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Strategies for Successful Writing

A Rhetoric, Research Guide, Reader, and Handbook

James A. Reinking

Andrew W. Hart

Robert von der Osten



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Sixth Edition

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All of Ferris State University



Taken from:

Strategies for Successful Writing: A Rhetoric, Research Guide, Reader, and Handbook, Sixth Edition

by James A. Reinking, Andrew W. Hart, and Robert von der Osten
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Preface

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The sixth edition of *Strategies for Successful Writing: A Rhetoric, Research Guide, Reader, and Handbook* is a comprehensive textbook that offers ample material for a full-year composition course. Instructors teaching a one-term course can make selections from Chapters 1–16, from whatever types of specialized writing suit the needs of their students, and from appropriate essays in the reader.

Because we strongly believe that an effective composition textbook should address the student directly, we have aimed for a style that is conversational yet clear and concise. We believe that our style invites students into the book, lessens their apprehensions about writing, and provides a model for their own prose. This style complements our strong student-based approach to writing, and together they help create a text that genuinely meets student needs.

■ Changes in the Sixth Edition

The enthusiastic response to the five previous editions both by teachers and students has been most gratifying. The sixth edition retains the many popular features of the previous ones and incorporates a number of improvements, suggested by users and reviewers, that should considerably enhance the utility of the text. Among these changes the following are noteworthy.

- Twelve of the essays in the Reader, over one-fourth of the total, are new. These additions significantly broaden the Reader's scope, increase its coverage of contemporary subjects, and expand its discussion potential.
- Discussions of writing and ethics now accompany Chapter 1, the chapters that explain the individual writing strategies, and the chapters on writing about literature, the library research paper, and primary research papers. These discussions address ethical issues pertinent to writing each type of paper.
- The individual-sentence exercises in the Handbook are all new.
- The writing strategy chapters now include updated and expanded suggestions for writing.
- The library research chapters now include guidelines for evaluating Internet material and also expanded and updated guidelines for online documentation.
- The Business Letters and Résumés chapter now includes sections on memorandums and e-mail, along with an updated form of the résumé.
- Assorted updates and additions throughout the text, too numerous to mention individually, should help make the text even more effective.

■ The Rhetoric

In addition to these improvements, the text offers many other noteworthy features. The Rhetoric consists of nineteen chapters, grouped into four parts. The first part includes three chapters. Chapter 1 introduces students to the purposes of writing; the need for audience awareness, which includes a discussion of discourse communities; and the qualities of good writing. Chapter 2 looks at the planning and drafting stages. Chapter 3 takes students through the various revision stages, starting with a systematic procedure for revising the whole essay and then moving to pointers for revising its component parts. Sets of checklists pose key questions for students to consider. Chapters 2 and 3 are unified by an unfolding case history that includes the first draft of a student paper, the initial revision marked with changes, and the final version. Notes in the margin highlight key features of the finished paper. Students can relate the sequence of events to their own projects as they work through the various stages. Both chapters offer suggestions for using a word processor, and Chapter 3 explains peer evaluation of drafts, collaborative writing, and maintaining and reviewing a portfolio.

The ten chapters in the second part (Chapters 4–13) feature the various strategies, or modes, used to develop papers. These strategies, which follow a general progression from less to more complex, are presented as natural ways of thinking, as problem-solving strategies, and therefore as effective ways of organizing writing. A separate chapter is devoted to each strategy. This part concludes with a chapter on mixing the writing strategies, which explains and shows that writers frequently use these patterns in assorted combinations for various purposes. Planning and writing guidelines are presented for problem/solution and evaluation reports, two common types that rely on a combination of strategies.

