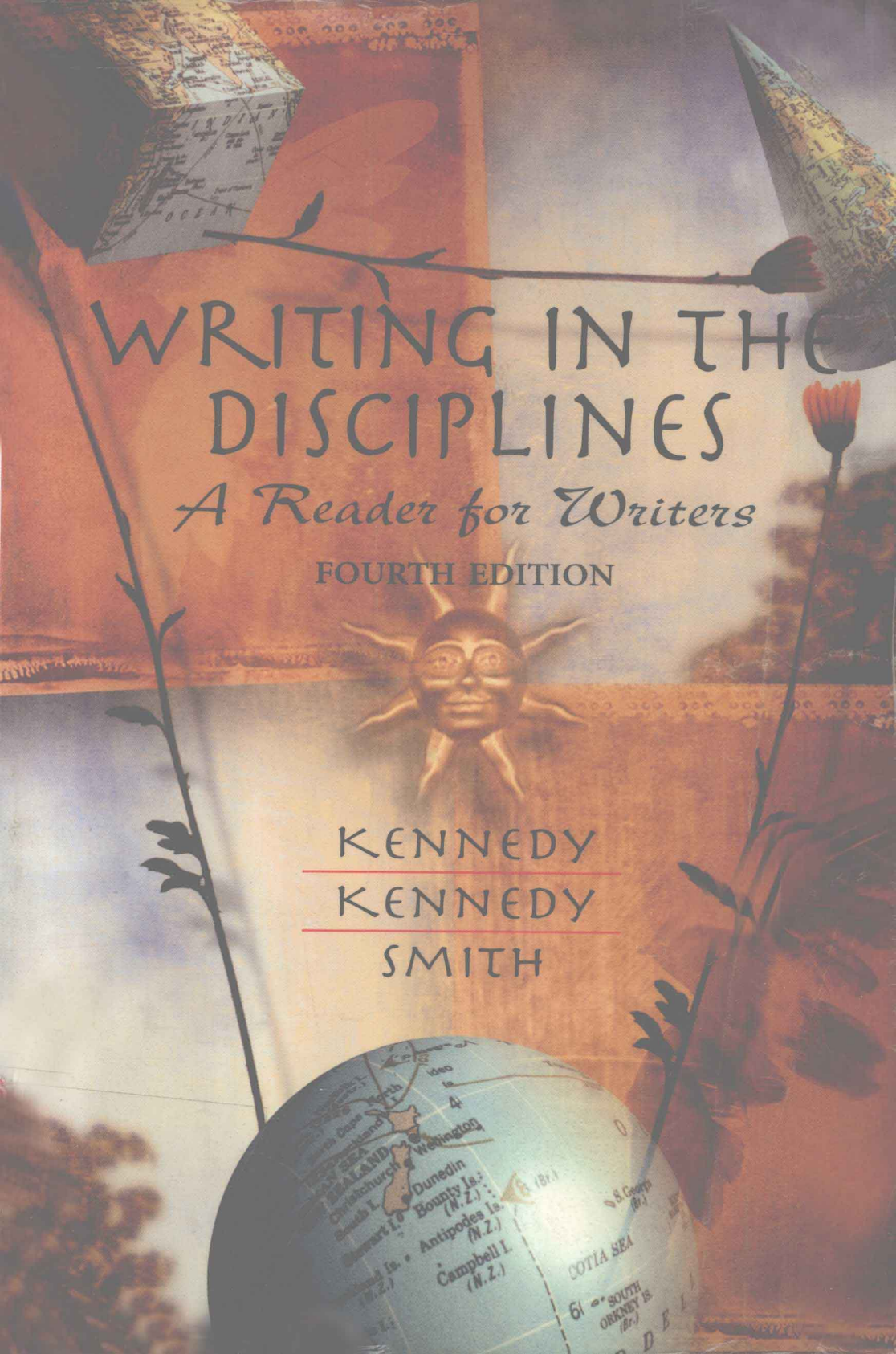
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Writing in the Disciplines

A Reader for Writers

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preface

TO OUR READERS IN APPRECIATION

In preparing the fourth edition of *Writing in the Disciplines: A Reader for Writers,* we listened closely to students and instructors who had used the third edition, and we followed their advice. As requested, we reworked the first part of the book. We added a new student essay to Chapter 2, rearranged Chapters 3 and 4, and made extensive revisions to Chapter 5, "Writing Research Papers." We have also made changes to the second half of the book. A number of the readings are new, and in Chapter 12, we have introduced a new topic. To the readers who suggested these changes, we say "thank you" for helping us strengthen this book.

