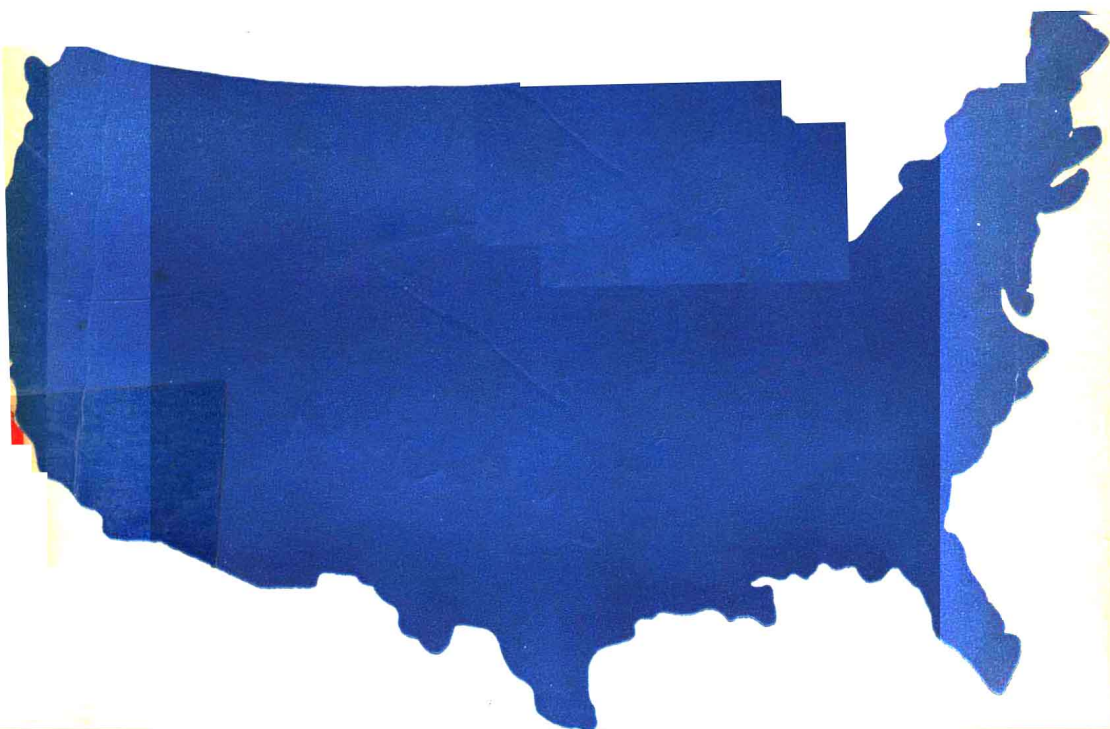


**Robert G. Bander**

# **American English Rhetoric**

**A Writing Program in English  
as a Second Language**

**Second Edition**



# **American English Rhetoric**

**A Two-Track Writing Program  
for Intermediate and  
Advanced Students of English  
as a Second Language**

**SECOND EDITION**

**Robert G. Bander**

**Holt, Rinehart and Winston**

**New York Chicago San Francisco Atlanta Dallas  
Montreal Toronto London Sydney**

## Preface

The unique feature of this text for students of English as a second language is that it joins an intensive expository composition program with a handbook approach to essentials of grammar, punctuation, and vocabulary. The two-books-in-one concept of this second edition of *American English Rhetoric* makes it possible for an instructor to use the book at either the Intermediate or Advanced level.

### Composition: A Two-Track Program

The usefulness of the text for both Intermediate and Advanced students is increased by the two-track composition sections at the close of Chapters 2–10. Each chapter's composition assignment offers two distinctly different sets of topics and writing approaches. Group I topics, in addition to being more basic than those of Group II, are also more highly structured; the Group I track provides practice in the same method of expository development studied elsewhere in a chapter. In contrast, Group II topics supply a creative alternative to Group I subjects for students who are especially imaginative or advanced. Here writing assignments are drawn from James Thurber fables and Woody Allen fantasies; "Doonesbury," "Peanuts," and *New Yorker* cartoons; a cryonics advertisement and the composition of a French schoolgirl; the fanciful novel *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and the rock music publication *Rolling Stone*. As students move through the book, composition topics become increasingly more complex.

