

全国高等教育自学考试指定教材

TEACH

Advanced College Composition

英语写作

(附英语写作自学考试大纲)

全国高等教育自学考试指导委员会办公室组编

杨俊峰 主编



辽宁大学出版社

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出版前言

编写高等教育自学考试教材是高等教育自学考试工作的一项基本建设。经国家教育委员会同意，我们拟有计划、有步骤地组织编写一批高等教育自学考试教材，以满足社会自学和适应考试的需要。《英语写作》是为高等教育自学考试英语专业组编的一套教材中的一种。这本教材是根据专业考试计划，从造就和选拔人才的需要出发，按照全国高等教育自学考试指导委员会颁布的《英语写作自学考试大纲》的要求，结合自学考试的特点，组织高等院校一些专家学者集体编写而成的。

英语专业《英语写作》自学考试教材，是供个人自学、社会助学和国家考试使用的。现组织专家审定同意予以出版发行。我们相信，随着高等教育自学考试教材的陆续出版，必将对我国高等教育事业的发展，保证自学考试的质量起到积极的促进作用。

编写高等教育自学考试教材是一种新的尝试，希望得到社会各方面的关怀和支持，使它在使用中不断提高和日臻完善。

全国高等教育自学考试指导委员会

1997年6月

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Part One

The Book Report

For classes of literature or of extensive reading, book reports may be assigned to students by teachers who want to find out how the students are doing with the reading assignments or how well they understand those books. As a matter of fact, many conscientious students write book reports of their own will, because, as they have discovered, writing book reports can help them improve their reading comprehension and enhance their ability to analyze the story and the characters.

Generally speaking, a book report is usually composed of three major parts. They are:

- ✧ information about the writer (his name, the books he has published, the years of his birth and death, the publisher of the book)
- ✧ a summary of the book (the story and main characters)
- ✧ some comments on the book (personal interpretation of the meaning of the book)

When giving the information about the writer, the student writer should include some historical and social background to

Part One: The Book Report

which the book is related. To make things clear, the student writer should read some reference materials, such as biographies of the writer and histories of the period in which the book was written.

As we have mentioned in the previous part, a book report should contain a summary of the book under discussion. The summary should be concise, clear and easy to understand. The student writer should make sure that the summary be subjective and center on the major theme of the book. As for the tense of the book report, it depends on the subject matter of the book. If it is a novel or a play or a science fiction, the present tense is more appropriate while the past tense is required for nonfiction such as history books.

The third part and also the most important part of a book report is the comment. In this part, the student writer's job is to evaluate the book according to his or her own personal interpretation and discuss the merits and demerits of the book, the social and/or historical significance of the book. If the student writer is competent enough to discuss the writing style of the author, he or she should feel free to do so.

Here are some samples:

Sample 1

The Mayor of Casterbridge is a novel written by Thomas Hardy and it was first published in 1886 in London by Macmillan.

The setting of the story is in the 19th century England and Henchard is the major character of the book.

Henchard was a hay worker when he was young and he sold his wife and daughter in a drunken state. Later, he

succeeded in business and became a good mayor. When he decided to marry his love Lucetta, his ex-wife appeared. He remarried his ex-wife. After her death, he became much annoyed by the accidental discovery that Elizabeth, his daughter, was not his biological daughter. Meanwhile, his business partner, Farfrae, deserted him. Bankrupt and shameful, he was thrown into disorder and his indecent behavior began to spread. Treated indifferently by Elizabeth on her wedding day, Henchard left Casterbridge and died in misery.

Henchard's life experience was complicated and full of unexpected events. His tragedy can be said to have been brought about by his own character. His impulsiveness and jealousy caused his estrangement from his wife, daughter and his friends. He was isolated and doomed to suffer the consequences incurred by himself. From his point of view, we can conclude the Henchard was a typical representative of the old type peasant of the 19th century England. He embodied the degenerating rural society and economy. He was honest and upright, but conservative and narrow-minded. He was experienced in his hay trussing, but lacked the modern scientific knowledge and administrative ability. All these were the distinct characteristics of the peasants of his generation.

