


Focus on Writing

Paragraphs and Essays



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Focus on
Writing
Paragraphs and Essays



Preface for Instructors

When we set out to write a new paragraph-to-essay developmental text, we knew what we wanted to accomplish. We wanted *Focus on Writing: Paragraphs and Essays* to reflect two of our central beliefs: first, that in college, writing comes first and second, that students learn writing and grammar skills best in the context of their own writing. We also knew that we had an opportunity to bring developmental textbooks to another level—to recognize who is taking basic writing classes today and to engage them in a new and different way. Our students may be basic writers, but they live in a world of images. We wanted to engage our students with a highly visual book and a contemporary design that reflected the most recent pedagogy about reaching basic writers. We conducted usability testing in classrooms to see how students responded to our books' designs and layouts. Consequently, the pages of *Focus on Writing* have clean, open margins, with the most important information moved directly into the body of the text, and an up-to-date look that takes the needs of today's basic writing students seriously. We also wanted this book to be accessible to all basic writers: the text explanations and instructions are clear and streamlined throughout to make them as transparent as possible.

Still, *Focus on Writing* is most importantly a writing text. For this reason, the book begins with thorough coverage of the writing process and includes extensive writing practice throughout the text. Most chapters open with a writing prompt that asks students to respond to an evocative and contemporary visual. Students practice not only by working through effective exercises but also by applying each chapter's concepts to their own original writing, giving them a sense of ownership of their work. We included lots of grammar support to help basic writers understand and apply the fundamentals of good writing, and our up-to-date exercise topics relate to students as citizens of the world beyond the college campus.

Further, because we know that the issues of the developmental classroom are not limited to writing, *Focus on Writing* offers other resources such

as help with college study skills, ESL usage, research skills, test-taking, and critical reading in a format that is flexible enough to support a variety of teaching styles and to meet the needs of individual students.

We wrote this book for our own interested, concerned, and hardworking students, and we tailored the book's approach and content to them. Instead of exercises that reinforce the idea that writing is a dull, pointless, and artificial activity, we chose fresh, contemporary examples (both student and professional) and worked hard to develop interesting exercises and writing assignments. Throughout *Focus on Writing*, we try to talk *to* students, not *at* or *down* to them. We try to be concise without being abrupt, thorough without being repetitive, direct without being rigid, specific without being prescriptive, and flexible without being inconsistent. Our most important goal is simple: to create an engaging text that motivates students to improve their writing and that gives them the tools to do so.

Organization

Focus on Writing: Paragraphs and Essays is divided into three general sections: "Writing Paragraphs and Essays," "Revising and Editing Your Writing," and "Becoming a Critical Reader." The first section is a comprehensive discussion of the writing process. The second section presents thorough coverage of sentence skills, grammar, punctuation, mechanics, and spelling. The third section introduces students to critical reading skills and includes thirteen professional essays and five sample student essays, each illustrating a particular pattern of development. Finally, three appendixes—Appendix A, "Strategies for College Success," Appendix B, "Using Research in Your Writing," and Appendix C, "Taking Standardized Assessment Tests"—provide help with skills that students will need in other courses and on standardized tests.

Features

With *Focus on Writing* we aimed to create a complete and contemporary paragraph-to-essay text for developmental writers in a format that students could relate to. Guided by our "student writing first" philosophy, we created the following innovative features designed to make students' writing practice meaningful, productive, and enjoyable.

The book's striking design is uncluttered and clear while the visual presentation of material helps students stay on track. Lively, eye-catching photographs in every chapter get students writing immediately. The open design uses color, call-out boxes, and highlighting to emphasize

important information and new concepts with a minimum of distractions to keep basic writing students focused.

Clear, step-by-step coverage of every stage of the writing process helps students master drafting, revising, and editing. Nine chapters on paragraph writing cover the patterns of development, supported by plenty of student-friendly examples and exercises. Models of student writing, one for each pattern of development, show every stage of the writing process, with a final, finished student paragraph annotated to show how it has been improved. Two more chapters on the writing process and two on essay writing cover the rhetorical skills students need to master.

“Writing-in-context” activities, a hallmark of our developmental books, get students writing immediately and help them practice rhetorical skills while revising and editing their own writing. In each chapter, students respond in writing to a full-page photo or other visual. Then, a series of *Flashback* and *Revising and Editing* activities throughout the chapters ask students to return to their initial writing, apply new skills they are learning, and create a polished draft.

