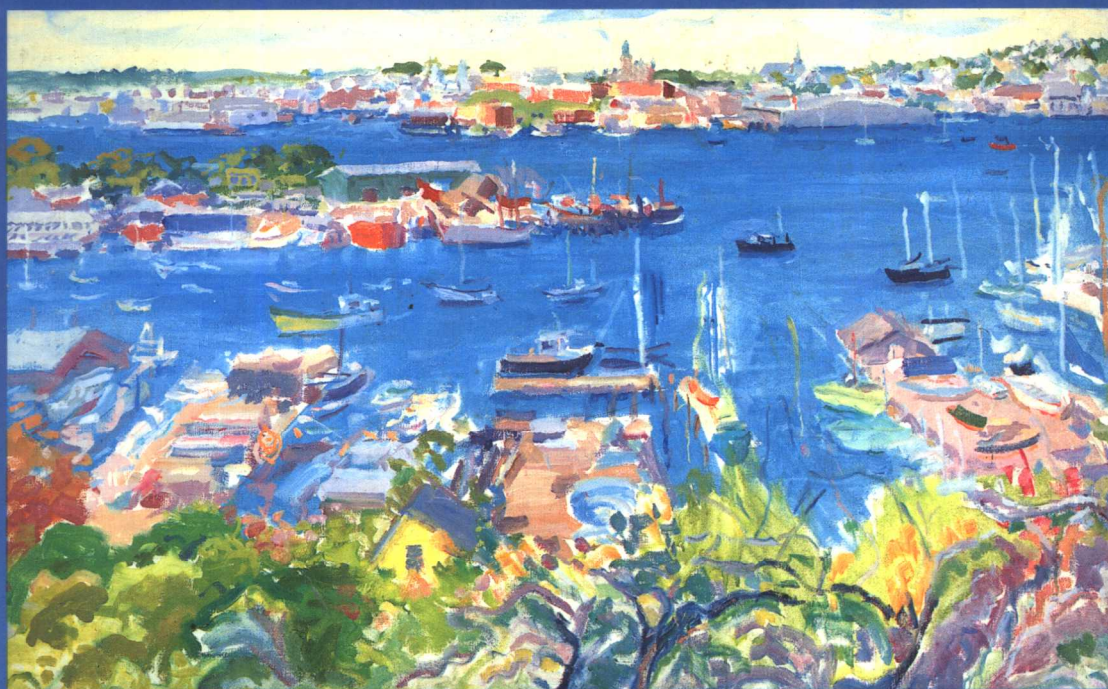# The Longwood Guide to Writing

Brief Edition

SECOND EDITION

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Bill Bridges

The Longwood Guide to Writing

BRIEF EDITION

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PREFACE

In one sense, this book began twenty-eight years ago, when the two of us met at Florida State University in a graduate-level rhetorical theory course taught by our mentor, James McCrimmon. Thanks to the many conferences we have attended together since then and to advances in technology that have allowed us all but immediate communication, we have collaborated more and more, eventually co-authoring several articles and three books. We even confer with each other in our teaching; these days, we scarcely take a writing exercise to class that the other has not read, critiqued, and, ultimately, made better. Over the years that we have worked together, we have written and talked our way to the writing theory that provides this book's framework. We can best describe this theory as one in which writing is viewed as rhetorical, personal, and communal.

Writing as Rhetorical

Professor McCrimmon introduced us to the work of Kenneth Burke, and through Burke to Aristotle. The result is a heavy commitment to writing as rhetorical, that is, to the view that the quality of a piece of writing is judged by its effectiveness in achieving its writer's purpose for the intended reader. That commitment is made evident in our use of the rhetorical triangle as a means of structuring the chapters in Part Two that treat various writing occasions. It should also be clear in our treatment of argument and persuasion in Chapters 9 and 10 and in the rhetorical perspective we bring to our treatment of style in Chapters 13 and 14.

Writing as Personal

Good writing is personal; that is, it is steeped in the significance the writer sees in his subject. *The Longwood Guide to Writing* reveals our commitment to the personal nature of writing in our emphasis on significance in all types of writing. Whether a personal essay or a fully developed researched argument, good writing conveys the significance or meaning that matters for the writer.

