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青海人民出版社

高校初级英语阅读 (下)

Elementary English Reading for college Students

ENGLISH

青海师范大学资助出版

College Elementary English Reading

高校初级英语阅读

下册

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前 言

《高校初级英语阅读》是按照《高等学校英语专业基础阶段英语教学大纲》中对阅读课程的要求而编写的,可供英语专业一年级的学生使用,也适用于英语自学者。教材旨在通过选取题材广泛的阅读材料以及不同的文体使学生在提高阅读理解能力和扩大词汇量的同时,学习掌握有用的目的语国家的文化背景知识。

本教材具有以下特点:

一、注重阅读过程中各种阅读技巧的训练。本教材致力于学生阅读技巧的训练,通过恰当的阅前和读后的练习设计,引导学生带着问题进行略读、查读,乃至精细阅读,找出主题句,确定中心思想;对单词、句子和通篇含义等进行推断,掌握语篇分析、文章概括、上下文推理的阅读过程和阅读方法。学生经过这样的训练,将加深对语言深层次含义的理解,提高阅读能力。

二、选文注重时效性与知识性,各种题材兼顾。本教程的选文特别注重文章内容的时效性、知识性,并与一年级阅读教学训练的适应性相结合。为了培养学生的阅读兴趣,方便活跃阅读课堂教学,教程的文章主要选取一些新颖的、喜闻乐见的、难度及篇幅基本符合英语专业教学大纲中的相关要求的文章,并注意题材涉及各种话题、领域以及各种体裁类型。如,说明文、议论文及记叙文等的结合。

三、此教材采用理解型速读方式,阅读量较大。上册的课文长度每篇平均为1200词,下册每篇1500词。阅读长度的加大旨在使学生在有效的时间内大量地输入语言信息并进行处理,在理解的前提下,不断加快阅读速度、扩大词汇量、拓展知识面,提高阅读理解的确度。

《高校初级英语阅读》分上下两册。每册13个单元(每单元分为三个部分。第一部分为课文A,课文A是单元的阅读主体,要求在课堂上处理,学生无须预习。第二部分为课文B,课文B是快速阅读,有三篇长度为300词左右的短文,要求学生在限定的时间范围内阅读并完成阅读理解问题。第三部分为课文C,课文C为课外阅读,提供较长的语言材料,要求学生在课外进行阅读并完成练习,教师在下一节课上检查学生完成情况并给予评判。

本教材的主编和编写人员都是多年从事英语专业教学的教师,赵志义教授担任主编,罗冬梅副教授负责编写上册,王勇副教授负责编写下册。本书的编写和出版得到了青海师范大学有关部门和外语系的大力支持,也得到了青海人民出版社编辑的鼎力相助。在此,我们表示衷心感谢。由于时间紧迫、编者水平有限,恳切专家和读者不吝赐教,以便及时校正。

编者

2007年8月

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Unit One

An Effective Education System

Text A

Words you need

Selection: some education systems include a series of examinations by which the students are “selected” for different types of schools. These examinations typically occur at the end of their Primary education, midway through their Secondary education and again at the end of their Secondary education. The results of these examinations often decide the whole future of the students involved.

Pre-reading activity

Discuss with your neighbors the idea that most children at the age of 13 and 14 are experiencing something different in school study. You may need the following words: penalty, receptive, dominated, label.

An Effective Education System

- 1 No matter what age we are, we all remember our schooldays — but how many of us remember them as happy, carefree days? Society expects a great deal from our young people and is often tempted to label young people as “failures” if they do not achieve as highly as we would wish. However, who is to blame for these “failures”? Is it possible that the children are not at fault at all, but society itself?
- 2 This is a recording of a debate speech made on exactly this question as it exists in Britain. How much of what the speaker says applies to your own experiences of education and to what extent do you agree with him?
- 3 “Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, without a doubt, the greatest wish of every caring and responsible society is to do something important and meaningful to improve the lives of its young people. The most obvious way of doing this is to free childhood from the unacceptable pressure of examinations and selection.
- 4 At the tender age of 13 and 14, children are selected and pushed into examination classes that effectively decide their futures. Then at the age in their lives when most of them are least receptive to formal learning, they are forced to sit exams where the penalties for failure, as final as a death sentence.

5 The lives of secondary school children are dominated by these exams. Some schools do offer a wide range of interesting subjects, but only for those who have already been labeled as failures. So parents continue to push, cajole, threaten and force their children through exams, or search frantically for schools with "high standards" to do the pushing and forcing for them, because this is what our tertiary institutions demand.

