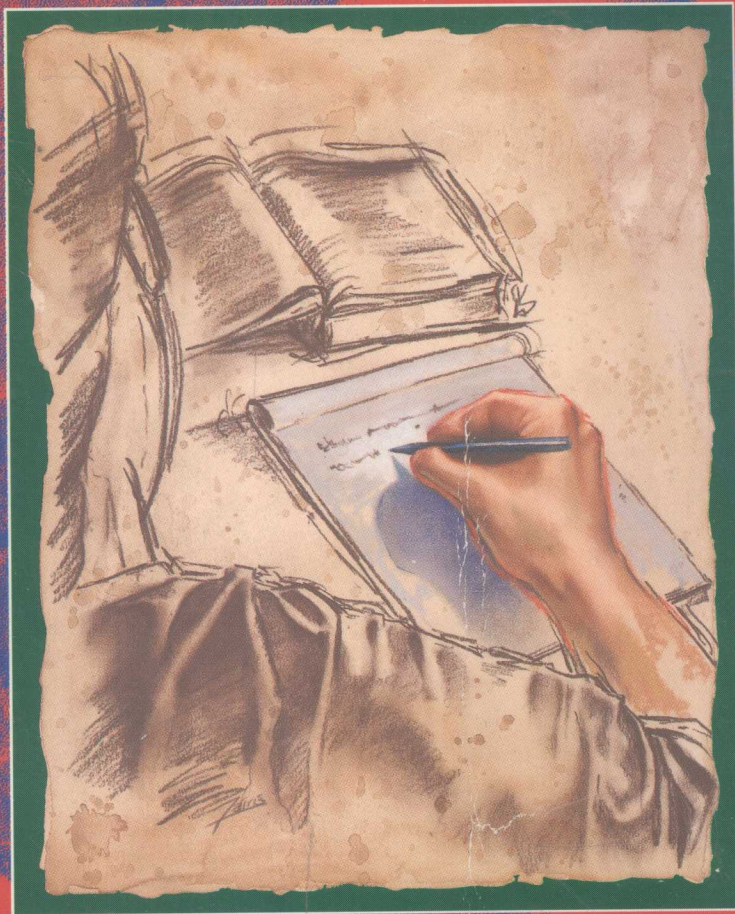


Read to Write

THIRD EDITION



DONALD M. MURRAY

Read to Write

Third Edition

Donald M. Murray



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for
Minnie Mae
who shares both reading
and writing with me

Preface

The myth: Writers are lonely, each day shutting the door behind them to perform their craft in solitude.

The reality: Writers shut the door behind them each day, but they are not alone. All the writers, living and dead, whose works they have ever read crowd in the writing room, sitting on shelves and on the desk, standing beside the computer, looking over the writer's shoulder, sitting on a chair, the couch, the floor, staring in the window, waiting in the hallway outside the door.

Read to Write introduces the beginning writer to some of the writers who crowd my writing room each day and reveals our professional relationship; it shows how these writers continue to instruct me. And yes, the writer I have been is in the writing room with the writer I am becoming; my published writing instructs my evolving drafts, and the beginning writer shares that instruction by reading this book.

The selections in this reader are personal, from the shelves and filing cabinets in my room. They are all pieces that instruct me as I do my daily writing. The choices for this book are mostly nonfiction and lean toward the autobiographical, in the hope that students can connect their lives with the writer's. The selections also attempt to represent a diversity of the voices that are changing our culture in ways that instruct me and that I celebrate.

The revisions in *Read to Write*, third edition, are based on extensive review of the previous edition by students and their instructors, as well as on what I have learned and continue to learn about my craft. The longer I write and read, the more I learn; writing and reading are lifetime apprenticeships, and I am blessed with the fact that I can never say I have learned to write or read, only that I am learning to do so. Etched in my mind is what the great Japanese artist Hokusai said:

I have drawn things since I was six. All that I made before the age of sixty-five is not worth counting. At seventy-three I began to understand the true construction of animals, plants, trees, birds, fishes, and insects. At ninety, I will enter into the secret of things. At a hundred and ten, the everything—every dot, every dash—will live.

THIRD EDITION REORGANIZED

The third edition of *Read to Write* has been reorganized to make it easier for students and teachers to work back and forth between the diverse ways we teach writing and reading. It retains its emphasis on the writing process and continues to take the reader behind the printed text into the workshop of the writer, both student and professional.

NEW FIRST CHAPTER

Careful reexamination of the problems students have in writing, combined with continued study of effective classroom and professional writers, has led me to provide a new description of the writing process. The text emphasizes the recursive nature of the writing process and offers a sequence that is helpful for instruction in class and for the important self-instruction that the student must master while writing outside the classroom:

FOCUS

EXPLORE

PLAN

DRAFT

CLARIFY

In this edition, the process is introduced in a single, opening chapter so that students can see the entire process as a whole and discuss the working relationship between the parts of the process. This makes it possible for students to apply the process to their individual writing tasks and to read with the insight that comes from an understanding of the process that led to the printed page.

