



普通高等教育“十一五”国家级规划教材

◎ 大学英语选修课 / 学科课程系列教材

高级英语写作

■ 《大学英语选修课 / 学科课程系列教材》项目组 编

Advanced Writing for
Academic Purposes



高等教育出版社
HIGHER EDUCATION PRESS



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GAOJI YINGYU XIEZUO



高等教育出版社·北京
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总 前 言

随着我国经济、文化、科技的不断发展,社会对大学生的英语水平提出了更高的要求,大学英语教学改革已成为社会关注的热点之一。为了推动大学英语教学改革,教育部在总结近年来教学改革经验的基础上,对2004年公布的《大学英语课程教学要求(试行)》进行了全面修订,并于2007年8月正式颁布了《大学英语课程教学要求》。与以往的《大学英语教学大纲》相比,新的《大学英语课程教学要求》从以下三个方面为大学英语教学带来了新的变化:1. 培养目标的变化。《大学英语课程教学要求》提出,大学英语要培养学生的英语综合应用能力,在坚持其通用基础学科定位的同时,提出了与专业学习相结合的专门用途英语,以及以人文、国际交流为核心的文化素质课程的定位;2. 教学思想的变化。提出了自主学习的思想,鼓励学生自主选择学习内容和学习方式;3. 教学模式的变化。鼓励在教和学的过程中使用以计算机为基础的教育技术,拓展英语学习的渠道,增加语言练习的机会,提高语言输入和输出的质量。

面对新的改革形势,我们明显感到,现行的以英语基础能力发展为核心的大学英语教材体系难以适应新形势的需要,广大师生也盼望着更多与国际文化知识、专业知识、学术交流相结合的新型英语教材,满足正在出现的大学英语的多重定位、学生自主选择学习内容和基于计算机技术的自主学习方式等变化的需要。为此,我们提出开发《大学英语选修课/学科课程系列教材》。

本系列教材为“普通高等教育‘十一五’国家级规划教材”,主要供完成《大学英语课程教学要求》中规定的“一般要求”后,继续学习“较高要求”和“更高要求”英语课程的学生使用,也可供研究生及广大专业技术人员学习专业英语、学术英语,提高英语综合应用能力使用。

本系列教材包括语言技能发展、跨文化交际能力发展和通用学术交流能力发展三个子系列。语言技能发展系列教程着重发展学生的通用英语技能。在该系列教材的开发中,我们将分期、分批建设若干门大学英语高级技能发展课程教材,其中包括:网络视听、翻译实践、网上阅读、高级阅读、口译技巧、应用写作等。跨文化交际能力发展系列教程着眼于扩展学生的国际文化视野,培养学生将英语作为国际交流语言使用的能力。在该系列教材的开发中,我们拟建设的教材有中西方文化概论、英语文化解读、英语演讲与辩论、跨文化交际、世界文明与文化导论、科技与人文、文学选读、经典作品欣赏、影视欣赏等。通用学术交流能力发展系列教程重在发展学生使用英语进行相关专业学术交流的能力。在该系列课程的开发中,我们将重点建设两大类别的专业学术英语课程,即A类教材和B类教材。其中,A类教材以学术研究和职业技能为基础,包括学术写作、学术会议、批判性思维等;B类教材以专业知识为基础,提供可供双语教学使用的专业通用基础教材,从而将专业学习与语言学习有机地结合起来。

本系列教材的开发是我们的一个新的尝试, 新教材强调英语学习与文化学习、专业学习、学术交流和工作的结合, 突出英语学习的实用性、学术性和人文性, 充分反映国内外新式教学思想和理念, 突出学生的参与和自主学习, 强调信息技术的使用和教材的立体开发。我们相信, 该系列教材的出版一定会给广大师生带来新的感受和新的教学体验, 进而深化我国大学英语教学改革, 创造出大学英语教学的新范式。

由于编者水平有限, 加之时间仓促, 疏漏和不妥之处在所难免, 恳请读者不吝指正。

《大学英语选修课 / 学科课程系列教材》项目组

2008年1月

Preface

Writing is a significant literate skill that any modern educated person must have. Human beings normally acquire speaking skills in their first language and sometimes more languages in a natural language environment, but must generally be taught how to write. For Chinese learners of English, writing can be the most challenging task as it demands not just the mastery of the linguistic forms but also skills in thinking creatively and critically, organizing ideas coherently and presenting them in a conventional style in the target language.

