

新世纪大学英语系列教材

“十二五”普通高等教育本科国家级规划教材

总主编 秦秀白

写作教程2

Writing as Communication

学生用书

主 编	刘海平			
副 主 编	丁言仁	徐青根		
分册主编	孙倚娜			
编 者	孙倚娜	高永晨	徐 萍	
	周明亚	金 琳		

上海外语教育出版社

图书在版编目(CIP)数据

写作教程(2)学生用书/刘海平主编. —2版. —上海: 上海外语教育出版社, 2014
(新世纪大学英语系列教材. 第二版)

ISBN 978-7-5446-3512-7

I. ①写… II. ①刘… III. ①英语—写作—高等学校—教材 IV. ①H315

中国版本图书馆CIP数据核字(2013)第278877号

顾 问：（按姓氏笔画顺序）

李观仪 胡文仲 桂诗春 蒋妙瑞 戴炜栋

总主编：秦秀白

编 委：（按姓氏笔画顺序）

马秋武（同济大学）	张勇先（中国人民大学）
王一普（南开大学）	张春柏（华东师范大学）
王守仁（南京大学）	李淑静（北京大学）
王俊菊（山东大学）	李霄翔（东南大学）
王海啸（南京大学）	束定芳（上海外国语大学）
石 坚（四川大学）	杨 跃（西安电子科技大学）
刘正光（湖南大学）	杨惠中（上海交通大学）
刘洵波（华南理工大学）	杨瑞英（西安交通大学）
刘海平（南京大学）	汪火焰（武汉大学）
向明友（北京航空航天大学）	季佩英（复旦大学）
孙倚娜（苏州大学）	金 艳（上海交通大学）
庄智象（上海外国语大学）	俞洪亮（扬州大学）
严 明（黑龙江大学）	洪 岗（浙江外国语学院）
何莲珍（浙江大学）	黄国文（中山大学）
余渭深（重庆大学）	黄源深（上海对外经贸大学）
张 森（河北科技大学）	黄震华（对外经济贸易大学）
张文霞（清华大学）	樊葳葳（华中科技大学）
张绍杰（东北师范大学）	

2004年1月,教育部颁布了《大学英语课程教学要求(试行)》,将大学英语的教学目标确定为“培养学生的英语综合应用能力,特别是听说能力,使他们在今后工作和社会交往中能用英语有效地进行口头和书面的信息交流,同时增强其自主学习能力,提高综合文化素养,以适应我国社会发展和国际交流的需要”;提出了分层次(即“一般要求”、“较高要求”和“更高要求”)和分类指导的教学要求。与此同时,教育部在全国180所院校开展多媒体网络教学的试点,推广具有个性化学习特征的多媒体网络教学系统,并于2005年2月颁布了《全国大学英语四、六级考试改革方案(试行)》,2007年7月又下发了修订后的《大学英语课程教学要求》(下称《课程要求》)。这些举措进一步推动了我国高校大学英语教学全方位的改革和教学质量的全面提升。新世纪的教学改革呼唤新的教材不断诞生。这既是时代的召唤,也是历史的必然。

正是在这样的时代背景下,上海外语教育出版社于2004年初组织全国数十所高校启动了“新世纪大学英语系列教材”建设项目。项目开始之初,外教社以书面问卷、个别访谈和集体座谈等形式在全国数十所高校中进行了广泛的调查研究,并请专家对编写方案进行了多次论证。在庄智象社长的直接领导和筹划下,经过三年多的努力,我们编写了这套“新世纪大学英语系列教材”,力图为新形势下的我国大学英语教材建设做出新的尝试和努力。本套教材是国内首套完全按照《课程要求》编写的新一代大学英语系列教材,也是外教社规模最大、内容最新、辅助教学配备最全、数字化网络化程度最高的大学英语教材之一。经教育部认定,这套教材被列入“普通高等教育‘十一五’国家级规划教材”;2012年,教材再次入选“‘十二五’普通高等教育本科国家级规划教材”。

“新世纪大学英语系列教材”包括6种教程,分别是《综合教程》、《视听说教程》、《阅读教程》、《写作教程》、《快速阅读》和“经贸类选修课教材”。《综合教程》和《视听说教程》被教育部认定为“2008年普通高等教育精品教材”;经贸类选修课程《职业规划与拓展》被教育部认定为“2009年普通高等教育精品教材”。2009年在由中国日报社《21世纪英语教育周刊》和21世纪英语网站联合举办的“60年60本英语教育图书”大型评选活动中,本系列教材成功入选。

《课程要求》充分体现了人本主义教育观;严格按照《课程要求》编写教材必能走出新路。因此,在编写“新世纪大学英语系列教材”的过程中,我们始终坚持人本主义教育观,把落实《课程要求》作为我们工作的主旨。在这方面,我们主要抓住以下几个环节:

1) 牢牢把握大学英语的课程定位,紧扣《课程要求》,即“大学英语课程不仅是一门语言基础课程”,“兼有工具性和人文性”。根据这样的定位,我们设计了6种教程,旨在满足不同类型和不同层次高校的教学需要。

2) 紧扣《课程要求》表述的大学英语教学目标,即“大学英语的教学目标是培养学生的英语综合应用能力,特别是听说能力,使他们在今后学习、工作和社会交往中

能用英语有效地进行交际，同时增强其自主学习能力，提高综合文化素养，以适应我国社会发展和国际交流的需要。”夯实语言基本功、提升学生综合运用英语的能力是本系列教材的根本宗旨，能让学生受益一辈子。

3) 体现教学模式改革，实现《课程要求》提出的两个根本性转变：一是实现“以教师为中心”向“以学生为中心”的转变；二是实现“单纯传授语言知识与技能的教学模式”向“既传授一般的语言知识与技能，更重视培养语言运用能力和自主学习能力的教学模式”的转变。这正是人本主义教育观的核心，也是本系列教材的核心理念。

4) 落实“分层次教学”和“分类指导”原则，系列教材的主干教程都编写了8册，还编写了选修课教程，既要满足大学生英语学习与实践的基本要求，又要让“那些英语起点水平较高、学有余力的学生能够达到较高要求或更高要求”。

