

吉林大学研究生立项教材

新

English *Writing Course* For Doctoral Students

# 博士生英语写作教程

——非英语专业博士研究生使用

*Writing  
Course*



吉林大学出版社

**新**

English Writing Course For Doctoral Students


# 博士生英语写作教程

——非英语专业博士研究生使用

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## 前 言

世纪之交,原吉林大学、吉林工业大学、白求恩医科大学、长春科技大学和长春邮电学院合并,组建成为我国目前规模最大的一所综合性大学。新的吉林大学在博士研究生教育方面迈出了更大的步伐,招生人数猛增,学科门类趋于齐全。为适应新形势下对非英语专业博士研究生英语教学的需要,吉林大学组织部分教师编写了这套《新博士生英语》系列教材。

《新博士生英语》系列教材是针对 21 世纪对博士研究生英语教学要求的新特点而编写的一套系列教材,分为阅读、写作和翻译三种教程,既相互配合形成一个整体,又根据各自特点自成体系,供非英语专业博士研究生基础英语教学使用。

本系列教材充分吸取各高校在非英语专业博士研究生英语教学中积累的行之有效的经验,借鉴国内外优秀的教学理论和方法,博采众长,将实用性与知识性融为一体,旨在通过教师精讲多练,进一步提高博士研究生英语综合应用能力。

本系列教材选材广泛,集时代性、知识性、可思性、信息性、前瞻性和实用性为一体,以反映当代社会生活为主,兼顾科技、政法、文史、医药等时尚主题;体裁多样,充分兼顾书面语,正式语体和非正式语体;课后练习形式丰富、实用,既有利于学生消化、巩固语言基础知识,也有利于培养博士研究生运用英语的实际能力。

吉林大学研究生院于永利副院长、郭学东处长、陈玉梅副处长,全国大学外语教学指导委员会副主任、全国大学英语四、六级考试委员会委员、吉林大学公共外语教学与研究中心主任刘龙根教授,以及吉林大学出版社杨枫等同志对本教材的设计与编写自始至终给予关心和支持,其余参加本系列教材协助编写的还有:崔敏、刘淑范、刘贤明、刘艳、田平、田兵、高广坤、赵治惠、张玉娟、李军、张秀丽、韩松、石华、李维清、蒋剡、李向欣、孙学棋、沈葆春、赵崇文、王金霞、王相锋、于萍、李欣霜、于大溱、梅松伟等同志,在此一并致谢。

由于编者水平与经验有限,教材中难免还有不足之处,希望广大教师和学生批评指正。

编 者

2002 年 8 月

## 使 用 说 明

《新博士生英语写作教程》是《新博士生英语》系列教材之一，其目的是提高博士研究生用英文写作的能力。

本书共 6 单元，需 40 学时完成。第一单元介绍段落 (Paragraph) 写作的基本知识和技巧；第二单元详细说明各种段落类型及其写作方法；第三单元介绍篇章 (Essay) 写作的基本知识和技巧；第四单元详细说明各种篇章类型及其写作方法；第五单元阐述了实用写作 (Practical Writing)，尤其是书信 (Letter) 写作的基本知识和技巧；第六单元探讨了科技论文 (Research Paper) 写作的基本知识和技巧。本书坚持理论与实践相结合，不仅在每个问题的讲解过程中配有实例，而且在每个单元后配有练习题。

书后还附有 2 个附录。附录一包含 20 篇托福范文，附录二包含 25 篇雅思范文，供学生参考。

本书在编写过程中参考了部分国内外有关文献，在此谨向有关作者表示诚挚的谢意。

限于水平和时间，错漏之处在所难免，欢迎广大博士研究生及同仁批评指正。

***It takes both the rain and the sunlight to make a rainbow!***

编 者

2002 年 8 月

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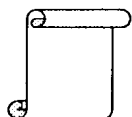
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# Unit One



## Introduction To The Paragraph

What is a paragraph? You probably know that a paragraph is a group of sentences and that the first sentence of this group is indented; that is, it begins a little bit more to the right of the margin than the rest of the sentences in this group. But it is not enough to say that a paragraph is a group of sentences. How do these sentences relate to each other? How does a paragraph begin and where does it end? What constitutes a good paragraph? These are all questions that we hope to answer in this first unit.

