**Where to find help in *The McGraw Hill Guide:***

In the table of contents for Chapters 3 and 5–12, identify the chapter that corresponds to your writing assignment.

To set your writing goals, consider the guidelines that appear in the **Setting Your Goals** section of each chapter.

**Where to find help in *The McGraw Hill Guide:***

Chapters 3 and 5–12 are organized around four general writing goals:

1. To demonstrate **rhetorical knowledge**
2. To practice **critical thinking, reading, and composing**
3. To work through **composing processes**
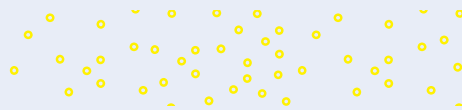4. To follow **conventions**

Successful writers adapt these goals to the particular needs of their situation. In Chapters 3 and 5–12, you will find clear guidance on how to think about the four goals and how to achieve them in relation to your specific assignment.

**Where to find help in *The McGraw Hill Guide:***

Chapters 3 and 5–12 all conclude with a guided **self-assessment** that will help you gauge how effectively your writing meets your goals.

## Table of Contents for Assignment Chapters:

# THE McGraw Hill
# GUIDE

## Writing for College, Writing for Life

FIFTH EDITION

**Duane Roen**

*Arizona State University*

**Sherry Rankins-Robertson**

*University of Central Florida*

**Barry M. Maid**

*Arizona State University*

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THE MCGRAW HILL GUIDE: WRITING FOR COLLEGE, WRITING FOR LIFE, FIFTH EDITION

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*"When I think about **assessing my goals,** I think about whether I attained the outcomes I hoped for and how my audience responded to my writing."*

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**McGraw Hill** **connect** ® **plus+**
**|COMPOSITION**

# Reading Selections in the 5th Edition

# About the Authors

**Duane Roen** is Professor of English at Arizona State University, where he serves as Dean of the College of Integrative Sciences and Arts, Dean of University College, Vice Provost, and Coordinator for the Project for Writing and Recording Family History. At ASU he has also served as Head of Interdisciplinary Studies; Head of Humanities and Arts; Director of Composition; Co-director of the graduate program in Rhetoric, Composition, and Linguistics; Director of the Center for Learning and Teaching Excellence; and President of the Academic Senate. At Syracuse University he served as Director of the Writing Program. At the University of Arizona, he was Founding Director of the graduate program in Rhetoric, Composition, and the Teaching of English, as well as Director of Graduate Studies in the Department of English. He has served as Secretary of the Conference on College Composition and Communication and President of the Council of Writing Program Administrators.

Duane has written extensively about writing across the curriculum; writing curricula, pedagogy, and assessment; writing program administration; writing family history; and collaboration, among other topics. In addition to more than 280 articles, chapters, and conference papers, Duane has published the following books: *Composing Our Lives in Rhetoric and Composition: Stories about the Growth of a Discipline* (with Theresa Enos and Stuart Brown); *The Writer's Toolbox* (with Stuart Brown and Bob Mittan); *A Sense of Audience in Written Discourse* (with Gesa Kirsch); *Becoming Expert: Writing and Learning across the Disciplines* (with Stuart Brown and Bob Mittan); *Richness in Writing: Empowering ESL Students* (with Donna Johnson); *Strategies for Teaching First-Year Composition* (with Lauren Yena, Susan K. Miller, Veronica Pantoja, and Eric Waggoner); *Views from the Center: The CCCC Chairs' Addresses, 1977–2005; The WPA Outcomes Statement: A Decade Later* (with Nicholas Behm, Greg Glau, Deborah Holdstein, and Edward White); *The Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing: Scholarship and Applications* (with Nicholas Behm and Sherry Rankins-Robertson); and *The McGraw Hill Guide: Writing for College, Writing for Life* (with Sherry Rankins-Robertson and Barry Maid), now in its fifth edition. He is currently co-authoring a composition handbook (with Michael Day) and co-editing a collection of essays on cognition in writing (with Patricia Portanova and Michael Rifenburg).

**Sherry Rankins-Robertson** is Chair and Professor of Writing and Rhetoric at the University of Central Florida. Her passion for student success has fueled her energy to create successful, sustainable higher education programs to improve students' experiences both on campus and in the community. For the past twenty years, Sherry has taught first-year writing; she also teaches nonfiction writing and graduate-level theory courses. For more than a decade, she has taught writing in prisons.

Her research has appeared in *Kairos*, *Computers and Composition*, *WPA: Writing Program Administration,* and the *Journal of Writing Assessment* along with more than a dozen diverse edited collections. She served as co-editor of the *WPA* journal. With Nicholas Behm and Duane Roen, she edited *The Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing: Scholarship and Applications* (Parlor Press, 2017). Her co-edited collection with Joe Lockard on teaching writing in prisons is titled *Prison Pedagogies: Learning and Teaching with Imprisoned Writers* (Syracuse University Press, 2018). Sherry is a co-author of *McGraw Hill Guide to Writing 5th edition* alongside Duane Roen and Barry Maid. With Aurora Matzke and Angela Clark Oates, Sherry is co-editing a collection on the lifespan of feminist practitioner-scholars. Her current research focuses on academic families in Rhetoric and Composition along with the rhetoric and ethics of self-care for faculty and administrators in writing programs.

Sherry is an officer for the Council of Writing Program Administrators and serves as a member of the Executive Committee of the Conference on College Composition and Communication. She has served on committees and task forces for NCTE, CCCC, and CWPA. Sherry spent eight years as a faculty member and administrator at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock where she worked as Writing Program Administrator, Associate Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs, and Associate Professor of Rhetoric and Writing. Previously, Sherry taught at Arizona State University where she worked with

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# A Letter to Teachers from the Authors

Learning is a lifelong journey that begins early—often in a classroom—and continues and changes throughout an individual's academic, professional, civic, and personal life. In service of this journey, *The McGraw Hill Guide* provides students with the autonomy of constructing rhetorical situations by offering a purpose-based approach to writing. This approach leads to transfer of knowledge for settings beyond the first-year composition course by emphasizing goal-setting and offering comprehensive materials that support students in achieving their own learning goals.

The national consensus among educators is that students succeed best when they are guided by outcomes and approach their assignments from a goals-based perspective. This is true for a wide range of faculty, whether full- or part-time, new or experienced: they agree that knowing and working with specific goals and objectives helps students to achieve those goals. We have therefore structured *The McGraw Hill Guide* to help students set goals for their writing, use effective composing strategies to achieve those goals, and assess their progress toward achieving them.

The student writing goals in *The McGraw Hill Guide* are drawn from the learning outcomes established by the Council of Writing Program Administrators (CWPA), because we know how important they have been in shaping discussions about writing curricula. These learning outcomes demonstrate the value of the full range of knowledge sets and skills that writers need to develop, which include rhetorical knowledge; critical thinking, reading, and composing; processes; and knowledge of conventions. The current version of the WPA Outcomes Statement for First-Year Composition—version 3.0—emphasizes that digital tools are integral to a wide range of composing activities.

Just as Aristotle argued in *The Rhetoric* that writers should use "the available means of persuasion," we argue that twenty-first-century writers should use the full range of tools available to them, especially digital tools. Throughout the book we introduce students to the digital technologies that will help them in their research and writing, and we include a special feature on using digital technologies alongside our instruction to emphasize these tools. We place particular focus on multimodal composition.

