

大学英语阅读精选

COLLEGE ENGLISH READING

(三)

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前言

本书为大学英语系列教材中的泛读教材,主要使用对象为大学英语专业一、二年级的学生,参加自学考试、培训的学生以及欲在短期内提高阅读及应试能力、具有中等以上水平的广大英语学习者。

阅读在英语学习和提高中具有极其重要的作用,要想提高自己的英语整体水平,采用正确、有效的阅读方法是至关重要的。为使阅读的实践与理论得以充分结合,并使理论能够正确指导实践,本书对主要的阅读技巧都做了简要阐述,并附有范文。

本书旨在通过系统、科学的阅读,以较快地提高学生的英语水平,为此在每个单元之前都有指导性文章,对于学生养成良好阅读习惯,提高阅读速度都有帮助。为了加强对课文的理解,我们在每篇课文之后都安排了形式不同的练习,书后附参考答案。

本书文章、段落全部选自近年来国内外出版的书籍、报刊及杂志,编者对各位作者的辛勤劳动表示衷心地感谢。本书内容丰富新颖,题材多样,包括名人传记、风土人情、史地常识、短篇故事、语言文化、社会知识等,以期在提高学生阅读能力的同时增强学习兴趣,扩大知识面。

本书在编写过程中得到西安外国语学院副院长兼英语系主任余宝珠教授及加拿大籍英语专家 Alex Proudfoot 教授的大力支持与关怀,在此全体编写人员对他们的辛勤劳动表示

衷心地感谢。

由于编者的水平有限,加之时间紧迫,本书难免存在不足之处,敬请各位使用者及同仁提出批评建议,编者不胜感激。

编者

一九九八年五月

于西安外国语学院

CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1 Introduction: Reading Fundamentals	1
CHAPTER 2 SQ3R	54
TEST 1	65
TEST 2	83
TEST 3	102
TEST 4	118
TEST 5	135
CHAPTER 3 Outlining	152
TEST 6	165
TEST 7	184
TEST 8	201
TEST 9	220
CHAPTER 4 How to Read Faster	237
TEST 10	250
TEST 11	269
TEST 12	287
TEST 13	305
CHAPTER 5 Obstacles to Faster Effective Reading	323
TEST 14	329
TEST 15	347
TEST 16	364
TEST 17	382
TEST 18	399

TEST 19	414
Key to the Exercises	432

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION: READING FUNDAMENTALS

Most people have false ideas about what good reading is. To see whether or not you have any incorrect ideas, mark the following statements true or false.

- _____ 1. To get the full meaning, the reader must read material word by word.
- _____ 2. Good reading requires you to use a dictionary to look up all unfamiliar words.
- _____ 3. A good reader always reads at the same steady pace.
- _____ 4. The best way to read a textbook chapter is to start at the first page and read straight through to the end.
- _____ 5. A good reader can remember all the facts in a textbook chapter after one reading.

All the statements are false.

1. Good readers read phrases, not words. For example, read each word in the sentence: *The | average | college | student | reads | ten | books | in | one | semester.* Now read it by phrases. *The average college student | reads ten books | in one semester.*

2. Good readers figure out most new words from the **context**—the parts of the sentence or paragraph that surround the word. The context usually determines the word's meaning. You should use a dictionary only when you have to, because looking up words while reading interrupts concentration.

3. Good readers change their reading speed according to how difficult the material is and according to their purpose in reading. For example, if you have to remember the facts in a textbook chapter for a test, you should read slowly. If you are reading a newspaper for general information, you should read faster.

4. Reading a textbook chapter from beginning to end is a mistake. Special methods for reading material that must be remembered for a test are presented later in this book.

5. Do not expect to read a textbook chapter and remember all the facts. Special methods for study reading are presented later in this book. Before moving to the full-length reading, it would be helpful to review word comprehension and paragraph comprehension.

WORD COMPREHENSION

A good vocabulary is essential for understanding what you read. If you have to keep interrupting your reading to look up word in the dictionary, your concentration will be broken and your speed will be slowed.

You can improve your vocabulary in four ways: (1) You can become skilled at using context clues, (2) you can become skilled at using the dictionary, (3) you can become skilled at using word parts, and (4) you can become skilled at using "word memory"—practicing some methods to help you remember new words.

