

HANDBOOKS reviewed
(referred to subsequently by underlined author or title)

Author	Title	Publisher	Year
<u>Corbett</u>	Little Eng Hndbk, 4th ed.	Scott, Foresman	1984
<u>Corder & Ruszkiewicz</u>	Hndbk of Current Eng, 7th ed.	Scott, Foresman	1985
Crews & Schor	<u>Borzoi</u> Hndbk for Writers	Knopf	1985
Dornan & Dawe	<u>Brief Eng Hndbk</u>	Little, Brown	1984
<u>Gefvert</u>	Confident Writer: Norton Hndbk	Norton	1985
<u>Guth</u>	New Eng Hndbk, 2nd ed.	Wadsworth	1985
<u>Hacker</u>	Rules for Writers	Bedford/St. Martin's	1985
Hodges & Whitten	<u>Harbrace Coll Hndbk</u> , 9th ed.	Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich	1984
Howard & Tracz	<u>Essential Eng Hndbk</u> & Rh	Bobbs-Merrill	1985
Kirkland & Dilworth	<u>Concise Eng Hndbk</u>	Heath	1985
<u>Kolln</u>	Lang & Comp: A Hndbk & Rh	Macmillan	1984
Leggett, Mead & Kramer	<u>Prentice-Hall Hndbk for Writers</u>	Prentice-Hall	1985
Marius & Wiener	<u>McGraw-Hill Coll Hndbk</u>	McGraw-Hill	1985
Muller	<u>Am Coll Hndbk of Contemp Eng</u>	Harper & Row	1985

KEY to notes on handbooks

- (1) Rh - The Rhetoric Section - all have this - most have the old stuff, by which I mean Bain-type paragraphs, development of paragraphs just like Warriner's. Old modes means classification, definition, comparison/contrast, etc.; if these are treated in any way other than as real types of essay, I so note.
- (2) Res - The research paper - mainly, I looked to see documentation styles - new MLA or old, or both; whether APA style included.
- (3) Lang att - Attitudes, stated and implied, toward language, levels of usage; whether standard English (St Eng in my notes) is treated as sacred and monolithic - any definition of St Eng; attitudes toward dialects and/or non-standard forms; whether writing is seen as a social transaction. "Sex pron use" - has to do with, chiefly, the book's recommendations for treatments of the 3rd sing. with gender-indefinite antecedent.

I chose to focus on the next four items because they are issues which seem to come up in my 306 classes - or perhaps I impose them. I looked for, first, how easy these topics were for me to find (if I have trouble finding them, can I expect a freshman to find them at all?) and, next, whether explanation and/or "rule" was clear and brief, and yet full enough. These are graded poor, ok, good. "Divided" means: Is this topic treated, particularly through examples given, as one easily defined problem? Or, is there enough so that the student can see these issues as concepts?

- (4) Commas
- (5) Par - parallelism
- (6) Passive - passive voice verbs - how to recognize, how to revise, when to revise, when to use
- (7) Pron ref - ambiguous or unclear pronoun reference
- (8) Ex - exercises

Sometimes below item 8, I list a particular feature, or strength, or weakness of the book.

Corbett

1. Rh--old stuff, sounds like Warriners
2. Res--assumes a lot of knowledge--no illustrations of any kind of card, lib, bib, or note old MLA, not new--APA, yes--diff not spelled out
3. Att/Lang--brevity becomes prescription--"sloppy expression=sloppy thinking"
sexist pron use dealt with but buried in explanation, thus hard to find unless you are looking for it
4. Commas--good
5. Par--ok
6. Pass--not enough expl for fr
7. Pron ref--not divided, not enough expl
8. Ex--no

Harbrace

1. Rh--old modes--nothing on inv, begins w/ arrangement--old stuff
2. Res--New MLA and 1983 APA--ok
3. Lang att--not much discussion--blames it all on the dictionary fairly prescriptive
sex pron--only an oblique ref --all examples are he
4. Commas--good
5. Par--whole chapter--divided well, very good
6. Pass--buried in "shift" chapter--you have to know about this in order to find it--virtually useless
7. Pron ref--divided--pretty good
8. Ex--yes

