

力求涵盖考纲要求的各个方面



高中英语 专项突破

一阅读理解

READING COMPREHENSION



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总主编/吴劲松 本书主编/张伟克 陈 晨

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总主编 吴劲松 本书主编 张伟克 陈 晨

策划编辑 / 陈 勤

责任编辑 / 曹慧炜

责任校对 / 金慧娟 封面设计 / 戚亮轩

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编委会名单

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本书主编 张伟克 陈 晨

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前言

《考试大纲》对阅读理解的要求做了明确的规定,阅读理解部分主要测试考生以下能力:

- 1. 掌握所读材料的主旨和大意;
- 2. 了解用以阐述主旨的事实和有关细节;
- 3. 根据上下文判断大纲附表以外的某些词汇和短语的意义;
- 4. 既理解个别句子的意义,也理解上下文之间的逻辑关系;
- 5. 根据所读材料进行一定的判断,推理和引申;
- 6. 正确领会作者的观点和态度。

阅读理解在高考英语试卷中,分值比重最大,难度也较大,是英语高考的重头戏。

为提高广大高中学生阅读技巧与能力,提高英语学习效率和语言综合运用能力,养成良好的英语学习习惯和形成有效的学习策略,本书选取的短文体裁多样、语言地道,贴近现代生活实际;命题规范,符合测试学的理论要求,适合中学生的实际需要,练习布局合理。全书共三大部分:第一部分为历年真题研习,对近几年各地高考试题进行分析解剖;第二部分为模拟演练;第三部分为答案详解和技巧点拨。其特点为:新,文章尽量从新近报刊书籍和网站上选取;全,无论题材、体裁,还是单篇、单元,力求涵盖考纲要求的各个方面;准,完全按高考思路和要求设题;精,答案解析和技巧点拨精练、到位。

本书遵循教育部制订的英语课程标准和考试大纲的要求,从语言技能、语言知识、学习策略、情感态度、文化意识等方面着手,让学生在使用过程中能够扩展视野、丰富知识、开拓思维、提高能力。

本书从策划、编写到出版,都进行过精心设计、细致操作,但编写当中难免有不当之处,恳请广大读者多提宝贵意见。

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第一部分 历年真题研习

Unit 1 全国 I 卷(2008)

阅读下列短文,从每题所给的四个选项(A、B、C 和 D)中,选出最佳选项,并在答题卡上将该项涂黑。

A

Last week my youngest son and I visited my father at his new home in Tucson, Arizona. He moved there a few years ago, and I was eager to see his new place and meet his friends.

My earliest memories of my father are a tall, handsome, successful man devoted to his work and his family, but uncomfortable with his children. As a child I loved him. He seemed unhappy with me unless I got straight A's and unhappy with my boyfriends if their fathers were not as "successful" as he was. Whenever I went out with him on weekends, I used to struggle to think up things to say, feeling on guard.

On the first day of my visit, we went out with one of my father's friends for lunch at an outdoor cafe. We walked along that afternoon, did some shopping, ate on the street table, and laughed over my son's funny facial expressions. Gone was my father's critical (挑剔的) air and strict rules. Who was this person I knew as my father, who seemed so friendly and interested to be around? What had held him back before?

The next day dad pulled out his childhood pictures and told me quite a few stories about his own childhood. Although our times together became easier over the years, I never felt closer to him at that moment. After so many years, I'm at last seeing another side of my father. And in doing so, I'm delighted with my new friend. My dad, in his new home in Arizona, is back to me from where he was.

| 1. | Wh | y did the author feel | bitter about her father | r as | a young adult? | |
|----|-----|------------------------|-------------------------|-------|---------------------|---------|
| | A. | He was silent most of | the time. | | | |
| | B. | He was too proud of | himself. | | | |
| | C. | He did not love his cl | nildren. | | | |
| | D. | He expected too muc | h of her. | | | |
| 2. | Wh | en the author went of | ut with her father on | weel | kends, she would f | feel |
| | A. | nervous | B. sorry | C. | tired | D. safe |
| 3. | Wh | at does the author thi | ink of her father after | r hei | visit to Tucson? | |
| | A. | More critical. | | B. | More talkative. | |
| | C. | Gentle and friendly. | | D. | Strict and hard-we | orking. |
| 4. | The | e underlined words "n | ny new friend" in the | last | paragraph refer to | |
| | A. | the author's son | | B. | the author's father | r |
| | C. | the friend of the auth | nor's father | D. | the café owner | |

