

21世纪高等院校英语专业系列规划教材

总主编 虞建华

英语基础写作教程

Writing Strategies:

A Coursebook for Chinese EFL Learners

主编 徐宏亮 杨玲



北京师范大学出版集团

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前 言



《高等学校英语专业英语教学大纲》指出,英语专业基础阶段的主要教学任务是传授英语基础知识,对学生进行全面、严格的基本技能训练,培养学生实际运用语言的能力、良好的学风和正确的学习方法,为进入高年级学习打下扎实的专业基础。作为英语专业技能课程之一的写作课,在人才培养过程中起着不可替代的重要作用。《大纲》指出,在听、说、读、写、译各项技能全面发展的同时,我们更应该突出说、写、译能力的培养。英语写作能力的培养在全球化的今天显得越来越重要,实际上已成为中国外语教学强调的一个核心技能。

教材是教学的灵魂,直接影响到教学的过程与结果。据不完全统计,目前市场上通用的英语专业教材中,英语写作教材占30%左右,远远低于大学英语四、六级写作技能指导书的数量。《英语基础写作教程》正是针对当前英语专业写作教学实际、结合英语写作教材评价研究成果而编写的面向普通高校英语专业本科学生的一本写作教材。

本教程具有以下特点。

一、遵循以读导写的原则。本教程摒弃以词、句、实用语法作为起点的结构主义编写原则,以段落写作和篇章写作为起点和重点,强调以读导写。我们认为写作的关键是段落写作,段落是文章的基本单位,本教程的目标之一就是重点培养学生的基于语篇分析的写作能力。

二、强调学生思维能力的培养。专业课程教学中要有意识地训练

学生分析与综合、抽象与概括、多角度分析问题等多种思维能力以及发现问题、解决难题等创新能力。本教程通过指导学生如何使用举例、下定义、分类说明、比较与对照、原因与结果等写作策略来扩展文章的段落,使其成为一篇文章,加强对学生思维能力的训练和培养。

三、充分考虑使用者的实际需要。由于学生的英语写作水平不同,本教程在各个章节中设置了许多练习,难易不等,教师可以根据实际教学需要有选择地使用。范文和用作例证的段落与文章尽量贴近学生生活,语言表达清晰易懂,易于学生模仿。此外,结合每章节的特色,编者在每章节最后安排了相关的语言点学习,使教程内容更加立体化。

在编写过程中,我们参考了国内外相关教材和网站的一些实例和练习形式。所引用的材料一般已注明出处,未注明出处的大多是由于辗转引用,未能查出原作者或来源。对此,编者在此表示感谢。

作为教育部普通高等学校人文社会科学重点研究基地中国外语教育研究中心的中国外语教育基金项目“英语写作教材评价与建设研究”的成果之一,同时作为安徽省教学研究项目“英语写作元认知研究与教学改革”(20100178)的部分成果,本书已通过专家评审,被列为“21世纪高等院校英语专业系列规划教材”,主要供高等院校英语专业本、专科生在写作课中使用,也可供具有同等英语水平的英语写作自学者使用。

编写写作教材是一项艰苦而繁重的工作。尽管编者做了很大努力,但书中缺点与疏漏之处仍在所难免,恳请专家、师生和广大读者批评指正。

编者

2012年2月10日于上海



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Unit



1

Writing Effective Sentences

Our ability to communicate with each other depends on how we use and understand sentences. Sentences express our complete thoughts. Expressing our ideas in skillfully written sentences contributes greatly to the success of our writing as a whole. To write effective sentences takes careful study and good, regular practice. This unit will provide some guides that can help us construct effective sentences and avoid the most common problems we may have in writing sentences.

1.1 Writing Correct Sentences

1.1.1 Avoiding Sentence Fragments

In order for a sentence to be complete, it must have at least one subject and one verb, that is, one clause. A clause is a group of words that contains a subject and a verb, either an action verb or a linking verb. A sentence that has neither a subject nor a verb is incomplete. If an incomplete sentence is used in writing, it is a type of sentence structure error called a fragment. A sentence fragment is punctuated as a sentence, beginning with a capital letter and ending with a period. Usually fragments do not make complete sense by themselves (except perhaps in casual conversation), so it is important to learn how to recognize and correct them.

Let us look at some examples of common fragment errors and how they can be corrected.

(1a) You can have your blood pressure checked at the nurse's office.
Across from the library. (incorrect)

In this example, the second word group "Across from the library" doesn't contain either a subject or a verb, so it is a fragment. To correct it, we could add a subject and a verb, or we could simply join the fragment to the previous sentence:

(1b) You can have your blood pressure checked at the nurse's office.
The nurse's office is located across from the library. (correct)

(1c) You can have your blood pressure checked at the nurse's office
across from the library. (correct)

Here is another example.

