



# 大学实用英语

写作教程 (第2版)

**P**ractical English Writing  
for College Students

主编 汪宏 王红 张莱湘  
郭瑞 沈莉霞

 北京理工大学出版社  
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主审 吴树敬

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# 序 言

实用英语写作是大学英语教学中一门重要的课程。随着社会的发展,以及文化全球化、多元化的趋势,熟练掌握英语写作规则和技巧,对于促进国际交流,提高大学生的综合素质,有着越来越重要的意义。为了满足大学英语后续教育的需求,提高大学生英语应用能力,我们依据教育部2004年颁布的《大学英语教学大纲》,并参考2005年全国研究生入学统一考试英语大纲中有关规定,编写了这本教材。

实用英语写作是一门综合技能训练科目,主要目的是强化英语写作知识,提高学生写作能力。本书是编者在近年来英语写作教学经验基础上,经过优化精选,结合现代英语写作规范编写而成的。书中主要内容均取材于国外经典写作教材,力争给学习者提供标准的英语写作指导,培养学生自主学习的能力和以语言为工具获取并传递信息的能力。

本教材分4个部分,共15章。计划使用32~40学时。书中包括英语写作基础理论和专题介绍,全书章节清晰,便于教师根据教学目标、进度以及学生的语言水平和需求,进行灵活安排和取舍。为了方便课外学习者自主学习,书中附有相应的练习及参考答案、经典范文、相关网站链接信息等内容。

本书由北京理工大学外国语学院教师汪宏、王红、张莱湘、郭瑞、沈莉霞共同编写。汪宏负责全书的统稿工作。本书特请北京理工大学外国语学院院长吴树敬教授担任主审;北京理工大学教务处和出版社有关领导对本书给予了支持和鼓励,在此一并致谢。

编 者

## 第2版说明

《大学实用英语写作教程》自2007年出版以来,一直作为北京理工大学的教材使用。经过了四年的教学实践,我们获得了一些新的经验,也收到一些建设性意见,因此决定对此书做一些修订。

在《大学实用英语写作教程》(第2版)中,我们主要增加了一些必要的基础训练和相关信息,置换了部分参考范文,并对个别文字进行了修订。通过这些实践性很强的内容,希望能给学习者提供英语写作的必备知识和参考。

本书的修订和再版得到了北京理工大学出版社的支持,在此一并致谢。

编 者

2011年7月于北京

# Preface

Written communication skills are central to learning. Whether in academic career, in the workplace, or in personal life, they offer a powerful advantage in a world in which people must constantly learn new information. To become confident and effective writers, learners need to learn how to write for various purposes and audiences, try different approaches and reconsider what they have written through revision and editing.

*Practical English Writing* centers on the English writing techniques and communication skills that the co-writers of this book have acquired through years of English teaching. The instructions involved in this book are the result of five years of teaching non-English major university students, and are based on the ever-revised class teaching experiences and proved to be beneficial to the teaching of English writing.

This textbook, like a handbook, provides some practical guidance on how to improve learners' written English, which helps learners manage the written tasks in everyday life and communicate easily with the outer world. The book is designed in four parts — The essential guide to English writing, Composing essays, Writing for practical purposes and Academic writing — fifteen chapters in all, to suit the learner's individual need. In explaining the basic principles of English writing, the authors' intent has been to offer learners explicit guide to an efficient and well-organized English writing.

To accomplish the purposes, basic writing principles and skills are introduced in early chapters and reinforced throughout the book. Meanwhile, some live and useful format and samples are selected to accompany some exercises and the suggested answers, presenting the encouragement to write on the learner's own. The authors strongly believe that *Practical English Writing* also promotes and fosters readers' qualities such as insight, imagination, motivation and self-discipline — useful not only in school and university, but also in the wide English application.

# Contents

<b>Foreword to Learners of English Writing .....</b>	<b>(1)</b>
--	------------

## **PART ONE THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO ENGLISH WRITING**

<b>Chapter One Basic Principles of English Writing .....</b>	<b>(4)</b>
--	------------

1.1 Basic skills of English writing .....	(4)
1.2 Spoken English vs. written English .....	(5)
1.3 Punctuation .....	(5)
1.4 Mechanics .....	(10)
1.5 Procedure of writing .....	(14)
1.6 Words .....	(18)
1.7 Sentences .....	(20)

<b>Chapter Two Paragraph Writing .....</b>	<b>(27)</b>
--	-------------

2.1 Listing .....	(27)
2.2 Classification .....	(29)
2.3 Cause and effect .....	(30)
2.4 Comparison and contrast .....	(31)
2.5 Exemplification .....	(33)

## **PART TWO COMPOSING ESSAYS**

<b>Chapter Three Narration .....</b>	<b>(39)</b>
--------------------------------------	-------------

