



CAROLINE SHRODES / MICHAEL SHUGRUE / MARC DI PAOLO / CHRISTIAN J. MATUSCHEK

The
CONSCIOUS
READER

BRIEF EDITION

The Conscious Reader

BRIEF EDITION



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P R E F A C E



... the unexamined life is not worth living.


—Plato, *The Apology*

In response to requests from instructors who have expressed their students' wishes for a more portable and affordable text, we are happy to make available *The Conscious Reader*, Brief Edition for the first time. While this shorter version is about thirty percent briefer than the Tenth Edition of *The Conscious Reader*, the editors have preserved the quality and integrity of the longer edition by maintaining a balance of classic and contemporary works. The editors have also included texts written in a variety of genres and styles and incorporated the works of writers from a diverse range of cultural traditions and academic disciplines. As a result, the Brief Edition contains a refreshing breadth of selections from each of the chapters from the longer version. (The only section from *The Conscious Reader* that is not represented here is "Art and Composition," which comprises a showcase of full-color artwork exclusive to the full-length version of the text.)

Voices in this edition include a rich representation of Poets Laureate, Nobel Laureates, established literary figures, and distinguished commentators, as well as several essays and stories that were commissioned specifically for the Tenth Edition of *The Conscious Reader*. Notable commissioned selections include a student's interpretation of a contemporary short story (offered as a model for future student work) and an essay on music appreciation that includes musical notation.

Most of the readings in this book are nonfiction prose, primarily exposition or argument. Some of the essays are personal and readily comprehensible and provide models for early writing assignments. Others, more complex, should help students develop the ability to reason abstractly. The selections engage the readers' interests by virtue of their style and their focus on issues of

universal concern. They reflect the continuity between past and present and serve as a catalyst to self-expression, to help sharpen their perceptions and widen their sympathies. Consciousness heightened through reading develops effective writing, and the act of writing fosters self-definition. As students extend awareness by reading, they become increasingly conscious of the reservoir of memories and experiences from which to draw and the variety of forms and techniques that give shape to their writing.

Each selection has a headnote and suggestions for discussion and writing to help students explore multiple levels of understanding. The suggestions invite students to pay careful attention to thought and structure and to compare their experience with the vision of life expressed in the selections. Some readings are accompanied by images, and some suggestions for these readings, marked with an icon , create links between the text and the image. Exploring cultural patterns both similar and alien to their own should encourage a continuing dialectic in classroom discussion as well as in writing.

If there is a dominant theme in these readings, it is that neither understanding of the past nor projections of the future can eliminate conflict from our lives and that opposing forces in the self and society are a part of the human condition. Indeed, it is vital that these forces contend. For it is primarily through conscious recognition and expression of these conflicting forces that we may find our way to a tolerance of ambiguity and to an increased freedom of choice.



Instructor's Manual

The Instructor's Manual accompanying *The Conscious Reader*, prepared by Dominic Delli Carpini of York College of Pennsylvania, is designed to be helpful without being intrusive. Its primary goals are to help instructors select readings that will fit the design and aims of their courses, to expand on the text's suggestions for discussion and writing in ways geared more toward instructors than students, and to give instructors some inroads toward discussing the rhetoric and style of each piece. The manual treats nonfiction essays, imaginative literature, and visual images as examples of the skillful use of language and art from which students—writers can learn a good deal.

The Instructor's Manual also suggests ways that the readings can work together, crossing boundaries of genre in ways well suited to composition courses and helping students to forge connections in style as well as theme.



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M. F. S., M. D., AND C. J. M.

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