

## WRITING-INSTRUCTION SOFTWARE WITH HBJ WRITER

Joel Nydahl

<b>Program:</b>	<i>HBJ Writer</i>
<b>Available From:</b>	Harcourt Brace Jovanovich 1250 Sixth Avenue San Diego, CA 92101
<b>Price:</b>	" <i>HBJ Writer for the Computer</i> ": \$50 " <i>HBJ Writer for the Student</i> ": \$25
<b>Licensing agreements:</b>	None
<b>Requires:</b>	IBM PC or PC-compatible with 256K RAM and 2 double-sided disk drives (An Apple II version may be issued if market indicates a need and if IBM version meets with success.)
<b>Applications:</b>	Computer-aided writing instruction and word processing for beginning writers in a classroom environment.

*HBJ Writer* is finally available to composition teachers who have been waiting to get a look at the commercial version of *WANDAH*, the writing-instruction program developed at UCLA in the late 1970's.<sup>1</sup>

Heralded by Ellen McDaniel as a "hybrid of academic knowledge and commercial know-how,"<sup>2</sup> *Writer* is a pedagogically sound example of what Lynn Veach Sadler, Wendy Greene, and Emory W. Sadler have called the "heuristic stage" in computer-aided writing-instruction—"the use of specially developed software to tutor students in the composing process."<sup>3</sup>

### PACKAGING

*HBJ Writer* is packaged in two versions—one to be purchased by students, the other by schools or departments. The first version, "*HBJ Writer for the Student*"—containing a PREP(ARATION) disk, a PAPERS (DOCUMENT) disk, a user's manual, a keyboard template, and a quick-reference card—cannot stand alone; it works only when piggy-backed onto the second version. The second version, "*HBJ Writer for the Computer*"—an institutional package—is self-contained. In addition to everything in the student version, it also includes the WRITER (SYSTEM) disk and the SPELLER disk.

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Since "Writer for the Student" works only with "Writer for the Computer" and since the system disk must remain in the computer while the program is running, schools must buy one institutional package for each work station in use. Unfortunately, this method of marketing does not allow students to carry usable versions of *Writer* away with them—unless they buy the more expensive version—either at the end of the class or at the end of the term. Such, evidently, is the price to be paid for a marriage of convenience between Academe and the Market Place.

## LIMITATIONS OF THE PROGRAM

Because of limitations which *Writer* imposes on the number of document disks and on the number and size of files that may be written on each disk, *HBJ Writer* is appropriate only for beginning writers (who are, after all, its intended audience). Anyone who produces either many or lengthy texts—especially if he or she wants to retain them—will encounter some inconveniences with *Writer*.

The problem lies in *HBJ Writer* requiring students to use the PREP disk to format the PAPERS disks in a way idiosyncratic to *Writer*. Since Harcourt Brace Jovanovich has programmed the PREP disk to prepare only three PAPERS disks (each of which will hold a maximum of 70 documents or 50,000 words) and unless students delete old papers, they will not be able to compose more than 210 papers or about 150,000 words with *Writer*. (Papers are limited to about 2,000 words; but as students run out of space—*Writer* tells them this—they can split the screen and continue a paper under a new name. When it comes time to print, *Writer* can link the two files together in one continuous essay.)

## HBJ Writer AND THE COMPOSING PROCESS

The ideal writing-instruction program would perfectly replicate the writing process. *HBJ Writer* does not achieve that perfect replication; like all writing-instruction programs, it can only approximate a recursive process in a linear mode. It does, however, mitigate the problem of breaking into the flow of the writing process in order to address a discrete part of it by having its composing aids on-line—by integrating them, in other words, with the word processing part of the program.

Although the structure chart for *HBJ Writer* seems to treat prewriting, writing, and revising as simple, discrete stages, *Writer* actually encourages students to see writing as a complex, recursive act. For example, although "prewriting" suggests an act confined to a time before the creation of something else called "writing," *Writer* allows and encourages students to use its prewriting aids before, during, or after the creation of text.

