

初中科普英语阅读文选

POPULAR SCIENCE *Reader*



初中科普英语阅读文选

张力平 郑元和 周琦 编

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前 言

在科学技术迅猛发展的今天,为了在广大青少年中普及科学知识,及早提高他们阅读科普英语的能力,使他们在今后从事科学技术工作时具备坚实的英语阅读基础,我们特选编了这本《初中科普英语阅读文选》。

书中 60 篇科普文章均选自英语原版书刊,语言规范,简明易懂,符合中学生的知识水平和接受能力。这些文章题材广泛,涉及物理、化学、生物、医学、考古、天文、地理、环保、计算机等学科。文章富有知识性、科学性和趣味性。为便于学习者阅读,每篇文章后都附有主要生词表,加注了音标,同时还设计了各种类型的练习题,以加深读者对原文的理解。这些练习题还可作为阅读理解自我测试题。

本书可作为广大初中学生英语学习的选修教材或课外读物,也可供广大科普英语爱好者阅读使用。

本书难免有不足之处,欢迎广大师生批评指正。

编 者

1999 年 8 月

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THE PLANTS ON MARS

Is there life on Mars? We do not know. We are sure that earthlike people do not live on Mars. Earth people need oxygen to breathe. There is almost no oxygen on Mars.

Living on Mars would be like living on a very high mountain. There would be little air. It might be 50 degrees above zero at noon and 100 degrees below zero at night.

Many people think there may be plants on Mars. We know that Mars has carbon. This is a kind of material found in all plants and animals on earth. Through a telescope, we see that Mars looks red. In some places, it seems grey. At times, the grey color turns grey-green, then brown, then grey again. The grey-green color may be a kind of plant life changing color with the seasons.

Will men go to Mars one day? If they do, they will have to take along with them their own oxygen, food, clothing, and shelter.

New Words and Expressions

Mars /mɑ:s/

n. 火星

earthlike /'ɜ:θlaɪk/

a. 像地球一样的

oxygen	/ˈɒksɪdʒən/	<i>n.</i> 氧气
breathe	/briːð/	<i>v.</i> 呼吸
degree	/diˈɡriː/	<i>n.</i> (温度的)度数
zero	/ˈziərəʊ/	<i>n.</i> 零
carbon	/ˈkɑːbən/	<i>n.</i> 碳
telescope	/ˈtelɪskəʊp/	<i>n.</i> 望远镜
grey	/ɡreɪ/	<i>a.</i> 灰色的
shelter	/ˈʃeltə/	<i>n.</i> 遮盖物, 庇护所

Questions for Comprehension

1. Why are we sure that earthlike people do not live on Mars?
2. Why would living on Mars be like living on a very high mountain?
3. How does the temperature change on Mars?
4. Why do many people think there may be plants on Mars?
5. What is the color of Mars seen through a telescope?
6. What could be the cause of the color changing in some places on Mars?
7. What will man have to take along with them if one day they go to Mars?
8. In what way do you think man could have a better understanding of Mars?



THE CITY THAT GREW IN A LAKE

The center of a lake is a strange place to build a city. Yet this is what the Aztec Indians of Mexico did more than 600 years ago. One of their legends said the people would see an eagle holding a snake in its mouth. When they did, they were to build a city on that spot. They did this, even though the spot was a swampy island in the middle of a lake.

The Aztecs had to work hard to build their island city. Much of the water had to be drained. Then canals had to be built. The Aztecs used wooden boards as bridges across the canals.

Later, the Aztecs built big, wide roads raised above the water. They also built tall towers of stone. The towers rose high above the canals.

In 1519, the island city was the Aztec capital. It has changed very much over the years. But the ancient Aztec city is still a capital. We know it as Mexico City, the great capital of Mexico.

New Words and Expressions

Aztec Indian /'æztek 'indɪən/ *n.* 阿兹台克印第安人

Mexico	/ˈmeksikəʊ/	<i>n.</i> 墨西哥
Mexico City		<i>n.</i> 墨西哥城
legend	/ˈledʒənd/	<i>n.</i> 传说, 传奇
spot	/spɒt/	<i>n.</i> 地点, 斑点
swampy	/ˈswɒmpi/	<i>a.</i> 沼泽的
drain	/dreɪn/	<i>v.</i> 排水, 使流出
canal	/kəˈnæl/	<i>n.</i> 运河
ancient	/ˈeɪnfənt/	<i>a.</i> 古代的, 古老的

Multiple Choices

- The Aztec Indians built a city _____.
 A) in the middle of a mountain
 B) in the middle of a desert
 C) on a swampy island
 D) on a sea island
- The word in the story that means *old stories or beliefs passed on down the years from generation to generation* is _____.
 A) eagle B) spot C) legend D) drain
- The story does not say this, but you can tell that _____.
 A) a city made of towers will not last
 B) cities do not change much over the years
 C) people can build a city almost everywhere
 D) many cities have been built according to legends
- Which of the following does this story lead you to believe?
 A) The Aztecs were very fine builders.
 B) The Aztecs could not do anything well.
 C) The Aztecs used canals instead of roads.

- D) The Aztecs thought the snake could bring them good luck.
5. The main idea of the story is that ____.
- A) everyone should listen to eagles in Mexico
 - B) the Aztecs built a city in the middle of a lake
 - C) snakes could talk to the Aztec Indians of Mexico
 - D) the city built by Aztecs used to be their capital



THE FISH ON THE MOUNTAIN

It is no surprise to find seashells in the sand. Most seashells are found near the sea. But some seashells have been found on high mountaintops. That is a funny place for seashells. How did they get there?

The earth did not always look the way it does today. Once the sea covered more of the land. Then the mountains pushed up. They pushed up through the water. Land from the bottom of the sea became mountaintops. Seashells and fish bones were pushed up, too. They were far away from sea water. They were left high and dry.

The seashells and fish bones were covered with soft mud and sand. The mud became hard. It turned to stone. The shapes of the shell and bones were pressed into the stone. These stones are called fossils.

Fossils have been found all over the world. Have you ever found one?

New Words and Expressions

seashell /'si:ʃel/

n. 贝壳

bone /bəʊn/

n. 骨, 骨头

- C) the earth has changed
- D) The seashells and fish bones were covered with mud and sand



THE LEAF THAT TELLS A STORY

A hundred million years ago, a leaf fell to the ground. It landed in soft mud. More mud covered the leaf. After a long time the mud dried. Rocks and water pressed down on it.

Years passed. The dirt around the leaf was pressed to stone. The leaf became dust. But it had left a mark on the stone. The mark was shaped like the leaf. It was a fossil.

There are many kinds of fossils. Sometimes a whole animal became a fossil. Some fossils are shaped like fish. Some are shaped like birds.

Today, scientists study the fossils. From the fossils, scientists can learn what kinds of trees grew long long ago. They can tell what kinds of animals once lived on earth.

Fossils can be found in many places. Look at the rocks you pick up. You may find a fossil. It may be one hundred million years old!

New Words and Expressions

press	/pres/	<i>v.</i> 压, 挤, 按
dust	/dʌst/	<i>n.</i> 遗骸, 灰尘
mark	/mɑ:k/	<i>n.</i> 痕迹, 记号