

TEACHER'S MANUAL

COMPOSITION: MODELS AND EXERCISES

FIRST THROUGH EIGHTH COURSES



HARCOURT BRACE JOVANOVIICH, PUBLISHERS

New York Chicago San Francisco Atlanta Dallas and London

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AND
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If your class assignment changes and you no longer are using or examining this Teacher's Manual, you may wish to pass it on to a teacher who may have use for it.

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Composition: Models and Exercises in the Composition Program

How the use of models improves composition teaching English teachers, pressed by the demand that they do more to improve the writing ability of their students, may feel the need for additional materials with which to stimulate their students and clarify writing skills. The books in the *Composition: Models and Exercises* series were designed to meet this need by providing interesting models demonstrating the important writing skills, together with careful analyses of the models and suggestions of topics to write about.

The model has always been an important device in the teaching of writing. Its *raison d'être* is the truism, "Example speaks louder than precept." The besetting sin in most ineffective composition teaching is vagueness. Students resent those theme assignments that do little more than announce that a theme will be due on a certain date. Such assignments do not make their purpose clear. Students do not understand what writing skill they are to work on; they have no clear idea of what kind of composition they should produce. They are confirmed in a long-held belief that the terrain of composition is a morass in which the teacher is floundering without a sense of direction, taking the students nowhere.

A model alone cannot teach everything, but when used to demonstrate the writing skill taught in a composition lesson, it makes the instruction concrete and the goal specific. Even explaining to students exactly what is expected of them is not enough; *showing* them is equally important. The model prevents the student frustration that is the inevitable result of vague teaching. If students can see, through models and analyses, that professional writers must plan, select, and organize their words and their thoughts, then they too may be more likely to accept these responsibilities in their own work.

How to fit *Composition: Models and Exercises* into the composition program If you are following a prescribed course of study that specifies the writing skills to be taught at each grade level, you will find that these same skills are covered in the *Composition: Models and Exercises* book for the grade you are teaching. Since each lesson in a given book is independent and each teaches one writing skill, you may, if you wish, ignore the lesson sequence of the text and follow the sequence specified in your own course of study, turning to any lesson in the book at any time you wish.

For example, if in the tenth grade the school course of study calls for the teaching of descriptive writing during the first weeks of the school year, you may use Section Two in *Fourth Course* in connection with this first unit of the year. If, on the other hand, the course specifies that narrative writing should be taught at the beginning of the tenth grade, you may use Section Three, "Narration," at this time. This flexibility of the books makes them easily adaptable to any course of study.

How the *Composition: Models and Exercises* books can be used singly and together Basic skills in composition are covered in each grade level of *Composition: Models and Exercises*. This means that students do not have to use all five books of the program to cover the basics of composition. Students who have not used *First Course* or *Second Course*, for example, can work with *Third Course* with no difficulty and, having completed that volume, will have studied the basic writing skills even though they may not have the opportunity to go on to *Fourth Course* or *Fifth Course*. It should be pointed out, however, that the basic skills are covered with more sophisticated models and exercises as the books progress from *First Course* to *Fifth Course*, so that students who do follow the entire *Composition: Models and Exercises* series will have additional practice adapted to their growing maturity and changing interests. It should also be noted that while all the *Composition: Models and Exercises* books deal with paragraph writing and with exposition, narration, and description, the emphasis shifts from book to book. In the earlier books, stress is put on finding ideas and on word study—the choice of nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs. In the later books, stress is put on developing a more mature style and on more sophisticated forms of writing, such as the informal essay and criticism of literature.

How to use *Composition: Models and Exercises* to supplement a basic language-composition textbook Most schools equip their students with a basic English language-composition textbook which serves as both a source of lessons in composition and a reference tool. Again the

flexibility of the *Composition: Models and Exercises* series makes it a readily available supplement to the composition lessons in any basic book. For example, most basic textbook series include work on the structure of the paragraph at every grade level. Similarly, every book in this series provides a number of lessons in paragraph structure. These lessons support and extend the materials in any basic textbook.

