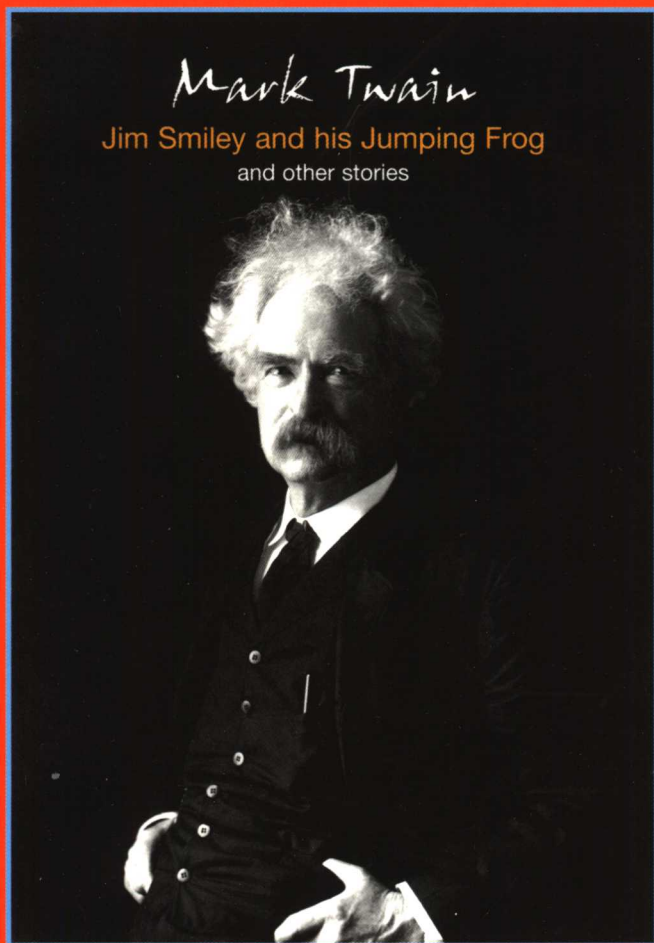




企鵝英語簡易讀物精選

吉姆·斯迈利和他的跳蛙



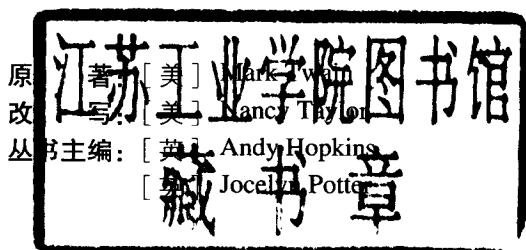
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① 企鹅英语简易读物精选 (高三学生)

Jim Smiley and his Jumping Frog and Other Stories

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企鹅英语简易读物精选 (高三学生)

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大量阅读简易读物 打好英语基础（代序）

北京外国语大学英语系历来都十分重视简易读物的阅读。我们要求学生在一、二年级至少要阅读几十本经过改写的、适合自己水平的英语读物。教学实践证明，凡是大量阅读了简易读物的学生，基础一般都打得比较扎实，英语实践能力都比较强，过渡到阅读英文原著困难也都比较小。这是我们几十年来屡试不爽的一条经验。

为什么强调在阅读英文原著之前必须阅读大量的简易读物呢？原因之一是简易读物词汇量有控制，内容比较浅易，而原著一般来说词汇量大，内容比较艰深。在打基础阶段，学生的词汇量比较小，阅读原著会遇到许多困难。在这种情况下，要保证足够的阅读量只能要求学生阅读简易读物。其次，简易读物使用的是常用词汇、短语和语法结构，大量阅读这类读物可以反复接触这些基本词语和语法，有助于他们打好基础，培养他们的英语语感。第三，简易读物大部分是文学名著改写而成，尽管情节和人物都大为简化，但依旧保留了文学名著的部分精华，仍不失为优秀读物。大量阅读这些读物对于拓宽学生视野、提高他们的人文素养大有帮助。