## Changes to the 5th Edition

*The McGraw Hill Guide* 5th edition embodies advances in current research, theory, and practice in the field in ways that enrich the learning experiences of students. This edition of the *Guide* includes:

- Increased emphasis on student-success strategies with intentionality toward writing across the academic lifespan

- Critical analysis of information literacy in a time of disinformation

- Coverage of genre for writing beyond academic settings, with examples and illustrations

- Reflective practices through a new feature called "metacognitive moment"

- Readings that bring forward voices of diverse writers and topics

- A focus on rhetorical purpose—using writing to get things done in the world

- Invitations to write that encourage students to use twenty-first-century digital technologies for crafting multimodal projects with successful models

- Updated citation conventions used in both *MLA Handbook,* 9th edition, and *APA Handbook,* 7th edition

- Up-to-date sample student projects with examples from their invention work through peer review to finished academic essays

- Questions and guidance that help students to respond thoughtfully to peers' work—and to reflect critically on their own

In the updates to the instructor's guide, we have added content that will aid you in anti-racist pedagogies, coverage on teaching students how to manage misinformation, and the benefits of student selected genres and modalities. The IM is accompanied by a pacing guide for co-requisite models.

We have enjoyed writing *The McGraw Hill Guide* because it reflects our own experiences in the classroom, our research, and our many conversations with colleagues in the field. We hope that you enjoy using *The Guide* with your students as they strive to become the most effective writers possible. If there is anything that we can do to assist you, please let us know.

Sincerely,

- Duane Roen, duane.roen@asu.edu
- Sherry Rankins-Robertson, sherry.robertson@ucf.edu
- Barry M. Maid, barry.maid@asu.edu

# Preface to the 5th Edition of *The McGraw Hill Guide*

With *The McGraw Hill Guide*, students apply a goals-oriented approach to their writing assignments and practice the habits of mind of engaged students. Using proven techniques derived from the *Frameworks for Success in Postsecondary Writing*, *The Guide* encourages students to understand the underlying principles on which their writing is assessed by offering reflective opportunities for students to assess themselves. In doing so, students will develop the strategies needed to transfer these skills throughout their coursework, and long after they have completed college.

This approach is supported by McGraw Hill Education Connect, a digital assignment and assessment platform that strengthens the link between faculty, students, and coursework. With Connect Composition, students have four-year access to *The McGraw Hill Guide*, as well as a handbook and an anthology of additional readings. Additionally, students benefit from a range of assignment types and learning resources to practice and build on knowledge gained from *The Guide*, including guided critical reading assignments and personalized learning paths through adaptive assignments that reinforce the text's goals-oriented, purpose-based approach. Instructors have access to assignable and assessable quizzes and exercises, a robust range of assignment types, and a suite of instructor resources.

## A goals-oriented approach that promotes student engagement and success

Structured to help students **set, achieve,** and **assess** their writing goals, *The Guide* encourages students to **transfer** the knowledge they develop to assignments across the disciplines, and apply it to their personal, civic, and professional lives.

### *Set*

- Each chapter opens with the section titled **Setting Your Goals,** a feature that introduces students to the disciplinary learning outcomes of first-year composition, the foundational concepts that will guide their writing—rhetorical knowledge, critical thinking, writing processes, and knowledge of conventions. Based on the WPA Outcomes Statement, these goals encourage students to establish a framework for their writing assignments grounded in sound rhetorical principles.

| | |
|---|---|
| **SET** | How do I set my goals?<br>**Setting Your Goals (p. 76)** |
| **ACHIEVE** | How do I achieve my goals?<br>**Rhetorical Knowledge: Understanding the rhetorical situation for your project (p. 77)**<br>**Critical Thinking, Reading, and Composing: Thinking critically about this type of writing (p. 81)**<br>**Writing Processes: Establishing a process for composing your project (p. 96)**<br>**Knowledge of Conventions: Polishing your work (p. 105)** |
| **ASSESS** | How do I assess my goals?<br>**Self-Assessment: Reflecting on Your Goals (p. 112)** |

**Set, Achieve, Assess.** Assignment chapters begin with outlines that show students how that chapter will help them to set, achieve, and assess their writing goals.

- **Strategies for Success** coverage throughout the 5th edition recognizes that student success happens across the curriculum, and will carry over into their careers. As part of this coverage, *The Guide* focuses on establishing the eight habits of mind that students will need to succeed in most areas of their lives: curiosity, openness, engagement, creativity, persistence, responsibility, flexibility, and metacognition.

## *Achieve*

- *The Guide* supports the development of strategies students need to achieve their writing and learning goals. A new chapter on **"Strategies for Success in College"** covers topics essential to student success, including guidance on avoiding procrastination, understanding the differences between online and in-person classes, and making use of campus resources.

- Each writing assignment chapter in *The Guide* follows student writers' progress as they construct a sample paper—with examples that range from initial invention work to a first draft, to peer review and teacher feedback, to a final draft. Students thus can envision how they might follow such a path as they construct their own papers, understand what kind of feedback they may receive, and learn how to effectively work with those suggestions.

- The writing assignments in *The Guide* provide an array of writing possibilities, suggesting to students scenarios for constructing traditional and multimodal assignments. These **Scenarios for Writing** appear at the beginning of the chapter.

- **Writing Assignment Plus** in Connect provides students with an all-in-one tool to help develop their writing abilities. In Writing Assignment Plus, students benefit from just-in-time learning resources as they draft responses to writing prompts. The built-in grammar checker and originality detection alert students to issues before they submit their work and offer learning resources that direct them on how to correct errors within the context of their own writing, empowering them to achieve their writing goals.

- **Power of Process** in Connect provides the practice students need to read real-world texts analytically and critically by guiding students through the thinking required for deep understanding. These interactive reading assignments prepare students for critical thinking before, during, and after reading. Instructors can build assignments that ask students to reflect on a text, respond to a text, analyze a piece of writing, or evaluate a source, among other options. Additionally, instructors can choose from a bank of carefully chosen readings within Power of Process, readings from *The McGraw Hill Guide*, or upload their own readings.

- **SmartBook 2.0** in Connect supports student engagement and helps students (and instructors) track progress in achieving reading and study goals.

**Writing Assignment Plus.** Instructors can provide summative and directive feedback on students' work and a customizable scoring guide that provides assessment transparency to students, while allowing them to see why and how to improve.

**Power of Process.** The "process circle" within Power of Process is completely customizable, allowing instructors to integrate their own material and wording to meet the goals of each activity.

## *Assess*

- Throughout *The McGraw Hill Guide*, students are shown how to assess writing critically and rhetorically—whether written by a professional, another student, or themselves. Framed in the context of the core outcomes of the course, this skill has been shown to improve students' performance in their writing-intensive courses.

- Chapters are **structured around the WPA learning outcomes**, which demonstrate the knowledge and skills that will guide students' writing: rhetorical knowledge; critical thinking, reading and composing; processes; and knowledge of conventions. Using these outcomes, students will learn to set appropriate goals for their writing, select and use the most effective composing strategies to achieve those goals, and assess their progress as they go.

- **Adaptive Learning** in Connect provides students with adaptive, individualized support to help them with trouble spots in the reading and writing processes, grammar, and mechanics. Learning Resources provide instruction and remediation for topics as needed by the individual student. Students can track their own understanding of these concepts and discover where their knowledge gaps are.



