

# ENGLISH

中美两国教授把关，英语作文不再难！

## 高分作文就该这样写

# 中国大学生 英语作文

# 批改

毛荣贵 [美] Dorine S. Houston 评改

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## 前言

王婆卖瓜，自卖自夸。

为自己辛苦写成的书籍写前言，总免不了“自夸”。当然，“自夸”要夸得实在，夸得在理。

“珠联璧合”——乃“自夸”之核心词也。如此多元“珠联璧合”之书，足见其难得矣。眼下书店、书城里的书籍，动辄冠以“宝典”，而对于英语学习者来说，对于欲得英语写作高分者来说，如此“珠联璧合”之书，不会辱没“宝典”二字吧！

### “珠联璧合”之一——中美教授携手合编此书

1996年，美国驻华大使 James R. Sasser(詹姆士·尚慕杰)邀请我访美。大使给我的头衔是 leading citizen(杰出公民)。我访问了美国23个著名学府，且在3所大学讲学。鉴于我在国内讲学之经验——大，则易空；泛，则易疲，我选了一个有点怪异的冷题——The Special Function of Periodic Sentence in Creative Writing(“圆周句在英语写作中的特殊功能”)。开头，听众颇有点不以为然，Periodic Sentence，他们认为，是一个 out-dated topic! (过时话题)。不料，我对 Periodic Sentence 的细密关注和层层演绎赢得掌声阵阵。讲座完毕，Dorine Huston(一位前来听讲的女教授，在费城教授英语写作已有20余年)，激动异常，邀请我去她家做客，边喝咖啡，边谈论英语写作的教学，直至深夜。她跟我说：Unexpectedly, your talk has offered me much food for thought, for this technique has been ignored by me. (没想到，你的讲座让我深思，这种写作技巧忽视久矣。)

时任《科技英语学习》(月刊)的我，刊登了一则征文(英语作文)启事，应征英语作文，如雪片飘来。粮草备足，本打算独立编写一本有关中国大学生英语作文评改的书。现在结识了 Dorine，何不邀请她参与编写呢？——这个“灵感”，让我失眠。

也许读者会问：独立编写，不是也很好吗？

——君有所不知也。

中国教师(含本人)执教英语写作，底气不足矣！

英语写作(或许是任何写作)，一靠语感，二靠天赋。语感是基础，天赋是关键。英语，后天所学，毕竟非母语！两者相比，不在同一水平线上！中国教师们，辛辛苦苦教英语写作，尽心尽职地教呀，改呀，其内心并不踏实！表达之疏漏，林林总总，随时可能从眼皮底下溜走！于是，中国的英语写作教师们，跌入尴尬，缺乏权威，情理之中也。

果然，合作伊始，Dorine 的点评，就让我有拨云见日之喜，生相见恨晚之心！不信？请看：

### 1. 标点之误

不该用逗号之处用了

【误】He once said, he used to rank first in English tests when in middle school.

【正】He once said he used to rank first in English tests when in middle school.

该用逗号之处却不用了

【误】It is impolite to ask a foreigner, particularly a lady such personal question.

【正】It is impolite to ask a foreigner, particularly a lady, such personal question.

### 2. 时态之误

现在完成时态——中国学生感到陌生——不知现在完成时用于过去发生，但其影响延及目前的事件。

【误】The past has passed, I hadn't, and will still not regret my decision to stay.

【正】The past has passed, I have not, and will still not regret my decision to stay.

### 3. 逻辑之误

英汉相比，前者被称为“逻辑语言”哦！

【误】It is a long way to develop our education to a perfect status.

【正】We have a long way to go in order to develop our education to an ideal status.

Dorine 点评: Nothing is perfect! “ideal” is acceptable.

【误】... nowadays in our modern society ...

【正】... in our modern society ...

Dorine 点评: nowadays / modern, 两者取一即可!

#### 4. 语气问题

【误】Gulongyu (鼓浪屿) is a paradise that **could be** touched.

【正】Gulongyu is a paradise that **can be** touched.

Dorine 点评: 应该使用 can! can 可更充分表达作者的自信!

#### 5. 冠词问题

【误】... resulting from their unique contemporary living background **on Mainland**.

【正】... resulting from their unique contemporary living background **on the Mainland**.

Dorine 点评: 由普通名词构成的专有名词一般要加定冠词。

#### 6. 惯用法问题

隐性眼睛【误】contact-lens 【正】contact lenses

游泳衣【误】swimming shirts 【正】bathing suits

(商店里的)模特儿【误】model【正】mannequin

Dorine 点评: model——T 台上走猫步的(活的); mannequin——穿着服装的人体模型(死的)。

#### 7. 介词问题

【误】... playing guitars with romantic songs or walking in the tree-lined passages.

