



普通高等教育“十一五”国家级规划教材
普通高等教育“十二五”规划教材



总主编 李正栓

大学英语 快速阅读 1 (第三版)

College English
Fast Reading

张强乾 © 主编



北京大学出版社
PEKING UNIVERSITY PRESS

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College English Fast Reading

大学英语快速阅读 1

(第三版)

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快速阅读技能指南

“快速阅读”现在又称之为“全脑速读”，它是一种讲究效率，节省脑力和视力，有利于记忆的阅读。与传统的阅读法（俗称为慢读）不同的是，前者是按字、词等少数几个单字为单位进行阅读，后者则是以意群、组、行、块、段为整体进行阅读。“慢读”耗时多、速度缓，虽利于理解但不利于记忆。其原因是此种读法的缓慢节奏与大脑处理信息的节奏不甚协调，故影响记忆。“快读”则不然。经过“快读”训练的人一般均具有超宽的视觉能力。而这种能力所提供信息的节奏更容易与大脑处理信息的节奏相一致。实践证明，经过严格、系统、科学的“快读”训练者，其对阅读材料的理解和记忆绝不逊色于“慢读”者，但其摄取的信息量及阅读速度则又是“慢读”者所不可比拟的。鉴于快速阅读是一种需要系统训练的阅读技能，这种技能要求一定的语言能力，心理素质和速读的实用技巧，下面就快速阅读和阅读中的解词技巧做以介绍，并附以部分练习，以此提高学习者的快速阅读能力。

一、快速阅读技能

1. 设定积极的目标主动阅读(Setting Up a Positive Goal to Read Initiatively)

在信息时代，阅读成为你获取信息，与人沟通及产生共鸣的重要途径之一。而有效的阅读会受各种因素制约，例如你的身体状态，心理状态，阅读技能技巧，语言知识水平，还有阅读材料，阅读时间，外界环境等。所以为了提高自己的阅读效果，包括理解与速度，你首先要设定积极的目标，主动地阅读。积极的阅读目标是指你对阅读材料产生更多的认知，希望从阅读中获取所需的较为全面的信息交流，扩大你的知识面，开拓自己的视野。主动地阅读是要求你在阅读时主动地思考：例如，作者的意图，文章或书的用途，与你的联系等等。比起填鸭式的被动接受信息，由你主动地分析消化阅读内容是更行之有效的方法。

下面是一种常见的鱼骨头分析法(fishbone analysis)：鱼头是你需要达到的目标(设定积极目标主动阅读)，主干鱼骨是可能阻碍目标实现的因素(阅读时没有目标，没有动机，没有关联性，阅读中没有重点，没有认知，没有集中注意力)，副鱼骨列举了具体情况，请对照主、副鱼骨分析你的阅读状态(如果你的鱼骨头越多，你就越需要改进阅读态度和方法了！)

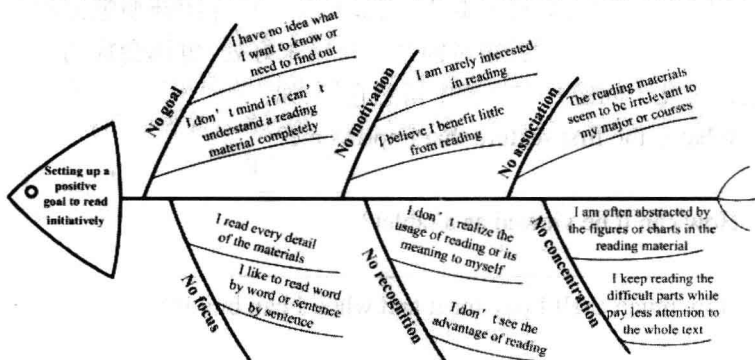


图 1

Reading Simulation 阅读仿真

阅读仿真将为你模拟两种特定的阅读过程,其中阅读材料A和B在信息的类型、字数和难度上十分接近,请你依照仿真步骤的顺序(step1,2,3等)和要求进行阅读并完成仿真中的练习,从中体验设定积极的目标主动阅读所带给你的不同阅读效果:

