



北京市高等教育精品教材

# CONTEMPORARY

Advanced Writing

# COLLEGE ENGLISH

## 现代大学英语

● 总主编：杨立民

● 高级写作

● 主 编：梅仁毅

● 编 者：甘恢挺

宋云峰

梁 昊



外 语 教 学 与 研 究 出 版 社

FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING AND RESEARCH PRESS



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# 序 言

## 使用范围

教育部普通高等教育“十五”国家级规划教材“现代大学英语”(Contemporary College English)系列教材中的写作教程共分6册,包括《基础写作(上)》(First-Year Writing, Book One),《基础写作(下)》(First-Year Writing, Book Two),《中级写作(上)》(Intermediate Writing, Book One),《中级写作(下)》(Intermediate Writing, Book Two),《高级写作》(Advanced Writing)和《学术写作》(Academic Writing)。《基础写作》上、下册为大学本科英语专业一年级学生编写,《中级写作》上、下册供二年级使用,《高级写作》供三年级使用,《学术写作》为四年级上学期即将撰写学士论文的毕业班学生编写。

## 指导思想

语言是人类交流思想的工具,语言的交际功能通过听、说、写、读来实现,而写作在这几种交际手段中具有特别重要的意义。它不仅以书面形式记录了思想的交流,从而超越了时空的限制,更重要的是,它特别强调思维逻辑的严密、思想感情表达的深度,以及语言运用的精妙。从某种意义上说,笔头表达的能力,而不是日常生活的口语,才是是否受过严格教育和训练的标志。我们教材的最终目的是帮助学生实现用英语表达思想这个目标。因此我们在教材的各个环节都把内容放在重要的地位,训练写作技巧时力求结合我国的具体实际,结合当代我国学生的生活、学习情况和他们的经历,针对并围绕不同学习阶段学生想表达而且也能表达的话题。

## 编写特点

- 吸收国内外优秀写作教材的长处,结合我国的国情和学生的情况选材,注重当代大学生熟悉、关心的话题。
- 与本系列的其他教材,如精读和口语在题材方面有机地结合或配合。这不仅有利于深化学生对某一话题的认识,也有利于使学生认识到讨论同一话题时英语口语与书面语风格的区别,如《基础写作(上)》,训练学生写概要,用的就是系列教材中同一阶段的精读课文(或课文的某一部分);《中级写作(下)》的教学内容是议论文,与同一阶段的口语教材中的“辩论”部分在讨论的话题方面相互配合。
- 写作所需要的不只是语言表达能力,还取决于一个人的生活阅历、观察和思维能力及知识面等多方面的综合素质。当然以上所列的方方面面不可能仅从写作课上获得,但写作教材和写作课必须力求做到有利于学生以上能力的培养。在编写这套教材时,我们努力按照这个目标选材、编写练习和作业,鼓励学生独立思考,努力挖掘他们记忆中和生活中的闪光点,并引导他们观

察现实生活,发现周围环境中的真、善、美和假、恶、丑,并对这些现象确立自己的观点和态度。

- 写作必须有一定量的阅读作后盾。本书选用了不少阅读篇章,这些选篇的作者均以英语为母语。选篇主要的任务是引起学生对某一话题的兴趣,通过课堂讨论甚至辩论,促使他们对这一话题进行深入的思考,并考虑自己对此话题的立场和态度;与此同时,这些文章从篇章结构和写作技巧来讲,也可起到示范作用。此外,本书也收录了同等水平学生的习作作为示范,它们选自使用本书作教材的学生的作业。这些习作虽然并不完美,但其语言水平、所涉及内容及其深度都更加贴近使用本书的其他学生,他们经过努力,完全能够写出水平相当甚至更好的文章。
- 理论从简,强调写作实践及其过程。有关写作技巧方面的“理论”本书不做长篇的论述,只做画龙点睛般的说明,学生主要在分析范文的过程中体会并学习如何根据不同文章的目的而采用恰当的篇章结构和写作技巧,从而使技巧和方法为内容——所表达的思想——服务。
- 提高英语的写作能力,决非仅仅完成课堂布置的作业就能做得到。教师在教学中一定要把课上布置的有指导性的作业和课下的自由写作结合起来,注意激发学生动笔的愿望和激情,鼓励他们多写、常写,写日记、读书心得或报告,办班级刊物,参加作文比赛。总之,教师要为他们创造广阔的写作平台。

