

The reviews contained in this folder are for [Writing for Success – 1st Canadian Edition](#).

The new 1st Canadian H5P Edition of the book was added to the B.C. Open Textbook Collection in January 2022 and the 1st Canadian Edition was removed in January 2022. Although these are reviews of the previous edition, we believe they offer valuable feedback that may be of use to potential adopters. As such, we have compiled the reviews for the 1st Canadian Edition in this folder so they are available to anyone interested in adopting this book.

Please keep in mind that these reviews are for the 1st Canadian Edition, and that the new edition has been revised to include over 150 H5P interactive activities.

Review of Writing for Success - 1st Canadian Edition

Date submitted
2015-09-20 14:23:29

My Information

Textbook that was reviewed
Writing for Success - 1st Canadian Edition
For what level would this textbook be appropriate?
First Year
My name
Kate Hildebrandt
My title/position
Associate Faculty
My institution
Royal Roads University

Comprehensiveness

The text covers all areas and ideas of the subject appropriately and provides an effective index and/or glossary.
I believe the text covers all areas of effective writing for Canadian students beginning studies within an academic post-secondary setting. The table of contents is effective, however, I would recommend that sub-sections be included.
In reviewing this text, I could easily imagine this text as a teaching tool and as a reference tool. With a more detailed table of contents, users would be able to access key information more readily. As is stands, the table of contents lists chapters only.
Further, I believe the text title could benefit from a sub-head explaining that content is best suited to those beginning post-secondary studies in need of a reference tool to enable academic writing.
The text includes a wide range of examples, tips, applications within the workplace, sub-sections with easy-to-read headers. I found the information was presented in a logical order and the content throughout was, in my opinion, relevant, thorough, and sensible.
How do you rate the book's overall comprehensiveness?
5

Content Accuracy

Content, including diagrams and other supplementary material, is accurate, error-free, and unbiased.

I did find a few errors which could be easily repaired with a thorough, third-party proofreading exercise. For example, I have put errors into caps as follows - on page 284 - if the writer has only HAS presented a limited discussion, on Page 369 - It will also help you MAKE recognize how much and what kind of background information you need to provide your reader ...

Also, I was surprised that the first chapter was identified as Introduction to Academic Writing when there was no reference to any writing style or type in the text title 'Writing for Success'.

As for the remainder of the content, I found the text to be highly accurate.

Overall, how do you rate the accuracy of the content?

4

Relevance/Longevity

Content is up-to-date, but not in a way that will quickly make the text obsolete within a short period of time. The text is written and/or arranged in such a way that necessary updates will be relatively easy and straightforward to implement.

I found the content to be highly relevant and current for its intended audience. As a post-secondary writing instructor and as a professional writer with more than 20 years of experience, I would not hesitate to use this text in my teaching.

I particularly enjoyed the way ideas and information were presented from start to finish, from basic to increasingly complex topics. This made reading easy to understand and the knowledge more likely to become consolidated within the student's mind.

Overall, how do you rate the relevance/longevity of the book?

4

Clarity

The text is written in lucid, accessible prose, and provides adequate context for any jargon/technical terminology used.

Yes, the text is written in lucid, accessible prose. In fact, I quite enjoyed the sections on slang and cliches which are important distinctions when teaching professional writing to our students today who are much more relaxed in their writing styles for the public domain.

Overall, how do you rate the clarity of the book?

5

Consistency

The text is internally consistent in terms of terminology and framework.

Yes, the text is written in a consistent manner with a natural progression of information that is well-suited to the learner's perspective.

How do you rate the overall consistency of the text?

5

Modularity

The text is easily and readily divisible into smaller reading sections that can be assigned at different points within the course (i.e., enormous blocks of text without subheadings should be avoided). The text should not be overly self-referential, and should be easily reorganized and realigned with various subunits of a course without presenting too much disruption to the reader.

At times, I found the many, different examples, tips, and suggestions a bit too disruptive, however, I believe this text is presented this way so it can further function as a reference tool. It's easy to imagine a learner returning to this text for specific details on certain elements of academic writing in which case the modularity is helpful. I do believe either a more detailed table of contents, subject index, or glossary would enable learners to make the best possible use of the text contents. As for teaching purposes, the sub-units function well in informing, sampling, defining key points, as well as keeping the learner engaged.