5) 凸显自主学习和个性化学习理念，注重调动教师和学生两方面的积极性，体现学生在教学过程中的主体地位和教师在教学过程中的主导作用。

6) 配有网络课件和电子教案，外教社还建立了供全国高校使用的新理念外语网络教学系统，为学生和教师提供完整、多元、立体化的学习平台。

7) 人本主义教育观重视教学过程和学习过程的评估，尤其强调学生的自我评估。《课程要求》为形成性评估设计了参考词表、基于计算机和课堂的英语教学模式、英语能力自评/互评表等具体项目和指标，成为编写各主干教程的重要依据。

教材的生命力和质量源于不断及时的修订。为更好地满足各地区和各类型高校的教学需要，外教社于2012年启动了“新世纪大学英语系列教材”修订工作。在过去的几年，各教程编者深入教材使用单位，通过听课、座谈和访谈等不同方式，跟踪了解教材的使用情况，获取了大量反馈信息。外教社还在全国各地不同类型的高校中开展了问卷调查，广泛收集各教程使用单位的意见，为教材修订工作做了充分的准备。2013年8月，全国大学英语四、六级考试委员会公布了“大学英语四、六级考试题型调整”的方案，对听力、阅读、翻译和写作等题型均有涉及。此次修订工作主要针对《综合教程》、《视听说教程》、《阅读教程》、《写作教程》和《快速阅读》的1-4册，修订工作重点一是更新语料，优化教学内容；二是优化练习形式和内容，使其更好地适应教师课堂讲授和学生课后自主学习；三是在一定程度上反映四级考试的新变化。各教程的修订重点和主要内容如下：

- 《综合教程》用一些故事性较强的记叙文替换了说教色彩过浓的论说文。第一、二册各更换了5篇课文，第三、四册各更换了6篇课文。在练习设计方面，改变了原 Listen and Respond 的练习形式；将 Grammar Review 改为 Grammar in Context，使语法项目的复习与课文中出现的语言现象更加紧密地结合起来；在 Increasing Your Word Power 部分，加强了词语搭配练习。修订总量约占全书的40%。
- 《视听说教程》在推出的第三版中对单元结构进行了优化，对听力素材进行了增补和调整，充分体现“还课堂教学以本来面貌”、追求“教有实效、学有实效”的编写理念和视听说教学的宗旨。

- 《阅读教程》通过优化结构、调整练习项目、更新课文，既保持原有课文的人文特色，又凸显了题材的多样性和丰富性；既注重文章的经典性和普适性，又考虑到篇章的时代性和大众关注度；做到了教材的长效性和其当下的针对性的和谐统一，课文的趣味性也得以加强。
- 《写作教程》强调读写结合，以读促写。从句子到段落到文章，逐步提高学生英语写作能力。修订进一步更新素材，并增强练习的可操作性。
- 《快速阅读》大幅更换选文，并在3、4册练习设计中与四、六级考试新题型接轨。修订后的《快速阅读》根据阅读目的将阅读技巧的训练分为两大板块：“考试阅读题型与技巧”和“真实阅读策略与技巧”。前者围绕四、六级考试的常见文体、题型介绍阅读技巧；后者则是针对真实生活中获取信息这一目的讲述阅读技巧。这些举措大大加强了教材的实用性和有效性。

总之，教材建设必须以实现教学目标为己任；同时推动教学模式的改革和学习行为的转变。和外语界的众多前辈一样，我们在特定的历史条件下做了一件我们认为有意义的工作。我们培育的这棵新苗需要更多园丁的抚育和护理。我们期待着她的成长、壮大、开花、结果。

秦秀白

这套《写作教程》(*Writing as Communication*)是“新世纪大学英语系列教材”中配合《综合教程》主干教材、与《视听说教程》、《阅读教程》等其他教材配套的课程教材,旨在培养和加强学生的英语书面表达能力。

一、重视英语写作能力的提高

我们习惯用“听、说、读、写”分门别类地衡量一个人的语言或语文的基本能力。在外语学习的入门和初级阶段,强调“听说领先”是有必要的,总的说来也很有效,但随着学习的深入,尽管听说的训练仍需要经常进行,读和写会成为进一步提高英语水平最重要的途径。特别是写,如果缺乏基本的写作能力,在英美国家还不能算是摘掉了文盲的帽子,许多英语词典,如 Random House 出版的大学英语词典对“illiteracy”(文盲)下的定义便是“the lack of ability to read and write”。

最近曾有文章采用了许多美国数据,说明英文写作在当今社会的重要性:对100多位美国大企业人力资源部负责人的调查结果表明,写作能力差的人一般被录用的机会很少;即使被录用,也难以得到升迁。在企业界写作水平历来是个人成功的重要条件,也跟获得高层工作机会和高薪挂勾。三分之二大企业雇员的日常工作主要就是写材料。80%以上的金融、保险、房地产等服务业公司,在招聘人员时都要考写作。40%的公司对写作能力差的员工要开展特别培训,美国公司在这方面的投资估计每年达31亿美元之多……

又有文章说,在英语国家,写作对于攻读本科和研究生学位的人来说也同样重要,因为英语国家大学招收学生时,一项重要的考核就是看你入学申请中的陈述文章写得如何。入学后,即使在理工科实验室工作,教授也十分看重你写科研总结和报告的能力,看你的写作是否用词得当,语句通顺,简洁明了,逻辑性强。文科学生的写作要求自然会更高些。

即使不去外企工作,不去国外念书,掌握英语写作能力仍然十分重要。因为从本质上说,大学教育是要提升人的内在素质和培养人与社会和环境的适应及互动能力。外语学习是整个大学教育中的一个有机部分,人们在掌握本国语言和文化的基础上,通过外语的“视”、“听”、“读”,了解外国人民和文化,取长补短;通过“说”与“写”与之交流自己的思想、感情,介绍我国的文化。

