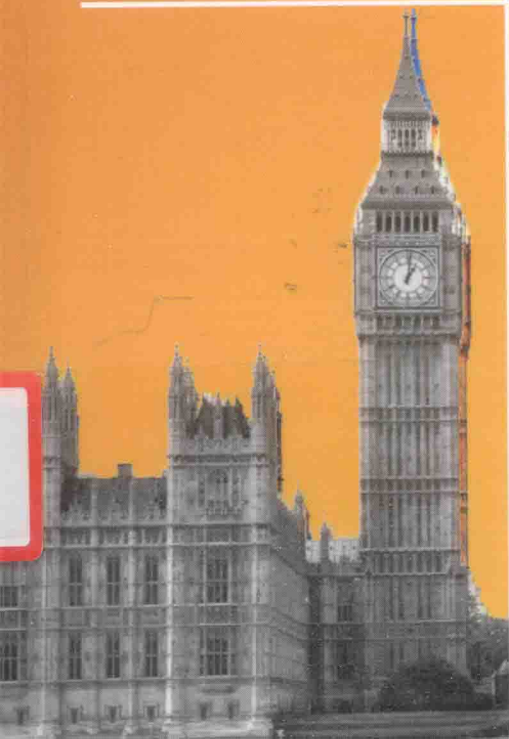


语言文化系列丛书

# *A Reading Course on Selected Beautiful Essays*

## 英语短篇美文阅读教程

叶枫 赵茜 季蓓蓓◎编著



西北工业大学出版社

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**【内容简介】** 本书精选来自国外刊物专栏作家的优秀文章,选材范围涉及社会、人性、友情、亲情、爱情等。全书分为12个单元,每单元3篇文章,包含前言、英文原文、词汇注释、相关的词语构词法讲解、综合阅读及翻译技巧练习。适合高等院校高年级学生阅读,以增进其对西方人士情感及价值观的了解,达到增进跨文化交际能力的目的。

本书适用于普通高等院校非英语专业高年级本科生作为阅读教材,也可作为英语爱好者的阅读参考用书。

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# Preface

## 前言

随着我国经济的不断增强,国际化进程的不断推进,社会对于人才及高等学校在校学生的英语水平提出了更高的要求。广大非英语专业学生在大学一、二年级时已经学习过基础的英语课程并参加大学英语四级考试,可以说已具备了一定的英语听说读写能力。然而,在校英语课程的内容往往对英语语言文化及英语国家文化、英语国家人士情感及价值观介绍甚少,使得学生对于上述方面缺乏必要的了解,并最终导致欠缺必要的跨文化交际技能,无法顺利地实现跨文化交际。

本书的推出即是为了有效地改变这种不利局面,利用学生已有的英语读写能力,使其接触到原汁原味并覆盖西方社会人士情感的原版文章,令其在进行充分阅读后增进对西方家庭结构、人文情感的了解,并最终达到增进跨文化交际技能的目的。

本书精选来自国外刊物的文章,选材涉及社会、人性、友情、亲情、爱情等。文章语言优美、细腻、温暖,贴近当代英语语言文化发展趋势,知识含量丰富,并且贴近现实社会,具有准确性、时效性及实用性等特点。为了让广大读者接触到原汁原味的英文文章,所选文章的长度及内容与原文基本保持一致,确保读者能得到翔实的第一手英文阅读体验。

本书内容共分为 12 个单元,每个单元分为文章简介、2 篇标准阅读以及 1 篇课外阅读等 3 部分。在单元简介方面,每个单元介绍本单元文章的共同之处以及主旨思想;在标准阅读方面,精心提供英文词汇、构词法、阅读技巧和翻译练习;在课外阅读方面,仅提供阅读技巧、判断正误和翻译练习,以便学生课后自我练习。本书采用模块化设计,易教易学,展现了英语阅读学习的各个方面,通过对篇章、词汇、翻译技巧等的讲解与练习稳扎稳打,深入洞察西方世界情感模式及价值观;学习实用阅读技能;掌握英语词汇构词词缀基本法则;强化文章结构的辨析能力,并使读者亲身接触纯正;贴近生活的英语文章思维与写作模式;多重功能集于一书,为学生英语阅读水平的提高打下坚实基础。

