最新高级英语

A READING TEXTBOOK FOR
ADVANCED LEARNERS

阅读速通

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世界图书出版公司

Advanced English Reading

最新高级英语阅读速通

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前 言

短期英语强化培训初级、中级系统教材共十一本于1995、1998年相继出版。现在我们又把短期英语强化培训高级系列教材奉献给广大读者。它们分别是：

《最新高级英语阅读速通》(Advanced English Reading)

《测试成功之路》

(Towards Success in TOEFL, PETS5, BEC)

《托福听力测试突破》

(Breakthrough in TOEFL Listening Comprehension)

《最新高级英语快速阅读精粹》

(Speed Reading for Advanced Students)

《高级英语听力》(Advanced English Listening)

《高级英语写作》(Advanced English Writing)

短期英语强化培训高级系列教材设计的起点是大学英语6级或本系列培训中级，结业成绩相当于TOEFL 570分或IELTS 6分以上。按国际惯例，这样的结业成绩一般被认为达到了高级英语水准，可以进入多数外国大学院校学习。因此，短期英语强化培训高级系列教材是通向国际英语标准考试的桥梁，它将使国内大学英语教学与国际英语教学直接接轨。

短期英语强化培训高级系列教材是按照教育部《出国留学人员英语强化教学大纲》修订本(1992)的高级阶段标准要求编写的，并根据近年来人们英语水平普遍有所提高的实情，编写的要求略高于该教学大纲的水平。跟初、中级系列教材一样，它充分体现了“大剂量，高时效，重交际，讲灵活”的教学指导思想和原则。

《最新高级英语阅读速通》和《最新高级英语快速阅读精粹》在于进一步提高学员的阅读理解能力和阅读速度，在于进一步提高学员的英语语言技巧和运用能力，在编写的过程中，我们特别注意了选材的质量和数量。质量上，强调一个“精”字，要求选文内容精粹、文辞精美、结构严谨，有一定的利用价值和代表性，便于精讲、精读、精练。数量上，突出一个“泛”字，要求选文题材广、文体宽、风格异，有一定的难度和趣味性，便于定时量化检测，便于激发学生的学习积极性。两本阅读书由于课文难度和词汇量显著增大，对学生是一个挑战。这两本书的选文也充分体现了当代英语的特点。

《测试成功之路》编撰了10套TOEFL、7套PETS 5、3套BEC模拟题(不含听力理解部分)，选材新颖、面宽，涵盖这三种考试试题书面部分的所有基本题材和题型，所命的问题有很强的应试性、针对性。模拟题似真题而又不照抄照搬。一书在手，如虎添翼，对于参加以上三种考试的考生来说，本书不仅提供了战前演练的“活靶”，而且为他们铺平了一条通过考试的成功之路。

PETS5 (Public English Test System, Level 5)，即全国公共英语等级考试第五级，是教育部考试中心于去年推出，用以替代全国外语水平考试(WSK · EPT)的一种新型考试，去年九月启用。我们根据教育部考试中心PETS5的考试大纲赶编了七套PRETS模拟题与TOEFL和BEC模拟题一同出版，供考生备考之用。关于PETS5的听力部分，可购买由我们编写，西安外语音像教材出版社出版的《PETS5听力测试突破》一书。

《托福听力测试突破》在编写内容与形式上自成体系，相对独立。然而，它与此前出版的《英语听力测试》(第一册)有机联系。它根据TOEFL近年来的一些命题规律，针对考生的难点，将各类题型归类整理，引导学生反复操练，以期在较短的时间内提高其听力应试能力。本书以TOEFL听力题型为主，但部分“对话”及“短文”对PETS5考生亦有相当重要的价值。

《高级英语听力》较之《中级英语听力》有相当大难度，课文长度有较大增加。题材以讲座、演讲等为主要内容，着重培养学生听讲座、听专题报告、记笔记等能力，以便适应国外学习与工作的需要。另外，针对学生听英语新闻困难的现象，本书选用了标准语速VOA或BBC新闻内容，以训练培养学生理解新闻的技巧和能力。作为高级听力教材，文化导入是必不可少的。因此，本书还尽可能将一些文化背景知识融合在听音材料中，力争使学员通过训练在听力理解文面产生一个质的飞跃。

《高级英语写作》包括两大块：一是基本功练习，二是类型和技巧。前者是为了和中难写作教槛衔接(因为有人可能未参加中级培训)，后者则是教学的重点。它的特点是：一、容量大，全面介绍了英语写作的“四大类型”和“八大技巧”；二、应用性强，学了就能用得上；三、各部分既有学生范文模拟，又有作家作品鉴赏；四、超出一般国外英语考试题型，对学员用英语进行各种书面交际均有参考价值。

21世纪向外语教育工作者提出了巨大的挑战，但也给我们提供了巨大的机遇。当此系列教材完成之际，我们为有这样的机遇而高兴，同时也深感未来责任之重大。由于我们的水平有限，本系列教材疵漏之处在所难免，尚有待今后陆续补正。我们再次诚恳希望广大读者和外语界同仁不吝赐教，俾使本教材渐臻完善。

