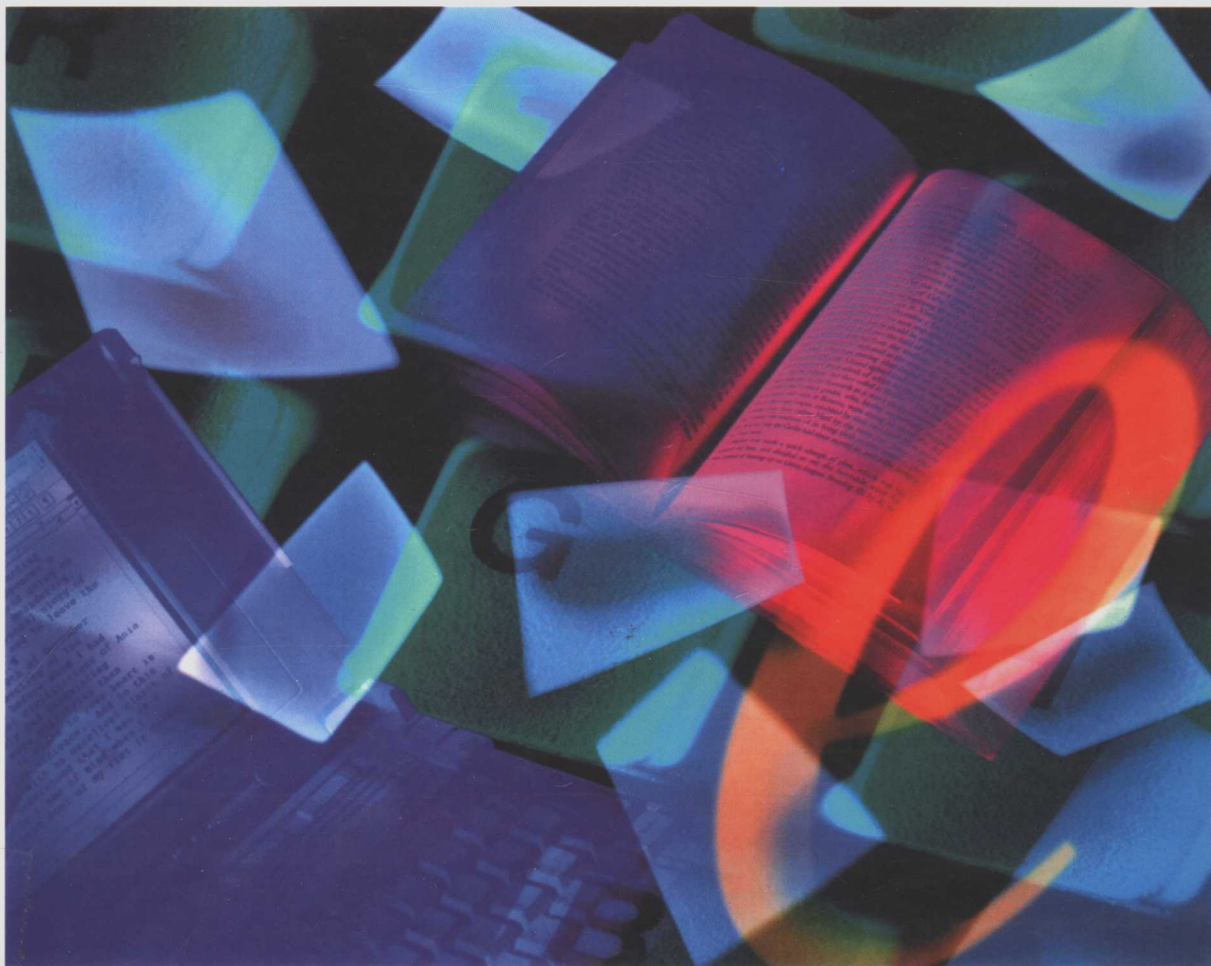


Strategies for **Successful Writing**


1998 MLA
Guidelines Included

A Rhetoric, Research Guide, and Reader



James A. Reinking
Andrew W. Hart
Robert von der Osten

Fifth Edition



Strategies for Successful Writing

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and Reader**
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**James A. Reinking
Andrew W. Hart
Robert von der Osten**
All of Ferris State University

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always the level stream, for Scott, who is on his way,
and
for John-Weston Franke, Philip Emerson Franke, and Nicole E. Olson*

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Audience Checklist

Chapter 1

.....

- ☐ What are the educational level, social class, and economic status of the audience I want to reach?
- ☐ Why will this audience read my writing? To gain information? To learn my views on a controversial issue? To enjoy my creative flair? To be entertained?
- ☐ What attitudes, needs, and expectations do they have?
- ☐ How much do they know about my topic? (Your answer here will help you gauge whether you're saying too little or too much.)
- ☐ What kind of language will communicate with them most effectively? (See "Level of Diction" section in Chapter 16.)

Topic Checklist

Chapter 2

.....

- ☐ Which strategy for focusing on a topic should I use? Tapping my personal resources? Keeping a journal? Sorting out a broad subject? Asking questions? Freewriting? Brainstorming?
- ☐ Is my topic likely to interest my reader?
- ☐ Do I know enough about my topic, or can I learn enough about it in the time available?
- ☐ How can I gather information? Brainstorming? Reading? Talking with others?

Peer Draft Response Checklist

Chapter 3

.....

