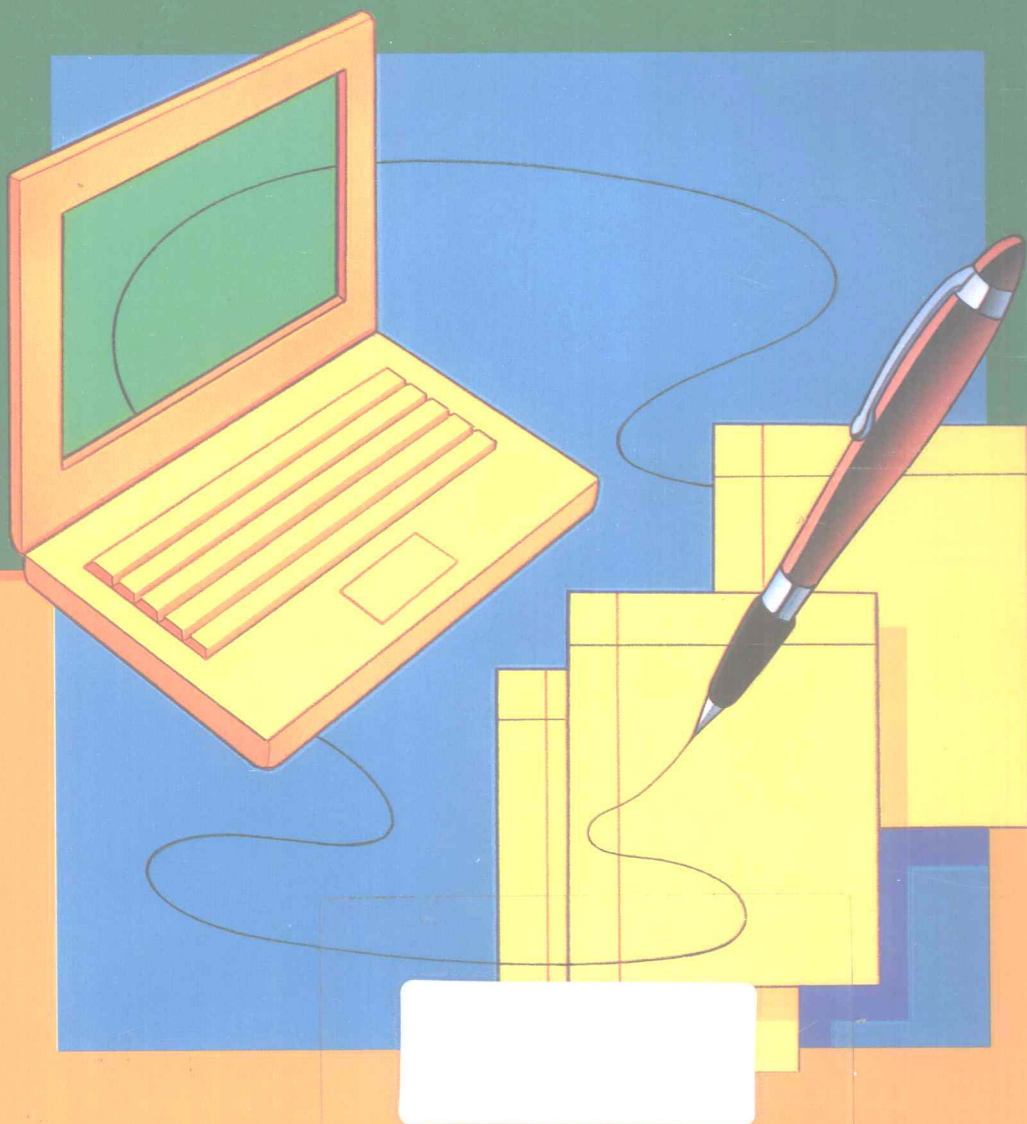


# English Skills

Eighth Edition



John Langan

# English Skills

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Eighth Edition

John Langan

Atlantic Cape Community College

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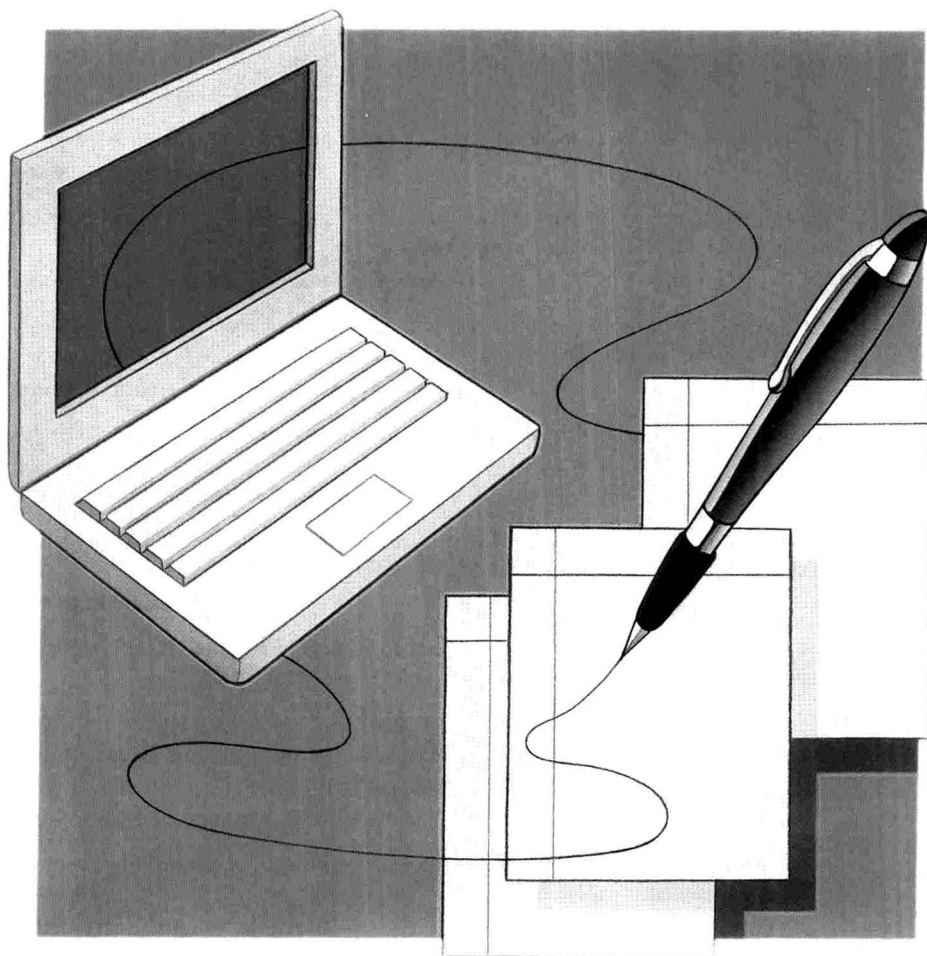
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# English Skills



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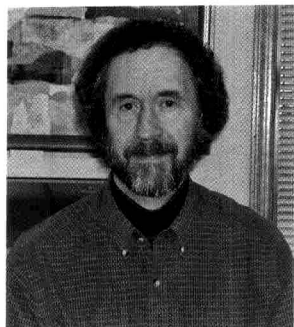
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# About the Author

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**John Langan** has taught reading and writing at Atlantic Cape Community College near Atlantic City, New Jersey, for over twenty-five years. The author of a popular series of college textbooks on both writing and reading, John enjoys the challenge of developing materials that teach skills in an especially clear and lively way. Before teaching, he earned advanced degrees in writing at Rutgers University and in reading at Rowan University. He also spent a year writing fiction that, he says, “is now at the back of a drawer waiting to be discovered and acclaimed posthumously.” While in school, he supported himself by working as a truck driver, a machinist, a battery assembler, a hospital attendant, and an apple packer. John now lives with his wife, Judith Nadell, near Philadelphia. In addition to his wife and Philly sports teams, his passions include reading and turning on nonreaders to the pleasure and power of books. Through Townsend Press, his educational publishing company, he has developed the nonprofit “Townsend Library”—a collection of more than forty new and classic stories that appeal to readers of any age.

