

The Writing of English

葛传槩著·英语写作

上海译文出版社



AE563/52

41.687
65

The Writing of English
葛传槩著·英语写作

上海译文出版社

The Writing of English

英语写作

葛传槩 著

上海译文出版社出版发行

上海延安中路 955 弄 14 号

全国新华书店经销

上海东方印刷厂印刷

开本 850×1156 1/32 印张 15 插页 5 字数 446,000

1985 年 9 月第 1 版 1989 年 2 月第 2 次印刷

印数: 36,001—41,000 册

ISBN 7-5327-0599-4/H·163

定价: 4.70 元

PREFACE

The present volume is a revised edition of my *A Textbook of English Composition* first published in 1941. The revising has been done in accordance with the same strongly held beliefs as those that I acted upon in writing the original work. These beliefs are as follows:

1. Such a book ought never to lose sight of the fact that it is intended for *Chinese* students, who have their special difficulties and therefore need special advice and warning. Since they have not been brought up in English-speaking families and since they study English chiefly as something written rather than spoken, they are ignorant of a great many everyday expressions that are only too common on the lips of those whose mother tongue is English. On the other hand, they are quite safe from a great many faults in diction and construction that most English and American students of composition have to take care to unlearn before they can hope to write respectable English.

2. Such a book ought to aim at the art of writing English for practical purposes instead of at authorship. The object of the average student of English composition, whatever his nationality, is to learn to express himself in written English, not to learn to become a professional author.

3. Such a book ought not to confine itself to the treatment of school compositions. While most students may never wish to write professionally, it does not follow that all that they will ever have to do in the way of English composition is to write short essays on given subjects, or what is called in American schools "themes".

4. Such a book ought not to content itself with imparting a *knowledge* of the art of writing English. Principles and rules are

of little use until they are applied.

5. Such a book ought to give such principles and rules; only as are based upon the actual practice of good authors. Some of those found in nearly every popular manual of composition serve no definite purposes and therefore prove to be only so many handicaps in the path of the writer of English, who has enough to take care of without the interference of those unnecessary "technical" restrictions.

6. Such a book ought to teach *present-day* English only. Living as they do at the present day, students of composition should in no way be taught or encouraged to follow the usage and practice of authors of bygone days.

7. Such a book ought to be written on the assumption that its readers are careful students but that they are not students of precocious ability. No book can teach anything to careless students or to those who feel little or no interest in the subject. Nor is it advisable to take too much for granted in Chinese students of English, who are necessarily supposed to have made progress in their studies with the help of dictionary and grammar.

Whatever shortcomings some critical readers may find in this book, I take a pride in pointing out that the whole work is my own. I should like to make special mention of the fact that the illustrative examples have been, except in a very few cases, taken at first hand, and that for the purpose of collecting such examples I read a very large number of books, newspapers, and magazines. Not a single sentence has been quoted from any work written in the nineteenth century. In this new edition a large number of newer examples have been added or substituted, most of the authors happily still alive.

It remains for me to thank Comrade Yu Shiwen (Ü Conyoon) for his help in the preparation of this revised edition. I have also to express my gratitude to the late Comrade Gui Shaoxu, who was the first to encourage me to write a book of this kind.

October, 1983

Ge Chuangui

CONTENTS

CHAPTER I	INTRODUCTION	1
1.	Composition and Compositions	1
2.	Purpose of This Book.....	1
3.	Your Advantage	2
4.	Your Special Difficulties	2
5.	Rhetoric	3
CHAPTER II	MECHANICS OF COMPOSITION	4
6.	Materials	4
7.	One Side or Two Sides ?	4
8.	Margins	4
9.	Spacing	4
10.	Titles	6
11.	Paging	6
12.	Folding	7
13.	Endorsing	7
14.	Spelling	7
15.	Syllabication	8
16.	Underlining	9
17.	Italics	9
18.	Omissions, Corrections, and Insertions	11
19.	A Warning	12
CHAPTER III	LEARNING TO WRITE	14
20.	Something to Say	14
21.	How to Say It	14

