

# 大学英语四级考试 阅读难关突破

BREAKTHROUGH IN READING COMPREHENSION  
OF COLLEGE ENGLISH TEST BAND FOUR

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西南交通大学出版社

# 大学英语四级考试 阅读难关突破

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## 内 容 提 要

国家教委《大学英语教学大纲》、《大学英语四级考试大纲》都将阅读力置于核心位置,“阅读理解”的得分率已经成为四级考试能否顺利过关之关键。为了帮助学生在有限的时间内大量阅读,在临考前对阅读理解进行重点突击,编者从大纲出发,参照国家教委公布的样题和曝光题,广取博纳,精心选编了这本《大学英语四级考试阅读难关突破》。全书共 50 个单元,每个单元 4 篇文章,20 个问题,要求在 35 分钟内完成,平均难度略高于大纲要求,细心的读者一定会发现该书对大学英语四级应考大有裨益。

### 大学英语四级考试阅读难关突破

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# 前 言

全国大学英语四级考试已推行了十年之久。为了更好地评估教学质量,更客观地检查大纲落实情况,进一步指导大学英语教学,国家教委从 1995 年起就先后推出了“听写填空”、“英译汉”及“简答题”等新题型。今后,随着教学改革不断深化,测试手段将日臻完善,新的题型还可能出现。但从近几年的试题结构来看,不论新题型如何变化,“阅读理解”始终处于绝对突出的位置,总分一直保持 40 分不变;每小题 2 分,相当于“词汇结构”或“完形填空”4 道题;如果再考虑到阅读材料又将在“英译汉”或“简答题”中加以测试,则该部分的实际分值可高达 50 分。显然,“阅读理解”的得分率已经成为四级考试能否顺利过关之关键。

国家教委《大学英语教学大纲》、《大学英语四级考试大纲》都将阅读能力置于核心位置,但目前学生能接触到的阅读材料大多淹没于名目繁多的成套成册的模拟题和样题之中,真正单打一的、针对性强的阅读材料并不多见。为了帮助学生在有限的时间内大量阅读,在临考前对阅读理解进行重点突击,编者从大纲出发,参照国家教委公布的样题和曝光题,广取博纳,精心选编了这本《大学英语四级考试阅读难关突破》,细心的读者一定会发现本书对大学英语四级应考大有裨益。

全书共 50 个单元,每个单元 4 篇文章,20 个问题,要求在 35 分钟内完成。取材涉及面广,信息量大,平均难度略高于大纲要求。常用词复现率高,词汇基本上按《大学英语四级考试通用词汇表》,个别不易猜测的超纲词予以注释。问题设置侧重于分析推理和归纳总结两个方面,书末附有参考答案。

限于编者学识水平,疏漏错误之处难免,恳请读者同仁批评指正。

马永红

1999 年 4 月 14 日

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# Unit 1

## Passage 1

It is difficult to imagine what life would be like without memory. The meanings of thousands of everyday perceptions, the bases for the decisions we make, and the roots of our habits and skills are to be found in our past experiences, which are brought into the present by memory.

Memory can be defined as the capacity to keep information available for later use. It includes not only "remembering" things like arithmetic or historical facts, but also involves any change in the way an animal typically behaves. Memory is involved when a rat gives up eating grain because he has sniffed something suspicious in the grain pile. Memory is also involved when a six-year-old child learns to swing a baseball bat.

Memory exists not only in humans and animals but also in some physical objects and machines. Computers, for example, contain devices for storing data for later use. It is interesting to compare the memory-storage capacity of a computer with that of a human being. The instant-access memory of a large computer may hold up to 100, 000 "words" — ready for instant use. An average U. S. teenager probably recognizes the meaning of about 100, 000 words of English. However, this is but a fraction of the total amount of information which the teenager has stored. Consider, for example, the number of faces and places that the teenager can recognize on sight.

The use of words is the basis of the advanced problem-solving intelligence of human beings. A large part of a person's memory is in terms of words and combinations of words.

