Steps to Academic Reading 1



Steps and Plateaus

Jean Zukowski/Faust (美) 编著

外语教学与研究出版社 FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING AND RESEARCH PRESS

# Steps to Academic Reading 1 精通英语阅读系列 1

# STEPS AND PLATEAUS

# 一步领先

(第二版)

Jean Zukowski / Faust (美) 编著

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# "英语阅读文库"丛书总序

讲人21世纪。全球经济一体化进程加快、国际交往日益频繁、科学和 技术日新月异:我国加入WTO后,国内学英语、教英语、用英语的热潮持 续升温,有关英语教学改革的新举措频频出台,令人鼓舞,催人奋进。我作 为外语教学战线上的一名老兵, 面临如此机遇和挑战, 深受鼓舞和鞭策。这 些年,我一直埋头干翻译研究和辞典编纂,外语教学研究领域涉及不多,但 为我国革语教学出一份力的念头始终没有放弃过。现在,终于有了这样一个 机会, 外语教学与研究出版社独具慧眼, 从众多国际知名出版社引进一套大 型"英语阅读文库"。激请我担任该文库的总主编。该文库首批推出12本英 语阅读教材,内容涵盖了政治、经济、环保、教育、科学与技术等领域中广 大读者最感兴趣和关心的话题,并由国内经验丰富的英语教学专家、教授、 博士为各书撰写导读,为读者解疑释惑,指点迷津。文库后续几辑不久也将 陆续与读者见面。出版这样大规模的英语阅读系列从书、这在我国还是不多 见的。这套阅读文库所带来的全新阅读教学理念, 无疑为我国英语阅读教学 和阅读教材的编写吹来了一股新风, 也为广大英语师生、涉外人员和普通英 语学习者献上了一套内容新颖、知识丰富、图文并茂的丛书,对此我感到由 夷地高兴。

长期以来,人们认为,在听、说、读、写、译五项语言技能中,阅读一直是我国学生的强项。教育部颁布的《全日制高级中学英语教学大纲》和《大学英语教学大纲(修订本)》也将其目标分别定位在"侧重培养阅读能力"和"培养学生具有较强的阅读能力"。但是,有人却认为讲好英语或许更有助于我们在国际舞台上参与竞争。因此,外语教学界有人对大学英语教学大纲是否应该继续将培养阅读能力放在首位提出了质疑。

要解决这个问题,首先要弄清楚:英语在中国是"外国语"(EFL)还是"第二语言"(ESL)?我们不得不承认英语在中国还只是外国语。英语为母语或第二语言的学习者通常是在具备相当程度的听和说的能力后才开始学习阅读技能的。而在中国,情况绝非如此,这是不言自明的。尽管通过多年的努力,教授英语听和说的条件有所改善,但是由于种种条件的限制,听、说方面的条件仍不尽人意,因此阅读仍然是扩展英语知识和能力的重要途径。可以说,阅读输入是其他输出的主要前提条件。从某种意义上说,没有阅读就没有英语学习,学生要学好英语就必须广泛阅读。通过大量的语言输入,

开阔眼界,扩展知识,更好地理解所学语言。

解决了为什么要阅读这个问题,就需要弄清楚我们应该怎样看待阅 读——是把阅读看成简单、被动的字符释义,还是看成读者与原文之间的 互动交流?在这个问题上,大致上有两种观点:一种观点注重阅读的结果, 强调文章的形式和意义,认为阅读只是字符的简单解码过程;另一种观点则 注重阅读的过程,更重视读者在理解文章内容时所采用的策略、认为阅读过 程中,读者调动已有的语言知识来理解所读文章的意思。一方面,阅读是大 脑认知的过程;另一方面,阅读也是读者与文章之间的沟通与交流。现代语 言学以及语言习得理论的研究成果告诉我们:要驾驭一门外语,学习者一定 得经历从语言能力(linguistic competence)的成熟,到社交语用能力 (socio-pragmatic competence)的成熟,最终到文化能力(cultural competence)的成熟这一必经的过程,三个阶段缺一不可。也就是说,学习 一种外国语不只是学习语言本身及其运用的技巧, 更需要学会跨越与该语言 伴随而来的文化障碍,即不同的文化背景所产生的不同思维方式和生活习俗。 而要完成上述过程,阅读能力的培养始终是英语教学的首要任务。因为阅读 是语言输出的主要来源,是听、说、写、译的基础,也是学生毕业后继续深 造的基石。

