A Write Shop Crafting

Bob Brannan



Crafting Paragraphs, Building Essays

Bob Brannan

Johnson County Community College Overland Park, Kansas



McGraw-Hill Higher Education

A Division of The McGraw-Hill Companies

A WRITER'S WORKSHOP: CRAFTING PARAGRAPHS, BUILDING ESSAYS Published by McGraw-Hill, an imprint of The McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc. 1221 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY, 10020. Copyright © 2003 by The McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or distributed in any form or by any means, or stored in a database or retrieval system, without the prior written consent of The McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc., including, but not limited to, in any network or other electronic storage or transmission, or broadcast for distance learning.

Some ancillaries, including electronic and print components, may not be available to customers outside the United States.

This book is printed on acid-free paper.

4 5 6 7 8 9 0 QPD/QPD 0 9 8 7 6 5 4

ISBN 0-07-239329-7 (student edition) ISBN 0-07-252267-4 (annotated instructor's edition)

President of McGraw-Hill Humanities/Social Sciences: Steve Debow

Executive editor: Sarah Touborg

Senior developmental editor: Alexis Walker Senior marketing manager: David Patterson

Project manager: Ruth Smith

Production supervisor: Rose Hepburn Senior designer: Jennifer McQueen

Associate supplement producer: Vicki Laird
Producer, Media technology: Todd Vaccaro
Photo research coordinator: Jeremy Cheshareck

Photo researcher: Amy Bethea
Cover illustration: Paul Turnbaugh

Typeface: 10/12 Sabon

Compositor: Electronic Publishing Services, Inc., TN

Printer: Quebecor World Dubuque Inc.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Brannan, Bob.

A writer's workshop: crafting paragraphs, building essays / Bob Brannan.— 1st ed.

p. cm.

Includes index.

ISBN 0-07-239329-7 (student ed. : alk. paper) — ISBN 0-07-252267-4 (alk. paper)

1. English language—Paragraphs—Problems, exercises, etc. 2. English

language—Rhetoric—Problems, exercises, etc. 3. English language—Grammar—Problems, exercises, etc. 4. Report writing—Problems, exercises, etc. I. Title.

PE1439 .B69 2002

808'.042-dc21

Praise for A Writer's Workshop, 1E by Bob Brannan

"I must say that Brannan did a fabulous job putting together a textbook that covers every topic essential for developmental courses. CONGRATULATIONS!"
—Joanna A. Benavides Laredo Community College
"Brannan's book is informative, illuminating, and the most logical resource for the new millennium I would adopt it and encourage my fellow colleagues to do the same. I believe this book will be an unequalled resource for building writing skills." —Marilyn Garrett Texas Southern University
"In the design of every chapter one sees the work of an experienced, gifted teacher of composition No text that I know of can match the depth of coverage that this one offers. I would describe this text to my colleagues as an outstanding, comprehensive instrument for teaching developmental students."
—Huey Guagliardo Lousiana State University at Eunice
"The writing samples are really pretty wonderful and very effective. They far exceed the value of the writing samples in my own text and I would like to use them in my class next semester."
—Rebecca Busch Adams Naugatuck Valley Community Technical College
"I would encourage my department to adopt Brannan's text because he explains and models the writing process very well and offers hands-on instruction in all areas, not just the areas he thinks need the most attention."
—Nita Wood Tidewater Community College
"Brannan does an outstanding job of showing how to turn the paragraph into an essay." —Jeannette Palmer Motlow State Community College
"The revision coverage is excellent."
—Susan Brant College of the Canyons
"Inclusion of prewriting, drafting, revising, and editing steps in the writing process and accompanying activities and examples is a real strength and has a direct appeal to me as a teacher I would assign each chapter a grade of 'A' because the chapters meet

"This is the most thorough introduction to paragraph writing I have ever seen. There are plenty of examples and assignments. The attention to audience, along with sample paragraphs and activities is really nice to see. . . I find the use of previous paragraphs for development into essays remarkably effective. . . . The emphasis on revision that

my course objectives and teaching style."

this text appears to offer is long overdue."

—Tracy Peyton Pensacola Junior College

St. Petersburg Junior College

-Karen Sidwell

"The examples and exercises meet the students where they are, but instead of leaving them there, they lead students to the skill level needed for college writing. I also like the emphasis on meaning, especially in the comparison chapter, the diversity that does not call attention to itself, and the range of assignments that are varied and interesting."