You may begin work on the paragraph, for instance, with either the basic textbook or the *Composition: Models and Exercises* textbook, introducing and demonstrating one at a time the skills required to write an effective paragraph. Having taught a skill from one book, you may then turn to the other for additional materials. The combination will be more effective than presentation from only one book. Not only does the combination assure learning through repetition of instruction and further demonstration in models, but it also supplies more suggested topics to write about.

How to use *Composition: Models and Exercises* as a basic composition textbook Although this series is usually used to supplement and enrich the composition program in a basic English textbook, the series may serve as the composition course itself. Each book presents more lessons and more skills than most teachers will have time to cover in a year. You may follow any sequence of subject matter you wish, or you may adopt the sequence of the book, which, in effect, then becomes the year's course in composition.

If you are using the books as a basic composition series, you will probably wish to equip your students with an English handbook giving rules for mechanics—capitalization, punctuation, spelling—and instruction in certain other aspects of writing—usage, grammar, sentence structure—not covered or not fully covered in a book of models.

SECTION TWO

Composition: Models and Exercises in the Composition Lesson

Familiarizing yourself with the models and exercises When you plan a composition lesson, you begin by asking yourself what it is about writing that you wish to teach. Having decided what skill or understanding you wish your students to acquire as a result of the lesson, you turn to the question, "What text and other materials will I need?" In almost any composition lesson you will need some explanation, some practice exercises, some models to be analyzed, and some subjects—topics—for the students to write about. These you can find in almost any basic language-composition text, but the chances are that you will find the offering there too sparse for really thorough teaching, and you will have to look for additional materials. The function of the *Composition: Models and Exercises* books is to supply these additional materials.

It is always essential to familiarize yourself thoroughly with all materials you intend to use in your lesson. Ideally, you should take time to read every word of every model many times and to go over the book's analysis of the models so carefully that you can conduct the analysis without referring in class to the analytical questions in the book. Your awareness of suitable topics for themes growing out of the lesson will then be so definite and clear that no student will be at a loss for something to write about.

Beginning the lesson independently of the book As a rule, it is preferable not to use the book (any book) at the beginning of a lesson. Beginning a lesson with the directive "Please open your books to page 145" can be deadly. You are the teacher. The book is the material with which you teach. It is your responsibility to devise ways of arousing the interest of your students. If you rely on a book to arouse interest and enthusiasm for writing, you may be disappointed. A lesson generally develops better when it begins as a dialogue between the teacher and class or between

members of the class with the teacher assuming the role of interested listener and guide. Not to begin in this way often sacrifices the important rapport necessary between teacher and student. This is especially true in a composition lesson.

Using the analytical questions—"The Writer's Craft" How you handle "The Writer's Craft" sections in the lessons is extremely important. You may find it more productive if you do *not* take the class through the questions in lock step, having each question read aloud from the book and then calling on someone to answer it. Rather, before class, you might go through the questions, decide which ones you wish to use—you may, of course, wish to use all of them—and have these questions in mind well enough so that you can conduct the analysis of the model without referring at that time to the questions in the book. In that way you will be able to ask the questions in "The Writer's Craft" section as though they were your own questions.

The opposite method—of reading questions aloud, flipping the page back to the model and then back to the next question—could produce a dull classroom routine. With the method suggested in the preceding paragraph, the students' entire concentration will be on the model as *you* lead them through the analysis.

Selecting lessons and parts of lessons to teach You should feel no compulsion to teach every lesson in the book. As pointed out earlier, each book contains more lessons than a class will generally have time for in the school year. Select such lessons that best fit your own composition program; omit those you think your class does not need. If you are using the book as your course of study, you may wish to follow its sequence of lessons, but this does not mean that you must teach every lesson.

Neither should you feel any compulsion to use all the models provided in a lesson, especially where two models are used to demonstrate the same writing technique. Furthermore, a particular model may prove successful with some classes but unsuccessful with others. You can anticipate which model may not appeal to a particular class and simply ignore the model. All lessons in the *Composition: Models and Exercises* books can in this way easily be adapted to the interests and abilities of students.

