



Writing Course for English Majors

英语专业写作教程

A篇

主 编 蒋洪新

分册主编 王崇义

复旦大学出版社

<http://www.fudanpress.com.cn>

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图书在版编目(CIP)数据

英语专业写作教程 .A 篇 / 蒋洪新主编;王崇义分册主编. —上海:复旦大学出版社,2016.6
ISBN 978-7-309-12287-9

I. ①英… II. ①蒋…②王… III. ①英语—写作—高等学校—教材 IV. ① H315

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字 (2016) 第 095927 号

英语专业写作教程 . A 篇

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复旦大学出版社有限公司出版发行

上海市国权路 579 号 邮编:200433

网址: fupnet@fudanpress.com <http://www.fudanpress.com>

门市零售:86-21-65642857 团体订购:86-21-65118853

外埠邮购:86-21-65109143

长沙超峰印刷有限公司

开本 787×1092 1/16 印张 13.5 字数 300 千

2016 年 7 月第 1 版第 1 次印刷

ISBN 978-7-309-12287-9/H · 2626

定价:36.00 元

如有印装质量问题,请向复旦大学出版社有限公司发行部调换。

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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

2016.4

Contents

Chapter One	Mechanics	1
1.1	Margins and Paragraphing	2
1.1.1	Margins	2
1.1.2	Paragraphing	2
1.2	Handwriting	4
1.3	Syllable Structure / Syllabification	4
1.4	Abbreviations	5
1.5	Numerals	7
1.6	Capitalization	8
Chapter Two	Punctuation Marks	15
2.1	Line-beginning Punctuation Marks	17
2.2	Sentence-ending Punctuation Marks.....	17
2.2.1	The Period / The Full Stop	17
2.2.2	The Question Mark	19
2.2.3	The Exclamation Point	19
2.3	Internal Punctuation Marks	20
2.3.1	The Comma	20
2.3.2	The semicolon	25
2.3.3	The Colon	26
2.3.4	Quotation Marks	28
2.3.5	The Dash	29
2.3.6	Parentheses	30
2.3.7	Brackets	31
2.3.8	The Apostrophe	31
2.3.9	The Hyphen	32
2.3.10	The Virgule / Slant	34

2.3.11	Italics / Underlining	34
2.4	Some Points About the Use of Punctuation Marks	35
Chapter Three Diction		41
3.1	Appropriateness	42
3.1.1	Sense of Style (文体意识)	42
3.1.2	Degree of Word Formality	44
3.1.3	Exactness and Use of Synonymous Words and Expressions	46
3.2	Specificity, Concreteness, and Conciseness	50
3.2.1	Specificity	50
3.2.2	Concreteness	52
3.2.3	Conciseness	53
3.3	Imagery / Figures of Speech	54
3.3.1	Metaphor and Simile	54
3.3.2	Personification	55
3.3.3	Hyperbole	56
3.3.4	Euphemism	56
Chapter Four Sentence Writing		63
4.1	Sentence Sense	64
4.2	Basic Requirements of an Effective Sentence	64
4.2.1	The Unity of a Sentence	64
4.2.2	The Coherence of a Sentence	65
4.2.3	The Completeness of a Sentence	68
4.3	Sentence Elements	69
4.3.1	Essential Sentence Elements: the Subject and the Predicate Verb	69
4.3.2	Secondary Sentence Elements	69
4.4	Sentence Patterns	70
4.4.1	Basic Sentence Patterns	70
4.4.2	Special Sentence Patterns	71
4.5	Parts of Speech (词类, 词性) and Their Respective Functions and Placements in a Sentence	73
4.5.1	Nouns	73
4.5.2	Pronouns	73
4.5.3	Adjectives	74
4.5.4	Adverbs	76