Except for Chapter 13, the discussion in each chapter follows a similar approach, first explaining the key elements of the strategy; next pointing out typical classroom and on-the-job applications to show students its practicality; and then providing specific planning, drafting, and revising guidelines. Practical heuristic questions are also posed. A complete student essay, accompanied by questions, follows the discussion section. These essays represent realistic, achievable goals and spur student confidence, while the questions reinforce the general principles of good writing and underscore the points we make in our discussions. Twenty carefully chosen writing suggestions follow the questions in most chapters. All chapters conclude with a section entitled “The Critical Edge.” These sections, intended for above-average students, explain and illustrate how they can advance their writing purpose by synthesizing material from various sources. Synthesis, of course, helps students develop and hone their critical reading and thinking skills. Furthermore, the *Annotated Instructor's Edition* includes suggestions for using the Reader essays and writing strategies to build assignments around themes.

In the third part, we shift from full-length essays to the elements that make them up. Chapter 14 first discusses paragraph unity; it then takes up the topic sentence, adequate development, organization, coherence, and finally introductory, transitional, and concluding paragraphs. Throughout this chapter, as elsewhere, carefully selected examples and exercises form an integral part of the instruction.

Chapter 15 focuses on various strategies for creating effective sentences. Such strategies as coordinating and subordinating ideas and using parallelism help students to increase the versatility of their writing. The concluding section offers practical advice on crafting and arranging sentences so that they work together harmoniously. Some instructors may wish to discuss the chapters on paragraphs and sentences in connection with revision.

Chapter 16, designed to help students improve their writing style, deals with words and their effects. We distinguish between abstract and concrete words as well as between specific and general terms, and we also discuss the dictionary and thesaurus. Levels of diction—formal, informal, and technical—and how to use them are explained, as are tone, various types of figurative language, and irony. The chapter concludes by pointing out how to recognize and avoid wordiness, euphemisms, clichés, mixed metaphors, and sexist language.

The fourth and final part of the Rhetoric concentrates on three specialized types of college and on-the-job writing. Chapter 17 offers practical advice on studying for exams, assessing test questions, and writing essay answers. To facilitate student comprehension, we analyze both good and poor answers to the same exam question and provide an exercise that requires students to perform similar analyses.

Chapter 18 uses Stephen Crane's "The Bride Comes to Yellow Sky" as a springboard for its discussion. The chapter focuses on plot, point of view, character, setting, symbols, irony, and theme—the elements students will most likely be asked to write about. For each element, we first present basic features and then offer writing guidelines. Diverse examples illustrate these elements. The chapter ends with sections that detail the development of a student paper and explain how to include the views of others when writing about literature.

Like other parts of the text, Chapter 19 speaks to a practical reality by reminding students that the value of writing extends beyond the English classroom. Example letters address a variety of practical situations—for example, applying for a summer job.

■ The Research Guide

The Research Guide consists of three chapters. Chapter 20 is a thorough and practical guide to writing library research papers. A sample pacing schedule not only encourages students to plan their work and meet their deadlines but also enables them to track their progress. As in Chapters 2 and 3, a progressive case history gradually evolves into an annotated student paper, which includes the results of a personal interview, thus demonstrating that primary research can reinforce secondary research.

Chapter 21 details and illustrates the correct formats for bibliographical references and in-text citations for both the MLA and APA systems of documentation. Guidelines are based on the 1994 edition of the *Publication Manual of the APA* and current online updates as well as the 1999 edition of *The MLA Style*

Manual. The chapter also explains how to handle the various types of quotations and how to avoid plagiarism. Our detailed treatment in Chapters 20 and 21 should make supplemental handouts or a separate research paper guide unnecessary.

Chapter 22 offers an in-depth discussion of interview, questionnaire, and direct-observation reports. After pointing out the nature, usefulness, and requirements of primary research, we explain how to plan and write each report, concluding with an annotated student model that illustrates the guidelines.

■ The Reader

The Reader, sequenced to follow the order of the strategies as presented in the Rhetoric, expands the utility of the text by providing a collection of forty-four carefully selected professional models that illustrate the various writing strategies and display a wide variety of styles, tones, and subject matter. These essays, together with the nine student models that accompany the various strategy chapters, should make a separate reader unnecessary.

