FIFTH EDITION

Writing

A COLLEGE HANDBOOK

James A. W. Heffernan

John E. Lincoln

Janet Atwill

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UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE

W. W. Norton & Company

NEW YORK   LONDON

Preface to the Fifth Edition

WELCOME

With this fifth edition, James Heffernan and John Lincoln welcome a new coauthor, Janet Atwill, of the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. A well-established specialist in rhetoric, Janet is thoroughly conversant with current scholarship in the field. She has brought new perspectives, new expertise, and new energy to this edition. Janet has sharpened our focus on the roles of race, class, and gender in writing; she has strengthened our treatment of the rhetorical contexts in which writers and readers operate; she has offered special guidance on writing as a form of public service moving well beyond the walls of the classroom or the boundaries of the college campus; and she has brought us fully up-to-date on the new forms of reading, research, writing, and document design in the age of computers and the Internet. The result is a book that melds the best of our previous editions with the most innovative new approaches in rhetoric and the technology of communication.

Welcome, Janet.

THE BOOK ITSELF

For the first time, *Writing: A College Handbook* comes to you in full color. In fact, this elegant new design employs color *rhetorically,* emphasizing and differentiating points as it gives our pages visual clarity.

Previous editions of this book set out to show that good writing is not simply the absence of grammatical error but the presence of rhetorical power. This remains our leading aim. With new guidance on topics ranging from the writer's audience to use of the Internet, our basic approach is unchanged. While identifying the mistakes commonly made in student writing and showing how to correct them, we emphasize what student writers can do rather than what they can't or shouldn't do. Above all, we

try to show them how to generate the kind of writing that informs, excites, delights, and persuades the readers for whom it is written. While we have maintained the positive, empowering approach to the writing process that has always distinguished *Writing: A College Handbook,* we have incorporated several new emphases.

Since many instructors like to start by introducing students to the writing process as a whole, Part 1, "The Process of Writing," begins with a five-chapter overview of that process. Users of the fourth edition will see that we continue to illustrate the writing process with various examples of student writing-in-progress and with successive versions of one student essay as it evolves from early drafts to final draft. But we have made a number of needed changes. We now emphasize that the process of writing has powerful civic and social dimensions. And we start with considerations of audience and purpose, because even prior to setting pen to paper, student writers must consider their readers, the context in which they are writing, and their purpose or goals for the assignment.

In chapter 1, we explain that writing is a process of participation, of making ideas public and making a difference in the world. We also ask student writers to examine the ways in which effective writing makes a difference—both within the academy and in the many communities in which they participate, such as clubs and organizations, citizen groups, places of work, and new communities in cyberspace.

Many writing courses recognize the importance of collaboration by making use of peer review groups and similar activities. So chapter 2 now treats collaboration (in section 2.6), and talks about the benefits of working with other reader-writers and receiving feedback. This chapter also offers planning strategies for various writing situations, and illustrates that effective writing often means balancing multiple purposes and, in some instances, multiple contexts and audiences.

Chapter 3, on active writing and reading, has been expanded to treat reading as a rhetorical act, acknowledging that we read—just as we write— for many purposes. We continue to treat writing and reading as a form of inquiry, but in this edition we place special emphasis on investigating cultural assumptions about race, class, and gender. We focus on these assumptions so that students understand the literacy skills and practices that they bring to their writing and reading, and where these practices come from. And such cultural assumptions are important when thinking about audience and context. A new section (3.5) presents the basics of field research: constructing research questions and collecting data through observing, notetaking, interviewing, and surveys. And chapter 3 also includes new sections on analyzing advertising and cultural codes (3.8 and 3.9), with strategies and assignments for helping students examine visual as well as written rhetoric.

In addition, we have strengthened and expanded the rest of Part 1. Because a writer's language and style choices depend upon his or her audience, chapter 8 focuses on style in the context of community and discusses language and language expectations in various communities. The new chapter 11, on argument, includes a section on treating the opposition with respect. The new chapter 12, on document design, demonstrates the use of visual information in texts designed for diverse audiences. Computer-graphics programs offer many choices for producing finished documents, and so this chapter features full-color annotated model documents from standard and online media.

