

Developing Critical Reading Skills

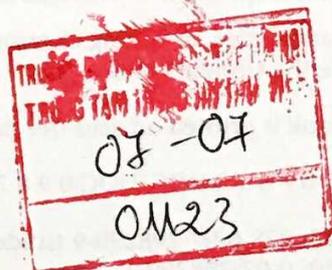
Seventh Edition

Deanne
Spears

Developing Critical Reading Skills

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Deanne Spears
City College of San Francisco



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PREFACE

Developing Critical Reading Skills proceeds from the assumption that good reading and clear thinking go hand in hand. For this reason, the text emphasizes practice in sustained, analytical reading. Because learning to read analytically requires concentration and an intense engagement with the text, the text emphasizes the importance of reading with a pencil in one's hand and deliberately omits practice in speed techniques. Students first work with high-quality short passages before moving on to more substantive pieces of greater complexity. The readings explore diverse subjects: anthropology, sports, human behavior, politics, social policy, education, ethics, autobiography, personal reminiscence, the minority and immigrant experience, humor, satire, and so forth. The passages also reflect diverse writing styles, thereby giving students the experience of reading high-level prose by its best practitioners.

This book succeeds if students become more self-assured about their reading and if they recognize that reading well—with confidence, fluency, and enjoyment—is a significant part of their emotional and academic lives. My hope is that students will feel genuine excitement when they encounter a writer who shows them a new way of looking at their lives and at the world. It is this feeling—or inspiration, perhaps, for lack of a better word—that I hope to impart.

Now in its Seventh Edition, the text continues to evolve in response to instructors' concerns, to our students' needs, and to the changing world. The political upheavals resulting from the 2001 terrorist attacks and the shifting political and social landscape in the United States have made it even more imperative for us to be an educated populace, able to read with accuracy and skilled in detecting manipulation, emotional appeals, bias, and propaganda. These events have also made it more important than ever to acquire knowledge about other cultures, particularly about those cultures that have different worldviews and whose members, thus, behave in seemingly incomprehensible ways. Perhaps this book can do a small part to help students—indeed, all of us—to be better thinkers and better citizens, able to participate fully in the democratic process.