

普通高等教育“十一五”国家级规划教材



新世纪高等院校英语专业本科生系列教材(修订版)

总主编 戴炜栋

# 英语新闻写作

## English News Writing

第2版

编者 / 丁言仁 俞 希



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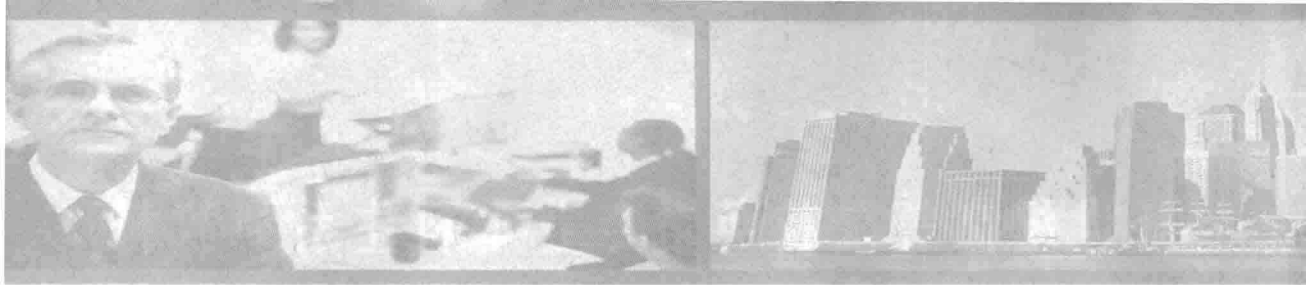
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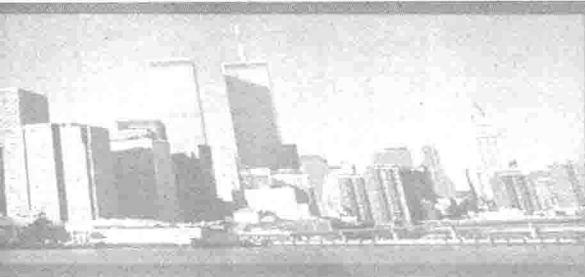
我国英语专业本科教学与学科建设,伴随着我国改革开放的步伐,得到了长足的发展和提升。回顾这30多年英语专业教学改革和发展的历程,无论是英语专业教学大纲的制订、颁布、实施和修订,还是四、八级考试的开发与推行,以及多项英语教学改革项目的开拓,无不是围绕英语专业的学科建设和人才培养而进行的,正如《高等学校英语专业英语教学大纲》提出的英语专业的培养目标,即培养“具有扎实的英语语言基础和广博的文化知识并能熟练地运用英语在外事、教育、经贸、文化、科技、军事等部门从事翻译、教学、管理、研究等工作的复合型英语人才”。为促进英语专业本科建设的发展和教学质量的提高,外语专业教学指导委员会还实施了“新世纪教育质量改革工程”,包括推行“十五”、“十一五”国家级教材规划和外语专业国家精品课程评审,从各个教学环节加强对外语教学质量的宏观监控,从而确保为我国的经济建设输送大量的优秀人才。

跨入新世纪,英语专业的建设面临新的形势和任务:经济全球化、科技一体化、文化多元化、信息网络化的发展趋势加快,世界各国之间的竞争日趋激烈,这对我国英语专业本科教学理念和培养目标提出了新的挑战;大学英语教学改革如火如荼;数字化、网络化等多媒体教学辅助手段在外语教学中广泛应用和不断发展;英语专业本科教育的改革和学科建设也呈现出多样化的趋势,翻译专业、商务英语专业相继诞生——这些变化和发展无疑对英语专业的学科定位、人才培养以及教材建设提出了新的、更高的要求。

上海外语教育出版社(简称外教社)在新世纪之初约请了全国30余所著名高校百余位英语教育专家,对面向新世纪的英语专业本科生教材建设进行了深入、全面、广泛和具有前瞻性的研讨,成功地推出了理念新颖、特色明显、体系完备的“新世纪高等院校英语专业本科生系列教材”,并被列入“十五”国家级规划教材,以其前瞻性、先进性和创新性等特点受到全国众多使用院校的广泛好评。

