

Teaching and Grading Descriptive Writing (I)

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Introduction

Describing is one of the significant abilities that writers have to master. Describing people and objects involves logical but delicate thinking. In the Taiwanese college entrance examinations, descriptive writing seems to have become an essential part of the English writing test. Therefore, senior high school students in Taiwan have to learn how to write descriptive passages. However, students in Taiwan do not generally seem able to take advantage of what they learn in English class to clearly describe people and objects. Often, they just use one or two simple sentences in their descriptions, instead of producing the rich and detailed descriptions that are characteristic of good English writing. They appear to regard simple descriptive writing tasks as complicated and difficult, and cannot smoothly and logically depict what they observe and feel in their writing.

In order to address this problem, the following lesson plan has been developed, with the aim of providing teachers with ways of developing their students' descriptive ability. It can be divided into three parts: (1) the usage of prepositions, (2) techniques for describing a person, and (3) the addition of personal observations to descriptive writing. Students may use these skills to describe a space or portray a person, techniques that are quite useful in English writing. In the final part of the lesson plan, these methods will be applied to a writing task, utilizing a topic from the English writing test produced by the College Entrance Examination Center in 2009.

Evaluation of writing is the other main concern in this lesson plan. Many English teachers in Taiwan see the teaching of writing as a huge burden, because of the amount of time they have to spend on correcting student compositions. Although, this may sometimes be a joy for teachers, as they encounter examples of fantastic creativity, it is more often a kind of detective work, as they try to read between the lines to guess what their students really mean. This kind of experience has generated the stereotypical view that correcting English writing is inefficient and painful. Because the purpose of this lesson plan is to have students acquire descriptive writing ability, the aim of evaluation here is to ascertain whether students have actually achieved this goal. Therefore, in addition to offering instruction in ways to use the target

language to describe objects and people, this lesson plan also provides analytical rubrics and forms of self-evaluation. Students can thus understand what their teachers would like them to learn, and how to apply this knowledge to their compositions. The ultimate goal is to assist students and teachers to learn and teach English descriptive writing more efficiently.

A three-step process is adopted here to train students' descriptive writing ability. First, a group discussion is conducted, in which the teacher models the kinds of language use that are being targeted. In this way, the students can gain an overall picture of what the teacher would like them to do. At the same time, they can engage in sufficient practice to enable them to attempt tasks individually. After the group discussion, students do an individual writing assignment. Next, a peer conference is held, in which they receive the first feedback on their writing. Students can enjoy reading other students' assignments in this conference. At the end of every class, they are required to write down ten points that they feel are important. In this way, they can accumulate a collection of ideas to help them in their descriptive writing.

Difficulty Level

Elementary Intermediate Upper-Intermediate Advanced

Lesson Plan

I. Descriptive Writing

1.1 Ask students to complete the handout (Writing Practice 1).

* Writing Practice 1



提示：請描述上方圖片的場景，說明之前發生了什麼事情，並根據圖片內容描述現在的狀況。

II. Usage of Prepositions

Before Writing

- 2.1 Divide the whole class into several small groups.
- 2.2 Every student gets one handout (Writing Practice 2-1) and each group has one group handout (Writing Practice-Group 2).
- 2.3 Have every student make 3 sentences using the prepositions listed to describe the picture (Writing Practice 2-1).
- 2.4 Have each group take the sentences they have created and arrange them clockwise into a clear paragraph (Writing Practice-Group 2).
- 2.5 Ask each group to choose one representative. The representative goes to another assigned group to read their own passage to that group. The rest of the group members carefully listen to the representative from the other group to see if their passage depicts clearly or not. They then give a response to the representative.
- 2.6 Ask the same representative to go to the next group and repeat step 2.5.
- 2.7 Have students read the handout (Writing Practice – Sample 2-1) and compare the sample and their own passage.

While Writing

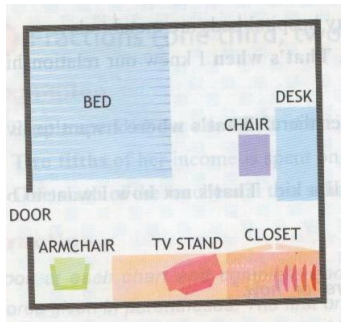
- 2.8 Have students write the handout (Writing Practice 2-2) for 30 minutes.

After Writing

- 2.9 Conduct a peer conference: Ask each student to read his partner's work and give them the following responses:
 - (1) The sentence I like the best is _____.
 - (2) A sentence I do not understand is _____.
 - (3) From the description of the house, if I were Elaine, I would feel _____.
- 2.10 Have students revise their work. They are allowed to discuss revisions with their partners if possible.
- 2.11 The teacher corrects the final compositions and gives each student a completed copy of the rubric (Evaluation 2) as feedback on their work.
- 2.12 Debugging—Peer correction: Ask each group to correct some samples of students' writing from the class (Appendix 1 and 2).
- 2.13 Ask students to write down ten points they have learned from this section.

