

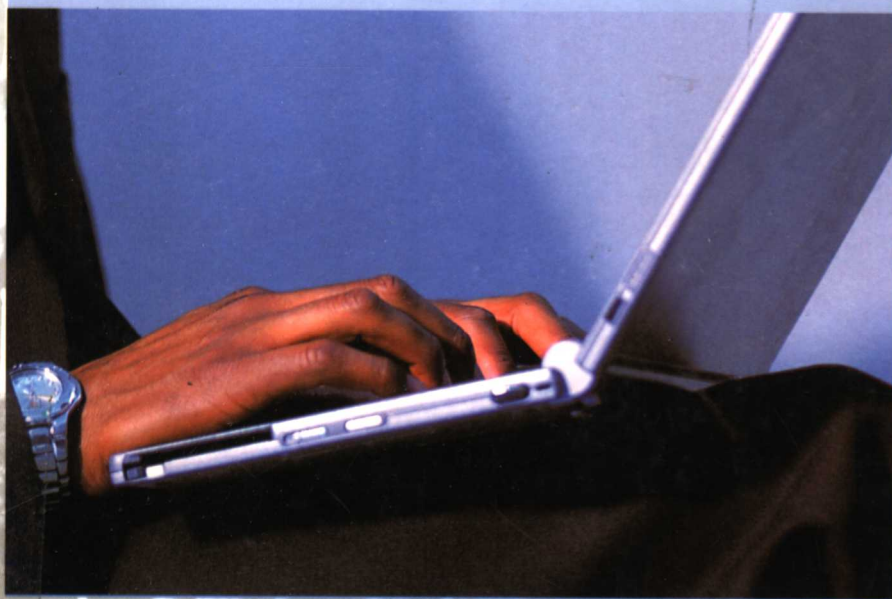
COLLEGE ENGLISH

Creative Writing

Book 3

Student's Book

Dr. Christopher Green



大学英语创意写作

第三册

学生用书



外教社

上海外语教育出版社

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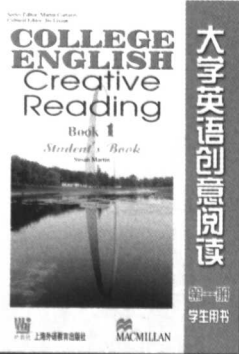
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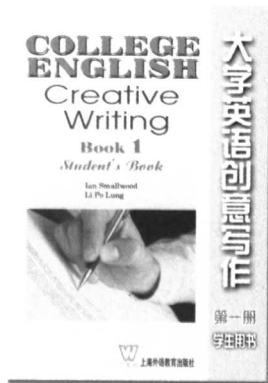
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- 培养学生创造性地使用英语进行写作的能力



Introduction

It is very important to write effective academic English. This is because English is the international medium for academic communication, and writing is a permanent record of your thinking and of your working processes. Your writing is an advertisement of yourself and, as with any advertisement, you should present the highest quality “product” possible. So, always aim to produce written work that you are proud of, and always keep in mind your audience (the readers) and the purposes of your writing.

There are a number of common problems in academic writing which need very careful attention. I want to mention just three of the most important problems here. The first of these problems is achieving the right tone and style. Academic writing should be expressed in a tentative and objective tone. To achieve an appropriate style, you need to use formal rather than informal vocabulary and you need to ensure that your grammar is accurate, that ideas link together smoothly and that a full range of grammatical structures is employed. Chapter One will help you to develop an appropriate academic tone and style in your writing.

Another common problem in academic writing concerns the way in which the writing is produced. Many students hand in for grading the first and only draft of a piece of writing. This simple process cannot ensure that the writing is of the highest quality possible. Instead, you should adopt a process approach to writing in which you produce a number of drafts and improve each draft through careful editing and proofreading. Editing and proofreading can be done by individuals and by groups of peers. Chapter Two will help you to learn more about the process approach to writing.

The third common problem you need to be aware of is *plagiarism*. Plagiarism is copying the work of others without permission or acknowledgement. Most colleges and schools have strict rules about plagiarism and students found plagiarising may well be severely penalized. But there are other — and more positive — reasons for avoiding plagiarism. When you mention the name of an author or speaker in your essay, you are creating references. Accurately written references do much more than just helping you to avoid plagiarism.

When you use references in your writing, you show your audience that your academic writing is based on the work of expert sources of information. This is an important point, because a good academic writer will always avoid putting forward unsubstantiated points or personal opinions. Good academic writing puts forward points which have the support of recognized experts. You can appreciate that well-referenced writing carries far more credibility and “weight” with your audience than poorly-referenced work. Another important reason for acknowledging authors and speakers in your

writing is that doing so earns you the right to use their intellectual property, i.e. their ideas. You pay respect to writers when you acknowledge them in references. You can imagine how annoyed you would feel if you read an article or listened to a talk in which your ideas were referred to, but your name was not mentioned! Chapter Four of this book is dedicated to helping writers avoid plagiarism.

