



新 编

大学英语 快速阅读

New College English Fast Reading

主编◎宋 军

第 4 册



大连理工大学出版社

Dalian University of Technology Press



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前言

《新编大学英语快速阅读》(第4册)是根据教育部新颁布的《大学英语课程教学要求》编写而成,适用于大学二年级(下)非英语专业学生或具有同等英语水平的阅读爱好者。

本册教材编写目的是,通过积极主动的快读训练,帮助学生扩大英语词汇量,提高快速浏览能力、准确猜词能力、独立分析能力和归纳总结能力。本册教材编写严谨,具有高度的科学性、合理性和实用性。全书共设10个单元,每单元4篇文章(全书共40篇),每篇文章字数为1000~1200词。文章的材料大多选自近年来国外报刊和杂志,在语言规范、原汁原味的基础上,突出选文的科学性、可读性和趣味性;文章的体裁分为“记叙文、议论文和说明文(主要指科技类)”等主要文体;文章的题材广泛,内容丰富,各单元主题包括以下几个方面:

(1)文化教育类;(2)高校学生学习、生活类;(3)风土人情类;(4)英美等国家历史类;(5)社会热点话题、社会掠影和时事聚焦;(6)政治经济类、人口和经济发展与现代生活;(7)能源发展、科技发展与生存环境;(8)科技类(或科普类);(9)风云人物类;(10)现代生活。

本册教材的练习设计强调实训性,每篇文章后都附有“填空题、判断正误题和选择题”3种题型,基本涵盖了710分大学英语四级考试中的快读题型,问题设计合理、巧妙,期望通过这种训练,提高学生快速阅读能力。

参与本册编写的人员都是教学经验丰富、一直坚守在教学第一线的教师。我们真诚希望学习者能从本教材中获得最大的收益,也欢迎广大同仁多提宝贵意见。

编者

2010年5月

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Unit 1

Passage 1

My Life on the Court

Vocabulary Tips

dribble *v.* 运球

mediocre *adj.* 普普通通的

beneficiary *n.* 受惠者, 受益人

parameter *n.* 参数, 参量

icing *n.* 糖衣; 结冰

regress *v.* 复原; 逆行, 使倒退

trek *v.* 步行; 缓慢或艰难地旅行

hoop *n.* 篮圈

disinterested *adj.* 无私的

by and large 大体上, 基本上

I have been playing basketball since I was seven years old. That's more than 60 years, and as March Madness moves into full swing, I find myself thinking about the game and my addiction to it.

It isn't skill. I can do two things—shoot from the outside and run. (I don't get tired.) I **dribble** as little as possible. I drive to the basket once a decade; I've blocked two shots in my entire life, and if white men can't jump, this white Jewish man really can't jump. Maybe twice a year my shot is on and I feel I can't miss. On days like that I think that I've finally arrived and can't wait for the next game. But when game day rolls around again and I get out on the court, I find that I have **regressed** to my usual level, which is several degrees south of the **mediocre**.

In all these years I have had two triumphs. Once when I was playing on the beach-side courts in Laguna Beach, every shot went in. The other players, black and Latino, started to yell, "Larry Bird, Larry Bird." I knew it was a joke, but I savored the moment anyway.

Another time, when I was living in Baltimore, I hired a tall young man to remove the leaves from my lawn. When I came back a couple of hours later I found the leaves merely rearranged. I complained and refused to pay. We got into a shouting match, and then I

asked, "Do you play basketball?"

"Yes," he answered, and I said, "There's a gym up the street; let's play for it. You win, I pay you; you don't, I don't." He replied, "Are you crazy old man?" (At the time I was in my mid-forties; I hate to imagine what he'd say today.)

We **trekked** to the gym and I beat him three times by big scores. In the first game he didn't guard me because he didn't believe I could do anything, and I hit one long shot after another. In the second game he guarded me too closely, and I went around him. In the third game he didn't know what to do, and it was all over. The whole thing took less than half an hour, which was good because in another 20 minutes he would have figured out that I had only two moves and that both of them could easily be neutralized by someone taller, stronger and more athletic, all of which he was.

