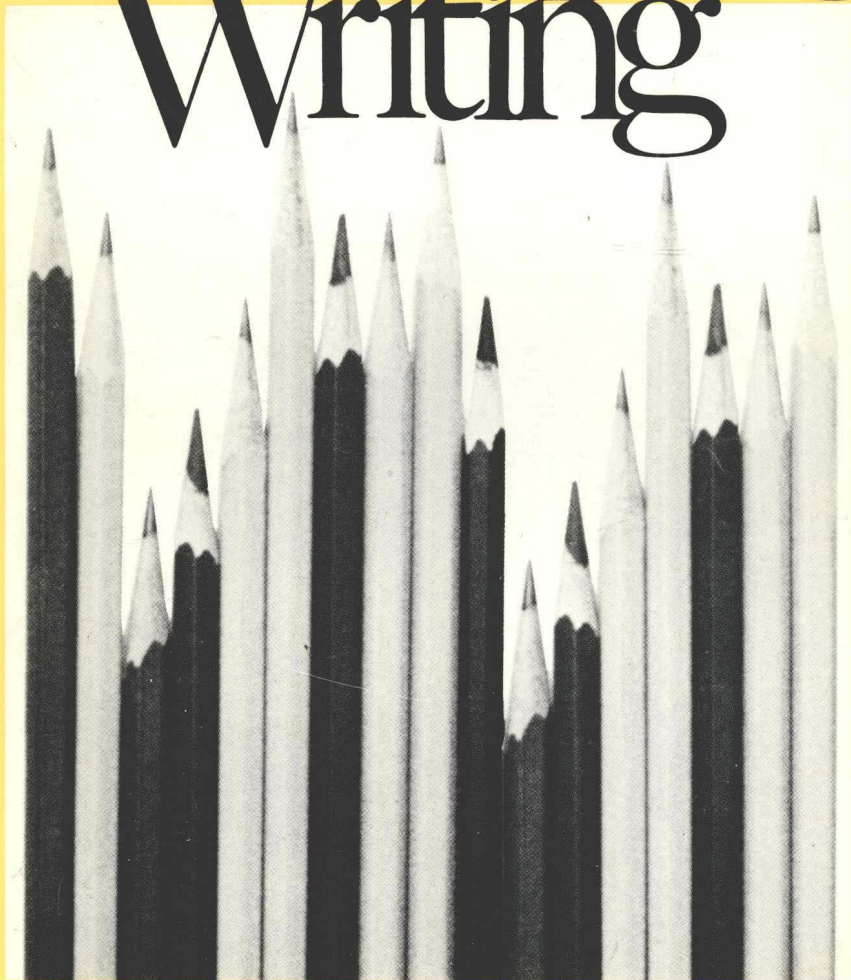


Developing Writing



PATRICIA WILCOX PETERSON

WRITING SKILLS PRACTICE BOOK FOR EFL
BEGINNING/INTERMEDIATE LEVEL

Developing Writing: Writing Skills Practice Book

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Author: Patricia Wilcox Peterson
Editor: Lin Lougheed
Illustrations: Rebecca Alm

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INTRODUCTION TO THE TEACHER

The goal of this book is to take the student from the mechanics of basic sentence writing to the ability to construct a simple paragraph. The vocabulary and the structures have been planned chapter by chapter, from simple to more complex, and the lessons build on each other. For this reason, the students will probably benefit the most if they do the exercises in each chapter in the order they are presented. The same is true of the order of the chapters: information presented early in the book will be helpful for the writing tasks in the later chapters.

The amount of time needed to work through a chapter depends on the level of the students, the length of the class period, and the teacher's decision about homework. Some groups may finish a chapter in two hours, with two hours of outside work. Other groups may do all the exercises in class in four or five hours. Two sample lesson plans are suggested at the end of this section, one with homework assignments and one without homework.

Each chapter includes some of the following exercises:

1. **Text** The text is a reading selection that contains the model structures upon which the chapter is based. There is a variety of styles and registers of English. Some of the texts are descriptions; some are narratives; some are newspaper articles; some are dialogs; and some are letters.