Step 1: 阅读A部分

A

The new iPad is scheduled to go on sale on March 16 for a starting price of \$499, unchanged from the last generation of iPads. The product has a screen that provides a comparable level of clarity to the iPhone's "retina display", with higher-resolution than conventional high-definition televisions, according to Apple executives. The new iPad, which has no numbers or letters following its name, is an effort to keep growth chugging along in a two-year-old business that has turned into a major technology franchise for the company. The third generation of the iPad looks virtually indistinguishable from its predecessor, without any of the bold outward design changes often associated with new products from the company. It features a faster processor — an A5X quad-core chip — and a higher resolution screen — 2,048 by 1,536 pixels, more than 3.1 million pixels, or four times more than the second generation iPad. It operates on the fourth-generation cellphone network technology known as LTE. In the United States, the new iPad will work on AT&T's and Verizon's networks. The iPad will allow users to dictate e-mails, though Apple did not introduce an iPad version of Siri, an iPhone virtual assistant feature that can schedule appoints and perform other tasks using natural sounding commands.

Step 2: 覆盖原文A,列举至少3项new iPad的特点。

Feature 1: _____;

Feature 2: _____;

Feature 3: _____.

Step 3: 模拟自己是一名计算机专业人员,你对下一篇介绍新型笔记本性能的文章有积极的兴趣:它是与自己的职业相关,很可能给工作带来好处,也许会提高工作效率等。请你在阅读B部分前设定几个问题并在阅读中留意它们,如:

Question 1: What is the first feature that impress me?

Answer: _____

Question 2: How can it be viewed as a tablet?

Answer: _____

Question 3: How much shall I pay for it and when I can buy it?

Answer: _____

Step 4: 阅读B部分

B

Lenovo's Yoga PC might not be the absolute fastest or thinnest new portable to come out of this year's International Consumer Electronics Show, but as its name implies, it is certainly flexible.

The 17 mm thin laptop (about the thickness of Apple's MacBook Air) is also a tablet. It achieves its duality from a tricky patented hinge that lets the keyboard flip flush to the back of its 13-inch screen. With the keyboard folded back, the screen is controlled through touch as with any tablet.

In fact, the Yoga includes a 10-point capacitive touchscreen, meaning it can read where all of your fingers contact the screen at the same time. How this is useful escapes me, but it's a feature Lenovo was careful to point out. The computer-slash-tablet features are enabled by the Windows 8 operating system that will ship with the Yoga, which is expected in the second half of the year at a price of \$1,200. Also under the hood is an Intel Chief River processor, 8GB RAM and 256GB solid state drive, with a claimed battery life of eight hours. One clever feature of the Yoga's hinge is that it can hold the gadget partway open, so it can be set on a table as a display for watching videos. Like the famous dessert topping that was also a floor wax, it's hard to guess if the buying public will receive the Yoga as a clever double threat or a confused schizophrenic.

Step 5: 覆盖原文B, 回答上面3个问题。

Step 6: 总结仿真。请你对两次阅读效果及完成问题作个比较, 相信可以体验到在阅读过程中带有积极的目标主动阅读的好处了。

2. 测试阅读速度和理解力(Measuring Reading Rate and Comprehension)

了解设定积极的目标主动地阅读的好处后, 你也许会问“到底我的阅读速度和理解能力如何呢”? 现在就开始测试一下吧!

下面的练习将帮你测量目前的阅读速度和理解力, 所以请你做到以一贯的速度去阅读材料。阅读时要读懂文章主旨并掌握其细节, 读完后回答随后的问题, 同时尽可能不回看文章。练习时你需要记录下阅读的起始和结束时间(即开始时××分钟××秒, 结束时××分钟××秒, 两项相减后再换算成××分钟, 就是你的阅读时间, 例如15分15秒换算成15.25秒), 所以请准备手表一类的工具, 保证时间可精确到秒。

● 开始时间:分 ____ 秒 ____

Blood Test Diagnoses Major Depression

By Jessica Berman

Scientists have developed the first blood test to diagnose major depression. The landmark test could give psychiatrists a more objective way to identify different types of depression in their patients, and would be especially helpful in designing treatments for depression in highly-vulnerable teenagers.