TEST provides a powerful tool to help students understand how paragraphs work and to revise their own writing. Introduced early in the book, the easy-to-remember TEST acronym (topic sentence, evidence, summary statement, and transitions) helps students self-check their paragraphs for unity, support, and coherence. Clear and practical directions for applying TEST to their writing allow students to quickly see where their drafts need more work before they revise toward a final draft.

Better grammar coverage—with less jargon and clearer explanations—than any other basic writing text gives students lots of practice and lots of support.

- **Uncomplicated explanations of grammar topics help students master the essentials.** Clear instructions, basic definitions, and well-illustrated examples make fundamental grammar issues easy to grasp. “Grammar in Context” boxes in the paragraph chapters highlight issues particularly relevant to each rhetorical mode.
- **Hundreds of exercises offer abundant practice.** Exercises range from very basic to more challenging, with topics that developmental students find engaging. Additional practice is available at the nearly 9,000-item online database, *Exercise Central*.

- **Checklists and mastery tests help reinforce new skills.** Review Checklists in the grammar chapters ask students to review key concepts before they move on. Chapter Reviews, and the five-paragraph, multi-error Unit Reviews, give students hands-on practice editing paragraphs and essays.
- **A full chapter on grammar and usage for ESL students addresses the concerns of nonnative speakers.** Chapter 29 addresses issues of special interest to nonnative speakers while marginal ESL tips throughout the Instructor's Annotated Edition help teachers support these students. The packagable ancillary, *Bedford/St. Martin's ESL Workbook*, offers even more practice.

Focus on Writing helps students make the connection between reading and writing. Chapter 35, "Reading for College," guides students through the process of critical reading and includes a sample annotated reading. Chapter 36, "Readings for Writers," contains eighteen professional and student essays that illustrate the major rhetorical patterns. End-of-reading questions check for comprehension, build vocabulary skills, and suggest topics for student writing.

Three full appendixes help students with research, test taking, and vocabulary development. Appendix A, "Strategies for College Success," introduces students to practical strategies that they can use throughout their college careers. Appendix B, "Using Research in Your Writing," introduces students to the process of doing research for college, including finding print and Internet sources, and documenting sources using MLA style. Appendix C, "Taking Standardized Assessment Tests," orients students to important exit and assessment exams and offers them a spectrum of test-taking strategies. The marginal *Word Power* boxes throughout the book expand students' vocabularies as they work on their own writing.

The Focus on Writing e-book offers an online version of the print text. The first of its kind developed for the developmental writing class, this online version of the print book includes interactive exercises and multimedia tutorials that let students do the work of the class—from responding to writing prompts to grammar exercises—right in the e-book. Additionally, instructors can create their own multipart lessons, pages, quizzes, discussion forums, and more while keeping track of student progress in an integrated gradebook.

Ancillaries

Focus on Writing is accompanied by comprehensive teaching support that includes the following items. Many resources are free. Starred titles are free when packaged with the book.

Print Resources

Instructor Resources:

- **The *Instructor's Annotated Edition*** contains answers to all the practice exercises, plus numerous ESL and teaching tips that offer ideas, reminders, and cross-references that are immediately helpful to teachers at any level.
- ***Classroom Resources to Accompany FOCUS ON WRITING*** offers advice for teaching developmental writing as well as chapter-by-chapter pointers for using *Focus on Writing* in the classroom. It contains answers to all of the book's practice exercises, sample syllabi, additional teaching materials, and full chapters on collaborative learning.
- ***Diagnostic and Mastery Tests to Accompany FOCUS ON WRITING*** offers diagnostic and mastery tests that complement the topics covered in *Focus on Writing*.
- ***Transparency Masters to Accompany FOCUS ON WRITING*** includes numerous models of student writing and is downloadable from the *Focus on Writing* Web site at bedfordstmartins.com/focusonwriting.

Student Resources:

- *● ***Supplemental Exercises to Accompany FOCUS ON WRITING*** provides students with even more practice on essential skills. Perforated pages are easy to copy and distribute.
- *● ***The Bedford/St. Martin's ESL Workbook*** includes a broad range of exercises covering grammatical issues for multilingual students of varying language skills and backgrounds. Answers are at the back.
- *● ***From Practice to Mastery*** is a study guide for the Florida Basic Skills Exit Tests in reading and writing that gives students all the resources they need to practice for—and pass—the test. It includes pre- and post-tests, abundant practices, and clear instruction on all the skills covered on the exam.

New Media Resources

Many resources are free. Starred titles are free when packaged with the book.

