



全国高等农林院校“十一五”规划教材

COLLEGE ENGLISH

Fast Reading 2

李冰玉 主编

大学英语

快速阅读

第

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前 言

快速阅读是指以较快的速度在一定的时间内有目的、有效率地读完一定字数的材料，并从中获得所需要的文字信息，它是培养学生提高阅读速度和阅读能力的基础和最有效的方法之一，而且快速阅读还是大部分大学生今后工作所需要的主要技能。多年以来，培养学生具有较强的阅读能力一直是大学英语教学的主要目标。因此，最近改革的英语四级新题型中专门增加了对快速阅读能力的考查。为了提高学生快速获取信息的能力，使其尽快达到《大学英语课程教学要求》对快速阅读的要求，我们编写了《大学英语快速阅读》。

《大学英语快速阅读》共分4册，每册8个单元，每单元3篇文章。文章的篇幅分别为：第一册700~800词，第二册800~900词，第三册900~1,000词，第四册1,000~1,100词。本教材选材广泛，内容生动、多样，涉及文化、语言、生活、人性、哲学、文学等方面，语言清晰、活泼，文章有一定的趣味性、知识性和可思性。

在培养学生英语快速阅读策略和技巧运用上，本教材着重强调以下3点。

1. 每单元第一篇文章的前三段或前一、两段标示了意群，以指导学生按意群进行阅读。逐字阅读速度慢，不利于对句子或篇章的整体理解。把句子分为若干意群来领会文章的整体意思，可有效地提高阅读效率。在每个意群中，重点要放在实词上，不必过多注意冠词、介词等虚词，这是提高阅读速度的关键。

2. 每单元的第二篇文章前三段或前一、两段标示了主题句，以指导学生学会抓住主题句进行阅读，主题句的位置通常是在段落的开始，其特点是开门见山地摆出

问题，然后加以详细论述。其作用是使文章的结构更加清晰，更具有说服力，便于读者迅速地把握主题和预测该段落的内容。

3. 每篇文章后面都设计了不同形式的练习，目的是提高学生的阅读能力，同时增强他们学习英语的自信心和兴趣。

此外，每篇文章后加注了少量的文化点，文中插注了少量生词，希望能帮助学生提高学习效率。

本册文章以说明文为主。在选材过程中，我们一方面注意题材的广泛性，另一方面又注重内容的健康性、趣味性。文章涉及英美文化、人文、社会、心理、科技等方面。文章生词量不超过3%，本册阅读词汇量超过25,000。为了适合教学目的，我们对部分内容进行了适当的删改。

本教材适合我国高等院校非英语专业大学一年级和二年级开设快速阅读英语课使用，也可作为英语阅读强化班的培训教材，同时适合广大水平相当的英语自学者。由于编者水平和时间所限，不足之处在所难免，敬请广大读者批评指正。

编 者

2007年1月

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Unit 1

Passage 1

Democracy and Government

The British constitution

There is no written constitution (宪法) in Britain. // A thousand years ago, // before the Norman Conquest in 1066, // the Anglo-Saxon kings // consulted the Great Council // (an assembly of the leading men // from each district) // before taking major decisions. // Between 1066 and 1215 // the king ruled alone, // but in 1215 // the nobles forced King John // to accept Magna Carta (the Great Charter), // which took away some of the king's power. // In later centuries // this was seen as the first occasion // on which the king was forced to take advice. // In 1264 // the first parliament of nobles met together. // Since then // the British Constitution has evolved, // in other words, // it has grown up slowly, // as a result of countless Acts of Parliament. // There have been no violent changes in the constitution since the "bloodless revolution" of 1688. // Then, Parliament invited William and Mary // to become Britain's first constitutional monarchs (君主). // A constitutional monarch is one // who can rule only with the support of Parliament. // The Bill of Rights (1689) // was the first legal step towards constitutional monarchy. // This Bill prevented the monarch from making laws // or raising an army without Parliament's approval. // Since 1689 // the power of Parliament has grown steadily, // while the power of monarch has weakened. // The Reform Acts of 1832, 1867 and 1884 gave the vote to large numbers of male citizens. // Today every man and woman aged eighteen and over // has the right to vote. //

The government

The party that wins the most seats in a general election forms the government, and the leader of this party becomes Prime Minister (首相), the head of the government. Prime ministers usually take policy decisions with the agreement of their Cabinet. In recent years, partly influenced by the American presidential style, strong prime ministers have shown a tendency to take policy decisions on their own, but to do this successfully; they must later persuade either the Cabinet or a majority of their party to support their decision. They hold frequent Cabinet meetings at their house at number 10 Downing Street, which is very near the Houses of Parliament in Westminster. The power of the Cabinet is, in turn, controlled by Parliament, for no bill which a minister prepares can become law until it is passed by an Act of Parliament.