*** Writing Practice 2-1**

Please look at the following picture. Make 3 sentences by using the prepositions listed.

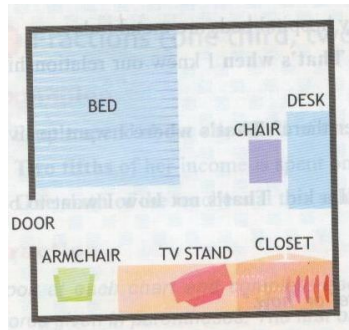


- next to 在……旁邊
- on the right/left 在右/左手邊
- opposite 在……對面
- between 在……中間
- above 在……上方
- in front of 在……前面
- in the corner 在角落
- on top of 在……上面
- under 在……正下方
- over 在……正上方
- against 靠著
- across from 在……對面
- in the middle 在中間
- below 在……下方
- behind 在……後面

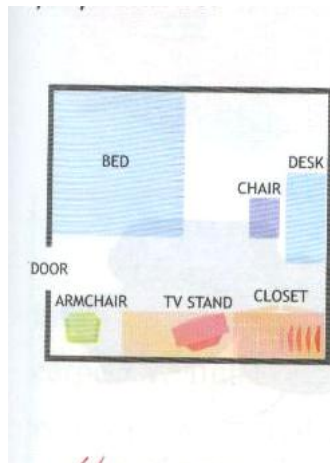
1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

*** Writing Practice –Group 2**

Please take the sentences you have created and arrange them into a clear paragraph.



* Writing Practice—Sample 2-1



Description of the bedroom floor plan on the left

Standing in the doorway and looking into the room, I would like the bed to be in the left corner near the door. Please put an armchair on the right, in the corner just inside the room. Next to the armchair, put the TV stand, and put the closet next to the TV stand, in the corner of the room. I would like the desk to go against the wall across from the door, and the chair in front of the desk.

* Writing Practice 2-2



Vocabulary

- bathroom
- bedroom
- dining room
- entrance
- laundry room
- living room
- kitchen
- powder room

Mrs. Huang has just moved to a new house. She plans to write a letter to her daughter Elaine about her new house. If you were Mrs. Huang, how would you describe the new house for Elaine.

Dear Elaine,

It's so exciting to write this letter to you. I love this new house.

Love,

Mom

* Evaluation 2

Class _____ No _____ Name _____			
內		容	
◎	平面圖描述	非常清楚明瞭，有按照順(逆)時針方向依序描述空間	
		空間描述順序跳來跳去，讓人讀了容易搞混	
		只描述部分的空間	
		空間敘述含糊不清楚	
◎	介係詞使用	Great! 你有用到老師提供的介係詞	
		用介係詞將位置、擺設清楚點出，讓人讀了易懂明白	
		幾個介係詞使用不妥，使人混淆、疑惑	
		好像不太敢使用介係詞喲！這是很棒的工具，要好好利用	
◎	文法句構	S + V	
		S/V [主詞動詞一致性]	
		t [時態變化]	
		CE [中式英文]	
		gap [文意有斷層，讀起來不順]	

III. Techniques for Describing a Person

Before Writing

- 3.1 Divide the whole class into several small groups.
- 3.2 Every student gets two handouts (Handout 3 and Writing Practice 3-1) and each group receives two group handouts (Writing Practice-Group 3-1 and Writing Practice-Group 3-2).
- 3.3 Have every student make 4 sentences by using Handout 3 to describe the girl in the picture, either from top to bottom or from left to right (Writing Practice 3-1).
- 3.4 Have each group take the sentences they have created and arrange them into a clear paragraph (Writing Practice-Group 3-1).
- 3.5 Ask each group to choose one representative. The representative goes to the assigned group to read their own passage to the group. The rest of the group members carefully listen to the representative from the other group to see if their passage depicts clearly or not. They then give a response to the representative.
- 3.6 Ask the same representative to go to the next group and repeat step 2.5.

3.7 Practice the sentence pattern “**S + V as adj./adv. as N.**”

(Writing Practice-Group 3-2):

- (1) give students a model for making an outline to portray the girl in the handout – one general idea and then two specific examples;
- (2) ask each group to make an outline;
- (3) select two groups’ work to read to the class, and have students evaluate which point should be the general idea and which should be the specific example.

While Writing

3.8 Have students write the handout (Writing Practice 3-2) for 30 minutes.

After Writing

3.9 Conduct a peer conference: Ask each student to read his partner’s work and give them the following responses:

- (1) The sentence I like the best is _____.
- (2) A sentence I do not understand is _____.
- (3) From the description of 小玉, if I were 大雄, I would feel _____.