B

More than 10 years ago, it was difficult to buy a tasty pineapple (菠萝). The fruits that made it to the UK were green on the outside and, more often than not, hard with an unpleasant taste within. Then in 1966, the Del Monte Gold pineapple produced in Hawaii first hit our shelves.

The new type of pineapple looked more yellowy-gold than green. It was slightly softer on the outside and had a lot of juice inside. But the most important thing about this new type of pineapple was that it was twice as sweet as the hit-and-miss pineapples we had known. In no time, the Del Monte Gold took the market by storm, rapidly becoming the world's best-selling pineapple variety, and delivering natural levels of sweetness in the mouth, up until then only found in tinned pineapple.

In nutrition (营养) it was all good news too. This nice tasting pineapple contained four times more vitamin C(维生素 C) than the old green variety. Nutritionists said that it was not only full of vitamins, but also good against some diseases. People were understandably eager to be able to buy this wonderful fruit. The new type of pineapple was selling fast, and the Del Monte Gold pineapple rapidly became a fixture in the shopping basket of the healthy eater.

Seeing the growing market for its winning pineapple, Del Monte tried to keep market to itself. But other fruit companies developed similar pineapples. Del Monte turned to law for help, but failed. Those companies argued successfully that Del Monte's attempts to keep the golden pineapple for itself were just a way to knock them out the market.

5. We learn from the text that the new type of pineapple is A. green outside and sweet inside B. good-looking outside and soft inside C. yellowy-gold outside and hard inside D. a little softer outside and sweet inside 6. Why was the new type of pineapple selling well? A. It was rich in nutrition and tasted nice. B. It was less sweet and good for health. C. It was developed by Del Monte. D. It was used as medicine. 7. The underlined word "fixture" in Paragraph 3 probably refers to something A. that people enjoy eating B. that is always present C. that is difficult to get D. that people use as a gift 8. We learn from the last paragraph that Del Monte A. slowed other companies to develop pineapples' B. succeeded in keeping the pineapple for itself C. tried hard to control the pineapple market

D. planned to help the other companies

C

It is often necessary to release a fish, that is, set it free after catching, because it is too small, or you just don't want to take it home to eat. In some cases, releasing fish is a good measure that will help keep fish variety and build their population size. The Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (DGIF) encourages fishermen who practice catch-and-release fishing to use a few simple skills when doing so. The advice provided below will help make sure that the fish you release will survive (存活)

to bite again another day.

- —When catching a fish, play it quickly and keep the fish in the water as much as possible. Don't use a net in landing the fish and release it quickly to prevent it from dying.
- —Hold the fish gently. Do not put your fingers in its eyes. Don't wipe the scales (鱼鳞) off the fish because it might cause it to develop a disease and reduce its chance of survival.
- —Remove your hook (鱼钩) quickly. If the hook is too deep or hooked in the stomach, cut the line and leave the hook in. The hook left inside will cause no serious problem to the fish.
- —Take good care of the fish by moving it gently in water. Release the fish when it begins to struggle and is able to swim.
- —Do not hold fish in a bucket or some other containers and later decide to release it. If you are going to release a fish, do so right away.

With a little care and by following the suggestions given above, you can give the released fish a better chance of survival.

| 9. Peop | le sometimes | set a | fish | free | after | catching | it | because | they | | |
|---------|--------------|-------|------|------|-------|----------|----|---------|------|--|--|
|---------|--------------|-------|------|------|-------|----------|----|---------|------|--|--|

- A. don't want it to die
- B. hope it will grow quickly
- C. don't want to have it as food
- D. want to practice their fishing skills
- 10. Which of the following will probably make a fish ill?
 - A. Taking the hook off it.