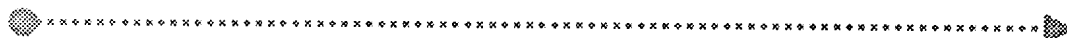
### 1.1 The Topic of a Paragraph

1  
Unit One

To begin with, a paragraph may be defined as a group of sentences that develops one main idea; in other words, a paragraph develops a topic. A topic is basically the subject of the paragraph; it is what the paragraph is about. Read the following paragraph, which is about the habit of smoking cigarettes.

*Smoking cigarettes can be an expensive habit. Considering that the average price per pack of cigarettes is seventy-five cents, people who smoke two packs of cigarettes a day spend \$1.50 per day on their habit. At the end of one year these smokers have spent at least \$547.50. But the price of cigarettes is not the only expense that cigarette smokers incur (招致, 负起, 蒙受). Since cigarette smoke has an offensive odor that permeates clothing, stuffed furniture, and carpet, smokers often find that these items must be cleaned more frequently than nonsmokers do. Although it is difficult to estimate the cost of this additional expense, one can see that this hidden expense does contribute to making smoking an expensive habit.*

Although usually you are assigned topics to write about, often these topics are too general to be developed adequately in one paragraph. After all, for most practical purposes your paragraphs will range in length from about seven to fifteen sentences. Therefore, you will need to restrict your topics; that is, you will need to narrow down your topic to a more



specific one. Let us say, for example, that you were asked to write about your favorite place and you chose a country such as Mexico. Although you could easily write several sentences naming all the things you like about Mexico, it would be more interesting for your reader if you narrowed down the topic of Mexico to a particular place in Mexico, such as the Great Temple in the Aztec ruins. Your topic should be narrowed down as much as possible. Look at how the topic of Mexico was narrowed:

*Mexico*  
*Mexico City*  
*Historical Sites*  
*Aztec Ruins*  
*The Great Temple*

Of course there are many ways you could narrow down this topic. Here is another way:

*Mexico*  
*Yucatan Peninsula*  
*The City of Progreso*  
*The Beach South of Progreso*

2

Unit One

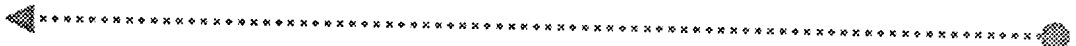
Now let us say that you were asked to write about drugs. Obviously the topic “drugs” is far too broad for specific development in one paragraph; the topic needs to be narrowed down, restricted. Observe how the topic “drugs” can be restricted:

*Drugs*  
*Marijuana (大麻)*  
*Effects of Smoking Marijuana*  
*Effect on Memory*

This paragraph, then, will discuss one of the effects of smoking marijuana. As any topic, this one could be narrowed down in several ways. Observe:

*Drugs*  
*Marijuana*  
*Reasons People Smoke It*  
*Peer Pressure as a Reason*

This paragraph will discuss one of the reasons people smoke marijuana: peer pressure.



## 1.2 The Topic Sentence

### 1. Defining the Topic Sentence

The topic of a paragraph is usually introduced in a sentence; this sentence is called the *topic sentence*. The topic sentence can do more than introduce the subject of the paragraph, however. A good topic sentence states an idea or an attitude about the topic as well. This idea or attitude about the topic is called the *controlling idea*; it controls what the sentences in the paragraph will discuss. All sentences in the paragraph should relate to and develop the controlling idea. To illustrate, let us look at the following topic sentence to identify the topic and the controlling idea about that topic:

*Smoking cigarettes can be an expensive habit.*

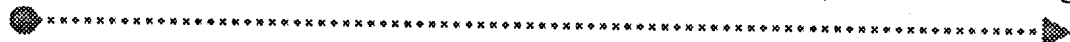
In this sentence the topic is the habit of smoking cigarettes; the controlling idea is that smoking can be expensive. A paragraph that develops this topic sentence should demonstrate that smoking cigarettes can indeed be an expensive habit.

