

循序渐进 大学英语写作

Step by Step to College English
Writing

李争鸣 著



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内 容 提 要

这是一本帮助中国学生了解英语写作规律、提高英语写作水平的教材。特点是：信息量大，针对性强，讲练结合，以练为主。例句及范文从英美原文中精挑细选，语言力求地道并通俗易懂。读者可通过模仿进行创作。本书还注重英语写作的实用性，有一个章节专门介绍英文书信的写作格式及多种信函的写作方法。在大多数情况下，同一类的练习有两套：一套附有答案，为自学者提供参考；另一套不附答案，为课堂教学时使用。如果只有一套练习，那么练习中的前一部分附有答案，后一部分则不附答案。

本书可用作我国高等院校大一、大二（非英语专业）本科生英语写作必修课或选修课程的教材，也适用于准备参加我国大学英语四、六级考试的考生，同时也可供出国留学人员和广大英语爱好者自学时使用。

在本书的撰写过程中，加拿大籍专家 Pat Donnelly 女士对本书的英文部分进行了润色，在此对她表示衷心的感谢。

探索有效途径,提高英语写作水平

——写给英语写作学习者的话(代前言)

一、英语写作的重要性

在谈到英语写作是否重要时,一位在美国耶鲁大学学习中国留学生是这样回答的:“是的,非常重要!很多来耶鲁大学招聘学生的公司,包括大多数众所周知的华尔街金融与咨询公司,公开声明他们首选那些有着坚实写作能力的应聘者。”

下面一个自然段的内容与上面那个中国留学生的回答有异曲同工之处:

Many students feel that learning to write well is a useless, time-consuming task that has little to do with “real life” — that is, with their future occupations. This may be true if you plan to become an auto mechanic or a waitress. It is certainly not true if you plan to have a white-collar job. No matter what profession you enter — business, engineering, government — you will have to write.

看来,在就业市场竞争异常激烈的今天,一个人是否能寻找到理想的职业,并在未来的事业中获得成功,都与自身英语写作水平的高低有着密切的关系。

二、英语写作中普遍存在的三大问题

1. 词汇量有限或用词不准确。曾经有一位学生在想表达“母鸡(hen)”一词时却不知如何拼写,于是“急中生

智”地用 cock’s wife 来替代。而这种不恰当的替代完全是由于词汇量有限所致。还有一位学生在作文中这样写道:On my way to school, I meet an old friend I have not touched for years. 显然,此句话中的 touch 用词有误。该词的“接触”有“触摸”、“抚摸”之意,而非与人“交流”、“交往”的“接触”。要想表达后者之意,应选用 contact 或 communicate with 才对。以上两个例子说明,如果词汇量不足或用词不准确,要么会闹出笑话,要么会引起误会。

2. 母语思维与母语干扰。在写作时,学生们或多或少地会先用汉语思维,然后再用英语表达出来。这样写出来的句子往往会有明显的汉语思维痕迹。请看一位学生作文中的一句话:“Renting a room, you will be living under the house owner’s eyes.”这句话虽然无任何语法错误,也不会产生歧义,但就是不符合英语的表达习惯。首先,如果将“房屋的主人”逐字逐句地译成英语,的确是 the house owner,但在英语中,特指“出租房屋的房主”时,则用 landlord 或 landlady;另外,与汉语“在某人的眼皮底下”相对应的英语表达方式是“under one’s nose”,而不是“under one’s eyes”。因此,上面那句中国式英语应改为:“Renting a room, you will be living under the landlord’s nose.”

受母语干扰,我国学生在写作的过程中经常会写出一些中国式英语,例如将“象牙塔”(ivory tower)写成 tower of elephant teeth,将“彩票”(a lottery ticket)写成 a color ticket,将“大风”(strong wind)写成 big wind,将“睡衣”(pajamas)写成 sleeping clothes 等。

