

Katherine Anne Ackley

PERSPECTIVES on Contemporary Issues

Readings Across the Disciplines

Third Edition



Perspectives on Contemporary Issues

Readings Across the Disciplines
Third Edition

KATHERINE ANNE ACKLEY

University of Wisconsin at Stevens Point

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Australia Canada Mexico Singapore Spain United Kingdom United States

*For my newest grandchildren
Che-Aaron James White
Celia Fatima Yahí*

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Perspectives on Contemporary Issues, Third Edition
Readings Across the Disciplines
Katherine Anne Ackley

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PREFACE



Perspectives on Contemporary Issues: Readings across the Disciplines, Third Edition, presents an approach to thinking, reading, and writing that views learning as the interconnectedness of ideas and disciplinary perspectives. Contemporary issues engage the students, and the readings provide rich material for both class discussion and writing topics. The essays focus on individual, national, and global issues by authors from a variety of disciplines and professions. Likewise, the writing assignments enhance the skills that students will use, regardless of their majors.

The goals of *Perspectives on Contemporary Issues* are

- To sharpen students' critical thinking skills by presenting them with a variety of perspectives on current issues
- To give students practice in both oral and written expression, by providing questions for discussion and assignments after each selection
- To provide students with a variety of assignments representing the kinds of writing they will be asked to do in courses across the curriculum
- To encourage students to view issues and ideas in terms of connections with other people, other disciplines, or other contexts

The questions for discussion and writing encourage critical thinking by asking students to go well beyond simple recall of the readings and to use higher-order skills such as integration, synthesis, or analysis of what they have read. Most of the questions are suitable for work in small groups, as well as for class discussion.

NEW TO THIS EDITION

The biggest change in this new edition is the inclusion of 43 new readings, all published in the late 1990s or early 2000s. Many of the older readings from the second edition have been dropped. Among the new readings are essays that focus on topics of recent interest, such as school shootings, human cloning, globalization, and terrorism.

Some changes have been made to the organization of part 1 on writing critically and conducting research, including the addition of new student essays and papers. Chapter 1 is devoted to reading critically and includes guidelines, an illustration of critical reading, and a sample discussion that reflects critical reading. Chapter 2 focuses on writing a summary, chapter 3 on writing a critique, and chapter 4 on writing a synthesis. Chapter 5 features directions for paraphrasing, quoting, and documenting sources. The final two chapters in part 1 explain the research paper using MLA style and APA style, respectively.

In addition to the new subjects in part 1, parts 2 through 5 include the following revisions. part 2 has been retitled "The Arts, Media Studies, and Popular Culture" to reflect the nature of the readings in that part. Two chapters on music and film and popular culture in the second edition have been combined in this edition into one

long chapter entitled “Music, Film, and Media Studies.” This change reflects the strong overlap of readings on music, film, and the media. Finally, the chapter on international relations in the second edition has been dropped because of its overlap with chapter 24 in part 5 on the American image abroad.

READING SELECTIONS

The reading selections are divided into four sections within the book, representing four broad disciplinary areas: the arts and media studies, the social sciences, the natural sciences, and business and economics. Within each broad division are chapters on specific topics related to the larger subject. Part 2, The Arts, Media Studies, and Popular Culture, contains chapters with readings on visual arts, the role of the artist, advertising, music, Hollywood films, and television. In part 3, Social and Behavioral Sciences, the chapters address such matters as education, poverty and homelessness, criminal behavior, gender and sex roles, and race and ethnicity. In part 4, Science and Technology, writers from a variety of disciplines explore such subjects as the relationships among science, technology, and society; public health issues; computers and cyberspace; the ethical implications of technology and human genetic experimentation; and science and the imagination. Finally, in part 5, Business and Economics, the essays address marketing and the American consumer, the workplace, the American image abroad, and the United States in the global marketplace.

The selections in each chapter encourage students to consider issues from different perspectives because the authors come from a wide range of disciplinary backgrounds and training. Sometimes the writers cross disciplinary lines in their essays. For example, a chemist explores the metaphor of discovery, and a historian extols the virtues of reading. The individual perspectives of the writers may differ markedly from students’ own perspectives, thus generating discussion and writing topics.

ACTIVITIES AND ASSIGNMENTS

Following each selection, students will have an opportunity to respond on a personal level to some aspect of the reading. Each reading is also followed by questions that are appropriate for either class or small-group discussion. These questions invite students to think of larger implications, to discuss related issues, or to make connections between the readings and their own experiences. Many of these questions are appropriate for writing topics as well, and many others will prompt students to discover related topics on which to write. Finally, each chapter is followed by writing assignments generated from reading the collected selections in that chapter. These writing assignments are arranged in three categories:

- Suggestions for synthesis
- Additional writing topics suitable for argumentative and other modes of writing such as the report, the letter, the personal essay, and the comparison and contrast essay
- Research paper topics

Given the title of this textbook, a definition of “issues” is in order. An issue is usually taken to mean a subject that is controversial, that prompts differences of opinion, or that can be viewed from different perspectives. It often raises questions or requires taking a close look at a problem. Although this is not primarily an argument textbook, the inclusion of topics and essays guaranteed to spark controversy is deliberate. Many of the readings will surely prompt students to take opposing positions. Some of the readings are provocative; others may anger students. Such differences of opinion will not only generate lively class discussions, but they will also result in writing opportunities that engage students.

