

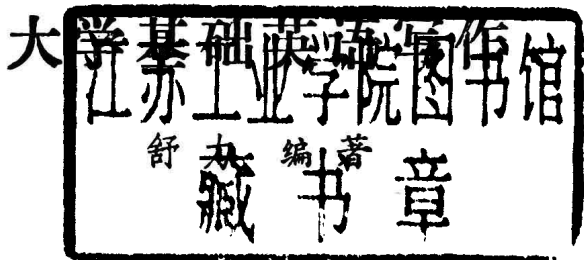
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COMPOSITION IN COLLEGE
BASIC ENGLISH

大学基础
英语写作

上海交通大学出版社

BASIC ENGLISH COMPOSITION
IN COLLEGE



上海交通大学出版社

内 容 提 要

本书从中国学生对英语写作的实际需要出发, 针对学生在英语写作中通常易犯的错误和感困难的问题, 分别从句子、段落和文章等三个方面进行系统的阐述, 并辅以详尽的范例和练习。全书内容精练、实用, 还附有常用写作规则和说明等。

本书可作为高等院校学生学习公共外语的教学用书, 也可供其他英语自学者参考。

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PREFACE

Basic English Composition is designed to teach Chinese college students to improve their English writing skills. Frankly speaking, most of handbooks available on book market are unsuitable for such purpose for three reasons. They present an overwhelming amount of material, much of which is irrelevant to the student's needs. In addition, they provide too many writing principles and specialized terms, which are of little use for developing the writing ability. The third reason, perhaps, is that they fail to treat the most frequent and characteristic writing problems of Chinese students.

Basic English Composition starts from the actual English level of our college students and focuses on the problems which present the greatest difficulty to them. The selection and organization of material have been guided not only by informality but also by usefulness and effectiveness.

This book is divided into three chapters: writing at the sentence level, writing at the paragraph level and writing at the composition level. Each part contains several sections, and in each section there are concise easy-to-read instruction with illustrative examples. The heart of this book lies in exercises, for

we consider that no amount of directions about writing will in itself do learners any good. Rules are only a dead set if they are not combined with practice. The exercises in this book proceed from easy to more difficult items, with adequate repetition and reinforcement.

The students for whom Basic English Composition is written can master all or nearly all the material in one term. Such mastery, combined with writing practice, will not be enough to make them good English writers, but it can reduce their frequently-made mistakes in composition courses to a certain [degree and lay a sound fundation for further study. That is why we call this book Basic English Composition, not advanced or intermediate.

1989. 1

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To the student

Writing in English is an important and useful communicative ability. Quite likely, every future specialist will have opportunities to write English in his professional work.

You have learned enough English to be able to read fluently and, perhaps, communicate with foreigners orally. Now, in my opinion, you must think very carefully about your writing in order to prepare for your future studies and work. You should begin to practise writing step-by-step. At first, you can try to write about your daily life, your experiences and common knowledge, then you can select topics from areas such as science, technology, medicine, economics, business and the like.

It is clear that when something is written a knowledge of English vocabulary and grammar is needed. These aspects of language are elementary requirements to a good English writer. Therefore, this booklet contains several sections in which we discuss sentence building from grammatical points of view.

However, in teaching practice we often find that even bright students make a lot of mistakes in their written work, although they can do grammar or vocabul-

any exercises perfectly. It seems that writing ability does not follow automatically from adequate vocabulary and grammar, but has to be trained quite specifically.

This booklet is designed to develop the basic English writing skills of college students. It will teach how to link words and phrases into sentences, to group sentences into paragraphs and to join paragraphs into a composition, so that the things are written will be easy to read and understand.

Here are some of the reasons why a written piece is difficult to read:

1. The sentences make no sense.
2. The paragraph has no unity and logical order.
3. The relation between the ideas is not clear because the writer has not used linking words and phrases like *therefore, finally, after all, for example* and so on.
4. The writer does not begin his piece with an introduction that starts the writing in the right direction.
5. The writer does not end his piece with a conclusion that sums up the point he wants to make.
6. The piece does not have good appearance. For example, there are punctuation marks without any reason or no punctuation at all.

All the exercises in this booklet will help you get rid of your errors in these six aspects. Obviously, diff-

erent learners will vary in their strong and weak points. So when you use this booklet, you are free to choose the materials which suit your specific needs.

Finally, when you practise writing English, your handwriting should at least be neat, clear and easy to read. Your composition should look like the work of an educated person.

I wish you success.

Chapter One

Writing at the Sentence Level

Whenever you want to convey a thought, you should first select the words you need and arrange them in an orderly way to make a sentence. The sentence is a basic unit of language communication. The ability to present ideas in sentences correctly, clearly and intelligently is quite essential for a good writer.