—Maria A. Garcia San Antonio College

"Brannan is very, very good at explaining the writing assignment."

—Marcia B. Littenberg State University of New York—Farmingdale

"The author's use of a student paragraph from the appropriate chapter in the paragraph unit and its development into an essay is one of the outstanding features of this text-book. This is such a good technique!"

—Sandra Barnhill South Plains College

"The author understands student concerns. The exercises and prompts are very well done. The author knows how to motivate students and the importance of clarity and organization when teaching at this level. . . . This text is excellent."

—Laura Kasischke Washtenaw Community College

"The chapter on Taking Essay Exams is innovative and exciting."

—Joyce L. Maher Eastern Shore Community College

Copyright @ 2003 The McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc. All rights reserved.

Bob Brannan

Bob Brannan is a professor at Johnson County Community College in Overland Park, Kansas, where he has taught composition for the past ten years. He received his M.A. in composition/rhetoric from Iowa State University and began his teaching career as a "freeway flyer," shuttling between community colleges and carrying his office in a bag. Over the years he has taught a number of writing classes—including developmental, first- and second-semester composition, business and technical, advanced composition, and honors seminars—but he focuses much of his attention on the pre-college-level writer. A Writer's Workshop is his first composition textbook.

When not working in a writing classroom, Bob spends much of his time with his family, frequently attending his daughter's tea parties, where his voice imitations are in great demand, and climbing trees with her in his backyard.

A Writer's Workshop is a text for developing writers that begins with three basic assumptions: Students learn to write best by writing, they need to revise their work significantly, and they deserve comprehensive instruction on why and how to revise to express themselves effectively. To this end, I have tried to create a text that provides many opportunities for students at all levels—from the least- to best-prepared—to write often within a rhetorical context and to critically evaluate their work.

You will probably notice as you work through A Writer's Workshop that it is quite assignment centered. In fact, no other pre-college-level composition text offers as much process instruction and support to students for developing their paragraphs and essays—almost three-fourths of the book. While many composition texts claim to thoroughly explore an assignment with students, they devote only a few pages to this instruction, preferring instead to focus on grammar, spelling, and punctuation. A Writer's Workshop has a thoroughly developed handbook section in Unit Five, well supported by Unit Four; however, neither of these units was developed at the expense of the critical process instruction in the paragraph and essay units.

A well-developed rhetorical apparatus is vital if a book is to be a valuable tool for both teachers and students. As composition instructors we have all found ourselves working up instructional material to supplement the textbooks that do a good job of outlining a writing project, but then fall short on the explanation, examples, writing models, and activities students really need to complete—or in some cases even to start—an assignment. A Writer's Workshop devotes most of its focus to answering questions students regularly ask about how to compose a specific paragraph or essay: "What do you mean by 'dominant impression'?" "How do you build toward a climax?" "How can I keep my examples from being underdeveloped?" From the chapter introductions, into the practical skills sections, on to the engaging and substantive student models, through the step-by-step process explanations, ending with the Annotated Student Models, A Writer's Workshop keeps the students who are struggling to improve a specific assignment in focus at all times.

Of course, no textbook can replace a talented and dedicated teacher, who in a single class session is apt to casually offer students more practical advice for solving their own immediate writing problems than a book manages in many pages. However, students *can* take the book home with them, so the clearer and more detailed the instruction, the better able students are to help themselves outside the classroom. My goal for *A Writer's Workshop* has been to design a composition text that can be of real help to students in the absence of their instructors and that can free teachers from a good part of their classroom drudgery. If we can spend less time tracking down models, creating heuristics, detailing checklists, and concocting editing practices, we can spend more time with our students' own writing—the true focus of a composition course.

ORGANIZATION OF THE BOOK

The book is divided into six units:

Unit One: Getting Our Feet Wet

Unit Two: Working with the Paragraph

Unit Three: Working with the Essay

Unit Four: Polishing Style

Unit Five: Practicing Sentence Sense

Unit Six: Additional Readings

UNIT ONE covers the writing and reading process.

- Chapter 1 gives students many opportunities to practice essential writing strategies like prewriting and organizing and ends with several assignment options that instructors might use to assess student skill levels. Chapter 1 is useful the entire semester as students move from one part of the writing process to another.
- Chapter 2 helps students who have difficulty effectively reading. This chapter is a logical extension of Chapter 1 and makes the reading/writing connection clear, framing the reading process in terms like locating thesis and topic sentences, focusing on primary examples, and working with the writer to actively understand a point. Activities help students practice reading/writing suggestions and are linked to Chapter 3 so that instructors can quickly move students into the assignment chapters of *A Writer's Workshop*.

