

# 计时英语

## TIMED READING

北京邮电学院外语系汇编



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北京邮电学院出版社

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(3)

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## 前 言

《计时英语》一书四册，共收集短文 500 篇。每篇大约 500 词，篇后均附有 10 道多项选择题，以检查在单位时间内的阅读效果。书后附有每篇短文的中文译文，可以帮助读者正确理解全文。

本书选材广泛，涉及面宽，内容新颖，文章短小精悍。短文均接近于大学英语四级、六级统考，EPT 考试及 TOEFL 或 GRE 等考试阅读理解题的题材及深度。本书全套无难度差异，可单独使用，也可全套使用。通过阅读实践，可以丰富知识面，全面提高阅读速度和技能。对参加各种考试，大有裨益。

参加第三册汇编工作的同志依次是：贺敏（1～10 篇）、程占绪（11～30 篇）、吕敏（31～50 篇）、房为群（51～70 篇）、应娅舒（71～90 篇）、赵金富（91～110 篇）、成文德（111～125 篇）。本册全部中文译稿由陈淑华老师审校。

北京邮电学院外语系

1993 年 12 月

## Introduction to the Student

These *Timed Readings* are designed to help you become a faster and better reader. As you progress through the book, you will find yourself growing in reading speed and comprehension. You will be challenged to increase your reading rate while maintaining a high level of comprehension.

Reading, like most things, improves with practice. If you practice improving your reading speed, you will improve. As you will see, the rewards of improved reading speed will be well worth your time and effort.

### Why Read Faster?

The quick and simple answer is that faster readers are better readers. Does this statement surprise you? You might think that fast readers would miss something and their comprehension might suffer. This is not true, for two reasons:







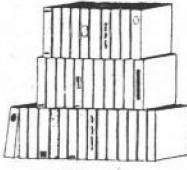
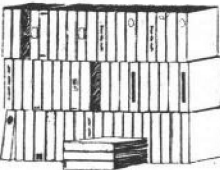
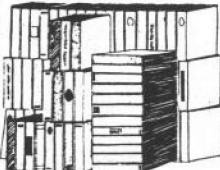
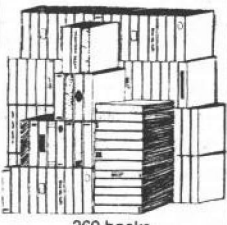
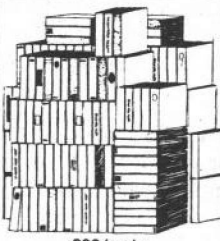

**1. Faster readers comprehend faster.** When you read faster, the writer's message is coming to you faster and makes sense sooner. Ideas are interconnected. The writer's thoughts are all tied together, each one leading to the next. The more quickly you can see how ideas are related to each other, the more quickly you can comprehend the meaning of what you are reading.

**2. Faster readers concentrate better.** Concentration is essential for comprehension. If your mind is wandering you can't understand what you are reading. A lack of concentration causes you to re-read, sometimes over and over, in order to comprehend. Faster readers concentrate better because there's less time for distractions to interfere. Comprehension, in turn, contributes to concentration. If you are concentrating and comprehending, you will not become distracted.

### Want to Read More?

Do you wish that you could read more? (or, at least, would you like to do your required reading in less time?) Faster reading will help.

The illustration on the next page shows the number of books someone might read over a period of ten years. Let's see what faster reading could do for you. Look at the stack of books read by a slow reader and the stack

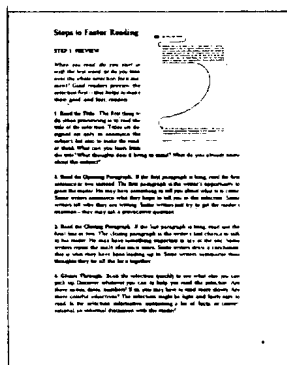
	Slow Reader (150 words per minute)	Fair Reader (250 words per minute)	Good Reader (350 words per minute)
1 WEEK	 3/4 book	 1 1/4 books	 1 3/4 books
1 MONTH	 3 books	 5 books	 7 books
1 YEAR	 36 books	 60 books	 84 books
10 YEARS	 360 books	 600 books	 840 books

read by a good reader. (We show a speed of 350 words a minute for our "good" reader, but many fast readers can more than double that speed.) Let's say, however, that you are now reading at a rate of 150 words a minute. The illustration shows you reading 36 books a year. By increasing your reading speed to 250 words a minute, you could increase the number of books to 60 a year.