The number of compositions you assign—"Now You Try It"—in any one lesson will be determined by the amount of time you have to teach the skill emphasized in the lesson. You need not use all the writing assignments provided in the "Now You Try It" sections. For example, Lesson 9 in *First Course* contains three of these sections. All are designed to give the student practice in the effective use of adjectives. You may wish to skip

one or two of these sections. One way of doing this is to give the students a choice of the writing assignments, after they have studied the models and seen how professional writers use adjectives. The student's goal—effective adjective selection—is the same in all three assignments. A second way is for you yourself to select one assignment from the three given. Sometimes you will have the class write only the final assignment in the lesson, for the final assignment usually is a culminating assignment, a piece of writing incorporating everything in the lesson.

Combining lessons from different sections of the book Just as you may prefer to omit certain lessons and models because you think they may not be suitable for a particular class (student interest and ability), you may take advantage of the flexibility of the books in two other ways. You may combine lessons from different sections, and you may “space out” over a long period of time the lessons within one section.

The organization of any book is at least partly arbitrary. Having a section on the careful selection of words is useful. It permits a period of concentration on one important writing skill—word choice. At the same time, however, this arrangement removes discussion of word choice, such as the choice of adjectives, from the treatment of description, which is another section, and in which adjectives play an important role. In *First Course*, for instance, it might be desirable to combine Lesson 9 (“Adjectives”) in Section Three with Lesson 12 (“Writing a Description”) in Section Four, which emphasizes the use of specific details in description. It is by the use of adjectives that descriptive details are made specific.

This crossing of section boundaries can be done easily, and it will give added impetus to lessons on both sides of the boundary.

Spacing out lessons within a section To teach the six lessons in the section on narration in *Fifth Course*, for example, would require a minimum of six class periods. You may wish to teach the first of these lessons, Lesson 11 (“Skills of Narration”), and perhaps the second lesson, Lesson 12 (“Selecting Key Events”), in November. Then you may not wish to return to the writing of narrative until February, when you will take up Lessons 13–16. In other words, you need not feel that because all lessons in narrative writing are combined in one section of the book, you must teach this entire section as a unit in one consecutive sequence of lessons, even though teaching it this way does have some advantages.

Varying the beginnings of lessons All lessons in the *Composition: Models and Exercises* series follow the same pattern: a general introduction giving instruction and explaining the writing skill; a model or models dem-

onstrating the skill; "The Writer's Craft," an analysis of the model by means of questions for the student to answer and, frequently, things for the student to do; "Now You Try It," a writing assignment with suggested topics to write about.

This uniformity of lessons, however, should not result in uniformity in teaching procedures. You will be able to invent ways of varying your lessons. As you read the sample lesson plans on pages 8-26 of this manual, you will see that variety in presentation has been achieved even though the lessons in the book are the same in arrangement.

One way to give variety to your composition teaching is to begin your lessons in varied ways. The beginning sets the tone and determines the attitude the class will take toward the lesson.

A composition lesson may begin in several ways. One of these is by anticipating the first model. This means that you conduct a discussion of the ideas in the model and perhaps the means of organizing these ideas before the students read the model. This is the kind of lesson opening used in the first of the sample lesson plans, page 8. The first model in this lesson is a paragraph about the United Nations. Anticipating this, you begin the lesson by drawing from the students any facts they know about the United Nations. Gradually you get the class to focus on the idea about the United Nations that you know is expressed in the first model. When you have the students turn to the model, they do so with interest. They read to find answers to questions raised during the class discussion. The rest of the lesson, of course, deals with the writing skill demonstrated in the United Nations paragraph.

A second way to begin a composition lesson is by discussing with the class the writing skill the lesson is designed to teach. Having introduced the skill through questioning the class and perhaps through simple examples of it written on the board, you then turn to some models that demonstrate the skill. Having students analyze a model to find a skill already discussed and, it is hoped, understood, is the opposite approach from having students first *discover* the skill by reading the model. Both approaches can be effective. Examples of the beginning that concentrates on the skill first will be found in sample lesson plans 5 and 7.

Another way of beginning a lesson is by presenting a writing problem in the form of the assignment you are going to give the class at the end of the lesson. In other words, the students know immediately what kind of composition they are going to write and, usually, on what subject. Then you proceed with a discussion of the writing problems they will face and skills they will need. Finally, you present some models that demonstrate how professional writers have solved the same problems and employed the same skills. Sample lesson plan 4 illustrates this kind of beginning.

