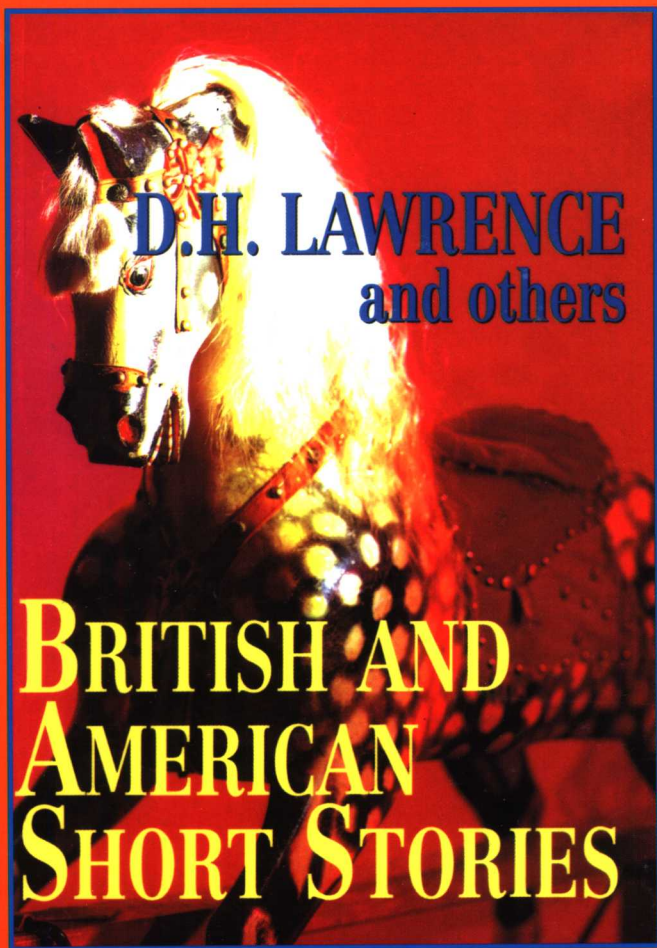




企鵝英語簡易读物精選

英美短篇小說選



世界圖書出版公司

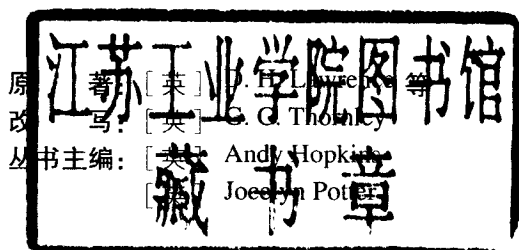




企鹅英语简易读物精选 (大一学生)

British and American Short Stories

英美短篇小说选



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世界图书出版公司



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企鵝英语简易读物精选 (大一学生)

英美短篇小说选

原 著 者: D. H. Lawrence 等

改 写 者: G. C. Thornley

责任编辑: 张颖颖 王志宇

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大量阅读简易读物 打好英语基础（代序）

北京外国语大学英语系历来都十分重视简易读物的阅读。我们要求学生在一、二年级至少要阅读几十本经过改写的、适合自己水平的英语读物。教学实践证明，凡是大量阅读了简易读物的学生，基础一般都打得比较扎实，英语实践能力都比较强，过渡到阅读英文原著困难也都比较小。这是我们几十年来屡试不爽的一条经验。

为什么强调在阅读英文原著之前必须阅读大量的简易读物呢？原因之一是简易读物词汇量有控制，内容比较浅易，而原著一般来说词汇量大，内容比较艰深。在打基础阶段，学生的词汇量比较小，阅读原著会遇到许多困难。在这种情况下，要保证足够的阅读量只能要求学生阅读简易读物。其次，简易读物使用的是常用词汇、短语和语法结构，大量阅读这类读物可以反复接触这些基本词语和语法，有助于他们打好基础，培养他们的英语语感。第三，简易读物大部分是文学名著改写而成，尽管情节和人物都大为简化，但依旧保留了文学名著的部分精华，仍不失为优秀读物。大量阅读这些读物对于拓宽学生视野、提高他们的人文素养大有帮助。

