

A vibrant, stylized illustration in a folk-art style. The background features a city skyline with several tall buildings in shades of purple and white against a dark sky with radiating lines. In the foreground, there are four figures. On the left, a woman in a white dress with a black pattern and a blue shawl carries a large brown vase on her head and waves. On the right, a man in a red and blue striped poncho and a woman in a blue headscarf and red poncho are shown. At the bottom, a woman in a purple patterned dress and a woman in a red and white patterned dress are depicted. The entire scene is framed by large green leaves.

VISIONS ACROSS THE AMERICAS

Short Essays for Composition

Third Edition

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VISIONS ACROSS THE AMERICAS

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PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION

Visions Across the Americas takes an intensive look at some of the cross-cultural issues and themes affecting the lives of Americans today as well as in the past. Overall, our essays offer a broad perspective of topics, providing students with a chance to evaluate and re-evaluate their biases, prejudices, or “programmed notions” about subjects. Most importantly, our selections present good writings which are valuable tools for generating material, for writing logs and journals, for collaborative activities, and for individual writing assignments, all of which encourage creativity and help students to think and write clearly and critically.

Eleven new essays appear in the third edition of this text, offering a wide range of topics and issues—for reading, discussion, critical thinking, and writing. In *Chapter 1: Communicating is Language at Work*, Toni Morrison’s “Writers Together” continues to illustrate the practice of active reading, and Peter Elbow’s “Freewriting,” presents a method for generating ideas *freely*, avoiding writer’s block. Meanwhile, the student essay by Joanne Jaime, “Marriage: The Changing Institution,” demonstrates how writers develop a controlling idea or thesis in stages.

From essays reflecting on gender—such as Ursula Le Guin’s “American SF and The Other” and Robert Bly’s “Men’s Initiation Rites”—to articles touching on popular culture (debuting in the Thematic Table of Contents for the third edition)—for example, Jane and Michael Stern’s “Valley Girls,” Barbara Graham’s “Confessions of a Quit Addict,” or Jack Knoll’s “Roll Over Bach, Too”—the newest essays in *Visions Across the Americas* create additional opportunities for progressive language study. Generally, the reading selections in *Visions Across the Americas* are arranged from easiest

to most difficult. With the exception of the description, argumentation, and persuasion chapters, which contain six reading selections, each chapter contains five reading selections. As in the second edition of *Visions Across the Americas*, whenever possible we have also complemented our brief biographies with photographs of the selection authors.

To reinforce understanding of rhetorical modes and their purposes in context, there is a short discussion of them at the beginning of each chapter. Following chapter introductions are brief lists of tips on how to effectively compose a particular type of essay (i.e., comparison/contrast or cause/effect). Additional writing topics are included at the end of each rhetorical chapter, and a glossary of common literary and rhetorical terms appears at the back of the text. This reader is designed primarily to consider short essay development through rhetorical mode but does more than merely acquaint students with cause/effect, argumentation, narration, and so on. The selections included also enrich students' vocabulary because clear written expression is often a matter of good reasoning coupled with a broad command of the English language. Thus, many of the reading selections challenge and test the readers' growing abilities.

To emphasize the connection between reading and writing, we have designed specific questions and activities to engage students in reading. While instructors may modify our basic guidelines a bit, generally we suggest that students *first* thoroughly consider pre-reading questions and do what they suggest prior to reading the selection. *Second*, scan the composition, and then underline, list, and write the definition of each unfamiliar word. *Third*, carefully read the composition and jot down any notes or questions that come to mind in the margins of the text. *Fourth*, reread the selection after looking over the post-reading questions and then write the answers to the questions found in the following sections: *Content, Strategies and Structures, and Language and Vocabulary*.

We are aware that many students may be unfamiliar with the reading-writing process. Therefore, apart from a discussion of reading strategies, we have included an overview of the writing process in *Chapter 1* which (1) serves as a resource for students and (2) allows instructors flexibility in teaching what we offer, disregarding it, and/or combining our information with information from a standard rhetoric. We have narrowed our discussion of the writing process to:

- (a) generating ideas and writing topics,
- (b) organizing material for paragraphs and essays,
- (c) strengthening and developing one's thesis/controlling idea, and
- (d) revising and editing compositions.

Once students have made the connection between reading and writing, how the two go hand-in-hand, they will not only read more clearly with

greater retention but also will be able to respond to material critically and confidently, which will be important growth as writers.

The Instructor's Manual for the *third edition* of *Visions Across the Americas* includes suggested approaches to rhetorical sections; responses to *Content* and *Strategies and Structures* questions; a section about poetry and word use; and an expanded, detailed bibliography of multicultural literature from the Americas and beyond. New to the Instructor's Manual for this edition of our text are brief professional resource essays describing writing instruction techniques and tools as well as approaches to writing assignments. In answer to many requests for reading comprehension tests, Judy Hilliard has fashioned several reading quizzes to round off the Instructor's Manual.

The third edition of *Visions Across the Americas* was greatly enriched by frank, helpful, detailed critical reviews from: Sarah Dye of Elgin Community College and Harry Rubinstein of Hudson Community College. We are also grateful for the advice, criticisms, and suggestions from colleagues and students, criticisms that helped us to revise our text with a renewed sense of student interest and awareness.

Getting from one edition of a text to the next is a long process, and so we want to acknowledge our appreciation to all the instructors whose careful, critical comments helped us to shape the first *two* editions of *Visions Across the Americas*: Shirley Brozzo, Northern Michigan University; Lawrence Carlson, Orange Coast College; Lynn M. Lowery Darby, Kentucky State University; Jeannie Edwards, Memphis State University; Lloyd A. Flanigan, Piedmont Virginia Community College; Mary J. Flores, Lewis-Clark State College; Gail J. Gerlach, Indiana University of Pennsylvania; Margie Glazier, Merced College; Carolyn Hartnett, College of the Mainland; Shirley Kahlert, Merced College; William L. Knox, Northern Michigan University; Regina Lebowitz, New York City Technical College; Reginald F. Lockett, San Jose City College; Robert Mehaffy, American River College; Margaret Murray, Temple University; Tamara O'Hearn, Ball State University; Joanne Pinkston, Daytona Beach Community College; Nancy Sessano, American River College; John Sklute, San Jose City College; Barbara Smith-Cunningham, Olivet College; Sherry Sullivan, South Puget Sound Community College; Sandra Trammell, Kentucky State University; and George T. Vaughan, Maysville Community College. Finally, our indebtedness to Stephanie Surfus, Harcourt Brace's Central District Manager for the Great Lakes District, deserves special mention; her enthusiasm, support and critical advice never wavered as she followed the first edition of our text from its inception to its completion.

We also want to thank the authors who have contributed to the present edition of *Visions Across the Americas*, Kevin Warner for his technical support, and our families, friends and colleagues for their encouragement and

patience. We also want to thank those at Harcourt Brace, particularly Carol Wada, senior acquisitions editor; Camille Adkins, senior developmental editor; Betsy Cummings (assisted by Travis Tyre and Mike Norris), project editors; Brian Salisbury, art director; Diane Gray, production manager; and Cheri Throop, assistant photo editor, for their time, enthusiasm, and support in preparing the third edition.

Sterling Warner
Judith Hilliard
Vincent Piro

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