

The Rinehart Reader

Jean Wyrick & Beverly J. Slaughter



THE RINEHART READER



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Preface

To some students the term "classic" suggests a certain accumulation of dust. This "classic" collection should dispose of that notion once and for all. The selections in *The Rinehart Reader* are classics in the sense of being established works by many of our best writers, works that instructors have turned to as models of eloquence and power again and again. But they are certainly not dusty. They are works that will challenge, inform, and stimulate student writers. In short, they are selections that fit Ezra Pound's wonderful definition of literature as "news that stays news."

Within that standard of quality, the selections provide ample variety. They range across the generations from the eighteenth century to the present. They vary in style from Thurber's whimsical touch to the fierce elegance of James Baldwin. They include multiple selections by several writers to illustrate the scope of individual style. And they range in method and intent across the traditional rhetorical categories.

To increase the usefulness of the selections, *The Rinehart Reader* opens with a unique two-part section. The first part, "Why Read?", offers a rationale for critical reading, followed by note-taking techniques that are then demonstrated in detail in an annotated essay. Following this introduction are works by nine distinguished authors on the subject of reading. The essays offer a variety of imaginative approaches to a task that some students too often take for granted.

The second selection, "The Writing Process," presents a clear, concise guide to the methods most widely used in today's composition courses.

Eight essays on the subject of writing follow, many by authors experienced in writing instruction. Other essays in this section offer a personal or inspirational look at what writing means to some of its finest practitioners.

This comprehensive, two-part introduction gives students more on the subject of critical reading and the writing process than most other college readers. For many courses, it can eliminate the need for supplementary texts. After completing the two sections, students will not only have an overview of the reading-writing processes, they will also have their appetites whetted for the classic essays to follow.

The essays themselves are grouped by chapter in the traditional rhetorical sequence, from basic narration to argumentation. Each chapter has a separate introduction that defines the rhetorical mode, shows how and when it is commonly used, and describes it through brief examples. The introduction then provides students with step-by-step guidelines for developing that particular rhetorical strategy in their own writing.

Each reading selection is preceded by a brief biography of the author; most also present photographs. A set of five review questions—one of them a writing assignment—follows the reading. An additional set of writing assignments concludes each chapter. These final assignments refer to the specific readings, thus supporting what is, after all, the main purpose of the reader—to use classic essays as working models for student writing.

Reference features include a glossary of rhetorical terms, a list of authors represented by more than one essay, a cross-guide to essays illustrating more than one rhetorical mode, and an alternate thematic table of contents. We should also mention two excellent ancillaries available with *The Rinehart Reader*: an Instructor's Manual, which comes free with text adoptions, and a very reasonably priced student workbook, *The Rinehart Reader Companion*, which offers additional writing instruction and exercises based on the text's readings.

We hope this brief description has clarified what *The Rinehart Reader* is and what it isn't. We have not attempted to create a reader with a gimmick or one with unusual or peripheral selections. What *The Rinehart Reader* does provide is ample material on reading and the writing process, the rhetorical organization that most instructors prefer, and an excellent selection of essays that have proven their value both as literature and as models of effective writing techniques. Our intention is to give you what you need and expect from a traditional reader, developed to the very highest editorial standards. We would be lax in pursuing that goal if we failed to invite your comments and suggestions. Please direct them, along with any requests for information or sample materials, to the English Editor, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 111 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York 10003.

Whatever praise is found in those comments must be widely shared. We thank English Editor Charlyce Jones Owen for giving us the oppor-

