

CONNECTIONS

A Multicultural Reader for Writers
Second Edition

JUDITH A. STANFORD
Rivier College

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London · Toronto

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PREFACE

“Only connect!” This injunction from E. M. Forster’s *Howards End* is widely quoted. Yet Forster’s character goes further: “Only connect the prose and the passion, and both will be exalted, and human love will be seen at its height. Live in fragments no longer.”

A tall order, perhaps, yet this book faces the challenge by urging readers to make such connections. The structure, the apparatus, and the readings in *Connections* all lead students to seek relationships: among the processes of reading, writing, and thinking; among the ideas and emotions expressed by the writers; among the cultures that are represented by the seventy-six diverse selections; and, most of all, between the students’ reading, writing, and thinking and the process of their own lives.

Connections does much more than simply provide a collection of readings that represent various cultures. Part I comprises three chapters that demonstrate critical reading, thinking, and writing skills and suggest that these skills become particularly important when readers encounter unfamiliar circumstances and ideas. In addition, this introductory section asks students to think carefully about the definition of culture and about the concept of reading, writing, and thinking across cultures. Chapter One provides strategies for reading and thinking across cultures. Chapter Two, new to this edition, offers an overview of issues and strategies related to the processes of writing. Chapter Three, also new to the second edition, revises and reorganizes the detailed introductions to the expressive, explanatory, and persuasive aims of writing that were part of the first edition. All three chapters in Part One include extensive examples of students’ writing—from journals and brief annotations of reading to drafts and final copies of papers.

The writing apparatus has been carefully planned to involve students in a variety of roles and rhetorical situations. Each selection is introduced by a brief note about the author and the circumstances of original publication, followed by a series of prereading prompts designed especially for journal writing, brief informal class writing, or discussion that will lead to thoughtful reading. Following each selection are topics for writing and discussion, as well as suggestions for research or for longer papers related to the reading. At the end of each thematic section, “Topics for Making Connections” invite students to stretch their responses beyond a single selection. Every writing suggestion encourages students to read closely, carefully, and with an open mind and seeks to engage students in meaningful writing that raises questions rather than simply answering them.

The readings are divided into nine thematic sections. New to the second edition are “Arrivals, Roots, and Memories,” “American Conflicts and Struggles,” and “Media Messages.” Thirty-seven new selections appear in this edition. Preceding each thematic section is a photograph related to the theme as well as brief quotations taken from the selections that follow. The instructor’s guide provides questions allowing students the opportunity to respond to these photographs and quotations as a means of introduction to the theme. The instructor’s guide also includes detailed discussions of each selection as well as innovative and flexible suggestions for using the text with various semester or quarter schedules.

Part Three is the new “Guide to Finding and Using Information,” which offers a concise overview of the process of research as well as detailed explanations of MLA and APA documentation. A student research paper demonstrates the MLA and APA formats. Abundant student responses—sample discussions, journal entries, summaries, and papers in various stages of development—demonstrate possible ways of reading, writing, and thinking, both individually and collaboratively.

Selections have been carefully chosen to provide diversity in terms of both the voices and the types of discourse represented. Readers will find an intriguing mix of letters, essays, newspaper columns, interviews, speeches, short stories, and poems. Again, the emphasis is on connection; selections represent an extraordinarily wide range of cultures. As one reviewer noted: “Rather than limiting the diversity and ethnic experiences to people of color or women, this text extends ‘multicultural’ to include accounts of immigrants, first generation sons and daughters, the educated and uneducated, and the poor—voices that all contribute to an American melody.”

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Writing and Learning Center faculty as well as English Department faculty at Rivier College deserve sincere thanks for creating a working atmosphere that promotes sharing ideas, exploring new possibilities, and taking risks. My friend, colleague, and first co-author, Rebecca Burnett, has offered suggestions, provided encouragement, and given support in ways that cannot be adequately acknowledged here. As always, Joan O’Brien’s ready wit, unflagging energy, and total commitment to the fine art of good teaching serve as inspiration and reassurance. I thank William Vesterman, Dan Moran, and Barbara Armentrout, who wrote the “Guide to Finding and Using Information.”

Most especially, I wish to thank and praise my Writing and Learning Center colleague Lorraine Lordi, who—as with the first edition of this text—has supported the project and accorded me loyal and unvarying friendship as the book has moved from proposal to final manuscript. Not only has she prepared the main sections of the detailed instructor’s guide, but she has recommended selections and provided useful, apt, and creative suggestions for the apparatus that accompanies each of the selections. In addition, she and a former Writing and Learning Center colleague, Laurie Blagdon, used the first edition of *Connections* in their writing classes and then provided detailed, valuable critiques that allowed me to plan the second edition to be even more accessible and useful to students and instructors.

