

全国高等教育英语专业重点规划教材

总主编 吴耀武



ENGLISH WRITING

—Theories, Skills and Practice

英语写作

——理论、技巧与实践(下册)

姚克勤 编著

西北工业大学出版社

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【内容简介】《英语写作——理论、技巧与实践》分为上、下两册,适用于高等院校英语专业一、二年级学生及非英语专业初学写作的学生、英语爱好者和英语水平相近的自学者。

本册主要讲授遣词的原则和方法、句子的类型和写法、段落的整体性、连贯性和展开段落的各种技巧、标点符号的用法等写作的基本知识和技能,辅之以具有针对性和实用性的练习。本书的编写思路是写作技能的讲解与实践训练并重,旨在引导学生通过大量的实际操作理解掌握运用写作技巧的方法,最终达到熟练地使用写作技巧表达自己的思想。

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写作是人们借助书面符号传递信息、表达思想、进行交际的重要手段,是一个复杂的、动态的语言应用过程,也是语言能力测定的重要手段。英语写作技能作为一项重要的语言产出技能,是英语学习者使用英语语言的主要体现。在培养英语综合运用能力的过程中,写作能起到承上启下的作用,促进学习者语言发展的功效。英语写作不仅要求作者要有相当的语言应用能力,还要具有一定的认知能力和英语思维能力。

本着引导学生在写作实践过程中加强语言基础,掌握写作技巧的原则,本书在编写过程中,首先是提供了较多的选自英、美原著的例句、例段和例文,供学生阅读、思考、仿效,帮助学生理解英语写作方法,认识中西方不同思维模式造成的词汇选用、句子结构和语篇结构的差异,增加英语语言输入,积累更多的语料。其次,提供了大量的练习,引导学生通过系统、循序渐进的写作实践领悟和掌握各种写作技巧的实质和作用,逐渐形成在写作中自觉地运用适当的写作技巧表达思想感情。另外,书中在“应用文写作”一章中,提供了个人信函、商务信函和简历的一般写法和注意事项,帮助学生初步掌握信函、简历写作的基本知识。

在英语写作中,语言问题固然重要,但孤立的学习语言很难达到传递信息、表达思想、进行交际的目的。在写作实践中,重要的是将注意力更多的放在篇章的内容上,把语言的学习贯穿于不同题材、体裁的写作之中,掌握不同题材、体裁的词汇和语法特点,了解特定语篇的信息组织形式,了解语篇的构建方法和原则,运用符合人们所期待的、公认正确和适合的形式进行写作,实现写作目的。

本书在编写过程中,得到了西安科技大学外国语学院同事和学生的关心和支持,在此谨表谢意。同时对所参阅的大量国内外书籍、网络资料的作者致以诚挚的谢意。

限于水平及其他客观原因,疏漏和错误在所难免,敬请学习者、同行和专家不吝赐教,予以指正。

编 者
2010年6月



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Chapter One Basic Steps in Writing Process



An essay is “a short literary composition on a particular theme or subject” (Random House Dictionary). In *Webster’s Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary*, it is defined as “an analytic or interpretative literary composition usually dealing with its subject from a limited or personal point of view; something resembling such a composition.” The two dictionaries have told us that basically, an essay is a composition on a certain topic, and with a point of view. It is always analytic or interpretative. It is also called a theme, especially when referring to the student’s essay.

An essay is written about one topic or one main idea, just as a paragraph is. The main idea of essay is expressed in a thesis statement, which is much like the topic sentence in a paragraph. However, the topic of an essay is bigger and more complex than that of a paragraph. A well-written thesis statement not only pinpoints the main idea or topic, but also indicates the major subdivisions of the topic. In other words, it tells both the writer and the reader what the essay is driving home, and what major points are planned to help.

