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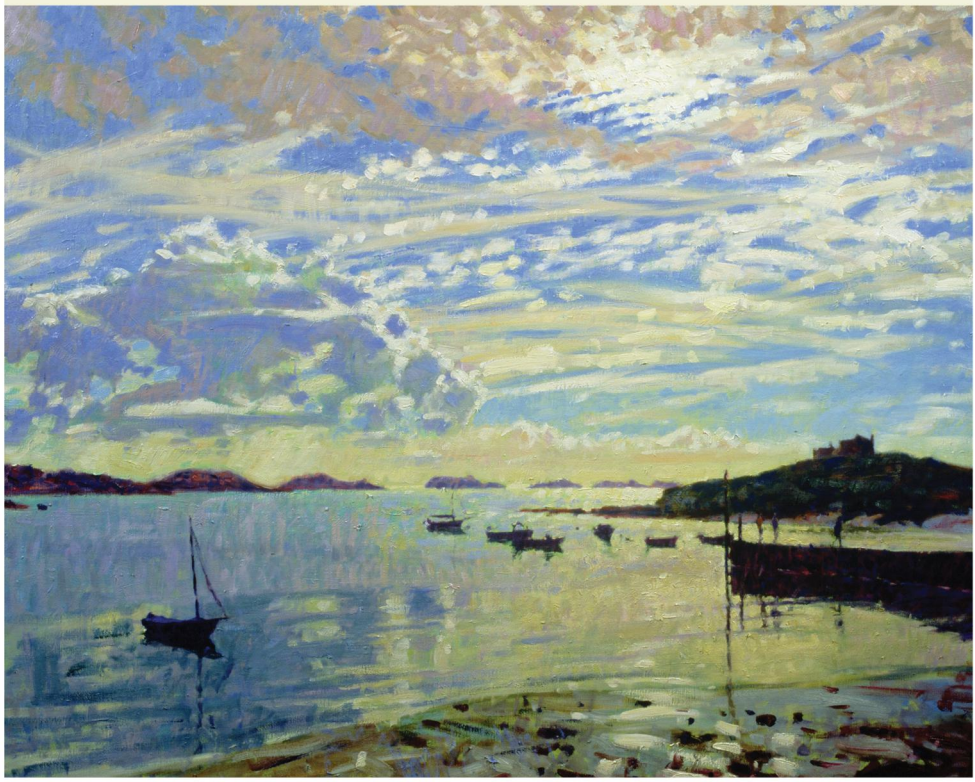
16TH EDITION

Readings for Writers

Jo Ray McCuen-Metherell
Anthony C. Winkler



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Australia • Brazil • Mexico • Singapore • United Kingdom • United States

***Readings for Writers*, Sixteenth Edition**
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Contents

Thematic Table of Contents

Issues for Critical Thinking and Debate

In Print and Online in MindTap for *Readings for Writers* 16th Edition
Readings and images include discussion questions.

The American Dream (Chapter 3)

IN PRINT AND MINDTAP

By Our Own Bootstraps / W. Michael Cox and Richard Alm

Long Live the American Dream / Shikha Dalmia

Terrorism (Theme 1)

IN PRINT AND MINDTAP

Terrorism: America in Fear / Jeffrey Metherell (student essay)

ONLY IN MINDTAP

My Accidental Jihad / Krista Bremer

The Real War / Thomas L. Friedman

Self-Image (Theme 2)

IN PRINT AND MINDTAP

Body Modification—Think about it! / Shelley Taylor (student essay)

ONLY IN MINDTAP

Body Image / Cindy Maynard

Bullying (Theme 3)

IN PRINT AND MINDTAP

Bullied / Gunnar Neuman (student essay)

ONLY IN MINDTAP

In Defeat of Bullies: Awareness Is Power / Joyce Plage

The Three Little Pigs and the Big Bad Wolf / Anonymous

Drugs and Society (Theme 4)

IN PRINT AND IN MINDTAP

Solving the Drug Problem in the United States / Jordan Dubini (student essay)

Preface

For over 35 years, *Readings for Writers* has been the leading rhetorical reader for the freshman composition course. It has sold over a million copies and has been used by hundreds of thousands of students, providing carefully crafted, time-tested instruction designed to equip students with the skills they need to produce more powerful writing.

Over the years, *Readings for Writers* has kept pace with the themes, times, and technology, some of which have perished and disappeared. For example, we have bounded from slow research in library carrels to instant research on the Internet. Although many of the issues we debated decades ago remain unresolved, we have moved on to more current topics such as terrorism and online dating. Nonetheless, we continue to teach writing as a skill that combines clarity and precision. Best of all, we immerse students in a mixture of classical masterpieces as well as progressive prize winners, which we encourage them to use as intellectual models.

Readings for Writers provides a taste of all kinds of brilliant writing—literary classics, poems, speeches, narratives, and philosophy. Here William Shakespeare and James Joyce mingle with Maya Angelou and Judith Ortiz Cofer. The aristocrat Sir Arthur Grimble mixes with common laborer Rick Bragg. We respect and challenge each one of them. All of the anthologized material is brought together and ordered under the headings of either advice or examples, giving students, as well as instructors, an idea of the practical emphasis of each selection. It is this unique structure, range of readings, and multifaceted appeal to every conceivable taste that have endowed *Readings for Writers* with its remarkable longevity.

New to This Edition

Readings for Writers, Sixteenth Edition, includes both print and online changes. Both versions offer easy and efficient course navigation.

New Readings

The sixteenth edition features nine new readings, including selections by Daniel Defoe, Sojourner Truth, Stephen Jay Gould, Joan Didion, Amy Tan, Elizabeth Kolbert, Colson Whitehead, John McWhorter, and Adele Peters. Our goal here, as always, is to expose students to examples of preeminent writing from a diversity of perspectives. To that end, this edition contains more writing by women and people of color than ever before.

New Part Configuration

Though the major organizational principal of the book remains unchanged, this new edition offers a more streamlined, user-friendly design by collecting the image galleries, student writing, and writing tips in Part 3: Thematic Collections for Critical Thinking and Debate; the editing instruction in Part 4: Rewriting Your Writing; the punctuation instruction in Part 5: Checking Your Punctuation; and the research and documentation instruction in Part 6: Writing Research Papers.

Writing Research Papers

In keeping with the effort to provide a more user-friendly experience for students, the sample student research papers in Part 6 now include on-page annotations, allowing students to focus on making connections between the instruction and the examples with greater ease.

Unchanged in This Edition

For longtime users of *Readings for Writers*, let us reassure you that the basic structure and intent of the book remain unchanged.

- In Part 1, Chapter 3, "Synthesis: Incorporating Outside Sources," students get ample practice and instruction in effectively synthesizing outside sources. Numerous models and exercises as well as an extensive synthesis essay assignment engage students with a range of source materials. This chapter introduces students to the concepts and skills they will need to do well on the synthesis question of the AP® exam. Along with the rhetoric chapter in Part 1 and the argumentation chapter in Part 2, these three chapters cover the concepts that students need for the three AP® essays on the exam.

- The unique labeling system identifies the intended function of every anthologized piece as either giving advice about some fundamental principle of writing or as serving as examples of it.

- The "Rhetorical Thumbnail" sketches out the major considerations that went into writing the selections.

- The anthologized works offer a broad sweep of topics, styles, and arguments.

- Each anthologized piece is still followed by questions about the Facts, Strategies, and Issues explored, and is bolstered by suggestions for writing.

- Each chapter in Part 2 still ends with Chapter Writing Assignments and Writing Assignments for a Specific Audience. An added bonus of auto-gradable reading comprehension and vocabulary activities is now included in the MindTap edition of the book.

- The image galleries, analysis questions, and writing suggestions included in Part 3 offer students the opportunity to apply their newly acquired rhetorical writing skills, while at the same time sharpening their visual literacy.

- The popular student essays included in Part 3 showcase examples of real student writing, along with their commentary on how they learned to write and the personal tips they offer composition students.

All of the changes in this sixteenth edition have one unmistakable aim: to make *Readings for Writers* even easier and more practical to use than before. Combining the advice of its anthologized experts with the authors' commentary, *Readings for Writers* can still be used unaccompanied by any other book.

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MindTap is an outcome-driven application that propels students from memorization to mastery. It's the only platform that gives you complete ownership of your course. With it, you can challenge every student, build their confidence, and empower them to be unstoppable.

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Auto-graded Activities
Provide robust practice on concepts related to writing, reading, research, style, and mechanics. With varied item formats and three unique attempts per question, these activities boost student engagement and foster concept mastery.

How-to Research: Videos and Tutorials
Demystify the research process with 50 video activities narrated by academic professionals that provide tips on how to tackle each step. Corresponding auto-graded comprehension checks assure student engagement, and tutorial activities provide a framework to guide students through each phase of independent research.

Examples of Student Works
Use examples of student writing in various modes and documentation styles as flexible instructional tools: facilitate class discussion of a particular mode, provide attainable models of exemplary work, demonstrate proper formatting, or even drive a peer review practice session. The days of digging through musty files, blacking out identifying information, and scrambling to make copies before class are no more—the Examples of Student Works collection is here with vetted, curated paper samples to back your every instructional move.

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PART ONE

From Reading to Writing

A veteran English teacher once remarked to us that she had known readers who were not writers, but she had never known writers who were not readers. Neither have we. All writers begin as eager readers and continue to read throughout their lives. Their lifelong pleasure in reading wanes only in the presence of the greater pleasure they take in writing.

You may not be a writer in the sense of making a living from what you write, and you may not even write every day. But like it or not, you read every day, even if it is nothing more than the sign on a passing bus or the words on a billboard. Unless you live in a cave or on a desert island, modern life compels you to read.

All of us begin life as nonreaders. Reading is a skill that is learned in childhood and shapes our intellectual growth in ways that are still not completely understood. And even though we might have learned to read under peculiarly similar or different conditions, we all more or less share a similar reading history.

It began with the delight we felt when we first were taught to read. And once we were able to read on our own, many of us found ourselves swept away into magical worlds. Books took us on exotic journeys to places that existed only on the page and in our heads. We were visited by cats wearing hats, by talking rabbits, and by children who never grow old. We walked down yellow brick roads, sailed a balloon to the moon, and traveled with a crusty pirate in search of buried treasure on a remote island. Reading had planted in our heads a delightful high-definition TV called *imagination*, and never were colors brighter or images sharper.