下面让我们进行一次带有知识性和趣味性的小测验。请将下列 10 个汉语短语译成英语。

(1)冷色调	(2)温床
(3)喝汤	(4)休息室
(5)旅游城市	(6)步行街
(7)一轮圆月	(8)学知识
(9)安全感	(10)飞吻

译完后,可在本篇文章的后面找到答案。对照着答案,看一看我们自己在翻译过程中是否也存在着母语干扰的问题;然后再统计一下自己的母语干扰率为百分之几。

要想摆脱母语干扰,把文章写得更接近英语,我们需花大量的时间去接

触原汁原味的英语材料(本文就此问题还会在后面详谈),这样才能逐步养成用英语思维的习惯。要做到这一点确实不易,但经过长期努力,这一目标并非遥不可及。

3. 不了解英语国家的文化背景及语用习惯。英语写作中,最常见的错误是语言错误。但语言作为文化的载体,往往负载着一定的文化蕴意。有些词汇及表达方式除了字面意义外,还有深层的文化内涵,不了解这层内涵就有可能犯文化错误(cultural mistake)。

下面是从学生作文中收集到的一个句子:“If you eat too much and have little moving, you will get fat.”这是一个既有语言错误又有文化错误的典型例子。语言错误和文化错误分别在“have little moving”和“you will get fat”之处。在与英美人的交往中,他们对我们的语言错误往往是持宽容、接受态度的,但如果犯了文化错误,则会令他们尴尬、不快、反感甚至恼火。英语中 fat 一词的内涵有“大腹便便”、“脑满肠肥”、“赘肉缠身”之意,因此在表达“胖”这一概念时,应尽量使用委婉语。以上那句话可修改成:“If you eat too much but do little exercise, you will gain some weight.”

再举一例。一位学生在表述“大雨把我们都浇成了落汤鸡”这一意思时写道:“The rain was so heavy that we were like chickens.”这句话同样不符合英语的语用习惯,即习惯表达方式。由于中西方文化存在着差异性,因此用动物进行比喻时,也要考虑同一词汇在英、汉两种语言中所各自持有的联想意义。在英语中, chicken 一词所产生的联想意义是“害怕”、“胆怯”。请看例句:“My friend Joe was planning to get married for the fourth time. But at the last moment he chickened out because his first three marriages ended in divorce and he was afraid to take another chance.”用英语形容某个人胆小时,还可以说:“You are so chicken-hearted.”可想而知,当母语是英语的人读到前面那句话时,会颇感费解。英语中表现“落汤鸡”的习语是 as wet as a drowned rat, 据此,我们可以把那个比喻不恰当的句子改写成:“The rain was so heavy that we were all as wet as drowned rats.”此例说明,在掌握了丰富的词汇和熟练的语法规则的同时,还需了解英语国家的文化。只有将语言与文化的学习结合起来,才能准确得体地表达语义,避免语用失误。

为了丰富我们用动物进行比喻的表达法,下面分三组进行介绍。

1) 在中西方文化中,联想意义相同或相似的动物及与其相关的习语有:

(1) dove (和平鸽)

- (2) a dark horse (比赛或竞选中的“黑马”)
- (3) scapegoat (替罪羊)
- (4) the ugly duckling (丑小鸭)
- (5) as sly as a fox (像狐狸一样狡猾)
- (6) as slow as a turtle (像乌龟一样行动迟缓)
- (7) as busy as a bee (像蜜蜂一样忙碌)
- (8) as dirty and greedy as a pig (像猪一样肮脏贪婪)
- (9) to have a bird's eye view (of) (鸟瞰)
- (10) to kill two birds with one stone (一石双鸟, 一箭双雕)
- (11) to shed crocodile's tears (假慈悲)
- (12) to parrot what other people say (鹦鹉学舌)

2)在中西方文化中,联想意义相反的动物及与其相关的习语和例句有:

动物	汉语的联想意义	英语的联想意义	英语习语/例句
peacock	美丽、吉祥	骄傲、炫耀、虚荣、盛气凌人、趾高气扬	<p>—as proud/vain as a peacock</p> <p>—The young man was peacocking about on the lawn. (那个年轻人趾高气扬地在草地上走来走去。)</p> <p>—He <i>puffed himself up</i> (骄傲自满, 趾高气扬) like a peacock.</p>
bat	“蝠”同“福”	有眼无珠, 不祥之物, 巫婆	<p>—You must have been as blind as a bat not to have seen me; I was sitting at the table next to you.</p> <p>—In many parts of Europe, people believe that ghosts take the form of bats and that the places they inhabit are haunted. But in China, bats are symbols of long life, and representations of them worn as lucky charms are guaranteed to bring happiness. (在欧洲许多地方, 人们相信幽灵化身成蝙蝠, 有蝙蝠的地方常常闹鬼。但在中国, 蝙蝠是长寿的象征, 作为吉祥护身符佩戴的蝙蝠造型饰物保证能带来幸福。)</p>

