

Baruch COLLEGE | WRITING CENTER

WRITING FOR READERS NEEDS WORKSHOP

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MATERIALS NEEDED

Students: a text to be revised

LEARNING GOALS

At the close of the workshop, students will be able to:

- Articulate the purposes of Reader-based and Writer-based Prose.
- Describe key features of each, and effectively identify them in context.
- Articulate and implement revision strategies to effectively transform Writer-based into Reader-based Prose.

OVERVIEW

In this workshop, students explore the meta-language of Writer-based Prose and Reader-based Prose in order to distinguish between writing for discovery and writing for communication. Two primary activities take place:

- Students compare a Writer-based draft and a Reader-based revision of the same text in order to identify key features and extract strategies for transforming Writer-based Prose into Reader-based Prose.
- Students identify passages of Writer-based Prose in their own drafting and practice revision in light of the strategies previously articulated.

LESSON PLAN

Introduction

Welcome students by asking about their goals and what has brought them to the workshop. Explain that the workshop introduces two kinds of writing—**Writer-based Prose** and **Reader-based Prose**. Briefly define the word “prose” before defining “Writer-based” as “based on a writer’s needs” and “Reader-based” as “based on a reader’s needs.”

Part One: Examining Two Kinds of Text

1. Distribute **Handouts 1: “Writer-based Draft”** and **Handout 2: “Reader-based Revision.”** Frame the activity that follows:
 - Identify Handout 2 (the Reader-based text), as the writer’s revision of Handout 1 (her earlier, Writer-based draft).
 - Explain that you will read both texts aloud to students, and then the group will compare and contrast them together.
2. Read Handout 1 aloud; then read Handout 2 aloud.
3. While distributing **Handout 3: “Two Kinds of Writing,”** ask students to begin by describing their experiences as readers of the two texts. Consider prompts such as:
 - *What does it feel like to read this?*
 - *What do you think about the writer?*
 - *How does your opinion of her change between the two versions?*
4. Facilitate close reading of the two texts, beginning with the **Purposes of Writer-based Prose**. Elicit and document on the whiteboard such observations as:

	Writer-based Prose
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documents and facilitates unfolding of the writer’s thoughts (associational wandering from Beyoncé to Nazism to “post-racial”) • Enables testing—of tone and voice, potential counter-arguments, etc. (“Now some will argue... Yes, I understand...”) • Enables the discovery of ideas (arrival at concluding inquiry) • Is self-focused rather than concerned with readers’ understanding

5. Segue to the **Purposes of Reader-based Prose**, explicitly comparing to the **Writer-based draft** where possible:

	Reader-based Prose
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly communicates a specific idea or claim (“Our cultural figures...”)

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflects purposeful choice of tone, voice, and counter-argument (“But even if national politics...”; “This coded demand...”) • Demonstrates awareness of a reader’s needs for understanding
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6. **Synthesize the two columns to identify strategies for transforming Writer-based drafting into Reader-based Prose.** Prompt students to extract principles by asking, “What did the writer have to do, change or decide to get to the Reader-based version?” Elicit such strategies as:

Strategies for Revision	
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take a point of arrival (e.g., the bolded question) as a point of departure for a claim or thesis • Identify passages of associational tangents and discard them • Review collections of potential counterarguments to select the most likely or useful; discard others

7. **Following the structure of Handout 3 from left to right and top to bottom,** continue to guide students through collaborative analysis of the two texts, the differences between them, and the identification of actions or strategies for shaping Writer-based prose into more Reader-based forms. Arrive at findings such as:

	Writer-based Prose	Reader-based Prose	Strategies for Revision
Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Narrates a writer’s thinking process chronologically • Surveys or “dumps” data, evidence or examples (“Beyoncé Knowles’s L’Oreal Corporate Contract...”; “Two of the preferred...”) • Ignores conventions for citation or attribution (“Don’t quote me...”) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses a hierarchical structure with topic sentences that overview information before evidence is provided • Signposts purposefully transition from one idea to the next, or from a claim to an example (“Consider, for example, the reigning queen...”) • Cites and presents sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Code claims, analysis and evidence in the draft in order to introduce them to readers as such • With a claim or thesis identified, select appropriate ideas from the draft to serve as topic sentences
Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contains language that is “private”—undefined or decontextualized (“sistas”; “post-racial”) • Uses a conversational (or otherwise inappropriate) tone (“Now some will argue...”) • Contains ungrammatical passages, including fragments and run-on sentences (“forbid to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contextualizes and defines terms to ensure shared understanding (“post-racial”) • Uses an academic voice • Observes sentence boundaries and rules of grammar 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replace, define, or contextualize private language • Identify readers’ expectations for tone and voice • Proofread

	change”; “Yes, I understand...”)		
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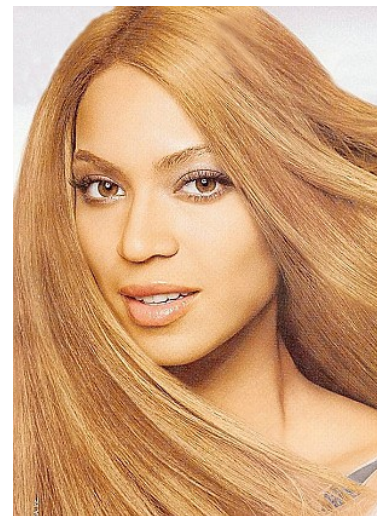
Part Two: Practicing Revision

1. **Re-emphasize that Writer-based Prose can be valuable** if we understand it as a step in the writing process *to discover* what the writer has to say—and if we revise *to communicate* to a reader.
2. **Direct students to identify a passage of Writer-based Prose in their own drafts.**
 - Ask that they work to revise this passage into a more Reader-based form.
 - Check for understanding by roving the room as students work.
 - If any student does not have a text to work with, supply **Handout 4: “Writer-based Draft Continued.”**

WRITER-BASED DRAFT

Beyoncé Knowles's L'Oreal Corporate Contract signed in July 2002 states the following concerning her hair image, "hair will be of adequate length and color before shoots....., and will notify Advertiser far in advance of concerts in North America of any radical change to her hair..."

