

中央广播电视大学英语专业本科系列教材

文学英语赏析

English Through Literature

(英) Alan Maley 编著



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高等教育出版社

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(英) Alan Maley 编著

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Preface



This course will use texts from English Literature to help you improve your command of the English language. It is important that you understand that this is not a course in English Literature – rather it draws upon the rich resources of literary texts to teach language.

Literary texts are a particularly good resource for language learning. They offer examples of some of the best writing in English. They open doors for understanding cultural issues and for expanding general knowledge about the world. They help us to become more reflective, more sensitive and more critically aware. Above all they are enjoyable.

You may have some doubts and worries about reading English stories, poems, plays and so on. Some people feel that literature is ‘too difficult’ for them. In fact, much literature is not very difficult at all. I have tried to offer you some quite short and relatively simple texts to begin with, so that you can experience for yourself the simple nature of many literary texts. Do not forget that writers do not write because they want to make it difficult for you to read them. On the contrary – they want readers to be able to read what they write.

Some people also feel that literature has nothing much to do with their practical, everyday needs and concerns. This is not true either. Firstly, the language used by literature draws very much on everyday uses of the language, not some special variety of the language. What is more, the themes and topics which literature deals with are very relevant to our lives as human beings living in a world which is sometimes full of problems for us. Literature can help us understand the world we live in better.

In this course, you will read a wide variety of texts of all kinds: stories, extracts from novels and plays, poems, and even non-fiction texts such as essays. You will be encouraged to read these texts critically and to carry out some tasks designed to activate your English skills. There is a Task Feedback section for every unit in the book so that you can check your work against the suggested answers I have provided.

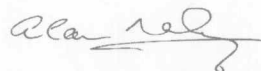
Apart from the main coursework, there is an Enrichment Reading for most units. This section provides you with a wider variety of texts to read, so that you can extend the range of reading material you can handle confidently.

The course also offers you sound recordings of many of the texts in the main coursework and the Enrichment Reading. I hope you will find these a useful support. It helps a lot to hear as well as to read the texts.

There are also eight video programmes to offer further support and encouragement for each of the units in the course. These are intended to further consolidate your understanding of the course materials by adding a visual element. The videos include lecture-style material as well as dramatized readings of some of the texts.

I believe that, if you work through the course and follow the suggestions I have made, you will make great progress in enhancing your proficiency in the English language. You will also become much more confident in your ability to use English. Incidentally, I hope you will also enjoy what you read and develop a love for literature.

I sincerely wish you every success in this course.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Alan Red', with a stylized flourish at the end.

前 言



《文学英语赏析》是根据英语专业本科教学大纲的要求,借鉴国内外英语语言教学和英语文学教学的成果,将语言教学和文学教学相结合的创新尝试。众所周知,阅读英语文学原著一举多得。通过对文学作品的研读赏析,学习者不仅可以增强语感、提升英语的基本功,而且可以开阔眼界、启迪心智、陶冶性情、提高人文修养。

《文学英语赏析》是一套由主、辅文字教材和录音、录像、网络资源构成的适合自学的多种媒体教材。

文字主教材——《文学英语赏析》(English Through Literature)

本教材按照文学体裁分类编排,打破传统以国别、作家或年代为脉络的编排模式。教材中汇聚了短篇小说、长篇小说、诗歌、戏剧和散文等多种文学体裁的名家名作。教材结构如下:

每个单元开篇为致学习者的信,旨在营造积极阅读、快乐阅读的氛围并提供学习内容和学习方法的指导与提示。八封书信为学习者创造了有名师相随的学习环境,帮助学习者消除对英语文学的隔膜感。

正文部分以简洁易懂的英语讲解文学的基本要素,并通过典型的作品具体分析该要素在作品中的意义和作用。将英语文学作品基本要素的讲解与例证分析紧密结合是本教材的一大特色。