## 各册内容 / 安排

《基础写作(上)》: 概要与段落 (Summary & Paragraph)

《基础写作(下)》: 记叙与描述 (Narration & Description)

《中级写作(上)》: 说明文模式 (Patterns of Exposition)

《中级写作(下)》: 议论与说服 (Argumentation & Persuasion)

《高级写作》: 目标与选择 (Aims & Options: A Thematic Approach to Writing)

《学术写作》

多年来,尤其是改革开放以来,我国广大英语教师在英语写作教学方面进行了多种实践和改革,取得了不少经验,编写和引进了不少好的教材。这套教材借鉴了不少前者的经验,同时也有意识地对写作教学进行一些新的探索。我们尽力把它编成集读本(Reader)、指南(Guide)和写作实践(Writing Practice)为一体的有实用价值的教材。

编 者

2005年8月

# 本册使用说明

《高级写作》是“现代大学英语”写作系列的第五册，是为大学高年级英语写作课而编写的。在前面几册训练的基础上，本册的重点放在议论文的写作训练上。议论文是学生在学校及社会上应用比较广泛的一种文体，同时议论文的写作又是训练学生逻辑思维的有效手段。在训练时，我们将重点放在言之有物、组织严密、条理清楚、重点突出这四点上。

本书共分十个单元，每个单元一个主题，有三至五篇范文及参考文章。范文的目的是：向学生揭示文章的构思、启承转合、分析的逻辑性、材料运用的说服力等议论文写作中的要素，使学生知道规范的文章应如何写。参考文章供学生阅读以汲取信息。在研读范文的基础上，学生要就相关主题写一篇 800~1,000 字的文章。文章分初稿和定稿两个阶段。初稿出来后，要在同学间组织互改互评，然后交给教师作第一次修改。在修改初稿的基础上教师作第一次点评，然后将初稿发回，让学生修改，然后作为定稿交给教师。教师改后，作第二次点评。

这样的安排对教师与学生都提出了要求。教师的作用有三：引导学生从文章写作特点上去研读范文，掌握写作要点；修改学生文章，指出文章篇章结构上的毛病，必要时给予个别指导；抓住共同性问题，重点突出地进行点评，也可印发学生写得好的段落，给予分析。要发挥学生的积极性，特别在互改互评阶段，提高学生发现问题的敏感性和能力，培养团队精神。

时间安排及步骤可分为：

课上	课下
范文分析	学生就相关题目写文章
范文分析/学生互改互评	把论文交给教师作第一次修改
教师第一次点评	学生修改文章
交定稿/下一单元范文分析	学生撰写第二单元文章
第二次点评/范文分析/学生互改互评	教师第一次修改

这册书的有关单元在北京外国语大学英语学院试用过，得到了学生的支持与肯定。我们在每单元最后选择了几篇学生习作并附有教师点评，供同学们参考。对这些同学的支持，编者表示深深的感谢。书中部分文章经过新西兰专家 Helen Wily 的修改，在此表示衷心的感谢。

编者衷心希望这本教材能得到使用者的认可，并欢迎同行批评指正。

编 者  
2006 年 5 月

# Acknowledgements

We are deeply grateful to the authors and publishers of all the articles we use as readings for this textbook. We apologize for the insufficient information in some cases due to our lack of resources. We intend to show every respect for intellectual property rights, and hope our pleading for the permission to use the related stories and articles for teaching purposes will receive kind and generous consideration.