4.5.5	Prepositions	81
4.5.6	Conjunctions	82
4.6	Phrases and Clauses	83
4.6.1	Phrases	83
4.6.2	Clauses	85
4.7	Recognizing and Avoiding Sentence Fragments	87
4.8	Classification of Sentences	89
4.8.1	Classification in Terms of Communication Purpose	89
4.8.2	Classification in Terms of Grammatical Structure	89
4.8.3	Classification in Terms of the Development of Information	90
4.8.4	Classification in Terms of Length	92
4.9	Avoiding Comma Faults (逗号粘连) and Fused Sentences (熔句, 粘连句)	93
4.9.1	The Comma Faults / Comma Splices	93
4.9.2	Solutions to Comma Faults	93
4.9.3	Fused Sentences	95
4.10	Ways of Achieving Sentence Variety.....	95
4.10.1	Achieving Sentence Variety via Combination	96
4.10.2	Achieving Sentence Variety via Coordination	97
4.10.3	Achieving Sentence Variety via Parallel Structure	99
4.10.4	Achieving Sentence Variety via Subordination	101
4.10.5	Achieving Sentence Variety by Using Modifying Phrases	102
4.10.6	Achieving Sentence Variety by Using Appositives	104
4.10.7	Achieving Sentence Variety via Inversion	104
4.10.8	Achieving Sentence Variety by Employing Emphatic Sentence Structure (强调句结构)	105
4.10.9	Achieving Sentence Variety by Using Inanimate Subjects (非生命主语 / 无灵主语)	106
Chapter Five	Paragraph Writing	118
5.1	Types of Paragraphs	119
5.1.1	The Topical Paragraph	119
5.1.2	The Introductory Paragraph.....	120
5.1.3	The Transitional Paragraph	120
5.1.4	The Conclusion Paragraph	121
5.2	The Basic Structure and Qualities of a Topical Paragraph	122

5.2.1	The Unity of a Topical Paragraph	122
5.2.2	The Topic Sentence in a Topical Paragraph	124
5.2.3	The Supporting Sentences in a Topical Paragraph	128
5.2.4	The Conclusion Sentence in a Topical Paragraph	128
5.3	The Coherence (连贯性) of a Topical Paragraph.....	129
5.4	The Development of a Topical Paragraph	131
5.4.1	Time / Chronological Order	131
5.4.2	Space Order	132
5.4.3	General-to-particular Order	133
5.4.4	Particular-to-general Order	133
5.4.5	Order of Importance	134
5.4.6	Cause-to-effect or Effect-to-cause Order	135
5.4.7	Order of Comparison and Category Order	136
5.4.8	Question-to-answer Order	137
5.5	The Continuity (连续性) of a Topical Paragraph	137
5.5.1	Use of Pronouns	137
5.5.2	Use of Repetitive Structure	138
5.5.3	Use of Connectors	139
5.6	The Completeness of a Topical Paragraph	141
5.7	Basic Steps Taken in Writing a Topical Paragraph	142
5.8	Evaluation of a Topical Paragraph	143
Appendix	159
Appendix I	Key to Exercises	160
Appendix II	Correction Symbols	178
Appendix III	The Fifty States of the U.S.A. and Their Abbreviations	180
Appendix IV	Writing Terms	181
Appendix V	Useful Expressions, Idioms, Proverbs, and Famous Sayings ...	191
Bibliography	204

Chapter One

Mechanics



1.1	Margins and Paragraphing
1.2	Handwriting
1.3	Syllable Structure / Syllabification
1.4	Abbreviations
1.5	Numerals
1.6	Capitalization

It is known to us that language has been created out of the need of communication, and people use language mainly for the purpose of communication. Linguistic communication is carried out basically in two ways: speaking and writing. Unlike speech, communication in writing is to be seen before it is read and understood. So we can easily understand that a piece of writing that looks legible, tidy, well-organized, and attractive will certainly encourage readers to read and make written communication successful. Thus, things of mechanics (版面设计 / 机械性技巧), including the arrangement of the space on a sheet of writing paper, the margins, paragraphing, handwriting, syllabification, abbreviations, capitalization, etc., which can affect the appearance of any kind of written works, are worth our clear awareness and attention when we are conducting communication by means of writing.

1.1 Margins and Paragraphing

Both margins and paragraphing concern the arrangement of the paper space.

1.1.1 Margins

Before we begin to write anything on a sheet of paper, we should plan its arrangement of the space on the sheet. It is generally preferable to leave margins at the top and bottom and on both sides of each page. We should not write to the very edge on either side of the page. If the work is to be bound, the left margin should be wider.

Since we are student writers, it is advisable to write on every other line (隔行) if we use lined exercise books so that our writing instructors will have some space to write comments or corrections between the lines or in the margins.

