

**HOW  
TO  
WRITE  
A SUMMARY**

**大学英语写作练习手册**  
**(怎样写摘要)**

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# HOW TO WRITE A SUMMARY

## 大学英语写作练习手册 (怎样写摘要)

钟美荪 编著  
—刘承沛 审校

外语教学与研究出版社

大学英语写作练习手册

(怎样写摘要)

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## 前 言

用英文写作,是学英语的中国学生的一个薄弱环节。要使学生能够比较自由、正确地表达思想,需要对他们进行一系列循序渐进的指导和训练。一般地说,学习英文写作应从写句子,连接句子及其它有限制的练习开始,逐步过渡到就一个题目写出一个较完整的段落及至一篇完整的文章。从教学实践中,我们发现,从写句子到写段落的练习之间,有一个较大的距离,使不少学生难以适应。在学写段落的过程中,不少学生存在着主题思想不明确,逻辑混乱,段落结构不严谨,表达含糊不清,语汇贫乏,以及时态、语态等方面的错误和问题。由于问题繁杂,教师难以有重点地提出要求,有效地着手解决。为了能够逐步地、有步骤地帮助学生解决这些问题,我们在学生学习写句子及写段落的两个阶段之间,安排了写英文摘要的练习。为此,编写了这本以写英文摘要为主的写作练习教材。我们认为,在写英文段落和文章之前学习写英文摘要,有以下几个好处:

### 1)通过写摘要,学会抓住文章重点。

写摘要,即要摘出文章要点,排除次要的内容。通过这一练习,学生可以体会到在一篇文章或一个段落里,什么是主要的内容,什么是次重要的,什么是可有可无的,然后进行取舍。这有助于他们在将来的写作中避免面面俱到,事无巨细,一一罗列的不良倾向。

### 2)通过写摘要,学习文章结构。

在写摘要的过程中,为了抓住重点,分清内容层次,学生必须研究原文的文章结构,注意文章的开头与结尾,搞清楚文章中所叙事件与事件之间,人与人之间,观点与观点之间的关系,了解作者对不同内容在文章中的安排等等。这一学习与分析,对学生将来写出有条理,逻辑清楚的段落或短文,无疑是有益的。

### 3)通过写摘要,吸收语言。

本书中提供给学生写摘要的英文原文,是从英、美等国出版的英文课本中选出的文章,不少是出自名家之手。这些文章不仅结构严谨,层次分明,而且语言流畅,浅显易懂,比较容易为学生所吸

收。通过写摘要,学生可以学到各种风格不同的文章中的词汇和表达方式。

#### 4)通过写摘要,加强语言基本功的训练。

写摘要不同于就一个题目写段落或短文。后者是一种创作。学生写命题作文时,精力往往集中在如何把自己的想法用正确清楚的英文表达出来。在选择题材内容,选择词汇等方面很要下一番功夫。如果没有比较好的语言基本功和写作基本功,写出的段落和短文就会漏洞百出,既有题材、词汇方面的问题,又有基本结构及基本语法方面的问题,往往顾此失彼。写摘要,是让学生通过参考原文,吸收原文的文章结构与语言方面的部分长处,写出内容一致,结构近似,语言简洁的短文,可以使学生把精力集中在语言基本功的训练方面。我们认为这是过渡到创作性写作的一个有益的步骤。在本书中,我们在最后一章安排了几篇中文故事,要求学生用英文写出摘要,这也是帮助学生过渡到用英文表达中国人的想法的一个尝试。

本书正是按照以上几方面分四章编写的。第一章着重训练学生抓文章重点的能力;第二章着重训练学生组织文章结构的能力;第三章着重语言基本功的训练;第四章是为中文故事写英文摘要的练习。在各章中都安排了例子分析和相应的练习,供教师和学生参考使用。从第二章第三课开始,每篇练习后面加入了理解练习。这是针对学生对原文的理解而设计的,要求学生用完整的英文句子回答问题,以期达到弄懂原文难点并练习写作的双重目的。

书后答案部分的内侧画有剪裁线,教师可在发书前把答案剪下,日后分课次发给学生。

本书中所收集的短文,多数已在北京外国语学院英文系的学生中使用过。书中的改错练习,也多从学生的练习中取材。使用本书的教师,可以按照同样的办法,针对所教的学生的的问题,自行设计练习。

编写本书,无论从指导思想、内容安排及内容选择方面,都只是一个尝试。

在本书的编写过程中,编者得到了北京外国语学院英文系刘承

沛教授的大力支持和详尽指导,并由他审阅了全书。梅仁毅教授、吴冰教授一直很关心本书的编写,并对本书的内容提出了有益的建议。编者还得到了北京外国语学院英文系基础教研室写作组的同志们的热情支持和协助。在此,谨向他们表示衷心的感谢。

编 者

## *Introduction*

This book is designed for students who have gone over the first stage of basic training for writing English sentences, combining sentences and answering pre-set questions. The main purpose of the book is to help students acquire and develop the skills they need for summary and précis writing.

