
The

NORTON

READER

E I G H T H E D I T I O N





The Norton Reader

An Anthology of Expository Prose

EIGHTH EDITION

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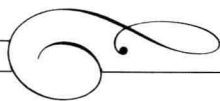
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Preface

Since much of what usually appears in our Preface has moved in this eighth edition to the section entitled “To Students: Reading and Writing with *The Norton Reader*,” these few pages will deal primarily with matters of history.

In the early sixties the seven original editors, all at the University of Michigan, all male (for such the English Department then predominantly was), almost all members of the Freshman English Committee, became dissatisfied with the crop of new readers available and thought that they might put together an improvement. (This is not to say that there had not earlier been excellent readers—by Keast, for example, or Locke, Gibson, and Arms, or Thompson, or Martin and Ohmann.)

Basically, they agreed, they would include works from the past as well as the present, foreign as well as native, long as well as short, light as well as serious, and in addition, those kinds of literature—journals, letters, characters, apothegms, parables—that are first cousins, in the family of the expository, to the essay and the article. They lacked, however, any scheme or program, any set of thematic or rhetorical headings by which to guide their selections. Excellence would be their pillar of smoke by day, of fire by night.

If that sounds presumptuous, as the editors soon discovered, it was, for about excellence, as Lord Chesterfield remarked to his wayward son (who tended to say “one man’s meat is another man’s poison”) “tastes differ.” The method of selection the editors agreed on was for each to make a certain number of nominations (say ten), to have these reviewed by a second editor, then by a third. More times than not, however, one or both of the reviewing editors disagreed with the nominator. Further, after the initial batch of nominations, each editor had to offer a second batch, this time to be reviewed by two editors who had had nothing to do with that editor’s earlier submissions. The point, of course, was to avoid “sweetheart” arrangements—X approving Y’s choices if Y approved X’s. The result of this process, which has continued through all subsequent editions, was three files. The first contained nominations

that had received the approval of both reviewers; the second those that both reviewers had rejected; and the third, those on which the reviewers had divided or about which both had registered uncertainty. The nominations that had achieved full approval were "in." Those with double-negative reviews were "out." Those in-between were reviewed by the General Editor, checked against approved essays to avoid substantial duplications, checked against the needs of the thematic groups that seemed to be forming, and then taken in or thrown out.

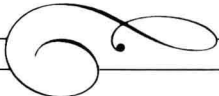
With each new edition voices from the field influenced editorial judgment. As Doctor Johnson said, "that book is good in vain that is not read," and when Freshman English instructors reported that they had not read or certainly had not assigned certain pieces, those pieces joined the formerly rejected. Further, voices from the field, from the first edition to this, have made valuable suggestions for additional selections, as have the good people at Norton, all of which have received careful consideration and many of which have been gratefully accepted.

So much for history. What is new in this edition? Briefly, the contributions of a new editor, Linda H. Peterson, director of Yale's Bass Writing Program; Joan Hartman's opening essay, "To Students: Reading and Writing with *The Norton Reader*," which is lean and clear in style and eminently sane; a timely new section, "Nature and the Environment" including essays by such gifted writers as Aldo Leopold, Gretel Ehrlich, and Edward Abbey; a yet fuller selection of women, minority, and Canadian voices; a broader offering of multiple selections by the same authors; and, belatedly but usefully, new opening source notes putting individual essays in a context expanded upon in the appendix of author biographies.

For many contributions and much support we thank our users, and these especially: Maureen G. Andrews, Northern Michigan University; Andrew J. Angyal, Elon College; Joan Baum, City University of New York-York College; Samuel I. Bellman, California State Polytechnic University-Pomona; Gail Berkeley, Reed College; Louise C. Berry, University of Tennessee; Blair F. Bigelow, Suffolk University; Edwin Block, Marquette University; W. Dale Brown, Calvin College; Ingrid Brunner, Lehigh County Community College; Donna M. Campbell, State University of New York at Buffalo; Roger D. Carlstrom, Yukima Valley Community College; S. L. Chalgian, Macomb Community College; Paul Cohen, Southwest Texas State University; Marianne Cooley, University of Houston; Fred D. Crawford, Central Michigan University; E. T. A. Davidson, State University of New York at Oneonta; Naomi Diamond, Ryerson Polytechnic Institute; Louise Dibble, Suffolk Community College; Wilfred O. Dietrich, Blinn College; Mary Alice Dillman, Ohio Wesleyan University; Ann Elsdon, Dawson College; Kristina Faber, Shippensburg University of Pennsylvania; Susan Fellows, Palo-

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—Arthur M. Eastman



To Students: Reading and Writing with *The Norton Reader*

This is the eighth edition of *The Norton Reader*; its first edition goes back to 1965. The editors have put together a selection of essays on a range of subjects, some familiar, others more specialized. You'll find the first kind in sections like "Personal Report," "People, Places," and "Signs of the Times," the second in sections like "Science," "Literature and the Arts," and "Philosophy and Religion." Some of these sections go back to the first edition: "Personal Report" opened the first as it still does the eighth. Others have come and gone: in this edition, for example, we've dropped a section called "Mind"—transferring some of its essays to "Human Nature—and added a section called "Nature and the Environment." Some essays have appeared in all eight editions of *The Norton Reader*: E. B. White's "Once More to the Lake," for example, and Jonathan Swift's "A Modest Proposal." Others—about one-third—are new to this edition. You'll find some of the essays long, some short; some formal, some informal; some calculatedly challenging, some simpler.

The editors—now nine of us—search widely in order to include a range of material and a range of authors. Although most of the essays are contemporary, some are older; although most of them are written in English, a few are translated from other languages. You'll hear in them male and female voices; American, British, and Canadian voices; African-American, Asian-American, American Indian, and Spanish-American voices. What the essays have in common is excellence: at least three editors, without actually defining good writing to ourselves or for