<b>Chapter Four Description .....</b>	<b>(45)</b>
---------------------------------------	-------------

<b>Chapter Five Exposition .....</b>	<b>(48)</b>
--------------------------------------	-------------

5.1 Expository essay of process .....	(49)
5.2 Expository essay of comparison and contrast .....	(51)

5.3	Expository essay of definition .....	(51)
5.4	Expository essay of cause and effect .....	(52)
5.5	Expository essay of exemplification .....	(53)
5.6	Expository essay of classification/division .....	(55)
5.7	Expository essay of problem and solution .....	(57)
5.8	Expository essay of listing .....	(58)
<b>Chapter Six Argumentation .....</b>		<b>(62)</b>
6.1	Argumentative essay — pattern 1 .....	(64)
6.2	Argumentative essay — pattern 2 .....	(65)
6.3	Argumentative essay — pattern 3 .....	(68)
6.4	Argumentative essay — pattern 4 .....	(69)
6.5	More samples of argumentative essays .....	(70)
<b>Chapter Seven Illustration Description .....</b>		<b>(75)</b>
7.1	Figure and chart description .....	(75)
7.2	Cartoon description .....	(85)
 <b>PART THREE WRITING FOR PRACTICAL PURPOSES</b>		
<b>Chapter Eight Personal Letters and Social Correspondence .....</b>		<b>(94)</b>
8.1	Format and envelope of a letter .....	(94)
8.2	Invitation .....	(97)
8.3	Thank-you letters .....	(101)
8.4	Condolences and consolation .....	(103)
8.5	Letter of congratulations .....	(108)
<b>Chapter Nine Applying for University Admission .....</b>		<b>(110)</b>
9.1	Requesting for admission form .....	(110)
9.2	Graduation certification and notarization .....	(113)
9.3	Personal statement .....	(114)
9.4	Letter of recommendation .....	(116)



<b>Chapter Ten Employment Writing .....</b>	<b>(120)</b>
---	--------------

10.1 Cover letter .....	(120)
-------------------------	-------

10.2 Résumé(CV) .....	(123)
-----------------------	-------

## **PART FOUR ACADEMIC WRITING**

<b>Chapter Eleven Notes and Memos .....</b>	<b>(129)</b>
---	--------------

<b>Chapter Twelve Notices and Posters .....</b>	<b>(132)</b>
---	--------------

<b>Chapter Thirteen Report and Seminar .....</b>	<b>(135)</b>
--	--------------

13.1 Report .....	(135)
-------------------	-------

13.2 Seminars .....	(139)
---------------------	-------

<b>Chapter Fourteen Summary and Abstract .....</b>	<b>(141)</b>
--	--------------

14.1 Summary .....	(141)
--------------------	-------

14.2 Abstract .....	(144)
---------------------	-------

<b>Chapter Fifteen Research Paper .....</b>	<b>(146)</b>
---	--------------

15.1 Procedures of writing a research paper .....	(148)
---	-------

15.2 Final copy of research paper .....	(157)
---	-------

15.3 Structures of research paper .....	(160)
---	-------

<b>Suggested Answers .....</b>	<b>(163)</b>
--------------------------------	--------------

<b>Notes and Works Consulted .....</b>	<b>(174)</b>
--	--------------

<b>中文参考书目 .....</b>	<b>(175)</b>
---------------------	--------------

## *Foreword to Learners of English Writing*

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### **The purpose of writing**

People write for many reasons and to achieve many goals. Some write for themselves (in diaries, and memos), some write for thousands (magazine, newspaper, speech, and novel writers). Undoubtedly, it is a specific way of communication and comprehension. People write to inform, to support, to judge and to persuade others to do, or think about a subject in a different way. In all cases, people have to write clearly and effectively in order to express exactly their inner minds, their deep feelings or their careful thoughts, even their insight into and the observation on the outer world.

### **Introduction to standard English writing**

When it comes to a good English writing, or rather, a standard English writing, first of all, the learners are supposed to answer the following open question: Is there a standard English? Many people would argue that there is not a “standard” English. Take American English and British English as an example. People can hardly tell which of them is not standard, let alone Australian English, Singapore English and many other varieties of English. Then, is there a “standard” English writing? Suppose the answer to this question is “YES” (because anyone who writes should obey the rules of English writing, such as the spelling, grammar, and the sentence structure), then, who is the judge to identify the standard and what is the measure to achieve it?

● **Rationale** To ensure that the writing is understood and well-received, writers need a working knowledge of language as well as grammatical structures, diction and usage, punctuation, spelling, layout, and presentation. This knowledge is also invaluable for discussing, revising, and editing written communication in any form.

