

BAZERMAN

THE  
INFORMED  
WRITER

USING SOURCES  
IN THE DISCIPLINES

5TH EDITION



# The Informed Writer

Using Sources  
in the Disciplines

Fifth Edition

Charles Bazerman  
Georgia Institute of Technology

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- Acknowledgments are continued on page 505.*

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## TO THE TEACHER

College students find themselves located in new worlds of literacy. They are moving from the simplified, defined worlds of textbooks and official knowledge into the multiple literacies of different disciplines and professions. As they get further engaged in the discussions of their fields, they will discover how conflicting claims, viewpoints, and agendas interact to produce the knowledge that they will have to act on. They will find that they need to develop a critical literacy to succeed in a world where ideas and choices are no longer predigested for them. Students will discover the challenges and pleasure of independent judgment, a process that requires them to understand as fully as possible what others say, but then evaluate this information, answer it, and use it as a resource in new situations. Critical literacy requires taking both others and one's self seriously, and taking reading and writing seriously.

This is a book about reading and writing—complementary elements in the learning and use of written language. Reading provides not only a model for writing and a provocation to write but also the very occasion and situation for most writing. Without a sense of continuity between statements, between reading and writing, students can learn only to create voices calling, and being lost, in the wilderness.

*The Informed Writer*, Fifth Edition, deals with writing in social contexts, for every piece of writing is a form of social action, whether its purpose is to persuade holders of views different from one's own, to propose the construction of a bridge, to justify the return of a shipment of paperclips, or to lay out one's thoughts for personal inspection. Writing makes things happen in the social world, and much of that social world is embodied in previous pieces of writing. Writers need to be able to understand and assess the social situation and then shape writing as an effective response within that context.

In college, students must read books, reproduce the books' contents, and respond to, interpret, and evaluate the meaning of their reading. The tasks they must perform are precisely those covered in this book: close and analytical reading, summary, synthesis, response to reading, interpretation and analysis, book reviews, reviews of literature, and research papers. In addition, this book introduces students to reading and writing in the various disciplines. Students explore the issues underlying disciplines' commonalities and differences, and can learn to approach disciplinary writing with confidence and independent creativity.

This book encourages creativity and originality in writing. Uninformed writing is usually a derivative, unthinking reflection of cultural and social forces of which the writer is unaware. Informed writing develops the mind against the background of what others have said.

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## Features of the Fifth Edition

From the first edition to the present one, one of the major purposes of *The Informed Writer* has been to enable students to develop independent thought and voice in their own writing and escape being intimidated by the authority of printed sources. This independence is not to be gained by naive rejection of other texts, but rather by a deepened understanding of their complexity. By seeing how texts are constructed and what they attempt to do, students will have greater resources for their own writing.

Changes that distinguish this edition from the previous one include:

- Major revision of Chapter 2, "Reacting to Reading," including expanded discussion of techniques of journal writing and increased use of student examples.
- New student examples of synthesis, review of the literature, and research papers built on the study of the business and economics of popular culture.
- Increased emphasis on student writing in Part 3, "Reading and Writing in the Disciplines," with examples of student writing in each chapter.
- Many new illustrative passages and reading selections, on high-interest, timely topics, designed to stimulate student thought and engagement. Topics include contemporary politics, the environment, prejudice, medically assisted suicide, affirmative action, women's history, popular culture, sports, ethics, and national service for youth.
- Reorganized and rewritten Chapter 8, "Evaluating the Book as a Whole: The Book Review," with increased emphasis on student examples and on the kinds of reviews students are likely to do for their courses.

- Overall streamlining of presentations, especially in Chapter 4, "Summarizing."
- Many new student examples throughout.

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Over the fifteen years since the idea of this book was first born, *The Informed Writer* has gained from the experience and wisdom of many colleagues, friends, students, and editors at Houghton Mifflin. However, throughout the many revisions, reorganizations, and rewrites of all the editions I have always had the firm, blunt, and on-target guidance of one of the most professional editors I have come to know: Dean Johnson. It is to him that I dedicate this fifth edition.

