

新编大学英语 快速阅读

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(第三册)



上海交通大学出版社

新编大学英语快速阅读

第三册

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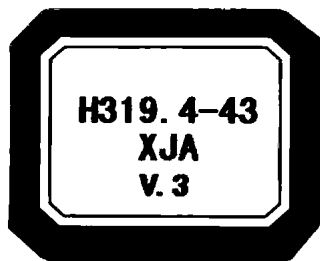
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图书在版编目(CIP)数据

新编大学英语快速阅读. 第三册 / 肖建安总主编. —上海: 上海交通大学出版社, 2006

ISBN 7-313-03865-8

I. 新... II. 肖... III. 英语—阅读教学—高等学校—教材 IV. H319.4

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字(2006)第 088628 号

新编大学英语快速阅读

第三册

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上海交通大学出版社出版发行

(上海市番禺路 877 号 邮政编码: 200030)

电话: 64071208 出版人: 张天蔚

长沙鸿发印务实业有限公司印刷 全国新华书店经销

开本: 787mm × 1092mm 1/16 印张: 12.25 字数: 287 千字

2006 年 8 月第 1 版 2006 年 8 月第 1 次印刷

印数: 1—6200

ISBN 7-313-03865-8/H · 896 定价: 17.00 元

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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 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 >>>

Words from a Father

(1,153 words, suggested reading time: 8')

In the doorway of my home, I looked closely at the face of my 23-year-old son, Daniel, from his backpack by his side. We were saying good-bye. In a few hours he would be flying to France. He would be staying there for at least a year to learn another language and experience life in a different country.

It was a transitional time in Daniel's life, a passage, a step from college into the adult world. I wanted to leave him some words that would have some meaning, some significance beyond the moment.

But nothing came from my lips. No sound broke the stillness of my beachside home. Outside, I could hear the shrill cries of seagulls as they circled the ever changing surf on Long Island. Inside, I stood frozen and quiet, looking into the searching eyes of my son.

What made it more difficult was that I knew this was not the first time I had let such a moment pass. When Daniel was five, I took him to the school-bus stop on his first day of kindergarten. I felt the tension in his hand holding mine as the bus turned the corner. I saw color flush (使……变红) his cheeks as the bus pulled up. He looked at me—as he did now.

What is it going to be like, Dad? Can I do it? Will I be okay? And then he walked up the steps of the bus and disappeared inside. And the bus drove away. And I had said nothing.

A decade or so later, a similar scene played itself out. With his mother, I drove him to William and Mary College in Virginia. On his first night, he went out with his new schoolmates, and when he met us the next morning, he was sick. He was coming down with mononucleosis (传染性单核细胞增多症), but we could not know that then. We thought he had a hangover (酒后不适).

In his room, Dan lay stretched out on his bed as I started to leave for the trip home. I tried to think of something to say to give him courage and confidence as he started this new phase of life.

Again, words failed me. I mumbled something like, "Hope you feel better, Dan." And I left.

Now, as I stood before him, I thought of those lost opportunities. How many times have we all let such moments pass? A boy graduates from school, a daughter gets married. We go through the motions of the ceremony, but we don't seek out our children and find a quiet moment to tell them what they have meant to us, or what they might expect to face in the years ahead.

How fast the years had passed. Daniel was born in New Orleans, LA., in 1962, slow to walk and talk, and small of stature. He was the tiniest in his class, but he developed a warm, outgoing nature and was popular with his peers. He was coordinated and agile, and he became adept in sports.

Baseball gave him his earliest challenge. He was an outstanding pitcher in Little League, and eventually, as a senior in high school, made the 8 varsity (大学代表队), winning half the team's games with a record of five wins and two losses. At graduation, the coach named Daniel the team's most valuable player.

His finest hour, though, came at a school science fair. He entered an exhibit showing how the circulatory system (循环系统) works. It was primitive and crude, especially compared to the fancy, computerized, blinking-light models entered by other students. My wife, Sara, felt embarrassed for him.

It turned out that the other kids had not done their own work—their parents had made their exhibits. As the judges went on their rounds, they found that these other kids couldn't answer their questions. Daniel answered every one. When the judges awarded the Albert Einstein Plaque for the best exhibit, they gave it to him.

By the time Daniel left for college he stood six feet tall and weighed 170 pounds. He was muscular and in superb condition, but he never pitched another inning (在另一局中充当投球手), having given up baseball for English literature. I was sorry that he would not develop his athletic talent, but proud that he had made such a mature decision.

One day I told Daniel that the great failing in my life had been that I didn't take a year or two off to travel when I finished college. This is the best way, to my way of thinking, to broaden oneself and develop a larger perspective (远景) on life. Once I had married and begun working, I found that the dream of living in another culture had vanished (消失).

