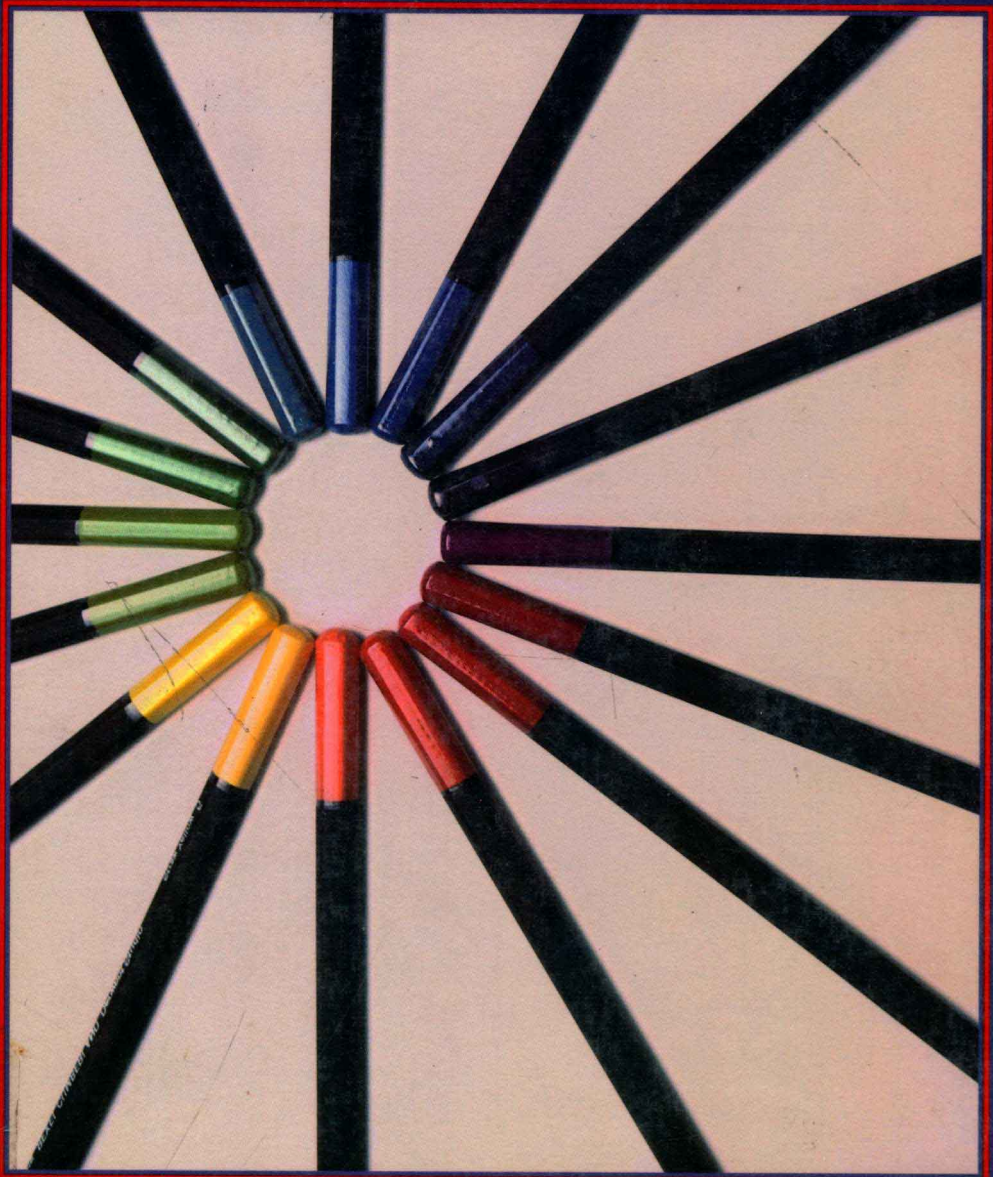


Instructor's Edition

THE PRACTICAL WRITER WITH READINGS

EDWARD P. BAILEY

PHILIP A. POWELL



SECOND EDITION

Edward P. Bailey, Jr.
Philip A. Powell

**THE
PRACTICAL
WRITER**
With Readings
SECOND EDITION

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How This Book Works

The *Practical Writer* is intended for typical first-year college students, who perhaps lack knowledge but don't lack intelligence. We assume that these students can learn quickly and well from a step-by-step approach to the fundamentals, good examples to follow, and carefully designed exercises.