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# LIST OF READINGS

This list notes the major readings (substantial excerpts or full-length essays) in the text. Essays by student writers are indicated with an asterisk (\*). Numerous shorter extracts are found throughout the text; they are noted in the general index at the back of the text.

## Chapter 1

Margaret Mead and Rhoda Metraux, from *A Way of Seeing*

## Chapter 2

William S. and Cecil Baring-Gould, from *The Annotated Mother Goose*

Gordon W. Allport, from *The Nature of Prejudice*

Robert Bell, from *Worlds of Friendship*

## Chapter 3

Henry David Thoreau, from *On Civil Disobedience*

Abraham Lincoln, "Address at the Dedication of the Gettysburg National Cemetery"

John Dewey, "Democracy as a Way of Life"

John Muir, on the need to preserve the wilderness

Alexis de Tocqueville, from *Democracy in America*

"Pollution Control: Costs and Benefits," from *Congressional Quarterly*

William Graebner, from *The Engineering of Consent: Democracy and Authority in Twentieth Century America*

H. L. Mencken, "The Declaration of Independence in American"

George Perkins Marsh, on the responsibility for preserving nature

Andrew Marvell, "To His Coy Mistress"

## Chapter 4

Katherine Corcoran, "Pilloried Clinton"

Daniel J. Boorstin, "News-Making: The Pseudo-Event"

Howard Wolinsky and Tom Brune, "JAMA's Jam"

Uta Frith, from "Autism"

Thomas F. Homer-Dixon, Jeffrey H. Boutwell and George W. Rathjens, from "Environmental Change and Violent Conflict"

C. Sue Carter and Lowell L. Getz, from "Monogamy and the Prairie Vole"

Robert W. Keyes, from "The Future of the Transistor"

M. Thomas Inge, on *Peanuts* and American culture

J. Larry Brown, "Hunger in the U.S."

## Chapter 5

Lillian G. Katz, "Reading, Writing, Narcissism"

Cheryl K. Smith, "Yes: A Matter of Choice"

Yale Kamisar, "No: Preserve Traditional Restraints"

Anonymous, "It's Over, Debbie"

Duane J. DeBruyne, "May National Service Live Up to Peace Corps"

Greg J. Scholl, "Why Not Altruism?"

\*James Margolis, "The National Service Plan: A Student's View"

Michael S. McPherson and Morton Owen Schapiro, "What Price Patriotism?"

T. George Harris and Daniel Yankelovich, "How Good Are the Rich?"

George Washington Plunkitt, on Lincoln Steffens's *The Shame of the Cities*

\*Lai Chung Leung, "Class, Mobility, and the Lai Family in Three Societies"

Seymour Martin Lipset and Reinhard Bendix, "Social Mobility in Industrial Society"

Kate Moody, "The Effects of Television on Children's Social Relations"

#### Chapter 6

"The One-Two Punch," [U.S. policy in Vietnam], *Time*, September 3, 1965

From *National Review*, January 25, 1966

TRB, "Crisis of Credibility," *The New Republic*

"The Vietnam Decision," *New York Times*, January 21, 1966

Alexander Cochran [the fifth decision, p. 219]

John D. Pomfret, "A Lonely Johnson Weighs Bombing"

\*Marie Pacione, "'Pilloried Clinton,' by Katherine Corcoran"

A. J. Ayer, from *Philosophy in the Twentieth Century*

#### Chapter 7

Joseph McCarthy, speech on Truman's commitment of troops in Korea

George Bush, Bill Clinton, and Ross Perot, Closing statements of three presidential candidates

John L. Turner, "Retreads on an Old Problem," *The Conservative*

Laurie Baum, "How to Be Smarter than the Boss and Keep Your Job"

\*Gary Niega, "How to Offer Advice: An Analysis of 'How to Be Smarter than the Boss and Keep Your Job'"

#### Chapter 8

Herbert Gleason and George Grady, review of *And the Band Played On: Politics, People and the AIDS Epidemic*

Mary Carroll, review of *Acing College: A Professor Tells Students How to Beat the Theory*

Keith Tester, review of *The Animal Rights Crusade: The Growth of a Moral Protest*

Harvey Mansfield, review of *Equality Transformed: A Quarter-Century of Affirmative Action*

Tony Freyer, review of *Equality Transformed: A Quarter-Century of Affirmative Action*

\*Jess Hopkins, review of *Earth in the Balance: Ecology and the Human Spirit*

Kenneth Turan, review of *The L.A. Musical History Tour*

Review in *Choice*, review of *Trading with the Enemy: An Exposure of the Nazi-American Money Plot, 1933-1949*

#### Chapter 9

\*Katherine Ellis, "More than a Mickey Mouse Business"

\*Kevin Nichols, "Whose Life Is It, Anyway?"