Context Clues

You learned most of the words you know by hearing or seeing them in a particular context. When you find a new word in your reading, take a moment to see whether you can figure out its meaning from the sentence or the paragraph that it's in.

In the following five sentences, you can figure out the meanings of the difficult words by using four types of context clues: definition clues, contrast clues, example clues, and experience clues. Circle the letter of the definition that comes closest to the meaning of the underlined word.

1. Sometimes an artist becomes famous posthumously, or after his or her death.
A. early in life

- B. after he or she dies
- C. when his or her work is good enough
- D. after he or she has written many books

The answer is B. The context clue used in this sentence is a **definition clue**. The phrase *after his or her death* defines the word *posthumously*.

2. Experienced stock – market investors rarely make the mistake of taking tips from friends and relatives the way naive investors do.
- A. inexperienced
 - B. wealthy
 - C. informed
 - D. wise

The answer is A. The context clue used in this case is a **contrast clue**. Naive investors are contrasted with experienced investors.

3. “Pretty as a picture,” “poor as a churchmouse,” and “sly as a fox” are examples of cliches.
- A. overused expressions
 - B. new ideas
 - C. insults
 - D. flattery

The answer is A. The context clue used is an **example clue**. The sentence gives examples of cliches.

4. Having your own desk, good lighting, and a quiet room facilitates studying.

- | | |
|----------------|-------------------------|
| A. prevents | B. causes difficulty in |
| C. discourages | D. aids |

The answer is D. The context clue is an **experience clue**. Anyone who has ever had the experience of studying knows that good conditions help.

Here is a context exercise that uses sentences that appear later in this book. Circle the letter that comes closest to the meaning of the underlined word.

1. "The flat surfaces, or facets, that resulted made the diamonds sparkle more than other gems."
A. holes
B. problems
C. angles
D. flat surfaces
2. "Homonyms can be difficult—*they' re*, *there*, and *their* are the triple threat that trip up everyone once in a while.
A. words that sound the same but have different meanings.
B. words that look the same but have different meanings
C. words that have opposite meanings
D. words that have similar meanings
3. "A testimonial is a tribute"
A. story
B. book
C. tribute
D. bribe

4. "Therefore, if someone who is widely respected endorses a candidate or a program, you are more likely to vote for the candidate of program.
A. vigorously opposes B. carefully ignores
C. decides to become D. publicly favors
5. "The best speakers are those who make their speeches sound spontaneous even if memorized."
A. bad B. memorized
C. written D. natural

Dictionary

Sometimes the context does not provide a clue to meaning, or sometimes you cannot understand the ideas being presented without finding out what a word means. In such cases, you will have to use a dictionary. Most people know how to look words up, but very few know how to make the most out of the information that a good dictionary provides.

A dictionary entry has five major parts; 1. the main entry; 2. the pronunciation; 3. the part or parts of speech; 4. the etymology (word history); 5. the definitions.

When you look up a word in the dictionary, the first thing you see is the **main entry**. The main entry word is divided into syllables, and the syllables are separated by dots.

The **pronunciation** appears in parentheses after the main entry. You can figure out how to pronounce words by using the brief pronunciation guide, which is usually located at the bot-

tom of every other page (see *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary* or *The Random House College Dictionary*). Some dictionaries (eg. *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English*) do not have a pronunciation guide, but a key to phonetic symbols, or a full explanation of pronunciation can usually be found at the beginning of a dictionary.

It is sometimes necessary to use the pronunciation guide or the key to phonetic symbols because you can't always tell how to pronounce a word from its spelling. There are twenty-six letters in English representing about forty-four sounds, depending on one's dialect. For example, the letter *a* is pronounced differently in the words *cat*, *father*, *admit*, *all*, and *late*.

When you look up a word in the dictionary, you should always take the time to figure out its pronunciation. If you can pronounce a word to yourself, you are more likely to remember it.

For practice in using the dictionary pronunciation guide or the key to phonetic symbols, find an English - English dictionary and figure out how to pronounce the difficult words in your reading materials.

