

# *Pathways*

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*A Text for Developing Writers*

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# To the Instructor

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*Pathways: A Text for Developing Writers*, designed for students needing a comprehensive, slowly paced review of the basics of writing, focuses on both the writing process and the writing product. Both a course text and a guide for independent study, it bridges the gap between the more traditional writing text, which tends to present a single linear, almost mechanical approach to writing, and the process-focused text, which too often tends to minimize the importance of the finished product.

## FEATURES

One of the text's most attractive features is that it strikes a much-needed balance between composition and grammar skills development. We present grammar not in isolation but rather as merely a part of the editing process, with all skills exercises throughout the text appearing in paragraph or essay form. As we have proved to be the case in our three-year classroom study, the format used in our text helps students become better editors and makes them better able to apply their editing skills to their own work. We are convinced that our approach aids writers in establishing the relevancy of grammar skills as they attempt to transfer text information to their individual papers.

Diagnostic and chapter review exercises are included in each chapter. We urge students to complete the diagnostic exercises before beginning their chapter study so that they can identify material that will require special attention. The chapter review, in much the same way, will help readers to determine which concepts they have understood, as well as those points they might need to review. In addition to the diagnostic exercises and chapter reviews, there is throughout the text an array of planning, composing, revising, and editing exercises, most of which require students to apply to their own writing assignments what they are being taught. Suggested journal and essay topics as well as a variety of exercises in freewriting, peer editing, and sentence combining all contribute greatly to helping the writer transfer the text information to everyday writing tasks.

While its approach is fundamental and its explanations are direct, *Pathways* contains easy-to-read professional and student models that readers will find inviting and, in some cases, even provocative. Our text includes selections from such well-known authors as Garrison K. Alice Walker, Sydney Harris, William Least Heat Moon, Martin L.

King, Jr., Andy Rooney, and Lewis Thomas. In addition to this wide range of professional models (seldom available in texts for developing writers), *Pathways* also contains those all-important student models that beginning writers find particularly helpful as guides. It is important to point out that these student and professional writing models are not all in finished form. Rough drafts (some of which students are asked to revise) are also included to give readers a more realistic view of the different writing stages.

## ORGANIZATION

This text is divided into three units. Unit I, "Understanding the Composing Process," focuses on journal writing, freewriting, exploring the topic, drafting, and revising. In this section, readers will find a writing inventory so that they can discover their own writing habits and preferences. Although this section presents general writing guides for planning and drafting, we emphasize that because each individual's composing process is different, no one plan will lead to effective writing.

Unit II, "Discovering Writing Options," provides an introduction to patterns of development. Chapter 5 includes a discussion of the various types of organizational patterns as well as engaging paragraph and essay models that illustrate development modes. An additional feature of this chapter is that it provides planning checklists designed to guide inexperienced writers as they explore different writing options. Chapter 6, a key element of this unit, teaches writers how the different organizational patterns can work together. Students will learn that their choice of a particular pattern must be in response to the goal(s) they wish to achieve.

Unit III, "Editing and Revising for Specific Concerns," focuses on elements of grammar, mechanics, and style. Although it is important to note that much of this section is devoted to editing for correct grammar, mechanics, and style (a skill much needed by developing writers), this unit is designed primarily to assist writers in revising the whole paper, of which these elements are merely a part. Toward helping writers attain this global mastery, Chapter 15 provides a comprehensive checklist that students can use for revising and editing faulty essays.

An *Instructor's Manual* contains answers to chapter exercises and chapter reviews. (Answers to diagnostic exercises can be found in the text.) Also contained in the *Instructor's Manual* are—for each chapter—objectives, suggestions, and activities for reinforcing concepts, as well as additional chapter reviews. The *Instructor's Manual* also provides ideas for developing course syllabi, creating a positive classroom environment, and responding to student writing. A separate test packet, printed on 8½ × 11" sheets for easy duplication, contains additional chapter review exercises as well as five additional revising and editing exercises similar to those found in Chapter 15. A computerized version of the test packet is also available.