Concluding the writing program, Chapter 11 contains four challenging composition units on the subjects of censorship, social protest, women's liberation, and love. An instructor may use these topics for special purposes throughout the course or save them for an end-of-course evaluation of student learning. Students will find seventy-four practice exercises to sharpen their writing, punctuation, and grammar skills. An especially useful reference source is the ten-part Appendix.

Since most chapters contain a wider selection of composition topics and writing approaches than are likely to be selected each week, an instructor can assign unused topics from earlier chapters as the course progresses.

### Using the Model Selections

Each chapter from 2 through 10 opens with a model paragraph or composition that has its expository techniques annotated in the left margin.

These annotations suggest points for discussion and, consequently, models are seldom analyzed at length in the chapter itself. The models also provide material for dictation and in-class analysis.

Dictation has been found to be effective in teaching writing to students of English as a second language. If an instructor favors this approach, part or all of the model selections at the beginnings of Chapters 2 to 10 may be dictated as the first learning step. Dictation may be staged in two ways: "live" during a class session, or voice and energy may be conserved by recording the dictation on a cassette tape that is later played in class. If an instructor is not a native speaker of English, the dictation might be recorded by one who is.

Instructors who do not wish to teach composition by dictation may use the model selections solely as a basis for class discussion. They may utilize discussion of the annotated models to discover whether students have understood the annotated points. If any expository techniques seem unclear, other examples should be chosen from the text, or from other texts students are using.

### **How the Second Edition Has Been Changed**

Although the format of the Second Edition is essentially the same as that of the First, the book incorporates some important changes that reflect the perceptive comments of both instructors and students. First, it is condensed from fifteen to eleven chapters. These chapters are reorganized to place basic material early in the text: subordination in Chapter 1, definite and indefinite articles in Chapter 2, modal auxiliaries in Chapter 3. Second, a clearcut division now occurs in Chapter 5 between earlier concentration on the paragraph in Chapters 1-4 to later focus on the longer expository composition in Chapters 5-10. This shift from paragraph to composition writing allows an instructor to adjust the use of the book to the students' demonstrated abilities and potentials. Third, copying as a composition approach is replaced by writing about varied topics supplied in each chapter. The topics are sometimes controversial, often innovative, hopefully always provocative. Fourth, an inner consistency of gradually increasing proficiency has been provided in vocabulary study; in writing, punctuation, and grammar exercises; and in composition assignments.

Some successful sections of the First Edition have been further developed. Outlining receives a fuller treatment in Chapter 5. Transitions, vital to expository writing, are presented with exercises in every chapter. More questions appear in the Questions for Discussion and Review sections of Chapters 2-10. The text contains seventy-four practice exercises and reviews; most have been lengthened with items gradated toward a gradually higher learning level. Four new model paragraphs and compositions with interest-generating topics replace earlier model selections. The Appendix contains four new parts: 5, Definite and Indefinite Articles; 8, Glossary of

Standard Usage; 9, Glossary of Grammatical Terms; and 10, Using Principles of Phonics to Recognize and Pronounce English Words.

Some less useful sections of the earlier edition, among them American English Idiom Study, have been eliminated. Vocabulary study, formerly geared to defining words in sentences, is changed to emphasize cloze procedure and context analysis. Readings and exercises on scientific and technical subjects now take the place of many of the First Edition's literary readings.

Some missing items have been added. The increase in composition topics has been noted above. Expanded, more concentrated coverage is given to definite and indefinite articles. Students gain much more practice in using modal auxiliaries through additional exercises. Complementing the First Edition's section on Writing an Introduction is a new section, Writing a Conclusion. Instructors who have requested more review exercises in writing, punctuation, and grammar will find them beginning in Chapter 5 and continuing to the end of the book.