1. According to the passage, memory is considered to be \_\_\_\_\_.
  - A. the basis for decision making and problem solving
  - B. an ability to store experiences of future use
  - C. an intelligence typically possessed by human beings
  - D. the data mainly consisting of words and combinations of words
2. The comparison made between the memory capacity of a large computer and that of a human being shows that \_\_\_\_\_.
  - A. the computer's memory has a little bigger capacity than a teenager's
  - B. the computer's memory capacity is much smaller than an adult human being's
  - C. the computer's memory capacity is much smaller even than a teenager's
  - D. both A and B
3. The whole passage implies that \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. only human beings have problem-solving intelligence
  - B. a person's memory is different from a computer's in every respect
  - C. animals are able to solve only very simple problems
  - D. animals solve problems by instincts rather than intelligence
4. The phrase "in terms of" in the last sentence can best be replaced by \_\_\_\_.
- A. in connection with
  - B. expressed by
  - C. consisting
  - D. by means of
5. The topic of the passage is \_\_\_\_.
- A. What would life be like without memory?
  - B. Memory is of vital importance to life.
  - C. How is a person's memory different from an animal's or a computer's?
  - D. What is contained in memory?

## Passage 2

A subject which seems to have been insufficiently studied by doctors and psychologists is the influence of geography and climate on the psychological and physical health of mankind. There seems no doubt that the general character of the landscape, the relative length of day and night, and the climate must all play a big part in determining what kind of people are.

It is true that a few studies have been made. Where all the inhabitants of particular area enjoy exceptionally good or bad health, scientists have identified contributory factors such as the presence or absence of substances like iodine, fluoride, calcium, or iron in the water supply, or perhaps types of land that provide breeding places for pests like mosquitoes or rats.

Moreover, we can all generalize about types of people we have met. Those living in countries with long dark winters are apt to be less talkative and less vivacious (活泼的) than inhabitants of countries where the climate is more equable (稳定的). And where the olive and the orange grow, there the inhabitants are cheerful, talkative, and spontaneous.

But these commonplace generalizations are inadequate: the influence of climate and geography should be studied in depth. Do all mountain dwellers live to a ripe old age? Does the drinking of wine, rather than beer, result in a sunny and open temperament? Is the strength and height of one of the Keyan tribes due to their habitual drinking of the blood of cows?

We are not yet sure of the answers to such questions, but let us hope that something of benefit to mankind may eventually result from such studies.

6. \_\_\_\_ might serve as a suitable title for this selection.
- A. The Importance of Geographical Environment
  - B. The Influence of Geographical Environment on Man
  - C. Generalization of Types of People
  - D. Geographical Environment: a Mysterious Subject
7. Using context clues we may infer that "iodine, fluoride and calcium" are \_\_\_\_.



- A. substances which act positively or negatively on man's health
  - B. harmful substances in the water supply
  - C. substances which help provide breeding places for pests
  - D. substances contributory to good health
8. We may infer from the third paragraph that geography and climate play an important role in determining the inhabitants' \_\_\_\_\_.
- A. health condition
  - B. personality
  - C. life-span
  - D. all of the above
9. According to the author, research into the influence of geography and climate should \_\_\_\_\_.
- A. focus on some unknown aspects
  - B. be pursued on a larger scale
  - C. be carried out within a larger scope
  - D. go much deeper
10. The author hopes that studies on the influence of geographical environment will enable us to \_\_\_\_\_.
- A. generalize better about types of people
  - B. find better water supplies
  - C. gain an insight into its influence on mankind
  - D. live to a ripe old age

### Passage 3

In January 1955, Jill Kinmont, then 19, seemed certain to make the United States Olympic ski team. Since age twelve, she had focused on this goal. Throughout high school in Bishop, California, she had competed at most Western ski areas, including Mammoth Mountain, Sun Valley, Aspen, Jackson, and Brighton. She had won both the women's and the junior national slalom (障碍滑雪) championships before traveling to Alta, Utah, to compete in the pre-Olympic tryout (选拔赛). As Jill says, "Skiing was it — everything — my world."

Jill's world collapsed on January 30 when she skied off the Alta run and landed helpless on the slope. Her fourth, fifth, and sixth cervical vertebrae (颈椎骨) were broken. For days, Jill hovered between life and death. By April, it became clear that she would be paralyzed from the shoulders down.

Jill underwent rehabilitation (康复) therapy with cheerful determination. She learned to write, to type, and to feed herself. Once she had mastered daily living skills, she enrolled in the University of California at Los Angeles, where she studied art, German, and English. After overcoming yet another personal tragedy, the death of her boyfriend in a plane crash, Jill grad-

uated in 1961.

By this time, Jill had chosen a new career goal: teaching elementary school children. Officials at UCLA, however, rejected her application for admission to the graduate school of education because of her paralysis. But she persevered, working with children in the UCLA Clinic School. When her family moved to Seattle, Jill was able to fulfill her new dream. She attended the School of Education at the University of Washington and began her new life's work as a teacher.

