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The Prose Reader

Essays for Thinking, Reading, and Writing

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Eleventh Edition

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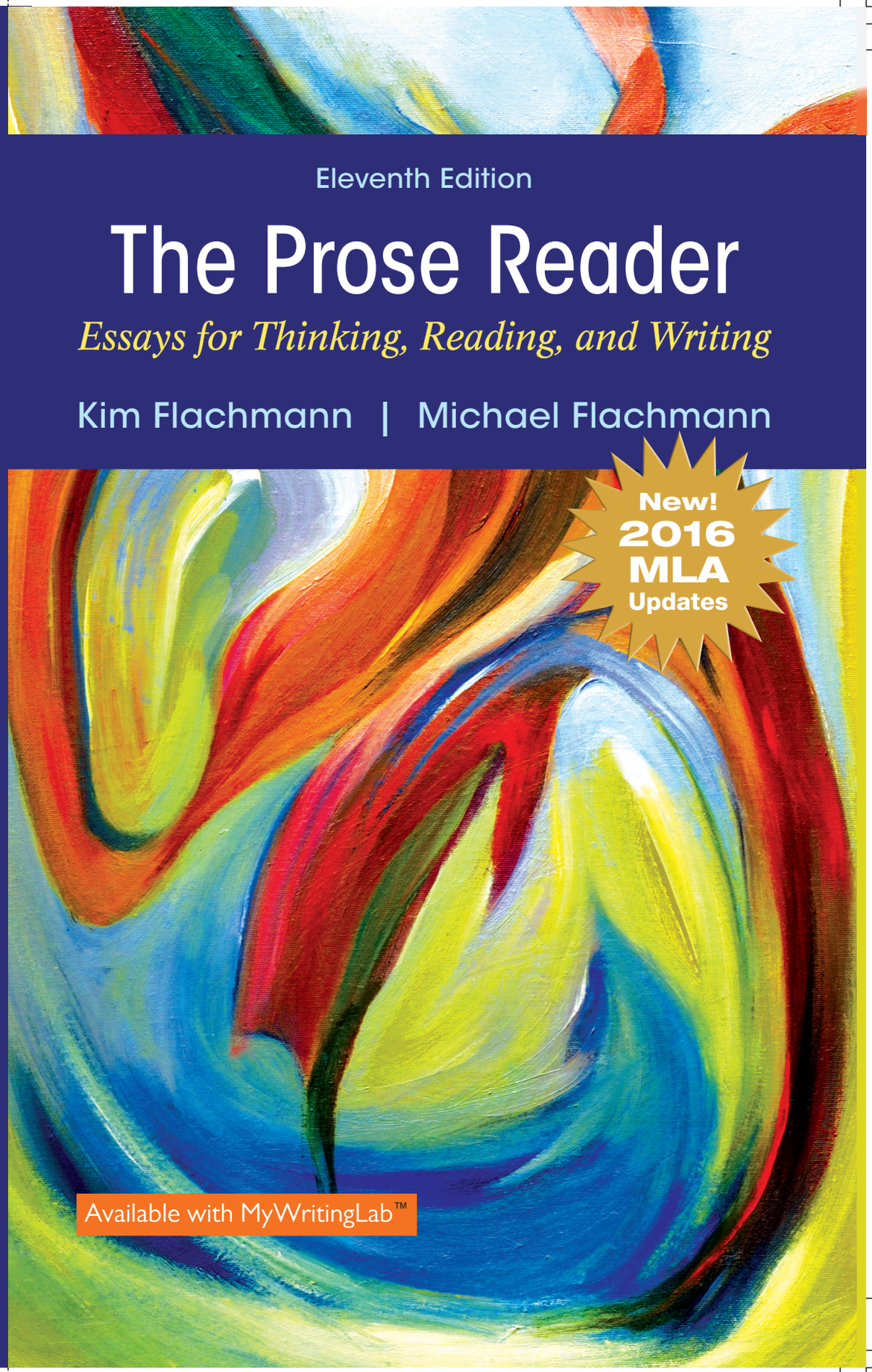

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Available with MyWritingLab™

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ELEVENTH EDITION

Kim Flachmann

California State University, Bakersfield

Michael Flachmann

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Rhetorical Contents

THEMATIC CONTENTS

BUSINESS

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EDUCATION

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PREFACE TO THE INSTRUCTOR

The Prose Reader is based on the assumption that lucid writing follows lucid thinking whereas poor written work is almost inevitably the product of foggy, irrational thought processes. As a result, our primary purpose in this book, as in the first ten editions, is to help students *think* more clearly and logically—both in their minds and on paper.

Furthermore, we believe that college students should be able to think, read, and write on three increasingly difficult levels:

1. *Literal*—characterized by a basic understanding of words and their meanings;
2. *Interpretive*—consisting of a knowledge of connections between ideas and an ability to make valid inferences based on those ideas; and
3. *Critical*—the highest level, distinguished by the systematic investigation of complex ideas and by the analysis of their relationship to the world around us.

To demonstrate the vital interrelationship between reader and writer, our text provides students with prose models intended to inspire their own thinking and writing. Rhetorical strategies are introduced as methods of thinking and processing information; they provide a productive means of helping students become better writers. These essays are intended to encourage your students to improve their writing through a partnership with some of the best examples of professional prose available today. Just as musicians and athletes richly benefit from studying the techniques of the foremost people in their fields, your students will grow in spirit and language use from their collaboration with the excellent writers in this collection.

NEW IN THE ELEVENTH EDITION

- Nineteen new selections on such fascinating topics as Mars, the value of college, making friends, business communication, different ways of being smart, music, sports, virtual assault, video games, the Internet, binge drinking, social media, and gender equality are included.
- New graphic flowcharts of the reading and writing processes consisting of questions that guide the reading and writing students do in each chapter have been added for each rhetorical mode; if students actually see how a particular rhetorical mode works as they read, they are more likely to be able to manipulate and use those same features as they write.
- Two professional documented essays show MLA and APA in action (Vozza in Chapter 7 and Hanson in Chapter 10); students can refer to

these samples as they use Part III (Reading and Writing from Sources) to work on their own research papers.

- A new multigenre chapter of readings reflects the primary changes in the Outcomes for First-Year Composition approved by the Council of Writing Program Administrators; it includes one autobiography, one speech, two poems, one piece of fiction, and a creative photograph, and its purpose is to give students practice with genres besides essays as they near the end of your college writing course.
- To supplement the new multigenre additions to this text is a new category of writing assignments at the end of each chapter in Part II entitled Composing in Different Genres; it offers two writing assignments (one multimedia and one multigenre) so students can vary their responses to their readings if such projects align with your course goals.

OUR UNIQUE, DISTINGUISHING FEATURES

Special Checklists of the Reading and Writing Processes

Highlighted pages at the end of chapters 2 and 3 outline the reading and writing processes. They serve as overviews of the material your students will study in this text and are designed to be used for reference throughout the text. Students are referred to these checklists for both their reading and writing assignments in the book.

In-Text Critical Thinking Questions

This edition offers questions throughout each reading selection that will help students interact critically with the material they read as they prepare for the assignments after each essay. These questions appear at the bottom of the pages of the essays and are designed to provide a "bridge" between the personal prereading questions and the more academic questions and assignments that follow each essay. Students will understand their reading on a deeper level by filtering the content of each essay through their own experience, moving progressively toward interpretive and critical understanding. The questions are marked both in the essays and at the bottom of the pages by sequential numbers within diamonds.