Farfrae, the former partner and later competitor of Henchard, on the other hand, represented the emerging new force of the countryside. He was intelligent, knowledgeable and open to new ideas. The competition

between Henchard and Farfrae reflected the competition between the traditional and the modern ways of production. The conflict between them reflected that of the two generations. The failure and death of Henchard signaled an end to the traditional rural life and the backward mode of production.

Sample 2

Sons and Lovers is a novel written by David Herbert Lawrence and it was first published in 1913 in London by Wyman & Sons.

D. H. Lawrence was born at Eastwood, Notts, on September 11th, 1885, the fourth child of a miner who had been employed at Brinsley Colliery since he was 7 years old. In 1911, his first novel *The White Peacock* was published.

Sons and Lovers is divided into two parts and is composed of 15 chapters altogether. The story, set in England, can be interpreted as an autobiographical novel of Lawrence. The hero of the book, Paul Morel, is the second son of a miner's family. His mother, Mrs. Morel, is a daughter of a mid-class family. Because of the differences in family background and education, a shadow is soon cast upon the married life of Mrs. Morel. And this shadow is darkened by Mr. Morel's laziness and alcoholism. By misfortune or bad luck, Mr. Morel has an accident and becomes a cripple, which changes him into a

man of bad temper. As a result, the couple shares less and less the things in common and is driven farther and farther apart from each other. Little by little, Mrs. Morel transports her attention and love to her children, especially her two sons, William and Paul. She encourages them to leave the small mining region for a big city to find opportunities for a better life. After the death of her first son, William, because of hard work and pneumonia, Mrs. Morel's divided attention and love is poured completely upon Paul. The mother's abnormal love robs Paul of his normal love for his girl friend.

Sons and Lovers has always been claimed since its publication to be another version of Oedipus complex. But D. H. Lawrence is in no sense an imitator. *Sons and Lovers* is truly an autobiographical novel. It describes an ordinary life of a coal miner's family. The abnormal love from the mother deprives Paul of his independent personality and mental health. It is perhaps because of this true picture of life that the novel has won Lawrence everlasting reputation.

Sample 3

Published in 1926, *The Sun Also Rises* is a novel written by the famous American writer, Ernest Hemingway. The book was printed in the United States by Charles Scribner's Sons.

Ernest Hemingway was born in Illinois in 1899. He became a reporter on the Kansas City *Star* and served as an ambulance driver in World War I. During the Spanish War and World War II, he served as a war correspondent. In 1954 he was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature and died in 1961.

The Sun Also Rises is a love story. Coming back home to England from World War I, Jake Barnes runs into a pretty girl, Brett. They fall in love with each other. Unfortunately Jake has been badly wounded in the war and he can not perform his function as a man. Brett gets involved with several men. While waiting in Paris for her new fiancé, Mike Campbell, a Scotsman of noble birth, Brett goes off and has an affair with Cohn, a boxer, but it means little if not nothing to her. Later she runs away with a bullfighter, Pedro Romero. Towards the end of the book, when Jake is taking a holiday, he receives a telegram. It is sent by Brett from Madrid, asking for his help. Jake discovers that she has given up the bullfighter and decided to return to Mike Campbell.

In this novel the author tries to picture a life of the sick people. They are not necessarily physically sick, but mentally and psychologically sick. It is a period when old values had been destroyed and new ones had yet to be established. This is also a book about the lost generation. The people don't seem to know what to do or what to look for. They are completely lost.

Practice 1

Read the following book report and find out if it contains information about the author, a summary of the story and comment on the story.

Wilkie Collins (1824-1889), the author of *The Moonstone*, wrote several detective novels, in which he established a number of conventions that became the prerequisites for the detective novel today. He is therefore regarded as the father of the modern detective novel. Besides the two masterpieces, *The Woman in White* and *The Moonstone*, he also wrote *The Law and the Lady*, *The Dead Secret* and *The Fallen Leaves*.

