

The
CONFIDENT READER 2



Carol Kanar

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PREFACE

The Confident Reader 2 focuses on reading as a process students can learn to control by developing and applying active reading and critical thinking skills. Successful application of knowledge and skills leads to achievement, and with achievement comes confidence. The goal of *The Confident Reader 2* is to help students achieve success in reading and thereby gain confidence in their ability to meet the reading demands of college, the workplace, and our information-filled society.

SPECIAL FEATURES OF THE TEXT

Focus on Process and Skill

The Confident Reader 2 teaches reading both as a process to be discovered and controlled and as a skill to be mastered and applied.

Integration of Skills

Though each chapter is centered on the development of one or two skills such as finding main ideas or understanding purpose and tone, there is much cross-referencing, interweaving, and reinforcement of skills covered in other chapters. This approach models the reading process itself in which skills are integrated and often applied simultaneously as readers process information.

Transference of Skills

Many students who seem to achieve in the reading class fall back into bad reading habits in their other courses. This may be the result of textbooks that provide examples and exercises that do not reflect actual reading situations students encounter outside the reading class. *The Confident Reader 2* is filled with reading selections, and excerpts from a variety of sources: periodicals, fiction, non-fiction, textbooks and others so that students gain experience with practicing their skills on many types of readings. A strong emphasis on textbook reading prevails in most chapters, giving students practical experience with materials and ideas they are likely to encounter in their other college courses.

The Connection Between Reading, Thinking, Writing, and Studying

Reading, writing, and studying are linked to critical thinking in several chapter features, and the chapter-opening essay with its pre-reading and post-reading features. *The Confident Reader 2* makes the assumption that writing is meant for an audience, and writers expect certain responses from readers. Students' comprehension is enhanced by seeing themselves as engaged in a dialogue with the writer as they read, and by seeing themselves as part of a larger audience. Studying, too, is more productive when students question the writer's intent and try to determine what he or she wants them to understand or be able to do.

Basic and Advanced Reading Skills

The basic skills of vocabulary development, finding main ideas and supporting details, understanding transitions, and finding patterns are covered in Units 1–3. The critical skills of distinguishing facts from opinions, understanding purpose and tone, making inferences and recognizing valid arguments are covered in Units 5 and 6. In addition to these skills that are addressed in most reading texts, *The Confident Reader 2* also covers three essential skills that are rarely featured: reading and interpreting graphic materials, detecting bias, and spotting fallacies in reasoning. This coverage is based on the belief that if we want students to achieve more we have to expect more. With a sound foundation in the basics covered in earlier chapters, students are ready to progress to more demanding skills covered in later chapters.

Exercises

Exercises are integrated throughout chapters so that students practice skills as soon as they are introduced and explained. The exercises are arranged in each chapter according to difficulty. A few exercises are self-checking, followed by the answers with explanations. The answers to all other exercises can be found in the instructor's manual, providing maximum flexibility for instructors to use exercises as they wish. The answers can be duplicated for any exercises that they may want students to correct on their own. One or two exercises in each chapter are designated as collaborative activities for partners or small groups. However, instructors should feel free to use any exercise either collaboratively or individually.

Organization and Content

The 15 chapters are organized into five units that reflect the reading process modeled in every chapter by the assumptions check, the pre-reading feature; the reading selection; and “The Critical Reader,” the post-reading feature.

Unit 1, “Preparing to Read” builds students’ confidence by teaching them strategies they can use to make every reading task a successful one. The unit focuses on attitude improvement, active reading strategies, concentration, awareness of and control of the reading process, and vocabulary development. Unit 2, “Getting the Point” and Unit 3, “Following the Evidence” focus on basic strategies that improve students’ comprehension and help them stay on track as they read. Understanding sentences and paragraphs, finding main ideas, identifying supporting details, recognizing the author’s organizational pattern, and interpreting graphics are all essential skills covered in Units 2 and 3. Units 4 and 5 focus on skills that help students think critically about what they have read so that they are prepared to discuss ideas, apply their knowledge in assignments and projects, study for tests, navigate the shoals of academic reading, and sail smoothly into the rough waters of workplace and public discourse. Unit 4, “Seeing Implications” focuses on distinguishing fact from opinion, understanding writers’ purposes and tones, and making inferences. Unit 5, “Entering the Dialogue” introduces students to more advanced skills of detecting bias, determining whether an argument is valid or invalid, and spotting fallacious reasoning.

Unit 6, “Using Your Skills: Additional Readings” is a collection of 8 reading selections on a variety of topics that instructors can assign for additional skills practice or for students to read on their own.

Chapter Features

The Confident Reader 2 has several unique features that make it a practical text for both instructors and students.

Questions to Guide Your Reading Each chapter opens with three thought-provoking questions that are framed to focus students’ attention on the chapter’s major concepts. The purpose of the guide questions is to help students establish a habit of doing a prereading activity each time they read.

Assumptions Check The assumptions check near the beginning of each chapter is the prereading activity for the chapter-opening reading selection, and its purposes are to establish a context for reading, assess students’ prior knowledge on a topic, and make predictions about what the selection covers.

The Chapter-Opening Reading Selection Students need ideas to think about and content to practice their skills on. The chapter-opening reading selection, in addition to the many example and exercise passages throughout the chapter, provides the content. Excerpts used as examples or as exercise material often relate to the chapter-opening selection according to topic, structure, or theme. A headnote precedes the reading selection, and it may include biographical data, list some of the author's other works, or contain a clue about the selection's content.

The Critical Reader This feature is a post-reading activity that checks students' comprehension and provides a structure for them to think critically about the selection. The Critical Reader consists of six parts: (1) Understanding Vocabulary; (2) Getting the Point; (3) Following the Evidence; (4) Seeing Implications; (5) Relating Ideas; and (6) Writing to Learn. The questions consist of both multiple-choice and open-ended items.

Study Skills Connection This feature focuses on a study skill that is related to the chapter topic. For example, "Have a System for Learning New Words" is the study skill featured in Chapter 3 "Developing Your Vocabulary." This feature gives students a practical application for skills they are learning.

Critical Thinking Application This feature is an exercise or activity, often the most challenging one in a chapter, that asks students to apply a concept in a new context or to analyze or synthesize information.

Summary Checklist and Review This feature helps students test their recall of important concepts and actively involves them in the review process. The checklist is a list of fill-in-the-blank questions that focus on chapter concepts. Following the checklist is a review that revisits the guide questions at the beginning of the chapter, asking students to write their answers.

Reflections on Reading The reflection is the last activity in the chapter. It may be a question, a series of questions, or an open-ended statement. Some reflections encourage students to comment on their progress or express their misgivings. They can be used as journal activities or as a communication channel between instructors and students.

Support for Instructors

An instructor's manual accompanies the text. It contains suggestions for teaching and testing the concepts in each chapter, a pretest and post-test for assessing skills, sample syllabi for a sixteen or ten-week course, and an answer key.

Newsweek Subscription. A 10-week subscription card may be shrink-wrapped with the text for a nominal fee.

The Dictionary Deal. *The American Heritage College Dictionary* may be shrinkwrapped with the text at a substantial savings.

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