

College English Composition Expressing an Idea

大学英语写作

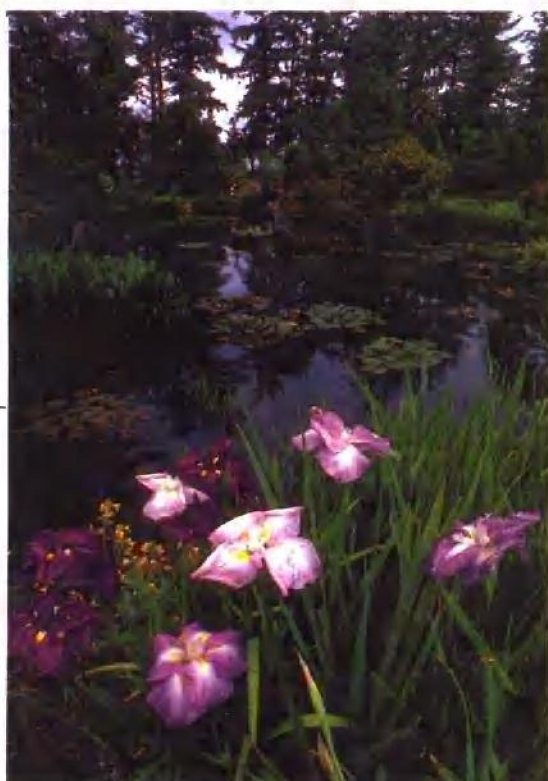


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第一册

赵文书

康文凯



南京大学出版社

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Expressing an Idea

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大学英语写作

第一册

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编者说明

我们这套《大学英文写作》的编写遵循了国家教委高校英语教学大纲的精神,努力满足英文专业本科阶段不同年级教学上的需要,注重帮助学生提高毕业论文的质量。我们希望我们的教学能够培养学生独立从事科研工作所需要的分析问题和解决问题的能力,为国家经济建设和教育发展输送高质量、高水平的外语人才。

长期以来,我国大学英文专业的写作教学一直缺少一套较为完整的、由浅及深、循序渐进、适合课堂教学使用的教材。有的教师在不得已的情况下用些《写作手册》之类的小册子,既不好用又没有连贯性,我们编写这套教材的目的之一就是要填补这一空缺,做到老师用顺手,学生用有效。为了使这套教材真正对教学起到帮助的作用,我们想说明下面几个问题。

一、对于英文专业写作课的教学,大纲已有了明确的规定和要求,但是各个学校在执行上因具体情况的差别而又各不相同。有的学校一年级上学期就开写作课,有的则要待到一下或二上才开写作课。在教学进度上各校也不一致,有的不能切实完成大纲所规定的教学任务,学生在毕业撰写学术性论文时有很大的困难。同时,大纲本身也有一个在实践中不断完善、不断适应学生毕业后工作需要和国家经济建设快速发展需要的问题。

本套教材大致上第一、二、三册分别供大学一、二、三年级使用,第四册则供四年级使用一个学期。对于一年级下学期才开设写作课或者四年级全学年开设写作课的学校来说,第一册的一部分也可供二年级使用,第二、三册也可分别供三、四年级使用。

为了帮助学生适应四级考试和八级考试对写作的要求,我们在第二、三册里又分别包括了快速写作的练习。

二、一般说来,本科阶段英语写作的学习要上两个台阶,过四道关口。第一个台阶是写记叙文、说明文和一般的议论文,学生上这个台阶就是要用英语写出他们在中学时期汉语写作中已经熟悉的各种文体。这里的两道关口,一道是克服畏惧心理,敢于用英语写作,另一道是学会用英语来写作,把作文写好。第二个台阶是写大学本科阶段

专业学习所必需的议论文、科研报告和学术论文。这里也同样存在着“敢写”和“会写”这样的两道关口。

由于学生在这几道关口所面临的困难不尽相同,写作课的教学也应有不同的侧重,我们的写作教材一至四册在一定程度上反映了这些不同的侧重点,在编写过程中我们也没有勉强去追求体例上的一致。总的说来,第一、三册是帮助学生打消顾虑,鼓励他们用一门尚未熟练的外语来写作或者用外语来写学术性的文章,而第二、四册则是要帮助学生在已经可以写的基础上把文章进一步写清楚,写规范,真正上好上述的两个台阶。

