

**INSTRUCTOR'S EDITION**  
*Instructor's Manual Included*



# Writer's Reader

Eighth Edition



**PROFESSIONAL  
EDITION**

*Not for Sale*

Donald Hall • D.L. Emblen

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# A WRITER'S READER

EIGHTH EDITION

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**Donald Hall**

**D. L. Emblen**

Santa Rosa Junior College



LONGMAN

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An imprint of Addison Wesley Longman, Inc.

New York • Reading, Massachusetts • Menlo Park, California • Harlow, England  
Don Mills, Ontario • Sydney • Mexico City • Madrid • Amsterdam

Executive Editor: Anne Elizabeth Smith  
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Cover Designer: Kay Petronio  
Electronic Production Manager: Angel Gonzalez Jr.  
Manufacturing Manager: Willie Lane  
Electronic Page Makeup: Ruttle, Shaw & Wetherill, Inc.  
Printer and Binder: R. R. Donnelley & Sons Company  
Cover Printer: The Lehigh Press, Inc.

#### **Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data**

A writer's reader / [edited by] Donald Hall, D.L. Emblen. —8th ed.  
p. cm.

Includes indexes.

ISBN 0-673-52505-8 (student's ed.). —ISBN 0-673-52333-0  
(instructor's ed.)

1. College readers. 2. English language—Rhetoric. I. Hall,  
Donald, [date] . II. Emblen, D. L. (Donald Lewis), [date] .

PE1417.W67 1997

808'.0427—dc20

96-33814

CIP

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Student Edition ISBN 0-673-52505-8  
Instructor's Edition ISBN 0-673-52333-0

12345678910—DOC—99989796

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## Preface

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Reading well precedes writing well. Of all the ancestors claimed by a fine piece of prose, the most important is the prose from which the writer learned his craft. Writers learn craft, not by memorizing rules about restrictive clauses, but by striving to equal a standard formed from reading.

A composition course, then, must be two courses: one in reading, another in writing. If students lack practice in writing, they are usually unpracticed readers as well. Most students lack quality of reading as well as quantity; and if we assert that good models help us, we admit that bad models hurt us. People who read bad prose twelve hours a week—newspapers, popular fiction, textbooks—are as ill served as people who read nothing at all. Surely most textbooks, from freshman handbooks through the text for Psych 101, encourage the illusion that words merely stand in for ideas, or carry information on their backs—that words exist for the convenience of thinking much as turnpikes exist for the sake of automobiles.

This barbarism underlies the vogue of speed reading, which urges us to scan lines for comprehension, ignoring syntax and metaphor, ignoring image and feeling and sound. If we are to grow and to learn—and surely if we are to write well—we must learn to read slowly and intimately, and to read good writing. We must learn to read actively, even aggressively, without the passivity derived from watching television. The active reader questions as he reads, subjects each author's ideas to skeptical scrutiny, and engages the writer in dialogue as part of the reading process.

For language embodies the human psyche. Learning to read—that privilege so recently extended to the ancestors of most of us—allows us to enter human history. In books we perceive the gesture, the pulse, the heartbeat, the pallor, the eye movement, the pitch, and the tone of people who lived before us, or who live now in other places, in other skins, in other habits, customs, beliefs, and ideas.

Language *embodies* the human psyche, which includes ideas and the feelings that properly accompany ideas. There is no sleight-of-mind by which the idea may be separated from its body and remain alive. The body of good writing is rhythm and image, metaphor and syntax, order of phrase and order of paragraph.

## A NOTE TO LATER EDITIONS

Many teachers have helped us prepare the many editions of *A Writer's Reader*—in letters, in conversations at colleges all over the country, in responses to the publisher's survey of users. We thank more people than we can list.

We have added considerable material, and we are pleased with the result. We believe that we have made a representative sampling of good prose. We like some pieces more than others, heaven knows, but we believe that all of them provide something to learn from. We have included a wide variety of prose, mostly contemporary but also historical. We hope that young Americans will attach themselves to the body of our history by immersion in its significant utterances.

