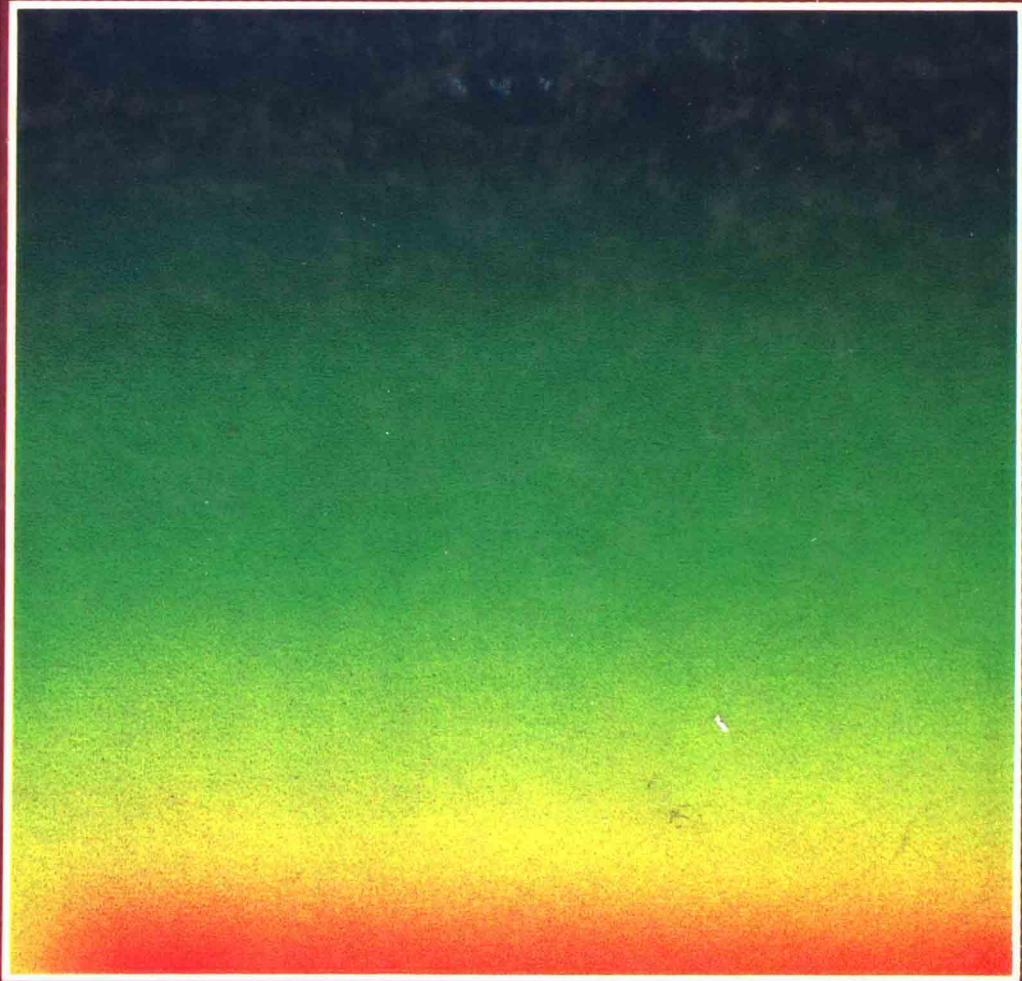


WRITING AND LEARNING



Anne Ruggles Gere

ANNE RUGGLES GERE

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON



Writing and Learning

MACMILLAN PUBLISHING COMPANY

NEW YORK

COLLIER MACMILLAN PUBLISHERS

LONDON

Acknowledgments

E. B. White. *Letters of E. B. White*. Letter to Alison Marks, April 20, 1956 (p. 417) in *LETTERS OF E. B. WHITE*, Collected and Edited by Dorothy Lobrano Guth. Copyright © 1976 by E. B. White. Reprinted by permission of Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc.

Richard Rodriguez. *Hunger for Memory*. From *Hunger for Memory* by Richard Rodriguez. Reprinted by permission of David R. Godine, Publisher, Boston.

Tom Wolfe. *The Right Stuff*. Excerpt from *The Right Stuff* by Tom Wolfe. Copyright © 1979 by Tom Wolfe. Reprinted by permission of Farrar, Straus and Giroux, Inc.

