

# WRITING MATTERS

CHAPTER

• 1 •

## Writing in the Professional World

You do not need a course in writing. After all, you have been studying it in English courses ever since you were born. Because you are planning to major in engineering or science or computer science or biology, you will not need to learn how to write anyhow. To succeed in that big world out there on the other side of graduation, all you will need are a few minutes of a three-hour lunch conference, and a good secretary to do all your writing for you. You will do the creative thinking, and you know that writing is not very important anyhow. So you will spend almost none of your time on the job doing the mundane tasks of writing. Right? Sorry. But do not take my word for it. I will tell you what people who know about the world of work have to say about the most neglected skill in business and industry: writing. The importance of writing in the professional world is about the same as the importance of writing in the professional world. Writing in their jobs, professional people spend a great deal of their time writing skills in corporations.

论文写作指导书系

*Peter G. Beidler*



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## QUICK REFERENCE TO EDITING MATTERS

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This section provides a handy summary and reference to the numbers and titles of the sections of “Editing Matters.”

1. Fragment.
2. Comma splice.
3. Fused sentences.
4. Tense shift.
5. Faulty subject-verb agreement.
6. Faulty pronoun-antecedent agreement.
7. Ambiguous pronoun reference.
8. Shift in person.
9. Dangling modifiers.
10. Passive voice.
11. Sexist language.
12. Careless use of “you.”
13. Vague use of “this.”
14. Misuse of “who” and “whom.”
15. Misuse of “which” and “that.”
16. Misuse of “however.”
17. Misuse of “hopefully.”
18. Overuse of “very.”
19. Split infinitive.
20. Mismatched parallel elements.
21. Comparing the incomparable.
22. Wordiness.
23. Redundancy.
24. Clichés.
25. Omitted transitions.
26. Misspelled words.
27. Faulty presentation of numbers.
28. Omitted comma.
29. Unnecessary comma.
30. Overused exclamation point.
31. Misused semicolon.
32. Omitted colon.
33. Misused dash.
34. Omitted hyphen.
35. Misused parentheses.
36. Misused square brackets.
37. Misused possessive forms.
38. Overused contractions.
39. Misspelled contractions.
40. Omitted quotation marks.
41. Misused ellipses.
42. Regular quotations.
43. Block quotations.
44. Title.
45. Lack of caring.

# 导 言

随着高等教育的发展和教学改革不断深入，从应试教育转向素质教育已成为目前讨论的焦点；高校更加重视学生的创新思维，强调学生的实际技能和研究方法的培养。为此，论文写作已经成为大学本科生、研究生学习的重要环节。本科生的学年论文、毕业论文，研究生的硕士、博士论文等已成为考核学生学习的重要依据。除英语专业的本科生和研究生需用英文写论文外，也有不少其他学科的研究生直接用外语撰写论文，或将自己的研究成果直接用外语发表，以达到对外交流之目的。学术论文可以说是学术水平最直接的反映。学术论文写作与一般作文不同，除应有创新的观点、充分的论证、流畅的文笔和严谨的文章结构外，还得有符合学术要求的方法与规范，特别是直接用外语撰写论文就更应该符合国际通用的学术规范。

写作在外语学习中被普遍认为难度最大，但这正是外语实际应用中最重要的一种技能。学习外语的目的就是为了交流，而学生的交流能力往往要看学习者动口和动手的能力。不少本科生，甚至研究生，一提到写论文就犯难：通常是因为理不出思路 and 头绪，下笔写几句就感到无话可说，或辞不达意，不能有条理地阐述清楚自己的观点；参考了大量的文献资料却无从下手，不知道怎样合理和正确地引用文献资料；文章写作过程中，不知道论文的格式要求，比如说论文的标题、目录和提要，文章的章节结构，引文的标注，论文的文体与格式，表格、插图及脚注，引文及参考书目的著录格式等等。所有这些都在一篇论文中都有相应的规范要求。四川大学出版社引进的这套“论

