
Preface to the Third Edition

Benefiting from suggestions by professors and students who used the first and second editions of my book, I have added 33 new poems, ten new short stories, four new essays, and one new play. I have also added a new chapter on the essay form of literature. These new works add to the existing diversity of selections in that they are drawn from South Asia, Southeast Asia, the Middle East, Europe, and North and Latin America.

Among the poems new to this edition, two especially important ones are Michael Lassell's stunning "How to Watch Your Brother Die" and Muhammad Iqbal's "The Story of Adam." Lassell's poem can be used as a crash course to underscore the necessity of pluralism and acceptance of diversity. Iqbal's poem emphasizes humanity's ability to transform potential tragedy into triumph and the collective human responsibility for the state of the world. Both poems have special relevance to this book's thematic emphasis on reconciliation and peace.

Added to the drama chapter is the British playwright Caryl Churchill's very short play *Seven Jewish Children: A Play for Gaza*. Through historical allusions, this play traces the sources of the tragic conflict between Israel and Palestine and even hints at possible solutions.

As for the new Chapter Nine on the essay, the following brief list of works will give you an idea:

1. Albert Camus' essay "Between Hell and Reason: Thoughts on the Defining Moment of the Twentieth Century." He wrote this essay when the U.S. dropped the atomic bomb on Hiroshima. For world peace, this essay is even more relevant today than it was when he wrote it. Equally important are his "Letters to a German Friend" that he wrote clandestinely during the Nazis' occupation of France in the Second World War. Camus' "Letters" are discussed in that context.
2. Albert Camus' essay "The Myth of Sisyphus" with its theme of ways to overcome seemingly impossible odds in the worst of circumstances and retain one's dignity and humanity.
3. Discussion of Bertrand Russell's essay "A Free Man's Worship." Russell's famous essay is a wise and deeply felt meditation on human crises and ways to cope with them.
4. Discussion of Edward Said's book *Orientalism* – one of the most important books of the twentieth century – is now added to his essay "Reflections on Exile." Said's work has the potential to promote acceptance of differences and diversity to achieve personal as well as global peace.

New to this edition is the book's subtitle: "In search of reconciliation and peace." It clarifies the nature of most of this book's literary selections. It, moreover, reveals my personal emphasis to make this book much more than just another textbook. The subtitle is also meant to point out that this book is not limited to students' use; it is equally relevant to the general reader who is interested in outstanding world literature with themes of reconciliation and peace.

Readers who have adequate mastery of the elements of literature, such as topics and themes, characters, plot, and style, covered in Part One, can use those chapters on an as-needed basis and go directly to the outstanding literary works and insightful essays on them. Regretfully, several literary works had to be left out because of their excessive permissions cost, but links are provided for easy access to them.

I am confident the readers of this new edition will find in it a life-long companion in their search for enjoyment of literature that emphasizes reconciliation, peace, and equity.

Preface for Students

I have been collecting my students' outstanding essays over the past thirty years. They are a valued treasure because they have helped me in my teaching and my students in their learning process. To those students whose writing appears in this book or on the website related to this book, I offer warm thanks for becoming allies in this worthy cause by sharing the fruits of your labor with fellow students. For me there is an added satisfaction: whenever I come across your writing, I will have the pleasure of remembering our time together when we tried to rescue and cherish a few moments from the blur of the stream of hours – something that great literature enables us to do. The literature and movie selections that you contributed to the book strengthen the view that ultimately and ideally, reading and writing courses are just an attractive excuse to sharpen our intellect and nurture our hunger for empathy, thereby making us better human beings.

Regretfully, space constraints permit inclusion of only a limited number of students' essays in the book. However, those essays that could not be included in the book appear on the website that is linked to this book. All students can benefit from seeing how your peers have crafted outstanding papers. After reading a student's essay on a literary work or a movie, you may wish to offer your own interpretation of the work and thus build on your peers' work in a unique way. In writing essays, finding a decent topic is quite often the problem. It can be solved by the numerous sample essays of your peers.

Besides the student authors featured in this book, I will remember others for your articulate participation in class discussions. Still others I will remember for your exemplary classroom conduct and a caring attitude in making this learning and teaching enterprise a rewarding experience for all participants. Such students more than make up for the inevitable rigors and challenges inherent in the teaching profession.

