# POCKETFUL OF ESSAYS VOLUME II THEMATICALLY ARRANGED

DAVID MADDEN



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LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY

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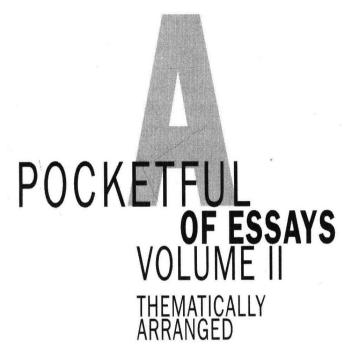
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### A Word from the Editor to Students and Teachers

You can actually lift this book.

And afford it.

As with the first two prose anthologies that launched the *Pocketful* series, *A Pocketful of Essays, Volume II: Thematically Arranged* is aimed at satisfying the need for a concise, quality collection that students will find inexpensive and that instructors will enjoy teaching.

The reception of this series has supported our original assumption that students and teachers would welcome an innovative alternative to huge readers, which are rarely used entirely, tend to be bulky to carry and to handle in class, and are, above all, expensive.

A Pocketful of Essays, Volume II: Thematically Arranged contains twenty-seven professionally written essays that research reveals to be currently among the most commonly studied in classes around the country.

The essays are arranged according to their predominant themes: child-hood memories, race and gender, psychology, law, relationships between men and women, social roles and customs, and so on. Each of the nine sections includes three essays, with each essay presenting a theme-specific topic of interest to both students and instructors. Brief introductions to the sections point out the different approaches the writers use.

An overview of writing strategies is provided in the introduction. A rhetorical table of contents identifies the various writing strategies employed in the essays, such as narration, description, illustration and example, process, and so on. Annotations that accompany Deborah Tannen's published essay "Talk in the Intimate Relationship: His and Hers," which opens the collection, and a student essay, Cecelia DeLozier's "Diagnoses, Denials, and Discoveries," which closes the collection, help to illustrate writing strategies more specifically.

The design of this text encourages students to respond to the essays as they read. Margins are wide enough to allow room for notes, questions, and student commentary.

Special thanks go to doctoral student Kimberly J. Allison, who provided the critical material for this book, under my direct and detailed supervision.

Special thanks also go to my agent Michael Rosenberg for his support and integral part in the continuation of this series.

At Harcourt College Publishers, my Acquisitions Editor, Julie McBurney, and my Developmental Editor, Jessie Swigger, shared my vision of this text and supported my desire to try new approaches to the creation of the textbooks. They helped shape the collection from start to finish.

We know that students will appreciate the low cost. We hope that the enhancement material and annotations will help broaden their experience with the essays.

We are interested in hearing from you. To tell us your comments about how this text worked in your class, please respond to English Acquisitions Editor, Harcourt College Publishers, 301 Commerce Street, Suite 3700, Fort Worth, Texas 76102.

David Madden Louisiana State University

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# A Brief Introduction to Writing Strategies

THE ESSAYS IN A Pocketful of Essays, Volume II, are arranged according to their overall theme (or subject matter). Along with providing ideas for your writing assignments, these essays offer insight into the strategies (or means of expression) writers use to compose their essays. Essays and other forms of prose often include combinations of writing strategies, even though one strategy is dominant. The "Alternate Contents" for this book offers some insight into the dominant writing strategy reflected in each essay. As you read these essays, you may want to identify the various writing strategies the authors rely upon to develop their topic. Authors usually combine two or more of the nine basic writing strategies: narration, description, illustration and example, process, comparison and contrast, cause and effect, definition, classification and division, and argumentation.

**Narration** is one of the fundamental strategies of writing, commonly understood as storytelling. When we tell a story or write a narrative essay, we recount events in sequential order, telling our reader what happened. The events in a narrative essay may be arranged chronologically—moving from events in the distant past to the more recent past or to the present. Chronological organization answers the question "What happened next?" Narratives based in the present often involve flashbacks to earlier events. An alternate strategy for organizing narration reveals the importance of events—arranging them from the most important to the least important or vice versa.