在这里我们还可以援引美国教学法家克拉申（Stephen Krashen）的一个著名观点。他认为，学生吸收外语有一个前提，即语言材料只能稍稍高于他们的语言理解水平，如果提供的语言材料难度大大超过学生的水平，就会劳而无功。这是克拉申关于外语学习的一个总的看法，但我们不妨把这个道理运用到阅读上。若要阅读有成效，必须严格控制阅读材料的难易度。目前学生阅读的英语材料往往过于艰深，词汇量过大，学生花了很多时间，而阅读量却仍然很小，进展缓慢，其结果是扼杀了学生的阅读兴趣，影响了他们的自信心。解决这个问题的关键是向学生提供适合他们水平的、词汇量有控制的、能够引起他们兴趣的英语读物。“企鹅英语简易读物精选”是专门为初、中级学习者编写的简易读物。这是一套充分考虑到学生的水平和需要，为他们设计的有梯度的读物，学生可以循序渐进，逐步提高阅读难度和扩大阅读量，从而提高自己的英语水平。

应该如何做才能取得最佳效果呢？首先，要选择难易度适当的读物。如果一页书上生词过多，读起来很吃力，进展十分缓慢，很可能选的材料太难了。不妨换一本容易些的。总的原则是宁易毋难。一般来说，学生选择的材料往往偏难，而不是过于浅易。其次，要尽可能读得快一些，不要一句一句地分析，更不要逐句翻译。读故事要尽快读进去，进入故事的情节，就像阅读中文小说一样。不必担心是否记住了新词语。阅读量大，阅读速度适当，就会自然而然地记住一些词语。这是自然吸收语言的过程。再次，阅读时可以做一些笔记，但不必做太多的笔记；可以做一些配合阅读的练习，但不要在练习上花过多时间。主要任务还是阅读。好的读物不妨再读一遍，甚至再读两遍。你会发现在读第二遍时有一种如鱼得水的感觉。

青年朋友们，赶快开始你们的阅读之旅吧！它会把你们带进一个奇妙的世界，在那里你们可以获得一种全新的感受，观察世界也会有一种新的眼光。与此同时，你们的英语水平也会随之迅速提高。

Introduction

This collection of short stories brings together the work of a number of well-known British and American writers. Some of those included here, such as D. H. Lawrence and Mark Twain, are better known for their full-length works, while others, like O. Henry and H. H. Munro, are remembered mainly for their short stories. The range of subjects in the collection is wide, but many are based on ordinary people living everyday lives. What could be more ordinary than a man's embarrassment at trying to open a bank account for the first time, as in Stephen Leacock's 'My Bank Account'? Some are light-hearted and humorous, others are darker and more serious, while 'The Rocking-Horse Winner' and 'The Upper Berth' touch on mystery and magic. Most end happily; many have an unexpected twist at the end. All the stories catch the reader's attention from the start.

The writers come from very different backgrounds and their different experiences and points of view are clear from their writing. Herbert Ernest Bates (1905-74) worked as a lawyer's clerk before becoming a writer. He wrote more than 30 books, including the well-known *The Darling Buds of May* (1958), as well as plays and some wonderful collections of short stories. Many of his stories take people and places in the English countryside as their subject matter. 'Silas The Good' is typical of the best of his stories; it paints a gentle, humorous picture of a country character.

The writer William Somerset Maugham (1874-1965) was born in Paris to an Irish family. His mother died when he was eight. After his father's death two years later, he was sent to England to live with an uncle. Maugham studied medicine in Germany and England before deciding to become a writer. During the First World War he served as an intelligence officer

and developed a love of travelling that stayed with him for the rest of his life. One of his best-known works is *Of Human Bondage* (1915), and his excellent short stories show one of the marks of a true short-story writer – the ability to attract the reader's attention quickly and keep it to the end.

William Saroyan (1908–81) was born in California to an Armenian family. Many of his stories, including 'The Barber's Uncle', contain Armenian characters and describe their joy for life in spite of their difficulties. Saroyan wrote a large number of short stories, many of which appeared first in magazines and then later in book form. He also wrote for the stage.

David Herbert Lawrence (1885–1930) was one of the greatest English writers of his time. Brought up in a family where his father was a coal miner and his mother a schoolteacher, he was in a good position to see at first hand the English class divisions that are often presented in his writing. Another of Lawrence's favourite subjects was the difficult nature of relationships between men and women. *The Rainbow* (1915) and *Women in Love* (1920) are perhaps his best works. Lawrence also wrote poems, many of them based on his own experiences while on his travels in Europe and the United States.

O. Henry is the pen name of the American short-story writer William Sydney Porter (1862–1910). After leaving school at the age of fifteen, Porter worked in a bank. He then spent some time in prison for stealing money. It is from conversations with other prisoners that he gained many of his ideas. His stories tell of the lives of ordinary people and often have a surprising twist in the ending – in the case of 'Springtime on the Menu', a happy one, full of hope for the future.

The English writer Hector Hugh Munro (1870–1916) also wrote under the pen name of Saki. He lived for some time in Burma, Russia and France before settling in London. At the beginning of the First World War, at the age of forty-four, he joined

the army and was killed in action. He wrote books and plays, but is best known for his clever and amusing short stories.

