



普通高等教育“十一五”国家级规划教材

SECOND EDITION [第二版]

NEW COLLEGE ENGLISH

新编大学英语

Fast Reading

快速阅读 4

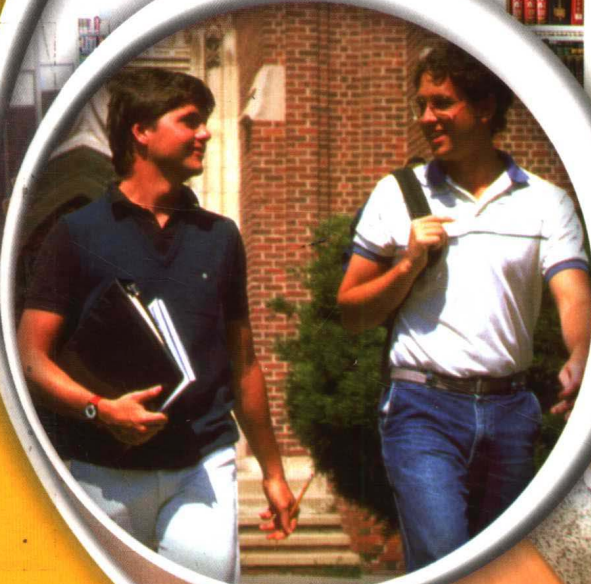
顾问：应惠兰

主编：张军平

方靖卫

外语教学与研究出版社

FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING AND RESEARCH PRESS





普通高等教育“十一五”国家级规划教材

SECOND EDITION [第二版]

NEW COLLEGE ENGLISH

新编大学英语

Fast Reading

快速阅读 4



江苏工业学院图书馆
藏书章

顾问
应惠兰

主编
张军平 方青卫

编者
魏新强 曹原 祁金善 薛莉娅 李星亮 郭卫

审订
闻人行 王德军

外语教学与研究出版社

FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING AND RESEARCH PRESS

北京 BEIJING

图书在版编目(CIP)数据

新编大学英语(第二版)=New College English (Second Edition): 快速阅读. 4 / 张军平, 方青卫主编. — 北京: 外语教学与研究出版社, 2007.2

(新编大学英语=New College English)

ISBN 978-7-5600-6392-8

I. 新… II. ①张… ②方… III. 英语—阅读教学—高等学校—教材 IV. H319.4

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字 (2007) 第 018592 号

出 版 人: 于春迟

选题策划: 张荣婕

责任编辑: 高淑芬

装帧设计: 孙莉明

出版发行: 外语教学与研究出版社

社 址: 北京市西三环北路 19 号 (100089)

网 址: <http://www.fltrp.com>

印 刷: 北京市鑫霸印务有限公司

开 本: 787×1092 1/16

印 张: 8.5

版 次: 2007 年 2 月第 1 版 2007 年 7 月第 2 次印刷

书 号: ISBN 978-7-5600-6392-8

定 价: 11.90 元

* * *

如有印刷、装订质量问题出版社负责调换

制售盗版必究 举报查实奖励

版权保护办公室举报电话: (010)88817519

前 言

《新编大学英语（第二版）快速阅读》分为1至4级，与《新编大学英语》（第二版）主教材配合使用，旨在帮助学生进行系统的、有针对性的快速阅读训练，掌握基本阅读技能，培养良好阅读习惯，提高阅读效率。

英语快速阅读与精读、泛读共同构筑了阅读技法的链状体系。快速阅读侧重于强化阅读的“时间观念”和阅读的“效率意识”，体现了信息化时代高速度、高效率的时代精神，是阅读技法中的现代化新概念。对于广大非英语专业的大学生而言，阅读效率低是制约他们获取知识与信息的最大障碍，由此，培养快速阅读、准确捕捉信息的能力是大学英语教学的重要任务。基于此种认识，我们悉心编写了这套快速阅读教材。

