


Inside Out



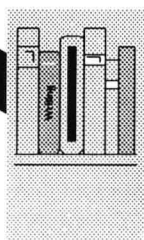
A Guide to Writing

*Maurice Scharton
Janice Neuleib*



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INSIDE



OUT

A
Guide to
Writing

Maurice Scharton

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both of

Illinois State University

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Preface

This book is about motivation to write. Why do we find ourselves writing such a book? We enjoy writing. We also enjoy working together as writers and find that our students enjoy working with other writers, too. Our purpose in writing this book is to give teachers and students multiple ways to find their own motivations for writing through writing experiences that focus and expand their interests, values, and convictions. Writers who use this book will be encouraged to move from the inside out: from inner, subjective experiences to outer objective writing projects, always maintaining the connection between the personal and social worlds. It is this connection that keeps motivational energy flowing.

A counselor friend of ours says that parents should avoid giving children rules that specify behavior that could be done better by a dead person than a living one. We found that some of the rules we had taught ourselves as writers fit into the “dead person” category: don’t use linking verbs, don’t write comma splices, don’t start without a catchy beginning. Writing a book that emphasizes experiencing writing rather than “learning” to write or learning “about writing” seemed very bold to us at first. We wanted to help writers break away from the rules and habits that might inhibit their involvement in their own writing. We also wanted to provide experiences for writers that would enable them to find their own best focuses.

Inside Out: A Guide to Writing

- provides scores of experiential activities,
- emphasizes collaboration and community response,
- demonstrates active, ongoing research techniques, and
- puts writers in touch with motivations.

Throughout the book we look at writers writing together. We write together and with colleagues both in production of text and in constant revisions of the texts we have already produced. Many of our classes work collaboratively. Many of the classroom experiences in the book ask writers to collaborate on all aspects of writing, from discovering who they are as writers to discovering topics through every stage of

revision and editing. The book demonstrates class communities and how they can work to create successful texts produced by engaged writers.

Writers read much more than they write. This book leads writers through the worlds of texts that they must negotiate in order to experience themselves as writers and guides them into those worlds as real writers. We wanted to show writers how we and our students have learned to use what we read, hear, and see to enrich what we write. Texts on texts, reading the world in many ways, contribute to every word we say and write. Finding comfortable and efficient ways to use the world of text is important to every writer. We do it by incorporating “research” into our writing at every stage, and we provide experiences for writers to use texts whenever they will enrich a paper.

Rhetoric must be at work in every stage of writing. A topic grows because a writer has something to say to a particular person or audience or wants to write in a particular magazine or journal. The first words or the first draft may or may not come easily depending on how comfortable the writer feels with his or her voice and role on a given topic. The desire to do some more research in the library or the field may arise because the writer needs more evidence to prove his or her point to the potential reader. Finally, the writer must present the work in the appropriate style, register, and format for the intended audience or forum. The experiences in this text provide many opportunities to use rhetorical techniques and activities to discover, produce, revise, and edit a paper.

Inside Out: A Guide to Writing has five major parts:

- I. Warming Up
- II. Discovering Writing Projects
- III. Drafting
- IV. Revising
- V. Producing the Final Draft

These sections follow a writer through the production of a finished text. Each part, however, also provides multiple possibilities for writing projects and offers writers many avenues for discovering both topics and directions.

The Warming-Up process proceeds through two chapters:

- Chapter 1: A Background for Writing Processes
- Chapter 2: The Satisfactions of Writing

These chapters increase writers' awareness of their writing processes and focus their attention on the intrinsic value of writing. The first journal assignment, on earliest writing experiences, can serve as a diagnostic essay. By the end of Warming Up, writers will have accumulated enough journal entries to compose an informative essay on their writing processes.

Part II, *Discovering Writing Projects*, also proceeds through two chapters:

- Chapter 3: *Discovering Topics*
- Chapter 4: *Discovering Writing Partners*

Chapter 3 leads students through some experiential, intuitive ways of finding ideas for writing: introspection, conversation, and reading. Chapter 4 helps them to organize the human resources they need to sustain them as they write. By the end of Part II, writers will have accumulated enough potential topics to write a proposal which describes the remaining essays they plan to complete during the course.