11. This passage could be entitled \_\_\_\_\_.
  - A. Never Beaten
  - B. Life and Death
  - C. A New Ski Star
  - D. Jill Kinmont: An Outstanding Teacher
12. Which of the following is NOT true about Jill?
  - A. She had devoted herself to skiing during high school and proved herself a very promising skier.
  - B. She had been a member of the U. S. Olympic ski team.
  - C. She was seriously wounded in the pre-Olympic tryouts.
  - D. Her career as a skier was destroyed in 1955.
13. Jill made up her mind to become a teacher \_\_\_\_\_.
  - A. immediately after she was paralyzed
  - B. because Jill had dreamed to be a teacher since her childhood
  - C. when she had learned to write, to type, and to feed herself
  - D. when she had recovered from her sadness over her boyfriend's death
14. It could be inferred from the passage that \_\_\_\_\_.
  - A. Jill's devotion to her boyfriend made her determine to be a teacher
  - B. Jill would totally recover from her paralysis because she underwent rehabilitation therapy with cheerful determination
  - C. Jill would be as enthusiastic a teacher as she was a skier
  - D. Jill would later become a college teacher specializing in skiing theory
15. The author will probably talk about Jill's \_\_\_\_\_ in the following paragraphs.
  - A. new rehabilitation therapy
  - B. further education in the University of Washington
  - C. enthusiasm for her teaching
  - D. family and children

#### Passage 4

It is not often realized that women held a high place in southern European societies in the 10th and 11th centuries. As a wife, the woman was protected by the setting up of a dowry (嫁

收) or decimum. Admittedly, the purpose of this was to protect her against the risk of desertion, but in reality its function in the social and family life of the time was much more important. The decimum was the wife's right to receive a tenth of all her husband's property. The wife had the right to withhold consent, in all transactions the husband would make, and more than just a right: the documents show that she enjoyed a real power of decision, equal to that of her husband. In no case do the documents indicate any degree of difference in the legal status of husband and wife.

The wife shared in the management of her husband's personal property, but the opposite was not always true. Women seemed perfectly prepared to defend their own inheritance against husbands who tried to exceed their rights, and on occasion they showed a fine fighting spirit. A case in point is that of Maria Vitas, a Catalan woman of Barcelona. Having agreed with her husband Miro to sell a field she had inherited, for the needs of the household, she insisted on compensation. None being offered, she succeeded in dragging her husband to the scribe (文书) to have a contract duly drawn up assigning her a piece of land from Miro's personal inheritance. The unfortunate husband was obliged to agree, as the contract says, "for the sake of peace." Either through the dowry or through being hot-tempered, the Catalan wife knew how to win herself, with the context of the family, a powerful economic position.

16. A decimum was \_\_\_\_\_.  
A. the wife's inheritance from her father  
B. a gift of money to the new husband  
C. a written contract  
D. the wife's right to receive one-tenth of her husband's property
17. In the society described in the passage, the legal standing of the wife in marriage was \_\_\_\_\_.  
A. higher than that of her husband  
B. lower than that of her husband  
C. the same as that of her husband  
D. higher than that of a single woman
18. What compensation did Maria Vitas get for the field?  
A. Some of the land Miro had inherited.  
B. A tenth of Miro's land.  
C. Money for household expenses.  
D. Money from Miro's inheritance.
19. Could a husband sell his wife's inheritance?  
A. No, under no circumstances.  
B. Yes, whenever he wished to.  
C. Yes, if she agreed.  
D. Yes, if his father-in-law agreed

20. Which of the following is NOT mentioned as an effect of the dowry system?
- A. The husband had to share the power of decision in marriage.
  - B. The wife was protected from desertion.
  - C. The wife gained a powerful economic position.
  - D. The husband was given control over his wife's property.

## Unit 2

### Passage 1

What do we think with? Only the brain? Hardly. The brain is like a telephone exchange. It is the switchboard, but not the whole system. Its function is to receive incoming signals, make proper connections, and send the messages through to their destination. For efficient service, the body must function as a whole.

But where is the "mind"? Is it in the brain? Or perhaps in the nervous system? After all, can we say that the mind is in any particular place? It is not a thing like a leg or even the brain. It is a function, an activity. Aristotle, twenty-three hundred years ago, observed that the mind was to the body what cutting was to the ax. When the ax is not in use, there is no cutting. So with the mind. "Mind" said Charles H. Woolbert, "is what the body is doing."