Billy Sinclair and Wilbert Rideau, "Prison or Castration?"

TRB, "Which Is More Cruel?" *The New Republic*

#### Chapter 10

\*Katherine Ellis, "Exporting American Culture: Disneyland in Japan and France"

\*James Riddle, "Effect of Society's Misconceptions of the Wolf"

#### Chapter 11

Robert Merton, on the use of reading in his field

Antonia Fraser, from *The Weaker Vessel*

#### Chapter 13

Elyce J. Rotella, "The Equal Rights Amendment—Yes, But Whose?"

\*LaShana Williamson, "Public Attitudes and Social Policy: A History of the Disability Rights Movement in the United States"

Tricia Rose, "Orality and Technology: Rap Music and Afro-American Cultural Resistance"

#### Chapter 14

Joe S. Foote, "Women Correspondents' Visibility on the Network Evening News"

\*Stacy Riskin, "'Freaking Out': Dancing to a Different Drummer"

\*Sherry Singh, "The Rocky Intertidal Ecosystem: Animal Species Distribution at Coal Oil Point"

Erving Goffman, from *Gender Advertisements*

#### Chapter 15

Michael A. Hoffman and Rachel Levy-Schiff, "Children's Vulnerability to Stressful Life Events in Mothers' Eyes: Effects of Gender and Parental Experiences"

\*Jessica Mills, "The Vapor Pressure of Water," a labor report

#### Chapter 16

Robert L. Simon, from *Fair Play: Sports, Values and Society*

\*James Cadavida, "How To Make Those Difficult Little Choices"



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# 1

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## WRITING ABOUT READING



# 1

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## WRITING

W

riting involves other people. You respond to and build on other people's statements; you then write for other people to read. As a reader and a writer, you converse with others over the written page. To converse effectively you need to know what is on other people's minds, how you want to affect other people, and how you plan to achieve that effect. Thus writing well requires that you understand the writing situation, grasp the particular writing problem, and carefully plan your writing strategy.



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## The Writing Situation

### A Writer Is Never Alone

Although a writer may work in private, a writer is never alone. To write is to communicate with other people: we write letters to share our lives with friends. We write business reports to influence managers' decisions. We write essays to convert readers to our vision of the truth. Without other people, we would have little reason to write.

Just as we wish to touch people through our writing, we have been influenced by the writing of others. Will Rogers's famous quip, "All I know is just what I read in the papers," has truth. We learn many things indirectly through the written word, from current and historical events to the collisions of subatomic particles and of multinational corporations. Even when we learn from direct experience, our perceptions and interpretations are influenced by the words of others. And though we may write private notes and diary entries to ourselves to sort out plans, thoughts, or feelings, we are nevertheless reacting to experiences and concepts and situations that come from our relationships with others. Through language we participate in an exchange of ideas and information that draws people's minds together.

### The Written Conversation

Your economics professor assigns a five-page paper requiring you to comment on the problems created by the federal deficit. If you know the facts and have a strong opinion, you are able to go to your computer and pound out the assignment. This work represents your opinions, but is it solely a product of your own mind?

To form opinions, you had to gather information on the deficit—probably from newspapers, magazines, and television. Editorials and articles in political magazines may have influenced your current view of the subject. Ideas you heard or read over the years about economics, taxes, and government spending have shaped your economic attitudes. Even your understanding of how the federal government works, how it is financed, and the nature of its role in the economy is based on what you learned from teachers and textbooks in history, government, and economics courses.

