

---

# IDEA 1

# EXCHANGE

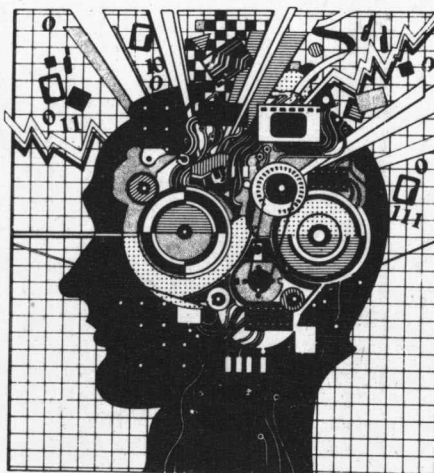
---

## Writing What You Mean

**Linda Lonon Blanton**

University of New Orleans





# IDEA 1 EXCHANGE

Writing What You Mean

Linda Lonon Blanton  
University of New Orleans

江苏工业学院图书馆  
藏书章



Newbury House Publishers  
A division of Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc.  
Cambridge, New York, Philadelphia, San Francisco, Washington, D.C.  
London, Mexico City, São Paulo, Singapore, Sidney

11  
\* 8/4/8  
(31362) 18-9104/8 \*

Sponsoring Editor: Laurie Likoff  
Production Coordinator: Cynthia Funkhouser  
Text Design and Cover Design: Suzanne Bennett Associates  
Text Art: Ray Skibinski  
Compositor: Waldman Graphics  
Printer and Binder: Malloy Lithographing Inc.



Newbury House Publishers, A Division of Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc.  
Language Science  
Language Teaching  
Language Learning

**Idea Exchange 1: Writing What You Mean**

Copyright © 1988 by Newbury House Publishers, a Division of Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc. All rights reserved. Printed in the United States of America. No part of this book may be used or reproduced in any manner whatsoever without written permission, except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical articles and reviews. For information address Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc., 10 East 53d Street, New York, NY 10022.

**Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data**

Blanton, Linda Lonon, 1942-  
Idea exchange.

1. English language—Rhetoric. 2. English language—Textbooks for foreign speakers. I. Title.  
PE1408.B526 1988 808'.042 87-35014  
ISBN 0-06-632614-1 (v. 1)

Printed in the U.S.A.  
63-26144

First printing: March 1988

91 90 89 88 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

# PREFACE

---

**IDEA EXCHANGE:** *Writing What You Mean* is intended for adult and young adult students of English as a Second Language. Its development has been greatly influenced by the evolution of composition theory over the last several years, and is the result of my own classroom experience in successfully applying current theory as I have worked to involve ESL students in the process of writing English in a nonthreatening, supportive way—one that is within their level of competence yet does not insult their intelligence. This book can be used successfully with high-beginning students, who may have to stretch—and that is good—as well as those at the intermediate level and above.

The lessons in the book are not self-instructional; they presume the guidance of a professional teacher. Following the table of contents is an introduction to the teacher that gives suggestions on how the materials may best be used. I urge anyone using this book to read that section.

The book is divided into ten units. Each unit contains prewriting and prereading activities; illustrated sample student essays with accompanying exercises; instructions for the student's own writing, within a process that promotes the development of all language skills; and a postwriting activity. For lower-level ESL writers, I have found that the writing process is of equal importance to the product, and the lessons are designed to show ESL students strategies for generating ideas and shaping them into a form that can be read and understood by someone else. The lessons are designed to guide students in their writing development to a point where they can generate several pages of written English.

I believe that it is important for students to begin the writing process early in their study of English, without waiting until they are more fluent. When it is done without fear of failure, writing can aid their overall progress in English. In other words, students will be writing English in order to learn more English.

I dedicate this book to my father, the late Seth Lonon, whose manner was so quiet and life so ordinary that I almost failed to recognize how very special he was.

I want to thank my student writers, Hassen Souissi, Lien Lo, Sebastian Pastor, and Cherry Cappel, whose essays form the core of each chapter of the book. Not only have they contributed authentic written language, but a whole lot of spirit as well.