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# To the Student

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Over the years, we have worked with thousands of student writers who were, no doubt, much like you. We have listened carefully to their writing questions; we have assisted them as they discovered the answers to those questions by developing their own skills; and we have celebrated with them their new-found writing confidence. *Pathways* was written to share our experiences with you. We believe that your thoughtful study of this text will help you to (1) determine your writing strengths as well as your weaknesses, (2) better develop and organize your ideas, (3) explore facets of grammar, punctuation, and spelling that you may not have previously understood, and (4) gain more confidence in your own writing ability.

*Pathways* is designed to help you better understand your approach to writing, particularly as it relates to your own writing habits. You will find that your increased awareness of your writing attitudes and how you approach each writing task will result in your being more realistic about doing your assignments and in your being more able to express your ideas effectively.

The text is divided into three units. Unit I, "Understanding the Composing Process," which focuses on journal writing, freewriting, exploring the topic, drafting, and revising, will guide you in developing a sound working draft as well as introduce you to particular concerns you must consider as you work on improving that draft. The Revising and Editing Checklist, which appears in Chapter 4, will not only serve as a guide as you assess writings in the text but will also help you to gain confidence in evaluating the writings of others as well as your own. Unit II, "Discovering Writing Options," which explores various types of organizational patterns and stresses the importance of your choosing a pattern that will best meet your writing goal, will give you an opportunity to apply the basic writing-skills information presented in Unit I as you experiment with various writing techniques. Whereas Unit I also will introduce you to the importance of editing, Unit III, "Editing and Revising for Specific Concerns," will provide you with a comprehensive review of grammar so that you will be able to edit your work effectively. Unit III also will teach you to consider important elements of style.

Although the text presents the common components of writing, it does not stress any one method that will lead to effective writing. We believe, as you will learn, that there are as many different ways to complete a writing task as there are writers. What we have done, however, is to arrange the text so that you have easy access to those particular writing

## To the Student

guides you may need in completing a given assignment. Consequently, your approach to the text need not be sequential. For example, it may not be necessary to read Chapter 6 in order to understand Chapter 7.

To aid you further, we have included pre- and post-exercises in each chapter. We urge you to complete the diagnostic exercises before beginning your chapter study. If you do, you will be able to identify quickly those points that require your special attention. Also, by studying the results of the end-of-the-chapter review, you will be better able to determine which concepts you understand and which you need to review.

The text contains other helpful learning aids. First, to help you (if you should need it) in generating ideas to explore, we have included topic suggestions for both journal-writing activities and the more structured assignments presented in Chapters 5 and 6. Second, throughout the text you will find that important terms are boldfaced and defined so that you can better understand their meaning and relationship to the overall writing process. Finally, we have put additional resource materials in the appendices. There you will find, in addition to other information, a glossary of important terms and a list and clarification of words often confused.

The close attention you are giving to this section of the book demonstrates that you are serious about trying to get the most out of it. With such careful consideration throughout the text, coupled with your willingness to apply both time and discipline to your work, you will see, as will others, a significant improvement in your writing.

Joyce M. Jarrett  
Margaret Giles Lee  
Doreatha D. Mbalia



# Contents

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*To the Instructor* v  
*To the Student* ix

UNIT **I** \_\_\_\_\_  
***Understanding the  
Composing  
Process***

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CHAPTER <b>1</b>	
<i>Getting Started</i>	2
SECTION A <i>Understanding Writing</i>	3
SECTION B <i>Identifying Your Personal Views About Writing</i>	4
SECTION C <i>Generating Ideas</i>	8

CHAPTER <b>2</b>	
<i>Planning Your Paper</i>	21
SECTION A <i>Brainstorming</i>	23
SECTION B <i>Grouping Ideas</i>	27
SECTION C <i>Asking Questions</i>	27
SECTION D <i>Considering Your Purpose</i>	30
SECTION E <i>Assessing Your Audience</i>	31

