

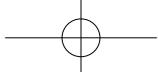
# Unit 4

## Constructing a striking setting

—Love or life, which would you give up?

### Learning objectives

- 1) Study the role of the setting
- 2) Make the setting interact with the characters
- 3) Write a continuation of a narrative essay

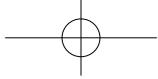


**A**s one of the basic elements of story writing, setting plays an indispensable role in revealing the theme, interacting with the characters, advancing the plot, and creating certain atmosphere. Characters do not live in a vacuum. Their personality can be properly revealed, given a well-designed setting. The setting is the time and place, or rather, a series of details related to these two dimensions. The change of the setting might lead to the transformation of heroes or heroines and hint at what could happen later in the story. Since information about the setting may be concentrated in the earlier part of a story, it should not be neglected if you attempt to write a brilliant continuation.

## WARM-UP ACTIVITY

Look at the following picture. What story comes into your mind? In five minutes, jot down the gist and share your gist in your group. Pay special attention to the details related to the time and place the story could be set in.





## SAMPLE ESSAY

What you are going to read is a century-old story about youth, love, and despotism which still has its charm today due to its unsolved ending—when one of the doors in the arena is opened, will the lady or the tiger come out? The question is left to readers to think about. It may be one of the earliest assignments of continuation after reading in history.

Now it is your turn to answer the question with your moral sense and novel imagination. Read it carefully and pay attention to all the details of the story before conceiving your continuation.

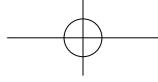


## The Lady or the Tiger?

by Frank R. Stockton<sup>1</sup>

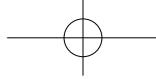
- 1 Long ago, in the very olden time, there lived a powerful king. Some of his ideas were progressive. But others caused people to suffer.
- 2 One of the king's ideas was a public arena as an agent of poetic justice. Crime was punished, or innocence was decided, by the result of chance. When a person was accused of a crime, his future would be judged in the public arena.

1. The story is originally written by Frank R. Stockton (1834-1902) and this text is adapted by VOA.



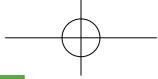
## SAMPLE ESSAY

- 3 All the people would gather in this building. The king sat high up on his ceremonial chair. He gave a sign. A door under him opened. The accused person stepped out into the arena. Directly opposite the king were two doors. They were side by side, exactly alike. The person on trial had to walk directly to these doors and open one of them. He could open whichever door he pleased.
- 4 If the accused man opened one door, out came a hungry tiger, the fiercest in the land. The tiger immediately jumped on him and tore him to pieces as punishment for his guilt. The case of the suspect was thus decided. Iron bells rang sadly. Great cries went up from the paid mourners. And the people, with heads hanging low and sad hearts, slowly made their way home. They mourned greatly that one so young and fair, or so old and respected, should have died this way.
- 5 But, if the accused opened the other door, there came forth from it a woman, chosen especially for the person. To this lady he was immediately married, in honor of his innocence. It was not a problem that he might already have a wife and family, or that he might have chosen to marry another woman. The king permitted nothing to interfere with his great method of punishment and reward. Another door opened under the king, and a clergyman, singers, dancers, and musicians joined the man and the lady. The marriage ceremony was quickly completed. Then the bells made cheerful noises. The people shouted happily, and the innocent man led the new wife to his home, following children who threw flowers on their path.
- 6 This was the king's method of carrying out justice. Its fairness appeared perfect. The accused person could not know which door was hiding the lady. He opened either as he pleased, without knowing whether, in the next minute, he was to be killed or married. Sometimes the fierce animal came out of one door. Sometimes it came out of the other.
- 7 This method was a popular one. When the people gathered together on one of the great trial days, they never knew whether they would see a bloody killing or a happy ending. So everyone was always interested, and the thinking part of the community would bring no charge of unfairness against this plan. Did not the accused person have the whole matter in his own hands?
- 8 The king had a beautiful daughter who was like him in many ways. He loved her above all humanity. The princess secretly loved a young man who was the best-looking and bravest in the land. But he was a commoner, not part of an important family.
- 9 One day, the king discovered the relationship between his daughter and the young man. The man was immediately put in prison. A day was set for his trial in the king's public arena. This, of course, was an especially important event. Never before had a common subject been brave enough to love the daughter of the king.
- 10 The king knew that the young man would be punished, even if he opened the right door. And the king would take pleasure in watching the series of events, which would judge whether or not the man had done wrong in loving the princess.
- 11 The day of the trial arrived. From far and near the people gathered in the arena and outside its



walls. The king and his advisers were in their places, opposite the two doors. All was ready. The sign was given. The door under the king opened and the lover of the princess entered the arena. Tall, beautiful, and fair, his appearance was met with a sound of approval and tension. Half the people had not known so perfect a young man lived among them. No wonder the princess loved him! What a terrible thing for him to be there!

- 12 As the young man entered the public arena, he turned to bend to the king. But he did not at all think of the great ruler. The young man's eyes instead were fixed on the princess, who sat to the right of her father. From the day it was decided that the sentence of her lover should be decided in the arena, she had thought of nothing but this event.
- 13 The princess had more power, influence, and force of character than anyone who had ever before been interested in such a case. She had done what no other person had done. She had possessed herself of the secret of the doors. She knew behind which door stood the tiger, and behind which waited the lady. Gold, and the power of a woman's will, had brought the secret to the princess.
- 14 She also knew who the lady was. The lady was one of the loveliest in the kingdom. Now and then the princess had seen her looking at and talking to the young man. The princess hated the woman behind that silent door. She hated her with all the intensity of the blood passed to her through long lines of cruel ancestors.
- 15 Her lover turned to look at the princess. His eyes met hers as she sat there, paler and whiter than anyone in the large ocean of tense faces around her. He saw that she knew behind which door waited the tiger, and behind which stood the lady. He had expected her to know it.
- 16 The only hope for the young man was based on the success of the princess in discovering this mystery. When he looked at her, he saw that she had been successful, as he knew she would succeed. Then his quick and tense look asked the question: "Which?" It was as clear to her as if he shouted it from where he stood. There was not time to be lost.
- 17 The princess raised her hand, and made a short, quick movement toward the right. No one but her lover saw it. Every eye but his was fixed on the man in the arena. He turned, and with a firm and quick step he walked across the empty space. Every heart stopped beating. Every breath was held. Every eye was fixed upon that man. He went to the door on the right and opened it.



# POST-READING DISCUSSION

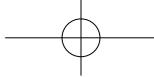
## 1 HOW TO IDENTIFY DETAILS OF THE SETTING?

