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John M. Kierzek
W. Walker Gibson

Seventh Edition

The Macmillan Handbook of English

THE MACMILLAN

HANDBOOK OF

ENGLISH *Seventh Edition*

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Preface

The seventh edition of *The Macmillan Handbook of English* marks a departure from the format of previous editions. Although the book remains a combined rhetoric and handbook dedicated to the propagation of precise, effective writing, the rhetoric section has been redesigned to move students from study of words and phrases, sentences, and paragraphs to composition of the whole essay. The introductory chapter of the rhetoric, "The Task of Writing," has changed focus accordingly, covering such essential matters as organization, tone, precision, and clarity, as well as addressing the important questions of gender and pronoun choice. Many outdated illustrations of formal and informal usage, most of which were taken from speeches rather than essays, have been replaced with more current examples of writing.

Other illustrative material has been added to subsequent chapters. I have introduced a short discussion of the history of the language to give students some notion of the development and sources of English words and phrases. Exercises in sentence combining have been added to the section on subordination in Chapter 3, "The Sentence," in the rhetoric. Chapter 5 now provides a thorough list of subjects for writing, along with class-tested suggestions for treating these subjects. Students may also trace the evolution of an entire essay from prewriting to proofreading. For the first time the rhetoric includes a chapter on writing themes about literature and film; this chapter offers definitions of important literary terms, suggested critical approaches, and a list of books for further study. The research paper chapter remains essentially the same, except for the substi-

tution of a new, informative sample paper on Shakespeare's contribution to our language.

Section II, "A Handbook of Writing and Revision," now deals exclusively with specific writing, spelling, and mechanical problems and their correction. Material treating paragraph development has been incorporated into Chapter 4, "The Paragraph," in the rhetoric. New exercises designed to give students more practice in correcting errors have been added to the various subsections. The "Guide to Usage" has been updated to include and comment on the latest abuses of the language; the chapter on letter form and the résumé has been removed to an appendix.

I believe the seventh edition of *The Macmillan Handbook of English* is a fuller, more coherent and useful text than past editions. It could not have been revised without the help of many composition instructors who took the time to provide me with constructive and clearly stated suggestions. I would particularly like to thank Ms. Pat Brayman and Mr. Ted Otteson of the University of Missouri-Kansas City English Department for their sound ideas and assistance. To my editor, Anthony English, goes deep appreciation for his careful review of the manuscript and his many sound and witty revisions. Ms. Helen Bennett of the University of Missouri-Kansas City General Library gave expert assistance in locating reference books and journals; to her I extend heartfelt thanks.

ROBERT F. WILLSON, JR.

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