【正】... playing romantic songs **on the guitar**, or walking in the tree-lined pathways.

Dorine 点评: “在乐器上弹奏……乐曲”的习惯表达是 play ... on the (guitars)。

#### 8. 语域问题

【误】... for it's so sweet and wonderful ...

【正】... for it is so sweet and wonderful ...

Dorine 点评：在英语作文中应当力避 it's 这样的缩写，缩写形式，不宜出现在书面作文之中！

【误】I guess there are two reasons.

【正】I believe there are two reasons.

Dorine 点评：“I guess” is in a very informal register, too informal to be used in academic writing, or even in spoken academic discourse.

你看，Dorine 之点评，着眼微观，众多的细枝末节，非中国教师之长也；由我执笔写“卷首语”（出现于每篇作文之前的导读），则着眼宏观，议论了中国学生英语写作的常见病，则非美国教授之长也。不信？请看：

### 1. 关于炼字

作者的文笔已经比较成熟，已开始注意炼字。比如，不少初学者写到“说”字，似乎只会用 say/said/ask/asked 等，而本篇就注意使用更精确，更老练的表达。

请读下面 5 句中的“说”字：

- a. “How about buying some crabs to take home?” **suggested** my friend.
- b. “Good idea,” I **responded**.
- c. “But we saw you selling them at seventy-five a jin to others yesterday, didn't you?” **interposed** my friend.
- d. “All right,” we **agreed**, “Give us six medium ones.”
- e. “Two yuan and sixty-five cents,” he **announced** emphatically.

### 2. 关于“视角”

文章之成败，在很大程度上也取决于作者在审题后的“切入”角度。要写一篇以“Tree”为题的文章，可以“切入”的角度太多太多！本文作者“量力而行”，选定了一个即可发挥，又不难落笔的角度——一年四季。

### 3. 英汉之异

英汉在句法上的差异问题。在 20 世纪 80 年代初，我国就有学者提出英语有别于汉语的句法特征，作了一个十分形象的比喻：多枝共

干。

#### 4. 自然为美

本文向我们提出了一个问题,一个初学英语写作者应该当心的问题,那就是应力避单纯追求辞藻的华美,力避使用艰深难懂的词汇。

#### 5. 善捕细节

本文的一个值得称道之处是:善捕细节。全文以 a stamp 为线索,一气呵成。加上标题“An Unforgettable Stamp of Mine”又提纲挈领,文章的可读性为之大增。

#### 6. 读写后感

因此,读后感不能与所提供的原文无涉,也不能纠缠原文过多。

#### 7. 表达语域

本篇习作提出的问题之一是:语域(或称“使用域”),其相应的英语表达是 register。《英汉大词典》对 register 一词有以下例句,十分有助我们理解此词:

“Formal”, “Informal” and “Slang” are different register labels. (正式体、非正式体和俚语为不同的语域标签。)

#### 8. 行文紧凑

欲使一篇文章行文紧凑(coherence)、前后粘着,其手段不一而足,但是,概而言之,又不外乎“形”和“意”两种。本文巧取后者,可资初学者模仿。

国人有句老话:相辅相成。Dorine 的精剖细析,笔者的宏观鸟瞰,两者结合,是否达到了一种境界,一种“辅”而“成”之境界?

### “珠联璧合”之二——两书携手出版

《英语写作韬略》和本书,名副其实之“姊妹篇”也——可比“连理枝”;可喻“比翼鸟”。

理论必须与实践联手;韬略必须与实战结合。——翻译如此,写作又何尝不是如此?

学习游泳,在课堂里、书本中学习游泳基本技巧之外,那碧波荡漾的泳池,那波涛起伏的江河湖海,也是一个 must 呀!

《韬略》一书讲了 parallelism(平行结构)的理论、构成、审美价值,



还强调了作为一种结构修辞,其不可低估的作用:

英语和汉语分居印欧语系(Indo-European Language)和汉藏语系(Sino-Tibetan Language),在词的构成、词形变化、句法结构和词序等方面差别甚著,然而,论及修辞方法,英语绝大部分的修辞格都能在汉语中觅到与之相同或相似的。

然而,若问在洋洋洒洒的英语修辞格中,哪一种修辞格对英语写作,或曰对初学英语写作的人来说最容易学,最用得上,同时收效又最显著?笔者将毫不犹豫地作答:parallelism(平行结构)。笔者使用“立竿见影”形容之。

此乃“红花”!但是,没有“绿叶”相扶,便让英语写作的学习空留遗憾!