If you'll be evaluating your peers' drafts, ask yourself these questions:

- ☐ What is the main point of the essay?
- ☐ What is the biggest problem?
- ☐ What is the greatest strength?
- ☐ What material doesn't seem to fit the main point or the audience?
- ☐ What questions has the author not answered?
- ☐ Where should more details and examples be added? Why?
- ☐ At what point does the paper fail to hold my interest? Why?
- ☐ Where is the organization confusing?
- ☐ Where is the writing unclear or vague?

Revision Checklist

Considering Your Whole Essay—Chapter 3

Using the FACT acronym, ask yourself these questions:

- ☐ Does my essay FIT together, presenting a central point for a specific audience? Does my thesis statement accurately reflect the content of my essay, or have I included material that has no bearing on the main point?
- ☐ Have I included all the material my reader will need to grasp my meaning, or do I need to ADD information or examples?
- ☐ Have I included material that fits the thesis but needs to be CT because it is uninteresting, uninformative, or repetitious?
- ☐ Does a TEST of my organization show that the writing flows smoothly, with clear transitions between the various ideas?

Strengthening Paragraph Structure and Development—Chapter 14

- ☐ Does each paragraph have only one central idea?
- ☐ Is the idea stated in a topic sentence or clearly implied?
- ☐ Does the topic sentence help to develop the thesis statement?
- ☐ Does each paragraph contain enough supporting detail?
- ☐ Is each paragraph appropriately organized?
- ☐ Is the relationship between successive sentences clear?
- ☐ Is each paragraph clearly and smoothly related to those that precede and follow it?
- ☐ Does the introduction arouse interest and set the appropriate tone?
- ☐ Does the conclusion reflect the content of the essay and provide a sense of completeness?

Sharpening Sentences and Words—Chapters 15 and 16

- ☐ Are my sentences clearly and effectively constructed?
- ☐ Have I varied the pattern and length of my sentences?
- ☐ Do I know the meanings of the words I use?
- ☐ Do I explain meanings my reader may not know?
- ☐ Have I used the appropriate tone and level of diction?
- ☐ Does/would figurative language enhance my style?
- ☐ Have I avoided wordiness, euphemisms, clichés, mixed metaphors, and sexist language?

Preface

The fifth edition of *Strategies for Successful Writing: A Rhetoric, Research Guide, and Reader* 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 Fifth Edition

The enthusiastic response to the four previous editions both by teachers and students has been most gratifying. The fifth 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.
- The argument section of the Reader has been expanded to include four sets of paired essays that offer contrasting views on capital punishment, sexual harassment, African-American advancement, and immigration policy. 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 ten categories, providing more choices for instructors who center their courses on themes.
- Chapter 20, "The Library Research Paper," now offers information on computer-based encyclopedias, an updated section on periodical indexes, and a new section on the Internet, including the World Wide Web, e-mail, newsgroups, and listservs. We offer detailed instructions for using the Internet and specific suggestions for evaluating Internet information.
- Chapter 21 now offers guidelines for documenting information obtained from CD-ROM or online sources, enabling students to incorporate this material in their papers.

- Chapter 1 now includes a discussion of discourse communities while Chapter 3 now covers collaborative writing and maintaining and reviewing a writing portfolio. These additions provide students with an understanding of increasingly popular approaches to writing instruction.
- 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, 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. 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 documenta-

tion. 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 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 as well as 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 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. Finally, we include a writing assignment suggested by the essay’s topic.

■ 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:

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

Editing Symbols

Symbol	Problem	Symbol	Problem
<i>ab</i>	improper abbreviation	<i>nsu</i>	nonstandard usage
<i>agr pa</i>	faulty agreement of pronoun and antecedent	¶	new paragraph needed
<i>agr sv</i>	faulty agreement of subject and verb	no ¶	new paragraph not needed
✓ or <i>apos</i>	missing or misused apostrophe	⊙	period needed
<i>awk</i>	awkward phrasing	or <i>para</i>	nonparallelism
<i>bib</i>	faulty bibliographic form	? or <i>ques</i>	missing or misused question mark
<i>cap</i>	capital letter needed	" / " or <i>quot</i>	missing or misused quotation marks
<i>case</i>	wrong case	<i>ref</i>	unclear reference of pronoun to antecedent
<i>cl</i>	cliché	<i>ro</i>	run-on sentence
⸗ or <i>com</i>	missing or misused comma	; or <i>sem</i>	missing or misused semicolon
<i>cs</i>	comma splice	<i>sp</i>	spelling error
<i>comp</i>	faulty comparison	<i>shift p</i>	shift in person
<i>dm</i>	dangling modifier	<i>shift t</i>	shift in tense
⋯ or <i>ellip</i>	missing or misused ellipsis	<i>sq</i>	squinting modifier
<i>frag</i>	sentence fragment	<i>t or tense</i>	wrong tense
<i>ital</i>	missing or misused italics	<i>trans</i>	poor transition
<i>lc</i>	lowercase (small) letter needed	<i>vb</i>	wrong verb form
<i>ll or lev</i>	wrong level of usage	<i>wdy</i>	wordiness
<i>log</i>	faulty logic	<i>ww</i>	wrong word
<i>mm</i>	misplaced modifier	⌞	delete (omit)
<i>num</i>	use numerals	^	material omitted
		⓪	meaning unclear or word illegible

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