

大学英语 分级阅读理解 (三、四级)

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内 容 提 要

本书由六十篇短文构成,每篇后面都相应配有六或七道阅读理解练习。文章均精选自英美出版物,内容丰富生动,题材广泛,语言流畅规范;练习别具一格,它一反中国学生习惯的模式,而是侧重于提高学生的分析归纳推理总结能力,并直接与全国三级、四级英语统考相联系。

说 明

本书是根据大学英语教学大纲编写的,旨在帮助学生提高英语阅读速度和理解水平。本书共选六十篇短文(其中三级、四级各占三十篇)。每篇篇幅跨度为 350—450 字左右,后面配有六至七道阅读理解题(答案附后)。练习侧重提高学生的归纳、总结、分析和推断的能力。

书中文章均选自英美出版的书刊,内容丰富,题材广泛,语言流畅。为培养学生通过上下文猜测词义的能力,每篇文章后没有单独列出生词的汉语释义。

本书可和《大学英语》泛读教材第三册、第四册配套使用,并直接和期末考试和四级统考挂钩。

编 者

1993 年 8 月于北京大学

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大学英语分级阅读理解

第 三 级

Lesson 1

I'm not a consumer — I'm a victim. If I order a product, it is sure to arrive in the wrong color, size or quantity. If I hire people to do repairs, they never arrive on the day scheduled. If I owe a bill, the computer is bound to overcharge me. Therefore, in self-defense, I have developed the following consumer's guide to complaining effectively.

The first step is getting organized. I save all sales slips and original boxes. Also, I keep a special file for warranty cards and appliance guarantees. I know the date of the purchase, the correct price (or service charge), where the item was purchased, and the exact description of the product, including model and serial numbers. When I compose my letters of complaint, I find it is not necessary to exaggerate. I just stick to the facts.

The next step is to send the complaint to the person who will get results quickly. My experience has shown that the president of a company is the best person to contact. I call the company to find out the president's name and make sure I note the proper spelling. Then I write directly to that person, and I usually get prompt action. For example, the president of a Philadelphia department store finally had a twenty-dollar overcharge on my bill corrected after three months of arguing with the computer had brought no results.

If I get no response to a written complaint within days, I follow through with a personal telephone call. When I had a new bathtub installed a few years ago, the plumber left a black substance on the bottom of the tub. No amount of

scrubbing could remove it. I tried every cleanser on the supermarket shelf, but I still had a dirty tub. The plumber shrugged off my complaints and the manufacturer never answered my letter. Finally, I made a personal phone call to the president of the firm. Within days a well-dressed executive showed up at my door. In a business suit, white shirt, striped tie, and rubber gloves, he cleaned the tub. Before he left, he scolded in an angry voice, "You didn't have to call the president." The point is, I did have to call the president. No one else cared enough to solve the problem.

Therefore, my advice to consumers is to keep accurate records, and when you have to complain, go right to the top. It has always worked for me.

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. In all the following cases, the consumer should make a complaint except one. The exception is
 - a. if the product bought is not up to standard.
 - b. if he is overcharged.
 - c. if he gets poor service.
 - d. if he is at fault in purchasing the product.
2. Which of the following is closest in meaning to the sentence "The plumber shrugged off my complaints." (para. 4)?
 - a. The plumber listened to my complaints patiently but did nothing about them.
 - b. The plumber turned a deaf ear to my complaints.
 - c. The plumber took my complaints seriously but was unable to do anything about them.
 - d. The plumber thought my complaints were unjust.
3. If the author had not called the president of the firm

- about her dirty bathtub,
- a. her problem would have been solved sooner.
 - b. she would never have had her bathtub cleaned.
 - c. the manufacturer would have dealt with the problem.
 - d. the executive would have done the same for her.
4. In this selection, the author tells the reader
- a. how to contact the president of a company.
 - b. how to avoid being a victim.
 - c. how to complain.
 - d. how to get poor service put right.
5. In this selection, the author tells the reader that
- a. she often makes a complaint to a responsible man and she always succeeds.
 - b. she is good at composing letters of complaint.
 - c. her complaint is always just.
 - d. making complaints takes her a lot of time.
6. From the information provided, we can conclude that
- a. we have to be very careful in purchasing.
 - b. we have to remember every detail about the article we bought in case we should make a complaint.
 - c. making complaints is not easy.
 - d. nowadays the quality of goods is bad , service is poor, and manufacturers are irresponsible.

