

*Help Yourself to Advanced English*

高级英语自学系列教程

# English for Studying



## 高级英语写作

顾曰国 主编

Gu Yueguo (chief editor)

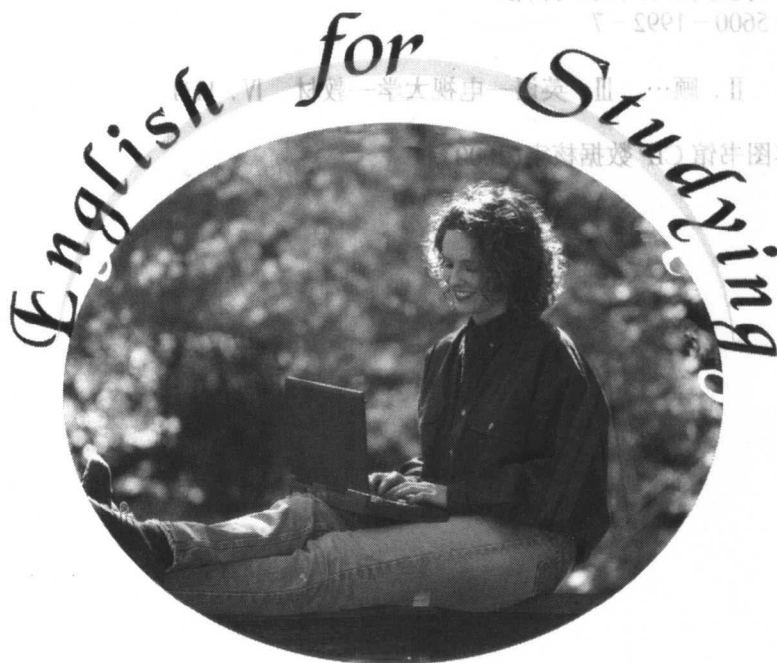
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# ***Help Yourself to Advanced English***

## 高级英语自学系列教程

***Help Yourself to Advanced English*** is a series specially designed for those self-study learners who want to upgrade their English from intermediate to advanced levels. It is thematically structured and five-skill integrated on activity/task basis. It consists of two modules: English Language Communication Module and Professional Training Module. Module 1 caters for general learners of English, and Module 2 provides up-to-date professional training for teachers of English.

### **English Language Communication Module:**

*A Guide to Success 1: Orientation*

*English in Daily Life*

*English at Leisure*

*English at Work*

*English in Current Affairs*

*A Guide to Success 2: Learning Strategies*

*English for Studying*

*Cross-cultural Communication*

*English in a Changing World*

*English Through Literature*

### **Professional Training Module:**

*A Guide to Success 3: Professionalism*

*Language and Linguistics: A Workbook*

*English Language Teaching Methodology (1)*

*English Language Teaching Methodology (2)*

*Practical Project Design*

Print materials are supplemented with both audio and video cassettes.

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# **The Second Year Pack**

## **Checklist**

### **Materials Provided:**

**Version available for Autumn Semester**

- ◇ *A Guide to Success 2: Learning Strategies*
- ◇ *English for Studying*  
with 1 audio cassette
- ◇ *Cross-cultural Communication*  
with 2 audio cassettes

**Version available for Spring Semester**

- ◇ *English in a Changing World*  
with 4 audio cassettes
- ◇ *English Through Literature*  
with 1 audio cassette

### **Materials Students Should Provide Themselves:**

- ◇ 2 assignment notebooks (standard A4 size recommended)
- ◇ 1 rough notebook
- ◇ 1 self-assessment record notebook
- ◇ 2 blank cassettes for speaking practice
- ◇ a tape recorder

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## How to Study This Course

Welcome to *English for Studying*. This course is named after the previous courses such as *English in Daily Life*, *English at Leisure*, *English at Work* and *English in Current Affairs*. They are all headed by the word *English*. You can paraphrase them by using this formula *English used* \_\_\_\_\_. Thus, *English in Daily Life* can be rephrased as **English used in daily life**. Similarly *English for Studying* means **English used for studying**. This gives you a snapshot of what this course is all about!

