

# Placement of the Thesis Statement in English and Chinese Argumentative Essays: A Study of Contrastive Rhetoric

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## Abstract

Although researchers have compared rhetorical patterns of college-level native English speakers with patterns of speakers of other languages, research on American and Chinese high school students' writing in English and Chinese has received limited attention from investigators. This contrastive rhetoric study investigates placement of the thesis statement in argumentative essays written by Chinese and American students. One hundred and ten students enrolled in junior high schools in China and the United States participated in this study. The theoretical framework is based on insights from Kaplan's (1966) theory of contrastive rhetoric both as a research base and as a base from which to draw pedagogical implications. The findings indicate that the argumentative writing of contemporary Chinese foreign language school students is closer to the "Anglo-American" rhetorical style than previously assumed.

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## 1 Introduction

The placement of the thesis statement has been typically categorized into two types, deductive and inductive, i.e. putting the thesis statement at the beginning and the end. As a literacy educator, the researcher has observed a large number of essays written by Chinese-speaking and English-speaking high school students. Neither the deductive nor the inductive pattern clearly describes placement of the thesis statement in the actual writing patterns. Although numerous contrastive rhetoric studies comparing college-level native English speakers to speakers of other languages have been published (e.g. Choi, 1988; Kobayashi, 1984; Lee, 2003; Silva & Matsuda, 2001; Wang & Wen, 2002), investigation into American and Chinese high school students writing in English and Chinese is lacking.

The purpose of the present study is to examine the similarities and differences in placement of the thesis statement in argumentative essays composed by Chinese and American students from the perspective of contrastive rhetoric. Kaplan's (1966) contrastive rhetoric study rests on the assumption that each culture has individual rhetorical patterns, and that those patterns may influence the manner in which one acquires his or her language(s). The present study addresses one primary question: Are there differences in the placement of the thesis statement between American students' argumentative writing in English (AE) and Chinese students' writing in Chinese (CC)? The primary question is explored through three specific sub-questions: 1) Are there differences in the

thesis-at-beginning (TB) pattern between American students (AE) and Chinese students (CC)? 2) Are there differences in thesis-in-middle (TM) pattern between American students (AE) and Chinese students (CC)? 3) Are there differences in thesis-at-end (TE) pattern between American students (AE) and Chinese students (CC)?

## 2 Rhetorical patterns of English and Chinese

Comparative rhetoric is “the cross-cultural study of rhetorical traditions as they exist or have existed in different societies around the world” (Kennedy, 1998, p. 1). Connor (1996) states that contrastive rhetoric reflects the rhetorical conventions of the first language that interfere with clearly understandable writing in the second language. Kaplan (1966) describes the pattern of English as linear, while the pattern of Asian languages is “circles or gyres [that] turn around the subject and show it from a variety of tangential views, but the subject is never looked at directly” (p. 10). Asians discuss things “in terms of what they are not, rather than in terms of what they are” (Kaplan, 1966, p. 10). Kaplan (1987) explains that Chinese students had difficulties keeping their English writing coherent because of the difference between the direct linear pattern of English discourse and the spiraling pattern of typical Chinese discourse. Regarding argumentative writing, Strevens (1987) concludes that Asians prefer “gaining merit by literary style”, while Americans prefer “logical argument” (p. 176). However, Zhu (1997) and Kong (1998) argue that business letters written in either Chinese or English by Chinese speakers followed the linear pattern rather than the circular pattern that Kaplan (1966) mentioned.

Li (1996) identifies differences in good writing values between the American and Chinese teachers from her personal writing experiences while studying in an American university as an international graduate student. American teachers emphasize logic that led the reader immediately to the action, while Chinese teacher prefer to “bring the piece to a definitive closure” at the end (Li, 1996, p. 126).

In Lee’s (2003) contrastive analysis, she examines similarities and differences in narrative structure using five major constituents: orientation, initiating event, complicating event, highpoint and coda. Subjects are asked to write a story in English, using a sequence of eight pictures, which is comprehensible to a ten year old child. Lee (2003) compares English narrative structures of 40 native English and 40 Chinese non-native English writers in Hong Kong. Both groups are adults who are in their first or second year of undergraduate study. The results show that the cultural backgrounds, perceptions of narrative structure and narrative rhetoric of their native languages influence the narrative writing of native and non-native English writers.