Overall, how do you rate the modularity of the text?

4

Organization/Structure/Flow

The topics in the text are presented in a logical, clear fashion.

Yes, topics are very well presented logically, clearly, and are easy to apply given the number of samples, tips, and suggestions. The information within this text are presented in a natural order which makes the learning somewhat 'organic' or 'intuitive' which facilitates learning for the student who is beginning their post-secondary studies and may be new to academic writing methods and styles. I also found each chapter to offer an exhaustive range of details and considerations that made the content more likely to be retained by the learner.

Overall, how do you rate the organization/structure/flow of the text?

5

Interface

The text is free of significant interface issues, including navigation problems, distortion of images/charts, and any other display features that may distract or confuse the reader.

I strongly recommend the text be reformatted using consistent design and layout elements from start to finish.

The margins varied throughout. In some cases, lines were inserted for learners to insert comments and those lines ran through the margins and off the page. I also found some re-occurring sections were highlighted in some cases, and then not at all in other cases.

Further, I remain unsure about using the 'handwritten' typeface for actual student examples. While this content was valuable, my first reaction was one of doubt in having to decipher. Once I read, however, I found the examples fairly easy to read. Even so, I would recommend a different type treatment.

There were graphics used throughout the text and while they were basic and easy to grasp, they lacked a consistent look and feel which were mildly distracting as if pulled from a range of places to support the content rather than created just for this text. I believe today's students are sensitive to such details and may find the overall design and layout of this text in need of polish.

Overall, how do you rate the textbook's interface?

3

Grammatical/Spelling Errors

The text contains no grammatical or spelling errors.

I did find a few occasions where there were some grammatical errors, however, in general the text was predominantly accurate. Please see my comments under Content Accuracy.

How do you rate the grammar and spelling of the text?

4

Diversity and Inclusion

The text reflects diversity and inclusion regarding culture, gender, ethnicity, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, education, religion. It does not include insensitive or offensive language in these areas.

There were moments of pause for me, as a reviewer, to find two of the first exercises featured within the first chapter based on American content; on page 61, students are to correct typos in a paragraph on a sample about the American Declaration of Independence, and again on page 64 on a short profile of a First Nations writer and poet from Washington state. These samples do not offend, however, this text is titled as a Canadian edition so Canadian content is expected.

Overall, how do you rate the diversity and inclusion of the text?

4

Recommendation

Do you recommend this book? If not, why?

For the few sections in need of attention, I only wish to add that I enjoyed reading this text which is an accomplishment in and of itself. I found certain sections offered great ideas which I plan to include in my writing class. I also found the text stayed true to its intended audience from start to finish with a consistent tone and impressive range of detail designed to promote well-rounded learning.

Review of Writing for Success - 1st Canadian Edition

Date submitted

2016-06-09 10:08:01

My Information

Textbook that was reviewed

Writing for Success - 1st Canadian Edition

For what level would this textbook be appropriate?

First Year

My name

Lesley Glendinning

My title/position

Lecturer

My institution

Brandon University

Comprehensiveness

The text covers all areas and ideas of the subject appropriately and provides an effective index and/or glossary.

This textbook covers a number of important areas of first-year essay-writing. It occasionally mentions a concept that it does not cover, such as when it advises students to avoid dangling modifiers, but does not explain fully what these are. It does not contain an index or glossary, but students could likely find the subject areas they need from consulting the table of contents, since the book does not go into grammatical concepts in a lot of depth. Instructors could supplement the material in this section with additional resources.

How do you rate the book's overall comprehensiveness?

4

Content Accuracy

Content, including diagrams and other supplementary material, is accurate, error-free, and unbiased.

The content of the book is accurate in terms of its instruction on essay-writing techniques. It does contain many typographical errors, however, and although its title specifies that it has been amended from an American version to a Canadian edition, changes have been made only in some places. I would like to have all the significant American references changed before I adopt this book for my class, particularly since the title leads one to think it will have Canadian focus. I have been looking for a new book because of the "typos" in the one I have been using, and would have to be sure this one would be corrected before I would adopt it. I have made a list of many of these, and will send it along.

Overall, how do you rate the accuracy of the content?