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## Meaning of Life

- |   |                      |
|---|----------------------|
| It's Not What You Do, It's How You Got There  | Judith Timson        |
| (From <i>English Language Learning</i> , August 2004, pp.25-27)   |                      |
| Determine Your Mission  | Tom Gegax            |
| (From <i>English Language Learning</i> , November 2005 pp.32-33)  |                      |
| Modern Life Is Killing Us   | Richard Martins      |
| (From <i>Guardian Weekly</i> , March 25-31, 2004)   |                      |
| Reasons to Be Cheerless   | Madeleine Bunting    |
| (From <i>Guardian Weekly</i> , March 4-10, 2004)  |                      |
| Frequently Asked Questions About the Meaning of Life  | Eliezer S. Yudkowsky |
| (From <a href="http://www.yudkowsky.net/tmol-faq/meaning%20of%20life.html">http://www.yudkowsky.net/tmol-faq/meaning of life.html</a> ) |                      |

## Health

- |   |                  |
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| The Diet Zone: A Dangerous Place  | Natascha Pocek   |
| (From <i>Goad Reasons: Designing and writing Effective Arguments</i> , eds by Lester Faigley and others, Longman, 2003) |                  |
| Don't Fool Yourself About Getting in Shape  | Edward Jackowski |
| (From <a href="http://www.NYDailyNews.com">http://www.NY Daily News.com</a> January 20, 2003)                           |                  |
| That Lean and Hungry Look   | Suzanne Britt    |
| (From <i>The Mercury Reader for Developing Writers</i> ed. by Trena Houpp, Pearson Custom Publishing, 2005)             |                  |

## Love and Marriage

- |  |                |
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| Balanced Heart: Seeking Equilibrium in Intimacy  | Tara D. Miller |
| (From <a href="http://www.meaning.ca/love_miller_june_03.htm">http://www.meaning.ca/love miller june 03.htm</a> )          |                |
| When the Heat Fades  | Ayala M. Pines |
| (Excerpted from <i>Sociological Footprints</i> , ed. by Leonard Cargan & Jeanne H. Ballantine Wadsworth, 1994, pp.234-238) |                |
| Contemporary Issues in Marriage  | David R. Mace  |
| (Excerpted from <i>Sociological Footprints</i> , ed. by Leonard Cargan & Jeanne H. Ballantine Wadsworth, 1994, pp.206-212) |                |



## E-education

- The Digital Revolution and the Coming of the Postmodern University  
(From *The Digital Revolution and the Coming of the Postmodern University* by Carl A Raschke London: Routledge, 2002) Carl A. Raschke
- The Nontraditional Undergraduate and Distance Learning: Is Higher Education Providing a Portal or Just a Keyhole to Social and Economic Mobility?  
(From [http://findarticles.com/plarticles/mi\\_m1254/is\\_634/ai94129286](http://findarticles.com/plarticles/mi_m1254/is_634/ai94129286)) Carriuolo, Nancy
- Wiring up the Ivory Towers  
(From [http://www.unesco.org/courier/2000\\_11/uk/doss26.htm](http://www.unesco.org/courier/2000_11/uk/doss26.htm)) Robin Mason

## Environment

- Environmentalism as Religion Run Amok  
(From *USA Today*, March, 2004) Michael Crichton
- Dirty Word, Clean Place  
(From *Texas Archival Resources Online*, David Quammen Papers) David Quammen
- Humans and Wildlife Face Water Woes  
(From *USA Today*, September 2002) Karin M. Krchnak