But as we grew older, a curious thing happened: Reading became associated with schoolwork as we were forced to read textbooks we disliked on subjects we hated. The very act of opening a book became a labor. Soon we were watching television to relax and reading only when we had to because of schoolwork. For many, reading changed from fun to drudgery. A lucky few retained a deep love of reading and will continue throughout their lives to read for fun. Speaking for them, the famous eighteenth-century British historian Edward Gibbon wrote in his *Memoirs*: "My early and invincible love of reading, I would not exchange for the treasures of India."

If you wish to write, you should develop the habit of reading. The skill of writing well is essentially a kind of mimicry, and the more writers we read, the more examples

we can choose to imitate. And although reading voraciously is no guarantee that you will write well, your writing is likely to get better if you continue to be an avid reader.

The first part of this book—From Reading to Writing—covers the preliminary topics of a writing course. Chapter 1 covers critical reading and introduces us to one of America's most prolific writers, himself an avid reader who devoured hundreds of books each year. Chapter 2 examines the role of rhetoric, an ancient discipline that is much misunderstood today. Chapter 3 illumines the weighty skill of synthesis—that is, imbedding other writers' ideas into your own work, Chapter 4 covers the writer's voice, while Chapters 5, 6, and 7 deal first with the nuts and bolts of choosing a thesis topic and organizing a paper, and then with the indispensable craft of paragraph writing.

Among the lessons Part One teaches is this: Writing is not an isolated skill that exists apart from the intellect of the individual. It is, instead, ingrained in the whole person. Read widely and your writing is likely to get better as your judgment of good writing matures. You are also likely to rediscover pleasures you once derived from memorable storybooks—pleasures that have no box office charge, no crowds, and require no hardware more elaborate than a library card.

Chapter 1

Reading Critically

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES

In this chapter you will

- Understand the difference between casual reading, reading for pleasure, reading for information, and critical reading.
- Read critically by analyzing to see how ideas are composed, how they are connected to other ideas, and how they are often based on biases or prejudices.
- Read critically by synthesizing to absorb or blend the ideas analyzed and forge something new and original.
- Read critically by evaluating to assess and grade the material that you have read.
- Understand and apply the fourteen steps to critical reading.

Kinds of Reading

There are at least four different kinds of reading. *Casual reading* is the most common. Everyone does it. The casual reader glances at magazines, newspaper headlines, letters, email messages, and roadside signs. Casual readers read not because they want to but because they must. Many people, if not most, fall into this category.

Reading for pleasure—whether mystery novels, romances, or tales of adventure—is the second common kind of reading. Reading of this kind is relaxed and uncritical. Many readers do it at bedtime to help them fall asleep. Pleasure readers don't worry about grasping the writer's full meaning as long as they get the gist of it and are transported by the writing to an imaginary world.

Reading for information, the third kind of reading, is practiced by information seekers who use reading as a tool. This type of reading is usually done at work or at school. Doing a job well or completing an assignment on schedule is the primary purpose of reading for information. This type of reading requires attention, understanding, and memorization.

Finally, there is *critical reading*—the kind of reading you must do for your college classes and the kind we shall emphasize throughout this book. Critical reading is a more active way of reading. You engage in a kind of mental dialogue with the writer. The writer says so-and-so is the case, and you reply, "Maybe so, but what about this?" You annotate the margins of the book you're reading with your reactions and comments. You not only try to understand the author's main point, but you also try to deduce any consequences of it. Teachers and parents are forever muttering that students can't read well—that

they know what the words say, but they don't know what the words mean. Energetic curriculum creators, abhorring this vacuum in students' minds, recently jumped into the fray and designed freshman composition courses that would encourage students to read critically. So what is critical reading? One way to explain it is to say what it is not. Critical reading is not gullibility—accepting as truth anything you read. Rather, critical reading involves analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.

1. **Analysis.** First, students are encouraged to *analyze* their reading so as to see how ideas are composed, how they are connected to other ideas, and how they are often based on biases and prejudices. In research, it means to gather numerous sources that support a point. For instance, a student writing a paper on the results of online dating will need to explore journals, books, and Internet sources to see what marriage counselors, psychologists, and ordinary people have reported about online romances and what opinions they have offered on the subject.
2. **Synthesis.** Next, students are encouraged to *synthesize*, which means to absorb or blend the ideas analyzed and forge something new and original—belonging to them alone and reflecting the student's mind. In other words, the critical reader will form his own opinion after studying the opinions of other thinkers. This reaching out for new data from new sources can send students on extraordinary adventures. However, the best part about synthesis is that it challenges students to acknowledge that on most knotty subjects, more than a single opinion exists. For instance, on the subject of online dating, a student will find through research that while online dating is growing at an amazing speed, with thousands of single men and women placing their profiles on the Internet, the results are not consistent. Some couples find harmonious and lasting relationships, but others discover only sexual chaos and even dangerous liaisons. A student reading on the subject must take into account various attitudes or findings, not just one.
3. **Evaluation.** The final step in critical thinking is to *evaluate*. This step is extremely important because what it does is give students the power to assess and grade the material read. After probing ideas that are for or against a point of view, the student finally must take sides. Is online dating the best answer to finding a mate, or is it hazardous? The student's conclusion might well be that more study on the subject is needed before anyone can state with certainty that marriages arranged through the computer are either good or bad. As one teacher lectured to her class: "Blessed are they who walk in the middle of the road, for they shall avoid extremes."

   Throughout this book, we shall encourage you to read critically and to form an educated opinion on various controversies. Should the retirement age be raised again? Should the United States continue to spend billions of dollars on foreign aid, or should we use the money to solve our own problems? Should we create a path to citizenship for undocumented immigrants, or should we have them deported? These are topics on which writers disagree, and critical reading will offer you the chance to place your own weight on the seesaw. In a way, this is a complete reversal of teacher–student roles because critical reading requires that students think on their own. Now, not all college professors approve of critical thinking. In fact, some few consider it dangerous because they worry that it invites students to pass judgment on whether they should accept or reject all ideas they confront—even

time-honored truths. A few critics believe that within critical thinking lie the germs of revolution, as in the French Revolution and American Revolution, Tiananmen Square protests, Kent State shootings, the 1963 march on Washington, and the Black Lives Matter movement. Fearmongering professors worry that students will ask questions such as these: "Is this class important?" "Does anyone see an inconsistency in this university's policy?" "Why should I conform?" "Shouldn't I be allowed to think on my own and make my own rules?"

This book considers critical reading a boon, not a bane. One of our goals is to have all students using the book learn how to solve problems by shining the beam of analysis on them—to take the facts and compare them with other facts in order to extract (synthesize) the truth. We believe that you are qualified to see the historical and cultural contexts of what you read. With experience, you will realize that you cannot allow your personal experience to judge everything you read, but you must see facts in the appropriate context in which they appear. For instance, if a Libertarian insists that local services for the poor and homeless should be run exclusively by nongovernmental organizations, you have to understand that Libertarians believe that the less the government is involved in our lives, the more we shall flourish. Conversely, if a Democrat insists that the government must take part in caring for the poor and the homeless, you have to understand that Democrats believe that the government has a responsibility to provide social services. Regardless of where a writer stands on an issue, you will become a better writer yourself if you read critically. The following guidelines will help you form the correct approach to reading critically.

Steps to Critical Reading

1. **Read actively.** Determine the author's main point as well as any secondary effects that stem from it. Ask yourself whether you agree or disagree with the author's opinions. If you disagree, make a note in the margin saying why. If the author makes a mistake of logic or fact, make a note on the page where it occurred.
2. **Demystify the writer.** Many of us have the tendency to regard writers as godlike and to take everything they say as gospel. But writers are only human and are just as likely to make mistakes as anyone else. Reading critically begins with kicking the writer off the throne of public esteem and regarding the writer's work as you would any other human production—which is to say "prone to error."
3. **Understand what you read.** Reread difficult passages, looking up in a dictionary all the unfamiliar words. You cannot form an opinion about what you have read unless you understand what the author is saying. Some students find it helpful to summarize aloud any difficult ideas they encounter. Reread any difficult chapter or essay whose meaning you didn't completely comprehend. A difficult-to-understand point usually seems clearer the second time around. For example, Tolstoy's massive novel *War and Peace*, on first reading, seems like a tangled plot cluttered by an overwhelming mass of scenes and characters. On second reading, however, the plot will seem clearer and the scenes and characters more understandable.

4. **Imagine an opposing point of view for all opinions.** If the writer says that all drug trafficking offenses should carry mandatory minimum sentences, reverse the argument and see what happens. In other words, look for reasons that support the other side. For example, if an essayist is passionately against the use of dogs in medical research, try to see the opposing point of view—namely, the benefits of such research to the lives of millions who suffer from terrible diseases. A little digging will reveal that insulin, the use of which has prolonged the lives of millions of diabetics, was discovered through research on dogs. The argument boils down to this question: Does a puppy have the same worth as a human baby?
5. **Look for biases and hidden assumptions.** For example, an atheist arguing for abortion will not attribute a soul to the unborn fetus; a devout Catholic will. To ferret out possible biases and hidden assumptions, check the author's age, sex, education, and ethnic background. These and other personal biographical facts might have influenced the opinions expressed in the work, but you cannot know to what extent unless you know something about the author. (That is the rationale behind the use of biographical headnotes, which accompany the readings in this book.)
6. **Separate emotion from fact.** Talented writers frequently color an issue with emotionally charged language, thus casting their opinions in the best possible light. For example, a condemned murderer may be described in sympathetic language that draws attention away from his or her horrifying crime. Be alert to sloganeering, to bumper-sticker philosophizing about complex issues. To the neutral observer, few issues are as simple as black and white. Abortion is a more complex issue than either side presents. Capital punishment is not simply a matter of vengeance versus mercy. The tendency in public debate is to demonize the opposition and reduce issues to emotional slogans. As a critical reader, you must evaluate an argument by applying logic and reason and not be swayed by the emotionality of either side.
7. **If the issue is new to you, look up the facts.** If you are reading about an unfamiliar issue, be willing to fill in the gaps in your knowledge with research. For example, if you are reading an editorial that proposes raising home insurance rates for families taking care of foster children, you will want to know why. Is it because foster children do more property damage than other children? Is it because natural parents are apt to file lawsuits against foster parents? You can find answers to these questions by asking representatives of the affected parties: the state Department of Social Services, typical insurance agencies, foster parents associations, the county welfare directors association, any children's lobby, and others. To make a critical judgment, you must know and carefully weigh the facts.
8. **Use insights from one subject to illuminate or correct another.** Be prepared to apply what you already know to whatever you read. History can inform psychology; literature can provide insights into geography. For example, if a writer in psychology argues that most oppressed people develop a defeatist air that gives them a subconscious desire to be subjugated and makes them prey to tyrants, your knowledge of American history should tell you otherwise. As proof that oppressed people often fight oppression unto death, you can point to the Battle of Fallen Timbers in 1794, to the Battle of Tippecanoe in 1811, and to the Black Hawk War of 1832—conflicts

in which American Indians fought desperately to retain their territories rather than go meekly to the reservations. In other words, you can use what you have learned from history to refute a falsehood from psychology.

