

READING AND STUDY SKILLS

FOURTH EDITION

FORM B

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READING AND STUDY SKILLS, FORM B

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TO THE INSTRUCTOR

Reading and Study Skills will help students learn and apply the essential reading and study skills needed for success in college work. The book also provides a brief review of important word skills that students must have. And it will help students examine their attitudes about college and about studying, set goals for themselves, and take responsibility for their own learning.

The book covers a good number of skills because, quite simply, students often need to learn or review that many. In the best of academic worlds, students would have an unlimited amount of time to spend on study skills, word skills, achievement motivation, and so on. In such an ideal scheme of things, they could use a series of books over several semesters to strengthen their learning ability. But in reality, students usually have only one or two semesters for improving their reading and study skills, and all too often they are asked to handle regular academic subjects at the same time as their developmental course. They should, then, have a book that presents all the central skills they need to become more effective learners. The book should also be organized in self-contained units, so that students can turn quickly and easily to the skills needed in a given situation.

With *Reading and Study Skills*, an instructor can cover a wide range of skills and activities that might otherwise require several books or one limited book and a bundle of handouts and supplementary exercises. In addition to its comprehensiveness, *Reading and Study Skills* has a number of other important features:

- The book is highly *versatile*. Its seven parts, and many sections within these parts, are self-contained units that deal with distinct skills areas. An instructor can present in class those areas most suited to the general needs of students and then assign other sections for independent study. Also, because the book is so flexible, an instructor can more easily sustain students' attention by covering several skills in one session. For example, in a three-hour class period, work could be done on a study skill such as time control, a

motivational skill such as setting goals, and a reading skill such as locating main ideas in short selections.

- The book is *practical*. It contains a large number and wide range of activities so that students can practice skills enough to make them habits. There are, for instance, over sixty separate exercises in the section on study skills, over fifty activities in the section on reading comprehension skills, and twenty-seven mastery tests that cover most of the skills in the book. No instructor is likely to cover all the exercises in the book, but the chances are good that an instructor will be able to select a combination of skills best suited to the needs of a reading class or individual students.
- The book is *easily used*. It has a simple conversational style and explanations that are friendly and nonpatronizing. It presents skills as processes that can be mastered in a step-by-step sequence. Besides the many activities, the book uses a question-answer format to help students learn the material. After a set of ideas is presented, one or more questions may follow so that students can check their understanding of those ideas. Such questions are signaled in the text with a bullet (■). Finally, the book features high-interest materials. For instance, selections on causes of stress, children and television, and ways to save energy are used to illustrate key skills.
- The book is *realistic*. It uses material taken from a variety of college textbooks (in one instance, an entire textbook chapter) and gives practice in common study situations. Wherever possible, students are asked to transfer skills to actual study and classroom activities. A particular value of *Reading and Study Skills* for teachers should be its emphasis on activities that help students practice and apply study skills; the lack of such activities is a drawback in many currently available texts. Too much attention in the past has been given to increasing students' skill in rapidly reading selections and answering questions about the selections. Such drill has some value, but it does not prepare students to cope with an essay, control their study time, memorize material effectively (on those still-too-frequent occasions when memory work is emphasized), take effective classroom notes, or carry out the study assignments in a textbook chapter. *Reading and Study Skills* treats all the study skills that students need to survive in their courses at the same time they are working in other parts of the book to improve their reading skills.
- The book includes *helpful appendixes*. Appendix A explains graphs and tables—visual information that students must often know how to “read.” Appendix B provides a series of tips for dealing with the special note-taking and study demands of mathematics and science courses. Appendix C shows important connections between reading and writing and includes a number

of writing assignments based on reading selections in the book. Teachers who feel that reading and writing skills should be practiced concurrently will find this section especially helpful.