Writing as Communal

Writing, as we have come to know it, is not a solitary act. Our work on this book—and on numerous projects before it—has taught us that good writing does not happen in a vacuum, or even in a writer's garret—unless that garret has an e-mail connection. At times, it is hard for us to know who is responsible for what. For example, one of us drafts a chapter, and the other responds, rewrites, and then ships it back to the other. From there, the chapter's initial writer revises. This back-and-forth process continues until, in the end, the product is a joint one. Through e-mail, we have even worked with each other's students, serving as

readers and editors at a distance. Our work together has helped us develop more and more collaborative exercises for our writing classes. We have included many of these exercises in this text.

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES OF *THE LONGWOOD GUIDE TO WRITING*

Writing as a Process

We have attempted to make writing process an integral part of this book without falling into the trap of acting as if there were only one writing process that all writers either do or should employ for all types of writing. What makes our approach distinctive is the availability of process throughout the text. We begin by devoting an entire section to writing process: Part One, with chapters on invention, shaping, revising, and reading. Further, in the first three of these chapters, we follow a student writer's process as she begins thinking and freewriting about her topic, then writes an initial discovery draft, and then revises that rough draft three more times until she completes the assignment. Then, in each of the writing occasion chapters in Part Two, the attention to process continues with an Assignment and Guidelines for Writing section, which offers specific advice and activities to help students complete an essay assignment.

The Rhetorical Triangle

What is good writing? As a way of answering this question, think for a moment about the various situations in which writing takes place. We write notes to family and friends. We write grocery lists and to-do lists. We write terse letters to credit card corporations, asking to be taken off their mailing or telephone lists. Some of us write books. Many of us write e-mail messages to our teachers, students, and friends. What do all of these writing situations have in common? Each involves a writer, a subject, and a reader. These elements are often referred to as the *rhetorical triangle:*
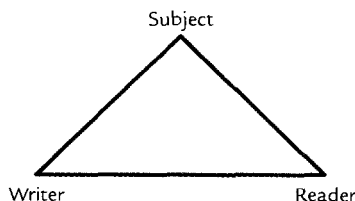
This triangle suggests that good writing results from a process in which a writer shares meaning with a reader. It also suggests that writing requires some sort of balance among writer, subject, and reader. The writer must fit the subject to the

reader. The writer must identify with the audience in such a way as to predict what readers want to learn from the writing and what information they need as background before they can understand the essential information in the text. This is difficult enough when writing for one reader—for example, when one family member writes a note to another about how to program the VCR. It becomes increasingly difficult as the readers become more numerous and more varied in their interests and knowledge. In writing an instruction booklet that includes a section on programming a VCR, a writer must arrive at some concept of a typical reader in order to decide what information to include.

In Part Two, we use the rhetorical triangle extensively. Each chapter in this part includes three sections corresponding to the corners of the rhetorical triangle: spotlighting the writer, spotlighting the subject, and spotlighting the reader.

Emphasis on Invention

We devote the first chapter of *The Longwood Guide to Writing* to invention and return to invention activities in the Guidelines section of each chapter in Part Two. These activities range from the informal—for example, freewriting and brainstorming—to the formal—for example, a comprehensive set of questions for analyzing a topic, discovering insights or information to use in an essay, and shaping those materials into an essay. This set of questions is consistent with our commitment to a Burkean approach to rhetoric, for it derives from Burke's logological analysis.

Modes as Invention and Organizational Structures

We see modes as very powerful tools in the writing process. However, it seems wrong to us to equate types of writing with modes. In *The Longwood Guide to Writing*, we are careful to illustrate how each mode may be, and often is, employed in writing with any aim. For example, even though the overall structure of an informative essay will likely be provided by one of the expository modes, there is no one-to-one correlation between expository modes and informational or explanatory writing. In fact, informational writing may well make use of an argumentative thesis and employ narrative or descriptive modes. The same could be said for writing with any other aim; that is, the writer may well use any mode to help achieve any aim. In the Guidelines section of several of the writing occasion chapters, we present modes as tools for generating and shaping material rather than as constraints or containers that limit writing.

