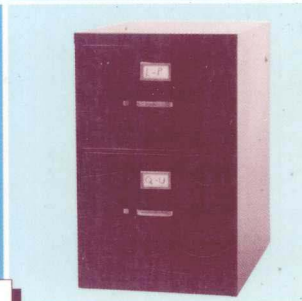
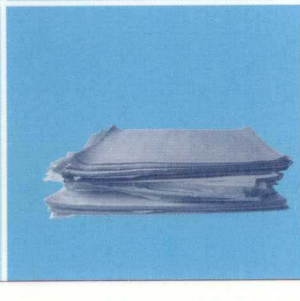
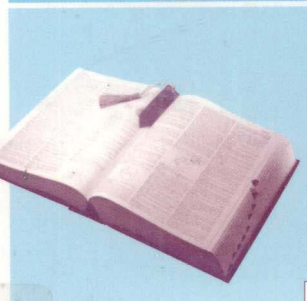
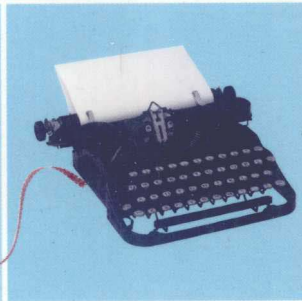
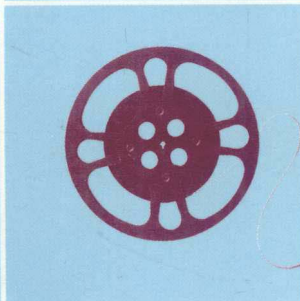
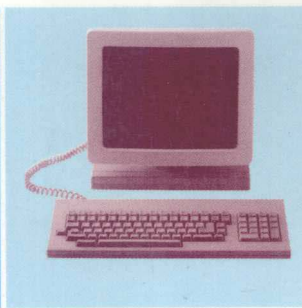
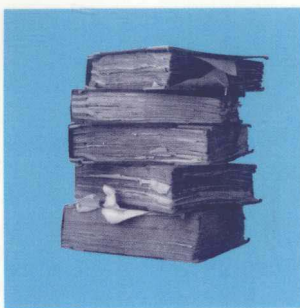
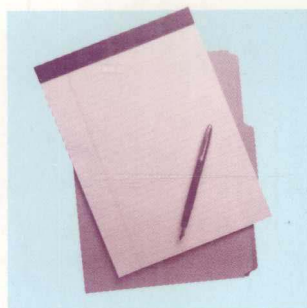


Successful Writing



Fourth Edition



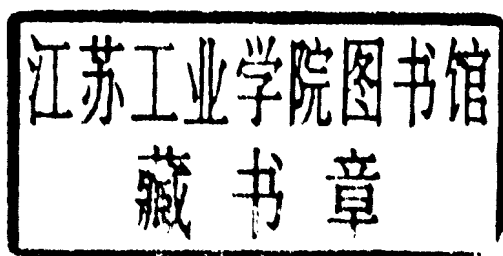
MAXINE C. HAIRSTON

SUCCESSFUL WRITING

FOURTH EDITION

MAXINE C. HAIRSTON

The University of Texas at Austin



W. W. NORTON & COMPANY

NEW YORK • LONDON

Copyright © 1998, 1992, 1986, 1981 by Maxine C. Hairston

All rights reserved.

Printed in the United States of America.

*The text of this book is composed in Sabon
with the display set in Frutiger Roman.*

Desktop composition by Gina Webster.

Manufacturing by Courier Companies, Inc.

Book design by Joan Greenfield

The image of Rosa Parks on page 206 is reprinted by permission of UPI/Corbis Bettmann.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Hairston, Maxine.

Successful writing / Maxine C. Hairston.—4th ed.

p. cm.

includes index

ISBN 0-393-97196-1 (pbk.)

1. English language—Rhetoric. 2. Report writing. I. Title.

PE1408.H297 1997

808'.042—dc21 97-14163

CIP

W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 500 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10110

<http://www.wwnorton.com>

W. W. Norton & Company Ltd., 10 Coptic Street, London WC1A 1PU

3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0

PREFACE

This Fourth Edition of *Successful Writing* maintains the focus of the previous editions in offering practical and straightforward advice to writers who have mastered the basic elements of writing and now want to strengthen their skills and polish their prose. But this new edition also introduces writers to some of the new electronic dimensions of their craft: using the Internet for research and exploration and applying some of the principles of document design and desktop publishing to their work. Most of the chapters of this edition incorporate suggestions about ways to make writing more readable by using the capacities that computers offer for creating graphics and producing several varieties of type, and the book itself has been designed to make it easier to use and to demonstrate the principles of visual appeal.