## COMPOSING AIDS

Besides representing the kinds of tasks likely to prove helpful to inexperienced writers who are getting acquainted with a topic and trying to think of something to say, the prewriting aids work well as parts of a total software package. *Writer* can save all prewriting files under special extensions so that students can easily call them up at any point in the composing process in order to print or edit them or refer to them on the split screen.

**FREEWITING** first asks students to type continuously until they have generated about 150 words; it then asks them to write one sentence that summarizes the main idea or is suggested by it. Students can repeat this cycle as many times as they wish.

**NUTSHELLING** helps students clarify their ideas by asking them to give a paper a working title, state its purpose, declare its intended audience, and summarize its main idea.

**PLANNING** asks students to give a paper a working title, come up with a thesis, and fill in both supporting statements and opposing ideas. Obliquely, it teaches argumentation with prompts such as, "I believe that my thesis is true because" and "Someone who disagrees with my thesis might say that . . ."

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**INVISIBLE WRITING** helps premature editors and aids students with writer's block. It asks students to concentrate exclusively on current thoughts by writing a minimum of 100 words while the screen is blank; <RESTORE> allows them to view their writing when they are finished.

Two other composing aids, "Organization" and "Commenting on a Paper"—both used by students after they have written drafts—encourage the view that writing is almost always in some stage of incompleteness.

**ORGANIZATION** asks students to do three things: (1) get a fresh perspective on a "completed" paper by creating a new NUTSHELL (a rethinking of the purpose, audience, and main ideas, which they can compare to their prewriting nutshell); (2) get an overview of how ideas are linked by checking TRANSITIONS and PRONOUN antecedents; and (3) review structure by producing SENTENCE OUTLINES from papers.

**COMMENTING ON A PAPER** deserves special elaboration since it is one of the most valuable aids in the program; it gives students a sense of audience. Prompted by a "Writer's Commenting Guide" on the top half of a split screen, students can comment intra-textually on the papers of others that appear on the bottom half. Since these comments—which can be of any length—are highlighted on the screen and can be printed out, students can benefit from the criticism of up to nine peer editors, who may sign their names or remain anonymous. As an added bonus, teachers may utilize this feature to evaluate and grade papers on-screen.

## FORMATTING AND PRINTING A PAPER

If *HBJ Writer* has one gigantic wart, it is formatting. Although it is very easy for students to print an unformatted draft to get an overview of an entire paper, printing a polished final version is significantly more difficult and produces an extremely messy and difficult-to-read on-screen text.

Students must insert elaborate formatting commands which appear on the screen but do not print out. Since these commands must appear at the beginnings of the lines in which they are to be invoked, commands governing only a few words frequently split sentences or phrases into different lines. For example, in order to underline two words in the title "Reading *Moby Dick* at the Beach" and center it, students must type:

```
>con
Reading
>ulon
Moby Dick
>uloff
at the Beach
>coff
```

It is difficult to guess why *Writer* uses such a cumbersome method of formatting. Since there is no way students can tell what output will look like until printing actually takes place, the possibility for error is great and the frustration factor is high. (Students can view clean, formatted text on the screen as printing is about to begin, but they cannot do anything to change it without leaving the printing mode—and even then they are limited to making changes in the same unwieldy way they formatted in the first place, with all the same chances for error.)

## EASE OF OPERATION

*HBJ Writer* is relatively easy to use, especially for those with little computer experience. Most students should master the basic functions with an hour or two of practice. Cursor movement is fast—although those familiar with the IBM keyboard may find an initial difficulty since, for some inexplicable reason, *HBJ* has turned the F1-F4 func-

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tion keys into cursor keys and the standard cursor keys into function keys (for example, "Search" and "Copy"). Students should have no difficulty handling large chunks of text since copy/move and search/replace operations are easy to carry out.

