

英语专业教材

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英语写作基础

BASIC WRITING



西北工业大学出版社

English Writing
Basic Writing

— Basic Writing

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【内容简介】 本书是为英语专业本专科学生打好英语写作基础而编写的教材。全书共分为七大部分,即用词、句子、段落、文章、实用文、论文写作、文稿格式及标点符号。本书在编写中充分考虑到中国学生的实际英语写作水平和存在的问题,本着既要打好英语写作的知识和语言基础,更要侧重培养学生的写作应用能力这一目的,提供了大量例句、例段、范文及实用写作方面的用语,便于学生模仿和实践。

本书还可供非英语专业的研究生、广大英语爱好者以及大、中学校英语教师在练习、指导写作时使用,也可作为提高英语写作的自学教材。

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前言

English Writing—Basic Writing English Writing—Basic Writing English Writing—Basic Writing English Writing—Basic Writing

英语写作基础是英语专业本专科学生一门重要的写作实践课程,旨在培养学生英语写作的基本技能,教授英语写作的最基本内容,为此我们特编写了这本《英语写作基础》教材。本书主要包括:用词、句子、段落、文章、实用文、论文写作、文稿格式及标点符号等七个部分的内容。

本书在编写过程中充分考虑到我国大学生的英语写作实际状况,仔细研究了国内外英语写作教材的编写原则与特点,既注意打好英语写作的语言基础,更侧重培养学生的应用能力,特别是实际使用书面英语进行涉外交际的能力。在上述总体思路的指导下,本书更新了教学理念和部分内容体系,这主要体现在以下几个方面:

一、难度适中,便于学生学习与掌握。本书所选原著的段落、例文、例句及范文比较浅易,一般没有超出学生所掌握的词汇。对写作知识和技能的讲解都使用简明平易的英语。给学生安排的习作实践其难度自然适中,非常适合本书读者的英语水平。

二、提供较多的实用写作用语及范例。学生对写作的基本理论和方法初步掌握后,主要靠写作实践和模仿。本书提供了较多的例句、例段、范文和实用写作用语,不仅能帮助学生理解写作的基本知识、方法和要领,更主要的是供模仿。书中所选的大部分例段和范文都来自近几年英美国家的写作教材,语言及写作格式规范,内容有趣、新颖,贴近生活,这使学生写作实践具有很好的启发性和模仿性。为了使学生在写作练习中更好地做到用语规范,词语丰富,本书在附录中提供了大量的实用语例句和例段,供参考。

三、注意教学内容的实用性和循序渐进原则。为了让学生打下较为扎实的写作功底,根据中国学生在写作训练中存在的问题,本书在编写时严格遵循语言学习循序渐进的原则,即按照从小到大,从点到面,从易到难的原则来编写,也就是从词、句、段、文,然后到实用写作的次序来排列内容。根据社会的实际需要,本书加大了实用文这一部分的内容。论文写作一章,主要考虑到本科学生在论文写作中普遍遇到的一些问题,专供高年级学生在写毕业

论文时参考。

本书由朱继武教授、王西玲副教授任主编，并进行修改和最后统稿。参编人员及撰写的章节按姓氏笔画排列如下：

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肖 蓉 第六部分、附录

在本书编写过程中，西安培华学院院长姜维之教授给予了很大的支持，在此，我们向他表示衷心的感谢。同时对所参阅的大量国内外书籍的作者致以深切的谢意。

由于编者的水平和经验有限，本书难免有疏漏之处，我们恳切希望专家、同行和读者在使用过程中提出宝贵意见，以便我们修订，使其日臻完善。

编 者

2005年8月

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Part One

Diction

Diction refers to word choice or use, especially with regard to appropriateness and exactness. A word is appropriate if it suits the audience, occasion, and purpose for which it is intended. Choosing the right word is difficult. The same word may be appropriate in one situation and inappropriate in another. Besides, many words are close in meaning, but they do not all mean the same thing. There is a big difference between the right word and almost the right word. In writing, students should be careful enough to use the words that are most appropriate, exact and fresh.

1. 1 Appropriateness

Levels of Words

● General Classification

Generally, words may be classified into three levels or layers: the learned, the common and the colloquial.

