

THE ALLYN & BACON GUIDE TO WRITING

CONCISE EDITION

JOHN D. RAMAGE
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JUNE JOHNSON
EIGHTH EDITION



 Pearson

The Allyn & Bacon Guide to Writing

Eighth Edition

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Contents

Writing Projects	xi		
Thematic Contents	xii		
Preface	xv		
PART I A Rhetoric for Writers	1		
1 Posing Problems: The Demands of College Writing, Reading, and Critical Thinking	2		
CONCEPT 1.1: Subject-matter problems are the heart of college writing.	3		
Shared Problems Unite Writers and Readers	4		
College Learning as Both Knowledge-Getting and Knowledge-Making	4		
Posing a Knowledge-Making Question	5		
CONCEPT 1.2: College writers must learn to read rhetorically.	8		
The Demands of College Reading	8		
Reading Rhetorically: Using the Reading Strategies of Experts	8		
CONCEPT 1.3: Seeing the “big picture” about college writing and reading promotes transfer of learning.	9		
How Deep Learning Requires Both Knowledge-Getting and Knowledge-Making	10		
Knowledge-Making, Transfer, and the Big Picture about Academic Writing	11		
Chapter Summary	12		
BRIEF WRITING PROJECT An Introductory Learning and Writing Reflection	13		
2 Exploring Problems: Making Claims	14		
CONCEPT 2.1: To determine their thesis, writers must often “wallow in complexity.”	15		
Learning to Wallow in Complexity	15		
Seeing Each Academic Discipline as a Field of Inquiry and Argument	16		
		CONCEPT 2.2: Expert writers use exploratory strategies to generate and deepen their ideas.	18
		Four Strategies for Exploratory Writing and Talking	18
		Two Heuristic Games for Generating, Extending, and Deepening Thought	21
		<i>Believing and Doubting</i> Paul Theroux’s <i>Negative View of Sports</i>	22
		A Student’s Exploratory Writing For Each Step in the Analysis Game	25
		CONCEPT 2.3: A strong thesis statement surprises readers with something new or challenging.	26
		Trying to Change Your Reader’s View of Your Subject	27
		Giving Your Thesis Tension through “Surprising Reversal”	28
		CONCEPT 2.4: A thesis is supported with organized points and related details.	31
		How Points Convert Information to Meaning	31
		How Removing Details Creates a Summary	32
		Using Your Understanding of Points and Details When You Revise	33
		Chapter Summary	33
		BRIEF WRITING PROJECT Playing the Believing and Doubting Game	34
		3 Thinking Critically About Rhetorical Problems	35
		CONCEPT 3.1: The features of good writing vary depending on rhetorical context.	36
		A Thought Exercise: Two Pieces of Good Writing That Follow Different “Rules”	36
		David Rockwood: <i>A Letter to the Editor</i>	36
		Kris Sankussem: <i>Listen to the Lizards</i>	37
		Distinctions Between Closed and Open Forms of Writing	39

Flexibility of “Rules” along the Continuum	40		
Where to Place Your Writing along the Continuum	41		
CONCEPT 3.2: Writers’ decisions are shaped by genre, audience, and purpose.	42		
What Is Rhetoric?	42		
How Writers Think about Genre	42		
How Writers Think about Audience	43		
How Writers Think about Purpose	45		
CONCEPT 3.3: Online environments are rhetorically interactive with shifting audiences, purposes, genres, and authorial roles.	47		
Shifting and Evolving Rhetorical Contexts Online	48		
Maintaining Appropriate Online Privacy	50		
Creating an Ethical Online Persona	50		
Chapter Summary	51		
BRIEF WRITING PROJECT Two Messages for Different Purposes, Audiences, and Genres	52		
4 How Messages Persuade	53		
CONCEPT 4.1: Messages persuade through their angle of vision.	53		
Thought Exercise on Angle of Vision	54		
Recognizing the Angle of Vision in a Text	54		
Analyzing Angle of Vision	57		
Arctic Power’s Description of the ANWR	58		
Defenders of Wildlife’s Description of the ANWR	58		
CONCEPT 4.2: Messages persuade through appeals to logos, ethos, and pathos.	59		
CONCEPT 4.3: Messages persuade through a writer’s style and voice.	61		
Understanding Factors That Affect Style	61		
Passage From Scholarly Journal	62		
Passage From a Popular Blog	62		
Ways to Make Your Style More Powerful	63		
Chapter Summary	67		
BRIEF WRITING PROJECT Two Contrasting Descriptions of the Same Scene	67		
Student Example	68		
Description 1—Positive Effect	68		
Description 2—Negative Effect	69		
		5	Thinking Critically About Document Design, Visual Rhetoric, and Multimodal Messages
			70
		CONCEPT 5.1: Document design has a persuasive effect on audiences.	70
		Document Design for Manuscripts and Papers	71
		Document Design for Published Work	71
		CONCEPT 5.2: Images have persuasive effects that can be analyzed rhetorically.	73
		Images and Appeals to <i>Logos</i> , <i>Ethos</i> , and <i>Pathos</i>	73
		Images: Open to Interpretation	74
		CONCEPT 5.3: Composers of multimodal texts use words, images, and sounds rhetorically to move an audience.	76
		Multimodal “Stills”: Hook Audiences with Images and Take-Away Headlines	77
		Multimodal Videos: Use Camera Strategies and Language to Make Narrative Arguments	78
		Chapter Summary	80
		BRIEF WRITING PROJECT Description and Reflection on Your Creation of a Multimodal Composition	81
		PART II Writing Projects	83
		6 Reading Rhetorically: The Writer as Strong Reader	84
		Understanding rhetorical reading.	84
		A Sample Reading for Analysis	85
		Stephen Marche: <i>The Epidemic of Facelessness</i>	85
		Filling Gaps Caused by Your “Outsider” Status	88
		Reading with the Grain and against the Grain	90
		Understanding summary writing.	91
		Usefulness of Summaries	92
		The Process of Writing a Summary	92
		Example Summaries of “The Epidemic of Facelessness”	95
		Writing an abstract or summary.	99
		Generating Ideas, Drafting, and Revising	99
		Questions for Peer Review	99

