

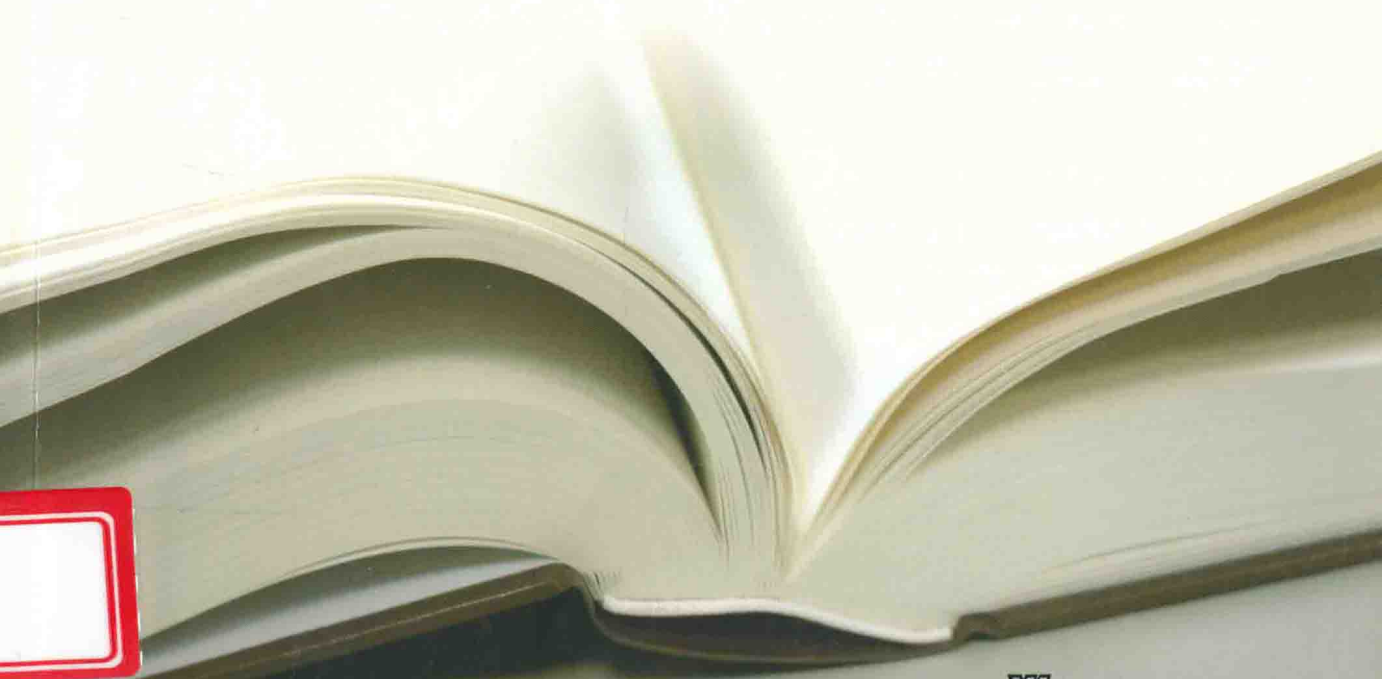
新标准高职英语专业系列教材

实用文写作

Success in Practical English Writing

A Textbook for College Students

祁寿华 (美)



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前言

本书是应上海外语教育出版社之邀为大学生撰写的实用英语写作教材，旨在系统地培养大学生实用英语写作的基本知识和能力。所谓实用英语写作就是指与学术性写作(Academic Writing, 如论说文和研究报告)和创作性写作(Creative Writing, 如诗歌和短篇小说)等相区别的具有实际用途的文体的写作。

本教材章节的安排由浅入深，由简至繁，循序渐进，并配有大量的实例。除主课内容外，每一单元开头都以名师哲人等的“智慧言语”(Words of Wisdom)为前导，以激发灵感、思考和学习热情。紧随其后的是“热身练习”(Warming Up)，以把心态调至最佳境界，然后进入主课内容。主课之后是“操练温习”(Workout)，以趁热打铁，巩固和扩展学习所得。另外，每一单元还配有“常用词汇和表达方式”(Useful Terms and Expressions)，以利于学生有重点和选择地汲取语言营养，提高实用英语的表达能力。本书还就实用英语写作的语言风格等分若干次讲解示范，以充实教学内容。

