

—An approach
to effective writing
in English

Across

Reading & Writing

链接读写

陈秋仙 成丽芳 编著

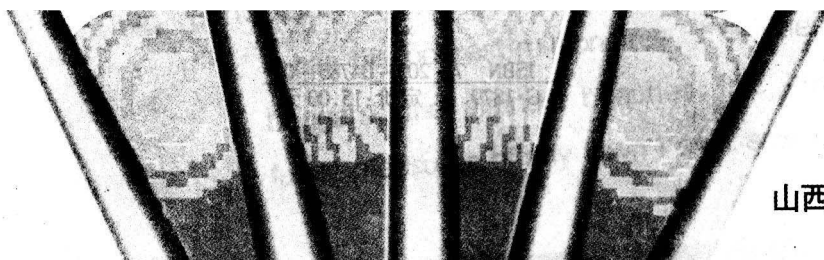
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前 言

本书是一种新的语言学习理念指导下就有效英语写作所做的尝试。过去二十年来将写作视为成品还是过程一直是写作教学的争论焦点。前者着眼于对作品的综合评价而后者重点在于将写作的整个过程展示出来,让初学者通过感官获得理性认识。本书则将二理念有机地结合起来。让学习者欣赏品味名作之后,领略这些优秀作品形成的过程,并尝试将其运用到自己的写作实践当中。

本书的创新之处在于:

一、提出阅读新视角。引导学习者改变以往为读而读的阅读习惯和思维定势,从写作者的角度来欣赏和审视阅读材料:文章的框架,语言的风格等。

二、优化输入,以输出最大化为导向。Reading 部分仔细选择极具典型性,且益情、智、趣的英语文学精品。辅以作者简介及极富启发性的问题,旨在拓宽学习者的眼界,淀积其文化底蕴。读写结合,为写而读,以读导写,将输入与输出合理链接,为有效的输出提供了较理想的模式。

三、将写作过程具体化。Writing Process 部分对写作作为一个过程以及写作策略系列地展示出来,并对每一步骤加以举例改错等相关练习,使得写作不再显得讳深莫测。

四、兼顾句法层次。Sentence Structure 试图将句法层次中国学生易犯的毛病如措辞、结构、逻辑、标点符号等通过解释加充分的训练一一根除。

五、理论与实践相结合。设计练习促使学习者在读写的每一阶段都动手。将获得的理念及时输出巩固并达到获得最大化最优化。特别是 Writing Assignment 部分结合每一章的核心设计了具有典型意义的题目,促使其将从范文中所感悟的付诸笔纸之上。随后补充的典型范例为学习者提供了更大的探索和实践空间。引导、协助学生轻松跨过英语写作这道关卡,达到有效英语写作的最终目的。

全书共十二章。前六章为具体手法: Exemplification, Definition, Comparison & contrast, Process analysis, Cause & effect, Classification, 后四章为四种体裁: Narration, Description, Persuasion, Exposition. 如此排列而非按照传统将手法统冠于 exposition 之下, 是因为作者认为手法实非某种文体独有而为所有文体所共享。此外, 补充了一章 Autobiography 与一章实用文体。作为教材, 每章可分六至八课时进行讲授, 依进度在一或两个学期内完成。

本书乃两位作者多年教学经验与研究的总结, 并借鉴了当前国内外相关的、先进研究成果, 将读与写有机的结合在一起, 融趣味性、启发性、实用性于一体, 希望能成为英语学习者攻克写作难关的有益助手。本书适用于非英语专业研究生、英语专业低年级学生、非英语专业大学生及广大英语爱好者。由于作者水平有限, 不足之处敬请读者不吝赐教, 以便再版时补充完善。

姜小红同志也参与了本书的部分编写及校对工作。

Preface

As you are sweating and toiling in learning English and want badly to turn it a tool instead of an obstacle, one thing may trouble you more than you can bear. That is, how come you put in so much while you can put out so little? No worry. You are not to blame. It is intake, the knot of learning process that should take the responsibility. Intake is just the bridge that you have to cross to get to your destination. Here in the book, illustrations are made with the reading-writing pair to show how to maximize the output by optimizing intake of what is put in. At least it provides you with a thought-provoking way to work towards it other than away from it. That is to try to transit reading into writing. In fact, we can never put enough emphasis on transition.

We cannot just read. We cannot read only for some words, phrases and grammatical points either. A proper way of reading is of vital importance for output. As we all know approach is the key to any door. And the very key of reading is to read as a reader should. A reader is not a passive data sponge into which meaning is poured and then dries up as time goes by. The role a reader plays is active, even creative.

