



附：英语写作基础自学考试大纲

# 英语写作基础

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全国高等教育自学考试指定教材  
英语专业（基础科段）

辽宁大学出版社

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# 英语写作基础

BASIC COLLEGE COMPOSITION

(附:英语写作基础自学考试大纲)

全国高等教育自学考试指导委员会组编

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## 组编前言

当您开始阅读本书时,人类已经迈入了二十一世纪。

这是一个变幻难测的世纪,这是一个催人奋进的时代。科学技术飞速发展,知识更替日新月异。希望、困惑、机遇、挑战,随时随地都有可能出现在每一个社会成员的生活之中。抓住机遇,寻求发展,迎接挑战,适应变化的制胜法宝就是学习——依靠自己学习、终生学习。

作为我国高等教育组成部分的自学考试,其职责就是在高等教育这个水平上倡导自学、鼓励自学、帮助自学、推动自学,为每一个自学者铺就成才之路。组织编写供读者学习的教材就是履行这个职责的重要环节。毫无疑问,这种教材应当适合自学,应当有利于学习者掌握、了解新知识、新信息,有利于学习者增强创新意识、培养实践能力、形成自学能力,也有利于学习者学以致用、解决实际工作中所遇到的问题。具有如此特点的书,我们虽然沿用了“教材”这个概念,但它与那种仅供教师讲、学生听,教师不讲、学生不懂,以“教”为中心的教科书相比,已经在内容安排、形式体例、行文风格等方面都大不相同了。希望读者对此有所了解,以便从一开始就树立起依靠自己学习的坚定信念,不断探索适合自己的学习方法,充分利用已有的知识基础和实际工作经验,最大限度地发挥自己的潜能达到学习的目标。

欢迎读者提出意见和建议。

祝每一位读者自学成功。

全国高等教育自学考试指导委员会

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# PART ONE

## The Sentence

### I. Types of Sentences

#### A. The Periodic Sentence

A periodic sentence is one in which the main thought is not completed until the very end of the sentence. Often this type of sentence is more effective than one in which the main thought is given first, followed by one or more modifying clauses or phrases. This is so because withholding the key word or words of the sentence until the end creates a sense of anticipation in the reader. Therefore, a periodic sentence is likely to be more emphatic than a sentence with a loose construction.

Notice the difference between the loose and periodic constructions in the following examples:

#### LOOSE CONSTRUCTION

The history of English words is the history of our civilization in many ways.

#### PERIODIC SENTENCE

In many ways, the history of English words is the history of our

civilization.

LOOSE CONSTRUCTION

She was offered a professional contract after winning the Olympic gold medal for figure skating, according to newspaper reports.

PERIODIC SENTENCE

According to newspaper reports, after winning the Olympic gold medal for figure skating, she was offered a professional contract.

LOOSE CONSTRUCTION

There have been many great discoveries made by scientists in the twentieth century.

PERIODIC SENTENCE

Scientists in the twentieth century have made many great discoveries.

**Practice**

Rewrite the following sentences so that the final emphasis falls on the idea in the clause presented at the beginning of each sentence.

1. The course was not very difficult, although I didn't receive a high grade.

Although I didn't receive a high grade, the course was not very difficult.

2. He felt that the world had come to an end when he wasn't chosen for the football team.
- 

3. It requires steady nerves to do the job safely.
-

4. The plane began to shake noticeably as soon as it lifted off the runway.
- 

5. She filled a bucket with water to put off the fire.
- 

6. Jane walked out of his life, bursting into tears as she left the room.
- 

7. Emily Dickinson is one of my favorite poets.
- 

8. There are many exercises to do if you want to build a muscular body.
- 

9. Summer is the most enjoyable season for many people.
- 

10. He played the violin well because he had been trained in it from an early age.
-

## B. The Short and Long Sentences

### 1. Using short sentences

Short sentences can often be very powerful. Study the following famous short sentences, and see if you agree that each owns much of its power to its brevity and that more words would make them less effective.

*Nice guys finish last .*

*Love conquers all .*

*War is hell .*

The following passage from a speech illustrates how effective a series of short sentences and other short structures - including sentence fragments - can be.

*What treaty that the whites have kept has the red man broken? Not one. What treaty that the white men ever made with us have they kept? Not one. When I was a boy, the Sioux owned the world; the sun rose and set on their land; they set ten thousand men to battle. Where are the warriors today? Who slew them? Where are our lands? Who owns them?*

Notice how the short questions, clauses, and fragments build a rhythm that gives power to his indictment of the white world. Repeated short sentences, if used with awareness of their effect, can add to the words much rhythmic beat and dignity.

Short sentences have their uses. They are easy to read. They are clear and effective. But too many short sentences exhaust the reader. They sound childish:

*Peter and Carl walk to school. Bonnie follows them. Bonnie is Peter's dog. She is a nice dog. She walks at Peter's heels. She turns back at the butcher's shop. Now Bonnie will try to find her friends. She may go home.*

When children start to write, they usually use short sentences. But gradually they find that they can write long sentences quite easily. To do this, they simply join the short sentences together with and, but, or or:

*Peter and Carl walks to school, and Bonnie follows them. Bonnie is Peter's dog, and she is a nice dog. She walks at Peter's heels, but she turns back at the butcher's shop. Now Bonnie may try to find her friends, or she may go home.*

The words and, but, and or are called coordinating conjunctions. They provide an easy method of joining short sentences together. You could also use subordinating conjunctions:

*As Peter and Carl walk to school, Peter's nice dog, Bonnie, follows them, walking at Peter's heels until she turns back when they reach the butcher's shop. Now, if she doesn't find her friends, she will go home.*

This paragraph is still about Peter, Carl, and Bonnie, but it sounds better somehow. One reason is that it uses four subordinating conjunctions, as, until, when, and if. Like coordinating conjunctions, subordinating conjunctions can be used to combine short sentences into longer sentences. But subordinating conjunctions are much more exact than coordinating conjunctions. They make relationships between

## Part One: The Sentence

---

groups of words much clearer.