大家都会有这样的体会:写作能凝炼我们的思想,帮助我们正确把握对事物或个人的感受,正如英国著名哲学家和散文家培根所说:“阅读使人充实,交谈使人机智,写作使人精确”(Reading makes a full man, conference a ready man, and writing an exact man)。美国学者沃尔特·翁(Walter J. Ong)曾说过,“写”改变了人类的思想。从口头文化到书面文化的转变,使得作为一个物种的人类的思维方式,产生了深刻而又永恒的变化。对翁的这一观点,学术界也许尚有争议,但日常工作中写作的作用是显而易见的。开会发言准备了发言稿往往可以使我们的发言更加清晰,更有逻辑性。“写”不仅使我们“说”得更好,也使我们的“听”和“读”更加有效,更容易抓住中心思想和内容的细微之处。

英美国家的大学一般都要求教授(不管教什么专业)重视对学生写作能力的培养,要对学生所学的每门课的阅读和写作提出要求;无论在学生总数只有六七百人的小型文理学院(liberal arts college),还是在哈佛这样学生总数接近两万的大学里,学生都是人手一本写作手册,从标点到句法,从用词到行文结构、注释规范等等,一概说得清清楚楚,足见其对英语写作的重视。

当然对写作的重视不仅在西方,我国也早有传统。在科举时代录用官员看的主要就是一篇命题作文。当今全球化信息化时代,不论你在校学习,还是在职场奋斗,写作依然是衡量人员素质的一个重要标准,因为不管时代如何千变万化,任何人都难以远离与人交流的环境和需要。

这也是为什么在许多国家,无论走到哪里人家都要考你的写作能力。学生从小就被告知,不管干什么,写作是事业的基石。我们的《写作教程》就是要培养我国大学生这样的写作意识,使他们对提高自己的英文写作有兴趣,有信心,并能脚踏实地,实现自己的目标。

二、编写《写作教程》的指导思想

教材的英文名取为“Writing as Communication”,这是因为作为教材编写者,我们希望教材的使用者,包括教师和学生,都把英文写作看作是一项与他人(有时也是跟自己)交流与沟通的活动,真正感到“有话要说”,有思想要表达,而不是为完成老师布置的作业而写。在写作课上,交流与沟通的对象不应该仅仅是老师,也应该包括同学。有话要告诉同学、说服同学才会有思想活动,有思想活动才会写出有质量的作文。在面对面的口头交际中,说话人可以不断根据听话人的反应和提问来调整自己对说话内容的组织和表达方式。与口头交际不同,写作时作者看不到也听不到读者的反应,只能在脑海里设想读者可能的各种反应和疑问,并据此来调整自己对内容的组织和表达方式,所以,写作不仅仅是承载交流的工具,它本身也是具有思想、情感和文化内涵的交流。

除了强调交流和沟通,我们还努力尊重英语写作教学的基本规律,吸纳国内外写作教材的成功经验,突出写作练习的目的性、实用性和适用性;理论结合实际,技巧融于实践,帮助学生稳步掌握为交流而写作的方法和技巧,切实全面地提高他们的写作能力。在英语的各项基本技能中,写作应该说比较难以掌握,但只要学习者用心投入,遵循一定的学习规律,反复实践,是完全可以学好的,成功的例子不胜枚举。《写作教程》的编写旨在努力帮助学生培养英语写作的兴趣,树立信心,同时也帮助他们踏踏实实地打好英语写作的各项基本功。

三、《写作教程》的特点

教育部2004年颁布的《大学英语课程教学要求(试行)》和2007年正式颁布的《大学英语课程教学要求》对英语写作课程提出了具体要求。《写作教程》力争体现分级指导、逐层提高的原则,编写时既注重教材分册间的纵向编写层次,循序渐进,由浅及深,使全套写作教材浑然一体,独具一格,又注重与丛书系列的横向联系,相辅相成,相得益彰。具体的有以下几个特点:

1. 各单元在范文选择、练习内容设置上, 尽量注意适应在校学生不同学习阶段的学习和生活特点, 使之既能引起学生的兴趣, 又符合他们实际交流的需要。

2. 每单元在理论和实践之间设计形式多样的练习作桥梁, 切实提高学生的英语思辨能力和表达能力。

3. 针对普遍存在的中式英文, 提供自我诊断和纠正练习, 适当地帮助学生从英汉用词和作文的对比的角度来分析错误原因。必要时就学生习作进行案例分析, 尽可能提供比照的范文段落, 使教材贴近中国学生的学习实际, 有的放矢。

4. 结构设计体现“过程写作”的原则, 活动设计有助于教师监督和参与学生的写作过程, 鼓励学生之间的写作交流和互助修订。

5. 突出教学互动。学生用书从学生认知规律出发, 设计了许多调动学生积极性的课堂活动; 教师用书详细提供每一任务的实施步骤和方法, 帮助教师有效利用课堂时间, 开展活动, 实现教学目标。教师用书还提供足量参考素材, 供教师自由取舍、因材施教。

四、关于《写作教程》的修订

《写作教程》从开始编写就注意在总体安排提高学生英语写作基础能力同时, 关注写作范文和练习设计在内容上的时代性和适用性。多年来课堂使用的实践证实了这套教材在编写理念上这方面的优势。然而, 当今大学生活和社会的变化可说日新月异, 这套已使用多年的英语写作教材, 也渐渐显露出更新修订的必要, 以保持贴近现实生活的特色。

《写作教程》编写小组经过多次讨论研究和广泛听取教师和学生使用者的意见, 确定围绕以下两方面进行修订与更新:

1. 语料更新

我们对其中内容已明显滞后于社会生活快速变化的文章, 如“Do My Parents Love Each Other?”、“Sorry, But What Is MP3?”、“The Tuition Fee, Isn't It Too Expensive?”等进行了调整, 分别以更贴近当今社会生活、更能引起同学老师兴趣的文章“Doing the DINK”、“Boomerang”和“Study Abroad”加以替代, 并围绕这些新课文内容编写新的扩展项目。

2. 细查全书

进一步强化原教材中取得显著教学效果的一些设计特色, 如: 为提高学生英语思辨和表达能力而设计的基础理论和练习实践的衔接; 为提高教材的实用性和适用性, 课文和练习的选材编写上突出跟大学生活和学生人格培养的结合; 针对中式英文, 提供自我诊断和纠正练习; 结构设计上体现“过程写作”的原则; 突出教学互动等。同时我们也对单元中的内容作了一些局部修改, 如更换图片或说明等。