This textbook aims at helping the learners to write academic English including essays, summaries, book reports or reviews, and course or research papers. These writings for academic purposes cannot be well mastered without understanding the writing process, writing across languages, and some basic conventions for English academic writing including style and register, topic sentence and paragraph development and organization, coherence and cohesion, logical fallacies, and rhetorical devices. Therefore, the textbook comprises four parts with the first two targeting at overall understanding and the basics for writing English, and the last two at the common academic English writing modes and special skills. Teachers may use the chapters in sequence or integrate them as relevant.

We would assume that students using this textbook have already mastered basic sentence skills such as making accurate, smooth and meaningful sentences but have not learned how to compose a well organized paragraph of different modes or a full essay such as book report and research paper. These skills are significant for academic success in education no matter whether the students are majoring in English or in other academic areas.

Nine experts and excellent teachers in ESL (English as a Second Language) writing participated in completing this textbook project. They are Dr. Jing Liu, Prof. Deyu Zhang, Ms. Zina Romova, Mr. T. Pascal Brown, Ms. Shasha Li, Ms. Christine Beckett, Ms. Lin Zhang, Ms. Peiqi Huang, and Mr. Naser Amin. Thanks to the team's great efforts for high quality of its work, we hope this textbook will better help ESL writing teachers and students in China.

Finally, we are grateful to the authors of the examples and activities used in this book, who are listed in the References. We would also like to thank the Higher Education Press and particularly Mr. Zhou Long, Mr. Jia Wei, Ms. Xu Yanmei, and Ms. Ma Wenmin for their generous support and the tremendous work they have done for this textbook project, without which publication of this textbook would not be possible.

The Textbook Project Team
April, 2011

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Understanding Writing Across Languages

Part I

Part I includes two chapters. Chapter 1 introduces some basic concepts of writing and Chapter 2 attempts to help Chinese student writers understand how writing in English as a second/foreign language can be influenced by our native language. With these essential understandings of writing and writing across languages, students will be better prepared for effective writing in English.

Chapter 1

An Introduction to Writing and Its Process

"Writing is the hardest work in the world not involving heavy lifting." — Pete Hamill

"Writing is a deliberate act; one has to make up one's mind to do it." — James Britton

Learning Objectives:

- To understand writing in general
- To learn differences between writing and speaking
- To understand relationships between writing and thinking
- To learn major purposes for academic writing
- To understand writing as a process

1.1 An introduction to Writing

1.1.1 Writing as a Technology

Writing is a kind of technology in two senses. For one, writing is a system of symbols and signs invented by human beings. There are many different writing systems used in the world's many languages. For the purposes of this textbook, we look at only English and Chinese. The English writing system is alphabetic, meaning that the basic written symbols are a small set of letters called "alphabets." One or more letters form a word. However for Chinese learners of English, the language has a very complex and irregular spelling system. For instance, the words *though* and *thought* share the same spelling except for the final *t*, but the letters *ough* are pronounced differently in each, with the former as [əʊ] and the latter [ɔ]. On the other hand, the Chinese writing system is mainly logographic, with a single written character usually representing a complete grammatical word. This essential difference between the two writing systems engenders many finer-grained differences in English and Chinese writing, which we will look at more closely in Chapter 2.

There is also a more immediate, physical sense in which writing is a technology. We use tools to put linguistic symbols down on paper, a computer screen, and so on. This act of writing distinguishes writing from speaking in the sense that the writer usually communicates with an imagined audience rather than someone in person. In a writing class, this imagined audience is often the teacher of the course, who acts as the evaluator of students' skills and abilities as reflected in their writings.

The technologies of writing impact on the writing process as well as its outcomes. With the advent of computers, wireless phones, and the Internet, people tend to write more than before because of the convenience of these communication technologies. The demarcation between writing and speaking is increasingly blurred as people use chat rooms online and other modes of communication like emailing and texting.

Activity 1.1

Discuss the following questions as a group:

- 1) Reflect on how you text your friends via cellphone. What is the process like? Do you try to think of what to say first and then begin writing?
- 2) How is writing with a word processor

different from or similar to writing on a sheet of paper? Are there some features or functions of the software you use that really facilitate or inhibit your writing on the computer? What are the advantages and disadvantages of writing with a word processor versus writing on paper?

