

FOCUS

From Paragraph to Essay

Martha E. Campbell

Focus:
From Paragraph
to Essay

MARTHA E.

江苏工业学院图书馆

CAMPBELL
藏书章



Prentice Hall
Upper Saddle River, New Jersey 07458

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Campbell, Martha E.

Focus: from paragraph to essay / Martha E. Campbell.

p. cm.

Includes index.

ISBN 0-13-309709-9

1. English language—Rhetoric. 2. English language—Grammar. I. Title.

PE1408.C2835 1996

808'.042—dc20

95-4676

CIP

Acquisitions editor: Maggie Barbieri

Editorial/production supervision: Mary P. Rottino

Cover designer: Bruce Kensellaar

Editorial assistant: Joan Polk

Buyer: Mary Ann Gloriande

Acknowledgments

Martin Luther King, Jr. "I Have a Dream." Reprinted by permission of Intellectual Properties Management, Atlanta, GA.

Katherine Creamer, "Chasing Suspects Costs Innocent Lives," editorial, June 7, 1994. Reprinted by permission of *Tampa Tribune*, Tampa, FL.



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Simon and Schuster/A Viacom Company

Upper Saddle River, New Jersey 07458

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Printed in the United States of America

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2

ISBN: 0-13-309709-9

Prentice-Hall International (UK) Limited, *London*

Prentice-Hall of Australia Pty. Limited, *Sydney*

Prentice-Hall Canada, Inc., *Toronto*

Prentice-Hall Hispanoamericana, S.A., *Mexico*

Prentice-Hall of India Private Limited, *New Delhi*

Prentice-Hall of Japan, Inc., *Tokyo*

Simon & Schuster Asia Pte. Ltd., *Singapore*

Editora Prentice-Hall do Brasil, Ltda., *Rio de Janeiro*

*Focus:
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to Essay*

*To my supportive friends, colleagues,
and students and my loving family—especially
Dan, Leah, and Jenny*

Preface

To the Instructor

PURPOSE/OVERVIEW

This textbook is a comprehensive rhetoric/workbook for the developmental writer. My purpose for writing this text was to create a readable, practical, and engaging text for students who have returned to school and need to brush up on their composition skills as well as students who have graduated from high school but who have not mastered the fundamentals of writing.

What differentiates this book from other writing texts is its balance of rhetoric and grammar through an integrated approach. Grammar and punctuation rules are not isolated in a separate section of this text but introduced to students within specific writing contexts. For example, the chapter on narration

features a discussion of comma splices and run-ons since these errors often occur in narrative paragraphs. This chapter also discusses the use of quotation marks in dialogue since many students incorporate dialogue in narrative writing. Furthermore, each chapter includes paragraph-level exercises which reinforce the writing situation being discussed in this chapter. This integration of grammatical and composition skills will help your students to value writing as a holistic activity and prepare them for the challenges of writing in college courses and in the workplace.

SPECIAL FEATURES

In addition to its integrated approach to the teaching of writing, other special features of this text include:

- ☐ Focus on the importance of writing for a reader
- ☐ Extensive use of student writing samples
- ☐ Emphasis on peer review including guide questions for each assignment
- ☐ Many choices of writing topics
- ☐ Specific organizational techniques for each rhetorical purpose
- ☐ Focus on transition in each rhetorical context
- ☐ Abundant exercises to reinforce grammar, punctuation, and diction skills
- ☐ Paragraph-level editing exercises
- ☐ Collaborative activities for small group work
- ☐ Revising and editing strategies for the computer
- ☐ Appendix on outlining
- ☐ Appendix on manuscript form
- ☐ Glossary of key grammatical terms

ORGANIZATION OF CHAPTERS

Chapter 1 introduces your students to the stages of the writing process and includes a student work-in-progress to demonstrate these stages.

Chapter 2 discusses the topic sentence paragraph while reviewing the basic grammatical structure of sentences.