正是基于这样的认识,"英语阅读文库"丛书的编写者们在充分汲取英美阅读理论的研究成果的基础上,围绕培养学生的"阅读速度"和"理解深度"这两个中心环节,紧扣学生学习过程中可能碰到的问题,以准确、通俗、精练的文字,对英语阅读的基础理论、方法和技巧作了深入浅出的归纳和介绍,并围绕每一核心话题,配以内容涵盖了人文类、社科类和科普类等日常生活的方方面面的练习,环环紧扣,自然合理,符合阅读训练的规律,较好地处理了教材编写中"知识性与可思性、系统性与灵活性、可接受性与前瞻性、语言规范与时代气息"之间的关系,让我们有机会了解到21世纪国际外语教学变革的最前沿动态。

总之,"英语阅读文库"体现了教育部制定的英语教学大纲的指导思想、教学目的和教学要求,顺应21世纪外语教学改革的大趋势。它以语言能力为基础,以跨文化交际能力为核心,以提高交际能力为目的,为读者提供了理论与实际相结合、适合教学或自学之用的辅助材料,对英语学习者一定有很大的吸引力。我相信这套从书会成为广大读者的良伴益友。

是为序。

# 导 读

#### 一。对英语阅读能力的培养

现代外语教学理论指出,英语阅读教学的目标不仅仅是培养学生的阅读理解能力。英语阅读教学的目标理念必须建立在人的发展概念上,让学生养成良好的阅读习惯,掌握一定的阅读技巧,拥有主动学习和合作的精神,具有自我学习的能力,为终身学习打下基础。

阅读理解能力为语言能力的一种,主要包括三个方面: 1.处理语言形式的能力——语能; 2.处理语言意义的能力——才能; 3.达到交际意念的能力——智能。另外,近来普遍为教师所采用的以学生为中心的课堂教学方法不仅强调培养学生的语言能力,而且注重培养学生的学习技能,因而阅读理解能力还应包括阅读技能。这样,阅读理解能力主要由四种能力组成:语能、才能、智能和技能。这四种能力构成整个阅读理解能力,也为阅读教材的编写提供了基本的理论依据。

阅读语能应包括词句和篇章结构两个层面的语能。这就要求阅读教材不仅要注意系统地呈现语言知识、培养学生处理词、句的语能,而且要注意培养学生处理篇章结构的语能。就培养学生的阅读才能来讲,阅读教材应注意提供读者阅读才能所及的内容,注意学生是否具备关于文章内容的背景知识以及对这些内容感兴趣的程度。阅读智能包括猜词悟意阅读智能、推理阅读智能、概括阅读智能和预测阅读智能。它在英语阅读活动中自始至终起着重要作用,因而阅读教材应该包括对读者的阅读智能的培养。例如,为了培养读者猜词悟意智能,教材各章节应该设有练习,专门训练学生根据上下文猜测词义的能力。阅读技能在读者的阅读过程中与其所具有的背景知识和文章中的信息产生交互作用,帮助读者高效地、有目的地阅读理解。

从以上的分析可以看出,要想达到培养和提高读者阅读能力的目的,必须从培养和提高读者的语能、才能、智能和技能四方面入于编写教材。只有这样,才能给读者呈献上一本好的阅读教程。

