

Introduction

TO THE INSTRUCTOR

About This Book

Academic Encounters: Human Behavior is a reading, study skills, and writing text based on material taken from psychology and human communications textbooks used in North American and other English-speaking colleges and universities. The student who will benefit most from this course will be at the high-intermediate to low-advanced level. This student may well be encountering academic text in English for the first time. However, the readings are short enough and the tasks sufficiently well scaffolded to allow a student at this level to access the texts successfully.

About the Academic Encounters Series

This content-based series is for non-native speakers of English preparing to study in English at the college or university level and for native speakers of English who need to improve their academic skills for further study. The series consists of *Academic Encounters* books that help students improve their reading, study skills, and writing, and *Academic Listening Encounters* books that help students improve their listening, note-taking, and discussion skills. Each reading book corresponds in theme to a listening book, and each pair of theme-linked books focuses on an academic subject commonly taught in North American and other English-speaking colleges and universities. For example, *Academic Encounters: Human Behavior* and *Academic Listening Encounters: Human Behavior* both focus on psychology and human communications, and *Academic Encounters: Life in Society* and *Academic Listening Encounters: Life in Society* both focus on sociology. A reading book and a listening book with the same content focus may be used together to teach a complete four-skills course in English for Academic Purposes.

Academic Encounters Reading, Study Skills, and Writing Books

The approach

In the *Academic Encounters Reading, Study Skills, and Writing books*, students are presented with authentic samples of academic text. The material has been abridged and occasionally reorganized, but on the sentence level, little of the language has been changed. Students study these texts to develop their reading and study skills. The high-interest content of the texts also provides stimulus for student writing assignments.

The content

The fact that each book has a unified thematic content throughout has several advantages. First, it gives the students a realistic sense of studying a course in college, in which each week's assignments are related to and build on each other. Second, as language and concepts recur, the students begin to feel that the readings are getting easier, building their confidence as readers of academic text. Finally, after studying an *Academic Encounters* book, some students may feel that they have enough background in the content focus area to actually take a course in that subject (e.g., psychology) to fulfill part of their general education requirements.

The skills

The main goal of the *Academic Encounters Reading, Study Skills, and Writing books* is to give students the skills and the confidence to approach a piece of academic text, read it efficiently and critically, and extract the main ideas and key details. But the goal of academic reading is not just to retrieve information. It is also important for a student to be able to display that knowledge in a test-taking situation. For this reason, students are taught highlighting, note taking, and test-preparation skills. An additional goal is the development of students' academic writing. Writing, reading, and study skills are developed in tasks that accompany each reading and that appear in two separate sections: "Preparing to Read" and "After You Read."

The format

Each Reading, Study Skills, and Writing book consists of five units on different aspects of the book's content focus. Units are divided into two chapters, with four readings in each chapter. Each reading is one to four pages long.

Preparing to Read

Each reading is preceded by a one-page section of prereading tasks called "Preparing to Read." Prereading is heavily emphasized since it is regarded as a crucial step in the reading process. Some of the prereading activities teach students how to quickly get a good overall idea of the content. Students learn to skim for main ideas and to survey the text for headings, graphic material, and terms in boldface, all of which can provide impor-

tant content clues. Another type of prereading task has students think about the topic of the reading, predict its content, and recall their prior knowledge and personal experiences to help them assimilate the new information they are about to encounter in the reading.

After You Read

Each reading is followed by a variety of postreading tasks in a section called “After You Read.” Some of these tasks ask students to demonstrate their understanding of the text, either by answering reading comprehension questions or by doing an activity such as drawing a graph or performing a roleplay. Other tasks ask students to reflect on the content and deepen their understanding of the text by personalizing the information. Some tasks ask students to analyze the structure of the text, looking for main ideas, supporting details, and authorial commentary. There are language tasks which focus on vocabulary or on some of the salient grammatical features of the text. Students learn how to highlight a text, take notes in the margins and in a notebook, and practice test-taking skills. The rich variety of tasks and task types allows students to experiment with different study-skill strategies and to discover their learning-style preferences.

Writing

There are plentiful and varied opportunities in Reading, Study Skills, and Writing books for students to practice their writing skills. Students write essays, text summaries, and journal entries, as well as short answers to test questions. At the same time, as students continually read and analyze academic English, they begin to acquire insight into its organization and style, and their own writing begins to develop a more academic tone.