Chapters 3 through 6 each focus on a particular purpose for writing paragraphs. Development-by-example, narration, observation, and comparison/contrast paragraphs are each introduced along with related grammatical, punctuation, and diction skills.

Chapter 7 creates a bridge from the paragraph to the essay. Your students will build on their development-by-example and comparison/contrast paragraphs to compose essays.

Chapters 8 and 9 continue the discussion of the essay with the problem-solving and persuasive essays. This experience in essay writing should build your students' confidence as they prepare to enter their freshman composition courses.

Chapter 10 introduces students to general revising and editing strategies as well as techniques for revising and editing with a computer. Spelling, confused words, and passive voice are reviewed as editing techniques.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am indebted to the composition theorists who have so greatly influenced the teaching of writing—especially Dr. James Kinneavy, Blumberg Centennial Professor of English at the University of Texas at Austin, who graciously reviewed this text and supported my work.

I am also grateful for my many students—particularly those whose compositions appear within these pages.

The comments of the reviewers of this text have been invaluable to me. These reviewers included Julie Carroll; Jane Somers and Marcia Bruels, who shared my work-in-progress with their students; Janet Bacon, of DeKalb College; Kathleen Beauchene, Community College of Rhode Island; Barbara Baxter, Mid-South Community College; and Bertha Murray, Tallahassee Community College.

For their tireless support and encouragement, I am thankful for my colleagues at St. Petersburg Junior College, Tarpon Springs Center—especially my department members and office-mates.

I appreciate the work of the Prentice Hall folks including sales representative Beth Rechsteiner, who urged me to undertake this project; Phil Miller, President of Humanities and Social Sciences, who encouraged me from the beginning; and Acquisitions Editor, Maggie Barbieri, and English Editorial Assistant, Joan Polk, for their professional assistance.

Finally, I thank my mother and father, Evelyn and George Etheredge, for giving me a love for language; my husband, Dan, for listening to me; and my daughters, Jenny and Leah, for their patience.

To the Student

This textbook asks you to think about yourself as a writer. If you are like many other college students, you may be uncomfortable with that title. You think of yourself as a student, an adult, a friend, a son or daughter, a worker—but as a *writer*?

With the help of this textbook, you can become a confident writer. You will need time, energy, and patience. You must also believe that writing well is a necessary skill for your future success in the classroom and in the workplace.

You will probably need to review some basics—especially if you are not an active writer outside the classroom or if you have not recently been in school. So this book offers a thorough review of the writing process, paragraph and essay organization, and grammar and punctuation rules. All of these techniques are important for you to know.

However, writing is more than grammatically correct, organized prose. Writing is a creative exchange between you and your reader. Unless your reader receives your intended message, your writing is not effective. Because your relationship with your reader is so important, this textbook also offers opportunities for you to read other students' writing and for other students to give you feedback about your work.

You are now part of a community of writers—your classroom. Your fellow students and your instructor will offer you support as you work to improve your writing. Keep practicing and learning. Remember that the more you learn about writing, the more you will want to know.

Martha E. Campbell

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chapter

This book is designed to help you improve your writing skills by building upon your strengths as a thinker and communicator. Effective composition skills are vital to your success both in the classroom and in the workplace. In the classroom teachers reward students who can express their understanding of an academic subject in a clear, organized composition. In the workplace supervisors often evaluate an employee's ability to compose effective proposals and other forms of business communications before they consider the employee for a promotion.

Some students enter a writing classroom as experienced, self-assured writers. However, many beginning college students, for a variety of reasons, are not confident about their ability to write well. Yet these students know that improving their writing skills is an essential key to their future success.

As you begin the task of improving your writing, you are setting forth on a journey of discovery. You will be asked to think about yourself as a writer and a reader. You will also learn a variety of grammatical and composition skills that will enable you to write for different purposes. The path of discovery will not always be smooth. However, the goal of being an effective writer is worth the effort and commitment you will make. As you make this jour-

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