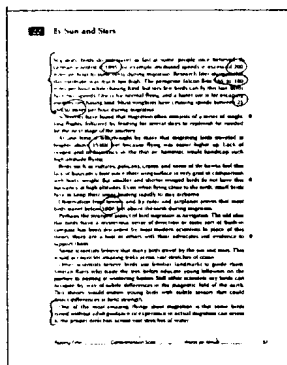
We have arrived at these numbers by assuming that the readers in our illustration read for one hour a day, six days a week, and that an average book is about 72,000 words long. Many people do not read that much, but they might if they could learn to read better and faster.

Faster reading doesn't take time, it saves time!

# How to Use This Book



**1 Learn the Four Steps**  
Study and learn the four steps to follow to become a better and faster reader. The steps are covered on pages 9, 10, 11, and 12.



**2 Preview**  
Turn to the selection you are going to read and wait for the instructor's signal to preview. Your instructor will allow 30 seconds for previewing.





**Reading Facts**

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**Understanding the Passage**

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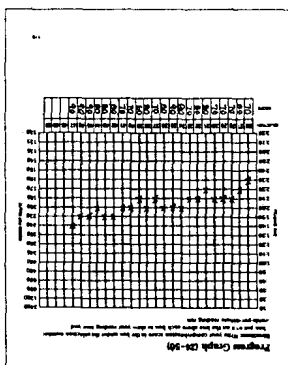
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**5 Answer the questions**  
 Answer the ten  
 questions on the next  
 page. There are five fact  
 questions and five thought  
 questions. Pick the best  
 answer to each question  
 and put an x in the box  
 beside it.

**6 Correct your answers**  
 Using the Answer Key  
 on pages 116 and 117,  
 correct your work. Circle  
 your wrong answers and  
 put an x in the box you  
 should have marked. Score  
 10 points for each correct  
 answer. Write your score  
 at the bottom of the page  
 on the line labeled  
 Comprehension Score.



**7** Fill in the progress graph. Enter your score and plot your reading time on the graph on page 118 or 119. The right-hand side of the graph shows your words-per-minute reading speed. Write this number at the bottom of the page on the line labeled Words per Minute.

## Instructions for the Pacing Drills

From time to time your instructor may wish to conduct pacing drills using *Timed Readings*. For this work you need to use the Pacing Dots printed in the margins of your book pages. The dots will help you regulate your reading speed to match the pace set by your instructor or announced on the reading cassette tape.

You will be reading at the correct pace if you are at the dot when your instructor says "Mark" or when you hear a tone on the tape. If you are ahead of the pace, read a little more slowly; if you are behind the pace, increase your reading speed. Try to match the pace exactly.

Follow these steps.

**Step 1: Record the pace.** At the bottom of the page, write on the line labeled *Words per Minute* the rate announced by the instructor or by the speaker on the tape.

**Step 2: Begin reading.** Wait for the signal to begin reading. Read at a slightly faster-than-normal speed. You will not know how on-target your pace is until you hear your instructor say "Mark" or until you hear the first tone on the tape. After a little practice you will be able to select an appropriate starting speed most of the time.

