

- V. R. Narayanaswami (印) 著
- 丁言仁 导读

# 简明英语写作 教程

第三版

## STRENGTHEN

## Your Writing

Third Edition



英语技能提高丛书

■ V. R. Narayanaswami (印) 著

■ 丁言仁 导读

# 简明英语写作教程

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# STRENGTHEN Your Writing

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# 导 读

20世纪80年代至今,我们已经引进了很多国外的英语教材,其中绝大多数是英美国家出版的,从印度这样的第三世界国家引进的几乎没有,而从这些国家引进的写作教材就更没有了。外研社引进的这本“彻头彻尾”的印度教材—*Strengthen Your Writing*,用时下学生论文里流行的话说,可谓“填补了一项空白”。

传统上我们往往认为印度这样的国家要比欧美落后很多,英语教学也一定如此,其实不然。像中国一样,印度幅员广阔、人口众多,但不同于中国的是,它又是一个多语言的国家。仅由宪法确立官方地位的语言就有14种,而老百姓实际使用的语言有300到1000种之多(估算的数字相差这么多,是因为人们经常难以判断一种语体究竟是一种独立的语言还是从属于某种语言的一种方言)。一个国家有这么多语言,老百姓之间交往就必须使用一种彼此可以理解、可以接受的交际工具(*lingua franca*),因此殖民地时期的官方语言——英语一直沿袭至今,并通行全国。

尽管宪法规定英语为辅助性的官方语言,但如今印度国家的政务活动、重要的商务活动、科技研发活动,用的都是英语。老百姓日常在家里说英语的很少(一说仅为人口的4%),但如果英语不好,则个人的发展机会大受限制。在文化教育领域,极少数的“贵族学校”用英语授课,大部分的中小学里英语是一门必修的课程,而大学里几乎所有的课程都是用英语讲授的。正因为这样,印度中学高年级、大学低年级的英语教学同中国国内大学里的英语教学有很多相通的地方,很多的教材和教学方法都是针对母语不是英语的青年学生的,很多印度的英语老师也积累了丰富的经验,有很多我们可以借鉴的方法和内容。

这本*Strengthen Your Writing*正是反映了印度的英语老师讲授写作课的经验,作者是一家大学里写作教学的专家,曾出版多部教材;而现在这本书自1979年出版后,作为中学和大学的教材,已经多次重印和修订,长盛不衰,比得上中国的《许国璋英语》。目前引进的这个版本是2005年出版的第三版。从内容上说,这部教程每个单元深入浅出、循序渐进,讲解时用了例子予以说明,并配有各种练习,甚至写作练习还提供了可以使用的短语词汇,因而是一本很好的基础英语写作教程。全书分九个单元:段落、描述和记叙、议论文、信札、笔记、摘要、报告、备忘录、图表应用。这些单元各自独立,可以根据情况挑选使用。九个单元基本涵盖了主要的修辞手段和实用文体,对中国学生来说,无论是在工作岗位上用英语工作还是读研深造、用英文写论文,这些都是必不可缺的写作技巧。

本书编写的许多理念都是值得我们领会和学习的。在《第二版前言》里,作者强调了写作不应该是机械地回答老师提出的问题,而应该是交际行为,有目的、有语境、有读者,因而老师应该鼓励学习者在作文中使用自己的语言,自己的知识和自己的经验。这里说的实际上是写作教学要想取得成功最根本的条件:学生写作时必须有交际的动力,有他们认为值得交流、愿意交流的信息和思想,而不是把作文看成是完成老师布置的一篇语言练习。只有他们有了兴

趣,老师才有可能按“过程法”组织教学,帮助学生一次次地修改,写出好的作文,学到好的写作技巧。否则,如果学生没有表达自己的愿望,消极地应付老师,则是写不好也学不好的。