Companion Internet Exercises

Two "LEARNING ONLINE" exercises frame each essay. The prereading material contains an Internet activity that asks students to explore on the Internet some aspect of the selection's topic. Following each essay is a writing assignment linked to the initial Learning Online exercise.

Visual Rhetoric

This edition offers 19 photographs to access our students' natural interest in visual stimuli. Because most college-age students have grown up accustomed to television, video games, and the Internet, they have the natural ability to "read" visual rhetoric. But they need to learn how to analyze it, just as they analyze words and ideas. Therefore, we include one photograph for each chapter introduction in Part II to teach critical thinking in that mode, one photograph for each set of writing assignments at the end of each chapter, and one photo as a reading selection in Chapter 13.

OUR TRADITIONAL FEATURES

Sequential Organization

The Prose Reader is still organized according to the belief that our mental abilities are logically sequential. In other words, students cannot read or write analytically before they are able to perform well on the literal and interpretive levels. Accordingly, the book progresses from selections that require predominantly literal skills (*Description, Narration,* and *Example*) through readings involving more interpretation (*Process Analysis, Division/Classification, Comparison/Contrast,* and *Definition*) to essays that demand a high degree of analytical thought (*Cause/Effect* and *Argument/Persuasion*). Depending on your curriculum and the experience of your students, these rhetorical modes can, of course, be studied in any order.

Two Tables of Contents

The Prose Reader provides two tables of contents: rhetorical and thematic. First, the book contains a Rhetorical Contents, which includes a one- or two-sentence synopsis of each selection so you can peruse the list quickly and decide which essays to assign. An alternate Thematic Contents lists selections by academic subject for instructors who prefer to teach essays in thematic clusters.

Student Writing Samples in Each Chapter

Two separate student writing samples are featured in each rhetorical introduction. The chapter introductions contain a sample student paragraph and a complete student essay that illustrate each rhetorical pattern, followed by the student writer's analysis of the most enjoyable, exasperating, or noteworthy aspects of writing that particular essay. We have found that this combination of student essays and commentaries makes the professional selections easier for students to read and even more accessible as models of thinking and writing.

Prereading Material

Each reading selection is preceded by thorough biographical information on the author and provocative prereading questions on the subject of the essay. Because students comprehend what they read most thoroughly when they understand its context, the biographies explain the real experiences from which each essay emerged, and the prereading questions ("Preparing to Read") help students focus on the purpose, audience, and subject of the essay. The prereading material also foreshadows the questions and writing assignments that follow each selection. This introductory material invites students to identify with both the author of an essay and its subject matter, thereby energizing their responses to the selections they read.

Wide Range of Essay Topics

The essays in *The Prose Reader* continue to represent a wide range of topics. As in the past, the essays in this edition were selected on the basis of five important criteria: (1) high interest level, (2) currency in the field, (3) moderate length, (4) readability, and (5) broad subject variety. Together, they portray the universality of human experience as expressed through the viewpoints of men and women, many different ethnic and racial groups, and a variety of ages and social classes.

Strong Commitment to Cultural and Gender Diversity

This edition continues its strong commitment to cultural and gender diversity. Although multicultural and gender issues have always been well represented in *The Prose Reader,* this edition includes even more essays by women and ethnic minority authors to offer a wide range of perspectives by such writers as Lewis Sawaquat, Maya Angelou, Sandra Cisneros, Richard Rodriguez, Amy Tan, Stephanie Ericsson, Amy Chua, Motoko Rich, Gloria Steinem, Robert Ramirez, Dana Gioia, Richard Wright, Emma Watson, and Jessica Anya Blau.

Expanded Chapter on Argument/Persuasion

The Argument/Persuasion chapter (Chapter 12**) now includes four essays on an interesting variety of topics and two sets of opposing viewpoint essays.** These essays are particularly useful for helping students refine their critical thinking skills in preparation for longer, more sustained papers on a single topic. The first four essays in Chapter 12 encourage students to grapple with provocative issues that make a crucial difference in how we all live, such as our obsession with illness, thinking

and the Internet, violence and TV, and mental health. The two sets of opposing-viewpoint essays on social media and DNA testing will help your students see coherent arguments at work from several different perspectives on a single issue.

Four Types of Questions

This edition offers four progressively more sophisticated types of questions at the end of each selection. These questions are designed to help students move sequentially from various literal-level responses to interpretation and analysis; they also help reveal both the form and content of the essays so your students can cultivate a similar balance in their own writing.

1. *Understanding Details*—questions that test students' literal and interpretive understanding of what they have read;
2. *Thinking Critically*—questions that require students to analyze various aspects of the essay;
3. *Discovering Rhetorical Strategies*—questions that investigate the author's rhetorical strategies in constructing the essay;
4. *Making Connections*—questions that ask students to find thematic and rhetorical connections among essays they have read.

Prewriting Prompts

The writing assignments ("Ideas for Discussion/Writing") are preceded by "Preparing to Write" questions. These questions are designed to encourage students to express their feelings, thoughts, observations, and opinions on various topics related to their reading. Questions about their own ideas and experiences help students develop strong convictions that they can then mold into compelling essays.

Engaging Writing Assignments

The writing assignments after each essay seek to involve students in realistic situations. For instructors who like to use role-playing in their teaching, many writing assignments provide a specific purpose and audience in the essay topics. In this manner, student writers are drawn into rhetorical scenarios that carefully focus their responses to a variety of interrelated questions or problems. These assignments are designed for use inside or outside the classroom.

This edition also offers five sets of writing assignments at the end of each chapter. They provide practice in the following categories: (1) more practice in a specific rhetorical mode, (2) a focus on interesting,

contemporary themes regardless of rhetorical mode, (3) an opportunity to analyze and respond to a provocative photograph, (4) a new set of assignments offering options for multimedia projects, and (5) related research assignments. These prompts give students even more opportunities to practice their writing—now in a variety of genres.

Glossary of Composition Terms

The book concludes with a glossary of composition terms. The glossary provides not only definitions of composition terms, but also examples of these terms from essays in this book, including specific page numbers. This serves as an excellent reference tool for students as they progress through the material in the text.

HOW THE TEXT WORKS

This text is divided into three sections:

Part I: Thinking, Reading, and Writing Critically
Part II: Reading and Writing Rhetorically
Part III: Reference: Reading and Writing from Sources

Part I consists of three chapters dedicated to the interaction of critical thinking, reading, and writing. It furnishes students with ideas and facts to help them discover for themselves how these skills are related.

Each chapter of **Part II** of *The Prose Reader* begins with an explanation of a single rhetorical technique as a means of processing information. These explanations are divided into six sections that progress from the effect of this technique on our daily lives to its integral role in the writing process. Featured in each introduction is a new flowchart of the reading and writing processes in that particular mode. We also include in each introduction a student paragraph and a student essay featuring each rhetorical strategy under discussion. The student essay is annotated to illustrate how a particular rhetorical mode operates and to help bridge the gap between student writing and the professional selections that follow. After each student essay, the writer has drafted a personal note with some useful advice for other student writers.

The essays that follow each chapter introduction are selected from a wide variety of well-known contemporary authors. Although each essay in this collection features a single rhetorical mode, other modes are always simultaneously at work. These selections concentrate on one primary technique at a time in much the same way a well-arranged photograph highlights a certain visual detail, though many other elements function in the background to make the picture an organic and effective whole.