And then there are the thousand other times when I walked off the court either feeling happy not to have embarrassed myself (although I hadn't done much) or trying to come to terms with the fact that I had indeed embarrassed myself. Whichever it was, I always knew that I would be back.

Why? Why continue to do something I wasn't any good at nine times out of ten? Well, for one thing basketball players are **by and large** generous. (There are exceptions.) If you're not very skilled, if you're old and slow, they will make a place for you in the game. In his recent book *Give and Go: Basketball as a Cultural Practice*, Thomas McLaughlin speaks of the ethical practices that emerge in the course of a game even though no rules have imposed them; "Every time one of the players in our game says to a weak player as he is taking an open shot that he will likely miss 'Good shot', he is weaving the ethical fabric of the game."

I have often been the **beneficiary** of that ethical fabric, even when those weaving me into it are perfect strangers. For one of the great things about being a basketball player (or pretending to be one) is that no court is closed to you which is why I always have a basketball in the trunk of my car. You can just show up wherever there is a **hoop** and a game and you will be included. (This holds also in foreign countries where there may be a language barrier, but never a basketball barrier.)

At Live Oak Park in Berkeley I played with college standouts and with American Basketball Association all-star Lavern Tart. On a famous court in the West Village, I played on a team that won every game. It was glorious even though I never touched the ball. In a strict sense I didn't belong on those courts, but pick-up basketball doesn't enforce any strict sense and is willing to relax the demands of competition and winning for

the sake of extending its pleasures to those whose skills are minimal.

What are those pleasures? They are not, I think, pleasures that point outward to some external good. Rather they are the pleasures of performing (however badly) within the strict **parameters** of a practice whose goals and rewards are entirely internal. Hans Gumbrecht, in his book *In Praise of Athletic Beauty*, links sports to Kant's account of the beautiful as the experience of "pure **disinterested** satisfaction". It is a satisfaction, Gumbrecht explains, that "has no goal in everyday life" (like virtue, it is its own reward); and he quotes with admiration Olympic swimmer Pablo Morales's description of the pleasure he feels in competition as "that special feeling of getting lost in focused intensity."

The marvel is that focused intensity can be achieved even in the act of failure, even by someone who knows what to do but most of the time can't quite do it. And it is for that intensity—not its object or its goal—that one plays, for in those moments of surrender to the game all one's troubles, all one's strivings, all one's petty irritations fall away. And if, occasionally, you actually do set the hard pick or deliver the perfect pass or make the improbable shot, well, that's just **icing** on the cake. (985 words)

Comprehension Exercises

Without referring back to the reading article, do the following tasks.

I. Fill in the blanks with the information you obtained from the reading.

1. I savored the moment on the beach-side courts in Laguna Beach when each of my shots _____.
2. Most basketball players are _____ generous so that I can keep on playing basketball.
3. Although the ethical fabric makers don't know me, I have often been the _____ of that ethical fabric.

II. Decide whether the following statements are true (T) or false (F).

4. The writer was addicted to basketball playing all his life. ()
5. The writer was good at dribbling the ball. ()
6. Once the writer played on a team that won every game. ()

III. Choose only one correct answer from the four choices given.

7. How old is the writer now?
 - A. He is in his mid-forties.
 - B. He is in his fifties.
 - C. He is in his mid-fifties.
 - D. He is in his sixties.
8. The writer got into a shouting match with a tall young man because _____.
 - A. he did not believe the writer could beat him
 - B. he guarded the writer too closely
 - C. he did not rearrange the writer's lawn as he asked
 - D. he refused to play basketball with the writer
9. According to the writer, being a basketball player means to _____.
 - A. have a basketball in the trunk of his car
 - B. play on a team that won every game
 - C. feel getting lost in focused intensity while playing
 - D. block every shot on the court
10. Which of the following is not true about the writer?
 - A. He could achieve the satisfaction even in the act of failure.
 - B. He wove the ethical fabric and imposed the rules on the court.
 - C. He held that there may never be a basketball barrier in foreign countries.
 - D. He never touched the ball while playing on a famous court in the West Village.

