

新编大学英语 快速阅读

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(第一册)



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新编大学英语快速阅读

第一册

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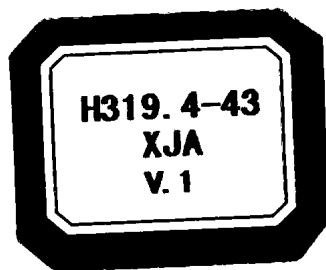
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前 言

大学英语快速阅读的教学目的是培养学生的英语综合理解和快速反应能力,特别是思辨性的理解能力,使之在今后工作和社会交往中能用英语有效地进行信息交流,增强理解和思辨能力,提高英语综合水平,以适应我国社会发展和国际交流的需要。

英语快速阅读能力的培养是大学英语教学的重要任务。《大学英语课程教学要求》(试行)对大学英语快速阅读做出了定性定量的具体要求,根据学生生源分为三个不同层次的要求:

一般快速阅读理解能力:能基本读懂一般性题材的英文文章,阅读速度达到每分钟 100 个词。能基本读懂国内英文报刊,掌握中心意思,理解主要事实和有关细节。能读懂工作、生活中常见的应用文体的材料。能在阅读中使用有效的阅读方法。阅读理解的准确率不应低于 70%。

较高快速阅读理解能力:能基本读懂英语国家大众性报纸杂志的一般性题材的文章,阅读速度达到每分钟 120 词。能就阅读材料进行略读或寻读。能阅读所学专业的部分综述性文献,并能正确理解中心大意,抓住主要事实和有关细节。阅读理解的准确率不应低于 75%。

更高快速阅读理解能力:能读懂有一定难度的文章,理解其大意,能快速阅读英语原版教材和英语国家报纸杂志上的文章,能比较顺利地阅读所学专业的综述性文献。阅读理解的准确率不应低于 80%。

为顺利达到快速阅读培养的要求,学生应该掌握的词汇量应达到 6000 个左右的单词和 1700 个词组,其中 2500 个单词为积极词汇,要求学生较好地理解和掌握。

《新编大学英语快速阅读》是以新的《大学英语课程教学要求》(试行)为指南,在参考国内外多种英语快速阅读教材的基础上,根据编者多年从事大学英语快速阅读教学的经验,以及我国大学生目前整体英语水平和实际英语能力,经过编委会认真、广泛的讨论之后编写而成的。

本套教程共分 4 册,每册 18 单元,每单元分为 Text A、Text B 和 Text C。Text A 略难于 Text B 和 Text C,Text A 为教师课堂训练和指导之材料,Text B、Text C 为学生自我训练之用。Text A 与 Text B、Text C 的选材原则上体现了同一主题。

每篇课文后精心设计针对性较强的 10 个相关练习题目,其中前面 7 个为正误判断题,后面 3 个为填空题,大多数答案是原文中出现的原词,要求读者在 15 分钟内完成。每本书后附有本册书练习的参考答案供师生参考。每篇文章的超纲单词在括号内用汉语进行标注,便于阅读理解。

本教程主要使用对象是大学英语本专科生,英语爱好者,也适用于研究生等。

本套教材的编写体现了如下特点:

1. 选材新:阅读材料选自近几年的国内外书刊原文;

2. 题材广:选材内容涉及生活、学习、工作、历史、科普等,体裁涉及叙事、议论、书信、广告宣传、法律规则等;

3. 题型活:在练习题目编写中采取了主观题和客观题相结合的办法,严格按照新的《大学英语课程教学要求》(试行)进行题型设计,便于检验读者的阅读水平;

4. 难度适中:采取循序渐进的原则,注意了每册书之间的难易梯度。

参加《新编大学英语快速阅读》编写的单位有:长沙理工大学,湖南农业大学,湖南工业大学,湖南工程学院等等。

《新编大学英语快速阅读》的编写是一项颇具挑战的工作,虽然作者有多年大学英语教学的经验,对大学英语快速阅读有一定的研究,在编写过程中几经易稿,但囿于作者的视野,以及时间仓促,书中难免有纰漏之处,敬请专家和读者不吝指正,以便进一步完善。