Some of the most useful subordinating conjunctions are the following:

- |               |                |            |                     |
|---------------|----------------|------------|---------------------|
| 1. after      | 2. as long as  | 3. if      | 4. in so far as     |
| 5. since      | 6. because     | 7. in case | 8. in order that    |
| 9. as         | 10. before     | 11. once   | 12. in as much as   |
| 13. as if     | 14. every time | 15. till   | 16. provided (that) |
| 17. so (that) | 18. now that   | 19. until  | 20. while           |
| 21. though    | 22. although   | 23. unless | 24. when            |

One reason for using subordinating conjunctions, then, is that they allow the writer to express his meaning more accurately. Another reason is that they allow more variety in sentence structure. Think about the sentence, *I studied hard and I passed the examination*.

This sentence uses the coordinating conjunction *and*. We can turn it around, so that the second part comes first: *And I passed the examination I studied hard*. [We might write *I passed the examination and I studied hard*, (the two parts seem to be in the wrong order.)] If we insist on keeping all the words, we are stuck with the sentence. But this isn't the case if we use the subordinating conjunction *because* instead of the coordinating conjunction *and*:

*I passed the examination because I studied hard.*

*Because I studied hard, I passed the examination.*

Most sentences with subordinating conjunctions can be turned around. Don't forget to put a comma when a two-part sentence starts with a subordinating conjunction. A comma usually separates the two sections of the sentence:

No Comma:

I'm a happy man now that I've solved my problems.

Comma:

Now that I've solved my problems, I'm a happy man.

No Comma:

You can use these tools till the farmers come back.

Comma:

Till the farmers come back, you can use these tools.

Sentences grow as ideas grow. Language is related to thought. The quality of language is related to the quality of thought. Children start to write simple sentences. But as they grow up, their thoughts become more complicated, their sentences more complex. They learn to communicate dozens of bits of related information in the same sentence.

Now look at the following two ways of combining sentences:

**TWO SENTENCES:**

Tom heard a knock at the door. Tom went to open it.

**ONE SENTENCE:**

Hearing a knock at the door, Tom went to open it.

**TWO SENTENCES:**

Bert is a certified accountant. Even Bert was stumped by the fourth math problem.

**ONE SENTENCE:**

Even Bert, a certified accountant, was stumped by the fourth math problem.

### **Practice 1**

Combine each of the following groups of short sentences into the best long sentence you can write. Don't change any of the key words and don't leave out any information. As an example the first has been

done in three ways.

1. The day was damp. The day was dismal. The day was cold. It was winter. The old man worked all day. He worked in the woods. He died on his way home.
  - a. The old man died on his way home from the woods, where he had worked all of a damp, dismal, and cold winter day.
  - b. After working all day in winter woods that were damp, dismal and cold, the old man died on his way home.
  - c. On his way home from working in the woods on a damp, dismal, cold winter day, the old man died.
2. It was nearly dark. A snowmobile appeared. The snowmobile was roaring. It was running without lights. It hit Mrs. Clifford.
3. Louis eyed the perfume. She carried a purse. The purse was already open. The clerk turned around. Louis put the perfume in her purse. The store manager told the judge that he saw all this happen.
4. Peg entered the room. Lisa was in the room. Lisa lay on his couch. Lisa appeared to be asleep. Lisa's hair was long. It nearly touched the floor. On Lisa's stomach was her cat. Its name was Tikky.

## Practice 2

How many short sentences can you make out of a long one? Here is the opening sentence of Edgar Allen Poe's short story, "The Fall of the House of Usher". Study this passage and try to form short sentences orally.

During the whole of a dull, dark, and soundless day in the autumn of the year, when the clouds hung oppressively low in the heavens, I had been passing alone, on horseback, through a singularly dreary tract of country, and at length found myself, as the shades of evening drew on, within view of the melancholy House of Usher.



## 2. Using long sentences

In contrast to short sentences, long sentences are particularly useful for presenting a set of complex, interlocking ideas. The following paragraph shows how a series of long sentences can be used effectively in this way.

It is particularly difficult to find good, cheap accommodation in big cities. What is more, public transport is sometimes crowded and dirty, particularly in the rush hour, and even the parks can become very crowded, especially on Sundays when it seems that every city-dweller is looking for some open space and green grass. Last of all, despite all the crowds, it is still possible to feel very lonely in a city.

In conclusion, I think that city life can be particularly appealing to young people, who like the excitement of the city and don't mind the noise and pollution. However, many people, when they get older, and particularly when they have young children, often prefer the peace and fresh air of the countryside.

Each of the three long sentences show the disadvantage of living in the city. Short sentences would probably not work as effectively here because they could not adequately express the ideas being presented.

## 3. Alternating short and long sentences

Although series of short and long sentences can both be effective in individual situations, frequent alternation in sentence length