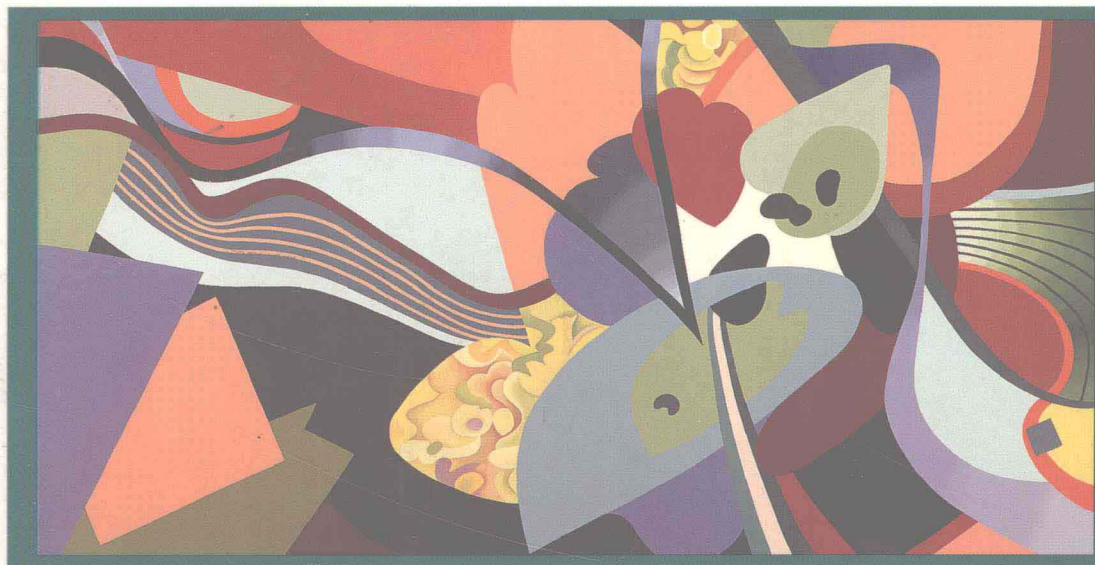


Departures

A READER FOR
DEVELOPING WRITERS



RANDALL POPKEN ALICE NEWSOME LANELL GONZALES

Departures

A Reader for Developing Writers

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Tarleton State University

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Departures

Preface to Teachers

Two special considerations have guided us in developing, field testing, and finally assembling *Departures*. First, our book is based on the idea that college students—from developmental to advanced—must read texts, discuss them, and ultimately respond with texts of their own. Being able to respond in writing to the texts of others is, after all, fundamental for survival in academic life: as part of the “credentialization process” for “membership in the academic community” but, more importantly as a way of learning.

We think what makes *Departures* unique among readers for developing writers is that nearly all of the readings in it come from the popular media: newspapers, news magazines, and other popular magazines. We believe that these discourses serve as an excellent bridge for many of our students from precollege and extra-college experiences to their academic lives because the readings contain topics that are of concern to both sides: the academic culture and the home culture. From the academic side, many of the readings in *Departures* report on academic research, adjusted to the interests of the popular reader. From the home culture side, the readings report on the world the students know best. As Rose Marie Kinder points out (“A Piece for the Streets,” *Journal of Basic Writing*, 10 (1991): 67–72), popular media writing constitutes “the students’ material, their world” and thus, they feel free to interact with it, to “love it or rip it apart” (p. 71). In contrast to bleak reports about reading that students *don’t* do, research by Carol Severino (“Where the Cultures of Basic Writers and Academia Intersect: Cultivating the Common Ground,” *Journal of Basic Writing*, 11 (1992): 4–15) suggests that most students do read popular media. A good many of the readings in *Departures* are about young people in one way or another, though we haven’t slighted the older, nontraditional students either (for instance, see Part III, “Home Life In America”).

Our second special consideration in developing *Departures* was that we were determined to give plenty of flexibility for you as teachers to use it. Therefore, we have included nearly 100 readings, enough to allow you to use the book several semesters without boring yourself with repetition and enough to help you adjust for students who may repeat your class. We have also tried to allow you plenty of flexibility in how we have arranged the readings: All readings appear in thematic chapters, which can be used in their entirety or from which individual articles can be selected. Though there is an overall order to the chapters (the readings in the final chapter are longer and somewhat more complex than those in the first), we suggest that you skip around (like we do), using chapters or individual readings that suit your own interests and those of your students.

This same flexibility was in our minds as we put together discussion questions ("Questions for Thinking and Discussion"), which appear after each reading, and writing assignments ("Writing Projects"), which appear at the ends of each chapter. Quite frankly, we have included both of these somewhat reluctantly: We really don't want to imply that teachers *have* to use them. In particular, we hope that you will invent your own writing tasks designed with your own students' needs in mind. Please write to us and let us know about the kinds of writing assignments you have had success with to accompany *Departures* articles.

