

INSTRUCTORS MANUAL TO ACCOMPANY

# GUIDELINES FOR WRITERS

RHETORIC, READER, HANDBOOK



*Judith Stanford*



INSTRUCTOR'S MANUAL  
TO ACCOMPANY

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*Judith Stanford*  
Rivier College

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**Instructor's Manual to Accompany  
GUIDELINES FOR WRITERS  
Rhetoric, Reader Handbook**

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by Judith Stanford**

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# Introduction

## Approaches to Teaching Guidelines

Many students arrive at college without the skills necessary to do the reading, writing, and thinking required of them in their classes. These students are often acutely aware of the gaps in their learning, and many have had extremely negative experiences in their previous schooling. During office conferences or in journal entries, students have recounted incidents of teachers or counselors telling them that they were "hopeless cases" or "slow learners" or "not college material." My approach in class, and also in this book, is to begin by showing students what they *do* know and by enabling them to see that the skills they already have can, in fact, be translated into effective strategies for successfully completing academic assignments.

In addition, I have found that students often view what they have learned in the past—whether in school, at work, in the community, or at home—as a series of disparate experiences. I believe it is essential to show students connections among these learning experiences. Further, students need encouragement to look not only at *what* they learn but at *how* they learn. They need to stand back and look at process—their processes of writing, of course, but also their processes of reading, their processes of discussing, their processes of working collaboratively with other students or of seeking advice from professors in their offices. These processes that are second nature to those of us who have experienced success in the academic world are often a mystery to students who come to our classrooms underprepared and anxious. To establish an atmosphere that encourages students who arrive discouraged, fearful, or defensive—as well as those who arrive full of hope and determination—I have found the following approaches useful.

**Seating Arrangements:** I like to arrive early for the first few class sessions and—if the number of students and the classroom furniture permit—arrange the chairs in a circle so that students can more readily talk to each other rather than focus all of their comments toward me. Even if the class comprises twenty-five or thirty students, it is usually possible to place the chairs in two or three half-circles to establish a sense of exchange among many voices—rather than a series of individual dialogues between the teacher and various students. (As the semester progresses, rather than moving furniture yourself, ask students to move chairs and desks as they arrive in the classroom.)

**Developing an Interactive Classroom:** During the first class period, I try to learn the names of as many students as possible and to encourage students to learn each others' names. Learning names—and perhaps a few basic facts about each other—promotes comfortable communication. Since students will probably be asked to share their ideas through discussion as well as through writing workshops, developing acquaintance with their peers serves as an essential step to understanding the audience for whom and with whom they will be writing and speaking.

To develop such a classroom community, consider taking a few minutes to have students work in pairs, interviewing each other and then introducing their partners to you and to the class. Because this exercise would most likely take place during the first or second class—before students are comfortable with one another—you might suggest several relatively "safe" questions as possibilities for the interview. For example:

1. Why did you choose this college and, now that you are here, what one piece of advice would you give to a close friend who is considering applying for admission next year?



2. What current or past work experiences have you most enjoyed or most disliked and why?
3. If you could spend one whole day doing anything you choose, what would you do and why?
4. If you could recommend one store, shop, or restaurant in an area you know well, what would it be and why?
5. If you could ask the instructor of this course one question, what would it be?

Just these few questions will give students a chance to get to know each other, to laugh a little, and—if you decide to use question 5—you'll also get a chance to introduce yourself and to discover some of the students' concerns about the course. (You may want to make the disclaimer that you'll choose only a few questions to answer because of time limitations!)

An added benefit of this exercise is that you can jot down students' names and brief descriptions as they are being introduced. These descriptions help you to form pictures of students as distinctive individuals whom you can get to know much more quickly than you can if they remain represented only by isolated names on a computer-generated roster.

