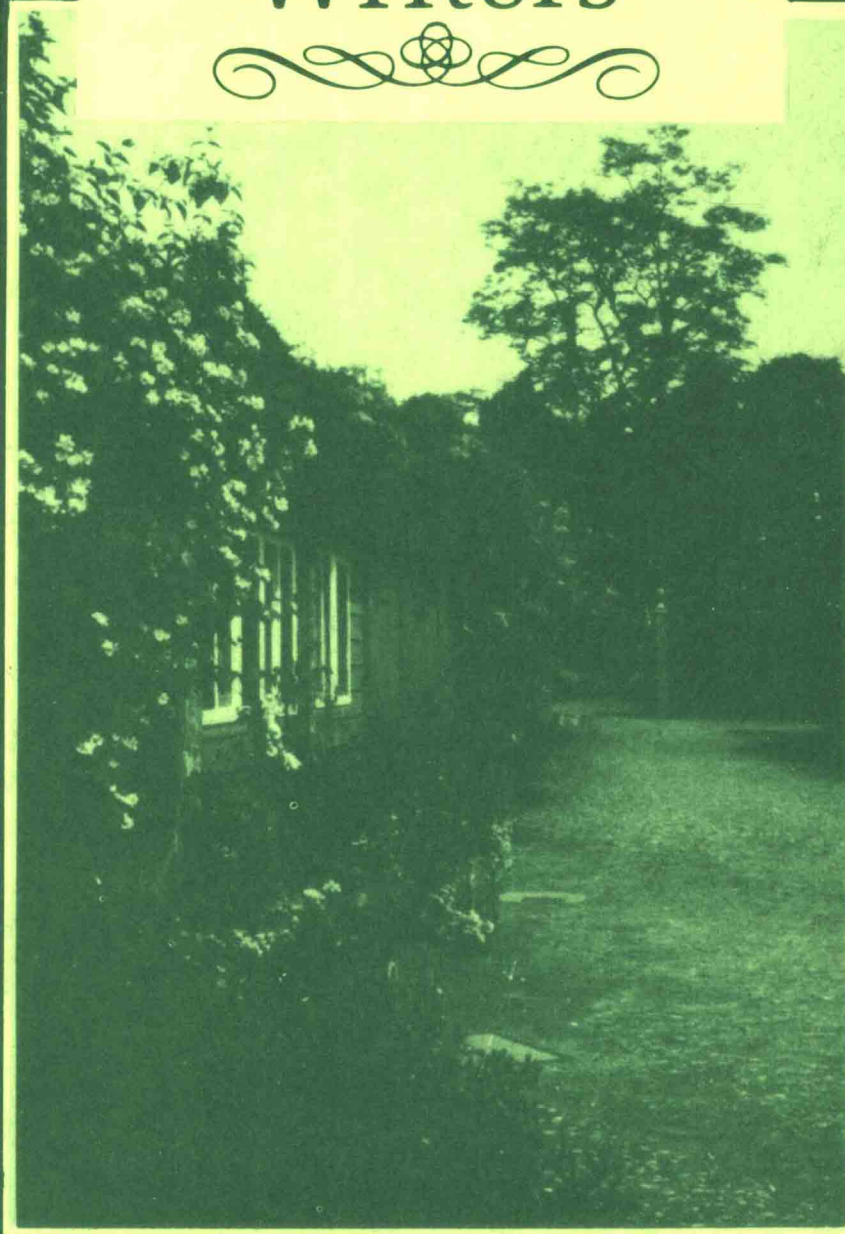
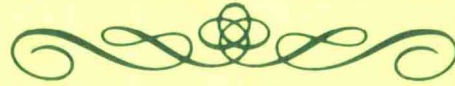


INSTRUCTOR'S MANUAL
TO ACCOMPANY
**A Reader
for
Developing
Writers**



Santi V. Buscemi

INSTRUCTOR'S MANUAL TO ACCOMPANY

A Reader for Developing Writers

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GETTING STARTED

This short section introduces students to the lay of the land, so to speak. It explains the organization of the text in general and of each of the chapters in specific.

