


英文写作

技巧

[美] 写作函授学校 编

北京出版社



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内 容 提 要

本书是美国一所写作函授学校编的教材，主要论述了英语写作的四种体裁，通过引用的古今名著作为范例，生动地论述了英语写作的规则和技巧。

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第一讲 四种写作方式

当作家提笔写作的时候，他们心中有一个具体的目标，一种明确的目的。这种目的因人而异，因时而异，而且差别颇大。

某一作家或许想描摹故事中的人物或环境。另一个作家可能希望讲述一个冒险故事。再有一个作家想向读者解释某些事实或学说。而第四个作家又试图提出理论以平息一场辩论。

一般说来，写作的目的不外乎这四种。通常，作家想要达到的目的不只有一个——偶尔四个都在希冀之中。在写作上，这四个目的所采用的名称在你看来可能笨拙讨厌，但它们已被当作四种基本写作方式的标志。它们是：

1. 描摹（如何描摹事物）
2. 记叙（如何叙述事物）
3. 说明（如何解释事实）
4. 议论（如何议论思想）

以说明（Exposition）这个词为例。在大多数情况下，一个能代替它而且比它好得多的名称是解释（explanation）。但是，古往今来，这一类文章都称作说明（Exposition）；为了避免异义，我们仍然沿用它，正如我们对待基本语法中的一些复杂但又必要的标志一样。

在下面诸讲之中，我们将更加详细地分别讲解上述四种普通写作方式。不过，此处我们的目的是让你迅速重温一遍，即：说明四种写作方式的一般区别，再各举一例，并附上我们

的评注。

在详细讲解描摹、记叙、说明以及议论之后，我们也将讨论对白。对白也是一种写作方式，很难准确地说它属于上述基本写作方式中的哪一种，但是这全部四种方式都用到它而且具有自己的特点与问题。

当一个作家试图给读者一幅清晰的字画、使读者清楚地了解背景、地点或人物时，他便采用描摹方式。如果他想告诉读者故事的情节发展，他便借助记叙方式。倘若他的目的是给读者解释事物，那么说明便是他的写作方式。假使他的意图是劝说读者，使他们改变态度，那他利用的写作方式称作议论。

仅具一个意图——即纯用一种写作方式——的文章是罕见的。回顾一下你所看过的小说作品或非小说作品，你不难发现，一篇作品往往是由多种写作方式综合而成。

举例说吧，有一篇关于预防小儿麻痹疫苗的杂志文章就使用了全部四种写作方式。作者首先描摹了疫苗、疫苗发现者的背景与外貌、实验室以及安·阿波宣布获得成功时的狂喜情景，然后记叙了约纳斯·沙克博士经过多年令人痛苦的反复摸索试验最后发现疫苗的经过，接着解释了使用疫苗减少小儿麻痹症的种种方法、如何采取预防措施以及疫苗广泛推广的前景，最后，作者仍然借助证据的份量、以贯穿文章始终的事实为基础，议论说：所有四十岁以下的人都要接种疫苗以预防麻痹症。

在小说中（新闻、广告或其他文章亦然），四种写作方式以及对白常常兼用并使。篇幅较长的小说容许作者反复描摹，不断叙述，解释种种思想、环境以及背景，并且说服读者相信故事的价值。伟大的俄国小说作家陀思妥耶夫斯基和托尔斯泰常常在其长篇小说的结尾用数页篇幅写哲理性的议论。这种总

结性的结尾现在不怎么流行，但是每一个小说作家都要在其小说中议论，即是说，使人信服他的中心思想(或主题)——不管他的手法多么巧妙。

我们在这一讲讨论四种主要写作方式的时候，要从费思·鲍德温，肯尼思·罗伯茨，文森特·希安，米格农·埃伯哈特以及威廉·梅克皮斯·萨克雷的作品中摘引一些章节作为范例。我们这样做的意思并非是要你应能与这些大师并驾齐驱。那不是我们摘录的目的。我们只是列举小说作品与非小说作品的范例，并附上我们的评注，使你能接触成功作家的文章，看看他们是如何使用各种写作方式的。

前面提到，阅读——阅读各种范围、论及各种题材的书籍——于习作者是一种极有教益的帮助。通过阅读，你能学到——也许是不自觉地——有关写作的某些技巧，因为分析研究成功作家的作品是取得成功的最佳方法。本讲所举之例以及例文旁边的附注，应能帮助指导你初步实践四种主要写作方式。

描摹方式

写作的描摹方式与人的五官以及读者对文字作反应时，五官对读者的刺激作用有不解之缘。描摹一般有五个源泉，它们是你眼见、耳听、鼻闻、舌尝以及身体接触之事物。

除此之外，还有对这些事物的包括一切的个人反应，这种反应我们称之为感觉或感情反应。无论何种描摹，其六种源泉不外是我们的五官与我们的总反应、感觉或感情。当我们描摹时，我们借助五官收集我们周围的有形事物。