本书可供普通高等院校非英语专业高年级本科生使用,可作为广大高等学校英语相关课程的教材用书,也可作为选修课和素质拓展课程的教材用书(适宜 32~48 学时的课堂教学安排)。

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# Unit 1 Childhood Memories

## 童年回忆

• • • •

This unit provides its readers with rich materials about the inner world of children in the western society. The articles are delicately chosen to give readers a vivid impression so as to enable them to better grasp the feeling of love and need of children in western countries. Passage A introduces the longing for a companion, be it human or machine, of a boy living in solitary rural area in Australia. Passage B describes a filial boy with incredible determination and self-discipline, who is also the apple in his mother's eyes. Passage C is all about a girl's tenderness and her delicate effort to pray for her mother.

### Passage A:

#### The Rivals

By Belle Atherton



#### Preview:

Read the passage quickly and try to find out the meaning of the title "The Rivals".

For a long time, as far back as his memory would go in the five short years of his life,

Rodney has set Tuesdays and Fridays on twin peaks high above the level monotony of the rest of the week. Those were the days the train passed so close to the backyard fence that he could feel the sweep of the wind it thrust from its path.

On Tuesdays it came snorting its way up from the city; a long, stumpy-tailed lizard of yawning chattering trucks. Rodney, scrambling to the top of a fence-post at the first sight of its black snout around the bend, knew its lazy grunting all pretence and hugged the secret closely to himself. A tramp of a train this, puffing wads of white smoke from its pipe as it climbed the steep incline; a passing slow train giving chance to a small boy to count the joints in its back and to decipher the chalk marks on its rusty sides.

As the engine drew abreast he would stiffen, his eyes glued to the figure of the driver leaning negligently from the cabin window, and await his chance to exchange a salute of fellowship. There was never anything hurried about Train Tuesday, as Rodney called it. It changed stolidly on its way northwards serenely confident that the orange groves and orderly vineyards would placidly accept its leisurely arrival.

Ah, but Train Tuesday! No longer a sleepy lizard unconcerned about its destination; no longer a purposeless tramp! Quick on the heels of its warning rumble its head poked out of the narrow cutting at the top of the slope, a long plume of purple smoke streaming behind. Down the hill it charged—a clattering, swaying, roaring, rollicking highwayman devouring time and space. The trucks, humped high beneath their dingy coverings, no longer lagged behind like fretful children, but pressed their eager, bloated bodies close to their leader.

Rodney would hold his breath until the roar of Train Friday's approach rocked his scenes. Now! Now! he would cry soundlessly; and, like a silver bullet, a smooth and shining note thrice repeated ripped the air. Before the echo ceased the highwayman, elbows working in mechanical precision, was charging through the level crossing on its unchallenged, triumphant way. The boy loved this moment—loved the sight of a motor car—a lone puny thing crouched in dumb servility at the side of the road. Once, he remembered, a car hadn't waited but had scuttled across the rails like a terrified rabbit, a white-faced driver glancing apprehensively at the towering monster almost upon it. Rodney had rocked with the delight on his precarious perch. He knew the crossing chuckled, too. By craning his neck he could see the shining ribbons that lay across its hard quiescent breast. They were quivering with mirth.

When the train had gone, leaving only wisps of coal-smelling smoke adrift in the sky, the boy's mind followed it on its headlong rush to the city where, his father had told him, the great ships lay at anchor in the bay and the sprawling factories churned and belched.

There was no need to wonder at his friend's eagerness to return.

Then, one morning, when the magpies digging industriously in his father's cabbage patch were the only matter of interest, Rodney's keen ear detected a strange new sound. It came from the east; a faint, interrupted, intangible throbbing. The boy stood immobile, his upturned face screwed against the glare of the sun. As the sound drew nearer it became a steady insistent droning; and over the tops of the tall pepperina-trees flanking the front of the house the aeroplane slid into sight, a dark mark against the vivid sky, no larger than the wildest span of the watcher's tiny arms.