- The book also includes *learning aids*. There is a set of *twenty-five ditto masters*, free to instructors adopting the book, which provide extra activities and tests for many skills. A *software disk*, revised so that it is truly “user-friendly,” will help students review and practice many of the skills in the text. And an *Instructor’s Manual and Test Bank* is made up of suggestions for using the book, a model syllabus, a full answer key, a guide to the computer disk, and additional activities and tests. All three learning aids are available from the local McGraw-Hill representative or by writing to the College English Editor, McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1221 Avenue of the Americas, New York, New York 10020.

CHANGES IN THE FOURTH EDITION

A number of changes have been made in this new edition. Some of the practice materials in the book have been replaced. A second color has been added to make the entire book more inviting and readable. The chapter on word signals has been revised so that it includes comparison-contrast as well as cause-and-effect signals. The largest change, in response to the request of many instructors, is the addition of a complete textbook chapter from an introductory college textbook. The chapter, taken from *Sociology*, by James W. Vander Zanden, appears on pages 363–391. Students now have the opportunity to practice their reading and study skills in the realistic framework of an entire text chapter. The focus of the book is now more directly on the skills that students need to master their textbook materials.

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John Langan

TO THE STUDENT

One of the first jobs I ever had was as a drill-press operator in a machine shop. When I reported to begin work, the supervisor said to me, "Langan, I want you to spend the first couple of nights going around and observing the operators and picking up everything you can. Then I'll put you on a machine." So for three nights, I walked around and watched people, was bored stiff, and learned very little. I didn't learn the skill of operating a drill press until I was actually put on a machine with a person who could teach me how to run it and I began practicing the skill. I have found that my experience in the machine shop holds true for skill mastery in general. One picks up a skill and becomes good at it when a clear explanation of the skill is followed by plenty of practice. This book, then, tries to present clearly the reading and study skills that you will need to succeed in your school or career work. And it provides abundant activities so that you can practice the skills enough to make them habits.

The skills in this book should help make you an independent learner—a person able to take on and master almost any learning challenge. However, the book cannot help you at all unless you have a personal determination to learn the skills. Back in the machine shop, I quickly learned how to run the drill press because I had plenty of motivation to learn. The job was piecework, and the more skilled I became, the more money I could make. In your case, the more reading and study skills you master, the more likely you are not only to survive but also to do well in your college courses.

- **Part One:** Part One of this book will encourage you to think about the commitment you must make to become an independent learner. It will also help you set goals for yourself, learn a series of five important survival strategies, and evaluate your individual study needs.
- **Part Two:** You can then use *Reading and Study Skills* to develop other skills that can make you an even more effective learner. The review of word skills in Part Two will help you improve your spelling and show you how

to pronounce unfamiliar words, including specialized terms in your various subjects. You will also learn ways to develop your vocabulary, an especially important matter because having only a limited knowledge of words will restrict your understanding of what you read. The concise information about word skills in Part Two can be supplemented with practice materials that are probably available in your college learning center.

- **Part Three:** If you are taking other courses at the same time you are using this book, you may actually want to start with Part Three. The first chapter, "Taking Classroom Notes," will show you how to take effective notes in class and how to study those notes. Early in the semester, you'll want to work through the chapter "Time Control and Concentration." There you will learn how to use your time effectively and to develop consistent study habits. When you begin to get textbook assignments, study the skills presented in the three chapters on textbooks. You might then go on to "Building a Powerful Memory" because that chapter presents techniques to help you remember both classroom and textbook notes. As exams approach, read "Taking Objective Exams" and "Taking Essay Exams," which show how to prepare for both kinds of exams and explain test-taking techniques. Last of all, a chapter called "Using the Library" is available for writing projects that require library research. The above sequence is only a suggested one. Each chapter in Part Three is self-contained so that you can turn to whatever study skill meets your need at a particular time.
- **Part Four:** Part Four explains and offers practice in seven key reading comprehension skills. Students often ask such questions as "What can I do to improve my comprehension?" or "How can I remember what I read?" The first five skills will help you locate and understand important points in articles and textbook chapters. The sixth and seventh skills will enable you to take down and remember those key points in the form of clear and concise study notes. Following the skills is a sample textbook chapter that will give you a chance to apply and strengthen many of the reading and study skills you have learned. Part Four, then, is concerned with improving your study reading—the kind of reading you do to achieve a satisfactory understanding of a selection.
- **Part Five:** Part Five gives you practice in skim reading—going through a selection quickly and selectively to find important ideas. Skimming is a valuable technique for the many times it is not necessary to read every word of a passage.
- **Part Six:** Part Six introduces you to rapid reading—processing words at a faster rate of speed than is your normal habit. You will also learn that rapid reading is not a cure-all for reading problems but simply one technique used

