

# NEWS

# 英语新闻写作教程

李娜 主编



首都师范大学出版社  
CAPITAL NORMAL UNIVERSITY PRESS

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图书在版编目 (CIP) 数据

英语新闻写作教程/李娜主编. —北京: 首都师范大学出版社, 2015.11

ISBN 978-7-5656-2603-6

I. ①英… II. ①李… III. ①新闻-英语-写作-高等学校-教材  
IV. ①H315

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字 (2015) 第 252002 号

YINGYU XINWEN XIEZUO JIAOCHENG

英语新闻写作教程

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责任编辑 朱瑞党

首都师范大学出版社出版发行

地 址 北京西三环北路 105 号

邮 编 100048

电 话 68418523 (总编室) 68982468 (发行部)

网 址 [www.cnupn.com.cn](http://www.cnupn.com.cn)

印 刷 北京集惠印刷有限责任公司

经 销 全国新华书店发行

版 次 2015 年 11 月第 1 版

印 次 2015 年 11 月第 1 次印刷

开 本 710mm × 1000mm 1/16

印 张 15

字 数 272 千

定 价 37.00 元

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## 前 言

《英语新闻写作教程》是《英语基础写作教程》的姊妹篇，是编者结合十多年积累的教学经验和素材编写而成的英语新闻写作教材，供具有中级英语水平的学生使用，属于英语新闻写作入门级的教程。本书按照教学大纲的要求，系统讲解了英语新闻文体的基本特征、硬新闻和软新闻的不同特点、倒金字塔结构、导语写作、引语运用等方面的知识和技巧，同时涵盖了灾难专题、连续报道、会议报道、人物专访等专题写作的内容，可以满足英语新闻写作课程的教学需要。

本书针对中国英语学习者的思维特点，进行章节安排和相关课堂活动、课下练习的编写设计。本书开篇统领全局，介绍了新闻写作的基本特点，以及新闻写作和短文写作的不同之处，帮助学习者迅速进入新闻写作学习的语境中。之后的章节以各种新闻写作技巧为主线，如标题写作、导语写作、背景材料运用、引语运用等；以专题写作为辅线，如灾难报道、连续报道、会议报道、人物专访等，全书经纬贯穿，编排紧凑，学习焦点集中，在帮助学习者了解新闻文体特点和新闻写作技巧的同时，又能帮助学习者巩固、熟料掌握各种专题写作的要领。

本书沿袭了它的姊妹篇《英语基础写作教程》的主要章节设计理念，突出以学习者为中心的特点。

1. 每个章节的导入语“Guide Words”，简洁生动地介绍了本章新闻写作的重点、难点和要点，旨在激发学习者的兴趣并为学习者勾勒出学习目的和学习目标。

2. 第一部分“What to Write”，选用了和每章学习重点相关的文章或者范文，文章之前的预习题和之后的思考题帮助学习者去领悟具体的写作技巧以及适用范围。“Ideas for Further Discussion and News Writing”为学生进行批判性思考和每周的新闻练笔提供了启发性的素材和话题。

3. 第二部分“How to Write”，采取了两种组织方式，一种是为学习者提供一至两篇新闻报道作为范文，配以启发式的学习活动激发学习者的学习主动性和学习潜能，引导学习者进行探究式学习，发现和总结相关新闻写作技巧。另一种是采取了“虚拟角色设置法”，虚拟了一个初学新闻、写作能力平平的女生Mary。通过对于Mary这个新闻初学者所面临的各种真实性新闻写作任务的分

析，展现了新闻文本细读、新闻素材分析、编写采访提纲、初稿修改等一系列新闻写作技巧。Mary 这一角色的设置是基于体验式写作的教学理念，通过这一代表了“平凡的大多数”的学生角色，使学习者明白自己遇到的学习困难并非是有特异性的，从而增强学习自信和改善学习体验。

4. 第三部分“Review and Assignment”，通过设计各种相关练习，帮助学习者巩固各章中所学习的写作技巧。书后配有主要练习的参考答案，供学习者自查使用。

本书编者力图编写一本有效帮助学习者抓住英语新闻写作基础知识和特点的教材，将一些教学实践中显有成效的思路和方法应用在本书的编写之中，盼望本书对广大英语新闻写作爱好者和学习者有切实的帮助。

编者水平有限，编写时间紧张，书中凡有不当之处，敬请指正！

编者  
2015.8

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# Chapter One Understanding News Writing

## Guide Words

“Shakespeare’s works are indeed good, but they are not urgently needed by most of China’s students of English. In my opinion, well-chosen articles from current British and American newspapers and magazines are more useful. They include some of the best of present-day English writing. If I had to choose between a course in classical literature and one in newspaper and magazine reading, I’d vote for the latter.”