**SmartBook 2.0** helps students study more efficiently by highlighting what to focus on in the chapter and asking review questions. SmartBook creates a personalized study path customized to individual student needs, continually adapting to pinpoint knowledge gaps and focus learning on concepts requiring additional study.

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### Transfer

- *The Guide*'s **purpose-based writing instruction** helps students develop a deeper understanding of rhetorical knowledge. Throughout the chapters, students are prompted to select an appropriate audience for a variety of rhetorical situations, a skill they will use throughout their personal, professional, and civic lives.

- A **focus on multimodality** provides students with pragmatic understanding of the various genres used to respond to readers in all areas of life. This focus helps writers explore the modalities for text delivery—print, electronic/digital, and sound—in various genres.

- The new **Metacognitive Moment** feature in each assignment chapter reinforces self-assessment by prompting students to reflect and consider their knowledge beyond the immediate context.

- With Connect Composition, students will be granted four years of access to the complete *Connect Composition Essentials Handbook,* which features up-to-date coverage of documentation styles and a selection of interactive documentation tools. With access to these resources even after they have completed the composition course, students will feel prepared to transfer their writing and researching skills to all written work throughout their college careers.

Four years of access to the *Connect Composition Essentials Handbook* prepares students to transfer their writing and researching skills throughout college.
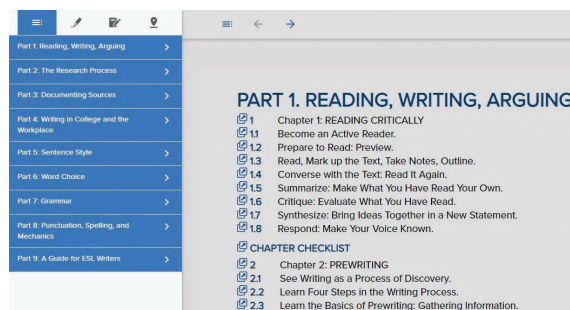
## One text for many levels

*The McGraw Hill Guide* was developed to meet the needs of both students and instructors in today's writing classroom. To meet these needs, *The Guide* offers a suite of instructor resources focused on **flexibility, alignment, and accessibility.**

### Flexibility

- *The McGraw Hill Guide* addresses recent course redesigns by offering strong co-requisite course support, including pacing guides and models for teaching for compressed courses, along with consideration for stretch models. Additionally, *The Guide* provides a range of content to support traditional two-semester sequencing. While the text can be used for many levels of writers, it can be used for the duration of the first-year writing experience by teachers with diverse pedagogical approaches.

- The enhanced student success coverage in the 5th edition helps establish and reinforce habits, practices, and mindsets of college-level learners. Furthermore, Power of Process and Adaptive Learning Assignments provide much-needed support for students who are developing critical reading and writing skills.

### Alignment

- With instruction organized around the WPA Outcomes Statement, *The Guide* promotes academic rigor and alignment across writing programs, saving instructors time in course preparation, grading, and reporting. The material is vetted by writing teachers across the country, and the digital content is readily available for student use.

- Course administrators can deploy Connect Composition to establish consistency across sections, with a flow of assignments that reflect a department's curriculum and course outcomes and with reports that provide outcomes-based views of performance as well as measures of student engagement.
- Connect's Adaptive Learning Assignment aligns with course objectives while offering personalized learning paths for study and practice across the spectrum of student needs and preparedness.

### *Accessibility*

- *The McGraw Hill Guide* was designed with students' and instructors' needs in mind. New and contingent faculty will benefit from an author-developed Instructor's Manual, as well as pacing guides for traditional and compressed model courses.
- With McGraw Hill's all-digital Inclusive Access offer, students will have access to their course materials for a fraction of the price of a print text. Students can start learning and begin their assignments right away, on the first day of class, with complimentary two-week free access to course materials. Seamless connection of Connect to your college or university's learning management system is only a click away.
- *The Guide* and its Connect offerings were designed to comply with ADA requirements. McGraw Hill works directly with Accessibility Services Departments and faculty to meet the learning needs of all students. Please contact your Accessibility Services office and ask them to e-mail accessibility@mheducation.com, or visit www.mheducation.com/about/accessibility.html for more information.

## Support for Online Success

McGraw Hill provides a variety of ways for instructors to get the help and support they need when incorporating new technology into a writing program. The learning technology in Connect was developed by experts to create a teaching and learning environment that engages learners with a wide variety of course assignments, suited for both online as well as hybrid or face-to-face courses. Users of Connect have several options for help in getting started, but also with developing courses and curricula that reflect best practices for incorporating learning technology.

- **Digital Faculty Consultants:** Instructors currently using Connect Composition are available to offer suggestions, advice, and training for new adopters. To request a Digital Faculty Consultant's assistance, simply e-mail your local McGraw Hill representative.
- **Learning Technology:** Local McGraw Hill representatives can provide face-to-face training and support.
- **Digital Learning Consultants:** These specialists support instructors with initial setup and training as well as answer questions that may arise throughout the term.
- **Implementation Consultants:** When Connect Composition is adopted, the Implementation Consultant makes sure all faculty learn basic information about the platform, and course and assignment creation.
- **Implementation Managers:** An Implementation Manager maximizes usage in relation to course goals, course design, and tracking performance using reports and analytic insights.

In general, instructors are encouraged to contact us any time they need help. Our Customer Support Team is available at 800-331-5094 or online at mpss.mhhe.com/contact.php.

## Need a Connect Account?

Request access to Connect Composition from your local McGraw Hill Education representative (www.mhhe.com/rep) or write to english@mheducation.com.

# Acknowledgments

*The McGraw Hill Guide* was developed with the guidance of the following instructors.

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# WPA Outcomes Statement for First-Year Composition

## Introduction

This Statement identifies outcomes for first-year composition programs in U.S. postsecondary education. It describes the writing knowledge, practices, and attitudes that undergraduate students develop in first-year composition, which at most schools is a required general education course or sequence of courses. This Statement therefore attempts to both represent and regularize writing programs' priorities for first-year composition, which often takes the form of one or more required general education courses. To this end it is not merely a compilation or summary of what currently takes place. Rather, this Statement articulates what composition teachers nationwide have learned from practice, research, and theory.[1] It intentionally defines only "outcomes," or types of results, and not "standards," or precise levels of achievement. The setting of standards to measure students' achievement of these Outcomes has deliberately been left to local writing programs and their institutions.

In this Statement "composing" refers broadly to complex writing processes that are increasingly reliant on the use of digital technologies. Writers also attend to elements of design, incorporating images and graphical elements into texts intended for screens as well as printed pages. Writers' composing activities have always been shaped by the technologies available to them, and digital technologies are changing writers' relationships to their texts and audiences in evolving ways.

These outcomes are supported by a large body of research demonstrating that the process of learning to write in any medium is complex: it is both individual and social and demands continued practice and informed guidance. Programmatic decisions about helping students demonstrate these outcomes should be informed by an understanding of this research.

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[1]This Statement is aligned with the *Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing*, an articulation of the skills and habits of mind essential for success in college, and is intended to help establish a continuum of valued practice from high school through to the college major.

As students move beyond first-year composition, their writing abilities do not merely improve. Rather, their abilities will diversify along disciplinary, professional, and civic lines as these writers move into new settings where expected outcomes expand, multiply, and diverge. Therefore, this document advises faculty in all disciplines about how to help students build on what they learn in introductory writing courses.

