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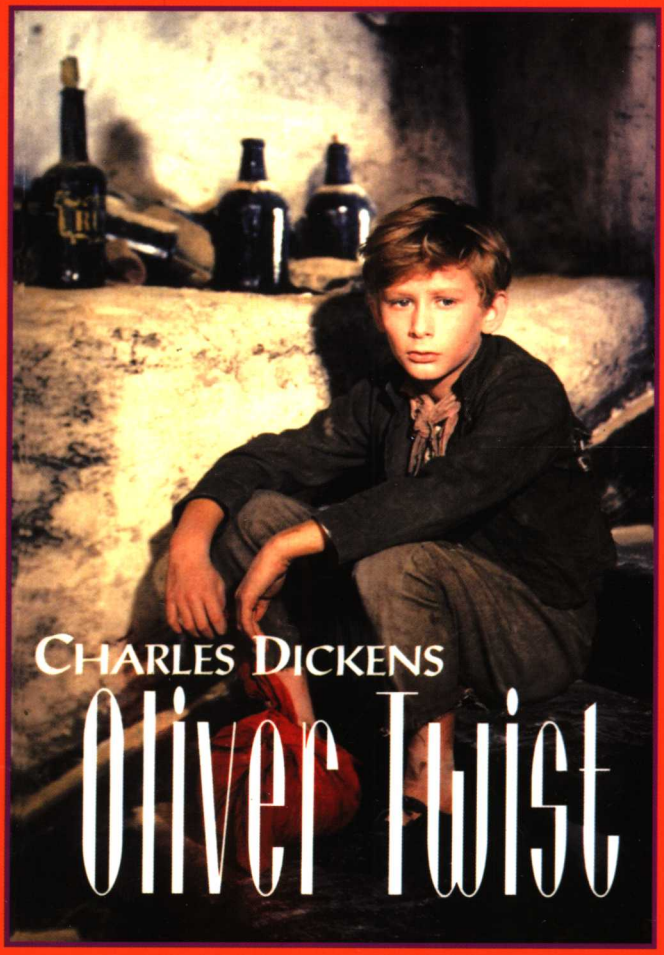
雾都孤儿



世界图书出版公司

PEARSON
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企鹅英语简易读物精选（大二学生）

Oliver Twist

雾都孤儿

原　　著：［英］Charles Dickens
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（2300－3000词）

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图书在版编目（CIP）数据

雾都孤儿/[英]狄更斯（Dickens, C.）著；[英]多斯（Doss, L.）改写. —北京：世界图书出版公司北京公司，2006.8
（企鹅英语简易读物精选·大二学生）
ISBN 7-5062-8534-7

I. 雾… II. ①狄… ②多… III. 英语—语言读物 IV. H319.4

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字（2006）第 103227 号

企鹅英语简易读物精选（大二学生）

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原 著 者：Charles Dickens
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责任编辑：张颖颖　王志宇

出　　版：世界图书出版公司北京公司
发　　行：世界图书出版公司北京公司
（地址：北京朝内大街 137 号　邮编：100010　电话：64077922）
销　　售：各地新华书店和外文书店
印　　刷：北京朝阳印刷厂有限责任公司

开　　本：889×1194　1/32
印　　张：4.125
版　　次：2006 年 8 月第 1 版　2006 年 8 月第 1 次印刷
版权登记：图字 01－2006－5073

ISBN 7-5062-8534-7/H.944

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。

北京外国语大学英语教授、博士生导师　胡文仲

Introduction

Charles Dickens was one of the most popular writers of all time, creating some of the best-known characters in English literature. He was born in Portsmouth, England, in 1812 and moved to London with his family when he was about two years old. The family was very poor, and John Dickens, a clerk with the navy, could not earn enough to support his wife and eight children. Charles, the second oldest, attended school for a time, but his formal education was cut short. It was his mother who taught him to read and helped him develop a deep love of books. The family's circumstances forced him to leave school at the age of twelve. He found a job in a shoe polish factory and, at about the same time, his father was arrested for debt and sent to prison.