在使用本教材时，教学的幅度和速度等可依据本校的教学大纲及学生的英语水准安排，不必强求教完所有的内容。某些章节，如第16单元“Contract and Agreement”和第17单元“Power of Attorney”，具有一定难度，可只作简单介绍，让学生有所接触，不必要求学生完全掌握。

作为教材，本书无意也不可能包罗所有实用英语写作的文体、样式、功能和交际场合。本教材旨在帮助大学生在实用英语写作方面打下坚实基础，以备将来在社会、工作及国际商务和文化交流的实践中不断学习和提高，开拓事业发展的新天地，为中国在新世纪的崛起发挥自己的才智。

最后，感谢上海外语教育出版社的各位编辑同仁在本书的撰写过程中所给予的全方位的、热情耐心并充满智慧的指导和支持。

编者
2011年

PREFACE

Welcome to *Success in Practical English Writing*!

This book is designed for students of vocational and other colleges and universities. Its purpose is to introduce them to the basics of practical writing in English. By “practical writing” is meant writing for practical situations and purposes, as opposed to either academic writing (e.g., research essays or papers) or creative writing (e.g., fiction, poetry, drama, and creative nonfiction).

WHAT IS IN THE BOOK

Instead of trying to cover all aspects of practical English writing for all situations and purposes, which is impossible to do, this book selects 17 to focus on, from the basics of practical writing to the more complex business and legal documents. Apparently, the level of challenge increases as the course progresses. Indeed taking on the book would be no different from embarking on a months-long marathon, long march, or Tour de France. To help the “athlete” reach the finish line successfully, the book has prepared the following in addition to the regular content.

WORDS OF WISDOM

These are words from sagacious philosophers, well-known writers, and other important historical and cultural figures. Preceding each of the 17 units, these “words of wisdom” will not only inspire students, provoking them to think and reflect, but also serve as examples of elegance in language use.

WARMING UP

Just as an athlete needs to warm up the body before starting any sports event or rigorous workout, so does a student need to stretch the mental muscles to ready them for the new information and challenge of each unit. That is the function of the examples or questions placed at the beginning of each unit. There is no need to dwell on them too long. A five-minute or so “encounter” should suffice for the purpose.

USEFUL TERMS AND EXPRESSIONS

Another way to recharge the battery, so to speak, is to soak up those lists of terms and expressions included in each unit. These are mostly “extracted” from the content of each unit although other useful terms and expressions are added on. Think of them as “energy bars” that replenish the mind for the strenuous cognitive activity of each unit.

TIPS FOR THE WINNING STYLE

“Use Active Voice,” “Use Strong Verbs,” “Use Positive Words,” “Cut Wordiness and Redundancy,” “Avoid Trite Expressions and Clichés,” “Avoid Offensive Expressions,” “Use Parallel Structure,” “Create Sentence Variety” — these are among the tips for developing a winning style given at the end of the book. Think of these tips as useful advice from an

experienced coach. Practice them often enough so they become second nature.

WORKOUT

To be consistent with the sports and fitness metaphor, the exercises and assignments in this book are called “workout” sessions. Whether they are placed in the middle or the end of each unit, “workout” sessions are meant for students to practice what they have learned and to consolidate what they have learned through practice. Excellence, says the Greek philosopher Aristotle, is not a single act, but a habit. The only way students can achieve excellence in practical English writing is through working out regularly and thoughtfully.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

How should a professor (the “coach” for this months-long marathon or Tour de France, really) use this book? It depends on the objectives and the expected learning outcomes of the course the professor is teaching. Another key factor is the level of students (freshman, sophomore, junior, or senior) and their English proficiency. Since it is impossible to cover everything during a 15- or 16-week semester, a ten-unit plan, such as the one below, would seem reasonable:

WARMING UP

- Unit 1 Introduction
- Unit 2 Invitation and Thank-You Card
- Unit 4 Event Program
- Unit 5 Business Letter I: Format and Characteristics
- Unit 7 Memo
- Unit 8 Professional Email
- Unit 10 Application Letter
- Unit 14 Business Advertisement
- Unit 15 Invoice, Bill of Sale and Promissory Note

This ten-unit plan sticks to the most essential while avoiding the heavier units such as those on legal documents.