Understanding strong response writing.	100	READINGS	
Strong Response as Rhetorical Critique or Analysis	100	Kent Ansen (student): Should the United States Establish Mandatory Public Service for Young Adults?	133
Strong Response as Ideas Critique	102	Kent Ansen (student): Should the United States Establish Mandatory Public Service for Young Adults?	139
Strong Response as Reflection	103		
Strong Response as a Blend	105		
Writing a summary/strong response essay.	105	8 Writing an Image Analysis Essay	141
Exploring Ideas for Your Strong Response	105	Analyzing documentary and news photographs	142
Articulating Your Own Purpose for Reading	106	Angle of Vision and Credibility of Photographs	144
Writing a Thesis for a Strong Response Essay	108	How to Analyze a Documentary Photograph	144
Shaping, Drafting, and Revising	109	Sample Analysis of a Documentary Photograph	147
Example of a Student Strong Response Essay as a Blend	110	Analyzing paintings	150
Questions for Peer Review	114	How to Analyze a Painting	150
READING		Sample Analysis of a Painting	151
Stephanie Malinowski (student) <i>Questioning Thomas L. Friedman’s Optimism in “30 Little Turtles”</i>	115	Analyzing advertisements and advocacy posters	153
7 Writing an Exploratory Essay or Annotated Bibliography	118	Analyzing the Rhetorical Context of an Ad	154
Understanding exploratory writing as dwelling with a problem	118	How to Analyze an Advertisement	155
Multiple Perspectives: Keeping the Question Open	119	Sample Analysis of an Advertisement	156
Dialectic Thinking: Playing Ideas against One Another	121	Analyzing Posters	161
Finding sources and taking double-entry research notes	122	A Sample Analysis of a Poster	161
Writing an exploratory essay	124	Writing an image analysis essay	163
Posing Your Initial Problem	125	Exploring and Generating Ideas for Your Analysis	163
Formulating a Starting Point	125	Shaping, Drafting, and Revising Your Analysis	164
Finding Sources and Taking Double-Entry Notes	126	Multimodal or Online Assignment Options	166
Drafting and Revising	126	READING	
Typical Structure of an Exploratory Essay	127	Lydia Wheeler (student): Two Photographs Capture Women’s Economic Misery	167
Writing an annotated bibliography	129	9 Writing a Synthesis of Ideas Essay	171
What Is an Annotated Bibliography?	129	Understanding analysis and synthesis as a knowledge-making process	171
Features of Annotated Bibliography Entries	129	Two Common Kinds of Synthesis Essays	172
Examples of Annotation Entries	130	Posing a Synthesis Question	173
Writing a Critical Preface for Your Annotated Bibliography	131	Synthesis Writing as an Extension of Summary/Strong Response Writing	174
Shaping, Drafting, and Revising	131		
Multimodal or Online Assignment Options <i>Speech With Visual Aids (Flip Chart, Powerpoint, Prezi)</i>	132		

The thinking process for writing a synthesis essay 175

Summarizing Your Texts to Explore Their Ideas	175
Rosie Evans's Summary of Robin Marantz Henig's Article	176
Rosie Evans's Summary of Scammed Hard!'s Blog Post	176
Analyzing the Rhetorical Features of Your Texts	177
Rosie Evans's Rhetorical Analysis of Henig's Article	178
Rosie Evans's Rhetorical Analysis of Scammed Hard!'s Blog Post	178
Analyzing the Main Themes and Similarities and Differences in Your Texts' Ideas	179
Rosie Evans's Analysis of Similarities and Differences	180
Generating Ideas of Your Own	181
Rosie Evans's Exploration of Her Personal Connections to Her Texts and the Synthesis Question	182
Taking Your Position in the Conversation: Your Synthesis	183
Rosie Evans's Exploration of Her Synthesis Points	184

Writing a synthesis essay 185

Posing Your Synthesis Question	185
Generating Ideas and Drafting	185
Writing a Thesis for a Synthesis Essay	185
Organizing and Revising a Synthesis Essay	187
Multimodal or Online Assignment Options	188

READING

Rosie Evans (student): Boomerang Kids: What Are the Causes of Generation Y's Growing Pains?	189
---	-----

10 Writing a Classical Argument 193

Understanding classical argument 193	193
What Is Argument?	193
Truth-Seeking and Persuasion in Practice: A Thought Experiment	194
Stages of development: your growth as an arguer 195	195
Understanding the components of argument 197	197
Creating an Argument Frame: A Claim with Reasons	197
Articulating Reasons	198

Articulating Underlying Assumptions	200
Using Evidence Effectively	201
Evaluating Evidence: The STAR Criteria	204
Addressing Objections and Counterarguments	205
Responding to Objections, Counterarguments, and Alternative Views	208
Seeking Audience-Based Reasons	210
Appealing to <i>Ethos</i> and <i>Pathos</i>	211

A brief primer on informal fallacies 212

<i>Post Hoc, Ergo Propter Hoc</i> ("After This, Therefore Because of This")	213
Hasty Generalization	213
False Analogy	213
Either/Or Reasoning	214
<i>Ad Hominem</i> ("Against the Person")	214
Appeals to False Authority and Bandwagon Appeals	214
<i>Non Sequitur</i> ("It Does Not Follow")	214
Circular Reasoning	214
Red Herring	214
Slippery Slope	215

Writing a classical argument 215

Generating and Exploring Ideas	215
Shaping and Drafting	217
Revising	219
Multimodal or Online Assignment Options	220

READINGS

Ross Taylor (student): Paintball: Promoter of Violence or Healthy Fun?	221
Theda Hovind (student): Exit Through the Gift Shop, or Entrance to Life-Long Learning?	225
Claire Giordano (student): Virtual Promise: Why Online Courses Will Not Adequately Prepare Us for the Future	227

11 Proposing a Solution 232

Understanding proposal arguments 232	232
Types of Proposals	232
Common Components of Proposal Arguments	233
Special Challenges of Proposal Arguments	234
Strategies for justifying a proposal 235	235
Multimodal proposal arguments 236	236
Writing a proposal argument 238	238