Bills can be introduced into either House, but all important bills are presented first to the House of Commons. Here they go to the House of Lords. The Lords only have power to delay a bill. They can throw it out once, but if presented a second time, they must pass it.

Finally the bills are taken by the prime minister to the Queen, who always signs them. The Queen is a constitutional monarch; that is to say she governs through Parliament. She acts on the advice of her prime minister and does not make any major political decisions.

The House of Commons is the main law-making body. If a major bill is defeated there the government usually resigns and there is a new election. In any case, elections must be held at least every five years.

Local government

In 1974 the map of Britain was redrawn, and a few new counties were created—Avon, Cumbria, the Western Isles (Scotland). The purpose of this was to make local government more efficient.

The County Council is the most important unit of local government. It is in charge of the county as a whole. Nobody can plan anything—shopping-centres, factories, parks, race courses—without the permission of the County Council. Its other responsibilities include local roads, transport, the police, the fire service, education, personal social services including old people's

homes, child welfare etc.

Each county is now divided into districts of between 60,000 and 100,000 people. The District Councils are responsible for housing, especially for the building and renting of council houses. It is their job to keep the district clean and to inspect the food shops. And they employ the dustmen who go from house to house to collect rubbish.

The new District Councils are not as bureaucratic (官僚的) as many people imagine. Anyone who wants to build a house, clear their back yard of old iron—or rats—can get all the advice and help they need from the local council office. The British have never liked faceless, unapproachable officials.

County and District Councils are run by part-time unpaid councilors, who are elected in the same way as MPs (议会议员). Although most of them represent a political party, they don't often have political battles among themselves. But the government is not pleased if the opposition party gets control of the majority of local councils. The councilors appoint from among themselves the committees who run the different departments. They also appoint paid full-time officials. These officials, like the civil servants, are completely non-political. The head of each county council and district council is appointed every year by the councilors.

The money the councils need come from the rates, a local tax paid by all owners of houses or land. The amount paid depends on the value of the property. The councils also get a grant from the Treasury. The government never refuses to give this grant because it disapproves of a council's politics, but it may hesitate if it feels the money is being spent unwisely. Some councils are more progressive than others, and, most councils are honest and conscientious (尽责的).

(896 words)

Exercises

Directions: After you read the passage, please fill in the blanks with proper words or expressions.

1. _____ was an important step towards constitutional monarchy.
2. The party _____ in a general election forms the government.
3. Any major political decisions are made by _____, not _____.
4. Bills can be introduced into either House: _____.
5. The source of the councils' money is from _____, _____.

Notes

1. **the Norman Conquest:** 〈史〉诺曼底人(对英格兰)的军事征服。诺曼征服始于1066年,由征服者威廉领导的诺曼底人对英格兰的征服。
2. **the Anglo-Saxon:** 盎格鲁-撒克逊人。1066年诺曼底征服之前,盎格鲁-撒克逊人的后裔在英国居主要地位。
3. **the Bill of Rights:** 权利法案。英国人民为争取民权、限制王权而于1689年制定公布的法案。
4. **Downing Street:** (伦敦的)唐宁街,英国伦敦威斯敏斯特区白厅街旁边的一条大街,英国首相官邸及若干政府主要部门的所在地。唐宁街10号是首席财政大臣的办公住所,首席财政大臣通常但不必然是英国首相。
5. **Westminster:** 伦敦市的一个行政区,英国议会所在地。
6. **House of Lords/Commons:** 上/下议院。
7. **The Treasury:** 英国财政单位,财政委员会,是给财政大臣(Chancellor of the Exchequer)提供意见,管理国库,调整各种经济活动的机构。

Passage 2

The Press

What other country in the world has its daily newspapers delivered at the door before breakfast? Paperboys and girls push the papers through letterboxes before going to school. It is a luxury of the British, and for the paperboy or girl it is a way of earning extra pocket money.

