

# A READER FOR DEVELOPING WRITERS

THIRD EDITION



SANTI V. BUSCEMI

THIRD EDITION

*A* Reader for Developing Writers

*Santi V. Buscemi*

Middlesex County College

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## **A Reader for Developing Writers**

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## **P**REFACE TO THE INSTRUCTOR

When I wrote the proposal for what later became *A Reader for Developing Writers*, I hoped the text would serve as a useful tool for my own students and for those of a few colleagues in my own college and perhaps in a few others. Thus, the enthusiasm, encouragement, and kindness with which it has been received by students and faculty across the United States and elsewhere have been both unexpected and overwhelming. No matter what the future brings, I will always be grateful for your support.

As in its first and second editions, the text's primary purpose is to help students read carefully, to react thoughtfully, and to use these reactions as creative springboards for writing. Research in the theory of reading and writing continues to affirm the close and natural connections between these two skills. Beginning writers need a program of critical and committed reading that increases their appreciation of language, that provides inspiration for their own creative efforts, and that reinforces the teaching of basic rhetorical strategies. In short, no basic-skills program in English makes sense without the integration of reading and writing.

As in the past, the reading selections have been chosen with an eye toward helping students use their own experiences and perceptions as sources of information and insight in writing that explores questions suggested by—if not drawn directly from—the reading. In the second edition, selections by and about Native-Americans, Latino/Caribbean-Americans, Asian-Americans, Arab-Americans and African-Americans widened the text's appeal and enriched its texture, as did pieces depicting cultures and lifestyles that will be unfamiliar to some student readers. Selections for the third edition were chosen with an eye toward maintaining this diversity. As always, introductory materials illustrate important principles and techniques, and reading selections demonstrate variety in length, subject matter, and purpose. Included in most chapters is at least one short, readily accessible piece designed to promote confidence in beginning writers/readers and to prepare them for longer, more challenging selections.

In addition, the third edition continues to emphasize the notion that writing is a process of discovery to be approached with care, commitment, and energy. As in the past, the "Getting Started" section, which opens the text, traces the evolution of an essay from prewriting through the editing of a final draft, with each stage fully explained and illustrated via samples taken from the work of a first-year college student. However, something new has been added to reinforce the idea that students should approach writing as a process. In the third edition, the introduction to each chapter (except the one on

the short story) compares excerpts from rough and revised drafts of a student essay that appears a few pages later. Comments in the margins, relevant to techniques and skills covered in the chapter, demonstrate the riches revising can yield.

As in the second edition, the belief that writing is a process is reinforced in the Suggestions for Sustained Writing, which appear at the end of each chapter. Most suggestions refer to journal entries students make after reading the selections, and they encourage the use of this information to begin and develop full-length essays and letters. Each and every Suggestion for Sustained Writing also reminds students that composing is more than simply gathering information and arranging it on a page. Indeed, woven into the fabric of each item is a reminder that successful writing demands careful planning, the creation of multiple drafts, frequent reorganization and revision, and painstaking editing.

Other important features of the third edition include introductions to the reading process and to taking notes. These have been added to the "Getting Started" section, which begins the text. A form of the SQ3R (Survey, Question, Read, Recite, Review) method, taught in many developmental reading classes, is explained clearly and concisely. This new material also offers students suggestions—complete with easy-to-follow illustrations—on how to keep a double-entry notebook and to make notes in the margins. There are even some special tips on how to read this text.

The emphasis on careful reading and thinking is carried through the rest of the text in Thinking Critically, a new pedagogical subsection accompanying each selection. Thinking Critically offers students questions for writing and discussion by which they can practice a variety of important critical skills. For example, some items ask students to practice techniques learned in the reading and note-taking sections of "Getting Started." Others ask them to extend or respond to the discussion of ideas or opinions found in what they have just read. Still others require them to make comparisons between two or more selections in the text.

The table of contents continues to address a variety of academic disciplines and a wide range of social, political, economic, and scientific concerns. As in the first two editions, I have chosen selections appropriate to the reading abilities of developmental students, but I have also included several that promote healthy intellectual stretching. The text continues to offer easy-to-follow aids designed to foster comprehension. While most selections are nonfiction, prose, poetry, and fiction play a prominent role. More important, student writing has an increased presence in the third edition. Indeed, every chapter now boasts at least one student piece. Several are new to the text; others have been revised and expanded. All are the products of careful, sustained effort through which the writers' forceful and distinctive voices address engaging topics through various modes of discourse.

Behind the design of *A Reader for Developing Writers* remains a belief that there should be a natural and clear connection between what students are asked to read and

what they are asked to write. This is not to say that reading selections must serve as blueprints for student writing. They should certainly illustrate important principles and techniques clearly, but they should also inspire students to use writing as a way to explore ideas, emotions, and issues they find meaningful. This essential connection is fostered by the text's instructional apparatus. Section and chapter introductions discuss fundamental principles of composition and rhetoric illustrated in the reading selections that follow. In addition, the third edition includes graphic illustrations, whenever possible, to help students see as well as read important principles and techniques they can apply to their own writing.

Of course, each selection is again accompanied by materials that help students learn and practice techniques explained in chapter introductions and illustrated in the selections. Apparatus for each selection includes Looking Ahead (comments to help students preview reading selections); Vocabulary; Questions for Discussion; Thinking Critically; and Suggestions for Journal Entries. As mentioned earlier, Suggestions for Sustained Writing (prompts for full-length essays and letters) appear at the end of each chapter.

Since developmental students often find collecting detail difficult, special attention is paid to the early stages of the writing process. In this regard, perhaps the most useful piece of apparatus is "Getting Started." As in the second edition, this introduction to the text delineates the evolution of a student essay from beginning to end. It also explains prewriting strategies that are recommended in Suggestions for Journal Entries and that help students gather information they can use to launch longer projects described in Suggestions for Sustained Writing. Finally, as indicated above, Getting Started now addresses questions and techniques important to reading and note-taking as well.

Once again, the instructional apparatus is fully integrated. Items under Looking Ahead and Vocabulary help students preview the contents and structure of the paragraph, essay, poem, or short story they are about to read. At the same time, they prepare students for the Questions for Discussion and the Thinking Critically sections, which follow. The clear connection between the Suggestions for Journal Entries and the Suggestions for Sustained Writing has been maintained. The latter make direct reference to details, insights, and ideas students have recorded in their journals, and they encourage the use of such materials as springboards for longer projects.

No textbook is the product of one person alone, even one that carries a single byline. I am indebted to several good friends and fellow teachers whose counsel, direction, and encouragement helped make this book what it is. For their careful reviews and helpful suggestions, I would like to thank several colleagues from across the country: David Davis, Johnson County Community College; Elizabeth Dupe Ojo, Tennessee Technical College; Judith Funston, State University of New York, Potsdam; Maureen Hoag, Wichita State University; and Douglas Johnson, Highline Community College.

Among my friends and colleagues at Middlesex County College, I want to extend

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Finally, I thank my wife, Elaine, for putting up with my "imperfections" and for granting me her patience and support during the many times she had to vie with this and with other projects for my time and affection.

*Santi V. Buscemi*

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