9. **Evaluate the evidence.** Critical readers do not accept evidence at face value. They question its source, its verifiability, its appropriateness. Here are some practical tips for evaluating evidence:
   - **Verify a questionable opinion by cross-checking with other sources.** For example, if a medical writer argues that heavy smoking tends to cause serious bladder diseases in males, check the medical journals for confirmation of this view. Diligent research often turns up a consensus of opinion among the experts in any field.
   - **Check the date of the evidence.** In science especially, evidence varies from year to year. Before 1976, no one really knew exactly how the immune system worked. Then Susumu Tonegawa, a geneticist at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, discovered how our bodies rearrange genetic material and manufacture diverse types of antibodies to protect us from foreign substances. In 1976, when he first started his research, the evidence would say that how these specific antibodies came about was a mystery, but that evidence would be inaccurate ten years later.
   - **Use common sense in evaluating evidence.** For example, if a writer argues that a child's handwriting can accurately predict his or her life as an adult, your own experience with human nature should lead you to reject this conclusion as speculative. No convincing evidence exists to corroborate it.
10. **Ponder the values behind a claim.** In writing the Declaration of Independence, Thomas Jefferson based his arguments on the value that "all men are created equal." On the other hand, Karl Marx based the arguments of his *Communist Manifesto* on the value that the laborer is society's greatest good. Critical reading means thinking about the values implicit in an argument. For instance, to argue that murderers should be hanged in public to satisfy society's need for revenge is to value revenge over human dignity. On the other hand, to argue that democracy can exist only with free speech is to value freedom of speech.
11. **Recognize logical fallacies.** Logic is not interested in the truth or falsehood of a claim. It is only interested in the method used to reach certain conclusions. Consider this train of thought: "All Italians are musical. Luigi is Italian; therefore, Luigi must be musical." It is perfectly logical, but we know that it is not true because the major premise "All Italians are musical" is not true. As with any people, there will be some Italians who can't sing a note. In other words, sometimes a claim is supported by evidence, and sometimes it is not. Being logical does not guarantee being right, but avoiding logical fallacies is a requirement of critical thinking. The following logical flaws are among the ones most commonly used in a wide range of arguments: the *ad hominem* attack (attacking the person instead of the point of view or the argument); the *ad populum* appeal (the use of simplistic popular slogans to convince); the *false analogy* (comparing situations that have no bearing on each other); *begging the question* (arguing in circles); *ignoring the question* (focusing on matters that are beside the point); *either/or reasoning* (seeing the problem as all black or all white, with no shades of gray); *hasty generalization* (the mistake of inadequate

sampling); and *non sequitur* (drawing a conclusion that is not connected to the evidence given). For a more detailed discussion of logical fallacies, turn to Chapter 16.

12. **Don't be seduced by bogus claims.** Arguments are often based on unsubstantiated statements. For example, a writer may warn that "recent studies show women becoming increasingly hostile to men." Or, another writer might announce, "Statistics have shown beyond doubt that most well-educated males oppose gun control." You should always remain skeptical of these and similar claims when they are unaccompanied by hardheaded evidence. A proper claim will always be documented with verifiable evidence.

13. **Annotate your reading.** Many of us have the tendency to become lazy readers. We sit back with a book and almost immediately lapse into a daze. One way to avoid being a lazy reader is to annotate your reading—to write notes as you read. To annotate your reading is, in a way, to interact with the reading—almost like chatting with the author. If you can't bring yourself to write directly on the printed page of this book, or if you're reading a digital version of this book that doesn't have markup tools, we suggest you make notes on a separate sheet or in a separate file as you read. Here are some suggestions for annotating your reading:

    - **Write down your immediate impression of the essay.**
        - **a.** Did the subject interest you?
        - **b.** Did the reading leave you inspired, worried, angry, amused, or better informed?
        - **c.** Did the reading remind you of something in your own experience? (Cite the experience.)
        - **d.** Did you agree or disagree with the author? (Note specific passages.)
        - **e.** Did the reading give you any new ideas?
    - **Note the author's style, especially the words or expressions used.**
        - **a.** What specific passages really made you think?
        - **b.** Where did the writer use an especially apt expression or image? What was it? What made it so good?
        - **c.** Where, if any place, did the author write something you didn't understand?
        - **d.** What kind of audience did the author seem to address? Did it include you, or did you feel left out?
    - **Make marginal notes that express your response to the author's ideas.**
        - **a.** Supplement the author's idea or example with one of your own.
        - **b.** Underline passages that seem essential to the author's point.
        - **c.** Write any questions you might want to ask the author if he or she were sitting next to you.
        - **d.** Write down any sudden insight you experienced.
        - **e.** Write why you agree or disagree with the author.
        - **f.** Write a marginal explanation of any allusion made by the writer. For example, in the fourth paragraph of the introduction to Part One, we wrote, "We were visited by cats wearing hats, by talking rabbits, and by children who never grow old." Did

you understand these three allusions? The first is a reference to *The Cat in the Hat* by Dr. Seuss; the second, to *Alice in Wonderland*; and the third, to *Peter Pan.*

14. **Finally, be sure you understand the writer's opening context.** The writing may be part of an ongoing debate that began before you arrived and will continue after you've left. Some essays begin by plunging right into an ongoing discussion, taking for granted that the reader is familiar with the opening context. The effect can be mystifying, like hearing an answer but not knowing the question.

Here are the principles of critical reading applied to a brief essay by CBS News commentator Andy Rooney. The annotations in the margins raise questions that we think any reasonable critical reader would ask. At the end of the essay, we provide the answers.

1. What is the opening context of this article?

2. Who is Fowler?

3. What is his book about?

4. What do we learn about Fowler's book in this paragraph?

5. What is Rooney doing here?

6. What does this quotation tell us about Fowler?

1 I would choose to have written Fowler's *Modern English Usage*.

2 My book, known far and wide and for all time as Rooney's *Modern English Usage* and comparable in sales to the Bible, would have assured my fame and fortune. Even more than that, if I'd had the kind of command of the language it would take to have written it, I would never again be uncertain about whether to use further or farther, hung or hanged, dived or dove. When I felt lousy and wanted to write about it, I'd know whether to say I felt nauseous or nauseated.

3 If I was the intellectual guru of grammar, as author of that tome, I would issue updated decrees on usage such as an end to the pretentious subjunctive. Not if I were.

4 I would split infinitives at will when I damn well felt like it, secure in my knowledge that I was setting the standard for when to and when not to. Challenged by some petty grammarian quoting a high school English textbook, I would quote myself and say, as Fowler does, "Those upon whom the fear of infinitive-splitting sits heavy should remember that to give conclusive evidence, by distortions, of misconceiving the nature of the split infinitive is far more damaging to their literary pretensions than an actual lapse could be, for it exhibits them as deaf to the normal rhythm of English sentences."

5 Never again would I suffer indecision over matters like whether it was necessary for me to use an "of" after "apropos." I would not be looking up "arcane" eight or ten times a year. I would not use "like" when I meant "such as."

7. What do these terms mean?

8. What is the best book ever written on English usage?

9. What does this paragraph mean?

10. What is the significance of "neither I nor me"?

6 The fine difference between sophisticated bits of usage such as syllepsis and zeugma would be clear in my mind. ("She ate an omelet and her heart out" is either syllepsis or zeugma. I am unclear which.)

7 Having produced the best book on English usage ever written, I would berate the editors of the newly issued *New York Times Manual of Style and Usage* for their insistence that the President of the United States be referred to as merely president except when used as a title immediately preceding his name. In my book he's The President. Corporate chief executives are plain president.

8 I would conduct a nationwide poll to choose a satisfactory gender neutral replacement for both "he," "she," "him," and "her." This would relieve writers of the cumbersome but socially correct necessity of "he or she," "him or her," or the grammatically incorrect "they" or "their" with a singular precedent. ("Someone left their keys.")

9 Eventually, I'd expect Oliver Stone to buy the movie rights to Rooney's *Modern English Usage*. His film would prove it was neither I nor me who murdered the English language.

ANSWERS TO CRITICAL READING QUESTIONS ON ANDY ROONEY

1. If you do not know the opening context of this essay, you're likely to miss the writer's intent—although you could probably reconstruct it from his essay. Rooney's essay initially appeared in an annual awards issue of the *Journal of the Screenwriters' Guild* as part of a feature called *A Writer's Fantasy—What I Wish I Had Written.* Various writers, Rooney among them, were asked to select the one work they wish they had written and say why.
2. Henry Watson Fowler (1858–1933) was an English lexicographer and philologist—someone who studies linguistics—who, in collaboration with his younger brother Frank, published in 1906 *The King's English*, a witty book on English usage and misusage. After the death of his brother, Fowler completed the classic Rooney wished he had written, *A Dictionary of Modern English Usage* (1926). Fowler was known for being definitive and blunt in his grammatical and literary opinions.

   He wrote, "Anyone who wishes to become a good writer should endeavor, before he allows himself to be tempted by the more showy qualities, to be direct, simple, brief, vigorous, and lucid"—certainly good advice for anyone who writes.
3. Many people consider *A Dictionary of Modern English Usage* to be the definitive book on English usage and grammar. Grammarians often consult it to settle arguments over the fine points of acceptable usage.