I would like to acknowledge Ann Raimes for her term "parallel writing"; Flower and Hayes for pointing out some of the specific concerns that writers need to have for their readers; and Amy Sonka, for her concept of interaction in the classroom. I am undoubtedly indebted to many others whose ideas and terminology I've incorporated so thoroughly into my thinking that I am unaware of my debt.

Linda Lonon Blanton  
*New Orleans*

# TO THE TEACHER

---

## INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK

*Idea Exchange, Book 1*, is written to the student. The student is addressed directly, and the instructions for each lesson are written as simply as possible so that they can be understood by the student, with just a little help from you. The purpose of addressing the students directly is not to leave you out, for you are indispensable, but rather to engage students by involving them personally in the materials, thereby making your job a little easier. You are invited to supplement, rearrange, and simplify where you see fit; only you know your students' needs and modes of learning and the constraints of your program.

What follows is a discussion of the methodology inherent in the materials, as well as a suggested plan for using them. These may help you in understanding why and how to use the lessons.

## ASSUMPTIONS AND INTENT

The materials in *Idea Exchange, Book 1*, are based on the supposition that writing competency develops along a continuum of ever-increasing accuracy and fluency, and that it develops over time and within an atmosphere of encouragement and respect. Further, it develops most rapidly when the focus is on communicating and sharing ideas and experiences, not on counting errors and getting grades—although students certainly want feedback on their errors and rewards for work well done. Finally, writing competency develops when reading is intertwined with writing: readings then serve as a source of ideas, stimulation, vocabulary, and general usage that enables the reader to become a writer and, in turn, to be read.

*Idea Exchange, Book 1*, is designed for students of English as a

Second Language who have a high-beginning or low-intermediate level of proficiency. Because these materials may be your students' first formal instruction in writing English, the tone set by the materials you use, as well as the atmosphere created by you in using them, is extremely important.

My own experience in working with emerging ESL writers and in being a beginning writer in other languages tells me that inexperienced writers feel extremely vulnerable. My sense is that writing teachers, who need a great deal of patience and understanding in most circumstances, need an extra measure when working with students who are groping for a footing in the language.

You need to be adept at knowing when to intervene in the developmental process because students are on the wrong track and when to "wait it out" as students work through problems that only they can solve over time. A concern for the feelings of beginning writers and a strong sense of how ragged the course of writing development can be has influenced the wording, sequencing, and contents of the book.

*Idea Exchange, Book 1*, is written for adults who want to learn English for professional, academic, and business purposes. The format has been used successfully with high-beginning students, ranging in age from seventeen to forty-five, from eight different language backgrounds, and with varying degrees of education.

The book is divided into ten units or lessons. Each lesson contains prewriting and prereading activities, two illustrated readings with accompanying exercises on various aspects of the readings, instructions for the students' own writing, and a postwriting activity. In all, the ten lessons provide fifty to sixty class hours of instruction and writing practice.

### **THE LESSONS: PREWRITING**

The first activity in each unit is journal writing. Its purpose is to give students the space and time in which to write, to connect thoughts and words without being concerned with how their writing appears. When students write in their journals, they are writing for and to themselves. Any notebook can become a "journal" when entries are made in it routinely. Another prewriting activity directs students to play with words; with this activity, students will find that they can be creative with their new language and have some fun with it. As they play with the language, they concentrate on meanings and word relationships.

The readings that follow in each unit are essays written by real students—three non-native speakers of English and one native

speaker—and edited to suit this book. Despite the editing, the student writers' own voices and personalities are clearly expressed in their essays.

I have used student essays for three main reasons: to provide authenticity in the writing, to give students real people to identify with, and to engage them in using English to find out more about four individuals whom they will find interesting and worth caring about. The readings are considered part of the prewriting phase of each lesson as students interact with the ideas of the four student writers and begin to shape their own ideas.

The illustrations that accompany the readings can help clarify meanings. You may want students to follow along as you "tell" the readings. In turn, the illustrations can guide oral discussion or the retelling of each essay.