本书,乃“绿叶”,称职的“绿叶”!对于 parallelism,配合《韬略》一书,有具体而又生动的演绎。比如:

本书对米粒同学的习作(Ocean/《海洋》)有以下点评:

最值得向广大读者荐介的是,米粒同学对 parallelism 的运用比较娴熟自如,此辞格确实为本文添色不少,笔者曾经对初学者多次说,parallelism 这一辞格有“立竿见影”之效。读此文,又觉此言不为过也。请读:

a. Anything in this world to be as imposing as that, as emotional as that, as powerful as that, as moving as that and as dramatic as that...

五个 as... as... 短语一字排开,语势澎湃,感情奔放,宣泄淋漓,读者的心也怦然而动。

b. Now I am standing here, with waves licking my toes, with wind kissing my face, with you, Ocean, lying by my side.

licking/kissing/lying 三个词别具魅力,恐怕与“嵌”在 parallelism 中不无关系。

本书对肖文黎的 *On Friendship* (论友谊)有以下点评:

parallelism 的频频使用,为文章添色不少。不仅使行文产生形式美,而且,为作者淋漓地表情达意提供了理想的“平台”。如:

a. To you, some friends are fun-loving, some give encourage-

ment, some offer knowledge, and others help you to find your own identity.

b. Before your friends, you may act as a supervisor, a learned brother, a lovely child, a gentleman or a playmate. In a word, friendship helps you to be a full person.

《韬略》一书之第5章讲了 topic sentence(主题句),并认为:

可以得出三点启示:a. 主题句概括了全段的中心思想;b. 它通常居于句首;c. 它尤适用于说明文或议论文。它对确保段落主题突出有着举足轻重的作用。它是作者思维起点、扣题的准绳、阐述的对象,同时也是读者叩开阅读理解之门的钥匙。

然而,仅仅有此“理念”在胸,缺憾也!宛如没有绿叶相扶的红花。

本书收入的习作,不少还未能将主题句作“开门见山”的处理。比如王小华的习作(*My Life on the Campus*/《我的校园生活》),笔者的导读如此写道:

本文的例证丰富多彩,构成了较为理想的“展开句”(supporting sentences),但就其主题句言,居然不是出现在文首,而是出现在文末。这在汉语看来,顺理成章,是画龙点睛。然而,欲使文章更符合英语的成文习俗,还是将主题句提前为宜。我们提供了本文的参考主题句如下:

There are many reasons why I have been so happy during the past two years in teachers college, fulfilling the great expectations of my parents and teachers. My new college life has been enjoyable, regular, and exciting. As a college student, I have come to better understand my goal, to be a middle school teacher.

很多习作的作者,掌握了主题句的“理念”,并能付诸写作实践。可惜的是,至少本书有五六篇习作将主题句作为独立一个起始段落处理。对此,Dorine 一而再,再而三地呼吁:

Do not begin a new paragraph just as you have started you topic sentence!

读者朋友,你看,两册英语写作的书籍携手出版,是否应了目前常用的两个政经语汇——双赢?

### “珠联璧合”之三——集 73 篇学习英语习作之大成

本书收入习作 73 篇。就题材而言,就有 10 大类:1. 菁菁校园;2. 师恩难忘;3. 掩卷凝思;4. 江山多娇;5. 人生百味;6. 纵论横析;7. 七彩生活;8. 初涉尘世;9. 人物素描;10. 谈情说爱。

就地区而言,既有北大、清华、复旦、交大学习的英语美文,也有偏远省份、偏远学府学子的佳作。

就其质量而言,其中精彩文章,堪称范文。Dorine 也叹曰:无懈可击!如郝田虎的 *What Quality in Mme Curie Impresses Me Most* (《居里夫人什么品质给我留下最深印象》)。该习作全文如下:

Mme Curie once said something to this effect, "Life is not easy for any of us. We must work, and above all we must believe in ourselves. We must believe that each one of us is able to do something well. And that, when we discover what that something is, we must work, and so we succeed," Like Thomas Edison, the great American inventor, whose life philosophy was "to work for the happiness of human beings," Mme Curie never ceased working. Her ephemeral existence was a constant struggle against adversity of various kinds, such as racial prejudice, inconceivable setbacks, ill fortunes and appalling poverty. Adversity and struggle lies at the root of evolutionary progress; self-development and self-accomplishment result from the struggle against adversity. Such a struggle calls for "stubborn effort" and "terrible patience", which was not lacking in and fully employed by Mme Curie. Such a struggle must be directed towards a certain objective, as Mme Curie did, Much more significant, Mme Curie had to struggle against fame, that is, against the pursuit of the vulgar world, after she became triumphant. Many people are also great, but their greatness differs considerably from that of Mme Curie; they are taken prisoners by fame and their achievements turn into a bar to further advance, so they are no more than meteors, where Mme Curie was a fixed star, forever shining over the human soul as a

warning against any ignorant self-satisfaction.