With more than two millennia of rhetoric history in ancient China, Chinese rhetoric has been little influenced by Western ideas until the New Culture Movement (*Xin WenHua Yundong*) in 1919. Chinese rhetorical theory represents “the best example of a conceptualized non-western tradition for comparative study” (Kennedy, 1998, p. 167). As typical pattern-specific representations of Asian languages, rhetorical patterns in Chinese and Japanese writing provide useful contrasts with the discourse practices of American English (Grabe & Kaplan, 1996). Traditional practices continue to influence contemporary ESL composition textbooks and classroom practices today (Silva, 1990). Mohan and Lo (1985) surveyed previous English composition instruction in Hong Kong and British Columbia, Canada. They found that previous experience in both Cantonese and English composition affects second-language writers in English. For instance, Hong Kong instruction focuses on grammar, whereas Canadian instruction concentrates on organization.

## 3 Methodology

### 3.1 Settings and participants

American high school students and Chinese foreign language school students were chosen as the participants of this study. Firstly, these two schools in China and the United States were selected for this study on contrastive rhetoric, as the researcher needed to include at least two differ-

ent groups of writers that produce “a number of sources of variation in order to see what indeed emerge from the contrast” (Purves, 1988, p. 15). The junior year was selected over the senior year because in the senior year Chinese and American students were preoccupied mostly with preparing for college entrance exam or SAT. Secondly, the foreign language school is chosen because the Chinese students have learned the language to the degree that they could express themselves well in a conventional manner in their first language (L1) and in their second language (L2) (Slobin, 1990). Also, the researcher is familiar with the educational settings in both China and the United States.

### 3.2 *Chinese students writing in Chinese (CC)*

The first group of students who contributed essays to this study comprised junior high Chinese students in a foreign language boarding school in Shanghai. The school has 43 classes and six grades from middle school through senior high school, with 2,046 students and 112 teachers, four of whom are native speakers of various countries. As a key metropolitan foreign language school, this school plays a leading role in conducting research on the effective teaching of foreign languages in collaboration with foreign language schools in other major cities.

Table 1 shows that 14 males and 46 females participated in the CC group. Ninety-seven percent of the students in both groups are between 16-17 years old. At the time of their participation in the study, none of the Chinese students had ever been to the United States.

Background	Groups	
	AE n = 50	CC n = 60
Age	17 years old	33
	16 years old	25
	15 years old	2
Gender	Male	14
	Female	46
Country of Birth	U.S.	-
	China	60
Native Language	English	-
	Chinese	60

Notes: AE = American students writing essays in English; CC = Chinese students writing essays in Chinese

**Table 1: Participants**

### 3.3 *American students writing in English (AE)*

The second group of students who participated in this study comprised 50 English native-speakers in a Midwest metropolitan public high school in the United States. These fifty students were selected from 53 students who volunteered to participate in this study. After examining

the questionnaire on their countries of birth and native languages, the researcher excluded 3 non-native English students. Nineteen males and 31 females participated in the study (see Table 1). Ninety-eight percent of the students' were aged between 16-17 years old. At the time of the data collection in 2004, none of the American participants had ever been to China.

The American school employs a traditional curriculum with 6 or 7 hours of instruction every day and the semester is 18 weeks long. The average class size is approximately 20 students per teacher, with an enrollment of 3,278 students and a faculty of 180. The student body consists of 58.82% White, 34.78% African American, 5.09% Hispanic and 1.31% of Asian ethnic backgrounds. Writing improvement has been a goal of the school since 2001. All faculty members have been trained in evaluating or scoring writing. All teachers expect students to write cogent answers to essay questions and to answer at least one essay question on each final exam.

As high school students in their junior year, the students take various English writing courses, such as advanced composition, English language/composition, contemporary literature composition and expository writing. For instance, the textbook for English language/composition is "English: Communication Skills in the New Millennium," which introduces different genres of writing (Senn & Skinner, 2002). Aside from four required years of language arts and literature and one semester of speech, students are supposed to choose electives from different courses, such as creative writing, independent reading, journalism production, yearbook production, drama, speech, debate, mass media and critical thinking. Students choose their own research topics, books and projects of personal interest in the independent reading course, which alternates with creative writing. Journalism production and yearbook production provide students with ample opportunities to discover journalistic writing, such as news and features writing and editing of drafts. By taking these writing courses, students can write for the monthly school newspaper.