The Reader section opens with a unit entitled “Strategies for Successful Reading.” In it, we discuss how to read for different purposes—for information/evaluation, to critique—and explain how students can use their reading to improve their writing as well as how they can synthesize information from various sources. Several of the guidelines are applied to a professional essay. Instructors can, of course, assign this unit at any point during the term.

Each of the essays clearly illustrates the designated pattern, each has been thoroughly class tested for student interest, and each provides a springboard for a stimulating discussion. In making our selections we have aimed for balance and variety:

1. Some are popular classics by acknowledged prose masters; some, anthologized for the first time, are by fresh, new writers.
2. Some are straightforward and simple, some challenging and complex.
3. Some adopt a humorous, lighthearted approach; some a serious, thoughtful one.
4. Some take a liberal stance, some a conservative one; and some address ethnic, gender, and cultural diversity.
5. A few are rather lengthy; most are relatively brief.

The first essay in each strategy section is annotated in the margin to show which features of the strategy are included. These annotations not only facilitate student understanding but also help link the Rhetoric and Reader into an organic whole. A brief biographical note about the author and a photograph, when available, precede each selection, and stimulating questions designed to enhance student understanding of structure and strategy follow it. In addition, a segment entitled “Toward Key Insights” poses one or more broadbased questions prompted by the essay’s content. Answering these questions, either in discussion

or writing, should help students gain a deeper understanding of important issues. Finally, we include a writing assignment suggested by the essay's topic.

■ The Handbook

The comprehensive Handbook, which features tab indexing on each page for easy access to all material, consists of five parts: "Sentence Elements," "Editing to Correct Sentence Errors," "Editing to Correct Faulty Punctuation and Mechanics," "Spelling," and "Glossary of Word Usage." Explanations skirt unneeded grammatical terminology and are reinforced by sets of sentence exercises in the first three sections. The section on "Sentence Elements" explains how students can use these elements to improve their writing skills. We also include connected-discourse exercises—unfolding narratives that engage and retain student interest and therefore facilitate learning—in the "Sentence Errors" and "Punctuation and Mechanics" sections. Extra sets of twenty-item exercises that parallel those in the Handbook are available upon request to instructors who adopt the book. The "Spelling" unit presents four useful spelling rules and an extensive list of commonly misspelled words. The "Glossary of Word Usage" offers similarly comprehensive coverage of troublesome usages. Instructors can use the Handbook either as a reference guide or as a basis for class discussion.

■ Supplementary Material for Instructors and Students

The *Annotated Instructor's Edition* (0-13-041734-3) consists of the entire student edition as well as strong instructional support. The material in the margins of the text consists of background information on particular aspects of writing; key insights into how students view writing projects and why they experience difficulties; case studies that raise ethical issues for student discussion; answers to all discussion questions and to appropriate exercises in the text; supplementary exercises; teaching strategies and classroom activities that instructors may want to consider; and Reader/Theme strategies that show how to use the Reader to build writing assignments based on themes.

The *Teaching Composition with Strategies for Successful Writing*, Sixth Edition, (0-13-041731-9) supplement offers various suggestions for teaching first-year composition, a sample syllabus for a sequence of two fifteen-week semesters, numerous guidelines for responding to student writing, and a detailed set of grading standards. In addition, it contains an extra set of twenty-item exercises that parallel those in the Handbook section of *Strategies*. The exercises can be used either in the classroom or as assignments.

The companion Web site for *Strategies for Successful Writing*, Sixth Edition, can be accessed at www.prenhall.com/reinking. The site includes lecture notes, self-check quizzes, additional writing models, bulletin board/chat topics, critical thinking questions, and essay questions. WEB CT and Blackboard courses for *Strategies* are complete online courses that include all of the content from the Web site as well as additional material for students and instruc-

tors. These courses are available at a discounted price for instructors who adopt *Strategies*.