B. Removing its scales.

C. Touching its eyes

- D. Holding it in your hand.
- 11. A proper way to release a fish is to _____
 - A. move it in water till it can swim
 - B. take the hook out of its stomach
 - C. keep it in a bucket for some time
 - D. let it struggle a little in your hand
- 12. What is the purpose of the test?
 - A. To show how to enjoy fishing.
 - B. To persuade people to fish less often.
 - C. To encourage people to set fish free.
 - D. To give advice on how to release fish.

D

Holidays

Holiday News

Vacancies (空位) now and in the school holidays at a country hotel in Devon. This comfortable, friendly home-from-home lies near the beautiful quiet countryside, but just a drive away from the sea. The food is simple but good. Children and pets are welcome.

Reduced prices for low season.

The Snowdonia Center

The Snowdonia Center for young mountain climbers has a mountain lesson. The beginners' costs are £57 for a week, including food and rooms. Equipment is included except walking shoes, which can be hired at a low cost.

You must be in good health and prepared to go through a period of body exercises. This could be the beginning of a lifetime mountain climbing adventure.

The World Sea Trip of a Lifetime

Our World Sea Trip of 2008 will be unlike any holiday you have ever been on before. Instead of one hotel after another, with all its packing and unpacking waiting and traveling, you just go to bed in one country and wake up in another.

On board the ship, you will be well taken care of. Every meal will be first-class and every cabin will be like your home.

During the trip, you can rest on deck(甲板), enjoy yourself in the game rooms and in the evening dance to our musical team and watch our wonderful play.

You will visit all the places most people only dream about — from Acapulco and Hawaii to Tokyo and Hong Kong.

For a few thousand pounds, all you've ever hoped for can be yours.

- 13. What can you do if you like to go on holidays with pets?
 - A. Choose the holiday in Devon.
 - B. Go to the Snowdonia Centre.
 - C. Join the World Sea Trip of 2008.
 - D. Visit Acapulco and Hawaii.
- 14. In what way is the Snowdonia Centre different from the other two holidays?
 - A. It provides chances of family gatherings.
 - B. It provides customers with good food.
 - C. It offers a sport lesson.
 - D. It offers comfortable rooms.
- 15. What is special about the World Sea Trip of 2008?
 - A. You can have free meals on deck every day.
 - B. You can sleep on a ship and tour many places.
 - C. You will have chances to watch and act in a play.
 - D. You have to do your own packing and unpacking.
- 16. At the Snowdonia Centre, the beginners' costs of £ 57 do not cover

| Αt | the Snowdonia | Centre, | the beginners | costs of | £ 37 | do not | cover | |
|----|---------------|---------|---------------|----------|-------|--------|-------|--|
| Α. | food | | | B. | rooms | 3 | | |

C. body exercises D. walking shoes

E

Edward Wilson is America's, if not the world's, leading naturalist. In *The Future of Life*, he takes us on a tour of the world's natural resources(资源). How are they used? What has been lost? What remains and is it able to continue with the present speed of use? Wilson also points out the need to understand fully the biodiversity(生物多样性) of our earth.

Wilson begins with an open letter to the pioneer in environment (环境) protection, Henry David Thoreau. He compares today's Walden Pond with that of Thoreau's day. Wilson will use such comparisons for the rest of the book. The problem is clear: man has done great damage to his home over the years. Can the earth, with human help, be made to return to biodiversity levels that will be able to support us in the future?

Biodiversity, Wilson argues, is the key to settling many problems the earth faces today. Even our

agricultural crops can gain advantages from it. A mere hundred species(物种) are the basis of our food supply, of which but twenty carry the load. Wilson suggests changing this situation by looking into ten thousand species that could be made use of, which will be a way to reduce the clearing of the natural homes of plants and animals to enlarge farming areas.

