

最新版

精编英语阅读理解

220篇

北京大学考试中心主任石春祯教授编著

 世界图书出版公司

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北京大学考试中心主任石春祯教授 编著

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## 前 言

英语阅读理解能力是研究生入学英语考试考查的一项最重要的能力。阅读理解部分试题的分数占英语总分的 40%，阅读理解分数的高低对研究生入学英语考试总成绩的影响最大。

本书共选编英语阅读理解文章 220 篇，每篇文章后附四道练习题。

本书选编的 220 篇文章的体裁以议论文和说明文为主。文章题材主要涉及科普、经济、社会生活、教育、人的生理和心理等方面。文章后所附练习题以深层次问题为主，主要涉及文章的主旨和大意、作者的观点态度、根据文章的思路进行推断等。文章和练习题的难度至少等于或略高于研究生入学英语考试阅读理解部分试题的难度。

本书不仅试图为读者提高应试阅读理解试题的能力提供练习的素材，而且文章选材涉及的面比较广，希望在扩充知识方面对读者能有一定益处。

本书可供准备参加研究生入学考试的同学复习使用。本书共分 44 个单元，每个单元 5 篇文章，相当于一次正式考题中阅读理解试题的阅读量。如果考生能抽时间把本书的 220 篇阅读理解文章全部读完，不仅可以大幅度提高研究生入学英语考试的成绩，也会大幅度提高自己的英语阅读水平。

本书也可供对提高英语阅读理解能力感兴趣的读者练习使用。

编 者

1999 年 6 月于北大燕北园



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# UNIT 1

## Passage 1

The most common penalty is the fine. In 1984 in England, for instance, 42 percent of all criminal offenders (excluding motoring offenders) were fined, the same percentage were dealt with by various other means not involving custody, and 16 percent were imprisoned in one manner or another. The fine is a simple penalty that avoids the disadvantages of many other forms of sentence; it is inexpensive to administer and does not normally have the side effects, such as social stigma and loss of job, that may follow imprisonment. Fining has limitations, however. There are dangers that the imposition of financial penalties may result in more affluent offenders' receiving penalties that they can easily discharge, while less affluent offenders are placed under burdens that they cannot sustain. In some cases, it has been suggested, the more affluent offender, who is able to pay a very large fine, may be able to persuade the court to fine him in circumstances where any other offender would be sent to prison; such discrimination is likely to lessen respect for the legal system. Other problems arise when courts have to deal with offenders who have no financial resources or with those whose incomes are too small to allow them to pay anything more than a derisory fine. Some countries, notably Sweden, solve this problem by allowing the court to calculate the fine not in terms of a sum of money but as a number of days' earnings.

The problem of lack of means is to some extent related to that of the enforcement of fines; a significant number of offenders who are fined have to be brought back to court for nonpayment of the fines imposed on them. If the court is satisfied that the offender has failed to pay as a result of willful neglect or culpable default, and that other means of securing payment are unlikely to succeed, he may be committed to prison. The other means include seizure and sale of the offender's property (distress) or seizure of any funds he may have in a bank or savings account (garnishee order). The length of time for which an offender may be committed to prison for deliberate nonpayment of a fine depends on the amount outstanding. Each year about 20,000 offenders are imprisoned in England for deliberate nonpayment of fines (this represents about 1 percent of those who are fined), but most of these are imprisoned for very short periods—one or two weeks is typical. If the offender is able to pay the amount outstanding, he is entitled to immediate release; if he pays a part, the term of imprisonment is reduced proportionately.

1. The first paragraph is mainly about \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. the most practical penalty on earth
- B. various problems that may arise in the imposition of financial penalty
- C. the dangers that the imposition of financial penalty may result in
- D. the advantages and disadvantages of fines

2. The underlined word "satisfied" in the second paragraph most probably means \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. annoyed
- B. convinced
- C. pleased
- D. settled

3. It is implied in this passage that \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. even death penalty may be superseded by fines
- B. some offenders may be unable to pay a derisory fine
- C. the lack of means may lead to the failure to impose fines on some offenders
- D. seizure and sale of the offender's property is a better means than the enforcement of fines