《新编大学英语（第二版）快速阅读》严格按照2004年教育部颁布的《大学英语课程教学要求（试行）》（以下简称《课程要求》）中关于快速阅读的要求编写而成。《课程要求》对英语快速阅读能力的一般要求是“在快速阅读篇幅较长、难度略低材料时，阅读速度达到每分钟100词。能基本读懂国内英文报刊，掌握中心意思，理解主要事实和有关细节。能读懂工作、生活中常见的应用文体材料。能在阅读中使用有效的阅读方法。”对英语快速阅读能力的较高要求是阅读速度为每分钟120词，同时要求掌握寻读、略读技能。

本教材遵循理论与实践相结合的原则，讲练结合，每级分为两大部分：第一部分讲授快速阅读常用技能，采用中文讲解，深入浅出，清晰明了；第二部分为快速阅读综合技能训练，注重训练的渐进性和系统性，共10个训练单元。每个训练单元包含两篇阅读文章，每篇文章后配有两项练习。第一篇与主教材《新编大学英语》（第二版）对应单元的主题一致，方便教学中配套使用，建议课上完成；第二篇选用不同主题，有助于学生拓宽视野、增长知识，可在课下完成。

本教材所选篇目均是在实际教学中试用筛选而来，在保证科学性、知识性的同时，又尊重学生的兴趣爱好、保证难度适中。1至4级阅读文章的长度分别为：第1级600—800词，第2级800—1,000词，第3级1,000—1,200词，第4级1,200—1,400词。配套练习形式多样、设计合理，既注重寻读、略读、猜词悟意、写摘要等快速阅读基本技能的训练，又与大学英语四、六级考试快速阅读题型相结合。

《新编大学英语（第二版）快速阅读》系列教材由浙江大学应惠兰担任顾问。本册主编为郑州大学张军平和解放军信息工程学院方青卫，参加编写的人员有魏新强、曹原、祁金善、薛莉娅、李星亮、郭卫。闻人行和王德军做了稿件的审订工作。

编者

2006年10月

快速阅读常用技能

本书先对设置注视点、扩大识别幅、意群视读、猜词悟意、寻找主题句、辨认信号词、预读、略读、寻读九项快速阅读常用技能进行系统讲解，以便学生理论联系实际，提高快速阅读水平。

1 设置注视点 (Finding a Fixation Point)

注视点是眼停瞬间眼睛实际注视的目标。在正常观看静止物体（如印刷文字）时，眼睛交替地进行扫视和注视两种运动。注视时，眼睛瞄准到视野中的一个固定点，接受视觉信息。眼睛的扫视时间是短暂的，而注视时间较长。既然注视时间较长，那么阅读时视线应集中在什么位置阅读效率才比较高呢？

在读 answer this question 这三个词时，有的读者一目一词地阅读，先把注视点集中于第一个词 answer 上，然后集中于 this，最后才是 question，这样，每一个词在大脑中闪现一遍，难以迅速形成完整的概念（即意群），这种阅读方式不仅影响阅读速度而且影响阅读理解。要提高阅读速度就必须努力改掉一目一词的习惯，逐步养成成组视读 (phrasal reading) 的习惯。如上述词组，只需把注视点集中在 this 上，两眼同时吸收其左右两边的 answer 和 question，这样大脑里便闪现出完整的意群，从而摆脱了对字母和孤立单词的依赖，真正进入积极而有意义的阅读状态。

2 扩大识别幅 (Increasing Recognition Span)

眼睛注视焦点词的同时所能吸收左右两边词的范围叫作识别幅 (recognition span)，亦称视幅。阅读心理学研究表明，大脑和眼睛识别一个词和多个词所需时间几乎是相同的，因为信息数量都处于一个视幅广度之内。因此每次注视到的焦点词两边的词越多，识别幅越大，阅读速度就越快。

首先可进行五个单词的练习，练习时主视区应放在中间，也就是主视中间的三个焦点词，两边单词用余光扫视。如：

We / have a colour / TV.

