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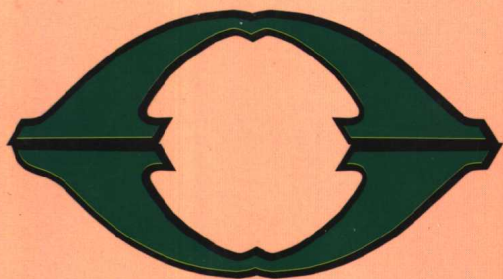
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A TRUE ENGLISH CLASSROOM 全英文课堂

大学英语精读课题研究组
丛书主编 万 之



全

英文授课，是提高英语学习效率的最佳途径
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英文授课，不仅倍增英文信息获取量
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A TRUE ENGLISH CLASSROOM

A TRUE ENGLISH CLASSROOM

大学英语精读 全英文课堂

2

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前言

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——万之

2002.8

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Unit 1

Is There Life on Earth?

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I. Learning Target

I). Key Words and Expressions:

Words: manage; signal; feasibility; atmosphere; compose; conclusion; unfit; emit; proceed; indicate; deadly; survive

Expressions: as well as; ever since; known as; be named after; as to; base ... on; for one thing... for another; as far as ... be concerned; stick up; give off; set back

II). Grammar:

because of
so that
so / as far as ... be concerned

III). Reading Skills:

Using word part clues for word meanings

You should learn to use your knowledge of word part clues to figure out the meanings of unknown words.

Dividing compound words

A compound word is a word made up of two or more words. By dividing the word into small units, you may get a clue to its meaning.

Recognizing prefixes

A prefix is a word or syllable added to the beginning of a word. It does not generally change the word-class of the word but only modify its meaning. By recognizing prefixes, you will be able to learn many new words.

Recognizing suffixes

A suffix is a syllable or syllables added to the end of a word. Suffixes mainly

change the word class.

IV). Text:

The text sounds like a piece of humorous science fiction or an amusing nonsense story just for light reading. But in fact it is a very serious article about the serious problem of environmental pollution on the earth. The author tells the story from the point of view of the hypothetical "Venusians" who are exploring the possibility of life on earth with the purpose of criticizing human being's indifference to the environment. He illustrates his viewpoint in a satirical tone. In order to achieve this effect, the author chooses the planet Venus as the setting for his story and employs such writing devices as irony (e. g. "Manhattan"), the unconventional usage of words (e. g. "20,000 light years ago", "billions of zilches"), the fictitious and facetious coinage of words (e. g. "Grubstart", "Consolidated Edison Belt"). His satire is most deeply felt when he has the Venusian professor say that if the Venusians can learn to breathe in an Earth atmosphere, then they can live anywhere else. The text can be divided into three parts:

Section one (Para. 1 - 2): The Venusian scientists managed to land a satellite on the planet Earth for the first time and from then on the satellite has been sending back important information and photographs.

Section two (Para. 3 - the end of the text): At the press conference, the Venusian scientists issue a piece of astonishing news that there is no life on the earth, for the place they have explored is heavily polluted.

V). Writing Skills: How to make your paragraph coherent

Coherence of a paragraph is concerned with its organization. Coherence is one of the most important elements in paragraph writing. Otherwise, the reader will find it difficult to follow the writer's train of thought and understand what he is talking about. In order to achieve coherence, the sentences in a paragraph should be arranged in a clear, logical order, and the transitions should be smooth and natural.

II. Background Information of the Text

1. About the author

Art Buchwald (1925 -) is a well-known American humor columnist for the Washington Post. His columns frequently deal with stories about politicians and famous personalities, current events in politics and issues in the news.

2. Venus

Venus is the second planet in order of increasing distance from the sun and nearest to the earth of all the planets in solar system. Except for the sun and the moon, Venus is the brightest planet in the sky. The planet is called "the morning star" when it appears in the east at sunrise, and "the evening star" when it is in the west at sun-

set. Its surface is extremely hot (over 400°C). It lacks water and its atmosphere consists mainly of carbon dioxide. The high temperature and lack of water and oxygen make it unlikely that life as we know it could exist there.