What would we pay attention to when we write a continuation of an unfinished story? The plot and the characters, of course. We have learned their importance in the previous units. Now we would like to focus on the third essential element of fiction writing—the setting.

The setting consists of time and place. As a rule, the time for a story to take place is generally vague, like “once upon a time,” “long, long ago,” “in the very olden time,” and so is the place, like “in a kingdom,” “in a village,” and so on. However, there must be some detailed description of the setting related to a part of the storyline, especially the climax, which varies from story to story. Take the example of Shakespeare’s masterpiece *Romeo and Juliet*. We may mention Juliet’s balcony, where the lovers secretly meet in spite of the long-standing feud between their families, and the church, which is the only place Juliet is allowed to go outside her home and the site for both lovers to commit suicide.

In the unfinished story “The Lady or the Tiger?”, details of the setting can be identified throughout the writing. The following table has listed a part of them. Collect the rest and complete the table below.

Location	Time	Place
Para. 1	Long ago, in the very olden time...	
Para. 2		The public arena
Para. 3		A door was under the king for the accused to step out into the arena.
Para. 4		Behind one door, there was a hungry tiger.
Para. 5		Another door was under the king for a clergyman, singers, dancers, and musicians to join in the marriage ceremony.
Para. 9	One day...	
Para. 11	The day of the trial	The king and his advisers were in their places, opposite the two doors.
Para. 12		The princess sat to the right of her father.
Para. 17		The young man went to the door on the right and opened it.



## 2

### HOW DOES THE SETTING INTERACT WITH THE CHARACTERS?

The table on the previous page indicates that details of the setting may sometimes be intermingled with other information about the characters and the plot. Moreover, there seem to be more details related to the setting in the initial part of this story.

When we go to the theater to watch a play, what do we expect to see immediately after the curtain rises? The setting<sup>1</sup>. The setting on the stage is usually made up of some typical components of a certain time and place. For example, a big desk may represent the environment of an office, and if the audience see a computer on the desk, they may infer that the plot must take place in the contemporary time.

The beginning of the story “The Lady or the Tiger?” appears similar to that of a play. It takes seven paragraphs to set the scene before the plot begins. After reading these paragraphs, people come to see a very tense and bizarre atmosphere “on the stage.” This vividly constructed setting comprises:

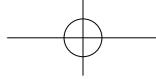
Time—a crucial moment on the day of trial held by the king;

Place—in front of the two identical doors in the arena.

As indicated in the first paragraph, such an atmosphere is attributed to the king’s tyranny. The arena is the portrayal of the king’s despotic ruling, and the two doors are the symbol of his arbitrariness. With paragraphs of showing and telling, such details of the setting help readers get a vivid image of one of the major characters—the king.

Details of the setting may also help portray other characters of the story. Like many love tragedies, the young couple in this story have to face the conflict with the overpowering force. But these two young characters look distinctive in some aspects as soon as they come on the scene. One is the princess, who sits “to the right of her father” when her lover’s case comes to trial. This information of the setting implies that she chooses not to rebel openly. Though she has managed to possess the secrets behind the doors covertly, she still faces a knotty dilemma; that is, the door with the tiger behind means the end of her lover’s life, while the door with the lady behind means the end of her love. Neither choice will result in the reunion of the couple. That has been determined before the trial by her powerful father who knows that the young man will be punished, even if he opens the right door—the two choices are equally terrible for him. The highlighted part of the setting—two doors—represents the fork of the young man’s fate after he loses the princess. Moreover, what the king thinks of as “poetic” is the cruel fact that the

1. “Setting” of a stage play is usually translated as “场景,” while “setting” of a story is translated as “情境.”



## POST-READING DISCUSSION

young man has no way to decide his own fate even though he has the chance to open either door as he pleases. Nevertheless, why does the young man hope to get a hint for life from his lover?

In a nutshell, these two young characters look more like common beings, with strong points and weak points. They are not as pure and perfect as the young couples of many other love tragedies, such as Romeo and Juliet. They are round, dynamic, and unpredictable characters within the setting of their story.

**Next, do more analysis of the setting and the characterization. For example, what do you think of the two women in and out of one of the doors? One is ranked among the loveliest in the kingdom but a commoner; the other is the princess, a beautiful, bold, and decisive girl with “the blood passed to her through long lines of cruel ancestors.” Make more comparison between them. Perhaps you will have a sudden flash of inspiration to make the lady behind one door, a foil character at present, play an unanticipated role in your continuation.**

### 3

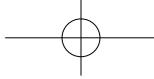
#### HOW WOULD YOU ADVANCE THE PLOT IN YOUR CONTINUATION?

**W**hat we have read as the sample essay is not the entire work. Eight paragraphs have been cut off because they are not the extension of the plot but the writer’s opinions on how to answer the question: “Which came out of the open door—the lady, or the tiger?” If we were asked to write a continuation after these paragraphs, the writing might become argumentative rather than narrative. We might need to consider which point of view should be taken, as the writer turns from third-person narration to first-person discussion in these paragraphs, with the employment of “we” and “I.”

Nevertheless, to get an entire impression of this time-honored masterpiece is absolutely necessary. Therefore, the cut-off section of the original essay is provided below.

#### The cut-off section of the original essay

- 18 Now, the point of the story is this: Did the tiger come out of that door, or did the lady?
- 19 The more we think about this question, the harder it is to answer. It involves a study of the human heart. Think of it not as if the decision of the question depended upon yourself. But as if it depended upon that hot-blooded princess, her soul at a white heat under the fires of sadness and jealousy. She had lost him, but who should have him?
- 20 How often, in her waking hours and in her dreams, had she started in wild terror, and covered her face with her hands?

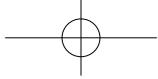


She thought of her lover opening the door on the other side of which waited the sharp teeth of the tiger!

- 21 But how much oftener had she seen him open the other door? How had she ground her teeth, and torn her hair, when she had seen his happy face as he opened the door of the lady! How her soul had burned in pain when she had seen him run to meet that woman, with her look of victory.
- 22 When she had seen the two of them get married. And when she had seen them walk away together upon their path of flowers, followed by the happy shouts of the crowd, in which her one sad cry was lost!
- 23 Would it not be better for him to die quickly, and go to wait for her in that blessed place of the future? And yet, that tiger, those cries, that blood!
- 24 Her decision had been shown quickly. But it had been made after days and nights of thought. She had known she would be asked. And she had decided what she would answer. And she had moved her hand to the right.
- 25 The question of her decision is one not to be lightly considered. And it is not for me to set myself up as the one person able to answer it. And so I leave it with all of you:
- 26 Which came out of the open door—the lady, or the tiger?