为了提高学生写作的动力,作者在书中有意识地设置了有一定难度也有一定吸引力、贴近学生生活的写作任务,让学生自己寻找信息和解决问题,表达自己的意念和思想。同时,作者认为,老师应该在学生表达自己意念、思想的过程中,帮助学生写出正确的英语语句。这样的观念也是值得我们认真考虑的。作为教师,我们既不能因为学生语句有毛病而降低作文的难度,甚至反复做造句练习,不去引导学生表达自己的思想,也不能因为要培养学生的书面“交际”能力而不去纠正他们语句上的错误,“读”之任之,不去帮助他们提高书面语的准确性。这两种倾向都是误人子弟的。

当然,使用这本教材也有几个应该注意的问题。

首先,正像作者自己说的那样,我们没有必要也不应该机械地使用这本书,任课老师在教学内容的选用上应该有很大的自主性。这一点在我们使用引进教材时尤为重要,很多的练习往往贴近当地的文化而与中国学生的生活和学习尚有一定的距离。这本教材也不例外,尽管出版社在出版这本书以前在内容上作了一定的调整,但仍旧会有一部分内容让学生“没有感觉”。因此老师应根据学生的具体兴趣和要求来组织教学,有的练习多做,有的少做甚至不做,还有的可以补充,一切从调动学生积极性出发。至于有个别单词反映了印度的文化,理解有困难,则尽可以跳过去,一般不会影响对内容的理解。

其次,这本书毕竟是一本基础教材,要真正提高学生的写作水平,他们还需要进行大量阅读、写作、思考、讨论的实践。作为老师,我们还需要培养他们抽象思辨的能力和表达这一思辨的能力,也就是说,需要引导他们大量地、深入地阅读、分析、评论各个国家文学、文化、思想的流派和作品。近年来,随着市场经济大潮的冲击,我们不少地方的英语专业对这一点有所淡忘,任其发展下去,我们的学生难免要成为“会英语、没文化”的毕业生了。作为一本基础教材,这本书介绍的是基本技能,不可能顾及从人文教育的角度来认识写作课的教学,但作为使用这本教材的老师,我们应该做到心中有数,不迷失方向。

最后,除了以上提到的这本教材的一些特点以外,作为学生,使用这本教材还可以使我们学到一条老师经常强调的真理:学习英语没有捷径。印度的学生从小接触英语的机会比我们要多得多,一般说他们学习英语会比我们容易一点,但即使是这样,他们也要用这样的一本教材,作文要一篇一篇地写,练习要一题一题地做,任何一点进步都要付出艰苦的劳动。我们往往期望来个“学习方法的革命”,学上几招“策略”,英语写作可以变得轻松一点。这样的策略或者“革命”是不存在的,任何学习策略都是以大量的付出为前提的。反过来,我们可以说,付出最多的方法往往是条捷径。既然人家基础好一点都还是这样学的,我们也可以硬着头皮学下去,总有一天会有回报的。只要努力,总是会有希望的。

丁言仁

南京大学英语学院教授



# Preface to the Third Edition

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The third edition of *Strengthen Your Writing* is being published twelve years after the release of the second edition. During these years, there have been considerable changes in writing styles as well as in formats. However, the basic assumption that good writing does not comprise merely in writing a series of correct sentences has continued to be the guiding principle in the making of this book. Further, the feedback received from users of the book has been valuable in helping us decide on the changes that have been made in this new edition.

Designed to fulfil the needs of tertiary-level students of English, the revised edition has been written bearing in mind the following factors. Firstly, some of the tasks and formats found in the earlier editions have ceased to be relevant on account of changes in both the needs and modes of present-day communication and these have, therefore, been omitted. The section on telegrams is an example. Secondly, a considerable part of our writing is now done on the computer, and this has led to new, related forms of writing assuming importance. We have included a section on e-mail communication and expect the learners to go on from there to exploring other forms of writing that require computer skills. Thirdly, the content has been revised to include topics (some of them subjects of debate) that we hope will be of interest to students today. Environmental concerns, the ethics of cloning, freedom of the press in a democratic society, and cyberlaw are among the new themes discussed in the texts in this edition. Finally, we have provided separate sections for quick reference on some important aspects of composition such as bias-free writing and parallel structure. These appear in shaded boxes at the end of some chapters in the book.