Generally, easy to find things

Ess Eng Hndbk

1. Rh--intends to focus on "contractual bond bet reader and writer" but gives lots of rules--same old modes, but sample essay thru process is pretty good
2. Res--no APA, but new MLA and fnt form, both used in same sample res paper--has Ibid. !!!!
3. Lang att--nothing, slang="vulgar"
no disc of sex pron use
4. Commas--ok
5. Par--a chapter, but definition is incomprehensible--skimpy
6. Pass--no real disc, only 3 examples
7. Pron ref--I can't find it--even in index
8. Ex--no

Am Coll Hndbk

1. Rh--ok, old modes
2. Res--good lay out,,new MLA, no APA
3. Lang att--"for better or worse, st Eng preferred" but then questions existence of st Eng--moves to idea of social registers and on to "print code"--but this good stuff is in the back of the book--deals with sex pron use here, but not in the pron/ant agr section
4. Commas--skimpy--a rule and 1 or 2 examples
5. Par--whole chapter, but it has only 8 sent--divided
6. Pass--only 1 p., too brief
7. Pron ref--divided but too skimpy
8. Ex--yes, but on entire chap, not on topic at hand

Kolln

1. Rh--ok
2. Res--no new MLA, no APA
3. Lang att--wants to "expand remedial grammar to rhetorical gram" good on levels of diction--whole chap on What Is Good Eng? good stuff on sex pron use, even gives history, which I didn't know, of generic he--emphasizes personal voice in revision
4. Commas--not in a section by itself, but scattered thru the grammar sections
5. Par--in two places, co-or sent and effective paragraphs
6. Pass--whole chapter, explained transformationally, but without the tech jargon--excellent--the best expl of pass I've seen discussion ok on when to use and why
7. Pron ref--I can't find--expl of pronouns is too structural here
8. Ex--yes

Borzoi

1. Rh--old modes, but good distinction bet subj area, topic, and thesis
2. Res--new MLA and a sort of APA, called "scientific"
3. Lang att--says that st Eng is "appropriate for your writing," apparently assuming that all academic writing is the same. Deals w/ sexism and racism of lang in a chap called Appropriate Meaning--but these issues are not listed in contents and so are hard to find. Sex pron use treated here too--nicely done, but hard to find
4. Commas--ok
5. Par--good chapter, easy to find, good examples or exercises, I don't remember what ex. stood for in these notes
6. Pass--hard to find, not much
7. Pron ref--in chapter on shifts--ok
8. Ex--no

Punct. also treated in sections on syntactic structures

Holt-Guide

I looked at the hard-back version--I think this is a rhetoric, not a handbook. If you want my response, I have my notes.

Brief Eng Hndbk

1. Rh--old stuff, Bain type paragr w/ topic sent--but most of these bks do that, so I probably shouldn't even note it here--old modes. a chapter on essay on lit
2. Res--new MLA, but in a separate little booklet--nothing in my ~~no~~ notes on APA--I'll check--a nice section called 20 Questions most often asked about respapers
3. Lang att--they say they are "prescriptive about st Eng, more relaxed w/ style"--but I don't quite see what this means--where does one stop and the other start? Examples of non-st are all BEV or So. rural, reinforcing the stereotypes Sex pron use--a small note in the text
4. Commas--good
5. Par--good, good ex (examples or exercises? examples I think)
6. Pass--brief--requires an understanding of verbs--easy to find
7. Pron ref--a chapter, easy to find, some division--ck
8. Ex--yes

Concise Eng Hndbk

1. Rh--current pre-writing exercises and classical topics--old modes--a section on writing about lit
2. Res--new MLA, no APA
3. Lang att--uses EAE instead of st Eng, but nothing in this intro section on levels of lang and usage--does have pretty good stuff on making meaning and on literacy
Sex pron use--ok--1st example with sing antecedent is her
4. Commas--maybe too brief
5. Par--too skimpy--find non-par under "errors"--not the way I teach this
6. Pass--in section on Voice and in another section--I'll check--grammar explained transformationally--ok
7. Pron ref--ok
8. Exercises--yes, but not many