### **3.4 Recruitment of participants**

In the United States, fifty participants from the Midwest high school were recruited through in-class announcement. A period for questions and answers was allowed. The researcher explained the purpose of the research and answered questions from the students, teachers and chairperson of the English department. In China, sixty participants were contacted by phone-call, e-mail and fax. The researcher explained the purpose of the research and answered questions as well. Both schools in China and the U.S. had a large number of student writers. Each participant attested to the fact that he/she knew exactly what was happening in the study and knew what was expected of him/her. The participants were reminded that their participation was strictly voluntary and that they could withdraw at any time.

### **3.5 Criteria for writing task selection**

The researcher established three criteria for selecting the writing task in order to confirm that the type of writing was in keeping with the research questions. The first criterion was that the writing topic would enable both Chinese and American students to express their opinions. Second, one topic has to be used, because contrastive rhetoric analysis require the samples to address a similar context for a similar purpose (Swales, 1990). By having each student write about the same topic in pen, the researcher would be able to compare and to contrast their writings. The third criterion was that the research should solicit an argumentative topic, as an attempt to justify a claim, where the thesis statement must be upheld or challenged, as suggested by Toulmin (1958).

The writing instructions stated that students are not allowed to state their opinion as both "agree and disagree;" they had to select "agree" or "disagree" as opinion and use specific reasons and examples. In this way, the coders could clearly find the thesis statement in different placements. They had 40 minutes to compose their essays, which conforms to Silva's (1993) suggestion that the researchers limit the writing time to 30-60 minutes in ESL writing research. The researcher adopted the suggestions of English teachers both in China and the United States that the essay should be one page (single-spaced) in length (approximately 300 words).

Based on the three criteria for topic selection, the writing task was: “Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? – High school students should ALWAYS obey their parents. Please state either ‘agree’ or ‘disagree’ and use specific reasons and examples. The opinion of both ‘agree and disagree’ was not acceptable.” For the AE group, the writing guideline was written in English. For the CC group, writing guideline was written in Chinese.

### **3.6 Data collection**

The writing tasks were sent to the schools in China and the U.S. and each subject was required to complete the writing task on the same topic. One teacher in China and one teacher in the United States assisted in the distribution and collection of the questionnaires and essays. Each essay was assigned an ID number, such as AE1 and CC5. The ID numbers, not the participants’ names, were used as the identifier on all essays. The total of 50 essays written in English and 60 essays written in Chinese were collected by mail and in person.

### **3.7 Data coding**

The 110 essays were coded by two coders. After the thesis statement and the placement of the thesis statement were defined, a reliability test was performed to check coder A and coder B’s coding work. The thesis statement needed to meet two criteria: (1) the statement must state that the student writer either “agree” or “disagree” with the following statement “High school students should ALWAYS obey their parents” (essays stating both “agree” and “disagree” were not acceptable); and (2) the statement must address all the information presented in the essay.

There were three main locations of the placement of the thesis statement: 1) thesis-at-beginning (TB), 2) thesis-in-middle (TM) and 3) thesis-at-end (TE). In terms of placement, a thesis statement that appeared as the first sentence (TB1) and in the beginning of the essays after a short topic annotation (TB2) was identified as having a thesis-at-beginning (TB) pattern. The thesis-at-end (TE) pattern indicated that the thesis statement appeared at the end of essays. If the thesis statement occurred neither at the beginning nor the end, it followed a thesis-in-middle (TM) pattern. A thesis-at-beginning (TB) pattern shows a deductive development of ideas, a thesis-at-end (TE) pattern reflects an inductive development of ideas, and a thesis-in-middle (TM) pattern combines both the inductive and the deductive movement of ideas.