面对快速发展的英语专业本科教育,如何保证专业的教学质量,培养具有国际视野和创新能力的英语专业人才,是国家、社会、高校教师共同关注的问题,也是教材编撰者和教材出版者关心和重视的问题。

作为教学改革的一个重要组成部分,优质教材的编写和出版对学科建设的推动和人才培养的作用是有目共睹的。外教社为满足教学和学科发展的需要,与教材编写者们一起,力图全方位、大幅度修订并扩充原有的“新世纪高等院校英语专业本科生系列教材”,以打造英语专业教材建设完整的学科体系。为此,外教社邀请了全国几十所知名高校40余位著名



英语教育专家，根据英语专业学科发展的新趋势，围绕梳理现有课程、优化教材品种和结构、改进教学方法和手段、强化学生自主学习能力的培养、有效提高教学质量等问题开展了专题研究，并在教材编写与出版中予以体现。

修订后的教材仍保持原有的专业技能、专业知识、文化知识和相关专业知识的四大板块，品种包括基础技能、语言学、文学、文化、人文科学、测试、教学法等，总数逾 200 种，几乎涵盖了当前我国高校英语专业所开设的全部课程，并充分考虑到我国英语教育的地区差异和不同院校英语专业的特点，提供更多的选择。教材编写深入浅出，内容反映了各个学科领域的最新研究成果；在编写宗旨上，除了帮助学生打下扎实的语言基本功外，着力培养学生分析问题、解决问题的能力，提高学生的思辨能力和人文、科学素养，培养健康向上的人生观，使学生真正成为我国新时代所需要的英语专门人才。

系列教材修订版编写委员会仍由我国英语界的知名专家学者组成，其中多数是在各个领域颇有建树的专家，不少是高等学校外语专业教学指导委员会的委员，总体上代表了中国英语教育的发展方向和水平。

系列教材完整的学科体系、先进的编写理念、权威的编者队伍，再次得到教育部的认可，荣列“普通高等教育‘十一五’国家级规划教材”。我深信，这套教材一定会促进学生语言技能、专业知识、学科素养和创新能力的培养，填补现行教材某些空白，为培养高素质的英语专业人才奠定坚实的基础。

**戴炜栋**

教育部高校外语专业教学指导委员会主任委员

国务院学位委员会外语学科评议组组长



*English News Writing*

# Additional Words for the Teacher

## (Second Edition)

First, compiling the second edition of this textbook represents an attempt to call attention to the importance of teaching journalism within university English departments. Editors of Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press certainly see such importance. They encouraged me to put out this edition.

News media played a critical role in the establishment and development of the contemporary capitalist political system; in the United States, it is regarded as the fourth estate of the government, an estate in addition to the executive, legislative and judicial branches of the government. As China strives to build itself into a highly developed, highly democratic modern country, arguably, news media will again have an important place. The job of journalists and others working for news media is to inform the public, and only an informed public can effectively participate in political decision-making processes and can possibly make sure that its voices are heard, and its interest represented. Journalists, to quote a British newspaper editor, are “unofficial public servants.” By informing the public, they safeguard democracy, that is, the power of the people in government. The Western democratic systems do have many problems, but this does not mean there is nothing we can learn about the ideas behind them. The Chinese journalists are also unofficial public servants, and for those of them who produce stories in English, the community they serve includes expatriates who work or study in China and those who do China-related work outside China. To this day, such service has not been very effective. This is why the teaching of English journalism is important.

Second, as suggested in the first edition, the teachers may use this book flexibly by selecting the units that are relevant to what the students are doing. The new edition has retained the basic ideas and organization

of the first edition that worked well in the classroom although it includes many new ideas and examples — many were contributed by my young colleague Yu Xi. It takes repeated practice before students can improve their news writing skills, and therefore it is hard to determine what skills they will need before others. Perhaps teaching should begin with what is most interesting and useful to the students. For instance, many other textbooks introduce hard and soft news writing before they introduce broadcast news writing, maybe because it is easier to discuss feature stories together with straight news stories. This book, however, introduces broadcast news writing early on simply because broadcast journalism has become such an important messenger in our everyday life that when choosing what to learn, students often prefer it to print journalism.

