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《大学生英语阅读系列丛书》编委会

使　用　说　明

很多前辈学者的成功经验表明，大量阅读英文书籍是从根本上提高英文水平的必由之路。大量的课外阅读能帮助学生巩固课上所学的语言知识，并扩大词汇量；大量的课外阅读能帮助学生提高理解能力，加快阅读速度；大量的课外阅读能开阔学生的眼界，使学生更多地了解英语国家的文化。更重要的是，只有通过大量的阅读才能逐步形成语感。总之，量的积累能导致质的飞跃。大阅读量对提高英语水平所起的作用是精读课和做试题都无法取代的。为了满足广大学生和英语爱好者学习的需要，我们编写了这套系列阅读丛书。

本系列丛书针对非英语专业大学生的需要编写而成。既可为他们提供课外阅读的资料，又可为他们进入专业阅读阶段的学习打下基础。还可以供社会上其他中级水平的英语学习者自学之用。本着既富趣味性，又兼顾知识面的原则，本丛书第一批共推出八册，题目分别为：体育大世界，特殊的历史时刻，人与环境，法庭内外，媒体文萃，文化与交际，世界政坛焦点漫谈，经济文选等。每册书中既有该领域的奇闻轶事及趣谈供读者赏析，又有初步的理论与专业术语供读者学习。按专业分类选编的目的旨在提高每册书中同一领域单词的复现率，有利于读者扩充词汇，并能满足综合性大学各专业学生及社会上各行业读者学习专业外语的不同选择。

我们编写本阅读系列丛书的意图是引导读者既学习语言又学习阅读技巧。为此，本丛书以学习理论为指导，安排全书的编写体例。

首先，目录为英汉对照，使读者对每册书的内容一目了然。

其次，每篇文章之前设导读语，提示该篇主题或要点，引导读者阅读之前对阅读内容进行预测。在阅读过程中验证所做出的推断、养成积极思维的良好阅读习惯。这一习惯的养成对于提高阅读理解能力和阅读速度，起着至关重要的作用。

第三，本丛书在词汇控制方面别具特色。既控制生词量，又指导学生掌握使用字典的分寸。各分册以大学英语教学大纲词表为准，将四级以外的单词控制在千分之七左右。对于超出四级的单词，作如下处理：凡是根据理解的需要必须懂的生词，均以斜体标出，并收入书后的词表，方便记者查阅；凡是不影响全文理解或者不构成重要信息的生词，以及根据上下文的提示或构词法知识可以猜出的生词，则不做斜体处理，亦不收入词表。遇到这类生词，读者应先设法猜测词义，猜不出时尽可以忽略，不必费时费力查字典。这种安排旨在向读者传递这样一个信息，即：培养阅读能力的关键是学会针对不同的阅读目的采取不同的阅读方法。课外阅读属于泛读，目的是获取信息，重在扩大阅读量，不必依照精读课的习惯字字推敲，因而也不必频繁地放下书本去查字典，因为那样不仅会影响阅读速度、打断阅读时的雅兴，而且字字斟酌费时费力，所查出的词义又不可能全部记住，造成事倍功半的结果。

第四，为了体现泛读与精读方法上的不同之处，本丛书中每篇文章后只附少量阅读理解题目，提示应掌握的文章要点与理解重点，引导读者注重扩大阅读量，而不必过分追究细节。

以阅读与学习理论指导阅读丛书编写工作的作法尚属尝试。由于我们水平有限，编写中难免有失误与疏漏之处，敬请读者与英语界前辈及同仁批评指正。

本丛书由中国人民大学外语系英语阅读系列丛书编写组编写。编委会成员有：主编：李守京教授，顾问：罗舜泉教授，编

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英语阅读系列丛书编委会

1999年春，于北京

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第一篇 理论篇

1. A Brief History of Economic Thought

经济思想史概论

Economic issues have occupied philosopher's mind through the ages. But it was not until 1776 when the Scottish economist Adam Smith published his book "An Enguiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations" that economics became a subject of modern study. That year represented a watershed in the development of economics. And the following centuries saw a proliferation of economic thought.

One of the best-known early economists is Adam Smith[1]. He lived between 1723 and 1790 and is regarded as the founder of economics. In The *Wealth of Nations*, his monumental work published in 1776, he described the free economy. His theory was that human beings are chiefly motivated by a desire for personal profit and, if all individuals acted in their own interests, this competitiveness and independence would produce universal wealth. By each person pursuing his own profit, the interests of society would be served because there is an "invisible hand" which guides such individual actions towards a common goal, even though this may not be the intention of the separate individuals. What is good for the individual is good for society as a whole. Smith's theory is the foundation on which capitalist society rests: independence and competition. The profit motive and self-interest are its mainspring and lead to the self-regulating market.