Developing a theme fully is no easy work, but you can master the technique if you think of writing as a process with three stages — prewriting, writing, and postwriting (sometimes known as invention, shaping, and editing). In practice, the stages always overlap, and the writing process is too recursive, too full of starts and stops and loops backward, to break into clearly distinguished stages. In other words, the stages do not constitute a linear process which you can follow step by step.

1. Prewriting

Prewriting, in writing, refers to the process you use to search for, discover, create, or invent material for a piece of writing. It can occur throughout the whole writing process. But when it happens before you have produced any actual piece of text, the process is called “prewriting”. As the starting point of writing, inventing is a very important stage which emphasizes the idea of discovery, and involves considerable effort, often accompanied by stress.





You may think that it is really one of the most frustrating obstacles to effective and productive writing to invent ideas for a topic, particularly one you have never thought about much. Actually, whether you desire to write a narrative essay about a personal experience, a literary analysis of a story, an argumentative essay supporting a particular idea or point of view, or any other possible type of essay, the steps of the essay writing process are basically the same.

Keep in mind that the following techniques and advice can be useful for writing essays.

1.1 Choose and narrow your topic

In some circumstances, if you may have the flexibility to choose the topic you would most enjoy to explore and write about. Choose something you know about, either your own experience or something you can learn about quickly with the available resources. In other cases, however, especially when you are given a particular essay writing assignment, your topic may be provided for you.

The key to choosing a workable and interesting essay topic is how to unlock your memory and to associate your ideas with other experiences and recollections. The best way to narrow your topic is to apply *directed questioning*.

If you already have a topic that you are not sure how to approach it, try *directed questioning* that points you to the information needed to start your writing. Such questions often begin with who, what, when, where, and which. The answers can be found by examining the topic and drawing on personal experience and prior knowledge and activities. Such questions have a definite answer and build the foundation for more challenging questions. Rather than encouraging you to expand your thinking, this method helps you to narrow your broad ideas. Here are some general questions that may prove helpful:

- ✧ How can I define the topic?
- ✧ How can I describe the topic?
- ✧ How does the topic resemble or differ from other topics?
- ✧ How does the topic work?
- ✧ How does the topic affect other things?
- ✧ Can I argue for or against the topic?
- ✧ Why does this topic interest me?
- ✧ What ideas are generally associated with the topic?

To be specific, if your topic is health and smoking, you could ask questions such as:
How does smoking affect health?

What are the warnings about the danger of smoking?

What are the statistics on smoking and health?

Once you have stated your topic as a question, you need to identify the main concepts in the question.



How does smoking affect health?

What are the warnings about the danger of smoking?

What are the statistics on smoking and health?

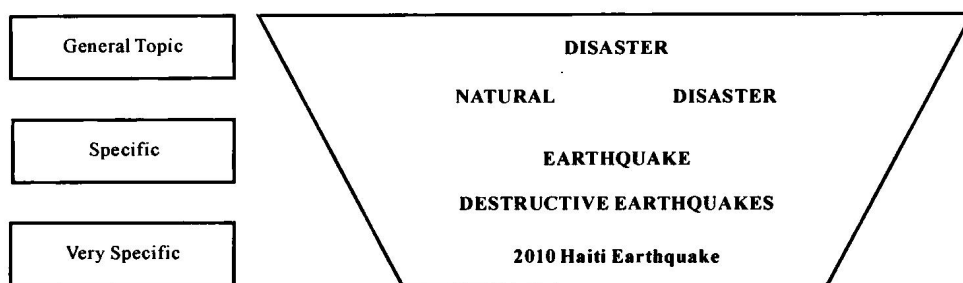
If you find too much information, narrow your topic by adding concrete or specific terms to your questions. For example, instead of asking, “What are the warnings about the danger of smoking?” ask

“What are the doctor’s warnings about the danger of smoking?”

Or, instead of asking, “What are the statistics on smoking and health?”

“What are the statistics on smoking and cancer?”

The diagram below also illustrates the process of narrowing a general topic “disaster” to a specific one.





1.2 Brainstorming

Now you have chosen a topic and narrowed it to a specific focus, the next prewriting step is to generate ideas. It can be done by a process named brainstorming, during which you get everything that comes to your mind down on paper quickly, either a significant word or phrase. Although these brainstorming activities may seem unnecessary at first, after doing them a few times, you will realize their usefulness. The advantage of this technique is that you free up your internal critic and allow yourself to write things you might not write if you were being too self-conscious. Brainstorming for ideas can also get you started writing more quickly and save your time in the later stages of the writing process. The useful brainstorming techniques are listing, clustering and freewriting.

Brainstorming by listing

Listing is a brainstorming technique in which you think about your topic and quickly make a list of whatever words or phrases come into your mind. Your purpose is to produce as many ideas as possible in a short time; your goal is to find a specific focus for your topic. Several procedures are usually included:

 Write down the general topic at the top of your paper.

 Then, make a list of every word or phrase that comes into your mind about the topic. Don’t stop the free flow of ideas by judging or editing them before you write them down. Keep the ideas flowing. The harder you think, the more ideas will flow. If, however,



you write down information that is completely off the subject, don't worry about it — you can cross it out later.

Use words, phrases, or sentences. Don't worry about spelling or grammar. Remember, your primary goal is to write down ideas as quickly as they come to you without worrying about whether an idea is important, interesting, or related to your subject. Of course, try to stay on the general topic.

Here is an example of the listing technique on the topic of Education.

Education

at-home	professors
self teaching	primary
friends	pressure
competition	novels
incentive	memorized
buildings	continuing
measure progress	postgraduate
master's degree	classes
administrators	great emphasis
fraternities	college
university	vocational school
secondary	preschool
boys and girls	university
grades	classmates
sororities	regulations and rules
P. E. class	regular exercise
classrooms	examinations
contests	awards
bachelor's degree	books
maths	Chinese

Now cross out ideas which don't fit or are duplications. Then you can choose either one/ones as a specific for your paragraph.

at-home	professors	great emphasis
preschool	administrators	measure progress
primary	buildings	examinations
maths	classrooms	contests
Chinese	grades	competition
secondary	friends	awards
college	boys and girls	incentive
university	classmates	pressure
bachelor's degree	fraternities	memorized



vocational school	sororities	regulations and rules
postgraduate	classes	
master's degree	P. E. class	
continuing	regular exercise	
night school	books	
self teaching	novels	

From the reorganized list, it is clear that “measure progress” and “types of schools” can be chosen as a specific focus for your writing.

✿✿ Brainstorming by Clustering

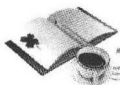
Clustering shares very great similarities with listing. Both are used to generate ideas. The only difference is that you have to change the list into a cluster as far as whatever words or phrases coming into your mind. Several procedures are usually included:

✿ Write down and circle the general topic in the middle of your paper.

✿ Then, write whatever ideas, words, phrases, details, examples, feelings, situations, descriptions, etc. that come into your mind about the topic around. Do not limit or censor ideas — if you think of it, write it! Do not write in complete sentences. Write topic or subject in the center of your page; let your mind make free associations and write these associations around your topic branching out from the center. All the ideas will produce a cluster of circles.

For example, suppose you are creating ideas for the topic “a goal as a junior”.





✿ Go back over the paper and circle in different ways each group of words that appear connected. Continue grouping your words and phrases until all the logical ones are circled. Name the connection for each group and you will have the rough body of an outline for your paper. Clustering does not take the place of a linear, traditional outline; but it allows you to explore ideas before committing them to a particular order.

✿ Brainstorming by freewriting

Freewriting — also called stream-of-consciousness writing — is a writing technique used mainly to collect initial thoughts and ideas on a topic, often as a preliminary to formal writing. In freewriting you write continuously for a set period of time without regard to spelling, topic, or correct grammar usage, etc. It produces raw, often unusable material, but helps you overcome blocks of apathy and self-criticism.

