

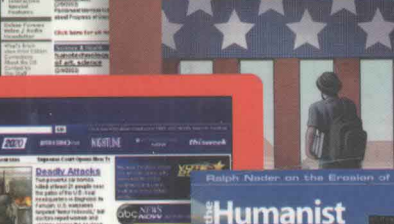
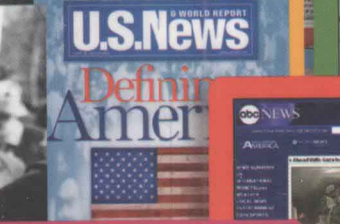
Sixth Edition

America NOW

Short
Readings

from Recent Periodicals

Robert Atwan



America Now

Short Readings from Recent Periodicals

Sixth Edition

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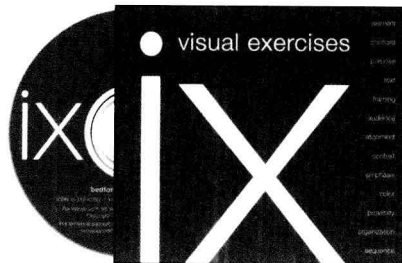
About This Book

With 75 *very* brief readings — all new to this edition — from over 50 *very* recent periodicals and student newspapers — on 15 topics of *very* current interest, *America Now* reflects what students are talking and writing about right **now**.

- With every selection published since 2003 and more than half from 2004, *America Now* is the **most current short-essay reader available**. Provocative cartoons, opinion advertisements, and *America Then* selections invite students to think critically about visual texts.
- **15 bite-sized thematic units** on topics such as body image, consumerism, the media, diversity, racial bigotry, and the death penalty stimulate lively debate and student response. *Opposing Views* and *Campus Debates* offer diverse perspectives and invite critical discussion and writing.
- **Extensive editorial apparatus** provides the help students need to think, speak, and write about their reading. In the book's introduction, **new advice on expressing opinions** — including two annotated student papers — helps students express and support arguments in their writing.

A New Resource for Teaching with Visual Texts

ix Visual Exercises CD-ROM offers a new way to focus on visual rhetoric. Nine exercises provide illustrated definitions of key concepts, guided readings of real-world texts, and interactive assignments to help students develop a critical vocabulary to use as they read and write about *all* kinds of texts.



To order ix, FREE with student copies of *America Now*, use package ISBN 0-312-43671-8. For more information, visit bedfordstmartins.com/ix, or contact your local sales representative.

America Now

Short Readings from Recent Periodicals

Bedford/St. Martin's Offers Your Students More Help to Succeed in Your Course

Bedford/St. Martin's has a wide variety of Web sites designed to help your students with their most common writing concerns. They'll find advice from experts, models they can rely on, and exercises that will tell them right away how they're doing. And it's all free and available any hour of the day.

Help with Writing and Editing:

Exercise Central (bedfordstmartins.com/exercisecentral)

Diagnostic tests, tutorials, and thousands of editing exercises help students improve their grammar and usage skills and save valuable classroom time.

Model Documents Gallery (bedfordstmartins.com/modeldocs)

Examples of documents from a variety of disciplines model for students appropriate formats, styles, and documentation methods.

Document Design Tutorial, by Roger Munger
(bedfordstmartins.com/docdesigntutorial)

Students learn how to create visually effective papers using basic word processing features.

Preparing Presentation Slides Tutorial, by John Battalio
(bedfordstmartins.com/presentationssidetutorial)

Design guidelines and sample slides help students create successful presentations.

Help with Research:

The Bedford Research Room, by Mike Palmquist
(bedfordstmartins.com/researchroom)

Step-by-step tutorials help students develop a research question, search a database, evaluate sources, and integrate quotations.

Tutorial for Evaluating Online Sources, by Roger Munger
(bedfordstmartins.com/onlinecestutorial)

Students learn how to select Web sites that will serve as good sources for their papers.

Research and Documentation Online, by Diana Hacker
(bedfordstmartins.com/resdoc)

Clear guidelines help students integrate outside material into their writing, cite sources correctly, and format their papers according to MLA, APA, Chicago, or CBE styles.