## RHETORICAL KNOWLEDGE

*Rhetorical knowledge* is the ability to analyze contexts and audiences and then to act on that analysis in comprehending and creating texts. Rhetorical knowledge is the basis of composing. Writers develop rhetorical knowledge by negotiating purpose, audience, context, and conventions as they compose a variety of texts for different situations.

*By the end of first-year composition, students should*

- Learn and use key rhetorical concepts through analyzing and composing a variety of texts

- Gain experience reading and composing in several genres to understand how genre conventions shape and are shaped by readers' and writers' practices and purposes

- Develop facility in responding to a variety of situations and contexts calling for purposeful shifts in voice, tone, level of formality, design, medium, and/or structure

- Understand and use a variety of technologies to address a range of audiences

- Match the capacities of different environments (e.g., print and electronic) to varying rhetorical situations

Faculty in all programs and departments can build on this preparation by helping students learn

- The expectations of readers in their fields

- The main features of genres in their fields

- The main purposes of composing in their fields

## CRITICAL THINKING, READING, AND COMPOSING

*Critical thinking* is the ability to analyze, synthesize, interpret, and evaluate ideas, information, situations, and texts. When writers think critically about the materials they use—whether print texts, photographs, data sets, videos, or other materials—they separate assertion from evidence, evaluate sources and evidence, recognize and evaluate underlying assumptions, read across texts for connections and patterns, identify and evaluate chains of reasoning, and compose appropriately qualified and developed claims and generalizations. These practices are foundational for advanced academic writing.

*By the end of first-year composition, students should*

- Use composing and reading for inquiry, learning, critical thinking, and communicating in various rhetorical contexts

- Read a diverse range of texts, attending especially to relationships between assertion and evidence, to patterns of organization, to the interplay between verbal and nonverbal elements, and to how these features function for different audiences and situations

- Locate and evaluate (for credibility, sufficiency, accuracy, timeliness, bias and so on) primary and secondary research materials, including journal articles and essays, books, scholarly and professionally established and maintained databases or archives, and informal electronic networks and Internet sources

- Use strategies—such as interpretation, synthesis, response, critique, and design/redesign—to compose texts that integrate the writer's ideas with those from appropriate sources

Faculty in all programs and departments can build on this preparation by helping students learn

- The kinds of critical thinking important in their disciplines

- The kinds of questions, problems, and evidence that define their disciplines

- Strategies for reading a range of texts in their fields

## PROCESSES

Writers use multiple strategies, or *composing processes*, to conceptualize, develop, and finalize projects. Composing processes are seldom linear: a writer may research a topic before drafting, then conduct additional research while revising or after consulting a colleague. Composing processes are also flexible: successful writers can adapt their composing processes to different contexts and occasions.

*By the end of first-year composition, students should*

- Develop a writing project through multiple drafts

- Develop flexible strategies for reading, drafting, reviewing, collaborating, revising, rewriting, rereading, and editing

- Use composing processes and tools as a means to discover and reconsider ideas

- Experience the collaborative and social aspects of writing processes

- Learn to give and to act on productive feedback to works in progress

- Adapt composing processes for a variety of technologies and modalities

- Reflect on the development of composing practices and how those practices influence their work

Faculty in all programs and departments can build on this preparation by helping students learn

- To employ the methods and technologies commonly used for research and communication within their fields

- To develop projects using the characteristic processes of their fields

- To review work in progress for the purpose of developing ideas before surface-level editing

- To participate effectively in collaborative processes typical of their field

## KNOWLEDGE OF CONVENTIONS

*Conventions* are the formal rules and informal guidelines that define genres, and in so doing, shape readers' and writers' perceptions of correctness or appropriateness. Most obviously, conventions govern such things as

mechanics, usage, spelling, and citation practices. But they also influence content, style, organization, graphics, and document design.

Conventions arise from a history of use and facilitate reading by invoking common expectations between writers and readers. These expectations are not universal; they vary by genre (conventions for lab notebooks and discussion-board exchanges differ), by discipline (conventional moves in literature reviews in Psychology differ from those in English), and by occasion (meeting minutes and executive summaries use different registers). A writer's grasp of conventions in one context does not mean a firm grasp in another. Successful writers understand, analyze, and negotiate conventions for purpose, audience, and genre, understanding that genres evolve in response to changes in material conditions and composing technologies and attending carefully to emergent conventions.

*By the end of first-year composition, students should*

- Develop knowledge of linguistic structures, including grammar, punctuation, and spelling, through practice in composing and revising
- Understand why genre conventions for structure, paragraphing, tone, and mechanics vary

- Gain experience negotiating variations in genre conventions
- Learn common formats and/or design features for different kinds of texts
- Explore the concepts of intellectual property (such as fair use and copyright) that motivate documentation conventions
- Practice applying citation conventions systematically in their own work

Faculty in all programs and departments can build on this preparation by helping students learn

- The reasons behind conventions of usage, specialized vocabulary, format, and citation systems in their fields or disciplines
- Strategies for controlling conventions in their fields or disciplines
- Factors that influence the ways work is designed, documented, and disseminated in their fields
- Ways to make informed decisions about intellectual property issues connected to common genres and modalities in their fields.

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# Writing Goals and Objectives for College and for Life

When you write, you strive to fulfill a goal. In school, you often write papers to communicate your ideas and develop essay exam answers to demonstrate what you have learned. Outside of school, you use writing to perform your duties in the workplace, to make your voice heard in your community, and to communicate with friends and family. All discourse has a goal or **purpose:** to inform, to persuade, to entertain, and so on.

Whatever the purpose, effective writers achieve their goals through rhetoric. **Rhetoric** is the use of words—either spoken or written—as well as visuals to convey an idea or message for some purpose. Rhetoric is used intentionally to appeal to a specific audience. Each chapter in this book has a *rhetorical* focus on what you, as a writer, want your writing to accomplish for a specific audience. Intentional, thoughtful choices you make as a writer are often referred to as rhetorical decisions.

The first rhetorical decision a writer makes is to answer the following question: What would you like this writing to *do* for a particular group of readers—your **audience**—in a particular place

Aggapom Poomitud/Shutterstock

and at a specific time? Once you have determined your audience and purpose you are prepared to decide how much and what kinds of information your audience needs to know and what will be convincing to this audience. You also decide how to collect this information and how to present it in an appropriate format. This rhetorical approach to writing applies to all decision making that you do in various settings—not just in the classroom—in crafting any message.

This chapter provides the context for the exploration of writing in subsequent chapters. Here we look at writing in the four areas of life, the course learning goals, the concept of becoming a self-reflective writer, and strategies for lifelong success as a learner.

As you work through this chapter, think about the writing you will produce for this class as well as for the other classes you are taking. How will the ideas in this chapter help you improve your writing?

## Writing in the Four Areas of Your Life

Improving your ability to produce effective texts for college is an important goal of this course and this text. However, writing skills are vital not only in college but also in the professional, civic, and personal parts of your life. If you are like most students, during the next few years, you will devote much of your time to your academic studies. When you finish your academic studies, however, your time commitments will probably change.

Although it is possible that you may still be a student five years from now, it is more likely that you will devote most of your time to the other three parts of your life—especially to your professional life. The writing that you produce in college will prepare you for each of the other areas of life. You will **transfer** the knowledge you are building to produce texts in workplace environments, which is a similar kind of writing used for civic engagement.