在练习五个单词达到熟练之后，即可加宽视区练习，一下看六七个单词，甚至达到九个单词，逐渐加宽视区范围，延长目光移视长度，这样就能缩短凝视时间，达到快速阅读的目的。

3 意群视读 (Reading in Thought Groups)

3.1 什么是意群和意群视读

句子可按照意思和结构分为若干段，每段称为一个意群。意群可以是一个单词、一个词组或短语，也可以是并列句的一个分句或复合句的一个主句、从句等。

意群视读是指我们在阅读文章时，以意群为单位，通过眼球转动，逐个扫视意群，整体领会意思。阅读意群时，要把重点放到实词上，而不必过多注意虚词。在按意群阅读时，视线需从一个意群跳到另一个意群，不断地按“停顿——跳跃——停顿”的程序快速往前跃动，进行识读。

3.2 如何进行训练

- ◆ 首先，要端正坐姿，眼睛距离书本约一尺，这样才能尽可能多地摄入文字信息。
- ◆ 其次，要把所读的句子划分成意义较完整的意群，目光要尽量少停顿。如果意群划分得短，视线跨度小，眼睛注视停顿的次数就多，阅读速度会因此而降低。
- ◆ 从一个意群跳到另一个意群时，目光不要盯在字行本身，而要停留在字行上端，这样映入眼帘的便是词组而不是单个的词。目光在一个意群停顿的时候，眼睛只需注视每个意群的核心词或词组，并以它为中心，用余光扫视两侧的词。意群划分可采用断开或划斜线两种方式。

【例 1 断开式】

To increase your reading rate and become a rapid reader, you should practice finding a fixation point in the middle of a phrase or a word group comprising a thought unit, so that you perceive this entire word group or thought unit during a brief fixation pause. Since ideas come in groups of words rather than single words, you will find your comprehension is also improved.

【例 2 斜线式】

Another way to develop / your recognition span / is to go through an article / putting in slash marks / where the phrases should be divided. / After several sessions / you'll find yourself / automatically dividing sentences into phrases / in your mind. / Transfer your newly acquired habits of phrasing / to the reading of many interesting books. / You will be reading / with fewer and briefer fixations. / You will develop / a wide recognition span. / You will make few or no regressions. / You will learn to / concentrate on units of concepts and ideas, / not individual words. / You will develop flexibility / so that you can fit your rate / to your purpose. / You will find yourself / reading more / because you enjoy it.

意群视读可大大提高阅读速度。以上面两段为例，如果读者采用每次视线停留只看一个单词的逐词阅读法，那么完成例 1 的阅读，视线需移动 66 次。完成例 2 的阅读，视线需移动 112 次。而如果用意群阅读法，每次视线停留时可看到一个意群，那么视线由意群到意群，阅读例 1 只需移动 13 次，阅读例 2 只需移动 24 次，甚至更少。

4 猜词悟意 (Guessing Unknown Words)

阅读速度的提高离不开培养猜词悟意的能力。见生词就查词典不仅影响阅读速度还会使阅读变得索然无趣。有效的办法是在该词的上下文中寻找线索，如与其意义相同、相近、相关甚至相反的单词、词组或解释说明性语句，悟出其意，从而使阅读有效地进行。

4.1 利用线索、信号词猜测词义 (Using Context Clues to Guess the Meaning)

当文章作者觉得所用词汇可能会造成理解障碍时，他往往会利用一些线索、信号词对其进行解释说明，以帮助读者理解。常用的线索、信号词有：that is, i.e., namely, or, such as, in other words, for example, for instance 等。

【例 1】The young man's *irascibility*, or bad temper, was criticized by his girlfriend.

【说明】or 表明作者在用 bad temper 解释生词 irascibility，因此不难理解其意思是“脾气暴躁”。

【例 2】John is *indecisive*, that is, he can't make up his mind.

【说明】that is 表明 indecisive 和 can't make up his mind 同义，意思是“犹豫不决”。

4.2 利用常识猜测词义 (Using General Knowledge to Guess the Meaning)

有很多词，读者可根据自己的生活经验或学科常识猜出意思。

【例 1】I heard a noise, like a rabbit being killed by a *stoat*.

【说明】即使我们猜测不出 stoat (白鼬，鼠类的一种) 的准确意思，但根据常识可以判断，能杀死兔子的 stoat 肯定是一种攻击性很强的动物，这样就不会影响我们对该句的理解。

【例 2】The woman next door kept me awake *bawling* at her husband half the night.