Of course there are many other controlling ideas one could have about the topic of smoking cigarettes. Indeed, one of the most popular is that it is hazardous to health. See how this idea is developed in the following paragraph:

*Smoking cigarettes is hazardous to your health. Several years ago, a United States government study was released that linked the intake of tar and nicotine (尼古丁), found in cigarettes, with the development of cancer in laboratory animals. The evidence was so overwhelming that the United States government required cigarette manufacturers to put a warning on the outside of each package of cigarettes, which says, "Warning: The Surgeon General has determined that cigarette smoking is hazardous to your health." Aside from the most serious and dreaded disease, cancer, cigarette smoking also can aggravate or promote other health problems. For example, smoking can increase the discomfort for people with asthma (哮喘) and emphysema (肺气肿). It can give one a "smoker's cough" and contribute to bronchitis. Finally, recent studies have shown that cigarette smokers are more susceptible (易患) to common colds and flu. Whether you get an insignificant cold or the major killer, cancer, smoking cigarettes is hazardous. Is it worth it?*

### 2. Improving the Topic Sentence

As indicated, a topic sentence introduces the topic and the controlling idea about that topic. However, it is not enough merely to have a topic and a controlling idea. The controlling



idea should be clear and focused on a particular aspect; for example, consider the following topic sentence:

*Drinking coffee is bad.*

This sentence has a topic --- drinking coffee --- and a controlling idea --- bad --- but it is rather vague. In what way is coffee bad? For whom or what is it bad? Is drinking only a little coffee bad, or is drinking a lot of coffee bad? As you can see, this topic sentence leaves a lot of questions that probably cannot be answered effectively in one paragraph. This topic sentence needs more focus, and that focus can come from the controlling idea:

*Drinking over four cups of coffee a day can be harmful to pregnant women.*

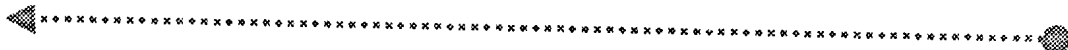
In this version the topic itself is narrowed down some more, and the controlling idea is more precise.

### 3. Recognizing the Topic Sentence

To review, a topic sentence has a particular function: to introduce the topic and the controlling idea. Where should the topic sentence be placed in the paragraph? Generally, because the topic sentence does introduce, it is a good idea to place it at or near the beginning of the paragraph. However, depending on the kind of paragraph it is in, the topic sentence may be placed near the middle or even at the end of the paragraph. Sometimes neither the topic nor the controlling idea is explicitly stated in one sentence; this does not mean, however, that a topic and controlling idea are not present. In this kind of paragraph the topic and controlling idea are implied; that is, they are clearly suggested in the development of the paragraph. However, it is usually a good idea to state topic sentences clearly, not only to be certain that the idea is clear but also to help control the development of the paragraph.

### 4. Formulating the Topic Sentence

Thus far you have been given topics and controlling ideas to recognize and improve, but often you must find your own controlling idea. Once you have found a manageable topic for a paragraph, you need to examine that topic more closely in order to see what you think about it and what your own feelings or attitudes are about it. To decide on the controlling idea and what you want to say about a topic begin by making a detailed list of things that come to mind about the topic. You can write the list using complete sentences, or you can just take brief notes. The form your notes take is not really important; what is important is writing down enough notes so that you can pick out an aspect of the topic that seems worthy of



development. As you examine your notes, keep in mind that you should still try to narrow down the scope of your topic. For example, let us say that you were asked to write about a place in China and that you had narrowed that broad topic down to a certain resort. The following is an example of how your notes could be done:

*Topic: Sanya Resort in Hainan Province*

*Notes:*

- 1. Pretty sandy beaches, palm trees along the shore, clear turquoise (青绿色的) water, gorgeous (壮丽的) mountains*
- 2. Tourists swarming every place, new hotels cropping up every month*
- 3. Resort provides many jobs, brings in \$1 million in revenue from tourists, has attracted some new companies to the city*

The list could, of course, be expanded. Once the list is done, look for something striking. For example, you might realize that the resort has provided economic benefits to the local area. Or in your notes you might like to write about the beauty of the resort area. Several ideas could emerge from these notes. Here are a few:

*Sanya Resort is set in one of the most scenic coastal areas in China.*

*Sanya Resort has been ruined by the excessive influx of tourists.*

*Sanya Resort has brought direct and indirect economic benefits to the area.*

## 1.3 Support

Once you have taken notes and formulated a controlling idea about the topic, the next step is to extract from your notes the material you can use to develop the paragraph. This material will be used as *support* for the opinion or attitude expressed in your topic sentence. It serves to back up, clarify, illustrate, explain or prove the point you make in your topic sentence. Most often we use factual detail to support our point. Such detail may be facts from resource material, such as magazines, journals, books; or the details may include things that we or others have observed. Basically, support comes from the information you used to arrive at the view you have expressed in your topic sentence.