Two basic principles for reading are 1) **read for meaning** – that is what the author wrote for; 2) **read like a writer** to see how an article is formed and how an idea should be organized, and how this formation and organization helps to convey the writer's idea-that is what the author is known for. So doing, you are reading towards taking in the very essence of the materials that have left mark of some kind in the history. These two principles are different but complementary. Making it a habit and using it unconsciously is the first and foremost step to transition.

Specifically, marking while reading can help a lot. Here the mark you leave might as well go beyond the Chinese that you looked up in dictionaries. You highlight or underline what you think is important, write briefly in the margin what

you think it means, and what ideas and questions it raises for you, or whatever you would like. The simple act of marking makes you read closely and attentively. Yet it would never do to take for granted everything in the materials. Instead, we keep our eyes wide open and read critically. Additional reading strategies such as summarizing, outlining and analyzing would be introduced to extend and deepen your repertoire.

A second important and indispensable step to transition is to write. “Reading maketh a full man, and writing an exact man.” As Francis Bacon noted, writing can make exact what you’ve got from reading. The most important aspect of writing well is knowing that writing is a process, a special kind of process—a process of discovery, and learning how to make the process work for you. The writing process often seems messy, it can be somewhat manageable if we divide it into three stages: invention-drafting-revision. Writing helps you explore, develop and refine the language you’ve acquired as well as the ideas you’ve got in a way that “doing in your head” can’t compare with. You write as you reflect, explore and discover, only to find a new language structure have been established unknown to yourself.

That is why the book is written.

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Unit 1

Exemplification

◆ Reading

Using examples and illustrations is a common and effective way to explain ideas. Usually the use of examples should be to illustrate a point, basically by making the general specific and making the abstract concrete.

Genius or Jerk^①?

—by Andy Rooney

People are more complicated in real life than in the movies, says columnist Andy Rooney. To make his point, he gives the example of a prominent friend who is admired by some and disliked by others.

It's too bad life isn't like the movies.

When they make a movie in Hollywood, the women are beautiful, the men are handsome and all the characters are either good or bad. We aren't confused about what we think of anyone. That's the way life ought to be.

Life isn't that way, though. In real life, it's impossible to tell the good guys from the bad guys because people are too complicated. Good people are always doing bad things, and bad people keep fooling you by doing good things. The ax murderer drops breadcrumbs out his cell^② window to feed the birds.

The other night we were sitting around with some friends and, as will hap-

① jerk: a foolish person
② cell: room in prison.

pen, we started talking about another person we all knew who wasn't there. The subject of our discussion was Fred Friendly, onetime president of CBS News, a Columbia University professor and director of Columbia University Seminars on Media and Society. One of the people in the group referred to Fred as a "genius." A second man in the room exploded^① and said some things about Fred that I wouldn't repeat here in print.

I didn't say anything because I was thinking they were both right. To almost everyone who has met him Fred Friendly is "My Most Unforgettable Character." He is one of my best friends, and I have not only great respect for his brilliance as an accomplisher of things but great affection for the way he is: I can't explain why I like the way Fred is, I just do. I don't fight with anyone who can't stand him. I understand.

Fred can be an egomaniac^② and a jerk. When he is, I just smile because he's my friend. I stopped judging him years ago.

That's the real problem. A person can be so many different things. He or she can be a loving husband or wife, a considerate friend who'd do anything for you in an emergency, but also someone who'd steal a sweater from a department store. This mixed-up quality of the character of all of us is hard to get used to, and the movies make it even harder because they condition^③ us to expect people to be predictably all good or all bad. . .

It would be best if we didn't take such satisfaction in our firm decisions about whether people are good or bad. We're amused by our own initial reaction to someone and keep repeating it until it becomes our opinion. In a conversation, we know it's a lot more interesting if we say someone is a genius or a jerk than it is if we withhold any comment.

I don't think any of us is going to change, but I wish the movie would.

① explode: refute.

② egomaniac: a self-conceit person.

③ condition: to make somebody behave or think in a certain way.

Questions for meaning and style:

1. What's the point that "Genius or Jerk?" tries to make?
2. Do you agree that movies "condition us" to see the world a certain way? Explain what this means.
3. How many examples are used in the essay? Are they the same kind of example?
4. Paragraph 4 is an example of which of these: description, process, narration, or cause and effect?
5. The first sentence of the essay says people should be more like the people in the movies. The last sentence says movie people should be more like real people. Do you think the saying agrees in a logic sense?

◆ From reading to writing

When you use examples in an essay, you have a couple of decisions to make. How many examples are enough and proper? Which to use? Where to use? A true example from your own life or a hypothetical (make-up) example? One extended example or several short ones? "Genius or Jerk?" is a perfect demonstration in all these considerations. Read the passage again to see how the writer controlled his examples. You are encouraged to provide answers to all the questions mentioned above.

Exemplification is widely used in almost any kinds of writings. The examples chosen should be specific, typical, interesting, and relevant to the point expressed. And the arrangement of examples should be coherent and harmonious with the other part, and above all to the best of whole writing. Now do the following matching up exercise to gain some sense.

Read the four paragraphs below and try to identify the main idea of each. Then select suitable example for each idea from those listed.

Stress and living abroad

1. When a person goes to live in a foreign country, he finds that the new lan-

guage causes him a great deal of stress. Even if he has studied the language in his own country, he may find the vocabulary and pronunciation different from what he learned. Furthermore, because the sounds and structures of the new language are unfamiliar to him, he must listen more carefully than he does to his own language.

2. Although a stranger in a new country feels very lonely, he may find social contacts with the natives of the country a great strain. He is not sure how to behave. This is especially embarrassing to an adult, who already knows how to handle most social situations in his own culture.
3. Not only are language and social relationships difficult, but a foreigner also has to become accustomed to a new environment in which everyday objects and experiences may be different. The confusion caused by these differences can make even a simple activity seem difficult.
4. The newcomer also suffers from emotional stress. He has left his family and friends in his own country. He is more alone in the new country than he has ever been in his life. In the process of moving to another country he has left behind much of his own identity. He does not have a family or a job to show who he is. He cannot use the language well enough to show what kind of person he is.

Examples:

- a. "I am a very shy person," said one recent immigrant.
- b. For example, a foreigner finds conversation with a new American friend very tiring. After only ten or fifteen minutes, he finds himself suffering from a terrible headache and a great urge to run away.
- c. One foreign student said, "The person you are talking to isn't really me. I don't know English well enough to show you who I am."
- d. One illustration is the problem of using a bus. A newcomer to the United States wanted to take a bus to downtown. He started to get on the bus by the back door, but the other passengers all yelled at him. In his country, one gets on at the back and pays the person who collects the money. Then he

gave the driver a dollar, but she refused to take his money. She told him he needed the exact change. He got off the bus in confusion.

e. For instance, he is not sure what to do when he is introduced to somebody. Is it polite to shake hands? Should he bow? And what should he say?

Your choice: _____.

As you have noticed, the phrases or structures often used in exemplification are: for instance, for example, a case in point, a good illustration of . . . is . . . , take . . . as example, etc. , though these might as well be implied just as the author of "Genius or Jerk?" did.

The following paragraph seems tedious and vague for lack of proper examples.

Courage is the willingness to take risk when the outcome is uncertain, and when the risk taken may involve harm, loss, or danger to the one taking it. The courageous person fears no one and no thing. He or she is undaunted by danger or peril. He or she will venture boldly into an uncertain situation, hardly giving a thought to the harm or consequences which may result to his or her person.

With good examples the above generalization is made specific:

Courage is the willingness to take risk when the outcome is uncertain, and when the risk taken may involve harm, loss, or danger to the one taking it. For example, in a Los Angeles suburb, a twelve-year-old girl ran into a burning house to rescue her baby brother, pulled him unconscious out of the burning bedroom, and dragged him down the stairs and outside to safety. This was a rousing display of courage. The girl had been safe outside the flaming house when she remembered her sleeping brother. Disregarding her personal safety, she plunged into the flaming house to save him.

Tips for using examples

- * Select appropriate examples
- * Make it clear what your examples are illustrating
- * Don't overuse examples

◆ Writing assignment

Write a unified paragraph on one of the following topics. Use either real life or hypothetical examples to support the topic sentence.

1. Women/man can be hard to understand.
2. Some teachers bring about the worst/best in a student.
3. Small children can be a real joy/headache to their parents.

Will you use several examples to write about one subject, or will you use only one example but develop it fully? Make sure to have your examples controlled. Use the planning form below.

(Topic sentence) _____

◆ Writing process

Decades of research have shown that the most important aspect of writing well is knowing that writing is a process and learning how to make the process work best for you. A piece of writing is usually completed over a period of time. The process can be divided into different productive stages, with each stage having special focus.

1. **Prewriting** is the earliest stage of any writing process. During prewriting, you generate and develop ideas and information.
2. **Drafting** is the first attempt at getting your ideas down in paragraph or essay form. First draft is almost always rough.
3. **Revising** is the third stage when the writer reviews and polishes the draft to