Freewriting can be open or focused. If you really do not have any idea what to write about, just begin to write down your impressions and thoughts in an “open” freewrite. Filling the page with words may coax something from your mind. Once you have done this, choose an idea or two from your open freewrite to explore in a more “focused” freewrite. Writing down your thoughts about a more specific idea that came up in your open freewrite will narrow down your topic even more, and hopefully will lead to the idea that will be the basis for your paper.

If you reach a point where you can't think of anything to write, you simply write that you can't think of anything, until you find another line of thought. You can freely stray off topic, letting thoughts lead where they may. At times, you may also do a focused freewrite, letting a chosen topic structure your thoughts. Expanding from this topic, the thoughts may stray to make connections and create more abstract views on the topic. This technique helps you explore a particular subject before putting ideas into a more basic context.

Read the following set of three freewritings:

don't know. don't know. this is harder than I thought it would be. worried. what if I don't have any ideas to bring out. the writer's perpetual concern — lack of ideas. Cliches. wonder how they got started? had meaning at one time. say “every dog has his day” now and people will jump at you for using sexist language. don't know. don't know. don't know. don't know. hear the timer ticking. time. so much to do and so little time to do it in. what is time? arbitrary or not? different for different people. so many people pressed for time now. wonder if time went more slowly in grandparents' day, if they needed 24 hrs. to do what we now do in 12. they had to use washboards, coal heat. greenhouse effect. are we greenhousing? greenhouse should have a nice, flowering plant connotation, not self-destruction. destruction by plants. Little Shop of Horrors. plants going crazy. at least the weeds in the garden do.

don't know. don't know. don't know. don't know. don't know. wish the 5 min. would go faster. fast time. slow time. fast time when you're doing something you like. slow time waiting in dentist's office or in any place where you'd rather not be. Slow time for



children waiting for something special to happen and fast when it's happening. hard to write write write write. right. what is right? Orville and Wilbur were Wright. bad puns to fill the 5 min. Why do people groan at puns? wonder how that got started. don't know. don't know.

do not like bugs in summer. flies and mosquitoes the worst. Read somewhere that June is "kill the filthy fly" month. I agree. hate those large flies that buzz you, usually when you're trying to eat lunch. read about cluster flies recently. they seem to cluster around your coffee when you go out of the room. then the big question, did they dip into it or not? mosquitoes as bad at night. like divebombers in your ears. don't know. don't know. don't know. there are other annoyances, part of everyday life. call waiting, caller id, especially when you're on the calling end. telephone solicitors. door-to-door salespeople. rude people in general. the person in the express line at the supermarket with 20 items in the cart. could go on about this one.

One obvious topic for this writer seems to be "time," or the different ways in which we perceive time (adult vs. children's perception of time, how time is counted in sporting events, etc.). "Annoyances" may be another topic, as the writer mentions that he/she "could go on about this one." Actually, any topic mentioned here is a possibility for an essay ("bugs," "clichés," "greenhouse effect," "puns"); the choice depends on the writer's purpose (research or non-research writing?), interests (for which topic can I most easily generate information?), audience (what will interest my readers?), and parameters (what is the type of writing assigned?).

The crucial point is that you keep on writing even if you believe you are saying nothing. Word must follow word, no matter the relevance. Your freewriting might even look like this:

"This paper is supposed to be on the politics of tobacco production but even though I went to all the lectures and read the book I can't think of what to say and I've felt this way for four minutes now and I have 11 minutes left and I wonder if I'll keep thinking nothing during every minute but I'm not sure if it matters that I am babbling and I don't know what else to say about this topic and it is rainy today and I never noticed the number of cracks in that wall before and those cracks remind me of the walls in my grandfather's study and he smoked and he farmed and I wonder why he didn't farm tobacco..."