At the end of the book, Wilson discusses the importance of human values in considering the environment. If you are to continue to live on the earth, you may well read and act on the ideas in this book.

| 17. | We learn from the text that Wilson cares most about |
|-----|---|
| | A. the environment for plants |
| | B. the biodiversity of our earth |
| | C. the wastes of natural resources |
| | D. the importance of human values |
| 18. | How many species are most important to our present food supply? |
| | A. Twenty. B. Eighty. C. One hundred D. Ten thousand. |
| 19. | Wilson suggests that one way to keep biodiversity is to |
| | A. learn how to farm scientifically |
| | B. build homes for some dying species |
| | C. make it clear what to eat |
| | D. use more species for food |
| 20. | We can infer that the text is |
| | A. a description of natural resources |
| | B. a research report |
| | C. a book review |
| 8 | D. an introduction to a scientist. |
| 【解 | 析】 |

1. D。细节理解题。从文章第二段 He seemed unhappy with me unless I got straight A's and unhappy with my boyfriends if their fathers were not as "successful" as he was. 可知作者父亲以前对她要求很严格。如果自己成绩不好,或者男朋友们的父亲不和他一样"成功",他就不高兴。

2. A。推理判断题。从文章第二段最后一句 Whenever I went out with him on weekends, I used to struggle to think up things to say, feeling on guard. 可知周末自己和父亲出门,自己总是要想好

对策,提防着父亲对自己发难。

3. C。推理判断题。从第三段的内容 We walked along that afternoon, did some shopping, ate on the street table, and laughed over my son's funny facial expressions. Gone was my father's critical (挑剔的) air and strict rules. 可知自己和儿子与父亲及他的一位朋友外出后,发现他再没有以前那种挑剔的神色和严格的规矩,变得有绅士风度和和蔼可亲了。

4. B。词义猜测题。时过多年,自己终于发现了父亲的另一面,对父亲有了新的认识。my new friend 前后都提到了 my father(dad) 可知 my new friend 就是作者的父亲。

1

5. D。推理判断题。本文介绍了一种产于夏威夷的可口的、营养丰富的菠萝。从文章第二段的语句 The new type of pineapple looked more yellowy-gold than green. It was slightly <u>softer on the outside</u> and had <u>a lot of juice inside</u>. But the most important thing about this new type of pineapple was that it was <u>twice as sweet as the hit-and-miss pineapples we had known</u>. 可知夏

威夷菠萝是一种外表稍软,里面汁儿很甜的水果。

- 6. A。细节理解题。从文章第二段的 ... this new type of pineapple was that it was twice as sweet as the hit-and-miss pineapples we had known. 以及第三段的 In nutrition (营养) it was all good news too. 可知这新品种波萝不仅味道香甜,而且营养丰富,很快就成了世界上最畅销的菠萝品种。
- 7. B。词义猜测题。从含有该词的句子 The new type of pineapple was selling fast, and the Del Monte Gold pineapple rapidly became a <u>fixture</u> in the shopping basket of the healthy eater. 可知这种 菠萝销得快,很快成了健康食客购物篮中必不可少的东西。
- 8. C。推理判断题。从文章最后一段的语句 Del Monte tried to keep market to itself. But other fruit companies developed similar pineapples. Del Monte turned to law for help, but failed. 可知 Del Monte 想独自垄断市场,而且寻求法律帮助未果,说明该公司费了很大劲来控制这个菠萝市场。

-

- 9. C。细节理解题。本文主要讲述如何提高钓到小鱼的放养成活率。从文章第一段的语句 It is often necessary to release a fish, that is, set it free after catching, because it is too small, or you just don't want to take it home to eat. 可知钓到的鱼太小,不想带回家煮着吃。
- 10. B。细节理解题。从文中第二条建议 Don't wipe the scales (鱼鳞) off the fish because it might cause it to develop a disease and reduce its chance of survival. 可知刮掉鱼鳞会让鱼生病,减少成活的机会。
- 11. A。细节判断题。从第四条建议 Release the fish when it begins to struggle and is able to swim. 可知答案,其余三种情况都是错误的做法。
- 12. D。推测作者的写作意图题。从文章第一段最后一句 The advice provided below will help make sure that the fish you release will survive (存活) to bite again another day. (中心句)及文章最后一段的总结句 With a little care and by following the suggestions given above, you can give the released fish a better chance of survival. 可知写这篇文章的目的是就如何放养钓到的小鱼,使它们的成活率更高提出了一些建议。

