

SIXTH EDITION

Language Awareness

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ST. MARTIN'S PRESS

New York

Senior editor: Catherine Pusateri
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Cartoonist: Jeff Danziger

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 92-62769

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Manufactured in the United States of America.

87654

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For information, write:
St. Martin's Press, Inc.
175 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10010

ISBN: 0-312-08410-2

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Language Awareness

PREFACE

Since the first edition of *Language Awareness* appeared in 1974, its purpose has been twofold: to foster an appreciation of the richness, flexibility, and vitality of the English language and to encourage and help students to use their language more responsibly and effectively in speech and particularly in writing. Because of these purposes, *Language Awareness* has been used in a variety of courses over the years. Its primary use, however, has been and continues to be in college composition courses. Clearly, many instructors believe as we do that the study of language and the study of writing go hand in hand.

The study of language has many facets; so, while covering a broad spectrum of topics (including the history of English, contemporary debates on cultural diversity and the use and misuse of Standard English, the language of prejudice and of euphemism, for example), we have tried to concentrate on those areas in which language use exerts the widest social effects—politics, advertising, media, and gender roles. Opening students' eyes to the power of language—its ability to shape and to manipulate one's understanding, perceptions, and cultural attitudes—is, we believe, one of the worthiest goals a writing class can pursue.

We also provide extensive material to help students improve their abilities as readers and writers. As in the fifth edition, the **general introduction** to *Language Awareness* provides a discussion of reading and writing that includes **guidelines and questions** students can use to increase their abilities as thoughtful, analytical readers, as well as explanations of how the various writing strategies can be put to work. At the end of the text an **alternate table of contents** classifies the reading selections in *Language Awareness* according to the rhetorical strategies they exemplify, and a **detailed glossary** defines rhetorical terms and concepts important to the study of writing.

The fifty-six readings in *Language Awareness* have been chosen not only for their subject matter but also to provide students of composition with practical illustrations of rhetorical principles and techniques. After each selection, in addition to **questions on the content of the essay**, we have provided **questions that address these rhetorical concerns**, adding cross-references to the glossary where useful. The **vocabulary list** after each selection calls attention to a few words that students will find worth adding to their own active vocabularies. Finally, two or more **writing topics** follow each reading, and each section concludes with **topics and guidelines** for writing essays that make connections among the readings in the section. In our own teaching we have found such topics helpful in promoting both writing and classroom discussion of language issues.

NEW TO THIS EDITION

As always, we have emphasized pieces written in nontechnical language on topics and issues of current interest. Guided by comments and advice from many colleagues across the country who have used the fifth edition, we have retained in this new edition those essays that teachers and students have valued most. But over half of the selections in *Language Awareness* are new to this edition. Among the **thirty-three new essays** are William Lutz's analysis of public doublespeak; Bill Bryson's popular discussion of three early dictionary makers and the "order" that they've brought to English; Peggy Noonan's examination of the process by which a political speech comes into being; Rosalie Maggio's timely discussion of ways to avoid the use of discriminatory language; and Deborah Tannen's exploration of the differences between the ways men and women talk.

In response to the many requests for actual political language for analysis, we have added a **casebook of texts and speeches** to Part 4. Included are Thomas Jefferson's Declaration of Independence, Elizabeth Cady Stanton's "Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions," Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, John F. Kennedy's Inaugural Address, Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "I Have a Dream," and Bill Clinton's 1993 Inaugural Address. These eighteenth-, nineteenth-, and twentieth-century texts offer students a variety of styles, purposes, and language. Each selection is followed by a number of **questions for study and discussion** designed to help students identify the key points and rhetorical features of the text. **Writing assignments** at the end of Part 4 ask students to compare and contrast both the content and the rhetorical features of two or more of the texts.

Many instructors asked us to include more on **advertising**, so we have expanded that section, adding Gloria Steinem's provocative and candid look at the often shady relationship between advertisers and women's magazines, and five contemporary advertisements for students to analyze. Other users asked for several new articles in the **section on gender and language**, so we have added Deborah Tannen's essay on gender-related differences in speech and Bernard R. Goldberg's essay on "male bashing" in television sitcoms and commercials.

