

高校英文写作教材系列



石坚 帅培天 主编

# 英文写作

English Writing

*From Sentence to Paragraph and to Theme*

句子 · 段落 · 篇章



四川出版集团 · 四川人民出版社

 高校英文写作教材系列

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石坚 帅培天 主编

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## 前 言

从事高校英语写作教学及研究多年,一直心仪能有一整套供师生从低年级到高年级使用的写作教材。这套教材应包括基础英语写作、英语应用文写作和高级阶段的英语论文写作。作为基础阶段的教材,应从句子到段落,再到篇章,帮助学生打下坚实的英语写作基础;应用文写作则为增强学生应用英语进行交际的能力添砖加瓦;论文写作应从普通论文讲起,再到学术论文,初步培养学生从事学术研究、撰写学术文章的能力。这套教材,可分阶段教材自成体系,但从知识和技能的讲解及训练规划上讲,应循序渐进,具有系统性。这套教材应有很好的可操作性,理论的讲解和技巧的介绍应深入浅出,环环相扣,且能及时和准确地得到操练,转化为学生的“知识”。这套教材,既然是英文教材,就必须使学生在使用过程中感到自始至终沉浸在英美语言文化的浓重氛围之中,逐步脱离汉语母语的影响,养成新的写作习惯,写出地道的英语文章。让中国学生把英语文章写得真正像英美人士所写,并非易事,但正因为此,一套好的英语写作教材更应把东西方思维模式、行为方式、生活习惯等对各自语言和语言的应用的影响说得使人信服。这样的写作教材,让人心仪,也给人以创作的冲动。《英文写作——句子·段落·篇章》正是这种创作冲动的产物。该书的主要对象是大学本科低年级学生,对其他英文学习和工作者而言,不乏为一部指导性的专著。

这部专著/教材努力体现上述愿望。全书分为四大部分。第一部分为英语写作知识与技巧概述,引用语言学的新成果,分析对比了东西方不同民族的思维表达方式和习惯,提出了怎样才能写出地道英语的原则。第二、三部分介绍从句子到段落,再到篇章的写作知识与技巧,让学生通过知识与技巧的运用,实现用英语写作短文、传递信息和表达思想的目标。第四部分介绍两种特殊形式的英文写作——文章概要和读书报告的写作,适应大学英语教育的普遍要求。

在第三部分“从段落到篇章”中,本书采用 theme 一词泛指有别于“段落”的“篇章”。在英美国家的学校里,几乎每一门课程,教师们都会要求学生写 theme 去传递信息和表达思想。在不同的学习阶段,一篇 theme 可长可短,可以是一个段落,可以是一篇包含几个段落的短文。一些学者把长的 expository paragraph 称作 theme,而把有几个段落的 expository writing 称作 essay;另一些学者则用 theme 一词泛指所有表达一个中心思想的短文。这类短文,从体裁上讲,可以是说明文、议论文,也可以是记叙文或描写文,但从表达一个中心思想的角度讲,它们本质上是论说性文章。本书取学者们的后一种界说,目的非常明确:一、大学一、二年级学生通过写作训练,学会用英语写作短文传递信息、表达思想应是阶段性任务(写

文章概要和读书报告也一样);二、根据形式服务于内容的原则,把文章的体裁和通过内容传达的信息统一起来,让学生摆脱形式(体裁)的束缚,初步明白各种不同体裁的文字都可以“说事”,为高年级专攻英语论文写作作准备。

在讨论 theme 的基本结构时,本书以当然“说事”的论说文为基础,但在议论篇章拓展技巧时,又不拘于此:举例不乏记叙和描写性文字,这使以传递信息和表达思想为目的的写作多了一分文学色彩,多了一分对造就作家的贡献。

本书有以下一些特点:

1. 全书深入浅出,以第一人称写成,充分体现了人文精神,让使用者以平等的身份参与问题的讨论,增强写作地道英语短文的自信心。
2. 各章节均配有大量练习,练习难易有致,教师和学生可以自由取舍,灵活选用。练习编排采用了“预测—实践—效果检测”三段循环式的科学方法。预测可以唤起读者的求知欲;实践使其熟悉写作技巧,获得真知;效果检测既可起到复习巩固所学写作知识和技巧的作用,又可增强读者提高写作能力的自信心。
3. 创造性地把标点符号的使用融入了文章整体性与连贯性的讨论,改变了写作书籍孤立对待标点符号的传统做法。
4. 举例多引自当代英美原著,但并不生搬硬套,这使全书既摆脱了中式英语的束缚又切合中国学生学习的实际需要。

