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总主编：何莲珍 石 坚

研究生英语 系列教材

实用英语写作

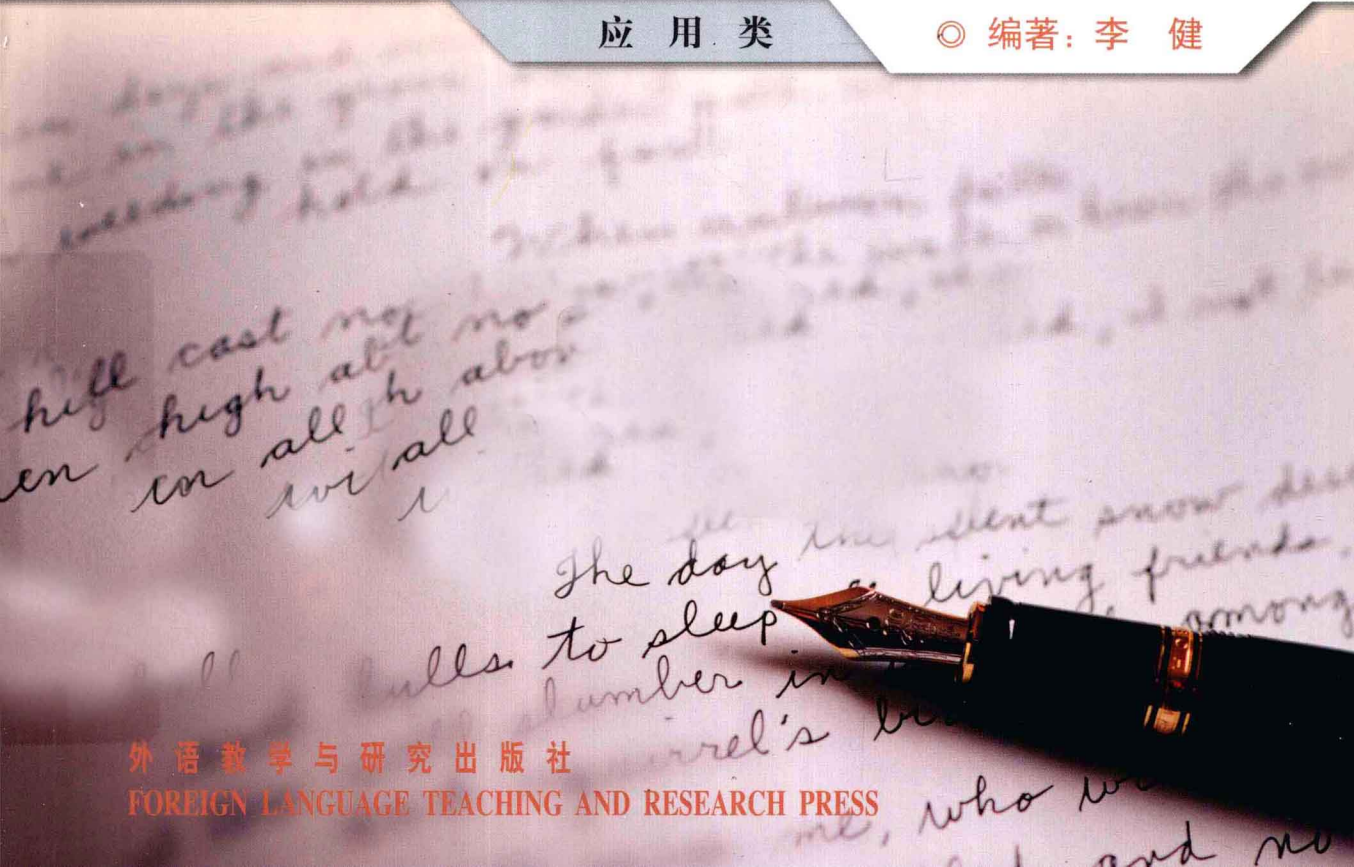
Practical English Writing

应用类

◎ 编著：李 健

外语教学与研究出版社

FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING AND RESEARCH PRESS



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# Preface

在研究生的英语学习中，写作是一项重要的内容，也是最难提高的技能，一方面是由于写作本身涉及语言使用的方方面面，是一项综合性技能；另一方面由于写作目的不同，还要考虑选择适当的写作风格和方式。研究生不仅要掌握学术论文的写作技能，为了满足留学、求职、社交、工作等方面的需要，还应具备实用性写作的能力。实用英语写作的涵盖面很广，写作目的不同，面对读者不同，涉及内容不同，都会影响写作方法和语气的使用，因此要提高写作水平，需要认真观察、学习和掌握不同题材的写作特点和各种写作技巧，不断实践。本教材的编写目的就是为了满足研究生教学的需要，为同学们提供一个学习实用英语写作的平台。

《实用英语写作》适用于各专业研究生实用英语写作教学。本书从语言应用入手，重点放在为实现不同交际目的而进行的写作，按专题分类，从语言特点、写作技巧、篇章结构等方面给予指导，以帮助研究生解决学习和工作中遇到的实用性写作问题。

本教材共 10 个单元，针对留学与求职、专业学习与学术交流、以及职业工作等方面的需要，包括留学/求职申请书、个人陈述、专业书评、专业会议论文摘要与展板设计、商务信函、商务报告、合同与法律英语、专利申请、招标与投标文件、广告等 10 个专题。每个单元主要由四个部分组成，第一部分为写作指南 (Writing Guidelines)，介绍相关题材的特点和写作方法；第二部分为实例分析与写作实践 (Sample Analysis and Writing Practice)，通过阅读范文和各种练习引导学生对文本的组织结构、语言的使用和写作方法等进行观察、分析和学习；第三部分为实用写作技能 (Writing Skills for Communication)，针对学生在实用写作中的问题进行指导，例如如何选择适当的语体、如何加强语言的逻辑性、如何使用有效的句子结构和表达方法等；第四部分为创意性写作 (Creative Writing)，使学生有机会结合自己的实际情况，将所学技能应用到真实的场景中，从而达到学习的真正目的。以上四部分各有侧重，又相互关联，使教材形成了一个有机的整体。

