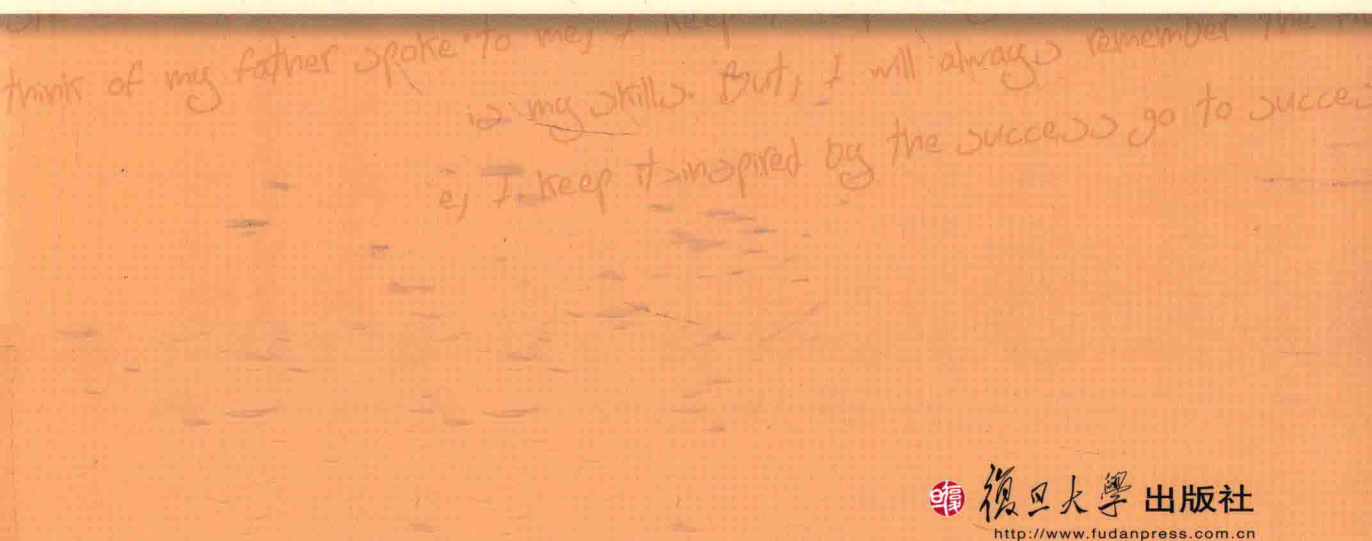


Reading Course for English Majors

英语专业阅读教程 ——评判阅读及写作

主 编 蒋洪新

分册主编 刘金玲



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——评判阅读及写作

主 编 蒋洪新
分册主编 刘金玲
分册副主编 刘利红 刘 宏



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本册共4个单元,其中前3个单元集中介绍各种重要的阅读理论和技巧,并在阅读理论的指导下,运用阅读技巧进行阅读实践。每一单元除阅读基础理论和范文后都配有相应的阅读和写作练习。第4单元为综合练习,教师可视情况选择使用。

本套教材的编写和出版得到了复旦大学出版社的大力支持和帮助,刘学明、吴丁娥等教授和教学同仁对本教材提出了宝贵的建议,在此深表谢意。

编 者

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UNIT 1

Paragraph Analysis

Part 1 Finding the Topic

When you are trying to analyze a paragraph, you should begin finding the topic which can always be found in a well-written paragraph. When we talk about the topic of a paragraph, we usually refer to the subject of it. It has a close connection with the main idea of the paragraph, but it is not necessarily the same thing. The topic is usually what the paragraph is about. It is often the person, place or thing, or event frequently mentioned or referred to in the paragraph, while the main idea is an idea expressed, supported by the sentences in the paragraph. When you are trying to find the topic, you may ask a simple question: Who or what is repeatedly mentioned or referred to in this paragraph? The right answer to the question is the topic of the paragraph. We can use the following paragraphs to illustrate how this question leads us to the topic.

◀ Sample Paragraph 1

Within cities there are many areas that are poorly served by medical personnel and facilities. However, more people can obtain medical care in central city areas than in rural areas. There are hundreds of rural counties without a single doctor or clinic. Metropolises have thousands of doctors and clinics. They may not be always located where most of the people live, but in an emergency some form of care is available.

