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**AN ACADEMIC WRITING
TEXT**

VISIONS

EMILY LITES JEAN LEHMAN

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Introduction

Visions: An Academic Writing Text is part of a series of writing books for college/university or adult students of English as a Second Language. It integrates writing skills for academic purposes. This book is coordinated with *Visions: A Pre-Intermediate Grammar* but can be used independently.

Subtechnical vocabulary, vocabulary common across academic and technical fields, is introduced through exercises in which students discover meaning through context. This subtechnical vocabulary is usually more difficult for students than are the technical terminologies of their individual fields; therefore, it is emphasized due to its importance to all college/university ESL students, regardless of their major fields. Content vocabulary exercises prepare students for the topic of the chapter. The vocabulary is then integrated in a reading whose topic is related to that of the main textbook chapter. Follow-up exercises emphasize general comprehension, vocabulary skills, sentence comprehension, paragraph organization, and discourse analysis. The grammar and/or discourse grammar in the reading is summarized and practiced.

Finally, students produce their own writing, guided by warm-up activities, brainstorming activities, guidelines for paragraph organization, and topical assignments that allow the use of vocabulary as well as sentence and discourse level grammar from the chapter. Using a process approach, students edit each other's writing. Checklists guide both the writing process and peer editing of drafts.

This book is intended for the low-intermediate level student who already has a knowledge of elementary English forms. It contains sufficient material for five class hours per week in an intensive semester course.

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EL/JPL

To The Teacher

This *Academic Writing Text* is coordinated with and expands on the content in the main textbook, *Visions: A Pre-Intermediate Grammar*. It can be used with the main text or independently. The focus is on the integration of written skills for academic purposes: acquiring vocabulary from context, reading, understanding elements of grammar as they apply to discourse, and writing. This book is intended for use in the writing component of intensive English language programs.

Chapters begin with vocabulary discovery exercises. "Vocabulary in Context" includes both subtechnical and content vocabulary exercises. Subtechnical vocabulary consists of items common across academic and technical fields. These terms are reentered in later chapters as review. Content vocabulary is based on the topic of the "Reading," which is an extension of the topic in the corresponding main textbook chapter. All vocabulary exercises focus on the more difficult words in the reading. "Vocabulary in Context" can be assigned as homework and then discussed or done entirely in class. Students work without dictionaries on these exercises to develop the skill of guessing meaning from context. In later chapters, as students progress in their ability to guess meaning from context, vocabulary follow-up exercises check comprehension after the reading.

The "Reading" section begins with warm-up activities to direct attention to the content of the reading and/or to practice reading skills (predicting content, skimming, scanning). The reading can be covered in a variety of ways. To save class time, students can prepare before class by studying the reading. Class discussion can then center on their questions. Since the readings are short, students could also read them in class. Variations are reading parts of the material aloud to students, having students scan for specific details or skim for main ideas, and timed readings for comprehension.

"Understanding Through Writing" consists of explanation and exercises in General Comprehension, Word Study, Sentence Study, and Discourse Study. Students answer questions to gain a general understanding of the ideas; then they analyze the reading in terms of its vocabulary, sentences, and discourse. Skills covered include identifying true and false statements, answering questions, finding main ideas, identifying general and specific information, identifying synonymous sentences, making inferences, paraphrasing, identifying noun phrase and other referents, and so on. Students work on this section either in class or at home. The teacher checks comprehension with follow-up discussions.

"Getting Ready to Write Paragraphs" explores elements of discourse grammar from the reading. These points expand on the grammar presented in the corresponding chapter of the main text and have been selected on the basis of their

frequency in written discourse rather than in conversation. Explanation can be discussed in class; associated exercises can be assigned as homework. In Recognition Exercises, students first identify and then write original sentences using the grammatical elements. Additional sentence-level exercises provide more practice of the material.

The answer key is for those exercises in the first part of each chapter only. It is made available for self-study or in-class use.

