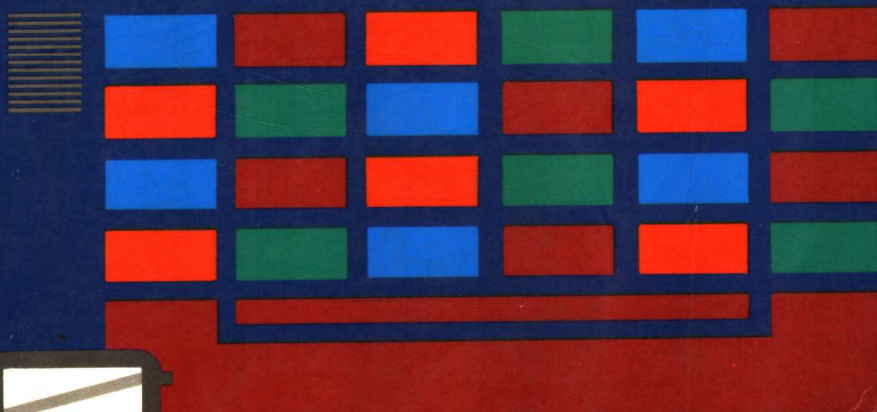


JOHN LANGAN

COLLEGE
WRITING
SKILLS
WITH
READINGS

1310
1055
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710
103.7

SECOND EDITION



JOHN LANGAN
Atlantic Community College

Writing assignments
 1 & last draft
 5 & 6 assignments #3
 Only 5 & 6 Review #1-7
 2a Activities info book
 pg
 Rolfs

407-404
 404-405 (info book) 1-10
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 1st draft choose from topics
 389-390
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COLLEGE WRITING SKILLS WITH READINGS

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CHECKLIST OF THE FOUR STEPS IN WRITING AN EFFECTIVE ESSAY

Use the checklist below to help you write and evaluate an essay. The numbers in parentheses refer to the pages that explain the skill in question.

1 Unity

- Clearly stated thesis in the introductory paragraph of your paper (7; 12-16; 23-29)
- All the supporting paragraphs on target in backing up your thesis (64-66; 76-79)

2 Support

- Three separate supporting points for the thesis (7-9; 16-17; 101-106)
- *Specific* evidence for each of the three supporting points (17-20; 30-34; 67-69)
- *Plenty of* specific evidence for each supporting point (20-21; 35-38; 79-81)

3 Coherence

- Clear method of organization (40-42; 55-57; 69-72; 81-86)
- Transitions and other connecting words (42-45; 57-59)
- Effective introduction and conclusion (7-9; 49-54)

4 Sentence Skills

- Fragments eliminated (224-230)
- Run-ons eliminated (231-235)
- Correct verb forms (236-242; 247-251)
- Subject and verb agreement (243-246)
- Faulty parallelism and faulty modifiers eliminated (252-256)
- Faulty pronouns eliminated (257-260)
- Capital letters used correctly (261-265)
- Punctuation marks where needed:
 - a Apostrophe (266-268)
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 - c Comma (272-279)
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 - e Dash; hyphen (282; 283)
 - f Parentheses (281)
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- Needless words eliminated (284-285)
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- Careless errors eliminated through proofreading (106-108)
- Sentences varied (290-295)

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Review of 338-339
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TO THE INSTRUCTOR

College Writing Skills with Readings is a rhetoric with readings that will help students master the writing of the traditional five-paragraph essay. It is a very practical book with a number of special features to aid teachers and their students.

- ***Four principles are presented as keys to effective writing.*** Four principles or standards—unity, support, coherence, and sentence skills—are highlighted on the inside front cover and reinforced throughout the book. Part One focuses on the first three standards; Part Four covers sentence skills, the fourth principle, by providing a brief handbook on grammar, punctuation, and usage. Part Two introduces students to important factors in writing that will help them achieve these four principles. In Part Three, students learn to use the four standards in different types of essay development. And then the reading selections in Part Five generate assignments which encourage students to apply the four principles in a variety of well-developed essays.
- ***Activities, questions, and assignments are numerous and varied.*** The more than one hundred activities in the book serve as an essential step between the explanation of a skill and a student's full understanding of that skill. Discussion questions follow all the student essays and the selections that make up the readings in the book; comprehension questions also follow the reading selections. Finally, a generous number of writing assignments are included in both the rhetoric and the reader parts of the book.
- ***Clear thinking is stressed throughout.*** This focus on logic starts with the introductory "To the Student" on pages xv–xvi. The book emphasizes that the essay is the result of a sustained reasoning process. Writing assignments provide direction in clear thinking and planning; a section in Part Two on outlining offers practice in grouping ideas and details in logical ways; many