Passage 2

Your Airline Wants to Get to Know You

Vocabulary Tips

itinerary *n.* 路线

circumvent *v.* 围绕, 包围; 智取

manifest *n.* 载货单, 旅客名单

fraught *adj.* 充满……的

kiosk *n.* 亭子

customize *v.* 定做; 制作或改制

perk *n.* 小费

carousel *n.* 行李传送带

blitz *v.* 以闪电战攻击

predicament *n.* 困境

An airline loses your bag or cancels your flight because of a mechanical problem. The next time you show up at the airport, an agent personally apologizes and offers a free pass to an airport lounge for your troubles.

Don't laugh. Someday it may happen at U. S. airlines.

Airlines are getting closer to rolling out new technology that tells airport agents your ticket-buying and travel history, flags key customers to flight attendants and instructs them to offer personalized apologies, or sends you sales targeted to your vacation patterns.

High-end hotels have long tracked customer information, right down to pillow preferences or history of complaints and bad experiences, and online retailers pitch products based on your buying history. But airlines have done very little in the field of "customer relationship management", known as CRM.

Airlines acknowledge they will never be the Ritz, but they are hoping to put such practices into use—to the benefit of fliers. Several airlines, as well as suppliers of CRM systems, say airlines view better customer-related technology as crucial to retaining important customers in a declining economy and differentiating themselves from competitors.

One small initiative already in use: After boarding, Alaska Airlines flight attendants deliver favorite drinks to elite-level customers when they are sitting in coach, thanking them by name for their business. "The point is not the cocktail. The point is the recognition and thanks for your business," said Steve Jarvis, vice president of sales and customer experience for Alaska, a unit of Alaska Air Group Inc.

Airlines say they have been slow to adopt customer-friendly services because they have multiple old computer systems that don't share information well.

At airports today, airline agents can call up a traveler's **itinerary** and frequent-flier status. But information about past complaints, delays, baggage problems, canceled flights or missed connections isn't available. Neither is, in most cases, how much money you spend with the airline.

Airlines are using new systems to better calculate the value of each customer—how much you spend per miles flown each year, for example. But they haven't yet found ways to **customize** service at ticket counters and gates based on that information.

"You can be the most-frequent flier and when you are with your family and sitting in

the back of the airplane, there's no recognition," said Tom Klein, president of Sabre Travel Network and Sabre Airline Solutions, divisions of Sabre Holdings Corp. "It's a service consistency problem."

Poor relations between labor and management have also made some carriers hesitant to ask employees to change their interactions with customers. Airline officials and technology executives say putting fancy online tools in the hands of jaded employees can be a recipe for failure.

New technology—such as self-service kiosks, electronic boarding passes on handheld devices and automatic flight-alert systems—aims to help customers **circumvent** employees and cut labor costs.

Airlines have long tried to reward their best customers through **perks** tied to frequent-flier programs. Top-level fliers receive upgrades, priority boarding and sometimes access to special security lines.

But to many travelers, those benefits have become impersonal and widely available.

Jason Schneider Cam Marston, a frequent flier who has elite status on Delta Air Lines Inc., AMR Corp.'s American Airlines and US Airways Group Inc., was amazed when he flew Alaska a few times and noticed the beverage delivery in coach to top customers. (Alaska prints elite-level fliers' drink preferences on **manifests** given to flight attendants.)

"It really made an impression," Mr. Marston said. "With the technology available today, it would seem easy to do to add personalized service ... I think there is a huge opportunity."

But even simple steps like that are challenging for airlines. Alaska wants to do more with CRM, Mr. Jarvis said, and is working to improve target marketing to customers and offer more personalized service. The first is easier than the second, he said.

"It's a high priority and we're getting there," said Mr. Jarvis. "We'd like front-line employees to know we lost your bag last time you flew, but it's just in different data sources right now." Alaska has at least six different data systems housing customer information.

Some major airlines say they have spent years trying to get different computer systems to work together. Most say they have CRM projects in the works, and a few hope to roll out innovations this year.

Some international airlines already give their best customers white-glove treatment using CRM systems and simple good business. British Airways, Lufthansa and Air France

Unit 1

all have special services for first-class and top-level travelers at key hubs, and employees who track personal information and preferences.

"I truly don't see airlines ever getting to the level of say, Ritz-Carlton, but that's not what our customers tell us they want," said Kerry Hester, a US Airways vice president responsible for customer service planning. "Customers say they want a convenient, hassle-free experience rather than high-touch service, but there are definitely things we can do."