Getting Started is also intended to help students make effective use of the instructional apparatus that accompanies each chapter and each selection therein. That is why I always assign it the very first day of class. Particular attention is paid to methods for information-gathering (listing, brainstorming, focused freewriting, interviewing, and summarizing), which students can use when they respond to the Suggestions for Journal Entries offered immediately after each selection. In fact, many journal suggestions make direct reference to Getting Started and ask students to use one of these five prewriting techniques.

I have found that the journal is an ideal way to create a bridge between the reading selections and the students' own writing. I ask students to reserve an entire notebook for their journal, and I encourage them regularly to make detailed entries as soon as they complete each of the reading assignments. As an added inducement, I check their journals three or four times a term and offer extra credit to those who do a particularly good job. Finally, I remind students that what they write in their notebooks can serve later as the basis or beginning of a successful essay. In fact, many of the Suggestions for Writing at the end of each chapter make direct reference to the Suggestions for Journal Entries and advise students to use their journal notes as a way to get started on full-length essay projects.

SECTION I ORGANIZATION AND DEVELOPMENT

If you are using the text for students who need a review or introduction to basic structural principles--as is the case with most students in developmental-writing classes--the three chapters in Section I make an appropriate beginning.

It makes sense to attempt them one at time and in the sequence that they are presented. In my experience, it has been crucial for students to master the central idea (Chapter 1) before going on. On the other hand, I am not so concerned that they master unity and coherence (Chapter 2) on the first pass, for I find opportunities to correct weaknesses in focus, coherence, and the like as we move into other chapters and as I begin to discuss their own writing in class.

I prefer to spend more time on teaching methods of development (Chapter 3). Student confidence increases enormously once they have learned that they can amass details and arrange this information effectively in support of a topic sentence or thesis statement. Moreover, their ability to do produce sustained--if not polished--pieces of writing provides the instructor with a source of samples from which to identify and address particular weaknesses and to build upon important strengths in each student's work.

CHAPTER 1

THE CENTRAL IDEA

This is a how-to chapter, as are the two others that follow. The most effective approach for me has always been to spend about two classes defining the central idea and explaining procedures for drafting workable topic sentences and thesis statements.

I begin by using the blackboard to show students how to write a topic sentence like those that might appear in their essays (only later do I extend the discussion to a broader thesis, but the jump is usually quite easy). I review the process of focusing by calling on students by name and asking them questions about purpose, main point, and details, which they should be able to answer if they've read the chapter. After trial, error, and some good-natured prodding from me, most students learn quickly to transform a vague topic like "college textbooks" into a something more workable: "College textbooks are a lot more expensive than I thought."

I usually end the discussion as the chapter does. "Central ideas are like all the other things we write," I am fond of saying. "They require frequent revision and may change often and completely before we finish a writing project." But I also take this opportunity to reflect a bit on the process of writing itself: I review what we've said about prewriting in an earlier class devoted to Getting Started; I talk a little about drafting; and I emphasize the importance of revision, distinguishing it from simple editing and proofreading.

Carson, From The Sea Around Us

Questions for Discussion

1. Carson's purpose is to explain the evidence scientists use to piece together theories about the origins of the sea.
2. Most students have little difficulty picking out the word "shadowy" in the first sentence.
3. Sentences 2-4 are important in this regard, but so are the details Carson uses to describe various scientific evidence later in the paragraph.

Suggestions for Journal Entries

- 1-2. Though you might want to assign both journal suggestions, item #2 will usually yield more fruitful results. In fact, it should help students address one of the Suggestions for Writing at the end of the chapter.

Three Paragraphs for Analysis

Questions for Discussion

1. The topic sentence of the Muller/Wiener piece is its first: "Few writers begin without some warmup activity." Cross places his topic sentence in the middle of the paragraph: "He is the voice of Finland, its symbol." Sharp places his central idea at the very end: "...the fact that most drivers cannot make [a bumper jack] work says much about the way motorists have changed over the past forty years."
2. Some students have trouble explaining why the phrase "warmup activity" needs to be introduced at the outset even though they realize its function in the paragraph. Try placing the topic sentence in the middle or at the end of the paragraph, and see how they react.
3. He compares the status of Sibelius in America with the honor accorded him Finland, and he provides details to develop this idea.
4. "Motorists have changed over the past forty years," claims Sharp. Providing the evidence before springing the topic sentence on us makes his claim more dramatic and more convincing.
5. Few students have difficulty with this question. Sharp's implication is rather pronounced.

