

Preface

After many years of teaching composition, we have come to see reading and writing as interrelated activities: If students are going to write effectively, they must first be able to read actively and critically. In addition, we see writing as both a private and a public act. As a private act, it enables students to explore their feelings and reactions and to discover their ideas about subjects that are important to them. As a public act, writing enables students to see how their own ideas fit into larger discourse communities, where ideas gain meaning and value. We believe that students are enriched and engaged when they view the reading and writing they do as a way of participating in ongoing public discussions about ideas that matter to them. From the beginning, our goal in *The Blair Reader* has always been to encourage students to contribute to these discussions in the wider world by responding to the ideas of others.

The core of *The Blair Reader* is, of course, its reading selections. As we selected the readings for this title, our goal was to introduce students to the enduring issues they confront as citizens in the twenty-first century. Many of these readings are contemporary; many are also quite provocative. Whenever possible, however, we also include classic readings that give students the historical context they need. For example, Chapter 4, “Issues in Education,” includes “School Is Bad for Children” by John Holt; Chapter 5, “The Politics of Language,” includes “Learning to Read and Write” by Frederick Douglass; and Chapter 9, “The American Dream,” includes The Gettysburg Address by Abraham Lincoln. It was also important to us that the selections in *The Blair Reader* represent a wide variety of rhetorical patterns and types of discourse as well as a range of themes, issues, and positions. In addition to essays and articles from print and electronic sources, *The Blair Reader* includes speeches, short stories, poems, creative nonfiction, and a short play. It is our hope that exposure to this wide variety of formats, topics, and viewpoints can help students discover their own voices and express their own ideas.

As teachers, we—like you—expect a thematic reader to include compelling reading selections that involve instructors and students in spirited exchanges. We also expect readings that reflect the diversity of ideas that characterizes our society and questions that challenge students to respond critically to what they have read. In short, we expect a title that stimulates discussion and that encourages students to discover new ideas and see

familiar ideas in new ways. These expectations guided us as we initially created *The Blair Reader*, and they continued to guide us as we worked on this new tenth edition.

What's New in the 10th Edition

In response to the thoughtful comments of the many instructors who generously shared with us their reactions (and their students' reactions) to *The Blair Reader*, we have made many changes in this new edition, adding new readings, new study questions and writing and research prompts, and new visuals.

- **New Focus sections** showcase related essays that examine contemporary concerns, zeroing in on questions such as “What Is Fake News, and Why Does It Matter?” and “How Do We Talk about Sexual Harassment?”
- **New readings** have been added to stimulate student interest and to introduce them to some of the challenging issues that they confront as students and as citizens. Among the many essays that are new to this edition are Sonia Sodha’s “If You Have No Children, Who Will Care for You When You’re Old?”, Matthew Yglesias’s “Walmart’s Too-Good-to-Be-True ‘\$1 a Day’ College Tuition Plan, Explained,” Jelani Cobb’s “*Black Panther* and the Invention of ‘Africa,’” Jon Meacham’s “To Hope Rather than to Fear,” Rand Fishkin’s “The Truth Shall Set You Free (from a Lot of \$#*% Storms),” and Alex Wagner’s excerpt from *Futureface: A Family Mystery, an Epic Quest, and the Secret to Belonging*. New literary selections—such as Sarah Chevallier’s “If Literature’s ‘Complicated Men’ Were on Tinder,” Brenda Cárdenas’s “Lecciones de lengua,” and Benjamin Busch’s “New World”—have also been added.
- A **new shared writing prompt** at the conclusion of each chapter’s introductory discussion helps students engage with the chapter theme.
- A new **Before You Read journal prompt** before each reading gets students thinking about ways to approach each selection.
- The new **full-color visuals and engaging design** connect with students accustomed to encountering content in color. Students analyzing the chapter-opening paired visuals and the Focus section visual will now be able to explore discussions related to the use of color within the content not available in the previous black-and-white editions.

Resources for Students

We designed the apparatus in *The Blair Reader* to involve students and to encourage them to respond critically to what they read. These responses can lay the groundwork for the more focused thinking that they will do when they write. In order to help students improve their critical reading and writing skills, we have included the following features:

- An **Introduction** maps out the title's features to help students get the most from *The Blair Reader*.
- **Paired visuals** introduce each thematic chapter. These visuals engage students by encouraging them to identify parallels and contrasts. In addition, they introduce students to the themes that they will be considering as they read the selections in the chapter.
- A brief **chapter introduction** places each chapter's broad theme in its social, historical, or political context, helping students to understand the complexities of the issues being discussed. This chapter introduction is followed by **Preparing to Read and Write**, a list of questions designed to help students focus their responses to individual readings and relate these responses to the chapter's larger issues.
- **Headnotes** that introduce each selection provide biographical and other background information as well as insight into the writer's purpose.
- **Responding to Reading** questions that follow each selection address thematic and rhetorical considerations. By encouraging students to think critically, these questions help them to see reading as an interactive and intellectually stimulating process.
- A **Rhetorical Analysis** question for each selection addresses rhetorical considerations, helping students understand the discursive acts at work in the selection.
- A **Writing with Sources** prompt (after essays and speeches) gives students the opportunity to write a longer essay that requires research.
- A **Focus** section at the end of each chapter is introduced by a provocative question related to the chapter's theme, followed by a visual that is accompanied by **Responding to the Image** prompts. The heart of the Focus section is a group of readings that take a variety of positions on the issue, encouraging students to add their voices to the debate and demonstrating that complex issues elicit different points of view. Each reading is followed by "Responding to Reading" questions, a "Rhetorical Analysis" question, and a "Writing with Sources" prompt.

- At the end of each Focus section, a **Widening the Focus** feature includes a writing prompt (“For Critical Reading and Writing”) that asks students to tie the readings together; a list of essays in other chapters of the title that also address the issues raised by the Focus question; an Internet research assignment; and a field research assignment (“Beyond the Classroom”).
- **Exploring Issues and Ideas** suggestions at the end of each thematic chapter encourage students to explore the chapter’s theme in greater depth.
- A **Rhetorical Table of Contents**, located at the front of the title on pages xx–xxix, groups the text’s readings according to the way they arrange material: narration, description, process, comparison and contrast, and so on.
- **Topical Clusters**, narrowly focused thematic units (viii–xix), offer students and teachers additional options for grouping readings.
- An **Appendix: MLA Documentation** helps students to incorporate research ethically, offering numerous sample citations for commonly used sources.

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 let 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.

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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 Blair Reader*. Several of these supplements are available to instantly download 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** Because we wanted *The Blair Reader* to be a rich and comprehensive resource for instructors, a thoroughly revised and updated *Instructor's Resource Manual* has been developed to accompany the text. Designed to be a useful and all-inclusive tool, the manual contains teaching strategies, collaborative activities, and suggested answers for “Responding to Reading” questions. The manual includes web and/or multimedia teaching resources for almost every reading. It also contains new questions for stimulating classroom discussions of the chapter-opening images. Available within Revel and on the IRC.

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