Lunsford

Connors

The New St. Martin's Handbook

The New St. Martin's
Handbook

Andrea Lunsford
THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

Robert Connors
UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

With a section for multilingual writers by
Franklin E. Horowitz
TEACHERS COLLEGE, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

Acknowledgments

◤ Preface

These are high times for teachers and students of writing. New genres emerge almost daily, online and off. Our vocabulary is changing and growing before our very eyes, our spelling and even our capitalization along with it. Stylistic elements long beyond an ordinary writer's grasp — varied fonts and type sizes, color, boxes, icons, sidebars, graphics, even sound — now call out for our experimentation. In a time of such challenging possibilities, what's a poor handbook author to do? In our case, the answer seemed clear: we needed to take on the challenges posed by the new technologies and to provide answers to the many new questions students are now asking.

The New St. Martin's Handbook is the result. In it, we've pursued two major goals. First of all, we've taken advantage of some of the new stylistic elements ourselves to make this book easier to navigate and to use. Second, we have added crucial new material about writing, reading, researching, and collaborating online.

Easy to use, easy to understand

An appealing new size and format. We've made the *Handbook* shorter and wider, with a more colorful and more modern design that makes the book much easier to use. Key reference information — correction codes, most cross-references, URLs, multilingual notes — is out in the margins and thus easy to find on the page.

Boxed editing tips. All handbooks provide rules, but *The New St. Martin's Handbook* goes the extra step by providing tips that help students apply those rules to their own writing. Printed on pale green stripes for easy reference, these editing tips appear on the second page of most chapters and elsewhere in the book as well.

Attention to everyday language. Many chapters open with brief vignettes of language in everyday use, linking the material in the handbook (and the classroom) to students' lives beyond the classroom. And everyday language pervades the book, giving students clear, straightforward answers they can easily understand.

A guide to editing the most common errors. The Introduction serves as a "crisis control center" for writers, providing guidelines for recognizing, understanding, and editing the

most common errors. Screened pale orange for easy reference and with cross-references into the rest of the book, this section works nicely as a brief handbook within the larger handbook.

Hand-edited examples.   Most examples are now shown hand-edited, allowing students to see the error and its revision at a glance. Black pointers and boldface type make these examples easy to spot on the page.

A user-friendly index.   Even the index is especially easy to use, listing everyday words (such as *that* or *which*) as well as grammatical terms (such as *relative pronoun*), so that students can find information even if they don't know grammatical terminology.

Crucial new advice about writing online

A new research study of online writing habits. Like its previous editions, *The New St. Martin's Handbook* is informed by new research into student writing. Through a nationwide survey of teachers and students, we tried to determine how and when students work online, what problems they most often encounter, and what questions they have about online writing and research.

FAQs about online writing and research. Where do you break a URL when it won't fit on one line? How important are grammatical conventions in email and other online writing? How do online audiences differ from print audiences? Answers to these and other frequently asked questions about on-line work can be found on the orange pages at the beginning of each part of this book.

Annotated URLs throughout. Because so much information is now available on the Web, we've added URLs referring students to sites especially useful to writers. These URLs can be found in the margins throughout the book and also in a directory on pp. 735 – 751. All Web sites listed here can be accessed through links on *The New St. Martin's Handbook*'s own Web site, <www.bedfordstmartins.com/nsmhandbook>.

A full section on using the new media.   While earlier editions focused primarily on the medium of print, *The New St. Martin's Handbook* includes a full section on using various media — oral, print, and electronic. Chapter 50 offers guidance on preparing and giving oral presentations. Chapter 51 provides advice about various kinds of graphics and print or online documents students may be asked to produce, and Chapter 52 offers guidance in using hypertext, PowerPoint, and other forms of multimedia.

A completely revised research section with guidance in new forms of online research as well as in library and field research. New technologies have forever changed the face of research, and much of the research students now do takes place online. While continuing to help students understand how to use print and field research and offering guidelines for synthesizing and interpreting sources and data, our research section now also offers specific guidelines for finding

electronic resources and using and evaluating them critically and carefully. In addition, we include up-to-date guidelines for citing and documenting sources in MLA, APA, CBE, and Chicago styles.