The Second Edition's more intensive focus on contemporary life in the U.S.A., the text's increased range of humorous selections, and the illustrations appearing in each chapter give both the look and substance of a new book that still retains the fiber of the old.

The idea for this text grew from my reading of two scholarly articles. One was a monograph by Jean Praninskas. The second was the article "Cultural Thought Patterns in Intercultural Education" (*Language Learning*, XVI, nos. 1-2, 1-20), written by Professor Robert B. Kaplan of the English Communication Program for Foreign Students at the University of Southern California. Dr. Kaplan has graciously consented to the reprinting of his article in the *Instructor's Manual* to this text.

Experience in teaching European, Asian, and Arab students in their own countries has guided me in developing this book. From classes at Liceo Scientifico Vittorio Veneto in Milan and at the University of Pisa; from students at the University of Petroleum and Minerals in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia; from colleagues at the A.U.A. Language Center in Bangkok; and from East-West Center students at the University of Hawaii, I have learned the techniques that are offered here.

The single most important influence on this text has come from Professor Kaplan; consulting with him in Los Angeles gave me valuable direction in shaping the Second Edition. I am grateful as well to the students I have taught, both at home and abroad. Whatever they may have learned, I know that I have been the chief beneficiary of our collaborations.

The patient and supportive Holt, Rinehart and Winston staff—especially Harriett Prentiss, Ruth Chapman, Anita Baskin, and Susan Katz—and my alert and persevering wife Margaret have been vital forces in allowing me

to add new wine to old bottles. I want to thank Professor Louis Trimble of the University of Washington for helping to identify material on scientific and technical writing to add to the text. And the others will know who they are: friends—both lay and professional—who, though unnamed, are far from unvalued.

R.G.B.

Palo Alto, California  
October, 1977

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# Chapter 1

## The English Paragraph



*Drawing by W. Steig; © 1970, The New Yorker Magazine, Inc.*

A lonely clown in a drifting lifeboat has a special problem. All his life he has given pleasure to audiences with his antics and his painted-on smile. Floating on the sea, though, he turns his smile to a world that cannot understand it. Suddenly he can no longer communicate.

A student learning to write in a language that is not his own has a similar problem. Like the clown, he must learn to communicate in terms that his new world will understand. But every writer finds it hard to express in a new language the many ideas filling his mind. To release these bottled-up ideas, he must gain an understanding of the vocabulary and writing techniques of the new language. Only when he has done this will he be able to present himself to best advantage in writing.

This chapter offers the basic information needed for you to begin to write English well. To start with, you will examine the nature of the English paragraph. The Chinese have a saying, "A journey of 1,000 miles

begins with the first step." Studying the material in this chapter is your first step toward mastery of written English.

## Unity

For some international students, the concept of an English paragraph may be quite new. Just as a sentence is a group of words conveying a complete thought, so a paragraph is a group of sentences advancing the thought somewhat further. Each paragraph should leave a reader more informed at the end than he was at the beginning. A paragraph is normally identified by having its first sentence indented a few spaces. This indentation tells a reader that the material in the paragraph represents a separate unit of thought.

The fact that an English paragraph constitutes a separate unit of thought is its most important quality. In composing a paragraph, a writer discusses only one topic or one aspect of a topic. This characteristic of a paragraph is known as **unity**, or singleness of purpose. Because an English paragraph concentrates on a single idea, all the facts, examples, and reasons used to develop that idea must be relevant. A writer who introduces material that is not directly related to a paragraph's topic runs the risk of losing his reader.

Study the following short paragraph to help you better understand what unity is. The boldfaced words are transitions (see page 20). Notice that every sentence expands on the topic announced in the opening sentence: the beginnings of the sea. The writer even restates the subject in the fourth sentence to remind her reader (and perhaps herself) that all of the details toward the end of the paragraph should explain how the earth got its ocean—and *only* that topic.