3.10 Have students revise their work.

3.11 Correct the final versions and give each student a completed rubric (Evaluation 3).

3.12 Debugging—Peer correction: Ask each group to correct the students’ samples from the class (Appendix 3 and 4).

3.13 Have students evaluate their own learning in this writing course (自我評量 1).

3.14 Ask students to write down ten points they have learned from this section.

* Handout 3

身材特徵字彙表：

看看句型 Look at that...*man / woman* over there.

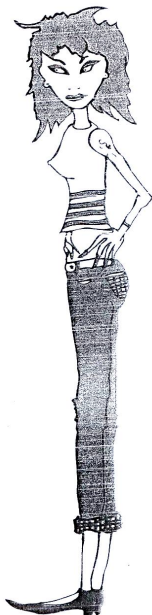
- | | | | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 高的 | tall | <input type="checkbox"/> 魁梧的 | heavyset |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 矮的 | short | <input type="checkbox"/> 年輕的 | young |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 過重的 | overweight | <input type="checkbox"/> 中年的 | middle-aged |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 肥的 | fat | <input type="checkbox"/> 年老的 | old |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 大骨架的 | big-boned | <input type="checkbox"/> 白髮蒼蒼的 | gray-haired |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 小骨架的 | small-boned | <input type="checkbox"/> 病懨懨的 | sickly |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 瘦的 | thin | <input type="checkbox"/> 弱不禁風的 | frail |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 皮包骨的 | skinny | <input type="checkbox"/> 結實的 | trim |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 遺骨如柴的 | bony | <input type="checkbox"/> 凹凸有緻的 | shapely (女) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 身材比例很好的 | well-proportioned [ˌweɪlprəˈpɔːʃənəd] | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 胸圍大的 | well-endowed [ˌweɪlɪnˈdɔːd] | (女) | |

行為特徵字彙表：

看看句型 He's / She's so....

- | | | | |
|--------------------------------|---|--------------------------------|---------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 快樂的 | happy | <input type="checkbox"/> 情緒化的 | emotional |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 憂鬱的 | depressed | <input type="checkbox"/> 笨拙的 | clumsy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 寂寞的 | lonely | <input type="checkbox"/> 優雅的 | graceful |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 悲傷的 | sad | <input type="checkbox"/> 粗枝大葉的 | coarse [kɔːs] |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 生氣的 | angry | <input type="checkbox"/> 偽作的 | fake |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 興奮的 | excited | <input type="checkbox"/> 瘦身的 | slimy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 不悅的 | upset | <input type="checkbox"/> 有活力的 | energetic |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 好動的 | active | <input type="checkbox"/> 疲累的 | tired |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 多話的 | talkative | <input type="checkbox"/> 無趣的 | lifeless |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 安靜的 | quiet | <input type="checkbox"/> 精力充沛的 | full of life |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 愁煩的 | frustrated [ˈfrʌstrəɪd] | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 手舞足蹈的 | excitable / spastic [ˈspæstɪk] | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 墨上誇張的 | melodramatic [ˌmeləˈdɒrəˈmætɪk] | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 內向的 | introverted [ˌɪntrəˈvɜːtɪd] | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 外向的 | extroverted [ˌekstrəˈvɜːtɪd] / outgoing | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 精疲力竭的 | exhausted [ɪkˈzɔːstɪd] | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 無精打采的 | listless [ˈlɪstlɪs] | | |

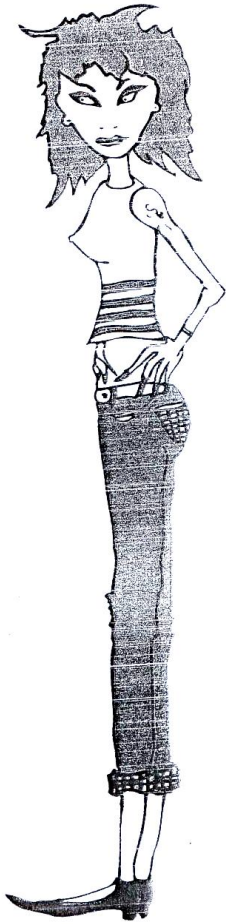
* Writing Practice 3-1



Please make 4 sentences using **Handout 3**.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

* Writing Practice –Group 3-2



“S + V as adj./adv. as N. ”

Examples: She eats as little as a bird.

She is as thin as a bamboo crane.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

* Writing Practice 3-2



小丸子 would like to introduce her best friend 小玉 to her dearest cousin 大雄 who lives in Taiwan. Please use what you learned in class to write the letter for 小丸子.