UNIT TWO introduces the paragraph.

- Chapter 3 offers a comprehensive treatment of paragraph structure and development.
- Chapter 4 offers in-depth revision suggestions for rough, developing, and final *paragraph* drafts, explaining important distinctions in descriptive, narrative, and expository writing. As they revise drafts, students will appreciate being able to consistently refer to one chapter that gives them specific, well-illustrated suggestions for improving their work.
- Chapters 5 to 11 cover seven patterns of development (definition and argument treated in Unit Three), taking students through all phases of the writing process.

UNIT THREE moves students into the essay.

- Chapter 12 focuses on essay form and development, with special attention devoted to introductions and conclusions.
- Chapter 13 offers thoroughly illustrated advice for revising rough, second, and final *essay* drafts, and includes useful editing practice.
- Chapter 14 helps students either expand a former paragraph assignment or begin an essay focusing on one of the patterns of development. The three chapters that follow, Chapters 15, 16, and 17—definition, persuasion, and essay exam skills—stress combining the patterns of development that students have worked with in Unit Two.

UNIT FOUR helps students with many elements of style.

- Chapter 18, Creating Sentence Variety, works toward increasing students' syntactic fluency, using extensive sentence-combining exercises that also reinforce correct punctuation.
- Chapter 19 helps students learn to control their tone, select language carefully, and eliminate clutter.

UNIT FIVE works on common problems developmental writers have with grammar, spelling, and punctuation, but does so without intimidating students, through the framework of a Writer's Basic Sentence Grammar. The operating principle in this unit is that less is more. Using a minimum of grammar and punctuation rules, students can learn to punctuate effectively, express themselves clearly, and achieve a degree of syntactic fluency. A number of basic stylistic options are also demonstrated, and there is a substantial chapter devoted to the special concerns of ESL students.

PREFACE

UNIT SIX offers fourteen professional readings that are appropriate to the course in length and complexity, modeling key principles introduced in the assignment chapters.

Appendix 1 is a guide to basic word processing using Windows and the common word processing software Microsoft Word. Even though we live in an increasingly computer-literate society, many of our students have difficulty with word processing, making their composition efforts that much harder. This appendix is largely illustrations—a simplified user's manual with some practical suggestions and warnings—to help students with the many questions they ask their instructors in class: "How do I double space, insert page numbers, spell check, word count . . . ?"

Appendix 2 is an Improvement Chart, which students can use to track their progress with mechanical correctness throughout the semester. The chart is particularly valuable for helping students isolate and overcome pattern errors.

FEATURES OF THE ASSIGNMENT CHAPTERS

The assignment chapters in Units Two and Three are the heart of this text. Here is a list of their key features:

- Introduction: The chapter illustration uses visual reinforcement to help focus students' attention on the main point of the chapter.
- Setting the Stage summarizes the chapter's goal in a paragraph.
- Linking to Previous Experience shows students what they already know about the chapter concepts, linking the material to their personal, work, and academic lives and to other material they have already practiced in the text. (This approach is tied to reading theory—activating a person's "schema"—and is used throughout the text.)
- Determining the Value shows students why they might want to care about the chapter information, linking the material to their personal, work, and academic lives and to larger concerns of personal growth.
- Developing Skills, Exploring Ideas helps students with concepts and skills essential for understanding and writing the chapter assignment. The activities are thoroughly explained, helping students understand the *why* and the *how* behind the activity and linking the specific concept to the general goal of effective communication.
- Student Models offer a Prereading paragraph to help students actively read the upcoming model and then a Postreading paragraph to help students analyze key composition elements, which they can apply to their own paragraph or essay assignment. The Questions for Analysis, which follow the student models, focus on organization, development, and style, helping students see how their own writing can be improved.
- Explaining the Writing Assignment prepares a rhetorical context for the students' writing assignment, including a clear focus on audience and purpose.
- Topic Lists are extensive and geared to student interests.
- Prewriting is modeled for each assignment.
- Organizing Ideas deals with overall arrangement and gives specific guidance with essential elements like topic and thesis sentences, complete with examples.
- Drafting offers several important reminders to help ease students into their first drafts.
- The Annotated Student Model treats draft development in four stages for the specific assignment students are working through. Students can readily see revision from more global matters of organization and development through polishing for style and mechanical correctness.

