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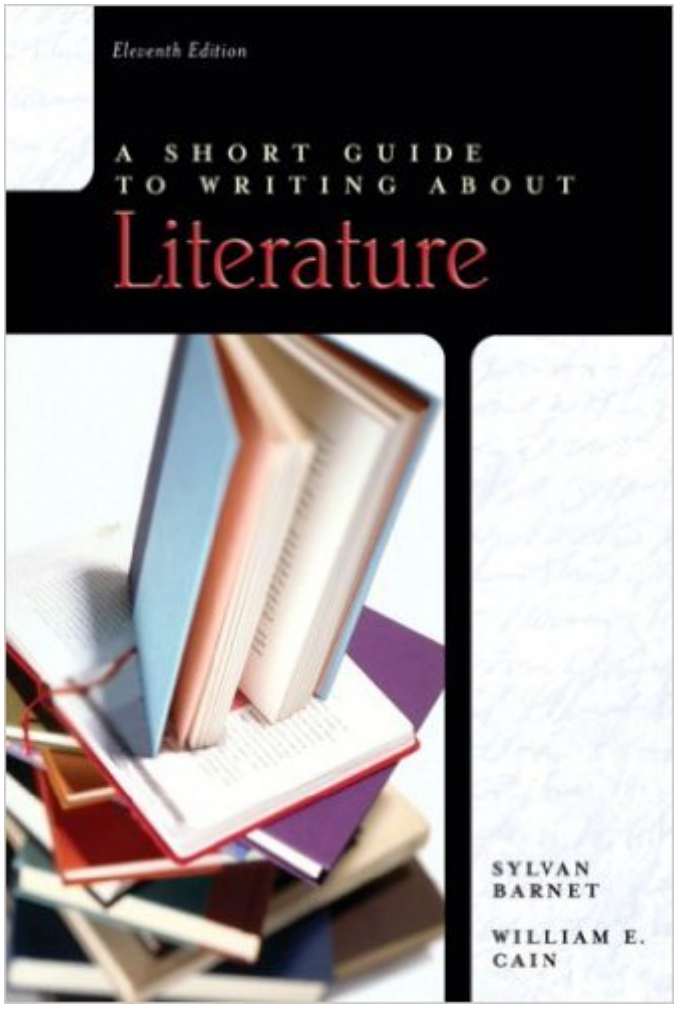
Short Guide To Writing About Literature, A (11th Edition)



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Synopsis

Part of Longman's successful Short Guide Series, A Short Guide to Writing about Literature,11/e, emphasizes writing as a process and incorporates new critical approaches to writing about literature.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I teach literature to undergraduate students majoring in interdisciplinary arts and sciences, business, computer science, and nursing. Since I can’t count on them having had training in writing about literature, I often assign specific sections of this text, or make it recommended reading for students with less confidence in writing about literature.My students almost universally praise this text, and I think *their* opinions, rather than those of us teachers, are the ones that really count. They find the specific, nuts-and-bolts suggestions useful, and the explanations clear and helpful.I recommend this text to any student (high school or college) who wants a concise guide to writing about literature, and any teacher or professor whose students usually lack a solid background in literary study.

I bought this in addition to my textbook for an Intro to Literary Studies class. It wasn’t required but my professor was not clear about the mechanics of a literary paper, so it was just the step by step guide to writing papers that I needed. It tells you how to take notes and start thinking about writing a paper about each type of literature: prose, poem, drama, etc. Then it shows you an example paper and explains why it’s a good paper. It’s not an MLA guide, although it covered that, too.

The back of the 11th edition gives five reasons why this edition is better than the other ones. I disagree that the 11th edition is that much better than the 9th edition, which I also have. The paper cover of the 11th edition feels flimsier and weaker. The back of the 11th edition claims there are five (good) reasons exclusive to the 11th edition as to why you should buy it. The written explanation for the first reason could be both simpler and clearer: "A new introduction in Chapter 1 explains writing as a process in which you argue with--and ultimately explain something to--yourself." Arguing with yourself does not sound either safe nor advisable, especially if you are having a bad day. Explaining things to yourself sounds like one needs help of the non-literary kind. Reason number two sounds good: "An updated chapter on print and electronic research [offering] advice..." This is nothing new, but why shouldn't the reader benefit from another's digital wisdom? The amount of digital information available on the Web grows exponentially faster than one can keep up with. Reason number three (sounds like door number three) is from the more is better paradigm: Twenty model student essays--including three new to this edition... This is a very good feature of this writing guide. I never counted how many there were in the 9th edition, but in this case, more is better. Generally, I have found the example essays, analysis and explications to be of great help, except for the section on meter, which I found just as difficult as the 9th edition's explanation. Reason number four: "Updated bilographical references..." More of the more is better paradigm. Can't complain with that. Reason number five (the last one): "New and expanded 'Rules for Writing...'" Almost every How to Write book or textbook I have looked at contains a section like this, so, I have to say this is nice but nothing really new. I gave this new edition four stars out of five. The first reason didn't make sense and, I thought, needed re-writing to be clearer thus more helpful and/or convincing. The real reason for why you, or anyone else should buy this book, is that it is very good at taking a subject, which can be made as complex or as simple as you desire, and breaking it down into smaller, more productive and clearer steps, which should help you write better. I recently bought two copies of the 11th edition, one of which I gave to a student, and the other, I have to admit--I kept for myself. And that is my second reason for why you should buy this book. It is good enough, even though the 9th edition was not broken and needed repair, that I bit the bullet and kept a copy for myself. This is one of the more helpful reference and How to Write, self-help books available.P.S. I was not an English major and this book series did a very good job at answering most of the questions I have and have had.

"A Short Guide to Writing about Literature" is a good little introduction to college-level writing skills

and literature that is often taught at the college level. Helpful for those who struggle with writing, but not necessarily useful to individuals who already have good writing skills. The biggest drawback is the constat "you can do it!" attitude. Could be helpful to some who need that extra push, but I found it a little demeaning.

Just as advertised. Exactly what I needed for class. This is a really good text book, it’s one the professional student should hold on to even after the semester is over.

Easy to read, the author guides you through a series of logical steps to analyzing literary works and then presenting coherent arguments,

The book is in great shape and would have been a fantastic find if the Instructor had changed mind about using the book.

I was very satisfied!

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