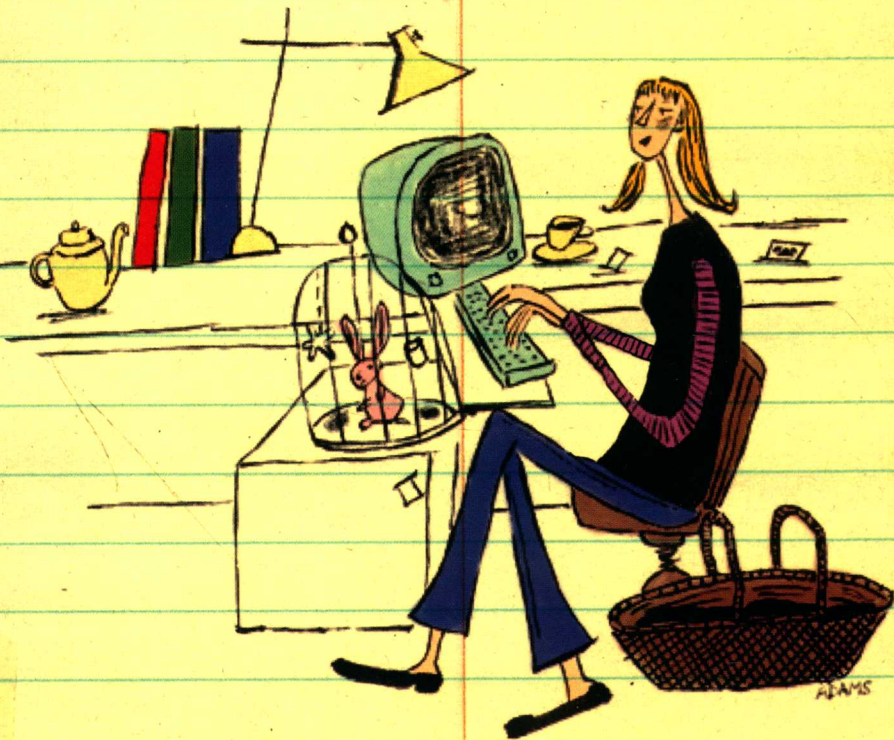


FIFTH EDITION

SUCCESSFUL WRITING



Maxine Hairston
Michael Keene

Successful Writing

FIFTH EDITION



Michael Keene

THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE AT KNOXVILLE



W. W. Norton & Company

NEW YORK • LONDON

Copyright © 2003 by Maxine C. Hairston and Michael Keene. Copyright © 1998,
1992, 1986, 1981 by Maxine C. Hairston.

All rights reserved.
Printed in the United States of America.

Manufacturing by Courier Companies.
Book design by Martin Lubin.
Production manager: Diane O'Connor.

Photo of Rosa Parks (p. 236): Reuters NewMedia Inc./Corbis.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Hairston, Maxine.

Successful writing / Maxine C. Hairston, Michael Keene.—5th ed.

p. cm.

Includes index.

ISBN 0-393-97818-4

1. English language—Rhetoric. 2. Report writing. I. Keene, Michael L. II. Title.

PE1408 .H297 2003

808'.042—dc21

2002032978

W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 500 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10110
www.wwnorton.com

W. W. Norton & Company Ltd., Castle House, 75/76 Wells Street,
London W1T 3QT

2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0

Preface

In the twenty years since the first edition of *Successful Writing*, the elements of good writing haven't changed. Good writing is still • clear • vigorous • well organized • tightly focused, and • adapted to its audience.

My goals in writing this Fifth Edition are also the same as they have been throughout my three decades of teaching writing and teaching teachers of writing. Quite simply, I want to offer writers clear and useful suggestions for strengthening their writing and to show them how they can develop a piece of effective writing through a process that is manageable and reliable. Since retiring from active teaching, I myself have come to know what it's like now to be a student writing in college: I've gone back to school to work on a master's degree in history and have taken several undergraduate classes at the University of Texas with a substantial writing component. In fact, the model research paper in this edition is a shortened version of a paper I wrote in one of those courses.

