

John Mauk | John Metz

The
Composition
of Everyday
Life

A Guide to Writing

CONCISE SIXTH EDITION





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The Composition of Everyday Life

A Guide to Writing | CONCISE | Sixth Edition

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The Composition of Everyday Life:
A Guide to Writing, Concise
Sixth Edition

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Brief Contents

Part I: Invention

1. Inventing Ideas	2
2. Remembering Who You Were	24
3. Explaining Relationships	58
4. Observing	92
5. Analyzing Concepts	122
6. Analyzing Written Texts	152
7. Analyzing Images and Videos	188
8. Making Arguments	222
9. Responding to Arguments	266
10. Evaluating	298
11. Searching for Causes	332
12. Proposing Solutions	364
13. Thinking Radically: Reseeing the World	390

Part II: Research

14. Finding Sources	426
15. Analyzing, Synthesizing, and Evaluating Sources	436
16. Integrating and Documenting Sources	466

Part III: Organization and Delivery

17. Organizing Ideas	518
18. Developing Voice	530
19. Vitalizing Sentences	552



Online Chapter

Part IV: Anthology

20. Anthology: Everyday Rhetoric	
----------------------------------	--



Online Chapter

Part V: Rhetorical Handbook

21. Rhetorical Handbook	
-------------------------	--

Contents

Using <i>CEL</i> as a Thematic Reader	xviii
Note to Instructors	xxv
Acknowledgments	xxxi
Using <i>The Composition of Everyday Life: A Guide to Writing</i> to Meet WPA Outcomes (v3.0)	xxxiii

Chapter 1 Inventing Ideas 2

INTRODUCTION 3

Asking Questions	5
Re-Inventing Education	6
Reading for Rhetoric	8
How to Use <i>The Composition of Everyday Life</i>	12

SAMPLE ESSAYS 12

WRITING TOPICS 12

INVENTION 13

Invention Workshops	13
Point of Contact	15
Analysis	15
Public Resonance	16
Thesis	17
Rhetorical Tools	18
Revision and Peer Review	19
Reflection	20

PART II: RESEARCH 20

PART III: ORGANIZATION AND DELIVERY 21

A FINAL NOTE 21

Inventing Ideas Assignment	22
----------------------------	----

Chapter 2 Remembering Who You Were 24

INTRODUCTION 25

READINGS 27

"Selling Manure" *Bonnie Jo Campbell* 27

"How I Lost the Junior Miss Pageant" *Cindy Bosley* 31

"The Thrill of Victory . . . The Agony of Parents" *Jennifer Schwind-Pawlak* (Student Essay) 36

INVENTION 41

Point of Contact 41

Analysis 44 • Thinking Further • Invention Workshop

Public Resonance 48

Thesis 49 • Evolution of a Thesis • Common Thesis Problem: Avoiding
Clichés • Revising Your Thesis

Rhetorical Tools 51 • Narration • Allusions • Dialogue

Revision 54 • Peer Review • Peer Review Truisms

Reflection 56

Beyond the Essay: Invention Video 57

Chapter 3 Explaining Relationships 58

INTRODUCTION 59

READINGS 61

"Americans and the Land" *John Steinbeck* 61

"Mugged" *Jim Crockett* 67

"To Fish and Be Fished: A Tinder-fied Game of Love" *Kellie Coppola* (Student Essay) 70

INVENTION 76

Point of Contact 76

Analysis 78 • Thinking Further • Invention Workshop • Sample Invention Workshop

Public Resonance 82

Thesis 84 • Evolution of a Thesis

Rhetorical Tools 86 • Using Narration • Using Description • Using Figurative Language

Revision 88 • Peer Review

Reflection 90

Beyond the Essay: Images as Support 91

Chapter 4 Observing 92

INTRODUCTION 93

READINGS 95

"Living Like Weasels" *Annie Dillard* 95

"The Front Porch" *Chester McCovey* 100

"Red Raiders Fans" *Taylor Perry* 104

INVENTION 108

Point of Contact 108 • Observing People • Observing a Place • Observing an Animal • Observing a Person or Event Involved in Your Major

Analysis 112 • Thinking Further

Public Resonance 114 • Invention Workshop

Thesis 116 • Evolution of a Thesis

Rhetorical Tools 117 • Using Details • Using Narrative • Using Allusions
• Using Simile and Metaphor

