

Cambridge University Press  
978-0-521-54490-0 - A Writer's Workbook: A Writing Text with Readings: Fourth Edition:  
Teacher's Manual  
Trudy Smoke  
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*Fourth Edition*

# *A Writer's* WORKBOOK

*A Writing Text with Readings*

## TEACHER'S MANUAL

TRUDY SMOKE

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## INTRODUCTION

*A Writer's Workbook* emphasizes development of the use of English for academic purposes. It integrates reading and writing activities, and it contains readings that typify the style of writing and vocabulary found in linguistics, sociology, psychology, and anthropology texts. The pedagogy in the book utilizes a collaborative and student-based approach, with many opportunities for students to work with a partner, in small groups, or with the entire class.

### STRUCTURE OF THE STUDENT'S BOOK

*A Writer's Workbook* is divided into twelve chapters, which are grouped in four units: "Language," "Culture," "Work," and "Roots." Each chapter is divided into the following six sections:

#### Prereading

- an illustration related to the reading
- discussion questions to activate prior knowledge
- a vocabulary activity

#### Reading

- a brief biography of the writer
- the reading selection

#### Postreading

- questions to check comprehension and encourage discussion of ideas
- questions to provoke analysis of how the piece was written
- questions to elicit personal response

#### Writing

- journal writing
- presentation of one or more aspects of formal writing and related activities
- the main writing assignment
- a technique for getting started
- writing the first draft

#### Revising

- analysis and suggestions for revision of a sample piece of writing
- analysis and suggestions for revision of a partner's writing
- writing the second draft

#### Editing

- presentation of a grammar point and related activities
- editing the main writing assignment for grammar
- presentation of a mechanics point and related activities
- editing the main writing assignment for mechanics

## TEACHING GUIDELINES

### Prereading

Many teachers like to have students discuss what the illustration on the first page of the reading suggests because it is an enjoyable way to lead students into the topic of the reading. The discussion should focus on the illustration in a broad sense – on what it evokes and implies, rather than on merely describing its content.

Follow up students' ideas about the illustration with the discussion questions, which are designed to activate their prior knowledge about a topic and give them the opportunity to learn from others in the classroom. The questions are intended for the entire class, but some teachers prefer to ask students to work in small groups, where they discuss one or all of the questions and then share their answers with the class. Other teachers find it more effective to engage the entire class in discussing the questions, putting interesting information and new vocabulary on the board, and sometimes introducing visual materials (such as the map of a country or a relevant photo or chart) to build students' understanding and interest.

*Vocabulary: Words in Context* tasks appear in Chapters 1–11. Working with a partner, students figure out from context the meaning of the italicized words in three to five sentences or short passages excerpted from the text of the reading. Learning to derive the meaning of words from context is an important skill for students to build because they do not have time to look up every new word they encounter. Furthermore, looking up each new word would slow down the reading process and make it a frustrating experience.

Students gain vocabulary and reading skills, however, by a combination of strategies including figuring out word meanings from context, discussing words with their classmates, and using the dictionary. Many teachers, therefore, encourage students to verify their guesses at meaning by checking in the dictionary. Whichever way you choose to have students complete this activity, it is very important that they always perform the second part, in which they take turns explaining to a partner in their own words the meaning of the entire sentence or passage. It's a good idea to then call on a few students to repeat their explanations for the class.

You may want to suggest (or require) that students add new words to a “personal dictionary” that they keep either in their class notebook or a separate notebook. Have them add to this personal dictionary any new words they encounter in the readings or in class discussions. Encourage students to try to use some of these new words in their writing.

The reading in Chapter 12 is a short story containing specialized vocabulary relating to the southwestern United States and the Roman Catholic religion. Because it is unlikely that students will be able to guess the meanings of these words from context, the vocabulary activity for this chapter is different.

See page 61 of this manual for a discussion of the vocabulary task in Chapter 12.

## Reading

In each unit, there are three reading selections, one per chapter. The first selection is a personal essay, the selection in the second chapter is an academic essay, and the third chapter uses either a journalistic selection or a piece of fiction. These choices were made to introduce students to the different styles in which people write according to their purposes and audiences.

Because students will have discussed some of the ideas in the reading selection and reviewed some of the vocabulary in class, teachers usually ask them to read the selection for the first time as homework. Of course, the first reading may also be done in class if you prefer. Some teachers read the selection aloud after students have read it on their own so that students can hear the correct pronunciation and intonation. If you choose to do this, students can even tape your readings so that they can listen to them at home.