Connections Between Writing and Reading

Writing and reading are very closely connected, and *The Longwood Guide to Writing* includes a chapter devoted to this connection. In Chapter 4, we focus on ways in which writing can help students understand what they are reading. This chapter offers a comprehensive range of reading and writing strategies students may use before they read, while they are reading, and after they have read to help them

better understand a given text and then use that text in fulfilling a writing assignment.

Writing *About* and *From* Literature

In Chapter 7, we present two ways of responding to literature: writing *about* literature and writing *from* literature. Writing *about* literature requires the writer to analyze a piece of literature and write an interpretation of it, while writing *from* literature involves using a piece of literature as a springboard to an essay. These essays tend to be personal, but they can be argumentative or even informative. Both types of literature essays—writing *about* and writing *from*—begin with reading closely to derive an understanding of the literature at hand. Chapter 7 discusses how to develop this understanding.

Argument and Persuasion

We have chosen to deal with argument and persuasion in two chapters rather than one. In Chapter 9, we attempt to help students strengthen their abilities to think through an argument, both from their own perspectives and from the perspectives of those who would disagree with them. The writer's goal in this type of writing is not to persuade a person holding an opposite point of view to agree with him, but rather to gain the respect and understanding of those who disagree. To do so, the writer must show respect and understanding for those who hold an opposing point of view.

In Chapter 10, we follow two important tenets of Kenneth Burke. The first is that persuasion occurs only when writer and reader can identify with each other. This identification cannot occur when writer and reader begin with opposing positions on arguments that, in part, determine their identity. The second Burkean principle follows from the first, namely, that in persuasive writing the writer must carve out an audience that suits the topic of persuasion. Thus, if a writer wants to persuade readers to take some action to promote the goals of a controversial topic such as abortion, she must choose an audience that can be persuaded on this topic. To do otherwise is to do pretend, rather than real, writing.

Student Writing

We make ample use of student writing, featuring essays written by our students as examples in a number of chapters. In addition, each of the chapters in Parts Two and Three presents a piece of student writing in its entirety from prewriting to final draft. The collaborative nature of writing is emphasized and illustrated in these sample essays by the inclusion of actual peer reviews and teacher comments that students received during their writing processes, whether in prewriting and planning or between drafts.

Realistic Professional Models

We have chosen professional writing that can serve as models for student writing. Most of these essays are of comparable length to those essays written by our students. Thus, students should be able to see parallels between the structure of these essays and the essays they will be writing. The Questions for Review after each of these essays encourage students to reflect on the ways each essay illustrates the concepts being treated in the chapter in which it is presented.

NEW TO THE SECOND EDITION

Expanded Readings

We have changed a number of professional and student readings in response to the reactions of our students and reviewers. These new readings, which offer a wide range of quality literature and nonfiction prose, are by such authors as Judith Ortiz Cofer, Sandra Cisneros, John Cheever, and Paul Ruffin.

Writing Opportunities

Each reading in Part Two is followed by a Writing Opportunity that invites the writer to use the reading just completed as a springboard to writing. Some of these prompts call for personal responses, while others suggest the writer conduct some research on a topic introduced in the reading. Students may also base formal writing assignments on any of the Writing Opportunity prompts.

Oral Presentations—A New Chapter

Because many composition programs around the country are incorporating a speech component as part of their first-year writing courses, we have added Chapter 15, Oral Presentations. The focus of this chapter is on the connections between writing and public speaking, with an emphasis on moving from the written essay to an oral presentation on that essay. Students will find practical advice on developing a speech outline, using audio and visual aids, and delivering a public address.

Expanded Internet Assignments

In this edition, we begin our discussion of the Internet and writing in Chapter 1, where we focus on the history of the Internet and its availability as a useful source of information. In Chapters 8 and 10, we focus on evaluating Internet sites, and we offer optional writing assignments that ask students to develop their own websites and evaluate their effectiveness. We continue our work with the Internet in Chapter 12, where we discuss how to assess the reliability of Internet sources and provide samples of electronic documentation formats following the guidelines

established by the second edition of the *MLA Style Manual and Guide to Scholarly Publishing* (1998) and the fourth edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (1994).

