

研究生英语语言技能系列教程

何业华 总主编

GRADUATE ENGLISH LANGUAGE SKILLS SERIES

高级 英语写作 技能

WRITING SKILLS FOR CAREER SUCCESS

陈汉芳 主编

高级英语写作技能
高级英语阅读技能
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湖北科学技术出版社

Graduate English Language Skills Series

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Writing Skills for Career Success

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主 编 陈汉芳

编 写 何业华
陈汉芳
李梅英
赵庆红

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高级英语写作技能

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序 言

《研究生英语语言技能系列教程》是以教育部颁布的《非英语专业研究生英语教学大纲》为依据,在针对研究生的语言需求、研究当代最新英语语言理论和总结国内外语言教学以及教材编写经验的基础上编写的。

研究生学习英语多年,已有了一定的基础。但来源多门,层次繁多;多数来于工作岗位,英语荒疏多年,水平参差不齐;还因师出各门,受各种教材、教法的影响,他们通常只注重记、背,不注重运用,甚至不用,因而语言运用能力差。本系列教程的编写指导思想是培养良好的语言学习习惯,揭示语言习得规律,教授外语运用技能,在运用外语中学习外语,全面提高外语运用能力。因此,教程提供的不仅是 fish,更重要的是 fishing。

此系列教程有如下特点:

培养良好的语言学习习惯。研究生过去学习外语,通常抓生词、习语,背语法条条,在词、句上下工夫。在阅读中,词、句均清楚,整篇主题却不明;口语中,主、谓、宾在脑中排列整齐,但出口张口结舌,甚至不能开口;听力中,逐词逐句地听,句中一词没听到,就不知整句所云等等。他们只在“林”中穿行,养成了“只见树木不见林”的不良习惯。本教程一改传统做法,引导学生从“林”走出,让他们站高、看远,不仅见“树”还要见“林”。

注重运用。语言是交际工具,非英语专业研究生掌握英语的最终目的是获取信息,交流信息,是用英语做事,而不是学习、学习、再学习。因而在教材编写中充分体现语言必须在运用语言中习得,集中地体现让学生学习一个语言项目就运用一个语言项目,最终提高整体运用水平的原则。

教授语言技能。教程力图揭示语言习得规律,教授语言运用技能,即抓主旨、识细节,领悟隐含意义,养成预测、推绎习惯,熟习篇章体裁结构等常用技能,使学生在技能的指导下用得得好、用得得体。

本系列教程由《高级英语阅读技能》,《高级英语写作技能》,《高级英语听力技能》和《高级英语口语教程》组成。各教材均以语言技能为主线,提供体裁广泛、语言现代、编写形式活泼的内容,以达到逐步掌握各项语言技能的目的。本系列教程可供非英语专业硕士研究生和博士研究生使用,还可供相当于硕士和本科英语6级及以上水平的英语自学者使用。

《高级英语写作技能》共有八章,每章由三部分组成,即写作介绍、阅读练习和写作练习。《写作》强调基础,注重系统,着眼实用。它强调段落写作,段落写好了,基础就有了。注重系统,由段落写作上升为篇章写作,继而扩展为论文写作;这样,段落、篇章和论文的写作都进行了系统的训练,整个写作教材实用性很强。《写作》突出了学、写、读三个字。第一要“学”。研究生以往没系统地学习过写作,通常读得多写得少,因而不知如何写,也不知

道什么是一篇好的作文。写作要有正确的方法作指导，本书详细地介绍了写作的理论和方法。第二要“写”。只学不写不行，而且要大量地写，“Practice makes perfect”。本书列出了许多写作的形式和题目。第三要“读”。要写好还要阅读，有输入才有输出，将写作与阅读紧密结合。在阅读中，从宏观层面、语篇层次对文章加以认识，分析范文的篇章结构，写作方法和技巧，从阅读中学习写作。教材提供了足够的阅读范文，供学习者借鉴和欣赏。

《高级英语写作技能》在编写过程中得到了各位人士的大力支持和协助，张宏清教授和王应杰教授在试用本教材后提出了许多修改意见，朱建国、杜飞翔、何亚萍等同志对本书的选材、输入、编排做了大量的工作，在此一并致谢。尤其要感谢的还有湖北科学技术出版社的冯友仁同志，在本书的编辑成书过程中做了大量细致的、建设性的工作。