In general, students benefit from reading the same selection several times. The first reading usually serves the purpose of getting a general idea of the piece; the next reading may be to look at specific features such as the introduction, cohesion between paragraphs, vocabulary, etc.; and a third reading would focus on the content and point of view of the author. Developing the habit of reading an academic text more than once is important, especially now that many colleges are requiring written exams based on comprehension of selected pieces of writing.

## Postreading

*Think about the Content* questions, which follow each reading, are designed for small group discussions. Such discussions give students the opportunity to talk with each other about a common reading, to see how well they understood the reading, and to expand their understanding of it by hearing other responses. After the small group discussions, teachers often continue the discussion with the full class.

*Think about the Writing* questions are meant to be discussed as a class because it is important that all students hear each point made about writing. These questions lead students to analyze the writing itself and, it is hoped, apply some of the writing strategies to their own writing.

A *Personal Response* questions are intended for partner work and help students to think about their own experiences in relation to what they have read.

The suggestions mentioned above are only one way to use the postreading questions. Some teachers prefer discussing all the questions with the entire class; some ask different groups of students to work on different questions and then report their discussions to the class; other teachers assign all or

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some of the questions for homework to be discussed along with the selection in class. You might also consider assigning some of the questions for online class Web board discussions.

## Writing

*Journal Writing* is helpful to students because it allows them to write freely without worrying about grammar, mechanics, spelling, or organization. To that end, students write a journal entry in response to each selection they read and discuss. This encourages them to develop the habit of writing about what they have read and of seeing writing as a tool for learning and exploring their ideas. The journal questions are meant to encourage students to think and then write about an aspect of the reading selection that touches them or corresponds to their own experience.

There are various ways to have students keep journals. One way is to have them write at home in a private journal that is collected periodically throughout the semester. If you choose this approach, you may permit your students to fold over any pages that are personal and that they do not want to share with you; this helps them understand that journals are personal learning tools. If you prefer, the journals may be written on the computer and e-mailed to you. In this case, students can omit from what they send you any parts of their journals they feel are too personal for anyone else to see. If you conduct part of your class using online activities, you may occasionally, with your students' permission, publish a student's journal entry in a chat room or blog so that other students can respond and have an online discussion. Another approach is to have students engage in a dialogue-style journal in which the student writes his or her response directly to you (as though the student were writing you a letter), and you in turn write back to each student. Whichever approach you choose, bear in mind that most researchers suggest you only comment on the content and not on the language, grammar, or mechanics when responding to students' journals.

From time to time, you may encounter students who do not want to keep a journal. You may decide to accept this, or you may give them a different assignment such as asking them to copy a part of the reading they especially liked and a part they especially disliked and write a brief explanation for their choices. This is not as personal as a typical journal entry, but it does get students into the habit of writing in response to reading.

With the exception of Chapter 1, which deals with autobiographical writing (see next paragraph), at least one type of *Formal Writing* that students are expected to produce during their academic careers is introduced in each chapter. The writing assignment for the chapter then has students practice that type of writing. For example, when students are introduced to how to write summaries, the writing assignment they do for that chapter is to write a summary; when students are introduced to the cause-and-effect essay, the writing assignment is a cause-and-effect essay, and so on. In some chapters, a second aspect of formal writing is also introduced – for example,



paraphrasing or connecting ideas. Tasks that allow students to practice these skills are provided.

Students are offered three choices of topic for each writing assignment with the exception of Chapters 1 and 8. The writing assignment for Chapter 1 asks students to write an autobiographical essay that is structured around their experiences with reading and writing. For more information about the Chapter 1 assignment, see page 3 of this manual. In Chapter 8, students write a persuasive essay under test conditions and are offered two choices in accordance with the style of the test. For more information about the Chapter 8 assignment, see page 39 of this manual.

In each chapter, *Getting Started* introduces a technique that helps students with their writing assignments. Though a different technique is focused on in each chapter, not all work equally well for all students. In some chapters, you may want to allow students to use a technique they prefer rather than try the one presented, but have them try at least a few of the different techniques. This way they discover that there are many ways to get started even if a writing assignment seems difficult at first. In Chapters 5, 8, and 11, however, all students should do the *Getting Started* activities specific to those chapters because they are integral to the development of their essays.