Suggestions for Journal Entries

1. This item is intended reinforce what students learned by answering the Questions for Discussion.
2. Students will use their journals to write topic sentences in much the same way that you and they came up with sample topic sentences during class discussion.

Russell, Three Passions I Have Lived For

Questions for Discussion

1. The answer should be obvious to all students. However, sometimes it helps to read or to ask a student to read the first and last paragraphs aloud.
2. The first sentence is the thesis.
3. I usually find it effective to call upon three different students to provide each part of the answer.
4. Russell's essay is a model of organizational clarity. The fact that he identifies his "passions" in his thesis contributes to that clarity and provides a model for beginning writers.
5. Students usually respond well to this question as long as the instructor remembers to read each of the paragraphs aloud and to discuss them one at a time.
6. This one is intended to help the instructor close, for it returns the discussion to Russell's thesis and his focus on three--and only three--points of discussion.

Suggestions for Journal Entries

1. I assign this item just to make sure that all students have understood this challenging piece.
2. You might want to add more topics, but I usually find that students have little trouble picking their own "passions." Incidentally, this item is mentioned in the Suggestions for Writing at chapter's end.

Cirilli, Echoes

Questions for Discussion

- 1-2. In paragraph 1, Cirilli sets up a contrast that will help the reader understand the significant role her grandfather played in her life. Most students identify "...he was the most gentle man I have ever known" as the central idea.

- 3. Paragraph 3: "He was always available...."
- Paragraph 4: "He would sit by the fireplace...."
- Paragraph 5: "As I grew up...."
- Paragraph 6: "The sound of his voice...."

4-5. These questions are open-ended and usually generate interesting discussion.

Suggestions for Journal Entries

- 1. Once again, the object is to make sure that all students have fully comprehended what they have read.
- 2. It helps to remind students that they should describe someone they know quite well and that what they put in their journals might serve as an easy-to-follow outline for a longer writing assignment.

CHAPTER 2

UNITY AND COHERENCE

Before defining the concepts of unity and coherence, I usually spend a few moments reviewing important definitions from the previous chapter: focus, main point, central idea, thesis statement, and topic sentence. I also take time to explain what I mean by using information to "support" or "develop" a central idea, warning students that they'll hear these terms often throughout the semester and especially when we get to Chapter 3.

The next step is to walk them through some of the paragraphs used to illustrate unity and coherence in the introduction this chapter. Spending a few careful minutes on the passage by Massey usually pays off nicely, but I sometimes have to distribute and discuss other samples taken from textbooks, popular magazines, or student writing gathered in other classes. It's a good idea to build a file of such chestnuts over the years; they usually serve a variety of purposes.

I also find it helpful to practice one or more of the prewriting techniques discussed in Getting Started (brainstorming or listing are the easiest to work with at this stage) and to gather details about a pre-determined topic on the blackboard. After the board is filled with my scribble, I ask students to compose a preliminary topic sentence and to choose from the details we have come up with those that relate most directly to that sentence. Quite often this exercise becomes an intellectual free-for-all, but it has never failed to get students to understand the principle of unity.

The paragraph that results also provides the basis of my introduction to coherence. More often than not, it appears to be string of unrelated ideas, but a few transitions and well-placed relative pronouns fixes that fast. I usually spend the rest of the hour reviewing other methods for maintaining coherence as explained in the text. If possible, I also preview one or two of the chapter selections that we will discuss at our next meeting.

When time is short and I feel that my students would profit by moving on to Chapter 3, I limit class discussion to Witt's "Gambling," a student essay, and to Scott's "Vegetable Gardens Are for the Birds." Both illustrate important principles clearly and in sufficient detail.