本书考虑了非英语专业学生的需要。因全书用英文写成,部分非英语专业的学生有可能望而生畏,这个问题可由指导教师的合理使用加以解决。比如理论部分只作提要式讲解,重在指导练习,并可向学生提示个别生词。

编著者

2006年1月

# CONTENTS

## Part One A General Introduction to English Writing

- I. Writing in Our World / 1
- II. Types of Writing / 2
  - 1. Narration / 2
  - 2. Description / 5
  - 3. Exposition / 7
- III. Writing Well / 15
  - 1. Writing for Your Readers / 15
  - 2. Good Writing / 15

## Part Two From Sentence to Paragraph

- I. Sentence Structure / 30
  - 1. Elements of a Sentence / 31
  - 2. Kinds of Sentences / 33
  - 3. Clause Connectors / 35
  - 4. Coordination and Subordination / 38
  - 5. Parallelism / 45
- II. Paragraph Structure / 51
  - 1. The Basic Paragraph / 52
  - 2. Four Elements of the Paragraph / 52
  - 3. Mechanics in Writing a Paragraph / 54
- III. Basic Paragraph-Building Skills / 56
  - 1. Taking Four Pre-Writing Steps / 56
  - 2. Making Our Topic Sentence a Helpful Guide / 61
  - 3. Loading Our Topic Sentence with a Strong Controlling Idea / 75
  - 4. Writing a Helpful Outline in Advance / 80

5. Gaining Unity / 90
  6. Gaining Coherence from Logical Order / 96
  7. Gaining Coherence from Transitions / 102
  8. Gaining Better Unity and Coherence from Punctuation / 111
- IV. Sentence Problems / 134
1. Sentence Fragments / 134
    - Fragments Without Verbs / 134
    - Fragments Without Subjects / 135
    - Fragments Without Subjects and/or Verbs / 135
    - Fragments of Dependent Clauses / 136
  2. Choppy Sentences / 138
  3. Run-Together Sentences / 138
  4. Stringy Sentences / 140
  5. Confusing Shifts / 141
    - Confusing Shifts in Person / 142
    - Confusing Shifts in Tense / 143
    - Confusing Shifts in Subject and Voice / 143
    - Confusing Shifts in Mood or Speech / 144
    - Confusing Shifts in Number / 145
    - Mixed Sentence Construction / 145
  6. Incomplete Constructions / 147
    - Careless Omissions / 147
    - Incomplete Comparisons / 148
  7. Ambiguous Pronoun Reference / 150
    - A Pronoun with Two or More Possible Antecedents / 150
    - A Pronoun Without Clearly Expressed Antecedent / 151
    - The Pronouns *It*, *They*, and *You* with Indefinite Antecedents / 151
    - The Pronouns *This*, *That* and *Which* Referring to General Ideas / 152
    - A Pronoun Too Far Away from Its Antecedent / 152
  8. Dangling Modifiers / 153
    - Dangling Participial Modifiers / 154
    - Dangling Gerunds in Prepositional Phrases / 154
    - Dangling Infinitive Modifiers / 155
    - Dangling Abbreviated Clauses / 155
  9. Misplaced Modifiers / 157
    - Misplaced Prepositional Phrases / 157
    - Misplaced Adjective Clauses / 158

- Misplaced Adverbial Modifiers / 158
10. Wordiness / 160
- Needless Repetition / 160
- Needless Expansion / 161
- Awkward Clichés / 162
- Overwritten Style / 162

## **Part Three** From Paragraph to Theme

- I. Introduction / 165
- II. Three Kinds of Paragraphs / 166
1. The Introductory Paragraph / 167
2. The Body Paragraph / 173
3. The Concluding Paragraph / 177
- III. Basic Theme-Building Skills / 179
1. Getting the Theme Well-Unified with an Effective Thesis Statement / 180
2. Getting the Theme Coherent with Transitions Between Paragraphs / 185
3. Developing the Theme Under the Guidance of a Well-Organized Outline / 189
- Process Theme in Time Order / 194
- Descriptive Theme in Order of Importance / 199
- Theme of Classification in Order of Importance / 202
- Theme of Comparison and Contrast in Order of Importance / 203
- Theme of Cause and Effect in Order of Importance / 204
- Theme of Exemplification in Time Order, or Order of Importance / 208
- IV. Sample Themes Observed / 210