扩展阅读部分提供文学名作补充读物。原文有全文,也有节选;作品介绍画龙点睛、点到为止;作者介绍简明扼要;阅读理解思考题从作品本身的写作技巧和语言特点等角度启发和引导学生理解、分析文学作品。编者力图通过对文学基础知识的讲解和对例证的分析、对阅读理解题的反馈等向学习者提供一把进入英语文学宝库的钥匙。

主教材附有多种助学材料,除了正文后的阅读理解思考题参考答案(Task Feedback)外,随书赠送一本手册,内含词汇表(Vocabulary),常用术语(Glossary of Terms),常用网址(Recommended Websites),方便学习者自学参考。

录音教材

《文学英语赏析》配有录音,录有教材中选用的诗歌、戏剧(节选)、演讲等,录音中的朗读出自主教材的编者Alan Maley,他纯正地道的语音、声情并茂的朗读一定能加深学习者对作品的理解。录音教材的形式有CD(2盘)和MP3,学习者可自由选择。

文字辅教材——《文学英语赏析导学》(Guide to English Through Literature)

《文学英语赏析导学》在编写体例上与《文学英语赏析》相呼应,是学习者学习、复习和自我检测的良师益友,也是教师授课的重要参考。

录像带/VCD

《文学英语赏析》每个单元配有一讲50分钟的录像带/VCD,主要内容包括对该单元重点内容的提炼讲解及对典型文学作品的形象化演示。

网络资源

《文学英语赏析》配有丰富的网络资源。中央广播电视大学的网址是www.openedu.com.cn, 我们在该网站上提供与文字教材紧密结合的扩展阅读及视听材料, 并提供学习过程中的指导和帮助。

本教材是中英合作的结晶。中央广播电视大学外语部刘黛琳教授主持了策划工作。文字教材由Alan Maley编著, 中方课程组成员有孙建华、杜亚琛、刘永权、刘丹、张宇光, 课程组负责协调课程资源建设中各个环节、编写词汇表、提供作家图片, 及最后的通读、校对。

本教材的内容经过英语教学界专家教授审定。参与审定的专家有北京外国语大学何其莘教授、郭棲庆教授、张耘教授、张剑教授和对外经济贸易大学黄震华教授。北京外国语大学钱青教授审读了部分书稿并提出了宝贵的修改意见; 江苏广播电视大学的佟元晦老师对本书的设计提出了宝贵的建议; 中央广播电视大学出版社有关同志对本书的版式、插图设计倾注了大量的心血, 在此我们一并表示衷心感谢。

《文学英语赏析》适合英语专业和非英语专业的本科生作为教材使用, 也可供英语文学爱好者业余欣赏之用。作为教材, 本书教学内容供一学期使用, 授课周时数为3学时。

限于水平及其他客观原因, 本书难免有疏漏之处。敬请使用本教材的师生多提宝贵意见, 以便再版时补充更正。

“文学英语赏析”课程组

2006年8月

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Introduction

- To introduce you to the course.

- To help you overcome any doubts or worries you may have about the course.
- To persuade you that literature has a value for your own life.
- To show that literature and other ways of using language are closely connected.



Dear students,

I shall be your teacher for this course, so I'd like to begin by writing you this letter to help us get started. (Or as we sometimes say in English 'to get off on the right foot' — to make sure we make a smooth start.)

I know that you may not feel very confident about studying English literature. You may be worried that the texts are too difficult for you to understand. You may be concerned that you do not know enough about the history, the culture and the conventions of English literature. You may be fearful that you will be all alone, faced by texts you cannot relate to. I quite understand such concerns. It is natural to feel some worries when we meet something new, and possibly strange, for the first time.

However, I would like to reassure you. In the first place, it is not the intention of this course to 'study' literature as a subject. What we are trying to do is to use literary texts to help you learn more language, and to improve your proficiency in English overall. The reason we shall be focussing on literary texts is because they are richer and more interesting than some other kinds of text. So it is not necessary for you to master literary criticism. Instead, we hope you will develop your ability to read texts like these, and to respond to them critically and personally. In this way, you will certainly improve your level of competence in English.

