

An aerial photograph of a person standing on a wide, pebbly beach. The person is positioned on the left side of the frame, looking out towards the ocean. The beach is composed of numerous small, light-brown pebbles. The ocean is a vibrant blue, with white foam from a wave washing onto the shore. The overall scene is serene and contemplative.

# *The Writer's Response*

A READING-BASED  
APPROACH TO WRITING

SIXTH EDITION

McDONALD | SALOMONE | GUTIÉRREZ | JAPTOK



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# *The Writer's Response*

A READING-BASED  
APPROACH TO WRITING

SIXTH EDITION

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



## EDITING CHART

Use the chart below to revise and edit the drafts of your writing assignments when they are returned to you. On the left you can fill in other symbols that your instructor might prefer.

Your Instructor's Symbol	Symbol	Reference
	<i>agr</i>	Agreement between subject and verb (347–352) or between pronoun and antecedent (353–357)
	<i>apos</i>	Apostrophe (385–387)
	<i>awk</i>	Awkward sentence
	<i>c</i>	Comma usage (373–380)
	<i>cap</i>	Capitalization (392)
	<i>case</i>	Pronoun case (361–366)
	<i>cs</i>	Comma splice (338–340)
	<i>dm</i>	Dangling modifier (369–371)
	<i>frag</i>	Sentence fragment (333–336)
	<i>fused</i>	Fused sentence (337–340)
	<i>mm</i>	Misplaced modifier (365–371)
	<i>num</i>	Spelling or use of numerals for numbers (392–394)
	<i>p</i>	Punctuation (373–390)
	<i>ref</i>	Unclear or vague pronoun reference (357–359)
	<i>sp</i>	Spelling
	<i>tense</i>	Verb tense (341–343)
	<i>voice</i>	Verb voice (343–346)
	<i>wc</i>	Word choice
	✂	Delete
	¶	Paragraph
		Other marks your instructor might use



*Creativity is a continual surprise.*

—Ray Bradbury

*The discipline of the writer is to learn to be still and listen to what his subject has to tell him.*

—Rachel Carson

*Put down everything that comes into your head and then you're a writer. But an author is one who can judge his own stuff's worth, without pity, and destroy most of it.*

—Colette

*Writing is a conversation with reading; a dialogue with thinking. All conversations with older people contain repetition. Some of the ideas mean a lot to me, just interesting, so I both embrace and attack the ideas because I found them, well, delightful.*

—Nikki Giovanni

*Half my life is an act of revision.*

—John Irving

*Close the door. Write with no one looking over your shoulder. Don't try to figure out what other people want to hear from you; figure out what you have to say. It's the one and only thing you have to offer.*

—Barbara Kingsolver

*Most people won't realize that writing is a craft. You have to take your apprenticeship in it like anything else.*

—Katherine Ann Porter

*It has often been said there's so much to be read you never can cram all those thoughts in your head. So the writer who breeds more words than he needs is making a chore for the reader who reads. That's why my belief is the briefer the brief is the greater the sigh of the reader's relief is.*

—Dr. Seuss (Theodore Geisel)

*Ideas are like rabbits. You get a couple and learn how to handle them, and pretty soon you have a dozen.*

—John Steinbeck



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# Readings Listed by Rhetorical Mode

*Articles that illustrate several modes may appear more than once.*

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*Without Emotion*, G. Gordon Liddy  
*Jailbreak Marriage*, Gail Sheehy  
*In Defense of Voluntary Euthanasia*, Sidney Hook  
*Anonymous Sources*, Tina Dirmann  
*The Neglected Suicide Epidemic*, Emily Greenhouse

## **Comparison-Contrast**

*Not-So-Social Media: Why People Have Stopped Talking on Phones*, Alan Greenblatt  
*What American Has Gained, What America Has Lost*, George Packer  
*Public Universities Should Be Free*, Aaron Bady  
*Online Dating and Relationships*, Aaron Smith and Maeve Duggan  
*Overwhelmed and Creeped Out*, Ann Friedman  
*Is Internet Addiction a Real Thing?*  
Maria Konnikoa  
*Searching Online May Make You Think You're Smarter Than You Are*, Poncie Rutsch

