

Keys ^{to} Successful Writing

UNLOCKING THE
WRITER WITHIN

"Writing is making sense of life."

—Nadine Gordimer

M A R I L Y N A N D E R S O N

Keys to Successful Writing



Unlocking the Writer Within

MARILYN ANDERSON

El Camino College



LONGMAN

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*True ease in writing comes from art, not chance,
As those move easiest who have learned to dance.*

—ALEXANDER POPE,
from *An Essay on Criticism*

This book is dedicated with my gratitude and love to those who have taught me to dance: El Camino College students, colleagues, and dean; editors at Longman; dear friends; and family—Guy, Alisa, Michael, Emily, and Austin, the dancing partner who continues to sweep me off my feet.

Preface for Instructors

After observing the students who entered my classroom, after experiencing frustration with texts that fail to address adequately these students' needs, and after discovering that many of my colleagues face similar challenges, I decided to write a text that would meet these complex needs. This new textbook, I decided, would:

- entice students to participate in the community of college readers and writers;
- familiarize students with the writing process, offering them plenty of practice in the skills and strategies necessary to build competency and confidence;
- empower students to communicate clearly in written and electronic modes, both on the job and in their civic and personal lives.

Keys to Successful Writing, I believe, will help meet all these diverse needs while using a friendly and assuring tone. In *Keys*, I address students not as individuals lacking in certain skills but as writers about to embark on an odyssey of self-discovery. *Keys* also provides flexibility and support to the instructor: lots of good student models and professional readings on a variety of thought-provoking topics, computer activities adaptable to the ever-changing technology on campus, and a rubric—the five *Keys*—allowing relevant and clear evaluation of student writings.

For the past several years, I have worked with many talented students, editors, colleagues, and reviewers in the creation of *Keys to Successful Writing: Unlocking the Writer Within*. Together, we have created a fresh new approach for developmental writers in the paragraph-to-essay level course, an approach that considers students' needs as well as the strengths. *Keys* unlocks the composing process for developmental students by offering practical, class-tested solutions to their problems. It also makes clear the connection between classroom assignments and workplace writing.

FEATURES

I wanted to write a text that was practical and pedagogically sound, yet innovative. I hope that instructors and students will appreciate the traditional organization of *Keys* and the support it lends to the following dynamic features:

A strong process-plus-skills orientation, in a 3-in-1 format

Keys describes the recursive process of essay writing, offering a smoothly integrated series of fill-in exercises that reinforce skills and encourage students to practice new skills and strategies as well as to reflect upon what they are reading. The 3-in-1 format offers writing instruction, a wide range of readings, and a concise handbook, all in one package.

An appreciation of the real-world goals of student writers

Today's students face many challenges and opportunities in their course work, their career planning, and their personal lives. *Keys* is deeply concerned with making the work of the writing classroom relevant to all that today's students do. Each chapter includes photographs and profiles of students who share their essays, journals, and goals to help make the link.

Toolkit of practical applications

Part Three of the text offers specific strategies for special writing situations, from timed classroom writing to resumes. The toolkit furthers this emphasis by giving students confidence in timed writing situations that they will encounter both in college and in their careers, and it also allows students to grasp the importance of on-the-spot writing skills in the real-world situations that they will continue to encounter. Because increasing numbers of college students work for at least a portion of their college careers, this toolkit includes strategies and guidelines for writing employment letters and resumes.

A distinctive “5 Keys” heuristic to ease learning and retention

The text offers a system for teaching writing (and becoming a writer) that is easily grasped through repetition and reinforcement. The following five KEYS are defined and consistently applied to the formal elements of the writing process:

PURPOSE: The writer's primary goal in writing.

FOCUS: The writer's choice of subject and the main point the writer makes about the subject.

MATERIAL: The writer's content, including details, facts, and supporting evidence.

STRUCTURE: The writer's organization or arrangement of material to support the main point clearly and completely.

STYLE: The writer's sentence structure, sentence variety, word choice, and placement of words within sentences to present a unique piece of writing.

This class-tested set of principles helps students become better readers as well as develop their writing skills. Reviewers and instructors who have class-

tested the text have responded enthusiastically to the structure and consistent application of the KEYS throughout the text, noting that the five KEYS lead to greater student writing success and ease in essay evaluation. Students affirm that the KEYS are easy to grasp and applicable to a variety of college and real-world writing situations. Whenever the five KEYS are listed in the text, they appear in all capital letters, again to ease learning through repetition and reinforcement.