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CHAPTER ONE

Principles of Academic Writing



IMPROVING YOUR UNDERSTANDING

Guidelines for achieving a formal style in your academic writing

Some DOs

Do

- employ tentative rather than assertive or overly positive language, e.g. use:
It can be argued that the overall standard of English in China has increased in recent years.
rather than:
There is no doubt that the overall standard of English in China has increased in recent years.
- use formal rather than informal vocabulary, e.g. *discuss* not *talk about*
- acknowledge sources of information by giving references, e.g. *Green (2005, p.1) has suggested that the overall standard of English in China has increased in recent years.*
- ensure that grammar is accurate, that ideas link together smoothly and that a full range of grammatical structures is employed

Some DON'Ts

Avoid

- informal negatives, e.g. use *little* rather than *not ... much*
- informal quantifiers, e.g. use *a great deal of* rather than *a lot*
- the use of personal pronouns such as *you* and *we* to address the audience
- short, disconnected sentences
- the use of rhetorical questions such as *Did you know that spoken and written language*

are very different? Write a statement instead: *Spoken and written language are very different.*

- * the use of contractions such as *won't*, *didn't*, and *we'll*
- * the overuse and misuse of certain logical connectors, especially *besides*, *furthermore*, *moreover*, *on the contrary* and *on the other hand*
- * employing constructions derived from the mother tongue, e.g. *For/Concerning some people, they find it very hard to study.*



Task 1

Read the student essay on English language learning styles. Also read the notes. You will see that the student essay breaks most of the guidelines we have just studied. Informal vocabulary is underlined, abbreviations are boldened, and poor sentence construction is outlined.

A student essay

Notes	English language learning styles
Do not use informal vocabulary.	We all know that students have their own individual styles of learning. Learning styles are a <u>hot topic</u> for analysis <u>nowadays</u> . One expert says that there are six different general learning styles. Do <i>you</i> know what they are called? They are dependent, independent, collaborative, competitive, participant, and avoidant. However, for learning English specifically, another expert says there are only four different styles: the concrete, the analytical, the communicative, and the authority-oriented.
Do not use personal pronouns such as <i>we</i> and <i>you</i> to address the reader.	In the following paragraphs, I'll tell <i>you</i> about this four-way classification and explain some of the <u>pros</u> and <u>cons</u> of each one.
Do not use abbreviations.	
Use standard sentences structure with subject-verb-object order, and link ideas together, e.g. Concrete learners are very good students because they ...	Concrete learners like to learn English through playing games, watching videos, and listening to tapes. They also enjoy doing speaking practice in pairs. Concrete learners, they are very good students. It is because they make an effort to practise their English out of class. If they <u>come across</u> native speakers, they will <u>grab</u> the chance to talk to them. But the concrete learner is not so good at making rules about using English and often memorizes too much. For analytical learners, they are very good at understanding rules and also studying grammar. Reading <u>a lot</u> is <u>a must</u> for analytical learners. They prefer to learn on their own and by thinking about what the teacher says.
	Concerning communicative learners, they like to learn English by solving problems in groups or pairs. They much prefer to work on speaking rather than writing tasks. They are collaborative learners and enjoy

interaction with other students. The authority-oriented learner depends greatly on the teacher. Authority-oriented learners rely on set rules and explanations. They cannot learn without the help of a teacher. These students also prefer to work through their textbooks in a step-by-step way.

Do not ask questions in essays.

What about you? Do *you* have a favourite learning style? Maybe you are a mixture of different styles. For me, I think **I'm** a concrete learner. I prefer to learn English through video viewing. I also like to read English newspapers. But we must remember that learning is not a rose garden and no pain, no gain.

Now read the rewritten essay below. Notice that the essay makes reference to two expert sources of information.

The essay rewritten in academic style

English language learning styles

There is evidence to show that individual students learn in different ways; that is, they have different learning styles. If a student's preferred learning style can be identified, then teachers might be able to help him/her learn in the preferred way and thus maximize the learning potential of the student. In this brief article, I want first to discuss a classification of learning styles from the field of general education. I then go on to examine different individual styles in learning English specifically and consider the characteristics of each style.

In the field of general education, Claxton & Murrell (1987, p.20) have identified six basic types of learning styles and these are presented as three sets of contrasting pairs: dependent/independent, collaborative/competitive, participant/avoidant. I do not intend to discuss these here; instead, I will focus on the styles related to English language learning proposed by Nunan (1991, p.16): the concrete, the analytical, the communicative, and the authority-oriented.