Part 2 retains its positive approach by repeatedly stressing the rhetorical impact of a particular construction when it is correctly and effectively used. Presenting lively examples from student and professional writing, we show students how they can exploit the rich, vital, and inexhaustible resources of the English language. Our chief aim in the whole of Part 2, in fact, is summed up by the title of chapter 27: "Invigorating Your Style."

The emphasis on rhetorical effect in Part 2 is reinforced by the exercises. Instead of merely calling for the correction of errors, many of them ask for short sentences to be combined in more than one way so that students can see what rhetorical effects they can achieve with various constructions. Also, nearly all of the exercises consist of consecutive sentences that work together to tell a story, build a description, or develop a point.

The newly revised chapter 28, "Academic English for Nonnative Speakers," helps international students learn the kinds of skills that native speakers acquire without conscious effort, such as when and how to use *the, a,* and *an,* and how to choose between gerunds and infinitives.

We have expanded and strengthened Part 4, "The Research Paper," to account for changes in composition theory and in research processes. We now include extensive treatment of electronic research sources, including online databases and Web sites. We give students detailed strategies for both conducting Internet research and evaluating Web sites, and we provide a new research paper that uses Internet sources. The section on MLA documentation has been thoroughly updated and now includes guidelines for citing electronic sources such as Web sites, emails, listservs, and CD-ROMs. We also include, in chapter 37, detailed information on conducting interviews.

In Part 5, "Writing in Academic Contexts," chapter 41 discusses writing about literature and offers two sample essays, one on a short story and one on a poem. Chapter 42 treats writing and research in different disciplines and includes citation information for APA, CBE, and *CMS* styles. It also discusses how to present tables and figures in research papers; how to

write examinations, applications, and letters; and how to write personal statements when applying for admission to a school of business, law, medicine, or graduate study.

In Part 6, "Writing in Nonacademic Contexts," chapter 43 discusses writing in occupational settings. The entirely new chapter 44 presents public service as a form of collaborative inquiry, and provides strategies for oral as well as written communication in public-service contexts—from holding productive meetings to creating brochures and writing press releases. Chapter 45, also new, discusses grant writing for nonprofit groups and offers guidance on locating funding sources and creating successful applications.

SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS

Writing: A College Handbook, Fifth Edition, is supported by a complete instructional package.

For the student: *Writing: A College Workbook*, Fifth Edition, is a basic textbook on the writing of sentences and the handling of punctuation and mechanics. It parallels and supplements Parts 2 and 3 of the handbook and includes basic instruction on sentence structure as well as over one hundred exercises—ranging from recognition and error correction to sentence-combining to revising and editing complete paragraphs and essays—printed on tear-out pages that can be assigned as classwork or homework. An electronic answer pamphlet for the workbook is available to instructors upon request.

The Instructor's Edition of *Writing: A College Handbook* offers chapter overviews, teaching tips, notes on nonnative speakers, selected bibliographies, suggestions for peer work, backgrounds, quotations, and answers to the exercises.

New to the Fifth Edition is the *Writing: A College Handbook* Web site, which offers an array of resources for students and instructors. Highlights of the site include six hundred mail-to exercises and quizzes that correspond to sections of the handbook; Parts 2, 3, and 4 of the handbook online, fully hyperlinked and annotated; a databank of downloadable document models in MLA, *CMS,* APA, and CBE styles; an electronic library of scholarly articles in rhetoric and composition; and links to useful sites for writing and research across the disciplines.

Acknowledgments

Introduction

TALKING AND WRITING

Talking is something most of us seem to do naturally. We learn to talk almost automatically, first imitating the words we hear and then imitating the ways in which people around us put them together. Well before we learn how to put words on paper, we unconsciously learn how to use them in speech.

But no one learns to write automatically. You cannot write even a single letter of the alphabet without a conscious effort of mind and hand, and to get beyond the single letter, you must be shown how to form words, how to put words together into sentences, and how to punctuate those sentences.

