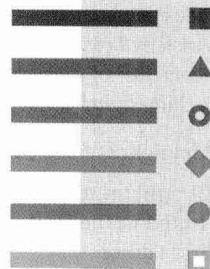


THE **Norton**  
**FIELD GUIDE**  
TO **WRITING**



**RICHARD BULLOCK**

The Norton  
Field Guide  
to Writing



Richard Bullock

WRIGHT STATE UNIVERSITY



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The Norton Field Guide to Writing



# Preface

I began work on *The Norton Field Guide to Writing* with three goals in mind: (1) to offer the kind of writing guides found in the best rhetorics, (2) to make the book as user-friendly as the most popular handbooks, and (3) to keep it brief. If I've gotten it right, this book will be a handy guide that will help college students with all their written work. Just as there are field guides for bird watchers, for gardeners, and for accountants, this will be one for writers.

*The Norton Field Guide* aims to offer both the guidance new teachers and first-year writers need and the flexibility many experienced teachers want. From my own experience as a teacher and writing program administrator, I've seen how books with explicit writing guides work well for students and novice teachers. At the same time, many instructors chafe at the structure imposed by such books. And students complain about having to buy (and lug around) a lot more book than they actually use—and especially about books that have much more detail than they need. So I set out to write a rhetoric that would provide enough structure without too much detail. I've tried to give the information college writers need to know—and to resist the temptation to tell them everything there is to know.

A companion Web site makes much of the material available electronically, something my students have asked for. As I wrote this book, I regularly posted drafts online for them to use, and many students asked whether the finished book could be made available online. The site includes complete writing guides for a literacy narrative, a textual analysis, a report, and an argument; a portfolio management tool; MLA and APA guidelines; and more. A floating toolbar allows students to access the site from their word processors as they write. Check it out at [wnnorton.com/write/fieldguide](http://wnnorton.com/write/fieldguide).

## An Overview of the Book

*The Norton Field Guide* covers fifteen kinds of writing often assigned to college students. Much of the book is in the form of guidelines, designed to help students consider the choices they have as writers. I've taken seriously students' complaints about books with too much detail and kept most chapters brief—but have added color-coded links to places in the book where they can find more information if they need it. The book is organized in six parts:

1. **RHETORICAL SITUATIONS.** Chapters 1–5 focus on purpose, audience, genre, stance, and media and design. In addition, almost every chapter includes a short list of tips to help students focus on their particular rhetorical situation.
2. **GENRES.** Chapters 6–20 offer guidelines for fifteen kinds of writing, from abstracts to lab reports to memoirs. Four genres—literacy narrative, textual analysis, report, and argument—are treated in greater detail.
3. **PROCESSES.** Chapters 21–27 offer advice for generating ideas and text, drafting, revising and rewriting, editing, proofreading, compiling a portfolio, and collaborating with others.
4. **STRATEGIES.** Chapters 28–37 cover familiar ways of developing and organizing text—writing effective beginnings and endings, coming up with good titles and developing effective thesis statements, comparing, describing, using dialogue, and other essential writing strategies. Chapter 38 offers a catalog of useful reading strategies.
5. **RESEARCH / DOCUMENTATION.** Chapters 39–46 offer advice on how to do academic research; work with sources; quote, paraphrase, and summarize source materials; and document sources using MLA and APA styles.
6. **MEDIA / DESIGN.** Chapters 47–49 give general guidance on designing and presenting texts for print, spoken, and electronic media.

## Highlights

It's small and handy, with a binding that lets the book open flat (making it easy to use while writing) and a cover flap that can function as a bookmark.

It provides guidelines for writing in fifteen academic genres, most of which are routinely assigned in first-year writing courses and many of which extend across disciplines.

It has just enough detail, with complete guides to four of the most common first-year assignments and briefer guides to eleven other academic genres. Color-coded links send students to specific pages where they will find more detail if they need it.

It's easy to navigate, and to understand. Color-coding makes it easy for students to find what they're looking for; a minimum of jargon makes it easy to understand. We've even managed to make the MLA and APA documentation guidelines easy to follow, with color-coded models that show all the necessary detail without lengthy explanation.

It offers teachers flexibility not often found in a rhetoric. There are clear assignment sequences if you want them, or you can create your own. If you assign a position paper, there's a full chapter. If you want students to do research, or keep a portfolio, or submit an annotated bibliography, add the appropriate chapters. If you organize your course thematically, you could start with the chapter on generating ideas to get students thinking about the topic and then assign them to do research, using the chapter on finding sources. Whatever genre they decide on to write about the topic, there's likely to be a chapter to guide them.

It maintains a consistent rhetorical focus, with guidelines in almost every chapter to get students thinking about their purpose, audience, genre, stance, and medium, as well as brief chapters on each.