**After reading the above paragraphs, hold a discussion in class about the following questions.**

- 1) It seems that the writer regarded the effort to answer the question “the lady or the tiger” as an exploration of the human heart, or rather, of the heart of the hot-blooded princess. Do you agree with him? Why or why not?
- 2) Are there any other possibilities to advance the plot?
- 3) What will your continuation be? One with a tragic ending or a happy ending?
- 4) Would you like to develop the plot within the existing setting? Or would you prefer to create one or more new settings for further development of the plot?
- 5) Would you like to bring change to some characters? For instance, a flat character like the king might be developed into a round character; a commoner might become a hero; a foil character might be turned into a major character. If you have such ideas, how would you realize them?
- 6) What kind of theme would your continuation bring to the entire story? Is it related to the solution of the princess’s dilemma as the writer expected? Or will it be something else?



# YOUR TURN TO PRACTICE

## 1 LEARN TO USE INANIMATE SUBJECTS

When we describe feelings, we usually use the animate subjects, e.g. He looked at her. But we may think about using inanimate subjects to achieve variety, e.g. His eyes met hers as she sat there. More examples are as follows.

- Already thoughts of road accidents, muggings, and murder crowded my mind and I tortured myself with each horrific scenario until I could literally scream.
- My nerves are stretched to a breaking point.
- My legs feel kind of wobbly.
- A great sense of relief floods through me.

Now use inanimate subjects to replace animate subjects in the following sentences.

1) I was too excited to utter any words.

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2) Because the rain continued to pour down outside, the players felt more and more frustrated.

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3) Worrying about the consequences, she feels uneasy.

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4) She was worried with a frown.

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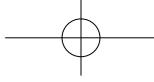
## 2 LEARN TO UNDERSTAND THE ROLE OF SETTING

Read the following excerpt from the science fiction *Rachel in Love* by Pat Murphy to see how the setting implies the development of the characters and the plot. Then discuss it with your partner.

### Excerpt

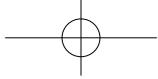
*Previous event: Aaron injects his dead daughter's consciousness into a chimpanzee named Rachel.*

1 It is a Sunday morning in summer and a small brown chimpanzee named Rachel sits on the living room floor of a remote ranch house on the edge of the Painted Desert. She is watching a Tarzan movie on television. Her hairy arms are wrapped around her knees and she rocks back and forth with suppressed excitement. She knows that her father would say



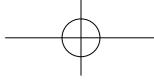
that she's too old for such childish amusements—but since Aaron is still sleeping, he can't chastise her.

- 2 On the television, Tarzan has been trapped in a bamboo cage by a band of wicked Pygmies. Rachel is afraid that he won't escape in time to save Jane from the ivory smugglers who hold her captive. The movie cuts to Jane, who is tied up in the back of a jeep, and Rachel whimpers softly to herself. She knows better than to howl: She peeked into her father's bedroom earlier, and he was still in bed. Aaron doesn't like her to howl when he is sleeping.
- 3 When the movie breaks for a commercial, Rachel goes to her father's room. She is ready for breakfast and she wants him to get up. She tiptoes to the bed to see if he is awake.
- 4 His eyes are open and he is staring at nothing. His face is pale and his lips are a purplish color. Dr. Aaron Jacobs, the man Rachel calls father, is not asleep. He is dead, having died in the night of a heart attack.
- 5 Rachel backs away from her father's body. In the living room, Tarzan is swinging across the jungle on vines, going to save Jane. Rachel ignores the television. She prowls through the house as if searching for comfort—stepping into her own small bedroom, wandering through her father's laboratory.
- 6 She thinks that perhaps she made a mistake. Perhaps her father is just sleeping. She returns to the bedroom, but nothing has changed. Her father lies open-eyed on the bed. For a long time, she huddles beside his body, clinging to his hand.
- 7 He is the only person she has ever known. He is her father, her teacher, her friend. She cannot leave him alone.
- 8 The afternoon sun blazes through the window, and still Aaron does not move. The room grows dark, but Rachel does not turn on the lights. She is waiting for Aaron to wake up. When the moon rises, its silver light shines through the window to cast a bright rectangle on the far wall.
- 9 Outside, somewhere in the barren rocky land surrounding the ranch house, a coyote lifts its head to the rising moon and wails, a thin sound that is as lonely as a train whistling through an abandoned station. Rachel joins in with a desolate howl of loneliness and grief. Aaron lies still and Rachel knows that he is dead.

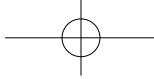


## YOUR TURN TO PRACTICE

- 10 Two weeks after Aaron's death, a black-and-white police car drives slowly up to the house. When the policemen knock on the door, Rachel hides behind the couch in the living room. They knock again, try the knob, then open the door, which she has left unlocked.
- 11 Suddenly frightened, Rachel bolts from behind the couch, bounding toward the back door. Behind her, she hears one man yell, "My God! It's a gorilla!"
- 12 By the time he pulls his gun, Rachel has run out of the back door and away into the hills. From the hills she watches as an ambulance drives up and two men in white take Aaron's body away. Even after the ambulance and the police car drive away, Rachel is afraid to go back to the house. Only after sunset does she return.
- 13 Just before dawn the next morning, she awakens to the sound of a truck jouncing down the dirt road. She peers out the window to see a pale green pickup. Sloppily stenciled in white on the door are the words: PRIMATE RESEARCH CENTER. Rachel hesitates as the truck pulls up in front of the house. By the time she has decided to flee, two men are getting out of the truck. One of them carries a rifle.
- 14 She runs out of the back door and heads for the hills, but she is only halfway to hiding when she hears a sound like a sharp intake of breath and feels a painful jolt in her shoulder. Suddenly, her legs give way and she is tumbling backward down the sandy slope, dust coating her red-brown fur, her howl becoming a whimper, then fading to nothing at all. She falls into the blackness of sleep.
- 15 The sun is up. Rachel lies in a cage in the back of the pickup truck. She is partially conscious and she feels a tingling in her hands and feet. Nausea grips her stomach and bowels. Her body aches.
- 16 Rachel can blink, but otherwise she can't move. From where she lies, she can see only the wire mesh of the cage and the side of the truck. When she tries to turn her head, the burning in her skin intensifies. She lies still, wanting to cry out, but unable to make a sound. She can only blink slowly, trying to close out the pain. But the burning and nausea stay.
- 17 The truck jounces down a dirt road, then stops. It rocks as the men get out. The doors slam. Rachel hears the tailgate open.