Dear 大雄,

See the cute girl standing next to me? Her name is 小玉, and she is my best friend. _____

Best Wishes,

小丸子

* Evaluation 3

Class _____ No _____ Name _____			
內 容			
◎	人物外觀描述	Great! 你有用到老師提供的字彙與例句	
		人物外觀有依照順序描述 (上至下、順[逆]時針方向)	
		描述人物外觀順序跳來跳去，讀起來易混淆	
		人物外觀描述甚少著墨，要多多練習	
		有創意！會把自己的想法和人物外觀描述連結	
◎	文法句構	S + V	
		S/V [主詞動詞一致性]	
		t [時態變化]	
		CE [中式英文]	
		gap [文意有斷層，讀起來不順]	

* 自我評量 1

Class _____ No _____ Name _____						
請依照自己的狀況回答。5 代表『最符合自己的敘述』，1 代表『最不符合自己的敘述』：						
內 容		1	2	3	4	5
◎ 介係詞	我知道介係詞在寫作的重要性					
	我會選擇適當的介係詞來描述人/物品					
	我會在寫作時使用介係詞來精確地描述人/物品					
◎ 平面圖	我知道描述空間順序的重要性					
	我會利用描述空間順序此技巧來描述人/物品					
◎ 大綱	我知道大綱在寫作的重要性					
	我知道如何在短時間內打大綱，將論點和具體例子很快列出來					
	我會在寫作時打大綱，將論點和具體例子很快列出來					
	大綱可以充實我的寫作內容					
	大綱可以幫助控制寫作時間					
◎ 寫作	我可以很快想到作文如何開頭					
	我可以很快想到作文如何結尾					
	我會使用同義詞、反義詞來增進自己文章內容的可看性					
	當我想不出用哪一單字、句型、片語描述心中的話時，我會當機立斷換別的單字或說法					
◎ 檢查	我有充裕的時間在寫作時間內檢查自己的作文					
	我可以清楚檢查出自己作文錯誤處(如：單字、片語、句型)					
	我可以明確知道如何將自己作文錯誤處修改成適當的表達方式					
	我可以檢視出自己的論點是否切題或合乎邏輯性					
	我喜歡和同學討論彼此的作文					
	同學對我的作文所給的正面回應可以讓我信心大增					
	同學跟我說關於我作文不順之處及建議，可以有效增進我的英文寫作能力					
	欣賞同學的作文，可以增進我的英文寫作能力					
◎ 老師，我還想跟您說 ...						

IV. Observation + Personal Feelings

Before Writing

- 4.1 Divide the whole class into several small groups.
- 4.2 Each group gets one group handout (Writing Practice-Group 4).
- 4.3 Have each group discuss the questions listed on the handout Writing Practice-Group 4. Remind them that they may apply the techniques they learned above to this discussion.
- 4.4 Have students read the handout (Sample 4).

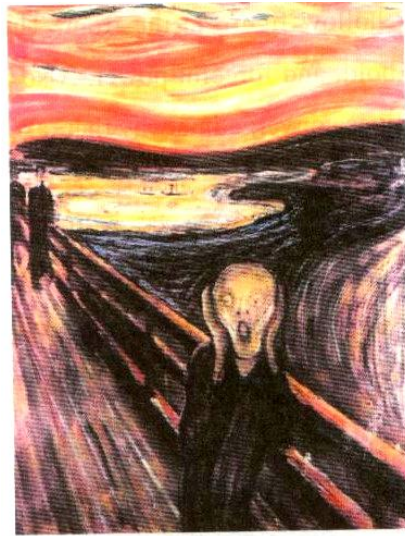
While Writing

- 4.5 Have students write the handout (Writing Practice 4-1) for 30 minutes.

After Writing

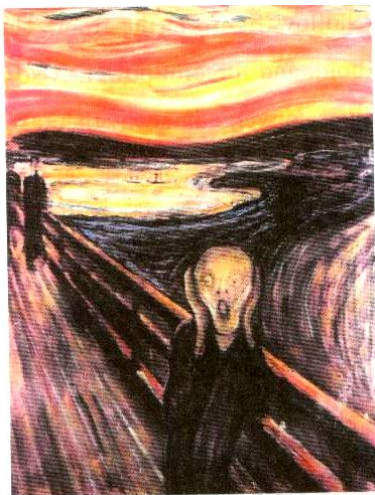
- 4.6 Conduct a peer conference: Ask each student to read his partner's work and give them the following responses:
 - (1) The sentence I like the best is _____.
 - (2) A sentence I do not understand is _____.
- 4.7 Have students revise their work.
- 4.8 Correct the final assignments and give each student a completed rubric (Evaluation 4).
- 4.9 Have students evaluate their own learning in this writing course (自我評量 2).
- 4.10 Ask students to write down ten points they have learned from this section.