Revision 119 • Peer Review

Reflection 121

Beyond the Essay: Cover Image 121

Chapter 5 Analyzing Concepts 122

INTRODUCTION 123

READINGS 125

"Why 'Natural' Doesn't Mean Anything Anymore" *Michael Pollan* 125

"Black Like I Thought I Was" *Erin Aubry Kaplan* 129

"The Real, the Bad, and the Ugly" *Cassie Heidecker* (Student Essay) 133

Outside Reading 138

INVENTION 139

Point of Contact 139

Analysis 140 • Invention Workshop • Thinking Further

Public Resonance 143

Thesis 144 • Evolution of a Thesis

Rhetorical Tools 146 • Examples • Definitions and References • Invention Workshop • Outside Sources

Revision	149 • Peer Review
Reflection	150
Beyond the Essay: Conceptual Map	151

Chapter 6 Analyzing Written Texts 152

INTRODUCTION 153

READINGS 155

The Weight of Sanity: A Sample Analysis of Ann Marie Paulin	155
"The Default Setting: An Analysis of David Foster Wallace" Adrienne Carr	158
"Politics and Audience: <i>The New York Times</i> ' Appeal to Undecided Voters in 2016"	
Alison Block (Student Essay)	163

INVENTION 168

Point of Contact	168
Analysis	169 • Thinking Further
Thesis	177 • Evolution of a Thesis
Rhetorical Tools	179 • Caution: Four Common Pitfalls
Reflection	185
Revision	186 • Peer Review
Beyond the Essay	187

Chapter 7 Analyzing Images and Videos 188

INTRODUCTION 189

READINGS 191

"Rise of the Image Culture: Re-Imagining the American Dream" Elizabeth Thoman	191
"An Imperfect Reality" Rebecca Hollingsworth	197
"Look on My Works: <i>Breaking Bad</i> 's Final Season Trailer" Nick Fendinger (Student Essay)	201

INVENTION 205

Point of Contact	205 • Print Advertisements • Posters • Internet Images • Billboards
Analysis	206 • Image • Video • Text • Context • Invention Workshop
Thesis	215 • Common Thesis Problems • Evolution of a Thesis • Revising Your Thesis
Rhetorical Tools	217 • Research

Revision 219 • Peer Review

Reflection 220

Beyond the Essay: Video Briefing 220

Chapter 8 Making Arguments 222

INTRODUCTION 223

READINGS 225

"The Dog Delusion" *April Pedersen* 225

"Cruelty, Civility, and Other Weighty Matters" *Ann Marie Paulin* 230

"Hive Talkin': The Buzz around Town about Bees" *Teresa Scollon* 240

INVENTION 245

Point of Contact 245 • School • Work • Home • Community • Pop Culture • Your Major

Analysis 247 • Invention Workshop • Thinking Further

Public Resonance 249

Thesis 251 • Arguability • Scope • Public Resonance • Revelation • Evolution of a Thesis
• Common Thesis Problems

Rhetorical Tools 254 • Support • Counterargument • Invention Workshop • Concession
and Qualifier • Caution: Logical Fallacies

Revision 263 • Peer Review

Reflection 264

Beyond the Essay: The Open Letter 264

Chapter 9 Responding to Arguments 266

INTRODUCTION 267

READINGS 269

"Entitlement Education" *Daniel Bruno* 269

"Have It Your Way: Consumerism Invades Education" *Simon Benlow* 275

"The Power of Failure: J. K. Rowlings' 2008 Harvard Commencement Speech"
Liz Winhover (Student Essay) 279

INVENTION 283

Point of Contact 283

Analysis 285 • The First Layer: The Four Elements of Argument

The Second Layer: Warranting Assumptions	286
Public Resonance	288 • Invention Workshop
Thesis	289 • Evolution of a Thesis • Thinking Further
Rhetorical Tools	292 • Using Support • Counterarguing • Conceding and Qualifying Points • Remembering Logical Fallacies
Revision	294 • Peer Review
Reflection	296
Beyond the Essay: Tattoo Design	296

