



实用英语阅读技巧

PRACTICAL SKILLS FOR READING

■ 罗虹 著



WUHAN UNIVERSITY PRESS

武汉大学出版社



实用英语阅读技巧

Practical Skills

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内 容 提 要

《实用英语阅读技巧》主要是为高等院校英语专业、大学英语学生及广大英语读者的英语阅读学习、技能训练、参加各类英语等级考试而编写的实用性技巧用书。编者通过多年的教学经验以及对国内外大量有关资料进行研究后,阐述了新的阅读观念,提出了克服各种阅读障碍的方法,并详尽介绍了多种实用阅读技巧。

全书共分为九个章节。每个章节着重介绍一个方面的阅读技能,并配合相关阅读材料供读者进行技能训练与检测。

前 言

阅读是一个认知和言语交际的过程,读者利用本身掌握的知识和阅读技能,领会作者通过语言符号表达的意图,使这些符号意义化,从而达到与作者的思想沟通。由于阅读是一项复杂的理解过程,所以影响阅读成效的因素诸多,其中最头疼和最常见的问题是阅读的方法问题。作者以教育学、心理学、语言学和外语教学法理论为依据,参考了国内外大量有关快速阅读的理论书籍和教材,同时结合本人长期从事阅读教学的经验,针对中国学生和英语读者在阅读中通常容易碰到的学习问题和理解障碍进行了详尽的分析,提出了一套十分有效的阅读学习方法,并为读者介绍了各种实用的阅读技巧。

本书由九个章节组成,每个章节着重详细介绍一个方面的阅读技能和内容相关的阅读技能训练,各章节相互联系,循序渐进。作者从阅读理念(An Introduction to Reading)、词汇识别(Recognizing Words)、上下文理解(Identifying the Meaning through Context)、中心大意辨别(Discovering the Main Ideas)、文章结构(Identifying the Patterns of Organization)、快速阅读(Techniques for Speed Reading)、批判阅读(Techniques for Critical Reading)、考试策略(Strategies for Taking Tests of Reading)、特殊英语阅读(How to Read Specialized Materials)等多方面系统地阐述了新的阅读理念和阅读学习方法。

本书从阅读学习的实际出发,针对读者的认知心理特点,由浅入深,从易到难,精讲多练,可帮助读者克服阅读障碍,掌握阅读技巧,快速提高阅读速度和理解能力。

本书适用于高等院校英语专业的阅读课程教学,特别适合于大学生的阅读学习、广大英语读者的课外阅读,也可作为学生复习备考及教师的教学参考用书。



由于作者水平有限,错误缺点在所难免,衷心希望广大读者和专家们提出宝贵的意见。

作 者

2006年8月21日

于南湖

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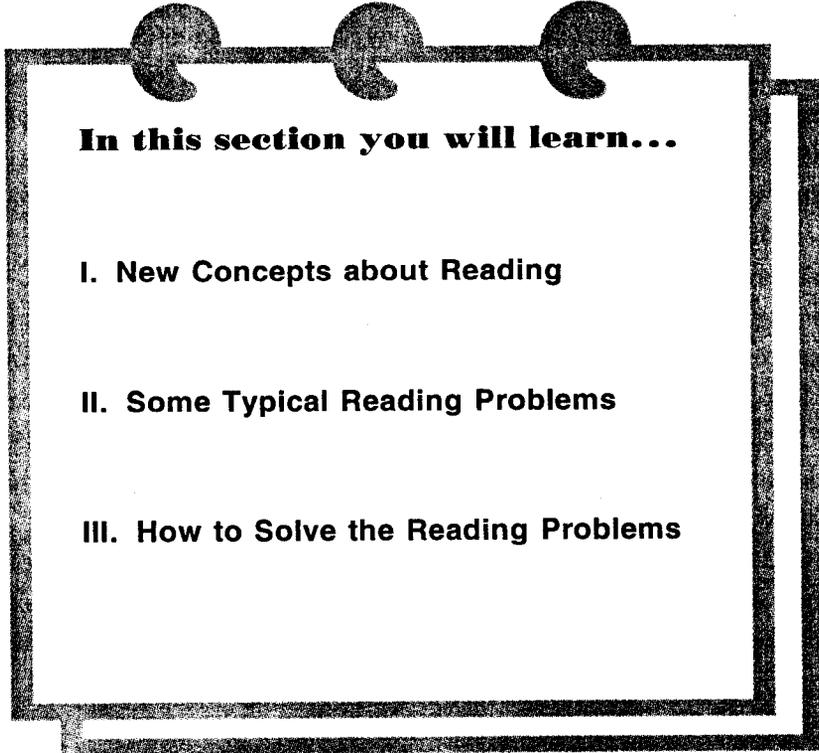
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Chapter **1**

An Introduction to Reading



In this section you will learn...

I. New Concepts about Reading

II. Some Typical Reading Problems

III. How to Solve the Reading Problems



I. New Concepts about Reading

Reading is a complex process. It depends on a variety of factors, such as the reader's experiential and conceptual background, word recognition strategies, reasoning ability, purpose for reading, environment, motivation, and text complexity. These features of reading influence our attempts to construct meaning from what we read. This book presents some practical skills for reading and helps you to become a strategic, or flexible reader.

1. The Definition of Reading

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What is reading? Some people may say that reading is for the sake of reading and getting knowledge as well as recreation from the reading materials. However, to be speaking in a more strict sense, reading is a comprehensive process involving not only one's understanding about the reading material but also his thinking about the content. In order to understand the reading material well, one's basic skills such as vocabulary, grammar and sentence structure alongside with his extensive background knowledge, which covers a wide range of culture, literature, science, technology, philosophy, history, anthropology, psychology, sociology, politics and economy, are required. At the same time, reading is also a thinking process in that it requires the readers' participation and criticism, since the author's ideas may sometimes collide with the readers'.