There are very few relationships that are as enduring and special as the one between teachers and students. Invoking here the help of Shakespeare, let me assure you that

When to the sessions of sweet silent thought
I summon up remembrance of things past,

you will figure prominently among them.

Abdul Jabbar
San Francisco
July, 2013

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I would also like to thank my students who have written many of the book’s sample essays. Their names appear throughout the book. Here they are listed in alphabetical order: Caroline Alcantara, Talib Ali, Katherine Allen, Adrienne Anderson, Arienne Aramchikova, Jovi Bondoc, Paul Brandt, Nancy Brill, Victoria Candau, Stella Carey, John Coetzee, Cody Corbett, Larry Devich, Andrea Deyzel, Eithne Doorly, Julie Doyle, Lisa Embry, Allan Fisher, Davina Fok, Laura Franklin, Samantha Gibson, Nick Glasser, Margaret Ghuman, Dana Gong, Phil Haggerty, Greg Hamaguchi, Jennifer Hammer, Katherine Hajar, Serena Hoe, Dennis Johnson, Navneet Kaur, Erin Kehoe, Andrew Keller, Vincent Largo, Thom Lee, Maxwell Lynch, Mariana Maguire, Ron Matestic, Mara McCain, Sydney McIver, Jack Murray, Carolyn Nash, Aaron Nathan, Jeff Neilson, Nicky Newton, Joseph Nugent, Lisa Palmer, Veena Parekh, Ineca Quiteno, Noah Reinhertz, Laurian Rhodes, Jarrod Roland, Scott Roland, Hiromi Ortega Roque, Renee Rose-Perry, Joanne Rotella, Arjuna Sayyed, Kirstin Schneider, Janey Skinner, Serrana Smith-Kassamali, Martin Spence, John Starks, Ayana Summers, Melanie Talienian, Jeffery Tarbell, Kyle Taylor, Victor Rivas Umana, Kristen Vandling, Devin White, Indigo Wilmann, and Kathleen Wong. To keep the cost affordable, some of the students’ essays are placed on my website.

I also acknowledge my indebtedness to several other people who have helped me in the completion of this book:

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My daughter Huriya Jabbar, and Joshua Roebke for suggesting inclusion of feminist theories in the study of fiction and for their help with proofreading. Thanks to Huriya also for helping me with the index.

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My son Talib and my daughter Iram for looking at the book from students' perspectives to give me valuable feedback. Thanks to Iram also for helping me with the index.

To Lisa Moore and Lisa Pinto, editors, McGraw Hill, I am thankful for their valuable suggestions and for obtaining various professors' reviews of my book.

For their gentle coercion to make me send my manuscript out for publication, thanks are due, in alphabetical order, to Javed Akhtar, Ilyas Anwar, Julia Bergman, Tariq Bukhari, Prof. Hamid Iqbal Butt, Javed Iqbal Butt, Prof. Zafar Iqbal Butt, Prof. Thalia Dorwick, Mukhtar Hai, Mrs. M. B. Hassan, Rubena Ilyas, Fahad Javed, Hina Javed, Nadia Javed, Nighat Javed, Dr. Rizwan Khan, M.D., Shahram Khan, Farooq Malik, Dr. Tariq Mahmood Malik, M.D., George McCown, Karen McCown, Greg Mortenson, co-founder of Central Asia Institute, Munaf Sattar, and Prof. Javaid Sayed.

For the many ways in which they pushed me to complete the book, specifically, when they started asking about the health of my book rather than my own health and well-being, I am indebted to my sisters Azra Bashir, Safoora Iqbal, Ghania Isad, Atika Yusuf, Khalida Sajid, Prof. Zakia Isad, and many other members of my immediate and extended family and friends.

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For granting permission to reproduce copyrighted material, I am indebted to Waseem Barelvi, who allowed me to translate into English and include in my book his poem "The Artist." Thanks are also due to the publishers/copyright holders listed at the end of this book.

All who have helped me in various ways to make this book possible have earned my gratitude. In these acknowledgements, if I unintentionally left out any name, my apologies.