activities in the book require students to develop rigorous thinking skills; a form that will help students plan a well-thought-out essay appears on the inside back cover. In short, students learn that clear writing is inseparable from clear thinking.

- **Writing is treated as a process.** Specific areas in Part Two concern prewriting, rewriting, and editing. In addition, most writing assignments are accompanied by "Suggestions on How to Proceed" that give step-by-step directions for the process of writing a paper.
- **Lively models are provided.** One (though by no means the only) way that students learn is by imitation. *College Writing Skills with Readings* thus provides several high-interest essays with each assignment. Students read and evaluate these essays in terms of the standards of unity, support, and coherence, which have already been explained. Student essays appear along with professional ones written expressly for this book. Almost all the essays follow the 1-3-1 format and average about five hundred words, so that students have clear and realistic models for the essays they will be asked to write.

The book assumes that students are especially interested in and challenged by the writing of their peers. After reading vigorous papers composed by other students and experiencing the power that good writing can have, students will be more encouraged to aim for similar honesty, realism, and detail in their own work.

- **The book is versatile.** Since no two people use an English text in exactly the same way, the material has been organized in a highly accessible manner. Each of the five parts of the book deals with a distinct writing area. Instructors can therefore turn quickly and easily to the skills they want to present.
- **A number of prose readings are included in Part Five.** These readings deal with many contemporary concerns and will stimulate lively class discussions as well as individual thought. They will serve as a rich source of material for a wide range of writing assignments.

There are two special features of Part Five. First is the emphasis placed on helping students become stronger readers. A brief introductory section offers tips on good reading, and ten questions after each selection help students practice key skills in effective comprehension. A second special feature is the detailed guidelines provided with many of the writing assignments. Students are shown how to start thinking about an assignment, and they are often given specific ideas on how to proceed.

- **Several learning aids are available.** Instructors will find useful the checklist of the four steps in essay writing on the inside front cover. Also helpful will be the form for planning an essay on the inside back cover and

the list of correction symbols on the last page. A thorough Instructor's Manual includes a model syllabus, suggestions for using the book, a detailed answer key, and mastery tests for a number of key skills in essay writing. In addition, a set of twenty-five ditto master tests is provided free to those adopting the text. These tests offer practice in a wide range of skills covered in the book, from generating and narrowing a thesis to outlining essays to editing papers for such common mistakes as fragments, verb problems, and run-ons. Both the Instructor's Manual and the ditto masters are available from the local McGraw-Hill representative or by writing to the College English Editor, McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1221 Avenue of the Americas, New York, New York 10020.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THIS BOOK AND COLLEGE WRITING SKILLS

- Parts One to Three are essentially the same as the three rhetoric sections of *College Writing Skills*. There is one new feature: an additional writing assignment appears at the end of each chapter in Part Three. Titled "Writing about a Reading Selection," this assignment asks students to respond to one of the professional essays in Part Five by writing a paper using the mode of development in question.
- Part Four of *College Writing Skills*, "Special Skills," has been omitted to help create space for the twenty-five readings.
- Part Five of *College Writing Skills*, "Handbook of Sentence Skills," has been reduced somewhat—again, to create space for the readings. The editing tests, for example, have been shortened from ten to five.

CHANGES IN THE SECOND EDITION

Changes in the new edition of *College Writing Skills with Readings* include the following:

- The chapter titled "Reasons" in Part Three has been replaced by two chapters: "Cause and Effect" and "Argumentation and Persuasion." As a result, all the traditional modes of discourse are now represented in the book. The chapter on argumentation is completely new and features an extensive series of writing assignments. Four of these assignments approximate typical test-out exams used in a variety of English programs.