## Revising

After writing the first draft of their essays, students revise and then write a second draft. It is important for students to understand that revising necessarily consists of two steps: (1) analyzing both what is good and what needs improvement in a piece of writing, followed by (2) rewriting, i.e., adding to, deleting from, and reorganizing the piece of writing.

To provide practice in analyzing writing, students are given a task in which they are asked to analyze a sample essay and make suggestions for how it could be improved. This is such an important skill for students to learn that it is recommended that teachers model the task, perhaps working with a tutor or with one student. Students are often not sure how to work with a partner to make both positive and instructive comments, which is why modeling this process is enormously beneficial to them. It is interesting to note that although students often need time – and help from teachers – to become proficient at analyzing writing, many of my students have said they learned more about revising by doing this analysis than from any other activity.

The Student's Book provides a *Peer Response Form* (page 228) for students to reproduce and use each time they analyze writing – the writing of others as well as their own. Be sure to include the use of this form as you model how to analyze the writing of others. It is essential that you make students aware of how important it is to find and state the good points in a piece of writing before discussing the areas of weakness. (The order of questions in the *Peer Response Form* leads them to do this.) The purpose of revision is to improve a piece of writing, and writers who are encouraged by positive responses to

their good points are usually more motivated to work on the weak ones. Let students know that if they need more room for their comments, they can either continue on the back of the form or use additional paper.

After students practice analyzing the writing of someone else, they work in pairs to analyze their own writing and then plan how to revise it. Each partner should fill out the *Peer Response Form* in relation to his or her partner's writing. Then they can use the two forms as the basis for their discussion. While students work with their partners, it is a good idea for you to walk from pair to pair, observing, listening, and offering guidance as needed.

Take some time to discuss with students how they should write their second drafts. It is critical for them to understand that in the end each writer must make his or her own decision as to how much of a partner's advice to take. Ideally, the analysis skills students are developing will help them distinguish good advice from bad. Partner feedback is important, but the final decisions about what and how to revise must be those of the individual writer. It often happens that students see ways to improve their own writing that their partners didn't see.

This is a good time to point out to students that in the "real" world, writers often revise many times for the simple reason that once doesn't always do the job. If time permits, you should feel free to allow students to write more than two drafts. One possibility is to have students revise once, give them written feedback, and even grade their papers. Then allow them to revise once more, bearing your comments in mind. This approach gives students excellent practice as well as a chance for a better grade. (See more about assessing your students' writing under *Suggestions for Responding to Students' Writing* on page xii.)

## Editing

Up to this point in *A Writer's Workbook*, students have concentrated on the content and organization of their writing. In the *Editing* section, students work on elements of writing that are often intimidating to them: grammar and mechanics.

The *Grammar* section of each chapter presents an aspect of grammar that typically poses problems for students when they write. Practice exercises in which students apply the grammar follow its presentation. The last practice exercise is always a paragraph with errors in the grammar discussed in the chapter; students must correct these errors and then check their answers in the back of the Student's Book. Answers for the other grammar tasks are in this manual.

At the end of the *Grammar* section, students are given instructions to edit their own writing for grammar. This is done in two steps: First, students review their writing looking for errors in the grammatical aspect presented in the chapter. Then they are told to choose two or three other areas of

grammar that typically give them problems and look for errors in these areas. You may want to ask students to note at the bottom of their papers which grammar areas they chose to look for in addition to the one addressed in the chapter. As you become familiar with your students' writing, you can help them identify their problem areas.

The *Mechanics* section of each chapter includes information about such topics as how to use commas and semicolons, how to avoid run-on sentences and fragments, and how to punctuate direct speech. As in the *Grammar* section, a mechanics point is presented and followed by practice exercises, the last of which is a paragraph that needs editing for the specific mechanics issue discussed in the chapter. (Answers for the paragraph to be edited appear in the back of the Student's Book.)

Each chapter ends with a checklist, *Edit Your Writing for Mechanics*, a tool that requires students to review their writing for each mechanics point discussed from Chapter 1 through the chapter on which they are working. You may want students to copy this checklist onto a piece of paper and hand it in with their essays.