Learned words are also called literary words or big words. They mainly appear in formal speech and writing, such as official documents, formal lectures and addresses, scholarly or theoretical works. They are seldom used in conversation, except for desired effects or purposes. Most of them originate from Latin, Greek or French.

Common words are also called popular words because they are the words that are commonly or popularly used every day. They appear in all types of speech or writing.

Colloquial words are mostly used in daily conversation. They may appear in writing of a conversational style to record one's thoughts or dialogues. Most of

them are of Saxon origin.

The following three paragraphs give examples of such a classification.



Paragraph A

The idea of an African renaissance has taken hold in our continent with all the resonance of an idea whose time has come. The rebirth we are engaged in is not one that will culminate, as European renaissance did, in colonization and dominance of a world economic system, of which the slave trade was an integral part. Ours is, however, a rebirth that must deal with problems that derive from Africa's historical relation with the rest of the world, established in that period. And this must be achieved in a rapidly globalising world.



Paragraph B

Deaf students face many problems. Their needs are greater than those of other students. Often rejected, deaf students develop a severe inferiority complex. Their inability to mix in a large group is a partial cause of this problem. Because deaf students communicate by sign language or by lip reading, they usually interact on one-to-one basis. It is not at all unusual for deaf students to be in a classroom and not even realize that someone in the class is speaking.



Paragraph C

My friends had it all figured out; Les and I would "duke it out." We were the two youngest ones in the crowd, and Kevin and the older guys were kind of curious to see who would lose. I didn't give a damn about the whole thing. Les was a decent guy and pretty smart as well. I figured from the glance he gave me that he knew as well as I did that we were going to have to act as entertainment for the others, but what the hell, why not?

Paragraph A is a speech made by Nelson Mandela, the former President of South Africa. It was delivered in London in the year 2000. It contains those

literary words such as *renaissance*, *resonance*, *culminate*, *colonization*, *dominance*, etc. They are appropriate for formal writing.

Paragraph B is a lecture for students. It explains the problems of the deaf students. There are no colloquial words and contractions in the paragraph. Except for the words such as *inferiority complex*, that are a little abstract, all the other words in the paragraph are common words, which are appropriate for college writing.

Paragraph C is mainly about the personal feelings of a small boy. The diction is colloquial and it conveys an oral quality. It contains many colloquial and even slang words and expressions such as *duke out*, *guys*, *kind of*, *give a damn about*, *pretty smart*, *what the hell*, etc. The diction is appropriate for a boy telling his past experience.

● Standard and Non-standard English

Standard English is the English used by all educated speakers of English. All the three levels of words are of Standard English. For most college students, the appropriate vocabulary is the Standard English commonly used and understood by educated writers and readers. The variant words and expressions that are often not acceptable even in conversation are **nonstandard English**. No absolute rules are used to distinguish standard and nonstandard usage. Dictionaries and handbooks may be used as a reference. Those words that are labeled as nonstandard or substandard in a dictionary should be avoided. College students are not encouraged to use those words in their writing such as slang, clichés, etc. (see “General Guidelines”)

Standard English

all right
am/is/are not; has/have not
anywhere
can hardly
cleverest
gentler
have begun

Nonstandard English

alright
ain't
anywheres
can't hardly
most cleverest
more gentler
have began

himself
nowhere
regardless
themselves
won't do anything

hissself
nowheres
irregardless
theirselves
won't do nothing

Style

● Sense of Style

Style in writing has a range of meanings with references to the writer, the audience, and the occasion. It also refers to levels of language. These levels may range from informal to general to formal. Any language has a variety of styles. Different occasions require different styles. We usually match language to the writing occasion. What is most important is that we should tell one style from another and use different styles on different occasions appropriately.

● Formal, General and Informal

Formal style is often found in addresses, scholarly articles and formal reports. Usually the formal or learned diction is preferred. The passage of a formal style contains no slang words or colloquial expressions. There are many abstract words or phrases and specialized terms that suggest an audience of educated readers. The sentences are relatively long, with considerable modification. The sentences are carefully connected with transitions. The voice is usually impersonal, that is, the writer does not speak in his own voice directly. Sometimes the collective *we* is used rather than *you*. Paragraph A in the above section is such an example.

General style is appropriate to a wide range of writing occasions and purposes. It is the style college students are expected to use in most of their writing. It stands midway between formal and informal style. The words are neither slangy nor very learned. Sentence patterns are varied, ranging from the simple and short to more sophisticated structures. The voice may be personal or impersonal. Paragraph B is an example of a general style.

