

# THE MACMILLAN WRITER

Rhetoric, Reader, Handbook

SECOND EDITION



JUDITH NADELL

LINDA McMENIMAN

JOHN LANGAN

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# ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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# PREFACE

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IN our roughly sixty years of combined experience teaching composition, the three of us have gathered ideas from colleagues, journals, books, and conferences. Mindful of shifting trends in composition theory and practice, we've experimented with a variety of instructional methods. We've also risked the deflation of our egos as we've tested numerous hunches of our own. And so, when we started thinking about writing the first edition of this book, we looked as objectively as we could at our classroom experiences. Which approaches, we asked ourselves, had truly helped students become more confident, more skilled, more insightful writers?

Like the first edition, the second edition of *The Macmillan Writer: Rhetoric, Reader, Handbook* represents a distillation of what we've learned about writing these many years. We continue to adopt an eclectic approach in the book, bringing together the best from often conflicting schools of thought, blending in class-tested strategies of our own. The mix we've come up with works for our students; we think it will for yours, too.

In the book, as in our classes, we try to strike a balance between product and process. Stressing the connection between reading and writing, we describe possible sequences and structures. At the same time, we emphasize that these steps and formats shouldn't be viewed as rigid prescriptions but as strategies for helping students discover what works best for them. This flexibility means that the book can fit a wide range of teaching philosophies and learning styles.

*The Macmillan Writer* includes everything that instructors and students need in a one- or two-semester first-year college composition course: (1) a comprehensive *rhetoric*, including chapters on each stage of the writing process, discussions of the exam essay and the literary paper, and an in-depth treatment of the research paper; (2) a *reader* with thirty-two *professional selections* and thirteen *student essays* integrated into the rhetoric; plus (3) a concise, easy-to-use *Handbook*. Throughout the text, we aim for a supportive, conversational tone that inspires students' confidence without being patronizing. Numerous *activities* and



*writing assignments—over three hundred in all—* develop awareness of rhetorical choices and encourage students to explore a range of composing strategies.

## THE BOOK'S PLAN

Gratified by the first edition's warm, enthusiastic reception, we decided not to tinker with the book's essential structure. Although a new chapter (Chapter 11, "An Overview of the Patterns of Development") has been added, the book's format remains as follows.

**Part I, "The Reading Process,"** provides guided practice in a three-step process for reading with close attention and interpretive skill. An activity at the end of Chapter 1, "Becoming a Strong Reader," gives students a chance to put the sequence to use. First, they read Phyllis Theroux's essay "The Worry Factor." Then we show them how to apply the three-step sequence to the selection. Last, they respond to sample questions and writing assignments, all similar to those that accompany the professional selections in Part III. Part I thus does more than just tell students how to sharpen their reading abilities; it guides them through a clearly sequenced plan for developing critical reading skills.

**Part II, "The Writing Process,"** takes students, step by step, through a multistage composing sequence. To make the writing process easier for students to understand, we provide a separate chapter for each of the following stages:

- Chapter 2, "Getting Started Through Prewriting"
- Chapter 3, "Identifying a Thesis"
- Chapter 4, "Supporting the Thesis With Evidence"
- Chapter 5, "Organizing the Evidence"
- Chapter 6, "Writing the Paragraphs in the First Draft"
- Chapter 7, "Revising Overall Meaning, Structure, and Paragraph Development"
- Chapter 8, "Revising Sentences and Words"
- Chapter 9, "Editing and Proofreading"
- Chapter 10, "Writing on a Word Processor"

In Chapter 2, we introduce students to a range of prewriting techniques, including brainstorming, mapping, and journal writing. Stressing the need for students to analyze their purpose and audience, we explain how to limit a broad topic and how to generate raw, preliminary material about the topic. Chapter 2, like the other chapters in Part II, ends with an array of practical activities.

At this point, students are ready for our discussion of thesis statements in Chapter 3. Numerous examples illustrate how to frame an effective thesis and what pitfalls to avoid. The chapter also encourages students to view their first thesis as tentative; they learn that as writing continues, new ideas emerge that may force them to reformulate their initial thesis.

Chapter 4 starts with a description of strategies for gathering evidence to support a thesis. Then we discuss techniques for evaluating the relevance, specificity, accuracy, and persuasiveness of supporting material. Numerous suggestions for organizing evidence are presented in Chapter 5. Besides describing chronological, spatial, and emphatic methods for sequencing material, the chapter illustrates various approaches for preparing effective outlines.