As you wrote, you kept in mind the economics professor's lectures and assigned readings on economic concepts and theory. They helped you become more informed and thoughtful, enabling you to present a mature, informed opinion. All semester the professor has been expressing opinions; now it is your turn. The assignment demands that you apply what you have learned to the problem of the federal deficit. You yourself may have specific economic issues to discuss in the paper to get the professor's reaction. At the very least you want your paper to earn the professor's approval for how

competently you handle the course material. Above all, as you write you need to keep the professor's academic standards in mind in order to meet them.

When you write, your statements are your own. You choose the words and organize the thoughts to fulfill your own motives and to realize your own intentions. But you choose words that you share with your readers, and you refer to concepts and objects that those readers are likely to recognize. Through being aware of what your readers already know, you can share your original ideas with them more easily. Moreover, you have developed your thoughts, motives, and intentions in response to what you have read and heard and experienced. Your language and conclusions and intentions, even as they are your own, arise out of the many voices around you and then become part of that rich multiplicity of voices.

Others' voices form the social context for your statements, and your statements in turn contribute to the context for someone else's. We know that our words have been heard when other speakers have our words in mind as they reply. Whether people agree with us or disagree, approve or disapprove of what we say, cooperate with our requests or rebel against them, they are responding to what we say. We have made our presence known to them and have influenced them.

The social context of voices that surround us frames each particular writing situation. You sit down to write at one moment in time for particular purposes, which are usually related to the people around you. Your teacher assigns you an essay. A company advertises a job you want. An unusual experience, an encouraging teacher, or a moving poem inspires you to write your own poem.

Think of a conversation. In a spoken conversation it is essential to pay attention to what has just been said and to the person you are addressing. Even when arguing for your original ideas, you are attempting to convince people directly in front of you. To make other people feel you are talking *with* them and not *at* them, you must listen to the facts, ideas, and emotions that they express in order to know what kinds of answers they will understand and accept.

As you react to others in spoken conversation, so you do in written conversation. The more you understand and assimilate what others have said before, the more you understand the context of the "conversation" in which you are participating. If you have a sense of the people to whom you are writing, you can then decide how you wish to affect them and what you should write.

Reading and writing go hand in hand. The better you read, the better you write. In order to develop your own thoughts, you need to be able to gather information from reading; even more, you need to understand the ideas and implications of your reading so that you can respond. You have to read well enough to see what people are really discussing, what the real issues are. You need to understand what has already been written to decide

intelligently what you can contribute. Otherwise, you may simply wind up only repeating what others have already written.

*This book explains the skills of digging more deeply into your reading and then using that reading to develop your own original statements.* The assignments in this book give you practice in gaining control over the knowledge you are acquiring in all your courses and reading; that knowledge can then help you formulate and express your own thoughts. Writing assignments will help you read more deeply and precisely, respond to and think about what you read, and analyze and evaluate it. They will help you develop your own conclusions and ideas based on research. At the end of this course, you should be better able to take part in all the written “conversations” that will come your way in school, in your career, and in other aspects of your life.

### Written Versus Spoken Conversation

When you speak, you usually know whom you are talking to. You can see your conversational partners in front of you. Gathered around you are the people who have made previous comments and the people who will hear what you say. Listeners may add some further comments of their own. People may come and go from your conversational group, but these changes are easy to see.

On the other hand, it takes imagination to envision all the people involved in a written conversation. Relevant prior comments may come from any of the authors you may have read on a subject; anyone who picks up pages you have written may receive your message; and relevant later comments may come from totally unexpected sources. The comings and goings of readers and writers in written conversations are not limited to the physical presence of people gathered in one place at the same time. Paper travels through time and space.

You can exert some control over whom you draw into your written conversation. You can choose among texts you have read to define relevant prior comments, quoting one author and ignoring another. Similarly, you can help shape your audience by sending your writing to a particular person or persons or to a publication chosen for its readership. In businesses and organizations the people you choose to receive copies of your correspondence may be as important as what you choose to say in your writing. Leaking a government document to the press can change the entire dynamics of a policy conversation. In spoken conversation you have limited control over whom you will talk with. In written conversation you have many more options and wider-ranging possibilities in determining the conversation's participants.

Despite these opportunities to arrange and rearrange the participants and dynamics of a written conversation, most writing situations suggest a few obvious participants. A written conversation is often small, and its partici-