

## Foreword

This volume, *Invention in Rhetoric and Composition* by Janice M. Lauer, launches the Reference Guides to Rhetoric and Composition Series. Invention is a fitting topic for the initial volume in this undertaking, for it addresses one of the most basic questions a writer asks: what should I write about? To whom? And why? What materials can I use? Where can I find them? What will move and persuade my readers? How can I even begin to think about what I might write?

These writers' questions rest on even more fundamental philosophical questions about the nature of writing: What can we as individuals and communities know and claim? How do we know things and how might we share that knowledge with others? How can we represent what we know and believe and how does representation realize or transform our beliefs and knowledge?

Invention also raises the most practical classroom questions: How can we help our students find subjects they want to write about, topics on which they will have much to say, and that will lead others in the classroom to think more deeply? How can we help our students locate the fundamental impulses to communicate important messages to others through writing?

Because invention raises such fundamental problems of theory and practice, its history extends back to the earliest reflections on effective communication in classical rhetoric. Thus this volume ties together some of the most ancient rhetorical wisdom with some of the most contemporary thinking about what it is to compose a text. Because *Invention in Rhetoric and Composition* ties together some of our most ancient and modern thinking, it is especially fitting that this book initiates the Reference Guides to Rhetoric and Composition, which will attempt to bring together the wide range of learning applicable to learning to write at all levels of education and in all settings.

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