本系列教程的作者怀着对研究生外语教育的一片热忱，群策群力，通力合作，为研究生英语教材的编写作了一点有益的尝试，但由于编者水平有限，经验不足，思路难免以偏概全，语言的缺点也再所难免。我们诚挚地欢迎广大师生和读者提出批评和建议，以便使这套系列教材在今后的修订中不断得到改进和完善。

何业华

2002年3月1日于武汉

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Chapter One Getting Started

Before you start to write, the hardest part of writing is getting started sometimes. To get started, you are advised that you have in mind the answers to four basic questions: Who am I writing to (writing for)? Why am I writing to these readers? What do I want to say? How do I get from ideas to finished form? The first of these questions involves a sense of **audience** — that is, the ability to imagine the persons who will read your writing and to know what is important to them. The second question concerns your **purpose**. Do you want to entertain your readers, tell them a story, inform them or persuade them? Or is your purpose some combination of these aims? The last two questions deal with the **writing process** — that is, finding ideas, putting them down on paper, and polishing them so that your thoughts are clearly and effectively explained to your readers.

I. Audience

While you are thinking about your writing, you should think about your audience — your readers who read or “hear” your thoughts, either spoken or written. Developing a sense of audience is a mark of maturity and the ability to put yourself in your audience's place because your writing will be shaped by your perception of what your readers know about your topic. For example, if you are writing a story for children, you will choose a subject that interests them, use simple words and keep your sentences short. If, however, you are writing for your colleagues or your teacher, you will choose a topic of interest to adults, use a natural vocabulary and vary your sentence structures to fit the ideas you want to convey. If you want to argue that TV turns us all into consumers you will expect that your readers will readily agree instead of distrusting TV commercials. To write effectively, you must try to consider the subject to your writing, vocabulary to use and style to adopt and how your readers are likely to think and feel about your subject.

As an adult, you must write for a variety of audiences — your family, employers, consumers or clients, business associates and perhaps all the citizens of the community. You might also write for a professional journal, addressing people who share interests in your profession but you have never seen. There may be times when you write only for yourself — your grocery list, your memorandum, your diary but

most of the writings you do in life is intended for others to read.

Whether your audience is a general one, such as the readers of a professional journal, or a specific one, such as your tutor, you should consider the needs and expectations of your readers or at least acknowledge before expressing yourself. These considerations will affect the ideas you include and the words you choose to express them. Until you become so accustomed to thinking about your audience that you do this automatically, your writing has become mature. Here are some questions to keep in mind as you shape your draft.

- (1) Who are you writing for? Are your readers similar to you in age, background, culture, and education?
- (2) How much do your readers know about the topic? You consider this question in order not to underestimate them that you are talking down to their heels, or overestimate them that you are talking over their head. Try to tell your readers only as much as they need to know.
- (3) How do your readers feel about the topic? Are they likely to have feelings for or against your topic? If they are quite different from you, you should understand and respect the feelings of readers who disagree with you.
- (4) How do your readers expect you to treat the topic? Another way of asking this question is, How does your teacher expect you to treat the topic? Not only students but some professional writers, especially journalists work under instructions. They work under instructions from editors who tell them not only what to write about but how to treat it. When you are given a writing assignment, you should find out as much as you can about the approach you are expected to take. For example, are you going to write in the first person I or We or in the third person He, She or They, to present a fact or opinion or both, and to shape it formally or informally? How much information (facts, details, examples, explanations) will be enough for the readers, but not too much?

To develop the sense of audience is to put yourself in your readers' place. It could enable you to plan, right from the start, to answer any questions you might have about the topic or to explain things they are not likely to know. This skill is especially important in a persuasive paper. If you hope to get your readers to agree with you, or to change their minds on a controversial issue, you must look at all sides of the issue and answer the objections of those with a different point of view. Although later lessons will focus on this point in greater detail, you should form the habit now of thinking about your audience before you begin to write.

II. Purpose, tone, style

The second important step to get started before you begin to write concerns your purpose for writing. Defining your purpose in advance will help you choose what to include and how to approach your subject. For example, if you write on “A Prospective Renewal of EFL Teaching”, you must be sure to *explain* the necessities, reasons and expectations fully. If you are giving directions, you must *state* all the necessary information and nothing that would distract. If you want to *entertain*, you might choose humorous events and informal language to achieve the goal. If you intend to *persuade*, you might choose ideas and words that appeal to both reason and emotion.

As a student, your first response to the question is that your paper is an assignment in a required course. If you think ahead to your future, however, you will see that the assignments are intended to prepare you for some situations you will meet later on. Even if your purpose is determined by a given assignment, it will be good practice to think about it before writing, because that purpose will control what you decide to say and how you say it.

