Short Takes

MODEL ESSAYS FOR COMPOSITION

Tenth Edition

Elizabeth Penfield
University of New Orleans

Longman

New York  San Francisco  Boston
London  Toronto  Sydney  Tokyo  Singapore  Madrid
Mexico City  Munich  Paris  Cape Town  Hong Kong  Montreal
## Contents

**You'll Love the Way We Fly**  
Lori Jakiela  32

> "I hear him coming before I can see him: the rustle of his nylon bag, brushing against seat backs and the beads of other passengers."

**El Hoyo**  
Mario Suárez  36

> "From the center of downtown Tucson the ground slopes gently away to Main Street, drops a few feet, and then rolls to the banks of the Santa Cruz River. Here lies the section of the city known as El Hoyo."

### Chapter 2

#### On Using Narration

40

**A Fowl Trick to Play on a Lawn Tractor**  
Pete Dexter  48

> "While I'd been cutting the grass, the tractor had begun making horrible noises. I am close to my tractor; I depend on it emotionally."

**Learning, then College**  
Meg Gifford  52

> "I acknowledge that postponing college is not easy. Few people supported my decision, telling me that once I stopped my education I'd never get back on track."

**The Night of Oranges**  
Flavius Stan  55

> "It is Christmas Eve in 1989 in Timisoara and the ice is still dirty from the boots of the Romanian revolution."

**Time to Look and Listen**  
Magdoline Asfahani  59

> "The America that I love is one that values freedom and the differences of its people."

**Footprints on the Flag**  
Anchee Min  63

> "As a child, I was taught to hate Americans. 'Long Live Chairman Mao' was the first phrase I learned to write before my own name."

**The Flag (editorial cartoon)**  
Ann Telnaes  66
3 On Using Example

Sweatin’ for Nothin’  Michael Barlow  75
“We have treadmills, rowing machines, Stairmasters, stationary bikes, NordicTracks, butt busters, and wall climbers and we labor at them while going nowhere. Absolutely nowhere!”

Have Fun  Allison Silverman  79
“There’s a particular tone of voice that mothers use when they watch their kids at the pool—a queasy combination of ‘have fun’ and ‘don’t die.’ It’s how my mother sounded when I was leaving the country last year.”

Stop Ordering Me Around  Stacey Wilkins  83
“Food-service positions are the last bastion of accepted prejudice. People go into a restaurant and openly torment the waiter, leave a small tip and don’t think twice about it.”

A Black Fan of Country Music Finally Tells All  Lena Williams  87
“For most of my adult life, I was a closet country music fan. I’d hide my Waylon Jennings and Willie Nelson albums between the dusty, pyschedelic rock.”

Bananas for Rent  Michiko Kakutani  92
“Even bananas have been colonized as billboard space, with stickers promoting the video release of ‘Space Jam’ and the ‘Got Milk?’ campaign turning up on the fruit.”

4 On Using Definition

Chocolate Equals Love  Diane Ackerman  102
“What food do you crave? Add a hint of mischief to your desire, and the answer is bound to be chocolate. Dark, divine, sense-bludgeoning chocolate.”
I Was a Member of the Kung Fu Crew  Henry Han Xi Lau  106

"Chinatown is ghetto, my friends are ghetto, I am ghetto. I went away to college last year, but I still have a long strand of hair that reaches past my chin."

Getting Angry Can Be a Good Thing  Cecilia Muñoz  111

"I am deeply familiar with that hollow place that outrage carves in your soul. I've fed off of it to sustain my work for many years."

The Handicap of Definition  William Raspberry  114

"[It occurs to me that one of the heaviest burdens black Americans—and black children in particular—have to bear is the handicap of definition: the question of what it means to be black."

Crippled by Their Culture  Thomas Sowell  118

"The counterproductive and self-destructive culture of black rednecks in today's ghettos is regarded by many as the only 'authentic' black culture—and, for that reason, something not to be tampered with."

Speed Bump (cartoon)  Dave Coverly  123

On Using Comparison and Contrast  126

Living on Tokyo Time  Lynnika Butler  133

"In Japan, time is measured in the same hours and minutes and days as anywhere else, but it is experienced as a fundamentally different phenomenon."

Who's Watching? Reality TV and Sports  Frank Deford  136

"It would seem to me that reality TV is nothing more than a form of sport."

Playing House  Denise Leight  139

"With the number of marriages ending in divorce these days, it sounds reasonable that many couples want to give marriage a trial run before making any formal commitment. But do the chances of a successful marriage actually improve by cohabiting?"
Singing Like Yma Sumac
Cheryl Merrill 143

“Standing on a termite mound, face-to-trunk with an elephant, I place the flat of my hand against Morula’s fluttering forehead, a forehead as cool and rough as tree bark.”

World and America Watching
Different Wars
Danna Harman 147

“The gruesome video shown Sunday on Al Jazeera—reaching 35 million Arab-speakers worldwide, including about 20 percent of the Egyptian population—will probably never be seen by the average American TV viewer.”

6 On Using Division and Classification 154

What Are Friends For?
Marion Winik 160

“Ah, the Former Friend. A sad thing. At best a wistful memory, at worst a dangerous enemy who is in possession of many of your deepest secrets.”

