Preface

The Prose Reader: Essays for Thinking, Reading, and Writing is based on the assumption that lucid writing follows lucid thinking whereas poor written work is almost inevitably the product of foggy, irrational thought processes. As a result, our primary purpose in this title, as in the previous 11 editions, is to help students think more clearly and logically—both in their minds and on paper and screens.

Furthermore, we believe that college students should be able to think, read, and write on three increasingly difficult levels:

1. **Literal**: characterized by a basic understanding of words and their meanings;
2. **Interpretive**: consisting of a knowledge of connections between ideas and an ability to make valid inferences based on those ideas; and
3. **Critical**: the highest level, distinguished by the systematic investigation of complex ideas and by the analysis of their relationship to the world around us.

To demonstrate the vital interrelationship between reader and writer, The Prose Reader provides students with prose models intended to inspire their own thinking and writing. We introduce rhetorical strategies as methods or ways of thinking and processing information; they provide a productive means of helping students become better writers. These essays are intended to encourage students to improve their writing through a partnership with some of the best examples of professional prose available today. Just as musicians and athletes richly benefit from studying the techniques of the foremost people in their fields, students grow from their collaboration with the excellent writers in this collection.

What’s New in the 12th Edition

The Prose Reader exists to help students improve their thinking, reading, and writing skills; it also seeks to support instructors who have the same goal. Therefore, the most important phase of planning for a new edition involves listening to the feedback of instructors who teach from The Prose Reader and the
students who learn from it. Through formal reviews and informal conversations, we took to heart what instructors and students want for the 12th edition:

- For the first time, *The Prose Reader is now available for Revel*, Pearson’s interactive learning environment. For more information on Revel and the interactive features developed for this title, see “Revel” on page xxix.
- **Updated Visual Rhetoric** with six new photographs to stimulate critical thinking and essay writing. Because most traditional college-age students have grown up accustomed to television, video games, and the internet, they have the natural ability to “read” visual rhetoric. But they need to learn how to analyze it, just as they analyze words and ideas. Therefore, we include one photograph for each chapter introduction in Part II to teach critical thinking in that mode, one photograph for each set of writing assignments at the end of each chapter, and one photo as a reading selection in Chapter 13.
- **New visuals** to help students understand key concepts. Chapter 1 contains an all-new Figure 1.1: The Reading–Writing Connection to help students visually understand the ways in which critical thinking connects and informs the reading and writing processes; Figure 3.2: Clustering is now interactive to show that the clustering process for choosing a writing topic occurs in steps.
- **Thoroughly Updated Part III: Reference: Reading and Writing from Sources** offers timely content updates to both the professional essay (Allan Goldstein, “‘Our Brains Are Evolving to Multitask,’ Not! The Ill-usion of Multitasking”) and the student response (“Multitasking and the Internet: Doing More and Accomplishing Less?”). In addition, the unit is updated to adhere to the guidelines presented in the 2016 MLA Handbook, eighth edition.

**Content Highlights**

Our loyal users and current and former students alike have continually praised the structure, content, and pedagogy of *The Prose Reader*, so our overall format remains the same in Revel, refreshed with updated readings and activities. The title is divided into both parts and chapters.

**Part I: Thinking, Reading, and Writing Critically**

**Part I** consists of three chapters dedicated to the interaction of critical thinking, reading, and writing. It furnishes students with ideas and facts to help them discover for themselves how these skills are related.
• **Chapter 1 (Thinking Critically)** introduces students to the three essential levels of thinking outlined earlier in this preface—the literal level, the interpretive level, and the critical level—in addition to providing an overview of the idea of “rhetorical modes.” Students are also introduced to one of *The Prose Reader*’s most salient features, the “Thinking Critically” questions that punctuate the essays throughout the book and encourage students to make both personal and intellectual connections to the essays. This chapter also introduces the essential connection between thinking, reading, and writing, complete with a new interactive visual to display the process (Figure 1.1).

• **Chapter 2 (Reading Critically)** offers an overview of the reading process that thousands of students using *The Prose Reader* have found instrumental in their academic success. We walk them through the process of preparing to read, reading, and rereading an essay—Lewis Thomas’s “To Err Is Human”—introducing our carefully crafted pedagogy along the way. Chapter 2 concludes with a succinct and helpful interactive checklist that reminds students of all of the steps in the reading process.