We begin by presenting the fundamentals (organization, support, unity, coherence)—one at a time—in a tightly structured one-paragraph essay. The paragraph, we've found, is a unit large enough for students to demonstrate their understanding of the fundamentals and small enough for them to work toward mastery. At this point, we don't overwhelm them while they're learning the fundamentals by making them struggle to find support; instead, we ask them to write about personal experiences and the people and things they know well. We encourage them to be colorful, interesting, and—above all—specific.

We then move through several longer stages of writing to a 1000-to-2000-word research paper. By the time students complete the research block, they can write a serious paper—the kind they will have to write in other college courses and beyond them—with a less mechanical structure than we required earlier. We still offer a model, of course, but it becomes a guide rather than a goal.

The last two topics of our book, punctuation and expression, are not part of the step-by-step approach. These chapters can be studied anytime, whenever your students are ready for them. They are not typical handbook material, though, because we've been careful to select only what first-year students need to learn, leaving out the skills they probably know and those they're not yet ready to apply.

Finally, we try to avoid the “scholarly” style of writing and speak personally to the students, as though we're talking to them in class.

Preface to the Second Edition

This edition remains true to our original conception of *The Practical Writer* when we first began work on it in 1977: a step-by-step introduction to the fundamentals of composition presented in a clear, straightforward style.

In this edition we've made many changes. First, we've added three chapters:

- Chapter 22, "Works Cited," which helps students understand this key part of a research paper.
- Chapter 28, "Colon," which presents one good (and simple) rule to help students use this important mark of punctuation.
- Chapter 29, "Dash," which presents two (easy) rules and encourages students to use this mark of punctuation.

We've also thoroughly revised the exercises in the book, keeping some workhorses but replacing many and adding a substantial number to Part Six, "Punctuation," and Part Seven, "Expression."

And we've added extra sample essays to the chapters in Part Four, "More Patterns of Development."

In each edition, we've acknowledged our indebtedness to Professor Paul Knoke, who worked closely with us on every word in the first edition of this book. Paul has our continuing thanks.

Our editors at Holt, Rinehart and Winston are true professionals who share our enthusiasm for this book and always "go the extra mile": Our special thanks to Charlyce Jones Owen, who helped us develop our ideas for this edition (and who has no doubt memorized our phone numbers—as we have memorized hers); to Kate Morgan, who worked closely with us to develop our

ideas into words; and to Sondra Greenfield, who turns all of our words and ideas into the real thing—a typeset book that looks (and is) professional. Our thanks to all of you.

The reviewers for this edition were especially insightful, confirming our concerns and offering us new approaches. Our particular thanks to all of them: Paul Devlin, Ferris State College; Beverly Elliott, Peirce Junior College; Beverly Farris, Hinds Junior College; James Helvey, Davidson County Community College; Robert Jenkins, Florence Darlington Technical College; Linnie Jones, New Mexico State University; Patricia Kuett-Wellington, University of Miami; Ann Morton, Portland Community College; Mary Catherine Park, Brevard Community College; Kathleen Tickner, Brevard Community College.

And our students, of course, deserve special recognition. We admire their talent and creativity. We especially thank those students who contributed sample papers: Andrea M. Bopp, Louise A. Burket, Anthony J. Comtois, Robert T. Cunningham, Erik A. Emaus, George M. Fox, James C. Gall, James E. Kinzer, Janet C. Libbey, Rodney L. Marshall, Jay D. McFadden, Susan J. Timmons, Rodney R. Williams, and Lawrence A. Wolf.

September 1988

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SECTION ONE

A MODEL FOR WRITING

PART ONE

The One-Paragraph Essay (Stage I)

This section teaches you how to write a good one-paragraph essay. Though you rarely see one-paragraph essays in publications, you'll find them remarkably handy for improving your writing. One obvious advantage is that they are short enough to allow you to spend your study time writing a really good one. Yet they are long enough for you to practice and demonstrate the fundamentals of writing. A final advantage is that what you learn about one-paragraph essays transfers nicely to larger themes and research papers.

In Part One you'll learn about the simplest one-paragraph essay, which we call Stage I. Later, in Part Two, you'll study the organization for a slightly more sophisticated one-paragraph essay, which we'll call Stage II.

Part One presents a very tightly structured model for a paragraph. You may wonder if all good writers follow such a structure for persuasive writing. No, of course not. This structure is not *the* good way to write a paragraph, but it is *one* good way. And this way has a very real advantage: it automatically gives your paper organization so that you have one less thing to worry about. You can then concentrate on learning the other fundamentals that experienced writers already know. And by working constantly with this model paragraph, you will learn organization too, the easy way.

