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大学英语

快速阅读

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快速阅读

第六册

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前 言

《大学英语》是根据国家教育委员会审定批准的《大学英语教学大纲(文理科本科用)》编写的一套系列教材,分精读、泛读、听力、快速阅读、语法与练习五种教程。

本教材重视英语语言基础,从各方面保证文、理科的通用性,适用于大学英语基础阶段的教学。

本教材的精读、泛读、快速阅读和听力教程各按分级教学的要求编写六册,每级一册;语法与练习编写四册,供1—4级使用。精读与听力教程均配有教师用书和录音磁带。对低于大纲规定入学要求的学生,另编预备级精读、泛读教程各两册。

上述五种教程根据各自的课型特点自成体系,但又相互配合,形成整体,以贯彻大纲所提出的三个层次的要求:“培养学生具有较强的阅读能力、一定的听的能力、初步的写和说的能力。”全套教材由复旦大学、北京大学、华东师范大学、中国人民大学、武汉大学和南京大学合作编写,复旦大学董亚芬教授审订。

大学外语教材编审委员会综合大学英语编审组的全体成员对这套教材的设计与编写自始至终给予关注,分工审阅了全套教材并提出宝贵意见。上海外语教育出版社的编辑同志在付梓前仔细编审,精心设计,给予我们很大帮助和促进。

《大学英语》快速阅读教程由中国人民大学外语系负责编写。谌馨荪教授担任主编,许孟雄教授担任主审,参加本册编写的有余申燕副教授和李守京副教授。

本书为快速阅读教程第六册,供大学英语六级学生使用。

由于时间仓促,编者水平与经验有限,教材中不妥之处在所难免,希望广大读者批评指正。

编 者

1991年11月

使用 说 明

本教程旨在培养学生的正确阅读习惯,提高学生的阅读能力和速度。为保证语言文字的规范化,课文全部选自英、美原著,但有少量删改。选材力求多样化,知识性和趣味性兼顾。

全书共分六册,每册十单元二十课。每篇选文均配有多项选择练习,以测试学生对课文的理解能力。快速阅读主要着眼于培养阅读速度,强调在单位时间内快速获取所需信息,因此每篇材料均略浅于相应的精、泛读课文。篇幅跨度为 250—600 词左右,生词控制在 2%—3% 之间。快速阅读的全部教学活动都要求在课内进行。每单元进行一次,每次使用一至两篇,阅读后即做练习,所需时间(包括练习)约十分钟。每次练习后,学生应及时记录阅读和练习所分别占用的时间,供日后进行自我评估。

使用本教程时,应注意下列各点:

1. 为便于教学,本教程印成活页,由教师保管,使用时临时分发。学生不得预习。
2. 阅读时不能查阅词典,如有生词,可根据上下文进行猜测以确定词义。
3. 培养边阅读、边理解、边记忆的良好习惯。读完课文即做练习,做练习时,不再翻阅已读过的课文。
4. 阅读后,由教师收回快速阅读材料和练习,予以批改并记录成绩。

编 者

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1. Just the Job!

Rodney Mace, 35, is married with two young children, and is a part-time teacher of architectural history. "I am constantly surprised by other people's surprise, when they come to the house and see me cleaning a floor or hanging out the washing. Their eyes open wide at the sight of it! Much of the comment comes from men, but I am even more surprised at the number of women who comment too."

His wife Jane, an Oxford graduate in modern languages, has a demanding full-time job. She is director of the Cambridge House literacy scheme for adults in South London. Her working week involves several evenings and Saturdays, and at these times her husband is in sole charge of home and family. Apart from this, they share household jobs and employ a child-minder for the afternoons. This enables him to teach two days a week and to do what he considers his principal work: writing. He has written several books and spends much of his time in the British Museum Reading Room, cycling there from his home in Brixton.

People ask the Maces if they think that their children miss them. One can argue that satisfied parents generally have satisfied children, but in any case the Maces are careful to reserve time and energy to play with their children. "And they have now developed relationships with other adults and children."

Previously, Rodney Mace worked full-time and Jane only part-time. Then 18 months ago, the director of the literacy scheme left. "It seemed to me that Jane was very well suited to do this job. She was very doubtful about it. But I urged her to apply. She did, and she got it." Jane Mace confirms that she needed this encouragement, as so many women initially do.