Before each reading selection, we offer students a context for their reading including biographical information about the author and some prereading questions to whet the reader's appetite for the essay that follows. The prereading questions forecast not only the content of the essay but also the questions and writing assignments that follow.

The questions after each reading selection are designed as guides for thinking about the essay. These questions are at the heart of the relationship represented in this book among thinking, reading, and writing. They are divided into four interrelated sections that shepherd your students smoothly from a literal understanding of what they have just read to interpretation and finally to analysis and critical thinking.

After your students have studied the different techniques at work in a reading selection, specific essay assignments let them practice these skills in unison and discover even more details about effective communication. Four "Ideas for Discussion/Writing" topics (one of which is based on the prereading Internet exercise) are preceded by "prewriting" questions to help students focus their writing as precisely as possible.

The word *essay* (which comes from the Old French *essai,* meaning a "try" or an "attempt") is an appropriate label for these writing assignments because they all ask your students to wrestle with an idea or problem and then *attempt* to give shape to their thoughts in some effective manner. The essay lets your students demonstrates that they can assemble all the skills they have learned into a coherent piece of writing.

At the end of every chapter is a collection of essay assignments that ask your students to choose a topic in one of five categories: Practicing [a particular rhetorical mode], Exploring Ideas, Analyzing Visual Images, Composing in Different Genres (a new category of prompts in this edition), and Writing from Sources. Each of these groups of assignments lets your students demonstrate what they have learned in a slightly different way.

The final chapter in Part II (Writing in Different Genres: Combining Rhetorical Modes) aligns with the latest version of the Writing Program Administrators' outcomes for first-year composition by including selections in multiple genres. It provides selections in five different genres; one autobiography, one speech, two poems, one piece of fiction, and one photograph.

Part III of this edition provides a tabbed reference guide for writing a documented essay. It demonstrates how to approach a writing assignment based on sources by following a student through the entire process from reading a documented essay to responding to that reading by writing on a related topic. It covers finding sources, avoiding plagiarism, staying organized, documenting sources, and writing the paper itself—all from the perspective of our model student.

RESOURCES FOR TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

Available with *The Prose Reader* are three resources intended to help your students discover how to read and write analytically and respond to the world around them coherently.

Instructor's Resource Manual

First is an extensive *Instructor's Resource Manual* designed to help make your life in the classroom a little easier. It offers innovative options for organizing your course, creative teaching ideas, instructor comments on teaching the different rhetorical modes, background information on each essay, and several successful techniques for responding to student writing. In addition, it provides specific suggestions for the first day of class, a series of student essays (one for each rhetorical strategy featured in the text) followed by the student writer's comments, provocative quotations, definitions of terms that may be unfamiliar to your students, detailed answers to the questions that follow each selection, additional essay topics, and various strategies for revision. This supplement ends with an annotated bibliography of books and articles about thinking, reading, and writing. To learn more, visit www.pearsonhighered.com or ask your Pearson representative.

The Prose Reader Quiz Book

Available on the Pearson website (www.pearsonhighered.com) under "Instructional Resources" is *The Prose Reader Quiz Book*, which includes two objective quizzes on the vocabulary and content of each selection to help you monitor your students' understanding of the selections in this book. These quizzes are posted for you in Word so you can edit and print them.

MyWritingLab™ *and The Prose Reader eText*

MyWritingLab is an online practice, tutorial, and assessment program that provides engaging experiences for teaching and learning. It includes *The Prose Reader* eText, which lets students access their textbook whenever and wherever they can access the Internet.

In addition to the eText, students may use MyWritingLab to respond to the four detailed writing project prompts found at the end of each reading in *The Prose Reader*, plus the ten end-of-chapter writing assignments. Instructors can then track and respond to submissions easily—right in MyWritingLab—making the response process easy for the instructor and engaging for the student.

In the Writing Space Assignments, students will have direct access to *The Prose Reader's* checklists and flowcharts, and there they can use

instructor-created peer review rubrics to evaluate and comment on other students' writing. When giving feedback on student writing, instructors can add links to activities that address issues and strategies needed for review. Instructors may link to multimedia resources in Pearson Writer, which include curated content from Purdue OWL. Paper review by specialized tutors through Smarthinking is available, as is plagiarism detection through TurnItIn.

Adaptive learning. My WritingLab offers preassessments and personalized instruction so students see improved results and instructors spend less time in class reviewing the basics.

Learning Catalytics. MyLab and Mastering with eText now provides Learning Catalytics—an interactive student response tool that uses students' smartphones, tablets, or laptops to engage them in sophisticated tasks and thinking.

MediaShare. MediaShare allows students to post multimodal assignments easily—whether they are audio, video, or visual compositions—for peer review and instructor feedback. In both face-to-face and online course settings, MediaShare saves instructors valuable time and enriches the student learning experience by enabling contextual feedback to be provided quickly and easily.Visit www.mywritinglab.com for more information.

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Part I

Thinking, Reading, and Writing Critically

Chapter 1

THINKING CRITICALLY

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After completing this chapter, you will be able to do the following:

- Understand the three levels of thinking
- Use the in-text critical thinking questions successfully
- Understand the reading-writing connection

Have you ever had trouble expressing your thoughts? If so, you're not alone. Many people have this difficulty—especially when they are asked to write down their ideas. The good news is that this "ailment" can be cured. We've learned over the years that the more clearly students think about the world around them, the more easily they can express their thoughts through written and spoken language. So thinking more clearly, logically, and critically about important ideas and issues that exist in our world today will actually help your writing. In fact, to succeed in college you need to reason, read, and write about the world in increasingly complex ways, moving steadily from a simple, literal understanding of topics to interpretation and analysis.

LEVELS OF THINKING

The foundation of all successful reading and writing on the college level is critical thinking. You need to know as much as you can about this skill in order to do your best in all your classes. Inspired by the well-crafted prose models in this text and guided by carefully worded questions, you can

actually raise the level of your thinking skills while improving your reading and writing abilities on three progressively more difficult levels:

1. ***The literal level*** is the foundation of all human understanding; it entails knowing the meanings of words, both as individual terms and in relation to one another. For someone to comprehend the sentence "You must exercise your brain to reach your full mental potential" on the literal level, for example, that person would have to know the definitions of all the words in the sentence and understand the way those words work together to make meaning.
2. ***Interpretation*** requires the ability to make associations between details, draw inferences from pieces of information, and reach conclusions about the material you have read. An interpretive understanding of the sample sentence in level 1 might be translated into the following thoughts: "Exercising the brain sounds a bit like exercising the body. I wonder if there's any correlation between the two. If the brain must be exercised, it is probably made up of muscles, much like the body is." None of these particular thoughts is made explicit in the sentence, but each is suggested in one way or another.
3. ***Thinking critically***, the most sophisticated reasoning ability, involves a type of mental activity that is crucial for successful academic and professional work. A critical analysis of our sample sentence might proceed in the following way: "This sentence is talking to me. It actually addresses me with the word *you*. I wonder what *my* mental potential is. Will I be able to reach it? Will I know when I attain it? Will I be comfortable with it? I certainly want to reach this potential, whatever it is. Reaching it will undoubtedly help me succeed scholastically and professionally. The brain is obviously an important tool for helping me achieve my goals in life, so I want to take every opportunity I have to develop and maintain this part of my body." Students who can disassemble an issue or idea in this fashion and understand its various components more thoroughly after reassembling them are rewarded intrinsically with a clearer knowledge of life's complexities and the ability to generate creative, useful ideas. They are also rewarded extrinsically with good grades and are more likely to earn responsible jobs with higher pay because they are able to apply this understanding effectively to their professional and personal lives.