- 18 A woman's voice: "Is that the animal the County Sheriff wanted us to pick up?" A woman peers into the cage. She wears a white lab coat and her brown hair is tied back in a single braid. Around her eyes, Rachel can see small wrinkles, etched by years of living in the desert. The woman doesn't look evil. Rachel hopes that the woman will save her from the men in the truck.
- 19 "Yeah. It should be knocked out for at least another half hour. Where do you want it?"
- 20 "Bring it into the lab where we had the rhesus monkeys. I'll keep it there until I have an empty cage in the breeding area."
- 21 Rachel's cage scrapes across the bed of the pickup. She feels each bump and jar as a new pain. The man swings the cage onto a cart and the woman pushes the cart down a concrete corridor. Rachel watches the walls pass just a few inches from her nose.
- 22 The lab contains rows of cages in which small animals sleepily move. In the sudden stark light of the overhead fluorescent bulbs, the eyes of white rats gleam red.
- 23 With the help of one of the men from the truck, the woman handles Rachel onto a lab table. The metal surface is cold and hard, painful against Rachel's skin. Rachel's body is not under her control; her limbs will not respond. She is still frozen by the tranquilizer, able to watch, but that is all. She cannot protest or plead for mercy.
- 24 Rachel watches with growing terror as the woman pulls on rubber gloves and fills a hypodermic needle with a clear solution. "Mark down that I'm giving her the standard test for tuberculosis; this eyelid should be checked before she's moved in with the others. I'll add thiabendazole to her feed for the next few days to clean out any intestinal worms. And I suppose we might as well de-flea her as well," the woman says. The man grunts in response.
- 25 Expertly, the woman closes one of Rachel's eyes. With her open eye, Rachel watches the hypodermic needle approach. She feels a sharp pain in her eyelid. In her mind, she is howling, but the only sound she can manage is a breathy sigh.
- 26 The woman sets the hypodermic aside and begins methodically spraying Rachel's fur with a cold, foul-smelling liquid. A drop strikes Rachel's eye and burns. Rachel blinks, but she cannot



## YOUR TURN TO PRACTICE

lift a hand to rub her eye. The woman treats Rachel with casual indifference, chatting with the man as she spreads Rachel's legs and sprays her genitals. "Looks healthy enough. Good breeding stock."

- 27 Rachel moans, but neither person notices. At last, they finish their torture, put her in a cage, and leave the room. She closes her eyes, and the darkness returns.

Based on your discussion, fill in the blank boxes in the following table with your comments on how the setting implies the development of the characters and the plot.

Time	Place	Implication for the story development
A Sunday morning in summer	A <u>remote ranch house</u> on the edge of the Painted Desert	
	In <u>the living room</u> , a Tarzan movie on television A scene of the movie: Tarzan has been trapped in a bamboo cage by a band of wicked Pygmies...	
	Another scene of the movie: Tarzan is swinging across the jungle on vines, going to save Jane.	
The afternoon sun blazes through the window... The room grows dark... When the moon rises, its silver light shines through the window to cast a bright rectangle on the far wall.	Outside, somewhere in the <u>barren rocky land</u> surrounding the ranch house, a coyote lifts its head to the rising moon and wails...	
Just before dawn the next morning	In <u>a truck</u> jouncing down the dirt road	
The sun is up.	In <u>a cage</u> in the back of the pickup truck <u>The lab</u> contains rows of cages in which small animals sleepily move. In the sudden stark light of the overhead fluorescent bulbs, the eyes of white rats gleam red.	



# Major Assignment

Write a continuation for the unfinished story “The Lady or the Tiger?”. The length of your continuation should be at least 600 words.

## SUGGESTED STEPS OF YOUR WRITING TASK

1  
STEP

### Brainstorming

- Reread the original carefully.
- Think about how to develop a significant theme through a well-conceived continuation.
- Consider whether the plot will be advanced along with the existing setting. Consider whether it is necessary to create one or more subsequent settings.
- Think about how to bring an exciting development to the characters, and how to enrich the plot with more twists and turns. Exchange your ideas with your classmates.
- Jot down the details as they come to your mind.

2  
STEP

### First draft

- Write the continuation based on your brainstorming.

3  
STEP

### Peer review

- Exchange first drafts with one or two classmates.
- Do peer review by completing the table on the next page, and then have a discussion with your peer reviewer(s).
- Pay attention to the interaction of the setting with the plot development and characterization in the entire work. Make sure that the writing is a consistent continuation of the original both in content and in style.

4  
STEP

### Revision and proofreading

- Revise your writing by referring to the comments made by your peer reviewer(s).
- Check spelling, collocations, and word usage.

5  
STEP

### Submitting your work to your teacher

## Suggested Focuses for Peer Review

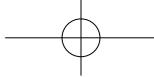
Title of the writing: \_\_\_\_\_

Author: \_\_\_\_\_ Reviewer: \_\_\_\_\_

Standard	Evaluation scale	Focused comments
<b>Length and succinctness</b>		
The writing is appropriately long and without redundancy.	1   2   3   4   5	
The writing is neat, legible, and presented in an appropriate format.	1   2   3   4   5	
<b>Content</b>		
The writing is a consistent continuation of the original in content.	1   2   3   4   5	
New effort is made in developing the original setting.	1   2   3   4   5	
The personality of the characters in the original is strikingly revealed.	1   2   3   4   5	
The plot of the original is successfully advanced.	1   2   3   4   5	
<b>Organization and style</b>		
The style of organization is close to that of the original.	1   2   3   4   5	
Techniques such as flashback are appropriately used.	1   2   3   4   5	
<b>Language</b>		
The writing is free of misspellings; words are capitalized correctly; sentences are punctuated accurately without run-on sentences or fragments.	1   2   3   4   5	
The tenses are used correctly.	1   2   3   4   5	
The language flows naturally with effective wording.	1   2   3   4   5	

**Note:** 1 =fail; 2=unsatisfactory; 3=pass; 4=good; 5=excellent

**Global suggestions for revision:** (to be written on a piece of paper)



## A Continuation of “The Lady, or the Tiger?” (Version A)

by *Li Haishan* (李海珊)

The moment the young man opened the right door, all the people gathering around the arena held their breath. A grave atmosphere was pervasive.

The door was opened, and out came a pretty lady.

“Great, a happy ending.”

“The young man must be complacent about his luck.”

“Wow, the lady is marvelously fascinating.”

“They are indeed cut out for each other, perfectly matched.”

A buzz of happy chatter permeated the arena.

“Now, start the marriage ceremony.” The king’s august voice stilled the clamor, and then a rapturous ovation burst out from the crowd.

Contrary to other people’s ecstasy, the young man, emotionless and indifferent, merely stood there. It seemed that there was nothing to do with him no matter what happened around him.

