

# *Guide and Handbook for Writing*

IRWIN GRIGGS

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## *Preface*

This book combines materials for three parts of the usual freshman composition course: first, the study of the craft of writing; second, models and assignments of various kinds; and third, a handbook of usage. There is no necessary tie between the three main parts; any one of them may be used separately. We suppose that the first two divisions, or portions of them, will be assigned for study and as source material for student themes; we expect that the third division, the handbook, will often be used only as a reference book.

We owe a debt to many colleagues who have suggested changes and who have helped us in various ways. For earlier help we are obliged to Harper Brown, William Rossky, and Elkan Buchhalter. For recent help we are especially indebted to three colleagues who have aided in the chapter on the research paper: Marie Stone, Paul A. Brown, and Charles Burkhart.

I. G.

D. H. W.

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# I

## *The Craft of Writing*





but studying them all is not important. Learning to write is a skill, and you must learn to use words. You must learn to use words in a way that is effective. You must learn to use words in a way that is clear. You must learn to use words in a way that is powerful. You must learn to use words in a way that is beautiful. You must learn to use words in a way that is meaningful. You must learn to use words in a way that is memorable. You must learn to use words in a way that is persuasive. You must learn to use words in a way that is inspiring. You must learn to use words in a way that is transformative. You must learn to use words in a way that is revolutionary. You must learn to use words in a way that is eternal.

## Introduction to Writing

All your life you have been learning to use words, and if your mind does not become stagnant, you will continue to learn as long as you live. For no one, not even the greatest poets, ever "masters" the art of using words—masters it in the sense that he has nothing more to learn or in the sense that he succeeds automatically and without effort. For most of you, however, this class will be the last formal study of the subject. You should enter it with the belief that no matter how well or how poorly you write this September, by next May you can have learned to write much better. For, like throwing a baseball or playing a violin, writing is a skill and can be studied and learned; and though no one can achieve perfection in it, everyone, if he tries, can make progress.

First of all, you must wish to develop your skill—and not simply to get a grade and pass a course. You must wish to develop the skill because you understand its value to you. People seldom become expert at anything unless they wish to, even in the simpler skills like preparing a good dinner, and no one ever learned to write well without study and prolonged effort.

## THINKING AND WRITING

Your most obvious and immediate motive for learning to use effective English lies in realizing that your success in other college courses depends in good part on your ability to express yourself in clear, forceful language. Even in mathematics you will use words as well as mathematical symbols; in chemistry you will get nowhere by merely memorizing formulas and manipulating test tubes; and subjects like his-