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# To the Instructor

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## Key Features of the Book

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

- *First of all, English Skills 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 and to some extent on sentence skills; Part Five serves as a concise handbook of sentence skills.
  - The four principles are applied in different types of paragraph development (Part Two) and in several-paragraph essays (Part Three).
- Part Four discusses research skills.

The ongoing success of *English Skills* is evidence that the four principles are easily grasped, remembered, and followed by students.

- *The book also reflects a belief that, in addition to these four principles, there are other important factors in writing effectively.* The second chapter discusses *prewriting, rewriting, and editing*. Besides encouraging students to see *writing as a process*, the chapter also asks students to examine their *attitude toward writing*, to *write on what they know* about or can learn about, to consider keeping a *writing journal*, and to make *outlining* a part of the writing process.
- *English Skills 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 reports, articles, and books. In Parts Two and Three, students are asked to write on *both experiential and objective topics*.

- *The book also assumes that beginning writers are more likely to learn composition 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 will be more apt to remember and follow the writing principles that are involved.
- *A related assumption is that students are especially interested in and challenged by the writing of their peers.* After reading vigorous papers composed by other students and understanding the power that good writing can have, students will be more encouraged to aim for similar honesty, realism, and detail in their own work.
- *Another premise of English Skills is that mastery of the paragraph should precede work on the several-paragraph essay.* Thus Part One illustrates the basic principles of composition writing 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 several-paragraph essays in Part Three.
- *The grammar, punctuation, and usage skills that make up Part Five are explained clearly and directly, without unnecessary technical terms.* Here, as elsewhere, *abundant exercise material* is provided, especially for the mistakes that are most likely to interfere with clear communication.
- *A final 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 of writing, instructors can turn quickly and easily to the skills they want to present. At the same time, ideas for sequencing material are provided in a section titled “Using This Text” at the end of Chapter 1. And a detailed syllabus is provided in the Instructor’s Manual.

I am very grateful for the ongoing popularity of *English Skills*. 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 activities, assignments, model passages, and reading selections especially interesting and worthwhile.

## Changes in the Sixth Edition

Here is a list of what is new in the sixth edition of *English Skills*:

- *The new edition features a more visual design for today's students.* On the opening pages of the book, two *Peanuts* cartoons help reinforce the first and second steps in writing. More than thirty other cartoons, illustrations, posters, and photographs then appear throughout the book to reinforce writing principles or as incentives for writing. In each chapter on patterns of development in Part Two, two assignments are illustrated with visuals to give today's multimedia-trained students help in writing about a topic. In addition, a new full-color design adds visual appeal for students while helping to organize and highlight material.
- *Added practice materials reinforce the basic writing principles in the book.* In Chapter 3, "The First and Second Steps in Writing," instructors now have their choice of activities that sharply underscore the difference between point and support and that help illustrate just what is meant by being specific in writing.
- *Transitions in writing are treated in much more detail.* In Chapter 4, "The Third Step in Writing," instructors have at their disposal explanations and activities that will give students a much better sense of the use of transitions in writing.
- *An expanded treatment of purpose in writing and an introduction to tone* are now included in Chapter 7, "Introduction to Paragraph Development," in Part Two. Added attention is given to purpose and audience in the final assignment for each of the nine patterns of development.
- *A full set of activities and more writing assignments have been added to Part Three, "Essay Development."* With the help of these new materials, instructors who wish to provide students with a more substantial introduction to essay writing will be able to do so.
- *A completely revised Part Four offers students practical guidance on how to do research.* Chapter 19 consolidates and updates material on the library, the Internet, and the research paper. Students will quickly learn how to use their computer and a powerful search engine to look up material on almost any subject.
- *Chapter 39, "Using the Dictionary," has been expanded to help students take full advantage of online dictionaries.*
- *Throughout the book, particularly in Part Five, student models and practice materials have been updated and revised.*

## About the Media Links

This edition of *English Skills* includes icons that link the text and its class-tested media supplements: *English Skills* Student CD-ROM and Online Learning Center. Each chapter in this edition features marginal icons that alert students to additional exercises, extended explanations, and supplemental resources for the topic at hand.