“I know you can’t endure this kind of situation. Why didn’t you tell me to choose the other door? I don’t want you to suffer such pain, such sadness. Is the destiny pulling our legs?” The young man focused his eyes on the princess, with a mute yell full of gloom in his heart. He hoped that the princess could turn to look at him, but obviously, she was running away from his gaze.

The princess tilted her head back to hold back her tears, intentionally hiding her upset. She felt restless, and vaguely sensed that something unexpected was happening.

Out of the blue, the young man raised his voice and said to the king, “Your Majesty, I wanna make a bet with you.”

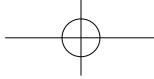
“What is that? Go ahead,” the king replied.

“If I defeat the tiger, please betroth the princess to me.” The young man continued without any hesitation or fear.

“Oh, no, you can’t. You can’t do that.” The princess screamed out, and rushed to the front of the grandstand, struggling to stop her lover’s meaningless behavior.

“You can’t! No! Stop!” Spewing tears continually blurred her eyes. Undoubtedly all the people were shocked by the man’s incredible decision.

“Sure? Are you sure?” the king asked the young man twice.



## STUDENT ESSAY

“Yes, Your Majesty!” Without saying anything more, the young man walked toward the left door firmly.

All of a sudden, the tiger snapped at the young man as the door was opened. In the nick of time the young man leaped back several paces swiftly, and the tiger landed in front of him. With a thunderous roar, the tiger rushed to him again. The moment the tiger intended to dig its paws into his shoulders, the young man quickly rolled over the ground underneath the tiger and leaped onto its back. Exerting all his strength, he pressed its head into a pit which was dug by the tiger seconds ago. At this juncture, the young man relentlessly clutched the tiger’s ruff with his left hand, rapidly freed his right hand as an iron mallet, and then, with all his might, began to pound. After sixty or seventy blows, the tiger lay motionless, panting weakly. Blood streamed from its eyes, mouth, nose, and ears.

“Unbelievable! The tiger is dying.”

“How can he do that? Defeating a tiger without any weapon!”

“He must be the bravest man in our kingdom.”

No wonder hearty rounds of clapping erupted from the crowd with yells and screams. The king was absolutely shocked by the scene that happened in front of him.

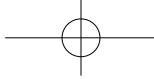
“You are an amazing guy. I admire you,” the king applauded for his bravery and said.

The princess couldn’t wait to hug her hero, and ran to him fast.

“Thanks, God. Fortunately, you’re alright.” She hugged him tightly.

“It is all because of you, dear. I can’t live without you,” the young man, entirely exhausted, replied. The two clung to each other with the blessing of the world.

Two days later, the young commoner and the princess walked down the aisle, with happiness and contentment flowing through their souls.



## COMMENTS

The student author does a good job of developing the main characters and the plot within the existing setting in her continuation. She turns the arena into a battle field between human nature and tyranny. The progress of the situation goes beyond the control of the despot, soon after the young man refuses the chance to survive by accepting the wedding arranged against his will and requests to open the other door to face the fierce tiger. Both lovers demonstrate their sincerity in love and exceptional courage in their pursuit, and the unexpected perfect ending means the triumph of good over evil. The continuation adds an excellent climax and a thrilling theme to the original.

In the continuation, the princess is developed into a fairly round character. Though she is the apple of the eye of the king, she follows her own heart and loves a commoner. In the previous part, she is portrayed as a hot-blooded princess, with part of the cruel nature inherited from her ancestors. She feels jealous even at seeing her lover talking with the lovely lady. What confronts her is a test of her heart, to see whether her love is selfish possession or selfless devotion. The continuation just hits the mark in showing how her deep affection for the young man leads her to discard jealousy and decide that she would rather be lonely herself than send her lover to his death. The preceding part tells us that the princess secretly loves a young man who is the best-looking and bravest in the land. The continuation proves this point—the young man is really the bravest in the country.

The author uses dynamic description effectively. The scene in which the young man fights against the tiger is vividly depicted with colorful wording. Nevertheless, it seems that more attention has been paid to actions than to thoughts. For example, the struggle of the inner world of the princess could be further developed. The preceding part hints that the princess hates the lady behind one of the doors “with all the intensity of the blood passed to her through long lines of cruel ancestors,” but why is this hatred gone so easily? Readers expect to know more about what she thinks during the transformation.

What do you think of the above comment? Is there anything you would like to argue or add? Write it down.

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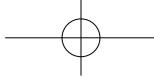
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## A Continuation of “The Lady, or the Tiger?” (Version B)

by Zhu Weitao (朱伟涛)

Screams of terror came from the crowd. The terrible green eyes were fixed on the handsome man. There came the tiger, which was almost starved to death. The people were sad and nervous. Some people held their farm tools tightly.

Different from the previous situation, the tiger didn't jump on the man at once. It just watched him, which made the people confused. Some of them loosened their hands slightly. The man was shocked at first and he thought he would die. He then looked at the princess with fear and anger, “Why?”

The princess, with similar personalities to the king, was smiling in tears. She said to herself, “No one can be your wife except me! If I couldn't, no one else could!” Her cruel smile indicated that she had betrayed him.

But the man was not only brave but smart. He immediately concentrated on the tough situation. He stared at the tiger, whose eyes were fixed on him tightly. He was a bit frightened and confused, “Why hasn't it killed me?” Then the man looked at the tiger carefully and noticed a scar on its left hind leg. Something flashed in his brain, but he couldn't remember what it was.

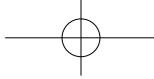
Unexpectedly, the tiger roared and jumped on him. Blue veins stood out on people's hands. Some people even closed their eyes as they could not bear to see such a handsome man die.

Screams didn't come out. Instead, the tiger pushed him down and began to lick his face. Something vague in his head became clear. When he looked into its eyes, he collected the fragments of his memory and shouted happily, “It's you!”

When he was a child, he enjoyed playing in wild mountains. One day, when he was having a good time, he heard some noises in the distance. Driven by curiosity, he got closer and found a little tiger caught in a trap with its left hind leg bleeding.

“Are you...OK?” Out of compassion, he went up to it. The little tiger glared at him and roared in terror. “I'm not going to hurt you. Wait a moment.” He soon ran away. The little tiger struggled but all efforts were in vain. Later, he came back with a stick and a stone. “Don't worry,” the boy said.

After a long time, he managed to help it out. He found a cave to let it in and covered its wound with herbs. They gradually became good friends and the boy went to the mountain every day. Sadly, he had to move to another town weeks later and cried hard when he said goodbye to it. The tiger was



very upset but it watched him leave reluctantly with blessing.