3

Relevance/Longevity

Content is up-to-date, but not in a way that will quickly make the text obsolete within a short period of time. The text is written and/or arranged in such a way that necessary updates will be relatively easy and straightforward to implement.

The book's content should not have to be updated much, but I think changes could be relatively easy. For example, students in the social sciences are advised (at least in some courses) that they must use sources no older than five years, and the sample essay included (Jorge's, on low-carb diets) uses sources dating from 2010, for the most part. Further, the use of "he or she" and related forms has been under debate, and a strong case made for the adoption of "they" as a singular pronoun (I know - grammatically incorrect) because it expresses a more inclusive idea of the student; it allows discussion without "outing" students who are transgender, and includes the idea of gender as possibly fluid. While this notion does not have to be the one adopted officially, a note could be included in the section on pronouns. Again, the American references can be changed, but some will require significant adjustment (Canadian statistics in Jorge's essay, for example).

Overall, how do you rate the relevance/longevity of the book?

5

Clarity

The text is written in lucid, accessible prose, and provides adequate context for any jargon/technical terminology used.

The writing style is a strong feature of this book. Ideas are usually presented clearly; however, the errors compromise this clarity in places. I wasn't sure whether mistakes had actually been purposely included, so the instructor would point them out(!). That seems unlikely, though - and not a positive feature if it is the case. One example is the use of "if" in many places where "whether" seems more appropriate. I'm sure correct usage is not meant to be sacrificed for accessibility or informal style.

Overall, how do you rate the clarity of the book?

4

Consistency

The text is internally consistent in terms of terminology and framework.

This book presents ideas consistently in terms of terminology and framework.

How do you rate the overall consistency of the text?

5

Modularity

The text is easily and readily divisible into smaller reading sections that can be assigned at different points within the course (i.e., enormous blocks of text without subheadings should be avoided). The text should not be overly self-referential, and should be easily reorganized and realigned with various subunits of a course without presenting too much disruption to the reader.

This book is very specifically organized for a particular course, and even goes so far as to designate which week assignments will be submitted and how much they are each worth. (Is that what you mean by self-referential? In addition, students are advised to go to "our library" in places, and just "your institution's something" in others. Students are directed to the JIBC APA Reference Guide (which looks like a live link in the PDF file but isn't one), so I would want to change that to direct them to the academic resources at BU, our institution.) Of course, instructors could tell students to ignore those aspects, but it would be better if the text was a little more open, so that instructors could use parts of it or teach it at a different pace (even for a spring or summer course, for example, the "week 1" components wouldn't be useful, and could be off-putting for students).

Overall, how do you rate the modularity of the text?

3

Organization/Structure/Flow

The topics in the text are presented in a logical, clear fashion.

Yes, the topics are presented in a logical, clear fashion - except, as noted earlier, where the errors confuse things.

Overall, how do you rate the organization/structure/flow of the text?

5

Interface

The text is free of significant interface issues, including navigation problems, distortion of images/charts, and any other display features that may distract or confuse the reader.

The font size does vary quite a lot, with some passages being slightly larger than others, and some lighter in colour than others, even within a sentence or paragraph. A couple of the graphics are missing, and these are key pieces of the chapter's instruction. These would need to be fixed. Otherwise, graphics are effective.

Overall, how do you rate the textbook's interface?

4

Grammatical/Spelling Errors

The text contains no grammatical or spelling errors.

The text contains many typographical errors, and a few grammatical errors (who instead of whom, for example).

How do you rate the grammar and spelling of the text?

4

Diversity and Inclusion

The text reflects diversity and inclusion regarding culture, gender, ethnicity, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, education, religion. It does not include insensitive or offensive language in these areas.

Cultural bias is not an issue, it seems to me.

Overall, how do you rate the diversity and inclusion of the text?

5

Recommendation

Do you recommend this book? If not, why?

Again, it needs more updates to make it relevant for Canadian students. The typos, missing words, and wrong words/wording need to be fixed. I will gladly send my list of suggested corrections, and will still consider adopting this book if corrections are made.

Review of Writing for Success - 1st Canadian Edition

Date submitted

2016-10-20 22:13:57

My Information

Textbook that was reviewed

Writing for Success - 1st Canadian Edition

For what level would this textbook be appropriate?

