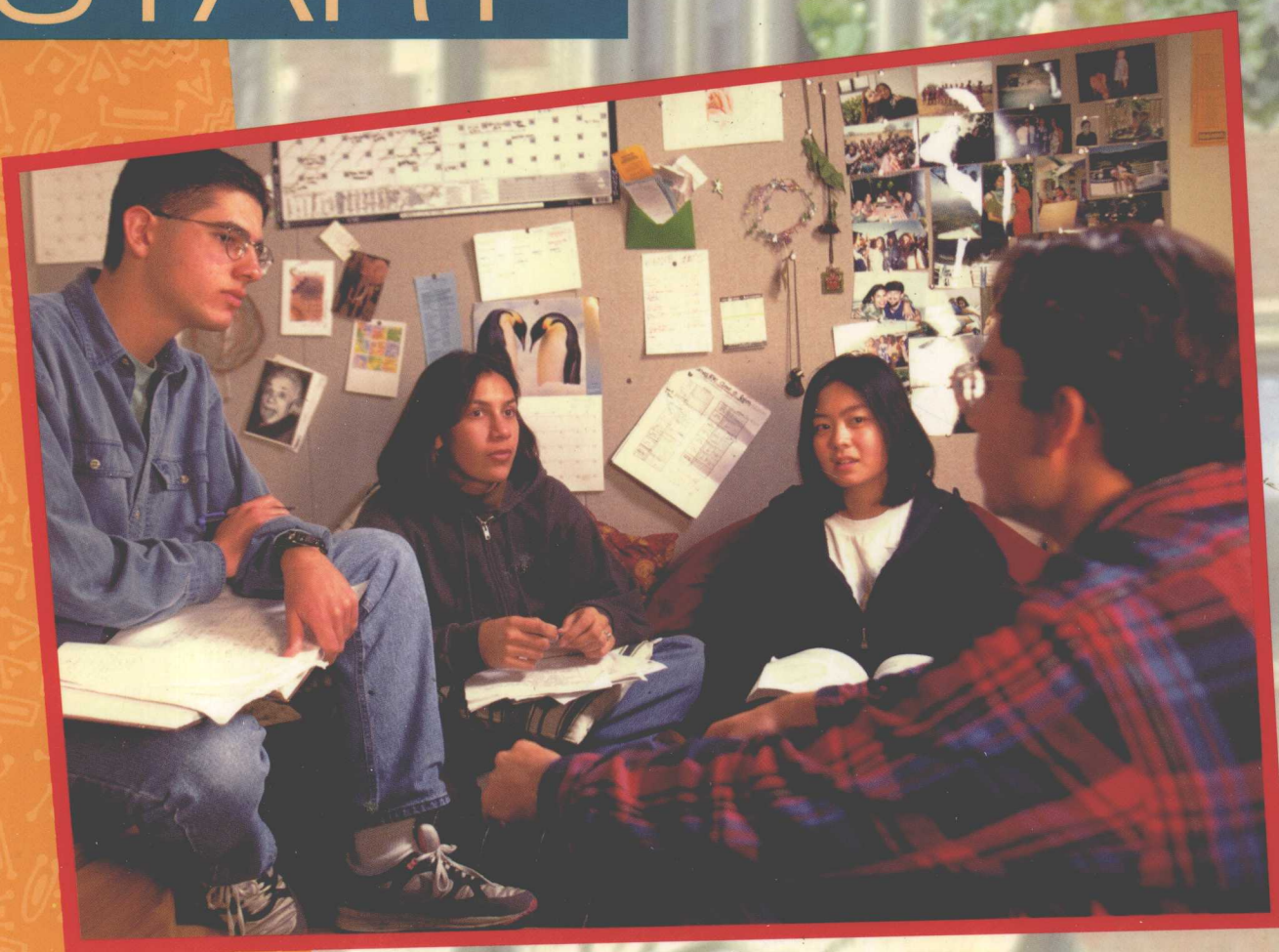
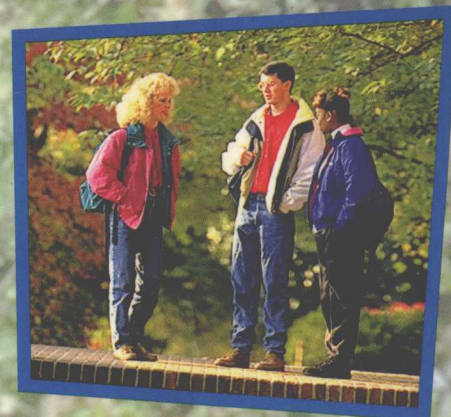