Paul Connolly. *On Essays*. Pages 1–2 “What Is an Essay?” (Introduction) from *ON ESSAYS: A Reader for Writers* by Paul H. Connolly. Copyright © 1981 by Paul H. Connolly. Reprinted by permission of Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc.

Harper Lee. *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Excerpt on page 293 from *TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD* by Harper Lee (J. B. Lippincott). Copyright © 1960 by Harper Lee. Reprinted by permission of Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc.

Business Week. “How Mt. St. Helens Is Burying Tourism.” Reprinted from the July 21, 1980 issue of *Business Week* by special permission, © 1980 by McGraw-Hill, Inc.

Arthur C. Morgan. “Mount St. Helens Theology.” Copyright 1984 Christian Century Foundation. Reprinted by permission from the July 2–9, 1980 issue of *The Christian Century*.

P. R. Hooper. “Composition of the Mount St. Helens Ashfall in the Moscow–Pullman Area on 18 May 1980.” Reprinted with permission from *Science*, Vol. 209 (5 September 1980), pp. 1125–1126. Copyright 1980 by the American Association for the Advancement of *Science*.

Anthony DeCrosta. "Volcanic Ash and What It Means to Gardeners." Reprinted from *Organic Gardening*, Emmaus, PA 18049, September, 1980 with the permission of Rodale Press, Inc., copyright 1980.

Charlotte Ford. *Charlotte Ford's Book of Modern Manners*. Copyright © 1979 by Charlotte Ford. Reprinted by permission of SIMON & SCHUSTER, Inc.

Judith Martin. "Dating" from *Miss Manners' Guide to Excruciatingly Correct Behavior*. Copyright © 1979, 1980, 1981, 1982 by United Feature Syndicate, Inc. Reprinted with the permission of Atheneum Publishers.

Aldo Leopold. *A Sand County Almanac*. From *A Sand County Almanac, with other essays on conservation from Round River* by Aldo Leopold. Copyright © 1949, 1953, 1966, renewed 1977, 1981 by Oxford University Press, Inc. Reprinted by permission.

John Updike. "Central Park." Copyright © 1956 by John Updike. Reprinted from *Assorted Prose*, by John Updike, by permission of Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. Originally appeared in *The New Yorker*.

Joseph Katz and Denise Cronin. "Sexuality and College Life." From *Change* magazine, 1980. Reprinted by permission.

College Student Personnel Abstracts. From *College Student Personnel Abstracts*, Vol. 16, No. 1, Fall 1980, p. 98. Reprinted by permission.

Revised Standard Version. From the *Revised Standard Version of the Bible*, copyrighted 1946, 1952 © 1971, 1973. Reprinted by permission.

Reader's Digest Version. Reprinted from "The Reader's Digest Bible," copyright © 1982 by The Reader's Digest Association, Inc. Reprinted by permission.

May Swenson. "The Universe." From *New & Selected Things Taking Place* by May Swenson. Copyright © 1963 by May Swenson. First appeared in *The Hudson Review*. By permission of Little, Brown and Company in association with the Atlantic Monthly Press.

H. W. Janson. *History of Art*. Reprinted from *History of Art* by H. W. Janson. Published in 1977 by Harry N. Abrams, Inc. New York. All rights reserved.

James O'Brien. "The Future for Satellite-Derived Surface Winds." First published in *Oceanus*, the magazine of the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, in 1981. Reprinted by permission.

John A. Daly and Wayne G. Shamo. "Writing apprehension and occupational choice." From the *Journal of Occupational Psychology*, 1976, **49**, 55-56. Reprinted with the permission of the British Psychological Society.

David Brewster. "Revising the Downward Drift of American Education." From *The Weekly* (12/8/82). Reprinted by permission.

Robert Frost. "Education by Poetry." From *Selected Prose of Robert Frost*, edited by Hyde Cox and Edward Connery Lathem. Copyright © 1966 by Holt, Rinehart and Winston. Reprinted by permission of Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Publishers.

Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature. Copyright © 1970, 1971 by The H.W. Wilson Company. Material reproduced by permission of the publisher.

Applied Science & Technology Index. Copyright © 1971, 1972 by The H.W. Wilson Company. Material reproduced by permission of the publisher.

Meteorological & Geostrophysical Abstracts. "Radar forecast aide," by Waldheuser and Hughes. From *Meteorological & Geostrophysical Abstracts*, January 1970, Vol. 21, No. 1, Pages 76-77. Copyright by the American Meteorological Society. Reprinted by permission.