Generating and Exploring Ideas	238	Skill 13.2: Nutshell your argument and visualize its structure.	273
Shaping, Drafting, and Revising	240	Making a List of “Chunks” and a Scratch Outline Early in the Writing Process	273
Multimodal or Online Assignment Options	241	To Achieve Focus, “Nutshell” Your Argument and Create a Working Thesis Statement	274
READINGS		Visualize Your Structure	275
Lucy Morsen (student): A Proposal to Improve the Campus Learning Environment by Banning Laptops and Cell Phones from Class	242	Skill 13.3: Start and end with the “big picture” through effective titles, introductions, and conclusions.	277
Sam Rothchild (student): Reward Work Not Wealth:	246	Creating Effective Titles	278
Kent Ansen (student): Engaging Young Adults to Meet America’s Challenges: A Proposal for Mandatory National Service (MLA format research paper)	249	Writing Good Closed-Form Introductions	279
		Writing Effective Conclusions	282
		Skill 13.4: Create effective topic sentences for paragraphs.	284
PART III A Guide to Composing and Revising	255	Revising Paragraphs to Place Topic Sentences at the Beginning	284
12 Writing as a Problem-Solving Process	256	Revising Paragraphs for Unity	285
Skill 12.1: Follow the experts’ practice of using multiple drafts.	256	Adding Details to Support Points	286
Why Expert Writers Revise So Extensively	258	Skill 13.5: Guide your reader with transitions and other signposts.	287
An Expert’s Writing Processes Are Recursive	259	Using Common Transition Words to Signal Relationships	287
Skill 12.2: Revise globally as well as locally.	259	Writing Major Transitions between Parts	289
Skill 12.3: Develop ten expert habits to improve your writing processes.	261	Signaling Major Transitions with Headings	289
Skill 12.4: Use peer reviews to help you think like an expert.	262	Skill 13.6: Make sentences cohere by following the old/new contract.	290
Becoming a Helpful Reader of Classmates’ Drafts	263	The Old/New Contract in Sentences	290
Using a Generic Peer Review Guide	263	How to Make Links to the “Old”	291
Participating in Peer Review Workshops	266	Avoiding Ambiguous Use of “This” to Fulfill the Old/New Contract	293
Responding to Peer Reviews	267	Skill 13.7: Use effective tables, graphs, and charts to present numeric data.	294
13 Strategies for Writing Closed-Form Prose	268	How Tables Tell Many Stories	294
Skill 13.1: Satisfy reader expectations by linking new material to old material.	268	Using a Graphic to Tell a Story	296
The Principle of Old Before New	269	Incorporating a Graphic into Your Essay	298
How the Principle of Old Before New Creates Unified and Coherent Paragraphs	270	14 Strategies for Composing Multimodal Texts	299
How the Principle of Old Before New Helps Readers Construct Meaning	272	Skill 14.1: Consider a range of multimodal options for accomplishing your rhetorical purpose.	299
		Skill 14.2: Design multimodal texts so that each mode contributes its own strengths to the message.	301

This Design Principle at Work in Successful Multimodal Texts	301	Attributive Tags Avoid Ambiguities That Can Arise with Parenthetical Citations	325
Using This Design Principle to Revise a Jumbled Multimodal Text	303	Attributive Tags Frame the Source Material Rhetorically	326
Skill 14.3: Design multimodal texts in a variety of genres, including posters, speeches with visual aids, podcasts, and videos.	306	Skill 15.4: Avoid plagiarism by following academic conventions for ethical use of sources.	328
Informational or Advocacy Posters, Brochures, Flyers, and Ads	306	Why Some Kinds of Plagiarism May Occur Unwittingly	328
Scientific Posters	308	Strategies for Avoiding Plagiarism	329
Speeches with Visual Aids (PowerPoint, Prezi, Pechakucha)	309		
Scripted Speech (Podcasts, Video Voice-overs)	311	16 Citing and Documenting Sources	332
Videos	312		
15 Using Sources	315	Skill 16.1: Cite and document sources using MLA style.	332
Skill 15.1: Evaluate sources for reliability, credibility, angle of vision, and degree of advocacy.	315	In-Text Citations in MLA Style	333
Reliability	315	Works Cited List in MLA Style	335
Credibility	316	MLA Citation Models	335
Angle of Vision and Political Stance	316	MLA Format Research Paper	345
Degree of Advocacy	318	Skill 16.2: Cite and document sources using APA style.	345
Skill 15.2: Know when and how to use summary, paraphrase, and quotation.	318	In-Text Citations in APA Style	345
Summarizing	318	References List in APA Style	345
Paraphrasing	318	APA Citation Models	347
Quoting	320	Credits	353
Skill 15.3: Use attributive tags to distinguish your ideas from a source's.	324	Index	357
Attributive Tags Mark Where Source Material Starts and Ends	325		

WRITING PROJECTS

BRIEF PROJECT OPTIONS

- CHAPTER 1** Reflect on how your previous writing and reading experiences have prepared you for the demands of college writing as explained in Chapter 1.
- CHAPTER 2** Use the “believing and doubting game” to explore a controversial assertion.
- CHAPTER 3** Write two messages with different audiences, purposes, and genres.
- CHAPTER 4** Write contrasting descriptions of the same place and then analyze how you achieved these different rhetorical effects.
- CHAPTER 5** Describe a multimodal text that you have created and reflect on your thinking processes as you designed it.

MAJOR PROJECT OPTIONS

- CHAPTER 6** Write an abstract or summary of a reading.
Write a strong response to a text by analyzing its rhetorical strategies and engaging its ideas.
Multimodal or Online Options: Compose a summary and strong response to a blog post, or write an online book review.
- CHAPTER 7** Write an exploratory narrative of your engagement with a problem and your attempts to resolve it.
Write an annotated bibliography for a research project.
Multimodal or Online Option: Compose an oral presentation with visual aids explaining your exploratory process.
- CHAPTER 8** Analyze and compare two photographs, paintings, or print advertisements.
Multimodal or Online Options: Compose a museum audioguide or a lecture with visual aids comparing advertising campaigns for the same product in different countries.
- CHAPTER 9** Analyze the ideas of other writers on a question and synthesize these ideas to arrive at your own point of view.
Multimodal or Online Option: On a class discussion board or wiki space post your own summaries and analyses of texts under discussion and track how your views evolve.

THEMATIC CONTENTS

The Allyn & Bacon Guide to Writing contains a wealth of readings by professional writers and by students. In addition, the text has many visual texts (such as advertisements, news photographs, posters, and Web sites) that can lead to productive thematic discussions.