* Writing Practice –Group 4



1. What is the man in the foreground doing?
2. Why do you think he is doing it?
3. How would you describe his eyes, mouth, and hands?
4. Is he happy and excited, lost and lonely, or depressed and anxious?
5. What do you think is the most appealing feature of this work of art – the dramatic colors, the energetic lines, the hollow image of the figure, or the mysterious background of the painting?

* Sample 4



The man on the bridge is crying for help. His eyes are full of confusion, his mouth is wide open in fear, and his hands are clutching his head as if he is at a complete loss. He seems to feel utterly hopeless and extremely lonely, and he looks like he is overcome with a sense of uncertainty and insecurity. In the background is the blood red sunset, which poses a sharp contrast with the dark hollow figure in the front. The energetic lines give the painting a simple, bold, and forceful power. Also, the swirling red lines and the straight black lines converge in a way that takes your breath away.

Tips: When you are asked to describe a picture, you can describe the contents of the picture, such as the objects or animals or people you see in the picture. You can also imagine what the people in the picture are doing and describe their activities or movements.

* Writing Practice 4-1



1. What are the two girls in the painting doing?
2. How would you describe their dresses, hair, faces, and skin?
3. What do you think of the use of color in the painting?
How does it appeal to you emotionally?
4. What is the overall impression the painting creates upon your mind?

* Evaluation 4

Class _____ No _____ Name _____		
內 容		
◎ 介係詞使用	Great! 你有用到老師提供的介係詞	
	用介係詞將位置、擺設清楚點出，讓人讀了易懂明白	
	幾個介係詞使用不妥，使人混淆、疑惑	
	好像不太敢使用介係詞喲！這是很棒的工具，要好好利用	
◎ 物件、人物外觀描述	Great! 你有用到老師提供的字彙與例句	
	整幅畫面有依照順序描述 (上至下、順[逆]時針方向)	
	描述空間的順序跳來跳去，讀起來易混淆	
	物件或人物外觀描述甚少著墨，要多多練習	
	有描述所看到的顏色、物件的質感、形狀等	
◎ 加入個人感受	有創意！會把自己的想法與圖中的物件、人物連結	
	只是單純描述空間，個人感覺甚少描述	
◎ 文法句構	S + V	
	S/V [主詞動詞一致性]	
	t [時態變化]	
	CE [中式英文]	
	gap [文意有斷層，讀起來不順]	

*** 自我評量 2**

請仔細閱讀各項敘述，在最符合自己狀況的空格內打勾：

Class _____ No _____ Name _____							
請依照自己的狀況回答。5 代表『最符合自己的敘述』，1 代表『最不符合自己的敘述』：							
	內	容	1	2	3	4	5
◎	介係詞	我知道介係詞在寫作的重要性					
		我會選擇適當的介係詞來描述人/物品					
		我會在寫作時使用介係詞來精確地描述人/物品					
		我會利用描述空間順序此技巧來描述人/物品					
◎	人物描寫	英文寫作時，我知道要用哪些角度切入來進行人物描寫					
		英文寫作時，我會運用自己的創造力編寫橋段讓人物描寫更精采					
◎	自我抒發	英文寫作時，我會抒發自己對描寫的人/物品感想、意見、評論					
		英文寫作時，我會站在描寫的人/物品的立場，想像他們的感想、意見、評論					
		我會運用自己的五官感受來表達自己對描寫的人/物品感想、意見、評論					
◎	檢查	我有充裕的時間在寫作時間內檢查自己的作文					
		我可以清楚檢查出自己作文錯誤處(如：單字、片語、句型)					
		我可以明確知道如何將自己作文錯誤處修改成適當的表達方式					
		我可以檢視出自己的論點是否切題或合乎邏輯性					
		我喜歡和同學討論彼此的作文					
		同學對我的作文所給的正面回應可以讓我信心大增					
		同學跟我說關於我作文不順之處及建議，可以有效增進我的英文寫作能力					
		欣賞同學的作文，可以增進我的英文寫作能力					
◎	老師，我還想跟您說 ...						

V. Descriptive Writing

- 5.1 Ask students to write the handout (Writing Practice 1) again.
- 5.2 Correct the final versions and give each student a completed rubric (Evaluation 整體總表).
- 5.3 Have students evaluate what they have learned from the writing course (自我評量 3).