In Chapter 6, students learn how to move from an outline to a first draft. Urging students to view the first draft as work in progress, we describe ways to avoid getting bogged down. Plentiful “before” and “after” examples show how to write unified, specific, and coherent paragraphs and essays. The chapter concludes with techniques for writing strong introductions, conclusions, and titles.

Emphasizing how helpful peer feedback can be, Chapters 7 and 8 introduce students to a multistage revising process. In Chapter 7, students learn to start revision by evaluating an essay’s overall content and structure. Once they know how to rework an essay at this level, they are ready to move ahead to Chapter 8. This chapter begins with abundant “before” and “after” examples that illustrate strategies for making sentences clear, concise, and emphatic. The chapter then describes approaches for refining word choice, with extensive examples showing how to make language natural, vigorous, and specific. Rounding out the chapter is a section on nonsexist language. Throughout Chapters 7 and 8, handy checklists make revision more manageable by focusing students on one rewriting stage at a time. And a series of structured activities helps them apply the checklists when they revise their own and other students’ papers.

Chapter 9 offers hints for editing and proofreading, while Chapter 10 shows students how to use a word processor during each phase of the composing sequence.

We continually point out in Part II that the stages in the writing process are fluid. Indeed, the case history of an evolving student paper dramatically illustrates just how recursive and individualized the writing process can be. Similarly, we stress that there’s no single correct way to write. Focusing on the excitement and sheer fun of exploring ideas on paper, we explain that everyone must tailor the writing process to fit his or her own needs.

Throughout Part II, three instructional devices are used to strengthen students’ understanding of the writing process. *Checklists* summarize key concepts and keep students focused on the essentials. Extensive *end-of-chapter activities* also reinforce pivotal skills. Designed to highlight the way invention and revision come into play throughout the writing process, the activities involve students in making rhetorical decisions about such matters as purpose, audience, tone, point of view, organization, paragraph development, and sentence structure. And several *guided exercises* quickly involve students in writing, showing them how to take their papers through successive stages in the composing process.

Finally, to illustrate the link between reading and writing, the chapters in Part II present—from prewriting through revision—the progressive stages of a student essay written in response to Phyllis Theroux’s “The Worry Factor” (the professional selection in Part I). In short, *by the end of Part II, the entire reading-writing process has been illustrated, from reading a selection to writing about it.*

**Part III, "The Patterns of Development,"** opens with Chapter 11, which provides a concise overview showing how the patterns enlarge options in every phase of the writing process. The rest of Part III consists of nine chapters, each covering a different pattern: description, narration, illustration, division-classification, process analysis, comparison-contrast, cause-effect, definition, and argumentation-persuasion. The first few chapters address the more personal and expressive patterns of development, while later chapters move to the more public and analytic patterns. However, because they are self-contained, the chapters can be covered in any order. Part III's twenty-eight professional essays are grouped according to the nine patterns of development.

We recognize that some instructors are reluctant to teach the patterns of development as discrete forms; they fear that doing so implies that writers set out to prepare an essay using a specific pattern and that an essay contains only one pattern. Of course, writing usually doesn't work that way at all. So throughout Parts II and III, we provide numerous examples and activities to illustrate that writers select a pattern because it helps them generate material and organize their ideas—that is, it helps serve their rhetorical purposes. We also show that most writing combines two or more patterns, with one pattern usually providing the organizational framework for a piece.

The nine pattern-of-development chapters also illustrate that the multistage composing sequence described in Part II has relevance no matter which pattern or combination of patterns is used in an essay. Each chapter in Part III thus follows the same format:

- *A detailed explanation of the pattern* begins the chapter. The explanation includes these sections: (1) a definition of the pattern, (2) a description of the way the pattern helps writers accommodate their purpose and audience, (3) a Prewriting Checklist to spark creativity and help students get started, (4) *step-by-step* guidelines for using the pattern, and (5) a Revision Checklist to focus students' efforts when they rework their papers.

The argumentation-persuasion chapter is even more extensive. Besides the sections described above, it includes a clearly explained section on Toulmin logic, a chart on refutation strategies, and a full discussion of induction, deduction, and logical fallacies.