Third, I am grateful to Don Snow, my colleague from Nanjing University and the Amity Foundation. Don read earlier drafts of this manuscript, made many editorial changes, and offered valuable comments and suggestions.

Ting Yenren  
Nanjing University





English News Writing

# Words for the Teacher (and the Student)

(First Edition)

Publishers nowadays may prefer a title that makes the book sound like written for pros, but indeed this book could be more appropriately titled *The ABC's of English News Writing* because that's what it is, a book of basic facts and principles of news writing for students who would like to become English reporters and for those who have just left school and begun their work as English reporters in China.

I have no journalism credentials, either by training or by work experience. What you can expect to find here is only a layman's observations. There is only one reason behind this project: we need a book like this. There is no shortage of books that survey English journalism or books that help English learners read English newspapers and periodicals. However, when it comes to writing a news story, novice reporters often do not have any reference material at hand, and newspapers like *China Daily* have to spend much time preparing their new employees for the trade. As China's contact with the outside world grows, so does the need for news writing that introduces China to the rest of the world.

So, this book may serve as a handbook for novice reporters or as a textbook for news writing courses. Teachers, should they choose it as a textbook, may follow the units one by one, but they may also use it flexibly by selecting the units that are relevant to what the students are doing. Like any other kind of writing, news writing is a recursive, cyclical process, with repeated revision and re-examination, and it takes much practice to hammer home the basic principles of news writing; therefore, units that have been covered may need to be referred to again from time to time as the need arises. Since all these units are highly readable and self-explanatory, teachers may adopt a **project approach** by organizing students into groups and letting them take the responsibility of

researching, gathering material, writing up, sharing, revising and making presentations. The students may put out their own papers, set up websites, or produce audio or video news programs. Throughout these activities, the teacher assumes the role of facilitator, guide and adviser; the emphasis is laid not on “learning to write” but “writing to learn.” People learn to swim by being out in the water, not by reading books about swimming. As teachers, we must put students in the water before they can really begin to learn. The student projects encourage a kind of learning that is active and creative and goes beyond traditional methods of rote and lecture, and they bring results that are a source of pride for both the teacher and students. More importantly, as the students experience the joy and satisfaction of producing their own news stories, they will gain confidence in the next step of their professional lives.

I am grateful to the students I have had over the years for their inspiration. As can be seen, many examples used in this book are their writings. It is their hard work that encouraged me to launch into this project.

I am also indebted to Barbara Penney, my one-time colleague from Nanjing University and an Amity teacher at Fuzhou Teachers College, who patiently read an earlier version of the manuscript, did much editing, and offered many invaluable comments and suggestions.

I should also thank Northwest University in Xi'an for giving me a light teaching load so that I could finish the manuscript during the time when I was teaching there.

Ting Yenren  
Nanjing University



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# Introduction



*English News Writing*



# Get Ready for the Hard Work

If you look up the word “journalism” in the dictionary, you may be told that it refers to the profession of writing for newspapers and news magazines. This, however, is not a complete definition because journalism in these days also includes writing for radio and television and for web-based news media.

The core of journalism is news writing. No matter how much you know about today’s broadcasting and print journalism, to be a qualified journalist, you have to be able to produce articles and produce them efficiently. If you have only read books on journalism and can only talk about the subject, you may be able to teach it in a school, but you can never work in a newsroom.

The aim of this book, therefore, is to help you develop a command of the basic skills of print and broadcast news writing. It tries to help you learn the very minimum a practicing news reporter must know: how to start, develop and polish hard news and feature stories. “Story” is the word reporters use to refer to the articles they write for newspapers, magazines and television programs.

