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大学英语阶梯阅读

南开

薛琛 主编

南开大学出版社

Graded College English Reading

BOOK ONE



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(1—2 级)

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前 言

本系列读物以提高学生的阅读能力为目的,从而促进他们在听、说、写各方面的发展。读者对象为高等院校研究生、本科生、专科生以及英语自学者。本读物共分四册,与目前大学英语分级教学密切配合。

国家教委颁发的《大学英语教学大纲》指出:大学英语教学的目的是培养学生具有较强的阅读能力、一定的听的能力以及初步的写和说的能力。显然“培养学生具有较强的阅读能力”是第一层次的要求。在英语教学的实践中,我们也深感要培养学生听说读写四方面的技能,提高学生的阅读能力是关键。

从目前大学生英语学习的情况来看,普遍存在的问题是词汇量小,阅读速度慢,阅读理解能力不够理想,写作方面的困难也就更加突出。在全国大学英语四级、六级统考中,也再次反映了这些问题。我们认为,切实可行的解决办法就是让学生大量地阅读,通过阅读,丰富学生的文化背景知识,扩大他们的知识面,增加词汇量,以此提高阅读速度和理解力。“读书破万卷,下笔如有神”。我们相信,通过大量的阅读,学生的写作能力也一定会相应地提高。

本系列读物与高等院校学生从大学英语一级到六级的学习相呼应,在各级的学习阶段中,为他们提供内容新颖、体裁

多样、具有现代语言规范和特点的课外读物。将英语的阅读部分从“习题集”这类书籍中分离出来,将它独立成书,并与英语一至六级的教学程序互相承接,相得益彰;同时避免一般英语读物文艺性过强的倾向,代之以更加广博的内容,增补大量当代世界各个领域的新知识,是我们一次认真的尝试,也是广大学生热切的呼声。为帮助学生更好地对课文进行理解、消化和吸收,我们适当地对每篇读物加以注释,并密切结合各级学生的学习要求,配备了多种形式的练习。为便于学生的自学,我们在书后附了练习的答案。

《大学英语阶梯阅读》的编写安排如下:

册次	级别	词汇量	对应年级
1	1、2	2,500-3,000	大学一年级
2	3	3,000-3,500	大学二年级第一学期
3	4	3,500-4,500	大学二年级第二学期
4	5、6	4,500-6,000	大学高年级及研究生

本系列读物由南开大学外文系英语教研室徐齐平教授审定。

鉴于编者水平有限,在选材、注释、练习编写等方面难免存在不少缺点和问题,请读者批评指正。

编者

一九九〇年十月

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1. THE OLYMPIC GAMES

1 Although the exact origins of the earliest Olympic games are not clear, we have at least some knowledge of an ancient Greek festival in which athletes competed in sports. This celebration was held regularly every four years and was open to all men and boys who spoke Greek as their native language. These ancient games were simpler than our modern ones. For the month before the festival, the athletes attended a formal course of exercise at the gymnasium in the city of Olympia. Then the competition itself consisted of a single foot race. Later festivals included such sports as jumping, wrestling, discus-throwing, and horse racing.

2 These original Olympic games were most popular around the fifth century B. C. (before the birth of Christ). At that time, winning at a sport brought the highest possible honor to the individual competitor, his family, and his city. The winner of a game received neither gold nor silver but a simple crown of olive leaves on his head. Later, however, when the Greeks began paying athletes, there were problems with professionalism. In addition, instead of participating in all sports, the competitors began to specialize; that is, they concentrated on only one Olympic event.¹ Because of this interest in money and the increasing specialization of athletes, the ancient games lost their original purpose; they ended in A. D. 393.

3 The first of the modern Olympics took place in the same country as the original festivals; two hundred eighty-five athletes from thirteen countries competed in Athens in 1896. Today, thousands of athletes from over one hundred countries compete—each time in a different city of the world. The games are popular, spectacular events. There have been

hundreds of exciting, very special Olympic moments that people all over the world have shared by reading newspaper stories, watching films, or seeing the actual events on T. V. or in person.

- 4 In 1904, for example, the Cuban runner Felix Carvajal lost his money in New Orleans and could not afford to take the train to St. Louis, Missouri, where the games were taking place. Nevertheless, he participated in the twenty-six-mile Olympic marathon. To do this, he had to run the seven hundred miles to St. Louis. He arrived just in time for the beginning of the marathon. Moreover, after already running seven hundred miles, he succeeded in finishing the marathon in fourth place. Another runner, black American Jesse Owens, won four gold medals and the hearts of the world in the 1936 Olympics in Berlin. As he received his medals, the ruler of Germany, Adolf Hitler, stared coldly from his seat.

- 5 War between Greek cities stopped the ancient games only twice in one thousand years; politics rarely entered into the Olympic games. In modern times, however, such has not been the case. Political conflicts have influenced the games more often than just during the rule of Hitler; world war stopped the celebration of the Olympics in 1916, and the same thing happened in 1940 and 1944; because of South African politics, people continue to argue over the participation of athletes from that country; and at the 1972 games in Munich, *political terrorists*² from the Middle East killed seventeen people. In 1980 and 1984, many countries avoided the games for political reasons.