We have numbered paragraphs for ease of reference. Although *A Writer's Reader* is a collection of essays, we have again violated coherence by including fiction, feeling that the contrast afforded by a few short stories among the essays was useful and refreshing. We have also included several poems, for the same reason. Perhaps we should make an argument for including poems—but let us just say that we enjoy them, and we hope you do too. To satisfy students' curiosity, we have included headnotes to the poems; but we have stopped short of suggesting questions after them, lest we seem to surround a landscape garden with a hundred-foot-high concrete wall.

We have chosen to arrange our essays, stories, and poems alphabetically by author. This arrangement makes for random juxtaposition, irrational sequence, and no sense at all—which is why we chose it. We expect no one to teach these pieces in alphabetical order. We expect teachers to find their own order—which they would do whatever order we attempted to impose. In our first edition we struggled to make a stylistic organization, listing some essays as examples of "Sentences," others as examples of "Paragraphs." For the editors themselves, a year after deciding on our organization, it was no longer clear why essay X was to be studied for its sentences, essay Y for its paragraphs. With a rhetorical organization, one runs into another sort of problem. Although an essay may contain Division, or Process Analysis, or an example of Example, the same essay is likely to use three or four other patterns as well. No piece of real prose is ever so pure as our systems of classification. Thematic organizations, which have their attractions, have similar flaws; is E. B. White's theme in "Once More to the Lake" Mortality? Aging? Youth and Age? or, How I Spent My Summer Vacation?

Our arrangement is more arbitrary than an arrangement by style or rhetoric or theme, and presents itself only to be ignored. At the same time, there are dozens of ways in which these essays (and poems and stories) can be used together. Our Instructor's Manual suggests

several combinations. Our Rhetorical Index, printed as an appendix to the text itself, lists single-paragraph examples of rhetorical patterns as well as longer units. We hope that students will find the Rhetorical Index useful. Freshmen who return to their rooms from class, set to write a paper using Comparison and Contrast, sometimes find themselves in need of a concrete example of the assigned pattern to imitate. We have also added a Thematic Index.

Thus, we have tried to supply some useful maps to go with our arbitrary arrangement. Following suggestions from several teachers, we have chosen to represent a few authors by small clusters of their work. We have expanded our representation of writing by scientists. In response to many suggestions, we have looked for short, complete essays in exposition and argument on a variety of topics.

If you miss essays or authors that we eliminated in this edition, please let us know. If there are authors we overlook, whom you would recommend, we solicit your help. Although we intend to remain alert to good prose and to the needs of the classroom, we need help from the outside.

In this eighth edition, we have added a little poetry—in response to the suggestion of several long-time users.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We thank the following users of the first, second, third, fourth, and fifth editions for their helpful comments: Louise Ackley, Maureen Andrews, Tony Ardizzzone, Jo Ann Asbury, Ann Avery, Tom Barnwell, Conrad S. Bayley, Jane Berk, Meredith Berman, Dennis Berthold, Barbara Blaha, C. Bogarad, Linda Schafer Emblen, Charles E. Bolton, Charles Bressler, Patrick Broderick, Otis Bronson, Laurel Broughton, Ingrid Brunner, Ed Buckley, Sandra Burns, Jon Burton, Ann Cameron, Marti Carpenter, Richard Cloyed, Edythe Colello, Randy Conine, Steven Connelly, Roger Conner, Rebecca Coogan, Charles L. Cornwell, Valecia Crisafulli, Garber Davidson, Virginia de Araujo, Loretta Denner, Robert Duxbury, Ida Egli, Cirre Emblen, Clovis Emblen, Lee Engdahl, Elizabeth Failla, Ralph Farve, Gala Fitzgerald, Jerome T. Ford, Frances B. Foreman, Susan Forrest, David S. Gadziola, Peggy Gledhill, Ronald Gurney, Barbara Hamilton, Bill Harby, Walter Harrison, Lowell Hawk, Carol T. Hayes, Peter Heitkamp, Allan Hirsh, Samuel G. Hornsby, Jr., Nancy Hunt, John Huntington, C. S. Joyce, Donald Kansch, Gregory Keeler, Jeff Kluewer, Deborah Lambert, John Lerner, Karen LeFerre, Kennedy P. Leisch, Richard H. Lerner, Opal A. Lovett, Neillie McCrory, Sherry McGuire, Andrew Makarushka, Steven J. Masello, Richard Maxwell, Kenneth Maue, Deanne Milan, Molly Moore-Kehler, Harriet Napierkowski, John Necker, Wayne