1.1.2 Paragraphing

The first thing a reader sees after opening a composition book, a letter, a newspaper, or a book is a page full of writing or print. If one were faced with a solid block of writing, it might be difficult for him / her to understand what is written. On the other hand, comprehension by the reader can be greatly improved if the material is broken up into sections — paragraphs — that help to organize the content of the writing. In general, one paragraph deals with one idea. Conventionally, we can mark or separate the paragraphs in one of the two styles: *the indented style* (缩进式) and *the block style* (齐头式 / 方块式).

(1) Using indentation, we start the first line of each paragraph about 3-5 typewriter spaces or

about 1-1.5cm to the right of the left-hand margin. The actual amount of space we indent in the first line of a paragraph doesn't matter as much as the consistency with which we use it. One paragraph contains only one indentation. In a three-paragraph composition, the indented form looks like this:

1.2 Handwriting

In Chinese, as in some other cultures, calligraphy, the art of handwriting, is regarded as a Chinese writer tries to write as artistically and beautifully as possible. Unfortunately, an English writer is not so concerned with the aesthetic in handwriting as a Chinese writer or reader is. Particularly these days, when speed writing is being suggested for examination, a writer of English is perhaps more concerned with the speed and clarity of his handwriting than with its artistic value. As a result, English handwriting, though it is considered very beautiful, is always functional and utilitarian. In contrast of English, we should use the student and paper first. As we may use the student's handwriting, they must be clear in its letter without it being too small or too large. In Chinese-Chinese, we can make a study in the impression of the handwriting of the student.

- (2) Using the block style, we start the first sentence of a paragraph on a new line without any indentation on the left-hand side, and the paragraphs are separated by a space. Blocked paragraphs in a three-paragraph composition should look like this:

[illegible]

It seems that the block style is becoming increasingly popular with and widely used especially by scientists and engineers and is preferably applied in printing.

Either the indentation or the block style is used just to signal to the reader that there is a slight change of subject in the writing.

1.2 Handwriting

In Chinese, as in some other cultures, calligraphy, the art of handwriting, is highly developed. A Chinese writer tries to write as artistically and beautifully as possible. Regrettably, an English writer is not so concerned with the aesthetics in handwriting as a Chinese writer or reader is, particularly these days, when most writing is done on word processors or computers. A writer of English is, perhaps, more concerned with the content than his handwriting when he is writing. Anyhow, in English writing, a neat and legible handwriting, though not necessarily very beautiful, is always desirable and inviting. As student writers of English, we should try to submit any paper that is neat and easy to read. In fact, a writing instructor may return a paper to its writer without reading it if it is a mess and too difficult to read. Obviously, we can make a much better impression of our written work on our readers, teachers, or examiners if our handwriting is neat and legible.

1.3 Syllable Structure / Syllabification

While writing, we may sometimes find that there is not enough room to write a whole word in at the end of a line. In this case, we have to move the whole word onto the next line if it is a mono-syllabic word (one-syllable word). If the word is bi-syllabic or poly-syllabic, we can split it, i.e., syllabification is necessary: only part of the word followed by a hyphen (a short dash) is written at the end of the line and the rest part of the word is moved onto the next line. The hyphen indicates that the word is incomplete and that the missing portion appears at the beginning of the next line.

There is a restriction on splitting a word at the end of a line, which is often overlooked by quite a number of students. The split can only occur between syllables. For example, the word "occupation" could be written with "oc-" "occu-" or "occupa-" at the end of a line because it contains the syllables "oc" "cu" "pa" and "tion". A monosyllabic word like *child* cannot be split.

Besides, we should avoid any splitting that would leave a single letter at the end of a line. Words should not be split at the end of the last line of a page. If there is not enough space for a whole word at the end of the last line of a page, we should move the whole word onto the next page.

Syllabification is not always easy. When in doubt about where to divide a word, we'd better consult a dictionary. Entries in a decent dictionary indicate the syllabic structures of words with dots, as the following examples show.

ed•u•ca•tion di•plo•ma u•ni•ver•si•ty pea•cock

1.4 Abbreviations

Abbreviations shorten words, titles, and long names. We have probably seen abbreviations used frequently in advertising and informal writing. However, in college writing and in other more formal writing, we should use abbreviations cautiously, and if we are in doubt, we'd better not abbreviate. Following are cases in which abbreviations are used.

- (1) Before surnames / family names (姓), titles such as *mister*, *miss*, *mistress*, *doctor*, etc., are abbreviated.