First Year

My name

Annette Lapointe

My title/position

College Professor of English

My institution

Grande Prairie Regional College

Comprehensiveness

The text covers all areas and ideas of the subject appropriately and provides an effective index and/or glossary.

The book covers some material extremely well. The first chapter, dealing with study skills, is detailed, thorough, and covers a variety of crucial reading, studying, and time-management skills for first-year university students. The rest of the book focusses on developing essay-writing skills, with some attention given to issues of grammar.

Grammar issues are dealt with briefly, without systematic coverage. Several good examples are given of how to address common problems at the level of the sentence, and with spelling. The book does not contain a comprehensive grammar guide. There is no index or glossary included, and no detailed table of contents (the table of contents that exists does not include page numbers or functioning links). The book does not deal with MLA-style documentation. (Only APA is used, and that style is not discussed in any detail.)

The essay-writing section of the book covers thesis development and paragraph creation adequately, though with no special innovation and no remarkable level of detail. It does not address a full range of the types of essays a first-year student might be expected to write. It covers summary in some detail. It very briefly addresses exposition, narration, illustration, description, process analysis, compare/contrast, and cause and effect (all within a single chapter). Analysis, synthesis, and evaluation are likewise briefly addressed.

The book lacks professional-level models for writing, but this is at least in part a problem with Open-Access: copyrighted material cannot be included.

In spite of the book's length, its coverage of key topics is uneven. It appears to have been customized to reflect one instructor's approach to teaching composition, with its strengths and weaknesses stemming largely from that fact. Only instructors whose foci are extremely similar to this of the author will likely find the book useful.

How do you rate the book's overall comprehensiveness?

3

Content Accuracy

Content, including diagrams and other supplementary material, is accurate, error-free, and unbiased.

The content is largely correct and unbiased. Some writing exercises are based on problematic assumptions about gender and sexuality (ironic in a context of teaching critical thinking). This reviewer respectfully disagrees with the author as to what constitutes a sufficiently detailed and argumentative thesis statement.

Overall, how do you rate the accuracy of the content?

4

Relevance/Longevity

Content is up-to-date, but not in a way that will quickly make the text obsolete within a short period of time. The text is written and/or arranged in such a way that necessary updates will be relatively easy and straightforward to implement.

The content is generally up-to-date and unlikely to become dated quickly. The layout would allow it to be easily updated if necessary. However, composition classes generally require the use of MLA documentation, so the exclusive focus on APA is problematic.

Overall, how do you rate the relevance/longevity of the book?

5

Clarity

The text is written in lucid, accessible prose, and provides adequate context for any jargon/technical terminology used.

The text is generally accessible, avoiding jargon and defining terms as needed. It would benefit from a consolidated glossary, but is comprehensible without one. In this, the text is thoughtfully tailored to a first-year student's vocabulary and reading level.

Overall, how do you rate the clarity of the book?

4

Consistency

The text is internally consistent in terms of terminology and framework.

The text is consistent in terminology and framework.

How do you rate the overall consistency of the text?

5

Modularity

The text is easily and readily divisible into smaller reading sections that can be assigned at different points within the course (i.e., enormous blocks of text without subheadings should be avoided). The text should not be overly self-referential, and should be easily reorganized and realigned with various subunits of a course without presenting too much disruption to the reader.

The modularity of this text is uneven. It is divided into a wide range of smaller sections, each with a sub-heading. However, the sub-sections are not consistent in terms of length, structure, or content. The text is also significantly self-referential, and relies on the order of chapters as presented when discussing new topics. The interface makes this self-referentiality a problem, because the text does not allow its user to “flip” easily between sections.

The text contains assignments which are “weighted” – that is, given values of 5% of the total grade for the class. This compels use of the text in a particular order and requires instructors to use all parts of the text in order to achieve a “complete” grade for students.

Overall, how do you rate the modularity of the text?

3

Organization/Structure/Flow

The topics in the text are presented in a logical, clear fashion.

The organization of topics within the text is questionable. It begins, usefully, with an extended section titled “Introduction to Academic Writing,” which addresses time management and study skills, differences between high school and university, self-assessment tools for learning styles, and alternative approaches to key tasks. If this were the approach and structure of the entire book, it would be a comprehensive delight.