**Narration** may serve different purposes—to express ideas, to inform, or to amuse—and from different points of view (or perspectives). First-person narratives can easily be identified by the use of *I*. The narrator, or *I*, speaking in the first-person narrative may be an active participant in the events of the story—as in Maya Angelou's and George Orwell's autobiographical narrative essays "The Finishing School" and "Shooting an Elephant," respectively—or the narrator may be recounting events he or she merely observed.

**Description,** like narration, is one of the fundamental strategies of expression and is, thus, used in all types of writing: in narration, cause and effect, and process, for instance. Description requires specific, detailed language that evokes a response from readers' senses—sight, smell, taste, hearing, touch. Along with creating an image of what we see or hear, description allows us to explain what we mean: When an idea or instruction is unclear, we often ask the speaker, "Could you describe it? It's not clear at this point." Writing description requires keen observation. To describe a scene, a person, a thing, or an event, writers must take note of what they see, hear, smell, taste, or touch. Including these sensory impressions allows the reader to sense what the writer

is describing. If description were not included, narrative writing would be stale and boring.

Illustration can be understood as explaining by example. Examples clarify general statements by offering specific cases that represent, prove, or interpret the idea discussed. When clarifying statements, speakers often use expressions such as "Take, for example" or "For example." Examples are used in all types of writing to develop (or support) a statement in a paragraph and to add interesting details. In an example essay—an essay developed primarily by illustration—the author uses examples to support a thesis (or main idea). For instance, in an essay stating that college life is detrimental to our health, we might clarify our thesis with a series of examples: Late night studying causes sleep deprivation or exhaustion; flu and colds are repeatedly transferred from student to student on campus; anxiety about test-taking causes ulcers and insomnia. Each of these examples would make up the body paragraphs of our essay. Examples are also useful in clarifying statements in essays relying on any of the other eight writing strategies. Deciding how many and what kind of examples to include in your essay isn't an exact science. One short example may be enough to explain (or clarify) a concept. In some cases, an extended example, spanning one page of text, may explain your point most effectively. Or a series of examples may be necessary to show the prevalence of various types of cases in which your point can be identified as true.

If you have ever read a "how-to" book or essay, you are familiar with **process** (or process analysis). Process essays provide step-by-step instructions or guidelines for performing a task. We use process when we respond to the questions "How do I do that?" or "How does that work?" Process essays frequently begin with an explanation of the equipment, ingredients, or essential means for performing the task discussed. Once the reader knows what is needed for the task, the author turns to the series of steps to be performed. These step-by-step instructions are arranged chronologically and often begin with such cues as "first," "next," "then," and "finally." As with examples in illustrations, the steps for performing a process may be arranged in groups. Group together steps that complement each other or that must be performed together at one point in the process.

Writers of process essays must carefully consider what terms need to be defined, what barriers or problems a reader might encounter while performing the task, and what, if any, steps might have been omitted. For a reader to perform effectively the task in your process essay, he or she will need the complete process explained and any possible difficulties anticipated.

**Comparison** involves the examination and explanation of similarities between concepts or objects. **Contrast** involves the same strategy but focuses on differences. We often compare our options, such as courses we might take, without realizing we are doing so. We frequently ask ourselves, "How are those similar?" or "What makes that different?" Whether we choose to focus on similarities or differences, the purpose of comparisons and contrasts is to make a decision or judgment about the items examined: We engage in comparisons

and contrasts to decide which course will most benefit our future study, which degree program fits our goals, or which job allows us to use our degree most effectively. Comparison and contrast essays can be arranged in one of two ways: in blocks (or units) or according to alternating points. Using the block format, the author fully discusses the points of one concept or object before turning to a full discussion of the second. Writers use comparison and contrast in essays based on descriptions, definitions, and argumentation.