ENERGY, ENVIRONMENT, SUSTAINABILITY, AND HEALTH

- Billie Grace Lynn, Mad Cow Motorcycle sculpture 1
- David Rockwood, A Letter to the Editor 36
- Kris Saknussem, Listen to the Lizards 37
- Artic Power, Description of the ANWR 58
- Defenders of Wildlife, Description of the ANWR 58
- Floating iceberg photograph 74
- Photos of wolves 76
- U.S. War Department, Beware: Drink Only Approved Water poster 78
- Maude Barlow, Notes for U.N. Panel International Mother Earth 89

THE INTERNET, TECHNOLOGY, AND EDUCATION

- Roz Chast, Problematic Online Personae cartoon 51
- Stephen Marche, The Epidemic of Facelessness 85
- Scott Lindquist (student), Is “Facelessness” the Real Cause of Online Trolling? A Response to Stephen Marche 111
- Kent Ansen (student), Should the U.S. Establish Mandatory Public Service for Young Adults? 133
- Rosie Evans (student), Boomerang Kids: What Are the Causes of Generation Y’s Growing Pains? 189
- Theda Hovind (student), Exit Through the Gift Shop, or Entrance to Life-Long Learning? 225
- Claire Giordano (student), Virtual Promise: Why Online Courses Will Not Adequately Prepare Us for the Future 227
- Lucy Morsen (student), A Proposal to Improve the Campus Learning Environment by Banning Laptops and Cell Phones from Class 242
- Kent Ansen (student), Engaging Young Adults to Meet America’s Challenge: A Proposal for Mandatory National Service 249

VIOLENCE, PUBLIC SAFETY, AND INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS

- Photos of wolves 76
- World Trade Center 9/11 attack photographs 142
- Peter Turnley, Fall of the Berlin Wall (photograph) 147
- Ross Taylor (student), Paintball: Promoter of Violence or Healthy Fun? 221
- Black Lives Matter Poster, 237

PUBLIC POLICY AND SOCIAL ISSUES

- Angle of vision sweatshop cartoon 55
- Artic Power, Description of the ANWR 58
- Defenders of Wildlife, Description of the ANWR 58
- Maude Barlow, Notes for U.N. Panel International Mother Earth 89
- Stephanie Malinowski (student), Questioning Thomas L. Friedman’s Optimism in “30 Little Turtles” 115
- Kent Ansen (student), Should the U.S. Establish Mandatory Public Service for Young Adults? 133
- World Trade Center 9/11 attack photographs 142
- Peter Turnley, Fall of the Berlin Wall (photograph) 147
- Jean-Michel Basquiat, *Museum Security (Broadway Meltdown)* 151
- Poster for Cultural Sensitivity, *We’re a Culture, Not a Costume* 161
- Black Lives Matter Poster, 237
- Sam Rothchild (student), Reward Work Not Wealth: A Proposal to Increase Income Tax Rates for the Richest 1 Percent of Americans (speech with visuals) 246
- Kent Ansen (student), Engaging Young Adults to Meet America’s Challenge: A Proposal for Mandatory National Service 249

RACE AND CLASS

- Dorothea Tanning, *Portrait de Famille* 7
- Jean-Michel Basquiat, *Museum Security (Broadway Meltdown)* 151
- Natalie Ball, *Reload* 153
- Poster for Cultural Sensitivity, *We’re a Culture, Not a Costume* 161
- Lydia Wheeler (student), Two Photographs Capture Women’s Economic Misery 167
- Dorothea Lange, Destitute Pea Pickers in California (*Migrant Mother*) photograph 169
- Black Lives Matter Poster, 237
- Sam Rothchild (student), Reward Work Not Wealth: A Proposal to Increase Income Tax Rates for the Richest 1 Percent of Americans (speech with visuals) 246

GENDER

- Dorothea Tanning, *Portrait de Famille* 7
- Anonymous (student), Believing and Doubting Paul Theroux’s Negative View of Sports 22
- Lydia Wheeler (student), Two Photographs Capture Women’s Economic Misery 167
- Dorothea Lange, Destitute Pea Pickers in California (*Migrant Mother*) photograph 169
- Still Shot of MC Putting on Tux, 314

IDENTITY AND VALUES

- Dorothea Tanning, *Portrait de Famille* 7
- Stephen Marche, The Epidemic of Facelessness 85
- Scott Lindquist (student), Is “Facelessness” the Real Cause of Online Trolling? A Response to Stephen Marche 111

- Kent Ansen (student), Should the U.S. Establish Mandatory Public Service for Young Adults? 133
Natalie Ball, *Reload* 153
Poster for Cultural Sensitivity, We're a Culture, Not a Costume 161
Rosie Evans (student), Boomerang Kids: What Are the Causes of Generation Y's Growing Pains? 189
Claire Giordano (student), Virtual Promise: Why Online Courses Will Not Adequately Prepare Us for the Future 227
Black Lives Matter Poster, 237
Lucy Morsen (student), A Proposal to Improve the Campus Learning Environment by Banning Laptops and Cell Phones from Class 242
Sam Rothchild (student), Reward Work Not Wealth: A Proposal to Increase Income Tax Rates for the Richest 1 Percent of Americans (speech with visuals) 246
Still Shot of MC Putting on Tux, 314

POPULAR CULTURE, MEDIA, AND ADVERTISING

- Anonymous (student), Believing and Doubting Paul Theroux's Negative View of Sports 22
Urban gardener video 79
Jean-Michel Basquiat, *Museum Security (Broadway Meltdown)* 151
Poster for Cultural Sensitivity, We're a Culture, Not a Costume 161
Ross Taylor (student), Paintball: Promoter of Violence or Healthy Fun? 221
Theda Hovind (student), Exit Through the Gift Shop, or Entrance to Life-Long Learning? 225
Still Shot of MC Putting on Tux, 314

PARENTS, CHILDREN, AND FAMILY

- Dorothea Tanning, *Portrait de Famille* 7
Lydia Wheeler (student), Two Photographs Capture Women's Economic Misery 167
Dorothea Lange, Destitute Pea Pickers in California (*Migrant Mother*) photograph 169
Rosie Evans (student), Boomerang Kids: What Are the Causes of Generation Y's Growing Pains? 189
Theda Hovind (student), Exit Through the Gift Shop, or Entrance to Life-Long Learning? 225

Preface

From its inception as the flagship rhetoric of the Allyn & Bacon publishing house (which has since merged with Pearson), *The Allyn & Bacon Guide to Writing* has been informed by research in writing studies, learning theory, critical thinking, and related fields. Through seven editions, *The Allyn & Bacon Guide to Writing* has been praised for its groundbreaking integration of composition pedagogy and rhetorical emphasis. In regular, brief, and concise editions, the text has been adopted at a wide range of two- and four-year institutions where instructors admire its appeal to students, its distinctive emphasis on reading and writing as rhetorical acts, its focus on shared problems as the starting point for academic writing, its engaging classroom activities that promote critical thinking, and its effective writing assignments. Reviewers have consistently praised the book's theoretical coherence and explanatory power, which help students produce engaged, idea-rich essays and help composition instructors build pedagogically sound, intellectually stimulating courses shaped by their own strengths, interests, and course goals.

What's New in the Eighth Edition?

