



A College English Writing Course

# 大学英语写作

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钟 平 陈学斌◎主编

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# 大学英语写作

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## 第一章 理论篇

### 第一节 写作要求

学习写作，首先要对什么样的文章才算好文章有个明确的认识。许多学习英文写作的人都把语言正确看作最主要的标准。他们以为写出的文章只要没有拼写错误，用词造句符合语法和习惯用法就够了。

诚然，好文章应该做到语言正确规范，本书有些部分讨论的就是这方面的问题。但是如果把这些当作写作的唯一要求，还是写不出好文章来的。写作决不能满足于避免语言上的错误，更重要的是要能有效地表达思想，使读者理解文章的内容，抓住文章的精神，并从中获得启示。所以一篇好的英语文章一般应该做到准确、鲜明、充实。这三个要求关系密切，相辅相成。它们是逻辑、语法和修辞等基本规律在写作中的综合反映。我们在本章里将分别对上述三个要求做一简要的说明。当然，好文章的要求是相对而言的。归根到底，它们应该服从文章的具体内容、对象和场合的需要。但对初学者来说，有必要首先强调准确、鲜明和充实，因为它们能在多数情况下保证交际的有效开展。



## 1. 准确

准确是指文章必须准确地反映和表达作者对客观世界的认识。由于人们的理性认识要通过概念、判断、推理等思维形式来表述，而思维形式又总是和语言形式相适应的，所以在写作中正确地运用各种思维形式和思维方法，自觉遵循基本的逻辑规律，是准确地反映和表达作者对客观世界认识的前提与保证。离开这一条而去片面地寻章摘句，就等于探求无本之木，无源之水。

具体地说，作者在文章中应该做到概念明确，判断恰当，推理有逻辑性，论证有说服力。为此，内容必须真实，材料必须充分，中心思想必须突出，观点和材料之间必须有逻辑联系。当文章中提出一个论点，并对它进行论证时，要环环相扣，严密地从理由一步步推导出结论。文章的论点是通过判断来表达的，要准确地反映认识对象的性质和相互关系，判断就应该在充分调查研究的基础上恰如其分地进行。由于判断由概念组成，这就要求概念明确，使它的内涵和外延——或者说它的含义和范围——明白无误。与此同时，作者在写作时还要做到用准确的词语表达明确的概念，用恰当的句子表达恰当的判断。这些都是使文章准确的必要条件。

请看下面一篇介绍运动比节食能更有效地克服人体肥胖的文章的片断：

There are 30 percent of Americans today who are overweight and maintain what physiologists call a positive energy balance. They take in more energy, in the form of food, than they use, and the thrifty body stores the excess in the form of fat. The usual treatment has been diet. But, as a recent article in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* points out, no more than 20 percent of those trying to lose weight with dieting have had any long-term success.

Perhaps our widespread failure to control obesity is based on the fact that we have concentrated on the wrong side of the energy equation: decreasing food consumption rather than increasing exercise. U. S. Department of Agriculture figures



show that the average amount of food consumed annually in this country has dropped from 1,592 pounds per person around the turn of the century to 1,441 today. But we also exercise far less—many of us earn our living behind a desk, drive everywhere we go, watch TV during our leisure hours. Even housewives burn fewer calories since they no longer beat rugs or scrub clothes by hand. Recent research indicates that at low levels of activities people find it difficult to adjust their food intake to match their low caloric expenditure. In fact, food intake tends to be greater than at moderate activity levels.

The result: average weight is up. According to the National Center for Health Statistics, women between 35 and 44 are on average six pounds heavier than they were in the early '60s. Men in the same age group have gained an average of eight pounds.

这个片断主要说明节食减肥的方法并不可靠。文章不仅有理论分析，而且摆出了具体数据，论证是有一定说服力的。根据作者的看法，由于脂肪是过剩能量的一种储存形式，要减肥就必须改变人体能量摄入大于支出的局面。减少饮食可以降低能量摄入，但现代生活方式使人们的活动量(即能量消耗)的下降更大。更何况调查研究表明，活动量少的人即使节食也难以使饮食物量适应于他们的运动能量的消耗，所以收支还是达不到平衡。其结果正如一些数据所显示的那样，节食减肥的效果不佳，人们的平均体重还是上升。这样的论据逻辑性很强，读者看了文章后不能不承认作者得出的结论是有道理的。

再看一个例子：

The reasonable man adapts himself to the world, the unreasonable one persists in trying to adapt the world to himself. Therefore all progress depends upon the unreasonable man.