The national press

National newspapers are papers which are sold in all parts of British. Nearly all the national newspapers have their head offices in London, but the famous newspaper street, Fleet Street, now houses only two of them, *The Daily Express* and *The Daily Telegraph*. The rest have moved to cheaper parts of central London. The next move may well be out of London.

The national papers can be divided into two main groups: quality papers and popular papers. Quality papers like *The Times*, *The Guardian*, *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Financial Times*, *The Observer*, *The Sunday Times* and *The Sunday Telegraph*, report national and international news very thoroughly. They also publish articles on many general subjects. The popular papers tend to make news sensational (爆炸性的), and to publish "personal" articles which shock and excite. *The News of the World* has the largest circulation in the Western world. Much of its information concerns the private lives of people who are in the news.

Only one national newspaper, *The Morning Star*, is the official mouth-piece of a political party (the Communist Party), but many of the other papers support a political party unofficially.

The provincial press

(newspapers published outside London)

The three most famous provincial daily newspapers are *The Scotsman* (Edinburgh), *Glasgow Herald* and *Yorkshire Post*, which present national as well as local news. *The Scotsman* and *Glasgow Herald* could be considered "national" papers for Scotland and all three have a high standard of reporting. A few others, like *the Western Mail* (Cardiff) and *Birmingham Post*, have a good standard but are less well known. Apart from these, there are many other daily, evening, and weekly papers published in cities and smaller towns. They present local news and are supported by local advertisements.

Many big cities have successful evening newspapers which give the latest news. London now has only one, *The New Standard*.

The future of newspapers

British newspapers are finding it difficult to meet rising costs. Some of them could save labour costs by introducing a new and revolutionary method of printing, involving the "microchip", which would make it possible for journalists to print their articles themselves. Printers have objected strongly because the new technology has meant the loss of jobs. There were particular difficulties at *The Times*. Its owner, Lord Thompson, closed the paper for eleven months (1979-80) in an attempt to force the trade unions to agree to the new technology. But in February 1981 he sold *The Times* to an Australian tycoon (企业界大亨), Rupert Murdoch. *The Times* has always been a symbol of solidity (可靠性), both to the British and to many foreigners — rather like the Bank of England. Rupert Murdoch, who also owns *The Sun* and *The News of the World*, has given a firm promise that the independence of *The Times* will be respected.

The printers are now using the new technology.

Periodicals

There are nearly 5,000 periodicals published in the United Kingdom. Of these, women's magazines have the largest circulations: *Woman*, (1,700,000) and *Woman's Own*, (1,660,000).

There are magazines and periodicals for almost every trade, profession, sport, hobby or interest. The most important periodicals for the more serious readers are: *The Economist*, which comments on events of international, political or economic interest; *The Spectator*, a journal with conservative views, which publishes articles on many different subjects, including politics; *The New Statesman*, a left-wing periodical containing articles on national and international affairs; *Tribune*, with strongly left-wing political articles and sociological reviews; *New Society*, which has long articles on social matters; *New Scientist*, which reports on scientific matters in language that non-specialists can understand; *Punch*, a long-established humorous magazine which also has serious articles. *The Times* publishes separately a weekly *Educational Supplement*, *Higher Education Supplement* and *Literary Supplement*.

Reuters

There are a number of news agencies in London, the oldest being Reuters, which was founded in 1851 by the German, Julius Reuter. Reuter is now used by newspapers all over the world.

Freedom of the press and the Press Council

Newspapers can say what they like about anyone and anything: the army, the Queen, the prime minister, private individuals, the police, the trade unions, provided they say nothing "libellous" (损害名誉的) or "obscene" (污秽的). Libel (诽谤罪) is the making of accusations which can be proved to be false and which are harmful to a person's reputation; obscene describes something that shocks because it is improper or very nasty. Regarding obscenity, newspapers have very much more freedom now than they had in the early 1960s.

The Official Secrets Act also limits the freedom of the press in Britain.

In 1952 the Press Council was founded to guard the freedom and the reputation of the British press and to keep up the high standard of British journalism. It deals, too, with complaints about newspaper articles.

(844 words)