Psychological studies have shown that thinking and feeling are complementary operations. All of us have feelings that are automatic and instinctive. To feel pride after winning first place at a track meet, for example, or to feel anger at

a spiteful friend is not behavior we have to study and master; such emotions come naturally to all of us. Thinking, however, is much less spontaneous than feeling; research suggests that study and practice are required for sustained mental development.

Thinking critically involves grappling with ideas, issues, and problems that surround you in your immediate environment and in the world at large. It does not necessarily entail finding fault, which you might naturally associate with the word *critical,* but rather suggests continually questioning and analyzing the world around you. Thinking critically is the highest form of mental activity that human beings engage in; it is the source of much success in college and in our professional and personal lives. Fortunately, all of us can learn how to think more critically.

Critical thinking means taking apart an issue, examining its various parts, and reassembling the topic with a more complete understanding of its details. Implied in this explanation is the ability to see the topic from several new perspectives. Using your mind in this way will help you find solutions to difficult problems, design creative plans of action, and ultimately live a life consistent with your opinions on important issues we all confront daily.

Because critical or analytical thinking is one of the highest forms of mental activity, it requires a great deal of concentration and practice. Once you have actually felt how your mind processes information at this level, however, re-creating the experience is somewhat like riding a bicycle: You will be able to do it naturally, easily, and skillfully whenever you choose.

Our initial goal, then, is to help you think critically when you are required to do so in school, on the job, or in any other area of your life. If this form of thinking becomes part of your daily routine, you will quite naturally be able to call on it whenever necessary. Because rhetorical strategies are presented in this text as ways of thinking and processing information that you can use in all your academic tasks, working with these traditional modes is an effective way to achieve this goal. With some guidance, each rhetorical pattern can give you a mental workout that prepares you for writing and critical or analytical thinking in the same way that physical exercises warm you up for various sports. Just as in the rest of the body, the more exercise the brain gets, the more flexible it becomes and the higher levels of thought it can attain. Through these various guided thinking exercises, you can systematically strengthen your ability to think analytically. We feature one strategy in each chapter so you can understand how it works before you combine it with other strategies, thus providing you with a systematic means of improving your ability to think critically about the complex world around you.

As you move through the following chapters, we will ask you to isolate each rhetorical mode—much like isolating your abs, thighs, and biceps in a weight-lifting workout—so you can concentrate on these thinking patterns one at a

time. Each rhetorical pattern you study will suggest slightly different ways of seeing the world, processing information, and solving problems. Looking closely at rhetorical modes or specific patterns of thought will also allow you to discover how your mind works in that particular mode. In the same fashion, becoming more intricately aware of your thought patterns will help you improve your thinking skills as well as your reading and writing abilities. Thinking critically enables you to identify fresh insights within old ideas, generate new thoughts, and see connections between related issues. It is an energizing mental activity that puts you in control of your life and your environment rather than leaving you at the mercy of your surroundings.

Each chapter introduction provides three exercises—one of which is based on a photograph—specifically designed to help you focus on a particular pattern of thought in isolation. While you are attempting to learn what each pattern feels like in your mind, use your imagination to play with these exercises on as many different levels as possible.

IN-TEXT CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS

Critical thinking does not automatically occur after you complete these exercises, but rather is the result of sustained practice. With this in mind, we "coach" you through the entire reading process as you move from a literal understanding of the author's ideas to a critical approach to your reading. If this partnership is successful, you will be able to apply this level of performance to all your academic tasks in this class and throughout the curriculum.

Your approach to critical thinking in any subject must be built on a solid foundation, which is the reason that each essay in this collection is preceded by a number of questions that introduce you to the author's main ideas before you start reading. Forming some initial opinions and relating some of the ideas to your own experiences is the starting point of all good thinking.

Next, this initial engagement with the essay must be woven into and out of the reading process—without abandoning your original thoughts. To this end, critical thinking questions are furnished at the bottom of the pages you are reading to help you make both personal and intellectual connections with the text. These questions (marked in the text by numbers in diamonds) always start by encouraging you to interact personally with each reading selection before you analyze it. You are asked to filter the reading through your own life experiences, which will help you discover meaning by associating the reading with your own worldview. Once you begin to interact personally with the text, the questions will then take you deeper and deeper into the content of the reading. These critical thinking questions will engage you on many different levels, so the act of reading each selection will ultimately become an act of total immersion in the

subject matter. These questions essentially serve as a guide through your reading, or a teacher in your head, when you use this feature productively.

To achieve these goals, the "in-text" critical thinking questions progress very consciously from personal to more academic concerns. In other words, they teach you, through carefully scaffolded prompts, how to ascend to understanding at the critical or analytical level. The questions fall quite naturally into the following progressively more difficult levels of interaction:

Making personal associations: These questions ask you to make connections with your own experiences.

Understanding definitions: These questions check your literal understanding.

Engaging curiosity: These questions stimulate your curiosity and require you to look outside yourself to generate some of your own questions.

Drawing conclusions: These questions prompt you to make some deductions from the material you have read so far.

Making connections: These questions ask you to connect ideas in your reading.

Finding evidence: These questions encourage you to find examples, statistics, data, and reasons that support your conclusions.

Analyzing your discoveries: These questions require you to step away from the reading selection and study the ideas and connections that have resulted from your reading.

Through this entire process, as we guide you to more advanced levels of reasoning, you must be willing to tolerate ambiguity at every stage of the process. This uncertainty allows you ultimately to bring together exciting ideas and make creative discoveries. This approach to your reading will also keep your mind open to new ideas and unique interpretations as you read.

Finally, these in-text questions will lead you smoothly and seamlessly to the questions following each essay. In essence, the in-text questions build a bridge to the postreading questions. So if you have reflected and taken notes on the critical thinking questions at the bottom of the pages as you were reading, you will be fully prepared for the postreading questions to take you to even higher levels of thought after reading the essay. In each case, these questions move from literal understanding of details, definitions, and concepts through interpretation to analysis of this same information. Working systematically with the in-text questions will stimulate your own opinions and thoughts, which will help support your final discoveries and analyses.

The in-text critical thinking questions prepare you for what follows so you will be ready to read, write, and discuss the topic at hand from a number of

different perspectives and with various audiences and purposes in mind. These final questions, then, will spark your creativity and enable you to think more deeply about the topic. At the end of this process, your head will be filled with ideas that you will want to use in class discussions, papers, oral reports, or any other assignments you might encounter.

As you practice each of the rhetorical patterns of thought in isolation, you should be aware of building on your previous thinking skills. As the book progresses, the rhetorical modes become more complex and require a higher degree of concentration and effort. You should, therefore, keep in mind that you ultimately want to let these skills develop into a high-powered, well-developed ability to process the world around you—including reading, writing, seeing, and feeling—on the most advanced analytical level you can master.

THE READING–WRITING CONNECTION

Your approach to critical thinking will determine your potential as a reader and a writer. Continuing to refine your definition of critical thinking and your own ability to think critically is important to your progress and success as a student. With a good, clear understanding of critical thinking, you are now ready to move on to the relationship of critical thinking to reading and writing.

