

# DEVELOPING WRITING SKILLS

薛琛 徐齐平 编著



中高级英语写作教程

DEVELOPING WRITING SKILLS

# 中高级英语写作教程



薛琛 徐齐平 编

责任编辑 潘建国  
封面设计 王晓峰

## 中高级英语写作教程

薛 琛 徐齐平 编

\*

浙江人民出版社出版  
(杭州武林路125号)

文达电脑排版部排版  
(杭州环城北路55号)

浙江新华印刷厂印刷  
(杭州环城北路天水桥堍)

浙江省新华书店发行

\*

开本 787×1092 1/16 印张 14.75 字数 50 万

1990年2月第 一 版

1990年2月第一次印刷

印数: 00.001—4300

\*

ISBN7—213—00477—6

G·95 定价: 6.50元

# 前 言

《中高级英语写作教程》是以国家教委批准的《大学英语教学大纲》与《大学英语考试大纲（六级）》的要求为依据而编写的教材，供大学文理科本科生（四、六级）及非英语专业研究生的写作课程使用，也是同等学历者的自学课本。

本教程分为两个部份。第一部份为段落写作，由四个单元组成。按照由浅入深的原则，我们简明扼要地说明写作的基本知识和技巧，同时，配备大量的多种形式的练习，以帮助学生通过具体实践和模仿的办法，切实掌握写作的要领，培养写作的能力。这一部份内容对本科生准备大学英语四级考试的写作部份有直接的帮助。

本书的第二部份是短文写作，按文体类别划分，由八个单元组成。每个单元包括文体概述，范文阅读，注释，理解练习，词汇练习，写作技巧训练，以及附加阅读和作文题目等内容。这一部份着重讨论每一种文体的基本特点和要求，以丰富和充实学生的写作知识，使他们开阔思路，掌握文章的基本结构，句子之间的连接和段落之间的过渡，以及整体及段落之间的布局。为了适应文理科学生不同专业的爱好与兴趣，我们选录的阅读范文，包括文化、历史、社会、旅游、科技等内容，都是当代学者的作品，用现代的语言写成，内容新颖，既有科学性，又有趣味性。同样，我们根据实践和模仿为主的原则，配备了大量具有启发性的练习。针对大学英语统一考试的特点，练习分为词义识别，段落改错，标点应用，句子连接，以及文章组织等内容。通过多种形式，使学生在模仿过程中，逐步学会条理清晰，逻辑分明地表达思想。这一部份的每一单元都有两至三个作文题目，我们采用图表和图解的方式，启发学生思考，培养他们分析和归纳的能力。

本书的附录包括部份练习的答案，常用应用文的格式等。

本书在编写过程中，我们参考了近期英美国家出版的写作教材和书刊，并采用了其中一部份的练习。

由于我们水平有限，编写仓促，错误和不当之处在所难免，恳请读者批评指正。

编 者

1989年10月，于天津

## CONTENTS

### Part One The Paragraph

Unit 1	Introduction to the Paragraph -----	1
Unit 2	The Narrative Paragraph -----	19
Unit 3	The Descriptive Paragraph -----	28
Unit 4	The Expository Paragraph -----	37

### Part Two The Essay

Unit 1	Narration ----- Text: Bittersweet Farewell of a Grown-up Child Additional Reading: D-Day	46
Unit 2	Description ----- Text: The Kitchen Additional Reading: Wheat	61
Unit 3	Illustration ----- Text: The Paper Wedding Gown Additional Reading: The Game of the Name	79
Unit 4	Definition ----- Text: Customs Additional Reading: Natural-A Word of Many Meanings	98
Unit 5	Process Analysis ----- Text: How to Tour Europe Additional Reading: How "Little House" Gets to Your House	121
Unit 6	Comparison and Contrast ----- Text: Grant and Lee: A Study in Contrasts Additional Reading: Japanese and American Workers: Two Casts of Mind	143
Unit 7	Cause and Effect ----- Text: An Ugly Footprint in the Sand Additional Reading: The Causes of Cancer	169

Unit 8	Argumentation	-----	192
	Text: Designing the Superman		
	Additional Reading: The Egalitarian Error		
Appendices		-----	215
	1. Answer key		
	2. Resume		
	3. Letters of Application		
	4. Miscellaneous Forms of Writing		

## PART ONE THE PARAGRAPH

### UNIT 1 INTRODUCTION TO THE PARAGRAPH

What is a paragraph? You probably know that it is a group of sentences and that the first sentence of this group is indented. But it is not enough to say that a paragraph is a group of sentences. How do these sentences relate to each other? How does a paragraph begin and where does it end? What makes a good paragraph? These are questions that we are going to discuss in this unit.