三、因为教学情况多样,任课老师在教材内容的选用上应该有很大的灵活性,不必去使用这套教材的每一章、每一节、每一个练习。

首先,学生在不同的地方和时期有着不同的兴趣,老师应根据学生的具体兴趣和要求来组织教学。对于书中的练习,有的可做深,有的可做浅,有的可多做,反复做,有的则可以不做的,一切从教学出发,从调动学生积极性出发。

其次,写作是一个不断挖掘深化,不断修改提高的过程。如果课本上每一个练习都要做,就难免会占用过多的时间,影响到一篇作文的深化和提高。

老师对学生帮助最有效的时机是当这一过程仍在进行之中的时候,而不是在这一过程结束之后再来写评语、批分数。在写作过程中,老师可以指出问题,提出修改意见,启发学生,从而参与这一过程,帮助学生写出更好的作文。因此,课堂的主要时间应该是用来评讲学生的作文,帮助他们修改第二稿、第三稿。

这一套教材的出版,得到了校、院、系各级领导长期的关心和支持,藉此机会表示衷心的感谢。我们还要感谢所有参与这项教材编写工作和给予这项工作各种支持的老师和同学们,没有他们,就不可能有今天的成果。

编 者

Words for the Teacher

This English composition textbook is compiled for first year university students with a major in English.

The emphasis of this book is on *content* rather than on *form*, that is, on the development of the students' own ideas. Each unit of the book contains many exercises that are designed to be "user friendly," i.e. readily usable in the classroom. Some of these exercises do help students improve the accuracy in their use of the English language. However, it is our belief that form is not an end in itself but a means to an end, a means to the expression of worthwhile content. To encourage original idea development and expression, each unit of this book provides a **topic** which is relevant to the students' life; students are also encouraged to choose their own topics and write about what interests them.

For good reasons, writing teachers often concentrate on the essays students turn in, i.e. the end product of a writing process. However, the teacher's help and advice are usually more effective while the student is still working on the essay. In this textbook, we try to illustrate the skills and strategies students should develop and employ at various stages of the writing process. This approach is evidenced by the organization of each unit.

For the convenience of classroom instruction, a unit has a set format with the writing task and the process of doing this task at its center. Each unit begins with an introduction, which outlines the kind of writing task that is to come.

Following the introduction, PART ONE, "Getting Started," gives a writing topic and introduces some prewriting skills, skills that help students develop the topic and overcome the fear of writing as well as the "writer's block." It is at this stage that students learn to collect useful materials which will later be used in writing the first draft.

PART TWO, "Learning How to Write," introduces skills needed at different levels and stages of the writing process, each unit dealing with those skills that might serve the immediate writing task. Exercises are provided to reinforce the students' understanding of these skills.

PART THREE, "Drafting and Rewriting," provides students with almost step-by-step guidance for applying the skills they have learned in the previous part to the process of writing, rewriting and producing a finished copy of the assignment.

PART FOUR encourages students to consolidate what they have learned by studying the teacher's feedback, sharing their written work with their classmates, and writing unstructured journal entries.

The exercises can be easily used in the classroom or assigned as homework.

While using this book, teachers may consider the following specific suggestions.

First, since students should concentrate on the paragraphs and essays they are developing, teachers may choose not to give an entire unit as the reading assignment outside the class. Instead, they may explain the book's discussion on writing skills in class but, as an assignment, only ask students to read the examples and complete the selected exercises.

Second, since the time in class is limited, it should not be spent mostly on going over the sample paragraphs and essays in the book; a writing class should not be a reading class. Instead, use most of the time discussing the student work on those exercises.

Finally, again, to give maximum time to developing ideas and revising student writing, teachers should concentrate on the content and structure of the samples, not on finding the exact meaning of every word. The students, after all, should learn fast reading skills such as guessing the meaning from the context and skipping over words that do not critically affect the comprehension of the overall text. This also tells us that success in teaching a writing course has much to do with success in teaching other courses. Language skills are inseparable. They develop together.

