



Writing Course for English Majors
英语专业写作教程

B篇

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英语专业写作教程

(B 篇)

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前言

选修一门课程时,首先我们应该认识这门课程的性质和功能。这对我们的学习是很有帮助的。

1. 我们为什么要学习英文写作

语言是人类交际,即交流思想、情感和各種信息的主要工具。人类运用语言进行交际的方式有两种:有声的和无声的,也就是口头的交流和书面文字的交流。简单说来,学习英文写作实质上就是学习用英语进行书面文字的交流。这是写作者与读者之间通过文字等书面符号而进行的交流。

我们知道,在中文学习的过程中,如果我们仅仅会说中文,却不能用中文阅读和写作,我们就还是中文的文盲或半文盲。英语学习中道理也是一样。学习英语写作的过程是一个促进、巩固和深化英语学习的过程。

2. 怎样才能学好英文写作

在现实的学习、工作和生活中,当口头交流不可能进行或者客观现实要求只能用书面语言进行交流时,写作就不可避免了。我们应该知道,除了所用语言不同之外,中文写作与英文写作虽然有共性,但它们之间还是有很多差异。此外,书面交际与口头交际也不一样。英语口头表达能力强的学习者不一定就有较强的英语书面表达或者写作能力。英语写作是需要学习的。

(1) 首先我们要学习和掌握有关英语写作的基本理论知识及一些常用的规则和要求,如大小写、标点符号的使用,版面的设计,选词、造句、组段、谋篇的基本原则,书信等应用文写作的格式,等等。

(2) 写作是一项产出性或者输出性的(productive / output)心智活动。只有当我们有了丰富的输入(input)之后,输出才有可能。阅读是主要的输入途径。阅读可以帮助我们扩充词汇量、丰富思维、建构良好合理的知识结构。俗话说“读书破万卷,下笔如有神”就是这个道理。也就是说,写作与阅读是分不开的。所以要想提高我们的写作水平,我们首先需要认真阅读,并扩大阅读量。

(3) 学习写作是需要实践的。只有循序渐进、坚持不懈地练习写好每一个句子、段落、短文、书信等,我们才能不断提高我们的英文写作水平。

3. 本书的特点

(1) 在参考了英语国家(主要是美国)出版各类英语写作教材及国内出版的同类书籍,尤其是在借鉴了美国大学对以英语为第二语言的学生开设英语写作课的做法的基础上,结合中国学生的实际和我们多年从事英文写作教学的体会,我们编写了这套《英语专业写作教程》(*Writing Course for English Majors*)。本套教程分 A 篇与 B 篇。A 篇侧重写作方面的基础知识及一般性写作, B 篇侧重实用性写作。书末附有包括练习参考答案在内的五个附录。

(2) 学习英文写作就是学习用英语进行书面的表达或交际。而任何的交际都是有目的的。“以交际目的为导向的写作”是本套教材试图体现的一个理念。

(3) 本套教材在理论解说、例文、练习等内容编排上遵循从理论到示范再到实践的从易到难循序渐进的原则。

(4) 本套教材重视理论与实践的联系及阅读与写作的结合。书中配有大量可读性和示范性很强的例句、例段及各类范文。各章节都有丰富的练习以帮助学习者进行写作实践,从而逐步提高写作能力和水平。

(5) 本套教材具有较强的实用性和可操作性。教师既可逐章开展教学,也可根据实际需要择章进行教学。授完本套教材 A 篇、B 篇大约需要 150 课时。

(6) 本套教材同时具有手册的功能,可作为大学英语专业写作教材,也可作为研究生、中学和大学英语教师及各行各业从事英语书面交际的工作者的参考用书。

编 者

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Chapter One

Essay Writing

1.1

The Basic Structure of an Essay

1.2

Types of Essays

1.3

The Process of Writing an Essay

1.4

Evaluation of an Essay

1.5

Sample Essays and Discussions

In written communication, usually longer texts (文章, 语篇) rather than just single sentences or paragraphs are needed. Thus, essays are frequently composed. Usually, an essay refers to a composition of about three to eight paragraphs or about 200 to 800 words.