### **3.8 Coding of writing tasks**

At the time of the data coding in 2004 and 2005, Coder A was the researcher of the present study, who is bilingual in English and Chinese and was a graduate student in foreign language education in a Midwest university in the United States. Coder B is bilingual in English and Chinese and was a doctoral candidate majoring in rhetoric and composition; he teaches English writing in colleges in the United States.

All essays were coded to maintain students’ confidentiality based on the assigned ID number, which was used as the identifier on all essays. The coding scheme was explained. The guidelines for analyzing the thesis statement and the placement of the thesis statement were laid down by Coder A. Coder A coded 110 essays to classify each essay according to the presence of a thesis statement and its location, comparing the coding results with those of coder B.

The inter-rater reliability of Thesis-at-beginning (TB1) pattern was relatively high ( $r = 1$ ), because thesis statements presented as first sentence were easily distinguishable in the students’ essays under the unified criteria. The results of the inter-rater reliability test indicate that there was a lower level of agreement between Coder A and Coder B for thesis-in-middle (TM) and thesis-at-end (TE) patterns. Coder A and Coder B discussed TB2, TM and TE patterns until agreement was reached for over 80%. Since the study analyzes the placement of the thesis statement in the original essays, errors in spelling, grammar, punctuation, usage and run-on sentences that occurred in the essays were ignored.



#### 4 Findings

Findings from this study reveal that students of both AE and CC use three placements of thesis statement: Thesis-at-beginning (TB), thesis-in-middle (TM) and thesis-at-end (TE) (see Appendices 1 and 2). However, the preferred placement of the thesis statement demonstrates the similarities and differences in their Chinese and English argumentative essays.

The percentages of students using thesis-at-beginning (TB) in the groups AE and CC are similar in both groups: at 92% for Chinese students and 86.67% for American students (see Table 2). The thesis-at-beginning pattern can be further sub-divided into placement in the first sentence TB1 (AE = 58%, CC = 60%) and in the beginning paragraph TB2 (AE = 34%, CC = 26.67%).

Placement of Thesis Statement	AE n = 50	CC n = 60
First sentence (TB1)	29 (58.00%)	36 (60.00%)
Beginning paragraph (TB2)	17 (34.00%)	16 (26.67%)

**Table 2: Frequency distribution of “Thesis-at-beginning” (TB)**

The analysis of the frequency distribution data reveals that most American students (AE) and Chinese students (CC) preferred the deductive pattern while writing in their native languages (L1).

Two (or 4%) of the 50 students in the group AE used the thesis-at-end (TE) pattern in their English (L1), compared to 5 (or 8.33%) of the 60 students in the group CC (see Table 3).

Placement of Thesis Statement	AE n = 50	CC n = 60
Thesis-at-end (TE )	2 (4.00%)	5 (8.33%)

**Table 3: Frequency distribution of “Thesis-at-end” (TE)**

The analysis of the frequency distribution data indicates that the number of American students (AE) and Chinese students (CC) using the inductive pattern is small.

Two (or 4%) of the 50 students in the group AE used the thesis-in-middle (TM) pattern as compared to 3 (or 5%) of the 60 students in the group CC (see Table 4).

Placement of Thesis Statement	AE n = 50	CC n = 60
Thesis-in-middle (TM )	2 (4.00%)	3 (5.00%)

**Table 4: Frequency distribution of “Thesis-in-middle” (TM)**

The analysis of the frequency distribution data indicates that some American students (AE) and Chinese students (CC) used the TM pattern, but the number of these students is small when writing in their native languages (L1).

Figure 1 and Table 5 present a summary of the performance of the two groups of students' in the placement of the thesis statement in their argumentative essays in order to suggest an answer to the general research question. As shown, 92% of the American students used the TB pattern in their English writing, compared to 86.87 % of their Chinese counterparts in their Chinese writing. The use of the patterns TM and TE is less frequent than the use of the TB pattern. Around 4% of American students used the TM pattern, compared to 5% of Chinese students, while around 4% of American students use the TE pattern, compared to 8% of the Chinese students.