Airlines tailor email sales alerts to customers based on past destinations or hometown airports, and some even try to track travel patterns, such as whether you take a ski trip every February, and then marketing ski trips to you.

But they have lagged behind other industries—such as book, movie or music sellers—in developing truly personalized marketing. Airlines are considering ways to collect more information from customers to better pitch to them.

"I might have said some of the same things five years ago on what we are trying to get done. We're still getting the hang of better email marketing," said Mark Bergsrud, senior vice president of marketing programs at Continental Airlines Inc., considered an industry leader in mining customer data.

Much of the airline CRM effort is focused first on improving responses to customers when things go wrong, from sending email alerts when bags aren't loaded on the right plane (so a customer doesn't wait at a baggage **carousel** for a bag that won't show up) to instantly rebooking customers when flights are canceled or connections missed.

Rebooking is a complicated area **fraught** with customer frustration. Often travelers have trouble getting information out of airlines, so road warriors **blitz** different contact points, calling the airline while waiting in an airport line and simultaneously emailing with a travel agent.

If airlines could electronically send rebooking options to customers, especially their most valuable customers, or allow self-service rebooking at **kiosks**, customer satisfaction might improve.

What's more, airlines hope to better dole out available seats to customers based on their **predicaments**, and not just their status. Currently elite-level fliers, full-fare passengers and sometimes travelers with international connections get priority for seats on other flights. But with more data, a customer who had a flight canceled three days earlier could also get priority.

Sabre's Mr. Klein thinks CRM may help airlines figure out which services will excite customers. Some services may simply add cost without much reward for the airline. But others may be so highly prized that customers would even pay extra for them.

"I think you'll see a lot of experimentation," he said. (1182 words)

Comprehension Exercises

Without referring back to the reading article, do the following tasks.

I. Fill in the blanks with the information you obtained from the reading.

1. Some airlines regard better customer-related technology as _____ to retaining important customers in a declining economy.
2. Since many old computer systems don't share information well, some airlines have been slow to _____ customer-friendly services.
3. At airports today, although the airline agents may be able to call up a frequent-flier status, in most cases the information about how much money you spend with the airline in the past isn't _____.

II. Decide whether the following statements are true (T) or false (F).

4. Airlines can use new systems to customize service at ticket counters and gates based on how much you spend per miles flown each year. ()
5. The purpose of the new technology is to help customers go around employees and cut labor cost. ()
6. On some airlines flight attendants even can give top customers the beverage according to their drink preferences. ()

III. Choose only one correct answer from the four choices given.

7. According to the passage, a service consistency problem is caused by _____.
 A. poorly sharing of the information in the old computer systems
 B. poor relations between labor and management
 C. the employees' poor interactions with the customers
 D. the insufficient information about a traveler's itinerary
8. According to the passage, the elite-level fliers have the priority to do the following things except _____.

- A. receiving upgrades
 B. getting access to special security lines
 C. receiving the personalized service
 D. getting information about their past complaints
9. According to Steve Jarvis, vice president of sales and customer experience for Alaska, _____ is more difficult than working to improve target marketing to customers.
- A. trying to get different computer systems to work together
 B. offering more personalized service
 C. calculating the value of each customer
 D. sending email alerts when bags aren't loaded on the right plane
10. Which of the following is not true about the airlines?
- A. Some major airlines have spent years trying to get different computer systems to work together.
 B. Some airlines have CRM projects in the works.
 C. Some airlines hope to roll out innovations this year.
 D. Some airlines have improved customers' satisfaction by sending rebooking options to them.

Passage 3

More than One Way to the Square

Vocabulary Tips

crisscross *adj.* 作十字记号的; 成十字状的

sputter *v.* 气急败坏地说

sketch *n.* 略图, 草图

perfume *n.* 香味, 芳香, 香水

dawn *v.* 渐渐明白

luncheon *n.* 午宴, 正式的午餐

roadblock *n.* 障碍, 障碍物

stitch *n.* 针法, 针脚

gloomy *adj.* 绝望的; 悲观的

all in all 总的说来

We were standing at the top of a church tower. My father had brought me to this spot in a small Italian town not far from our home in Rome. I wondered why.