【说明】根据经验可想象出，让人深夜难以入睡的原因是隔壁夫妻争吵，bawling 的意思是“叫嚷，大喊”。

4.3 利用相反信息猜测词义 (Using Contrastive Information to Guess the Meaning)

利用相反的信息也能帮助猜出生词的含义。文章通常会提供一些表示对照的词。如：while, however, unlike, but 等。

【例 1】American businessmen expect employees to be *punctual*. They do not expect that the workers will come *late*.

【说明】从上下文中可以判断 punctual 和 late 意思相反，因此其意为“准时的”。

【例 2】Mary's father is *thin* while her mother is really *obese*.

【说明】从上下文中可以判断 obese 和 thin 意思相反，因此其意肯定是“肥胖的”。

4.4 利用标点符号猜测词义 (Using Punctuation Strategies to Guess the Meaning)

破折号、逗号、分号、冒号等标点符号常引出表示补充说明、解释或下定义的句子，因此充分利用标点符号也有助于猜测词义。

【例 1】The harbor is protected by a *jetty*—a wall built out into the water.

【说明】破折号表明 *jetty* 的意思就是 a wall built out into the water (防波堤)。

【例 2】Many of the Romans were quite willing to *deify* their Caesars, to make gods of them.

【说明】逗号后的 to make gods of them 是解释 *deify* 的，因而 *deify* 意为“把……神化”。

4.5 利用构词法知识猜测词义 (Using Word Formation Knowledge to Guess the Meaning)

有些词可根据构词法知识猜出其意。如 *untaxable*，根据该词的三个不同组成部分 *un*, *tax*, *able* 我们可以判断其意思是“不征税的，免税的”。用同样的方法试着猜测下面几个词的意思：*preheated*, *over-sensitivity*, *discontinuous*, *horsy*, *bookish*, *inky black*, *wavy hair*。

(答案：*preheated* 预热的；*over-sensitivity* 过分敏感；*discontinuous* 中断的；*horsy* 似马的，脸型瘦而尖的；*bookish* 爱读书的，书呆子气的；*inky* 漆黑的；*wavy* 波浪式的)

当然，猜词悟意只是提高阅读理解能力的一种手段，如果将其视为阅读的目的，就有点本末倒置了。因此，阅读时如果有一两个词猜不出来也没关系，只要不影响理解，就继续读下去而不要停下来查词典。

5

寻找主题句 (Locating the Topic Sentence)

主题句即某一段落主题思想的概括。大多数的主题句出现在段落的开头，开宗明义；有些主题句在段尾，概括全文；有时主题句出现在段中，承上启下。还有些段落没有明显主题句，需要读者自己来概括总结。

【例 1】段首主题句 Topic Sentence at the Beginning of the Paragraph

Sleep patterns undergo major changes for most people between early adulthood and late middle age. By age 60, people who used to wake up once during the night are now waking up six times, and their sleep is much lighter than it used to be. Women's sleep patterns do not change as dramatically as those of men and resemble the sleep of men 10 years younger. (66 words)

Topic Sentence: Sleep patterns undergo major changes for most people between early adulthood and late middle age.

本段中其他句进一步阐述了睡眠模式的变化，如不同年龄和男女之间的变化。

【例 2】段末主题句 Topic Sentence at the End of the Paragraph

How much do you remember of what you have learned over the past academic year? How many of your high school classmates could you call by name right now? How many times a week do you forget appointments, chores, and other details of everyday life? Before you groan in self-disgust, take heart at how normal you are. We all forget all kinds of things all the time. (67 words)

Topic Sentence: We all forget all kinds of things all the time.

本段开头提出一系列问句作为我们日常生活中健忘的例子，最后引出主题句。

【例 3】段中主题句 Topic Sentence Within the Paragraph

有时主题句既不是段首句，也不是段尾句，而是段落中的某一句。

When we speak of an individual's "status" in casual conversation, the term usually conveys connotations of influence, wealth, and fame. However, sociologists use status to refer to any of the full range of socially defined positions within a large group or society—from the lowest to the highest position. Within American society, a person can occupy the status of president of the United States, fruit picker, son or daughter, violinist, teenager, resident of Minneapolis, dental technician, or neighbor. Clearly, a person holds more than one status simultaneously. For example, Alina is an economist, an author, a sister, a resident of Connecticut, and a Puerto Rican at the same time. (109 words)