The difficulties the family suffered and the general hopelessness he saw around him as he was growing up shaped Dickens's view of the world and strongly influenced the subject matter, events and characters that featured in his later writing. Determined to break out of a life of insecurity, Dickens started writing for a newspaper. He soon made a name for himself as a reporter in London's courts and at the House of Commons.

His first literary success came with the publication, in monthly parts, of what came to be known as *The Pickwick Papers*. By the age of twenty-four he was famous, and he remained so until he died. In contrast to his public success, though, Dickens's personal life was not happy. He married Catherine Hogarth in 1836 and they had ten children together. However, as time passed they became increasingly unhappy, and they separated in 1858. Apart from his writing, Dickens found the time and energy to work for various charities, demonstrating the concern for people and social conditions that underlies so much of his writing. Under the strain

of these many activities his health became worse and he died suddenly in 1870.

Dickens wrote twenty novels, nearly all of which originally appeared in weekly or monthly parts. By presenting his work in this way in newspapers and magazines, Dickens was able to reach people who would never normally buy full-length books. His wide readership loved the scenes and characters he created that reflected life in mid nineteenth-century London so well. He displayed a great understanding of human nature, a strong sympathy for young people and a keen eye for people and places. He also wrote a number of works of non-fiction.

During the 1840s, Dickens wrote five 'Christmas books'. The first of these, *A Christmas Carol*, is an extremely well-known story. It is about the rich and mean Ebenezer Scrooge who, late in life, learns the meaning of Christmas and discovers happiness by helping others less fortunate than himself.

In his later works, including *Hard Times*, *Little Dorrit* and *Our Mutual Friend*, Dickens presents a much darker view of the world. His humour is more pointed, concentrating on the evil side of human experience; in particular, the inhuman social consequences of industry and trade. *Bleak House* shows the unfairness of the legal system and how lawyers could extend the legal process for their own benefit without any regard for the damage done to the lives of their clients. *David Copperfield* is an exception from this period: a much more light-hearted story and a lovely description of a young man's discovery of adult life.

Dickens began writing Oliver Twist in 1837, shortly after becoming a father for the first time. This is the first novel in which Dickens speaks out against social evils, in this case the terrible conditions in the workhouses where poor people were forced to live if they could not pay their debts. The novel also

paints a lively picture of London's criminal underworld, showing how poor children so easily entered into a life of crime under the influence of adults who took advantage of them for their own gain. The book is full of unexpected developments and unlikely occurrences which were much loved by nineteenth-century readers, and it was received with great enthusiasm on its publication. Ever since then, the story has been popular and has reappeared in many forms including stage and film musical versions.

Oliver's young mother dies giving birth to him and the child is brought up in a workhouse, always hungry and cruelly treated. After working for a time for an undertaker, Oliver runs away to London where he meets a young thief, the Artful Dodger, and his friends. The band of pickpockets work for and live with the evil Fagin, who welcomes Oliver to his home. When Oliver realizes what the boys are doing, he tries to escape. Fagin hires Bill Sikes, a violent criminal, to get the boy back again, but Oliver has made new friends who want to protect him. The struggle between these friends and the evil men who want to silence Oliver becomes an exciting and dramatic adventure.

Contents

Chapter 1 Oliver Twist Is Born

Oliver Twist was born in a workhouse, and for a long time after his birth there was considerable doubt whether the child would live. He lay breathless for some time, trying to decide between this world and the next. After a few struggles, however, he breathed, coughed and gave a loud cry.

The pale face of a young woman was raised weakly from the bed, and in a faint voice she said, 'Let me see the child and die.'

'Oh, you must not talk about dying yet,' said the doctor, as he rose from where he was sitting near the fire and advanced towards her.