Avoiding Plagiarism, by Margaret Price
(bedfordstmartins.com/plagiarismtutorial)

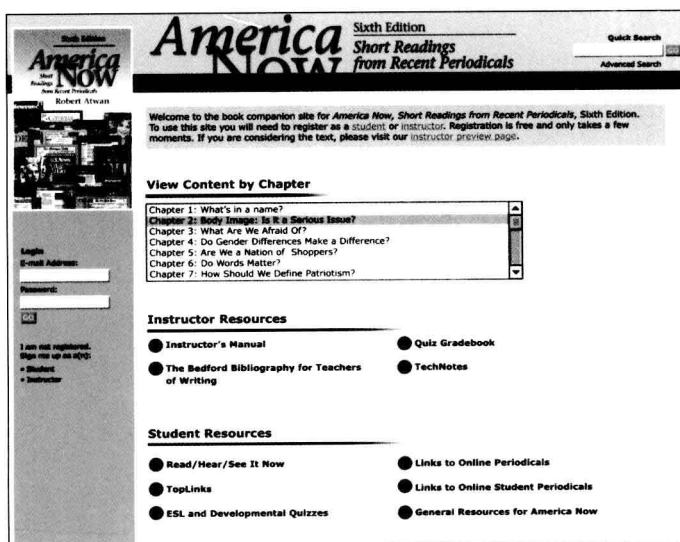
An explanation of what plagiarism is, advice on how to avoid it, and useful exercises help students develop responsible research and writing habits.

Want to see what else *America Now* has to offer
you and your students?

Visit our companion Web site.

Our new Web site for *America Now* is designed to help your students extend their study, discussion, and writing about today's hottest issues. Additional resources for teaching include an online version of the Instructor's Manual.

bedfordstmartins.com/americanow



- **Read/Hear/See It Now** links, organized by chapter, provide access to every online resource — essays, interviews, photographs, music, and speeches — provided in the book's Web references.
- **TopLinks** — annotated research links for each chapter — offer excellent resources for writing.
- **ESL and Developmental Quizzes** for each chapter test vocabulary and comprehension skills; electronic scoring, which can be monitored by instructors, offers immediate feedback.
- **Links to Online Periodicals**, including student publications, connect you with every online newspaper, magazine, and journal in *America Now*.
- **General Resources for America Now** offer links to sites related to the issues and authors represented in the book.

About the Editor

Robert Atwan is director of The Blue Hills Writing Institute at Curry College and the series editor of the annual *Best American Essays*, which he founded in 1985. His essays, reviews, and critical articles have appeared in the *New York Times*, the *Los Angeles Times*, *The Atlantic Monthly*, *Iowa Review*, *Denver Quarterly*, *Kenyon Review*, *River Teeth*, and many other publications. For Bedford/St. Martin's, he has also edited *Ten on Ten: Major Essayists on Recurring Themes* (1992), *Our Times*, Fifth Edition (1998), and *Convergences*, Second Edition (2005). He has coedited (with Jon Roberts) *Left, Right, and Center: Voices from Across the Political Spectrum* (1996), and is coeditor with Donald McQuade of *The Writer's Presence*, Fifth Edition (2005).

Preface for Instructors

People write for many reasons, but one of the most compelling is to express their views on matters of current public interest. Browse any newsstand, library magazine rack, or Web portal home page and you'll find an abundance of articles and opinion pieces responding to current issues and events. Too frequently, students see the writing they do in a composition class as having little connection with real-world problems and issues. *America Now*, with its provocative professional and student writing—all truly current opinion essays drawn from a range of periodicals—shows students that by writing on the issues of today that are most important to them, they can influence campus and public discourse and truly make a difference.

The sixth edition of *America Now* retains its generous sampling of this timely and provocative material. *America Now* is designed to immerse introductory writing students in the give-and-take of public dialogue and to stimulate thinking, discussion, and composition. Its overriding instructional principle—which guides everything from the choice of readings and topics to the design of questions—is that participation in informed discussion will help generate and enrich student writing. The book systematically encourages its users to view reading, thinking, discussion, and writing as closely interrelated activities. It assumes that (1) attentive reading and reflection will lead to informed discussion; (2) participation in open and informed discussion will result in a broadening of viewpoints; (3) an awareness of different viewpoints will stimulate further reflection and renewed discussion; and (4) this process in turn will lead to thoughtful papers. The book's general introduction, "The Empowered Writer," briefly takes the student through the process and offers some useful guidelines for engaging in productive discussion—and in this sixth edition, also includes advice on opinion formation and expression along with two annotated student essays that serve as models of effective opinion writing. Instructors may also find helpful my essay "Writing and the Art of Discussion," which can be found in the Instructor's Edition and online at the *America Now* Web site.