It is just because she loved her native land, she loved science and she loved life that Mme Curie spent her whole lifetime in a continuous struggle. True and deep love of life in the spring from which flow courage, confidence and power.

In spite of, or rather, because of, the unavoidable imperfection in life, we cherish a sincere and profound love for life, for the imperfections provide us with a precious chance to struggle, and, in the end, we are certain to say to the passing moment, like Faust, "Linger a while! Thou art so fair!"

周征同学的习作 *A Letter about Military Training* (《关于军训的一封信》), 让 Dorine 教授感动不已, 她甚至在其点评中提出: 想把此信推荐给议员, 推荐给总统!

于志伟同学的习作 *Never Fall in Love Again* (《决不再坠入爱河一次》) 让 Dorine 教授一洒热泪!

如此众多的精彩大学生英语习作集结出版, 供你学习, 是否可称得上是“珠联璧合”了?

正如 Dorine 教授点评时所说: Nothing is perfect! (世无十全十美), Dorine 教授和我期待各位的批评!

毛荣贵

2008年春于上海龙居路寓所

## Preface

Collaborating with Prof. Mao in writing this book for Chinese learners of English has been an exciting, challenging, learning experience, and I am delighted to have not only this opportunity, but also that of our future work together. Both his wife and my husband have been very patient with the long hours Prof. Mao and I have both spent at our computers, writing, editing, sending each other e-mail consulting about our work, and discussing questions while we neglected our sleep and family duties. We hope that the sacrifice our families have made will bear fruit as you benefit from what you learn from our effort about the art of writing a good English essay.

We present to you your own work, essays written by students from all over China, which we have corrected and annotated with discussions about the rules of English grammar and rhetoric. I have responded to some of the more moving essays with stories of my own, and feel that I have come to share with you your hopes, joys, sorrows, and aspirations, for they are the hopes, joys, sorrows, and aspirations of people everywhere. School is a precious and stressful time for all of us. Love tears the heart and puts wings on the feet no matter where we live. Happy families, as the Russian author Dostoyevsky wrote in *Anna Karenina*, are all alike.

Prof. Mao and I have learned as much from each other as we hope you learn from our work. We have shared our perspectives and cultural expectations, sometimes surprising each other. We have had distressing moments, too. One weekend I was to e-mail him a lot of work to take to the publisher on Monday. I was pleased to be able to send it on Saturday—until the mail started bouncing back into my

system. He was not getting it! I kept trying on Sunday, and Monday morning, which is really Monday evening in China. At first I worried about his embarrassment before the publisher, presenting only empty hands to him, but then I began to worry about Mr. Mao's well-being. I tried to telephone various numbers I had in Shanghai but without success, and began to think something terrible must have happened to him. Faxes followed, and a message to the postmaster at his e-domain. On Monday evening I got mail from him indicating a change in the e-mail address and assuring me of his well-being. Such vicissitudes make intercontinental collaboration all the more interesting!

Another time we had both been putting in long hours and were getting exhausted. I was just beginning to work on a set of essays when my weary fingers hit the wrong key and I accidentally sent him back a whole set of essays on which no work had been done. He feared that I was sending him a covert message about working too hard; I assured him that when I want to complain, I do so openly and directly. The little misunderstanding served to further strengthen our bond.

Reading so many essays by Chinese students has given me a good picture of the problems most often presented in your essays. I want to deal with some of the most salient in this preface, the overall organization of an essay, the use of cliché, overdependence on dictionaries, subordinate clauses, and the use of articles. If you master the "grammar" of the English paragraph and use the words that are familiar to you rather than looking for "elegant" ones in the dictionary, you will write in a way that communicates to native speakers of English. When you have mastered subordinate clauses, you have mastered an essential part of English grammar. When you write in your own voice, avoiding cliché and excessive quotations from others, and using familiar words rather than ones you have lifted half-baked

from the dictionary, your voice will be sweet to the English hearer's ear.

