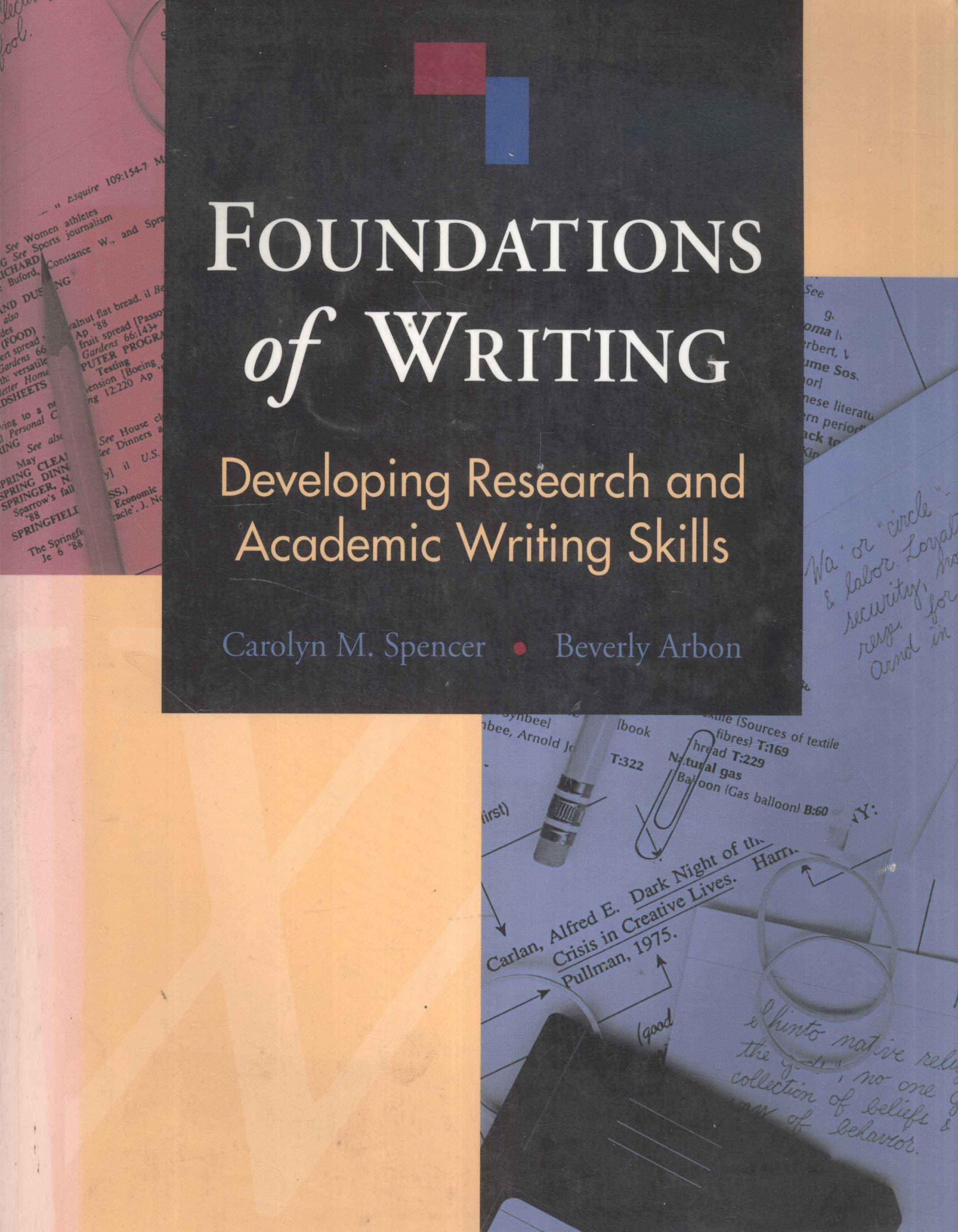


FOUNDATIONS *of* WRITING

Developing Research and Academic Writing Skills

Carolyn M. Spencer • Beverly Arbon





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To the Student

You and your classmates are now in an academic writing class to learn about the types of writing that are required in American colleges and universities. Every student's writing experience has been different. Some have written mostly short letters or journal entries, while others have written in many different forms. Therefore, it is important at the beginning of this course to discuss the writing experience you and your classmates have had and what you expect from this class.