*HBJ Writer* is a reasonably transparent program. Once students are familiar with it, they should be able to work on their own without much difficulty. The easily accessible, logically arranged menus are designed so that the key which invokes a command always represents the first letter of the command (for example, <S> = "Save," <C> = "Continue working," and <Q> = "Quotation marks and associated punctuation"). The user's manual is clearly written, well organized, and aptly illustrated. Except when it comes to formatting a paper, students should not find *HBJ Writer* an intimidating program.

For peace-of-mind's sake, students will find that it is very difficult to do serious inadvertent damage to a paper; not only will a warning "beep" sound when they try to delete large blocks of text, but they can always use <RESTORE> to rectify any deletions as long as no other key has been pressed in the meantime.

## OVERALL EVALUATION

Writing-instruction programs like *HBJ Writer* finally must stand or fall on the degree to which they enable students to become better writers. Stressing, as it does, writing as process rather than product, *HBJ Writer* ought to be a substantial aid in many composition classes. Provided that a knowledgeable teacher gives informed instruction and allows students to understand the tentative and exploratory nature of the composing act, students should find themselves gently linked, not chained, to the program. Although *Writer* will lead students through the stages of a paper, from conceptualizing to formatting and printing, they may easily skip any of the steps and move forward and backward at will.

By encouraging constant revision, *Writer* encourages students to interact with their writing; by refusing to correct possible flaws—for example, in word usage, punctuation, and spelling—it forces students to take command of the responsibility for their writing. Since the on-screen messages are nonprescriptive, students should not end up the slaves of someone else's idea of how a paper ought to be written.

*HBJ Writer* is not the perfect program; it is, however, a successful step toward that goal. On a small and limited scale, it approximates what Bryan Pfaffenberger has called an "integrated word-processing program."<sup>4</sup> Although *HBJ Writer* has not completely solved the problem of breaking into the flow of the writing process in order to address a discrete part of it, it has mitigated the problem by having its composing aids on-line—by integrating them, in other words, with the word processing part of the program.

In summary, *HBJ Writer* will not take the place of teachers of writing. As Susan Tyler Hitchcock has pointed out, "computers don't teach writing; people do."<sup>5</sup> *Writer* may be an answer, however, for those seeking a reasonably priced, easy-to-use writing-instruction program based on sound pedagogy—a program that does not require teachers radically to redesign courses already in place and of proven worth.

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Type of Commands	Menu-driven
Spelling Dictionary	Yes: Approximately 40,000 words
On-Screen Help	Yes
Cursor Movement	In all directions: by space, word, sentence, paragraph; next or previous screen; end or beginning of lines; end or beginning of text
What-You-See-Is-What-You-Get	No
Automatic Word Wrap	Yes
Footnotes	No
Reformat Paragraphs	Yes
Undo	Yes
Split Screen	Yes
Copy/Move	Yes
Search/Replace	Yes
Running Header/Footer	Yes/No
Page Numbering	Yes
Variable Spacing	Yes: Single, double, or triple
Style Analysis	Yes: "Be" verbs; prepositions; abstract words; "-tion" and "-sion" words; gender-specific words; sentence and paragraph length; sentence-length graph
Mechanics Check	Yes: Potentially misused words; punctuation check
Copy-Protected	Yes: students cannot make a backup copy

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## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Developed by Morton Friedman, Earl Rand, Ruth Von Blum, Michael Cohen, Lisa Gerrard, Andrew Magpantay, Susan Cheng, Arturo Pisano, and Louisa Mak.

<sup>2</sup>*Research in Word Processing Newsletter*, Vol. 3, No. 9 (1985), 7.

<sup>3</sup>*Research in Word Processing Newsletter*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (1986), 2.

<sup>4</sup>*Research in Word Processing Newsletter*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (1986), 11.

<sup>5</sup>*Research in Word Processing Newsletter*, Vol. 3, No. 7 (1985), 7.