The online service www.turnitin.com allows teachers to check if students are copying their assignments from the Internet and is now free to professors using *Strategies for Successful Writing*, Sixth Edition. In addition to helping teachers easily identify instances of Web-based student plagiarism, Turnitin.com also offers a digital archiving system and an online peer review service. Professors set up a “drop box” at the Turnitin.com Web site where their students submit papers. This online service then cross-references each submission with millions of possible online sources. Within 24 hours, teachers receive a customized color-coded “Originality Report,” complete with live links to suspect Internet locations, for each submitted paper. Professors can access the Turnitin.com site free through the faculty resources section of the Reinking Web site at www.prenhall.com/reinking.



The following supplements are free when instructors order any Prentice Hall English textbook. Contact your local representative for details.

■ *The New American Webster Handy College Dictionary*, Third Edition

This dictionary provides more than 115,000 definitions. It includes phrases, slang, scientific terms, advice on usage and grammar, notes on etymology, foreign words and phrases, and a word gazetteer.

ISBN: 0-13-032870-7

■ *English on the Internet 2001: Evaluating Online Sources*

Explains how to access online sources, indicates the most useful English sites, notes popular search engines, and includes a glossary of terms and the latest MLA documentation guidelines for electronic sources.

ISBN: 0-13-022073-6

■ *Guide to Research and Documentation: Prentice Hall Resources for Writing* by Kirk G. Rasmussen

This useful paperback booklet provides students with research and documentation guidelines and is designed for ease of use and portability. It features the most recent information on MLA, APA, CBE, and CM formats and also covers the research process. ISBN: 0-13-081627-2

■ *Model Student Essays* by Mark Gallaher

This anthology features 25 student essays collected from around the country, which are organized into three broad writing categories: writing to explore a personal experience, writing to explain or inform, and writing to argue a position. ISBN: 0-13-645516-6

■ *The Writer's Guide Series* (new)

Provides students and instructors with in-depth coverage of relevant topics, which allows instructors to convey information based on their course structure and students' needs.

Writer's Guide to Document & Web Design ISBN: 0-13-018929-4

Writer's Guide to WAC & Oral Presentations ISBN: 0-13-018931-6

Writer's Guide to Writing About Literature ISBN: 0-13-018932-4

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J.A.R.
A.W.H.
R.v.d.O.

To the Student

No matter what career you choose, your ability to communicate clearly and effectively will directly affect your success. In the classroom, your instructor will often evaluate your mastery of a subject in part by the papers and examinations you write. Prospective employers will make judgments about your qualifications and decide whether to offer you an interview on the basis of your job application letter and résumé. On the job, you will be expected to write clear, accurate reports, memorandums, and letters.

There is nothing mysterious about successful writing. It does not require a special talent, nor does it depend on inspiration. It is simply a skill, and like any other skill, it involves procedures that can be learned. Once you understand them, the more you practice the easier the writing becomes.

Strategies for Successful Writing will help you become a successful writer. And after you graduate it can serve as a useful on-the-job reference if writing problems occur. The first three chapters explore the fundamentals of writing and the general steps in planning, drafting, and revising papers. The next ten explain the basic writing strategies as well as papers that mix them. The following three chapters zero in on paragraphs, sentences, and writing style, and the final six turn to specialized writing—essay examinations, papers about literature, business correspondence, library research papers, and papers based on your own original research results. The book concludes with a Reader and, if you are using the complete version of the text, a Handbook.

From time to time you have probably had the unpleasant experience of using textbooks that seemed to be written for instructors rather than students. In preparing this book, we have tried never to forget that *you* are buying, reading, and using it. As a result, we have written the text with your needs in mind. The book uses simple, everyday language and presents directions in an easy-to-follow format. The chapters on writing strategies provide examples of student essays that supplement the professional essays in the Reader. These student examples represent realistic, achievable goals. When you compare them to the professional examples, you'll see that students can indeed do excellent work. We are confident that by learning to apply the principles in this text, you will write well too.

Here's wishing you success!