## **Definition**

*Jailbreak Marriage*, Gail Sheehy  
*It's None of Your Business: The Challenges of Getting Public Information for the Public*, Kathleen Carroll  
*What American Has Gained, What America Has Lost*, George Packer  
*Uncle Sam Doesn't Always Want You*, Mark Arax  
*Public Universities Should Be Free*, Aaron Bady  
*For Better, For Worse: Marriage Means Something Different Now*, Stephanie Coontz  
*Is Internet Addiction a Real Thing?* Maria Konnikoa

*Dream Machines*, Will Wright  
*Are You Living Mindlessly?* Michael Ryan  
*Why Competition?* Alfie Kohn

## **Division and Classification**

*Three Passions I Have Lived For*, Bertrand Russell  
*How to Stay Alive*, Art Hoppe  
*Killing Women: A Pop-Music Tradition*,  
John Hamerlinck  
*Let Them Eat Dog*, Jonathan Safran Foer  
*Online Dating and Relationships*, Aaron Smith  
and Maeve Duggan  
*Overwhelmed and Creeped Out*, Ann Friedman  
*Are You Living Mindlessly?* Michael Ryan  
*It's Good Enough for Me: The Renaissance in  
Children's Programming*, Emily Nussbaum

## **Illustration**

*Anonymous Sources*, Tina Dirmann  
*How to Stay Alive*, Art Hoppe  
*Printed Noise*, George Will  
*Ordinary People Produce Extraordinary Results*,  
Paul Rogat Loeb  
*Not-So-Social Media: Why People Have Stopped  
Talking on Phones*, Alan Greenblatt  
*Killing Women: A Pop-Music Tradition*,  
John Hamerlinck  
*Male Fixations*, Dave Barry  
*Dropping the "T": Trans Rights in the Marriage Era*,  
Emily Greenhouse  
*The Neglected Suicide Epidemic*, Emily Greenhouse  
*It's None of Your Business: The Challenges of Getting  
Public Information for the Public*, Kathleen Carroll



## x Readings Listed by Rhetorical Mode

*We Treat Racism Like It's Going Extinct: It's Not,*  
Brittney Cooper

*Most Freshmen Say Religion Guides Them,*  
Thomas Bartlett

*The Bachelor: Silly, Sexist, and, to Many, Irresistible,*  
Mimi Avins

*Let Them Eat Dog,* Jonathan Safran Foer

*Why You Should Think Twice Before Shaming  
Anyone on Social Media,* Laura Hudson

*Online Dating Odds Getting Better,* Katherine Harvey

*Lost in an Online Fantasy World,* Olga Khazan

*Part-Time Work Ethic: Should Teens Go for It?*  
Dennis McLellan

*Balancing Act: High School Students Making the  
Grade at Part-Time Jobs,* Maureen Brown

*Why Competition?* Alfie Kohn

*Are You Living Mindlessly?* Michael Ryan

*It's Good Enough for Me: The Renaissance in  
Children's Programming,* Emily Nussbaum

### Cause–Effect

*Anonymous Sources,* Tina Dirmann

*Jailbreak Marriage,* Gail Sheehy

*Not-So-Social Media: Why People Have Stopped  
Talking on Phones,* Alan Greenblatt

*The Neglected Suicide Epidemic,* Emily Greenhouse

*Video Games Can Be Helpful to College Students,*  
Scott Carlson

*The Bachelor: Silly, Sexist, and, to Many, Irresistible,*  
Mimi Avins

*For Better, For Worse: Marriage Means Something  
Different Now,* Stephanie Coontz

*Why You Should Think Twice Before Shaming  
Anyone on Social Media,* Laura Hudson