New to This Edition

Seventy-five selections—all new and *very* current. Drawn from more than fifty recent periodicals, including eighteen online student newspapers, every essay is not only new to the book but—perhaps more important—has appeared within a year or two of the book’s publication. With over half of its selections published in 2004, *America Now* is the most up-to-date short essay reader available. Some of the readings you’ll find in the sixth edition are Richard Rodriguez and Saira Shah on identity, Margaret Talbot on gender and war, Howard Zinn on patriotism, Bill McKibben on environmental issues, and Andrew Sullivan on same-sex marriage.

Eight new issues of current interest. Eight of the fifteen thematic chapters have been changed in this edition to reflect the changing interests of students over the past two years and to stimulate discussion and writing. These new topics are fear, consumerism, diversity, the news media, cars and the environment, same-sex marriage, democracy, and the death penalty.

New advice on the formation and expression of opinion. The Introduction includes new sections to help students generate, express, and support arguments in their writing. Two annotated student papers illustrate this advice and offer models for persuasive writing.

A new Student Writer at Work feature. Seven chapters include new interviews with students whose work appears in *America Now*. In brief Q&As, student writers discuss why they wrote on a given topic and published their work in their campus newspapers, providing readers with insight into how and why their peers respond to current issues.

An updated companion Web site (bedfordstmartins.com/america now) provides students with access to the Read/Hear/See It Now links referenced throughout the book, annotated research links for each chapter, electronically scored *ESL and Developmental Quizzes* for each chapter, and links to every online newspaper, magazine, and journal in *America Now*. The site also includes an online version of the Instructor’s Manual.

Using America Now

Professional and Student Writing from a Wide Variety of Sources

The book’s fifty selections from professional writers are drawn from thirty-six recent periodicals, ranging from professional journals such as *Black Issues in Higher Education* to influential general magazines such

as *The Atlantic Monthly*. As would be expected in a collection that focuses heavily on social trends and current events, *America Now* features a wide variety of newspapers and news-oriented magazines: the *Boston Globe*, the *New York Times*, the *Wall Street Journal*, *Time*, *Newsweek*, and the *New York Times Magazine*. With its additional emphasis on public discourse, this collection also draws on some of America's leading political magazines, including *Reason* and *The Progressive*. Magazines appealing primarily to specialized audiences (such as *The Humanist* and the *Chronicle of Higher Education*) are also represented, along with two popular online periodicals, *Indymedia.org* and *Salon.com*. In general, the selections illustrate the variety of personal, informative, and persuasive writing read daily by millions of Americans. In addition to their range and interest, the selections are kept short (many under three pages, and some no longer than a page) to hold student interest and to serve as models for the student's own writing, generally assigned to be about the same length. To introduce a more in-depth approach to various topics, the book features a few longer essays in the final chapters.

America Now also features twenty-five published student selections—essays and cartoons—almost all of which appeared in college newspapers that are available on the Internet. These recent works reveal student writers confronting in a public forum the same topics and issues that challenge some of our leading social critics and commentators, and they show how student writers can enter into and influence public discussion. In this way, the student selections in *America Now*—complemented by this edition's new Student Writer at Work interviews—encourage students to view the act of writing as a form of personal and public empowerment. And since they clearly display what students write about on their own outside of class, the student essays are sure to spark lively, interesting discussion inside the classroom.

Opposing Views on Timely Topics for Discussion and Debate

Student essays not only make up a large percentage of this edition, they also shape the volume's contents. As we monitored the broad spectrum of college newspapers available on the Internet—and reviewed several hundred student essays—we gradually found the most commonly discussed campus issues and topics. Issues such as consumerism, the role of democracy, the news media, the environment, racial conflict, and same-sex marriage have provoked so much recent student response that they could have resulted in several single-topic collections. Many college papers do not restrict themselves to news items and editorial

opinion but make room for personal essays as well. Some popular student topics are gender, group identity, patriotism, and body image, all of which are reflected in the book's Table of Contents.

To facilitate group discussion and in-class work, *America Now* features fifteen bite-sized units. These tightly focused chapters permit instructors to cover a broad range of themes and issues in a single semester. Each can be conveniently handled in one or two class periods. In general, the chapters move from accessible, personal topics (for example, body image, identity, and gender) to more public issues (diversity, patriotism, the death penalty), thus accommodating instructors who prefer to start with personal writing and gradually progress to exposition, analysis, and argument.