该教程在编写过程中得到了曾凡贵、刘明东等教授的指导和帮助,也查询了国内外不少相关参考资料,由于有些资料来源没有注明出处,在此一并表示感谢。

编 者

2006 年 8 月

快速阅读理论与策略

一、快速阅读的理论依据

阅读常常被认为是信息的被动接收过程,信息在传递过程中,可能会遇到障碍。信息接收者的脑海里产生了疑问。读者是否能完全接收到作者的信息,取决于读者对信息的难易程度和信息类型的了解。在阅读过程中,读者能否将被动信息迅速转化为主动接受信息,取决于读者自身的知识和经历。正如 Goodman(1967)以及 Smith(1971)认为:阅读是积极的认知过程,阅读效率高的读者根据阅读材料的线索期望对阅读内容做出预测,然后迅速确认或排斥这些预测。信息确认后,读者就在大脑里贮存主题信息。

根据不同阅读目的和不同类型的阅读材料,阅读理解可分为如下几种类型:一是字面理解(literal comprehension),即理解、记忆或回忆文章中明确表述的信息;二是推理性理解(inferential comprehension),即指运用读者的经验和直觉通过推理去寻找文中隐含的信息;三是评论性或评价性理解(critical or evaluative comprehension),即把文章中的信息主旨与读者本人知识和价值观念进行比较;四是欣赏性阅读(appreciative comprehension),即通过阅读文章得到感情上或认知上的共鸣。快速阅读就是迅速、准确地获取所需信息,并对相关问题迅速做出判断。读者的阅读速度取决于对阅读技巧的运用。

Jeremy Harmer (1983)把阅读技巧定义为接收性技巧(receptive skills),共分为六项:(1)预测技巧(predictive skills),即读者对课文内容做出预测,边读边理解所预测内容是否与课文内容相符;(2)快读(scanning),即提取某个信息;(3)略读(skimming),即获取全文大意;(4)推测作者观点和态度;(5)根据上下文推断意义(deducing meaning from content);(6)辨认(识别)语法功能,语篇结构及提示词(recognizing function and discourse patterns and markers),即识别文中的时态、指示代词等,识别文章的种类,文章的论点、论据,识别承上启下词等。文中使用了“in other word”时,读者只要看后面的解释就很清楚作者的意图。

读者在快速阅读过程中,常常运用的阅读技巧有:略读(skimming,抓住主要信息,忽略次要信息),寻读(scanning,即带目的进行阅读,迅速在文中寻找相应信息),交互型阅读方法(interactive reading,即采取自上而下、自下而上的阅读方法全面理解语言信息)等。

在传统阅读中,大脑对文字信息处理的过程是书面的文字信息对眼睛产生光学刺激之后,视网膜把这种物理过程转化为神经活动,由此传送到大脑的视觉中枢,由视觉中枢处理后再传达到语言中枢,语言中枢再传递到听觉中枢,最后由听觉中枢传输到记忆中枢。这种阅读实际是在“读书”,而不是在真正“看书”。而快速阅读是一种“眼脑直映”式的阅读方法,它是将书面的文字信息对眼睛产生光学刺激之后所产生的整体文字图像,直接传送到右脑以图像的形式记忆住,之后再由大脑将文字图像解析出来。快速阅读这种“眼脑直映”式的阅读的方法省略了语言中枢和听觉中枢这两个可有可无的中间环节,即文字信号直接映入大脑记忆中枢进行理解和记忆,省去了发声阅读或心声阅读的环节,这是一种单纯运用视觉的阅读方式。“眼脑直映”式的快速阅读才是真正意义上的“看书”。

由于人的思维反映非常迅速,特别是大脑内的言语思维,有很强的跳跃性、简缩性,常

常是一闪而过。但是在传统阅读中,文字信息在到达大脑记忆中枢的过程中,一定要有听觉中枢的参与,由于听觉中枢要将文字转化为声音,而声音又只能一个一个“串行”式的传输到大脑,所以,精读不能很快且大量地提供给大脑足够的信息进行处理,这样一快一慢,两者不能协调运作,效率当然就很差,阅读速度自然受影响和牵制而快不起来。快速阅读时就应特别注意眼脑配合的训练。

