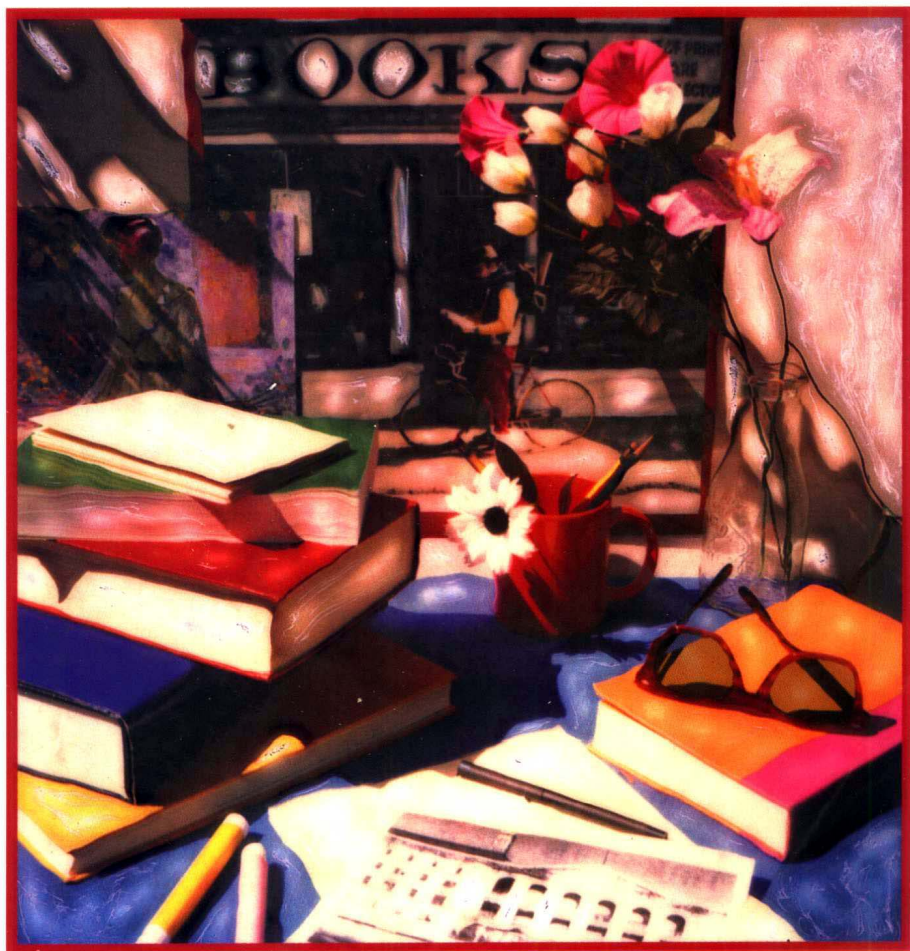


THE WRITER'S RESOURCE Readings for Composition

Third Edition



SUSAN DAY

ELIZABETH McMAHAN

The Writer's Resource

READINGS FOR COMPOSITION

Third Edition

Susan Day

Illinois State University

Elizabeth McMahan

Illinois State University

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

SUSAN DAY has lived in Bloomington-Normal, Illinois, for over twenty years, attending Illinois State University as a student (B.S. in English Education, M.S. in English) and working there as a teacher since 1973. Nevertheless, Susie has managed to have an eventful and entertaining life, portions of which she will relate in surprising detail to complete strangers. With Elizabeth McMahan, she has co-authored three college texts for McGraw-Hill: *The Writer's Rhetoric and Handbook*, *The Writer's Handbook*, and *The Writer's Resource: Readings for Composition*. Because her presentations are practical, funny, and brief, Susie frequently appears as a speaker at professional conventions. If one could make a living as a conversationalist, she would; the occupation of writing helpful, amusing textbooks runs a close second.

ELIZABETH McMAHAN, professor of English at Illinois State University, grew up in College Station where her father taught physics at Texas A & M. Her B.A. and M.A. degrees in English are from the University of Houston; her Ph.D. (in American literature) is from the University of Oregon, where she enjoyed the benefits of an NDEA Fellowship. While still in graduate school, she wrote her first text, *A Crash Course in Composition*, now in its fourth edition, published by McGraw-Hill. Since then she has embraced the joys of collaborative writing with Susan Day. They have published the following texts with McGraw-Hill: *The Writer's Rhetoric and Handbook*, *The Writer's Handbook*, and *The Writer's Resource: Readings for Composition*.

In 1976 Dr. McMahan received the Illinois Arts Council Essay Award, and in 1990 she was selected to deliver the Arts and Sciences Lecture at Illinois State University. For five years she served as Director of Writing Programs.

PREFACE

This collection of readings, designed to help students improve their writing, has benefited from several years of classroom use. Writing classes from high school preparatory to community college to four-year university have given us valuable advice and gratifying encouragement in our efforts to provide essays and imaginative literature that will inspire students to write well. We have retained this format from the original edition:

Part 1, *The Writer's Design*. The selections, all serving specific rhetorical purposes, are intended as brief and interesting models for analysis.

Part 2, *The Reader's Resources*. Since any introductory course in composition should include discussion of the deliberate misuse of language, this section offers readings exposing the language of deception as well as providing examples of slanted writing and advertisements for in-class analysis.

Part 3, *Chapter 12, Using Sources*. This last section briefly covers the skills students need in order to compose fair and proficient essays using sources—summarizing, paraphrasing, integration of sources, documentation, and avoiding plagiarism.

