



英文写作技巧：动词:Consists of / comprises / composed of / constitutes / make up / includes

难度：中级

“Contain、consist、compose、constitute、comprise…” 这些动词的共同点是都有拉丁词根“com-”，意思是“放在一起”。这些词描述的都是部分与整体的关系，在有些情况下可以替换使用，有些则不能。下面让我们来看一下每个词的用法，注意主动及被动语态。

什么是全面性列表？什么是非全面性列表？

全面性与非全面性列表的概念对于正确使用动词来说至关重要。

全面性列表 - 包含所有项目

非全面性列表 - 包含部分项目，但非全部

全面性列表：“My siblings **consist of** three brothers.”，这表示我没有姐妹。

非全面性列表：“My siblings **include** three brothers.”，这表示我有一个或多个姐妹。 [MS1]

选择恰当的动词

有些动词用于全面性列表，而有些则用于非全面性列表。我们要根据不同的情形选择合适的动词。

非全面性列表之动词/词组：include / contain

Include

这两个词词义是一致的。

The whole includes the parts; the parts are included in the whole.

The whole contains the parts; the parts are contained in the whole.

整体包括局部，局部被包括在整体之中。

正确：Asia includes the countries of China, Japan, and Korea.

亚洲包含中国、日本及韩国。

(因为亚洲不止三个国家，同时又包含其他国家。)

错误：North America includes the countries of the USA, Canada, and Mexico.

北美包含美国、加拿大及墨西哥。

(因为北美只有这三个国家，不包括其他国家。)

Contain

The whole contains the parts; the parts are contained in the whole.

整体 contains 局部，局部 are contained in 整体中。

正确：The report contains statistics about the labor market from 2008 - 2014.
该报告包含 2008-2014 年劳动力市场的统计数据。
(还包括其他的统计数据。)

全面性列表之动词/词组: consist of / compose / comprise / constitute/ make up

Consist of

在使用 “consist of ” 时，要写明所有的包含项。整体 consists of 部分。

正确：North America consists of three countries: the USA, Canada, and Mexico.
北美包括三个国家：美国、加拿大和墨西哥。
错误：Asia consists of China, Japan, and Korea.
亚洲包括中国、日本和韩国。
(因为亚洲不止这三个国家。)

另外，“is consisted of” 是不正确的英文表达。

Compose

在使用 “compose” 时，要写明所有的包含项。整体 compose 部分。

正确：The nicotinic acetylcholine receptor is composed of five subunits: the muscle-type one is composed of two α 1, one β 1, one δ , and one η subunits.
烟碱乙酰胆碱受体是由五个子单元组成：肌肉型的是由两个 $\alpha 1$ ，一个 $\beta 1$ ，一个 δ ，和一个 η 组成。

另外，用 “compose” 表达包含的意思时，主动语态是不常见的，因为 “compose” 有另外一个意思，即 “创作乐曲、作曲”，例如 Mozart composed his first symphony at the age of eight.(莫扎特在八岁时创作了第一支交响乐)。

Comprise

在使用 “comprise” 时，要写明所有的包含项。

标准用法是 “整体 comprises 局部”。现在 “整体 is comprised of 部分” 的用法比较常见。然而，由于一些英式风格权威人士认为后者的用法是错误的，所以请谨慎使用。另外一种替换表达 “consists of” 是没有争议的。

正确：A simple circuit comprises a source of voltage (e.g. a battery), a conductive path

(e.g. a wire), and a resistor (e.g. a lightbulb).

一个简单的电路包括电压源（如：电池）、导电路径（如：导线）和一个电阻器（如：一个灯泡）。

替换表达：A simple circuit ~~is comprised of~~ **consists of** a source of voltage (e.g. a battery), a conductive path (e.g. a wire), and a resistor (e.g. a lightbulb).

Make up

在使用 “make up ” 时，要写明所有的包含项。

部分 make up 整体，整体 is made up of 局部，主动语态及被动语态都很常见。

正确：Seeds and fern spores make up the finch' s diet.

种子和蕨类孢子组成雀类的食物。

正确：The finch' s diet is made up of seeds and fern spores.