**Speaking as a Way of Knowing:** While some students participate easily in class discussion, others find speaking excruciatingly painful for many reasons. Some fail to speak because they fear ridicule from fellow students. Others think they have to be absolutely certain of a "right answer" before they volunteer. Some have been silenced because they have been told repeatedly (at home, at work, or at school) that their opinions are not worthy of consideration. Still others may come from a cultural background that discourages students from speaking out and that views the instructor as the holder—and imparter—of all wisdom.

While the first college English course concerns primarily reading and writing, I think it is important also to help all students find their speaking voices. You might mention to your classes that throughout life, we find ourselves in situations (committee meetings and public hearings come immediately to mind) where we are disempowered if we are afraid to speak.

The suggestions in this Instructor's Guide address primarily strategies related to reading and writing, but integrated throughout are approaches that encourage speaking. While I do not succeed with every class, I aim each semester for 100% participation in discussion because I believe that the student who speaks in class becomes engaged in the learning process—"owns" the learning process—in a way that most silent learners do not.

**Writing as a Way of Thinking:** Many students begin their first college writing class with astonishingly little practice in writing. Informal surveys in my own classes suggest the most common previous writing experiences to be (1) short answer and multiple choice exams, (2) book reports that are primarily summaries, and (3) research reports that permit—and sometimes encourage—paraphrasing as the main means of writing (and thus often tacitly condone plagiarism).

A few fortunate students may have completed more thoughtful writing assignments that encourage multiple drafts and critical thinking, but they are in the minority. Very few have ever heard of the concept of writing as a way of thinking. They may have kept journals, but they do not make the connections between writing in journals and discovering new ideas and ways of thinking. If you do assign journals, consider asking students to write some entries they will feel comfortable sharing with the class. You can then use these entries as a way of initiating either full-class discussion or small-group work.

In addition to using journals as a way to get students thinking, consider brief in-class writings as a way to encourage engagement with a discussion topic. (Writing suggestions in the text or in this guide might be used as the starting point for these in-class writings.) When students write before they begin discussing, each person should have something to contribute.

This process allows those who need time to think and to consider a question slowly the same opportunity to join the classroom conversation as those who think more quickly and who speak more readily. After students have finished writing (you may want to set a time limit of five or ten minutes), you might sometimes ask for volunteers; at other times, you may move quickly around the room requesting one comment or question from each student.

Such relatively brief and informal experiences as journal writing and in-class writing lead students to see that their longer, more complex papers written out of class are also ways of discovering and of thinking. They begin to recognize that writing is not simply an arduous task that must be accomplished to pass the course. Instead it is an essential way of exploring their ideas, observations, and questions, both in college courses and (for most of them) in whatever profession they choose to follow in the years after graduation.

**Group Work:** Many of the exercises in this text suggest group work. Chapter Three provides an example of a small group of students working on a writing task. Most students will not have worked in groups before, or, if they have, few will have had the opportunity to discuss and understand the reasons for working collaboratively or for recognizing the need to think about how groups can work together most effectively. Discussing the guidelines and examples provided in Chapter Three leads students not simply to one specific group task but rather to an overview of the way collaborative problem solving can become a useful reading, writing, thinking, and study strategy for them.

**Evaluation:** Evaluating students' writing is a part of teaching most instructors dread. It's easy to lose patience with students who ignore our carefully written comments and, instead, focus mainly on the grade a paper earns. On the other hand, students know that the grade on the paper—and ultimately in the course—represents the standard by which they will later be judged. Perhaps they will lose a scholarship, be placed on academic probation, or even asked to leave school unless they attain a certain grade. Given these pressures, it is easy to see why many students focus on the grade rather than on the instructor's comments.

Unless you teach in a school that does not give letter or number grades there's no way to avoid entirely this concern with marks. However, you might consider some strategies that do alleviate the abject terror some students associate with receiving their graded papers.

**Allow—or require—multiple drafts:** If students have a chance to get your comments on their drafts—perhaps in an office conference or in a classroom workshop—they may be encouraged to focus on writing issues rather than strictly on grades.