However, subsequent chapters “flow” less easily. The second chapter divides its attention between writing problems (, commonly confused words, things to avoid) and reading comprehension techniques. The latter has more in common with the first chapter; the former would more logically appear near the end of the book. The third chapter addresses sentence composition (again, largely an issue of correcting grammar problems), so that actual essay composition does not arise until chapter 4. While this approach does work from a micro-to-macro viewpoint, it is likely to be disruptive in the task of getting students writing. Subsequently, types of essays are addressed, and after that how one should select material to include in an essay.

Overall, the organization of the book is idiosyncratic and unusual for a text of this type.

Overall, how do you rate the organization/structure/flow of the text?

3

Interface

The text is free of significant interface issues, including navigation problems, distortion of images/charts, and any other display features that may distract or confuse the reader.

The interface of this text needs significant attention. In .pdf format (the most portable from a device perspective), the links are non-functional, blank pages occur at random, and sections break distractingly across pages. Some sections are colour-coded but no colour-key is provided. Navigation between sections is only achievable by “paging” or scrolling, which is time-consuming and often frustrating, as other sections are not indexed by page number.

The web-access/html interface is more functional, and is clearly the “ideal”, but using it requires ongoing web access, which may not be practical for all students, and which is problematic for reading on hand-held devices and for taking notes.

Overall, how do you rate the textbook's interface?

2

Grammatical/Spelling Errors

The text contains no grammatical or spelling errors.

I noticed no grammatical errors.

How do you rate the grammar and spelling of the text?

5

Diversity and Inclusion

The text reflects diversity and inclusion regarding culture, gender, ethnicity, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, education, religion. It does not include insensitive or offensive language in these areas.

The text's cultural relevance is generally strong. However, the essay topic regarding the sexualisation of teenage girls took a surprisingly uncritical and often slut-shaming approach to the topic, which feels inappropriate for a contemporary Canadian university.

Overall, how do you rate the diversity and inclusion of the text?

4

Recommendation

Do you recommend this book? If not, why?

This text could be revised into a more useful textbook. At present, it has two major problems. The first is that the interface needs to be made much more "user-friendly." The second is that the text is presently customized for use by one instructor. It makes direct reference to institutionally-specific documents, and (of more concern) includes assignments which are "weighted" as portions of the course. Any instructor planning to use this book should be prepared to include textual revision as part of her/his course preparation.

Review of Writing for Success - 1st Canadian Edition

Date submitted

2017-11-13 21:58:43

My Information

Textbook that was reviewed

Writing for Success - 1st Canadian Edition

For what level would this textbook be appropriate?

First Year

My name

Ken Harmel

My title/position

Educational Technologist

My institution

University of the Fraser Valley

Comprehensiveness

The text covers all areas and ideas of the subject appropriately and provides an effective index and/or glossary.

This textbook is very comprehensive, if not a little too comprehensive. Although the information is very useful, there is a lot of reading involved when the focus of the course is on writing. I would use this as a writer's reference guide than as a textbook with the instructor referencing relevant pages.

How do you rate the book's overall comprehensiveness?

5

Content Accuracy

Content, including diagrams and other supplementary material, is accurate, error-free, and unbiased.

The author is obviously very experienced on the topic and has included the required learning content to master the topic of academic writing. The charts and graphs offered a reprieve from content heavy material. They were on-topic, relevant and consistent with the material within each lesson.

The content itself seemed error free, unbiased and remained consistent in its formatting and writing style.

This textbook appears to be written from a conservative, or traditionalist, point of view where academic writing is a formal style of rhetoric. There are good tips in "Writing for Work" sections, but they offer only theoretical tips and not much that can be directly applied in the workforce (but academic writing seems to be the focus of this text, so is by no means a limitation).

Overall, how do you rate the accuracy of the content?

5

Relevance/Longevity

Content is up-to-date, but not in a way that will quickly make the text obsolete within a short period of time. The text is written and/or arranged in such a way that necessary updates will be relatively easy and straightforward to implement.

Academic writing itself hasn't changed much over the years, therefore there is little fear that this content will become dated any time soon.

However, writing styles outside of academia have changed considerably. Writing for the internet, writing informally and business writing has progressed and should be included in the textbook if the focus is to include writers outside of academics.

Overall, how do you rate the relevance/longevity of the book?

