

"How to Say It: Choice Words, Phrases, Sentences, and Paragraphs for Every Situation" 研讀心得

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書 摘

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Book	How to Say It: Choice Words, Phrases, Sentences, and Paragraphs for Every Situation
Author	Maggio, Rosalie
Publisher	Penguin Group USA
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Paperback	512
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Content Introduction	<p>It is a practical, easy-to-use book that tells people what to say and how to say it. Most of us are capable of writing a fine letter, but few of us have the time and mental energy to deal with the various letters that life today seems to demand of us, especially since all of them should have been written yesterday. There are fifty letter topics available for the users. The users may follow or adapt the guidelines given by the book.</p>

Abstract

In our daily life, we always have to write or say something. This handbook, *How to Say It*, introduces 50 kinds of documents in our daily life. It is a practical, easy-to-use book that tells people what to say and how to say it. Most of us are capable of writing a fine letter, but few of us have the time and mental energy to deal with the various letters that life today seems to demand of us, especially since all of them should have been written yesterday. There are fifty letter topics available for the users. The users may follow or adapt the guidelines given by the book. The book is not only a good handbook for English teachers, but also gives chances to those curious students to know how to express their feelings by writing. In the first place, the readers can check the fifty different topics which in the table of contents, such as e-mails, notes and acknowledgments. Besides, the readers may check the appendix I to know the way to deal with the mechanics of letter-writing, for instance, the way to address an envelope and what kind of stationery to use. Moreover, the readers may know the content of their letter in the Appendix II, such as writing tips, grammar and usage and frequently misspelled or confused words. Each chapter offers appropriate forms for people to write, and gives advices to people in their daily life.

Keywords: handbook, love letter, invitation, cover letter, resumes.

Different kinds of social and business interactions take place in our daily life. The ability to utilize words becomes very important to everyone. Not only for keeping relationships among people, but also helping people to communicate with each other. The book, *How to Say It*, is such a handbook to improve students' writing ability. Besides, it is a good source for teachers to do their researches. The book provides various topics, from informal notes, emails, and invitations to businesslike résumés. I would choose some chapters which are practical and attractive to the readers.

In the book, each chapter would show "How to Say It," and "What Not to Say" . Besides, each chapter also offers useful words, phrases and sentences to the readers. Sometimes, examples and samples would be offered. In the first place, the readers can check the fifty different topics which

in the table of contents, such as e-mails, notes and acknowledgments. Besides, the readers may check the appendix I to know the way to deal with the mechanics of letter-writing, for instance, the way to address an envelope and what kind of stationery to use. Moreover, the readers may know the content of their letter in the Appendix II, such as writing tips, grammar and usage and frequently misspelled or confused words. Each chapter offers appropriate forms for people to write, and gives advices to people in their daily life.

Following paragraphs are some categories which people deal with in daily situations.

I. Love letters:

Love letters always stir up students' passion to pick up their pens to write to someone. According to the handbook, love letters are difficult to write. For people want their love letters to be perfect. However, there is no perfect instance to show people that what kind of the love letter is the perfect one. The handbook gives some advices which "What Not to Say" when people write their love letters, such as "Don't use language that isn't natural to you." And "Don't ask another person to read your letter before you send it to see if it is 'okay.'" The only people who know if the letter is good are you and the one you love." (290) According to love letters are such private and subtle writings, we cannot find a certain frame to set up a standard.

In this chapter, it also gives some tips to the readers, such as: "Write from the heart." And "Keep the other person in mind as you write." (291) Love letters are divided into two items, one is given to someone who returns your love, in other words, he or she knows who you are and loves you. But another one is written to those who you are asking for love, it means, he or she doesn't love you. There is an advice for the readers:

"Special Situations

When writing to someone who doesn't (yet!) love you as you love them, be brief rather than long..., you wouldn't tell a story from your childhood that has high meaning for you. Your goal is much like that of a letter of application: you don't aim to get the job, you want to get the interview. You present yourself as a warm, bright, funny, interesting person so that you can keep the person's interest long enough to present yourself as a candidate for their love." (293)

People can find more inspirations from some sources, such as buying some greeting cards, reading love letters from the world's great lovers. The first step to create our own article is copying other's work. However, this is just the process

After all, love letters should show the feelings from people's hearts, and deliver love to each other. People may look up some quotations from the books, but tell he or she the truly feelings.

II. Invitations:

People always have something to celebrate. Before we join the party, we send invitations to our family members and friends. Such as birthdays, baby showers, weddings or funerals, each happy and sad life events marked by different situations, people share their happiness and sadness to each other, and they want to let others to memorize the moment.

The handbook reminds the reader to give the occasion, the date, time and the address. (278) However, if people want to cancel the event, the chapter also gives some useful advices:

“To cancel or postpone an invitation, follow the original invitation in format, style, and quality of paper. If there's time the announcement is printed or engraved as the invitation was.... Urgent situations, of course, require the telephone. To cancel an invitation that you have already accepted, call your host at once and then follow up with a note apologizing for the change of plans. ” (282)

If people want to send an invitation to a family with young children, they have to list their first name on the envelope on the line underneath the parents' names; never add “and family.” Showing respect for our guests, even if they are only children.

There is a guideline which offered by the handbook:

“...four to six weeks before a formal dinner, ball, dance, charity benefit, reception, or tea; two to four weeks before a reception or cocktail party; three weeks before a bar mitzvah or bat mitzvah; two weeks before a casual dinner or get-together.” (280)

III. Cover letters, Letters of Application and Résumés:

When people find their jobs, they have to prepare for several documents: cover letters, letters of application and résumés. What are they? The handbook unfolds, “*résumé*, a businesslike summary of your work history, education, and career goals; *cover letter*, a brief letter written to

accompany a résumé; *letter of application*, a combination cover letter and brief, informal résumé.” (387)

Cover letters, also called transmittal letters, usually accompany résumés, application forms, manuscripts, documents, product literature, payments, charitable contributions, contracts, reports, samples, data and other materials which can prove a person’s abilities. There are some advices from the handbook:

“Double-check names, titles, and addresses for accuracy; this is crucial when applying for a position or sending a manuscript to an editor.

Be brief... A good cover letter is usually not more than one page long (five or six paragraphs) and it will make the reader want to set it aside quickly in order to get to the enclosure.”

(139)

A letter of application is a powerful material to persuade the employer to hire a person. It is usually a combination cover letter and résumé. The writer has to tell the reader that why he or she has to get the job, why sends it to this one company but not the other one. He or she has to list skills, education and experience which are most relevant to the position, leaving other specific explanation for the interview.

On the other hand, a résumé is a summary of a person’s qualifications and work history. A résumé must prevail on the employer, and makes he or she believe the writer is a good candidate for the position, getting a chance for an interview. Following lines are some advices offered by the handbook:

“Don’t tell every single thing you’ve done... Omit work you’ve done in the past that you don’t want to do again, unless this would leave unexplained holes in your résumé.

Don’t embellish, exaggerated, tell half-truths, or, of course, lie.

Don’t use jargon, long, involved phrases, a bookish vocabulary you don’t normally use, or acronyms (unless the acronym is so familiar in your field that it would be insulting to spell it out).” (389)

If you are a first-time job seeker who does not have experience, you still can show the employer your abilities. He or she has to tell the reader his or her summer job experiences (responsibility), extracurricular activities (leadership potential), awards, honors, scholarships and other

accomplishments which can convince the reader.

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