就阅读的理解和记忆效果而言,快速阅读能利用人脑对图像的超强记忆能力来整体记忆摄入的文字,运用经训练后所具备优良的超宽视觉能力,大量和快速地摄取文字信息,使得它提供信息的速度和大脑处理信息的节奏更接近,更容易协调和匹配,能够在很短的时间处理大量的文字材料。所以经过严格、科学、系统地训练的快速阅读,其理解记忆水平毫不逊色于传统阅读的理解记忆。一个技巧熟练的快速阅读者,在速读时的理解记忆效果也是相当好的。所以速读是最有利于记忆的阅读。

二、大学英语快速阅读的基本要求

快速阅读的目的是扩大阅读范围,增加词汇数量,提高阅读速度,丰富语言知识,增强学生英语语感,培养学生独立和广泛阅读的能力。新的《大学英语课程教学要求》(试行)对大学英语快速阅读做出了定性定量的具体要求,根据学生情况分为三个不同层次。(见下表)

《大学英语课程教学要求》(试行)对快速阅读能力的要求

要求层次	阅读速度(词/分钟)	阅读要求
一般要求	100	能基本读懂国内英文报刊,掌握中心意思,理解主要事实和有关细节,阅读理解准确率不低于70%。
较高要求	120	能就阅读材料进行略读或寻读,基本读懂文本并能正确理解中心大意,抓住主要事实和有关细节,阅读理解准确率不低于75%。
更高要求	未规定	能读懂有一定难度的文章,理解其意义,借助词典能阅读英语原版书籍和英语国家报纸杂志上的文章,能比较顺利地阅读自己专业有关的综述性文献。阅读理解准确率不低于80%。

三、大学英语快速阅读策略举要

所谓快速阅读就是利用视觉运动的规律,通过一定的方法训练,在较短的时间阅读大量的文字资料的一种科学的摄入信息的方法。快速阅读这一概念的内涵应由以下几个属性构成:

- (1)阅读文字材料的快速性;
- (2)阅读文字材料的无声性;
- (3)阅读方法的科学性。

(一) 快速性

要达到阅读的快速性,关键是眼肌能训练,即用特殊方法,使眼肌能灵活自如,达到视角、视幅、视停、视移等视觉最佳状态,使视线如行云流水般地快速阅读。训练方法可按手指法(即目光随着手指左右,上下移动,头不要摇动)、图谱法(如点、圆、抛物线等图形目光沿着图形而快速移动)、词谱法以及用投影仪进行快速阅读的基本功训练。当眼肌能训练适应之后,可采用快速阅读初级方法之一:跳读法。所谓跳读法就是指眼光从一个“意群”跳到另一个“意群”进行识读(意群是由多个单词组成的)这个过程眼球按“凝视—跳跃—凝视”的程序进行连续,不断运动,如:

The man in /the brown coat /was reading a book.

在熟练跳读练习之后,可进行扩大视力识读文字单位面积的训练。首先进行五个单词的练习,练习时主视区总应放在中间,也就是主视区中间的3个单词,两边单词用余光扫视。如:

/We /have a colour / TV.

五个单词的训练达到熟练之后,就可加宽视区练习,一下看六个至七个单词,甚至达到九个单词,逐渐加宽视区范围,延长目光移视长度,这样就能缩短凝视时间,达到快速阅读的目的。

(二) 无声性

阅读时无声要比有声快,这是因为有声阅读是眼、脑、口、耳四个器官一起活动,文字符号反映到眼睛后再传到大脑,大脑命令嘴发音,耳再监听辨别正确与否。而无声阅读只是运用眼和脑两大器官,省去了口的发音和耳朵的监听,因而它的速度要快。快速阅读的信息变换方式为:书面信息>眼睛扫描信息>大脑记忆中枢的信息。因此可用特殊方法和手段消除读音和心音。特殊手段就是用自身单声调鼻音,单声调心声或外界背景音乐抵消并消除读音和心音的手段,对特别顽固的不发音不能阅读的人,还可用一套自创歌曲,边唱边读,获得“眼脑直映”式的快速阅读效果,最后达到无音阅读以提高阅读速度。

(三) 科学性

阅读的科学性是提高阅读效果的重要环节。在快速阅读的时候,读者必须通过直觉、联想、想象、逻辑分析和综合判断等一系列思维活动,才能把按顺序进入视觉的一连串文字信号转换成概念和思想,完成阅读过程。进行科学阅读可以采纳以下几个技巧:

