英语阅读策略进阶

Graded English Reading Skills

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高等学校 "

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前　言

　　阅读是获取信息的一种重要途径。提高英语阅读能力,对于广大英语学习者来说,是一个渐进的学习过程。《大学英语教学大纲》在对专业阅读阶段的具体要求中指出,该课程教学时数为100～120。这要求专业阅读教材在考虑课堂教学的同时,也要考虑学生自学的需要。这门课程最根本的还是要教会学生如何掌握阅读技巧,并以此为工具获取所需要的信息。"授人以鱼",不如"教人以渔"。因此,英语阅读教材的编写过程中就应考虑到培养学生正确有效的学习策略和自学能力,教会学生基本阅读技巧,并进行有效的训练。

　　值得强调的是,英语阅读理解能力是真正读懂英文,与作者进行思想沟通的能力。这就要求应用阅读策略读懂文章,而非简单运用某些所谓应试技巧。如果只关注所谓的应试技巧,应试能力可能会有所提高,但阅读理解能力并不见得有质的提高。而如果具备了较高的、真正的阅读理解能力,掌握了"阅读策略",就能真正领会作者通过语言符号表达的意图,从而真正达到与作者的思想沟通。

　　鉴于此,本教材从探讨阅读的本质入手,从不同角度对英语阅读技能进行阐释和训练。在汲取国内外英语阅读教学的最新理念和研究成果的基础上,丰富阅读教材的内容和形式,为广大大专院校学生和教师提供更多的选择余地。

　　本教材针对大专院校英语专业一二年级学生、非英语专业高年级学生的课堂阅读而设计,是阅读课程教师的辅助教材。本教材循序渐进,从养成良好的阅读习惯开始,过渡到以发展学生的有效阅读能力及培养学生的反思能力为目标的评析性阅读,分三个阶段培养和拓展学生的阅读能力。

　　教材把微观阅读技巧贯穿于各单元的讲解和综合练习当中,避免了传统阅读教材只让学生阅读,不传授技巧的不足。以单元形式出现的阅读技巧,便于教师在课堂中选用。教师可根据学生实际情况,在教学中安排时间配合使用。教材的特色主要体现在针对性强、练习形式多样、编排趣味性强、分析讲解细致几个方面。

　　针对性强。本教材编写有两个出发点:一是针对阅读教学中学生灵活运用阅读技巧的能力不足的问题,为提高其阅读能力而编写。二是针对教师阅读材料系统性不强的缺点,为教师提供丰富的有"启发"作用的练习而编写,因而具有针对性强的特点。针对阅读中涉及的各种技能,每单元重点讲解一种技能,并辅之以专项

训练，以帮助学生掌握各种阅读策略。

趣味性强。学习者对阅读是否产生浓厚的兴趣是阅读教学成败的关键。本教材通过设计有趣的阅读练习，适当变换文体形式和内容，使阅读教学经常保持新鲜的感觉。教材选材新颖，形式灵活多样。例如，在导入部分通过学生阅读习惯或能力自测问卷，让学生自我检查阅读中存在的问题。本套教材设计趣味性强，图文并茂，能激发学生的阅读兴趣，把他们的注意力引向阅读的微观层面。在积累微观技巧的同时，再辅以综合性的阅读训练，从而帮助他们在宏观上综合运用多种阅读技能，在形式多样的练习中发展他们的技能，拓展他们的视野。

本教材由方芳主编并负责编写第一至第三部分（Part One　Basic Reading，Part Two　Effective Reading，Part Three　Critical Reading），范秀丽及江秀丽负责编写第四部分（Part Four　Comprehensive Reading），王吉祥及范文负责整理答案。

本教材的编写得到了合肥学院夏蓓洁副教授及宁夏大学外国语学院孙如凤教授的悉心指导。外籍教师 Carolyn Stent 女士审阅了教材，对教材中不当之处进行了修正。内蒙古科技大学范秀丽老师及安徽三联学院江秀丽老师试用了该教材，并提出了宝贵意见。借此机会，对以上各位专家和老师的支持和帮助表示诚挚的谢意！

编　　者

2011 年 3 月

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Part One　Basic Reading

In a very real sense, people who have read good literature have lived more than people who cannot or will not read. It is not true that we have only one life to lead; if we can read, we can live as many more lives and as many kinds of lives as we wish.

