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LEARNING TO WRITE

Winfield Goong



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By

Winfield Goong

*Formerly Professor of General English, Literature, Poetry,
and Drama in the National Southeastern University, the
Shanghai College of Commerce, and Fu Tan University*

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INTRODUCTION 序

This volume is an endeavor on the part of the author to present a very old subject in a very new way. It has been universally acknowledged that language student ought to write a lot so that what he learns may get fixed in the mind. But, while this dictum is correct, unfortunately the means employed is generally not proper. It is like a physician that knows what's wrong with the patient, but somehow he does not prescribe the right dose. It may sound too self-conceited for the writer to say that he has found it. Yet, since there seems to be no good patented book-medicine on the market, he feels justified to offer his new remedy for the suffering public. The author does not make the claim that this book is the panacea for all the students sick of composition work. He is simply offering a medicine that he has found to be very effective, through his many years of experience as a teacher.

It is the desire of the writer to show to the students the beauty of, and interest in, composition work. To do this he considers it necessary that

the students should not be made to write complete compositions at the outset. This is not done in even the most ordinary manual work, say carpentry. Would a master-carpenter teach his apprentice by giving him some pieces of wood and tools, then telling him to go ahead to make the box? If the apprentice is very obedient, can you expect the box be made properly? Yet, this is the way composition work is being taught in schools! No wonder most students dislike to write compositions.

In this volume the method presented is a decided departure from the old way. The writer, however, is not aiming at securing the interest of the students by giving them something peculiar. There is a psychological background for the whole thing.

In the first place, general plans for each kind of compositions are shown by tables. This is followed by the general principles, and the principles thus mentioned are shown with examples. Then a few simple compositions are given for the students to analyze according to these examples. This work will help to fix the principles in the mind of the student.

After this stage, the students are made to do some constructive work by getting them to finish a few stories partially given, with suggestions at the end of each so as to help along. Then a more advanced piece of work is prepared in a series of outlines for the students to write compositions from. In the last stage only subjects are given, with objects desired shown. If the student can do this part of the work well, he has undoubtedly "learned the game."

The author has considered it worth-while to add some familiar essays after the four regular types of compositions. This is done because familiar essays have come to be very popular, and perhaps more useful too. After the students put away their textbooks and go into the real world, they are not often called upon to write a narration or description. When they are asked to write on a given subject in this practical world of ours, they are generally expected to express their personal opinion. Familiar essays are the products of these outbursts of opinion. The writer would have given some general principles for this type of composition, had he not found it impracticable. For to express

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an opinion is entirely a personal thing, which cannot be made to follow any fixed rule. Nevertheless, he has tried to prefix some studies in essay-writing in front, in the way of giving suggestions only.

In a book of this character necessarily a majority, nearly all the selections, are taken from the great writers of the English language. He should acknowledge his thanks to every one of them, if it were possible. But he must not fail to mention, in particular, the help he has derived from Dr. J. F. Genung's splendid works on Rhetoric, Mr. Webb's "How to Write an Essay," Mr. Peacock's "Studies in Essay Writing," and Mr. Tanner's "Essay and Essay Writing." To the writers above mentioned the author acknowledges his great indebtedness.

TO THE TEACHER

Dear Friend:

You are teaching a subject of great importance. You help the students to develop their faculty of expression. Whether they will attain the right goal or not, it all depends on your leadership. I have no doubt that you are very anxious to lead the youths entrusted to your care in the right direction, by the shortest way.

This book is prepared with the aim of offering some new suggestions in composition work. With your help, I feel we can make this work a delight, rather than a drudgery, for the novitiates. Why shouldn't it be? The desire for expression in youth is as natural as anything in the world. They are anxious for expression because they are normal. But they need to be shown the right way for this form of expression. You only have to take the lead; they will follow gladly. The old method of giving the students a subject to write whatever they like to say, is too absurd to be tolerated much longer. The student's mind is not brimful of ready-made compositions, needing only a bait to

draw them out one after another. We have to train them step by step. The suggestions contained herein are given from my personal experience; they are more logical than the old way. But they are not intended to be unchangeable. You may shift the order of presentation, for instance, to suit your local need. You don't have to teach the compositions one by one, if you think a certain change may help to make the work even more interesting to your class.

One more suggestion I have to offer you is about correcting the exercises of the students. When they hand in the written work, better not give complete corrections. They cannot appreciate the amount of hard work you do for them in that way. It is better just to mark their compositions with the list of marks given below. Let the students correct their own mistakes with your help by means of these marks. Then require them to hand in their corrected work for the second time. This time you may correct their compositions as you would like to have them.

Lastly, if you have any special question about this work that you wish to consult the author of

this book, or if you have any further suggestions, you are welcome to write me, through the Editorial Office of the Chung Hwa Book Company.

Wishing you great success,

Your sincere co-worker,

The Author.