- Following the explanation of each pattern of development is an *annotated student essay, from prewriting through revision*. Written in response to one of the professional selections in the chapter, each essay clearly illustrates the pattern under discussion. By comparing successive stages of the essay, students come to appreciate the way material is progressively reshaped and refined.
- *Commentary* after the student essay points out the blend of patterns in the paper, identifies the paper's strengths, and pinpoints areas needing improvement. "First draft" and "revised" versions of one section of the essay reveal how the student writer went about revising, thus illustrating the relationship between the final draft and the steps taken to produce it.
- Next come *extensive prewriting and revising activities*. Together, these two sets of activities help students appreciate the distinctive features of the pattern being



studied. The first prewriting activity asks students to generate raw material for an essay and helps them see that the essay may include more than one pattern of development. The last revising activity gives students a chance to rework a paragraph that needs strengthening. Other activities encourage students, working alone or in groups, to examine rhetorical options, to anticipate the consequences of such choices, and to experiment with a variety of composing techniques.

- The *professional selections* follow the activities. Representing a variety of subjects, tones, and points of view, the selections include tried and true classics like George Orwell's "Shooting an Elephant" and E. B. White's "Once More to the Lake." Other selections have rarely, if ever, been included in a composition text. Among these are Meg Greenfield's "Why Nothing Is 'Wrong' Anymore," Beth Johnson Ruth's "Our Drug Problem," and Alice Walker's "Am I Blue?" Of course, each selection clearly illustrates a specific pattern of development or combination of patterns.

*Extensive instructional apparatus* accompanies each professional selection:

1. A *biographical note* gives background on the author and provides a context for the selection.
  2. *Questions for Close Reading* help students dig into and interpret the selection. The first question asks them to identify the selection's thesis; the last provides work on vocabulary development.
  3. *Questions About the Writer's Craft* deal with such matters as purpose, audience, tone, point of view, organization, sentence structure, diction, and figurative language. The first question (labeled "The Pattern") focuses on the distinctive features of the pattern(s) used in the selection. And often there's another question (labeled "Other Patterns") that asks students to analyze the writer's use of additional patterns in the piece.
  4. Next come *four writing assignments*, all prompted by the selection and packed with suggestions on how to proceed. The first two assignments ask students to write an essay using the same pattern(s) as the selection; the last two invite students to discover for themselves which pattern(s) would be most appropriate for an essay. Frequently, the writing assignments are preceded by a special symbol (∞), indicating a cross-reference to another professional selection in the book. By encouraging students to make connections between selections, these assignments broaden students' perspective and give them additional material to draw upon when they write. Such paired assignments will be especially welcome to instructors stressing recurring ideas and themes.
- At the end of each pattern-of-development chapter are two sets of Additional Writing Topics: *General Assignments* and *Assignments With a Specific Purpose, Audience, and Point of View*. The first set, new to the second edition, provides open-ended topics that prompt students to discover for themselves the best way to use a specific pattern. The second set, problem-solving in nature, develops students' sensitivity to rhetorical context by asking them to apply the pattern in a real-world setting.

**Part IV** consists of two chapters on “**The Research Paper.**” In this practical, comprehensive guide, we demonstrate how to tailor the multistage composing process described in Part II to the demands of writing a research paper. This section is also filled with hints on using the library, taking notes, introducing quoted material, documenting sources, and avoiding plagiarism. A fully annotated research paper illustrates MLA documentation, while a separate section provides guidelines for using the APA system. Activities at the end of both chapters help ensure mastery of key research skills.

**Part V** includes two chapters, “**Writing About Literature**” and “**Writing Exam Essays.**” Besides showing students how to adapt the composing process to fit the requirements of these highly specific writing situations, each chapter includes a student essay and commentary, as well as helpful end-of-chapter activities.

The book concludes with **Part VI, “A Concise Handbook.”**\* Detailed and user-friendly, the Handbook offers easy-to-grasp explanations of those areas that most often give students trouble. *Boxed “Cautions”* help students focus on the essentials. When appropriate, alternative correction strategies are presented so that students come to see that there may be more than one way to remedy a problem. Plentiful *practice activities* encourage mastery of important skills.

A comprehensive *Instructor’s Manual* for *The Macmillan Writer* includes the following: a thematic table of contents; lists of the book’s paired writing assignments and collaborative and/or problem-solving exercises; pointers about using the book; suggested activities; a detailed syllabus; answers to the Handbook exercises; and in-depth responses to the end-of-chapter activities, Questions for Close Reading, and Questions About the Writer’s Craft.

## WHAT’S NEW IN THE SECOND EDITION

Before beginning work on the second edition of *The Macmillan Writer*, we looked closely at the scores of questionnaires completed by instructors using the book. The instructors’ comments, always discerning and constructive, helped us identify additional material the book might include. Here, then, are the most important new features of *The Macmillan Writer*, second edition.

