

中学英语拾级读物

# GRADED ENGLISH READERS

第七级

## Biographical Sketches of Famous People

### 世界名人小传

第 5 册

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中学英语拾及读物  
第七级 第五册

Graded English Readers  
Stage VII No. 5

# Biographical Sketches of Famous People

## 世界名人小传

叶 林 编注

《中学英语拾级读物》 第七级 第五册  
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## 前 言

受国家教育委员会中学司委托,由上海外国语学院、北京外国语学院、北京师范大学、华东师范大学所属的四家大学出版社联合编辑、出版的《中学英语拾级读物》(简称《拾级读物》或《GE》)与读者见面了。这是我国中学英语教学的一项重要配套工程,旨在促进中学英语教学的改革。

取名《拾级读物》,不仅因为它有十个级别五十本书,而且还寓有“循序渐进,拾级而上”之意。中学生从初二开始阅读,逐级向上攀登,便可达到借助词典读懂浅近原著的水平。

《拾级读物》每册的词汇量、字数及对应年级大致如下:

级别	词汇量	每册大约字数	对应年级
一	500—700	10万	初二
二	600—900	10万	初二、初三
三	800—1200	12万	初三
四	1000—1500	12万	高一
五	1400—1800	12万	高一、高二
六	1700—2000	12万	高二、高三
七	2000—2500	14万	重点中学高三
八	2500—3000	16万	外国语学校高三
九	3000—3500	18万	高材生、中学教师
十	3000—3500	18万	高材生、中学教师

阅读是学好任何一种语言的必由之路,也是获得信息的主要渠道。只做习题,不大量阅读是学不好英语的。近年来不少

学生为了应付考试，花费大量的精力和时间去做各种各样的复习题，模拟试题，但收效甚微，对外语能力的提高并无多大益处，这是外语教学中的一种偏向。《拾级读物》的出版正是为了给中学英语教学提供一套可读性与系统性相结合的课外读物。

《拾级读物》主要供学生自己阅读，但教师可根据学生的实际水平帮助他们选择使用，并进行适当的辅导。特别在阅读方法上教师可作示范性的讲示，引导学生逐步摆脱语法和汉语的束缚。在此过程中，一是抓篇章大意和故事情节；二是注意学过语言现象的再现和在新环境下的发展。对不易理解之处，要启发学生先根据上下文去琢磨，实在影响阅读时再查阅词典。对不影响理解全文的语言难点则要舍得放过。只有这样，才能培养学生良好的阅读习惯，保持他们阅读的兴趣，提高他们阅读的速度。

《拾级读物》的级别是衡量中学生英语阅读水平的客观尺度。为了便于检查，我们还准备编写一套相应的测试材料和教学参考书。

《拾级读物》除供中学生使用外，还可作为中学英语教师培训、进修的教材。

第七级共五册，书目如下：(1)《欧·亨利短篇故事》；(2)《哈代作品选》；(3)《英美短篇小说》；(4)《中国现代故事》；(5)《世界名人小传》。

本册承北京外国语学院夏祖燧教授审阅，谨致谢忱。

鉴于编者水平有限，本读物在选材、注释等各方面肯定有不少缺点，敬请广大师生 各界读者不吝指正，供我们再版时参考。

《中学英语拾级读物》编辑委员会

一九八七年五月

## 中学英语拾级读物 第七级 第五册

### 世界名人小传

本册选收世界著名民族民权运动领袖(甘地、肯雅塔、马丁·路德·金)、医疗护理工作者(施韦策、南丁格尔)、文学艺术家(威尔斯、毕加索、卓别麟)、博物学家(达尔文)、遗传学家(孟德尔)、发明家(斯蒂芬森、莱特兄弟、福特)的小传共 13 篇。内容翔实,事迹感人,文字浅显,注释详明。各篇基本上按由易到难、由浅入深的原则排列,可供高中三年级、大学一年级学生及具有中等英语程度的自学者选读。

中学英语拾级读物是受国家教育委员会中学司委托编辑、出版的。

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1.