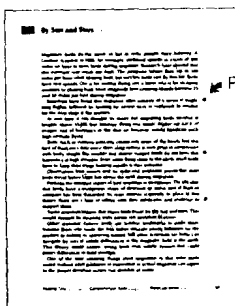
**Step 3: Adjust your pace.** As you read, try to match the pace set by the instructor or the tape. Read more slowly or more quickly as necessary. You should be reading the line beside the dot when you hear the pacing signal. The pacing sounds may distract you at first. Don't worry about it. Keep reading and your concentration will return.

**Step 4: Stop and answer questions.** Stop reading when you are told to, even if you have not finished the selection. Answer the questions right away. Correct your work and record your score on the line *Comprehension Score*. Strive to maintain 80 percent comprehension on each drill as you gradually increase your pace.

**Step 5: Fill in the pacing graph.** Transfer your words-per-minute rate to the box labeled *Pace* on the pacing graph on page 120. Then plot your comprehension score on the line above the box.

These pacing drills are designed to help you become a more flexible reader. They encourage you to "break out" of a pattern of reading everything at the same speed.

The drills help in other ways, too. Sometimes in a reading program you reach a certain level and bog down. You don't seem able to move on and progress. The pacing drills will help you to work your way out of such slumps and get your reading program moving again.



# Steps to Faster Reading

## STEP 1: PREVIEW

When you read, do you start in with the first word, or do you look over the whole selection for a moment? Good readers preview the selection first—this helps to make them good, and fast, readers.

**1. Read the Title.** The first thing to do when previewing is to read the title of the selection. Titles are designed not only to announce the subject, but also to make the reader think. What can you learn from the title? What thoughts does it bring to mind? What do you already know about this subject?

**2. Read the Opening Paragraph.** If the first paragraph is long, read the first sentence or two instead. The first paragraph is the writer's opportunity to greet the reader. He may have something to tell you about what is to come. Some writers announce what they hope to tell you in the selection. Some writers tell why they are writing. Some writers just try to get the reader's attention—they may ask a provocative question.

**3. Read the Closing Paragraph.** If the last paragraph is long, read just the final line or two. The closing paragraph is the writer's last chance to talk to his reader. He may have something important to say at the end. Some writers repeat the main idea once more. Some writers draw a conclusion: this is what they have been leading up to. Some writers summarize their thoughts; they tie all the facts together.

**4. Glance Through.** Scan the selection quickly to see what else you can pick up. Discover whatever you can to help you read the selection. Are there names, dates, numbers? If so, you may have to read more slowly. Are there colorful adjectives? The selection might be light and fairly easy to read. Is the selection informative, containing a lot of facts, or conversational, an informal discussion with the reader?

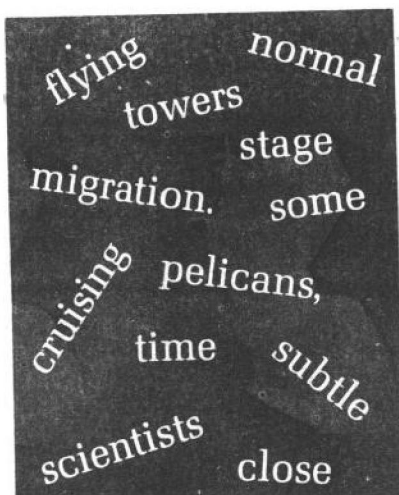
**274 By Sun and Stars**

Migratory birds do not travel as fast as some people once believed. A German scientist in 1960, for example, attributed speeds in excess of 200 miles an hour to some birds during migration. Research later showed that this estimate was much too high. The peregrine falcon flies 100 to 180 miles per hour while chasing food, but very few birds can fly this fast. Birds have two ways to fly: one is for normal flying, and a faster one is for escaping enemies or chasing food. Most songbirds have cruising speeds between 25 and 50 miles per hour during migration.

Scientists have found that many birds migrate at night. They use the stars and moon to guide them. Some birds migrate during the day. They use the sun to guide them. Some birds migrate at dawn or dusk. They use the position of the sun to guide them. Some birds migrate at night. They use the stars and moon to guide them. Some birds migrate during the day. They use the sun to guide them. Some birds migrate at dawn or dusk. They use the position of the sun to guide them.