Secondly, let me reassure you that not all literature is 'difficult'. Many poems, stories, novels, plays and essays are written in fairly simple language. You need to remember that most writers of literature do not write because they want to make things difficult for their readers. They write because they have something important to communicate, so they want their readers to be able to understand them. In this course, we shall try to introduce you to easier texts before moving on to a few more difficult ones.

Thirdly, if there is important background information or explanation needed to help you understand the text better, we shall provide you with this in the form of notes. But do not forget that the most important thing is your own personal understanding of the text, not some second-hand interpretation. The more often you take the risk of coming to your own decisions about the meanings and significance of a text, the more independent you will become. Therefore, you should always do the task on your own before you check on the feedback.

Let me explain in a little more detail why we think literary texts are such a good language learning resource. There are basically three main reasons:

The language of literary texts is generally much more carefully and artfully used than for most other kinds of texts (such as newspapers, etc.). This means that literary texts offer a rich resource for expanding your range of vocabulary, your repertoire of grammatical

structures, and your sensitivity to style, and the way the language is used to convey subtle nuances of meaning. In Unit 2, we shall be looking in more detail at the precise ways it does this, for example, through the use of metaphor, patterns of repetition and other literary devices. Literature is language — but language used in the most aesthetically conscious way. It is a mine of language for us to exploit.

Literature is also the vehicle for cultural information and for knowledge about the world. We can learn a lot about the ways people behave in societies far away from our own. I do not mean that we can 'learn' culture from literature, but inevitably, we notice 'difference' when we read literature. This should help us to become more curious about the ways other people live, more tolerant about difference, and more able to see our own ways of doing things more clearly. Literature opens windows on the world.

The third reason is that literature touches our lives as people. When we read literature, we are sharing in the imaginative world of the writer. We often visualize what is happening or being described, making connections between our own store of experience and the world the writer is describing. We also enter the writer's world of feeling. This capacity to see the world through another person's eyes enhances our capacity to empathise with other people. It helps our own development as mature people. When we read literature we are also constantly being challenged to think more creatively and critically about the world we live in, about other people's actions and motivations. We often recognize aspects of ourselves in what we read, and may come to question what we had previously accepted as normal. Literature works partly by surprising us or shocking us out of our habits of thinking or perceiving. It makes us see things new, in a fresh light. All of this helps us to become more reflective, more sensitive and ultimately, more mature as people. So one of the important things literature can bring us is this enriched dimension in our lives. We not only acquire more language in the process but we also acquire a better understanding of ourselves and how we relate to others.

Let me end this letter by suggesting some ways you can make the best use of this course. Of course, everyone studies and learns in different ways, but there are some things you can do which will definitely enhance your learning:

- Read a lot. Research shows that the single most effective way to improve your English is by extensive reading. There are plenty of texts in this course but it will help you if you read as much other material in English as you can find. If you have access to a computer with an Internet connection, you will find many useful websites to consult. (We have indicated some of these to help you get started.)
- When you read, try to use your dictionary with discretion. Preferably try to work out meanings first, and only use the dictionary as a last resort. There is definitely a place for detailed, analytical reading of literary texts: what is often called 'Intensive Reading' — but real reading is fast and fluent.
- Listen to English as often as you can. Apart from the tapes and videos which

accompany this course, make every effort to listen to radio or TV channels in English. Of course, if you know any native speakers of English, try to engage them in conversation whenever you can.

- Keep a personal Learning Journal. This may be a simple notebook in which you can write about anything related to the course. It is a way of 'talking to yourself' on paper about any aspect of the course. You can use it to keep a record of what you read; to write down your thoughts and feelings about what you have read; to jot down problems or questions you want to think about; to make a note of particular vocabulary items or phrases which you want to retain; to record websites you have found useful; perhaps also to write down ideas for your own writing in English. Apart from anything else, keeping a learning journal is valuable in giving you informal practice in writing in English. It also gives you a sense of progress when you re-read it at the end of the course, and see how far you have come.