# THE RIGHT START



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# THE RIGHT START



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# PREFACE

Higher education—college, business school, technical school—may offer the opportunity of a lifetime for you. This book is intended to help you make the most of that opportunity.

The main purpose of higher education is to foster your intellectual development and skills. Academically, you may well find higher education much tougher than high school, and if you have been out of high school for some years, you may find it very different from what you remember. In some colleges, the scramble for grades can be crushing. You may feel that success in finding a good job or admission to a four-year or graduate school hinges on your performance on every quiz, test, and term paper. Poor grades may signify a waste of time and hard-earned money, but worse, they may make you feel less confident about yourself as a person. So it's reassuring to know that there are many things you can do to take charge of your academic life and to improve your study skills. Similarly, our years of teaching experience have shown us that you may also be worried about coping with myriad personal and social challenges posed by student life. There are also strategies and resources available that you can employ to help you make good decisions and get where you want to be.

As you enter school, whether you are flying hundreds of miles away to a four-year residential college or commuting across town, your concerns probably range from the sublime to the mundane. You may spend time asking questions like "What is the mind?" or "What is the true nature of the universe?" But you may be equally concerned with questions like "Where can I find a parking space?" or "Can I juggle classes and a part-time job?" or "How will I pay the bills?"

## THE SOLUTION: THE RIGHT START

This book is intended to help you cope with all of these challenges. In *The Right Start*, we address three broad areas:

- Getting the right start: making the transition to higher education
- Academics: managing the academic challenges
- Life: coping with the personal and social side of higher education and making the transition from college to job

The book is designed to be interactive, with lots of questionnaires to work and places to write. We urge you to participate wherever you can: write in the open spaces (and in the margins) to help you remember what's important; tear out pages (the whole book is perforated so you can do that); use this book as a resource throughout college, not just in your first year.

### Part I: Getting the Right Start

The first three chapters of this book help you make the transition to higher education by providing basic information about school, community, and academic resources.

Chapter 1 helps you form accurate expectations about higher education—to recognize, for example, that professors and instructors will not be carbon copies of high school teachers. Chapter 1 also emphasizes that, although you may face uncertainties and new demands, you can take charge of the various challenges in your life—a central theme of this book.

Chapter 2 focuses on human diversity. Whether you are attending a community college, a business institute, or a residential college, you will meet people from other places, with other cul-



tural and ethnic backgrounds, with other beliefs, with disabilities, and facing challenges different from your own. This diversity may challenge many of your dearly held beliefs and values. We urge you to view diversity as opening doors, providing opportunities for you to grow and get outside yourself. We encourage you to interact with people different from yourself, rather than insulating yourself in your own, perhaps more comfortable, background and beliefs.

Chapter 3 provides a wealth of information about the wide variety of resources available to you on your campus and in your community. In Chapter 3, you'll learn about specific aids to academic performance that you can put to good use—from dictionaries to computers. You'll also learn about facilities like health care centers, libraries, child care, financial aid, and community groups that potentially can provide support for you in all parts of your life.

## **Part II: Academics**

Learning takes time. Chapter 4, which provides strategies for organizing your time, may be the most important single chapter in this book. If you're a residential student, you may be creating your own schedule—planning sleep and meals and studying—for the very first time. Some students miss classes because no one gets them out of bed in the morning. If you are a returning student, you may be juggling the demands of family, job, and academic requirements, and you may find yourself missing class or turning a paper in late because a child was ill or the babysitter had to study for a test too. Almost all students complain that there are not enough hours in the day to get everything done. Chapter 4 will help you fit classes, studying, meals, family, social life, work, extracurricular and recreational activities, and sleep into a twenty-four hour day.

