

大学英语四、六级统考应试指导丛书

# 大学英语读写教程

薛 峰 袁 明 编著

*College English*  
**Developing Composition Skills**  
**A Reading & Writing Course**

南开大学出版社

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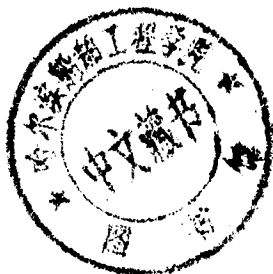
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大学英语四、六级统考应试指导丛书

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## 前 言

《大学英语读写教程》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(四、六级)》的要求为依据而编写的教材,供大学文理科本科生及非英语专业研究生的阅读写作课程使用,也可作为同等学力者的自学课本。

本教程分为两个部分。第一部分为段落写作,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。

本书的第二部分是短文写作,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。这一部分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和部分题型的改革,练习分为词义识别,翻译,段落改错,标点应用,句子连接,以及文章结构等内容。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。这一部分的每一单元都有一、两个作文题目,我们采用图表或图解的方式,启发学生思考,培养他们分析和归纳的能力。

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,并采用了其中一部分的练习。

本书附有部分练习的答案。

由于我们水平有限,错误和不当之处恳请读者批评指正。

编 者

1996年2月

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# **PART ONE**

## **THE PARAGRAPH**

### **UNIT 1**

#### **INTRODUCTION TO THE PARAGRAPH**

**W**hat 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 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 im-

portant 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 about, 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

When the topic is narrowed down to a specific point, you will find it easier to start a paragraph. Here your 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 townfolks 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 who 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 \_\_\_\_\_

---

An elderly man was standing by the canned vegetables as I came along with my grocery cart. I was walking past him when he spoke to me. "My wife bought the best-tasting canned peas, but she died, and I don't know what brand they were. What do you think would be good?" I looked at him, then glanced away because I felt uneasy, seeing tears in his eyes and hearing his voice start to shake. I knew he was not as troubled about canned peas as he was about being alone and having to deal with details of life that he had never thought about before.

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
- 
-

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## THE TOPIC SENTENCE

**T**he 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 industrialized 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

- A radio

##### 2. Campgrounds

- In forests, near lakes, at hill sides

- a) Magnificent scenery

- b) Rivers or streams

- c) Waterfalls

- d) Crowded in spring and summer

##### 3. Camping in wilderness areas

- No roads, restrooms, far away from groceries

- Plenty of flowers and plants

Strange birds

Great fun to go fishing, swimming, and hunting

Possibility of getting lost

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. Registration for this term was frustrating because two classes I wanted to take were already closed.
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 a 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 Xidan Shopping Center well-known.
8. Xidan Shopping Center is a convenient place to shop.
9. Provinces along the Yangtze River are among the most livable in China.
10. Living in Hangzhou is very pleasant because of the beautiful environment.

### 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.  
\_\_\_\_\_