Reviews

Excerpts from pre-publication reviews of Abdul Jabbar's book obtained anonymously by McGraw Hill Publishers

1. "This text would be perfect for our English Comp. II classes. I love the idea of having step-by-step instructions about how to interpret literature and the clear instruction about how to structure a literary analysis or explication (p. 3 of the proposal). Also I love the idea of the text's inclusion of literature from non-Western writers and the inclusion of a section on film. This text follows the exact structure of our Comp. II classes, so our students could read the text from start to finish and be able to enter literature courses with confidence."

"The first few paragraphs of the introduction are wonderful for our students because they need a quick justification for their reading or they won't continue the reading assignment. The second paragraph of the introduction offers them a wonderful justification by listing the three enrichments that the text should provide them. I particularly like #1 -- 'showing ways to cope with dilemmas of human existence.' Also, I think that the preview of the book's contents will aid the students in seeing a quick summary of what the text includes."

"I love the explanation that the chapter provides about theme. The statement that "all other features, including style, become incidental to theme" is wonderful. Often, texts refer to theme as just another literary element. Also, the various sections relating to the numerous ways one can understand and write about literature are helpful. This chapter covers all of the methods that I normally teach my students plus methods that I sometimes forget to explain to them. I particularly love the section on explicit *versus* implied themes."

"The sample essays are great. They are much better than the sample essays that I have seen in most introduction to literature texts."

"This is a text that can replace our stacks of notes and supplementary materials that we add to our current literature anthology text. Our students can read this text cover to cover in one semester and be well-prepared for any discussion of literature or any situation where writing about literature is required."

"I would love to have this text in class because it contains instructions that are well-stated, clear, and insightful. This author's explanations seem effortless, yet they convey the exact idea about interpreting and writing about literature that I attempt to provide to my students. This text is much better than my current text."

2. "The author gives many examples of literary interpretation and then does provide a very careful and detailed listing and explanation of the steps necessary to write an effective interpretation. Students will feel confident in their ability to write an interpretive essay because they have the steps readily available to them."

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“The sample essays are a great tool for students to use. It is particularly helpful for them to know that these are student written.”

3. “I am most impressed by the promise of meeting students’ needs in their struggle to move from summarizing to discussing style and technique.”

“The step-by-step explanation is the basis for the success of this text. Students can profit from such instruction.”

“The author not only gives clear instructions, but he does so in a manner that will encourage students to express their own ideas. Students often fear that their ideas about literature are not valid. This author removes that fear by showing them papers written by students like themselves and by leading them through the thinking and analyzing process.”

“The guidelines throughout the book, replete with students’ essays, are quite clear and helpful and will, I think, encourage students to investigate the various types of literature and come to their own conclusions.”

“The tone is quite down-to-earth and engaging. I believe students will appreciate that. There are a few learned words that they won’t know; however, that will simply serve to stretch their vocabularies a bit.”

“I find the student essays quite interesting. Some demonstrate a level of abstract thinking that will be most beneficial to my students.”

“The selections in this section are extremely well chosen for college freshmen. I believe these selections will capture their interest, expand their vocabulary and jump-start their imagination.”

“I particularly like the discussion concerning character analysis. Students need to know what questions to ask. They need to know why they like or dislike a character -- not just that they do. I particularly like the discussion on page 200 that show students how to become involved in a piece of literature. In the first section, I like that you have an example of a plot summary side by side with analytic and interpretive comments.”

4. “I currently use two texts in my introduction to literature course. . . . I considered the following texts . . . (I was also serving on a textbook selection committee at that time, which exposed me to many offerings.)

Literature: Reading, Writing, and Reacting (Kirszner/Mandel)

Bedford Introduction to Literature (Meyer)

Literature: An Introduction to Reading and Writing (Roberts/Jacobs)

Understanding Literature (Kalaidjian)

Literature (XJ Kennedy/Gioia)

[*Reading and Writing with Multicultural Literature*] is the most original and creative literature textbook I have ever seen. For years I have supplemented anthologies with works like Griffith’s *Writing Essays About Literature*, which proves a cumbersome and expensive practice. Now, with [*Reading and Writing with Multicultural Literature*] I can teach literature with one comprehensive, pedagogically sound text.”

- A. [*Reading and Writing with Multicultural Literature*] “literally walks students through the process of thinking and writing about literature.”
- B. “Moreover, it is full of wonderful student writing samples: my students will literally be able to see that thinking and writing about literature is within their grasp.”
- C. “Additionally, the readings are highly original for an introduction to literature text and I think that my students will enjoy them. Demographically, Arabs comprise part of my ethnically diverse classroom and they will appreciate the inclusion of Middle Eastern authors.”
- D. “[This text] would work well at a two-year or four-year institution because it is general enough for the former but comprehensive enough for the latter.”