在这里我们还可以援引美国教学法家克拉申（Stephen Krashen）的一个著名观点。他认为，学生吸收外语有一个前提，即语言材料只能稍稍高于他们的语言理解水平，如果提供的语言材料难度大大超过学生的水平，就会劳而无功。这是克拉申关于外语学习的一个总的看法，但我们不妨把这个道理运用到阅读上。若要阅读有成效，必须严格控制阅读材料的难易度。目前学生阅读的英语材料往往过于艰深，词汇量过大，学生花了很多时间，而阅读量却仍然很小，进展缓慢，其结果是扼杀了学生的阅读兴趣，影响了他们的自信心。解决这个问题的关键是向学生提供适合他们水平的、词汇量有控制的、能够引起他们兴趣的英语读物。“企鹅英语简易读物精选”是专门为初、中级学习者编写的简易读物。这是一套充分考虑到学生的水平和需要，为他们设计的有梯度的读物，学生可以循序渐进，逐步提高阅读难度和扩大阅读量，从而提高自己的英语水平。

应该如何做才能取得最佳效果呢？首先，要选择难易度适当的读物。如果一页书上生词过多，读起来很吃力，进展十分缓慢，很可能选的材料太难了。不妨换一本容易些的。总的原则是宁易毋难。一般来说，学生选择的材料往往偏难，而不是过于浅易。其次，要尽可能读得快一些，不要一句一句地分析，更不要逐句翻译。读故事要尽快读进去，进入故事的情节，就像阅读中文小说一样。不必担心是否记住了新词语。阅读量大，阅读速度适当，就会自然而然地记住一些词语。这是自然吸收语言的过程。再次，阅读时可以做些笔记，但不必做太多的笔记；可以做一些配合阅读的练习，但不要在练习上花过多时间。主要任务还是阅读。好的读物不妨再读一遍，甚至再读两遍。你会发现在读第二遍时有一种如鱼得水的感觉。

青年朋友们，赶快开始你们的阅读之旅吧！它会把你们带进一个奇妙的世界，在那里你们可以获得一种全新的感受，观察世界也会有一种新的眼光。与此同时，你们的英语水平也会随之迅速提高。

Introduction

"And what's a frog in a box good for?" asked the man.

"He's good for one thing," said Smiley quietly. "He can jump higher and farther than any frog in Calaveras."

Mark Twain started telling stories when he learned to talk. As the years passed, he became a great storyteller. He wanted to give his readers an amusing trip through a story. The reader and the storyteller share the adventure. You feel that you are in the middle of a conversation with an old friend.

Mark Twain also wanted to give his American readers a true picture of their country and of themselves. He understood how real people think. His stories are funny, but there is a serious side to them, too. Twain wrote about jumping frogs and practical jokes, but also about war, slavery, bad politicians, greedy people, and dishonest governments. He wrote about every important subject of his day.

Mark Twain's real name was Samuel Langhorne Clemens. He was born in 1835 in the state of Missouri. He grew up there in Hannibal on the Mississippi River, with his parents, two brothers, one sister, and Jenny, the family's slave. Jenny was the first great storyteller in the young boy's life.

Clemens began his writing career at an early age. He had to get a job when his father died in 1847. First he worked for a printer, and then he joined his brother at a local newspaper. He started to write short pieces for the paper and enjoyed reading amusing stories about the Wild West by the older writers.

Soon Clemens began to move from state to state. He usually found a job with a printing company or at a newspaper office. After a visit to New Orleans in 1857, he began to work as a pilot on a riverboat. He continued in this job until the American Civil War (1861-65) stopped traffic on the Mississippi River.

In 1861, after a few weeks as a soldier, Clemens traveled with his brother to Nevada. The two young men searched for silver and gold in the Wild West, but Clemens found more success as a writer. In 1863, he started to put a different signature on his writing. On the Mississippi, the pilots shouted "mark twain" if the water was deep enough for a big riverboat. Samuel Clemens decided that this was a good name for a writer.

Clemens soon had his first big success using his new name. In 1865, Mark Twain's readers around the country enjoyed his story in the New York Saturday Press about Jim Smiley and his jumping frog. From that time, he made his living as a writer and speaker. He traveled around the world, and his books and short stories were very popular during his lifetime.