## Capital Punishment

- Death and Justice: How Capital Punishment Affirms Life  
(From *Current Issues and Enduring Questions*, eds. by Sylvan Barnet and Hugo Bedau) Edward I Koch
- The Death Penalty  
(Excerpted from *Current Issues and Enduring Questions*, eds. By Sylvan Barnet and Hugo Bedau) David Bruck
- A Cruel Penalty for Victims  
(From *The Enquirer*, February 3, 2003) Peter Bronson
- The Case Against the Death Penalty  
(Excerpted from [archive.aclu.org/library/case-against-death.html](http://archive.aclu.org/library/case-against-death.html), July 16, 2004) Hugo Adam Bedau

## Technology

- Starved of the Truth—"GM is About Profit, Not Feeding the Poor"  
(From *Guardian Weekly*, 18-24 March 2004) George Monbiot
- The Shock of the New  
(From *The Economist* March 26th 2005, p.13) Robert Hughes
- GM Crops Pose Risk to the World  
(From *Guardian Weekly*, 18-24 December 2003) (Two Readers)
- Anatomy of a Techno-Myth  
(From *Economist* March 26th 2005, pp.73-74) John Daly



The Third Technological Revolution and Its Possible Socioeconomic Consequences      Daniel Bell  
(Excerpted from *Sociological Footprints*, ed. by Leonard Cargan & Jeanne H. Ballantine, Wadsworth,  
Inc. 1994, pp. 537-547)

## Poverty

The Two Nations      Anthony Lewis  
(From *The New York Times Archive*, 2005)

The Fight of Our Lives      Bill Moyers  
(Excerpted from *AlterNet*, July 14, 2004)

Who Was Poor in 2002?  
(From *IRP*, April 19, 2004)

The Hunger in America's Midst      Bill Shore  
(From *Christian Science Monitor*, June 3, 2004)

From the Ranks to the Street      Jocelyn Y. Stewart  
(Excerpted from *Los Angeles Times*, May 29, 2004)

The Dangers of Too Much Success      David Murphy  
(From *Far Eastern Economic Review*, June 10, 2004)

## Communication

Sex, Lies, and Conversation      Deborah Tannen  
(From *Gender and Discourse* by Deborah Tannen, Oxford University Press, 1994)

Is Technology Making Us Intimate Strangers?      Jonathan Coleman  
(From *Newsweek*, March 27, 2000)

The Fine Art of Complaining      Caroline Rego  
(From *Writing in a Visual Age* eds. by Lee Odell and Susan Katz, St.Martins, 2006)

## Globalization

What Is Globalization?      World Bank Briefing Paper  
(From World Bank Website)

International Economics      Jeffrey Sachs  
(Excerpted and adapted from *Globalization and the Challenges of a New Century*, eds. by Patrick  
O'Meara and others)

Anti-globalization  
(Adapted from *Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia*)

Globalization and Its Discontents      Robert Gilpin  
(Excerpted and adapted from *The Challenge of Global Capitalism*, by Robert Gilpin)

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# Meaning of Life

## Guide to Reading

“生活的意义”是每一个来到这个世界上的人，尤其是将要走出大学校园进入社会工作的大学生们必须面对和回答的问题。面对严峻的就业形势和沉重的生活压力，如何明确人生的目的、树立正确的择业观和成功观是至关重要的。本单元选取的五篇文章在这些方面从不同的角度进行了深浅不同的分析，对同学们会有有益的启示。

第一篇文章**“It’s Not What You Do, It’s How You Got There”**题目本身就强调：做什么样的工作并不重要，重要的是如何做好它并取得成功，得到物质与精神两方面的满足。现实世界里究竟有多少人在从事与其大学所学专业有关的工作呢？事实上，这个比例很小。文章以加拿大多伦多陌生人之间流行的问候语“你是做什么的？”开头以引起读者的兴趣，然后提出自己的论点，对这一现象背后的原因进行深刻的剖析。这可以帮助同学们树立辩证的择业观。

第二篇文章**“Determine Your Mission”**引导读者树立正确的成功观。许多人将成功视为人生的追求，但怎样才算成功呢？作者通过分析得出结论：事业与金钱只是成功的两个方面，而人生的目的是多方面的。这就提醒我们不要陷入一味追求物质财富的陷阱。作者在这篇文章里着力对成功进行全面地定义，并形象地将成功比喻为钻石的不同剖面。