A unique emphasis on using computers

“Using the Computer” activities in each chapter show students how the computer can enhance their writing process, help them do research, and find a job. These activities are specially screened, boxed features highlighted with a special icon. *Keys* offers computer activities that go beyond enhanced typing—I encourage students to join online communities, to research areas of personal and professional interest, to report back to the class on their findings, and ultimately to use the vast resources of the Web to achieve their goals. All activities use straightforward, nontechnical language, and many are designed to be fun as well as practical. In addition, the same invitation to visit the Longman English Pages Web site appears at the end of each chapter, highlighting Longman’s commitment to providing opportunities for *all* students to work online.

A wide variety of engaging writing assignments

The writing opportunities in *Keys* are geared to student sensibilities, using interesting contemporary content as the prompting for journal writing, collaboration, critical reading, and analysis. Within each chapter, numerous and varied assignments can be used to complete in-class writing and more complex or reflective prompts that could lead to longer essays. There are three kinds of assignments within each chapter, highlighted with a special “pen” icon for easy reference:

Options for Writing: Innovative, thoughtful, and absorbing prompts for writing compositions. These paragraph and multi-paragraph essay choices build on the chapter’s discussion of an aspect of the writing process or a specific pattern of development. Choices that are especially appropriate for paragraph-length responses are marked with a “¶” symbol.

Some writing options for each chapter ask students to respond to one of the student models or professional readings as a point of reference, some challenge students to consult an outside source or conduct an interview, and others suggest personal experience and/or the experiences of others in the class as material. All prompts have been classroom-tested. Many are collaborative.

Journal Writing: These prompts include advice on working with a journal as well as exercises for journal writing. Reflective and suggestive,

these prompts are casual enough to allow for a wide range of student response, yet close enough to chapter content to be useful as the starting point for essay drafts.

Responding to Writing: Students learn to become critical readers as they reflect upon and write in response to a wide range of texts, from the work of other students to the essays of professional writers. Many prompts can be used for either individual or collaborative work. In the “Responding” section of each chapter, students see the KEYS at work in the writings of others, and then they are asked to apply the strategies and principles in these models to their own drafts in progress or to the drafts of their peers.

Solid, provocative, and varied readings

Keys features student and professional models of writing on issues both contemporary and of enduring interest, ranging from pets, roommates, and car repair to career planning, AIDS awareness, and social justice. The wide range of selections includes full-length pieces and excerpts, from a variety of genres that includes essays, interviews, journalism, even poetry. Classic writers as well as new voices are represented, as well as a rich diversity of perspectives and experiences. A thematic table of contents (see pp. xxv–xxvii) allows students and instructors to find readings that explore similar themes.

Opportunities for critical thinking and collaboration

Critical thinking and reading are given extensive attention throughout *Keys*. Chapter 1, “Reading, Thinking, and Writing for College,” affirms the reading/writing connection that continues to be emphasized throughout the text. Students are introduced to six strategies for active reading—strategies such as previewing and annotating texts, for example, that will be stressed consistently throughout the text in examining readings, student models, or peer drafts.

Critical Thinking in Connecting Texts activities at the end of each chapter challenge students to synthesize reading from student and professional models. In this collaborative brainstorming activity, students are asked to make connections in themes, points of view, and subjects presented within each chapter and occasionally between different chapters. Critical thinking and collaborative activities are the goals here.

Collaborative work and peer editing also appear frequently in the writing options section as well as in several “Responding to Writing” sections with the inclusion of peer editing strategies and helpful peer editing worksheets.

ORGANIZATION

Recognizing the diversity of departmental and individual approaches to developmental writing, the structure of *Keys* allows for a variety of classroom, lab, and writing conference uses. Instructors can easily adapt chapters and chapter sections to course schedules, instructional emphases, and programs that vary from ten to eighteen weeks in length. In addition, instructors will appreciate the quick assessment of student in-text response and general comprehension the book offers.

- Part One focuses on the reading-writing connection, the parts of the essay, and the stages of the composing process.
- Part Two builds on this knowledge by introducing specific patterns of essay development and encouraging writers to explore these patterns in their reading and writing.
- Part Three is a toolkit of models and strategies for future academic and professional writing: portfolio preparation, timed in-class writing, introductory research, and resumes and cover letters.
- Part Four, the handbook, begins with an overview of basic grammar and usage and then focuses on helping students to pinpoint and solve habitual errors in grammar, usage, sentence boundaries, punctuation, mechanics, and format. Practice items throughout help students reinforce their skills.