Task pages and text pages

Task pages are clearly differentiated from text pages by a colored vertical bar that runs along the outside edge of the page. The task pages contain the activities that students are asked to do either before or after reading the text. Tasks and texts never occur on the same page, and the text pages have been designed to look like authentic college textbook pages. This helps to create a sense for students that they are actually reading from an academic textbook. The readings and tasks have been carefully laid out so that each new reading begins on a right-hand page, opposite a one-page “Preparing to Read” section. These design features make the book easy to use.

Task commentary boxes

When a task type occurs for the first time in the book, it is headed by a colored commentary box that explains what skill is being practiced and why it is important. When the task occurs again later in the book, it may be accompanied by another commentary box, either as a reminder or to present new information about the skill. At the back of the book, there is an

alphabetized index of all the tasks. Page references in boldface indicate tasks that are headed by commentary boxes.

Opportunities for student interaction

Many of the tasks in *Academic Encounters* are divided into steps. Some of these steps are to be done by the student working alone, others by students in pairs or in small groups, still others by the teacher with the whole class. To make the book as lively as possible, student interaction has been built into most activities. Thus, although the books focus on reading, study skills, and writing, speaking activities abound. Students discuss the content of the texts before and after reading them; they often work collaboratively to solve task problems; they perform role play activities, and they frequently compare answers in pairs or small groups.

Order of units

The units do not have to be taught in the order in which they appear in the book, although this order is recommended. To a certain extent, tasks do build upon each other so that, for example, a note-taking task later in the book may draw upon information that has been offered in an earlier unit. Teachers who want to teach the units out of order, however, may do so. They can use the task index at the back of the book to see what information has been presented in earlier units and build that information into their lessons. In terms of reading topics, also, the order of units is regarded as optimal, although teachers may use them out of order if they wish.

Course length

Each of the five units of a Reading, Study Skills, and Writing book contains a unit preview section and eight readings, and represents approximately 16-20 hours of classroom material. An *Academic Encounters* book could thus be a suitable course book for a 64- to 80-hour course (when a teacher selects four of the five units) or an 80- to 100-hour course (when all the units are used). The course can, however, be made shorter or longer. To shorten the course, teachers might choose not to do every task in the book and to assign some tasks and texts as homework, rather than do them in class. To lengthen the course, teachers might choose to supplement the book with some content-related material from their own files and to spend more time developing students' writing skills.

TO THE STUDENT

Welcome to *Academic Encounters: Human Behavior*. In this book, you will encounter readings that have been taken from textbooks used in North American and other English-speaking colleges and universities. *Academic Encounters: Human Behavior* will teach you how to become a more efficient and competent reader of such texts and provide you with the study skills that you will need to be successful in an American college classroom.

Texts that appear in college textbooks are different from other types of texts that you may have read in English. They are organized differently and are written in a distinctive style. Since a great deal of effort has gone into making the texts in *Academic Encounters* books look and read exactly as they might in an academic textbook, by studying this book you will have an excellent opportunity to become familiar with the special features and style of academic text.

The approach in *Academic Encounters* may be different from what you are used to. First, you are asked to try to master the subject matter, as if you were studying in a regular university course. Then, after having studied the texts and having read them critically, you are taught the skills that would allow you to retrieve the information you have learned in a test-taking situation. For example, you are taught highlighting, note taking, and test-preparation skills.

Although the primary emphasis in this book is on reading and study skills, there are also opportunities to study the language of the texts. It is particularly important as you get ready to study in an English-speaking university that you broaden your vocabulary, and many of the activities are designed to help you do so. Sometimes, too, the focus of instruction is on a grammatical structure that occurs commonly in academic text.

There are also plentiful opportunities in *Academic Encounters: Human Behavior* for you to practice your academic writing skills. You will find that by continually reading and studying academic English your own academic writing will improve. As you become more and more familiar with academic texts, how they are organized, and the language in which they are written, you will find yourself naturally beginning to adopt a more academic writing style of your own.

The topics in this book all come from the academic disciplines of psychology and human communications. One effect of studying subject matter that comes only from one field is that you will build up a lot of new knowledge in this area. After using this book, you may feel that you have had enough background information in the subject matter to go on and take an introductory course in psychology or human communications to fulfill part of your general education requirements. Or, perhaps you will have gained the knowledge and confidence to do so at some future date.

Finally, we hope that you find this book to be not only useful, but enjoyable. The topics have all been chosen for their high interest, and you will have many opportunities to discuss them with your classmates. It is important to remember in all your studies that the most successful learning takes place when you enjoy what you are studying and find it interesting.