This edition of *Successful Writing* retains features that have distinguished it from the beginning. These include

- Emphasis on the writing process
- Stress on the crucial role of audience and purpose in every writing situation
- Stress on revision as essential to the creative process
- Pragmatic advice about editing and rewriting
- Emphasis on and guidelines for writers working in groups

In addition, almost all examples have been replaced with material from contemporary sources, and a quotation about writing now introduces each chapter. Overall, I have tried to make the text more concise by tightening discussions and, wherever possible, condensing material into boxes and lists. Special tips for writers appear in boxes throughout the book. In each chapter, I have made a number of changes, listed below.

- Chapter 1, “Writing in College,” has been condensed and some of the information rearranged in more visually accessible boxes and lists. A new section has been added on avoiding common pitfalls in choosing topics.
- Chapter 2, “What Is Good Writing?” no longer contains negative models of bad writing; the criteria for good writing have been expanded to include visual appeal and good design.
- Chapter 3, “What Happens When People Write?” streamlines the discussion of explanatory and exploratory writing, makes those concepts more accessible with lists and boxed summaries, and adds tips about using the Internet for invention. Preliminary discussion for a new model paper on the need for heroines in children’s literature begins in this chapter.
- Chapter 4, “What Is Your Writing Situation?” has been condensed somewhat from the third edition and now contains analyses of the audience, purpose, persona, and message for the new model paper.
- Chapter 5, “Drafting Your Paper,” includes a revised section on patterns of organization, substituting “assertion and support” for “claims and warrant” and adding a discussion of “classification.” This chapter now offers material on civil discourse and a section on how a writer can tell when he or she has written an adequate draft.
- Chapter 6, “Revising,” has been made more accessible through headings, lists, and special guidelines for helping students evaluate and revise their own papers and those of their peers, especially when they are working in collaborative writing situations.
- Chapter 7, “Holding Your Reader,” opens with a new section on presenting writing in a form that is visually appealing to readers. The chapter has been condensed somewhat by moving much of the Third Edition’s discussion on opening paragraphs to Chapter 9, “Crafting Paragraphs.”

- Chapter 8, “Writing Clearly,” expands the section on sexist language to include guidelines for avoiding other kinds of biased language and adds a section on civil discourse.
- Chapter 9, “Crafting Paragraphs,” includes new material on adapting opening paragraphs to a writer’s audience and purpose.
- Chapter 10, “Editing,” has been streamlined and rearranged for easier access and now includes material on editing to improve a paper’s visual appeal. Once more it offers advice about usage and writing conventions based on actual surveys of how readers respond to lapses in usage and mechanics.
- Chapter 11, “Writing Research Papers,” has been substantially revised to add material on using electronic sources and the conventions for citing such sources. It includes suggestions—and cautions—for doing research on the Internet and the World Wide Web.
- Chapter 12, “Document Design,” is new to the Fourth Edition. It incorporates much of the material from the “Writing on the Job” chapter of the Third Edition but is essentially an introduction to the basic elements of document design and to desktop publishing. This new chapter includes advice about planning documents, choosing type, arranging layouts, and integrating graphics and illustrations into documents. It begins with suggestions for enhancing academic papers and class presentations with visual elements, but also includes help with job-related projects such as brochures, agendas, proposals, and résumés. The second part of the chapter offers sixteen model documents along with comments and checklists for designing each kind.

The underlying principles of this Fourth Edition of *Successful Writing* remain unchanged from previous editions:

- Writing is a dynamic social process that can be taught and learned.
- People grow as writers by learning to draft, revise, and polish their writing through stages.
- Every writing project must be considered in the context of its audience and purpose.
- Learning to interact and work with other writers is an important part of every writer’s development.

I believe in these principles as strongly as I did sixteen years ago when the First Edition of *Successful Writing* appeared.

MAXINE HAIRSTON

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I received encouragement, support, and valuable advice on this book from a number of colleagues and friends, but I want to express my special appreciation to Professor Michael Keene of the University of Tennessee. I owe him a great deal. I also wish to thank Mary Trachsel for her assistance in revising the chapter on research papers.

I also want to express my thanks to the following people, whose reviews of the Third Edition helped me plan the Fourth: P. Michael Brotherton, Labethe Community College; Gary Sue Goodman, University of California, Davis; Betty L. Hart, University of Southern Indiana; JoAnn Harrill, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University; Phillip A. Snyder, Brigham Young University.

