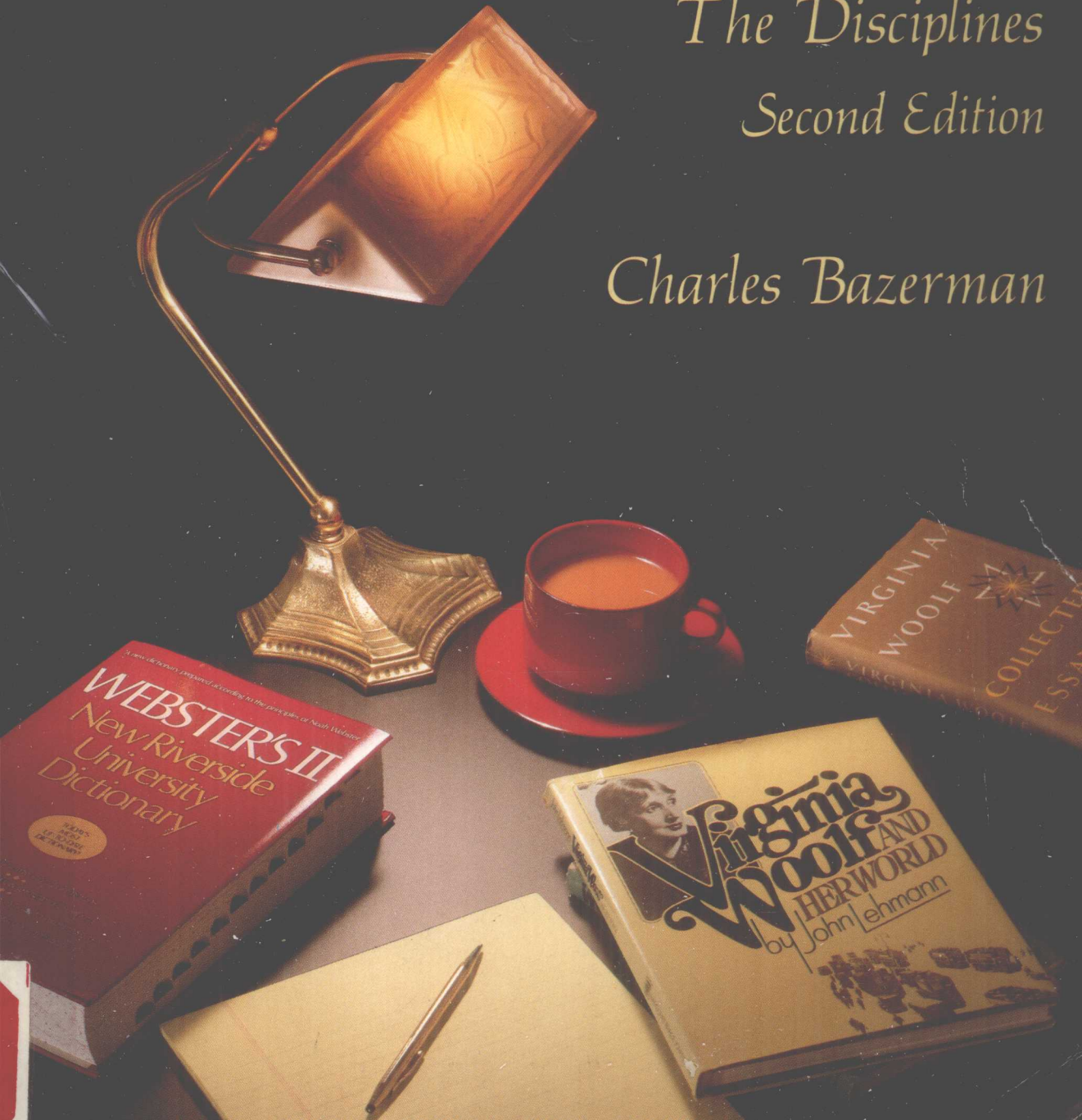


The Informed Writer

*Using Sources in
The Disciplines*

Second Edition

Charles Bazerman



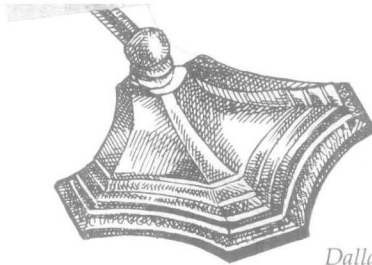
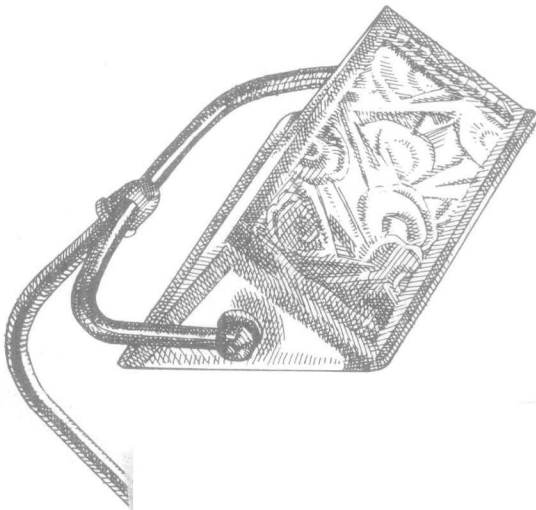
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College City University of New York



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(continued on page 517)

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To the Teacher

This is a book about reading and writing—complementary elements in the learning and use of written language. Reading provides not only a model and a provocation to write but also the very occasion and situation for most writing. Without a sense of continuity between statements, between reading and writing, students can learn only to create voices calling, and being lost, in the wilderness.

The Informed Writer deals with writing in social contexts, for every piece of writing is a form of social action, whether its purpose is to persuade holders of different views, to propose the construction of a bridge, to justify the return of a shipment of paperclips, or to lay out and order one's thoughts for personal inspection. Writing makes things happen in the social world, and much of that social world is embodied in previous pieces of writing. Writers need to be able to understand and assess the social situation and then shape writing as an effective response within that context.

Students constantly read books, reproduce the books' contents, and respond to, interpret, and evaluate the meaning of their reading. They must make the old new again, and the tasks they must perform are precisely those covered in this book: close and analytical reading, summary, synthesis, response to reading, interpretation and analysis, book reviews, reviews of literature, and research papers.

This book introduces students to writing in the various disciplines by exploring the underlying issues that make for commonalities and differences. The different methods of developing and presenting statements are portrayed as evolving attempts to carry on the particular discipline's work of creating knowledge. By understanding the purpose of the procedures and formats of writing in the different disciplines, students can approach disciplinary writing with confidence and independent creativity while still respecting the communal objectives. This approach teaches students to command the forms of disciplinary writing, rather than simply follow them.

