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### PREFACE

ixteen years ago, when I taught my first section of composition, I was Jalarmed to discover that several of my colleagues were using such assignments as "Compare your mother to a 1954 Ford" and "Describe the process of tying a shoe." The prevailing view of the composition class in those days was discouraged and discouraging. Students saw it almost entirely as a course in correctness: "grammar boot camp," they used to say. The graduate students and junior faculty members who did the bulk of the teaching had no coherent view of the course's goals and simply saw it as something else to get done, with good humor if possible. But on every college campus there were a few composition teachers with gleams in their eyes, talking about the relationship between writing, revising, and re-thinking; talking about encouraging students to take a critical attitude toward "facts"; talking about helping them understand the indirect messages conveyed by the choice of this word rather than that, this form of the sentence rather than the other. Talking, in short, as though this course really could become an introduction to college-level thinking, reading, and writing.

The discipline of composition has matured enormously since 1974, both in its guiding theories and in its applied research. We are now in a much better position to construct a course that is grafted to the central purpose of college education: to help students become lucid and flexible thinkers who can present their ideas persuasively to others. *The Riverside Guide to Writing* is designed

to serve as the textbook for such a course.

The book divides into four parts. The first part, Writing and Thinking, shows that writing involves interpretation (the placing of subjects in frameworks), explains how the writing process improves the mind's ability to create convincing interpretations, and gives students a chance to write interpretations based on memory or direct observation. The second part, Writing and Argument, extends the notion of interpretation into argument and persuasion, distinguishing between arguments about facts and arguments about rules and teaching students methods of pursuing each. The third part, Professional and

Academic Applications, builds on insights gained in the first two and shows students how to write proposals, evaluations, essays about literature, and research papers. The fourth, *Matters of Form and Style*, discusses organization, introductions and conclusions, and the principles of style. Users of the longer edition will find a fifth part: a handbook of grammar and usage, including exercises.

#### **FEATURES**

The principal features of The Riverside Guide to Writing are these:

- ◆ Forty-three assignments prepare students for the kinds of writing they will do throughout their college careers. Modeled on assignments used in courses across the curriculum, the assignments allow students to practice in simplified form the skills in research and analysis that they will use in courses in history, sociology, literature, biology, and other disciplines. The number and variety of assignments should allow instructors to choose their own emphases and to tailor their courses to their students' abilities and interests.
- ♦ Abundant, engaging essays serve as models. The assignment-centered chapters (3-10) include several professionally written examples short enough to serve as models for student essays. At the ends of chapters are forty-seven longer selections for analysis and discussion. This reading program is enriched by featuring a "panel" of twelve writers whose works and ideas appear in several chapters. These panelists were chosen for their skill and their variety but also because most of them have valuable information to impart about the process of writing, and so they serve students as a sort of coaching staff. Students learn, for example, about the drafting practices of E. B. White, the research methods of Barbara Tuchman, the way that Maya Angelou prepares herself to write, and the way that Charles Darwin used daily journal writing to sharpen his powers of analysis and observation. Other members of the panel are Joan Didion, George Orwell, Annie Dillard, James Weldon Johnson, Mary McCarthy, Mark Twain, Theodore White, and George Will.
- ◆ Each assignment-based chapter concludes with a compact statement of "Points to Consider" in the process of drafting and revising the type of essay covered, plus a short set of "Questions for Peer Review."

- Exercises scattered through the chapters prepare students for the writing assignments. These exercises can often serve as a focal point for an entire class period. Almost all of them are designed with a dual purpose: not only to help students digest the information in the chapter, but to allow them to practice critical thinking skills they will use in a variety of classes. Instructors committed to collaborative learning will find these exercises particularly engaging.
- ◆ A chapter on writing about literature looks at elements of fiction and poetry and provides three poems and four stories for analysis. This chapter should be useful in programs where the composition course serves as a prerequisite to literature courses.