When he came to himself, he found that he was sitting on the ground and the tiger was licking his face happily. He smiled and touched its head gently as before, and said, "Let's have a big meal later."

He thought a lot when he looked at the tiger and the princess. Feeling heartbroken and disappointed, he bowed to the king again and said, "Your Majesty, I promise that I will never be the lover of your daughter and I will leave the country right away."

After hearing those words, the king sighed in relief and said, "You are exactly a brave man. I will try my best to grant you a wish."

"No, thanks, Your Majesty," he continued. "I just want to talk to the princess for the last time."

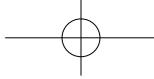
Looking at her pale face, he took a deep breath and said bitterly, "The tiger who is trying to kill me saves me because of love; the lady who I love with all my heart and soul is trying to kill me because of love, too. What an irony!"

The princess cried hard as he went on, "Goodbye, my lover; goodbye, my friend; goodbye, Your Highness! Farewell!" He then left with the tiger and gave her the cold shoulder, leaving her wailing and shouting, "No!"

## COMMENTS

This continuation is a remarkable brainchild of a Chinese freshman after reading the original. Apparently, his answer goes beyond the expectation of the writer of the original, who considered that the answer to the lady-or-tiger question was the privilege of the princess only, and the young man was so passive a character that he had no right to change his fate. The continuation diverts the exploration of the original essay from what is human heart to what is love.

Yes, the princess makes her choice. For her, love is a desire of possession, and the two doors represent two possibilities: to sacrifice her lover's life for her own desire or to sacrifice her desire for his life? She chooses the former because she thinks that no one could be the young man's wife except her, and "if I couldn't, no one else could!" With this sharp revelation, the author of the continuation successfully differentiates love from selfish desire.



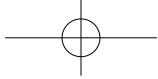
## STUDENT ESSAY

It seems that the plot would develop toward a sad ending—the so-called judgment in the arena would become the cooperative murder of the father and the daughter with the same evil blood. However, the student author shows that human fate should not be arbitrarily controlled by evil forces, for justice will assert itself anywhere for those who stick to goodness. As for the young man, the dangerous situation dissipates soon after he opens the wrong door and out comes the tiger. Dramatically, the tiger does not kill him because it recognizes that he used to be its lifesaver when it was a trapped small tiger. The tiger with a grateful heart, though an animal, dwarfs the selfish princess. Thus the theme of the whole story is revealed by the young man's words to the princess before he leaves the arena with his true friend—the tiger: "The tiger who is trying to kill me saves me because of love; the lady who I love with all my heart and soul is trying to kill me because of love, too. What an irony!" The development is quite consistent with the previous part of the story, and it successfully leads readers to see the strength of genuine love and justice. With love and justice, the door of death becomes the door of life.

Rhetorically, the flashback has been inserted just right, which brings in a different setting—in wild mountains during the hero's childhood. It suddenly turns the young man into a round character, rather than the simple image of a miserable, abandoned lover. Besides, the king's answer—"You are exactly a brave man. I will try my best to grant you a wish"—foreshadows the smooth exit of the young man and the tiger.

Despite merits above, this writing needs further improvement, and we would like to mention the weak response of the ending to the first seven paragraphs of the original where the irrational juridical practice of the country has been elaborated before introducing the couple of lovers. It would satisfy readers if the dramatic event brings any change to the system and the country.

What are your opinions? Discuss with your classmates.



## 修辞层面

本单元要求同学们续写的文章“The Lady or the Tiger?”，也许是有史以来第一篇由作者自己布置“读后续写”任务的文章。本单元截取了这篇文章的前十七段，供同学们阅读后进行续写。本单元的文章仅让读者读一个故事的前期发展，在即将进入高潮（climax）时戛然而止，留给读者一个巨大的悬念。这意味着故事最精彩、最彰显主题的部分要由学生自己完成。

许多同学读完前文，会认为续写任务无非是让他们接着编故事，并没有感到有多大难度。有的续写作文写到，正当青年要去打开命运之门的时候，一阵怪风刮起，把他和公主都裹挟到了另一个国度；还有的学生作文提出设想，说那位青年是当代某作品中的主人公穿越去的，然后又说这些都是一场梦……但是，这样的续写是无法和前文连起来读的。读者的大脑里还存留着前文精心营造的情境（setting），而随心所欲的编写则让这样的情境突然烟消云散了，后面新添的情节再精彩，读者也会问，前面为什么要那样写呢？这样的续写错在把读过的内容当成了可以自由发挥的话题，而对其中的细节视而不见，没有紧扣前文，必然会导致主题分裂。

所以，叙述文的三大要素——情节、人物、情境，在续写时都不能被忽视。情节的创新和人物形象的拓展，都要以情境的连贯为前提。若将“The Lady or the Tiger?”这个故事的情境高度浓缩，我们会看到：

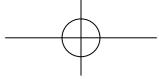
时间——古代封建专制时代一个生离死别的时刻；

地点——竞技场上一对情侣所面对的两扇门。

另外，情境设置与人物塑造是相辅相成的。竞技场是国王所创立的体制的缩影，两扇门是他随心所欲的象征，这一令人毛骨悚然的情境告诉读者，这个国王不同于封建社会一般的家长，他对于子女不仅拥有行为否决权，而且拥有生杀权。他让自己的女儿去选择的（假设他默许了女儿对两扇门的暗中调查）根本不是放不放弃恋爱的自由，而是给不给必然要失去的情侣一条生路。

公主坐在竞技场中仅次于国王的位置上，尽管她的命运也要受到专制的父王的掌控，但她并不是传统爱情故事中追求自由幸福的佳人形象——那样的形象是比较单纯的；这个故事强调了家世对她的影响——公主的性格传承了祖上的残忍。她爱那位青年，但难以容忍其他少女夺走她所爱的人。在故事的情境中她面临两难的选择，这个选择与朱丽叶、祝英台所面临的选择不同。后者的选择是为爱而死还是弃爱而生，而前者的选择则是在放弃所爱的人已成必然的时候，是让所爱的人死去还是活下来。她并没有对父亲的意志表示出反抗，文中没有任何暗示她会殉情。当然，我们也可以认为她根本没有屈服，而是成竹在胸，有了反抗的计划。