22. A Consolation	15
23. Others May Have Said It before You.....	15
24. What to Read	15
25. How to Read	16
26. Some Dictionaries Recommended	16
27. Self-cultivation	25
28. Writing from Memory	25
29. Imitation, Conscious and Unconscious	26
30. Reading Dictionaries	27
31. Expressing Another Person's Thoughts	27
32. Paraphrasing Sentences	28
33. Suggestions for Paraphrasing	30
34. Paraphrasing Paragraphs	33
35. Paraphrasing Verse	36
36. Condensing	41
37. Various Degrees of Condensation	50
38. Suggestions for Condensing	51
39. Using Material in Han	57
40. Expressing Your Own Thoughts	58
41. Keeping a Diary	58
42. Choosing a Subject	58
43. Choosing a Title	59
44. Taking Notes	60
45. Making an Outline	61
46. Note-taking and Outline-making in the Head	64
47. Making Outlines of What You Read	64
48. Expanding an Outline	65
49. Practice in Composition	68

CHAPTER IV. WRITING CORRECTLY70

50. What is Correct English ?	70
51. Usage	70
52. Present-day Usage	70
53. Neologisms	74

54. English and American Usage	74
55. Good Usage	102
56. Expressions Outside of Good Usage	102
57. Colloquialisms Etc in Written English	103
58. You are Quite Safe	104
59. How You Violate Usage	104

CHAPTER V WRITING CORRECTLY (*Continued*) 106

60. Grammar	106
61. Idiom	106
62. Grammar and Idiom	106
63. About the Study of Grammar	107
64. About the Study of Idiom	109
65. Some Books Recommended	112
66. Make Your Own Dictionary of Usage	115
67. Exercises in Grammar	115
68. Proper Nouns Used as Common Nouns	129
69. Nouns Used as Adjectives	131
70. Singulars and Plurals	137
71. Nouns Singular Only	138
72. Nouns Plural Usually or Plural Only	140
73. Nouns Plural in a Special Usage	142
74. Nouns of Multitude	145
75. Abstract Nouns in Plural	147
76. Material Nouns in Plural	148
77. Nouns Ending in "-ics"	149
78. Some Miscellaneous Nouns	149
79. Numerals in Plural	165
80. Number in Nouns Used as Adjectives	166
81. Number and Articles	167
82. Plural Subject with Singular Verb	167
83. Some Knotty Points of Number	169
84. Gender and Sex	170
85. Male or Female Beings Considered Neuter	171

86. Animals Considered Masculine or Feminine	
Without Reference to Sex	172
87. Sexless Things Considered Masculine or Feminine ..	172
88. Masculine and Feminine Nouns Used as Nouns of	
Common Gender	173
89. Feminine Nouns Ending in "-ess"	174
90. Nouns Ending in "-man"	175
91. Words of Common Gender Made Masculine or	
Feminine	175
92. Gender and Number	176
93. Possessive Case and <i>Of</i> -phrase	177
94. Subjective and Objective Meanings	177
95. Possessive Plurals	178
96. Noun Phrases and Possessive Case	178
97. "S" Repeated and "Of" Repeated	179
98. Possessive Case and Lifeless Things	179
99. Idiomatic Uses of Possessive Case	180
100. Noun Omitted after Possessive	181
101. "Of" before Possessive	182
102. One Noun in Two Cases	182
103. Pronoun and its Antecedent	183
104. Lack of a Common-gender Third-person-singular	
Pronoun	184
105. A Question of Person	185
106. Case in Pronouns	185
107. Objective Used as Predicate Nominative	186
108. Interrogative "Who" Used as Objective	186
109. Relative "Whom" Used as Nominative	187
110. "Whom" Used after "Than"	187
111. Nominative or Objective after "But" ?	188
112. A Curious Case of Agreement	188
113. National, Editorial, and Generic Uses of "We"	189
114. Generic Use of "You" and "Your"	190
115. Indefinite Use of "They"	191

116. Generic Use of "One" and "One's"	191
117. Idiomatic Uses of "It"	193
118. Two Distinct Constructions of "It ... That"	198
119. Defining and Non-defining Relative Clauses	198
120. The Relative Pronouns "Who", "Which", and "That"	204
121. Three Points of Choice between "Who(m)" and "Which"	209
122. Two Relative Clauses Linked by "And" or "But"	210
123. Omission of Relative Pronouns	211
124. "Which" without Definite Antecedent	213
125. "As" as Relative Pronoun	214
126. "Who" as Indefinite Relative Pronoun	216
127. "What" Preceding Statement	216
128. "One Another" and "Each Other"	217
129. Adjectives Used as Nouns	218
130. Exact Senses of Adjectives	220
131. A Curious Point about Comparatives	221
132. Two Curious Uses of Superlatives	222
133. "A Most" Followed by Adjective	223
134. "Worth" Taking an Object	224
135. "The Matter"	225
136. "Nothing Much"	225
137. Articles	226
138. "A" and Abstract Nouns	226
139. Some Words Often Mistaken for Abstract Nouns	227
140. Generic Use of Articles	229
141. Position of "A" (or "An")	230
142. "The" Giving Common Noun Abstract Sense	231
143. Articles and Proper Nouns	232
144. Omission of Articles	532
145. Repetition of Articles	238
146. Final Remarks on Articles	239
147. Transitive and Intransitive Verbs	242