With this system consumers are free to spend their money however they wish and businesses compete for their custom. According to Smith this causes a natural movement of both labour and capital to the areas where they are most needed. If consumers want more of an item than is being produced, then producers can charge high prices and earn high profits. This attracts other producers into the field and, as more goods are produced, prices fall. The competition wipes out inefficient businesses. You can see that elements of this theory have survived in today's economic theories based on consumer sovereignty[2] and the competitive market system.

According to Smith's theory, the rise in production would cause wages to rise, along with the collective national wealth; everyone could then secure more of the necessities and enjoy more of the pleasures of life. Smith also saw that work specialisation and the division of labour would lead to improvements in production and skills. This theory holds good today, but specialisation has gone much further than Adam Smith foresaw.

Smith's doctrine was that of laissez-faire and it held that any attempts by governments to control the operation of the free market would restrict the nation's economic progress. There are today economists who still believe in this theory and argue that governments should not take such a large role in the economy.

Another thinker who developed an early economic theory was Thomas Malthus[3] (1776 – 1834). He is remembered mainly for his theories on population growth. Malthus argues that population increases at a faster rate than the increase in available food, therefore there is always a tendency for population growth to endanger the food supply. He felt that rises in income were reduced by a rising population, and too large a population would tend to push wages down. Malthus wanted most social-welfare payments to the poor to be abolished — he claimed that these payments encouraged the poor to have more children. He stated that no person had any claim on society if his labour did not fairly purchase that claim[4]; the progress of society as a whole would be hindered by rising living standards of its poor since that situation would lead to an increase in the population which must be checked. The Poor Laws had led to increased claims on food supplies without adding to them, he claimed, and parish relief made the unemployed unwilling to work but capable of reproducing more quickly, thus increasing competition for the limited food supply. Population growth would be kept in check by wars, famines, plagues and other diseases. Malthus's doctrine was harsh, but he advocated withdrawal of public assistance only from the able-bodied who were capable of working and not from those incapable of earning their own living.

Malthus did not foresee the later improvements in agricultural production which have increased the food supply, nor methods of birth control. His theory could still apply to parts of the world where the birth rate is high but the death rate has been reduce by improvements in public health and sanitation.

Although Malthus is remembered chiefly for his theories on population, he also made other contributions to economic thought. He saw that lack of demand would lead to depression and in this his theory foreshadows that of J. M. Keynes.

The ideas of David Ricardo[5] (1772 – 1823) were very influential in economic thinking. His main aim was the promotion of free international trade, and he introduced the theory of comparative advantage: that countries should produce only those items for which they are best suited. This theory is still a central issue in international economics.

Ricardo's other ideas concerned the distribution of wages, rents and profits, and on these issues he followed the line of capitalist thinking. He saw society as dominated by two groups, the industrialists and the landowners, and he considered the former to be the more important for economic progress. He argued that the Corn Laws, which protected English agriculture against foreign competition by means of a high tariff on imported wheat, would cause rents to rise and that landlords would prosper at the expense of the other groups in society, He saw that in the long run workers would get only the bare minimum necessary to keep themselves and their families alive. This is sometimes called the "iron law of wages". Like Malthus, he believed that if workers earned more they would breed so many children that the wages would be driven down by too many workers in competition with each other. Towards the end of the nineteenth century the most influential economist was Alfred Marshall[6] (1842 – 1924). He defined economics as being "the study of mankind in the ordinary business of life". Marshall's main work, *The Principles of Economics*, was published in 1890. He contributed a great deal to economic theory, claiming that theoretical investigations could illuminate practical problems.

Marshall believed in the Adam Smith model of the unregulated economy. He concentrated on the behaviour of consumers and producers, and assumed that people acted rationally to achieve their own advantage, consumers seeking maximum satisfaction and producers seeking maximum rewards. Marshall explained and analysed the functioning of the free market system, the operations of demand and supply, and the achievement of equilibrium price[7] as resulting from the interaction of demand and supply; equilibrium price being that price towards which the market would naturally tend to move. The concept of demand and supply stems from the theories put forward by Alfred Marshall. He introduced the importance of consumer demand and its effect on prices, and outlined the concept of elasticity of demand[8].

