

FOURTH EDITION

# READINGS FOR THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY

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JOSH OZERSKY

*Readings for the  
21st Century*

*Tomorrow's Issues for  
Today's Students*

*Fourth Edition*

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# PREFACE

The twenty-first century is upon us and today's students will be facing issues both frightening and fascinating—issues that involve enormous cultural, political, social, and economic changes. This edition, like its predecessors, assumes that learning to deal with these issues begins with learning to read, think, and write critically—and that these skills may best be achieved by engaging students with essays on topics that affect them personally now and will continue to do so. The fourth edition of *Readings for the 21st Century* has been extensively reorganized and revised to build on what our readers have found to be most successful in the third edition. It is also designed to meet users' desires for additional new material that reflects a student's point of view on the future, one that favors the practical over the academic. The revisions include:

- An entirely new chapter on the workplace and careers, including one on the exploitation of interns
- Four new essays in the popular culture chapter, which now leads off the book, including opposing views of Tupac Shakur
- An improved chapter on the Internet and the Information Age with three new essays, including one on e-mail relationships
- A new focus on controversial prescription drugs in the chapter on medicine with three new essays, one by Jack Kevorkian

- Three new essays in the education chapter, including one by Bill Gates on the future of computerized learning
- Four new essays in the final chapter on social issues, including a controversial argument: “The Case for Sex Work”

Like Bill Gates, many of the authors will be names already familiar to instructors and students, names such as Oliver Stone, Frank Zappa, Jack Kevorkian, Hillary Rodham Clinton, Al Gore, Amy Tan, Camille Paglia, and Pete Hamill. The consistently popular Past as Prologue feature begins each chapter with classic essays by authors such as Malcolm X, Tom Wolfe, Frederick Douglass, Rachel Carson, G. K. Chesterton, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, or Benjamin Franklin. Each piece is introduced by a biographical headnote and each chapter is interrelated with others through the Making Connections feature. All discussion questions are designed to avoid simple yes-or-no answers.

With lively classic and contemporary essays addressing American life in the new century, the book strives to help today’s students develop thoughtful, informed, and articulate views on topics that will define their futures.

## Acknowledgments

Many people have helped to bring this book to its present form. At Rutgers we thank Kelly Griffin, for research and suggestions. At Allyn and Bacon we thank our editor Joe Opiela and his assistant Mary Varney. For advice in shaping the book we thank teachers at many schools: John Bayer, St. Louis Community College at Meramec; Kathleen Shine Cain, Merrimack College; C. Jeriel Howard, Northeastern Illinois University; William Lutz, Rutgers University-Camden; Jean Reynolds, Polk Community College; Mark Rollins, Ohio State University; Robert Schwegler, University of Rhode Island; and Tom Zaniello, Northern Kentucky University. We gratefully acknowledge the valuable suggestions provided by the book’s team of reviewers: Melanie Booth, Heald College; George F. Edmonds, Catonsville Community College; Henry Marchand, Cleveland State University; Digambar Mishra, Miles College; Edwina Pendarvis, Marshall University; and Peter Quigley, Embry-Riddle University. And finally, we thank Fr. Bill Miscamble at Notre Dame, Dan Moran, and, especially, Cynthia R. Ozersky.

William Vesterman  
Josh Ozersky

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TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY****Learning and Unlearning for the Future**

## The Past as Prologue

FREDERICK DOUGLASS

Learning to Read and Write

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*For Frederick Douglass, born into slavery before the Civil War, learning to read and write was neither a chore nor a child's game. It was a task of deadly importance, carried out in danger and secrecy. It eventually allowed him to forge papers that would help him to escape and become the greatest of all abolitionist writers and orators, but first he had to learn the very basics. This selection is from his famous Autobiography (1845).*

BILL GATES      Linked Up for Learning

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*Bill Gates, the founder of Microsoft and the richest man in America, believes for obvious reasons that the Internet will be one of the richest and most transformative resources education has ever seen, changing its very nature and helping students all over the world learn more and communicate better. Unlike Neil Postman, whose essay follows, Gates believes that technology will change students, and he gives some of his reasons in this excerpt from The Road Ahead.*

NEIL POSTMAN      from The End of Education

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*The electronic blessings of the Internet may well have a beneficial effect on education, as some of technology's proponents such as Bill Gates might have it. But Neil Postman, professor of communications at New York University and a noted skeptic on the subject of wired education, thinks otherwise. Who are the students that will use the Internet? And why will they use it as predicted? Postman answers these and other questions in this excerpt from his book The End of Education.*

ROBIN MARANTZ HENIG      Dumbing Down

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