V. R. Narayanaswami

April 2005

# Preface to the Second Edition

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*Strengthen Your Writing* was first published in 1979 as a course book for use at the secondary or higher secondary stage or during the early stages of the first year degree programme. Nearly fifteen years have passed since the book was first published. It seemed therefore that a revised new edition of the book would be useful in the light of the feedback received from its users. Besides, it seemed necessary to replace some of the old texts with texts dealing with topics of current relevance so as to make the book more contemporary and relevant. The author also felt that he could take this opportunity to incorporate some of the insights on writing skills gained by theoreticians and practitioners of ELT in recent years.

The following points have been borne in mind in carrying out the revision of the book.

- a. A writing task is not to be treated as mechanical production of the answer to a question set by the teacher. As far as possible, the learner should be made to see it as an act of communication, which has a purpose, a context and an audience. Many of the tasks in this book try to create a communicative situation for the learner.
- b. It follows then that the learners should be encouraged to make use of their own resources, in language as well as knowledge and experience.
- c. The *process* of writing is to be given as much importance as the *product*: a writing task does not begin and end in the thirty or forty minutes with it takes for the student to put his answer on paper. There can be a search for information before the writing begins: this search can be through reading or discussion. Again, the learner may decide to revise his response even after he has completed the task for the time being.
- d. The skill of writing cannot be isolated from the other language skills. The tasks in this book call for an integrated application of the four conventional language skills, as well as the equally important reference skills.
- e. Nothing can dampen the learner's motivation so much as his being asked to perform a repetitive task of a set and stereotypical kind. In many of the tasks in this book, there is an element of problem solving or filling of an information gap or transfer of information. The tasks are made challenging and interesting so that the student who has completed them feels a sense of achievement. Many of them simulate actual, day-to-day communication tasks.

The writing tasks in the book represent forms of continuous writing which the learner may be required to produce either in his academic, or later, in his professional life. The aim is to activate the grammatical competence that the learner has acquired during his earlier training. The assumption is that the attention of the student should be on meaning rather than on the grammatical system of the language. Any gap in the student's ability to construct correct sentences can be remedied better in the context of practising continuous writing than by repeating or revising parts of the sentence-construction course.

Taking sentence construction as the take-off point, the course trains the student to look at the communicative function of sentences and to develop an understanding of inter-sentence relationships. The first unit, therefore, provides a variety of tasks for practice in paragraph building. The remaining units deal with forms of discourse that comprise a series of paragraphs. Note making, which is a skill that has great importance in the use of English both for academic and professional purposes, forms an important part of this course. Various other forms of communicative tasks are given in the later units. The close relationship between graphics and continuous prose has been recognised in recent times, especially after the general advent of the electronic media with graphic capabilities: some of the tasks in the book provide practice in transfer of information between the two modes. Several other forms of writing, not generally included in courses of this kind, have been included here: writing brief messages, preparing checklists and understanding different kinds of graphic communication are examples.

Each unit contains a discussion of the type of discourse that is being taught, followed by a number of exercises for practice in the composition of the discourse. For the students paying attention to features of language, discourse and format, a model is provided for analysis. The student must be encouraged to study the model with the teacher's help in the beginning and independently later. By the time he has completed the course, the student should be able to identify the most general features of discourse development which may be realised differently in different specific communication situations.

The course is not intended to be a rigid or regimented process to be gone through uniformly by all the students. The tasks included in the book represent the author's ideas regarding relevant and useful writing practice. The teachers' contribution is very important here; they should feel free to add or substitute other tasks which they consider important.