Alternate Writing Assignments give students some specific options that incorporate
chapter writing strategies and include topics drawn from students' personal, academic, and work lives.

HOW TO USE A WRITER'S WORKSHOP

This text is divided roughly 60/40 between paragraph and essay, and there are enough assignments in each unit to allow an instructor to teach mostly paragraph or essay or balance the two. If you focus primarily on paragraphs, teaching most of the patterns of development before moving into the essay, you may find Chapters 14, Expanding Paragraphs into Essays, and Chapter 15, Defining Terms, Clarifying Ideas, particularly useful as capstone writing projects. If you weight your course more toward the essay, you will find that a thorough treatment of narrative/descriptive and expository writing in Unit Two helps students quickly apply basic organizational and developmental strategies to the essay assignments in Unit Three. Working concurrently with the appropriate pattern of development from Unit Two, you can ease students into the essay by midterm or sooner. Whether your course is primarily paragraph or essay, you may appreciate the in-depth treatment of the essay exam in Chapter 17, one of the three essay chapters that stress combining the patterns of development.

Chapters 1 to 3 work well if presented during the first few weeks of class and are written to reinforce each other. You may want to begin Chapter 3 while students are reviewing the writing process, and you will notice several activities in Chapter 1 that introduce students to description, the assignment for Chapter 5. Also, if you plan to move students fairly quickly into the essay, Chapter 7 makes an effective transition point. Throughout the text you will find copious cross-referencing so students can easily link one chapter to another. However, the cross-referencing is used as *support* for instruction and examples provided in the chapters rather than as replacement for them.

Of course, you will use the handbook section as needed, but you might want to take students carefully through Chapter 20, Working with Sentence Parts, before progressing into the rest of the handbook or Unit Four. Chapter 18, Creating Sentence Variety, works best when visited frequently throughout the semester, particularly when students are polishing and editing drafts.

The skills section of each assignment chapter helps students practice key composition strategies needed to do well in the chapter assignment. Although many of the more challenging activities are labeled *collaborative*, students can manage most by themselves in or out of class. When time is pressing, you may also want to handle some of the activities orally. Aside from the skills section, you will find other writing possibilities in the chapter rhetorical apparatus:

- 1. Journal Entries (can be collaborative)
- 2. Prereading and Postreading Analysis Questions
- 3. Questions for Analyzing Paragraphs and Essays
- 4. Alternate Writing Assignments

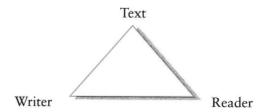
A substantial section of each assignment chapter is devoted to the process breakdown of the assignment and the Annotated Student Model. The purpose of this material is not to hold students back who understand and can move more quickly into a writing project. Rather it is to help students move as quickly and painlessly as possible into their own writing. The operative principle from my perspective is "need-to-know." Some students will want to read most of the assignment and models before they feel confident about proceeding with their papers. Others will make successful creative leaps, quickly skimming for the gist and then plunging in. However you pace your classes, I think that you will find the draft/revise/draft/edit illustration a useful model for students who are still stuck in the "knock-it-out-the-night-before" mode.

PREFACE

KEY FEATURES OF THE TEXT

Aside from the points already listed, you might note these features that set A Writer's Workshop apart from the competition:

- A Writer's Workshop offers eleven fully illustrated assignments and fifty alternatives (Instructor's Manual contains two additional fully developed assignments with ten alternate assignments).
- Strong attention is paid to reading theory throughout the text: chapter introductions, summaries, prereading/postreading activities, essay analysis questions, and writing activities. Students are asked to think critically: to compare new information with old, to synthesize new concepts, and to apply them to their current writing projects.
- User-friendly tone, diction, examples, and models are geared especially toward a
 diverse student body: traditional, nontraditional, minority, and ESL students.
- A Writer's Workshop features a strong revision emphasis, with an Annotated Student Model illustrating revision stages in each assignment chapter and two chapters devoted to revision.
- Questions for Paragraph Analysis focus on the "nuts and bolts" of composition—how to effectively use the models presented.
- Writing activities serve as prewriting to step students through the process of writing their chapter assignment.
- Key composition concepts—such as unity, coherence, and development—are frequently reinforced and repeated in all assignments.
- Instruction in grammar and punctuation is reinforced at the most timely points in the students' writing process as they review draft stages in the two revision chapters.
- Writer's Journal prompts are integrated into the writing process, helping students with invention, organization, drafting, revising, and editing.
- An essay-exam chapter lets instructors build a thorough discussion of the strategies for successfully completing this common academic writing task.
- Unit Four gives teachers a wide variety of options for helping students polish their style.
- Chapter indexes at the front of each chapter make it easy to find and review material.
- Appendix 1 gives instruction on basic word processing.
- The index is particularly comprehensive and thoroughly cross-referenced.
- All instruction is grounded in a rhetorical context:



