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The Writing Process

A Concise Rhetoric

John M. Lannon

David B. Parsons

Canadian Edition

Canadian Edition

The Writing Process

A Concise Rhetoric

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Revision Checklist

WORTHWHILE CONTENT

The essay's main point is clear and sharply focused.

- ☐ Does the title attract attention and give a forecast? (45)
- ☐ Is the topic limited enough? (22)
- ☐ Do you get to your main point quickly? (46)
- ☐ Is the thesis definite, informative, and easy to find? (23)

The discussion delivers on the promise made in the thesis.

- ☐ Will readers learn something new and useful? (80)
- ☐ Do you support every assertion with enough details? (79)
- ☐ Does everything belong, or can anything be cut? (84)
- ☐ Have you used only your best material? (31)

SENSIBLE ORGANIZATION

The essay has a definite introduction, body, and conclusion.

- ☐ Will your introduction make readers want to read on? (10)
- ☐ Does each body paragraph develop *one* supporting point? (90)
- ☐ Does the order of body paragraphs reveal a clear line of thought and emphasize what is most important? (10)
- ☐ Does the conclusion give a real sense of an ending? (10)
- ☐ Is everything connected? (15)
- ☐ If you varied this organization, was it for good reason? (155)

Except for paragraphs of transition or special emphasis, each body (or support) paragraph usually is a mini-essay.

- ☐ Does the paragraph have a topic (or orienting) statement? (92)
- ☐ Does the topic statement come at the beginning or end, depending on your emphasis? (92)
- ☐ Does everything stick to the point (unity), and stick together (coherence)? (94, 95)
- ☐ Is the paragraph developed enough to support the point? (83)

READABLE STYLE

Sentences are clear, concise, and fluent.

- ☐ Can each sentence be understood the first time it is read? (110)
- ☐ Is the information expressed in the fewest words possible? (119)
- ☐ Are sentences put together with enough variety? (126)

Each word does its job.

- ☐ Is a real person speaking, and is the voice likable? (133)
- ☐ Is everything in plain English? (140)
- ☐ Is your meaning precise, concrete, and specific? (134)
- ☐ Is your tone appropriate for this situation and audience? (138)

This text promotes rhetorical awareness by treating the writing process as a set of deliberate and recursive decisions. It promotes rhetorical effectiveness by helping develop the problem-solving skills essential to reader-centred writing. Practical guidelines, accessible models, and case studies enable students to produce writing that works.

ORGANIZATION OF THE WRITING PROCESS

Section One, “THE PROCESS,” covers planning, drafting, and revising. Students learn to invent, select, organize, and express their material recursively. They see how initial decisions about purpose and audience influence later decisions about what will be said and how it will be said. They see that writing is essentially a “thinking” process, and they also learn to work collaboratively.

Section Two, “SPECIFIC REVISION STRATEGIES,” focuses on top-down revision: content, organization, and style. Students learn to support their assertions; to organize for the reader; and to achieve prose maturity, precise diction, and appropriate tone.

Section Three, “ESSAYS FOR VARIOUS GOALS,” shows how the strategies (or modes) of discourse serve the particular goals of a discourse; that is, how description, narration, exposition, and argument are variously employed for expressive, referential, or persuasive ends. The opening chapter explains how reading and writing are linked and offers strategies for reading and responding to essays by others. Subsequent chapters cover each rhetorical mode, using a balance of student and professional writing samples to touch on current and lasting issues. Beyond studying the samples and case studies as models, students are asked to respond to the issues presented; that is, to write in response to a specific rhetorical situation.

Section Four, “THE RESEARCH PROCESS,” approaches research as a process of deliberate inquiry. Students learn to formulate significant research questions; to explore a selective range of primary and secondary sources; to record, summarize, and document their findings; and, most important, to evaluate sources and evidence and interpret findings accurately.

Finally, for easy reference, Appendix A is a concise handbook, with exercises. Appendix B—an additional, brief appendix—offers advice on formatting a manuscript. Appendix C lists useful Web sites and electronic information resources for writing students.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE WRITING PROCESS

- Writers with no rhetorical awareness overlook the decisions that are crucial for effective writing. Only by defining their rhetorical problem and asking the important questions can writers formulate an effective response to the problem.
- Although it follows no single, predictable sequence, the writing process is not a collection of random activities; rather it is a set of deliberate decisions in problem solving. Beyond emulating this or that model essay, students need to understand that effective writing requires critical thinking.
- Students write for audiences other than instructors and purposes other than completing an assignment. To view the act of writing as only a mere display of knowledge or fluency, an exercise in which writer and reader (i.e., “the instructor”) have no higher stake or interest, is to ignore the unique challenges and constraints posed by each writing situation. In every forum beyond the classroom, we write to forge a specific connection with a specific audience.
- Students at any level of ability can develop audience awareness and learn to incorporate within their writing the essential rhetorical features: worthwhile content, sensible organization, and readable style.
- As well as being a fluent communicator, today’s educated person needs to be a discriminating consumer of information, skilled in the methods of inquiry, retrieval, evaluation, and interpretation that constitute the research process.
- As an alternative to reiterating the textbook material, classroom workshops apply textbook principles by focusing on the students’ writing. These workshops call for an accessible, readable, and engaging book to serve as a comprehensive resource. (Suggestions for workshop design are in the Instructor’s Manual.)
- Finally, writing classes typically contain students with all types of strengths and weaknesses. The Writing Process offers explanations that are thorough, examples and models that are broadly intelligible, and goals that are rigorous yet realistic. The textbook is flexible enough to allow for various course plans and customized assignments.

The Writing Process proceeds from writer-centred to reader-centred discourse. Beginning with personal topics and a basic essay structure, the focus shifts to increasingly complex rhetorical tasks, culminating in argument. Within this cumulative structure, each chapter is self-contained for flexible course planning. The sample essays represent a balance of student and professional authorship. Application exercises in each chapter offer various levels of challenge. (All material has been class-tested.)

KEY FEATURES

- **Student-written model essays.** Although professional examples enhance skills in reading and responding, reviewers agree that students are more comfortable emulating essays written by other students.
- **Case studies throughout.** Concise case studies show student writers at work as they read, plan, draft, and revise.
- **Guidelines for writing and research.** Boxed “Guidelines” help students synthesize and apply the information in each chapter.
- **Collaborative projects.** This text features collaborative projects throughout, including guidelines for computer-mediated collaboration.
- **Coverage of computers and the Internet.** Fully integrated computing advice is supplemented by end-of-chapter applications and Appendix C, listing useful Web sites and electronic resources for student writers and researchers.
- **Emphasis on information literacy.** Information-literate people are those who know how to organize information, how to find information, and how to use information to influence others. Critical thinking—the basis of information literacy—is covered intensively in Section Four.

SUPPLEMENTS

- **Instructor’s Manual** (0-201-74224-1). The Instructor’s Manual for the Canadian edition provides suggested answers to Applications as well as additional Applications, options for essay writing, and further discussion of some key points from the text.
- **Companion Website** (www.ablongman.com/lannonwriting). This site created for the American edition of the text includes additional exercises and links to online samples and resources.

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DAVID PARSONS

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