Acknowledgment

I would like to thank my friend and colleague Mary Wang, who encouraged me to take up the teaching of writing when I first became a teacher. I will also be grateful to Barbara Penney, who patiently reviewed the draft and offered many insightful suggestions.

Zhao Wenshu

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Unit 1 Can You Recognize This Person?

We often need to describe people factually. We describe ourselves in job applications, and we describe friends in personal letters. Sometimes, if a relative or friend is missing—this happens occasionally although we hope it will never happen—we may have to describe the missing person to the police in order to get help. In this unit we are going to have a try at describing a person.

PART ONE: GETTING STARTED

I. GATHERING INFORMATION

Free-Writing

An effective way to start is to do free-writing. Free-writing helps the writer discover ideas and gather materials. It also helps overcome “writer’s block”, a situation in which the writer sits for hours in front of a blank sheet of paper without being able to produce anything.

Here is one way to do **free-writing**:

Let’s take out a piece of paper and a pen.

Relax for a moment. Close the eyes and breathe deeply.

Now open the eyes and start writing. Write down anything that comes to mind, in any order. Keep the pen moving. We may search through our memory in the order of time: what we did, said, saw and heard yesterday morning, lunch time, afternoon and evening. We may also do it in the order of space and location: what we experienced at home, in the classroom, on the street and in the dorm. If our minds go blank momentarily, write the word “nothing”, “no” or any other word or phrase. Repeat that word until the next idea comes.

When we do free-writing, we do not think about spelling, punctuation, or grammar. We do not stop to look up a word in the

dictionary. In fact, it would be better not to stop to read what we have written down. There is no other rule in free-writing. Our job is simple: write, write and write some more.

Keep writing for ten minutes. If we are at home, we can use an alarm clock. If we are in class, the teacher will time our work.

Let us give it a try now.

Focused Free-Writing

When we set out to write, we usually have a topic either assigned by the teacher or chosen by ourselves. In this case, we may try **focused free-writing**, i.e. free-writing with a focus, the topic. Focused free-writing requires us to think about our topic as we relax and get ready. After that, all we need to do is to follow the free-writing procedure as has been outlined.

Now, let's try focused free-writing for ourselves.

Step One. The topic for our focused free-writing is "Our Writing Classroom." If any of us do not like the topic or have already written on this topic in our previous free-writing, consider "English Composition," or any other topic we would enjoy. Choose a topic now.

Step Two. Take out a piece of paper and a pen. Write down the topic at the top of the page. Do not change the topic once it is written down.

Step Three. Relax and think about the topic.

Step Four. Write for ten minutes without stopping.

Exercise 1 Now, you are going to **write about one of your classmates**. Do not mention his or her name. Instead, describe his or her physical appearance in a way that would enable your other classmates and your teacher to figure out who this person is when they read your description.

Before you begin, choose a classmate and observe him or her for a minute. Then do a focused free-writing for ten minutes on this classmate.

Exercise 2 A personal description should tell the reader what a person looks like. To be specific, it should answer some of the following questions:

1. What clothes is the person wearing?
2. How old is he or she?
3. How tall is the person?
4. What is his or her figure like, big or small, slim or stocky?
5. What is his or her complexion?
6. What are his or her facial features, e.g. features of hair, eyes, nose, lips, teeth?
7. What makes this person different from others?
8. Does this person have any features that stand out, such as a scar on the nose?

Now, think up three other questions whose answers might help describe the person you have chosen. Look at what you have written down during the focused free-writing. What questions does your free-writing answer? Are these questions included in the eight questions listed above and the three you think up?

Exercise 3 The teacher will write on the blackboard some of the questions your classmates have thought up in Exercise 2. Discuss them with your partner. Are they good questions? Are they critically important? Why or why not? Look at your own questions and your partner's. Are they helpful questions? Why or why not?

Exercise 4 Choose the ten questions that you consider most important. Then look at your focused free-writing about your classmate. Does it adequately answer these questions? If it fails to answer any of the questions or fails to answer them well, use the questions as new topics and do more focused free-writing.

