

李丽君 主编



# 英语学术论文 及留学文书写作

A Handbook for Writing English  
Academic Paper and Admissions Essay



清华大学出版社  
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# 英语学术论文及留学文书写作

## A Handbook for Writing English Academic Paper and Admissions Essay

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清华大学出版社  
北京交通大学出版社  
· 北京 ·

## 内 容 简 介

《英语学术论文及留学文书写作》的设计主要涵盖了两个板块。英语学术论文写作部分全方位地分析和展示了英语学术论文写作的技巧与诀窍,从论文选题、确定主题句、草拟大纲、资料的搜集与整理、记笔记的有效方法、论文初稿的撰写与修订、论文完稿等方面详尽地讲解了英语学术论文写作的各个必要环节。留学文书写作部分介绍了个人陈述、研究计划、简历等主要留学文书的写作,更搜集了近年成功申请国外各类知名院校的申请信,并从其结构设计、语言选择等方面给出了详尽的分析和归纳。同时,本书同样适用于前往英语国家进修或学习的职业人士阅读借鉴。

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# 前言

《英语学术论文及留学文书写作》是“高级英语阶段系列教程”提高阶段的主干教材之一。本书的主要对象是大学公共外语高年级扩展阶段的本科生、英语专业学生、高年级研究生（硕士生、博士生），另外也可供科研人员和科技编辑案头查阅和浏览。本书的设计主要涵盖了两个板块，包括提高学习者国际学术交流能力和科技文章撰写能力的英语学术论文写作指导及旨在帮助欲前往英语国家深造的本科高年级学生和研究生撰写留学文书的写作指导。

本书首先是英语学术论文写作的指南读物。书中全方位地分析和展示了英语学术论文写作的技巧与诀窍，从论文选题、确定主题句、草拟大纲、资料的搜集与整理、记笔记的有效方法、论文初稿的撰写与修订、论文完稿等方面详尽地讲解了英语学术论文写作的各个必要环节。本书在每个章节理论讲解的基础上，援引了新近在国内外学术刊物上发表的论文作为实例，要求学习者积极主动地分析并掌握各章节所讲解的理论知识，做到活学活用，由此实现真正意义上的有效教学。此外，本书不仅详尽地阐述了学术论文写作的全过程，还介绍了针对论文设计多媒体演示文稿的方法，以及参加学术会议和论文答辩的一些相关技巧，真正实现从论文撰写人从论文选题到完稿，再到口头呈现研究结果作出整体指导。

本书的留学文书写作部分目的在于帮助有意在国外继续深造的学习者成功地赢在申请的第一步。随着高等教育的深化，越来越多的本科毕业生及研究生计划在结束本阶段学习后继续深造。除了必须具备的学术成绩、语言成绩等“硬件”外，还需要包括个人陈述在内的一套完整的留学申请材料，申请者应最大限度地通过留学文书成功反映出个人的个性和才智，充分地展示出自己的学术成就、学术观点、智慧和所具备的其他独特才能。本书留学文书写作部分不仅介绍了个人陈述、研究计划、简历等主要留学文书的写作，更搜集了近年成功申请国外各类知名院校的申请信，并从其结构设计、语言选择等方面给出了详尽的分析和归纳。

本书在编写过程中注意突出高级英语阶段英语教学层次较高、应用面广、学术性强的特点，注重培养学习者学术英语写作能力，特别是使用英语写作和发表专业学术论文的实际能力；并力求从实际出发，注重教材的先进性、实用性、针对性和导向性，确保内容全面、材料翔实、例证丰富、语言规范。全书的写作语言为英语，做到“用英语讲英语”，更清晰准确地讲解对英语这一语言工具的有效驾驭，提高学习者的英语学术研究水平与论文撰写能力。