## **Part Four** Summary and Book Report

- I. Summary Writing / 223
- II. Book Report Writing / 231

Correction Symbols / 235

Partial Answers to Exercises / 236

Bibliography / 243



# Part One

## A General Introduction to English Writing

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### I

#### Writing in Our World

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Writing is a way to reach out to your world. When you write, you write to someone. You write to be read. Writing is also a way to find out about yourself. It is a way to explore your ideas, feelings, and dreams. Sometimes you write for others and sometimes you write just for yourself. Sometimes you write to explore ideas.

Writing is creating, and you are its creator. Writing is thinking, and it is discovering what you think. Writing is a way of finding out about your world. Writing is a way to change it! That is a powerful thought. Writing is powerful. It is a powerful tool in your world and in the wonderful world of language.

—ideas from *World of Language*

## II

# Types of Writing

---

Different types of writing are required for different purposes. In general, we can divide writing into three kinds: *narration*, *description*, and *exposition*.

*Narration* tells "what happened." It tells a story. It is the kind of writing that we find in novels, short stories, and biographies.

*Description* tells how something looks or feels or sounds. It talks about such features as size, shape, color, sound, or taste.

*Exposition* is the writing that explains something. It often answers the questions *what*, *how* and *why*. Its purpose is to present ideas and to make the ideas as clear as possible.

It is not always easy to decide what is narration, what is description, and what is exposition. Often a piece of writing includes all three types. A narration may include some description and some exposition. An exposition may use some narration and description in order to explain something as completely as possible. Usually it is possible, however, to decide whether a piece of writing is *mainly* narration or *mainly* description or *mainly* exposition.



### Pre-test

Which of the three kinds of writing is illustrated by this paragraph?

One day a crow stole a piece of cheese from a woman's kitchen and flew with it to a tree. A fox who was very hungry saw the crow. He said to the crow, "You have a beautiful voice. Won't you sing for me?" The crow was very pleased by the compliment. As he opened his mouth to sing, the piece of cheese fell to the ground. The fox snatched the cheese and ran away.

## I Narration

There are various ways to organize the sentences in a piece of writing. In narration the sentences are usually organized according to *time order*. One thing happens and then another thing happens, and the events are told in the same order.

We are familiar with time order because we have noticed it when we were reading stories. The story we just read in the Pre-test about the fox and crow follows time order. The sentences in the paragraph tell the story just as the events happened. To show the order of events, the sentences could be arranged like this:

A. A crow stole a piece of cheese from a woman's kitchen.

- B. He flew with it to a tree.
- C. A hungry fox saw the crow.
- D. He said to the crow, "You have a beautiful voice. Won't you sing for me?"
- E. The crow was very pleased by the compliment.
- F. He opened his mouth to sing.
- G. The piece of cheese fell to the ground.
- H. The fox snatched the cheese.
- I. He ran away.

Because the events happened in a certain order, it is important that the sentences in the story follow one another in a certain order. Suppose the sentences were arranged like this:

- He ran away.
- A crow stole a piece of cheese from a woman's kitchen.
- A hungry fox saw the crow.
- He opened his mouth to sing.
- He said to the crow, "You have a beautiful voice. Won't you sing for me?" etc.

If the sentences were arranged like this, the story would be so mixed up that we could not understand it. We can see how important it is to arrange the sentences in good order.

To gain a good order, sometimes we need the help of time-order words. If we read the following paragraph about kite flying, we will notice that the italicized words tell about time order.

Kite flying began *long ago*. For *thousands of years* people have sent kites soaring into the sky. *Recently*, kite flying has become popular. *Today* hobby shops sell many kinds of kites. Are you ready *now* to try this sport? *At first* you may feel clumsy. *Before long* you will gain skill. *Soon* you will learn to control a kite. *Someday* you may even enter kite flying contests.