### *Summary-writing*

Summary-writing is an exercise in compression. It is the gist or main theme of a passage which should be expressed in as few words as possible. It should be brief, clear and full, including all the essential points, so that anyone who reads it may be able to grasp the main points and general effect of the passage summarised.

Summary-writing is a very good exercise in writing a composition. It teaches one how to express one's ideas clearly, concisely and logically. In a summary, people have to write within strict word limits, which is usually no more than one third or one fourth of the original. So, to write summaries, one learns to choose his words carefully and to construct his sentences with an eye to fullness combined with brevity.

Summary-writing is also a very good exercise in reading. It forces one to read with both his mind and his eye on the page. He has to pay great attention to what he reads, or he would not be able to grasp the main points. So this is an excellent training in concentration of attention.

### *Method and Procedure*

Summary-writing means intensive brain-work. To grasp the

main points of a passage and compress them into a summary means concentrated work. Here, close attention and hard thinking are required.

### I. Reading

- 1) First read the passage through carefully, but not too slowly, to get a general idea of its meaning.
- 2) Read the passage a second time. This time make sure of the meaning of each sentence, phrase and word. Consult a dictionary when it is necessary.
- 3) Select and put down the important points essential to the expression of the main theme. Read the passage a third time if necessary.

### II. Writing

- 1) Write an outline for the summary, with the help of the notes taken during the reading. Make sure that all the main points are included and they are listed in a strictly logical order.
- 2) Write a draft, keeping in mind the limit of word number. You may use fewer words than the number prescribed, but in no case may you exceed the limit.
- 3) The summary should be in the own words of the student. It must not be a patchwork made up of phrases and sentences quoted from the original.
- 4) The summary must be a connected whole. It may be divided into sections or paragraphs, according to the changes in the original. But these sections and paragraphs must not appear as separate notes, but must be joined together so that they can be read continuously. Here, to write a summary in the form of a list of points should be avoided.
- 5) The summary should be complete. It must convey all the important points so that the reader of the



summary can get a full and clear idea of the original without referring to the original.

- 6) The summary should be faithful to the original. Add nothing; make no comment; correct no facts.
- 7) The summary should be in simple, direct, grammatical and idiomatic English. All the direct speech in the original should be changed into indirect speech in the summary.

### III. Revision

When you have worked out the final draft, you should carefully revise it before you write out the fair copy. Be sure that its length is within the limits prescribed. Compare it with the original to see that no important point is omitted. See whether it reads well as a connected whole; and correct any mistakes in spelling and punctuation, grammar and idiom.

Then write out the fair copy neatly, and, at the end of it, put down its word number.

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## **Section One**

### **Learn to Write an Outline**

#### **I. What should be included in the outline?**

An outline should include the main idea of a sentence, a group of sentences or a paragraph. Main idea here means:

- 1) Essential facts only.
- 2) The main action in a narrative sequence.
- 3) Statistical information which is necessary for the understanding of the passage.
- 4) Names and dates without which the passage would not be understood.

#### **II. How shall I write an outline?**

- 1) Don't bother to write complete sentences. Just a few words will be enough as long as the meaning is clear.
- 2) The points included in the outline should be faithful to the original ideas of the passage, though you are encouraged all the time to use your own words and sentence structures.
- 3) The points in the outline should follow a logical order to avoid confusion.
- 4) When you write the outline, always keep in mind the required length of the summary and don't write an outline which will certainly lead you to an exceedingly long summary.

#### **III. Exercises:**

- A) Write ONE phrase or short sentence to sum up the main idea of the following:

Example:

The winning painting, framed in gold and hung in the main entrance hall, was a seascape.

The winning painting, was a seascape.