The teacher may read the text out loud, or he may ask the students to read it silently. The texts in dialog form (chapters 3, 10 and 20) are suitable for dramatic reading in pairs. After the first reading, the teacher may want to clarify new vocabulary words and ask a few comprehension questions.

2. **Mechanics** This section helps to reinforce the new vocabulary, ideas, and structures in the text. To present the section, the teacher should explain the rule of punctuation or capitalization to the class, and write the example or the first problem on the board. Then the students can do the remaining problems.

One effective method for checking the students' work is to divide the chalkboard into sections and ask each student to write one answer in a section. Several students can do this at once, to save class time. Then the class as a whole can read and correct the boardwork. This self-

correction builds awareness of the mechanical rules of English and should encourage careful writing.

3. Grammar Many types of structures are included under this heading. Essentially everything that is rule-based is included here: question transformations, negation, tenses, and sentence combining. One particularly important goal of the book is to give practice in the use of articles. Rules for article use are introduced very gradually and drilled repeatedly. An index to grammatical information is given in the appendices in the back of the book.

The teacher will want to discuss the rule briefly before the students do an exercise, and the class should do one or two problems together so the teacher is sure that they understand. Many grammar exercises can be done orally first, and this strengthens the students' listening and speaking skills. Oral work is appropriate for sentence combining, word order exercises, question transformations, negations, and tense work. It may be especially useful to read the article exercises aloud, to help the students develop a sense of correctness with English articles. When the students write out the problems, they may work individually or in pairs. Work should always be collected, corrected, and returned for the students to see.

4. Sentence Construction Exercises under this heading introduce elements of free choice in writing. The students are given some sentence parts, but they must put the sentence together in their own way. Often there is more than one correct response to each problem.

These exercises may be done in class or as homework. Since these exercises involve the beginning of some original thought, students often like to see each other's work. Sentences can be written on the board, corrected, and discussed. The incomplete dialogs in chapters 3, 6, 7, 12, and 17 should provide enjoyment if the students read them aloud in pairs. One type of sentence construction exercise, the game of Concentration, must be done in class with a partner.

5. Controlled Composition The purpose of these exercises is to give practice in writing student-generated short paragraphs, letters, dialogs, and other units longer than a single sentence. Some of the exercises are suitable for homework, and some can be best done in class. Another way to handle these compositions is to hold a writing lab within the classroom. In this procedure, each student works independently; the teacher walks around the room, commenting on the papers and helping

students one by one. Especially good compositions can be read aloud at the end of the lab period.

A few composition exercises are of the highly controlled variety, in which the students' task is basically to copy a given text and to make certain required changes of tense, pronoun usage, or similar changes. These occur primarily in the first half of the book, when the students' grammatical repertoire is still fairly limited.

Dicto-comps are used in almost every chapter to form a bridge between grammar work and free writing. They resemble dictations in that the content has been predetermined. However, as the directions indicate, the students are not asked to write a word-for-word copy of the original. Rather, they are to listen three times before writing, and then to compose a paragraph from memory, as close to the wording of the original as possible.

Partly completed compositions with large blanks are a kind of controlled composition that calls for more student input. These assignments provide the students with choices that are varied enough to allow an opportunity for expression, but controlled enough to make incorrect combinations rather unlikely. By completing each sentence appropriately, students can practice writing paragraphs, letters, and memos in their own words, conforming to a standard form.

Some composition assignments are almost entirely free, stimulated by a list of questions or a picture. When this kind of assignment is given, there has been a previous text in the chapter which can serve as a model.

In the second half of the book there are exercises that treat the process of composition as a problem of arranging and ordering ideas. In these assignments, sentences are given to the students, but they are out of order. The students' task is to rewrite the composition in a logical order.

6. Vocabulary and Spelling Often the final section of a chapter is a game activity. There are puzzles and word games to expand student vocabulary and to focus attention on accurate spelling. In this section, as well as in the grammar section, attention is given to the spelling and usage of inflectional and derivational affixes. These sections are intended to bring some fun to the drudgery of spelling work. They should be done in class in pairs or even in teams. At the end of a unit, the teacher may want to reward the class by arranging a competitive game, in which two teams try to be the first to complete a puzzle.

Below are two possible time schedules for a typical chapter in the book.