On an on it came, murmuring its monotonous chant; aloof, unwavering on its course; no shimmering rails, no yellow road pressing beneath its belly. A legless bird of stiffened wings and blunted beak, flying with the flowing curve of the sky, then over and under the rim of the world. Long after he could see it no more Rodney could still feel the lift of its pulse against his ears. All day he waited its returning but in the morning it came again from the east, tireless, glittering, efficient. It left no friendly gesture in its wake; no hint of its adventures while the world slept. Even when the clouds hung low and heavy, the boy heard its steady muffled voice.

Deep in his perplexed little heart he felt uneasy. This master of the skies was nibbling at his allegiance to his earthbound friend. On more than one occasion of late, while his fascinated eyes were riveted to the sky, he had nearly missed the engine-driver's greeting.

But there came a day when he heard a ragged, fretful note in the throat of the steel bird who challenged his affections. The machine came out of the sun losing height rapidly, its engines stuttering defiance like a manacled giant. It left its ghostly highway, circling above the stiffened figure on the ground, coming closer and closer to earth as if caught in some tenacious vortex. The boy whimpered his distress as the roar of the plane's strangled voice beat on his ears. Unconsciously, he braced his feet, straining his arms skywards to their utmost limit, palms flattened, pressing with all his childish strength, his whole body taut with desire to prevent that crippled thing from crashing to its death. Then, when his terrified, anxious eyes grew dim with strain, suddenly he heard the engines roar with returning life. The languid propeller on the starboard motor once more flailed the air with silver arms. Invigorated, the machine zoomed overhead, miraculously healed of its hurt, arrogantly climbing to its invisible path.

The boy breathed a little trembling sigh, but when the morrow came and with it the blurred cross and even beat of Train Friday's rival, he gave it but a cursory glance and continued with his play.

(1,004 words)

## Bank of New Words &amp; Phrases / 词汇注释

snort [snɔ:t]	<i>v.</i> force air out through the nostrils with a loud noise 用鼻子哼, 喷气
stumpy ['stʌmpi]	<i>adj.</i> short and thick 粗短的
yawn [jɔ:n]	<i>v.</i> take (usu involuntarily) a deep breath with the mouth wide open 打呵欠
placidly ['plæsɪdlɪ]	<i>adv.</i> calmly and peacefully, undisturbedly 平静地
snout [snaʊt]	<i>n.</i> projecting nose and mouth of an animal 长鼻子; 口鼻部
wad [wɒd]	<i>n.</i> lump or bundle of soft material used for keeping things apart or in place, or to block a hole, etc. 填充物, 小软物
decipher [dɪ'saɪfə]	<i>v.</i> succeed in understanding (a passage, bad handwriting, etc.) 辨认; 解读, 解释
quiescent [kwɪ'esnt]	<i>adj.</i> (fml) inactive; passive, quiet 不活动的, 静态的; 休眠的
mirth [mɜ:θ]	<i>n.</i> (fml) merriment or happiness; laughter 欢乐, 欢笑
aloof [ə'lu:f]	<i>adj.</i> cool and remote in character; unconcerned 冷淡的; 疏远的; 远离的
shimmer ['ʃɪmə(r)]	<i>vi.</i> shine with a soft light that seems to waver 闪烁, 发微光
perplexed [pə'plekst]	<i>adj.</i> puzzled or confused 困惑的; 杂乱的
nibble ['nɪbl]	<i>v.</i> take tiny bites of sth; eat small amounts 啃; 小口咬; 使减少
allegiance [ə'li:dʒəns]	<i>n.</i> (fml) support or loyalty 忠诚, 拥护
ragged ['ræɡɪd]	<i>adj.</i> (of clothes) badly worn or tattered; sharp to the ear; having an uneven outline 衣衫褴褛的, 粗糙刺耳的, 不整齐的
fretful ['fretfl]	<i>adj.</i> irritable or complaining because of unhappiness or worry 烦躁不安的
stutter ['stʌtə(r)]	<i>vi.</i> speak with sudden pauses and a tendency to repeat rapidly the same sound or syllable; move uncontinuously 结结巴巴地说, 断断续续地移动
defiance [dɪ'faɪəns]	<i>n.</i> open disobedience or resistance; refusal to give way to authority or opposition 对抗; 挑战; 蔑视
whimper ['wɪmpə(r)]	<i>vt.</i> whine or cry softly; esp with fear or pain 呜咽着说出
taut [tɔ:t]	<i>adj.</i> tightly stretched; not slack 紧张的; 绷紧的; 整齐的
morrow ['mɔ:roʊ]	<i>n.</i> the next day after the present or after any given day 翌日, 次日
cursory ['kʌsəri]	<i>adj.</i> done quickly and not thoroughly 粗略的, 草率的