Support for the paragraph's main idea is also easy. Right now we don't care if you know how to find facts in the library. We're much more concerned that you can recognize and use good support once you find it. So we make finding it simple. You don't need to go any further than your own mind: you can use either your experiences or your imagination for support. As a result, you can have fun with your one-paragraph essays. They can be intriguing and perhaps humorous. Writing doesn't have to be dull!

1

Overview of the One-Paragraph Essay (Stage I)

You may already be familiar with a common organization for good writing:

- Tell the readers what you're going to tell them.
- Tell it to them.
- Then tell them what you just told them.

This chapter shows you how to apply that organization to the one-paragraph essay: the first sentence states the idea you want your readers to accept (we call this a *topic sentence*), all middle sentences present specific support for that idea, and the last sentence rewords the topic sentence—to remind your readers of the point you've just made.

THE MODEL FOR THE ONE-PARAGRAPH ESSAY (STAGE I)

The model for a Stage I one-paragraph essay looks like this:

Topic Sentence

Specific Support

Specific Support

Specific Support

Reworded Topic Sentence

Now let's look at a "real" paragraph—one that follows the model we've just shown you:

*Topic
Sentence*

_____ { The Boundary Waters Canoe Area, a wilderness park in northern Minnesota, is a refreshing change from the city. Away from the din of civilization, I

<i>Specific Support</i>	_____	{	have canoed silently across its waters for an entire afternoon and not heard a single noise except an occasional birdcall and the sound of waves beating against the shore. Also, my partner and I were able
<i>Specific Support</i>	_____		to navigate our way through a string of five lakes by following a campfire's scent drifting through the pure air. Most refreshing, the park is so magnifi-
<i>Specific Support</i>	_____		cantly beautiful that even the voyageurs of old were willing to endure its hardships in order to settle
<i>Reworded Topic Sentence</i>	_____		there. The Boundary Waters Canoe Area is thus an ideal place to clear your head of the congestion of urban life.

Now look at an outline of this paragraph:

Topic Sentence The Boundary Waters Canoe Area is a refreshing change.

Specific Support quietness

Specific Support purity of the air

Specific Support beauty

Reworded Topic Sentence It's an ideal place to clear head of congestion of urban life.

ANOTHER EXAMPLE

Here's another sample one-paragraph essay. Notice that it, too, follows the model perfectly.

<i>Topic Sentence</i>	_____	{	Even though I have never really lived there, going to my grandmother's farm always seems like coming home. The feeling begins as soon as I cross the threshold of that quaint little house and tumble into the arms of waiting aunts and cousins. The sense of welcome overwhelms me. Then there are the cozy rooms—the ceilings don't seem higher than six feet—with their crackling fireplaces that make me want to snuggle down into the feather-
<i>Specific Support</i>	_____		stuffed chairs. But the memory that always lasts the longest is the smell of Grandma's biscuits and pastries cooking in her coke-fed stove. Yes, only in Grandma's house do I feel the warmth and welcome that always seems like coming home.
<i>Specific Support</i>	_____		
<i>Specific Support</i>	_____		
<i>Reworded Topic Sentence</i>	_____	{	

Again, let's outline it:

Topic Sentence Going to my grandmother's farm seems like coming home.

Specific Support greeting by relatives

Specific Support coziness of house

Specific Support smell of home-cooked food

Reworded Topic Sentence Visiting Grandma's seems like coming home.

Notice that each of these sample paragraphs has three items of specific support. Sometimes five or six items are necessary to be persuasive; other times, one long example will do. As a general rule, though, three seems to work well.

Although the sample paragraphs in the first two or three chapters of this book are good, they are intentionally fairly simple so you can easily see the basic organization. But if you don't fully understand the one-paragraph essay yet, don't worry. The rest of Part One explains the fundamentals.

You can find a checklist for these fundamentals on page 54.

EXERCISES

- A. Outline the following paragraph the same way we outlined the two paragraphs in the chapter:

Three common electrical distractions on my desk waste my precious study time at night. The worst distraction is my clock, constantly humming to remind me how little time I actually have. Another interruption is the "high-quality" fluorescent desk lamp that sometimes buzzes, flickers—and then goes out. And, finally, consider that fascinating little invention, the computer, which not only does all kinds of complicated math problems, but also challenges me to games and helps me write letters home. After stopping to worry about the time, fix my lamp, and play with the computer, I am too tired to study, so I just go to bed.