Chapters 5 through 10 focus on the academic side of college life: thinking and problem solving, attending class, reading, writing, studying, and taking tests. Each chapter provides valuable guidance and specific strategies for “attacking” your studies, from a focus on solving problems to getting the most out of attending classes to becoming “test-wise.” These chapters will give you the support you need to become the best student you can be—to make the very most of college. The skills you learn here—how to edit and proofread papers, how to read critically and efficiently, how to improve memory—will not only help you get better grades at college or institute. They will also serve you as you move forward through your life and career.

## **Part III: Life**

Many of you are on your own for the first time. Others have been balancing major responsibilities of family and job for many years. Wherever you fit into the college population, you will almost certainly, at one time or another, find yourself stressed out or sick or out of money. Chapters 11 through 15 offer guidance and strategies for coping with the challenges that come with the nonacademic side of higher education: stress, social relationships, health, money management, and finally the transition from college to career. You'll find advice in Chapter 11 about reducing stress through various techniques, including meditation and breathing exercises. Chapter 12 focuses on the social adjustments you'll need to make, from getting along with a roommate to finding companionship among the hundreds or thousands of other students on campus to making responsible decisions about sex. In Chapter 13, you'll find invaluable information about health—nutrition, exercise, how to know when you need to see a doctor—as well as about alcohol and drugs. For many students, college is the first time they will manage their own money—and it isn't an easy task. Chapter 14 will help you organize your finances, from planning and budgeting daily expenses to identifying financial aid opportunities.

Finally, Chapter 15 brings *The Right Start* full circle. In Chapter 1, you learned about the transition into higher education; in this last chapter, you learn about the transition out of higher education. Chapter 15 is full of practical information about choosing an appropriate field, finding job opportunities, writing a résumé, and even handling a job interview.

We confess that *The Right Start* will not help you answer the questions “What is the mind?” or “What is the true nature of the universe?” However, we hope that the information here will help you organize and manage your academic and personal life—and free you to have the time you need to muse on the larger questions that higher education may stimulate.

## FEATURES OF THIS TEXT

As you'll learn in Chapter 7, "Reading," textbooks often are full of special interactive features designed to help you absorb information more efficiently. This book is no exception. We've provided some "handles" that will allow you to participate in the book and, we hope, will help you learn more and learn more easily. In each case, the feature is printed on a page that can be filled in and torn out of the book—and we encourage you to do that. If your book included software, you will find many of these features on the disk.

### Did You Know That—

Every chapter begins with "Did You Know That—" questions. These questions are designed to tease you into thinking about some of the issues that will be raised later in the chapter. Sometimes they will challenge you by running counter to common sense; sometimes they will simply point you to important pieces of information. For example, Did You Know That—

- Women comprise the majority of students enrolled in institutions of higher education in the United States? (Chapter 2)
- You may not necessarily understand what you read better by reading slowly? (Chapter 7)
- Students who receive good grades may receive discounts on their automobile insurance? (Chapter 14)

### Questionnaires

You'll find questionnaires throughout the book. They may be fun—or a little scary. The Questionnaires help you know more about yourself: your personality, your behavior patterns, your attitudes. Examples include:

- Who's In Charge Here? (Chapter 1). Are you running your own life? If it doesn't feel that way, how can you change things?
- Going Through Changes: The Social Readjustment Rating Scale (Chapter 11). Life changes are stressful. Complete this questionnaire to compare the stress you have experienced with that of other students.
- Questions to Consider Before You Commit Yourself to a Loan (Chapter 14). Taking out a loan is a huge responsibility. Often students don't consider all the consequences.

Answer all the questionnaires and see how you stack up—you may surprise yourself! If you do the questionnaires on disk, the software program will calculate the results for you.

