



大学英语快速阅读教材系列

# 大学英语 快速阅读

COLLEGE ENGLISH  
FAST READING

刘四平 祝捷 主编



武汉大学出版社  
WUHAN UNIVERSITY PRESS

BOOK ONE



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江苏工业学院图书馆

藏书章

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## 前 言

《大学英语快速阅读》是根据教育部颁发的《大学英语教学基本要求》以及大学英语四、六级考试最新题型而编写的。改革后的大学英语考试题型更注重扫读和寻读能力的培养,并增加了阅读的篇幅,改进了阅读理解题型,要求学生在15分钟之内完成1000字文章的阅读量。传统阅读教材在阅读篇幅,阅读时间以及阅读理解题型方面都很难满足新的要求。为了适应四、六级考试的新变化,我们及时编写了《大学英语快速阅读》教材。

本教材有以下几个特点:首先是紧扣最新变化,无论是阅读篇幅和题型都严格按照最新四级考试要求编写。其次是选材多样,内容新颖,信息量大,所选短文全部是近两年英美正式发表的,以介绍英美社会、人文、习俗等背景知识为主,每单元以一个话题为中心。我们的编写宗旨是不以应试为目的,而是给学生提供高质量的英语阅读文章,使学生在愉快的阅读中,欣赏美文,开阔视野,并在不知不觉中掌握阅读技能,尤其是快速阅读技能。为此,我们在每单元中都添加了英语阅读技能介绍,以期从理论和实践两个方面提高学生的阅读能力。最后,本教材适合于课堂和自学两种教学模式。每单元由4篇文章组成,前2篇为课内阅读,由教师按规定的时问随堂练习,有计划、有步骤地培养学生的阅读技能;后2篇文章为课后阅读,可作为课后作业和学生自主学习材料,进一步强化和巩固课内所学的内容。

相信通过学习本教材,学生能更迅速和更有效地掌握英语阅读技能。

本教材由武汉大学外语学院大学英语部负责编写。第一册由刘四平、祝捷、曾鸣和王芳老师编写。

由于编者水平和经验有限,且时间紧迫,教材中难免还有不足之处,热切期望广大读者不吝指正。

编 者

2006年6月于珞珈山

# Content

Unit One Festivals and Holidays .....	1
<b>In-Class Reading</b> .....	1
Passage I   Carnival in Brazil .....	1
Passage II   Valentine's Day .....	3
<b>After-Class Reading</b> .....	6
Passage I   Chinese Festivals: Keeping Traditions Alive .....	6
Passage II   The First Thanksgiving .....	10
阅读技巧:快速阅读方法简介.....	14
Unit Two Campus Life .....	18
<b>In-Class Reading</b> .....	18
Passage I   How to Deal with College Classes .....	18
Passage II   The Virtual College .....	20
<b>After-Class Reading</b> .....	23
Passage I   The American Education System .....	23
Passage II   Saying Goodbye .....	27
阅读技巧:阅读速度.....	31
Unit Three VIP and VIP's Talks .....	35
<b>In-Class Reading</b> .....	35
Passage I   Bill Gates' Advice to Students: Get a Sound, Broad Education .....	35
Passage II   Yang Zhenning: When Will There Be a Nobel Prize- Winning Work on Chinese Soil? .....	37
<b>After-Class Reading</b> .....	40
Passage I   Condoleezza Rice .....	40
Passage II   Yao: A Life in Two Worlds .....	44
	1

阅读技巧:略读.....	48
Unit Four Love Stories .....	50
<b>In-Class Reading</b> .....	50
Passage I Love for Rose .....	50
Passage II Banjo .....	52
<b>After-Class Reading</b> .....	54
Passage I Go Out and Make a Difference .....	54
Passage II A Small Boy's Mother .....	58
阅读技巧:扫读.....	62
Unit Five Cultural Difference .....	65
<b>In-Class Reading</b> .....	65
Passage I Avoiding Cultural Taboos .....	65
Passage II Table Manners: A Cultural Difference .....	67
<b>After-Class Reading</b> .....	69
Passage I Traveling Student .....	69
Passage II Beyond Assumptions: One Woman's Experience of Living Abroad in the U. S. A. ....	74
阅读技巧:预测.....	78
Unit Six Interpersonal Relationship .....	81
<b>In-Class Reading</b> .....	81
Passage I As My Daughter Leaves for College, I Let Go .....	81
Passage II Cybercourtship .....	83
<b>After-Class Reading</b> .....	86
Passage I After Twenty Years .....	86
Passage II Of My Friend Hector and My Achilles' Heel .....	90
阅读技巧:获取中心思想.....	95
Unit Seven Science and Technology .....	98
<b>In-Class Reading</b> .....	98
Passage I Wireless Wearable .....	98