SUPPLEMENTS PACKAGE

- *The Instructor's Edition* (ISBN 0-07-252267-4) consists of the student text complete with answers to all activities and marginal notes on using the text in class.
- The *Instructor's Manual* (ISBN 0-07-239330-0) includes comprehensive commentary on every chapter in the text, sample syllabi, alternative writing assignments, peer response worksheets, and more.
- A website accompanying the text (www.mhhe.com/brannan) offers instructional aids and resources for instructors, including the *Instructor's Manual* and online resources for writing instructors.
- PageOut! helps instructors create graphically pleasing and professional web pages
 for their courses, in addition to providing classroom management, collaborative
 learning, and content management tools. PageOut! is FREE to adopters of
 McGraw-Hill textbooks and learning materials. Learn more at http://www.mhhe.com/pageout/.
- Web Write! is an interactive peer-editing program that allows students to post papers, read comments from their peers and instructor, discuss, and edit online. To learn more, visit the online demo at http://www.metatext.com/webwrite.

Supplements for Students

- The *website* accompanying the text (www.mhhe.com/brannan) offers additional resources for students, including self-correcting exercises, writing activities for additional practice, guides to doing research on the Internet and avoiding plagiarism, useful web links, and more.
- AllWrite! 2.0 is an interactive, browser-based tutorial program that provides an online handbook, comprehensive diagnostic pretests and posttests, plus extensive practice exercises in every area.

Please consult your local McGraw-Hill representative or consult McGraw-Hill's website at **www.mhhe.com/english** for more information on the supplements that accompany the first edition of A Writer's Workshop.

Custom Options

A Writer's Workshop can be customized for brevity or for courses that place different amounts of emphasis on the paragraph or the essay. The text can also be expanded to include your course syllabi, semester schedule, or any other materials specific to your program. Spiral binding is also available. Please contact your McGraw-Hill representative for details, or send us an email at english@mcgraw-hill.com.

A Writer's Workshop has benefited from the input of many people, including the editorial team at McGraw-Hill. I thank Sarah Touborg, executive editor, who patiently listened to my early ideas for the book and who had the faith to bring me on board. Also, I am grateful to Alexis Walker, senior developmental editor, who has given me many suggestions for reorganizing and slimming down a manuscript that threatened on occasion to swamp us all.

A number of reviewers and class testers from across the country have helped me tighten and polish the ideas in this book, and I would like to acknowledge my debt for their many practical revision suggestions:

Rebecca Busch Adams

Naugatuck Valley Community Technical College

Linda Bagshaw Briar Cliff College

Sandra Barnhill
South Plains College

Joanna A. Benavides Laredo Community College

Karen L. Blaske Arapahoe Community College

Susan Brant College of the Canyons

Vicki Covington
Isothermal Community College

Crystal Edmonds
Robeson Community College

Marilyn Garrett Texas Southern University

Eddye Gallagher
Tarrant County College

Maria A. Garcia
San Antonio College

Jeanne Gilligan
Delaware Technical and Community
College

Huey Guagliardo Louisiana State University at Eunice

Faye Jones Northeast State Technical Community College Laura Kasischke Washtenaw Community College

Patsy Krech University of Memphis

Eleanor Latham Central Oregon Community College

Marcia B. Littenberg SUNY, Farmingdale

Joyce L. Maher Eastern Shore Community College

Sebastian Mahfood St. Louis University

Randy R. Maxson Grace College and Seminary

Aubrey Moncrieffe, Jr.
Housatonic Community College

Jeanette Palmer Motlow State Community College

Myra Peavyhouse Roane State Community College

Tracy Peyton Pensacola Junior College

James Read Allan Hancock College

Al Reeves Montana State University College of Technology

Carole Rhodenhiser Fort Valley State College

Lola Richardson Paine College

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Linda C. Rollins Christina Vick

