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FOREWORD

Highly motivating prewriting strategies here provide students an introduction to every type of composition: narration, exposition, sensory description and persuasion. Over many years, Joel Littauer has observed the greatest pitfalls, the areas of most frequent error, in English composition. This volume distills these observations in concise, effective, trouble-shooting lessons for high school through adult students, for both English As A Second Language and native English speakers.

Lessons such as The Autobiographical Essay, The Controversial Essay and Write A Letter Home provide just the practice students need to score well on standardized tests. The transparencies supply a convenient and effective means of reinforcing instruction. Problems are stated, defined, illustrated, and procedures are offered to correct them. For those needing reinforcement in grammar, there are transparencies on teaching parts of speech, subjects and predicates, agreement of subject and verb, and sentence combining.

Good material for writing is scarcely ever found in textbooks, but is indeed everywhere around us. The author tells us how and where to find it: in newspapers and magazines, in the entire school curriculum, even unexpectedly in disciplines such as music and mathematics. He suggests ways for students to "brainstorm," to generate ideas within the group, and work toward the goal of the individual creating and ultimately editing his or her own writing.

The instructor leads the way, but in a real sense students take responsibility for themselves as well as criticize each other's material. It is a hands-on, workshop atmosphere: peer-editing leading to self-editing. Involvement, enthusiasm and fun are the spark plugs; improved output is the result for those students fortunate enough to have found themselves in this mentor English/ESL teacher's classroom.

The writing process found in this new edition, Appendix A, is much admired and nationally recognized. Overall, it validates and summarizes the foregoing material, and should prove useful.

There is a wealth of original thinking in these pages. The strategies offered are practical and useful, and the transparencies make this material eminently accessible.

Joan Ashkenas, Editor

2. PUNCTUATION OF CONVERSATION: MUSIC HATH CHARMS

Vehicles to motivate students to write can be found in some pretty out-of-the-way places. Music, for example, is enjoyed by almost everyone in one form or another. Music moves people emotionally. It demands a response. As an English teacher, you can make the power of music work for you. Here's how it can be harnessed to teach something as mundane and important as punctuation of conversation.

Materials Needed: a cassette player and a tape recording of Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition*

Get a tape recording of Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition*. The piece as a whole is a suite describing a walk through an art museum wherein the participants stop occasionally to view one or another painting. Each section of the suite describes a different painting. One of these paintings is called "Samuel Goldenberg and Schmuyle." Samuel Goldenberg and Schmuyle are two characters holding a dialogue. Each is represented by a different instrument. The tones of Mr. Goldenberg's instrument are deep, sonorous and authoritative while those of Schmuyle are high pitched and twittering. The piece opens with a musical pronouncement by Goldenberg followed at length by a response by Schmuyle.

Step 1. Tell your students that they are about to learn how to punctuate conversation. Tell them that the lesson will begin with a tape recording of a musical dialogue. The advantage of beginning with a musical dialogue is that it enables the teacher to demonstrate the importance of dialogue technique. Students will see that dialogues exist in music as well as in print literature and verbal conversation, indeed across the entire spectrum of communications. Play "Samuel Goldenberg and Schmuyle." When the section finishes, rewind back to its beginning.

Step 2. Discuss the differences in tone between the instruments representing the two characters, Samuel Goldenberg and Schmuyle. Are they arguing, debating, plotting? What are they talking about? Which character seems surer of himself? Does the other seem as though he might give in? Is there a winner and a loser? Brainstorm for topics the two men might be discussing. Write the suggested topics on the blackboard or overhead projector.

Step 3. Create the following scenario for students who can't create one themselves:

The bell has rung ending the lunch period. You have stayed too long talking to a friend. The tardy bell is about to ring. You have no chance of getting to class on time. You sneak along the corridors in hope of getting to class before a dean or assistant principal or the principal catches you. Suddenly...! (Begin the tape. The deep, sonorous tones of Samuel Goldenberg will sound like the voice of authority to your students.)

While Goldenberg's music is playing, ask your students, "What is he/she (Dean/Assistant Principal/Principal) saying?" When Schmuyle responds, say to your students, "That's you. What are *you* saying? What excuses are you making up?" Let the musical dialogue finish. Students will continue the verbal dialogue mentally while the music plays out.

Step 4. Ask students to write the dialogue in words using the scenario you've created for them. Encourage humor. How much time to allow will depend on the class level. A minimum of ten minutes is recommended.

Note: At this point you needn't worry about correct punctuation. The lesson on punctuation of conversation is yet to come. Remember, this is a prewriting technique designed to motivate. Concern for mechanical correctness at this point in the lesson might discourage students from writing freely.

Step 5. Ask students to share their dialogues with their classmates by reading them aloud. Smile and laugh as much as you can. Encourage students to have fun reading and listening.

Now you're ready to teach the mechanics of punctuating conversation (Use model sentences at the end of this unit and **Transparency T-2**). Having been exposed to a demonstration of the importance of dialogue, having been treated to a musical interlude, and having had some fun with the topic, students will learn more willingly and retain your lesson for a longer period of time than would otherwise have been the case. Music hath charms . . . and can motivate your students to learn.*

* Examples of musical dialogues abound. Another I've used frequently is Mozart's "Sinfonia Concertante in E flat, K364." The second movement contains a dialogue between violin and viola which is a superb vehicle to stimulate a romantic written conversation. Debussy's "La Mer" contains the lovely "Dialogue of Wind and Sea." What can students make out of that?