What is the topic of the paragraph?

Explanation

After you finish reading the previous paragraph, you may think that “Urban Medical Care” is the topic of the paragraph. But if you read it again, you will find this topic is too specific. The paragraph does not only deal with the medical care in cities, but also in rural areas. So medical care is the precise topic of the paragraph. It includes medical care both in cities and in rural areas.

Sample Paragraph 2

True to character, Charles Lindburgh^① planned his own burial just a few days before his death from cancer. The decision to plan his own burial was typical of Lindburgh’s personality: he was a man who knew what he wanted and insisted on living according to his beliefs. In 1927 he decided to fly nonstop over the Atlantic. Nobody believed he could do it, but he did, and the news of his flight went around the world. When popular sentiment demanded that Lindburgh return a medal given him by the Nazis, he refused. Considering his past, it’s no surprising that Lindburgh wanted to end his life as he had lived it on his own terms.

What is the topic of the paragraph?

Explanation

If we asked you to give the topic of the previous paragraph, you might answer with the name Charles Lindburgh. But if you read again, you’ll see that this topic is too general. The paragraph does not deal with the many things that might fall under the heading “Charles Lindburgh”, such as his family, hobbies, or illness. Instead, the paragraph is limited to a discussion of Charles Lindburgh’s personality; this is what we call the precise topic of the paragraph. It is neither too general nor too specific. It is precise because it includes everything discussed in the paragraph and excludes everything not discussed.

Sample Paragraph 3

A bicycle consists of two wheels and a simple steel frame equipped with handles, pedals, cranks, and a saddle. The rider sits on the saddle, grasping the handlebars. The pressure of the rider’s foot on the pedals turns the cranks. This action drives a chain over the front and rear sprockets,^② causing the rear wheel to revolve and setting the bike in motion.

What is the topic of the paragraph?

Explanation

The preceding paragraph talks about riding a bicycle, which is the subject the author repeatedly refers to. We can say then that “Riding a Bicycle” is the precise topic of the

paragraph. Notice, however, that this phrase does not appear anywhere in the paragraph. To express the precise topic, we have to provide the phrase ourselves.

Exercises

I

Find a topic for each of the following paragraphs.

Paragraph 1

In 1803, the United States paid France \$15,000,000 for the Louisiana Territory, an area more than four times the size of France. The land which was bought included everything between the Rocky Mountains and the Mississippi River except Texas. The principal port for the second longest river system in the world was located within this territory. Although few realized it at that time, the purchase included the vast forests of Arkansas and Minnesota, the oil deposits of Oklahoma, the cornfields of Iowa, the wheat land of the Dakotas, the copper, silver, and gold of Colorado and Montana, the rice and sugar of Louisiana. Without doubt, the Louisiana purchase was one of the greatest events in the history of the United States. In a single action, a third class nation doubled its size, united its states and population, and became a great power in the world.

The topic of the paragraph is _____.

Paragraph 2

Over the years many different systems of physical exercise designed to improve the health and appearance of the body have emerged. One of the best ever to come forth was Hatha Yoga^③, a form of Yoga consisting of various postures that exercise the entire body. Facial muscles, for example, can be toned by daily performance of "The Lion", a posture that imitates the face of a roaring lion.^④ Back muscles can become more flexible by regular practice of "The Cobra"^⑤, a posture that imitates the arching head of that poisonous snake. "The Crow"^⑥, which resembles the headstand is said to improve circulation and relieve tension.

The topic of the paragraph is _____.

Paragraph 3

EcoNet^⑦ was the first computer network designed for organizations and individuals working on environmental preservation. It is the largest.

EcoNet began in California in 1984 with five computers donated by Apple Computer. It now has more than 2,300 users, most in the United States, and is adding

about 170 new users every month. Given the size of the United States, this may appear a fairly small group, but it is one with considerable leverage. More than 60 percent of EcoNet's members are organizations or individuals representing organizations. Indeed, EcoNet's online phone directory, which gives the names and addresses of all the users, reads like a bibliography of the American environment.

The topic of the paragraph is _____.

II Write a paragraph on one of the given topics.

Directions: When you write a paragraph, do remember what your topic is and this topic should be the center of your paragraph which is limited to no more than 60 words.