I thank my husband Don for being a person who listens thoughtfully, who reads widely, and who truly enjoys a good conversation. His observations have helped to shape this book. My sons, David and Aaron, now college students, provide me with plenty of opportunity to discuss and argue about the issues addressed in *Connections*; some day soon I may even win one of those arguments. As always, my mother, Arline Dupras, has given me help in every possible way. Editing, word processing, and proofreading are important, of course, but absolutely essential are the love of reading, the dedication to creative teaching, and the ever-hopeful view of life that she has passed on to me. The reviewers of this text offered helpful and wise suggestions which I greatly appreciate: Laurie Blagdon, Rivier College; Katherine Heenan, University of Connecticut; Lorraine Lordi, Rivier College; Hildy Miller, University of Louisville; Nancy Shapiro, University of Maryland; William E. Smith, Western Washington University; and Molly Abel Travis, Tulane University.

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For my sister, Cynthia Hervey,
who knows well the meaning of connections

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Slave Ship

charles ball

75

This brief but graphic account of an African's forced voyage from his homeland to early America allows the reader to witness firsthand the terrifying journeys forced on thousands of black people.

The Promised Land

mary antin

78

A Russian immigrant recalls the wondrous and magical first weeks of life in America during the late 1800s. The novelty of even the most basic of objects, from rocking chairs to street lamps, leads to an early sense of what it means to live free.

Crossing the Border

miguel torres

83

This view of a young Mexican as he illegally enters the United States seeking employment allows readers to ask the question: Should the United States open its borders to Miguel and others like him?

A Boat Person's Story

vo thi tam

87

In a numb and distant voice, Vo Thi Tam describes the agonizing journey she and her family endured as they attempted to leave South Vietnam.

Arrival at Manzanar

jeanne wakatsuki houston

and james d. houston

92

This child's-eye view of the inhumanity suffered by Japanese-American citizens during World War II may evoke laughter but also leaves the reader thinking hard about the lives led by those forced to spend the war years in detention camps.

How It Feels to Be Colored Me

zora neale hurston

99

Instead of complaining or exploding in anger, this author examines the delights and the dilemmas she faced growing up in America, a black woman comfortable with who she was, even though she sometimes felt like she was standing against “a sharp white background.”

I Am What I Am

rosario morales

104

Call it a song, a poem, or a woman's exploration. Read it aloud with passion, or quietly alone. However you choose to connect to this piece, you will discover not only who Morales is, but perhaps you may glimpse who you are, too.

Two Kinds

amy tan

107

A Chinese mother and her Chinese-American daughter, caught up in the glamor of the American dream, realize how different their goals and desires are. In this short story, the reader gets a sense of the challenges that must be faced for two different cultures, as well as two different people, to harmonize.

Refugee Ship

lorna dee cervantes

117

Caught between two cultures, the speaker recounts how life for an immigrant is often one of drifting between two forces, without the hope of landing whole and in one piece.

Topics for Making Connections: Arrivals, Roots, and Memories

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Letter to My Mother

tran thi nga

121

Although Thi's letter to her mother in China reveals the conveniences of daily life in America, in the empty spaces of this piece, Thi also whispers why her heart is aching and her spirit lacking.

I Remember Papa

harry dolan

124

Dolan challenges the myth of the lazy black man as he journeys back to the memories of his own father—a man who, despite a life void of opportunity, faced the challenges of poverty and suffering by doing the best he could with the little he had.

Chinese Puzzle

grace ming-yee wai

131

Through recollections of her early life, Wai attempts to reconcile both her relationship with her father, who was killed in a robbery when she was ten years old, and her Chinese culture with her life in the United States.

For My Indian Daughter

lewis p. johnson

138

Johnson tells us how an understanding of his Native American culture has led to a deeper understanding of his own identity and his responsibility not only to his family's past but also to his daughter's future.

My Father's Life

raymond carver

142

Even though Carver's father cheated on his mother and couldn't handle money or alcohol, he cared about his family and never pretended to be perfect. In this piece, Carver reconciles his feelings for the man who profoundly influenced his life.

Mom's in Prison: Where Are the Kids?

virginia a. huie

150

Although it's an issue seldom addressed in this country, Huie reminds readers that when mothers are imprisoned the children they leave behind also suffer tremendous punishments for crimes in which they had no part.

The Loudest Voice

grace paley

155

When a young Jewish girl is asked to be the main narrator in a Christmas play, her dilemma, and her parents' and neighbors' responses, suggest both the comic and tragic elements of being caught between cultures.