D

- 13. A。细节理解题。本文是为旅游爱好者介绍几个度假的好去处。从文章第一节的语句 Children and pets are welcome. 可知在 Devon,人们可带自己的宠物去度假。其余三节中均未提及 pet 一词。
- 14. C。细节判断题。通过三个地方所能提供的活动内容对比,就可知 Snowdonia Centre 可以提供 a mountain lesson。
- 15. B。细节判断题。从第三节中的语句 Instead of one hotel after another, with all its packing and unpacking waiting and traveling, you just go to bed in one country and wake up in another. 可知可以睡在船上游览很多地方。
- 16. D。细节理解题。在第二节中的语句 The beginners' costs are £ 57 for a week, including food and rooms. Equipment is included except walking shoes, which can be hired at a low cost. 可知 75 英镑中不包含鞋的价格,游客可以自己很便宜地租借到。

E

17. B。推理判断题。本文介绍了美国著名的生物学家 Edward Wilson 的著作 *The Future of Life* 中的一些有关如何开发、利用和保护自然资源的情况。文章第一段,Edward Wilson 的书 *The Future of Life* 不仅让我们对资源的来龙去脉有一个很好的了解,而且指出"我们有必要对地球的生物多样性有一个充分的了解。"第三段的语句 Biodiversity,Wilson argues,is the key to settling many problems the earth faces today. 也说明了 Biodiversity 是解决地球面临许多问题的关键。

故选B项。

- 18. A。细节理解题。从文章第三段的语句 A mere hundred species(物种) are the basis of our food supply, of which but twenty carry the load. 可知对我们的食物供给的物种最重要的有 20 种。
- 19. D。细节理解题。从文章第三段的语句 Wilson suggests changing this situation by <u>looking into ten</u> thousand species that could be made use of, which will be a way to <u>reduce</u> the clearing of the natural homes of plants and animals to enlarge farming areas. 可知 Wilson 建议保持地球生物 多样性的方法之一就是寻求更多的可以利用的物种。
- 20. C。推理判断题。从文章开头的 In *The Future of Life*, he takes us on a tour of the world's natural resources(资源). 到结尾处的 At the end of the book, Wilson discusses the importance of human values...可知该文是介绍一本书的内容。

Unit 2 江苏卷(2008)

请认真阅读下列短文,从短文后所给的A、B、C、D四个选项中,选出最佳选项,并在答题卡上将该项涂黑。

A

What time is it? Most people are pretty accurate in their answer. And if you don't know for sure, it's very likely that you can find out. There may be a watch on your wrist; there may be a clock on the wall, desk, or computer screen; or maybe you're riding in a car that has a clock in the dashboard(仪表 板).

Even if you don't have a timepiece of some sort nearby, your body keeps its own beat. Humans have an internal clock that regulates(调节) the beating of our heart, the pace of our breathing, the discharge(排出) of chemicals within our bloodstream, and many other bodily functions.

Time is something from which we can't escape. Even if we ignore it, it's still going by, ticking away, second by second, minute by minute, hour by hour. So the main issue in using your time well is, "Who's in charge?" We can allow time to slip by and let it be our enemy. Or we can take control of it and make it our ally.

By taking control of how you spend your time, you'll increase your chances of becoming a more successful student. Perhaps more importantly, the better you are at managing the time you devote to your studies, the more time you will have to spend on your outside interests.