If this activity is necessary for thinking, it is also necessary for carrying thought from one person to another. Observe how people go about the business of ordinary conversation. If you have never done this painstakingly (费力的), you have a surprise in store, for good conversationalists are almost constantly in motion. Their heads are continually nodding and shaking sometimes so vigorously that you wonder how their necks can stand the strain.

Even the legs and feet are active. As for the hands and arms, they are seldom still for more than a few seconds at a time.

These people, remember, are not making speeches. They are merely common folk trying to make others understand what they have in mind. They are not conscious of movement. Their speech is not studied. They are just human creatures in a human environment, trying to adapt themselves to a social situation. Yet they converse, not only with oral language but with visible actions that involve practically every muscle in the body.

In short, because people really think all over, a speaker must talk all over if he succeeds in making people think.

1. Which of the following is the best title for the passage?
  - A. Bodily Communication.
  - B. Bodily Actions.
  - C. Spoken Language.
  - D. Conversations.
2. Which of the following statements would the author agree with?
  - A. Thinking is a social phenomenon.
  - B. Thinking is solely a brain function.

- C. Thinking is a function of the nervous system.
  - D. Thinking is the sum total of bodily activity
3. In communication, it is essential not only to employ speech, but also \_\_\_\_.
- A. to speak directly to the other person
  - B. to employ a variety of bodily movements
  - C. to be certain that the other person is listening
  - D. to pay great attention to the other person's behaviour
4. It can be inferred from the passage that the basic function of bodily activity in speech is to \_\_\_\_.
- A. make the listener feel emotional
  - B. make the speaker understood
  - C. amplify or intensify the speaker's spoken words
  - D. convey the speaker's implied meaning to the listener
5. Which of the following is TRUE?
- A. The brain is compared to a telephone exchange.
  - B. The mind is an activity of the nervous system.
  - C. Some people remain still while talking to others.
  - D. Many people move their bodies on purpose while talking.

## Passage 2

As a boy, Sanders was much influenced by books about the sea, but in fact by the age of fifteen he had decided to become a doctor rather than a sailor. His father was a dentist and as a result Sanders had the opportunity of meeting doctors socially. When he was fourteen he was already hanging around the dispensary (药房) of the local doctor where he was supposed to be helping to wrap up medicine bottles, but was actually trying to listen to the conversations with patients taking place in the next room.

During the war Sanders served in the Navy as a surgeon. "That was the happiest time of my life, doing major surgery. I was dealing with very real suffering and on the whole making a success of it." In Rhodes he taught the country people simple facts about medicine. He saw himself as a life-saver. He had proved his skill to himself and his ability to take decisions. With this proof came the firm belief that those who lived simply, those who were dependent upon him, possessed qualities and a secret of living which he lacked. Thus, whilst in a position to tell them what to do, he could feel he was serving them.

After the war, he married and chose a practice deep in the English countryside, working under an old doctor who was much liked in the district, but who hated the sight of blood and believed that the secret of medicine was faith. This gave the younger man plenty of opportunity to go on working as a life-saver.

6. As Sanders grew up \_\_\_\_.

- A. the doctors he met were very friendly
  - B. he met doctors with strong political opinions
  - C. the doctors he met ran social services
  - D. he was often in the company of doctors
7. He helped in the dispensary because he wanted to \_\_\_\_\_.  
A. find out more about the doctor's work  
B. wrap up bottles of medicine  
C. find out the secrets of the patients  
D. learn more about the medicine in the bottles
8. His experience in the Navy taught him that \_\_\_\_\_.  
A. surgeons had the happiest lives  
B. he was good at relieving those in pain  
C. surgeons on ships could be very successful  
D. he was successful at making people suffer
9. When Sanders was working in Rhodes during the war, he \_\_\_\_\_.  
A. discovered the virtues of a simple life  
B. wanted to live like a countryman  
C. wanted to be able to take decisions  
D. taught life-saving to his patients
10. After the war, he \_\_\_\_\_.  
A. married an older doctor working in a country town  
B. chose a junior partner who was very popular  
C. decided to marry someone living deep in the country  
D. joined an old country doctor who needed someone to help him