Neel, Jean O'Donnell, Barbara Olive, Stephen O'Neil, Beverly Palmer, John V. Pastoor, Ray Peterson, Roscoe Poland, Muriel Rada, Martha Rainbolt, Shari Rambo, Dennison G. Rice, James Rosen, Harriet Susskind Rosenblum, Robert Schwegler, Terry Shelton, Marvin and Helen Sherak, James Shokoff, Donald K. Skiles, Thomas Skmetzo, Marilyn Smith, Arnold Solkov, Andrew Solomon, Richard Speakes, David A. Spurr, Helen Stauffer, Art Suchoki, Bernard Sugarman, Kathleen Sullivan, Ron Taylor, Jane Bamblin Thomas, Richard Tubbs, E. Guy Turcotte, Darlene Unrue, Peter Valenti, Sara Varhus, Craig Watson, Richard Webster, Joyce Welch, Richard Welin, Dorothy Wells, Joseph F. Whelan, Roberta White, Shirley and Russell White, Edith Wiard, Richard A. Widmayer, Gary Williams, J. J. Wilson, Suzanne Wilson, George Wymer, B. Yu, and Robert Lee Zimmerman.

We would like to thank the following people for their help in preparing the eighth edition: Peter Balbert, Trinity University; Rebecca Brittenham, Rutgers University; Patsy Callaghan, Central Washington University; Vincent Casaregola, Saint Louis University; Frank R. Cunnigham, University of South Dakota; Charles Harrison, San Jacinto College South; Maura Ives, Texas A&M University; Rodney Keller, Ricks College; Deborah K. Richey, Owens Community College.

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## Preface

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This manual consists chiefly of responses to the Considerations—the study questions—following each of the prose selections in *A Writer's Reader*, Eighth Edition. Obviously, many of these Considerations have no simple answers. Both the questions and the responses are devised to stimulate class discussions and writing projects, as well as to encourage careful reading of the selections assigned. Where definite answers seem appropriate, we provide them. For questions that seem open to discussion, we offer ways of directing thought to the selection and to the reading and writing problems suggested by the selection. Many of the responses take the form of added questions and suggestions for additional readings, both within and outside the text. Still others offer exercises and suggested reading and writing assignments.

The alphabetical arrangement of readings that comprise the text has evolved from our concern that both instructor and student explore *A Writer's Reader* in their own ways and shape their courses of study accordingly. To that end, we have included, in the responses, many recommendations for comparison of selections with others in the text. Our reasons for adopting the alphabetical arrangement are various, but some of them are suggested by the title of a volume of poems by the fine Swedish poet Werner Aspenström: *Ordbok* (literally, *Dictionary*). To that title, Aspenström appended a note in which he implied that to arrange the poems of a volume by theme and thus to force them into some semblance of a unifying message was a tedious and dubious affair, and that both poet and reader were better off arranging the contents according to their own predilections. The heartening response of users of our second edition, in which we first used the alphabetical arrangement, encouraged us to preserve it in later editions.

In addition to the responses, the manual keys selections to the organization of Donald Hall's *Writing Well*, Eighth Edition. (For alternative arrangements of the selections, see "A Rhetorical Index" and "A Thematic Index" in *A Writer's Reader* itself.)

Any suggestions on how to improve the contents and their presentation in either the text or the manual will be received gratefully and considered seriously by the editors and the publisher.

**A Note on the Poems**

We have not included Considerations after the poems in *A Writer's Reader*, nor in this manual have we spoken about teaching the poems, thinking that instructors who assign them will take their own directions without our help. For many users, the poems have provided students of English prose with excellent lessons in economy of language, figures of speech, importance of organization, use of allusion, and so on. Other teachers and students have simply enjoyed the poems as welcome breaks in the steady parade of prose selections.

***Donald Hall***  
***D. L. Emblen***

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