描摹的这些源泉在读者的脑子里激起一系列的反应。既然读者也有同样的五官，他们就应该知道作者在努力向他说什

么。作家的描摹对读者影响的深刻程度，取决于他通过书面表达个人的所见、所听、所闻、所尝以及所接触的事物，或他假想中的人物的所见、所听、所闻、所尝以及所接触的事物的反应或感情的清楚程度。

小说作家必须特别敏感（注意五官），因为如果没有敏感性，他就无法把自己的想象形诸文字。从事创造性写作的作家必须创造描摹，使他的语言刺激读者的感官反应，让读者体会到作家自己想象深处所感到的同样反应。

倘你欲知小说作品中的描摹是什么样儿，请看下面从费思·鲍德温的小说《美国家庭》中摘录的段落。鲍德温小姐的这部小说，写的是主人翁大卫在一个十九世纪创办的医院里开始接受医务训练的事。通过巧妙的布局，作者既描摹了主人翁的工作场所又描摹了他对工作场所的反应：

As usual, and easily, David made friends. Men liked him, and women smiled at him. There were pretty women among the nurses, the big white aprons spotless, their grayish blue, striped uniforms rustling, stiff with starch, the round cap perched on hair that was brown or black or red. Social intercourse between the young internes and the nurses was not encouraged, but it flourished in secret, as must any sweet and forbidden fruit.

使用习见的、简单的词语描摹简单、习见的事物，效果极好。

(a) “striped uniforms rustling, stiff with starch, the round cap perched on hair that was brown or black or red. (浆得笔挺的条纹制服沙沙作响，女护

Therefore, some of David's gayer colleagues laughed at him for his reluctance, and his professional manner.

But if he had no heroines at the time, he had heroes in plenty. He would follow the doctors on their rounds, listening, watching. He would stand almost breathless, as he had stood at the New Haven Hospital, in the torrid operating room with its odor of carbolic spray, and watch the surgeon moving deftly, with skill and precision. For the time would come when he could not watch but could only pray, in some remote part of his intelligence, for then it would be his hand that held the knife steadily and drew so quick, so sure a line upon the field of operation, and his eyes which, his life concentrated into their blazing blue, would watch and decide and send the message to brain and muscle.

Over the table the gaslight flickered. It was not enough There

士们戴着圆帽子, 帽子底下的头发有黑色的、褐色的、红色的。)

(b) "in the torrid operating room with its odor of carbolic spray." (在充满苯酚雾气味的热烘烘的手术室里。)注意读者对感官的反应: 视觉(color of the nurses' uniforms), 听觉(stiff rustling of the starch), 嗅觉(carbolic spray)。在其他地方有味觉与触觉的反应。

解剖刀“如此稳准迅速地划一道口”(“so quick, so sure a line”)这触觉, 即: 锋利的解剖刀接触皮肤的“感觉”。

were candles taped into bottles to augment the illumination; and it was the duty of one person to see that the fumes of the anesthetic did not rise and explode in the tapering flames.

The service was rotary: medicine, obstetrics, surgery. During his last six months he would be required to serve courses in erysipelas, obstetrics and acute alcoholism, and would during this time be resident within the hospital instead of, as now, boarding in the district.

The hours were long and tedious. At night the gas-lighted wards were eerie. Wails broke the silence, sobs, the voice of terror, the voice of pain. Oaths, prayers...

It was only recently, he learned from a graduate nurse, that the gas was permitted to burn all-night. At a not very distant date in the past two candles were permitted each ward per week—other necessary candles must be supplied by the nurses themselves, out of

描摹需要事实。而事实要靠观察。

诉诸视觉、嗅觉与听觉。

汽灯照明的环境描摹得淋漓尽致，令人不寒而栗。

读者自己的反应、他们自己的感情成为描摹的一个工具。

their twelve dollars a month allowance. For the dimly burning gas had been turned off entirely by the captain of the night watch, at five A. M.

小说作家肯尼思·罗伯茨在其《我要写作》这本自传作品里，从初出茅庐的新闻记者的眼里，描摹了波士顿的报业区：

Boston was fertile ground in those days for an inquiring and aspiring reporter, even though financial rewards were insignificant. The city was almost as small as the rewards, and a reporter could get around it nearly as easily as he could make a tour of Kennebunkport, Maine.

Newspaper Row, home of the *Globe*, *Post*, *Transcript*, *Record*, *Journal* and *Herald*, was contained within a few cozy, grimy blocks on lower Washington Street, a section decorated by tall newspaper blackboards on which employees wrote, in chalk and at considerable length, the news of the

day.

Those chalk writers had a profound attraction for me, yet filled me with discomfort. They seemed symbolical of something I disliked to contemplate: scrawling, scrawling, scrawling, day after day after day after day after day, only to have their work destroyed every night, wiped from existence, washed out—never a word saved.

