

● 专门用途英语课程系列



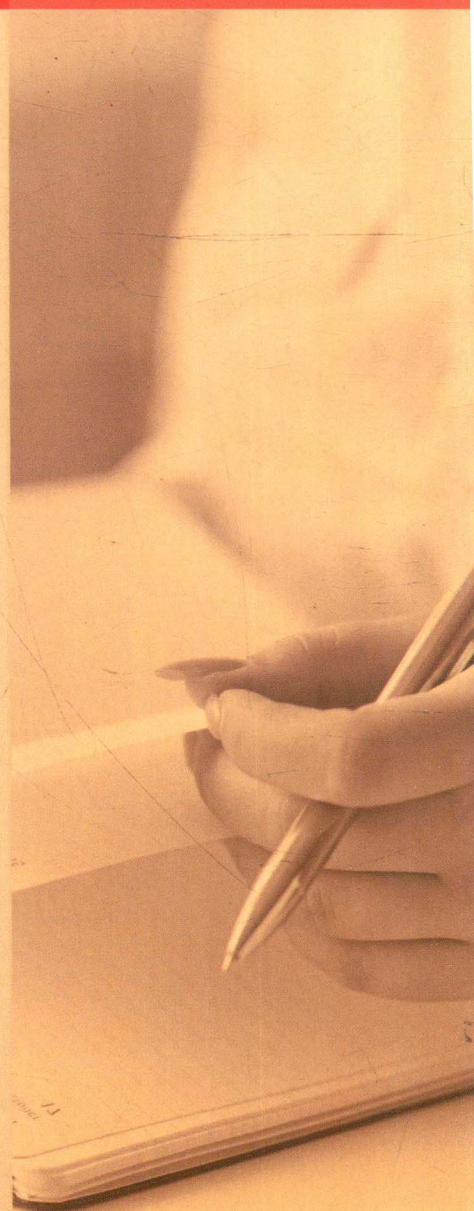
College English Creative Writing
for Academic Purposes

学术英语写作基础


Student's Book

学生用书

Christopher Green



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Introduction

In Chinese universities and colleges there is an increasing emphasis on students' practical ability to write in English for both academic and general purposes. It is recognized that their writing skills in English also need to be linked to the development of a creative spirit, to cultural awareness and skills in intercultural communication, and to the active application of thinking and problem-solving skills.

The *College English Creative Writing* series of College English textbooks is aimed at helping students develop the writing skills and language competence necessary for their tertiary studies and other writing needs. The series systematically builds up students' writing skills from the foundation of sentence and paragraph structure, through different text types, and provides comprehensive notes about commonly used grammar and vocabulary items. The final two books help to develop the particular skills necessary for academic and business writing. The series also encourages students to be creative, to be aware of the intercultural aspects of using English, and to be able to express their own thoughts and feelings when writing.

Although the *College English Creative Writing* series is particularly suitable for students who will study at tertiary institutions, other learners who need to develop basic writing skills and build up basic language competence necessary for written communication in daily life and/or the workplace will also find the books to be very useful.

This book will train you in writing for academic purposes. There is a further book focusing on writing for business purposes.

Special Features of *Writing for Academic Purposes*

Writing for Academic Purposes focuses on avoiding the common pitfalls of academic writing and aims to help you produce written work that you are proud of. The main features of the book are:

Carefully selecting grammar, vocabulary, and punctuation items to cater for students' standards and needs when writing for academic purposes;

Raising students' awareness of the appropriate style and tone for various academic documents;

Enhancing students' knowledge and understanding of how to construct academic texts with well-organized grammar, vocabulary, and punctuation exercises;

Analyzing authentic written texts at the sentence, paragraph, and text levels, which enables students to thoroughly understand the fundamental elements of successful academic writing;

Training students to proofread and edit their writing;

In-depth grammar, vocabulary, and punctuation notes which help students understand the language systems in academic writing;

Variety of extracts and passages from a wide range of fields to cater for students' interests and experience and, more importantly, to maximize their exposure to various text types;

Expanding students' creativity by providing them with contextualized tasks which require them to write on a wide range of topics for various authentic purposes.

The Structure of *Writing for Academic Purposes*

Writing for Academic Purposes consists of sixteen units; each focusing on one particular aspect of academic writing, from the initial steps such as “Locating Information” (Unit 3) to the more comprehensive “Writing Research Proposals” (Unit 14). In each unit, there are three parts:

- Part One: Improving Your Understanding
- Part Two: Developing Your Skills
- Part Three: Expanding Your Creativity

Part One: Improving Your Understanding

The first part in each unit focuses on breaking down some of the basic steps in academic writing. Common pitfalls and the requirements of each stage of the writing process are explained to ensure students' understanding of:

- the process of gathering information;
- the structure of academic writing;
- the different genres of academic writing.