续表

动物	汉语的联想意义	英语的联想意义	英语习语/例句
owl	不祥之兆	智慧、聪明	—He always gives good advice. He's as wise as an owl. —If a clown is not so funny and an owl is not so wise, you might be a workaholic.
dragon	皇权、中华民族的象征、腾飞	邪恶、怪物	—In the legends of North America, the dragon is a threatening animal. But in the tales of China, the dragon represents good luck. —Since ancient times, the Chinese dragon has been seen as a symbol of China and was the <i>emblem</i> (象征,标志) of royal family. But in the West, dragons are large monsters that breathe fire and eat people.

3) 在中西方文化中联想意义各不同,或在另一种文化中仅仅是一个语言符号的动物及与其相关的习语和例句有:

- (1) as poor as a church mouse
- (2) as busy as a *beaver* (河狸)
- (3) as cheerful as a *lark* (云雀)
- (4) pig-headed (固执的)
- (5) kill the goose that lays the golden egg (杀鸡取卵)
- (6) lion-hearted (勇敢)
- (7) a lion in the way/one's path (拦路虎)
- (8) come in like a lion and go out like a lamb (虎头蛇尾)
- (9) The lion is reputed to be the bravest of all animals. (狮子为百兽之王。)
- (10) The leopard won't change its spots. (本性难移。)
- (11) She was *like a cat on hot bricks* (像热锅上的蚂蚁) before her driving test.
- (12) It was the morning of the World Cup Final and most of the

players *had butterflies in their stomachs* (紧张、不安或焦虑)。

(13) Although Jane was very shy at the beginning, she became the *top dog* (骨干、主要人物) in her office within the first year.

(14) Movie stars are always *dogged* (跟踪、追逐、纠缠) by the media.

(15) Mirabel Airport is a real *white elephant* (昂贵且不实用) because it is so far out of Montreal that no one wants to use it. It costs a lot and it's useless.

(16) I tell you I know for certain that Wendy will be promoted to manager. The boss told me himself, so it's *straight from the horse's mouth* (消息非常可靠)。

(17) At the conference I was *like a fish out of water* (感到很尴尬、不自在、不适应)。All the speeches were in French, a language I never studied.

(18) He is a big drinker. He drinks like a fish(牛饮)。

(19) There are some conservatives who call me pro-China, call me what they term a “panda-hugger”. (一些保守主义者认为我是亲中国的。)

(20) The early bird gets/catches the worm. (捷足先登。)

请将下列汉语译成英语：

(1)望子成龙

(2)第一个吃螃蟹的人(比喻意)

三、写作的功夫在写作之外

中国学生写作时的的问题可概括为 *rich in thoughts, but poor in expressions*, 换言之,他们无法把自己丰富的想法用英语准确无误地见诸笔端。根据语言输入理论,只有输入,才有输出,而且输入量要绝对大于输出量。写作属于输出技能,因此,要想提高写作水平,摆脱语尽词穷的困境,就必须有大量的和规范的语言信息输入,即从多方面来丰富一个人表达词汇库中的“内存”。

1. 阅读是丰富一个人表达词汇的主要途径。在谈到阅读与写作关系时有如下的至理名言:“读书破万卷,下笔如有神。”“熟读唐诗三百首,不会作诗也会吟。”英语中类似的说法有:“Writing is learnt from reading.” “To be a good writer, you must also be a good reader.” 英国教育专家 L. G. 亚历山大也曾经谈道:“There is no writing before reading.” 这都说明无论古今中外,

阅读都被认为是写作的基础和源泉,欲想写出漂亮的文章来,须先做勤奋的读者。

1) 阅读有助于我们用词准确。

例 1. 学生一般都知道如何用英语表达“有些人……”,“另外一些人……”,但不知道如何表达“还有一些人……”。当我们读到下面的自然段时,问题便迎刃而解了: People spend their weekends in various ways. **Some** go to the mountains to hike, ski, or just relax. **Others** prefer the beach to enjoy the seashore activities and to get a suntan. **Still others** like to relax by staying home and reading a good book.