* Evaluation (整體總表)

Class _____ No _____ Name _____				
內容	優	主題(句)清楚切題，並有具體、完整的相關細節支援。		
	可	主題不夠清楚或突顯，部分相關敘述發展不全。		
	差	主題不明，大部分相關敘述發展不全或與主題無關。		
	劣	文不對題（凡文不對題，其他各項均以零分計算）。		
	時間	時間清楚點明：明確點出 之前、現在、未來		
		運用 時間標記 ：	使用得很 恰當	你有在使用這工 具，但用得不大 順手 這是很好的工具，要要求自己 把它學起來
	空間	介係詞	用介係詞清楚將位置點出，讓人讀了易懂明白	
			幾個介係詞使用不妥，會使人混淆、疑惑。 要趕緊弄清楚各介係詞的用法	
			好像不太敢使用介係詞喎！這是很棒的工具，要好好利用	
		人物 描述	描述得很生動。有加入你自己的看法、感覺，很棒！	
你的意見很保守，不大敢表達出來。 可加入你對人物的評論、看法、感覺				
看不到你的意見、感覺、想法。				
組織	優	重點分明，有開頭、發展、結尾，前後連貫，轉承語使用得當。		
	可	重點安排不妥，前後發展比例與轉承語使用欠妥。		
	差	重點不明、前後不連貫。		
	劣	全文毫無組織或未按提示寫作。		
文法、句 構	優	全文幾無文法錯誤，文句結構富變化。		
	可	文法錯誤少，且未影響文意之表達。		
	差	文法錯誤多，且明顯影響文意之表達。		
	劣	全文文法錯誤嚴重，導致文意不明。		
		S + V		
		時態變化 (t)		
主詞動詞一致性 (S/V)				
中式英文 (CE)				
文意有斷層，讀起來不順 (gap)				
字彙、拼 字	優	用字精確、得宜，且幾無拼字錯誤。		
	可	字詞單調、重複，用字偶有不當，少許拼字錯誤，但不影響文意之表達。		
	差	用字、拼字錯誤多，明顯影響文意之表達。		
	劣	只寫出或抄襲與題意有關的零碎字詞。		

體例	優—可	格式、標點、大小寫幾無錯誤。		
	差	格式、標點、大小寫等有錯誤，但不影響文意之表達。		
	劣	違背基本的寫作體例或格式，標點、大小寫等錯誤甚多。		
			一直使用逗點。記得還有 句點 的存在喲！	
			段落開頭沒有內縮空二格	

* 自我評量 3

Class _____ No _____ Name _____							
請依照自己的狀況回答。5 代表『最符合自己的敘述』，1 代表『最不符合自己的敘述』：							
	內	容	1	2	3	4	5
◎	大綱	我知道大綱在寫作的重要性					
		大綱可以充實我的寫作內容					
		在寫作打大綱時，我會很快將論點和具體例子列舉出來					
		大綱可以幫助我控制寫作時間					
		寫作進行時，我可以依當時狀況即時調整我的大綱內容					
◎	介係詞	我知道介係詞在寫作的重要性					
		我會選擇適當的介係詞來描述人/物品					
		我會在寫作時使用介係詞來精確地描述人/物品					
		我會利用描述空間順序此技巧來描述人/物品					
◎	人物描寫	英文寫作時，我知道要用哪些角度切入來進行人物描寫					
		英文寫作時，我會運用自己的創造力編寫橋段讓人物描寫更精采					
◎	自我抒發	英文寫作時，我會抒發自己對描寫的人/物品感想、意見、評論					
		英文寫作時，我會站在描寫的人/物品的立場，想像他們的感想、意見、評論					
		我會運用自己的五官感受來表達自己對描寫的人/物品感想、意見、評論					
◎	寫作	我可以很快想到作文如何結尾					
		我會使用同義詞、反義詞來增進自己文章內容的可看性					
		當我想不出用哪一單字、句型、片語描述心中的話時，我會當機立斷換別的單字或說法					
◎	檢查	我有充裕的時間在寫作時間內檢查自己的作文					
		我可以清楚檢查出自己作文錯誤處(如：單字、片語、句型)					
		我可以明確知道如何將自己作文錯誤處修改成適當的表達方式					
		我可以檢視出自己的論點是否切題或合乎邏輯性					
		我喜歡和同學討論彼此的作文					
		同學對我的作文所給的正面回應可以讓我信心大增					
		同學跟我說關於我作文不順之處及建議，可以有效增進我的英文寫作能力					
		欣賞同學的作文，可以增進我的英文寫作能力					