Samuel Langhorne Clemens (1835–1910) wrote under the name of Mark Twain, and was one of America's best-known storytellers. He grew up near the Mississippi, and for some years worked as a steamboat pilot on the river before becoming a writer. His most famous works are *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1876) and *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1884).

Francis Marion Crawford (1854–1909) is best known for his ghost stories, of which 'The Upper Berth', a mystery set on board a ship, is a good example. He was born in Italy to American parents, was educated in the United States and Europe, and worked for some time for a newspaper in India, where many of his stories are set.

Stephen Butler Leacock (1869–1944) was an English-born Canadian economist and writer. He studied in Toronto and Chicago, and taught in the Department of Economics and Political Science at McGill University. Although he wrote about these subjects as well as producing two books on the lives of famous figures, he is best known for his collections of humorous short stories. He also wrote an account of his own life in *The Boy I Left Behind Me* (1946).

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Silas The Good *H. E. Bates*

In a life of 95 years, my Uncle Silas found time to try most things, and there was a time when he became a gravedigger.

The churchyard at Solbrook stands a long way outside the village on a little hill above the river valley. And there, dressed in a blue shirt and old brown trousers, my Uncle Silas used to dig perhaps one grave a month.

He worked all day there at the blue-brown clay, with no one for company except birds picking the worms out of the thrown-up earth. Small and ugly, he looked like a stone figure that had dropped off the roof of the little church, someone who had lived too long and might go on living and digging the graves of others for ever.

He was digging a grave there once on the south side of the churchyard on a sweet, hot day in May, the grass already long and deep, with golden flowers rising everywhere among the gravestones.

By midday he was fairly well down with the grave, and had fixed his boards to the sides. The spring had been very dry and cold, but now, in the shelter of the grave, in the strong sun, it seemed like midsummer. It was so good that Silas sat in the bottom of the grave and had his dinner, eating his bread and meat, and washing it down with the cold tea he always carried in a beer bottle. After eating, he began to feel sleepy, and finally he went to sleep there, at the bottom of the grave, with his wet, ugly mouth falling open and the beer bottle in one hand resting on his knee.

He had been asleep for 15 or 20 minutes when he woke up and saw someone standing at the top of the grave, looking down at him. At first he thought it was a woman. Then he saw his

mistake. It was a female. He was too surprised to say anything, and the female stood looking down at him, very angry at something, making holes in the grass with a large umbrella. She was very pale and thin, with a round, unattractive face. She seemed to have a pair of men's boots on below her thick, black skirt.

He did not have time to take another look before she attacked him. She waved her umbrella and shouted, criticizing his laziness, stupidity and disrespect.

She shook her head from side to side and stamped one of her feet. Finally she demanded to know, her thin neck stretching down at him, why he was drinking beer down there on holy ground, in a place of rest for the dead.

Now at the best of times it was difficult for my Uncle Silas, with his full red lips, red eyes and nose, not to look like a drunken sailor. But there was only one thing that he drank when he was working, and that was cold tea. It was true that the tea always had a little alcohol in it, but even so, it was mainly cold tea.

Silas let the female talk for almost five minutes, and then he raised his hat and said, 'Good afternoon, madam. Aren't the flowers nice?'

'Not satisfied with your disrespectful behaviour on holy ground,' she said, 'you're drunk, too!'

'No, madam,' he said. 'I wish I was.'

'Beer!' she said. 'Couldn't you leave the beer alone here, of all places?'

Silas held up the beer bottle. 'Madam,' he said, 'what's in here wouldn't harm a fly. It wouldn't harm you.'

'It is responsible for the ruin of thousands of homes all over England!' she said.

'Cold tea,' Silas said.

She gave a cry of anger and stamped her foot. 'Cold tea!'

'Yes, madam. Cold tea.' Silas opened the bottle and held it up

to her. 'Try it, madam. Try it if you don't believe me.'

'Thank you. Not out of that bottle.'

'All right. I've got a cup,' Silas said. He looked in his dinner basket and found a metal cup. He filled it with tea and held it up to her. 'Try it, madam. Try it. It won't hurt you.'

'Well!' she said, and she reached down for the cup. She took it and touched it with her thin lips. 'Well, it's certainly some sort of tea.'

'Just ordinary tea, madam,' Silas said. 'Made this morning. You're not drinking it. Take a good drink.'

She took a real drink then, washing it round her mouth.

'Good, isn't it?' Silas said.

'Yes,' she said, 'it's very nice.'

