

Paragraphs & Essays

Sixth Edition

with MULTICULTURAL READINGS



Lee Brandon

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with MULTICULTURAL READINGS

Sixth Edition

Lee Brandon

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Preface

Intended for use in developmental and college writing courses that deal with paragraph and essay writing, *Paragraphs & Essays*, 6th Edition, is based on the principles that writing is a recursive process, that writing instruction should be linked to reading, and that good writing and critical thinking are intrinsically bound together. This book addresses developmental paragraph writing and essay writing together because they often share the same patterns; whether an idea is developed into a paragraph or an essay is often determined by the extent of the explanation and the quantity of the evidence. Of course, in college writing, need for that explanation and evidence will be determined by the nature of the assignment and the anticipated needs of the audience, as well as by the capacity of the writer. Addressing both the paragraph and the essay in one text provides a broad base that allows instructors to adjust the lengths and types of various assignments (subject to time constraints and to the needs of a given class at a particular point in the semester). Some instructors will no doubt choose to concentrate on the paragraph (perhaps finishing the semester with a few essays), whereas others will begin with shorter assignments and rather rapidly move the students to the essay. *Paragraphs & Essays* accommodates such flexibility.

A Comprehensive and Flexible Textbook

While retaining the basic framework that made *Paragraphs and Themes* (the title of previous editions) an enduring textbook, I have incorporated certain significant changes and refinements in all the main aspects of instruction. The result is a comprehensive and flexible textbook. Writing instruction includes explanations, examples, and exercises, in forms ranging from the sentence, to the essay, to the documented paper. Readings include paragraphs, essays, short stories, poems, and even a song with music. Contemporary cartoons lighten the atmosphere while making instructional points. The number of exemplary paragraphs from both professional and classroom sources (more than sixty essays and more than a hundred paragraphs) make it unnecessary for instructors to assign a separate reader while allowing for varying reading assignments from class to class and from semester to semester.

Writing

My approach to writing instruction begins with the premise that each student writer has ideas to express. Those ideas, though apparent to the student writer, must be “decoded” by using a writing process to conceptualize and present them to the reader. To define this process, I have coined the acronym **DCODE** (pronounced “décode”): **D**elve, **C**oncentrate, **O**rganize, **D**raft (with revision), and **E**dit. DCODE is presented for the developmental paragraph in Chapter 1 and for the essay in Chapter 2, and

is integrated throughout the book. This system gives form to what most instructors teach—freewriting, brainstorming, clustering, writing of the topic sentence or thesis, organizing by outline or outline substitute, writing and revising, and editing. It is flexible enough for instructors to vary assignments and approaches, yet structured enough to guide student writers in an orderly way through the writing forms and purposes presented in Chapters 3–13. Those chapters include both generic and reading-related assignments for writing paragraphs, essays, and journal entries. An alternate Thematic Table of Contents arranges material for idea-related treatment and is specifically keyed to instruction and assignments in simple textbook-based documented writing in Chapter 14, which also provides instruction in using the library and writing a short research paper. Every chapter includes an analysis of a brief piece of writing from a professional source and the step-by-step production of a student paragraph or essay. In each of the first fourteen chapters, students can see how another student moved from the inception of an idea, through the stages of the writing process, to the final draft.

Handbook for Revising and Editing

Chapter 15, the handbook, has a new section on revision using **clues**(coherence, language, unity, emphasis, support, and sentence structure), complete with exercises on both the developmental paragraph and the essay. The section on fundamentals (stressing editing) features two exercises for each topic, one with answers in the Answer Key and one without answers. Exercises have been simplified in several instances, and more sentence writing is included in this edition. Taking Tests and Making Application (writing letters of application and résumés) are among the new handbook sections. Instruction is supported in the *Instructor's Guide* with a quiz on each topic. A separate section entitled Brief Guide for ESL Students focuses on special problems through explicit instruction, cross-references, and an exercise.

Readings

The readings are varied in content, form, and perspective, reflecting cultural diversity in the broadest sense and the thoughts of both men and women. Each of the first fourteen chapters includes numerous paragraphs and essays that have been selected for three reasons: to stimulate ideas for discussion, to stimulate ideas for reading-related writing, and to provide models for forms of discourse. The readings are supported by vocabulary highlights where appropriate, by guide questions for both writing and discussion, and by teaching suggestions and reading quizzes in the *Instructor's Guide*.

Critical Thinking

Critical thinking underpins both the reading and writing components. Chapter 13 introduces critical thinking explicitly, highlighting such matters as fact and opinion, inductive and deductive thought, logical fallacies, and kinds of evidence. Throughout the book, guide questions for readings are

both implicitly and explicitly concerned with critical thinking. Writing instruction, keyed especially to reading assignments, requires the same critical-thinking principles as does reading.

Collaborative Learning

This book readily adapts to collaborative learning. The Applications for Critical Reading and Discussion questions are linked to both form and idea, so that reading, thinking, and writing become the basis for useful and stimulating discussion. The **DCODE** approach to writing provides a highly accessible and comprehensive framework for students engaged in peer editing.

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LEE BRANDON

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