CHAPTER <b>3</b>	
<i>Drafting Your Essay</i>	38
SECTION A <i>Understanding the Essay</i>	40
SECTION B <i>Developing Your Thesis</i>	42
SECTION C <i>Supporting Your Thesis</i>	49
SECTION D <i>Organizing Your Essay</i>	54
SECTION E <i>Shaping Your Supporting Paragraphs</i>	57
SECTION F <i>Writing Your First Draft</i>	69
SECTION G <i>Beginning and Ending Your Paper</i>	71

CHAPTER <b>4</b>	
<i>Revising and Editing Your Paper</i>	80

## Contents

SECTION A	<i>Revising and Editing Process</i>	82
SECTION B	<i>Revising and Editing Hints</i>	83
SECTION C	<i>Revising for Organization</i>	83
SECTION D	<i>Strengthening Support</i>	85
SECTION E	<i>Understanding the Importance of Grammatical and Mechanical Correctness</i>	87
SECTION F	<i>Understanding the Importance of Style</i>	87
SECTION G	<i>Revising and Editing Checklist</i>	87

## UNIT II

### Discovering Writing Options

CHAPTER 5	<i>Understanding Patterns of Development</i>	92
SECTION A	<i>Narration</i>	95
SECTION B	<i>Description</i>	101
SECTION C	<i>Illustration</i>	109
SECTION D	<i>Process</i>	115
SECTION E	<i>Comparison/Contrast</i>	120
SECTION F	<i>Definition</i>	126
SECTION G	<i>Persuasion</i>	133

CHAPTER 6	<i>Choosing Appropriate Patterns of Development</i>	146
SECTION A	<i>Understanding How Development Patterns Work Together to Achieve Your Writing Goals</i>	149
SECTION B	<i>Using Development Patterns to Achieve Your Writing Goals</i>	156

## UNIT III

### Editing and Revising for Specific Concerns

CHAPTER 7	<i>Editing for Correct Sentence Structure</i>	162
SECTION A	<i>Reviewing Sentence Sense</i>	165
SECTION B	<i>Avoiding Fragments</i>	169
SECTION C	<i>Avoiding Comma Splices and Fused Sentences</i>	175

CHAPTER 8	<i>Using Verbs Correctly</i>	180
SECTION A	<i>Basic Functions of Verbs</i>	183
SECTION B	<i>Verb Forms</i>	185
SECTION C	<i>Verb Tense</i>	190
SECTION D	<i>Tense Consistency</i>	194
SECTION E	<i>Mood</i>	195
SECTION F	<i>Voice</i>	197

<b>CHAPTER 9</b>	
<i>Using Pronouns Correctly</i>	201
SECTION A <i>Pronoun Case</i>	205
SECTION B <i>Pronoun Reference</i>	211
SECTION C <i>Pronoun Consistency</i>	214
SECTION D <i>Avoiding Other Pronoun Errors</i>	216
<b>CHAPTER 10</b>	
<i>Editing for Proper Agreement</i>	223
SECTION A <i>Subject/Verb Agreement</i>	226
SECTION B <i>Pronoun/Antecedent Agreement</i>	237
<b>CHAPTER 11</b>	
<i>Using Modifiers Correctly</i>	242
SECTION A <i>Adjectives and Adverbs</i>	245
SECTION B <i>Adjective and Adverb Clauses</i>	253
SECTION C <i>Misplaced and Dangling Modifiers</i>	254
<b>CHAPTER 12</b>	
<i>Editing for Correct Punctuation and Mechanics</i>	259
SECTION A <i>End Punctuation</i>	261
SECTION B <i>Internal Punctuation</i>	263
SECTION C <i>Mechanics</i>	275
<b>CHAPTER 13</b>	
<i>Editing for Correct Spelling</i>	281
SECTION A <i>Helpful Hints for Improving Your Spelling</i>	284
SECTION B <i>Adding Prefixes</i>	284
SECTION C <i>Adding Suffixes</i>	285
SECTION D <i>Forming the Plurals of Nouns</i>	289
SECTION E <i>Selecting ie and ei</i>	291
SECTION F <i>List of Words Often Misspelled</i>	292
<b>CHAPTER 14</b>	
<i>Editing for Style</i>	296
SECTION A <i>Developing Sentence Variety</i>	300
SECTION B <i>Developing Word Precision</i>	318
SECTION C <i>Maintaining Word Economy</i>	321
SECTION D <i>Clarifying Words Often Confused</i>	323
SECTION E <i>Avoiding Trite Expressions</i>	326

