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IMPROVE YOUR ESSAYS



TAKE CHARGE!

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E IMPROVE YOUR **SSAYS**

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Thomas Hart Benton (1889-1975) is the creator of the cover art, *The Arts of Life in America and The Arts of the West*, a mural housed in the library of the Whitney Museum of American Art. Benton was born in Neosho, Missouri, to a family active in state politics. He began his education at the Art Institute of Chicago and continued his art studies at the Académie Julian and the Collarossi Studio in Paris. His first major exhibition in New York City was the Forum Exhibition of 1916. He is best known for his work employing abstract forms of pure color and his more realistic murals derived from sketching tours of the American midwest.

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T O THE INSTRUCTOR

Improve Your Essays provides a holistic plan for developing essay-writing skills at the college level. The holistic approach is integrated, developing and combining writing skills and knowledge in the comprehensive manner in which they must be used during any writing process. The holistic approach also makes use of students' valuable prior knowledge and skills and uses this experience as the basis for introducing and developing essential writing skills. Drawing from materials used successfully with many classes, *Improve Your Essays* helps students develop skill in expressing and developing their ideas in logically organized essays. The text is highly interactive, requiring students to respond continually to the concepts and examples through both group activities and independent writing. Skills are presented as strategies or sequential steps rather than as rote memorization, enabling students to obtain a deep understanding that fosters mastery. In a wide variety of activities and assignments, students practice new skills by applying what they've learned to write about real-life issues.

ORGANIZATION OF *IMPROVE YOUR ESSAYS*

In working through the four sections and fourteen chapters of this text, students will find informative content and user-friendly features that will help them develop essay-writing skills and increase their confidence in their writing. By the end of the text, they will be ready to apply their essay-writing skills to specialized forms of writing.

- **Section 1. The Writing Process.** This section focuses on the steps of the writing process: prewriting, writing a first draft, revising and editing drafts, and proofreading and preparing a final copy.
- **Section 2. The Elements of Essays.** This section explores the four basic purposes for writing: to describe, to narrate, to persuade, and to inform. In addition, this section examines the five key elements of writ-

ing—purpose, content, structure, audience, and tone and presents strategies for developing essay content and methods of organizing information.

- **Section 3. Writing to Describe and to Narrate.** The chapters in this section examine in more depth the two most common writing purposes—to describe and to narrate. Each chapter demonstrates how to accomplish one of those purposes effectively.
- **Section 4. Writing to Inform and to Persuade.** Each chapter in this section explores a strategy that can be used to develop essay content effectively: example, process, cause/effect, comparison/contrast, classification, definition, and argument.

The Appendix to *Improve Your Essays* includes five enrichment chapters that explore special essay applications: essay tests, summaries, reports, résumés and application letters, and research papers. The Appendix also contains additional grammar-related activities as well as a Writer's Guide—an easy-reference handbook of grammar and style.

FEATURES OF THE STUDENT EDITION

Each chapter of *Improve Your Essays* includes these special features:

- **Chapter Opener.** The chapter opener includes the chapter title, objectives, focusing question, brief introductory paragraphs, and a picture. The chapter opener engages the students' interest, builds on current knowledge, and describes the focus of the chapter.
- **Getting Started.** This feature helps students identify what they already know about the content of the chapter. *Getting Started* includes checklists, inventories, and questionnaires that help students assess their prior knowledge.
- **In Your Journal.** Each chapter has journal-writing activities that encourage students to identify goals for improvement and to chart their progress toward those goals. Other journal activities invite students to do exploratory writing or to gather ideas for later use.
- **Group Activities.** The peer group activities guide students' work with classmates. Group work has several advantages: Students share tasks and contribute ideas and skills to the group; they learn to appreciate other people's ideas and skills; they can take pride in both their ability to work with others and the outcome of group efforts.