ORGANIZATION AND APPROACH

Writing in the Disciplines: A Reader for Writers serves two functions. It explains how to use reading sources as idea banks for college papers, and it teaches fundamental academic writing strategies: reading, paraphrasing, summarizing, quoting, organizing, drafting, revising, editing, synthesizing, analyzing, researching, and developing arguments. It also provides an anthology of readings in the humanities, the natural sciences and technology, and the social sciences which contains articles representing various rhetorical approaches across academic disciplines. These articles, along with the accompanying instructional apparatus, help develop students' abilities to think critically and reason cogently as they read, compose, and revise. The activities and questions that accompany each reading encourage students to approach academic writing as a process: to preview the source, set reading goals, and ponder the general topic before reading; to annotate the text and think critically while reading; and to reflect on the source and identify information content, form, organization, expository and stylistic features, and rhetorical elements

after reading. Students are also shown how to draw on annotations, notes, and preliminary writing to produce first drafts of academic essays and how to revise essays at the drafting stage as well as later in the writing process. Additional activities help students to use ideas from different sources to produce synthesis essays and research papers.

Chapter 1 presents active reading strategies that help students engage the ideas in academic texts and incorporate them in their own writing by paraphrasing, summarizing, and quoting. Chapter 2 presents the writing process, including analyzing the assignment, planning, organizing, drafting, revising, and editing. In addition, Chapter 2 examines essay structures, from the introduction and thesis statement through the body of the essay to its conclusion, and teaches students to write essays of response to a source. Chapter 3 focuses on essays that draw on two or more sources, including compare-and-contrast essays and synthesis. Chapter 4 covers essays of argumentation, analysis, and evaluation, with the special attention to literary analysis; and Chapter 5 focuses on library research strategies and writing research papers. In the eight succeeding chapters, we provide forty-seven reading selections. We have organized the anthology in Chapters 6 through 13 by dividing the academic curriculum into three major fields: the natural sciences and technology, the social sciences, and the humanities. Each chapter in *Writing in the Disciplines* deals with a topic that is widely studied in the field. For example, the social sciences section has chapters on redefining the American family and social class and inequality. The reading selections help students view each topic from a range of perspectives, and they provide diverse views from experts within the discipline and from journalists and specialists in other academic fields. Most of the articles are written for nonspecialized readers, not for majors in particular fields. We believe these articles, from popular as well as scholarly sources, represent the types of readings many professors assign in introductory and lower-level courses. Psychology professors, for instance, know that first-year students cannot interpret most psychological research reports until they acquire a basic knowledge of the discipline and learn its principles of experimental methodology and statistical analysis. However, first-year students can read summaries and analyses of psychological research written for nonspecialists. For *Writing in the Disciplines,* we chose readings that might appear on a reserve list as supplements to an introductory-level textbook. We make no assumptions about students' prior knowledge. Our intent is to model first-year-level reading assignments, not to exemplify professional standards within the disciplines.

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In the introduction to each of the sections, we characterize the field of study with a discussion of its subdisciplines, methodology, logic, and vocabulary. We then describe writing within the field by examining authors' perspectives, goals, organizational patterns, literary devices, and rhetorical styles. We recognize that there is no absolute standard for categorizing intellectual activities. For example, although we have classified history as a discipline within the humanities, we could as well have placed it within the social sciences, depending on the methodology the historians use. Throughout the book, we not only point out overlaps among disciplines but also capitalize on them in synthesis assignments at the end of each chapter. Despite the imprecision of these categories, we believe that important differences in approaches to scholarship and writing do exist among the three main academic areas. Students who understand these differences will read more critically and write more persuasively.