1.1.2 Writing and Speaking

Writing is improved speech. It is harder because it is better. It takes longer because it can carry more meaning. It requires more concentration because it carries more weight. It is more permanent because it is tested and refined. Writing is harder than talking because it counts for more, not less.

— John Tagg

Writing can be casual and informal, when it is very much like talking, as well as formal, when it is more suited to academic work (i.e., writing in school). This difference is one of register or style, which we will look at more closely in Chapter 3. Since writing is usually done without the reader present, the writer enjoys the freedom of time and space to elaborate his or her ideas. This advantage, however, is also an encumbrance for the writer, as he / she must take into consideration who the reader is and what the reader may be expected to understand. The lack of immediate response from the reader, either paralinguistically (i.e., vocal response like *um*, *baba*) or extralinguistically (i.e., non-vocal response such as facial expressions, posture, and gesture), challenges the writer to be more thoughtful and logical so that his or her attempt at communication can be meaningful and successful. This means that the writer is obliged to provide appropriate and sufficient support whenever he / she makes an assertive statement.

Therefore, the register of writing tends to be more formal than that of talking. The formality manifests itself mainly at three levels of language. First, at the level of word choice, more big or formal words tend to be used in writing than in talking. For example, short and phrasal verbs like “set”, “go”, “put off” are more often used in daily conversation than in writing.

Second, at the level of sentence structure, simple or even incomplete sentences are often used in daily conversation, whereas compound and complex sentences are often used in formal writing. For example, a college student might say to his / her friend at a gathering “Got to go; haven’t finished my homework yet.” In contrast, the student may write in a narrative essay assignment for his / her composition class, “I had to leave because I needed to finish my homework that night.”

Third, at the level of discourse, the organization of ideas and paragraphs tends to be more compact in writing than in everyday chitchat. A formal essay usually begins with an introduction to what is to be presented in the body and concludes with an area of focus. Transition expressions like “furthermore” and “consequently,” and connectors like “though” and “if,” are often used in formal writing to avoid the more roundabout structures of speech. Tables 1.1 and 1.2 summarize the features of speaking versus writing, and what speakers do versus what writers do.

Table 1.1 Features of Writing Versus Speaking

Speaking	Writing
Acquirable in daily life	Learnable in school
Dialect variations that represent a region or social status	More restricted and generally follows a standardized form of vocabulary, grammar, structure, and organization
Often spontaneous and unplanned	Mostly planned and can be changed through editing and revision before an audience reads it
Usually informal and repetitive	More formal and compact; progresses more logically with fewer explanations and digressions
Simpler sentences connected by lots of <i>ands</i> and <i>buts</i> .	More complex sentences with connecting words like <i>however</i> , <i>who</i> , <i>although</i> , and <i>in addition</i>

Table 1.2 What Writers Do Versus What Speakers Do

Speakers	Writers
Use voices (pitch, rhythm, stress) and body language (facial expression, gesture, posture), pauses, intonation, and varying pronunciation	Use words on the page, punctuation, and spelling
Have immediate audiences who nod, interrupt, question and comment	Have delayed response from audiences or none at all and have only one opportunity to convey their message; must be interesting, informative, accurate and hold the reader's attention
Draw on their listeners' reactions to know how or whether to continue	Are often solitary in their process
Can gauge the attitudes, beliefs, and feelings of the audience by their verbal and non-verbal reactions	Must consider what and how much their audience needs to know about a given topic
Can be assertive without providing reasons	Must support their assertions with sufficient and specific reasons

Activity 1.2

Arrange the words in each group according to their usage levels — from most formal to most informal.

- a) silly, nonsensical, nutty, preposterous

- b) kill, murder, wipe out, slay
c) quickly, fast, rapidly, expeditiously
d) examine, scrutinize, check out, investigate
e) know-how, aptitude, smart, skill

Activity 1.3

Compare the following two passages and decide which one is more like talking. Give the reasons for your decision and list all the features that you find in the talking which are not in the writing and vice versa.

