



*Writing*  
FOURTH EDITION

ROBERT KEITH MILLER

# ***MOTIVES FOR WRITING***

**FOURTH EDITION**

**ROBERT KEITH MILLER**

*University of St. Thomas*

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## *Motives for Writing*

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# Preface

The fourth edition of this book continues to reflect the belief that helping students to discover and fulfill their motives for writing will help them to write well. As its title suggests, *Motives for Writing* emphasizes the importance of the writer's purpose—the reason for composing and the ends the writer seeks to achieve. In focusing upon purpose, I have been influenced by the work of such theorists as James Britton, James Kinneavy, and James Moffett, all of whom have shown that understanding the aims of discourse can contribute to better communication. I believe that an emphasis on these aims can help students to develop the active minds that are essential for making sense of the world and conveying that sense to others. I also believe that students familiar with the aims of writing are well prepared for writing in their courses across the curriculum. Each of these aims—or motives, as they are called here—is the subject of one of the introductions provided for Chapters 1–10. The introduction for the book as a whole, “Writing for Your Life,” places the aims with other elements of the rhetorical situation, such as audience and context, and discusses strategies for invention, arrangement, and revision so that students will be better prepared to accomplish their aims. It also introduces students to how to conduct research and how to honor the conventions of academic discourse—new material requested by users of the third edition.

All of the introductions are designed to provide both teachers and students with flexibility. There are frequent reminders that the aims of discourse can be pursued by different means, and the discussion of planning and drafting encourages writers to choose the methods that work best for them. The entire book reflects the conviction that different writers work well in different ways—and the same writer may work well by using different approaches at different times. I have seen in my classrooms that providing students with choices can enable them to overcome the difficulties that writers encounter. Mindful of these difficulties, I have tried to keep the book's rhetoric as simple and direct as possible and to choose readings that speak to a diverse range of students.

The reading selections illustrate the various motives for writing and provide examples of different writing styles and patterns of arrangement. Although the readings vary in length—with the longer, more challenging selections concentrated toward the end of most chapters—they all address issues that are likely to inspire good class discussion. Of the 77 selections, 34 are new in the fourth edition. The choices have resulted in a collection that is both culturally and rhetorically diverse: The writers included in this edition discuss diversity in terms of race, class, gender, geography, religion, and sexual orientation; and their works include personal essays, feature articles, documented arguments, critical assessments, short fiction, and poems. I have nevertheless retained a

number of familiar pieces both because they have proven records as classroom favorites and because I wanted to spare instructors the necessity of undertaking an entirely new class preparation. Gloria Naylor, Annie Dillard, Martin Luther King, Jr., George Orwell, Alice Walker, and Jonathan Swift are a few of the authors represented by well-known works.

An alternative table of contents groups selections on related topics for users interested in pursuing a particular subject or theme. Moreover, the apparatus for each selection includes links making connections with other selections within the book, as well as directing students to additional resources in print and online. Headnotes provide information about authors and the context in which their work originally appeared. Although some “Questions for Discussion” are designed simply to gauge reading comprehension, most raise concerns that invite readers to think about what they have read and to formulate their own responses. Every reading is also followed by three “Suggestions for Writing.” Individual readers may well identify other questions and suggestions; I did not attempt to exhaust the possibilities of any piece. My goal was simply to encourage thoughtful responses to reading, and I believe that such responses, when encouraged, can take any number of directions.

Instructors familiar with the third edition will find that I have made changes in the book’s structure. In response to reviewers who recommended less emphasis on expressive discourse and more emphasis on academic discourse, I condensed two chapters in the third edition (“Writing to Record a Memory” and “Writing to Explore Experience”) into one: “Writing to Understand Experience.” In addition to incorporating examples of academic discourse into Chapters 2, 3, and 7, I also incorporate them into a chapter new to this edition, Chapter 5: “Writing to Analyze Images.” The design of this new chapter responds to research on the extent to which students learn visually as well as to rising interest in visual rhetoric. It also provides another way for instructors to give writing assignments that call for both creative and critical thinking.