Passage II The World Is Getting Smaller .....	100
<b>After-Class Reading</b> .....	103
Passage I The Internet: What Lies Ahead? .....	103
Passage II New Genes—New Hope or Future Disaster? .....	107
<b>阅读技巧:根据上下文猜词悟意</b> .....	112
<b>Unit Eight Life and Health</b> .....	114
<b>In-Class Reading</b> .....	114
Passage I You Have a Cold! .....	114
Passage II Protein .....	116
<b>After-Class Reading</b> .....	119
Passage I Yoga .....	119
Passage II What You Eat Can Sabotage Your Sleep .....	123
<b>阅读技巧:信号词</b> .....	127
<b>Unit Nine Animals</b> .....	129
<b>In-Class Reading</b> .....	129
Passage I How Do the Animals Spend the Winter? .....	129
Passage II Cats and Man .....	131
<b>After-Class Reading</b> .....	134
Passage I Animals as Teachers .....	134
Passage II Animals “Speak” Many Strange Languages .....	137
<b>阅读技巧:推理</b> .....	142
<b>Unit Ten Sports and Leisure Time</b> .....	144
<b>In-Class Reading</b> .....	144
Passage I Lessons for Your Life and Business from Wimbledon .....	144
Passage II Beijing 2008: Five Mascots for the Beijing Games .....	146
<b>After-Class Reading</b> .....	149
Passage I Sports and Exercise Safety .....	149
Passage II Tennis, Then and Now .....	153
<b>阅读技巧:段落结构</b> .....	158

# Unit One

## Festivals and Holidays

### In-Class Reading

#### Passage I

### Carnival in Brazil

#### Words to Know

1. carnival *n.* 狂欢节;嘉年华会
2. peak *n.* 尖顶;最高点
3. festivity *n.* 欢宴;节庆活动
4. Lent *n.* (基督教的)四月斋(复活节前为期 40 天的斋戒和忏悔)
5. costume *n.* 服装;戏服
6. samba *n.* 桑巴舞(曲)(源于巴西)
7. Rio de Janeiro 里约热内卢(巴西城市名)
8. coronation *n.* 加冕礼
9. Portugal 葡萄牙(国名)
10. take on 呈现(某种样子);装成某事物
11. identity *n.* 身份
12. Catholic *a.* 天主教的; *n.* 天主教徒
13. fast *n.* 斋戒(期);禁食(期)
14. originate *v.* 发端;始自
15. rhythm *n.* (音乐)节奏

Time Limit: 7'30"

- 1 Carnival is the most famous holiday in Brazil. It happens at the peak of summer



and attracts thousands of people from all corners of the world.

2 Carnival festivities usually happen just before the Lent time, the 40-day period that comes before the Easter. Carnival is a 4-day celebration. It starts on Saturday, and ends on Tuesday. Dates vary every year.

3 People put on their costumes and go out into the streets or to clubs. There are also the samba schools, which make a parade showing their music and dances. Every year the parade tells a different story. Each city has one or more schools like this. The Samba Parade is the most colorful carnival event in Brazil.

4 According to historical researches, the first Brazilian carnival party happened in 1641. In that year, Rio de Janeiro's governor determined that a whole week should be dedicated to the celebration of the coronation of the new king of Portugal.

5 Carnival is the only national holiday that moves all the country and its different kinds of people and cultures together. It provides the ordinary people with an opportunity to protest against racial, class, and other inequalities. During Carnival, the social structure is put upside down as people use costumes to take on different identities: the poor are the royal, the wealthy are maids, adults are children, and men are women.

6 The name carnival comes from the Italian expression "carne vale". Hundreds and hundreds of years ago, the followers of the Catholic religion in Italy started the tradition of holding a wild costume festival right before the first day of Lent. Because Catholics are not supposed to eat meat during Lent, they called their festival, carne vale—"meat worth it", which means the meat fast and the Lent Time worth the feast of food and music.

