

Second Edition

The Basics

A Rhetoric and Handbook

Santi V. Buscemi

Albert Nicolai

Richard Strugala

THE BASICS

A Rhetoric and Handbook

Santi V. Buscemi

Albert H. Nicolai

Richard Strugala



**Irwin
McGraw-Hill**

Boston, Massachusetts Burr Ridge, Illinois Dubuque, Iowa
Madison, Wisconsin New York, New York San Francisco, California
St. Louis, Missouri

McGraw-Hill

A Division of The McGraw-Hill Companies



THE BASICS: A RHETORIC AND HANDBOOK

Copyright © 1998 by The McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc. All rights reserved.
Previous edition © 1996 by The McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc. Printed in the
United States of America. Except as permitted under the United States Copyright
Act of 1976, no part of this publication may be reproduced or distributed in any
form or by any means, or stored in a database or retrieval system, without the
prior written permission of the publisher.

This book is printed on acid-free paper.

3 4 5 7 8 9 0 DOC/DOC 9 0 9 8

ISBN 0-07-009454-3

Editorial director:

Sponsoring editor: *Tim Jület*

Marketing manager: *Lesley Denton*

Senior project manager: *Mary Conzachi*

Production supervisor: *Bob Lange*

Designer: *Kay Fulton*

Compositor: *Carlisle Communications, Ltd.*

Typeface: *10 1/2/12 Weiss*

Printer: *R. R. Donnelley & Sons Company*

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

The basics : a rhetoric and handbook / Santi V. Buscemi, Albert H.
Nicolai, Richard Strugala. — 2nd ed.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0-07-009454-3 (acid-free paper)

1. English language—Rhetoric—Handbooks, manuals, etc.

2. English language—Grammar—Handbooks, manuals, etc. 3. Report
writing—Handbooks, manuals, etc. I. Nicolai, Albert H.

II. Strugala, Richard A. III. Title.

PE1408.B8852 1997

8'.042—dc21

97-7539

[tp://www.mhcollege.com](http://www.mhcollege.com)

About the Authors

Santi V. Buscemi is professor of English and chair of the Department of English at Middlesex County College in Edison, New Jersey, where he teaches reading and writing. He received his B.A. from St. Bonaventure University, and completed studies for the doctorate at the University of Tennessee. He is the author of *A Reader for Developing Writers* (McGraw-Hill), now in its third edition; *An ESL Workbook* (McGraw-Hill); and co-author with Charlotte Smith of *75 Readings Plus* (McGraw-Hill). He is also chief author of McGraw-Hill's *Allwrite!*, an interactive computer software program in rhetoric, grammar, and research.

Albert H. Nicolai is professor of English at Middlesex County College in Edison, New Jersey, where he teaches reading and writing. He received his B.A. from Hope College and his M.A. from Temple University.

Richard Strugala is professor of English at Middlesex County College in Edison, New Jersey, where he teaches reading and writing. Professor Strugala received his doctorate in composition and rhetoric from Rutgers University, where he was elected to Kappa Delta Pi. He is a certified trainer for the New Jersey affiliate of the National Writing Project.

*For the women in our lives:
Elaine Buscemi, Dorothy Polaski,
and Barbara Strugala*

To the Instructor

The Basics is designed for use both as a classroom tool and as a reference guide that even beginning writers can use independently. As its subtitle indicates, it offers college writers an introduction to important writing strategies as well as an accessible handbook of grammar and usage.

One of the most important features of *The Basics* is its comprehensive coverage of rhetoric. **Book One** focuses on the writing process and helps students learn methods to gather information, to draft and revise, and to edit their work. Explanations are thorough and fully illustrated, often with student writing. As such, the writing process is explained in a rich context of realistic writing projects. Indeed, Book One contains six full chapters on the composing process. It also contains three chapters on how to build effective paragraphs and to practice methods of development and organization. The second edition significantly expands coverage of prewriting by explaining the use of clustering and the creation of a subject tree. It also contains complete and practical coverage of audience, style, and tone in language that is concise and accessible to students. Indeed, when field-tested in our own classes, these new sections proved very useful and quite easy to teach.

Book One ends with a four-chapter section on special assignments, which students have found especially helpful. The first chapter in this section discusses persuasive writing and presents strategies to help students write logical, well-developed arguments. Students should profit from added coverage of audience as it pertains to argument. Chapters 11 and 12, which explain both print and electronic resources and which introduce students to MLA format, are fully integrated. The same topic of research is used as a basis of illustration in both chapters from the pre-research stages, through the drafting and documentation process, to the creation of the final draft of a research paper. Chapter 13, new to this edition, leads students through the process of writing a research paper using APA format, complete with a second student research paper. Also

new to the second edition is additional information on using and documenting electronic resources, especially the Internet.

Book Two, the handbook, presents tools students will need to revise, edit, and proofread their writing. They are able to check their work quickly and efficiently by referring to fifteen concise but complete chapters on grammar, punctuation, usage, mechanics, and other important considerations. New to this edition is a comprehensive glossary of writing terms complete with examples.