• **Chapter 3 (Writing Critically)** mirrors the structure of Chapter 2 by introducing students to the three stages of the writing process: preparing to write, writing, and revising/editing. Throughout the chapter, students engage with samples from a fellow student who walks them through the early activities of brainstorming, clustering, and journaling to the completion of a first draft. Students then see the same essay move through the revision/editing stage and read the final draft of the student’s essay. As in Chapter 2, this chapter concludes with an interactive checklist that reminds students of the steps in the writing process. They will refer to these reading and writing checklists throughout their work in *The Prose Reader*.

**Part II: Reading and Writing Rhetorically**

Chapters 4 to 12 of **Part II** of *The Prose Reader* each introduce a single rhetorical mode as a means of processing information. We remind students that these modes (description, narration, example, process analysis, division/classification, comparison/contrast, definition, cause/effect, and argument and persuasion) are simply ways of thinking. The final chapter in Part II (Chapter 13) aligns with the latest version of the Writing Program Administrators’ outcomes for first-year composition by including selections in multiple genres. It provides selections in five different genres: one autobiography, one speech, two poems, one piece of fiction, and one photograph.

Chapters 4 to 12 focus exclusively on helping students grasp the mode at hand, much like a single workout might focus on a specific area like the quadriceps or the core. The goal is ultimately to possess an understanding of each mode to have a full repertoire of critical thinking—in the same way that workouts
benefiting an individual area combine to benefit the entire body. These chapters are organized consistently and methodically:

- **Learning objectives** open each chapter to prepare students and help them focus on what they need to master.
- The first module of the chapter will focus on **defining the mode** at hand, complete with a **sample student paragraph** that exemplifies writing in the mode. Students will also complete an **interactive activity or exercise** to increase their understanding.
- The second module asks students to **think critically** through the mode by completing a brief reflective writing activity, which always includes a striking photograph that serves as a discussion prompt.
- The third and fourth modules walk students through the **reading and writing process** for the essays they will encounter and the essays they will write. In both cases, students begin with a **visual flowchart** of questions to ask as they prepare to read, read, and reread the essays highlighting a given mode and as they prepare to write, write, and revise/edit their own essays.

**Flowchart 4.1: Questions to Guide Your Reading**

**PREPARING TO READ** Before you read the essays, answer the following questions:
- What assumptions can you make from the essay’s **title**?
- What do you think the general **mood** of the essay will be?
- What are the essay’s **purpose** and **audience**?
- What does the **synopsis** tell you about the essay?
- What can you learn from the author’s **biography**?
- What do you predict the author’s **point of view** toward the subject will be?

**READING** As you read the essays for the first time, answer the following questions:
- What is the essay’s **dominant impression**?
- Is the essay predominantly **objective** or **subjective**?
- What **senses** does the author engage?

**REREADING** When you read the essays again, answer the following questions:
- What **details** support the essay’s dominant impression?
- How are these details **organized**?
- How does the essay **show rather than tell** the audience about its dominant impression?
- What other **rhetorical modes** does the author use?
- How does your understanding of the essay change with each rereading?
• The fifth module provides students with the encouragement of an annotated student essay. The annotations point out the ways in which the student successfully masters the mode at hand by labeling effective writing strategies and noting the essential parts of each essay (such as the writer’s point of view or the thesis statement). Written and audio commentary from the student writer follows each essay.

• The final module of each chapter before the professional essays ends with some “final thoughts” on the given mode. We offer tips to prepare for reading the subsequent essays but also engage students on a multimedia level with an audio feature from author Kim Flachmann, who helps students connect what they have learned to their daily lives and experiences. (This audio feature also prepares students for a Shared Writing opportunity they have at the end of the chapter.) In addition, students have a chance to study the key terms from the chapter with interactive flashcards.

The professional essays that comprise the heart of this title are selected from a wide variety of well-known authors writing on diverse, stimulating topics of interest to today’s college students. Students appreciate the robust pedagogical support provided for each essay:

• Each essay module opens with full biographical details about the author, including the year of his or her birth (and death, if applicable), professional highlights, and relevant life experiences. Many of the biographies also include personal messages of encouragement to students looking to improve their thinking, reading, and writing using The Prose Reader.

• Students will also encounter background information on the essay, including original publication information.