Cousins: From "Pain Is Not the Ultimate Enemy"

Questions for Discussion

1. Most students will say that Cousins' topic sentence is his first and that the main point is "severely disadvantaged." Don't be surprised, however, if some of the brighter ones opt for the very last sentence in this paragraph.
2. The other sentences contain key words that make the connection clear as well.
3. Students rarely have difficulty picking out "But," "so," and "however." Some will even see that "Presto" acts as a transition.
4. The paragraph contains numerous examples.
5. The words "torn muscle" and "tissue damage" echo "injury" in the previous sentence; "throw a ball" reminds us of "takes his place on the mound"; and "victims of overzealous treatment" is reminiscent of "further damaging the torn muscle."

Suggestions for Journal Entries

- 1-2. I often ask three or four students to read their journals aloud at this point in order to make sure the class understands what keeping a journal is all about. I always spend a few minutes after class with one or two students who need extra help, but most complete these assignments with little difficulty.

Newsweek: From "The Search for Adam and Eve"

Questions for Discussion

1. The central idea is, of course, that all members of the human race have at least one common ancestor: "your 10,000th great-grandmother."
2. The fact that scientists have dubbed this figure "Eve" and that "she" is the subject of all the sentences that follow serves to keep this paragraph unified throughout.
3. "She," "her," and "hers" are of course the answer.

Suggestions for Journal Entries

Once again, it is a good idea to ask students to read their responses aloud and to check the journals of those who remain doubtful about the assignment.

Osgood, "Real" Men and Women

Questions for Discussion

1. Perhaps the best expression of Osgood's central idea is in the essay's last two sentences.
2. This is an open-ended question designed to help students begin thinking about rhetorical strategies. Most members of class will realize that Helene's *English* assignment is merely a convenient point of departure for a larger issue; some might also suggest that Osgood exploits the English teacher's rather provocative questions to draw us into the essay and keep us reading.
3. The first sentence in paragraph five serves as the topic sentence. It and the topic sentences in paragraphs 6 and 7 have a direct and clear relationship with the thesis. For example, the notion of robbing someone of his or her humanity (paragraph 5) is echoed in the words "limit" and "qualify" at the end of the essay.
4. Clearly, Osgood is pointing out the dangers of relying on stereotypes as the measure of reality. Paragraphs 4 and 5 express the same idea.
5. "If you can persuade yourself" is the most obvious example. The repetition of the word "someone" is also worth mentioning.
6. "They" and "them"
7. "Therefore"
8. Repetition, transitional words, and linking pronouns make paragraph 4 coherent.

Suggestions for Journal Entries

1. Many students use this journal entry to begin a longer writing assignment like the one described in item #3 of the Suggestions for Writing. I usually remind them to make sure that each of the "reasons" called for in this item is expressed in a complete sentence so as to make beginning such an essay easier.

2. Responses to this journal item usually make an excellent basis for class discussion, which should promote a better understanding of Osgood's essay.

Witt, Gambling

Questions for Discussion

1. Gambling is described as a disease in paragraphs 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8. Paragraph 4 discusses the relationships his habit has ruined.
2. Conveniently, Witt has placed his central ideas in the first sentence of each of the subsequent paragraphs.
3. I have found that limiting the discussion to paragraphs 5, 6, and 7 usually serves to show how well this essay is organized.
4. Transitional devices include "At times" and "Lately, however," in paragraphs 6 and 7. The linking pronouns, which few students will have difficulty finding, include "he" and "his." Repeating his subject's name and making reference to his "disease," "affliction," "obsession," and "rehabilitation" also help Witt maintain coherence.
5. After answering the first four questions, few students should have difficulty with this one.

Suggestions for Journal Entries

- 1-2. Both have proven to be successful prompts for journal writing; both will help students gather details for use in longer projects (see item #4 in the Suggestions for Writing). Before making the assignment, however, I find it useful to have students talk about common addictions like those to alcohol and tobacco in class. The discussion usually gives them a good idea of the kinds of details to look for when considering other illnesses or addictions.

Scott, Vegetable Gardens Are for the Birds

Questions for Discussion

1. Scott's three main points appear in paragraphs 1 and 2.
2. The author begins paragraphs 1 through 13 with an easily identifiable topic sentence in each case.
3. "Here are my complaints."