“[*Reading and Writing with Multicultural Literature*] is in almost every way superior to *Making Literature Matter* [the text that I am now using]. *Reading and Writing*, through its methodical, theme-based approach, should demonstrate textual relevancy for students because they will discover facets of a given work through/by writing about it. As the author notes, they will learn ‘how to treat literature as an enjoyable mind-expanding experience rather than an unpleasant hurdle to cross,’ I, like the author, see writing as a discovery tool integral to thinking. This is why I am especially excited about the material on journaling in *Reading and Writing with Multicultural Literature*.”

“The section entitled “Structured and In-Depth Journal Entries” is wonderful -- very direct, informative language used, and section provides practical advice like the need for returning to the text being analyzed and finding supporting assertions. . . . The integration of readings with journal responses strikes me as a highly original strategy.”

“The material on timed/self-testing responses (158) is very useful -- many anthologies give but a perfunctory – or no – attention to this critical aspect of responding to literature.”

“The chapter contains a wonderful diversity of readings.”

“Under “Structure and Organization” a wonderful statement asserted on how ‘support for the thesis comes primarily from relevant details from the work itself’ (254).”

“Material on revision is practical and rooted in solid tenets of composition.” (261)

“Step by step instructions” are by far the best rubric I have ever seen for writing a critical essay -- brilliant, succinct, essential, and clear. The cost of the text is worth [this]Chapter alone.”

“I would describe [*Reading and Writing With Multicultural literature*] as a brilliant, innovative work that truly makes a textual apparatus an all-in-one pedagogical asset. The text’s focus on writing as a discovery tool is its greatest quality, followed by the diversity and quantity of readings. Clearly the text deserves a grade of ‘A’. My current text [*Making Literature Matter*] would, relative to [*Reading and Writing*], earn a ‘C.’”

“I will wholeheartedly adopt [*Reading and Writing with Multicultural Literature*] because I believe it can, through writing, help students see the relevance of literature to their lives. Our department just selected Kirszner and Mandell’s intro to lit. text but when the review committee -- of which I am a

member -- meets again I will most certainly lobby for *Reading and Writing*. I would adopt the text as it is, regardless of whether you add the suggested readings in section III or not.”

5. “After reading the proposal and the first five chapters, . . . I am, in general, impressed. It is very clear that the author is an experienced teacher who understands writing students and the challenges they face when they write about literature. The book’s strengths are obvious:

- The clear explanation of the differences between topic, theme, and thesis. (Excellent!)
- The flexibility of choice in the literature.
- The diversity of the pieces.
- The student sample essays.
- The author’s sample essays.
- The careful, step-by-step instruction on writing the literary analysis. (Excellent).”
- “I would consider adopting [*Reading and Writing With Multicultural Literature*] because of the explanation of the differences between topic, theme, and thesis; the discussion on generating and supporting topic and thesis statements; the instructions on writing a literary analysis; and the text’s multi-cultural focus.”
- “I have never seen this level of instructional specificity in an introductory text before.”

Reviews by professors who have used this book

As Chair of the English Department I am very involved with curriculum choices for our courses. Most of the texts used in our literature course English I B are limited to the literary canon, but Dr. Abdul Jabbar’s book brings in multiple perspectives for a more diverse literature for students. His textbook framework is very solid. The book has a wonderful variety of student writings that he has collected over the years. Those essays can be used as examples for students to learn from in their reading and writing development. I highly recommend the book and if I were teaching English I B I would certainly use it. It is the kind of textbook that should be showing up on bookshelves in colleges all over the country.

Jessica Brown
Chair, English Department
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I have used *Reading and Writing with Multicultural Literature* for several semesters and have always been pleased with the way students are able to apply Dr. Jabbar’s guidelines and suggestions. It puts them in touch very quickly with the essence of literature and with the key methods of literary analysis and criticism.