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I would like to thank the following reviewers whose insights and suggestions helped to create this textbook: Amy Battle, Salisbury State University; Laura Blankenship, University of Arkansas; Amanda McBride, Durham Technical Community College; and Wayne Stein, University of Central Oklahoma.

My family has been supportive in many ways during the production of this textbook. My heartfelt thanks go especially to my daughters Heather Anne Schilling and Laurel Leigh Yah, who provided editorial assistance with the manuscript. Heather teaches English at Whitko High School, South Whitley, Indiana, and Laurel runs her own business. Both were also students when I was preparing previous editions of this book. From their perspectives as both professionals and students, they provided valuable help on the selections and the questions for discussion. I am also grateful to my husband Rich Ackley, my son Jeremy White, my daughter-in-law Jenni White, and my sons-in-law Brian Schilling and Mourad Yah for their encouragement during the project.

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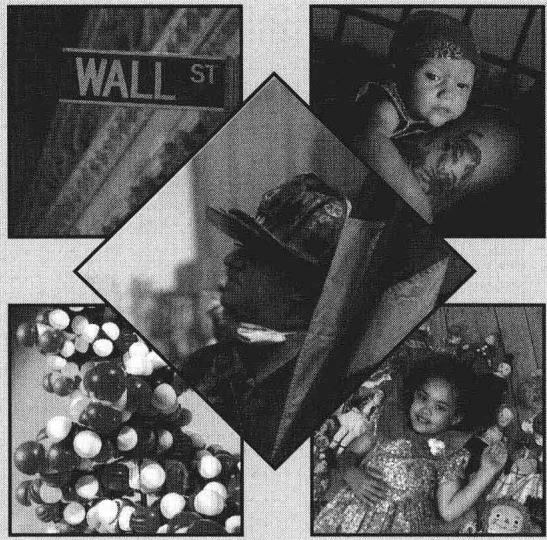
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PART I

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Reading Critically

CHAPTER 2

Writing a Summary

CHAPTER 3

Writing a Critique

CHAPTER 4

Writing a Synthesis

CHAPTER 5

In-Text Citations, Paraphrasing, and Quoting

CHAPTER 6

Writing a Research Paper Using MLA Style

CHAPTER 7

Writing a Research Paper Using APA Style

CHAPTER I



READING CRITICALLY

READING CRITICALLY IN PREPARATION FOR WRITING CRITICALLY

Critical reading does not necessarily mean that you object to what someone has written or that you view it negatively. Rather, it means that you read something carefully, thoughtfully, and thoroughly for two reasons: first, to understand it, and second, to assess it. You read for meaning first because, obviously, you must understand what you read before it can be examined. Once you develop a clear understanding of a piece of writing, you have a solid basis for moving beyond comprehension to evaluation.

Reading critically involves examining an author's ideas and the evidence the author has supplied in support of those ideas. It means that you try to recognize the difference between reasonable, logical assertions and those that are unreasonable or lack credibility. It requires you to distinguish between fact and opinion, to sort out the evidence an author cites, and to evaluate that evidence in terms of its relevance, accuracy, and importance. Thus, reading critically means that you actively engage in what you read, that you analyze it, and that you evaluate it. Learning to be a critical reader also helps to make you a better writer. If you pay attention to the ways in which professional writers and scholars use language, structure their essays, and develop their ideas, you will learn some valuable lessons for your own writing.

The following guidelines are not ironclad rules for reading critically, but they are useful suggestions to help you get the most from your reading. These guidelines for reading will also be very helpful for any kind of writing required in your college courses, especially the one for which you are using this textbook. If you read the assigned selections carefully, you will very likely be fully prepared to write on one of the topics that end each chapter. Certainly, reading critically is a necessity for any of the varieties of writing discussed in the remaining chapters in part 1: summary, critique, synthesis, and research paper.

Read the Title. Before you read, consider the title. A title often not only reveals the subject of the piece, but it can also tell you something about the way in which the subject will be treated. It may reflect the tone of the piece and sometimes indicates the position the author takes on the subject. A number of essays in this textbook have revealing titles. For instance, the title "Don't Ignore the Arts" in chapter 8 clearly indicates that its author, Harold M. Williams, thinks highly of the arts. You cannot tell from the title alone what the context of his plea is, but you can expect an argument or a plea for the inclusion of arts in whatever that context is. Similarly, the title "Hollywood Poison Factory" in chapter 9 suggests that its author will have something negative to say about Hollywood. Sometimes authors ask questions in their titles, as