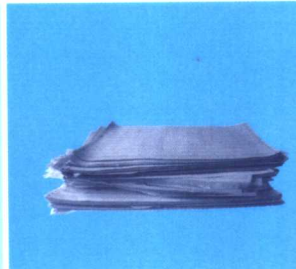
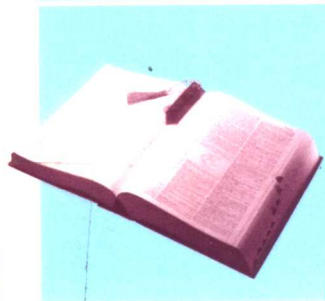
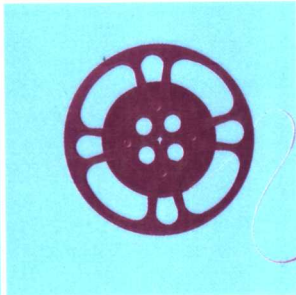
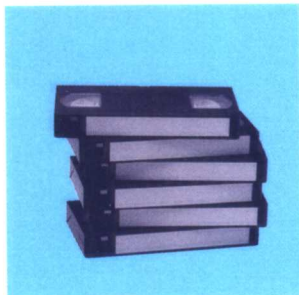
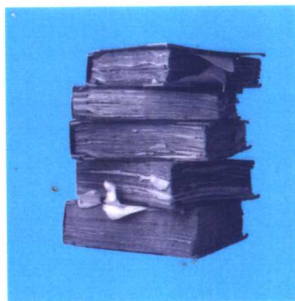
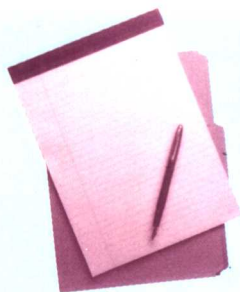


# Successful Writing



Fourth Edition



MAXINE C. HAIRSTON



# SUCCESSFUL WRITING

FOURTH EDITION

MAXINE C. HAIRSTON

The University of Texas at Austin



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# PREFACE

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This Fourth Edition of *Successful Writing* maintains the focus of the previous editions in offering practical and straightforward advice to writers who have mastered the basic elements of writing and now want to strengthen their skills and polish their prose. But this new edition also introduces writers to some of the new electronic dimensions of their craft: using the Internet for research and exploration and applying some of the principles of document design and desktop publishing to their work. Most of the chapters of this edition incorporate suggestions about ways to make writing more readable by using the capacities that computers offer for creating graphics and producing several varieties of type, and the book itself has been designed to make it easier to use and to demonstrate the principles of visual appeal.

This edition of *Successful Writing* retains features that have distinguished it from the beginning. These include

- Emphasis on the writing process
- Stress on the crucial role of audience and purpose in every writing situation
- Stress on revision as essential to the creative process
- Pragmatic advice about editing and rewriting
- Emphasis on and guidelines for writers working in groups

In addition, almost all examples have been replaced with material from contemporary sources, and a quotation about writing now introduces each chapter. Overall, I have tried to make the text more concise by tightening discussions and, wherever possible, condensing material into boxes and lists. Special tips for writers appear in boxes throughout the book. In each chapter, I have made a number of changes, listed below.

- Chapter 1, “Writing in College,” has been condensed and some of the information rearranged in more visually accessible boxes and lists. A new section has been added on avoiding common pitfalls in choosing topics.
- Chapter 2, “What Is Good Writing?” no longer contains negative models of bad writing; the criteria for good writing have been expanded to include visual appeal and good design.
- Chapter 3, “What Happens When People Write?” streamlines the discussion of explanatory and exploratory writing, makes those concepts more accessible with lists and boxed summaries, and adds tips about using the Internet for invention. Preliminary discussion for a new model paper on the need for heroines in children’s literature begins in this chapter.
- Chapter 4, “What Is Your Writing Situation?” has been condensed somewhat from the third edition and now contains analyses of the audience, purpose, persona, and message for the new model paper.
- Chapter 5, “Drafting Your Paper,” includes a revised section on patterns of organization, substituting “assertion and support” for “claims and warrant” and adding a discussion of “classification.” This chapter now offers material on civil discourse and a section on how a writer can tell when he or she has written an adequate draft.
- Chapter 6, “Revising,” has been made more accessible through headings, lists, and special guidelines for helping students evaluate and revise their own papers and those of their peers, especially when they are working in collaborative writing situations.
- Chapter 7, “Holding Your Reader,” opens with a new section on presenting writing in a form that is visually appealing to readers. The chapter has been condensed somewhat by moving much of the Third Edition’s discussion on opening paragraphs to Chapter 9, “Crafting Paragraphs.”

- Chapter 8, “Writing Clearly,” expands the section on sexist language to include guidelines for avoiding other kinds of biased language and adds a section on civil discourse.
- Chapter 9, “Crafting Paragraphs,” includes new material on adapting opening paragraphs to a writer’s audience and purpose.
- Chapter 10, “Editing,” has been streamlined and rearranged for easier access and now includes material on editing to improve a paper’s visual appeal. Once more it offers advice about usage and writing conventions based on actual surveys of how readers respond to lapses in usage and mechanics.
- Chapter 11, “Writing Research Papers,” has been substantially revised to add material on using electronic sources and the conventions for citing such sources. It includes suggestions—and cautions—for doing research on the Internet and the World Wide Web.
- Chapter 12, “Document Design,” is new to the Fourth Edition. It incorporates much of the material from the “Writing on the Job” chapter of the Third Edition but is essentially an introduction to the basic elements of document design and to desktop publishing. This new chapter includes advice about planning documents, choosing type, arranging layouts, and integrating graphics and illustrations into documents. It begins with suggestions for enhancing academic papers and class presentations with visual elements, but also includes help with job-related projects such as brochures, agendas, proposals, and résumés. The second part of the chapter offers sixteen model documents along with comments and checklists for designing each kind.

The underlying principles of this Fourth Edition of *Successful Writing* remain unchanged from previous editions:

- Writing is a dynamic social process that can be taught and learned.
- People grow as writers by learning to draft, revise, and polish their writing through stages.
- Every writing project must be considered in the context of its audience and purpose.
- Learning to interact and work with other writers is an important part of every writer’s development.

I believe in these principles as strongly as I did sixteen years ago when the First Edition of *Successful Writing* appeared.

MAXINE HAIRSTON

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# 1

## WRITING IN COLLEGE



People who write well are more likely to get what they want than people who write badly.



### WRITING AS A WAY OF LEARNING

If you are like most college students, you write a great many papers, not only for your English and history classes but in courses such as accounting, geology, or engineering, areas that you may not have thought would require writing. Professors in those courses are having you write not only because you must report what you're learning but because writing is a powerful tool for learning. They know that all of us benefit from writing in important ways:

- We understand material better and retain it longer when we write about it.
- We generate new ideas when we write because the act of writing helps us make connections and see relationships.
- We think more critically when we write. When we get ideas down on paper, we're more likely to be able to clarify and evaluate them.
- We solve problems more easily when we write because we understand the dimensions of a problem better after we write out its components.