## 本教材具有以下特点：

1. 理论与实际相结合：不仅提供丰富的写作实例，而且对每种题材的写作方法进行分析，使学生系统掌握写作原理，而不是停留在模仿式学习的阶段，从而使学生能够根据不同交际目的有意识地使用恰当的语言和写作方法。

2. 写作实例规范，语言纯正：写作素材均选自权威英语出版物和正规英语网站，能够反映当前英语本族语人士的写作规范及标准语言的使用，使学生学到正确的写作方法与表达方法，避免与英语本族语人士进行交流时有可能产生的误会和障碍。

3. 注重实践，练习灵活多样：紧密结合学习内容，安排了形式多样、生动活泼的写作实践活动，从不同角度为学习者提供练习和参与教学的机会，调动英语写作的积极性，发挥他们在学习中的主观能动性。

4. 讲解系统、全面，指导性强：每个单元除第一部分的“写作指南”之外，还在学习的不同阶段设置了“写作小贴士”(Tips for Writing)，以专题的形式从不同侧面对与主题有关的问题进行讲解，随着学习的推进有针对性地进行指导。此外，在每个单元的最后还附有实用写作常用的表达方法，供学习者查阅和选用。本书结尾是练习答案，作为学习参考。

本教材虽然是为研究生教学编写的，但也可用于英语专业高年级实用写作课程，或作为具有一定英语水平的英语爱好者学习和进修的教材。

如有不当之处，诚请指正。

李 健

2010年8月

于北京

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# Unit 1

## Cover Letters for Academic/Employment Application

### Focus of Study

After completing the Master's program, you may wish to further your study toward Ph.D. in one of the universities abroad, or you may want to find a job in a foreign company or joint venture. In either case, the first step you are going to take is to write a letter of application, which is also called "cover letter" because it is usually sent together with your résumé and other necessary documents.

