

## To the Student Writer

The *Borzoi Handbook* is organized as a reference work that you can consult whenever you meet a problem in your writing. Much of its advice deals with relatively small matters such as where to place a punctuation mark or which tense to choose. But the book is also a resource for writing in a wider sense. If you are a college student facing a composition course, we suggest that you begin by reading Chapters 30-35, which will give you a sense of the true "basics"-finding a good idea, developing an appropriate structure, and progressing from draft to draft until you are sure you have made your point clearly and effectively. It is only toward the end of that process that you need concern yourself with the rules and conventions that are often taken to be the heart of acceptable prose.

To get answers to questions you may already have in mind, you need not wait for an instructor to assign specific chapters. Any part of the book can be understood independently of the others, and you will find cross references to any unknown terms. But you should also have a general sense of the *Handbook's* features. You can get acquainted with those features by glancing at the following parts of the book.

1. The **inside front cover** provides an abbreviated table of contents and a guide to key lists within the text. The Checklist for Revision (p. 420), can be especially useful when you are trying to improve your drafts.

2. The **Table of Contents** (p. xi) shows how the whole book is organized into parts and chapters.

3. The **inside back cover** provides a list of Symbols for Comment and Revision that your instructor may use in marking your papers. Note that problems such as a comma splice can be marked either by a symbol (*cs*) or by a section number (2b). Since section numbers accompany the symbols on the inside back cover, you can always find the relevant discussion by locating its *thumb index*-the red box in the margin.

4. The **index** (p. 564) is your surest means of locating any point you need to look up.

5. The **Index of Diction** (p. 341) is a handy alphabetical list which can help you resolve common problems of word choice-for example, *affect* versus *effect*.

6. The **Glossary of Terms** (p. 538) provides definitions of grammatical and rhetorical terms and indicates where you can find a fuller treatment of each term.

Once you grasp the various ways in which this book can be consulted, you should find it of lasting use to your writing in college and beyond.