- **Learning Objectives/Chapter Outlines/Key Terms/Visuals:** A list of learning objectives, chapter outlines, definitions of key terms, and PowerPoint slides supplement each chapter of the textbook.
- **Writing On and Offline:** Online activities encourage students to activate new concepts in writing, applying what they've learned in class.
- **Interactive Exercises:** Crossword puzzles, matching exercises, and multiple-choice questions reinforce comprehension of key concepts and grammar rules.
- **Additional Resources:** Offerings include a comprehensive glossary; guides to using the Internet, avoiding plagiarism, and doing electronic research; a study skills primer, author links, and more.

## Learning Aids Accompanying the Book

### Supplements for Instructors



- An *Annotated Instructor's Edition* (ISBN 0-07-296264-7) consists of the student text complete with answers to all activities and tests, followed by an Instructor's Guide featuring teaching suggestions and a model syllabus.
- An *Online Learning Center* ([www.mhhe.com/langan](http://www.mhhe.com/langan)) offers a host of instructional aids and additional resources for instructors, including a comprehensive computerized test bank, the downloadable Instructor's Manual and Test Bank, online resources for writing instructors, and more.
- An *Instructor's CD-ROM* (0-07-296272-0) offers all of the above supplements in a convenient offline format.
- The *Classroom Performance System* (CPS by eInstruction) is an easy-to-use, wireless response system that allows instructors to conduct quizzes and polls in class and provide students with immediate feedback. McGraw-Hill provides a database of questions compatible with *English Skills* and *English Skills with Readings*. To download the database, go to the *English Skills* OLC at [www.mhhe.com/langan](http://www.mhhe.com/langan). For further details on CPS, go to [www.mhhe.com/einstruction](http://www.mhhe.com/einstruction).

- *PageOut!* helps instructors create graphically pleasing and professional web pages for their courses, in addition to providing classroom management, collaborative learning, and content management tools. *PageOut!* is **FREE** to adopters of McGraw-Hill textbooks and learning materials. Learn more at [www.mhhe.com/pageout](http://www.mhhe.com/pageout).

## Supplements for Students

- An *Online Learning Center* ([www.mhhe.com/langan](http://www.mhhe.com/langan)), offers a host of instructional aids and additional resources for students, including self-correcting exercises, writing activities for additional practice, guides to doing research on the Internet and avoiding plagiarism, useful web links, and more. The site is powered by Catalyst, McGraw-Hill's innovative writing and research resource.
- A *Student CD-ROM* (0-07-296275-5) offers all the resources of the Student's Online Learning Center and more in a convenient offline format.
- *AllWrite! 2.1* is an interactive, browser-based tutorial program that provides an online handbook, comprehensive diagnostic pretests and posttests, and extensive practice exercises in every area.

## Dictionary and Vocabulary Resources

- *Random House Webster's College Dictionary* (0-07-240011-0): This authoritative dictionary includes over 160,000 entries and 175,000 definitions. The most commonly used definitions are always listed first, so students can find what they need quickly.
- *The Merriam-Webster Dictionary* (0-07-310057-9), based on the best-selling Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, contains over 70,000 definitions.
- *The Merriam-Webster Thesaurus* (0-07-310067-6): This handy paperback thesaurus contains over 157,000 synonyms, antonyms, related and contrasted words, and idioms.
- *Merriam-Webster's Vocabulary Builder* (0-07-310069-2) introduces 3,000 words, and includes quizzes to test progress.
- *Merriam-Webster's Notebook Dictionary* (0-07-299091-0): An extremely concise reference to the words that form the core of the English vocabulary, this popular dictionary, conveniently designed for 3-ring binders, provides words and information at students' fingertips.
- *Merriam-Webster's Notebook Thesaurus* (0-07-310068-4) is designed for 3-ring binders, and helps the student search for words they might need today. It provides concise, clear guidance for over 157,000 word choices.

- *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary and Thesaurus, Electronic Edition* (0-07-310070-6): Available on CD-ROM, this online dictionary contains thousands of new words and meanings from all areas of human endeavor, including electronic technology, the sciences, and popular culture.

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**John Langan**

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