

大学英语 COLLEGE ENGLISH
阅读技巧训练
READING SKILL PRACTICE

● 王仁才 吴扬才 / 主编



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大学英语阅读技巧训练

College English Reading Skill Practice

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内容提要

本书共分“单项技巧训练”和“综合技巧训练”两大部分。“单项技巧训练”部分按照《大学英语教学大纲》(修订本,1999.9)规定的10大项阅读技巧,用英文分单项讲解。每项技巧设有5篇短文,围绕所谈技巧各设1道单选题,供同学们即学即练、学以致用,掌握该技巧。“综合技巧训练”部分共分4级,每级由10个单元组成,每个单元有4篇短文和20道习题。全书所选题材广泛,内容丰富;习题对大学英语教学大纲所要求的阅读技能作了全面和精细的安排。尤其第一部分——“单项技巧训练”对广大英语学习者掌握阅读方法,增强阅读理解能力,提高阅读速度具有指导作用。本书由易到难、由浅入深、循序渐进,是大学英语阅读技巧训练的理想读本,也可作为同等水平的英语爱好者学会阅读、提高技能的最佳教材和自我检测的标尺。

前 言

现行《大学英语教学大纲》(以下简称大纲)将原来的外语教学目标听、说、读、写、译等各项技能重新作了编排,将“读”提到了首位,明确规定:培养学生具有较强的阅读能力,一定的听、说、写、译能力,使他们能以英语为工具交流信息。有些语言学家甚至指出,这是继视听法、情景法、功能法教学之后的又一种新的教学手段。阅读是掌握语言知识、获取信息、提高语言应用能力的基础。因此,在大学英语教学中始终都应注重阅读能力的培养。《大纲》对阅读能力的要求是,能顺利阅读并正确理解语言难度中等的一般性题材的文章,掌握中心大意,了解说明中心大意的事实和细节,能根据听读材料进行判断,了解作者的观点和态度。

由此可见,阅读理解在英语学习中占有极其重要的位置,它是衡量人们掌握英语词汇,了解西方文化以及各方面专业知识的一个标准。然而,阅读是一个复杂的认知过程,它的复杂不仅在于涉及一系列对字母的认知、词的知觉与判断、句法分析、语义分析等语言加工与信息处理过程,还在于它涉及诸多其它因素,如语言因素和超语言因素。语言因素包括读者对单词、习惯表达法、句子长度、语法规则与知识的识别与表征;阅读材料中生词的比例等。超语言因素包括阅读习惯与阅读心理、背景知识与语篇知识、阅读技能与阅读策略等。外语阅读效率,即理解准确率与阅读速度之和,可以说,是语言因素与超语言因素综合制约的结果。要提高阅读效率,除了需要大量背诵单词,了解西方的风俗、文化、历史、地理等以及有关方面的专业知识外,还要掌握一定的阅读技巧,才能提高阅读速度、加快理解。

本书由“单项技巧训练”和“综合技巧训练”两大部分组成。“单项技巧训练”按照《大学英语教学大纲》(修订本,1999.9)规定的10大项阅读技巧,用英文分单项讲解,每项技巧给出例证分析,并围绕所讲技巧各选配了5篇短文,各设1道习题。“综合技巧训练”分为4级(Band 1~4),由易到难,由浅入深,重点放在提高阅读速度上,同时兼顾扩大词汇量。本书的阅读材料是按大学生的需求来选取的。

为适应快速阅读训练,我们对这些材料进行了少许的精简。各级分为10个单元,每个单元选4篇短文。每级习题都涉及到了10大技巧,循环重现。通过大量实践掌握阅读技巧,这正是我们编写此书的目的。本书的绝大部分练习曾在编者所在的几所大学试用过,效果很好。

全书承蒙美籍专家 Dr. Milo Hadwin 和 Karen Hadwin 女士审定。特此致谢。

编 者

2001年5月

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Part One

1. Understanding the Topic and Main Idea

What is the most important element in any paragraph or passage? Without a doubt, it is the main idea or the central idea, which gives the paragraph or passage a purpose and direction.

When reading paragraphs for the main idea, try to read a bit faster than usual. By doing so, it will be easier to concentrate on ideas and the relationships between ideas. The slow reader usually cares too much about individual words and thus may actually comprehend less than the quick reader.

The topic sentence usually states the main idea of the paragraph. The topic sentence generally (not always) is placed at the beginning of the paragraph and the other sentences in the same paragraph develop around it.