~ S. I. Hayakawa ~

General Introduction

Do you think that you are a good reader? The following questions are designed to introduce you to the concept of reading strategies. Think about the questions to see whether you are a good reader.

Assess Your Reading Habits

The following list contains the reading strategies most often used by college students trying to understand and remember textbook material. Choose the answer that fits your reading habits at this point in the course. On the line next to each item, write A for always, U for usually, S for sometimes, R for rarely.

_____ 1. Before I start to read, I preview the reading material for title, author, thesis, logic patterns, headings, lists, and other graphic aids.

_____ 2. In an article or chapter, I can tell where the introduction ends, the body begins and ends, and the conclusion begins.

_____ 3. I look first in the introduction of an article or chapter for the thesis or main idea for the whole piece.

_____ 4. Each time I read a paragraph, I look for a sentence that states the main idea for that paragraph.

_____5. If I do not see a topic sentence in a paragraph, I try to infer the main idea.

_____6. I try to determine the logic pattern for each paragraph and tell first-level details from second-level and third-level details.

_____7. I look for transitional words or phrases that writers use as signposts to guide the reader from one idea to the next.

_____8. I do not skip back when reading easy material.

_____9. I use a different method when reading difficult material or for study purposes than when reading for pleasure.

_____10. When I am studying or reading difficult material, I stop to tell myself in my own words what I have just read.

_____11. I skim certain materials instead of reading them thoroughly.

_____12. I determine whether an author's purpose is to inform, persuade, or entertain.

_____13. I can tell the difference between a fact and an opinion in what I read.

_____14. I evaluate a writer's evidence to see if it is recent and from a reliable source.

_____15. I am aware of an author's tone. In other words, I can tell when a writer is being sarcastic, bitter, gentle, playful, or ironic.

_____16. I read groups of words at one glance instead of pausing on each word.

_____17. I do not try to memorize material as I am reading it for the first time.

_____18. I make a constant effort to learn the meaning of new words from their context and from word analysis.

_____19. I have made a commitment to read something every day for pleasure.

_____20. I believe that by continuing to practice these techniques every time I read, I will continue to read faster and understand more.

For each answer that is usually or always, give yourself 5 points. (Place a 5 in the margin.) Add up your points. The closer you come to 100 percent, the more effective you are as a reader.

Score:_____

This part will help you...

- Know what to look for in a passage.
- Gain a general understanding of a reading.
- Develop good reading habits.

- Skim a text to get the main idea.
- Scan a text to find specific information.
- Guess the meaning of unfamiliar words in contexts.
- Guess the meaning of unfamiliar words by using the word formation.

Unit 1   Speed Reading & Reading Speed

It's important to find out how fast you read now so that you can track your improvement. Not only will timing help you to tell if you're improving, but it will also keep you motivated.

Many of us believe that "If I read faster, I'll lose comprehension". The truth is that when you read slowly, word by word, you get lost in the words, lose the bigger picture, and your comprehension drops. When you read faster, your concentration actually increases and your comprehension goes up because instead of getting lost in the words, you see the overall picture.

Another commonly held idea is "Reading fast is only good for skimming". This is also wrong. All academic and professional fields require fast reading. Speed reading is not only beneficial, but necessary for anyone in a field that requires extensive reading.

If speed reading is essential to reading comprehension, how can you calculate your reading speed then? Take any small paragraph and count the number of words in it. Then clock your watch when you start reading and stop it when you are done. Check how much time you took to completely read the paragraph and comprehend it as well. Say, for example, you took 10 minutes to read and understand a 1200-word paragraph. Then, your reading speed is 120 words per minute. Let's try it. Read this passage and start timing yourself now.

Reading is a vital medium of communication. In the academic environment written texts, including the Internet, are still the main form of instruction. After graduation, the capacity to read efficiently is important for people to keep abreast of developments in their particular fields. Like any other skill, the ability to read efficiently

can be developed with practice. Many people believe they must read every word to understand the meaning, but only some words are essential for comprehension, while others are following the rules of English syntax. Reading the first sentence of every paragraph will help you with the structure of the discussion. Concentrating on key words and phrases will usually give you a broad understanding of the passage. You have to use your judgment to decide which are the key phrases and whether you should vary your reading rate and attention to detail, but that comes with practice. Stop the timer.

How long did it take you to read this passage? There are 150 words in this passage. Take the number of words in the passage, divide it by the number of seconds you took to read the passage and multiply by 60 to convert back to words per minute.

