


英语阅读 与学习技巧

READING AND STUDY SKILLS

主编 李尚宏 编者 何春燕 审订 李观仪

 上海外语教育出版社

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Introduction

Reading and Study Skills, Books I and II, compiled and edited by Mr. Li Shanghong and Ms. He Chunyan, are coursebooks that not only teach reading and study skills but also provide large amounts of reading materials. They are unique extensive reading coursebooks that help students to enlarge their vocabulary and widen their scope of knowledge.

Book I lays emphasis on the fundamentals of reading comprehension skills, namely the use of dictionaries, understanding word formation, learning idioms and words in context, finding information on the Internet, learning how to concentrate, to name a few. There are not only adequate explanations, but also numerous kinds of corresponding exercises to help the students to truly master the essentials of reading comprehension skills. There are also three lessons from the Bible stories, Greek and Roman myths, and Tales from Shakespeare, which enable the students to familiarize themselves with the basics of western culture.

Book II introduces the students to various kinds of reading methods and different types of writing. It stresses the importance of finding the main idea and relating details to the main idea. It gives instructions to different ways of reading different kinds of materials, in making inferences, in distinguishing between facts and the author's opinions, in reaching a certain conclusion, among other characteristics.

The most important and fundamental is that the coursebooks try every means to guide the students to active and creative reading, so that they, through assimilation and absorption, gain a thorough understanding of the texts. Each lesson is provided with reading materials and corresponding exercises that range from easy to difficult, from simple to complex, as befitted to the subject matter of each.

In short, the coursebooks help the students to develop active

thinking rather than passive learning. The students, when accumulating their vocabulary and learning to read, not only understand what is there, but also why it is so, so that they can lay a solid foundation in English reading comprehension skills with ease and facility.

Li Guanyi

Preface

Reading and Study Skills, Books I and II, incorporating reading comprehension, study skills and vocabulary building, is a course designed for first-year English majors in Chinese colleges. The two books are best suited for a teacher-led group; they are, however, self-instructional enough to be used for individual study.

The two books have grown out of a pressing need and my own teaching experience. Eight years ago, when I was first assigned the task to teach “Extensive Reading” to English majors at the College of English of Shanghai International Studies University, I was frustrated with the lack of an appropriate coursebook. There were dozens available which were published in Britain or America, but none seems to have taken consideration of the circumstances and needs of Chinese college students. I have also found several coursebooks compiled by Chinese professors, but they are usually too simple, falling short of students’ expectation as their general English level has risen appreciably in recent years.

I was not the only one in such a situation. Nearly a dozen of my colleagues also felt the urgent need for a coursebook tailored for Chinese students. I therefore embarked on compiling reading coursebooks that offer sufficient guidance and orientation to the students, without, in the meantime, slowing down their progress towards proficiency and diminishing their enjoyment of English reading. After eight years of research and teaching, the present two books are finally to be put into print. I am confident that the two coursebooks will delight teachers of reading and will be very helpful to English majors in Chinese colleges.

DISTINGUISHING FEATURES OF BOOK I

◆ Vocabulary skills to help students to make a quick breakthrough

To most first-year students, new words pose the greatest challenge. Good progress in speed and comprehension is impossible if every page has dozens of new words. To help students overcome this obstacle, Book I has five skills devoted to the single task of vocabulary build-up.

1. *How to remember words*. Any one of the three methods in Lesson One can be of great help if the student persists with it.
2. *Dictionary skills*. Lesson Two gives detailed instructions on what dictionaries to buy and how to best use them.
3. *Roots, prefixes and suffixes*. Word Formation in three lessons will undoubtedly afford students a shortcut to a larger vocabulary.
4. *Idioms*. Of course, vocabulary does not only include single words. *Learning Idioms* tells students how to recognize, understand and remember English idioms.
5. *Using context clues*. We advise students to remember words in the context. Using context clues can often dispense of the need to turn to a dictionary when there is a new word. It also helps students to develop the ability to use the language idiomatically.

By applying the vocabulary skills with persistence, students can expect to enlarge their vocabulary by thousands within weeks.

◆ Study skills to help students to do well in their college courses

Students in a new environment are naturally disorientated. Without proper guidance, they will be slow in adapting to campus life and in carrying out independent learning. Book I includes five study skills needed for success on campus. They tell students how to take advantage of school facilities, how to build the right study habits, how to read textbooks, and how to excel in exams.

◆ Readings to tell students what to read

Extensive reading is much more than working with only a coursebook. Ideally, students should be self-motivated and read widely on their own. But in reality, most first-year students do not do so for the simple reason that they do not know what to read.

For this consideration, in Book I there are three lessons to point directions to students. *Bible Stories*, *Greek and Roman Myths* and *Tales from Shakespeare* are excerpts from the three most important sources of the English language and culture.

Book I also has passages that have been carefully selected from a wide scope of sources. Apart from relevance to the theme of each lesson, the passages are all authentic, enlightening and interesting.