by an effective reader. Indeed, the overall purpose of Parts Four, Five, and Six is to make you an effective, flexible reader. Such a reader is able to practice study reading, skim reading, or speed reading—or all three—depending on the purpose for reading and the nature of the material.

- **Part Seven:** Part Seven consists of a series of mastery tests that can help measure your understanding of many skills in the book.
- **Part Eight:** Finally, Part Eight has three appendixes that provide helpful information on reading graphs and tables, studying mathematics and science, and understanding the connections between reading and writing.

In short, *Reading and Study Skills* will help you become an independent learner— a person who can take on the challenge of any college course. What remains, however, is your personal determination to do the work needed to become a successful student. If you decide—and only you can decide—that you want to make your college years productive and worthwhile, this book will help you reach that goal.

John Langan

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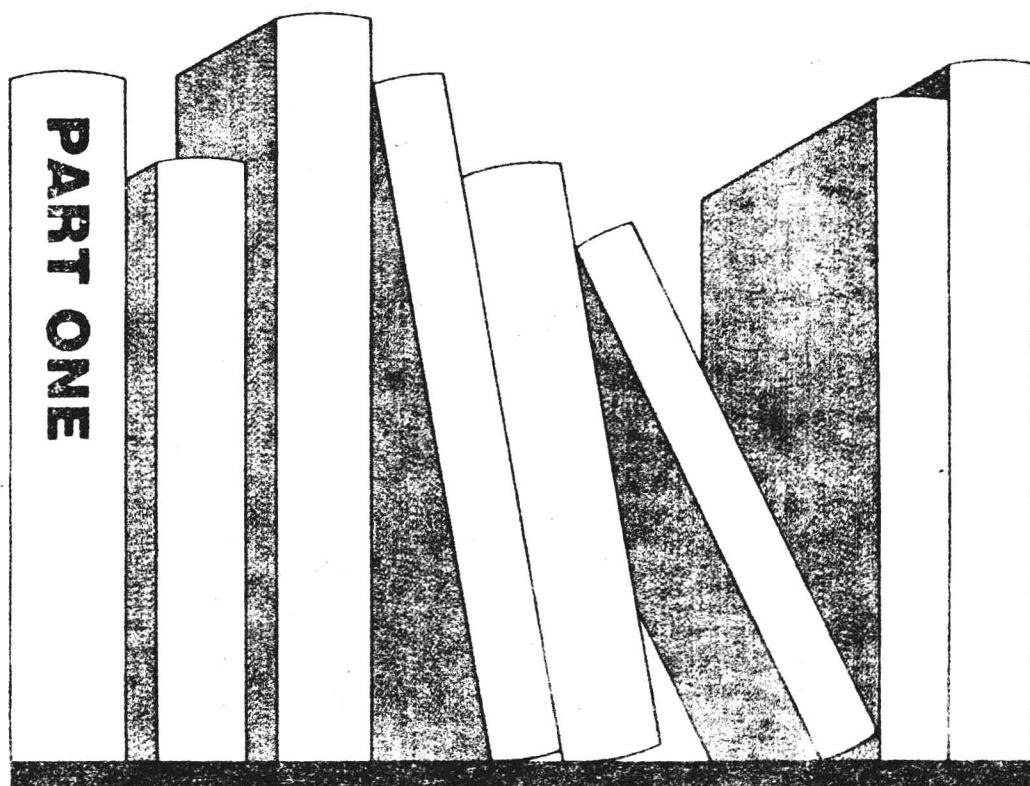
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MOTIVATIONAL SKILLS