Consider these questions with your classmates:

1. How much writing have you done?
2. What kind of writing did you do? (stories, essays, reports)
3. What length were your writings? (number of paragraphs or pages)
4. What part of your writing experience did you enjoy?
5. What does the term *academic writing* mean to you?
6. What do you expect to learn from this class?

Here is a list of the types of writing that are generally required in colleges and universities. Look at this list together.

Put a *Y* for "yes" next to those you already know how to do.

Put a question mark (?) next to all those you need to know more about.

Put an *N* for "no" next to those you don't know.

- ☐ NOTES—you take notes from readings, interviews, or lectures
- ☐ LIBRARY RESEARCH—you use a library to find information for a research paper
- ☐ SUMMARIZE AN ARTICLE—you read an article and write the main ideas in a paragraph
- ☐ DESCRIPTION—you describe an event, a picture, or a place

- ☐ CAUSE AND EFFECT—you discuss the cause of something and how it affects something else
- ☐ COMPARISON AND CONTRAST—you discuss the similarities and differences of things or ideas
- ☐ PRO AND CON—you discuss two opposing sides of an issue
- ☐ ACADEMIC ARGUMENT—you look at both sides first, then take a position and defend it
- ☐ ANALYSIS—you carefully look at the parts of something and see how they all work together
- ☐ EVALUATION ESSAY—you look at the parts of something and compare it to a standard or an ideal
- ☐ WRITING ESSAY ANSWERS ON A TEST—you look at the test question, decide what the question is asking, and write an answer that is organized in a paragraph or a short essay

How many do you think you already know?_____

How many are you familiar with?_____

How many don't you know?_____

Overview of Academic Writing Tasks

Here is a list of academic writing tasks you probably will be expected to do in a North American college or university. By the time you finish this course, you will be able to do most of these tasks.

I. Note-taking

- A. From reading texts and articles
- B. From interviews or speakers

II. Essays and Papers

- A. Writing from
 - 1. Facts you already know
 - 2. Facts you read about
 - 3. Facts you discover on your own
- B. Types of papers
 - 1. Essays
 - a. Informal
 - b. Formal
 - 2. Reports
 - 3. Research Papers

III. Examinations

Answering test questions that require writing a paragraph or an essay.

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Writing Backgrounds and Styles

Knowing Yourself

Writing is a healing and creative journey back to the mystery and power of our words as an instrument of creation that came latent within us at birth.

—G. Lynn Nelson

PART 1: WHAT'S THE POINT?

By the time we get to college, most of us in the United States are aware of the diverse culture in which we live. Our different backgrounds incorporate various literacy styles (ways in which we read, write, and speak). And our individual minds have individual learning styles (how we learn and how we figure things out). Finally, most of us do not use **Standard English** in speaking or writing. In fact, many of us don't even know what Standard English is or why it's important. Below are various models of literacy and learning, including Standard English. You will see yourself in at least one of these models, and many of you will spot yourselves in several.

CHAPTER 1

The Essay

INTRODUCTION

One of the most common writing assignments is the essay. An essay is a short piece of writing on a single subject. An essay can be as short as three to five paragraphs. Sometimes you choose the subject of an essay yourself, and sometimes the subject is assigned to you.

PART 1 *Essay Types*

There are two general types of essay, informal and formal. Study the definitions of both types.

Informal essays are written from your own experience and knowledge for a general audience. They are revised to improve content, organization, and mechanics (spelling, punctuation, sentence structure, and grammar). These essays are written in friendly, personal, everyday language and can be handwritten or typed.

Formal essays are written for an academic audience for a specific purpose. The language is formal. Like informal essays, they are revised many times to improve the content and organization and to correct errors in mechanics (spelling, punctuation, sentence structure, and grammar). They might use information from other sources. They are usually typed.

PART 2 *Essay Models*

When you prepare the final copy of an essay, you will want it to have a specific appearance. The appearance includes where you put your name, date, and class name on the paper. This information is called a heading. The appearance also includes the proper place for the title, capitalization of the title, the margins, and the font (or typewriter lettering) you use. In addition, academic papers are written or typed on only one side of a sheet of paper.

