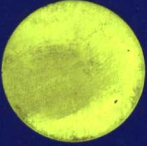


# *The Confident Writer*



A NORTON WORKBOOK

SECOND EDITION

AMY RICHARDS

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# THE CONFIDENT WRITER

## A Norton Workbook

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AMY RICHARDS

WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY

*Second Edition*



W · W · NORTON & COMPANY · NEW YORK · LONDON

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Printed in the United States of America.

ISBN 0-393-95620-2

W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 500 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10110  
W. W. Norton & Company Ltd., 37 Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3NU

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0

# PREFACE

*The Confident Writer: A Norton Workbook* teaches rhetoric, paragraph and sentence structure, effective word choice, grammar, and mechanics through explanation, example, exercise, and writing. In its plan it addresses most of the subjects covered in *The Confident Writer: A Norton Handbook*. It extends the usefulness of the handbook by giving further practice, often through a new or simplified approach, in the understanding of the subjects.

There are five parts to each workbook chapter: summary explanations of the concepts treated in the chapter; examples of these concepts; outlines of the learning objectives for the exercises; exercises; and writing assignments. The summaries and examples review the explanations in the corresponding chapters of the handbook and become a reference source when the workbook is used without the handbook. The list of exercise objectives introduces the reasons for doing the exercises. The exercises themselves give experience in both the recognition of the subject and in its use. Finally, the writing assignments give an opportunity for practicing new understandings and skills in a paragraph or an essay.

You may choose to assign the workbook to the whole class, using it for class discussions and activities throughout the semester. If you do this, you could

- focus on rhetoric in class, assigning chapters 1 and 2 (rhetoric), 9 (Crafting Sentences), 10 (Revising Sentences), 11 (Choosing Effective Words). Chapters on grammar and mechanics could be assigned as a review outside of class;
- focus on paragraphing, sentence structure, grammar, and mechanics, using chapter 2 (Paragraphs and the Writing Process), 3 and 4 (Basic Sentence Grammar), 5, 6, 8 (problems with verbs, nouns and pronouns, and modifiers), 7 (Problems with Agreement), 10 (Revising Sentences), and 12–14 (spelling and punctuation);
- assign only those chapters that are relevant to the needs of your particular class or to your prescribed course syllabus.

Alternatively, you might make the workbook optional, assigning it only to students who need work in special areas.

Since students gain greater insight if they work exercises together, you can encourage group work by

- making a part of a chapter the focus of a class discussion in which answers to exercises are produced by the class;
- dividing a class into groups in which exercises are discussed and worked together;

- assigning to a group the task of explaining a subject to the class, using the exercises for illustrations;
- allowing students who share a common problem to work exercises for that problem in a laboratory or conference;
- promoting an after-class workshop in which students help each other review grammar, punctuation, and sentence structure.

**Acknowledgments** I would like to thank the many people who helped me with this book: the scores of students whose essays provided the paragraphs and sentences that make up the bulk of the examples and exercises in the workbook; other students who tried out exercises; teachers, Carol Domblewski, Claire Crabtree, and Patricia Hernlund, who contributed in special ways to the preparation of the workbook; its editor, Barry Wade, whose skill and insight shaped the book; Barry's assistants, Victoria Thys and Heather Warren, who cheerfully arranged details; its expert copy editors, Marian Johnson and Jeremy Townsend; and, of course, Connie Gefvert, who guided and supported my efforts.

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# INTRODUCTION

Writing confidence grows when your readers let you know that they have understood your writing easily and quickly. Confidence increases even more when you learn how you have achieved this readability; if you know what techniques you have used well, you can employ them again to assure future successes. Helping you recognize effective writing techniques is one of the important roles of this workbook.

*The Confident Writer: A Norton Workbook* gives comprehensive coverage of most of the subjects treated in the *The Confident Writer: A Norton Handbook*. If you are having trouble understanding a particular point in the handbook, you should turn to the workbook for a summary explanation and examples of most topics in addition to exercises and perhaps essay assignments.

The workbook identifies successful rhetorical, paragraph, and sentence structures, and effective word choices, grammar, and mechanics. In addition to identifying these features of writing, the workbook gives you practice in using them effectively. It provides exercises and essay assignments that help you practice using rhetorical skills; building essays, paragraphs, and sentences; and choosing appropriate words, grammatical forms and mechanics.

Each exercise begins with directions that are accompanied by examples of how to follow them. The exercises are often paired, the first helping you recognize the concept being studied, the second asking you to use it in an appropriate form. The exercises have not been constructed so as to trick you, but only to give you practice in recognizing and using forms. Since the examples and the exercise materials have been taken from the writing of college students and have been tried out by college students, you should find them easy to read and relate to. Try to do the exercises not automatically but thoughtfully, reviewing the explanations, examining the examples, and fulfilling the directions with care.

There are many ways in which your instructor may use the workbook: your whole class may work exercises which will be used for class discussions and activities; you may join with other students in workshop sessions where you will help each other master certain concepts; you may be assigned only those sections that are relevant to the course syllabus; or you may be asked to use the workbook on your own to review information.

While using the workbook remember that the exercises are not ends in themselves but steps toward your becoming a more confident writer. Mastering a concept such as when to use “who” or “whom” or how to structure a particular kind of paragraph or sentence will bring a sense of accomplishment, but the real victory comes when you apply what you have learned to your own writing.





# 1

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## THE WRITING PROCESS

Do you look around the room at your classmates as they concentrate on an in-class writing project or watch them as they happily hand in a neatly typed term paper and feel that you must be the only one among them who experiences writing as a struggle? The truth of the matter is that most students—and most professional writers too—find writing a complex process and share with you a sense of its difficulties. Although the writing process differs for different writers, most go through a similar series of activities.

- They start out by deciding to explore an experience, develop the answer to a question, interpret an event, convey information, or argue a position in writing.
- Next, they unearth ideas and facts about this subject;
- Assess the purpose and audience of the project;
- Shape a thesis suitable to the purpose;
- Select the ideas for supporting the thesis and the methods for developing and arranging them;
- Allow the subconscious to incubate while it discovers new ideas and new relationships among ideas;
- Draft, redraft and ultimately edit.

While this outline may make the writing process seem complex, take comfort in knowing that you have already mastered many of these activities and regularly engage in them unconsciously. More confidence will come to you when you recognize these activities as they occur and engage in them deliberately, thus producing more thoughtful writing. As you engage in the writing exercises at the end of each chapter in this book, return to this list and check off the steps you recognize yourself performing.

Confidence will come as well with your secure knowledge of paragraph and sentence structure—with your understanding of their coherence and the options for their forms. It will come more easily, furthermore, when you feel assured of grammatical patterns and their relationships and the rationale and rules for punctuation and mechanics. At the end of the workbook you will have the chance to write an essay describing your personal writing process and your mastery of the internal structures of paragraphs and sentences and their punctuation.