- 6 In addition to politics, there have been problems with the athletes who compete in the games. Some have used illegal drugs and chemicals. Furthermore, as in the ancient Greek festivals, there have been increasing problems with the professionalism of modern athletes. Only "*amateurs*"³ are allowed to compete in the Olympics, but the exact line between "amateur"

and "professional" can be a thin one. For these reasons, participants and spectators worry about the future of the Olympic Games.

From *Interactions* Book 1, 1985

Notes

1. Olympic event; one of the items in the program of the Olympic Games
2. political terrorists; people who practise violence for political purpose
3. amateurs; people playing a game, taking part in sports, etc. without receiving payment, but for enjoyment

Exercises

I . Comprehension Check

Read each statement and decide whether it is true or false.

1. The original Olympic games were held in Greece before the birth of Christ, every four years except in time of war.
2. The old games were exciting than the modern ones.
3. The first Olympic athletes participated for money and for political reasons.
4. The modern games are so spectacular that no sports event can match them.
5. Politics haven't had an effect on the modern Olympics.
6. The modern Olympics have some of the same problems that the original ones had.

II . Reading Comprehension

Circle the letter next to the best answers.

1. The ancient Olympic games _____ .
a. began in 1776 B. C.

- b. were held every four years
 - c. were held in time of war
 - d. were open to men and women of many countries
2. The athletes in the very first Olympic game _____.
- a. lived at the gymnasium in Olympia for years before competing
 - b. ran in a one-foot race
 - c. competed in six to ten different events
 - d. participated in the games for the honor of it
3. The ancient Olympic games _____.
- a. reached their height in the fifth century B. C.
 - b. offered a reward of gold to the winner
 - c. were open only to amateur athletes until about the end of the fifth century B. C.
 - d. never allowed professionals to compete
4. The modern Olympics _____.
- a. first took place in 1936
 - b. are spectacular events
 - c. have competitors from over 100 countries
 - d. are always held in Athens
5. Both Felix Carvajal and Jesse Owens _____.
- a. were runners
 - b. ran seven hundred miles to win gold medals
 - c. competed in the 1904 Olympics
 - d. were Cuban

III. Vocabulary

Match each word in Column A with its meaning in Column B.

A

B

amateur

a. certain

original

b. a person who does dangerous things

ancient	c. not strange
marathon	d. scared
reward	e. first
daredevil	f. a person who does something for honor or enjoyment, not money
mental	g. a very long foot race
normal	h. in the distant past
clear	i. money or honor
frightened	j. of the mind (brain); not physical

IV. Structural Revision

as and like

As refers to a person's profession or a part he plays as an actor; **like** is only used for comparison.

Complete these sentences with *as* or *like*.

1. He could swim _____ a fish.
2. He works _____ a fisherman.
3. I once appeared on the stage _____ Othello, but I'm glad I'm not _____ him in real life.
4. He has taken his responsibilities _____ Managing Director so much to heart that he goes around behaving _____ Napoleon.
5. I once had a friend who was in his father's class at school. He never knew whether his father was speaking to him _____ a father or _____ a teacher.

2. COMMUNICATING ACROSS CULTURES (PART I)

cultures

Language Fluency and Communication

- 1 Two people from different cultures meet. Let's say one is American, born in the U. S. , and the other is from another country. Perhaps the person from the other country is an *immigrant*¹ now living in the U. S. , or maybe he is a foreign student staying in the U. S. for only a couple of years. He could be a businessman from *overseas*² on a brief visit or he may be a tourist. Or, perhaps in a country outside of the U. S. , it is an American who has met a citizen of that country.
- 2 Sometimes communication comes easily to them; other times it does not. If the non-U. S. -born person is *fluent*³ in English or if the American speaks the other's language, then conversation is not so difficult.
- 3 It is important to remember, however, that fluency in a language does not *guarantee*⁴ perfect communication all the time. Even two people who speak the same language can have difficulty.
- 4 **An Example: An American in England.** An American has traveled to England and is staying with a friend. During his stay, the American decides to talk to the Englishman about some things that are *bothering*⁵ him.

American: "I feel uncomfortable with many of the people here, but I'm not sure why. I speak the same language, so there shouldn't be any problem. *Back home, I usually get along with people*⁶. You know that I'm very friendly."

Englishman: "Yes, that's true, but you're friendly in the

- way that Americans are friendly. ”
- American: “I’m not sure I understand what you mean. ”
- Englishman: “Well, for example, at the meeting we went to the other night, you immediately called people by their first names. We do that here, but not when we first meet someone. ”
- American: “That’s how we make people feel comfortable. People feel friendlier toward each other when they use first names. ”
- Englishman: “It’s different here. For example, when you met my boss at the meeting, you should have used his last name. There’s something else that you do that English people don’t often do. ”
- American: “What’s that? ”
- Englishman: “You touch people on the shoulder *quite a bit*,⁷ especially when you compliment them. ”
- American: “I guess I’ve never thought about that before. I suppose that is what I do at home. ”

- 5 This is an important lesson for the American. He speaks the same language as the English do, so he assumes that he won’t have any problems. He doesn’t stop to think that he may have to do things differently. Luckily for him, he has someone who can help him understand the people that he meets. He quickly learns that in England he needs to be able to do more than speak English.