HOW TO USE BOOK I

To the Instructor

Reading and Study Skills, Book I, is designed for one semester's use, each lesson being allotted two academic hours.

The present order of the lessons in this book by no means prescribes a course schedule. You have the freedom to rearrange the order according to your own needs. For example, stories can come between study skills so as to reduce monotony.

The "Practices" after the presentation of each skill are exercises to reinforce students' understanding of the skill. Students are supposed to have done them on their own before classroom discussions and your explanations. However, the skills in this book are not to be read for comprehension only. Students are to be frequently reminded to apply the skills in their own studies.

It is well likely that you find explanations or exercises inadequate in the two coursebooks. In such cases, you are welcome to add your own. For example, when discussing word formation, you can explain more word parts so as to lessen students' dictionary work and help them remember.

Bible Stories, *Greek and Roman Myths* and *Tales from Shakespeare* are only very short excerpts from the three important sources. Students are expected to read more in these fields. It will benefit everybody if

students can share in class stories that are not selected in this book.

To the Student

Reading and Study Skills are especially suited for Chinese students. Each of the skills has been proven effective and helpful. Yet, you have to remember that mere comprehension of the skill is far from enough. The skills, especially vocabulary skills, are to be diligently carried out in your own studies. For example, after the first lesson in Book I, you shall have a vocabulary book, column folds, or vocabulary cards to help you remember new words.

Unless otherwise required, all the lessons are to be previewed and exercises finished so that you should have acquired a preliminary understanding of both the skills and the passages of the designated lesson before class.

What you read in this textbook is not extensive enough. You are strongly recommended to read more *Bible* stories, Greek and Roman Myths, simplified English novels, and other reading materials on your own.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am most grateful to Prof. Li Guanyi for reviewing word by word the two books and for her invaluable advice. Her professional guidance has undoubtedly raised the quality of the two books.

Due to some unexpected changes in my job early in 2004 and my subsequent seven-month academic visit to Cambridge, I was not able to finish the two books alone. It was an immense relief when Dr. He Chunyan, one of my best student friends, came to my rescue. She helped me in compiling Lessons Thirteen and Fourteen in Book I, and the last five lessons in Book II. She also did the painstaking job of revising the two books according to the advice of Prof. Li Guanyi and that of the editors. I am deeply indebted to her for all the excellent work she has done.

My heartfelt thanks and appreciation also go to Prof. He Zhaoxiong and Prof. Zou Shen for reviewing and commenting on the two books.

Ms Wan Hongyu, Ms Cai Jiaying and Ms Han Dianxiu reviewed the books and gave some helpful advice at the various stages of their compilation.

Dr. Jiang Yanmei, my former colleague who is currently in the University of Wisconsin, U. S. A. , has given me professional advice on compiling the books and has provided me with more than ten valuable books newly published in U. S. A. Without her help, the completion of my books would be much delayed.

I am especially indebted to my students, who have made the teaching of reading such a fountain of pleasure. I thank them for their active participation in the classroom and their willingness to share with me their ideas, their frustration, progress and achievement in reading. They are the ultimate inspiration of my books and the unfailing sustenance of my effort in bringing them to completion.

Last but not least, I want to express gratitude to the editors for their many helpful suggestions and extraordinary editorial skill.

Li Shanghong

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Lesson One

Three Methods of *Learning New Words*

The average vocabulary of a college student in an English-speaking country is said to be about 24,000, while that of a first-year Chinese college student is around 4000. Naturally, on every page of an English book there are dozens of new words for them. First-year English majors are ambitious. They make plans to remember as many words as possible, picking up whatever new words they see and remembering them in their various ways that often prove not to be the most efficient. The following three methods have been widely used by successful students. If you adopt any one of them and persist, you will undoubtedly be rewarded with a larger and more powerful vocabulary. You can, of course, invent your own method or develop one from the three.

Method 1: A Vocabulary Notebook

One way to develop your vocabulary is to keep a notebook of the words you want to learn. A spiral notebook is better since you can add new pages and take out ones you no longer need. A typical entry might look like this:

dispense / dɪs'pens /

1 *vt.* give out to a large number of people

2 *vi.* (+ *with*) do without ; make unnecessary
dispenser, dispensable, indispensable

This machine dispenses coffee.

*We shall have to dispense with the car;
we can't afford it.*

*The new computer system will dispense
with the need for keeping files.*

Of course, what type of entries is made is up to you. Some students copy examples from a dictionary. Others prefer to include the sentence where the word is first encountered. Still others write an example sentence of their own.

If you choose not to include the pronunciation, you should at least have a look at the pronunciation in the dictionary. English words often have irregular pronunciations. Read the ten words below and see how many you get correct.

<i>demon</i>	<i>edition</i>	<i>salon</i>	<i>colonel</i>	<i>comparable</i>
<i>receipt</i>	<i>admirable</i>	<i>aisle</i>	<i>chaos</i>	<i>contemplate</i>

You can now check each word in a dictionary. I doubt if you have read more than five correctly.