Chapter 10 Evaluating 298

INTRODUCTION 299

READINGS 301

"Talibanned" <i>Benjamin Busch</i>	301
"Important and Flawed" <i>Kareem Abdul-Jabbar</i>	305
"Star Trek: Where No Man Has Gone Before" <i>Jaren Provo</i> (Student Essay)	310

INVENTION 317

Point of Contact	317
Analysis	319 • Discovering the Purpose of the Subject • Applying Criteria to the Subject
Public Resonance	321 • Invention Workshop
Thesis	323 • Evolution of a Thesis • Common Thesis Problems
Rhetorical Tools	325 • Using Support • Counterarguments and Concessions • Invention Workshop
Revision	328 • Peer Review
Reflection	329
Beyond the Essay: Evaluation Form	330

Chapter 11 Searching for Causes 332

INTRODUCTION 333

READINGS 335

"Is Google Making Us Stupid? What the Internet Is Doing to Our Brains" <i>Nicholas Carr</i>	335
"Why We Binge-Watch Television" <i>Kevin Fallon</i>	343

"Why Millennials Are Weak" *Quinn Greenwell* 346

INVENTION 350

Point of Contact 350 • Work • Local Events • Social Trends • Campus Issues • Politics

• Your Major

Analysis 352 • Invention Workshop • Thinking Further

Public Resonance 355

Thesis 356 • Evolution of a Thesis • Common Thesis Problems • Revising

Your Thesis

Rhetorical Tools 358 • Integrating Authorities (Outside Sources) • Counterarguing
and Conceding • Invention Workshop

Revision 360 • Peer Review

Reflection 361

Beyond the Essay: Photo Essay 362

Chapter 12 Proposing Solutions 364

INTRODUCTION 365

READINGS 367

"Hi, I'm a Digital Junkie, and I Suffer from Infomania" *Manoush Zomorodi* 367

"Your Kids Bored at School? Tell Them to Get Over It" *Laura Hanby Hudgens* 370

"Different Jobs" *Dana Stewart* 373

INVENTION 377

Point of Contact 377 • School • Government • Television • Your Major • Community

Analysis 380

Public Resonance 381 • Invention Workshop

Thesis 383 • Evolution of a Thesis

Rhetorical Tools 384 • Discovering Counterarguments and Alternative Solutions

• Avoiding Logical Fallacies

Revision 387 • Peer Review

Reflection 389

Beyond the Essay: Exploring Other Media 389

Chapter 13 Thinking Radically: Reseeing the World 390

INTRODUCTION 391

READINGS 394

"Celibate Passion" *Kathleen Norris* 394

"Build the Wall" *Ed Bell* 398

"Unemployed and Working Hard" *Simon Wykoff* (Student Essay) 403

Outside Reading 408

INVENTION 409

Point of Contact 409

Analysis 411 • Thinking Further

Public Resonance 415

Thesis 415 • Evolution of a Thesis

Rhetorical Tools 418 • Using Narration • Using Description • Building Intellectual Bridges
• Counterarguments and Concessions • Outside Sources

Revision 421 • Peer Review

Reflection 423

Beyond the Essay: Visual Essay/Collage/Poster 424

Chapter 14 Finding Sources 426

USING CATALOGS AND DATABASES 427

Online Catalogs 427

Periodical Databases 428

CONDUCTING INTERVIEWS 430

Asking the Right Questions 430

Integrating Interviews into Your Writing 431

Planning an Interview 432

CREATING SURVEYS 432

Generating Questions 433

Choosing Respondents 433

Recording and Using Responses 434

Chapter 15 Analyzing, Synthesizing, and Evaluating Sources 436

DEVELOPING CRITICAL LITERACY 437

“Just the Facts, Please”—Or Maybe Not 437

“Numbers Don’t Lie”—Or Do They? 439

SUMMARIZING AND ANALYZING SOURCES 440

Content 440

Context 441

UNDERSTANDING COMMON SOURCE TYPES 442

Books and e-books 442

Periodicals 443

Newspapers 444

Government Documents 444

Reference Works 445

Audiovisual Materials 445

SYNTHESIZING SOURCES 446

Assignment: Summarizing, Analyzing, and Synthesizing Sources 449

Sample Synthesis 452

“Exploring Caffeine Views” *Jim Crockett* 452

EVALUATING SOURCES 455

Relevance 455

Reliability 455

Credibility 456

Timeliness 457

Diversity 457

Evaluating Online Sources 458

Assignment: Evaluating a Source 460 • Relevance • Reliability • Credibility • Timeliness
• Diversity