## Practice 1

1. The sentences that follow have no order. Write the correct order on the lines provided.

- 1) A. George liked one of them.
- B. The librarian gave him three books to look at.
- C. George visited the library.
- D. He checked the book out and took it home with him.
- E. He asked for a book to read.

\_\_\_\_\_ , \_\_\_\_\_ , \_\_\_\_\_ , \_\_\_\_\_ , \_\_\_\_\_

- 2) A. The small car turned over.
- B. There was an accident at the street corner.
- C. The two men inside it were badly injured.

- D. A large truck hit a small car.
- E. The police took them to a hospital.

\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_

- 3) A. The house began to leak.  
B. Then leaks began in other rooms.  
C. Fortunately the rain stopped then and the sun came out.  
D. The bad leak started in the living room.  
E. It rained steadily for two days.

\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_

- 4) A. They came to school ready to write the exam.  
B. The students studied very hard for it.  
C. He was sick that day.  
D. They found that the teacher was not there.  
E. The teacher said he would give an examination.

\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_

2. Think about the list of topics that follow. Put a T before each topic that you would probably develop according to *time order* if you were writing about it.

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_ The Importance of Good Health Habits
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_ My Vacation Trip
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_ Spring Is My Favorite Season
- 4) \_\_\_\_\_ The Characteristics of Indian Music
- 5) \_\_\_\_\_ Why I Want to Be a Lawyer
- 6) \_\_\_\_\_ How I Spent Last Sunday
- 7) \_\_\_\_\_ The Growth of Opportunities for Women in Business and the Profession
- 8) \_\_\_\_\_ My Favorite Actor

3. Write the sentences below as a paragraph, and discover how the story goes with the *time-order words*.

- A. At first I felt annoyed.
- B. One day my sister told me to go to fly a kite.
- C. I next asked my sister to help me make a kite.
- D. Finally she agreed to do it.
- E. Then when I thought about it, I said, "Why not?"

4. Copy the sentences in Exercise 1 in paragraph form. After you have copied the sentences in paragraphs, read the paragraphs to make sure that you have put the sentences in the correct time order. Also be sure that you have copied the sentences correctly, with no mistakes in spelling or pronunciation.

## 2 Description

We have seen that narration usually follows time order. *Description* may follow various kinds of order, depending on what is being described. If we are describing a man, we will choose different things to say than if we are describing a mountain or a restaurant or a dress.

One kind of description follows *space order*. In space order we tell *where* things are. This is the order we will probably follow if we want to describe a place.

For example, here is a description of a classroom.

**Example 1:** The classroom is large, clean and well lighted. The walls are pale green. In the wall at the left as you enter there are three large windows. The teacher's desk is in the front. Blackboards cover most of the wall at the right.

We may notice that the writer describes how the room looks from the door—what is on the left, what is in front, and what is on the right. It does not matter which way we move in our description. The important thing is to have some order that will be easy for the reader to follow.

Now, let's compare the description using space order with the description of a man.

**Example 2:** The man who opened the door in answer to my knock was an elderly man, white-haired and bent. He looked at me over his spectacles, which were far down on his nose. In spite of his age, his dark eyes were keen and his voice was clear and strong. I noticed that he was wearing a bright-colored sports shirt.

In describing the man, the writer selected the man's most interesting and most outstanding features. This description is quite different from a description of a place based on space order. The kind of description we use depends on what we are describing.

### Practice 2

1. The sentences that follow have no order. Write the correct order on the lines provided.

- 1) A. There are four single beds on both sides of the room.
- B. On the desk are some books and newspapers.
- C. This is a bedroom for the students of Teachers' Training Class.
- D. In the middle there stands four desks and chairs.
- E. It is a small but clean bedroom.

\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_

2) A. Behind the house a hill rose sharply.

B. Standing at the edge of the road, I looked up the gently winding driveway that climbed to the front of the

house.

- C. I had never seen such a lovely setting for a house.
- D. The hill ended in a curved peak that seemed to frame the whole scene.
- E. The house stood on a level space surrounded by all oak trees.

\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_

- 3) A. Then you will come to a hallway leading to the library's music room.
- B. Walking around the information desk to the left, you will pass a children's reading room on your right.
- C. The sign reads, "To the Music Room."
- D. As you enter the main door of the library, you will see the information desk directly in front of you.
- E. At the end of the hallway, you will see a sign.