Mark Twain found information for his writing from his many trips to foreign countries, but most of his stories take place in the United States. His two most famous books, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1875) and *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1884), paint an unforgettable picture of the life that he knew as a boy. (You can read these two stories, and *The Prince and the Pauper*, as Penguin Readers.) These exciting and amusing books give the reader a clear idea of life on the Mississippi River in the 1800s. They are very different from a lot of the romantic stories of that time because they are more honest.

Twain had to face some difficult problems toward the end of his life. He lost all of his money in unsuccessful businesses and moved to Europe in 1891. Then he worked very hard to make more money. He gave speeches and wrote cheap mysteries and detective stories. Sadly, his troubles grew worse. His daughter Suzy died in 1896; Olivia, his wife since 1870, died in 1904.

Before his own death, Mark Twain had plenty of money in the bank. He wrote his own life story and started to write amusing short stories and books again. He died in 1910 at Stormfield, his house on a hill in Connecticut.

To many people, Mark Twain is the first writer with a truly American voice. H.L. Mencken, a famous newspaperman, wrote: "I believe that Mark Twain was the true father of our national literature, the first real American artist." Mark Twain's work looks back to a time of spoken storytelling. It covers all kinds of subjects, big and small, and it looks inside people's hearts and minds. It also showed future writers—like Ernest Hemingway and William Faulkner—how to write. Both of these more modern writers tried to copy Mark Twain's honest style. Hemingway described *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* as the most important work in American literature.

Mark Twain is still very popular today through his books and also through TV programs and movies of his work. He gave us a picture of Americans: amusing, a bit rough, adventurous, but also trying to be kind, fair, and honest. Twain understood these goals. But, he also knew that people are weak. No one can be good all the time. He was more than an amusing writer—he was also a great teacher. His work helped to shape America's picture of itself.

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Jim Smiley and His Jumping Frog

While I was visiting the west coast of this great country, an old friend wrote a letter to me. He made an interesting suggestion:

“You should visit old Simon Wheeler. Ask him about Leonidas W. Smiley. Wheeler won’t know Leonidas—he doesn’t exist. But when you say the name, he’ll remember *Jim* Smiley. Wheeler’s got some funny stories about Jim.”

I found Simon Wheeler in Angel’s Bar in Calaveras, in the north of California, sitting in his favorite chair close to the door. He was asleep, so I had a good look at him. He was a fat old man with no hair on his head but a big white mustache under his nose. He had a simple, kind look on his face.

When Wheeler woke up, I greeted him.

“Good afternoon, Mr. Wheeler. A friend from the east coast has sent me to you for news of his friend, Leonidas W. Smiley.”

Simon Wheeler smiled, stood up, and took me to a table in the corner. His chair now blocked the path to the door. I sat and listened silently. No one, I soon realized, could stop Simon Wheeler in the middle of a good story. He never changed his voice as he moved smoothly from one sentence to the next. Did he think the story was serious or funny? He gave his listener no sign. This was his story. You can decide for yourself.



Leonidas W. Smiley, you say? Well, there was a man named *Jim* Smiley here in the winter of 1849. Or, maybe it was the spring of 1850. He was a hard worker and a good talker, but there was something special about him, too. Jim Smiley liked to bet. He was always looking for someone to bet against. He liked to bet on everything: on the weather, on business, and on all kinds of

fights and races. He had good luck and almost always won.

His boss's wife had a terrible illness. She was sick for a long time. Then, one morning, the boss came to work with good news.

"How's your wife today?" one man asked.

"She's much better today, thank you," answered the boss. "I hope she'll be well by the end of this week."

Without thinking, Smiley said, "I'll bet five dollars she's dead by Saturday." That's how he was.

At one time, Smiley had a horse. Just for fun, the boys around here called her the fifteen-minute racer because she always walked very slowly. She coughed all the time, and she was old and thin. But she wasn't as slow as those boys thought. For the first half of a race, this horse didn't seem to move. But at the last corner, Smiley's horse came alive. She went crazy and ran like a wild animal to the finish line. She won lots of money for Smiley.