## Mahatma Gandhi\*

Leslie W. Leavitt

On the evening of January 30, 1948, a little old man was slowly crossing the courtyard of his home on his way to prayers. Suddenly the sound of four gun-shots was heard, and the man fell to the ground. That night his great friend, Pandit Nehru,<sup>1</sup> speaking on the radio to the people of India, said: "The light has gone out of our lives and everywhere it is dark." The life-story of this little, old and very great man, Mahatma Gandhi,<sup>2</sup> is one which everyone should know.

Mohandas<sup>3</sup> Gandhi was born in a city in the west part of India on October 2, 1869. Mohandas was his first name. The word Mahatma means "Great Soul" and is a title which was given him later. For many years members of the Gandhi family had held important government posts, and for a long time the father of Mohandas was chief officer in one of the states of India. The father was a fine and brave man, and very good at his work.

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\* Selected from *Great Men and Women*, by Leslie W. Leavitt; published by Longman Group Limited, 1979.



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The son loved his father very much, and also his mother. His mother was very serious in her religion and never thought of beginning a meal without prayer.<sup>4</sup> At one time she felt that her religion demanded that she should not eat until she saw the sun. It was then the season of rain, and often the sun was not seen for a long time. Her children were much troubled and spent long hours looking up at the sky to be able to hurry to tell her that the sun was shining and that she could eat.

In his later life Gandhi wrote a book which tells us many things about his early years. In this book he says that it was not easy for him to make friends with other boys in school, and that his only companions were his books and his lessons. He used to run home from school as soon as classes were over for fear that someone would talk to him or make fun of him. As a little boy he was very honest. One day a small event concerned with school games troubled him very much. Because he did not enjoy being with other boys and also because he wanted to help his father after school, he did not like to take part in school games. He thought they were a waste of time.

One day when they had had their classes in the morning only, Mohandas was supposed to return to school at four o'clock for school games. He had no watch and the cloudy weather deceived him. He arrived late; the games were over; the boys had gone home. The next day when he explained to the head of the school why he was late, he was not believed. He was told that he was not telling the truth and that he must be punished. He, Mohandas Gandhi, a liar? No! No! But how could he prove that he was tell-

ing the truth? At this early age he began to understand that a man of truth must also be a careful man. Carelessness<sup>5</sup> often leads others to have wrong ideas about a person.

Later Mohandas changed his mind about the value of games in the playground. Fortunately he had read in books that walking was a valuable exercise, and while still a boy began to take long walks in the open air, a form of exercise which he enjoyed and carried on during all his life.

He also says in his book that his handwriting was very poor, and that he did nothing to improve it because he believed that it was not important. Later, when he was in South Africa,<sup>6</sup> he saw the excellent handwriting of lawyers and young men of that country and became ashamed of his own. He saw that bad handwriting should be considered a weakness in a person. When he then tried to improve his own handwriting, he found it was too late.

Mohandas was married at the early age of thirteen, which in India at that time was not thought to be too young. The oldest son of the family was already married, and the father and mother decided that the second son and the third son, Mohandas, together with an uncle's son, should all be married at the same time. Marriages, with their presents, dinners, fine clothes and all the rest, cost the families a lot of money, and a marriage of all three together would save much. The young wife of Mohandas had never been to school. This early marriage did not help his lessons, and he lost a year in high school. Fortunately, by hard work he was later able to finish two classes in one year.

Among his few friends at school was a young man whose cha-

racter was not very good. Mohandas knew this, but refused to accept the advice of others and felt that he would be able to change the character of his friend. The family of Gandhi belonged to a religious group which did not believe in taking the life of any creature,<sup>7</sup> and so the eating of meat was forbidden them.<sup>8</sup> But Mohandas's friend set out to make him believe that the eating of meat was good for him. He explained it in this way: "We are a weak people. The English are able to rule over us because they eat meat. I myself am strong and a fine runner. It is because I am a meat-eater. You should eat meat, too. Eat some and see what strength it gives you." After a time the young Mohandas partly believed his companion. He himself was certainly not strong and could hardly jump or run. He was afraid of the dark, too, and always had a light burning in his bedroom at night. The desire to eat meat was great, even though he hated to deceive his father and mother. One day the two boys went off to a quiet place by the river alone, and there Mohandas tasted meat, goat meat, for the first time. It made him sick. For about a year after that, from time to time his friend arranged for him to eat meat. At last Mohandas stopped completely, believing that nothing was worse than deceiving his father and mother in this way. They never learned of what he had done, but from that time on through his whole life he never tasted meat again.