1. 略读的运用

略读是用最快的速度抓住文章大意。为了提高阅读速度首先应抓住关键词句,因为它是连接上下文的纽带,快速阅读时只注意瞬时关键词,其他便可迎刃而解,抓住关键句子也就是找出主题句,主题句是文章中用来概括大意的句子,主题句往往是每个段落的第一个句子,有时可能是最后一个句子,在特殊情况下可能出现在段落当中,通过识别主题句,可以快速、准确地抓住文章中各个段落的主要意思。如果抓住了每一段落的大意,就抓住了全文中心思想。在阅读中识别主题句,准确理解其意思,可帮助读者了解作者的行文思路,分析文章的内容结构,弄清各个段落之间的逻辑关系,有利于提高阅读速度和理解的准确性。

2. 寻读的运用

寻读是指有目标地去找文中某些特定信息。对文章有所了解(即略读)后,在文章中

查找与某一问题、某一观点或某一单词有关的信息,寻找解题的可靠依据。寻读时,需快速扫视文章,确定所查询的信息范围。同时,还应该注意题目中体现出的所查信息的特点。例如在问题或填空的句子中涉及人名、地名时,则寻找首字母大写的单词;有关日期、数目的问题,则要查找具体数字;有关某个事件、某种观点等,就需要寻找与此相关的关键词,而与所查信息无关的内容可一掠而过。如在 *In the United States the building of landfills is the job of both federal and local governments.* 一句中,一些特殊的用词,“United States” “building of landfills”能提示读者顺利找到原文 “*In the United States, taking care of trash and building landfills are local government responsibilities*”,而据此命题的正误判断练习 “*In the United States the building of landfills is the job of both federal and local governments.*”答案也就一目了然了。

3. 逻辑关系的运用

快速阅读理解能力的提高尤其应注意文章中逻辑关系的运用。逻辑关系体现在句子内部、句子以及段落之间。最基本的逻辑关系有以下几种:

(1) 因果关系:常用 *as a result, therefore, hence, consequently, because, for, due to, consequently* 等词。

(2) 并列、递进关系:常用 *and, or, then, in addition, besides, in other words, moreover* 等词。

(3) 转折关系:常用 *however, but, yet, in fact* 等词。

这些读者常见的逻辑提示词不但能衔接文章的句子,而且还提示读者哪些句子是有效信息,哪些是相对重要的信息,哪些是相对不重要的。读者在阅读文章的时候,必须思路清晰,重点寻找能帮助获取主旨信息的关键词。例如: *You have just finished your meal at a fast food restaurant and you throw your uneaten food, food wrappers, drink cups, utensils and napkins into the trash can. You don't think about that waste again. On trash pickup day in your neighborhood, you push your can out to the curb, and workers dump the contents into a big truck and haul it away. You don't have to think about that waste again, either. But maybe you have wondered, as you watch the trash truck pull away, just where that garbage ends up.* 该段最后一句话里的“*But*”,说明该句的逻辑主旨发生了变化,因此,转折逻辑词之前的信息就显得并不重要了。简单的处理方法是重点扫视转折词之后的信息。同样,并列、递进关系等词,意味着其前后衔接的信息主旨未发生变化,只突出了前后句子主旨的相似性,所以阅读其中一半便可。这样,既保证了阅读质量,又提高了阅读速度。如在 *How Is a Landfill Operated?* 中有这样一段:

Along the site, there are drop-off stations for materials that are not wanted or legally banned by the landfill. A multi-material drop-off station is used for tires, motor oil, lead-acid batteries. Some of these materials can be recycled.

In addition, there is a household hazardous waste drop-off station for chemicals (paints, pesticides, other chemicals) that are banned from the landfill. These chemicals are disposed of by private companies.

其中“*In addition*”意味着其后内容和上一段信息主旨基本一致,可以放弃本句的阅读。

4. 标点符号的运用

标点符号(破折号、小括号、冒号)可用于了解生词或句子的含义。由于快速阅读用词相对比较简单,很容易理解和把握标点前的被解释信息,所以,可以将这些标点符号后面的信息删除,从而更加快速地把握文章的主旨。例如:

Dump—an open hole in the ground where trash is buried and that is full of various animals (rats, mice, birds). (This is most people's idea of a landfill!)