Concrete learners prefer to learn through action and so it is not surprising to find that such learners enjoy playing English language learning games, watching videos and listening to tapes. This kind of learner also enjoys interaction with other learners, carrying out speaking practice in pairs, for example and will attempt to get exposure to English outside the classroom by talking to native speakers. Analytical learners present a contrast to concrete learners since they prefer to think about language and construct their own rules. The concrete learner tends simply to memorize input rather than analyze it. Analytical learners prefer to work alone and enjoy the study of grammar and reading extensively.

The most interaction-oriented of the four learning styles is the communicative. For example, communicative learners enjoy learning English by solving problems but they prefer to tackle the problems and suggest possible solutions in groups or pairs so that they experience the element of interaction while learning. Indeed, communicative learners much prefer speaking activities to solitary writing tasks. The final learning style in Nunan's classification is the authority-oriented. As may be inferred from the name, this type of learner prefers to rely on the teacher to guide learning in a highly structured way. Without strong and persistent teacher guidance, authority-oriented learners feel lost and confused since they rely on set rules and explanations to motivate their learning. It is not surprising to find, then, that authority-oriented learners feel most relaxed when the teacher works through the textbook in linear fashion.

In this essay, I have discussed four learning styles related to the learning of English. These are: the concrete, the analytical, the communicative, and the authority-oriented. Students may be broadly categorized under these four styles and each style has its preferred way of learning. No style is necessarily superior to the others, but teachers will need to be sensitive to the different learning styles and ensure that each style of learning receives attention.

References

- Claxton, C. and Murrell, D. (1987). *Learning styles*. California: Sage.
Nunan, D. (1991). *Language learning*. London: Longman.



DEVELOPING YOUR SKILLS

The structure of academic writing

An essay will have three main sections: the introduction, the body and the conclusion.

Writing introductions

When writing any kind of text, your introduction is very important because it will make either an immediately positive or negative impression on your reader(s). An effective introduction may consist of one or more paragraphs and the information will be sequenced in four or more basic steps. Generally speaking, an effective introduction:

1. introduces the topic of the piece of writing;
2. provides any necessary definitions of terms in the topic;

- 3. provides any necessary background information on the topic;
- 4. gives the reader a clear overview of what will be discussed and in what order.



Task 2: Analysing the steps in an introduction

Look at the introductory paragraph below which is taken from an essay entitled “Health and Relationships at University.” The sentences are not in the correct order. Referring to the steps above, write the numbers 1–4 in the appropriate cells of the right hand column.

Steps	Numbers
This essay will first discuss the impact of the new concept of health on the behaviour of university students. It will then go on to investigate the effects of the new concept on personal relationships before finally exploring the services and products available to help students maintain a healthy lifestyle.	
Good health has long been regarded as the most valuable goal for people to achieve, although some students rank it in third place behind relationships and study.	
In recent years, the concept of health has extended beyond the notion of “not being sick.” It has come to mean maintaining a good appearance, keeping fit, avoiding obesity and having regular medical check-ups.	
Good health has a vital effect on relationships and study and, indeed, research shows that the healthier the student is, the better his/her friendships and work are.	

Writing the body section of an essay

The body of an essay will present the main ideas and information to answer the question. Each paragraph will present just one main point and evidence and examples to support the main point. The main point will normally be expressed as a topic sentence.



Task 3

Read the paragraph below from the essay on learning styles. Underline the topic sentence. Do you notice the way the writer uses examples, explanations and contrasts to support the main point made by the topic sentence?

Concrete learners prefer to learn through action and so it is not surprising to find that such learners enjoy playing English language learning games, watching videos and listening to tapes. This kind of learner also enjoys interaction with other learners, carrying out speaking practice in pairs, for example and will attempt to get exposure to English outside the classroom by talking to native speakers. Analytical learners present a contrast to concrete learners since they prefer to think about language and construct their own rules. The concrete learner tends simply to memorize input rather than analyse it. Analytical learners prefer to work alone and enjoy the study of grammar and reading extensively.

Writing conclusions

When writing any kind of text, your conclusion is very important because it will leave your reader(s) with either a negative or positive overall impression of your work. An effective conclusion may consist of one or more paragraphs and the information will be sequenced in four or more basic steps. Generally speaking, an effective conclusion:

1. summarizes the main points presented in a text;
2. evaluates the arguments presented;
3. provides a statement of the writer's view on the topic;
4. provides reasons for the writer's stance/suggests ways to improve a situation/recommends further investigation of some kind.



Task 4: Analysing the steps in a conclusion

Look at the concluding paragraph below which is taken from an essay entitled "Health and Relationships at University." The sentences are not in the correct order. Referring to the steps above, write the numbers 1– 4 in the appropriate cells of the right hand column.