Topic Sentence: However, sociologists use status to refer to any of the full range of socially defined positions within a large group or society—from the lowest to the highest position. (the second sentence in the paragraph)

第一句只是说明人们对“地位”(status)一词的普遍理解，第二句有关社会学家对“地位”的阐述才是本段主题句。主题句后面的句子则是用细节和例子来进一步阐明和诠释“地位”。

6

辨认信号词 (Recognizing Transitions or Signal Words)

6.1 什么是信号词

信号词预示着读者将要读到的内容与上下文存在什么样的逻辑关系。快速、准确地把握信号词就能使我们更清楚地理顺上下文的逻辑关系及作者的思路，从而提高阅读理解的速度和准确率。

6.2 常用信号词列表

常用信号词 (Useful Transitions and Linking Expressions)

表示空间位置的信号词 Transitions Used to Show Location:

above	across	against	along	alongside
amid	among	around	away from	back of
behind	below	beneath	beside	between
by	down	in front of	inside	into
near	off	onto	on top of	outside
over	throughout	to the right	under	

表示时间的信号词 Transitions Used to Show Time:

about	after	before	during	first
second	third	prior to	till	until
today	tomorrow	yesterday	next week	soon
afterward	immediately	finally	then	next
as soon as	when	in the meantime	later	meanwhile

(待续)

(接上表)

表示对比的信号词 Transitions Used to Compare:				
in the same way	also	likewise	as	similarly
equally	just	just as	in like manner	alike
like	as in a similar fashion			
表示相反意义的信号词 Transitions Used to Contrast:				
but	however	even so	in the meantime	nevertheless
on the contrary	although	even though	otherwise	counter to
as opposed	yet	still	conversely	
表示强调的信号词 Transitions Used to Emphasize:				
again	to repeat	above all	for this reason	in fact
truly	indeed	important to note	most of all	with this in mind
to emphasize				
表示总结或概括的信号词 Transitions Used to Conclude or Summarize:				
as a result	finally	in conclusion	consequently	thus
therefore	accordingly	all in all	in summary	in short
to sum up				
表示递进或添加信息的信号词 Transitions Used to Add Information:				
again	also	additionally	in addition	important
another	and	besides	equally	next
furthermore	likewise	further	moreover	finally
as well	together with	along with		
表示举例或阐述的信号词 Transitions Used to Clarify:				
that is	in other words	put another way	stated differently	to clarify
for instance	for example			
表示因果关系的信号词 Transitions Used to Show Cause and Effect:				
because	therefore	so that	cause	reason
effect	thus	consequently	since	as a result
if... then	result in	(be) due to		

7

预读技能 (Previewing)

所谓预读,就是在阅读文章之前,快速浏览作者所强调的一切。预读应进行得很快,半分钟至一分钟即可。预读可使读者减少 90% 的阅读时间而获取将近一半的信息。

8

略读技能 (Skimming)

8.1 什么是略读

略读要求读者有选择地进行阅读,可跳过某些细节,以迅速获取文章大意或中心思想。据统计,训练有素的略读者的阅读速度可以达到每分钟 3,000 到 4,000 个词。

8.2 略读技巧

- ◆ 利用文章标题、副标题、小标题、黑体、斜体、脚注、标点符号、图表、图画以及章节后面的问

题等对文章进行预测略读 (preview skimming)。

- ◆ 以一般阅读速度阅读文章开头的段落，以熟悉作者将要讨论的主题。然后阅读下面各段的第一句和最后一句，以掌握段落大意。之后阅读最后一段或结论段，这是全文的概括和总结。
- ◆ 注意转折词和序列词。转折词如 but, however, nevertheless, yet, on the other hand 等；序列词如 in the first place, first, secondly 等。