4. We learn in this paragraph that Fowler's book sold as well as the Bible and that its popularity ensured fame and fortune to its writer.
5. He's mocking the rule of the subjunctive, which many people think is an ugly Latin holdover.
6. It gives us a glimpse of the sometimes starchy writing style of Fowler, who is capable of going from clarity and plainness to a scholastic denseness in a single page.
7. These are examples of the kind of arcane topics that Fowler deals with in his book. *Syllepsis* refers to the use of a word in the same grammatical relationship with two other words while disagreeing in case, gender, number, or sense with one of them. An example is "Neither she nor they are coming," where *are* agrees with *they* but not with *she*. Syllepsis is also a figure of speech in which a single word is linked to two others but in different senses, as in this use of *write*: "I write with enthusiasm and a pen." *Zeugma* refers to the linking of one word to two, one of which it does not grammatically fit, as in this use of *were*: "The seeds were devoured but the banana uneaten."
8. Obviously Fowler's, in Rooney's opinion.
9. Rooney is referring here to the quest for a nonsexist, third-person pronoun so that a sentence like "A doctor should take care of his patients" can be written without the gender bias implicit in the use of "his." In the time since Rooney wrote this essay, the use of "the singular they"—which he refers to as "the grammatically incorrect 'they' or 'their' with a singular precedent"—has grown in favor. Major style guides, including *The Chicago Manual of Style* and *The Associated Press Stylebook*, either recommend or accept this usage.
10. Again, Rooney is spoofing another fusty rule from English grammar—namely, that the verb "to be" takes no object. Rigorous practice of this rule is responsible for the snooty construction one hears over the telephone occasionally: "It is I" or "This is he."

Chapter 2

Rhetoric: The Art of Persuasion

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES

In this chapter you will

- Use rhetoric to make your case in the strongest and best possible way.
- Use rhetoric to communicate with your audience.
- Use good grammar to help you communicate.
- Consider audience and purpose in your writing.
- Learn to develop and use your internal reader and editor.
- Adapt a level of English that is appropriate for the purpose and audience of your writing.
- Approach your writing assignments with an understanding that writing is a process.
- Learn to write about the many types of visual images.

Road Map to Rhetoric

Rhetoric is the art of putting one's case in the strongest and best possible way. All of the strategies of communicating in speech and writing that we use daily in an attempt to sway each other come under its heading, with practical effects so lasting and widespread that we take them for granted. For instance, when we open a popular cookbook, we expect it to be written clearly, with ordinary words framed into speakable sentences. We do not expect it to be dense and wordy like a piece of legislation. Because of rhetoric, cookbooks are not written like legal contracts; insurance policies do not read like a comic's jokes; and love letters do not sound like State of the Union speeches.

Yet, there is no law requiring that this should be so. It is merely the effect of rhetoric—a combination of audience expectation and writers' desire to please—that operates like a force of nature. No doubt there are badly written cookbooks, but few are either published or read; flippant insurance companies go bankrupt; and pompous lovers have trouble finding mates. This desire of writers to please—to communicate with their audiences—is the basic law of rhetoric.

Grammar and Rhetoric

In the minds of some students, grammar and rhetoric are often confused, but they are significantly different. Grammar tells a writer how words should be used and sentences framed. Just as drivers obey the rules of the road, writers follow the rules of grammar.

They know that they should not begin a sentence with "one" and then suddenly switch to "you," as in "One must try to do well or you will be embarrassed." That is called a shift in point of view and, like most grammatical lapses, tends to muddy meaning.

The Importance of Good Grammar

In an ideal world, grammar would be strictly neutral and mechanical and would imply nothing about anyone's inner self or social standing. In our grubby world, grammar is often the self-serving weapon of the language snob. Some people passionately believe that anyone who says or writes *ain't* instead of *isn't* would not be a suitable guest for tea. Yet as a wise orator from ancient times once remarked, "Nobody ever praises a speaker for his grammar; they only laugh at him if his grammar is bad." Grammar, in short, is a bit like tact: When it is absent we notice it; when it is present we don't.

There are basically two schools of grammar: prescriptive grammar and descriptive grammar. Prescriptive grammar begins with the assumption that the rules of grammar are etched in granite and have the universal application of gravity. People must be taught how to speak and write properly—for their own good and the good of the language. Descriptive grammar, on the other hand, makes no such assumptions. It begins by asking how certain people express themselves. How do they say this or that? Without making any value judgments on the usage based on some supposed universal standard of right and wrong, the descriptive grammarian infers the grammar rules that a community of writers and speakers observe. It says, under these conditions people use *ain't*. But because that is what they do, even though it's not what we do, we can still be good neighbors. People not in the prescriptive or descriptive camp fall somewhere between these two extreme positions.

Everyone knows what grammar is in general, but not everyone agrees that a particular construction is right or wrong. English grammar is in this muddle because its principles were founded by Latin grammarians who tried to superimpose the rules of that dead language on the emerging infant of English. This led to the formulation of some silly rules. Take, for example, the so-called split infinitive rule. Many instructors, editors, and institutions would damn as incorrect this popular phrase used in the introduction of *Star Trek* episodes: "to boldly go where no man has gone before." This is regarded as wrong because it puts the adverb *boldly* between the infinitive *to go*. In other words, it splits the infinitive as if it were a banana. According to the orthodox view, this should read "to go boldly" or "boldly to go." Why is this splitting wrong? Because the infinitive in Latin is a single word that cannot be split, its equivalent in English, even though it consists of two words, should likewise never be split. On the basis of that silly line of reasoning was sculpted a rule of grammar that has bedeviled generations of writers and speakers.

However we arrived at our present state of confusion, the fact is that the world at large will judge you by your use or nonuse of grammar. The hard fact is that if you are applying for a job with a company sensitive about its image, you are less likely to be hired if your English is ungrammatical. Like it or not, the way you write and talk reveals your inner person as definitively as the way you dress or act. This concept of the inner man dates back to ancient Greece where, as the story goes, a rich merchant had taken his son to a philosopher who he hoped would accept the boy as a student. The philosopher

glanced at the boy who was standing four feet away in broad daylight and said, "Speak, so I can see you." We do not have on record what followed. But if there had been two boys, one of whom replied something like, "I ain't getting your point," and the other, "I don't quite understand what you mean," which boy do you think would have been chosen?

The importance of good grammar, however, in our view, should be based on its useful function of helping us communicate and not on its misuse as a benchmark to classify people. Because readers expect writers to follow grammatical rules, ungrammatical writing can function as a roadblock, preventing even the most forgiving of readers from comprehending a writer's point. Whatever your viewpoint on grammar, it has an undeniable effect on how you are received and understood.

Letting the Habits of Literate Writers Be the Final Referee

Call it being snobbish and promoting class distinctions, but the truth is that if you want to achieve top-level jobs, you will have a better shot at doing so if you follow the grammar of people considered literate—those who write editorials in magazines like *Time*, *Harper's*, and *The New Yorker* or in newspapers that influence public thinking, such as *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and *The Washington Post*. What we would like students to do is follow the grammatical rules observed by the best writers when they write unselfconsciously and regularly. All good writers make an occasional grammatical goof, and when someone corrects them, they are grateful. The most important rules to follow are those whose violations will stigmatize you as a person who uses substandard English. Here are some of the most grating errors committed by thousands of writers:

1. **Double negatives: Wrong:** I **don't** know **nothing** about baseball. **Right:** I **don't** know anything about baseball. **Wrong:** He **didn't** tell me the date **nor** the location of the performance. **Right:** He **didn't** tell me the date or the location of the performance.
2. **Nonstandard verbs: Wrong:** Pete **knowed** the name of each bird. **Right:** Pete **knew** the name of each bird. **Wrong:** Melanie should've **wrote** an apology. **Right:** Melanie should've **written** an apology.
3. **Double comparatives: Wrong:** If you climb over the fence, you'll get there **more faster. Right:** If you climb over the fence, you'll get there **faster**.
4. **Adjective instead of adverb: Wrong:** That was a **real** stupid answer. **Right:** That was a **really** stupid answer. **Wrong:** She types **good** without looking at the keyboard. **Right:** She types **well** without looking at the keyboard.
5. **Incorrect pronoun: Wrong:** The coach never chooses him or **I**. **Right:** The coach never chooses him or **me**. **Wrong: Her** and **me** might get married. **Right: She** and **I** might get married.
6. **Subject-verb disagreement: Wrong:** They **was** always late. **Right:** They **were** always late. **Wrong:** That **don't** matter in the least. **Right:** That **doesn't** matter in the least.

These and numerous other grammatical errors we could have listed belong to the category of mistakes that literate writers never knowingly make. By the way, literate writers will instantly notice when another writer makes such errors, but not making these errors is simply taken for granted. Don't expect to garner special kudos if you avoid them. The rules we hope you will learn and obey are those that help you avoid being stigmatized as "illiterate." If you think your knowledge of correct grammar is weak, then we suggest you purchase a compact grammar handbook, such as *Grammar Matters* or *The Least You Should Know about English*, to review or brush up on the rules.

Exercises

1. Write a paragraph in which you express your views about the rules of grammar with which you are familiar. Do you consider their observance important, or do you see them as a way of segregating people?
2. Write a paragraph in which you describe your reaction to people who seem to disregard grammatical rules. Does their lack of grammatical sense affect your attitude toward them, or is it irrelevant to your attitude?

The Importance of Rhetoric

While grammar speaks in terms of rules, rhetoric speaks only in terms of effectiveness—and effectiveness is a relative judgment. If you are writing to a child, for example, you must use simple words and short sentences if you wish to be understood. However, simple words and short sentences may be entirely inappropriate in a paper explaining a complex process to an audience of specialists. When you know the rules of grammar, it is easy to compare two versions of a writing assignment and say if one is more conventionally grammatical than the other. It is far harder to say whether one version is more effectively written than the other.

Judging the effectiveness of a work is, in fact, the chief business of rhetoric. For example, consider this student paragraph:

> During high school, my favorite English course was English literature. Literature was not only interesting, but it was also fun. Learning about writers and poets of the past was enjoyable because of the teachers I had and the activities they scheduled. Teachers made past literature interesting because they could relate the writers back to the time in which they lived. This way I learned not only about English writers but also about English history.