This excellent textbook gives students clear step-by-step directions to guide them in reading, interpreting, explicating, and analyzing literary texts. It has separate chapters on formal and informal modes of writing about literature and film, both clearly explained and amply illustrated with sample

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papers by students. I am especially happy that the discovery and expression of theme receive special attention and in-depth treatment, concepts which are reinforced throughout the book.

There is also a surprising chapter covering playful approaches to writing about literature. This chapter helps students realize that sometimes the best way to gain a deeper understanding of a serious work is to have fun with it.

Equally important are Dr. Jabbar's instructions aimed at helping students improve their own writing style, going beyond the bare basics of composition and into the use of more sophisticated devices such as isocolon, anaphora, and chiasmus—devices that most students have never heard of. When students are introduced to these devices, I have found that they are often eager to try them in their writing, which in turn sparks their enthusiasm for developing their thinking and feeling about what they have read.

Most important of all, perhaps, is the book's emphasis on multicultural literature, giving students a vital awareness of the diversity of subject and approach across many cultures, while simultaneously showing that all literary works share a common commitment to rendering human experience in all its conflicts and contrasts, exploring universal emotions, such as anger, fear, defeat, and despair, balanced by courage, hope, reconciliation, joy, love, and celebration.

I agree with the McGraw-Hill reviewers who praised Dr. Jabbar's step-by-step instructions as the "best rubric" they had seen for writing a critical essay, adding that the book's "down-to-earth tone" will certainly appeal to students and engage their interest.

H. Brown Miller
Professor of English
City College of San Francisco

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I have been using Prof. Abdul Jabbar's book *Reading and Writing with Multicultural Literature* in my university-level reading and writing class. The book is comprehensive in its scope, introducing students to all forms of literature in a clear and inviting style. Students love the short fiction segment, the stories and the essay discussions on them. The discussion of Albert Camus' *The Stranger* is very helpful to introduce students to challenging modern forms of fiction.

For example, inspired by Chapter Eleven of Dr. Jabbar's book, I assigned "Apotheosis" as an essay topic on the two novels, that is, *The Stranger* and my own just published novel *Soul on the Run*. From the outcome of this assignment, I can say that the book helps shape the course without intruding.

I fully agree with the McGraw Hill reviewer's following comment on the quality and variety of literary selections: "The selections . . . are extremely well chosen for college freshmen. I believe these selections will capture their interest, expand their vocabulary and jump-start their imaginations."

Marc Dulman
Professor of English
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5.0 out of 5 stars **Posted on Amazon website**

Excellent choice for literature classes, July 22, 2010

By Louise Nayer (San Francisco, CA)

This review is from: *Reading and Writing with Multicultural Literature Vol. I & II* (Perfect Paperback)

I used Reading and Writing with Multicultural Literature in my English 1B (transfer level literature class) at City College of San Francisco. The amazing variety of works (Chitra Divakaruni, Maya Angelou, Albert Camus, Sherman Alexie, Elizabeth Bishop, Sylvia Plath, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Rabindranath Tagore, Leslie Silko, Saadat Manto, Li-Po, E. M. Forster, Ernest Gaines, Kyalo Mativo, Waseem Barelvi, Faiz Ahmed Faiz, Alifa Rifaat, Lu Hsun, Langston Hughes), to name a few, illustrate the breadth of the multicultural literature that is used--not just one or two works thrown in--but works from a multiplicity of cultures.

But it is not just the choice of stories/poems/plays which creates such an astounding book, but the way students are led, step by step, to understand how to read and love literature. From distinguishing topic from theme, learning how to write an interpretive essay and later a research-based essay, students are calmly led through the process. Excellent exercises and ideas for journal entries help students understand literature in terms of structure and content. Students learn to clearly organize their papers and retain a passion for literature. Creative and even humorous ways of looking at these works keep the classroom lively and interesting. Other media is included (movies, on line sites) which enrich the classroom experience. Most importantly, students who are exposed to literature from many cultures become more empathetic citizens of the world.

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* * *

Abdul Jabbar's new text, *Reading and Writing with Multicultural Literature*, is an outstanding contribution to the study of literature in college classes. First, it contains a wide variety of readings by authors that have not traditionally been part of the literary canon, such as Saadat Hansan Manto and Rabindranath Tagore. Yet it also contains the full range of authors with whom we are familiar, such as William Faulkner, E.M. Forster, and Kate Chopin. The text is rich in student writing which Dr. Jabbar has collected in his years of teaching literature at City College of San Francisco. Using student examples, plus his own essays on the various elements of literature, Dr. Jabbar leads students to write excellent literary analyses of the works they are reading. I highly recommend this text for college literature classes.