The tone of the author's writing is similar to the tone of a speaker's voice. For listeners it is fairly easy to tell the difference between an angry tone and a romantic tone by noticing the speaker's voice. In writing, distinguishing between humor, sarcasm and irony, however, may be more different. Humorous remarks are designed to be comical and amusing while sarcastic remarks are designed to cut or give pain. Ironic remarks, on the other hand, express something other than the literal meaning and are designed to show the incongruity between the actual and the expected. You may wish at some time to express some positive tones: happiness, love, delight, amazement, surprise and so on; at others you may need to express some negative ones: anger, irritation, depression, disappointment, fear, worry and so on. Take the extract from a letter for example.

and I must confess I never expected to be so charmed by Rolf — I didn't meet him, before Lynn's marriage to him — but he's very charming and cultivated. In fact the whole family have been very sweet. It's so lovely to see Lynn so happy and looking so “green and fresh”, as if life is all cream and roses. The house here is rather sweet, too — small but cosy, with a log-fire burning permanently in the old grate. The furniture is all glossy mahogany. Actually I find the house a bit over-heated, but who cares when the company is so convivial.

The extract expresses the positive tone while the following extract from a letter by someone expresses a negative tone since he is both irritated and depressed by a personal situation involving friends.

and when I got back I felt depressed about the whole ghastly situation. I hate the way Chris and Susi just refuse to talk to each other — it has an awful effect on the children. I know these days this sort of break-up is common, but being so close to it makes me feel very miserable. There's a sinking, empty feeling in the stomach as you realize that a part of young life is being destroyed. Actually, I get very angry just talking to Chris but I don't think that really helps anyone.

Now look at the list of pairs in the following where some qualities of two men are described by adjectives:

Mike is ambitious;

Mike is tough-minded;

Mike is foresighted;

Mike is firm;

John is pushy.

John is ruthless.

John is calculating.

John is stubborn.

The words describing “Mike” are positive and complimentary, making him seem ideally suited for high responsibility in business or government. On the other hand, the words describing “John” are loaded with negative sense, making him seem almost disqualified for any responsibility at all.

So, no matter what you are writing, you must have your tone, either factual, angry, humorous, hopeful, or optimistic. Therefore, you have to decide your tone before you make your choice of words in writing.

Apart from the tone, other differences between different types of writing are to be observed. Letters to friends, for instance, are regarded as informal personal communication. In them, words are usually those used in daily conversation, easy and even slangy, and sentences are short, simple and even incomplete. Research reports, on the other hand, are considered formal professional communication. As such, the primary goals are accuracy, clarity, and completeness. The rough draft of any research report should be edited to ensure that all data is correctly presented, that all equipment is listed, and that all results are properly detailed. Beyond checking the report for clarity and accuracy in the presentation of technical data, the author of a research report should review for basic grammatical and mechanical accuracy. Therefore, in research reports, special terms are presented, and full forms, such as *does not*, *must*

not, etc. are used instead of such contractions as *doesn't*, *mustn't* in informal personal communication. Similarly, sentences are complete and the passive voice is preferred.

Special features like these in writing are a matter of writing style — a matter of formal or informal writing style. Before writing, you have to decide which kind of writing style is appropriate so that you can avoid using an informal writing style where a formal writing style is required, or the other way round.

III. The writing process

The writing process can be divided roughly into five steps or stages, although these are not meant to be rigidly applied. This general description oversimplifies the complex process of writing, but it does give a framework for talking about how most writers compose. Professional writers may become skilled enough to take shortcuts, but these five steps are a good system for less experienced writers to start with.

The following are the five steps in the writing process:

1. **Planning a composition:** Choosing a topic; prewriting, generating ideas, deciding upon audience and focus, deciding what to include or leave out; data gathering, and organizing, deciding the order in which to make points or present information
2. **Drafting:** Putting ideas into sentences and paragraphs
3. **Revising:** Evaluating earlier drafts; rearranging to improve organization; adding, cutting, replacing, and recasting sentences to improve effectiveness
4. **Editing:** Checking correctness of facts, grammar, spelling, usage, punctuation, and mechanics
5. **Proofreading:** Reading final copy for typing errors, handwriting legibility, and words left out

Almost all kinds of writing involve the same steps, but certain kinds of writing require more attention to various stages in the process. For example, a note to your family explaining where you have gone and why you won't be home for dinner involves very little prewriting thought, and revising might be little more than checking to make sure you have included all the necessary information. A technical report, on the other hand, may require extensive preparation, data gathering, and organizing before the actual writing begins, and revisions may be quite extensive before you are satisfied that the paper represents your best work.

