

大学英语四、六级标准考试参考用书

# 大学英语阅读理解

(第四册)

王 镁 主编

COLLEGE  
ENGLISH  
READING  
COMPREHENSION

北京理工大学出版社

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## 内 容 简 介

《大学英语阅读理解》是按照理工科本科及文理科本科两种《大学英语教学大纲》对培养学生在大学学习各个阶段（一至六级）的阅读能力提出的定性和定量要求而编写的阅读教材。全书共六册，大体上适应于一至六级的教学要求而分册的，便于教学使用。

本书为第四册，共精选短文40篇。每篇文章之后，编写了注释、常用习语、理解练习和词汇练习，书末附有练习答案。书中所选的文章均来自英、美原文书刊，题材广泛，语言规范，具有知识性、科学性和趣味性。读者通过本书的阅读训练，不仅可以提高阅读能力，还可广泛了解国外的文化教育和一般的科学技术知识。因此本书是各高等学校本科生较实用的阅读教材，也适合于研究生及其他英语爱好者阅读。

### 大学英语阅读理解（第四册）

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## 前 言

国家教委颁布的理工科本科和文理科本科两种《大学英语教学大纲》中，对学生在大学学习各个阶段（一至六级）的阅读能力提出了定性和定量的要求。学生们欲达到《大纲》中规定的对阅读能力的具体要求，则必须具备快速阅读的能力和正确理解的能力。阅读理解 (Reading Comprehension) 不仅是培养学生通过阅读获取信息能力的一种方法，而且也是对学生的英语词汇、语法、文化背景知识和分析问题能力的一种综合测试手段。

我们编写这套《大学英语阅读理解》(College English Reading Comprehension)，其目的就是培养学生提高阅读速度，增强阅读理解能力，并可广泛了解国外的社会、文化知识和风土人情。

书中所选的文章均来自英美原文书刊，题材广泛，语言规范，具有知识性、科学性和趣味性。

这套阅读教材既可作为理工科和文理科本科生的阅读教材，也适合于研究生以及准备参加国家英语水平考试和美国托福考试各类人员阅读。

全书共六册，大体上适应于《大纲》中一至六级的教学要求而分册的。本书为第四册，共选短文40篇。编写体例和内容与第三册相同，惟课文的长度和难度稍有增加，以适应循序渐进的要求。

在本书编写过程中，我们得到了我校外语系许多老师的热情支持与帮助，在此谨向他们表示衷心的感谢。

CAE37109

由于我们水平有限，书中难免会出现一些缺点和错误，我们  
恳切希望读者提出宝贵的意见。

**编 者**

**1990年12月**

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## Passage 1

### LANGUAGE AS A LIVING THING

A group of scholars, calling themselves the Philological Society<sup>1</sup>, decided in 1858 that the time had come for a new Dictionary to be compiled. They set themselves the stupendous task, not only of recording every word to be found in English writings  
5 from about the year A.D. 1000, but also of tracing the history of each from its first appearance in manuscript, and showing the changes it had undergone in form, spelling and meaning. Like Johnson,<sup>2</sup> they planned to illustrate<sup>3</sup> the use of the word by quotations from various writers, but unlike him they were to  
10 give a whole series of quotations for each word, illustrating its complete recorded history.

To find suitable quotations, they enlisted the aid of hundreds of volunteers, who undertook to read texts and sent in the quotations on slips of paper. Many of the older works which  
15 had to be sifted in this way existed only as rare manuscripts, so that one of the first steps necessary was for arrangements to be made for these to be printed and published. In the course of many years, some six million slips were sent in by readers from all over the world.

20 Progress in compiling the Dictionary was, naturally, slow. Three different editors had a hand in the task before the first instalment<sup>4</sup> was published in 1884 — and that instalment covered



part of the letter A. It was not until 1928, just eighty years after it was started that the final section of the *New English Dictionary* came out. It filled ten large volumes and dealt with 240, 165 main words — the greatest dictionary of any language in the world.

Valuable though the actual volumes of the dictionary were, there was perhaps an even more valuable product of this enterprise — a new way of thinking about language problems and “rules”. The emphasis, you will have noticed, was upon history. The compilers did not pretend to lay down a certain “correct” way of using a word, but showed us the various uses to which it had actually been put at various times in the past. They bring home to us the idea of language as a living, growing thing not as something that can ever be “fixed”.