• The Preparing to Read activities help students foster a personal connection to the topic of the essay. Two types of questions comprise this section—“Exploring Experience” that asks students to reflect on their own beliefs, ideas, and experiences related to the topic of the essay and “Learning Online” that asks them to do some simple online research (such as watching a brief video or looking at a series of photographs) to help them connect to the topic.

• The Increase Your Vocabulary activity helps students learn six potentially new and challenging vocabulary words they will encounter in the essay. After students have reviewed the vocabulary, they can challenge themselves with a no-stakes quiz to ensure they’ll remember the terms in their reading.

• The “Thinking Critically” questions that punctuate the essays help students foster deeper, progressively more sophisticated connections to the
essays. In addition, they build a natural bridge from the personal prereading questions to the more academic questions that follow each reading.

• The **postreading questions** are divided into four types to help students move sequentially from literal level responses to interpretation and analysis. They also help reveal both the form and the content of the essays so that students can cultivate a similar balance in their own writing.

  ○ **Understanding Details** questions test students’ literal and interpretive understanding of what they have read.
  ○ **Reading Critically** questions require students to analyze various aspects of the essay.
  ○ **Discovering Rhetorical Strategies** questions investigate the author’s rhetorical strategies in constructing the essay.
  ○ **Making Connections** questions ask students to find thematic and rhetorical connections among essays they have read in *The Prose Reader*.

• The “**Ideas for Discussion/Writing: Preparing to Write**” journal prompts encourage students to write freely in order to express their feelings, thoughts, observations, and opinions on various topics related to their reading. Questions about their own ideas and experiences help students develop strong convictions that they can then mold into captivating college essays.

• The “**Ideas for Discussion/Writing: Choosing a Topic**” assignments offer a wide variety of compelling assignments for students to complete after reading each essay. Many are essay topics related to the ideas or themes presented in the essay; others involve students in realistic situations with a specific purpose and audience (such as writing a letter to a high school principal). For those instructors who wish to have students complete **multimedia assignments**, we always provide one option that ties back to the “Learning Online” prereading activity and asks students to create a piece of art, shoot a video, craft an infomercial, make a collage, or come up with their own creative way of expressing themselves.

Finally, Chapters 4 to 12 conclude with **chapter writing assignments** that focus on giving instructors and students a broad set of choices for longer essays. We offer the following four sets of chapter assignments:

• Additional practice in the rhetorical mode at hand;
• A focus on interesting, contemporary themes regardless of rhetorical mode;
• An opportunity to compose in different genres, including the option to analyze and respond to a provocative photograph; and
• Related research assignments and documented essays.
Part III: Reference: Reading and Writing from Sources

Part III of *The Prose Reader* acknowledges that much of the college-level writing students will complete across the disciplines will involve integrating and citing academic sources. To this end, we provide an overview of how to research and write a documented essay. Students learn best by example, so the unit follows a single student through the entire process, from reading a documented essay to responding to that reading by writing on a related topic. It covers finding sources, avoiding plagiarism, staying organized, documenting sources, and writing the paper itself—all from the perspective of our model student.

**REVEL™**

Revel is an interactive learning environment that deeply engages students and prepares them for class. Media and assessment integrated directly within the authors’ narrative lets students read, explore interactive content, and practice in one continuous learning path. Thanks to the dynamic reading experience in Revel, students come to class prepared to discuss, apply, and learn from instructors and from each other.

Some of the interactive features of *The Prose Reader* in Revel include:

- **Fill-In Writing Exercises**
  Interactive writing prompts throughout *The Prose Reader* encourage students to make writing a regular part of the learning experience. Fill-in applications enable students to complete writing activities and respond to discussion questions as they engage with the key concepts of a chapter—without leaving the course. Students can rewrite statements using descriptive language to “show” rather than “tell” their audience in Chapter 4; they can freewrite about possible causes and effects of given scenarios in Chapter 11. Students will also use this interactive writing feature to complete the prereading and postreading questions surrounding each professional reading. If students would like to maintain their responses for future use or to submit to their instructor, they may print any writing they generate as they complete these interactive exercises.