7 As time passed, carnivals in Italy became quite famous. Then, in many parts of the world, where Catholic Europeans set up colonies and entered into the slave trade, carnival took root. Brazil, once a Portuguese colony, is now famous for its carnival.

8 Carnival traditions also borrow from the African traditions of putting together natural objects (bones, grasses, shells) to create a mask or costume—with each object or combination of objects representing a certain idea or spiritual force. Besides, samba—the music of carnival—originated from the ancient rhythm the African slaves brought to Brazil.

9 Today, Rio de Janeiro has the biggest and best known pre-Lenten carnival in the world. In February, the former capital of the Republic turns itself into a land of magic and beauty. Splendid balls and street celebrations are held everywhere inside

the city. Crowds gather to watch or take part in the wonderful samba school parades.

10 The Samba Parade began in the 1930's. By the 1950's, the samba school parades became very successful and turned into profitable products. The coming of TV helped to establish a new relationship between samba and society. Today the event is broadcast to dozens of countries and all Brazilian states.

(502 words)

### Comprehension Exercises: Yes / No / Not Given

**Directions:** Judge whether or not the following statements agree with the information given in the passage, and mark **Y** for Yes, **N** for No, or **NG** if information is not given in the passage.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Carnival celebration lasts one week every year.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ Carnival traditions come from European and African culture.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ Rio de Janeiro used to be the capital of Brazil.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ Most Brazilians are Catholics.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ Eating meat is the most important carnival event.

## Passage II

### Valentine's Day

—Not like It Used to Be

#### Words to Know

1. tribute *n.* 贡品
2. pagan *n.* 异教徒
3. commemorate *v.* 纪念
4. bishop *n.* 主教
5. rite *n.* 仪式
6. Lupercus *n.* 古罗马畜牧农林神
7. feature *v.* 包含……作为特点的
8. lottery *n.* 抓阄法
9. Pope *n.* 罗马教皇

10. emulate *v.* 仿效
11. patron saint *n.* 守护神
12. ban *v.* 禁止
13. convert *v.* 使……改变信仰
14. behead *v.* 斩首

**Time Limit: 7'**

1 February 14 is Valentine's Day. Although it is celebrated as a lovers' holiday today, with the giving of candy, flowers, or other gifts between couples in love, it originated in 5th century Rome as a tribute to St. Valentine, a Catholic bishop.

2 For eight hundred years prior to the establishment of Valentine's Day, the Romans had practiced a pagan celebration in Mid-February commemorating young men's rite of passage to the god Lupercus. The celebration featured a lottery in which young men would draw the names of teenage girls from a box. The girl assigned to each young man in that manner would be his companion during the remaining year.

3 In an effort to do away with the pagan festival, Pope Gelasius ordered a slight change in the lottery. Instead of the names of young women, the box would contain the names of saints. Both men and women were allowed to draw from the box, and the game was to emulate the ways of the saint they drew during the rest of the year. Needless to say, many of the young Roman men were not too pleased with the rule changes.

4 Instead of the pagan god Lupercus, the Church looked for a suitable patron saint of love to take his place. They found an appropriate choice in Valentine, who in AD 270 had been beheaded by Emperor Claudius.

5 Claudius had determined that married men made poor soldiers. So he banned marriage from his empire. But Valentine would secretly marry young men that came to him. When Claudius found out about Valentine, he first tried to convert him to paganism. But Valentine reversed the strategy, trying instead to convert Claudius. When he failed, he was stoned and beheaded.

6 During the days that Valentine was imprisoned, he fell in love with the blind daughter of his jailer. His love for her, and his great faith, managed to miraculously heal her from her blindness before his death. Before he was taken to his death, he signed a farewell message to her, "From your Valentine". The phrase has been used

on his day ever since.

7 Although the lottery for women had been banned by the Church, the Mid-February holiday in commemoration of St. Valentine was still used by Roman men to seek the affection of women. It became a tradition for the men to give the ones they admired handwritten messages of affection, containing Valentine's name.

8 The first Valentine card grew out of this practice. The first true Valentine card was sent in 1415 by Charles, duke of Orleans, to his wife. He was imprisoned in the Tower of London at the time.

9 Cupid, another symbol of the holiday, became associated with it because he was the son of Venus, the Roman goddess of love and beauty. Cupid often appears on Valentine cards.