Part of becoming a better writer involves understanding that reading and writing are companion activities that engage people in the creation of thought and meaning—either as readers interpreting a text or as writers constructing one. Clear thinking is the pivotal point that connects these two efforts. If you learn to apply your critical thinking skills to your reading, you will naturally be able to write critically. You must process thoughts on this higher level as you read in order to produce essays of your own on this level. In other words, you must "import" your reading critically to "export" critical writing.These next two chapters explain the relationship of reading and writing and give annotated examples of these processes at work. Part I ends with Reading and Writing Inventories that will serve as a summary of these processes and a reference for your reading and writing throughout this textbook.

MyWritingLab™ Visit Ch. 1 Thinking Critically in *MyWritingLab* to test your understanding of the chapter learning objectives.

Chapter 2

Reading Critically

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After completing this chapter, you will be able to do the following:

- Understand the reading process
- Use the reading process to read critically

Reading critically begins with developing a natural curiosity about an essay's subject and then nurturing that curiosity throughout the reading process. It involves many different activities that work together to keep your mind active and engaged, all of which revolve around approaching your reading with an inquiring mind. To learn as much as you can from an essay, you need to read closely and deeply. That means you work in partnership with your reading material to make meaning literally interpretively, and analytically.

THE READING PROCESS

The reading process begins as soon as you get a reading assignment. It involves many different activities from getting ready to read to thinking critically about your reading. First, you should study any preliminary material you can find, then read the essay to get a general overview of its main ideas, and finally read the selection again to achieve a deeper understanding of its content. These three phases of the reading process—preparing to read, reading, and rereading—will help you develop the natural curiosity you need to be a good reader. What is especially important is establishing your own routine for reading that is comfortable for you. Once you establish your

reading ritual, make sure you go through the entire process for each of your assignments. The Reading Inventory at the end of this chapter will guide you through this discovery process.

Preparing to Read

Focusing your attention is an important first stage in the reading processes. In fact, learning as much as you can about an essay and its context (the circumstances surrounding its development) before you begin reading can help you move through the essay with an energetic, active mind and then reach some degree of analysis before writing on the assigned topics. In particular, knowing where an essay was first published, studying the writer's background, and doing some preliminary thinking about the subject of a reading selection will help you establish a rhetorical context for the writer's ideas and encourage you to form some valid opinions of your own on the topic.

As you approach any essay, you should concentrate on four specific areas that will begin to give you an overview of the material you are about to read. We will use an essay by Lewis Thomas to demonstrate these techniques.

Title. A close look at the title will usually provide important clues about the author's attitude toward the topic, his or her stand on an issue, or the mood of the essay. It can also furnish you with a sense of audience and purpose.

To Err Is Human

From this title, for example, we might infer that the author will discuss errors, human nature, and the extent to which mistakes influence human behavior. The title is half of a well-known proverb written by Alexander Pope ("To err is human, to forgive, divine"), so we might speculate further that the author has written an essay intended for a well-read audience interested in the relationship between errors and humanity. After reading only four words of the essay—its title—you already have a good deal of information about the subject, its audience, and the author's attitude toward both.

Synopsis. The Rhetorical Table of Contents in this text contains a synopsis of each essay, very much like the following, so you can discover more specific details about its contents before you begin reading.

> Physician Lewis Thomas explains how we can profit from our mistakes—especially if we trust human nature. Perhaps someday, he says, we can apply this same principle to the computer and magnify the advantages of these errors.

From this synopsis, we learn that Thomas's essay will be an analysis of human errors and of the ways in which we can benefit from those errors. The synopsis also tells us that the computer has the potential to magnify the value of our own innate errors.

Biography. Learning as much as you can about the author of an essay will generally stimulate your interest in the material and help you achieve a deeper understanding of the issues to be discussed. It also provides a context for your reading. From the biographies in this book, you can learn, for example, whether a writer is young or old, conservative or liberal, open- or close-minded. You might also discover if the essay was written at the beginning, middle, or end of the author's career or how well versed the writer is on the topic. Such information will invariably help you reach a more thorough understanding of a selection's ideas, audience, and logical structure. If such information is not provided for other reading tasks, you might go to the Internet to learn about the author.

LEWIS THOMAS (1913–1993)

Lewis Thomas was a physician who, until his death in 1993, was president emeritus of the Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center and scholar-in-residence at the Cornell University Medical Center in New York City. A graduate of Princeton University and Harvard Medical School, he was previously head of Pathology and dean of the New York University–Bellevue Medical Center and dean of the Yale Medical School. In addition to having written over two hundred scientific papers on virology and immunology, he authored many popular scientific essays, some of which have been collected in *Lives of a Cell* (1974), *The Medusa and the Snail* (1979), *Late Night Thoughts on Listening to Mahler's Ninth Symphony* (1983), *Etcetera, Etcetera* (1990), and *The Fragile Species* (1992). The memoirs of his distinguished career have been published in *The Youngest Science: Notes of a Medicine Watcher* (1983). Thomas liked to refer to his essays as "experiments in thought": "Although I usually think I know what I'm going to be writing about, what I'm going to say, most of the time it doesn't happen that way at all. At some point, I get misled down a garden path. I get surprised by an idea that I hadn't anticipated getting, which is a little bit like being in a laboratory."

As this information indicates, Thomas was a prominent physician who published widely on scientific topics. We know that he considered his essays "experiments in thought," which makes us expect a relaxed, spontaneous treatment of his subjects. From this biography, we can also infer that he was a leader in the medical world and that, because of the positions he has had held,

he was well respected in his professional life. Last, we can speculate that he had a clear sense of his audience because he was able to present difficult concepts in clear, everyday language.

Prereading Background and Questions. One other type of preliminary material in this text will broaden your overview of the topic and enable you to approach the essay with an active, inquiring mind. The "Preparing to Read" background information and questions following the biographies are intended to focus your attention and stimulate your curiosity before you begin the essay. They will also prepare you to form your own opinions on the essay and make predictions as you read.

Learning where, why, and how an essay was first written will provide you with a context for the material you are about to read: Why did the author write this selection? Where was it first published? Who was the author's original audience? This type of information enables you to understand the circumstances surrounding the development of the selection and to identify any topical or historical references the author makes. All the selections in this textbook were published elsewhere first—in another book, a journal, or a magazine. The author's original audience, therefore, consisted of the readers of that particular publication.

In addition, two types of questions will serve to focus your attention. The first type (Exploring Experience) asks you to begin drawing on your prior knowledge in reference to this particular topic; they ask pointed questions about your previous life experiences in preparation for this reading assignment. The second set (Learning Online) guides you to an Internet activity that will prepare you for your reading; this activity is then linked to the first writing assignment at the end of the essay.

Preparing to Read

The following essay, which originally appeared in the *New England Journal of Medicine* (January 1976), illustrates the clarity and ease with which Thomas explains complex scientific topics.

Exploring Experience: As you prepare to read this essay, take a few moments to think about the role mistakes play in our lives: What are some memorable mistakes you have made? Did you learn anything important from these errors? Do you make more or fewer mistakes than other people you know? Do you see any advantages to making mistakes? Any disadvantages?

LEARNING ONLINE Most computers have games included in their operating systems. Find a game on your computer, and play it for a while. Who won? What types of mistakes did the computer make? What types of mistakes did you make? Consider your experience while reading Thomas's essay.

From the sample "Preparing to Read" material, we learn that Thomas's essay "To Err Is Human" was originally published in the *New England Journal of Medicine,* a prestigious periodical read principally by members of the scientific community. Written in 1976, the article plays on its audience's growing fascination with computers and with the limits of artificial intelligence—subjects just as timely today as they were in the mid-1970s.