Following are handwritten and typed models of an essay called "Money, Money, Money! I Want More Money!" Look at them and identify the parts by answering these questions.

1. What information is found in the heading?
2. Where is the heading placed?
3. Where is the title? How is it capitalized?
4. How wide are the margins?
5. Why did the student skip lines in the body of the essay?

Handwritten model

	Rafael Delgado
	May 10, 1995
	College Writing
	Money, Money, Money! I Want More Money
	Is money that important? Many people are always concerned about
	getting as much money as they want, and sometimes they forget the real reason
	to have money. Then the desire to make more money becomes an obsession that
	can be difficult to stop. It is not bad to make money. As a matter of fact, we
	need it to survive in this world. We need money to buy food and pay for our
	rent, books, and entertainment. It is almost impossible to live

Typed model

Rafael Delgado
May 10, 1995
College Writing

Money, Money, Money! I Want More Money!

Is money that important? Many people are always concerned about getting as much money as they want, and sometimes they forget the real reason to have money. Then the desire to make more money becomes an obsession that can be difficult to stop. It is not bad to make money. As a matter of fact, we need it to survive in this world. We need money to buy food and pay for our rent, books, and entertainment. It is almost impossible to live without money. The problem is when money is the only thing we want.

Sometimes people get this obsession for money for the wrong reasons. They think that money will bring them better status, more friends, and more happiness. The question is, are they really friends and is that real happiness? Most of the time these friends and happiness last only as long as the money lasts. Real friends and happiness have so high a price that they cannot be bought with money.

Another problem with the obsession for money is that people forget to enjoy the "way through it." For example, sometimes students have their minds set on the graduation date or the day they have their diplomas in their hands. They forget that it is better to enjoy all the way, day by day, semester by semester. In the same way, people should enjoy making money and using it always, not as a final and big goal. For example, I can enjoy making \$20,000 a year, then the next year \$50,000, and then a million. I do not have to wait for happiness. I can enjoy the process.

Finally, the Lord says in the *New Testament* that it is not bad to make money if we have a wise purpose or if we use it to share with the people who need it. Since I do not have money, I share my time with others who need help, and this brings me satisfaction. In the same way, people who share their money to help others will find great satisfaction. It is not bad to have money, if you use it wisely.

Money is important. People should be concerned about getting money to live, but many important parts of life do not cost money. Therefore, money is not bad unless it is the only thing we want.

PART 3 *Assignment 1: Informal Essay*

- ▼ Write an informal essay following the information you have just studied. You have 30 minutes.

Write on the topic “The Importance of My College Major” or “The Importance of Learning English.”

PRACTICE 1

Thinking about Assignment 1

- ▼ After you have finished Assignment 1, discuss with your classmates how you felt about the first writing assignment and how you fulfilled the assignment. Write short answers to these questions in your notebook.

1. How did you begin? (GETTING STARTED)
 - Did you wonder why this subject was given?
 - Did you think about who would read this essay?
 - What did you think the reader would want to know?
 - What did you think of that you decided the reader wouldn't want to know?
2. What did you do to plan before you began writing? (PREWRITING)
 - Did you plan in your head or on paper?
 - Did you write down any words or sentences?
 - How did you decide the first word?
3. What happened while you were actually writing? (ORGANIZING, REVISING, EDITING)
 - Did you want to rewrite some parts?
 - Were you trying to please the reader or yourself, the writer?
 - Was it easy to divide the paragraphs?
 - Did you think of starting some sentences with a clause or a prepositional phrase?
 - Did you have trouble with vocabulary, grammar, spelling, or punctuation?
4. What were you feeling?
 - Did you think that your work would be criticized?
 - Were you afraid, nervous, frustrated, unsure?
 - Was the subject a good one? Did you like it or dislike it?
 - Did you feel pressure from the 30-minute time limit?
 - Were you happy with what you wrote or did you want to start over again?

5. How does this assignment compare to other writings you have done?

- Who read your other papers?
- How many 30-minute essays have you written?
- Have you written about this subject before?
- Does the appearance of this essay look like other English essays?