While retaining the signature strengths of earlier editions, the eighth edition features the following key improvements:

- A re-organized Part 1 (“A Rhetoric for Writers”) incorporates recent research in transfer of learning, threshold concepts, and metacognition to help learners apply “big picture” concepts to new rhetorical situations.
- A new Chapter 1, “Posing Problems: The Demands of College Writing,

Reading, and Critical Thinking,” introduces students to this “big picture.” It shows how the threshold concepts of problem-posing, knowledge-making, and rhetorical reading promote deep learning, which in turn promotes the transfer of skills from first-year composition to students' study of other disciplines and to their professions.

- A revised Chapter 2, “Exploring Problems: Making Claims,” includes a new module on analysis. “Playing the Analysis Game” teaches students to analyze an artifact, object, or phenomenon by slowing down, describing the object in detail, and then finding what is puzzling by asking why something is this way rather than some other way (following Ludwig Wittgenstein's dictum: “Everything we see could be otherwise”).
- A reorganized Chapter 3, “Thinking Critically About Rhetorical Problems,” provides a richer introduction to rhetorical thinking as a threshold concept. The explanations of purpose, audience, and genre are now linked to explanations of closed- and open-form prose and to the rhetoric of online environments.
- A newly designed Chapter 5, “Thinking Critically About Document Design, Visual Rhetoric, and Multimodal Messages,” focuses on non-verbal rhetoric. The persuasive power of document design, of images, and of multimodal messages is now discussed in a single chapter.
- Part 2 (“Writing Projects”) has been significantly streamlined for easier

navigation and includes many refreshed, expanded, or updated chapters.

- **A revised Chapter 6, “Reading Rhetorically: The Writer as Strong Reader,”** includes more coverage of summary writing. A new reading on Internet trolling (along with related student examples and a model essay) replaces Michael Pollan’s “Why Bother?”
- **A revised Chapter 8, “Writing an Image Analysis Essay,”** has many new images and examples, including new mock advertisements and advocacy posters on respect for underrepresented cultures and on environmentalism. The 7th edition’s section on European impressionistic painting has been replaced with a sample analysis of Haitian-Puerto Rican American Jean-Michel Basquiat’s 1983 piece *Museum Security (Broadway Meltdown)* and a painting, *Reload* (2007), by Native American artist Natalie Ball.
- **A revised Chapter 9, “Writing a Synthesis of Ideas Essay,”** includes more emphasis on analysis in the synthesis process.
- **Many new, high-interest student model essays, images, and updated examples appear throughout the text.**
 - **New student essays include** a student’s exploratory analysis of a surrealist painting by Dorothea Tanning; a “summary/strong response” essay examining Internet trolling; and a zine arguing for improved museum programs for children.
 - **Updated examples and visuals** focus on current issues: Europe’s refugee crisis, “Black Lives Matter,” prescription drug controversies, social media, climate change, and many others.
 - **A revised introduction to research in Chapter 15, “Using Sources,”** increases

the emphasis on rhetorical reading and rhetorical purpose to help students understand research as a knowledge-making activity.

- **A revised Chapter 16, “Citing and Documenting Sources,”** includes updated information on MLA format based on the 8th edition of the *MLA Handbook*.

What Hasn’t Changed? The Distinctive Features of *The Allyn & Bacon Guide to Writing*

The Allyn & Bacon Guide to Writing takes a distinctive pedagogical approach that integrates composition research with rhetorical theory and insights from writing across the curriculum. It treats writing and reading both as rhetorical acts and as processes of problem posing, inquiry, critical thinking, analysis, and argument. Its aim is to evoke the kind of deep learning that allows students to transfer compositional and rhetorical skills across disciplines and professional fields. What follows are the text’s distinctive features aimed at achieving these goals.

- **Focus on transfer of learning into the disciplines.** Recent cognitive research shows that transfer of knowledge and skills from one course to another depends on deep rather than surface learning. *The Allyn & Bacon Guide to Writing* promotes deep learning in a variety of ways. As one example, the text emphasizes four underlying skills that novice academic writers must acquire: (1) how to pose a problem that engages targeted readers, (2) how to summarize the conversation that surrounds the problem, (3) how to produce a thesis that adds something new, challenging, or surprising to the conversation, (4) how to support the thesis with appropriate forms of reasons and evidence. Armed with knowledge of these principles (deep learning), a student entering a new discipline can ask, “How does this

discipline ask questions? How does it summarize the scholarly conversation surrounding this problem (literature reviews)? What constitutes evidence in this discipline?"

- **Classroom-tested assignments that guide students through all phases of the reading and writing processes and make frequent use of collaboration and peer review.** The Writing Projects in Parts 1 and 2 promote intellectual growth and stimulate the kind of critical thinking valued in college courses. Numerous "For Writing and Discussion" exercises make it easy to incorporate active learning into a course while deepening students' understanding of concepts. The text's focus on the subject-matter question that precedes the thesis helps students see academic disciplines as fields of inquiry rather than as data banks of right answers.
- **Easy navigation through the text with headings linked to learning outcomes and with numbered take-away points highlighted as "Concepts" or "Skills."** These concepts and skills help students build big-picture understanding—by emphasizing transferable principles that promote metacognitive reflection and give students control over their own solutions to subject-matter or rhetorical problems.
- **Placement of nonfiction writing on a continuum from closed to open forms.** This innovative pedagogical strategy introduces students to the rhetorical concepts of purpose, audience, and genre and shows why the "rules" for good writing depend on rhetorical context. The text focuses on closed-form writing for entering most academic, civic, and professional conversations and on open-form writing for communicating ideas and experiences that resist closed-form structures and for creating stylistic surprise and pleasure.
- **Coverage of a wide range of genres and aims, including academic, civic, and professional genres as well as multimodal, personal, and narrative forms.** The text presents students with a wide range of genres and aims, and it clearly explains their rhetorical function and stylistic features. The range of genres is extended to multimodal texts that combine features of closed-form and open-form prose with visual or aural elements to produce powerful new media compositions.
- **Use of reader-expectation theory to explain how closed-form prose achieves maximum clarity and how open-form prose achieves its distinctive pleasures.** Our explanations of closed-form prose show students why certain closed-form strategies—such as identifying the problem before stating the thesis, forecasting structure, providing transitions, placing points before details, and linking new information to old information—derive from readers' cognitive needs rather than from the arbitrary rules of English teachers.
- **Treatment of research as a knowledge-making activity requiring rhetorical reading.** An often-noted strength of *The Allyn & Bacon Guide to Writing* is its method of teaching rhetorical reading so that students can summarize complex readings and speak back to them through their own analysis and critical thinking. This skill is crucial for summarizing the conversation surrounding a subject-matter problem (literature review) and for any research project that uses verbal, visual, or multimodal texts as primary sources. Our instructional approach to research teaches students to understand the differences between print and cyberspace sources; to analyze the rhetorical occasion, genre, context, intended audience, and angle of vision of sources; to evaluate sources according to appropriate criteria; and to negotiate the World Wide Web with confidence.
- **An organizational structure that offers flexibility to instructors.** The modular

organization gives instructors maximum flexibility in designing courses. Numbered concepts and skills are designed as mini-lessons that are easy for students to navigate and can be assigned in an order chosen by the instructor. Instructors can select, mix, and match writing assignments to fit their own course goals (or design their own assignments). In Parts 3 and 4, modularized lessons teach students to develop an effective writing process while gaining expert knowledge for composing closed-form, open-form, and multimodal texts. In Part 4, modularized lessons teach students expert strategies for conducting academic research in a rhetorical environment. Part 4 particularly reinforces the rhetorical concepts learned in Part 1 and is closely integrated with Chapter 6's focus on summary writing and formulating strong responses to readings.

