Advanced English Essays and COMPOSITION

高级英文散文与作文教程

王振昌 赵朝珠 董启明 毛卓亮 编注
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上

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《高级英文散文与作文教程》（原名《高级英语散文教程》）分上下两册，并配练习参考答案（教师用书）一册，供高等学校英语专业高年级教学和有一定基础的英语爱好者使用。

本教材旨在扩大学生的知识领域，巩固和提高学生的语言技能，重点培养学生驾驭英语语言文学知识和对文学作品独立赏析的能力，从而使其能得体而流畅地运用语言，把用英语表达思想的能力提高到一个新的高度。经部分高校多年试用，证明本教材的使用效果基本符合新颁布的《高等学校英语专业教学大纲》中关于阅读部分和写作部分的要求。现为了适应更多学校英语教学的迫切需要，本教材经修订后由北京大学出版社正式出版。

本教材所选的散文包括说明文、限定文、论说文、叙述文、描写文以及一些关于文章开头与结尾、文体风格的范文，其内容涉及文学批评、语言学、哲学、教育学、历史文化、名人轶事及经济生活等各个领域，具有教学大纲中要求的事实性阅读(factual reading)，评判性阅读（critical reading）和鉴赏性阅读(aesthetic reading）三种特点。每类散文之前都有一篇概要的理论介绍，阐明该类散文的写作意旨、对象、语言特色和写作技巧。这些作品大都出自名家之手，结构严谨，用词考究，构思精巧，具有不同的写作风格和艺术特色，堪为学习和模仿的范例。

为提供理解课文的必要知识和语言材料（作家简介、作品的时代背景、语言难点和重点等），我们在每课课文后作了简要的注释。同时，还编有分析性、启发性、评判性和鉴赏性的练习。它包括：写作对象和目的、篇章结构、句法分析和词汇研究四个部分，借以帮助学生深入分析和全面理解各篇文章。

使用本教材时，教学进度每篇文章以 4—6 课时为宜。在讲授过程中应当强调学生对课文的预习，要启发学生独立思考和判断的学习主动性。教师的讲授主要在于分析和引导，帮助学生深

化对文章的理解。做练习的方法与步骤最好以学生课外完成、课堂讨论、教师总结归纳的方式进行。每课之后，可让学生模仿作文一次，教师视具体情况进行批改和讲评。

本教程以美国康乃狄克大学（University of Connecticut）托马斯·凯恩和伦纳德·彼得斯（Thomas Kane and Leonard Peters）编辑的 Writing Prose 一书为蓝本，针对我国英语教学的实际情况对原书课文作了筛选，并补充了一些新的范文，增加了课文注释，编写了全部练习参考答案。

在本教材正式出版之际，承北京大学英语系李赋宁教授审订。

在编写过程中，美籍专家 Charles Dickinson, Joanne Eton, John Stowe, 以及北京大学英语系胡壮麟教授曾先后给予指导和帮助；定稿时，美籍专家 Thomas Ragle, Nancy Ragle, Allan Brown, Nadine Brown, Philip Brown 参加了教师用书的审阅工作；北京大学出版社的有关领导，尤其是江溶先生、周学艺先生，不辞辛苦，鼎力相助；本书特约编辑北京大学英语系张涛同志以及张亦梅同志也付出了辛勤的劳动。此外，在初稿的编写过程中，娄维汉同志也参加了部分工作。在此，一并表示诚挚的谢意。

由于编者水平所限，教材中的错误在所难免。殷切希望广大师生提出宝贵意见，以便修订再版。

编　者

一九九一年六月

CONTENTS

EXPOSITION

Different kinds of writing achieve different purposes. On the basis of controlling purpose we traditionally divide all prose into three kinds: narration, description, and exposition. Of these, exposition is especially important to the college student since much of what he reads, and most of what he writes, is expository prose.

Exposition is writing that explains. In general, it answers the questions how? and why? If we go into any university library, most of the books we find on the shelves are examples of exposition. Philosophies, histories, literary essays, theories of economics, studies of government and law, the findings of sociology, the investigations of science—all these, however different, have for their purpose to explain. Although exposition often is formal and academic, it appears also in magazines and newspapers, in any place where people look for explanations. It is the most common kind of writing, the sort with which we conduct our workaday affairs—the business letter, the doctor's case study, the lawyer's brief, the engineer's report—and the writing with which we attempt to control our world, whether our means of doing so is a complicated system of philosophy or a cook book.

Exposition, then, is a wide net. What, we may ask, is not exposition? If the guiding purpose of the writer is to tell a story, to tell merely what happened, then we say the writing is narrative rather than exposition. If the writer intends to tell us how something looks, to re-create the thing in words, we may call it description. A narrative arranges its material in time. Description most often organizes in space. We might think of narrative

as a stage play or motion picture in words, and of description as a verbal photograph or painting. Exposition organizes its subject not in time or space but by logic. The subject of the expository writer may be people, things, ideas, or some combination of these, but always he is a man thinking, interpreting, informing, and persuading. Although he may appeal to our emotions, he is more likely to appeal to our reason by using evidence and logic. In other words, exposition is less like a stage play or painting and more like a lecture, discussion, or debate.

Seldom is any piece of writing pure exposition. Just as the lecturer tells a story or uses maps, charts, or slides to interest his audience and clinch his point, so the expository writer may turn for aid to narration or description. Often these kinds of writing become so fused as to be practically indistinguishable: the description of the structure of an atom is as much an explanation as it is a picture. The historical narrative is as much concerned with the why and how as with what happened. Even so, the traditional classification of prose into description, narration, and exposition is useful so long as we are aware of its limitations. The expository writer will do well to remember that his primary purpose—the purpose that guides and shapes his total organization —is to explain by logic and to show relationships.

The writing of exposition begins, therefore, in an understanding of the broad purpose to be achieved. It begins, like all composition, in the writer's head. Even before he sharpens his pencil, the expository writer must ask himself four questions: What specific point do I intend to make? Is it worth making? For whom am I writing? How can I best convey my point to my readers? Unless the writer has carefully answered each of

these questions, no amount of good grammar and correct spelling will save him, and his composition is already worthless even before he begins to scribble. Deciding upon reader and purpose is easily half the task of writing. Once the writer has determined what point he intends to make, his composition is already half organized, if not completely planned. The writer has already saved himself time by eliminating several false starts, and he has already resisted the temptation to lose himself and his reader in the thickets and bypaths of his subject. With his reader in mind he has already solved many of his problems of diction and tone as well, and, however awkwardly he has expressed himself when he has done, he will know that he has fulfilled the first requirement of all writing—a definite point for definite readers.

On paper, the writing of exposition begins with paragraphs. Within each paragraph the writer shapes and develops a single unit of his thought. Every expository writer therefore must understand the nature and construction of paragraphs. To begin our definition we may say that paragraphs are like men. Each is an individual, unlike any other. Yet, as all men are alike in having a head, eyes, two arms, and two legs, every paragraph is like all the others, all possessing, so to speak, the same anatomy. Learning to write good paragraphs must begin with an understanding of the pattern common to all. We find that paragraphs of exposition contain two different kinds of statements. The first—a *general*, rather abstract statement—is called the topic sentence. Here, the writer says, "This is what I assert or believe in a general way; this is my opinion, my evaluation or conclusion about the subject of this paragraph." For instance, Frederick Lewis Allen, writing about the great depression of 1929, begins the paragraph

on page 25 with this topic sentence: "The Big Bull Market was dead." Sometimes the general drift of a paragraph is so clear that the topic idea is only implied. To be sure, it is there, but the writer feels he will not lose his reader if he fails to state his topic idea in so many words. A second class of statements in every paragraph consists of *particular* facts, examples, illustrations, and supporting details that say, in effect, "This is why I believe or conclude what I do. You may not agree with what I say, but at least you understand now why I believe or conclude it. Here is my evidence."

Most often the topic sentence stands first in the paragraph, unless one or two sentences of transition go before. Less frequently, topic sentences appear last, or nearly so, when the paragraph is developed from particular to general, a pattern useful both for variation and, building as it does to a climax, for emphasis. Sometimes for the sake of clarity or emphasis the writer may restate his topic idea in a second or third sentence and again at the end of a paragraph. With or without restatement the expository writer usually moves from topic sentence to supporting details, from general to particular.

The particulars of exposition are patterns of logic and evidence, patterns that may shape individual paragraphs, a group of several paragraphs, or the composition in its entirety. To show that Fenimore Cooper's novels at times are absurdly unbelievable, Mark Twain brings forward several devastating examples. His pattern of expository development is clear, and it is hilariously convincing in its effect. Again, the expository writer may throw new light upon two things by comparing and contrasting them, by showing how they are alike and yet different.

The expository writer, therefore, uses the common methods of logic and thinking: he develops his material by offering examples as evidence, by comparing and contrasting, by making analogies, by restating, by giving reasons, by classifying and dividing his subject, by showing cause and effect, by defining, by arguing from premise to conclusion. The selections that follow give examples of each of the common types of expository development. These every student of composition should learn to use when his intention is to explain and inform.

LESSON ONE

The Delicate Art of the Forest

MARK TWAIN

1 Cooper's gift in the way of invention was not a rich endowment; but such as it was he liked to work it, he was pleased with the effects, and indeed he did some quite sweet things with it.

In his little box of stage-properties he kept six or eight cunning devices, tricks, artifices for his savages and woodsmen to deceive and circumvent each other with, and he was never so happy as when he was working these innocent things and seeing them go.

A favorite one was to make a moccasined person tread in the tracks of the moccasined enemy, and thus hide his own trail.

Cooper wore out barrels and barrels of moccasins in working that trick. Another stage-property that he pulled out of his box pretty frequently was his broken twig. He prized his broken twig above all the rest of his effects, and worked it the hardest. It is a restful chapter in any book of his when somebody doesn't step on a dry twig and alarm all the reds and whites for two hundred yards around. Every time a Cooper person is in peril, and absolute silence is worth four dollars a minute, he is sure to step on a dry twig. There may be a hundred handier things to step on, but that wouldn't satisfy Cooper. Cooper requires him to turn out and find a dry twig; and if he can't do it, go and borrow one. In fact, the Leatherstocking Series ought to have been called the Broken Twig Series.

2 I am sorry there is not room to put in a few dozen instances of the delicate art of the forest, as practised by Natty Bumppo and some of the other Cooperian experts. Perhaps we may venture two or three samples. Cooper was a sailor—a naval officer; yet he gravely tells us how a vessel, driving toward a lee shore in a gale, is steered for a particular spot by her skipper because he knows of an *undertow* there which will hold her back against the gale and save her. For just pure woodcraft, or sailorcraft, or whatever it is, isn't that neat? For several years Cooper was daily in the society of artillery, and he ought to have noticed that when a cannon-ball strikes the ground it either buries itself or skips a hundred feet or so; skips again a hundred feet or so—and so on, till finally it gets tired and rolls. Now in one place he loses some "females"—as he always calls women—in the edge of a wood near a plain at night in a fog, on purpose to give Bumppo a chance to show off the delicate art of the forest before the reader.

These mislaid people are hunting for a fort. They hear a cannon-blast, and a cannon-ball presently comes rolling into the wood and stops at their feet. To the females this suggests nothing.

The case is very different with the admirable Bumppo. I wish I may never know peace again if he doesn't strike out promptly and *follow the track* of that cannon-ball across the plain through the dense fog and find the fort. Isn't it a daisy? If Cooper had any real knowledge of Nature's ways of doing things, he had a most delicate art in concealing the fact. For instance: one of his acute Indian experts, Chingachgook (pronounced Chicago, I think), has lost the trail of a person he is tracking through the forest. Apparently that trail is hopelessly lost. Neither you nor I could ever have guessed out the way to find it. It was very differ-

ent with Chicago. Chicago was not stumped for long. He turned a running stream out of its course, and there, in the slush in its old bed, were that person's moccasin–tracks. The current did not wash them away, as it would have done in all other like cases—no, even the eternal laws of Nature have to vacate when Cooper wants to put up a delicate job of woodcraft on the reader.

(From "Fenimore Cooper's Literary Offenses,"
in *How To Tell a Story and Other Essays*)

NOTES TO THE TEXT

1. About the author — Mark Twain (1835–1910) is one of the best–loved American writers. His real name was Samuel Langhorne Clemens. He was born on November 30, 1835 and grew up in Hannibal, Missouri. Twain was very typically American in both his life and his writing style — adventurous, patriotic, romantic and humorous. Unfortunately, his life was very unhappy. Personal tragedy haunted his entire life in the death of his loved ones: his father died when he was only 12, his brother Henry was killed by a steamboat explosion, his son Langdon died at 19 months, his eldest daughter Susy died of spinal meningitis, his wife succumbed to a heart attack while his youngest daughter, Jean, an epileptic, drowned in an upstairs bathtub. All these greatly affected his personality and writing style. He became bitter, sarcastic, satirical, and pessimistic late in life. From this selection we can sense his bitterness and sarcasm. His best–known books are *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, *The Prince and the Pauper* and *The*

Adventures of Huckleberry Finn.

2. Cooper (l.1) — James Fenimore Cooper (1789–1851), a very popular American novelist. In 1823, he published *The Pioneers*, the first of five books about Natty Bumppo known collectively as the *Leather–Stocking Tales*. He was often considered the first successful American novelist. But his faults such as syntactical awkwardness, arbitrary plotting and heavy–handed attempts at humor were obvious enough, which caused the attacks of the critics, Mark Twain being one of them.
3. stage–properties (l. 4) — things, objects that actors and actresses use on the stage except painted scenery and costumes. Here the term is used metaphorically.
4. his savages and woodsmen (l. 5) — characters in Cooper's book
5. reds and whites (l. 15) — native Americans and white men
6. a Cooper person (l. 16) — a character in Cooper's book
7. In fact, the Leatherstocking Series ought to have been called the Broken Twig Series (11. 20–23) — Notice the sarcasm here. The succession of wearing out barrels and barrels of moccasins (leatherstocking series) ought to have given place to that of broken twigs.
8. Natty Bumppo (l.24) — the main character in Cooper's *Leather–Stocking Tales*. He is a seventy–year old hunter, six feet tall, gray–eyed, with lank, sandy hair, sunburned, robust but thin almost to emaciation, with one yellow tooth surviving in his big mouth. He wears a fox–skin hat and is clad in deerskin — coat, moccasins, and even the leggings, which give him the nickname of "Leatherstocking". He is the symbol of

the independent woodsman.

9. Cooper was a sailor — a naval officer (l.26) — Cooper became a sailor in 1806, and two years later, a midshipman in the navy.
10. lee shore (1. 27) — a shore onto which the wind blows from the sea. It is dangerous sailing towards a lee shore.
11. undertow (1. 29) — the current beneath the surface which pulls back towards the sea as a wave breaks on the shore
12. sailorcraft (1. 30) — a nonce word coined by imitating the word "wood-craft". Notice the irony here.
13. cannon-ball (1. 33) — a heavy, solid iron ball fired from a big gun (cannon), used in former times
14. He turned a running stream out of its course(11. 52-53) — He made the water in the river flow in a different way. This reveals that Cooper changed the natural fact wilfully without considering its objective reality.

QUESTIONS

READER AND PURPOSE

1. What is Twain's purpose—to inform, to entertain, or to do both? If to inform, what point does he make about novel writing? Who precisely is his ideal reader? Don't answer hastily, "Anyone." This selection would not do for a sixth-grade reader, nor would it be suitable for the Sunday supplement of most newspapers.

ORGANIZATION

2. Mark Twain develops these two paragraphs by specific exam-