Contents

1 Writing about Literature 3

Why Write? 3 The Nature of Critical Writing 4 A Sample Essay 5 Some Kinds of Essays 8 **Two Common Approaches** - 9 Explication q A Sample Explication 10 Analysis 11 A Sample Analysis 14 Writing a Review 17 Organization 18 Tone 20 Finding a Manageable Topic 22 Sample Topics in Fiction 24 Sample Topics in Drama 25 Sample Topics in Poetry 26 **Considering the Evidence** 27 Organizing the Material: Comparisons 28 **Communicating Judgments** 32 **Review: How to Write an Effective Essay** 33

2 Style and Format 37

Principles of Style 37

Get the Right Word 38 Denotation 38; Connotation 38; Concreteness 39; Levels of Usage 40; Repetition and Variation 42: The Sound of Sense 44 Write Effective Sentences 44 Economy 44; Parallels 45; Subordination 46 Write Unified and Coherent Paragraphs 47 Unity 47; Coherence 50; Introductory Paragraphs 50; Concluding Paragraphs 52 Write Emphatically 54 A Note on Authors' Names and Other Troublesome Matters 55 Remarks about Manuscript Form 56 Basic Manuscript Form 56 Quotations and Quotation Marks 57 Footnotes 60 Kinds of Footnotes 60; What to Footnote 60; Numbering and Positioning Footnotes 62: Footnote Style 62; First Reference to a Book 63: First Reference to a Journal 64; Subsequent References 65; References to Introductions and to Reprinted Essays 66; Secondhand References 67 Bibliography 67

PART TWO

3 Writing about Fiction 73

The World of the Story 73 Plot and Character 73 Foreshadowing 75 Setting and Atmosphere 78 Symbolism 81 Sample Essay: Atmosphere as Symbol 82 Point of View 87 Third-Person Narrators 88 First-Person Narrators 90 Theme 94 Vision or Discourse 94 Determining and Discussing the Theme 96 **Concluding Remarks** 100

Sample Essays 102

David Lodge, The Rhetoric of a Page of Hard Times 103 John Daremo, Insight into Horror: The Narrator in Faulkner's "A Rose for Emily" 108

4 Writing about Drama 112

Types of Plays 112 Tragedy 112 Comedy 116 Tragicomedy 117 Aspects of Drama 119 Theme 119 Plot 121 Sample Essay on Structure 125 Conventions 130 Gestures and Settings 130 Characterization and Motivation 133 **Concluding Remarks** 135 Sample Essays 136 Kenneth Muir, Hamlet's Foil 137 Joseph Wood Krutch, Moral Vision in Arthur Miller and Tennessee Williams 140

5 Writing about Poetry 145

Harmony and Mimicry 145 Varieties of Imitation 147 The Speaker and the Poet 149 The Language of Poetry 150 Diction and Tone 150 Paraphrase and Explication 152 A Sample Explication 154 Figurative Language 156 Imagery and Symbolism 160 Sample Essay on the Speaker in a Poem 162 Structure 165 Repetitive 165 Narrative 166 Logical 167 Verbal Irony 169; Paradox 169 **Concluding Remarks** 170

xii Contents

Rhythm and Versification: A Glossary 173
Meter 175 Metrical Feet 175; Metrical Lines 177
Patterns of Sounds 178
Stanzaic Patterns 180 Blank Verse and Free Verse 181
Sample Essays 182 Mark Van Doren, Wordsworth's "The Solitary Reaper" 182 Donald Hall, Hardy's "Transformations" 186

6 Writing about Film 192

Film as a Medium 192 Film Techniques 195 Shots -196 Sequences 197 Transitions 198 Editing 199 Theme 201 Getting Ready to Write 203 Sample Essay on Visual Symbols 20.1 Concluding Remarks 210 Sample Essays 211 Charles Michener, Cooling the Jazz Age 212 Penelope Gilliatt, Dillinger 215

Appendixes 219

Appendix A: Research Papers 219 What Research Is 219 Primary and Secondary Materials 220 From Topic to Thesis 221 Locating Material: First Steps 222 Other Bibliographic Aids 223 Taking Notes 224 Writing the Paper 226 Appendix B: Essay Examinations 227 What Examinations Are 227 Writing Essay Answers 228 Appendix C: William Faulkner, A Rose for Emily 231

Index 241