编者诚恳希望, 这次修订努力能使这套英语写作教材更强化原有的设计优点, 与时俱进, 更好体现时代性和实用性, 更有利于调动学生学习英文写作的兴趣, 增加教师在课堂教学中使用教材的乐趣。教材编写疏漏之处在所难免, 我们衷心希望使用这套教材的广大师生对我们及时批评指正。

编 者

人类的知识可以分为叙述性(declarative)和程序性(procedural)两大类,它们的学习方法不尽相同。写作能力主要是属于后一类知识。学习写作就好像是学习游泳一样,教练讲起怎样学蛙泳、自由泳可以讲上好几节课,但是这仅仅是叙述性知识,即使你都背熟了,如果你不下水去游,还是学不会。学习英语写作也同样如此。要想写得好,只有多写多练,长期地写,长期地练,否则无论什么教科书也无济于事。这里,我们有几点经验,可供你们参考。

第一,在写作文时我们要努力表达我们自己的思想和感受。同中文写作一样,英语写作的目的是把我们自己的想法表达清楚,跟读者进行交流沟通。写作学习中范文有重要的作用,但思想的表达更为重要,因而不要迷信范文,不要去套范文。范文之所以重要是因为它们体现了各种常用的、行之有效的修辞形式,但掌握这些修辞形式的目的全在于应用。假如你去采访一些有经验的作家或者记者,他们会告诉你,他们在写作的时候经常是根本想不到那些书本上介绍的修辞形式和规则,而是全身心地扑在他们所要表达的内容上。交际的内容永远高于表达的形式,英文写作同此道理,有了思想内容才谈得上表达的方式。

正因为内容如此之重要,我们希望同学们也能参与写作的教学。对于课本里大家感受深、有话说的练习和讨论,我们可以建议老师多花点时间,多写几稿,多交流一点,而对那些没有多少感受、没有多少话说的,可以建议少花时间甚至不花时间。例如,课本的第一、二、三册都讲到了连接词(conjunctives)的用法,对有的同学来说,这也许是必要的,但如果大家对连接词的使用都已经基本掌握了,就可以建议老师不要再重复了。有的时候,一部分同学对某一个练习有兴趣,而另一部分同学对另一个练习有兴趣,则可以建议老师组织小组活动,让人人发展自己的兴趣和特长,写出有充实内容的作文来。

第二,为了使作文有充实的思想内容,我们要深入开掘写作的题目,反复修改自己思想的组织和表达的语言。下笔之前要对题目进行充分的讨论和思考,真正对自己所要说的话有了“感觉”再动笔。没有感觉的套话、空话,甚至假话,最好是一句也不要说。没有感受的话题往往流于空泛,不容易写好。例如, Mobile phones should be banned from schools 是一个很大的题目,也许难以写好,但 Text messaging is polluting the Chinese language 却非常具体,切口很小,可以找到很多让人信服的例子。值得指出的是,主题的开掘和深化是一个需要反复修改、讨论、思考的过程,一篇好的文章的完成稿经常会与它的初稿大相径庭。因此,我们不要害怕把自己的作文改得面目全非,甚至也不要害怕推倒重来,英文里说的 There is no good writing, only good rewriting 就是这个道理。

第三,为了要修改好自己的作文,我们要重视读者的意见,特别是班上、同组、邻座同学的意见。作为写作文的人,我们先有思想再有语言,我们知道自己想要表达什么意思,因而往往看不到草稿里哪些话说清楚了,哪些话没有说清,哪里的语言有问

题。相反，不了解我们意思的同学在读我们的草稿时是先看懂我们的语言，再归纳出我们所要表达的思想，因而即使是写作能力不如我们的同学也往往一读我们的初稿就能发现哪些地方他们读不懂，看到我们文字上的问题，指出我们表达不清的地方。所以说同学之间相互帮助十分有效，即使有的时候大家对文字应该如何修改看法不一也不要紧，这样的讨论至少可以使我们关注那些不一致的语言点，有助于我们下一步的学习。英美国家学校里把这种同学间相互修改作文、共同讨论的做法叫做 peer editing，在课堂上经常采用。老师的批改极为重要，但我们走上工作岗位的时候不可能带上我们的老师。相反，工作岗位上经常发生的是同事之间相互帮助，做一点 peer editing。更为重要的是，经常做 peer editing，从修改别人作文的实践中，我们可以逐步学会修改自己的作文，提高自己的英语文字水平和编辑能力。

第四，为了提高自己的英语文字能力，我们要作出长期不懈的努力，在任何使用英语的过程中都要做英语学习的“有心人”。英语写作有其自身的要求和规律，但它同时也体现了听、说、读、译等其他各项技能的综合能力。很多在中国学习的留学生可以写出基本合乎语法的中文句子，但这些句子我们看起来却很吃力或者根本看不懂；他们用的不是我们平常使用的语句。我们的英语学习也是这样的情况。英语写作不是简单地用语法和词汇来造句，而是“借用”英语本族语者的语言表达我们自己的意思，因此要提高文字水平就要靠我们在平时阅读中和口语交际中多留意本族语者怎样使用语言。有的同学满足于读得懂、听得懂，而实际上读懂意思、听懂意思仅仅是语言学习的起步，懂了以后还要关注语言的使用。不仅要关注单词的使用，而且要关注词与词之间的搭配和表达的方式。譬如说，读了一句 Nothing can be compared with the importance of family，有的同学觉得这里没有什么生词也没有什么难懂的，就让它过去了，但是学习的“有心人”却能注意到 nothing can be compared with ... 的用法，甚至会把整个句子记下来，以后自己用。语言学习就是这样一个长期努力、一点一滴积累的过程，没有什么捷径可走。因此我们不要被速成英语补习班之类的广告所误导，即使是专家们所谓的英语学习策略也只有在自己付出艰苦的劳动以后才能奏效，不能指望不经过努力，几个月之内甚至几天之内就会出现什么奇迹。