The main purpose of this letter is to explain your interest in admission to a specific Ph.D. program and/or doctoral assistantship, or in doing a certain job. This letter is an extremely important part of your academic or job application because the letter is the first time you are introducing yourself to a professor, the admission committee of a graduate school or a potential employer. Therefore, it should not only describe your research and work experience, but also demonstrate your intellectual and writing ability.

In this unit, you will learn:

1. how to write effective cover letters;
2. how to choose the appropriate level of language.

## Part I Writing Guidelines

### What Is a Cover Letter?

A cover letter is a document that you send to a professor, the admission committee of a graduate school or your future employer along with your résumé. A good cover letter not only explains what you are applying for and why you think you would be a good candidate, but also who you are as an individual.

Many people think that a cover letter is not as important as a résumé. Actually, a cover letter is very important, because it gives you the opportunity to draw your readers' attention to specific qualifications. A résumé presents a lot of information about your past education and employment, while a cover letter features specific qualifications that you think will impress your readers most.

A cover letter is also important because it provides a sample of your written communication skills. Showing you can write well will demonstrate your intelligence and help to establish your credibility (可信性). Always write cover letters with care, because, like résumés, cover letters create an image of who you are as a professional.

Therefore, successful cover letters are those which reflect something more than what is evident in your résumé; they will give the professor, the admission committee or the would-be employer you are writing to a sense of your voice, your intellectual capacity, and your enthusiasm, thus create an interest in what you do. Successful cover letters also indicate that you are “academically ready” or “job ready”—that you have a research agenda already underway, and have some sense of what it means to be a fully functioning faculty member in your field, or that you can start your job immediately.

### How Is a Cover Letter Organized?

A cover letter usually consists of three parts:

**Opening paragraph:** Gain your reader's attention and explain why you are writing. Clearly state the proposed concentration area of the Ph.D. program or the position in job application, and your source of information. In this part you may also indicate in summary your strongest qualifications for the program or the position.

**Body paragraph(s):** Outline your strongest qualifications in detail and show how they match the research program or the position requirements. Provide as much evidence as possible (facts and



examples) about your academic experiences and accomplishments, as well as your related work experiences. In this part, you may also refer to your enclosed résumé.

**Closing paragraph:** Bring the letter to an end positively by convincing your reader that you have the personal qualities and motivation to succeed. Request an interview and indicate how and when you can be contacted. You may also suggest that you will call at a specific time to discuss interview possibilities. Thank the reader for his/her consideration.

---

## Part II Sample Analysis and Writing Practice



**Situation:** *Since Alice Brown gained her Master's degree, she has been working as a QE (Quality and Environmental) Manager in an engineering consultancy company. Recently, she decided to pursue the doctoral studies to cope with the challenges she encountered in her job. Here is the cover letter that she has written in the application.*

---

Dear Professor Hopkins,

I am writing to apply for the Ph.D. program in Environmental Risk Management at Sheffield University.

I graduated with the Bachelor's degree in Environmental Engineering in 2002 from Manchester University. During my studies I became interested in the sustainable development, its principles and associated tools for the evaluation and prevention of potential risks. In the last year of my degree, I worked directly with a local authority to develop its "Sustainable Observatory" based on a set of indicators<sup>1</sup>, which covered the environmental, social and economic areas. The observatory revealed to be a very important tool for their Local Agenda, helping the decision-makers to evaluate their local development plans, strategies and policies.

**Opening Paragraph:**  
the purpose of writing the letter and the intended area of study

**Paragraph 2:**  
undergraduate education and the specific area of interest

Once I had completed my degree, I focused my professional career on the development of quality and environmental management systems in companies related to the construction industry. In 2004, I began to do a Master's degree in Quality Engineering at Plymouth University. In developing my Master's dissertation<sup>2</sup>, I applied my research skills to a real case study in a company, which is affiliated to<sup>3</sup> a well-known multinational<sup>4</sup> in China. It was a real challenge and very interesting experience for me, from which I decided to reinforce my experience by working in this area after graduation.