SAMPLE SOURCE EVALUATION 462

Assessing Bond Pittman’s “Drink Earlier, Drink Less”

Chapter 16 Integrating and Documenting Sources 466

INTEGRATING SOURCES 467

- Paraphrase 467
- Summary 468
- Quotation 470 • Special Conditions in Quoting
- Coherence Strategies 474
- Plagiarism 476

DOCUMENTING SOURCES 477

MLA STYLE 477

- In-Text Citation 478
- Works Cited 479
- Books 481 • Single Author Print Book • Book with Two Authors • Book with Three or More Authors
 - Corporate Author or Government Publication • Subsequent Editions • Republished Book • Edited Book
 - Translated Book • Online Book • E-book
- Articles 483 • Article in a Magazine, Accessed Online • Article in a Print Journal • Article in Online Journal • Journal Article Retrieved from a Database • Article in a Print Newspaper • Newspaper or Magazine Article Retrieved from a Database • Essay, Story, or Poem in an Anthology (such as a college textbook) • Encyclopedia Article
- Online-Only Sources 485 • Official Website • Personal or Professional Home Page • Document or Page from Website • Government Website • Online Presentation • E-mail • Online Posting • Untitled Online Posting • Entry in an Online Encyclopedia or Dictionary
- Other Sources 487 • Abstract • Television Episode • Film • Film or Television Episode, Accessed Online • Audio Recording • Personal Interview • Published Letter • Print brochure • Print advertisement • Work of Art (painting, sculpture, photograph) • Lecture or Speech • Performance
- Sample Research Essay 490

APA STYLE 496

- In-Text Citation 496
- References 498
- Printed Books 499 • General Format for Books • Two or More Authors • Corporate Author
 - Subsequent Editions • Edited Book • Translated Book
- Printed Articles 500 • Article in a Magazine • Article in a Newspaper • Article in a Journal • Article or Chapter in an Edited Book • Encyclopedia Article
- Electronic Sources 501 • Website • Document from Website (Author and Date Stated) • Document from Website (No Author or Date Stated) • Personal or Professional Home Page • Journal or Magazine Article Retrieved from a Database • Journal Article Online • Online Presentation • Online Book • Abstract

Other Sources 503 • Brochure • Personal Interview or Letter • Television Program • Government Publication

Sample Research Essay 504

Frequently Asked Questions 516 • What If I Don't Know What Type of Source I Have? • How Do I Tell the Difference between a Journal and a Magazine? • How Do I Find the Publication Information? • How Do I Know the Page Numbers of an Electronic Source? • Should I Use APA, MLA, or Something Else? • Why Are There Different Documentation Styles? • Why Don't Some Articles Have Works Cited or Reference Pages? • Standard Abbreviations

Chapter 17 Organizing Ideas 518

INTRODUCTION 519

BEGINNING 519

CHANGING PARAGRAPHS 522

INTEGRATING OUTSIDE SOURCES 523

COUNTERARGUING 524

SEPARATING PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS 526

CONCLUDING 527

QUESTIONS FOR ORGANIZING YOUR PROJECTS 529

Chapter 18 Developing Voice 530

INTRODUCTION 531

ESTABLISHING PRESENCE 531

Choosing Details 531

Controlling Speed and Time 533

Managing the "I" 533

Using Allusions 535

Promoting Curiosity 536

Using Figurative Language 537

Whispering (Drawing Readers in Close) 538

Yelling (Emphasizing Points) 539

Using Sentence Length 539

BUILDING CREDIBILITY 541

- Drawing on Experience 541
- Arguing, Conceding, and Qualifying 542
- Avoiding Harsh Description 543
- Talking with, Not Arguing at, Readers 544
- Applying Rogerian Argument 544
- Creating Reasonable Tone 545

FOLLOWING CONVENTIONS 546

- Considering Verb Mood 546
- Adjusting Formality 548
- Exploring the Boundaries 549

QUESTIONS FOR DEVELOPING VOICE 550**Chapter 19 Vitalizing Sentences 552****INTRODUCTION 553****CONTROLLING THE PACE 553**