- **Full coverage of outcome goals for first-year composition from the Council of Writing Program Administrators (WPA).** The correlation of the WPA Outcomes Statement with the eighth edition of *The Allyn & Bacon Guide to Writing* appears on the inside back covers of the book and in the Instructor's Resource Manual. In addition to helping instructors plan their courses, these correlations help with program-wide internal and external assessments.

The Eighth Edition of *The Allyn & Bacon Guide to Writing* is Available in Both Print and REVEL Editions **REVEL: Educational Technology Designed for the Way Today's Students Read, Think, and Learn**

When students are engaged deeply, they learn more effectively and perform better in their courses. This simple fact inspired the creation of REVEL: an interactive learning environment designed for the way today's students read, think, and learn.

REVEL enlivens course content with media interactives and assessments—integrated directly within the authors' narrative—that provide opportunities for students to read, practice, and study in one continuous experience. This immersive educational technology replaces the textbook and is designed to measurably boost students' understanding, retention, and preparedness.

Learn more about REVEL at <http://www.pearsonhighered.com/revel/>.

Resources for Instructors and Students

The Instructor's Resource Manual, Eighth Edition, integrates emphases for meeting the Council of Writing Program Administrators' guidelines for outcome goals in first-year composition courses. It continues to offer detailed teaching suggestions to help both experienced and new instructors; practical teaching strategies for composition instructors in a question-and-answer format; suggested syllabi for courses of various lengths and emphases; chapter-by-chapter teaching suggestions; answers to Handbook exercises; suggestions for using the text with nonnative speakers; suggestions for using the text in an electronic classroom; and annotated bibliographies.

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JOHN C. BEAN

JUNE JOHNSON

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The Allyn & Bacon Guide to Writing

Eighth Edition

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Part I

A Rhetoric for Writers

This image is a photograph of a kinetic sculpture by Billie Grace Lynn. The sculpture won the 2011 grand prize at the West Collection, headquartered in Oaks, Pennsylvania. This electric/hybrid motorcycle, which is made from cow bones, a bicycle frame, and a motor, is fully rideable. Lynn has also built a larger version of the Mad Cow on a motorcycle frame designed to run on waste vegetable oil, and she has taken the motorcycle on a cross-country tour. This activist sculpture is intended to draw people into conversation about the consumption of meat, the health of our bodies, and the sustainability of our lifestyles. What questions does this sculpture raise for you? How might a sculpture like this make an “argument” about the environment?



Mad Cow Motorcycle by
Billie Grace Lynn

Chapter 1

Posing Problems: The Demands of College Writing, Reading, and Critical Thinking

Learning Objectives

- 1.1** Understand subject-matter problems as the starting point of academic writing.
 - 1.2** Read rhetorically.
 - 1.3** See the “big picture” about college writing and reading in order to promote transfer of learning.
-

It seems to me, then, that the way to help people become better writers is not to tell them that they must first learn the rules of grammar, that they must develop a four-part outline, that they must consult the experts and collect all the useful information. These things may have their place. But none of them is as crucial as having a good, interesting question.

—Rodney Kilcup, historian

What abilities and skills do the professionals and global citizens of the twenty-first century need? According to Harvard educator Tony Wagner, among the most important competencies are the ability to think critically and solve problems, to communicate effectively both orally and in writing, to assess and analyze information, and to exercise curiosity and imagination.¹ One recent study

¹Tony Wagner, *The Global Achievement Gap: Why Even Our Best Schools Don't Teach the New Survival Skills Our Children Need—and What We Can Do about It* (New York: Basic Books, 2008): 14–15, 34–41.

showed that college graduates in business or professional life spend, on average, 44 percent of their time writing, including (most commonly) letters, memos, short reports, instructional materials, and professional articles and essays. With an eye to your future, this textbook seeks to cultivate the reading, critical thinking, and writing skills that you need to succeed in college and your career. However, because no writing course can teach you everything you need to know about writing, the key to your success is to become the kind of learner who knows *how to learn*. Particularly, you need to understand key principles about writing and reading so that you can transfer the skills you acquire in first-year composition to new writing situations.

In Part I of this book, we introduce some of these important big-picture principles. Specifically, we want you to see problem posing as the heart of college-level writing and reading. As we show throughout this textbook, writers pose two sorts of problems: *subject-matter problems* (for example, What can the United States do to reduce gun violence?) and *rhetorical problems* (for example, Who are my readers? What are their current views about gun violence? What form and style should I use?).

Psychologists who study critical and creative thinking see problem solving as a productive and positive activity. Indeed, humans pose and solve problems all the time and often take great pleasure in doing so. According to one psychologist, “Critical thinkers are actively engaged with life. . . . They appreciate creativity, they are innovators, and they exude a sense that life is full of possibilities.”² In this chapter, we explain the demands of college writing and reading and provide strategies for developing these skills. The payoff will be a big-picture overview that will help you transfer what you learn in this course to your other courses, your major, and your career.

Concept 1.1: Subject-matter problems are the heart of college writing.

1.1 Understand subject-matter problems as the starting point of academic writing.

From your previous schooling, you are probably familiar with the term **thesis statement**, which is the main point a writer wants to make. However, you may not have thought much about the question that lies behind the thesis. A paper’s thesis statement is actually the writer’s proposed answer to the question or problem that the writer is trying to solve, and it is this question that has motivated the writer’s thinking. Experienced writers immerse themselves in subject-matter questions in pursuit of answers or solutions. They write to share their proposed solutions with readers who share their interests.

²Stephen D. Brookfield, *Developing Critical Thinkers: Challenging Adults to Explore Alternative Ways of Thinking and Acting* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1987): 5. Academic writers regularly document their quotations and sources. In this text, sources are documented either on the page or in the Credits section at the end of the text.