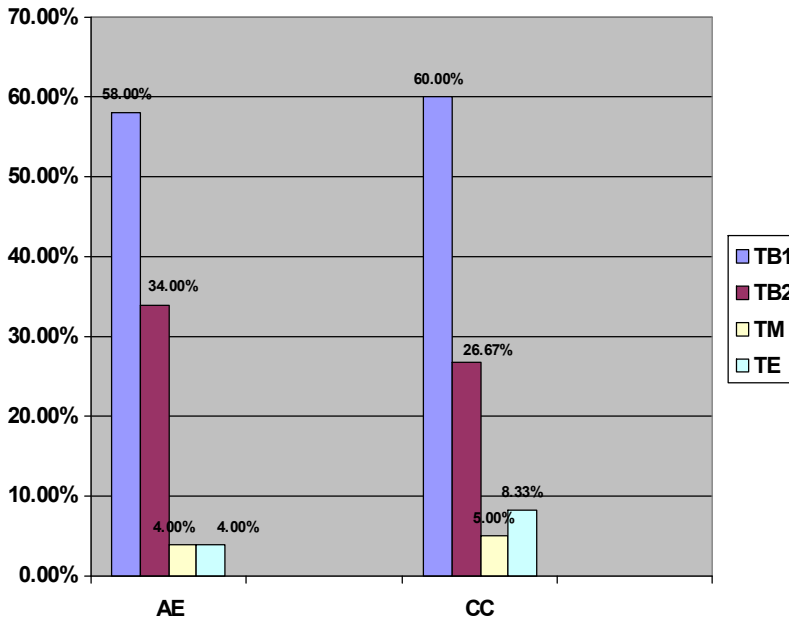


Fig. 1: Overall percentages of placement of the thesis statement

Placement of Thesis Statement	AE n = 50	CC n = 60
First sentence (TB1)	29 (58.00%)	36 (60.00%)
Beginning paragraph (TB2)	17 (34.00%)	16 (26.67%)
Thesis-in-middle (TM)	2 (4.00%)	3 (5.00%)
Thesis-at-end (TE)	2 (4.00%)	5 (8.33%)

Table 5: Overall frequencies of placement of the thesis statement

## 5 Discussion

This study is limited by the sample size of the dataset, which is not large enough to draw valid generalizations about the writing of all Chinese and American students. The results from the study are not sufficient to make claims regarding the underlying structures employed by all Chinese and American high school students. However, findings from this study reveal that there are similarities between American and Chinese students' argumentative writing in TB, TE and TM placements. In fact, contemporary Chinese argumentative writing of foreign language school students is closer to the "Anglo-American" rhetorical style than previously assumed.

Connor (1996) comments that much of the contrastive rhetoric research lacks explicitly described steps of analysis, which makes the studies non-replicable. This study suggests a methodology to compare thesis statement placements of argumentative essays in various languages. This approach could produce more replicable studies. It would also help second language teachers know which rhetorical patterns are new to their ESL students in explaining the target language (Zhang, 1998).



## 6 Further research

The present study only investigates structural variations, showing placement preferences for the thesis statement. Further research should delve into pragmatic factors necessary for successful written communication, which may override structural factors. This study is merely a starting point for future contrastive rhetoric research of Chinese writing, not only in foreign language high schools, but also in Chinese public high schools. More studies should investigate whether Chinese students in mainstream schools are losing their traditional Chinese writing style.

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**Appendix 1****Sample Compositions of AE**

## TB1 Pattern / Sample AE 12

I disagree with the statement "High school students should ALWAYS obey their parents." Always is a strong word that implies that a student would never go against a parent's wishes. I believe that is important to have guiding parents, but too much guidance turns into control, which is not good for the student. One example is a parent who wants her child to be enrolled in <sup>as many</sup> accelerated classes as possible. This child might really struggle in the area of math. This child would have to be in the upper level math class in order to obey their parent, even though it is not the appropriate course. This would result in a low grade in the class and possibly a drop in grades in other classes. In this instance it is not in the student's best interest to obey their parents. As students grow up they need experience making their own decisions. If parents are overbearing, the student will not be well prepared for leaving their home and venturing out into the world on their own. I think that in most instances, the student knows more than the parent. This is why the parent's instructions are not always the best for the student. They should not always obey their parents. Saying it in this way gives a negative connotation. The disobeying can be done in a respectful way.