When you are examining your notes to find support for your topic sentence, you may find it necessary to add material to your notes. Let's take as an example the topic sentence "Sanya Resort has nearly solved our local employment problem." From the notes on this topic, we might extract "Resort provides many jobs" and "has attracted some new companies to the city." These two bits of information can serve as the basis for more notes and support. To



generate more notes, at this stage you may find it useful to ask specific questions, such as “What are the companies that have opened up? How many jobs have they brought to our city? How else has the resort provided jobs? What are those jobs? What was the employment situation before the resort opened? What is the employment rate now?” The answers to these questions will serve as a foundation for the support for your paragraphs. Your revised notes might be as follows:

*Unemployment rate in 1985 = 35%; in 1995 = 8%*

*Hotel jobs --- Noble Hotel, 100*

*Holiday Inn, 50*

*Redbuds Hotel, 35*

*Five new shops on Beach Highway for tourists --- 15 new jobs*

*New companies (since 1990) --- Princess Amy's Service*

*Legend*

*Romeo & Julia's Tour Guide Service*

*Microsoft Corporation*

*Giant Manufacturing Company*

It is a good idea to write the support out as sentences and list them under your topic sentence in outline form, grouping related details together. For example, for the Sanya Resort example, your paragraph outline might look like this:

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Unit One

*Topic Sentence: Sanya Resort has nearly solved our local employment problem.*

*Support: 1. The unemployment rate has dropped from 35% in 1985 to 8% in 1995.*

*2. The tourist industry has created many jobs.*

*a. Three new hotels have opened up.*

*1) The Noble Hotel employs 100 local residents.*

*2) The Holiday Inn hired fifty.*

*3) The Redbuds Hotel has thirty-five new workers.*

*b. Five new shops have opened on Beach Highway, for a total of fifteen jobs.*

*c. Tourist-related industries have opened up: Princess Amy's Service, Legend, Romeo & Julia's Tour Guide Service.*

*3. The resort has attracted two non-tourist companies: Microsoft Corporation, Giant Manufacturing Company.*

Such an outline is useful in two ways: It provides a means for quickly checking your sentences to see if they deal with the topic, and it serves as a guide for checking whether the sentences are logically arranged. Here is an outline of a paragraph given on page 1:



*Topic Sentence: Smoking cigarettes can be an expensive habit.*

*Support: 1. Cigarettes cost about seventy-five cents.*

*2. The average smoker smokes two packs a day.*

*3. The annual expense for this smoker is \$547.50.*

*4. The smoker must also pay for extra cleaning of carpets, furniture, and clothes.*

Obviously, not all the sentences in the original paragraph are listed or recorded verbatim (一字不漏地). For example, the sentence "But the price of cigarettes is not the only expense the cigarette smoker incurs" is omitted here. This sentence certainly relates to the topic and the controlling idea, but its main function is to provide a link in the sentences; it joins the section discussing the price of cigarettes with the section dealing with the hidden expense of cigarette smoking. This type of sentence is called a transition. Another sentence omitted in the outline is the last one: "Although it is difficult to estimate the cost of this additional expense, one can see that this hidden expense does contribute to making smoking an expensive habit." This type of sentence, which summarizes the main idea in the paragraph, is called the concluding sentence. Note all paragraphs have concluding sentences, but they are useful for ending the development of the support smoothly.

How you organize your sentences will depend on your topic and purpose. In the following chapters you will learn how to support various kinds of topics and how to organize that support. At this stage it is important to understand that the material you use to write the sentences in your paragraph should be directly supportive of the view you express in your topic sentence.

## 1.4 Unity

As mentioned earlier, each sentence in a paragraph should relate to the topic and develop the controlling idea. If a sentence does not relate to or develop that idea, it is irrelevant and should be omitted. Consider the topic sentence discussed earlier in this chapter:

*Smoking cigarettes can be an expensive habit.*

If a sentence in that paragraph had discussed how annoying it is to watch someone blow smoke rings, that sentence would have been out of place, since it does not discuss the expense of smoking. A paragraph that has sentences that do not relate to or discuss the controlling idea lacks *unity*. Note the following example of a paragraph that lacks unity:



