

English Extensive Reading for Colleges and Universities

大学英语泛读 (下)

张秀明 编



北京大学出版社

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北 京

图书在版编目(CIP)数据

大学英语泛读(下)/张秀明编. —北京:北京大学出版社,
1996. 6

ISBN 7-301-03015-0

I. 大… I. 张… II. 英语-阅读教学-高等学校-教学参考资料
N. H319

书 名: 大学英语泛读(下)

著作责任者: 张秀明

责任编辑: 徐万丽

标准书号: ISBN 7-301-03015-0/H·306

出版者: 北京大学出版社

地 址: 北京市海淀区中关村北京大学校内 100871

电 话: 出版部 62752015 发行部 62559712 编辑部 62752032

排 印 者: 北京经纬印刷厂印刷

发 行 者: 北京大学出版社

经 销 者: 新华书店

850×1168 毫米 32 开本 7.25 印张 224 千字

1996 年 6 月第一版 1996 年 6 月第一次印刷

定 价: 8.00 元

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Unit One

Texts:

How to Read Fast

- 1 When I was a kid in Philadelphia, I must have read every comic^① book ever published. (There were fewer of them then than there are now.)
- 2 I zipped through all of them in a couple of days, then reread the good ones until the next issues arrived.
- 3 Yes, indeed, when I was a kid, the reading game was a snap.
- 4 But as I got older, my eyeballs must have slowed down or something! I mean, comic books started to pile up faster than my brother Russell and I could read them!
- 5 It wasn't until much later, when I was getting my doctorate^②, I realized it wasn't my eyeballs that were to blame. Thank goodness. They're still moving as well as ever.
- 6 The problem is, there's too much to read these days, and too little time to read every word of it.
- 7 Now, mind you, I still read comic books. In addition to contracts, novels, and newspapers; screenplays^③, tax returns^④, and correspondence. Even textbooks about how people read. And which techniques help people read more in less time.
- 8 I'll let you in on a little secret. There are hundreds of techniques you could learn to help you read faster. But I know of three that are especially good.
- 9 And if I can learn them, so can you—and you can put them to

① comic; funny; causing laughter; humorous

② doctorate; doctor's degree

③ screenplay; a story written for a movie

④ tax return; a formal report of taxable income; 报税表(亦称退税表)

use immediately.

10 They are commonsense, practical ways to get the meaning from printed words quickly and efficiently. So you'll have time to enjoy your comic books, have a good laugh with Mark Twain, or a good cry with *War and Peace*. Ready?

11 They'll give you the overall meaning of what you're reading. And let you cut out an awful lot of unnecessary reading.

I. Preview—If It's Long and Hard

12 Previewing is especially useful for getting a general idea of heavy reading like long magazine or newspaper articles, business reports, and nonfiction books.

13 It can give you as much as half the comprehension in as little as one-tenth the time. For example, you should be able to preview eight or ten 100-page reports in an hour. After previewing, you'll be able to decide which reports (or which parts of which reports) are worth a closer look.

14 Here's how to preview: Read the entire first two paragraphs of whatever you've chosen. Next read only the first sentence of each successive paragraph. Then read the entire last two paragraphs.

15 Previewing doesn't give you all the details. But it does keep you from spending time on things you don't really want—or need—to read. Notice that previewing gives you a quick, overall view of long, unfamiliar material. For short, light reading, there's a better technique.

I. Skim—If It's Short and Simple

16 Skimming is a good way to get a general idea of light reading—like popular magazines or the sports and entertainment sections of the paper.

17 You should be able to skim a weekly popular magazine or the second section of your daily paper in less than half the time it takes you to read it now.

18 Skimming is also a great way to review material you've read before.

19 Here's how to skim: Think of your eyes as magnets^①. Force them to move fast. Sweep them across each and every line of type^②. Pick up only a few key words in each line.

20 Everybody skims differently.

21 You and I may not pick up the same words when we skim the same piece, but we'll both get a pretty similar idea of what it's all about.

22 To show you how it works, I circled the words I picked out when I skimmed the following story. Try it. It shouldn't take you more than ten seconds.

My brother (Russell) (thinks monsters) (live) in our (bedroom closet) (at night.) But I told him (he is crazy.)

"Go and (check) (then,)" he said.

(I didn't want to.) Russell said (I was chicken.)

("Am not,") I said.

("Are so.") he said.