Daniel thought about this. His friends said that he would be insane to put his career on hold. But he decided it wasn't so crazy. After graduation, he worked as a waiter at college, a bike messenger and a house painter. With the money he earned, he had enough to go to Paris.

The night before he was to leave, I tossed in bed. I was trying to figure out

something to say. Nothing came to mind. Maybe, I thought, it wasn't necessary to say anything.

What does it matter in the course of a life-time if a father never tells a son what he really thinks of him? But as I stood before Daniel, I knew that it does matter. My father and I loved each other. Yet, I always regretted never hearing him put his feelings into words and never having the memory of that moment. Now, I could feel my palms sweat and my throat tighten. Why is it so hard to tell a son something from the heart? My mouth turned dry, and I knew I would be able to get out only a few words clearly.

"Daniel," I said, "if I could have picked, I would have picked you."

That's all I could say. I wasn't sure he understood what I meant. Then he came toward me and threw his arms around me. For a moment, the world and all its people vanished, and there was just Daniel and me in our home by the sea.

He was saying something, but my eyes misted over, and I couldn't understand what he was saying. All I was aware of was the stubble (短须) on his chin as his face pressed against mine. And then, the moment ended. I went to work, and Daniel left a few hours later with his girlfriend.

That was seven weeks ago, and I think about him when I walk along the beach on weekends. Thousands of miles away, somewhere out past the ocean waves breaking on the deserted shore, he might be scurrying (急跑) across Boulevard Saint Germain, strolling through a musty hallway of the Louvre, bending an elbow in a Left Bank café.

What I had said to Daniel was clumsy and trite (陈腔滥调的). It was nothing. And yet, it was everything.

For questions 1—7, mark Y, N or NG.

- () 1. The author lives by the seaside.
- () 2. When Daniel was four years old, the author sent him to the kindergarten.
- () 3. At graduation, the coach named Daniel the team's most valuable player.
- () 4. After graduation, Daniel worked as a soldier.
- () 5. Daniel did not give up baseball by the time he left for college.
- () 6. Daniel was awarded the Albert Einstein Plaque for the best exhibit.
- () 7. The author was a Frenchman.

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

- 8. Daniel would be staying in France for at least a year to _____.
- 9. Daniel was the tiniest in his class, but he developed _____ nature and was popular with his peers.
- 10. _____ gave Daniel his earliest challenge.

Text B

The Lies Your Parents Tell You

(1,340 words, suggested reading time: 10')

(选自《心智的感动》p44~49)

The German philosopher Nietzsche(尼采)once said that we need lies in order to live. They console, evoke sympathy, hide and protect. They can also confuse, damage relationships, lead to a loss of trust and create a world in which nobody feels comfortable. People resort to(求助于)lies to save face, to deliberately mislead, to gain power. And lies are not always to do with words. You can live(实践,身体力行)a lie.

Consider some myths and allegories(寓言). Ancient cultures discarded much of the information that came their way. The vital things—the “truth”, handy hints for living, health tips(忠告)—were all handed down by word of mouth(通过口头流传下来)in story, verse and song. Without that tradition, nobody would have known what to do, who to be.

It was the same in my family. In our house, the sustaining myth was that we had once been respectable but had somehow fallen on hard times(遭逢艰难事时). Nonetheless, I found it difficult to believe that my relatives had gambled away all the precious family silver.

As a child, I invented a few myths of my own. In one, I was the son of a prince who had been given to the wrong parents. My sustaining myth was similar to that of my parents(loss of rightful inheritance), but with mine you met a much better class of people.

My parents did not tell me any deliberate lies, I'm sure. Most parents don't. But children can learn from the being of lying and the feeling of it, as well as the actual telling of lies. And often the saying of it(口头的欺骗)isn't the same as the being or the feeling of it.

That's where the confusion comes from in families—especially when the parents' myths and world view cease to convince, to have relevance. What was true for our parents may, in a changing world, be irrelevant to our lives.

If all parents were happy, fulfilled, courageous human beings, they'd bring up their children to be the same. But parents are scared, frustrated, angry, confused and disappointed. I'm not surprised they resort to lies. It's left to their children to sort out the lies from the truth.

My father was a good man but he told me lots of lies. He told me, in words that big boys don't cry, that boys are better than girls, that you don't argue with authority. He told me, in his being(活着的), that men had to be tough all the time, they weren't

entitled to feel sad, sentimental, tender or loving. Or to be in love. That was considered cissy(女人气的). At the very heart of my father's philosophy lay fear. Fear of "the bosses", of women, of love. Once I'd detected that fear, that weakness, we grew apart. I wish I could meet him again. I'd respect his vulnerability, his wish not to see certain things. I wouldn't attempt to discuss class, or women, with him. I'd just buy him a beer and tell him that I loved him very much.