## I . Culture and Contrasting Rhetorical Styles

Human cultures are fascinating studies in contrast. Being different is a gift; we human beings are as diverse and lovely as the many flowers in a garden. One is a violet, another a daisy, another a rose, another a lily, and all are lovely, good because they are made by God's own hand for our enjoyment. No one flower can claim to be better than another. Likewise, we are made as diverse as the flowers for the Creator's enjoyment as well as one another's, and cannot claim superiority over one another. One of the joys of learning another language is the delight and challenge of viewing the world through another prism, from another point of view. Learning to act as well as speak within the norms of the new language is rigorous exercise, but essential if we are to fully master the new language. Sometimes that means accepting values that differ from our own, and conforming to how that affects our daily lives and the use of language.

Keep these thoughts in mind as our culture and writing expectations are contrasted in this book. Chinese styles and values are neither worse nor better than English ones; they are simply different. A learner of English needs to learn all the areas of difference, not just some of them. Likewise, when I learn Chinese, I will endeavor to change my writing style to satisfy the norms of Chinese rhetoric.

## II . The Overall Organization of the Essay

Linguists study the structure of discourse across languages as well as many other aspects of language science, Robert Kaplan of the University of Southern California is often called the father of contrastive discourse analysis because he did a large study and analyzed the structure of paragraphs and essays in a number of languages, quantified their features, and wrote his well-known *Anatomy of Rhetoric: Prolegomena to a Functional Theory of Rhetoric* (Philadelphia, PA:

The Center for Curriculum Development, Inc., 1972, p. 64) in which he used a series of doodles to illustrate his argument that different languages have different grammars of the essay that are as distinctive as their grammars of the sentence.

Kaplan used essays by students who were learning English in California, and who were from a variety of cultures. He analyzed the structure of the essays and found that certain patterns in the presentation of ideas predominated in the style of each language family. East Asian students were found to write around their topic without ever directly pointing the reader to it. Their languages are “reader-responsible”, that is, the reader is responsible for finding the meaning in the writer’s text. The writer is not to insult the intelligence of the reader by indicating the topic too pointedly. Kaplan described this essay pattern as a spiral that never quite reaches the center. Chinese students in particular were observed to write their English essays in a style that appeared to be derived from the pattern required in the Imperial Civil Service Exams, which Kaplan refers to as the “Eight-Legged Essay.” This tradition, he points out, required writers to quote extensively from authorities but without necessarily identifying them since everybody knew the same information anyway. Certain set phrases were found to be repeated over and over, in short, clichés were used extensively.

In contrast, English is a “writer-responsible” language. The writer is expected to make everything clear to the reader and leave no doubts as to the intention in the writer’s mind. Thoughts must be organized in a linear fashion to lead the reader from the introduction of the topic (the topic sentence) through its examination (the body of the essay) and finally to the conclusion intended by the writer. Kaplan drew a straight line to illustrate the English pattern.

Speakers of English place great value on writing that shows coherence, cohesiveness, and unity. These traits are represented by an



effective introduction of the topic, a clearly stated and defined thesis, adequate development of the ideas with sufficient and relevant supporting details, a logical organization of ideas, effective and accurate use of transitions, and a clear and relevant conclusion. In contrast, I sense that Chinese writers are more likely to stress such literary devices as repetition to show coheriveness and unity. In English, a sharp line is drawn between the literary and expository uses of language. The academic essay belongs to the expository category, where literary devices are not appropriate.

Expository writing is writing done for the purpose of making a point or presenting an idea. Expository writing can enumerate facts, demonstrate characteristics, compare, contrast, show cause and effect, explain a process (such as a report on a scientific experiment), define a term, evaluate, argue and persuade. Literary writing tells a story or uses words as things of beauty rather than bearers of information. Expository writing conforms closely to the Aristotelian conventions of rhetoric; literary writing breaks the rules. An academic essay is not a literary effort, and any attempt to make it so is not well looked upon. A literary effort, in the university, is limited to the creative writing class. Good expository writing is clear, orderly, logical, and to the point, and uses the most appropriate or effective word order rather than the most beautiful one. Expository writing is a no-frills venture.

### III. Avoiding Cliché

Many Chinese students fill their essays with so many clichés and shopworn quotes that I am beginning to think that the patterns of the Imperial Civil Service Examination essays are still taught in Chinese schools. To the American reader, this habit is atrocious! We are taught beginning in elementary school to avoid repeating commonly heard and overused expressions and quotations in our work. As a matter of fact, we are given lower grades when we indulge in this