

DECKER'S
PATTERNS OF
EXPOSITION 10



PATTERNS OF EXPOSITION 10

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with the assistance of
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To the Instructor

Patterns of Exposition 10 retains the basic principles and the general format of previous editions. Use of the book remains high, and we continue to poll instructor-users for evaluations of the selections and about the need for basic changes in the framework. We also reviewed the responses of students who returned questionnaires like the one at the back of this book. Although obviously we are unable to comply with all requests, we have seriously considered and fully appreciated all of them, and we have incorporated many suggestions into this new edition.

One important change we made in response to evaluations of the text is the addition of a table of contents listing pairs of essays whose similarities (or contrasts) in theme, approach, and style are worth study. These essay pairs can form the focus of class discussion or writing assignments.

The section of argumentative essays, which appeared for the first time in the preceding edition of the text, was well received by users and remains an important feature in this edition. Although the focus of the text as a whole remains on exposition and the rhetorical patterns it employs, we recognize that many instructors like to include a section on argument in their courses, and that argument often uses the same rhetorical patterns as exposition. The argument section can be used in two ways: It may be taught as a separate unit, or the essays within it can be added to those in the expository chapters as further illustrations of the usefulness of the patterns. The argument chapter is similar in arrangement and approach to the other sections of the text, and the "Guide to Terms"

has been revised to include terms and concepts particularly important in argument.

The demonstration paragraph located at the end of each introductory section has proven to be a useful feature of the text, and the paragraphs have been retained in this edition. The "Further Readings" section has been expanded by the addition of an essay by a contemporary author. The essay provides an interesting contrast with the classical or near-classical selections. Instructors will find that all these essays can be used along with the other sections of the book or on their own; in addition, all the selections have some elements of argument or persuasion and provide stimulus for writing and discussion as well as strategies for students to use in their own writing.

But throughout *Patterns of Exposition 10* we have tried, as always, to make possible the convenient use of all materials in whatever ways instructors think best for their own classes. With a few exceptions, only complete essays or freestanding units of larger works have been included. With their inevitable overlap of patterns, they are more complicated than excerpts illustrating single principles, but they are also more realistic examples of exposition and more useful for other classroom purposes. Versatility has been an important criterion in choosing materials.

The number of selections has been increased by two for a total of fifty-two. Thirty-six of those best liked in the previous edition have been retained and three favorites from previous editions have been returned at the request of users of the text. Thirteen are entirely new and all but three of these are anthologized for the first time.

Their arrangement is but one of many workable orders; instructors can easily develop another if they so desire. To make such variations convenient, we have nearly always placed interest essay questions at the end of sequences, where they can be quickly detected and, if not suitable, easily eliminated or modified. The Thematic Table of Contents also suggests a variety of arrangement.

We have tried to vary the study questions — and undoubtedly have included far more than any one teacher will want — from the purely objective to those calling for some serious self-examination by the students. (The Instructor's Manual places further materials at the instructor's disposal.)

Suggestions for writing assignments to be developed from ideas in the essays are located immediately after each selection. But

for classes in which the instructor prefers writing to be done according to the expository pattern under study at the time, regardless of subject matter, topic suggestions are located at the end of each section.

"A Guide to Terms," where matters from *Abstract* to *Unity* are briefly discussed, refers whenever possible to the essays themselves for illustrations. To permit unity and easy access, it is located at the back of the book, but there are cross-references to it in the study questions.

In all respects — size, content, arrangement, format — we have tried to keep *Patterns of Exposition 10* uncluttered and easy to use.

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

We maintain an unusual revision policy on *Patterns of Exposition*. It is revised every two years to ensure that its popular framework is always well stocked with fresh selections. However, for those who do not like to change texts so frequently, the previous edition does *not* go out of print. Thus two editions of *Patterns of Exposition* are available at all times.

An Instructor's Manual for *Patterns of Exposition 10* is available from the publisher. Instructors wishing to obtain a complimentary copy of the manual may address their requests (on school letterhead) to College Marketing, Little, Brown and Company, 34 Beacon Street, Boston, Massachusetts 02106.