8.3 略读应试策略

8.3.1 略读部分考点设置

- ◆ 文章或段落的主题思想；
- ◆ 作者的基本态度、文章风格、语气等；
- ◆ 某条重要线索在文中的发展、变化；
- ◆ 重要部分的总结、判断。

8.3.2 应对策略

略读的关键是判断文章哪些部分该读、哪些部分可略过不读。对于考试中的快速阅读部分，建议学生首先略读文章后考题的内容，再根据这些内容有针对性地进行略读。

1) 一般而言，需要阅读的内容包括：

- ◆ 文章的标题和副标题，这是文章提纲挈领的骨架；
- ◆ 文章的首段，很多语篇会开门见山说明全文核心内容；
- ◆ 文章最后一段，尾段往往会归纳总结整篇文章；
- ◆ 每段的首句和尾句，这两个位置是每段的中心句最常出现的地方；
- ◆ 黑体、斜体、有下划线等特殊标识的地方；
- ◆ 注意转折词和序列词，有助于理清文章脉络；
- ◆ 考题中出现的相关信息，如数字、专有名词（人名、地名等），以及跟考题中提到的具体内容一致的句子。

2) 可跳过不读的内容有：

- ◆ 枝节性的内容：段落中核心句之外拓展性的内容；
- ◆ 解释性的内容：破折号后面的部分、括号里的内容、注释、举例说明等；
- ◆ 重复性的内容：前文已经出现过的内容、已经阐述过的观点；
- ◆ 生词、结构复杂的句子（除非与考题密切相关）；
- ◆ 考题中没有涉及的内容。

3) 特别提示：

- ◆ 如果通读之后对文章主题没有把握，建议先做其他题，最后再做主旨题。因为在略读全文、寻读获取若干细节信息后，会加深对文章内容的理解，从而有助于准确判断或总结全文主题。
- ◆ 建议阅读速度快的学生，做题前用略读方法通读全文以便迅速、准确查找后面考题所涉及的内容。对于阅读速度较慢的学生，或阅读生词较多、句型复杂、内容晦涩的文章时，建议先看题，然后在文章中寻找与之相关的信息，其余部分略过不看。

9 寻读技能 (Scanning)

9.1 什么是寻读

寻读又称查读，是一种从大量的资料中迅速查找所需信息的快速阅读方法。例如，在图书馆

查找书刊目录，在文献中查找某一日期、名字等，都可运用这种方法。寻读带有明确的目的性，因此，不必字字句句过目。

9.2 寻读与略读的区别

寻读与略读不同。在略读前，读者对所涉及材料一无所知；而寻读则是在读者对材料有所了解的情况下进行的。略读略去文章某些细节以求抓住文章大意，从而加快阅读速度，而寻读舍弃不需要的信息以求快速、准确地检索到所需信息。

9.3 寻读技巧

9.3.1 利用材料的编排形式

- 1) 资料多半是按字母顺序排列的，如词典、索引、邮政编码簿、电话号码簿等；
- 2) 电视节目按日期和时间排列；
- 3) 历史资料按年代排列；
- 4) 报纸上的体育版是按比赛类别（足球、排球、网球）排列；
- 5) 畅销书、唱片等根据销售数量按照数字排列。

不管资料来源怎样，都是按照某种逻辑关系编排的。

9.3.2 利用章节标题和说明

9.3.3 注意提示词

例如，在百科全书上寻找纽约市的人名，翻到New York City那一章后，population, census, inhabitants 等词就是提示词，找到提示词，就可以采用正常的阅读速度，获得所需要的信息。

9.4 寻读应试策略

四级新题型样题中快速阅读部分的10道题中，只有一题涉及文章的大意，其余9题全是文章中的重要细节。我们通过略读来摸清文章脉络，通过寻读来查找所需具体信息。

9.4.1 寻读常见题型

- ◆ 根据具体信息判断正确 (Yes)、错误 (No)，或文中没有提及 (Not Given)；
- ◆ 句子填空，补全信息；
- ◆ 多项选择题；
- ◆ 简答题。

9.4.2 寻读部分考点设置及应对要领

- ◆ 细节题的排列顺序与文中对应信息出现的顺序是一样的，可逐项在文中搜寻；
- ◆ 抓住信号词和关键词。关键词包括专有名词、年代、数字等；
- ◆ 用题干里的信号词或关键词扫描文章里对应的原始句。仔细阅读该词所在的句子，一般情况下这就是考点所在之处。
- ◆ 尤其注意转折句、因果句，这里是考察细节信息的重点所在。

