



**Richard Marius**  
**Harvey S. Wiener**

**THE  
McGRAW-HILL  
COLLEGE  
HANDBOOK**

**FOURTH EDITION**

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**Richard Marius**

**Harvard University**

**Harvey S. Wiener**

**Adelphi University**

# THE McGRAW-HILL COLLEGE HANDBOOK

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# ABOUT THE AUTHORS



**Richard Marius** has been the Director of Expository Writing at Harvard since 1978, in charge of a course that all Harvard students must take. His program includes a large writing center and interdisciplinary work in writing across the undergraduate curriculum. He teaches a popular advanced writing course, and in 1990 the student government at Harvard gave him the Levenson Award for outstanding teaching by a member of the senior faculty. In 1993 he was awarded the Harvard Foundation Medal for furthering good race relations in the Harvard community.

He was born on a farm in Tennessee and worked on a small county newspaper for five years while he finished high school and then took a degree in journalism at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. Later he took the M.A. and the Ph.D. at Yale. He is the author of two biographies, *Luther* in 1974 and *Thomas More* in 1984. *Thomas More* was a finalist in the nonfiction category for the National Book Award. He has published three novels, *The Coming of Rain* in 1969, *Bound for the Promised Land* in 1976, and *After the War* in 1993. He writes a regular book review column for *Harvard Magazine*, and his articles have appeared in publications as diverse as *Esquire* and the medieval journal *Traditio*.

He has published many articles about the teaching of writing, and he has written or coauthored three writing textbooks. Since 1986 he has directed a two-week Governor's Academy for Writing each July for Tennessee teachers from kindergarten through twelfth grade to help them teach writing more effectively. By 1994 over 1500 teachers had attended the Academy, and Tennessee's governor has made him a Tennessee Colonel for his efforts in their behalf. In 1992 then Governor Bill Clinton of Arkansas made him an Arkansas Traveler for his work with schools and teachers in that state. \*

**Harvey S. Wiener** is Vice Provost for Academic Affairs at Adelphi University. He is the author of many books on reading and writing for college students and their teachers, including *The Writing Room* (Oxford, 1981). His book for parents, *Any Child Can Write*, was a Book-of-the-Month-Club alternate. A revised edition appeared in 1990. He has written two other books for parents, *Talk with Your Child* (1988) and *Any Child Can Read Better* (1990). He has written for network television and was trained in the Columbia Broadcasting System's daytime television Writer Development Project. He was founding president of the Council of Writing Program Administrators (CWPA) and chaired the Teaching of Writing Division of the Modern Language Association (1987).

Born in Brooklyn, he has worked in education for more than thirty years. He has taught writing and literature at every level from elementary school to graduate school. A Phi Beta Kappa graduate from Brooklyn College, he holds a Ph.D. in Renaissance literature from Fordham University. He has won grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Fund for Improvement of Postsecondary Education, the Exxon Education Foundation, and the Ford Foundation.

# PREFACE



The fourth edition of the *McGraw-Hill Handbook* is a sign of the solid place it has gained in the teaching of English composition in colleges and universities in the United States. We are proud of its acceptance by the women and men who teach this most demanding of disciplines and the steady dialogue in person, by mail, and increasingly by E-mail that we have had with teachers who use the book in the classroom. We have incorporated a great many suggestions from these conversations in this edition.

We are also gratified by the recognition of our efforts to present a handbook that does not condescend to students or to teachers. Like all living languages, English changes as the people who use it change. Our language is not a dead butterfly in a glass case; rather, English flutters brightly in the sun of human experience and at times does things that no one quite understands. Why does “ain’t” have such a bad reputation? Why do words like “shrewd” dramatically change meaning from one century to another? Where do new words come from? Unlike some handbooks, ours admits the puzzles when we find them. We believe that good writing is a matter of principles rather than rules, and we try to be honest when we find the principles fuzzy.

English does have some rules, but we make a distinction between those that can be broken now and then and those that cannot. We do not scream in agony at the sight of a split infinitive, but we do think tacking a plural verb onto a singular subject confuses readers. We think some sentences can end with a preposition, but we don’t think good writers can use double negatives. We try to hold to principles, to state them clearly, and to illustrate them by the work of good contemporary authors.

