

ENGLISH SKILLS WITH READINGS

4th Edition



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ENGLISH SKILLS WITH READINGS

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FOURTH EDITION

JOHN LANGAN

Atlantic Community College



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ENGLISH SKILLS WITH READINGS

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To the Instructor

Note: This Instructor's Edition of *English Skills with Readings* is identical to the student textbook except that it also includes, at the end, a special section, "Instructor's Guide." (A separate *Instructor's Manual and Test Bank*, which includes this guide along with supplementary activities and tests, is also available.)

English Skills with Readings will help students learn and apply the basic principles of effective composition. It will also help them master essential reading skills. This nuts-and-bolts book is based on a number of assumptions about the writing and reading process:

- First of all, *English Skills with Readings* assumes that four principles in particular are keys to effective writing: unity, support, coherence, and sentence skills. These four principles are highlighted on the inside front cover and reinforced throughout the book. Part One focuses on the first three principles; Part Four treats sentence skills fully. The rest of the book shows how the four principles apply in different types of paragraph development (Part Two), in traditional five-paragraph essays (Part Three), and in both paragraphs and essays (Part Five).
- The book reflects the belief that, in addition to the four principles, there are other important factors in writing effectively. After a brief introductory chapter, the second chapter of the book discusses prewriting, rewriting, and editing. Besides encouraging students to see writing as a process, the chapter also asks students to examine their attitude about writing, to write on what they know about or can learn about, to consider keeping a writing journal, and to include outlining as part of the writing process.
- *English Skills with Readings* assumes that the best way to begin writing is with personal experience. After students have learned to support a point by providing material from their own experience, they are ready to develop an idea by drawing on their own reasoning abilities and on information in notes, articles,

and books. Students are asked to write on both experiential and objective topics in Parts Two and Three. And the reading selections in Part Five generate a variety of first- and third-person assignments.

- The book also assumes that beginning writers are more likely to learn composing skills through lively, engaging, and realistic models than through materials remote from the common experiences that are part of everyday life. For example, when a writer argues that proms should be banned, or catalogs ways to harass an instructor, or talks about why some teenagers take drugs, students are more apt to remember and follow the writing principles that may be involved. After reading vigorous papers composed by other students and some of the stimulating selections by professionals in Part Five, students will understand better the power that good writing can have. They will then be more likely to aim for similar honesty, realism, and detail in their own work.
- Another premise of *English Skills with Readings* is that mastery of the paragraph should precede work on the several-paragraph essay. Thus Part One illustrates the basic principles of composition using paragraph models, and the assignments in Part Two aim at developing the ability to support ideas within a variety of paragraph forms. The essential principles of paragraph writing are then applied to the traditional five-paragraph essays in Part Three. Finally, in Part Five, each reading selection is followed by two paragraph assignments and one essay assignment.
- Another assumption is that, since no two people will use an English text in exactly the same way, the material should be organized in a highly accessible manner. Because each of the five parts of the book deals with a distinct area, instructors can turn quickly and easily to the skills they want to present. At the same time, ideas for sequencing material are provided by three boxes titled “Some Suggestions on What to Do Next”; these boxes appear in the opening chapters of the book. And a detailed syllabus is provided in the Instructor’s Manual.
- Finally, an assumption central to this book is that reading and writing are closely connected skills—so that practicing one helps the other, and neglecting one hurts the other. Part Five enables students to work on becoming better readers as well as better writers. An introductory section to Part Five offers a series of tips on effective reading, and ten questions after each of the selections provide practice in key reading comprehension skills. A set of discussion questions also follows each selection, serving to deepen students’ understanding of the content and to make them aware of basic matters having to do with structure, style, and tone. Last, there are three writing assignments for each selection, along with guidelines to help students think about and get started with the assignments.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THIS BOOK AND ENGLISH SKILLS

- Parts One to Three are essentially the same as the three rhetoric sections of *English Skills*. There are three omissions: the research assignment (typically “Writing Assignment 4”) has been omitted from the sequence of writing assignments that follow each type of paragraph development in Part Two; the “Additional Paragraph Assignments” have been removed from the end of Part Two; and an article titled “Full Circle” has been taken out of Part Three.
- There is also an addition: an extra writing assignment appears at the end of each chapter in Part Three. Titled “Writing about a Reading Selection,” this assignment asks students to read one of the professional essays in Part Five illustrating a certain rhetorical mode. (For example, in the chapter on comparison and contrast, students are asked to read “People Need People,” which develops its point through the use of contrast.) They are then asked to write a paragraph using the mode of development in question.
- Part Four of *English Skills*, “Special Skills,” has been omitted to help create space for the sixteen readings. Note, however, that some of the content of “Key Study Skills” can be found in the selection “Power Learning”; and information that originally appeared in “Writing a Résumé and Job Application Letter” now appears (in a somewhat different form) in the selection “Finding a Career and a Job: A No-Nonsense Guide.”
- As the title indicates, what is most different in this book is the inclusion of sixteen reading selections by professional writers, along with detailed reading and writing apparatus following each selection.