Grammatically, this paragraph is correct; rhetorically, it is empty. It cries out for examples and supporting details. Which writers and poets did the student find so interesting? What activities did the teacher schedule to make them seem so? Without such details, the paragraph is shallow and monotonous.

Here is a paragraph on the same subject, written by a student with a strong sense of rhetoric:

> Picture a shy small-town girl of eighteen, attending college for the first time in a large city. She is terrified of the huge campus with its crowds of bustling students, but she is magnetically drawn to a course entitled "Survey of English Literature," for this awkward girl has always been an avid reader. College for me, this alien creature on campus, was the sudden revelation of a magical new world. I now could read the great English literary masterpieces—Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Shakespeare's *Othello*, Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*. Then I could discuss them in class under the watchful eye of my professor, who encouraged me to dig for ideas and interpret them on my own. As the teacher asked questions, and the students responded to them, I received exciting flashes of insight into the human condition: I understood the loneliness of Jude the Obscure, the hardness of life in *Oliver Twist*, and the extravagant beauty of nature as detailed by the Romantic poets. English literature also led me into the mazy paths of history. I learned about the greed for political power as I read about the War of the Roses. I saw how the Magna Carta, so reluctantly signed by King John, influenced our present democracy. And Chaucer's tales convinced me that the pageantry of people has not changed much since medieval times. English literature educated me without my being aware of the act of acquiring knowledge. I learned through falling in love with English literature.

The second paragraph is rhetorically more effective than the first because it tells us in richer detail exactly how the author was affected by her English classes.

Audience and Purpose

To write well, you must bear in mind two truths about writing: It has an audience and it is done for a purpose. Many students think that the audience of their writing is a single instructor whose tastes must be satisfied, but this viewpoint is too narrow. The instructor is your audience only in a symbolic sense. The instructor's real job is to be a stand-in for the educated reader. In this capacity, the instructor represents universal standards of today's writing. An English instructor knows writing, good and bad, and can tell you what is good about your work and what is not so good. In this capacity, your instructor can be compared to the working editor of a newspaper, and you, to a reporter.

Purpose, on the other hand, refers to what you hope to accomplish with your writing—the influence you intend your work to exert on your reader. Contrary to what you might think, earning a grade is not the purpose of an essay. That might be its result, but it cannot be its purpose. A freelance writer who sits down to do an article has expectations of earning money for the effort, but that is not the writer's primary purpose. Instead, purpose refers to the intention—be it grand or simple—the writer had in mind when pen first touched paper. If you are writing an essay about the funniest adventure you have ever had, your purpose is to amuse. If you are writing an essay about how amino acids are necessary for life, your purpose is to inform. If you are writing an essay urging the eradication of the bail-bond system, your purpose is to persuade.

It follows from this discussion that you must understand the audience and purpose of an assignment if you are to have a context for judging the effectiveness of your words and sentences. Context hints at what might work and what might flop; it warns of perils

and points to possible breakthroughs. Anyone knows that a love letter should not be written in the dense sentences of a bank report and that a note of sympathy to a grieving friend should not tell jokes—anyone, that is, who thinks about the audience and the purpose of the written words. As the English writer W. Somerset Maugham put it, "To write good prose is an affair of good manners." Like good manners, good prose is always appropriate. It fits the audience; it suits the purpose. This fitting and suiting of one's writing to audience and purpose are among the chief concerns of rhetoric.

The Internal Reader/Editor

The basic aim of any instruction in rhetoric is to teach you how to distinguish between what is appropriate and inappropriate for different audiences and purposes. You develop a sixth sense of what you should say in an essay for an English instructor, a note addressed to your mother, or an ad seeking a new roommate. We call this sixth sense the internal reader/editor. One writer defined it this way: ". . . as it is for any writer, there are two characters in my head: the Writer (me) and a Reader/Editor (also me), who represents anyone who reads what I write. These two talk to each other."

Your internal reader/editor is your sense for judging aptness and effectiveness in writing. This sense improves with practice and exposure to assignments intended for different audiences and purposes. Whether you are crafting an essay for a psychology instructor or a letter to a creditor asking for more time to repay a debt, the same internal reader/editor judges the rhetorical and grammatical appropriateness of what you have written.

By the time you are old enough to read this book, your internal reader/editor is already in place and functioning with some sophistication. For example, your reader/editor surely knows that obscenities have no place in an essay, that "ain't" is not appropriate in a formal exam paper, and that a wealth of personal jokes and anecdotes do not belong in an objective paper on science.

Levels of English

Virtually all writing can be divided into three levels of English: formal, informal, and technical. Each has its place in the various assignments you will be asked to do. It is your internal reader/editor who must decide on the appropriateness of each for a specific assignment.

Formal English is characterized by full, complex sentences and the use of standard and consistent grammar. It states ideas in an orderly fashion and with an educated vocabulary. It avoids the "I" point of view and does not use contractions such as "can't," "don't," "he'd," or "wouldn't." Here is an example of formal English:

> It is not in his personal emotions, the emotions provoked by particular events in his life, that the poet is in any way remarkable or interesting. His particular emotions may be simple, or crude, or flat. The emotion in his poetry will be a very complex thing, but not with the complexity of the emotions of people who have very complex or unusual emotions in life. One error, in fact, of eccentricity in poetry is to seek new human emotions to express; and in this search for novelty in the wrong place it discovers the perverse. The business of the poet is not to find new emotions, but to use the ordinary ones and, in working them up into poetry, to express feeling which are not in actual emotions at all.
>
> —T. S. Eliot, "Tradition and the Individual Talent"

The aim of formal writing is to make a case or present an argument impartially rather than to relate the writer's own views on a subject. The writer takes special care to eliminate the "I" reference and to remain discreetly in the background. Examples are either generalized or in the third person, but never personal. Note the following differences:

> **Generalized:** "All of the participants agreed to publish their notes on the laboratory experiment."
>
> **Third person:** "Murdoch, the director of the experiment, came to a different conclusion."
>
> **Personal:** "I was delighted with the results of the study because it promised hope for diabetes patients."

In formal English, the personal example would be disallowed because it seems too biased or emotional and therefore unscientific. In formal writing, the facts are allowed to speak for themselves; the writer's task is to present them with objectivity.

Formal English Formal English is the staple of college writing. You should use it in research papers, scholarly papers, written examinations, and serious letters. Unless instructed to do otherwise, you should also use it in your essays.

Informal English Informal English is based on the familiar grammatical patterns and constructions of everyday speech. You should use it in journalistic writing and in personal letters, diaries, and light essays. The following student essay is a typical example:

> I drive a truck for a living, and every other week I'm assigned to a senior driver called Harry. Now, Harry is the dirtiest person I've ever met. Let's start with the fact that he never takes a bath or shower. Sitting in the closed cab of a diesel truck on a hot August day with Harry is like being shut up in a rendering plant; in fact, the smell he emanates has, on many occasions, made my eyes water and my stomach turn. I always thought Harry was just dark-complexioned until it rained one day and his arms started to streak—I mean, this guy is a self-inflicted mud slide. In fact, I could've sworn that once or twice I saw Harry scratch his head and a cloud of dust whirled up above him.

This point of view is unabashedly personal and relaxed. The "I" point of view is mixed with contractions, such as "I've," "I'm," and "could've." However, in many fields, the strict standards for using formal over informal English are easing. Even some scientific journals today allow the investigator to use the "I" pronoun, especially if the writer was heavily involved in the research. Consider this paragraph about a revolution in Nepal, reprinted from an article in *National Geographic*:

> From the teahouse I can see the police station, a broken concrete shell daubed with Maoist graffiti. The police have fled from here, as they have from most of rural Nepal, and the village is now the front line, the first community I've seen that is openly controlled by the rebels. When photographer Jonas Bendiksen and I arrived in Babiyachour, we noticed a few Maoist soldiers buying aluminum plates

> and sacks of rice for hundreds of new recruits training on a hill above the village. One of the highest ranking Maoists, Comrade Diwakar, was said to have arrived for their "graduation." We sent our letters of introduction up the hillside, asking to meet him. Nobody seemed in a hurry to respond.

In brief: Use formal English in most papers you submit to your teacher. Use informal English in your personal writing and in those special circumstances where you are free to express yourself in your own individualistic style.

Technical English Technical English is formal English that uses the vocabulary of a specialized field. It is written most often by engineers, technicians, and scientists, as well as by full-time technical writers who specialize in this craft. Those who excel at technical writing are able to translate complex information—for example, the advanced features of new software—to a broader, more general audience. Here is an example of technical writing:

Using a style set to change line spacing for an entire document

1. Go to the **Home** tab, in the **Styles** group, and select **Change Styles**.
2. Point to **Style Set** and point to the various style sets. Using the live preview, notice how the line spacing changes from one style set to the next.
3. When you identify your preferred line spacing option, select the name of the corresponding style set.

The level of English you should use in any specific essay will depend on its audience and purpose; that is a judgment your internal reader/editor must make. Let us take an example. Your English teacher asks you to write an essay on the most unforgettable date you've ever had. One student wrote this paragraph:

> My most unforgettable date was with Carolyn, whom I took to a movie. I chose the movie theater across town as the site of our date because Carolyn was nearly a foot taller than I, and I was embarrassed to be seen out in the neighborhood with her. What I did not expect was that my car would break down and I would not only have to get out and try to fix it, but that we would end up walking all the way home.

The tale that followed was a funny one about the writer's mishaps at the movie theater with Carolyn. He wrote the paragraph and the essay in an informal style because that is exactly what this assignment called for.

If, however, your sociology teacher asks you to write an essay on dating as a courtship ritual in America, you must write a formal essay. Instead of saying what happened to you personally on a date, you must say what is likely to happen on a date. Instead of airing your personal views, you must express the researched ideas and opinions of others. You should not use the pronoun "I" to refer to yourself, nor attempt to impose your

personality on the material. This does not mean you should have no opinions of your own—quite the opposite—but you should base your expressed opinions on grounds more substantial than personal experience or unsupported belief. Here is an example of a student paper that follows the rules of objectivity:

> Dating is a universal courtship experience in the life of most American adolescents. The ritual goes back to the earliest chaperoned drawing-room meetings between eligible couples and has evolved to the present-day social outing. But the greatest impact on the ritual, so far as its American practice goes, has been the introduction and popularization of the automobile.