The Plot Against People
Russell Baker 165

“Inanimate objects are classified into three major categories—those that don’t work, those that break down and those that get lost.”

The Search for Human Life in the Maze of Retail Stores
Michelle Higgins 169

“Attention, shoppers: It is getting even tougher to get help in the aisles.”

Desert Religions
Richard Rodriguez 173

“These have been months of shame and violence among the three great desert religions—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam—the religions to which most Americans adhere.”

7 On Using Process 178

Runner
Laura Carlson 184

“My steps are slow to start. I feel my legs tighten and restrain me, not wanting to exert the effort to propel me forward.”

Independence Day
Dave Barry 187

“If Martha Stewart comes anywhere near my picnic, she’s risking a barbecue fork to the eyeball’ should be your patriotic motto.”
How to Write a Letter  Garrison Keillor  191

“The telephone is to shyness what Hawaii is to February, it’s a way out of the woods, and yet: a letter is sweeter.”

A Woman’s Place  Naomi Wolf  196

“Next time, ask: What’s the worst that will happen? Then push yourself a little further than you dare. Once you start to speak, people will yell at you. They will interrupt, put you down and suggest it’s personal. And the world won’t end.”

On Using Cause and Effect  202

Tiffany Stephenson—An Apology  Bjorn Skogquist  210

“I know now that people need each other, and I wish I could tell the fourth grade that we could all be friends, that we could help each other with our problems. I wish that I could go back. But all I can do is apologize.”

Black Men and Public Space  Brent Staples  215

“After dark, on the warrenlike streets of Brooklyn where I live, I often see women who fear the worst from me.”

When Music Heals Body and Soul  Oliver Sacks  220

“All of us have all sorts of personal experiences with music: We find ourselves calmed by it, excited by it, comforted by it, mystified by it and often haunted by it.”

Technology’s Power to Narrow Our View  Samantha Power  225

“For many of us, though, technology has actually lowered the odds of bumping into inconvenient knowledge.”

Retreat into the iWorld  Andrew Sullivan  229

“Even without the white wires you can tell who they are. They walk down the street in their own MP3 cocoon, bumping into others, deaf to small social cues, shutting out anyone not in their bubble.”

The Class of 2008 (cartoon)  John Deering  234
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dance, Dance, Revolution</td>
<td>Barbara Ehrenreich</td>
<td>246</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;The need for public, celebratory dance seems to be hardwired into us.&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veiled Insult</td>
<td>Anne Applebaum</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Debate about the veil inevitably leads to discussions of female emancipation, religious freedom and the assimilation, or lack thereof, of Muslim communities in the West.&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Should the Drinking Age Be Lowered?</td>
<td>John Cloud</td>
<td>254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Every year around this time, millions of American kids graduate from high school, throw massive parties and get drunk.&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old Enough to Fight, Old Enough to Drink</td>
<td>Debra J. Saunders</td>
<td>258</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;How can we trust 18-year-olds to vote or run for office, but not to legally buy a beer?&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Life (cartoon)</td>
<td>Chip Bok</td>
<td>262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Other Coast (comic strip)</td>
<td>Adrian Raeside</td>
<td>263</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guest Workers and the U.S. Heritage</td>
<td>Jay Bookman</td>
<td>265</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;It's also important to think about the guest worker approach in moral terms, in terms of the values that we claim to honor as Americans.&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We Don't Need 'Guest Workers'</td>
<td>Robert J. Samuelson</td>
<td>269</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Guest workers would mainly legalize today's vast inflows of illegal immigrants, with the same consequence: We'd be importing poverty.&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All These Illegals (comic strip)</td>
<td>Darrin Bell</td>
<td>273</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Americans and Jobs (cartoon)</td>
<td>Steve Kelley</td>
<td>274</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Contents

**Multiple Modes:**
**Two Topics, Six Views** 276

### ON REALITY AND TELEVISION 276

**Watching the World Go By**  Anna Quindlen 278

> "Reality television is the twenty-first-century equivalent of astronaut food: Just point and click, and it's as though you're really alive."

**Ugly, the American**  James Poniewozik 280

> "Reality TV may be so hospitable to immigrants because it's a fun house mirror of the immigrant experience."

**Queens of the Hills**  Amelia Meyer 282

> "On Tuesday mornings, in the dining halls, in the dorms, even in the bathrooms, the standard chatter revolves around a single question: 'Did you watch The Hills last night?'"

### ON FREEDOM, CENSORSHIP, AND EDUCATION 284

**Whose Lathe?**  Ursula Le Guin 286

> "In a small town near Portland late this spring, a novel, The Lathe of Heaven, was the subject of a hearing concerning its suitability for use in a senior-high-school literature class. I took a lively interest in the outcome, because I wrote the novel."

**With a No. 2 Pencil, Delete**  Anna Quindlen 288

> "You can imagine how honored I was to learn that my work was going to be mangled for the sake of standardized testing."

**Solitude and the Fortresses of Youth**  Michael Chabon 291

> "Earlier this month my local paper, The San Francisco Chronicle, reported that a college student had been expelled from art school here for submitting a story 'rife with gruesome details about sexual torture, dismemberment and bloodlust' to his creative writing class."

### Credits 295

**Index of Authors, Essays, and Terms** 298