This book encourages creativity and originality in writing. Uninformed writing is usually a derivative, unthinking reflection of cultural and social forces of which the writer is unaware. Informed

writing develops the mind against the background of what others have said.

Several marked changes distinguish this edition of *The Informed Writer* from the previous one.

A new first chapter introduces students to a basic way of thinking about writing as problem solving. Procedures for analyzing writing situations and writing problems help students discover purposes and strategies. By seeing their writing as purposeful within a context, students can focus their ideas and invent means to fulfill their purposes, to solve the writing problem.

In a major substantive and structural change, a new five-chapter unit (Part 3), "Writing in the Disciplines," introduces students to the uniformities and differences of developing and presenting arguments in the range of academic disciplines. Because what appears in a disciplinary essay results to a large extent from the process of formulating ideas, designing research, and gathering and analyzing data, methodology is discussed throughout this book as a set of prewriting procedures, to be controlled and varied depending on the disciplinary setting, the questions to be investigated, and the tools available. These methodological procedures are at every step tied to the process of writing and the final form of the writing. Examples and exercises from a range of disciplines, historical to theoretical, help students see how research interests become realized during the writing process.

In a final structural change, students are introduced to the concepts and informal methods of response before they are drawn into the detailed examination of texts through paraphrase and summary. By expressing their reactions to texts immediately, students will gain a fuller sense of themselves in relation to the text; and the deeper understanding of texts achieved by means of paraphrase and summary exercises will be enlivened by the deeper responses evoked in the students. Students will find that as they understand texts more deeply, they will have more to say in response to them.