The story is set in the 19th century England. The Moonstone is a sacred Hindu diamond at the forehead of the Moon-God. In the year 1799, a British officer steals the diamond and gives it to his niece Rachel as a present for her eighteenth birthday. Franklin Blake, asked to take the gift to Rachel, falls in love with her. On the night of Rachel's birthday, the diamond mysteriously disappears. Several people are suspected, including the Hindus, Rosanna Spearman, a maid with a criminal record, and even Rachel herself. When the local police made no progress, the preeminent city sergeant, Cuff, is sent to handle the case. However, he, too, fails to clear up the myth. Later, Rachel tells Franklin that she has actually seen him steal the Moonstone. Shocked by this remark, Franklin himself begins his elaborate investigation. Through Ezra Jennings, a doctor, Franklin learns that he had been influenced by opium which was administered as a joke by Mr. Candy, whom he had offended on the night of the birthday dinner. In his unconscious state, Franklin removes the gem. At last, the real thief, Godfrey Ablewhite is discovered to be killed

by the Hindus. The sacred Moonstone returns to the hands of the Indians.

Far from being merely a classic detective tale, *The Moonstone* is a novel of serious criticism, conveying its meaning through unconventional characters and historical allusion. In this novel, Collins subtly and persuasively presents and criticizes the ineffective social machinery, disgusting hypocrisy and man's greed.

In *The Moonstone*, the social machinery for the detection of crime is unbelievably ineffective. Superintendent Seegrave and Sergeant Cuff, representing the social control of crime, can not handle the case. Seegrave is a foolish, unqualified and unprofessional local policeman. His investigation on the disappearance of the gem is gross and has few useful results. On the contrary, with shrewdness and knowledge, Sergeant Cuff is a famous city policeman. Sharp as he is, Cuff is not entirely equipped to deal with the "myth" about the Moonstone. The incompetence of the police force embodies Collins' view that the social control of crime is ineffective, and there is no social justice.

Beneath the surface of his fiction, one finds in Collins a continuing struggle against hypocrisy. Godfrey Ablewhite is a typical character employed in *The Moonstone* to represent Collins' purpose. He wears a double mask. In public, he appears a real gentleman, but in fact, he leads a wanton life. He deserves to be punished. Godfrey Ablewhite is a hypocritical villain whose real nature betrays his disguised gentleman-like behavior.

Socially, the Moonstone is employed as a touchstone to reflect man's greediness. The curse upon the stone is nothing more than the curse on the natural tendency for the greediness of man. In particular,

the Moonstone becomes the sign of England's imperial depredation and the symbol of national rather than a personal crime. The British people have never thought that the gem is a stolen thing.

The Moonstone, apparently concerned with little more than a love story and a theft, is actually a novel of serious social criticism. It criticizes the hypocrisy and social machinery. Furthermore, it is a national not a personal guilt that is in question.

Practice 2

Read the following passage of nonfiction carefully and write a summary.

Every living thing has a physical boundary that separates it from its external environment. Beginning with the bacteria and the simple cell and ending with man, every organism has a detectable limit which marks where it begins and ends. A short distance up the phylogenetic scale, however, another, non-physical boundary appears that exists outside the physical one. This new boundary is harder to delimit than the first but is just as real. We call this the "organisms' territory." The act of laying claim to and defending a territory is termed territoriality. It is territoriality with which this chapter is most concerned. In man, it becomes highly elaborated, as well as being very greatly differentiated from culture to culture.

Anyone who has had experience with dogs, particularly in a rural setting such as on ranches and farms, is familiar with the way in which the dog handles space. In the first place, the dog knows the limits of his master's "yard" and will defend it against encroachment. There are also certain places where he sleeps: a spot next to the fireplace, a spot in the kitchen, or one in the dining room if he is