写作学习，贵在勤奋，贵在坚持。祝同学们成功！

编 者

CONTENTS

Part 1 Descriptive Writing 1

Unit 1 Unforgettable People 2
Writing strategy: Description of people

Unit 2 Unique Places 17
Writing strategy: Description of places

Unit 3 Sharing Our Feelings 31
Writing strategy: Description of feelings

Part 2 Narrative Writing 45

Unit 4 Exploring the Meaning of Life 46
Writing strategy: Narration

Part 3 Expository Writing 59

Unit 5 College Life 60
Writing strategy: Development by example

Unit 6 Sharing Our Interpretations 71
Writing strategy: Development by definition

Unit 7 Where to Live 81
Writing strategy: Development by comparison and contrast

Unit 8 Teaching and Learning 97
Writing strategy: Development by division and classification

Unit 9 Improving Your Habits 111
Writing strategy: Development by process analysis

Unit 10 Meeting Challenges 124
Writing strategy: Development by causal analysis

Part 4	Argumentative Writing	135
Unit 11	Issues in Education (I)	136
	Writing strategy: Having a debatable point	
Unit 12	Issues in Education (II)	151
	Writing strategy: Organizing an argumentative essay	
Part 5	Special Writing Assignments	165
Unit 13	Culture Shock	166
	Writing strategy: Using multiple strategies	
Unit 14	Keeping in Touch	181
	Writing strategy: Writing letters	
Unit 15	Facts Speak Louder	191
	Writing strategy: Using tables and figures	
Appendix	Tips About Writing Under Pressure	204

Part 1

Descriptive Writing

The descriptive essay presents a word-picture of persons, places, objects, and emotions. The writer uses a careful selection of specific and concrete details to make a clear dominant impression on the reader. A descriptive essay can be objective or subjective and the writer's purpose is to involve the reader enough so that s/he can visualize the people or things being described. The best description appeals to the five senses: sight, sound, touch, smell, and taste. As you work on your own descriptive essay, the thing to remember is: show, rather than tell.



Writing strategy: Description of people

Principles

In this unit, we look at **descriptive essays about people**. Description of people may focus on various aspects of the people described — their physical appearance and style of clothing, their character and personality, their interests and behavior. What you select to describe depends on your topic and purpose.

- **Describe clearly.** You should include sufficient specific details so that the reader can easily form a precise mental picture of the person being described. (See Sample A)
- **Select only appropriate details.** When describing a person, you don't have to describe every single detail about the person. You should select only those details that present a dominant impression. Sometimes you could just focus on one or two outstanding features that convey something about the person's personality or character. (See Sample B)
- **Make your description vivid.** (See Sample C)

TASK 1 Read to learn about writing

Sample A

Remember that you can't give good description without being specific. The following is a typical example of the descriptive essay, in which the writer uses specific details to create a portrait of his father who has affected his life greatly.

“Terrific Work”

by Lou Dobbs

1 [I grew up in Childress, Texas, a town of nearly 8,000, where Dad had a farm-machinery business. I hauled hay, picked potatoes and did other chores, but my father always insisted that schoolwork come first.]¹

2 [He may not have had much formal education — Dad left school in the eighth grade — but he possessed a world of knowledge. He was a voracious (热切的) reader who was smarter about current affairs than anyone I knew. At the dinner table he pushed me to think and to defend my opinions. These discussions sparked in me an intense curiosity about the world and taught me the importance of attaining the best education I could.]²

3 [It also helped that Dad believed praise was a more powerful motivator than criticism. When I brought home a good report card, he would say, “Terrific work!” and that was enough to inspire me to bring home an even better one next time. This approach proved successful, and when it came time for me to go to college, I was lucky enough to be accepted by Harvard.]³

4 [Honesty was supremely important to Dad. He stressed that an honest life is an honorable life. I always remember him telling me, “Say what you mean and mean what you say.”]⁴

5 [My father has been gone 30 years now, but he still lives on in me and my children. I tried to raise them as he raised me, and I have wished countless times that he could see us now.]⁵

1. Introduction

2. The first aspect of Dad's character and personality

3. The second aspect of Dad's character and personality

4. The third aspect of Dad's character and personality

5. Conclusion

Questions on content and structure

1. From the introductory paragraph, what can we learn about the writer's father?
2. What detail is presented by the writer in the second paragraph to show his father's influence on his interest in the world and his idea about the importance of education?
3. What detail is presented by the writer in the third paragraph to show his father's approach to motivating him and how this approach affected him?
4. What quote does the writer use in the fourth paragraph to show that his father was a person who believed in honesty?
5. How does the writer convey his special feeling for his father in the last paragraph?
6. Is this essay a subjective descriptive essay or an objective descriptive essay?

Sample B

Read the essay below and notice how the writer uses appropriate details to present an unforgettable professor to the readers.

My Favorite Professor

1 In my more ambitious academic days, I was majoring in both mathematics and journalism. I was not a typical math major; my classes did not come easily to me despite my professors' most brave efforts. While my peers tended to tackle their homework without too much sweat, I struggled to keep pace. Dr. Rudy Horne taught my differential equations (微分方程) course, which dealt with material I considered quite challenging.

2 I still remember the first day of class. Dr. Horne had the rare ability to make difficult maths seem simple. Of course, I still failed to keep up, so I attended his open office hours every week to catch up on material that I could not digest in class. Dr. Horne's office hours were his strongest point. At first, I was concerned that he would not be pleased with how much extra help I was seeking. I was worried for no reason. Not only would he go through any homework problem with which I struggled, but he made sure I knew that he wanted me to be there. After the work on differential equations

was finished, we would sit and chat about Carolina sports, the dynamics of the classroom and even his friend's upcoming wedding. Needless to say, Dr. Horne became a friend in that mathematical part of my life where I needed the most support.

3 I had a difficult time telling certain people about my decision to focus solely on journalism. Months after my decision, I still had not told Dr. Horne. I did not want to disappoint him since he had spent so much of his time helping me. I eventually ran into him at a movie theater on Franklin Street. We went out for coffee after the film to catch up with each other. When I told him about my decision and the reasons behind it, he could not have been more supportive. I realized then that even though he was an experienced mathematician who had been dragged into my mathematical struggles, he really wanted what was best for me. That, to me, is the definition of a friend.