One of the most amazing things about migration is that some birds travel without adult guidance or experience in actual migration can occur to the proper direction across vast stretches of water.

Reading Time \_\_\_\_\_ Comprehension Score \_\_\_\_\_ Words per Minute \_\_\_\_\_ 57



## Steps to Faster Reading

### STEP 2: READ FOR MEANING

When you read, do you just see words? Are you so occupied reading words that you sometimes fail to get the meaning? Good readers see beyond the words—they read for meaning. This makes them faster readers.

discover that your thoughts have strayed, correct the situation right away. The longer you wait, the harder it becomes. Avoid distractions and distracting situations. Outside noises and activities will compete for your attention if you let them. Keep the preview information in mind as you read. This will help to focus your attention on the selection.

**2. Read in Thought Groups.** Individual words do not tell us much. They must be combined with other words in order to yield meaning. To obtain meaning from the printed page, therefore, the reader should see the words in meaningful combinations. If you see only a word at a time (called word-by-word reading), your comprehension suffers along with your speed. To improve both speed and comprehension, try to group the words into phrases which have a natural relationship to each other. For practice, you might want to read aloud, trying to speak the words in meaningful combinations.

**3. Question the Author.** To sustain the pace you have set for yourself, and to maintain a high level of comprehension, question the writer as you read. Continually ask yourself such questions as, "What does this mean? What is he saying now? How can I use this information?" Questions like these help you to concentrate fully on the selection.

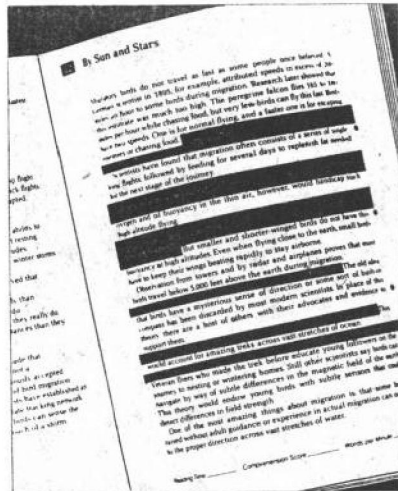
# Steps to Faster Reading

## STEP 3: GRASP PARAGRAPH SENSE

The paragraph is the basic unit of meaning. If you can discover quickly and understand the main point of each paragraph, you can comprehend the author's message. Good readers know how to find the main ideas of paragraphs quickly. This helps to make them faster readers.

**1. Find the Topic Sentence.** The topic sentence, the sentence containing the main idea, is often the first sentence of a paragraph. It is followed by other sentences which support, develop, or explain the main idea. Sometimes a topic sentence comes at the end of a paragraph. When it does, the supporting details come first, building the base for the topic sentence. Some paragraphs do not have a topic sentence. Such paragraphs usually create a mood or feeling, rather than present information.

**2. Understand Paragraph Structure.** Every well-written paragraph has purpose. The purpose may be to inform, define, explain, persuade, compare or contrast, illustrate, and so on. The purpose should always relate to the main idea and expand on it. As you read each paragraph, see how the body of the paragraph is used to tell you more about the main idea or topic sentence. Read the supporting details intelligently, recognizing that what you are reading is all designed to develop the single main idea.



## Steps to Faster Reading

### STEP 4: ORGANIZE FACTS

When you read, do you tend to see a lot of facts without any apparent connection or relationship? Understanding how the facts all fit together to deliver the author's message is, after all, the reason for reading. Good readers organize facts as they read. This helps them to read rapidly and well.

**1. Discover the Writer's Plan.** Look for a clue or signal word early in the article which might reveal the author's structure. Every writer has a plan or outline which he follows. If the reader can discover his method of organization, he has the key to understanding the message. Sometimes the author gives you obvious signals. If he says, "There are three reasons . . ." the wise reader looks for a listing of the three items. Other less obvious signal words such as *moreover*, *otherwise*, *consequently* all tell the reader the direction the writer's message will take.

