

大学英语分级阅读



华中理工大学出版社



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大学英语
分级阅读丛书

第 卅

戴瑛选编

华中理工大学出版社

内容提要

本书为大学英语阅读教材的第二册，介绍了国际奥林匹克运动、自然界奇迹、英国历史传说和莎士比亚戏剧等四部分内容。可供大学一年级学生和其他中级英语水平的自学者阅读。

大学英语分级阅读丛书

第二册

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阅读——一种技能

前言

阅读是一种技能，掌握这种技能主要靠实践。正象学游泳一样，只谈理论，不去实践，是学不会游泳的。同样，要学会阅读，光讲理论，不去实践，也是学不会阅读的。

“多读”——这是许多人学外语的一条重要经验。要提高阅读速度和阅读理解能力，关键在于是否进行大量阅读。课堂阅读对熟悉阅读技巧固然重要，但要真正掌握这些技巧，还得靠精心设计的、大量的、独立的课外阅读。因此，一切有经验、有远见的教师，莫不鼓励学生进行大量阅读。

然而遗憾的是：在市面上学生很难找到称心如意的阅读材料。有的读物语言过难，读者望而生畏、敬而远之；有的读物故事陈旧，内容早已为读者所知晓，缺少时代性和新鲜感；有的读物由于文体与学生所希望阅读的不一样，因而有实用性和知识性不足之感；有的读物虽文体内容尚可，但由于是节选而成，东拼西凑，有头无尾，读来使人颇有不满足之感。

几年来我们一直希望能够解决这个问题。在寻找合适的大学英语课外阅读材料的时候，我们高兴地发现 Cassell 出版公司出版的一套分级读物。这套丛书避免了以上所说

的种种缺点，集知识性、趣味性、实用性和时代性于一体。同时由于编者用词造句巧妙自然，因而读来毫无一般简易读物的不地道和非真实之感。因此说这是非英语国家学生的一套理想的英语课外读物，那是毫不夸张的。

为了满足我国文理工科大学学生英语学习的需要，我系教师浏览了这套丛书，并选出其中15本按难易程度编成与我国大学英语1至4级相符的四册阅读教材，增加了词汇和注解部分。我们相信：广大读者，特别是文理工科大学学生，一定会喜爱这套丛书的，因为它会扩大你的视野，丰富你的知识，使你体会到以英文为工具吸取新信息的那种由衷的喜悦之情。我相信你会在不知不觉中对英文阅读产生兴趣，同时你也会在不知不觉中提高了自己的阅读速度和阅读理解能力。

程恩洪

一九八九年六月

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Book One

The Olympics

Amanda Alvey

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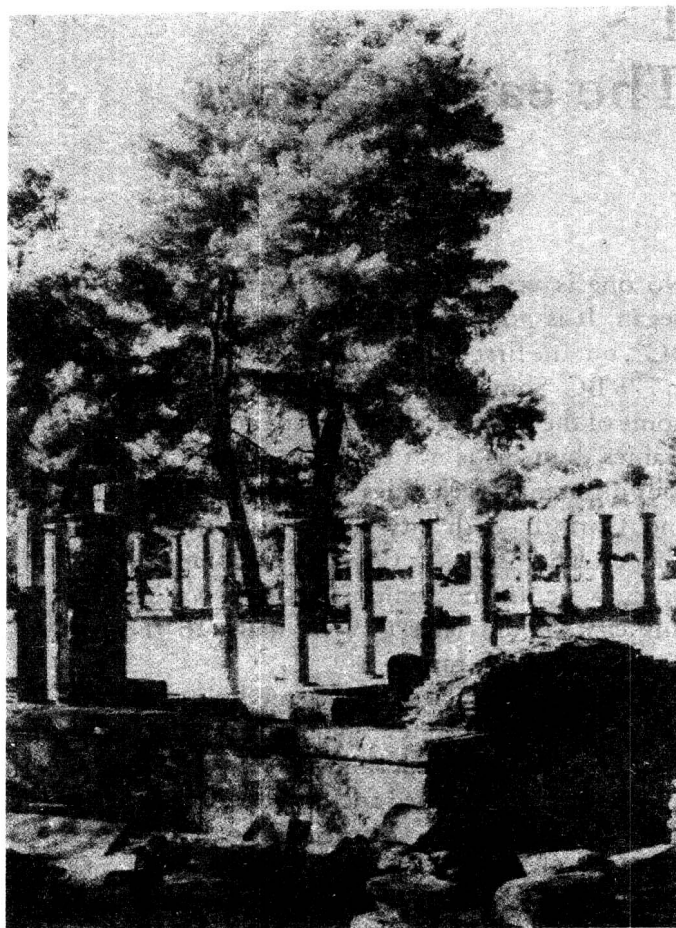
The early Games

No one is very sure exactly when the early Games began. It is possible that they began as early as 1300 BC*, but the first written reports are of the Games held in 776 BC. Some people believe that Mount Olympus, home of the Greek gods, was also the home of the early Games, but this is not true. The Games were held in four different Greek cities – Olympia, Nemea, Delphi and Corinth, each city taking its turn to hold the Games. The Games at Olympia, held once every four years, were the most important, so it was natural that this city should later give its name to the modern Games – the Olympics.

Although there was no direct link* between the early Olympic Games and Mount Olympus, the Games were very closely linked to Greek religious* life. Animals were killed and offered to the Gods on the third day and a flame* burned throughout the Games for Zeus, father of the gods. The Greeks, who fought long and bitter wars against each other as well as their

* See *Glossary*.

New words are asterisked (*) the first time they occur only.