Landfill—carefully designed structure built into or on top of the ground in which trash is isolated from the surrounding environment (groundwater, air, rain). This isolation is accomplished with a bottom liner and daily covering of soil.

Sanitary landfill—landfill that uses a clay liner to isolate the trash from the environment.

Municipal solid waste (MSW) landfill—landfill that uses a synthetic (plastic) liner to isolate the trash from the environment.

在 Dump、Landfill 之后分别有一个破折号,其作用在于对前者进一步进行解释,明白这些单词的基本含义后则可放弃其后信息的阅读。因为阅读理解强调把握文章主旨信息,而不是具体的细节信息。

5. 特殊信息点的运用

所谓“特殊信息点”是指文章中很容易识别的词汇,诸如时间、数字、大写字母等形式的语言点。这些信息点一方面很容易识别出来,另一方面,其表现的一般都是文章的琐碎信息,对于主旨的理解和把握而言,不过是更进一步论证说明而已,因此,可以忽略这些信息的阅读。如果测试题中确实涉及了,再回来细读也无妨,毕竟它们的表现形式非常利于查找和定位判断。如:

The trash production in the United States has almost tripled since 1960. This trash is handled in various ways. About 27 percent of the trash is recycled or composted, 16 percent is burned and 57 percent is buried in landfills. The amount of trash buried in landfills has doubled since 1960.

这段文字中充斥着大量的数字性信息,可以判断该部分信息为具体的描述,可以放弃阅读。

总之,快速阅读是培养学生在短时间内获取篇章主旨和特定信息的能力,因此,它更强调正确的阅读方法和技巧的运用。只要掌握一定的方法,培养良好的阅读习惯,就能取得事半功倍的效果。

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Unit 1

Reading Comprehension (Skimming and Scanning)

Directions: In this part, you are to go over each passage quickly within the given time and answer the questions that follow.

For questions 1—7, mark

Y(for YES) if the statement agrees with the information given in the passage;

N(for NO) if the statement contradicts the information given in the passage;

NG(for NOT GIVEN) if the information is not given in the passage.

For questions 8—10, complete the sentences with the information given in the passage.

Text A >>>>

Learning a Language

(888 words, suggested reading time: 9')

Linguists(语言学家) are interested in the abilities to understand and use language that people have. One of the abilities that people have is the ability to learn language. You are using this ability right now in your efforts to learn English as a second language. Most students would like to know how to learn a language more easily. Most linguists and language teachers would also like to know this. Linguists are working on this problem in two ways. First, they are trying to understand how children learn to speak and understand their native language. They are also trying to learn how people learn a second language.

Linguists are not sure how children learn to speak. Some linguists think that children are born with an ability to learn and use a language. This does not mean that you came into the world knowing your native language. It means that, along with many other things, you were born with the ability to learn your native language. One group of linguists feels that with just a little exposure to language, and a little help from your parents, you are about to learn to speak. Another group of linguists does not think this is correct.

This second group of linguists thinks that children learn to use a language from their parents. They believe that a child's parents teach their child to say sounds and words in their language. When the child knows some words, the parents begin to teach their child to say sentences. The linguists do not think that parents teach their children by talking to them and correcting their use of language. These linguists feel that you learn your language mainly from your environment. In this case, your environment is your family and your home. As you see, the first group of linguists disagrees.

There are some other theories about how children learn language. Many people are studying the process of language learning by children. This work is being done in many countries. Linguists are not the only people who are interested in these questions. Many

psychologists, doctors, and parents are also interested. People who teach foreign languages are interested in this process.

Foreign language teachers are interested in how children learn to speak their native language for a very important reason. If we knew how children learn their native language, perhaps we would have an easy way to teach adults, as well as children, a second language. This is a very interesting idea. Some foreign language teachers believe that adults learn a second language the same way children learn their native language. These teachers try to make their students' lives similar to the life of a child just learning to speak. These teachers speak only the foreign language in the classroom. They will not speak to the student in her native language. They try to expose the student to as much of the spoken language as possible. They do not teach their children rules for language usage, either. They simply tell the child how to say something correctly. Foreign language teachers using this spoken language method do the same thing. For some students, this method is successful. They learn to speak quickly and easily. They seem to enjoy using the language, and they do not worry about using exactly the right rule for everything they say. Some students, however, cannot learn a language this way. Linguists are trying to find another way to teach them a language.