I have been working as a QE (Quality and Environmental) Manager in an engineering consultancy company since 2006. Its main clients are local authorities and its services include: design and maintenance of highways; design, maintenance and inspection of highway structures; and development of regeneration projects.

Dealing with this type of clients, entities<sup>5</sup> and projects, I have realized how important all the parties (from planners and local authorities to designers and contractors) are in terms of making the sustainability<sup>6</sup> happen and how difficult it is due to the lack of appropriate or available tools and factual data. This has reinforced my interest in this field, in which I intend to get involved as a researcher. Hence, I wish to develop a Ph.D. research related to sustainable issues and associated tools as well as practical techniques to enhance my capacity to find the most effective option for the clients, maximizing the benefits in economic, social and environmental terms.

As the Division of Environmental Health and Risk Management at your university has many important research activities in these areas, I would like to apply

**Paragraph 3:**  
graduate study and the focus of the study

**Paragraph 4:**  
work experience after getting the second degree

**Paragraph 5:**  
the interest developed in work and the challenge encountered which leads naturally to the desire of continuing to study for Ph.D. degree

**Paragraph 6:**  
stating the reason for choosing that university for Ph.D. study, and re-emphasizing the qualifications

for an opportunity to develop my professional scope in Environmental Risk Management, and I am confident that I have the skills, knowledge and competence to complete my studies successfully.

Thank you very much for considering my application and I look forward to hearing from you.

**Closing Paragraph:**  
positive ending

Sincerely,  
Alice Brown

### Vocabulary

- |                                |                                  |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. indicator <i>n.</i> 指标      | 4. multinational <i>n.</i> 跨国公司  |
| 2. dissertation <i>n.</i> 学位论文 | 5. entity <i>n.</i> 实体; 组织, 机构   |
| 3. be affiliated to 附属于        | 6. sustainability <i>n.</i> 可持续性 |



### Exercise A

#### Answer the questions.

1. How does Alice indicate the purpose of her writing this letter?
2. How does she organize the letter logically?
3. What experience and qualifications does she put in the letter to convince the professor that she is qualified for the Ph.D. study?
4. How does Alice describe her undergraduate education?
5. Why does she mention her Master's dissertation in the third paragraph?
6. Do you think her working as QE Manager in an engineering consultancy company is important for her application for Ph.D. study? Why?
7. How does she indicate her reason for desiring to pursue Ph.D. study?
8. How does Alice bring her letter to an end?



**Situation:** *Eric Smith, a doctoral candidate at Washington State University, is going to graduate and wishes to find a teaching position in a university. He has contacted several universities and the following is one of the cover letters he has written.*

Dear Mr. Robinson,

I am responding to your advertisement in *New Scientist* for a faculty position in the Materials Engineering Department at Michigan Technological University. I am a Ph.D. candidate at Washington State University in the Department of Materials Science and Engineering. My thesis work is in the area of process modeling for semiconductor fabrication and my specific research topic is the diffusion of dopants<sup>1</sup> in gallium arsenide<sup>2</sup>. My thesis advisor is Professor Thomas, Director of the Integrated Circuits Laboratory in the Department of Electrical Engineering.

I am particularly interested in a faculty position in a department that values teaching. As you may note from my résumé, I have taken every opportunity to teach while at Washington State University, and I have also participated in various educational projects outside the university. These included the Computer Literacy Project, which I founded and directed for three years in a predominantly minority middle school in Seattle, and Expanding Your Horizons at a community school, a workshop<sup>3</sup> for young women interested in pursuing careers in maths and science. At Washington State University, in addition to being a grader<sup>4</sup> and teaching assistant in several electrical engineering courses in semiconductor processing, I helped design and teach a materials science and engineering laboratory course. I also designed and co-taught a new course for undergraduates entitled Electronic Materials Science.

