

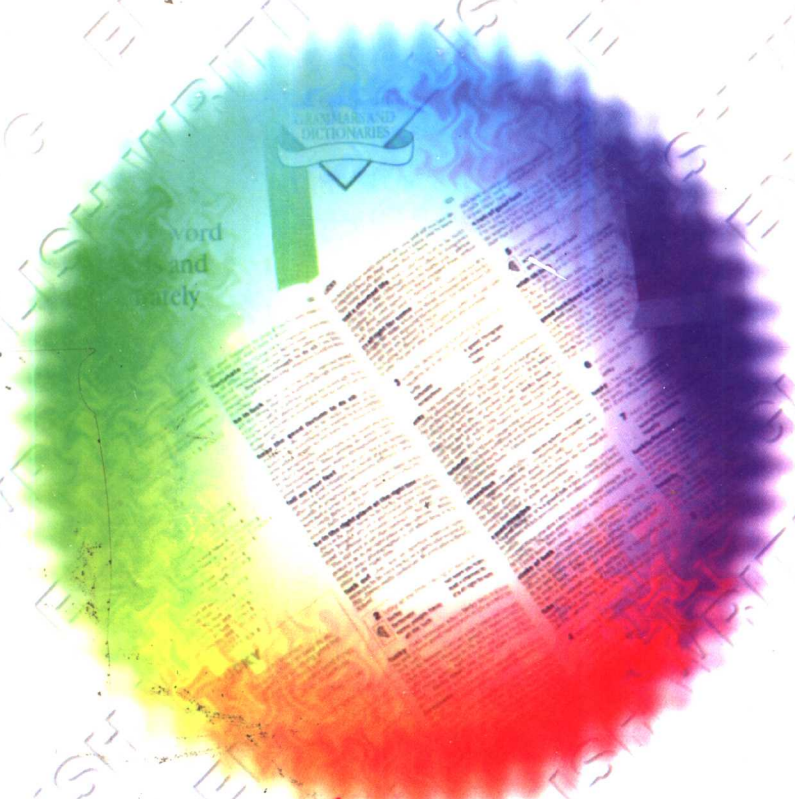
English Writing  
— From Paragraph to Essay

# 英语写作

## 段落 · 短文

第2版

主 编 余宝珠 副主编 董述曾



西北工业大学出版社

English Writing—From Paragraph to Essay

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(第2版)

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## 第2版前言

《英语写作——段落·短文》(English Writing—From Paragraph to Essay)自1997年8月出版发行以来,受到了全国英语专业和非英语专业广大师生及社会各界人士的积极肯定和大力支持。许多院系将本书作为写作课的教材,且收效良好。

现根据实际使用情况和读者反馈信息,我们对原书进行了如下修订:

1. 删去了97版部分章节中语言难度过大的例文和练习,取而代之的是语言难度适中、内容更加丰富的例文和练习;

2. 短文部分的每个章节增添了选自西安外国语学院英语系二年级学生的作文,一方面加大了例文的代表性,另一方面缩小了与读者的距离;

3. 书后增加了词汇表,可以为读者,特别是自学者带来很大方便;

4. 对各章节客观性写作练习提供了参考答案,以节省使用本书的广大教师许多宝贵的时间;

5. 本书的修订也将非英语专业的学生纳入使用对象的范围,以上四条中范文语言难度的调整、学生例文的增添以及书后附上词汇表和参考答案的做法都可实现这一目标。

我们希望通过这次修订能够为英语专业和非英语专业的英语写作教学提供一本更好的写作教材。同时,我们也殷切希望广大读者能一如既往地给我们提出建议和意见。

编著者

1999年8月

## 前 言

《英语写作——段落·短文》(English Writing—From Paragraph to Essay)与《英语写作——遣词·造句·组段》(English Writing—Words, Sentences and Paragraphs)、《英语写作——书信·函件·请柬·证件》(English Writing—Letters, Correspondence, Invitations and Certificates)为系列英语写作教程。本书适用于大学英语专业本科二年级学生,理工科大学英语高年级学生,中学英语教师,广大英语爱好者和自学者,其中包括参加 EPT, TOEFL 等测试的应考人员,赴英语国家学习人员以及各类涉外工作人员。