These lines are by someone who was talking about news reading and writing. To what extent do you agree with them? News is becoming something people cannot avoid in the daily life, especially for those who have decided to learn the truth and facts about this special language style. So this is a start line. In this chapter, you will learn some basic ABCs about news and English news.

## Part I What to Write

### Warm-up Reading

#### Pre-reading questions

1. How do you usually describe a good writer, according to your earlier reading and writing experience?
2. How do you usually describe a good news reporter, according to your earlier experience of newspaper and magazine reading?

### Roy Peter Clark: Fourteen Traits of Good Writers

Roy Peter Clark, who may be the best-known writing coach in the United States, described one of his first days in the newsroom of the *St. Petersburg (Fla.) Times*.

It was more than two decades ago; Clark had left a comfortable **niche** as a university professor to become a writing coach. Most of the reporters in the newsroom were not particularly impressed with his Ph. D. in English literature. He knew little of the day-to-day **practicalities** of journalism.

Writing in the *Washington Journalism Review*, Clark recalled the need he felt “to

interview every reporter on the staff to learn much more than I could hope to teach.” He told of an early experience:

One day, I found myself sitting beside Howell Raines, then political editor in St. Petersburg, now with *The New York Times*. Howell had written a series of political profiles that became legendary in the newsroom. They were powerful and influential character studies so well written that other reporters could quote passages **verbatim**.

The week I interviewed Howell, two of his books had been published, a terrific novel called “*Whisky Man*”, and an oral history of the civil rights movement, “*My Soul Is Rested*.” I felt humbled at the prospect of coaching him. What could I tell him, “Use more active verbs in your next novel, Howell?”

I decided to become student instead of teacher, and asked Howell a dozen questions about political reporting. I recorded his responses. Howell described how to write about politicians as human characters and not just authority figures. He got down to **nitty-gritty** matters of interviewing and **leads** writing.

Clark used portions of the interview in his **in-house newsletter**; it was well received. It occurred to him that advice from respected writers could be more instructional and inspirational to reporters.

Clark served as writing coach at the *St. Petersburg Times* for two years, worked as a reporter and then joined the staff of the Modern Media Institute, which in 1983 became the Poynter Institute for Media Studies. Nelson Poynter, publisher of the *St. Petersburg Times* and *Evening Independent*, **willed** the controlling stock of the Times Publishing Co. to the institute. Clark, who continues to function as a writing coach, serves as senior scholar at the institute, which serves students of all ages and professionals from all over the nation.

In his article in the *Washington Journalism Review*, (now *American Journalism Review*), Clark told how he had interviewed dozens of reporters during writing seminars at the institute and during his years as editor or co-editor of “*Best Newspaper Writing*”, which is published each year by the institute. The book **features** award-winning stories in the American Society of Newspaper Editors’ annual writing contest.

Clark began to see similar qualities in the outstanding reporters he interviewed. In turn, he developed a list of 14 qualities often shared by good writers.

Here is Clark's discussion of the common traits, adapted from the article in *Washington Journalism Review*.

**Trait 1:**

Good writers see the world as their journalism laboratory, a storehouse of story ideas. If they can get out of the office, they can find a story. In fact, they can't walk down the street or watch television without finding something to write about.

**Trait 2:**

Good writers prefer to discover and develop their own story ideas. They have an eye for the **offbeat** and may find conventional assignments **tedious**. They appreciate collaboration with good editors but spend more time avoiding bad editors and what they perceive to be useless assignments.

**Trait 3:**

Good writers are **voracious** collectors of information. This usually means that they take notes like crazy. They are more concerned with the quality of information than with flourishes of style. They more often describe themselves as reporters than as writers.

**Trait 4:**

Good writers spend too much time and creative energy working in their leads. They know that the lead is the most important part of their work, the passage that invites the reader into the story and signals the news. They are inclined to describe how they wrote a lead a dozen times until they "got it right."

**Trait 5:**

Good writers talk about "**immersing** themselves" in a story. They live it, breathe it and dream it. They plan and rehearse the story all day long, writing it in their heads, considering their options, talking it over with editors, and always looking for new directions and fresh information.

**Trait 6:**

Most good writers are bleeders rather than speeders. When they write, in the words of the great *New York Times* sportswriter Red Smith, they "open a vein." This is because their standards are so high that their early drafts seem painful and inadequate. But when deadline comes or a big story breaks, **adrenaline** kicks them into a different warp factor. They can speed when they have to.