- 1) It turned out that the thieves, who were finally caught at Rome Station, had taken the money because they were both heavily in debt to a firm of money-lenders who wouldn't wait any longer for their repayment.
- 2) The crowded, slow-moving bus laboured noisily up the hill and then suddenly broke down with a tremendous explosion somewhere underneath the bonnet.
- 3) The whole family, which had lived aboard the junk for years and years in very cramped conditions, had an extremely lucky escape when the stove caught fire and their vessel started to sink.
- 4) Louise didn't see the grey and white Mercedes that came speeding round the corner as she stepped off the pavement to cross the road.
- 5) There is only one animal in the whole world that has four knees and that is the elephant, both the large-eared African variety and the small-eared Indian variety.
- 6) The house on the headland had a reputation for bringing bad luck because people thought it was haunted by a one-legged man who carried his head under his arm and dripped a trail of blood on the staircase every full moon.
- 7) "Old wives' tales", some of which have an element of truth in them and others of which are absolute nonsense, are sayings which have been passed down from generation to generation and which are usually concerned with folk medicine — the treatment of colds and childhood illnesses, spots and pimples, pregnancy-related complaints and so on.

- 8) That man wearing the dark glasses and the grey trenchcoat looks as though he's a private detective — like the ones on TV who investigate mysterious disappearances and dreadful murders.
- 9) The main purpose of this Exercises other than introducing you to a few new words and sharpening up your relative clauses, is to help you with précis writing later on.
- B) In this item, your teacher will read for you the following short passages. Listen carefully and try your best to take down the main points of the passages. Then write an outline for each of the passages with the help of your notes.

### **1. Rip Van Winkle**

Up the River Hudson in North America are the Catskill Mountains. In a certain village at the foot of these mountains, there lived long ago a man named Rip Van Winkle. He was a simple and good-natured person, a very kind neighbour and a great favourite among all the good wives of the village. Whenever there was a squabble in the family of Rip, the women in the village always took his part and laid all the blame on Dame Van Winkle.

The children of the village too would shout with joy whenever they saw him. He helped at their sports, made playthings for them, taught them to fly kites and shoot marbles and told them long stories of ghosts, witches and Indians.

Rip had no love for labour, if it would bring him profit. He would sit for a whole day on a wet rock and fish without a murmur, even though he did not catch a single fish. He would carry a light gun on his shoulder for hours together and shoot only a few squirrels or wild pigeons.

He would never refuse to assist a neighbour even in roughest toil. The women of the village often employed him to run their errands and to do little jobs for them. In a word, Rip was ready to attend to anybody's business but his own. He was, however, one of those men who take the world easy. He would eat coarse bread or fine, whichever could be got with least thought or trouble. And he would rather starve on a penny than work for a pound.

If left to himself, Rip would have whistled away life in perfect contentment. But his wife always kept drumming in his ears about his idleness, his carelessness and the ruins he was bringing on his family. Rip had but one way of replying to all her lectures — he shook his head, cast up his eyes and said nothing. He had one good friend at home and that was his dog Wolf which was as idle as the master.

## 2. Bad Habits

It is very easy to acquire bad habits, such as eating too many sweets or too much food, or drinking too much fluid of any kind, or smoking. The more we do a thing, the more we tend to like doing it; and, if we do not continue to do it, we feel unhappy. This is called the *force of habit*, and the force of habit should be fought against.

Things which may be very good when only done from time to time, tend to become very harmful when done too often and too much. This applies even to such good things as work or rest. Some people form a bad habit of working too much, and others of idling too much. The wise man always remembers that this is true about himself, and checks any bad habit. He says to himself, "I am now becoming idle," or "I like too many sweets," or "I smoke too much," and then adds, "I will get myself out of this bad habit at once."



One of the most widely spread of bad habits is the use of tobacco. Tobacco is now smoked or chewed by men, often by women, and even by children, almost all over the world. It was brought into Europe from America by Sir Walter Raleigh, four centuries ago, and has thence spread everywhere. I very much doubt whether there is any good in the habit, even when tobacco is not used to excess; and it is extremely difficult to get rid of the habit when once it has been formed.

Alcohol is taken in almost all cool and cold climates, and to a very much less extent in hot one. Thus, it is taken by people who live in the Himalaya Mountains, but not nearly so much by those who live in the plains of India. Alcohol is not necessary in any way to anybody. Millions of people are beginning to do without it entirely; and once the United States of America have passed laws which forbid its manufacture of sale throughout the length and breadth of their vast country. In hot countries it is not required by the people at all, and should be avoided by them altogether. The regular use of alcohol, even in small quantities, tends to cause mischief in many ways to various organs of the body. It affects the liver, it weakens the mental powers, and lessens the general energy of the body.

### **3. Early Rising**

The great advantage of early rising is the good start it gives us in our day's work. The early riser has done a large amount of hard work before other men have got out of bed. In the early morning the mind is fresh, and there are few sounds or other distractions, so that work done at that time is generally well done. In many cases the early riser also finds time to take some exercises in the fresh morning air, and this exercise supplies him with a fund of energy that will last until the evening. By beginning so early, he knows that he has plenty of time to do thor-