第三篇文章**“Modern Life Is Killing Us”**则提醒我们注意现代化，尤其是科技飞速发展的结果。现代化使我们异化，成为物质与科技手段的奴隶，从而限制了我们的身心自由。这是现代人或后现代人应尽力避免的。这篇文章使用了驳论法，即先陈述以美国为代表的西方“竞争”价值观的可取之处，然后引入它无能为力的地方，最后证明西方生产和生活方式的弊端。这种方法合情合理，令人信服。

第四、五两篇文章为补充阅读。第四篇文章**“Reasons to Be Cheerless”**论述现代化给人类带来的生活意义的迷茫。第五篇文章**“Frequently Asked Questions About the Meaning of Life”**则从哲学与逻辑的高度对生活与生命的方方面面的问题进行解答，针对性较强，但难度较大。

## ► Reading on the Subject

### Requirements:

- You are required to go over Articles 1, 2 & 3 before coming to class. The questions listed after these three articles are meant to help you in reading and preparation for class.
- Articles 4 and 5 are for reference. You are encouraged to read them for information.


# 1

## It's Not What You Do, It's How You Got There

Judith Timson

- 1** In Toronto, the careerist capital of Canada, when strangers meet, they don't say "How do you do?" They say "What do you do?"
- 2** It is a question that drives many people crazy because they don't wish to be defined by or awarded status or demerit points on the basis of their work.
- 3** I say it's all right to ask the question if you follow it up with a much more interesting second question: "How did you come to do what you do?"
- 4** It is then, not in the simple job description, that character is revealed and destiny described. The real estate saleswoman confesses she wanted to be a forensic pathologist but was not steered to the right university courses. The lawyer shrugs and says he had no clue what he wanted to do and law school seemed like a good idea at the time. The entrepreneur admits he had this crazy idea about starting a small radio station. The highly capable nurse still laments her family did not have the money to send her to university.
- 5** Choosing what we do for a living—or having it choose us—is, as American author Po Bronson observed in his bestseller *What Should I Do with My Life?* "one of life's great dramas." There's usually a Greek chorus (the parental unit), an unexpected twist in the road (can't get into medical school) and a crisis or two to be overcome.
- 6** For some there is unbelievable success—think of the founders of Google, so young and yet so rich, for others, a life of desperately unsatisfying activity, and for most everyone else, something in between—good years and bad, fulfillment and drudgery. If you ask people about their professional regrets, they usually involve something they didn't do, as opposed to something they did. "I didn't try out enough things when I was young," says one businessman.



- 7** Sometimes I think people invest their careers with the same mythology they do their love lives—the great passion, the career that got away, now looms larger than life, which is why, in their fifties, many people go looking for that career spark they left behind. And which is why the word “passion” is today popping up in more and more career consultants’ marketing come-ons. We understand, because of our own convoluted life circumstances, that there is no one moment when we fall in love with our work and stay that way, but we don’t demystify the process enough for students.
- 8** It starts early in schools. “When they have a career day at my daughter’s school, they usually haul in the parents and that’s a narrow spectrum—a handful of doctors and lawyers,” says one Montreal woman who wanted to be an architect but ended up with a Bachelor of Commerce degree. On the other hand it’s difficult to convey how vast the possibilities are without overwhelming students.
- 9** Because of changing work patterns, we now get it that when you choose a career, it most likely won’t end up being exactly that job or even that career for life. But how helpful is it to tell someone starting out, actually agonizing over the choices, not to worry because that job won’t be around anyway 20 years from now?
- 10** The graduates in good shape are the ones who emerge even hungrier to learn. That’s what a great education should really foster: a big appetite for learning, and just a little of bravery.
- 11** A few years ago, a high school student in the neighborhood was doing a project on careers, and she called with a good question: “What did you want to be at 16, and what are you today?” I warned her that my answer would be boring—in short, I became what I wanted to be. “Out of 16 people, you and only one other person answered this way,” she said.
- 12** It’s not surprising that we don’t all become what we think we want to be. If we did, it would be a pretty dull world.
- 13** In the meantime, on the bumpy road to getting there, there’s always humor. A teenager I know—tired of adults asking her all the time what she wanted to be—decided at a recent family party to just mutter the words “brain surgeon” to any adult in the room.
- 14** I thought it was a great idea until, at the same party, I came upon a guest who actually is a brain surgeon and he laughed when I told him her plan. “I went skiing recently, and on the chairlift someone asked me what I did. When I said neurosurgeon, he wouldn’t believe me.”
- 15** What kind of a world is it if you can’t get instant status points for being a brain surgeon? I guess it’s a world in which you might as well do exactly what you want.
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## Questions to think about