New York Times Index. From the *New York Times Index*, Vol. 58, 1970, Pages 1899-1900. Copyright © 1970 by The New York Times Company. Reprinted by permission.

Book Review Digest. Copyright © 1971 by The H.W. Wilson Company. Material reproduced by permission.

Book Review Index. Selected from *Book Review Index, 1983 Cumulation*, edited by Gary C. Tarbert (copyright © 1983, 1984 by Gale Research Company; reprinted by permission of the publisher) Gale Research, 1983, p. 248.

Humanities Index. Copyright © 1978, 1979 by The H.W. Wilson Company. Material reproduced by permission of the publisher.

Psychological Abstracts. This citation is reprinted with permission of *Psychological Abstracts* and the PsycINFO Database (copyright © by the American Psychological Association), and may not be reproduced without its prior permission. Further information may be obtained by addressing requests to: PsycINFO, American Psychological Association, 1200 Seventeenth Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

Susan Sontag. *On Photography*. Copyright © 1973, 1974 by Susan Sontag. Reprinted by permission of Farrar, Straus and Giroux Inc.

Interview with Truman Capote. From *Writers at Work: The Paris Interviews*, First Series, edited by Malcom Cowley. Copyright © 1958 by The Paris Review Inc. Reprinted by permission of Viking Penguin Inc.

Simply Stated. "Plain English Boilerplate" from *Simply Stated* #28. Reprinted with the permission of the Document Design Center.

Tom Robbins. *Another Roadside Attraction*. Excerpt from *Another Roadside Attraction* by Tom Robbins. Copyright © 1971 by Thomas E. Robbins. Reprinted by permission of Doubleday & Company, Inc.

E. B. White. *Essays of E. B. White*. (First paragraph p. 71)—Allen Cove, February 8, 1975—in *ESSAYS OF E. B. WHITE*. Copyright © 1975 by E. B. White. Originally appeared in *The New Yorker*.

David Brewster. *The Best Places*. Sasquatch Publishing Company, 1981. Reprinted by permission.

Lewis Thomas. *The Lives of a Cell*. From *The Lives of a Cell* by Lewis Thomas. Copyright © 1974 by Lewis Thomas. Reprinted by permission of Viking Penguin Inc.

Loren Eiseley. *The Star Thrower*. Copyright © 1978 by The Estate of Loren C. Eiseley. Reprinted by permission of TIMES BOOKS/The New York Times Book Co., Inc.

J. Bronowski. *The Ascent of Man*. From *The Ascent of Man* by J. Bronowski. Copyright © 1973 by J. Bronowski. By permission of Little, Brown and Company.

Jung Waser, et al. *Chem One*. Copyright 1980 by McGraw-Hill Book Company. Reproduced with permission.

Joan Didion. "Why I Write." Reprinted by permission of Wallace & Sheil Agency, Inc. Copyright © 1976 by Joan Didion. First appeared in *The New York Times Book Review*.

Barbara Tuchman. *Practicing History*. Copyright 1981. Reprinted with the permission of Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.

Dictionary entry. Copyright © 1982 by Houghton Mifflin Company. Reprinted by permission from *The American Heritage Dictionary, Second College Edition*.

Preface



Learning makes the world look different. Learn a new word, and suddenly that word appears in your reading; the word was probably there before, but learning helps you see it. Learn a person's name, and suddenly you start meeting that person in your daily travels. Learn to write about a subject, and suddenly you see aspects of that subject that had never before occurred to you. This book assumes that learning is a new way of seeing, that writing and learning are closely connected, and that both contribute to new views of the world. These are the central assumptions, but there are others:

1. *Writing is a recursive process that occurs over time.*
2. *What is learned in a writing course should have application in other courses.*
3. *Learning is a complex and ongoing process.*
4. *Learning to write is not the same as writing to show learning.*

There are two major sections in this book, reflecting the difference between learning to write and writing to show learning. The first part of the book concentrates on learning to write. It begins with a discussion of what writing is, suggests ways of starting to write, considers the role of audience in writing, and then examines strategies for drafting. These strategies are arranged in order of difficulty, and each builds on the previous one so that, for example, argument or writing to convince includes strategies of narration and explanation. Exploratory writing comes last in this section because it is the most difficult and inclusive kind of writing.

