



普通高等教育“十一五”国家级规划教材  
· 高职高专英语专业立体化系列教材

# 英语

## 写作教程

*A Guide to English Essay Writing for Chinese Learners*

( 高职高专英语专业适用 )

姜亚军 马素萍 编 著



高等教育出版社  
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# 前言

近些年来,我国高职高专教育的改革和发展取得了长足的进步,无论是学校数量,还是在校生人数都占到高校总数和学生人数的一半以上。高职高专英语专业学校的数量和学生人数也增长很快。为了满足新形势对高职高专英语专业教育和人才培养的需求,我们编写了“高职高专英语专业立体化系列教材”,该套教材被列为普通高等教育“十一五”国家级规划教材。

本套教材力图体现我国高职高专英语专业实践教学的特点,遵循高职高专教育“实用为主、够用为度”的总体指导方针,充分反映中国学生学习英语的规律和要求,并体现我国英语教学研究的新成果、新思想和新理念。教材的设计充分考虑高职高专英语专业的课程设置、课时、教学要求与高职高专英语专业人才培养的要求与目标,力图处理好打好英语语言基础与培养英语语言应用能力的关系,强调英语语言基本技能的训练与培养实际使用英语从事涉外交际活动的语言应用能力并重。

《英语写作教程》(*A Guide to English Essay Writing for Chinese Learners*)是该系列的主干教材之一,其目的在于培养学生用英语的基本写作能力,特别是篇章结构和句子层面的基本功。本教程适用于我国高职高专院校的英语专业学生,同时也适用于大学本科英语专业低年级学生和“二专”是英语专业的学生使用。本教材的设计教学时间为一个学期。

学生的英语写作能力是一种综合性的语言能力。书面交际的成功,不仅要求作者写出的句子语法正确(grammatically correct),表达有效(effective),还要求整篇作文的结构符合英语读者的阅读预期(expectations)。因此,英语写作课历来是我国学生较为头疼、但又“不能不学”的一门基础课;对很多教师而言,写作课也因此成为一门“不得不教”的任务。基于这一认识,本教材的编写目的之一便是:培养学习者的兴趣,提高英语写作课的教学效率,进而促进学生语言综合能力的提升。具体而言,本教材的编写原则是:

1. 本教程的出发点是汉英两种语言在写作层面上存在差异,并将这一思路贯彻教材始终,目的在于帮助学生克服汉语写作知识和技巧对其英语写作的影响。

# Foreword

2. 本教程力求提高写作教材的可操作性。全书以篇章结构为主导,从英语作文的宏观结构入手,层层深入至作文的结构(开头部分、主体部分和结尾部分)及其写作策略。

3. 本教程把句子的写作融入各章节,有利于学生“边学边练”。句子写作策略的讲授围绕“句型的多样性”(sentence variety),以提高学生对英文句子的认识,增强他们所写句子表达上的有效性。

4. 本教材提供的范例和范文原则上出自英美英语习作者之手,尽量避免知名作家的作品,以利于我国学生了解英语写作的基本要求,学习英语作文的基本写作策略。

本教程共分为9章,从汉英写作的差异(第1章)和英文作文的宏观结构(第2章)开始,让学生对英语作文有一个整体的概念,接下来讲授英语作文的各个部分的结构和写作技巧(第3章至第8章),最后又回到整篇作文的写作技巧(第9章)。每一章中包含一部分句子写作的讲解和练习。原则上,每一章讲授4课时,其中两课时为文章结构和写作技巧的讲解,另外两课时为句子写作训练。当然,由于英语作文的各部分繁简不同,在整篇作文中的重要性也各异,教师也可根据实际需要和学生自身的学习情况,在课时安排上作适当调整。

本教材的特色之一是各个章节中均设有大量的练习题。绝大部分练习题可作为课堂练习,但建议教师每次从中选择部分习题作为课后作业布置给学生,以巩固学生在课堂上所学的知识。同时需要提醒的是,按照本教材的设计,到学期结束前学生方能掌握整篇作文的写作技巧,所以学期中间的作业应针对所讲授内容或者讲授过的内容,最好避免让学生写作整篇的作文。