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## Conference on the Applications of SNOBOL and SPITBOL

October 9-11, 1986, has been set for ICEBOL 86, the second International Conference on the Applications of SNOBOL and SPITBOL, featuring a keynote address by Susan Hockey of Oxford University, author of *A Guide to Computer Applications in the Humanities* and *SNOBOL Programming for the Humanities*. Papers will cover student writing and usage programs, analysis of literary texts (including bibliography, concordance, and index preparation), music theory and analysis, linguistic and lexical analysis (including translation and foreign language text analysis). Support for the conference has come from Prentice-Hall and other corporations.

Two programming clinics will also be included for SNOBOL4 and SPITBOL, languages believed to be ideally suited for humanities and text. SNOBOL4 expert Ralph Griswold will lead an advanced programming clinic, but an important clinic for beginners is expected to be well attended. Contact Dr. Eric Johnson, ICEBOL Director, 114 Beadle Hall, Dakota State College, Madison, SD 57042, or call (605) 256-5270.

## Software Clearinghouse for Journalism Educators

An educational software clearinghouse for journalism and mass communication has been established with funding from the American Newspaper Publishers Association Foundation. It is called the Oates Clearinghouse for Computer-Based Education in Journalism and Mass Communication.

The clearinghouse will not only collect information about computer-based education in journalism, but will work hard to make public domain and noncommercial software in the field available to educators interested in writing, editing, and journalism. Some software is already available in the \$10-\$25 price range.

Clearinghouse director Dr. William R. Oates is chair of the Instructional Technology Committee of the National Council of Teachers of English—and writes a regular column called "Keyboard and Blackboard" for the *Journalism Educator*. Contact Prof. Oates at the Oates Clearinghouse for Computer-Based Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, School of Communication, University of Miami, POB 248127, Coral Gables, FL 33124. (Before May 5, 1986, reach him at School of Journalism, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, NC 27514.)

## Humanities Computer Network Established

An international online network for humanities scholars started on March 1, 1986. Called HUMANET, the network at first will focus on the areas of English, history, philosophy, and religion, allowing members to communicate with each other. Part of the ScholarNet network, HUMANET offers

- electronic mail
- newsletter and journals
- databases and information resources
- text and data file transfer
- computer applications
- free software programs
- teleconferencing
- online polling of users
- bulletin boards
- topical forums
- course syllabi exchanges.

A lifetime membership fee of \$29.95 for individuals and \$100.00 for departments is required. In addition, use-rates are \$16.00 an hour for prime time (7:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M. Mon-Fri) and \$6.00 an hour evenings, weekends, and holidays. Charges are prorated by the minute, and TYMNET and UNINET connections are possible.

Contact Prof. Richard W. Slatta, HUMANET Director, Department of History, North Carolina State University, Box 8101, Raleigh, NC 27695-8101 or call (919) 737-2908. He can also be reached on CompuServe: 70156,404.

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## Penn State Conference in July

The Penn State Conference on Rhetoric and Composition will be held July 8-11, 1986, and will include papers, workshops, panel discussions and demonstrations on a wide variety of writing-related topics, including computers and writing. One-page abstracts of proposals need to be sent to Prof. Marie Secor, Department of English, The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA 16802 by April 15, 1986—or contact her for more information about the conference. Registration has been set at \$85.00, not including dormitory meals and lodging.

## Microcomputer Applications Summer Course

On June 18-20, 1986, North Carolina State University will offer an intensive three-day course on microcomputer applications in the social sciences and humanities, including instruction and research. Enrollment is limited and the cost is \$500, but participants will receive a certificate of completion and \$200 in software. The workshop will be entirely "hands on" with individual access to an IBM PC (or an Apple II).

Topics include statistical and data analysis, text analysis, online database and text sources, bibliographic research, simulation, and instructional courseware. This course is aimed at the individuals in each department who function as "gatekeepers," providing their colleagues insight and access to the world of microcomputing. Contact Prof. Richard W. Slatta, Department of History, North Carolina State University, Box 8101, Raleigh, NC 27695-8101.