\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_

- 4) A. He spent the first fifteen minutes of the hour working on the first of ten examination problems.
- B. He spent other minutes doodling on his test paper.
- C. Jose did not complete his mathematics examination yesterday.
- D. Like many college students, he does not know how to use time profitably during an examination.

\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_

- 5) A. Kathy is athletic.
- B. No one in school can catch up with her at the track meets.
- C. She has won many swimming awards.
- D. She is an excellent fencer.
- E. Her teammates chose her to be captain of the basketball team.

\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_

2. Think about the list of topics that follows. Put an S before each topic that you would probably develop according to *space order*.

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_ I Enjoy Weekends
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_ She Is Intelligent
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_ Our Campus
- 4) \_\_\_\_\_ Linda Is an Artist
- 5) \_\_\_\_\_ A Scenic View
- 6) \_\_\_\_\_ Our Library
- 7) \_\_\_\_\_ Nanjing Road on Sunday
- 8) \_\_\_\_\_ My Native Town

3. Copy the sentences in Exercise 1 in paragraph form according to the order in which you numbered them. After you have copied the sentences in paragraphs, read the paragraphs to make sure that you have put the sentences in the correct order. Pay attention to the space order. Also be sure that you have copied the sentences correctly, with no mistakes in spelling or pronunciation.

### 3 Exposition

Narration tells what happened. Description tells how something looked or felt or sounded. *Exposition* explains something. Here are some examples of exposition.

Example 1: Our teeth are very important to use. There are two main uses for teeth. One is to chew our food, which then is easy to swallow and digest. The second use is to help us talk. We put our tongues against our teeth to make certain sounds. It is difficult to understand what a person is saying if he does not have any teeth.

We may notice that this paragraph does not tell about a happening and it does not describe the teeth. The paragraph explains why our teeth are important.

Example 2: The common housefly is very dangerous. It carries germs in its mouth and on its legs and feet. The legs and feet are covered with small hairs. On these hairs there are thousands and thousands of germs. One fly may carry as many as 6,000,000 germs. When a fly stops and eats some food, it leaves thousands of germs on the food.

We may notice that the first sentence says that the housefly is dangerous. Then the sentences that follow explain what this means. They explain by telling why the housefly is dangerous and how it spreads germs.

What kind of order does *exposition* follow? Because *exposition* tries to make ideas clear and understandable to the reader, we say that it follows *logical order*. There are various kinds of logical order. We will learn more about them as we go on in these composition lessons.

### Practice 3

1. The sentences that follow have no order. Write the correct order on the lines provided.
  - 1) A. Since there is usually no pain except when the ankle is moved, it gives victims a perfect rest and a delightful reason to be waited on.
  - B. It never kills anyone, and it always gets better in a short time.
  - C. Because a sprained ankle offers all the benefits of an illness and few of the disadvantages, it is very popular complaint.
  - D. It brings sympathy and is a reason for a week's absence from.

\_\_\_\_\_ , \_\_\_\_\_ , \_\_\_\_\_ , \_\_\_\_\_ , \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) A. Yesterday Mr. Chan kept the Frisbee when it landed on his front porch.
- B. Mrs. Brown calls the police whenever we want to play ball on the street.
- C. If we happen to stray into Mr. Hardy's yard, he yells at us.
- D. All the people on our block give us trouble.

E. Mrs. Johnson complains that skateboarding makes too much noise.

\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_

3) A. I had a terrible morning today.

B. In the middle of a class, I discovered I had left my physics assignments in my locker.

C. I tripped over a curb on my way to my political science class and tore my raincoat.

D. At the end of the class, the professor would not let me go to lunch on time.

E. I slept so late that I did not have time to eat any breakfast.

F. I had not turned in my assignments, and he wanted to talk over this problem with me.

\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_

4) A. When the bus arrives, someone always tries to push past you to get in first.

B. You have to wait in long lines at the bus stop.

C. It is hard to travel to work by bus during the rush hour.

D. It certainly is a relief when you finally reach your stop.

E. A passenger standing near to you might shove his or her elbow in your ribs, step on your toes, or even drop cigarettes ashes on you.