In addition to teaching, I am looking for a research opportunity that would allow me to continue my work in electronic materials processing, structure and properties. At Washington State University I have accomplished original research in pursuit of my degree, as well as contributed to the development of a fabrication line for the digital technology. While working at National Instruments Corporation I designed and supervised construction of a thin film laboratory research facility and initiated a research project in amorphous<sup>5</sup> semiconductor thin films.

I expect to finish my degree in June 2009. My résumé is enclosed, including a list of publications, and a list of references<sup>6</sup>.

Thank you for your consideration and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Very truly yours,  
Eric Smith

### Vocabulary

- |                                  |                                  |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. dopant <i>n.</i> 掺杂剂          | 4. grader <i>n.</i> 试卷 (或作业) 评阅人 |
| 2. gallium arsenide 砷化镓          | 5. amorphous <i>a.</i> 非晶态的      |
| 3. workshop <i>n.</i> 专题讨论会; 讲习班 | 6. reference <i>n.</i> 推荐人; 介绍人  |



### Exercise B

#### I. Summarize the main idea of each paragraph of the letter.

Paragraph 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Paragraph 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Paragraph 3: \_\_\_\_\_

Paragraph 4: \_\_\_\_\_

Paragraph 5: \_\_\_\_\_

#### II. Decide whether the following statements are True or False. Write T for True and F for False in the box.

- 1. Like Sample A, the organization of this letter also follows the chronological (or time) order.
- 2. Besides his résumé, he also sent the reader a list of publications, and a list of references with the letter.
- 3. The letter concentrates on Eric's teaching experience instead of his education because the information about his teaching is directly related to the job he is applying for.
- 4. Eric mentioned his thesis advisor Professor Thomas in the letter probably because he wanted to introduce the professor to the reader.
- 5. From the letter we can assume that Eric is a creative teacher with new ideas.
- 6. Eric said in the letter "I am particularly interested in a faculty position in a department that values teaching" to indicate that he knows that the institution he is applying to places a high value on teaching.

- 7. At the beginning of the letter, Eric mentioned the advertisement in *New Scientist* because he wanted to tell the reader that he was a young scientist.
- 8. Judging from the letter, Eric is familiar with the structure and language style of the formal letters.



**Situation:** *Walter Harris is seeking to persuade a company to accept him as an intern (实习生). After carefully analyzing the possible obstacle in application and what benefit he could offer the company, he decided to open the letter indirectly by mentioning the benefit first instead of the purpose of writing the letter in the usual way.*

Dear Ms. Ashley,

How often do college-trained specialists offer to work for nothing?

Very infrequently, I imagine. But that's the offer I'm making to Software Enterprises. During the next 14 weeks, could you use the part-time services of a graduate student with communication and computer skills?

To gain work experience and to earn three units of credits, I would like to become an intern at Software Enterprises. My skills in computer programming, as well as training in letter and report writing, could be put to use in your Customer Service, Human Resources, Legal, Documentation, or other departments.

By granting this internship<sup>1</sup>, your company not only secures the skills of an enthusiastic and well-trained student, but also performs a valuable service to Edmonds University. Your cooperation provides an opportunity for students to acquire the kind of job training that college classrooms cannot give.

If equipment and desk space at Software Enterprises are limited, you may want me to fill in for employees who can then be freed up for other projects, training, or release time. In regard to supervision you'll find that I require little direction once I start a project. Moreover, you don't need to worry about insurance, as our university provides liability coverage<sup>2</sup> for all students at internship sites.



Although I'm taking classes in the mornings, I'm available to work afternoons for 15 hours a week. Please examine the attached résumé to confirm my preparation and qualifications.

Do you have any questions about my proposal to become an intern? To talk with me about it, please call 893-2155. I could begin working for you as early as February. You gain a free employee, and you also provide an appreciative student with much-needed job training.