SUCCESSFUL WRITING

FOURTH EDITION

CONTENTS

Preface	xiii
Acknowledgments	xvii
1 WRITING IN COLLEGE	1
<hr/>	
Writing as a Way of Learning	1
Strategies for Writing Papers in College Courses	2
Analyze Your Writing Situation	2
Work to Limit Your Paper Topic	3
General Criteria for Academic Writing	5
Matters of Content	5
Matters of Form	5
2 WHAT IS GOOD WRITING?	7
<hr/>	
Specific Elements of Effective Writing	8
Good Writing Has Significant Content	8
Good Writing Is Clear	9
Good Writing Is Unified	10
	v

VI CONTENTS

Good Writing Is Economical	11
Good Writing Is Grammatically Acceptable	12
Spelling	13
The Additional Attributes of Excellent Writing	14
Vigor	14
Authentic Voice	15
Exercises	15
Suggested Writing Assignment	17

3 WHAT HAPPENS WHEN PEOPLE WRITE? 19

An Overview of the Writing Process	19
How Professional Writers Work	19
Explanatory and Exploratory Writing	20
Combining Explanatory and Exploratory Writing	22
The Stages of Writing	23
Preparation	24
Stocking the Bank	24
Immediate Preparation	25
PART 1	25
PART 2	26
Model Topic: Preparation	26
PART 1	26
PART 2	28
Drafting	31
Create a Writing Environment	31
Overcome Writing Blocks	32
Find Your Pace: Sprinters, Plodders, and Bleeders	33
Postpone Corrections	34
Maintain the Creative Tension	34
Incubation	35
Exercises	36
Suggested Writing Assignments	37

4 WHAT IS YOUR WRITING SITUATION? 39

Audience	39
Analyzing Your Audience	39

Model Topic: Preliminary Analysis of Audience	41
Purpose	41
Analyzing Your Purpose	41
Model Topic: Preliminary Analysis of Purpose	42
Persona	43
Presenting Yourself	43
Creating Your Persona	43
Ethical Appeal	43
Model Topic: Preliminary Analysis of Persona	44
Message	45
Model Topic: Preliminary Message	45
Exercises	45
Suggested Writing Assignments	47
 5 DRAFTING YOUR PAPER	 49
<hr/>	
Writer-Based and Reader-Based Prose	49
Some Suggestions about Openings	51
Illustrations	51
Quotations	51
Anecdotes	52
Scene-Setting Descriptions	53
Generative Sentences	53
Common Patterns of Organization	54
Reasoning from Evidence	55
Assertion and Support	57
Definition	58
Cause and Effect	59
Circumstantial Arguments	60
Comparison	61
Analogies	62
<i>A Fortiori</i> Reasoning	63
Narration	64
Process	64
Choosing and Combining Methods	65
Knowing When You Have an Adequate Draft	66
Exercises	66
Suggested Writing Assignments	68

6 REVISING 70

The Revision Process	71
Different Kinds of Revising	71
A Plan for Revising in Stages	72
Revision Strategies: Stage One	72
Revision Strategies: Stage Two	73
Model Paper	74
Stage One Revisions	77
Stage Two Revisions	77
Model Paper Revised	78
Revising in Peer Groups	81
Guidelines for Working in Writing Groups	81
Responding to Drafts	82
Revising under Pressure	85
When to Stop Revising	86

7 HOLDING YOUR READER 88

Make Your Writing Visually Attractive	89
Choose a Good Title	89
Write Strong Leads	91
Tighten Your Writing with Transitions	93
Links and Nudges	94
Repeated Words	95
Using Conjunctions to Begin Sentences	96
Achieve Frequent Closure in Sentences	97
Chunk Your Writing into Units and Blocks	98
Avoid Antagonizing Your Readers	99
Exercises	101
Suggested Writing Assignments	103

8 WRITING CLEARLY 104

Write Concretely and Specifically	104
Use Specific Examples	106

Make Your Readers <i>See</i> Something	107
Downshift from the General to the Specific	109
Choose Specific and Concrete Subjects for Your Sentences	109
Use Actor/Action Sentence Patterns	110
Put People in Your Sentences	110
Avoid Too Many Nominalizations	111
Choose Verbs for Clarity	112
Use <i>To Be</i> Verbs Sparingly	112
Choose Economical Verbs	113
Prefer Active to Passive Verbs	114
Use Passive Verbs Carefully	115
Choose Adjectives and Adverbs Carefully	115
Add Metaphors for Clarity	116
Control for Bias in Your Language	116
Avoid Sexism in Language	118
Avoid Racial and Ethnic Bias	119
Avoid Bias Connected with Age, Physical Condition, or Sexual Orientation	120
Keep a Sense of Humor and Proportion	121
Maintain a Civil Tone	121
Exercises	122
Suggested Writing Assignments	123