He also had a fighting dog, named Andrew Jackson.* No one liked that dog. He was an ugly little thing. But *he* had a special trick, too. He fought with every dog that Smiley could find for him. He looked weak during the fight. The other dog always bit him and threw him around. Then at the last minute, he turned and got one of the other dog's back legs between his teeth. He could hold on to a back leg all night, or all year.

Andrew Jackson won every fight until one sad day when the other dog in the fight didn't have any back legs! It was the result of an accident in a farmyard. Andrew Jackson didn't know what to do. What could he get his teeth into? He lost the fight, lay down, and died. I always feel sorry when I remember his last night. Jim Smiley loved that little dog.

Smiley had other animals, too. He had fighting chickens and racing birds, and wild cats. Then, one day, he found his best animal: a frog.

* Andrew Jackson: the seventh US president (1829-37)

He noticed this frog when he was fishing. It was looking straight at him. Smiley took the frog home and kept it in his backyard for more than three months. He taught that frog how to jump. Daniel Webster*—that was the frog's name—was the smartest frog along the west coast. Smiley was really proud of Daniel. He said, "This frog can learn anything!" Then he said, "Jump!" and that frog jumped higher and farther than any frog alive. Smiley was always looking for people with frogs. He wanted to bet on Daniel Webster as often as possible.

Smiley kept his frog in a little box with holes along the top. Sometimes he came in here with the box, looking for a bet. One day, a stranger walked into the bar and saw the box.

"What have you got in there?" the man asked.

"Well, maybe it's a cat, or maybe a bird. But, no, it's only a frog," answered Smiley.

"And what's a frog in a box good for?" asked the man.

"He's good for one thing," said Smiley quietly. "He can jump higher and farther than any frog in Calaveras."

The stranger took the box and looked through a hole at Daniel Webster. "It looks like an ordinary frog. I don't see anything special about it."

"Maybe you don't," Smiley said. "Maybe you don't understand frogs. Or, maybe you know a lot about them. I've got my opinion about this frog. I'll bet forty dollars that he can jump better than any frog around here."

The stranger thought about this. Then he said, "I don't have a frog, so I can't take your bet."

"Don't worry. That's no problem," Smiley said. "You hold my box for a minute, and I'll find a frog for you."

The stranger put his forty dollars on the table and took the box. Smiley ran out the door toward the river.

* Daniel Webster: a well-known American politician (1782-1852)

The stranger sat in the bar here, thinking. Then he opened the box and got Daniel Webster out. He held the frog's mouth open and poured sand into the animal's stomach.

Soon Smiley returned from the river with a big frog.

"Here's your frog," Smiley said to the stranger. "Put him next to Daniel Webster, and we'll start the race. One—two—three—go!" he shouted, when the frogs were ready.

Both men touched their frogs' backs. The new frog started jumping. But Daniel Webster didn't move. He couldn't move with all that sand inside him. He gave Smiley a sad look.

The new frog won the race, and the stranger picked up the money. As he left the bar, he said, "I still don't see anything special about that frog."

Smiley looked at Daniel Webster. He was surprised and angry. What was the matter? Then he picked his frog up by the neck.

"What's this? Daniel, you're so heavy!"

"Smiley turned the frog over and shook him, and about three cups of sand came out of the frog. When he understood the trick, Smiley was the angriest man in California. He went outside and looked for the stranger, but he was gone. And—"



"Mr. Wheeler!" a boy suddenly called to the old storyteller from the street. "You're wanted at home."

"Stay here," Wheeler said to me. "I'll be back in a second."

I didn't have any reason to stay, so I decided to leave. But at the door, I met Simon Wheeler as he returned to the bar. He started a new story immediately:

"Smiley had a yellow cat with one eye and no tail. This cat's name was Betsy Ross, and—"

But I didn't have time for another story, or any interest in one, so I didn't wait to hear about the cat. I politely said goodbye and left Calaveras.



About three cups of sand came out of the frog.

The Other Side of War

You have probably heard old soldiers' stories about the great things they did in the Civil War.* Isn't it time to hear about a different kind of soldier? Many young men on both sides went into the war and didn't do anything. Some tried it and returned home almost immediately. Others stayed but saw no action.

