
The

NORTON

READER

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The Norton Reader

An Anthology of Expository Prose

EIGHTH EDITION

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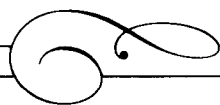
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Preface

Since much of what usually appears in our Preface has moved in this eighth edition to the section entitled "To Students: Reading and Writing with *The Norton Reader*," these few pages will deal primarily with matters of history.

In the early sixties the seven original editors, all at the University of Michigan, all male (for such the English Department then predominantly was), almost all members of the Freshman English Committee, became dissatisfied with the crop of new readers available and thought that they might put together an improvement. (This is not to say that there had not earlier been excellent readers—by Keast, for example, or Locke, Gibson, and Arms, or Thompson, or Martin and Ohmann.)

Basically, they agreed, they would include works from the past as well as the present, foreign as well as native, long as well as short, light as well as serious, and in addition, those kinds of literature—journals, letters, characters, apothegms, parables—that are first cousins, in the family of the expository, to the essay and the article. They lacked, however, any scheme or program, any set of thematic or rhetorical headings by which to guide their selections. Excellence would be their pillar of smoke by day, of fire by night.

If that sounds presumptuous, as the editors soon discovered, it was, for about excellence, as Lord Chesterfield remarked to his wayward son (who tended to say "one man's meat is another man's poison") "tastes differ." The method of selection the editors agreed on was for each to make a certain number of nominations (say ten), to have these reviewed by a second editor, then by a third. More times than not, however, one or both of the reviewing editors disagreed with the nominator. Further, after the initial batch of nominations, each editor had to offer a second batch, this time to be reviewed by two editors who had had nothing to do with that editor's earlier submissions. The point, of course, was to avoid "sweetheart" arrangements—X approving Y's choices if Y approved X's. The result of this process, which has continued through all subsequent editions, was three files. The first contained nominations

that had received the approval of both reviewers; the second those that both reviewers had rejected; and the third, those on which the reviewers had divided or about which both had registered uncertainty. The nominations that had achieved full approval were "in." Those with double-negative reviews were "out." Those in-between were reviewed by the General Editor, checked against approved essays to avoid substantial duplications, checked against the needs of the thematic groups that seemed to be forming, and then taken in or thrown out.


With each new edition voices from the field influenced editorial judgment. As Doctor Johnson said, "that book is good in vain that is not read," and when Freshman English instructors reported that they had not read or certainly had not assigned certain pieces, those pieces joined the formerly rejected. Further, voices from the field, from the first edition to this, have made valuable suggestions for additional selections, as have the good people at Norton, all of which have received careful consideration and many of which have been gratefully accepted.

So much for history. What is new in this edition? Briefly, the contributions of a new editor, Linda H. Peterson, director of Yale's Bass Writing Program; Joan Hartman's opening essay, "To Students: Reading and Writing with *The Norton Reader*," which is lean and clear in style and eminently sane; a timely new section, "Nature and the Environment" including essays by such gifted writers as Aldo Leopold, Gretel Ehrlich, and Edward Abbey; a yet fuller selection of women, minority, and Canadian voices; a broader offering of multiple selections by the same authors; and, belatedly but usefully, new opening source notes putting individual essays in a context expanded upon in the appendix of author biographies.

For many contributions and much support we thank our users, and these especially: Maureen G. Andrews, Northern Michigan University; Andrew J. Angyal, Elon College; Joan Baum, City University of New York-York College; Samuel I. Bellman, California State Polytechnic University-Pomona; Gail Berkeley, Reed College; Louise C. Berry, University of Tennessee; Blair F. Bigelow, Suffolk University; Edwin Block, Marquette University; W. Dale Brown, Calvin College; Ingrid Brunner, Lehigh County Community College; Donna M. Campbell, State University of New York at Buffalo; Roger D. Carlstrom, Yukima Valley Community College; S. L. Chalgian, Macomb Community College; Paul Cohen, Southwest Texas State University; Marianne Cooley, University of Houston; Fred D. Crawford, Central Michigan University; E. T. A. Davidson, State University of New York at Oneonta; Naomi Diamond, Ryerson Polytechnic Institute; Louise Dibble, Suffolk Community College; Wilfred O. Dietrich, Blinn College; Mary Alice Dillman, Ohio Wesleyan University; Ann Elsdon, Dawson College; Kristina Faber, Shippensburg University of Pennsylvania; Susan Fellows, Palo-

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—Arthur M. Eastman



To Students: Reading and Writing with *The Norton Reader*

This is the eighth edition of *The Norton Reader*; its first edition goes back to 1965. The editors have put together a selection of essays on a range of subjects, some familiar, others more specialized. You'll find the first kind in sections like "Personal Report," "People, Places," and "Signs of the Times," the second in sections like "Science," "Literature and the Arts," and "Philosophy and Religion." Some of these sections go back to the first edition: "Personal Report" opened the first as it still does the eighth. Others have come and gone: in this edition, for example, we've dropped a section called "Mind"—transferring some of its essays to "Human Nature"—and added a section called "Nature and the Environment." Some essays have appeared in all eight editions of *The Norton Reader*: E. B. White's "Once More to the Lake," for example, and Jonathan Swift's "A Modest Proposal." Others—about one-third—are new to this edition. You'll find some of the essays long, some short; some formal, some informal; some calculatedly challenging, some simpler.