'Goodness, no!' added the poor old woman who was acting as nurse.

The doctor placed the child in its mother's arms; she pressed her cold white lips on its forehead; passed her hands over her face; looked wildly around, fell back – and died.

'It's all over,' said the doctor at last.

'Ah, poor dear, so it is!' said the old nurse.

'She was a good-looking girl, too,' added the doctor. 'Where did she come from?'

'She was brought here last night,' replied the old woman. 'She was found lying in the street. She had walked some distance, for her shoes were torn to pieces; but where she came from, or where she was going, nobody knows.'

'The old story,' said the doctor, shaking his head as he raised the dead woman's left hand. 'No wedding ring, I see. Ah! Good night!'

While the nurse dressed him, Oliver cried loudly. If he had known, though, what the future held for him, the motherless child would have cried even louder.

Chapter 2 Early Years

For the next eight or ten months Oliver was bottle-fed when anyone remembered to attend to him. Then he was sent to a smaller workhouse some three miles away, where twenty or thirty other young orphans rolled about the floor all day, without the inconvenience of too much food or too much clothing. They were in the charge of an elderly woman called Mrs Mann, who received from the government seven and a half pence each week for each child. Being a woman of wisdom and experience, she knew what was good for the children and what was good for herself. So she kept the greater part of the weekly allowance for her own use, and gave the children hardly enough to keep them alive.

It cannot be expected that this system of bringing up children would produce any very strong or healthy specimens. On his ninth birthday, Oliver Twist was a pale, weak child, very thin and rather below average height. But the child was full of spirit.

He was spending his ninth birthday in the coal cellar with two other children; they had, all three, been beaten by Mrs Mann and then locked up for daring to say they were hungry. Suddenly, Mrs Mann was surprised by the appearance of Mr Bumble, a workhouse official; a fat man, full of a sense of his own importance. The purpose of his visit was to take Oliver back to the large workhouse, for he was now too old to remain with Mrs Mann.

Oliver, whose face and hands had by this time been washed in a hurry, was led into the room by his kind-hearted protectress.

'Make a bow to the gentleman, Oliver,' said Mrs Mann.

Oliver obeyed.

'Will you go along with me, Oliver?' said Mr Bumble in his clear, ringing tones.

Oliver was about to say that he would be happy to go along

with anybody when, looking upward, he caught sight of Mrs Mann, who was standing behind Mr Bumble's chair and making threatening gestures at him. He understood what she meant at once.

'Will *she* go with me?' asked poor Oliver.

'No, she can't,' replied Mr Bumble. 'But she'll come and see you sometimes.'

Oliver pretended to be very sad at going away; it was easy for him to call tears into his eyes. Hunger and recent bad treatment are of great assistance if you want to cry; and Oliver cried very naturally indeed. Mrs Mann gave him a thousand kisses and, what Oliver wanted a great deal more, a piece of bread and butter, so that he should not seem too hungry when he got to the workhouse.

Oliver was led away by Mr Bumble from the home where not a single kind word or look had ever lighted the darkness of his early years.

Life in the workhouse was very severe indeed. The members of the board of management had ruled that the children should work to earn their living, and that they should be given three meals of thin soup a day, with an onion twice a week and half a cake on Sundays.

The room in which the boys were fed was a large stone hall, with a huge pot at one end. Out of this the master, assisted by one or two women, served out the soup at mealtimes. Each boy had one small bowl, and nothing more – except on public holidays, when he had a small piece of bread as well. The bowls never needed washing. The boys polished them with their spoons till they shone again, and when they had performed this operation they would sit staring eagerly at the huge pot, as if they could have eaten that too.

Oliver Twist and his companions suffered terrible hunger in silence for three months; in the end they became so desperate that one boy, who was tall for his age, told the others that unless he had another bowl of soup every day, he was afraid he might some night eat the boy who slept next to him. He had a wild hungry eye, and they fully believed him. A council was held; votes were cast, and it fell to Oliver Twist to walk up to the master after supper that evening and ask for more.