Planning a composition

Planning a composition means making preparations for the composition. Writing

without sufficient preparation will spoil it. So planning a composition is the first necessity. The preparation involves the following steps:

- **Choosing a topic**
- **Prewriting**
- **Data gathering**
- **Organizing**

• **Choosing a topic**

If you are free to choose your own topic, choose a topic you really want to think about. You can pick one in which you are genuinely interested and about which you want to know more. Or you might well try to find something from your own experience, something that will let you explore yourself, perhaps something that you have never fully described or analyzed to anyone, even to yourself. The richest moments of your experience are often born out of conflict. Suppose you recall a time when you were made or asked to do something you did not want to do. When and where did it happen? How did you feel about having to act against your will? How did you feel about the person who asked you to do so? What did you learn from the episode?

When a topic is assigned, find a way to make it your own. Most of the writing you do in college will be on assigned topics. The way to get started on an assigned topic is to discover how it connects with what you already know, with your own interests and experience. By this means you begin to make the topic your own.

Suppose you are asked to write an essay on any one of the following general topics:

computers	crime
education	sports
farming	music
housing	assembly-line manufacturing
an open-heart surgery	

If you are asked to write on "Farming", start by asking yourself if you have ever had any experience in farming, what kind of farming work you did, how it affected you and how you felt about it. Any one of these personal experiences could be the wedge that opens up the topic for you.

But one of the biggest obstacles to the success of a short essay is an oversize

topic and one of the commonest phenomena for a freshman writer is to choose too broad or general a topic, such as “crime”, “education”, “music”. If you were asked to write a five-hundred-word essay on the general farming, you will probably find that you have no room to make it fully developed or it is too general to get started. So you should cut the topic down to a specific one that you can manage in a short essay. Take “Crime” of the general topics listed above:

General topic: Crime
Specific topic: Shoplifting
Questions: How did the shoplifting happen, how much should shoplifters be punished, and why?

You will certainly find the specific topic “Crime: a Common Shoplifting” is easier to develop than the general topic “Crime”.

• Prewriting

Prewriting, as the term implies, is the activity you engage in before beginning to write your paper. You must think about your topic and explore all the possible things you might say on the subject. The simplest form of prewriting is **making a list** of the things you know about the subject or **brainstorming** (free association), which is similar to listing but the purpose is to generate ideas rather than a list of objects or details. With these methods, you jot down as many facts or thoughts as you can about the subject, without stopping to consider whether or not a particular idea will be useful or arranging them in any particular order. Later you can cross out the thoughts you don't plan to use, but don't rule anything out now, because even a weak idea may lead to other ideas. Your jottings need not be full sentences — just a few words to remind you of the thought.

The following is a sample of brainstorming by a class on the comparison of the similarities of doctors and teachers.

Doctors:	Teachers:
professionals	professionals
need a longer time of college education	need a 4-year college education
treat patients	t each students
do operations	earn a little money
respected by their communities	important in the community
earn much money	respected by the community
important in the community	

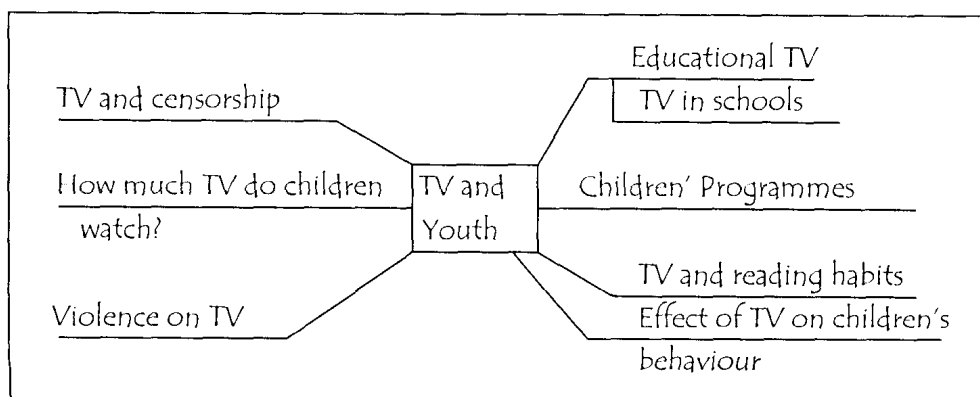
After the initial brainstorming, you can decide to cross out the items about the period of time of college education, earning money because those show the differences rather than the similarities. But you can find all the other items comparable, showing the similarities: they are professionals, they help others, and they are important in the community. And you are then ready to organize and write your papers.

