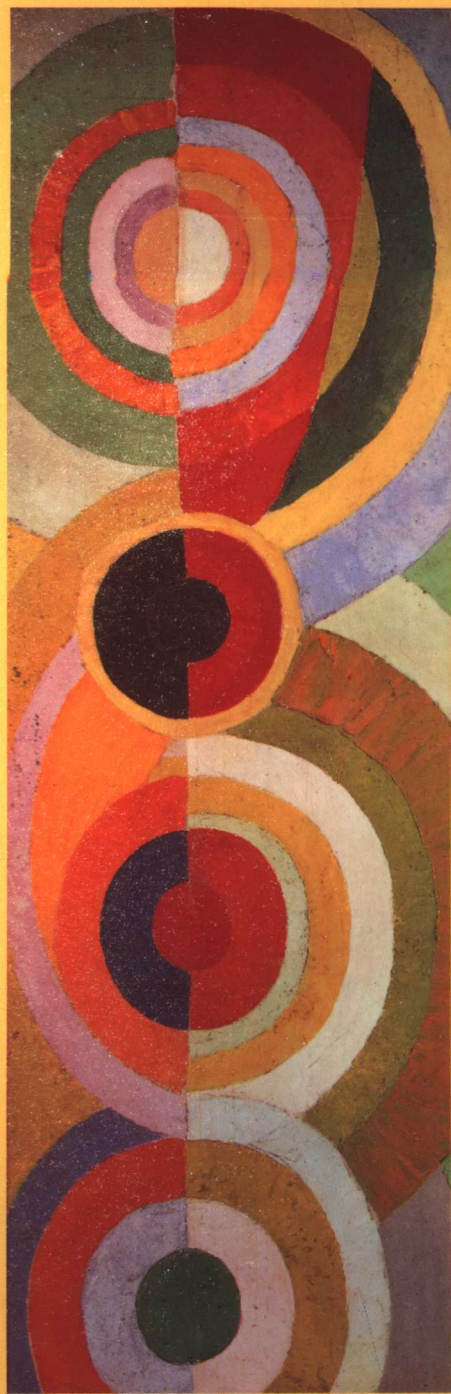


Aims and Options

*A
Thematic
Approach
to
Writing*

**Rodney D.
Keller**



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Writing

Rodney D. Keller

Ricks College

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PREFACE

Aims and Options: A Thematic Approach to Writing informally and simply introduces the multiple writing options available to first-year college students and encourages them to explore these possibilities to determine the most effective way to achieve a particular aim or purpose in their own writing.

Aims and Options focuses on four main options for college writing:

To reflect by expressing self or sharing personal experiences

To inform by reporting information, explaining a concept, or describing an object

To persuade by influencing readers' beliefs and actions or appealing to readers' reason, emotions, or values

To speculate by discussing past, present, and future possibilities or asking, What if . . . ? or What about . . . ?

These aims are the reasons students write and can help them decide how best to meet their needs and the needs of their readers. The assumption behind this text is that the writer's purpose for writing is the most important influence that governs the writer's options regarding all aspects of writing: audience, topic, organization, examples, and language. The principles behind these aims can help students understand more fully *why* and *how* they write what they do.

CONTENT AND ORGANIZATION

Aims and Options consists of eight chapters, each focusing on a theme: work, education, environment, health, self, relationships, law, and community. This thematic focus gives students a direction for their ideas. The themes also provide continuity among the different stages of the writing process within each chapter.

Many texts begin with a chapter on self that asks students to reveal something significant about their personal lives to an audience made up of people who are still strangers. It is my experience that beginning students are already anxious about writing and that asking them to discuss their personal lives right away can inhibit their free expression. Thus,

Aims and Options begins with a more neutral theme: work. This topic suggests that students begin by looking outside themselves for college writing assignments. The chapter on self, therefore, appears in the middle of the text and serves as a pivot between the first four issues and the later, more interpersonal topics, which culminate in the theme of community.

Each thematically arranged chapter guides students through the writing process. Many beginning writers fail to realize that writing *is* a process, a process that involves different activities at various stages, from initial idea to finished product. And the writing process is different for different people. Therefore, students need options. Each chapter highlights and integrates its own prewriting, drafting, rewriting, and editing principle or strategy so that students can experiment and discover what method works best for them. Specifically, *Aims and Options* contains eight distinct prewriting, drafting, rewriting, and editing strategies.

An appendix provides instruction on writing a research paper and using correct documentation.

Also integrated into each chapter is one of eight different expository strategies, which provide students with additional tools and options for achieving their main purpose for writing.

SPECIAL FEATURES

Aims and Options has several features that make the text flexible and easy to use:

Thematic organization Organized into eight thematic chapters based on issues relevant to students' lives, all readings, examples, exercises, writing topics, and student essays are based on the chapters' themes.

Reading-writing connection Two professional essays introducing each chapter function as springboards for thinking and writing about the topic of the chapter and as models of good writing. Questions after each selection guide students in evaluating the writer's techniques and thinking critically about the content.

Writing process Each chapter highlights a different prewriting, drafting, rewriting, and editing strategy to allow students to explore the different options writers have for expressing their ideas. Instruction and practice in grammar and mechanics are integrated in the chapter as part of the writing process.

Student essays Each chapter contains a student essay in progress; that student essay becomes an example for the prewriting, drafting, and rewriting sections. An annotated student draft appears in each chapter.

Exploring Your Options This feature leads students through the process of writing their own essays.

Extensive writing opportunities Each chapter contains sixteen different suggested writing assignments that focus on the four different writing aims. Many of these assignments encourage students to actively address local social issues and to participate in or explore community service organizations.

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INTRODUCTION



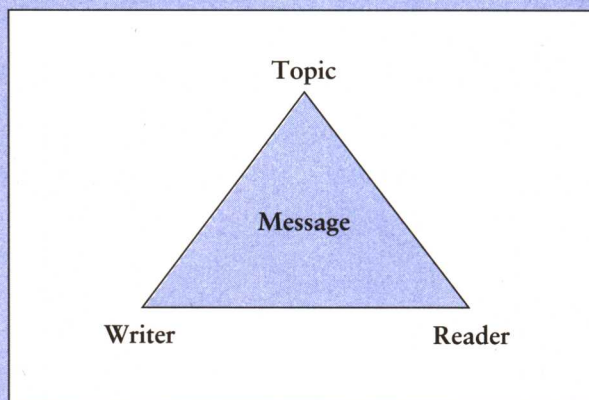
The overall purpose of *Aims and Options: A Thematic Approach to Writing* is to provide clear and simple general instructions for writing college papers. A more specific purpose is to help you—the student writer—come up with new ideas and draw on your experiences both to enrich the writing process and to improve the quality of its product.

COMMUNICATION TRIANGLE

The most basic guideline for writing is the communication triangle (Figure I.1). It identifies the four main components of writing: the *writer*, the *reader*, the *topic*, and the *message*.

FIGURE I.1

Communication triangle



Each point of the triangle represents an important element of writing: the *writer*, the *reader*, and the *topic*. Inside the triangle is the central idea that the writer wants to communicate about the topic to the reader. That point is the *message*.

The *writer* is you. As a writer, you bring all of your attitudes, experiences, observations, and research and, most importantly, *yourself* to the subject. Suppose your subject is civil rights. Your attitudes about civil rights are affected by the interactions you have had with other