



This is “Preface to Teachers”, article 3 from the book [Writers' Handbook \(index.html\)](#) (v. 1.0).

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Preface to Teachers

Background

The *Unnamed Publisher Handbook for Writers (FWKHW)* understands that writing is at the center of the college experience, not just something students do on their way to higher-level coursework. The materials in the *FWKHW* support the goal of acculturating entering students to the demands of college-level thinking and writing, whether that goal is being met through coursework in composition, student development, or some combination of the two as part of a first-year experience program.

The *FWKHW* shows students how to use writing as a portal for thinking and learning and for communicating with the world. Its writing prompts and exercises encourage students not only to do a great deal of exploratory writing but also to gradually experience the rhetorical considerations of going public in a variety of genres and media. Through it all, students are asked to reflect on their writing, examining precisely how it functions depending on the rhetorical considerations of their voice, audience, message, and purpose.

The *FWKHW* is *both* a guide to college-level writing and thinking *and* a comprehensive college-level writing handbook. In [Chapter 1 "Writing to Think and Writing to Learn"](#), [Chapter 2 "Becoming a Critical Reader"](#), [Chapter 3 "Thinking through the Disciplines"](#), and [Chapter 4 "Joining the Conversation"](#), students will identify and develop habits of mind they can use for success in college and life, and in the remainder of the book, they will find the tools they need to become better, more polished writers.

Rationale

It's tiresome to teach against the grain of a textbook that you or your department adopted as the least objectionable choice—and students who have just paid one hundred bucks for it appreciate the irony even less. Thanks to the advent of course management systems and other technological platforms for delivering content, virtually any composition teacher with five or more years of experience is in a position to go “do it yourself” (DIY) and eschew using a textbook at all.

However, *Unnamed Publisher's* unique, innovative, and inexpensive options for overwriting, annotating, and customizing the materials in the *FWKHW* make it an

attractive option as a baseline text, so that DIY instructors don't have to start from scratch. Individual instructors can put as much or as little of an imprint on the text as they like. They will be able to use the reading and writing concepts and assignments provided in the *FWKHW* or embed their own tailored versions into the text, customizing the resulting product as they see fit. Writing program administrators could use the *FWKHW* as a baseline to support a department-wide custom text and perhaps even tailor some of the material and principles in [Chapter 1 "Writing to Think and Writing to Learn"](#), [Chapter 2 "Becoming a Critical Reader"](#), [Chapter 3 "Thinking through the Disciplines"](#), and [Chapter 4 "Joining the Conversation"](#) to support the professional development needs of their new faculty. Students will be able to move comfortably back and forth between their online (and possibly print) version of the *FWKHW* and whatever course management system(s) or technological platform(s) their instructor or program has designed for them.

Organization

The driving energy of [Chapter 1 "Writing to Think and Writing to Learn"](#), [Chapter 2 "Becoming a Critical Reader"](#), [Chapter 3 "Thinking through the Disciplines"](#), and [Chapter 4 "Joining the Conversation"](#) is the reciprocal relationship between thinking and writing. Students will use low-stakes writing to identify, develop, and activate the habits of mind they need for college-level thinking, then learn how to apply those thinking habits to the high-stakes writing they will be asked to do in academic, civic, and professional contexts. The first three chapters each focus on a different cluster of four related "habits of mind," while [Chapter 4 "Joining the Conversation"](#) focuses on the rhetorical demands of demonstrating those habits in the presence of others.

[Chapter 1 "Writing to Think and Writing to Learn"](#) activates the following habits of mind: **examining the status quo, posing productive questions, slowing down your thinking, and withholding judgment**. Students are exposed to a variety of ways to use writing as a gateway to deeper thinking, not so much as a stepping stone toward producing more audience-centered texts, but more as a preliminary, meditative strategy to generate further questions.

[Chapter 2 "Becoming a Critical Reader"](#) concentrates on **reading texts carefully and critically**, arguably the most crucial habit students must acquire and develop in order to succeed as college-level writers, readers, and thinkers. Building on [Chapter 1 "Writing to Think and Writing to Learn"](#)'s focus on asking questions about self, text, and context, students are also exposed to a variety of additional methods they can use to reflect productively about themselves as readers and about the texts they encounter and produce.