#### 二、关于"精通英语阅读"系列

"精通英语阅读"系列可谓最新推出的不可多得的英语分级阅读教程。该套教程主要有五大特征: 1. 文章选题广泛,而且都是读者所感兴趣和关心的话题; 2. 注重阅读技巧的传授和训练,有助于学习者系统地掌握阅读技能,改掉不良阅读习惯及方法,提高阅读能力; 3. 既注重培养学生阅读词、句的能力,也注重培养学生分析篇章结构的能力; 4. 注重培养学生的阅读智能,比如,在阅读后的练习中有意识地训练学生猜词悟意的能力、推理判断的能力; 5. 注重在阅读过程中培养学生的交际能力。阅读后的讨论话题多样且与学生的生活经历有密切关系,这样既可避免阅

读练习题的机械性, 也培养了学生的交际能力。

#### 三、关于《一步领先》(Steps and Plateaus)

本书为"精通英语阅读"系列的第一册,是专为英语初学者编写的基础阅读教程,因而重点突出了初学者已经掌握或需要掌握的常规词汇。本书结构十分简单,包括15个"步骤(Step)"和3个"阶段(Plateau)"。每5个"步骤"后有一个"阶段"。通过学习以主题划分的"步骤",学生会发现这些熟悉的内容对英语阅读大有帮助。"阶段"则是对各个主题的简要重复,"阶段"中学过的重点词汇也在此重复出现。

本书综合了一般读物中的系列相关话题,通俗易懂,循序渐进。英语中使用频率极高的词汇出现在简单自然的句子中,以便加深读者对词义的理解掌握。基本词汇表中未列出的生词经由上下文或通过图表予以解释。该教程的主要目标是帮助学生锻炼语言技巧和思考能力,使其熟练进行英语阅读。本书着重强调以下几个方面,

- 1) 促进读者与阅读文章的互动:
- 2) 了解文章的梗概:
- 3) 归纳文章的中心大意:
- 4) 找出各个观点之间的联系:
- 5)列出单词在上下文中的意义及惯用法;
- 6) 学习阅读技巧:
- 7) 学会容忍文章语言的模糊,借助蛛丝马迹的线索理解全文。

总之,阅读本教程就是要学会在意群中阅读单词,提高阅读速度和熟练程度。 教程开篇的文章长度较短,后面逐步加长,一篇课文的长度达到1,500词左右。

对于初涉英语的阅读者来说,要想成功地积累阅读经验必须选择简易的读物,选择句法结构(尤其是时态及插入结构)简单的阅读材料。在遇到新结构之前,多练习熟悉的结构会使学生获益匪浅。本书第一部分的语法结构基本上仅限于一般现在时和一般过去时的陈述句和疑问句,以及以 will 表示的将来时。随着课程深入,将介绍一些较复杂的结构。其目的是通过对简单结构的大量练习,锻炼学生的判断性阅读技巧。也正是基于这一理念,本书对书面语进行了简化处理,降低了阅读的难度。具体做法如下:

- 1)限制句子的长度,让初读者能掌握每句话所表达的含义。如果学生能在10秒钟内读完一个5至8个单词的句子,那么就不必写下每个单词的意思。因此,前面几课中的句子都非常短,只是一些易懂的语言单位。这样能使读者轻易地理解其意义,从而增加信心和兴趣。
- 2)不时地在句首使用过渡词,如 and, but, so 等,来保持连贯性。"步骤"1中基本上没有插入语,即使有,通过上下文其意义也一目了然。随着课程的深入,学生的能力提高,到了能读懂较长的句子,理解综合性强的观点时,再介绍原因状语从句和if/then结构。不过这些结构并非作为语法结构,而是作为连接两个意群的单位在文章中体现,对学生起到了潜移默化的作用。

3)在每篇阅读材料后附上一整套的问题。大多数问题的答案在文章中可以找到,学生可以将答案写下来。但是在某些情况下,由于答案实际上只是一种推论,而且学生可能因词汇量小而无法表达自己的观点,因此选择题的形式可供学生阅读并做出选择。学生所要表达的观点也许超过了他们的英语表达能力,但在不知不觉之中。学生语言的流利程度及积极表达能力得到了提高。