As a college student myself in 2002, I'm aware of how writing in college has changed in the past decade. Although the standards for good writing haven't changed, the kinds of writing college students do and the ways they now deliver their writing have changed a great deal. Students today may be called upon to write

- ▷ a traditional college essay
- ▷ a research paper
- ▷ a Web site for an assignment or organization
- ▷ commentary on an electronic blackboard
- ▷ a contribution to a class listserv
- ▷ a response to a fellow student's draft
- ▷ an oral PowerPoint presentation
- ▷ a technical report, printed or online
- ▷ email messages to instructors, friends, and families

And so this edition of *Successful Writing* has been expanded to offer students the help they need for these various writing situations.

As you will see, there are a number of new features in this edition. But perhaps the most important addition is a new co-author, Michael Keene, a former student and colleague, and today a friend of many years, who will describe what's new in the book.

Maxine Hairston and I have shared a long and happy friendship over the years, starting with her teaching me how to teach writing. ("What's your approach to teaching writing?" Maxine the new freshman composition director asked Mike the new graduate student. "Approach?" said Mike, bewildered.) But in the thirty or so years we've known each other, we've never written together. So it's a treat and a thrill for me to join her in this new edition of *Successful Writing*. While Maxine's task has been mostly to update existing chapters, mine has been to add several new ones. In particular, the Fifth Edition of *Successful Writing* offers the following **new and noteworthy features**:

- ☉ *A new chapter on electronic communication*, emphasizing the ways writing for online readers needs to be adjusted to the electronic medium, with particular attention to the do's and don'ts of email.
- ☉ *A new chapter on oral presentations*, offering eight steps to planning and delivering the kind of informal five- or ten-minute talk common in many classroom and professional settings today.
- ☉ *A new chapter on designing documents and Web pages*, emphasizing both the *process* and the finished product—and a wonderful new design for the book itself, one that reflects the principles of audience appeal that we promote throughout the book.
- ☉ *Much-expanded coverage of MLA and APA documentation*.
- ☉ *A collection of model documents* showing good examples of the many kinds of writing students now need to do, from letters to reports to résumés to a full MLA-style research paper.
- ☉ *A Q&A feature in each chapter* that answers many of the questions students most often ask.

➤ *Greatly expanded coverage of the research-and-writing process*, with particular attention to the many new ways research is being done via computers, including the important step of judging the reliability of information found on the Internet.

We have tried to be guided by three principles of textbook writing: Is it clear? Is it useful? Is it true? We hope you'll find this new edition of *Successful Writing* meets those tough standards.

Maxine Hairston, Austin, Texas

Michael Keene, Knoxville, Tennessee

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like to thank the many people at Norton who have contributed to this edition: English editor Marilyn Moller for her thoughtful guidance, Debra Morton Hoyt for the charming cover design, Marian Johnson for overseeing the copyediting, Richard K. Mickey for the actual copyediting, Martin Lubin for the new interior design, and production manager Diane O'Connor for making sure the book was produced well and on time. Michael Keene would like to thank Mary Jo Reiff (at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville) and Katherine Adams (at Loyola University, New Orleans) for their insight into classroom experiences with previous editions and their advice concerning this one.

We would also like to thank all the reviewers who have contributed to shaping this book over its more than twenty years of publication:

Douglas Atkins (University of Kansas)

Martha A. Barter (The Ohio State University, Marion)

Mary Bly (University of California at Davis)

P. Michael Brotherton (Labethe Community College)

Linda Cades (University of Maryland)

Edward P. J. Corbett (The Ohio State University)

Toby Fulwiler (University of Vermont)

Greg Cowan (Texas A & M)
Richard Gebhart (Findlay College)
Gary Sue Goodman (University of California at Davis)
William Harmon (University of North Carolina)
JoAnn Harrill (Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University)
Betty L. Hart (University of Southern Indiana)
E. D. Hirsch Jr. (University of Virginia)
Paula Johnson (University of Wyoming)
Andrea Lunsford (Stanford University)
Donald P. McNeilly (University of Maryland)
Susan Miller (University of Utah)
Amy Richards (Wayne State University)
Robert Rudolf (University of Toledo)
Philip A. Snyder (Brigham Young University)
Mary Trachsel (University of Iowa, Des Moines)
Joseph Trimmer (Ball State University)
Steven J. Vander Weele (Calvin College)
John Walter (University of Texas)
John Webster (University of Washington)

Brief Contents

1	Writing in College	1
2	What Makes Writing Successful?	9
3	How Do Writers Write?	21
4	What Is Your Writing Situation?	35
5	Drafting	43
6	Writing Clearly	59
7	Holding Your Reader	72
8	Crafting Paragraphs	93
9	Revising	113
10	Editing	122
11	Considering Design	128
12	Writing Research Papers	156
13	Sending Electronic Communications	205
14	Giving Oral Presentations	217
	Model Documents	231
	Mastering the Conventions of Documentation	271
	Index	289