My mother had her own version of the powerlessness myth. "It's not for the likes of us (像我们这样的人)," she'd say. (Why not?) "Don't think you're better than your father." (Not better, different.) "Know your place." (So who's assigning these supposed places?)...

Parents tell lies to protect themselves. A mother may say to her daughter. "The greatest happiness a woman can have is to marry and have children." (And the daughter could equally say to her mother, are you saying it, or living it?) In my day, babies were left in the charge of big girls a lot of the time, so by the time a woman came to have a baby herself, she knew a great deal about them. These days, that's not true. A mother may say to her daughter how wonderful it is to have a baby; the daughter may find that she doesn't feel anything like wonderful when she has the baby. (And she then has to cope with the guilt of not having the "right" feelings.)

Mothers rarely tell daughters that bringing up a child can be excruciatingly(极度地) demanding(费力)and absolutely exhausting; that being with a child all the time knackers(使筋疲力尽)you; that having a baby fundamentally changes your life (forever) and limits your freedom (forever). What parents do say—to each other—is, "I'd love to have some grandchildren. It would be so nice to be able to play with them and then hand them back." This is grandchildren as status symbols.

It is the same with marriage. All parents indulge in lies about marriage; all children are exposed to the Cinderella myth(灰姑娘的故事). Nobody has found a substitute for the family but you don't have to lie about it. Bringing up a family is incredibly hard work. In a marriage you argue, row, bicker(争吵), have times when you hate each other, use each other, abuse each other. (The family is legitimised abuse.) I'm not knocking(说……的坏话) the family. When I think of an alternative way of bringing up children I'll let you know. But why the lies? Why not tell it how it really is?

Some of the lies parents tell are plain silly; that boys climb trees, girls don't; that, for a girl, it's nice to be better but it's better to be nice; that John is great at helping dad with the car and Jenny is much better in the kitchen helping mum.

A lot of women are afraid of their sons, but not of their daughters. Sons are spoilt, praised, fussed over(得到过分的钟爱), forgiven, pampered, fed, watered, serviced; for very little in return. Not so with girls; they're expected to give something back, to take responsibility for their behavior (and manners). Is it any wonder that when a man gets married, he's not looking for a partner; he is looking for his mother? Wouldn't you?

Most parents still don't tell their children about sex. That's a very vulnerable area, so some parents will pretend that they don't do it, only did it twice or don't think about it at all... There are parents today who never mention sex to their children (or, more importantly, making love and the part sex plays in love). That's a massive lie by default (由于疏忽). You can tell powerful lies without moving your lips.

And by moving them (张口说话), "You go to the party, darling. I'll run you there in the car. Of course I don't mind," says mummy. She minds like hell (实际上她在乎极了). She's tired, frazzled, can hardly drag one foot after the other. Parents think they're not allowed to become tired, angry, annoyed, frustrated, fed-up, sad, miserable, and furious. That's why they will often say one thing and yet feel-and signal-another. That's the most confusing lie of all, and it's usually totally unnecessary. "Daddy loves mummy very much," says daddy. Are you sure you mean love? Do people who love each other say those kinds of things to each other? If I listen to what you're saying, you love each other; if I watch you it occurs to me that you can't stand the sight of each other. There's dissonance(不一致)between what's heard and what's seen and that can be very damaging to a child.

The Big Lies in families aren't always spoken; they're also lived. Parents who tell their children to be brave but aren't brave themselves, who tell their children not to cheat and lie but who cheat and lie every week; who tell their children to be happy and loving but who never show any signs of happiness—or love.

I feel sorry for parents. It isn't that they say things that are lies... It's that what we do is what we are. Children have eyes that can see. That's why it's better to tell the truth.

The best thing that parents can give to their children is the truth, and a love of life. "Life is becoming what you want to be, not what I want you to be," they should say. Then children can forgive the lies and seek the truth themselves.

For questions 1—7, mark Y, N or NG.

- () 1. The German philosopher Nietzsche(尼采)once said that we need lies in order to live.
- () 2. My parents told me some deliberate lies.
- () 3. The author's father did not tell a lie.
- () 4. The author's mother had her own version of the powerlessness myth.
- () 5. Mothers rarely tell daughters that bringing up a child can be excruciatingly(极度地)demanding(费力)and absolutely exhausting.
- () 6. Some of the lies parents tell are plain silly.
- () 7. The best thing that parents can give to their children is the truth, and a love of life.