Jean Baptiste Say[9] (1767 - 1832), whose theories claimed that there could never be a general glut or a depression because production would always ensure sufficient purchasing power to make demand equal to supply. This theory was firmly believed until the 1930s, when Say's ideas were supplanted by those of J. M. Keynes.

While Say's Law held that there was a natural mechanism which ensured full employment and economic equilibrium[10], Keynes[11] (1883 - 1946) argued that there could be an equilibrium where total demand *equalled* total supply in a situation of large-scale unemployment. Keynes recommended that the government should take a hand in regulating the economy. He saw the level of economic activity—that is, of employment, production and income — as depending on the level of total spending by consumers, businesses and governments. Keynes strongly criticized the unregulated market economy, and the *laissez-faire* system.

The Keynesian principles worked well for some forty years, and most Western-style governments followed his policy recommendations, but in recent years economics and societies have undergone changes and developments which Keynes did not foresee. Economic conditions have changed greatly since the 1930s and other economic theorists have come to prominence. Say's law has re-emerged in some of these theories, although in a modified form.

A contemporary economist is J. K. Galbraith[12] (1908 –). He has published many books, including *The Affluent Society*, *The New Industrial State and The Great Crash*. *Unlike* many economists, his writing is easy to read and understand, and in his book *Almost Everyone's Guide to Economics* he explains the basis of the economic system very simply for the ordinary reader. His theories have not always been accepted, but he has made economics intelligible to a wider public than have most other writers on the subject, and he has drawn attention to many evils of the economic system. He argues that the free market system may lead to private affluence but does not provide sufficiently for public needs such as hospitals, education, roads, and leisure facilities. He claims that there is a conflict of interest between the provision of public goods (collective goods) and the provision of private goods. This is denied by the followers of the classical market theory, who claim that consumer sovereignty ensures that consumers get what they want. Galbraith claims that consumers are really being manipulated by the large corporations to want what the corporations provide, and that the giant corporations in their relationship with consumers bear no resemblance to the classical market economy of individual consumers and small competitive businesses. The competition that now exists, says Galbraith, is between strong labour unions and powerful corporations.

Milton Friedman[13] (1921 –) has harked back to the *laissez-faire* system and defended the free market, arguing that the only regulation needed in the economy is through monetary policies[14], such as the control of the money supply and interest rates. He, like Adam Smith and Alfred Marshall, sees no need for government involvement in the market system. His ideas are, of course, quite contrary to those of Galbraith. He also rejects the Keynesian approach as he sees no need for fiscal policy, i.e. adjusting government expenditure and taxation. Friedman's ideas are really a revival of some very old theories of the classical economists such as Smith, Ricardo and Malthus.

The economists and economic theories we have been discussing are all products of a certain type of society, which is often called a capitalist society. Therefore the theories are built around the kind of society in which they originated and are explanations of its economic behavior. Some economists who have examined this type of society and economic behaviour have become very critical of it. The most famous and influential of these thinkers was Karl Marx (1818 – 1883). His most important works were *the Communist Manifesto*[15] (1848, written with Friedrich Engels) and *Das Kapital*[16].

During the nineteenth century, exploitation of labour was commonplace and children as young as 8 years old worked as many as 14 hours a day in factories and mines. Marx saw capitalism as an inhuman system which would eventually destroy itself. Capitalism, he argued, would turn out more goods than the workers could buy with their meager wages and ultimately they would rise against the capitalist system. He foresaw the rising power of the large corporation which can destroy competition and control prices. He also predicted depressions and slumps which the classical economists said could not occur. His theories were based on the assumption of continual conflict, which would eventually destroy capitalism through revolution, and lead to a classless society in which all the factors of production would be communally owned.

Marxian ideas spread and developed in certain parts of the world and today many countries claim that they are socialist states, running their economies on Marxist lines; but there are many differences among them. There are varieties of socialism and no one universal model, but basic to all of them is a belief in state planning and control of the economy, with little private ownership of the means of production. In these countries, therefore, the economic system is run differently from those in the West. There are different degrees of state control and ownership of productive enterprises. Not all socialist countries claim to follow Marx, but all depend to some extent on his theories.

It is clear that economic thinking and policies are based on economic theories, which in turn are based on certain assumptions. The result is that a number of different theories are offered to explain the economic environment. Because the underlying assumptions are different, the recommendations on organising the economy and on policies to be followed will be different.