4. The proper title for this passage should be \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. Financial Penalties
- B. The Enforcement of Fines
- C. The Limitations of Fining
- D. The Most Common Penalty

### Passage 2

An important part of the monetary system is the central bank. The Bank of England was the first modern central bank, serving as the model for many others. It was established as a private bank in 1694 but quickly came to be largely an agency of the government. The Bank of France was established as a governmental institution by Napoleon in 1800. In the United States, the 12 Federal Reserve Banks, which, together with the Board of Governors in Washington, D.C., constitute the Federal Reserve System, are technically owned by their member commercial banks, but this is a pure formality. Member banks get only a fixed annual percentage dividend on their stock and have essentially no real power. To all intents and purposes, the system is a governmental agency.

The notes issued by a central bank (or other governmental agency) plus deposits at the central bank are often called high-powered money, because when held as bank reserves each dollar or pound or franc may correspond to several dollars or pounds or francs of commercial bank deposits. Generally speaking, there is now no formal limit to the amount of notes and deposits that a central bank may have as liabilities.

The way in which a central bank increases or decreases the total amount of high-powered money is, typically, by making loans (discounting) or by buying and selling government securities (open-market operations). If, for example, the Federal Reserve System purchases \$1,000,000 of government securities, it will pay for these securities by a check on itself, adding \$1,000,000 to its assets and \$1,000,000 to its liabilities. The seller can take the check to a Federal Reserve Bank, which will exchange for it \$1,000,000 in Federal Reserve Notes. Or the seller may deposit the check at a commercial bank, and the bank will in turn present it to a Federal Reserve Bank, which will "pay" the check by making a book entry increasing that bank's deposits with it by \$1,000,000. The bank may, in turn, transfer this sum to a borrower, who again will convert it into Federal Reserve

Notes or deposit it.

The important point is that these bookkeeping operations simply record a process whereby the central bank has created, out of thin air as it were, additional high-powered money—the direct counterpart of printing Federal Reserve Notes. Similarly, if the central bank sells government securities, it destroys high-powered money.

In addition to the high-powered money of the central bank, the total quantity of money at any given time depends on the preferences of the public as to the relative amounts of money it wishes to hold as currency and as deposits and on the preferences of the banks as to the ratio they wish to maintain between their reserves and their deposits. (The reserve ratio is, of course, dominated by legal reserve requirements, where they exist, but may vary somewhat as banks think it prudent to keep a larger or smaller cushion in excess of required reserves.)

It follows that, by controlling the amount of high-powered money and by other, less important means, a central bank can vary the total quantity of money as it wishes within broad limits. The major problem of modern monetary policy is how the central bank should use this power.

1. The first paragraph is mainly about \_\_\_\_\_.
  - A. the constitution of the Federal Reserve System in the United States
  - B. an important part of the monetary system
  - C. typical examples of modern central banks in the world
  - D. the first modern central banks in the world
2. Which of the following statements concerning "high-powered money" is not true?
  - A. High-powered money refers to the notes and deposits at the central bank.
  - B. The limit to the total amount of high-powered money as liabilities varies with countries.
  - C. Buying government securities may increase the total amount of high-powered money.
  - D. Selling government securities may decrease the total amount of high-powered money.
3. It is implied in the passage that \_\_\_\_\_.
  - A. additional high-powered money can be created without issuing more notes.
  - B. the total amount of high-powered money cannot be changed without issuing more Federal Reserve Notes
  - C. the Bank of England is still a private bank
  - D. all the 12 Federal Reserve Banks in the U.S. are not owned by their member commercial banks
4. It can be inferred from this passage that a central bank \_\_\_\_\_.
  - A. has no way to control its total quantity of money
  - B. can easily change its total quantity of money by some possible means
  - C. has power to make its monetary policy
  - D. is not permitted to increase or decrease its total quantity of money as it wishes



### Passage 3

Throughout China's long history, the intellectuals considered themselves the preservers and transmitters of the precious culture of their country. Their road to success was not always smooth, but the intellectuals were strengthened by the belief that once they won recognition as first-rank scholars they would be rewarded with position, honour, and lasting fame.