Writing, then, is a means of communication you must consciously learn. And part of what makes it hard to learn is that written words usually have to express your meaning in your absence, have to "speak" all by themselves. When you speak face to face with a listener, you can communicate in many different ways. You can raise or lower the pitch or volume of your voice to emphasize a point; you can grin, frown, wink, or shrug; you can use your hands to shape a meaning when you don't quite have the words to do it; you can even make your silence mean something. But in writing you have to communicate without facial expressions, gestures, or body English of any kind. You have to speak with words and punctuation alone.

Furthermore, writing is a solitary act. When you talk, you normally talk to someone who talks back, who raises questions, who lets you know whether or not you are making yourself clear. But when you write, you work alone. Even if you are writing a letter to a friend, he or she will not suddenly materialize to prod or prompt you into speech, to help you fill in the gaps that often occur when you try to tell a story or give an explanation off the top of your head. To write well, you have to anticipate the reactions of a reader you cannot see or hear.

But writing does have one big advantage over speaking. It gives you time to think, to try out your ideas on paper, to choose your words, to read what you have written, to rethink, revise, and rearrange it, and most important, to consider its effect on a reader. Writing gives you time to find the best possible way of stating what you mean. And the more you study the craft of writing, the better you will use your writing time.

ACADEMIC ENGLISH, OTHER DIALECTS, AND DISCOURSE COMMUNITIES

This book aims to help you write effectively in English. But since there are many kinds of English, you should know which kind this book teaches—and why.

The language called "English" is used in many parts of the world. It is spoken not only in England but also in the British West Indies and in countries that were once British colonies—such as Canada, the United States, Australia, India, and Nigeria. These are all "English-speaking" countries, but they have different ways of using English. Sometimes, for instance, they have different words for the same thing:

> truck (U.S.) = lorry (Great Britain)
>
> pond (U.S.) = billabong (Australia)

Sometimes they have different ways of spelling or pronouncing the same word:

> check (U.S.) = cheque (Great Britain and Canada)
>
> labor (U.S.) = labour (Great Britain and Canada)
>
> recognize (U.S.) = recognise (Great Britain and Canada)
>
> laugh: pronounced "laff" in the U.S., "lahff" in Great Britain
>
> paint: pronounced "paynt" in the U.S., "pint" in Australia

Sometimes they use different grammatical forms:

> The jury has reached a verdict. (U.S.)
>
> The jury have reached a verdict. (all other English-speaking countries)

You may have already noticed differences such as these. Even if you have never traveled abroad, you have probably heard British or Australian speech. When you did, you could undoubtedly tell after just a few words that what you were hearing was different from any kind of English commonly spoken in North America. The reason for the difference is that a living language never stands still. Like the people who speak it and the world

they speak it in, it changes. And if English-speaking peoples live far enough apart, the English they use will change in divergent ways. That is why English sounds different in different parts of the world.

Just as English varies from one country to another, it also varies from one region of a country to another, and from one cultural or ethnic group to another. Consider these statements:

> She says I be crazy.

> She says I am crazy.

> They ain't got no ponies; they got big horses. I rode one, real big uns.

> They don't have any ponies; they have big horses. I rode one, a really big one.

> I have three brother and two sister.

> I have three brothers and two sisters.

These statements illustrate four dialects—four kinds of English used in North America. The first statement in each pair illustrates a regional or ethnic dialect; the second illustrates standard, or academic, English. Each of these dialects has its own distinctive character and rules. But of them all, academic English is the only one normally taught in schools and colleges, the only one normally required in business and the professions, and the only one widely used in writing—especially in print. Why does academic English enjoy this privilege? Is it always better than any other kind? And if you were raised to speak an ethnic or regional dialect, must you stop speaking that dialect in order to learn the academic one?

There is no easy answer to the first of these three questions. But the answer to the second one is no. Academic English is not always better than any other kind. In a spoken exchange, it can sometimes be less expressive—and therefore less effective—than a regional or ethnic dialect. Compare for instance, the original version of a regional proverb with the academic version:

> Them as has, gets; them as ain't, gets took.

> Those who have, get; those who do not have, get taken.

These two statements strike the ear in different ways. While the first has the expressive vitality of regional speech, the second—the academic version—sounds comparatively stiff.

Part of what makes the original version so effective is the tradition that stands behind it. Because of that tradition, the answer to the third question we raised is also no. A regional or ethnic dialect is not just a way of speaking; it is the living record of a shared heritage and shared concerns.