Keys is easy to use and teach from. A **predictable organizational structure** increases familiarity from chapter to chapter. Each chapter's opening "Preview" concisely presents the strategies and content to be covered in the chapter. Following the "Characteristics" and "Guidelines" sections, each chapter's "Strategies" section applies the five KEYS to the particular structure or process under discussion. Chapters are activity-driven, making the book easy to use in the classroom, lab, or writing center. The student models early in each chapter provide a starting-off point to teach the writing process and build toward the writing assignments. A format that allows each chapter and section to stand alone enhances flexibility, and the great variety of reading and exercise options in each chapter provide instructors with multiple choices about how to adapt the text to their particular classroom needs. A glossary (pp. 469–477) further assists students and instructors in locating specific content and concepts for classroom discussion and individual study. Most important, this is a text that has been written *for* the student, in language that is refreshingly accessible, honest, engaging, and clear. *Keys* takes a friendly approach toward writing and academic work, emphasizing explanation and reassurance over prescriptive formulas.

DESIGN

A friendly, clear design establishes consistency within and among chapters of *Keys*, helping students and teachers locate specific content from chapter to chapter and reinforcing through visual cues important new concepts and skills.

Features and exercises that appear in each chapter are highlighted with special icons for easy reference:



Indicates writing opportunities within each chapter, including “Journal Writing,” “Options for Writing,” and “Responding to Writing” assignments.



“Key Questions” follow all student models, helping students read critically and recognize writing strategies. The icon also denotes the “Strategies for Writers” boxes, which remind students of how to put the KEYS to use in their own writing.



Helps you and your students locate “Using the Computer” activities and additional writing resources on our Website.



Shows you where to find “Reading and Additional Activities,” which provide still more opportunities for your students to practice their reading skills and discover ways in which writers put the KEYS to use.

SUPPLEMENTS

Many high-quality supplements are available to students and instructors using *Keys* in the classroom.

The Longman Teaching and Learning Package

Instructor’s Manual. The Instructor’s Manual provides numerous suggestions for using *Keys*, including how to structure and organize the course and how to approach each section of the text. To order the Instructor’s Manual, use ISBN 0-321-04755-9.

A series of other skills-based supplements are available for both instructors and students. All these supplements are either free or available at greatly reduced prices.

For Additional Reading and Reference

The Dictionary Deal. Two dictionaries can be shrinkwrapped with any Longman Basic Skills title at a nominal fee. *The New American Webster Handy College Dictionary* (0-451-18166-2) is a paperback reference text with more than 100,000 entries. *Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, tenth edition (0-87779-709-9), is a hardback reference with a citation file of more than 14.5 million examples of English words drawn from actual use.

Penguin Quality Paperback Titles. A series of Penguin paperbacks is available at a significant discount when shrinkwrapped with any Longman Basic Skills title. Some available titles are Toni Morrison's *Beloved* (0-452-26446-4), Julia Alvarez's *How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents* (0-452-26806-0), Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn* (0-451-52650-3), and plays by Shakespeare, Miller, and Albee. For more information, please contact your Addison Wesley Longman sales consultant.

80 Readings (Second Edition). This inexpensive volume contains 80 brief readings (1–3 pages each) on a variety of themes: writers on writing, nature, women and men, customs and habits, politics, rights and obligations, and coming of age. Also included is an alternate rhetorical table of contents. 0-321-01648-3.

100 Things to Write About. This 100-page book contains 100 individual assignments for writing on a variety of topics and in a wide range of formats, from expressive to analytical. Ask your Addison Wesley Longman sales representative for a sample copy. 0-673-98239-4.

Electronic and Online Offerings

The Longman English Pages Website. Both students and instructors can visit our free content-rich Website for additional reading selections and writing exercises. From the Longman English pages, visitors can conduct a simulated Web search, learn how to write a resume and cover letter, or try their hand at poetry writing. Stop by and visit us at (<http://longman.awl.com/englishpages>).

The Basic Skills Newsletter. Twice a month during the spring and fall, instructors who have subscribed receive a free copy of the Longman Basic Skills Newsletter in their e-mailbox. Written by experienced classroom instructors, the newsletter offers teaching tips, classroom activities, book reviews, and more. To subscribe, visit the Longman Basic Skills Website at (<http://longman.awl.com/basicskills>), or send an e-mail to BasicSkills@awl.com.

Longman Grammar Software. For computerized practice and tutorial, download Longman's free grammar software from our Website. Organized by topic, the Longman Grammar Package is the ideal complement to any basic writing text. Find the software at (<http://longman.awl.com/basicskills/grammar>).

The Writer's Workshop. The Writer's Workshop "pops up" over any commercial word processing program to provide writing prompts for students as they compose their papers. An online handbook provides instant reference. Available for a nominal fee shrinkwrapped with any text. IBM: 0-321-04756-7; Mac: 0-321-04757-5.