Instructors new to *Motives for Writing* will find that this book also includes chapters designed to elicit other kinds of writing that are rarely included in standard textbooks. While Chapters 1 through 5 prompt students to consider what they want an audience to learn or to think, Chapter 6 (“Writing to Move Others”) and Chapter 8 (“Writing to Amuse Others”) encourage students to focus on changing how an audience feels. Chapter 9, “Writing to Experiment with Form,” emphasizes how an essay can be as “creative” as a story or a poem. And Chapter 10, “Writing to Understand Reading,” extends the discussion of literary discourse by inviting students to think about stories, poems, and a short play.

Most chapters begin with short, readily accessible readings and conclude with more demanding pieces. And the motives themselves have been arranged according to the degree of difficulty inexperienced writers are likely to have with them. The sequence of chapters begins with a writer-centered motive in “Writing to Understand Experience,” then turns to subject-centered motives

such as “Writing to Report Information” and “Writing to Interpret Information,” followed by such audience-centered motives as “Writing to Move Others” and “Writing to Persuade Others.” But because every chapter is self-contained, the various motives can be studied in any sequence that seems appropriate for a specific class—just as the readings within any chapter can be read in a sequence determined by individual interests or needs.

A word here about the rhetorical modes: This book takes the position that writing seldom involves conforming to a fixed pattern, that a single piece usually involves several modes, and that no mode is limited to any one motive. In other words, I present the modes as means for generating ideas when pursuing different aims—not as models to which writers should make their thoughts conform. I believe that instruction based on fixed patterns of arrangement can turn writing into an academic exercise that bears little relation to the way writers write in the world beyond the classroom. Patterns such as definition, classification, and comparison are more likely to grow out of the act of writing than to be imposed at the outset as a framework to which invention must be subordinate. Because the modes can be useful for instructors and students who wish to focus on organization, I include discussion of them in the introduction to Chapters 3, 4, 5, and 7. The book also includes an Index to the Readings by Rhetorical Strategy (Mode); however, the text as a whole presents arrangement as one of the writer’s tools, not an end in itself.

In completing this edition of *Motives for Writing*, I have accumulated many debts. Leslie Adrienne Miller helped me to select new poems for the book, and, in the process of doing so, introduced me to works by many poets whom I want to keep reading. My friends Mary Rose O’Reilly, Lon Otto, John O’Brien, and Erika Scheurer offered good counsel whenever I turned to them. In addition, Erika somehow found time in a demanding schedule to read the manuscript with care and to write the Instructor’s Manual—work for which I am deeply grateful. Andrew J. Leet provided timely assistance with photocopying manuscript and helping me to review page proof. I also want to thank the following instructors for sharing their experience with the first three editions of the book: Funwi F. Ayuninjam, Kentucky State University; Roy Baggett, North Central Texas College; T. M. Barnhill, B.A., M.A. English, Gadsden State Community College; Stephen Bonin, North Central Texas College; Carol Ann Britt, San Antonio College; Amanda Crowell, University of Missouri–St. Louis; Mary Dell Heathington, North Central Texas College; Bill Franklin, North Central Texas College; Janet Goddard, University of Missouri–St. Louis; Bernie Hall, Lee College; Linda Hasley, Redlands Community College; Megan L. Knight, University of Iowa; Kaye Kolkman, Modesto Junior College; Janet Kraft, Long Beach City College; Kim Long, Shippensburg University; Ian Marshall, Penn State Altoona; Nellie McCrory, Ph.D., Gaston College; Katherine P. McFarland, Ph.D., Shippensburg University; Delma McLeod-Porter, McNeese State University; Tracy Michaels, Shoreline Community College; Eleanor Montero, Ph.D., Daytona Beach Community College; Douglas L. Okey, Spoon River College; Marilyn Ortmann, Westchester Community College; Erica F.