**Allow—or require—rewriting after the student has received a grade:** If students can rewrite a paper that you have graded (perhaps for a new grade or perhaps to replace the initial grade), they will be more apt to think about your comments rather than to look only at the "B" or "C" or "D" at the end of the paper.

**Consider using the portfolio method of evaluation:** One way to use this method is to tell students at the beginning of the course that you are not going to grade each paper as it is submitted, but instead will give them comments on their writing. At the end of the semester, they will choose ten pages (or twenty pages or whatever you decide) to be revised and submitted in a portfolio for you to evaluate for the course grade (or for a substantial portion of the grade).

Some students, of course, will want to know what their grades would be if you were evaluating the papers with numbers or letters rather than with comments. To respond to their concerns, you may want to let students know at mid-term where they stand or you may want to develop an alternative system. One instructor I know includes a cover sheet with her comments and with the following designations:

- *Publishable*: The paper has a clearly established point that has been well developed with logical support from reasons, details, and examples. Organization and style are effective and appropriate. Any mechanical or spelling errors are extremely minor.
- *Revisable*: While the central idea is sound, more work is needed in one or more of the following areas: providing logical support; development of one or more supporting points; organization; providing clear transitions among sentences in paragraphs or between paragraphs; revising for style issues (such as sentence combining or eliminating ineffective repetition or wordy sentences); proofreading for errors in spelling or mechanics.
- *Needs rewriting*: The paper is not yet acceptable because of one or more the the following concerns.
  - a. There is no clear central idea.
  - b. The organization is not logical; the reader cannot follow the writer's train of thought.
  - c. Supporting details, reasons, or examples are absent, illogical, or not related to the main idea.
  - d. Sentences are not clearly written; the reader cannot readily understand what the writer is saying at sentence level.
  - e. The writer does not demonstrate an understanding of the writing assignment and, instead, writes a paper unrelated to the topic.

While the instructor makes the final portfolio assessment, students may be involved at many levels in assessing their own writing and in helping other students to assess their writing. You may, for example, ask students to work in groups or in pairs to help each other decide what to include in their portfolios. You may also want to involve your campus writing center in the process and to provide the center with the guidelines you have given students for assembling the portfolio as well as with a list of the standards you will use for making the final evaluation.

#### **A Word about the Text's Title: *Guidelines***

This book is called *Guidelines* because its primary purpose is to provide students with clearly defined strategies that encourage the communication—the critical reading, writing, speaking, and thinking—they will need to succeed both in their college courses and in their future lives as workers and as members of communities and families.

Throughout the text, you will find boxed summaries of these guidelines, each with a title indicating the strategy it addresses. You may want to call these guidelines to students' attention as providing useful reminders to which they can refer when they want—or are required—to use any of the approaches covered by a particular set of guidelines.

#### **Using this Guide**

The sections that follow suggest ways of teaching *Guidelines*. The first four sections of the instructor's guide break the sections of the text into units for teaching. The breakdown identifies five teaching units for Section One, seven teaching units for Section Two, six teaching

units for Section Three, and seven teaching units for Section Four. A teaching unit equals one class hour, so if your classes meet for a different period of time, you may want to combine some of the suggested assignments and strategies.

This schedule suggests spending approximately two weeks on each of the first four sections of the text. If your college year is divided into eight-week quarters, one quarter might profitably be spent on the first four sections of *Guidelines*. On the other hand, if your college year is divided into fifteen- or sixteen-week semesters, the first half of the semester could be spent on the first four sections of the text while the remaining weeks would allow time for students to explore the strategies they have developed by reading, discussing, and writing about the selections in the Anthology of Readings. One or more of the remaining weeks of the semester might be used to teach any of the Appendixes.

Whatever the structure of your college year and whatever decisions you make regarding the primary focus of your assignments, you may want to consider integrating into each class one part of Appendix B, "Guide to Editing." A logical process would be to assign the introduction, pp. 293-300, during the first week of classes and then to distribute the remaining twelve "Editor's Focus" sections (each of which considers a major editing issue) evenly throughout the rest of the term.