Other highlights

For all the dramatic changes resulting from electronic forms of communication, student writers still work to understand and to enter academic discourse — and to think about the audiences, purposes, and rhetorical situations their writing addresses. Online or off, students carry out research, collaborate, and work to draft, design, edit, and proofread their work. *The New St. Martin's Handbook* continues to provide helpful, up-to-date advice in all these areas.

Attention to writing, not just to correctness. Our ongoing research and experience convince us that students need extensive practice in writing, and in writing that is compelling and powerful. Like all composition handbooks, this book provides guidance in checking and revising for correctness. Unlike most others, however, it also pays attention to rhetorically effective writing throughout the book, including the chapters dealing with grammar and mechanics. The chapter on adjectives and adverbs (Chapter 12), for instance, asks students to focus not only on how to use adjectives and adverbs correctly — but also on the more compelling question of why and in what circumstances to use them at all. The end punctuation chapter (Chapter 32) provides rules for using periods, question marks, and exclamation points, and, in addition, asks students to try revising a piece of their own writing for sentence variety using declarative, interrogatory, and exclamatory structures. In other words, we present grammar and mechanics as tools to use for a writing purpose, not simply to use "correctly."

Attention to rhetorical situations. Since writing always responds in some ways to its context — including audiences, purposes, and other texts — we put special emphasis on the importance of understanding rhetorical situations that student writers encounter. Beginning with Chapter 2, we urge students to think critically and imaginatively about what they want to do in writing, whom they want to reach, and how they want to do so. This emphasis on rhetorical choice is present throughout the text, as we show students over and over again how to go about making particular choices (which word to use, what example to choose for particular situations).

Two other chapters put special focus on rhetorical situations. Chapter 29, "Considering Others: Building Common Ground," rests on two major assumptions: that writers will wish to address readers whose backgrounds, values, and perspectives will vary widely and will also be different from their own; and that language offers a primary means of both respecting and bridging such differences. Based on Kenneth Burke's theories of identification and division in language use, this chapter asks students to take a close look at how the words they use can help them include — or exclude — their readers. Chapter 28, "Considering Language Variety," discusses standard, regional, ethnic,

and occupational varieties of English, showing students how different varieties of English (and of other languages as well) can be used appropriately and effectively, not only outside of school but also in their academic writing. This chapter helps students "shift language gears" as needed between the contexts of community, workplace, and school.

Systematic attention to reading.   Because we see writing and reading as inextricably linked (and particularly so in online environments), we include reading instruction throughout. Not only do we offer extensive guidance to help students read observantly and critically — whether evaluating a draft, an argument, a paragraph, or an online source — but we also present reading as one more tool that can help improve writing and research skills. The first chapter offers explicit guidelines for reading, as do the chapters on research, on the disciplines, on literature, and on using and evaluating sources.

Attention to critical thinking throughout. Beginning with the Introduction, "Thinking Critically about Your Writing," this book focuses on critical thinking in almost every chapter. The Introduction provides a framework to help students approach their writing with a critical eye, including guidelines to help them check for the most common errors. This framework continues through subsequent chapters, with editing guidelines to help students think about and revise their drafts along with end-of-chapter activities that ask them to think critically about issues in the chapter and to apply what they learn to their own writing

Attention to the needs of multilingual writers. Franklin Horowitz of Teachers College, Columbia University, provides coverage of grammatical and rhetorical issues of concern to multilingual writers in Part 11 of *The New St. Martin's Handbook*. In addition, marginal notes throughout the book offer advice on topics where multilingual writers need extra help, in language-specific terms whenever possible.

Attention to the needs of basic writers.   Several features of this text are especially appropriate for basic writers. The focus on reading not only provides instruction and practice in critical reading but also offers practice drawing conclusions and inferences from reading — practice that is valuable for basic writers. In addition, the focus on their own writing helps basic writers to make crucial links between their first-year writing courses and other academic and professional writing they might do. Finally, the use of actual student sentences and essays throughout the book and the emphasis on everyday uses of language invite students — and especially basic writing students — to link the language of this handbook and the classrooms it is used in with their lives beyond the classroom.