**CHAPTER 15**

***Sharpening Your Revising and Editing Skills***

**330**

**SECTION A *Revising and Editing Process* 333**

**SECTION B *Revising and Editing Example* 333**

**SECTION C *Revising and Editing Exercises* 339**

***Glossary of Grammatical Terms* 343**

***Words Often Confused* 349**

***Idiomatic Expressions* 355**

***Answers to Diagnostic Exercises* 359**

***Index* 381**



# I

## Understanding the Composing Process



# 1

## Getting Started

### SECTION

**A** Understanding Writing

**B** Identifying Your Personal Views About Writing

**C** Generating Ideas

Many writers, unwisely, spend hours thinking about what to write and how to write it before ever writing a single word. If you feel that there are few things more challenging than staring at a blank sheet of paper and wondering how to fill it, you will find this chapter particularly helpful. It is designed to guide you in beginning the writing process. You will find that getting started is easier if you learn more about basic writing concepts as well as more about your own personal views on writing. You will also be given in this section tips that will help you to generate your thoughts with greater ease.

### Diagnostic Exercise

*The following diagnostic exercise has been included to aid you in previewing the chapter and in determining how much you already know. (Answers to the exercise appear in the back of the text.) Since this is an introductory exercise, you should not worry if you do not know all of the correct responses. At the end of the chapter, you will be asked to respond to these same questions again, so that you can determine how much you have learned as well as what concepts you may need to review.*

**Directions:** Before continuing this chapter, respond to the statements that follow. Indicate whether you believe that each statement is true or false by marking T for true or F for false. Place your answer in the column labeled Diagnostic Exercise.



Diagnostic  
ExerciseChapter  
Review

- |       |   |       |
|-------|---|-------|
| _____ | 1. Writing is effortless if you allow enough time to do it.   | _____ |
| _____ | 2. There is a set writing procedure that, if followed, will lead to acceptable writing.   | _____ |
| _____ | 3. If you do not enjoy writing, you will be unable to compose an excellent paper.   | _____ |
| _____ | 4. When writing continuously (freewriting), you force yourself to put your ideas on paper.  | _____ |
| _____ | 5. A journal is another name for a diary.   | _____ |
| _____ | 6. If your thoughts do not flow freely when you're drafting a paper, you are probably doing something wrong.                        | _____ |
| _____ | 7. Freewriting is basically unstructured and should be reserved for those times when a writer wants to get in the mood for writing. | _____ |
| _____ | 8. When unsure about the length of a paper, write as much as possible.  | _____ |
| _____ | 9. When revising, it is good to read your paper aloud.  | _____ |
| _____ | 10. A paper that is correct in form and free of grammatical errors is generally acceptable.   | _____ |

## SECTION A \_\_\_\_\_

### Understanding Writing

If you are like many other writers, you probably spend more time than you want to admit trying to find the secret to developing acceptable writing. There is, perhaps, only one sure secret to successful writing—your willingness to work hard at it. But even before you can begin to work, you must first understand some basic facts about writing. Otherwise, your faulty beliefs may lead you to choose a writing approach that could limit the amount of success you will achieve.

Your general impressions about writing have likely been shaped by your own writing experiences. And since experiences vary from writer to writer, you, understandably, may have formed faulty ideas about writing. Three of the most common writing misconceptions follow.

