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《大学公共英语学习丛书》

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第三册

大学英语 系列读物

北京出版社

大学英语系列读物

ENGLISH READING SERIES
FOR COLLEGE STUDENTS

第 3 册

BOOK 3

王静芬 刘庆华 杨桂华 编
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前 言

外语的熟练阅读能力是大学生和一般科技工作者必须具备的基本功之一。国家教委1985年制定的《大学英语教学大纲》，要求学生达到每分钟阅读50~70词（大体相当于每小时10~14页）；而实际工作中往往要求达到每分钟能阅读100~120词（相当于每小时20页），并要有较高的准确度，才能称作熟练阅读。但目前不少学生在不同程度上存在着忽视阅读的倾向。据了解，一些出国生在国外学习期间，由于阅读能力跟不上，不仅大量书刊资料看不完，而且影响听、说、写能力的进一步提高。由此可见，阅读能力是与提高听、说、写能力紧密相关的。

《大学英语系列读物》的编写，旨在帮助学生通过大量课外阅读，培养阅读兴趣，扩大词汇量和提高阅读能力。这套读物共分3册（每册2级，共6级），具有以下特点：

一、材料新颖，全部选自原著。读物的素材大部分摘选自70年代至80年代英美的原版书籍、报刊，一般都未作删改。

二、词汇丰富，阅读量大。经计算机统计，全套系列读物的阅读量在165,000词以上，总词汇量超过8,000。因此，这套读物既可对大学课本中出现的词汇起到复习巩固作用，又能扩大词汇量。

三、题材广泛，趣味性和知识性强。内容包括社会、文化、史地、故事、寓言、童话、传说、人物传记、风土人情、科普常识、报刊等等。

四、注释详细，便于自学。文章中词汇、语法、词组、习语和

阅读理解上的难点都作了较详细的注释和翻译，读者即使不借助词典，也能阅读。

五、由浅入深，循序渐进。全部文章按难易程度和不同题材分类编排，便于阅读欣赏和积累词汇。

因此，这套读物既可作为大专院校学生的课外读物，也可作为一般科技工作者和业余英语爱好者的自学丛书。

《大学英语系列读物》由李相崇教授（原北京高等院校公共外语教学研究会主任、清华大学外语系主任）审阅，吴琼教授审校。在编写过程中并得到清华大学外语系许多同志的帮助和支持，在此表示衷心的感谢。

由于编者水平有限，时间紧迫，缺点错误在所难免，欢迎广大读者批评指正。

编者

一九八五年三月

内 容 提 要

《大学英语系列读物》是为提高大专院校学生英语阅读能力而编写的。这套读物共分3册，内容包括社会、文化、史地、风土人情、人物传记、科普常识、寓言、故事等。全部素材选自70年代和80年代英美原版书刊，具有题材广泛、内容新颖、阅读量大、知识性、趣味性强等特点。编排上由易到难，注释详细，便于阅读。此书在清华大学部分学生中试用，受到欢迎，被认为是训练阅读能力，提高阅读速度的一套较好的泛读材料。

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STAGE ONE

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1 The Marvels¹ of Colour

The *traffic lights² were red when the motorist approached them. To the surprise of his passenger the car did not slow down. Suddenly the passenger was thrown forward in the vehicle as the driver put on his brakes at the last minute. The car *skidded to a halt just in time³.

"Sorry," said the driver. "I didn't notice the light. I thought it was green until I saw that it was the top light which was shining. I am colour blind; I can't see red colours as you can."

This strange story is quite true. In fact about ten men in every hundred suffer from colour blindness in some way; women are luckier—only about one in two hundred *is affected in this manner⁴. Perhaps, after all, it is safer to be driven by a woman!

There are different forms of colour blindness. In some cases a man may not be able to see deep red. He may think that red, orange and yellow are all *shades of green⁵. Sometimes a person cannot tell the difference between blue and green. In rare cases an unlucky man may see everything in shades of green—a strange world indeed.

In certain occupations colour blindness can be dangerous, and candidates⁶ are tested most carefully. For example, when fighting in the jungle at night soldiers *use very lights or flares to signal to each other⁷. A green light may mean "Advance" and a red light may mean "Danger! *Keep back!"⁸ You can see what will happen if somebody thinks that red is green!

Colour blindness in human beings is a strange thing to explain. In a single eye there are millions of very small things called "cones."⁹ These help us to see in a bright light and to tell the difference between colours. There are also millions of "rods"¹⁰ but these are used for seeing when it is nearly dark. They show us shape but not colour. Wait until it is dark tonight, then go into your garden or into a dark room. Look round you and try to see what colours you can recognise.