Two-Hour Plan with Homework	Four-Hour Plan with no Homework
<p>Day one Text Read the text aloud or silently, clarify vocabulary, and ask comprehension questions. Mechanics Explain the rule, have students write the sentences on the board, and correct their work. Grammar Review the rule and do some problems orally. Students write out the exercise individually or in pairs. Collect the papers. Homework Sentence Construction Exercise</p>	<p>Day One Text Read the text aloud or silently, clarify vocabulary, and ask comprehension questions. Mechanics Explain the rule, have students write the sentences on the board, and correct their work. Grammar Review the rule and do some problems orally. Students write out the exercise individually or in pairs. Collect the papers.</p>
<p>Day Two Correct the Sentence Construction exercise in class and compare answers. Dicto-Comp Puzzle Students work in pairs or in teams. Homework Controlled Composition</p>	<p>Day Two Sentence Construction exercise Have students act out dialogs, compare different student answers, or do Concentration game in class. Dicto-Comp</p>
	<p>Day Three Controlled Composition Use the writing lab technique. The students may do one or more compositions, as time permits.</p>
	<p>Day Four Discuss the student compositions and compare them. Have students read each other's work to develop a critical eye. Puzzle Team game</p>

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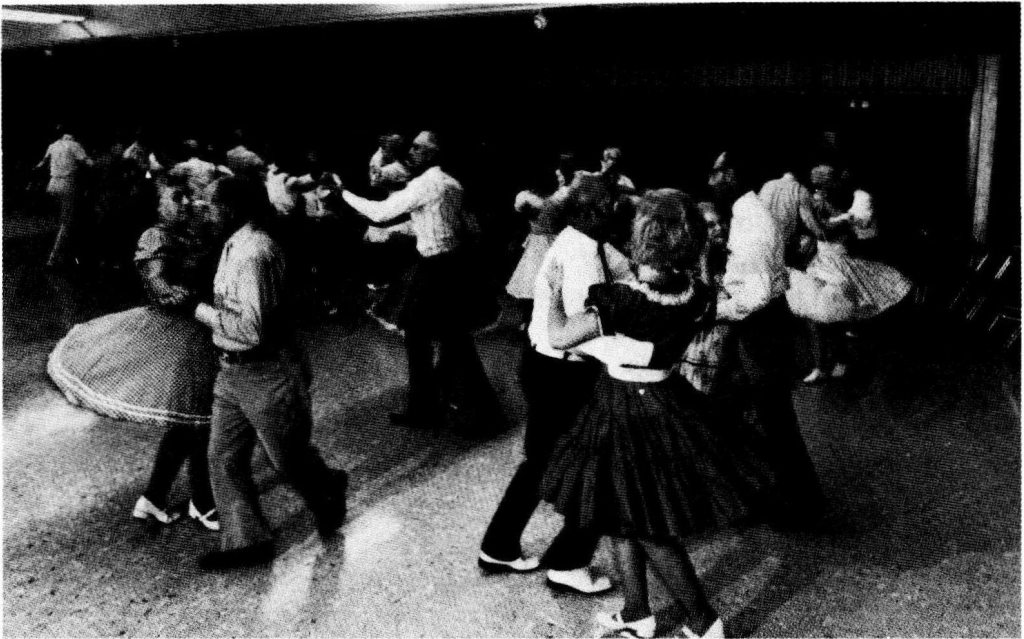
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SQUARE DANCING

Hello. I am Ernie Anderson. I am a truck driver. I am from the United States.

Here is a picture of my wife and me. We are with our friends. We are square dancers. Dancing is not our work. It is our hobby.



The square dance is an old American dance for four couples. A couple is one man and one woman. Three other couples are in our square. Their names are Bob and Marsha, Doug and Cathy, and Henry and Eileen.

My wife's name is Hazel. Her dress is short and full. It is a square-dance dress. We are in the front on the left. The music is very fast right now.

I. Mechanics Capital letters at the beginning of sentences and for names. Periods at the end of sentences.

Each new sentence begins with a capital letter and ends with a period (.)

This is a good sentence. this is not correct

Names begin with capital letters, too:

Ernie Anderson Bob and Marsha Kovacik

Copy the sentences, and make all the corrections that are necessary.