9 CRAFTING PARAGRAPHS 126

The Outside View of Paragraphing	126
Guidelines for Breaking Paragraphs	127
Use One-Sentence Paragraphs Sparingly	129
The Inside View of Paragraphing	130
Commitment/Response Paragraphs	131
Other Paragraph Patterns	133
REASONING FROM EVIDENCE	133
ASSERTION AND SUPPORT	133
DEFINITION	134
CAUSE AND EFFECT	134
COMPARISON	135
CLASSIFICATION	135
NARRATION	136
PROCESS	136

Opening and Closing Paragraphs	137
Crafting Opening Paragraphs	137
Adapting Opening Paragraphs to Audience and Purpose	138
Wrestling with Closing Paragraphs	139
Exercises	141
Suggested Writing Assignments	142

10 EDITING **144**

Strategies for Editing	144
Adjust Sentence Length and Variety	145
Check Sentence Rhythms	146
Review Word Choice	146
Improve the Body Language of Your Document	147
ADDING WHITE SPACE	147
DIVIDING AND CHUNKING	148
HIGHLIGHTING	149
Check for Errors in Usage	150
Avoid Sentence Fragments	150
RECOGNIZE MINOR SENTENCES AND FORMAL FRAGMENTS	151
RECOGNIZE TRUE SENTENCE FRAGMENTS	151
Avoid Comma Splices	152
Avoid Fused or Run-on Sentences	153
Avoid Dangling Modifiers	153
Make Structures Parallel	154
Avoid Faulty Predication	155
Check for Spelling Errors	156
Proofread	158
Review Specifications	159
Set Priorities about Errors	159
What Businesspeople Think about Grammar and Usage	160

11 WRITING RESEARCH PAPERS **163**

Selecting a Topic	164
Defining Your Purpose	164
Identifying the Audience: Your Instructor and Beyond	165
Formulating a Research Question	166

Researching	167
Setting Up a Search Strategy	167
Using Primary and Secondary Sources	168
DOING ORIGINAL RESEARCH	168
SEARCHING OUTSIDE THE LIBRARY	169
Using the Library	170
PERIODICALS	171
NEWSPAPERS	173
GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS	173
BOOKS	174
COMPUTER SEARCHES	174
ELECTRONIC SOURCES	175
SERENDIPITY	180
Taking Notes	181
Managing Sources and Quotations	181
INFORMAL CITATIONS	181
DIRECT QUOTATIONS	182
USE QUOTATIONS SPARINGLY	183
Writing the Paper	184
Getting Started	184
Choosing a Plan of Organization	184
Mastering the Conventions of Documentation	185
Uses of Documentation	186
Styles of Documentation	187
Bibliographic Entries in APA and MLA Styles	189
 12 DOCUMENT DESIGN	 191
<hr/>	
What Is Document Design?	191
The Uses of Document Design	192
ACADEMIC PAPERS	192
ON-THE-JOB WRITING	192
EXTRACURRICULAR PROJECTS	193
Planning	193
Learning about Type	195
Fonts (Typefaces)	195
CHOOSING YOUR FONTS	197
COMBINING FONTS	198
Type Styles and Sizes	200
BOLDFACE	200

XII CONTENTS

ITALICS	200	
SPECIALTY TYPE STYLES	200	
TYPE SIZE	201	
HEADLINES	201	
Organizing Your Design		201
Direction	202	
White Space	202	
Chunking or Separating Information	203	
Positioning Graphics and Artwork	203	
Model Documents		205
Model 1: Academic Paper	206	
Model 2: Academic Paper with Graphs	208	
Model 3: Simple Presentation Slide	210	
Model 4: Newsletter	212	
Model 5: Simple Brochure	214	
Model 6: Poster	216	
Model 7: Program	218	
Model 8: Flyer	220	
Model 9: Summary or Abstract	222	
Model 10: Agenda	224	
Model 11: Résumé	226	
Model 12: Letter of Application	228	
Model 13: Business Letter	230	
Model 14: Press Release	232	
Model 15: E-mail	234	
Model 16: Simple Proposal	236	
Index		239