Since sound organization is fundamental to good writing, all of the selections—essays, short stories, and poems—are arranged according to their major pattern of organization. Within each section the difficulty of the essays ranges from simple to challenging. The stories and poems provide further insights into organizational techniques and

offer instructive examples of the skillful use of language. These imaginative works also serve to spark the process of invention and generate ideas for writing. Our primary purpose in including them, though, is to enrich the teaching of composition.

In this revision we have weeded out any selections that were outdated as well as any that students, colleagues, or reviewers found problematic for any reason. We have added pieces that are up to date and, we think, perfect for the classroom. The new essays are these: Robert Benchley's "Why I Am Pale," Langston Hughes's "Salvation," Sharon Begley's "The Stuff That Dreams Are Made Of," Marisa Bowe's "Black to Basics," Mary Kay Blakely's "I Do, I Do, I Do . . .," David Denby's "Walk on the Mild Side," Andrew Potok's "Dash and Me," Bette Lee Sung's "Bicultural Conflict," Michael Green and Beverly Rainbolt's "He Doesn't Hit Me, But . . .," Lerone Bennett, Jr.'s "The Ten Biggest Myths about the Black Family," Harry Middleton's "Trouble on the Wind," Susan J. Douglas's "Flex Appeal, Buns of Steel, and the Body in Question," Benjamin Spock's "Are You Giving Your Kids Too Much?" Clarence Page's "The Trouble with Legalizing Drugs," Joan Morgan's "The Pro-Rape Culture," Ellen Goodman's "We Do Not Need More Talk of War," Kurt Vonnegut, Jr.'s "What I'd Say If They Asked Me," Dan Wakefield's "Celebrating 'The Small Moments of Discovery,'" and James Hynes's, "And They Called It Yuppie Love. . . ." We have added one new story, Katharine Brush's "The Birthday Party," and these new poems: D. H. Lawrence's "Baby Running Barefoot," Ezra Pound's "In a Station of the Metro," and Edna St. Vincent Millay's "You Will Be Sorry."

Since the prereading exercises won approval from both students and teachers, we have added a number of new ones. These usually appear before pieces that have proven to be somewhat difficult for students. Prereading exercises enable students to develop an appropriate mind-set for reading a selection with understanding and enjoyment by evoking their own thoughts and feelings about the subject to be encountered. Often these activities provide additional writing practice as well.

The discussion questions following each reading—including the stories and poems—focus on rhetorical features. A brief biography of the author appears before each selection; following each reading are these study aids:

Vocabulary. Difficult words defined briefly in context.

Design and Meaning. Five or six discussion questions focusing on rhetorical analysis.

Similarity and Difference. One discussion question asking students to compare or contrast this reading with another in order to understand elements of style, diction, tone, meaning, etc.

Short Writing Ideas. Prewriting suggestion, process work, model imitation, etc.

Longer Writing Ideas. Essay topics for papers of 500 to 700 words.

Vocabulary Check. Matching, fill-in-the-blanks, sentence-completion, and word-power exercises.

The *Instructor's Manual* which accompanies this text provides practical suggestions for using these materials in the classroom.

We wish to thank the many people who have helped us put this book together, including our excellent editors at McGraw-Hill, Lesley Denton and David Dunham, and the following reviewers for the third edition: Michael Daly, Glendale College; Rebecca Imschweiler, Manatee Community College; Philip Pierpont, Vincennes University; Ruben Quintero, California State University, Los Angeles; Rene Viargues, California Maritime Academy; and Brenda Williams, Massasoit Community College.

As always, we have depended on the kindness of our dear friends David Lee and Dan LeSeure.

Susan Day
Elizabeth McMahan

TO THE STUDENT

We have chosen these readings primarily to provide you with helpful models of style and structure. At the same time, we have tried hard to select pieces that you will enjoy and find enlightening. The idea is to encourage in you a fondness for language and a sharp eye for technique, both of which will serve to make you a more skillful writer.

The selections include poetry and stories as well as essays, and the writing assignments sometimes ask you to do what might be called “creative writing.” You may want to know why you should ponder a poem or describe a fantasy when the writing you will need to do in the working world consists of ordering parts from the Acme Showcase Company, reporting on water damage from burst pipes, or describing right-of-way specifications for a city street. Although these quite different kinds of writing appear to have little in common, the creative exercises will stretch your imagination and bolster your confidence. Any practice that helps you to realize fully your power over words will prove worthwhile. The ease of expression you develop during creative writing (when no rules apply) will carry over into anything you choose to write. Of course, every writer has times when the words stubbornly have minds of their own, kicking each other in the shins and refusing to stand nicely in line; but the more you think about and practice writing, the briefer these little rebellions will be.

Many students feel confident that they can understand an essay, but turn into quivering masses of uncertainty when given a poem to read. *Don't let yourself be intimidated by the unusual word patterns of poets.* If the meaning is unclear on first reading, go over it again—

aloud this time. Give yourself the pleasure of puzzling out the meaning. Assume an open, relaxed approach to the literary selections, and you will find that you can learn from them as much about rhetoric as you can from a comfortably paragraphed page of prose.

Your task will be made easier by the list of words and definitions following each reading. These definitions supply only the meaning of the word in the context of that selection. The words defined are those that may be new to you (like *interlocutor* or *vacuity*), those that carry a different meaning in the selection from the usual one (*exact* used as a verb, for example), and those that have changed meaning over time (*fancy* meaning “imagination,” for instance).

Your most taxing work in using this text involves thinking. You will need to think critically in analyzing the selections, and you will have to think hard in planning and practicing your writing. But you should find, as you progress, that the line between work and pleasure grows steadily less distinct.

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