9.4.3 特别提示

- ◆ 有些题可通过常识判断答题，不必再到文中寻读，以节省时间；
- ◆ 寻读后没有找到答案的题可放至最后来做，有时会在搜寻其他考题答案时迎刃而解。

目 录

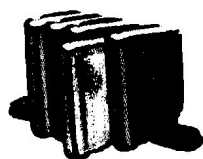
I	快速阅读常用技能
1	Unit 1 Leisure Activities In-Class Reading This Summer: Enjoy Ourselves After-Class Reading Ryan's Well
13	Unit 2 The Power of Words In-Class Reading The Power of Words: Advertising Tricks After-Class Reading Consumer Protection—A way to Make Life Safer
25	Unit 3 Gender Differences In-Class Reading About Gender: Differences After-Class Reading Crisis-Proof Your Marriage
37	Unit 4 Creativity In-Class Reading Child Development: Creativity in Young Children After-Class Reading A Tale of Two Worlds
49	Unit 5 Athletes In-Class Reading An Honorable Sportsman After-Class Reading Your Dream Job: A Click Away
59	Unit 6 Risks In-Class Reading Do You Risk Enough to Succeed? After-Class Reading Wedding Customs Around the World
71	Unit 7 College Life In-Class Reading Hot Majors, Hot Jobs After-Class Reading Confrontation in Sweet Water Valley
83	Unit 8 Time In-Class Reading Time: How to Have More of It After-Class Reading You Are What You Eat
95	Unit 9 Science and Technology In-Class Reading Can Earth Take the Heat of "Global Brightening"? After-Class Reading Let's Put the Pressure on Campus Cheats
107	Unit 10 Satire in Literature In-Class Reading Irony and Sarcasm After-Class Reading Your Time—Their Future
119	练习参考答案



Unit 1

Leisure Activities

In-Class Reading: This Summer: Enjoy Ourselves
After-Class Reading: Ryan's Well



In-Class Reading

This Summer: Enjoy Ourselves

1 Summer holds the opportunity for each of us to explore and embrace the ancient practice of leisure. The great respect for leisure time is an age-old practice throughout the history of mankind. History teaches us that since the beginning of time humans have been challenged to create a balance between work and leisure in their lives. In recent times *workaholism* (醉心工作) had been admired in our culture and working over eight hours a day has become the rule instead of the exception. Balancing work and leisure time was even a problem in the 2nd century. I discovered this story about a famous monk in the early Christian church in the 2nd century, when I was teaching world religions and I believe it is worth repeating.

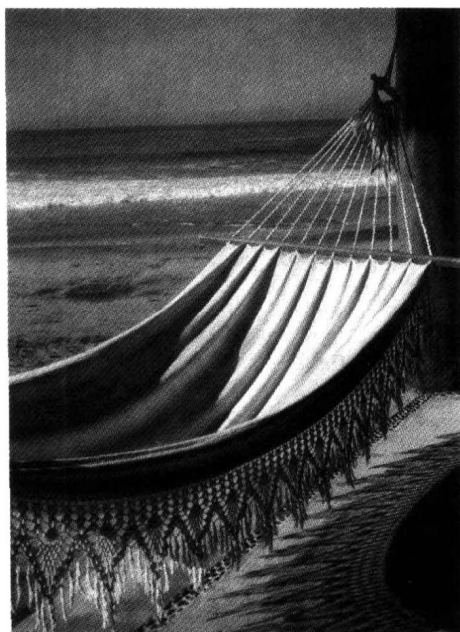
2 “One day a hunter in the desert saw Abba Anthony enjoying himself with the *brethren* (教友) and he was shocked. What kind of spiritual guide was this?

3 But the old monk said to him, ‘Put an arrow in your bow and shoot it.’ So the hunter did. Then the old man said, ‘Now shoot another.’ And the hunter did. Then the elder said, ‘Shoot your bow again.’ ‘Keep shooting; keep shooting; keep shooting.’ And the hunter finally said, ‘But if I bend my bow so much I will break it.’

4 Then Abba Anthony said to him, ‘It is just the same with the work of God. If we stretch ourselves beyond measure, we will break. Sometimes it is necessary to meet other needs.’ When the hunter heard this, he was struck with regret and went away greatly enlightened by Anthony’s words of wisdom.”