例 2. 受母语的干扰,有的学生将汉语的“鸡心领毛衣”写成 a chicken-heart-collar sweater。但下面的句子告诉了我们它的英语表达法: This officer was standing across a small counter from a young white boy who was wearing a **V-necked sweater**.

例 3. “参照物”一词怎样用英语表达? 请看下面的英语句子: Like “Far East” or “Orient”, either term makes sense only if one takes Europe as **the point of reference**. 通过阅读我们又掌握了英语的一个表达法。

例 4. 我们有时可以听到或读到,国外的某个城市被联合国评选为最宜居的城市。那么如何用英语表达“最宜居的”呢? 读了下面的句子便可一目了然: *Melbourne* (墨尔本) has been rated as the world's most **livable** city — healthier, cleaner, and safer than any other big city in the world.

掌握了 livable 一词后,将下面两句话翻译成英语就不难了,你来尝试一下:

(1) 温哥华(Vancouver)曾被联合国评选为世界上最宜居的城市。

(2) 通过我们的努力,北京将会被建成世界上最宜居的城市之一。

例 5. 有的学生在表达“双赢”这一概念时,按其字面意义将其写成“double win”,有的按实际含义写成“mutual benefit”。那么英语中“双赢”一词的准确说法又是什么呢? 在一篇有关求职时如何面谈薪金的文章中有这么一句话: Be enthusiastic and professional in your negotiations and encourage outcomes that put both you and your future employer in a **“win-win” situation**. 了解了“双赢”的英语表达法,表达下面的中文句子就易如反掌了: “通过合作我们可获得双赢。”你是如何表达的呢?

既然“双赢”一词涉及到了英语数字的表达方法,我们不妨再来了解一些

涉及到数字的英语习语：

- (1) Don't you think he is *one track-minded* (一根筋)?
- (2) That's all Greek to me. (我对……一窍不通。)
- (3) "Do you have any second thoughts?" (你犹豫吗?)
"No. None." (没有。从来没有。)
- (4) His mark in math is second to none in the class. (他的数学在班上独占鳌头。)
- (5) Habit is a second nature. (习惯成自然。)
- (6) A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush. (一鸟在手胜于两鸟在林。)
- (7) They arrive in twos and threes. (他们三三两两地来了。)
- (8) Two is company, but three is none. (两人成伴, 三人不欢。)
- (9) Two heads are better than one. (三个臭皮匠合成一个诸葛亮。)
- (10) One boy is a boy, two boys are half boy, and three boys are no boy at all. (一个和尚挑水吃, 两个和尚抬水吃, 三个和尚没水吃。)
- (11) Look before you leap. (三思而后行。)
- (12) New brooms sweep clean. (新官上任三把火。)
- (13) The wounded soldier crawled on all fours to a nearby village. (受伤的士兵靠四肢爬到了附近的一个村子。)
- (14) If a football team wins a game, the players will *give high fives to everyone around to celebrate* (互相击掌以示庆贺)。
- (15) I don't care which car you choose; it's six of one and half a dozen of the other to me. (不管你选中哪辆小轿车, 对我来说区别都不大。)
- (16) I always believe in my sixth sense. (我相信直觉。)
- (17) The children are in seventh heaven with their new toys. (新玩具让这些孩子们兴奋不已。)
- (18) His room is always *at sixes and sevens* (乱七八糟)。
- (19) be scattered here and there (七零八落)
- (20) a narrow escape (from death) (九死一生)
- (21) A wonder lasts but nine days. / a nine days' wonder (轰动一时的事件、昙花一现的新鲜事)
- (22) A cat has nine lives. (比喻某人有顽强的生命力。)

(23) Ten to one he will be late. (十有八九他会迟到。)

(24) flawless (十全十美)

(25) The war was prevented at the eleventh hour. (战争在最后关头被制止了。)

(26) The editor made several eleventh hour changes in the magazine. (编辑在杂志马上就要付印时又进行了最后的修改。)

(27) Eggs are sold by the dozen. (鸡蛋论打卖。)

(28) My parents' resources are not sufficient to hire round-the-clock nursing. (我父母的收入无法支付一天 24 小时的护理费用。)

(29) Martha studied around the clock for a management exam.