The editors—now nine of us—search widely in order to include a range of material and a range of authors. Although most of the essays are contemporary, some are older; although most of them are written in English, a few are translated from other languages. You'll hear in them male and female voices; American, British, and Canadian voices; African-American, Asian-American, American Indian, and Spanish-American voices. What the essays have in common is excellence: at least three editors, without actually defining good writing to ourselves or for

each other, have agreed on the inclusion of each essay. We find their subjects important, timely, timeless, engaging. We find their authors, sometimes well known, sometimes less well known, speaking with authority and, often, seeing with a distinctive angle of vision. We find their writing convincing and clear, their style lean when elaboration is not required and adequate to complexity. The essays are not invariably simple to read: they originally appeared in publications read by informed and educated general readers.

The editors have provided a large number of essays, more than any instructor will assign during a semester: this time the regular edition contains 207; the shorter, 121. The organization, by kinds of writing and kinds of subjects, is loose. We know that there are many kinds of college writing courses; we know that instructors link reading and writing in a variety of ways. Our aim in *The Norton Reader* is to accommodate all or most of them. In consequence, we limit our editorial presence. You'll find, after some but not all of the essays, questions addressed to you as readers and others addressed to you as writers. We intend them to focus your reading of the essays: questions addressed to readers ask about the essays' content, meaning, and argument; questions addressed to writers ask about their authors' strategies—how they present their content and how they make their meanings clear. In the questions addressed to you as writers there's also at least one follow-up writing assignment—out of the many assignments that are possible. We leave it to your instructors to direct you through the essays, to decide which ones to assign and how to use them.

READING

We hope that, in addition to following your instructors' assignments, you'll also follow your own interests. But we don't count on it. Putting essays in a textbook, even one called a "reader," makes reading them seem artificial. They were written for and read by readers who read them naturally: because they wanted to know—or know more—about their subjects, because they knew—or knew of—their authors, or because the essays, appearing in publications they ordinarily read, tempted them to launch into unfamiliar subjects written about by authors they had never heard of. Outside the classroom, readers bring their own interests and motives to reading; inside the classroom, you are left to generate your own in response to assignments.

As editors, we've tried to make available some of the choices available to the original readers of these essays. Information about them appears in two places. A footnote at the beginning of each essay tells when and where it first appeared and, if it began as a talk, when and where it was

delivered and to whom. Maya Angelou's "Graduation," for example, is a chapter from her autobiography, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, published in 1969; Scott Russell Sanders' "Looking at Women" was published in a journal called the *Georgia Review* in 1989; Francis Bacon's "Of Revenge" was published in a collection of his essays called, simply, *Essays*, in 1625; Chief Seattle's "Address" (which is translated), was delivered in response to a treaty offered to his people in 1854; Frances FitzGerald's "Rewriting American History" comes from her *America Revised*, published in *The New Yorker* and then as a book in 1979. We don't, however, explain the differences between the *Georgia Review* and *The New Yorker*; the first, a noncommercial journal published three times a year by the University of Georgia, has fewer and presumably more select and self-selected readers than *The New Yorker*, a commercial magazine published weekly. If more information about context helps situate you in relation to what you are reading, ask your instructors. As editors, we could swamp a smaller number of essays with additional information about their contexts, but we prefer to include more essays and keep contextual information spare.

A section called "Authors" at the end of *The Norton Reader* provides biographical and bibliographical information about the authors whose essays we include. Outside the classroom, we may know something about the authors we read before we read them or we may encounter them as unknowns. We may choose to let them speak for themselves, to see what we can discover about them as they do. Sometimes knowing who they are and where their voices come from helps us to hear them and to grasp what they say—and sometimes it doesn't. Putting biographical information at the end provides, in a textbook, something like the choices ordinary readers have as to how much knowledge about authors to bring to their reading.

An index listing essays by title and by author also appears at the end of *The Norton Reader*. It's of course useful for locating essays; it's also useful for identifying multiple essays by the same author. This edition includes multiple selections by eighteen authors, among them, for example, Joan Didion, Gretel Ehrlich, Stephen Jay Gould, and George Orwell. When you enjoy your encounter with particular authors, it's worth looking in the index to see if we've included additional essays by them; following an author provides motives for reading such as ordinary readers have.

In addition to information about contexts and authors, we also provide, in footnotes, explanations of material in the essays themselves. Our rules for annotation go something like this: (1) *Don't* define words, except foreign words, that appear in desk dictionaries. You can go to yours or, often more sensibly, guess from context. If an unfamiliar word is central to the meaning of an essay, the author is likely to define it.