- a) The worst part about it was I had a friend sitting up here and she's saying "ha ha"... And I was saying "Go get the police... go get someone"...I later learned that there are some people who do that in the

face of disaster...I mean they just start cracking up as opposed to crying.

- b) My helpful friend, perhaps not realizing that I was serious, began laughing. Sue roared all the harder as my situation became more difficult. She claimed I looked funny, clinging there screaming. I realized that she was laughing because she was incapable of acting: the situation must have been greatly disturbing to her, and so she treated it as if it were another situation.

1.1.3 Writing and Thinking

Full literacy which arguably no society has yet quite reached, is one in which writing is no longer regarded just as a "profitable invention for continuing the memory of time past, and the conjunction of mankind," but as a particular mode of operation of the human mind and the key to a new concept of language.

— Harris

The relationship between writing and thinking is twofold. First, the act of writing aids the writer in thinking, as the writer can rely on pen and paper or a word processor to record a series of logically connected ideas. During this process, we are able to read and reread the words we write on the paper or computer screen, and figure out what to write next or to revise.

On the other hand, writing is itself a form of thinking as well as a process of discovering ourselves. Let's look at an anecdote.

Mr. John Langan, the author of *College Writing Skills with Reading*, received a C for his first college essay. He found scrawled beside the grade the comment “Not badly written, but ill-conceived.” He went to the instructor after class and asked about his comment and also the word “Log” that the instructor had added in the margin at various spots.

“What are all these logs you put in my paper?” Mr. Langan asked, trying to make a joke of it.

The instructor looked at him a little wonderingly. “Logic, Mr. Langan,” he answered, “logic.” He went on to explain that Mr. Langan had not thought out his paper clearly. There were actually two ideas rather than one in his thesis, one supporting paragraph had nothing to do with either idea, another paragraph lacked a topic sentence, and so on. At the end, he said, “If you don’t think clearly, you won’t write clearly.”

Mr. Langan was speechless and felt confused and angry because he didn’t like being told that he didn’t know how to think. But, after reading over his paper several times, he eventually decided that his instructor was right. His instructor’s invaluable advice enabled him to see that clear, disciplined thinking is the key to effective writing.

To write clearly requires thinking clearly. That is what the story tells us. Thinking clearly means there is a central idea or thesis statement with supporting details which are coherently and fully developed in one paragraph or essay. Let’s look at the following paragraph:

① Scientists face a difficult yet important task in predicting earthquakes. ② Scientists are usually successful in the end, however. ③ Each year earthquakes take 10 000 to 15 000 lives and cause billions of dollars in damages around the world. ④ Many cities have been totally destroyed. ⑤ In 1811 and 1812 a series of earthquakes in Missouri changed the course of the Mississippi River, shaking the earth enough to stop the clocks in Boston. ⑥ Boston is also sometimes struck by tornadoes. ⑦ Recent efforts to predict earthquakes have met with only limited success. ⑧ Chinese scientists predicted an earthquake in Haicheng in 1975, and Russian scientists predicted an earthquake in 1978. ⑨ To truly control destruction from earthquakes, scientists must find a way to predict them more consistently.

Sentence ① states the main idea of the paragraph and hence demands that the subsequent sentences relate to and support it. But, sentences ② and ⑥ do not, which confuses the reader. The main idea stated in ① is that predicting earthquakes is a difficult but important task for

scientists, whereas ② is contradictory to this central idea, as it states that scientists are usually successful in predicting earthquakes. In other words, predicting does not sound difficult. Consequently, the writing is not clear because the writer fails to think clearly on the topic.

Activity 1.4

Read the following paragraph closely and discuss as a group whether the writing reflects clear thinking — that is, whether there is a topic sentence and well-developed, coherently connected supporting details.

① Many people, when they feel guilty about something, try to stifle their bad feelings with stimulants or depressants, which makes matters worse. ② A friend of mine, for example, feeling guilty about her low grades, tried to stay high nearly all the time. ③ The

result was that she got even worse grades, felt guiltier still, and eventually dropped out of school. ④ I had tried to talk to her about her problems, but she was already too depressed to allow anyone to get through to her. ⑤ Later, I lost touch with her, and I never did learn whether she straightened herself out. ⑥ I think that people like her deserve a lot of pity, because if she hadn't been so sensitive in the first place, she wouldn't have had the guilty feelings that sent her into a tailspin. ⑦ Her supposed remedy had become a major part of her problem.

