

Real Writing

2nd Ed.

Walter H. Beale

Real Writing

Argumentation, Reflection, Information

Walter H. Beale

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To Sarah, Stella, and Louise

An Instructor's Manual is available and may be obtained through a local Scott, Foresman representative or by writing to English Editor, College Division, Scott, Foresman and Company, 1900 East Lake Avenue, Glenview, IL 60025

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Preface to the Second Edition

Classical rhetoric is a living tradition. *Real Writing* was conceived as an extension of that tradition to the world of modern writing. The second edition of *Real Writing* continues to tie rhetorical invention and the intelligent handling of subject matter to a realistic understanding of basic types, motives, and situations of writing. It is therefore focused on writing that is public and nonspecialized, writing directed at the common and immediate concerns of individuals and communities. Along with its basic order of chapters, the new edition retains the conceptual features of the original: the emphasis on writing as a public act rather than a private exercise, on motives and purposes rather than forms of discourse, on practical argumentation rather than formal logic, and on positive direction in the process of writing rather than prescriptions and lists of things to avoid. The body has changed (with some new pedagogical features, a more convenient trim size, and handsomer appointments all around), but the spirit is the same. I am extremely pleased that the book's own life will continue in the form of a second edition.

Sketchbook and Written Response Assignments

The second edition contains a number of new features inspired both by users' suggestions and by my own continued conviction that a writing course should be a writing workshop, offering daily (or almost daily) opportunities in the practice of writing. In addition to the more traditional essay assignments, each chapter now contains multiple examples of two new types of writing assignments: *Sketchbook Assignments* and *Written Response* assignments. While the virtue of essay assignments is that they call a full range of composing and rhetorical skills into play, their drawback is that no composition course can accommodate more than a relatively small number of them. But students, I believe, need many opportunities to write—to experiment with new or unfamiliar forms, to practice particular logical or rhetorical strategies, and to try out different styles and voices. Such opportunities are provided by the new types of assignments in *Real Writing*:

The *Sketchbook Assignments* are short writing exercises that isolate individual elements of the writing process, focusing on specific skills or tasks relevant to particular sorts of writing. The pieces of writing that they prompt are like artists' sketches: fragmentary and concentrated on specific, isolated tasks; experimental, but occasionally interesting and skillful enough to provide the basis for larger works.

Written Response assignments are attached to the reprinted essays at the end of each chapter; they provide prompts to critical reading and rhetorical analysis, opportunities for amplification or rebuttal, and practice in (and imitation of) the various rhetorical strategies used by these essays.

Case Assignments

Another special feature of this edition is the addition of six *Case Assignments* integrated into appropriate chapters. The case assignment is a proven and well-established method for narrowing the problem of invention, by providing a ready-made rhetorical situation. Each case introduces a particular problem or controversy, provides a package of information for students to analyze and use in their writing, and specifies a situation that calls for a rhetorical response. Because the cases in this book are designed in harmony with the larger program of “real writing,” they differ somewhat from those found in many composition texts. They are drawn out of actual public issues of policy, value, and interpretation, and they are more open-ended than most case assignments, offering possibilities for additional research and for different kinds of written responses.

Chapter 7: Documenting the Deliberative Essay

The one completely new chapter is Chapter 7: Documenting the Deliberative Essay, which replaces the “Research Report” section of the first edition. Not just another “term paper” section, this new chapter teaches skills that are integral to the purposes and strategies of deliberative writing. The chapter deals extensively with the *purposes of documentation* and with *documentation as a persuasive strategy*, as well as with the nuts and bolts of finding information and documenting an essay. (Documentary style is based upon the 1984 *MLA Handbook*.) This chapter also contains a documented deliberative essay by Greg Gunn, a geology major and amateur astronomer, whose efforts won him First Prize in UNC-Greensboro’s Freshman English Essay Contest in 1983.

Readings and Other Features

This new edition continues to offer a full repertoire of readings, including ten which appeared in the first edition, eight which are new to this edition, and nine student essays. I have retained those readings that worked best for users of the first edition. The new essays appear in every chapter except the first and include the modern classic, Martin Luther King, Jr.’s “Letter from a Birmingham Jail,” in Chapter 5.

Finally, I have welcomed the opportunity to clarify and amplify various points throughout the book and to improve the style and readability of the

whole. In this effort, and in larger matters also, I have received excellent guidance (and excellent prodding) from Constance Rajala, my editor at Scott, Foresman, and also from copyeditor Hope Rajala, who has been skillful and considerate in every way.

For many valuable suggestions leading to the second edition, I am grateful to Deborah Dawson of Washington State University; Judy Davidson of Texas A & M; Juliet Kincaid of Johnson County Community College; Bruce Nims of Winthrop College; Ruth Redel of Elizabethtown Community College; Joanna Roper of Southwest Oklahoma State University; and Whitney Vanderwerff of Elon College.

Also for many valuable suggestions, both stylistic and substantive, I especially want to thank the following colleagues who reviewed the revised manuscript of the second edition: Lisette Carpenter of McLennan Community College; Mary Ann Dazey of Mississippi State University; Judy Davidson of Texas A & M; Juliet Kincaid of Johnson County Community College; Michael Raymond of Stetson University; and Carol Singley of Brown University. All of these people have helped to make *Real Writing* a better book than I could have done on my own, and I am very grateful to them.

Walter H. Beale

To the Student

I need not tell you that writing is an important skill or dwell upon how central it will be to your success in college. I probably need not remind you that writing is a marketable skill—one that will serve you well in almost any profession. I would, however, like to discuss two reasons why writing is important and essential, especially to you, especially now.

First of all, writing is not merely a method of communicating; it is a method of knowing and of coming to know. This may seem like an outlandish idea, but it is widely testified to by people who write extensively. You begin with an idea, an insight, or a body of information. But in the process of working the idea or information into a coherent and convincing presentation, you produce new orderings and discover new relationships. There is a very real sense in which your understanding is not complete—it remains half-formed and untested—until you have communicated it in writing.

Second, writing is an important form of social participation and leadership. And because it is a special way of understanding *as well as* a way of communicating, no amount of technological innovation will alter that fact. The modern revolution in electronic communication has not diminished the importance of writing; it has increased it. There is more writing and publication going on right now than at any time in history.

Communities and organizations, like individuals, need good writing. They need it for communicating information, for solving problems, for sharing insights and experiences, for building consensus about what they love and value, and for increasing and refining their understanding of themselves. In learning to write well, you are becoming an educated person and cultivating a central human art. At the same time, you are learning to contribute something vital to the communities and organizations to which you belong.

This conviction about the dual importance of writing informs both the title and the method of this book. It asks you to do “real writing,” and it attempts to guide you in that task. It concentrates on three of the most prominent types of public, non-specialized writing: *Deliberative*, *Reflective/Exploratory*, and *Informative*.

These different types of writing involve different purposes, situations, and forms and strategies. Each, however, offers the challenge of finding as well as communicating insights. And in each type, the needs of individuals and communities converge.

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