- Form the habit of formulating questions. By this I mean that, whenever you are reading one of the texts in the course, ask yourself questions like, 'Do I agree with this?', 'Is this like something I have experienced myself?', 'Why has the writer used this particular word?', 'Why...? Why not...?'. Think of questions you would like to ask the author if you had the chance. 'Why did you...? Why didn't you...?'

- Review what you have read and studied — and do it frequently. There is something about re-reading what you have already studied which is profoundly enriching. And this is particularly true of literary texts. It is one of the characteristics of a really great literary text that you can find something new in it every time you read it again.

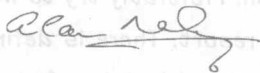
(This is one of the reasons that Shakespeare's plays are still performed — because actors and directors continue to find new ways of interpreting them.)

So, let me summarise the overall objectives for this unit. It is intended to introduce you to the course, and to help you overcome any doubts or worries you may have about the course. We also hope that it will persuade you that literature has a value for your own life. Finally, we shall try to show you that literature and other ways of using language are closely connected.

Letters should not be too long, so I think I'd better stop here. After all, this is only the beginning. In any case, I will write you more notes and letters as we go along.

For now, I hope you will enjoy this course, and I wish you every success!

Yours sincerely,



Alan Maley

Section 1

Two Fables

Objectives

- To expose you to some simple narrative texts.
- To demonstrate that you can read literary texts: they are not necessarily too difficult.
- To demonstrate the close connection between literature and life.

The text which follows is a traditional fable. It is not a 'true story', yet it reminds us of a human failing which many of us share.

Read it through as quickly as you can. Do not worry if there are a few words you do not know. Keep reading and simply try to understand both the surface meaning of the story, and its underlying message.

Then read it again. In your Learning Journal write a few lines giving your opinion about the story and its underlying message. Does the story remind you of anything in your own experience, for example, when you were let down by a good friend? If so, make a note of it in your Journal.

A Test of Friendship

Many years ago two spice merchants were travelling from one village to another in the foothills of the Himalayas. On their heads they were carrying bundles of garlic, pepper, cloves, and cinnamon. It was almost dusk and they were hurrying along to reach the next village before darkness fell. As they walked along the steep, rocky path the sun went down behind the mountains and it began to grow dark.

At that moment they were passing a small rocky hillock, when suddenly they heard a mighty roar and a large black bear came leaping down the hillside towards them.

Immediately, one of the men climbed up a

nearby tree. Unfortunately, his friend did not know how to climb trees, so he fell down on the path and lay still, pretending to be dead. The bear, coming to the man lying on the path, sniffed at his body and at the bundles of spices. It even began to nuzzle his head. The man was terrified but he did not move. Maybe the bear did not like the strong smell of garlic and pepper because, after a few minutes, it sneezed, then walked slowly away back up the hill.

After waiting a few minutes to be sure the bear had really gone away, the man in the tree climbed down again. He walked over to his friend lying on the ground and said, 'It's all right. You can get up now. The bear has gone.' So they set off together along the path again towards the next village.

After a few minutes the man who had climbed the tree asked his friend, 'I saw the bear whispering in your ear just now. What did he say to you?'

His friend replied, 'He told me to beware of travelling with friends who leave you when you need them most!'

(Traditional fable.)

If you enjoyed this fable, you can find more similar fables on these websites:

<http://www.rider.edu/~suler/zenstory/zenstory.html>

<http://www.thesegoto11.com/zen/>

<http://www.readliterature.com/hodjastories.htm>

The next story is a kind of fable too. But this time it is a modern story, written by James Thurber, a very famous humourist who was also famous for his cartoons. One of his stories, *The Secret Life of Walter Mitty* was made into a successful film.