## TB2 Pattern / Sample AE 5

Many students in high school believe that their parents should not have complete control of their lives. So many people around me say this, that it makes me feel different and strange. I believe that high school students should always obey their parents. There are several reasons why I think this. First of all, our parents have had a lot more experience than we have, and therefore, know a lot more about the results of actions. Therefore, it makes much more sense for students to obey their parents. One instance where it would be where the parent tells their child not to be out late the night of a big test. The parent knows that the child will do poorly if he stays out late, so it is good for the kid to follow the parents.

Another reason to obey your parents is that the parents only do it because they love their children. When telling a child not to eat ~~too~~ too many sweets is out of concern, just as when telling their child to not talk on their phone. Not listening to the parents is harmful to the kid.

Overall, I believe it is very important for children to obey their parents. Quite possibly the most important factors in determining someone's success in life are their parents.

## TM Pattern / Sample AE 52

Highschool is a time for personal growth, finding yourself, and learning about the world around you. ~~Parents~~ Our parents lived a different generation than we do today, therefore their perception of what is right and wrong differ from ours.

Although our parents offer us good advice, such as don't do drugs or get good grades, it is critical for ourselves to ~~figure out~~ our mistakes (Learn from)

to help shape our character and morals.

Parents can tell us what to do and offer their advice, but it is in teenage nature to rebel and let us figure out right and wrong.

~~where it was so severe~~

When I was a freshman ~~and~~ highschool, one night I snuck out of my house <sup>when I</sup> ~~never~~ of course I was caught by my mom and she screamed and yelled. When I was off grounding, I snuck out of my house again (this time ~~was~~ to rebel against my mom) when I was in the car a drunk driver hit us. Instead of learning from my mom that sneaking out was wrong, I learned from my experience never to do it again.

## TE Pattern / Sample AE 2

By the age of sixteen, most teenagers can drive and many hold a lot of responsibilities, at home, with a job or somewhere else. With this amount of responsibility there are also a lot of privileges extended to teenagers by their parents and teachers. However amount of privileges a teenager is given, however, will <sup>not</sup> be enough, as the younger generation ~~are~~ <sup>is</sup> usually more liberal than their parents. Being a teenager is really much like being an adult, with less responsibility, ~~however~~ and a teenager should learn to abide by their own judgement in certain situations. While a parent's rules are to help maintain safety and practicality, a teenager often has different opinions from their parents and needs to learn to use their own judgement. Without a certain amount of independence to exercise judgements, teenagers cannot become adults with independent reasoning and judgement skills. High school students shouldn't always obey their parents, because while a parent's guidance promotes safety and maintains stability, their rules do not always allow for independent growth of the mind, in opinion and judgment of situations.

## Appendix 2

## Sample Compositions of CC

TB1 Pattern / Sample CC 37

我不同意“高中生应该总是服从他们的家长”的论述。

首先，我已是高二的学生了，应该具有一定的思想，对任何事物有自己独到的见解。如果一味地服从家长，我们将逐渐散失独立思考的能力。

其次，家长和我们所成长的年代不同。这势必会引发彼此之间对事物的看法或处事方法的不同。比如，有些家长对电脑的认识不深，认为玩电脑只会毁了自己的孩子，因此不许自己的孩子上网。而事实上，电脑却是我们学习生活的好帮手。我们应该告诉家长这一事实，却不是服从他们远离电脑。

再则因为我们毕竟还是未成年人，身心都还未发育完全。若一味服从家长会使我们产生依赖心理。这样会导致我们易接受外界的错误信息，而分辨不出是非。长期下去，会使部分孩子误入歧途，后果不堪设想。

最后我想说，我们已经渐渐长大了，而且我们中的绝大多数孩子都是独生子女。家长们的爱超过了自然的给予成为了溺爱。这便成了许多学生总是服从家长的重要因素之一。他们认为自己的家长的行为总是对的，而自己总是错误的。这种错误的教育方法被深深地印入他们的脑海。放手吧！让你的孩子学会独立，学会自己去思考。不要认为家长总是对的，每个人都难免有犯错的时候，不要让“服从”误导了自己。

所以，“高中生不应该总是服从他们的家长”。

## TB1 Pattern / Sample CC37 (Translation of original Chinese text)

I do not agree with the statement “high school students should always obey their own parents”.