*How Racist Is Online Dating?* Shaunacy Ferro

*Overwhelmed and Creeped Out,* Ann Friedman

*Is Internet Addiction a Real Thing?* Maria Konnikoa

*Lost in an Online Fantasy World,* Olga Khazan

*Dream Machines,* Will Wright

*Searching Online May Make You Think You're  
Smarter Than You Are,* Poncie Rutsch

*Part-Time Work Ethic: Should Teens Go for It?*  
Dennis McLellan

*Balancing Act: High School Students Making the  
Grade at Part-Time Jobs,* Maureen Brown

*The Minimum Legal Drinking Age: Facts and Fallacies,*  
Traci L. Toomey, Carolyn Rosenfeld,  
and Alexander Wagenaar

*Why Competition?* Alfie Kohn

*Are You Living Mindlessly?* Michael Ryan

*TV Can't Educate,* Paul Robinson

### Argument and Persuasion

*Ordinary People Produce Extraordinary Results,*  
Paul Rogat Loeb

*Dropping the "T": Trans Rights in the Marriage Era,*  
Emily Greenhouse

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Brittney Cooper

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Different Now,* Stephanie Coontz

*Let Them Eat Dog,* Jonathan Safran Foer

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*Uncle Sam Doesn't Always Want You,* Mark Arax

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*History 101: Pass the Popcorn, Please,*  
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and Alexander Wagenaar

*De-Demonizing Rum: What's Wrong with  
"Underage Drinking"?* Andrew Stattafor

*Why Competition?* Alfie Kohn

*TV Can't Educate,* Paul Robinson



# Preface

The premise of *The Writer's Response* is that it is nearly impossible to write well without also reading well, that college courses today demand not only that students write clearly and read accurately but also that they write effectively *about* what they have read. *The Writer's Response* is designed as an introductory text to academic writing, the type of writing based on the careful, deliberate reading and the clear, critical thinking demanded of students throughout their college careers.

## THE REASON FOR THIS TEXT

### WRITING IN RESPONSE TO READING

College courses outside of our English departments rarely ask students to write personal experience essays, nor do they ask students to write papers on topics *similar* to those they have read in some textbook. Rather, such classes more often ask that students write papers and essays in direct response to ideas they have encountered in assigned reading. Such writing assignments demand careful reading and clear summary. They demand that students be able to recognize and respond to specific points in the material they have read, to synthesize ideas from several reading selections, and to evaluate and to argue about the ideas they have found in their reading material. *The Writer's Response* introduces students to these and other skills they will need to write successful college-level papers.

### USING PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

Although *The Writer's Response* introduces students to academic writing, it does not at all ignore the importance of their personal experiences, nor does it fail to recognize that writing about themselves is often the best way for writers to find their own voices and to discover that they do indeed have something to say. For this reason, the assignments throughout *The Writer's Response* ask students to use personal experience to respond to the material they have read in the text when it is appropriate to do so. Chapters 1–4 in particular emphasize personal responses. Then, when the students are writing more directly *about* what they have read in Chapters 5–8, optional assignments allow instructors to assign personal experience responses when they want to do so.



## ABOUT THE TEXT

*The Writer's Response* integrates reading, writing, sentence combining, and editing. Its writing instruction is kept simple and clear, and its reading selections consist of over sixty short articles, most of which are both recent and timely in their subject matter.

### ORGANIZATION

#### *Part One: The Reading-Writing Conversation*

Part One, consisting of the first four chapters, introduces students to the reading and writing processes and to the concepts of unity, coherence, and development. Each of these chapters contains a variety of reading selections to illustrate the points being made and to provide material that students can respond to using their own personal experience. In these first four chapters we want students to become comfortable with the writing process and familiar with the elements of well-written paragraphs and essays. At the same time, we want students to become careful readers and to recognize that accurate reading is an integral part of clear thinking and good writing.