The following is an example of comparing the similarities between doctors and teachers based on the brainstorming above:

There are many similarities between doctors and teachers. First, both doctors and teachers are considered professionals by their communities. The classification of professional is the highest socio-economic rank an individual can achieve in this society. Second, both doctors and teachers help others: doctors heal the bodies of sick people and return them to health, and teachers mold the minds of young people and turn them into responsible, educated adults. Last, both doctors and teachers are essential members of a community. It is difficult to imagine a city or town that has no need of either a doctor or a teacher. Such a place would truly be primitive.

A variation of brainstorming is **mapping** or **clustering**. With this method, you write your topic in the center of a blank page and branch out all directions with various thoughts on the topic. Mapping uses the creative part of your brain, drawing on associations and seeing relationships in weblike pattern. Later you can select from the ideas generated, and use the organizing part of your brain to convert them to sentences and paragraphs.

Below you will see some first thoughts of a student who was asked to write an essay on the subject of "The Influence of Television on Young People". These notes were made before he did any research into the subject.



Another kind of prewriting activity is **Asking questions**. One useful set of questions is the “5 W's and the H” — Who, What, When, Where, Why and How. Answering these questions may help you to realize that you have a great deal to say about your subject. For example, if you are writing about a change made on your campus, you might ask these questions:

Who would be affected by the change?
What exactly would happen?
When would you like to see it happen?
Where will it take place?
Why is it likely to happen, or why is it desirable?
How can it be accomplished?

You can use these general questions to generate further questions. These questions are particularly helpful for persuasive papers and reports. You might need to gather more information in order to write such papers authoritatively, and these questions can guide your research and notemaking. But you need one question to focus on, to point you toward a specific writing goal. So after you have put down all the questions you can think of, read the whole list over and look for the question that strikes you as most important, most interesting, or most unusual. It may be one of the questions you have actually written down, or it may be a new question that grows out of those you have before you. In either case, this is the **basic question** you will hope to answer for yourself and your reader as you write the paper. Make it as sharp and specific and pointed as you can.

Of course you will have other prewriting techniques, such as **free writing**, **using analogies**, which are also helpful to generate ideas or thoughts.

During the prewriting, you have to keep in mind your audience and purpose which were briefly discussed in Parts I and II because they will affect the way you approach your writing task.

• **Data Gathering**

Whether you have been assigned a topic or have chosen one of your own, a good way of getting started is to read about it to gather more data. You may go to the library to get more information. In the newspapers and magazines you will find articles on a variety of subjects to enrich your thoughts on the subject. Then re-examine your earlier thoughts, to see whether you now take a broader view of your subject. In the age of rapidly expanding information, data gathering is essential for keeping up-to-date and for making informed decisions or recommendations.

Reading with a purpose is a fine way to fertilize your mind, to help you choose

your topic, define it, enrich it, or enlarge it. Reading gives you not only a departure but a continuous supply of information.

• Organizing

The fourth step in the writing process is organizing your ideas. As you look at the results of your prewriting, you may see certain items or ideas that seem to belong together logically. You will also see that some are more important than others. Select the most important points, and cross out the unimportant ones. You may also discover, as you focus on a main idea that some of the items do not relate to that main idea. Take those out, too. When the collected information is sufficient and you are somewhat sure of your subject, you can work out your outline to help eliminate repetition or rambling.

Your outline should begin with an indication of your writing goal — the basic question you are trying to answer. Under that question you can outline your prewriting in one of two ways: by a vertical list or by a tree diagram. The vertical list is the more common kind of outline and a simple version of it looks like this:

The vertical list

Basic question: What are the ways in which a student can acquire information?

- I. From his tutors
 - A. By lecture
 - B. By tutorial
 - C. By handouts
- II. From other experts outside his college
 - A. By reading
 - B. By listening
 - (1) Radio
 - (2) Cassette recordings
 - C. By watching educational TV programmes
- III. From his fellow students
 - A. In seminar
 - B. In tutorial
 - C. In informal conversation
- IV. From himself — can develop new ideas

An outline like this will help you to write a clear, efficient essay paper. By organizing your points in advance, you will save time and make sure that you cover everything once and only once. It also lets you see the structure of the essay you are