文写作指导书系”能很好地帮助论文作者解决上述难题。

**WRITING MATTERS** 一书的作者 Peter G. Beidler 教授是很多中国大学生熟悉的作者。他那脍炙人口的“WHY I TEACH”一文(《大学英语》第三册,上海外语教育出版社)打动过无数学生和老 师。作者有着长期从事大学英文写作课教学的经验,作为美国富布莱特教授他也曾到中国大学任教。此书有其他写作教材所没有的特点:它不直接给出写作中的规范(a list of Dos and Don'ts),而是循序渐进地引导读者自己动手,在写作的过程中学习、体会,逐步掌握论文写作要点和规范。全书的另一大特点是,作者用一般大学生所掌握的3 000左右的词汇量及生动而又风趣的语言,条理非常清楚地教给学习者怎样提高写作能力。Beidler 教授在书中首先帮助学习者建立起学习写作的自信心。他从多年的写作课教学经验中知道写作对于母语为英语的学生和以英语为外语的学生同样是学习中难度较大的一门功课。他用自己学习和工作的积累及他多年来所教的学生的学习过程,让读者体会到任何人都可以成为一个优秀的作者,都可以写出好文章。他主张学习者要有自己的思想,有自己的创新思维,经过深思熟虑可形成自己的论点。同时,他也主张学习者要掌握文章写作的条理结构和篇章布局。为了让读者体会他所讨论的每一个写作要点,他把书中的每一章节直接写成一篇范文。从如何写好论文、找准题目、理清思路、组织论证、处理不同论点,到引文标注和写作规范,每一个章节都为读者做出了示范。Beidler 教授对大学生写作中常出现的问题直接采用学生的文章加以讲解,一边讲解一边修改,带着读者辟出一条新的路径。每一章节均为一篇完美的文章,这也是本书的一大特点。所以在使用这本教材时,读者不仅仅可以学到每章中所讨论的写作要点,而且还可以把每一章节作为相关要点的文章来赏析。这本书让读者感到学习英文写作可以是一件愉快而又很有收获的事情。它既可以用作写作课的教材,也可以用作一般读者自修提高的学习手册,还可以成为英语爱好者阅读赏析的读本。这种让人思考、给人自信、引导人走向成功的书并不多见。

这套引进丛书中 Nigel Fabb 和 Alan Durant 所著的 *HOW TO WRITE ESSAYES, DISSERTATIONS AND THESES IN LITERARY STUDIES* 是一本针对性极强的学术论文写作指南，它在欧洲被以英语作为母语和非母语的大学生广泛使用。此书既可用于高校本科生、研究生和教师自修提高的读本，也可以作为文科学者，特别是文学、语言学学者在用英语写作学术论文时的参考指南。Fabb 和 Durant 两位作者是有多年写作教学经验的教师，他们认真总结了 20 世纪 80 年代以来大学课堂教学的变化，注意到在人文社会科学的学习中，教师对学生学习的考核不再用传统的“对与否”的问答式闭卷考试方法，而更多采用开卷式：在考试中以短论文的方式让学生就相关学习内容阐发自己的见解。许多文科课程还采用让学生写论文的方式来考察学生对学习内容掌握的情况。本科生完成学年论文、毕业论文，硕士研究生、博士研究生完成学术论文和学位论文已经是大学学习的基本要求。在我国也是如此。另外，Fabb 和 Durant 在编写这本写作指南时也考虑到了文学批评与文化批评从 20 世纪 80 年代以来的发展变化、人文社会科学学科在国际交流中所普遍遵循的学术规范。这本书的重点不在写什么，而在怎么写；对论文写作的规范也不是枯燥乏味地列出 what you must and must not do，而是在讲解学术论文写作规范和方法的同时，给读者和学习者留足空间，引导学习者去拓展自己的思路和张扬个人的写作风格。作者在有限的篇幅内用简洁的语言指导读者怎样阅读语言和文学作品，怎样克服对写作的畏惧心理，怎样理清思路和形成自己的论点，怎样论述和使用文献支撑来增强说服力，以及怎样使论文成为一篇规范的学术成果。同 *WRITING MATTERS* 一书的作者 Peter Beidler 一样，Fabb 和 Durant 把重点放在写作的过程之中，强调写作是一种构建，是一种不断完善的构建过程。他们认为写作与交谈不一样，是一种思考的过程。通过这种思考过程，读者可对所阅读的文本有更深刻的理解，同时对需要进一步阅读的资料和目的会更加清楚。书中所用的举例和范文均选自英语语言文学本科生和研究生的论文，他们中有以英语为母语的学生，也有以英语为外语的学生。对于学习者来说，这些在论文

