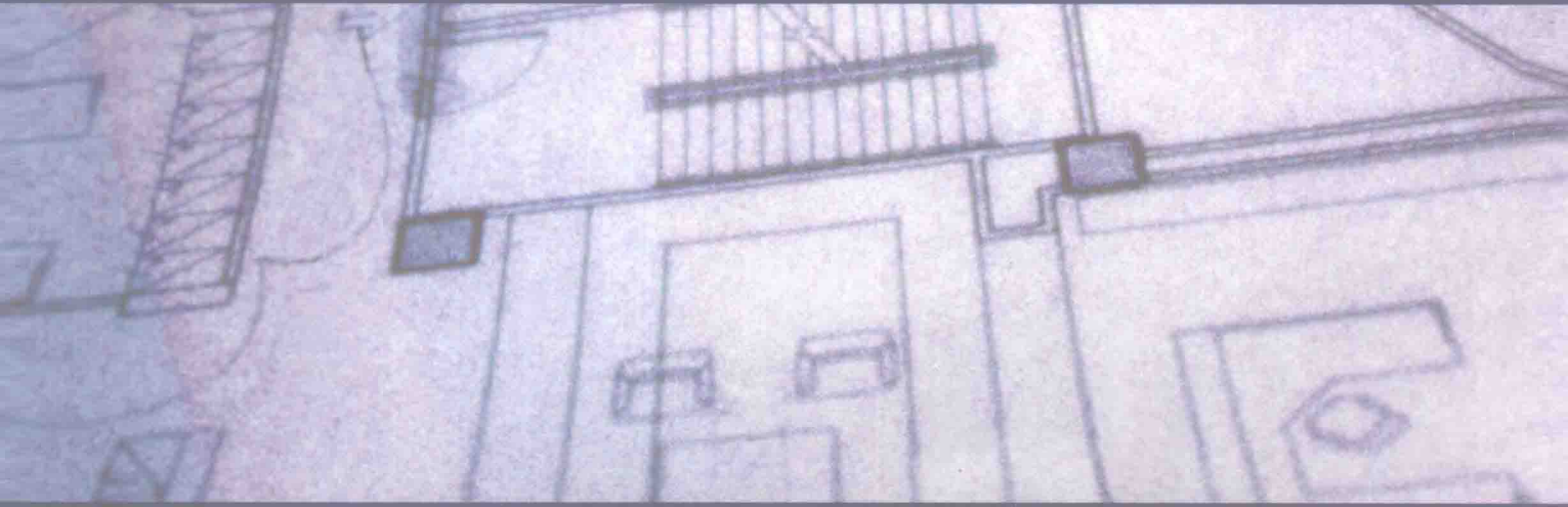


SIXTH EDITION

COMPOSING WITH CONFIDENCE

WRITING EFFECTIVE PARAGRAPHS AND ESSAYS



ALAN MEYERS

SIXTH EDITION

Composing with Confidence

Writing Effective Paragraphs and Essays

Alan Meyers
Harry S Truman College



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Preface

While retaining the most popular features of previous editions, the sixth edition of *Composing with Confidence* is more engaging for students and versatile for instructors than ever before. For students, it presents high-interest content in exercises and readings, with a single theme (unusual facts about animals, the stories of Crazy Horse and Custer, the life of a man who was known as the Emperor of the United States, and so on) developed throughout each chapter. A new feature, “A Word About Words,” graces the margins of every chapter, sparking interest in the roots and history of English as well as presenting fascinating etymologies of individual words. Sample paragraphs and essays, many written by students, provide lively and realistic models within each chapter on writing—as do the sixteen additional readings (including student essays) at the end of the book. Each chapter includes helpful tips in the margins, as well as advice for students whose first language is not English. A new chapter, “Writing on the Job,” offers advice on and models for letter, résumé, and memo writing. And the answer key in the back of the book provides answers to all odd-numbered items in the exercises so that students may work independently. All sentence-level chapters now conclude with two Editing for Mastery exercises—the answers to the first also included in the answer key, so students may check their work before completing the second. A new graphic summary entitled “Synthesis for Success” concludes each unit, providing a quick reference to the most important elements of the unit.