STRUCTURE OF *THE LONGWOOD GUIDE TO WRITING*

Part One, Writing Process Strategies, introduces students to various parts of the writing process, moving from generating ideas (Chapter 1), to organization (Chapter 2), to rewriting (Chapter 3). The final chapter in this section (Chapter 4) helps students hone their reading skills as a means of both generating ideas for writing and becoming more critical readers of their own writing.

Part Two, Writing Occasions, consists of seven chapters that guide students through writing assignments for papers with various discourse aims. Each of these chapters contains several professional essays and at least two student samples, with one of those student essays traced from the beginning of the writing process through to the final draft of the essay. Each of these chapters also contains a discussion of the key elements in writing designed to achieve the aim in question, with attention given to each element in the rhetorical triangle: writer, subject, and reader. Finally, each of these chapters contains numerous exercises designed to help students explore the concepts being introduced and apply them to their own writing. The seven chapters in this section may be further categorized:

Writing That Spotlights the Writer	Chapter 5, Personal Essays
Writing That Spotlights the Subject	Chapter 6, Information Essays
	Chapter 7, Essays *About* and *From* Literature
Writing That Spotlights the Reader	Chapter 8, Evaluation Essays
	Chapter 9, Position Essays
	Chapter 10, Persuasion Essays
	Chapter 11, Problem/Solution Essays

Part Three, Research, consists of one chapter, Chapter 12. In it we discuss various types of research students are likely to do in college and after they graduate, and we guide them through the writing of a research project, giving special attention to the use and documentation of information on the World Wide Web. Chapter 12 includes two sample research essays by students, including the entire research project for one of these, from start to finish.

Part Four, Style, comprises two chapters, both related to the aims presented in Part Two. Chapter 13 examines word choice in terms of writing that spotlights the writer, writing that spotlights the subject, and writing that spotlights the reader. Chapter 14 examines sentence structures in the same manner. The intent of these chapters is not to suggest that various strategies are limited to specific

types of writing but to look at general principles of diction and syntax. We approach style as something of a paradox, both inseparable from content and yet one of the defining characteristics of good writing.

Part Five, Special Presentations, consists of three chapters: Chapter 15, Oral Presentations; Chapter 16, Essay Examinations; and Chapter 17, Portfolios. In Chapter 15, we focus on the connections between writing an essay and making a speech or oral presentation, and we offer practical advice on delivering that presentation. In Chapter 16, we analyze examination questions from various disciplines and categorize them into four types based on the response each question calls for: summary, synthesis, evaluation, or interpretation. We also offer strategies for writing these types of essays and analyze sample essay examinations. In Chapter 17, we model two different approaches to creating writing portfolios and include parts of two sample portfolio assignments.

HOW TO USE *THE LONGWOOD GUIDE TO WRITING*

We have written this book as a tool to be used in writing classes; we do not envision ourselves as the teachers of these classes. Another way of putting this is to say that we have not written this as a tutorial, which students can work their way through from start to finish without other guidance, though we certainly believe they could gain insights into writing in general and into their own writing process by doing so. Instead, our intent was to write a book that teachers can use to suit their purposes. We do not imagine that many teachers will be able to assign all the chapters in this text, and we have not designed the book in such a way as to make this necessary. Some teachers will be working in courses that place relatively little emphasis on persuasion and thus may well omit most, if not all, of the section spotlighting the reader in Part Two. In other situations, teachers working in courses focusing on argument may devote most of their attention to this section. We believe this book can be successful in both situations.

We do not envision this as a linear book in which one assigns all of Chapter 1 before moving on to Chapter 2, and so forth. But there is a basic design that teachers can work within. That design would suggest that teachers begin by deciding which of the chapters in Parts Two, Three, and Five their course will include. The choice of chapters will be determined, of course, by such considerations as the nature of the course (e.g., whether the first or second in a two-course sequence) and the types of writing assignments the teacher intends to make. This decision made, the teacher can then base the course on these core chapters, using readings, and exercises from Parts One and Four as supplements.