另外,本教程还附有个人简历(résumé)、求职信(cover letter)和常见商用信函(business letter)的写作介绍和范例。该部分内容原则上供学生参考,但教师可根据需要将其列入课程内容进行讲授。

本教材的主体内容自2004年以来在东华大学外语学院多次讲授,教学过程中得到学生的积极参与和配合,教师同行也提出了不少建议,在此表示感谢。由于编者水平有限,敬请广大师生在使用过程中多提宝贵意见和建议。

姜亚军 马素萍

2007年10月于上海

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# 1

## CHAPTER 1

# English Writing and Chinese Writing

### ***This chapter will show you:***

- ✓ what makes “good writing”;
- ✓ people write in different ways;
- ✓ English writing differs from Chinese writing:
  - in directness;
  - in sentence and word variety;
  - in use of connectives;
- ✓ how to learn English writing.

# Chinese Writing and English Writing

1. English Writing

This chapter will show you

what makes "good writing":

people write in different ways:

English writing differs from Chinese writing:

in directness:

in sentence and word variety:

in use of connectives:

how to learn English writing



There is nothing more difficult than sitting down in front of a blank piece of white paper, knowing that you have to write an essay and figuring out, right there, what to say. It is even more difficult when you have to do it in a foreign language, say, in English, rather than in Chinese, your native tongue. In fact, it has been discovered that, on those occasions where Chinese English learners do sit down in front of that blank page and successfully manage to fill it with well written great ideas, it is usually the result of a great deal of work to unlearn (= make an effort to forget) much of what they have been taught about “good Chinese writing”.

This chapter, therefore, will help you gain a quick understanding of major aspects in which English writing differs from Chinese writing. Suggestions will also be made to you, writing beginners of English as a foreign language (EFL). However, we will begin with some common features of “good writing” in general, since you will definitely benefit from them if you know what they are.

## 1.1 Common Features of “Good Writing”

English writing is different from Chinese writing, but this does not mean they have nothing in common. As a matter of fact, some basic principles in writing are universal to all languages.

**First, writers of all languages make a point in their work.** They write to communicate, to argue, to explain, to describe, or to narrate. Whatever they are writing about, they have a purpose or a central idea. In some languages, such as Chinese and Japanese, this central idea tends to be implied, but in others, such as English, it is clearly expressed in most cases. Explicit or implicit, it is always there in a paragraph or an essay.

**Activity 1.1**

**Directions:** Go over the following paragraphs, one in English and the other in Chinese, and decide which sentence in each paragraph expresses the author's main idea. Write your answer on the space provided.

**Paragraph A****Good-bye, Tony**

(1) I have decided not to go out with Tony. (2) First of all, he was late for our first date. (3) He said that he would be at my house by 8:30, but he did not arrive until 9:20. (4) Second, he was bossy. (5) He told me that it would be too late to go to the new Steven Martin movie I wanted to see, and that we would go to a new horror movie, instead. (6) I told him that I did not like gruesome movies, but he said that I could shut my eyes during the gory parts. (7) Only because it was the first date did I let him have his way. (8) What he did after the movie angered me most of all. (9) Rather than suggesting a hamburger or a drink, he proposed we go right home, simply because he was not happy about the movie. (10) When he left me, I said: "good-bye, Tony", in a friendly enough way, but in head I thought, "Good-bye forever, Tony."

Sentence \_\_\_\_\_ expresses the main idea of the passage. This idea is why the writer plans not to \_\_\_\_\_

**Paragraph B**

(1) 到 2007 年,上海市人均国内生产总值预计将达到 7,500 美元。(2) 这一目标的实现,老百姓最直接的感受应该是会住得更宽敞、更舒服。(3) 因为从市民的“衣食住行”消费来讲,住房是一个重要因素,而且占了相当大的比重。(4) 届时,上海人均住房面积将会大幅增加。(5) 除此之外,老百姓的服务性消费,如教育、信息、旅游等消费也会大量增长。(6) 用一句话来表述,那便是未来老百姓的生活会更好,将和中等发达国家的百姓一样。

Sentence \_\_\_\_\_ expresses the main idea of the passage. This idea is \_\_\_\_\_



**Second, if you want to communicate effectively with readers, you must support your idea.** You must provide solid evidence for your point. Think of your readers as reasonable people. They will not take your views on faith, but they are willing to accept what you say as long as you support it. Therefore, remember to support any statement that you make with specific evidence.