4. Paragraph 3.
5. Paragraph 6, 11, and 13 contain several more good examples.

Suggestions for Journal Entries

- 1-2. I usually ask students to complete only one of these. However, in preparation for the essay suggestion #5 at the end of the chapter, I explain that they might begin thinking about two or three other reasons they "hate eating spinach" or "dislike walking the dog." Incidentally, don't be surprized if students choose provocative and even bizarre subjects to write about.

CHAPTER 3 DEVELOPMENT

Learning how to develop a paragraph in sufficient detail and in the most effective pattern is one of the most difficult and important skills for beginning writers. I spend a great deal of time on this chapter, beginning--as I do with any chapter--by briefly reviewing important principles learned earlier.

I have had some success using blackboard exercises to teach students how to determine whether their paragraphs and essays contain enough detail. Usually, I begin with simple topic sentences/thesis statements, most of which make mention of quantities: "Regular exercise is important for three reasons" or "Smoking cigarettes can be harmful to your health in at least four ways," for example. I ask the students to come up with the "three reasons" and "four ways" before I let them off the hook. I then go on to more sophisticated central ideas like those in the paragraphs found later in the chapter introduction.

Explaining how to choose the best method of development simply involves explaining the purpose of each method. But it is extremely important to tell students that they will rarely come across a piece of writing--even a paragraph--that is, say, purely narrative or persuasive in content. The important thing, I always remind them, is that numerous choices are available and that accomplished writers often combine methods of development almost randomly as it suits their purpose.

Teaching students various patterns to use when arranging ideas and details in a paragraph is a bit more difficult. Don't expect them to memorize the patterns discussed in pages 53-57. That's not why they were included. A far more reasonable expectation is that students will come to understand that practiced writers often plan the arrangement of ideas so as to create a pre-determined effect on their readers. It is also reasonable to believe that they will begin recognizing such patterns in what they read--especially in this chapter's selections--and perhaps in their own writing. Finally, I also think it fair to expect them to begin practicing a few of the simpler patterns described herein, as suggested by a number of the journal and essay assignments that follow.

The clearest and easiest-to-teach of the four selections in this chapter is Devoe's "The Hibernation of the Woodchuck." Volk's "A Family of Firsts" provides a great deal of comic relief and is also quite teachable, but it may prove too lengthy to allow for a full discussion of some of the other essays you assign. Perhaps the most moving selection in the entire text is "A Brother's Dreams" by Paul Aronowitz. Don't make the mistake of reading it aloud,

at least not in its entirety. There won't be a dry eye in the house. Hamer's "The Thick and Thin of It" will probably hold less interest for most students, but it is well put together and serves nicely to illustrate the kinds of techniques this chapter was designed to teach.

Devoe, The Hibernation of the Woodchuck

Questions for Discussion

1. Paragraph 1: "He is ready for the Long Sleep."
Paragraph 2: The central idea is implied; this is the first stage of the Long Sleep.
Paragraph 3: "He has entered fully...."
Paragraph 4: "It is almost true to say...."
Paragraph 5: "Then, in the middle of March...."
Paragraph 6: "Such is the performance...."
2. Falling outside temperatures cause the woodchuck's body temperature to fall and turn the animal into a "compact ball."
3. Conclusion and support is used in paragraph 4. Process analysis is perhaps the most appropriate response for paragraph 5, but some students will argue for narration.
4. The two important differences discussed in this paragraph have to do with body temperature and the rate of heartbeat and respiration.
5. This is an open-ended question, but most students agree that the amount of detail Devoe uses in this paragraph is clearly sufficient to its purpose.
6. Devoe contrasts the hibernation of the woodchuck with two other natural phenomena.
7. The easiest way to explain how these paragraphs work is to compare process analysis with narration and to discuss elements in paragraphs 3 and 5 that relate to the telling of a story. I often find it helpful to discuss Devoe's use of verbs and, in paragraph 3, to identify transitional devices that indicate the passage of time. It is important to point out, however, that Devoe also makes use of contrast in paragraph 3, thereby providing an opportunity to remind students that authors rely on a combination of methods to develop their ideas.
8. Few students will have trouble with this question if they have learned what they were supposed to learn in