## Software Review—WordPerfect 4.1

*Tom Williams*

<b>PROGRAM:</b>	<i>WordPerfect 4.1</i>
<b>PUBLISHER</b>	SSI Software
<b>ADDRESS:</b>	288 West Center Street, Orem, UT 84057
<b>LIST PRICE:</b>	\$495
<b>WILL RUN ON:</b>	IBM PC, XT, or AT and compatibles
<b>MEMORY (RAM):</b>	256K
<b>DISK DRIVES NEEDED:</b>	two (limited use possible with one)
<b>SPELL CHECKER:</b>	105,000 words
<b>ON-LINE HELP:</b>	very good
<b>DOCUMENTATION:</b>	very good
<b>EASE OF LEARNING:</b>	good
<b>EASE OF USE:</b>	very good
<b>COPY PROTECTION:</b>	unprotected

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## **FEATURES**

## **COMMENTS**

### **HELP SCREENS**

concise alphabetical listing of features and commands; full explanation of any feature.

### **HEADERS/FOOTERS**

up to two multiline headers and two multiline footers per page; can print on alternate pages.

### **CURSOR CONTROL**

by character, word, line, screen or document using arrow keys; HOME + character moves cursor to next occurrence of that character.

### **ADJUSTABLE MARGINS**

from 0 to 250 spaces; can be changed at any point in the document; tab ruler will display current settings.

### **SPACING OPTIONS**

line spacing can be set for 1, 1½, 2, 2½, 3, 3½, 4, 4½ (or more); half spacing displayed on-screen at next whole number; various settings can be combined in one document; can be set for 6 or 8 lines per inch.

### **AUTO TEXT ADJUST**

changes in margin, line spacing, etc. occur on screen immediately; changes to accommodate inserted text take place as cursor passes line on which insertion was made.

### **SEARCH/REPLACE**

will search for and replace both text and formatting codes; wild card text character.

### **CUT/COPY/PASTE**

will cut or copy and paste sentence, paragraph, or any marked block.

### **AUTO FOOTNOTING**

will create footnotes or endnotes; automatic numbering; notes displayed and edited in separate window.

### **WINDOWS**

maximum of two; screen divides horizontally only; can also toggle between two full-screen documents.



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02/19/86 22:25		Directory B:\*.*				Free Disk Space: 328704			
Document Size: 0									
Filename.Ext	Size	Date	Time	Filename.Ext	Size	Date	Time		
. <CURRENT>	<DIR>			.. <PARENT>	<DIR>				
BARGRAPH.	750	02/15/86	16:10	CRTLET1 .	632	02/19/86	19:41		
CRTLET2 .	628	02/19/86	19:40	DISPUB .	623	02/03/86	07:59		
INC&EXP .	1777	01/31/86	23:52	JOURNAL .	4278	01/26/86	22:06		
LEMME1 .	954	02/04/86	19:13	LEMME2 .	650	02/17/86	21:24		
PTFVE1 .	839	02/03/86	06:47	PTFVE2 .	662	02/07/86	19:39		
PTFVE3 .	1904	02/17/86	17:17	PTFVE4 .	3557	02/17/86	17:13		
PTFVE5 .	775	02/17/86	16:47	REVIEW .	8810	02/17/86	17:02		
SYMMES .	708	01/29/86	08:37	WARDBUDG.	540	02/10/86	19:51		

1 Retrieve; 2 Delete; 3 Rename; 4 Print; 5 Text In;  
6 Lock; 7 Change Directory; 8 Copy; 9 Word Search: 0

**Fig. 1: Directory Listing**

## UNDO

can restore up to three levels of deletions.

## FOREIGN CHARACTERS

displays full IBM extended character set on screen;  
any key can be set to produce a specified character  
when used with ALT or CTRL.

## PROPORTIONAL SPACING

if supported by the printer.

## CENTERED TEXT

can center lines from left to right; can center text  
from top to bottom on page.

## RIGHT-JUSTIFIED TEXT

printed but not displayed on screen.

## SUB/SUPERSCRIPING

yes; multiple levels with some printers.

## GRAPHICS

limited; cursor can be used to outline blocks of text  
and make simple right-angle drawings.