Steps	Numbers
In my view, the new concept of health should set a very positive trend among students and will help them to appreciate that everyone needs not just a study-based life but, equally importantly, social, cultural and physical lives too.	
The products and services already available from the University Health Centre lend valuable support to students as they attempt to become more health conscious, but these should be expanded and made completely free of charge to encourage all students to use them.	
This essay has discussed the impact of a new concept of health on the behaviour of university students. This new concept refers not only to avoiding illness, but also to maintaining a good appearance, keeping fit, avoiding obesity and having regular medical check-ups. The essay also investigated the effects of the new concept on personal relationships and finally examined the services and products available to help students maintain a healthy lifestyle.	
The new concept of health is a very positive one because it helps students to view health in a more positive way and, in particular, how health impacts developing relationships. It also encourages students to take responsibility for their own health by promoting a balanced and healthy lifestyle.	

The language of academic writing

Tentative versus assertive language in academic writing

Academic writing is rarely expressed in strongly positive language because expressing an idea in a strongly positive way leaves writers open to attack by critical readers. Unless you are presenting firm facts, it is better to use tentative rather than assertive language to express degrees of likelihood. Look at the examples:

Expressing likelihood	<i>The evidence supports the view/It seems likely that</i> the overall standard of English in China has increased in recent years.
Expressing less likelihood	<i>It may/might be the case that/It appears quite likely that</i> the

	overall standard of English in China has increased in recent years.
Expressing doubt	<i>It is unlikely that</i> the overall standard of English in China has increased in recent years.



Task 5

Make the assertive statements more tentative. Read the information in brackets to help you choose suitable language. Write your statements on the lines provided.

1. There is no doubt that most students need to improve their standard of English. (less likelihood)

2. Students who adopt a deep approach to learning will succeed in university study. (likelihood)

3. Students will not improve their language skills unless they work hard. (doubt)

4. Students who work intelligently rather than just hard will experience the greatest success. (less likelihood)

5. The evidence suggests that teachers who are punctual receive the best feedback from students. (likelihood)



EXPANDING YOUR CREATIVITY

Informal versus formal vocabulary in academic writing

As you learned while working through the unit, selecting appropriate vocabulary is essential in achieving a good academic style in your writing.



Task 6

Match the informal verbs in the left-hand column of the table with their formal equivalents in the right-hand column. Write the appropriate number in the brackets. Follow the example.

Informal verbs	Formal verbs
1. go up	discuss ()
2. ask for	enter ()
3. come in	descend ()
4. talk about	ascend ()
5. go down	request ()
6. come up with	fluctuate ()
7. come across	determine (10)
8. look at	suggest ()
9. go up and down	discover ()
10. pin down	examine ()

Cohesion in academic writing

Pronouns, conjunctions and different words are used to make the elements of a piece of writing "stick together." Writing that is logical with effectively linked ideas is said to be cohesive.



Task 7

From the box under the short text on family types, choose the most appropriate word or phrase to fill each gap in the text. Then, note down the function of each word or phrase i.e. pronoun reference (PR), word substitution (WS) or conjunction (C). Also, note down the referent. Follow the example.

Family types

The nuclear family is generally a conjugal unit. By (1) _____ this _____ is meant that, in most societies, the family grows out of the union of a man and a woman — normally a (2) _____ who have entered into marriage. (3) _____ consists primarily of father, mother and offspring. The consanguine family, by way of (4) _____, comprises a nucleus of blood relations and associated spouses. When someone marries, (5) _____ is incorporated into the parental families and is able to share a common life with all blood relatives. The former family type is a concentrated culture pattern, while the latter is a diffused one.

1. the, these, those, this
2. pair, man and a woman, company, couple
3. It, That, Marriage, These
4. difference, concession, addition, contrast
5. this, he or she, they, that

PR: conjugal unit

In this exercise, we will look more closely at a particular element of cohesion — the use of conjunctions to signal the relationship between the ideas of different parts of a sentence.



Task 8

Look at the conjunctions in the sentences and analyse the function of each one. The functions of result, cause, condition, contrast, and concession are represented in the table. Write the appropriate functions in the middle column of the table and add the conjunctions to the correct list in the left-hand column of the table.

1. The university's degree presentation ceremony was a great success **despite** the terrible weather.
2. The company was undergoing a financial crisis **so** the Managing Director decided to impose salary cuts across the board.
3. Indonesia relies mainly on exports of raw materials to raise money, **whereas** Shanghai depends largely on financial services and tourism for its revenue.
4. Ferry services were suspended **because of** the typhoon.
5. English is a difficult language to learn but it can be mastered **provided** learners put enough effort into practice.