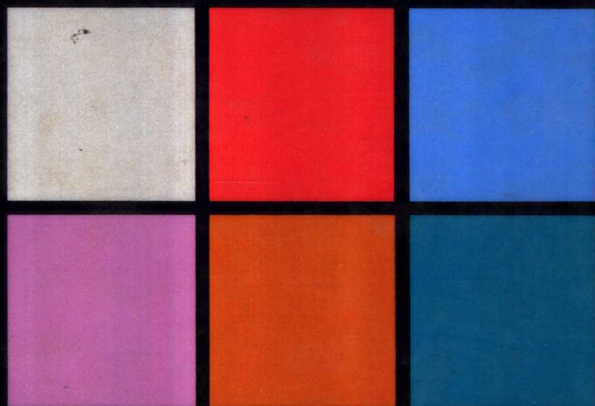


*Third Edition*

# THE BEDFORD HANDBOOK FOR WRITERS



Diana Hacker

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Third Edition



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# THE BEDFORD HANDBOOK FOR WRITERS

Diana Hacker

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## Preface for Instructors

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*The Bedford Handbook for Writers*, available in paperback or hardcover, is a major revision of *Rules for Writers*, Second Edition. It retains the quick reference features of *Rules for Writers* and includes more rhetorical material to strengthen the book as a classroom text.

When I began writing this book in 1982, I had been teaching long enough to know just what I wanted in a handbook. Like many of my colleagues, I teach five composition classes a semester, each with twenty-five students of varying abilities, so there is all too little time for individualized grammar lessons. I wanted a handbook so clear and accessible that my students could learn from it on their own. I had in mind a book that would give students what they seem to prefer—straightforward, unambiguous rules—but without suggesting that rules are absolutes or that writing well is simply a matter of following the rules.

Further, because my students have such a range of abilities, I hoped for a book that would be useful for all of them, offering a little help or a lot of help depending on their needs. Finally, I envisioned a handbook that would support the phi-

losophy of composition that I work so hard to convey in the classroom. Writing is a process, I tell my students, and revision is central to that process. Revision is not a punishment for failing to get things right the first time. Nor is it a perfunctory clean-up exercise. It occurs right on the pages of a rough draft, often messily, with cross-outs and insertions, and it requires an active mind, a mind willing to look at a draft from the point of view of the reader, to spot problems, and to choose solutions.

With these aims in mind, then, I began writing this book. And it was with them in mind that I rewrote it again and again, with each draft edging closer to my vision. Now, six years after the initial publication of *Rules for Writers* and after much classroom testing, I have revised the book once again, this time under a new title: *The Bedford Handbook for Writers*. Here are its principal features.

**Hand-edited sentences.** Most of the examples appear as they would in a rough draft, with handwritten revisions made in color over typeset faulty sentences. Unlike the usual technique of printing separate incorrect and correct versions of a sentence, hand-edited sentences highlight the revision, allowing students to grasp both the error and its correction at a glance. Further, hand-edited sentences mimic the process of revision as it should appear in the students' own drafts.

**Award-winning design, now with a third color.** At the 1985 New England Book Show, the judges presented the first edition of this book (then titled *Rules for Writers*) with a Special Merit Award, remarking that it was a pleasure to see a reference book "designed with taste, clarity, and simplicity." Because the design highlights rules and examples, the book is easy to skim; readers who want more help will find it in full explanations following rules and in small-print comments pegged to examples.

For *The Bedford Handbook*, we have added a third color, used in the part openers and in the new full-page charts.

**Quick reference charts.** New to this edition are more than twenty full-page charts designed for quick reference. Many of these charts take students back to their own writing, helping them review their drafts for common problems such as comma splices and subject-verb agreement. Other charts summarize important material: guidelines for peer reviewers, a checklist for global revision, strategies for avoiding sexist language, and so on.

**An organization reflecting the writing process.** *The Bedford Handbook for Writers* moves from the whole paper and paragraphs through sentence rhetoric and diction to grammar, punctuation, and mechanics. This organization puts the stages of the writing process in context, thereby showing students when—as well as how—to revise and edit their drafts.

**A problem-solving approach to errors.** Where relevant, *The Bedford Handbook for Writers* attends to the linguistic and social causes of errors and to the effect of errors on readers. The examples of errors in the text are realistic, most having been drawn from student essays and local newspapers. The text treats these errors as problems to be solved, often in light of rhetorical considerations, not as violations of a moral code. Instead of preaching at students, it shows them why problems occur, how to recognize them, and how to solve them.

**A unique section on ESL problems.** Part VI now focuses exclusively on common problems facing speakers of English as a second language. Section 29 discusses ESL problems with verbs; section 30 explains when to use the articles *a*,

an, and the; and section 31 alerts ESL students to a variety of other potential trouble spots.

**Special attention to dialect differences.** Most of the material on dialect differences (formerly in Part VI) has been moved to section 27, "Choose standard English verb forms." There students will find help with such matters as omitted -s and -ed endings and omitted verbs.

**Straightforward advice on composing and revising.** Instead of philosophizing about the writing process, Part I of *The Bedford Handbook for Writers* shows students, through a multiplicity of examples on a variety of topics, how to find a process that will work for them. The emphasis, throughout, is on flexibility.

The current edition adds five new charts and includes fuller advice on prewriting and global revision as well as a new section on peer review. Part II, Constructing Paragraphs, contains more on developing and arranging paragraphs, on reasons for combining or dividing paragraphs, and on coherence.

