

To the Teacher

Description of Text

Choice and Consequence is designed to promote skills in academic reading, critical thinking, and writing across several disciplines. It takes a reading-to-write approach, with each chapter immersing students in the exploration of a global issue before requiring them to form and support their own views on the topic. This text is designed for a semester-long course.

Each of the four chapters explores one topic: websurfing in the workplace, sports doping, genetically modified food, and alternative energy. Students read, analyze, evaluate, and synthesize information to develop opinions in order to write a strong academic response. Students receive practice working with authentic material with the goals of ensuring that it is thoroughly understood in terms of both content (comprehension) and coherence (text analysis). Students are taught to evaluate sources and arguments. Some practice with citation is included.

Rationale for Approach

Students need to be able to research and comprehend information from multiple sources and from a variety of disciplines in order to succeed in academic writing. They need to develop skills and strategies involved in deconstructing, contemplating, and evaluating authentic texts of different genres. Students also benefit from analyzing and practicing strategies used by professional writers to convey meaning, such as the repetition of key terms, the use of a variety of logical transitions, and the choice of details and examples to illustrate points.

Choice and Consequence contains news stories, formal and informal essays, and journal articles from both print and online sources. Some are included for schema building and providing overall content and terminology. Others serve the dual purpose of modeling academic writing conventions and providing source material on a topic. Reading widely and critically from various types of publications helps students learn to detect an author's tone and purpose and to evaluate the validity of ideas and information presented as support.

Choice and Consequence promotes the recursive process of *sustained content reading* through vocabulary building, text annotation, summarizing, and synthesizing. *Choice and Consequence* offers more than the typical pre- and post-reading exercises. It asks students to engage with the texts in order to develop

the skills of questioning what they read, comparing and contrasting different perspectives on a topic, and formulating working hypotheses requiring verification or rejection through further reading. Students are also made aware of ways in which published writers integrate facts, examples, differing perspectives, and ideas from multiple sources without plagiarizing. The reading comprehension and analysis skills taught in this book are crucial for college success.

Choice and Consequence allows students to assess their own strengths and weakness in critical academic skills. Recursive reading and writing practice in high-interest content areas links literacies and commands insightful discourse. It is the aim of this text and its authors to empower students with the language and concrete understanding of a rather abstract notion: that no choice in writing is made without a resulting consequence.

Skills/Proficiencies We Assume Students Have

We have assumed that reading-to-write and critical-thinking skills such as annotating passages, evaluating ideas, and searching for further information may be very familiar to students. The instructor is free to manipulate the material to serve the needs of particular classes by using chapter readings as the sole source of content or, alternatively, as a springboard for further research and development of language and concepts. We have also assumed that students at this level have had instruction in and practice with academic writing and basic research skills. We assume they have access to a writer's handbook that can guide them to APA or MLA citation style. Ideally, concepts such as thesis statements, coherence, and support should not be new to them. Although teaching critical reading skills is the primary focus of the book, instructors can design a variety of writing tasks based on chapter themes.

Overview of Chapter Readings and Activities

Canvas the Topic

Each chapter begins with a brief introduction to the topic, followed by schema-building questions and/or vocabulary. This section prepares students to focus on the bigger picture and to gain an in-depth coverage of the topic. It also provides ample opportunity for discussion.

Focus In

Questions or tasks provide context for each reading passage. Students may be asked to skim and scan to activate knowledge, predict content, and judge length and readability of articles. In some cases, they are asked to look for and mark

specific content. They learn that the background information, terminology, and underlying social, legal, and ethical questions surrounding the versions controversial issues are timeless even though some articles are not as recent as others.

Read

Authentic readings have been selected to mirror what students encounter when they conduct searches for college writing assignments. Some articles can be accessed through direct links—using *Google* or *Alta Vista*, for example. Others are available only through online library databases that house journals and publications from special interest groups and discipline areas. In each chapter, students will find articles that cross-reference each other, allowing them to observe how source material is sifted and compared. Notes designed to look like “sticky notes,” titled Think about It, are placed strategically in the margins of reading passages to prompt students to think critically. These questions are designed to give students pause but need not be discussed immediately as they appear. They require students to read between the lines, contemplate an author’s particular choice of words and supporting details, relate ideas to those in other readings in the chapter, and/or research a particular aspect of the topic in further depth. The Think about It prompts serve as a model for interacting with a text, including marking notable points and junctures, questioning authors, and exploring one’s own beliefs. The Think about It notes thus differ from other comprehension and analysis questions about the readings that can be answered in a fairly straightforward manner from a close read of the text itself.

Zoom In

In a variety of pre- and post-reading activities, comprehension is facilitated and assessed through true/false and fact/inference questions, text analysis, vocabulary study, critical thinking, and discussion. Topical and academic vocabulary exercises employ a lexico-grammatical approach. Open-ended activities such as outlining, paraphrasing, and short reader response writing prepare students for the final chapter writing assignments by requiring them to return to the readings several times and to engage in critical thinking.

Throughout the Chapters

In addition to immersing students in content and vocabulary, this text teaches and tests reading skills such as recognizing tone and bias, identifying audience and purpose, observing patterns of development like distinguishing facts from opinions, and differentiating between main ideas and supporting details. These skills are introduced and practiced in the text with further skills practice pro-

vided on the companion website. Students will finish each chapter with a sense of accomplishment and emerge as better readers.

Sorting Sources

One of the advantages of using only the sources given in this text for student writing assignments is that it creates a controlled environment, which helps students learn the research process in a controlled way and lessens the amount of time it takes teachers to evaluate student writing. After completing the printed and online activities for each reading within a chapter, students are asked to complete a Sorting Sources chart. This graphic organizer is provided online for students to download and complete for each chapter. The charts help students extract appropriate information from the readings and to document sources in their writing. After working through all of the readings in a chapter, students return to the information from each reading captured in the chart. Learning to use this type of graphic organizer is a transferable skill—one that students can easily adapt for use in future academic courses.

The Big Picture

Each chapter ends with some assignments that could be the basis of discussion, in general terms, or of writing, in more specific terms. Teachers should freely adapt these Big Picture tasks as needed for their course. Students and instructors can easily create alternate or additional writing assignments. For example, one suggested assignment might be for students to form and write an essay of opinion based solely on sources provided in the chapter, citing three out of the five as support; an alternate assignment might be to use the provided readings as a springboard for guided research, possibly involving updates on the issue explored in the chapter. Some instructors may choose to attack writing through rhetorical modes; others may prefer to assign persuasive essays for each topic, allowing students more stylistic freedom in developing their arguments.

Companion Website

The companion website at www.press.umich.edu/esl/compsite/choicecons/ provides interactive quizzes focusing on reading comprehension, text analysis, and vocabulary building that constitute an integral part of the course. The website provides some writing practice in outlining, paraphrasing, and summarizing. The companion website is not merely supplemental; together with the text, it encourages students to move back and forth between printed and online materials and activities—exactly as they will be required to do when they conduct research in college courses.