**Essay Writing Day 1**

**Thinking of Yourself as a Writer Chapter 1**

Students often do not think of themselves as “real writers.” Speaking as teachers with many years of experience, we strongly believe that you *are* real writers, with important things to say. We hope that the samples of student writing included in this book will help to convince you of the power of student writing. We also believe that the only way to improve as a writer is to write regularly and write a lot. Thus, even in this first chapter, we have included many writing activities to show you ways of exploring your attitudes toward writing and your past experiences with writing, as well as strategies for getting words on paper and coping with common writing problems.

**Forming a Classroom Community**

**Getting Acquainted**

This activity encourages you to get acquainted with your classmates by conducting an informal survey and then writing up the results.

1. Move around the room and try to find as many of the types of people listed below as possible. Write down their names in the blanks.
2. Find someone who is majoring in the same area that you are.

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1. Find someone who is working at a job you would like to have. What kind of job is it?

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1. Find someone who speaks more than two languages. (three? four? More?)

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1. Find someone who has done a lot of writing in the past – either for school assignments or for personal reasons.

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1. Find someone who likes to draw or paint.

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1. Find someone who is an expert at using computers.

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1. Find someone whose favorite singer is the same as yours.

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1. Find someone who likes to play a sport you like to play.

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1. Find someone you can call if you need to get homework assignments. Write down the person’s name and phone number.

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1. Now write up your results. Imagine your reader is a classmate who was absent on the day of the survey. Do not try to include everything, just the most important parts. Here are some questions you can use to focus your writing.

⚫ What did you learn about other members of the class that was interesting or surprising?

⚫ What did you learn that might be useful to you?

⚫ What did you learn that might be useful to others?