由于受到母语的影响,中国学生对英语写作往往是一筹莫展,常常套用中文的思维方式和表现手法。为了有效地帮助中国学生提高英语写作水平,本书遵循读写并重、培养英语思维方式的的原则,从段落写作的基本要素到英语短文的写作,逐步深入、系统地分析讲解英语中不同的写作方法,既突出各种实用技巧的阐述,又不拘泥于抽象的理论知识,通过大量的例证和范文,使学习者对英语写作产生从感性认识到理性认识的飞跃。新颖的实例分析和精选的范文以及大量的练习是本书的特点,旨在培养学生的英语思维方式,进而提高对英语语言的感觉力和实际写作能力。

本书由余宝珠教授任主编,董述曾副教授任副主编。编写工作按参编人员的姓氏笔画排列分工如下:

王西玲 第一、三、十、十四章;

田德新 第九、十一章;

刘颖勤 第二、四、五、六章;

曾 萍 第七、八、十三章；

董述曾 第十二、十五章。

在编写过程中，西安外国语学院外籍专家 Betty Coggin, Lori Fenneken 及 Alex Proudfoot 提供了宝贵意见，王丰明同志协助进行电脑编排，在此谨表示感谢。同时对所参阅的大量国内外书籍的作者致以深切的谢意。

限于水平及其他客观原因，本书难免有疏漏之处，敬请各位英语界前辈、同行和读者不吝赐教，予以指正。

**编著者**

1997 年 5 月

# Contents

## Chapter One

The Writing Process .....	1
---------------------------	---

## Chapter Two

The Plane of Generality .....	8
-------------------------------	---

## Chapter Three

The Topic Sentence .....	25
--------------------------	----

## Chapter Four

Paragraph Structure .....	47
---------------------------	----

## Chapter Five

Paragraph Continuity .....	70
----------------------------	----

## Chapter Six

The Short Essay .....	96
-----------------------	----

## Chapter Seven

Description .....	115
-------------------	-----

## Chapter Eight

Narration .....	132
-----------------	-----

## Chapter Nine

Exposition; Illustration .....	150
--------------------------------	-----

## Chapter Ten

Exposition; Classification .....	168
----------------------------------	-----

## Chapter Eleven

Exposition; Comparison and Contrast .....	183
---	-----

<b>Chapter Twelve</b>	
Exposition: Causal Analysis .....	198
<b>Chapter Thirteen</b>	
Exposition: Definition .....	220
<b>Chapter Fourteen</b>	
Exposition: Process Analysis .....	243
<b>Chapter Fifteen</b>	
Argumentation .....	257
<b>Glossary</b> .....	278
<b>Key to Exercises</b> .....	295
<b>Editing and Proofreading Symbols</b> .....	310
<b>Bibliography</b> .....	312



# Chapter One

## The Writing Process

Just like speech, writing allows us to convey our ideas and opinions. However, compared with speech, writing gives us more freedom to express ourselves. It gives us more time to consider what we want to say, and it permits us to put on paper what we are afraid to say aloud. For instance, it is much easier and wiser to write a few lines on a sheet of paper telling one of your former teachers what you really think about his or her teaching style and grading practices than to speak it aloud.

Writing is necessary in almost every field, and it is particularly important in college study. When you enter a college, you may find that your writing ability is actually the most valuable working and thinking tool you have. As a college student, you are going to be increasingly dependent on writing for your study, and even for the rest of your whole life. Practically speaking, writing is the primary means by which your performance in college will be judged.

Many students today feel deeply inadequate or discouraged or resentful when they talk about the subject of writing. They have some misconceptions or mistaken ideas about writing that lead them to underrate or misjudge badly their own talents for writing. For example, when a student gets stuck on an assignment, he or she might wrongly think that no other writer ever gets similarly stuck. And because of this mistaken idea, the student might feel suspicious of his or her writing ability and think that he is inept at writing. Actually, all writers occasionally get

stuck in their writing, and the difference is that a successful writer sees the fact that getting stuck and unstuck is a normal, expected, and even predictable part of writing. Besides, self-confidence and perseverance can help a writer realize and exert his or her full potential in writing.