- **Discovery Activities.** Discovery Activities guide students to use what they already know—both experiences and ideas—as a springboard for learning new concepts and skills.
- **Questions.** Every chapter poses questions that invite students to respond to the material presented. Some questions draw on students' prior knowledge and experience while other questions check students' understanding of the chapter content.
- **Do You Write on a Computer?** Each chapter presents a tip on how students can use the many features of word processing programs.
- **Assignments.** Every chapter includes assignments where students apply what they learn about the writing process to creating essays. There are group and individual assignments. To provide evidence of increasing skills, students are directed to save these assignments in a portfolio.
- **Grammar Gremlins.** The Grammar Gremlins in each chapter presents an explanation of a grammar element, examples, and several practice activities. Additional Grammar Gremlins activities are in the Appendix.
- **Wrapping It Up.** Each chapter concludes with a summary, questions, and a journal activity to help students assess their progress.
- **Writing Tools.** A variety of writing tools in the form of charts, checklists, and guides appear throughout the text. These tools include: *Checklist for Revising and Editing*, *Checklist for Proofreading*, *Writing Focus Chart*, *Writer's Tool Box*, and *Writer's Guide*.
- **Writing Models.** Numerous extracts from published sources are included as models in the text. These extracts reflect a variety of college-level subjects and provide models of professional writing as well as student writing.
- **Reading As a Stimulus for Writing.** In addition to the shorter extracts within the chapters, longer selections by published authors appear in the Appendix. These selections serve as a stimulus for students' writing.

FEATURES OF THE INSTRUCTOR MATERIALS

The Instructor's support materials include the following:

- **The Instructor's Wraparound Edition** of *Improve Your Essays* is a unique teaching guide that includes a comprehensive instructor's manual

and reduced student pages. Positioned adjacent to the appropriate student material, teaching solutions and strategies focus on each major concept.

- **The Transparency Package** for *Improve Your Essays* contains color teaching transparencies that reinforce the key concepts.
- **The Test Package** contains reproducible test masters correlated with the chapters, Grammar Gremlins, and the Writer's Guide.
- **HyperGraphics® Software** for the *Take Charge!* system is a multimedia instructional system that allows for group and individual exploration of chapter concepts and instructor assessment of student understanding.
- **Electronic Worksheets Software** provides guided practice dealing with grammar, usage, and style.

TAKE CHARGE! SERIES

Glencoe's *Take Charge!* series provides comprehensive support for success in college-level studies. The series of four texts—each supported with an Instructor's Wraparound Edition, a transparency package, a test package, HyperGraphics® Software, and *Electronic Worksheets Software*—includes *Improve Your Essays* and these three texts:

- *Improve Your Reading and Study Skills* helps students learn to manage time and resources and improve such necessary skills as listening and note taking, studying for and taking tests, and reading for information.
- *Improve Your Sentences* presents a logical and thorough treatment of sentence structure.
- *Improve Your Paragraphs* helps students integrate and develop skills and knowledge in using the writing process to create well-organized paragraphs.

Your decision to use *Improve Your Essays* reflects a commitment to developing your students' writing proficiency to the highest degree possible. The text, used with the comprehensive instructor support materials, will provide a complete and empowering tool enabling students to become skillful, confident writers.

Doug Emory

T O THE STUDENT

As you continue to answer the challenge of college-level studies, you will become more aware of the need to express your ideas clearly and effectively. Your success in school as well as your success on the job and in your personal life depends in large measure on how well you communicate. *Improve Your Essays* is designed to help you express ideas and information clearly through carefully written essays. This text will guide you in focusing on the elements of sound writing and developing the skills needed for effective written communication.

As you work toward your academic goals, you'll need to write in many different areas of knowledge. You'll want this writing to be an accurate reflection of the care and thoughtful effort you're putting into your studies. *Improve Your Essays* will help you develop and polish specific skills that will enable you to take charge of your writing. To accomplish this goal, *Improve Your Essays* takes you through the writing process, examines the interrelated elements of writing—purpose, content, structure, audience, and tone—and explores how successfully blending these elements is essential to writing effective essays.

Improve Your Essays also makes use of aspects of your abilities that you may not have associated with writing skills, such as your previous life experience and details you have learned through observation. By combining an exploration of the steps of the writing process with activities that engage your emotions and experiences, *Improve Your Essays* provides an effective program of essential writing skills.

As you work through the four sections and fourteen chapters of this text, you'll find informative content and user-friendly features that will help you develop your essay-writing skills and increase your confidence in your writing. By the end of the text, you'll be ready to apply your essay-writing skills to specialized forms of writing such as essay tests, summaries, reports, résumés and application letters, and research papers.

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The Appendix to *Improve Your Essays* includes five enrichment chapters that explore special essay applications: essay tests, summaries, reports, résumés and application letters, and research papers. The Appendix also contains additional grammar-related activities as well as a Writer's Guide—an easy-reference handbook of grammar and style.

To make the best use of this text, take charge—participate actively in the writing process. Active writing involves awareness of the elements and steps of the writing process and application of that awareness to everything you write. The activities and assignments in this text make it easy for you to apply what you are learning, not only to your work in this course but to your other courses and in your daily life.

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