The author would like to acknowledge his profound gratitude to Dr N. S. Prabhu who gave his time and his counsel liberally during the planning of the content and organisation of the first edition of *Strengthen Your Writing*.

V. R. Narayanaswami  
1993



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# 1 Paragraph Writing

## 段落写作

### 本章导学

本章以如何定义一个概念或物体开篇，介绍什么是段落，什么是段落中心句（topic sentence）。作为表达全段中心思想的句子，段落中心句无疑是全段最重要的一句话，也是最难写的一句话，我们有的同学意思表达不清楚，往往就是中心句写不好造成的。有的教科书说段落中心句必须放在段首，并且强调说英文段落就是这样的，但是这里，作者没有绝对化。他指出，尽管置中心句于段首有很多优越性，但也有很多的段落将其置于段尾、段中，甚至没有中心句。这样的说法是符合客观实际的，并不是所有的段落都必须以中心句开头的。

作者接着讨论了写得好的段落所应具备的两个特征：

- 统一性（unity），即一个段落只能有一个中心思想，如果有两个中心思想、两个中心句，势必造成读者理解上的困难。
- 连贯性（coherence），即
  - a、段落里的句子须按合理的顺序排列，譬如说可以按照时间顺序、按照由近及远的空间顺序、或者按照原因—结果的逻辑顺序来排列句子；
  - b、句子之间使用联结词（如 however, furthermore 等），当然，如果逻辑关系已经清楚了，则不要过度使用联结词；
  - c、使用指代（如 he, they, those boys 等）和重复（如同一短语或者类似短语）。

所有这些手段的使用都是为了增加可读性和清晰度。

本章最后的加框文字介绍了排比结构，这实际上也是英语中一个重要的修辞手段，我们要提高英语文字水平就必须关注自己写作中排比结构的运用。

## DISCUSSION

### 1.1 Definition

Read the text below carefully and see how the sentences are arranged.



Birds have different-shaped feet to suit their way of life. Birds that perch on branches have toes that curl round the branch to give a tight grip. The grip is so tight that the bird doesn't fall off, even when it goes to sleep. Some birds find their food in the ground. Their short, blunt toes are like rakes. They scratch the ground to turn up insects and seeds. Birds such as ducks, geese and swans have feet like paddles to help them swim in the water. Birds of prey, which eat small animals, have sharp, curved claws, which they use for grabbing the creatures they hunt.

The text begins with the statement that birds have feet of different shapes to suit their needs and then goes on to give four examples.

- birds that perch on branches
- birds that find their food in the ground
- birds that swim
- birds that hunt and kill other animals

The examples are given to support the statement made in the first sentence of the text.

A text of this kind, in which one thought or idea is developed by means of supporting details, is known as a paragraph. The supporting details can be examples, reasons, comparative statements or other related facts. Every good paragraph has a controlling idea, to which its sentences are related.

## 1.2 The topic sentence

As you see from the definition given above, every paragraph is built around a single idea, which can be expressed in one sentence. This is the *topic sentence* or the *pilot sentence*.

The most common pattern of the paragraph is one in which the main idea is stated first, and then explained or amplified or supported with examples or details in the sentences that follow. Look at the paragraph below. Note the main points of the paragraph and observe how these points are related to a single idea. Which sentence in the paragraph states this idea?

Geographers have found that there are some important differences between the northern and southern polar regions of the earth. The Arctic region, in the north, is mostly sea, surrounded by masses of land. The South Pole, on the other hand, is situated in a land mass surrounded by oceans; in fact, Antarctica is regarded as a continent by itself. Both the regions have a very cold climate, but the winter in the Arctic is not so severe or so long as that in the Antarctic. Antarctica is snowbound almost throughout the year, but the snow in the Arctic melts in summer. There is some vegetation in the Arctic, but Antarctica is a desert with virtually no plant or animal life.