● **Reader’s view** It is widely accepted that the purpose of writing is to exchange ideas and thoughts, even the arguments with the targeted audience. In this sense, when writing, reader’s view has become the first concern of the writer. Generally speaking, readers feel pleasant and comfortable when the written work has the following features, or when it is:

— *clear* on both the intended thesis and the controlling ideas;

- *concise* of the language and structures;
- *comprehensible* to the reader; and
- *recognizable*, which mainly refers to the clear handwriting.

In short, a well-written work is always a benefit to readers.

## Requirement of standard English

In all cases, however, the criterion of a “standard” English writing varies definitely from that of writing “standard” English. The former concerns about the audience’s response, while the latter depends on the writer’s ability to use the correct spelling, punctuation and grammar that help communicate easily. Besides, writers are expected to meet the following demands in their writing:

- some well-thought-out, critical questions on the essay;
- a clear introduction of the writing on the reader;
- a clear, coherent and logical writing style;
- a range of supporting evidence; and
- a conclusion.

## Basic principles of English writing

Apart from the intellectual abilities of the writer, such as the ability to criticize, conceptual skills, the abilities to initiate and select organizational materials, and the skills in using correct grammar and proper vocabulary, writers should take the following into account:

- be aware of the writing assignment or situation and start by playing with ideas;
- focus ideas and be specific;
- select details that fit the focus and keep it clear;
- write an ending; and
- rethink, reorganize, rewrite.

To sum up, the writing ability, among many other language skills, is well acquired through targeted teaching and everyday practice.

*Tell me, I will forget;  
Show me, I may remember;  
Involve me, I will understand.*

# *P*ART ONE

## THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO ENGLISH WRITING

### Introduction ■

The objective of writing is to express the writer's idea concisely and clearly to readers so that the communication is achieved as quickly and accurately as possible. To this end, two elements are fundamental in writing: **language** and **content**, i.e. good language and clear ideas.

These two elements together can generate good writing. However, if we have nothing worth writing, even the best writing skills cannot help. Similarly, if we have good ideas but cannot express them well in writing, the reader will not benefit. A good writing should not be a guessing game for the reader, or an exercise in error correction.

PART ONE of this textbook introduces the basic elements of a good English writing, including basic skills of English writing and the writing process, such as the use of punctuation, word choice, and effective sentence structure, as well as some necessary training on the targeted techniques.

# *Chapter One*

## *Basic Principles of English Writing*

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### **1.1 Basic skills of English writing**

#### **1.1.1 A pre-test**

Before we begin discussing the principles of English writing, learners are expected to be aware that some ideas about writing are not true. Please read the following statements carefully and tell if they are **True** or **False**:

- a. You need to be inspired to write.
- b. You have to have a “real gift” for writing.
- c. If you write a good first sentence, then all the other sentences will follow in order.
- d. All you do is to follow a step-by-step procedure that includes making an outline.
- e. You should try to impress your readers with your large vocabulary.

(All the above statements are false or partly true. )

#### **1.1.2 Basic principles of writing**

Prior to writing, there are usually some questions the writer will confront. For example, some assignments will seem either too general or too narrow. Consequently, learners will have to figure out what to do, and how to do. In either case, remind yourself of the following steps:

- ① Think about the writing assignment or the situation;
- ② Get started by playing with ideas;
- ③ Be specific;
- ④ Focus your ideas;
- ⑤ Select details that fit the focus;
- ⑥ Keep the focus clear;
- ⑦ Connect related parts;
- ⑧ Write an ending;
- ⑨ Rethink, reorganize, rewrite.

## 1.2 Spoken English vs. written English

**Spoken English** refers to the English spoken in our ordinary everyday life. **Written English** signifies a formal kind of English that is commonly used in academic and scientific books. Whether to tell a story or write it down, we need at least to take five elements into consideration: the content, the structure, the context, the audience/readers and the feedback. That is to say, whether to speak well or to write well, we need to have good and well-organized ideas and present them in the right context. In addition, we ought to know about the audience, their interests and their needs. As to writing, we have to arrange it in a logical way for the target readers and make efforts to identify it with their needs so as to involve their identification likewise.

Though both spoken and written English are communication activities sharing many common characteristics in content, structure, context, audience/readers, feedback, etc., it is evident that they differ from each other in many aspects. These differences fall into two categories: the choice of words, and the way these words are put together to form sentences.

**Ex. 1 – 2** Rewrite the following sentences in spoken English.

1. At the counter, we inquired about the arrival time of the aircraft.
2. He eradicated all the imperfections in his notes.
3. She contemplated his utterance.
4. Paul was terminated from his employment.
5. Personnel are requested to extinguish illumination before departure from these premises.
6. Unfortunately, we are not in a position to offer assistance to you.
7. Our university is in close proximity to an amusement park.
8. Terry is of the opinion that everything will be going on smoothly.

## 1.3 Punctuation

Punctuation refers to the use of standard marks and signs in writing to divide a piece of writing into sentences, and phrases so as to clarify the meaning. As a device to help us read and understand a piece of writing, correct punctuation mark is an efficient assistant to both the completeness of language and the accuracy of contents.