Another way to manage the course is by not trying to cover all content in all units; rather, select and sample things the professor feels would be most interesting and potentially beneficial to the students. In that sense, to change the metaphor, the book will serve like a buffet-style feast.

Independent users of this book (i.e., those who are not taking a college course featuring this book) would do well by following the plan of study suggested above too. It is important though to have guidance and feedback from people with appropriate expertise.

With an abundance of examples for each kind of practical writing discussed in the book, *Success in Practical English Writing* can also serve as a valuable sourcebook, a sort of reference, for people who are engaged in practical English writing for their business, career and other purposes.

Finally, no textbook can teach everything about every possible practical writing situation.

However, with a good textbook, and with good “coaching,” the diligent student should have acquired enough essential knowledge at the end of the semester, enough essential skills, and mental elasticity to be able to absorb new information in the world beyond the classroom, to learn new skills, and to adapt and succeed in ever new practical writing situation.

Bon voyage!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am deeply indebted to the numerous print and online sources (as well as my own previously published works) in writing this book. They are simply too many to be acknowledged individually each time the indebtedness occurs. To respect their privacy, names of persons, organizations, and places from real life examples of practical English writing have been changed whenever appropriate; therefore, they become fictitious. Any resemblance, real or imagined, to any person, organization, or place is coincidental.

I am profoundly grateful to Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press for inviting me to work on this project, and to my editors Ms. Wang Dongmei, Ms. Xie Yu and Mr. Wu Wenzhi for their warm professionalism, their numerous constructive comments, and their thorough and intelligent work.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Shouhua Qi is Professor of English at Western Connecticut State University. His scholarly as well as creative works have appeared in the United States, China, and elsewhere. Among Dr. Qi's publications are *Western Literature in China and the Translation of a Nation* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, forthcoming in 2012), *Pearl Jacket and Other Stories: Flash Fiction from Contemporary China* (translator and editor; San Francisco: Stonebridge Press, 2008); *Literature: Traditions, Trends, and Topics in Western Literary Studies* (coeditor and contributing author; Beijing: People's University of China Press, 2007); *Red Guard Fantasies and Other Stories* (San Francisco: Long River Press, 2007); *When the Purple Mountain Burns: A Novel* (English edition: San Francisco: Long River Press; Simplified edition: Shanghai: Shanghai People's Press; Traditional Chinese edition: Hong Kong: Sanlian Press, 2005); *Voices in Tragic Harmony: Essays on Thomas Hardy's Fiction and Poetry* (coauthor; Shanghai: Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press, 2001); *Success in Advanced English Writing: A Comprehensive Guide* (Shanghai: Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press, 2001); *Western Writing Theories, Pedagogies, and Practices* (Shanghai: Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press, 2000) and *The Well-Beloved* (translator; Nanjing: Yilin Press, 1998).

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WORDS OF WISDOM

First say to yourself what you would be; and then do what you have to do.

Epictetus (ca. 50–ca. 135)

If you can imagine it, you can achieve it; if you can dream it, you can become it.

William Arthur Ward (1921–1994)

The act of writing is an act of optimism. You would not take the trouble to do it if you felt it didn't matter.

Edward Albee (1928–)

Okay, first thing first: Let's get you a business card.

Without a proper business card, you can't expect to speak (and write) properly in this class and you can't expect to be treated properly either. Remember what the sagacious Confucius said in this regard?

Indeed, handing out or exchanging business cards is an inevitable ritual of today's world. Whether you are conducting business or trying to build a network of friends and contacts, a business card is a de facto representation of you. Has anyone ever handed you something like the one below?