#### THE TOPIC OF A PARAGRAPH

A paragraph may be defined as a group of sentences that develop one main idea, in other words, a paragraph develops a topic. A topic is basically the subject of the paragraph; it tells what the paragraph is about. Read the following paragraph, which is about the newspaper reading.

The best way to know about world affairs, local news, and daily events is to read the newspaper regularly. The headlines emphasize important political and economic news, such as elections and campaign issues, tax increases, labor-management disputes, and strikes. The first page presents news items. Businessmen usually open their papers to the business section first. Many young men read the sports pages. Others enjoy the television guides. Some students read the book reviews and the movie reviews. There may also be articles on education problems and government programs. Newspapers have something for everyone.

Very often, when you are assigned topics to write, the topics are too general to be developed adequately in one paragraph. A paragraph usually ranges in length from about seven to fifteen sentences. Therefore, you will have to narrow down your topic to a more specific one. For example, you were asked to write about your favorite place, and you chose a city such as Beijing. You could easily write several sentences naming all the things you like about Beijing, but the paragraph did not have a specific topic. It would be more interesting for your reader if you narrowed down the topic to a particular place such as The Palace Museum in Tian An Men Square.

Look at the narrowing down of the topic:

Beijing

Historic Spots

Tian An Men Square

The Palace Museum

Now let us say that you were asked to write about the effects of smoking cigarettes. Obviously, the topic is far too broad for specific development in one paragraph; it needs to be narrowed down.

Cigarettes

Effects of Smoking Cigarettes

Effects on Health

Effects on Lungs

This paragraph, then, will discuss one of the effects of smoking cigarettes.

#### EXERCISE 1-1

Study the following paragraphs to find their topics. Write the topic in the space provided.

Years ago, river water and rain water provided all the water people needed. The farmer working in the fields used river water. The people living in the towns used rain water. There was no shortage in the water supply. But population growth and town development have changed the situation. Nowadays geologists are trying to find cheap ways to get drinking water from the salty sea. Big advertisements printed in the paper ask people to save water. Farmers who have no irrigation system always fear a dry winter. Even those townfolk who once disliked the winter rain now wait for the clouds that will bring rain.

This paragraph is about \_\_\_\_\_

A final examination in a course will give a student the initiative to do his or her best work throughout the



course. Students are only taking notes and attending classes in order to pass a few short tests will not put forth their best effort. For instance, some of my friends in drama, in which there is no final examination, take poor notes, which they throw away after each short test. Skipping classes also becomes popular. Imagine the incredible change a final examination would produce. Students would have to take good notes and attend all classes in order to be prepared for the final examination.

This paragraph is about \_\_\_\_\_

Another reason why I like the beach is its solitary atmosphere. At the beach I have no witness but the beach, and I can speak and think with pleasure. No one can interrupt me and the beach will always be there to listen to everything I want to say. In addition, it is a quiet place to go to meditate. Meditation requires solitude. Many times when I am confused about something I go to the beach by myself. I find that this is the best place to resolve my conflicts, solve problems and to think.

This paragraph is about \_\_\_\_\_

#### EXERCISE 1-2

Fill in each line below by narrowing down the topics given.

1. Cigarettes  
Cigarette Smokers  
Types of Cigarette Smokers  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. Television Programs  
Educational Programs  
Language Teaching  
\_\_\_\_\_

3.

Music

Classic Music

---

---

4.

My Hometown

---

---

### THE TOPIC SENTENCE

The topic of a paragraph is usually introduced in a sentence and this sentence is called the topic sentence. It introduces the subject of the paragraph. A good topic sentence states an idea or an attitude about the topic as well. This idea or attitude about the topic is called the controlling idea. It controls what the sentences in the paragraph will discuss. All sentences in the paragraph should relate to and develop the controlling idea. Let us look at the following topic sentence to identify the topic and the controlling idea about that topic:

The French educational system is quite different from the American.

In this sentence the topic is "the French educational system"; the controlling idea is "quite different from the American." A paragraph that develops this topic sentence should demonstrate that the French educational system is indeed different from the American. Now let us read the following paragraph and see how the idea is developed:

The French educational system is quite different from the American. It is directed by the central government, and the basic curriculum is the same throughout the country. In French towns and cities most small children attend school in their immediate neighborhood. They enter school on their fourth birthday and are grouped with others of their age. They wear a uniform coat of a special color to indicate their grade.

As we all know, a topic sentence introduces the

topic and the controlling idea about the topic. However, it is not enough merely to have a topic and a controlling idea. The controlling idea should be clear and focused on a particular aspect; for example, consider the following topic sentence:

Shanghai is an interesting city.

