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The
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St. Martin's
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Guide to
.....
WRITING
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Fifth Edition



RISE B. AXELROD
CHARLES R. COOPER

5th EDITION

The St. Martin's Guide to Writing

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ADVISORY BOARD

We owe an enormous debt to all the rhetoricians and composition specialists whose theory, research, and pedagogy have informed *The St. Martin's Guide to Writing*. We would be adding many pages to an already long book if we were to name everyone to whom we are indebted.

The members of the advisory board for the fifth edition, a group of dedicated composition instructors from across the country, have provided us with extensive insights and suggestions for the chapters in Part I and have given us the benefit of their advice on new features, in many cases testing them in their own classrooms. *The St. Martin's Guide to Writing* has been greatly enhanced by their contributions.

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PREFACE

The first four editions of *The St. Martin's Guide to Writing* have taught a generation of students how to write. Over the years, students have shared their experiences with it and have testified to its success. About the fourth edition, one student wrote, "It broadened my abilities to think and learn." Another student concluded, "It made me both confident about my work and interested in the work I was doing." After working through Chapter 9, "Speculating about Causes," still another student wrote, "It walked you through the neighborhood of causal argument, stopping at every corner to make sure you weren't left behind." The enthusiastic reception of the *Guide* in its previous four editions testifies to the dedication and seriousness of many instructors who share our conviction that writing can and should be taught. We are deeply grateful to everyone who has helped to make it the most widely used college rhetoric today. With such success and praise, we might be tempted to approach this latest revision cautiously. Instead, encouraged and emboldened, we have strived to increase both the pleasure and the usefulness of our popular tour through the neighborhoods of written discourse.

When we first wrote *The St. Martin's Guide to Writing*, we tried to design a flexible composition textbook for instructors and a helpful guide for students. We took what we had learned from classical rhetoric as well as from contemporary composition theory and research and did our best to make it accessible to students. We wanted to write a book that would help students to learn to write, not one that just talked about writing.

Although *The St. Martin's Guide* has changed over the years, our basic goals remain unchanged. From the beginning, we have tried to continue the classical tradition of teaching writing not only as a method of composing rhetorically effective prose but also as a powerful heuristic for thinking creatively and critically. To the best insights from that tradition, we have with each new edition added what we believed to be some promising developments in composition theory and research. In particular, we have tried to emphasize the idea that writing is both a social act and a way of knowing. We try to teach students that form emerges from context as well as content, that knowledge of writing comes not from analyzing genres alone but also from participating in a community of writers and readers.

Our principal aim is to demystify writing and authorize students as writers. To this end, we seek to teach students how to use the composing process as a means of seeing what they know as well as how they know it. We want students to learn to use writing to think critically and communicate effectively with others. Finally, we hope to inspire students with the desire to question their own certainties and provide them with the strategies for doing so.

AN OVERVIEW OF THE BOOK

As a rhetoric and reader, *The St. Martin's Guide* can serve as a comprehensive introduction to discursive practice. It comprises several parts:

Part I, Writing Activities, presents nine different essay assignments, all reflecting actual writing situations that students may encounter both in and out of college, kinds of discourse that they should learn to read critically and to write intelligently. Among the types of essays included are autobiography, explanation, position paper, proposal, and literary interpretation.

You may choose among these chapters and teach them in any sequence you wish, though they are sequenced here to move students from writing based on personal experience and observation to writing calling for the analysis and synthesis of ideas and information derived from a variety of sources.

Each chapter follows the same organizational plan.