5 One of the least accepted spiritual practices in America today is the ancient practice of leisure. Leisure has two aspects, play and rest. Even Abba Anthony in the 2nd century was warning people about the critical role of leisure. Leisure is about balance and our society’s usage of time is “off balance”. Nature created balance with day and night, but with the appearance of electricity and human-created light sources, we can and do continue to work later and later into the night. Balance with our families is becoming harder and harder as well. As a consequence our souls are drying up. We need to take note of the lesson of Abba Anthony, taking time from our work to play and rest.

6 Remember the image of the *teeter-totter* (跷跷板) on the playground? There was always one person on



one end and one on the other. This is a lesson in balance because we know that for both people to have the fullest experience on the teeter-totter they had to stay in constant balance. Our bodies are exhausted from how hard we are working. So are our souls.

7 Leisure is an essential part of our spirituality. Leisure is one of the most difficult spiritual practices to achieve, because we've become doers and makers, and forgotten how to be dreamers and reflectors. We have all but forgotten the lost art of teaching people to be thoughtful.

8 Isn't it sad that in our society we teach everyone how to work, but we don't teach them to play and to relax? Play was the basis of leisure time throughout all societies. The function of holy days and festivals was to provide all levels of people the opportunity to play and celebrate together. It was an opportunity to equalize social classes through leisure.

9 Leisure is for holy things; it engages the heart and stretches the soul. Leisure is the gateway to experiencing balance in mind, body and spirit.

10 Leisure is not a vacation from life, rather it brings meaning to life because it allows us time to deepen our thinking. Leisure is not withdrawal from the human race; it is essential to the health and happiness of the human race. Work becomes more meaningful and has a purpose when we experience leisure.

11 Learn to play and rest. Now is the time to explore and discover new ways to play and rest. There are a variety of opportunities for you to communicate with nature this summer. Be creative. Explore new possibilities. Make it fun. Explore your city; there are so many events that allow you to experience rest and play. From museum openings, art festivals, free concerts, zoos and historical sites, to the beauty of a fully blossomed tree, all these and more will move you into more harmony and balance at home, work and in your community. The Internet is a great resource for finding current activities in your neighborhood and splendid hot spots to fulfill yourself, although the Internet or playing computer games should not be the only place to spend your leisure time.

12 For rest time, take a nap! Science now tells us that the health benefits of a good nap are enormous. Go sit under a tree. Do you remember when you were a child sitting under the tree and looking up through the umbrella of branches as you watched the leaves blow in the slow summer breeze? Lie in your yard surrounded by the scent of the summer grass. Try resting in the grass with your children or by yourself and rediscover the shapes hiding in the clouds. Visit a local park and rediscover yourself on the playground and always remember leisure is meant for a time of exploration and discovery. Let this summer be filled with rest and play.

13 The key to leisure is awareness and balance. Use your leisure time as an opportunity to challenge yourself to be aware of every gift summer brings. Just as winter is an opportunity to experience practices of solitude, to explore movement inward to ourselves, summer holds the possibility to move outward into the natural world as we experience the beauty of the season. Nature gives us winter and summer to illustrate the necessity of balance, the rhythm of nature, much like the ancient Asian symbol of *Yin* and *Yang*, or the rise and fall of the tides of the ocean.

14 Take advantage of the unique scents of summer. Be challenged to discover the smell of the roses and other magnificent flowers in more meaningful ways. Make a list of items you will

investigate anew with your nose this summer. Go smell a flower or a mountain breeze. There are a variety of sensory experiences just waiting for you. Listen to the sounds of summer. Listen to the ocean pounding on the shore as the seagulls soar above your head. Taste the abundance of foods associated with the leisure and play of summer and the feast created by fresh fruit like watermelons and home-grown tomatoes.

15 Practice awareness by experiencing the colors of summer. Notice the colors of plants, flowers, grass and trees that surround you. Try to observe the many different shades of green. Becoming conscious of the color and shapes of nature is a lesson in awareness.

16 Summer is a glorious time for community. You may travel to family reunions, visit friends and relatives or escape by yourself.

17 Summer is pregnant with possibilities. This is your life. It is your summer. It will swiftly pass by. I invite you to discover a new part of yourself this summer. Live an intentional life this summer and every day of your life. (1,206 words)

Time taken: _____ minutes