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Introduction

Not just another textbook

It is important to understand the kind of book it is because there are many books in the market that sound like my book but are very different. My book is not a typical anthology of literature, even though it has many selections from world literature. It is primarily a companion and guide that uses literary selections to elucidate relevant principles and teach the crafts of reading and writing. Moreover, as the book's subtitle indicates, its literary selections were made with an eye on their potential to promote reconciliation and peace. To keep the book's cost affordable for students, only outstanding literary works are included, supplemented by links to other great works that could not become a part of my book.

This book is the result of my nearly forty years' experience of teaching literary studies and writing at the college level. It is designed for use in literature, composition, and humanities courses from freshman through senior years. It is meant for both English majors and the general reader and makes writing and literary studies an enjoyable, uplifting experience rather than an unpleasant hurdle to cross.

Teaching philosophy

The book reflects my teaching philosophy that students' college years should be a memorable time during which they pick up life-long learning skills of critical thinking, reasoning, analysis, and enjoyment of literature. In the process, they should acquire a reasonable mastery of language resources to make their own expression of ideas engaging, thus transforming themselves from mere admirers to practitioners of good writing.

Students need not experience fear and confusion in their introduction to literary studies. Inadequate grasp of necessary skills causes this problem. A large number of students are fearful of taking composition and literature classes because they are often unsure of what is expected of them, especially when they write about literary works. In situations when they know what is expected of them, they do not feel they have the necessary skills to complete their assignments. When asked to write an analysis or interpretation, many of them write little more than a summary or paraphrase. Often they have a very vague understanding of the concept of style and how it shapes literary creations and their own writing.

Solutions to typical problems

To solve these problems, I have provided step-by-step instructions that guide students systematically through the process of reading and writing. Sample essays, many of them written by students, demonstrate how relevant assignments are to be completed. Using this book, students can also learn from their peers' accomplishments. I have addressed the very basic as well as the more sophisticated needs of students. With these guidelines, students can respond to great works with confidence, depth, and self-enrichment.

Professors who teach literature and composition classes invariably notice a wide divergence in the levels of preparation among their students. Some students need repetition of instruction in certain areas,

whereas those with a higher level of preparation tend to be bored with that repetition. In addressing the needs of those at the bottom, we sometimes end up neglecting those who are looking for more challenging assignments. While accommodating all levels, this book allows relatively advanced students to skip over the information that they do not need. At the same time, help with basic skills is also included for less advanced students. Thus the book frees professors of the onerous and uninspiring burden of repetition of basic concepts without overlooking the needs of less advanced students. Moreover, since well-known works have been chosen to illustrate essential principles of reading and writing, professors may appreciate this putting together of a practical and interesting instructional resource, which they can supplement with choices of their own. The assignments of this book honor that independence of choice.

Three enrichments

This book is guided by the belief that study of literature should bring about at least three enrichments:

- A wealth of enduring ideas and fresh insights celebrating life and showing ways to cope with dilemmas of human existence.
- Participation in the pains and pleasures of humanity to develop empathy and openness.
- Continuous improvement in reading and writing skills.

To achieve these goals, the book's literary selections are drawn from outstanding international literary works. Both the works and their interpretations have a humanistic emphasis. They affirm the hope that study of literature can enhance our pleasures, mitigate our suffering, raise our consciousness, and develop our ability to empathize, in short, make us better human beings. Those points of emphasis make my book unusual.

Teaching methodology

The book's teaching approach consists of five components:

1. Necessary background information to explain various literary forms
2. Clearly worded assignments
3. Step-by-step instructions on how to complete the assignments
4. Sample essays (some of them by students), showing how the assignments are actually completed
5. Exercises to determine mastery of covered material and to suggest topics for further study.

The book's organization

The book is divided into three parts:

1. Part One introduces the elements of literature – topics, themes, character, plot, and style.
2. Part Two offers general reading and writing advice (with instructions and samples) that apply to all major forms of literature. Knowledge of concepts learned in Part One is here applied to informal as well as formal literary interpretation.