(480 words)

### Comprehension Exercises: Sentence Completion

**Directions:** Complete the following sentences with the information given in the passage with *no more than three words* for each answer.

1. The tradition of Roman men to write the messages of affection to women by using Valentine's name can be traced back to \_\_\_\_\_ (time).
2. The pagan celebration in mid-February 800 years prior to the establishment of Valentine's Day featured a \_\_\_\_\_ in which young men will get their companion by drawing the names of girls from a box.
3. Valentine was beheaded by Emperor Claudius because he \_\_\_\_\_ secretly.
4. Valentine's love worked miracle on the jailer's daughter, making her \_\_\_\_\_.
5. In addition to rose and chocolate, \_\_\_\_\_ is another symbol of the holiday.

## After-Class Reading

### Passage I

#### Chinese Festivals: Keeping Traditions Alive

##### Words to Know

1. anticipation *n.* 预期
2. permeate *v.* 弥漫; 充满
3. illumination *n.* 照明
4. delicacy *n.* 微妙; 棘手
5. extravagantly *ad.* 奢侈地; 铺张地
6. impractical *a.* 不切实际的
7. originally *ad.* 最初; 起先
8. crescent *a.* 新月形的
9. default *n.* 默认
10. precaution *n.* 预防; 警惕; 防范
11. boon *n.* 恩惠; 实惠; 福利
12. catering *n.* 公共饮食业
13. resist *v.* 抵抗; 反抗
14. temptation *n.* 诱惑
15. ban (banned, banning) *v.* 禁止
16. mermaid *n.* (传说中的) 美人鱼
17. sundry *a.* 各式各样的
18. souvenir *n.* 纪念品
19. solstice *n.* (冬、夏) 至
20. Slavonic *a.* 斯拉夫民族的
21. sacrificial *a.* (用于) 献祭的
22. ancestor *n.* 祖先; 祖宗
23. pomegranate *n.* 石榴
24. consume *v.* 消费
25. venerate *v.* 崇敬

## 26. contemporary a. 当代的

Time Limit: 14'

1 We all love holidays and the happy gatherings of family and friends that they bring, and the Chinese are no exception. The Chinese celebrate festivals based on the lunar calendar dating back thousands of years. The popular favorite is Lunar New Year, or Spring Festival, which falls on the first day of the first lunar month. According to the Western solar or Gregorian calendar, in 2004 it falls on 22nd of January.

2 Spring Festival, or *chunjie*, dates back to the Western Zhou Dynasty (1121—771 BC). Two weeks beforehand, a feeling of pleasurable holiday anticipation permeates the atmosphere. Everything must be prepared just so: music on the streets, decorations and illuminations.

3 What I most like about China is that its ancient traditions are still very much alive. Many people, especially those living in the countryside, still celebrate *chunjie* in the traditional manner. This means buying something new to wear, even if it is only a new handkerchief or scarf. Thirty years ago, the holiday was a huge celebration because for many it was the only day of the year they allowed themselves the luxury of eating meat. It is now no longer a delicacy, and many Chinese can afford to present to their family members and friends extravagantly impractical gifts like flowers. In Beijing alone last year 100 million fresh cut flowers were sold during the seven-day holiday.

4 On Spring Festival Eve, all family members get together, even when separated by thousands of kilometers. Transportation companies consequently rake in high profits in the days leading up to it, as almost all of China is on the move. Last year, more than 1.5 billion people used various forms of public transportation to get home for *chunjie* dinner.

5 As it was originally the main meal of the year, *chunjie* dinner has many different dishes to choose from, but you will see the crescent moon-shaped dumplings (*jiaozi*) in every household. Dumplings that have been prepared in advance are traditionally the only dish served during the first five days of the New Year, as in Chinese the words “stir-fry” and “quarrel” sound similar. This is why women avoid cooking during the first week of the lunar new year as they don’t want to hint, even by default, at a quarrel with their loved ones. These traditional precautions are a

boon to China's catering industry as that week restaurants are solidly booked several months in advance.

6 Another "must" dish on the festival table is fish, again, because of the pronunciation. In Chinese the words "fish" and "surplus" sound similar, so those from a household serving fish might find wealth in the coming year. As one who would not even try to resist the temptation of such easily gained riches, I also have fish on my festive table—just in case.

