

汪氏英语 —— 快速阅读系列

EASIER ENGLISH

FAST

READING OF POPULAR SCIENCE

初级科普英语快速阅读

汪士彬 / 主编

南开大学出版社

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前言

研究表明,学习效率的高低首先是由学习速度决定的,而决定学习速度的因素中最基础的是一个人的阅读速度。因为我们获取的知识 80%以上是通过阅读性学习来获取的,而一个人学习能力的高低 95%取决于他的阅读能力,所以我们说提升学习效率的关键因素在于阅读速度的提升。据专家测定,学习好的学生,大约有 70%的时间用于阅读。

现代社会已经进入了经济全球化、科学技术一体化时代。当代科技发展的趋势是向知识密集型转化,信息量急剧增加,传递速度空前加快。而英语在现代社会的作用也越来越重要。各种科技资料在世界数百种语言中,以英语记载最为广泛,约占 85%以上。因此,对于英语学习者而言,掌握快速阅读技巧,提高阅读速度,快速、及时、准确地了解掌握最新的科普知识,是紧跟时代、更新观念、掌握知识的最基本技能之一。但是对于许多英语学习者而言,目前许多科普阅读材料难度偏大,这不仅影响阅读速度,也不利于提高学习者的阅读能力和自信心。有鉴于此,我们严格筛选,精编细作,出版这本富于知识性、趣味性和科学性,同时又简单易懂的《初级科普英语快速阅读》。本书由南开大学出版社出版,是与该社之前出版的《中级英语快速阅读》、《中级英语快速阅读辅导》、《高级英语快速阅读》(上下册)、《中级科普英语快速阅读》及即将出版的《高级科普英语快速阅读》和《中级科普英语快速阅读辅导》配套的“汪氏英语——快速阅读系列”之一。本系列经过多次修订再版,已经成为深受广大师生和英语爱好者欢迎的英语快速阅读培训教程,可谓历经时间考验的“经典”教材。编者以教育部颁布的《大学英语教学要求》为纲,以“高中英语新课程标准词汇表”规定的词汇(3500 个单词)为依据,完成了本书的编写。本书选材范围广泛,语言地道精彩,练习重点突出,适用于具高中基础和高自考、职大、夜大及普通高校的低年级学生,特别适用于近年蓬勃发展起来的独立院校,其中的多数学生英语基础较弱,尤其需要在阅读上狠下功夫。认真抓好他们的快速阅读训练是当务之急,也是为他们今后顺利通过全国英语四、六级考试做好充分准备。

本书内容新颖丰富,趣味性强,使学生读来津津有味,又能拓宽见闻,增长知识。本书选材包括通俗科普和边缘学科的最新报道和科学研究。如老虎与虎年的知

识；植物之间的“亲情”；动物预测地震的能力；动物的数学才能；水能反映人类的爱与恨；在最恶劣气候环境下生活的帝企鹅；美国中西部气候变冷的原因；温室效应与全球变暖；各种新能源的应用；揭示人类大脑的密码；盐的秘密；最大的人体器官——皮肤的奥秘；还有对如何戒除网瘾、烟瘾，如何缓解压力、如何提高记忆力的介绍；充足睡眠、合理饮食对健康的影响；电子游戏对青少年的利与弊。本书还包括最新的科普报道，如 2010 年发生的北京沙尘暴，冰岛火山大喷发，苹果公司最新发布的新产品 iPad，等等，可谓包罗万象。

本书选材的绝大部分选自近 5 年来的西方原作，语言地道规范，遣词造句优美流畅。学生读来不仅可以丰富自己的科普知识，还能享受地道英语的原汁原味的美感，提高英语语言素养。编排时，本书本着由简而繁、由浅入深的原则，使学生循序渐进地掌握内容，感受不断进步的喜悦，提高学生自信心。同时，每个单元都包含主题一致的主篇和副篇两篇文章，内容前后呼应，词汇复现率高，有利于学生深度掌握所学知识。

本书的练习形式多样，旨在全面锻炼和提高学生的快速阅读技巧。我们希望通过针对性强的课后练习，帮助学生在提高理解能力的同时逐步牢固地掌握快速阅读的技巧，体验快速阅读的乐趣。为了更有效地利用这些练习，提高学习效率，我们在这里对练习的构思和目的进行简单的叙述：

练习 I (Reading Comprehension) 采用单选题和填空题两种形式。单选题考查学生对文章主旨的把握和细节的理解情况，引导学生在提高阅读速度的同时兼顾理解的准确性。填空题则着重锻炼学生概括总结和运用关键词的能力。