The writer supported her thesis—that the automobile has had a drastic impact on the dating ritual in America—throughout the paper and amply supported it with statistics, facts, and the testimony of experts. Her examples are also generalized rather than personal. Instead of writing that so-and-so happened to me on a date, she wrote that so-and-so is likely to happen to an American couple dating.

All writers will similarly adapt their language to suit the audience and purpose of their writing, using the principles that spring from common sense and the ancient discipline of rhetoric. While much of this adapting may be done unconsciously, it still must be done by all who sincerely wish to communicate with an audience.

Writing as a Process

Learning to write well cannot be mastered by rote, the way you might absorb facts about the anatomy of a fish or the chemistry of a nebula. It involves learning a process, and that is always harder to do than memorizing a set of facts. The parts of a bicycle can be memorized from a manual, but no one can learn to ride a bicycle merely by reading a book about it. *Scribendo disces scribere*, says the Latin proverb: "You learn to write by writing." Here, then, are some truths about the writing process uncovered by laboratory research:

- **Composing is a difficult, back-and-forth process.** Many writers compose in a halting, lurching way. A writer will pen a few sentences, pause to go back and revise them, compose several new sentences, and then pause again to reread and further edit before continuing with the paragraph. "In their thinking and writing," says one researcher, "writers 'go back' in order to push thought forward."

  Any professional writer will recognize the truth of this observation, but often it comes as a revelation to students who tend to worry when their own compositions emerge by similar fits and starts. Be assured that this back-and-forth movement is a healthy and normal part of composing. The research even suggests that writers who accept the halting, stumbling nature of composing actually have an easier time with this necessary process of "waiting, looking, and discovering" than those who fight against it. Because of this circularity in composing, writing is often described as a recursive process, meaning that results are achieved by a roundabout rather than a

linear path. Often it is necessary to retrace one's trail, to go back to the beginning of a work, or to revise earlier sentences and paragraphs before writing new ones. If you find yourself doing something similar in your own writing, be heartened by this truth: That is how the vast majority of writers work. You are merely going through the normal cycle of composing.

- **The topic can make a difference in your writing.** Professional or amateur, few writers are entirely free to choose their own topics. Most are assigned topics by employers, professors, or circumstances. Yet, when choice does exist, the lesson from common sense and research is that you should always pick the topic you like best. The fact is that most people write better when they write about a subject that appeals to them. It is no mystery why this should be so. We all try harder when we are engaged in a labor of love—whether building our dream house or writing an essay. Unfortunately, in a classroom setting, many students are content to settle for a topic that seems simplest to research or easiest to write about, regardless of whether they find it appealing. This is a mistake. When you write for your own enjoyment, you will behave more like an experienced writer than when you force yourself to write about a subject you find boring.

- **Your writing will not automatically improve with each essay.** Writing does not automatically get better with every paper. It is realistic to compare writing to, say, archery. The first arrow might hit the bull's-eye, while the tenth might entirely miss the target. An archer's overall accuracy will gradually improve with practice, but never to the point of absolute certainty for any one arrow. In practical terms, this simply means that you shouldn't brood if you find a later essay turning out worse than an earlier one. Your overall writing skills are bound to improve with experience, even if the improvement isn't reflected in any single essay.

The gist of this chapter may be summed up thus: You can learn to write well, and rhetoric can teach you how. Writing well means doing more than simply scribbling down the first idea that pops into your head. It involves thinking about your audience and purpose and choosing between this level of language and that. It means developing a rhetorical sense about what techniques are likely to work for a particular assignment. All of these skills can be learned from a study of rhetoric.

Writing about Visual Images

Visual images range from works of art found only in museums to photographs published in daily newspapers. They include television images, line drawings, sketches, computer graphics, and a bewitching gallery of faraway scenes and pictures of beautiful people from advertising. So widespread and influential are visual images that many instructors use them as essay topics. This book, for example, contains images that you will be asked to interpret or evaluate in the context of the various readings they are meant to illustrate.

If you've never done this kind of writing before, don't worry. Writing about an image is not that different from writing about a pig, a poem, or an adventure. Here are

some techniques for writing about artwork, news photographs, cartoons, and advertising images.

Writing about Artwork You do not have to be an art critic to write about a work of art, and you do not have to try to write like one. As in all kinds of writing, it is better for a writer to write from an honest self than to pretend to be someone else. In other words, be yourself always, whether you're writing about a real plum or one in a still-life painting. Here are some steps you can take to write about a work of art:

- **Study the work carefully.** Is it realistic, or is it an abstract work with a distorted and imaginary vision? If it is a realistic work—say, a painting of a rural scene—take note of the colors and the way the paint is applied. An artist, by using drab colors and bold strokes of the brush, can suggest a negative feeling about a scene. On the other hand, a scene can be idealized with the use of bright colors and fine brushstrokes. After studying the work carefully, sum up in a single sentence your overall impression of it. This single sentence will be your thesis.

- **Pay attention to the title of the work.** Many expressionist painters create images that are purely imaginary and have no equivalent in reality. It often takes a title to help us understand what the images mean. Figure 2.1 is a dramatic example of the

■ **FIGURE 2.1**
The Pillars of Society, 1926, by George Grosz.

How admirable are these pillars of society?

importance of titles. The painting shows a sinister assembly of men, two of whom have half a skull crammed with what looks like excrement and miscellaneous garbage. In the background are an ugly priest and a Nazi soldier with a bloody sword. It is only after we know the title of the painting, *The Pillars of Society*, that we grasp who these revolting men are meant to be—the emerging Nazi rulers whom the artist was satirizing.

- **Use the Internet to research background about the artist and the work.** For example, before writing the paragraph about *The Pillars of Society*, we entered the name of the artist George Grosz and the title of his painting in Google, which gave us the information we needed about the work and its creator.

- **Check your response to the work of art against the responses of art critics.** We all have a unique eye. If beauty is in the eye of the beholder, so is much of art. Some modernists argue that one reaction to a work of art is as valid as another. Traditionalists take just the opposite point of view, arguing that it is possible for one reaction to be "right" and another "wrong." Most likely the truth lies somewhere in between. It is possible for an interpretation of an artwork to be so farfetched and unprovable as to come entirely from the viewer's mind rather than from the artwork itself. It is also possible for two contrary interpretations of the same artwork to exist side by side, one no more "right" than the other. In situations like this one, art critics can be helpful. They have the experience and background in evaluating artistic works that enable them to spot what is unique about an artwork and what is imitative.

- **Support your opinions or interpretations of the artwork.** Any opinion you have about an artwork should be supported by details drawn from the work itself. If you say that the portrait of a certain person reflects an air of gloom, you should say why you think that. In support of this opinion, you can point to background colors, a grim facial expression, or perhaps the way the figure slumps.

- **Say how the work made you feel.** Artwork is meant to appeal both to the mind and to the heart. Don't be afraid to express how the work made you feel or to say why you think it affected you as it did. That kind of admission will help a reader better understand your opinions of the work. It is also perfectly allowable to use "I" in an essay interpreting a visual image. As a matter of fact, writing on such a personal topic without the use of "I" would be very difficult to do. You are, after all, expected to say how the work affected you and how you feel about it. You should not necessarily feel any obligation to like the artwork just because you're writing an essay about it. You may find that you heartily dislike the work. In such a case, what you have to do is to say why. If you did like the work, you should also say why.

In review, here are the steps involved in writing about artwork:

1. State your overall impression of the work in a single sentence.
2. Ground your opinions and impressions of the artwork in details drawn from it.
3. Say how the work affected you.

Writing Assignment

Find a work of art you like. Write three paragraphs about it, interpreting the work of art and saying what about it you especially appreciate. Include an image of the work of art with your essay.

Writing about News Photographs *News photographs*, a staple of newspapers and magazines, range from the serene to the horrific. In the hands of a good photographer, the camera can seem to totally capture a subject. That uncanny ability to seemingly x-ray the human soul, coupled with the spontaneity missing in more formal artworks such as paintings, has made photography into a universal language. A photograph of people leaping to their death from a burning skyscraper is globally understandable and universally wrenching, no matter what language we speak. Here are some tips on how to approach writing about a news photo:

- **Begin by researching and describing the context of the photograph.** When was it taken and by whom? Under what circumstances was it shot? Knowing its context puts a photograph in historical perspective and affects your interpretation of it.

- **Describe the news photograph by clearly stating its details.** Sum up, as well as you can, the importance of the scene depicted. Figure 2.2, for example, catches a spectacular moment in mountain rescuing.

In review, here are the steps involved in writing about news photos:

1. Establish the context of the photograph, when and where it was taken, and why.
2. Describe the photo in detail.
3. Compose a thesis for the photo.
4. Develop evidence from the photo and its context to support your thesis.

Writing Assignment

Write a couple of paragraphs about a news photograph, explaining its context and giving your interpretation of it. Include the photo with your written work.

Writing about Cartoons Nothing captures the spirit of an age better than a collection of its best cartoons. They seem to sum up in shorthand the idiosyncrasies of the time. The political cartoon, particularly the caricature—which is a cartoon that exaggerates physical appearance—is actually a good measure of how a particular person is regarded at a particular time. To get an idea of how Teddy Roosevelt was perceived in his day, for example, you need only go to the collection of cartoons that depict him.
Here are some tips for writing about cartoons:

- **Make sure you understand the message of the cartoon.** Some cartoons, of course, are merely intended to amuse and have no particular message. Many cartoons mix

Asmus Koefoed/Shutterstock.com

FIGURE 2.2
A search and rescue operation.

humor with some kind of commentary or message. While you may immediately understand the message of a cartoon that relates to current events, understanding other cartoons about people and subjects with whom and with which you are less familiar may require some research. Look at Figure 2.3, for example. Here we see a 1904 cartoon with the caption "No Molly-Coddling Here" that depicts Teddy Roosevelt toppling men—personifications of different trusts and *everything in general*. Though you may be able to learn something about Teddy Roosevelt from the cartoon even if you aren't familiar with his presidency, it is helpful to know, for example, that his philosophy was to "speak softly and carry a big stick" and that he sued forty-five companies under the Sherman Antitrust Act of 1890. With that in mind, what do you think the cartoonist is saying about Teddy Roosevelt's aggressive approach?