7 On the night of *chunjie* people celebrate by rushing outside and setting off firecrackers. As it is impossible to sleep that night, the best thing to do is join in, as I usually do. In downtown areas of big cities like Beijing, firecrackers are banned but as people find it impossible to celebrate Spring Festival without them, many drive out of the capital to the outskirts and have fun making lots of noise.

8 During the first week of Spring Festival celebrations villages, towns and cities are filled with festivities and performances. Traditional Lion, Dragon, Boat and Mermaid dances are very popular, as are acrobatics, traditional opera performances, and street-traders selling everything from pictures to sweets to sundry souvenirs. Years ago these activities took place around temples, and are still known as temple fairs.

9 On April 5, 105 days after the winter solstice, there is another important festival, *qingming*. This day reminds me of the traditional Slavonic Radunitsa festival, when people go to cemeteries to pay their respects to beloved family members who have passed away. In China people do the same and more—they leave special sacrificial paper money on tombs, or tie it to nearby trees. Those far away from their ancestors' tombs and unable to return burn sacrificial money and other objects wherever they are.

10 According to the Chinese Lunar Calendar, autumn occurs in the seventh, eighth and ninth lunar months. That's why Mid-Autumn Festival, *zhongqiu*, another important occasion when all the family gathers, is celebrated on the 15th day of the eighth lunar month when the moon is at its brightest.

11 This holiday, when families gather in courtyards and share a special meal of round eatables like oranges, pomegranates (whose seeds symbolize many sons), melons and—last but not least—moon cakes (*yuebing*), has been celebrated in China since the Tang Dynasty (618—907BC).

12 The first stalls selling *yuebing* appeared more than a thousand years ago in the then capital city of Chang'an (modern Xi'an). Today *yuebing* are the traditional

Chinese dessert, and have become a profitable industry. Insiders say that during holiday week *yuebing* makers earn around 80 percent of their yearly income. For example, Shanghai consumes 10,000 tons of moon cakes in just one week!

13 For me all these Chinese festivals represent an organic connection between venerated themes and traditions and China's current rapid development. In carrying on the customs of their ancestors from centuries ago and celebrating ancient festivals, the people of contemporary, fast-moving China bring new life to them.

### Appendix(附录):

*Chunlian* (春联, antithetical couplet)—writing auspicious wishes for happiness, prosperity, good luck in business and everything else on red paper. *Chunlian* are usually pasted on either side of entrance gates or doors.

*Fu* (福) means happiness and good luck and should be pasted upside-down on the door. Why? In Chinese the word for “upside-down” sounds similar to “arrival”. So, this way of hanging the “*Fu*” means “good luck comes to me”.

*Menshen* (门神, door god)—freshly made paper figures of the door god that often come in pairs—one a warrior protecting the household from evil spirits and the other a good spirit bringing health, happiness and luck.

(984 words)

### Comprehension Exercises: Multiple Choice

**Directions:** For each of the following questions, decide on the best choice.

- According to this article, what way of cooking do Chinese women try to avoid during Spring Festival?
  - Baking.
  - Frying.
  - Steaming.
  - Boiling.
- The word “surplus” in Paragraph 5 means \_\_\_\_\_.
  - fish
  - good luck
  - happiness
  - addition



3. Which of the following statements is TRUE?
- A. *Qingming* has the longest history among all the traditional Chinese festivals.
  - B. People in Beijing can have a sound sleep on Spring Festival Eve because firecrackers are banned in this city.
  - C. This article was probably written just before the Spring Festival of 2004.
  - D. People like to eat melons on Mid-Autumn Festival because their seeds symbolize sons.
4. How many traditional Chinese festivals are mentioned in this article?
- A. Three.
  - B. Four.
  - C. Five.
  - D. Six.
5. The author's attitude toward these traditional Chinese festivals is \_\_\_\_\_.
- A. positive
  - B. negative
  - C. neutral
  - D. sarcastic

## Passage II

### The First Thanksgiving

#### Words to Know

- 1. the New World *n.* 指美国
- 2. pilgrim *n.* 清教徒前辈移民(1620 年在新英格兰建立普利茅斯殖民地的英国主张脱离国教者)
- 3. worship *v.* 崇拜
- 4. severe *a.* 严峻的
- 5. stern *a.* 难以忍受的
- 6. starvation *n.* 饥饿
- 7. ration *n.* 定量配给
- 8. crude *a.* 粗糙的
- 9. communal *a.* 公共的