**2. Relate as You Read.** As you read the selection, keep the information learned during the preview in mind. See how the ideas you are reading all fit into place. Consciously strive to relate what you are reading to the title. See how the author is carrying through in his attempt to piece together a meaningful message. As you discover the relationship among the ideas, the message comes through quickly and clearly.



## **1** Beyond the Seas

Nearly 400 years ago, in the royal courts of Europe, in the baronial castles, in the marketplaces of country towns, and at wayside taverns, people were listening to strange and wonderful stories. More exciting than the legends that Marco Polo had brought from the distant East, these stories told of a New World to the west, on the other side of their planet Earth, which they learned was wondrously round. No discovery like this had ever occurred. All other new lands had been attached to the vast Euro-Asian-African landmass then known to exist.

A great many Europeans could get to the Americas, and they did. They sailed the turbulent Atlantic in ships as light as 50 tons and some just 40 feet long. Their sea voyages were full of peril and fears of the unknown. The voyages lasted from eight to ten weeks without sight of land or communication with the Old World they had left. Such voyages to the New World required a courage bred in faith and sustained by the thrill of adventure and the hope of making a new start in life. Such faith and courage inspired both men and women.

The English were almost foolhardy in their courage and their spirit of adventure. They knew the shores of North America were inhabited by strange humans whom they regarded as dangerous savages. The land was 3,500 miles from the protecting power of England, and they feared their settlements would be discovered and perhaps wiped out by hostile Spaniards. Spain was the greatest naval and colonial power of the period. It had a large settlement in Florida.

Many men and women suffered or died in the first serious English effort to start the conquest of a large part of the North American continent by the slow process of agriculture, industry, and trade. The colonization effort called for heroic efforts and many sacrifices. The hardships of the first colony in 1585 and 1586 and the disappearance of the Lost Colony on Roanoke Island in 1587 helped teach the English the practical difficulties of settling this new land and enabled them to grow in colonial wisdom. The birth of Virginia Dare on August 18, 1587, the first child of English parentage to be born in the New World, symbolized the hope of establishing a new English-speaking nation beyond the seas.



## Recalling Facts

1. Europeans sailed the Atlantic in ships as light as
  - ☐ a. 20 tons.
  - ☐ b. 50 tons.
  - ☐ c. 80 tons.
2. Voyages to the New World sometimes lasted
  - ☐ a. three weeks.
  - ☐ b. six weeks.
  - ☐ c. ten weeks.
3. The greatest naval power in the 1500s was
  - ☐ a. England.
  - ☐ b. Spain.
  - ☐ c. Portugal.
4. The Lost Colony disappeared during the late
  - ☐ a. 1580s.
  - ☐ b. 1620s.
  - ☐ c. 1660s.
5. The author describes the English voyagers as
  - ☐ a. almost foolhardy.
  - ☐ b. deeply religious.
  - ☐ c. very patriotic.

## Understanding the Passage

6. Most Europeans traveled to the New World to
  - ☐ a. escape religious persecution.
  - ☐ b. search for a new passage to the Orient.
  - ☒ c. begin new lives in a new land.
7. The discovery of America was spectacular because it was
  - ☐ a. a land of riches.
  - ☐ b. a separate continent.
  - ☐ c. found by accident.
8. The "strange and wonderful stories" told 400 years ago
  - ☐ a. appealed mostly to men of science.
  - ☐ b. concerned Marco Polo's trip to China.
  - ☐ c. were about the Americas.
9. Virginia Dare was the
  - ☐ a. first English woman to travel to the New World.
  - ☐ b. wife of Roanoke Island's first governor.
  - ☐ c. first English child born in America.
10. To the English, the disappearance of the Lost Colony was
  - ☐ a. the worst tragedy in colonial history.
  - ☐ b. a lesson for future settlers.
  - ☐ c. the result of fear and ignorance.