Naturally, there is a somewhat arbitrary order for the grammar and mechanics issues discussed in each chapter. You may want to use them in a different order or you may decide to assign particular ones to individual students or small groups of students.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR CREATING A COMMUNICATIVE CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

- As students work together in the classroom, circulate among them observing, listening, and giving guidance when necessary. Talk to the groups and show interest in the conversation.
- Provide opportunities for quieter students to interact by having students work with partners, in small groups, or by using a class Web board and chat room. Having an online connection for the class may encourage students who are reluctant to speak in class to communicate on the computer either to you personally or to their classmates. Write to the students online in response to their entries and also to pose and answer questions. You may want to schedule a particular day and time when you will be available on the computer for a class chat.
- In every class meeting, try to ensure that each student has an opportunity to speak to the whole class or to a small group, even if only for 2 or 3 minutes. In addition to the activities in the book, you can ask students to find newspaper articles related to the chapter topic and present the information in the article to the class; or, you may divide students into teams to debate an issue related to the topic.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR RESPONDING TO STUDENTS' WRITING

- Use students' journals as a form of dialogue. Respond with interest to what they have written rather than simply writing "good" or "interesting," and so on.
- Read each student's essay through once before responding or correcting. Respond to the content and organization first with extended written comments that point out the strengths of the writing as well as the weaknesses. Many teachers do this by writing a short paragraph at the end of the essay that is a note to the student rather than by inserting comments throughout the paper. Then respond to the grammar and mechanics. Let students know what they do well and then where their weak points are.
- Put a dot at the edge of each line where there is an error in grammar or mechanics and ask students to work with a partner to find the problem. (If they cannot find the problem, they need to ask you.)
- Consider the option of responding to students' drafts via audiotape. Rather than writing on a draft, you can record your ongoing response to the content and organization as you read.
- Grade papers so that students understand their strengths and weaknesses. One way of doing this is to give a triple grade – one grade for content and organization, one for grammar, and one for mechanics. Some teachers average these into one grade. They then encourage students to write additional drafts addressing the area where they have the most problems, which gives them a chance to raise their grade.
- Require your students to meet one-on-one with you to go over one of their essays at least once per semester (preferably more than once). Some teachers do this at midterm time and then again a few weeks before the end of the semester. Have students read parts of their essay aloud to you; many times students self correct when they read.
- Have students keep copies of their multiple drafts so that you and they can compare the changes and improvements in their writing.
- Have students keep portfolios of their writing throughout the semester so you and they can track their growth.

## PLANNING YOUR COURSE

*A Writer's Workbook* works well with a variety of writing classes. It may be used in six-week, twelve-week, or fourteen-week semesters. It may be used in intensive language classes as well as classes that meet less frequently.

Although there is a progression in the formal writing presented and practiced in each chapter, teachers are not bound to follow the order of the book. The units do not have to be taught in the order in which they occur, nor do all three chapters of a unit have to be taught.

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Some teachers may choose to have students complete only the chapters with academic readings (Chapters 2, 5, 8, and 11) while still doing all the *Grammar* and *Mechanics* sections in the book. Other teachers may decide to have students complete the *Grammar* and *Mechanics* sections selectively or even assign them individually or to small groups of students. Still other teachers may want to focus on the personal essay at the beginning of the semester, in which case they would have students do Chapters 1, 4, 7, and 10 first. Teachers who prefer to have students read one genre at a time may organize their semester by first assigning chapters with personal essays, then focusing on chapters with journalistic essays (Chapters 3 and 9), followed by academic essays, and concluding with fiction (Chapters 6 and 12).

Depending on the length of your semester and how many hours a week your class meets, you might spend one or two weeks on a chapter. Some teachers focus on *Prereading*, *Reading*, and *Postreading* for the first two classes and then focus on *Writing* in the next class. The *Revising*, *Grammar*, and *Mechanics* sections are then done in the following class. In that way, a chapter may be used for two weeks.

There is a great deal of flexibility in how you choose to use *A Writer's Workbook*. The *Plan of the Book*, on pages vi–xiii of the Student's Book, and the *Index*, on pages 248–249 of the Student's Book, permit you to easily see all the readings and activities with the page(s) where they may be found. These features will help you personalize the book to meet class needs and plan a syllabus that works effectively for an eight-week, twelve-week, fourteen-week, or longer program. What makes this book work so well for so many different kinds of teachers and students is the breadth of material presented and the variety of activities and readings.