## MERGE PRINTING

text can be inserted in primary file from a secondary  
file, from the keyboard, or from text files; can be  
combined with macro and sort functions for very  
complex applications.

## COLUMNS

displayed on screen; up to five columns; can con-  
tinue text from bottom of one column to top of next  
or can keep blocks of text together horizontally.

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## MACROS/GLOSSARY

built-in macro function allows insertion of standard text or automatic execution of a series of commands; macros can be chained or nested but not edited.

## OTHER FEATURES

In addition to the full complement of standard features, *WordPerfect 4.1* includes a very powerful sort function that treats either lines or paragraphs as records. Fields within records are defined by tabs or indents. Sorts can be alphanumeric or numeric and can be keyed to lines within paragraphs, fields within lines, or words within fields. Tabbed columns, for example, can be sorted by any column, in ascending or descending order. You can also select records using logical operators (and, or, equal to, greater than, less than, etc.) and do global searches for any record containing a specified word or words.

```
Anderson, Ken      New York  433-1831  TWA      coach
Anderson, Sherry  Boston   322-3161  Eastern  coach
Bassett, Don      England  225-7338  TWA      1st C
Cahoon, Henry J.  Belgium  786-5632  TWA      1st C
Clegg, Ted        Vegas    244-1730  Delta    coach
Collins, Fred     Calif    553-4981  Republic coach
Curtis, Helen     LA       373-2604  Western  1st C
Fielding, Tom     Phoenix  798-5233  TWA      coach
Fields, Carl J.   Sweden   255-1076  TWA      coach
Gentry, Steven M. Columbus 734-8970  Republic coach

                               Doc 2 Pg 1 Ln 1 Pos 10
-----
                               ]
-----
                               ]
Sort by Line -----
Key Typ Field Word      Key Typ Field Word      Key Typ Field Word
1 a 1 1                  2 a 1 2                  3 a 4 1
4                          5                          6
7                          8                          9
Select

Action                    Order                    Type of Sort
Sort                      Ascending                Line Sort

1 Perform Action; 2 View; 3 Keys; 4 Select; 5 Action; 6 Order; 7 Type: 0
```

Fig. 2: Sort Utility

*WordPerfect 4.1* will automatically number paragraphs or outlines in any style and renumber when additions or deletions are made. It will also create tables of contents from division headings, and generate indexes.

In addition to the 105,000 word dictionary of the spelling checker, *WordPerfect 4.1* comes with its own thesaurus. If you do not have a hard disk, the documentation directs you to swap disks each time you enter a synonym or to use 216K to store the thesaurus file on your data disk. If your computer has sufficient RAM, however, you can set up a RAM disk for the thesaurus. Once that is done, you will need to load the thesaurus only at the beginning of each session. It will then remain instantly available until you turn off the machine.



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Each of the ten function keys—alone or in combination with the ALT, SHIFT, or CTRL key—executes a command or calls up one or more menus. The user is assisted by a color-coded template that fits around the function keys. The word in red next to each key indicates what that key does in combination with the CTRL key, the word in green what it does in combination with the SHIFT key, the word in blue what it does in combination with the ALT key, and the word in black what it does when used alone. This system makes both learning and using *WordPerfect 4.1* very simple.

Flexibility, ease of use, and an extensive list of features make *WordPerfect 4.1* an excellent choice for beginners and casual users as well as for demanding users with considerable word processing experience.

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**Tom Williams** is Manager of Editorial Services at the Agency for Instructional Technology, Bloomington, Indiana, and is experienced with *WordStar* and *Microsoft Word* (Macintosh version) as well as *WordPerfect*. He holds a PhD in comparative literature and has taught business and technical writing.

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### **IN FUTURE ISSUES . . .**

***Final Word II***

***XYWrite III***

***IBM's EGA Card & Monitor***

***Multimate Advantage w/Keyboard***

***Dedicated Word-Processing Systems***

***Memory-Resident Utilities***

***Text-Oriented Database Managers***

**plus**

***More on Personal Desktop Publishing***