1. How does the author start her article?
2. Do you wish to be defined or judged by your profession or status? Why or why not?
3. Why do many people end up doing what they did not intend to do when they were young?
4. What is most people's professional regret?
5. What kinds of parents does the university haul in at students' career day?
6. What is the most important thing, according to the author, for a student when he or she is in university?
7. What function is the final example in illustrating the author's point of view?



## Determine Your Mission

Tom Gegax

- 1** Success. Arguably the most sought after and least understood prize. Many hunger for it, and some never realize when they've got it. Most of us want to be successful human beings, mates, parents, workers, managers, homemakers, salespeople. To achieve it, many work excessive long hours and packing more activity into already bloated schedules.
- 2** Yet it's startling to consider that while this effort may yield some of the usual trappings, many still don't feel successful. Underneath the satisfaction of good performance reviews, a bigger house, and committee memberships, many still feel that success is somewhere out there yet to be snared.
- 3** No wonder. Our eyes are bleary from reading business-success tomes and taking notes at "achievement" seminars. Still, we're left asking the same questions: What makes us tick? What makes us stick? What drives us? While the average people works more hours than ever, little of the effort actually helps us understand anything about ourselves. Crowded out by the often manic push for success, simple, reflective inquiry rarely hits anyone's radar screen.
- 4** Many of us are encouraged to train our attention outward, toward such linear concepts as the latest managerial trend, and toward consuming and producing on time, on trend, and in step. We're often so concerned with learning how to manage others—employees, children, mates, even friends—that we're left with little energy to manage ourselves. Obsessed with mastering the world around us, we often fail to notice the unexplored world within. As French author



Edward Schure writes, “Modern man seeks pleasure without happiness, happiness without knowledge, and knowledge without wisdom.” Meanwhile, the search goes on for the secret to success, as if there were a single pill that would make all the difference.

- 5** In my experience, there is no magic bullet. Success, however, is forever within reach, personal and professional growth evolving hand in hand through a winning life game plan. This “whole person” approach focuses on every aspect of our being to support a well-lived personal and professional life. Every aspect is a player and every player is necessary. No one needs to be left on the bench. Recognizing that a win-lose dichotomy only fragments your mission, this winning life game plan redefines “winning” into a venture of cooperation and integration. Win-lose evolves into win-win. Everyone and everything benefit.
- 6** This integrated approach is a path to success, but what kind of “success” are we talking about? This life game plan isn’t just about making more money, ascending the corporate ladder, or cramming in one more goal in the name of efficiency. That narrow view of what constitutes success stands between us and deeper satisfaction. With our eyes locked only on the prize, we forget that a winning life is a product of how we play the game.
- 7** Success, like a jewel, has many facets, and it can be easy to focus on two of the most eye-catching: money and career. Important? Sure, polishing those are part of the plan. Turn the jewel in your hand, though, and take a look at all the other glints of well-rounded success: loving relationships, community consciousness, physical and psychological health, intellectual balance, spiritual connection—to name just a few. An effective life plan polishes them all. While no single facet defines success, the sum reflects a life well-lived.