Many other changes, expansions, clarifications, and additions (such as the material on use of computer-assisted bibliographic searches) appear throughout this edition. I have changed many examples and exercises, keeping those that have worked best and adding others that I hope will work even better. Finally, the documentation instruction is in keeping with the recent change in Modern Language Association policy. The MLA parenthetical style is explained in detail and used in the sample research paper. Because the MLA still recognizes (though does not encourage) endnoting,

procedures, formats, and some examples for endnotes remain, following the latest MLA revisions. American Psychological Association documentation procedures are also presented and illustrated.

With this new edition, my debts have been compounded. The wealth I have now taken from my friends is too great to account, but I would like to add the following to the roll call of the previous edition: Ed Davenport and Charles Piltch of John Jay College, Greg Myers and Les Faigley of the University of Texas at Austin, Susan Miller of the University of Utah, Don McCloskey of the University of Iowa, and Edwin Thumboo of the National University of Singapore.

For their thoughtful suggestions toward the development of this revision, I am grateful to Jay Balderson and Paul Cioe, Western Illinois University; James Crosswhite and Brooke Neilson, University of California at San Diego; Susan McLeod, San Diego State University; Nancy Moore, University of Iowa; Virginia Sullivan, SUNY at Farmingdale; Connie Sutherland, Northeast Missouri State; Carol Slade, Columbia University; Rita Sturm, Albuquerque; and Michael Vivion, University of Missouri.

Shirley Geok-lin Lim, my spouse and colleague, deserves my continuing gratitude for her patience with the domestic tedium engendered by such projects as this.

Checklist of Readings

This list notes the major readings (either substantial excerpts or full-length essays) in the text. Essays by student writers are indicated with an asterisk (*). Numerous shorter extracts are found throughout the text; they are noted in the general index that begins on page 508.

- Cicero *On Friendship* 28
 Eric Hoffer *Three Journal Entries* 34
 Bertrand Russell *Ideas That Have Helped Mankind* 47
 Lewis Thomas *On Cloning a Human Being* 49
 Alexis De Tocqueville from *Democracy in America* 51
 P. B. & J. S. Medawar *The Biological Principles of Population Control* 55
 H. L. Mencken *The Declaration of Independence in American* 63
 E. M. Forster from *Culture and Freedom* 64
 S. E. Luria *Mind* 65
 Lawrence Lichty *The News Media: Video Versus Print* 72
 Mort Rosenblum *Censorship and Government Pressures* 77
 Daniel Boorstin *News-Making: The Pseudo-Event* 83 *From News Gathering to News Making* 86
 Michael Schudson *The Politics of Narrative Form: The Emergence of News Conventions in Print and Television* 89
 Donald Trunkey *Trauma* 101
 Ernest Hartmann *The Psychology of Tiredness* 103
 *Carolyn Ross *What Kind of Friendship?* 114
 Dale Carnegie *Do This and You'll Be Welcome Anywhere* 117
 Psychology Today *Second Class Citizens* 119
 G. W. Plunkitt *On The Shame of the Cities* 125
 *Steve Slipka *My Friendship with Jesse* 129
 H. S. Sullivan *Need for Interpersonal Intimacy* 133
 Kate Moody *The Effects of Television on Children's Social Relations* 134
 Ludwig Wittgenstein *Preface to Philosophical Investigations* 147
 Newsweek *Guns: Like Buying Cigarettes* 168
 Anatole Broyard *Review of Death as a Fact of Life* 177
 Samuel S. Epstein et al. *Review of Hazardous Waste in America* 182
 David E. Leary *Review of Human Nature in American Thought* 185
 *Colleen Mitchell *Review of Black Life in Corporate America* 190
 *Amy Larseu *Some Kinds of Tiredness* 213
 *Carol Myer *Whose Assembly Line?* 248
 Reynold M. Wik *Henry Ford and Grass Roots America* 251
 Roger Burlingame *Henry Ford* 253
 Keith Sward *The Legend of Henry Ford* 255
 *Diane Pari *A Violent Week* 266
 *Mark Green *The Beginning of the Space Race: The United States and the Challenge of Sputnik* 310
 Pat Washburn *New York Newspapers and Robinson's First Season* 347
 Charles Bazerman *Time in Play and Film* 360
 Glenn Petersen *Ritually Changing the Seasons* 378
 Virginia Brooks *Sex Differences in Student Dominance Behavior in Female and Male Professors' Classrooms* 384
 Erving Goffman *Pedestrian Traffic* 394
 Patricia Kuhl and Andrew Meltzoff *The Bimodal Perceptions of Speech in Infancy* 403
 Paul Yarnold and Laurence Grimm *Time Urgency Among Coronary-Prone Individuals* 410
 R. G. Collingwood *Some Perplexities About Time* 420
 Karl Marx and Friederich Engels *Bourgeoisie and Proletarians* 428