EXAMPLE W-1

GLOBAL CULTURAL GATEWAY, INC.
www.globalculturegw.com.cn

CHERYLE LING

1291 Nanjing Road, 201B
Shanghai 200081

Tel: (021)65423622
Mobile: 13908319535

Or like this?

EXAMPLE W-2

Changchun Foreign Investment Office
Foreign Investment Promotion Office

Helen Xu
Interpreter

Add: No. 78 Renmin Ave.
Changchun 130056
China, P.R.

Tel: 86-431-8996719
86-431-8991011
Fax: 86-431-8997011

Depending on your needs and situations, your card can be cute, creative, with personalized touches, or the more “serious” corporate type. Since the “graphic” part of business

card design (i.e., logos, photos, fonts, and layout ideas) is not our “business” here, we will focus on the text content only.

Typically, a business card should contain the following essential information:

1. Name
2. Job Title (if applicable)
3. Name of Business or Organization
4. Address
5. Phone Number(s) (If more than one, list them in order of telephone, fax, and cell/mobile; include country and area codes and extension, if applicable.)
6. Email Address (a very effective way to communicate)
7. Webpage Address (if applicable)

For business companies or organizations, a well designed and consistently used logo helps to establish their identity. If using two-sided or folded business cards, you can even include a bullet list of services or main product line.

Many people in China choose to have two-sided business cards: one side in Chinese and one side in English.

Now that you know the essential elements of the business card, what do you think of the two business cards cited above? Is there any essential information missing? Why should it be included?

Below are the texts of a few more business cards, which may give you ideas when it comes to designing your own.

EXAMPLE W-3

SMC DEVELOPMENT LTD

JIANG XUYI

Managing Director

CITIC Plaza, Rm. 1001, 1008
Tian He North Road, No. 332
Guangzhou 510613
China, P.R.
Tel: (8620)87524000 ex. 636
Fax: (8620)87526101
Email: jiangx@citic-plaza.com
www.citic-plaza.com

EXAMPLE W-4

SHANGHAI MUNICIPAL ECONOMIC COMMITTEE
PLANNING OFFICE

HUANG YU

DIRECTOR

No. 200 People Ave. Tel: (8621)63119693
Shanghai 200003 Fax: (8621)63587145
China, P.R. Email: huangyu@shcec.gov.cn

EXAMPLE W-5

Yao Qiangming

Professor

President

JIANGSU COLLEGE FOR INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION
Add: 1999 Jiyin Avenue, Jiangning Economic and Technical
Development Zone (JNDZ), Nanjing 211102
Tel: 8625-52724661 8625-83062277
Fax: 86-25-52721546 Mobile: 13851560896
Email: yaoqmno1@163.cn

Useful Terms and Expressions

network, de facto, cultural gateway, foreign investment, company logo, bullet list, international education, office manager, general manager, MOD (manager on duty), CEO (Chief Executive Officer), CFO (Chief Financial Officer), Board of Trustees, English major, double major, dual major, administrative assistant, business school

EXAMPLE W-6

Kenny Zhao
President/CEO

KCF International, Inc.
2091 Saturn Street
Monterey Park, CA 91755
U.S.A.
Tel: 323-888-7000
Fax: 323-888-7007
www.kcfn.com

EXAMPLE W-7

CHINA TIMES
www.chinatimes.com

Juanli Wang
Correspondent

952 National Press Building
Washington, DC 20045
Tel: (240)938-1813
Fax: (301)530-8320
Email: Wangj99@AOL.com

EXAMPLE W-8

HARVARD BUSINESS SCHOOL PUBLISHING

STEVEN A. BYERS, JR.

DIRECTOR OF INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

300 North Beacon Street / Watertown, Massachusetts 02472
Mail: 60 Harvard Way / Boston, Massachusetts 02163
Ph 617.783.7894 / FX 617.783.7866 / byerss@hbsp.harvard.edu

EXAMPLE W-9

MARGARET KONG

Senior Language Coordinator

Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs and Language Services
Tel: (212)788-2267
KONGM@CITYHALL.NYC.GOV

100 Group Street, 2nd Floor
New York, NY 10038
Fax: (212)788-8993

Are you now ready to design your own business card(s) so that you can speak and write properly and expect to be treated properly too?