#### *Part Two: Writing about Reading*

Part Two consists of four chapters that introduce students to ways of writing about what they have read. We start Part Two with a chapter on how to write brief summaries, extended summaries, and summary-response essays because so often students have trouble doing much more than identifying the central idea of what they have read. Writing the summary gives them practice in recognizing and expressing both the central idea and the supporting points of a reading selection. We then move to a chapter on evaluating the effectiveness of material they read. In this chapter students must read accurately as well as explain why they have or have not found a selection convincing, persuasive, or effective. In the next chapter, students synthesize the issues involved in several reading selections. Here, students must not only summarize what they have read but also recognize connections among reading selections and explain those connections in their papers. The final chapter of Part Two asks students to argue from several reading selections, using material from a number of brief articles to support their positions.

#### *Part Three: Editing Skills*

Part Three of *The Writer's Response* is meant to act as a supplement to the primary instruction provided in Parts One and Two. It serves as a brief handbook for those students who need help with grammar, punctuation, or usage problems, and it allows the instructor to cover such material as needed. We have arranged it as a separate part of the text rather than spreading its material throughout each chapter so that the student can quickly and conveniently use it as an aid in the editing process.



## *Part Four: Additional Readings for Writing*

Part Four includes ten reading selections for the instructor to use in addition to those in the body of the text. These reading selections offer groups of related articles that can be used as multiple sources for synthesis or argument papers or that can be read and responded to individually. All of the reading selections reflect the criteria discussed below.

## *Appendix: Writing the Research Paper*

The Appendix covers the writing of a research paper for those instructors who prefer to assign a full research paper at this level. We discuss choosing a topic, developing a thesis, doing the research using library services (including the Internet and library online subscription services), integrating research into the paper, and using MLA documentation methods. The Appendix also includes a sample student research paper.

## **FEATURES**

### *The Reading Selections*

In choosing the reading selections for *The Writer's Response*, we have kept several criteria in mind. First, we wanted most of the selections to be relatively brief since this text is, after all, an introduction to academic writing. For that reason, the majority of the selections are only a few pages in length. However, we also wanted our students to have to “stretch” their mental muscles at times, so we have included some longer, more complex articles for instructors to use as they see fit. Second, we wanted the reading selections to be both timely and interesting, appealing to as wide a range of students as possible. To achieve this end, we have chosen articles that challenge the students to think about who they are as well as about how they fit into our complex world. Titles ranging from “Are You Living Mindlessly?” to “How Racist Is Online Dating” to “Why You Should Think Twice before Shaming Anyone on Social Media” to “Education Is Not a Luxury” reflect the variety of topics to be found in this text. Finally, to allow for the kind of synthesis and argument that *The Writer's Response* is meant to encourage, we have included several articles grouped around common topics, such as “Online Worlds: Friend or Foe?,” “Should Drugs Be Legalized?,” “Should the Minimum Legal Drinking Age Be Lowered?,” “Physician-Assisted Suicide,” and “Online Dating.”

### *Evaluating Sample Student Papers*

In addition to writing instruction and brief reading selections, each of the chapters in Parts One and Two includes a section on evaluating sample student papers. This section has two purposes. First, it is designed to provide students with “models” of successful papers that can be used to discuss what is expected of well-written paragraphs or essays. Second, it is meant to teach students to distinguish between successful and less successful papers so that they can better evaluate the effectiveness of their own writing.



## Sentence Combining

Each chapter in Parts One and Two includes a section on sentence combining. Since so many student writers rely primarily upon compound and relatively brief complex sentences, the sentence combining sections are designed to give students practice in writing sentences that move beyond the patterns they are most comfortable with. Beginning with simple exercises in recognizing when modifiers in one sentence can easily be “embedded” within another sentence, these sections gradually introduce more difficult sentence structures involving the use of coordination, parallelism, subordination, participial phrases, appositives, and sentence variety.