THE WRITER AT WORK

The second chapter contains ten case studies, alternating between professionals and students, to dramatize the similarities of the problems and solutions of experienced and beginning writers. A journalist, an academic turned writing authority, a technical writer, a poet, and a science writer will invite the student reader to their writing rooms and allow those students to see them at work. They will reveal how they write and read. Simultaneously, five students will invite their fellow students into their writing rooms, commenting on how they wrote a paper for one of my Freshman English classes in argument.

This chapter and those that follow contain discussion questions designed to help students reading or writing alone or to stimulate small-group and whole-class discussion, activities that students can perform on their own or as class assignments, and collaborative learning exercises that will help students share the process of learning by reading and writing together.

READING AS WRITER

Chapter 3 contains six essays, four of them new to this edition, by published writers. I comment on each piece of writing in detail, documenting what I see as a writer, not as an absolute authority, but as a learning writer hoping to stimulate responses from instructor and student. Writers do read differently than nonwriters, and I will describe and document this form of reading that should be available to student writers.

Of course there are many ways to read and write, and my commentary will be qualified, expanded, and contradicted by my readers; and my own reading a year from now may be different as I continue to learn to read and write. I hope, however, that instructors and students find that my comments help them see what is instructive in the reading, how we can learn from the writers who crowd our writing rooms.

The selections are followed by discussion topics, activities, and possibilities for collaboration.

READING FOR WRITING

In the last chapter, students are introduced to a wide range of voices from experienced writers dealing with a broad spectrum of issues. The selections include twenty-three essays, fourteen new to this edition, two examples of fictional narrative, and eleven poems by two poets.

Each essay is introduced by a section new to this edition—"The Writer's Problem"—in which a difficult issue faced by the writer is described from a writer's point of view. Students are helped to see behind the text to issues that had to be resolved by the writer. This focus will help them see the connection between the selection they are reading and their own writing.

The selections are also followed by discussion topics, activities, and possibilities for collaboration.

GENRE AND THEME TABLE OF CONTENTS

This alternate table of contents will be useful to instructors who focus on genre and theme in the teaching of writing and for students who want to compare different writers' perspectives on common themes.

SPECIAL INDEX: WRITING PROBLEMS SOLVED

This special index identifies the twelve most common writing problems beginning writers face and offers practical solutions to solving them. Selections from the book are suggested as models that demonstrate the writing problem solved.

USING THE THIRD EDITION WITH WRITE TO LEARN

Read to Write is designed to be used alone or with the rhetoric *Write to Learn*. The writing process described in *Read to Write* is defined, described, and documented in greater detail in *Write to Learn* as it focuses on students' writing. Both textbooks have the same process design and a similar attitude toward the act of writing. The focus on reading in *Read to Write* balances the emphasis on composition in *Write to Learn*.

INSTRUCTOR'S MANUAL

I have written an instructor's manual to help teachers with the practical problems of the classroom. It is based on my own experience as a teacher and on the

experiences of hundreds of teachers I have worked with across the United States and Canada. It is also built upon the responses of instructors who have used *Read to Write* in many different types of schools, colleges, and universities with students at many levels of accomplishment. It is specific and practical, written to help both beginning and experienced teachers facing realistic teaching situations. A copy of this manual has been placed at the back of the Instructor's Edition of *Read to Write*; it can be obtained by contacting your local Harcourt Brace Jovanovich sales representative.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My wife, Minnie Mae, rescued my first pieces from the wastebasket and sent them off to editors who published them. I would not be a writer without her. Christopher Scanlan, of the Knight-Ridder Washington Bureau, has been a writing companion who always offers wisdom and support at the moment it is needed.

Readers who continue my education include Dr. Brock Dethier, Dr. Donald Graves, Lisa Miller, and Dr. Thomas Newkirk of the University of New Hampshire, Dr. Thomas Romano of Utah State University, and Dr. Bonnie Sunstein of the University of Iowa.

This edition has benefited from the intelligence of Michael Rosenberg and would not have been completed without the skilled editing of Laurie Runion. I would also like to thank Dawn Youngblood and Nicole Boyle for supervising the editorial production with efficiency, Jeanette Ninas Johnson, the copy editor who caught my mistakes, and David Day, whose design supported my words and meaning.

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THE WRITING PROCESS

*I love the process of writing.
I am at my fullest when I'm writing.
I can think of no activity
that brings so much of everything that I am
—everything I've learned,
everything I feel,
all the techniques at my disposal—into one suspended moment
that is the work of art.*

CHARLES JOHNSON

Reading writing and writing reading. Twin games and playing one instructs the other.

When readers write, they come to a new and deeper understanding of what they are reading; when writers read, they come to a new and deeper understanding of how they are writing.

The readers' understanding of the craft that produced the printed page gives readers who write a greater appreciation of what they are reading; the writers' appreciation of what another has written inspires and instructs their craft.

Readers, of course, can read without writing but no writer can avoid reading. As writers write, they also read their evolving draft. What appears on the page—or the word processor screen—is read as it appears. Information is added; words, sentences, paragraphs are moved into a different pattern—or