1. Shopping on Line
2. Electronic Games
3. A Computer

Part 2 From Topic to Main Idea

The topic of a paragraph, as we discussed in the previous part, is the person, place, thing or event frequently mentioned or referred to in the paragraph. It has a very close connection with the main idea of the paragraph, but they are not the same. The main idea of the paragraph is an idea — the most important idea that is developed or supported by the sentences in the paragraph which centers around the topic. This idea may be contained in a sentence which is the most general and covers the ideas stated by the other sentences in the paragraph. We call this general sentence “topic sentence”. Sometimes, the main idea of the paragraph is not explicitly expressed by any one sentence alone. It is suggested by all the sentences together. We call it unstated main idea. The main idea, however, not like the topic, does not necessarily always exist in every paragraph. In reading practice, we may come across paragraphs that don't contain the main idea. In this case we can neither find a topic sentence nor an idea that runs through the paragraph. We call this disappearance of the main idea.

1. The Main Idea Contained in a Topic Sentence

If the main idea of a paragraph is explicitly stated in a topic sentence, this topic sentence is more often than not either the first or the last sentence. As main idea is more frequently found in the first sentence, look for the following three patterns.

A. Statement and Examples: Is the first sentence a statement followed by other sentences giving examples supporting that statement? For example:

McDonald's is having a sales promotion this month. Double cheeseburgers are half price and free Cokes are given every order over five dollars. Besides that, French fries are being sold two orders for the price of one.

- B. Statement and Reasons: Is the statement in the first sentence followed by reasons that support it? For example:

Turkey vultures are useful animals. Although they are awkward birds on the ground, moving with a shuffling gait, they are most graceful in the air, where they soar for hours looking for food. Turkey vultures eat all kinds of carrion. Their prompt removal of dead animals makes them much appreciated by humankind, especially in tropical countries.

- C. Statement and Details: Is the statement in the first sentence followed by details that support it? For example:

The panda is a popular animal. Stories about the panda in the Washington Zoo are always front page news and important features on television newscasts. Stuffed pandas are among the most popular toys for children, and panda postcards are always in demand in zoo gift shops.

If these three patterns don't contain the solution to the main idea puzzle, consider the possibility that the main idea is contained in the last sentence, and try out these patterns.

- A. Examples and Statement: Do the other sentences in the paragraph supply examples that support the statement made in the last sentence?
- B. Details and Statement: Do the other sentences in the paragraph support the statement in the last sentence?
- C. Reasons and Statement: Do the other sentences in the paragraph supply reasons that support the statement made in the last sentence?

If the paragraph doesn't conform to any of these patterns, we have to think of another type. Sometimes, however, the main-idea sentence is in the middle of the paragraph. Once you have mastered the two strategies explained above, you can use them to help find this third type of placement of the main idea.

The following are sample paragraphs with main ideas expressed by topic sentences.

Sample Paragraph 1

For a period of about seventy five years (1765—1840) the Gothic novel^①, an early relative of the modern horror stories, was popular throughout Europe. Many of the most popular novels, those written by Horence Walpole, Ann Radcliffe, and Monk Lewis were sold

by the thousands, quickly translated, and frequently plagiarized. The stories were the object of fascination because they described a world where mysterious happenings were a matter of course, and ghostly, hooded figures flitted through the night. Gothic novels were read and discussed by men and women of the upper classes, and publishers ever alert to ready market, made sure that copies of the books were available at bargain prices. Even the poorest members of the working class could afford to pay a penny to enter the Gothic world of terror, and they paid their pennies in astonishing numbers.

1. Topic: _____
2. Topic Sentence: _____
3. Main Idea: _____

Explanation

Read and analyze this paragraph, you'll find that the Gothic novel is the precise topic, the subject to which the author repeatedly refers. The first sentence tells us that the Gothic novel was very popular in Europe in the years between 1765 and 1840. The second, third, fourth, and fifth sentences provide specific examples of the books' popularity. We learn that books from popular authors sold by the thousands and were widely discussed and purchased by the rich and the poor alike. The author returns repeatedly to the idea that the Gothic novels were very popular; this, then, is the main idea of the paragraph. The first sentence which contains the main idea is called "topic sentence".