### Writing as a College Student

*See Chapter 4 for writing-to-learn strategies.*

You will be expected to do a great deal of writing in college because writing is a powerful tool both for learning and for demonstrating learning. Students who use writing to explore course material generally learn more—and get higher grades—than students who do not. For example, if you write summaries of texts you read, your reading comprehension skills are typically much better than a student who does not write summaries. The reason for this enhanced performance is fairly simple: writing is an effective way to become more involved with your course material in all of your college classes.

### Writing as a Professional

Almost all jobs require some writing; some require a great deal of it. In the workplace, you may be asked to write a proposal or a report. You might be asked to join a team to develop a presentation and/or document new processes. Most employees send e-mails to various audiences, including their peers, supervisors, or clients, throughout their day. Because of these kinds of communication demands, employers frequently list strong writing skills as one of the most important qualifications they seek in job candidates.

Surveys of employers consistently confirm the importance of writing in the work world: employers want to hire people who can write and speak clearly and effectively, think critically, solve problems efficiently, work well in teams, and use technology thoughtfully. The most competitive job seekers are those who begin honing these skills early.

### Writing as a Citizen

Societies work most effectively when citizens are well educated and involved. If you have strong feelings about issues in your community and want to have a voice in how your society functions, you need to actively participate in your community. One important way to make your voice heard in a representative democracy is to write.

You can write to elected officials at the local, state, and federal levels to let them know what you think about an issue and why you think the way that you do. In addition to writing to elected officials, you might find yourself writing to the local newspaper so your views can be more widely circulated. In the civic part of your life, you often solve problems by working with others—neighbors or other citizens who are involved and interested in issues that affect them, their neighborhood, and their community.

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### **Writing** Activity

#### Balancing the Four Areas of Life

Working with two or three of your classmates, answer the following questions about the bar graph shown in Figure 1.1. Compare and discuss your responses. Your instructor may ask your group to share its findings with the rest of the class.

- Which group of bars (1, 2, 3, or 4) comes closest to representing the current balance in your life? What kind of writing do you produce for each area of life?

- Which group of bars comes closest to representing what you consider the ideal balance for someone enrolled full-time in college? For someone enrolled part-time? For a student with family responsibilities and/or a part-time or full-time job?

- Which group of bars best represents the balance that you would like to achieve a decade from now? Two decades from now? Five decades from now?
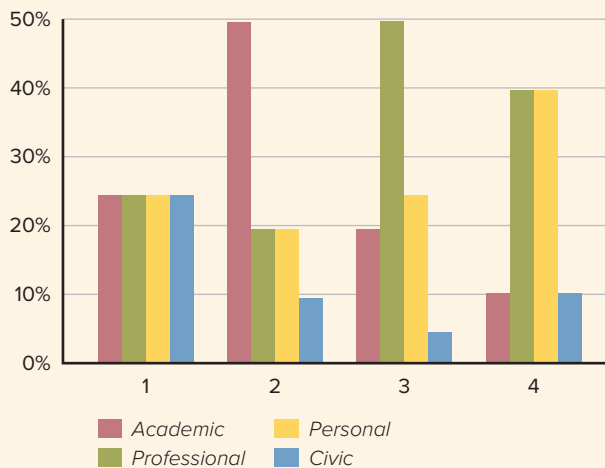
**FIGURE 1.1**
Balancing the
Four Areas of Life

Academic · Personal · Professional · Civic

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## Writing as a Family Member or Friend

Even though writing in the academic, professional, and civic areas of life is important, the writing that you do in your personal life at times can be the most important

of all. We write—whether in print or in digital spaces—to the people who are significant to us to accomplish life's daily tasks and to fulfill our needs. For example, you might develop a newsletter with the intention of updating family and friends on important events, or you might write in a daily journal about the events of your life with the intention of gifting these memories to generations to come.

## Learning Goals in This Course

Whether you are writing for an academic, professional, civic, or personal audience and purpose, you will draw on the same set of writing skills. Your work in this course will help you to learn and to apply these skills to specific writing situations. To achieve this end, throughout the text we have incorporated the learning goals developed by the Council of Writing Program Administrators, a national organization of instructors who direct composition courses. The goals, called the Writing Program Administrators Outcomes Statement, are organized into four broad areas: rhetorical knowledge; critical thinking, reading, and composing; writing processes; and knowledge of conventions. Woven throughout these are goals specific to using digital technologies in writing practice; and throughout this text, "Using Digital Technologies" boxes provide guidance for improving your skills in this area. The following content helps you better understand the four areas of the national learning outcomes.

### Rhetorical Knowledge

**Rhetorical knowledge** includes an understanding of these aspects of the writing situation:

- Audience
- Purpose
- Rhetorical situation
- Writer's voice, tone, and level of formality
- Context, medium, and genre

#### AUDIENCE

To write for others successfully, you need to tailor your writing to their expectations and needs. You need to focus on where there is a meeting of minds—yours and theirs—and where there is not. For example, if you were to write the following grocery list and take it to the store, you would probably know precisely what you had in mind.

**Grocery List**

cereal

milk

coffee

bread

paper

If you were sick, however, and had to rely on a close family member to do your grocery shopping for you, you might have to revise the list by adding a few more details.

**Version of the Grocery List for a Family Member**

cereal

1% milk

coffee beans

multigrain bread

Sunday paper

If you handed the list to a neighbor, though, you would probably have to add much more specific information.

**Version of the Grocery List for a Neighbor**

Grape Nuts Flakes

1% milk (half gallon)

whole-bean Starbucks Sumatra extra-bold decaf coffee

Grandma Sycamore's multigrain bread

the *New York Times*

In each case, you would adjust your list for the audience who needs to act on the information. When you share a great deal of experience with your reader, you can leave gaps in information without causing serious problems. The fewer experiences you have in common with your audience, however, the more you need to fill in those gaps with details and description as you revise, rather than after you have finished writing.

## PURPOSE

In this book Chapters 3–12 focus on common rhetorical purposes for writing: to understand and synthesize texts, to learn, to share experiences, to explore, to inform, to analyze, to convince, to evaluate, to examine causes and effects, and to solve problems. In Chapter 3 you will learn to respond critically to a text and to synthesize texts. In Chapter 4 you will have opportunities to experiment with many forms of writing to learn, which will serve you in this course as well as your other courses. In Chapters 5–12, you will have opportunities to engage with those purposes in some detail. In all the chapters, we will ask you to connect the concepts outlined to the other classes you are taking (and the writing you will do in those classes).

## RHETORICAL SITUATION

When writers compose for a particular purpose, in response to the needs of a particular audience, they are responding to a **rhetorical situation**. A rhetorical

situation consists of the following elements: Writer, purpose, audience, topic, and context/occasion.

Although each rhetorical situation is unique, there are general types of situations that require writers to use the appropriate conventions of format and structure. For example, if you are writing a lab report for a biology course, your instructor will expect you to structure your report in a certain way and to use a neutral, informative tone. If you are proposing a solution to a problem in your community, your readers will expect you first to describe the problem and then to explain how your solution can be implemented, using a reasonable, even-handed tone and giving some attention to possible objections to your proposal.

### WRITER'S VOICE, TONE, AND LEVEL OF FORMALITY

A writer's **voice** is the personality or image that is revealed in the writer's text—the impression made on the reader. To establish a distinctive voice, a writer thoughtfully and consistently makes decisions about such elements as diction (word choice), syntax (sentence structure), and punctuation. All of these decisions are based on the writer's understanding their audience and purpose. It is important to note that "all languages have rules" as linguist Rusty Barrett points out, and writing isn't correct or incorrect, but rather "grammatical" or "ungrammatical." The writer's approach and voice is relative to the rhetorical situation.