3. **Manhattan**

Manhattan, one of five boroughs of New York City, is the commercial, cultural and financial center of the U. S. as well as the whole world. The famous Fifth Avenue runs up the center of Manhattan from south to north. It is a street of fashion and shopping center. Broadway is a center of theaters. Every year its theaters give many performances which attract large numbers of people from all over the country. Wall Street, walled by skyscrapers of large banks and offices of big companies, is a financial center of the world. Manhattan is well known for its skyscrapers, such as the Empire State Building, Rockefeller Center, the World Trade Center, and the United Nations Building. By the use of this name in the text, the author intends to enhance the satirical effect of the essay.

III. Summary of the Text

This is a piece of science fiction, and a satire, and it may provoke us into serious thinking. Venusian scientists are researching the human being and trying to explore the possibility of life on Earth. Based on the information the satellite has sent back, Venusian scientists have come to the conclusion that there is no life on earth. The surface, the atmosphere, the water, the space all seem unfit for survival. The author wants to call our attentions to the fact that man has polluted his environment to such an extent that he might destroy himself and man should take effective measures to protect his environment.

IV. Key Words and Expressions

1. **Words:**

1. **manage**:vi. [~ to do sth.] to succeed in doing sth. esp. with an effort
e. g. It's heavy, but I can manage to carry it.

In spite of these insults, she managed to keep her temper.

[derivative] management *n.* manager *n.*

[compare] try to do sth.

To express the idea of succeeding in doing something difficult because of one's own powers and efforts, use "manage to do." "Try to do something" means "to attempt and do something".

e. g. I'll try to learn Spanish.

2. **signal**:

- ① *n.* a sound or action intended to warn, command, or give message

e. g. A red lamp is often used as a danger signal.

She made a signal with her arm for a left turn.

② **vt. & vi.** [~ to / for] to give a signal; express, warn, or tell by a signal

e. g. The general signaled to his officers for the attack to begin.

The thief signaled his friend that the police were coming.

3. **feasibility**: *n.* possibility of being carried out or done

e. g. feasibility study

The Venusian scientists succeeded in getting important information as to the feasibility of landing a satellite on Earth.

[derivative] feasible *adj.*

4. **atmosphere**: *n.* (usu. sing.)

(1) all the gases round the earth

e. g. The carbon monoxide from factories and automobiles have seriously polluted the atmosphere.

(2) the feeling among a group or produced by the surroundings

e. g. That restaurant has real atmosphere.

5. **compose**: *vt.*

(1) [be composed of] to make up something; form something

e. g. Water is composed of hydrogen and oxygen.

(2) to write (music, poetry, etc.)

e. g. to compose a poem

[derivative] composer *n.* composition *n.*

[synonym] be composed of, consist of, be made up of

6. **conclusion**: *n.* (1) the end; closing part

e. g. I found the conclusion of his book very interesting indeed.

(2) a judgement or decision

e. g. What conclusions did you come to / draw / reach?

[root] conclude *v.*

[synonym] end, outcome, result, judgement

7. **unfit**: *adj.* [~ for / to do] not good enough; not suitable

e. g. The water is unfit to drink.

He was unfit for the task.

[synonym] unsuited, unsuitable, inappropriate

[antonym] fit, suitable

8. **emit**: *vt.* to send out (esp. heat, light, smell, sound)

e. g. The chimney emitted a cloud of smoke.

The old radiator emits little heat.

9. **proceed**: *vi.* (~ to do sth. / with sth.) to begin and continue (some course of action); continue after having stopped

e. g. Tell us your name and then proceed with your story.

After the applause died down, the pianist proceeded to play.

[synonym] go on, continue

[antonym] retreat

10. **indicate**: *vt.* to show

e. g. At the crossing there is an arrow indicating the direction to the town.

[derivative] indication *n.* indicator *n.* indicative *adj.*

11. **deadly**:

1) *adj.* causing death; likely to cause death

e. g. a deadly weapon

The disease is deadly.

2) *adv.* very

e. g. The movie was deadly dull.

[derivative] die *v.* dead *adj.* death *n.*

[synonym] fatal, lethal, mortal

[compare] fatal, deadly

Fatal is used to describe anything that is capable of causing or that actually has caused death; it carries a strong suggestion of the inevitability of the fate; an illness which might not be serious for a young person, but which will almost certainly prove fatal to the old lady. Deadly is interchangeable with fatal in this sense: a deadly disease. Deadly, however, in this way that fatal cannot, can refer to a person who desires or seeks to cause the death of another person; The murdered man had many deadly enemies.