Sample Paragraph 2

Prior to his death Julius Caesar had received several warnings that his life was in danger, but he chose to ignore them because he doubted whether there was any one in Rome courageous enough to kill Caesar. He had come to think of himself as so important to the world's continued progress and well-being that he could not imagine anyone would dare make an attack on the great Caesar's life. Undoubtedly, his pride and arrogance contributed to his death.

1. Topic: _____
2. Topic Sentence: _____
3. Main Idea: _____

Explanation

Read this paragraph carefully, you will find that almost every sentence of this paragraph refers to Julius Caesar's pride. So Julius Caesar's pride is the precise topic. The first sentence contains the main idea of the paragraph that because of his pride Julius Caesar ignored the warnings before his death that his life was in danger. The last sentence is the conclusion.

Sample Paragraph 3

Three days before Christmas in 1894, Captain Alfred Dreyfus, a Jewish officer in French army, was found guilty of treason and sentenced to life imprisonment on Devil's Island^②. In 1906 Dreyfus was completely exonerated; but in those twelve years before Dreyfus was proved innocent, every possible attempt was made to prove him guilty. Key officers in the military gave the newspapers material that supposedly proved Dreyfus's guilt. The newspapers, for their part, printed the stories without questioning their authenticity. Evidence proving Dreyfus innocent was ignored and attempts to open the case were blocked because an examination of Dreyfus case was considered dangerous to the prestige of both the army and the government.

1. Topic: _____
2. Topic Sentence: _____
3. Main Idea: _____

Explanation

After reading this paragraph, you'll find that neither the first nor the last sentence contains the main idea. A careful reader will discover that the idea expressed by the second sentence is supported by the other sentences. So the second sentence is the topic sentence, and the main idea is: In 1906 Dreyfus was proved innocent, but before that many attempts were made to prove him guilty.

2. The Unstated Main Idea

The paragraphs discussed are paragraphs with their main idea expressed by a topic sentence. Sometimes authors will not put their main ideas in sentences. Instead, they provide a number of sentences that all combine to suggest a main idea. After reading the sentences, the reader has to infer the suggested main idea. It is important, however, to be careful when you try to find the suggested main idea of a paragraph. You can't let your imagination run away with you and infer any main idea simply because there is no topic sentence in the paragraph to prove you wrong. The following is a sample paragraph with an unstated main idea. Read through this paragraph and see if you can infer the main idea.

Sample Paragraph 4

As a young man, British soldier and writer T. E. Lawrence took part in an archaeological expedition in Middle East. The work fascinated him, as did the land, and he became possessed by a dream. The Arabs would overthrow the Turks and rule their own country. During World War I, Lawrence saw a chance to make his dream become reality when the British showed an interest in helping the Arabs revolt. Lawrence quickly seized on the idea and brought about the meeting between British and Arab leaders. Supplied by British arms and aided by Lawrence's military strategy, the Arabs rose and captured several major Turkish strongholds. By 1919, the war was over, and the Turks had been defeated. Thrilled by the Arab victories, Lawrence was called to the Paris Peace Conference where he learned for the first time that the British did not intend to give up their control in the Middle East.

1. Topic: _____
2. Topic Sentence: _____
3. Main Idea: _____

Explanation

If you read and analyze this paragraph, you'll come to the conclusion that the topic of it is "Lawrence's Dream for Arab Freedom". If you ask what the author wanted to say about the topic, the answer is clear: Lawrence's dream of Arab freedom was only partially realized. However, this main idea is not contained in a sentence, but it is clearly implied. The third sentence in the paragraph tells us that Lawrence dreamed of the Arabs revolting against the Turks and ruling their own land. The remainder of the paragraph makes it clear that the Arabs did throw off Turkish rule, but the last sentence in the paragraph tells us that the Arabs still did not rule their country. Thus our inferred main idea is based solidly on the facts given in the paragraph.

3. The Disappearance of the Main Idea

Most paragraphs have a main idea that is either contained in a general sentence or else suggested by several specific sentences. But, as we'll stress in the following paragraph, some paragraphs do not contain a main idea. Read the following paragraphs, to see if there is a topic sentence, or specific sentences combining to suggest one main idea.