Chapter Organization for Part I

- Three brief **scenarios** identifying the kind of discourse covered in the chapter and suggesting the range of occasions when such writing is done
- A **collaborative activity** that gets students working with the kind of discourse taught in that chapter
- A set of **readings** accompanied by a **critical apparatus** designed to help students to explore connections to their culture and experience and to analyze strategies used in this genre
- A summary of the **purpose and audience** and the **basic features** of this kind of discourse
- A flexible **guide to writing** that escorts students through all the stages of the composing process
- **Editing and proofreading guidelines** to help students to check for several sentence-level problems likely to occur in that kind of writing
- A look at one **writer at work**, focusing on some aspect of the process of writing the student essay featured in that chapter
- A trio of **critical thinking activities** designed to help students to reflect on and consolidate what they learned about writing and reading and to consider the social dimensions of the genre of writing taught in that chapter

Part II, Critical Thinking Strategies, collects in two separate chapters practical heuristics for invention and reading. The catalog of invention strategies includes

clustering, looping, dramatizing, and questioning, while the catalog of reading strategies includes annotating, summarizing, exploring the significance of figurative language, and evaluating the logic of an argument.

Part III, Writing Strategies, looks at a wide range of essential writers' strategies: paragraphing and coherence, logic and reasoning, and the familiar modes of presenting information, such as narrating, defining, and classifying. Examples and exercises are almost all taken from contemporary nonfiction, and many exercises deal with reading selections appearing in Part I. Because of the extensive cross-referencing between Parts I and III, instructors will find it easier to teach writing strategies in the context of purpose and audience.

Part IV, Research Strategies, discusses field as well as library and Internet research and includes thorough guidelines for using and documenting sources, with detailed examples of the Modern Language Association (MLA) and American Psychological Association (APA) documentation styles. The part concludes with a sample student research paper.

Part V, Writing for Assessment, covers essay examinations, showing students how to analyze different kinds of exam questions and offering strategies for writing answers. It also addresses portfolios, helping students to assemble a representative sample of their writing.

The *Handbook*, which has been thoroughly revised for this edition, is a complete reference guide covering grammar, word choice, punctuation, mechanics, common ESL problems, sentence structure, and usage. We have designed the Handbook so that students will find the answers that they need quickly, and we have provided student examples throughout so that students will see errors similar to the ones in their own essays.

Proven Features

Several proven features have made *The St. Martin's Guide to Writing* such an effective textbook: the practical guides to writing, the systematic integration of reading and writing, activities to promote group discussion and inquiry, and activities that encourage students to reflect on what they have learned.

Practical Guides to Writing. We do not merely talk about the composing process; rather, we offer practical, flexible guides that escort students through the entire process, from invention through revision and self-evaluation. Thus, this book is more than just a rhetoric that students will refer to occasionally. It is a guidebook that will help them to write. Commonsensical and easy to follow, these writing guides teach students to assess a rhetorical situation, identify the kinds of information they will need, ask probing questions and find answers, and organize their writing to achieve their purpose.

Systematic Integration of Reading and Writing. Because we see a close relationship between the ability to read critically and the ability to write intelligently, *The St. Martin's Guide* combines reading instruction with writing instruction. Each chapter in Part I introduces one kind of discourse, which students are led to consider both as readers and as writers. Readings are followed by questions that make students aware of how they as

readers respond and at the same time help them to understand the decisions that writers make. Students are then challenged to apply these insights to their own writing as they imagine their prospective readers, set goals, and write and revise their drafts.

Activities to Promote Group Discussion and Inquiry. At the start of each of the writing chapters is a collaborative activity that invites students to try out some of the thinking and planning they will be doing for the kind of writing covered in that chapter. Then, following each reading comes Connecting to Culture and Experience, designed to provoke thoughtful responses about the social and political dimensions of the reading. In the Guide to Writing is another collaborative activity that gets students to discuss their work in progress with one another and a Critical Reading Guide, which guides students as they read and comment on each other's drafts. Finally, a discussion activity invites students to explore the social dimensions of the genre they have been learning to write. All of these materials include questions and prompts to guide students to work productively together.

Thinking Critically about What You Have Learned. Each chapter in Part I concludes with three metacognitive activities to help students to become aware of what they have learned about the process of writing, about the influence of reading on writing, and about the social and political dimensions of the genres they have learned to write. These activities are based on research showing that reflecting on what they have learned deepens students' understanding and improves their recall.