I The simple sentence and the sentence fragment

As is well known, a simple sentence is a group of words that has three characteristics:

- (1) It contains at least two main parts—a subject and a predicate.
- (2) It makes sense when standing alone.
- (3) It begins with a capital letter and ends with a punctuation mark.

The subject is the part that names what the sentence is about, and the predicate tells something about the subject. Subject-predicate structure is the main feature of a sentence.

My brother will go to the United States as a visiting scholar next year.

A knowledge of mathematics is always useful.

The Prime Minister is to make a statement tomorrow.

The room was filled with smoke.

A simple sentence may have two or more subjects, which are called "compound subjects".

My brother and his girl-friend will go to the United States next year to study computer science.

The old and the young, the man and the woman, the strong and the weak unite in defending their country.

The old and the sick are taken good care of in China.

Or a simple sentence may have two or more predicates, which are called "compound predicates". Notice that the verbs in a compound predicate must all have the same grammatical form.

My sister will go to England, live in London and study high-energy physics in a university.

The foreign guests arrived at the airport at noon, checked their luggage and boarded the plane.

Agriculture has been and remains the basis of the development of our national economy.

As long as all the subjects are related in the same way to all the predicates, they are all parts of a simple sentence.

The tourist and his guide climbed the mountain, stood at the top and viewed the countryside below.

My father and my two uncles went by bike to the reservoir, fished for five hours and came back home in the dark.

In addition, a predicate may require an object to complete the meaning of the sentence.

We can forgive his mistake.

You should inform the manager and all the members of the company.

Several members of the football team have received national awards.

A predicate may require an object and an indirect object to complete the meaning of the sentence.

The students have to cook themselves meals on Sunday.

The advice saved us a lot of trouble.

We should give the classroom a thorough clean-

ing and a good airing.

A predicate may require an object and an objective complement (a word that names or describes the object) to complete the meaning of the sentence.

I thought the experiment a failure.

He proved himself an outstanding scientist.

I guess his age as twenty-five.

Only in orders or directions will an subject be left out, for example, in the description of an experiment, instruction books, repair manuals, advertisements etc.

In these cases, "You" (meaning the reader) is said to be the implied subject. This kind of sentence often begins with the verb. Sometimes the word "please" comes first.

(You) Turn left at the corner, sir.

(You) Please try to be on time.

(You) Please reach me that book with a red cover over there.

But a fragment is a piece of a sentence which does not express full information without a context. It is grammatically or logically incomplete. In student's writing, fragments repeatedly appear due rather to care-

lessness than to ignorance. Remember the features of a sentence and be careful to distinguish a fragment from it when you are writing.

Sentence fragment:

A car by the side of the road
A child running into the busy street
The student can express fluently and exactly
I've just bought my English teacher
Lubrication makes the machine

If the necessary elements are added to the fragments, they will become sentences.

A car was parked by the side of the road.
The policeman stopped a child from running
into the busy street.

The student can express himself in French fluently and exactly.

I've just bought my English teacher a Christmas card.

Lubrication makes the machine run smoothly.

Exercise I

Write an S on the blank line if the sentence is

correctly constructed, or an F, if the group of words is only a fragment.

1. Begin the first word of each sentence with a capital letter _____.
2. Waiting eagerly for replies from the University of Southern California _____.
3. These effective measures can keep air pollution _____.
4. The letter about English programs for foreign students _____.
5. It is a little mountain stream _____.
6. Reading novels after work both knowledge and pleasure _____.
7. Different ways to express the same idea clearly _____.
8. How you enlarge your English vocabulary? _____.
9. Above sixty people at the meeting _____.
10. We think our duty to study hard for the four modernizations _____.
11. The government trying many different approaches to discourage people from smoking _____.
12. A young person needs to learn how to become selfreliant _____.
13. Over the past ten years, many farmers have moved _____.
14. A visit to a strange place always with surprise

- _____.
15. Prices have gone up mainly for three reasons
_____.

Exercise II

Fill in the blanks with omitted subjects, predicates, objects or complement.

1. The English evening _____ with a group singing and _____ with a disco dance.
2. _____ cut through the wheat field and _____ a cloud of dust behind it.
3. Subway fares in New York city _____ now to 90 cents and may _____ to \$1.50 soon.
4. Houses built in Beijing every year make our capital _____.
5. To read _____ is always interesting and instructive.
6. It was rude of you not to answer _____.
7. The flood soon covered _____.
8. City-dwellers have different ways _____.
9. Many kinds of part-time jobs are _____.
10. There are several steps in doing _____.
11. Severe weather made construction _____.
12. Every committee member _____ given a copy of the report.
13. During the summer _____ earn extra money.