### What Do You Do Now?

How do you select a good child care center (Chapter 3)? How do you spend your time (Chapter 4)? How do you overcome writer's block (Chapter 8)? How do you replace self-defeating thoughts with helpful ones (Chapter 10)? The "What Do You Do Now?" sections put you into demanding and sometimes perplexing situations and help you figure out how to handle them. You can test your own coping skills—and then receive feedback that helps you assess the appropriateness of your responses.

### Summing Up

Near the end of each chapter you'll find a list of ten questions that provide a quick review of the chapter you have just finished reading. Your answers to these questions will reinforce your learning, help you retain what you have learned, and help you review for tests.



## Thinking Things Over

At the very end of each chapter are a variety of exercises that give you the opportunity to relate what you learned in the chapter to your own life. These exercises will help you organize your thoughts and experiences and give you practice expressing your ideas in written form. They include:

- Keeping a Notebook or Journal (Chapter 8). Keeping a journal not only helps you think through problems or issues, but also can provide considerable self-satisfaction.
- Managing Test Anxiety (Chapter 10). Do tests make you nervous? This exercise helps you understand what you can do about that.
- Magical Health Foods (Chapter 12). So there are no magical health foods—but this exercise will start you thinking about your diet and asking questions (like why Bugs Bunny is immortal...).

See the table of contents to find out which of these appear on the disk.

The features listed above will be easy for you to find because they have clear headings and a different design. However, *The Right Start* also includes a number of practical features woven into the book itself: detailed instructional lists for assembling efficient schedules (Chapter 4); problem solving (Chapter 5), knowing what to bring to a test and hints for taking multiple-choice tests (Chapter 10); and ways to avoid sexually transmitted diseases (Chapter 13) and to budget money (Chapter 14). You will also find quotes from a variety of sources offering wisdom “through the ages.”

We hope you'll enjoy reading *The Right Start*. We've tried to make it friendly and accessible. We've tried to make it relevant for each of you, whatever your background or your current situation. The common denominator is that everyone reading this book is a student, and students face certain common challenges. We hope this book will get you over the hurdles more easily than you might have without it.

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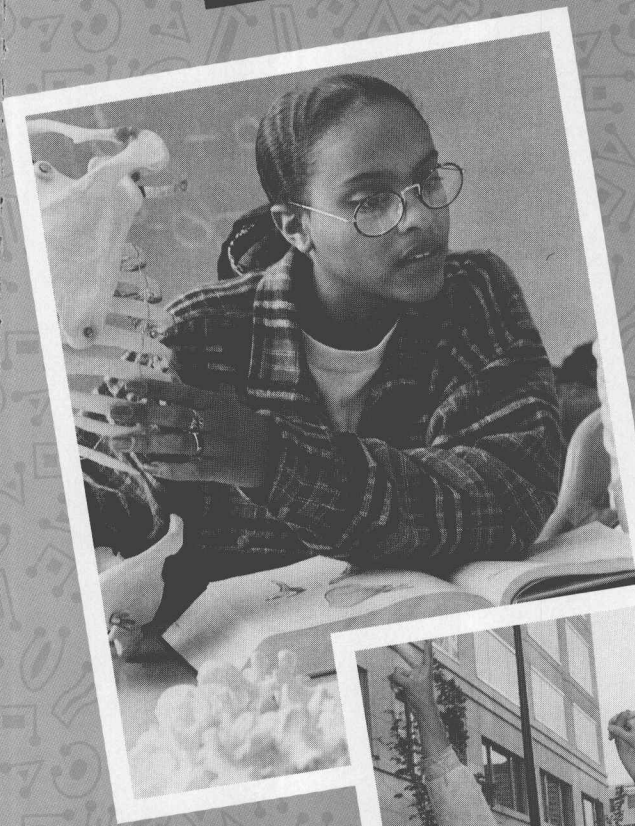
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# Part One

# GETTING THE RIGHT START







# Chapter 1

# BEGINNING