### Questions to think about

1. What do most people pursue all their lives, according to the author?
2. How do most people measure success in Western societies?
3. What is an integrated approach to success, according to the author?
4. What is your opinion on success?
5. What kind of life would you like to live out there?







## Modern Life Is Killing Us

Richard Martins

- 1** The intellectual mind is a mind in denial. Let us not go into the American's self-deception with its power of positive thinking. Agreed, it works only too well for winning wars, competitive sports, making money. But one must ask: Why is it that the most affluent societies have the longest queues for psychiatrists?
- 2** Culturally speaking, the answer is ultimately clear for a system such as Western society and the nations centered upon capitalistic enterprise, which are based upon competition and success, the driving force of ambition, the rationale of surviving and winning. This is psychologically the most destructive element in human relationships. We are turning ourselves into machines with this kind of egocentric suicide. The suppression of emotions or the sentimental overt display of them misses the point: These are symptoms and may have cultural, moralistic or religious aspects within the overall conditioning of personality and attitudes.
- 3** This technological era has not given us more personal freedom except in the acquisition of material pleasure. Freedom is not a system, a set of laws, a display of individual desires and achievements. Freedom lies only in the courage to face our own self-made illusions and take responsibility for them. Time is being moved faster by the technology; one cannot escape from it; one must be required to do more and more even when there is nothing to do. When you accelerate time, you also accelerate the decay of material life.
- 4** Yes! Stress, paranoia. What good is the liberation of a technological society when one is so stressed that, like the Americans, to be alone or idle is impossible without either going mad or becoming violent? All of this contributes to an immense complexity in coping with the individuation process.
- 5** Life has lost its trust and its harmony, and only disease can follow. Children are very aware of little beings, but they have not the experience to understand. They accept life openly, and they are telling us that the one we have constructed for ourselves is killing us.

### Questions to think about

1. In what aspects does the American way of "positive thinking" work well?



2. What has the technological era given us?
3. How does the author define personal freedom? Do you agree with him?
4. What does the author say about the relationship between technology and time?



## Reasons to Be Cheerless

Madeleine Bunting

**Modern life's meaninglessness causes such despair that we need more than a stiff upper lip.**

Rising mental illness seems an inescapable consequence of the kind of rapid, disruptive change driven by market capitalism. It's not that people have gone soft so much as that they are profoundly disoriented by the ceaseless discontinuity of change. Experience becomes utterly random and meaningless. You were doing really well in your job but you still got fired; you thought your relationship was strong but your partner has fallen out of love with you. What lies behind the escalating weight of emotional distress is that awful struggle to make meaning, that instinct that our lives should have a narrative and a purpose.

Whereas previous generations had a very strong grasp of the meaning of their lives, of their own identity and where they belonged, we are living out Marx's prediction that "all that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned." Meaning inspires resilience: If you have some explanation for what happens, it gives strength. That's what past generations drew comfort from. It is the sheer meaninglessness of the chaotic instability of our experiences that exposes us to despair. We have no answer to "why me?" We have no account for the suffering which is the inevitable lot of human beings other than to employ desperate strategies to avoid it.

Freud said that human beings oscillate between their need for security and their need for freedom. At some point in the 20th century, we pretty much junked security in favor of freedom. The price we pay for that is a kind of nervy, risk-taking roller coaster ride of adrenaline and depression. We've replaced lives that were nasty, brutish and short with lives that are insecure, disorientated and long.

Inevitably, there are casualties, and they need help, not skepticism. That's where the therapy and emotionalization of contemporary culture are part of the solution, not the problem; both are part of how we develop an account of our lives that connects with that of others in the wake of declining religious and political narratives. It can play a crucial role in the lives of many