Effective sentences are the basic ingredients of a good paragraph, and good paragraphs make good essays. An essay and a topical paragraph have a lot of similarities, though, the former is usually much deeper in content and wider in coverage than the latter. For example, a good topical paragraph has unity, coherence, proper order, and completeness; so does a good essay. Structurally, the sentences in a topical paragraph are divided into three parts: the beginning, the topic sentence; the middle, the supporting sentences; and the ending, the conclusion sentence(s). Similarly, the paragraphs in an essay are divided into three parts: the beginning, the middle, and the ending. The beginning of an essay, generally the first one (sometimes more than one) paragraph, is called the opening or introductory paragraph; the paragraph(s) in the middle is / are the main discussion of the subject or the body of the essay; and the ending, usually the last paragraph, is the conclusion. The three parts in a composition function almost the same as the introductory, supporting, and conclusion sentences do in a topical paragraph. So once we know how to organize and write a topical paragraph well, we will have little difficulty organizing an essay well.

The first words we write on the page when we begin writing an essay are, perhaps, the title. In a title, all the words except conjunctions, prepositions and articles should be capitalized. Conjunctions, prepositions and articles should also be capitalized if they are the first words of a title. Nowadays some writers prefer to capitalize a preposition of five or more letters. A title is often a fragment rather than a sentence, though sometimes a short sentence can be used as a title, of course. If the title is a sentence, no punctuation mark except a question mark is used at its end. A good title suggests the content of an essay in as few words as possible. So a title should be not only interesting but also suggestive. Following are titles of books or stories by famous native English writers:

- *A Tale of Two Cities*
- *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*
- *The Catcher in the Rye*
- *An Unforgettable Moment in My Life*
- *A Walk in the Country*

- *Settling Down in England*
- *Originality Is Not Everything*
- *How Important Is Money?*

1.1 The Basic Structure of an Essay

Every essay must have a central purpose or objective. No matter what purpose or objective a particular essay has, essays have in common three major parts: the introduction, the middle part or body, and the ending or conclusion.

A Structural Comparison Between a Topical Paragraph and an Essay

	A Topical Paragraph	An Essay
The Beginning Part	The Topic Sentence	The Introduction (usually containing the thesis statement)
The Middle Part	The Supporting Sentences	The Body (主体)
The Ending Part	The Conclusion Sentence	The Conclusion

Like a good topical paragraph, a well-organized essay should be properly-proportioned (各部分比例恰当). The biggest portion should be given to the middle part or the body, for the discussion of the subject (主题 , 话题) is the most informative and important part. The introduction and conclusion sections in an essay are comparatively brief.

1.1.1 The Introduction of an Essay

The paragraph that begins an essay is often called the introductory paragraph or the opening paragraph. The main function of an introductory paragraph is to tell readers the general idea of the whole essay, the coverage of the subject-matter, the direction in which the subject is to be developed, the writer’s point of view on the subject, and to arouse readers’ interest in reading on.

In the introduction, the sentence(s) that convey(s) the central idea of an essay and perhaps also indicate(s) how the main idea is to be developed is / are called the **thesis statement** or **thesis sentence(s)** (短文的主题句). A good thesis statement governs and controls the organization of the whole essay, and tells not only where the essay is going but also how it is going there. And since the opening paragraph is just a general introduction to the whole essay,

we do not need to include too many details in it. Details belong to the body of an essay.

The method we can use to let an introductory paragraph carry out its task depends on the purpose or the type of writing: *description*, *narration*, *exposition*, or *argumentation*. For example, we may provide background (*when*, *where*, *what*, *who*, and *how*) when we write to narrate an event. We may just state our point of view on a subject with a very brief explanation if we plan to persuade the reader or argue for or against something. A number of introductory techniques can be used to begin an essay. Following are examples illustrating some of the strategies used to open an essay.

(1) Supplying historical, geographical, or other background information. This kind of introduction is often used in narration or description.