The exercises throughout these chapters provide opportunities to use what has just been learned, and suggestions for further writing invite more extensive prose.

Part Two focuses on writing to show learning by discussing strategies for revising. These strategies include reseeing entire pieces of writing in terms of organization, cohesion, and style; reshaping paragraphs and sentences; and polishing writing to conform with conventions of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, usage, and accepted formats such as documentation style. The index provides easy reference for questions about writing.

This text combines the best of traditional approaches with innovations based on current theory and research in composition. There are discussions of writing strategies, samples of both professional and student writing, a usage handbook and other reference guides, and chapters that consider whole essays as well as chapters that focus on paragraphs, sentences, and words. There are sections on narration, exposition, and argument, and sections on research papers and business letters. In line with recent discussions of the modes of discourse, narration is combined with description, and it and exposition and argument are presented as strategies for drafting rather than as modes to be emulated. Exploration, a fourth strategy, is added to the traditional modes to emphasize the connection between generating and evaluating ideas. Revision is presented as a multi-step process and occupies the second half of the book.

In keeping with the view of writing as a process, the chapters in this book move from prewriting to revising and editing. The chapters on narrating, explaining, convincing, and exploring suggest many ways of drafting, and the second half of the book underscores the idea that writing is revising by beginning with what I call *conceptual* revision and moving progressively toward smaller units of language. Although conventions of printing require chapters to be arranged in linear form, this book recognizes that stages in the process of writing double back on one another and suggests ways for writers to move freely from one stage to another.

Writing assignments from many disciplines are included, and adaptations of writing strategies to these various purposes are discussed. Perhaps most important, this text assumes that writing and learning cannot be separated, that learning in history or physics or art involves more than mastering subject matter, and that effective writing requires knowledge as well as control of the conventions of writing. In other words, this text does not support instructors who claim, "If you composition people would just teach students to write, I will teach them what they need to know about my

field.” Nor does it excuse students who complain, “But I know all the material. It’s not fair to give me a C on this paper just because it’s not well written.”

The definition of learning in this book distinguishes between training and education, a distinction illustrated by the following anecdote:

A blind man was asked how long it had taken to train his guide dog, and he retorted angrily, “That dog is not trained. He is educated.”

Sensing that his listener was startled, he continued, “Lots of dogs are trained. They will roll over or shake hands if you tell them to; they can respond to commands. But this dog is educated. If we are walking down the street and there is a hole up ahead, this dog will sit down and refuse to move. It wouldn’t matter what I said; he would not lead me into that hole. A trained dog would do what I told him to, and we both would fall into the hole. Educating takes a lot longer and costs much more than training.”

Learning, as it is used in this book, refers to this lifelong process of educating rather than training.

Throughout both parts, this book presents writing, like education itself, as a series of choices rather than as rules that must be followed slavishly. In so doing, it emphasizes that without learning there is no writing, and that without writing, learning becomes more like training than education.

I have learned a great deal while working on this book. Much of it resulted from the process of writing, but many people also contributed to my writing and learning. In her study of the printing press as an agent of change, Elizabeth Eisenstein notes that widespread publication created new intellectual communities, and nearly every chapter of this book owes a debt to the intellectual community in which I participate through books and articles as well as conversations. A more detailed explanation of sources appears in the Instructor’s Manual, but I would like to acknowledge a number of individuals here: Glenda Bissex, Rexford Brown, and Janet Emig in Chapter 1; Ann Berthoff, Peter Elbow, Thomas Lee Hilgers, Roy Hughes, D. Gordon Rohman, and Ann Wotring in Chapter 2; Barry Kroll, Fred R. Pfister, and Joanne F. Petrich in Chapter 3; James Britton, Stephen Dunning, and Frances Yates in Chapter 4; Benjamin Bloom, Elaine Maimon, Philip Phenix, and Mike Rose in Chapter 5; George Lakoff, Mark Johnson, and Chaim Perelman in Chapter 6; Peter Elbow and Richard Larson in Chapter 7; Virginia Tiefel and Paula Walker in Chapter 8; Ken Davis, Michael Halliday, Requa Hasan, and Donald Murray in Chapter 9; Stephen Dunning, Walker Gibson, and Martin Joos in Chapter

10; Arthur Stern in Chapter 11; Frank O'Hare in Chapter 12; George Dillon and Mina Shaughnessy in Chapter 13; and Eugene Smith in Chapters 14 and 15.