1. Normally when we read, we are concerned with comprehending both the central idea and the supporting detail. This time, however, your purpose is solely to find the writer's main thought. Therefore you should be able to read somewhat faster. On the other hand, do not attempt to skim so rapidly that you risk losing altogether the sense of what you are reading. Try for a reading speed that is only a little faster than usual.

2. Concentrate on finding, and following, the writer's central idea. Do not attempt to remember details such as exact dates, lists of names, large numbers, and the like.

3. If you find an occasional word, which you do not understand, or lose the sense of a word or phrase here and there, do not stop to reread the material. Continue reading at the slightly faster than normal speed that you have established.

Example

Surviving in the jungle is a science. The jungle people have become perfect in this science, and you can too. Learn as much as you can about what to expect in the jungle. Make sure you have the right equipment. Then no part of the jungle will seem completely unfriendly or frightening. In fact, you will be able to "live off" it for a long time.

The underlined part is the topic sentence, which happens to be the first sentence of the paragraph. If you do not have time to read the whole paragraph, you may just read this topic sentence and know at least that living in a jungle requires knowledge and skills.

Exercises

1. Not like his pictures, he was bald with an ugly mustache. Of course, I did my best to please him. I told him we thought highly of his plays and still performed them on stage. In fact, I

said we thought they were the greatest examples of literature in the English language, maybe in any language.

What is the main idea of this paragraph?

- A. I did not like his pictures.
- B. I did my best to please him.
- C. His plays were the greatest examples of English literature.
- D. English may be better than any other language.

2. At the age of 51, Dr Coleman was determined to escape from university life for a few months and to get a variety of experiences in the world of work. He especially wanted to learn about people. People who do hard physical labor were particularly interesting to him.

Which statement best expresses the main idea?

- A. Dr Coleman was an elderly man.
- B. Dr Coleman was determined to leave his university.
- C. Dr Coleman wanted to learn about famous people.
- D. Dr Coleman wanted to learn about hard physical laborers.

3. Yet the animals were the real pioneers. Without them, and the information they gave, it would have taken men much longer to go into space. Ham and other animal pioneers, including the sixty-six mice, showed today's spacemen the way.

Which statement indicates the main idea of this paragraph?

- A. The animals once went into space.
- B. The animals found the way into space.
- C. The sixty-six mice were real pioneers.
- D. Without the animals, men could not have gone into space so early.

4. In 2050 you will sleep later because your job will start later in the morning. This is just one of the many things that will make life at the middle of the 21st century different from what it is today. Too, machines will do most of your work for you. Also, you will travel to work on a moving sidewalk. Furthermore, you will talk to friends on a picture telephone. Finally, you will take longer vacations in more distant places since transportation will be so much faster and cheaper.

The central idea of this passage is that

- A. life at the middle of the 21st century will be different from what it is today
- B. people will sleep later in the future
- C. people will not work as long as now in the future
- D. a picture telephone will be used in the future

5. ① The leaders of ancient Egypt and Ethiopia made many important contributions to good

government. ②Negroes in Africa were among the earliest to perfect the art of making iron. ③In West Africa, Tenkemenin, Gonga Mussa, and Sonni Ali made many important advances in the area of defensive and offensive warfare. ④Certainly Africans have earned their place in history.

What is the topic sentence of this paragraph?

- A. ① B. ② C. ③ D. ④

2. Recognizing Primary Supporting Details

To understand the main idea thoroughly, however, we must recognize the important facts or details, which help develop or support it. These facts and details give us a deeper understanding of the main idea. They may prove a point, show a relationship between ideas, or serve as examples to help us understand the main idea more fully.

Here are some ways to help us recognize important facts or details:

1. Read for the main idea. If you have identified the main idea, you can more easily recognize the important facts that support it.
2. Keep in mind that not all facts or details are equally important. Look only for the facts related to the main idea.
3. To check on your understanding of the material you have read, review the facts or details that you have decided are the most important. Then consider if they support what you have identified as the main idea.

Example

①There are several reasons why Toby likes his new job. ②To begin with, he now has more free time. ③He goes to work later in the morning and gets home earlier in the evening. ④Furthermore, he now makes more money. ⑤His weekly pay check has increased from \$ 75 to \$ 130. ⑥Above all, he now has a better chance for advancement. ⑦The skills he is learning will help him to qualify for a much higher paying position. In this paragraph, the first sentence happens to be the main idea; the other sentences are the supporting details.

Exercises

1. ① How can you protect yourself from the danger of lightning? ②For one thing, when you are at home, keep away from the stove, fireplace, and windows. ③For another, don't take a bath or a shower during a storm, as water carries electricity easily. ④Third, if you are outdoors, get into a building or car, if possible. ⑤Fourth, stay off hilltops and away from any tree or tower that stands by itself. ⑥Fifth, if you can't get away quickly from a beach, a field, or other open place, lie down until the storm moves away.