The Exploring Experience questions here prompt you to consider your own ideas, opinions, or actions as a way to help you generate thoughts on the topic of errors in our lives. The Internet exercise is designed to stimulate your thinking and expand your knowledge on this and related subjects. These queries are, ideally, the last step in preparing yourself for the active role you should play as a reader.

If questions are not provided for your reading in other courses, you might generate some for yourself so you can look for the answers to them as you read. Keeping a journal to respond to these questions is an excellent idea because you will then have a record of your thoughts on various subjects related to your reading assignments.

Reading

People read essays in books, newspapers, magazines, and journals for a great variety of reasons. One reader may want to be stimulated intellectually, whereas another seeks relaxation; one person reads to keep up with the latest developments in his or her profession, whereas the next wants to learn why a certain event happened or how something can be done; finally, some people read to be challenged by new ideas, whereas others find comfort principally in printed material that supports their own moral, social, or political opinions. The essays in this textbook fulfill all these expectations in different ways. They have been chosen, however, not only for these reasons but for an additional, broader purpose: Reading them can help make you a better writer.

Every time you read an essay in this book, you will also be preparing to write your own essay based on the same rhetorical pattern. For this reason, as you read, you should pay careful attention to both the content (subject matter) and the form (language, sentence structure, organization, and development of ideas) of each essay. In this way, you will see how experienced writers use particular rhetorical modes or patterns of thought to organize and communicate their ideas. Each essay in this collection features one dominant pattern that is supported by several others. The more aware you are of each author's writing techniques, the more skillfully you will be able to apply these strategies to your own writing.

The questions before and after each essay teach you a way of reading that can help you discover the relationships of a writer's ideas to one another as well as to your own thoughts. These questions can also help clarify for you the connections among the writer's topic, his or her style or manner of expression, and your own composing process. Such an approach to the process of reading takes some of the mystery out of reading and writing and makes them manageable tasks at which anyone can become proficient.

Within each essay, at the bottom of the pages, are questions designed specifically to raise your level of thinking as you read. They provide a "bridge" between the personal prereading questions before each essay and the more broad-based academic questions and assignments that follow each essay. In other words, the questions within the essays prepare you for the thinking and processing you will be asked to do at the end of a reading assignment. These "bridge" questions actually teach you how to interact critically with your reading material, guiding you through the text as you become partners with the essay in the creation of meaning. They invite you to engage fully with your reading and bring it into your life so you will understand it both instinctively and intellectually. If you take the time to produce written responses to these questions, you will quite naturally form your own opinions and arguments in preparation for the assignments that follow each essay.

To understand your reading material on the critical level, you should be prepared to read each essay at least three times. The first reading is an overview, during which you want to get a general sense of the essay in relation to its title, purpose, audience, and publication information. You should annotate the essay with your personal reactions and make sure you understand all the author's vocabulary. You should also read the questions at the bottom of the pages, but don't answer them until your second reading.

To illustrate this process, on the following pages Lewis Thomas's essay is printed with a student's comments in the margins, showing how she interacted with the essay while reading it for the first time. The student also circled words she didn't know and put their definitions in the margins.

LEWIS THOMAS (1913–1993)

To Err Is Human

Boy is this true

Everyone must have had at least one personal experience with a computer error by this time. Bank balances are suddenly reported to have jumped from $379 into the millions, appeals for charitable contributions are mailed over and over to people with crazy sounding names at your address, department stores send the wrong bills, utility companies write that they're turning everything off, that sort of thing. If you manage to get in touch with someone and complain, you then get instantaneously typed, guilty letters from the same computer, saying, "Our computer was in error, and an adjustment is being made in your account." 1

Last spring this happened to me

exactly

These are supposed to be the sheerest, blindest accidents. Mistakes are not believed to be part of the normal behavior of a good machine. If things go wrong, it must be a personal, human error, the result of fingering, tampering, a button getting stuck, someone hitting the wrong key. The computer, at its normal best, is infallible. 2

How can this be?

perfect

I wonder whether this can be true. After all, the whole point of computers is that they represent an extension of the human brain, vastly improved upon but nonetheless human, superhuman maybe.[1] A good computer can think clearly and quickly enough to beat you at chess, and some of them have even been programmed to write obscure verse. They can do anything we can do, and more besides. 3

In what way?

Can this be proven?

I expected this essay to be so much more stuffy than it is. I can even understand it.

It is not yet known whether a computer has its own consciousness, and it would be hard to find out about this. When you walk into one of those great halls now built for the huge machines, and stand listening, it is easy to imagine that the faint, distant noises are the sound of thinking, and the turning of 4

Thinking Critically

1 To what extent do you feel computers "extend" the human brain? Can humans do anything that computers can't do? If so, what?

the spools gives them the look of wild creatures rolling their eyes in the effort to concentrate, choking with information. But real thinking, and dreaming, are other matters.

In what way?

good, clear comparison for the general reader

On the other hand, the evidences of something like an unconscious, equivalent to ours, are all around, in every mail. As extensions of the human brain, they have been constructed with the same property of error, spontaneous, uncontrolled, and rich in possibilities. [2]

5

so true

Mistakes are at the very base of human thought, embedded there, feeding the structure like root nodules. If we were not provided with the knack of being wrong, we could never get anything useful done. We think our way along by choosing between right and wrong alternatives, and the wrong choices have to be made as frequently as the right ones. We get along in life this way. We are built to make mistakes, coded for error. [3]

6

great image

I don't understand this??

I agree! This is how we learn

We learn, as we say, by "trial and error." Why do we always say that? Why not "trial and rightness" or "trial and triumph"? The old phrase puts it that way because that is, in real life, the way it is done.

7

Another effective comparison for the general reader

A good laboratory, like a good bank or a corporation or government, has to run like a computer. Almost everything is done flawlessly, by the book, and all the numbers add up to the predicted sums. The days go by. And then, if it is a lucky day, and a lucky laboratory, somebody makes a mistake: the wrong buffer, something in one of the blanks, a decimal misplaced in reading counts, the warm room off by a degree and a half, a mouse out of his box, or just a misreading of the day's protocol. Whatever, when the results come in, something is obviously screwed up, and then the action can begin.

8

Isn't this a contradiction?

storage area for data being transferred

plan

What?

The misreading is not the important error; it opens the way. The next step is the crucial one. If the investigator can bring himself to say, "But even so, look at that!" then the new finding, whatever it is, is

9

aha!

Thinking Critically

2 How could computer errors be "rich in possibilities"?

3 Have you ever made an error that turned out to be beneficial? What happened?

ready for snatching. What is needed, for progress to be made, is the move based on error.

Whenever new kinds of thinking are about to be accomplished, or new varieties of music, there has to be an argument beforehand. With two sides debating in the same mind, haranguing, there is an amiable understanding that one is right and the other wrong. Sooner or later the thing is settled, but there can be no action at all if there are not the two sides and the argument. The hope is in the faculty of wrongness, the tendency toward error. The capacity to leap across mountains of information and land lightly on the wrong side represents the highest of human endowments. 10

arguing

interesting idea

I believe Thomas here because of his background

It may be that this is a uniquely human gift, perhaps even stipulated in our genetic instructions.[4] Other creatures do not seem to have DNA sequences for making mistakes as a routine part of daily living, certainly not for programmed error as a guide for action. 11

Could this be related to the human ability to think critically?