### Activity 1.2

**Directions:** Go over the above English paragraph in Activity 1.1 again and see how the writer support his/her main idea. Write your answer on the space provided or indicate it by checking the corresponding box.

1. How many supports does the writer provide in Paragraph A?

☐ One. ☐ Two. ☐ Three. ☐ Four.

2. These supports are:

1) He was late for their first date.

2) \_\_\_\_\_

3) \_\_\_\_\_

**Finally, writers organize and connect the specific evidence.** By doing so, they are being reasonable and persuasive. Remember that a paragraph or an essay is more than a group of grammatical sentences; it needs to be well-organized so as to be reasonable and convincing.

### Activity 1.3

**Directions:** Identify the signal words used in the above English paragraph that explains the reasons why the writer plans not to go out with Tony. Write your answers on the space provided.

1. The first signal word: first of all

2. The second signal word: \_\_\_\_\_

3. The third signal word: \_\_\_\_\_

## 1.2 Cultural Differences in Writing

While there are principles common to all good writing, a more important thing you have to know about English writing before you actually write in English, whether a paragraph, a letter or an essay, is that different cultures have different ideas about what constitutes “good writing”. For example, a business letter in Chinese is vastly different in structure and rhetoric from a similar letter in English. It has also been found that Chinese essays often contain materials that would seem excessive or unnecessary to a reader of English. Therefore, the most important thing you have to know when you learn to write in English is that native speakers of English have different ideas from us Chinese about “good writing”.

What is considered “good” Chinese writing, therefore, is not necessarily “good” writing according to the English writing conventions. When writing an English essay, you should be aware of certain writing conventions that most native English readers and writers take for granted. You should understand that these conventions are not rules that you have to follow at all costs; rather, they reflect an English reader’s *expectations*. If you fail to meet these expectations, the reader will be confused, and your essay will not hit the mark.

Before we go on to the differences between English and Chinese writing, we shall take some time to think about the following questions or, as you are encouraged to do throughout this course, to discuss it with your partner(s).

### Activity 1.4

**Directions:** Which of the following may be one of the reasons why people in the world have different views about “good writing”? Indicate your answer by checking the box.

1. People have different writing traditions.  
☐ Yes.      ☐ No.
2. They have different views toward “self”.  
☐ Yes.      ☐ No.
3. Different cultures have different writer-reader relationships.  
☐ Yes.      ☐ No.
4. Writing has different functions in different societies.  
☐ Yes.      ☐ No.



5. People have different cultural backgrounds.

☐ Yes.

☐ No.

6. The written language is different from the spoken language.

☐ Yes.

☐ No.

### 1.3 English Writing vs. Chinese Writing

A lot of research has been conducted to unveil the ways in which Chinese writing differs from its English counterpart. The following are some of the important differences discovered, which Chinese beginners of English writing can never afford to ignore.

**First of all, Chinese writers tend to be “indirect”, while Anglo-Americans are found to be more “direct”.** “Indirect” means that Chinese writers do not always follow a linear pattern of placing a thesis statement, a sentence that expresses the central idea of an essay, in the introductory paragraph, followed by supporting paragraphs and a concluding paragraph. Instead, Chinese writers often express their purpose or central idea when they are finishing an essay, that is, in the last paragraph.

An example of this “indirect” Chinese way of writing is presented below. This is a translation of a letter of request written by a Chinese listener to the China Service of Radio Australia (kirkpatrick, 2000).

Respected Radio Australia producers,

I have been a loyal listener to Radio Australia’s English teaching programmes and to “Songs You Like” for several years. I consider both programmes extremely well produced.

Let me describe myself a little: I am a middle school student. I am eighteen and my home is in ×, a small border city. The cultural life really isn’t too bad. Because I like studying English, I follow those programmes closely. But because the Central Broadcasting Station’s English programmes are rather abstruse, they are not really suitable for me and therefore I get all my practice in listening comprehension from Radio Australia’s English programmes. This practice has been of great benefit. As I progress, step by step through the course, I am keenly aware that not having the teaching

materials presents several difficulties. Because of that, I am taking time to write this letter to you, in the hope that I can obtain a set of Radio Australia's English programmes' teaching materials. Please let me know the cost of the materials.