Beginnings are apt to be shadowy, and so it is with the beginnings of that great mother of life, the sea. Many people have debated how and when the earth got its **ocean**, and it is not surprising that their explanations do not always agree. **For** the plain and inescapable truth is that no one was there to see, and in the absence of eyewitness accounts there is bound to be a certain amount of disagreement. **So** if I tell here a **story** of how the young planet Earth acquired an ocean, it must be a **story** pieced together from many sources and containing many whole chapters the details of which we can only imagine. **The story** is founded **on** the testimony of the earth's most ancient rocks, which were young when the earth was young; **on other evidence** written on the face of the earth's satellite, the moon; and **on hints** contained in the history of the sun and whole universe of star-filled space. **For** although no man was there to witness this cosmic birth, the stars and the moon and the rocks were there, and, **indeed**, had much to do with the fact that there is an ocean.

"Mother Sea: The Gray Beginnings," Rachel Carson, *The Sea Around Us*

## Coherence

Writing in a foreign language at first may seem to be very like writing in your native language, but of course it isn't. The problem stems from more than a mere difference between words or symbols. It is also a matter of the arrangement of words together in a sentence. The words and word groups of one language don't fit together in the same way as the words of another language do. Perhaps even more important, ideas don't fit together in the same way from language to language. A Russian, an Egyptian, a Brazilian, and a Japanese tend to arrange their ideas on the same subject in quite different ways within a paragraph. These differences exist because each culture has its own special way of thinking. And how a person thinks largely determines how he writes. Thus, in order to write well in English, a foreign student should first understand how English speakers usually arrange their ideas. This arrangement of ideas can be called a **thought pattern**. And, even though English thought patterns are not native to you, once you understand them you can more easily imitate them. By doing this, you will succeed in writing more effective English.

A basic feature of the English paragraph is that it normally follows a straight line of development. This English thought pattern is important for a writer to understand. The paragraph often begins with a statement of its central idea, known as a **topic sentence**, followed by a series of subdivisions of the central idea. These subdivisions have the purpose of developing the topic sentence, preparing for the addition of other ideas in later paragraphs. In following a direct line of development, an English paragraph is very different, for instance, from an Oriental paragraph, which tends to follow a circular line of development. It also differs from a Semitic paragraph, which tends to follow parallel lines of development. A paragraph in Spanish, or in some other Romance language, differs in still another way: its line of thought is sometimes interrupted by rather complex digressions. Similarly, a paragraph in Russian often contains digressions. In different cultures, the various approaches to making a written statement are related to each culture's culturally influenced pat-

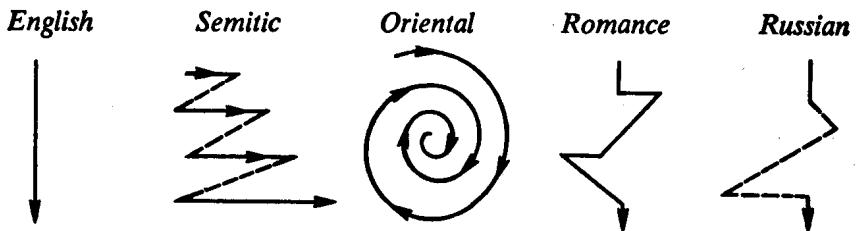


Diagram from Robert B. Kaplan, "Cultural Thought Patterns in Inter-Cultural Education," *Language Learning*, 16, nos. 1 and 2: 15.

terms of thinking, none of which is necessarily better than any other. For students of composition, however, an awareness that rhetorical patterns differ from one culture to another can help them become more quickly proficient in a writing pattern that is not native to them. The movement of paragraph development in various cultures is graphically represented on the preceding page (broken lines indicate largely irrelevant material introduced into a paragraph).

The typically straight line of development of an English paragraph is the basis of its particular type of **coherence**. An English paragraph is coherent when its ideas are clearly related to each other in orderly sequence. Each sentence in such a paragraph should naturally grow out of each previous sentence in developing the central idea. Ideally, there should be a sense of movement or flow, a going forward and building on what has been said before. You may hold your reader's interest if your paragraphs contain an occasional obscure, weak, or repetitious sentence, but too many such paragraphs could cause the reader to give up.