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The continued success of *Patterns of Exposition* is due to a great extent to the many students and instructors who respond to ques-

tionnaires and offer helpful suggestions, making the job of revision easier. For their invaluable assistance with the tenth edition we would especially like to thank Suzanne Achleitner, Howard C. Adams, Cynthia Akers, Antoinette M. Aleccia, George E. Bell, Lee M. Blackaby, Joseph M. Blimm, K. Bouteele, Judith Boschult, William Brunskill, Ann Cales, Harlin M. Cook, Michael E. Cooley, Susan Darling, Dale Dillinger, Maria Helena Donahue, Truman Eddy, John Erickson, Terry Estes, Heather Faulkner, B. L. Fitzpatrick, Michael A. Gee, Regis C. Ginn, Terrence Glass, Shain Graham, Kathy Greenman, Lee T. Hamilton, Betty Jo Hicks, Gordon Hinds, John W. Holtzclaw, Kathy Lamoureaux, Ann Leatherwood, Kenneth P. Leisch, Ina M. Lowe, James L. Lucas, Chris McCarthy, James H. Miesen, Lisa Miller, Deane G. Minahan, Maranda Montgomery, Alma Myers, Lisa J. Neal, Richard Newby, Elizabeth B. Orlosky, Doris Osborn, Jacqueline Orsagh, Dennis W. Petrie, Charles R. Plunkett, Cathy Prion-Sarata, J. Karen Ray, Charles Reinhart, Gregory Saraceno, Amy Shackman, Michael Sellers, Marilyn N. Silva, Stephen Sossaman, Gwendolyn C. Stanford, Douglas Stauffer, Andrew Stevens, Marilyn Swanson, Victor Venettozzi, Bernard L. Welch, Jack C. Wills, Judy Wolfe, Paul A. Wood, Ralan Yamaziki, and Thomas Young.

Essay Pairs

Among the selections in *Patterns of Exposition* are a number of essay pairs whose similarities in topic or theme and contrasts in perspective or style offer interesting insights. These relationships show that the strategies a writer chooses can affect the way readers come to view the subject matter of an essay. The following list identifies some sets of essays that are particularly well suited for study and discussion; there are, of course, many other interesting and revealing ways of pairing the selections in the text.

A few of the pairs illustrate different ways of using the same pattern, like example or definition. In other sets, the patterns offer contrasting strategies for expression or alternate ways of viewing a subject.

David Schoenbrun, *A Traffic Light Is a Brainless Machine*, 4
Andy Rooney, *In and of Ourselves We Trust*, 8

Joyce Maynard, *His Talk, Her Talk*, 91
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Introduction

Exposition is one of the basic aims of communication, more important in many situations than the other aims — entertainment, persuasion, or self-expression. Sometimes we may write to entertain, as do the novelist and to a certain extent the sports writer; or we may try to persuade in the manner of the lawyer, the salesperson, or the preacher. We may even choose to express our beliefs and feelings in personal letters and conversation. Yet much of the writing and speaking everyday activities call for is expository in purpose, requiring us to share our knowledge of a subject. People in specialized professions are also frequent users of exposition.

Exposition means explanation, simply an *exposing* of information or ideas. Its primary function is not to tell a story or create vivid pictures for the reader, although exposition often *uses* narration and description among many other techniques. Its primary function is not to convey an author's feelings about a subject, though this perspective may at times be a valuable element in exposition. The primary function of exposition is not to convince or persuade, though argumentative and expository writing share many techniques and may each contain elements of the other. The primary function of exposition itself is merely to *explain*.