In paraphrasing various sections of Beyoncé's L'Oreal Hair Contract, she is basically forbid to change her hair color and style and skin tone color plus shade as well to keep her approximately 10 million dollar contract for a period lasting at least five years as I understood. Don't quote me on the actual dollar amount, but somewhere in the realm of millions. Two of the preferred L'Oreal images of her are exhibited below:



Now some will argue well this is the **Advertisement Business** and most models sign-on to similar contracts about maintaining a certain look, but in terms of African-American Females, why must we be seen in this particular look which is mostly attributed to "blue-eyed and blonde-haired white women." That is a known fact that the look is mostly attributed to white women, not sistas. Even though Beyoncé's eyes are brown, but still in my opinion this is part of the old guard in terms of the look of the "master race" out of Hitler's Nazism. Yes, I understand we live in a "post-racial" American society and so many of my opponents will stay and fight me on this argument about "Eurocentric Looks are being pushed on Black Women" in a racist ideological way, and say I am far-reaching, but with that said, if we are in a "post-racial" society then my question is **why must the majority of Main-Stream American Advertisement reflecting African-American Women in hair beauty advertisements always be geared towards our adopting a different self hair-image that is not our own natural hair texture?**

READER-BASED REVISION

After the 2008 election, in which the United States chose its first black president, many Americans began to speak of ours as a “post-racial society,” meaning one that had progressed beyond its violent history. If a fatherless black boy could grow up to hold the highest office in the land, after all, surely race was no longer determining the outcomes of human lives.

But even if national politics has finally come to value the contributions of those who are not white, it’s difficult to say the same for other aspects of American life. Our cultural figures—musicians, actors, celebrities, models—are especially constricted by the assumption that whiteness is more beautiful, more sophisticated, than blackness. In other words, we demand that black entertainers reflect Eurocentric traits if they are to be considered elegant, rather than merely “ghetto fabulous.” Consider, for example, the reigning queen of elevated black culture, Beyoncé Knowles. Beyoncé has been a spokesmodel for cosmetics giant L’Oreal since 2001, when she signed her first five-year contract for \$4.7 million.¹ That first agreement included a section titled “Artist’s Appearance,” which generally outlined Beyoncé’s obligation to maintain “approximately the same appearance” throughout her relationship with L’Oreal.² This coded demand to stay pretty may be off-putting, but it’s a reasonable request if, like Beyoncé, one is hired to be pretty. What’s far more problematic is the specific line requiring her to “give notice of any substantial...alteration to her hair.”³ No other part of her body or style is mentioned specifically. Why? No other part of her body is as important in creating her racial identity. Indeed, her appearances on behalf of L’Oreal consistently emphasize flowing, strawberry-blonde hair. In every ad, whether blown to the side or away from her face, her naturally Afro-textured hair is always straight, shiny, and moving in the wind.

¹ Glaister, Dan. “L’Oreal Denies ‘Whitening’ Beyoncé Knowles’ Skin in Cosmetics Ad.” *Guardiannews.com*. The Guardian. 8 Aug 2008. 9 Nov 2011.

² “Beyoncé’s Head = Big Booty.” *thesmokinggun.com*. 14 Aug 2004. 9 Nov 2011.

³ *Ibid.*

TWO KINDS OF WRITING

	Writer-based Prose	Reader-based Prose	Strategies for Revision
<p>Purpose <i>What is the writer's purpose? Is it clear? What is the main idea or thesis and where is it expressed? Who is the intended audience?</i></p>			
<p>Structure <i>How is the information organized and presented? What role do topic sentences play? Where is the evidence or examples?</i></p>			
<p>Language <i>Are there undefined terms? Are sentences clear?</i></p>			

WRITER-BASED DRAFT CONTINUED

Tom Burrell a black advertising visionary states the following, "Black People are not dark-skinned white people." "In fact, they are much more. They are survivors of the Middle Passage and centuries of humiliation and deprivation, who have excelled against the odds, constantly making a way out of 'No way!' At this pivotal point in history, the idea of black inferiority should have had a 'Going-Out-of-Business Sale.'"

I think Tony Burrell is right, at this point, selling the Black Woman in the image of the White Woman should have long gone out of business, but yet it seems just the opposite, like it is picking up some new form of steam especially as it relates to the "unbelievable weavable business". I think there is enough revenue going to the buying of weaves amongst Black Women, that we could put hoods of young people through college with the "weavable fund" alone. I think it is morally corrupt how Mainstream American Media chooses to ignore the natural beauty of black hair and promote something that is totally artificial, and package that up and sell it to young gullible sistas. There ought to be a law that forbids them for only selling basically one type of main image of beauty in terms of the "straight hair" look, when clearly so many of us Black Women do not grow hair naturally in such a state, nor do we prefer the "straight hair" look. A great deal of us want to see our true selves, and even more need to see their natural hair-image as a great symbol of beauty but don't even know it.

According to Tom Burrell the first ever The Black Inferiority Campaign started in 1620. He goes on to state in his work Brainwashed that the first ever American Branding started in 1620 which circulated around selling Black Folk as commodities. Black Folk were turned into commodities by American Landowners at the birth of America. Mr. Burrell reminds his readers that in 1781 Thomas Jefferson stated that blacks are inferior in both body and mind.