- | | |
|-------------|---------------|
| ➤ Mr. Green | ➤ Mrs. Smith |
| ➤ Ms. Alan | ➤ Dr. Bethune |

- (2) Titles of academics, government officials, and clergy can be abbreviated and are followed by the full name (given name and family name).

- | |
|--|
| ➤ Prof. (Professor) Ralph King |
| ➤ Gov. (Governor) Henry Ford |
| ➤ Sen. (Senator) Robert Kennedy |
| ➤ (the) Rev. (the Reverend) Martin Luther King |

Note: If these designations are followed only by family name, the full form of the title should be used.

- (3) Academic degrees and family designations preceded by full names can be abbreviated.

- Robert Smith, Ph.D. (Doctor of Philosophy)
- Howard Rubin, M.D. (Doctor of Medicine)
- William Harrison M.A. (Master of Arts)
- John Jones Sr. (Senior) (= the elder John Jones)
- John Jones Jr. (Junior) (= the younger John Jones. Junior is used to specify the son in a family in which both the father and the son have the same name. If a third generation carries the same name, Roman numbers are used: John Jones III.)

(4) Names of well-known organizations, firms, places, and long technical terms can be abbreviated by using the initial letters of the words.

- UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization) (联合国教科文组织)
- IBM (International Business Machines Corporation) (国际商用机器公司)
- BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation) (英国广播公司)
- WHO (World Health Organization) (世界卫生组织)
- FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigation) (美国联邦调查局)
- TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) (托福考试)

Note: Unless the abbreviation is generally known and used, we should write the word or the phrase in its complete form the first time, followed by the abbreviation in parentheses.

- I am a student of Hunan Normal University (HNU).
- The National Students' Union (NSU) calls on us young people to make contributions to the environment protection. (全国学联号召我们年轻人为环保出力。)

(5) Time designations, when used with specific numbers, are abbreviated.

- | | |
|-------------|-------------|
| ➤ 345 B.C. | ➤ 769 A.D. |
| ➤ 6:00 a.m. | ➤ 9:00 p.m. |

(6) Words referring to portions of addresses (the names of streets, avenues, boulevards, roads,

etc., and of states, provinces, countries, etc.,) can be abbreviated when they appear in addresses on envelopes, letter headings (信头), or inside addresses (信内地址).

- 252 Yuelu Rd.
- Foreign Studies College.
- Hunan Normal Univ.
- Hunan Prov. 410081
- P.R.C.

(7) Dollars used together with cents or alone, but not cents alone, can be abbreviated.

- \$56.35
- \$50.00 (but fifty-one cents)

Note: Many abbreviations are followed by periods, but abbreviations pronounced as words tend to be written without periods. In any case, using the same pattern of abbreviation throughout a piece of writing is especially important.

1.5 Numerals

In business, scientific, technical, and legal writing, Arabic numerals are often used; whereas, as a general rule, numerals are written out. The following are some types of exceptions.

(1) Figures are used if spelling them out requires more than two words.

- Write a composition of about 180-220 words.
- There are six students in our bedroom.

But Arabic numerals should be avoided at the beginning of a sentence by either spelling the numbers out or putting them elsewhere.

- Two hundred and thirty-seven people attended the meeting.
- There were 237 people at the meeting.

(2) Numerals referring to like items in the same paragraph should be represented the same way to ensure consistency.

- This department enrolled 135 students this year, and only 20 of them are boys.

(3) Numbers should be represented as figures in addresses, dates, time of day, exact sums of money, decimals, measurements, code numbers, percentages, and page numbers, etc.

- April 8, 1994
 ➤ page 32
 ➤ \$9.81 (but one million dollars)
 ➤ 6:22 p.m. (but twenty-two past six)

1.6 Capitalization

The use of capitalization is unique and important in writing. A word can mean quite a different thing when it is capitalized.

- The china made in China is first-class.
 ➤ He bought that article of japan in Japan.
 ➤ Their eldest child was shanghaied in Shanghai in the 1930s.
 ➤ Mr. Brown / Black / Green / White painted his table brown / black / green / white.
 ➤ John wanted to go to the john. (He wanted to use the bathroom.)

In addition to changing the meaning of a word, capitalization has various functions. It is used:

(1) For the beginning of a sentence (a complete or an elliptical sentence).

- Where there is a will, there is a way.
 ➤ Wonderful!

(2) For the first letter in each line of a poem.

➤ The Arrow and the Song

H. W. Longfellow

I shot an arrow into the air,