

RHETORIC

M A D E P L A I N

F O U R T H E D I T I O N

ANTHONY C. WINKLER • JO RAY McCUEN

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Preface

The title of this book, *Rhetoric Made Plain*, describes its authors' aim—to present the principles of rhetoric as concretely as possible, to illustrate every idea with practical examples, and to practice the art of clear writing which the book attempts to teach.

The organization of its chapters is simple: each is based on a question student writers should ask themselves during the prewriting and writing process. Each chapter then focuses on answering the question through explanation, example, and exercises. We prescribe both a step-by-step prewriting method—finding a voice, formulating a thesis, and organizing and outlining the topic; and a writing method—getting from outline to paragraphs, finding the right word, and revising the final essay.

This Fourth Edition, above all else, tries to come to grips with the *realities* of writing. Every English teacher knows that many principles of composition are more honored in the breach than the observance by professional writers. Nor has this fact escaped the notice of students, who often ask why. In this edition of *Rhetoric Made Plain* we close the gap between principles and practice in a novel way: to each of the chapters in Parts 1 and 2 we have added a subsection titled “Applications.” Here we examine the difference between classroom principles and real-world practice. For example, the Application at the end of Chapter 3 deals with the explicit thesis, which student writers are forced to use, and the implicit thesis, which professional writers often use. We explain the difference between the two and offer a justification of the classroom practice. Other Application topics include “Role-playing on Paper,” “Rhetorical Patterns and the Essay Exam,” and “Form and Function in the Paragraph.”

Even without this new section, the Fourth Edition of *Rhetoric Made Plain* would still be a substantial revision. We have completely rewritten two chapters—Chapter 1, “What Is Rhetoric?,” and Chapter 2, “What Should I Sound Like?”—to make them more practical and useful. To Chapter 5, “How Do I Get from Outline to Paragraph?,” we have added a full discussion of beginning and concluding paragraphs. We have also substantially revised Chapter 7, “What Is the Right Word?,” and Chapter 11, “Writing about Literature.”

Chapter 10, “The Research Paper,” has been rewritten to conform with the latest documentation style—parenthetical references—of the Modern Language Association. This style has been voted on, accepted, and is currently in use in *PMLA*, but as of this writing has not yet been promulgated in the

MLA Handbook. Thus, three alternative styles of documentation are discussed: footnotes, endnotes, and the new parenthetical style now favored by MLA. Chapter 10 also includes a new research paper on an appealing topic—Agatha Christie’s hero, Hercule Poirot.

Finally, the grammatical explanations in the Handbook have been expanded and many new examples added. In so doing, we have had the advantage of valued criticism from many of our colleagues. Especially helpful to us were reviews by Professors MariLyn Beaney, Leigh Holmes, Bette B. Lansdown, and S. A. Newell, all of Cameron University, Oklahoma, to whom we offer our thanks.

Anthony C. Winkler
Jo Ray McCuen

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Part
ONE

Prewriting

1

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clarity

Exercises