读后续写中的  
拓展与创新



那位青年无法决定自己的命运，两种选择对于他来说都是残酷的。那么他为什么要用眼神向公主求助？是出于逃生的愿望，还是把生看作进一步反抗的起点？

公主和青年都不是凭空拔高的完美人物，而是实实在在的社会地位不同的凡人，在竞技场的两扇门所高度凝缩的专制凌压人性的情境中，遇到了实实在在的抉择问题。

那这个没有说完的故事的主题是什么呢？所截取的开头部分并没有点明，这个工作就留给了读者。读者交出的答卷也就给故事赋予了可能的主题。

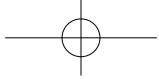
现在我们可以来衡量自己的续写任务了。后续情节往哪个方向发展可以由我们自己决定，但前提是要和前文一脉相承；对人物性格可以大胆开拓，增添新的亮眼之处，即使是国王这样原本很扁平的人物，也可以在新的事件中受到震撼，性格发生根本的变化。同时还要考虑：情节和人物是在原有的情境中拓展，还是添加新的情境？

以上这些都是写作技巧层面的问题，而一篇好的续写作品，还要在艺术层次上有更高的追求——怎样构思一个令人震撼的主题？

我们可以这样问自己，在一个世俗的情境里，是否只能看到世俗的答案？比如：公主牺牲自己的爱情，把幸福让给所嫉妒的美女，由此给所爱的人一条生路；或是公主误导所爱的人以身饲虎，情愿让他结束生命，也不结束自己对爱情的占有。除此之外，如果人们一直坚信人性能战胜兽性，善良能战胜残忍，那么，会不会有超越世俗的可能呢？本单元所选的两篇学生作文作出了很好的探索。前一篇是着墨于男主人公在与老虎决斗中展现的无畏无敌的过人素质；另一篇对情节的开拓则更为神奇：男主人公对老虎曾有救命之恩，因此处于极度饥饿状态的老虎不但没有伤害他，反而援助他，从而展现了高尚人性的力量。前一篇中公主在内心激烈斗争之后展现了忠贞于爱情，宁愿自我牺牲的一面，与祖辈传下来的残忍作了诀别，最终赢得了幸福；后一篇中公主的自私、残忍暴露无遗，最后被男主人公唾弃。就创作风格而言，前一篇是在原有情境中拓展，而后一篇通过插叙添加了新的情境——数年前与老虎邂逅的荒山野岭，老虎也由情境的组成部分变成了一个重要的“人物”。

也有的续写会着力于对陪衬人物的拓展，例如，门后的那位美女，会不会扮演一个改变局势的角色？场边的观众，会不会总是旁观起哄、任人愚弄的群氓？

好了，说到这里，对本单元的读后续写任务，同学们应该是心里有数了，也许早就跃跃欲试了。



## 情境的设置

情境 (setting) 作为与人物和情节并驾齐驱的要素, 却常常遭到忽略。情境设置好了, 有了时间, 有了地点, 人物的塑造和情节的发展就有了根源。下面我们来谈谈情境设置的不同手法。

一、时间的设置大至恢弘的历史时期, 小至具体的分分秒秒。

如果作品要反映宏大的主题, 就必须要有个宏大的历史背景。例如托尔斯泰的小说《战争与和平》, 就是以俄罗斯历史上最壮丽的一页——1812年抗法卫国战争为背景的。

有的作品需要指出故事发生在一年中的哪一段时间, 如不同的季节、节日 (新年、火把节、泼水节、万圣节、圣诞节等) 或重要的日子 (生日、结婚纪念日、战争纪念日等)。例如, 短篇小说《礼物》 (“The Present”) 将情境设置在老妇人 80 岁生日的那一天。大寿之际, 本应是全家人热热闹闹共庆生日, 可是最心爱的二女儿前些年死在了手术台上, 大女儿整日事务繁多, 最后并没有现身, 而是送来了一张支票, 让老太太失望之至。

故事中有些情节描述则需要交代一天中具体的时间段, 是白天、黑夜, 还是凌晨或黄昏。这有助于展现人物的心情, 或多或少地暗示或推动情节的发展。如科幻小说《别让我走》 (*Never Let Me Go*) 讲述的是克隆人的悲惨命运: 没有父母的照料, 生来就是为了捐献器官。其中对情境有这样的描写:

It's slow and late night and American, and there's a bit that keeps coming round when Judy sings: "Never let me go... Oh baby, baby... Never let me go..." I was eleven then, and hadn't listened to much music, but this song, it really got to me.

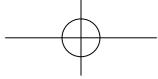
这一段细腻地描写了“我”的心情, 并为后文克隆人逃脱不了的生命消逝作下铺垫。

故事情节中的时间需要快进或减缓。有的作品紧盯住一段流逝的时间, 如凯特·肖邦 (Kate Chopin) 的短篇小说《一个小时的故事》 (“The Story of an Hour”), 讲述女主人公 Mrs. Mallard 得知丈夫在铁路事故中去世后一个小时内的心路历程, 先是悲伤, 然后居然发展到极度兴奋, 觉得自己自由了, 从身体到灵魂都可以得到解放。然而信息有误, 丈夫并没有离世, 导致她失望至死。时间上高度凝缩的情境, 实现了对女主人公种种心境的高度聚光, 侧面反映了女性内心深处对平等权利的渴望。

时间作为情境的一个维度, 也包括了与事件有关的不同因素。例如, 莎士比亚把《罗密欧与朱丽叶》中具有高度震撼力的情节, 安排在南欧的盛夏。气候这一因素可以影响人物的心情甚至生活态度。

二、地点的设置可以从宽泛的地点到具体的屋内陈设。

宽泛意义上的地点, 包括某个国家、州、城镇等, 其背后的社会、政治



及文化环境涉及内容广泛，对于故事人物的价值观、其在家庭及社会所扮演的角色都有着潜移默化的影响。

伊迪丝·华顿 (Edith Wharton) 的作品《纯真时代》(*Age of Innocence*) 所描述的爱情悲剧发生在 19 世纪后半叶的纽约，小说的开头是对豪华的剧院里上演歌剧《浮士德》的盛况的描写，一下子就把读者带入了那座城市的上流社会。那里立法周全，人们受着传统道德的约束。出生于世家，身为律师的纽兰 (Newland) 就生活于这样的情境，在一场没有爱的婚姻里做了一个尽职的丈夫和父亲。直到妻子离世后，已届老年的他在善解人意的儿子引领下，去拜访心中思念的昔日恋人，但到了楼下后，纽兰又选择悄然离去，让爱永远停留在纯真的记忆中。他始终没有从自己所处的情境中跨出来。

地点的设置可以大到对自然环境的描述，如山川、河流、森林等，会起到烘托气氛的作用，暗示故事情节的发展或者表现一种反讽；也可以小到对室内陈设的细致描写，先让读者漫不经心地读过去，继而认识到某个细节原来埋下了情境上的伏笔。

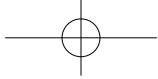
如短篇侦探小说《珍珠项链失窃案》(“Lord Peter’s Party Trick”) 中，描写了室内的圣诞装饰：

...but he did insist on old-fashioned Christmas. He called in the servant to hang holly and mistletoe upon the cubist electric fittings, loaded the steel sideboard with delicacies, and even had the radiators removed from the modernist grates and installed wood fires.