Instructor Resources:

- *● **The *Testing Tool Kit: Writing and Grammar Test Bank* CD-ROM** allows instructors to create secure, customized tests and quizzes from a pool of nearly 2,000 questions covering 47 topics. It also includes 10 prebuilt diagnostic tests.

- **Focus on Writing content for course management systems** is ready for use with Blackboard, WebCT, and other popular course management systems. For more information about Bedford/St. Martin's course management offerings, visit bedfordstmartins.com/cms.
- **Adjunct Central at bedfordstmartins.com/adjunctcentral** offers a central place for adjuncts to find practical advice for the classroom and downloadable assignments that can be adapted as needed. The site also offers access to the Adjunct Advice blog, links to additional resources, and a free adjunct resource kit.
- **Just-in-Time Teaching at bedfordstmartins.com/justintime** is a library of classroom materials such as handouts, syllabi, tips for peer review exercises and teaching students with disabilities, and more. Perfect for last-minute class preparation, this site is searchable by activity and topic.

Student Resources:

- **The companion Web site at bedfordstmartins.com/focusonwriting** offers helpful student and instructor resources including downloadable forms and annotated student paragraphs and essays that allow students to learn from strong, unified writing models in an interactive format. It also gives access to *Exercise Central*, the extensive online exercise collection, and to *Re:Writing Basics*.
- **Exercise Central at bedfordstmartins.com/focusonwriting** is the largest free collection of grammar and writing exercises available online. This comprehensive resource for skill development contains nearly 9,000 exercises, helping to identify students' strengths and weaknesses, recommend personalized study plans, and provides tutorials for common problems. *Exercise Central* also provides immediate feedback and allows instructors to monitor student progress.
- * ● **The Exercise Central to Go: Writing and Grammar Practices for Basic Writers CD-ROM** provides hundreds of practice items from the *Exercise Central* Web site to help students build their writing and editing skills. No Internet connection is necessary.
- **Re:Writing Basics at bedfordstmartins.com/rewritingbasics** is an easy-to-navigate Web site that offers the most popular and widely used free resources from Bedford/St. Martin's, including writing and grammar exercises, model documents, instructor resources, help with the writing process, tips on college success and more.

Ordering Information

To order any of these ancillaries for *Focus on Writing*, contact your local Bedford/St. Martin's sales representative, send an email to sales_support@bfpub.com or visit our Web site at bedfordstmartins.com/focusonwriting.

Use these ISBNs when ordering the following supplements packaged with your students' book:

- *Focus on Writing* e-Book Access Card
ISBN-10: 0-312-48093-8; ISBN-13: 978-0-312-48093-6
- *Supplemental Exercises*
ISBN-10: 0-312-48083-0; ISBN-13: 978-0-312-48083-7
- *The Bedford/St. Martin's ESL Workbook*
ISBN-10: 0-312-47395-8; ISBN-13: 978-0-312-47395-2
- *Exercise Central to Go* CD-ROM
ISBN-10: 0-312-47396-6; ISBN-13: 978-0-312-47396-9
- *Make-a-Paragraph Kit* CD-ROM
ISBN-10: 0-312-47364-8; ISBN-13: 978-0-312-47364-8
- *From Practice to Mastery*
ISBN-10: 0-312-47394-X; ISBN-13: 978-0-312-47394-5

- **The *Make-a-Paragraph Kit*** is a fun, interactive CD-ROM that includes “Extreme Paragraph Makeover” animation to teach students about paragraph development. It also contains exercises to help students build their own paragraphs, audiovisual tutorials on four of the most common serious errors for basic writers, and the content from *Exercise Central to Go: Writing and Grammar Practices for Basic Writers*.

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In our work on *Focus on Writing*, we have benefited from the help of a great many people.

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Laurie G. Kirszner
Stephen R. Mandell



A Student's Guide to Using *Focus on Writing*

What *Focus on Writing* Can Do for You

It's no secret that writing will be very important in most of the courses you take in college. Whether you write lab reports or English papers, midterms or final exams, your ability to organize your thoughts and express them in writing will help to determine how well you do. In other words, succeeding at writing is the first step toward succeeding in college. Perhaps even more important, writing is a key to success outside the classroom. On the job and in everyday life, if you can express yourself clearly and effectively, you will stand a better chance of achieving your goals and making a difference in the world.