## **What Is Writing**

Since you can see how advantageous, necessary, and important writing is, we need to make clear what writing is. Writing is best thought of as a process of thinking on paper about a topic. Writing here particularly refers to the activity in the college classroom called “classroom writing”. This kind of essay writing usually puts demands on students such as limited subjects, a specified number of words, and sometimes even a certain form. Students have to meet the requirements of the assignment when they write.

## **What Is Writing Process**

As you have learned that essay writing is a process, the immediate question you might ask is what “writing process” is. Writing process is a series of deliberate steps carried out in a particular order and leading to a specific result. When you begin to learn how to write well, you must first realize a simple but often overlooked fact. That is, when you write, you go through a process. The more aware you are of the steps you go through in this process and the better you are able to control them, the more easily and successfully you will write. If you are not aware of some of the basic steps in the writing process, or if you haven’t found the best order in which they are carried out, you will probably find writing much more frustrating than it needs to be.

## Five Steps in Writing

Writing is no more mysterious than talking, but it can often be complex, depending on what you are writing about. Very often, the best way to handle complex writing is to break it down into steps, into a process. Generally speaking, “classroom writing” is thought of as a five-step process: generating ideas, organizing ideas, writing, revising, and editing. The first two steps can be regarded as the prewriting steps, and the last two as the rewriting steps. These steps often overlap and even run together, but for the sake of discussion we will treat each as separate and distinct.

### The First Step: Generating Ideas

When given a writing assignment, many students like to say that they do not know what to write. They usually complain that they do not have anything to say about the topic. Some of them often spend more time in trying to find something to say than they spend in writing. This is really a waste of time because they have already had many experiences to draw from. The only problem is that they have not realized that their own experiences can actually be used as a source for the writing assignment. For instance, every day you go to places, watch television, read magazines and newspapers, and talk to people. And even when you stay at home, you may also do a great deal of thinking and so have many ideas. Therefore, you can write what you see, what you hear, what you feel, and what you think. In a word, you can write your own experiences and your own thoughts. Your experiences and thoughts provide you with the best material because they provide information on which you are an authority. And without any further researching or reading, you can write a

fairly interesting paper.

Usually, when you are assigned a topic you may develop from your experiences or a subject based on your class readings and discussions, you must begin your work by listing all of your ideas on the specific writing assignment. This listing of ideas is sometimes called brainstorming. When you are brainstorming, in other words, generating the ideas, you just write down everything that comes to your mind about the subject. Do not worry about whether some of those ideas are related to the subject or not, just jot them down. For example, after reading an article on waste in government, you are asked to write an essay about your experiences with government incompetence. You can begin your work by making a list of incidents that demonstrate government inefficiency. When doing this, you only write down any experiences you have had with government ineptness. If you are assigned a paper in which you have to describe your favourite childhood spot as it was and as it now is, you need to make two lists: one with the details of the scene you recall and the other with the details of the scene as you see it today. Again, when you do this, you write down everything that comes to the mind about the favourite spot.

Generating ideas is not only the first but also the most important step in the writing process because it is the one that gives your writing substance, letting you have something to say and write.

## **The Second Step: Organizing Ideas**

After writing down all the ideas on the assigned subject, you need to scan the list of ideas you have made in step one and decide what subject those ideas suggest. Find a word or a phrase to state this subject. For instance, after comparing the two lists above in the second example, you may find that one good subject those details suggest is "the change of my favourite scene".

Having determined the subject, you are well on your way to writing an essay. Before you write, however, you should go through your list again and remove any ideas that are not related to your stated subject. It is often hard for students to omit good ideas. Maybe you can make it easier by saving those ideas on another list which might be used for a future assignment. Then try to arrange the remaining ideas on your list so that they can support the subject.