- *One-quarter of the professional essays are new.* Some of these new readings were suggested by instructors across the country; others were chosen after a thorough search of magazines, nonfiction collections, newspapers, and the

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\*Note: Part VI is *not* included in *The Macmillan Writer, Brief Edition*, now available for the first time. The *Brief Edition* is appropriate in those classes where students are likely to have purchased a separate English handbook.

like. Whether written by a well-known literary figure like John Ciardi ("Dawn Watch") or a relative newcomer like Nancy Gibbs ("When Is It Rape?"), the new selections are bound to stimulate strong writing on a variety of topics—education, family life, prejudice, friendship, and the mass media, to name just a few. When selecting new readings, we took special care to include pieces dealing with gender, ethnic, and class issues.

- Chapter 1, "Becoming a Strong Reader," now includes an annotated professional selection. The annotations exemplify critical reading in action and show how close reading often paves the way to promising writing topics.
- Part II, "The Writing Process," includes new guided composition activities that involve students right from the start in the act of writing and revising both paragraphs and first drafts.
- Chapter 3, "Identifying a Thesis," is more comprehensive. Textual explanations and several new, highly practical activities show students how to refine a working thesis and how to determine the best place for it in an essay.
- Chapter 6, "Writing the Paragraphs in the First Draft," illustrates the principle of coherence more fully and gives a clearer sense of the pitfalls to avoid.
- Chapter 7, "Revising Overall Meaning, Structure, and Paragraph Development," now covers strategies for responding to instructor feedback.
- Chapter 10, "Writing on a Word Processor," includes more nuts-and-bolts suggestions for using a word processor in every phase of the composing sequence.
- Chapter 11, "An Overview of the Patterns of Development," reinforces two of the book's key concepts: that the patterns of development come into play throughout the writing process and that most writers combine patterns in their work. The chapter, new to this edition, ends with a checklist that helps students analyze the blend of patterns in the book's selections.
- Chapter 14, "Illustration," presents additional techniques for making writing specific.
- Throughout, there are more writing assignments, many of them paired thematically. Also, each chapter in Part III now ends with a set of brief, open-ended writing assignments followed by "Assignments With a Specific Purpose, Audience, and Point of View." Numerous assignments engage students in problem solving and collaborative learning.
- Chapters 21 and 22 on the library and research paper have been finetuned so that instructions to students correspond to MLA guidelines. Also, the two chapters have been reorganized so that the steps in preparing a research paper parallel more closely the composing stages described in Part II.
- Chapter 21 now includes sections on conducting surveys, interpreting statistics, running computerized searches, evaluating conflicting sources, and keeping personal biases in check.
- Throughout Chapters 21 and 22, the discussion of plagiarism has been clarified and expanded.
- The Handbook has additional practice exercises.

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To help us prepare the second edition, a good many writing instructors responded to a detailed questionnaire about *The Macmillan Writer*. These colleagues' hard-hitting, practical comments guided our work every step of the way. To the following reviewers we are indeed grateful: Thomas G. Beverage, Coastal Carolina Community College; Barry Brunetti, Gulf Coast Community College; Beatrice I. Curry, Columbia State Community College; Juanita Davis, Columbia State Community College; Jo Nell Farrar, San Jacinto College Central; Adam Fischer, Coastal Carolina Community College; Andrea Glebe, University of Nevada, Las Vegas; Linda Hasley, Redlands Community College; M. Jean Jones, Columbia State Community College; Rowena R. Jones, Northern Michigan University; Leela Kapai, University of the District of Columbia; Anne M. Kuhta, Northern Virginia Community College; William Lalicker, Murray State University; Joe Law, Texas Christian University; Carol Owen Lewis, Trident Technical College; James L. Madachy, Gallaudet University; Rita M. Mignacca, State University of New York at Brockport; Betty P. Nelson, Volunteer State Community College; Douglas L. Okey, Spoon River College; Doris Osborn, Northern Oklahoma College; Mack A. Perry, Jackson State Community College; John S. Ramsey, State University of New York at Fredonia; Gladys C. Rosser, Fayetteville Technical Community College; Peggy Ruff, DeVry Institute of Technology; Laura A. Scibona, State University of New York at Brockport; Marilyn Segal, California State University at Northridge; Richard Stoner, Broome Community College; Martha Coultas Strode, Spoon River College; Carole F. Taylor, University of Dayton; Wendy F. Weiner, Northern Virginia Community College; and Stephen Wilhoit, University of Dayton.

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Judith Nadell  
Linda McMeniman  
John Langan

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