So (I told him) the monsters were going to (eat him) at (midnight.) He started to cry. (My Dad came in) and (told) the monsters (to beat it^③.) Then he (told) us to (go to sleep.)

"If I hear any more about monsters," he said, (I'll spank^④ you.")

We went to (sleep fast.) And you (know something?) They (never did) (come back.)

23 Skimming can give you a very good idea of this story in about half the words—and in less than half the time it'd take to read every word.

24 So far, you've seen that previewing and skimming can give you a general idea about content—fast. But neither technique can promise more than 50 percent comprehension, because you aren't

① magnet; any object, esp. a piece of iron, which can draw other (metal) objects towards it, either naturally or because of an electric current being passed through it

② every line of type; every printed line

③ beat it: to go away

④ spank; to strike (esp. a child) with the open hand, esp. on the bottom

reading all the words. (Nobody gets something for nothing in the reading game.)

25 To read faster and understand most—if not all—of what you read, you need to know a third technique.

I. Cluster—To Increase Speed and Comprehension

26 Most of us learned to read by looking at each word in a sentence—one at a time.

27 Like this:

28 My—brother—Russell—thinks—monsters...

29 You probably still read this way sometimes, especially when the words are difficult. Or when the words have an extra-special meaning—in a poem, a Shakespearean play, or a contract. And that's O. K.

29 But word-by-word reading is a rotten way to read faster. It actually cuts down on your speed.

30 Clustering^① trains you to look at groups of words instead of one at a time—to increase your speed enormously. For most of us, clustering is a totally different way of seeing what we read.

31 Here's how to cluster: Train your eyes to see all the words in clusters of up to three or four words at a glance.

32 Here's how I'd cluster the story we just skimmed:

(My brother Russell) (thinks monsters) (live in)
(our bedroom closet) (at night.) (But I told him) (he is crazy.)
("Go and) (check then,") (he said.)
(I didn't want to.) (Russell said) (I was chicken.)
("Am not,") (I said.)
("Are so,") (he said.)
(So I told him) (the monsters) (were going to) (eat him)
(at midnight.) (He started to cry.) (My Dad came in)
(and told the monsters) (to beat it.) (Then he told us) (to go)
(to sleep.)

① clustering: group-reading

("If I hear) (any more about) (monsters," he said,)
("I'll spank you.")

(We went) (to sleep fast.) (And you) (know something?)
(They never did) (come back.)

33 Learning to read in clusters is not something your eyes do naturally. It takes constant practice.

34 Here's how to go about it. Pick something light to read. Read it as fast as you can. Concentrate on seeing three to four words at once rather than one word at a time. Then reread the piece at your normal speed to see what you missed the first time.

34 Try a second piece. First cluster, then reread to see what you missed in this one.

35 When you can read in clusters without missing much the first time, your speed has increased. Practice fifteen minutes every day and you might pick up the technique in a week or so. (But don't be disappointed if it takes longer. Clustering *everything* takes time and practice.)

36 So now you have three ways to help you read faster. Preview to cut down on unnecessary heavy reading. Skim to get a quick, general idea of light reading. And cluster to increase your speed and comprehension.

37 With enough practice, you'll be able to handle more reading at school or work—and at home—in less time. You should even have enough time to read your favorite comic books—and *War and Peace*!

I. Comprehension Questions:

Choose the correct statement for each of the following three sentences.

1. A. Preview is useful for getting a thorough idea of light reading.
- B. Preview promises you more than 50 percent comprehension in one-tenth time.
- C. To preview means to read the first sentence of each successive paragraph.

- D. Preview is of especial use for grasping a general idea of heavy reading.
2. A. Skimming can give you more than 50 percent comprehension in less than half the time it'd take to read every word.
- B. To skim means to read the entire first two paragraphs of the article first, then read only the first sentence of each paragraph and finally the entire last two paragraphs.
- C. Skimming is an efficient way to get a detailed idea of light reading.
- D. To skim, you must move your eyes swiftly to pick up a few key words in each line.
3. A. Clustering helps you to read fast and understand most of what you read in about half the words
- B. Clustering is too difficult a technique for people to learn because it is not something our eyes do naturally.
- C. Clustering means to see all the words in groups at a glance.
- D. It is a good way to learn to cluster while reading Shakespearean plays.
4. According to the author, examples of both "heavy" reading and "light" reading are _____.
- A. nonfiction books / long newspaper articles
- B. long magazine articles / the sports sections of the paper
- C. popular magazines / comic books
- D. business reports / contracts
5. Choose the one which best expresses the main idea of the article :
- A. it is necessary to choose your method of reading according to the kind of material you want to read and the amount of comprehension you need.
- B. Moving your eyes fast across each line will give you a general idea of the content of reading material in much less time than it would take to read every word.
- C. You should skim long and heavy readings, preview simple

ones, and read in groups or clusters when you have to understand the whole material quite well.