In your present study of distance taught BA courses, writing plays an exceptionally important role. It is through writing that you give your tutor and university authorities hard and solid evidence of your continuous progress and achievement. That is why you had to do a lot of writing tasks in your first-year study, a piece a week, to say the least! However, those tasks were designed in such a way that they were subordinate to the other non-writing tasks. In other words, they are not systematic in view of developing writing skill. This course — *English for Studying* — will not only reinforce your previous writing practice by recycling some of the writing tasks, but also attempt to create more systematic and coherent opportunities for you to practise writing.

### ***Resources Checklist***

First things first. Let's make sure that you have everything you need.

#### ***The Materials You Should Have***

#### ***Have You Got Them?***

- There is **an audio cassette** accompanying the book. It is for listening tasks. And all the listening tasks are integrated with the writing tasks of the book. It is therefore absolutely essential that you have it.
- For each unit there are **extra sample writings**. They are included at the end of the unit.



### English for Studying

- There are also **some video programmes** accompanying the book. They show some authentic clips of writing activities or writers talking about their writing experiences. You are not expected to buy them, of course, but you should watch them in the tutorial centre.
- You should have at least **one notebook**.

You have the resources now. They will remain wasted if you fail to use them wisely.

### ***The Structure of the Book***

There are 8 units. Unit 1, Reflect on Your Writing, invites you to reflect upon your own writing. As you may recall, our ancestor warns us 学而不思则罔. In the modern theory of writing, there is a **reflective approach** to composition. This approach actually follows the same principle of learning as that laid down by our ancestor. It is adopted in the course. We believe it is informative and effective. The essence of the approach is that you have to do constant critical reviews of your own writing practice against the sample texts to assess your own strengths as well as weaknesses. Through self-assessment, you achieve a high degree of self-awareness of your own composition. In writing, because we have to think hard on so many things all at the same time, we tend to make mistakes, sometimes very silly ones. We then feel ashamed when they are pointed out to us. We cannot believe that they are there in black and white! Experienced writers, due to sharp self-awareness, know where the errors are most likely to occur, thus steer their thinking and writing more smoothly than otherwise.

The remaining 7 units deal with 7 particular types of writing activities. Unit 2, Correspondence, is concerned with letter writing, including such subtypes as formal/informal, personal/official, business/non-business, and CV. It may seem simple and straightforward to write a letter. In actual fact, it is one of the writing areas that is mostly culturally sensitive. Errors often occur due to the unawareness of the cultural

values involved. Unit 3, Getting Ideas Sorted Out, deals with sorting out ideas at the paragraph level. There are three types of activities designed to develop learners' three capabilities: (1) being able to write good paragraphs in general; (2) being able to take notes from lectures or from reading — the notes that read like good paragraphs; and (3) being able to write a summary or abstract of a text, an article, etc.

From Unit 4 onwards, each unit is aimed at a particular type of composition. Unit 4, Describing What You See, is descriptive; Unit 5, Telling What Happened, is narrative; Unit 6, Presenting Your Ideas, is expository; Unit 7, Making Arguments, is argumentative; and Unit 8, Writing a Report, prepares you for your last course, viz. *Practical Project Design*.