Informed by research into student writing

From the beginning, *The St. Martin's Handbook* has always been informed by our own

research into student writing. In fact, we first began work on *The St. Martin's Handbook* in 1983, when we realized that most college handbooks were based on research on student writing conducted fifty years earlier. Our own historical studies had convinced us that student writing and what teachers think of as "good" writing change over time, and so we began by gathering a nationwide sample of over 21,000 marked student essays and carefully analyzed a scientifically stratified sample of those to identify the twenty surface errors most characteristic of contemporary student writing. One of the most intriguing discoveries was how many of these errors related in some way to visual memory — wrong words, wrong or missing verb endings, missing or misplaced possessive apostrophes, even the *its/it's* confusion — which suggests that students today are less familiar with visual aspects of print-based writing than students once were. One effect of an oral, electronic culture seems to be that students do not automatically bring with them the visual knowledge of writing conventions that text-wise writers possess and use effortlessly.

This problem of visualization was most pronounced in terms of spelling errors, which occurred — by a factor of 300 percent — more frequently than any other error, and so we next undertook a second research study examining all the spelling errors in our sample of student essays. Out of this study came our own list of the words student writers misspell most frequently, as well as the discovery that most of these words are homonyms. These findings further suggest that the visual aspect of spelling is particularly important. In a world of secondary orality, we need to find ways to help students visualize their language.

Since our original research revealed that many errors are governed not so much by hard-and-fast rules as by large-scale rhetorical decisions, we turned back to the 21,000 essays in a third study, looking this time at content and organization. Again, we got some provocative results. We found, for instance, that these aspects of the composing process are as important to readers today as they were over two thousand years ago: the use of good reasons, proof, evidence, and examples — the rhetorical tools of invention — elicited the most consistent commentary from teachers, followed by commentary on the ways in which such materials were arranged and organized. These findings strongly suggest that readers are interested in the *what* as well as the *how* of student writing. More specifically, they suggest that student writers need to become conversant with traditional methods of analysis and patterns of development not simply to demonstrate that they can recognize the difference between classification and division, for example, but rather to gain the understanding and assent of their readers.

Good research, of course, always generates new research questions that beg to be pursued. As we approached the third edition, we found ourselves wondering, "How are we doing here?" Were we providing the guidance that student writers need? Next, then, we turned to the students using *The St. Martin's Handbook,* aiming to find out how students actually use our book and what we could do to make it more useful. Their

astute judgments and suggestions and their complex realization that good writing means more than just following rules led us, in the third edition, to add a chapter on oral presentations (95 percent of our student respondents asked for help here); to develop a special section providing help for multilingual writers; to provide guidelines for using varieties of English (and other languages) in academic writing; and to offer more help with using and documenting electronic sources.

However, even as the third edition went to press reflecting all we had learned from over a decade of ongoing research, we already had our sights set on what we needed to do next. Our student respondents had convinced us that the increased availability of home computers, access to the Internet, and the advent of something called the World Wide Web (which was a very, very new electronic space back in 1992) would have a swift and major impact on student writing. Thus for *The New St. Martin's Handbook* we again conducted a nationwide survey, this time of 2,500 students and 53 teachers, about their computer-based and online work.

This study confirmed our intuitions that almost all students (95 percent) are doing most of their work on a computer, with all the challenges that entails. In addition, we found that most students (71 percent) have experimented with using the Web — and that those who have not want to do so. Most important, students voiced a number of concerns and questions about how to get online and how to work effectively once there. In their questions, they often seemed to be straining for language to describe writing situations that were new and unfamiliar. Our attempts to address these concerns appear throughout this edition in the FAQs.

Looking back over fifteen years of research gives us a renewed sense of the dramatic changes that have taken place in the writing that students do. We began our research with a historical understanding that writing conventions and notions of "correctness" change over time. Our ongoing investigations have only emphasized this linguistic fact of life: in 1985, we were counting conventional "errors" in student essays that were largely typewritten (some were even handwritten); today, students work in virtual or paperless environments where what counts as error is daily called into question. Formerly simple choices — about what words to capitalize, for example — are now much more complex, as some new words include internal capitalization (*HotJava,* for example) and some online writers eschew capitalization altogether.