The Fairly Intelligent Fly

A large spider in an old house built a beautiful web in which to catch flies. Every time a fly landed on the web and was entangled in it the spider devoured him, so that when another fly came along he would think the web was a safe and quiet place in which to rest. One day a fairly intelligent fly buzzed around above the web so long before alighting that the spider appeared and

said, 'Come on down.' But the fly was too clever for him and said, 'I never light where I don't see other flies and I don't see any other flies in your house.' So he flew away until he came to a place where there were a great many other flies. He was about to settle down among them when a bee buzzed up and said, 'Hold it, stupid, that's flypaper. All those flies are trapped.' 'Don't be silly,' said the fly, 'they're dancing.' So he settled down and became stuck to the flypaper with all the other flies.

Moral: There is no safety in numbers, or in anything else.

(James Thurber. *Fables for our Time*)

Task 1

p186

1. The writer uses the word 'devoured'. Why do you think he preferred this word to any of the following equivalents?
ate / consumed / gobbled up / swallowed
2. Look at the word *entangled*. Can you find three words the writer uses to mean roughly the same thing?
3. The writer uses the word *landed*. How many other words does the writer use to convey roughly the same meaning?

If you enjoyed this modern fable, you will find another one (*The Bear Who Could Leave It Alone*) on this website, which also has a lot more information about Thurber:

<http://home.earthlink.net/~ritter/thurber>

Section 2

A Short Story

Objectives

- To help you read a modern short story with understanding.
- To give you confidence in your ability to read stories of this kind.
- To offer you some activities to increase your language proficiency.

This is a very short story about a married couple and an incident which happened some time earlier. The couple had had an argument, which led the man to throw all the plates and knives and forks on the floor. He is remembering this incident. As you read, try to find out what causes him to remember it. What does he do? What is his wife's reaction?

The Paring Knife

I found a knife under the refrigerator while the woman I love and I were cleaning the house. It was a small paring knife we lost many years before and had since forgotten about. I showed the knife to the woman I love and she said, 'Oh. Where did you find it?' After I told her, she put the knife on the table and then went into the next room and continued to clean. While I cleaned the kitchen floor, I remembered something that happened four years before that explained how the knife had gotten under the refrigerator.

We had eaten a large dinner and had drunk many glasses of wine. We turned all the lights out, took our clothing off, and went to bed. We thought we would make love, but something happened and we had an argument while making love. We had never experienced such a thing. We both became extremely angry. I said some very hurtful things to the woman I love. She kicked at me in bed and I got out and went into the kitchen. I fumbled for a chair and sat down. I wanted to rest my arms on the table and then rest my head on my arms, but I felt the dirty dishes on the table and they were in my way. I became incensed. I swept everything that was on the table onto the floor. The noise was tremendous, but then the room was very quiet and I suddenly felt sad. I thought I had destroyed everything. I began to cry. The woman I love came into the kitchen and asked if I was all right. I said, 'Yes'. She turned the light on and we looked at the kitchen floor. Nothing much was broken but the floor was very messy. We both laughed and then went back to bed and made love.

The next morning we cleaned up the mess, but obviously overlooked the knife.

I was about to ask the woman I love if she remembered that incident when she came in from the next room and without saying a word, picked up the knife from the table and slid it back under the refrigerator.

(Michael Oppenheimer. *Flash Fiction*.)

Task 2

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1. In the first paragraph, the writer is telling us about something which happened in the recent past. What happened?
2. Which time zone does the second paragraph refer to? And the third? Does this suggest a shape for the story?
3. a. How did the knife get under the refrigerator?
b. Why did the man act as he did in paragraph 2?
c. Why do you think the woman replaced the knife under the refrigerator?
4. Look up the meaning of these English proverbs and sayings. Which one do you think best sums up this story?
a. *Least said, soonest mended.*
b. *Let sleeping dogs lie.*
c. *Time is a great healer.*
d. *Let it be.*
e. *The past is another country.*
5. Were you surprised by the ending of the story?