Riley, Des Moines Area Community College; Dorothy S. Ryan, University of Massachusetts–Dartmouth; Roberta Silverman, California State University–Dominguez Hills; David Sims, Pennsylvania College of Technology; Thomas Staudter, Westchester Community College; Ian C. Storey, Central Michigan University; Jeffrey S. Tormala, Central Michigan University; and Dave Waddell, California State University, Chico, Butte College, Shasta College. April Wells-Hayes, copyeditor, was consistently helpful when preparing the final manuscript for production. We had worked together on the first edition of this book, and it was a pleasure to be reunited on the fourth. Barbara Armentrout provided timely and much appreciated assistance with locating biographical information about authors and resolving issues in documentation style. Brian Gore located numerous web sites from which students could benefit. At McGraw-Hill, Alex Ambrose, photo researcher, and designers Susan Breitbard and Violeta Díaz all provided expert help. Marty Granahan was a model of efficiency and good humor when negotiating permissions agreements. Carole R. Crouse read page proof with careful attention. During the long and complicated process of getting the manuscript into print, David Staloch, my production editor, was inventive and steadfast in honoring with grace and wit numerous requests from me. Finally, I am glad to acknowledge the generous and thoughtful support of Renée Deljon, the acquisitions editor who convinced me to create this edition and proved endlessly resourceful as the work developed.

## **A Summary of What's New in the Fourth Edition**

The changes to this edition of *Motives for Writing* are explained in detail above; the following list shows, at a glance, what's new:

**Over 40% of the Readings.** 34 of the 77 selections in the text are new to this edition, offering timely selections on topics such as cell phones, racial profiling, and terrorism.

**Expanded “Links.”** A new “Links” box now appears after each selection to refer students to related readings in the text, related readings elsewhere in print, and relevant resources on the World Wide Web.

**Writing to Analyze Images.** Chapter 5 includes essays on topics from classical art to print advertising, Web pages, and product packaging. It also includes a wealth of images as well as a guide to writing about visuals.

**Expanded Introduction.** The book's introduction, “Writing for Your Life,” now includes an expanded discussion of peer review and a new section focused on how to write academic papers, as well as a discussion of how to do research and use documentation.

**Streamlined Organization.** The previous edition's first two chapters were combined to create the new Chapter 1, "Writing to Understand Experience." Academic motives for writing are focused early on in Chapter 2, "Writing to Report Information," and Chapter 3, "Writing to Interpret Information."

**Increased Emphasis on Academic Writing and Research.** In addition to the new coverage in the book's general introduction and the emphasis on academic motives for writing beginning with Chapter 2, examples of academic writing, including documented works, appear throughout the book. Both MLA and APA styles are now illustrated (see pages 38–48, 257–273, and 563–577). MLA style is also used for the "Elsewhere in Print" lists that follow every selection.

**Web Site to Accompany *Motives for Writing, Fourth Edition*.** The book's new Web site, located at <[mhhe.com/motives](http://mhhe.com/motives)>, provides links to information related to the readings' topics, themes, and authors.

## Additional Resources Available

**More Digital Solutions.** McGraw-Hill also offers other technology products for composition classes. Three of those products are briefly described below. For information about the following, and additional electronic resources, please visit the McGraw-Hill Higher Education Web site's English pages at <[www.mhhe.com/catalogs/hss/english](http://www.mhhe.com/catalogs/hss/english)> and its "Digital Solutions" pages at <[www.mhhe.com/catalogs/solutions](http://www.mhhe.com/catalogs/solutions)>.

**PageOut.** McGraw-Hill's widely used click-and-build Web site program offers a series of templates and many design options, requires no knowledge of HTML, and is intuitive and easy-to-use. With PageOut, anyone can produce a professionally designed course Web site in very little time.

**AllWrite!** Available online or on CD-ROM, AllWrite! offers over 3,000 exercises for practice in basic grammar, usage, punctuation, context spelling, and techniques for effective writing. The popular program is richly illustrated with graphics, animation, video, and Help screens.

**Webwrite.** This online product, available through our partner company MetaText, makes it possible for writing teachers and students to, among other things, comment on and share papers online.



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Women's Brains, STEPHEN JAY GOULD 230

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What Happened to the Anasazi? CATHERINE DOLD 237

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Bing Crosby, The Unsung King of Song, GARY GIDDINS 298

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Reach Out and Annoy Someone, JONATHAN ROWE 307

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She: Portrait of the Essay as a Warm Body, CYNTHIA OZICK 313

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Please, Please, You're Driving Me Wild, JEAN KILBOURNE 413

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