



USED

The Norton Reader

An Anthology of Expository Prose

SHORTER EIGHTH EDITION

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Preface

Since much of what usually appears in our Preface has moved in this eighth edition to the section entitled "To Students: Reading and Writing with *The Norton Reader*," these few pages will deal primarily with matters of history.

In the early sixties the seven original editors, all at the University of Michigan, all male (for such the English Department then predominantly was), almost all members of the Freshman English Committee, became dissatisfied with the crop of new readers available and thought that they might put together an improvement. (This is not to say that there had not earlier been excellent readers—by Keast, for example, or Locke, Gibson, and Arms, or Thompson, or Martin and Ohmann.)

Basically, they agreed, they would include works from the past as well as the present, foreign as well as native, long as well as short, light as well as serious, and in addition, those kinds of literature—journals, letters, characters, apothegms, parables—that are first cousins, in the family of the expository, to the essay and the article. They lacked, however, any scheme or program, any set of thematic or rhetorical headings by which to guide their selections. Excellence would be their pillar of smoke by day, of fire by night.

If that sounds presumptuous, as the editors soon discovered, it was, for about excellence, as Lord Chesterfield remarked to his wayward son (who tended to say "one man's meat is another man's poison") "tastes differ." The method of selection the editors agreed on was for each to make a certain number of nominations (say ten), to have these reviewed by a second editor, then by a third. More times than not, however, one or both of the reviewing editors disagreed with the nominator. Further, after the initial batch of nominations, each editor had to offer a second batch, this time to be reviewed by two editors who had had nothing to do with that editor's earlier submissions. The point, of course, was to avoid "sweetheart" arrangements—X approving Y's choices if Y approved X's. The result of this process, which has continued through all subsequent editions, was three files. The first contained nominations

that had received the approval of both reviewers; the second those that both reviewers had rejected; and the third, those on which the reviewers had divided or about which both had registered uncertainty. The nominations that had achieved full approval were "in." Those with double-negative reviews were "out." Those in-between were reviewed by the General Editor, checked against approved essays to avoid substantial duplications, checked against the needs of the thematic groups that seemed to be forming, and then taken in or thrown out.

With each new edition voices from the field influenced editorial judgment. As Doctor Johnson said, "that book is good in vain that is not read," and when Freshman English instructors reported that they had not read or certainly had not assigned certain pieces, those pieces joined the formerly rejected. Further, voices from the field, from the first edition to this, have made valuable suggestions for additional selections, as have the good people at Norton, all of which have received careful consideration and many of which have been gratefully accepted.

So much for history. What is new in this edition? Briefly, the contributions of a new editor, Linda H. Peterson, director of Yale's Bass Writing Program; Joan Hartman's opening essay, "To Students: Reading and Writing with *The Norton Reader*," which is lean and clear in style and eminently sane; a timely new section, "Nature and the Environment" including essays by such gifted writers as Aldo Leopold, Gretel Ehrlich, and Edward Abbey; a yet fuller selection of women, minority, and Canadian voices; a broader offering of multiple selections by the same authors; and, belatedly but usefully, new opening source notes putting individual essays in a context expanded upon in the appendix of author biographies.

For many contributions and much support we thank our users, and these especially: Maureen G. Andrews, Northern Michigan University; Andrew J. Angyal, Elon College; Joan Baum, City University of New York-York College; Samuel I. Bellman, California State Polytechnic University-Pomona; Gail Berkeley, Reed College; Louise C. Berry, University of Tennessee; Blair F. Bigelow, Suffolk University; Edwin Block, Marquette University; W. Dale Brown, Calvin College; Ingrid Brunner, Lehigh County Community College; Donna M. Campbell, State University of New York at Buffalo; Roger D. Carlstrom, Yukima Valley Community College; S. L. Chalgian, Macomb Community College; Paul Cohen, Southwest Texas State University; Marianne Cooley, University of Houston; Fred D. Crawford, Central Michigan University; E. T. A. Davidson, State University of New York at Oneonta; Naomi Diamond, Ryerson Polytechnic Institute; Louise Dibble, Suffolk Community College; Wilfred O. Dietrich, Blinn College; Mary Alice Dillman, Ohio Wesleyan University; Ann Elsdon, Dawson College; Kristina Faber, Shippensburg University of Pennsylvania; Susan Fellows, Palo-