If you do choose to use our writing assignments, though, we think you will find plenty of flexibility to adjust to the needs of your course and to the levels of your students. For instance, we have included one assignment per chapter that asks students to discuss how the readings are related to their own experiences. Most assignments, however, are not about the self. Some ask for summaries of chapter readings; some require students to conduct interviews or informal surveys to challenge or affirm concepts in readings; some ask students to do library research for further reading on topics; some ask students to search for other evidence to support a thesis.

While we are proud of our work with *Departures*, we also realize that we are indebted to many people for the way it finally came together in theory and practice. For instance, a guiding spirit throughout our work on this book has been Mina Shaughnessy's special concern for her students' predicament: "they were . . . strangers in academia, unacquainted with the rules and rituals of college life, unprepared for the sorts of tasks their teachers were about to assign them" (*Errors and Expectations*, p. 3).

We also owe debts to theoretical influences as varied as Charles Bazerman, Richard Coe, Stephen Goldman, Stephen Krashen, and

Mike Rose. Moreover, articles by Rose Marie Kinder and by Carol Severino (both mentioned previously) have helped shape our notions of what we were doing in *Departures*.

Finally, we want to acknowledge the help of several other people. Special thanks to teachers who helped us field test earlier manuscripts of *Departures*: Stan Coppinger of Howard Payne University; and Sandra Beaty, Terrie Lewis, and Ruben Rodriguez, all of Tarleton State University. We also thank in particular two of our reviewers for helpful suggestions: Tom Dasher of Valdosta State College and Tahita Fulkerson of Tarrant County Community College Northwest. And, we are indebted to Alice Cushman for helping us get financial support for the early version of the book. Finally, we have also been helped immensely by those who worked with manuscript preparation and proofreading: Mary Etzel, Amy Neeb, Shirley Popken, Kristal Sappington, and Grace Ussery.

Randall Popken
Alice Newsome
Lanell Gonzales

Preface to Students

The first thing you might have asked yourself when you saw that this book was being used for your writing class this semester was, “Why is it called *Departures*”? We used this title for our book because three different meanings of the word *departures* refer to the role we hope this book will play in your development as a writer this term.

First, a *departure* is an act of “starting out” or “starting from.” In this sense, our book is about ways that other pieces of writing can be the starting points for your own writing. Writing in response to what you have read is commonly what you will do in other courses in your college career. Throughout your college career, in fact, your instructors will ask you to produce summaries, critiques, research papers, think pieces, analytical papers, reports, and essay exams of all sorts. In many of these cases, the writing will be a response to someone else’s writing.

We have assembled a book made up of readings for you to respond to by writing. The readings in *Departures* all deal with issues that are important to Americans: Part I gives some profiles of modern America, Part II is about education, and Part III is about home life. Each of these three larger parts of the book is made up of individual chapters on more specific topics such as stereotyping, the value of college, and the influence of television on children. All readings in a chapter are on the same topic, which we think allows you to build your knowledge about a topic in order to be able to write more confidently about it.

The term *departure* also means “setting out in a new direction.” For each of you, the decision to come to college has certainly set you out in a new direction. Stop for a minute to think about what this departure means: You are entering a very new place where the primary activities are learning and talking about learning. In this new place, writing is a crucial part of that process of learning. In many ways, then, we think of this book as a point of departure for the rest of your academic and professional career.

A *departure* can also be a “deviation or divergence, as from an established rule or procedure.” In this sense, we hope that this book will be a departure from what you might have thought a writing textbook must contain, especially if you have not gotten much out of writing textbooks in the past. *Departures* has no grammar exercises, no rules for writing, no workbook with blanks to fill in. Instead, the departure we offer you centers on reading; your writing instructor will make writing assignments and work with you on them. We think you will enjoy the readings in our book and that the readings will make your writing tasks very meaningful.

We hope you will be as serious and devoted to this book as we have been in assembling it and using it with our own students. We sincerely believe that *Departures* in your hands—and the very important guidance you receive from your writing teacher—will help you improve your writing in preparation for the rest of your college career.

Randall Popken
Alice Newsome
Lanell Gonzales

Departures

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1

Image

IN HIS BOOK *Future Shock*, Alvin Toffler speaks about how the modern era is a time of personal freedom for many people. Because of technology, people today are able to take on many different images, many different “selves.” For instance, a person might project the image of a business person at work but also take on the image of an artist, poet, or member of a musical group during his or her spare time. Toffler’s point is that we are free to take on many different images throughout our lives.

The image we project is made up of such things as how we act, how we look, and whom we associate with. This image, which we create either consciously or unconsciously, provides a way for people to interpret who we are and what we are.

The readings in this first chapter deal with personal images in a variety of ways. For instance, the first article reports on a study of female college students’ responses to the images created for them in women’s magazines. The next article shows how not only women are concerned about ways to create their own images. The third article examines how children develop a sense of image through the clothes they wear. The final three readings in the chapter are about reactions