## Group Work

Throughout the text, exercises and writing assignments encourage students to work together, discussing the reading selections, comparing their responses to those selections, and helping each other develop their papers. While individual instructors will, of course, use such group work as they see fit, we have found it to be an invaluable teaching device, helping students clarify their own thinking as they work with those around them.

## NEW TO THIS EDITION

In this sixth edition of *The Writer’s Response*, we have made the following improvements:

- We have added eighteen new reading selections, covering topics ranging from the marginalization of transgender people (“Dropping the “T”: Trans Rights in the Marriage Era,” Chapter 3) to an argument that public universities should not charge tuition (“Public Universities Should Be Free,” Chapter 6), to an examination of the world of online dating (“Overwhelmed and Creeped Out,” Chapter 7).
- We have updated the Appendix, “Writing the Research Paper,” to reflect the latest changes in the *MLA Style Manual*. This Appendix covers how to choose topics; how to do the research, including making full use of the Internet; how to evaluate researched material; how to integrate researched paraphrases and quotations; and how to use MLA documentation within the text as well as on a Works Cited page. The Appendix also includes a sample student research paper.
- We have replaced 50 percent of the exercises in “Part Three: Editing Skills.”
- We have replaced 50 percent of the sentence-combining exercises in Parts One and Two of the text.
- As in all previous editions, cultural diversity and reactions to it are emphasized in articles throughout the text.



## INSTRUCTOR'S MANUAL

The Instructor's Manual for *The Writer's Response* provides suggestions for teaching the course on a chapter-by-chapter basis and offers comments about the reading selections. It also includes answers to all exercises in the text.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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## **DEDICATION**

*With love to George and Joan McDonald,  
Kathryn and Michelle Salomone,  
Nagadya Japtok,  
and Estela and Francisco Gutiérrez*



# Part One

## The Reading-Writing Conversation

Have you ever talked to someone who wouldn't listen or listened to someone who just rambled on and on without making a clear point? Probably you tried not to have many more conversations with that person. After all, in a conversation, both listening well and speaking clearly are important, and a poor listener or a confusing speaker is not a very enjoyable person to talk to.

Writing and reading are very much like speaking and listening. When you read, you listen to what someone else has to say; when you write, you speak your own ideas. Together, reading and writing make a conversation between the reader and the writer, and a poor reader or a poor writer can pretty much spoil that conversation.

As students in college classes, you will be asked to participate in this reading-writing conversation by writing in response to what you read. Depending on the instructor or the class, you might be asked to summarize the ideas you have found in textbooks, to analyze topics after reading about them, to evaluate opinions expressed by a writer, to define concepts discussed in several articles, or to respond in any number of other ways to what you have read.

Obviously, to write clearly and accurately in response to what you have read, you need to read clearly and accurately too. Part One of this text will help you work on both activities at the same time—clear and accurate reading and writing.





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# Writing with a Central Idea

# 1

## THE WRITING PROCESS

Writing is a messy business. It is full of stops and starts and sudden turns and reversals. In fact, writing an essay can sometimes be one of the most confusing, frustrating experiences a college student will encounter. Fortunately, writing does not have to be a horrible experience. Like almost anything in life, writing becomes much easier as you become familiar with the “process” that makes up the act of writing.

Writing is often called a *recursive process*. This means that the many steps to writing an effective paper do not necessarily follow neatly one after the other. In fact, often you will find yourself repeating the same step a number of different times, in a number of different places, as you write a paper. For example, you might jot down notes on scratch paper before you start writing your first draft, but at any time while you write, you might stop to jot down more notes or to rethink what you are writing. To help yourself understand this writing process, think of it as being divided roughly into three stages: **prewriting**, **writing**, and **rewriting**.



## PREWRITING

Prewriting involves anything you do to help yourself decide what your central idea is or what details, examples, reasons, or content you will include. Freewriting, brainstorming, and clustering (discussed later) are types of prewriting. Thinking, talking to other people, reading related material, outlining or organizing ideas—all are forms of prewriting. Obviously, you can prewrite at *any* time in the writing process. Whenever you want to think up new material, simply stop what you are doing and start using one of the techniques you will study in this chapter.