Example: if you took 37 seconds

$$150 \div 37 = 4.05 \text{ words per second}$$
$$4.05 \times 60 = 243 \text{ words per minute}$$

It should be noted that your reading speed will vary depending on the purpose of the reading. For example, normal reading (reading for comprehension) $200 \sim 250$ words per minute (wpm), memorization less than 100 wpm, reading for learning $100 \sim 200$ wpm, skimming $400 \sim 700$ wpm, and scanning over 700 wpm. The following table lists different reading rates of western readers for your reference.

Speed (words per minute)	Comprehension	Reading Rate
110	50%	slow
240	60%	average
400	80%	above average
1000	85%	very fast

Speed reading is a bit like running. You would "run" every day as you try to improve your time and your skills. It may be hard at first, especially if you have a weak vocabulary or poor habits deeply that are hard to break. If you keep practicing, the going gets easier, and you'll be reading faster than you ever thought possible.

Exercise: You can work out your reading speed by seeing how far down the following text you get in one minute.

Reading is becoming more and more important in the new knowledge economy and remains the most effective human activity for transforming information into knowledge.

Top readers those who read at speeds of above 1000 words per minute (wpm) with about 85% comprehension only represent 1% of readers. Average readers are the majority and only reach around 200 wpm with a typical comprehension of 60%. This seems surprising since most readers actively read work documents, newspapers, magazines, books or the contents of a computer display daily for at least one hour. With such intense training everyone should be close to top performance.

Unfortunately, this is far from the real situation. The average reader is five times slower than the good reader. Things are even worse if we consider reading efficiency as well as speed. Reading efficiency is reading speed weighted by comprehension rate and it amounts to $200 \times 60\%$ or 120 efficient words per minute (ewpm) for the average reader and to $1000 \times 85\%$ or 850 ewpm for top readers. Thus, an efficiency ratio of seven divides these two categories.

Compare the results of the average reader to other skill areas. We may imagine a sprinter practicing every day for several years on the running track and then just calmly walking for a race. We can also picture a racing driver never exceeding 30 mph or a pianist playing every day of the week for 20 years and only able to play music like a beginner. Unfortunately, since the age of 12, most readers do not substantially improve their efficiency and never reach their full capacity.

Every computer-user who is also a slow typist is aware of the benefits he could obtain with a typing course, but nearly no one suspects the much higher profits he could reach by improving his reading comprehension and speed. The rapid improvement of voice recognition may gradually make typing virtually obsolete since a good typist performs well under the speed of speech. On the other hand, human or computer speech, with an average speed of 150 wpm, will always remain many times slower than a good reader, without any consideration of the skimming and skipping possibilities.

There are three possible ways to improve reading. The fastest is probably a

speed reading seminar based upon good materials and animated by a dynamic instructor. It is quite usual for a slow reader to double and even triple his reading efficiency during a two-day class offering a positive atmosphere, carefully selected texts and comprehension tests. However, as this rapid and encouraging improvement is not sufficiently anchored, it often fades with time.

A book about speed reading is the second possibility. Such a book usually provides speed and comprehension tests as well as techniques to improve reading. It often includes more general information about concentration, interest stimulation, skimming techniques and ways to approach a text. Some methods may include audio or videocassettes. A book-based method requires a good deal of time as well as a strong commitment from the reader.

Finally, a speed reading computer program is probably the most efficient way to achieve top reading levels. Computers offer unique exercises to boost reading efficiency through interaction, text animation and pacing. Higher reading skills obtained with a computer screen are totally transferable to reading from paper. Unfortunately the inverse way does not work so well. Speed reading software delivers enjoyable and fast paced training, thus giving the consistent practice necessary to break lifelong slow reading habits. This is the task that seminars and speed reading books usually leave up to the reader.