The readings are intended as readings, not models for your students' writing. Although the readings are intentionally above the level of your students' writing, they are not above their level of reading—if students are willing to stretch. If, at first, they understand only bits and pieces of a reading, they need not despair. They should still be encouraged to do some or all of the exercises and work through the process of their own writing. Breakthroughs in reading and writing ability come at different times for different students, and neither we nor they can predict when these small victories will occur.

Overall, the readings are there to exercise students' reading muscles, to serve as written input to the language acquisition process, and to challenge and stimulate students to share parallel ideas and experiences. In effect, the readings provide context and support for your students' writing. Don't expect their writing to be an imitation of the essays in the book, however; it will be additional writing, at a less sophisticated level, within the same thematic range. At first, it may amount to only a few simple lines. Be patient; it will develop!

The exercises that follow the readings in each unit are varied in order to maintain student interest, as well as to cover linguistic ground over the scope of the book. Many of the grammar exercises are designed to review structures that students may need to check as they edit their work. The exercises can be deleted or supplemented, depending on what your students need to work on.

## **THE LESSONS: WRITING**

The process that students follow in writing their essays is just as important as the essays they write. Built into the process as taught in this book are strategies that will help students accomplish a number of important goals:



1. become more aware of the needs of their readers
2. generate ideas
3. get feedback throughout the writing process
4. expand their ideas and refine what they mean
5. revise and edit

Experience has shown that we can not assume that students have sophisticated rhetorical skills that can simply be transferred to English; as likely as not, many of them don't feel confident in writing their native language, while others have learned to write according to formulaic prescriptions. Either way, you may have to help students develop rhetorical skills that haven't been developed in any language.

Throughout this book I ask you to give attention to the writing process. However, students will surely want you to read their writing and assess it, and you may already have found satisfactory ways of responding to their writing. My own choice is to respond to the content of their essays and to select one rhetorical or grammatical problem to highlight and note on each essay. The pattern of student errors will indicate problems they are ready to attack next.

### **THE LESSONS: POSTWRITING**

The postwriting activity at the end of each unit consists of an entry into a learning log. In this section, entitled "Winding Down," students are asked questions that direct their attention to language learning experiences and perhaps to their own anxiety and frustration. Although the questions do not need to be answered one by one, they are there to "prime the pump" and give students "permission" to participate in their own learning. The log is simply a sheet of notebook paper that students write their thoughts on and turn in at the end of each unit.

I suggest that you respond to students' logs by writing several comments in return on their papers—commiserating with a problem, sharing the joy of an important discovery, answering a question, or sharing a similar insight or experience. (At all costs, I urge you to resist the urge to correct students' logs; simply respond as a reader.) In addition, you might handwrite a collective log to the class, making a copy for each student. In my log to the class, I comment on our recent work, cite the ideas or comments of a classmate, and summarize some of the content of their individual logs. I've found that students dearly love to see themselves cited or quoted in my log!

The purpose of the learning log is threefold: to give students a

reason to reflect on the learning process, set up another writing situation with a real reader, and help provide a sense of collaboration between you and your students. Writing a learning log can be as valuable as writing a journal or an essay. In different ways, each enhances a writing program and promotes writing development.

## **TOPICS AND RHETORIC**

In content, the units focus on aspects of daily life that touch us all—families, special occasions, favorite and familiar places, trips, unusual experiences. These topics are so universal that they can easily be personalized by your students, a factor that will make writing easier and more meaningful. None of us can write well on topics that are remote to our personal knowledge and experience.

Rhetorically, the readings and students' parallel writing are narrative in Units 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, and 10 and descriptive in Units 1, 2, 5, and 8. You may wish to point out that in writing it is the content and the writers' intentions that lead the way, not a particular rhetorical mode.

In my guidelines to the student writers whose essays appear in the readings, I asked them to explore certain topics without giving them rhetorical specifications. The rhetorical "shape" that each essay took was determined by what the writer wanted to say about a particular topic. Such is the nature of written language.