- Turn Clauses to Phrases 5544
- Turn Phrases to Words 554
- Combine Sentences 555
- Subordinate Less Important Ideas 556
- Experiment with Length 556
- Avoid Unnecessary Interruption 557
- Avoid Over-Embedding 557
- Avoid Pileups 558
- Avoid Vague Pronouns 558
- Cleaning the Language 559
- Avoid Clichés 559
- Avoid Stilted Language 561
- Avoid Unnecessary Attention to I 561
- Avoid Unnecessary Attention to You 562
- Clean Up Attributive Phrases 563

- Avoid Blueprinting 563
- Condense Wordy Phrases 564
- Avoid Expletives 565
- Throw Away the Obvious 565

GETTING SPECIFIC 566

- Vitalize with Verbs 566
- Avoid *Be* Verbs When Possible 567

EXPERIMENTING WITH PATTERNS 567

- Repeat Clause or Phrase Patterns 567
- Intensify with a Series 568
- Try Absolutes! 568
- Try the Stylistic Fragment 569 • Stylistic Fragments
- Deliberately Break a Rule! 570
- Questions for Vitalizing Your Writing 570



Chapter 20 Anthology: Everyday Rhetoric

Remembering Who You Were

- "A Beat Education" *Leonard Kress*
- "The Grapes of Mrs. Rath" *Steve Mockensturm*

Explaining Relationships

- "What the Honey Meant" *Cindy Bosley*
- "Dog-Tied" *David Hawes*

Observing

- "Onward, Gamers, Onward!" *Royce Flores*
- "The Farm on the Hill" *Evan Proudfoot*

Analyzing Concepts

- "Why We No Longer Use the 'H' Word" *Dan Wilkins*
- "This Is What a Feminist Looks Like" *Barack Obama*

Analyzing Texts and Images

"Cartoons 'n Comics: Communication to the Quick" *Joy Clough*

"Protests with the Mostest: The Art of Opposition through Protest Signs" *Deanna Krokos*

Making Arguments

"Internet Addiction" *Greg Beato*

"Trees Please" *Michael Rust*

Responding to Arguments

"Military Fraud: The Myth of Automatic Virtue" *Steve Gillman*

"Crimes against Humanity" *Ward Churchill*

Evaluating

"Revealing the Ugly Cartoonish Truth: *The Simpsons*" *Simon Benlow*

"The Parting Breath of the Now-Perfect Woman" *Chester McCovey*

Searching for Causes

"Are Female Long-Distance Runners More Prone To Suicidal Depression?"
Emily de la Bruyere

"American Consumerism" *Jamie Bentley*

Proposing Solutions

"Technology, Movement, and Sound" *Ed Bell*

"Reverence for Food" *Rachel Schofield*

Thinking Radically

"Not Homeschooling? What's Your Excuse?" *Tricia Smith Vaughan*

"Why Tough Teachers Get Good Results" *Joanne Lipman*

"An Apology to Future Generations" *Simon Benlow*



Online Chapter

Chapter 21: Rhetorical Handbook

Index | I-1

Using The Composition of Everyday Life as a Thematic Reader

Here we suggest how readings from different chapters might be grouped together thematically. As you explore a subject (education and learning, for example), you might focus on a particular rhetorical aim (such as evaluating or proposing a solution). Or you might explore a subject area without an aim in mind, eventually discovering a specific topic and rhetorical aim.

EDUCATION AND LEARNING

Are students customers? What is the practical value of studying great works of literature? Is school too easy? The following essays explore the complexity of education and learning. Through reading, writing, and discussion, you might explore and come to think differently about education and its role in people's lives. You might discover an important point about education by exploring a memory, a relationship, an observation, a concept, and so on.