后来窃贼就是把偷来的珍珠放在槲寄生 (mistletoe) 上，让人误以为是果实。

对地点的描写也给了作者展现才华的机会。下面的例子摘自克里斯蒂娜·斯特德 (Christina Stead) 的小说《雷德施尔兹城堡的客人》(“Guest of the Redshields”)，讲述了生活窘迫的诗人 (“I”) 意外受邀到该城堡做客。庭院里布局巧妙，有不少精巧的机关；诗人无意中启动机关，由阳台进入花园。通过对花园的光影、颜色、声音的描写，侧面反映出主人华贵而精致的生活。描写细致入微、有静有动，让读者有身临其境之感：

A rolled-up ladder was attached to the balcony, and at a careless tap of my cigarette, it unwound and invited me to descend directly into the park. The full but cloudy moon shone irregularly on the cocks combed glades, rounded knolls, ideal vistas, terraces, and wildernesses sweetly artficed, which appeared momentarily along the serpentine paths; and here fountains, a well of dark sound, a jet of snow, and there watercourses, dulcet with pools, resonant with pebbles, with flute and lyre, descanted in the woods, in an hour I returned, wound up my ladder, closed—the shutters and thought of sleeping.



各种类型的情境并非截然分开，很多都是交错在一起的。有的情境描写需要展示视觉、听觉、味觉、嗅觉及感觉上的体验，有的情境则只需要粗略或含蓄的描述，有些名著的书名本身就是对情境的刻画，例如《静静的顿河》(*And Quiet Flows the Don*)、《艰难时世》(*Hard Times*)、《呼啸山庄》(*Wuthering Heights*)等。

## 语言层面

如果你想告诉读者：“我和几个朋友先凑合住着，等找到房子就搬家”，用英语怎么表达呢？也许你会在大脑里搜索出一个英语副词来表示“凑合”；其实，你也可以用虚的词汇手段，即英语中的词汇屈折手段来表达这个实在的意思：

I'm living with some friends until I can find a house.

这个句子中的进行时态形式，就是用来表示暂时的状况的。在英语中，进行时表暂时，一般时表长久。进行时 'm living 在这句话里就有“凑合”的意思。

再来看一个例子。如果说“玛丽通常暑假打工，但今年暑假没干活”，“今年暑假”的情况，便是个不同于常规的情况，具有暂时性，这句话可以用现在进行时的否定式来表示：

Mary usually has a summer job, but she isn't working this summer.

如果我们把 isn't working 理解成“没有正在干活”，肯定说不通。

进行时还能表示对未来的打算，如 John is getting up at six tomorrow morning 这句话里，就没有正在进行的动作，只能理解为“约翰打算明早六点起床”。

介词也是一种虚词，同样可以表达汉语中要用实词来表达的意思。示例：

They worked long hours on meager food, in cold caves, by dim lamps.

这句话中的三个介词分别含有“吃”“住”“点(灯)”的意思，用中文说就是：他们每天长时间工作，吃的是粗茶淡饭，住的是冰冷的窑洞，点的是暗淡的油灯。

看来，要写出地道的英语，一定要注意摸索如何拿虚词或词的屈折变化来说实实在在的事。

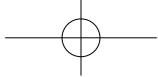
下面这两个错句摘自学生作文，如果把它们编成改错题，肯定难不倒了解英语基本语法的同学。然而，许多写作老师却发现，大学生在写英语作文时仍经常会犯以下错误：

\*My roommate couldn't answers the question.

\*Fortune will always smiles on us.

虚词实意

防微杜渐：  
情态动词或  
助动词后面  
动词不变形



### 英语标点拾趣

像第二句这样情态动词和动词之间插入了一个状语的情况下，出现动词变形错误的频率就更高了。希望同学们都能留意这个问题，在写作时经常提醒自己：位于情态动词或助动词后面的动词不会有屈折变化！

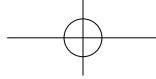
学了很多年英语，同学们对英语标点的用法，可说是信心满满了。但也有些微妙的地方，未必人人都搞得清楚。

比如，在并列结构中，末尾的并列项前面需加连接词 and/but/or，而连接词和前面的并列项之间，是不是要用逗号隔开呢？这就有两大流派。一种认为这是必须的，例如：I'll go with my girlfriend, Jane, and my dog. 这里 and 和前面一项之间，就由逗号隔开。由于这曾经是牛津大学出版社对稿件的书写规范，因此叫做牛津逗号 (Oxford comma)。不过后来牛津大学出版社更改了规范，不鼓励使用牛津逗号了。这是因为学者们发现，牛津逗号可能会产生歧义。就拿刚才那个例子来说，跟说话人一起走的是一人一狗还是两人一狗呢？都有可能，因为 Jane 可以看成是 my girlfriend 的同位语，也可以看成是另一个姑娘。如果是两人一狗，在 and 前面不加逗号则可消除歧义：I'll go with my girlfriend, Jane and my dog.

那么，是不是不用牛津逗号就不会出现歧义了呢？学者们杜撰了一个例子：有位作家想在自己的著作扉页题写一句话，他提笔写道：To my parents, Ayn Rand and God. 一些读者把 Ayn Rand and God 看成了 my parents 的同位语，就困惑地想，这位作家真的是上帝之子吗？由此看来，两种规范都不能完全消除歧义。

现在牛津逗号反而成了美国出版界的偏好，也称为哈佛逗号 (Harvard comma) 或序列逗号 (serial comma)。我们这套教材也提倡在作文中使用牛津逗号，当然仍要注意，如果有产生歧义的可能 (比较罕见)，and 等连接词的前面也可不加逗号。

还有一个有趣的规范值得一提，就是在汉语和英式英语中，如果句子中只有一部分是用引号隔开的，那么跟引号内的内容无关的逗号或句号就要放在引号之外。例如：People called him "a sore loser". 这句话最后的句号表示全句的结束，因此放在引号外面。美式英语则不同，即使逗号或句号不属于引号内的内容，也要放到引号之内，如刚才那个句子就要写成 People called him "a sore loser."



## My Recent Writing Companions

Dear fellows, it is near the end of the journey. Have you enjoyed it? Fill in the boxes below to share with others what you have done or learned!



### Good words and expressions I have used in my writing

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### Other gems in my treasure box

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