nice cross referencing--esp. in area 6

Gefvert

1. Rh--several invention heuristics--looping, grid, pentad, topics old modes--treats par as miniature essay and as punctuation--which I like because I do too
2. Res--new MLA and APA--shows book both ways--and footnotes--old MLA
3. Lang att--"appalled at unrelieved prescriptivism" but recognizes reality of readers' reactions--usage based on small survey--acknowledges probs of sexism and racism--social and political implications--geog and sp/wr differences recognized--good expl of st Eng
Sex pron use--good--sample res paper on 3rd per pron
4. Commas--ok--but in attempt not to be prescriptive, this part is a little looser than I would like
5. Par--ok--a little skimpy
6. Pass--good expl of the grammar--but how to revise is in a sep. chapter and not much there
7. Pron ref--almost imposs to find--listed under referential words and phrases--why?--again what's there is ok, but skimpy
8. Ex--yes, but by chapter, not by topic at hand

McGraw-Hill

1. Rh--old stuff--old modes, which are used to define "rhetorical approach"
2. Res--new and old MLA, no APA
3. Lang att--a whole chapter on avoiding sexist lang but the formal is implied to be always better than informal or other levels, no prominent mention of levels of tone or of individ differences--"correct Eng requires..." esp. noticeable, to me, in part on copulative deletion
4. Commas--confusing--lots of tiny rules given equal billing with the nec. ones
5. Par--whole chapter--good--offers several choices in showing revisions--a fine chapter
6. Pass--in 3 diff places--where my judgments range from poor to ok to good
7. Pron ref--unclear--an ok minus
8. Ex--yes

layout makes it hard to distinguish "right" examples from "wrong" ones

Guth

1. Rh--old modes, also includes "other prose forms" like summaries, which I like
2. Res--new MLA and APA
3. Lang att- "use st Engⁱⁿ all written work" followed by a simplistic def of st Eng--treats non-st in a patronizing tone. Sex pron use--conservative
4. Commas--confusing, too long, too unorganized, for instance treats rest/non-restr in 2 places, clauses and phrases
5. Par--not divided well--dealt w/ in 2 places
6. Pass--under awk sent-- what is there is ok, but not enough
7. Pron ref--good, divided --easy to find
8. Ex--yes

I have hated using this book--I have trouble finding things I need. If I can find what I need, sometimes there isn't enough to help.

Hacker

1. Rh--~~seems~~ ^{more} to imply that Rom.outline in nes part of process--old stuff on par development, but not old "types of essays"--will check
2. Res--new and old MLA, no APA
3. Lang att--"treats rules as rhet. devices not as moral prescriptions"--aims to prevent hypercorrection. But it seemed pretty typical handbook to me--rules still seem hard and fast as presented, despite disclaimers in text. Only dialect used as ex. is BEV, ~~sometimes inaccurately~~
Sex pron use--ok
4. Commas--good, clear--easy to find--good ex, whatever that means.
5. Par--good, but in 2 places
6. Pass--hard to find, very little expl
7. Pron ref--easy to find--ok, as far as it goes, but not enough, not divided
8. Ex--yes, some w/ ans., some without

Corder and Rusz

1. Rh--good, old modes there, but rec as heuristic--outlines have Rom #--chapter on writing about lit. More up-to-date than most.
2. Res--notes diff types of res--old and new MLA, ~~but~~ ^{also} APA--good on integrating quotes
3. Lang att--intro chapter--good and accurate disc of levels of lang--egalitarian, but realistic
Sex pron use--not in section on agr, but in the chap on pronouns--good
4. Commas--good
5. Par--hard to find--in a chapter on sent development--ok, once you find it
6. Pass--good--good expl and definition
7. Pron ref--good--divided nicely
8. Ex--yes

Prentice-Hall

1. Rh--good--use "what if" situations rather than rules--old modes there, but not treated as pure--used, instead, as ways of organizing
2. Res--new MLA, no APA--info not easy to find
3. Lang att--non-st="illiterate=uned--heavy pejcratives--"no place in your writing"--even down to pronunciation--but despite my lack of the post-vocalic r, I can spell surprise
Sex pron use--gives pl solution, but seems to like the old way--
he--better
then uses a snippet from Sledd's "Linguistics of White Supremacy" as an example of good writing
4. Commas--ok
5. Par--a whole chapter--good also at paragraph level, too
6. Pass--not in table of contents--in both voice and shift sections
--no cross-ref--very little expl
7. Pron ref--ok
8. yes

looks like a book hard to use in sections--wants to be read straight-through