If you enjoyed this story you will find more very short stories on these websites:

<http://www.anotherealm.com/flash/ff1q01.html>

<http://consideration.org/flash>

If you would like to try slightly longer stories, try:

<http://www.short-stories.co.uk>

You have now read three short pieces of narrative — all stories of one kind or another. I hope you have enjoyed them, and that you now feel more confident about engaging with

literature in English. Before we move on to Section 3, however, here is one last task for you to try.

Task 3

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These sentences are all part of a very short story by the world-famous American writer, Ernest Hemingway. They tell of a tragic incident during the First World War in Italy. The sentences are in the wrong order however. Try to re-arrange them to form the story as you think it should be.

1. All the shutters of the hospital were nailed shut.
2. When they fired the first volley he was sitting down in the water with his head on his knees.
3. There were pools of water in the courtyard.
4. They tried to hold him up against the wall but he sat down in a puddle of water.
5. One of the ministers was sick with typhoid.
6. Two soldiers carried him downstairs and out into the rain.
7. There were wet dead leaves on the paving of the courtyard.
8. Finally the officer told the soldiers it was no good trying to make him stand up.
9. They shot the six cabinet ministers at half past six in the morning against the wall of a hospital.
10. It rained hard.
11. The other five stood very quietly against the wall.

(Ernest Hemingway. *In Our Times*. Acknowledgement to John McRae and Malachi Edwin Vethamani for the idea from *Now Read On*. Routledge. 1999.)

To tackle this task, first try to identify the sentence which you think is the first in the story. Write out more than one possible version of the story before you compare it with the one in the Task Feedback.

Section 3

Literature Is All Around Us

Objectives

- To introduce you to the ‘playfulness’ of language use both in literature and in life.
- To show how features of literature can also be found in many ‘ordinary’ everyday texts.
- To offer a brief explanation of how some of these literary devices work.

Humans are playful creatures, and this is nowhere more true than in the way they play with language. What is more, this is true of all known languages. Just think for a moment of ‘xiang sheng’ or of four-character phrases in Chinese and you will see what I mean. English is certainly no exception. When native English speakers use their language, they seem to have an irresistible urge to play with it, through proverbs, sayings, jokes, puns, rhyming, etc.

The interesting thing is that literature makes use of language play too. In fact, one of the ways of defining literature is ‘language with a very high degree of playfulness.’ So the very same features of playful language use are found both in everyday usage and in literary texts.

In the rest of this section we shall take a look at some of the more common text-types which exhibit this playfulness, and explain the features they make use of.

Proverbs

Like all languages, English has a large number of proverbs. A proverb is a piece of ‘folk wisdom’ which has become crystallised as a fixed set of words. In a way, proverbs are like fossilised language play. They must once

have been original creative utterances but they have since solidified, so we cannot change them (unless we want to play another game with them — see Aphorisms below, especially those by Oscar Wilde).

Proverbs use a range of literary devices. Here are a few examples showing how they do this:

The proof of the pudding is in the eating.

This uses repetition of the consonant ‘p’. This repetition of consonants at the beginning of words is called alliteration. The end of each line also rhymes ‘-ing’.

He who laughs last, laughs longest.

This too uses alliteration by repeating the consonant ‘l’ four times. It is also an example of parallelism, which means that the same phrase structure is repeated; *laughs last / laughs longest*.

Time and tide wait for no man.

This uses rhyme in the sound [ai] in: *time/tide*, as well as alliteration through repeating the consonant ‘t’.

Least said, soonest mended.

Here we have parallelism again; the same structure is repeated — *least / soonest* (both are superlative forms of the adjective), *said / mended* (both are past participle forms of the verb.)

So, as you can see from just these few examples, there is extensive use of a number of literary devices. Let’s see how many examples we can find with some other types of text.

Aphorisms

An aphorism is a clever or witty saying. Aphorisms are different from proverbs because we usually know who invented the aphorism in the first place. With proverbs we