

安徽省高等学校“十一五”省级规划教材

# 英语实用写作教程

A Practical English Writing Course

主编 / 夏蓓洁



中国科学技术大学出版社

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## 内 容 简 介

本书主要介绍英语写作的原则、基本特点及要求,内容包括英语写作的基本格式、基本文体(描写、叙述、说明、议论)和常用应用文(书评、摘要、便条、书信、电子邮件、申请、备忘录)的写作。本书以“实用”为原则,采用目前国内外关于英语写作教学的“新范文教学法”理论,融阅读与写作为一体,各章都包括理论讲解、模仿借鉴、话题讨论、范文赏析和谋篇成文这几个部分。同时,本书通过读写练习来介绍写作基本技能和指导段落或篇章写作,从而提高学习者的英语写作能力以及全面运用英语的能力。

本书属通修基础课教材,适合普通应用型高等院校及高职高专的英语专业学生使用,也可供非英语专业及具有同等英语水平的自学者参考。

## 图书在版编目(CIP)数据

英语实用写作教程/夏蓓洁主编. —合肥:中国科学技术大学出版社,2012.7  
ISBN 978-7-312-03089-5

I. 英… II. 夏… III. 英语—写作—高等学校—教材 IV. H315

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字(2012)第 140155 号

出版 中国科学技术大学出版社  
安徽省合肥市金寨路 96 号,230026  
<http://press.ustc.edu.cn>  
印刷 安徽江淮印务有限责任公司  
发行 中国科学技术大学出版社  
经销 全国新华书店  
开本 710 mm×960 mm 1/16  
印张 14  
字数 272 千  
版次 2012 年 7 月第 1 版  
印次 2012 年 7 月第 1 次印刷  
定价 28.00 元

## Preface

## 前 言

本书是一本通修基础课教材,适用于全国普通高等院校英语专业本科英语写作课程,同时也可供非英语专业及具有同等英语水平的自学者参考。

英语写作能力是当今时代对人才的重要考核项目之一,也是兼具专业知识和英语技能的复合型人才必须具备的一项基本能力。“英语写作”对于英语学习者来说是一门重要的课程。因为写作是一个自我发现、自我认识以及发现和认识周围世界的过程;英语写作则是一个加强和巩固英语基础知识、运用英语进行思维的过程。通过英语写作,学习者可以更加扎实地掌握英语语言知识,更加细致地锤炼英语书面表达技能。

本书力图区别于已出版的同类教材,彰显自身特色,注意吸收目前国内外关于英语写作教学的“新范文教学法”理论,将成果教学法与过程教学法相结合,将范文融入学习者的写作学习过程之中,而不是仅在写作之前研究范文。这一教学理念可以充分发挥写前阶段的优势——帮助学习者放松,培养他们发掘题材的能力,树立他们的自信,并最终顺利完成英语写作过程中的各项任务。

本书重在“实用”,让学习者接触各种使用广泛的文体,以提高他们的英语写作实践能力以及全面运用英语的能力。

本书有如下几个特点:

①针对语言水平不高的学习者,通过提供一系列的文体范文和各类练习、设计教学环节等方式,培养他们的自学能力和创新精神。

②将写作中的复杂问题加以分解,由易到难、由浅入深地帮助学习者解决写作中的难题。

③精心安排各章节,使学习者在学习写作的开始阶段就进行不同风格、不同体裁的段落或篇章写作的训练,帮助学习者从一开始就养成完成整个写作过程的习惯。

④每个章节都加入了反映各学习要点的范文,供学习者在学习过程中内化巩固所学的知识,并逐步培养学习者鉴赏美文的能力,达到读写并重,提高鉴赏能力



的目的。

⑤通过切合英语学习特点的写作任务来营造语境,提高学习者的写作兴趣,使他们将学过的知识变成能够熟练运用的写作技能,最后达到写出各类英语文章的目的。

根据“新范文教学法”的教学理论,每一章节的基本结构均为:理论讲解—模仿借鉴—话题讨论—范文赏析—谋篇成文。按照整体训练的教学理念及循序渐进的学习过程,本书介绍了英语写作的基本格式,词汇选择、造句、段落扩展,以及四种基本文体(描写、叙述、说明、议论)、书评、摘要、便条、书信、电子邮件、申请、备忘录的写作方法,并在附录中加入了标点符号的用法(特别是学习者在英语写作中常用的标点符号)。但是各章节没有按照传统写作课程的顺序安排(词—句子—段落),而是一边介绍写作的基本技能,一边进行段落或篇章写作的指导,力图让学习者养成用英语进行段落和篇章写作的习惯,从而避免割裂写作过程或写作成品的尴尬,帮助学习者更好地完成篇章写作,并在本书最后几单元安排实用写作的训练。