This complexity makes even more important the clear message we have always tried to send about the role of "correctness" in standard academic English. Without oversimplification, our goal now as always is to help student writers make effective choices.

Throughout, *The New St. Martin's Handbook* seeks to serve students as a ready reference that will help them make appropriate grammatical and rhetorical choices. Beyond this immediate goal, we hope to guide students in understanding and experiencing for themselves the multiple ways in which truly good writing always means more than

just following the rules. Truly good writing, we believe, means applying those rules in specific rhetorical situations for specific purposes and with specific audiences in ways that will bring readers and writers, teachers and students, to spirited conversation as well as to mutual understanding and respect.

A wide array of ancillaries

Several useful resources accompany *The New St. Martin's Handbook*. All are available free of charge to instructors. The *Workbook* is available for students to purchase.

TEACHING RESOURCES

Instructor's Notes
by Andrea Lunsford and Cheryl Glenn

The New St. Martin's Guide to Teaching Writing,
by Robert Connors and Cheryl Glenn

Assigning, Responding, Evaluating: A Writing Teacher's Guide, Third Edition
by Edward M. White

The St. Martin's Sourcebook for Writing Tutors
by Christina Murphy and Steve Sherwood

The St. Martin's Manual for Writing in the Disciplines
by Richard Bullock

STUDENT RESOURCES

The New St. Martin's Workbook
by Lex Runciman

The New St. Martin's Pocket Guide to Research and Documentation

Preparing for the CLAST

Preparing for the TASP

ELECTRONIC RESOURCES

The New St. Martin's Handbook Online
An HTML version of the complete handbook, including Internet links and interactive exercises

The New St. Martin's Handbook Web Site
http://www.bedfordstmartins.com/nsmhandbook

Acknowledgments

The New St. Martin's Handbook remains a collaborative effort in the best and richest sense of the word. As always, we are enormously indebted to Marilyn Moller, whose efforts as publisher on this edition — as on all others — have been quite simply invaluable. For this edition, we have also had the extraordinary gift of John Elliott's astute, attentive (and, we are tempted to say, "truly awesome") editing: The marks of his painstakingly careful work are everywhere present — and greatly appreciated. Diana Puglisi has managed the entire handbook from manuscript to bound book with skill and grace — and together with Joe Ford has made an enormously complex project run smoothly. In many matters large and small, Eva Peck has provided valuable assistance. For the wonderful new cover and interior design, we are indebted to Anna George. We are fortunate indeed to have had Karen Melton as our marketing manager; in our experience, she sets the standard. And as always, we are grateful to the entire SASMP sales force; they are the *best*.

The New St. Martin's Handbook is for the first time available in an imaginative and

highly interactive HTML version. For his extraordinary work in creating this electronic version, we thank John Sisson.

From its inception, this text has had the benefit of meticulous and insightful reviews of Franklin Horowitz, Teachers College of Columbia University — and, starting with the last edition, Frank has contributed a superb section for multilingual writers. Special thanks also go to colleagues Richard Bullock, Mike Hennessy, Christina Murphy, Marcia Muth, Lex Runciman, Steve Sherwood, and Ed White, who contributed uncommonly innovative books to accompany the handbook, and to Cheryl Glenn for her outstanding work on the *Instructor's Notes* and *The St. Martin's Guide to Teaching Writing*. And finally, we thank friend and colleague Nick Carbone, whose extensive and detailed reviews of all new material relating to online writing have been, for us, the *sine qua non*. Thanks also to Nick for the up-to-date and helpful URLs and annotations found throughout the margins of the text.

As always, we feel extremely fortunate to have had the contributions of very fine student writers, whose work appears throughout this text: Kelly Barr, Laura Brannon, Leah Clendening, Tisha Clevinger, Kristin Convery, Mike Dangler, Amy Dierst, Sean Finnerty, Jennifer Georgia, Jennifer Gerkin, Jeff Loew, Patricia Medley, Leslie Shaffer, Zakiyyah Shabazz, and Tamara Washington. For this edition, we are especially grateful to Shannan Palma, whose imaginative essay on movie heroes appears in Chapter 44. In addition, we are grateful to the many instructors who generously shared their assignments with us: Karen Burke

