

# The CANADIAN Writer's Handbook

Second Essentials Edition

William E. Messenger Jan de Bruyn Judy Brown Ramona Montagnes

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#### **How to Find What You Need**

- Consult the table of contents. The table of contents will give you a comprehensive overview of the material this handbook covers.
- Use the running heads and the virtual index.
   The running heads at the top of each page and the colour-coded tabs of the virtual index will let you know at a glance what is covered on each page.
- Check the index. The detailed index, which appears on the final pages of this handbook, will direct you to the exact pages on which a topic is discussed.
- Use the EAL icons. EAL icons mark the sections that are particularly useful to learners of English as an additional language.





 Refer to the list of marking symbols and abbreviations on the inside back cover. This list will help you understand the symbols your instructors use to indicate writing problems on your papers.

## The **CANADIAN** Writer's Handbook

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## Important Topics for EAL Students

Several sections throughout this handbook provide information of particular importance to students who are studying English as an additional language (EAL). The following list is a quick and convenient guide to those sections. Whether you are relatively new to writing in English or are more experienced and looking to master the finer points of the written language, these sections of the text—in combination with a learner's dictionary—will help you improve your writing skills. Note that the entries in this list correspond to the EAL symbols found throughout the text:

51	Mixed Constructions
6a	Inflection of Nouns: Number; Possessive Case
6c	Nouns and Articles: a, an, and the
7a.6	Indefinite Pronouns
7a.8	Reciprocal Pronouns
8b	Inflection of Verbs: Principal Parts
8c	Irregular Verbs
8c	Auxiliary Verbs
8e	Verb Tenses and Their Functions
8f	Tense Sequence
10c.2	Ordering of Adjectives
13b.2	Correlative Conjunctions
14e	Idiom
14g	Usage: A Checklist of Troublesome Words and Phrases

### **Preface**

The second essentials edition of *The Canadian Writer's Handbook* is designed to help you work on your writing skills. Improving written communication is an ongoing—even lifelong—project. Whether you are a long-time writer of English seeking to refine your abilities or a writer who is approaching English as an additional language, the suggestions, examples, and guidelines in this new edition will help you to write with greater confidence and communicate with greater clarity.

#### Overview

Each of the six parts in this book addresses an essential aspect of the writing process. Part I provides practical guidance on planning and composing two larger units of communication, the essay and the paragraph. We start here because we have found that students who are beginning a written assignment usually want help with the broad strokes of composition before they move on to consider the narrower concerns of sentence structure or word choice. In Part II and Part III, we explore the essentials of grammar and style, first by examining how sentences work, then by looking at how the parts of speech come together to form meaning. In Part IV we discuss the importance of punctuation, and in Part V we address issues of mechanics and spelling. Part VI offers valuable information on conducting research and citing sources in an essay. Appendix A provides a checklist that will help you revise, edit, and proofread your work, while Appendix B offers a sample research paper in MLA style.

#### **How to Use This Handbook**

We encourage you to use this handbook as a reference tool that you can consult on particular issues arising from everyday writing activities. We suggest that you begin by familiarizing yourself with it by seeing what each part has to offer. Browse through the table of contents and the index. Look up some sections that arouse your interest. Flip through the pages, pausing now and then for a closer look.

You may want to start at the beginning of Part I and proceed carefully through each section in sequence. Note that some points in later sections might not be clear to you unless you understand the material in the early sections. Or, if you are struggling with a particular problem, you may want to skip to the relevant section and then consult other sections as your needs change.

The book is subdivided into sections and subsections that are numbered consecutively throughout. Note how the running heads and the coloured tabs on each page—together with the part index that follows the acknowledgements—can help you find things quickly.



#### Help with Polishing Your Work

When you finish a piece of writing, go through the checklist in Appendix A. If you find you're not sure about something, follow the cross-references to the sections that will give you the help you need.

#### Help with Correcting and Revising Your Work

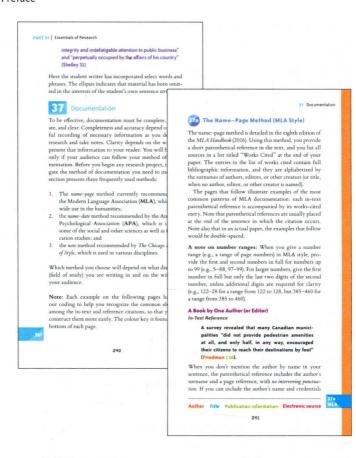
When you get a piece of writing back with marks and comments, look it over alongside the list of marking symbols and abbreviations on this handbook's inside back cover. The information there may be enough to help you make the appropriate changes. But if you need more than a reminder about a specific issue or pattern, look up the relevant topic and study the sections that discuss and illustrate those principles in greater detail. You should then be able to edit and revise your work with understanding and confidence.

#### **Key Terms**

Throughout the text, you will find important terms set in boldface. Pay attention to these terms, for they make up the basic vocabulary necessary for the discussion of grammar, syntax, and style.

## For Readers and Writers of English as an Additional Language

Our experience as university instructors has given us the opportunity to work with a number of writers engaged in the challenging project of reading and writing in English as an additional language (EAL). At several points in this handbook, we offer information and direction of particular importance to those of you who are approaching English as a relatively new language, and we have designated those relevant sections with the symbol [EAL].



#### **Up-to-Date Documentation Guidelines**

Part VI offers guidelines that cover the three most popular citation styles used in Canada today: MLA style (the name-page method), APA style (the name-date method), and Chicago style (the note method). To illustrate each method of documentation, we offer an array of examples modelled on the recommendations set out in the most recent edition of each style guide.

The components of each example are colour coded to help you identify and compare similar components across different examples. The colour key is found at the bottom of relevant pages.

#### Acknowledgements

As with the previous editions of *The Canadian Writer's Handbook*, the second essentials edition owes much to the contributions of reviewers, colleagues, friends, fellow writers, and talented and committed editors.

For their determination to strengthen and polish their work and their commitment to grow and change as thinkers and writers, we thank our students. We are especially grateful for their generosity in allowing us to use their questions and insights about writing in this book.

We would also like to thank Rhiannon Don, Pam Farvolden, Teresa Flanagan, Stephen Guy, Dennis R. Nighswonger, Conrad van Dyk, and all of the other reviewers whose comments and suggestions have helped to shape all editions of *The Canadian Writer's Handbook* over the years.

We deeply appreciate the encouragement, advice, and support we have received from the talented and enthusiastic staff at Oxford University Press Canada—especially from Phyllis Wilson, Dave Ward, Leah-Ann Lymer, and Peter Chambers. Special appreciation goes out to Janice Evans, our meticulous editor whose input helped to shape the new edition.

To all of you, many thanks.

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PART III Essentials of Grammar and Style:
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PART IV Essentials of Punctuation

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