The attitude of the Chinese communists toward intellectuals is in large measure influenced by their ideology. While workers and peasants were raised to the top position, the intellectuals were downgraded because they were considered products of bourgeois and feudal education and perpetuators of bourgeois ideology. The communist policy was to "absorb and reform" the intellectuals.

The intellectuals were made to undergo thorough thought remodeling to be "cleansed" of bourgeois ideas and attitudes. The remodeling began with relatively mild measures, such as "political study" and "reeducation." The policy became increasingly oppressive in the 1950s when intellectuals were pressured to take part in the class struggle of the land reform and in orchestrated attacks on university professors, writers, artists, and intellectuals in different walks of life. The intellectuals, especially those who had studied in Western schools or had been employed by Western firms, were forced to write autobiographies giving details of their reactionary family and educational background, pinpointing their ideological shortcomings, and confessing their failings.

Following Khrushchev's 1956 speech criticizing Stalin, violence broke out in Poland and Hungary. This worried Mao, who agreed to try Premier Zhou Enlai's proposal to relax the Communist Party's pressure on intellectuals. This resulted in the slogan "Let a hundred flowers bloom, a hundred schools of thought contend." Mao indicated that intellectuals would be allowed to speak freely.

The result, however, was unexpected and shocking. Once they began to speak freely, the intellectuals unleashed a torrent of angry words, fierce criticisms, and open attacks upon the repressive measures under which they had suffered. Some recanted the confessions they had made under duress; others went so far as to denounce the Communist Party and its government. To avoid a more serious outburst of explosive ideas and emotions, the government decided to put a stop to the "blooming-contending." Outspoken critics were labeled rightists, and an anti-rightist campaign not only silenced the intellectuals but also placed them under more restrictive controls than before. The "flowers" wilted and the "schools" were muffled.

During the Cultural Revolution, Mao's criticism of the intellectuals instigated young radicals all over the country to join the struggle against the intellectuals. Students were urged to slap and to spit at their teachers; insult, humiliation, and torture were common. Some teachers chose suicide. Others were sent to May 7<sup>th</sup> cadre schools or to the countryside to be reformed by labour.

1. Throughout China's long history, intellectuals considered themselves \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. the transmitters of the precious Chinese cultural tradition
  - B. the force to move society forward
  - C. the producers of knowledge
  - D. the master of the society
2. When the Chinese intellectuals underwent a thorough thought remolding in 1950s, they were generally forced to do all of the following, except \_\_\_\_\_.
- A. to tell lies
  - B. to tell truth
  - C. to overdo self-criticism
  - D. to reveal everything about their so-called reactionary family and educational background
3. The campaign—"Let a hundred flowers bloom, a hundred schools of thought contend"—launched by Mao in 1950s \_\_\_\_\_.
- A. was unexpected and shocking
  - B. reflected Mao's sincerity to intellectuals
  - C. encouraged intellectuals to recant what they had confessed
  - D. was immediately followed by anti-rightist campaign
4. It is improper to use the word "\_\_\_\_\_" to describe the circumstances of intellectuals during the Cultural Revolution.
- A. extremely adverse
  - B. miserable
  - C. justified
  - D. inevitable

#### Passage 4

A number of ethical questions cluster around both ends of the human life span. Whether abortion is morally justifiable has popularly been seen as depending on our answer to the question "When does a human life begin?" Many philosophers believe this to be the wrong question to ask because it suggests that there might be a factual answer that we can somehow discover through advances in science. Instead, these philosophers think we need to ask what it is that makes killing a human being wrong and then consider whether these characteristics, whatever they might be, apply to the fetus in an abortion. There is no generally agreed upon answer, yet some philosophers have presented surprisingly strong arguments to the effect that not only the fetus but even the newborn infant has no right to life. This position has been defended by Jonathan Glover in *Causing Death and Saving Lives* (1977) and in more detail by Michael Tooley in *Abortion and Infanticide* (1984).

Such views have been hotly contested, especially by those who claim that all human life, irrespective of its characteristics, must be regarded as sacrosanct. The task for those who defend the sanctity of human life is to explain why human life, no matter what its characteristics, is specially worthy of protection. Explanation could no doubt be provided in terms of such traditional Christian

doctrines as that all humans are made in the image of God or that all humans have an immortal soul. In the current debate, however, the opponents of abortion have eschewed religious arguments of this kind without finding a convincing secular alternative.