4

Clarity

The text is written in lucid, accessible prose, and provides adequate context for any jargon/technical terminology used.

The text uses simple terminology that is easy to understand for native English speakers. It may be difficult for non-native speakers, who may also be a big market for this type of textbook.

Explaining content in a more concise manner would benefit in the length and amount of reading. More doing (applied) than reading (theory) would be beneficial. There are some wonderful examples provided of good writing – these examples could be the lesson in itself.

One writing book that I often use and have found refreshing in its clarity and conciseness is the Macmillan Writing Series. These writing textbooks have similar objectives but weigh heavily on the writing process rather than reading about how to write.

Perhaps breaking it into three different textbooks: Sentence writing, paragraph writing and essay writing. It is not until page 120 until the fundamentals are explained, "An effective paragraph contains three main parts: a topic sentence, the body, and the concluding sentence." If I want to "Write for Success" I would have looked on Google a long time before reaching page 120.

Overall, how do you rate the clarity of the book?

4

Consistency

The text is internally consistent in terms of terminology and framework.

The consistency is great. It has sections that I can refer to throughout the text and a constant writing style. Knowing where to find content and what comes next in each section is very clear.

How do you rate the overall consistency of the text?

5

Modularity

The text is easily and readily divisible into smaller reading sections that can be assigned at different points within the course (i.e., enormous blocks of text without subheadings should be avoided). The text should not be overly self-referential, and should be easily reorganized and realigned with various subunits of a course without presenting too much disruption to the reader.

As mentioned before, this text could be broken into three different texts addressing various levels of learners: Writing sentences, writing paragraphs and writing essays. The target audience is much too broad. This text also aims to offer business writing tips, which further broadens its scope. Business writing could be a fourth text.

The sections in each are clearly defined but dependent on each other. However, instructors could pick apart and use the textbook as needs, much like a reference guide as previously mentioned.

Overall, how do you rate the modularity of the text?

4

Organization/Structure/Flow

The topics in the text are presented in a logical, clear fashion.

The various highlighted boxes are great for a quick reference. They offer a good overview of the section and a good summary along with learning tips. These sections break up the content heaviness of the text.

The headers and subheaders are clear enough. A more comprehensive TOC and / or Index would help a student use this as a reference guide.

More external references may be useful. There are some great topics covered, but are beyond the scope of this text, so a link would be appreciated. For example, using proper connotations (page 67) is useful and very difficult for non-natives – so how can they know whether to use “skinny” or “slender”? Provide a links whenever possible.

Overall, how do you rate the organization/structure/flow of the text?

4

Interface

The text is free of significant interface issues, including navigation problems, distortion of images/charts, and any other display features that may distract or confuse the reader.

The ePub is much preferred to the PDF, although ePub software does not offer the ability to markup as PDF software. The ePub's formatting is also great, which is hard to achieve with graphs and charts. The TOC links don't follow through. And the sections, although clearly defined, do not stand out enough to make it obvious that I am moving on to different topic. Colour would be nice for the headers.

Overall, how do you rate the textbook's interface?

4

Grammatical/Spelling Errors

The text contains no grammatical or spelling errors.

There shouldn't be any in a textbook on Writing for Success, and there wasn't from what I found. It was also written in a conversation manner, which was easier to read and understand than most textbooks on academic writing that I have read.

How do you rate the grammar and spelling of the text?

5

Diversity and Inclusion

The text reflects diversity and inclusion regarding culture, gender, ethnicity, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, education, religion. It does not include insensitive or offensive language in these areas.

The examples remained neutral, so I found it neither alienated or included and specific group. I didn't find this to be an issue at all.

There could have been a section included on writing on sensitive topics. Academia is the place where controversial issues should be discussed, but should be approached in a sensitive fashion.

ESL learners would benefit information such as on page 67, Using Proper Connotations.

Writing in posts and blogs could also be addressed more thorough as discussion forums make up a huge portion of academic work and extend into the workplace.

Overall, how do you rate the diversity and inclusion of the text?

5

Recommendation

Do you recommend this book? If not, why?

I would absolutely recommend this book as it is very comprehensive and offers something for almost every writer. Instructors can pull out what they need as it should not be used in its entirety in any 13-semester course because of the extremes in the learning audience, at one end being the beginner writer and at the other being an advanced writer in their fourth year student.