Although *Composing with Confidence* provides guidance through the composing process, it does not aim to furnish empty organizational shells into which students pour content. Instead, the book stresses writing as a purposeful and social act, in which audience, occasion, and goal affect the outcome: the paragraph or essay. It is neither condescending in style nor attitude toward students. It regards them as writers—perhaps inexperienced (or inexperienced in writing in English)—but writers nonetheless. A feature entitled “A Writer Speaks” invites students to join the community of writers by hearing the advice and insights of experienced writers. These commissioned, original contributions from professional writers, editors, and professors confirm that the processes involved and the obstacles faced in shaping thoughts into meaningful messages for readers are universal.

For instructors, the book allows great flexibility. This new edition thoroughly explains the composing process in six steps, but not in a lockstep manner. The book emphasizes the rhetorical nature of writing: that each writing task is unique, depending on purpose, content, audience, and occasion; and that each writer is unique, depending on how he or she can best discover, plan, draft, revise, edit, and proofread his or her work. Each chapter includes one well-wrought writing assignment, as well as at least five alternatives, and allows the instructor to expand the paragraph into an essay at any point. Photographs and artwork provide visual prompts for writing, as do the numerous choices in end-of-chapter “Writing for Mastery” sections. And for instructors who favor student collaboration, the margins of each chapter are filled with optional activities allowing students to share ideas, peer review and edit, and help each other discover and strengthen their own talents as writers.

Previous users of the book will find a number of improvements on features. A unique feature entitled “Writing from Source Material” appears in each of the chapters in Units II and III, providing students with data to summarize, paraphrase, and quote in support of a topic idea without having to conduct

independent research. Each chapter in Unit IV concludes with the two “Editing for Mastery” passages, the first with the answers supplied in the answer key, so that students may work independently. Additional readings afford more opportunities for integrating reading into the basic writing curriculum, as well as providing additional prompts for writing assignments. And a new quotation bank provides inspiration and prompts for even more writing. Key terms highlighted in the text are defined in a glossary at the back of the book.

CONTENT OVERVIEW

Composing with Confidence is designed for maximum flexibility. Instructors may choose to follow the book in sequence or to choose those chapters that best fit their students’ needs.

- **Unit I: Writing as a Composing Process.** These four chapters motivate students to write and show them how it’s done. Separate chapters focus on the reasons for writing; a six-step writing process that begins with discovery and ends with proofreading; the shape and form of the paragraph; and the shape and form of the essay.
- **Unit II: Strengthening Writing.** Chapters in this unit offer practice in developing a paragraph or essay through detail, illustration, and example; achieving coherence; writing directly and vividly; and fashioning a more concise and varied style.
- **Unit III: Composing Types of Paragraphs and Essays.** Instruction in both paragraph and essay writing is consolidated in this new unit on rhetorical modes. Each chapter includes at least one professional model and one student model, most new to this edition, and guides students through the composing process with explanations and a “blueprint” for organization. A chapter on writing the essay is designed to build student skills and confidence for this key to success in college. A new chapter, “Writing on the Job,” offers advice on and models for workplace writing.
- **Unit IV: Troubleshooting.** This handbook-like section includes instruction and practice in sentence-level issues: fragments, comma-splices, and run-ons; coordination and subordination; subject-verb agreement; past-tense and past-participle verb forms; consistency in sentence structures; number and case of pronouns; placement of modifiers; use of apostrophes, hyphens, and capital letters; punctuation; and commonly confused words. Each chapter also provides advice on issues of concern to non-English-dominant, or ESL, writers.
- **Reading Selections.** These sixteen high-interest essays, arranged from most accessible to most challenging, represent a diversity of cultures and viewpoints. They also provide models of the rhetorical modes, practice in close reading, questions for discussion, and prompts for additional writing.

CONTINUING FEATURES

The following continuing features of *Composing with Confidence* make the text a valuable and flexible tool for both instructor and student:

- **Simple and Direct Explanations.** Discussions of the composing process, rhetorical modes for paragraphs and essays, grammar, and mechanics focus on what students should know to generate effective sentences, paragraphs, and essays, while increasing their facility with language and eliminating errors. Key

terms are highlighted and explained in the text, and, for continuing reference, they are repeated in a glossary at the back of the book.