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—Arthur M. Eastman

sometimes well known, sometimes less well known, speaking with authority and, often, seeing with a distinctive angle of vision. We find their writing convincing and clear, their style lean when elaboration is not required and adequate to complexity. The essays are not invariably simple to read: they originally appeared in publications read by informed and educated general readers.

The editors have provided a large number of essays, more than any instructor will assign during a semester: this time the regular edition contains 207; the shorter, 121. The organization, by kinds of writing and kinds of subjects, is loose. We know that there are many kinds of college writing courses; we know that instructors link reading and writing in a variety of ways. Our aim in *The Norton Reader* is to accommodate all or most of them. In consequence, we limit our editorial presence. You'll find, after some but not all of the essays, questions addressed to you as readers and others addressed to you as writers. We intend them to focus your reading of the essays: questions addressed to readers ask about the essays' content, meaning, and argument; questions addressed to writers ask about their authors' strategies—how they present their content and how they make their meanings clear. In the questions addressed to you as writers there's also at least one follow-up writing assignment—out of the many assignments that are possible. We leave it to your instructors to direct you through the essays, to decide which ones to assign and how to use them.

READING

We hope that, in addition to following your instructors' assignments, you'll also follow your own interests. But we don't count on it. Putting essays in a textbook, even one called a "reader," makes reading them seem artificial. They were written for and read by readers who read them naturally: because they wanted to know—or know more—about their subjects; because they knew—or knew of—their authors; or because the essays, appearing in publications they ordinarily read, tempted them to launch into unfamiliar subjects written about by authors they had never heard of. Outside the classroom, readers bring their own interests and motives to reading; inside the classroom, you are left to generate your own in response to assignments.

As editors, we've tried to make available some of the choices available to the original readers of these essays. Information about them appears in two places. A footnote at the beginning of each essay tells when and where it first appeared and, if it began as a talk, when and where it was delivered and to whom. Maya Angelou's "Graduation," for example, is a chapter from her autobiography, *I Know Where the Caged Bird Sings*,



To Students: Reading and Writing with *The Norton Reader*

This is the eighth edition of *The Norton Reader*; its first edition goes back to 1965. The editors have put together a selection of essays on a range of subjects, some familiar, others more specialized. You'll find the first kind in sections like "Personal Report," "People, Places," and "Signs of the Times," the second in sections like "Science," "Literature and the Arts," and "Philosophy and Religion." Some of these sections go back to the first edition: "Personal Report" opened the first as it still does the eighth. Others have come and gone: in this edition, for example, we've dropped a section called "Mind"—transferring some of its essays to "Human Nature"—and added a section called "Nature and the Environment." Some essays have appeared in all eight editions of *The Norton Reader*: E. B. White's "Once More to the Lake," for example, and Jonathan Swift's "A Modest Proposal." Others—about one-third—are new to this edition. You'll find some of the essays long, some short; some formal, some informal; some calculatedly challenging, some simpler.

The editors—now nine of us—search widely in order to include a range of material and a range of authors. Although most of the essays are contemporary, some are older; although most of them are written in English, a few are translated from other languages. You'll hear in them male and female voices; American, British, and Canadian voices; African-American, Asian-American, American Indian, and Spanish-American voices. What the essays have in common is excellence: at least three editors, without actually defining good writing to ourselves or for each other, have agreed on the inclusion of each essay. We find their subjects important, timely, timeless, engaging. We find their authors,

sometimes well known, sometimes less well known, speaking with authority and, often, seeing with a distinctive angle of vision. We find their writing convincing and clear, their style lean when elaboration is not required and adequate to complexity. The essays are not invariably simple to read: they originally appeared in publications read by informed and educated general readers.