Since composition courses naturally emphasize issues revolving around language and the construction of meaning, *America Now* also includes several chapters designed to encourage students to examine the powerful influence of words and symbols. Language issues also surface in many selections throughout the book.

For instructors who want to concentrate on developing argumentation skills, the book arranges several controversial topics into **Campus Debates** and **Opposing Views**. A Campus Debate in the book's Introduction presents two student opinions on how to approach the issue of date rape; Opposing Views feature both students and professionals debating the issue of cars and the environment, and the questions of what patriotism is and what defines American heroes.

The Role of the Internet

Nearly all of the student pieces were located on the Internet. *America Now* is the first composition reader to draw heavily on this rapidly expanding resource for readers, writers, and anyone interested in discussion of current political and cultural affairs. As Web pages, chat rooms, online forums, and other discussion sites continue to proliferate, students will find a wide-open environment for sharing information, opinions, and concerns. All kinds of public forums are quickly growing more convenient and accessible; most periodicals, for example, welcome e-mail responses, and today student writers can enter the public sphere as never before. In addition to student essays from Internet sources, *America Now* includes selections from many online magazines and newspapers—in fact, most of the publications are available in online versions.

Because most students have access to electronic resources, the book's issues and topics can be examined in greater detail by means

of Web links that appear in each chapter. **Read It Now**, **See It Now**, and **Hear It Now** features allow students to explore individual topics more extensively by giving them access to additional essays, interviews, images, and audio recordings related to the topics at hand. The recommended Web sites are all easily accessible at bedfordstmartins.com/americanow and cost nothing. For the most part, these sites will continually update information and thus help keep the *Now* in *America Now*.

The Visual Focus of Public Discussion Today

America Now encourages students to pay close attention to the persuasive power of language and images. Reflecting the growing presence of advertising in public discussion, among the book's twenty-four images are seven carefully selected advertisements designed by various groups and organizations to initiate public change. The ads—on issues such as cultural identity, religious diversity, cars and the environment, and same-sex marriage—are distributed throughout the book; students are encouraged to uncover the visual and verbal strategies of recent opinion advertisements (or “Op-Ads”) employed by various advocacy groups and intended to influence the consciousness and ideology of large audiences.

Along with the advertisements, the book features several visual texts aimed at demonstrating the persuasive combination of word and image. For example, students can vividly see how the news media can selectively shape a story by studying the way two major tabloids headlined and portrayed Condoleezza Rice on their front pages on the same day. Other visual texts include a magazine cover and several photographs, cartoons, and comic strips—including a student cartoon that asks us to consider dating and gender roles and a comic strip that uses humor to connect fear and illness with television. Another assortment of visual selections—titled “America Then”—provides students with historical perspectives on “America Now.” These images demonstrate that many of the current issues we’re dealing with have roots in the past. They include a 1982 photo of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in the chapter on names; two 1940s rationing posters in the chapter on consumerism; and a 1920 photo of women marching for the right to vote in the chapter on democracy.

The Instructional Apparatus: Before, During, and After Reading

The apparatus of *America Now* supports both discussion-based instruction and more individualized approaches to reading and writing.

Taking into account the increasing diversity of students (especially the growing number of nonnative speakers) in today's writing programs, the apparatus offers extensive help with college-level vocabulary and features a "Words to Learn" list preceding each selection. This vocabulary list with brief definitions will allow students to spot ahead of time some of the words they may find difficult; encountering the word later in context will help lock it in memory. It's unrealistic, however, to think students will acquire a fluent knowledge of new words by memorizing a list. Therefore, the apparatus following each selection includes additional exercises under the headings "Vocabulary/Using a Dictionary" and "Responding to Words in Context." These sets of questions introduce students to prefixes, suffixes, connotations, denotations, tone, and etymology.

To help promote reflection and discussion, the book includes a prereading assignment for each main selection. The questions in "Before You Read" provide students with the opportunity to explore a few of the avenues that lead to fruitful discussion and interesting papers. A full description of the advantages gained by linking reading, writing, and classroom discussion can be found in my introduction to the Instructor's Manual.