**EXERCISES:****Vocabulary****I. Fill in the blanks with the words given below. Change the form where necessary.**

stumpy	placidly	decipher	mirth	shimmer
nibble	allegiance	ragged	fretful	defiance
taut	cursory			

- Susan is not supposed to be in her position any longer. She is too \_\_\_\_\_ and has caused a great loss to the company.
- To our relief, when \_\_\_\_\_ came, everything turned out to be fine and our plan carried on smoothly.
- The boy grew more \_\_\_\_\_ in the presence of the cruel sun.
- Frogs come with long, slim limbs whereas toads tend to have \_\_\_\_\_ ones.
- This little town is an ideal place for people to spend several relaxing days due to its \_\_\_\_\_ atmosphere.
- In winter, quite a lot animals go into a \_\_\_\_\_ state, which is what we call hibernation.
- Tapirs are known for their eye-catching \_\_\_\_\_.
- We would have been lost in the woods but for the stars that \_\_\_\_\_ in the thoroughly dark night sky.
- Some young people choose to express their anger by looking \_\_\_\_\_, that is, they dress themselves in clothes with holes on them.
- Only an expert in language can \_\_\_\_\_ the words in this ancient book.

**Word Building**

**II. The suffixes *-ful* and *-less* are added to nouns to form adjectives meaning "having, full of" or "without", as is shown in the table below.**

Noun	Suffix	Adjective
use	ful	useful
harm	less	harmless

Now complete the following sentences with the words provided in the table using the suffix -

ful or -less. Change the form when necessary.

care faith help aim rest color name thought beauty skill bag worth

1. What is truly \_\_\_\_\_ is the goodness in one, not his looks.
2. Thank you for your advice. You've been truly \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Mary may not be the right person for this job. We need someone more \_\_\_\_\_.
4. The angry boy stays \_\_\_\_\_ all day.
5. In a battle, we must remain \_\_\_\_\_ to our allies.
6. You appear \_\_\_\_\_. What is the matter with you?
7. His idea finally proved worthless and was put out of discussion.
8. "Watch out" is another way of saying "be \_\_\_\_\_".
9. A great deal of good deeds are done by \_\_\_\_\_ heroes.
10. To my mind, spring is the most \_\_\_\_\_ season of all.
11. Stop walking \_\_\_\_\_. Set a target and go for it!
12. He always brings a \_\_\_\_\_ of apples when he drops by.

## Reading Skills

III. Read the passage carefully and find out the best answer to each question:

1. Why were every Tuesday and Friday important to little Rodney?
  - A. Because he was able to see the trains pass by his house.
  - B. Because he did not have to go to school then.
  - C. Because he could meet his friends then.
  - D. Because he could go into town by train then.
2. What would he expect to do with the driver of Train Tuesday?
  - A. Have an exchange of greetings.
  - B. Make a trade of goods.
  - C. Invite him to dinner.
  - D. Share the latest news from afar.
3. How was Train Tuesday different from Train Friday?
  - A. It was larger.
  - B. It was faster.
  - C. It carried more goods.
  - D. It came with a friendly driver.