Digging

seamus heaney

161

Even though the speaker in this poem has chosen a different career path from those of his Irish father and grandfather, as he digs into the meaning of his life with his pen, he realizes the deep connections that continue to bind these generations together.

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Learning to Read and Write

frederick douglass

167

In this classic essay, Douglass recounts his poignant and ingenious struggle to educate himself during his years in slavery.

“I Just Wanna Be Average,”

mike rose

173

When a school system tracks students into convenient categories of high, middle, and low learners, what are the consequences—for the school system, for the students, and for society?

The Teacher Who Changed My Life

nicholas gage

185

With clarity and grace, Gage recalls the one teacher who reached out to a young immigrant boy and fostered within him a hunger for learning and a sense of dignity.

I Show a Child What Is Possible

jacques d’amboise

191

What do children need to astound themselves with all their potential? In this essay, d’Amboise shares his own experiences as student and teacher to remind all teachers of life’s most valuable lessons.

Graduation in Stamps

maya angelou

196

With the clearest voice, the deepest wonder, and the most exact language, Angelou writes of the day she learned, amidst compassion, anger, and sorrow, what graduation really meant for her and the rest of her black classmates.

The Misery of Silence

maxine hong kingston

208

Courage and language: In this narrative, the author reflects on the years in school when her silence became her only sanctuary against the noise of a foreign, American language.

Eventually she finds the courage to speak, but even today she seeks the right words to give her heart in a country whose major language differs from her own.

Famous All Over Town

danny santiago

213

Rudy, a rebellious member of the inner city Jesters, is determined to change his life by becoming a star pupil in his teacher's eyes. When Rudy slips back to his old ways after a class, we wonder: Was Rudy a lost cause to begin with, or did a rookie teacher extinguish the spark that could have led him to a brighter future?

Elena

pat mora

221

In her native country of Mexico, she could share everything with her children. But in this new country, America, the children have learned English and talk among themselves while she, their mother, struggles to learn the right words to reach them.

Topics for Making Connections: Ways of Learning

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Just Walk on By: A Black Man Ponders His Power to Alter Public Space

brent staples

227

Out for a simple late-night walk, Staples faces the deadly threat that infects the night and, perhaps, all of America: prejudice.

A Question of Language

gloria naylor

232

As she reflects on her childhood and a time when she was called "nigger," Naylor realizes that the hurt and violence words inflict are most often caused by the speaker's intention and tone of voice.

Rootlessness

david morris

236

Can Americans really establish meaningful roots and relationships when we are constantly moving, constantly racing to get ahead? Morris offers reasons why we should slow down and solutions to our hopscotch life-style in this country.

Profound Changes

elena padilla

241

Why is it that some American immigrants today blend into the mainstream culture with relative ease while others cling passionately to the culture they've left behind? In this essay, Padilla examines the factors and circumstances surrounding these two different responses.

Not Just the Inner City: Well-To-Do Join Gangs

seth mydans

247

Rebellion has always been a necessary element in the American adolescents' search for self. Today, however, that search has middle-class teenagers rambling down a relatively new path as they leave the comforts of their homes and head out to find their identities in inner-city gangs.

The Face of Beauty

diane ackerman

252

Of course no one ever said it's fair that women who are graced with beauty and men who have tall, fine body structures tend to be more successful in life. But, unfortunately, that's the way it usually is. And, according to Ackerman, that very well may be the way it has always been.

Seventeen Syllables

hisaye yamamoto

257

The Japanese art of haiku is one of the world's most simply beautiful poetic forms. Yet in this short story, beneath the quietly measured seventeen syllables, lives are transformed, rearranged, and even completely shattered.

First Practice

gary gildner

268

Camaraderie, cooperation, challenges, championships. Those are some of the best possibilities within the world of sports. However, in this poem Gildner flips the coin and huddles the reader into sports' darker, dangerous side.

Topics for Making Connections: American Conflicts and Struggles

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Shanghai Blues

william zinsser

273

With openness and mutual respect, two jazz musicians connect Chinese conservatory students to American culture by introducing them to rhythm and blues and to the fine art of improvisation.

Quilts and Women's Culture

elaine hedges

286

Hedges discovers that the seemingly simple quilt designs reveal the ties that bound women to their place in life and that these artistic masterpieces also reflect the deep ties women maintained with one another and with their communities.

Dreaming Big Dreams: An Interview with

Bharati Mukherjee

bill moyers

292

In this interview, Mukherjee explains how an immigrant in America finds roots and meaning in a culture so different from her own. Moyers's questions and Mukherjee's responses ask us to examine our own sense of place, our own sense of America, and our own sense of ourselves.