Contents

Preface xvii

1 Writing in College 1

STRATEGIES FOR WRITING IN COLLEGE COURSES 1

Analyzing Your Writing Situation 2

Limiting Your Writing Topic 3

Laying Out a Plan of Organization 4

SOME CRITERIA FOR ACADEMIC WRITING 5

● Q&A 6

● FOR PRACTICE 7

● FOR WRITING 8

2 What Makes Writing Successful? 9

SPECIFIC CHARACTERISTICS OF WRITING THAT WORKS 10

Good Writing Says Something of Consequence 10

Good Writing Is Clear 11

Good Writing Is Well Organized 12

Good Writing Is Economical 13

Good Writing Is Grammatically Acceptable 13

Good Writing Has No Spelling Errors 14

EXTRA TOUCHES 15

Vigor 15

Authentic Voice 16

● Q&A 17

● FOR PRACTICE 17

● FOR WRITING 19

3 How Do Writers Write? 21

DIFFERENT WAYS OF WRITING 22

- Explanatory Writing 22
- Exploratory Writing 23
- Writing That Explains *and* Explores 24

THE STAGES OF WRITING 25

- Preparation and Planning 25
- Drafting 29
- Incubating 31
 - Q&A 32
 - FOR PRACTICE 32
 - FOR WRITING 33

4 What Is Your Writing Situation? 35

AUDIENCE 35

PURPOSE 36

PERSONA 37

- Your Language Choices 38
- Tone 38
- Authenticity 39
 - Q&A 40
 - FOR PRACTICE 40
 - FOR WRITING 42

5 Drafting 43

GETTING STARTED 43

- With an Illustrative Example 44
- With a Quotation 45

With an Anecdote	45
With a Description	46
With a Summary Paragraph	47

COMMON PATTERNS OF ORGANIZATION 48

Reasoning from Evidence	48
Assertion and Support	49
Definition	50
Cause and Effect	51
Comparison and Contrast	52
Classification	54
Narration	55
Choosing and Combining Patterns	56