- **Interactive Reading/Writing Checklists**
  The reading and writing processes (as well as the process of reading and writing a documented essay) are supported by interactive checklists to remind students of the critical steps they must remember as they read and write across their college courses. The checklists begin by reminding students what they need to do when preparing to read or write and then move through the reading and writing processes step by step. Students will be prompted to return to these checklists as they work their way through *The Prose Reader*. 
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• Integrated Writing Opportunities
To help students connect chapter content with personal meaning, each chapter offers two varieties of writing prompts: “Ideas for Discussion/Writing: Preparing to Write” journal prompts encourage students to freewrite about their feelings, ideas, and experiences with a given topic in order to prepare for a more formal writing assignment. The end-of-chapter Shared Writing prompt encourages students to write about the ways the rhetorical modes play out in their personal, professional, and academic lives. They are also encouraged to share and reply to each other’s responses.

• Drag-and-Drop Games
To increase retention and provide opportunities to practice what they learn, students will play no-stakes games allowing them to drag an example to its correct category. For example, after learning about objective and subjective definitions in Chapter 10, students can categorize a key term and definition as objective or subjective by dragging the sample to the appropriate label. In addition, the “Increase Your Vocabulary” activity preceding each reading provides a table with six challenging vocabulary words/definitions students will encounter. Once students have studied the terms, they can enter “challenge mode” and drag the definitions to the correct spot on the table.

• Video Quizzes
Students using The Prose Reader will also have the opportunity to consider how the rhetorical modes and related concepts play out in video clips. In Chapter 7, students will view several brief clips of student speeches in order to identify examples of directive and informative process analysis. In Chapter 12, they will also assess student speech clips to identify ethos, logos, and pathos in action.
• **Author Audio**

Students using *The Prose Reader* will get to hear from the author in every chapter highlighting a rhetorical mode. Before they dive into the professional essays, Kim Flachmann shares questions and thoughts to help students connect each mode to their daily lives and experiences. This multimedia activity also helps prepare students to make these connections on a more formal level in the Shared Writing activity at the end of the chapter.

**Learn more about Revel**
http:// www.pearson.com/revel

**Pearson English Assignments Library**

Available with your adoption of any © 2019 or © 2020 Pearson English course in Revel is the English Assignments Library comprising 500 essay and Shared Media prompts:

- A series of 300 fully editable essay assignments invite students to write on compelling, wide-ranging writing topics. You can choose from an array of writing prompts in the following genres or methods of development: Argument/Persuasion; Comparison/Contrast; Critique/Review; Definition; Description; Exposition; Illustration; Narration; Process Analysis; Proposal; and Research Project. Assignments can be graded using a rubric based on the WPA Outcomes for First-Year Composition. You can also upload essay prompts and/or rubrics of your own.

- 200 Shared Media assignments ask students to interpret and/or produce various multimedia texts to foster multimodal literacy. Shared Media activities include analyzing or critiquing short professional videos on topics of contemporary interest; posting brief original videos or presentation slides; and sharing original images—such as posters, storyboards, concept maps, or graphs.

**Supplements**

Make more time for your students with instructor resources that offer effective learning assessments and classroom engagement. Pearson’s partnership with educators does not end with the delivery of course materials; Pearson is there with you on the first day of class and beyond. A dedicated team of local Pearson representatives will work with you to not only choose course materials but also integrate them into your class and assess their effectiveness. Our goal is your goal—to improve instruction with each semester.

Pearson is pleased to offer the following resources to qualified adopters of *The Prose Reader*. Several of these supplements are available to instantly download
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from Revel or on the Instructor Resource Center (IRC); please visit the IRC at www.pearson.com/us to register for access.

- **INSTRUCTOR’S RESOURCE MANUAL** Create a roadmap for teaching classroom, online, or hybrid courses. Designed for new and experienced instructors, the Instructor’s Resource Manual for *The Prose Reader* contains the following: detailed information to help new and seasoned instructors set up their courses, manage the first day of class and respond to student writing; practical advice on using *The Prose Reader* and getting the most out of each reading; suggestions for working with student essays; and an annotated bibliography of suggested readings. Available within Revel and on the IRC.

- **QUIZ BOOK** *The Prose Reader Quiz Book* includes two objective quizzes on the vocabulary and content of each selection to help you monitor your students’ comprehension of the selections in this title. Note that the vocabulary terms tested are the same as those introduced in the “Increase Your Vocabulary” feature prior to each reading selection. This repetition will help to cement these important terms in students’ minds and increase their long-term vocabulary. You can easily customize the assessment to work in any major learning management system and to match what is covered in your course. Word and BlackBoard versions are available on the IRC.

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