**Tone** is the writer's attitude toward the topic, the audience, and other people. Tone can reveal the extent to which a writer is respectful/disrespectful, patient/impatient, supportive/unsupportive, angry, happy, irritated, accommodating/unaccommodating, and the like. For example, Stephen Colbert, host of *The Late Show with Stephen Colbert*, will say something like, "I couldn't have said it better myself" when a political figure or celebrity has made a statement that many people find offensive or illogical. Everyone knows that his tone is ironic; he clearly means the opposite of what he is saying. Together voice and tone are used when a writer is determining how formal to be in meeting the expectations of the audience. Writers should be thoughtful in their approaches to using the language that will be most effective for the specific audience and purpose.

### CONTEXT, MODALITY, AND GENRE

The context for writing affects the writer's choice of modality and genre. Too often in college writing situations students default to seeing the teacher as the audience, and writing the genre, of an essay. The teacher is often a reader but not the audience. Carefully thinking about the rhetorical situation that has been presented to you when you begin writing will allow you to use the voice and level of formality, which provides a space for various language decisions. For example, an executive who needs to announce a company's plan for furloughs (required time off without pay) to thousands of employees in several cities will probably choose to send a memo (the genre) via e-mail (the modality). This genre and this modality make sense in this context because companies often use memos for such announcements. Further, the medium of e-mail is cost-effective.

Laurence Mouton/PhotoAlto Agency/Getty Images


Blend Images/Getty Images

How would your writing change if you were writing to (a) a friend who is still in high school about your new roommate, and (b) a housing administrator to request a housing change?

**Context:** Throughout this book you will have opportunities to write in a variety of **contexts**, or the circumstances that surround your writing, in all four arenas of life: the academic, the professional, the civic, and the personal. These opportunities appear in scenarios describing various rhetorical situations that give rise to writing. Consider what you would write if you were in the following rhetorical situations:

1. You want to convince the financial aid officer at your college that you need a scholarship to stay in school next semester.
2. After a disagreement with a family member or friend, you want to apologize for having said something that you regret.
3. After a conversation with your supervisor at work, you want to communicate you need to reduce your work hours, so you can focus more on school.

As you contemplate these rhetorical situations, consider how the purpose, audience, topic, and context/occasion might alter what you will write and in what format you will deliver the information. For instance, how does writing an apology to a loved one (no. 2 above) differ from writing a request to your supervisor (no. 3 above)?

**Medium/Modality:** A medium is a means of delivering communication. **Media**, often referred to in academic settings as **modality**, come in formats of print, electronic, or sound. For example, a book can be in print and picked up at a bookstore. Books are also offered through audio files and listened to through apps or read in an electronic reader. Video can be watched via a streaming service, through a website, or on a DVD. A letter could be sent on a piece of paper through the mail, sent as an e-mail

attachment, or read aloud to the audience. When you combine together more than one media (or modality) your text is **multimodal**. According to Claire Lauer in her article "Contending with Terms: 'Multimodal' and 'Multimedia' in Academic and Public Spaces," *multimodal* is the academic term that is used interchangeably with ***multimedia***, but that is more accurate in terminology because of the focus on design and process. Think of medium, or modality, as you consider the best method to deliver a text to your audience. As you develop projects for Chapters 5–12, you will be encouraged to use various (and multiple) modalities to communicate with your audience. Although you may want to use what feels most comfortable, you may also want to try forms of media that you have not used before.

**Genre:** *Genre* is a French word meaning "kind" or "type." Although people frequently use the word **genre** to refer to kinds of texts, such as a letter, a formal paper, a report, a blog, a website, or a memo, people use this word in a wide variety of ways. You may have heard *genre* used to refer to the **content** of texts. For example, Shakespearean plays are labeled tragedies, comedies, or histories. If a friend tells you that she saw a film version of a Shakespearean tragedy last night, you could guess fairly accurately that she saw characters die as a result of foul deeds. Likewise, if another friend said that she had read résumés all morning, you would know that she was reading a genre about people's educational and work backgrounds.

    *Genre* also refers to different **forms** of texts. For example, think again about the friend who said that she had read résumés all morning. Résumés have not only standard content (educational and work background) but also a generally standard, easily recognized format. Likewise, you can typically tell a newspaper or magazine article based on glancing at its format.

    From a rhetorical standpoint, you select the format or overall structure of the piece of writing you are constructing. A letter will have a salutation, a body, and a signature, although the structure of the body of that letter could vary widely—it could be organized in paragraphs or as a list, for instance. The point is that content can come in many kinds of packages. For example, in writing to convince people to wear a face mask during the global pandemic you could use any of the following: a letter to the editor of a local newspaper a flyer, a poster, or a website in which you present an argument in support of wearing face masks a poem, short story, play, or song about someone who died because he neglected to wear a mask and socially distance an obituary; or a social media story.

    You may choose from a wide variety of genres for writing projects in Chapters 5–12. In each of these chapters, you will find information about genres that are commonly used for that rhetorical purpose. For example, in Chapter 9, "Writing to Convince," you will find information about editorials, position papers, job references, and advertisements. In writing, *genre* means that you follow the conventions of a type of writing and provide, generally, what readers expect from that genre. A paper for one of your college classes will usually be more formal and detailed than an e-mail you might write to your classmates asking them to vote in an upcoming election. Let's look again at the list of three rhetorical situations discussed in the context section and determine the medium and genre for each scenario.

### Rhetorical Analysis

A **rhetorical analysis** is an examination of the relative effectiveness of a particular text written for a particular audience for a particular purpose. It can include any of the previously mentioned features of **rhetorical situations**: audience, purpose, voice and tone, context, format, and genre. The average person does many rhetorical analyses each day. Although formal rhetorical analyses are more elaborate than this example suggests, the principle is the same.

Throughout this book, you will have opportunities to engage in rhetorical analysis. For example, at the end of each reading in Chapters 5–12, you will have an opportunity to write brief rhetorical analyses of those texts.

### Critical Thinking, Reading, and Composing

To get the most out of your reading and to accomplish your goals as a writer, you need to develop and use critical thinking skills. In Chapter 2 we offer some informal reading and writing activities that promote critical thinking. Although these activities will help you read more thoughtfully, many of them are also tools for generating ideas and material for the more formal writing tasks you will do in all four parts of your life and, of course, in the other college classes you are taking.

In general, you engage in **critical thinking** when you examine an idea from many perspectives—seeing it in new ways. For example, when you write a formal argument, you will need to address others' objections to your ideas if you hope to persuade your audience to accept your point. As noted in Chapter 3, when you respond to texts or when you synthesize the ideas in several texts, you are thinking critically. You can also apply critical thinking to understand the relationships among language, knowledge, and power. That is, language often has a greater impact when it is used by people in positions of social, political, or economic power. When used effectively, language is often far more powerful than physical weapons. Many modern governments have written constitutions and written laws derived from those constitutions. The most politically and economically powerful people in societies tend to be those who use critical thinking and language most effectively to present their ideas.