KNOWING WHEN YOU HAVE AN ADEQUATE DRAFT 56

- Q&A 57
- FOR PRACTICE 57
- FOR WRITING 58

6 Writing Clearly 59



ILLUSTRATING GENERAL STATEMENTS WITH SPECIFIC EXAMPLES 59

MAKING YOUR READERS SEE SOMETHING 62

PUTTING PEOPLE IN YOUR WRITING 62

CHOOSING CONCRETE WORDS 64

Avoiding Deadwood Nouns 64

Choosing Strong Verbs for Clarity 65

Using Adjectives and Adverbs Sparingly 67

ADDING METAPHORS FOR CLARITY 67

- Q&A 68
- FOR PRACTICE 69
- FOR WRITING 70

7 Holding Your Reader 72

CHOOSING A GOOD TITLE 73

WRITING STRONG LEADS 73

KEEPING YOUR WRITING TIGHT AND UNIFIED 75

Links and Nudges 75

Repeated Words 77

Using Conjunctions to Connect Sentences or Paragraphs 77

KEEPING PARAGRAPHS AND SENTENCES TO A REASONABLE LENGTH 78

CHUNKING YOUR WRITING INTO MANAGEABLE UNITS 80

AVOIDING ANTAGONIZING YOUR READERS 82

MAKING YOUR WRITING LOOK GOOD 83

USING FIGURATIVE AND CONNOTATIVE LANGUAGE SPARINGLY 83

AVOIDING STEREOTYPES AND OFFENSIVE LABELING 84

Sexist Language 85

Using Racial and Ethnic Terms Carefully 85

Maintaining a Civil Tone 87

● Q&A 87

● FOR PRACTICE 88

● FOR WRITING 91

8 Crafting Paragraphs 93

THE EXTERNAL VIEW OF PARAGRAPHING 93

Some Guidelines for Breaking Paragraphs 94

THE INTERNAL VIEW OF PARAGRAPHING 97

Generalization with Supporting Details 97

Question and Answer 98

Statement and Illustration 98

Assertion and Explanation 99

Other Common Paragraph Patterns 99

CRAFTING OPENING PARAGRAPHS	104
WRESTLING WITH CLOSING PARAGRAPHS	107
● Q&A	110
● FOR PRACTICE	110
● FOR WRITING	112

9 Revising 113

AN OVERVIEW OF THE REVISION PROCESS 113

A PLAN FOR REVISING IN STAGES 114

Stage One: Large-Scale Revision 114

Stage Two: Small-Scale Changes 115

GETTING RESPONSE FROM OTHERS 116

Some Guidelines for Working in Groups 116

WHEN SHOULD YOU STOP REVISING? 117

- Q&A 121
- FOR PRACTICE 121

10 Editing 122

SOME GUIDELINES FOR EDITING 122

Review Any Specifications for Your Document 123

Check Details for Accuracy and Consistency 123

Check for Awkwardly Repeated Words 123

Check for the Most Common Errors 124

Check Your Spelling and Run a Spell Checker 124

Consider the Way Your Writing Looks 125

PROOFREADING 126

- Q&A 126
- FOR PRACTICE 127

11 Considering Design 128

A FEW USES OF DOCUMENT DESIGN 129

PLANNING A DESIGN 131

Questions to Ask As You Plan a Design 131

Sketching Out a Preliminary Design 133

Estimating Costs 134

CONSIDERING TYPE 134

Fonts 135

Type Styles 139

Type Size 140

Color 141

CONSIDERING LAYOUT 142

Direction 142

White Space 143

Chunking Information 143

Positioning Graphics and Artwork 144

DESIGNING FOR THE WEB 145

How the Web Is Read 145

Web Site Structure and Web Page Design 146

Model Templates for Web Pages 153

● FOR PRACTICE 155

12 Writing Research Papers 156

SELECTING A TOPIC 157

Pick a Good Topic 158

Define Your Purpose 158

Identify Your Audience 159

Formulate a Research Question 160

RESEARCHING YOUR TOPIC 162

Set Up a General Search Strategy 162

Use Primary and Secondary Sources	163
Do Original Research	164
Make a Research Outline for Using the Library and the Web	165
Find Things Out for Yourself	177
Be Open to Serendipity	178
Take Notes	179
Manage Sources and Quotations	179
Manage and Evaluate Electronic Sources	182

WRITING YOUR PAPER 188

Get Started	188
Choose a Plan of Organization	188
Write a Draft	189
Get Responses	190
Finish Your Paper	192

- Q&A 193

A SAMPLE RESEARCH PAPER: "ARTEMISIA GENTILESCHI: ARTIST AGAINST THE GRAIN" 195

13 Sending Electronic Communications 205



WRITING FOR ONLINE READERS 206

EMAIL DOS AND DON'TS 207

Privacy	207
Snap Responses	208
Unwanted Email	209

HANDLING CASUAL CORRESPONDENCE 210

HANDLING ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL CORRESPONDENCE 211

Résumés	212
---------	-----

ATTACHMENTS 214

- Q&A 215
- FOR PRACTICE 216

14 Giving Oral Presentations 217

SIZING UP THE SITUATION	218
Find Out Where and When the Talk Is Scheduled	218
Find Out Who Your Audience Is	219
Determine the Purpose(s) of Your Talk	219
WRITING OUT A ROUGH DRAFT OF YOUR TALK	220
OUTLINING YOUR TALK—AND PLANNING YOUR VISUALS	221
DECIDING ON PROPS AND VISUALS	222
Some Guidelines for Using Visuals	223
PRACTICING	224
DELIVERING THE TALK	225
ANSWERING QUESTIONS CAREFULLY	227
GETTING FEEDBACK	228
● Q&A	228
● FOR PRACTICE	229
● FOR WRITING	229

Model Documents 231

The First Page of a Print Academic Paper	233
An Academic Paper with Graphs	235
An Academic Paper with Headings and Visuals	237
A Plan for a Two-Page Spread in a Report	239
A Plan for an Academic Paper on the Web	241
A Summary	243
A Simple Presentation Slide	245
A Simple Proposal	247
An Application Letter (Printed)	249
An Email Application Letter	251
A Print Résumé	253
A Scannable Email Résumé	255
A Newsletter	257

A Simple Brochure	259
A Poster	261
A Flyer	263
A Program	265
An Agenda	267
A Press Release	269

Mastering the Conventions of Documentation 271



MLA STYLE 278

APA STYLE 283

Index 289