练习 II (Content Review) 列出了课文中的超纲词汇（本书以超“高中英语新课程标准词汇表”为准），并配以对应的英文解释，以加深学生对词汇含义的理解，同时可以锻炼读者通过上下文猜词义的能力。

练习 III (Increasing Reading Speed) 设置两种形式的练习，要求学生在极短的时间内从诸多相近的词汇或短语中找到指定的词汇或短语。该练习旨在训练学生的眼睛扫视速度，锻炼成组阅读能力和寻读能力。

练习 IV (Contextual Reference) 锻炼学生利用上下文对陌生词汇含义进行推测的能力。该练习所选的句子或短文都与所在单元的主题保持一致。

练习 V 以两种题型，即 Translation 或 Blanked Cloze 的形式出现。Translation 练习是为帮助学生应对大学英语四级考试的翻译题型而设置的，而 Blanked Cloze

练习则旨在帮助学生加强对语篇逻辑的把握能力和词汇的运用能力。**Blanked Cloze**练习中所选短文也与所在单元的主题保持一致。

另外，宁静老师对本书的选材有贡献，在此一并表示谢意。

书中错误与疏漏之处，敬请读者批评指正。

编者
2010年12月

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Unit One

Tigers in Trouble



For centuries, tigers have been a *symbol* of power, courage and good fortune. But the big cat's luck may be running out. In January, the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) showed that the wild tiger population has hit an all-time low of 3,200. In 1998, there were 5,000 to 7,000 tigers.

Scientists believe the *decline* is due to *illegal* hunting, climate change and a great loss of habitat and prey. "It's startling how fast they can lose their habitat," Sybille Klenzendorf, a tiger expert at the WWF, told TFK.

Tigers live in the wide areas in Siberian, Amur, the cold regions of Russia and the grasslands of the Indian subcontinent. But development has had bad effect on tigers. People have moved into tiger territory and destroyed much of the animal's habitat. Today, tigers live in 7% of the habitat they occupied just a hundred years ago.

In Greater Mekong, an area in Southeast Asia, tigers have been pushed close to *extinction*. More than 70% of its tiger population has been lost in the past 12 years, due in large part to illegal hunting.

Climate change is threatening the big cats in the Sundarbans *delta*, on the coasts of

India and Bangladesh. The delta is home to the world's largest Bengal tiger population. Scientists say a rise in sea levels could destroy the Bengal's habitat and *wipe out* 96% of the tiger population by 2070.

The Year of the Tiger

The Chinese New Year begins on February 14, and 2010 is the Year of the Tiger. The WWF hopes people will take action to save the tiger this year. The group's program Tx2 aims to double the number of wild tigers by 2022, the next Year of the Tiger.

It may already be too late for the South China tiger. In the 1950s, there were 4,000 living in the wild in southern China. But the cat has not been sighted in more than 25 years. Researchers believe it may be extinct in the wild. Illegal trade in tiger parts led to the decline. Tiger bones are a key *ingredient* in Chinese folk medicine.

Can There Be a Comeback?

Last month, leaders from 12 Asian nations and Russia met to discuss plans to save the tiger. They are punishing hunters and making bans on the sale of tiger products. They are also looking for ways to protect the tiger habitat.

A ban in China, begun in 1998 to protect the tiger habitat, is starting to pay off. The Siberian tiger has *expanded* its territory from Russia to China. "That's one of the places that we put huge hope into for tiger recovery," Klenzendorf says. She believes that with help from local communities, tigers can make a comeback.

—From <http://www.timeforkids.com/TFK/kids/wr/article/0,28391,1961929,00.html>

Time: _____ 510 words / _____ minutes = _____ wpm

EXERCISES

I. Reading Comprehension

Directions: Answer the following questions according to the information given in the passage. For questions 1-7, choose the best answer from the four choices marked A, B, C, and D. For questions 8-10, complete the sentence with the information given in the passage.