WORKOUT

Although our focus is on the text content, please feel free to be creative with personalized touches when designing your own cards, e.g., logos, photos and other graphics, and unique layout ideas.

1. Design a business card for yourself based on who and what you are now (e.g., a college student).
2. Design a business card for yourself based on what you expect to be five years after graduation.
3. Design a business card for yourself based on what you dream of becoming (in terms of career success).

When you are done, exchange your business card(s) with your classmates.

Congratulations! Now you are officially inducted into this college course in practical English writing and are ready to learn and explore what this course has to offer.

Unit 1

INTRODUCTION

WORDS OF WISDOM

Success is the sum of small efforts, repeated day in and day out.
Robert Collier (1885–1950)

Writing is communication, not self-expression. Nobody in this world wants to read your diary except your mother.
Richard Peck (1934–)

The secret of becoming a writer is to write, write and keep on writing.
Ken MacLeod (1954–)

Warming Up

EXAMPLE 1–1

O, my love's like a red, red rose,
That's newly sprung in June.
O, my love's like the melody,
That's sweetly play'd in tune.

EXAMPLE 1–2

Hi,

I am returning an iPod I recently bought from your online store. It's really a piece of junk and I am so disappointed! I demand a full refund. If I don't receive the full refund within three days of this letter, I guarantee you'll hear more from me.

Thanks a lot!

Super

Of the two examples above, which one is “practical writing”? Why? Is it good, effective? Why (not)?

Unlike a poem, a short story, a novel, or a play, practical writing is the kind of writing you do for “practical” purposes, e.g., to return a defective product, to apply for a job, to invite people to a fundraising event, to explain why you have turned in the assignment late, or to notify employees of a change in benefits. This unit has a very “practical” purpose, too: to introduce you to the basics of practical writing (in English). It will cover the following basic topics:

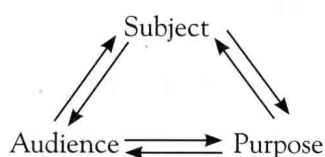
1. Communicative Context of Practical Writing
2. Kinds of Practical Writing
3. Criteria for Effective Practical Writing

I. COMMUNICATIVE CONTEXT OF PRACTICAL WRITING

Like any other written communication, practical writing involves the following three essential elements:

1. Subject: what the writing is about
2. Audience: to whom the writing is addressing
3. Purpose: what the writing wants to achieve

Their dynamic relationships would look like the illustration below:



To use the “iPod” letter above as an example:

- Subject: the defective iPod
Audience: the seller/vendor (or the Customer Service Department of a business company)
Purpose: to return the defective iPod for a full refund

Of course, we do not want to forget Super, the writer, a very unhappy customer.

Being fully aware of and sensitive to the communicative context of any practical writing situation is important. The communicative context shapes the content, the format, the style and tone, and even the length of such writing, all of which, ultimately, determine whether the writing is effective.

WORKOUT 1-1

What would be the *possible* communicative contexts for the following practical writing situations?

A letter applying for a job

Subject:

Audience:

Purpose:

(Writer?):

A letter inviting people to a fundraising event

Subject:

Audience:

Purpose:

(Writer?):

A letter explaining why you are turning in the assignment late

Subject:

Audience:

Purpose:

(Writer?):

A letter notifying employees of a change in benefits

Subject:

Audience:

Purpose:

(Writer?):

II. KINDS OF PRACTICAL WRITING

There are as many kinds of practical writing as there are occasions, needs, and situations in the real world. However, we can group them in the following categories:

1. Personal and Business
2. Internal (Interoffice) and External
3. Formal and Informal

1 Personal and Business

PERSONAL WRITING

You write as an individual to another individual for *personal* reason(s). For example, you write to:

- congratulate a friend for winning the first prize in a public speaking contest;
- thank your roommate's parents for having you over for the Mid-Autumn Festival;
- apologize for missing your mother's birthday;
- offer condolences (to a friend for his or her pet's death);
- inform friends of your engagement.

