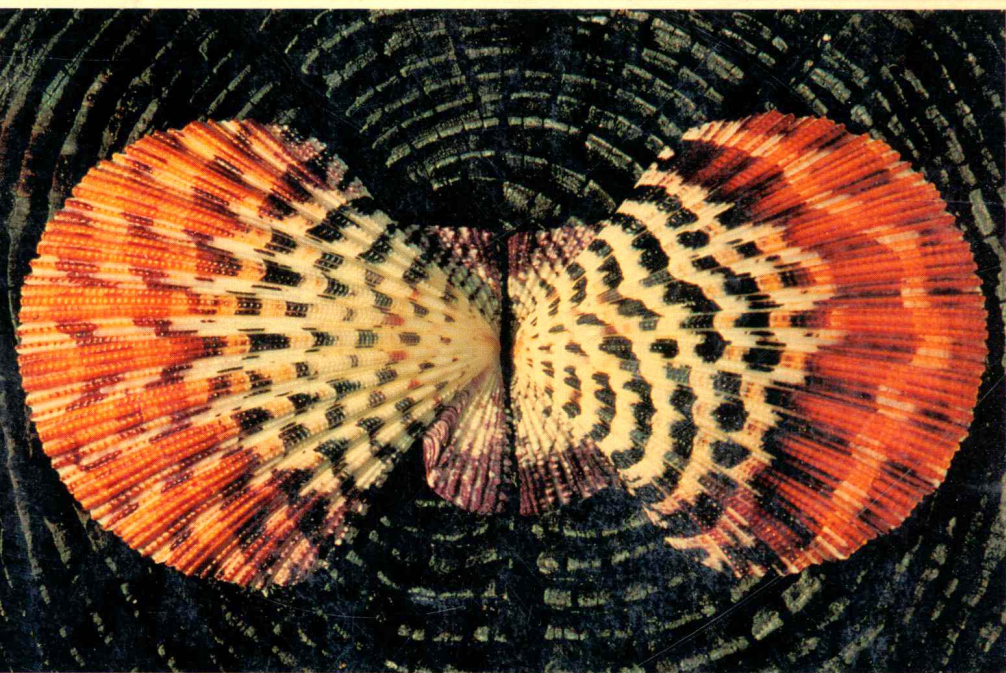


Second Edition

MODELS FOR CLEAR WRITING



ROBERT B. DONALD
BETTY R. MORROW
LILLIAN G. WARGETZ
KATHLEEN WERNER

SECOND EDITION

***MODELS
FOR
CLEAR
WRITING***

Robert B. Donald
Betty Richmond Morrow
Lillian Griffith Wargetz
Kathleen Werner



Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey 07632

Models for clear writing

Bibliography p

Includes indexes

1 English language—Rhetoric 2 College readers

I Donald, Robert B

PE1408 M583 1989 808' 0427 88-30660

ISBN 0-13-586959-5

Editorial/production supervision *Bea Marcks/Edith Riker*

Cover Design *Ben Santora*

Manufacturing buyer *Laura Crossland*

Cover photo. *James Carmichael, The Image Bank*

To
ROBERT B. DONALD
our colleague, co-author, and friend



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10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

ISBN 0-13-586959-5

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Prentice-Hall of Australia Pty Limited, *Sydney*
Prentice-Hall Canada Inc, *Toronto*
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PREFACE

Models for Clear Writing, a result of many years of teaching experience, attempts to satisfy three needs: enjoyable learning for the student, effective support for the instructor, and comprehensive direction for the course. To these ends, we have chosen models with as wide a range of topics as possible but still within the students' interests and scope.

Some of the selections are long, some short; some are serious, some are light-hearted; some are simple, some are more complex; some stand alone, some present opposing views.

Models for Clear Writing attempts to improve the students' writing by integrating reading and writing skills. Research clearly indicates that learning how to be a good writer and learning how to be a good reader often require an understanding of the same concepts:

1. Having a clear purpose in mind
2. Understanding various patterns of organization
3. Forming generalizations
4. Separating main ideas from supporting ideas
5. Understanding the function of details
6. Distinguishing between fact and opinion
7. Recognizing the importance of phrases as units of writing
8. Recognizing the importance of key words and word placement
9. Understanding how language affects tone
10. Understanding how tone affects interpretation
11. Understanding how context affects meaning.

In each chapter, the rhetorical pattern and its practical purpose are clearly explained and illustrated, and the professional and student models then show the theory put into practice. The models represent not only a broad spectrum of viewpoints and opinions, but also a wide range of styles and methods of development. After almost every essay, discussion questions follow to stimulate close reading which, in turn, encourages the creative response that leads to worthwhile writing.

Chapter 1 presents writing as a learnable skill and emphasizes a step-by-step procedure for developing clear and effective writing.