The principal punctuation marks and their names are as follows:

- ① Period: [ . ];
- ② Comma: [ , ];

- ③ Hyphen: [ - ];
- ④ Apostrophe: [ ' ];
- ⑤ Semicolon: [ ; ];
- ⑥ Colon: [ : ];
- ⑦ Question mark: [ ? ];
- ⑧ Quotation mark: [ “ ” ];
- ⑨ Exclamation mark: [ ! ];
- ⑩ Dash: [ — ];
- ⑪ Brackets: [ ( ), [ ], < >, { } ];
- ⑫ Ellipsis: [ ... ].
- ⑬ asterisk: [ \* ]
- ⑭ pound: [ # ]
- ⑮ at: [ @ ]

The use of punctuation marks in English shares great similarities with that in Chinese. However, there are still some differences. For example:

- Period in English: [ . ]; in Chinese: [ 。 ]
- Ellipsis in English: [ ... ]; in Chinese: [ …… ]
- There is no [ \ ] in English. We use [ , ] to separate the words, clauses, and even sentences; while in Chinese, [ \ ] is adopted instead.
- In Chinese, [ 《 》 ] is employed to quote the title of books, papers, magazines, etc. However, in English, quotation mark [ “ ” ] is preferable to modify the title of passages and songs, while the title of books or other longer works, when printed, is usually italicized.
- The dash in English is made up of two hyphens [ — ], leaving no space before, between, or after them.

## 1) Period:

A period is used

- a) to end a statement, a mild command, or an indirect question.

*Mary is a lovely girl.*

*Please pass me the salt.*

*I am wondering what is going on.*

- b) to indicate an abbreviation.

*Mr. Smith; U. S. A.*

A period is not used in abbreviations of names or organizations and government agencies

(such as NBC). When the abbreviation comes at the end of a sentence, one period is adequate while in the middle of a sentence, an abbreviation often has a period followed by a comma ( . , ).

## 2) Comma:

Comma is used between two complete sentences, joined by **and**, **but**, **or**, **for**, **nor**, **so**, **yet**, etc. It is applied

a) To separate items in a series of list, but it is normally not used between the last two items:

*There are many fruits on the table: apples, pears, grapes and pineapples.*

b) Before **and**, **but**, **or**, **nor**, **for**, **yet** and **so** when the word joins two coordinate clauses:

*I have to come back earlier, for it is my mother's birthday.*

c) To mark off sentences or clauses where a pause is needed in reading:

*Jones, come with me.*

d) To separate adjectives which describe the same noun:

*a tall, dark, handsome young man*

e) To mark off participial phrases, when a pause is required in reading:

*Tom is lying in the bed, reading a novel.*

f) To set off short words and phrases, such as **yes**, **no**, **well**, **oh**, **nevertheless**, **after all**, **at long last**, **all in all**, etc.

*Yes, I am a sophomore in Beijing Institute of Technology.*

g) With **too** when it means **also**:

*Nice to meet you, too.*

h) To separate words that might confuse the reader if they were read together:

*Before, the party cheered us up.*

*Before the party cheered us up,...*

### Tips:

No comma before "**that**", nor when a word or phrase gives necessary information:

*The box that was on the shelf has disappeared.*

*Their daughter Susan just graduated from high school.*

Sometimes, pairs of commas [ , , ] are used:

a) To set off parenthetical words or phrases like **however**, **therefore**, **of course**, **for instance**, etc.

*The book, however, is worth it though it is very expensive.*

b) To set off an appositive:



*Jane, my sister, is a nurse.*

- c) To set off non-restrictive clauses:

*Tom, who lives next-door, hasn't arrived yet.*

### 3) Hyphen:

A hyphen is used:

- a) To make compound words:

*well-dressed; bad-tempered*

- b) To spell out a number between twenty and one hundred:

*fifty-five*

- c) To join the two parts of a word when it runs out of room at the end of a line.

### 4) Apostrophe:

An apostrophe [ ' ]:

- a) Indicates possession. The general rule is to add an apostrophe and "s" to the word required:

*Mary's father; Jack's book.*

- b) Indicates the omission of letters:

*can't; it's; aren't*

- c) Is used when the first two figures of the number of a year are left out:

*An incident occurred in '82.*

### Note:

If there is already an "s" at the end of the word, do not add a second one, unless the word is singular: *wives'; ladies'.*

### 5) Semicolon:

A semicolon is stronger than a comma and weaker than a period and it connects only equal rank, too strong to be used often:

*He had in his hand, a pistol; in his boot, a knife; in his belt, a sword; in his eyes, a gleam of hatred.*

It is usually used:

- a) Between independent clauses not joined by coordinating conjunctions (*and, but, or, nor, so, yet, etc.*):