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We are grateful to the thousands of students who responded so thoughtfully to our survey about online writing. Their names are far too numerous to list here, but we would like to thank the instructors who distributed surveys to their students and offered their own thoughtful and helpful advice: James Allen, College of Du Page; Ellen Arl, University of South Carolina at Sumter; Jay Atkinson, University of Massachusetts, Lowell; Evelyn Beck; Sue Belles; S. K. Benson; Randall A. Clack, Elizabeth City State University; Ben Davis Jr.; Ruth Fischer, George Mason University; Beverly Furlow; Stephanie Garcia; Yohma Gray, DePaul University; Russell Greinke, Central Missouri State University; G. Grunow, Henry Ford Community College; Sandra Hall, Corning Community College; Kay Harkins, Point Loma Nazarene College;

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helped to shape and refine its goals. More special thanks go to Ohio State colleagues Melissa Goldthwaite, Jeff Loew, Jennifer Cognard-Black, and Jennifer Phegley, whose good-natured help tracking down sources, identifying readings, and looking for examples has been just what we needed — every time. Thanks are likewise extended to Jim Fredal, who provided very helpful information on speaking and writing. And to our very special friends, Keith Walters, Beverly Moss, Cheryl Glenn, and — always — Lisa Ede, we are continually grateful.

We could go on and on in praise of the support and help we have received, for we are fortunate (beyond our wildest dreams, as our mentor Edward P. J. Corbett would say) to be part of a unique scholarly community, one characterized by compassion as well as passionate commitment to students and to learning. We remain grateful to be among you.

Andrea Lunsford
Robert Connors

◤ A Note to Students

Our goal in writing *The New St. Martin's Handbook* has been to produce a book that will help you become competent and compelling writers, a book that you can use easily throughout — and beyond — your college years.

The introductory chapter of this book, "Thinking Critically about Your Writing," is our attempt to provide a tool for analyzing your use of the writing patterns and strategies most college students need to practice. The introduction — and indeed, the entire book — offers a critical thinking program for building on strengths and eliminating weaknesses in your own writing.

Throughout this text, we thus ask that you become accustomed to carefully analyzing your own prose. In most chapters, we will not only provide explanations and opportunities for practice but also ask you to apply the principles presented directly to your own writing. If you follow our directions, they will guide you in becoming a systematic self-critic — and a more effective writer. And since writing and reading in many ways go hand in hand, many chapters will also offer you a chance to read with an eye for various logical or stylistic or conventional aspects of writing, often in the work of some of the finest writers in English. Sometimes you will be asked to try to imitate their sentences. As your writing improves, so will your reading.

Chapters 1 – 6 will guide you through the process of expository and argumentative essays — from your first choice of a topic to your final typed essay. Chapters 7 – 39 provide thorough discussion of writing conventions — grammar, word choice, punctuation, and mechanics. These chapters provide examples and practice to guide you in mastering such conventions and in learning to use them appropriately and effectively.

Next come chapters that will help you carry out and use research in your writing and examine the writing of your chosen discipline. Then come chapters that focus on different kinds of media: making oral presentations, designing print documents, and using hypertext and multimedia. Finally, there is a section for multilingual writers.

How to use *The New St. Martin's Handbook*

This book has been designed to be as easy as possible to use. Depending on what information or advice you're looking for, you may want to consult any or all of the following:

- **Tables of Contents.** If you know what general topic you're looking for (such as using commas), the **Brief Contents** on the inside front cover will lead you to the chapter where you'll find that topic. If you're looking for a specific kind of information within a general topic (such as using commas in a series), the detailed **Contents** on the inside back cover or the even more detailed **Contents** following this introduction can lead you to this information.

- **Index.** The index lists everything covered in the book. It's especially useful for finding specific words you need help with (such as *that* or *which*) but don't know the exact technical term for (*relative pronouns*).

- **Information about Online Writing.** If you have questions specific to working online, from how to indicate italics to how to evaluate Web sites as sources for a research paper, you'll find answers on the FAQ pages in each section of the book. A directory to all these questions appears on page 794.

- **Common Errors.** On pages I-12 – I-28 are an explanation and examples of twenty of the most common surface errors in the writing of U.S. college students, with references to pages in the book where you can find additional help in revising those errors.