- **Clearly Outlined Composing Process Instruction.** The “Six Steps to Composing with Confidence” presents students with an easily mastered series of activities to perform in the writing process. Not only is the process thoroughly explained, but also outlining and writing topic sentences and thesis statements are highlighted in every chapter on the rhetorical modes.
- **High-Interest Exercises and Models.** Working with engaging materials in connected discourse, students gain skills in composing, revising, and editing sentences with meaningful content. Selections include odd and fascinating facts from history, animal behavior, and biographies of famous or unusual figures. This entertaining subject matter serves a more serious purpose: that people write to communicate ideas and that, if ideas are worth saying, they are worth saying well. As students read and then rewrite or revise an exercise, they discover that interesting ideas become clearer and even more interesting.
- **Mastery Learning Capabilities.** Unit IV of the book is designed to facilitate a Mastery Learning approach, in which students complete a section on grammar and mechanics, evaluate their understanding and application of the concepts, restudy parts of the section if necessary, and then engage in further evaluation. Two “Editing for Mastery” concluding exercises, as well as the parallel test forms in the ancillary testing package, all serve as useful tools in this approach.
- **Attention to Matters of Style.** Several chapters explore ways to make writing more lively, vivid, and direct. They offer practice in writing strong verbs, adjectives, and expressions; employing parallelism; eliminating unnecessary repetition of words and ideas; and avoiding clichés.
- **Chapter-Ending Summary Boxes.** These highlighted summaries help students identify and review the important points to learn and practice and serve as additional reference aids in revising and editing.
- **Multiple Opportunities for Collaborative Work.** For instructors who wish to encourage group work, *Composing with Confidence* offers a variety of options but does not require that they be followed. Each paragraph writing assignment includes **Revision Guidelines** that encourage peer response and editing. **Predicting activities** throughout the text provide additional opportunities for collaboration while stressing the interrelationship between writer and reader. **Collaborative activities**, presented as options in the margins of each chapter, guide students in sharing ideas, doing peer review and editing, and working in groups to improve their writing. Each sentence-level chapter concludes with an **Editing for Mastery** exercise, which can be done collaboratively or independently.
- **Full Integration of the Paragraph and Essay.** Each chapter in the rhetorical mode unit guides students in writing a paragraph and demonstrates the connection between paragraphs and essays. Additional assignments are provided for those students ready to put paragraphs together.
- **Multi-Faceted Writing Instruction.** Professional and student models exemplify the skills students should aim to achieve. Discussion questions focus attention on these models, followed by a step-by-step guide through a single, well-developed writing assignment. A section called “**Getting Ready to Write**” includes practice in formulating topic sentences, developing ideas, and organizing materials before students compose their own paragraphs. Each mode is not only described in text but also vividly illustrated through an easy-to-grasp blueprint of the essentials.

- **Readings.** Selections from contemporary writers stimulate student interest, exemplify rhetorical modes, guide analysis, and suggest topics for additional writing.
- **Writing from Source Material.** This unique feature provides data that students may employ as they gain experience with writing summaries, paraphrasing, quoting, and making attributions, but without requiring independent library research.
- **“A Writer Speaks.”** These boxes feature writers, editors, and professors who give advice and encouragement to students by discussing their own composing practices and recounting their struggles and experience. All contributions are original and were commissioned solely for this book.
- **Chapter Goals.** These chapter openers address student aims instead of merely foreshadowing chapter headings.
- **Tip Boxes.** These boxes throughout the text provide helpful advice and mnemonic aids.
- **“If Your First Language Is Not English” Boxes.** These boxes provide helpful and timely advice for the specific needs of this growing segment of the student population. However, the boxes are not solely intended for non-English dominant, or ESL, writers; they are also useful to writers of all backgrounds and all ages.
- **Glossary.** Key terms are highlighted in the text and defined in a glossary at the back of the book.

NEW TO THE SIXTH EDITION

The sixth edition of *Composing with Confidence* has been revised with an eye toward increasing the emphasis on process, accessibility to students, ease of use for instructors, and adaptability to a variety of programs and teaching approaches.