THE READINGS

- The sixteen selections have been chosen for their content as much as for rhetorical mode. They are organized thematically into three groups: “Goals and Values,” “Education and Self-Improvement,” and “Human Groups and Society.” Some reflect important contemporary concerns: for instance, “Let’s Really Reform Our Schools,” “Television Changed My Family Forever,” and “What Good Families are Doing Right.” Some provide information many students may find helpful; examples are “Power Learning,” “Finding a Career and a Job: A No-Nonsense Guide,” and “How to Think Clearly.” Some recount profoundly human experiences: “Rowing the Bus,” “The Tryout,” “Adolescent Confusion,” and “A Drunken Ride, A Tragic Aftermath.” All the selections should capture the interest of a wide range of students. (A list on pages xi–xii presents the readings by rhetorical mode.)

- Each reading begins with a preview that supplies background information where needed and stimulates interest in the piece.
- The ten reading comprehension questions that follow each selection give students practice in five key skills: understanding vocabulary in context, summarizing (by choosing an alternative title), determining the main idea, recognizing key supporting details, and making inferences. Reading educators agree that these are among the most crucial comprehension skills. A special chart at the back of the book enables students to track their progress as they practice these skills.
- Discussion questions following the reading comprehension questions deal with matters of content as well as aspects of structure, style, and tone. Through the questions on structure in particular, students will see that professional authors practice some of the same basic composing techniques (such as the use of transitions and emphatic order to achieve coherence) that they have been asked to practice in their own writing.

When assigning a selection, instructors may find it helpful to ask students to read the preview as well as to answer the reading comprehension and discussion questions that follow the selection. Answers can then be gone over quickly in class. Through these activities, a writing instructor can contribute to the improvement of his or her students' reading skills.

NOTES ON THIS EDITION

With pleasure and gratitude, I have watched the audience for *English Skills with Readings* expand each year. Instructors continue to say that the four bases really do help students learn to write effectively. And they continue to comment that students find the model passages, activities, assignments, and readings in the book especially interesting and worthwhile.

Here is an overview of what is new in the fourth edition:

- In "Important Factors in Writing" in Part One, the section on the student's attitude toward writing has been expanded with a new activity. Students will be better able to recognize and deal with the fact that their attitude is an important part of learning to write well.
- The material on outlining in Part One has been enlarged with two new activities; another activity has been revised as well.

- A section on word processing is now included as one of the key factors in writing in Part One.
- In response to a number of requests, the material on revising, editing, and proofreading in Part One has been revised and enlarged.
- A series of class-tested new activities in “The First and Second Steps in Writing” will help students better understand the nature of specific details and how to generate and use such details. As writing teachers know, learning to write concretely is a key step for students to master in becoming effective writers. A new exercise has been added on topic sentences as well.
- A number of changes have been made in the sentence-skills materials in Part Four. For example, diagnostic and achievement tests have been added, along with a chapter on “Sentence Sense” and an additional five editing tests. Materials in general have been updated, and there are more multicultural names. An introductory project on fragments has been replaced, and the chapters on run-ons and subject-verb agreement have been expanded.
- Throughout the book, a number of model paragraphs have been replaced with topics of more current interest. New subjects include changes in today’s families, apartment hunting, culture conflict, dealing with verbal abuse, benefits of a multicultural club, day versus evening students, and adult children at home.
- Finally, five new selections are now part of the sixteen selections in Part Five: “Rowing the Bus,” by Paul Logan; “Do It Better!,” by Ben Carson and Cecil Murphey; “Anxiety: Challenge by Another Name,” by James Lincoln Collier; “The Chase,” by Annie Dillard; and “Rudeness at the Movies,” by Bill Wine. All five selections deal with themes that should engage the interest of students and make for rewarding writing assignments.

SUPPLEMENTS

The *Instructor’s Edition* of the book consists of the student text followed by an Instructor’s Guide featuring hints to the instructor, a model syllabus, and answers for all the activities and tests in the text. The *Instructor’s Manual and Test Bank* includes the material in the Instructor’s Guide along with thirty supplementary activities and tests. Also available is a computer disk of mastery tests (in both IBM and Macintosh formats) along with *Allwrite!*—a high-interest, interactive grammar tutorial program on CD-ROM. These supplements are available from the local McGraw-Hill representative or by writing to the College English Editor, The McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc., 1221 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10020.

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John Langan

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Let's Really Reform Our Schools <i>Anita Garland</i>	552

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Note: Some selections are listed more than once because they illustrate more than one rhetorical method of development.

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Comparison-Contrast

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People Need People	<i>S. Leonard Syme</i>	614

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PART ONE

BASIC PRINCIPLES OF EFFECTIVE WRITING