Changes in the Fifth Edition

We have tried in this new edition to continue our tradition of turning current theory and research into practical classroom activities—with a minimum of jargon. We have also incorporated guidelines for using the new technologies that are increasingly available to students. Chief among these new features are encouragement to write essays on identity and community and on work and career, a completely revised Handbook, coverage of the new opportunities for research available on the Internet, updated and improved MLA and APA guidelines, and a new, more colorful design.

New Topic Choices. The Guide to Writing in each chapter in Part I now includes topic suggestions in two broad areas: "identity and community" and "work and career." These two themes are also reflected in a number of the readings in Part I. In addition, *Who Are We? Readings in Identity and Community and Work and Career* provides additional readings for classroom discussion. The two themes are useful for instructors who prefer a thematic approach, and the topic suggestions also broaden the possibilities for all students.

Activities Connecting Themes in the Readings to Students' Culture and Experience. Immediately following each reading, an activity, Connecting to Culture and Experience, relates students' cultural knowledge and personal experience to a central theme of that reading. The activity identifies and usually elaborates on the theme and contextualizes it further to ensure that students see its cultural implications and importance in their own lives. Students are then invited to consider the theme in

small group discussion. The goals for the discussion are clearly defined so that students can maintain a shared focus while at the same time exploring freely the various meanings of the theme for their individual lives. Many themes relate to the broad topic areas of “identity and community” and “work and career.”

Activities for Analyzing Writing Strategies in Every Reading. In this edition, we have reduced the number of tasks for analyzing writing that follow each reading from four to two. We have also refined and focused them so that students can learn more from each reading about strategies they will need to succeed with their own essays. Students are directed to a particular strategy in one part of a reading, given directions for carrying out a close analysis of the strategy, and asked to evaluate its effectiveness, given the writer’s purpose and readers. Taken together, the eight activities in each chapter, two after each of the four readings, provide students with a comprehensive introduction to the features and strategies of a genre, an introduction they can complete on their own or with the help of other students. In each activity, the strategy of interest is identified in bold type.

A New Handbook. To provide students with a new quick-reference Handbook for use in class or on their own, we completed an ambitious study of students’ control of sentence-level conventions in every type of writing assigned in *The St. Martin’s Guide to Writing*. Experienced college writing instructors (some of whom specialize in linguistics) and professional copy editors analyzed the errors in over 500 essays from community colleges, four-year colleges, and research universities. Using this analysis, we determined our categories of error, most of them familiar but some of them new to this Handbook. Student sentences from our analysis provide the Handbook’s hand-corrected examples, giving students realistic models for recognizing their own errors and correcting them. Because it centers on student examples, the Handbook’s advice is concise and straightforward, with essential grammatical terms defined in the margin. The *Instructor’s Resource Manual* outlines a strategy for enabling students to use the quick-reference Handbook productively.

A Section on Internet Research. An extensive new section in Chapter 21 describes the World Wide Web and other tools for accessing the Internet, including Telnet, FTP, Archie, and Gopher, and provides suggestions for using newsgroups, discussion groups, and E-mail as part of invention and research. A “search in progress” on the topic of censorship on the Internet demonstrates how to use various search strategies to locate information.

Improved MLA and APA Guidelines. Updated to reflect the latest editions of the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* and the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, the guidelines are now separated for easier reference. Guidelines for citing electronic sources, including Web sites, E-mail correspondence, and postings to newsgroups or discussion groups, are also provided.

Full Color Design. The new design highlights collaborative activities, lists of basic features, guidelines for peer review, and other important activities and information throughout the text.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Numerous resources accompany *The St. Martin's Guide to Writing*.