根据本书的特点, 教学可以按以下方式组织:

#### 1) 读前准备

预先准备一套与话题有关的单词和短语。在介绍一个"步骤"时,让学生注意 其中的题目和插图,因为它们包含了许多目标词汇和观点。组织全班集体讨论,根 据学生提供的意见在黑板上写下单词和短语。可以指着插图的某个部分,询问学生 看到了什么或读一下标题问学生标题是什么意思。这种开放性的集体讨论可以引出 相关论点,学生通过聆听同学的发言,踊跃地提出自己的想法,从而可以增加背景 知识。如此一来,相关概念中存在的语义上的对应开始在内部形成。

#### 2) 阅读

首先可以考虑在学生面前大声地阅读文章,让学生一起读或研究插图。在读第一遍时,可以停下来指出主要观点。阅读语速要慢,但语调要自然。每读一句要停顿一下,给学生时间来梳理整个句子结构。如果这个方法合适的话,大声朗读两至三遍,鼓励学生跟着一起朗读。学生的阅读能力有高有低,在重复阅读中,已经掌握了阅读要领的学生可能感觉收获不大。可以让阅读较熟练的学生复述文章、组合句子,使文章复杂化,以帮助他们学习更多的句法结构。

通过阅读使语言能力得到锻炼的学生也会获得一项有用的技能。他们会发现要想从阅读中获得信息,并不需要理解每个单词、句子的意思。对于文章中模糊语的适应也是每个语言学习者必须掌握的基本技能。尽管阅读中双语字典十分有效,但使用最好谨慎,且不宜持续使用,否则学生在阅读中会过分依赖字典,而无法保持放松的状态。

#### 3) 练习

每个"步骤"和"阶段"里都有各种各样的练习,但并非都是同一模式,因此,不会令人厌烦。老师可以选择不同的练习,分别进行单个或集体操练。有些则可作为课后练习。练习大致分成以下几种:

#### • 从阅读中学习(Let's Learn from the Reading!)

阅读的重点在于: 重要的细节、生词的意义、文章主题、结论和细节的推理。因为学生大都缺乏足够的词汇,无法流利表达,因此通常采用选择题作为练习的形式。

#### 综合练习(Let's Practice!)

这部分通常是由大量的练习组成,以供学生运用单词、理解文章细节、分门别类地学习如何应用阅读中所学的各种规则。

• 交谈(Let's Talk!)

通过这几个部分,学生可以将阅读材料中的观点与自己的现实生活联系起来。这些问题,可用来引发班级讨论,并为讨论中所涉及的生词提供上下文语境。其中一些问题可以带出某些观点,使之很快成为全班讨论的一部分。

• 写作(Let's Write!)

阅读和写作是密切相关的。这几部分的活动将写作纳入了阅读技巧的训练 之中,使之成为一项重新梳理主要观点的指导性活动。学生的作文题目应十分 明确。通过限制学生自己创作材料的数量,可以培养成功的写作经验。

• 思考 (Let's Think!)

这一练习的重点在于锻炼判断性思考的技能。

• 自我检查(Let's Find Out About You!)

这些问题可以帮助学生探究自己对文章所涉及的各个方面情感上的反应。

附加练习(Extension Activities)

某些单元练习中还增加了额外的材料、游戏以及图表供阅读理解,其中有些适合作为课外练习。

本书为英语初学者提供了与日常生活密切相关的知识。这些简单的初级阅读材料和培养技巧的综合性练习能为学生熟练地阅读英文读物打好基础。

为了保持"精通英语阅读"系列原有的风格,帮助广大师生更好地使用这套从书,我们只对从书做了以下必要的辅助性工作,具体包括:

