MOSAICS

FOCUSING ON PARAGRAPHS IN CONTEXT

FLACHMANN
MAHER ▪ CAMPBELL
JOHNSON ▪ MAGEE

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PREFACE

Students everywhere must learn to respond to the varying intellectual demands made on them throughout the college curriculum so that they have the best possible chance of succeeding in higher education. One extremely important part of this process is being able to analyze ideas and think critically about issues in many different subject areas. ***Mosaics: Focusing on Paragraphs in Context*** is the second in a series of three books that teaches the basic skills so necessary to all good academic writing. By focusing on eight primary purposes for writing in each book, this series illustrates how the companion skills of reading and writing are parts of a larger process that moves back and forth through the tasks of prereading/reading, prewriting/writing, and revising/editing. In other words, the ***Mosaics*** series shows how these tasks are integrated at every stage of the writing process.

ASSUMPTIONS

This text is based on the following fundamental assumptions:

1. Thinking, reading, and writing are intricately related.
2. Students learn best from discovery and experimentation rather than from instruction and abstract discussion.
3. Students must be able to transfer their writing skills to all their college courses.
4. Students profit immeasurably from studying models of both professional and student writing.
5. Students perform better in college when they learn to think critically and analytically.
6. Students learn both individually and collaboratively.

HOW THIS BOOK WORKS

This book begins with a general introduction to the writing process (Chapter 1) outlining the scope and sequence of the volume. The eight chapters that follow are each divided into three carefully integrated sections:

Reading and Writing for a Reason

Tips for Revising

Tips for Editing

Reading and Writing for a Reason. Each chapter focuses on one of the eight primary purposes for writing: recalling, observing, explaining, investigating, restating, analyzing, persuading, and problem solving. The purpose is explained and then featured in a professional essay and a student essay before the readers are asked to compose an essay of their own.

- *Learning from Published Writers* focuses on a provocative professional essay with a controlled reading level in order to introduce students to a specific purpose for writing. Each essay was chosen for its high interest and moderate readability level and serves as a springboard in form and content for the rest of the chapter.
- *Learning from Your Peers* walks students through the writing process using an actual student essay. Your students witness the development of a student essay that moves through the general recursive tasks of thinking, planning, developing, organizing, drafting, revising, and editing. The revised draft is printed in each chapter with the student changes highlighted.
- *Writing Your Own Essay* asks students to compose their own essays focusing on the purpose they have just studied. Following a brief review of the highlights of the chapter and the composing process, students are given four writing topics to choose from. After they draft, revise, and edit their essays, students are then asked some specific questions that require them to pause and reflect on their own composing process before they start another chapter.

Tips for Revising and Tips for Editing. The second and third sections of each chapter, Tips for Revising and Tips for Editing, can be taught by themselves or in conjunction with the first section. The revising sections focus on effective paragraphs in the context of essays; they progress from fairly simple to more complex revision strategies. The editing sections then serve as brief but thorough reference guides to grammar and usage; they move from the most basic usage and syntactic problems to more sophisticated writing conventions. The strategies in these sections are integrated into the first part of each chapter. In addition, the Tips for Revising and Tips for Editing include instruction and focused exercises (on both the sentence and paragraph levels) that are drawn from the professional and student essays featured in the chapter. Each Tips section begins with a checklist summarizing the tasks to be covered and ends with collaborative work for individual, small group, or entire class projects.

The specific skills taught in the three main sections of this second book in the ***Mosaics*** series are listed here so that you can see in abbreviated form how this particular book works:

Chapter	Reading and Writing	Tips for Revising	Tips for Editing
1	Introduction		
2	Recalling	Paragraphs	Words/Phrases/Clauses

Chapter	Reading and Writing	Tips for Revising	Tips for Editing
3	Observing	Topic Sentences	Sentence Structure
4	Explaining	Focused Paragraphs	Fragments/Run-ons
5	Investigating	Paragraph Development	Agreement
6	Restating	Paragraph Organization	Verbs/Nouns/Modifiers
7	Analyzing	Unified Paragraphs	Punctuation/Mechanics
8	Persuading	Titles/Introductions	Diction/Spelling
9	Problem Solving	Supporting/Concluding Paragraphs	Successful Sentences

UNIQUE FEATURES

Several unique and exciting features separate this book from other basic writing texts:

1. It moves students systematically from personal to academic writing.
2. It gives student writing the same attention as professional writing.
3. It illustrates all aspects of the writing process.
4. It integrates reading and writing throughout the text.
5. It teaches revising and editing through the student essays in each chapter.
6. It features culturally diverse reading selections that are of high interest to students.