We are at our human finest, dancing with our minds, when there are more choices than two. Sometimes there are ten, even twenty different ways to go, all but one bound to be wrong, and the richness of selection in such situations can lift us onto totally new ground. This process is called exploration and is based on human fallibility. If we had only a single center in our brains, capable of responding only when a correct decision was to be made, instead of the jumble of different, credulous, easily conned clusters of neurons that provide for being flung off into blind alleys, up trees, down dead ends, out into blue sky, along wrong turnings, around bends, we could only stay the way we are today, stuck fast. 12

Yes, but this is so frustrating

nice mental image

imperfection

gullible

fooled

This is a great sentence—it has a lot of feeling

The lower animals do not have this splendid freedom. They are limited, most of them, to absolute infallibility. Cats, for all their good side, never make mistakes. I have never seen a maladroit, clumsy, or blundering cat. Dogs are sometimes fallible, occasionally able to make charming minor mistakes, but they 13

I love the phrase "splendid freedom"

See ¶11

look up "maladroit"

perfection

awkward

Thinking Critically

4 Do you agree with Thomas that we are genetically programmed to make mistakes in our lives? Explain your answer.

I like this idea

get this way by trying to mimic their masters. Fish are flawless in everything they do. Individual cells in a tissue are mindless machines, perfect in their performance, as absolutely inhuman as bees.

I never thought of mistakes this way

We should have this in mind as we become dependent on more complex computers for the arrangement of our affairs. Give the computers their heads, I say; let them go their way. If we can learn to do this, turning our heads to one side and wincing while the work proceeds, the possibilities for the future of mankind, and computerkind, are limitless. Your average good computer can make calculations in an instant which would take a lifetime of slide rules for any of us. Think of what we could gain from the near infinity of precise, machine-made miscomputation which is now so easily within our grasp. We would begin the solving of some of our hardest problems. How, for instance, should we go about organizing ourselves for social living on a planetary scale, now that we have become, as a plain fact of life, a single community? We can assume, as a working hypothesis, that all the right ways of doing this are unworkable. What we need, then, for moving ahead, is a set of wrong alternatives much longer and more interesting than the short list of mistaken courses that any of us can think up right now. We need, in fact, an infinite list, and when it is printed out we need the computer to turn itself on and select, at random, the next way to go. If it is a big enough mistake, we could find ourselves on a new level, stunned, out in the clear, ready to move again. [5, 6]

14

Thomas makes our technology sound really exciting

so true

error or mistake

yes

We need to program computers to make deliberate mistakes so they can help our natural human tendency to learn thru error

So mistakes have value!

Not a contradiction after all

After you have read the essay for the first time, summarize its main ideas in some fashion. The form of this task might be anything from a drawing of the main ideas as they connect with one another to a succinct written summary. You could draw a graph or map of the topics in the essay (in much the same way that a person would draw a map of an area for someone unfamiliar with a particular route); outline the ideas to get an overview of the piece; or summarize the ideas to check your understanding of the main

Thinking Critically

5 What do the author's final words mean to you: "stunned, out in the clear, ready to move again"?

6 Why do you think Thomas ends his essay this way?

points of the selection. Any of these tasks can be completed from your original notes and underlining. Each will give you a slightly more thorough understanding of what you have read.

Finally, read the questions and assignments following the essay to help focus your thinking for the second reading. Don't answer the questions at this time; just read them to make sure you are picking up the main ideas from the selection and thinking about relevant connections among those ideas.

Rereading

The second and third readings will dramatically increase your understanding of each essay in this book. The temptation to skip these two stages of the reading process is often powerful, but these readings are crucial to your development as a critical reader in all your courses. Rereading can be compared to seeing a good movie for the second or third time: The first viewing provides you with a general understanding of the plot, the characters, the setting, and the overall artistic accomplishment of the director; during the second viewing, however, you would notice many more details and see their specific contributions to the artistic whole. Similarly, the second and third readings of an essay provide for a much deeper understanding of the essay and prepare you to analyze the writer's ideas.

Your second reading is a time to develop a deeper understanding of the author's argument or main ideas. Concentrate on reading "with the grain," as the rhetorician John Bean calls it, meaning you are essentially trying to adopt the author's reasoning in an attempt to learn how he or she thinks and came to certain conclusions. This reading will expand your reasoning capacity and stimulate new ideas.

Also during this reading, you should answer the questions at the bottom of the pages of the essay (the "bridge" questions). These questions are marked throughout the text both in the essay and at the bottom of the pages by numbers within diamonds. Then, you might ask some additional questions of your own. You will get the most out of this stage if you respond in writing. Keeping a journal to collect these responses is especially effective as you work to make this essay your own. Here are some sample student responses to the bridge questions accompanying the Thomas essay.

1. Sample response: Computers can supply us with more memory than we could ever have. Perhaps we even rely on them too much for this service. On the other hand, I think we can reason on more complex levels than the computer can.

2. Sample response: Errors on the computer, like errors made by humans, might lead to new discoveries or new insights into old theories and observations.
3. Sample response: I have made several mistakes that turned out to be beneficial: I dated a guy who turned out to be a negative force in my life, which helped me understand what it means to be happy; I followed a lead on the Internet that taught me an important lesson; and I learned a lot about myself when I discovered a mistake I made on a math test.
4. Sample response: Compared to cats and dogs, we are definitely programmed to make mistakes. We are not meant to do everything perfectly, and we learn from our mistakes—in both positive and negative ways.
5. Sample response: My guess is that Thomas means we will be stunned by our new discoveries and ready to break into the clear—like a football player running freely with the ball.
6. Sample response: This ending sounds like a new beginning ("stunned," "into the clear"), which is an effective way to end his essay and get his point across.

Then, during your third reading, you should consciously read "against the grain," actively doubting and challenging what the author is saying. Do some detective work, and look closely at the assumptions on which the essay is based: For example, how does the writer move from idea to idea? What hidden assertions lie behind these ideas? Do you agree or disagree with these assertions? Your assessment of these unspoken assumptions will often play a major role in your critical response to an essay. In the case of Thomas's essay, do you accept the unspoken connection he makes between the workings of the human brain and the computer? What parts of the essay hinge on your acceptance of this connection? What other assumptions are fundamental to Thomas's reasoning? If you accept his thinking along the way, you are more likely to agree with the general flow of Thomas's essay. If you discover a flaw in his premises or assumptions, your acceptance of his argument will start to break down.

Next, answer the questions that follow the essay. The "Understanding Details" questions will help you comprehend and remember what you have read on both the literal and the interpretive levels. Some of the questions (the literal questions) ask you to restate various important points the author makes; others (the interpretive questions) help you see relationships among the different ideas presented.

UNDERSTANDING DETAILS

Literal	1. According to Thomas, in what ways are computers and humans similar? How are they different?
Literal/ Interpretive	2. How do we learn by "trial and error"? Why is this a useful way to learn?
Interpretive	3. What does Thomas mean by the statement, "If we were not provided with the knack of being wrong, we could never get anything useful done" (paragraph 6)?
Interpretive	4. According to Thomas, in what important ways do humans and "lower" animals differ? What does this comparison have to do with Thomas's main line of reasoning?

The "Reading Critically" questions require you to analyze and evaluate some of the writer's ideas to form valid opinions of your own. These questions demand a higher level of thought than the previous set and help you prepare more specifically for the discussion/writing assignments that follow the questions.