The evening arrived; the boys took their places. The master, in his cook's uniform, stood beside the huge pot with his two assistants behind him; the soup was served out. It quickly disappeared; the boys whispered to each other and made signs to Oliver. He rose from the table and, advancing to the master, bowl in hand, said, 'Please, sir, I want some more.'

The master was a fat, healthy man, but he turned very pale. He stared with horror and amazement at the small boy for some seconds.

'What!' he said finally in a faint voice.

'Please, sir,' replied Oliver, 'I want some more.'

The master aimed a blow at Oliver's head with his big spoon; seized him tightly in his arms, and shouted for Mr Bumble.

Mr Bumble, hearing the cry and learning the cause of it, rushed into the room where members of the board were meeting and, addressing the gentleman at the head of the table, said: 'Mr Limbkins, I beg your pardon, sir. Oliver Twist has asked for more.'

There was general alarm. Horror showed on every face.

'For *more*!' said Mr Limbkins. 'Be calm, Bumble, and answer me clearly. Do you mean to say that he asked for more, after he had eaten the supper given by the board?'

'He did, sir,' replied Bumble.

'That boy will be hanged,' said one of the gentlemen on the board. 'I know that boy will be hanged one day.'

Oliver was locked up at once. Next morning a notice was put

up on the outside of the gate, offering a reward of five pounds to anybody who would take Oliver Twist away from the workhouse.

Chapter 3 A Chimney Sweep Offers to Take Oliver

For weeks after committing the crime of asking for more, Oliver remained a prisoner in the dark and lonely room to which he had been sent by the board as a punishment. But let it not be supposed by the enemies of 'the system' that Oliver, while a prisoner, was denied the benefit of exercise or the pleasure of society. As for exercise, it was nice cold weather, and he was allowed to wash himself every morning under the pump in a stone yard in the presence of Mr Bumble, who prevented his catching cold by the repeated use of a stick. As for society, he was carried every other day into the hall where the boys dined, and there he was publicly beaten as a warning and example.

It happened one morning that Mr Gamfield, a chimney sweep, was on his way down the High Street, wondering how to pay the rent he owed to his landlord. Passing the workhouse, his eyes fell on the notice on the gate. He walked closer to read it.

One of the gentlemen on the board was standing at the gate. The chimney sweep, observing him, told him that he wanted an apprentice and was ready to take the boy offered. The gentleman ordered him to walk in and took him to Mr Limbkins.

Arrangements were made. Mr Bumble was at once instructed that Oliver Twist and the papers for his apprenticeship were to be taken before the magistrate for approval that very afternoon.

On his way to the magistrate, Mr Bumble instructed Oliver that all he would have to do would be to look very happy and say, when the gentleman asked him if he wanted to be apprenticed, that he would like it very much indeed.

Eventually they arrived at the office and appeared before the

magistrate, an old gentleman with a pair of eye-glasses.

'This is the boy, sir,' said Mr Bumble. 'Bow to the magistrate, my dear.'

Oliver made his best bow.

'Well,' said the old gentleman. 'I suppose he's fond of sweeping chimneys?'

'He's very fond of it, sir,' replied Bumble, giving Oliver a threatening look.

'And this man that's to be his master – you, sir – you'll treat him well, and feed him, and do all that sort of thing, will you?' said the old gentleman.

'When I say I will, I mean I will,' replied Mr Gamfield roughly.

'You're a rough speaker, my friend, but you look an honest, open-hearted man,' said the old gentleman, turning his eye-glasses in the direction of Gamfield, on whose face cruelty was clearly stamped. But the magistrate was half blind, so he could not reasonably be expected to see what other people saw.

The magistrate fixed his eye-glasses more firmly on his nose, and began to look about him for the inkpot.