Shared Problems Unite Writers and Readers

For college professors, “a good, interesting question” is at the heart of good writing (see the quotation by historian Rodney Kilcup at the beginning of this chapter). College professors want students to become gripped by problems because they themselves are gripped by problems. For example, at a workshop for new faculty members, we asked participants to write a brief description of the question or problem that motivated their Ph.D. dissertation or a recent conference paper or article. Here is how a sociology professor responded:

As a sociologist, I study the ways in which human behaviors that are often assumed to be biological are powerfully shaped by culture. The question of nature versus nurture is particularly relevant to the sexual behavior of adolescents. In a recent research project, I investigated how heterosexual adolescent males talk about sex. That teenage boys talk a lot about sex is a truism of popular culture (witness *Beavis & Butthead* or *American Pie*). But what do we actually know about that talk? What are some of the variations in the ways boys decide what is important or right for them when it comes to sex? How do boys talk about girls? Do they express a desire for loving relationships with a girl or do they see girls as objects to be conquered? Are there ways of talking about girls and sex that are more or less acceptable to other boys? This research question is significant because the results might show the extent to which male sexual desire is socially constructed. Although popular culture sees teenage boys driven by “raging hormones,” perhaps there are social components of male sexual behavior that need to be better understood.

As you progress through college, you will find yourself increasingly engaged with the kinds of questions that motivate your professors. Around college campuses, you’ll find clusters of professors and students asking questions about all manners of problems ranging from the effect of reforestation projects on soil erosion in Nicaragua to the changing portrayal of race and gender in American films. At the center of all these communities of writers and readers is an interest in common questions and the search for better or different answers. Writers write because they have a new, surprising, or challenging response to a question. Readers read because they share the writer’s interest in the problem and want to deepen their understanding.

So where do these problems come from and how can you learn to pose them? The problems that college professors value might be different from what you at first think. Beginning college students typically imagine that a question has a right answer. Students ask questions about a subject because they are puzzled by confusing parts of a textbook, a lecture, or an assigned reading. They hope their professors will explain the confusing material clearly. Their purpose in asking these questions is to eliminate misunderstandings, not to open up inquiry and debate.

College Learning as Both Knowledge-Getting and Knowledge-Making

The difference between questions with right answers and questions that promote inquiry point to two different dimensions of college-level learning:

knowledge-getting versus **knowledge-making**. By *knowledge-getting*, we mean the acquisition of the new knowledge taught in every course you take. Every day you learn new facts, ideas, concepts, theories, and methods associated with the disciplines you are studying. Knowledge-getting entails transfer of knowledge from experts to new learners via textbooks, lectures, and homework activities. To do well in college generally and on exams specifically, you do need to do well in knowledge-getting.

College-level writing assignments, however, often focus on *knowledge-making*, rather than knowledge-getting. They ask you to apply what you have learned to new problems—that is, to subject-matter problems that may not have an agreed-upon answer. Such assignments ask you to make your own contribution to a conversation—to discover or invent something new to say, to add your voice to a discussion, to make new knowledge.

The questions or problems that motivate college-level writing often resist a single right answer. They ask instead for a claim that you must support with analysis or argument. By **argument** we mean the use of reasons and evidence to support your claim combined with a fair-minded examination of alternative claims and counterevidence. Your argument is aimed at an audience interested in your question but perhaps skeptical of your claim. College writing assignments thus require a high degree of critical thinking. They are part of the knowledge-making dimension of learning. They help you extend, solidify, and deepen what you have learned through knowledge-getting.

Posing a Knowledge-Making Question

Although knowledge-getting questions are important, college writing assignments usually focus on unknowns or invite multiple points of view. So how do new college students become engaged with questions that require them to make knowledge rather than simply acquire it? We offer two approaches.

Sometimes you become engaged with a question that others are already debating—an existing question that is already “out there” in ongoing public dialog. Some of these are “big questions” that have sparked conversations for years or even ages: Do humans have free will? What is the best form of government? How did the universe get created? Why do good people have to suffer? Thousands of narrower subject-matter questions are being discussed by communities all the time—in classroom debates, discussion threads on blogs, and in the pages of scholarly journals or newspapers. As you advance in your major, you’ll be drawn into disciplinary problems that may be new to you but not to your professors. In such cases, a problem that is already “out there” initiates your search for a possible answer and invites you to join the conversation.

Sometimes, though, you initiate a conversation by posing a problem fresh from your own brain. For example, you find a problem whenever you see something puzzling in the natural world, note curious or unexplained features in a cultural phenomenon or artifact, or discover conflicts or contradictions within your own way of looking at the world.

Table 1.1 summarizes some of the ways that writers can become gripped by a knowledge-making problem.

Table 1.1 How Writers Become Gripped by a Problem

Occasion That Leads to Your Posing a Problem	Examples	Your Interior Mental State
The problem is already “out there.” (<i>You enter a conversation already in progress.</i>)		
You encounter others arguing about a problem, and you don't know where you stand.	Our class discussion has left me uncertain about whether health care should be rationed. My classmate Trevor thinks that Atticus Finch in <i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i> is not a good father, but I can't decide whether I agree with him.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You are equally persuaded by different views or dissatisfied with all the views. • Part of you thinks X but another part thinks Y (you feel divided).
Your gut instinct tells you that someone else is wrong, but you haven't fully investigated the issue (your instinct may be wrong).	This article's proposal for reducing gun violence seems to misunderstand why people want guns in the first place. Shanita says that we should build more nuclear power plants to combat global warming, but I say nuclear power is too dangerous.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your skepticism or intuition pushes against someone else's view. • Your system of values leads you to views that differ from someone else's views. • <i>NOTE: You aren't gripped by a problem until you have seen the possible strengths of other views and the possible weaknesses of your own. You must go beyond simply having an opinion.</i>
Someone gives you a question that you can't yet answer or a problem that leaves you baffled.	Your boss asks you whether the company should enact the proposed marketing plan. Your history professor asks you, “To what extent does Frederick Jackson Turner's frontier hypothesis reflect a Eurocentric worldview?”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You feel overwhelmed with unknowns. • You feel that you can't begin to answer until you do more exploration and research. • You may be able to propose a few possible answers, but you aren't yet satisfied with them.
You pose the problem yourself. (<i>You initiate the conversation.</i>)		
You see something puzzling in a natural or cultural phenomenon.	You note that women's fashion magazines have few ads for computers and begin wondering how you could market computers in these magazines. You notice that your little brother and his friends in middle school use Instagram as their social media of choice (rather than Facebook, Twitter, e-mail, or direct text messaging). You wonder why.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You begin puzzling about something that other people don't notice. • Your mind plays with possible explanations or new approaches. • You begin testing possible solutions or answers. (Often you want to talk to someone—to start a conversation about the problem.)
You see something unexpected, puzzling, or unexplained in a poem, painting, or other human artifact.	Why is the person in this advertisement walking two dogs rather than just one? My classmates believe that Hamlet loves Ophelia, but then how do you explain the nunnery scene where he treats her like a whore?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You can't see why the maker/designer/artist made a particular choice. • You notice that one part of this artifact seems unexpected or incongruous. • You begin trying to explain what is puzzling and playing with possible answers.
You identify something inconsistent or contradictory in your own view of the world.	I agree with this writer's argument against consumerism, but I really want a large plasma TV. Is consumerism really bad? Am I a materialist?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You feel unsettled by your own inconsistent views or values. • You probe more deeply into your own identity and place in the world.