In addition, I hope to obtain a Radio Australia calendar. Wish Radio Australia's MSC programmes even more interesting.

Listener X

(date)

The letter above represents "good writing" in the Chinese sense, but when English speakers read it, they might feel a bit upset and ask themselves something like: "When is she going to get to the point?" One of the reasons is that the letter seems "hopelessly indirect" to the Australian eyes: it gets to the point only at the very end.

If the letter were written by a native speaker of English, it would have been something like the following.

Dear Radio Australia,

I would be very grateful if you would be kind enough to send me the teaching materials of your excellent English language teaching programmes. I am learning English from your programmes but I am finding it difficult without the materials.

I would also be very grateful if you would be kind enough to send me a Radio Australia calendar.

Yours sincerely,

X X

### Activity 1.5

**Directions:** Go over the above two letters again, and then decide what makes the first one "indirect" to native speakers of English? Discuss with your partner(s) before checking the box.

1. The author writes things that seem to be unrelated to his/her purpose of writing the



letter. ☐ Yes. ☐ No.

2. The author does not express his/her intention of writing the letter in the first paragraph. ☐ Yes. ☐ No.

3. The author puts the date of writing at the end. ☐ Yes. ☐ No.

4. The author explains the reasons why he/she needs the teaching materials and the calendar. ☐ Yes. ☐ No.

5. The author does not include his/her postal address. ☐ Yes. ☐ No.

6. The author introduces himself/herself in the letter. ☐ Yes. ☐ No.

The indirectness of Chinese writing can also be seen in the structure of the paragraph. In English paragraph writing, a paragraph often begins with a topic sentence, followed by supporting sentences and, sometimes, a concluding sentence. A topic sentence is a sentence which states the main idea of a paragraph. However, when writing in Chinese, we do not necessarily start a paragraph with such a general sentence. We will explain the structures of English paragraphs in Chapters 4, 6, 7, 8, and 9, but at present you may have some idea of the differences between English and Chinese paragraphs by discussing the following questions with your partner(s).

### Activity 1.6

**Directions:** Chinese writing beginners are often advised to *kaimenjianshan* (write on a subject directly without beating around the bush). Indicate your understanding of this strategy of writing by checking the box.

1. The first paragraph should not contain sentences which are unrelated to the topic. ☐ Yes. ☐ No.

2. The first sentence of the first paragraph should indicate the topic of the whole essay. ☐ Yes. ☐ No.

3. The first paragraph should always include a sentence which expresses the central idea of the essay. ☐ Yes. ☐ No.

4. The first sentence of a paragraph should express the main idea of the paragraph.  
☐ Yes. ☐ No.
5. The last paragraph should not restate the central idea of the essay.  
☐ Yes. ☐ No.

### Activity 1.7

**Directions:** Go over the following passage, and then explain why it is possibly a translated paragraph from a Chinese one. Indicate your answer by checking the box.

It is reported that currently 25 millions people in countries other than China are learning the Chinese language and culture and that 2,100 universities in 85 countries offer courses of Chinese as a foreign language. In the United States alone, over 80 universities offer degree programs in Chinese and more than 700 universities teach Chinese as a second language. The numbers are on the increase as people are becoming more and more interested in the Chinese language and culture. There is every evidence that a worldwide craze in learning the language is rising.

1. The paragraph primarily discusses learning of the Chinese language and the Chinese culture.  
☐ Yes. ☐ No.
2. It has no topic sentence.  
☐ Yes. ☐ No.
3. The paragraph expresses the main idea at the end.  
☐ Yes. ☐ No.
4. It has only four sentences.  
☐ Yes. ☐ No.
5. The sentences are too long.  
☐ Yes. ☐ No.

**Another difference between English and Chinese writing lies in sentence and word variety.** While both languages make use of repetition in sentence structure and word choice, it seems that more variety is expected of English writers than Chinese ones. For one thing, English writers are often encouraged to use a variety of sentence types. This means that grammatically correct sentences are not necessarily "effective" sentences in writing. In other words, some options will