THE MOSAICS SERIES

All three books in the ***Mosaics*** series ***(Focusing on Sentences in Context, Focusing on Paragraphs in Context,*** and ***Focusing on Essays)*** introduce the writing process as a unified whole and ask students to begin writing full essays in the very first chapter. The Tips for Revising sections, however, change the emphasis of each book: The first book highlights sentence structure, the second book paragraph development, and the third the composition of essays. The books also differ in the length and level of their reading selections, the complexity of their writing assignments, the degree of difficulty of their revising and editing strategies, and the length and level of their student writing samples. Each volume moves from personal to more academic writing in various disciplines throughout the curriculum.

The books are fully integrated in two significant ways: (1) The revising and editing strategies for each chapter are integrated into the demonstration of the writing process in the first part of each chapter, and, in turn, (2) the Tips for Revising and Tips for Editing draw examples and exercises from the professional and student essays in the first section of each chapter. This constant cross-reference and repetition of ideas and skills in different contexts throughout each chapter will help students grasp the basic procedures and potential power of the entire writing process.

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Ultimately, each book in the ***Mosaics*** series portrays writing as a way of thinking and processing information. One by one, these books encourage students to discover how the "mosaics" of their own writing process work together to form a coherent whole. By demonstrating the interrelationship among thinking, reading, and writing on progressively more difficult levels, these books promise to help prepare your students for success in college throughout the curriculum.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We want to acknowledge the support, encouragement, and sound advice of several people who have helped us through the development of the ***Mosaics*** series. First, Prentice Hall has provided guidance and inspiration for this project through the wisdom of Maggie Barbieri, Senior Editor of Developmental English; the insights of Vicki Nelson, Development Editor; the diligence and clairvoyance of Maureen Richardson, Project Manager; the hard work and patience of Fred Courtright, Permissions Editor; and the common sense and organization of Joan Polk, Administrative Assistant for Developmental English. Also, this book would not be a reality without the insightful persistence of Phil Miller, President of the Humanities Division at Prentice Hall.

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CHAPTER ONE

The Writing Process

What student's mind—what writer's mind—has not begun to write without knowing really where it will go, only to learn at the end where it meant to start?

—Victor Kantor Burg

The simple act of using the written word to communicate makes a writer. Whether we use writing to list what we need when we shop, to send a message to a friend, to fulfill an assignment in school, or to earn a living, we are all part of a community of writers.

Any piece of writing more formal than a grocery list, however, is usually the result of a sequence of activities that seems on the surface to have nothing directly to do with the act of writing itself. This sequence of activities is called **the writing process,** and learning to follow this process to write essays is what this book is all about.

GETTING STARTED

To begin with, you should be aware of the many choices involved in the writing process. Though all writers are different, some general principles apply to everyone—students and professional writers alike. Before you can begin the process of composing an essay, you need to set aside a time and place for your writing, gather supplies, and establish a routine.

A Time and Place to Write

In her famous *A Room of One's Own,* Virginia Woolf argues that all writers have a basic need for space, privacy, and time. You need to set up your own place that suits your needs as a writer, and it should be a place where you are not distracted or interrupted. You should also set aside a special time for your writing tasks and plan

to do nothing else in that time period. The dog's bath will wait until tomorrow; the kitchen appliances don't have to be polished today; drawers can be cleaned and organized some other time; the dirt on the car won't turn to concrete overnight. (These are all some of the activities that writers confess they have done to put off the inevitable beginning.)