③ What are the supporting details of the paragraph?

A. ①②③④⑤ B. ②③④⑤⑥ C. ③④⑤⑥① D. ④⑤⑥①②

2. ① Spanish-speaking Americans fall into four large groups. ② One group, the largest, is the Mexican-Americans. ③ This group came across the Rio Grande and settled in the Southwest. ④ Puerto Ricans, the second group, settled mainly in New York City. ⑤ The Voting Rights Act of 1965 gave them, along with other foreign language speaking citizens, the right to vote without having to read and write English. ⑥ Cubans, the third group, arrived in the early 1960s. ⑦ They were fleeing from Cuba. ⑧ Filipinos, the fourth group, settled mainly on the West Coast. ⑨ These four groups of Spanish-speaking Americans make up one of the largest minority groups in the nation.

What are the supporting details of the paragraph?

A. ①②③④⑤⑥⑦ B. ③④⑤⑥⑦⑧⑨
C. ②③④⑤⑥⑦⑧ D. ①③④⑤⑥⑦⑧

3. ① There are certain basic demands that some black students have made of the university in general. ② One of their demands is that larger numbers of black students be accepted, with the necessary scholarship funds provided. ③ Another is for black studies departments with more black control. ④ Still another is for separate eating and living facilities and for the establishment of cultural centers for black students. ⑤ There is also the demand that the courses of study be changed to make a university education more meaningful to black students.

What are the supporting details of the paragraph?

A. ②③④⑤ B. ①②③④ C. ①③④⑤ D. ①②④⑤

4. ① How can fire or hot things be a danger in the house? ② Matches, of course, are always dangerous in the hands of young children. ③ A little fire on waste land can easily get out of control. ④ A wind comes, sparks are blown onto the roof of a house, and the whole building may be burnt to the ground before you can even call the Fire Brigade. ⑤ Kerosene lamps, too, can be very dangerous. ⑥ Quite recently there was a bad accident in a village house. ⑦ The mosquito-net over a baby's bed was blown against a lamp and caught fire. ⑧ The bedclothes and even the clothes of the baby were burnt before the fire was discovered.

What are the supporting details of the paragraph?

A. ①②③④⑤⑥⑦ B. ②③④⑤⑥⑦⑧
C. ①③④⑤⑥⑦⑧ D. ①②④⑤⑥⑦⑧

5. ① Different uses for kites were also developed. ② The kite became a tool for scientists in their experiments. ③ Benjamin Franklin used a kite to prove that lightning is electricity. ④ Other men, such as Alexander Graham Bell and the Wright brothers, used kites in their study of plane design. ⑤ The first photograph taken in the air was from a kite. ⑥ And in World War II, "birds"

were part of rescue means. ⑦ Each lifeboat had a kite with a radio antenna that could carry messages from a small sender.

In this paragraph, they are all the sentences of supporting details except

A. ⑦ B. ⑤ C. ③ D. ①

Which sentence expresses the writer's opinion?

3. Distinguishing Between Facts and Opinions

Writers often write stories, essays, and articles to express opinions about people, places, events, or ideas. By understanding who the narrator is and what the stated facts are, we can sense stated or implied opinions developed by the writer.

Understanding the writer's point of view depends on our ability to tell the difference between fact and opinion. Statements that can be proved or disproved with evidence are facts. Opinions cannot be proved or disproved. A writer can, however, persuade the reader to accept an opinion by giving supporting facts.

Example

The automobile has solved some problems. It gives people freedom. With a car a person can go where he pleases and when he pleases. But the automobile has also helped create some big problems. One obvious problem is traffic jams. In New York City a horse and carriage once could travel about ten miles an hour. Now in the central part of the city, cars often creep along at eight miles an hour. Another is the high rate of automobile accidents. More than a thousand Americans die in them every month.

Here the author shows what he likes and what he does not by describing both the bright side and the dark side of using cars. His viewpoints are clearly shown in "The automobile has solved some problems" (bright side) and in "But the automobile has also helped create some big problems" (dark side). Besides these commenting sentences, he also shows his dislike by using the verb "creep" to describe the slow movement of cars in a crowded city. You should pay attention to the commenting sentences and the particular language the author uses to describe a fact while reading.

Exercises

1. ① I believe that most Americans would not want my job. ② I work from nine to five, six days a week. ③ The room I work in is 14 by 20 feet. ④ Ten people work in that space. ⑤ There are no windows. ⑥ We're given twenty minutes for lunch. ⑦ There is no overtime pay.