Whether you write as a student, as an employee, as a parent, or as a concerned citizen, your writing almost always has a specific purpose. For example, when you write an essay, a memo, a letter, or a research paper, you are writing not just to complete an exercise but to give other people information or to tell them your ideas or opinions. That is why, in this book, we don't just ask you to do grammar exercises and fill in blanks; in each chapter, we also ask you to apply the skills you are learning to a writing assignment of your own.

As teachers—and as former students—we know how demanding college can be and how hard it is to juggle assignments with work and family responsibilities. We also know that you don't want to waste your time. That's why in *Focus on Writing* we make information easy to find and use and include many different features to help you become a better writer.

The following sections describe key features of *Focus on Writing*. If you take the time now to familiarize yourself with these elements of the book, you will be able to use the book more effectively later on.

How *Focus on Writing* Can Help You Become a Better Writer

Focus on Writing contains a lot of information that will be helpful to you in college and beyond. Review the book's tools and elements listed below so that you know how to locate important information and understand how the book is organized.

Highlight boxes Throughout the book, blue boxes with a bright yellow outline highlight useful information, identify key points, and explain difficult concepts.

**Highlight:
Avoiding
Sentence
Fragments**

Remember that a semicolon can join only two complete sentences (independent clauses). A semicolon cannot join a sentence and a fragment.

- Incorrect** Because millions are dying of AIDS; more research is clearly needed.
- Correct** Millions are dying of AIDS; more research is clearly needed.

Grammar in Context boxes In Chapters 3–11 you will find boxes that identify key grammar issues in the patterns of paragraph development. Use these boxes to increase your understanding of important issues in your writing.

**Grammar in
Context:
Definition**

A definition paragraph often includes a formal definition of the term or idea you are going to discuss. When you write a formal definition, be careful not to use the phrase *is where* or *is when*.

Happiness is ~~when you have~~ a feeling of contentment or joy.

Checklists At the end of every chapter you will find a checklist that will help you review and apply the skills that you are learning.

- **Self-Assessment Checklists** Chapters 1 and 12 include Self-Assessment Checklists that give you a handy way to review your understanding of basic paragraph and essay structure.

**Self-Assessment
Checklist:
Editing Your
Paragraph**

- Are all your sentences complete and grammatically correct?
- Do all your subjects and verbs agree?
- Have you used the correct verb tenses?
- Are commas used where they are required?
- Have you used apostrophes correctly?
- Have you used other punctuation marks correctly?
- Have you used capital letters where they are required?
- Are all words spelled correctly?

For help with grammar, punctuation, mechanics, and spelling, see Units 6–7 of this text.

- **TEST Checklists** Chapters 2–11 include TEST checklists that give you a helpful and easy-to-remember way to check drafts of your paragraphs before you revise and hand them in.

TESTing an Argument Paragraph

Topic Sentence Unifies Your Paragraph

- Do you have a clearly worded topic sentence that states your paragraph's main idea?
- Does your topic sentence state your position on a debatable topic?
- Do you need to revise your topic sentence to include new ideas?

Evidence Supports Your Paragraph's Topic Sentence

- Does all your evidence support your paragraph's main idea?
- Have you included enough evidence to support your points, or do you need to add more?

Summary Statement Reinforces Your Paragraph's Unity

- Does your paragraph end with a statement that summarizes your main idea?

Transitions Add Coherence to Your Paragraph

- Do you use transitional words and phrases to let readers know when you are moving from one point to another?
- Do you use transitional words and phrases to indicate when you are addressing opposing arguments?
- Do you need to add transitions to make your paragraph more coherent?

- **Review Checklists** All grammar chapters and some of the writing chapters end with a summary of the most important information in the chapter. Use these checklists to review material for quizzes or to remind yourself of the main points.

Review Checklist: Writing Simple Sentences

- A sentence expresses a complete thought. The subject tells who or what is being talked about in the sentence. (See 14A.)
- A prepositional phrase consists of a preposition and its object (the noun or pronoun it introduces). The object of a preposition cannot be the subject of a sentence. (See 14B.)
- An action verb tells what the subject does, did, or will do. (See 14C.)
- A linking verb connects the subject to a word or words that describe or rename it. (See 14C.)
- Many verbs are made up of more than one word. The complete verb in a sentence includes the main verb plus any helping verbs. (See 14C.)

Answers to Odd-Numbered Exercise Items Starting on page 669, you'll find answers for some of the Practice exercises in the book. When you need to study a topic independently, or when your instructor has you complete a Practice but not hand it in, you can consult these answers to see if you're on the right track.