Sample Paragraph 5

The Jehovah's Witnesses^③, a religious group formally known as the Russellites, was

founded by Charles Taze Russell in the late nineteenth century. Members of the group believe that there will be a second coming of Christ, at which time Satan^④ will be defeated, and God's rule on earth established, they are firmly opposed to war and government authority. The Witnesses publish and distribute *Watchtower* and *Awake*, two pamphlets that outline their religious beliefs.

Explanation

After you finish reading this paragraph, you will discover that this paragraph does not contain one sentence that is more general than the others; all the sentences are equally specific. None of the sentences in the paragraph contains an idea that is developed throughout the paragraph. Instead, each sentence introduces a new fact concerning the Witnesses, and the sentences do not combine to suggest a main idea.

Exercises

I

Reading practice

Directions: Fill in the blanks after reading through each paragraph below. Read and decide if the paragraph contains a topic sentence. If it does, write the number of the topic sentence. If the paragraph contains a main idea, but not a topic sentence, infer it then. If there is no main idea in the paragraph, write "No" in the blank.

Paragraph 1

As a young man, Bela Lugosi was rich and famous, but as he grew older, both his fame and his wealth disappeared. Audiences had come to associate him so strongly with the role of Count Dracula^⑤ that producers were hesitant to star him in any other films. Once the Dracula films were no longer popular, Lugosi was unable to find work, and his debts began to increase. Forgotten by Hollywood and his fans, Lugosi became addicted to drugs, and the last few years of his life were filled with poverty and bitterness.

1. Topic: _____
2. Topic Sentence: _____
3. Main Idea: _____

Paragraph 2

Edgar Allan Poe^⑥ is usually praised for having written some of the very first detective stories. However, another aspect of Poe's work is frequently ignored: his understanding of abnormal psychology. Although today it is known that human beings

may be motivated by dark and irrational desires that are contrary to normal morality, Poe was writing in the nineteenth century, not the twentieth. Yet in *The Tell-Tale Heart* and *The Black Cat*, he managed to realistically describe two characters who are well aware that they have no reason to desire the death of their victims. As Poe makes clear, reason has nothing to do with their decisions; they are driven by cruel desires beyond their control.

1. Topic: _____

2. Topic Sentence: _____

3. Main Idea: _____

Paragraph 3

My son used to be an articulate, friendly young man of whom I was very proud. That was before he started going to movies on a regular basis. Since that time he seems to have learned that real men don't talk very much. After all, Charles Bronson hardly says a word in his movies. When my son does get around to talking, his conversation is composed of one syllable words like "yeah" "no" and "oh, yeah". Actually his conversation very strongly resembles the kind of snappy dialogue that made Clint Eastwood famous. Before he became a movie freak, my son had female as well as male friends. Now he refers to girls as "chicks" and "broad" and starts doing a poor imitation of Burt Reynolds every time a "chick" comes into view.

1. Topic: _____

2. Topic Sentence: _____

3. Main Idea: _____

Paragraph 4

Test anxiety is an uneasiness or apprehension experienced before, during, or after an examination because of concern, worry, or fear. Almost everyone experiences some anxiety. But some students find that anxiety interferes with their learning and test taking to such an extent that their grades are seriously affected. Fortunately, there is a great deal that you can do to keep the anxiety from interfering with your performance. First, it is important to know that you don't have to eliminate it entirely. It helps to be "up" for exams. You just want to reduce the anxiety to a manageable level. Second, remember that getting prepared for the exam is more than half the battle. Attend all of your classes, find out what you are expected to know and when the exams are scheduled. Keep up with your work so that you can avoid "cramming" for exams. Become more efficient in your study habits. Have a study schedule that makes use of "wasted time".

Study in a location where you can concentrate, get interested in the material, and give it your complete attention. Use a method such as SQ3R (Survey, Question, Read, Recite, Review) for reading your text books. Make flashcards and review them often. Learn how to take good notes. Go over them right after class and review periodically. Make outlines and summary sheets. Ask yourself, "What is the important information?" Being in a study group with motivated classmates is often helpful. In general, organized, self-confident students with efficient study habits may actually spend less time studying than others who receive lower grades.