One way to achieve coherence is to arrange a paragraph's details in a systematic way that is appropriate for the subject matter. For example, many writers of English place their supporting detail in order of importance, often starting with the least important detail and ending with the most important one. Paragraph development by order of importance is an especially helpful way to gain coherence when you are writing an opinion or an argument. Paragraphs are also developed chronologically (mentioning events in the order they occur in time), spatially (moving from discussing one location to discussing another in some orderly sequence), from the general to the specific, or from the specific to the general. You can expect to use all of these systems of organizing ideas within a paragraph as you progress through the book, writing chronological and spatial paragraphs and both short and long expository compositions.

Another way to ensure a paragraph's coherence is to add various transitions to alert the reader to the direction the developing idea is taking. In the following paragraph, the writer gains coherence by leading the reader from one sentence to the next with transitional signals:

(<sup>1</sup>)Far more striking than any changes in the kinds of work done by women in the [U.S.A.] labor force is the shift of wives and mothers from household activities to the world of paid employment. (<sup>2</sup>)Emphasis on the new work of women, **however**, should not be allowed to obscure an equally important fact. (<sup>3</sup>)**Today**, as always, most of the time and effort of American wives is devoted to their responsibilities within the home and the family circle. (<sup>4</sup>)**This** is true even of those who are in the labor force. (<sup>5</sup>)**Since 1890** the demands of paid work have become much lighter. (<sup>6</sup>)The normal work week has decreased from sixty to forty hours; paid holidays and vacations have become universal; and most of the hard, physical labor that work once required has been eliminated. (<sup>7</sup>)**Because**



of these developments, many women can work outside the home and still have time and energy left for home and family. <sup>(8)</sup>Moreover, most working mothers do not assume the burdens of a full schedule of paid work. <sup>(9)</sup>Among employed mothers of preschool children, four out of five worked only part time or less than half the year in 1956. <sup>(10)</sup>Among those whose children were in school, three out of five followed the same curtailed<sup>1</sup> work schedule. <sup>(11)</sup>And even among working wives who had no children at home, only a little more than half were year-round, full-time members of the labor force.

"Working Wives and Mothers," Robert W. Smuts, *Women and Work in America*

<sup>1</sup> curtailed: shortened

You can easily trace the devices that give this paragraph its coherence. The transition "however" connects the second sentence (2) to the first sentence (1); the adverb "today" links (3) to (2). The pronoun "this" joins (4) to (3), the phrase "since 1890" connects (5) to (4), and (6) contains examples of the point made in the previous sentence.

The pronoun "these" in (7) continues the forward movement of ideas listed in (6). The transition "moreover" links (8) to (7). And the repetition of the preposition "among" at the beginnings of sentences (9), (10), and (11) ties them together, forcefully ending the paragraph.

## The Topic Sentence

To write a good paragraph, you first need to decide upon your purpose in writing. In other words, since each paragraph should be a separate unit of thought, you will need to decide in advance exactly what idea you are trying to communicate in each paragraph. Once you are sure of your idea, the next step is to make it clear to your reader. You can do this by stating your idea in a topic sentence. The topic sentence expresses your paragraph's central purpose. As you write a composition, you are responsible for keeping your purpose firmly in mind and continually signaling it to your reader. Notice that both the earlier model paragraphs that are cited as examples of unity and coherence have clearly stated topic sentences. In the Carson paragraph illustrating unity, the topic sentence is the first one; in the Smuts selection illustrating coherence, the topic sentence is the third.

Seeing your topic sentence written out will help you to focus on your subject. But if a topic sentence is expressed in terms that are too general, it will be less likely to help you achieve unity. To prevent yourself from introducing unrelated material, you will want to try in most of your topic sentences to use a word or group of words to express the chief point of a paragraph: its **controlling idea**. Occasionally the entire topic sentence will be needed to state this idea, but often it will appear in only a word