148. Absolute Use of Transitive Verbs	245
149. Copulative Verbs	246
150. Factitive Verbs	247
151. Verbs Taking Double Object	250
152. Tense and Time	256
153. Present Tense Referring to Future	256
154. Present Tense Referring to Past	257
155. Past Tense Referring to Future	259
156. Present Perfect Tense vs Past Tense	261
157. Past Perfect Tense	263
158. Perfect Tense vs Factitive "Have" with Past Participle as Complement.....	265
159. Continuous Tenses	266
160. "Always" with Continuous Tenses	267
161. "Be" in Continuous Tenses	268
162. "Used" Followed by Infinitive	268
163. "Be" Followed by Infinitive	270
164. "Have" Followed by Infinitive	271
165. Infinitive without "to"	271
166. Split Infinitives	275
167. "To" Standing for Infinitive	276
168. "To" Followed by Gerund	276
169. Infinitive or Gerund ?	280
170. "Enough" Qualified by Infinitive	303
171. "Too" Qualified by Infinitive	306
172. Active and Passive Infinitives	306
173. Active and Passive Gerunds	310
174. Gerunds Used as Adjectives	312
175. Gerund and Possessive	313
176. Fused Participles	314
177. Present Participle Separated from Subject by Predicate Verb	316
178. Unattached Participles	317
179. Intransitive Past Participles Used as Adjectives	320

180. "Shall" and "Will", "Should" and "Would"	321
181. Subjunctive Mood	332
182. Sequence of Tenses	338
183. "The" as Adverb	340
184. Double Adverbial "The"	341
185. Quasi-adverbs	342
186. Prepositions	343
187. Idiomatic Uses of Prepositions	344
188. Prepositions before Particular Nouns	344
189. Prepositions after Particular Words	347
190. Omission of Prepositions	355
191. Prepositions Governing Words Other than Nouns and Pronouns	359
192. <i>That</i> -clause in Apposition to Nouns	362
193. <i>That</i> -clause Qualifying Adjectives and Past Participles	364
194. <i>That</i> -clause Used after Verbs	366
195. <i>That</i> -clause Qualifying "So" and "Such"	370
196. Idiomatic Uses of "That"	370
197. Omission of "That"	371
198. "And" Expressing Result	372
199. "Or" Meaning <i>Otherwise</i>	373
200. Idiomatic Uses of "If"	373
201. "Than" with Ellipsis	374
202. "When" as Relative Conjunction	374
203. "As Well As"	374
204. "Though ... Yet ..."	375
205. Indirect Questions	375
206. Negative Inversion	376

CHAPTER VI WRITING WELL

207. What is Good Writing ?	377
208. Superstitions	378
209. Diction and Sentence Structure	380

210. The Exact Word	380
211. Specific and General Words	383
212. Plain and Pretentious Words	384
213. Idiomatic Phrases and Idiomatic Uses of Plain Words.....	385
214. "Fine Writing "	389
215. Hackneyed Phrases	391
216. Words Used Too Often	392
217. Economy of Words	392
218. Periodic and Loose Sentences	394
219. Qualities of a Good Sentence	397
220. Unity	398
221. Coherence	401
222. Emphasis	408
223. Euphony	414
CHAPTER VII PARAGRAPHS	418
224. What is a Paragraph ?	418
225. Length of Paragraphs	418
226. Paragraphs and Outline	419
227. Topic Sentence	419
228. Paragraph Development	426
229. Qualities of a Good Paragraph	427
230. Transition between Paragraphs	428
CHAPTER VIII FORMS OF COMPOSITION	433
231. Narration, Description, Exposition, and Argument ..	433
232. Point of View in Narration	433
233. What Tense to Use ?	436
234. "Story Style" and "News Style"	437
235. Plain Account of Events	439
236. Artistic, Practical, and Scientific Description	440
237. Avoid "Fine Writing".	441
238. What is Beautiful Language ?	441

