

Writing With a Purp

McCrimmon

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Writing With a Purpose

James M. McCrimmon

Eighth Edition

by Joseph F. Trimmer Nancy I. Sommers

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Foreword

by James M. McCrimmon

The Eighth Edition of *Writing With a Purpose*, prepared by Joseph F. Trimmer and Nancy I. Sommers, is the most thorough-going revision the book has ever received. While the basic theme of purpose and the general organization of earlier editions have been retained, nine of the fourteen chapters of the Seventh Edition have been rewritten, expanded, or modified to conform to changing emphases in the teaching of freshman composition. The result, in my judgment, is a book that gives teachers and students everything of value that they had in previous editions and adds much that these editions did not provide.

The most significant changes are the expanded treatments of the writing process and of invention. Earlier editions tended to view the writing process as a linear progression — first prewriting, then writing, then rewriting — and in some editions each of these stages became a major unit of the book. However convenient this division may have been as a pedagogical device, it was certainly an oversimplification of how writers go about the process of writing. The Eighth Edition corrects this oversimplification by use of the concept of thinking-in-writing, a concept that fuses the linear stages into a cumulative progression in which writing and rewriting become means of invention: writers clarify their sense of purpose by reconsidering and revising what they have written. They do not think *and* write; they think *as* they write. Or — to be more accurate — they think before, during, and after the writing. This change of emphasis requires two organizational changes: first, *prewriting* becomes a misleading term and is dropped as a major unit; second, revision is emphasized as a necessary part of the process by devoting a whole chapter to it early in the book. The final result of these revisions is a description of the composing process that is both realistic and consistent with the belief that writing is a way of knowing.

The treatment of invention is both more comprehensive and more specific than in previous editions. It is at its best in Chapter 2, where Trimmer and Sommers present eight different means of acquiring information about a subject. These different means of invention merge into a continuing exploration, in which brainstorming, freewriting, journal keeping, scouting, mapping, speculating, interviewing, and reading provide investigative routes that lead to the same goal — a fuller understanding of the subject, an understanding that is made vivid by the effective use of the best student “case histories” I have seen in a freshman text.

Preface

Writing With a Purpose has always been distinguished by its emphasis on the role of purpose in the writing process, its comprehensive coverage of the materials and problems basic to introductory writing courses, and its effective use of examples and exercises to illustrate how writers make decisions that produce successful writing. Although the revisions embodied in the Eighth Edition retain and reinforce these traditional features of the text, they also introduce and incorporate the best of contemporary theory and practice in the teaching of writing. The result is a blend of familiar and new material invigorated by fresh approaches and examples and enlivened by student writing that moves through the various stages of the writing process.

Part 1, “The Writing Process,” is completely new and covers all aspects of composing from planning through revising. Chapter 1, which provides an overview of this process, details the variety of approaches employed by individual writers to complete writing tasks and discusses those three activities common to every writing situation: selecting your subject, analyzing your audience, and determining your purpose. The third element, purpose, receives an expanded definition that is carefully reinforced throughout the text as the principal touchstone by which writers measure their progress through the writing process.

The remainder of Part 1 (Chapters 2, 3, and 4) takes up the three stages in the writing process — planning, drafting, and revising. Chapter 2 offers multiple planning strategies that illustrate how students can generate and evaluate their thinking-in-writing. Chapter 3 presents methods to arrange the material discovered during planning and provides instruction on how to formulate a preliminary hypothesis to guide the creation of a discovery draft. Chapter 4 defines the nature of the revising process, demonstrates methods for revising an essay, and then provides an extended case study of revising from discovery draft to final draft. Indeed, all the chapters in Part 1 are unified by recurring student writings-in-progress that encompass a full range of writing problems and lead to numerous exercises and writing assignments.

Part 2, “The Expression of Ideas,” has been expanded and enriched by new examples and exercises. In particular, Chapter 5 has been completely rewritten to present all the methods of development from narration and description through the various forms of exposition. (Argument, because of its importance, continues to receive extended treatment in Chapter 10.) Each method is illustrated by carefully annotated selections from traditional writers such as George Orwell and W. H. Auden and more contemporary writers such as Ellen Goodman and Patricia Hampl. Chapters 6, 7, and 8 present familiar information on paragraphs, sentences, and words highlighted by new examples and exercises. Each of these chapters concludes with a special section on revision. Chapter 9, “Tone and Style,” has been expanded to culminate in a summary analysis of revision for final style. Chapter 10, “Persuasion,” discusses the thinking and writing strategies with which writers endeavor to change their readers’ views.

Part 3, “Special Assignments,” retains the valuable chapters on the essay examination and the critical essay (writing about literature) but presents completely new chapters on planning and writing the research paper (Chapters 13 and 14) and business writing (Chapter 15). These new chapters continue to focus on purpose as a crucial element in the writing process, but they also provide extensive analysis and illustration of the many steps embedded in the process of each special assignment.

For example, Chapter 13, “Planning the Research Paper,” demonstrates how to select a subject for research; how to locate, assess, and analyze sources; and how to use current research tools, including the computer search, to help locate information. Chapter 14, “Writing the Research Paper,” presents the methods by which information produced by other researchers can be incorporated into a student’s own research paper. Special attention is given to the purpose and procedures of quoting, summarizing, and paraphrasing. The whole range of planning and writing activities required to produce a successful research paper is illustrated by one student’s progress through the process. His paper, “Preparing for the Information Age: An Analysis of AT&T Advertising,” which concludes the chapter, is fully annotated so that readers can assess the decisions made during the writing process and the methods used to embody those decisions in an appropriate format.

Although Chapter 15 provides information on the style and format of business writing, it also adapts the rhetorical principles of subject, audience, and purpose to such writing. Again, one student moves through the steps of planning, drafting, and revising as she writes various kinds of letters, memos, and reports.

New to this edition is *Practice For a Purpose*, by Muriel Harris of Purdue University. It offers a wealth of inventive activities in all phases of the writing process. The instructor’s manual for the text, *Teaching With a Purpose*, by Doug Hunt of the University of Missouri at Columbia, features an introductory essay for new teachers, comments on all aspects of the Eighth Edition, and answers to the exercises.

It is a pleasure to acknowledge those who helped shape this edition of *Writing With a Purpose*.

For his counsel throughout the planning and writing of the Eighth Edition, thanks to James McCrimmon.

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J.F.T. N.I.S.

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Writing With a Purpose

Part 1

The Writing Process