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published in 1969; Scott Russell Sanders's "Looking at Women" was published in a journal called the *Georgia Review* in 1989; Francis Bacon's "Of Revenge" was published in a collection of his essays called, simply, *Essays*, in 1625; Chief Seattle's "Address" (which is translated), was delivered in response to a treaty offered to his people in 1854; Frances FitzGerald's "Rewriting American History" comes from her *America Revised*, published in *The New Yorker* and then as a book in 1979. We don't, however, explain the differences between the *Georgia Review* and *The New Yorker*; the first, a noncommercial journal published three times a year by the University of Georgia, has fewer and presumably more select and self-selected readers than *The New Yorker*, a commercial magazine published weekly. If more information about context helps situate you in relation to what you are reading, ask your instructors. As editors, we could swamp a smaller number of essays with additional information about their contexts, but we prefer to include more essays and keep contextual information spare.

A section called "Authors" at the end of *The Norton Reader* provides biographical and bibliographical information about the authors whose essays we include. Outside the classroom, we may know something about the authors we read before we read them or we may encounter them as unknowns. We may choose to let them speak for themselves, to see what we can discover about them as they do. Sometimes knowing who they are and where their voices come from helps us to hear them and to grasp what they say—and sometimes it doesn't. Putting biographical information at the provides you, in a textbook, something like the choices ordinary readers have as to how much knowledge about authors to bring to their reading.

An index listing essays by title and by author also appears at the end of *The Norton Reader*. It's, of course, useful for locating essays; it's also useful for identifying multiple essays by the same author. This edition includes multiple selections by nine authors, among them, for example, Joan Didion, Gretel Ehrlich, Stephen Jay Gould, and George Orwell. When you enjoy your encounter with particular authors, it's worth looking in the index to see if we've included additional essays by them; following an author provides motives for reading such as ordinary readers have.

In addition to information about contexts and authors, we also provide, in footnotes, explanations of material in the essays themselves. Our rules for annotation go something like this: (1) *Don't* define words, except foreign words, that appear in desk dictionaries. You can go to yours or, often more sensibly, guess from context. If an unfamiliar word is central to the meaning of an essay, the author is likely to define it. (2) *Do* provide information about people, places, works, theories, and unfamiliar things. For example, for Maya Angelou's "Graduation," we

explain Gabriel Prosser, Nat Turner, and Harriet Tubman (but not Abraham Lincoln and Christopher Columbus); Stamps (it's not immediately clear that it's an Arkansas town); and the poem "Invictus." For Frances FitzGerald's "Rewriting American History," we explain socialist realism and American nuclear bomb tests in the Pacific. We don't always agree among ourselves on what needs annotation or how much information constitutes an explanation. In this we're not unique: all annotators make assumptions about the information readers they don't fully know bring to their reading. Our experience in the classroom helps us estimate the annotation you need. But you can be sure that we'll fail in some places and affront you in others by explaining what you find obvious. When we fail, ask your instructors for help; when we affront you, take our efforts as well intentioned. Again, rather than swamping a smaller number of essays with annotation, we keep it spare.

Our last rule for notes is the trickiest. (3) Explain, don't interpret—that is, provide information but leave readers to decide how authors frame and engage the material we explain and how it contributes to their meanings. Francis Bacon's "Of Revenge," for example, ends: "Public revenges are for the most part fortunate; as that for the death of Caesar; for the death of Pertinax; for the death of Henry the third of France; and many more. But in private revenges it is not so, Nay rather, vindictive persons live the life of witches; who as they are mischievous, so end they infortunate." We explain Pertinax and Henry III (but not Caesar). You sensibly could guess, without annotation, that all three were, first, public persons and, second, assassinated. We give dates—Pertinax assassinated in 193, Henry III in 1589—but leave you to consider what Bacon's illustrations, ranging over time, contribute to his meaning. We also leave you to work out what made these revenges "for the most part fortunate," because Bacon himself, with his terse, elliptical style, demands that you do. He contrasts these public revenges with private revenges that are "not so," that is, not for the most part fortunate, and then points out the consequences for the assassins themselves, who end unfortunately. To work out the meanings engaged by Bacon's illustrations is to interpret rather than to explain. Working out meanings is the work of readers and, in the classroom, of communities of readers and instructors.