12. **survive**: *vt.* to continue to live; live or exist longer than; outlive

e. g. survive the accident / the fire / the war / the shipwreck, etc.

Only a few soldiers survived the battle.

He survived his wife.

[derivative] survival *n.* survivor *n.*

[synonym] continue, persist, live, remain, succeed, outlive

[antonym] die

13. **land**: *vt. & vi.* to go, come, put on land

e. g. The pilot landed the plane safely in the heavy snow.

The spaceship landed in the sea this morning.

II. Expressions:

1. **as well as**: (used to connect two nouns) in addition to

e. g. He speaks Spanish as well as English and French.

His children as well as his wife were invited to the party.

[compare] as well

"As well" is usually used at the end of the sentence, while "as well as" is used in

the middle of the sentence.

e. g. I'm going to London and my sister's coming as well.

2. **ever since**: (*adv.*, *conj.*, *prep.*) from then till now; throughout the whole of a period of time referred to and up to the present

e. g. He went to Spain 40 years ago and has lived there ever since.

We have been friends ever since we met in 1981.

He had been teaching English in high school ever since the year of 1980.

3. **(be) known as**: generally recognized as, publicly called

e. g. He is known as a great singer.

Samuel Clements, known as Mark Twain, became a famous American writer.

[compare]

be known for; be famous for

be known to (or well-known to); be known by

4. **be named after**: to be given the same name (of) as

e. g. Their son was named George after his grandfather.

The machine is named after its inventor.

5. **as to**: regarding, about

e. g. As to money, he is indifferent.

We want to know from you as to whether you have ever experienced any cruelty.

[compare] as for; (sometimes derog.) with regard to; concerning

"As for" introduces a subject connected with what was being spoken of before.

e. g. We all passed the examination, but as for him, he alone failed.

You can have a bed, but as for children, they'll have to sleep on the floor.

"As to" is also sometimes used in a sentence like this, but it can also begin a new subject.

6. **base... on**: to build or place, use as a base for

e. g. This book is based on a true story.

One should always base one's opinion on facts.

7. **for one thing... for another**: in the first place..., in the second place (used to introduce reason)

e. g. I can not go abroad this summer. For one thing, I have no time, and for another I have not enough money.

8. **as far as ... be concerned**: as far; to the degree that it matters to

e. g. As far as I am concerned, I cannot object to your marriage.

9. **stick up**: to stand upright; project

e. g. Aerials stick up above the building.

10. **give off**: to emit; send out something (esp. liquid, gas, light, steam, or smell)

e. g. The boiling water gives off steam.

The fresh flower gives off a sweet fragrance.

Other phrases with "give":

give away: to give sb. sth. as a present; make known (a secret)

give in: to yield

give out: to give to each of several people

give up: to stop having or doing

11. **set back**: to delay the advance or development of sth.; cause to put off or get behind schedule

e. g. The cost of the war has set back the national development by 8 years.

The crisis set back the entire economy of their country.

Other phrases with "set":

set about: to begin to do sth.

set aside: to save for a special purpose

set down: to write; make a record of

set off / out: to begin a journey

set up: to establish; raise into position

V. Difficult Sentences

1. **Is there life on earth? — Is there any human beings existing on earth?**

This is a piece of science fiction. The author tells the story from the point of view of the Venusians who are exploring the possibility of life on earth.

2. **For the first time Venusian scientists managed to land a satellite on the Planet Earth, and it has been sending back signals as well as photographs ever since. (L1 - 3) —**

The Venusian scientists succeeded in landing the first satellite to the planet Earth, and it has been returning information and photographs.

3. **The satellite was directed into an area known as Manhattan (named after the great Venusan astronomer Prof. Manhattan, who first discovered it with his telescope 20,000 light years ago). (L4 - 6) —** The satellite was aimed at an area called Manhattan (which was given the same name of the great Venusian astronomer prof. Manhattan, who first found it with his telescope 20,000 light years ago.)

(1) **direct**: vt. [~ at, to] to turn or aim (attention, remarks, etc.) (in the stated direction); aim (movement) (in the stated direction)

e. g. He directed all his attention to the next exam.

The warning is directed at you.

We directed our steps towards the house.