Somewhat similar issues are raised by euthanasia when it is nonvoluntary, as, for example, in the case of severely disabled newborn infants. Euthanasia, however, can be voluntary, and this has brought it support from some who hold that the state should not interfere with the free, informed choices of its citizens in matters that do not cause others harm. (The same argument is often invoked in defense of the pro-choice position in the abortion controversy; but it is on much weaker ground in this case because it presupposes what it needs to prove—namely, that the fetus does not count as an "other.") Opposition to voluntary euthanasia has centred on practical matters such as the difficulty of adequate safeguards and on the argument that it would lead to a "slippery slope" that would take us to nonvoluntary euthanasia and eventually to the compulsory involuntary killing of those the state considers to be socially undesirable.

Philosophers have also canvassed the moral significance of the distinction between killing and allowing to die, which is reflected in the fact that many physicians will allow a patient with an incurable condition to die when life could still be prolonged, but they will not take active steps to end the patient's life. Consequentialist philosophers, among them both Glover and Tooley, have denied that this distinction possesses any intrinsic moral significance. For those who uphold a system of absolute rules, on the other hand, a distinction between acts and omissions is essential if they are to render plausible the claim that we must never breach a valid moral rule.

1. The opponents of abortion \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. deny the right of both the fetus and the newborn infant to life
- B. generally resort to traditional Christian doctrines to defend their position
- C. have failed to supply convincing arguments for their position
- D. have proved that abortion does not cause others harm

2. The underlined word "canvassed" in the last paragraph most probably means \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. debated
- B. defined
- C. demonstrated
- D. described

3. According to this passage, \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. neither Glover nor Tooley believed in the moral significance of the distinction between killing and allowing to die
- B. there is a valid moral rule that we must never violate
- C. involuntary euthanasia is applicable exclusively to severely disabled newborn infants
- D. voluntary euthanasia is morally justifiable

4. The proper title for this passage should be \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. The Sanctity of Human Life

- B. A Distinction between Acts and Omissions
- C. Voluntary vs. Involuntary Euthanasia
- D. Abortion, Euthanasia, and the Value of Human Life

### Passage 5

The most intensive forms of rural land use for agricultural purposes are those concerned with the raising of harvestable crops or with the production of animal products. Unlike primitive agriculture, which involved only the temporary removal of natural vegetation and depended for a short period of time on natural soil fertility, conventional agriculture today uses large inputs of chemicals, energy, and technical skills to produce increased yields of crops or animals. In the technologically advanced countries food production is often greater than population growth, and it is possible to retire former farmlands from use and to produce crops according to demand without approaching the maximum yields obtainable. The so-called Green Revolution has been based on the spread of such farming methods to less developed nations of the world. It has been made possible by the breeding of high-yielding forms of grain specifically adapted to the ecological conditions of the countries involved.

The decision to use an area of land for high-yield agriculture essentially rules out its use for other purposes. The intensive production of farm crops in an agricultural region may also have undesirable side effects; as has been previously noted, these may include the pollution of other areas when the pesticides, herbicides, or other agricultural chemicals blown or washed from farmlands affect vegetation and animal life elsewhere. Nevertheless, committing an area to intensive agricultural production does not rule out its future restoration for other uses. As long as the soils are well cared for, such areas can be converted quickly to other purposes if it is not necessary to keep them in farm production. Abandoned farmlands in the southern United States, for example, are now highly productive forest areas, and former farming lands elsewhere are being used to support wildlife and outdoor recreation. In general planning for conservation of natural resources, intensive use and high production in those areas best suited for farming must be encouraged—provided, of course, that the polluting effects of these activities on the general environment are avoided. Such concentration can spare the destruction of other resources through attempts to use inadequate lands for marginal farming activities.