Finally, of course, we include the authors' own notes, distinguishing theirs from ours by adding their names in square brackets. In general, authors' notes are infrequent: extensive notes indicate academic writers addressing other academics within their disciplines rather than nonacademic writers addressing general readers. This edition of *The Norton Reader* includes a report published in a scientific journal, "Handgun Regulations, Crime, Assaults, and Homicide: A Tale of Two Cities,"

from the *New England Journal of Medicine*, which has extensive notes. Scientific reports accessible to general readers are not easy to find. This one stands in useful contrast to the essays by Stephen Jay Gould that we also include: he's a scientist who writes for general readers, who popularizes science. Among the differences between the handgun report and Gould's essays is the presence (or the absence) of authors' notes.

Assignments in *The Norton Reader* will motivate you to "read" but won't make you readers, that is, persons who bring to what they read their own interests and who are ready to engage in the activity of making meaning out of words encountered on a page. Reading is a solitary enterprise and making meaning somewhat mysterious. Watch yourself as you do it. Try to notice what happens when you succeed and when you fail, for failure is as instructive as success. Ordinarily you are the sole judge of both. Short-answer tests elicit only your superficial comprehension. Writing about what you read, in essay examinations or papers, tests your comprehension of large structures. But sentence to sentence, paragraph to paragraph, your comprehension is manifest only to you. Mark up your texts as a record: where do you deal confidently with meaning and where tentatively and where do you drift away, either willfully or inadvertently? And what can you learn about yourselves as readers through this kind of marking?

Because assigned reading is shared reading, class discussion can move the making of meaning from a solitary to a social enterprise. The classroom provides a community of readers and opportunities to demystify reading. What interests and motives do we, students and instructors alike, bring to texts? What strategies do we employ when we read? Are there other, more useful ones? What meanings are common to us, what meanings individual? What is responsive and responsible reading? When do individual meanings become irresponsible, and how do we decide? These are questions that concern writers as well as readers: making meaning by writing is the flip side of making it by reading. In neither enterprise is meaning passed from hand to hand like nickels, dimes, and quarters.

WRITING

Making meaning by writing is less mysterious than making it by reading. Most instructors of writing, however they choose to link reading and writing, emphasize what's called process. Process refers to working in stages on multiple drafts, product refers to final drafts. Multiple drafts provide evidence for what we do and how we do it. Student writers seldom have time to proceed through as many drafts as do professional

writers and experienced writers. But learning to distribute the time you have over several drafts rather than one will turn out to be the most efficient use of it.

Experienced writers know they can't do everything at once: assemble material, assess its usefulness, disperse it in sections, paragraphs, and sentences, and write it out in well-formed sentences. Student writers, however, often expect to produce a finished single draft. If that's what you expect of yourself, then a writing course is a good place to change your expectations and cultivate more sensible and profitable practices. When you try to produce a finished single draft, you are likely to thin out your evidence and disperse it in simple ways; lock yourself into structures you can't change even if, in the course of writing, you discover new meanings; and write lumpy sentences that need to be reformed. In addition, single-draft writing, when you're aiming for something reasonably thoughtful and deserving of a respectable grade, is harder than multiple-draft writing and no quicker.

The process experienced writers go through when they write is something like this. They start with freewriting, brainstorming, listing, or whatever other heuristic devices—that is, means of discovering what to write—that they have learned work for them. They try out what they have to say in rough drafts. As they shape their material they find what it means and what they want it to mean; as they find what it means and what they want it to mean they figure out how to shape it—shape and meaning are reciprocal. Large and small are also reciprocal: they work back and forth among complete drafts and smaller units—sections and paragraphs in longer drafts, paragraphs in shorter. As shape and meaning come together, they refine still smaller units, that is, sentences, phrases, and even words.

