the Heath Handbook

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Preface

When Edwin C. Woolley published the first edition of *The Heath Handbook* in 1907, he established a new standard for composition textbooks in the twentieth century. Though Woolley's tone was dogmatic and his approach to correctness uncompromising, the unprecedented comprehensiveness of his book and its clear organization—350 numbered rules, beginning with a definition of good usage and ending with the proper placement of a postage stamp on a letter—made it an immediate success.

Our understanding of the writing process, and of the way writing should be taught and learned, has changed dramatically in the more than eight decades since Woolley's first handbook appeared. But comprehensive coverage and clarity of organization remain desirable features in a handbook. This twelfth edition of *The Heath Handbook,* the most thorough revision of the book in more than twenty years, represents the most complete and, we believe, the most accessible edition ever published. Every chapter of the book has been revised; many have been greatly expanded or completely rewritten; several others are new to this edition. Throughout the book, moreover, new headings and subheadings break up the text within chapters, making them easier to consult for quick reference.

Past users of *The Heath Handbook* will notice in particular the following major changes:

1. Increased attention to the writing process.

Chapter 1, "Understanding the Writing Process," has been enlarged to include discussion of the recursive and idiosyncratic nature of the writing process. Chapter 2, "Exploring Ideas," includes a new section

on keeping a journal and several new examples of student writing. Chapter 3, "Considering Your Audience," and Chapter 4, "Choosing a Voice," both feature expanded exercises. Chapter 10, "Revising the Essay," has been totally rewritten; it includes a new discussion of the nature of revision, a new student essay in the process of being revised, and an extended new section on participating in a peer editing group.

2. Greatly expanded treatment of grammatical usage, punctuation, and mechanics.

Most of the nine chapters in Part VI, "Grammatical Usage," and Part VII, "Punctuation, Spelling, and Mechanics," have been completely rewritten to provide more thorough coverage of usage than was available in any previous edition. Our emphasis in rewriting these sections of the book has been on clear explanations, carefully chosen examples, and an organization that enables the reader to locate information quickly and easily.

3. Expanded treatment of the research paper, including three complete student research papers illustrating MLA, APA, and endnote documentation.

Chapter 17, "The Research Process," has been more than doubled in length; it now includes greater discussion of the process of identifying a subject for research and planning the research project. Chapter 18, "The Library," includes an enlarged section on data-base searches—a change that reflects the increasing availability of both on-line and CD-ROM data bases since the last edition was published in 1986. The number of sample MLA Works Cited entries in Chapter 19, "Working with Sources," has been increased to forty-four and now includes examples of entries for every print and nonprint source that students are likely to encounter. Chapter 19 also includes new sections on evaluating sources and assessing one's subject. Chapters 22 and 23, new to this edition, offer comprehensive discussions of APA documentation and endnote documentation, along with fully annotated student research papers illustrating each of these documentation methods in practice.

4. More complete coverage of the art of writing effective sentences.

Chapter 8, "Writing Effective Sentences," combines material that was scattered among several different chapters in previous editions; it

also includes such new topics as avoiding nominalizations and eliminating wordy connectives. The result is a unified and comprehensive discussion of effective sentence writing in a single chapter.

5. A new section on avoiding sexist language.

Chapter 13, "Revising Diction," now includes thorough discussion of the types of sexism too often found in English and suggestions for avoiding them.

6. A new chapter on writing with a word processor.

Chapter 36, "Writing with a Word Processor," is also new to this edition; it surveys the capabilities of word processors and shows students how to use word processing in the planning, drafting, and revising of a paper.

7. More than fifty new exercises.

All exercises that call for the revision of sentence-level errors now consist of sentences that fit together to form brief expository or narrative essays on topics ranging from astronomy to surgery, from Gertrude Stein to Thomas Edison, from the Harlem Renaissance to the Chicago Fire, from traveling by train to writing with a word processor. We think students will find these exercises far more interesting than exercises composed of random, unrelated sentences; these exercises also make it possible for students to consider usage and mechanical errors in a context larger than that provided by a single isolated sentence.

8. An entirely new design.

The typeface has been enlarged and the pages have been reformatted to give students a more readable, accessible text. In addition to the new headings and subheadings, the amount of second color has been increased to make information easier to locate.

9. A full supplement package.

The *Workbook, Diagnostic Tests,* and *Instructor's Edition* provide teachers with support materials that make *The Heath Handbook* a useful classroom tool. In addition, Grammatik III software (a style analysis program) and a variety of word-processing programs and user manuals are available to give students ample help in writing with computers.

Other supplements include copies of the eighth edition of Wilbert J. McKeachie's *Teaching Tips,* an ideal book for beginning instructors, and, through a special arrangement, student subscriptions to *Newsweek* magazine.

We enjoyed the support and assistance of many colleagues and friends as we prepared this edition of *The Heath Handbook.* Specific thanks are due to Robert Acker of the DePaul University Libraries, who shared his expertise in on-line information systems; to Celia Burkhalter of the American Psychological Association, who resolved some thorny questions about APA documentation; to James Catano and Michelle Massé of Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, who made helpful comments on many portions of the manuscript; to Dusky Loebel of Tulane University, whose contributions to the exercises were invaluable; and to the students who allowed us to use their writing for the first time in this edition: Janet Lively, Cyndi Lopardo, Nancy McClure, Kathleen Mulkerrin, and Brad Olson.

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