6 But is there any need for all that? What's the hurry? The labor market is not, exactly begging for very young newly qualified people. Why do we put such intolerable pressure on our young people? What to they want? Between the ages of 13 and 16 a great many children feel less like studying and learning than at any other time in their lives. The business of growing up is enough. They need time and space. Often, highly motivated children, whose love of reading has led them to read libraries of books, suddenly stop reading at this age. It doesn't mean that they will stop forever. With any luck, after about 16 or 17 they can grow out of that phase, but under our present system of selection that's too late. If they took the wrong course at the age of 14, then their lives could be ruined. Parents are often driven to despair at children who, given the chance, spend half the day in bed and the other half getting dressed, but it doesn't last for ever. So why do we choose this period in their lives as the time to make or break them?

7 If the pressure of selection at 16 was removed, secondary education could become a different process altogether. From about 13 onwards, children could be free to

study if they choose; or they could choose to study for part of the time only. They could spend exactly as long as they wanted doing the subjects they wanted to do. Or they would be free to do nothing. Schools would have sitting spaces for them to do nothing in. If they wanted to spend half the day in the art rooms or doing drama, that would be their decision. In Britain, such schools have existed for decades, but while the present exam system exists, the penalties for encouraging a child to develop their own interests instead of the school system's can be very severe.

8 It seems that the primitive system of education, physically beating knowledge into a child, has been replaced by a system that is, equally unacceptable to a caring society: to frighten children with the threat of being a failure for life.

9 When I consider that between the ages of 5 and 18 I was subjected to 17, 745 lessons at a time when the brain is biologically at its most receptive, and how little I knew at the end of it all, I am appalled by the waste of time, money and effort. The school day itself is hardly designed to encourage serious study and concentration, dividing it up into those 40-minute pieces of learning. Students move about the school like cars on a factory production line, having little pieces of geography or history or biology added at certain times and in a particular order.

10 Most children cannot concentrate under these conditions. The very act of being taught all day by people who know better, or at least believe they know better, is enough to make any but the most highly motivated student

rebel. The only rationale behind the present system is that it makes administration and school bureaucracy easy, but it can never be called efficient. Why, for example, does it take up to 11 years to get children up to the low level of English required for the exam they sit at 16? If somebody really wanted to teach a child English and the child actually wanted to learn, it could be done in a year or so.

11 The voice of the children themselves is rarely heard; and all too often, when they do write about education, they simply write what they know the teacher wants to read, as they are afraid of failing in the piece of work because the teacher disagrees with what they have written. However, changes are slowly beginning to take place. In Britain there is a National Union of Students (NUS) that can help students express their true opinions to the school authorities.

12 The NUS argues that school should not be compulsory, boring teachers should get fewer pupils, and many more people from ordinary jobs should take turns teaching in schools. If jobs are available, pupils should be able to do some work in the outside world. Adults should be encouraged to come to the schools and learn as well, in an attempt to make the schools and the community more understanding, of each other. They argue that under such a free system pupils would be likely to learn more and be more cooperative with adults and authority in general.

13 I have no idea whether these students are correct in their belief that children would actually learn more. But I am sure they would be happier. I very much doubt that they

would end up learning less, and we shouldn't have to spend so much time telling 13- and 14-year-olds that if they don't study all day, every day, they will end up as failures for the rest of their lives.

- 14 Therefore, ladies and gentlemen, I'm sure you will agree that, you have no choice but to agree with today's motion. The system that exists today is certainly harmful to our children and must be changed. "

(1161, words)

Comprehension questions

I. Read the following passage carefully and decide whether the following statements are true or false.

1. _____ According to the author, the effective education system is the one in which school children feel less stressed and happy.
2. _____ The first paragraph suggests that the writer believes young people are themselves responsible for being educational "failures".
3. _____ In paragraph 9, the author introduces the figures because he wants to say that school learning takes a long time and it should be designed more reasonably?
4. _____ Again in paragraph 9, the author implies that geography, history and biology should be added to the examinations.
5. _____ The author agrees with the NUS's point of view.

II. Answer the following questions

1. Why are examination and selection not suitable for the 13- and 14-year-olds?

2. In which paragraph does the author give an example to show the unsuitableness?

3. Why are the examination and selection so important for the 13- and 14-year-olds?

4. What suggestion does the author make to help the 13- and 14-year-olds go through this time period?

5. Do you agree with the idea in paragraph 10 that all-day teaching is not effective because it only makes administration and school bureaucracy easy? Why or Why not?