Questions on content and structure

1. What is the first example given by the writer about Professor Horne?
2. What is the second detail presented to show Professor Horne's patience with the student?
3. What is the vivid detail offered to describe how Professor Horne shared fun with his student?
4. What is the detail presented to show Professor Horne's understanding for his student?
5. What does the writer conclude about Professor Horne?

Sample

To write a good descriptive essay about people, you should try to make your description lively. The following is an essay written by Katharine Brush, first published on March 16, 1946, in *The New Yorker*. As you read it, note how the writer vividly portrays the couple who failed to communicate well with each other. Discuss the questions after the essay.

Birthday Party

by Katharine Brush

1 They were a couple in their late thirties, and they looked unmistakably married. They sat on the banquette opposite us in a little narrow restaurant, having dinner. The man had a round, self-satisfied face, with glasses on it; the woman was fadingly pretty, in a big hat. There was nothing conspicuous about them, nothing particularly noticeable, until the end of their meal, when it suddenly became obvious that this was an Occasion — in fact, the husband’s birthday, and the wife had planned a little surprise for him.

2 It arrived, in the form of a small but glossy birthday cake, with one pink candle burning in the center. The headwaiter brought it in and placed it before the husband, and meanwhile the violin-and-piano orchestra played “Happy Birthday to You” and the wife beamed with shy pride over her little surprise, and such few people as there were in the restaurant tried to help out with a pattering of applause. It became clear at once that help was needed, because the husband was not pleased. Instead he was hotly embarrassed, and indignant at his wife for embarrassing him.

3 You looked at him and you saw this and you thought, “Oh, now, don’t be like that!” But he was like that, and as soon as the little cake had been deposited on the table, and the orchestra had finished the birthday piece, and the general attention had shifted from the man and the woman, I saw him say something to her under his breath — some punishing thing, quick and curt and unkind. I couldn’t bear to look at the woman then, so I stared at my plate and waited for quite a long time. Not long enough, though. She was still crying when I finally glanced over there again. Crying quietly and heartbrokenly and hopelessly, all to herself, under the gay big brim of her best hat.

Questions on content and structure

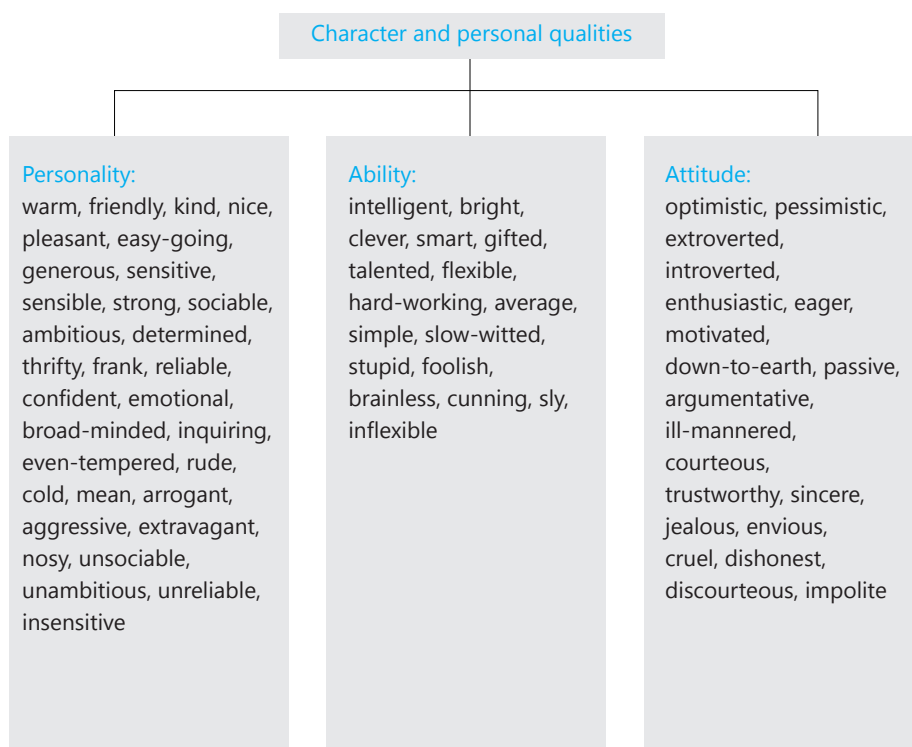
1. What does the essay reveal about the husband? And about the wife?
2. How does the writer create a striking image of the birthday cake delivered to their table?
3. Why was the husband embarrassed? How did he show his embarrassment? Can you understand how he felt? Why, then, do we find it hard to sympathize with him?

4. Do you think the writer uses the quote “Oh, now, don’t be like that!” to convey her attitude toward the two characters described?
5. Why does the writer present the detail “I saw him say something to her under his breath — some punishing thing, quick and curt and unkind”?
6. Why does the writer give the description “She was still crying when I finally glanced over there again. Crying quietly and heartbrokenly and hopelessly, all to herself, under the gay big brim of her best hat”?

TASK 2 Enlarge your vocabulary

A

Vocabulary is a crucial factor in producing convincing description of people. The following is a brainstorming map which could help you enlarge your vocabulary on various aspects of description of people.



B

The table below lists words that are often used to describe people's appearance. Look at the words and select those that you can appropriately use when you describe someone in your class in a small-group activity.

general	good-looking, beautiful, elegant, handsome, untidy-looking, unattractive
height and build	tall, tallish, short, average, medium height, slim, stout, overweight
hair	black, blond, brown red, light brown, dark brown, shiny, dyed, straight, wavy, curly, bald, red-haired
face	attractive, plain, ugly, round, square, long, oval, thin-faced, round-faced
eyes	big, small, round, black, brown, blue, grey, bright, shining
skin	fair, brown, dark, light, black, tanned, red, clear, smooth, rough

C

Here are some selections from books that include description of people. Read them and pick out the phrases that describe the appearance and character of people.

I have to admit that what I initially found attractive in Ted were precisely the things that made him different from my brothers and the Chinese boys I had dated: his brashness; the assuredness in which he asked for things and expected to get them; his opinionated manner; his angular face and lanky body; the thickness of his arms; the fact that his parents immigrated from Tarrytown, New York, not Tientsin, China.