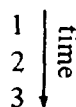
## **ORGANIZATION AND GRAMMAR**

In organization, the readings illustrate the following:

- Chronological order (a time arrangement): Units 3, 4, 6, 9, 10
- Spatial order (a space arrangement): Units 5, 8
- Enumeration (a listing of information): Units 1, 2
- Shift of conversational subject (movement from one topic to another): Unit 7

Again, students with strong rhetorical backgrounds may be interested in some of the more academic and analytic aspects of English discourse as they become more proficient in the language. And they may want to know some terminology and rhetorical concepts. If they are curious, diagrams are a good visual way of explaining organizational arrangements:

Chronological order:

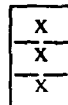
*Example:* morning, afternoon, evening

Spatial order:

a.



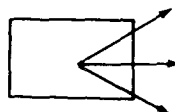
b.

*Example:* front, center, back

Enumeration:

*Example:* John = male, oldest child, student

Shift of subject:

*Example:* I, you, your brother

Whenever direct attention is given to rhetorical analysis, it should be emphasized that writers do not set out, for example, to spatially order their content; spatial order of details will emerge when a writer wants the reader to “see” how something or someone looks. It is the by-product of a writer acting on intentions.

It is up to you to determine when attending to rhetorical matters is confusing or when it satisfies the intellectual curiosity of academically minded adults. A lot of rhetorical know-how is acquired by students without their conscious knowledge of it. They simply put it into practice. It is my sense that at the beginning levels of ESL writing, such rhetorical matters are part of “teacher knowledge.”

Structurally, the content of the readings is developed within the time frames of present and past. Accordingly, the writers have used primarily the simple present, present continuous, or simple past tenses. (The past continuous and perfect tenses pop up occasionally, but are never focused on.)

The progression of tenses through the ten units is largely the result of the arrangement of topic areas, rather than a rigid editing of the readings. For example, the topics that make use of the simple past tense are placed toward the end of the book, since present grammar tenses are traditionally introduced before the many irregular past forms.

Although this traditional arrangement is based more on custom than logic, I have chosen to follow that tradition. This is not to say that students should be exposed only to language forms that we think they are ready for. In fact, it is often productive for them to work with content that is comprehensible, yet which contains structural

forms that they may not be ready to produce. Working with such forms, even if outside the level of conscious awareness, readies students for language that they may end up acquiring without any direct work on their part or yours. This is language development at its best.

Overall, you will see a grading of length and structural complexity of the readings according to what classroom experience has shown is manageable. Note that this is done as naturally as possible without affecting the authenticity of the readings, with forms appearing in the readings before they become the grammatical focus of a particular unit. The result may be that students try to use a form before it becomes part of a lesson; so much the better. There is never a wrong time for students to be curious about their new language.

### A SUGGESTED TIME FRAME FOR THE LESSONS

Each unit is designed to provide five to six hours of classwork. If students meet for composition five days a week, as they do in some intensive ESL programs, much of the basic work can be done in class. If they meet less often, more will need to be assigned as homework in order to complete a unit in a week's time. If you prefer a less rigorous pace, stretch each unit over a week and a half.

What follows is a six-day suggested plan for each unit:

*Day 1: Prewriting and prereading.* Students write in their journals and play with words in class. Then they prepare for the reading, by combining individual work with oral sharing. If time permits, present the readings by "telling" them while students follow along with the illustrations. Homework assignment: Have students study the readings, looking up and writing down new vocabulary. (Urge them to keep a special vocabulary notebook.)

*Day 2: Readings and exercises.* Several students retell the readings, while others listen and follow the illustrations to see if anything has been left out. The listeners then offer corrections or supplementary information. Alternative plans are for you to ask questions whose answers, in effect, constitute a retelling of the readings or to write sequential questions on the board and have students respond orally. Next, have students refer to their own questions from the prereading and comment on any similarities or discrepancies between what they expected and what they actually found. If possible, do some or all of the exercises that follow the readings. They can be done individually or collectively. Homework assignment: Have students complete any unfinished exercises.