For over a decade now, I have enjoyed a supportive academic home at the University of Washington. William Irmscher and Charles Schuster have provided continuing collegial support, and they, along with Richard Dunn, Chair of the English Department, and Elizabeth Feetham, its Administrative Assistant, help explain why my professional life has been such a happy one. Eugene Smith, valued colleague and friend, has collaborated with me on a number of projects, and this book was no exception. He contributed substantially to the sections on grammar, usage, and sentence revision. Always generous and helpful, Eugene also sustained me in the long process of writing and rewriting. Members of my writing group responded to draft after draft of the manuscript, and many of the suggestions of Mary Kollar, Thomas Roesler, Sandra Silberstein, Charles Schuster, and Linda Sullivan have been incorporated into these pages.

We who teach learn twice, and my students have tutored me continually. Many of them took a lively interest in this book, giving me permission to use samples of their writing. Those whose work is included are: Ken Anderson, Rachelle Brown, Debbie Carlson, Tim Dereg, Eva Godwin, Helen Halstead, Cara Homestead, Jordan Kleber, Phil Knoll, Mike Langley, Matthew Luke, Donna Mixon, Byron Nakagawa, Helen Pearson, Steve Reed, Jane Reifel, Bruce Schmitz, Roy Schuler, and Russ Tolsma. Ruth Nicholson Siguenza and Connie So, whose student careers at the University of Washington coincided with the writing of this book, shared much of their educational experience with me, and my pleasure in watching their growth was equalled by what I learned from them.

Teaching is not an accurate description for my experience as director of the Puget Sound Writing Program, although that has been my function. I have learned much from the instructors who participated in that program. In particular, I wish to thank Lori Eichelberg, Brian Herbison, Roy Hughes, Pat Juell, Elmer Keiski, Steve Pearse, Tom Watson, and my assistants, Linda Clifton and Ralph Stevens.

It was my work with the Puget Sound Writing Program which first made me aware of the powerful connections between writing and learning. That awareness was sharpened by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities for a project titled "Writing to Learn in the Humanities." Ralph Stevens helped envision the project, Crale Hopkins of NEH helped turn it into a reality, and the instructors who worked with me on it helped shape my thinking about writing and learning.

As *Writing and Learning* evolved from draft to draft, it benefitted from thoughtful and intelligent reading by a number of scholars and teachers of writing. Among them are: Patricia Bizzell (Holy Cross College), Philip P. Boshoff (Skidmore College), David A. Jolliffe (University of Illinois at Chicago), Richard L. Larson (Herbert H. Lehman College of CUNY), Gerald Levin (University of Akron), Susan Miller (University of Utah), John C. Schafer (Humboldt State University), Marilyn S. Sternglass (Indiana University), Josephine Koster Tavers (The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill), Thomas N. Trzyna (Seattle Pacific University), Clemewell Young (Manchester Community College), and John Warnock (University of Wyoming). Tony English initially encouraged this book, and Eben W. Ludlow saw it through to the end. They, along with Joel Brauser, Production Supervisor, and Robert Freese, Book Designer, made my association with Macmillan consistently productive and satisfying.

As convention dictates, the first are last: My family, that complex network of immediate and extended kinship stretching from Seattle to the East Coast, made this book possible. I cannot enumerate all the loving gifts of time and talent, but I can say a heartfelt thank you to Cindy, Sam and, especially, Budge.

Contents



PREFACE	ix
<hr/>	
PART ONE	<i>Writing to Learn</i>
<hr/>	
CHAPTER ONE	<i>Writing and Learning: An Overview</i> 3
What Is Writing?	3
Writing Is Communication	4
Writing Is Self-Expression	6
Writing Is Public	9
Writing Is Governed by Rules	11
Writing Is Learning	13
The Context of Writing	17
Types of Writing	17
Circumstances of Writing	18
The Writer's Experiences	18
The Writer's Attitudes	20
Writing Process Papers	21
Writing and Learning in College	24
For Further Writing	26
<hr/>	
CHAPTER TWO	<i>Prewriting</i> 27
What Is Prewriting?	27
Free Writing	29
Journals	30
Paraphrasing	36
Dialogues	39