1. According to WWF, there are _____ tigers now, the lowest wild tiger population ever.

A.3,200

B.5,000

C. 7,000

D. 4,000

2. According to the passage, which of the following is not one of the reasons for the decline of wild tiger population?

A. Illegal hunting.

B. Climate change.

C. Disease.

D. A great loss of habitat and prey.

3. Compared with one hundred years ago, the habitat tigers occupy now has decreased by _____.

A. 7%

B. 93%

C. 70%

D. 30%

4. What is the main reason for the tigers in Greater Mekong to come close to extinction?

A. Climate change.

B. Illegal hunting.

C. Rise in sea level.

D. Loss of habitat.

5. What is the aim of WWF's program Tx2?

A. To save the extinct South China tiger.

B. To provide tigers with better habitat.

C. To stop the illegal hunting of tigers.

D. To double the number of wild tigers by 2022.

6. When was the South China tiger last sighted?

A. More than 25 years ago.

B. About 60 years ago.

C. Less than 10 years ago.

D. It has never been sighted.

7. Which of the following is not mentioned in the passage as one of the effective ways to protect tigers?

A. Punishing hunters.

B. Making bans on the sale of tiger products.

C. Taking care of tigers at zoos.

D. Looking for ways to protect the tiger habitat.

8. Tigers have been seen as symbol of _____ for centuries.

9. _____ is a threat to the world's largest Bengal tiger in the Sundarbans delta.

10. _____ leads to the possible extinction of the South China tiger.

II. Content Review

Directions: Match the following words in column A with the statements in column B.

The first one is done for you.

A	B
<u> e </u> 1. symbol	a. When sth. becomes less in amount, importance, quality or strength.
<u> </u> 2. decline	b. An animal that is hunted and killed for food by another animal.
<u> </u> 3. illegal	c. An area that an animal or person tries to control or thinks belongs to them.
<u> </u> 4. habitat	d. An area of low flat land where a river divides into several smaller rivers before flowing into the sea. (三角洲)
<u> </u> 5. prey	e. A sign, shape or object which is used to represent sth. else.
<u> </u> 6. subcontinent	f. To become greater in size, number or importance.
<u> </u> 7. territory	g. A large area of land which is part of a continent, often referring to India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. (次大陆)
<u> </u> 8. extinction	h. The natural environment in which an animal or plant usu. lives.
<u> </u> 9. delta	i. A situation in which sth. no longer exists.
<u> </u> 10. wipe out	j. Not allowed by law.
<u> </u> 11. ingredient	k. An element in a mixture or compound.
<u> </u> 12. expand	l. To destroy or be destroyed completely.

III. Increasing Reading Speed

Directions: Do the word recognition drills below. Note the words by the number; then underline it every time it appears in the same form on the line. No regression, no vocalization. Try to finish in 15 seconds or less.

Starting Time: _____

- | | |
|-------------|---|
| 1. fortune | future formal fountain fortune foolish |
| 2. decline | decrease acclaim deduce incline decline |
| 3. symbol | synthetic symbol sympathy ramble system |
| 4. populate | popular pollution populate pollinate politics |

5. habitat	habit humiliate habitable habitation habitat
6. effective	affective effective reflective active effect
7. threaten	thread threatening threaten thrill thrash
8. destroy	destine deadline destiny decline dispose
9. extinct	existence excited export extinct exterior
10. protect	protect propose detect preface proceed

Finishing Time:_____ Total Reading Time:_____

Errors:_____ Check each line carefully for mistakes.

IV. Contextual Reference

Directions: *Looking up unfamiliar words in a dictionary is time-consuming and should only be done as a last resort. Figure out meanings of the words in italics using only the context given and word-building skills.*

The Tiger in Chinese Culture

The Chinese have *interpreted* the marking on the tiger's forehead as the *pictogram* Wang, also a common family name, meaning "king". Or rather, because of the tiger's power as king of the forest and the marking on its head, the marking was *adopted* into the Chinese language meaning "king". The Tiger is also known as the King of the Mountain, and it is said that it has the power to drive away *evil*. In Chinese *folklore*, tigers are believed to be such powerful creatures that they have the ability to keep off the three main household disasters—fire, thieves and evil spirits. A painting of a tiger is often hung on a wall inside a building facing the entrance to ensure that *demons* would be too afraid to enter. Even in modern China, children wear tiger-headed caps and shoes *embroidered* with tiger heads or sleep on tiger-shaped pillows to *ward off* evil spirits and make them strong.

V. Translation

Directions: *Complete the sentences by translating into English the Chinese given in brackets.*

1. _____ (由于下大雨), the basement match is cancelled.

2. _____ (网络游戏不但对青少年有影响), but also

on adults.

3. The custom of giving presents at Christmas _____ (可以追溯到数千年前).

4. My grades have increased from C to B and _____ (我的努力开始有了回报).

5. Specialists in intercultural studies says that it is not easy to _____ (适应不同文化中的生活).

Timed Reading:

It's the Year of the Tiger!