In some parts of the country, it was hard for a man to choose his side. Should he fight with the Union soldiers or the Confederates? In December 1860, I was working on a boat on the Mississippi River.

"Have you heard the news?" one of my friends asked. "South Carolina has left the Union."

"That's terrible news," I answered. Like my friend, I was on the side of the Union.

"You're probably happy about it," said my friend. "Your father owned slaves, didn't he?"

"Yes, he did. But he believed slave-owning was wrong. He only had one slave when he died. And that man *chose* to stay with him," I explained.

"Facts are facts. Your father was a slave-owner. You're on the side of the Confederacy," my friend said.

A month later, I met this same friend in New Orleans. By then, I really was on the side of the Confederacy. My friend was, too.

"You can't be on this side," said my friend.

"Why not?" I asked.

"Your father believed slave-owning was wrong," my friend said. Every week, people found good reasons for changing sides.

* The Civil War: the war in the United States between the north and the south (1861–65). The northern states wanted to stop the practice of slave-owning. Union soldiers were from the north. Confederate soldiers were from the south.

In the summer of 1861, I was in my hometown of Hannibal, Missouri. Union soldiers pushed into the state and took the three biggest cities. Our local politicians told the men of Missouri to throw out the Union soldiers. About fifteen of my old friends and I formed ourselves into the Hannibal Confederate Company. We wanted to do our part in the war and to protect our state.

Tom Lyman knew nothing about fighting, but he became our leader. Another man, Peterson Dunlap, was a good example of our type of soldier. He was young, intelligent—but didn't know much—and full of romantic ideas. He read books and sang love songs. He was looking for an interesting war with fine uniforms, good weather, and beautiful women waiting for us at the end.

Ed Stevens was another of the soldiers in our company. He was handsome, clean as a cat, and smart as a college professor. But his only goal was to have fun. We had to watch for his practical jokes. The Civil War was a big vacation to him.

Joe Smith was another. He wasn't very smart, in fact he was slow. But he had a warm heart, and he worked hard. He was often homesick, but he was serious about the war. He stayed with the company, and he was killed before the end.

We didn't know anything about war. Tom, Peterson, Ed, and the rest of us were just boys, really. What could a group like us do? Nothing. And that's what we did.

At midnight on our first night as soldiers, we began our walk to the town of New London, about fifteen kilometers away. The first hour was full of fun. We laughed and told stories. In the second hour, the trip seemed like hard work. Everyone was silent, thinking his own thoughts. Then we were near a farmhouse. Our information was that there were Union soldiers in this farmhouse. Lyman gave the orders.

"This is it, boys," he began. "Let's go down there and attack the enemy."

"Are you crazy?" asked Ed Stevens. "I don't want to die. We don't even have any good guns."

"But we're soldiers," said Lyman. "This is our job."

"You can go down there if you want," said Stevens. "Or we can form a circle around the house."

And we did that for the next three hours. Then, when the sun came up, we walked to an open space in the forest.

"That was a good night," said Tom Lyman. "It was our first action as soldiers."

"A great success," agreed everyone.

We began to laugh and enjoy ourselves again. Then we walked to General Ralls's farm, near New London. General Ralls was an old soldier from the Mexican-American War. He gave us a good breakfast and an old-style speech. He spoke about history and love for our country. Now we were ready for anything!

We continued walking to an old building near Jeb Mason's farm. Old Mason and his son were friends of the Confederates. At about noon, a number of farmers arrived. They, too, wanted to help, and they had horses for us and a few guns.

"You can keep the horses until the end of the war," one farmer said. "That'll be in about three months, I think. We'll see you when it ends."

For a few days, we had a good time. We learned to ride the horses in the daytime. Each evening, we visited a farmhouse and were given a good meal. There were often pretty daughters to talk to in the moonlight. Then we returned to our old, empty farm for a good night's sleep. Our life was perfect. Then some farmers came with bad news.

"The enemy is coming this way. They're in New London now. Are you ready for them?"

"Yes, sir," Lyman answered. "We're here to protect you."

After the farmers left, we looked at Lyman. Everyone shouted at the same time.



"Are you crazy? I don't want to die."