- **Be aware of the topsy-turvy world of cartoons.** Many cartoons spoof the accepted and habitual views of society, often by turning the world upside down. For example, one cartoon shows the seats of a movie theater filled with an audience of winged bugs waiting for the feature to begin. On the screen is the name of the upcoming movie: *Return of the Killer Windshield*. Another—one of our favorites—shows a horrible monster scrambling to get dressed. Looking at his watch worriedly, he is complaining to his wife that he's late and should have already been in a certain boy's closet. The caption of the cartoon? "Monster jobs." The humor of both cartoons comes mainly from the inversion of normalcy, giving us an unusual slant on a familiar situation.

- **State what lesson the cartoon teaches.** Many cartoons teach a lesson. Sometimes the lesson is obvious, as in an old cartoon that shows two males stranded on a

FIGURE 2.3
A 1904 political cartoon lampooning Roosevelt's "big stick" policy.

tiny tropical island. One fellow looks at the other and suggests that perhaps they should form some simple form of government—reminding the viewer that setting up governments is part of the human instinct for politics. Sometimes the lesson is less obvious. For example, a cartoon featuring two forlorn-looking people standing

side by side in the aisle of a library and looking at two different books, one entitled *Self-Improvement* and the other *Self-Involvement*, is teaching a subtle lesson about narcissism. In any case, part of your interpretation of the cartoon is to say what lesson it teaches—if it, indeed, teaches any. Study the cartoon until you get its meaning.

In review, here are the steps involved in writing about cartoons:

1. Make sure you understand the message of the cartoon, if it has one.
2. Be aware of the topsy-turvy world of cartoons.
3. Study the lesson of the cartoon.

Writing Assignment

Write a few paragraphs about any cartoon that you particularly like. Be sure to include the cartoon with your work.

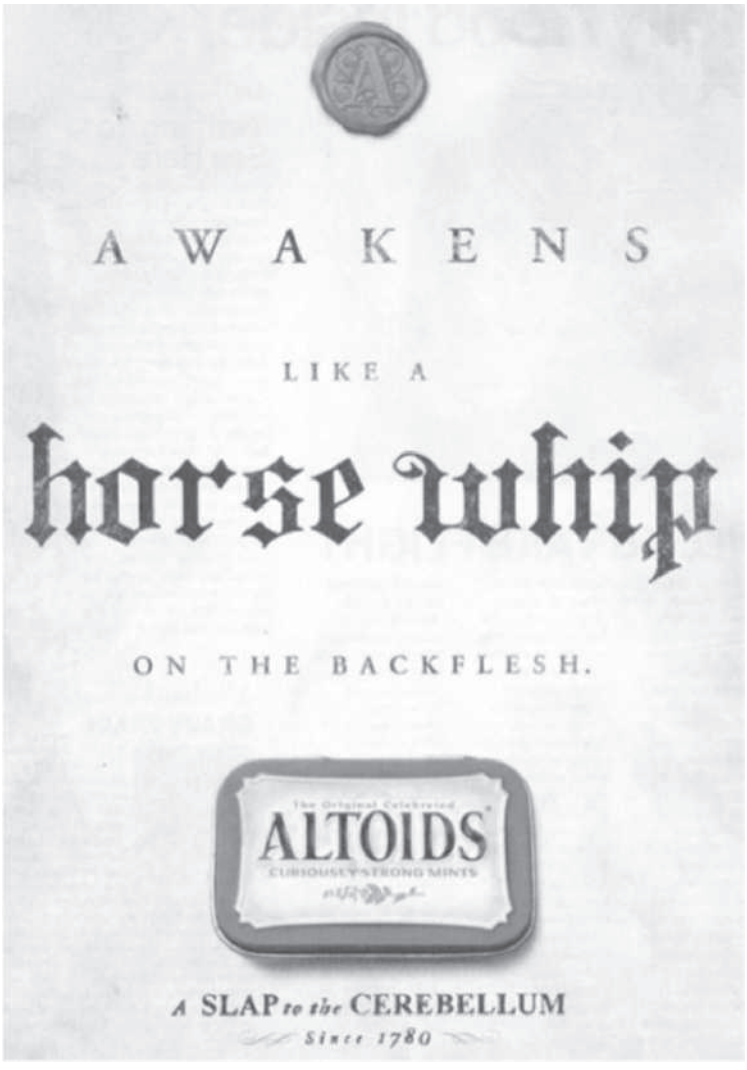
Writing about Advertisements Advertising images, although sometimes bewitching, often have an air of unreality. They glamorize persons, settings, and objects. Or they can make products seem to have an exaggerated influence on the world. See Figure 2.4, which asks us to believe that taking an Altoids mint can snap your mind into immediate attention.

Many of the graphic messages in advertisements are either exaggerated or outright lies. We know that it is impossible for anyone to turn a rainy day into a sunny one just by swallowing a pill, that all our worries will not vanish if we take a certain laxative, and that rubbing our faces with a cream will not make wrinkles disappear overnight. Buying a certain mattress will not turn an insomniac into another Rip Van Winkle, nor will driving a new car make you into an overnight sensation.

Anyone who writes about advertising images has to exercise both common sense and logic. Common sense will enable you to see through the pitch. Logic will help you to sift through the exaggerated claims made by the hype. Writing about an advertising image requires you to take the following steps:

- **Be sure you know the audience at whom the ad is aimed and the product that is being advertised.** An ad directed at women—for a perfume, for example—often comes with a feminized image. On the other hand, masculine images are typically found in a beer advertisement aimed mainly at men. Strange as it may seem, a few advertisements have been oblique rather than blunt in their hype of a product. Probably the most famous example of this is the advertising campaign for a certain Japanese car. The ads show scenes of pastures and mountain brooks—to the accompaniment of philosophical babble that has little to do with owning a car. Ask yourself what the product is, who uses it, and what it does. Sum up this information in a single sentence and you have your thesis.

- **Pay attention to the language that accompanies the image.** Advertising copy is often written in fragments rather than whole sentences. For example, an ad for a trip



Courtesy Wm. Wrigley Jr. Company

FIGURE 2.4
Altoids ad with its popular slogan.

to Wales uses the following copy: "Suggested itinerary: London-Nirvana-London. It's a stopover in serenity. A side trip to paradise. Where the wonders of nature and the comforts of home live side by side. Wales. Just two hours from London." One sentence and five fragments make up this copy. Notice any poetic touch used to highlight the image. For example, the most successful advertising slogan of all time consists of two rhyming words: "Think Mink." Advertising copy is also often openly romantic, as in this example: "Somewhere she went from the girl of your dreams to the love of your life. A diamond is forever."

- **Notice any inversion of reality.** Advertisers are notorious for turning reality on its head. If a product is bad for you, the advertising may surround it with an aura of health and well-being. For example, cigarette advertisements used to always show smokers as specimens of perfect, robust health. The typical image associated with Marlboro cigarettes was a rugged cowboy shown on the range herding cattle and occasionally pausing for a "healthful" smoke. While those ads have faded from view, they have been replaced by commercials touting creams to cure pimples, baldness, or erectile dysfunction. Can anyone not envy the male who has taken Cialis or Viagra before strolling through a spring meadow planning to make love to his beloved "when the time is right"?

- **Watch out for buzzwords or euphemisms.** A buzzword is a slogan or saying that is associated with the product. The slogan of a certain underarm deodorant was, "Strong enough for a man. But made for a woman." A euphemism is a gentler way of saying something. For example, saying "he passed away" is a euphemism for "he died." Advertisers often combine images with euphemisms as part of their pitch. For example, an advertisement for insurance will talk about sparing your family the heartbreak of final decisions—meaning finding a place to bury you and a way to pay for it. Personal-hygiene products for women are always euphemistic in their claims. Sometimes, even an image can be euphemistic, as is often the case in some advertisements for laxatives.

- **Use logic to evaluate the extravagant claims of an advertising image.** It is no exaggeration to say that advertisements often tell outright lies. Ad people would probably claim that they do not lie, but merely stress the positives about their product. Yet, anyone with common sense can't help but wonder what to make of a claim like "*X* toothpaste is used by two out of three dentists." How many dentists were surveyed to come to this conclusion? It might have been three. And what does this claim mean: "Degree antiperspirant deodorant is body-heat activated. Your body heat turns it on." And when an insect repellent advertises that it makes you "invisible to bugs," is that claim meant literally or figuratively?

- **Mention any humor associated with image.** An ad for Toshiba copy machines features a speaking copier: "I print eighty pages per minute and sit near the men's room. She types eighty words per minute and gets the corner office. Is there no balance in the universe?" To discuss this particular image, you would have to touch on the humor of the talking copier.

In review, here are the steps involved in writing about advertisements:

1. Be sure you know what's being advertised and to whom.
2. Pay attention to the language that accompanies the image.
3. Notice any inversion of reality.
4. Watch out for buzzwords or euphemisms.
5. Use logic to evaluate the extravagant claims of an advertising image.
6. Mention any humor associated with the image.

Writing Assignment

Write two paragraphs on a magazine or newspaper ad that you particularly dislike. Include the ad with your work.

Writing on the Social Networks An essay is a formal piece of college writing, whereas a blog entry, email, Facebook post, text, or tweet is an informal discussion online of particular topics and interests. In the past decade, informal online writing has exploded into a worldwide obsession. People—old as well as young—everywhere sit, walk, and drive while typing on their phones, tablets, or laptops. A wife in Los Angeles is texting her husband in Dubai. A business executive in Brussels is using his laptop to compose a group email to five colleagues in Chicago. The famous 2011 "Arab Spring" revolution in Egypt began with messages sent via social networks and ended by overthrowing the ruling president, Hosni Mubarak.

This book focuses on the formal essay, yet most students spend large chunks of time writing online, which means blogging, emailing, texting, or tweeting. Because this kind of writing is here to stay, we propose you practice getting good at it. Most of the chapters in the book will help you become a better blogger or emailer because writing well is the bedrock of all communication. For instance, the need to make a clear point and support it (see Chapter 5) is as necessary to blogging or emailing as it is to writing a formal essay.