(30) Dozens of advertising boards in Paris's metro stations are singing cheerful slogans this week. (本周,在巴黎的地铁站,几十个广告牌正唱出鼓动人心的宣传口号。)

(31) As a model, she is *one in a thousand* (百里挑一)。

(32) He is *one in a million* (凤毛麟角,百里挑一)。

(33) They tried in a thousand and one ways to please their boss. (他们千方百计地去取悦他们的上司。)

(34) It is a wise man that never makes mistakes. (智者千虑,必有一失。)

(35) It is only once in a blue moon that you get an opportunity like that. (对你来说,这是个千载难逢的机会。)

(36) Absolutely true! (千真万确!)

(37) That's the last thing he will do. (那是他最不愿意做的事情。)

2)在日常阅读过程中学习英语的习惯表达法。

在我们与加拿大的一个合作项目中,加方主任随信寄来了一式两份的年终报告。在所附的信函中,该主任这样写道:“We are sending you two copies. Would you please distribute them to the appropriate officials?”在获得信息的同时,我们又掌握了“有关负责人”或“相关负责人”的一种表达方式。

在阅读时只要我们留意,会积累到很多我们原本不知道或表达不准确的单词、短语或句子,例如:mentality (心态),a wealth of (大量的、丰富的),in split seconds (刹那间),by lottery (通过抽签),by drawing lots (通过抓阄),

cross-disciplinary studies (交叉学科研究), popular majors and rarefied fields (热门专业和冷门专业), downloadable version (可下载版本), public service announcement (公益广告), fixed-line telephone (办公室或家装的固定电话), train of thought (思路), product endorser (产品代言人), keep a low profile (保持低调), to advance with the times (与时俱进), Let nature take its course. (顺其自然。)以及 The outcome is hard to foresee. (结果很难预测。)等。

阅读下面的句子,看看自己是否能从中掌握一些新的英语词汇和表达法。

(1) We attended what were then private schools and received a *solid* (良好的) education. This education continued for many of us at universities in Britain, Canada and the US, where we obtained bachelor's, master's and even doctoral degrees.

(2) Although disappointed that I did not want to pursue graduate studies, my parents eventually approved of my decision.

(3) I'm now pursuing my doctorate at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in Boston, USA.

(4) Students from every corner of the world flock to American universities. They may be at ease with the most complex mathematical theories, but are often bewildered by Americans. So the University of California at Berkeley initiated a class for foreign students, who make up 60 percent of all post-doctorates on campus.

(5) We need to be careful not to overload you with courses which may be too challenging.

(6) These days, graduate school is the most important choice because the competition for all kinds of jobs has gotten fiercer.

(7) Days are often filled with meetings.

(8) Remember that winners do what losers don't want to do.

(9) Most people admit to having a love-hate relationship with TV.

(10) Beauty contests in Canada are declining in popularity.

(11) Among the necessities of life are food, clothing, and shelter.

(12) The best way to broaden your horizons is to learn a foreign language.

(13) After she broke up with her boyfriend, she threw herself into her job.

(14) Many chefs have become household names by teaching the UK how to cook.

(15) Keeping four kids on a regular sleep schedule isn't easy for the Friesen family as they juggle homework, hockey, curling and dance lessons.

(16) She never missed an opportunity to *humiliate* (羞辱) me.

(17) A life partner, children and good friends are all recommended if you aim to live to 100.

(18) My first job also helped me achieve more confidence.

(19) I took a day off work and treated her to lunch.

(20) About 50% of Canadians think their standard of living is going up.

(21) More than one-sixth of the global population doesn't have access to clean drinking water at all.

(22) He has the history of his country at his fingertips.

(23) Teens who go on diets or take unhealthy measures to lose weight may end up gaining pounds in the long run.

(24) The French have a passion for preserving old towns, old architecture. The English are not quite so passionate about this.

(25) To put it simply, you need to set some short-term, long-term and life-long goals. Once you have some concrete, and/or even some vague goals set, you are ready to start working to achieve those goals. University is a stepping stone to reaching your life's goal.

3) 阅读使我们的写作词汇更加多样化。

例 1. 在用英语表达“把……归功于……”时,学生们用得最多的习惯搭配是“owe... to...”和“contribute... to...”。阅读下面两个句子后,你会掌握两个新的同样表达“把……归功于……”的习惯搭配:

(1) Marsha attributed her success to her husband's generous support.