At about this time he and another young man began to smoke, not because they really liked it but because they thought that they got pleasure in blowing smoke from their mouths like grown-up men. They had little money to buy cigarettes, and the unsmoked ends

of their uncle's cigarettes were not enough. So occasionally they stole a little money from the servants in the house. Mohandas soon gave up smoking, and came to feel that it was dirty and harmful.

These actions of his troubled the young man Mohandas because he had determined to build his life on truth, and he knew that in deceiving his father and mother and breaking the rules laid down by his religion<sup>9</sup> he was not honest. There was one more event of the same kind. Once when fifteen years of age he stole a small piece of gold from his older brother, and the deed lay heavy on his mind. Finally he wrote ~~at~~ <sup>in</sup> the story of what he had done, asking that he be punished ~~and promising~~ <sup>and promising</sup> that he never again would steal. Feeling very much ashamed, he gave this letter to his good father, then a sick man. The father read it carefully, closed his eyes in thought, and the tears came. He slowly tore up the letter. The boy had expected angry words, and the sorrowful but loving feelings of the father were never to be forgotten by the son.

At the age of eighteen Gandhi went to a college, but remained for only part of the year. The lessons did not interest him and he ~~did not do well~~. Soon after this he was advised to go to England to study to be a lawyer. This would not be easy. It was difficult for him to leave India and to go to a foreign land where he would have to eat and drink with foreigners. This was against his religion, and most leaders of his group were against his going. Yet, in spite of all difficulties, the young Mohandas, at the age of eighteen, sailed for England, leaving a wife and child behind.

On board ship he wore, for the first time, the new foreign clo-

thes provided by his friends. He wore his black suit, carefully keeping his new white clothes until he reached England. This was at the end of autumn, and on landing he was<sup>n</sup> much troubled to find he was the only person so dressed. To make matters worse, he could not get at his baggage to change his clothes. In his own account of his early days in London, we find two interesting events.

One of these was his difficulty in finding suitable food. Unlike most of the Indians in England, he followed the rule of his religion and would not eat meat. This was not easy; and he was often hungry at the end of a meal. What was his joy when he discovered a dining-place where no meat of any sort was served. He learned for the first time that there were many people in England who for health reasons ate no meat. It pleased him to find science giving support to his religious beliefs. Later he found it easier to prepare breakfasts and suppers in his own room, and to buy his meals in the middle of the day.

The other event is one which later gave him and his friends much amusement. The young Indian tried to "play the English gentleman". He decided that if he could not eat like an Englishman, he would dress like one and act like one in other ways. He bought new clothes and a tall silk hat, and asked his brother to send him a gold watch chain. Then he spent some time each morning dressing with care and brushing his thick hair. Following the advice of friends, he took lessons in dancing, French, playing a musical instrument and speaking in public. But in these arts he did not do very well, and his money was rapidly disappearing. At the end of three months he saw that he was not making the best use

of his time, and gave up all this. He began to study law.

At this time also he became more interested in religions. When friends asked him to help them in their understanding of the Gita,<sup>10</sup> the holy book of his own Hindu<sup>11</sup> religion, he began to see how beautiful it was. Before long it became for him the one book for the best knowledge of Truth. Someone gave him a Bible, and in it he found some teachings of Jesus<sup>12</sup> which he liked very much because they were so like certain ideas in the Gita. Then from a reading of a book by the English writer Carlyle,<sup>13</sup> he learned about the Prophet Muhammad<sup>14</sup> and about his greatness and bravery and simple living. At this time he was beginning to learn that the truth he loved was not to be found in any one religion only.

After four years of study, young Gandhi passed his law examinations and in 1891 returned to India. When he landed he was met by friends who told him of his mother's death. This was an even greater shock to him than the death of his father before he went to England. The next few years were not happy ones. He found his work as a lawyer not at all interesting, and came to feel that he was not fitted for this kind of occupation. He had trouble on the one occasion when he was in court. He almost fainted, and when his turn came to speak he could not say a word. He would welcome a change. This came when he was invited to go to South Africa to advise a rich Indian merchant who was trying to collect a large amount of money from a member of his family. We find him at the age of twenty-four in Durban,<sup>15</sup> South Africa.