SECTION THREE

Sample Lesson Plans

The sample lesson plans—two for each book in the *Composition: Models and Exercises* series—are included here as a concrete way of showing teachers how to plan a composition lesson around lessons in the books. It has obviously been necessary to fashion plans without reference to any of the basic English textbooks that may be used with them. While independent of any other books, the plans may well be used as part of larger lessons involving a basic textbook.

Even though you may be using only one of the books, you will find it helpful to study all the plans. They vary in several ways, and this variety will help you in your own lesson planning.

SAMPLE LESSON PLAN 1

FIRST COURSE Lesson 4

The Topic Sentence

Objective: To teach the nature and the importance of the topic sentence.

Procedure:

1. Since the first model paragraph develops an idea about the United Nations, initiate an impromptu discussion of the United Nations as a means of leading the class into this first model.

Question: Is there anyone in class who can tell us something about the United Nations?

Accept any facts the students volunteer provided they are correct. The following may be among them:

- a. The United Nations was established after World War II to help nations preserve peace and work together on world problems.
- b. Its headquarters are in New York.
- c. Its principal purpose is to preserve peace, but it does many other things, too.

Question: What are some of these other things that the United Nations is involved in?

Answers: aviation, shipping, atomic energy, drugs, weather, etc. (The class will probably not know that the United Nations is involved in all these areas.)

2. Tell the class that by reading Model 6, they can find out other things the United Nations does. Have them read silently, or, if you prefer, have one student read the model paragraph aloud while the others follow along in their books.

3. By questioning, establish the nature of a topic sentence and make clear its importance.

Q. What, in general, is this paragraph about?

A. Activities of the United Nations.

Q. Where in the paragraph is the main idea of the paragraph stated?

A. First, underlined, sentence.

Q. Does this sentence, then, state the topic of this paragraph? What name could we give to the sentence that states the topic of a paragraph? (Write "topic sentence" on the board.)

Q. What does the rest of the paragraph provide in relation to the topic sentence? (development, support, explanation)

Q. What additional activities of the United Nations has this paragraph given us for our list?

4. Have the class read silently the introduction to Lesson 4, where the topic sentence is explained.

Q. Did you find in the introduction anything about a topic sentence you did not know?

Q. How is using a topic sentence like aiming a gun? What do we mean by a well-aimed topic sentence?

Q. What is the usual position of a topic sentence? What advantage is there in this position for the reader? for the writer?

5. Have the class read Model 8 and answer questions in "The Writer's Craft." Explain that the substitute topic sentence given in the second question is not well-aimed. The paragraph is not about the destruction of Krakatoa; it is about the world-wide effects of the eruption.

6. Assign the writing of a paragraph, following the procedure given in "Now You Try It."

FIRST COURSE Lesson 9

Adjectives

Objective: To teach discriminating selection of adjectives.

Procedure:

1. Before turning to the book, cover by questioning and discussion information given in the introduction to the lesson.

Q. How many of you have lived in a place other than the place you live in now? City, house, apartment, etc.

Q. What things do you remember most clearly about that other place? As the students respond, list on the board some of their answers, being sure to include as many adjectives as you can. Examples: big trees, wide lawns, noisy street, small apartment, heavy traffic, cluttered sidewalks, snowcapped mountains, etc.

Q. In each word-group on the board, what does the first word do for the second word? (Describes it, makes it more definite.)

Q. What part of speech are these words? In what kind of writing are adjectives especially important?

2. Have the class open their books and read Models A and B and list on paper all the adjectives they can find in B. Discuss question 1 and do the exercise given in question 2, following Model B.

3. Assign question 3, the class listing the six words on their paper and writing three appropriate adjectives after each.

4. Send six students to the board. Have each student take one word and write it and the adjectives he or she wrote for it. Send six others to the board and have them write their adjectives beneath those written by the first group. Discuss the adjectives, comparing them as to interest and effectiveness. If the same adjectives are used occasionally by both groups, perhaps you can make the point that these duplicated adjectives are those commonly used to describe the particular noun; a writer might do well to avoid them and try to find fresher ones. Get some examples of fresher adjectives from the class.

5. By questioning and discussion prepare the class for Model 22.

Q. Have any of you read a story about Sherlock Holmes? Who was he? Who was Dr. Watson? For what skill as a detective was Holmes famous? Might a hat found at the scene of a crime afford useful clues?

Q. Does anyone know what *ruefully* means? Can anyone guess what a hat-securer is?

Explain that a hat-securer is a piece of elastic attached to the brim of a hat that may go under the chin or around the back of the head to hold the hat tight.

6. Have students read Model 22 and list all adjectives used to describe the hat. Cover the questions in "The Writer's Craft" following the Doyle paragraph. Emphasize that in giving a complete description of any object, we must mention certain facts about it: size, color, shape, condition, characteristics that distinguish it from others of its kind, and, for some objects, feel, smell, and taste.

7. Q. On your paper write a list of adjectives you would use to describe the appearance of this textbook.

Make a composite list on the board from the words the students offer from their lists. Commend those that show especially keen observation.

8. "Now You Try It": You may have the class write about any object they choose, except, of course, the textbook. Limit them to relatively small objects. For purposes of comparison of their writing, you may prefer to have them all write about the same object, one that you specify. Place this object on an elevation in front of the room so that everyone can see it. You may permit a few students at a time to go up and get a close look. A wastebasket, vase, flowerpot, briefcase—any common object—will do for this exercise.

Discuss what might be a good opening sentence for a paragraph describing this object. Examples: I am looking at a wastebasket. The wastebasket at which I am looking is Advise the class not to use the first adjective that occurs to them, but to take time to think of the most descriptive one.

SAMPLE LESSON PLAN 3

SECOND COURSE Lesson 11

Verbs

Objective: To teach the importance of discrimination in the selection of verbs.

Procedure:

1. Lead the class to understand that a writer must constantly be making word choices. From the many words available, the writer chooses the word that best suits a given purpose.

Q. Someone once said that living is making decisions. Looking back over this day (morning or last hour), what decisions do you remember making?

A. When to get up; what clothes to wear; what to have for breakfast; which books to take to school; etc.

Q. Are many of these decisions choices?

A. Yes. You choose which of two dresses to wear; whether to wear jeans or slacks; whether to have milk or cocoa for breakfast; etc.

Q. One might say that writing, like living, is making decisions or choices. What decisions do you have to make when you write?

A. What to write about; what ideas to include; how to organize the ideas; what words to use; etc.

Q. Let's think about the decisions, or choices, you make concerning the words you use. Suppose you know several words that are similar in meaning. On what basis do you decide which of these words to use? Try to get the class to conclude that one chooses the word that best expresses the intended meaning.

2. Write the following words on the board: limp, stride, slink, pace. Call on four students to come to the front of the room, each to demonstrate (act out) the meaning of one of the words.

3. On separate slips of paper write the following numbers and words: 1. skip 2. shuffle 3. waddle 4. prance 5. gallop. Hand a slip to each of five students and have each, in turn, walk across the front of the room in the way specified on the slip. After each performance, allow a few minutes for the rest of the class to write on their papers a word that to them best tells what the walker did.

Select five students. Give each a number (1-5) and have each write on the board the word he or she wrote for that number. Thus student 1 will probably write *skipped*; student 2 will write *shuffled*; etc. Ask for volunteers who disagree with the choice of words represented on the board and get their suggestions. It may be necessary to have some of the performances repeated.

Q. What kind of words are these on the board?

A. Verbs.

4. Have the students read Model 27, Constance Rourke in *Davy Crockett*. Ask them to jot down on their papers at least five verbs in the model that seem to them to be just right—that is, carefully chosen. Discuss individual verbs as indicated in "The Writer's Craft."

5. Tell the class that strong, carefully chosen verbs can make a writer's description more vivid for the reader. Have the class read Model 28, Anne Morrow Lindbergh in *Earth Shine*. Tell them to select four important verbs and prepare to explain why these verbs are especially well chosen.