The aim of time management is not to schedule every moment so we become slaves of a timetable that governs every waking moment of the day. Instead, the aim is to permit us to make informed choices as to how we use our time. Rather than letting the day go by, largely without our awareness, what we are going to discuss next can make us better able to control time for our own purposes.

| The underlined word "ally" in Para. 3 most lik | ly means somebody or something that is | |
|--|--|--|
|--|--|--|

- A. your slave and serves you
- B. your supporter and helps you
- C. under your control and obeys you
- D. under your influence and follows you
- 2. The author intends to tell us that time _____.
 - A. could be regulated by a timepiece such as a clock or a watch
 - B. could be managed by the internal clock of human bodies

- C. should be well managed for our own interest
- D. should be saved for outside interests
- 3. In the next part, the author would most probably discuss with you
 - A. how to keep up with the times
 - B. how to make up for lost time
 - C. how to have a good time
 - D. how to make good use of time

B

We experience different forms of the Sun's energy every day. We can see its light and feel its warmth. The Sun is the major source of energy for our planet. It causes the evaporation(蒸发) of water from the oceans and lakes. Sunlight also provides the energy used by green plants to make their own food. These green plants then provide food for all organisms(生物) on the Earth.

Much of the energy that comes from the Sun never reaches the Earth's surface. It is either reflected or absorbed by the gases in the upper atmosphere. Of the energy that reaches the lower atmosphere, 30% is reflected by clouds or the Earth's surface. The remaining 70% warms the surface of the planet, causes water to evaporate, and provides energy for the water cycle and weather. Only a tiny part, approximately 0.023%, is actually used by green plants to produce food.

Many gases found in the atmosphere actually reflect heat energy escaping from the Earth's surface back to the Earth. These gases act like the glass of a greenhouse in that they allow energy from the Sun to enter but prevent energy from leaving. They are therefore called greenhouse gases.

When sunlight strikes an object, some of the energy is absorbed and some is reflected. The amount reflected depends on the surface. For example, you've probably noticed how bright snow is when sunlight falls on it. Snow reflects most of the energy from the Sun, so it contributes to the low temperatures of winter. Dark-coloured surfaces, such as dark soil or forest, absorb more energy and help warm the surrounding air.

- 4. According to the passage, the root cause for weather changes on the Earth is _____.
 - A. the atmosphere surrounding the Earth
 - B. water from oceans and lakes
 - C. energy from the Sun
 - D. greenhouse gases in the sky
- 5. Only a small part of the Sun's energy reaches the Earth's surface because most of it is _____.
 - A. absorbed by the clouds in the lower atmosphere
 - B. reflected by the gases in the upper atmosphere
 - C. lost in the upper and lower atmosphere
 - D. used to evaporate water from the oceans and lakes
- 6. We learn from the passage that _____.
 - A. all living things on the Earth depend on the Sun for their food
 - B. a forest looks dark in winter because it absorbs solar energy
 - C. only 0.023% of the energy from the Sun is made use of on the Earth
 - D. greenhouse gases allow heat energy to escape from the Earth's surface

C

Gallery Policies

For visitors to National Gallery of Art, Washington, visitors must present all carried items for inspection upon entry. After inspection, all bags, backpacks, umbrellas, parcels, and other things as determined by security officers must be left at the checkrooms. Free of charge, close to each entrance. All oversized bags. Backpacks, and luggage must be left at the checkrooms near the 4th Street entrance of either the East or West Building. These items will have to be x-rayed before being accepted. Items of value, such as laptop computers, cameras, and fur coats, may not be left in the checkrooms but may be carried into the galleries.

We regret that we do not have enough space for visitor items larger than 17×26 inches into the Gallery or its checkrooms.

Additional security procedures and checks may be taken according to the decision of the Gallery. For the safety of the artworks and other visitors, nothing may be carried on a visitor's back. Soft front baby carriers are allowed, but children may not be carried on shoulders or in a child carrier worn on the back. Pushchairs are available free of charge near each checkroom.

Smoking is prohibited. Food and drink are not permitted outside the food service areas. Unopened bottled water may be carried only in a visitor's bag. Cell phones may not be used in the Gallery.