Chapter 3 "Thinking through the Disciplines" introduces students to another signature milestone of their intellectual development as undergraduates: **seeing and making connections across disciplines** and using disciplinary lenses as a method of **articulating multiple sides of an issue**. Students will be encouraged to think about how the disciplines they encounter in college, just as the occupations they will someday assume, are socially constructed and negotiated. They will come to understand that these disciplines have developed distinct conventions for writing, speaking, and making meaning that are under constant interrogation and revision.

Chapter 4 "Joining the Conversation" introduces students to what's involved when writing of the type produced in the first three chapters goes public and finds a medium and genre. Systematically students will learn the value of **thinking rhetorically** as they explore the stakes of writing for a variety of public purposes. The chapter will define the elements of the rhetorical triangle (voice, audience, and message), but it will also explore the relationships between those elements (tone, attitude, and reception) and the appeals activated by these elements and relationships (*logos, ethos, and pathos*).

The rest of *FWKHW* has the look and feel of a comprehensive handbook but with a few crucial differences. **Chapter 5 "Planning"** through **Chapter 20 "Grammar"** and **Chapter 21 "Appendix A: Writing for Nonnative English Speakers"** and **Chapter 22 "Appendix B: A Guide to Research and Documentation"** are consistently infused with the principles and habits of mind introduced in **Chapter 1 "Writing to Think and Writing to Learn"**, **Chapter 2 "Becoming a Critical Reader"**, **Chapter 3 "Thinking through the Disciplines"**, and **Chapter 4 "Joining the Conversation"**, with exercises designed to reinforce **becoming a reflective practitioner, writing to think and learn, thinking through the disciplines, and joining the conversation**.

From the table of contents, **Chapter 5 "Planning"**, **Chapter 6 "Drafting"**, **Chapter 7 "Researching"**, **Chapter 8 "Revising"**, **Chapter 9 "Designing"**, and **Chapter 10 "Publishing"** might look like an endorsement of the idea that writing follows a single, sequential process, but the experience of working through these chapters will show otherwise. Throughout **Chapter 5 "Planning"**, **Chapter 6 "Drafting"**, **Chapter 7 "Researching"**, **Chapter 8 "Revising"**, **Chapter 9 "Designing"**, and **Chapter 10 "Publishing"**, students are reminded that the very process of writing itself is under constant revision, depending on the shifting relationship between one's voice, audience, message, tone, attitude, and reception.

In **Chapter 11 "Academic Writing"**, **Chapter 12 "Professional Writing"**, **Chapter 13 "Writing on and for the Web"**, and **Chapter 14 "Public and Personal**

Writing", academic writing is reintroduced in the larger context of various other kinds of public, professional, and civic communication in an effort to dissolve some of the artificial distinctions between the kinds of rhetorical acts students will perform in college versus those they will perform elsewhere in life.

Even **Chapter 15 "Sentence Building"**, **Chapter 16 "Sentence Style"**, **Chapter 17 "Word Choice"**, **Chapter 18 "Punctuation"**, **Chapter 19 "Mechanics"**, and **Chapter 20 "Grammar"**, which look the part of a grammar, mechanics, and style manual, are written in a style that invites students into the process of carefully reviewing their work at the word, sentence, and paragraph level. The appendices serve to support two specific chapters: **Chapter 21 "Appendix A: Writing for Nonnative English Speakers"** follows up on **Chapter 20 "Grammar"**, with more of a focus on the most common challenges faced by students who are using English as a second language, while **Chapter 22 "Appendix B: A Guide to Research and Documentation"** expands the coverage of research and documentation introduced in **Chapter 7 "Researching"**.

There's one final note to make about organization: Yes, this book includes all the elements of a comprehensive handbook and organizes them in a logical sequence, meaning instructors can confidently use it as is, "off the shelf" (or "on the screen" as the case may be). But the real power of this book will doubtless derive from its unforeseen uses and from the myriad, customized versions of it that will emerge. The adoption of a **Unnamed Publisher** text like this one is the beginning, not the end of a process. Professionals, working every day to enhance the rhetorical awareness and cognitive skills of undergraduates, will doubtless write the next chapters of this book and its future.