READING CRITICALLY

Analytical	1. What is Thomas's main point in this essay? How do the references to computers help make his case?
Analytical	2. In paragraph 10, Thomas explains that an argument must precede the beginning of something new and different. Do you think this is an accurate observation? Explain your answer.
Analytical	3. Why does Thomas perceive human error as such a positive quality? What does "exploration" have to do with this quality (paragraph 12)?
Analytical	4. What could we gain from "the near infinity of precise, machine-made miscomputation" (paragraph 14)? In what ways would our civilization advance?

The "Discovering Rhetorical Strategies" questions ask you to look closely at what strategies the writer uses to develop his or her thesis and how those strategies work. The questions address important features of the writer's composing process, such as word choice, use of detail, transitions, statement of purpose, organization of ideas, sentence structure, and paragraph development. The intent of these questions is to raise various

elements of the composing process to the conscious level so you can use them later in your own essays. If you are able to understand and describe what choices a writer makes to create certain effects in his or her prose, you are more likely to be able to discover the range of choices available to you as you write, and you will also become more aware of your ability to control your readers' thoughts and feelings.

DISCOVERING RHETORICAL STRATEGIES

1. Thomas begins his essay with a list of experiences most of us have had at one time or another. Do you find this an effective beginning? Why or why not?
2. Which main points in his essay does Thomas develop in most detail? Why do you think he chooses to develop these points so thoroughly?
3. Explain the simile Thomas uses in paragraph 6: "Mistakes are at the very base of human thought, embedded there, feeding the structure like root nodules." Is this comparison between mistakes and root nodules useful in this context? Why or why not? Find another simile or metaphor in this essay, and explain how it works.
4. What principal rhetorical strategies does Thomas use to make his point? Give examples of each from the essay.

A final set of questions, "Making Connections," asks you to consider the essay you have just read in reference to other essays in this book. Written so you can focus your responses on the essays you have read, the questions have you compare the writers' treatment of an idea, the authors' style of writing, the differences in their opinions, or the similarities between their views of the world. Such questions will help you see connections in your own life—not only in your reading and your immediate environment, but also in the larger world around you. These questions, in particular, encourage you to move from specific references in the selections to a broader range of issues and circumstances that affect your daily life.

MAKING CONNECTIONS

1. Kimberly Wozencraft ("Notes from the Country Club") and Joe Keohane ("How Facts Backfire") refer both directly and indirectly to learning from mistakes. Would Lewis Thomas agree with either of their approaches to this topic? In what ways do any of these authors you have read agree about the benefits of making errors? In what ways do they differ on the topic? Explain your answer.

2. Lewis Thomas, Jessica Mitford ("Behind the Formaldehyde Curtain"), and Michael Dorris ("The Broken Cord") all write about the intersection of science and humanity. Which of these authors, from what you have read, is most intrigued by the human aspect of this equation? Explain your answer.
3. According to Thomas, humans are complex organisms with a great deal of untapped potential. Maya Angelou ("New Directions") and Sarah Toler ("Understanding the Birth Order Relationship") also comment on the uniqueness of human beings. In what ways do any of these writers that you have read agree or disagree with each other on the intelligence and resourcefulness of humans? To what extent would each author argue that we use our mental capacities wisely and completely? Explain your answer.

The last stage of responding to the reading selections in this text offers you various "Ideas for Discussion/Writing" that will allow you to demonstrate the different skills you have learned in each chapter. This material includes questions to consider before you write, followed by the writing topics themselves. You will be most successful if you envision each writing experience as an organic process that follows a natural, recursive cycle of prewriting, writing, and rewriting, which we will discuss in the next chapter.

IDEAS FOR DISCUSSION/WRITING

Preparing to Write

Write freely about an important mistake you have made: How did the mistake make you feel? What (if anything) did you learn from this mistake? What did you fail to learn that you should have learned? Did this mistake have any positive impact on your life? What were its negative consequences? How crucial are mistakes in our lives?

Choosing a Topic MyWritingLab™

1. **LEARNING ONLINE** Return to the game you played in "Preparing to Read." If you could change a mistake you made in this game, what mistake would you fix? Why would you rethink this play? Write an analysis in which you reflect on this mistake, and offer an explanation of its consequences and outcomes. Then, relate the lesson you learned to a similar life experience.
2. You have decided to write an editorial for your local newspaper concerning the impact of computers on our lives. Cite specific experiences you have had with computers to help make your main point.

3. You have been invited back to your high school to make a speech to a senior English class about how people can learn from their mistakes. Write your speech in the form of an essay explaining what you learned from a crucial mistake you have made. Use examples to show these students that mistakes can be positive factors in their lives.
4. In an essay for your writing class, explain one specific human quality. Use Thomas's essay as a model. Cite examples to support your explanation.

READING CRITICALLY

Reading critically is the heart and soul of successful studying. But it requires reflection. Only when the imagination is engaged will you read critically and be productive students in our fast-paced world. Taking the time to read critically will positively affect every aspect of your life in and out of college—especially your writing ability.

Because checklists can provide a helpful method of learning and reviewing important information, we offer a series of questions on the next page that represents the reading process we have just described. All these guidelines can be used for your reading in any discipline. Keeping a continuous journal of your responses to your readings is an excellent way to improve your reading and raise your level of understanding.

MyWritingLab™ Visit Ch. 2 Reading Critically in *MyWritingLab* to complete the writing assignments and test your understanding of the chapter learning objectives.

READING CHECKLIST

Preparing to Read

Title

√ What can you infer from the title of the essay?
√ Who do you think is the author's audience? What is the principal purpose of the essay?

Synopsis

√ What is the general subject of the essay?
√ What is the author's approach to the subject?

Biography

√ What do you know about the author's age, political stance, general beliefs?
√ How qualified is the author to write on this subject?
√ When did the author write the essay? Under what conditions? In what context?

Prereading Background and Questions

√ Where was the essay first published?
√ What would you like to learn about this topic?
√ What are some of your opinions on this subject?

Reading

√ What are the essay's main ideas?
√ What words do you need to look up?
√ What are your initial reactions to the ideas in this essay?

Rereading

√ What do you agree with in this essay? What do you disagree with?
√ What assumptions underlie the author's reasoning?
√ Do you have a solid interpretive understanding of this essay? Do you understand the relationship among ideas? What conclusions can you draw from this essay?
√ Do you have an accurate analytical understanding of this essay? Which ideas can you take apart, examine, and put back together again? What is your evaluation of this material?
√ Do you understand the rhetorical strategies the writer uses and the way they work? What are the effects of these strategies?
√ How does the author achieve his or her purpose in this essay?

Chapter 3

WRITING CRITICALLY

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After completing this chapter, you will be able to do the following:

- Understand the writing process
- Use the writing process to write critically

Writing critically involves analyzing your topic in detail and then engaging deeply in a sustained investigation of one aspect of that topic. Just as reading does, writing requires a natural curiosity about an essay's subject that will prompt your investigation. Structuring your analysis in some standard way is essential for communicating your ideas to others so that you always present a beginning, middle, and end to your discussion. To understand this structure and use it as effectively as possible, you need to learn about the writing process and then mold it to your own purposes.

THE WRITING PROCESS

The phases of the writing process mirror those of the reading process—preparing to write, writing, and rewriting. Following this format will help you develop the natural curiosity you need to write a good analytic essay. The writing process consists of identifiable "stages" that overlap in a number of unique ways. No two people write in the same way, so it is important for you to discover a writing process that is most comfortable for you.