"Look down, Elsa," Father said. I gathered all my courage and looked down. I saw

the square in the center of the village. And I saw the **crisscross** of twisting, turning streets leading to the square.

"See, my dear," Father said gently. "There is more than one way to the square. Life is like that. If you can't get to the place where you want to go by one road, try another."

Now I understood why I was there. Earlier that day I had begged my mother to do something about the awful lunches that were served at school. But she refused because she could not believe the lunches were as bad as I said.

When I turned to Father for help, he would not interfere. Instead, he brought me to this high tower to give me a lesson. By the time we reached home, I had a plan.

At school the next day, I secretly poured my **luncheon** soup into a bottle and brought it home. Then I talked the cook into serving it to Mother at dinner. The plan worked perfectly. She swallowed one spoonful and **sputtered**, "The cook must have gone mad!" Quickly I told what I had done, and Mother stated firmly that she would take up the matter of lunches at school the next day!

In the years that followed I often remembered the lesson Father taught me. I knew where I wanted to go in life. I wanted to be a fashion designer. And on the way to my first small success I found the road blocked. What could I do? Accept the **roadblock** and fail? Or use imagination and wits to find another road to my goal?

I had come to Paris, the center of the world of fashion, with my **sketches**. But none of the famous fashion designers seemed interested in buying them. Then one day I met a friend who was wearing a very beautiful sweater. It was plain in color, but it had a lovely and unusual **stitch**.

"Did you knit that sweater?" I asked her.

"No," she answered. "It was done by a woman here in Paris."

"What an interesting stitch!" I continued.

My friend had an explanation. "The woman—her name is Mrs. Vidian—told me she learned the stitch in Armenia, her native country."

Suddenly I pictured a daring design knitted into such a sweater. Then an even more daring idea came to me. Why not open my own house of fashion? Why not design, make and sell clothes from the house of Schiaparelli! I would do it, and I would begin with a sweater.

I drew a bold black and white butterfly pattern and took it to Mrs. Vidian. She knitted it into a sweater. The result, I thought, was wonderful. Then came the test. I

wore the sweater to a luncheon which people in the fashion business would attend. To my great pleasure, the sweater was noticed. In fact, the representative of a large New York store wanted 40 sweaters to be ready in two weeks. I accepted the order and walked out on a cloud of happiness.

My cloud disappeared suddenly, however, when I stood in front of Mrs. Vidian. "But it took me almost a week to knit that one sweater," she said. "Forty sweaters in two weeks? It is not possible!"

I was crushed to be so close to success and then to be blocked! Sadly I walked away. All at once I stopped short. There must be another way. This stitch did take special skill. But surely there must be other Armenian women in Paris who knew how to do it. I went back to Mrs. Vidian and explained my plan. She really didn't think it would work, but she agreed to help.

We were like detectives, Mrs. Vidian and I. We put ourselves on the trail of any Armenians who lived in Paris. One friend led us to another. At last we tracked down women, each of whom could knit the special stitch. Two weeks later the sweaters were finished. And the first shipment from the new house of Schiaparelli was on its way to the United States!

From that day a steady stream of clothes and **perfumes** flowed from the house of Schiaparelli. I found the world of fashion gay and exciting, full of challenge and adventure. I shall never forget one showing which was really a challenge. Once again Father's advice helped me. I was busy getting ready to show my winter fashions. Then just 13 days before the presentation the sewing girls were called out on strike. I found myself left with one tailor and woman who was in charge of the sewing room! I was as **gloomy** as my models and salesgirls. "We'll never make it," one of them cried.

Here, I thought, is the test of all tests for Father's advice. Where is the way out this time? I wondered and worried. I was certain we would have to call off the presentation or else show the clothes unfinished. Then it **dawned** on me. Why not show the clothes unfinished?

We worked hurriedly. And, exactly 13 days later, right on time, the Schiaparelli showing took place.

What a showing it was! Some coats had no sleeves; others had only one. Many of our clothes were still in an early stage. They were only patterns made of heavy cotton cloth. But on these we pinned sketches and pieces of material. In this way we were able to show