To reinforce what students have learnt in this part and to prepare them for their own academic writing, they are encouraged to complete various tasks, including:

- planning;
- analyzing texts;
- ordering information;
- summarizing;
- editing;
- identifying plagiarism.

Part Two: Developing Your Skills

The second part of each unit focuses on developing the key skills that students need to construct a well-developed piece of academic writing, including:

- writing introductions;
- writing conclusions;
- analyzing task words;
- compiling references;
- comparing and contrasting information;
- ordering arguments;
- understanding rhetorical devices.

This section regularly contains vocabulary used specifically in academic writing.

Part Three: Expanding Your Creativity

The final part of each unit builds on what students have learnt in the previous sections and asks students to put their knowledge into practice with various writing tasks including:

- creating mind maps;
- creating balanced arguments;
- writing abstracts;
- conducting and writing up research;
- designing questionnaires.

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Principles of Academic Writing

Improving Your Understanding

Guidelines for Achieving a Formal Style in Your Academic Writing

Do

- Employ tentative rather than assertive or overly positive language, e.g.
 - It can be argued that the overall standard of English in China has increased in recent years.
- Instead of:
 - 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. use "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.

Don't

- Use informal negatives, e.g. use "little" rather than "not ... much."
- Employ informal quantifiers, e.g. use "a great deal of" rather than "a lot."

- Use personal pronouns such as “you” and “we” to address the audience.

Note:

It is acceptable to use the pronoun “I” in the introduction to explain your purpose in writing.

- Write in short, disconnected sentences.
- Use rhetorical questions such as “Did you know that spoken and written language are very different?” Instead, write a statement: “Spoken and written language are very different.”
- Use contractions such as “won’t,” “didn’t,” and “we’ll.”
- Overuse or misuse certain logical connectors, especially “besides,” “furthermore,” “moreover,” “on the contrary,” and “on the other hand.”
- Employ constructions derived from your native language.
- Use figurative language.

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, contractions are in bold, poor sentence constructions are italicized, personal pronouns are in bold italics, and other issues are in italics and underlined.

English Language Learning Styles	Notes
<p><i>We</i> all know that students have their own individual styles of learning. Learning styles are a <u>hot topic</u> for analysis <u>nowadays</u>. <i>One expert</i> says that there are six different general learning styles. <i>Do you know what they are called?</i> They are dependent, independent, collaborative, competitive, participant, and avoidant. However, regarding English specifically, <i>another expert</i> says there are only four different styles: the concrete, the analytical, the communicative, and the authority-oriented. In the following paragraphs, I’ll tell <i>you</i> more about this classification and explain some of the pros and cons of each one.</p> <p>Concrete learners like to learn English through playing games, watching videos, and listening to CDs. They also enjoy doing speaking practice in pairs. <i>Concrete learners, they are very good students. It is because they make an effort to practise their English out of class.</i> If they <u>come across</u> native speakers, they will <u>grab</u> the chance to talk to them. However, concrete learners often fail to study the rules of the language and rely too much on memorizing specific phrases. <i>For analytical learners, they are very good at understanding rules and also studying grammar.</i> Reading a lot is the norm for analytical learners. They prefer to learn on their own by thinking about and processing what they have been taught.</p>	<p><i>Do not use personal pronouns.</i></p> <p><i>Do not use informal vocabulary.</i></p> <p><i>Acknowledge sources with accurate references.</i></p> <p><i>Do not ask questions in essays.</i></p> <p><i>Do not use contractions.</i></p> <p><i>Do not use constructions from your native language. Instead, use standard sentence structures with the subject-verb-object order, and link ideas together, e.g. Concrete learners are very good students because they ...</i></p> <p><i>Do not use informal vocabulary.</i></p>

Concerning communicative learners, they like to learn English by solving problems in groups or pairs. They usually 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 will normally prefer to work through their textbooks in a step-by-step way.

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.

Do not use constructions from your native language.

Do not use informal vocabulary.

Do not ask questions in essays.

Do not use personal pronouns.

Do not use contractions.

Do not use figurative language.

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

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 way which is more natural for them and thus maximize the learning potential of the student. In this brief article, I want 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. However, Nunan (1991, p.16) narrows this down within the system of learning English, and reduces it to four: 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 CDs. This kind of learner also enjoys interaction with other learners, for example carrying out speaking practice in pairs, 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 comfortable when the teacher works through the textbook in a linear fashion.

This essay has 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: Implications for Improving Educational Practices*. ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Report No.4, Washington, DC: George Washington University.
- Nunan, D. (1991). *Language Teaching Methodology: A Textbook for Teachers*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

Developing Your Skills

The Structure of Academic Writing

An essay should 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 immediately make either a positive or negative impression on your reader(s). An effective introduction may consist of one or more paragraphs (depending on the length of the text overall) 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.