### ***Writing as a Painstaking Process***

As you may recall, in *A Guide to Success 1: Orientation*, Professor Guide draws your attention to the differences between **knowing something** and **knowing how to do it**, and between **knowing how to do it** and **being able to actually do it**. He uses paragraph writing to illustrate his point. To quote:

Take *paragraph writing* for example. You can read something about paragraph writing. You now know something about paragraph writing. You can even proceed to tell others how to do it: First, write a topic sentence, then give examples to support it, etc. When time comes for you to write a paragraph yourself, your knowledge about paragraph writing, and your knowledge of how to do it are put to the real test. You soon realise that it is far from being enough to know about paragraph writing, and to know how to do it. **You need a lot of practice in actual writing, that is, you need to write one paragraph after another until you can do it confidently and with ease.** There is a very adept expression in Chinese that captures the differences I try to drive home here. The expression is only four characters long, that is, 眼高手低, but the implication for English language learning is far beyond its length. (emphasis added, Gu, 1999:61)

The point made here by Professor Guide cannot be overemphasised. There are altogether 201 tasks throughout the course. They fall into three general types:

- ◇ 'to know' tasks — tasks that are designed to develop your knowledge about a particular type of writing, or features of writing, etc.

### English for Studying

- ◇ 'to know how' tasks — tasks that are designed to develop your understanding of the actual process of writing
- ◇ 'practice' tasks — tasks that require you to do the actual writing

Note that the first two types of tasks can be done through reading, filling in the blanks/tables, listening to a cassette, analysing, critical thinking, etc. The last type, however, must be carried out by practising actual writing. Unfortunately, there is a general tendency among learners that they do the three types of tasks all by reading them through. This is the easiest way, but **the least effective way**. At the end of the day you only achieve the knowledge about writing, without any actual skill. If you do want to improve your writing skill, the only way to achieve this goal is by following the instructions, and doing the tasks as required. There is no short-cut way, and no one can learn to write for you!

### **An 8-week Planner**

I know you are very busy, like everybody else. It is essential that you prioritise your time very well. **It takes 8 weeks to finish this course.** The first step, therefore, is to draw an 8-week planner. Your planner may look like this:

Course	Study Weeks	Calendar Week	Tasks	Tutorial	Hours p.w.
<i>English for Studying</i>	3		U1		12
	4		U2		
	5		U3		
	6		U4		
	7		U5		
	8		U6		
	9		U7		
	10		U8		
Semester Exam					

**A Weekly Planner**

The next thing you should do is to draw a weekly planner. Your planner may look like this.

<b>Monday</b> 6.30 get up 7.00-7.30 breakfast 8.00-12.00 12.00-2.00 lunch break 2.00-6.00 6.00-7.30 dinner 7.30-10.00 10.30 bed time <i>An hour a day on distance learning</i>	<b>Thursday</b> 6.30 get up 7.00-7.30 breakfast 8.00-12.00 12.00-2.00 lunch break 2.00-6.00 6.00-7.30 dinner 7.30-10.00 10.30 bed time <i>An hour a day on distance learning</i>
<b>Tuesday</b> 6.30 get up 7.00-7.30 breakfast 8.00-12.00 12.00-2.00 lunch break 2.00-6.00 6.00-7.30 dinner 7.30-10.00 10.30 bed time <i>An hour a day on distance learning</i>	<b>Friday</b> 6.30 get up 7.00-7.30 breakfast 8.00-12.00 12.00-2.00 lunch break 2.00-6.00 6.00-7.30 dinner 7.30-10.00 10.30 bed time <i>An hour a day on distance learning</i>
<b>Wednesday</b> 6.30 get up 7.00-7.30 breakfast 8.00-12.00 12.00-2.00 lunch break 2.00-6.00 6.00-7.30 dinner 7.30-10.00 10.30 bed time <i>An hour a day on distance learning</i>	<b>Saturday</b> 6.30 get up 7.00-7.30 breakfast 8.00-12.00 12.00-2.00 lunch break 2.00-6.00 6.00-7.30 dinner 7.30-10.00 10.30 bed time <i>A distance learning day!!!</i>
	<b>Sunday</b> 6.30 get up 7.00-7.30 breakfast 8.00-12.00 12.00-2.00 lunch break 2.00-6.00 6.00-7.30 dinner 7.30-10.00 10.30 bed time <i>Half a day on distance learning</i>

## ***Learning Strategies***

In *A Guide to Success 1: Orientation*, Professor Guide recommends his strategy of **keeping a writing treasure book** (Gu, 1999:42). What do you think of this strategy? I think it is a good one. Why not have a try and keep one yourself?