高级英语强化培训系列教材在编写过程中，陕西省政协副主席、西安外国语学院前院长孙天义教授、院长杜瑞清教授曾给予很大支持和关怀；王长友同志、王树昌同志、蒲建社同志也付出了辛勤的劳动；世界图书出版公司康宏磊同志给予大力支持和协助，在此一并表示诚挚的谢意！

编　者

二零零零年六月

Contents

Unit One

English as a Computer Language

1 Luke Skywalker's robot friend in ***Star Wars***, C3PO, spoke several languages and served as a diplomatic translator. But today's real-life computers cannot yet understand even the curses that their users hurl at them after all other attempts to communicate have failed. Although researchers have striven for decades to teach machines language, their pupils are still struggling with the rudiments of civilized discourse. The difficulties say as much about the lack of understanding that human beings have of their own language as they do about computers' capabilities, or present lack of them.

2 There are several reasons for teaching computers to speak natural languages, like English. It would make them much easier to command and to use. It would enable them to do new tasks--such as automatically filing documents according to key words contained in them. And a facility with language might help computers learn how to understand the ideas people express with language, and so learn to tackle yet more complex tasks.

3 Sadly, machines still make mistakes with language that would cause a pre-school child to giggle. These failings often tempt frustrated researchers to forget how far computers have progressed. In the past 30 years, computers have become fluent in several artificial languages: BASIC, FORTRAN, PROLOG and others. While these do not exactly trip off the human

tongue, they are far easier to understand than the strings of 0s and 1s which are the native tongue of electronic circuits.

4 Encouragingly, computer scientists are teaching machines to understand some simple English phrases. Both Lotus Development and Symantec now sell software that enables humble micro-computers to answer to commands like "Show me the total sales of each region in the database".

5 So why are machines still so far from speaking real English? Much of the explanation lies in the difference between those languages they can understand and those they cannot.

6 Language has two parts: syntax and semantics. Syntax describes the rules by which words can be combined into "legal" sentences, or grammar. Semantics describes what, if anything, those sentences mean. Most of the research on understanding language, or teaching it to machines, takes syntax as its starting point.

7 Although starting with syntax may at first glance seem a long route to extracting the meaning of sentences, it has much to be recommended. Teaching a machine syntax enables it to distinguish valid sentences from jumbles of words--and so reject out of hand phrases like "went dog big house potato chips".

8 Syntax also gives valuable clues to meaning. Nouns, for example, might describe objects in a database, while verbs and prepositional phrases describe relations between objects. Knowing syntax would prevent the machine from trying to search for a "by" or a "bitten" while trying to answer the reporter's query "show me the dogs bitten by their masters".

9 Perhaps equally important, Dr. Noam Chomsky in the late

1950s gave the study of syntax the sort of logical rigour which is required to make computer programs. The study of the semantics of language, by contrast, still involves many woolly concepts of the sort that poets and Oxford philosophers love to argue about, but which mere computers cannot even begin to grasp.

10 Dr. Chomsky based his work on a broad definition of language. A language, he said, consists of a vocabulary and a grammar. The vocabulary can be any set of symbols. For English, it would be the words in a dictionary. For the "language" of algebraic expressions, it would be the mathematical symbols +, −, variables like x or n, and so on. The grammar, in turn, is the set of rules by which the vocabulary's symbols combine to produce sentences.

11 Dr. Chomsky divided languages into a hierarchy of four classes, according to the complexity of their grammar. Specifically, he sought to devise logical "machines" that could apply all the rules of the grammar to the vocabulary--and so recognise or create all the legal sentences of the language. Each class of his hierarchy requires a different sort of logical machine.

12 This approach yields an immediate pay-off for computer scientists. The logical machines for the two simplest of the Chomsky grammars, at least, are easily constructed in a computer. The simplest of the four classes of languages is defined by a "regular grammar". Its sentences can be recognised by a so-called finite-state machine. Although useful for such lowly tasks as picking words out of the stream of characters which make up a sentence, finite-state machines lack the clout needed to cope even

with most computer languages, let alone English.

13 Working out just how much computers must "know" in order to understand everyday language is one of today's most tricky research topics. One of the most radical approaches involves so-called semantic grammars. The idea here is that the most efficient way to teach a machine to understand language is not to mess about with syntax at all. Instead of devising a grammar of nouns, verbs and other parts of speech, one creates a grammar that reflects the underlying concepts the language expresses.

14 Dr. Roger Schank of Yale University has taken this approach farthest. He has condensed the world to a series of "primitives", and he analyses sentences in terms of these concepts rather than nouns or verbs. When faced with the statement "John hit Mary", for example, his program would know by the word "hit" that the sentence involves a primitive Dr. Schank calls PTRANS. PTRAN is a sort of stereotype for the physical transfer of an object from one place to another. Within the computer, it contains a series of "slots" to contain things like the actor (i.e., John), the acted upon (i.e., Mary) and the object being transferred (i.e., we assume, John's fist). As it fills in the slots, the program "understands" the sentence.