(2a) By running three miles every day. Peter stays in shape. (incorrect)

The first word group in Example(2a) has no subject or verb, so it is a fragment. Although "running" may look like a verb, an *-ing* word cannot be a verb by itself; it always needs a form of "to be" as an auxiliary verb with it in order to function as the verb in a sentence. The easiest way to correct this fragment is to join it to the next sentence, like this:

(2b) By running three miles every day, Peter stays in shape. (correct)

★ Tips on correcting sentence fragments

Most fragments are simply pieces of sentences that have been accidentally separated from the sentence where they belong. Therefore, the best way to correct a fragment is usually to connect it to the previous sentence (or sometimes to the following sentence).

There are several ways to correct sentence fragments. You may connect the fragment to a complete sentence or independent clause, or add the missing subject or verb or both to complete the sentence, or you may eliminate the subordinating conjunction or relative pronoun so that the dependent clause stands alone as a complete sentence. Specifically, sentence fragments can be corrected by attaching them to, or rewriting them as, independent clauses.

◇ **Infinitive, participial, and prepositional phrases are not complete sentences.**

(3a) The man who talked for an hour not realizing everyone was bored. (fragment)

(3b) The man talked for an hour, not realizing everyone was bored. (correct)

(4a) You might think people would resent such a talkative boy, but they do not. The reason being Steve's poise and appearance. (fragment)

(4b) You might think people would resent such a talkative boy, but because of Steve's poise and appearance, they do not. (correct)

(5a) He talked for fifty minutes without taking his eyes off his notes. Apparently not noticing that half the class was asleep. (fragment)

(5b) He talked for fifty minutes without taking his eyes off his notes. Apparently he did not notice that half the class was asleep. (correct)

◇ **Dependent clauses are not complete sentences.**

(6a) Who writes books for a living. (fragment)

(6b) Anyone who writes books for a living knows that it involves much hard work and very little security. (correct)

(7a) He finally decided to leave school. Because he was utterly bored with his work and was failing all his courses. (fragment)

(7b) He finally decided to leave school because he was utterly bored with his work and was failing all his courses. (correct)

◇ **Appositives are not complete sentences.**

(8a) A man of high ethical and moral principles. (fragment)

(8b) Reverend Meyers, a man of high ethical and moral principles, resigned from his parish to assist with missionary work in the remote jungles of Africa. (correct)

When you are writing, it is important to make sure that all of your sentences are complete, with both a subject and a verb. While a sentence fragment does not express a complete thought, experienced writers may occasionally use a fragment for some special effect or emphasis (the so-called intentional fragment). As a college student, though, it is best to avoid fragments altogether and use complete sentences. In rough drafts,

sentence fragments tend to obscure major problems in sentence structure and punctuation. In the final draft, sentence fragments cause serious problems in communication, while, at the same time, creating all the wrong impressions—impressions that undermine the writer's credibility.



Task One

Rewrite each of the following sentences to eliminate any fragments.

1. For some people, life is only boring or painful. Especially if the person has no purpose, no goal in life.
2. He failed a number of courses before he earned his degree. Among them, English, Economics and General Biology.
3. He marched down the street protected by a dainty rose-pink nylon-covered umbrella. This being the only one he could find in the stand.
4. He pointed at Mrs. Wolfe. The woman who wore the hard hat and the tool belt.
5. Not only rich men become President in America. For example, Lincoln.
6. The class often starts late. For example, yesterday at a quarter past nine instead of at nine sharp.
7. To protect shipping and keep the gulf open to international oil traffic. The United States, Britain and France all have war-ships patrolling these increasingly turbulent waters.
8. Today's children are being brought up very differently than children a generation ago. Some of them being spoiled.
9. Tom had worked at many jobs. Among them teaching, accounting, and printing.
10. Workers who have been laid off. They are eligible to unemployment benefit.

1. 1. 2 Avoiding Run-on Sentences

A run-on sentence occurs when two or more independent clauses are presented as one sentence, with no punctuation between the two clauses that run together. Here are some examples of run-on sentences and some

suggested revisions.

(9a) The driver did not see the icy spot on the road he was blinded by the sun's glare. (run-on sentence)

(9b) The driver did not see the icy spot on the road; he was blinded by the sun's glare. (correct)

(10a) Exams are over and I still feel tense and nervous. (run-on sentence)

(10b) Exams are over; however, I still feel tense and nervous. (correct)

★ Tips on correcting run-on sentences

You can correct a run-on sentence by making the two independent clauses into separate sentences, by joining the two independent clauses with a semicolon or a comma and a coordinating conjunction to make a compound sentence, or by making one clause a dependent clause. Specifically, run-on sentences like (11a) can be corrected in one of the following ways.

(11a) There should never be a third world war another war would destroy the human race. (run-on sentence)

(11b) There should never be a third world war. Another war would destroy the human race. (with a period)

(11c) There should never be a third world war; another war would destroy the human race. (with a semicolon)

(11d) There should never be a third world war, for another war would destroy the human race. (with a comma and a coordinating conjunction)

(11e) There should never be a third world war because another war would destroy the human race. (with a dependent clause)

As a general rule of thumb, the following guidelines can be helpful when one is attempting to correct a run-on sentence.