Part III, once again, is divided into two chapters:

- Chapter 5: *Planning a Draft*
- Chapter 6: *Composing a Draft*

The planning chapter guides writers in defining rhetorical situations for the essays they have proposed. The composing chapter addresses the issues of managing their composing processes to create a comfortable and productive writing experience. This chapter integrates three forms of invention work (clustering, matrix building, and a variation on freewriting) to help writers focus during the drafting process itself. By the end of Part III, writers will have composed drafts of one of the projects they have proposed and planned.

Revising, by far the longest of the five parts, comprises four chapters:

- Chapter 7: *Peer Suggestions for Revision*
- Chapter 8: *Narrative Strategies for Revision*
- Chapter 9: *Analytical Strategies for Revision*
- Chapter 10: *Personal Dimensions of Revision*

Chapter 7 provides a formal structure for peer reviews of writing projects to keep students on task as they work in groups. Chapters 8 and 9 use rhetorical strategies to produce more sophisticated work in revision. Chapter 10 broadens the context, fostering understanding of the part revision plays in enabling students to assume a role in the aca-

demic community. By the time writers have completed Part IV, they will be prepared either to draft and revise the remaining projects or to proceed to Part V and produce the final drafts of their portfolios.

Part V, Producing the Final Draft, involves two chapters:

- Chapter 11: Editing Your Style
- Chapter 12: Final Details

Chapter 11 focuses on clarity, moving from logical transitions through word choice. Chapter 12 provides resources to prepare the Works Cited list and to complete the final proofreading.

At the teacher's discretion, writers may compose a test essay for the Writing for Evaluation appendix.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We know a beautiful Afghan hound who always bows to say "thank you," and we wish we could bow with the same grace to all the students and colleagues who have helped us through this book.

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Our warmest thanks go to the students who wrote in our classes, whose responses suggested practical changes in the book, and who produced the essays there. Other students in graduate programs at Illinois State have contributed to the book by reading and responding to it in graduate classes, teaching parts of it in their classes, and offering revision suggestions at various stages of the writing. One graduate student in particular, Ruth Fennick, offered structural ideas through her doctoral dissertation and through ongoing discussions during the three years of an ISU NEH institute.

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Introduction

The world is full of books—many of them quite good books—that will tell you how to write. We as authors have learned from those books, and in many ways *Inside Out: A Guide to Writing* resembles them. We have tried to cover the issues that writing teachers and students would expect to find in a writing textbook, from the first moment of conceiving an idea to the last hour of proofreading a manuscript. You will be writing from the inside out, processing inner experiences into writing projects for the outer world.

Relatively few books about writing ask you to consider what it feels like to write, how writing flows from your experience of the past and present. We have always found discussions of the experience of writing to be crucial to our pleasure and productivity as writers and as teachers. In this book, we have therefore focused on the experience of writing.

When we use the term **experience**, we mean it in three ways: (1) the immediate experience of using words to convey meaning, (2) the more distant experience from which your writing habits and attitudes originate, and (3) your experience of Life with a capital L. (We confess that we regularly contemplate the meaning of life both upper- and lower-case.) We hope that as you do the work we have laid out, you'll find new lines of communication opening between your writing and your whole experience of Life with a capital L. Writing will start to feel like living instead of something you stop living to do.

In order to help you conduct an orderly search for the connections between your life and your writing, we have organized *Inside Out: A Guide to Writing* into five parts:

- I. Warming Up
- II. Discovering Writing Projects
- III. Drafting
- IV. Revising
- V. Producing the Final Draft

Our five parts represent themes which occur and recur in various writing processes. Like the themes in a piece of music, the themes of the writing process rise and fall throughout the course of the work on a

piece as various melodies, rhythms, and instrumental voices emerge and then recede. Our order reflects, very generally, the order in which events often happen during writing processes.

The order of the parts and chapters facilitates study of the writing process, but we recognize that productive writing processes may vary widely from one person to the next and from one writing project to the next. Your plans, goals, and interests may lead you along paths entirely different from the one we have mapped out.