For Instructors

Competency Profile Test Bank (Second Edition). This series of 60 objective tests covers ten general areas of English competency, including fragments, comma splices and run-ons, pronouns, commas, and capitalization. Each test is available in remedial, standard, and advanced versions. Available as reproducible sheets or in computerized versions. Free to instructors. Paper version: 0-321-02224-6. Computerized IBM: 0-321-02633-0. Computerized Mac: 0-321-02632-2.

Diagnostic and Editing Tests (Second Edition). This collection of diagnostic tests helps instructors assess students' competence in standard written English for purpose of placement or to gauge progress. Available as reproducible sheets or in computerized versions, and free to instructors. Paper: 0-321-02222-X. Computerized IBM: 0-321-02629-2. Computerized Mac: 0-321-02628-4.

ESL Worksheets (Second Edition). These reproducible worksheets provide ESL students with extra practice in areas they find the most troublesome. A diagnostic test and post-test are provided, along with answer keys and suggested topics for writing. Free to adopters. 0-321-01955-5.

80 Practices. A collection of reproducible, ten-item exercises that provide additional practices for specific grammatical usage problems, such as comma splices, capitalization, and pronouns. Includes an answer key, and free to adopters. 0-673-53422-7.

CLAST Test Package (Fourth Edition). These two 40-item objective tests evaluate students' readiness for the CLAST exams. Strategies for teaching CLAST preparedness are included. Free with any Longman English title. Reproducible sheets: 0-321-01950-4. Computerized IBM version: 0-321-01982-2. Computerized Mac version: 0-321-01983-0.

TASP Test Package (Third Edition). These 12 practice pre-tests and post-tests assess the same reading and writing skills covered in the TASP examination. Free with any Longman English title. Reproducible sheets: 0-321-01959-8. Computerized IBM version: 0-321-01985-7. Computerized Mac version: 0-321-01984-9.

Teaching Online: Internet Research, Conversation, and Composition (Second Edition). Ideal for instructors who have never surfed the Net, this easy-to-follow guide offers basic definitions, numerous examples, and step-by-step information about finding and using Internet sources. Free to adopters. 0-321-01957-1.

Reading Critically: Texts, Charts, and Graphs. For instructors who would like to emphasize critical thinking in their courses, this brief book (65

pages) provides additional critical thinking material to supplement coverage in the text. Free to instructors. 0-673-97365-4.

Teaching Writing to the Non-Native Speaker. This booklet examines the issues that arise when non-native speakers enter the developmental classroom. Free to instructors, it includes profiles of international and permanent ESL students, factors influencing second-language acquisition, and tips on managing a multicultural classroom. 0-673-97452-9.

For Students

Researching Online (Second Edition). A perfect companion for a new age, this indispensable new supplement helps students navigate the Internet. Adapted from Teaching Online, the instructor's Internet guide, Researching Online speaks directly to students, giving them detailed step-by-step instructions for performing electronic searches. Perfect-bound, **free** when bundled with any Longman Basic Skills text: 0-321-02714-0. Spiral-bound also available at nominal price: 0-321-05117-3.

Using WordPerfect in Composition and Using Microsoft Word in Composition. These two brief guides assume no prior knowledge of WordPerfect or Word. Each guide begins with word processing basics and gradually leads into more sophisticated functions. Shrinkwrapped free with any Longman Basic Skills text. WordPerfect: 0-673-52448-5. Word: 0-673-52449-3.

Learning Together. This brief guide to the fundamentals of collaborative learning teaches students how to work effectively in groups, how to revise with peer response, and how to co-author a paper or report. Shrinkwrapped free with any Longman Basic Skills text. 0-673-46848-8.

A Guide for Peer Response (Second Edition). This guide offers students forms for peer critiques, including general guidelines and specific forms for different stages in the writing process. Also appropriate for freshman-level course. Free to adopters. 0-321-01948-2.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Marilyn Anderson
El Camino College

Preface for Students

“All good writing is swimming under water and holding your breath.”

—F. Scott Fitzgerald, author of *The Great Gatsby* and other novels

PERSONAL INVENTORY

If you were to answer truthfully, what would you say in response to the following set of questions:

1. Do you believe good writers are born, not made? _____
2. Do you enjoy personal writing? _____
3. Do you worry about your ability to succeed in a college writing class?

4. How long has it been since you've been in a classroom situation?

5. Was your last classroom writing experience positive, negative, or a little of both? (Explain briefly.)

6. What are two specific things you'd like to learn from this course?

HOW THIS TEXT CAN HELP YOU

No matter how you have answered these questions—regardless of your concerns, hopes, expectations, or fears upon beginning this course—rest assured that you can use *Keys to Successful Writing: Unlocking the Writer Within* to improve your skills and confidence. Just as metal keys are instruments for unlocking and opening doors, the “keys” presented in this text will offer you access into the realm of effective college, workplace, and everyday writing.