Generally speaking, therefore, reading may be defined as the rapid fusions of word symbols into consecutive units of thoughts through which the experiences of the reader are expanded. His power of thinking is stimulated and his ability to interpret life becomes more intelligent and accurate.



2. The Nature of Reading Comprehension

Reading is one of the four macro-skills in language learning. It is viewed as a process of decoding written symbols, working from smaller units to larger ones. One of the significant contributions to reading, we are told, is to show the importance of background knowledge. The mental structures that store our knowledge are called schemata, and schema theory is the theory of reading comprehension basing on schemata. According to this theory, reading is an interactive process between what a reader already knows about a given topic or subject and what the writer writes. It's not simply a matter of applying decoding conventionally grammatical knowledge to the text, nor seeking for rapid reading speed. By contrary, good readers are able to relate the context and their own background knowledge efficiently; therefore, they achieve both adequate comprehension and appropriate reading rate.

3. Reading Purposes and Skills

It is important to bear in mind that reading is not an invariant skill, and that there are different types of reading skills which correspond to the many different purposes we have for reading.

Here we borrow some foreign scholars' ideas. We are suggested that sound language learners will read for the following purposes:

- To obtain information for some purpose or become curious about some topic.
- To obtain instructions on how to perform some task for our work or daily life.
- To act in a play, to play a game, or to do a puzzle.
- To keep in touch with friends by correspondence or to understand business letter.
- To know when or where something will take place or what is available.
- To know what has happened or is happening.



— To get enjoyment or excitement.

In our daily life, we often encounter different reading tasks. We agree that different purposes require different skills. Here are some examples.

You are:

- filling in an unfamiliar form.
- operating a machine you have never used.
- looking into a newspaper to find something useful for you.
- dealing with your students' written pieces of work.
- interpreting tables on pharmaceutical products.
- using a timetable.
- using road signs.
- selecting and reading a newspaper article.
- reading a short story or a novel.

As you are carrying out the reading task, you would have been involved in:

- recognizing and understanding script and format.
- recognizing and understanding key words and phrases.
- skimming for the gist.
- identifying the main points in text.
- reading in detail.

Successful reading then involves:

— using word-attack skills such as identifying sound/symbol correspondences.

— using grammatical knowledge to discover meaning, for example, interpreting non-finite clauses.

— using different techniques for different purposes, for example, skimming and scanning for key words or information.

— relating text content to one's own background knowledge of the subject in hand.

— identifying the rhetoric or function of individual sentences or text segments.



You will get the results especially quickly if you do these things as reading:

1. Pay attention to interesting things; new words and grammatical structures and phrases.

2. Use your dictionary to learn about those interesting things, the more you use your dictionary, the faster you will progress. If you do not like to stop reading (to look up a word in your dictionary), you can write down all the interesting sentences or you can underline them in the book with a pencil. You can learn the words and grammar that you have marked later.

3. Add these interesting things to your super memo, for this will give you everyday contact with correct and standard English. You will not forget the useful words and grammar because of this, and you can build your knowledge very quickly.

4. Adjust reading rate and methods according to the type of material you are reading and your purpose for reading.

5. Be always reading English texts which are at the "right level" (literature, science books, text books, and the web), because this will expand your scope of knowledge and make the reading easier.

II. Some Typical Reading Problems

In many cases, you will encounter many new words and expressions that you are unfamiliar with, which seem a great obstacle in reading comprehension. Among this kind of problems, those of new words, idioms, native expressions, using of rhetoric, writer's style, the sentence complexity and lack of related background experience with the subject are the commonest ones.

1. Vocabulary Unfamiliar

For most readers, especially the students in examination, vocabulary unfamiliar is a great head-pain problem for their



understanding of the passage. They usually attribute their failure in understanding the passage to the many new words, and complaint that common words should be chosen instead of the rare-used words, however, the factual situation is the other way round. In many cases, we shall see such words as “agony” used for the meaning of “pain”, “arrogant” for “proud”, “majestic” for “great”, “accelerate” for “speed up”, “interrogate” for “ask”, and so on. Since a passage is written rather than spoken, the common words used for oral communication will not be suitable when applied in a passage. Therefore, some formal words and profound words are introduced. These learned words are largely rooted from Latin, Greek and French, but they are commonly used in official documents as well as normal articles. To tackle such problems, one must enlarge his vocabulary as possible as he can. As for this point, we will discuss in the following.

2. Idioms Application

As is known to everyone, idioms are the condensation of a certain culture of a nation; it is a reflection of the nation's thinking manner, life style and behavior. Idioms are of concise and vivid characteristics and are favored by most of the native people. However, to foreign learners, they are hard to be captured because of its flexibility. Its meaning seldom has something to do with its components. For example, the idiom *to spill the bean* is not at all connected with beans; it means *to tell something that is secret*. Therefore, it reveals that the meaning of an idiom must be learned as a whole.

English idioms are a kind of special speech form that is peculiar in grammatical structure, meaning and usage. They are usually made of commonly used words but vivid in usage, brief in structure and profound in meaning. *Once in a blue moon* does not mean that one has been to the moon; it means *once in a very long time, rarely*, while *to cry for the moon* means *to desire strongly something that cannot be gained*. Besides, English idioms sometimes seem to be similar in meaning with Chinese