(600 words)

Your reading speed:_____

Comprehension Questions:
1. Compared to an average reader, the accomplished reader reads with a _____ .
    a. higher speed and worse reading comprehension
    b. higher speed and better reading comprehension
    c. higher speed and similar reading comprehension
2. People reading above 1000 wpm _____ .
    a. are average readers　　　　　　　b. are the majority of readers
    c. are the 1% minority
3. The average reading speed is around _____ .
    a. 120 wpm　　　　　　b. 150 wpm　　　　　　c. 200 wpm
4. The average reader comprehension is around _____ .
    a. 50%　　　　　　　b. 60%　　　　　　c. 85%

5. A sprinter running as the average reader reads, runs 100m in _____.
   a. 10 seconds (near record time)   b. 35 seconds (jogging)
   c. 70 seconds (walking speed)
6. Which is the most effective way to acquire knowledge from information?
   a. Watching TV.   b. Reading text.   c. Listening to a speaker.
7. The average speaking speed of a race driver is around _____.
   a. 120 mph   b. 150 wpm   c. 200 wpm
8. Most computer users want to _____.
   a. improve typing   b. improve reading   c. buy a larger screen
9. What will lessen the importance of fast typing?
   a. Spelling-checkers.   b. More ergonomic keyboards.
   c. Progress in voice recognition.
10. A speed reading seminar or book lacks _____.
    a. rapid results   b. consistent practice
    c. deep enough explanations
11. What is probably the best way to reach top level reading efficiency?
    a. A speed reading book.   b. A speed reading seminar.
    c. Speed reading software.

⌨ Internet Reading Resources

http://gandalf. psych. umn. edu/groups/gellab/MNREAD/DEMO_RS/ (online
  speed-reading test)

http://www. speedreadingcd. com/reading-test. htm   (free online speed-reading
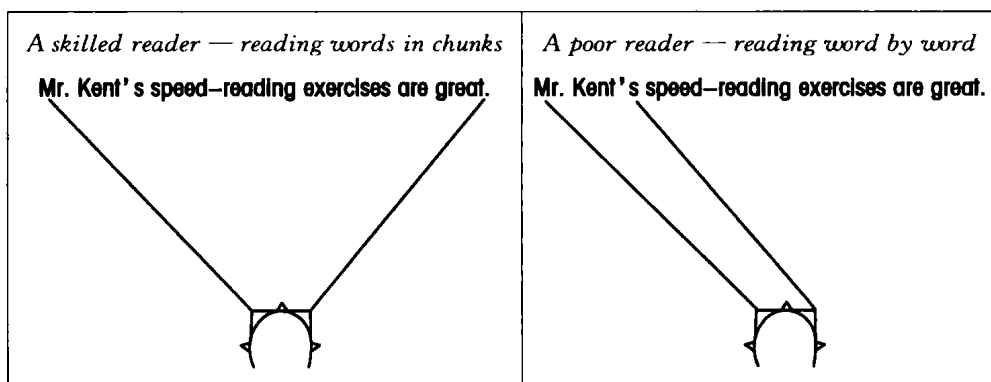 test)

Unit 2   Techniques for Speed Reading

    Reading habits make the difference of a skilled reader
and a poor reader. When one's habits are good, reading is
efficient and rapid; when one's habits are bad, reading is
slow, awkward and unsatisfying.

Some people read slowly because it's their habit. They tackle every reading task in the same way, not realizing that there are some things they can read faster than others. Do you know that most text contains 50% unnecessary words. This means you can remove 50% of the letters from the text and it will still be readable. If you understand this simple idea, your reading speed will increase dramatically.

See how fast readers and slow readers differ in the way they tackle the reading. You may be given some hints to improve your reading. The following diagram illustrates the most distinctive difference in the reading habits of two groups of readers — reading only one word at a time or reading several words at a time.

| *A skilled reader — reading words in chunks*	*A poor reader — reading word by word*
Mr. Kent's speed-reading exercises are great.	**Mr. Kent's speed-reading exercises are great.**

A skilled reader doesn't read single words but reads words in groups. He or she will only dwell on each group of words for an instant, and will then move on. Only rarely will the reader's eyes skip back to a previous block of words. This reduces the amount of work that the reader's eyes have to do. It also increases the volume of information that can be assimilated in a given period of time.

A poor reader will become bogged down, spending a lot of time reading small blocks of words. He or she will skip back often, losing the flow and structure of the text, and confusing his or her overall understanding of the text. This irregular eye movement makes reading tiring. Poor readers tend to dislike reading, and they may find it harder to concentrate and understand written information.