It was a critical moment in Oliver's future. If the inkpot had been where the old gentleman thought it was, he would have been led away at once. But as it happened to be immediately under his nose, he looked all over his desk for it without finding it; and chancing in the course of his search to look straight ahead of him, his eyes met the pale and frightened face of Oliver Twist, who was staring at the cruel face of his future master with a mixture of horror and fear.

The old gentleman stopped, laid down his pen, and looked from Oliver to Mr Bumble.

'My boy!' said the old gentleman, leaning over the desk, 'you look pale and alarmed. What is the matter? Stand a little way from him, Mr Bumble. Now, boy, tell us what's the matter: don't be afraid.'

Oliver fell on his knees and, joining his hands together, begged the magistrate to order him back to the dark room – beat him – kill him if he liked – rather than send him away with that awful man.

'Well!' said Mr Bumble, raising his hands and eyes. 'Well! Of all the ungrateful orphans that I have ever seen, you are one of the most shameless.'

'Hold your tongue,' said the magistrate. 'I refuse to sign these papers.' He pushed the documents aside as he spoke. 'Take the boy back to the workhouse, and treat him kindly. He seems to need it.'

Next morning the public were again informed that five pounds would be paid to anybody who would take possession of Oliver Twist.

Chapter 4 Oliver Is Apprenticed to an Undertaker

Mr Bumble was returning one day to the workhouse when he met at the gate Mr Sowerberry, the undertaker, a tall, bony man dressed in a worn-out black suit. As Mr Sowerberry advanced to Mr Bumble, he shook him by the hand and said: 'I have taken the measurements of the two women that died last night, Mr Bumble.'

'You'll make your fortune, Mr Sowerberry,' said Mr Bumble.

'Think so?' said the undertaker. 'The prices allowed by the board are very small, Mr Bumble.'

'So are the coffins,' replied the latter.

Mr Sowerberry laughed for a long time at this joke. 'Well, well, Mr Bumble,' he said finally, 'I don't deny that, since the new system of feeding has been introduced, the coffins are somewhat narrower than they used to be; but we must have some profit, Mr Bumble. Wood is expensive, sir.'

'Well, well,' said Mr Bumble, 'every trade has its disadvantages.

By the way, you don't know anybody who wants a boy, do you?'

'Ah!' exclaimed the undertaker, 'that's the very thing I wanted to speak to you about. You know, Mr Bumble, I think I'll take the boy myself.'

Mr Bumble seized the undertaker by the arm and led him into the building, where it was quickly arranged that Oliver should go to him that evening.

Oliver heard this news in perfect silence and, carrying a brown-paper parcel in his hand, which was all the luggage he had, he was led away by Mr Bumble to a new scene of suffering.

For some time they walked in silence. As they drew near to Mr Sowerberry's shop, Mr Bumble looked down to make sure that the boy was clean and neat enough to be seen by his new master.

'Oliver!' said Mr Bumble. 'Pull that cap up off your eyes, and hold up your head.'

Oliver did as he was told at once, but when he looked up at Mr Bumble there were tears in his eyes. Mr Bumble stared at him coldly. The child made a brave attempt to stop crying, but the tears rolled down his cheeks and he covered his face with both hands.

'Well!' exclaimed Mr Bumble, stopping short and looking at him with hatred, 'of all the ungrateful and unpleasant boys I have ever seen, Oliver, you are the–'

'No, no, sir,' cried Oliver, holding tightly to the hand which held the stick; 'no, no, sir; I will be good indeed; indeed I will, sir! I am a very little boy, sir; and it is so – so . . .'

'So what?' inquired Mr Bumble in surprise.

'So lonely, sir! So very lonely!' cried the child.

The undertaker had just closed his shop and was writing the details of the day's business by lamplight when Mr Bumble entered.

'Here, Mr Sowerberry, I've brought the boy.'

'Oh! That's the boy, is it?' said the undertaker, raising the lamp