We are proud that our handbook has been widely recognized as treating women and minorities with respect, and gratified by Professor Deborah Kennedy’s special commendation of *The McGraw-Hill College Handbook* for its attention to gender and inclusive language in her article “Inclusive Language” in the spring 1992 issue of *Women and Language* (p. 46). We have presumed throughout that women and minorities should

be treated with the same dignity and respect accorded to white males, and we have examined every line of the fourth edition to make sure that we maintain our own high standards.

Our handbook offers no easy route to glory: *The McGraw-Hill College Handbook* assumes that students must write regularly and revise continually if they are to become good writers.

We have practiced our own philosophy in preparing the fourth edition. In the previous three editions, we worked hard at providing clear explanations of both the process and the product of writing. How do writers write? What can they do to make their work clear, logical, and (we hope the word is not out of date) elegant? We considered these issues always with students in mind, always with the desire to convey the results of our study in a way that was friendly without being condescending, clear without being shallow, and accurate without being pedantic. The testimony of the hundreds of teachers and thousands of students who have used this book throughout the United States and Canada has been that we succeeded.

Once again in this edition, we focus as much on process as we do on product. Too often handbooks concentrate on showing students correct written products without telling them how to produce one. In our writing process chapters we have given a realistic account of how writers write. We have provided drafts of a typical first-year student's paper and showed the changes on the way to a final draft. Students who follow our trail through this process will arrive at a piece of work that will make them proud of their effort and their accomplishment.

Note that we have not forgotten product in our interest in process. To provide process without giving some idea of a goal is a bit like constructing an elaborate rocket to be fired off into space without a target. We try to help students write essays that will be coherent expositions of their own thoughts about evidence, however the evidence is defined. We show students how to revise and how to think about their writing so that they become their own best critics.

We expect this book to be used in composition classes for first-year students and in other courses in writing offered by English departments. We value literature, and we draw many examples from it. But we also think that students should write well in courses across the entire curriculum. We assume throughout that students can be helped by our book in whatever courses they take. In a new chapter and throughout the text, we provide examples from writing about history, psychology, economics, physics, bi-

ology, business, engineering, sports, and other fields to illustrate our conviction that good writing is necessary to any discipline.

Above all, we want students to learn to write by writing. If we taught kids to play baseball in the way that we have traditionally tried to teach them to write, baseball would not be our national sport. Just imagine saying, “Now in first grade, we are going to study the *Baseball Rulebook*. We are going to study that rulebook every year for twelve years. And if you memorize the rulebook, we may let you finally play a game.” We teach baseball by letting kids play, by telling them a step at a time that three strikes make an out, three outs make a half inning, a caught fly ball is an out, and so on. We should teach writing the same way. Let writers write; help them with the conventions as they go along. We all learn to write by discovering that we all have something to say if we try hard enough. We want to help students make that great discovery.

## **In This Edition**

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We worked hard to shorten the third edition and keep it comprehensive. In this fourth edition we have done some further tightening, eliminated some examples and added others, and reworked the entire text to make it even more readable. We have added many more Checklists. We have revised and rewritten exercises, and added some in a continuing effort to make the book serviceable to the first-year student. We have added an ESL appendix for students who want more help with some of the more difficult problems of idiomatic usage. We have also worked on the design, to make it more attractive and functional.

We have returned to our earlier practice of providing two research papers, one in literature and one in science, to buttress the interdisciplinary character of the book. Once again we show both the APA and the MLA reference styles, with examples and in detail.

Reviewers and users of the three previous editions of *The McGraw-Hill College Handbook* have continually commented warmly on its stylistic excellence. We have worked hard in this revision to hold to the standard we have set for ourselves. We have been told that we have written a handbook that can be read with pleasure and used with profit. We think we have written a handbook for these times, and yet a book that respects and uses the strengths of tradition.

## Supplements

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We have provided a package of aids that teachers will find helpful throughout the course, and supplements that students will find useful in enhancing their work.

For teachers, the aids consist of:

An **Instructor's Manual** that contains teaching tips, answers to exercises, and additional testing materials for the classroom teacher; and the McGraw-Hill **Computerized Diagnostic Tests**. For these we thank Santi Buscemi of Middlesex County College.

For students, the supplements include:

The **McGraw-Hill Workbook**, which includes exercises that may be assigned by the teacher, prepared by Mark Connelly of Milwaukee Area Technical College, for which an **Answer Key** is available. The **McGraw-Hill On-Line Handbook** is a computer disk that can be stored in memory and accessed to answer questions about grammar and usage. The **McGraw-Hill Practice Program** is an interactive software tutorial with exercises. **Writer's Tools** is a HyperCard stack with two sets of tools to help with writing.