Lesson 2

In this land of department stores, mail-order catalogues, supermarkets, and shopping malls, there remain two old-fashioned, rural styles of shopping: the general store and the country auction. The general store is an old institution. In the farm village, the frontier settlement, or the small town, the general store was a place to exchange gossip and to argue politics by the dim light of oil lamps. In winter, customers would gather around the pot-bellied stove, not minding the smoke and the soot which it gave forth.

Some of the farmers, having no cash, would bring produce to barter for their purchases. The stock of the general store was varied. There were open sacks and barrels of bulk foods like sugar, rice, coffee, and potatoes. China, soap, buttons, and cloth were bought by the women. For the men, there were tobacco, jeans, suspenders, and shoes; nails, tools, guns, as well as farm equipment. Many kinds of medicines were available and were claimed to be cures for any disease or condition.

Somewhat simpler and cleaner general stores still exist and prosper in many small towns throughout the country. They are usually family businesses, offering a wide variety of merchandise, including clothing, hardware, farm implements, groceries, and school supplies. They still serve as a place to meet and pass along local information.

The country auction is a method of selling household goods, farm equipment, or other belongings to be disposed of because of a family's departure or a death; or sometimes,

for selling a collection of goods from some other source. The sale usually takes place outside the house, with the audience seated on benches, chairs, or boxes, or else standing. With the help of one or two assistants, the auctioneer displays the item offered for bidding, while praising its qualities. He has a special style of patter, speaking rapidly and dramatically. Sometimes he includes some rather harsh humor, or possibly a few insulting remarks ridiculing members of the audience who are not bidding or who are offering too little. His performance, if he is a skilled auctioneer, is quite a show; and it is not surprising that many come to watch it, with no intention of buying anything. Nevertheless, even some of those find themselves involved in bidding — perhaps for an item which they do not really want. In fact, there have been cases of a person raising a hand to brush off a fly, and finding himself the unwilling possessor of some strange object.

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. According to this selection, which of the following did not go on in the old-time general store?
 - a. business
 - b. gossiping
 - c. gambling
 - d. discussion on politics
2. How did a poor farmers pay for what he bought?
 - a. He wrote an IOU.
 - b. He did some odd jobs for the store.
 - c. He exchanged his farm products for the goods he wanted.
 - d. He settled with the owner of the store after the harvest.
3. Which of the following is not true of the general store?

- a. The general store is still very popular in small towns.
 - b. The general store has a wide variety of goods.
 - c. The general store is a place where people exchange news.
 - d. The general store is a state-run business.
4. Which of the following words best describes the behaviour of the auctioneer?
- a. amusing b. insulting
 - c. aggressive d. ridiculous
5. In the last sentence, the author implies that
- a. places where an auction takes place are usually very dirty. There are many flies around.
 - b. the visitor must remember to keep his hands down while watching the auction. Otherwise he would be misunderstood for bidding.
 - c. the visitor must remember not to brush off a fly while watching the auction. Otherwise he would be offered something he does not want.
 - d. during an auction, there are more visitors than buyers. So it often happens visitors are forced into buying things they have no intention of buying.
6. From the last paragraph we can conclude that
- a. people enjoy attending the country auction.
 - b. the auctioneer is skillful to talk the attenders into offering high prices for the goods.
 - c. people often buy what they don't want at the auction.
 - d. it is worth attending the country auction.
7. Which country does the author refer to in this selection?
- a. England b. Canada
 - c. America d. Australia

Lesson 3

It was half past seven before I reached the hotel, which was in a quiet street opposite a church. The manageress was a stern lady of about sixty. She showed me to my room herself because there was no porter and when I asked her about dinner, she said there was only one sitting, at six-thirty, and I had missed it.

"Never mind," I said amiably. "I'm not hungry. I'll just have a drink in the bar and then go to a restaurant."

"Bar!" she said, raising her eyebrows. "This is a respectable hotel, young man. If you want alcohol you must go somewhere else." She spoke as if a glass of beer were a dangerous drug.

I had dinner and noticed that there was a good film in the local cinema. When I returned to the hotel, it was half past eleven. Everything was in darkness. I banged on the door but nothing happened. The only sound was the church clock opposite, which suddenly struck the half hour with such force that it made me jump. Eventually a window opened upstairs and the old lady looked out. "What's going on?" she asked. I made her understand who I was and she let me in after ten minutes' wait. She was in her nightdress and her hair was in curlers. "Guests are to be back in the hotel by eleven o'clock," she said. "The same rule goes for everyone."

I went to my room and tried to sleep. The bed was hard and the sheets and blankets were damp. Every quarter of an hour the church clock struck and at midnight the whole hotel shook with the noise. Just before dawn, I finally got off