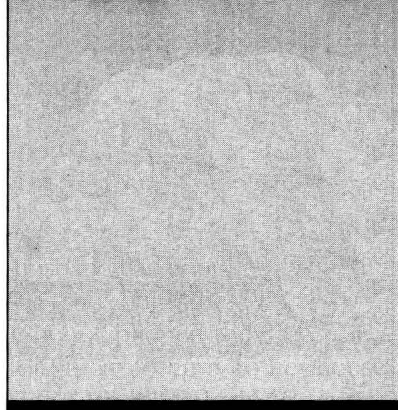
The background of the cover is a painting of a large, leafy tree on the left side, with its branches spreading across the top. A path leads from the bottom center into a misty, forested area in the background. The ground is covered in fallen leaves, and the overall atmosphere is serene and slightly mysterious.

Short Takes

**MODEL ESSAYS
FOR COMPOSITION**

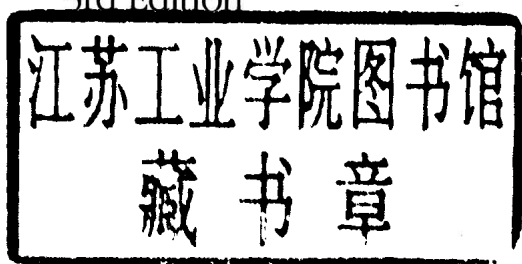
**3RD EDITION
ELIZABETH PENFIELD**



Short Takes

Model Essays for Composition

3rd Edition



Elizabeth Penfield
The University of New Orleans

Scott, Foresman/ Little, Brown Higher Education
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Preface

This third edition of *Short Takes* remains a collection of short, readable essays, and the framework continues to focus on how to interrelate reading and writing and how to write various kinds of essays. This edition begins with “Freeze Frame: Reading and Writing,” an essay that discusses the processes involved in these activities, and each chapter’s introduction reinforces the connections between reading and writing. The chapters are sequenced so that the more accessible patterns of development come first, with each chapter building upon the previous one and leading to the one that follows. Within each chapter, the essays are presented in order of difficulty. Throughout *Short Takes*, more attention has been devoted to the process of writing, both student and professional.

The Essays

To write is to choose among alternatives, to select the most appropriate organization, persona, diction, and techniques for a given audience and purpose. Each of the essays included in this edition was chosen because it exemplifies the author’s choices, and the apparatus emphasizes those choices and alternatives. Thus, the essays serve as illustrative models of organization and stylistic techniques available to the writer. The essays were also chosen because their subjects are accessible and their perspectives are lively, qualities that also allow them to serve as sources of invention, jumping-off places for developing one’s own ideas in one’s own style.

Many of the fifty-six essays are new to this edition. They are indeed short—about 1000 words or fewer—and being such, should easily lend themselves to scrutiny and emulation, since most of the papers assigned in composition courses fall in the 400–1000 word range. With

one exception, the essays are complete pieces, not excerpts. They represent the basic aims of discourse and illustrate the standard rhetorical modes.

Rhetorical Modes *and* The Aims of Discourse

Yet anyone who has used a reader with essays arranged by mode has likely run into two problems: first, few essays are pure examples of a single mode; second, most collections of essays treat argument—an aim of writing—as though it were the equivalent of description, comparison/contrast, and so on. *Short Takes* addresses these inconsistencies.

Because essays usually employ more than one mode, the essays here are grouped according to their *primary* rhetorical pattern; the questions that follow each essay go on to point out the subordinate modes. As for the aims of discourse, the essays represent the various purposes for writing. The writer's self-expressive, informative, and persuasive purposes are underscored in the discussion questions. In addition, connections between academic writing and the kinds of writing one finds outside of the classroom walls are emphasized.

Although argument is not the equivalent of example, description, or other standard modes, for many writers it is the most difficult to craft. It is considered, therefore, in its own special chapter—now greatly expanded in this edition. Of the ten essays in that chapter, six focus on different topics, two address the same problem but with radically different premises and solutions, and two argue for and against a particular position. And while Chapters 1–9 contain some essays that are intended to persuade, those in Chapter 10 exemplify the classical appeals: to reason, to emotion, and to the writer's ethical values.

Apparatus for Reading and Writing

The apparatus is designed to make full use of the essays. Each chapter begins with a brief introduction that depicts the mode, showing how it can be used in formal essays and in practical, everyday writing situations. The introductions go on to point out specifically how the modes can be shaped by considerations of audience, purpose, particular strategies, thesis, and organization. Each of the essays is preceded by a

short explanatory note and a list of key words and phrases. Following each essay are two sets of questions, one on *Thesis and Organization*, the other on *Technique and Style*. The apparatus for writing papers is reserved for the end of the chapter, where it is broken down into three stages: *Finding a Topic*, *Exploring the Topic*, and *Drafting the Paper*.

This division of the writing process approximates the classic one of invention, arrangement, and style, and is not intended to imply that the act of writing is linear. As the advice presented under the headings implies, writing is a recursive act. As one writes, one constantly invents, organizes, and revises; the lines between those activities are fine if not downright blurry.

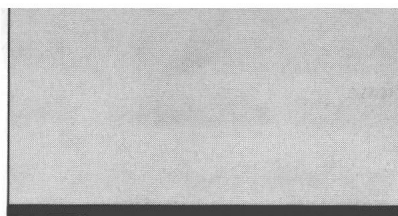
Finding the Topic contains suggestions for writing, all of which are directly related to the essays in the chapter. Each essay is listed by title and followed by at least five suggestions that use the essay as an organizational and thematic model. The assignments allow a good deal of flexibility: some lend themselves to open general information or personal experience essays, some to research papers, and some to the classical technique of imitation. Once the writer selects a subject, *Exploring the Topic* is the next step; the questions in that category are shaped so that no matter what type of paper may be involved, the writer can generate information about it. *Drafting the Paper* then helps organize the material and points out some of the pitfalls and advantages inherent in the particular mode. Throughout, the end-of-chapter material emphasizes both the process of writing and the flexibility of the model and mode.

Acknowledgments

For their help in bringing this book to publication, I have many to thank. Hope Rajala, as usual, provided some excellent essays, as well as good advice, encouragement, and a fine copyediting eye and pencil, while Constance Rajala cracked the whip (in a nice way) on deadlines and the production schedule. Numerous reviewers gave helpful criticism: Dr. Talbot Spivak, Edison Community College; Barbara Kerr Davis, Pasadena City College; Kenneth King, Somerset Community College; Sandra F. Macphée, Fashion Institute of Design and Merchandising; John J. Stewart, Utah State University. Professor Stewart also provided scores of reviews elicited from his students. Their specific

comments ranged from essay choice and content to the cover design; each was welcomed and considered. And as usual and most of all, I wish to thank my own students, who have taught me at least as much as I have taught them.

Elizabeth Penfield



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"... Within the last twenty years, this word has been so frequently misused that an entire generation has grown up believing that 'discrimination' means 'racism.'"

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"Last Wednesday the Supreme Court assured all parents—the confused and the pathologically indifferent as well as the caring and concerned—an equal right to put their kids in mental hospitals."

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