- ◇ **A period tends to preserve the distinctive features of the two thoughts.**
- ◇ **A semicolon tends to emphasize what the two thoughts have in common.**
- ◇ **The comma and coordinating conjunction tend to create a stronger flow and rhythm to the sentence and, at the same time, emphasize what the two thoughts have in common.**

- ◇ The dependent clause emphasizes the fact that one of the thoughts is of greater importance than the other one.

1.1.3 Avoiding Comma Splices

Connecting sentences or independent clauses with a comma rather than separating them into two sentences or joining them with a conjunction or a semicolon is called a comma splice (or comma fault). That is, a comma splice occurs when two independent clauses are joined by a comma but have no coordinating conjunction (i. e. *for, and, nor, but, or, yet, and so*). Here are some typical examples of comma splices and the suggested revisions.

(12a) I got up late this morning, I didn't have time for breakfast.
(comma splice)

(12b) I got up late this morning. I didn't have time for breakfast.
(correct)

(12c) I got up late this morning; I didn't have time for breakfast.
(correct)

(12d) I got up late this morning, so I didn't have time for breakfast.
(correct)

(12e) I got up late this morning, and I didn't have time for breakfast.
(correct)

(12f) Because I got up late this morning, I didn't have time for breakfast. (correct)

★ Tips on correcting comma splices.

From the above examples, it can be observed that comma splices like Example (13a) can be corrected in four principal ways.

(13a) The driver did not see the icy spot on the road, he was blinded by the sun's glare.

- ◇ Use a period and write two separate sentences.

(13b) The driver did not see the icy spot on the road. He was blinded by the sun's glare. (two sentences)

◇ Use a semicolon between two independent clauses.

(13c) The driver did not see the icy spot on the road; he was blinded by the sun's glare. (with a semicolon)

◇ Use a comma and a coordinating conjunction between two independent clauses.

(13d) The driver did not see the icy spot on the road, for he was blinded by the sun's glare. (with a comma and a coordinating conjunction)

◇ Make one of the clauses dependent.

(13e) The driver did not see the icy spot on the road because he was blinded by the sun's glare.

Note that there are certain transitional connectives that seem to be conjunctions but are actually adverbs. When these words are misused as conjunctions, it may result in run-on sentences or comma splices. Adverbs such as *then*, *therefore*, *however*, *moreover*, *also*, *nevertheless*, *besides* and *accordingly* are likely to be misused.

(14a) He paused at a wayside snack bar for a cup of tea then he settled down to a further long stretch of continuous driving. (run-on sentence)

(14b) He paused at a wayside snack bar for a cup of tea and then settled down to a further long stretch of continuous driving. (correct)

(15a) Several textile firms have to close down, therefore there was widespread unemployment in these areas. (comma splice)

(15b) Several textile firms have to close down; therefore there was widespread unemployment in these areas. (correct)



Task Two

Indicate first whether each of the following is a comma splice or a run-on sentence. Then in correcting the sentence, indicate the method you used.

1. A New York law at the turn of the century regulated automobiles under an ordinance applied to cattle it required a person to walk in front of the automobile carrying a red flag or lantern.
2. Coast Guard cadets continue to train on sailing ships, thus they

- gain firsthand knowledge of traditional nautical lore.
3. Constant reading will improve your vocabulary it will also improve your writing.
 4. Getting the right to vote is one thing, using it is another.
 5. Heavy rains have slowed construction on the new high-rise, however, the project remains ahead of schedule.
 6. I took lots of vitamin C however, I still came down with the flu.
 7. Kepler's Law explains the motion of the planets around the sun most astronomy students master the concepts early in their studies.
 8. Many old cars use premium gasoline, which is now difficult to find they can be tuned to use regular or lower octane unleaded gasoline.
 9. Many think popcorn is a typical American food, actually it was popular in ancient times.
 10. Mosquitoes are found in various climates they thrive in Alaska as well as in the tropics.
 11. My car wouldn't start this morning, the battery was dead.
 12. One of the first commemorative stamps of 1981 honored Whitney Moore Young he founded the National Urban League.
 13. One theory is that dinosaurs vanished about 65 million years ago an asteroid crashed into the earth.
 14. Palindromes are groups of words that read the same forward or backward, they are difficult to compose.
 15. Scientists disagree on the source of intelligence, some say heredity is the main source, but others believe that the environment is more influential.
 16. The flash bulbs momentarily blinded the celebrity, he continued to smile and wave.
 17. The sky was bright blue with a few white clouds in it, it was a beautiful day for the picnic.
 18. The surgeon made his morning rounds then he drove to his office.
 19. The tenants sent many letters to the landlord about the lack of heat, he did not reply.