本书全部用英文编写,旨在尽量为学习者提供英语语境,从而有助于提高学习者的英语思维能力和英语表达能力。

本书内容按照每学期 32 学时编写,共两学期完成相关教学任务。各授课老师可根据实际教学情况调整教学内容。

本书由夏蓓洁、李洁和徐莉娟三人合作完成。夏蓓洁负责 Unit 14~17 的编写,李洁负责 Unit 1~3 和 Unit 7~10 的编写,徐莉娟负责 Unit 4~6 与 Unit 11~13 和附录的编写。

在本书编写过程中,得到了安徽省教育厅、合肥学院各级领导的关心和支持,以及安徽大学外国语学院洪增流教授和合肥工业大学外国语学院任静生教授的悉心指导,在此表示衷心的感谢!还要感谢所有对本书编写给予支持的老师和同学!

本书在编写过程中参考引用了诸多学者的著作和文献资料,谨对资料作者表示衷心的感谢!由于编者水平有限,书中难免会有疏漏之处,敬请广大读者批评指正,并由衷地欢迎各位同仁不吝赐教。

夏蓓洁

2012 年 3 月

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# Unit 1 Writing Principles and Writing Process

Writing is vital and plays an important role in work and business as speaking does in life because human culture and life can not continue without communication, which consists of verbal and nonverbal ones. Writing is the more formal way to communicate as the means of expressing one's wishes and ideas, requesting responses and demanding actions in personal life and business context as well.

Writing is regarded as one of the critical competence for one's learning and future career. And it is agreed that good writing requires continuous practice and hard work with patience. In the sense of good writing, it does not only means to use the target language correctly and accurately to pursue the goals mentioned, it means as well to communicate effectively without sacrificing linguistic rules and cultural traits. Therefore, good writing aims to be concise in expressions, concrete in information and correct in grammar and spelling. Besides, a good writer also communicates with his readers with courtesy and consideration and writes at the readers' literal level to his knowledge.

## 1. Writing Principles

Good writing, for some people, simply means that it contains no mistakes, i. e. , no errors of grammar, punctuation, or spelling. In fact, good writing is much more than just correct writing. It responds to the interests and needs of the readers.

It is believed that there are seven qualities that define qualified writing (see Table 1.1), which include:

- Ideas—the message itself;
- Organization—the internal structure of the piece;
- Voice—the personal tone and flavor of the writer's message;

- Choice of Words—the vocabulary the writer chooses to convey the meaning;
- Sentence Fluency—the rhythm and flow of the language;
- Conventions—the mechanical correctness;
- Presentation—the final writing actually looks on the page.

**Table 1.1 Qualities of Good Writing**

Qualities	Features	Comments
Ideas	interesting and important	Ideas are the heart of the piece—the idea or the information that the writer is trying to convey.
Organization	logical and effective	Organization refers to the way how the writer organizes the ideas.
Voice	individual and appropriate	Voice is the expression of the writer's personality through words and how the reader feels about the writing when he reads it, i. e. , Is it formal or casual? Is it friendly and inviting or reserved and standoffish?
Choice of Words	specific and impressive	Good writing employs just the right words for the right topic.
Sentence Fluency	smooth and convincing	Fluent sentences are easy to read and understand.
Conventions	correct and communicative	Conventions are the ways that people all agree to use the punctuation, spellings, grammar, and other elements and rules that make the writing consistent and easy to read.
Presentation	orderly and neat	Presentation is how the writing actually looks on the page, including handwriting and format.

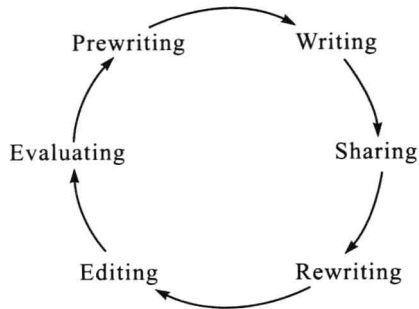
## 2. Writing Process

It is said that it has been no easy to talk about writing and instruct how to write in the English language. Since the early 1980s, there has been a pedagogical shift from taking writing as product to that as process because it is agreed that communication is a process rather than a product and writing, as a means of communication, takes after the major features of communication as well. And this





concept was further developed in the late 1980s that writing is a cyclical series, opposed to linear stages (see Fig. 1. 1).