Gandhi soon found that conditions among the many Indians

in South Africa were not at all right. He learned this first when he went to court wearing foreign clothes and a turban.<sup>16</sup> The judge of the court ordered him to take off his turban. He refused and left the court. This turban was soon to become famous all over South Africa. Most of the Indians who had left their own land to look for work in Africa were considered of a low rank and were known as "coolies".<sup>17</sup> Gandhi was thus a "coolie" lawyer.

A few days after he arrived, Gandhi was sent off to another city on business for his employer, Abdullah Sheth.<sup>18</sup> When a white *Coolie* man travelling in the same train discovered him in a first-class seat he called a railway guard who ordered him to leave the first-class carriage. Gandhi replied that he had bought a first-class ticket and intended to use it. A policeman came and forced him to leave the train. The next day something even worse happened. While making a journey in a large public carriage, he was given a seat outside with the driver. During the journey the white man in charge wanted his seat. When Gandhi refused to move, the man struck him, but the other white people in the carriage made the man stop. When he reached the city he drove to the main hotel, and there received another shock. The hotel would not take him in. It was events like these which made Gandhi feel that someone was needed to help the Indians in Africa. He himself was not proud, and he was not dependent upon a comfortable way of living. Later he accepted for himself the simple living of the poorest Indians, and travelled third-class in trains at all times. But it hurt him to see the people of his country treated badly, and so he continued to work, against all attempts to treat him and others in a way that was not

fair and just.

After a time he came to feel that it would be unwise for the merchant who employed him to go to the courts to get back the money that was owed him. As a result of very hard work lasting months, he was able to get the two merchants to agree outside of court upon the amount of money to be paid and how it was to be paid.<sup>19</sup> This success led him to believe that most quarrels between people could be, and should be, settled in a peaceful manner with the aid of friends.

During this year he met a number of Christians<sup>20</sup> who were eager that he should become a Christian and Moslems<sup>21</sup> who hoped that he would become a Moslem. He read from the Bible<sup>22</sup> and Koran<sup>23</sup> and from books about both religions. But at the same time he was coming to enjoy and depend more and more upon the holy books of Hinduism,<sup>24</sup> and was coming to find for himself deep happiness and peace in them.

At the end of a year his work with Abdullah Sheth was finished and he planned to return to India. But at a good-bye dinner<sup>25</sup> given him in Durban he learned that a law was being planned to take away from all Indians still more of their rights. During the talk at the dinner it was decided that Gandhi must remain in South Africa and work for the rights of the Indians. Thus began twenty years of hard work for the Indians of South Africa.

At the end of three years he returned to India for several months, and then came back by ship with his wife and two children. While in India he had tried to tell the people there how Indians were treated in South Africa, and news of what he had spoken and writ-



ten had reached the white people living in Natal<sup>26</sup> before he arrived. When he attempted to land he was recognized, and cries of "Gandhi, Gandhi!" quickly brought a crowd together. The crowd gathered around him, threw stones and eggs at him and struck him. He was saved by the courage of the wife of the English Chief of Police, who walked along with him until policemen came to his help. He was then able to escape from the angry crowd by dressing himself as an Indian policeman and slipping out of the back door while the Police Chief held the crowd's attention in front.

It is not possible to describe all the events of the years that Gandhi spent in South Africa serving his fellow Indians, and working to improve their conditions and to make the government treat them more justly. He gave up a position in which he was earning a lot of money in order to join with the poor people for whom he was working. In all his work his wife helped him, and believed in him and gave him courage to go on. From the struggle in South Africa he gained a strong belief in certain ways of action which were to be so important later in his own country. More and more he came to believe in a "soul force". This was a struggle against evil and force, not by using hatred and force, but by love and by quietly refusing to obey unjust laws.<sup>27</sup> Those who believed as he did and followed him would not work with the government or obey an unjust law. In the end there was little that the government could do about it. Gandhi was often put in prison, but his followers continued to carry on the work. When Gandhi left South Africa in 1914 very great improvements in the conditions of the Indians there had taken place.