Birds and animals which hunt at night have eyes which contain few or no cones at all, so they cannot see colours. *As far as we know, bats and adult owls cannot see colours at all—only light and dark shapes.¹¹ Similarly cats and dogs cannot see colours as well as we can. On the other hand lizards¹² have no rods in their eyes but they can see colours very well.

The eyes of some insects are very strange. They have neither cones nor rods but consist of thousands of little "eyes" all joined together. Insects can see *ultra-violet rays¹³ which are invisible to us, and some of them

can even see X-rays. The wings of an ordinary moth may seem grey and dull¹⁴ to us, but to insects they may appear beautiful, showing colours which we cannot see. Indeed, scientists know that there are other colours around us which insects can see but which we cannot.

One scientist experimented with some ants which normally keep their "eggs" in the dark. When he put their eggs in the sunlight, the ants quickly dragged them into a dark place. The eggs were then put in different coloured rays of light. When the scientist shone an ultra-violet ray on the eggs, the ants quickly dragged them into a red light, thinking that it was darkness.

Some insects have favourite colours. Mosquitoes like blue but do not like yellow. A red light will not attract insects, but a blue lamp will.

In a similar way human beings have favourite colours. Blue is often popular because it is the colour of the cool sky and sea. Green is a peaceful colour which makes us think of wide fields and forests. Yellow is the cheerful colour of the sun. On the other hand, red is the colour of blood and fire. It makes some people think of accidents, danger and bloodshed¹⁵. Black is the colour of the night. In the dark we cannot see what is around us, so we are sometimes afraid of the unknown and do not like black as a colour. Perhaps that is why it is often the colour of mourning¹⁶.

Yet we are lucky. With the aid of the cones in our

eyes we can see many beautiful colours by day, and with the aid of the rods we can see shapes (but not colours) at night. One day we may even learn more about the invisible colours around us.

注:

1. 奇迹
2. 交通管理色灯(俗称红绿灯)
3. 恰好刚刚刹住停下来[to skid: (刹着车)滑行; halt: 停止]
4. 患色盲[to affect: (疾病)侵袭; in this manner: 这样地]
5. 深浅不同的绿色[shade: (色彩的)浓淡]
6. 投考者
7. 正是使用信号灯或照明灯来互相发信号 [very: a. (加强语气)正是那个]
8. 别上前!
9. “视锥”(在视网膜内)
10. “杆状体”
11. 据我们所知,蝙蝠和已成长的猫头鹰根本看不见颜色,只能看见明亮的和黑暗的形状。
12. 蜥蜴
13. 紫外线
14. 黯淡的
15. 流血
16. 哀悼

2 'Television Is Doing *Irreparable Harm'¹

'Yes, but what *did we use to do² before there was television?' How often we hear statements like this! *Television hasn't been with us all that long³, but we are already beginning to forget what the world was like without it. Before we *admitted the one-eyed monster into our homes⁴, we never found it difficult to occupy our spare time. We used to enjoy *civilised pleasures⁵. For instance, We used to have hobbies, we used to entertain our friends and be entertained by them, we used to go outside for our amusements to theatres, cinemas, restaurants and *sporting events⁶. We even used to read books and listen to music and broadcast talks occasionally. All that belongs to the past. Now all our free time *is regulated by the 'goggle box'⁷ We rush home or *gulp down⁸ our meals to be in time for this or that programme. We have even given up sitting at table and having a leisurely⁹ evening meal, exchanging the news of the day. A sandwich and a glass of beer will do—*anything, providing¹⁰ it doesn't interfere with the programme. The monster demands and obtains absolute silence and attention. If any member of the family dares to open his mouth during a programme, he is quickly

silenced.

Whole generations are growing up *addicted to the telly¹¹. Food is left uneaten, homework undone and sleep is lost. The telly is a *universal pacifier¹². It is now *standard practice¹³ for mother to keep the children quiet by putting them in the living-room and turning on the set. *It doesn't matter that the children will watch rubbishy commercials or spectacles of sadism and violence—so long as they are quiet.¹⁴

There is a limit to the amount of *creative talent¹⁵ available in the world. Every day, television consumes vast quantities of creative work. That is why most of the programmes are so bad: it is impossible to *keep pace with¹⁶ the demand and maintain high standards as well. When millions watch the same programmes, the whole world becomes a village, and society is reduced to *the conditions which obtain in pre-literate communities¹⁷. We become utterly dependent on the two most *primitive media of communication¹⁸: pictures and the spoken word.

Television encourages passive enjoyment. We become content with *second-hand experiences¹⁹. It is so easy to sit in our armchairs watching others working. Little by little, television cuts us off from the real world. We get so lazy, we choose to spend a fine day in semi-darkness, *glued to our sets²⁰, rather than go out into the world itself. Television may be a splendid medium of