**Fig. 1. 1 Writing Process**

When writing in English, efforts have to go through the whole writing process, and special attention should be paid to prewriting, revising, editing and evaluating in order to gain a qualified writing piece.

It is important to note that, although the writing process presented above is in a linear way, it is not a linear process; rather, it is a fluid process that moves back and forth between the stages.

1) Prewriting or Planning

- Talking, thinking, viewing, reading and listening to others' ideas;
- Brainstorming and sharing ideas;
- Planning (sketching, graphic organizers and webbing).

2) Writing a Draft

- Putting the ideas down on paper (or computer);
- Letting the writing flow on;
- Leaving spaces to fill in further details later.

3) Sharing: with peers, teachers and / or parents

- Asking them to read the writing piece;
- Asking them for advice;
- Discussing the uncertainties of the piece with them.

4) Rewriting or Revising: by oneself, peers, teachers and / or parents

- Making decisions about how to improve the writing;
- Reading the written piece from a different point of view;

- Modifying the parts to make them clearer, more interesting, more informative and more convincing.
- 5) Editing: making necessary changes in words, length, pacing, emphasis, spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing, verb tenses, persons, grammatical constructions and visual presentation
  - Rereading and anticipating a reader's response;
  - Reading it aloud for precise language, pace and rhythm;
  - Tightening and linking it;
  - Clarifying and sharpening;
  - Smoothing out and reordering it;
  - Creating or refining a title;
  - Finding ways to engage and support a reader;
  - Anticipating a critic's attention to details.
- 6) Evaluating: by oneself, peers, teachers, parents or professionals
  - Getting more advice on it;
  - Grading it;
  - Publishing it.



### Sample 1.1

#### When I Found Triond

I love writing and I started writing when I was younger. Before, I don't like other people to see my works except those who knows me. All of it was about my personal life I don't want to get judge from my writings. They might misunderstand me because they don't know about my whole story. And I'm not confident that I am good in writing. So I kept them unread by many.

There came a time a friend told me about a site he joined where he can submit his compositions and at the same time earn even just a little. He encouraged me to do so and I thought of it. I thought it's time for me to come out of my shell. It's time to be open. So I changed my conceptions in life and gave myself a chance and an opportunity.

I joined and wrote my first article last January 10th. I had different kinds



of emotions in my writing experience here in Triond. My first article was my experiment how Triond will work. I wonder how viewers and readers will absorb and understand my compositions and how they will react about it. I saw the number of my views, I felt glad. Then, I published another composition that adds the number of my views. And for the first time I received comments from viewers who were perfectly strangers. I felt wonderful and I was very very glad about it and about them. So, I thank Triond for healing me from being blind. Sharing and being open is not harmful at all. It felt so good to share your feelings and knowledge and anything under the sun. And I thank my friend for showing me the way.

Now I publish more and more articles and poems as I can. And I get more and more views, comments and friends, too. I learn a lot from reading different articles from different kinds of people. Sometimes, I even consider their suggestions. I'm thankful I found Triond.



## Discussion

1. Have you ever noticed the difficulties in your English writing?
2. What is the most difficult or enjoyable part of your writing process? Why?
3. Orally develop a simple paragraph to describe one of your happy or painful writing experiences. Try your best to make your paragraph vivid and impressed.



## Model Passage

### Writing

I first started to enjoy writing in high school in my freshmen English class on constructing the essay. Since then, I have had a strange affection for the form. Even though critics **bash** it for its convention and supposed lack of creative opportunity, a clean, concise, argument-driven essay earns my admiration. Besides its efficiency in communicating ideas, it allows the author to focus on content, syntax and diction. Once these have been mastered, writers can “**mutate**” the essay and develop other, more complex and creative, organizations.

Another aspect of writing I enjoy is playing with words. The English



language has an immense **warehouse** of word, each with a specific and slightly different **connotation** and sound. This gives writers plenty of tools with which to work. We can pair words together in such a way that is fresh and surprising to readers. This involves using **metaphors**, personifications and **oxymoron**. We can compare and contrast connotations to give our work a unique and memorable voice. In addition, the sounds of the words themselves can leave a lasting impression. **Alliteration**, **consonance**, **assonance** and **onomatopoeia** are taught in every introduction to writing class but are then forgotten, not considered viable in mature writing. For these reasons, I think journalists should take an introduction to creative writing class and a creative nonfiction class as well.

