

STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESSFUL WRITING

A RHETORIC,
RESEARCH GUIDE,
READER, AND HANDBOOK

FOURTH EDITION

JAMES A. REINKING

ANDREW HART

ROBERT VON OSTEN

All of Ferris State University



PRENTICE HALL Upper Saddle River, New Jersey 07458

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Reinking, James A.

Strategies for successful writing. A rhetoric, research guide,
reader, and handbook / James A. Reinking, Andrew W. Hart, Robert von
der Osten.— 4th ed.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and indexes.

ISBN 0-13-190802-2

1. English language — Rhetoric. 2. English language — Grammar.
3. College readers. I. Hart, Andrew W. II. Von der Osten, Robert. III. Title.
PE1408.R427 1996b
808'.0427—dc20

95-8296
CIP

Acquisitions Editor: *Alison Reeves*
Development Editor: *Carolyn Smith*
Interior and cover design: *Tom Nery*
Editorial/production supervision: *Mary Rottino*
Manufacturing buyer: *Lynn Pearlman*
Cover Photo: *Frank LaBua*



© 1996, 1993, 1991, 1988 by Prentice-Hall, Inc.
Simon & 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 0-13-190802-2

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Margaret Abbott, "Heritage," from *Matched Pair*, Condor Press, Dexter, Mo, 1963.

R. T. Allen, "The Porcupine," from *Children, Wives, and Other Wildlife* by Robert Thomas Allen.

Copyright © 1970 by Robert Thomas Allen (N.Y.: Doubleday, 1970).

Bonnie Angelo, "Those Good Ole Boys," *Time*, Sept. 27, 1976, p. 47.

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"Antigen," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 1974, I, 417.

(Acknowledgments continue on page 683 which constitutes an extension of the copyright page.)

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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

PREFACE

The fourth 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 FOURTH EDITION

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

- The Reader features a number of improvements that should increase its usefulness for both instructors and students. Thirteen of the essays, nearly one-third of the total, are new. These additions significantly broaden the Reader's scope and diversity and also increase its coverage of contemporary subjects. In addition, every Reader essay is now accom-

panied by a segment entitled “Toward Key Insights” that poses one or more broad-based 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.

- The argument section of the Reader has been expanded to include three sets of paired essays that offer contrasting views on capital punishment, sexual harassment, and African-American advancement. These essays display various types of appeals and evidence and demonstrate the controversial nature of argument, thus allowing students to weigh the evidence and engage in debate before writing their own arguments.
- The Thematic Table of Contents now groups Reader essays into nine categories and subcategories, providing more choices for instructors who center their courses on themes. Finally, when available, a photograph of the author now accompanies the essay, helping to personalize the writer.
- Chapters 4–13 now conclude with a section entitled “The Critical Edge,” which explains and illustrates how students 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. Since these units pose an above-average challenge for students, they are enclosed within boxes so that instructors can use them at their discretion. Discussions of synthesis are now also included in Chapter 18, “Writing About Literature,” and in “Strategies for Successful Reading,” the introductory section of the Reader. Finally, the new library research paper now includes the results of a personal interview, thus demonstrating that primary research can reinforce secondary research.
- The text has been reorganized so that it can now be used conveniently as four writing books in one: a rhetoric, a research guide, a reader, and a handbook.
- Chapter 20, “The Library Research Paper,” now offers an expanded discussion of computerized card catalogs — including illustrations of subject, author, and title screens — and of periodical indexes, with special emphasis on the *InfoTrac* System. The chapter also features a new case history and a new student research paper on a subject of current interest: the electronic incarceration of lawbreakers. Margin annotations for the new paper now indicate where the student has integrated different writing strategies into his essay.
- Chapter 6, “Process Analysis: Explaining How,” now includes expanded writing guidelines for processes that readers will not perform. To enhance clarity, these guidelines and those for processes that readers will perform are now presented in separately captioned sections.
- The text features a new design that enhances its readability and visual appeal.

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, 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 and demonstrates peer evaluation of drafts.

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. Fifteen carefully chosen writing suggestions follow the questions. Furthermore, the *Instructor's Edition* includes annotations that suggest how to use 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. Reflecting recent technological advances, the discussion of periodical indexes notes the formats — print, microform, computerized — in which each is available.

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 the 1995 edition of *The MLA Style Manual*. The chapter also explains how to handle the various types of quotations and how to avoid pla-

giarism. 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-two 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. 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.

For each writing strategy, the essays are arranged generally from simple to more complex, with the first one in each section 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 precedes each selection, and stimulating questions designed to enhance student understanding of structure and strategy follow it, along with 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.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Like all textbook writers, we are indebted to many people. Our colleagues at Ferris State University and elsewhere, too numerous to mention, have assisted us in several ways: critiquing the manuscript; testing approaches, essays, and exercises in their classrooms; and suggesting writing models for the text. In addition, we would like to thank our reviewers, whose many suggestions have greatly improved our text:

Winifred P. Bridges, Arkansas State University; Robert Brien, Madison Area Technical College; Suzanne Clepper, Tarrant County Junior College; Thomas Dean, Cardinal Stritch College; Karen Hattaway, San Jacinto College North; Thomas R. Hawkins, Butler County Community College; Clayton G. Holloway, Hampton University; Rodney D. Keller, Ricks College; Linda L. Labin, Husson College; Bill Lamb, Johnson County Community College; Sue V. Lape, Columbus State Community College; Sarah Liggett, Louisiana State University; Joyce M. Miller, Collin County Community College; James Moody, South Suburban College; Winifred Morgan, Edgewood College; Lucille M. Schulz, University of Cincinnati; Richard Swanson, Madison Area Technical College; Frederick C. Van Hartesveld, III, Grand Rapids Community College.

Special thanks are also due to the outstanding team at Prentice Hall, whose editorial expertise, genial guidance, and promotional efforts have been vital to this project: Phil Miller, President of Humanities and Social Sciences Division, who first saw the potential in our approach, proposed the Annotated Instructor’s Edition, and suggested and supported many other improvements; Alison Reeves, Executive Editor for English, who offered numerous suggestions and just the right amount of guidance as she oversaw this revision; Joyce Perkins, Senior Development Editor for English, whose keen judgment and experienced hand are reflected throughout the book; Mary Rottino, our Production Editor, every author’s ideal of knowledge, efficiency, and understanding; Linda Pawelchak, who *is the best copy editor we have seen in the* twenty years we have been writing textbooks; David Schecter, Editorial

Assistant, who capably handled day-to-day matters; and Gina Sluss, whose marketing expertise will help our book find its way.

In addition, thanks to Carolyn D. Smith, whose penetrating suggestions improved our manuscript. Finally, we'd like to thank Norma Reinking for her conscientious proofreading of the entire manuscript.

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

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