

英语阅读技巧教程

A COURSEBOOK FOR ENGLISH READING SKILLS

主编 张艳玲 高新华

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前 言

本教程为英语专业各阶段的阅读技巧课、阅读课、文学类课程提供实用、全面的阅读技巧训练。本书同样适用于有意提高自身英语阅读水平、英语文学作品赏析能力及批判性思维能力的非英语专业学生、高中以上水平的英语爱好者。

与国内同类教材相比，本书具有以下特点。

1. 实用性、操作性强，突出英语阅读技巧的实战强化演练。
2. 英语阅读技巧训练涵盖全面。除基本阅读技巧训练模块外，还增加了文学作品（小说、诗歌、戏剧）批判性阅读策略、批判性思维技巧训练模块。
3. 选取的训练材料针对性、实效性、趣味性强，且体裁、题材丰富，原汁原味，文化气息浓厚，广泛覆盖英美社会生活。
4. 紧紧围绕课堂教学实际应用编排内容，便于教师教学、学习者自学。

本书分为三大部分，即英语阅读技巧训练、文学作品批判性阅读技巧训练和批判性思维技巧训练。第一部分英语阅读技巧训练分为三章，分别为理解主旨，段落和篇章思想内容组织模式，理解词义；第二部分文学作品批判性阅读技巧训练也分为三章，分别为读

懂小说，读懂诗歌及读懂戏剧；第三部分批判性思维技巧训练包括篇章逻辑和逻辑错误，篇章价值观判断两章。每章首先精要介绍、示范单项目标训练技巧，随后辅以充分的练习。每一章节结束都有综合技能训练，确保学生一练即会，循序渐进，直至全面掌握阅读策略，以应对学习、工作。

本教程是高校英语教师队伍长期教学经验积累及智慧的结晶。在编写过程中，参考了大量国内外书籍、杂志、互联网等相关资料，在此向原作者表示衷心感谢。

当然，由于种种客观因素限制以及编者水平有限，全体编者诚恳希望同行及学生多提宝贵意见，以便我们对本书进一步修正、完善。

编者

2013年3月

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Part One

Critical Reading
Skills

The ability to read critically is believed crucial for successful learning and study, especially in academic field. Critical reading involves three levels: “reading on the lines”, “reading between the lines” and “reading beyond the lines”. In “reading on the lines”, a critical reader makes efforts to understand the words, sentences, and the text compositions, rhetorics and genres to get the superficial information; In “reading between the lines” and “reading beyond the lines”, the critical reader tries to get at the “deep structure” of the text, that is, to examine the logical consistency, tone, organization, to evaluate the author’s values and beliefs, to weigh the soundness of the arguments, and to identify implicit messages and bias, etc.

To read critically, a reader needs to apply necessary skills to serve the purpose. In this part, you will practice such critical reading skills as identifying the main idea, either clearly stated or hidden, drawing conclusions, predicting outcomes, identifying organizing patterns of ideas, and decoding the meaning of words the author used.



Chapter 1 Getting the Message

When you read critically, the number one task is to get the writer's message — the main idea of the passage. To find the main idea of a passage that we read is the most essential part in reading comprehension.

The main idea of a passage is the key point or central message that is supported by many details.

Writers have different ways to make readers understand their messages. Sometimes they state the message clearly. They tell the reader at the beginning what he or she will read about. At other times, however, the message may be understated or unstated at all, which is especially true for stories and poems.

It is comparatively easier for a critical reader to identify a stated main idea than an understated or unstated one.

The stated main idea is usually expressed clearly in a complete sentence — the topic sentence. And it can be found somewhere in the passage.

Well, there are paragraphs in which all the information is equally important, and there is no trace of a topic sentence. Then you must summarize, infer, conclude or predict to get the main idea based on the information given. Therefore, you get the implied main idea by “reading between the lines”.

In this chapter, you will practice the following skills to interpret the writer’s message:

- (1) finding the stated main idea;
- (2) summarizing the main idea;
- (3) inferring the main idea;
- (4) concluding the main idea;
- (5) predicting the main idea.