"Living Like Weasels," *Annie Dillard* (4)

"The Default Setting: An Analysis of David Foster Wallace," *Adrienne Carr* (6)

"Entitlement Education," *Daniel Bruno* (9)

"Have It Your Way: Consumerism Invades Education," *Simon Benlow* (9)

"The Power of Failure: J.K. Rowling's 2008 Harvard Commencement Speech," *Liz Winhover* (9)

"Is Google Making Us Stupid?" *Nicholas Carr* (11)

"Infomania," *Manoush Zomorodi* (12)

"Your Kids Bored at School? Tell Them to Get Over It," *Laura Hanby Hudgens* (12)

"The Grapes of Mrs. Rath," *Steve Mockensturm* (20)

"A Beat Education," *Leonard Kress* (20)

"Internet Addiction," *Greg Beato* (20)

"Not Homeschooling? What's Your Excuse?" *Tricia Smith Vaughan* (20)

JUSTICE AND EQUALITY

A quick survey of the readings about justice and equality suggests a range of areas: immigration, Native American rights, body type, the mentally and physically challenged, wildlife, and so on. These readings can help you identify and explain a relationship, analyze a concept (such

as “justice” or “equality”), respond to an argument, identify a cause, propose a solution, and so on. What is justice, and how might exploring the concept of justice in today’s world be of value? What revelatory idea about justice and equality might you discover and share with others?

- “How I Lost the Junior Miss Pageant,” *Cindy Bosley* (2)
- “Unemployed, and Working Hard,” *Simon Wykoff* (13)
- “Americans and the Land,” *John Steinbeck* (3)
- “Why We No Longer Use the ‘H’ Word,” *Dan Wilkins* (20)
- “Cruelty, Civility, and Other Weighty Matters,” *Ann Marie Paulin* (8)
- “This Is What a Feminist Looks Like,” *Barack Obama* (20)
- “Important and Flawed,” *Kareem Abdul-Jabbar* (10)
- “Crimes Against Humanity,” *Ward Churchill* (20)
- “*Star Trek*: Where No Man Has Gone Before,” *Jaren Provo* (10)
- “Not Homeschooling? What’s Your Excuse?” *Tricia Smith Vaughan* (20)
- “Why Are Millennials Weak?” *Quinn Greenwell* (11)
- “An Apology to Future Generations,” *Simon Benlow* (20)

ENVIRONMENT AND ANIMALS

These readings, which offer different ways of looking at the environment and animals, encourage you to explore ideas beyond conventional beliefs. What is your relationship to the land? To the air? To the animals? How might you think differently about that relationship? And what might be the consequence of your new way of thinking?

- “Americans and the Land,” *John Steinbeck* (3)
- “Hive Talkin’: The Buzz around Town about Bees,” *Teresa Scollon* (8)
- “Living Like Weasels,” *Annie Dillard* (4)
- “Dog-Tied,” *David Hawes* (20)
- “The Front Porch,” *Chester McCovey* (4)
- “The Farm on the Hill,” *Evan Proudfoot* (20)
- “Why ‘Natural’ Doesn’t Mean Anything Anymore,” *Michael Pollan* (5)
- “Trees Please,” *Michael Rust* (20)
- “The Dog Delusion,” *April Pedersen* (8)
- “An Apology to Future Generations,” *Simon Benlow* (20)

CONSUMERISM AND ECONOMY

Several readings in this book suggest some fundamental questions about consumerism: What and how do you consume? And what, if anything, do you produce by consuming? As with

other subjects in *The Composition of Everyday Life*, you might spend an entire semester exploring this area, or you might explore it for just one assignment. It could be of great value to spend a semester exploring just one question: What does it mean to be a consumer?

- “Selling Manure,” *Bonnie Jo Campbell* (2)
- “Mugged,” *Jim Crockett* (3)
- “To Fish and Be Fished: A Tinder-fied Game of Love,” *Kellie Coppola* (3)
- “The Front Porch,” *Chester McCovey* (4)
- “Why ‘Natural’ Doesn’t Mean Anything Anymore,” *Michael Pollan* (5)
- “The Real, the Bad, and the Ugly,” *Cassie Heidecker* (5)
- “Rise of the Image Culture: Re-Imagining the American Dream,” *Elizabeth Thoman* (7)
- “Have It Your Way: Consumerism Invades Education,” *Simon Benlow* (9)
- “Is Google Making Us Stupid?” *Nicholas Carr* (11)
- “Why We Binge Watch Television,” *Kevin Fallon* (11)
- “Build the Wall,” *Ed Bell* (13)
- “American Consumerism,” *Jamie Bentley* (20)
- “An Apology to Future Generations,” *Simon Benlow* (20)

AMERICA

These readings deal with America and being American. They allow you to explore the relationship between yourself and your country. (International students may find this subject to be especially interesting as they bring a unique perspective to the topic.) To what degree do the two—individual and country—influence each other? You can make observations, evaluate, identify causes, propose solutions, and so on. And, you can explore how America communicates with and influences you.