Students and teachers asked us for more **essays about censorship**, so we have included a new section called "Censorship and the First Amendment." Free-speech advocate Nat Hentoff questions the rise of speech codes on college campuses, while Susan Jacoby rejects feminist arguments for the censorship of pornography. Censorship and the world of rock music is the subject of the essays by Caryl Rivers, Tipper Gore, and Frank Zappa. Other new sections created in response to reader demand include **"Usage, Words, and Standard English"**—essays that explore the varieties of English and their relation to Standard English—and **"Cul-**

tural Diversity: Searching for Common Ground”—essays that recount experiences when two cultures, and thus two languages, collide. Users of previous editions of *Language Awareness* will notice that we have retitled some sections in an effort to articulate more clearly the issues under discussion.

All of our aims in *Language Awareness* are serious ones, but a serious book need not be humorless or unnecessarily academic. William Lutz’s “The World of Doublespeak” addresses the problem of using language to deceive or manipulate, but some of his examples are sure to bring a smile to your face. There’s humor and wit also in Lance Morrow’s “If Slang Is Not a Sin”; Peggy Noonan’s “Speech! Speech!”; Barbara Ehrenreich’s “Drawing the Line”; and Frank Zappa’s “The Wives of Big Brother”—among others. Indeed, we like to think that readers of *Language Awareness* will have as much fun using this edition as we have had in preparing it.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We are grateful to the following colleagues across the country who have sent helpful reactions and suggestions for this sixth edition: Janice Albert, Las Positas College; Lena Ampadu, Towson State University; Anne M. Boyle, Wake Forest University; Jo Ann Campbell, Indiana University; Ralph Carlson, Azusa Pacific University; Hal Colony, University of Nebraska at Kearney; Charles S. Didier, Housatonic Community College; Belden Durtschi, Shoreline Community College; Don Ellis, University of Hartford; Kenneth J. Ericksen, Linfield College; Barbara Fox, University of Colorado; Helen Frink, Keene State College; Cayo Gamber, George Washington University; Claudia Greenwood, Kent State University; Dorothy Margaret Guinn, Florida Atlantic University; Jorge Guitart, State University of New York at Buffalo; Sheila Gullickson, Moorhead State University; Alan C. Hardis, California State University at Northridge; Greg Jacob, Pacific University; Philip Kaltenbach, Guilford College; Patricia Killian, Salisbury State University; Paula Krebs, Wheaton College; Zhihua Long, University of Colorado; Carol R. Mehler, Kent State College; Tracy Montgomery, Idaho State University; Dallin Oaks, Brigham Young University; Shaun O’Connor, University of Arizona; Cornelia Paraskevas, Western Oregon State College; Doris M. Piatak, Kishwaukee College; Michael T. Siconolfi, Gonzaga University; Michele Geslin Small, Northland College; Sandra Stephan, Youngstown State University; Stephen H. Stremmel, American River College; Richard Sweterlitsch, University of Vermont.

We would like to express our appreciation to the staff at St. Martin’s Press, especially Cathy Pusateri and Edward Hutchinson. Our special thanks go to Samuel Feitelberg and the faculty and staff of the race and

culture program at the University of Vermont for their help in selecting articles on issues of cultural diversity and then testing the usefulness of these articles in their classes. Our thanks also go to Susan Palmer for her work on the *Instructor's Manual* that accompanies this edition. Finally, we are grateful to all our students at the University of Vermont for their enthusiasm for language study and writing and their invaluable responses to materials included in this book. They teach us something new every day.