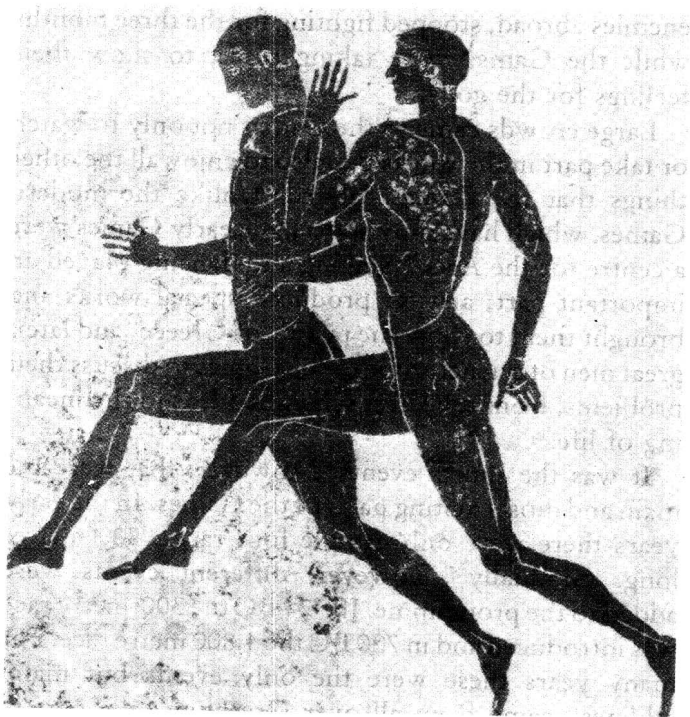
The ancient site of Olympus.

enemies abroad, stopped fighting for the three months while the Games were taking place, to show their feelings for the gods.

Large crowds came to the Games not only to watch or take part in the sports but also to enjoy all the other things that the Games offered. Unlike the modern Games, which have only sports, the early Games were a centre for the Arts.* Singing and dancing played an important part; artists* produced special works and brought them to show the people of Greece; and later, great men of science came to the Games to discuss their problems, from the latest scientific ideas to the meaning of life.

It was the sports events*, however, that were the main and most exciting parts of the Games. In the early years there were only simple foot races, 200 metres long. Gradually*, however, different events were added to the programme. In 724 BC the 300-metre race was introduced and in 720 BC the 4,800 metre race. For many years these were the only events but many athletes* came from all over Greece to take part in these simple races. The first known winner of an Olympic event was Koreobos, a Greek from Elis, who won the 200 metre foot race in 776 BC.

In time, other kinds of events were added to the programme. Although the foot races remained the most important of all the events, wrestling*, boxing*, pancratium* (a kind of wrestling), pentathlon* (five different sports including throwing and jumping events) and chariot* racing were eventually included in



An old drawing of two Olympic runners.

the programme. In the wrestling events there were no rules, as there are today, nor was there any fixed time. The competitors* sometimes fought for many hours before a winner was decided and men of different weights had to fight against each other, as they were not divided into separate groups. The greatest winner of all the early Games was Milos of Croton, who won

every wrestling event at Olympia between 540 BC and 516 BC and many events at Delphi, Nemea and Corinth. When he gave up wrestling, he had not lost a single event.

The most exciting event was the chariot race, which was introduced in 680 BC. This was held on the second day and large crowds came to watch the great fight that took place. The competitors drove round the stadium at high speed, trying to get into the best position. This was a very difficult race, and many chariots crashed. In 462 BC, forty-one chariots took part in the event – never before had there been so many – yet only one chariot crossed the finishing line at the end of the long race. Many of the competitors crashed and were still lying in the stadium, dead or badly hurt, when the race finished.

As the years passed, the Games began to change. In the early years of the Greek Games all the competitors were amateurs*, who took part just for the pleasure of winning; but soon professional* sportsmen began to take part together with the amateurs. Some of the best athletes received money or important positions from their home towns and in later years organisers* of the Games paid the more famous athletes to compete, so that they might get more money from the crowds who came to watch them. As the amounts of money grew, so too did the number of professionals. Athletes began to cheat* by deciding amongst themselves who should win the race and then dividing the prize money. The crowds began to bet* on the results and large amounts

of money were won or lost in the time it took to run 200 metres!

The situation became even worse after the second century BC, when Greece became part of the Roman Empire*. The Emperor* Nero, who was probably a little crazy, publicly gave himself medals for events that he had won unfairly. The competitors were so afraid of him that they had to let him win.

It was not the cheating and betting which caused the Games to be stopped, however, but the part that Greek religious life played in the Games. When Christianity became the only recognised religion of the Roman Empire, the Christian Emperor Theodosius I decided that the Greek Games should stop. So in 393 AD, the Olympic Games came to an end.

2

The Games are born again

The Games might have remained just a part of history without the dream of one Frenchman, Pierre de Coubertin. Coubertin believed that sport and exercise were very important for the health and happiness of every man and also for the nation. He therefore tried, in 1892, to interest other Frenchmen in his dream of starting a modern form of the early Greek Games. His ideas were strongly criticised* by many people, who did not really understand what he was trying to do. It is perhaps sad that the great work Pierre de Coubertin did to bring back the Games was never properly recognised during his lifetime. Gradually, however, people all over the world became interested in his ideas and at a meeting in Paris in 1894, with representatives* from twelve different countries, plans were made to hold the first modern Games in Athens in 1896.

Organising* the first modern Games, however, was not without problems. The Greek government was unhappy with the decision to hold the Games in Athens, as they had serious economic* problems at the time and did not feel they were in a position to spend the necessary money. It seemed therefore that the