*A Guide to Success 2: Learning Strategies* have introduced 18 task-based learning skills. Some of them are particularly useful for improving writing.

<i>Breaking down into elements</i>	⇒ Splitting a general question into components
<i>Giving an example</i>	⇒ Explaining an abstract idea by citing a concrete instance
<i>Graphic aids</i>	⇒ Using pictures, diagrams, charts
<i>Implementing</i>	⇒ Relating information to physical actions as with directives
<i>Modelling</i>	⇒ Imitating a language model, including overt practice and silent rehearsal
<i>Note-taking</i>	⇒ Jotting down anything of interest at any time
<i>Parallel writing, reverse translation</i>	⇒ Comparing English and Chinese writing by using the same topic
<i>Self-diagnosing</i>	⇒ Diagnosing learning problems by comparing the finished task with the feedback
<i>Using a checklist</i>	⇒ Revising composition against a standard checklist

If you are not confident in employing them, go back to the Guide and review the relevant sections. If you tell me they are useless or ineffective, I am not convinced until you show me that you have tried them yourself. It takes strong will and determination to employ them in your own writing process.

Finally, it is important to keep in mind that, although learning to write is a painstaking process, it is eventually extremely self-gratifying to read and share with others your finished product!

# Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>Reflecting on Your Writing</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Correspondence</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Getting Ideas Sorted Out</b>	<b>97</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Describing What You See</b>	<b>139</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Telling What Happened</b>	<b>189</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>Presenting Your Ideas</b>	<b>241</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>Making Arguments</b>	<b>299</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>Writing a Report</b>	<b>365</b>
	<b>Appendix: Glossary</b>	<b>413</b>

# Reflecting on Your Writing

## Unit 1



## Guide to Unit 1

### Reflecting on Your Writing

#### Warm up

Feedback

#### Activity 1 Purpose of Writing

Task 1 Feelings about English Writing

Feedback

Task 2 Your Feelings about English Writing

Feedback

Task 3 What You Write

Feedback

Task 4 Why You Write

#### Activity 2 Types of English Writing

Task 1 Differences between English and Chinese Writing

Feedback

Task 2 Comparing Different Types of Writing

Feedback

Task 3 Distinguishing Characteristics

Feedback

Task 4 Writing Practice — a Theft

#### Activity 3 Stages in the Writing Process

Task 1 Thinking about How You Write

Feedback

Task 2 Identifying Stages of the Writing Process

Feedback

Task 3 Prewriting, Writing, and Rewriting

Feedback

Task 4 Reflecting on Your Writing Process

Estimated Time	Actual Time	Page
		4
		6
		6
		9
		10
		11
		11
		11
		15
		19
		21
		22
		22
		23
		26
		29



## Guide to Unit 1

### Reflecting on Your Writing

#### Activity 4 Features of Good Writing

Task 1	Comparing Three Pieces of Writings	Feedback
Task 2	Identifying Features of a Well-written English Text	Feedback
Task 3	Unscrambling a Text	Feedback
Task 4	Reflecting on How Texts Are Arranged	Feedback

#### Activity 5 How Well Are You Doing?

Task 1	How to Mark?	Feedback
Task 2	Preparing to Assess Your Classmates' Work at the Tutorial Session	

#### Activity 6 A Study Plan

Task 1	Working out a Short-term Plan
Task 2	Keeping Vocabulary Records
Task 3	Writing a Study Plan
Task 4	Review

#### Extra Sample Writings

Estimated Time	Actual Time	Page
		30
		30
		33
		33
		34
		36
		36
		40
		42
		42
		43
		45
		46
		47