

# College Writing Skills, Media Edition

Fifth Edition



John Langan



## CHECKLIST OF THE FOUR STEPS IN WRITING AN EFFECTIVE ESSAY

Use the checklist below to help you write and evaluate an essay. The numbers in parentheses refer to the pages that explain the skill in question.

### 1 Unity

- Clearly stated thesis in the introductory paragraph of your paper (5; 51–55; 63–69)
- All the supporting paragraphs together in backing up your thesis (140–142; 152–155)

### 2 Support

- Three separate supporting points for the thesis (9–10; 30; 44; 55–56)
- *Specific* evidence for each of the three supporting points (55–61; 108–111; 143–145)
- *Plenty of* specific evidence for each supporting point (60–61; 71–75; 156–158)

### 3 Coherence

- Method of organization (77–80; 94–96; 146–149; 158–160)
- Transitions and other connecting words (80–86; 96–100)
- Effective introduction, conclusion, and title (6–10; 87–94)

### 4 Sentence Skills

- Fragments eliminated (414–427)
- Run-ons eliminated (428–440)
- Correct verb forms (441–449; 456–459)
- Subject and verb agreement (450–455)
- Faulty modifiers and faulty parallelism eliminated (477–484)
- Faulty pronouns eliminated (460–471)
- Adjectives and adverbs used correctly (472–476)
- Capital letters used correctly (487–494)
- Punctuation marks where needed:
  - a Apostrophe (498–504)
  - b Quotation marks (505–511)
  - c Comma (512–521)
  - d Colon; Semicolon (522–523)
  - e Dash; Hyphen (523–525)
  - f Parentheses (524)
- Correct paper format (485–486)
- Needless words eliminated (112–114)
- Effective word choices (543–549)
- Possible spelling errors checked (527–542)
- Careless errors eliminated through editing and proofreading (17–18; 36–39; 121–124; 550–562)
- Sentences varied (115–121)
- ESL pointers (563–576)

GIFT OF THE ASIA FOUNDATION  
NOT FOR RESALE

QUÀ TẶNG CỦA QUỸ CHÂU Á  
KHÔNG ĐƯỢC BÁN LẠI

MCGRRAW-HILL EDUCATION  
FOR DONATION ONLY  
NOT FOR RESALE  
19ASA004



# College Writing Skills, Media Edition

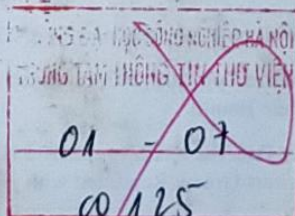
Fifth Edition

John Langan

Atlantic Cape Community College

GIFT OF THE ASIA FOUNDATION  
NOT FOR RE-SALE

QUÀ TẶNG CỦA QUỸ CHÂU Á  
KHÔNG ĐƯỢC BÁN LẠI



**Mc  
Graw  
Hill**

Boston Burr Ridge, IL Dubuque, IA Madison, WI New York  
San Francisco St. Louis Bangkok Bogotá Caracas Kuala Lumpur  
Lisbon London Madrid Mexico City Milan Montreal New Delhi  
Santiago Seoul Singapore Sydney Taipei Toronto



# McGraw-Hill Higher Education

A Division of The McGraw-Hill Companies

## COLLEGE WRITING SKILLS

Copyright ©2003, 2000, 1996, 1992, 1988, 1984 by The McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc. All rights reserved. Printed in the United States of America. Except as permitted under the United States Copyright Act of 1976, no part of this publication may be reproduced or distributed in any form or by any means, or stored in a database or retrieval system, without the prior written permission of the publisher.

This book is printed on acid-free paper.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 DOC/DOC 9 0 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0 9

ISBN 0-07-281892-1

Editorial director: *Steve DeBow*  
Executive sponsoring editor: *Sarah Touborg*  
Senior development editor: *Alexis P. Walker*  
Freelance editor: *Joshua M. Feldman*  
Senior marketing manager: *Davis S. Patterson*  
Project manager: *Jean R. Starr*  
Production supervisor: *Lori Kotters*  
Design coordinator: *Mary E. Kazak*  
Cover illustration: *Paul Turnbaugh*  
Interior design: *Rick Soldin*  
Supplement coordinator: *Marc Mattson*  
Compositor: *Electronic Publishing Services, Inc., TN*  
Typeface: *11/13 Times Roman*  
Printer: *R. R. Donnelley & Sons Company*

<http://www.mhhe.com>

## Credits and Acknowledgments

Donna Barron, "American Family Life: The Changing Picture," pp. 274–276, reprinted by permission.

Tom Bodett, "Wait Divisions," pp. 309–311, from *Small Comforts* by Tom Bodett, pp. 53–56. Copyright © 1987 by Tom Bodett. Reprinted by permission of Perseus Books Publishers, a member of Perseus Books, L.L.C.

Glenda Davis, "How to Do Well on a Job Interview," pp. 238–240, reprinted by permission.

Pete Hamill, "The Yellow Ribbon," pp. 202–203, reprinted by permission of International Creative Management. Copyright © Pete Hamill.

Molly Ivins, "Ban the Things, Ban Them All," pp. 329–331, from *Washington Post*, March 16, 1993, p. A17. © 1993, Washington Post Writers Group. Reprinted with permission.

Beth Johnson, "Lou's Place," pp. 183–186, reprinted by permission.

