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(第二册)

大学英语泛读教程

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**A New Concept College English for
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第 2 册

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前言

弗朗西斯·培根曾在他那著名的《论读书》一文中指出:读书使人充实(reading makes a full man),中国也有两句古谚:一为:“书读百遍,其义自现”。二为:“熟读唐诗三百首,不会做诗也会吟。”培根强调的是“读书”(阅读)与人生,而后二者强调的是“阅读”与“理解”,与“写作”(创作)的关系。不论怎样三者都突出强调了“读书”(阅读)的功用。“读书”就其本质而论就是“阅读”,而“阅读”又可分为“精读”(intensive reading)、“泛读”(extensive reading)、“跳读”(skipping)、“扫读”(scanning)和“快速阅读”(fast reading)以及“朗读”(reciting);也就是培根先生所说的 some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested。

学习一门外语,既需要“精读”也需要“泛读”,在某种意义上讲,“泛读”的多少决定了外语学习的成败高低。顾名思义,“泛读”就是泛泛而读,它的目标是通过大量的阅读,拓宽视野,扩大知识面,增加词汇量,从而增强语感——而语感是学习外语最最重要的一个因素。

基于这样的认识,我们特编写了这套《新概念大学英语泛读教程》(1—4册),供大学英语学习者和爱好者使用。本套教程取名为新概念,主要反映在以下几个编写特点:

阅读材料丰富多样,题材广泛,体裁多样,内容新颖,注重知识性、趣味性与实用性;

突破传统教材课文篇幅太短的局限,阅读量明显加大;

注重培养学生快速、准确、有效地获取信息的能力;

增加了有关中国传统节假日方面知识的阅读与摄取,以增强学生跨文化交际的能力;

为增强实用性,本教程有目的地收录了一些实用类体裁的阅读材料:如广告、信函、合同、协议、招标书以及招聘启事等,以便学生通过阅读和初步接触能了解此类文章的格式及其用词。

《新概念大学英语泛读教程》一套四册。每册有 15 个单元,每个单元由三部分组成:阅读课文和练习、快速阅读和练习、课外阅读和练习。此外,为方便阅读,我们在阅读课文和课外阅读后面增加了部分必需的注释。每册书后都配有练习参考答案,以便利教师和学生的教与学。

《新概念大学英语泛读教程》(1—4 册)由常州工学院外国语学院院长戎林海教授担任总主编,负责全书的策划、选题、编写体例设计、全书书稿的三审和终审。1—4 册每册设有两个主编,负责本册的编写与初审。

本套教材在编写与出版过程中得到了学校领导李文虎教授、教务处朱锡芳处长以及东南大学出版社刘坚博士的关心与支持,值此出版之际,谨向他们表示衷心的感谢。刘爱婷、邱晓琳、杨永萍、金政等人也为本套教材的出版做了不少工作,在此深表谢意。由于编者的水平和经验有限,全书错误和缺点在所难免,敬请读者批评指正。

戎林海

2012 年 6 月

于常州锦绣花园未厌斋

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Unit One



Part One Text

Americans are Queer

Stephen Leacock

Americans are queer people: they can't rest. They have more time, more leisure, shorter hours, more holidays, and more vacations than any other people in the world. But they can't rest. They rush up and down across their continent as tourists; they move about in great herds to conventions; they invade the wilderness, they flood the mountains, they keep the hotels full. But they can't rest. The scenery rushes past them. They learn it, but they don't see it. Battles and monuments are announced to them in a rubberneck bus. They hear them, but they don't get them. They never stop moving; they rush up and down as Shriners, Masons, Old Graduates, Bankers—they ate a new thing each day, always rushing to a reunion or something.

1

So they go on rushing about till eventually the undertaker gathers them to a last convention.

Americans are queer people: they can't read. They have more schools, and better schools, and spend more money on schools and colleges than all Europe. But they can't read. They print more books in a year than the French print in ten. But they can't read. They cover their country with one hundred thousand tons of Sunday newspapers every week. But they don't read them. They're too busy. They use them for fires and to make more paper with. They buy eagerly thousands of new novels at two dollars each. But they read only page one. Their streets are full of

huge signs. They won't look at them. Their street cars are filled with advertising; they turn their eyes away. Transparent colors, cart wheels and mechanical flares whirl and flicker in the crowded streets at night. No one sees them. Tons of circulars pour through the mails, through the houses, and down the garbage chute. The last American who sat down to read died in the days of Henry Clay.

Americans are queer people: they can't drink. All of the American nation is haunted. They have a fierce wish to be sober; and they can't. They pass fierce laws against themselves, shut themselves up, chase themselves, shoot themselves; and they can't stay sober and they can't drink. They have a furious idea that if they can ever get sober, they can do big things. But they can't hold it. They got this mentality straight out of home life in Ohio, copied from the wild drinking and the furious regret of the pioneer farmer. The nation keeps it yet. It lives among red specters, rum devils, broken bottles, weeping children, penitentiary cells, barrooms, poison hooch and broken oaths.

