

# WRITING AS REVELATION



MARJORIE FORD ■ JON FORD



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# WRITING AS REVELATION

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 **HarperCollins***Publishers*

Executive Editor: Constance A. Rajala  
Project Editor: Robert Cooper  
Design Supervisor: Heather A. Ziegler  
Text Design: North 7 Atelier, Ltd.  
Cover Design: Heather A. Ziegler  
Cover Illustration/Photo: © by Michael DeCamp  
Production Assistant: Linda Murray  
Compositor: Circle Graphics Typographers  
Printer and Binder: R.R. Donnelley & Sons  
Cover Printer: Lehigh Press Lithographers

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Writing as Revelation

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Ford, Marjorie (Marjorie A.)

Writing as revelation / Marjorie Ford, Jon Ford.

p. cm.

Includes index.

ISBN 0-06-042165-7

1. English language—Rhetoric. 2. Diaries—Authorship. I. Ford, Jon. II. Title.

PE1408.F517 1992

808'.0427—dc20

ISBN 0-06-042165-7 (Student edition)

ISBN 0-06-042165-5 (Free copy edition)

91 92 93 94 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

91-12979

CIP



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## PREFACE

Writing is a process of continual revelation. Through drafting and revising, authors develop, clarify, shape, and polish their feelings and ideas until they shine, revealing the writer's spirit and identity. As essayist Richard Rodriguez states in his autobiography, "One names what was previously only darkly felt." Writing that reveals reaches out to others; it is active with rhythm and mood; it speaks and communicates; it is alive.

In designing and writing this text, we worked to create a rhetoric that would support the student's writing process through a range of assignments, informal and formal, presented in a regular but lively pattern and sequence. To this end we have included a wide variety of journal activities, writing assignments, and essay topics that are illustrated by both student and professional writings. Because we see good writing, whether it be narrative, expository, or argumentative, as reflecting a sense of personal voice and creative engagement that communicates to a real audience, *Writing as Revelation* provides activities to help students develop a sense of personal voice through both individual and group work. The text integrates many voices: our own voice as authors, those of our students who submitted journal writings and essays to illustrate the major ideas and techniques presented in the chapters, and those of professional writers whose essays, poems, short stories, and interviews reflect the theme of revelation as it is focused in each particular chapter.

In this text, whether we are discussing rhetorical strategies, exploring the process of drafting and revision, or presenting readings for students to analyze and write about, we are also developing the metaphor of writing as revelation. We begin our presentation of writing as revelation with an initial definition of writing as a process of discovery, connected to an insight that leads one to resee and better understand feelings, experiences, and ideas. Through the inward adventure of writing, students can learn a great deal about themselves as they work to acquire the skills to express who they are and what they want to say about themselves and about their world.

## ORGANIZATION

We have organized this book in a sequence designed to help writers in their search to find and to reveal a unique voice and identity. **Chapter One** helps students explore their voice and identity as writers, their feelings about the writing process, the expressive power of words and images, and their goals for developing writing skills and fluency. **Chapter Two** discusses how creativity can enliven the writing process, presenting activities and strategies to help students get in touch with their creative potential while generating ideas for their writing. **Chapter Three** provides opportunities and activities for students to practice working collaboratively as readers, writers, and editors in order to discover the creative power that a community of writers can generate and nurture.

**Chapter Four** introduces the process of drafting and revising, helping students develop techniques for shaping sentences, paragraphs, and the essay as a whole in order to express their ideas with conviction and clarity. **Chapter Five** defines and discusses a variety of audiences for writing, encouraging students to understand how to shape their material and language in order to communicate effectively with many different readers, from oneself and close friends to culturally diverse and institutional audiences.

Chapters Six and Seven present a number of useful modes and strategies for developing writing that is clear, vivid, and revealing, both for the writer and the reader. **Chapter Six** discusses fundamental strategies—description, narration, and illustration—that are found in almost all writing, from fiction and memoir to expository and argumentative texts. **Chapter Seven** builds on the knowledge presented in the previous chapter, showing how students can use the analytical modes of discourse—process, definition, comparison, classification, and causal writing—to clarify their experiences and ideas for their readers.

Chapters Eight, Nine, and Ten are designed to prepare students for the challenges involved in academic writing. **Chapter Eight**, “Reading as a Writer,” will help students realize how readers engage themselves creatively in a text. This chapter also gives students the guidance they need to develop close reading skills and a framework for understanding the strategies of analysis, interpretation, and evaluation used by sophisticated readers. **Chapter Nine** introduces students to the intricacies of formal argument, including both inductive and deductive reasoning. **Chapter Ten**, “Research as Revelation,” provides students with the opportunity to use all of the strategies practiced throughout the book. This chapter encourages students to write from within, to be creative in their approach to research, to question and analyze, to interpret and evaluate their sources while synthesizing diverse kinds of knowledge. Students learn how to draft a research paper, share their drafts with peers, and finally produce a finished essay that expresses genuine commitment and belief.

While each chapter explores a different aspect of the text’s theme, the pedagogical strategies are interwoven in a consistent pattern. To support the discussion of each issue raised, we include numerous journal writing activities for students to practice as well as examples of student writing done in response to the journal assignments. The journal writing assignments are numbered and



can be kept in a special *Writing as Revelation* journal. At the end of each chapter we have included several professional writings and one student essay that further explore the issues discussed in the chapter. Each student essay and professional reading has accompanying discussion questions and related essay topics. All chapters conclude with suggestions for further writing assignments.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Completing *Writing As Revelation* was an enormous challenge for us. We appreciate the support and guidance of our editors. Lucy Rosendahl, our first editor at HarperCollins, was instrumental in getting the project underway. Linda Allen, our development editor, worked with us patiently from beginning to end, helping us define and crystallize our concept as we moved through successive drafts. Finally, executive editor Constance Rajala made sure that the project met the expectations of our reviewers and kept us on our time schedule.

While our editors helped us realize and refine our text, our students provided the inspiration and appreciation that made writing the book worthwhile. As we wrote this book for our students, they wrote it with us; their journals and essays have brought life to lessons about writing that otherwise would be only concepts. We are most grateful to the dedicated student writers who worked many hours to compose selections that they hoped would interest our readers all over the country.

We acknowledge our critics: Jean M. English, Tallahassee Community College; Nancy K. Barry, the University of Iowa; Mildred Melendez, Sinclair Community College; Kathleen Boardman, University of Nevada-Reno; Mark Reynolds, Jefferson Davis State Junior College; Joan Gilson, Johnson County Community College; Bruce Ballenger, University of New Hampshire; Gregory Barnes, Drexel University; Jennifer Banks, Michigan State University; Maureen Salzer, Eastern New Mexico University; Patricia Bridges, Grand Valley State University; Audrey Roth, Miami-Dade Community College; and George Lober, Monterey Peninsula College. Their valuable suggestions helped us develop and shape our manuscript.

Finally, we want to thank our children, Michael and Maya, who endured several long, uneventful summers at home while we wrote. They offered comfort and understanding in our trying moments when revising seemed like an endless process. We hope that they will continue with the family tradition and become writers themselves one day.

Marjorie Ford  
Jon Ford



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