IMPROVEMENTS IN THE FOURTH EDITION

In the fourth edition of *Writing in the Disciplines,* we have revised the initial section on academic writing. Chapter 2 contains a new student essay. We have moved argumentation from Chapter 3 to Chapter 4, and in Chapter 4 we have collapsed the material on analysis and evaluation. Chapter 5 has changed dramatically in response to advances in computerized information retrieval systems. Chapter 5 also includes a new research paper written in American Psychological Association (APA) style. In the anthology section, Chapter 6 has been revised to focus on the current controversy over human cloning, and Chapter 12 features a new topic, "Rock Music and Cultural Values." We also added new articles and fiction excerpts to Chapters 7 and 8. We continue to accompany each article with activities and questions that promote critical thinking. Each reading is preceded by a prereading activity and followed by groups of questions that encourage students to grasp information and decide what form, organization, and expository features the author uses. Additional questions ask students to analyze rhetorical concerns, such as the context and the author's purpose (Haas and Flower). As in previous editions, several writing assignments accompany each reading and each topically related chapter.

Finally, we have refined and expanded the guide to documentation and the comparison of the MLA (Modern Language Association) and APA styles in the Appendix.

COLLABORATIVE LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Writing in the Disciplines provides a series of collaborative learning activities that require students to work together in groups to clarify and extend their understanding of material presented in Chapters 1 through 5. We have constructed pairs of individual and collaborative exercises for each chapter subsection, so for any particular concept, instructors may assign out-of-class work and follow with in-class collaborative activities. Some instructors may use the collaborative exercises to emphasize points they or their students deem particularly important or problematic.

It is important to prepare students for group work by teaching them the collaborative skills they need in order to work together—requisite social skills, group dynamics, methods of interaction, and strategies for learning from each other as well as from the teacher. Some instructors pair off students at first. Then, when they move the students into groups, they give them time to become acquainted. Another technique is to redefine the groups frequently until everyone in the class has gotten to know each other.

Each of the collaborative exercises in this textbook requires students to divide into work groups. Experiment with different ways of grouping students together. You might allow them to choose their groups, or you might assign them to groups on the basis of working style, personality types, or role. We have found Kenneth Bruffee's methods for conducting collaborative learning groups particularly useful (28–51). The following procedure, which draws heavily on Bruffee's *Collaborative Learning: Higher Education, Interdependence, and the Authority of Knowledge,* is applicable to all the collaborative exercises in this textbook.

WORKING IN COLLABORATIVE LEARNING GROUPS

1. Students form groups of five or six by counting off. (Bruffee maintains that groups of five are particularly effective for collaborative activities.)
2. Each group selects a recorder who will write down the results of the group's deliberation and will eventually report to the entire class.
3. Each group selects a reader who then reads the collaborative task from the textbook.

4. Group members attempt to achieve a consensus on the question or issue posed by the collaborrative task. All viewpoints should be heard and considered. (Bruffee recommends that instructors refrain from taking part in or monitoring collaborative learning groups. He believes that teacher interference in groups "inevitably destroys peer relations among students and encourages the tendency of well-schooled students to focus on the teacher's authority and interests" [29].)
5. When a consensus is reached, the recorder reads her or his notes back to the group, and they are revised to make sure they reflect the group's decision. Differences of opinion are also included in the notes.
6. When all groups have completed the assignment, recorders read their notes to the entire class. The instructor may choose to summarize each group's report on the chalkboard. A discussion involving the entire class may follow.

Other methods of forming and conducting collaborative learning groups will also work with the exercises in Chapters 1 through 5. Although we have had success with Bruffee's technique, we encourage instructors to pick the methods that work best for them and their students. The following resources will be helpful:

Angelo, T. A., and K. P. Cross. *Classroom Assessment Techniques: A Handbook for College Teachers.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1993.

Goodsell, Anne, Michelle Maher, and Vincent Tinto. *Collaborative Learning: A Sourcebook for Higher Education.* University Park, PA: NCTLA, 1992.

Johnson, David W., Roger T. Johnson, Karl A. Smith, and E. Holubec. *Circles of Learning: Cooperation in the Classroom.* Edina, MN: Interaction, 1993.

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