### Writing Processes

Although writing processes vary from writer to writer and from situation to situation, effective writers generally go through the following activities:

- Generating initial ideas
- Relating those ideas to the writing situation or assignment
- Conducting research to find support for their ideas
- Organizing ideas and support and writing an initial draft
- Revising and shaping the paper, frequently with the advice of other readers
- Editing and polishing the paper

The order of these processes can vary, and often you will need to return to a previous step. For example, while drafting you may discover that you need to find more support for one of your ideas; while revising you may find a better way to organize your ideas.

When writers revise, they add or delete words, phrases, sentences, or even whole paragraphs, and they often modify their ideas by viewing the message through the eyes of their intended audience. After they have revised multiple times, they then edit, attending to punctuation, grammar, usage, and spelling—the "surface features" of written texts. A writer's credibility can be impacted by the lack of editing, so this is an important step before the text is distributed to the audience. Revising and editing are two separate steps in the writing process.

Effective writers also ask others to help them generate and refine their ideas and polish their prose. Published writers in academic, civic, and professional fields rely heavily on others as they work, often showing one another drafts of their writing before submitting a manuscript to publishers.

Because effective writers get help from others, this book provides many opportunities for you and your classmates—your **peers**—to help one another. One key to working productively with others is to understand that they bring different backgrounds, experiences, knowledge, and perspectives to the writing task, so it is critical to treat what others think and say with respect, no matter how much you agree or disagree with them. You should also remember when working with others that the suggestions and comments they make are about your *text,* not about you.

## Knowledge of Conventions

**Conventions** are the table manners of writing. Sometimes they matter; other times they do not. Writing notes to help yourself learn course material is like eating breakfast alone at home. In this situation, table manners are not very important. When you are having dinner with your employer or the president of your college, though, table manners do matter. The same principle applies when you write for readers. Effective writers know which writing conventions to use in particular settings based on who the audience is for the text produced.

To make their writing more appealing to readers, writers need to master many conventions: spelling, punctuation, sentence structure, and word choice. As discussed above, editing occurs once the text has conveyed the intended message for the specific audience. While some conventions are considered signs of the writer's respect for readers (correctly spelling someone's name, for instance), other conventions, such as punctuation, organization, tone, the use of headers and white space, and documentation style, help your readers understand what you are saying and where your information comes from.

In addition to surface feature editing, knowledge of conventions covers proper citation of sources along with understanding the rules of the genre. For example, a website is formatted differently than an essay or a magazine article. When selecting your genre, you will want to analyze other texts in this format so you know the knowledge of conventions for your project.

## Using Digital Technologies

Initially you might wonder, "Why is using digital technologies a learning goal for a writing course?" In fact, most writers use various digital technologies for parts of their composing process. Although many students choose to use pen and paper for note-taking or for the initial parts of their writing process, others write exclusively with a digital technology, taking notes on a laptop or tablet or even on a smartphone.

Although you are likely aware that you will be using some kind of digital technology to produce your final drafts for your college assignments, writing in digital environments and with digital tools will be a major part of composing in all aspects of your life, whether you are drafting an e-mail to a professor or supervisor, composing a text message to a friend, or updating your social media status. Part of what it means to compose using digital technologies is to understand the rhetorical strategies that are necessary in each different situation. You won't use the same strategies when you send a text message to a friend that you would when you e-mail an instructor. Likewise, the rhetorical strategies you use when updating your social media status are very different from the ones you employ when writing a paper for a course.

Further, using digital technologies strategically can help you throughout the composing process, and this work expands your **digital literacies**, defined as your ability to understand and work with digital texts and in digital spaces, which is a subset of your collective information literacy. A variety of technologies make it extremely easy to share your work and review the work of others. You can share files simply by e-mailing them or sharing a file via cloud-based storage such as Dropbox. Also, you might choose to use a collaborative writing environment such as Google Docs, which allows many writers to compose, revise, and edit text simultaneously.

Finally, because research is often conducted electronically, it is essential to understand how to find credible online sources, which we discuss further in Chapter 19. To locate these sources, you need to understand how to use your college library's website as a portal to a wide range of scholarly databases and credible websites.

> ### **Writing** Activity
>
> #### Assessing Your Strengths and Weaknesses
>
> In no more than two pages, assess your current strengths and weaknesses in one of the four goal areas: rhetorical knowledge; critical thinking, reading, and composing; writing processes; and knowledge of conventions. Also consider your proficiency in using digital technologies. Share your self-assessment with two or three classmates.

> 📶 **USING DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES**    **Sharing Digital Literacies**
>
> You and your classmates can help each other get more out of the writing technologies that are available on your campus. Offer to show your friends or the members of your study group shortcuts and tools in programs you are familiar with. Don't be shy about asking friends and classmates for tips and tricks they've picked up while developing their projects. You can use your own computing knowledge as "social collateral" in classes because some students will be more comfortable than others with various programs. For example, you might show your classmates how to use some of the formatting tools in the word processor and ask others to show you how to use slide show presentation, spreadsheet, or sound file–mixing software.

## **Writing** Activity

### Assessing Your Uses of Digital Technologies

Think about the ways in which you have used digital technologies. In the grid below, list a few tasks that you have done with digital technologies. Compare your list with those of several classmates.

| Digital Tool | Academic Situation | Professional, Civic, or Personal Situation |
| --- | --- | --- |
| • E-mail | _____ | _____ |
| • Word-processing software | _____ | _____ |
| • Web browser (e.g., Chrome, Mozilla Firefox, Safari) | _____ | _____ |
| • Webtext composing tools (e.g., Wix, WordPress, or Squarespace) | _____ | _____ |
| • Presentation software (e.g., PowerPoint, Prezi) | _____ | _____ |
| • Other | _____ | _____ |

## Becoming a Self-Reflective Writer

By evaluating your strengths and weaknesses in the four learning outcomes, you have taken a step toward becoming a more reflective–and therefore a more successful–writer. Throughout this course, you will continue to build on this foundation. Toward the end of each chapter in Parts 2 and 3, you will be asked to reflect on the work you did for that chapter. In each chapter, you will find opportunities to reflect on your learning; these sections are called metacognitive moments. **Metacognition** is a process for becoming aware of your rhetorical decision making and an awareness of your thinking processes. Reflecting–in writing–on your own writing activities helps you learn what worked (and perhaps what did not work). That kind of activity will help you remember the most useful aspects of your process the next time you face a similar writing task. By reflecting on your learning and thinking about yourself as a writer, you increase the likelihood that your learning will transfer to other settings in the four arenas of life.

**GENRES** *Up Close*    **Writing a Reflection**

A meaningful form of thinking and writing, is **reflection** an opportunity to consider carefully the importance, value, or applicability of something. Reflection may improve your ability to learn a skill or acquire knowledge. A reflection includes two components:

- A description of what is being reflected on. For example, if you reflect on a lab experiment, you first need to describe the experiment so you can look back at the process. If you reflect on what you learned from reading a novel, you first need to summarize the novel. When you describe or summarize the subject of your reflection, you make it easier for your readers to understand it. In addition, the action of describing or summarizing helps you to focus your attention on the subject of your reflection.

- A thoughtful consideration of the subject of your reflection. For example, you could ask the following kinds of questions:

  - Why is the subject of my reflection important? How can I apply it?

  - What have I learned from this experience?

  - What do I know about _____ that I did not know when I started this work? What do I still need to learn about _____?

  - What do my readers know about _____? What do they not know about _____? What do they need to know about _____?