PREVIEW

Part One concerns important steps you must take to get off to a strong start with your college career. The point stressed throughout the first chapter, "Your Attitude: The Heart of the Matter," is that you must make a personal decision and commitment to do the diligent work that learning requires. The chapter describes several students who made or failed to make such a commitment; it also asks a series of questions that will help you measure your own willingness to make such a commitment. "Setting Goals for Yourself" will encourage you to think actively about your eventual career goal and the practical steps you should take to start working toward that goal. In "Learning Survival Strategies," a successful student talks about the importance of planning for a realistic career, of getting organized, of learning how to persist, of being positive, and of remaining open to growth. The chapter ends with questions that will help you examine whether these survival strategies are working in your own life. "Diagnosing Your Needs," the last chapter in Part One, will enable you to identify important reading and study skills that you do or do not have right now. You can then begin using the book to work on the skills you need.

YOUR ATTITUDE: THE HEART OF THE MATTER

This book is chiefly about the reading and study skills you need to do well in your college work. But your *attitude* about college work is even more crucial than any reading or study skill. Without the proper frame of mind, you might as well throw this book in the trash. And without the proper frame of mind, you may be wasting your time in school.

DOING THE WORK

Your attitude must say, "I will do the work." I have found that among the two hundred or so students I meet each year, there is almost no way of telling at first which students have this attitude and which ones do not. Some time must pass for people to reveal their attitude by what they do or do not do. What happens is that as the semester unfolds and classes must be attended and work must be done, some people take on the work and persist even if they hit all kinds of snags and problems; others don't take on the work or don't persist when things get rough. It becomes clear which students have determined inside themselves, "I will do the work," and which have not.

The crucial matter is seldom the *speed* at which a person learns; the crucial matter is his or her *determination*—"I *will* learn." I have seen people who had this quality of determination or persistence do poorly in a course, come back and repeat it, and eventually succeed. And two years or so later, in June, I have heard their names being called out and have seen them walking up to the commencement stage to get their degrees.

For example, I have seen the woman who wrote the following piece as her first assignment in a reading and writing class go up to receive her associate of arts degree:

Well its 10:48 and the kids are all in bed. I don't know yet what Im going to write about but I hope I think of something befor this ten minutes are up. boy I don't even like to write that much. I never send my letters or cards because I dislike writing, may be because I never took the time to sit down and really write. I've always wishes I could, put thing on paper that were in my mind. but my spelling isn't at all good, so when I had to take the time to look up a word or ask one of my children how to spell it, I said to heck with it, but, I can't do that with this any way I don't believ I can write for ten mintes straght, but Im trying I refus to stop until Ive made It. Ive always given my self credit for not being a quitter, so I guess I have to keep fighting at this and every thing else in the future, If I wish to reach my gols wich is to pass my GED and go in to nursing. I know it will take me a little longer then some one who hasn't been out of school as long as I have but no matter how long it takes I'm shure I will be well worth It and I'll be glad that I keep fighting. And Im shur my children will be very proud of ther mother some day.

Through knowing such determined people as this woman, I have come to feel that the single most important factor for college survival and success is *an inner commitment to doing the work*. When the crunch comes—and the crunch is the plain hard work that college requires—the person with the commitment meets it head-on; the person without the commitment avoids it in a hundred different ways.

Doing the Work Despite Difficulties

The person who is committed to the work needed to succeed in college is not necessarily one without confusions and difficulties in his or her life. A joke that is sometimes made about freshman orientation—the day or so preceding the start of the first semester, when the student is introduced to college life—is that for some people freshman orientation takes a year or more. The joke is all too often true. I can remember my own confusing first year at La Salle College in Philadelphia. I entered as a chemistry major but soon discovered that I could not deal with the mathematics course required. As hard as I tried, I couldn't pass one of the weekly quizzes given in the class. I felt the teacher was poor and the text unclear, but since other people were passing the tests, I felt the problem was in me, too. It was a terribly confusing time. Because I doubted my ability to do the work, I began questioning my own self-worth.