这是爱尔兰戏剧家萧伯纳(Bernard Shaw)的一句名言。萧伯纳是一位诙谐



用语大师。“一切进步有赖于不通情达理者。”这句话听来可笑，但他的推理是如此合乎逻辑又如此巧妙，以致一句貌似荒唐的话在这里成了一个几乎是无懈可击的论断，闪发出真理的光辉。难道那些不满足于现状、不随波逐流、以百折不挠的精神从事社会变革的人们不正是给历史发展以巨大的推动力吗？萧伯纳这里使用的unreasonable man当然有其特定的内涵，但这却是大家所能接受的。

一些初学英文写作的人写出的文章概念不清，判断不当，说服力不强，除了由于对英语本身的掌握还不到家，以致在写作时词不达意外，其原因往往在于他们违背了思维必须遵循的各种规律。违背思维规律的表现形式多种多样，现略举几种分析如下，看看它们是怎样妨碍思想的准确表达的。

表现之一是把两个不同的概念混合为同一概念。请看：

Friction is when one surface rubs against another.

这句话从前半部分看，作者试图在阐述摩擦的定义，即回答“什么是摩擦”，然而后半部却在说明“什么时候发生摩擦”。这种概念不清的错误产生于违反了思维的同一律，因此就谈不上准确。要准确地表达摩擦的定义，句子应该改为：Friction is the rubbing of one surface against another.类似上述性质的错误在下一句中也有所反映：

An example of discrimination is an attendant, especially when he refused to serve blacks.

显而易见，歧视的事例不是这位服务员，而是他拒绝招待黑人这一举动。这句话混淆了人和事的概念，原话应改为：

An example of discrimination is an attendant's refusal to serve blacks.

表现之二是把并存不悖的事物误作为相互排斥对立来分析，例如：

Women must choose between a home and a career.

在这句话里，“家庭”和“事业”是虚假的对立。现实告诉我们，妇女完全能够既处理好家务又在工作上做出成绩。既然这是一种人为的矛盾对

立，两者必居其一的抉择也就失去了前提。由于作者的思维不严密，导致了片面错误的判断。

表现之三是得出的结论缺乏充分的理由和根据。如下面一例：

All Germans like opera; I have never met a German who did not.

这里的前一句是结论，后一句是作者提供的根据。但是除非是为了故意夸张，否则这样写是不符合推理规则的。要得到“所有的德国人都喜欢歌剧”的结论需要有两个前提：一、他碰到过所有的德国人；二、他发现他们都喜欢歌剧。由于他只能碰到一部分，无法碰到所有的德国人，因此他的结论“所有的德国人都喜欢歌剧”就缺乏充分的根据，很可能是不准确的。根据他的自身经历，当然也可以进行推理，但合情合理的结论应该是“Many Germans like opera”。保证文章准确性的重要条件之一就是要像前面那个“节食减肥”文章片断所显示的那样，既“言之有物”又“言之有理”，论证必须理由充分才能令人信服。

违背思维规律的表现之四是文字模棱两可，它也是一种逻辑上的混乱，常常影响文章的准确性。让我们举这样一个例子：某人把自己刚出版的一本书寄给他的朋友，不久他收到了朋友的回信。信上说：

I am so glad to receive your book. I shall lose no time reading it.

这是一句看了令人哭笑不得的话，因为它可以做出两种完全相反的解释：我将马上拜读你的书，或我不想花费时间去读你的书。也许写信人确实对这书不感兴趣，所以故意玩弄文字游戏，说句俏皮话，这当然另作别论。就一般理解而言，他的语言不能准确表达他的本意。这是个无意识的，然而性质严重的错误，因为他同时肯定了两个相互对立的态度，从而陷入了自相矛盾之中。

违背思维规律的逻辑错误除了以上列举的以外，当然还有别的表现形式，有些我们留在以后的有关章节里进一步讨论。

在写作中讲究逻辑十分重要。在本节中我们主要讲了概念推理判断的逻



辑性，其实不仅分析议论要讲逻辑，说明、记叙、描写也同样要合乎逻辑。自觉地遵循逻辑规律进行思维是准确地反映和表达思想的必要条件。当然逻辑贯穿于写作的全过程和整篇文章之中，从构思选材，谋篇布局，到用词造句都离不开它。所以讲究逻辑不仅与文章的准确性，而且与文章的其他要求都密切相关。

## 2. 鲜明

鲜明是好文章的又一基本要求。语言写得清晰易懂，思想表达得明朗突出，读者就能理解作者的意思。在特殊场合下，人们有时也需要用模糊语言表达模糊概念，但这种情况毕竟属于少数。

