

A Crash Course in Composition

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McMahan**

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A Crash Course in Composition

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A CRASH COURSE IN COMPOSITION

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A Crash Course in Composition

Preface

My purpose in this third edition of *A Crash Course in Composition* remains the same as before: to provide in a conversational tone—that students should be willing to read and able to understand—basic instruction about writing. Those familiar with previous editions will notice at once that this revision offers substantial additions and a major change in organization. To the concise rhetorical advice of Part One, I have added the convenience of a brief handbook in Part Two. The new alphabetized chapters (“Revising Index” and “Glossary of Usage”) allow students to locate brief, clear advice on mechanics, punctuation, style, and usage as easily as using a dictionary.

In the space thus saved, I have given more emphasis to thesis

development, organization of ideas, and purpose in writing. There is now a chapter explaining the virtues of well-polished paragraphs. This edition contains almost twice as many theme topics as previously and provides an abundance of new exercises, including two long comprehensive exercises, which can serve as diagnostic tests, if desired.

The "Researched Writing" chapter, offering complete information for using the *MLA Handbook* style, plus an annotated sample student research paper, also includes documentation styles for all academic disciplines. Composition textbooks typically assume that all students are English majors. *Crash Course* now gives non-English majors a chance to learn how to write the kind of papers they will eventually be called upon to produce in their chosen fields.

Another practical addition is the explanation in Appendix B of the fundamentals of writing a job application letter and compiling a résumé. This brief section includes a sample of each for students to use as models.

Crash Course was originally designed for use by experienced teachers, but I have lately discovered that new instructors often adopt it. For their convenience, I have provided an Instructor's Manual containing teaching suggestions and exercise answers to accompany this edition.

My sincere thanks to the many people who have given me valuable help with this revision: Jay B. Landis, Eastern Mennonite College; Richard Rouillard, South Oklahoma City Junior College; Frank Spang, Brookdale Community College; my husband, Dan LeSeure; and my editors, Barry Benjamin, William Talkington, and Phillip Butcher. I am, as usual, especially grateful to my colleague Susie Day who supplied the inspired theme topics, many of the imaginative exercises, and several of the wittier entries in the Revising Index.

Elizabeth McMahan

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