Animals, other than service animals, are not permitted in the Gallery.

Skateboarding is prohibited.

Picture-taking (including video) for personal use is permitted except in special exhibitions and where specifically prohibited. Tripods (三脚架) are not allowed.

Please do not touch the works of art.

7 When people come to visit the Gallery, they should

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|----|--|
| | A. leave all their carried items at the checkrooms |
| | B. have all their carried items x-rayed at the entrance |
| | C. take all their carried items with them without inspection |
| | D. have all their carried items inspected at the entrance |
| 8. | What does the Gallery feel sorry for? |
| | A. Visitors have to keep their valuable items in the checkrooms. |
| | B. The size of visitor items allowed into the Gallery is limited. |
| | C. It cannot keep oversized visitor items due to limited space. |
| | D. Visitor items over 17×26 inches must go through additional checks. |
| 9. | Parents with small children visiting the Gallery |
| | A. can carry their children in soft front child carriers |
| | B. can carry their children on their shoulders |
| | C. can carry their children in child carriers worn on the back |
| | D. ought to pay if they want to use pushchairs for their children |
| 10 | . Visiting photographers should make sure that |
| | A. pictures and videos are allowed for personal use anywhere in the Gallery |

B. pictures and videos can be taken in some places for personal useC. picture-taking and videoing are totally forbidden in the Gallery

D. tripods are allowed except in some special exhibitions

D

It had been some time since Jack had seen the old man. College, career, and life itself got in the way. In fact, Jack moved clear across the country in pursuit of his dreams. There, in the rush of his busy life, Jack had little time to think about the past and often no time to spend with his wife and son. He was working on his future, and nothing could stop him.

Over the phone, his mother told him, "Mr. Belser died last night. The funeral is on Wednesday." Memories flashed through his mind like an old newsreel as he sat quietly remembering his childhood days.

"Jack, did you hear me?"

"Oh, sorry, Mom. Yes, I heard you. It's been so long since I thought of him. I'm sorry, but I honestly thought he died years ago," Jack said.

"Well, he didn't forget you. Every time I saw him he'd ask how you were doing. He'd reminisce (回忆) about the many days you spent over 'his side of the fence' as he put it," Mom told him.

"I sold that old house he lived in," Jack said.

"You know, Jack, after your father died, Mr. Belser stepped in to make sure you had a man's influence in your life," she said.

"He's the one who taught me carpentry. I wouldn't be in this business if it weren't for him. He spent a lot of time teaching me things he thought were important. Mom, I'll be there for the funeral," Jack said.

Busy as he was, he kept his word. Jack caught the next flight to his hometown. Mr. Belser's funeral was small and uneventful. He had no children of his own, and most of his relatives had passed away.

The night before they had to return home, Jack and his Mom stopped by to see the old house next door one more time, which was exactly as he remembered. Every step held memories. Every picture, every piece of furniture. Jack stopped suddenly.

"What's wrong, Jack?" his Mom asked.

"The box is gone," he said.

"What box?" Mom asked.

"There was a small gold box that he kept locked on top of his desk. I must have asked him a thousand times what was inside. All he'd ever told me was 'the thing I value most', " Jack said.

It was gone. Everything about the house was exactly how Jack remembered it, except for the box. He figured someone from the Belser family had taken it.

"Now, I'll never know what was so valuable to him," Jack said sadly.

Returning to his office the next day, he found a package on his desk. The return address caught his attention.

"Mr. Harold Belser" it read.

Jack tore open the package. There inside was the gold box and an envelope. Jack's hands shook as he read the note inside.

"Upon my death, please forward this box and its contents to Jack Bennett. It's the thing I valued most in my life." A small key was taped to the letter. His heart racing, and tears filling his eyes, Jack carefully unlocked the box. There inside he found a beautiful gold pocket watch. Running his fingers slowly over the fine cover, he opened it.

Inside he found these words carved: "Jack, Thanks for your time! Harold Belser."

"Oh, My God! This is the thing he valued most."

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