*Another problem facing a number of elderly people is living on a reduced income. Upon retiring, old people may receive a pension from their company or Social Security from the government. The amount of their monthly checks is often half the amount of the checks they received when they were employed. Suddenly, retirees find that they can no longer continue the life style that they had become accustomed to, even if that life style was a modest one. Many find, after paying their monthly bills, that there is no money left for a movie or a dinner out. Of course, sometimes they can't go out because of their health. Maybe they have arthritis (关节炎) or rheumatism (风湿病) and it is painful for them to move around. This can also change their life style. Some older people, however, discover that the small amount of money they receive will not even cover their monthly bills. They realize with horror that electricity, a telephone, and nourishing food are luxuries they can no longer afford. They resort to shivering in the dark, eating cat food in order to make ends meet.*

The topic of this paragraph is "another problem facing a number of elderly people," and the controlling idea is "living on a reduced income." Therefore, all of the sentences should deal with the idea of the problem of living on a reduced income. In this paragraph, there are three sentences that do not discuss this particular topic: "Of course, sometimes they can't go out because of their health. Maybe they have arthritis or rheumatism and it is painful for them to move around. This can also change their life style." These sentences should be taken out of this paragraph and perhaps developed in another paragraph.

## 1.5 Coherence

We have seen that a paragraph must have a topic and controlling idea, support, and unity. Another element that a paragraph needs is *coherence*. A coherent paragraph contains sentences that are logically arranged and flow smoothly.

Logical arrangement refers to the order of your sentences and ideas. There are various ways to order your sentences, depending on your purpose. For example, if you want to describe what happens in a movie (the plot), you would order your sentences according to the sequence of the action in the movie, from beginning to end --- in that order. If, on the other hand, you want to describe the most exciting moments in the movie, you would select a few moments and decide on a logical order for discussion --- perhaps presenting the least exciting moments first and the most exciting last to create suspense. In the following chapters we will study various principles for ordering ideas and sentences. A paragraph can also be incoherent even when the principle for ordering the ideas is logical. Sometimes as students are writing they remember something that they wanted to say earlier and include it as they write.





Unfortunately, this sentence often ends up out of place. Study the following paragraph in which one or more sentences are out of order:

*Although Grants Pass, Oregon, is a fairly small town, it offers much to amuse summer visitors. They can go rafting down the Rogue River. They can go swimming in the Applegate River. Lots of people go hunting for wild berries that grow along the roadsides. Campers will find lovely campgrounds that are clean. There are several nice hotels. Tourists can browse through a number of interesting shops in town, such as antique stores. One fun activity is shopping at the open market where local folks sell produce grown in their gardens. Grants Pass has a lot of places to eat, ranging from a low-calorie dessert place to lovely restaurants. Some of these restaurants offer good food and gorgeous views. One store to visit is the shop that sells items made from Oregon's beautiful myrtlewood. Fishing in the area is also a popular activity. Water sports are by far the main attraction. As you can see, Grants Pass offers a lot to do in the summer. If you want to give your family a nice, wholesome (有益于健康的) vacation, try visiting Grants Pass.*

The paragraph seems to have a principle of organization; the first half is devoted to activities in the areas just outside of the city itself and the last half discusses activities in the city. However, toward the end of the paragraph the writer seems to throw in a few sentences as an afterthought. The sentences "One store to visit is the shop that sells items made from Oregon's beautiful myrtlewood," "Fishing in the area is also a popular activity," and "Water sports are by far the main attraction" are out of place. This paragraph could be revised as follows:

*Although Grants Pass, Oregon, is a fairly small town, it offers much to amuse summer visitors. Water sports are by far the main attraction. Visitors can go rafting down the Rogue River. They can go swimming in the Applegate River. Fishing in the area is a popular activity. Lots of people go hunting for wild berries that grow along the roadsides. Campers will find lovely campgrounds that are clean. There are several nice hotels. Tourists can browse through a number of interesting shops in town, such as antique stores. One store to visit is the shop that sells items made from Oregon's beautiful myrtlewood. One fun activity is shopping at the open market where local folks sell produce grown in their gardens. Grants Pass has a lot of places to eat, ranging from a low-calorie dessert place to lovely restaurants. Some of these restaurants offer good food and gorgeous views. As you can see, Grants Pass offers a lot to do in the summer. If you want to give your family a nice, wholesome vacation, try visiting Grants Pass.*

The order of the sentences in this revised version is improved, but it is still not completely coherent, for the sentences do not always flow smoothly.