- Five of the readings are new: "Success Means Never Feeling Tired," by Mortimer Adler; "Smash Thy Neighbor," by John McMurtry; "An Adventure in the City," by Steve Lopez; "Drugs and Alcohol: A Continuing Threat to Health," by George Gallup, Jr.; and "College Lectures: Is Anybody Listening?" by David Daniels.
- Throughout the book, practice materials have been freshened. For example, there is a new essay activity on page 36. One of the outlining activities on pages 102–104 has been updated. There is a revised list of essay collections on page 124. A new final writing assignment appears on page 161. And five editing passages new to the book now appear on pages 298–303.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I owe thanks to Phillip A. Butcher at McGraw-Hill, who first started me thinking about this book. My present editors, Susan Hurtt, Charlotte Smith, and Susan Gamer, have helped as well with their talented support.

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Finally, I am grateful to Janet M. Goldstein and Carole Mohr, writers and colleagues who provided assistance with the second edition.

John Langan

TO THE STUDENT

The experience I had writing my first college essay has helped shape this book. I received a C– for the essay. Scrawled beside the grade was the comment, “Not badly written, but ill-conceived.” I remember going to the instructor after class, asking about his comment as well as the word “Log” that he had added in the margin at various spots. “What are all these logs you put in my paper?” I asked, trying to make a joke of it. He looked at me a little wonderingly. “Logic, Mr. Langan,” he answered, “logic.” He went on to explain that I had not thought out my paper clearly. There were actually two ideas rather than one in my thesis, one supporting paragraph had nothing to do with either idea, another paragraph lacked a topic sentence, and so on. I’ve never forgotten his last words. “If you don’t think clearly,” he said, “you won’t write clearly.”

I was speechless, and I felt confused and angry. I didn’t like someone telling me that I didn’t know how to think. But I went back to my room and read over my paper several times. Eventually I decided that my teacher was right. “No more logs,” I said to myself. “I’m going to get these logs out of my papers.”

My instructor’s advice was invaluable. I learned that if you plan and think through an essay first, you’ll have completed a major stage of the work. *College Writing Skills with Readings* develops this idea by breaking down the writing process into a series of easily followed steps.

Part One of the book presents the four basic steps or principles you’ll need to write strong essays:

- 1 Begin with a clearly stated point or thesis.
- 2 Provide logical, detailed support for your thesis.
- 3 Organize your supporting material effectively.
- 4 Revise and edit carefully so that the material is presented in clear, error-free sentences.

In Part Two, you'll learn a series of prewriting techniques that will help you generate and develop your ideas on paper. You'll also work through a series of outlining activities that will sharpen your ability to think clearly and logically. Other important factors in the writing process are presented as well.

Part Three describes a number of different ways you can organize and develop essays. Each chapter opens with a brief introduction followed by several essays written by students. Then comes a series of questions so that you can evaluate the essays in terms of the basic principles explained in Part One. Finally, a number of writing topics are presented, along with prewriting hints to help you plan and write an effective paper.

Part Four offers review and practice in skills needed to write clear, error-free, and varied sentences. The skills include writing complete and correctly joined sentences; making subjects, verbs, and pronouns agree; avoiding faulty modifiers; using parallel structure; observing all the rules of punctuation; choosing words effectively; varying sentence styles; and practicing correct manuscript form.

Finally, Part Five consists of a series of high-interest reading selections that will give you many ideas for writing. A special feature of Part Five is an introductory guide to effective reading. Each selection is then accompanied by comprehension questions that will give you practice in key reading skills. In addition, there are discussion questions and writing assignments that will help direct your thinking about each selection.

For your convenience, the book contains the following:

- On the inside front cover, a checklist of the four basic steps in effective writing.
- On the inside back cover, an essay outline form to use when planning an essay.
- On the last page, a list of correction symbols.

Get into the habit of referring to these guides on a regular basis; they can help ensure that you will produce clearly thought-out, well-written essays.

In summary, *College Writing Skills with Readings* will help you learn, practice, and apply the thinking and writing skills you need to communicate effectively. But your starting point must be the determination to do the work needed to become a strong writer. Remember that the ability to express yourself clearly and logically can open doors for you, both in school and in your career. If you decide—and only you can decide—that you want this kind of power, this book will help you reach that goal.

John Langan

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