- **Revising and Editing Guidelines.** On the second page of most chapters, and elsewhere as well in some chapters, are brief guidelines for revising and editing your writing that focus on the issues covered in that chapter (such as paragraphs or sentence fragments).

- **Documentation Guidelines.** For information on documenting sources, see the directories for MLA (p. 517), APA (p. 565), CBE (p. 588) and Chicago (p. 602) styles.

- **Glossaries.** The **Glossary of Usage** (p. 726) gives help with troublesome words (such as *accept* and *except*); the **Glossary of Grammatical and Computer Terms** (p. 713) gives definitions of these kinds of terms (such as *clause* and *listserv*).

- **World Wide Web Sources.** In the margins of the text are addresses and brief descriptions of many World Wide Web sites that offer more information or interesting insights about issues under discussion in the text. There is also a Directory of Web Sites on pp. 735 – 751.
- **Multilingual Issues.** Chapters 53 – 56 cover some of the most common and most important problems that speakers of other languages face in understanding and using English. In addition, throughout the book advice on specific issues appears in the margins under the heading "For Multilingual Writers"; a list of these marginal discussions is on page 795.

A tutorial on using *The New St. Martin's Handbook*

For this book to serve you well, you need to get to know it – to know what's inside and how to find it. The following tutorial is designed to help you familiarize yourself with *The New St. Martin's Handbook;* the answers are on p. xix – xx.

Starting with the table of contents

1. Where will you find advice on revising a draft?
2. Where will you find quick information on checking verbs for -*s* and -*es* endings? On checking subject-verb agreement in general?
3. Where will you find guidelines on documenting Internet sources?
4. Is there any help in the handbook for multilingual students, including those who speak English as a second language?

For planning and drafting

5. It's the first week of class, and you are at work on your first essay. Where in the handbook can you find general guidelines on planning and drafting an essay?
6. Assigned to write an essay that argues a claim, you've been warned to be very careful about using any personal narratives as support for your argument. Does the handbook offer any advice about how to use narrative appropriately in college writing?
7. In an essay arguing for "equal pay for equal work" addressed to members of your writing class, you want to avoid any language that stereotypes members of any group. Where in the handbook can you find advice about using considerate rather than hurtful language?
8. You've been assigned to give an oral presentation. Where does the handbook offer advice on writing and giving oral presentations? How did you find this information?

For editing

9. As you edit a final draft, you stop at the following sentence: *Winning may be the name of the game but it isn't a name I care for very much.* You can't decide whether to put a comma before *but.* What does the handbook recommend that you do? How and where do you find this answer?

10. You speak several languages, and you still confuse the prepositions *in* and *on.* Where in the handbook can you find help?

11. Does the word *none* take a singular or plural verb form? You can't decide. Where in the handbook can you find a quick answer to this question? How did you find the answer?

12. Your teacher has written *ref* next to this sentence: *Transmitting video signals by satellite is a way of overcoming the problem of scarce airwaves and limiting how they are used.* Where do you look in the handbook for help responding to your teacher's comment?

For doing research

13. You've found some Web sites related to your topic, but you aren't sure how reliable they are. Where can you find help in evaluating them?

14. Should you quote, paraphrase, or summarize? Are there any guidelines in the handbook to help you decide? How do you find these guidelines?

15. You're required to use something called *APA* style in a psychology paper. Where in the handbook can you find this information?

16. Using *MLA* style, how do you document information obtained from a CD-ROM source?

For all your college courses

17. A take-home exam in political science asks you to compare Marx's and Lenin's theories of revolution. You've never before written a political science paper, and so you're not sure how to proceed. Do you need to cite sources — and if so, do they need to be primary? Do political science papers follow any set format?

18. You need to write an abstract as part of a biology report. Is there a model in the handbook?

19. For a literature course, you're writing an essay interpreting a poem by Emily Dickinson. Where can you find help in the handbook?

20. A report you're working on must include both tables and figures. You aren't sure of the difference, nor do you know how to set them up. Where in the handbook can you get help?

We hope that this book will prove to be a useful reference. But in the long run, a book can be only a guide. You are the one who will put such