Comments

1. **Familiarity with the textbook.** Students have already learned the prepositions and the sentence patterns listed in the lesson plan in junior high school. Yet, after comparing their first and second drafts on the destruction caused by an earthquake (Writing Practice 1), I found that these two linguistic elements did not clearly appear in their writing. However, I did notice one interesting thing: some of my students used several sentences from Lesson 7 “Tornadoes”, Far East Book IV (Appendix 5). Our school once required our students to memorize the first paragraph from this lesson as part of our monthly exam. This passage presents the transferring of time and space. Our students did not seem able to use simple prepositions to create new sentences; they just made use of the passage from the textbook instead. Furthermore, their passages seemed to be more organized in this way. Perhaps memorizing selected, well-organized passages from the textbook is one good way to train students. They might gradually be able to integrate them into their own English writing.
2. **Peer conference.** Appreciating every student’s English writing and reading is quite important. As long as we hold this positive attitude, students will present their best to us. Sometimes students do not need every error to be marked or suggestions in red ink about what they should do to improve their writing ability. What they need is an audience who truly appreciates their creativity, even if it is just a short simple sentence or a small fresh idea. Encouragement from their classmates or teachers can motivate them to write better. Furthermore, the peer conference is the best time for students to digest the writing materials at their own pace. What’s more, conducting a peer conference may save teachers a lot of time in correcting their students’ writing, so why not use this efficient method in class?
3. **Imitation and Creativity.** Before students create their own writing, they have to imitate first. Ask students to pay more attention to their personal lives, observe and comprehend their own inner thoughts and those of the people around them. Perhaps they might use these as their writing materials. Also, encourage students to frequently read passages about a variety of topics. This will stimulate them as well.
4. **Analytical rubrics.** Repetition is what English teachers are afraid of. They correct repetitive errors, provide repetitive suggestions to improve the writing, and write repetitive remarks. A good analytic rubric may save teachers’ a lot of time. Moreover, students can consequently acquire more

concrete advice from their teachers. Teachers may put what they emphasize into the analytic rubrics for students to learn. The latter can not only learn their strong and weak points from this, but also learn other critical aspects of writing from the same rubric.

Practice makes perfect. It really takes time to develop a good English writer. To casually deliver one's inner thoughts through words is a great enjoyment. To appreciate another person's inner world through words is also an awesome experience. Writing instruction in high school has a long way to go. We teachers seem to act as magicians who can make our students become spokesmen for their lives. Why not use our magic power to have them describe their own lives freely?

Appendix

Appendix 1.

二平 7 程潛喻

Dear Elaine,

It's so exciting to write this letter to you. I love this new house. Let me show my house to you. When you walk into the **entrance** you can see the **dinning** room in front of you. The **dinning** room is very big and there is a **round** table in the middle of **dinning** room. I put many chairs around the table. There is the powder room in the **dinning** room, and **it is in the corner**. On the right of the **dinning** room is a kitchen. You know **me** love to cook, but I think it too small. **Above** the kitchen is the bedroom and **above** the bedroom is a laundry room. And there is a bathroom on the left of **dinning**. It is my room. The room is bigger **than** before. But I feel comfortable. **Under** my room is the living room, and it's also very big. **Someday come to my house and have fun.**

Love,

Mom

Appendix 2.

二義 7 吳鈺瑩

Dear Elaine,

It's so exciting to write this letter to you. I love this new house. When you enter this new **house**, you can see some plants beside the door. On the left is the living room **where** the TV is against the wall. The desk and the sofa **is** in front of the TV. Behind the living room is your bedroom. Your bed is in the center and **beside the wall**. In the corner is your desk. If you want to take a bath, the bathroom is on your right. **Turning back to the entrance**, the dining room is in the center of the house. There's a small **powderroom** on the left. In front of the **powderroom** is the kitchen. I cook here every day. And beside the kitchen is my bedroom. **I think I'm a perfect housewife because there's a laundry room in my bedroom. If you want to go out, there's a parking lot next to the entrance. You can drive your car**

from here. I hope you can **turn** back soon. I want to live here with you everyday.

Love,

Mom

Appendix 3

二平 16 吳冠璿

Dear 大雄,

See the cute girl standing next to me? Her name is 小玉, who is my best friend. She has a round face and **wear a glasses.** **So she often ask me the words in the blackboard in the class.** 小玉 has weak **arm** and short legs. **So she is run** slower than I. She is thin. **Because** she **isn't eat** more. **Always** very happy and **energetic** when I **look** her. **I meet her in my school.** **Because** have her I **have** very happy everyday. **I'm believe** we **can best friend** forever. She is a great girl. If you have time, **You** can know her, too.

Best Wishes,

小丸子

Appendix 4

二義 27 吳冠儀

Dear 大雄,

See the cute girl standing next to me? Her name is 小玉, who is my best friend. She is as tall as me, and has a round face. Her hair is so long and beautiful. She **wear glasses**, so she can look **thing clear**. I always play with her, even when I go home, we can play **at** the road **with happy**. **Everytime**, when I am tired, she is always full of energetic.

I like her, she is my best friend, and I hope you can know her as soon as possible.