3. Part Three consists of study by genre, with chapters on the essay form of nonfiction, short story, novel, drama, poetry, and film, with a concluding chapter on “Playful Responses to Literature.” A few works for further study are included at the end of the poetry and short story chapters.

Multi-purpose usefulness of the book

1. As a writing text

To meet its major goal as a writing text, the book offers detailed instructions, explanations of key concepts and principles, clearly worded assignments, and their sample completions. It should be noted that the book’s usefulness as a writing text extends beyond purely literature-based writing. Even though most of the sample essays of this book are based on imaginative literature and film, they can serve as samples for all forms of expository writing, since the principles of organization, creating a thesis, and crafting effective topic sentences always remain the same. The only notable difference between literature-based and other expository writing is that in the former, the support for the essay’s thesis comes from the literary work itself. In the latter, the source of support is the writer’s knowledge and experiences. Interpretation is literature-based; argumentation, ordinarily, is experience-based.

2. As a reading text

This book can also be used with equal benefit in a reading course. Since we must first understand literary works before we can write about them, the act of interpretation is an ideal synthesis of reading and writing. To use this book as a reading text, simply change the word “write” to “discuss” in all of the writing assignments. Selected poems and short stories as well as expository and critical essays written on them make this book a rich reading anthology as well.

3. As a film appreciation tool

The practice of interpretation taught in this book will also enhance the ability of film appreciation. To interpret movies, we need to be aware of their surface *versus* suggested meanings. The book provides ample guidance to teach that skill.

4. As a means to enhance speech communication

A bonus aspect of this book is its potential for speech improvement. Like good writing, good speeches also make optimum use of language resources. The concluding part of the chapter on style introduces a method whereby students can broaden their range of written expression and make it engaging. The same strategy may be used to make speech communication vibrant.

Reviews of the book

The pre-publication reviews by McGraw Hill’s professional reviewers as well as reviews by professors who have used my book have been extremely positive. Here are just a few excerpts from McGraw Hill’s reviewers. Keep in mind that these reviewers don’t know the author’s identity, and the author doesn’t know who they are other than the fact that they are professional reviewers engaged by the publisher to gauge the value of a book to make their publishing decision. Publishers often withhold the reviewers’ identity even after the publication of a book.

Excerpts from McGraw Hill’s professional reviewers

“The most original and creative literature textbook I have ever seen”

“I am most impressed by the promise of meeting students’ needs in their struggle to move from summarizing to discussing style and technique.”

“The tone is down-to-earth and engaging. I believe students will appreciate that.”

“Step by step instructions are by far the best rubric I have ever seen for writing a critical essay – brilliant, succinct, essential, and clear.”

“The selections in this section are extremely well chosen for college freshmen. I believe these selections will capture their interest, expand their vocabulary and jump-start their imagination.”

“. . . a brilliant, innovative work that truly makes a textual apparatus an all-in-one pedagogical asset. The text’s focus on writing as a discovery tool is its greatest quality, followed by the diversity and quantity of readings.”

“I have never seen this level of instructional specificity in an introductory text before.”

In the end, I am very happy to announce that Barnes and Noble have selected my book for digitizing. It is an exciting development, and I can hardly wait for that to happen. I hope that readers will accept my book as a passport to the fascinating world of literary studies and to becoming better readers, better writers, and a better human beings.

Preview of the Book’s Contents

Ideally the chapters of this book should be read sequentially. However, various parts of the book can also be read on an as-needed basis. The following preview of the book would help students focus on areas in which they need more guidance.

Learning to distinguish between topic and theme, between summarizing and theme formulation, between mere re-telling versus analyzing (Chapter One).

Understanding and analyzing conventions relating to character (Chapter Two).

Understanding and analyzing conventions relating to plot (Chapter Three).

Understanding definitions and conventions relating to style, assessing an author’s style and connecting it with themes in a literary work, and transferring some of the graces and power of literary style to their own writing (Chapter Four).

Reading and writing advice applicable to all genres (Chapter Five).

Distinctive features of various literary genres and informal, journal-like responses to them (Chapter Six).

Formal interpretation (Chapter Seven).

Revising (Chapter Eight).

Study by specific genre: essays, short stories, novels, drama, poetry, and film (Chapters Nine through Fourteen).

Humorous Literature and Playful Responses to Serious Literature (Chapter Fifteen).