Motlow State Community College Louisiana State University at Eunice

Harvey Rubenstein Ted Wadley

Hudson County Community College Georgia Perimeter College

Patricia S. Rudden Beverly Walker

New York City Technical College North Central State College

Julia Ruengert Fred Wolven

Ozarks Technical Community College Miami-Dade Community College

Karen Sidwell Nita Wood

St. Petersburg Junior College Tidewater Community College

Pauline Simonowich William W. Ziegler

Pitt Community College J. Sargeant Reynolds Community

Alvin Starr College

Community College of Baltimore

I would particularly like to thank the following colleagues at Johnson County Community College who have helped me enormously by reviewing and class-testing chapters, and by giving many thoughtful answers to what must have seemed at times an endless stream of irritating questions:

Jay Antle Monica Hogan
Andrea Broomfield Pat Jonason
Mark Browning Bill Lamb

David Davis Mary Pat McQueeney

Kami Day Ellen Mohr

Maureen Fitzpatrick Paul Northam

Mary Grace Foret Judy Oden

Keith Geekie Larry Rochelle

Sandy Calvin Hastings Marilyn Senter

Finally, I want to thank those friends and family members who have patiently put up with my many excuses over the past three years, who, though they may have grown tired of hearing "I'll be able to do that in a month or so . . . ," have had the good grace, if not good sense, still to include me in their lives. To my wife, Beth Johnson, and my daughter, Lauren, who bring me a great deal of joy every day, I want to say, "I love you. The computer is now off."

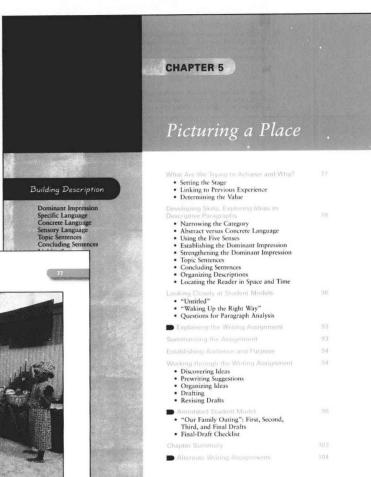
Bob Brannan

Walkthrough

Guided Tour

Welcome! The following pages illustrate how this book works. Spending a few minutes getting to know the features of the text will help you get the most out of A Writer's Workshop.

Chapter openers list key concepts and provide a chapter outline.



CHAPTER 5 PICTURING A PLACE



WHAT ARE WE TRYING TO ACHIEVE AND WHY?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Take a moment to look closely at the picture that begins this chapter. What do you notice about it? A family is celebrating Kwanza, smiling happily, standing and sitting close together as they focus their attention on the young girl, who has perhaps just performed for them. What feeling comes to you as you observe the family? If you had to find one or two words to sum up this picture, what do suppose they would be? If you said something like happiness or comfort or family togetherness, you have just identified a dominant impression and gotten to the heart of this chapter on description.

Describing is the process of relating details to help another person see what we have seen. It is the act of painting a picture with words. But more than just allowing a reader to see a scene, we can use the other senses (hearing, touch, taste, and smell) to involve the audience more completely. When we tell about and listen to subjective descriptions, we enrich our lives, communicating personal experiences and extending the boundaries of what we can know through our senses alone.

In this chapter we will learn about describing in general and of describing a place

In this chapter we will learn about describing in general and of describing a place

What kinds of describing have you done in the past—how about vacations? Maybe you have gone skiing. What did the mountains look like? How much snow fell while you were there; was there a deep base? What were the temperatures? How crowded were the lift lines? If you have not been on a vacation for awhile, when was the last time you tried to describe a scene or character closer to home? Talking to a friend,

The assignment chapters in Units Two and Three guide you step-by-step through the work of writing. Setting the Stage uses photos as visual texts that introduce the chapter's topic.

Determining the Value

Aside from helping us get through our daily lives more easily, the ability to describe has other benefits. The act of carefully selecting words to create images will make us better readers and improve our writing on the job, at home, and in school. But perhaps the most value in learning to describe well is that it will encourage you to observe more closely. By the time you have worked through the activities in this chapter, analyzed the student model paragraphs, taken notes for your own description, and finally workshopped your own and other students' drafts, you will find yourself noticing more of the world around you—and seeing it more clearly.

List at least one example of describing that you have done recently, either orally or in writing, from school, work, and home and recreate one description for your instructor. What value do you see in being able to describe well?