写作中易犯的共性错误很有启示意义。本书的另一特点表现在其编撰方式上：作者在每一章节结尾对讨论的要点做了一个提纲式的归纳，有针对性地设计了一些练习帮助读者掌握所学的内容。除此之外，书中还为读者留有自己补充学习心得和笔记的篇幅，真正体现了作者在编写此书时一再强调的一个字“enable”，让读者和学习者在实践中学习写作，体会到写作中只有重视过程才会有好的结果。

George Watson 是剑桥大学经验丰富的写作课教师。他的 *WRITING A THESIS : a guide to long essays and dissertations* 一书是在他多年来所作的有关论文和学术文章写作的系列讲座的基础上形成的。这也是一本颇有新意的规范学术论文的读本和指南。全书共 21 个章节，分为两大部分。每一章节同上两本书一样并不是乏味的说教和写作规则的简单罗列。同 Peter Beidler 一样，George Watson 书中的每一章节本身就是一篇漂亮的范文。在每一章的开篇，他均精心节选了一些知名作家、学者谈学术和写作的论述，从 William Shakespeare, Samuel Johnson, Ralph Waldo Emerson 到 Samuel Taylor Coleridge, 这些引言给人以非常深刻的启示。在“方法篇” (The approach) 的 10 个章节中，作者从学者为什么要写作谈起，认真讨论了在论文写作时怎样合理使用学术理论、拟定文章主题、怎样谋篇布局和克服写作中的心理障碍等等。在“技能篇” (The techniques) 的 11 个章节中，作者却从另一个角度对引文风格、引文技艺、文稿编辑、初稿处理、参考文献著录、语言学习及应用、论文发表等具体技能一一做了讨论。Watson 认为能写好文章不等于能写出合格的学术论文。在他看来，学术论文写作完全是一门不同的学科训练，不是学习者想怎么写就能怎么写的。学术论文写作有其严格的规范，需要严谨的行文、系统的文献处理、有理有据的论证和条理清晰的结构。*WRITING A THESIS* 在有限的篇幅中给了读者一个明晰的指南。作者编写本书的目的是指导文学、语言、史学的大学高年级本科生和研究生做课程论文、学年论文、毕业论文和学位论文，但这本指南对法学、经济学及其他社会科学和自然科学的学习者也非常

适用。对于对英文写作有兴趣的一般读者来说，这也是一本很有价值的参考书。

四川大学出版社首批出版的这几本论文写作指南虽然原不属于统一系列，但它们有一个共同特点——强调写作学习是能力和创新思维的培养，强调写作学习是在动手的过程中进行的。*WRITING MATTERS* 帮助读者提高文章和论文写作的能力，*HOW TO WRITE ESSAYS, DISSERTATIONS AND THESES IN LITERARY STUDIES* 训练读者掌握学术论文写作的规范，*WRITING A THESIS* 则在更高一个层次上帮助读者提高作为一个学者应该具备的素质和修养。相信这套“论文写作指导书系”会为我们的大学本科生和研究生、英语专业和非英语专业的学生、用英文进行科研和写作的学者和教师，以及爱好英语的读者带来非常实用的帮助。在这套书系的指导下，读者会发现用英文写作其实是一大乐趣。

石 坚

2003年3月 川大花园

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# *About the author*

Peter G. Beidler is the Lucy G. Moses Professor of English at Lehigh University. He has published widely on medieval literature , American literature , American Indian literature , and teaching. In 1983 he was named national Professor of the Year by the Council for Advancement and Support of Education in Washington , D.C. He spent the 1987 – 1988 academic year as a Fulbright professor at Sichuan University in Chengdu , China. In 1995 – 1996 he was a visiting professor at Baylor University in Waco , Texas.

**Request for suggestions.** *Writing Matters* is a collaborative effort that has gone through several drafts. In the event that there is a second edition , we request that you send your suggestions to the author so that they can be incorporated in such an edition. We would particularly like to know what features of the book you found useful , what features you found not-so-useful , and what features you would like to see added. Please indicate whether you are a teacher or a student and send your suggestions to :

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U. S. A.

# Preface

This little book is designed to help college students learn to write better essays. In its earliest draft it was a simple set of mimeographed guidelines for my first-year students who seemed to learn better by seeing my mini-lectures than by hearing them. Although many of my examples are drawn from courses in which students write about their own lives and their reactions to college life, the principles of good writing that I discuss will apply to almost any courses in which students are expected to write argumentative essays.