This new approach has had important results. The grammarian can now regard it as his business to examine the way in which the language works and to describe what he finds. Such descriptive grammar is sometimes at odds with that of the prescriptive grammarian who sets out with a set of rules and uses them to argue what ought to be. The prescriptive grammarian will tell us that we ought to say:

“It is *I* you have to thank”

because the verb *is*, like other parts of the verb *to be* must be followed by what, in Latin, is called the nominative case<sup>5</sup> of the pronoun. The descriptive grammarian says that in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred what in fact we do say is:

“It is *me* you have to thank”

and that this fact alone is a satisfactory reason for continuing to do so.

- To say that the second approach is often the more helpful is not, of course, to say that everyone should be permitted to treat the language just as he chooses, or to suggest that “Whatever is, is right”. In these days, when new words are coined<sup>6</sup> on the least provocation, whether the need for them exists or not, and when the loosest of conversational expressions are stamped with the approval of print, it is arguable that<sup>7</sup> far more thought should be given to what is and what is not acceptable.
- On most matters, probably all grammarians would find they agreed. There does, however, arise the problem of deciding between the expression which is theoretically correct and that which the usage of centuries seems to justify. Among the first writers to tackle the problem systematically were two school-masters, H.W. Fowler and F.G. Fowler, who published their book *The King's English* in 1906. This work, together with H.W. Fowler's *Dictionary of Modern English Usage*, did much to create a new interest in linguistic matters, particularly in those knotty questions which remain — and perhaps always will remain — debatable.

### Notes to the Passage

1. **the Philological Society:** an organization of people who deal with the science of the nature and growth of words, language or a particular language 语言学家协会
2. **Johnson:** Samuel Johnson, editor of the first great English dictionary, published in 1755 萨缪尔·约翰逊, 1755年出版的第一部英语大词典的编辑
3. **illustrate:** show the meaning of something by giving related

examples 举例说明

4. **instalment:** a single part of a book, play or TV show which appears in regular parts until the story is completed 连载, 连续剧
5. **nominative case:** subject case 主格
6. **coin:** invent (of words) 造字
7. **it is arguable that . . . :** there are good reasons for saying . . .  
有充分理由认为…, …可辩驳的

## Useful Expressions

1. **send in:** send to the proper person or authority; hand in  
递送; 提交
2. **in the course of (time):** when enough time has passed 在…  
过程中
3. **have a hand in:** take part in 参加
4. **come out:** be published 出版
5. **lay down:** establish; formulate 规定; 制定
6. **bring home to sb:** make sb realize . . . 弄清楚, 强调
7. **be at odds with:** not agree with 不睦; 争执

## Comprehension

Select the answer which is most accurate according to the information given in the passage.

1. *The New English Dictionary* is different from other dictionaries in \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a) its recording every word since the year A.D. 1000
  - b) its tracing the history of each word

- c) its changes it had undergone in form, spelling and meaning
  - d) All of the above
2. How many years do you think it took to complete *the New English Dictionary*?
- a) Ten years.
  - b) Twenty years.
  - c) Forty years.
  - d) Eighty years.
3. In the preparation of the NED the volunteers were asked \_\_\_\_.
- a) to collect the words from ancient times
  - b) to read pieces of written language
  - c) to send the quotations to the editor of the dictionary
  - d) Both b and c
4. Which of the following sentences is normal?
- a) Who are you writing to?
  - b) Whom are you writing to?
  - c) To whom are you writing?
  - d) Neither a nor b
5. "It was not until 1928, just eighty years after it was started that the final section of the NED came out." (line 23). In this sentence the word "just" means \_\_\_\_.
- a) completely
  - b) only a very short time ago
  - c) only a little
  - d) exactly
6. The purpose of \_\_\_\_\_ is to describe the contemporary forms of language.
- a) prescriptive grammar
  - b) historical grammar
  - c) descriptive grammar
  - d) comparative grammar
7. "They bring home to us the idea of language as living, growing thing ..." (line 35) means:
- a) They cause us to return the idea.
  - b) They make us realize that language is a living thing.

- c) They produce the idea that language is a fixed thing.
  - d) They cause the idea that language is a thing to be discussed.
8. A prescriptive grammarian is different from a descriptive one in that \_\_\_\_\_ .
- a) the former will tell us what we ought to say
  - b) the latter will set out with a group of rules
  - c) the former will tell us the most primitive form of the language
  - d) the latter will use the nominative case in most cases
9. Which of the following statements is true?
- a) The writer says that it is all right for people to write and speak.
  - b) The prescriptive grammar is much better than the descriptive one.
  - c) The compilers should lay down a certain correct way of using a word.
  - d) A new way of thinking about language problems and rules was an even more valuable product than the dictionary itself.
10. According to the article, the writer believes that \_\_\_\_\_ .
- a) a language is a fixed thing
  - b) a language is a living thing
  - c) a language can never be changed
  - d) a language gives a series of quotations for each word

## Vocabulary

Choose the definition which best fits these words and phrases as they are used in the passage.