**Five chapters on the research paper.** Part X has been substantially revised to make the research material more useful both as a reference and as a classroom text. The material is now divided into five chapters, and the MLA documentation models are easier to find because the edges of the pages are highlighted in color. Many new documentation models for both MLA and APA have been added in this edition.

To make the research paper chapters more useful as a classroom text, I have included further advice on matters most troublesome to students: choosing and narrowing a topic, finding sources, integrating quotations, and avoiding plagiarism both at the note-taking and the drafting stages of the writing process. New full-page charts show students how

to handle quotations, summaries, and paraphrases without plagiarizing.

**A chapter on writing about literature.** New to this edition is a chapter that takes students through the process of writing about literature: from forming an interpretation and planning the essay to drafting and revising it. Two sample essays are included: one on Langston Hughes's "Ballad of the Landlord" (without secondary sources) and one on Eudora Welty's "Why I Live at the P.O." (with secondary sources).

**A chapter on writing arguments.** The chapter on argumentative writing, now illustrated with a variety of examples, has been significantly expanded. Using a process approach, the chapter shows students how to construct an argument that will have some hope of persuading readers who do not already agree with their views. The logical fallacies and common mistakes in inductive and deductive reasoning now appear at the end of the chapter.

**Extensive exercises, some with answers.** At least one exercise set accompanies nearly every section of the book. Most sets begin with five lettered sentences with answers so that students can test their understanding independently. The sets then continue with ten numbered sentences whose answers appear only in the *Instructor's Annotated Edition*, so that instructors may use the exercises in class or assign them as homework. New to this edition are many exercises in paragraph or essay form.

**A wide array of ancillaries.** To make *The Bedford Handbook for Writers* more useful for both students and instructors, the publisher has greatly expanded the package of resources accompanying the handbook. All are free of charge to instructors, and the workbook and a set of supplemental exercises are available for student purchase as well.



## **CLASSROOM RESOURCES**

*Instructor's Annotated Edition*

*Bedford Basics: A Workbook for Writers* (with Answer Key)

*Supplemental Exercises for The Bedford Handbook for Writers* (with Answer Key)

*Diagnostic Tests to Accompany The Bedford Handbook for Writers* (with ESL versions)

## **RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS**

*MLA and APA Documentation Models* (Reprinted from *The Bedford Handbook for Writers*)

*Answers to Exercises in The Bedford Handbook for Writers*

*Preparing for the CLAST with The Bedford Handbook for Writers*

*Preparing for the TASP with The Bedford Handbook for Writers*

## **SOFTWARE**

*Grammar Hotline for The Bedford Handbook for Writers* (IBM and Mac versions)

*Exercise Tutor for The Bedford Handbook for Writers* (IBM and Mac versions)

## **PROFESSIONAL RESOURCES FOR INSTRUCTORS**

*Background Readings for Instructors Using The Bedford Handbook for Writers*

*The Bedford Bibliography for Teachers of Writing*, Third Edition

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many students over the years who have taught me that errors, a natural by-product of the writing process, are simply problems waiting to be solved.

**Diana Hacker**

Prince George's Community College

# Introduction for Students

Though it is small enough to hold in your hand, *The Bedford Handbook for Writers* will answer most of the questions you are likely to ask as you plan, draft, and revise a piece of writing: How do I choose and narrow a topic? What can I do if I get stuck? How do I know when to begin a new paragraph? Should I write *none was* or *none were*? When does a comma belong before *and*? What is the difference between *accept* and *except*?

## *How to find information*

When you are revising an essay that has been marked by your instructor, tracking down information is simple. If your instructor marks problems with a number such as 16 or a number and letter such as 12e, you can turn directly to the appropriate section of the handbook. Just flip through the colored tabs on the upper corners of the pages until you find the number in question. The number 16, for example, leads you to the rule "Tighten wordy sentences," and 12e takes you to the subrule "Repair dangling modifiers." If your instructor



uses an abbreviation such as *w* or *dm* instead of a number, consult the list of abbreviations and symbols inside the back cover of the book, where you will find the name of the problems (*wordy*; *dangling modifier*) and the number of the section to consult.

When consulting the handbook on your own, you may find information in several ways. The alphabetical index at the back is perhaps the most reliable way to find what you're looking for. As you become familiar with the overall plan of the book, however, you can also make use of the full table of contents at the beginning of the book or of the brief table of contents inside the front cover. And as you become accustomed to the headings at the tops of the pages next to the colored tabs, you may be able to find information simply by flipping through the pages.

Many sections of the handbook contain cross-references to other sections of the book. Most of these will lead you to specific sections in Part IX, Grammar Basics, where you will find a discussion of grammatical concepts and terminology necessary for understanding many of the rules in the rest of the book. Whenever the book uses a grammatical term that you don't fully understand, you can also track down its meaning by consulting the list of grammatical terms inside the back cover.

On the very last page of the book, following the index, is a directory of useful charts and lists. Many of the charts help you review your own writing for common problems such as sentence fragments and dangling modifiers. Other charts summarize important material: ways to narrow a subject to a topic, major uses of the comma, parts of speech, and so on.

### *The plan of the book*

A glance at the table of contents will show you that *The Bedford Handbook for Writers* is organized to reflect the writing process. Advice about composing and revising comes first