I. Read the following passage carefully and decide whether the following

statements are true or false.

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II. Answer the following questions

1. Why are examination and selection not suitable for the 13- and 14-year-olds?

2. In which paragraph does the author give an example to show the unsuitable-ness?

Text B

Fast reading

Directions: Read the following passages and do the multiple-choice exercises. Try to finish them within 15 minutes. Do not preview.

1

The welcome which a Kurdish tribe gives a guest is not only hearty but it is a bloody affair as well. On the outskirts of the village a delegation of men hold a bull ready for the slaughter, and as the guest approaches, one of the tribesmen stabs the animal in the throat. There is the last painful moment when the bull lets loose a bloody, gurgling sound before it is dragged across the road, leaving a stream of blood in its wake. The guest then steps across the blood. The killer saws vigorously on the neck of the beast until the head is cut off and then throws it to the side of the road. The khan, or other ranking host, turns to the guest, takes him by the hand, and says in a loud, ringing voice, "May that happen to the heads of all your enemies."

The new arrival is now a member of the tribe. He has special privileges, too. Each tribesman would give his life to defend him. Every man, woman, and child will cater to his needs and show him every courtesy. People of the Western world would also want to receive their guests cordially, but the Western version of hospitality certainly seems for less extreme.

1. The best title for this article would be _____.

A. A Kurdish Welcome

B. Tales of a Traveler

C. A Kurdish Warning

D. Putting Out the Welcome Mat

2. To enter the village, a guest must _____.

A. stab the bull in the throat

- B. drag the bull across the road
C. step across a trail of blood
D. behead the bull
3. The head of the bull represents the _____.
A. head of the guest
B. heads of the guest's enemies
C. head of the tribal chief
D. heads of all visitors
4. In addition to being a ceremony of welcome, the rite described is also _____.
A. a sacrifice to the gods
B. a tribute to the khan
C. a preparation for a meal
D. an introduction into the tribe
5. After the ceremony, the guest is entitled to _____.
A. each tribesman's life in his defence
B. the respect of every member of the tribe
C. his choice of any of the chief's wives
D. both A and B

2

The Parthenon is an ancient Greek temple built in Athens about 438 B.C. Many people think that The Parthenon is one of the world's most beautiful buildings. It has a grace and balance that have pleased the eyes of man for centuries.

Architects who have studied the Parthenon know that the Parthenon is a giant optical illusion. An optical illusion is a trick our eyes play on us. All the seemingly straight lines of the Parthenon are actually curves. These curves did not happen by accident. The ancient Greeks, who were fine engineers as well as excellent artists, knew that straight lines can sometimes appear to be curved! So they designed their columns to look straight.

Try drawing two long parallel lines on paper. Do they seem to look closer together in the middle than at the ends? A tall column is likely to look pinched

halfway up along its height, too. The columns of the Parthenon look as if they stand perfectly straight. Actually, they are slightly swollen in the middle and slant inward a little at the top. If lines were drawn up along the opposite sides of the columns, these lines would meet about one mile above the building.

A platform of three steps forms the base on which the Parthenon rests. These steps have strong horizontal lines that balance the vertical lines of the columns. But the steps are not really level and flat! They curve up in the middle because if they were absolutely straight, they would appear to curve down. The line of the top step, if continued at both ends, would form a circle with a radius of three and a half miles.

When is a curved line not a curved line? When our eyes tell us it is straight!

1. Implied but not directly stated: _____.
 - A. The ancient Greeks couldn't draw a straight line
 - B. Most architects don't think much of the Parthenon
 - C. We still admire the work of ancient Greeks
 - D. Two straight lines are always slant inward
2. On the whole, the article tells about _____.
 - A. the design of the Parthenon
 - B. lines meeting at the end of a mile
 - C. the horizontal lines of steps
 - D. the two lines that are swollen at both ends
3. Which statement does the article lead you to believe?
 - A. The Greeks knew nothing about optical illusions.
 - B. The Greeks knew a great deal about optical illusions
 - C. You cannot draw horizontal lines without vertical lines
 - D. Two lines can never be made vertically straight
4. What makes the steps look level and flat?
 - A. They curve up at the bottom.
 - B. They are level and flat.
 - C. They curve down in the middle.
 - D. They curve up in the middle.
5. Which statement seems true according to the passage?