A second method, the rule-learning method, sometimes works better with these students. Some linguists believe that learning a foreign language is different from learning to speak your native language. They feel that a student must learn the rules for using the language by memorizing them. The students must practice saying things in the language, using the rules correctly. These linguists try to teach the students the rules of the language they want to learn. Then they give the students many sentences in the language to say over and over again. The students are encouraged to make up new sentences using the rules that they have learned and other words that they know.

Some students are very successful with this second, rule-learning method. They learn the language quite quickly and can use it well. They know the rules for using the language, and can speak it and understand it too. For many students, this is the best way to learn a foreign language. For some students, both of the methods may work. Sometimes teachers use a combination of these methods in a class, hoping that everyone will be able to learn the language with one method or the other. Some people can go to a country and "pick up" the language simply from hearing it and trying to communicate. These people are rare.

Most people try to learn a language by taking classes and studying it in some way. Most teachers will try different ways of teaching to help the students learn the language quickly and easily. Linguists and psychologists are trying to understand how people learn and use a language. Perhaps language learning will be easier for everyone when we have a clear understanding of how people learn and use language.

For questions 1—7, mark Y, N or NG.

- () 1. Linguists and language teachers are trying to solve the problem of how to learn English as a second language more quickly.
- () 2. Everyone is born with the ability to learn his or her native language.
- () 3. Studying the process of language learning by children is the job of linguists.
- () 4. The foreign language teachers who believe that adults learn a second language the same way as children learn their native language try to create a language environment for their students.
- () 5. Some language teachers use a combination of different methods in a class, hoping that everyone will “pick up” the language simply from hearing it and trying to communicate.
- () 6. When children are born with a greater ability to learn and use a language, perhaps language learning will be easier for everyone.
- () 7. Sometimes linguistics have different opinions from psychologists, doctors.

For questions 8—10, complete the sentences with the information given in the passage.

- 8. _____, _____, _____, and _____ are all interested in the process of language learning by children.
- 9. The second group of linguists believes that children learn their language from _____.
- 10. There are two methods of learning a foreign language: _____.

Text B >>>

Schools in America

(732 words, suggested reading time: 8')

Today more than 56 million Americans are attending a wide variety of schools and universities across the nation. One half of all the people in the country between the ages of 18 and 25 attend a university. Schools are expected to meet the needs of every child regardless of his ability and also of society itself. This means that tax-supported free education includes courses in such subject as sewing, typing, radio and automobile repairs as well as in the customary school subjects such as mathematics, history, and language. Students can choose among a great variety of subjects depending on their interests, future plans, and level of ability. There are, however, certain basic courses that everyone is required to study, including reading, writing, mathematics, and

English. During the 1800's and early 1900's, when millions of people from many countries around the world came to the United States to settle, schools were an important part in "Americanizing" the children, through whom the parents got Americanized too.

Throughout the United States, all children are required by law to attend school from the ages of 6 to 16. The great majority of American children attend public schools. Most of the private schools are church-supported.

The local public schools are supported by tax money collected by the state and local governments from all of the people, whether they have children attending public schools or not. When the federal government does give money to education, it does so chiefly in the poorer areas, where there is not enough money locally. Federal government money is usually used for buildings, school bus systems, school lunches, or other purposes that do not affect the educational process itself. Americans do not want the federal government controlling what their children are taught. By having local governments control the schools, Americans feel that they are able to influence the education that is provided to their children to a greater degree.

Consistent with this clear separation of nation and state, there are no national examinations at either the school or university levels. A general entrance examination is given for students who want to attend universities. However, this test is not given by the government but a private organization and universities are not required to use the test results.

Religions and private schools receive little or no support from public taxes in the United States, and, as a result, are usually somewhat expensive to attend. The largest group of religious "parochial" (教会) schools in America is run by the Roman Catholic Church, while religious schools tend to be less expensive than private schools.

When there is free education available to all children in the United States, why do people spend money on private schools? Americans offer a great variety of reasons for doing so, including the desire of some parents to send their children to schools where classes tend to be smaller, or where religious instruction is included as part of the educational program, or because, in their opinions, the public schools in their area are not of high enough quality to meet their needs. Private schools in the United States range widely in size, quality, and in the kinds of programs that are offered to meet the needs of certain students.