* * * *

Johanna Branson, a tall dancer from Lawrence, Kansas, became an art history major and shared with me her love of paintings and film.

Jinnet Fowles, from Connecticut and another art history student, posed hard-to-answer questions about what I thought could really be accomplished through student action.

Jan Krigbaum, a free spirit from California, brought unflagging enthusiasm to every venture and helped establish a Latin American student exchange program.

Connie Hoenk, a long-haired blonde from South Bend, Indiana, was a practical, down-to-earth girl whose opinions frequently reflected our common Mid-western roots.

Suzy Salomon, a smart, hardworking girl from another Chicago suburb who laughed often and easily, was always ready to help anyone.

D

The paragraph below is taken from Joel Stein's article "The Me Me Me Generation". Choose one of the words listed below to fill in each blank in the paragraph, changing the form where necessary.

pragmatic | record | optimistic | fear | obsess | identify | approval | credit | material |
passionate | inactive | financially | previous | leader

So here's a more rounded picture of millennials than the one I started with. All of which I also have data for. They're earnest and (1) They embrace the system. They are (2) idealists, tinkerers more than dreamers, life hackers. Their world is so flat that they have no (3), which is why revolutions from Occupy Wall Street to Tahrir Square have even less chance than previous rebellions. They want constant (4) — they post photos from the dressing room as they try on clothes. They have massive (5) of missing out and have an acronym for everything (including FOMO). They're celebrity (6) but don't respectfully idolize celebrities from a distance. They're not into going to church, even though they believe in God, because they don't (7) with big institutions; one-third of adults under 30, the highest percentage ever, are religiously unaffiliated. They want new experiences, which are more important to them than (8) goods. They are cool and reserved and not all that (9) They are informed but (10): they hate Joseph Kony but aren't going to do anything about Joseph Kony. They are probusiness. They're (11) responsible; although student loans have hit (12) highs, they have less household and credit-card debt than any (13) generation on record — which, admittedly, isn't that hard when you're living at home and using your parents' (14) card. They love their phones but hate talking on them.

TASK 3 Write your own essay

The descriptive essay is often creative, personal, or artistic. When choosing someone to write about, it should be a person to whom you have strong emotional ties (positive or negative). Close your eyes and visualize the person in detail. Your ultimate goal in this task is to show his or her personality and character, not merely an image of what the person looks like. Look at the following topics and select one that you find inspirational. Adapt or narrow your topic to serve your purpose, and write a descriptive essay. You can also read the suggestions below and do the group work.

1. A different kind of mother/father
2. An unusual but wonderful relative
3. How my cousin changed
4. A remarkable neighbor
5. My favorite teacher
6. The person who has influenced me most
7. My idol
8. A self-disciplined roommate
9. My ambitious classmate
10. A computer game addict



Suggestions for group work

In your group, take turns to read aloud your finished descriptive essay about a person and ask other group members to give their impression of the person you have described in your essay.

TASK 4 Learn to revise your essay

Rewriting is one of the most satisfying and significant parts of the writing process. It offers you an opportunity for discovery. You can search for ways to improve your writing, identify problems and work out solutions. The following is a sample student essay. Read it, and try to revise it.

Sample student essay

Thanks, Mama

by Ma Wei

1 Clearly, I remember that night of the day — November 4, 1994, I was woken up by the noise of cry. It was on that night that all of your life changed. One of the members of our family went away, and forever he went. Only you, my elder sister and I were left.

2 The next day, you were still crying all the time without saying any word and having little strength even to support yourself to stand up. To a countrywoman not knowing a word and having no job, I know, it was the most heart-rending incident.

3 However, to everyone's surprise, you concealed your tears from then on. And you never wept again, at least in front of us, your children. Some people said you had wept too much and now had no tears any more. Actually it was not the fact. I know you were teaching my sister and me to face the facts through your actual behavior and set an example for us firstly, for the left days were long. We had to live and Dad once said he hoped we could live in happiness.

4 Soon, you started to seek a job. At that time, I was studying in a primary school while my sister was in a junior high school. We needed money and the next years we would spend much more money. However, as everyone knows, to a countrywoman as you without any specialty, how difficult it was to find a job. At last you worked as a

builder carrying bricks and concrete. That job was so dirty and weary. Generally, even some countrymen would not like to do such a task, tiring and not profitable, but you took it. For four years, you did that weary job. During that period, every morning you never got up later than five o'clock. At noon, you were allowed one hour for a lunch break. However you had to spend fifty minutes in hurrying home. The left ten minutes was used to have a meal and rest. You were so frugal as not to buy anything to eat nearby but go a long way home to eat. Things were the same for the whole four years.

5 At last, your body could not bear the heavy load of work, with your back hurt and no longer able to carry heavy things. At that time, I was studying in a junior high school, my sister in a technical secondary school. Both of us had to spend much money every year. To let us go on studying, you decided to sell vegetables at the terminal market of the town which was outdoors. In summer, generally, it was above forty centigrade and six below zero in winter. Both of your hands became rough with cracks.

6 It is eleven years since 1994. Within those years, you almost have no new clothes and haven't had a sufficient sleep. Who can feel the hardships you have undergone? No one.

7 Thanks, mama. Thank you for all of what you have suffered from. Though you are not a famous person and have not done anything influential, I am very proud of having you as my mother. You make me live in reality and self-confidence.

8 Thanks, mama.

Revised version

Thanks, Mama

1 Clearly, I remember that night — November 4, 1994 — when I was woken up by the sound of crying. It was on that night that all of your life changed. One of the members of our family suddenly departed, and he was gone forever. Only you, my elder sister and I were left.

2 The next day, you were still crying all the time without saying a word, and you had little strength to support yourself to stand up. To a countrywoman unable to read and write and having no job, I know, it was the most heart-rending disaster.

3 However, to everyone's surprise, you concealed your tears from then on. You never wept again, at least not in front of us, your children. Some people said you had wept too much and now had no tears any more. Actually, this was not the case. I know you were teaching my sister and me to face reality through your behavior and set an example for us firstly, because the remaining days were long. We had to go on with our life and Dad once said he hoped we could live in happiness.