Contents

Preface xii
To the Student xix

■ Rhetoric 1

1 Writing: A First Look 2

The Purposes of Writing 3
The Audience for Your Writing 6
The Qualities of Good Writing 9
Writing and Ethics 10

2 Planning and Drafting Your Paper 12

Understanding the Assignment 13
Zeroing In on a Topic 13
Gathering Information 21
Organizing the Information 23
Developing a Thesis Statement 26
Writing the First Draft 29
Planning and Drafting with a Word Processor 32

3 Revising and Editing Your Paper 33

Preparing to Revise 34
Considering the Whole Essay 34
Strengthening Paragraph Structure and Development 42
Sharpening Sentences and Words 43
Proofreading Your Draft 45
Writing the Introduction and Conclusion 45
Selecting a Title 45

Revising with a Word Processor 49
Peer Evaluation of Drafts 50
Collaborative Writing 57
Maintaining and Reviewing a Portfolio 59


4 Narration: Relating Events 60

Purpose 61
Action 61
Conflict 62
Point of View 63
Key Events 64
Dialogue 65
Ethical Issues 66
Writing a Narrative 67
Example Student Essay of Narration:
“The Beach Bum” by Gail Bartlett 68
The Critical Edge 72

5 Description: Presenting Impressions 74

Purpose 75
Sensory Impressions 75
Dominant Impression 77
Vantage Point 78
Selection of Details 79
Arrangement of Details 80
Ethical Issues 80
Writing a Description 81
Example Student Essay of Description:
“The Big One” by Rebecca Mutch 83
The Critical Edge 86

6	Process Analysis: Explaining How	88	Organizing a Comparison 123
	Kinds of Process Analysis Papers 89		Using Analogy 124
	Ethical Issues 91		Ethical Issues 125
	Writing a Process Analysis 91		Writing a Comparison 126
	Example Student Essay of Process Analysis: "The ABC's of CPR" by Kathy Petroski 95		Example Student Essay of Comparison: "Different Shifts, Different Actions" by Claire Mutter 128
	The Critical Edge 98		The Critical Edge 130
7	Illustration: Making Yourself Clear	100	10 Cause and Effect: Explaining Why
	Selecting Appropriate Examples 101		132
	Number of Examples 101		Patterns in Causal Analysis 133
	Organizing the Examples 102		Reasoning Errors in Causal Analysis 135
	Ethical Issues 103		Ethical Issues 137
	Writing an Illustration 103		Writing a Causal Analysis 137
	Example Student Essay of Illustration: "A Lesson from Nature" by Mike Braendle 105		Example Student Essay of Cause and Effect: "Why Students Drop Out of College" by Diann Fisher 140
	The Critical Edge 107		The Critical Edge 144
8	Classification: Grouping into Categories	109	11 Definition: Establishing Boundaries
	Selecting Categories 111		146
	Number of Categories 112		Types of Definitions 147
	Developing Categories 112		Ethical Issues 151
	Ethical Issues 114		Writing an Extended Definition 152
	Writing a Classification 115		Example Student Essay of Definition: "The Food Chain" by Michael Galayda 154
	Example Student Essay of Classification: "Undesirable Produce Market Customers" by Clarence DeLong 116		The Critical Edge 158
	The Critical Edge 118		12 Argument: Convincing Others
9	Comparison: Showing Relationships	120	160
	Selecting Items for Comparison 121		The Rational Appeal 161
	Developing a Comparison 122		The Emotional Appeal 170
			The Ethical Appeal 171
			Ferretting Out Fallacies 172
			Ethical Issues 176

