

英语阅读技能强化训练

李兴华

READING SKILLS:
AN INTENSIVE APPROACH



湖北教育出版社

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编者的话

阅读能力的测试是语言考试的一项重要内容。在各种英语考试试题中,例如托福考试(TOEFL)、英语水平考试(EPT),以及大学英语考试(CET),阅读理解(Reading Comprehension)题都占很大的比重。阅读理解题不仅份量重,而且还有时间限制。据统计,托福考试中的“词汇与阅读理解”要求考生在45分钟内读完大约2800个单词的材料,并做完60道多项选择题;英语水平考试中的“词汇与阅读理解”则要求考生在60分钟内读完大约2900个单词的材料,做完60道多项选择题;近几年来举行的大学英语考试四级试题中的“阅读理解”要求考生在35分钟内读完四篇短文,约1500个单词,并做完20道多项选择题。从以上数据可以看出:速度和准确,即阅读的流畅性和理解的准确性,对每位考生来说,都是很大的挑战。这两项指标也正是阅读课应该解决的一个矛盾。

阅读就是对书面材料信息的理解。对一篇文章的阅读理解不仅包括对该文章内的每一个词、每一个句子、每一个段落以及全文的理解,而且还包括对作者的意图、语气以及言外之意的理解。阅读理解能力实际上是一项综合能力。它既包括语言知识和阅读技能,又包括文化背景知识以及逻辑推理能力。所以,要提高阅读理解能力,以上几个方面都需要下功夫才行。

词汇和语法等语言知识是阅读理解的基础。要提高阅读理解能力,当然需要打好语言知识这个基础。但是,只有语言知识还不够,阅读技能也是阅读理解能力的一个组成部分,是提高阅读速度

的一个不可忽视的方面。

一般说来,阅读技能包括:

1. 从上下文中猜出生词的词意;
2. 找出篇章的主题大意;
3. 根据句子或段落的内容,进行正确的推理;
4. 批评性的阅读和鉴赏;

在英语考试试卷中,阅读理解题主要是围绕前三项技能的。本书的编写目的就是阅读的三个主要技能,为读者提供一套系统的强化训练材料。

本书所选的段落、短文均选自近年来的原文资料,体裁多样,题材广泛。书后附有参考答案,可供读者自测之用。

本书适合出国人员、研究生、有一定英语基础的大学生和自学者使用。

由于编者的教学经验和学术水平极其有限,书中定有不少缺点和错误,恳切地希望广大读者和专家们批评指正。

编 者
1991年6月

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UNDERSTANDING VOCABULARY IN CONTEXT

These exercises are designed to help you improve your ability to guess the meaning of unfamiliar words by using context clues.

Context refers to the sentence or paragraph in which a word occurs.

The context clues we are looking for include, SYNONYM, ANTONYM, COMPARISON/CONTRAST, DEFINITION, APPPOSITION/ RE-STATEMENT, EXAMPLES AND SITUATION etc.

Circle the one word that has the same meaning as the under-lined word.

1. Richard is usually very unassertive in class. His friend Sally, on the other hand, is totally different. She has strong opinions about almost every subject and often tries to impose her ideas on the rest of the class.

A) opinionated

B) curious

C) passive

D) aggressive

2. His parents always hoped he would be a successful doctor or lawyer after he graduated from college, but when he never finished high school, they were forced to change their expectations.

A) things fears

B) things studied

C) things hoped for

D) things worried about

3. Janet seemed so sincere when she told me she would come to visit me

last weekend. However, when she never came, I realized once again how people's behavior does not always correspond to their good intentions.

A)conduct, actions B)ideas, thoughts

C)needs, longings D)desires, wants

4. Compared to the peace and quiet of country, city life can be very hazardous. Pollution, crime, and constant traffic all pose threats to human health and safety.

A)rules B)hopes

C)requirements D)dangers

5. In most universities students are required to take a certain number of courses in specific areas of study. In some colleges it is also compulsory to study a foreign language for at least one year.

A)unfortunate B)necessary

C)difficult D)enjoyable

6. Tourists usually depend on a map and good directions from other people to find their way around a strange city. But sometimes they get lost when other people give them misleading information.

A)exciting B)interesting

C)helpful D>wrong

7. Most nations try to find a peaceful solution to their disputes and differences. In some cases, however, one country refuses to consider or respect the other's position, and war and violent conflict become unavoidable.

A)unusual B)uncomfortable

C)inescapable D)unimportant

8. All my life I had always assumed that my aunt and uncle had a hap-

A)follow

B)avoid

C)dislike

D)eliminate

14. Traditions in some countries have remained the same for many centuries, while in other nations local customs seem to alter constantly, so that a visitor never knows what to expect.

A)stay the same

B)change

C)visit

D)expect

15. Children often take for granted their parents' efforts to take care of them, that is, they consider their parents' work as something natural and expected.

A)dislike

B)enjoy

C)try to be careful

D)think of as natural

16. There are many beautiful movie actresses in the world, but it's usually those women with unusual physical features such as a tender yet sad smile; dark, penetrating eyes; or a mysterious look who truly capture the public's attention and admiration.

A)problems

B)characteristics

C)foundations

D)functions

7. First impression can be misleading. When I met my wife for the first time I perceived her as a rather silly, unintelligent person. Today I know her to be a bright and mature woman.

A)preferred

B)visited

C)impressed

D)viewed

18. Children often try to emulate or copy the behavior that they see on television.

A)duplicate

B)avoid

C)enjoy

D)laugh at

19. The family has a proud and distinguished heritage. In each of the last four generations, at least one family member has had an important role in industry.