In this sentence, the topic is the city of Shanghai; the controlling idea is that the city is interesting. But it is rather vague. In what way is the city interesting? Shanghai is a highly developed city and has a fairly long history. It is the largest city in China and one of the largest in the world. The city has been expanding rapidly and a large number of tall buildings have been erected over the recent years. As you can see the topic sentence leaves a lot of questions that can not be answered effectively in one paragraph. This topic sentence needs more focus.

The architecture in Shanghai reflects trends in modern design.

In this version the topic itself is narrowed down and it is more specific. Now we see that a topic sentence has a particular function: to introduce the topic and the controlling idea. The next question is where the topic sentence should be placed in a paragraph. Generally, because of the particular function it is often placed at or near the beginning of the paragraph. However, the topic sentence may be placed near the middle or even at the end of the paragraph. Sometimes neither the topic nor the controlling idea is explicitly stated in one sentence. They are implied; that is, they are clearly suggested in the development of the paragraph. But it is usually a good idea to state the topic sentence clearly, so as to help control the development of the paragraph.

To find a controlling idea for a particular topic is not always easy. Once you have found a manageable topic for a paragraph, you need to examine that topic very closely in order to see what you think about it and what your feelings and attitudes are about it. To decide on the controlling idea and what you want to say about a topic, you should begin by making a detailed list of things that come to mind about the topic. You can write the list using complete sentences, or you can just take brief notes. The form your notes take is not important; what is important is writing down enough notes so that you can pick out an aspect of the topic that is worthy of

development. When you examine your notes, keep in mind that you should try to narrow down the scope of your topic. For example, you were asked to write about your spare-time activities and you had narrowed the broad topic down to a camping holiday. Look at the suggested list:

Topic: Camping

1. Equipment
  - A tent
  - A camping stove, safer than a gas stove
  - Light and warm sleeping bags
2. Campgrounds
  - In national parks and forests
  - a) Magnificent scenery
  - b) Red rock formations
  - c) Waterfalls
  - d) Crowded in spring and summer
3. Camping in wilderness areas
  - No roads, restrooms, showers
  - Plenty of flowers and plants
  - Great fun to go fishing, swimming, and hunting

Of course, the list could be expanded. Once the list is done, look for some thing striking. Several ideas come to mind from these notes. Here are a few:

1. Camping is a popular form of recreation.
2. Campgrounds are usually located in places with magnificent scenery.
3. Camping in wilderness areas is fun.

### EXERCISE 1-3

Study the following topic sentences. Circle the controlling idea in each sentence. Underline the topic.

1. Another way to reduce the rate of inflation is to balance the government budget.
2. In addition to being unhealthy, smoking can be offensive.
3. Another problem for students is finding a part-time job.
4. Physical exercise is good for a person's mental health.

5. Some seeming English-Chinese equivalents are deceptive.
6. Another reason why I like the beach is its solitary atmosphere.
7. Although pretty, Maria is a shy girl.
8. One of the biggest problems with athletic scholarships is that more attention is paid to sports than to education.

#### EXERCISE 1-4

Study the following groups of sentences. Circle the number of the better topic sentence in each pair.

1. Many things make learning English difficult.
2. What makes English particularly difficult to learn is pronunciation.
3. Enrolling in college is not an easy task.
4. Registration at State College is a painful process.
5. A Dream of Red Mansions may be an old movie, but it is still a good movie.
6. The acting in A Dream of Red Mansions was superb.
7. The wide variety of merchandise makes Wang Fuming Department Store convenient.
8. Wang Fuming Department Store is a convenient place to shop.

#### EXERCISE 1-5

Read the following weak topic sentences. Rewrite each one to make it more specific. You can narrow down the topic and/or the controlling idea.

1. The Red Flag is an excellent automobile.  
The Red Flag is economical to maintain.

2. My hometown is a wonderful place.
- 

3. She has many problems.
-

4. Exercise is good for you.

---

5. Driving a car can be hazardous.

---

6. There are many interesting things to do at the park.

---

#### EXERCISE 1-6

Study the following paragraphs. In the space provided, write out the topic sentence, underlining the topic and circling the controlling idea. If the topic sentence is implied, write one out.

Many people work for city government. There are office workers, fire fighters, police officers, and sanitation workers -- the people who collect garbage and clean the streets. Most people think that city jobs are good. City workers are well paid, and when they retire, they get a pension. In other words, city jobs usually offer security for life.

The topic sentence: \_\_\_\_\_

---

One familiar sight in big cities nowadays is construction. Old buildings are torn down, and new ones are quickly built to replace them. Work goes on all the time on new highways and streets. In many cities, construction workers dig tunnels under the ground for subways. The face of a city keeps on changing every day.