Learning to do news writing is learning a set of skills. In terms of the basic principles, it is truly easier said than done. That is, if the basic principles are written down, you can read them in half an hour or even less, but if you want to be skilled in applying these principles to your work, it may take a lifetime. These principles are not a physical substance the teacher can put inside your head. Rather, they have to grow from within through repeated practice. Because of this, this book is rather thin, but if you want to benefit from it, you must do a lot of practice, i.e., take a hands-on approach by writing a lot of news stories yourself. You should do a number of things:

**Listening:** You should, preferably on a daily basis, watch CCTV Channel 9 and listen to news programs on VOA and BBC.

**Speaking:** You should frequently take notes on what you have heard on TV or radio and report back in a language that is as close to the

original as you can recall. In addition, you should read out loud to your classmates the broadcast stories you yourself have written and ask your classmates to tell whether it sounds like an English news story and where you can make improvements.

**Reading:** You should, also on a daily basis, read English journal publications such as *China Daily* and *21st Century*. Of course you will not have time to read all the stories from the front page to the last page, but you should at least read the first paragraphs of most stories and for some of these paragraphs, read them two or three times. You should also read and comment on the stories written by other students.

**Writing:** This is obviously the most important requirement: writing, writing, and more writing. In order to have something to write about, you should be constantly on the watch for things, events and people around you that are new and newsworthy, i.e., worthy of being reported. A news reporter never watches the clock; rather, he or she lives around a cycle of four C's. These four C's are

- (1) Conceive, i.e., developing the idea for a story;
- (2) Collect, i.e., gathering information through interviews and research;
- (3) Construct, i.e., writing the first draft of the story; and
- (4) Correct, i.e., revising and polishing the story.

As soon as one cycle of these four C's is completed, the next begins.

Is this a lot of work? Yes, but if you are not ready to carry such a workload, do not choose this profession, and do not go on reading this book.

What is the reward, then? The reward cannot be measured in money terms. It lies in seeing people read your story and hearing them talk about it. News reporting is a profession of service. It serves the public by informing them of what you believe they need to know. In addition, journalism is a good school for men and women of letters. Good English and American writers, from Charles Dickens to Mark Twain, from Jack London to Ernest Hemingway, never had a bachelor's or master's degree in literature or in creative writing, but they all had the experience of working for a newspaper when they were young. The practice of writing news stories developed their powers of observation, deepened their insights, and honed their ability to use words.

**Task:** Talk to a news reporter or search on the Web. Find what journalists think of their profession and what a day in the life of a journalist is like. Imagine how you would spend a day if you became a reporter. The following is an imaginary example of a day in the life of a reporter:

On the subway in the morning, I'm heading for a forum on community development and community activities. While the train is running, I go over my instructions and pause to plan my work.

When I get to the meeting room, I set up the video camera to record pictures and sound. Then I find a seat on the aisle where I can take notes on my laptop and still move around to check the names of any speakers I'll want to quote. After the meeting, I stay on for a while and talk to a few participants. As I'm leaving the building, a story is taking shape in my mind.

Back at the office, I feed the video recording into the newsroom computer, where it will be edited

and displayed on the video and audio on-line services for those who want instant access to the news via computer or telephone. Then I sit down at a computer to write my story. First, I write a summary paragraph for the on-line bulletin board. Then I write the story for tomorrow's paper. In it, I include the background and context that will add meaning even for those readers who have already learned the outcome from another medium. By the time I finish, it's very dark outside, and I've been given tomorrow's assignment.

That's all in a day's work.

**Task:** Among the four C's discussed above, it is often hard to explain the origin of the first C; that is, we do not know why a reporter can conceive a story idea in events in which others do not see anything significant. Presumably this is an ability that comes from years of practice.

Look around and ask acquaintances "What's new?" Find as many ideas for news stories as you can. For example,

A mother posted a letter of appreciation on the university bulletin board yesterday. In the letter she praised two second-year French majors. The two students took her son to hospital after they found him collapsed on the road. Her son is only six.

No. 2 Dining Hall has improved its service. It can deliver the breakfast to the dormitory janitor's room in the morning if the student has ordered it on the previous day. The new service enables students to stay in bed for an extra 15 minutes because they do not have to wait in long lines in the dining hall. The service charge is one extra yuan for a breakfast set.

Write these ideas down in your notebook. Each idea may just be a few words, but write enough to remind you of what the idea is when you go over your notes. You should in fact do this every week and work this into your genes so that whenever something comes up, your immediate reaction will be: "Hey, I should write a story about it."



# Writing a Lead



*English News Writing*