Which sentence expresses the writer's opinion?

A. ①

B. ③

C. ⑤

D. ⑦

2. ①There are many kinds of ants in the world. ②All kinds of them live in companies. ③They are the most industrious insects. ④Most of them make their nests underground. ⑤The nurse-ants look after the young; the soldier-ants protect their ant-town, and fight against the other kinds of ants. ⑥Other ants work hard collecting food, repairing nests and milking the young ants. ⑦They are always doing something.

Which sentence expresses the writer's opinion?

A. ①

B. ③

C. ⑤

D. ⑦

3. ①Technology has produced changes in nature. ②Men can build huge dams and create a lake where only a river was before. ③They can grow crops more rapidly and control insects and plant diseases. ④But at the same time we have reduced the fish population, and polluted rivers, lakes, and the air we breathe.

Which sentence expresses the writer's unhappy feeling about the dark side of technology?

A. ①

B. ②

C. ③

D. ④

4. The cold and dry winter has gone. All the trees, flowers and other kinds of plants begin to grow again. Small green leaves appear on the branches of the trees and the little flowers appear out of the ground. Birds sing happily on the trees and fly high in the sky. Nature has given us a beautiful picture of the spring.

Which statement gives us the facts that show us a beautiful picture of the spring?

A. All the trees, flowers and other kinds of plants begin to grow again.

B. Small green leaves appear on the branches of the trees and the little flowers appear out of the ground.

C. Birds sing happily on the trees and fly high in the sky.

D. All of the above.

5. Over the years my wife and I have seen our neighborhood change completely. Twenty years ago I knew everyone on the block. We belonged to the same clubs, shared the same ride to the office, and enjoyed each other's company at social activities. Then some of my friends moved away because of job relocations, and more and more newcomers moved in. Now, as I look around, I realize that I have nothing in common with these newcomers. I stay to myself and look toward the day when I can get out of this neighborhood.

All of the following statements tell us the neighborhood changed except: that .

A. Some of the writer's friends moved away.

B. More and more newcomers moved in.

C. The writer wants to stay where he lives.

D. The writer wants to move away someday.

4. Making Inferences

In reading, we must make an inference so that we can reach a decision based on evidence we think to be true because writers sometimes do not have their ideas clearly stated. They expect the readers to draw inferences in order to get a clearer understanding of the ideas implied. Suggested meaning sometimes is part of the total meaning of a passage. If we miss the suggested meaning, we may miss the main point of what the writer is saying.

We might get an inference through conversation — how someone said something or maybe what was left unsaid. Inference may be drawn by analyzing characters and their actions, and by determining the mood of the speaker. They may be based on facts and must be assembled by the reader. A fact can usually be found in the passage, but an inference is more of a feeling drawn from reasoning.

Example

A: Is your baggage only these two bags?

B: That's right.

A: Have you anything to declare?

B: I don't think so. They are all my personal effects.

What do you think "A" is?

A. Policeman.

B. Customs officer.

C. Hotel clerk.

D. Porter.

The inference can be drawn by the sentence "Have you anything to declare?" The verb "declare" means to make a full statement of (property for which money may be owed to the government). So the answer must be "B".

Exercises

1. A: I want to go to River Street.

B: Yes, ma'am.

A: The traffic seems awfully heavy. It's unusual.

B: No, ma'am. It's about the same this time every day.

Who is "A" speaking with?

A. Her husband.

B. Her friend.

C. A taxi driver.

D. A fellow passenger.

2. A: I have a person-to-person call from Los Angeles for Mr. Robert Taylor. Can he speak now?

B: Yes, I believe so. Hold the line please. Robert! Quick! Someone is calling you from Los Angeles.

What kind of phone call is it?

A. Emergency.

B. Important.

C. Secret.

D. Long distance

3. Weather routing is, simply, a method of planning a course of travel around and through bad weather. It is the shortest course, generally, in terms of both time and risk. It is an instrument of control and efficiency in navigation, a means to greater safety and speed.

It can be inferred from the paragraph that travel becomes safer as _____.

A. people learn not to fear storms

B. the science of weather forecasting progresses

C. people learn how to control their environment

D. means of transportation become safer

4. Newspapers do not always report the facts fairly. For example, a newspaper in a Southern state may devote very little space to an item on racial injustice. On the other hand, a newspaper from the Northeast might give wide coverage to race problems in other parts of the nation and fail to report on local racial troubles. In this way readers can be misled. They may be fooled into believing that prejudice is a regional problem and fail to realize that racism knows no boundaries.