## WRITING

The writing stage of the process involves the actual writing out of a draft. Unfortunately, many people try to start their writing here, without sufficient prewriting. As you may know from firsthand experience, trying to start out this way usually leads directly to a good case of writer's block. During this stage of the writing process, you should be ready to do more prewriting whenever you hit a snag or cannot think of what to write next.

## REWRITING

Rewriting consists of revising and editing. You should plan to revise every paper you write. When you *revise*, you examine the entire draft to change what needs to be changed and to add what needs to be added. Perhaps parts of your paper will need to be reorganized, reworded, or thoroughly rewritten to express your ideas clearly. Perhaps your paper will need more examples or clearer explanations. Unfortunately, people pressed for time often skip this stage, and the result is a poorly written paper. Finally, after you have revised your work, you must edit it. When you *edit*, you correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation errors. A word of warning: do not confuse editing with revising. Merely correcting the spelling, grammar, and punctuation of a poorly written paper will not make much difference in the overall quality of the paper.

## PREWRITING: FROM WRITER'S BLOCK TO WRITING

Have you ever had a writing assignment that absolutely stumped you? Have you ever found yourself *stuck*, staring at a blank sheet of paper for fifteen minutes (or thirty? or sixty?), wondering what in the world you could write to meet the assignment?

If you have not had this experience, you are a lucky person. Certainly almost everyone knows the frustrated, sinking feeling that comes as minute after minute passes and nothing seems to get written. In fact, for many writers, *getting started* is the most agonizing part of the entire writing process.

What we're talking about here is **writer's block**, a problem as common to professional writers as it is to student writers. Because it is so common,



you need to learn how to get past it quickly and painlessly so that you can get on with your assignment. Here are a few prewriting techniques to help you.

## FREEWRTING

Because writer's block means that you aren't writing, one of the quickest ways to get around it is to write anything at all, a technique called *freewriting*. You can write whatever you are thinking, feeling, wondering about, or trying to get out of your mind—just start writing.

Look at the *Zits* cartoon that opens this chapter. Jeremy, like many online writers, uses a form of freewriting as he writes his blog. (A *blog*, short for *weblog*, is a form of online journal.) He does not sit down wondering what to write. Instead, he writes about whatever is on his mind—in this case, his conversation with his mother.

When freewriting, don't stop to correct spelling, grammar, punctuation, or other elements of the writing. Set a time limit for yourself—five or ten minutes—and just keep writing. Here is how some freewriting might look from a person who was asked to write a paper explaining how a significant event affected his or her life:

An event that affected my life. What event could I choose? There haven't been a lot of things that have really affected me. The death of Heidi did, I guess. My marriage, of course. Having a child. What else? How about when I was a child? I don't remember much that really affected me from then. No big traumatic events or anything. Nothing particularly wonderful either. How about in elementary or high school? Well—Heidi's death, like I said. My mom's alcoholism. That's a big event. I wonder how it affected me. I wasn't really home all that much then. I wonder if it counts as an "event." Something major. I'm trying to think of something major. How about moving to Boulder? That was big event for me. I'd never been away from home for so long. Yes. I like that one.

As you can see, freewriting is very informal. Notice that the above freewriting moves from questions ("What event could I choose?") to answers that the writer might be able to use in a paper ("The death of Heidi," "My marriage," "My mom's alcoholism," "Moving to Boulder"). This movement—from searching for ideas that you might use to focusing on possible topics—is very common in freewriting.

## BRAINSTORMING

*Brainstorming* is similar to freewriting in that you write down whatever ideas come to mind. Don't censor or correct them. However, in this case, write the ideas in **list** form. Don't be surprised if you find one technique—brainstorming or freewriting—working better than the other. Use the one