DEVELOPING SKILLS, EXPLORING IDEAS IN DESCRIPTIVE PARAGRAPHS

As we work together through the following eleven activities, we will practice and come to understand the important composition concepts discussed in 3, ultimately using the skills we learn in our own place descriptions.

Journal Entries help you think through each step in the writing process on the way to completing each assignment.

Note: The point of using sensory details is not to cram as many into a paper as possible, or even to represent all the senses, but rather to use these details selectively wherever they can enhance an image.

Activities-some designed for group work—give you a chance to practice the skills you'll need to complete each assignment.

Activity 5-4: Using the Five Senses

Get together in groups of four or five and brainstorm sensory details for one of the following places. Be particularly alert to any details that might help illustrate a central focus or dominant impression/feeling. Also don't be surprised if you come up with more under sight and sound than any other

- 1. Cafeteria at lunch hour (dominant impression = activity/fast pace, maybe even
- 2. Church wedding (dominant impression = excitement/happiness, maybe even communal spirit of love)
- 3. Zoo (dominant impression = either depression/confinement, maybe even animals in misery or relaxation, maybe even contentment, animals happy to have a life so easy—rty for one of these, remembering that, as a lways in focused description, you choose the details that you want your reader to see
- 4. Summer camp (dominant impression = happy confusion/expectation/fun)

Untitled

The most peaceful activity I know of on a clear, dry night is relaxing around an open campfire. There is an ideal spot just north of the pond on my grand-parents' land. As the brilliant yellow moon shines down, reflecting off the pond, little waves ripple across the surface. Gazing at the sky, I can see milions of sparkling stars and, from time to time, even view a falling star. The blazing embers leave a smoke trail rising upward from the fire. Through the blazing embers leave a smoke trail rising upward from the fire. Through the discisses, I can see the shadows of the trees, silhouettes of the horses, and swooping bats. The sounds of the night surround me: the murmur of voices in the distance, leaves rustling, and branches brushing against each other. From the nearby pond and surrounding trees, I can hear the unique chorus of the tree frogs and bullfrogs. As the train whistles by, the cries of howling coyotes drift on the wind. From time to time, I can even hear the lonesome hooting of an owl. When the popping and crackling of the fire dies down, the embers are ready for cooking. The hotdogs siztle as they begin to cook and drip their juices off the end of the stick. Refreshing aromas of trimmings from the apple and pear trees add sweetness to the oak branches as they burn. Nearby, the smell of the hotses is carried in the breeze. While fire heats the hotdogs, I can smell the meat cooking. The hot, white melting marshmallows from the hotdogs and stickly chocolate/nut smores, I have time for solitude. from the hotdogs and sticky chocolate/nut smores, I have time for solitude While the chilly breeze blows, the radiating warmth of the fire draws me in. This is my favorite time around the campfire—a truly peaceful time in which I feel a sense of oneness with nature as she embraces me.

Student Models-three to four in each chapter—give you ideas of how others have approached an assignment; the Annotated Student Models show a student's progress through three drafts.

st rough drafts of illustration papers often have difficulties with overall development, and relevant material. Note how much explanation and how more examples were added to this draft to help clarify meaning. As you through your own draft, keep asking the question "What do I mean by that arement, example, or idea?" Also be alert to the overall structure of topic, pic, and concluding sentences. Help your reader find her way through your with the least possible effort. She will appreciate your efforts.

ult students with shouses and children have a difficult time balancing with the rest of there lives.

ey don't have much time for a social life, but everyone needs some relax-Even struggling with classes, most students want to see an occasional with a friend, catch a ball game, or have diner out. "When students take or rest & relaxation, they are looking over their shoulder at the clock

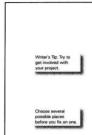
But socializing is often the least of the distractions for returning students, They constantly face the money battle. With families to care for the students have to worry about rent and mortgage payments, utilities, car payments, car repair bills, general property maintenance, food, clothing, medical, insurance of various kinds, school (their own included), and even squeezing in a few presents for their loved ones occasionally. 'The stress of dealing with the money drain sometimes makes focusing on textbooks difficult.

In order to meet the financial demands, of course, most nontraditional students are full-time workers as well. Often both husbands and wives financially support the family. Though sometimes only one brings in a paycheck while the other works at home. Spending forty hours a week, and more outside the home selling insurance, repairing cars, waiting tables; or spending the same amount of time inside the home cleaning house, fixing meals, and chasing children around-'nontraditional students often have a kind of frazzled look around the edges.