Role Playing	40	
Lists	43	
Responding to the Context of Writing	47	
Taking Cues from Assignments	47	
Asking Questions of Assignments	50	
Organizing Time for Writing	52	
For Further Writing	54	
<hr/>		
CHAPTER THREE	<i>Considering Your Audience</i>	55
Perspectives on Your Audience	55	
Seeing Your Audience	58	
Asking Questions	60	
Your Audience As Readers	74	
Cues	74	
Conventions	76	
Your Audience As Responders	81	
Writing Groups	81	
The Writer As Audience	85	
For Further Writing	86	
<hr/>		
CHAPTER FOUR	<i>Narrative in Writing</i>	87
What Is Narrative?	87	
Memory	89	
Selection	93	
Selecting Your Own Language	94	
Selecting the Most Important Parts	105	
Selecting According to Audience	112	
Strategies of Arrangement	113	
Chronology	114	
Degree of Importance	117	
Narrative As a Foundation	120	
For Further Writing	121	
<hr/>		
CHAPTER FIVE	<i>Writing to Explain</i>	123
Strategies of Exposition	124	
Defining	125	
Illustrating	129	
Categorizing	131	

Contents

Establishing Criteria	141	
Arts and Humanities	143	
Natural Sciences	146	
Social Sciences	148	
Tracing Implications	152	
Causal Relationships	154	
Expository Writing	156	
For Further Writing	160	
<hr/>		
CHAPTER SIX	<i>Writing to Convince</i>	161
Persuasion and Argument	161	
Persuasion	163	
Ethos	164	
Pathos	168	
Argument	171	
Knowing When to Argue	172	
Propositions	175	
Defining the Terms of Propositions	176	
Structuring with Propositions	178	
Reasoning	185	
Induction	185	
Deduction	187	
Narrative	188	
Explanations	190	
Specifying Agent	192	
Using Evidence	194	
Avoiding Fallacies	196	
For Further Writing	201	
<hr/>		
CHAPTER SEVEN	<i>Exploration Within the Writer</i>	203
What Is Internal Exploration?	203	
Divergence	204	
Metaphor	205	
Biopoems	209	
Lies	211	
Convergence	212	
The Five W's	212	
Questions About Events or Processes	216	
Questions About Single Items	221	
Questions About Abstract Concepts	224	
For Further Writing	226	

CHAPTER EIGHT *Exploration Outside the Writer* 227PART TWO *Writing to Show Learning*

CHAPTER NINE *Revising Through Rethinking* 259

CHAPTER TEN *Revising Style* 290

CHAPTER ELEVEN	<i>Revising Paragraphs</i>	311
	Paragraphs	311
	Types of Paragraphs	312
	Revising for Purpose	320
	Revising for Organization	323
	Revising for Cohesion	326
	Revising for Style	328
CHAPTER TWELVE	<i>Revising Sentences</i>	331
	Perspective on Sentences	331
	Revising to Clarify	332
	Revising to Make Interesting	341
	Revising to Increase Aesthetic Pleasure	347
CHAPTER THIRTEEN	<i>Revising Sentences to Acknowledge Conventions</i>	354
	Perspective on Conventions	354
	Revising Spelling	357
	Self-Assessment	357
	Learning Appropriate Rules	360
	Confusing Homophones	361
	Eliminating Word Confusions	365
	Eliminating Misspelled Words	373
	Revising Punctuation	374
	Punctuating to Enclose	375
	Punctuating to Separate	379
	Punctuating to Join	382
	Punctuating to End	384
	Punctuating to Show Omission	385
	Punctuating with the Apostrophe	385
	Revising to Acknowledge Other Conventions	387
	Capitalization	387
	Abbreviations	388
	Hyphens	389
	Italics	390
	Numbers	391
	Revising Usage	393
	Proofreading	401
CHAPTER FOURTEEN	<i>Revising Format</i>	402
	The Importance of Format	402
	The Essay Exam	404

The Research Paper	407
Documentation	408
The Business Letter	426
The Résumé	428

CHAPTER FIFTEEN	<i>Concise Grammar</i>	430
-----------------	------------------------	-----

Sentences	430
Complements	431
Modifiers	433
Phrases	433
Clauses	435
Sentence Types	436
Tense, Number, and Person	437
Aspect	438
Mood	439
Voice	440
Agreement	440

INDEX	443
-------	-----

PART ONE



Writing to Learn

*In written speech,
we are obliged to create the situation,
to represent it to ourselves.*

Lev Vygotsky