4 Soon, you started to seek a job. At that time, I was in primary school while my sister was in junior high. We needed money and in the coming years we would spend much more. However, as everyone knows, to a countrywoman like you without any special skills, how difficult it was to find a job. At last you took a job carrying bricks and concrete on a construction site. That job was so dirty and tiring. Generally, even some countrymen would not like to do such work, tiring and not profitable, but you took it. For four years, you did that exhausting job. During that period, every morning you never got up later than five o'clock. At noon, you were allowed one hour for a lunch break. In order to spend less money on your own lunch, you chose to walk home for some simple and cheap food and this walking cost you 50 minutes each noon with hardly any time left for rest. Things were the same for the whole four years.

5 At last, your back could not bear the heavy load of work, and you were no longer able to carry heavy things. At that time, I was studying in a junior high school, my sister in a technical secondary school. Both of us had to spend much money every year. To support us to go on with our education, you decided to sell vegetables at the market of the town, which was outdoors. In summer, usually, it was above forty degrees centigrade and in winter, six below zero. Both of your hands became rough with cracks.

6 It has been eleven years since 1994. For those years, you have almost had no new clothes and had no sufficient sleep. Who can feel the hardships you have gone through? No one.

7 Thanks, mama. Thank you for all your hard work. Though you are not a famous person and have not done anything influential, I am very proud of having you as my mother. You have taught me how to face reality with confidence.

8 Thanks, mama.

TASK 5 Additional reading

Eulogy for Grandfather

1 When I was little, if you couldn't find me, I could be anywhere — up a tree, under the covers, in the closet, even hiding in the bathroom where I couldn't be disturbed ... but almost always with a book. Friends even through college would ask how it was that I gobbled up (狼吞虎咽) words like peanut butter. Usually, I would just shrug and say, "I have no idea where it came from!" Thinking back, though, it's so obvious — how could I miss it?

2 My GungGung took such an amazing interest in books that one of my lasting childhood memories is him sitting in that armchair in the corner of the Ross Road house, under a pool of lamplight, poring over some biography of a thousand pages. My mom and two uncles used to joke that if an earthquake or fire hit Palo Alto, my grandfather would never notice, because he would be so wrapped up in his reading. I used to think, wandering around that Ross Road living room and looking at the shelves overflowing with books, that hopefully some day I would be able to cook like my grandmother and read thousand-page books like my grandfather.

3 I also secretly thought that GungGung must be bursting with words, because so many went in ... but so few came back out. At least when I knew him, he was not a man of many spoken words. On occasion, an old friend would stop by, and then I would be astounded by their animated back-and-forth. Usually, though, my grandfather was very quiet. I heard amazing stories of his studies in Paris, his political involvement in the Young China Party, and his years at the United Nations, but never from him. He never boasted, and I would never know these stories if it weren't for my mom and two uncles, who were so proud of their dad.

4 So much of what I know of my grandfather is pieced together from these stories that have trickled down from relatives and friends, and PoPo's photographs that I love to look at. In those, I see a wholly different GungGung — someone who wasn't a GungGung yet, someone laughing tremendously with friends on a beach in Paris (wearing a very fashionable 1920's bathing suit!), someone who, as my mom was fond of saying, looked like a Hollywood movie star, someone striking a debonair pose in my grandmother's garden with a guitar. Then there are wonderful pictures of GungGung with his family, with so much love shining in his eyes for

my PoPo, or countless ones of GungGung giving away yet another bride, perhaps in another wedding match made by PoPo. In each of these, you can see GungGung beaming just as happily and proudly as if he were giving away his own daughter in marriage all over again. I am happy to know that besides being a great scholar and passionate player in Chinese politics, my grandfather knew how to have fun!

5 So, despite my grandfather's amazing connection to words and books, the ways I will remember him are mostly nonverbal. When you hear that phrase "actions speak louder than words," that's something I truly take to heart regarding the kind of example GungGung set for the rest of us. I will remember GungGung by all these little things — for example, the way my grandfather could really dress, often in what I thought were very dashing three-piece suits, almost always set off with a sharp red tie. In comparison, my mom was always telling me something that GungGung used to tell her when she was little: "Don't look like a tou-bowzel!" (It's something I'm still working on, honestly.) That was the care he took with all aspects of his life.

6 I'll remember how the doorbells would jangle (发出丁零当啷声) insistently, and there would be GungGung, having run briskly over from their Ross Road house a few blocks away with some delicious meal that PoPo had just cooked — and then without much of a word, he would turn around and run right back, often before we had the chance to give him a ride! That was the generosity he and PoPo both shared with us.

7 I'll remember when Emily, then Marissa, and then Byron grew up, how GungGung, pretty deaf by now and very very silent, would spontaneously burst into clapping and chanting to either entertain or praise the kids. That was the pride and delight he had in all his grandchildren.

8 And what I will remember most of all is how in his last year, when he was very weak and confined to his wheelchair or bed, he always held out his hand to grasp yours tightly the moment you walked in the door. And what a grip! I saw him reach out like this to my Uncle Peter, to my Uncle Jimmy, to my mom — that was his love for his three children, who were often by his side. And for my PoPo — for her, he had a special two-handed grip. There was a time when they hadn't seen each other for a while, and my Uncle Jimmy wheeled in GungGung, and my mom and I had brought PoPo — as soon as GungGung and PoPo saw each other, across a wide, wide room, they both reached out to each other, instantly. GungGung once told PoPo that no matter where he was physically, even if they weren't living in the same place, his home was in her heart. That was their tremendous love for each other, which they shared for over 70 years.

9 All these little things that amounted to so much, and that influenced all of us growing up in GungGung's embrace. I know I speak for all the grandchildren when I say that GungGung was a wonderful inspiration, for his passion, his intellect, and most of all, his love. GungGung, we miss you so much, but we know you'll always have a home in all of our hearts as well.

Questions on content and structure

1. What was the grandfather's favorite hobby according to the author's childhood memory?

.....

.....

2. How did the author get to know the stories about his grandfather's early life?

.....

.....

3. Did the grandfather care about his appearances and dresses?

.....

.....

4. What could the author tell from the way the grandfather met family members in the last year of his life?

.....

.....