Even if you are lucky enough to have a private study area, you may find that you still need to make some adjustments. You may decide to unplug your phone during the time you spend on your composition assignments. Or you may discover that tuning your radio to an all-night jazz station helps you shut out noises from other parts of the house but doesn't distract you in the way talk shows and rock music do. (One well-known biographer owns a "white noise" machine that he cannot write without.) The first general principle for all writers is logical: *Find a place that is comfortable where distractions can be kept to a minimum.*

Writing Equipment and Supplies

Some writers use a legal pad and a pencil to get started on a writing task; some use typewriters or word processors. Some people work best at a desk in a straight chair, while others relax in a big armchair or on a bed. Ernest Hemingway and Virginia Woolf both wrote standing at a big desk, but Woolf used pen and ink for her early drafts, whereas Hemingway worked on a typewriter. The biographer with the white noise machine types on the battered portable typewriter that H. L. Mencken, a famous journalist of the 1920s, used to write his reports and essays. If you find you are most comfortable with your computer, you may want to use it even for your prewriting and early drafts. The next general principle remains the same for all writers and for all writing tasks: *Gather your supplies before you begin work.* Who knows what great idea might escape while you search for a pen that writes, scour the house for paper, or try to find a formatted disk?

Journal Keeping

The word *journal* means "a place for daily writing." The southern novelist Frances Newman kept a purple leather notebook with her at all times. (It had to be purple, and it had to be real leather.) In this little notebook she recorded ideas, snatches of conversation, dreams, and descriptions of people, places, or objects that caught her attention. According to Newman, her last novel developed entirely from a brief description she jotted down of the figure of a young man in Michelangelo's mural on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel.

Even though most people aren't as particular as Newman about the type of notebook they write in, journal keeping is a very popular activity. For your life as a writer, you will find a personal journal to be an invaluable tool. Now, with the advent of notebook-sized computers, your journal can even be electronic. Just be sure to back up computer entries fairly often so you don't run the risk of losing everything in a power failure or through some other unforeseen problem. Also, you may need to print hard copies to take with you to class.

A good way to establish the habit of journal writing is to use your journal for answering the questions that accompany the readings in this text. You can also jot down in your journal ideas and plans for essays as they occur to you. In addition, you can do all your prewriting activities in your journal. It is much easier to keep up with a notebook than to keep track of assorted scraps of paper. You might want to buy a loose-leaf binder or a notebook divided into several sections so that different types of entries can have their own place.

Keeping a section of your journal private is also a good idea. Sometimes, when you think on paper or let your imagination loose, you don't want to share the results—yet these notes can be very important in finding a subject to write about or developing a topic.

Now that you've chosen your time and place for writing, your writing tools, and your journal, you're ready to embark on your own writing process. In the course of this journey, you'll discover your own preferences and routines as you begin to recognize yourself as a writer.

PREWRITING

Many students are surprised by the fact that a number of vital steps come during the writing process before the act of putting words down on paper. When we speak of **prewriting,** we mean those activities that help us explore a subject, generate ideas about it, settle on a specific topic, establish a purpose, and analyze the audience for an essay. Your reading assignment and journal entries are a first step in this direction. Many writers use one or more of the following activities as an early step to stimulate their thinking in their writing process. You may find that one suits your writing process better than others, or a combination of two or more may work best for you.

Thinking

Thinking is your initial stage of exploration. It's a time to let your mind run free over the material you have to work with. Here are some activities that promise to stimulate your best thoughts:

- ***Rereading*** Sometimes a good way to jump-start your thinking and writing process is to reread the professional essay in each chapter, along with your notes, your underlining, and your journal entries. Together these might give you new insights into your topic.
- ***Listing*** Many writers find it helpful to jot down a list of ideas about possible essay topics or ideas for expanding a chosen topic. (See p. 73 for an example.)
- ***Freewriting*** Writing freely about anything that comes to your mind is the way to *freewrite*. The act of writing itself usually makes writers think of other ideas. (See pp. 17–18 for an example.)

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