Americans are queer people: they can't play. Americans rush to work as soon as they grow up. They want their work as soon as they wake. It is a stimulant—the only one they're not afraid of. They used to open their offices at ten o'clock; then at nine; then at eight; then at seven. Now they never shut them. Every business in America is turning into an open-all-day-and-night business. They eat all night, dance all night, build buildings all night, make a noise all night. They can't play. They try to, but they can't. They turn football into a fight, baseball into a lawsuit, and yachting into machinery. They can't play. The little children can't play; they use mechanical toys instead. The grown-up people can't play; they use a mechanical gymnasium and a clockwork horse. They can't swim; they use a float. They can't run; they use a car. They can't laugh; they hire a comedian and watch him laugh.

Americans are queer people: they don't give a damn. All the world criticizes them and they don't give a damn. All the world writes squibs like this about them and they don't give a damn. Foreign visitors come and write them up; they don't give a damn. Lecturers lecture at them; they don't care. They are told they have no art, no literature, and no soul. They never budge. Moralists cry over them, criminologists dissect them,

writers shoot epigrams at them, prophets foretell the end of them; and they never move. Seventeen brilliant books analyze them every month; they don't read them. The Europeans threaten to unite against them; they don't mind. Equatorial Africa is dead sour on them; they don't even know it. The Chinese look on them as full of Oriental cunning; the English accuse them of British stupidity; the Scotch call them closefisted; the Italians say they are liars; the French think their morals loose; the Bolsheviks accuse them of Communism.

But that's all right. The Americans don't give a damn; don't need to—never did need to. That is their salvation.

◆ Comprehension Exercises

I. Multiple Choice

- According to the article, Americans do not see the scenery when they travel because _____.
 A. they have already learned it from books
 B. they are running short of time
 C. they are always in such a hurry, rushing from one place to another, that they cannot really enjoy the view
 D. the scenery has been spoiled because of the flood of tourists
- The phrase "last convention" in paragraph 2 refers to a _____.
 A. last conference
 B. funeral
 C. last agreement
 D. last customary practice
- In the author's opinion, Americans cannot read because _____.
 A. they have never learned to read
 B. they have so many books and newspapers that they find that reading causes them to feel ill
 C. they are so sick of advertisements and circulars that they refuse to read
 D. they have so much to do that they cannot concentrate on reading anything at all
- In paragraph 4, "but they can't hold it" means _____.
 A. but they can't keep that idea in mind

- B. but they can't grasp that idea
 C. but they can't support that idea
 D. but they can't prevent that idea from being carried out
5. The author mentions "home life in Ohio" and "pioneer farmer" in order to show _____.
 A. that Americans cannot drink
 B. where the complex feeling of Americans towards alcohol originated from
 C. that the whole nation is anxious to be sober
 D. that sober Americans can do big things
6. When the author says Americans can't play, he actually implies that _____.
 A. Americans think that pleasure is not good
 B. Americans run businesses round the clock and have no time to play
 C. Americans are impressed by machines and become passive when it comes to play because they prefer work
 D. Americans are forbidden to play
7. In the last but one paragraph, "don't give a damn" means _____.
 A. don't give a cent
 B. aren't worth a penny
 C. don't criticize others
 D. don't care at all

II. Read the following statements and tell which one of them is True or False according to the text

1. Americans don't see the scenery when they travel. T ☐ ☐ F
2. Americans have more holidays than any other people in the world. T ☐ ☐ F
3. Americans don't stop rushing until the undertaker gathers them to a last convention. T ☐ ☐ F
4. Americans enjoy reading very much. T ☐ ☐ F
5. Americans take an indifferent attitude towards criticisms. T ☐ ☐ F
6. Work is the only stimulant Americans are not afraid of. T ☐ ☐ F

III. Topics for Discussion

1. Leacock says Americans are "queer" people. What does he mean by "queer"?

2. What may be inferred from the last sentence of the passage “That is their salvation”?
3. Does Leacock admire Americans? What tone does he use?

Part Two Fast Reading

Chinese Culture Broadens Its World Influence

As China steps into the new millennium, she hopes to enthrall the whole world with her unique culture, which is widely known for its dragon-shaped lanterns, Peking Opera, *wushu* or martial arts and even chopsticks.

With at least 5,000 years of history, China is eager to take her culture on tour overseas.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization has helped out in this fostering of awareness of Chinese culture by granting another four World Heritage certificates to Chinese cultural sites, bringing the total of World Heritage sites in the country to 27.

China has developed her own painting styles for 10,000 years, her own musical instruments for 8,000 years, ceramics for 5,000 years and poetry for 3,000 years.

During the overall history of civilization, China has been repeatedly confronted with challenges from various different cultures from the East and the West. In their interactions with foreign culture, Chinese people have always absorbed the best of foreign cultures and subtly altered these outside elements to fit in with the Chinese way.