  - How can I apply this learning to other settings in my life—now and in the future?

In this book you will be asked to engage in many forms of reflection. The following example is an excerpt from a reflection by student writer Zack Peach, whose paper appears in Chapter 9. Notice how Peach addresses his knowledge and skills as well as connections between the academic and personal arenas of his life:

My passion for this topic encouraged me to devote lots of time and energy to writing a paper that would help other people understand how autism—Asperger's syndrome, in particular—affects the lives of people. Because I have lived with Asperger's syndrome for nearly two decades, I feel knowledgeable about the topic and compelled to use the term "Asperger's" even though it is no longer used as an official diagnosis for a particular form of autism.

I enjoyed working on this writing project because it gave me an opportunity to consider the wide range of feelings that I have about the topic. I also enjoyed working with my peers, who asked me lots of questions about the topic and about my experiences. Their questions helped me to refine what I had said in earlier versions of the paper. They helped me see how I needed to elaborate on what I had said so that my thoughts would be easier to understand by people who have not experienced Asperger's or other forms of autism.

I think that my writing skills are improving because of the invention work, drafting, revising, and editing that our teacher asks us to do. However, the more I write, the more I realize that learning to write is a lifelong journey. I'm eager to keep working at it.

Most important, I feel that papers such as this one give me an opportunity to make a difference in the lives of other people.

## Strategies for Success

Successful people use strategies that are effective in most areas of life. Recognizing this, several professional organizations—the Council of Writing Program Administrators, the National Council of Teachers of English, and the National

Writing Project—have identified eight strategies—habits of mind—that can help writers achieve their goals:

- **Curiosity:** the desire to know more about the world
- **Openness:** the willingness to consider new ways of thinking and being
- **Engagement:** a sense of being involved in and committed to learning
- **Creativity:** the ability to use new and unusual approaches for generating, investigating, and representing ideas
- **Persistence:** the ability to remain interested in and involved with your projects, regardless of their length
- **Responsibility:** the ability to take ownership of your actions and understand the consequences of those actions for yourself and others
- **Flexibility:** the ability to adapt to situations, expectations, or demands
- **Metacognition:** the ability to reflect on your own thinking as well as on the way that people in your culture tend to think

In Chapters 5–12 in this book, you will find suggestions for using these eight strategies to help you become a more effective writer. As you use these strategies, however, think about how they can help you to become more successful in anything that you attempt to do in life. In addition to coverage on the habits of mind, Chapter 23 discusses student success as a new college student, including coverage on time management, dealing with procrastination, and accessing resources for your success.

## Text Credits

# 2

# Reading Critically for College and for Life

In Chapter 1, we considered how writing skills will serve you in the academic, professional, civic, and personal areas of your life. This chapter focuses on an activity that reinforces and helps you improve your writing skills: reading. When we read, we make meaning out of words and visual images. **Reading** is the active process of constructing meaning.

In this chapter, we ask you to consider how you currently read different kinds of material and give you some helpful reading strategies. Specifically, the chapter presents rhetorical reading strategies, strategies for reading actively, and reflective reading strategies. All of these strategies will help you better understand what you read and use that information to make your own writing more effective.

In your college classes, you will be asked to read (and write) about all kinds of print and digital texts for all kinds of purposes. More often than not, you will use some of what you read in the



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projects that you develop for your college classes. The connection between what you read and how you use that material in your writing requires you to think and read *critically*.

What does it mean to *read critically*? One thing reading critically does not mean is to be "nit-picky" or negative. Rather, when you read a text *critically,* you question what you read, make

connections to other texts you have read and to your own experiences, and think about how the information in the text might help you as you develop your own writing. To read critically means to read *thoughtfully,* to keep in mind what you already know, and to interact *actively* with the text. Critical readers underline, make notes, and ask questions as they read.

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## Reading Critically: Integrating Sources into Your Writing

Why do you suppose that your instructor asks you to read critically and thoughtfully? In addition to reading to understand the information, a key reason to read critically and thoughtfully is so that you will be able to put the information and concepts you read about into your own writing, to support your own ideas.

Reading critically also has an added bonus: it helps you understand how the writing you read "works"—what makes that writing effective (or not) or how that writing connects to and affects (or doesn't affect) readers. As you read and learn to understand how the writing your instructors ask you to read *functions*, you will be able to construct more effective texts.

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### METACOGNITIVE MOMENT

**Digital Literacy**

As we talk about your ability to consume texts as a literate being, we want to help you consider your history and relationship with reading and developing digital texts, which come in many forms. Let's think about how you've learned to use, function within, and produce digital texts. For many people early encounters with digital texts occurred through video gaming, e-mail, instant messaging, or online searches. Think back to the first time you played a video game. How did you know what to do? Do you recall an early exchange with a friend through e-mail, text message, or instant message? Have you added a comment within a Google document? When you have visited a search engine, how do you know the results that appear are accurate information and can be trusted?

**Questions to Consider**

1. What does it mean to be digitally literate? Why is this important?

2. Select one of the technologies listed above, or another you think is important, and walk through your literacy process step by step. How did you become digitally literate in that technology? What does it mean to be literate in the technology of e-mail, video gaming, messaging, web design, etc.?

3. What technologies do you need to learn to be successful in college? Where can you develop this knowledge base?

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In your college classes, you will be asked to read *a lot.* Understanding what you read and relating what you read to what you already know is, to a large extent, what college is about. As you read for your college classes, consider how you might use that information in your own class papers or examinations. For example, if you know your philosophy instructor will ask you to construct a paper in which you outline and explain "philosophy of the mind," you should look for the terms *philosophy* and *mind* and anything that connects them as you read. When you read, you may ask yourself:

- What is the main point, the thesis? How does the thesis relate to what I already know? To what I'm reading for this class?

- How are some important terms or concepts defined? How do the author's definitions compare to what I think the terms mean? What terms or concepts are not explained (and so I'll need to look them up)?

- How effective is the supporting evidence the author supplies?
- What did the author leave out? How does that omission affect the argument being made?
- What information in this text will help me construct my own paper?

You *use* what you learned from your reading by integrating those ideas into your own writing, by citing and paraphrasing the concepts you glean from your reading. You can read about using quotations from the texts in your own writing in Chapter 6. Chapter 20 discusses how to paraphrase and attribute those ideas correctly.

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### Writing Activity

#### What Is Your Reading Process?

Take a few minutes to answer the following questions:

- What kinds of texts do you like to read? Newspapers? Websites? Blogs?
- How does the way you read online differ from the way you read in print?
- What strategies do you use to read long, complex nonfiction texts like your college textbooks or e-books?
- What strategies do you use to help you understand and remember what you have read?

Share your answers with several classmates. How do your responses compare with theirs? What strategies do they use that might be helpful to you?

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## Applying Rhetorical Reading Strategies

When you write, you have a purpose in mind. As we note in Chapter 1, the reason for writing is your **rhetorical purpose**—what you hope to accomplish. Likewise, before you read, think about your rhetorical purpose: What are you trying to accomplish by reading? Are you reading to be entertained, to learn new information, to understand a complex subject in more detail, or for some other reason? If you consciously think about *why* you are reading, as well as *how* you plan to read a particular piece of writing, you will have a strategy you can follow as you begin reading.

Before you start to read any written work, take a few minutes to preview its content and design. Look for the following elements:

- The title of the work, or of the particular section, you are about to read
- Headings that serve as an outline of the text