写作中碰到的许多问题都影响到文章的鲜明性。比如选择贴切的词汇和适当的句型结构能使意思表达得准确清晰；如果代词的指代混乱或分词短语的逻辑主语没有着落，句子就会含糊不清。段落的中心是否突出，衔接是否紧密也直接与意义表达是否清楚有关。在正式写文章前认真拟定大纲细目，能有助于作者对写什么和怎样写有明确的打算；如果作者自己的思想混乱，要写出鲜明的好文章也是不可能的。

请先读下面一段文章：

And how is clarity acquired? Mainly by taking trouble; and by writing to serve people rather to impress them. Most obscurity, I suspect, comes not so much from incompetence as from ambition—the ambition to be admired for depth of sense, or pomp of sound, or wealth of ornament. It is for the writer to think and rethink his ideas till they are clear; to put them in clear order; to prefer (other things equal, and subject to the law of variety) short words, sentences and paragraphs to long; not to try to say too many things at once; to eschew irrelevances; and, above all, to put himself with imaginative sympathy in his reader's place. Everyone knows of Molière reading his plays to his cook; eight centuries before him, in distant China,



Po Chu-i had done the like; and Swift's Dublin publisher, Faulkner, would similarly read Swift's proofs aloud to him and two of his men-servants—"which, if they did not comprehend, he would alter and amend, until they understood it perfectly well. "In short, it is usually the pretentious and the egotistic who are obscure, especially in prose; those who write with wider sympathy, to serve some purpose beyond themselves, must usually be muddy-minded creatures if they cannot, or will not, be clear.

这篇文章摘自美国当代评论家F. L. 卢卡斯(F.L.Lucas)的一篇议论文风格的散文，其笔调是何等清晰流畅。他态度鲜明，语气真挚，用词造句平易通俗，整段意思层次分明，充分反映了他的严密思维和对语言运用自如的功力。他对怎样才能把文章写得清晰易懂做出了明确的回答，不但提出作者应树立为读者服务的思想，切忌卖弄玄虚，而且在具体写作技巧方面也发表了很好的意见。卢卡斯在这里谈的是明晰朴实的文风，而他自己的文章正为读者提供了一个极好的范例。

下面一段文字就完全不同，写得含糊其辞，叫人不知所云：

In order to find solutions to the problems confronting them today, it is necessary that each group be represented by one of its members. But because the individuals chosen are mere members of a whole individual group, alone the member is ineffective. For the groups from indivisible entities and its parts, when taken separately, fail to function effectively.

这一段的第一句写得还不错，意思比较明确，可是第二句和第三句却几乎只是词汇的堆砌，读了使人摸不着头脑。人们不能不提出一系列问题：第二句中的member一词该怎样理解？这一句中的主句和从句究竟有什么逻辑联系？至于第三句的主语部分就更加空洞含糊。产生上述问题的原因也许是作者词不达意，句子结构混乱；也许是他自己对解决问题的途径缺乏明确认识。如果把第二、三两句做如下修改，文章就鲜明得多，当然由于我们无法



肯定作者究竟要表达什么思想，修改后的句子只是一个可能的解释而已：

...But one person who speaks only for himself is limited in what he can do. Progress cannot be made until that person is able to speak as the representative of a united group.

从上面的例子中我们可以看到，要使文章鲜明，就得在用词造句上狠下工夫，力求把每个词语、每个句子的意思都表达得一清二楚。当然，如果从文章全局的角度出发，我们还应该看到，中心是否突出也是影响鲜明性的重要因素。一篇好文章必须有一个中心内容，它贯穿文章始终，使通篇成为一个统一的整体。这个问题实际上也关系到作者的思维能力。如果他本身的思想条理不清，逻辑性不强，写出的文章就一定东拉西扯，节外生枝，成为一个多中心的大杂烩，读者自然也就难以领会他究竟要说些什么。

下面是一个美国学生写的作文《我为什么想当土木工程师》：

### Why I Wish to Be an Engineer

Many of my friends are undecided about what they want to be. But my choice has been an easy one. For nearly as long as I remember I have wanted to be an engineer.

I suppose that one reason why I want to be an engineer is that my father is an engineer. He was a student here at the State University before World War I. He began his college career with the intention of being a doctor, but the war got him into the army, and he wound up a major in the Engineering Corps. His war experience was valuable to him in more ways than one, for he says it taught him how to deal with men of all kinds and to get work done under pressure. After the war, he went to Mexico and worked on building a railroad in the mountains.

There is a great future for an engineer in my country. It is true that during the

depression many engineers were out of work, but that was true of many occupations and professions. Engineering is especially important today, for we are in the midst of a technological revolution which will mean the rebuilding of many old plants and development of new transport facilities. They say we American people are very mechanical-minded, and I see nothing to be ashamed of in that.