## Section One: READING AND WRITING TO RESPOND (pp. 1-34)

As you teach this opening section of the text, consider providing students with as many opportunities as possible for asking questions, for expressing their concerns, and for responding freely to what they have read. At this point in the semester, many instructors find that a great deal of positive reinforcement serves to encourage students to take the risks necessary for learning, growing, and changing.

### FIRST CLASS: "READING AND WRITING TO RESPOND"

**Daily Reading (p. 2) and Exercise 1 (p. 2)** This brief discussion and warm-up exercise reassure students that all of them do read every day and that becoming aware of their everyday reading can help them develop alert responses to everything they read, whether for pleasure, for information, or for a class assignment.

To initiate discussion on the first day of class, ask students to spend five minutes or so making the lists described in Exercise 1. If time permits, have them work in groups of four or five compiling a master list of what they read and of printed matter they were exposed to but chose to ignore.

When the groups reconvene, ask the speaker for each group to read the master list while you record these lists on the chalkboard. You might point out—or ask students to point out—any discrepancies. For instance, one group may have on its "ignored" list the same (or similar) items that another group has on its "read" list.

**Assignment for next class: Read pages 2-11, "Reading for a Purpose" ; Write Exercises 2 (p. 2) and 3 (pp. 10-11).**

### SECOND CLASS: "READING AND WRITING TO RESPOND"

**Reading for a Purpose (pp. 2-6) :** Begin by asking students to discuss their responses to exercise 2. As they volunteer, write both the item they read and the purposes they defined for reading this item on the chalkboard. Then review the **reading patterns (pp. 3-6)**, asking whether they recognize these strategies as part of their own reading process. Most students enjoy discussing rereading if you ask them to expand on the idea introduced in the text that children's books read first in childhood and later, during adolescence or adulthood, seem to change. Of course, it's the *reader* who changes, not the book, but the example usually offers strong support for the importance of returning to a text for a second or third time rather than assuming that it has yielded all of its wealth during an initial reading.

This class also provides a fine chance for you to discuss the frustrations students may currently feel with their reading process. For instance, many think that not understanding something the first time through indicates that they are "poor readers" or "stupid." Knowing that most readers do not understand complex texts fully during the first reading encourages students not to give up. In addition, I usually let students know that running into one paragraph or one example that seems baffling is no reason to quit reading the selection. Reassure them that if readers continue, they'll often find that the next section begins to make sense and

may even be able to return to the puzzling paragraph or example and find that it now becomes intelligible in the larger context of the essay.

**Responding to Reading (pp. 6-10):** To work with this section in class, first ask students for any questions or observations they may have had as they read the explanations and the sample reading and annotation. If time permits, have them meet in groups to compare their marginal comments in response to the paragraph from "Hidden Lessons" (Exercise 3, pp. 10-11). When the class reconvenes, ask the recorders from each group to read the responses that students wrote out of class as well as any responses that came up as part of the group discussion.

**Assignment:** Read "Writing in Response to Reading" (pp. 11-23); Write either Exercise 4 or Exercise 5; Write Exercises 6, 7, 8, 9, 10.

### **THIRD CLASS: "READING AND WRITING TO RESPOND"**

**Writing in Response to Reading (pp. 11-23):** Begin by asking for any questions or comments students may have in response to reading this section. This is a good time to remind students that they should be practicing the reading strategies they are learning as they read their assignments. That is, they should be writing in the margins of the text, making notes of their questions, and so on. Consider asking them to come to each class prepared with at least two comments or questions relating to the assigned reading.