In each of these cases, the problem starts to spark critical thinking. We examine the process of critical thinking in more detail when we discuss “wallowing in complexity” in the next chapter.

For Writing and Discussion

Finding a Problem

- 1. Background:** Figure 1.1 shows a surrealist painting, *Portrait de Famille* (1954), by American painter, artist, and writer Dorothea Tanning (1910–2012). Surrealism was an early twentieth-century artistic movement that featured surprising, strange, and often disturbing contrasts, arresting symbolism, and a blending of reality and the painter’s subconscious dreams. These features make interpretation of surrealist art particularly open to speculation. What is surprising or strange about this painting? What questions does a close look at this painting inspire you to ask?
- 2. Task:** Spend several minutes writing one or more questions that emerge from your examination of this painting. The best questions will lead to a genuine conversation among your classmates, who will likely offer differing viewpoints and hypotheses. These questions will therefore be knowledge-making questions that you have to answer by conducting your own analysis and forming your own conclusions.

Figure 1.1 *Portrait de Famille* (1954) by Dorothea Tanning



We will return to this painting in Chapter 2 during our discussion of *analysis*.

Concept 1.2: College writers must learn to read rhetorically.

1.2 Read rhetorically.

So far we have shown how college writers must bring their own critical thinking to bear on subject-matter problems. But writing in college also makes special demands on you as a reader.

The Demands of College Reading

Many new college students are overwhelmed by the amount and complexity of their reading assignments. Many of these assignments require you to read textbooks, which are the main vehicles for the knowledge-getting dimension of college learning. Although textbooks can be challenging to read (particularly textbooks in the social or physical sciences), they are written specifically for the purpose of transmitting knowledge to new learners.

But college students are also asked to read material that is very different from textbooks—for example, historical documents, Platonic dialogues, Supreme Court decisions, scholarly journal articles, reports of scientific experiments, and a host of magazine articles, newspapers, opinion pieces, blogs, Web materials, zines, and so forth. These non-textbook readings immerse you in the knowledge-making rather than knowledge-getting side of college.

To add to the challenge, many college writing assignments are text based. By *text based*, we mean that the writing assignment asks students to analyze a reading. (These reading-based assignments ask you to approach a written text in the same analytical way we asked you to approach Dorothea Tanning's *Portrait de Famille*.) These non-textbook readings can be particularly difficult because you as student aren't the intended audience. Instead, you are an outsider. Because you are an outsider, you can expect to be confused by unfamiliar vocabulary, by references to background knowledge that you don't have, and by unfamiliar conventions of style and format.

Reading Rhetorically: Using the Reading Strategies of Experts

When you are asked to analyze a reading for a text-based writing assignment, your strategy for reading textbooks—reading to extract information—often doesn't work well. Your goal isn't to take an exam on this reading but rather to enter into conversation with it. To do so, you must learn to read these pieces rhetorically. When we say that readers read *rhetorically*, we mean that they try to reconstruct the text's original context—its place and date of publication, its original intended audience, its author's original purpose—and analyze how the piece intends to influence those original readers. Rhetorical readers also analyze whether the text works persuasively for them, and they think critically about whether to accede to or challenge the text's intentions. When giving a text-based assignment, college instructors expect you to engage with the reading, think critically about it, analyze it, and respond to it in a way that adds your voice to a conversation—in other words, that makes new knowledge.

Table 1.2 Differences between Novice and Expert Readers

Inexperienced Readers (Novice) [Weak or Minimal Rhetorical Reading]	Experienced Readers (Expert) [Strong Rhetorical Reading]
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek to extract information from a text (see reading as knowledge-getting) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Go beyond extracting meaning from a text to bring critical thinking to bear on that meaning (view reading as knowledge-making)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approach a text's message as content to be learned 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approach a text's message as content to be analyzed, evaluated, and perhaps argued with
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approach a text's data and concepts as neutral facts or non-controversial ideas or theories 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approach a text's data as selected and shaped by the writer's biases and purposes and open to evaluation and judgment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neglect to consider the author as a real person with a point of view, passion, and personal reason for writing; may think of readings as written by nobody 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use textual clues and research to identify the author and determine the author's intended audience and purpose
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • View the text primarily as a container of information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • View the text as trying to bring about some change in the reader's view of something; determine how much to agree or disagree with the author's view; see themselves in conversation with author
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequently highlight important material with a yellow marker 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequently take marginal notes that show the reader interacting with the writer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read all texts from beginning to end at the same speed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Match reading speed to the situation and reader's purpose—sometimes skim, sometimes read with close care, sometimes read sections out of order
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read text only once (often hoping the instructor will explain the reading in class) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take personal responsibility for understanding the reading; recognize that complex texts need to be read multiple times; hold confusing passages in mental suspension, hoping that later parts of the reading will clarify earlier parts

Table 1.2 summarizes the differences between the typical reading strategies of new college students and the expert reading strategies that instructors hope students will learn as soon as possible. These reading strategies are explained in more detail in Chapter 6, “Reading Rhetorically,” which explains how rhetorical readers both “listen” to a text (by summarizing it) and then join its conversation through their own analysis and critical thinking.

Concept 1.3: Seeing the “big picture” about college writing and reading promotes transfer of learning.

1.3 See the “big picture” about college writing and reading in order to promote transfer of learning.

So far, this chapter has tried to give you a “big picture” view of college writing and reading. As part of this big picture we have shown how authentic subject-matter problems are the heart of academic writing, how writers are expected to make knowledge rather than just get knowledge, and how academic writing depends on rhetorical reading. Learning to think about writing and reading in this