Starting time: _____

On February 13, 2010, millions of people across China will crowd onto trains and buses. They will be hurrying home to be with their families for the country's most important holiday, *Lunar New Year*, or Spring Festival. February 14 marks the end of the Year of the Ox, and the beginning of the Year of the Tiger.

More than one billion people worldwide celebrate Lunar New Year. In China, people from Beijing to Guangzhou enjoy a holiday. Businesses and government offices are closed. Many people go to temples to pray for good fortune for the future.

The Lunar New Year is celebrated at the second new moon after the winter *solstice*. The winter solstice, which falls around December 21, is one of two times of the year when the sun is at its greatest distance from the *equator*. It is also the shortest day of the year.

According to an old story, *Buddha* asked all the animals to meet him on Lunar New Year. Twelve animals came, and Buddha named a year after each one. The animals were: the Rat, Ox, Tiger, Rabbit, Dragon, Snake, Horse, Goat, Monkey, Rooster, Dog and Pig.

Buddha announced that people born in each animal's year would have some of that animal's *personality*. If you were born in 1926, 1938, 1950, 1962, 1974, 1986 or 1998, you were born in the year of the Tiger. People who were born in these years are believed to be brave, friendly, *competitive* and natural leaders. They are said to get along best with people born under the year of the Horse or Dog.

On Lunar New Year's Eve, the Chinese celebrate with fireworks, family gatherings and festivals. One of the most popular ways to celebrate the holiday is the lion dance.

The lion is considered a *holy* animal. During celebrations, dancers dressed as lions (or holding up paper lions) perform. The dancers are supposed to bring good luck to the people they visit at their homes or businesses. People often wear red, which symbolizes fire. *Legend* has it that fire can drive away bad luck.

The 15-day New Year season is celebrated with *firecrackers*, dragon dances and visits to friends and family. The celebrations end with the *Lantern* Festival, when brightly colored lamps are hung in parks around China.

—From <http://www.timeforkids.com/TFK/kids/news/story/0,28277,1964111,00.html>

Finishing Time: _____ 510 words / _____ minutes = _____ wpm

NEW WORDS AND PHRASES

Lunar	<i>adj.</i>	Of the moon.
solstice	<i>n.</i>	Either of the two times of the year when the sun is at its greatest distance from the celestial equator. (至日, 至点)
equator	<i>n.</i>	An imaginary line drawn around the middle of the Earth that is exactly the same distance from the North Pole and the South Pole.
Buddha	<i>n.</i>	Founder of Buddhism; worshipped as a god
personality	<i>n.</i>	Sb's character, esp. the way they behave towards other people.
competitive	<i>adj.</i>	Showing or having the desire to be more successful than others.
holy	<i>adj.</i>	Connected with God and religion.
legend	<i>n.</i>	A traditional story sometimes popularly regarded as historical but not authenticated.
firecracker	<i>n.</i>	A small firework that explodes loudly.
lantern	<i>n.</i>	A lamp that you can carry, consisting of a metal container with glass sides that surrounds a flame or light.

PASSAGE READING COMPREHENSION

Directions: Please do not look back at the Timed Reading passage to do this exercise. For questions 1-7, choose the best answer from the four choices marked A, B, C, and D. For questions 8-10, complete the sentence with the information given in the

passage.

1. The Year before the Year of the Tiger is _____.
 - A. The Year of the Rat
 - B. The Year of the Ox
 - C. The Year of the Rabbit
 - D. The Year of the Dragon
2. How many people celebrate Lunar New Year worldwide?
 - A. More than one billion.
 - B. More than two billion.
 - C. More than three billion.
 - D. More than four billion.
3. When is the Lunar New Year celebrated?
 - A. At the first new moon after the winter solstice.
 - B. At the first full moon after the winter solstice.
 - C. At the second new moon after the winter solstice.
 - D. At the second full moon after the winter solstice.
4. Which animal did not come to meet Buddha on Lunar New Year?
 - A. Dog.
 - B. Rooster.
 - C. Cat.
 - D. Ox.
5. According to the passage, people born in the year of the Tiger might be _____.
 - A. energetic
 - B. brave
 - C. stubborn
 - D. bossy
6. According to the passage, those who were born in the year of the Tiger tend to get along well with people born in the year of the _____.
 - A. Horse
 - B. Rooster
 - C. Rat
 - D. Monkey
7. Based on the information of the passage, people wear red during the Lunar New