1. High-yield modern agriculture \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. frequently retires former farmland from use
- B. involves only the temporary removal of natural vegetation
- C. is dependent on natural soil fertility merely for a short period of time
- D. depends on large inputs of chemicals, energy, and technical skills

2. Conventional agriculture today \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. attempts to approach the maximum yields obtainable



- B. often fails to produce sufficient food for the growing population
- C. is able to produce more than enough food for the growing population
- D. concentrates mainly on the raising of harvestable crops
3. An area of land which has been committed to intensive agricultural production \_\_\_\_\_.
- A. will never be abandoned
- B. can never be used for other purposes
- C. may be converted successfully to other purposes
- D. tends to be used for marginal farming activities
4. The proper title for this passage should be \_\_\_\_\_.
- A. Agricultural Management
- B. Intensive Agricultural Production
- C. Conventional Agriculture
- D. High-yield Agriculture

The decision to use an area of land for high-yield agriculture certainly rules out its use for other purposes. The intensive production of farm crops in an agricultural region may also have undesirable side effects, as has been previously noted, these may include the pollution of other areas when the pesticides, herbicides, or other agricultural chemicals blow or washed from farmlands, affect vegetation and animal life elsewhere. Nevertheless, committing an area to intensive agricultural production does not rule out its future restoration for other uses. As long as the soils are well cared for, such areas can be converted quickly to other purposes if it is not necessary to keep them in farm production. Abandoned farmlands in the southern United States, for example, are now highly productive forest areas and former farming lands elsewhere are being used to support wildlife and outdoor recreation. In general planning for conservation of natural resources, intensive use and high production in those areas best suited for farming must be encouraged—provided, of course, that the polluting effects of these activities on the general environment are avoided. Such concentration can spare the destruction of other resources, though the right to use unproductive lands for marginal farming activities.

#### 1. High-yield modern agriculture \_\_\_\_\_

- A. frequently ruins former farmland from use
- B. involves only the removal of natural vegetation
- C. is dependent on natural soil fertility mostly for a short period of time
- D. depends on large inputs of chemical, energy, and technical skills

#### 2. Conventional agriculture is \_\_\_\_\_

- A. attempts to approach the maximum yields obtainable



## UNIT 2

### Passage 1

No two libraries are exactly alike. But some have more in common than others.

Because the money to run a public library comes from taxes, it is a free library for the public—everyone who lives in a certain neighborhood, city, county, or province. Such a library serves all ages and groups as an information center, as a reading-and-viewing-and-listening-for-pleasure library. There were early types of public libraries in ancient Greece and Rome. However, they did not lend materials freely as do the world's public libraries today.

Throughout the school day, students and teachers in elementary and secondary school need school libraries to work in. The modern school library in many countries is a learning center designed for both group and independent study. Besides books, the library may contain magazines, newspapers, maps, posters, charts, models, teaching machines, films and filmstrips and slides to look at, records and tapes to listen to, and the equipment to use these. There may be special study and listening areas, conference rooms, and even a recording or TV studio. Such a library is called a materials center or media center. A large secondary school library may have separate resource centers for science, social studies, and other subjects.

An academic library is found in a college or university. Like a school library, this library is a workshop for the students and teachers, but it often has anywhere from 50,000 to millions of books and other materials covering many special subjects. That's why scholars from outside the college or university frequently use such a library for research. A university may include 50 or more libraries in its many schools a Far Eastern studies library, a fine arts library, an engineering library, and so on. There may be separate libraries for undergraduates and for rare books and manuscripts. Because of the vast amount of materials they handle, some academic libraries use computers to keep track of the collections.

The medical library of a hospital is a special library. So are the libraries of a law office, a weather bureau, a labor union, a museum, an arboretum, or an encyclopedia publishing firm. A special library is part of a hospital, business, or other organization, and it offers practical information to the workers or members. Such a library is not generally open to the public. Usually it concentrates on a particular subject or subjects — medicine, law, climate and weather, labor, art. A special library may have few books, relying heavily instead on such materials as magazines, reports, and computer printouts. These enable the library to keep up in fast-moving fields such as aerospace.

Public, school, academic, and special libraries are the four main kinds the world over, but there are libraries that don't fit neatly into one of these groups. Research libraries are an example. Because scholars use them for study, they're much like academic libraries. Research libraries are not always attached to a college or university, however. Also, a research library often concentrates on a special subject or subjects, much like a special library.