A)ceremony

B)ancestry

C)country

D)rebellion

20. In recent years there have been several major trends in education. One trend is toward increased emphasis on mastering the basic skills such as reading, writing, and math.

A)tendency

B)university

C)truth

D)topic

Write a synonym or short definition for the underlined word.

21. I always felt that I could not trust my neighbour. When I overheard him intentionally lying to someone, it just reinforced my negative opinion of him.
-

22. What a lazy, shiftless person she is! She's unemployed, yet she makes no effort to find a job.
-

23. In every language there are often several words that have the same meaning, and it's actually possible to substitute one for the other. For some words, however, no other word exists that is exactly

equivalent.

24. The United States has some strange laws. For instance, the government permits cigarette companies to advertise their products in magazines and newspapers, yet it bans cigarette commercials on TV.
-

25. The young man was unfriendly, bitter, and angry, even though everyone else seemed happy and pleasant. I couldn't imagine why he had so much hostility towards everyone.
-

26. "You don't intimidate me," shouted the worker at her boss. "If you think I'm afraid of you and your threats, then you're crazy."
-

27. It's interesting to observe how two brothers can be different. One can be completely independent and insist on doing things his own way, while the other can be so submissive that he just accepts whatever you tell him to do.
-

28. The professor's enthusiasm for his subject was contagious. Students who were normally disinterested in their schoolwork suddenly became excited and enthusiastic when they entered his class.

29. During most of his life the author was unable to find a publisher willing to publish his work. Finally, after years of continued effort, his perseverance produced incredible results, not only was his book published, but it also won a major literary award.

30. Young boys growing up often dream about playing sports for both college and professional teams. Yet the chances of actually playing for a major university are not very great, and the odds of playing professionally are even smaller.

31. When the police officer asked the woman if they could enter her hotel room she hesitated momentarily. It was obvious that the woman was reluctant to allow them in as if she had something to hide.

32. What a temper that uncle of ours had! If he thought that people didn't believe him or simply doubted his words, he would throw a terrible tantrum, his anger exploding violently and uncontrollably, like a volcano erupting.

33. Although you can't expect to speak a foreign language after studying it for only a few months, you can ultimately speak it well if you persevere and continue practising.

34. Machines have changed society irrevocably. It's doubtful that we will voluntarily return to the days when we used human muscles to do most of our work. Machines are with us to stay!

35. A man of tremendous physical strength, his muscles would bulge through his shirt, revealing a physique of powerful proportions.

36. As I looked ahead, I could see that the highway suddenly diverged. I wasn't sure which route to take at the point where the road divided.

37. After the operation the patient was in great pain, but she was soon given a drug to alleviate her discomfort.

38. I remember a student telling me of a recurrent, serial-story dream, with each chapter of the experience connected to the last installment.

39. Although it was difficult to see because of the huge crowd of people, I was able to catch a glimpse of the President as he passed in his car.

40. As fast as factories were built, people moved from their farms to live in towns and cities. This mass migration accelerated the development of large urban areas and also hastened the process of industrialization.

41. The life of a farmer is more interwound with nature than that of most city residents. A farmer tends to be more respectful and protective of the environment because he relies on the land and weather to grow his crops.

42. Teachers impart information in various ways, such as by the presentation of lectures, the assignment of readings, and the showing of films.

43. Some people don't like to travel to foreign countries. They prefer the comforts and familiarity of home instead of the strangeness of an alien environment.

44. In ancient times it was customary for people to watch the stars and think about what might exist up there in space. Thousands of years later, scientists continue to speculate about the nature of the uni-

verse.

45. Only a century ago people thought that it was impossible for human beings to live in outer space. Today, however, some scientists believe that it will soon be feasible for large numbers of people to live in space.
-

46. Biologists generally agree that heredity, the transmission of genetic characteristics from parents to their children, is the essential factor in determining a person's physical appearance.
-

47. One of the most amazing achievements in flight history took place in 1927 when Charles Lindbergh first crossed the Atlantic Ocean, flying from New York to Paris in just under 33.5 hours. Another incredible feat occurred in 1969 when Neil Armstrong became the first man to set foot on the moon.
-

48. Life in modern times seems to have a more transient quality; people change jobs and addresses with greater frequency, old buildings are torn down and new ones are quickly built in their place, and new scientific discoveries are made almost every day.
-

49. Before people learned to grow their own food, they spent much of their time foraging for food. In order to survive, they were forced to search for plants, berries, and animals to eat.

50. Statistics show that strokes (the paralysis that results from a sudden lack of oxygen flowing through the brain) occur today with less frequency than they did in the previous few decades.

MAIN IDEAS

One of the most useful reading skills is being able to determine the main idea of a paragraph. Once you become adept at finding main idea, you will read faster and with better understanding.

In a single paragraph, a writer usually will present one main idea. And most sentences in the paragraph support, describe or explain the main idea of that paragraph.

The main idea of a paragraph is often—but not always—contained in the first or last sentence of that paragraph.

Sometimes it is only implied in the paragraph.

To find the main idea of any paragraph, the reader can ask three questions:

- A. Who or what is the paragraph about?
- B. What aspect of the who or what is the author concerned with?
- C. What does the author really want readers to understand about this aspect of the who or what?

I. Sentence Study

1. The ability to read is essential to success in school.

A) Reading ability and success in school have little in common.

B) Individual progress records should be kept by all students.