**1. Writing is effortless.** Perhaps a few truly talented writers can honestly make the preceding statement. However, for the majority, writing requires both effort and discipline. Though (if you're lucky) you will be able to jot down your thoughts fairly easily in your first draft, you must realize that drafting is beginning. You must work at making your writing clear and interesting to the reader. Remember . . .

What is written without effort is in general read without pleasure.

*Anonymous*

2. There is a set procedure that, if followed, will lead to acceptable writing. Contrary to what many students believe, there is no one secret formula to good writing. Even though common writing elements are addressed in this text, these elements needn't be developed in any one way. There are as many approaches to writing as there are writers. Furthermore, writing is recursive, which means that leaving one stage of writing does not mean that you will not return to that stage. For example, it is not unlikely that, while revising a paper, you might well decide to refocus the paper or to change the initial organization plan. You will find yourself going back and forth—redefining your main idea, outlining, drafting, revising—until the job is done.

3. A paper that is correct in form and free of grammatical errors is generally acceptable. Before understanding fully what writing involves, many beginning writers are apt to believe the preceding statement. One student stormed into her professor's office to demand that he reconsider his low assessment of her paper. "After all," she said, "my paper doesn't have a single misspelling or one comma out of place." The student had apparently devoted more time to grammar and form than to content. Though using correct grammar and form provides a perfect frame for sound content, a paper without clear purpose and adequate content is like a frame without a picture.

## SECTION **B**

### ***Identifying Your Personal Views About Writing***

Before you can become an effective writer, you must first clarify your own views on writing. What do you prefer to write? When do you do your best work? What writing environment is best for you? The following writing inventory will aid you in identifying your views on writing as well as help you in evaluating your writing habits.

#### **WRITING INVENTORY**

It is important that you identify your attitudes about writing. This inventory will help you to understand your typical approach to a given assignment. Your honest response to the following questions will aid you in examining (1) the process you have developed for completing writing assignments, (2) those times when you are most productive, (3) the types of conditions you should try to avoid, and (4) the aspects of your writing which warrant particular concern. Circle the letter of your chosen response(s) to each of the following questions.

1. Generally, how do you find writing?
  - a. Exciting
  - b. Enjoyable
  - c. Satisfactory
  - d. A chore
2. What types of writing do you enjoy developing?
  - a. Essays
  - b. Research papers
  - c. Letters
  - d. Speeches
  - e. Journal writing
  - f. Short stories

- g. Poems or song lyrics
  - h. Other: \_\_\_\_\_
3. If the length of the assignment is not specified, how do you decide how long your paper should be?
    - a. Try to write as much on the topic as possible—more is better.
    - b. Make the paper as brief as possible—limiting the number of possible errors.
    - c. Don't think about length—write until the task is completed.
  4. When do you do your best writing?
    - a. Early morning
    - b. Midday
    - c. Evening
    - d. Late at night
    - e. Any time during the day
  5. Are you easily distracted when writing—for example, by others talking, doors slamming, or by radio or TV playing?
    - a. Always distracted
    - b. Usually distracted
    - c. Sometimes distracted
    - d. Seldom distracted
    - e. Never distracted
  6. What happens when you begin writing your draft?
    - a. Thoughts flow freely.
    - b. Thoughts come and go.
    - c. Thoughts come too slowly, causing panic each time a writing task is assigned.
  7. How many rough drafts do you typically write?
    - a. More than two
    - b. Two
    - c. One
    - d. None
  8. How much time do you usually allow between completing a writing task and submitting it?
    - a. A week or more
    - b. Three to five days
    - c. One to two days
    - d. Less than one day
  9. Which of the following do you think about when you revise your paper? Circle all that apply.
    - a. If the paper is in response to my task
    - b. If there is a main idea that controls my paper
    - c. If there are enough details about the main idea
    - d. If the paper is organized in a logical way
    - e. If the paper is free of grammar and usage errors
    - f. If the paper contains appropriate language
  10. How would you evaluate the general quality of your writing?
    - a. Exceptional
    - b. Above average
    - c. Average
    - d. Below average
    - e. Poor