'Drink it up,' he said. 'Have a little more. I suppose you've walked a long way?'

'Yes,' she said, 'I'm afraid I have. All the way from Bedford. Rather further than I thought. I'm not as young as I used to be.'

'Nonsense,' Silas said. 'Young? You look twenty.' He took his coat and spread it on the new earth above the grave. 'Sit down and rest yourself, madam. Sit down and look at the flowers.'

Rather to his surprise, she sat down. She took another drink of the tea and said, 'I think I'll unpin my hat.' She took off her hat and held it on her knees.

'Young?' Silas said. 'Madam, you're just a chicken. Wait until you're as old as I am, and then you can begin to talk. I can remember the Crimean War!'^{*}

'Really?' she said. 'You must have had a full and interesting life.'

'Yes, madam.'

She smiled weakly, for the first time. 'I am sorry I spoke as I

^{*}Crimean War: a war (1853-56) between Russia on one side and Turkey, Britain, France and Sardinia on the other.

did. It upset me to think of anyone drinking in this place.'

'That's all right, madam,' Silas said. 'I haven't touched a drop of alcohol for years. I used to. I've not always been as good.'

Old Silas reached up to her with the bottle and said, 'Have some more, madam,' and she held out the cup until it was full again. 'Thank you,' she said. She looked quite pleasant now, softened by the tea and the smell of flowers and the sun on her head. Somehow she stopped looking like a female and became a woman.

'But you're a better man now?' she said.

'Yes, madam,' Silas said, with a slight shake of his head, as if he were a man in real sorrow. 'Yes, madam, I'm a better man now.'

'It was a long fight against the drink?'

'A long fight, madam? Yes, it was a very long fight.' He raised his hat a little.

'How long?' she said.

'Well, madam,' said Silas, settling back in the grave, where he had been sitting all that time, 'I was born in hungry times. Bad times, madam, very bad times. The food and the water were bad. Very bad. There was disease too. So we had beer, madam. Everybody had beer. The babies had beer. I've been fighting against it for 80 years and more.'

'And now you've beaten it?'

'Yes, madam,' said my Uncle Silas, who had drunk more in 80 years than there is water in the Thames. 'I've beaten it.' He held up the beer bottle. 'Nothing but cold tea. You'll have some more cold tea, madam, won't you?'

'It's very kind of you,' she said.

So Silas poured out another cup of the cold tea and she sat on the graveside and drank it in the sunshine, becoming all the time more and more human.

'And it wasn't surprising,' as Silas told me afterwards. 'It was still my winter tea that we were drinking. You see, I had a

summer tea with only a little alcohol in it, and I had a winter tea with nearly a cupful in it. The weather had been cold up to that day, and I hadn't changed from winter to summer tea.'

They sat there for about another half an hour, drinking the cold tea, and during that time there was nothing she did not hear about my Uncle Silas's life: not only how he had left the beer and was trying to give up the bad language, but how he had given up the ladies and the horses and the doubtful stories and the lying and everything else that a man can give up.

As he finally climbed up out of the grave to shake hands with her and say good afternoon, she must have believed that he was a very pure and religious man.

Except that her face was very red, she walked away as proudly as she had come. That was the last he ever saw of her. But that afternoon, on the 2.45 train out of Solbrook, there was a woman with a large umbrella in one hand and a bunch of golden flowers in the other. In the warm, crowded train there was a smell of something stronger than cold tea. The woman appeared to be a little excited, and to everyone's embarrassment she talked a great deal.

Her subject was someone she had met that afternoon.

'A good man,' she told them. 'A good man.'

Mabel *W. Somerset Maugham*

I was at Pagan, in Burma, and from there I took the steamship to Mandalay, but two days before I got there, when the boat was tied up for the night at a riverside village, I made up my mind to go on shore. The captain told me that there was a pleasant little club where I could go and be comfortable; they were quite used to having strangers arrive like that from the ship, and the secretary was a very nice man; I might even get a game of cards. I had nothing in the world to do, so I got into one of the carts that were waiting at the landing stage and was driven to the club.

There was a man sitting outside, and as I walked up he welcomed me and asked me what kind of drink I would like. He never considered the possibility that I might not want any kind of drink at all. I chose one and sat down. He was a tall, thin man, browned by the sun. I never knew his name, but when we had been talking for a short time another man came in, who told me he was the secretary. He called my friend George.

‘Have you heard from your wife yet?’ he asked him.

The other’s eyes brightened.

‘Yes, a letter arrived today. She’s having a nice time.’

‘Did she tell you not to worry?’

George gave a little laugh, but was I mistaken in thinking that there was in it a sound of sorrow?