- “Americans and the Land,” *John Steinbeck* (3)
- “Rise of the Image Culture: Re-Imagining the American Dream,” *Elizabeth Thoman* (7)
- “Talibanned,” *Benjamin Busch* (10)
- “Build the Wall,” *Ed Bell* (13)
- “The Grapes of Mrs. Rath,” *Steve Mockensturm* (20)
- “Cartoons ’n Comics: Communication to the Quick,” *Joy Clough* (20)
- “Protests with the Mostest: The Art of Opposition with Protest Signs,” *Deanna Krokos* (20)
- “Crimes Against Humanity,” *Ward Churchill* (20)
- “Military Fraud: The Myth of Automatic Virtue,” *Steve Gillman* (20)
- “American Consumerism,” *Jamie Bentley* (20)
- “Reverence for Food,” *Rachel Schofield* (20)
- “Not Homeschooling? What’s Your Excuse?” *Tricia Smith Vaughan* (20)
- “An Apology to Future Generations,” *Simon Benlow* (20)

SELF

Readings in this book encourage you to explore your own life in a way you have perhaps not done before. These readings about self go beyond expressive writing. They encourage you to connect with others, even though—or perhaps *especially when*—you are looking inward at yourself. You can explore how these readings, your own writing, and focused discussion with others helps you to see differently—to learn something about yourself and connect it to the world around you.

“Selling Manure,” *Bonnie Jo Campbell* (2)
 “How I Lost the Junior Miss Pageant,” *Cindy Bosley* (2)
 “Thrill of Victory . . . The Agony of Parents,”
Jennifer Schwind-Pawlak (2)
 “Mugged,” *Jim Crockett* (3)
 “Black Like I Thought I Was,” *Erin Aubry Kaplan* (5)

“Cruelty, Civility, and Other Weighty Matters,” *Ann Marie Paulin* (8)
 “Celibate Passion,” *Kathleen Norris* (13)
 “What the Honey Meant,” *Cindy Bosley* (20)
 “This Is What a Feminist Looks Like,” *Barack Obama* (20)
 “American Consumerism,” *Jamie Bentley* (20)

OTHERS (COMMUNITY)

Can we look at ourselves without looking at our community? Both subjects (self and others) explore relationships between an individual and his or her surroundings. What is community? How is community created? These readings will help you to explore what we commonly call *community*, to consider how it works, and to examine your place in it. An entire writing course might be an exploration of one very important question: What is the relationship between community and communication?

“The Front Porch,” *Chester McCovey* (4)
 “Cruelty, Civility, and Other Weighty Matters,” *Ann Marie Paulin* (8)
 “Hive Talkin’: The Buzz around Town about Bees,” *Teresa Scollon* (8)
 “Different Jobs,” *Dana Stewart* (12)
 “Build the Wall,” *Ed Bell* (13)

“Unemployed, and Working Hard,” *Simon Wykoff* (13)
 “The Farm on the Hill,” *Evan Proudfoot* (20)
 “Technology, Movement, and Sound,” *Ed Bell* (20)
 “An Apology to Future Generations,” *Simon Benlow* (20)

LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

What is the relationship between language and culture? For example, how does the way that a group of people communicates affect their shared values, beliefs, customs, attitudes, and

practices—and vice versa? (How, for example, does what a group values about education influence the way that group uses, and thinks about, language?) These readings and others will help you step back and explore the relationship between words, ideas, and actions. Through exploration of this subject, you might discover that your college writing class is something more than you had originally imagined it to be.