Having learned from years of experience that students prefer practical approaches, we have tried to avoid the jargon of professional grammarians when offering advice or explaining rules, principles, and techniques. Instead, we have explained how following a particular principle will help students write sentences and paragraphs that are clearer, more effective, and more correct.

The need for a practical approach prompted us to include a number of other useful features. For example, each chapter ends with a boxed section entitled “What You Have Learned,” a summary of important points explained in the preceding pages. Students have told us that “What You Have Learned” sections make excellent guides for editing as well as for reviewing and studying.

Another special feature is the “Guides for ESL Students,” which appear at the end of several chapters in Book Two. (A convenient list of these guides can be found on the inside front cover.) They provide clear, concise advice on problems unique to speakers of English as a second language and have been placed within appropriate chapters so that ESL students can continue their study of specific points without the inconvenience of having to turn to an appendix at the end of the book.

Supplements to the text include a complete instructor’s manual and the McGraw-Hill Computerized Diagnostic Tests. In addition, students and faculty will be able to make use of *Allwrite!*, McGraw-Hill’s comprehensive interactive computer software, including animations, which helps students learn, review, and practice a full range of skills in rhetoric, grammar, style, and research.

* * * * *

In the first edition we thanked several members of our McGraw-Hill family. These fine people have continued to stand by us and deserve our gratitude once again. We especially want to thank Tim Julet, Robert Redling, Lesley Denton, and Mary Conzachi. We would also like to express our gratitude to those colleagues across the country who reviewed the manuscript and provided insight, criticism, and advice.

We are also indebted to several colleagues and friends at Middlesex County College, who provided advice, assistance, and encouragement: Sallie Del Vecchio, Emanuel di Pasquale, Sonia Slobodian, Georgianna Planko, Jack Moskowitz, and René Price. Our special thanks also go to John Dawkins of Manor Junior College.

We owe much to the women in our lives to whom this book is dedicated. Their kind words and their example helped keep the spark of inspiration alive. Finally, we need to thank our students for teaching us so much about writing, learning, and working with others.

Santi V. Buscemi
Albert H. Nicolai
Richard Strugala

To the Student

You might be asked to take this book with you to class and to use it during class discussions and exercises. You might also be required to complete many of its practical exercises as homework.

However your teacher decides to use this book, remember that it was written with you in mind, as a personal reference guide for you to use during your college years and beyond. Therefore, while you should complete the work your teacher assigns in this book thoroughly, don't think of *The Basics* as just another textbook. Consider it a tool you can also use independently to become a more powerful and effective writer.

The Basics is divided into two major parts. **Book One** introduces you to the writing process, tells you how to develop various types of paragraphs, and explains how to organize an essay. It also contains chapters on persuasion and library research. You will find these chapters especially helpful if you are taking other classes that require you to write persuasive essays or research papers. **Book Two** covers principles of grammar, punctuation, and other matters important to editing and proofreading your work. Included are several special sections devoted to writing problems ESL students face.

The table of contents is your road map through the text. Browse through it often, and use it to locate information that will help you improve skills your instructor thinks are weak. You will also want to refer to "The Basics at a Glance," located at the front of the text, for quick reference. Get into the habit of reading the comments your teacher makes on your papers. Then, target the problems he or she points out by reading more about them on your own in *The Basics*. Even better, use the text as a reference guide to editing and proofreading *before* you hand in your papers. In other words, devote some of the time you spend preparing a paper to checking points of grammar, sentence structure, mechanics, and so forth in *The Basics*.

In addition, the text contains study guides called "What You Have Learned" at the end of each chapter. These summarize information and

ideas presented in the chapters. They are easy-to-use tools that will help you edit and proofread your work. As mentioned earlier, *The Basics* also contains several sections especially important to ESL students. If your first language is not English, read these guides carefully. A list of them appears inside the front cover of the book.

To get you started, we suggest that you read the first six chapters of *The Basics* right away. They are fairly short and will give you a good overview to the writing process, which in turn will increase your chances of success as you launch your career as a college writer. As you will learn in these six chapters, writing can be an exciting voyage of discovery—a voyage that teaches us important things about ourselves and about the world around us. Best of luck as you begin your journey!

Santi V. Buscemi
Albert H. Nicolai
Richard Strugala

The BASICS at a Glance

Book One

The Writing Process

Part One *Getting Ready*

- 1 Learning the Writing Process 5
- 2 Gathering Information 9
- 3 Focusing on the Central Idea 22

Part Two *Drafting, Rewriting, and Editing*

- 4 Outlining and Drafting an Essay 31
- 5 Rewriting Drafts 41
- 6 Preparing a Final Copy 46

Part Three *Designing and Developing Paragraphs*

- 7 Writing Focused, Unified, and Coherent Paragraphs 55
- 8 Developing Ideas and Arranging Details in a Paragraph 72
- 9 Writing Introductions and Conclusions 87

Part Four *Special Assignments: Persuasion and Research (MLA/APA)*

- 10 Writing Paragraphs and Essays That Persuade 99
- 11 Learning How to Research and to Take Notes 112
- 12 Writing the Research Paper Using the Modern Language Association (MLA) Format 129