## The Instructor's Manual

*The Norton Field Guide to Writing* comes with a comprehensive *Instructor's Manual*. Part I of the manual offers helpful advice on teaching writing in general—creating a syllabus, using readings to teach writing, responding to writing, teaching online, teaching second-language writers, and more. Part II offers suggestions for working with the *Norton Field Guide*, organized chapter-by-chapter. Finally comes a brief anthology of articles and essays on composition studies, including classics that every composition instructor should be familiar with as well as pieces published more recently that offer excellent advice on teaching.

## Acknowledgments

When I started making a list of the people to whom I'm indebted for help writing this book, I found myself in an ever-widening spiral. How far back should I go? Should I include my grandmother, Amanda Hartman, who taught me to read and encouraged me to go to college? Should I mention Don Littlefield, the pun-loving ninth-grade English teacher who introduced me to the idea that language is fun? How about David Wyatt, a grad-school professor who helped me find my voice when he advised me that if I was writing about a funny book, I could write a funny essay—or Toby Fulwiler and Donald Murray, whose wonderful teaching I try feebly to emulate? I could go on and on.

Marilyn Moller, the editor of the *Norton Field Guide*, is at the top of my list. When I presented her with the idea for this book, she encouraged me and helped me conceptualize the book—and then taught me how to write a textbook. She has worked far too hard on this book, but if it's a good book, the quality is due in large part to her knowledge of the field of composition, her formidable editing and writing skills, and her sometimes uncanny ability to see the future of the teaching of writing. Not to mention her stamina.

Many others have contributed. I thank Anna Palchik for the user-friendly interior design and Debra Morton Hoyt for the whimsical cover. Francine



Weinberg wrote the ingenious documentation chapters and the glossary, and did heavy lifting on many other parts as well. Marian Johnson brought a sensitivity to language and an incredible eye for detail. Diane O'Connor and Kim Yi are due special thanks for transforming a scribbled-over manuscript into a finished product in record time. Carole Desnoes laid out the glossary / index and made it work. Nicole Netherton coordinated the many drafts and the permissions. Abby Winograd copyedited and Ben Reynolds proofread, both with great attention to detail. Eileen Connell, Jack Lamb, and Cliff Landesman planned, designed, and produced the sensational Web site. Michael Wright and Steve Dunn helped us all keep our eyes on the market. Fred McFarland spread the word about the book as only he can, with enthusiasm and professionalism. Thanks to all, and to Roby Harrington, Drake McFeely, and Julia Reidhead for supporting this project in the first place.

I also have many, many people at Wright State to thank for their support and assistance. Jane Blakelock has taught me most of what I know about electronic text and writing on and for the Web and has assembled an impressive list of useful links for the book's Web site. Adrienne Cassel, now at Sinclair Community College, and Catherine Crowley read and commented on many drafts. Peggy Lindsey shared her students' work and the idea of using charts to show how various genres might be organized. Stephanie Dickey, Brady Allen, Debbie Bertsch (now of Columbus State Community College), Vicki Burke, Jimmy Chesire, Carol Cornett, Byron Crews, Deborah Crusan, Sally DeThomas, Scott Geisel, Beth Klaisner, Nancy Mack, Marty Maner, Cynthia Marshall, Sarah McGinley, Michelle Metzner, Kristie Rowe, Bobby Rubin, Cathy Sayer, David Seitz, Caroline Simmons, Tracy Smith, Rick Strader, Mary Van Loveren, and A. J. Williams responded to drafts, submitted good models of student writing, contributed to the instructor's manual, tested the *Field Guide* in their classes, providing support and sharing with me some of their best teaching ideas. Henry Limouze, chair of the English Department, gave me room to work on this project with patience and good humor. Lynn Morgan, the secretary to the writing programs, kept me anchored. And thanks especially to the more than 100 graduate teaching assistants and 6,000 first-year students who class-tested various editions of the *Field Guide* and whose experiences helped to shape it.

Many reviewers offered astute advice and welcome encouragement as we developed this book: Anne Beaufort, State University of New York at Stony Brook; Sue Beebe, Texas State University; Pat Dansby, San Jacinto College Central; Marvin Diogenes, Stanford University; Russel Durst, University of Cincinnati; Maureen Daly Goggin, Arizona State University; Susanmarie Harrington, Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis; Paul Heilker, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University; Michael Hennessy, Texas State University; Sally Lahmon, Sinclair Community College; Irv Peckham, Louisiana State University; Duane Roen, Arizona State University; and Gardner Rogers, University of Illinois—Urbana/Champaign.