Placing the topic sentence at the beginning of the paragraph is often useful. It allows the writer to signal to the reader what the paragraph is about. In this way, he or she can also prevent irrelevant material from appearing in the paragraph. Further, the reader will know what to look for in the paragraph and will grasp the writer's points better. Finally, this type of arrangement helps the reader to make notes from the original text.

In many paragraphs, however, you will find the topic sentence at the end. Facts or details are given one after another, leading to a summing-up in the topic sentence at the end. Here is an example.



Recently there were reports in the newspapers about violent incidents during an international football match. The fans supporting the two teams clashed openly in the streets, and stones and acid bombs were hurled at the spectators and at the police who were trying to control the crowds. There are many other instances when passions have run high, leading to large-scale violence during international football matches. An example is the violence witnessed during the European Cup matches. Such incidents make us sad, and we wish people would realise that sports, at its best, could be a means of establishing friendship among nations.

Study the arrangement of the points in this paragraph. The first four sentences lead to the last sentence, which is the topic sentence in the paragraph.

**sentence 1:** news reports of violence at an international football match

**sentence 2:** what happened during the match

**sentence 3:** other instances of violence during football matches

**sentence 4:** violence during the European Cup matches

**sentence 5:** what these incidents show—we often forget that sports could help establish friendship among nations

Ordinarily, topic sentences help the reader most when they are placed at the beginning or the end of the paragraph. However, this does not always happen. Topic sentences can also be placed in the middle of the paragraph. Sometimes they may not even be overtly mentioned but only implied. In such a case, the reader will know what the central idea of the paragraph is, but will not be able to pick out any particular sentence that states the idea explicitly. With experience in writing, you will be able to introduce variety into your paragraphs by placing the topic sentence in different positions.

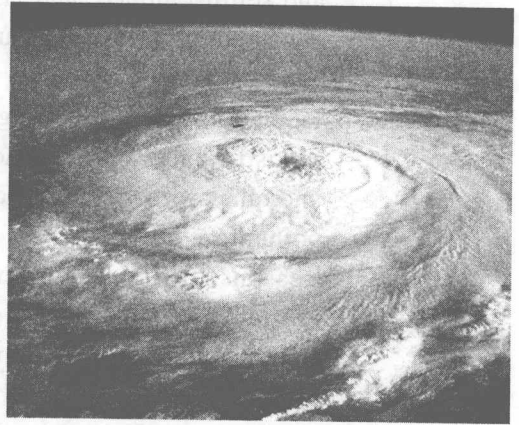
Here are two other specimen paragraphs, which differ in their patterns from the earlier examples. Read them carefully and find the central idea in each.

When the motor car was first introduced, it was a clumsy, noisy machine that laboured along the street at a pace no faster than that of a trotting horse. People looked at it with suspicion and fear. Since then the motor car has come a long way, and is today a combination of beauty, luxury and efficiency. The modern automobile, sleek and streamlined, with its brilliant hues, is an aesthetically appealing object, almost a work of art. You can travel in it in absolute comfort at an incredible speed, and yet feel no fatigue at the end of a day's journey. The engine is a masterpiece of mechanical ingenuity, and seldom lets you down if you maintain it well.

The above paragraph, as you can see, begins with a reference to the motor car in its early days and ends with a reference to the motor car today. The main idea of the paragraph is that there has been a great change in the motor car since it was first introduced. Find the sentence that states this idea and note its place in the paragraph.

Let us look at our second example. Here again, as you read, try to find the central idea of the paragraph and pick the sentence that states this idea.