- **Synthesis for Success.** This series of charts and graphics at the end of each unit provides students with a clear summary of and cross-reference to the unit’s most important points.
- **A Word About Words.** Intended to engender in students a curiosity about and love for language, these boxes in the margins of each chapter present fascinating information about the roots of English and unusual etymologies.
- **Dual Editing for Mastery Exercises.** These chapter-concluding activities in Unit IV allow students to test their knowledge of the skills taught in the chapter, check their work in the answer key, and then apply their knowledge a second time.
- **New Visual Prompts.** Additional photographs and artwork provide subject matter for student writing.
- **Writing for Mastery.** Concluding each chapter in Unit III, this section offers multiple prompts for writing, including writing in response to readings.
- **New Chapter on Writing on the Job.** This chapter provides students with advice and models on three important types of workplace writing: the letter of application, the résumé, and the memo.
- **New Readings.** The number of readings at the end of the book has been increased to sixteen, and many of them are new, including several written by students and two separate renderings of a column by Bob Greene: the first as it originally appeared, the second as it was abridged in *Reader’s Digest*.

- **Quotations and Proverbs.** This new quotation bank at the back of the book provides inspiration and prompts for even more writing.
- **Answer Key.** All odd-numbered items and answers to the first of each pair of “Editing for Mastery” exercises are listed here, allowing students to work independently and instructors to individualize instruction.

THE TEACHING AND LEARNING PACKAGE

Each component of the teaching and learning package has been crafted to ensure that the course is a rewarding experience for both instructors and students.

- The **Instructor’s Manual** contains teaching tips, sources of additional information, sample course syllabi, and answers to all in-text questions. 0-321-08834-4
- The **Test Bank** contains a profusion of additional quizzes, tests, and exercises keyed to each chapter in the student text. The test bank is printed on 8 ½" × 11" paper and is perforated for easy removal and copying. 0-321-08833-6

For additional exercises, resources, and Internet activities, be sure to visit the **Companion Web site** at <http://www.ablongman.com/meyers>.

In addition to the book-specific supplements discussed above, a series of other skills-based supplements are available for both instructors and students. All of these supplements are available either free or at greatly reduced prices.

For Additional Reading and Reference

- **The Dictionary Deal.** Two dictionaries can be shrinkwrapped with this title either free or at a nominal fee. *The New American Webster Handy College Dictionary* is a paperback reference text with more than 100,000 entries. *Merriam Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*, tenth edition, is a hardback reference with a citation file of more than 14.5 million examples of English words drawn from actual use. For more information on how to shrinkwrap a dictionary with your text, please contact your Longman sales representative.
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- **The Writer's ToolKit Plus.** This CD-ROM offers a wealth of tutorial, exercise, and reference material for writers. It is compatible with either a PC or Macintosh platform, and is flexible enough to be used either occasionally for practice or regularly in class lab sessions. For information on how to bundle this CD-ROM free with your text, please contact your Longman sales representative.
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- **The Longman Electronic Newsletter.** Twice a month during the spring and fall, instructors who have subscribed receive a free copy of the Longman Developmental English Newsletter in their e-mailbox. Written by experienced classroom instructors, the newsletter offers teaching tips, classroom activities, book reviews, and more. To subscribe, visit the Longman Basic Skills Web site at <http://www.ablongman.com/basicskills>, or send an e-mail to BasicSkills@ablongman.com.

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- **Competency Profile Test Bank, Second Edition.** This series of 60 objective tests covers ten general areas of English competency, including fragments; comma splices and run-ons; pronouns; commas; and capitalization. Each test is available in remedial, standard, and advanced versions. Available as reproducible sheets or in computerized versions. Free to instructors. Paper version: 0-321-02224-5 Computerized IBM: 0-321-02633-0 Computerized Mac: 0-321-02632-2.

- **Diagnostic and Editing Tests and Exercises, Fifth Edition.** This collection of diagnostic tests helps instructors assess students' competence in Standard Written English for purpose of placement or to gauge progress. Available as reproducible sheets or in computerized versions, and free to instructors. Paper: 0-321-11730-1. CD-ROM: 0-321-11731-X.
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Alan Meyers



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