6. What could help you to be less nervous and more organized? Write your ideas.

The Academic Writing Process

INTRODUCTION

Writing is a continuous process that ends with well-organized ideas on paper. A process means that you start at the beginning and go through several steps in a specific order. You will use the academic writing process in almost every paper you write for this course. Here are the steps in the academic writing process:

- I. GETTING STARTED
- II. PREWRITING
- III. GATHERING INFORMATION
- IV. ORGANIZING THE INFORMATION
- V. WRITING THE FIRST DRAFT
- VI. REVISING AND REWRITING
- VII. EDITING AND REWRITING

PART I *The Writing Process*

Now, here are more details for each of the steps. You will find out about all of these steps as you go through the book, and you will have many opportunities to practice these skills.

- I. GETTING STARTED
 - A. Get the assignment
 - 1. Understand the assignment. (What should you do?)

2. Understand the purpose. (Why is this necessary? What will you learn?)
 3. Identify the audience. (Who will read this? What do they want to know?)
- B. Choose a topic that you:
1. are concerned about (What is important to you?)
 2. are interested in (What do you like? What topic excites you?)
 3. want to know more about (What would you like to learn?)

II. PREWRITING

- A. Discover all you know about the topic by using one or more of the following techniques:
1. Make a list of everything you can think of about the topic (brainstorming).
 2. Ask yourself general questions and answer them, or ask more specific wh- questions (who, what, where, why, when, how).
 3. Use Venn diagrams or idea maps.
 4. Write (or talk) as fast as you can, saying anything that comes to your mind.

III. GATHERING INFORMATION

- A. Ask questions.
- B. Read articles.
- C. Choose information that explains the topic.
- D. Take notes on note cards.

IV. ORGANIZING INFORMATION

- A. Categorize and label information.
- B. Make a general plan (planning outline).

V. WRITING OR TYPING THE FIRST DRAFT

- A. Follow your planning outline.
- B. Write quickly.

VI. REVISING AND REWRITING

- A. Add more details, examples, explanations.
- B. Reorganize if necessary.
- C. Improve paragraphing.
- D. Change words or sentence structure.

VII. EDITING AND REWRITING

- A. Read your paper aloud.
- B. Correct errors in spelling, punctuation, and grammar.

(Repeat any steps as often as necessary.)

PART 2 *Model of the Academic Writing Process*

Study the model of the academic writing process. On the left is the process you have just studied. On the right is the work of a student who followed the steps to write an essay.

I. Getting Started

Topic: Why learning English is important to me

II. Prewriting

English

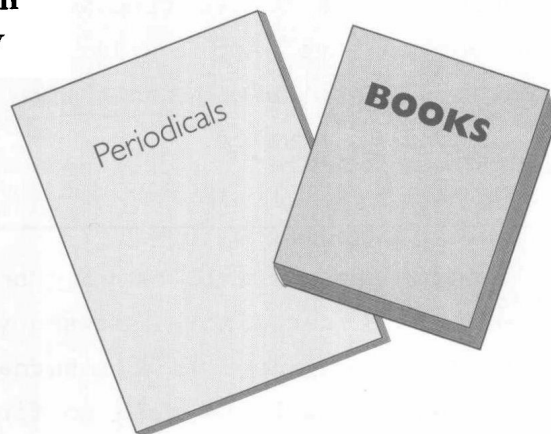
Jobs- more opportunities, can find work
anywhere

Money- good home, enough food, good
education for children

Influence-use my talents, teach my child

Travel- English is universal language

III. Gathering Information That Will Help Clarify the Topic



IV. Organizing Information

- I. Introduction
- II. Good jobs
 - A. More opportunity
 - B. Can work anywhere
 - C. Higher pay
- III. Influence
 - A. Teach children English
 - B. Use English internationally

V. Writing or Typing the First Draft

Knowing English will be very beneficial with me.

First I will be able to get a better job than if I didn't know English. I would be able for to find work somewhere I want to live. And I will get higher pay than peoples who don't know English.

Secondly, I will

VI. Revising and Rewriting

Knowing English will be very beneficial with me.

First I will be able to get a better job than if I didn't know English. I would be able for to find work anywhere I want to live. And I will get higher pay than peoples who don't know English.

Secondly, I will

VII. Editing and Rewriting

Knowing English will be very beneficial for with me. First since I am studying to become an engineer in international business, I will be able to find work anywhere I want to live. For example, there is an international business in nearly every large city in my country so I can applied many places. Also I will get higher pay