1. Finding the Stated Main Idea

The stated main idea is the message the writer directly writes in one sentence in the text. This sentence is the topic sentence. Then to find the stated main idea means to find the topic sentence.

The topic sentence is often found in the first sentence in a paragraph followed by supporting details. But sometimes the topic sentence is put at the end of a paragraph, that is, the author gives the supporting details first and ends with the main idea. The topic sentence may also be put in the middle of a paragraph, that is, the author gives some details, the main

idea, and then more details.

Now read the following passage and try to find the topic sentence.

Although many people hate cockroaches, cockroaches do help humans in some ways. For example, they are perfect experimental animals and are used for scientific research by scientists. Breeding them is easy, for they thrive under almost any condition. In studies on nutrition and food, cockroaches are good subjects because they will eat any kind of food. They can be used to study heart disease, and cancer researchers work with cockroaches because they grow cancerous tumors like those that are found in humans.

Answer:

The main idea of this paragraph is expressed in the first sentence. So you should have underlined the first sentence as the topic sentence.

Read another passage below, and see if you can find the topic sentence.

Making a study schedule is the first important step for a student to be successful in college. Students should schedule one hour of study time for every one hour of class time. At exam time, more study time may be necessary. The second step is to study in an appropriate place. It is important to study in a quiet place away from the distraction of other people and such things as the television and the

radio. Students should find a comfortable place with plenty of space for all the necessary study supplies. Then, students should study in small amount. It is a good idea to learn the required concepts slowly and thoroughly instead of trying to learn everything on the evening before the exam. Students who want to be successful in college should remember these three helpful study strategies.

Answer:

The last sentence is the topic sentence.

2. Summarizing the Main Idea

When the author does not directly write the main idea in passages, you have to summarize the main idea. But how? Asking the following five questions may be a strategy of great help:

- Who does the event involve?
- What event took place?
- Where did it take place?
- When did it take place?
- How did it happen?

Let's see how this method can be applied to reading a passage.

Read the passage below. As you read, ask yourself the five questions. Then summarize the main idea in one sentence.

The Disappearing Checks

In the late 1980s, banking fraud reached new heights. The practice of check-kiting — writing bad checks — was outdone by the passing of disappearing checks.

The scam involved cheating banks in the Midwest, South and West out of thousands of dollars. First, the crooks opened phony accounts. Then they cashed chemically treated checks against the accounts. Only hours after being presented to tellers for cash, the checks turned to confetti! Checks totaling \$50,000 were cashed in Chicago. According to the FBI, the crooks closed the accounts once the checks had been cashed.

Bank tellers were advised several measures to prevent being cheated. One step was to photocopy any check that had an oily surface. The FBI hoped to catch the culprits and solve the case of the disappearing checks by taking such an action.

Answer:

You should have identified the main idea in the following way:

Answers to the five questions.

Who: crooks.

What: cheated banks out of thousands of dollars.

Where: in the Midwest, South and West.

When: in late 1980s.

How: by cashing chemically treated checks that turned into confetti hours after they were cashed.

Main idea sentence: In the late 1980s, crooks cheated banks in the Midwest, South and West out of thousands of dollars by cashing chemically treated checks that turned into confetti hours after they were cashed.

Exercise: Writing the main idea sentence.

Directions: Read the following passage. Then answer the five questions. Write a main idea sentence based on the answers to the questions.

Rosa Parks Sparks Boycott

On December 1, 1955, in Montgomery, Alabama, a petite black woman was on her way home from work. She got on a bus and sat in the "colored section". As more and more people boarded the bus, a white man was left standing. The driver asked three black passengers to stand so that the white man could sit down, they did. But when the driver asked Rosa Parks to give up her seat, she refused. She told him that she would not give up her seat because she was tired and had paid her fare like everybody else. The driver threatened to have her arrested. When she still refused to stand, he