tunity to work on this project, and we are deeply grateful to Associate English Editor Kate Morgan, who guided the book to completion with expertise and good cheer. We extend our thanks to Judith Stanford of Rivier College and Edward Joyce of Suffolk County Community College for their invaluable help in preparing parts of the pedagogy for this book. We also appreciate the fine work of Jeanette Ninas Johnson, project editor, and Catherine Buckner, copyeditor. We are also indebted to the following colleagues for their critical insights and judicious reviews of this text: Norman Bosley, Ocean County College; Jane Bouterse, Texarkana College; Cheryl Brehm, Jones County Junior College; Shirley Ann Curtis, Polk Community College; James Egan, The University of Akron; Ann Fields, Western Kentucky University; Gloria Johnson, Broward Community College; Peggy Jolly, University of Alabama-Birmingham; Edward Joyce, Suffolk County Community College; Geraldine Lash, SUNY-Alfred; William Lewis, Central Michigan University; Larry Mapp, Middle Tennessee State University; Sylvia Miner, Mt. Wachusett Community College; James Moore, East Central University; Terry Moore, Jones County Junior College; John Nelson, St. Mary of the Plains College; Robert Noreen, California State University; Paul Olubus, Southern Ohio College; Karen Reid, Midwestern State University; Judith Stanford, Rivier College.

Last, we thank the members of our families for their continued support: David Hall and Sarah, Kate, and Austin Hall; Bosco R. Slaughter.

To the Student

How do writers write? Georges Simenon would churn out whole novels in eleven-day frenzies, with a complete medical examination before and after. Flaubert would sit smoking a pipe from noon till four in the morning, often completing no more than a sentence. Proust wrote lying in bed. Hemingway wrote standing up. The lives and habits of writers offer endless anecdotes, but no useful rules.

Yet there are clearly problems and techniques that all writers share. This book is organized to reveal them. It groups diverse works under essential rhetorical forms, allowing you to see, for example, both Alice Walker and George Orwell develop a narration, how both Thomas Jefferson and Margaret Mead construct and close an argument. From such comparisons common elements emerge—not rules per se, but strategies, structures, methods, tools.

These strategies may not be readily apparent in the essays themselves. In fact, the better the writing, the less exposed are its methods, the less obvious is the hard work that produced it. We may breeze through a piece by Thurber, but Thurber certainly didn't. Try stopping in the middle of one of his sentences. Then ask yourself how you would complete the sentence, the paragraph, or the entire essay. Suddenly, it's no breeze.

In this respect, the first chapters of the book are vital. They will show you how to read critically, to think like a writer, and to practice as you go. The same is true for the introductions to the mode and strategy that begin each chapter in Part II. As you read the selections in each chapter,

refer to the chapter's introduction often. Doing so will help you understand specific strategies of development you are studying. They will help you keep your focus on the specific technique being considered. In the writing assignments that follow the selections (or in assignments from *The Rinehart Reader Companion*, if your course is using it), you will be asked to practice certain methods of organization and development.

Of course, any essay is more than just a neat stack of rhetorical techniques. This book offers a wealth of ideas, styles, voices, facts, punchlines, images, and philosophies, all of which are resources for your own writing. You can greatly expand these resources by using the book's Thematic Table of Contents for additional comparative readings and the list of multiple selections to examine the range of a single author's style. The annotated Table of Contents is useful for the browser.

We hope that this book will be a part of a lively, informative course and a source of good reading long after graduation. We always enjoy hearing from students who use our texts. Any comments, questions, or suggestions may be sent to the English Editor, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 111 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York 10003.

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A noted poet and editor distinguishes “four kinds of reading, each with a characteristic manner and purpose.”

Lin Yutang, *The Art of Reading* 18

The best reading, argues a Chinese scholar, leads us into the contemplative mood, “for our interests grow like a tree or flow like a river.”

Donald Murray, *Reading as a Reader* 22

A practical approach to the craft of reading—“Write to learn how to read and read to learn how to write”—is outlined by a Pulitzer Prize winning journalist and successful teacher of writing.

Mortimer Adler, *How to Read a Difficult Book* 37

“In reading a difficult book for the first time, read the book through without stopping,” advises a founder of the Great Books Program.

Eudora Welty, *A Sweet Devouring* 39

A respected novelist recalls first falling in love with the printed page.

Richard Wright, *Discovering Books* 43

Through reading novels that he had to scheme to borrow, a writer discovers both point of view and a sense of himself.

William Gass, *Of Speed Readers and Lip-Movers* 51

Because "Reading is a complicated, profound, silent, still, very personal, very private, very solitary yet very civilizing activity," the author advises against speed reading.

Wendell Berry, *In Defense of Literacy* 59

"The mastery of language and the knowledge of books" is a necessity if the average American is to resist the media's premeditated language-as-weapon.