Along with the discussion of vocabulary, incrementally structured questions follow individual selections. Picking up on the vocabulary lists preceding each selection, another question set, "Responding to Words in Context," supplements the existing "Vocabulary/Using a Dictionary" questions and asks students to use what they have learned from the dictionary exercises and vocabulary lists. Following the vocabulary questions, the "Discussing Main Point and Meaning" and "Examining Sentences, Paragraphs, and Organization" questions help to guide students step by step through the reading process, culminating in the set of "Thinking Critically" questions. As instructors well know, beginning students can sometimes be too trusting of what they see in print, especially in textbooks. Therefore, the "Thinking Critically" questions invite students to take a more skeptical attitude toward their reading and to form the habit of challenging a selection from both analytical and experiential points of view. The selection apparatus concludes with "In-Class Writing Activities," which emphasize freewriting exercises and collaborative projects.

In addition to the selection apparatus, *America Now* contains end-of-chapter questions designed to stimulate further discussion and writing. The chapter apparatus approaches the reading material from topical and thematic angles, with an emphasis on group discussion.

The introductory comments to each chapter highlight the main discussion points and the way selections are linked together. These points and linkages are then reintroduced at the end of the chapter through three sets of interlocking study questions and tasks: (1) a suggested topic for discussion, (2) questions and ideas to help students prepare for class discussion, and (3) several writing assignments that ask students to move from discussion to composition—that is, to develop papers out of the ideas and opinions expressed in class discussion and debate. Instructors with highly diverse writing classes may find “Topics for Cross-Cultural Discussion” a convenient way to encourage an exchange of perspectives and experiences that could also generate ideas for writing. Located on the book’s Web site (bedfordstmartins.com/americanow) are **ESL and Developmental Quizzes** that test vocabulary and comprehension skills. Electronic scoring, which can be monitored by instructors, offers immediate feedback.

The Instructor’s Edition

Michael Booth and John Regan, both of Boston University, prepared the Instructor’s Manual (which is found in the Instructor’s Edition of this book), bringing to the task years of classroom experience at all levels of composition instruction. The manual contains an essay for each chapter, offering suggestions for teaching the selections together and separately, plus suggested answers and possible discussion topics based on every question posed in the text. Anyone using *America Now* should be sure to consult the manual before designing a syllabus, framing a discussion topic, or even assigning individual selections. Liz deBeer of Rutgers University also contributed a helpful essay on designing student panels (“Forming Forums”), along with advice on using the book’s apparatus in both developmental and mainstream composition classes that is available at the book’s companion Web site.

Acknowledgments

While putting together the sixth edition of *America Now*, I was fortunate to receive the assistance of many talented individuals. In addition to their work on the Instructor’s Manual, Michael Booth and John Regan offered many useful suggestions for the book’s instructional apparatus.

To revise a text is to entertain numerous questions: What kind of selections work best in class? What types of questions are most

helpful? How can reading, writing, and discussion be most effectively intertwined? This edition profited immensely from the following instructors who generously took the time to respond to the fifth edition: Kevin Ball, Youngstown State University; Deborah Biorn, St. Cloud State University; Andrea Germanos, Saint Augustine College; Jessica Harvey, Alexandria Technical College; Chris Hayes, University of Georgia; Sharon Jaffe, Santa Monica College; Brian Ludlow, Alfred University; Kimme Nuckles, Baker College; David Pryor, University of the Incarnate Word; Sherry Robertson, Pulaski Technical College; Lynn Sabas, Saint Augustine College; and Jennifer Satterlee, Parkland College.

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As always, it was a pleasure to work with the superb staff at Bedford/St. Martin's. Jane Betz, my editor on the first edition, shaped the book in lasting ways and helped with the planning of the revision. Of all the people acknowledged, I owe the most gratitude to this edition's developmental editor, Ellen Thibault. Her insightful suggestions, remarkable good sense, and uncanny ability to keep track of so many minute details made this collection a pleasure to work on from start to finish. Ellen is also responsible for the student interviews that are such an important new feature of this edition. Stefanie Wortman, this edition's editorial assistant, researched images and readings for the book, contacted the students profiled in the book, and worked

energetically on the book's Web site. Jason Reblando cleared text and art permissions under a tight schedule. Bernard Onken guided the book through production with patience and care, staying on top of many details, and Erica Appel managed the production process with great attentiveness. I was fortunate to receive the careful copyediting of Lisa Wehrle. In the advertising and promotion department, Tom Macy, Hope Tompkins, Emily Rankin Welch, and Jill Chmelko deserve warm thanks for their work, as does senior marketing manager Rachel Falk.

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Robert Atwan