- “The Real, the Bad, and the Ugly,” *Cassie Heidecker* (5)
- “Why ‘Natural’ Doesn’t Mean Anything Any-more,” *Michael Pollan* (5)
- “The Default Setting: An Analysis of David Foster Wallace,” *Adrienne Carr* (6)
- “Politics and Audience: *The New York Times*’ Appeal to Undecided Voters,” *Alison Block* (6)
- “Rise of the Image Culture: Re-Imagining the American Dream,” *Elizabeth Thoman* (7)
- “An Imperfect Reality,” *Rebecca Hollingsworth* (7)
- “Look on My Works: *Breaking Bad*’s Final Season Trailer,” *Nick Fendinger* (7)
- “The Power of Failure: J.K. Rowling’s 2008 Harvard Commencement Speech” *Liz Winhover* (9)
- “Why Are Millennials Weak?” *Quinn Greenwell* (11)
- “Unemployed, and Working Hard,” *Simon Wykoff* (13)
- “Why We No Longer Use the ‘H’ Word,” *Dan Wilkins* (20)
- “This Is What a Feminist Looks Like,” *Barack Obama* (20)
- “Protests with the Mostest: The Art of Opposition with Protest Signs,” *Deanna Krokos* (20)
- “Cartoons ’n Comics: Communication to the Quick,” *Joy Clough* (20)
- “Crimes against Humanity,” *Ward Churchill* (20)

GENDER AND IDENTITY

What does it mean to be male or female? How does gender affect our identities? What influence can we have on issues of gender and identity? This group of readings can be used in combination with other reading groups—from America or pop culture, for example. Instead of exploring just gender and identity, you might narrow your focus to readings that relate to gender and identity *and* pop culture.

- “Selling Manure,” *Bonnie Jo Campbell* (2)
- “How I Lost the Junior Miss Pageant,” *Cindy Bosley* (2)
- “The Thrill of Victory . . . The Agony of Parents,” *Jennifer Schwind-Pawlak* (2)
- “To Fish and Be Fished: A Tinder-fied Game of Love,” *Kellie Coppola* (3)
- “Cruelty, Civility, and Other Weighty Matters,” *Ann Marie Paulin* (8)
- “Important and Flawed,” *Kareem Abdul-Jabbar* (10)
- “*Star Trek*: Where No Man Has Gone Before,” *Jaren Provo* (10)
- “Celibate Passion,” *Kathleen Norris* (13)

“This Is What a Feminist Looks Like,”
Barack Obama (20)

“Are Female Long-Distance Runners More
Prone to Suicidal Depression?” *Emily de la
Bruyere* (20)

PARENTS AND FAMILY

What role do our parents play in our lives? Such a question might be explored endlessly with interesting results for both writer and readers. You might spend an entire semester exploring issues about parents and family. Such a simple subject area can prove to be far more complicated—and interesting—than you first imagined. What might be the value of thinking analytically and finding public resonance regarding the subject of parents and family?

“Selling Manure,” *Bonnie Jo Campbell* (2)
“How I Lost the Junior Miss Pageant,” *Cindy
Bosley* (2)
“The Thrill of Victory . . . The Agony of
Parents,” *Jennifer Schwind-Pawlak* (2)
“The Front Porch,” *Chester McCovey* (4)
“Black Like I Thought I Was,” *Erin Aubry
Kaplan* (5)
“The Dog Delusion,” *April Pedersen* (8)

“Cruelty, Civility, and Other Weighty
Matters,” *Ann Marie Paulin* (8)
“Unemployed, and Working Hard,” *Simon
Wykoff* (13)
“What the Honey Meant,” *Cindy Bosley* (20)
“American Consumerism,” *Jamie Bentley* (20)
“An Apology to Future Generations,” *Simon
Benlow* (20)

POPULAR CULTURE

What is the relationship between an individual and his or her popular culture? In what ways are we products of our own pop culture? From beauty pageants to theme parks, these readings allow you to consider the world that surrounds you from a fresh perspective. You can explore the *why* of your own behavior, considering how you and others are influenced by pressures of which you are both very aware and barely aware.

“How I Lost the Junior Miss Pageant,” *Cindy
Bosley* (2)
“Tinder, You, Me,” *Kellie Coppola* (3)
“The Front Porch,” *Chester McCovey* (4)
“Why ‘Natural’ Doesn’t Mean Anything Any-
more,” *Michael Pollan* (5)
“The Default Setting: An Analysis of David
Foster Wallace,” *Adrienne Carr* (6)
“Politics and Audience: *The New York Times*’
Appeal to Undecided Voters,” *Alison Block* (6)
“Rise of the Image Culture: Re-Imagining the
American Dream,” *Elizabeth Thoman* (7)