最后，限于编者的水平和其他客观原因，书中所述内容难免有遗漏之处，敬请同行批评指正。

编者

2009年6月于北京

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# Chapter 1

## Application Letters



留学申请是一项艰巨而复杂的“系统工程”，每一个环节都必须作近乎完美无缺的准备。除了必须具备的学术成绩、语言成绩等“硬件”外，还需要包括个人陈述、简历、学习或研究计划、推荐信等在内的一套完整的留学申请材料。个人陈述(Personal Statement)，也称 Admissions Essay，其目的在于成功地反映出你的个性和才智，充分地向人展示出你的学术成就、学术观点、智慧和所具备的其他独特才能，它是所有出国文件中最重要的一部分，是申请者最主要的自我展示舞台和成功地推介自己必不可少的敲门砖。个人简历(Résumé)是一种形式严谨的留学文书，虽然不需要过多的写作技巧，但是精心的安排和严密的组织会让个人简历成为成功申请的有力工具。简历写作时要注意内容主次的顺序安排，一定要突出重点；用语要简洁、地道，简历不需要过多的修饰性语言，用动词有力说明事实即可；另外，外观要美观、大方。研究计划(Research Proposal)旨在说明学习的目标、课题、方法、进度和安排，其最大的特点是专业性和具体性。该类材料一般要求涵盖的内容包括所选择的论文/研究课题、对本领域既有的研究的回顾、选择这一研究课题的动机及背景、这项研究的大概内容和研究价值、主要的研究方法、环节和实施步骤、预期所要达到的科研效果等。一份专业化的翔实的研究计划将大大增加申请人被录取的机会。此外，大多数欧美国家都要求申请人递交2~3封推荐信(Recommendation Letter)，有时校方会明确规定推荐人的职业范围和与申请人的关系，有时他们让申请人挑选与自己最熟悉的人做推荐人。招生委员会希望通过推荐人的评价，进一步确认申请人是否与学校和专业要求相吻合。一封有力量的推荐信，不仅仅在于推荐人的名气，更主要的是能真实可信地反映出申请人在学业、品德、个性等各方面的特点。申请的项目包括学术性项目、专业职业项目等，申请人应根据所申请项目的特点挑选推荐人。由于本章篇幅所限，本章仅在范文一节给出推荐信范例，供参考。

### Admissions Essay

The admissions essay is written by an applicant to graduate school in response to an assignment posed in the graduate application. Graduate programs will often assign specific topics

that applicants must address in writing their essay. Sometimes they ask for a generic “**autobiographical statement**” in which the applicant discusses his or her life, experiences, and goals. The admissions essay is sometimes referred to as a “**personal statement**”. The graduate admissions essay is a critical part of the graduate application because it is through this essay that applicants can speak directly to the committee and demonstrate their unique fit to the program.

### The purpose of the graduate admissions essay

Admissions committees deal with countless stacks of applications; faceless GRE scores and GPAs. How do they differentiate among applicants with similar scores and academic backgrounds? One essential evidence they refer to is the personal statement. Your personal statement reveals a great deal about your ability:

- to write;
- to determine the purpose of the essay;
- to stick to the task at hand;
- to “sell” yourself and explain why you’re a good match to the program.

Essentially, the essay is your opportunity to talk directly with the admissions committee, to call attention to important parts of your application that might otherwise be overlooked, and to explain any discrepancies or potentially negative aspects of your application. It’s your chance to help the admissions committee see you as a person instead of a grade point average and a clump of standardized test scores.

### Advice from the admissions committee

The admissions essay is an opportunity for applicants to stand out. Here’s what the admissions committee considers when reading an applicant’s admissions essay:

- How well does the applicant address the assigned question?
- If no specific topic is assigned, how well does the applicant manage the ambiguous assignment and construct an essay that is relevant and informative?
- How well does the applicant write?
- Does the applicant attend to details, such as spelling and presentation?
- Does the essay illustrate critical thinking?
- Does the applicant demonstrate abstract and complex reasoning?
- Is the essay appropriate? Is it too informal?
- Does the applicant reveal appropriate personal details and avoid sharing irrelevant and overly personal information (e. g. , mental illness, childhood experiences, family tragedies, etc. )?

- Is the essay free of careless errors (e. g. , listing the wrong school)?
- How well is the essay organized? Is it easy to read and to follow the author's ideas?