But the other stresses and distractions aside, for nontraditional students coming back to school, the family might be the biggest obstacle. Most mothers and fathers love there children and each other. But the daily drag of diapering, feeding, carting to school, and soothing fears and hurt feelings can drag a person

Topic Lists and Alternate Writing Assignments offer you

a chance to write about everyday issues that are important to you, including dating, work, family life, politics, and entertainment.



UNIT TWO WORKING WITH THE PARAGRAPH

While the tocus of this chapter has been on illustrating a place, there are many other uses for description. As you consider the following assignment options, keep these points in mind:

- Decide on a dominant impression.
- · State the dominant impression in your topic sentence.
- · Rely on specific words and sensory details to develop your dominant impression.
- Conclude with a sentence that links to the topic sentence and expands the thought.
- · Connect your sentences with time and place words.

• Connect your sentences with time and piace words.

 Describe a person: Find someone you know reasonably well or someone you come in contact with regularly enough to observe her appearance (physical look and clothing) and actions (how she walks, stands, and sits; body language; mannerisms). Listen closely to the person and try to record some characteristic dialogue. Your goal is to create a verbal portrait of this person so that someone who has not met your person would recognize her from your description. Focus your description with an overall dominant impression, such as sloppy, well groomed, athletic, lazy, talkative, shy, funny, angry, and so on.

2. Describe an object Select an object that you can observe closely and take notes on. This object could range from the small and ordinary (salt shaker, toaster oven, mench) to the large and more unusual (construction crane, new Corvette, office building). Your goal is to capture the dominant impression of the object through description. For instance, your salt shaker might be exceptionally functional. You could describe its look as well as how well the shaker performs its job, dispensing salt. The construction crane might suggest power. You could describe the large metal parts and then show the machine in action.



Assuming that your instructor is not simply assigning you a particular place to write about (i.e., "Let's all describe our bathrooms"), your choice of topics is virtually limitless. The good news is that you can select a place that you know well and have a real interest in. The bad news is that lots of freedom can be paralyzing. It is all too easy when faced with almost every possibility "out there" to feel overwhelmed and either put off choosing a place till too late or settle on the first choice that comes to mind, whether you have a real interest in it or not. Because you will be working on this project for several weeks, why not take the time to select a topic that you care about enough to invest some energy in? (Learning to become involved in a writing project is a trick of the writer's trade that will help you have a lot more fun with your writing and will usually produce better work.)

writing and will usually produce better work.)

The following topic lists may help get you off to a good start:

upic	(hel)	513	
Places	to	Describe	Ins

1. Any room in your house	15. Riverboat	29. Bus depot
2. Attic	16. Dance studio	30. Airport
3. Tool shed	17. Church/synagogue	31. Subway station
4. Restaurant	18. Pet store	32. Train station
5. Tavern	19. Pawn shop	33. Boxing arena
6. Department store	20. Music store	34. Doctor's office
7. Museum	21. Hospital	35. Police station
8. Gym	22. Movie theater	36. Grocery store
9. Bowling alley	23. Art gallery	37. Florist's
10. Arcade	24. Recording studio	38. Furniture store
11. Library	25. Beauty salon	39. Tire warehouse
12. Cafeteria	26. School (any level)	40. Recycling center
13. Office	27. Day care	41. Funeral home
14. Hardware store	28. Foundry	42. Cemetery



Unit Six, Additional Readings, offers fourteen texts by professional writers illustrating various writing strategies and followed by questions for discussion and writing.

of its arms as ferociously as a charging cat. It leaps savagely on the crab, there is a puff of black fluid, and the struggling mass is obscured in the sepia cloud while the octopus murders the crab. On the exposed rocks out of water, the barnacles bubble behind their closed doors and the limpets dry out. And down to the rocks come the black flies to eat anything they can find. The sharp smell of iodine from the algae, and the lime smell of calcareous bodies and the smell of powerful protean, smell of sperm and ova fill the air. On the exposed rocks the starfish emit semen and eggs from between their rays. The smells of life and richness, of death and digestion, of decay and birth, burden the air. And salt spray blows in from the barrier where the ocean waits for its rising-tide strength to permit it back into the Great Tide Pool again. And on the reef the whistling buoy bellows like a sad and

Ouestions for Analysis

- What is the dominant impression of these two paragraphs? Does the author state it in a topic sentence, if so where?
- 2. Name five specific words. How do these words contribute to the description?
- Choose any image that seems clear to you and tell how the details and explanation make the image appealing.

xvii