D. It is necessary to know three reading techniques.

I . Vocabulary exercise :

Replace the underlined words or phrases .

1. I zipped through all of them in a couple of days. (2)
 - A. opened and closed with a zip
 - B. went with the sound of a bullet flying through the air
 - C. went very fast
 - D. read slowly
2. The reading game was a snap. (3)
 - A. vigor or energy
 - B. a very easy job
 - C. a thin crisp cookie
 - D. quite difficult
3. "I'll let you in on a little secret. " (8)
 - A. know about
 - B. take part in
 - C. be about to have
 - D. go into
4. Russell said I was chicken. (22)
 - A. a little chicken
 - B. a bad egg
 - C. a person who lacked courage
 - D. a brave boy
5. Nobody gets something for nothing in the reading game. (24)
 - A. without payment
 - B. without reward or result
 - C. without reason
 - D. without a goal

II . Word Formation; contract (7)

The important Latin root tract- means "to drag; draw; pull".

Attract comes from the Latin prefix at- meaning “to; toward” and tract- meaning “to draw; pull”. Thus, attract means (1) to draw something or somebody to or toward oneself, as by magnetism; (2) to gain the admiration or attention of someone.

Contract comes from the Latin prefix con- meaning “together” and tract- meaning “to draw; pull”. Thus, contract [kən/ trækt] means (1) to draw together; to shrink or become more compact ; (2) to make a legal agreement . A contract [ˈkontrækt] is “a legal agreement that draws together two people or parties”.

Distract comes from the Latin prefix dis- meaning “away” and tract- meaning “to draw”. Thus, distract means “to draw away or divert the mind, attention, etc. , in a different direction”

Extract comes from the Latin prefix ex- meaning “out” and tract- meaning “to draw; pull”. Thus, extract [iks/ trækt] means (1) to draw or pull out; (2) to obtain something from a substance by squeezing it, distilling it, etc. ; (3) to obtain or draw out pleasure, knowledge, a promise, etc. , from something or someone; (4) to copy out information from a book. An extract [ˈekstrækt] is “anything drawn out of a thing or substance, as a passage or quotation copied out of a book or a preparation containing the essence of a substance in concentrated form”.

Subtract comes from the Latin prefix sub- meaning “beneath; away from; under” and tract- meaning “to draw”. Thus, subtract means “to take away from something by deducting a quantity, number, etc”.

Exercise;

Fill in the blanks with what we’ve just learned.

1. The dentist _____ the bad tooth.
2. The pupils of his eyes _____ in the bright light.
3. This machine _____ juice from oranges.
4. He _____ the expenses from the profits.

5. The lawyer drew up a _____ for his clients.
6. Dr. Lindon _____ a paragraph from the book for his speech.
7. He went to a movie to _____ his mind from his worries.
8. Did you _____ a promise of payment from the customer?
9. The construction company _____ to build the new school.
10. He read a(n) _____ from the Old Testament.

Common Faults in Reading and How to Cure Them

1 There are a number of bad habits which poor readers adopt. Most of these involve using extra body movement in the reading process. In efficient reading, the muscles of the eye should make the only external movement. Of course there must be vigorous mental activity, but extra body movements, such as pointing with the finger or moving the lips, do not help reading and often slow it down.

Pointing at Words

2 A fault that is often seen when students are trying to concentrate is pointing to the words with a finger, pencil or ruler. Young children and very poor readers often point with a finger at each word in turn. Slightly more mature readers sometimes hold a pencil or ruler underneath the line which they are reading. While marking the line might be helpful for beginning readers, it is certainly unnecessary for normal readers. Besides slowing down the student through the mere mechanical movement of pencil, ruler, or finger, pointing at lines or words tends to cause the student to focus his attention on the wrong thing. The important thing to concentrate on while reading is the idea that the author is trying to communicate, and not the location of the words on the page. The eyes of any child old enough to learn how to read are certainly skilful enough to be able to follow a line of print without extra help from fingers or rulers.