这儿第一次出现了对人的描摹。重复“scrawling”一词给人深刻的印象。

记叙方式

记叙是小说作品的典型特色，但是非小说作品的作家，也频繁地用它来一个前提接一个前提地解释。下面是选自名记者文森特·希安的《打雷与太阳之间》的非小说记叙段落：

The Windsors' dinner was very grand, and the guests consisted of assorted notables from up and down the coast, mostly English people of high rank who were holidaying in the South. My Lords Rothermere and Beaverbrook had been prevented from attending by colds. (Lord Beaverbrook's cold did not prevent his attendance at

所有的新闻记者都使用记叙方式，因为他们大多数时候是讲故事。但是他们写的是非小说作品，不是小说作品。

the Casino, where we saw him afterward.) when some of the more overpowering guests had departed, after the long and stately meal in the white-and-gold dining room, the Duke of Windsor and Mr. Churchill settled down to a prolonged argument with the rest of the party listening in silence.

The Duke had read with amazement Mr. Churchill's recent articles on Spain and his newest one (out that day, I believe) in which he appealed for an alliance with Soviet Russia. "You of all people, Winston," was the gist of his argument, "you cannot wish to make friends of these murderers and thieves." At one point Mr. Churchill, who was defending his point of view stubbornly and with undiplomatic vigor, said: "Sir, I would make a friend of the devil himself, if it would save England."

It resulted plainly from the state-

作者通过叙述性的对白，巧妙地使一个从头到脚浸透了保皇传统思想的人与当代一位伟大的现实主义者之间的根本区别泾渭分明，尽管这并不是小说作品。记叙是讲故事。

这一段也有说明和描

ments on the two sides that the self-willed, pleasure-loving little Prince, filled to the fingertips with royal prejudice, had no conception of the deadly danger to England involved in his alliance with Hitler, while Mr. Churchill, disliking the Bolshevik theory and practice as much as ever, was so thoroughly aware of England's peril that he would seek the alliance of Stalin at once.

We sat by the fireplace, Mr. Churchill frowning with intentness at the floor in front of him, mincing no words, reminding H. R. H. of the British Constitution, on occasion—"when our kings are in conflict with our Constitution we change our kings," he said—and declaring flatly that the nation stood in the gravest danger of its long history.

The kilted Duke in his Stuart tartan sat on the edge of the sofa, eagerly interrupting whenever he could, contesting every

幕，甚至还有议论。但是，这一段基本上仍是记叙，因为记叙是“一系列连贯的事件。”

借助记叙方式，作者作了描摹，也作了解释。但是线索一直是一个不断讲述的故事，亦即记

point, but receiving—in terms of 叙。
the utmost politeness so far as
the words went—an object lesson
in political wisdom and public
spirit. The rest of us sat fixed in
silence; there was something drama-
tically final, irrevocable about
this dispute.

由于小说的基本成分是记叙即讲故事，因此小说作家十分注意使故事得以发展之道。在这方面，没有几个作家可与米格农·埃伯哈特匹敌。下文选自她的著名惊险小说《邮戳谋杀案》，内容是写小说的主要人物在芝加哥的公寓附近溜达时，有人跟踪她们。这是简单、基本的记叙——故事随着人物的活动而展开。

It was about three when Laura and Jonny went for their usual outing, a walk this time along the lake. They were followed probably from the moment they left the apartment house.

在记叙中，活动是一个基本成分。读者跟着小说的人物在城里穿街走巷。

Laura was not aware of the pursuit for some time. They turned north along Lake Shore Drive, Jonny, a bright and happy figure in her little red coat and hat,

trudging along beside Laura. It was foggy and cold. Laura turned up the collar of her coat, and the scarf Matt had given her seemed to provide a particularly gentle warmth around her throat.

The sidewalk was damp from the fog. At that time in the afternoon traffic was slower but still cars swished constantly over the wet pavements. off at the right, across the Drive, the lake was only a blank gray, almost hidden in fog. They passed various pedestrians, the women bundled in furs, walking briskly along. Jonny stopped to speak to a black French poodle scampering gaily at the end of a yellow leash, and his owner smiled and talked to Jonny as Jonny fondled the dog.

Frequently they took one of the several subway passages, long tunnels for pedestrians, which went under Lake Shore Drive and its thudding traffic, and came out at

“swished constantly over the wet pavements” (车辆常常嗖地驶过街道) 这几个字也赋予记叙以势头。

就在这一令人忧郁的段落的结尾 (作者故意描写得令人可怕), 我们 (读者) 发现情况有点不妙, 街上还有一个男

the short strip of park and Oak Street Beach. This time, however, the steps going down into the crossing at Division Street looked dark and rather forbidding. Somehow Laura did not wish to enter the long tunnel with its echoes, its damp concrete walls, its few lights. They went on toward North Avenue, and the entrance to the park. It was as they stopped for a traffic light at Scott Street that she first saw a man trudging along through the fog about two blocks behind them. She glanced idly at him and away as the traffic light changed and they crossed the street. Perhaps halfway down the next block Laura thought suddenly, why, he reminded her of Conrad Stanislawski!

That was odd. In spite of herself she glanced back. The figure was still there, strolling along behind them, still about two blocks away, apparently paying no attention to them. But she then knew

人的影子。她们俩停下来等交通灯放行，于是读者便想象她们静静地站着，同时，记叙让读者第一次看见了跟踪她们的人。

在记叙中，这种“倒叙”往日有关之事或有关之人的方法，把故事的一根线索与现在联系起来，从而使故事向前发展。