The degree to which American parents are active in their children's schools is often surprising to people of other countries. Most schools have organizations consisting of both parents and teachers, usually called P. T. A. for Parent-Teachers Association. They meet together to discuss various matters concerning the school. Parents often give their time to help with classroom or after-school activities. Others work with teachers to help the slower-learning children in the classroom. Both mothers and fathers are expected to attend P. T. A. meeting and to show their interest in the school.

In addition to their regular schoolwork, students in the United States are offered a wide range of activities in the after-school hours. Called extra-curricular activities (课外活动), they are designed to help develop a student's skills, abilities, and attitudes toward life. From nature clubs to musical organizations, school newspapers or sports activities, students have a large selection of activities from which to choose.

Some of these activities occur during the school day, but most are held after classes. Although a student is free to join or not to join, after-school activities are considered an important part of the American educational system.

For questions 1—7, mark Y, N or NG.

- () 1. It is impossible that schools will meet the needs of every child regardless of his ability and also of society itself.
- () 2. Students can choose among a great variety of subjects at their own will.
- () 3. Majority of American children attend church-supported private schools.
- () 4. Only those people who have children attending public schools have to be taxed to the state and local governments.
- () 5. There are also national examinations at either the school or university levels just in China.
- () 6. American students also have a cooking course somewhat like in Japan.
- () 7. A wide range of activities are held only after classes.

For questions 8—10, complete the sentences with the information given in the passage.

- 8. Schools are expected to meet the needs of every child _____ his ability and also of society itself.
- 9. By having local governments control the schools, Americans feel that they are able to _____ the education that is provided to their children to a greater degree.
- 10. _____ activities are designed to help develop a student's skills, abilities, and attitudes toward life.

Text C >>>>

What Is the Attraction of the English Language?

(562 words, suggested reading time: 6')

China's "open door policy" to the West, introduced more than a decade ago, has injected an insatiable (不知足的) appetite for English language training. Despite China's staggering (令人惊愕的) 1.2 billion population it seems that the impact (影响) of the world's 400 million native English speakers has left the Chinese with little choice than to

embrace the English speaking tourists, slump (衰退) before that Hollywood movie on the TV, and get down to Los Angeles' freshest hip-hop tunes. Every day its new economic, cultural and intellectual (智力的) ties with the English-speaking world are growing. Just as in so many countries around the globe, learning English is seen by many Chinese, mainly, but not only the young, as a passport (护照) to a new world of employment, educational and entertainment opportunities. And they are exposed to English everywhere they look or listen.

In fact the worldwide language might more properly be called American, because the language of pop music, films and information technology in all its many aspects reflects the dominance (统治) of Hollywood and Silicon Valley. In the old days it was the BBC World Service that was the main conduit (渠道) for the flow of English from the English-speaking world. Today the engines of English production include the Internet (mostly in English), Pop culture—not just music films and books but also clothes, cigarettes and other consumer products.

It was Winston Churchill who said that Britain and the United States were separated by a common language. It is not just the pronunciation, which is different, there are hundreds of examples of words with totally different meanings on the two sides of the Atlantic. Some differences show that an American just can't be understood by an Englishman or vice versa (反之亦然)—others could lead to a slap (耳光) across the face.

Neither version of the language is better or worse than the other—they are just different. The same can be said of the many other varieties of English, which are current across the world—Indian, Nigerian, and Australian for example. Not only is English the official language and mother tongue of some 400 million people around the world, it is the second language of many hundreds of millions more—perhaps as many as 1 billion people in total.

Of course all languages have their own culture, history, literature and value and should be cherished (珍爱) but not replaced. However, whether we like it or not, we live in a globalized world and we need a common means for the world's population to communicate with each other. If people and nations are ever to understand each other then having a common language in which to communicate is vital. Many people have tried and failed to invent a new language for this purpose (remember Esperanto) and other candidates for the position have been proposed (such as French, once the universal language of diplomacy). However, by accident of history it seems that the English language is going to fulfill that role—a language in which all people on earth who consider themselves to be educated can communicate with each other. That would be something the world has not seen yet—the nearest was probably at the height of the Roman Empire when Latin was spoken or at least understood from the Atlantic to the Caspian and the Arctic to the Mediterranean.