In the final section, "Writing Paragraphs," students apply what they have learned throughout the chapter. Using a process approach to writing, students brainstorm for ideas, organize, write, and revise two or more drafts. A variety of topic ideas that center around the content of the chapter are suggested. Students are also encouraged to generate their own ideas as topics. In some of the later chapters, students write compositions. Many of the paragraph topics throughout the book can be adapted for longer pieces of writing.

More class time is necessary for "Writing Paragraphs" than for other sections. Explanatory material is discussed; then students explore topics and generate ideas by brainstorming. Brainstorming activities alleviate the first, often nerve-racking phase of writing when the student has decided on a topic but has nothing on paper. Students concentrate on writing words and phrases, making a list, or drawing a diagram. The product is not important at this point; students will have something on paper to work from or at least to think about. Various techniques for brainstorming are explored since different strategies work for different writers.

An explicit demonstration of brainstorming technique is helpful to students, many of whom are not familiar with what it is or why they are doing it. To demonstrate, the teacher might select transportation, the classification topic that students will work with in Chapter One. The teacher writes the topic on the board along with one related word or phrase, say *hydrofoil* or *space shuttle*. Students are invited to write one or two words each on the board. When everyone has contributed something, there will be a variety of ideas related to transportation on the board. Students then put the words in groups of their own choosing on a piece of paper. After several minutes, they compare their classifications in pairs. Finally, a few share their divisions with the class. This kind of introductory activity shows students the creative potential of a brainstorming activity, helps them to see that not every idea may be relevant, and gets them working with and learning from each other from the outset. Such an activity provides a transition to later chapters where students are expected to work in pairs on brainstorming.

After generating and organizing their ideas, students are encouraged to do the actual writing in class also. Students check each other's work and discuss it. Peer discussion and editing are valuable tools in revision. Revision can be started in class and completed as homework. A checklist gives students task-based suggestions on how to check their own and others' work for revision. Students consult the checklist before and after writing.

Throughout the writing process, students gain from the insights of other class members. They work together during brainstorming and again at the completion of

successive stages: topic sentence, organizational notes, first and second drafts. For brainstorming, the work is creative and freewheeling. Students' later discussion about revision is structured by the items on the checklist. Before any kind of pair or group work begins, however, students need to be clear on what they are to accomplish. The teacher then selects students to work together or can let students decide on partners. Cooperative learning encourages students to exchange information and ideas. It also serves to solidify and integrate all four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

To keep feedback and correction manageable, teachers often work with only a few types of errors. Many writing teachers react only to content and organization the first time a paper is turned in and then focus on grammar and mechanics in revised papers. With regard to content, focus might center on support of topic or thesis statement, for example. As for form, attention to verb forms, sequence signals, or any emphasis of the current chapter is appropriate. The checklist is another way to limit content suggestions and corrections. After the teacher comments on students' work, they are encouraged to revise and resubmit it. Like professional writers, they will discover more about what they want to say in successive drafts.

Following is one possible lesson plan for Chapter One. No textbook can substitute for the interest, vitality, and up-to-date knowledge that a teacher brings to class. Likewise, teachers are the best judge of how to pace and modify chapters to accommodate the interests and abilities of their students.

CHAPTER ONE LESSON PLAN

Day 1		Day 2	Day 3
Review		Go over General Comp. Answer questions on Reading.	Collect Exercise 3.
New Material	Parts 1 & 2: Vocabulary, Warm-Up, & Reading	Part 4: Capitalization & Punctuation, Exercise 1. Joining Ideas & Exercise 2	Part 5: Prefixes Exercises 4, 5, & 6. Part 6: Warm-Up
Homework	Part 3: General Comp.	Exercise 3 to turn in.	Read Paragraphs of Classification
Day 4		Day 5	Day 6
Review	Groups discuss Paragraphs of Classification	Discuss diagrams in pairs.	Go over Editing the First Draft; review Checklist.
New Material	Demonstration of brainstorming technique, Getting Started, Writing a Topic Sentence	Go over Writing a First Draft & Checklist. Students write first drafts.	Students edit their own work, trade papers, edit each other's work, & discuss.
Homework	Read Getting Organized. Draw a diagram.	Read Editing the First Draft.	Revise paragraphs to turn in.

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