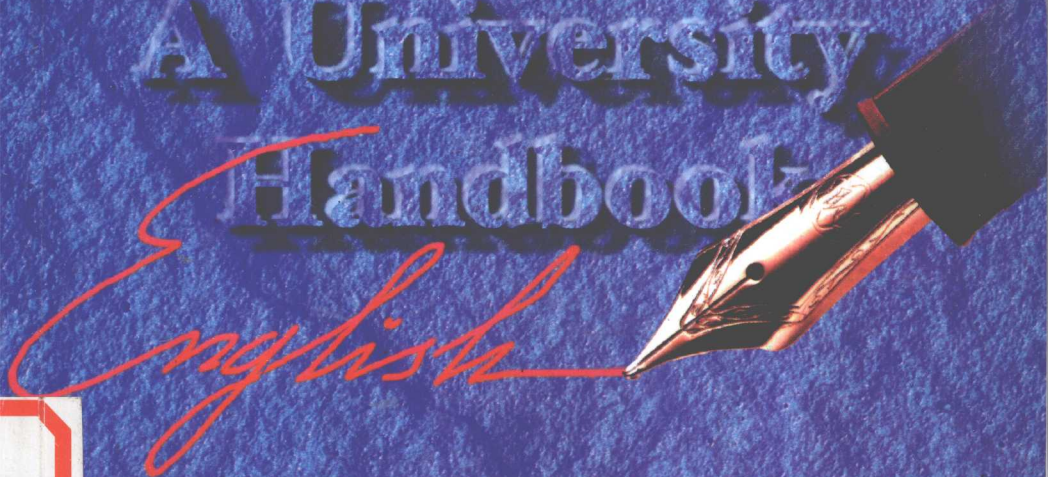


大学英语论文 写作手册

刘涪波 李如平 编著

Writing
Research Papers
A University
Handbook



重庆大学出版社

全国普通高等学校优秀教材

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Liu Jianbo

Li Ruping

Preface

This handbook is the result of the authors' six years of experience in teaching academic research and writing to postgraduate and MA students. It has been tried on the postgraduate and MA students at the School of Foreign Languages at Southwest China Normal University, Henan Normal University, Shanxi Normal University, Guizhou Normal University, Ningbo University, Yunnan Educational College and Xichang Teacher's College, and has been repeatedly revised. It provides an effective guideline in writing academic research papers by explaining the accepted practice in traditional and the very latest reference materials. It lays the emphasis on the importance of citation and documentation, at which the Chinese students of English are considerably weak.

Our six years of involvement with the teaching about the academic research and writing have shown that most Chinese postgraduate and MA students are virtually ignorant of the basic rules and standards of writing academic research papers. They are especially poor at

citations, notes, and Works Cited entries. It is with these in mind that we wrote this handbook, which intends to familiarize Chinese student researchers with proper knowledge, skills and self-confidence that will lead them to negotiating a topic, narrowing down a research topic, taking notes, writing the outline, and documenting sources.

The handbook consists of the following parts:

The Introduction defines what a research paper is, and briefs the student researchers with the component parts of a paper and the steps in writing a paper.

Chapter I, *Negotiating a Topic*, discusses the ways to negotiate a topic, such as using personal interests, talking with other people and using library sources.

Chapter II discusses the techniques for narrowing down the research topic.

Chapter III, *Taking Notes*, discusses the importance of taking notes, how to evaluate the sources, how to take notes, how to write summary notes, paraphrase notes, direct quotation and combination notes, what is plagiarism, how it could happen and ways to avoid it.

Chapter IV, *Writing the Paper*, explains the ways to write a thesis statement, an outline, an abstract, the introduction, the body and the conclusion.

Chapter V, *Documenting Sources: In-text Citation and Content Notes*, explains how to use in-text citation and how and when to use content notes.

Chapters VI and VII discuss the MLA (Modern Language Association) style for Works Cited.

Chapter VIII, *Alternative Documentation Style*, discusses how to use Chicago style in documenting sources.

Chapter IX discusses how to use an appendix. Two sample appendices are provided in this chapter.

The handbook includes two sample papers: one uses the MLA style, the other Chicago style. Both examples were written by Liu Jianbo and they are far from perfect. We sincerely welcome comments so that revision could be made in future editions.

Both authors have worked hard to bring the materials into book form, but specific chapters were written by the respective individuals, namely, Li Ruiping wrote Chapters I, II and IX; Liu Jianbo wrote the introduction, Chapters III, IV, V, VI, VII, VIII, and the appendices.

This handbook is intended for postgraduate students, MA students and senior undergraduate students. It can also be used as a course book and as a reference book with the absence of an instructor.

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Introduction

A research paper is sometimes called a term paper, a course paper, a thesis or a dissertation. It is a lengthy documented report from your firsthand acquisition, synthesis, and interpretation of information. Its content focuses upon a topic that your own intellectual curiosity brings you to study. The primary purpose of a research paper is to inform the reader in the field about the research topic, methods, and to demonstrate the validity or reasonableness of your conclusion about it. It may be a published article in a journal, a monograph distributed by a research institution, or a thesis or dissertation as a partial requirements for a university degree.

Although it is objective, the research paper is also an expression of the writer's own understanding of the topic. The writer's personal values, insights, and experiences have a great influence on the whole process.

Regardless of subject area, a research paper usually includes the following parts:

- Title page

- Outline (optional)
- Abstract (optional)
- The text of the paper
- Notes (optional)
- Works Cited
- Appendix (optional)

The largest part of the paper is naturally the text, which consists of three major sections: introduction, body and conclusion. The introduction serves as an orientation for readers of the paper, giving them the perspective they need to understand the detailed information coming in later sections. It leads to a statement of the paper's thesis, or the main point. The body, the main part of the three, illustrates and supports the thesis set forth in the introduction through discussion, analysis, data, experiments and examples. The conclusion states a final idea or summaries the paper's major arguments often with an emphatic and forceful statement to influence the audience's final impression of the essay and shows the possible implication or consequence of the argument.