BUSINESS WRITING

You write as an individual or in some "official" capacity (e.g., manager, director, Customer Service representative) for some "business" reason(s), as exemplified below:

- A customer writes to the Customer Service Department of a company requesting a refund for a defective product.
- A college student writes to volunteer for Shanghai World Expo 2010.
- A civil organization writes to invite people to a charity fundraising event.
- A professor writes to explain why he or she will not accept the late work.
- A Personnel Department manager writes to notify employees of a change in benefits.

2 Internal (Interoffice) and External

Business writing can be further divided into internal (interoffice) and external.

INTERNAL (INTEROFFICE)

You write to an individual or individuals *within* your office, department, company, organization, or institution for “business” reasons, as shown in the examples below:

- A manager writes to organize a surprise birthday party for one of the employees.
- The president of a college writes to offer holiday greetings to faculty, staff, and students.
- A department chairperson writes to a professor congratulating him or her on his or her promotion to the rank of full professor.
- The Student Association president writes to announce the new date for election.
- A Personnel Department director writes to notify employees of a change in benefits.

EXTERNAL

You write to an individual or individuals *outside* of your company, organization, or institution for “business” reasons, e.g.:

- The manager of a company writes to the manager of *another* company about possible cooperation.
- The Personnel Department director writes to the Personnel Department director of *another* college for a new employee’s background information.
- A professor writes a recommendation letter to support a student’s application for graduate studies abroad.
- The Public Relations Office writes to announce that the college’s new swimming pool is open to the public during limited hours.
- The Customer Service manager writes to reply to a refund request.

Useful Terms and Expressions

fundraising event, benefits, charity organization, written communication, communicative context, interoffice communication, surprise birthday party, holiday greetings, public relations, appointment

3 Formal and Informal

Practical writing can be formal or informal in style and use of language.

FORMAL

Using formal diction and salutation, complete and grammatical sentences, and respectful, polite (but less personal) tone.

INFORMAL

Using informal diction and salutation, more relaxed in sentence structures, and more personal in tone.

Below are a few pairs of salutations and expressions to illustrate:

Informal: Sarah

Formal: Dear Ms. Sarah Liu

Informal: Dear Kim

Formal: Dear Dr. Kimberley Johnson

Informal: Stop by if you have a sec.

Formal: Could you come to my office if you have a moment?

Informal: Just holler if you need anything.

Formal: Please let me know if you need any assistance.

Informal: Why don't you give me a buzz if you're around?

Formal: Please give me a phone call if you happen to be in this area.

In general, personal and internal (interoffice) writing tends to be more informal while business and external communication tends to be more formal. However, that is not always the case. In fact, personal and internal (interoffice) writing can be formal or informal depending on the communicative context (subject, audience, purpose).

Below are two announcements of engagement (by the parents of a young woman), one formal and one informal:

EXAMPLE 1-3 [Formal]

Sarah and David Liu
announce the engagement
of Jennifer Liu
to
Raymond Hu
of Nanjing, Jiangsu

EXAMPLE 1-4 [Informal]

Dear friends:

I'm thrilled to announce that our daughter Jennifer is engaged to Raymond Hu. They will marry May Day 2010. Jennifer, a graduate of Jinling Vocational University, works as an interpreter at Chang'an Ford Mazda Engine Company, an exciting new joint venture outside of Nanjing. Raymond, a fine young man, is also a graduate of Jinling Vocational University. He is associate director of Public Relations at the same company.

We're very happy for Jennifer and we're sure you'll all like Raymond too when you meet him.

More on the wedding plan later. Until then,

Our very best wishes.

Sarah and David Liu

As you can see, formality is a relative concept. Mr. and Mrs. Liu's letter to their friends announcing their daughter's engagement may seem formal. It does not use many informal or slang expressions. However, compared to the standard, card-like format used in the other