I Have a Dream

martin luther king, jr.

302

This classic speech, full of powerful rhythms, metaphors, and images, takes readers back to a time and place when a leader's words made concepts like freedom and unity touch the hearts of those seeking to live and prosper in the United States.

Our Barbies, Ourselves

emily prager

307

She's a harmless plastic twelve-inch high toy, right? Decide for yourself as Prager examines the social implications behind this bouncy-haired doll with the so-called perfect figure, perfect clothes, perfect house, perfect car, and perfect sexless boyfriend.

Indian Humor

vine deloria, jr.

310

"Hey! Did you hear how well-dressed Custer was for his last battle? Apparently when the Indians found him, he had on an Arrow shirt!" Whether or not this joke caused laughter might depend, as Deloria reveals, on whether or not the audience is privy to the extensive history of rich, American Indian humor.

Everyday Use

alice walker

315

One sister had everything—brains, beauty, and a life of opportunity and change. The sister left behind had only the simple life she had always known. Should the family quilts go with the sister who values them as artifacts, or should they stay behind with the one who will follow tradition and put them to "everyday use"?

Today Is a Day of Great Joy
VICTOR HERNÁNDEZ-CRUZ
323

This exquisite poem is a tiny capsule of images conveying great joy and hope.

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and Creations
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Letters: The Place of Women in the New American Republic
john adams and abigail adams
329

These three letters give readers a first-hand look at American history. A wife urges her husband to remember that women should be treated fairly as he and the other male leaders design rules that will shape the destiny of this new country.

Where I Come from Is Like This
paula gunn allen
332

Gunn analyzes the ways the Native American woman achieves her identity and explains the sources of her strength and her sense of purpose.

Between a Rock and a Soft Place: A Century of American Manhood
peter filene
340

Caught between the stereotype of the macho, Old West cowboy and the image of the sensitive, caring “new man,” today’s American male, according to Filene, lives a life of frustration and contradiction.

Asian Girls: A Cultural Tug of War
david haldane
357

When Asian families make America their new home, conflicts often arise between parents and their teenage daughters when Eastern values and Western freedoms clash.

On Being White, Female, and Born in Bensonhurst
marianna de marco togovnick
363

As she reflects on the tight-knit Italian neighborhood that nourished and shaped her identity, Torgovnick celebrates the love and compassion with which she was raised. At the same time, she rejects the narrow vision and prejudices that continue to isolate and infect this small New York community.

My Man Bovanne
toni cade bambara

374

When the children are grown, or at least almost grown, and it's finally the mother's chance to spread her wings and have some fun, her children are embarrassed and chide her for acting younger than her age. However, a man, whose eyes no longer see, recognizes her youthful spirit and charm.

The Sunday News

dana gioia

380

As he's flipping through the Sunday newspaper, the speaker sees a recent wedding picture of a woman he once loved. Although he ridicules the woman and angrily tosses the paper aside, he still carefully clips out the announcement and stores it away. Why?

Topics for Making Connections: Men and Women

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10: Rights and Responsibilities

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The Solitude of Self

elizabeth cady stanton

385

One hundred years ago, Stanton urged women to take courageous steps—including cherishing solitude—as they moved toward independence and equality.

The Backlash against Feminism

susan faludi

391

Although the feminist movement in America originated over thirty years ago, not only have women not achieved their original goals of equality and independence, but, Faludi believes, they are in the process of losing any ground they've gained due to increasing male hostility toward women in this country.

Why Blacks Need Affirmative Action

jesse jackson

405

Jackson contends that educational and professional opportunities for most blacks trail decades behind those available to white Americans. He urges an affirmative action plan that will help to close this gap.

It Is Time to Rethink Affirmative Action

catharine stimpson

408

It may not be the perfect solution to problems of equality in America, but, as this author demonstrates, affirmative action is a flexible program that can be revised to meet the needs of the modern, changing era.

The Price of Preference

shelby steele

413

Although Steele realizes how members of his race have benefited in the past from affirmative action rulings, he still maintains that blacks would be much better off without this mandated government crutch.

A Loaded Question: What Is It about Americans and Guns?

leonard kriegel

422

Kriegel claims that both gun proponents and those opposed to the sale of firearms are prompted by the same feeling: fear.

Here Comes the Groom

andrew sullivan

432

Sullivan makes a case for allowing gay lovers to be legally wed in civil ceremonies, which he sees as a conservative, positive step toward welcoming the gay community into mainstream America.

The Case against Civil Rights for Homosexuals

michael levin

437

If, as pro-choice advocates maintain, individuals should have the right to act on their own moral beliefs, then, conservative Michael Levin cleverly asserts, these same liberals shouldn't mind one bit when landowners exercise their own consciences when it comes to renting—or not renting—to homosexual tenants.