15 Although popular a few years ago, semantic grammars have fallen from fashion. They proved more complicated to write than they seemed at first glance. They are not portable. A grammar that can understand children beating each other up cannot cope with, say, corporate finance; one that could understand today's corporate finance might not understand tomorrow's. And

people are always getting one step ahead of the program.

16 Meanwhile, other researchers are making progress teaching machines to deal nicely with language with only a minimum of semantics. Take, for example, the sentence "I ate the fish with the fork". A computer cannot tell who has the fork, me or the fish, and, so, cannot cope with the sentence. But, instead of programming into the computer knowledge of fishes or eating (as Dr. Schank would do), members of Dr. Heidorn's team at IBM are teaching the computer to resolve the problem by looking the words up in a dictionary.

17 Their program, still in its early days, looks up the words of a confusing sentence in Webster's dictionary. As it analyses each definition, it looks specifically for phrases like "part of" or "used for" to relate the word being defined to others that might be in the sentence. Surprisingly often, such a simple trick can resolve the confusion over things like the fish and the fork. One definition of a fork is "an implement used for eating". From this, the program decides that the phrase "with the fork" modifies ate rather than fish.

18 Despite such progress, some researchers reckon that computers will always be confused by everyday language because it has too much knowledge implicit in it. Only a human, they argue, could really understand the assumptions language makes about the human condition. Among the sceptics is Dr. Terry Winograd of Stanford University, one of the first people to write a program that could answer questions posed in English, although they are only questions about toy blocks. For others, teaching computers about the world is merely the next topic on

the agenda.

Adapted from "English as a Computer Language"
in ***The Economist*** /April 1987

Notes:

1. C3PO: the name of the robot in ***Star Wars***
2. BASIC: Beginner's All-purpose Symbolic Instruction Code, a computer language
3. FORTRAN: Formula Translation, a computer language
4. PROLOG: Programming-in-logic, a computer language
5. Dr. Chomsky: an American linguist, one of the founders of transformational-generative grammar

Exercises

1. **Decide whether each of the following statements is true or false according to the information in the text. Then, in the blanks provided, write T for true statements and F for false ones.**

   ____ 1) Luke Skywalker was a translator that could speak several languages.

   ____ 2) Computers have progressed for only 30 years.

   ____ 3) Computers have become fluent in several natural languages.

   ____ 4) Some micro-computers now are able to answer certain commands given in simple English phrases.

   ____ 5) Computers can grasp the semantics of languages.

   ____ 6) There is no significance in teaching a machine syntax.

____ 7) According to Dr. Chomsky, mathematical symbols +, −, are the only vocabulary of algebra.

____ 8) Dr. Schank divided languages into a hierarchy of four classes according to their grammar.

____ 9) Semantic grammars are no longer in fashion.

____ 10) Dr. Heidorn's team uses the Webster's dictionary in their program.

2. **Choose the best answer according to the information in the text.**

1) This passage mainly talks about

a. why English can be applied as a computer language.

b. Dr. Chomsky's definition of language.

c. difficulties in teaching computers to speak natural languages.

d. syntax and semantics in language.

2) People teach computers to speak natural languages because

a. computers already know how to understand the ideas people express with language.

b. computers are already sophisticated enough for learning natural languages.

c. computers have become fluent in several artificial languages: BASIC, FORTRAN, etc.

d. they want computers to solve more complex problems.

3) Machines cannot speak real English because

a. those languages which machines can understand and those they cannot are different.
b. knowing only syntax and semantics is not enough.
c. there are too many rules in grammar.
d. what computers can now do with languages doesn't rely on logic or syntax.

4) Syntax makes it possible for a machine to
a. search for prepositions like "by".
b. speak natural languages.
c. distinguish a meaningful sentence from a mixture of words.
d. understand commands given in English.

5) Which of the following is not a computer language?
a. PROLOG.
b. BASIC.
c. PTRANS.
d. FORTRAN.

6) Which of the following is true about Dr. Chomsky?
a. He said that a language consists of two parts: syntax and semantics.
b. He divided languages into 4 levels, according to the grammar.
c. He condensed the language world to a series of "primitives".
d. He taught computers how to look up words in a dictionary.

7) The author would most probably agree with which of the

following statements?

a. There is some significance in teaching a machine syntax.

b. Computers will always be confused by everyday languages.

c. Researchers have no achievements in teaching computers natural languages.

d. Semantic grammars should not have fallen from fashion.

8) Which of the following is true about IBM?

a. Dr. Roger Schank of IBM has condensed the world to a series of "primitives".

b. Dr. Heidorn's team is teaching computers to look up words in a dictionary.

c. Webster's dictionary is being recomposed at IBM.

d. Dr. Terry Winograd's program could answer questions posed in English.

9) The passage implies that

a. teaching computers about the language world is difficult to achieve.

b. semantic grammars are by no means new.

c. semantic grammars are very popular nowadays.

d. great progress has been made in making computers speak natural languages.

10) Semantic grammars are out of fashion now because

a. they seem complicated to write at first glance.

b. they are not portable.