Beyond our need for informally written and spoken explanations, we use the processes of written exposition throughout college — in reports, term papers, essay examinations. Most of us use exposition throughout our working lives — in letters, in memoranda, in business and professional reports. Hence there are practical reasons why most college composition courses are devoted

primarily to study and practice in exposition. For the same reasons, this book concentrates on patterns of expository writing and other techniques commonly used. But because argument is closely related to exposition and shares many techniques with it, this book also contains a section on argument, arranged according to those expository patterns that appear frequently in argumentative writing. (The last part, "Further Readings," offers an even wider variety of composition forms and subject matter.) There is nothing new about the ten basic patterns of exposition; we have been using most of them since we first tried to explain why birds fly south in the winter. But mature writing depends partly on the author's being able to use *deliberately* whichever techniques will do the job best, with the least chance of misunderstanding. We study these techniques to get a clearer view of their functions and possibilities, with the aim of being able to use them more effectively in our own writing.

We examine and practice these techniques separately, realizing that they are seldom used separately in practical writing. After all, when we observe and practice for hours a skill involved in tennis or golf, we are not assuming that an entire game will be made up of serving or putting. In writing, we know there is no reason why a process analysis should not be used to assist comparison in some explanations, why illustration might not be valuably aided in certain developments by narration. In good writing, if the patterns do not overlap, it is simply because one alone is sufficient for the purpose.

The patterns of exposition are useful techniques in other kinds of writing as well, particularly in argument. The editorial writer arguing against a proposed government project might compare it to other such projects in the past that have been expensive failures or might analyze cause-and-effect relationships and use a series of examples to show that the project will not meet the needs of those it is supposed to serve. In the argument section of this book, we see how the expository patterns work in a different kind of writing. One of the goals of this book is to create an awareness of the patterns and of the roles they can play in different kinds of expression.

But besides the study of writing techniques in a college anthology, we have a right to expect real benefit from the reading itself. Reading and thinking about new ideas or experiences are excellent ways to widen horizons, to broaden our interests — and this broadening is an important phase of becoming educated. In general, each set of essays in this book progresses in complexity and

depth. Challenges help our understanding to reach an ever higher level.

The manner of approaching each reading, or the study of it, may be suggested by the instructor. If not, a worthwhile system for the student to give at least a fair trial is this:

1. For the first reading, relax. Read the selection casually, as you would some magazine article, for whatever enjoyment or new ideas you can get without straining. Do not stop to look up new words unless the sentences in which they are used are meaningless until you do. But have a pencil in hand and mark all words you are doubtful about, and then go on.

2. When you have finished the first reading, put the book down; for a few minutes think over what you have read.

3. Then use the dictionary to help you understand the words you have marked. Do not make the mistake of finding the first or the shortest definition of a word, and trying to memorize it. Instead, look at the various meanings, and for the word's uses as noun, verb, and modifier. *Think* about them. Pronounce the word. Use it in a few sentences. Identify it with similar words you already know. Then see how the author has used it.

4. After you understand all the words, read and think briefly about the assigned questions and remarks following the selection. (The paragraphs in each selection are numbered for easy reference.)

5. Then reread the essay, pausing at times to think and to *question*, underlining important ideas, marking sentences or phrases that seem to you especially interesting, misleading, amusing, or well expressed.

6. Then return to the questions at the end. You will probably find that you have already provided most of the answers. If not, give the questions further thought, referring again to the essay and to "A Guide to Terms" or earlier explanations wherever necessary for thorough understanding.

7. Next try to *evaluate* the selection. What was the author trying to explain? Was the author successful in explaining? Was the endeavor worthwhile? For what point of view was the author arguing? Was the argument convincing?

Useful as these selections can be, they are not intended as models for imitation by students. Each was written, as all expository

projects should be, to give a particular audience a particular explanation. (Or, in the case of argument essays, to persuade a particular audience.) The style of some selections is much too informal for most college writing. Other styles, perhaps from a slower and more sedate age than ours, would be too stately for today. Pure imitation is not the purpose of our study.

But each of the selections does demonstrate one or more of the *patterns* of exposition and argument, which are as useful now as ever. Each can provide, too, some profitable study of other sound principles of writing — principles of effective sentences and paragraphs, mature diction, forceful introductions and closings. The consideration of all these principles, instead of being handled in separate sections, is a continuing study within the basic framework of the expository patterns. The book is designed so that instructors and students can use it in several ways.

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