雀类的食物由种子和蕨类孢子组成。

Constitute

在使用 “constitute ” 时，要写明所有的包含项。

局部 constitute 整体，整体 is constituted of 局部，主动语态要常见于被动语态。

正确：Automobile exhaust constitutes a large proportion of total greenhouse gas emissions.

汽车尾气占温室气体排放总量的很大比例。

解释：这里的整体指的是很大比例的温室气体排放总量，而不是温室气体排放总量。

Uni-edit English Writing Tip: Verbs: Consists of / comprises / composed of / constitutes / make up / includes

Difficulty: Medium

Contain, consist, compose, constitute, comprise...what these verbs have in common is the Latin root “com-“, which means “to put together”. They describe the relationship of parts to the whole, or whole to parts. They can be used interchangeably in some cases, but cannot in others. Let’s look at the usages of each word, with attention to active and passive voice.

What’s an Exhaustive List? What’s a Non-Exhaustive List?

The idea of an exhaustive vs. non-exhaustive list is crucial to using the verbs correctly.

Exhaustive list - report all the items

Non-exhaustive list - report some but not all of the items

Exhaustive list: **My siblings consist of three brothers.**

This means I have no sisters.

Non-exhaustive list: **My siblings include three brothers.**

This means I have one or more sisters.

Choose the right verb

Some verbs are used for exhaustive lists. Some verbs are used for non-exhaustive lists. You must choose the right verb for the situation.

Non-exhaustive verbs: include / contain

Include

The meanings are essentially equivalent.

The whole includes the parts; the parts are included in the whole.

The whole contains the parts; the parts are contained in the whole.

Correct: **Asia includes the countries of China, Japan, and Korea.**

(It also includes other countries.)

Incorrect: **North America includes the countries of the USA, Canada, and Mexico.**

(It does not include other countries.)

Contain

The whole contains the parts; the parts are contained in the whole.

Correct: [The report contains statistics about the labor market from 2008–2014.](#)

(It also includes other statistics.)

Exhaustive verbs: consist of / compose / comprise / constitute / make up

Consist of

When you write 'consist of', you must write the entire list. The whole consists of the parts.

Correct: [North America consists of three countries: the USA, Canada, and Mexico.](#)

Incorrect: [Asia consists of China, Japan, and Korea.](#)

(There are more than these three countries in Asia.)

By the way, “is consisted of” is incorrect English.

Compose

When you write 'compose', you must write the entire list. The whole is composed of the parts.

Correct: [The nicotinic acetylcholine receptor is composed of five subunits: the muscle-type one is composed of two alpha1, one beta1, one delta, and one epsilon subunits.](#)

By the way, when using 'compose' with this meaning, the active voice is less common, perhaps because active-voice “compose” has another meaning, which is “to write (an artistic work)”: e.g., Mozart composed his first symphony at the age of eight.

Comprise

When you write 'comprises', you must write the entire list.

Standard usage is “the whole comprises the parts”. In modern times, the usage “the whole is comprised of the parts” is common. However, since some English style authorities think the latter usage is mistaken, use it at your own risk. An alternative like “consists of” is uncontroversial.

Correct: [A simple circuit comprises a source of voltage \(e.g. a battery\), a conductive path \(e.g. a wire\), and a resistor \(e.g. a lightbulb\).](#)

Alternative correct: [A simple circuit ~~is comprised of~~ **consists of** a source of voltage \(e.g. a battery\), a conductive path \(e.g. a wire\), and a resistor \(e.g. a lightbulb\).](#)

Make up

When you write 'make up' or 'made up of', you must write the entire list.

The parts make up the whole; the whole is made up of the parts. Active voice and passive voice are equally common.

Correct: [Seeds and fern spores make up the finch's diet.](#)

Correct: [The finch's diet is made up of seeds and fern spores.](#)

Constitute

When you write 'constitute', you must write the entire list.

The parts constitute the whole; the whole is constituted of the parts. The active voice is more common than the passive voice.

Correct: [Automobile exhaust constitutes a large proportion of total greenhouse gas emissions.](#)

Explanation: Here, in grammatical terms, the 'whole' is the 'large proportion of total greenhouse gas emissions', not 'total greenhouse gas emissions'.

END OF TIP