For example, you may sit down thinking that you are going to revise a piece of writing, but find yourself discovering ideas and then drafting. You may get started on a new writing project by reading over and editing a completed project. You may find that a conversation with a friend compels you to rewrite a piece of writing you thought was finished.

Since we can't be certain how you'll respond to the need to write something, we have made the five parts independent of each other. If you feel the need, you can readily skip around. You'll learn a great deal about writing if you follow your impulses and use your instincts.

We have arranged each of the chapters like a newspaper story, with the most basic information at the beginning. The further you progress in a chapter, the more advanced and complex the work becomes. You and your teacher will decide when you reach the point of diminishing returns. At that point you can skip to another chapter. You can always come back if you need to.

MOTIVATION: WHY WRITE?

Nearly every writing book asks that question somewhere, usually near the front of the text. The obvious answer in a writing course is that you write because the course requires writing. Another obvious answer in this technological world is that many jobs require writing. However, most people find those obvious answers unsatisfactory. The work we do must have intrinsic value. We need to believe that our work is worthwhile, or we don't keep doing it. What is the intrinsic value in writing? A well-written paper resembles any other finely crafted work, like a drawing, sculpture, or fine piece of furniture. Time spent on making your writing into that finely crafted work will give the same satisfaction as any other craft.

When we use terms like *connections*, *themes*, *plans*, *goals*, *interests*, *impulses*, and *instincts*, we intend to convey the message that why you write is important to your feeling of success as a writer. We want to

increase your awareness of the ways you drive and structure your writing processes so that you can use your reasons for writing to help you write better.

Experienced writers usually work with other writers at nearly every stage of a project. Businesses assign task forces to write reports; authors work closely with editors and coauthors; scientists research and report their work in project teams. Group work in class has come late to writing instruction, but within the last ten years writing teachers and student writers have begun to value peer responses to classroom writing. You will find that most of our assignments direct you to interact with others.

KINDS OF WRITING ASSIGNMENTS IN THIS BOOK

Experiences

The first kind of writing assignment in this book comes under the heading of **Experience**. Some of these assignments are Warm-Ups, which invite you to remember events in your school, work, or personal life and to consider those experiences as a writer to increase your consciousness of how and why you write. Other assignments are designed to focus your attention on work For Your Writing Project, to invite you to work with other writers, to reflect on attitudes, and to respond to other writers' writing.

The several dozen Experience assignments ask hundreds of questions, all intended to help you get started or keep going. We don't suppose that everyone will complete every Experience or answer every question in exactly the order we have listed them. We do hope to provoke some interested, reflective response from everyone.

To give you an idea of how to respond to the Experience assignments, we've supplied many examples of student writers' responses. Some of the responses are beautifully written, some a little hesitant and clumsy. Some are from students who represent what we used to think of as the "typical" undergraduate, while others represent the growing number of older students who are attending college now. We present their work with a minimum of editing.

Your Writing Journal

Collect your responses to the Experience assignments in a **journal**. Journals in writing classes give writers a free space in which to write informal expressions of feeling and opinion, explore ideas, record perceptions,

and just play with language. Most professional writers keep a journal or log of some sort to record ideas for writing or interesting information they come across while reading.

The nature of the journal can vary from writer to writer, and the content will include many different kinds of responses to this text and to other information you come across as you write. What should your journal look like? You. We will give you examples of journal entries other students write, but in the end journal entries will vary widely from one person to the next.

Journals usually are not graded since they are preliminary work and never contain final drafts of a writing project. Why would anyone assign or complete writing that will not get a grade?

One practical reason is that journals record the sort of preliminary work writers have to do before completing formal papers. You would have to think through your ideas anyway. Writing them down on paper helps you to focus on working out problems, puts the ideas in a form that makes your teacher able to help, gives you the satisfaction of seeing your ideas in language, and may even get you some credit for all that messy fumbling with language you have to do before you can produce “real” writing. A journal is a paper trail of your thinking as you plan, draft, and revise a group of papers.