Writing an Argument	177		
Example Student Essay of Argument: “The Right to Bear Arms” by Brenda Buehrle	182		
The Critical Edge	185		
13 Mixing the Writing Strategies	187		
Why and How to Mix Strategies	187		
Ethical Issues	188		
Problem/Solution Report	188		
Evaluation Report	189		
Example Essay Using Several Writing Strategies: “Eating Alone in Restaurants” by <i>Bruce Jay Friedman</i>	190		
The Critical Edge	193		
14 Paragraphs	195		
Characteristics of Effective Paragraphs	195		
Paragraphs with Special Functions	211		
15 Effective Sentences	218		
Sentence Strategies	219		
Beyond the Single Sentence	232		
16 Diction, Tone, Style	235		
Toward Clear Diction	235		
Toward Rhetorical Effect	241		
Special Stylistic Techniques	250		
Eliminating Flawed Diction	253		
17 The Essay Examination	258		
Studying for the Examination	258		
Types of Test Questions	259		
Preparing to Write	259		
Writing the Examination Answer	260		
18 Writing About Literature	266		
The Elements of Literature	267		
Ethical Issues	288		
Writing a Paper on Literature	288		
Example Student Essay on Literature: “Scratchy Wilson: No Cardboard Character” by Wendell Stone	291		
19 Business Letters and Résumés	295		
Letter Language	295		
Parts of the Business Letter	297		
Preparation for Mailing	299		
E-Mail Correspondence	300		
Types of Letters	300		
Résumés	309		
 Research Guide	313		
.....			
20 The Library Research Paper	315		
Learning About Your Library	316		
Choosing a Topic	317		
Assembling a Working Bibliography	322		
Taking Notes	345		
Organizing and Outlining	352		
Ethical Issues	354		
Writing Your Research Paper	355		
Example Student Research Paper: “House Arrest: An Attractive Alternative to Incarceration” by Keith Jacque	358		
Using a Word Processor	373		
21 Documenting Sources	376		
Preparing Proper MLA and APA Bibliographic References	376		
Handling In-Text Citations	391		

Handling Quotations 397

Avoiding Plagiarism 400

22 Additional Research Strategies: Interviews, Questionnaires, Direct Observations 403

The Value of Primary Research 403

General Principles for Primary
Research 404

Ethical Issues 405

Interviews 406

Example Student Interview Report: "Budget
Cuts Affect State Police: An Interview
Report with Officer Robert Timmons" by
Holly Swain 409

Questionnaires 410

Example Student Questionnaire: "Survey on
Public Smoking" by Kelly Reetz 413

Example Student Questionnaire Report:
"Findings from Smoking Questionnaire
Distributed to Bartram College Students"
by Kelly Reetz 416

Direct Observations 417

Example Student Observation Report:
"Observations of an Inner-City Apartment
Building" by Caleb Thomas 421

■ Reader 425

Strategies for Successful Reading 427

Following an Effective Reading
Strategy 427

"The Appeal of the Androgynous Man"
by Amy Gross 430

Reading as a Writer 432

Rhetorical Table of Contents

Narration 434

"The Perfect Picture" by James Alexander Thom 434

"Sound and Fury" by Dan Greenburg 436

"Momma's Encounter" by Maya Angelou 439

"For My Indian Daughter" by Lewis Sawaquat 443

Description 446

"When the Full Moon Shines Its Magic over
Monument Valley" by John V. Young 446

"In the Jungle" by Annie Dillard 448

"Assembly Line Adventure"

by Lesley Hazleton 452

"Once More to the Lake" by E. B. White 456

Process Analysis 461

"Fast Track to Perfection" by Ian Dunbar 461
From "The Spider and the Wasp"

by Alexander Petrunkevitch 465

"Let's Get Vertical!" by Beth Wald 467

"The Knife" by Richard Selzer 470

Illustration 474

"Binge Drinking, A Campus Killer"

by Sabrina Rubin Erdely 474

"Rambos of the Road" by Martin Gottfried 478

"Going for Broke" by Matea Gold and

David Ferrell 481

"The Company Man" by Ellen Goodman 485

Classification 488

"What Are Friends For?" by Marion Winik 488

"The Men We Carry in Our Minds"

by Scott Russell Sanders 491

"The Myth of the Latin Woman: I Just Met a Girl
Named María" by Judith Ortiz Cofer 494