Organizing ideas is also a very important step in the writing process because it lets your paper have a purpose. In other words, this step lets you know what you really wish to say.

### **The Third Step: Writing**

Writing means setting down your opinions on the topic in some coherent form. In this step, therefore, you can start to write. While writing, you use the material from your list that deals with the subject. Meanwhile, you may think of other ideas that are closely related to the subject and then add them to your list.

The chief purpose of writing is to convey your ideas to other people. Sometimes it is difficult to write exactly what you mean; therefore, do not feel discouraged if your ideas do not flow freely. It is quite normal for you to write hesitatingly — to start, pause, go to another paragraph, stop, and retrace your steps before going to the next paragraph; besides, you may also leave out sentences and discard paragraphs when necessary because that is exactly what successful writers do. So, if you find that your act of writing proceeds circlingly rather than proceeding in a straight line, you are working very much like a professional writer.

### **The Fourth Step: Revising**

To revise is to make major changes in the work. Usually

you revise your paper by reading it over and making changes so that it says what you wish it to say. As you read over the essay, you may make some changes in wording or sentence structure; you may also want to rearrange your ideas, add more details, or delete some details. In any case, the purpose of all your changes at this stage is to make your ideas clearer.

## **The Last Step: Editing**

To edit is to make small changes in the manuscript — to find a better word, a stronger sentence, a more vivid and appropriate phrase. As you make these editing changes, you pay attention to the style of the paper instead of the substance of it. Also at this stage, you proofread your essay by correcting errors of grammar, punctuation, spelling, etc..

So far, from the above discussion of the five steps, we can easily see that prewriting, including the first two steps — generating ideas and organizing ideas, refers to all the activities of thinking, exploration, and organizing that writers often do before committing pen to paper. Rewriting, including the last two steps — revising and editing, is the step of the composing process during which a writer rereads and reworks the material to make it better.

Writing always involves the above five steps. The more fully you control the various steps of the writing process, the more easily and successfully you will be able to write. As you learn and practice these steps in the following chapters, you will find that writing begins to be less of a chore and more of a pleasure.

## **Exercises**

**Directions:** Answer the following questions on a separate piece of paper. Make your answers as specific and complete as possible.

1. What is writing?
2. What is writing process?
3. Name the five steps in the writing process and explain each as briefly and completely as possible.

## Chapter Two

### The Plane of Generality

#### Clarity

The most important feature of good writing is clarity. Here, clarity means you have communicated something concrete or specific — i. e. something detailed, exact, and clear in meaning. Providing writing with clarity, therefore, requires you to add the details you produced during brainstorming. You should form a clear picture in your mind and then draw it so that your reader can see it, too.

**Example:** Suppose a friend asks you why you always go to the Blue Moon Restaurant to have dinner.

You may answer in either of these two ways.

1. "It is the best restaurant around the city."
2. "Its food is tasty, fresh, and rich; its service is quick and satisfactory; besides, its prices are low."

Which would give your friend a clearer picture of your reasoning?

Your first statement contains the general term; best; your second statement contains the specific terms; tasty, fresh and rich food, quick and satisfactory service and low prices. Although it is necessary to use both general and specific terms, specific terms, which are more informative and expressive, give clarity to writing.



## General and Specific Terms

To use specific details effectively, you need to be able to identify what are general terms and what are specific terms.

General terms refer to a variety of different things or groups of things, persons, or events, and specific terms refer to exact or individual things, persons, or events.

### General Terms

colors

persons

events

trees

### Specific Terms

blue, red, black

George Washington,

Abraham Lincoln

the Second World War,

the World Cup

elms, pines, oaks

The general term *tree* probably presents you a somewhat hazy image of a number of different trees. The specific term *elm*, however, would present you a clearer picture, removing pictures of pines, oaks, or any other trees. Specific terms, then, refer to particular things and make your writing clear.

Both general and specific terms are essential for clear writing. You may use general terms when you need one word that represents several different things. You may use specific terms when you wish to express exact ideas.

## General and Specific Statements

Statements or sentences are like terms because they too may be either general or specific.

Good writing possesses both kinds of statements. So you