Two impractical reasons are that journals are often fun and that they sometimes enable you to learn about yourself. Neither fun nor self-knowledge earns you credit hours in college, but both will make you a better writer. As you write in response to the Experience assignments, be prepared to discover, or increase your awareness of, the processes by which you write. You may find insights in the act of writing.

Likewise, be prepared to reexamine your writing with an analytical eye. You’ll find patterns, and those patterns will lead you to a better sense of how writing works for you. You won’t always draw the correct inference from your work, but the process of thinking about how and why you write the way you do will enable you to write more comfortably and efficiently.

As you complete the Experience assignments and make other journal entries, you’ll also begin thinking of ideas for larger, more formal writing projects. Be sure to note when the ideas occur to you. By the time you have progressed through Part III, you will have begun working on more formal writing projects, and most of your energy will flow in that direction. Don’t suppose that your journal work should stop at that point. You will continue to need the journal’s free space to help

you to talk to your teacher, your peers, and yourself about your writing processes.

Writing Projects

Of course, student writers also research, write, and revise papers for a wider audience and the customary grade. We use the term **Writing Projects** for those papers. For the most part, the topics for your papers will grow from the work you are doing in your journal and from other activities suggested in this book. In a way, you'll give yourself assignments for writing projects.

Note that the word *project* is both a noun and a verb. As a noun it means "a piece of work." As a verb, "to *pro-ject*," it means "to propose" or "to send forth into the world." Logically, if you project something, like a slide or a movie, it comes from where you are. You have ownership of it, and you send it out for other people to evaluate and use. We believe the word gives a clue to the way writing projects develop. Writing projects you value most will come from assignments you give yourself.

This book provides three sources of assistance for you to use in your search for meaningful writing projects. First, we've devoted Part II—Discovering Writing Projects—to the search for writing project ideas. By the time you've finished the section, you'll have a list of possible projects to choose from.

Second, throughout the book we describe how other writers found and developed writing projects as a result of journal assignments, conversations with other writers, reading in classes or on their own, comments from teachers, the need to say something or solve a problem, and a host of other inspirations. While you probably won't respond exactly as another writer does, you may pick up some hints and some encouragement from reading about how other people found projects that were important to them.

Third, every Experience assignment in the book has the potential to produce a writing project. When you find yourself writing more than you usually do in response to an Experience, you should ask yourself whether you have found a subject you want to deal with in more depth. When you find yourself writing that you were interested, upset, excited, sad, curious, outraged, or in any other way moved by an idea, event, or person, you will know that you have found a possible project.

Your Portfolio

Your teacher may ask you to collect your writing projects in a **portfolio**, which is a body of work designed to demonstrate the range of your interests and abilities as a writer. What should a portfolio look like? Like a journal, it should resemble you: your public self. It should contain your strongest public writing. If the formal academic essay is what you do best, then at least a couple of academic essays ought to be in your portfolio.

Your portfolio ought to show some balance as well. The writer who is most comfortable with library research should, for the sake of growth as a writer, try something less comfortable, perhaps a set of instructions, a personal essay, or even a piece of fiction. The writer who has always relied on imagination should, again for the sake of growth, get out to the library, do some interviews, or write a questionnaire to get the experience of managing factual information. The “creative” writer’s portfolio should contain some practical work, such as reports and reviews, along with the more familiar personal essays and stories.

You should keep track of the projects you put into your portfolio, including drafts of the projects you complete and a letter describing the portfolio’s contents. Many colleges have begun using portfolios to assess students’ competence as writers. Likewise, the portfolio provides valuable evidence of your achievements as a writer for potential employers. With your teacher’s assistance, you can begin preparing the documents which will help you land the job you want when you graduate.

In the early parts of this book, you will spend a good deal of time working with your journal. You should keep in mind that journal entries and writing projects are separated by the thinnest of veils. As you write your private thoughts in your journal, you will constantly glimpse the public writing which college and your profession will call on you to do.

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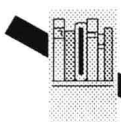
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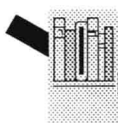
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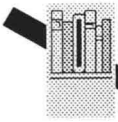
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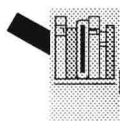
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