4. What did the aeroplane look like to the young boy?
  - A. A train.
  - B. A bird.
  - C. A god.
  - D. A kite.
5. What is the probable reason that the plane took away the boy's attention from the trains?
  - A. It was probably that the plane had a neat driver.
  - B. It was probably that the plane seemed larger.
  - C. It was probably that the plane produced a lot more noise than the trains did.
  - D. It was probably that the he had grown tired of seeing trains.

**IV. Drawing Inferences: Choose the one that you think is a good inference based on each statement from the passage.**

1. ... Rodney has set Tuesdays and Fridays on twin peaks high above the level monotony of the rest of the week. (Para. 1)
  - A. Rodney saw Tuesdays and Fridays as the highlight of the entire week.
  - B. Rodney would go climbing on Tuesdays and Fridays.
  - C. Rodney would meet his twin brother on Tuesdays and Fridays.
  - D. Rodney did not enjoy the other days of the week at all.
2. ... his eyes glued to the figure of the driver leaning negligently from the cabin window, and await his chance to exchange a salute of fellowship. (Para. 2)
  - A. He used glue to make himself attached to the driver to show intimacy.
  - B. He had some problem with his eyes so he wanted the driver to show sympathy.
  - C. He could not move his eyes away from the driver who could give him greetings.
  - D. He was so afraid the driver could miss him that he became stiff.
3. This master of the skies was nibbling at his allegiance to his earthbound friend. (Para. 9)
  - A. The plane was shifting his attention away from the train.
  - B. The plane was showing he was not a loyal boy.
  - C. The plane was taking his friends away.
  - D. The plane was would soon become his friend.
4. Then, when his terrified, anxious eyes grew dim with strain, suddenly he heard the engines roar with returning life. (Para. 10)
  - A. He witnessed the plane coming back to life.
  - B. He heard the plane roaring with anger.
  - C. He heard the engine again worked fine.

- D. He heard the plane was returning for fuel.
5. ... he gave it but a cursory glance and continued with his play.
- A. He was busy playing so he did not watch it attentively.
- B. It was too quick for him to stare at.
- C. He lost interest in it.
- D. He was not ready for it.

## Comprehension of Text Structure

### V. Choose the one that best answers the question.

- The first sentence of \_\_\_\_\_ is a topic sentence.
  - Paragraph 1
  - Paragraph 5
  - Paragraph 7
  - Paragraph 10
- What are Paragraph 1~6 mainly concerned about?
  - The boy and the train.
  - The boy and the plain.
  - The boy and his work.
  - The boy and his father.
- The urge of the boy to exchange a salute with the train driver vividly illustrates that \_\_\_\_\_.
  - the boy was very curious
  - the boy was such a fan of drivers
  - the boy was eager to show his politeness
  - the boy was in a state of being lonely
- Which of the following is the organizational pattern of Paragraph 2~5?
  - Listing.
  - Exemplification.
  - Definition.
  - Comparison and contrast.
- The overall organization of this passage may be best described as \_\_\_\_\_.
  - sequence of time
  - problem - solution
  - listing



D. cause and effect

## Reading and Discussion

### VI. Discuss the following questions.

1. Discuss the meaning of the trains and plane to little Rodney.
2. What is it that made the boy so keen on these tools for transportation?
3. What do you think that the boy is in serious need of?

### Translation

VII. Translate the following sentences into Chinese. These sentences are underlined in the above passage.

1. As the engine drew abreast he would stiffen, his eyes glued to the figure of the driver leaning negligently from the cabin window, and await his chance to exchange a salute of fellowship.

2. Rodney would hold his breath until the roar of Train Friday's approach rocked his scenes.

3. The boy stood immobile, his upturned face screwed against the glare of the sun.

4. This master of the skies was nibbling at his allegiance to his earthbound friend.

5. It left its ghostly highway, circling above the stiffened figure on the ground, coming closer