The passage with **an informal style** usually contains many slang words or colloquial expressions. The language suggests an oral quality. The vocabulary as a

whole is concrete and the sentences are either a single brief clause or several brief clauses joined by coordination. The writer generally speaks in the first person and expresses his own feelings. Paragraph C can be seen as such an example.

General Guidelines

● Appropriateness and Consistency

The words we use will depend on the writing situation. Most academic, business, and professional writing is serious and direct. The language we use in our everyday conversations is common, and it may be slang, colloquial — appropriate only for such situations. For college writing, the appropriate vocabulary is the Standard English used by educated writers and readers. The language should be matched to the writing occasion. We should know how to use each style appropriately and consistently. Do not change from one style to another on the same occasion.

● Using Colloquial Words with Care

Colloquial language is a kind of conversational vocabulary. It is informal and quite appropriate in everyday speech. Colloquial words are generally clearly understood. In writing they give the impression of conversation. Colloquial words and expressions might be used in writing when a conversational tone is to be conveyed. Generally, however, such words are avoided in academic and professional writing.

Colloquialisms may include

- contractions like *isn't*, *won't*, *I'm*, and *he's*;
- shortened word forms such as *phone* for *telephone*, *TV* for *television*, *dorm* for *dormitory*, and *exam* for *examination*;
- some placeholders such as *you know*, *sort of*, *kind of*, and *I mean*.
- the utility words such as *nice* for *good* or *acceptable*, *funny* for *odd*, and *great* for almost anything;
- a number of combined verbs such as *get across* for *communicate*, *come up with* for *find*, and *check out* for *investigate*.

● Using Technical Words with Care

Technical words are those words used in every academic or technical field to

convey special or specific meanings. Not every reader will understand those words. A doctor may talk about "heliotherapy," while a baseball player may say something like "fly ball." In technical writing, writers are expected to use the vocabulary of their field. In writing for a general audience, such words should be avoided. When you must use specialized terms, explain them when you introduce them.

● Avoiding Slang and Clichés

Slang is a special conversational vocabulary of a particular group of people. To others its meaning may not be clear. Since slang is generally short-lived, it can quickly become dated. In college writing, slang words should be avoided. The following are a few examples of slang words.

Common Words

errors
policeman
dollar
excellent / marvelous
fellow / guy
clothes

Slang Words

goofs
cop
buck
cool
dude
duds

Clichés are the words used so often that they have become stale or worn-out. They are no longer fresh. The use of these terms may give others an impression that the user is too lazy or too tired to think of a fresh way of expression. In ordinary conversation, the cliché can be a quick and convenient way to express an idea. In writing, however, Clichés are best avoided.

Clichés

as beautiful as a picture
easier said than done
dead of night
hit the nail on the head

as busy as a bee
straw that broke the camel's back
birds of a feather
face the music

● Avoiding Sexist Language

Do not use language that unfairly stereotypes people or discriminates against

either women or men. If you use biased terms, you will probably offend your readers. The language used should not encourage the readers to see the world in sexist stereotypes.

Biased Words

chairman/chairwoman
congressman/congresswoman
fireman/firewoman
freshman
mailman/postman
man
policeman/policewoman
salesman/saleswoman
steward/stewardess
weatherman

Suggested Alternatives

chairperson, head
member of Congress, representative
firefighter
first-year student
letter/mail carrier, postal worker
the human race, human beings, humanity
police officer
salesperson, salesclerk
flight attendant
weather forecaster, meteorologist

● **Avoiding Euphemism**

A euphemism is a pleasant word or an expression substituted for a word or an expression that is generally thought unpleasant or offensive. People usually avoid talking about a number of subjects, such as bodily functions, death, and certain social problems. Here are a few such examples.

General Words

barber
died

divorce
garbage collector
graveyard
retarded children
the elderly
the poor
toilet
used cars

Euphemisms

hair stylist
passed on / passed away / deceased / called to
heavenly rest / kicked the bucket / played his
last card / went to his or her reward / departed
marital dissolution
sanitation engineer
resting place / memorial park
exceptional children
senior citizens
the deprived
restroom / lounge / bathroom / powder room
preowned automobiles