Student researchers usually follow the following steps in writing the research paper:

- Selecting a subject of interest;
- Checking reference sources for the topic in the library;

-
- Focusing on one aspect of the subject (narrowing the subject);
 - Writing a research question;
 - Formulating a hypothesis (or thesis statement);
 - Designing the study;
 - Developing a preliminary outline;
 - Collecting data (reading and taking notes);
 - Revising the preliminary thesis statement and preliminary outline;
 - Writing the first draft of the paper;
 - Revising the paper;
 - Editing for mechanical errors;
 - Editing the citation and the bibliography;
 - Finalizing the paper;
 - Adding the cover which includes the title, your name, etc.

Chapter I

Negotiating a Topic

A tutor may assign a topic. In this case, the tutor has already considered its suitability for research, the students' interest and understanding of the subject. The students need only to demonstrate a grasp of basic concepts through independent research and thinking. Assigned topics are usually closely connected with the courses. Therefore, students can benefit from class notes, textbooks and the instructor's expertise. But an assigned topic also needs as much original thinking as the one you might have chosen yourself.

However, in most academic practices, tutors and instructors expect students to find topics themselves or negotiate a topic with the tutor.

To negotiate a topic, a student must first locate a good research subject, and resort to one or a combination of the four exercises: personal interests, talking with other people, brain-storming and reading source materials.

Personal interests

Interest is the best teacher. As you begin looking for a research topic, think about those that you may be willing to spend time researching. There are more possible topics in a subject you are interested in than in one you select because it seems easy. If you do not have a real interest in it, you may lose motivation at some stage and this will make your task much harder.

You may ask, "How shall I know that I can maintain interest in something until I have studied it thoroughly?" This is true, but the more you get into a subject, the more interesting it becomes; the more interesting it is, the deeper understanding you gain. Generally speaking, you should choose something that seems to promise you real value, something that you have always wanted to learn more about. Besides, as we have discussed in the introduction, your research paper should reflect your personal values, insights and opinions. You will write best on a subject you are interested in; you'll also feel better as you work, and your sense of satisfaction and achievement will certainly be greater when the job is done.

Talking with other people

As the Chinese saying goes: "One evening's conversation

with a gentleman is worth more than ten year's study". A good research topic may come from a talk with fellow students, instructors and friends. Something said might trigger an idea for your research topic.

Talk to your classmates, instructors and friends to find out if they have any interesting ideas or experiences relevant to your topic. Listen to their concerns on your topic. Make an initial plan and discuss this with your supervisor. Make adjustment accordingly.

Brainstorming

Brainstorming is a form of exploring a topic that involves listing relevant words and phrases in rapid succession. Doing researches needs a lot of mental work. You may sit down and write down all thoughts and ideas on the subject that come to your mind, no matter how simple or obvious they seem. These ideas and thoughts may look like a junk, but after sorting and grouping, they may provide valuable ideas for research.

Using library sources

A good library usually contains excellent sources for discussing a possible subject for a topic. You may turn to the following for ideas:

Encyclopaedias

Everyone is probably familiar with encyclopaedias such as *Encyclopaedia Britanica* and *Encyclopaedia Americana*, which cover practically all subjects. The entries are arranged alphabetically by subjects. The articles in encyclopaedias are often excellent, authoritative summaries and discussions. They are usually written by carefully chosen experts in their fields.

An encyclopaedia article is useful in selecting a subject and a topic. It can also suggest possible bibliography.

The following is an excerpt from *Columbia Encyclopaedia* about expressionism. It offers general information and classic references.

Expressionism, term used to describe works of art and literature in which the representation of reality is distorted to communicate an inner vision. The expressionist transforms nature rather than imitating it. 1 In painting and the graphic arts, certain movements such as the BRÜCKE (1905), BLAUE REITER (1911) and NEW OBJECTIVITY (1920s) are described as expressionist. In a broader sense the term also applies to certain artists who worked independent of recognized schools or movements, e.g. Rouault, Soutine, and Vlaminck in France and Kokoschka and Schiele in Austria—all of whom made aggressively executed, personal, and often visionary paintings. Gauguin, Ensow, Van Gogh, and Munch were

the spiritual fathers of the 20th-century expressionist movements, and certain earlier artists, notably El Greco, Grünewald, and Goya exhibit striking parallels to modern expressionistic sensibility. See articles on individuals; e.g., ENSOR. See Carl Zigrosser, *The Expressionists* (1957); Frank Whitford, *Expressionism* (1970); John Willett, *Expressionism* (1970); Wolfgang Pehnt, *Expressionist Architecture* (1973). 2 In literature, expressionism is often considered a revolt against realism and naturalism, seeking to achieve a psychological or spiritual reality rather than record external events in logical sequence. In the novel, the term is closely allied to the writing of Frank Kafka and James Joyce (see STREAM OF CONSCIOUSNESS). In the drama, Strindberg is considered the forefather of the expressionists, though the term is specifically applied to a group of early 20th-century German dramatists, including Kaiser, Toller, and Wedekind. Their work was often characterized by a bizarre distortion of reality. Playwrights not closely associated with the expressionists occasionally wrote expressionist drama, e.g., Karel Capeck's *R. U. R.* (1921) and Eugene O'Neill's *The Emperor Jones* (1921). The movement, though short-lived, gave impetus to a free form of writing and of production in modern theater. See Egbert Krispyn, *Style and Society in German Literary Expressionism* (1964).

But always keep in mind that encyclopaedia articles are