Topic Sentence _____

Specific Support _____

Specific Support _____

Specific Support _____

Reworded Topic Sentence _____

B. Outline this paragraph:

Old, stiff, and weathered, my grandfather's hands show the strenuous way of life he has known as a working man. Many hot summer days tilling the stubborn soil of West Texas have left their lasting mark in the form of a deep and permanent tan. Grandpa's hands are also covered with calluses—begun, perhaps, when he split cordwood for two dollars a day in an effort to pull his family through the Great Depression. Most striking, though, are the carpenter's scars he has collected from the days of building his house, barn, and fence, and from the unending repair jobs that still occupy his every day. Although small and battered, Grandpa's hands bring back images of a time when men and women worked from dawn to dusk just to survive, a difficult but respected way of life.

Topic Sentence _____

Specific Support _____

Specific Support _____

Specific Support _____

Reworded Topic Sentence _____

C. Outline this paragraph:

The East Wing of the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., is a showplace of modern art. Inside, it houses collections of such artists as Picasso and Matisse, artists well known for their nonrepresentational works. Hanging from the ceiling is a mobile, normally thought of as a dangling toy parents hang above their infant's crib. This one, however, is several stories high and much more impressive to the parents (and children, too). Even the building is in keeping with its contents—it has lots of glass, open spaces, and strange angles and corners. For modern art, then, this wing of the gallery is an excellent place to visit.

Topic Sentence _____

Specific Support _____

Specific Support _____

Specific Support _____

Reworded Topic Sentence _____

2

Support: Examples, Statistics, Statements by Authorities

The first sentence in our model paragraph is the topic sentence, but let's save that for the next chapter. Instead, we'll start with support. Once you understand support—and how specific it must be—you'll understand much more easily how to write a good topic sentence.

This chapter examines three different kinds of support: examples, statistics, and statements by authorities.

EXAMPLES

"The secret of good writing—the real secret," many professional writers would tell you, "is using examples."

"The biggest problem with undergraduate writing—the one that almost all students have," many teachers would tell you, "is that they don't know how to use examples."

So here you go: a chance to solve a problem by learning a secret. Let's begin with two different kinds of examples: *quick examples* and *narrative examples*.

Quick Examples

You already know from your everyday experience what a quick example is: *a quick example is one instance, one occurrence of whatever you're talking about*. If you're discussing the meals available at fast-food restaurants, a hamburger is one example—one of several possibilities. You could have named fried chicken, tacos, roast beef sandwiches, or (at the waterfront of San Francisco) even sourdough bread and crabs.

For a quick example to be effective, it must be very specific. If you want to show that Constance Dilettante can't stick with anything, don't say, "She changes her mind a lot." Don't even just say, "She changed her major fre-

quently in college.” Be still more specific: “She changed her major from philosophy to computer science to animal husbandry—all in one semester.”

Do quick examples really make any difference? We think so. Consider the following:

Without Quick Examples

There were many expensive cars in the school’s parking lot during the football game.

You could tell spring was here because of all the flowers in bloom.

Why do lawyers use words that mean one thing to them and something else entirely in ordinary English?

With Quick Examples

There were many expensive cars in the school’s parking lot during the football game—Mercedes convertibles, low-slung Porsches, red Ferraris.

You could tell spring was here because of all the flowers in bloom: tulips of all colors, yellow daffodils, and (if you want to call them flowers) even a few early dandelions.

Why do lawyers use words that mean one thing to them and something else entirely in ordinary English (words like “party” and “action” and “motion”)?

See the difference that quick examples make? They take something rather abstract—cars, flowers, legal words—and make them much more concrete. It’s almost as if the abstract words don’t really communicate, don’t really find a place to lodge in the brain cells. But the more concrete words—Mercedes, tulip, party—do.

When should you use quick examples? Well . . . how often do you like to have such examples when you’re a *reader*? Pretty often, right? And that’s how often you should use them when you’re a writer.

Quick examples, of course, don’t have to come at the ends of sentences. You could have a paragraph—probably a very short one—that depended entirely on quick examples:

Chairs come in many different designs. Easy chairs—designed for people who like to lounge back—usually have lots of padding, perhaps a curved back, and comfortable armrests. Straight chairs usually have minimal padding, a vertical back, and sometimes no armrests. Some contemporary chairs—kneelers—have padding for the knees and seat, but no back at all and no armrests. So, depending on their purposes, chairs differ quite a bit.