THEME CORRECTION MARKS

- A. Ambiguous
Ant. Error in antecedent
Cap. Capital needed
Cl. Not clear, vague
Const. Construction faulty
Con. Connection faulty
E. Not English
Fig. Error in figure
Gr. Not grammatical
I. Illogical
Id. Not idiomatic
K. Awkward, stiff, or harsh
l.c. Change capital to small letter
Or. Lack of organisation
P. Fault in punctuation

- ¶. Proper place for a paragraph
R. Redundant
Rel. Error in relative word
Rep. Avoid repetition
Se. Lack of sequence
Sl. Slang
Sp. Incorrect spelling
Tr. Transpose
U. Want of unity
W. Weak in thought or expression
S. Take out
Λ Words omitted
X Some obvious fault
/ Recast entire clause or sentence
.... A space is needed

英文修辭學

林天蘭編 一冊一元五角

此書用演繹法，先論文章之大要，次論章句之構造，末論字法；復就文章之體裁，分類列論，更摘錄名家之著作，援爲例證。文字淺顯詳明，引證極費斟酌，務求適合學生之程度及心理。

書

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大英學英文選

第一冊

六角

SELECTED READINGS
in
ENGLISH LITERATURE

鄺耀坤編

本書文體計分八大類：歷史，傳述，散文，書信，時評，書評，演說，短篇故事等，長短篇文字約計五十餘篇，古今著作家約五十人，且以近世名人作品爲多。文字有淺有深，取材以大學一二年級程度爲標準，務使學生熟讀本書以後，對於英語之日常應用文字，即可應付自如。凡較深字句，不易了解者，均有註解，以免檢查之煩。大學採爲課本，或大學生作爲參考用書，均極相宜。

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CONTENTS

PAGE

CHAPTER I

SOME REMARKS ABOUT THE GENERAL PRINCIPLES

OF WRITING - - - - -	I
The Meaning of Composition - - - - -	I
Why Do We Write? - - - - -	2
Why We Often Don't Write Well? - - - - -	3
What Are the Accepted Principles of Composition? - - - - -	6
Nine Steps in Good Composition Work - - - - -	7
Principles According to Usage - - - - -	10
The Importance of Making Outlines - - - - -	12
Rules for Outlines - - - - -	12

CHAPTER 2

GENERAL PLANS FOR COMPOSITIONS ON DE- SCRIPTION - - - - -

Description - - - - -	16
1. The Elephant - - - - -	19
2. A Walk along the Seashore - - - - -	21
3. An Old House - - - - -	23
Some Descriptive Compositions to be An- alyzed by Students - - - - -	25
1. Birds - - - - -	25
2. Pleasures of the Country- - - - -	26

	PAGE
3. Parts of a Plant - - - -	27
4. The Mosquito - - - -	28
Descriptive Compositions for Students to	
Complete - - - -	30
1. The Fox - - - -	31
2. Railways - - - -	31
3. The Candles - - - -	32
4. Postman - - - -	33
5. The Life of a Farmer - - - -	34
6. The Wagon and Its Crew - - - -	35
7. Matthias the King - - - -	36
8. Norcombe Hill at Night - - - -	38
9. Sir Roger De Coverely in Church - - - -	40
10. Our Country Life - - - -	42
Outlines for Descriptive Compositions - - - -	44
1. The Spring Season - - - -	44
2. The Rain-Fall - - - -	44
3. The Horse - - - -	44
4. The Sheep - - - -	45
5. The Air We Breathe - - - -	45
6. The Water - - - -	45
7. The Snow Mountain - - - -	46
8. The Great Wall of China - - - -	46
9. Airships - - - -	46
10. The Football Game - - - -	47
Subjects for Compositions - - - -	47
1. Keeping One's Clothes in Order - - - -	47
2. Scenes in a School Library - - - -	48

CONTENTS

xi

	PAGE
3. A Department Store - - -	48
4. The Sights of a Wharf - - -	48
5. My Ideal Garden - - -	48
6. Spring Time on the Campus - -	48
7. The Theatre in My Home Town -	49
8. The Pedestrian and the Automobile Rider - - - - -	49
9. The Freshman in the College (or High School) - - - -	49
10. Social Life in a Big Town - -	49

CHAPTER 3

GENERAL PLANS FOR COMPOSITIONS ON NAR-

RATION - - - - -	50
Narration - - - - -	51
The Method of Narration - - - -	52
1. A Journey by Rail - - - -	53
2. Sir Napier's Campaign in Upper Scinde - - - - -	55
Description in Narration - - - -	56
A Warning in the Use of Description -	58
Narrative Compositions to be Analyzed by Students - - - - -	59
1. A Sailor's Life - - - -	59
2. Where to Spend a Holiday - -	60

	PAGE
3. A Fire - - - - -	61
4. The Battle of Waterloo - - -	62
Narrative Compositions for Students to	
Complete - - - - -	64
1. Going through a Coal Mine - -	64
2. The Story of the Paper - - -	65
3. On Being a Policeman - - -	66
4. The English Lark - - - - -	67
5. Sojourn in Saloma - - - - -	68
6. Harold Skimpole - - - - -	69
7. A Longing for the Night - -	70
8. Baby Sylvester - - - - -	72
9. An Adventure with a Tiger - -	73
10. A Collision at Sea - - - - -	74
Outlines for Narrative Compositions -	75
1. My Visitors - - - - -	75
2. Lakes in China - - - - -	76
3. Pleasures of the Country - -	76
4. Different Methods of Lighting -	77
5. A Walk in the Country - - -	77
6. My Holiday Periods - - - -	77
7. Catching a Thief at Night - -	78
8. A Typical Chinese Hero - - -	78
9. Chinese Birds - - - - -	79
10. My Daily Routine - - - - -	79
Subjects for Compositions - - - -	79
1. Running a Book-Store - - - -	80
2. A Street Parade - - - - -	80