#### Also available are

- An Instructor's Resource Manual that offers commentary on the chapters and on each full-length reading, plus techniques for teaching and ideas for working through the assignments. In putting this instructor's manual together, Carolyn Perry and I have paid special attention to the needs of programs like our own, where a great many composition courses are taught by inexperienced instructors.
- ◆ Forty additional assignments available in printed and computerized form. These supplemental assignments should keep the text from going stale after two or three semesters of use. Their availability on computer disk allows instructors to modify them to suit their own needs.
- ◆ A package of sample student papers for class discussion. Written by students who used *The Riverside Guide* in draft form, these papers are not offered as patterns of perfection but as realistic examples of student writing. These are useful in class discussion because they have both strengths to praise and faults to criticize. We have provided instructors with commentary on each paper to help them prepare for class discussion.

The abundance of readings and assignments in *The Riverside Guide* makes it appropriate not only for one-term composition courses but for sequences that stretch over two or three courses with somewhat varied emphases. It would be possible, for example, to use the book for a series of courses

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that focus on (1) the writing process and personal writing, (2) argumentation, and (3) writing from research.

#### **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

Like many textbook writers, I am tempted to acknowledge the contribution of every rhetorician, old and new, who ever lived and wrote. Writers of rhetorics today stand on some massive shoulders and hope that this perch allows them to take in a broad horizon.

I will, however, avoid the long list that begins with Aristotle and ends with the most recent issue of College Composition and Communication. My more immediate debts are two: first, to Carolyn Perry of the University of Missouri, who is co-author of the Instructor's Resource Manual and who critiqued and class-tested the chapters in their draft form; next, to a remarkable set of reviewers, who were generous with their advice and time and who contributed to some important changes. These reviewers are Julia M. Allen, Sonoma State University (CA); Chris Anderson, Oregon State University; Ray Anschel, Normandale Community College (MN); Linda Bensel-Meyers, University of Tennessee at Knoxville; Annette Briscoe, Ball State University (IN); Patsy Callaghan, Central Washington University; Toni-Lee Capossela, Boston University; James V. Catano, Louisiana State University at Baton Rouge; Ian Cruickshank, St. Louis Community College at Florissant Valley; Beth Rigel Daugherty, Otterbein College (OH); John Dick, University of Texas at El Paso; Sandra A. Engel, Mohawk Valley Community College (NY): Fritz Fleischmann, Babson College (MA); Irene Gale, University of South Florida: G. Dale Gleason, Hutchinson Community College (KS); Barbara S. Gross, Rutgers Newark College of Arts and Sciences; John Hanes, Duquesne University (PA); Patricia Harkin, The University of Akron; Glenda A. Hudson, California State University at Bakersfield; Maurice Hunt, Baylor University (TX); Michael L. Johnson, University of Kansas; Mary A. McCay, Lovola University (LA); Grace H. McNamara, DeKalb College (GA); Elizabeth Metzger, University of South Florida; Margaret Dietz Meyer, Ithaca College (NY); G. Douglas Meyers, University of Texas at El Paso; Michael Miller, Longview Community College (MO); Walter S. Minot, Gannon University (PA); Patrick Parks, Elgin Community College (IL); Joseph Powell, Central Washington University; Susanna Rich, Kean College of New Jersey; Duane H. Roen, University of Arizona; Shirley K. Rose, San Diego State University; Carolyn H. Smith, University of Florida; Mary Jean Steenberg, Metropolitan Community College (NE); Martha Tolleson, Collin County Community College District (TX); George Y. Trail, University of Houston; Margaret Urie, University of Nevada at Reno; William Vande Kopple, Calvin College (MI); Linda G. Wadleigh, El Camino College (CA); Steven C. Weisenberger, University of Kentucky; James D. Williams, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; Michael Williamson, Indiana University of Pennsylvania; Ben Wilson, Greensboro College (NC); and Robert Wiltenburg, Washington University (MO).

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Doug Hunt University of Missouri



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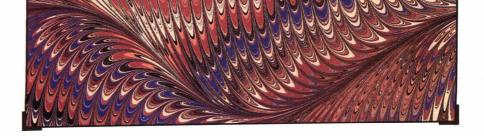


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