From *The Culture Puzzle*, 1987

Notes

1. immigrant; a person who comes to settle in a new country
2. overseas; countries beyond or across the seas
3. fluent; to be able to speak smoothly and readily
4. guarantee; to make certain

5. bothering; making someone feel worried or upset
6. Back home, I usually get along with people; When I am in the U. S. , I usually have a good relationship with people.
7. quite a bit; many times

Exercises

I . Comprehension Check

Read each statement and decide whether it is true or false.

1. When two people speak the same language, there are no communication problems. ☐
2. The example in Part I shows what happens when someone goes to another country and does not speak the language of that country. ☐
3. Cross-cultural communication takes place between people from two different cultures. ☐
4. The American and English cultures are exactly the same. ☐
5. Fluency in another language doesn't mean that communication will be perfect all the time. ☐
6. The American in England had some problems because he had language problems. ☐

II . Interpretation of Words and Phrases

Circle the letter next to the best answer.

1. He is easy to *get along with*.
 a. He's easy to be friendly with.
 b. He does not need many friends.
 c. He enjoys traveling to foreign countries.
2. He gave me *quite a bit* of help.
 a. He gave me a lot of help.
 b. He helped me because he was quiet.
 c. He gave me very little help.

3. It's difficult to *figure out* what to do.
 - a. It's difficult to do this math problem.
 - ☒ b. It's difficult to choose the best action.
 - c. It's difficult to draw the picture.
4. *Although* he has lived here for only a few years, he is very comfortable in this culture.
 - a. He has lived here for many years, so he knows a lot about the culture.
 - b. He has lived here a short time and does not understand this culture.
 - ☒ c. He has not lived here for a long time, but he is comfortable.
5. The American teachers laugh and joke with their students. *Perhaps* this is normal behavior for them.
 - a. Of course this is normal behavior.
 - b. You can be sure that this is not normal behavior.
 - ☒ c. Maybe this is normal behavior.
6. If you meet an older American woman who does not offer to shake hands, I *suppose* it is better for you not to offer to shake her hand.
 - a. I am sure it is better. . . .
 - ☒ b. I guess maybe it is better. . . .
 - c. I agree with you that it is better. . . .

II. Vocabulary

Match each word in Column A with its meaning in Column B.

A	B
bother	a. be, be real
assume	b. maybe
involve	c. think something will probably be true
influence	d. not communicate well or not understand
miscommunicate	e. worry; upset
exist	f. short

observe
perhaps
brief

g. include something
h. have an effect; shape or change
i. notice; watch

IV. Structural Revision

Compare these two sentences:

- * We always think of Spain as a hot and sunny country, but it **can** rain heavily there at times.
- * It **may/might** rain this afternoon.

Can refers to a possibility that is always present, while, **may** refers to a possibility in a particular case, and **might** refers, to this possibility existing but being less likely.

Complete the following dialogues with *can*, *may*, or *might*.

1. A: I'm sure I'm right.

B: You _____ be right. I'm in no position to say. But everyone _____ make mistakes. Why don't you show the results to someone else? They _____ be able to confirm your opinion.

2. A: What's the weather like? Is it going to be sunny this afternoon?

B: I'm not sure. It _____ be, but we _____ get a storm. I admit that it doesn't look like it at the moment, but the trouble is that storms _____ spring up so quickly round here that you never know when to expect them. But we _____ be lucky. There's no sign of trouble at the moment. It _____ be wise not to go sailing, though. It'll probably be all right, but you shouldn't take any risks.

3. COMMUNICATING ACROSS CULTURES (PART II)

Culture Learning

- 6 Fluency in another language is one of the most important *goals*¹ of a newcomer to another country. In addition, understanding the culture and learning to communicate comfortably with the people of that culture are as important as learning the rules of the language. Language learning and culture learning go together and may take a long time.
- 7 Sometimes people feel that they know a culture after a few weeks or months. People do learn a lot when they first begin living in another culture, but this is only the first stage of learning. It usually involves things like learning everyday activities and some basic customs.
- 8 To really learn another culture, people have to go beyond the first stage. This is a *challenge*² because it is often difficult to know what to learn. Much of what we call "culture" is hard to see.
- 9 **Culture is like an iceberg.** ³ Picture in your mind a huge iceberg in the ocean. The only part of the iceberg that you see is the tip. You don't see the rest of the iceberg because it is hidden from sight, *submerged*⁴ below the water. It's easy to forget that it is there. Most of the iceberg is deep within the ocean, just as much of culture is *deep within*⁵ people.
- 10 When you meet someone from another culture, certain cultural differences are obvious. You hear another language or you hear your own language spoken with an *accent*. You see different foods, clothes, and sometimes *physical features of people*. ⁶ You observe new customs or habits, such as the use of chopstick or bowing or kissing on both cheeks when greet-