Loudon Wainright, *A Little Banning Is a Dangerous Thing* 62

A *Life* magazine columnist takes issue with censors who withhold from young minds "the news that life is rich and complicated and difficult."

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WRITERS ON WRITING

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His personal motive for writing was "to alter people's ideas of the society they should strive after," admits the well-known creator of Big Brother.

Joan Didion, *Why I Write* 88

For one of the sharpest observers of contemporary society, writing is a passionate attempt to find out what is going on in pictures in her mind.

E. B. White, *Mostly about Writing: Selected Letters* 94

An admired essayist attributes his "terrible desire to write" to natural causes: "It is the same as breathing except that it is bad for one's health."

Benjamin Franklin, *The Art of Writing* 98

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William Stafford, *A Way of Writing* 101

Writing, explains this contemporary poet, is an exploratory process with endless possibilities.

Sheridan Baker, *What Shall I Write?* 107

"The best subjects lie nearest at hand and nearest the heart," advises an expert on the practical approach to writing.

Peter Elbow, *Freewriting* 112

A proponent of "the teacherless class" describes a non-traditional way to begin writing: "Freewriting may seem crazy but actually it makes simple sense."

Donald Murray, *The Maker's Eye: Revising Your Own Manuscripts* 115

A noted writer and writing teacher shows how multiple drafts go into the production of a finished work.

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The delightful comedy of undergraduate life is recollected by a famous humorist.

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A multitalented writer remembers her high school graduation ceremony with pride, despite the intrusion of a racist school official.

Alice Walker, *Beauty: When the Other Dancer Is the Self* 149

Blinded in one eye by a childhood accident, this prize-winning novelist struggles to see herself "beautiful, whole, and free."

George Orwell, *Shooting an Elephant* 158

A young Englishman serving with the Burmese police learns "when the white man turns tyrant it is his own freedom he destroys."

Maxine Hong Kingston, *White Tigers* 166

By revolting against the customs of her community, a Chinese-American writer argues that "Girls are necessary, too."

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A child of Chinese immigrants searches in old photographs for the meaning of her parents' past.

Annie Dillard, *Lenses* 183

In a memorable moment a naturalist sees two whistling swans become a microcosm of the universe.

John Updike, *My Grandmother's Thimble* 188

When a widely-read novelist chances upon his grandmother's sewing thimble, he remembers her in vivid detail.

E. B. White, *Once More to the Lake* 198

Revisiting a Maine lake transports a prominent essayist back to his childhood and completes the cycle of time.

Virginia Woolf, *If Shakespeare Had Had a Sister* 206

Using the hypothetical figure "Judith Shakespeare," this British novelist describes the formidable difficulties confronting the creative woman.

James Baldwin, *Stranger in the Village* 218

Experiences in a Swiss village lead a black writer to consider his status in America and to conclude "the interracial drama acted out on the American continent has not only created a new black man, it has created a new white man as well."

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Process

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Creative thinking by a nineteenth-century peddler led to the invention of blue jeans, an American symbol.

Jessica Mitford, *The American Way of Death* 238

An investigative journalist parts "the formaldehyde curtain" and describes the process of embalming and "casketing" Mr. Jones.

John McPhee, *Oranges* 246

An American essayist examines the process of turning oranges into juices, concentrates, and byproducts in plants that resemble oil refineries.

Martin Luther King, Jr., *Nonviolent Resistance* 253

Because "The old law of an eye for an eye leaves everybody blind," the leader of the Civil Rights Movement advocates nonviolent resistance.

Henry David Thoreau, *Economy* 259

In the course of describing the construction of his cabin, an American philosopher defines independence.

H. L. Mencken, *Criminology* 264

An American editor, known for his controversial views, challenges criminologists who believe that in "every pickpocket there is a potential Good Man."

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The success extolled by popular self-help books lacks an ethical dimension, claims this well-known newspaper columnist.

Calvin Trillin, *Eating in Cincinnati* 278

As this writer-gourmet recounts his adventures in a series of down-home eateries, he also offers a definition of chili, prepared in all its glorious forms, Cincinnati-style.