My dislikes (and maybe weaknesses as well) of writing are the willingness to actually start and rewriting. A blank page or screen terrifies me. Writers create stories out of nothing. A pen and paper, or a computer is all one needs, everything else is dependent on the writer. Think of the responsibility that rests on the tips of our fingers. We are the **gatekeepers** of the story, every word and punctuation mark must be there for a reason. Because of this, we must sacrifice time, energy and even a bit of ourselves in every story. This is a **daunting** task to start, but once I have begun, the process usually stimulates my creativity.

I strongly dislike rewriting. I won't say "hate" because "hate" is a strong, **irreversible** word, but I strongly dislike rewriting. I want to **differentiate** between rewriting and editing. Editing asks why is this word, sentence, punctuation mark, etc. here? It then asks is there a better symbol or writing tool to better communicate the idea? Rewriting, on the other hand, asks why is the idea itself here? This question can be quite **intimidating**. The answer can be unexpected and shatter the very foundation of the story. I understand that rewriting is an essential part of the writing process and ultimately makes the story the stronger, yet it has the power to tell the writer, who has put her energy and a piece of herself in it, good start but I think there is a more important aspect you may be missing.



### Notes to the Passage

**bash:** *v.* (figurative) to criticize severely

**mutate:** *v.* to change or cause to change in form or nature



**warehouse:** *n.* a large building where raw materials or manufactured goods may be stored prior to their export or distribution for sale

**connotation:** *n.* an idea or feeling which a word invokes for a person in addition to its literal or primary meaning

**metaphor:** *n.* a figure of speech in which a word or phrase is applied to an object or action to which it is not literally applicable (e. g. , The kid is a singing bird. )

**oxymoron:** *n.* a figure of speech in which apparently contradictory terms appear in conjunction (e. g. , Faith unfaithful kept him falsely true. )

**alliteration:** *n.* the occurrence of the same letter or sound at the beginning of adjacent or closely connected words (e. g. , sound and safe)

**consonance:** *n.* the recurrence of similar sounds, especially consonants, in close proximity (chiefly as used in prosody)

**assonance:** *n.* the resemblance of sound between syllables in nearby words, arising particularly from the rhyming of two or more stressed vowels, but not consonants (e. g. , sonnet, porridge), but also from the use of identical consonants with different vowels (e. g. , killed, cold, culled)

**onomatopoeia:** *n.* the formation of a word from a sound associated with what is named (e. g. , cuckoo, sizzle)

**gatekeeper:** *n.* (figurative) a person or thing that controls access to something

**daunting:** *adj.* seeming difficult to deal with in prospect; intimidating

**irreversible:** *adj.* not able to be undone or altered

**differentiate:** *v.* to recognize or ascertain what makes (someone or something) different

**intimidating:** *adj.* frightening



### Questions for Study

1. What is the main idea of this article?
2. How does the author make the impression that he enjoys writing?
3. How does the author tell us that good writing is the result of much practice and hard work?



## Exercises

### 1. Read the following passage and summarize its main idea in a paragraph about 50 words.

Sharpening your writing skills will help you to improve your grades in many different courses, not just in English classes.

Regardless of your career goals, writing is one of the most practical skills you can have. On a typical work day, professionals in fields as diverse as engineering, marketing, computer programming, and management spend anywhere from 15% to 50% of their time writing.

According to a study conducted in 2005 by the College Board, more than 75% of managers report that they take writing into account when hiring and promoting employees. “I’d say there’s a premium placed on well-developed writing skills,” observed one human resources director.

Writing can be personally rewarding and enriching, an outlet for our anxieties rather than a cause of them. Keeping a journal, composing letters or e-mails to friends, even writing an occasional poem or short story (whether or not we ever intend to show our work to anyone else)—all allow us to practice our writing skills without the fear of being judged.

Writing can be fun. I’m not joking. You may just have to trust me on this one for now, but soon you should find that being able to express your thoughts clearly in writing can produce an enormous sense of delight and satisfaction.

### 2. See how three students have mentioned the steps that they typically follow when writing a paper. Then compare their writing steps and draw a conclusion.

#### Student A

Before doing anything, I make sure I’ve got a quiet room and a clear head. When I feel ready to work, I sit in front of my laptop and begin tapping out whatever comes to mind. Then, after taking a short walk, I read over what I’ve written and pick out the things that strike me as worth keeping—key ideas and interesting details. After this, I usually go on to compose a rough draft pretty quickly. Then (maybe in a day or two, if I’ve gotten an early start) I read the draft and add explanations and ideas and make some grammatical changes. Then I write it over again, making more changes as I go. Sometimes I complete the whole process in



an hour or two. Sometimes it takes a week or more.