For this reason, no one who speaks such a dialect should be forced to give it up.

The same is true for anyone who speaks a kind of English peculiar to a discourse community: a group that defines itself largely by the way it speaks or writes a language used by others in different ways. The magazine *The Source,* for instance, is written largely in hip-hop, the speech of urban rappers: a kind of English in which *ripping it* is used for *performing, drops* for *arrives,* and *breaks it down* for *speaks.*

But just as many people can learn how to read both *The Source* and *The New York Times,* most people can learn how to speak and write more than one dialect. Academic English is what you will normally be expected to use in your writing. During college, it is what teachers will expect you to use in essays, exams, reports, and research papers. After college, it is what others will expect you to use in anything you write for business or professional purposes. For all of these reasons, academic English is what this book aims to help you learn.

GRAMMAR AND RHETORIC

The grammar of a language is the set of rules by which its sentences are made. You started learning the rules of English grammar as soon as you started to talk. Well before you learned how to write, you could have said which of these two statements made sense:

> *Eggs breakfast fried I two for had.

> I had two fried eggs for breakfast.

The words in each statement are the same, but you can readily see that only the second arrangement makes sense. What you know about the English language tells you that some ways of arranging the seven words are acceptable and others are not. You may not be able to say just why the word order in the first arrangement is wrong, but you know that it is.

Good writing requires a working knowledge of grammar, a basic command of the rules that govern the forming of a sentence. But good writing is more than the act of obeying grammatical rules. It is also the art of using rhetoric—of arranging words, phrases, sentences, and paragraphs in such a way as to engage and sustain the reader's attention.

The power of rhetoric can sometimes be felt in a single sentence: Virginia Woolf wrote, "Women have burnt like beacons in all the works of all the poets from the beginning of time." General George S. Patton said to his

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*From this point on, nonstandard constructions in this book generally are marked with a star. We also use asterisks to mark misspelled words and other errors in student drafts.

troops after a battle, "You have been baptized in fire and blood and have come out steel." Martin Luther King Jr. said to a crowd of civil-rights demonstrators, "I have a dream." Good sentences like these not only take their place in a paragraph but also make a place for themselves, striking the reader with their own special clarity and force. One aim of this book, therefore, is to help you maximize the rhetorical impact of every sentence you write.

Yet you do not normally write single sentences in isolation. You write them in sequence, and rhetoric is the art of making that sequence effective—of moving from one sentence to another in a paragraph, and from one paragraph to another in an essay. It is the art of sustaining a continuity while continually moving ahead, of developing a description, a narrative, an explanation, or an argument in such a way as to take the reader with you from beginning to end. The ultimate aim of this book, therefore, is to explain the rhetoric of the writing process as a whole.

USING THIS BOOK: TO STUDENTS

Your teacher may assign certain chapters to your class or, after seeing your work, may refer you individually to the sections you need. Either way, it will help you to know what the book offers.

The book has six main parts. Part 1, "The Process of Writing," surveys the whole writing process from early draft to final draft. It treats different kinds of writing such as exposition and persuasion, and specific parts of the writing process such as paragraphing and choosing words. Part 2, "Crafting Sentences," shows you how to make sentence structure work for you. We explain things you should not do, such as misplacing modifiers and misusing the passive voice. But we stress the things you can and should do, such as highlighting the main point of each sentence and varying your sentence patterns to invigorate your style. Part 3, "Punctuation and Mechanics," treats punctuation, spelling, and the use of mechanical conventions such as capitals and italics. Part 4, "Research and Writing," directs you through the research process from start to finish, and treats everything from asking the right questions to using the Internet. Part 5, "Writing in Academic Contexts," focuses on the kind of writing you will most likely do in college across the disciplines. It offers a thorough treatment of documentation styles in the humanities, social sciences, and physical sciences. (We have made these documentation sections easy to find by using color-coded bands: green for MLA, gold for *CMS*, plum for APA, and gray for CBE.) Part 6, "Writing in Nonacademic Contexts," illustrates how to draw upon academic writing skills to become proficient and effective writers beyond college. When you can communicate effectively, in the workplace and elsewhere, you have the power to change the world.

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