Chapters 2 through 8 then deal with a specific mode of development: narration, description, example, process, comparison, division and classification, cause and effect. The final three chapters—on definition, persuasion, and writing about literature—explore various combinations of rhetorical patterns and show how writers may employ more than one method to achieve their purpose. Thus, the student moves in orderly fashion from the simple patterns of organization to the more complex. As students progress systematically from chapter to chapter, the wide-ranging and eclectic selection of models encourages them to expand gradually the range of their own writing and eventually go beyond the confines of the single-mode essay.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We appreciate the generous support we received in writing this book. As always, the college has supported us enthusiastically. Our president, William K. Bauer, was quick to grant our every request, usually even before we made it. We also thank Peggy Williams, our academic vice-president and John Rizzo, our vice-president for business, for their cooperation and support.

Our colleagues in the Community College of Beaver County also deserve our thanks, especially Linda Ciani, our research librarian, whose expertise saved us countless hours. And we thank our secretary, Marsha Spano.

From outside the college, we received perceptive and painstaking criticism from our reviewers.

We also appreciate the generous support of Edie Riker, Jane Bauman, Phil Miller, Carolyn Ruddle, and, for old times sake, Gary Gutchell, all of Prentice Hall.

We thank most warmly our students for contributing their own essays to exemplify our principles: Lola Karnes, Debbi Lucci, Mark Pleshenko, Daniel Samerin, Karen Secrest, Robert Statti, Georgette Walton, Robert A. Wolfe, Patti Wright.

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1

Understanding Writing as a Process

Good writing is not produced in a vacuum; it comes from thought. It is only after thinking, questioning, reflecting, and organizing that writing can take place. Writing is a process—a gradual progressive process—that begins with a search and ends with a discovery. No one understood this better than Michel Montaigne, who wrote the world's first essays; he worked on his first collection of essays for over eight years before he had them printed in 1580. You probably won't have quite so much time to spend on your essays, but you do have to be willing to resist the temptation to rush the process—skipping the research and settling for the first random idea that pops into your head—just to complete an assignment. The writing process will work for you, but only if you appreciate the value of *each* step in the process.

1. Getting Started
2. Choosing a Topic
3. Establishing a Purpose
4. Forming a Thesis Statement

5. Becoming Aware of Your Audience
6. Organizing Your Thoughts
7. Writing Your Paper
8. Choosing Effective Titles
9. Editing and Revising

GETTING STARTED

You do not have to go through the above steps in any particular order. In fact, many times you will start with establishing a purpose, since one of the best reasons for writing is that you want to say something. On the other hand, you might have a particular subject you want to write about; in that case, you would follow the original order. Whichever order you choose, spend time on these two steps. If these are weak, your work will be feeble no matter how much time you spend on the other steps.

CHOOSING A TOPIC

Students often overlook the importance of one of the first steps in the writing process—finding an *interesting* topic. Some students, especially those who have a hard time thinking of something to write about, are often so relieved to find a topic that they don't care how bland that topic might be. They use it anyway just to get their paper written. Unfortunately, the time they think they have saved by abandoning the search for an interesting topic is usually lost in the frustrating process of trying to formulate a decent thesis statement (controlling idea) about a vague, overworked topic. They don't seem to realize that dull topics produce dull thesis statements, and dull thesis statements produce dull papers. The sad thing is that by overlooking the value of this important step in the writing process, these students deprive themselves of the opportunity to experience the real pleasures of the writing process as a whole. They learn nothing, and they miss the joy of discovery. Instead, they just reinforce their negative feelings about writing: apprehension, confusion, frustration, and hostility. If you are one of those people who have a hard time getting started on a writing assignment, take heart. There are plenty of ways to find a good topic, and none of them are particularly difficult or time-consuming. Here are a few suggestions.

Brainstorming

Brainstorming is one of the most effective techniques for generating ideas. Whether you brainstorm by yourself or within a group, you can produce a surprising number of ideas in a short time. When you brainstorm within a group, one person throws out an idea and another responds with the first thought that comes to mind, and that thought generates another response, and so on. You just bounce ideas off each other until you think you have enough. Keep in mind that the ideas are not to be criticized; they don't have to be good. In brainstorming you are after quantity, not quality, and you never know when a trivial idea will inspire a great one.

Brainstorming by Yourself

Brainstorming by yourself involves the same process, but instead of bouncing ideas off others, you generate your own ideas by letting your mind wander from one thought to another. In both cases, it is important to say anything that comes into your head, no matter how crazy it sounds. You will be surprised at how quickly one idea generates another. For example:

marriage	lawsuits
divorce	malpractice
kids	incompetent doctors
child support	Dr. Davis
early	my mother's operation
late	outrageous hospital costs
never	outrageous boy/girlfriends

From a list of twenty-five or thirty ideas, you will be able to spot several interesting topics that could be narrowed down for an essay. Another way that you can brainstorm by yourself is to concentrate on one subject at a time. For example, if you picked a topic such as sports, you would jot down all of the sports-related topics you could think of. In a matter of minutes, you would have plenty of ideas.

Free Writing

Another method that often works quite well is free writing. You just start writing and keep writing for ten minutes. Whatever comes