First of all, since I am already a sophomore in high school, I should have developed my own perspectives on things. If we obey our parents all the time, we would gradually lose our independent thinking ability.

Second, we grew up in a different environment than our parents did, which gives us divergent outlooks. For instance, some parents do not know how to use computers. They think that spending too much time on a computer will have a negative impact on their children’s future. Therefore, they do not allow their children to surf on the Internet. However, a computer is a good helper when we do our schoolwork. In addition, it is a great tool for learning about things that happen around the world. Therefore, we should communicate our thoughts on the benefits of using computers to our parents, rather than just obey their instructions.

Third, since we are adolescents, we are not yet as mature as adults physically and psychologically. Relentlessly obeying our parents might lead us to depend on them for every thing. As a result, we cannot develop a sense of autonomy, and we will be easily affected by others. In the long run, some young adults who lack this autonomy might become gang members due to peer pressure.

Lastly, most of us are the only child in the family. We are spoiled and do not have the capacity to behave on our own. We think our parents’ decisions are always correct. This is one of the main reasons why we always follow our parents’ rules. This kind of indulgent parenting practice is deeply imprinted on our parents’ mind. Let go! Parents! Let your children learn to be independent and to think for themselves. Do not think you are always right. Everybody makes mistakes. Do not let “obedience” destroy your own children’s bright futures.

In summary, high school students should not always obey their parents.

## TB2 Pattern / Sample CC11

每个人都应有属于自己的空间。人活着是为自己而活，不是别人。

作为高中生，我们正迈入认识社会、体验生活的快车道时期。许多新鲜、稀奇的想法、观点也会随之而来。这些想法在潜意识中很大程度地影响了我们的行为，举止。脱口而出之语，使我们的一些想法让大人们看来似乎是无稽之谈。那么，高中生是否应该总是服从家长呢？在我看来，答案是否定的。

毋庸置疑，在世上打拼了风风雨雨几十年的家长们，人生阅历以及社会经验远比我们多得多。但是，也正因为习惯了这半世习俗，他们对待一些事情的观点就显得陈旧、老气，缺乏激情。而一个社会的发展，需要不同人们的共同努力。我们需要大人们的沉稳、睿智，更需要我们高中生的激情、清新。我们高中生应该作时代的弄潮儿，用新鲜、无畏的想法去实现自我完善，而不是被老气横秋的世俗枷锁束缚。

当然，高中生应该服从家长，因为他们的经验会给我们指明正确的方向，使我们更快地达到成功。但是，高中生不应总是服从家长，因为盲目地服从只会扼杀我们新独有的想像力、创新能力。毕竟，家长不可能陪伴我们一辈子，总有一天，我们会独立地过着自己的生活。

## TB2 Pattern / Sample CC11 (Translation of original Chinese text)

Every one should have a space for himself/herself. We live for ourselves, not for others.

As high school students, we will be entering society with knowledge gained from our education. This is a transition in experiencing life because we are developing a new way of thinking. We will come across many new ideas and thoughts in this transition period, which will greatly influence our behaviors, such as what we do, how we talk, and how to behave. Our new ways of thinking might look ridiculous to some adults (e.g., our parents). In response to the question, *Should high school students always obey their parents then?* My answer is *no*.

Undoubtedly, our hard-working parents have more life and social experiences than we do. However, their traditional ways of living and value make them look old-fashioned and lifeless from our points of view. We need all kinds of people's contributions to our society. We not only need the adults' decency and wisdom, but also need our (high school students) passion and energy for life. We, high school students, should stand up for our own thoughts and ideas, rather than succumb to some out-of-date standards.

Our parents' rich life experiences can guide us to a positive direction in our lives and help us succeed. However, we should not *always* obey them. Obeying without purposes will only deprive our development the abilities of imagination and innovation. After all, parents can not hold our hands and guide us for our entire life. Eventually, we will live in a life of our own.