### Passage 3

Basic to any understanding of Canada in the 20 years after the Second World War is the country's impressive population growth. For every three Canadians in 1945, there were over five in 1966. In September 1966 Canada's population passed the 20 million mark. Most of this surging growth came from natural increase. The depression of the 1930's and the war had held back marriages, and the catching-up process began after 1945. The baby boom continued through the decade of the 1950's, producing a population increase of nearly fifteen percent in the five years from 1951 to 1956. This rate of increase had been exceeded only once before in Canada's history, in the decade before 1911, when the prairies were being settled. Undoubtedly, the good economic conditions of the 1950's supported a growth in the population, but the expansion also derived from a trend toward earlier marriages and an increase in the average size of families. In 1957 the Canadian birth rate stood at 28 per thousand, one of the highest in the world.

After the peak year of 1957, the birth rate in Canada began to decline. It continued falling until in 1966 it stood at the lowest level in 25 years. Partly this decline reflected the low level of births during the depression and the war, but it was also caused by changes in Canadian society. Young people were staying at school longer; more women were working; young married couples were buying automobiles or houses before starting families; rising living standards were cutting down the size of families. It appeared that Canada was once more falling in step with trend toward smaller families that had occurred all through the Western world since the time of the Industrial Revolution.

Although the growth in Canada's population had slowed down by 1966 (the increase in the first half of the 1960's was only nine percent), another large population wave was coming over the horizon. It would be composed of the children who were born during the period of the high birth rate prior to 1957.

11. The word "surging" in Line 4 is closest in meaning to \_\_\_\_\_.  
A. accelerating  
B. extra  
C. surprising  
D. new
12. The author suggests that in Canada during the 1950's \_\_\_\_\_.  
A. the birth rate was very high  
B. economic conditions were poor  
C. the urban population decreased rapidly  
D. fewer people married
13. The author mentions all of the following as causes of declines in population growth after 1957 EXCEPT \_\_\_\_\_.  
A. people being better educated  
B. better standards of living  
C. people getting married earlier  
D. couples buying houses
14. It can be inferred from the passage that before the Industrial Revolution \_\_\_\_\_.  
A. the population grew steadily  
B. economic conditions were bad  
C. population statistics was unreliable  
D. families were larger
15. What does the passage mainly discuss? \_\_\_\_\_.  
A. Educational changes in Canadian society  
B. Standards of living in Canada  
C. Canada during the Second World War  
D. Population trends in postwar Canada

#### Passage 4

The advantages and disadvantages of a large population have long been a subject of discussion among economists. It has been argued that the supply of good land is limited. To feed a large population, inferior land must be cultivated and the good land worked intensively. Thus, each person produces less and this means a lower average income than could be obtained with



a smaller population. Other economists have argued that a large population gives more scope for specialization and the development of facilities such as ports, roads and railways, which are not likely to be built unless there is a big demand to justify them.

One of the difficulties in carrying out a world-wide birth control program lies in the fact that official attitudes to population growth vary from country depending on the level of industrial development and the availability of food and raw materials. In the developing country where a vastly expanded population is pressing hard upon the limits of food, space and natural resources, it will be the first concern of government to place a limit on the birthrate, whatever the consequences may be. In a highly industrialized society the problem may be more complex. A decreasing birthrate may lead to unemployment because it results in a declining market for manufactured goods. When the pressure of population on housing declines, prices also decline and building industry is weakened. Faced with considerations such as these, the government of a developed country may well prefer to see a slowly increasing population, rather than one which is stable or in decline.

16. A small population may mean \_\_\_\_\_.
- A. higher productivity, but a lower average income
  - B. lower productivity, but a higher average income
  - C. lower productivity and a lower average income
  - D. higher productivity and a higher average income
17. According to the passage, a large population will provide a chance for developing \_\_\_\_\_.
- A. agriculture
  - B. transport system
  - C. industry
  - D. national economy
18. In a developed country, people will perhaps go to work if the birthrate \_\_\_\_\_.
- A. goes up
  - B. goes down
  - C. remains stable
  - D. is out of control
19. According to the passage, slowly, rising birthrate perhaps is good for \_\_\_\_\_.
- A. a developing nation
  - B. a developed nation
  - C. every nation with a big population
  - D. every nation with a small population
20. It is no easy job to carry out a general plan for birth control throughout the world because \_\_\_\_\_.
- A. there are too many underdeveloped countries in the world
  - B. underdeveloped countries have low level of industrial development
  - C. different governments have different views of the questions
  - D. even developed countries may have complex problems