1. *a series of* (line 10)

- a) a sum of terms
- b) different types
- c) a succession of things
- d) a composition of things

2. *texts* (line 13)

- a) pieces of written language
- b) the main body of writing in a book
- c) the original words of a speech
- d) a standard book for the study of a subject

3. *some* (line 18)

- a) certain but not all
- b) an unknown one
- c) a few
- d) about

4. *product* (line 29)

- a) something made in a factory
- b) result
- c) a new chemical compound
- d) the number got by multiplying a certain number

5. *pretend* (line 32)

- a) give an appearance of something
- b) attempt
- c) dare
- d) claim falsely

6. *set out* (line 41)

- a) state; describe
- b) intend; attempt
- c) begin; start
- d) plan; design

7. *the loosest of* (line 57)

- a) not fastened
- b) most careless
- c) most careful
- d) not bound together

8. *debatable* (line 70)

- a) that can be discussed
- b) doubtful
- c) payable
- d) claimed by more than one country

## Passage 2

### EDUCATION IN ASIA; THE NEED FOR VARIETY

It is commonly accepted that Asian societies must develop in order to raise themselves out of traditional poverty and stagnation and that to do this they must devote more effort and resources to education.

- 5        Some change therefore is inevitable and education, in its broadest sense, seems essential to ensure both that those who remain on the farms understand and adjust to the methods of, and the need for, new forms of agriculture and that those who enter other occupations are prepared both technically and psychologically for their new way of life.<sup>1</sup> Greater education opportunities for women, is moreover the most effective, humane way of restraining population growth.

- 10        Over the past century these countries acquired new educational systems based very largely on English and other Western models. The structure of the secondary system is in most cases still based, in one form or another, on a theoretical, scholastic<sup>2</sup> and examination-directed pattern designed originally to train administrators and similar persons for the upper levels of society. A grammar school system of this kind has great virtues
- 20        for the purposes for which it was originally designed, but it cannot be supposed that it is the most suitable form of education

for the great majority of secondary school pupils.

- The imbalance between academic and technical courses is partly a reflection of public and parental preference. White-collar jobs are preferred to blue-collar jobs. Why should a clerk doing a mechanical job be thought superior to a skilled mechanic engaged in tasks which require both considerable knowledge and judgement is not clear. Similar attitudes prevail at the university since there are everywhere more candidates for arts and social science courses than for physical science degrees, let alone technical degrees. At this level at least it can perhaps be argued that the proper study of mankind is Man, but the rigours<sup>3</sup> of an academic education may well be either quite wasted on, or even positively damaging to, the great majority of secondary pupils. Equally, while examinations are unavoidable to control entry from academic schools to the universities, there is no reason why the education of most school children should be blighted<sup>4</sup> by them.

Methods and styles of education depend also on teachers.

- The traditional didactic<sup>5</sup> methods are both easier and what most teachers are accustomed to, especially if they have had little or no specialist training for their tasks. It is usually easier to instruct, or to require children to learn by heart or to repeat in chorus, than to work to stimulate their curiosity, their ability to think for themselves, their imagination and artistic potential, and their interest in collecting, arranging and making things, and, in the course of doing so, both to lead them to master the basic skills and to lay sound foundations not only for acquiring further knowledge and interests, but also for furthering their moral and social development as civilized and balanced members of the



community. To achieve all this requires more better trained teachers and opportunities for further training in service and in refresher courses to keep them in touch with new methods and with technical developments such as educational television and the use of language laboratories and video cassettes. It also requires more accommodation; teaching is greatly hampered<sup>6</sup> if, because of shortage of space, school buildings have to be used for more than one set of classes, so limiting contact between teacher and pupil.

60 Ideally the more intelligent farm children, having acquired through the education system the understanding necessary to modernize rural life, should return to the villages to impart their newly-acquired knowledge. Once having left the village they do not wish to return.

65 Since circumstances and way of life will differ from place to place and time to time the form and content of education should differ also. Economic advance and education must march in step. Content should generally include, probably even in academic schools, some training in practical skills, but should also cover physical education, sport and other forms of recreation, and should try to arouse interest and participation at all levels in the culture of the society. Nor should education be confined to schools or to childhood; extension work, adult education and night schools are equally important, since education is a continuing process. There are many leisure activities which can also stretch and stimulate the mind, while a number of countries have tried to provide creative outlets for the energies of young people by organizing opportunities for community service. The purpose of education must, in short, surely be to enable chil-