➤ After the fall of Troy, the Greek army set sail for home. Each of the great Greek heroes had his own ships and men, and each had many adventures before finally reaching home. Odysseus, the king of Ithaca, was the wisest of the Greek heroes. His adventures make up a story called *The Odyssey*. The following tales are from the story.

➤ Hong Kong is a flourishing city with an area of over 1,000 square kilometers and a population of almost 6 million. It is the world's most open free port and is known as the "pearl of the east". Because it has returned to China, it has become the focus of worldwide attention.

(2) Using an anecdote or quotation introducing the theme.

➤ I've lived half of my 80 odd years in China, but I was born and brought up in England; and as the poet said: "Is there a man with soul so dead, / Who never to himself has said / This is my own, my native land ..."
So it was a thrill to go back to the land of my birth, as I did last spring.

(3) Telling a personal experience from which the main theme develops.

➤ One rainy night, I came back home late after a prolonged meeting. About 200 metres from my house, I saw the light inside was on through

the windows. As I remembered clearly that I had turned off all the lights before I left for the meeting, I felt a chill run down my spine (脊梁骨一阵发凉), which urged me to run toward the house at full speed.

➤ It must have been about two o'clock in the morning when I was woken abruptly by a loud banging noise. It was such a bitterly cold night that I did not fancy the idea of getting up, so I sat in bed and listened. Since I heard nothing more, I concluded that the sound must have come from the street. I was just pulling the bed-clothes over my head to go back to sleep, when there was another loud bang. The sound was so extraordinary that this time I jumped out of bed at once.

(4) Giving a general statement or expressing an emphatic opinion to be illustrated by examples and various types of evidence in the rest of the essay. (This kind of introduction is often used in argumentation.)

➤ Where there is a war, there is death and waste. Either side, winner or loser, is a sufferer. So we should try every means to stop wars.

➤ Next to air, water is the element most necessary for survival. A normal adult is 60 to 70 percent water. We can go without food for almost two months, but without water only a few days. Yet most people have no idea how much water they should drink. In fact, many live in a dehydrated state.

(5) Presenting a special questioning reference to some word or idea in the title.

➤ What is the nature of the scientific attitude, the attitude of the man who studies and applies physics, chemistry, medicine, engineering or any other branch of science?

➤ What is an ideal job? As far as I'm concerned, an ideal job is one for which I am competent and in which my interest lies.

(6) Defining briefly the subject to be dealt with in the essay.

➤ As its name denotes, a coat-hanger serves to hold coats, dresses, jackets, and similar garments in such a way that they hang vertically.

➤ A bicycle pump is a device which is used to fill a bicycle tire with air.

It is composed of three parts: a cylinder, a piston, and a rubber tube.

Various as the devices used in introductory paragraphs are, a well-written introduction must have one or more than one of the following functions:

- (1) setting forth the main idea or the main subject-matter;
- (2) obviously revealing the writer's point of view on the subject with a thesis statement;
- (3) implying what aspects of the subject are to be covered in the essay or the direction in which the essay is to be developed;
- (4) arousing the reader's interest.

Here are more sample opening paragraphs:

➤ There are a number of people I have come to respect in my life, but the man that I revere most is Stephen Hawking, a great British scientist. I revere him for his talent, his devotion to science, his strong will, and his great achievements.

➤ I had a curious collection of aunts. They all lived locally and each expected me to visit her at least once a fortnight. I therefore had the frequent opportunity of comparing their individual eccentricities.

With a clear understanding of the quality and function of the introductory part of an essay, we may be able to write a better introductory part; with a better introductory part, we may be able to write an interesting essay more easily, for well begun is half done.

1.1.2 The Body of an Essay

The body of an essay is the natural development of the introduction. It is in this part that

what is introduced in the introductory part is fully discussed.

In organizing this part, we should choose an effective order according to the purpose or type of writing of the essay. If the purpose is to tell a story, chronological order is mostly used. If the purpose is to describe something, spatial or geographical order might be most suitable. If the purpose of the essay is to explain something, any order so long as it is workable might be suitable. If the purpose is to argue for or against something, the correct order is a matter of what is logical. The principles that guide the arrangement of a topical paragraph are equally applicable.

