

Preface

Ideas Across Time aims to support students' exploration of their lives and of the world around them by explicitly linking everyday experience in the United States today with writing by major thinkers, past and present. Each chapter illuminates how we got here from there, making reading more meaningful and writing better informed. Each chapter treats a different significant aspect of life today, such as identity, democracy, science, or art, establishing a reasonably coherent narrative of the development of today's institutions, knowledge, beliefs, ideologies, and practices.

In each chapter, the readings begin with a Keynote essay, usually right out of the morning newspaper, intended to emphasize the immediacy and broad implications of the subject. These contemporary selections are followed by a chronological sequence of essays that trace the historical development of the idea under discussion. Although a number of the pieces that follow the Keynote selection are from classical Greece or Rome, for the most part these essays date back to around two hundred years ago and proceed chronologically to the present. Each chapter, moreover, not only begins but also ends with a contemporary essay, allowing students to reexamine our present-day slant on the subject at hand after having had the chance to explore key texts from the past. Most chapters also include literary works and visual material that can deepen understanding and stimulate writing.

Each essay is supported by a complete apparatus—a series of questions about content, rhetoric, and connections among ideas intended to help focus reading and to encourage reflective writing. The book's Introduction offers a helpful prospectus to college-level reading; and a guide to writing is found in the Appendix. Although each selection is meant mainly to be read for itself, the apparatus in each case leads to further exploration of a topic or an author and, in conjunction with the website, can be a good starting point for an essay or research paper. Each chapter opens with a general introductory essay, aimed to orient students to the intellectual terrain of the chapter; and each selection

opens with a headnote providing useful information about the writer or artist of the selection to follow.

As a venture into the major questions of our time, *Ideas Across Time* contains essays and visual material that can be at once unsettling and exhilarating. Carefully read and thoughtfully explored, the combination of provocative contemporary readings and generative readings from the past found in this book provides not only a broad and strong foundation for liberal studies but also an authentic encounter with knowledge and its transformative power.

Supplements

Reading selections are supported online at the *Ideas Across Time* Online Learning Center, which has been designed to be integral to the text. On the website, you will find connections to further readings or to the complete online texts of works that *Ideas Across Time* has excerpted, as well as links to contextual information. The website enables students to probe every issue in depth. It also features instructional writing content powered by Catalyst, McGraw-Hill's premier online learning tool.

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Igor Webb
Adelphi University