

THE NEW OXFORD GUIDE TO WRITING

THOMAS S. KANE

The New Oxford Guide to Writing

By Thomas S. Kane

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Many books on writing tell you how to think more creatively, how to conjure up an idea from scratch. Many, once you have an idea, show you how to express it clearly and elegantly. And many handbooks offer reliable advice on the use of commas, semicolons, and so forth. But *The New Oxford Guide to Writing* does all three, so that no matter where you find yourself in the writing process--from the daunting look of a blank page, to the rough draft that needs shaping, to the small but important questions of punctuation--you will find what you need in one handy volume.

Highlighted by numerous examples of successful prose--including marvelous, brief excerpts from Mark Twain, Joan Didion, H.L. Mencken, E.B. White, and Annie Dillard--this stimulating volume covers the entire subject step-by-step, clearly and authoritatively.

Whether you write for business or for pleasure, whether you are a beginner or an experienced pro, *The New Oxford Guide to Writing* is an essential addition to your reference library, providing abundant assistance and encouragement to write with more clarity, more color, and more force.

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Editorial Review

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There is an apparently endless supply of books about writing. Very few of those books, surprisingly, offer a thorough and scholarly approach to the basics: words, sentences, and paragraphs. *The New Oxford Guide to Writing* does. According to author Thomas S. Kane, writing is "an exercise of mind requiring the mastery of techniques anyone can learn." Kane's not claiming he can create a genius, but, as he says in his introduction, "you don't have to be a genius to write clear, effective English." The writing that Kane refers to here is expository and persuasive in nature--writing most likely to be required in day-to-day life. In great detail Kane explores the building of an essay, the development of paragraphs, the styling of sentences, the use of diction, and, finally, issues of punctuation. It is unlikely that very many writers have scrutinized the building blocks of language the way Kane has, but it's never too late. Rare is the sourcebook that can offer so much both to beginners and experts alike. And anyone who loves words will thrill to encounter--if he or she hasn't done so already--the freight-train sentence, parataxis, the triadic sentence, polysyndeton, asyndeton, collocation, and zeugma. --Jane Steinberg

From Library Journal

Kane, who also wrote the earlier Oxford Guide to Writing (1983), leads the student in some detail through such fundamentals as planning the writing project, grammar, style, and things to avoid all with a view to developing command over the niceties of proper expository prose. The early chapters conclude with short practice exercises. Throughout, excerpts from distinguished authors are offered as examples. Major sections are devoted to the essay, paragraph, sentence, diction, description and narration, and punctuation. A bit stuffy for general readers, and aspiring creative and professional writers might not buy into all this self-conscious correctness. Still, suited for use in college English courses or as an extra reference in libraries not overstocked on this subject. William A. Donovan, Chicago P.L.

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Review

"Guides to writing--some in print, others in software--continue to proliferate; the best-written this year is "The New Oxford Guide to Writing."--William Safire, New York Times Sunday Magazine

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