The **part of speech** appears after the pronunciation in a dictionary entry. Here are a few of the abbreviations you will see in dictionary entries.

n. = noun: a word that names a person, a place, or a thing

v. = verb: a word that shows an action or a state of being

adj. = adjective: a word that modifies a noun

adv. = adverb: a word that modifies a verb, an adjective, or another adverb

If you know parts of speech, you can use words correctly in a sentence. For practice, circle the letter before the correct part of speech of the italicized words in the following sentences. Use the dictionary if you need help.

1. The *produce* section is part of every supermarket.
A. adj. B. v.
2. UFO stands for unidentified flying *object*.
A. n. B. v.
3. Extreme cold causes metals to *contract*.
A. n. B. v.

The etymology, or origin of the word, appears in brackets after the part of speech.

In the *Websters New World Dictionary*, the etymology for *concur* says that the word comes from the Latin word *concurrere*, to run together. The symbol < (meaning "comes from") and the letter L. (the abbreviation for Latin) are defined in the front of the dictionary along with other symbols and abbreviations. *Concurrere* is further broken down into the word parts it comes from; *com* = together + *currere* = to run.

Taking the time to read the etymology is important in vocabulary building. For example, if you know that *cur* means to run, you will have an important clue to an entire word family, including:

Word	Meaning
------	---------

<u>ursive</u>	handwriting (letter running)
<u>current</u>	at the same time (running together)
<u>recur</u>	to happen again (rerun)
<u>cursor</u>	quick or brief (on the run)
<u>occur</u>	to come to mind (run up to)
<u>precursor</u>	forerunner
<u>current</u>	flowing (running)
<u>currently</u>	something that passes from hand to hand, as money (running around)
<u>incur</u>	to bring upon oneself (run into)

Word parts are so important in vocabulary development that we have devoted a separate section to discussing them later.

Definitions form the next part of a dictionary entry. Many words have more than one definition. You must choose the one that best fits the context in which the word is used. For example, in the sentence "Thunder and lightning do not *concur* in time, because light travels faster than sound," definition 1 is the one that is meant. The following dictionary entry shows that the word *concur* has three definitions.

concur vi. 1. to occur at the same time; happen together; coincide 2. to combine in having an effect; act together 3. to agree; be in accord

The following words have more than one meaning. There are two sentences for each word. Read each sentence and iden-

tify the dictionary meaning that best describes how the underlined word is used. Write the number of the definition in the space provided. Be sure to choose the definition that matches the part of speech written under the blank.

A. fast adj. 1. firm; firmly fastened 2. loyal; devoted 3. nonfading (fast colors) 4. swift; quick 5. ahead of time (a fast watch) 6. wild, promiscuous, or dissipated 7. (Colloq.) glib
adv. 1. firmly; fixedly 2. thoroughly (fast asleep) 3. rapidly

adj. _____ 1. Mary's older brother ran with the fast crowd in school.

adj. _____ 2. Sam and Joe have been fast friends since childhood.

B. muzzle n. 1. the nose and jaws of a dog, horse, etc. 2. a device put over the mouth of an animal to prevent its biting or eating 3. the front end of the barrel of a firearm vt. 1. to put a muzzle on (an animal) 2. to prevent from talking

v. _____ 1. Dictators try to muzzle the opposition.

n. _____ 2. My dog likes to have his muzzle rubbed.

Whenever you read a definition in the dictionary, you should do two things to make sure you really understand it. First, put the definition into your own words. Second, make up a sentence using the word. Define the word *concur* and use it in a sentence.

Definition _____

Sentence _____

Word Parts

You have seen how the dictionary etymology of the word *concur* helped you with the meaning. It also helped you discover the meaning of a whole group of words based on *cur*. Another way to understand thousands of new words is to gain a knowledge of basic word parts.

There are three types of word parts: prefixes, roots, and suffixes.

Prefixes are syllables added to the beginnings of words to change their meanings. For example, the word **insincere** means not sincere, because one meaning of *in* is *not*. A **root** forms the base of a word. *Cur*, meaning to *run*, is a root that is used with different prefixes to form many words. **Suffixes** are syllables that are added to the ends of words to change their meanings or their parts of speech. An example of a suffix that change a word's part of speech is the suffix *ness*. Adding the suffix *ness* to the adjective *great* changes it to the noun *greatness*.

For practice, write the correct word part from the following list in each blank. Make sure that the words match their definitions. Use the underlined words as clues.

Prefixes

com = together

Roots

pose = put

Suffixes

er = someone who