*Day 3: Collaborative work and decisions about reader needs.* Begin by checking exercises that weren't checked on Day 2. Then proceed to the first two steps of "Parallel Writing" for their own writing. (In Units 1 through 8, students work with partners; in Units 9 and 10, they work in larger groups.) After students decide on a reader, have them verbalize the answers to the questions. Perhaps a random check of the class will do. Homework assignment: Have students follow the third step of the instructions (draft an essay).

*Day 4: More collaborative work and revising.* Any general problems that emerge as students work on their writing can be addressed at the beginning of class. Have students work with their partners again (step 4) and then go on to step 5, checking back to the readings and revising their drafts. Homework assignment: Have students finish the revised draft.

*Day 5: Reader response.* Readers read the essays given to them and respond in writing (step 6). Writers get a chance to ask their readers for clarification, if needed. Then, based on the readers' comments, writers revise their drafts. Depending upon how much time is needed for exchanging comments, this last re-drafting may be completed in part or entirely at home.

*Day 6: Wrap up.* Students write in their learning logs in class and turn them in to you. At this point, you may also want to collect the students' drafts. If the paper load is excessive, you might stagger your collection so that you don't see every student's drafts every week. Another option is to have students select which of every three or four series of drafts they want you to read and respond to. However you arrange it, I suggest that you not collect any work until after the third draft, when writers have had a chance to act on their readers' comments. Your comments and evaluation will thereby take into account the quality of the final draft as well as the writer's increasing ability to revise from one draft to the next.

### **SOME NOTES ON THE WRITING PROCESS**

Built into each unit of this book is a process within a process. The larger process takes your class from journal writing ("Warming Up") to log writing ("Winding Down"); the smaller one takes your students from talking to a partner about ideas for writing to writing an essay ("Parallel Writing").

The real focus, of course, is the writing process itself which

12 \* 8/4/06-8 (29/12)

underlies and subsumes the other two. While we are continually learning more about the writing process, what we know so far is that it involves a lot of thinking and generating of ideas (called the "invention" stage by some theorists) and a lot of drafting and reclarifying. And we know that redrafting can be further refined into stages of revision, editing and proofreading.

The writing process also appears to be more cyclical than linear. For instance, writers may still be coming up with new ideas when they are already into the revision stage.

Research seems to indicate that writers become more successful when they understand that their ideas emerge over the course of thinking, reading, talking and writing about a topic; that their ideas do not arrive in a neat package, a gift of the gods.

Research also suggests that writers become more successful when they are not overly concerned with correctness in the early stages of their writing. They need to allow themselves time to figure out what they want to say before worrying about grammar and mechanics. Successful writers seem to leave the "cleaning up" for the editing and final proofreading stages.

Many of these aspects of the writing process will be readily apparent as your students work through each unit of the book. In particular, students will be generating ideas as they write in their journals, play with words, anticipate the content of the readings, read, work with their writing partners, anticipate their readers' needs, and draft their essays.

If your students still need additional activities to generate creative thinking and writing, have them try these:

1. Brainstorm a topic by listing all/any possible points to be covered.
2. List any words possibly related to the topic.
3. Draw pictures (stick figures permitted!) related to the topic.
4. Make a list of points that you would like to read about in someone else's essay on the topic.
5. Write the last (first) sentence of an essay on the topic.
6. Describe your most vivid memory or experience related to any aspect of the topic.

As you work through each unit of this book, you will see that students are drafting at almost every step along the way, even before they are given instructions for essay writing. They are drafting as well as generating ideas when they write in their journals; ideas expressed there will likely find their way into students' essays.

Once students see that their writing parallels the readings, they will probably start to compose in their heads as they read—trying

out new combinations of words to fit with their own experiences and ideas. Further, students compose orally as they talk through their ideas with their writing partners; they continue to draft in response to the feedback from their partners as well as to their readers' anticipated needs.