For example, teachers could assign various parts of the first three chapters as students work through the first chapter assigned from Part Two, so that students apply the invention, shaping, and revision strategies presented in Part One, while they are writing their first formal essay. Further, Chapter 4 may be assigned at any

point during the course. Some will no doubt want to assign it first, so that students can apply the chapter's reading strategies to readings not only in their writing course but in other courses as well.

Depending on what type of writing is being done, the teacher may well move ahead to sections from Part Four. For example, if the first chapter assigned from Part Two is Chapter 5, the teacher may want to assign the Strategies for Writing That Spotlights the Writer section from Chapter 13 and the Sentence Strategies for Writing That Spotlights the Writer section from Chapter 14.

SUPPLEMENTS FOR *THE LONGWOOD GUIDE TO WRITING*

The Longwood Guide to Writing is supported by a variety of helpful supplements for instructors and students.

Supplements for Instructors

+ The *Instructor's Resource Manual* we wrote contains an introductory section that provides sample syllabi for various courses in which *The Longwood Guide to Writing* can be used; a section in which we discuss each chapter individually, providing background information about what we hope students will achieve as they work through the material, as well as responses to many of the exercises in the text; and a theoretical section, in which we discuss, in three separate articles, the essential ingredients of a process approach to writing, various ways of giving students feedback about their writing, and the theories of Kenneth Burke that are the foundation of our text. Finally, a separate essay, written by Nancy Pfingstag, a member of the English Language Training Institute faculty at UNC Charlotte, deals with issues in teaching writing to students for whom English is a second language.

+ *The Longwood Guide to Writing Website* (*http://www.ablongman.com/ lunsford*) enables instructors to access on-line writing activities as well as links keyed to specific chapters, to post and make changes to their syllabi, to hold chat sessions with individual students or groups of students, and to receive e-mail and essay assignments from students.

+ *An Introduction to Teaching Composition in an Electronic Environment*, developed by Eric Hoffman and Carol Scheidenhelm, both at Northern Illinois University, offers a wealth of computer-related classroom activities. It also provides detailed guidance for both experienced and inexperienced instructors who wish to make creative use of technology in teaching composition.

+ *The Allyn and Bacon Sourcebook for College Writing Teachers*, Second Edition, compiled by James C. McDonald of the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, provides instructors with a varied selection of readings written by composition and rhetoric scholars on both theoretical and practical subjects.

+ *Teaching College Writing*, an invaluable instructor's resource guide developed by Maggy Smith of the University of Texas at El Paso, is available for adopters who wish to explore additional teaching tips and resources.
+ *CompSite Website* (*http://www.ablongman.com/compsite*) is an easily navigable and informative forum for instructors and students of composition. Instructors can share teaching strategies with colleagues. New resources include material on writing across the curriculum, teaching tips for newer instructors, and advice on using technology in the composition classroom.

Supplements for Students

+ *The Longwood Guide to Writing Website* (*http://www.ablongman.com/lunsford*) presents chapter summaries, writing activities, the course syllabus, links keyed to specific text sections, and chat and e-mail functions for communicating with classmates and the instructor.
+ *CompSite Website* (*http://ablongman.com/compsite*) offers resources and instructional materials for students, including helpful information on using computers for writing, techniques for using the Internet for research, and a forum for exchanging papers and writing ideas.
+ *Visual Communication: A Writer's Guide*, Second Edition, by Susan Hilligoss, Clemson University, introduces document design principles that writers can apply across different genres of writing. It includes academic papers, résumés and business letters, web pages, brochures, newsletters, and proposals. Emphasizing audience and genre analysis, the guide shows how readers' expectations influence and shape a document's look. Practical discussions of space, type, organization, pattern, graphic elements, and visuals are featured along with planning worksheets and design samples and exercises. A mini-history of publishing and graphic design is also included.

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Ronald F. Lunsford
Bill Bridges

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