Head Movement

3 Another common fault is head movement[†]. This most often occurs when students are nervous about their reading or trying hard, as during a reading speed test. With head movement the student tries to aim his nose at the word he is reading so that as he reads across the line his head turns slightly. When he makes the return sweep to begin a new line his head quickly turns back so that his nose is pointed at the left-hand margin, and he can now begin to read the new line by slowly turning his head. The belief that this head movement aids reading is pure nonsense. Eye muscles are quite capable of shifting the eyes from word to word, and they need no help from neck muscles. I sometimes tease my students by asking them if they have "rader" in their noses, or if neck muscles are involved in reading comprehension.

Vocalization

4 Vocalization is another fault. Some poor readers think it necessary to pronounce aloud each word as it is read. Usually this pronunciation is quite soft, so that the student is more whispering to himself than actually reading aloud, but even this is very undesirable. The chief disadvantage of pronouncing words while you read them is that it tends to tie reading speed to speaking speed, and as I have already said, the silent reading of most normal readers is nearly twice as fast as their speaking. Usually this fault can be eliminated in older students by their own conscious effort, possibly with the aid of a few reminders^① from the teacher. Vocalization by beginning readers is a common fault; after a reader reaches some maturity it becomes very undesirable.

5 Vocalization takes various modified forms. Sometimes a reader will merely move his lips soundlessly. At other times he may make tongue or throat movements without lip movement. Still other read-

^① reminder; something that helps someone to remember something

ers will have activity going on in their vocal cords^①, which can be detected^② by the student if he places his fingers alongside his vocal cords in the throat while he is reading. Vocal cord vibration can be felt with the fingers quite easily. Like true vocalization, these minor parts of “subvocalization”—lip movement, tongue or throat and vocal cord movement—can be stopped by conscious effort on the part of the student. Excessively slow reading speeds are often a clue to some type of vocalization.

Subvocalization

6 Finally we come to the most difficult of all types of vocalization. This is subvocalization. In subvocalization there is no body movement. The lips, tongue or vocal cords do not move. But an inner type of speech persists; within the student's mind he is saying each word to himself, clearly pronouncing each word and then listening to himself, as it were. This fault is difficult, but not impossible, to cure.

7 Probably the main reason for subvocalization is the nature of written language. English is written in an alphabet; a set of symbols which stand for speech-sounds. The speech-sounds in turn stand for an idea or thought. Since most students learn to read either after learning to speak or at the same time, there is a natural tendency to relate the printed word to its speech-sound. But it is not necessary to say or hear the word in order to get its meaning. It is quite possible to look at the printed word and get the idea directly. This is what efficient readers do.

Curing Subvocalization

8 The curing of subvocalization often takes a subtle and roundabout^③ route. First, explain to the class that the real purpose of reading is to understand what the author is saying. Then tell them

① vocal cords: 声带

② detect: to discover the presence or fact of

③ roundabout: not straight or direct

it is quite possible to do this without pronouncing each word. In fact it is undesirable to pronounce each word because of the time it wastes. It is quite easy to show that many people can read much faster than they could possibly speak; so the first thing that the student needs to realize is that subvocalization is bad.

9 A direct attack on subvocalization is not always successful. Sometimes when students first become aware of the fact that they are subvocalizing they try to stop subvocalizing by sheer will-power. They simply say to themselves "I will not subvocalize". Often when the students does this he will stop understanding, whereas before, when he was subvocalizing and saying each word inwardly to himself, he was at least taking in the story. Now when he tries by will-power to shut off all subvocalization he may not understand a thing. His eyes may go across the print while nothing happens. If this happens the student should be told to concentrate on the other aspects of reading, namely speed and comprehension. If he must talk to himself while reading let him say, "What does this mean?", "I don't believe this", "This point is not related to the paragraph", or "I'll bet this will be a question on the comprehension test". In short, he should talk *about* the material but not repeat the words. He should be mentally engaging in a conversation with the author, but not merely parroting what the author says. Efficient reading requires an active mind, not the mere passivity of saying the author's words.

10 At the same time that the reader is urgently trying to understand what the author is saying, and testing out the author's ideas against his own background of knowledge, he should be trying to speed up the reading process. He should keep in the back of his mind that one of the purposes of this drill is to get him to read faster, and he should attempt in each exercise to read a little faster than he did in the preceding one. If he is actively and forcefully trying to comprehend the subject matter, and at the same time to increase his speed, he will have little time left for subvocalization. So there is a positive cure for subvocalization. The negative approach of "I will not subvocalize" should be replaced by the more positive atti-