Writing an effective admissions essay or personal statement takes time to consider the topic, plan your points, organize and structure your argument, draft the essay, evaluate whether you have addressed all of the above issues, seek feedback, and write a final version. Therefore, it is better for you to start your writing far ahead of the deadline to ensure that you write an appropriate and effective admissions essay. Don't take shortcuts because the admissions essay can be what makes the difference between acceptance and rejection.

## How to organize your graduate admissions essay

There are several different ways you can structure your essay but the most common format includes an introduction, a body, and a concluding paragraph.

### 1. Introduction

- The introduction is the most important part of the essay, especially the first sentence. The first sentence introduces your essay and a bad introduction, in person or in writing, is detrimental to your admissions chances.
- Keep the readers interested by making them continue to read your essay after reading the first paragraph.
- The first sentence should be unique and compelling, possibly thought-provoking or attention-grabbing.
- First sentence may explain your desire to study the subject of interest or discuss the motivation that influenced your desire to study the subject of interest. State it in a creative manner.
- The sentences following the first sentence should provide a brief explanation that supports the claim stated in the first sentence.

### 2. The body

- The body should include several paragraphs that provide detailed evidence to support the statement made in the introductory paragraph. The paragraphs should flow by using transitions and resolutions.
- Each paragraph should have a transition, which starts each paragraph with a topic statement that will be the theme of that paragraph.
- Each paragraph should have a resolution, which ends each paragraph with a meaningful sentence that provides a transition to the next paragraph.
- Experiences, accomplishments, or any other evidence that can support your claims should

be included in the body. Future goals should also be mentioned in the body.

- A short summary of your educational background can be discussed in the 1st paragraph.
- Personal experiences and the reasons for wanting to attend the school can be discussed in the 2nd paragraph.
- The last paragraph should explain why you should be accepted.

### **3. Conclusion**

- State why you are interested in studying the subject of interest.
- State the key points mentioned in the body, such as your experiences or accomplishments, which explain your interest in the subject. State it in a conclusive and brief manner.
- End on a positive note with one or two attention-grabbing sentences.

Your essay should include enough details, be personal, and specific. The purpose of a personal statement is to show the admission committee what makes you unique and different from other applicants. Your job is to display your distinct personality and provide evidence that confirms your passion and desire for the subject and the school. However, even if you can write an interesting and compelling essay, the structure and organization may not be appropriate. Therefore, it is necessary that you follow the proper structure of an essay and allow all your paragraphs to flow smoothly. The structure and organization of your personal statement will not only make your essay more comprehensible and fascinating but it will also increase your chances of being accepted.

## **Preparation of your admissions essay**

Remember that writing your admissions essay is a process, not a discrete event. The first step involves preparation, gathering the information needed to compose the essay and understanding the task at hand. Here are some tips to help you gather the information needed to compose a personal essay that sets you apart from the rest.

### **1. Conduct a personal assessment**

The first step is to conduct a thorough self-assessment. Leave yourself plenty of time because this is a process of self-exploration that you don't want to rush. Sit down with a pad, or at the keyboard, and begin writing. Don't censor yourself in any way. Just write what feels natural.

Begin taking notes on what drives you. Describe your hopes, dreams, and aspirations. What do you hope to gain from graduate study? Granted, not all of this information will make it into the essay, but your goal at this point is to brainstorm. Identify as much of your personal history as possible so that you can carefully sift through and sort out events and personal items that will strengthen your essay.

Consider:

- hobbies;
- projects that you've completed;
- jobs;
- responsibilities;
- accomplishments in the personal and scholastic arena;
- major life events that have changed you;
- challenges and hurdles you've overcome;
- life events that motivate your education;
- people who have influenced you or motivated you;
- traits, work habits, and attitudes that will insure your success.

Carefully consider your academic records and personal accomplishments. How do the attitudes, values, and personal qualities that you've listed correspond to these experiences? Try to pair them up. For example, your curiosity and thirst for knowledge may have led you to conduct independent research with a professor. Consider how each pair of attitudes/personal qualities and experiences show that you're prepared to excel in graduate school. Also consider these questions that will help you gather information that will be useful in writing your essay.