A **definition** explains what something is or what a word or phrase means. Definitions are useful in all types of writing, particularly when a word may evoke multiple meanings or when it is jargon (language used in a specific field of study or occupation). Even in conversation you will be asked to "define your terms" or to "explain exactly what you mean by that." A definition essay provides an extended definition of a concept or object through the use of various writing strategies—especially through description and example—and can answer not only "What do you mean by that" but also "What does that mean to you?" or "Do you have a better way of saying that?"

**Argumentation** seeks to convince readers of an opinion or to move readers to take an action. Argument differs greatly from the unproductive bickering or debating we might hear in the supermarket or cafeteria because argumentation relies heavily on evidence to support the writer's claim. Any of the writing strategies presented in this book can be used in argumentation, and often several writing strategies are combined in the presentation of evidence in an argument so that the author can effectively persuade the audience to agree with the claim or to take an action.

The classical argument consists of a short description of the issue; a clear thesis statement, indicating what opinion or action the author is proposing; evidence that supports the thesis statement; an anticipation of and response to any counterarguments; and a conclusion that restates the thesis and summarizes the evidence in the argument. Each of these elements is important, but the thesis statement and evidence need particular attention. The thesis

statement must clearly state the author's position (or claim), and the evidence must directly relate to and clearly support the author's thesis.

The logical arrangement of ideas in argumentation may be presented deductively or inductively. A **deductive argument** states an opinion or position and then presents evidence that supports the claim, with the aim of reaching a conclusion about the issue. An **inductive argument**, common among the sciences, presents a number of cases particular to the issue and then draws a conclusion.

When you begin writing your essays, remember to consider the knowledge of and appeal to the audience's beliefs, backgrounds, needs, and interests. **Appealing to the audience** is essential in argumentation. An audience who disagrees with the author or who is ambivalent toward the topic will need to be persuaded. To persuade an audience, an author may focus on appealing to the reader's sense of the writer's credibility (ethos) or to the audience's emotions (pathos). The author's credibility may be revealed through his or her expertise or experience and professional tone, as well as the author's use of logical argument. Pathos is most effective for persuading disagreeable audiences and for moving an audience to action (as evidenced in television commercials soliciting donations for feeding children in Third World countries). To use these appeals effectively, put yourself in the place of your audience and consider what terms a reader might need defined and which examples or other support for your assertions would most likely engage the reader.

## Talk in the Intimate Relationship: His and Hers

Deborah Tannen, professor of linguistics at Georgetown University, focuses her research on social (or cultural) influences on language. Along with numerous books she has edited, Tannen has written seven books about the relationship between gender and language, including That's Not What I Meant (1989), You Just Don't Understand (1990), Gender and Discourse (1994), Talking from 9 to 5 (1995), and The Argument Culture (1999).

MALE-FEMALE CONVERSATION IS cross-cultural communication. Culture is simply a network of habits and patterns gleaned from past experience, and women and men have different past experiences. From the time they're born, they're treated differently, talked to differently, and talk differently as a result. Boys and girls grow up in different worlds, even if they grow up in the same house. And as adults they travel in different worlds, reinforcing patterns established in childhood. These cultural differences include different expectations about the role of talk in relationships and how it fulfills that role.

Everyone knows that as a relationship becomes long-term, its terms change. But women and men often differ in how they expect them to change. Many women feel, "After all this time, you should know what I want without my telling you." Many men feel, "After all this time, we should be able to tell each other what we want."

These incongruent expectations capture one of the key differences between men and women. Communication is always a matter of balancing conflicting needs for involvement and independence. Though everyone has both these needs, women often have a relatively greater need for involvement, and men a relatively greater need for independence. Being understood without

Opening paragraph introduces the topic of gender-based differences in conversation, **defining** gender-specific "cultures." Paragraphs 1–3 make up the **introduction.** 

**Narrows scope** of subject to genderspecific expectations of change in *long-term* relationships, **illustrating** men's and women's **contrasting** views of communication.

Introduces the **organizing point of comparison and contrast**—women's and men's *expectations* of involvement or independence in conversation—and the significance of inexplicit meaning.