The body is the longest part of a whole essay. If the body deals with several aspects of the subject, each aspect should be discussed in one paragraph and be given a fair share of discussion instead of neglecting or favoring one.

When more than one paragraph is needed in the body, some techniques should be used to connect them so that the whole essay can read coherently. Besides, a transitional paragraph or some other signals may be needed to show the ending of one idea and the beginning of another. Those techniques that can be used to add coherence and continuity within a paragraph are also applicable in essays.

1.1.3 The Conclusion of an Essay

The conclusion is usually an essay's last paragraph. An effective conclusion paragraph can have one or more than one of the following functions:

- (1) emphasizing the main points of the whole essay in a summary;
- (2) drawing a conclusion from the preceding paragraphs;
- (3) evaluating what has been discussed or expressing a judgment or realization;
- (4) echoing the opening paragraph to bring an essay full circle.

Following examples can show how a conclusion paragraph works in winding up an essay.

- I left the Palace Museum realizing that I would have to visit it at least once again; for after walking around for five hours, I had still only seen a very small part of all the interesting things on display.

➤ Therefore, if you want to gain weight, you must do either of the two things: consuming calories (units of heat, therefore energy) or use less through inactivity. If you want to lose weight, you do the reverse: decrease your input of calories or increase the amount of energy you spend. There is no other way. Gaining or losing weight is always a relation between intake and output of potential energy.

An effective concluding paragraph can make a positive contribution by bringing a whole essay to a climax or summing up the discussion in a few sentences, and leave the reader with a sense of completeness. But sometimes the conclusion of an essay may not occupy a separate paragraph but is involved at the end of the body. So when writing an essay, we have different tasks to fulfill in each of the three parts.

Following is an essay written by a native English speaker. It clearly demonstrates the structure of a well-organized essay.

➤ **University Lore: U.S.A.**

Stanford University, famous as one of northern California's several institutions of higher learning, is sometimes called "the Harvard of the West". Its reputation is based on its location, its intelligent students, its distinguished faculty, its growth opportunities offered to students, its overseas programs, its substantial endowment, and its recent extensive growth.

The closeness of Stanford to San Francisco, a city thirty-two miles to the north, gives the university a decidedly cosmopolitan flavor. Equally cosmopolitan is the student body. Students enroll principally from the western United States. But most of the fifty states send students to Stanford, and many foreign students study here, as well. And standards for admission remain high. Young men and women are selected to enter the university from the upper fifteen percent of their high school classes.

Not only because of the *high caliber* (高才能, 高素质) of its students but also because of the desirable location and climate, Stanford has attracted to its faculty some of the world's most respected scholars. The university staff has included such Nobel Prize winners as Dr. Felix Bloch, Dr. Robert Hofstadter, and Dr. William Shockley in physics, Dr. Author Kornberg and Dr. Joshua Lederberg in medicine, and Dr. Paul J. Flory and Dr. Linus Pauling in chemistry. The Russian novelist Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn has been in residence. Stanford's undergraduate school of engineering and its graduate schools of business, law and medicine are especially well-regarded.

What is student life like on "The Farm"? Culturally, the campus is a magnet for both students and citizens of nearby communities. Plays, concerts, and operas are performed in the university's several auditoriums and in outdoor Frost Amphitheater, where graduations are also held. Several film series are presented during the school year. Guest lecturers from public and academic life frequently appear on campus. In the evenings, many students gather to socialize in the Student Union's coffee house; here the beverages and the atmosphere both have a decidedly European flavor. For the sports-minded, the Stanford campus offers highly developed athletic facilities. Because its campus resembles a sprawling, wooded park backed by foothills and protected from the rather dense suburban life that surrounds it, the university has been able to provide large athletic fields. Team sports, swimming and track and field activity are all very much part of the Stanford picture. So are bicycling and jogging.

To enrich its educational offerings, the university has established overseas branch study centers in Great Britain, Austria, Germany, Italy, and France for third year students. In addition to financial support from alumni, Stanford receives grants from the government and from private philanthropic foundations. In recent years, government grants have made possible advanced studies in the fields of history, psychology, education,