As your students draft in response to feedback from their partners' and readers', they are, of course, already revising. By revising, I mean adjusting the content. In other words, they may need to explain in greater detail or more precise language something that is unclear; they might fill in pieces of information that are in their heads but are apparently unexpressed to the partner and/or the reader; or they may begin to take out pieces that they find irrelevant. The process of revising may be very uneven at first; your students may be wedded to what they have written and the partners and readers may be reluctant to actively participate or may simply think that everything is okay. Give them time; it often takes several weeks.

If your students require additional strategies to help them revise, have them try these:

1. Outline what they have written; an outline will pinpoint where the development of ideas breaks down.
2. Have a classmate outline what they have written; the gaps will be apparent.
3. Read their writing to themselves, alone and out loud; sometimes reading aloud helps writers gain some distance from their writing.
4. Type their writing or put it on a word processor; sometimes a change in visual appearance will create the distance a writer needs for revision.
5. Rewrite what they think they have written; writers may actually "find" what they were trying to get at all along.

Some of your students may edit their work too soon and end up with underdeveloped content; others may not edit at all and turn in work that is "sloppy." Either way, your students will benefit from a definable editing/proofing stage, when everyone becomes accustomed to checking and correcting as a matter of course.

Reading a paper for a final "clean up" needs to occur at the end of a final drafting—before the writing is "published" or evaluated. You may have students work from a checklist of problem items to be located and examined; some students work well from simple holistic reading, where they concentrate more on form than content; others need the extra support of having the teacher mark/circle/underline what they have missed and need to correct. Whichever method you choose to direct their attention to problems that they

have the ability to spot, they need to eventually become their own editors.

## **EXPECTATIONS AND CONCLUSION**

At the end of the term, you may want to prepare a table of contents for a special composition notebook that each student provides and keeps, a notebook containing all of the student's numbered and dated compositions for the course. Reader responses and learning logs might be included as well. The notebook can serve as a handy reference and a valuable resource for future composition work.

If resources permit, you might ask each student to select a favorite piece of writing for "publication" and then make copies for everyone in the class. That way, each student could finish the course with a "class book" (actually a binder of some sort) that contains a piece of writing by every member of the class. You might include one yourself! This is a good way to remember everyone.

After working through all the lessons in the book, students can be expected to write a one-to-two-page essay on a familiar, everyday topic. You can expect the essay to be coherent and reasonably accurate.

What is more important than any external standard are the changes evident in a student's writing over the weeks of the term. In order to document how dramatic these changes may well be, you might want to ask students to write a spontaneous essay in class—perhaps autobiographical in nature—at the beginning of the term; then repeat the assignment near the end, without there having been any response to the first assignment or any direct preparation for the second. (You can simply tell students that you are saving their first assignment for later.) You will be amazed at the tangible differences, differences that you may not have been aware of as you worked with students on a day-to-day basis.

Best of luck as you begin the term!



# **TO THE STUDENT**

Welcome to *Idea Exchange, Book 1*, and to the world of English! In this book, you will practice reading, writing, and speaking English. You will meet four people as you work through the lessons. They are students like you. Their names are Hassen, Lien, Sebastian, and Cherry. Hassen is a student from Tunisia; his first language is Arabic. Lien is a student from Taiwan; her first language is Chinese. Sebastian is a student from Honduras; his first language is Spanish. Cherry is a native speaker of English, and she is from Louisiana.

All four study at the University of New Orleans in New Orleans, Louisiana. If you don't know New Orleans, it is an old American city on the Mississippi River, near the Gulf of Mexico. It is a city with a long history. Before it was American, it was Spanish and then French. It became a city in the year 1718.

You will use English to learn more about New Orleans. You will also learn more about Hassen, Lien, Sebastian, and Cherry. You will learn about Tunisia, Taiwan, Honduras, and Louisiana. You will use English to tell others about yourself and your background. Good luck with your English! I hope that you will enjoy this book! The information below will help you as you begin your work.

Writers need tools and materials, just like painters. You will need these:

1. a notebook for your journal writing
2. 8½ × 11 inch loose-leaf notebook paper for your essays and your learning log
3. pens and pencils
4. a good translation dictionary and a simplified English-English dictionary.

As you read the writing by Hassen, Lien, Sebastian, and Cherry, please follow these rules: