



全国高等教育自学考试

英语写作自学辅导

组编/全国高等教育自学考试指导委员会
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出版前言

为了完善高等教育自学考试教育形式，促进高等教育自学考试的发展，我们组织编写了全国高等教育自学考试自学辅导书。

自学辅导书以全国考委公布的课程自学考试大纲为依据，以全国统编自考教材为蓝本，旨在帮助自学者达到学习目标，顺利通过国家考试。

自学辅导书是高等教育自学考试教育媒体的重要组成部分，我们将根据专业的开考情况和考生的实际需要，陆续组织编写、出版文字、音像等多种自学媒体，由此构成与大纲、教材相配套的、完整的自学媒体系统。

全国高等教育自学考试指导委员会

1999年10月

编 者 的 话

继《英语写作基础》出版之后,我们又应邀编写了《英语写作》作为本科阶段使用的写作教材。教材出版后,出版社收到全国各地许多学员来信来电,要求作者为《英语写作》再补编一本指导手册,但由于种种原因,指导手册迟迟没有问世。其中一个很重要的原因是作者认为提高英语写作水平,尤其是高级阶段的水平,单靠一两本指导手册是不行的。尽管如此,我们还是答应满足学员的愿望,在教材的基础上,再为学员提供一些有参考价值的资料。

本书除了为学员提供某些练习答案外,又在原来的基础上给予进一步的指导,并为学员提供一些可以参考的论文范文,希望能对学员有所帮助。

作 者

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The Book Report

In many academic courses or disciplines, book reports are one of the major means by which teachers evaluate their students for their assignment and students themselves test and practice their own comprehension and writing abilities and other skills. As our textbook demonstrates, it usually consists of three parts:

Information about the Writer

Information about the writer includes his name, the books he has published, the years of his birth and death, the publisher of the book etc.

Information about the writer can be very illuminating in getting a comprehensive and true understanding of the book. It provides the readers with a wide scope of the writer's personal and social background and some major thoughts and trends in the writer's activities. For such information about literary writers, the three most essential reference books include:

Cassell's Encyclopaedia of World Literature

Oxford Companion to American Literature

Oxford Companion to English Literature

For information about writers in other disciplines, the most

comprehensive reference books include:

Encyclopedia Americana

Encyclopaedia Britannica

Sometimes information about the writer can be found within the covers such as in the preface or the end of the book, especially when the book is a classic.

Other biographical information can also be found in various book forms such as a guide book, a handbook or a book of biography either in English or in Chinese.

A summary of the Book

A summary of the book includes the story and the main characters.

A summary is an abbreviated version of a longer piece of writing, a miniature reflection of the original text. The length of the summary in relation to the original may vary according to the requirements of the situation. There are summaries called abstracts that may summarize in one page or one paragraph a book of several hundred pages.

Summaries are widely used in business, industry, and the sciences. Busy executives do not have the time to read all the reports addressed to them; they may require that summaries accompany such reports, or they may delegate the task of summarizing the reports to a staff member. Scientists do not have the time to read everything written that might relate to their field, so they read summaries of other scientists' research to determine what may be relevant to their own work.

Summarizing is also important for college student writers. When you take class notes or write an essay exam, you are engaged in a summary-type activity, providing yourself or someone else with an abbreviated version of a lecture or assigned chapters in a textbook. If you are assigned a book review or book report to write, part of that review or report will include a summary of what you have read. Writing a summary of a book or other sources is a most basic skill for students to enhance and test their reading comprehension, writing skills and their power of generalization. It is an indispensable tool in learning.

Suggestions for Successful Summary Writing

1. Summarize the entire passage; do not summarize only part of the passage.
2. Reflect accurately what the author says; do not intrude your opinions, or add information not presented in the original.
3. Focus on the main idea; do not focus on examples, ignoring the main ideas.
4. Use quotations to support summary statements; do not copy the original passage virtually word for word.
5. Quote the author's words exactly and enclose them in quotation marks.
6. Paraphrase-restate the author's ideas in your own words; do not use the author's words, changing them only slightly.

Sample Summary Writing

Read carefully the following passage taken from an introductory sociology text written by Donald Light, Jr., and Suzanne Keller. Focus your attention on the key ideas of the passage that the authors present. Then write a summary of the passage in approximately 200

words. Include, in condensed form, all the major points necessary for understanding the passage.

A black student is bused to a school in a white neighborhood across town and finds himself the subject of unwanted controversy. An urban middle class couple with a five-figure income is shocked to discover they can't afford to buy a house within commuting distance of the city. A bank employee who embezzled thousands of dollars by programming a computer to divert pennies to his account is caught but given only a suspended sentence. Liberal, free-thinking parents are bewildered when their son joins a fundamentalist religious sect. "Why?" they ask themselves.

We tend to think that what happens to us is the result of something we did or something "they" did to us, ignoring the social forces that shape us. In different ways, all of these individuals are caught up in sociological events that are beyond their direct control. But these forces are not beyond understanding. It takes what C. Wright Mills called "sociological imagination" to perceive the larger forces that shape our lives – and to stop blaming ourselves or others for our frustrations.

The sociological eye looks beyond individual psychology and unique events to the predictable patterns and regular occurrences of social life. A sociologist would be more interested in the effects of marijuana on teen-age dating behavior than in the habits of one individual who smokes. A sociologist would be more interested in how best-selling novels come to be published, how they are circulated, and which groups read them and why than

in what merits or flaws a particular novel has. A sociologist would be more interested in the similarities and differences among families that produce a schizophrenic child than in the case history of a particular child.

There is nothing mysterious or cold-blooded about the sociological perspective. It is one way of examining our social lives in order to make sense and meaning out of the forces that shape our individual destinies. It complements the perspectives and angles of visions that we already have at our command. In this first chapter, we will discuss how the sociological perspective is used and the meaning of social facts. We will also consider the main theoretical orientations in sociology, the origins of sociology, its relations to other disciplines, and its uses in contemporary society.

Donald Light, Jr. , and Suzanne Keller, *Sociology*

Sample Summary 1

This passage, taken from a text in freshman Sociology, discusses what sociologists look for in a society. They do not look at the individual, but what causes the individual to do certain things. In the beginning, it discusses what may happen to a person just because of social forces. We do not always realize it is social force, but instead we blame ourselves. We are told that we are "caught up on sociological events that are beyond direct control." The sociologist wants only to look at those forces and understand them.

We are also told that the sociologist looks for the

predictable patterns and regular occurrences of social life. This, again, means looking beyond the individual. The sociological perspective is not mysterious or cold-blooded. Instead of being mysterious or cold-blooded, "it complement the perspectives and angles of visions we already have at our command".

So, this passage of the text is mainly about the sociological outlook on society and not the individual.

The following is a sample summary of Mark Twain's masterpiece, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* :

Sample Summary 2

The first part of the book deals with a series of adventures that Huck and Tom Sawyer have around the fictional town of St. Petersburg, Missouri. This section culminates with the reappearance of Huck's father, who takes the boy off to a cabin with the idea of trying to gain control of his money. Huck, however, manages to escape, taking a canoe and heading down the river to hide from his father on an island. In the second part of the book, on Jackson's Island, Huck joins the Negro Jim who, for fear of being sold away, has run away from his mistress, Miss Watson. Jim is not a new character, for he has already been the butt of tricks played on him by Huck and Tom. This second section of the book relates the adventures of Huck and Jim as they float down the river on their raft, and it culminates in the incident of the Grangerford-Shepherdson feud. Chapter 19 begins a new section as Huck and Jim are joined on the raft by two confidence men who pass

themselves off as a duke and king. It is clear to Huck that these two rascals will not shrink from doing violence to him and his friend Jim. On the other hand, Jim is held in awe of their claimed nobility. Whatever their reasons, Huck and Jim accompany the duke and the king, as the two frauds bilk the country people along the Mississippi River. This section culminates when Huck, continually appalled by their schemes, finally balks at helping them cheat three orphan girls out of their inheritance. In retaliation the Duke hands Jim over to a farmer by the name of Silas Phelps, who is elated at having his hands on a runaway slave. At this point, Tom Sawyer rejoins the action and virtually forces Huck to act out a parody of the contemporary popular romances in seeking to free Jim. At the end it is revealed that Jim has been free all of this time, Miss Watson having died with a provision in her will to free Jim. All other things are righted, leaving Huck free to take off for the "territory" to escape adoption by Tom's Aunt Sally Phelps.

Some Comments on the Book

Comments on the book include personal interpretation of the meaning of the book or critical comment or analysis of the book in its various aspects.

Sample Comment

Sample Comment on *the Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*

The theme and characterization of the novel are enhanced by Twain's style. Trained as a newspaper man, he wrote most easily by developing a series of incidents; *Huckleberry Finn* is written as a sequence of tales. Mark Twain also retained his strong liking for a good story, willing, for example, to delay the action to tell about Jim's witches' ride.

In this novel, unity is retained by the use of a first-person narrator who describes what he has seen and done, projecting a story most vividly as if you were there too. Huck's character and his adventures, then, become more believable. Further, by using a first-person narrator Twain develops a vernacular narrative which adds even more to the novel's credibility. Twain also worked with the natural dialects of the Mississippi which seem to have fascinated him.

Huck, as the narrator, was able to accomplish many things that the third-person narrator in *Tom Sawyer* could not. First, he could develop adequate descriptions, for the first-person narrator is presented by a well-defined character whose point of view becomes as important to us as the subject matter. Second, this viewpoint allows the wish-fulfillment aspects of the

Jackson's Island and early river sections of the book to be exploited fully. It is in this section of the book that one finds the typical descriptions of the river at night, the town lights seen like fire-flies dotting the distant bank. Here the idyllic can be exploited to the full. Third, the first person narration allows for comments on the action and description – both those depending for their effect on their accuracy as when Huck decides that his father will reform, and those depending on their inaccuracy as when Huck is misled about the circus rider or when he praises Emmeline Grangerford's verse and pictures. These comments become central features of the book since they develop Huck's character and the character of the Mississippi valley society, completing a satirical panorama by one of America's comic geniuses.

Key to Practice 1 (p. 7)

Read the following book report and find out if it contains information about the author, a summary of the story and comment on the story.

The first paragraph of this book report is the information about the author, the second paragraph is the summary of the story, and the rest of the book report is the comment on the story. The comment takes the largest portion of the three parts. It focuses on the novelist's criticism on the three major characteristics presented in the novel. These characteristics include the ineffective social machinery, disgusting hypocrisy and man's greed. They are summed up in one paragraph. Then each of the following three paragraphs is devoted to one of the three characteristics for further analysis. The last paragraph reaffirms the value of the novel and restates the two most important characteristics under the analysis. In writing a book report, the most valuable part is the comment which may show the writer of the book report's true understanding of the book and the special insight into the book. Therefore, enough efforts and space must be devoted to the comment in a book report.