"Which Stooge Are You?" by Ron Geraci 499

Comparison 504

"Grant and Lee: A Study in Contrasts"

by Bruce Catton 504

"Conversational Ballgames"

by Nancy Masterson Sakamoto 507

"Then and Now" by Mary Pipher 510

- "Private Language, Public Language"
by *Richard Rodriguez* 520
"Coming Home" by *Marjorie Waters* 525

Cause and Effect 527

- "Old Father Time Becomes a Terror"
by *Richard Tomkins* 527
"Gender Gap in Cyberspace"
by *Deborah Tannen* 531
"Why Marriages Fail" by *Anne Roiphe* 533
"Black Men and Public Space"
by *Brent Staples* 536

Definition 540

- "The Sweet Smell of Success Isn't All That Sweet"
by *Laurence Shames* 540
"The Power of Play" by *Hara Estroff*
Marano 542
"The Insufficiency of Honesty"
by *Stephen L. Carter* 547
"When Is It Rape?" by *Nancy Gibbs* 552

Argument 560

- "Death and Justice" by *Edward I. Koch* 560
"Execution" by *Anna Quindlen* 564
"Sexual Harassment Is a Serious Problem at
Universities" by *Marilyn Gaye Piety* 566
"Sexual Harassment Is Overestimated"
by *Gretchen Morgenson* 571
"I Have a Dream" by *Martin Luther King, Jr.* 576
"A Journalist's View of Black Economics"
by *William Raspberry* 580
"Close the Borders to All Newcomers"
by *Daniel James* 586
"Give Us Your Best, Your Brightest"
by *Stephen Moore* 590

Mixing the Writing Strategies 595

- "Blur: Cheetahs. Ranchers. Hope."
by *Susan Zimmerman* 595
"She's Your Basic L.O.L. in N.A.D."
by *Perri Klass* 601
"The Uses of a Word" by *Gloria Naylor* 604

Thematic Table of Contents

Life's Changes

- "The Perfect Picture" by *James Alexander Thom* 434
"Sound and Fury" by *Dan Greenburg* 436
"Momma's Encounter" by *Maya Angelou* 439
"For My Indian Daughter"
by *Lewis Sawaqual* 443
"Once More to the Lake" by *E. B. White* 456
"The Company Man" by *Ellen Goodman* 485
"Then and Now" by *Mary Pipher* 510
"Private Language, Public Language"
by *Richard Rodriguez* 520
"Coming Home" by *Marjorie Waters* 525
"Old Father Time Becomes a Terror"
by *Richard Tomkins* 527
"Why Marriages Fail" by *Anne Roiphe* 533
"Black Men and Public Space"
by *Brent Staples* 536

Who We Are

- "The Appeal of the Androgynous Man"
by *Amy Gross* 430
"Sound and Fury" by *Dan Greenburg* 436
"Assembly Line Adventure"
by *Lesley Hazleton* 452
"Binge Drinking, A Campus Killer"
by *Sabrina Rubin Erdely* 474
"Rambos of the Road" by *Martin Gottfried* 478
"Going for Broke" by *Metee Gold* and
David Ferrell 481
"The Company Man" by *Ellen Goodman* 485
"What Are Friends For?" by *Marion Winik* 488
"The Men We Carry in Our Minds"
by *Scott Russell Sanders* 491
"The Myth of the Latin Woman"
by *Judith Ortiz Cofer* 494
"Which Stooge Are You?" by *Ron Geraci* 499
"Grant and Lee: A Study in Contrasts"
by *Bruce Catton* 504
"Then and Now" by *Mary Pipher* 510
"Gender Gap in Cyberspace"
by *Deborah Tannen* 531
"Why Marriages Fail" by *Anne Roiphe* 533
"The Sweet Smell of Success Isn't All That Sweet"
by *Laurence Shames* 540

- "The Power of Play" by *Hara Estroff Marano* 542
 "The Insufficiency of Honesty"
 by *Stephen L. Carter* 547
 "The Uses of a Word" by *Gloria Naylor* 604