(2) He credits his longevity and health to drinking two ounces of *cognac* (白兰地) daily, along with eating five Danish butter cookies.

例 2. 在用英语表达“我实现了我的梦想”时,学生们用得最多的表达方

式是“I have realized my dream.”和“My dream has come true.”其实,“实现梦想”的表达方法也是多样化的。你能在下列句子中找到它们吗?

(1) The Chinese dream of space travel has at last become reality.

(2) Sonora gained local support and made her dream a reality one year later.

(3) The company claims to help customers to turn dreams into reality.

(4) Luckily I was single and could accomplish my dream about traveling to a faraway country — a dream I had since my childhood.

(5) We are a free nation, where men and women have the opportunity to achieve their dreams.

(6) When asked how old we are, we often feel reluctant to answer this question. Actually, we should be proud of our age because life is always offering us, no matter how old we are, opportunities to fulfill our hopes and dreams.

(7) Despite growing up in an age when women were pushed to pursue domestic lives, Hillary was always encouraged by her *close-knit* (和睦亲密的) family to follow her dreams.

(8) In 2004, I packed up and went in pursuit of my dreams.

掌握了多种有关“实现梦想”的表达方式后,我们就可以在写作时变换着使用。

2. 通过翻译练习来丰富我们的写作词汇。在阅读过程中,我们会遇到许许多多地道的英语表达法,但同时也会感到,对于这些表达法,我们往往只能欣赏,而不会使用。为了变被动欣赏为主动使用,我们可先将那些含有地道的英语表达法的句子译成汉语,几天后再将它们回译成英语(马上回译有可能对原文还有印象)。翻译得是否正确可与原文进行比对。先阅读下面这句话:Could she seize this rare opportunity? 这句话可译成:“她能抓住这个难得的机会吗?”我们从这句话中可以学到两个习惯搭配,即表达“抓住这个机会”时可以说“seize this opportunity”;在表达“难得的机会”时可以说“rare opportunity”。为了学会主动使用这两个习惯搭配,我们可将上面译成中文的句子再回译成英语。通过回译我们就对这两个习惯搭配加深了印象。这样,当以后想表达“对我来说这是一个难得的机会,我一定要抓住它”之意时,便可以把这两个习惯搭配调出来使用了。有时受母语的干扰,回译出的句子

与原文有一定的差距,那么我们可重译,直至掌握为止。将下面三句话译成汉语,看看你能掌握哪些英语的习惯搭配:

(1) They say they feel fulfilled in life.

(2) Since that day I got hooked into photography.

(3) Why is it that we're so prone to forming stereotypes that end up being unrepresentative?

3. 通过音像资料积累写作词汇。当被问到怎样用英语表达“外在的美”和“内在的美”时,一些学生的回答多是“outside beauty”和“inside beauty”。地道的英语是这样表达的吗?答案可以从美国的一个电视新闻报道中找到。节目主持人在报道了一则有关健美运动员生活的消息后,转到了一个新的话题:妹妹决定为生命垂危的姐姐捐献自己的一个肾脏。这位主持人是这样过渡的:“We make a turn now from the search for physical beauty to an inward focus. Last year, John Kenyon met a woman of great inner beauty who was prepared to risk her own life to help her dying sister...”读完这段文字,你知道“外在的美”和“内在的美”怎样表达了吗?

四、结束语

分析了写作的难点所在,了解了提高英语写作水平的一些方法,余下的问题就是实践了。本书为有志于提高英语写作水平的学生提供了大量的动笔实践的机会,希望大家在练习过程中克服浮躁情绪和急功近利的心态,点滴积累、勤于动笔,有一分耕耘,就会有一分收获。最后让我们用下面三句话作为共勉:

(1) Generally speaking, there is no way to write well except to write often.

(2) Writing is a slow process, requiring considerable thought, time and effort.

(3) Practice makes perfect.

(1) cool colors	(2) hotbed
(3) eat the soup	(4) a lounge
(5) a tourist city	(6) a pedestrian street
(7) a full moon	(8) gain/acquire/obtain/get knowledge
(9) sense of security	(10) to blow a kiss/a blowing kiss