Andrew H. Malcolm, "Dad," pp. 219–221, from Andrew H. Malcolm, "About Men: Dad," *New York Times Magazine*, January 8, 1984, p. 58. Copyright © 1984 by The New York Times Company. Reprinted by permission.

Desmond Morris, "Why Do Most Mothers Cradle Their Babies in Their Left Arms?" pp. 256–257, from *Babywatching* by Desmond Morris, pp. 175–177. Copyright © 1991, 1992 by Desmond Morris. Reprinted by permission of Crown Publishers, Inc.

Marie Winn, "Television Addiction," pp. 293–295, from *The Plug-In Drug*, rev. ed., pp. 23–25. Copyright © 1977, 1985 by Marie Winn Miller. Published by Viking Penguin.



# About the Author

John Langan has taught reading and writing at Atlantic Cape Community College near Atlantic City, New Jersey, for over twenty years. The author of a popular series of college textbooks on both subjects, he enjoys the challenge of developing materials that teach skills in an especially clear and lively way. Before teaching, he earned advanced degrees in writing at Rutgers University and in reading at Glassboro State College. He also spent a year writing fiction that, he says, "is now at the back of a drawer waiting to be discovered and acclaimed posthumously." While in school, he supported himself by working as a truck driver, machinist, battery assembler, hospital attendant, and apple packer. He now lives with his wife, Judith Nadell, near Philadelphia. Among his everyday pleasures are running, working on his Macintosh computer, and watching Philadelphia sports teams on TV. He also loves to read: newspapers at breakfast, magazines at lunch, and a chapter or two of a recent book ("preferably an autobiography") at night.



# Contents

To the Instructor

vii

## Part One: Essay Writing

1

### 1 An Introduction to Writing

3

Point and Support

4

Structure of the Traditional Essay

6

Benefits of Writing the Traditional Essay

12

Writing as a Skill

12

Writing as a Process of Discovery

13

Writing a Journal

14

Using a Computer

15

Review Activities

18

Using This Text

20

### 2 The Writing Process

23

Prewriting

23

Writing a First Draft

32

Revision

34

Editing

36

Review Activities

39

### 3 The First and Second Steps in Essay Writing

51

Step 1: Begin with a Point, or Thesis

51

Step 2: Support the Thesis with Specific Evidence

55

Practice in Advancing and Supporting a Thesis

61

### 4 The Third Step in Essay Writing

77

Step 3: Organize and Connect the Specific Evidence

77

Introductions, Conclusions, and Titles

87



|   |         |
|---|---------|
| Practice in Organizing and Connecting Specific Evidence | 94      |
| 5 The Fourth Step in Essay Writing                      | 103     |
| Revising Sentences                                      | 103     |
| Editing Sentences                                       | 121     |
| Practice in Revising Sentences                          | 124     |
| 6 Four Bases for Revising Essays                        | 139     |
| Base 1: Unity   | 140     |
| Base 2: Support   | 143     |
| Base 3: Coherence                                       | 146     |
| Base 4: Sentence Skills                                 | 149     |
| Practice in Using the Four Bases                        | 152     |
| <br>Part Two: Patterns of Essay Development             | <br>165 |
| 7 Introduction to Essay Development                     | 167     |
| 8 Description   | 175     |
| 9 Narration   | 195     |
| 10 Examples   | 211     |
| 11 Process  | 231     |
| 12 Cause and Effect                                     | 249     |
| 13 Comparison and Contrast                              | 265     |
| 14 Definition   | 285     |
| 15 Division and Classification                          | 303     |
| 16 Argumentation  | 319     |
| <br>Part Three: Special Skills                          | <br>339 |
| 17 Taking Essay Exams                                   | 341     |
| 18 Writing a Summary                                    | 349     |
| 19 Writing a Report                                     | 359     |
| 20 Writing a Résumé and Job Application Letter          | 364     |
| 21 Using the Library and the Internet                   | 370     |
| 22 Writing a Research Paper                             | 384     |



|   |            |
|---|------------|
| <b>Part Four: Handbook of Sentence Skills</b> | <b>407</b> |
| <b>Grammar</b>                                |            |
| 23 Subjects and Verbs                         | 409        |
| 24 Fragments                                  | 414        |
| 25 Run-Ons                                    | 428        |
| 26 Regular and Irregular Verbs                | 441        |
| 27 Subject-Verb Agreement                     | 450        |
| 28 Additional Information about Verbs         | 456        |
| 29 Pronoun Agreement and Reference            | 460        |
| 30 Pronoun Types                              | 466        |
| 31 Adjectives and Adverbs                     | 472        |
| 32 Misplaced Modifiers                        | 477        |
| 33 Dangling Modifiers                         | 480        |
| <b>Mechanics</b>                              |            |
| 34 Manuscript Form                            | 485        |
| 35 Capital Letters                            | 487        |
| 36 Numbers and Abbreviations                  | 495        |
| <b>Punctuation</b>                            |            |
| 37 Apostrophe                                 | 498        |
| 38 Quotation Marks                            | 505        |
| 39 Comma                                      | 512        |
| 40 Other Punctuation Marks                    | 522        |
| <b>Word Use</b>                               |            |
| 41 Spelling Improvement                       | 527        |
| 42 Commonly Confused Words                    | 532        |
| 43 Effective Word Choice                      | 543        |
| 44 Editing Tests                              | 550        |
| 45 ESL Pointers                               | 563        |
| <b>Index</b>                                  | <b>577</b> |