Then, when they have a draft that in some sense satisfies them, they turn themselves around. Having written for themselves and made their own meaning, they attend to writing for others, to transmitting what they mean. They try to distance themselves from themselves and from their draft by putting it aside for a time, if they can, and by imagining themselves as readers other than themselves bringing to what they've written other interests, other motives. Writing for oneself takes commitment: we have to turn off the censor that inhibits our writing and embarrasses us with what we have written. Writing for others takes skepticism: we have to turn the censor back on—or find a reader or readers who will dramatize for us the experience of making meaning from our draft and help us to see how we have been understood and misunderstood.

This is the rough sequence of tasks experienced writers perform in overlapping stages. They revise at all stages and their revisions are substantial. What inexperienced writers call revision—tinkering with

surface features by rewording, pruning, and correcting—they call editing and proofreading. These tasks they do at the end, when they are ready to stop revising and prepare what they call a final draft; if larger elements of a draft need repair, it's too soon to work on smaller elements.

To distance yourself from your own drafts or to respond to someone else's, individually and in groups, think about a hierarchy of questions.

1. When you write in response to an assignment, ask, "Did I do what I was told to do?" When you write on a subject you choose yourself, ask, "Did I do what I promised to do in the introduction?" In the second instance, you can revise your introduction to make a promise you keep: experienced writers expect to revise their introductions radically as their drafts take shape. In the first instance, you'll have to decide whether or not what you have written is a reasonable substitute for the assignment and, if it is, how to introduce it honestly.

2. Then ask, "Is the material I have included appropriate? Have I included enough, and have I interpreted it fairly and adequately?" Appropriateness is more or less straightforward. Inclusiveness is problematic. Ordinarily, experienced writers are more inclusive than student writers. You may find the essays in *The Norton Reader* dense and overspecific; your instructors, on the other hand, may find your essays skimpy and underspecific. Experienced writers thicken their writing with particulars to transmit their meanings and engage readers' recognition, understanding, and imagination. Because they are more in control of their writing than student writers, they are able to be more inclusive, to sustain multiple examples and illustrations.

Responsible writers want to interpret material fairly; slanted interpretation is the stock-in-trade of advertisers and hucksters. Interpreting material fairly means maintaining its emphases and distorting its inflections as little as possible. In general, experienced writers interpret adequately and student writers underinterpret. One way of assessing adequacy is looking at quotations. How many are there? (Experienced writers ordinarily use fewer than student writers.) How necessary are they? (Experienced writers paraphrase more than they quote.) How well are they integrated? (Experienced writers introduce quotations by explaining who is speaking, where the voice is coming from, and what to listen for; they finish off quotations by linking them to what follows.)

3. Then ask, "Is the material well deployed?" Writing involves putting readers in possession of interrelated material in a temporal order: readers read from start to finish. Sometimes material explained near the end might better be explained near the beginning; sometimes material explained near the beginning might better be postponed. When paragraphs follow each other, transitional words like *therefore* may not be necessary; when they don't, missing connections can't be supplied by *therefore*.

4. Then ask, "At the sentence level, which sentences unfold unproblematically and which sentences make readers stumble?" Readers who can identify what makes them stumble as they read your writing can teach you more about well-formed sentences than any set of rules for forming them.

Writing, unlike reading, is both a solitary and a social enterprise: while we compose and revise by ourselves, we eventually put our drafts into circulation. A writing classroom, at best, introduces social dimensions into the process, as students put *less-than-final* drafts into circulation and receive responses to them. It provides a community of readers to read each other's writing as well as the writing of professional and experienced writers in a text such as *The Norton Reader*. Honing one's skills as a reader on professional writing is good training: it will help you to respond to the writing of less experienced writers, others' writing and your own.



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