II. BUILDING UP VOCABULARY

Exercise 5 Put the following words into three groups: HAIR, EYES, and COMPLEXION. Notice that some of these words may go into two or even all three groups. Make sure you know the meaning of the words and try to visualize them. Discuss them with your partner.

pale fair black sallow ruddy bloodshot

curly lank frizzy pasty bright almond-shaped
dark long rosy spotty ginger bobbed

HAIR: _____

EYES: _____

COMPLEXION: _____

Exercise 6 Glance through your focused free-writing. Have you used any vocabulary items that are not included in Exercise 5? Put them in appropriate groups in Exercise 5. You may even set up new groups. Find out what your partner has added to his or her list.

Exercise 7 Put the following words into two categories: WOMEN'S CLOTHING & ORNAMENTS, and MEN'S CLOTHING & ORNAMENTS. Some words may belong in both groups.

suit coat jacket T-shirt shirt blouse scarf trousers
tights cords jeans sweater skirt lasses belt necklace
socks bracelet blazer tie overalls gloves uniform stockings

WOMEN'S CLOTHING & ORNAMENTS: _____

MEN'S CLOTHING & ORNAMENTS: _____

Exercise 8 Add more items to the lists in Exercise 7.

PART TWO: LEARNING HOW TO WRITE

I. DEVELOPING PARAGRAPH SKILLS

Space Order

In a descriptive paragraph, the information is generally arranged according to **space order**, i.e. the order of location and distance.

When we describe a person, we can do it in the same order as the person actually comes to our attention. For example, when the person is walking towards us from some distance, at first we see a human figure, then the clothing, and the way he or she walks. As the person comes nearer, we can see his or her facial features and complexion. Finally we may notice some special features that only that person has.

If a person is standing in front of us, we may follow a different order. We may look at the face first and then gradually move downward to the feet. This is another order we often follow when we describe a person.

Sometimes, however, something extraordinary about the person may change these usual patterns. For instance, if a person is wearing an unusually colorful scarf, our description might begin with this scarf.

To summarize, the space order may come in these ways:

- * DISTANT ———> CLOSE
- * HEAD ———> FEET
- * EXTRAORDINARY THING ———> ORDINARY THINGS

Exercise 9 Read the following paragraph, and determine the order in which the details are organized. Discuss with your partner why the order is effective for the paragraph.

My missing friend should be easy to recognize. When I last saw Roger, he was wearing dark-blue jeans, a pair of dark-brown hunting boots with red laces, and a light-blue sweater with a turtleneck; he was carrying a red school-bag with black trim, filled with books. He stands about six feet four inches, slouching¹ shoulders, and carries roughly 190 pounds on a

¹ slouching: showing that one is tired

medium frame¹. He walks in excessively long strides, like a cowboy. His hair is sandy blond, cut just below his ears and feathered back on the sides. He has deep purple eyes framed by dark-brown eyelashes and brows set into a clear tanned complexion. The bridge of his nose carries a half-inch scar in the shape of an inverted crescent. His right front tooth has a small chip in the left corner.

Adapted from *The writing Process*. 2nd ed. by John Lannon. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1986.

Order: _____>_____

Exercise 10 Here you have a jumbled paragraph. Re-organize the sentences so that they follow definite space order.

1) As usual Madeline was overdressed. 2) Her hair stuck out from her head in a graying frizz², and black horn-rimmed glasses encircled her eyes. 3) Her white blouse was ruffled³ at the elbows, and her red dirndl skirt was embroidered⁴ with black and white flowers. 4) Every inch of her seemed to scream for attention. 5) Look, from her ears hung red pendant earrings which bobbed as she talked, and about her thick neck was a matching strand of red baubles⁵. 6) On her feet were black patent high heeled sandals.

Adapted from *Twelve Steps to Better Exposition*. 2nd ed. by Barbara Williams. Columbus: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Company, 1978.

Sentence Order: _____

Exercise 11 Arrange the free-writing about your classmate according to one of the space orders:

¹ medium frame: shape of a body that is neither large nor small

² frizz: a hair style with tight, short curls

³ ruffled: no longer smooth

⁴ embroider (with): decorate by using needle work

⁵ bauble: a cheap jewel