

# *Reasoning & Writing Well*

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A Rhetoric, Reader, and Handbook

Betty M. Dietsch

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**Betty M. Dietsch**

*Marion Technical College*



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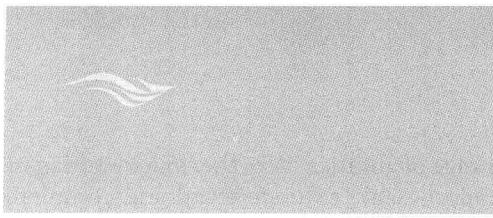
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# *A Note to Instructors*

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Students, especially those at colleges and universities with an open-door policy, tend to have a practical mindset. More and more ask, “How is this course related to my career?” Yet too few seem to realize that the ability to write well can affect not only their grades but also their careers. Six years of research on communication in the workplace, including nearly a hundred interviews with employers and employees from dozens of different businesses, have influenced *Reasoning and Writing Well*. This rhetoric is overtly relevant to the workplace as well as to the academic environment. The primary educational goals are to enable students to:

- Write with a purpose that considers the rhetorical situation
- Write clearly, concisely, and accurately
- Use language appropriately
- Research a topic using electronic and other sources
- Apply principles of documentation
- Analyze and evaluate logically and objectively
- Write with confidence
- Appreciate the value of effective writing

*Reasoning and Writing Well* is a comprehensive process-centered rhetoric that demystifies the art of writing and offers an abundance of engaging readings. The self-help features and group activities work well for individual study, collaborative work, or computerized settings. The text takes the student all the way from sentence structure to researched argument, literary analysis, and job-related writing. Logical and critical thinking, causal analysis, problem solving, and persuasion receive extensive coverage. Strategies of organization are shown as options to combine creatively. Other important features include:

- *Readability*. The light, friendly tone, sprinkled with humor, sets the scene for enjoyable and thoughtful reading. The clear explanations make the text

suitable for students with a wide range of abilities. Whether valedictorian or average student, each reader should be able to understand and complete the assignments. Equally important, each student should be challenged.

- *Flexible.* This text has been designed for and tested with a multicultural audience. Every reader should be able to identify with some of the examples.
- *Numerous student, as well as professional, models.* Exemplary student writing is featured throughout. Examples of introductions, conclusions, and entire papers illustrate various rhetorical strategies.
- *In-depth coverage of expository writing.* Students gain an overview of the writing process before each step is explained and illustrated. They are taught how to shape material according to purpose, audience, and occasion. Each major rhetorical strategy is allotted a full chapter, going from less to more complex.
- *Creativity.* Heuristics to generate ideas and details will enable students to start writing quickly. They are encouraged to use figures of speech and other literary devices.
- *Revision.* Revision is treated as an integral part of the writing process. Checklists for revision appear periodically. By the time students finish the course, they should be convinced that revision is a vital part of writing.
- *Diction.* The book provides extensive treatment of levels of formality, colloquialisms, jargon, sexism, positive/negative words, and concrete/abstract words. Students are encouraged to develop proficiency in professional English to succeed in college and the workplace.
- *Writing in response to literature.* Students learn how to write papers of reaction and analysis in response to essays, fiction, and poetry. The chapters explain not only how to take and defend a position but also how to discuss the elements of fiction and common literary devices.
- *Résumé and employment letter writing.* Up-to-date options for résumés emphasize skills and abilities. Students learn to analyze the needs of employers and tailor the statement of their qualifications accordingly. They also learn how to write impressive application, thank you, and refusal letters as well as compile an effective list of references.
- *Study aids.* Chapter summaries, tables, guidelines, and checklists assist students in preparation. “Test Yourself” exercises provide opportunities for quick feedback.
- *Activities.* Creative activities encourage and enhance analysis and discussion. Suggestions for peer review, role plays, and case problems provide opportunities to learn collaboratively. Suggestions for practice writing and papers stimulate thinking and originality.
- *Extensive help for computer users.* Tips and precautions alert users to possible pitfalls. Students learn how to create documentation for material from CD-ROMs, online services, and the Internet.

- *Reader*. This rhetorically arranged reader (that parallels the rhetoric's organization) contains 39 engaging readings. The selections for each rhetorical mode progress from the readily accessible to the more challenging. Charles Kuralt, Eudora Welty, C. S. Lewis, and Elisabeth Kübler-Ross are among the authors represented.
- *Handbook: A Guide to Usage*. The concise handbook provides quick answers to common questions about grammar, punctuation, mechanics, spelling, and usage. Common correction symbols are listed inside the back cover.
- *The Idea Book*. This unusual instructor's manual provides objectives, teaching strategies, activities, keys to exercises, and other features to interest students and to lighten the load of the instructor. For example, twenty-seven transparency masters and fourteen grammar work sheets are ready for duplication.

The philosophy of *Reasoning and Writing Well* has been shaped by education at Ohio State University, research, professional writing, experience in the workplace, and twenty years of teaching at Marion Technical College. Recently, a joint effort in workplace education by MTC and Whirlpool Corporation gained international recognition, winning a gold medal. A similar effort by MTC and Med-Center Hospital received the Governor's Workforce Excellence Award. *Reasoning and Writing Well*, tested locally for three years, has played a part in these and other achievements. This unusual rhetoric, reader, and handbook can also help your students to develop their potential.

### A Note of Appreciation

This book could not have been written without the generosity of the many students who have contributed their work. Heartfelt gratitude is also extended to professors Nancy Gilson and Leslie Weichenthal, my coworkers, and to librarians David Evans and Nannette White. Also lending expertise as well as encouragement were family members—George, Neil, Jeanne, Julie, and Christine. Appreciated too, is the assistance of Linda K. Wendling, University of Missouri-St. Louis, for helping to compile the Reader. Finally, my thanks go to the reviewers: Patricia Blaine, Paducah Community College; Julie Ann Doty, Southeastern Illinois College; Linda Jarvis, Kilgore College; Sharon Poat, Paducah Community College; Jonah Rice, Southeastern Illinois College; and Marilyn Terrault, Macomb Community College, for their suggestions.



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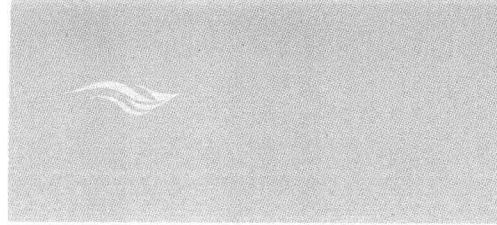
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