- 13 Writing the Research Paper Using the American Psychological Association (APA) Format 158

Book Two

Tools for Revision and Editing

Part Five *Sentence Sense*

- 14 Sentence Building Blocks 185
- 15 Sentence Structure 205
- 16 Sentence Logic and Effectiveness 220

Part Six *Correct Usage*

- 17 Agreement 239
- 18 Verb Forms and Tenses 254
- 19 Pronouns 274
- 20 Adjectives and Adverbs 289
- 21 Word Choice 303
- 22 Wordiness 325

Part Seven *Punctuation, Spelling, and Mechanics*

- 23 End Punctuation 339
 - 24 Commas 343
 - 25 Semicolons and Colons 357
 - 26 Other Marks of Punctuation 366
 - 27 Spelling 374
 - 28 Mechanics 387
- Glossary of Basic Writing Terms 397
- Index 413

Book One

The Writing Process

Part One *Getting Ready*

- 1 *Learning the Writing Process***
- 2 *Gathering Information***
- 3 *Focusing on the Central Idea***

Part Two *Drafting, Rewriting, and Editing*

- 4 *Outlining and Drafting an Essay***
- 5 *Rewriting Drafts***
- 6 *Preparing a Final Copy***

Part Three *Designing and Developing Paragraphs*

- 7 *Writing Focused, Unified, and Coherent Paragraphs***
- 8 *Developing Ideas and Arranging Details in a Paragraph***
- 9 *Writing Introductions and Conclusions***

Part Four *Special Assignments: Persuasion and Research (MLA/APA)*

- 10 *Writing Paragraphs and Essays That Persuade***
- 11 *Learning How to Research and to Take Notes***
- 12 *Writing the Research Paper Using the Modern Language Association (MLA) Format***
- 13 *Writing the Research Paper Using the American Psychological Association (APA) Format***

P

Part One

Getting Ready

A

R

T

1

Part One

<i>Getting Ready</i>	3
1 Learning the Writing Process	5
1.1 Begin with Prewriting	6
1.2 Write a Rough Draft	6
1.3 Revise Your Rough Draft	6
1.4 Edit and Proofread Your Work	6
1.5 See Writing as a Process of Discovery	7
2 Gathering Information	9
2.1 Write Down What You Know	9
2.2 Gather Additional Information if Needed	18
3 Focusing on the Central Idea	22
3.1 Make the Central Idea the Focus of Your Writing	22
3.2 Write a Working Thesis Statement	23
3.3 Limit the Discussion to a Manageable Length	26
3.4 Revise the Central Idea	27

Chapter 1

Learning the Writing Process

- **Begin with Prewriting**
- **Write a Rough Draft**
- **Revise Your Rough Draft**
- **Edit and Proofread Your Work**
- **See Writing as a Process of Discovery**
- **What You Have Learned**

As you begin to read this book, you may be asking yourself: “Why do I need to take a writing course? After all, I’ve already taken English in high school.”

The answer is simple: A college writing course sharpens the skills that you learned in school and that you will need as you continue your education or begin a career. Writing helps you to communicate with others and to discover important things about your subject and yourself. At home, you will write notes and letters; in school, you will write tests and essays; on the job, you will write memos and reports. The stronger your writing skills, the better your readers will respond to what you write. The stronger your writing skills, the better your chances for success!

The writing process is divided into four stages: *prewriting*, *drafting*, *revising*, and *editing*. Going through these stages carefully will make your writing more effective. It may even make the process more exciting, for it will help you see writing as a voyage of discovery. Each stage will reveal more and more about your subject and gradually help you focus on exactly what you want to say about it.

1.1 Begin with Prewriting

Prewriting is the stage in which you gather information (details) about a subject. It can take three forms: recording what you already know, interviewing, and researching.

1. **Writing down** what you know, have observed, or have experienced can help you gather interesting and important details about your subject. You can do this through focused freewriting, brainstorming, and other methods discussed in Chapter 2. If you find that you need more information, you can use the next two methods of information gathering as well.
2. **Interviewing** people who know something about your subject.
3. **Researching** (investigating) your subject in books, magazine articles, films, and any other materials that will tell you something about it. Many of these materials can be found in your college library.

1.2 Write a Rough Draft

The second stage begins when you clarify your purpose and decide on a preliminary central idea. (You will read more about the central or main idea in Chapter 3.) Drafting also involves outlining ideas and writing the first rough version of your paragraph, essay, letter, or other project. (You will learn more about drafting in Chapter 4.)

1.3 Revise Your Rough Draft

1.3
revise rough
draft

Revising means rewriting, rewriting, and rewriting. Effective writers revise their rough drafts three or more times, each version becoming clearer, more detailed, and better organized. Revising helps you clarify ideas, develop concepts in greater detail, or reorganize hard-to-follow sentences and paragraphs.

1.4 Edit and Proofread Your Work

Editing means reading the best of your rough drafts to correct errors in grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, and spelling. (Common errors of this sort are discussed in later chapters.) Editing also means improving your style by removing wordiness, making sure your language is precise