Did his male ego suffer from the change-over? Nothing like that occurred. But he still seems amazed at the way it changed his thinking. "I felt that we were finally going to be partners. I felt enormous relief. I wasn't avoiding responsibility, but changing it. Our relationship is so much better now. It has been a change for the good for both of us—I think for all of us, in every aspect of our lives. I cannot overemphasize that: in every aspect. I think it is fundamental that the woman works. The idea of equal partnership is an illusion if one partner doesn't work."

400 words

1. Just the Job!

Comprehension Exercise

1. The article is about a couple whose married life is happier because _____.
 - a. they have a truly equal partnership
 - b. the husband enjoys staying at home
 - c. they earn more money
 - d. the wife has a full-time job
2. At one time, Rodney Mace _____.
 - a. spent all his time writing books
 - b. taught architecture and history
 - c. had a full-time job
 - d. worked for the Cambridge House literacy scheme
3. Jane finally decided to apply for her present job because _____.
 - a. she thought she had better qualifications than others
 - b. her husband had persuaded her to
 - c. it was very well paid
 - d. some of her friends had encouraged her to
4. The Maces _____.
 - a. neglect their children
 - b. always manage to spend some time with their children
 - c. have helped find friends for their children
 - d. miss their children very much
5. It is implied in the passage that _____.
 - a. the Maces believe a good career is even more important than their family life
 - b. Rodney's children are quite happy with their position in the family
 - c. even capable women sometimes need encouragement from their families
 - d. the practice of sharing household jobs between husband and wife is commonplace in London
6. According to this passage the challenge to conventional ideas about the man-woman re-

lationship _____.

- a. is applauded worldwide
- b. seems to be sacrificing the men's interests to the women's
- c. has developed at an unheard-of speed
- d. will inevitably change people's ways of thinking

7. We can infer from this passage that a change-over of roles in the family _____.

- a. is quite necessary in modern life
- b. is probably based on some practical reasons
- c. aims solely at a complete emancipation of women
- d. shows women are not necessarily inferior to men

2. Conquering the Channel

England and France are separated by 22 miles of open ocean at the closest point.

Attempts to swim the English Channel have been made by people of all ages and from various walks of life. Each swimmer is drawn to the famous channel for different reasons, but each has the same goal—to conquer the Channel.

The English Channel was first crossed in 1875 by Matthew Webb, an Englishman, who swam breaststroke from Dover, England, to Calais, France. Since then, over 3,700 people have made approximately 4,500 attempts on the Channel. Only 297 people (199 men and 98 women), however, have successfully duplicated Webb's remarkable achievement.

Cold water, rough seas, strong currents, heavy winds and jellyfish are among the many reasons why the success rate is so low.

Attempts are usually made between late July and mid-October when the water temperature reaches a tolerable level (57—62 degrees Fahrenheit).

Swimmers and escort crews must wait for periods of calm seas and light winds lasting 10—20 hours.

Much to the frustration of the athletes and their coaches and crews, the weather may only cooperate a few days each year.

Once in the Channel, swimmers are always at the mercy of the elements since temperatures, winds and currents can change hourly. Quite often, luck and good timing play as important a role in a swimmer's success as proper physical training and mental preparation.

As a result of bogus claims of success, the Channel Swimming Association was established to authenticate all crossings. The Association also issues a list of knowledgeable navigators and provides invaluable advice to those intending to attempt the swim. Interested individuals should notify the Association of their plans several months in advance.

Most swimmers attempt to swim between Dover's Shakespeare Beach in England and Cap Griz-Nez, France. Matthew Webb's time of 21 hours and 45 minutes in 1875 has been significantly reduced to 7 hours and 40 minutes—a record set by Penny Lee Dean in 1978. In 1961, Channel swimming entered a new era when Antonio Abertondo from Argentina successfully completed the first double crossing (England-France-England) in 43 hours and 10 minutes. This record now stands at 17 hours and 56 minutes, set by New Zealander Philip Rush in 1985. Remarkably, Cindy Nicholas from Canada has successfully made a double crossing on five separate occasions. After years of trying, Jon Erikson from Chicago made the first and only triple crossing of the Channel in 1981, in 38 hours and 27 minutes.

Channel swimmers come from all ages and with various abilities and backgrounds. Two

12-year-old English school children have completed the Channel on separate occasions. A famous swimming coach, James completed the swim in September of 1979 at the age of 58. Sixty-five-year-old Ashby Taylor and 47-year-old Stella Taylor are the oldest male and female swimmers currently on record. Swimmers with various disabilities (polio, blindness, missing limbs) have also been successful. These athletes, whether they ultimately succeed or fail, are shining examples of the indomitable human spirit.

498 words

2. Conquering the Channel

Comprehension Exercise

1. Which of the following best expresses the main idea of the passage?
 - a. For a swimmer, conquering the English Channel is the dream of a lifetime.
 - b. Many people have set shining examples in conquering the Channel.
 - c. The key to success lies in luck and good timing.
 - d. Channel swimming has entered a new era.
2. Which of the following is NOT among the many reasons mentioned for the low success rate?
 - a. Cold water and heavy winds.
 - b. Rough seas and jellyfish.
 - c. Changeable temperatures and currents.
 - d. Poor physical training.
3. Up to the time of writing this article, 297 people have _____.
 - a. surpassed Matthew Webb's achievement
 - b. broken records in Channel swimming
 - c. tried to swim the Channel
 - d. succeeded in conquering the Channel
4. Once in the Channel, a swimmer's success often depends on whether _____.
 - a. he is well trained
 - b. he is mentally prepared
 - c. he has a strong will
 - d. the weather is cooperative
5. Which of the following is NOT a role of the Channel Swimming Association?
 - a. Confirming all crossings.
 - b. Informing Channel swimmers of the experienced navigators.
 - c. Training qualified coaches and escorts.
 - d. Providing invaluable advice to Channel swimmers.
6. Which of the following is NOT true?

- a. Swimming the English Channel is no sport for the disabled.
 - b. Swimmers usually attempt to cross the Channel between late July and mid-October.
 - c. Only a few days each year are suitable for Channel swimming.
 - d. The proper weather pattern must last long enough for a crossing.
7. Which of the following is true?
- a. The age for Channel swimming is between 18 and 60.
 - b. Penny Lee Dean set a record of 21 hours and 45 minutes in 1978.
 - c. The only triple crossing was made in 1985.
 - d. The man who has successfully made a double crossing on five separate occasions is from Canada.
8. According to the passage, swimming the English Channel is probably ____.
- a. a rare sport
 - b. a personal challenge
 - c. good exercise
 - d. a dangerous activity
9. The writer's attitude towards Channel swimming is ____.
- a. matter-of-fact
 - b. sarcastic
 - c. admiring
 - d. indifferent

3. Our Lost Children

Although we Americans in recent decades have grown richer, our children have grown poorer. Many families no longer adequately perform the nurturing and supporting function that children need, emotionally and intellectually.

The evil consequences for children are not in dispute. The rate of suicide among children aged ten to fourteen is twice as high as it was twenty years ago. For children aged fifteen to nineteen, the rate has tripled.

Since 1963, crimes by children have been rising at a faster rate than the juvenile population. About half of such crimes involve the traditional youthful offenses of theft, breaking and entering, and vandalism, but serious, violent crimes, though still involving a relatively small proportion of children, are going up at a startling rate. The rate of armed robbery, rape, and murder by juveniles has doubled in a decade.

The Senate Juvenile Delinquency Subcommittee surveyed 750 school districts and reported the following changes between 1970 and 1973.

Dropouts increased by 11 percent. Drug and alcohol offenses on school property were up 37 percent. Burglaries of school buildings were up 11 percent and assaults on teachers up 77 percent.

Among those who are thought of as "normal" children, lower reading scores and scholastic aptitude scores reveal intellectual impoverishment. Beyond all this loom the apathy and waste of the counterculture. Its existence is no longer news, but its ranks are still swelled each year by thousands of pathetic runaways and dropouts.

What forces are producing the increasingly severe stresses on today's children?

The phenomenon is complex and baffling, but several developments seem to be interacting. Urbanization is a factor. Children who might have made it on a farm or in a village, despite adverse family circumstances such as extreme poverty or a father's desertion, encounter disaster in a big city with its anonymity and diverse temptations.

Births by unwed mothers and divorce, two trends that are both rising steadily, result in depriving children of the stable, two-parent support that they need in their growing years. One out of every six children under eighteen today is living in a single-parent family. This is almost double the proportion in 1950.

Many divorced or widowed parents obviously succeed with their children, but ideally, rearing a child is a two-person job. When one parent is missing, the risk of failure increases. Indeed, it is best if a child has grandparents or other supportive relatives on the scene as well.

Instead, what has happened is the near disappearance of the extended family and the

substitution of television, the hopelessly inadequate electronic baby-sitter. One study, for example, revealed that fifty years ago half of the households in Massachusetts included at least one adult besides the parents. Today the figure is only 4 percent. In a small child's life, "Captain Kangaroo" is no substitute for a devoted grandmother.

464 words