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The Writing Process

A Concise Rhetoric

Lanham

s i x t h e d i t i o n

SIXTH

EDITION

THE WRITING PROCESS

A CONCISE RHETORIC

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This text promotes rhetorical awareness by treating the writing process as a set of deliberate and recursive decisions. It promotes rhetorical effectiveness by helping develop the problem-solving skills essential to reader-centered writing.

ORGANIZATION

Section One, **THE PROCESS**, covers reading, planning, drafting, and revising. Students learn to invent, select, organize, and express their material recursively. They see how decisions about purpose and audience influence decisions about what will be said and how it will be said. They see that reading and writing are linked, and that writing is essentially a “thinking” process. They learn to respond to their reading and to work collaboratively.

Section Two, **THE PRODUCT**, expands on composing and evaluation skills by focusing on content, organization, and style. Students learn to support their assertions; to organize for the reader; and to achieve prose maturity, precise diction, and appropriate tone.

Section Three, **ESSAYS FOR VARIOUS GOALS**, shows how the *strategies* (or modes) of discourse serve the particular *goals* of a discourse; that is, how description, narration, exposition, and argument are variously employed for expressive, referential, or persuasive ends. A balance of student and professional selections touch on current and lasting issues. Beyond studying these samples as models, students are asked to respond to the issues presented; that is, to write in response to a specific rhetorical situation.

Section Four, **THE RESEARCH REPORT PROCESS: A RESEARCH GUIDE FOR THE INFORMATION AGE**, approaches research as a process of deliberate inquiry. Students learn to formulate significant research questions; to explore a selective range of primary and secondary sources; to record, summarize, and document their findings; and, most importantly, to evaluate sources and evidence and interpret findings accurately.

Finally, for easy reference, Appendix A is a concise handbook, with exercises for the student. Appendix B, an additional, brief appendix offers advice on formatting a manuscript.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF *THE WRITING PROCESS*

- Writers with no rhetorical awareness overlook the decisions that are crucial for effective writing. Only by defining their rhetorical problem and asking the important questions can writers formulate an effective response to the problem.
- Although it follows no single, predictable sequence, the writing process is not a collection of random activities; rather it is a set of deliberate decisions in problem solving. Beyond emulating this or that model essay, students need to understand that effective writing requires critical thinking.
- Students write for audiences other than teachers and purposes other than completing an assignment. To view the act of writing as only a mere display of knowledge or fluency, an exercise in which writer and reader (i.e., “the teacher”) have no higher stake or interest, is to ignore the unique challenges and constraints posed by each writing situation. In every forum beyond the classroom, we write to forge a specific connection with a specific audience.
- Students at any level of ability can develop audience awareness and learn to incorporate within their writing the essential rhetorical features: worthwhile content, sensible organization, and readable style.
- As well as being a fluent *communicator*, today’s educated person needs to be a discriminating *consumer* of information, skilled in the methods of inquiry, retrieval, evaluation, and interpretation that constitute the research process.
- As an alternative to reiterating the textbook material, classroom workshops apply textbook principles by focusing on the students’ writing. These workshops call for an accessible, readable, and engaging book to serve as a comprehensive resource. (Suggestions for workshop design are in the Instructor’s Manual.)
- Finally, writing classes typically contain students with all types of strengths and weaknesses. *The Writing Process* offers explanations that are thorough, examples and models that are broadly intelligible, and goals that are rigorous yet realistic. The textbook is flexible enough to allow for various course plans and customized assignments.

The Writing Process proceeds from writer-centered to reader-centered discourse. Beginning with personal topics and a basic essay structure, the fo-

cus shifts to increasingly complex rhetorical tasks, culminating in argument. Within this cumulative structure each chapter is self-contained for flexible course planning. The sample essays represent a balance of student and professional authorship. Exercises (or Applications) in each chapter offer various levels of challenge. All material has been class-tested.

NEW TO THIS EDITION

- Case studies of student writers at work as they read, plan, draft, and revise. (See Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 23.)
- Guidelines and applications for collaborative work. (See Introduction and Chapter 3 as well as applications throughout.)
- Guidelines for reviewing and editing the work of others. (See Chapter 5.)
- Computer projects and guidelines. (See Chapter 4 and easily adaptable applications throughout.)
- Advice on avoiding excessive informality and offensive usage and on considering cultural differences in the observance of style guidelines. (See Chapters 3 and 9.)
- Discussions of how each rhetorical strategy might be used beyond the writing classroom. (See Section Three.)
- Readings and sample essays that have meaning for students today. Following each essay in Section Three are questions that promote critical analysis of the readings along with suggestions for discussion and response.
- E-mail communication guidelines. (See Chapter 20.)
- A fully revised Section Four, on research methods for the information age. Full coverage of MLA and APA styles as well as ACW (Alliance for Computers in Writing) style for documenting Internet sources (MOOs, FTPs, Telnet sites, and so on). Examples of other additions: achieving adequate depth in research, broadening and customizing electronic searches; understanding the essentials and limitations of interview and survey research; E-mail privacy and quality issues; guidelines for preparing summaries and abstracts; bias in printed and electronic sources; fallacies inherent in statistical data; a case study that follows one student through the research process. Two fully annotated research essays: one in APA style, one in MLA style.
- A broad range of challenging, class-tested ideas for essay topics.
- A revised and redesigned appendix on essentials of grammar, usage, and mechanics—including brief exercises.
- A separate instructor's manual written by the author.

- All chapters condensed and reorganized for greater clarity, conciseness, and emphasis.
- A user-friendly art program and page design for easy access and visual orientation:
 - In the margins, notes highlight key points and salient features of writing samples; icons announce material on collaborative and computer work; editing and correction symbols provide instant reference.
 - In the text, boxed “Questions,” “Guidelines,” and “Checklists” facilitate decisions and spell out criteria.

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JOHN M. LANNON

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