It is no secret that some academics worry about the writing skills of students addicted to texting and tweeting without the discipline of traditional sentence structure, spelling, or punctuation. Our aim is not to demean texting and blogging, given that their popularity is swelling, not shrinking. We believe they are here to stay, so we suggest you use them to build your writing skills, not turn you into an illiterate scribbler. Instead of having a cavalier outlook on the rules of correct grammar and punctuation, practice these rules when you are "thumbing" your way in a text or posting on Facebook. In sum, use your contributions to the social networks as training to become a better writer. Adhering to the following pointers will help:

- **Reread your message before sending or sharing it.** Even when no acronyms are involved, the grammar used by cell phone typists is often so poor that a reader can barely follow the train of thought. Here is an example from a student's Facebook post:

  Love all the latest hand creams advertised on the Net a scientist from Cambridge claims he has created age-pacific anti-aging cream a Jewish entrepreneur at the mall has some oil on sale from the Dead Sea its suppose to moisterize your hands best of all some Zhairdresser in Palm Springs is promoting a cream with magic compositions detracted from the honeycomb of bees.

  A second glance at this carelessly pecked out passage would surely make the writer realize that some punctuation and word analysis could lead to this improved version:

  I love all the latest hand creams advertised on the Internet. A scientist from Cambridge claims he has created age-specific anti-aging cream. A Jewish entrepreneur at the mall has some oil on sale from the Dead Sea. It's supposed to moisturize your hands. Best

of all, some hairdresser in Palm Springs is promoting a cream with magic ingredients extracted from the honeycomb of bees.

Remember that once you press that "Send" button, you cannot retrieve what you have mailed. It is destined to remain in cyberspace. Also, beware of your smartphone's uncanny ability to finish words that you start. We have seen messages mangled by being sent before double checking. One student meant to text this: "I love *to sit and read*," but his phone typed, "I love *to spit and rebel*." Another texter thought she was writing "I stepped into the hot *shower*," but she actually typed, "I stepped into the hot *snow*." A quick second glance would have prompted corrections. Spelling and grammatical errors are commonplace in the rapid finger pecking of electronic mailers, but we think that the diligent practice of reviewing even your most informal texts will help mold you into a better writer.

- **Think through what you want to say.** Before you write, make a mental topic outline of the points you want to make. For instance, if you are writing to remind your roommate to take care of the house chores while you are out of town, you might make this mental list: (1) walk the dog, (2) take out the garbage, (3) bring in the mail. If you are writing about a sensitive matter, it is doubly important to make a mental note of what you plan to cover in your text, especially if your purpose is tactful disapproval.

- **Don't send an email or text when you are seething with anger.** Words spewed out in a fit of fury tend to cause serious regrets later when the emotional explosion has died away. It is better *not* to send a scathing rebuke than to feel remorse gnawing at you after having sent it. The truth is that emotional turmoil tends to block your ability to be logical and clear, which are two traits of good writing.

- **Slow down the speed at which you peck away at your keyboard either with your thumbs or fingers.** Composing sentences at blitz speed doesn't save you time in the long run if you write incoherently. Stick to a comfortable speed that saves you from retyping or backspacing.

- **Write the way you speak.** That does not mean you should feel free to be vulgar or crass. It means you should write naturally and let your authentic voice resonate from your writing. If you tend to be a "cusser," delete the bad words as you type.

- **Use graphics when they would enlighten your point.** Use them sparingly, though, lest they act like an avalanche rather than a ray of light. People are visual, but you must be selective and choose only graphics that will make an impact on your reader and enhance your point.

- **Avoid acronyms entirely.** In the intimacy of close friendships, you may use secret codes as you like—abbreviating or codifying to your heart's content as in these popular examples:
  - BRB (Be right back)
  - IRL (In real life)

- LOL (Laughing out loud)
- TTYL (Talk to you later)

However, in the extended classroom atmosphere, these kinds of acronyms are regarded as a plague upon the land. Do not use them at all—lest they permanently endanger your ability to communicate with anyone except members of your own tight-knit community.

- **Use tweets to practice clarity, conciseness, and brevity.** Our book encourages clarity and vividness in everyday writing, but sadly we have found only one social network that champions our point of view—Twitter. Because a tweet is limited to 280 characters or fewer, it can train users to be precise and focused in expressing their opinions. Given that the blogosphere sets the tone for heated emotional written outbursts, writers who write at such a hysterical pitch are like opera singers stuck on a high-C note. Their writing too often devolves into half-baked ideas or murky expressions. Punctuation gets lost in the process or becomes irrelevant. We think tweets are not only a practical way of telling the world what you think, but they force you to do so without the wasteful blah blah blah that accompanies many blogs. Pithy Anglo-Saxon verbs must replace torturous Latin ones—such as "spit" instead of "expectorate." One strong adjective is better than several limp ones—such as "gleaming" instead of "shining and well-polished." Words that repeat one another must be deleted—such as "outcome' instead of "final outcome."* As in most aspects of writing, practice makes perfect. Here are four examples of opinions expressed in forceful tweets:

  > In 2016, I read a @NewYorker article about the dominance of American gymnast Simone Biles. Her determination heading into the Olympics was stirring.
  >
  > The cause of rocker @ChrisCornell's death is suicide. We all have our demons, so who are you to call him selfish? Don't spit nasty comments into the wind lest they come back and hit you in the face.
  >
  > I'm mad as hell because our City Council refuses to construct bicycle lanes in our town.
  >
  > Are you sure you want to wear that to work? Register online to download "Dress Code Policy" from White Paper. It's free.

  Study tweets you admire and try to imitate their author's style. This is the same kind of exercise as scrutinizing the writing of a famous author you admire.

In review, here are the steps involved in writing for the social networks:

1. Review your message before sending or sharing it.
2. Don't text while angry.
3. Make a mental note of what you wish to say.
4. Avoid typing too fast.

* For more on how to prune deadwood, see Part Four: Rewriting Your Writing.

5. Write the way you speak.
6. Use graphics to light up your point.
7. Don't use acronyms or abbreviations.
8. Practice writing tweets to achieve clarity, conciseness, and brevity.

Writing Assignments

1. Write an essay in which you defend the social networks as a useful force in our society. Use examples to prove that a social network has saved lives, has started a needed revolution, or has kept a family together.
2. Write an essay in which you point out the dangers involved when students become addicted to Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, email, or other aspects of the social networks.

Exercises for Understanding Rhetoric

1. After studying the following passages, suggest the purpose of each and the audience for which it is intended. Give specific examples of language suitable to that audience.
   a. At first, our Greg was a model child. Healthy, happy, unfailingly sweet-tempered, he was a total joy as a baby. When he was one year old, he thought that everything mother and father wanted him to do was wonderful. His second birthday passed, and he remained cooperative and adorable. Aha, I thought, the "terrible twos" that everyone complains about must result from inadequate attention and discipline.

      Then, Greg turned two and three-quarters. Suddenly we had an obnoxious monster in the house. His favorite word was "No!" and he used it constantly. At the simplest request, he would stamp his feet and cry. It was a battle getting him to put on clothing he had previously worn happily. Favorite foods were thrown on the floor. It became almost impossible to take him shopping because he would lie down in the store and refuse to move. There was constant tension in the house, and my husband and I became irritable, too. We felt as if we were living on the slopes of a volcano, and we found ourselves giving in to Greg too much in order to avoid the threatened eruptions.

   b. Others will debate the controversial issues, national and international, which divide men's minds. But serene, calm, aloof, you stand as the nation's war guardians, as its lifeguards from the raging tides of international conflict, as its gladiators in the arena of battle. For a century and a half you have defended, guarded, and protected its hallowed traditions of liberty and freedom, of right and justice.

      Let civilian voices argue the merits or demerits of our processes of government: whether our strength is being sapped by deficit financing indulged in too long; by federal paternalism grown too mighty; by power groups grown too arrogant; by politics grown too corrupt; by crime grown too rampant; by morals grown too low; by taxes grown too high; by extremists grown too violent; whether our personal liberties are as firm and complete as they should be.

These great national problems are not for your professional participation or military solution. Your guidepost stands out like a tenfold beacon in the night: duty, honor, country.

c. To give Eleanor her due, any suspicion as to the slightest inclination on her part toward Mr. Slope was a wrong to her. She had no more idea of marrying Mr. Slope than she had of marrying the bishop, and the idea that Mr. Slope would present himself as a suitor had never occurred to her. Indeed, to give her her due again, she had never thought about suitors since her husband's death. But nevertheless it was true that she had overcome all that repugnance to the man which was so strongly felt for him by the rest of the Grantly faction. She had forgiven him his sermon. She had forgiven him his low church tendencies, his Sabbath schools, and puritanical observances. She had forgiven his pharisaical arrogance, and even his greasy face and oily vulgar manners. Having agreed to overlook such offences as these, why should she not in time be taught to regard Mr. Slope as a suitor?

d. Earthquakes are often accompanied by a roaring noise that comes from the bowels of the earth. This phenomenon was known to early geographers. Pliny wrote that earthquakes are "preceded or accompanied by a terrible sound." Vaults supporting the ground give way, and it seems as though the earth heaves deep sighs. The sound was attributed to the gods and called *theophany*.

The eruptions of volcanoes are also accompanied by loud noises. The sound produced by Krakatoa in the East Indies during the eruption of 1883 was so loud it was heard as far away as Japan, 3,000 miles away, the farthest distance traveled by sound recorded in modern annals.

e. I beg you to excuse a father who dares to approach you in the interests of his son.

I wish to mention first that my son is twenty-two years old, has studied for four years at the Zurich Polytechnic, and last summer brilliantly passed his diploma examinations in mathematics and physics. Since then he has tried unsuccessfully to find a position as assistant, which would enable him to continue his education in theoretical and experimental physics. Everybody who is able to judge praises his talent, and in any case I can assure you that he is exceedingly assiduous and industrious and is attached to his science with a great love.

f. Letters written by a potential customer asking suppliers for free materials, information, or routine services are among the easiest to write. The customer will usually receive what he or she is asking for since it is to the supplier's advantage to provide it. The potential customer need only be clear and courteous. In writing routine request letters, give all the information the supplier will need in order to be really helpful, keep your request as brief as possible without omitting important details, and express your wishes courteously and tactfully.

2. Write two one-page essays explaining the reasons you wish to pursue a certain career. Address the first to the personnel manager of an organization that might hire you and the second to your father. Contrast the language and phrasing of each essay and explain the differences between them.