239. Examples of Artistic Description	445
240. Practical Description	451
241. Exposition is Explanation	454
242. Definition	454
243. What to Avoid in Exposition.....	457
244. Examples of Exposition	457
245. Argument and Exposition	464
246. Question and Answer	464
247. What to Avoid in Argument	465
248. Formal and Informal Argument	466

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1. Composition and Compositions. The title of this book, which is now *The writing of English*, was originally *A Textbook of English Composition*. The last word is "Composition", not "Compositions". "Composition" is an uncountable noun, meaning the art or practice of writing. "Compositions" (plural) is a countable noun, meaning pieces of writing; the singular form "composition" (as in "a composition" and "this composition") means a piece of writing.

"Piece(s) of writing", however, is a vague term. A single sentence is a piece of writing; a book of many volumes is also a piece of writing. Both may therefore be called "compositions". Between these two extremes there are various kinds of compositions, in whatever way they may be classified. But "compositions" has the narrower sense of school compositions or "student compositions", that is, short essays written on given subjects as educational exercises, or what is known in American schools as "themes".

2. Purpose of this Book. This book is not confined to compositions in the narrower sense, though these are by no means neglected. Nor does it claim to teach the writing of novels, short stories, dramas, poems, literary criticism, newspaper editorials, or scholarly treatises. It gives principles, suggestions, models, and exercises that will help you to express yourself well in English no matter what form of writing you may happen to do.

This book is written for *you*, who are supposed to be a Chinese student of English having a vocabulary of several thousand words and a fair knowledge of grammar, but having had little practice

in writing, and even less in speaking, the language. From the use of this book you may expect to acquire the art of expression in English — on condition that you do all the exercises carefully, preferably under the guidance of a competent teacher, and act upon all the principles and suggestions as far as possible.

3. Your Advantage. As I have said in the above, you “are supposed to be a Chinese student of English ... having had little practice in writing, and even less in speaking the language”. If you had been brought up in an English-speaking family, you would no doubt have more freedom of expression in the use of English than you have. But you have your advantage too. Just because you have not been brought up in an English-speaking family, you will be saved a great deal of trouble of trying to unlearn many errors and faults peculiar to those having brought up on English. You are not, for instance, in the habit of using the notorious double negative, as in “I don’t know nothing about him”, which many English-speaking children say when they ought to say “I know nothing about him” or “I don’t know anything about him”.

Much of the material that is usually found in books of composition written for English-speaking students is therefore quite useless to you — perhaps as useless as any method of getting rid of the cigarette habit would be to non-smokers.

4. Your Special Difficulties. Being the kind of student you are, you have certain special difficulties in learning English composition. You are perhaps a better speller than the average English or American schoolboy is; you have perhaps had more practice in parsing and analysis than he has; you perhaps know a great many words that he does not know. But you find it much more difficult to express many common ideas and thoughts than he does; you are far less good at the use of many common words than he is; you may even make such ridiculous mistakes as he never dreams of.

A large part of this book is devoted to helping you to conquer these difficulties.

5. Rhetoric. The two words “and Rhetoric” might have been added to the title of this book. You would like to have them added, wouldn't you? At any rate, you must not think that the high-sounding word “rhetoric” as used in the titles of so many American books of English composition has anything “deep” in it. In fact, it is practically equivalent to “composition” or “the art or practice of writing”, as can be seen from the following definition of the term quoted from a very popular book of “Composition and Rhetoric”: “Rhetoric consists of the study of the principles governing the clear, forceful, and elegant expression of thoughts”. Such books, which are often called “rhetorics” (with the singular “a rhetoric”) in America, do not teach anything that is not taught in those having only the more homely word “composition” in their titles.

If I have dropped the word “rhetoric” from the title of this book, however, it is not merely because the term would sound more or less like an Americanism or because it would not have much meaning. There are two other reasons. First, this book is not a formal treatise on rhetoric in the old-fashioned sense of the word: it does not make a parade of the many jaw-breaking rhetorical terms that are of little use except as an essential part of a *knowledge* of rhetoric, such as “asyndeton”, “oxymoron”, and “syllepsis”. Secondly, this book abstains from advising the observance of many rules that exist only from a narrowly rhetorical point of view: it mentions some of them only to condemn them as superstitions, such as “A sentence should not begin with ‘and’” and “A sentence should not end with a preposition”.