“Almost every people in the world has at some time been charmed by the charisma of Chinese culture with its unique philosophical origins,” said historian Joseph Toynbee.

Confucianism dominated the nation for more than 2,000 years. While all through the ages, many Chinese literary giants, from ancient poets like Qu Yuan and Du Fu to modern laureates like Lu Xun and Ba Jin, have shown their utmost care and passion for society and ordinary people.

With their trademark trait of tolerance, the Chinese people have embraced Buddhism, Islam, Christianity and Catholicism. They have also developed their own religions such as Taoism and Zen Buddhism.

Looking inward, we see that the many ethnic groups in the country also continue to learn from each other, bringing about many flourishing advances in the cultural field.

China's cultural achievements are important spiritual links that tie the Chinese people together and are also the basis for peaceful reunification, said President Jiang Zemin.

"Economic globalization will give rise to another round of competition in the cultural industry," said Cheng Zhongying, a scholar.

Many other scholars have said that no single culture can dominate the whole world, but the time-honored culture of China will continue to play a more and more active role in world culture in the coming centuries. Chinese cultural workers are already making endeavors to bring Eastern and Western cultures into closer harmony.

"While Western art focuses on representation, Eastern art stresses the power of the spirit," said Chen Yifei, a Chinese-American painter who has gained international fame.

Well-known movie directors Zhang Yimou and Ang Lee, who was born in Taiwan, have undertaken to tell Chinese stories using the most advanced Western cinema technology.

While sticking to the traditional core of her culture, China is preparing itself to compete with other global giants in the culture industry, which earns stunning profits for the countries involved.

As the country speeds up economic development, China is also ready to win its due place in the global cultural arena.

◆ Multiple Choice

1. People in the world have been at some time charmed by _____.
 - A. the dragon-shaped lanterns
 - B. the Peking Opera
 - C. Wushu
 - D. Chinese culture with its unique philosophical origins
2. It is _____ that can dominate the whole world.
 - A. the time-honored culture of China

- B. Confucianism
C. Western Art
D. Eastern Art
3. According to the text, there are _____ World Heritage sites in China.
A. 4 B. 31 C. 27 D. 23
4. The Chinese people have developed their own religions such as _____.
A. Buddhism B. Islam
C. Christianity D. Taoism and Zen Buddhism
5. In Chinese culture's interactions with foreign cultures, Chinese people _____.
A. have always absorbed the best foreign culture
B. have never absorbed the best foreign culture
C. have never altered the foreign culture
D. have always altered the foreign culture

Part Three Supplementary Reading

Language Barriers

7

Can a concept exist without words to describe it?

Take heart, those of you who struggled with maths at school. It seems that words for exact numbers do not exist in all languages. And if someone has no word for a number, he may have no notion of what that number means.

The Piraha, a group of hunter-gathers who live along the banks of the Maici River in Brazil, use a system of counting called "one-two-many". In this, the word for "one" translates to "roughly one" (similar to "one or two" in English), the word for "two" means "a slightly larger amount than one" (similar to "a few" in English), and the word for "many" means "a much larger amount". In a paper just published in Science, Peter Gordon of Columbia University uses his study of the Piraha and their counting system to try to answer a tricky linguistic

question.

This question was posed by Benjamin Lee Whorf in the 1930s. Whorf studied Hopi, an Amerindian language very different from the Eurasian languages that had hitherto been the subject of academic linguistics. His work led him to suggest that language not only influences thought but, more strongly, that it determines thought.

While there is no dispute that language influences what people think about, evidence suggesting it determines thought is inconclusive. For example, in 1972, Eleanor Rosch and Karl Heider investigated the colour-naming abilities of the Dani people of Indonesia. The Dani have words for only two colours: black and white. But Dr. Rosch and Dr. Heider found that, even so, Dani could distinguish and comprehend other colours. That does not support the deterministic version of the Whorf hypothesis.

While recognizing that there are such things as colours for which you have no name is certainly a cognitive leap, it may not be a good test of Whorf's ideas. Colours, after all, are out there everywhere. Numbers, by contrast, are abstract, so may be a better test. Dr. Gordon therefore spent a month with the Piraha and elicited the help of seven of them to see how far their grasp of numbers extended.

Using objects with which the participants were familiar (sticks, nuts and—perhaps surprisingly—small batteries), he asked his subjects to perform a variety of tasks designed to measure their ability to count. Most of these tests involved the participant matching the number and layout of a group of objects that Dr. Gordon had arranged on a table.

The tests began simply, with a row of, say, seven evenly spaced batteries. Gradually they got more complicated. The more complicated tests included tasks such as matching numbers of unevenly spaced objects, replicating the number of objects from memory, and copying a number of straight lines from a drawing.

In the tests that involved matching the number and layout of objects they could see, participants were pretty good when faced with two or three items, but found it harder to cope as the number of items rose. Once it was beyond eight, they were getting it right only three-quarters of the time. The only exception was in those tests that used unevenly spaced objects—an arrangement that can be perceived as a group of