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1 *Writing*

About

Reading

1 Writing

Writing involves other people.

You respond to and build on other people's statements; you then write for other people to read. As a reader and a writer, you converse with others over the written page. To converse effectively you need to know what is on other people's minds, how you want to affect other people, and how you plan to achieve that effect. Thus writing well requires that you understand the writing situation, grasp the particular writing problem, and carefully plan your writing strategy.

The Writing Situation

A Writer Is Never Alone

Although a writer seems to work in private, writing communicates between minds. Without other people to share our thoughts and experiences, to be affected and influenced, we would have little reason to write. We write letters to share our lives with friends; we write business reports to influence the decisions of other managers; we write essays to convert others to our vision of the truth.

Just as we wish to touch other people's minds through writing, our own minds have been deeply influenced by the writing of others. Will Rogers's famous quip, "All I know is what I read in the newspapers," has great truth. Most of what we learn about the world—events in the distant past or in distant countries, the collisions of subatomic particles or of corporate finance, the secrets of the beginnings of the world or of another person's mind—is filtered through written communication. Even when we learn things directly, we perceive and interpret that experience through attitudes influenced by the words of others. Through language we take part in an exchange that both draws our minds together through shared ideas and defines the differences among us through disagreements.

The Written Conversation

Imagine this: your political science professor asks you to write your opinion of a disagreement between Congress and the president over a proposed new energy law. If you know the facts and have a strong opinion—you don't want energy to be squandered as in the past or you object to oil drilling that will threaten wildlife—you sit down at the typewriter and pound out the required number of words. You sit back in relief and look at your work with some pride. There it is, an original paper written entirely from your own mind. Or is it entirely from your own mind?

Of course, you had to learn the basic facts on the subject from somewhere—perhaps from newspapers or television. Persuasive editorials may have influenced you or made you react strongly against the proposed law. A bit more deeply in the background are ideas you have read or have heard about this particular president and his relations with Congress. Even further back are high school teachers and textbooks explaining the structure and history of our

government. You relied on all these resources before you even began writing.

Then, as you wrote, you could not forget the professor's lectures and assigned readings. That material helped you become more informed and thoughtful; now you have a chance to present your matured, informed opinion. All semester the professor has been holding forth; now it is your turn. The professor's views may suggest specific issues you want to discuss and get a reaction to. At the very least, you probably want the professor's approval for doing competent work, so you need to keep his or her standards in mind.

When you write, your statements are your own. You choose the words and organize the thoughts. But you use those words because you share a common vocabulary with your readers. And your thoughts began elsewhere—with things you read, heard, or experienced. A social scientist might say that your statements are socially imbedded; that is, your words are surrounded and conditioned by the acts, words, and attitudes of the many people who form your social context.

This social context also establishes the specific writing situation that helps define any writing task. You sit down to write at one moment in time for particular purposes, which are usually related to the people around you. Your teacher assigns you an essay. A company advertises a job you want. An unusual experience, an encouraging teacher, or a moving poem inspires you to write your own poem.

Think of a conversation. In a spoken conversation it is essential to pay attention to what has just been said and to the person you are addressing. Even when arguing for your original ideas, you are attempting to convince people directly in front of you. To make other people feel you are talking *with* them and not *at* them, you must listen to the facts, ideas, and emotions that they express in order to know what kinds of answers they will understand and accept.