When you're done with your set number of minutes or have reached your page goal, read back over the text. Yes, there will be a lot of filler and unusable thoughts but there also will be little gems, discoveries, and insights. When you find these gems, highlight them or cut and paste them into your draft or onto an "ideas" sheet so you can use them in your paper. Even if you don't find any diamonds, you will have either quieted some of the noisy chaos or greased the writing gears so that you can now face the assigned paper topic.

Brainstorming by Cubing

Cubing is a writing exercise used as a prewriting technique. Cubing enables or even



forces you to think and re-think a topic and explore various aspects of a topic from six different directions; just as a cube is six-sided, of course, you would have to change your perspective in order to examine and write about the cube's six faces. Take a sheet of paper, consider your topic, and respond to these six commands.

- ✧ Describe it.
- ✧ Compare it.
- ✧ Associate it.
- ✧ Analyze it.
- ✧ Apply it.
- ✧ Argue for and against it.

Even if you can only think of three or four initially, push yourself to write about at least six views of your topic. Even if you think you know what your topic and thesis statement will be, try cubing for a few minutes. You may discover a new “angle” for your paper and create new avenues of discussion that will give depth to your argument. Cubing may also help you determine the most interesting aspect of your topic; you then have a good start on focusing your paper.

Now, look over what you've written and ask yourself some questions:

- ✧ Do any of the responses suggest anything new about your topic?
- ✧ What interactions do you notice among the “sides”? That is, do you see patterns repeating, or a theme emerging that you could use to approach the topic or draft a thesis?
- ✧ Does one side seem particularly fruitful in getting your brain moving?
- ✧ Could that one side help you draft your thesis statement?
- ✧ Use this technique in a way that serves your topic. It should, at least, give you a broader awareness of the topic's complexities, if not a sharper focus on what you will do with it.

After you have finished brainstorming, take a look at the material you have generated.

- ✧ What items seem to go together?
- ✧ What further connections can you see?
- ✧ What ideas and terms do you want to develop?
- ✧ What idea or concept seems to dominate your list?
- ✧ What material is surprising?

You may decide to use most of the items you produced, or you may find only a few fragments to keep. However, one of these fragments may point the way to a good paper.

If none of the techniques work for you, try to come up with your own strategy. What works for someone else may not work for you. After all, these prewriting strategies are just ways to put your ideas on the paper that allow you to edit your ideas in depth at a later time. Last, try to enjoy the moment you are writing instead of seeing writing as only finishing an assignment that teachers gave you. Then, writing might become an interesting hobby that you will get pleasure from it and also benefit your thinking techniques.



2. Writing

In the prewriting stage, you have chosen and narrowed your topics whether you have come up with a topic on your own or whether you are given a specific question to answer. Now you are ready for planning your essay in the process of writing.

2.1 *Planning or outlining*

Organizing ideas

Before constructing an outline, you need to reorganize the ideas you have generated around the topic first. You can do this by simply crossing out the words, phrases, etc. and evaluating whether the remained ones characterize novelty, significance and relevance to the topic.

Creating a thesis statement

A thesis statement declares what you believe and what you intend to prove. A good thesis statement makes the difference between a thoughtful research project and a simple retelling of facts. The thesis statement usually appears in the introduction of your essay, and is best expressed in one sentence as a definition of your position, or the point you intend to prove in your essay. A good thesis statement will help organize your essay and give it direction; it is the central idea around which the rest of the essay is built. As for how to create an effective thesis statement, refer to Chapter Two.

Outlining

Once you have generated sufficient ideas and an effective thesis statement, the next step can be to develop a more specific outline in which you break down what specifically will be in each paragraph of your essay. As for how to create an effective outline, refer to Chapter Two.

2.2 *Writing and revising drafts*

Drafting and revising drafts

Draft is one of the most important steps in your writing process. Any type of paper starts with draft and only after every possible idea is included in the rough draft you can move on to the next level. Draft is a sort of sketch of your future essay which can gather all thoughts and ideas relevant or even irrelevant to your topic. It is a stage of putting all collected information on paper in order to identify which parts will stay and what needs to go.