Lullaby

leslie marmon silko

439

In the depths of winter, an old Navajo woman's mind sifts through years of memories as she struggles to make sense of what she had and what was taken from her.

Ethics

linda pastan

448

Education may pose the tough questions about students' values and the meaning of life, but it is through living and aging that the complexity of possible answers becomes clear.

Topics for Making Connections: Rights and Responsibilities

440

11: Questions of Language

451

Bilingual Education: The Key to Basic Skills

angelo gonzalez

453

Children whose first language is not English will learn better and have a higher level of self-esteem, argues Gonzales, if they are first allowed to study school subjects in their native tongue.

Bilingual Education: Outdated and Unrealistic

richard rodriguez

457

Rodriguez contends that instead of producing learned, capable American citizens, bilingual education only serves to keep students whose first language is not English separated from mainstream America. Rodriguez favors an English language curriculum for all students.

Four-Letter Words Can Hurt You

barbara lawrence

461

What, if anything, is wrong with using four-letter words? Plenty, says Lawrence, for many of these words carry connotations that are particularly derogatory to women.

Talking Like a Lady

robin lakoff

464

Not only do men and women act differently when placed in social situations, but also, as Lakoff points out, the words they choose and the inflections they use reflect their dominant/submissive relationships.

Linguistic Chauvinism

peter farb

474

For years, the white majority have assumed that African-Americans are less educated because of their language and speech patterns. Farb contends, however, that black English is a sophisticated language historically connected to past cultures and events in American history.

What's Wrong with Black English?

rachel l. jones

482

Black English may very well serve to keep African-Americans as a proud and separate group, says Jones, but it also excludes them from the advantages and opportunities enjoyed by Americans who speak "white" English.

What Means Switch

gish jen

486

She is a Chinese-American, and he is an exchange student from Japan. Their schoolmates assume that because of their Oriental heritage, these two teenagers belong together. Why,

then, can they not hold on to one another for more than a brief moment in time? Why can't they speak the same language?

Don't Let Them Chip Away at Our Language

kitty tsui

501

What is more important—that people conform to the rules of a language, or that language conform to the needs of its people?

Topics for Making Connections: Questions of Language

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12: Media Messages

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Identity Crisis: The African Connection in African American Sitcom Characters

minabere ibelema

509

As Ibelema's study shows, the characters who star in America's major black sitcoms present a disturbing and unrealistic image of blacks because, in general, they range from those who are indifferent to their rich cultural background to those who mock other African-Americans who take pride in their African ancestry.

Indians in Aspic

michael dorris

520

In reviewing the American hit movie *Dances with Wolves*, Dorris wonders whether Hollywood films perpetuate myths about Indians or show the truth of Native American life.

The Visigoths in Tweed

dinesh d'souza

524

Instead of fostering open-mindedness and critical thinking skills, D'Souza believes that many who teach in America's colleges and universities today are actually shortchanging students by teaching trendy, unworthy pieces written by unknown authors, from little-known countries.

What Campus Radicals?

rosa ehrenreich

534

In contrast to D'Souza's assertion that higher education offers students a liberal, wishy-washy curriculum, Ehrenreich draws on her own experience at Harvard, as well as on the catalogs from other major universities, to support her contention: Instead of encouraging free thinking and independence, educators today are conservatives who teach mainly white, male classics.

Let's Put Pornography Back in the Closet

susan brownmiller

541

Although she appreciates the importance of free speech, Brownmiller lashes out at pornography as a vehicle that directs violent hate messages toward all women. On this point, she takes the stand that all pornography should be deemed illegal and banned.

Notes from a Free-Speech Junkie

susan jacoby

545

Yes, pornography denigrates, humiliates, and violates women. Even so, Jacoby contends, it should not be banned from the American marketplace. Censorship and, ultimately, banning pornography is up to parents and responsible adults who exercise free and appropriate judgments in this democratic society.

True Trash

margaret atwood

549

This is a tale of a steamy summer romance, of stolen kisses on a moonlit beach, of lonely young women with puckered mouths and sad eyes who want for more and look for it in the young, macho counselors at an all-boys camp. Each new episode keeps the reader reading, and, in the end, Atwood, in all her writing glory, ends up with the last laugh.

Indian Movie, New Jersey

chitra divakaruni

569

In a dark theater, this movie-goer can block out the realities of the darker outside American world and remember a time, and a place, where those who lived in India not only belonged to the larger community but were also appreciated.

Topics for Making Connections: Media Messages

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