### **Trait 7:**

Good writers understand that an important part of writing is the mechanical **drudgery** of organizing the material, what the AP's Saul Pett describes as "donkey work." They may respond to this by developing careful filing systems. They also develop **idiosyncrasies** that help them build momentum during the writing process: pilgrimages to the bathroom, waking walks, daydreaming, junk food orgies or self-flagellation.

### **Trait 8:**

Good writers rewrite. They love computer terminals, which permit maximum playfulness during revision. They move paragraphs around, invert word order for emphasis, find stronger verbs and occasionally **purge** the entire story to make a fresh start. Alas, they are rarely satisfied with their final stories and, burdened with imperfection, can hardly bring themselves to read their own work in the newspaper. Writing is an expression of ego, making the writer vulnerable and, at times, insufferable.

### **Trait 9:**

In judging their work, good writers tend to trust their ears and their feelings more than their eyes. Some stare at the screen with their lips moving, praying that the inner music will reach their fingers. Editors "look for holes in the story". Writers want to "make it sing".

### **Trait 10:**

Good writers love to tell stories. They are constantly searching for the human side of the news, for voices that **enliven** the writing. Their language reflects their interest in storytelling. Rather than talk about the five Ws, they are more inclined to discuss anecdotes, scenes, chronology and narrative. During interviews, they tend to answer even the most theoretical questions with war stories, jokes and **parables**.

### **Trait 11:**

Good writers write primarily to please themselves and to meet their own exacting standards, but they also understand that writing is a transaction between writer and reader. Unlike many journalists, these writers have confidence that sophisticated work will not be lost on their readers. They treasure the reader and want to reward and protect and inform the reader and take responsibility for what the reader learns from a story.

### **Trait 12:**

Good writers **take chances** in their writing. They love the surprising and the un-

conventional approach to a story. They prefer failing in print on occasion because those failures are a test of their inventiveness. They love editors who tolerate experimentation but who will save them from falling on their faces. Their secret wish is to produce the best, most original piece in the newspaper every day.

**Trait 13 :**

Good writers are lifelong readers, mostly of novels, and they like movies. They collect story ideas and forms from other genres. They love words, names and lists.

**Trait 14 :**

Good writers write too long, and they know it. Unlike other journalists, who stop caring for the reader after the lead is complete; these writers use transitions and endings to keep their readers going. Their endings are so good that it is almost impossible to cut stories from the bottom. They want their stories to be “seamless” or “connected by a single thread” or “to flow”. They want readers to read every word.

(Adapted from *News Writing and Reporting for Today's Media*)

**Notes**

**niche :**

*n.* a job or position which is very suitable for someone, especially one that they like.

e. g. I don't think he's yet found his niche in life, i. e. the occupation that gives him most satisfaction and happiness.

Daniel has carved/made a niche for himself as a professional tennis player.

**practicalities :**

*n.* [ pl. ] the real facts of a situation rather than ideas about how it might be.

e. g. The practicalities of having two young children and working full time meant we had to employ a nanny.

It sounds like a good idea, but you ought to consider the practicalities before you put it into action.

**verbatim :**

*adj.* , *adv.* using exactly the same words as were originally used; repeating the actual words that were spoken or written = word-for-word.

e. g. Their stories were taped and transcribed verbatim.

She had an amazing memory and could recall verbatim quite complex conversa-



tions.

**nitty-gritty :**

*n.* what is essential and basic ; specific practical details.

e. g. Let's get down to the nitty-gritty of the problem.

**leads :**

*n.* [ pl. ] item of news made to appear most prominent in a newspaper or coming first in a news broadcast.

**in-house :**

*adj.* , *adv.* existing, originating, or carried on within a group or organization or its facilities, not outside.

e. g. an in-house computer system; in-house counsel; an in-house newsletter.

All our advertising material is designed in-house.

**newsletter :**

*n.* a short written report of news about a club, organization, place, etc. that is sent regularly to people who are interested.

e. g. The society publishes a newsletter three times a year.

**will :**

*v.* to try to make something happen by thinking about it very hard.

e. g. She was willing herself not to cry.

**feature :**

*v.* to include or show something as a special or important part of something, or to be included as an important part.

e. g. The exhibition features paintings by contemporary artists.

Violence seems to feature heavily in all of his books.

**offbeat :**

*adj.* unusual and not what people normally expect, especially in an interesting way.

e. g. She's a little offbeat, but she's a wonderful actress.

**tedious :**

*adj.* tiresome because of being too long, slow or dull; boring.

e. g. We had to sit through several tedious speeches.

The trouble is that I find most forms of exercise so tedious.

**voracious :**

*adj.* having an extremely strong desire to do or have a lot of something; very eager