Our Relationship to Nature

- "When the Full Moon Shines Its Magic over
 Monument Valley" by *John V. Young* 446
 "In the Jungle" by *Annie Dillard* 448
 "Once More to the Lake" by *E. B. White* 456
 From "The Spider and the Wasp"
 by *Alexander Petrunkevitch* 465
 "Let's Get Vertical!" by *Beth Wald* 467
 "The Knife" by *Richard Selzer* 470
 "The Power of Play" by *Hara Estroff Marano* 542
 "Blur: Cheetahs. Ranchers. Hope."
 by *Susan Zimmerman* 595

Health

- "Sound and Fury" by *Dan Greenburg* 436
 "The Knife" by *Richard Selzer* 470
 "Binge Drinking, A Campus Killer"
 by *Sabrina Rubin Erdely* 474
 "Rambos of the Road" by *Martin Gottfried* 478
 "Going for Broke" by *Matea Gold* and
David Ferrell 481
 "The Company Man" by *Ellen Goodman* 485
 "Old Father Time Becomes a Terror"
 by *Richard Tomkins* 527
 "The Power of Play" by *Hara Estroff Marano* 542
 "She's Your Basic L.O.L. in N.A.D."
 by *Perri Klass* 601

Contemporary Issues

Women's Issues

- "The Appeal of the Androgynous Man"
 by *Amy Gross* 430
 "The Men We Carry in Our Minds"
 by *Scott Russell Sanders* 491
 "The Myth of the Latin Woman"
 by *Judith Ortiz Cofer* 494
 "Then and Now" by *Mary Pipher* 510
 "Gender Gap in Cyberspace"
 by *Deborah Tannen* 531
 "When Is It Rape?" by *Nancy Gibbs* 552

- "Sexual Harassment Is a Serious Problem at
 Universities" by *Marilyn Gaye Piety* 566
 "Sexual Harassment Is Overestimated"
 by *Gretchen Morgenson* 571

Diversity in Our Lives

- "Momma's Encounter" by *Maya Angelou* 439
 "For My Indian Daughter" by *Lewis Sawaquat* 443
 "The Myth of the Latin Woman"
 by *Judith Ortiz Cofer* 494
 "Conversational Ballgames"
 by *Nancy Masterson Sakamoto* 507
 "Private Language, Public Language"
 by *Richard Rodriguez* 520
 "Gender Gap in Cyberspace"
 by *Deborah Tannen* 531
 "Black Men and Public Space" by *Brent Staples* 536
 "Sexual Harassment Is a Serious Problem at
 Universities" by *Marilyn Gaye Piety* 566
 "Sexual Harassment Is Overestimated"
 by *Gretchen Morgenson* 571
 "I Have a Dream" by *Martin Luther King, Jr.* 576
 "A Journalist's View of Black Economics"
 by *William Raspberry* 580
 "Close the Borders to All Newcomers"
 by *Daniel James* 586
 "Give Us Your Best, Your Brightest"
 by *Stephen Moore* 590
 "The Uses of a Word" by *Gloria Naylor* 604

Crime and Punishment

- "When Is It Rape?" by *Nancy Gibbs* 552
 "Death and Justice" by *Edward I. Koch* 560
 "Execution" by *Anna Quindlen* 564
 "Sexual Harassment Is a Serious Problem at
 Universities" by *Marilyn Gaye Piety* 566
 "Sexual Harassment Is Overestimated"
 by *Gretchen Morgenson* 571

Language Use and Abuse

- "Sound and Fury" by *Dan Greenburg* 436
 "Momma's Encounter" by *Maya Angelou* 439
 "For My Indian Daughter" by *Lewis Sawaquat* 443
 "Fast Track to Perfection" by *Ian Dunbar* 461
 "The Knife" by *Richard Selzer* 470
 "The Myth of the Latin Woman"
 by *Judith Ortiz Cofer* 494