(2) **20,000 light years ago**:

A light year is the distance light travels in one year at the speed of 186,282 miles

per second. It is not acceptable to say "20,000 light years ago". The unconventional usage here may be deliberate and vividly reveal the author's writing purpose. The intended meaning is only "a very, very long time ago".

4. **Because of the excellent weather conditions and extremely strong signals, Venusian scientists were able to get valuable information as to the feasibility of a manned flying saucer landing on Earth.** (L7 - 9) — The weather is fine and clear and the signals sent back are very strong, so Venusian scientists could get important information about the possibility of a flying object with man landing on Earth.

because of (sth. or doing sth.) : *prep.* as the result of

"Because" is a conjunction, used to introduce an adverbial clause of cause.

e. g. He had to stay at home because it snowed heavily.

He had to stay at home because of the heavy snow.

5. **We have come to the conclusion, based on last week's satellite landing, that there is no life on Earth.** (L11 - 12) — According to last week's landing we have concluded that there is no life on Earth.

(1) **come to the conclusion**: to reach / draw / arrive at a conclusion

e. g. We come to the conclusion that that room must be empty.

(2) **based on last week's satellite landing**: past participle construction as attribute used to modify "conclusion"

(3) **that there is no life on Earth**: appositive to "conclusion"

e. g. The news that we are invited to the conference is very encouraging.

An idea came to her that she might do the experiment in another way.

6. **What does this mean as far as our flying saucer program is concerned?** (L19 - 20) — What's the meaning of this as for the plan of flying saucer?

7. **We shall have to take our own oxygen with us, which means a much heavier flying saucer than we originally planned.** (L21 - 22) — We will have to carry our own oxygen with us when we carry out our flying saucer program, and that will add weight to the saucer.

"Which" here does not refer to any of the nouns in the main clause. The antecedent of "which" is the whole main clause, and there must be a comma to separate the "which" clause from the word preceding it.

e. g. She changed her mind again, which made us all angry.

8. **Over here you will notice what seems to be a river, but the satellite findings indicate it is polluted and the water is unfit to drink.** (L28 - 29) — A river should be clean and clear. But what we have seen is not the case. According to the satellite information, the water here contains deadly elements and is not suitable to drink.

(1) **findings**: *n.* sth. learnt as the result of an official enquiry

Note the formation of this word: *v.* (find) + *ing* + *s*

e. g. belongings, earnings, greetings

(2) **notice and pay attention to**

"Notice" means "to pay attention to with the eyes, or other senses", while "pay attention to" means "to fix the mind on something by watching and listening carefully; keep or direct all one's thoughts and consideration on something".

See exercise V.

(3) **sentence pattern: subject + be + adj. + to do**

In this type of sentence pattern, the subject of the main clause is the logical object of the infinitive. Here, the adjectives are generally stative adjectives, such as easy, hard, difficult, and pleasant.

e. g. The question is difficult to answer.

9. ... **This means we shall have to carry our own water, which will add even greater weight to the saucer.** (L29 - 31) — Since the water there is polluted and unsuitable to drink we have to take our own water with us when we land on Earth, and this will make our saucer much heavier.

add to: to join (one thing to another); increase

e. g. The news added to his anxiety.

If you add two to five, you get seven.

10. **They emit gases, make noise and keep crashing into each other.** (L34 - 35) — The cars moving on the roads give off poisonous gases, make a lot of noise, and hit each other repeatedly.

(1) **crash:** vt. & vi. to fall or strike suddenly, violently and noisily

e. g. The plane crashed in the mountains.

He crashed his car into the wall.

(2) **keep doing sth.** : to continue doing sth., repeat an action

e. g. It has kept raining for more than a week.

11. **There are so many of these paths and so many metal particles that it is impossible to land a flying saucer without its being smashed by one.** (L35 - 36) — There are so numerous cars moving on roads and highways that a flying saucer is easy to get smashed by one of these vehicles when it tries to land on Earth.

(1) Metal particles refer to vehicles moving along the streets because they are small and made of metal.

(2) **smash:** vt. vi. to break or be broken violently into small pieces

e. g. The drunken man smashed up all the furniture.

(3) **so + adj. / adv. + that... :** (introduce adverbial clause denote result) to such a degree

e. g. The statement was so clear that it couldn't be misunderstood.

She danced so beautifully that everyone stared at her.

When "so" is put at the beginning of a sentence for emphasis, the sentence order should be inverted.