Once you have a master list, carefully examine the information that you've listed. Remember that the information that you have chosen to present can portray you as a positive and upbeat person or as a tired and discouraged student. Think about the image that you want to portray and revise your master list accordingly. Use the revised list as a basis for all of your admissions essays. Carefully consider what you should (and should not) include in your essay.

## **2. Do your research**

Research the programs that interest you. Read the brochure, check the website, and gather all information possible to help you determine what the admissions committee is looking for from potential students. Your research should provide enough of a knowledge base about the school to tailor your essay to it. Show that you're interested and that you've taken the time to learn about the program. Take careful notes on each program and note where your personal interests, qualities, and accomplishments coincide.

## **3. Consider the questions posed**

Many applications require that students address specific questions in their admissions essays, such as these common admissions essay topics. Make sure that you're answering the question. Take time to think about the question, the central theme asked, and how it corresponds to your master list of experiences/personal qualities. Some applications offer a string of questions. Pay

attention to your responses and try to avoid being redundant.

Before you begin your essay, familiarize yourself with the basic structure of admissions essays. As you begin to write, remember that this is your chance to present your strengths and really shine. Take advantage of it. Discuss your accomplishments, valuable experiences, and emphasize the positive. Make it involved and engaging. Show that you're motivated. Remember that the committee is composed of professionals who have read hundreds, even thousands of such statements over the years. Make yours stand out.

Your personal essay is a story that tells the admissions committee who you are and what you can offer. Granted, the questions posed will differ by program, but the general challenge is to introduce yourself and describe your potential as a successful candidate. A careful self-assessment and consideration of the program and the questions posed will aid in your endeavor to write a winning personal statement.

## Q & A with admissions essay

Students often wonder how to approach writing the graduate admissions essay. What do you include? What do you exclude? Read these answers to common questions.

### 1. How do I choose a theme for my admissions essay?

It may be helpful to make a list of all of your experiences and interests at first and then try to find an overlapping theme or connection between the different items on the list. However, your underlying theme should be why you should be accepted into graduate school or specifically accepted into the program to which you are applying. Your job is to sell yourself and distinguish yourself from other applicants through examples.

### 2. What type of tone (attitude towards the subject) should I incorporate in my essay?

The tone of the essay should be balanced or moderate. Don't sound too cheerful or too depressed but keep a serious and ambitious tone. When discussing positive or negative experiences, sound open-minded and use a neutral tone. Remember not to hit the extremes (too high or too low) and remain in balance. Additionally, do not sound too casual or too formal. Portray confidence and use an active voice.

### 3. Should I write in the first person?

You are encouraged to speak in the first person on your personal statement. Your goal is to make your essay sound personal and active. However, avoid overusing "I" and, instead, alter between I and other first person terms, such as "my" and "me" and transition words, such as "however" and "therefore."

**4. How should I discuss my research interests in my personal statement?**

First, it is not necessary to state a specific and concise dissertation topic in your personal statement. You are only to state, in broad terms, your research interests within your field. The reason you are asked to discuss your research interests is because the program would like to compare the degree of similarity in research interests between you and the faculty member you wish to work with. Additionally, your aim is to show your readers that you have knowledge in your proposed field of study.

**5. What if I don't have any unique experiences or qualities?**

Everyone has qualities that can distinguish themselves from other individuals. Make a list of all your qualities and think of how you utilized them in the past. Discuss the ones that will make you stand out but will still have some connection to your field of interest. If you do not have many experiences within your field, then try to make your other experiences relate to your interests. For example, if you are interested in applying to a psychology program but only have experience working at a supermarket, then find a connection between psychology and your experience at the supermarket that can show your interest in and knowledge of the field and portray your ability to become a psychologist. By providing these connections, your experiences and you will be depicted as unique.

**6. Should I mention which faculty members I would like to work with?**

Yes. It makes it easier for the admissions committee to determine if your interests match with the faculty members you're interested in working with. However, if possible, it is recommended that you mention more than one professor you wish to work with because it is a possibility that the professor you are interested in working with is not accepting new students for that year. By mentioning only one professor, you are limiting yourself, which can decrease your chances of being accepted. Additionally, if you only wish to work with a specific professor, then you are more likely to be rejected by the admissions committee if that professor is not accepting new students. Alternatively, it may be helpful to contact professors and find out if they are accepting new students before applying. This reduces the chances of being rejected.

**7. Should I discuss all volunteer and job experiences?**

You should only mention volunteer and employment experiences that are relevant to your field of study or have helped you develop or acquire a skill that is necessary for your field of interest. However, if there is a volunteer or job experience that is not related to your field of interest yet has helped influence your career and academic goals, discuss it in your personal statement as well.

**8. Should I discuss flaws in my application? If yes, how?**

If you think it may be helpful, then you should discuss low grades, low GRE scores, etc. ,

providing an explanation. However, do not whine, blame others, or try to explain away three years of poor performance. When you discuss flaws, make sure you aren't giving unreasonable excuses, such as "I failed my test because I went out drinking the night before." Provide explanations that are reasonably excusable and comprehensive to the academic committee, such as an unexpected death in the family.

#### 9. Can I use humor in my personal statement?

It depends. Humor may keep the reader entertained but at the same time it may hurt you if it is not taken in a light manner. If you do plan on using humor, do so cautiously, keep it limited, and make sure it is appropriate. The last thing you want to do is to offend the admissions committee. Instead, aim to leave a smile on the readers face.

#### 10. Is there a limit in the length of the personal statement?

Yes, there is a limit, but it varies depending on the school and the program. Usually, personal statements are between 500 - 1,000 words long. Do not exceed the limit. More importantly, remember to answer all the questions being asked.

### Cover Letter

#### What is the cover letter

When mailing out your résumé to a prospective university, you always want to include an original cover letter. The cover letter is used to transmit your résumé (or other documents, such as transcripts). More importantly, it gives you the opportunity to introduce yourself to a school, express your interest in a field, offer the admissions officers insight into your personality through your writing style, and impress them with your communication skills.

#### A checklist of the cover letter

The cover letter should amplify points that you may or may not have covered in your résumé; it serves as your introduction to a prospective university. It should be brief and informative. Several things should be addressed:

(1) Explain **why** you are writing to the school and indicate a professional attitude, the amount of preparation you have done and additional efforts you have made.

(2) Whenever possible, the letter should be **addressed/tailored to a specific person**, with the full name and title. Make sure the name of the person addressed is spelled correctly. This person could be the dean of the department or the specific professor you plan to study after. This



shows you are familiar with the school and that you have carefully researched this specific area.

(3) Analyze your **specified knowledge and skills**, acquired both from the courses at school and in volunteer work or part-time working experience, and then make every effort to match your skills with those emphasized by the specialty you are applying for.

(4) Make every effort to **explore the background of the prospective school**, its specified area and contribution to its development; if possible, some detailed information about your target supervisor, including his educational background, academic achievement, published works, etc., to permit you to match your accomplishments with the goals and objectives of the organization.

(5) In closing, **express a desire** to arrange a time for an interview (mostly telephone interviews with overseas schools) and state that you will telephone to request a time for an appointment.

## Résumé

Your résumé is one of the most important parts of your application for further study. A résumé is a summary of your education, work experience and accomplishments. Your résumé is important. Admissions officers often use résumés to decide whether to accept you among thousands of applicants and whether you are qualified to be joined in them. Therefore, you should highlight your best attributes.

### Tips on writing a résumé

#### 1. Arrive quickly at the important points

Résumés are often read in less than a minute; therefore, you should format your résumé in such a way that your outstanding characteristics are quickly seen.

#### 2. Be clear and concise

A résumé should be as long as it needs to be, but no longer. If possible, keep your résumé to one page. Second pages often are not read. If, however, you have several publications or much social experience, you may have to use two pages.

#### 3. Keep vertical lists and use action verbs

Because of the speed with which people read résumés, vertical lists are preferable to paragraphs. Remember to keep those lists parallel and to use action verbs where possible. Action verbs, such as “designed,” “analyzed,” “measured,” and “organized,” put your accomplishments in the strongest light. Don’t use declarative sentences like “I developed the...” or “I assisted in...”; leave out the “I.”