The topic sentence: \_\_\_\_\_

---

Many people come to big cities without any purpose. A city attracts them just because of its size. People often think that they will find work and excitement there. Some of them have dreams of success in the arts or in the theater, but others just want to be in a place where there is always a lot of activity. Many of them end up working as clerks or making deliveries. Some end up without any job at all.

The topic sentence: \_\_\_\_\_

Another reason students panic during final exams is that they are suddenly aware that they have not really learned anything all semester. These students spend the semester going to classes, taking notes, and reading the assigned chapters without ever really spending time to review their notes or make sure that they understand the material. As a result, they do not learn the material during the term. When the final exam period approaches, they find themselves overwhelmed with pages of notes they scarcely recognize and chapters in the book that they do not remember reading. Since they are faced with the task of learning fourteen weeks of material in a few hours, is it any wonder that they panic?

The topic sentence: \_\_\_\_\_

#### EXERCISE 1-7

Study the following topics. Use a separate sheet of paper for each topic and make a list of things that come to mind. After sorting through the list, write a topic sentence that has a controlling idea.

1. Topic: Pollution
2. Topic: Working mothers
3. Topic: Drinking
4. Topic: Population
5. Topic: TV shows

#### SUPPORT

Once you have taken notes and formed a controlling idea about the topic, the next step is to extract from your notes the material you can use to develop the paragraph. This material will be used as a support for the opinion or attitude expressed in your topic sentence. It serves to back up, clarify, illustrate, explain or prove the point you make in your topic sentence. Most often we use factual detail to support our point. Such detail may be facts from resource material, such as

magazines, journals, and books, or the details that we or others have observed. Basically, support comes from the information you used to arrive at the view you have expressed in your topic sentence.

It is a good idea to write the support out as sentences and list them under your topic sentence in outline form, grouping related details together. Take camping as an example, your paragraph outline might look like this:

Topic sentence: Camping in wilderness areas is fun.

Support: 1. There is always beautiful scenery.

a) Wherever you go you see mountains, rivers, lakes, and forests.

b) The waterfalls give you a sense of the power of nature.

2. You can go fishing, swimming, or hunting when and where you want to.

3. you will never find it is crowded with people wherever you go.

a) It is quiet and peaceful.

b) The air is fresh.

c) You can enjoy the trees and flowers, the wildlife, and the solitude of the wilderness as you like.

Such an outline is useful in two ways: It provides a means for quickly checking your sentences to see if they deal with the topic, and it serves as a guide for checking whether the sentences are logically arranged. Here is an outline of a paragraph about cigarette smoking.

Topic sentence: Smoking cigarettes can be an expensive habit.

Support: 1. Cigarettes cost about 75 cents.

2. The average smoker smokes 2 packs a day.

3. The annual expense for this smoker is \$547.50.

4. The smoker must also pay for extra cleaning of furniture and clothes.



Now let us read the paragraph:

Smoking cigarettes can be an expensive habit. Considering that the average price per pack of cigarettes is 75 cents, people who smoke 2 packs of cigarettes a day spend \$1.50 per day on their habit. At the end of one year these smokers have spent at least \$547.50. But the price of cigarettes is not the only expense cigarette smokers incur. Since cigarette smoker has an offensive odor that permeates clothing, stuffed furniture, smokers often find that these items must be cleaned more frequently than nonsmokers do. Although it is difficult to estimate the cost of this additional expense, one can see that this hidden expense does contribute to making smoking an expensive habit.

Obviously, not all the sentences in the paragraph are listed. For example, the sentence "But the price of cigarettes is not the only expense cigarette smokers incur." is not in the outline. This sentence certainly relates to the topic and the controlling idea, but its main function is to provide a link in the sentences. It joins the section discussing the price of cigarettes with the section dealing with the hidden expense of cigarette smoking. This type of sentence is called a transition. And then the last sentence is not in the outline either: "Although it is difficult to estimate the cost of this additional expense, one can see that this hidden expense does contribute to making smoking an expensive habit." This type of sentence, which summarizes the main idea in the paragraph, is called the concluding sentence. Not all paragraphs have concluding sentences, but they are useful for ending the development of the support smoothly.

#### EXERCISE 1-8

Study the paragraph about smoking. In the space provided, write the topic sentence, circle the controlling idea, and outline the support given in the paragraph. Write the concluding sentence if there is one.

Smoking cigarettes is hazardous to your health. Several years ago, a government study was released that linked the intake of tar and nicotine, found in cigarettes, with the development of cancer in laboratory animals. The evidence was so overwhelming that the government required cigarettes manufacturers to put a warning on the outside of each package of cigarettes, which says, "Warning: The Surgeon General has determined that cigarette smoking is hazardous to your health."