## Acknowledgments

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We are grateful to the many people who have helped us with this book in all four of its editions. Teaching English composition is probably the most difficult job in any university—and often the least rewarded. Perhaps the very difficulty of our profession makes its members feel so strongly the mutual obligations and respect that bind us all together. We have been the beneficiaries of helpful opinions from many teachers in the field who have reviewed this book in its various stages, and we could not have done our work without their searching commentaries, their occasional sharp criticism, and their generous and steadfast encouragement.

Because so much of the structure and personality of the three previous editions persists in this revision, we want once again to thank and acknowledge all those who helped with their reviews of this and the many drafts of the previous editions: Jay Balderson, Western Illinois University; Raymond Brebach, Drexel University; Richard H. Bulloch, Northeastern University; Santi Buscemi, Middlesex County College; David Chapman, Texas Tech University; John Chard, Gloucester County College; Joseph J. Comproue, Michigan Technological University; Virgil Cook, Virginia Polytechnic Institute; Harry H. Crosby, Boston University; Janet Eber, County Col-

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We want to say again how much we have enjoyed working on this book. We have had the pleasure of thinking through our long experience as deeply engaged teachers of writing and the greater satisfaction of thinking through our glorious English language in its rich and lively American version. We have worked far into the night more times than we can possibly count in producing the four editions of this book. We have never been content to study other textbooks and to rephrase their advice; we have

gone directly to the English prose that we both love to see how it works and to express our finding in the spirit of discovery and excitement that stands behind all true scholarship.

We have picked up many debts through the years. Dozens of people at McGraw-Hill have helped, sometimes giving us excellent technical advice, sometimes making evenings ring with laughter over the dinner table after long, long hours of difficult work.

For this edition we are especially grateful to C. Steven Pensinger, who cheerfully and energetically took this project under his general editorial wing for the third edition and remains steadfastly with us in this one. Jeannine Ciliotta has served as the developmental editor for the last two editions, spending hours with us on the telephone, working out an infinity of details. Developmental editors should have a special place in heaven, reserved for those patient and responsible shepherds who keep their sheep from running off in twelve different directions at once. David Damstra has been steadily on the mark in seeing that the text we wrote is the one that gets bound and printed. His friendly voice, booming through the telephone, has kept us on schedule during the long production of this book.

Both our families have put up with our silences at our computers while we labor to prune back old prose and to write something fresh and new. Our wives receive our loving gratitude not only for their support, but for the enthusiasm they have always managed to muster when we felt compelled to read to them something we had written that we thought deserved to be memorized by schoolchildren. They managed to like our words, and after a great many years, they seem to like us, too.

Perhaps most remarkable, we have worked closely with each other now for fifteen years through four editions with a mutual respect and affection that endure.

*Richard Marius  
Harvey S. Wiener*

# TO THE STUDENT



The best way to use this book is to keep it handy as a reference. Pick it up every day and browse through it at random. When your teacher assigns a section, read it carefully and do the exercises to fix its principles in your mind. By all means read Chapters 1 through 3 before you begin to write your first paper.

The index and the contents will help you locate information that deals with your special problems and interests. For easy reference, the correction symbols appear inside both front and back covers. The checklists, which you can use to review or as handy summaries of important points, are listed inside the front cover. Topics covered in the ESL appendix are listed inside the back cover. The appendix itself, which offers additional help (guidelines, examples) with special problems in English, is keyed into the text by a tree logo and a table number in the margin at the appropriate point.

The ability to write well can give you both pleasure and power. You owe it to yourself to discover the joy of writing, the excitement of expressing your ideas, your feelings, your thoughts, your discoveries, your opinions about everything from daily events to the demands of a promising future. As you learn to write well, you will also discover that people are more likely to respect and accept your opinions because you express them in writing that engages and persuades your readers.

Some textbooks seem to promise that they can make writing easy. They are wrong. Good writing always takes hard work, and all writers are sometimes discouraged. Effective writers go back to work after their discouragement and try again. We hope that *The McGraw-Hill College Handbook* can make writing less difficult and can give you guidance and pleasure along the way.

*Richard Marius  
Harvey S. Wiener*

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