F. After you pay your fare, you are shoved down the aisle by the rest of the boarding passenger.

\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_

2. Think about the list of topics that follows. Put an L before each topic that you would probably develop according to *logical order*.

1) \_\_\_\_\_ Weekends Mean Different Things to Different People

2) \_\_\_\_\_ I Enjoyed a Wonderful Holiday

3) \_\_\_\_\_ A Person You Are Familiar with

4) \_\_\_\_\_ Why Is the Weather Changeable

5) \_\_\_\_\_ My First day to School

6) \_\_\_\_\_ I Always Feel Lonely

7) \_\_\_\_\_ A Tale of a Little Girl

8) \_\_\_\_\_ A Visit to a Foreign Country Is Always Filled with Surprises

3. Copy the sentences in Exercise 1 in paragraph form according to the order in which you numbered them. After you have copied the sentences in paragraphs, read the paragraphs to make sure that you have put the sentences in the correct logical order. Also be sure that you have copied the sentences correctly, with no mistakes in spelling or pronunciation.

 **Post-test**

1. See if you can identify the types of writing in the following paragraphs. Mark each paragraph *N* (for Narration), *D* (for Description), or *E* (for Exposition).

\_\_\_\_\_ The robin is a common American bird. It grows about 9 or 10 inches long. The male has a rusty-red breast, dark gray upper parts, and a blackish head. Its tail feathers are tipped with white. The female is usually slightly smaller than the male and of duller color. Robins live in North America from Mexico to



Alaska.

\_\_\_ Special schools have been developed in Iran to meet the educational needs of nomads. Nomads are people who move from place to place. Because they move so often, their children cannot read or write. Consequently the government of Iran cannot send letters to them or make agreements with them. To solve the educational problem, the government has started schools in tents in the nomad camps.

\_\_\_ The traveler stepped into the hall of the old castle and looked around. It was a large room with stone walls. Several sleeping dogs lay against the wall on the left. In the middle of the room there was a fire. The smoke rose to a hole in the ceiling, but some of it remained in the room. The windows, high in the wall on the right, were not very large and the great room was rather dark.

\_\_\_ In 1928 an English doctor was working in his laboratory in a London hospital. The doctor's name was Alexander Fleming. One day he found a tiny bit of mold in dish that he was using in his work. He started to throw the mold away. Then he noticed that it seemed unusual. He kept the mold and studied it for a long time. He discovered that it could kill germs. He named it *Penicillin*.

\_\_\_ Many foods contain small amounts of substances called vitamins. Vitamins are necessary to the health of the body. Even if we eat a lot of food, we will not be healthy unless the food contains enough vitamins. Vitamins are important for healthy eyes and skin, strong bones and teeth, normal growth, and the regulation of the work of the body's organs.

2. "Literature unlocks our imagination." Read and try to appreciate the works of literature. Then, talk with your friends in what basic writing type each of the pieces is.

A

The month Rinko spent on Mrs. Hata's farm one summer was filled with surprises. Auntie Hata and her sons, Zenny and Abu, were much nicer than Rinko had expected. The old man living in Mrs. Hata's barn turned out to be a master kite maker from Japan.

Rinko was amazed when she first walked into the barn and saw the colorful kites hanging from the walls and rafters. She watched in wonder while the old man painted a samurai, kite with the glaring eyes of a warrior's face. As he worked, the old man told Rinko about the magic of kite flying. He said that flying a kite lets you become part of the sky. "You become the kite and the sky and the universe itself," the old man told her, "and then we are all one and the same."

That day, Rinko wasn't sure what the old man meant about the kite and the sky and the universe. Yet one day she understood his meaning. Here is Rinko's story of how it happened.

One evening when I was washing the supper dishes, the old man came to the back door with two of his kites. One was the diamond kite with the cross-eyed samurai who looked as if he'd just swallowed some of Dr. Oniki's awful brown medicine for stomach flu. The other was the yellow-and-black butterfly I'd seen hanging from the rafters of the barn. "Anybody interested in flying these before it gets dark?" he asked.

"Yeah, me!" Zenny yelled, and I saw the life suddenly come back to his face.

I noticed right away that the old man had only two kites. He's leaving me out again, I thought. But the old man thrust the butterfly kite toward me and said, "Well, come on, Rinko. Hurry up and dry your hands. I'll help you get this one up."