

S I X T H   E D I T I O N



THE *Brief*  
BEDFORD  
READER

X. J. KENNEDY • DOROTHY M. KENNEDY  
JANE E. AARON

# THE BRIEF BEDFORD READER

SIXTH EDITION

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X. J. Kennedy • Dorothy M. Kennedy  
Jane E. Aaron



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# PREFACE

## FOR INSTRUCTORS

“A writer,” says Saul Bellow, “is a reader moved to emulation.” In a nutshell, the aim of *The Brief Bedford Reader* is to move students to be writers, through reading and emulating the best essays available. We assemble forty-five lively selections and arrange them in ten rhetorical chapters. Before and after the essays, we show how effective writing is written—not just theoretically, but in the working practice of good writers.

Preparing this sixth edition, we polled many teachers and students, asking how we could improve the book. Some features have proved so popular that we did not tamper with them. But our users’ excellent suggestions also prompted many changes, highlighted below with bullets.

**REALISTIC RHETORICAL EMPHASIS.** *The Brief Bedford Reader’s* ten chapters treat ten methods of development, each presented not as a box to be stuffed full of verbiage but as a tool for inventing and shaping ideas. We take this realistic approach even further, showing through an “Other Methods” question after each selection how the authors freely combine the methods to achieve their purposes.

In this edition we have made the concepts of mixed methods easier to teach:

- In the instructor's manual, a list for every rhetorical method indicates the selections elsewhere in the book developed significantly by that method.

We have also improved the introductions to the individual methods, making each one's focus on concepts and process both clearer and more practical:

- A new section discusses and illustrates appropriate thesis sentences.
- A boxed revision checklist highlights essential elements for easy reference.
- New headings provide more signposts throughout the text.
- Marginal annotations on the two sample paragraphs clarify their uses of the method.

**VARIED, LIVELY SELECTIONS BY WELL-KNOWN AUTHORS.** The selections in *The Brief Bedford Reader* vary in authorship, topics, even length. Half are by women, and more than a quarter touch on cultural diversity. The essays deal with sports, business, history, science, gender, psychology, drug legalization, and many other subjects. Most are short, with some longer pieces to challenge as well as engage students.

As always, we've added many new selections intended to inspire students to write:

- Of forty-five selections, twenty-one are new. Joining proven favorites such as Jessica Mitford and E. B. White are Louise Erdrich, Amy Tan, Dave Barry, and many other fresh voices.
- Two new student essays, bringing the total to four, reassure students that good writing is not exclusive to professionals.

**THOROUGH COVERAGE OF CRITICAL READING AND WRITING.** As before, *The Brief Bedford Reader's* general introduction provides detailed advice on developing a critical response to reading. A case study shows the development of a student's response to an essay by M. F. K. Fisher, from annotations on the essay through journal entries and drafts to a final paper. And a "Critical Writing" topic after every selection helps students formulate their own critiques.

In this edition we've expanded the introductory discussion of the writing process:

- Under invention we cover freewriting, journal writing, and other techniques that can help students write fluently, creatively, and confidently.

- We give more advice on thesis sentences and more examples, laying the groundwork for the parallel coverage in each rhetorical introduction.
- We explain the advantages of collaboration in writing and revising, and we offer advice on giving and receiving criticism.

**UNIQUE COMMENTS BY WRITERS ON WRITING.** After their essays, twenty-nine of the book's writers offer comments on everything from grammar to revision to how they developed the reprinted piece. Besides providing rock-solid advice, these comments also prove that for the pros, too, writing is usually a challenge.

**EXTENSIVE THEMATIC CONNECTIONS.** To provide substantial topics for class discussion and student writing, *The Brief Bedford Reader* connects essays in many ways. Each chapter includes two selections that address the same topic, from the ordinary (housekeeping) to the controversial (drug legalization and capital punishment). Every selection ends with a "Connections" writing topic linking the selection to another in the book. And an alternate thematic table of contents organizes all the selections into more than two dozen topics.

**ABUNDANT EDITORIAL APPARATUS.** As always, we've surrounded the selections with a wealth of material designed to get students reading, thinking, and writing. To help structure students' critical approach to the selections, each one comes with two headnotes (on the author and the selection itself), three sets of questions (on meaning, writing strategy, and language), and at least four writing topics. One emphasizes critical writing, a second stresses connections with other selections, and a third is new:

- To complement the general introduction's increased emphasis on journal writing, a two-part writing topic for every selection encourages students to explore their responses in their journals and then develop their ideas into essays.

Besides aids with every selection, *The Brief Bedford Reader* also provides copious general resources, including one new to this edition:

- An appendix introduces the basics of using sources, including the selections in this book: paraphrasing, summarizing, and quoting; integrating quotations into one's own text; and documenting sources (including electronic sources) in MLA style.

As in previous editions, the book includes additional writing topics for every rhetorical chapter, a glossary ("Useful Terms") that defines all the

terms used in the book (including all those printed in SMALL CAPITAL LETTERS), and an index that alphabetizes authors and titles and important topics (including those in the Writers on Writing sections).

**INSTRUCTOR'S MANUAL.** Available as a separate manual or bound with the book, *Notes and Resources for Teaching The Brief Bedford Reader* features a discussion of every method, every selection (with possible answers to the questions), and every Writer on Writing. Some features are new to this edition:

- An introduction suggests ways to integrate journal writing and collaboration into writing classes.
- As noted earlier, each chapter includes a list of the selections in other chapters that illustrate the chapter's method.

**TWO VERSIONS.** *The Brief Bedford Reader* has a sibling. A longer edition, *The Bedford Reader*, features seventy-one selections instead of forty-five and includes five thematic chapters in which the essays illustrate mixed methods of development.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

With each edition we accumulate an enormous debt to teachers and students who help us shape *The Brief Bedford Reader*. The following teachers, patiently answering detailed questionnaires, pointed us toward worthy changes. We heartily thank Michael Benzel, Kate Hickey, Dawn Mays, Justin H. Miller, Hosanna G. O'Kelly, and Marlys M. Styne.

Bedford Books continues its tradition of spoiling its authors with generosity, warmth, and intelligence. Its bedrock, Charles H. Christensen, provided his usual insight into the needs of composition teachers and students. The developmental editor, Alanya Harter, was so bright, thoughtful, encouraging, and witty that the work of the revision was actually fun. She was supported by Aron Keesbury, who enthusiastically fielded any request. Andrea Kaston and David Gibbs helped shape the apparatus and instructor's manual. And Karen Baart, assisted by Deborah Baker, calmly and deftly shepherded a complex and sometimes unwieldy manuscript through production. We are deeply and happily grateful to all.



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