After leading discussion related to class-generated questions and comments, you may want to point out any parts of the writing process that you want to emphasize, using the written exercises as a way to initiate discussion and to identify trouble spots students may have as they work their way through a writing task. For example, if students have difficulty generating a list of topics, you may want to move immediately to the paragraphs at the end of this chapter (pp. 32-34), ask them to read one of the paragraphs, and then walk through a brainstorming session with the class, using the chalkboard to explore possibilities that occur to you or are suggested by students. Continue addressing questions concerning the writing process (especially those points raised by Exercises 6-10) by working with the paragraph students have just read.

**Assignment:** Read "Writing in Response to Reading" (pp. 23-31);  
Read Appendix A, "Revision Guidelines" and "Proofreading/Editing Guidelines";  
Write Exercises 11-13.

### **FOURTH CLASS: "READING AND WRITING TO RESPOND"**

**Writing in Response to Reading (pp. 23-31):** After leading a discussion based on students' observations and questions about the reading assignment, ask them to meet in small groups and discuss the similarities and differences in their responses to the process of revision. While some instructors prefer to have groups work strictly on their own with no intervention, I prefer

(at least during the early part of the term) to move from group to group, staying briefly to listen to their conversations. During these short visits, students have a chance to ask questions about the work the group is doing. Sometimes these are issues that have come up in the course of their discussion; sometimes they are questions that the student was hesitant to raise in front of the whole class, but will ask in the less formal small group setting. In addition, if I find a group that is really stuck, I have a chance to provide more focus and structure to get them back on track. Finally, as an extra bonus, by just sitting and listening, I gain new insights into the way each new class of students thinks about and approaches writing.

When the class reconvenes, ask the students who have served as recorders to report the points and issues that were raised during their discussion. You may want to elaborate on those issues or to raise other concerns that you see need more attention. Following this brief discussion, as a way of introducing the assignment for the next class, you may want to review the aspects of the reading and writing processes that have been covered in this chapter.

**Assignment: Write Exercise 14.** Suggest that students review April's approach to writing a response as they work on their own. If you would like to use the next class as a writing workshop, ask students to come with a rough draft rather than the finished copy the exercise calls for. Remind them to consult the "Revision Guidelines" and the "Proofreading/Editing Guidelines" provided in Appendix A (pp. 289-292) as they work.

#### **FIFTH CLASS: "READING AND WRITING TO RESPOND"**

**Paragraphs for Practice (pp. 32-34):** If you have opted to use this class as a writing workshop, ask students to spend a few minutes at the beginning of class rereading the "Revision Guidelines" and "Proofreading/Editing Guidelines" provided in Appendix A (pp. 289-292).

**Assignment: Read "Section Two: Reading and Writing to Evaluate" (pp. 35-38); Write Exercise 1, p. 37, or Alternative Exercise p. 38.**



## **Section Two: READING AND WRITING TO EVALUATE (pp. 35-84)**

This section moves students from response to the more complex process of evaluation. As you help students learn how to evaluate, you may find that many of them need to be reassured that they can, indeed, make a judgment about something they read even if they are not experts on the subject being discussed. Showing them that, in most cases, they have control of establishing the criteria by which they make their evaluations helps them to see how even a novice film viewer, for example, can make meaningful and sensible judgments about critiques written by professional film reviewers.

### **FIRST CLASS: "READING AND WRITING TO EVALUATE" (pp. 35-38)**

If possible, students should arrive at this class having read pages 35-38 and having written either Exercise 1 (p. 37) or the Alternative Exercise (p. 38). You might begin the class by reviewing the Siskel and Ebert example from the beginning of Section Two. First ask how many class members have seen these two film critics in action or have heard other film reviewers on television (for instance, Gene Shallitt, who appears from time to time on "Good Morning, America"). Then ask students whether they usually agree with the film critics' opinions. Almost always there will be several students who disagree while others generally agree. Asking both groups of students how they decide whether they agree or disagree gets the discussion moving toward the topic of evaluation. If you want to pursue the popular culture discussion further—perhaps to involve more students—consider asking whether they usually agree with the choices for Oscar or Emmy nominations and awards. Again, you'll generally get a lively response that leads easily to asking students what criteria they think the Awards committees use to make their selections and how those criteria differ from (or are similar to) the criteria students would use if they were making the choices.