TM Pattern / Sample CC5

曹禺先生是近代著名作家，但遭小惑的足，近30年来并无力作问世，而他本人解释此问题的原因之一便是，自己缺乏独立思考，在精神上完全丧失了自我。甚至到了临死前，他还感慨道：“我太听话了……”

缺乏独立思考，这是曹禺先生的遗憾，但又何尝不也是我们许多人的遗憾呢？所以我们高中生不总是应该听父母的，有时也应该“我行我素”。

所谓“我行我素”，其核心内容便是坚守立场。这点，我们的鲁迅先生做得很好。他的一生是战斗的一生，更是“我行我素”的一生，他在敌人的恶毒围攻无休止谩骂践踏历史巨轮中，横眉冷对，以“韧的精神”，用一篇篇如匕首般尖锐的杂文刺入敌人的心扉。

我们中国的现代社会，已经从万马齐喑的阴霾年代里挣脱出来，不再用僵笨死的木架子，铸出呆板的陈规，也不再用残忍的桎梏，造成扭曲的枷锁，如今的危更愿建设者们具有丰富的个性。

TM Pattern / Sample CC5 (Translation of original Chinese text)

Mr. Cao, Yu is a well-known author in China. However, in the last 30 years, he did not write much. His explanation was that he could not think independently. He totally lost himself. Before he died, he was regretful and said, “I am too obedient...”

Unable to think independently is Mr. Cao, Yu's biggest regret, so are many high school students [sic]. In order to develop our own critical thinking ability, we should not always obey parents. We should “wo xing wo su” (do whatever we want).

“Do whatever we want” helps us make decisions. Mr. Lu, Xun was a good example of having this type of attitude. He was fighting for himself for his entire life, a life of “wo xing wo su.” He kept calm and cool when facing his enemies' cruel attacks and critique. Fueled by his tough spirit, he used his pen as a weapon to pierce the hearts of his enemies.

In a modern society, we struggled out from the darkest era [sic]; it can no longer cast those stupid pottery figures from its cumbersome [traditional] mode. Neither can it ever make twisted plum trees through its twisted roles. What Chinese students need now is to construct their own rich individualities.

## TE Pattern / Sample CC2

## 高中生不应总是服从家长

我们已经16、17岁了,快要迈进成人的大门。无论是最大身心还是情感问题上已趋进成熟,为此,在大多数情况下,我们已经具备了选择的能力。

可以假设一下,如果高中生总是服从于家长,那么待我们是成人后,是否还要继续服从家长?如果不,是否应有一缓冲期而~~来~~锻炼自己~~对事~~服~~的~~判断或对其的~~决定~~能力。

曾经看过一则报载,讲的是河北承德的一位高中生,长期在父母的严厉管教下,丝毫不得到一丝喘息。高中毕业后,他进入北京某一所大学。这个学生一下子变了个人,说他内心空虚,不知所措(可能~~能~~是因为他父母事事~~逼~~他~~服~~从的原因吧),经常~~游~~荡于学校中,无心~~思~~听课,最后被校方~~强~~令退学。

这则惨痛的教训不是好说明高中生如果不能自主,那是多么~~惨~~痛的事啊!

高中是不能总服从家长,这样会~~丧~~失自己的灵魂,如果一个人没有了灵魂,即使可以~~存~~在于这个~~世~~上,那又有什么~~用~~呢?

## TE Pattern / Sample CC2 (Translation of original Chinese text)

## High School Students Should Not Always Obey Their Parents

We are already 16 or 17 years old, and soon we will become adults. Hopefully, we will be mature physically and emotionally when we reach adulthood. Therefore, we will have the ability to make our own decisions.

Supposedly, high school students should always obey their parents. When we are adults, should we continue obeying our parents? If not, shouldn't there be a transition period for us to develop our sense of judgment and the ability of decision-making.

Once I read a news report that a high school student, who was from Chengde, Hebei province, never had had the opportunity to develop a sense of autonomy because his parents were very strict with him. After graduating from high school, he went to a college in Beijing. He became a totally different person overnight. He felt emptiness and wandered around on campus all day long, not knowing what he should do next (probably because his parents had always asked him to do what they wanted him to do). He could not pay attention to his schoolwork either. Finally, he was asked to withdraw from the college.

This lesson is a very good example of showing high school students' insufficient practice in making decisions and being responsible for his or her actions.

High school students should not always obey their parents. If they do, they will lose their soul. What would a person be without a soul?