- 1) 对课文标题进行双语对照;
- 2) 对每册教程的特点和编写结构做了导读:
- 3) 对课文中涉及的应重点掌握的词汇做了汉语注释;
- 4)对课文内容做了文化背景注释。
- 一套优秀成熟的阅读教程是多年积累和反复磨炼的结晶。我们相信,这套引进的好书必将对我国大学和中学的英语阅读教学和英语阅读教材的改革起到积极的推动作用。

谨以此套从书献给立志提高阅读水平、学好英语的广大学生和朋友们。

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# Introduction 教材简介

Steps and Plateaus is a basic reading text for new readers of English. Written for the young adult and adult ESL/EFL student, this book features general vocabulary, the words that new learners of English already know or need and want to know. Through theme-based units (called Steps) and nonspecialized subject matter, adult students find familiar content an aid to learning to read in English. Summary recycling of the themes and vocabulary occurs in the Plateaus.

Steps and Plateaus is a series of relevant topics in readings with very low but gradually increasing readability levels. The highest-frequency words in English are used in simple but natural sentences, reinforcing their meaning. Vocabulary items outside of the basic list are defined in context and illustrated in the graphics. The main objective of this text is to help students develop the language and thinking skills that they need to become successful, proficient readers of English. Steps and Plateaus, therefore, focuses on the following aspects of reading:

- fostering the interaction between the reader and the text.
- getting the gist of a topic,
- · drawing key concepts out of a reading,
- making connections between ideas,
- figuring out the meanings of words and the idiomatic usage from context,
- learning specialized reading strategies like reading for details or sequence,
- learning to tolerate ambiguity and use minimal clues for understanding.

Above all, reading *Steps and Plateaus* is learning to read words in meaning groups to improve reading speed and efficiency. In this reading text, students begin with just a few hundred words and expand to a vocabulary of 1500 words.

#### The Organization of the Book

The outline of *Steps and Plateaus* is simple: there are fifteen progressive Steps, or short thematic units, and three Plateaus, larger thematic units with greater variety in readings, activity types, and vocabulary development materials. The Plateaus are expansions of the themes of the Steps, thus providing opportunities for respiraling and extending the concepts and the vocabulary. Each set of five Steps is followed by a Plateau.

#### Special Features for the Beginning Reader

To promote successful reading experiences for the reader who is just beginning to read in English, a teacher must select easy material. However, that material must be simple in sentence structure, particularly tenses and embedded structures. Because students benefit from practicing with familiar forms before new forms are introduced, the grammatical forms in the first part of *Steps and Plateaus* have generally been limited to simple present tense statements and questions, simple past tense statements and questions, and future meaning with *will*. As the text progresses, somewhat more complex forms are introduced. The purpose is to help students develop critical reading skills by providing plenty of practice with simple and familiar forms. That is why the following characteristics, which facilitate processing of the printed word and lower the level of readability (accessibility), form the basis of the presentation.

• Sentence length has been limited so that the concept load of each sentence is manageable by the beginning reader. If a student can process a sentence of five to eight words in ten seconds, then he or she is unlikely to need to write down the meanings of the words. For this reason, sentences are very short in the first Steps. These sentences are not necessarily authentic text, but they are understandable chunks of language that will give new readers a sense of success because they will be able to read and understand them. As learners succeed in reading and understanding, their confidence and enjoyment increase. Introduction xv

• Simple transition words such as and, but, and so are occasionally used to begin sentences and to include a feeling of continuity. Similarly, there are few embedded structures in the first set of Steps, and those that are there are heavily supported by the context. As students progress through the text, they are able to read longer sentences and able to understand combined ideas; therefore, because clauses and if/then constructions are added to their repertoire, not overtly as elements of grammar, but inductively as ways to combine two ideas.

• Each reading is followed by a set of questions. If the answer to a question is stated within the reading, the student might be asked to write the answer. However, because many answers are actually inferences, and because students might not have the active vocabulary with which to express their ideas, a multiple-choice format is used for the reader to read and to select from. Thus the students are dealing with ideas that may be beyond their active ability to express, while their passive fluency and ultimately their active language ability are being increased.