The careful newspaper reader should be aware that _____.

A. most news stories cannot be believed

B. some newspapers present only one side of the story

C. all newspapers present only one side of the story

D. government control of the news industry is needed

5. They are among the 250 000 people under the age of 25 who are out of work in the Netherlands, a group that accounts for 40 percent of the nation's unemployed. A storm of anger boils up at the government-sponsored youth centre, even among those who are continuing their studies.

Unemployment in the Netherlands has affected _____.

A. one million people

B. roughly 0.6 million people

C. 250 000 people

D. less than half of the population

5. Drawing a Conclusion

Drawing a conclusion means arriving at the only decision from the stated evidence. A reader can draw an accurate conclusion from a statement, a paragraph or a longer piece of writing only when he understands what the writer intends to say. So learning to draw an accurate conclusion from the stated facts can help the reader to sum up logically the ideas expressed in the writing. As you read, try to get a sense of the writer's organization. Look for the central ideas, but do not neglect the supporting detail, which the writer uses to reach his conclusions or support his argument.

Example

Whenever it rains, the ground gets wet. Since the ground is wet, I can conclude that

- A. it rained. B. it is raining
C. it may have rained D. it must have rained

The conclusion "it may have rained" is right, because, after thinking about the stated facts, you can conclude that the ground could be wet for other reasons.

Exercises

1. Peanut shells take on the color of the soil in which the nut is growing. Since most people prefer not to buy dark-shelled peanuts, the farmer receives very little profit from growing them. He tries to plant his peanuts in _____.

- A. light-colored soil B. fertile marshland
C. long straight rows D. the early spring

2. It usually costs one-twentieth to one-tenth of a cent per mile to ship goods by water, whereas it costs one-fourth to one-half of a cent to ship them by railroad. In comparison with transportation by land, transportation by water is much _____.

- A. more convenient B. more common
C. less time-consuming D. less expensive

3. The suit of a deep-sea diver is made so that he will be surrounded by a thin layer of air. It is important that the air in his suit and in his body always press outward at least as hard as the water around him presses inward, otherwise he will be flattened like a pancake. The diver is safe only so long as _____.

- A. air pressure is less than water pressure
B. water pressure is much greater than air pressure
C. air pressure is equal to water pressure
D. water pressure is zero

4. Dick wished very much that he were his cousin Bob, who had just won the state oratorical contest. But Bob would gladly have traded his shiny new medal if he could have been Dick just long enough to carry that football for a winning touchdown. Boys seem to be like that — each often wanting to be _____.

- A. grown right away B. someone he isn't
C. a star football back D. winner of everything

5. No animal except man has learned to build a fire, and so man is the only animal that cooks food. This has proved in some ways to be a disadvantage to our digestive apparatus and to our teeth, which are now deprived of some of the work that they were meant to do. We rarely hear of the lower animals having decayed teeth or indigestion, yet these troubles are quite common in man. These difficulties may be due in part to the consumption of the many _____

A. cooked foods

B. raw foods

C. cold foods

D. frozen foods

6. Skimming to Get the Gist of a Reading Material

There is often a great deal of material that students would like to cover either because they are interested in a particular field or because they wish to do so to meet course requirements. Skimming is getting the essence of material without reading all of it. Using an average rate of speed to cover a large amount of reading matter would take much more time than is usually available. Good readers, however, can cope with a great deal of material by skimming. So when skimming, we go through the reading material quickly in order to get the gist of it, to know how it is organized, or to get an idea of the tone or the intention of the writer. Skimming is therefore a more thorough activity which requires an overall view of the text and implies a definite reading competence. For instance, we may well skim through an article first just to know whether it is worth reading, then read it through more carefully because we have decided that it is of interest. It is also possible afterwards to scan the same article in order to note down a figure or a name, which we particularly want to remember.

To skim reading material, we extract the important parts — that is, the main part and the significant details; but we have to extract these where we find them, which are not necessarily at the top.

How to skim? The following method can be taken:

1. Read the first paragraph or two in its entirety at the fastest average rate to grasp the idea of the story, the setting, a little of the author's style, the tone or mood.

2. Try to understand the first few paragraphs. The author usually gives some instruction in

3. Leave out portions of the text in order to achieve a skimming rate. For the following paragraphs we read the key sentences to get the main idea of the paragraphs.

4. Get the main idea of every paragraph plus a few facts. Note besides the first few paragraphs it is wise to read the last few paragraphs, because they often summarize.

Example

Read the following passage: