

ESSAY 2

READING WITH THE WRITER'S EYE

GUTH / HAUSMANN SHEA



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THE WRITER'S EYE



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PREFACE

To the Instructor

The aim of this book is to help students become better readers and writers. Virginia Woolf once said that the ideal reader is the “author’s fellow-worker and accomplice.” The ideal reader senses what the writer is trying to do, is willing to get into the spirit of a piece of writing, and responds to the signals that point the reader in the right direction. It is this kind of reader who is best equipped to profit from the work of successful fellow writers. This book encourages students to read with the writer’s eye—to see in the finished piece of writing the author’s footsteps, to become aware of how a successful piece of writing works.

What makes this book different from other “readers for writers”?

(1) *Essay 2* reprints lively, thought-provoking prose on topics that matter. Many of the writers in this book write on topics close to their hearts, dealing with subjects that the reader can take seriously. They have something to say and they say it well.

(2) *Essay 2* treats each selection as a meaningful whole. The focus throughout is on the *why and how* of writing. What is the author trying to say and how does the author do it? Rather than artificially separating purpose from meaning, or form from content, questions and guidelines in each unit focus on how forms and techniques serve the writer’s purpose.

(3) The organization of *Essay 2* mirrors major dimensions of the writing process. The central part of the book (“Part Two: Patterns for Writing”), focusing on how writing takes shape, presents the familiar patterns of exposition: process, comparison and contrast, classification, cause and effect, definition, persuasion. But Part One (“Sources for Writing”) asks the preliminary question of where writing comes from, what sets it in motion, what gives it substance. It explores the roots of writing in personal experience, alert observation, and our response to the opinions of others (experience, observation, points of view). Part Three (“Areas for Writing”) takes the student writer “across the curriculum” and into actual “fields of writing”: science, media, history. It looks at areas where writers write to inform, to evaluate, or to interpret the past.

(4) *Essay 2* helps teachers bridge the gap between professional writers and the student writer. Pointed guidelines in the “Writer’s Guides” help students translate theory into practice. In candid interviews, authors talk about their own practice in writing and revision. Short student models complete each unit. A rich array of carefully worked-out writing assignments follows each essay.

The following are special features of this second edition:

- a new introduction, “Reading with a Purpose,” guiding the student through the reading of a sample essay
- lively shorter new essays on timely topics (our threatened wildlife, women and pornography, math anxiety)
- larger representation of favorite authors: Annie Dillard, John McPhee, Garrison Keillor, Joan Didion, Kurt Vonnegut, Carl Sagan, Maxine Hong Kingston, Alice Walker, Ellen Goodman
- author interviews (“Writers on Writing”) in which authors talk about writing and revision
- added “Overviews” in each section, specifying for each mode purpose, audience, and benefits for the writer
- student models at the end of each section (with both rough first draft and final revision included for one of these)
- streamlined apparatus with strengthened emphasis on purpose, structure, and audience
- new additional writing topics at the end of each section
- an instructor’s manual offering an introduction to the use of model essays, capsule reviews of essays as well as sample responses to questions, additional “Writing Across the Curriculum” topics, and vocabulary reviews

This book is designed to help writing teachers teach by example as much as by precept, to help them nurture their students’ gift for language, and to help their student writers succeed.

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Hans P. Guth
Renée Hausmann Shea

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