**Evaluation: Defining the Process (pp. 36-38)** After this initial discussion, ask student volunteers to read the lists and the descriptions of the evaluation process that they wrote in response to either Exercise 1 or the Alternative Exercise (p. 38). After listening to several people read their responses, use their examples to point out and review the steps in the evaluation process given on page 38. You may also want to arrive at this class with your own list and description (either on an overhead transparency or photocopied) so that you can model for students the way you make evaluations.

**Assignment: Read "Evaluation: Understanding What You Read" (pp. 38-46); Write Exercise 2 (pp. 40-41), Exercise 3 (p. 45), Exercise 4 (p. 46).**

### **SECOND CLASS: "READING AND WRITING TO EVALUATE"**

**Evaluation: Understanding What You Read (pp. 38-46)** To begin this class, you might emphasize that to evaluate anything accurately and usefully, one needs to understand the thing being evaluated. For example, if you are evaluating an automobile you want to buy, you have to know more about it than just what color it is or how fast it will go on the open highway. Getting to know the automobile thoroughly helps you to develop the criteria you'll

need to make a judgment about it. So it is with evaluating reading. The first step is understanding clearly what the author is saying.

**Dealing with Unfamiliar Words (pp. 38-41)** Dealing with unfamiliar words often stymies students who have not yet developed confidence in their reading skills. Most confident readers are undaunted by an unfamiliar word or even by a particularly difficult passage that contains many unfamiliar words or concepts. If, for example, you (as an instructor of English) were reading a chapter in a new book on, say, psycholinguistic theory, you might encounter whole sections that were puzzling. Like most experienced readers, you would probably persist, moving right by the difficult sections, perhaps marking them for later perusal and study. You would continue reading, picking up the thread of the author's argument and completing the chapter with an overview of the main ideas and with questions for which you'd later try to discover answers.

As a skilled reader, you would not pause every time you encountered an unfamiliar word. Instead, you'd continue to read trying to discover (usually without conscious effort) the meaning of the word through noting contextual clues. Only if you did not find those clues, *and* if you saw that the word was absolutely essential to understanding a key point would you head for the dictionary.

Inexperienced readers often need to be encouraged to have confidence in their own ability to discover meaning. They need to know that it's all right to read without knowing the definition of every word they see. Many will have been taught that they should "look up" any unfamiliar word. While I certainly applaud productive use of the dictionary, I also ask my students how many of the words they currently know and use were learned by finding them in a dictionary. This question usually gets a laugh that leads to a discussion of how they did—and do—learn new words. Beginning with early childhood, most of us increase our vocabulary by coming to understand words through contextual clues. Those clues may be images (as in childhood, when a parent points to a four-legged, purring animal and says "cat") or they may be the words and phrases that precede and follow an unfamiliar word, as described on pages 39-40.

Convincing students that they already have the skills for acquiring new vocabulary—and, thus, for understanding what they read more easily and fully—helps give them confidence to pursue the college-level reading they'll encounter in this course as well as in their other classes. In addition, it helps students to see that they can handle the essential first step to evaluating what they read: understanding clearly what the author is saying.

To review the strategies for finding meaning in context, go over Exercise 2 with the class. Although the source of the sentences in this exercise is mentioned in the book, you might reinforce that these examples of definitions in context are taken from an actual college text that is used in introductory anthropology classes.

*Possible Responses to Exercise 2 (pp. 40-41)*

1. The definition of "mechanization" is set off by dashes.
2. The authors make clear what they mean by "illegal substances" by giving several examples.
3. The second sentence provides a specific example that demonstrates what "exodus" means.
4. Most students will recognize that "autonomous" means independent or on one's own when they see the contrasting explanation of tightly knit relationships in the second sentence.
5. "Godparents" is provided as a synonym to define "compadres."