This book is designed to teach itself. Each chapter is not only a self-contained lesson on some feature of writing, but is also a model of the kind of writing that students are expected to do in college. It has an introduction, a thesis or central argument supported by evidence or examples, transitions, and a conclusion.

In addition to designing *Writing Matters* for use in courses that require systematic writing, I have also designed it with a view to the kind of writing that professional men and women will do after they leave college. Not only do I include an early chapter specifically on "Writing in the Professional World," but the principles of good writing that I emphasize throughout the book will apply to such writing: the need to see most writing tasks as an argument for a specific view, the need for concrete evidence in support of that view,

the need for clarity , and the need for an appropriate written “ voice. ” The brief final section on editing gives helpful hints that will prove useful for writers at all levels.

Some writing textbooks move from a discussion of sentences to a discussion of paragraphs and finally to a discussion of the whole essay. *Writing Matters* takes the opposite approach , beginning with the whole essay ( see , for example , Chapter 3 ). I have found that most students learn to write better if they are asked to write full essays right off. Doing so gives them an argumentative context within which to polish their individual sentences and paragraphs. The chapters , however , are designed to be independent units , and teachers can assign the various chapters in any order they find convenient for their own classrooms.

I am grateful to Macmillan Press and Pearson Education , Inc. , for releasing the copyright to the book to me , and to the many students and colleagues who have helped me to develop this approach to teaching writing , particularly Lucy Bednar , Rob Dornsife , Kathleen Mayberry , Susan Haytmanek , and James Wallace. I owe special thanks to my former Chinese student Shi Jian , now a teacher and administrator at Sichuan University , for his enthusiasm about this project and for putting me in touch with Luo Yi at Sichuan University Press , who helped in important ways to bring this book to other students in China. Others at the press who helped are Zhang Jing and the editing staff. I owe special thanks to my former student , my collaborator , and my friend Marion Frack Egge , who worked with me during the initial stages of production to make this book happen. Owner of a small publishing company called Publishing Plus , she helped to give *Writing Matters* its current shape.

# *To the student*

When I began my teaching career at Lehigh University I had no idea how to teach writing. I knew something about how to write, because I had, after all, majored in English and had written lots of papers. But how in the world would I teach writing? In my first decade or so of teaching writing I learned a few tricks that made me sound like a teacher of writing some of the time, but I was still mostly confused and mystified and full of questions about how to teach writing. Finally I decided to try to be somewhat more systematic in my questioning. I asked myself three questions: How do I write? How did I learn to write that way? How can I teach in such a way that others can learn as I did?

How do I write? Well, of course, that depends on what I am writing. In a letter to my daughter I write one way. In a letter to my insurance company I write another way. In a newspaper article... in a committee report... in a short story... in a poem... I decided that in answering my question about how I write I had to focus on argumentative writing, the kind of writing I had done as a college student. I read a few of my early papers and noticed certain common features. Each contained, for example, an introductory paragraph in which I stated my main idea. Each contained paragraphs in which I offered support for my main idea. Each contained transitional words

and phrases that showed the connections between my various supporting paragraphs. There was nothing great about any of those papers ,but in them I had found a way to express myself on subjects I had grown to care about. More important , I discovered that I still ,in most of my professional writing , write essays that have most of those same features.

Having described how I wrote ,I was ready for the question :How did I learn to write that way ?I really was not sure. Certainly ,I did not remember having been taught to write. I remember being taught something about dependent clauses in high school , but learning grammar is not learning writing. As for college ,I had skipped the writing courses Earlham College offered and took instead courses like “ Freshman Humanities ” and “ The Development of the Novel. ” My teachers sometimes criticized my writing and gave me suggestions , especially about the content of my papers ,but they spent little time actively teaching writing. I decided that I must have learned to write mostly by reading. I had always read for fun. It occurs to me now that perhaps I learned to write-through-reading in the same way that many students in other countries learn to speak-through-listening. I discovered that some of my best students the year I taught in China had learned to speak by listening to the Voice of America or to other English-language radio programs. They had trained their tongues by noticing how good speakers talked. I must , similarly , have trained my pen by noticing how good writers wrote.

Having discovered a bit about how I wrote and having developed some notions about how I had learned ,I was ready for the toughest question of all :How could I see that my students learned to write as I had learned to write ?It seemed impossible. My students ,after all , had been raised watching television ,not reading books. Still ,maybe I could find a textbook that would give my students helpful models of