Study shows that our eyes can only take in information when they are stopped. You can easily verify this by sitting face to face with a partner, holding up a book and watching their eyes as they read. The key is to reduce the number

of stops by increasing the number of words you see at each stop as shown in the following figure. You may be able to read faster by reducing the number of stops per line from perhaps seven to three.
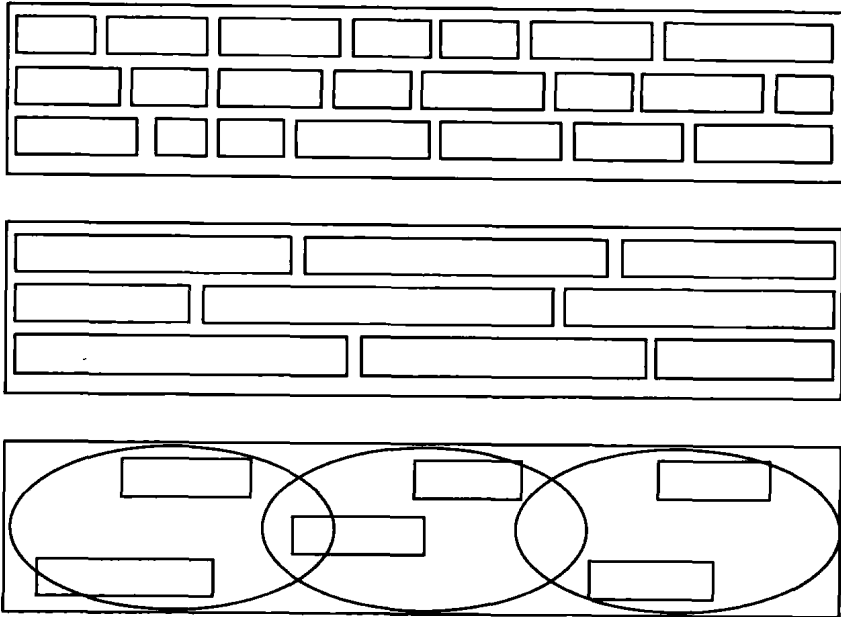
Three eye movement patterns
(Source: http://braindance. com/bdiread2. htm)

The person who uses the first eye movement pattern is actually looking at every word, one at a time. The person who uses the second is still looking at every word, but in groups. The person who uses the third eye movement pattern "notices" only a few key words and does so by reading both horizontally and vertically at the same time. The third pattern is the most desirable one for improving reading. Take this sentence for example:

Ceaseless Efforts are being made in China to minimize the effect brought by the newly confirmed SARS case in Guangzhou for a safe and sound Spring Festival, which officially begins on January 22.

A slow reader moves his eyes from word to word while an efficient reader will move his eyes from words to words, that is, from thought group to thought group.

Ceaseless Efforts   are being made   in China   to minimize the effect brought by   the newly confirmed SARS case   in Guangzhou   for a safe and sound Spring Festival, which officially

begins   on January 22.

Ceaseless Efforts are being made in China   to minimize the
effect   brought by   the newly confirmed SARS case in Guangzhou
    for a safe and sound Spring Festival,   which officially begins
  on January 22.

Are there other factors that make the difference between a skilled and a poor
reader? Yes, they are listed in the table below.

A Skilled Reader	A Poor Reader
Sees ideas	Hears the words (vocalized)
Reads with purpose	Reads to the end of the book
Adjusts their speed to meet their goals and purpose	Reads everything slowly
Keeps reading	Re-reads and backtracks
Uses their fingers or a piece of paper to keep pace	Lets their eyes wander around the page
Reads frequently	Reads infrequently
Marks key passages, takes notes, highlights	Leaves the pages clean
Reads critically and sorts the material	Reads everything without thinking about or processing the information

Now you may decide to get rid of some of the bad habits above. Changing
reading habits, however, is not easy. After all you have been reading that way
for many years. It takes several weeks of conscious effort in order to change bad
reading habits. You must practice and work at it in order to change. Below are
some ways to improve your poor reading habits and achieve faster reading.

Train yourself not to reread. Most people frequently stop and skip back to
words or sentences they just read to try to make sure they understand the
meaning. This is usually unnecessary, but it can easily become a habit, and many
times you will not even notice you're doing it. One exercise to help you avoid
rereading is to take a sheet of paper or index card and drag it down the page as
you read, covering each line once you've read it. Try to drag the card in a steady
motion; start slowly, and increase your speed as you feel more comfortable.

Stop reading to yourself. As you read, you probably pronounce the words to
yourself. Almost everybody does it, although to different degrees: some people
actually move their lips or say the words under their breath, while others simply