I make my best marks in mathematics, which is the basis of engineering, and I think that a man should follow his best talent. I like other subjects, too—history, for instance, and I read a good many novels and stories. But I cannot see myself making a profession of any of these fields. Business would be too confining for me. I have an uncle who is a lawyer, and it seems to me that he never gets out of his office except to come home at night. Taking everything together, I think that engineering is the right profession for me.

仔细阅读这篇作文，我们可以看出这位作者为确立当工程师的理想提出了三条理由：家庭背景，工程师这种职业的前途以及他对数学的爱好。这三点加上一头一尾是他的文章的总结构。但是这并不是一篇中心明确的作文，因为作者插进了许多跟主题无关的内容，从而破坏了文章的统一性。他像一个不高明的汽车司机一样，虽然规定了目的地，可是在驾驶过程中老是偏离方向。比如在第二段中，他要谈家庭对他做出当工程师决定的影响，但除了第一句外，其他部分全用在介绍他父亲的经历，至于身为工程师的父亲怎样激起儿子对工程建筑的兴趣，他却只字未提。第三段的末尾也跟工程师的前途没有直接关系。第四段开头刚讲他数学成绩好，适于当工程师，马上就转到了他的其他爱好和他叔父的工作上面，从而又一次离了题。

下面一篇作文就写得很好，这是北京一个13岁的学生在万国邮联举办的1983年青少年国际书信比赛中荣获金奖的作品。全信自始至终围绕着中国小朋友和爱斯基摩小朋友之间的深厚友谊这一中心，而这个中心是靠邮政通讯把五洲四海联结起来(即信中反复出现的postal link一词)这一条思想线索展开



的。文章主题突出，想象丰富，感情真挚，读来十分亲切感人：

March 20th, 1983

My little Eskimo friends,

How are you? It was me—a Chinese kid with yellow skin and black hair who received your letter addressed, "to the little one who loves the post." And when I got it I was so surprised to read, "from the North Pole." I thought, "Hey! Who on earth would write to me from the North Pole, a world of snow and ice?" But after I read it, I knew. It was you, my little friends in Eskimo land.

In your letter, you told me, "We are living so far from many other countries. We are living in a white world. The sky is white, the ice is white, the animals are white, and even our houses are white. How nice it would be if the post could be a colorful link through which all of our letters could be sent everywhere and bring us close together. With this link, our white world would be dotted with color."

I was greatly moved by your idea, because my father, mother and sister all work for the post office, and I also want to work there when I grow up. My parents told me the post office gets many letters from all over the world everyday; even from Australia, a country of kangaroos, and from equatorial Africa. Most fly to China from countries in Europe and America. And a few days ago, we received your letter from the North Pole.

This postal link is really a beautiful link, which can be seen in tropical forests, on the warm plains, and even in your North Pole. It's very miraculous, isn't it?

Well, I have another interesting story to tell you. One night I dreamt I was sitting on the postal link, following the north wind whistling to the North Pole. I saw you there on your white coast, waiting for me and clapping your hands. The polar bears swimming in the water greeted me too. I got off the link and went with you to



a glistening igloo, where everyone was singing and dancing, and a polar bear was playing the accordion.

My little Eskimo friends, we welcome you to come and see China. Just like the people in your white world, the people here are brave, hardworking and friendly. I would be glad to have you come to me on this postal link. When you visit, I will take you walking along the Great Wall, and out to enjoy the beauty of west Lake. Come, my little friends! I am waiting for you; the Chinese people are waiting for you.

Wishing you a pleasant journey.

Yours,

Wang Zhongqun

与中心突出一样，紧凑连贯是决定文章鲜明性的又一重要因素。紧凑连贯是指文章的各个部分(无论是段落还是句子)应该围绕中心思想有机地结合起来。它们之间的相互关系应该得到准确鲜明的体现。当作者从上一句过渡到下一句，从上一段过渡到下一段时，他必须使读者看得见思想联系。

紧凑连贯与中心突出有着密切的关系，但是它们的概念不同。如果说中心突出是指所有内容都跟主题有关，那么紧凑连贯则意味着把这些内容安排得顺理成章。为了使中心突出，作者须删去一切与中心无关的内容，实现紧凑连贯则是把选定的内容之间的内在关系处理得明白无误。

请看下面一段。

Some arid regions of the world receive an average of only two or three-hundredths of an inch of rain annually and may go on for years without getting a drop. Rain usually comes in torrential downpours.

假如把这里的前后两句分割开来，它们的意思是清晰易懂的，然而由于它们组成一段，两句之间理应存在必然的逻辑联系。但究竟是什么联系，读者就很难从文字上看得出了。如果我们对这一段做如下修改，在两句话之间