### Student B

I like to do my first draft on paper—that is, after I’ve daydreamed for an hour or two, raided the refrigerator, and made a fresh pot of coffee. I specialize in procrastination. After running out of ways to distract myself, I start to scribble down everything I can think of. And I mean scribble—write fast, make a mess. When I figure out what I’ve scrawled, I try to fix it up into an orderly, halfway-decent essay. Then I put it aside (after making another trip to the refrigerator) and start all over again. When I’m done, I compare both papers and combine them by taking some things out and putting other things in. Then I read my draft out loud. If it sounds okay, I go to the computer and type it up.

### Student C

In trying to put together a paper, I go through four phases. First, there’s the idea phase, where I get this bright idea. Then there is the productive phase, where I’m really smoking, and I start thinking about the Pulitzer Prize. After that, of course, come the block phase, and all those prize-winning dreams turn into nightmares of this big, six-foot guy jammed into a first-grader’s desk and being made to print the alphabet over and over again. Eventually (hours, sometimes days later), I hit the deadline phase: I realize that this sucker has got to be written, and so I start burning it out again. This phase often doesn’t start until ten minutes before a paper is due, which doesn’t leave a lot of time to proofread—a phase I never seem to get around to.

**3. Write down your own writing process in one or two paragraphs by answering the following questions as a self-test and save this when you’re done, and then look at it again in a month or so to see what changes you have made in the ways that you write.**

- (1) How do you get started?
- (2) Do you write several drafts or just one?
- (3) Would you like to share your work with others?
- (4) If you revise, what sort of tips do you look for and what sort of changes do you tend to make?

(5) How do you edit and proofread, and what types of errors do you most often find?

## Unit 2 Manuscript Forms

Writing is a process of creation guided by rules and principles. One has to know about what good English manuscript form is before he/she begins how to write in English. English manuscript form is related to one of seven qualities that good writing owns—Presentation. As far as format is concerned, rules governing the arrangement of each parts of the writing should be strictly observed so as to furnish the English writing with a clear and neat appearance.

Generally speaking, manuscript form is a fairly simple issue to understand but usually not easy to follow correspondingly. When writing an English composition, attention should be paid to the following guide lines.

1. Set the margin before writing the first line; leave about two and a half centimeters for the top, bottom and margins.
2. Write on every other line or double space the text in order to make it easy to read and provide room for further corrections or additions.
3. Put the title of the composition in the middle of the first line.
4. Capitals are used mainly at three places; the first words of sentences, key words in titles, and proper names.

### Capitalization of Titles

- 1) Always capitalize the first and last words of the title, regardless of their part of speech;
- 2) Capitalize all nouns, verbs (including *is* and other forms of *to be*), adverbs (including *than* and *when*), adjectives (including *this* and *that*), and pronouns (including *its*), and subordinate conjunctions (including *as*, *because*, *although*, *before*, *after*, and *when*);
- 3) Do not capitalize articles (*a*, *an*, *the*) unless an article is the first word in





the title;

- 4) Do not capitalize coordinate conjunctions (*and, but, for, nor, or*);
  - 5) Do not capitalize prepositions of four or fewer letters (*on, in, to*);
  - 6) Do not capitalize *to* in an infinitive phrase (e. g. , “How to Format Your Hard Disk”);
  - 7) Capitalize the second word in compound words if it is a noun or proper adjective or the words have equal weight (e. g. , Cross-Reference, Pre-Microsoft Software, Read/Write Access, Run-Time ). Do not capitalize the second word if it is another part of speech or a participle modifying the first word (e. g. , How-to, Take-off).
5. A title can be followed by a question mark if it is a question; quotation marks are used to enclose a direct speech, but no period is needed at the end of a title. Quotation marks are also expected for titles of articles, but for titles of books, they should appear in italics. The following are examples of acceptable titles.
- 1) The Text to Look For
  - 2) Christmas in the Morning
  - 3) A Room Without Windows
  - 4) Walt Whitman and His Leaves of Grass
  - 5) The Myth of Negro Literature
  - 6) What Can the Teacher Do in the World of Today?
6. Indent the first line of each paragraph, leaving a space of four or five letters. (About one third of an inch or two thirds of a centimeter can be auto-indented by computers. ) Do not indicate paragraphs by an extra line space.
7. If there is not enough space to complete the last word near the edge of the paper, write it on the next line. Make sure not to squeeze it into the margin.
8. Leave one space after any punctuation mark: a comma, a period, a question mark, and an exclamation mark, etc.
9. Write carefully, neatly and clearly so that the handwriting is recognizable.