The *Instructor's Resource Manual*, by Rise B. Axelrod, Charles R. Cooper, and Lenora P. Smith of the University of Houston, includes a catalog of helpful advice for new instructors (by Alison M. Warriner, Sacred Heart University), guidelines on common teaching practices such as assigning journals and setting up group activities, guidelines on responding to and evaluating student writing (by Charles Cooper), guidelines on helping students to prepare for writing assessment tests, suggested course plans, detailed chapter plans, an annotated bibliography in composition and rhetoric, and a selection of background readings. New to this edition are service-learning projects and two new articles on collaborative writing and using computers in the classroom.

Free Falling and other student essays, Third Edition, edited by Paul Sladky (Augusta College), formerly *The Great American Bologna Festival and other student essays*, is a collection of essays written by students across the nation using *The St. Martin's Guide*. The ten chapters in the book correspond to those in Part I of the *Guide*. The book includes forms for the submission of students' essays so that we may consider them for possible publication in future editions.

Who Are We? Readings in Identity and Community and Work and Career, prepared by Rise B. Axelrod and Charles R. Cooper, contains selections that expand on the two new themes in the fifth edition. Full of ideas for classroom discussion and writing, the readings offer students additional perspectives and thought-provoking analysis.

The St. Martin's Guide for Writing in the Disciplines: A Guide for Faculty, by Richard Bullock (Wright State University), is a handy reference for faculty, with ideas for using writing in courses across the curriculum. Among the topics covered are designing assignments that get students writing, using informal writing activities to help students to learn, assigning portfolios, and responding to student writing.

Designed to support classroom instruction, a packet of *transparencies* includes lists of important features for each genre, critical reading guides, collaborative activities, and checklists—all adapted from the text.

Exercises for The St. Martin's Guide to Writing, by Charlotte Smith of Adirondack Community College, provides opportunities for practice and review. Designed to accompany the revised handbook, the exercise booklet includes fifty exercises and an answer key.

Student Writer Software is an easy-to-use process writing program with exercises and an online handbook.

MicroGrade: A Teacher's Gradebook is an easy-to-use new software program for tracking grades and producing progress reports. It can be used on any computer system.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We owe an enormous debt to all the rhetoricians and composition specialists whose theory, research, and pedagogy have informed *The St. Martin's Guide to Writing*. We would be adding many pages to an already long book if we were to name everyone to whom we are indebted; suffice it to say that we have been eclectic in our borrowing.

We must also acknowledge immeasurable lessons learned from all the writers, professional and student alike, whose work we analyzed and whose writing we used in this and earlier editions.

So many instructors and students have contributed ideas and criticism over the years. We want especially to thank the staff, instructors, and students in the Third College Writing Program at the University of California at San Diego, where from 1979 to 1991 we developed and revised the *Guide*. We are still benefiting from the astute insights of M. A. Syverson, Kate Gardner, Kristin Hawkinson, Michael Pemberton, Irv Peckham, Keith Grant-Davie, Evelyn Torres, Gesa Kirsch, James Degan, and other teaching assistants and lecturers from these years. Others who have made special contributions to this edition are Kathryn O'Rourke, California State University, San Bernardino; Steven Axelrod, University of California, Riverside; and Jeremiah Axelrod, University of California, Irvine.

The members of the advisory board for the fifth edition, a group of dedicated composition instructors from across the country, have provided us with extensive insights and suggestions for the chapters in Part I and have given us the benefit of their advice on new features, in many cases testing them in their own classrooms. For all of their many contributions, we would like to thank Richard Boyd, University of California, Riverside; James L. Brown, Kansas City Kansas Community College; Richard Bullock, Wright State University; Sandy Cavanah, Hopkinsville Community College; Robert Corrigan, Baltimore City Community College; Joan Kuzma Costello, Inver Hills Community College; Janet Kay Dillon, Kansas State University; Nancy B. Etheridge, Boise State University; Judith Gardner, University of Texas, San Antonio; Michael A. Miller, Longview Community College; Donna Padgett, formerly of Macon College; Victoria F. Sarkisian, Marist College; Nancy W. Shankle, Abilene Christian University; Lenora P. Smith, University of Houston; and Rosemary Winslow, Catholic University of America.

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