It's customary to conclude by expressing gratitude to one's spouse and family, and for good reason. Drafting and revising the *Field Guide* over the past four years, I have enjoyed the loving support of my sons, Ben, Mickey, and Jonathan. Even as they went off to college, graduated, moved here and there and back, found and changed jobs, planned weddings—became adults, in other words—they have provided a strong, still center for my life that has made projects like the *Norton Field Guide* possible. Barb, my wife, is the genesis of whatever I do that's worthwhile and my ultimate reason for doing it.

# How to Use This Book

There's no one way to do anything, and writing is no exception. Some people need to do a lot of planning on paper; others write entire drafts in their heads. Some writers compose quickly and loosely, going back later to revise; others work on one sentence until they're satisfied with it, then move on to the next. And writers' needs vary from task to task, too: sometimes you know what you're going to write about and why, but need to figure out how to do it; other times your first job is to come up with a topic. *The Norton Field Guide to Writing* is designed to allow you to chart your own course as a writer—to offer you guidelines that suit your writing processes and needs. It is organized in six parts:

1. **RHETORICAL SITUATIONS:** No matter what you're writing, it will always have some purpose, audience, genre, stance, and medium and design. This part will help you to consider each of these elements.
2. **GENRES:** Use these chapters for help with specific kinds of writing, from abstracts to lab reports to memoirs and more. You'll find more detailed guidance for four especially common assignments: literacy narratives, analyzing texts, reporting information, and arguing a position.
3. **PROCESSES:** These chapters offer general advice for all writing situations—how to go about generating ideas and text, drafting, revising and rewriting, editing, proofreading, compiling a portfolio—and collaborating productively with others.
4. **STRATEGIES:** Use the advice in this part to develop and organize your writing—to write effective beginnings and endings, to guide readers through your text, and to use comparison, description, dialogue, and other strategies as appropriate.

5. **RESEARCH / DOCUMENTATION:** Use this section for advice on how to do research, work with sources, and compose and document research-based texts using MLA and APA styles
6. **MEDIA / DESIGN:** This section offers guidance in designing your work and working with visuals, and in delivering what you write on paper, on screen, or in person.

## Ways into the Book

*The Norton Field Guide* gives you the writing advice you need, along with the flexibility to write in the way that works best for you. Here are some of the ways you can find what you need in the book.

**Brief menu.** Inside the front cover you'll find a list of all the chapters. Start here if you are looking for a chapter on a certain kind of writing or a general writing issue.

**Complete contents.** Pages xv–xxix contain a detailed table of contents. Look here if you need to find a reading or a specific section in a chapter.

**Guides to writing.** If you know the kind of writing you need to do, you'll find guides to writing fifteen common genres in Part 2. These guides are designed to help you through all the decisions you have to make—from coming up with a topic to organizing your materials to editing and proof-reading your final draft.

**Color-coding.** The parts of this book are color-coded for easy reference: red for **RHETORICAL SITUATIONS**, green for **GENRES**, lavender for **PROCESSES**, orange for **STRATEGIES**, blue for **RESEARCH / DOCUMENTATION**, yellow for **MEDIA / DESIGN**. You'll find a key to the colors on the cover flap and also at the foot of each left-hand page. When you see a word screened in a color, that tells you where you can find additional detail on the topic if you need it.

**Glossary / index.** At the back of the book is a combined glossary and index, where you'll find full definitions of key terms and topics, along with a list of the pages where everything is covered in detail.

**Directories to MLA and APA documentation.** A brief directory inside the back cover will lead you to guidelines on citing sources and composing a list of references or works cited. The documentation models are color-coded so you can easily see the key details.

**The Web Site.** You can also start at [wwnorton.com/write/fieldguide](http://wwnorton.com/write/fieldguide). There you'll find a writing toolbar that provides electronic access to some of what's in the book, including writing guides for several genres, MLA and APA guidelines, the glossary, and more.

## Ways of Getting Started

**If you know your genre,** simply turn to the appropriate genre chapter. There you'll find model readings, a description of the genre's Key Features, and a Guide to Writing that will help you come up with a topic, generate text, organize and write a draft, get response, revise, edit, and proofread. The genre chapters also point out places where you might need to do research, use certain writing strategies (comparison, description, and so on), design your text a certain way—and direct you to the exact pages in the book where you can find help doing so.

**If you know your topic,** you might start with some of the activities in Chapter 22, Generating Ideas and Text. From there, you might turn to Chapter 40, for help Finding Sources on the topic. When it comes time to narrow your topic and come up with a thesis statement, Chapter 29 can help. If your assignment or your thesis defines your genre, turn to that chapter; if not, consult Chapter 3 for help determining the appropriate genre, and then turn to that genre chapter. The genre chapters point out places where you might need to do more research, use certain writing strategies (comparison, description, and so on), design your text a certain way—and direct you to the exact pages in the book where you can find help doing so.

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