‘In fact she did. But that’s easier said than done. Of course I know she wants a holiday, and I’m glad she’s having one, but it’s hard on me.’ He turned to me. ‘You see, this is the first time I’ve ever been separated from my wife, and I’m like a lost dog without her.’

‘How long have you been married?’

‘Five minutes.’

The secretary of the club laughed.

'Don't be a fool, George. You've been married for eight years.'

After we had talked a little, George, looking at his watch, said he must go and change his clothes for dinner and left us. The secretary watched him disappear into the night with a smile that was not unkind.

'We all talk to him as much as we can, now that he's alone,' he told me. 'He's so terribly unhappy since his wife went home.'

'It must be very pleasant for her to know that her husband loves her as much as that.'

'Mabel is an unusual kind of woman.'

He called the boy and ordered more drinks. These generous people did not ask you if you would have anything; they simply ordered you one. Then he settled himself in his chair, lit a cigarette and told me the story of George and Mabel.

George asked her to marry him when he was on holiday in England, and she accepted him; and when he returned to Burma, it was arranged that she should join him in six months. But one difficulty came after another – Mabel's father died, the war came, George was sent to an area unsuitable for a white woman – so that in the end it was seven years before she was able to start. He made all the arrangements for the marriage, which would take place on the day of her arrival, and went down to Rangoon to meet her. On the morning on which the ship was supposed to arrive he borrowed a motor car and drove along to meet it.

Then, suddenly, without warning, he was afraid. He had not seen Mabel for seven years. He had forgotten what she was like. She was a total stranger. He felt a terrible sinking in his stomach, and his knees began to shake. He couldn't do it. He must tell Mabel that he was very sorry, but he couldn't, he really couldn't marry her. But how could a man tell a girl a thing like that when she had been expecting to marry him for seven years and had come 6,000 miles to do it? He couldn't do that either. George

was seized with a courage brought on by hopelessness. There was a boat there just about to start for Singapore; he wrote a hurried letter to Mabel and, without any luggage at all, just in the clothes he stood up in, he jumped on board.

The letter that Mabel received was something like this:

Dearest Mabel,

I have been suddenly called away on business and do not know when I shall be back. I think it would be much wiser if you returned to England. My plans are very uncertain.

Your loving
GEORGE.

But when he arrived at Singapore he found a telegram waiting for him.

QUITE UNDERSTAND. DON'T WORRY. LOVE. MABEL.

Fear made him think quickly.

'Good heavens, I believe she's following me,' he said.

He got in touch with the shipping office at Rangoon and, sure enough, her name was on the passenger list of the ship that was now on its way to Singapore. There was not a moment to lose. He jumped on the train to Bangkok. But he was anxious; she would have no difficulty in finding out that he had gone to Bangkok and it was just as simple for her to take the train as it had been for him. Fortunately there was a French ship sailing next day for Saigon. He took it. At Saigon he would be safe; she would never imagine that he had gone there; and if she did, surely by now she would have understood.

It is five days' journey from Bangkok to Saigon and the boat is dirty, crowded and uncomfortable. He was glad to arrive, and he drove to the hotel. He signed his name in the visitors' book and a

telegram was immediately handed to him. It contained only two words: LOVE. MABEL. They were enough to make him shake with fear.

'When is the next boat for Hong Kong?' he asked.

Now his escape grew serious. He sailed to Hong Kong but dared not stay there; he went to Manila, but Manila seemed to threaten him; he went on to Shanghai. Shanghai made him anxious; every time he went out of the hotel he expected to run straight into Mabel's arms — no, Shanghai did not suit him at all. The only thing was to go to Yokohama. At the Grand Hotel at Yokohama a telegram was waiting for him.

SO SORRY TO HAVE MISSED YOU AT MANILA. LOVE. MABEL.

He examined the shipping news feverishly. Where was she now? He went back to Shanghai. This time he went straight to the club and asked for a telegram. It was handed to him.

ARRIVING SOON. LOVE. MABEL.

No, no, he was not so easy to catch as that. He had already made his plans. The Yangtse is a long river and the Yangtse was falling. He could just catch the last ship that could get him up to Chungking and then no one could travel until the following spring except in a smaller boat. A journey like that in a smaller boat was impossible for a woman alone. He went to Hankow and from Hankow to Ichang, he changed boats here and from Ichang went to Chungking. But he was not going to take any risks now: there was a place called Cheng-tu, the capital of Szechuan, and it was four hundred miles away. It could only be reached by road, and the road was full of robbers. A man would be safe there.

George collected chair-bearers and servants and set out. It was with great relief that he saw at last the walls of the lonely Chinese