The advantages of keeping a vocabulary notebook are that it is a convenient way to keep all new words together and a good source for constant review of older entries as new ones are made. The disadvantage is that the notebook may become nothing more than a list of words unless you make an effort to review the words constantly.

For non-native speakers of English, the task to put hundreds of words into a vocabulary book often tests their patience. To save time, they often just copy the new word, the pronunciation, and the simplest definition in their mother tongues. This method, though less time-consuming, often causes trouble. As thousands of English words have more than one meaning, what seems to explain in one context often fails in another. Besides, as you will find, it is the example that helps you to remember and learn more quickly to use a word.

Method 2: Column Folds

With this method you take a regular piece of notebook paper, or just an A4 copy paper, and fold it into three or four columns, three if you do not need the pronunciation of the word you want to learn. In the first column you write the words you wish to learn. In the second column you write the pronunciation. In the third column you write the definition of the word, and in the fourth, an example sentence using the word, but instead of writing down the exact word you may place a blank or a mark, “~”. You can usually get about ten or twelve words on one sheet of paper.

You can then practice learning the words in several ways. One way is to fold the paper so that only the words show. You then try to remember the definitions; if you cannot, unfold the paper and check the answer. Another way is to fold the paper so that only the definitions show. Try to see if you can identify the word that agrees with that definition. Still another way is to fold the paper so that only the sentences show, you then try to remember the word that should be in the blank. You can also fold the paper so that the pronunciation shows and try to spell the word and give its definition.

The advantage of this method is that it provides you with a means of studying with immediate feedback to the answers. The disadvantage is that the paper can become rather tattered after a while if you require much time to learn the words.

Method 3: Vocabulary Cards

You can easily find vocabulary cards for English word study in a bookstore. They are often in boxes. In such sets, each card has a word on one side and its definition on the other. These ready-made cards can be helpful, but chances are that you will already know many of the words on the cards. You can easily personalize the vocabulary card method by making your own cards. Here's all you need to do:

1. On the front of a card, print the word you want to learn. Use ink so that after much use it will still be legible. Underneath the word,

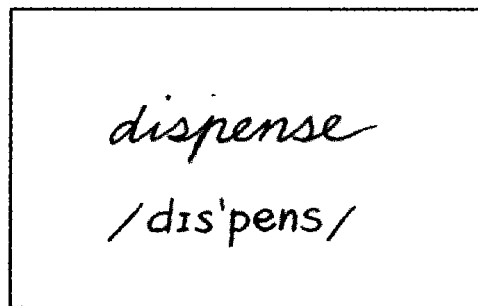
write the pronunciation unless you already know how to pronounce the word.

2. On the back of the card, put as much information as needed to help you learn the word. It is recommended that besides the definition you include a sentence using the word, either the sentence in which you find the word or an example of your own.

3. Make vocabulary cards only for the words you want to overlearn. It is important to overlearn new words, not just memorize them, because you will gradually forget their meanings if you do not use them. All the words you presently know you have already overlearned and you use them without thinking. The only way to have a truly larger vocabulary is to overlearn new words the way you do with the ones you now use regularly.

4. Try to learn at least fifty new words a week, more if you can. Practise daily by quickly flashing only the front of the vocabulary card, pronouncing the word to yourself and recalling the word's meaning. Try not to refer to the back of the card unless you can't remember the definition.

5. Carry a small stack of cards around in your bag or pocket so that you can refer to them often. At odd times during the day — between classes, while waiting for a friend, on a bus, etc. — practise flashing your cards. If you have a friend who is also using this method, practice flashing each other's cards. The more you practice, the sooner you will begin to overlearn the words and recognize them by sight. Here is an example of a vocabulary card:



Front of Card

1 vt. give out to a large number of people.
 2 vi. (+ with) do without ; make unnecessary.
*This machine dispenses coffee.
 We shall have to dispense with the car ; we can't afford it.*

Back of Card

6. When you have accumulated hundreds of cards, put aside the cards for words you feel you know very well and probably will never forget. At a later date, review the cards you put aside and see if you still remember them. If there are some you don't remember, put them back in your active stack of cards.

The advantage of this method is that it is a convenient way to learn words. If you have your cards with you, practice can take place anywhere, anytime. Rather than learning words from a list where association with other words on the list takes place, flash cards can be shuffled and mixed up. Once you have all the information you need on a card, you never have to look up the word again. The disadvantage is that making cards does take time, but the advantages far outweigh the disadvantages.

Admittedly, all the three methods take much time. But you know that it is worthwhile. Perhaps, you have not found any of them good enough for you though all have worked very well with many students. If so, you have to work out a method of your own. Whatever it may be, you have to be reminded of two things: 1) *you have to be persistent*. It does not help much if you remember one hundred in the first week but give up in the next. And 2) *you have to be patient*. Everyone forgets. If you forget a word, the only wise thing you can do is to remember it again.