# Suggested Procedures for Use of Steps and Plateaus

The following techniques and strategies work well with this text:

### Prereading

Create an anticipatory set of words and phrases related to the topic. As an introduction to a Step or Plateau, have your students focus on the titles and the illustrations of the unit. Many of the target vocabulary items and the concepts are presented there. Brainstorm as a class. With the students' input, write words and phrases on the board. As you write, you might want to group the words and phrases that are related. You can point to parts of an illustration and ask students what they see or read a title and ask what the title might mean. Such an open class brainstorming session is a particularly productive way of eliciting the predictable and related concepts. Students will listen to what their classmates have to say and volunteer ideas of their own, thus increasing the total background knowledge of each student. In this way, the semantic mapping that occurs among related concepts begins to form internally.

#### Reading

At first, you might consider reading the text articles aloud to your students. Ask your students to read along with you or to examine the illustrations. Pause to indicate illustrations of key concepts as you go through the reading for the first time. Read slowly but with a natural intonation. Pause after each sentence, allowing students time to process the complete sentence units. If it seems appropriate, read the story aloud a second and third time, and encourage the students to read it aloud quietly as you read. In any one class there are likely to be students who have greater and lesser degrees of proficiency in reading. Those who already understand the keys to reading will not benefit as much from the repeated reading as those who are developing readers. Students with greater proficiency might be asked to copy the text and to combine sentences, making the text more complex and helping them learn more about sentence structure.

Students whose language ability is being stretched by the reading will also be gaining a useful skill. They will begin to recognize that they do not need to understand the meaning of every word and every sentence to gain information from the reading. This tolerance for ambiguity is an essential skill for every language learner. Although it might occasionally be useful to allow the use of bilingual dictionary, encourage judicious and not continual use of the tool so that students feel more at ease with the readings but not dependent on their dictionaries.

## Activity Types

Within each **Step** and **Plateau**, you will find a variety of exercise types, though not all units have the same format. There is enough variety to prevent boredom. The teacher can select different kinds of exercises for individual or group work. Some exercises are most effectively done as a class. Some work well as assigned homework. In each **Step** and **Plateau** there are ideas for individuals to relate their lives to the theme.

## **≃** Let's Learn from the Reading!

The main points of the reading are the focus in these questions: important details, meanings of new words, main idea, sequences, and simple inferences. Because students do not always have the active vocabulary and oral fluency needed to express what they have understood, the language is sometimes provided for them, in multiple-choice questions.

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# Let's Practice!

This section is usually a number of different exercises, designed to give plenty of opportunity for practice in using new words, understanding details, categorizing, and applying principles that have been learned or implied in the reading.

# Let's Talk!

Through these sections, students can relate the ideas in the reading to their own lives. These questions can be used to stimulate in-class discussions and to create contexts for the new vocabulary to be used in conversation. Some of the questions are anticipatory of ideas that will soon become a part of the classwork.

# Let's Write!

Reading and writing are related skills. The activities in these sections integrate writing into the development of reading skills. In general, the writing activities are guided tasks that recycle the main concepts. The topics for students to write on are clearly defined. The activities are designed to foster successful writing experiences by limiting the amount of material that the students have to create and compose themselves. At the same time, students are guided into creating personal responses to what they have read.

# Let's Think!

The emphasis in these exercises is on developing critical thinking skills

# Let's Find Out About You!

These questions invite students to explore their emotional responses to aspects of the theme.

# Extension Activities

In some Steps and Plateaus there are extra readings, games, and charts to read and understand. These activities typically provide extra practice with the words and ideas so as to help students become more comfortable with the learning. Some of these activities are appropriate for housework.

Steps and Plateaus makes relevant information about everyday life accessible to the new reader of English. The simple beginning-level readings and the skill-building and integrating activities help students build the foundation for success in reading in English.

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