1. Topic: _____
2. Topic Sentence: _____
3. Main Idea: _____

Paragraph 5

When your speech is written, rewritten and edited, you must rehearse it as often as possible, alone and in company. There is no excuse for not rehearsing, however busy you are and however familiar you are with the speech you intend to deliver. Rehearsal is an endless process of discovery. By rehearsing you will discover any late errors in your writing and your facts, and you will discover more words which you can cut. You will discover whether your jokes work and why they don't and in general whether your speech will work on your listeners' hearts and minds as you intend it to. You will discover the right pitch of your voice and eliminate irritating vocal mannerisms (you know ... like ... that is ... er ...) and physical gestures. You will master any visual aids you are using, and whether or not you are able to rehearse in the actual setting you might be able to rehearse with any sound system which it uses. Above all, by rehearsing you will get control of your nerves.

1. Topic: _____
2. Topic Sentence: _____
3. Main Idea: _____

Paragraph 6

It has been found that many obese persons eat food to derive certain types of satisfactions or to compensate for certain personality lacks. The overweight girl who is not socially acceptable may appease her discomfiture and ego by indulging in rich desserts or some other type of unwise eating. Persons who are undergoing tensions such as fear, boredom or frustration may find that eating seems to relieve the situation. The individual who lacks affections, recognition or the fulfillment of other emotional needs

may turn to food as a solace. There is considerable evidence that psychological factors may play a role in obesity.

1. Topic: _____

2. Topic Sentence: _____

3. Main Idea: _____

Paragraph 7

In spring, the stickleback, a small fish found in both fresh and salt water, goes through a strange courtship ritual with the coming of the spring months. The male stickleback begins to look for a place where he can build his nest. Once he has found one, he grows aggressive and fights off all invaders. After finishing the nest, he goes off in search of a female. When he finds one, he leads her to the nest, and she enters it. The male then hits the tail of the female forcing her to deposit her eggs. Once she lays the eggs, the female swims off, and the male enters the nest.

1. Topic: _____

2. Topic Sentence: _____

3. Main Idea: _____

Paragraph 8

Daphne DuMaurier's short story "Don't Look Now" is a masterpiece of suspense. It is unfortunate that the film made from the story was not nearly as good. DuMaurier's story is suspenseful and mysterious, but it is also logical. One understands, for example, why the woman in the cape murders the architect. The movie, however, seems determined to avoid any logical explanation of the architect's death. One never understands why the woman in red chose to attack a man she'd never seen before. It is regrettable that the film chose to ignore DuMaurier's logical explanation of the mystery.

1. Topic: _____

2. Topic Sentence: _____

3. Main Idea: _____

Paragraph 9

Studies indicate that human beings use two kinds of memory, short-term and long-term. When we use short-term memory, we retain information for a very brief period of time. For example, we use short-term memory, when we look up a phone number and remember it only long enough to dial. When we use long-term memory we

retain information for a considerable length of time. A young child, for example, may memorize a poem and remember it for the next twenty years.

1. Topic: _____
2. Topic Sentence: _____
3. Main Idea: _____

Paragraph 10

America's puritan morality is in decline. They are sad about its passing. However, many do fear the flood of pornography^⑦ that has resulted from American's refusal to maintain a Puritan attitude toward sexuality. If Americans refused to mention pornographic movies in polite society as little as twenty years ago, just the opposite social rule seems to be in force today.^⑧ Movies like *The Devil in Miss Jones* and *Deep Throat* have achieved an unheard-of respectability and are praised for their humorous approach to sex. As little as ten years ago, *Playboy* was still considered a somewhat shocking addition to suburban newsstands, but today *Playboy* can hardly keep up with its numerous competitors who are less reluctant to present explicit sex scenes on the covers of their magazines. While the twenties saw the relentless reign of Anthony Comstock, a man who waged war on pornography in his role as public censor, the seventies have produced a series of court decisions that have made it increasingly difficult to convict sellers of pornographic literature.

1. Topic: _____
2. Topic Sentence: _____
3. Main Idea: _____

II

Writing practice

Directions: Review the types of the paragraphs discussed before you choose one of the given topics to write on. Remember the passage should contain a main idea with a topic sentence. The paragraph is no more than 180 words.

1. An Unbearable Embarrassment
2. Cell-phones
3. My First Travel

Part 3 Sentence Functions

Most of the paragraphs we have dealt with up to this point consisted mainly of topic