1. i am ernie anderson
2. i am from the united states
3. we are square dancers
4. dancing is our hobby
5. it is an american dance
6. bob and marsha are our friends
7. henry and eileen are another couple
8. a couple is a man and a woman
9. hazel is my wife
10. we are in the front of the picture

II. Grammar Subject pronouns

Study the pronouns below. Then rewrite each sentence and substitute the appropriate pronoun for each name.

I (the speaker)	we (the speaker and others)
you (the second person)	you (plural)
he (masculine) she (feminine) it (things and animals)	they (plural for men, women, things, or animals)



Ernie Bob Doug Henry Eileen Cathy Marsha Hazel

1. Bob is a dancer.
He is a dancer.
2. Ernie is a truck driver.
3. Doug is from America.
4. Doug, Ernie, and Bob are friends.
5. Hazel and Eileen are friends.
6. Cathy and Marsha are in the picture.
7. Hazel is Ernie's wife.
8. Hazel is a square dancer.
9. Dancing is not work.
10. The music is very fast.
11. The dresses are short and full.
12. The picture is from last year.

III. Grammar The verb to be

Study the forms for the verb to be. Then copy the paragraph below, writing in the correct form.

I am	we are
you are	you are
he	they are
she is	
it	

Square dancing _____ fun. The music _____ fast, and the people _____ friendly. Ernie _____ at the dance every week. Hazel _____ with him. She _____ a good dancer. Six friends _____ with them in a square. They _____ happy to be there.

IV. Controlled Composition Dicto-comp

Your teacher will read the paragraph above three times. Listen carefully, but do not take notes. After the third reading, write the paragraph as well as you can from memory.

V. Sentence Construction Sentence patterns with be

The verb to be connects the subject of a sentence to another word that tells us something about the subject. This second word or phrase after the verb may be another noun, an adjective, or an adverb. In this way, we can see three different basic sentence patterns with the verb to be.

1. Sentence patterns with noun phrases. The word or phrase after the verb may tell us what or who the subject is:

The square dance is an old American dance.
Noun phrase + be + Noun phrase

On the left is a list of subjects. On the right is a list of noun phrases, telling what or who. Choose a subject and a verb and match them with a noun phrase on the right to make a sentence. Write as many sentences as you can. Example: Ernie is a truck driver.

<u>Noun phrase</u>	+	<u>be</u>	+	<u>Noun phrase</u>
Ernie		is		a truck driver
Hazel		are		his wife
They				square dancers
Bob and Marsha				Ernie's friends
Dancing				fun
Doug and Cathy				not work
				a hobby
				another couple

2. Sentence patterns with adjectives The word or phrase after the verb may tell us how the subject is, or what it is like:

The music is very fast.
Noun phrase + be + Adjective

On the left is a list of subjects. On the right is a list of adjectives telling how. Choose a subject and a verb and match them with an adjective on the right to make a sentence. Write as many sentences as you can.

<u>Noun phrase</u>	+	<u>be</u>	+	<u>Adjective</u>
I		am		happy
You		are		welcome
The dresses		is		short and full
The music				fast
The dance				American

3. Sentence patterns with adverb phrases. The word or phrase after the verb may tell us where the subject is, or where it is from:

Ernie is from the United States.
Noun phrase + be + Adverb phrase

On the left is a list of subjects. On the right is a list of adverb phrases. Choose a subject and a verb and match them with an adverb phrase on the right to make a sentence. Write as many sentences as you can.

<u>Noun phrase</u>	+	<u>be</u>	+	<u>Adverb phrase</u>
Four couples		is		from the United States
We		are		in a square
They		am		on the right
Ernie and Hazel				in the front
Bob				in the picture
I				with my wife

VI. Sentence Construction Concentration

This is a game you can play with another person. Cut squares of paper to fit over each box below. Cover each box with a square of paper. Have a pencil and paper ready to write sentences.

The first player turns over two squares. He reads the words in the boxes. If they make a good sentence, he writes the sentence on his paper. He leaves the boxes uncovered. If the words do not go together in a sentence, he covers them again. (Remember what is under each square of paper!) The second player takes his turn. Continue play-