National libraries are the superlibraries of the world, with upwards of 80 million books and other materials in the largest. Because a national library serves the government of a country, it's a special library. It's also a research library for scholars. In addition, many national libraries are public in that they are for the people of an entire country.

1. The first two sentences of this passage — “No two libraries are exactly alike. But some have more in common than others.” — mean that \_\_\_\_\_.
  - A. although libraries have something in common, no two libraries are exactly alike
  - B. libraries are so different that most of them have few things in common
  - C. libraries can be divided into several categories
  - D. some libraries have little in common
2. An academic library is a \_\_\_\_\_.
  - A. research library
  - B. special school library
  - C. library attached to a college or university
  - D. national library
3. Which of the following libraries may serve all the people of a particular region?
  - A. A national library.
  - B. An academic library.
  - C. A fine arts library.
  - D. A state library.
4. The Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington is an example of \_\_\_\_\_.
  - A. public libraries
  - B. research libraries
  - C. school libraries
  - D. special libraries

## Passage 2

No survey of comparative economic systems would be complete without an account of centrally planned systems, the modern descendants of the command economies of the imperial past. In sharpest possible contrast to those earlier tributary arrangements, however, modern command societies have virtually all been organized in the name of socialism—that is, with the function of command officially administered on behalf of the broad masses of the population.

Socialist central planning needs to be differentiated from the idea of socialism itself. The latter draws on moral precepts of concern for the needy that can be discovered in the Judeo-Christian tradition and derives its general social orientation from Gerrard Winstanley's Diggers movement during the English Civil Wars in the mid-17th century: "The Earth," Winstanley wrote, "was made by Almighty God to be a Common Treasury of livelihood to the whole of mankind . . . without

respect of persons."

Socialism as a means of orchestrating a modern industrial system did not receive explicit attention until the Russian Revolution in 1917. In his brochure *The State and Revolution*, written before he came to power, Lenin envisaged the task of coordinating a socialist economy as little more than delivering production to central collecting points from which it would be distributed according to need—an operation requiring no more than "the extraordinarily simple operations of watching, recording, and issuing receipts, within the reach of anybody who can read and who knows the first four rules of arithmetic." After the revolution, it soon became apparent that the problem was a great deal more difficult than that. The mobilization of manpower required the complex determination of appropriate amounts and levels of pay, and the mobilization of foodstuffs from the countryside posed the awkward question of the degree to which the "bourgeois" peasantry would have to be accommodated. As civil war raged in the country, these problems intensified until production fell to a catastrophic 14 percent of prewar levels. By the end of 1920 the system was at the verge of collapse.

To forestall disaster, Lenin instituted the New Economic Policy (NEP), which amounted to a partial restoration of capitalism, especially in retail trade, small-scale production, and agriculture. Only the "commanding heights" of the economy remained in government hands. The NEP resuscitated the economy but opened a period of intense debate as to the use of market incentives versus moral suasion or more coercive techniques. The debate, which remained unresolved during Lenin's life, was brought to a conclusion at his death in 1924, when Joseph Stalin rose to power and rapidly forced the collectivization of the economy. Private agriculture was converted into collective farming with great cruelty and loss of life, all capitalist markets and private enterprises were quickly and ruthlessly eliminated, and the direction of economic life was consigned to a bureaucracy of ministries and planning agencies. By the 1930s a structure of centralized planning had been put into place that was to coordinate the Russian economy for the next half century.

1. According to this passage, one common characteristic of modern command societies is that \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. they are all socialist societies
- B. their final aim is to realize the ideal of socialism
- C. they are guided by the same socialist economic principles
- D. they administer the function of command officially on behalf of the great masses of people

2. It is implied in the passage that \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. a country with socialist central planning economy is not necessarily a socialist country
- B. the idea of socialism originated from the Russian Revolution in 1917
- C. socialist central planning can be traced back to Gerrard Winstanley's Diggers movement
- D. socialist central planning was first proposed in *The State and Revolution* written by Lenin

3. Which of the following statements is not true according to this passage?

- A. Lenin successfully established the economic structure of socialist central planning in the