Hurricanes are violent storms prevalent in certain regions close to the equator. They can be classified into five categories, on the basis of wind speeds, following a rating scale invented by Herbert Saffir and Robert Simpson in the 1970s. Hurricanes of category 1 can reach a wind speed of 95 miles per hour, and a category 2 hurricane, 110 miles per hour. These can cause mild to moderate damage to property and vegetation, and can cut off coastal roads. A category 3 hurricane, with a wind speed of up to 130, can cause extensive damage, blowing down trees and destroying small homes and signs. People living near the shoreline will have to move to safer places. Category 4 comprises major hurricanes, with wind speeds touching 155: they destroy mobile homes and cause extensive damage to structures near the shore. People living up to eight miles inland will have to move out of the danger zone. Finally, there is the category 5 hurricane, a supertyphoon, causing catastrophic damage to all structures up to fifteen feet above sea level. All trees and signs are blown down. Residences located up to ten miles from the shore will have to be evacuated.



In the paragraph above,

- which sentence states the controlling idea?
- which word in sentence 2 provides a link to sentence 1?
- which word in sentence 4 provides a link to sentence 3?

## Exercises

1. Write a paragraph on any two of the following topics. You can state the topic first and then develop the idea by giving examples or supporting details; or you can give facts or details and then sum up in the concluding sentence.
  - a. Living in a hostel can be an educative experience for a student. (*Here are some hints to help you:* makes one independent; teaches one to be organised and selfdisciplined, and also to take care of one's health and property; is an opportunity to learn to adjust with people and with available facilities; teaches one to share.)
  - b. Human activity is causing great harm to the environment. (*Hints:* pollution from industry and from automobile exhaust fumes; plastic bags and containers and other garbage; use of chemicals in agriculture; noise pollution and visual pollution.)
  - c. Reasons for promoting the widespread use of solar energy. (*Hints:* freely available source; limitless supply; economical; non-polluting.)
  - d. Continuous use of the computer can affect one's eyes. (*Hints:* failure to rest the eyes while staring at the screen; poor lighting in the room; glare from the screen; screen flicker; small size of letters; insufficient contrast between text and background.)
  - e. Many young people in India today seem to be influenced by the West. (*Hints:* dress — jeans, T-shirts; strong liking for Western music, dance, films; preference for English over the mother tongue; popularity of 'fast-food' such as pizza; attraction of foreign brand names.) You can write either for or against this statement. Add any other points you can think of.
2. Write a paragraph on any one of the topics given below. Discuss the topic with a partner before you write about it.
  - a. Accidents can be prevented by providing systematic training to road users.
  - b. Education can be meaningful only when the syllabus is relevant and when the students enjoy learning.
  - c. Many people feel that the practice of medicine today has become impersonal, wasteful and often a threat to the health of those it aims to heal.
  - d. It is important for two people to know and understand each other before they decide to get married. (You can write either for or against this statement.)

## DISCUSSION

### 1.3 Features of a good paragraph (Unity)

In the last section, we saw that a paragraph is a unit of composition in which a single thought is developed by means of supporting details. Whenever you write a paragraph, make sure that it contains a central idea. Look for the topic sentence of the paragraph. If there isn't one, try to state the central idea in a sentence of your own.

A paragraph is badly constructed if it lacks *unity*: that is, if it deals with more than one central idea or if it leaves the central idea half-developed. A good test of a well-written paragraph is that you can state the content of the paragraph in one sentence.

Here are two passages. Read them carefully and see whether they can be called paragraphs.

Coal is one of the most useful things known to humans. We cannot live without heat, and in countries where the winters are cold and it is necessary to keep our houses warm, we burn coal. It lasts longer than wood and gives out more heat. The gas which we use in our homes for cooking or heating is made from coal. Coal miners have difficult and dangerous work to do. Some of the mines are very deep, and the tunnels the miners make in order to get the coal often go for miles under the earth, and sometimes even under the sea. In some places in England, so many tunnels have been made and so much coal taken out that the land has begun to sink. People often have to leave their houses, which are beginning to fall over, and go to live elsewhere.

The above passage deals with more than one topic.

- a. What are the two topics?
- b. Write two sentences stating the topics of the passage.
- c. Where does the discussion of the first topic end?
- d. Rewrite the passage as two paragraphs.