Sincerely,  
Walter Harris

### Vocabulary

1. internship *n.* 实习生身份 (或职位)
2. liability coverage 责任险



### Exercise C

**Choose the best answer to complete each of the following sentences according to the letter you have read.**

1. The language used in this letter is \_\_\_\_\_ that of the previous two.
  - A. more formal than
  - B. less formal than
  - C. the same as
2. The purpose of asking a question at the beginning of the letter is to \_\_\_\_\_.
  - A. attract the reader's attention
  - B. sound funny
  - C. get the information from the reader
3. The first sentence of the third paragraph emphasizes \_\_\_\_\_.
  - A. the reasons why Walter wishes to work for nothing
  - B. his intention of working as an intern at Software Enterprises
  - C. both A and B
4. The style of the letter is similar to that of \_\_\_\_\_.
  - A. a sales letter
  - B. a business report
  - C. a contract

5. The purpose of writing this letter is revealed in the \_\_\_\_\_ paragraph.
- second
  - third
  - fourth
6. The application is likely to be accepted because \_\_\_\_\_.
- it is made by a graduate student
  - it is very important for the job training
  - it will benefit the company as well as the applicant and the university
7. The purpose of the fifth paragraph is to \_\_\_\_\_.
- show the writer's professional ability
  - provide the solutions to the expected problems
  - discuss the limitations of the company
8. The first sentence of the sixth paragraph emphasizes \_\_\_\_\_.
- how much time Walter can devote to his work in the company
  - why Walter is not able to work in the afternoon
  - what time Walter has to take classes
9. The last sentence of the letter is intended as \_\_\_\_\_.
- a reiteration of the main point of this letter
  - an appeal to the reader for providing more job training to the employees
  - an inquiry about the possibility of working in the company
10. The tone of the letter is \_\_\_\_\_.
- academic
  - conversational
  - official

## *Tips for Writing*

### **T**en Basic Rules for Writing an Effective Cover Letter

- ✓ Each letter should be original and typed in business form standard size paper.
- ✓ Open your letter with a strong sentence that would make the reader take notice.
- ✓ As your letter serves as an introduction to your résumé, highlight (突出) your achievements and qualifications, especially those that make you the right person for the position.

- ✓ Provide facts and examples to prove that you are responsible, determined and work well with others.
- ✓ Appeal in your letter to the self-interest of the person to whom you are writing. Include clues that indicate hiring you will lead to higher production, greater efficiency, etc.
- ✓ If at all possible, include some innovative thoughts that will cause employers to feel that a further discussion with you would be worthwhile even if they really hadn't been planning to hire anybody right now.
- ✓ Before writing the letter, research the organization, know the organization's needs and make sure that you can fulfill those needs.
- ✓ Keep your letter concise. Limit your letter to a few paragraphs to hold the reader's interest, and while content is more critical than style, how you write as well as what you say is certainly important. In all cases, use simple, direct language.
- ✓ Proofread your letter carefully. It is critical that your letter be free of errors, both in the language and typing.
- ✓ Specifically tailor your letter to the employer to show that you have taken time to research the position. It's okay to have a general format that you use to get you started, but make sure you change the specifics, making it relevant to the situation.

## **A** Few Points to Remember in Writing a Cover Letter

- ✓ The first step in gaining the interest of your reader is addressing that individual by name. Rather than sending your letter to the "Personnel Manager" or "Human Resources Department" or "Sir or Madam", try to identify the name of the appropriate individual.
- ✓ How you open your letter of application depends largely on whether the application is solicited (招聘性的) or unsolicited (非招聘性的). If an employment position has been announced and applicants are being solicited, you can open your letter directly (as in Sample B). If you do not know whether a position is open and you are prospecting for a job, it would be more appropriate to start the letter indirectly (as in Sample C).
- ✓ Once you have captured the attention of the reader, you can use the body of the letter to build interest. Keep in mind that your résumé emphasizes what you HAVE done, and your application letter stresses what you CAN do for the employer.
- ✓ After presenting your case, you should conclude with a spur to action (促使对方采取行动). This is where you ask for an interview. Remember to make it easy for the reader to agree by