PAUL ESCHHOLZ
ALFRED ROSA
VIRGINIA CLARK

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INTRODUCTION

Language Awareness is a collection of readings aimed at college writing students and designed to emphasize the crucial role language plays in virtually every aspect of our lives. For most of us language is like the air we breathe: we cannot survive without it, but we take it for granted nearly all of the time. Seldom are we conscious of language's real power to lead us (or mislead us) or of the effect our own use of language has on others. Even rarer is the recognition that our perceptions of the world are influenced, our very thoughts at least partially shaped, by language. It is also true that liberation begins with our awareness of that fact. To foster such an awareness is one of the goals of this book. We hope, therefore, that as you use this text you will gain a heightened appreciation of the richness, flexibility, and vitality of your language and be moved to explore its possibilities further.

THE STUDY OF LANGUAGE

Language is one of humankind's greatest achievements and one of its most important resources. *Language Awareness* represents the most immediate and interesting fields of language study with a diverse range of thought-provoking essays grouped into eleven broad sections. The first part, "Discovering Language," provides an overview of the central issues: the nature of language, the power of words to shape our thinking, and what it means to know a language. Part 2, "Language Use and Misuse," shows the importance of using language responsibly so as not to deceive or manipulate other people. The third part, "Usage, Words, and Standard English," starts with several articles that give an historical perspective on the evolution of the English language, usage standards, and dictionary-making and then moves on to consider the debate between standard and nonstandard English. "The Language of Politics," the fourth part, focuses on the ways leaders can use language to manipulate our thinking or to rouse our sense of purpose and includes a casebook of six political texts for analysis. Part 5, "The Language of Media and Advertising," raises critical questions about the objectivity of network news, the relationship between advertising and editorializing in popular magazines, and the ways advertisers use language to create a positive image for a product, to imply what they cannot say directly, and to exploit consumer vulnerability.

Part 6, "Prejudice, Discrimination, and Language," explores how we can become more sensitive to the ways words can lock us into particular one-dimensional categories, create powerfully discriminatory impres-

sions, and deeply affect our judgments of others. In Part 7, “Cultural Diversity: Searching for Common Ground,” various writers recount their personal experiences of what happens when languages and cultures collide in the United States. Part 8, “Gender and Language,” concentrates specifically on sexism in language, on stereotypical images of women and men implied in our language, and suggests some of the difficulties involved in overcoming linguistic prejudice. In “Euphemisms and Taboos,” Part 9, the readings explore how we tend to cloak sensitive topics in “nice” language and confront some of our culture’s “dirty words” to determine how and why these words may seem offensive. Part 10, “Censorship and the First Amendment,” explores how and why we censor—or decline to censor—through examination of speech codes on college campuses, pornography, and rock music lyrics.

Finally—because our further purpose in this sixth edition of *Language Awareness*, as in earlier editions, is to encourage you to write responsibly and effectively—we have included in our final section, “Writing Well: Five Writers on Writing,” essays in which professional writers reflect on their craft, on the way they write. Each writer offers practical advice on the qualities of good writing and the writing process—getting started, drafting, identifying an audience, being truthful to yourself and your audience, revising, and editing. Although this section is at the end of the book, you may find the readings useful as you start your writing course, because together they provide a detailed overview of the composing process. Or, as you work on particular assignments during the school term, you may want to look at one or more of these essays for direction and encouragement about specific aspects of your writing.

The common denominator of all good writing is the writer’s conscious concern for language, and this concern is emphasized, in various ways, by every essay in *Language Awareness*. We have chosen them not only because they explore important issues of language and communication but also because they provide excellent models of how writers give effective expression to their thoughts. Thus, reading and studying the selections throughout the text, by making you more sensitive to how you use language yourself and to how the language of others affects you, can help you become a better reader and, perhaps most important, a better writer. The more aware you are of the many subtleties and complexities of language use, the greater your mastery and control of language will be. This sense of control will, in turn, allow you to read more thoughtfully and critically and to achieve greater competence and confidence in your own writing.

THE IMPORTANCE OF READING WELL

Reading is most rewarding when you do it actively, in a thoughtful spirit and with an alert and inquiring mind. For writers—and in one way or another we are all writers—there are special reasons to cultivate the