As you react to others in spoken conversation, so you do in written conversation. The more you understand and assimilate what others have said before, the more you understand the context of the "conversation" in which you are participating. If you have a sense of the people to whom you are writing, you can then decide how you wish to affect them and what you should write.

Reading and writing go hand in hand. The better you read, the better you write. In order to develop your own thoughts, you need to be able to gather information from reading; even more, you need to understand the ideas and implications of your reading so that

you can respond. You have to read well enough to see what people are really discussing, what the real issues are. You need to understand what has already been written to decide intelligently what you can contribute. Otherwise, you may simply wind up only repeating what others have already written.

This book explains the skills of digging more deeply into your reading and then using that reading to develop your own original statements. The assignments in this book give you practice in gaining control over the knowledge you are acquiring in all your courses and reading, so that knowledge can help you formulate and express your own thoughts. Writing assignments will help you read more deeply and precisely, respond to and think about what you read, and analyze and evaluate it. They will help you develop your own conclusions and ideas based on research. At the end of this course, you should be better able to take part in all the written “conversations” that will come your way in school, in your career, and in other facets of your life.

Written Versus Spoken Conversation

To envision all the people who form the context of a written conversation taxes the imagination. Although the participants in a spoken conversation are limited to those in hearing distance, the participants in a written conversation include all those whose words you have read or heard on the subject and all those who are likely to pick up and read what you have written. Fortunately, the immediate conversational context for most writing is limited to a few persons. A student writing an assigned paper in a philosophy course may be responding only to a few authors she has read as part of the course and to the lectures of the professor; her readers will be that same professor and perhaps a classmate or roommate. A biochemist, although ultimately relying on all those teachers and writers of scientific works who contributed to her training, may base her immediate work on the findings of only a few colleagues, and she may address her highly technical conclusions to only a few specialists. The biochemist may feel the need to address a wider audience only if she discovers something that has broad social implications, like an insight into the growth of cancer cells. And she would need to reevaluate the basic literature of biochemistry only if her findings call into question fundamental principles she has learned earlier.

Or consider again that philosophy student, whose case is typical

of most students in most disciplines: the range of sources she would have to ponder for much of her education would be limited to the books assigned or recommended by her teachers. A research paper or personal curiosity may lead her to look at other sources, but only near the end of her academic training would she regularly work with less generally familiar material. And only at that late point would the audience for her work move beyond the classroom. Thus the academic context—in which most readers of this book find themselves—readily defines the participants of most written conversations. The writers to whom we are responding are those who contributed the recognized major works of any discipline, and our readers are those who regularly help evaluate student papers—the professor, graduate assistants, and class members.

In addition to the difference in participants, there are further differences between written and spoken conversation. In writing, the words alone must carry the entire message; when you write, you cannot rely on tone of voice, pitch, pauses, facial expressions, or gestures to pick up where words leave off. Nor can you keep an eye on your audience to see if a baffled face, wandering attention, or an angry look suggests you change what you are saying. The reader cannot stop you, ask you questions, raise objections, or demand clarification. Writing must stand intelligible, complete, and convincing in itself.

Because your audience is not there to interrupt you as you write, you can think through your ideas fully, and you can find the best way to state them. When speaking, you must reply on the spot with whatever thoughts come immediately to mind. In talking, in fact, you may be more concerned with keeping the conversation going in a pleasant way than with logic, consistency, or truth; one topic leads to another with only the loosest connection, and a topic rarely remains stable for long. Because speech goes by so fast, you may get away with many careless, unconsidered, and even irrelevant comments. You may not always speak to the point—nor do you always care whether you are making a substantive point. In the process of writing, you have time to consider, develop, and sharpen every statement. When you get stuck, you can take a long pause, go out for coffee, and then pick up where you left off. If words wander, you can later edit out the digression. When revising, you can satisfy yourself that the argument is coherent and fully developed, and you can polish the words before any reader sees them. Similarly, when the reader finally does get your writing, that reader can go through it slowly, evaluating everything that is there—or is not there. The conversation committed to paper slows down, grows thoughtful, and becomes more careful.