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KATHLEEN T. McWHORTER

*The WRITER'S EXPRESS*

A PARAGRAPH & ESSAY TEXT with READINGS

USED  
BOOK

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# The Writer's Express:

*A Paragraph and Essay Text with Readings*

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# Preface

To succeed in college, in the workplace, and in today's information-laden society, students must be able to **express their ideas clearly and correctly in written form**. *The Writer's Express* teaches developmental students the fundamentals of paragraph and essay writing through structured, sequential instruction and practice. The text approaches writing as a process, providing encouragement, support, and practical applications throughout. Students begin by writing simple paragraphs and gradually progress to rhetorical modes and essay writing. The text stresses writing as the effective expression of ideas; correct grammar and mechanics are presented as tools for achieving effective expression, rather than as ends in themselves.

Although writing skills are vitally important, they are not sufficient to handle the demands of college coursework. Students must also be able to **read, think critically, and interpret and react to what they have read**. Twenty-five years of experience teaching developmental students has convinced me that these essential skills—writing, reading, and critical thinking—are most effectively taught when integrated. Many students need help to “see” the connections among these skills; they need instruction that emphasizes connections, overlap, and cross-applications. They also need to build a repertoire of thinking strategies useful for writing, as well as reading. *The Writer's Express* links writing with reading and critical thinking by using high-interest, up-to-date readings as springboards to writing and critical thinking. Numerous writing and collaborative activities throughout the text foster critical thinking and analysis.

## Organization of the Text

The text is organized into five parts, opening with a chapter that establishes the importance of effective writing and places it within the context of the college experience. To encourage writing as early in the course as possible, the chapter includes six assessment exercises. It

concludes with a “How to Use This Book” section that explains the organization of Chapters 3–15 and describes the features within each chapter.

Part I focuses on paragraph writing strategies. It covers the writing process (Chapter 2), paragraph structure and topic sentences (Chapter 3), developing a paragraph with details (Chapter 4), and the revision process (Chapter 5). Chapter 5 introduces a Revision Checklist feature that is further developed in each of the remaining chapters of the book.

Part II presents methods of developing paragraphs, including narration and process; description; example, classification, and definition; comparison and contrast; and cause and effect. Each chapter describes the rhetorical mode and provides practical advice for organizing, developing, and writing in that mode. As in other sections, writing assignments build sequentially. Students generate ideas about a topic, prepare a first draft, and revise using the Revision Checklist.

Part III discusses essay writing techniques. Chapters 11–12 cover planning (including selecting and narrowing a topic and generating ideas), drafting, and revising the essay. Chapters 13–15 cover expository and persuasive essays and essay exams. Topics include analyzing audience, selecting and organizing convincing evidence, and choosing a tone.

Part IV contains fifteen additional readings, including questions for discussion and writing assignments. These readings give additional examples of good writing and further represent the rhetorical modes. The themes of these selections parallel those in the chapters and thus give instructors greater flexibility in assigning readings.

Part V, “Reviewing the Basics,” is a brief handbook with exercises. It reviews principles of grammar, sentence structure, mechanics, and spelling. A set of error correction exercises is included.

### Special Features

The following features distinguish *The Writer's Express* from other developmental writing texts and make its approach unique:

- **Readings** Beginning with Chapter 3, each chapter includes an engaging reading around which prewriting, critical thinking, and writing assignments are structured. Readings touch on topics within the students' realm of experience, such as sports, art, community policing, the environment, and family relationships. Each reading offers students a model for the writing skills taught in the particular chapter, as well as a source of ideas and a base for discussion and collaborative learning activities.

- *“Getting Ready to Write” Strategies* After the first two introductory chapters, each chapter contains three activities that prepare students to write about the reading. First, students are taught strategies for reviewing its literal content, including underlining, annotating, outlining, and idea mapping. Next, students learn a critical thinking strategy that enables them to analyze and evaluate the reading. Skills include making inferences, understanding connotative language, and distinguishing fact from opinion. Finally, students are given questions for reaction and discussion, which may form the base of class discussion or be used as collaborative learning activities. These introductory activities provide students with opportunities to use prior knowledge and build confidence.
- *Writing Assignments* Three types of writing assignments follow each chapter reading. Writing About the Reading involves students with ideas expressed in the reading. Writing About Your Ideas allows students to write about personal experiences related to the topic of the reading. Journal Writing Suggestions encourage students to react to topics related to the reading. This variety of writing assignments encourages practice with a range of writing tasks.
- *Revision Checklists* A Revision Checklist appears at the end of each chapter, starting with Chapter 5. This feature provides a review of writing strategies learned in the chapter as well as cumulative review of strategies learned in previous chapters.
- *Writing Success Tips* Each chapter includes a boxed insert that offers practical advice on topics related to writing. The Success Tips are intended to address student concerns, suggest new strategies, and help students overcome common writing problems. Topics include word processing, journal writing, peer review, and researching a topic.
- *Skill Refreshers* Each chapter offers a review of a topic related to sentence structure, grammar, or punctuation. The Skill Refresher begins with a brief section of instruction, followed by a ten-item self-assessment quiz. Students are directed to record their score on the Skill Refresher Score Chart located at the back of the book. Students who score below 80 percent on the self-assessment quiz are directed to pages in Part Five, “Reviewing the Basics,” that present a more detailed explanation of the topic.
- *Assessment Exercises* Chapter 1 contains six assignments that will enable the student and instructor to assess the student’s experience, attitude, and approach toward writing. These assignments encourage writing early in the course and emphasize its importance as a vehicle of communication between instructor and student.

- *Visual Learning Aids* Many developmental students are visual learners; that is, they process information visually rather than verbally or auditorily. The text uses idea maps—visual representations of a paragraph's content and organization—to appeal to visual learners. Tables, charts, lists, and photographs used throughout the text also accommodate a visual learning style.
- *Student Writing Samples* Each chapter contains one or more pieces of student writing used as an example or model of a particular writing strategy. The samples are motivational and enable students to establish realistic expectations for their own writing.

### Auxiliary Materials

Two teaching aids accompany the text:

*Software: Expressways.* Available in IBM and MacIntosh versions, *Expressways* provides a tutorial review of the key writing strategies presented in the text. The software is interactive: the student completes a range of writing activities and exercises that maintain interest and motivation. Each unit models the pedagogical structure of the text, providing skill instruction, demonstration, practice, and a brief on-screen reading. The program guides the student through the writing process and culminates with a writing assignment that may be printed and evaluated by the instructor or by peer reviewers.

*Instructor's Resource Manual.* This manual provides an overview of the text, explains pedagogical features, discusses the role of critical thinking in the writing class, and offers practical suggestions for teaching writing. It also contains suggestions for using the readings and has notes on each chapter, including additional class activities. Overhead Transparency Masters and a complete answer key to the text are also included.

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