Best Wishes,

小丸子

Appendix 5

Lesson 7 “Tornadoes”, Far East Book IV

It was a warm spring day when the Newport family began to hear a very loud and faraway sound from their farm in southern Kansas. Moments later, they saw a swirling cloud. As it came closer, it grew darker and darker. The winds grew stronger. The household realized the danger they were facing, so the parents rushed their five children into the cellar below the kitchen. When the children came out a few minutes later, they found their entire home blown away. If they had not been safely protected below the ground, they would surely have died. Their parents were not so lucky. Their bodies were found several hundred yards away.

Samples of Student Work

II. Usage of Prepositions

二義 15 遊琬甄

Dear Elaine,

It's so exciting to write this letter to you. I love this new house. When you open the door, you can see some plants at the entrance. And go straight; on the left side is the living room. It is bright and big, and my bedroom is next to it. If you are hungry, the dining room is across from the entrance, and there is a powder room in the left corner. On the right, there is a kitchen. And turn left, you can see a laundry room. And the bathroom is on the corner. It's between the laundry room and your bedroom. I think it's a wonderful house. You will like it. If you have time, welcome to visit my house. I miss you so much.

Love,

Mom

III. Techniques for Describing a Person”

二平 16 許涵瑜

Dear 大雄,

See the cute girl standing next to me? Her name is 小玉, and she is my best friend. At the first time, we met in the classroom. At that time, she saw me sitting on the chair alone. She came to me and talked with me. We talked with each other happily, so that we became the best friends. We play together and share everything with each other. Our friendship become better and better. Look at this picture. Her face is round. It makes her look so cute. And her smile always brings happiness to our classmates. Her figure is not tall. She likes to wear the T-shirt and the red shirt. I think that is very suiting her. How do you feel that? When you come here, I will introduce you to her. I think you will become good friends.

Best Wishes,

小丸子

IV. Observation + Personal Feelings

二義 37 李忠翰

At the painting, there are two girls playing the piano. One is sitting on the chair with yellow curly hair and the other is standing next to the piano with brown curly hair. Both of them are looking at the poem and trying to play it. The warm color makes people easy and comfortable. Important of all, the overall impression makes you think you are the girl who is playing the piano in the painting! And you can feel the happy atmosphere in the painting.

V. Descriptive—The Destruction of the Earthquake/Tornadoe

二義 2 許依庭

Several days ago, there was a tornado hit the town. It was Sunday. Many children played together in front of the house, they looked happily. Suddenly, the gray and thick clouds covered the sun, the winds grew stronger and

stronger. The trees were blown down. Everyone was scared because they saw a tornado coming from the side of the mountain. They quickly found a safe place to hide. Minutes later, the tornado left. However, it destroyed the house where the children played together in front of. The house became pieces of stones. Windows were broken and leaves were blown by winds. Fortunately, nobody got hurt. Although the tornado was terrible.

二平 42 陳昶廷

It was a horrible night. A terrible earthquake came and broke down the small town. All the buildings and things were destroyed by it. Many villagers were also killed because of the terrible earthquake. The man in this picture was one of the people who didn't die in this accident and came back to look for his family members. But he knew that it might be very hard to find any of his family members in the disaster area, so he felt upset.

二平 24 吳軒宇

Before, it was a beautiful house. But now, it becomes a destroyed and dangerous house. One night, people who lived in the house were sleeping. Suddenly, an earthquake happened and shook very hard. The wall began to break down and other things were falling down. People ran out as fast as they can.

The next day, people went back to the house and saw their house was destroyed. The man who stood in front of the house was looking for something that hadn't been destroyed. He was trying to think how to start a new life.

二平 17 張奕菁

In the afternoon, I came back to my home. I don't know what's wrong over here. My house was destroyed by something. Before I worked in the farm, my

house didn't see something wrong, but it is a big hole on the red roof and a white wall now. Maybe the UFO has knocked down it when I went out. I think I should find out anything fell down in the yard. Rocks, woods and glasses spreaded all over the ground, how could I clean it? I will ask some neighbors who know what happened to my house. It's time for dinner. I think I get a big trouble. Oops! Who can help me?

Resources

I. Writing Practice 1:

1.1 大考中心 98 學測考題

II. Usage of Prepositions

2.1 Lesson 3 Writing section: "Bedroom floor plan", *Far East Book IV*

2.2 平面圖：

<<http://203.64.208.5/project/96-3d/101/%E5%AE%A4%E5%85%A7%E5%B9%B3%E9%9D%A2%E5%9C%962.jpg>>

III. Usage of Describing a Person"

3.1 *LIVE Abc* English Magazine

3.2 櫻桃小丸子：

<http://momoangel.pixnet.net/album/photo/80919065#pic_top>

IV. Observation + Personal Feelings

4.1 Lesson 1 Writing section: "Picture Composition1: Describing a picture", *Far East Book IV*