1.1.4 Major Purposes for Writing

Writing can be very powerful because the modern world relies on writing to keep a record of events, to disseminate information, to exchange ideas, and to regulate social behavior. However, in school, writing is mainly used for the teacher to assess the students' learning and for students to express themselves (as in journal writing) and demonstrate their learning. Students learn how to write different genres for different purposes, including short answers to questions, essays, research papers, etc. Each genre targets certain skills of writing for assessment. In an advanced English writing class, students should be able to write a description, tell a story, explain a process, argue for a point of view, summarize a reading, review a book, and develop answers to questions related to the course in the format of a course paper or research paper.

Informative writing, also called expository writing, seeks to give information to readers and usually to explain it. It involves narration, description, definition, comparison and

contrast, analogy, cause and effect, and so on. For example,

“Diamonds in the rough” are usually round and greasy looking. But diamond miners are in no need of dark glasses to shield them from the dazzling brilliance of the mines for quite another reason: even in a diamond pipe, there is only one part diamond per 14 million part of worthless rock. Appropriately 46 000 pounds of earth must be mined and sifted to produce the half-carat gem you might be wearing. No wonder diamonds are expensive!

— Richard B. Manchester, “Diamonds”

This paragraph focuses clearly on its topic (diamonds in the rough), with several facts that can be verified (who, what, when, where), and in a reasonable tone.

Persuasive academic writing, also called argumentative writing, differs from informative writing in that the former seeks to persuade the reader to support a particular opinion, either the writer’s or the other’s. For example,

It is a widely accepted fact that many of America’s schools are doing a poor job of educating the nation’s young people. Research studies indicate that about 30 percent of American high school students drop out before graduating. In some high school systems, fewer than half of the students who enter ever graduate. We should not be surprised, then, that one of four Americans is illiterate — unable to read and write at the most basic level. What can be done? American schools should take a lesson from Japan, where strict rules of behavior, very demanding school schedules, and high academic standards have produced nearly 100 percent literacy.

— Nancy-Laurel Pettersen, “American Schools Should Take a Lesson from Japan”

The purpose of this paragraph is clearly to get the reader to agree with the writer’s point of view — that is, American schools should learn from Japanese schools — by providing information on literacy and using sound reasoning to interpret such evidence.

Table 1.3 provides a checklist for informative and persuasive writing respectively as well as a comparison between the two.

Table 1.3 Checklist for Informative and Persuasive Academic Writing

Aspects \ Types	Informative	Persuasive
Clarity	Is its information clear?	Are the parts of its argument clear?
Content for Presentation	Does it present facts, ideas, and observations that can be verified?	Does it present a point of view about which opinions vary?
Support		Does it support its point of view with specifics?
Quality of Content	Does its information seem complete and accurate?	Does it base its point of view on sound reasoning and logic?
Writer's Intend	Is the writer's tone reasonable and free of distortions?	Does it intend to evoke a reaction from the reader?

Activity 1.5

For the following two paragraphs, decide if the dominant purpose is *informative* or *persuasive*. Then, answer the questions in Table 1.3 in relation to the paragraph and explain your answers.

a) We know very little about pain, and what we don't know makes it hurt all the more. Indeed, no form of illiteracy in the United States is so widespread or costly as ignorance about pain — what it is, what causes it, and how to deal with it without panic. Almost everyone can rattle off the names of at least a dozen drugs that can deaden pain from every conceivable cause — all the way from headaches to hemorrhoids. There is far less knowledge about the fact that about ninety percent of pain is self-limiting, that it is not always an indication of poor health,

and that, most frequently, it is the result of tension, stress, idleness, boredom, frustration, suppressed rage, insufficient sleep, overeating, poorly balanced diet, smoking, excessive drinking, inadequate exercise, stale air, or any of the other abuses encountered by the human body in modern society.

b) Trees are living archives, carrying within their structure a record not only of their age but also of precipitation and temperature for each year in which a ring was formed. The record might also include the marks of forest fires, early frosts and, incorporated into the wood itself, chemical elements the tree removed from its environment. Thus, if we only knew how to unlock its secrets, a tree could tell us a great deal about what was happening in its neighborhood from the time of