The blood test is not designed to determine whether a teen is at risk for the condition or already suffers from major depression. That's something psychiatrists can do, using traditional subjective analysis, during their patients' office visits.

Rather, says Eva Redei, a professor of psychiatry at Northwestern University's Feinberg School of Medicine in Illinois, the new blood test is the first to identify the many different types of major depression, from bipolar disorder to depression driven by severe anxiety. She says this additional information can help doctors tailor therapies for each patient.

"The test probably can identify subgroups of depressed patients, which is the aim in the best treatment," Redei says.

Statistics show that depressed teenagers are at particularly high risk of suicide, so there is an urgent need for a test that can zero in on the precise nature of their depression and suggest the most appropriate treatments.

Redei had previously discovered 26 genetic markers, or substances in the blood, that appear to be elevated in depression. She says everyone has the markers, which she likens to those that indicate levels of blood sugar and cholesterol, and the depression markers can be in the normal range or elevated.

That's what Redei and her colleagues discovered in their study of blood markers in a group of 14 male and female adolescents, aged 15 to 19. They had been diagnosed with, but not yet treated for, major depression.

The study also included 14 healthy volunteers. In the blinded study - where researchers did not know which of the subjects had a mood disorder - investigators found they were able to differentiate between the two groups on the basis of 11 genetic markers in their blood.

Among depressed teens, researchers found 18 of the 26 blood markers could tell which participants had major depression and which also suffered from depression plus an anxiety disorder.

Patients with depression are treated with a variety of medications but, according to Redei, treatment is not always effective because one-size does not fit all.

"We can't choose a treatment at the moment because...we can't objectively diagnose how many kinds of depressions there are, what are the characteristics, and so on," Redei says.

The new test will enable that objective diagnosis. But Redei believes the markers she's

discovered could be just “the tip of the iceberg,” because depression is such a complex disorder. And she says further study should help scientists more precisely identify which markers are positively associated with each subtype of depression.

(459 Words)

● 结束时间: 分 ____ 秒 ____

现在计算阅读花了多长时间, 换算成以分钟为单位。用本篇文章的字数除以时间, 即得到你的阅读速度 ____ wpm (每分钟阅读字数/速度)

● 接着完成理解能力的测试, 请回答下面10道选择题(尽量不要回看文章):

1. According to the new research, why is the blood test helpful in diagnose major depression?
 - A. It can determine whether a teen is at risk for the condition or already suffers from major depression.
 - B. It is a therapy for relieving the depression.
 - C. It is a more objective way to identify different types of depression.
 - D. It is a special treatment for depression.
2. The researcher in psychiatry at Northwestern University's Feinberg School of Medicine in Illinois, discovered ____ genetic markers, which appear to be elevated in depression.
 - A. 11
 - B. 26
 - C. 18
 - D. 14
3. Statistics show that depressed teenagers _____.
 - A. are at particularly high risk of suicide
 - B. need the most appropriate treatments
 - C. tend to leave home and live alone
 - D. are more vulnerable than adults
4. In the blinded study of Redei and her colleagues, a group of 14 adolescents diagnosed with major depression and a group of 14 healthy volunteers _____.
 - A. can only be differentiated using traditional subjective analysis, during their patients' office visits
 - B. can be differentiated on the basis of 11 genetic markers in their blood
 - C. both had a mood disorder
 - D. had a similar 11 genetic markers in their blood
5. In the study, researchers found ____ among depressed teens.
 - A. a variety of medications should be applied
 - B. 18 of the 26 blood markers could be used to distinguish major depression and depression plus an anxiety disorder
 - C. they can objectively diagnose all kinds of depressions and clarify their characteristics
 - D. 11 of the 26 blood markers were helpful to differentiate variant depressions

6. Redei believes ____.
- A. they can objectively diagnose how many kinds of depressions there are, what are the characteristics, and so on
 - B. the markers she's discovered could be just "the tip of the iceberg," because depression is such a complex disorder
 - C. they have identified which markers are positively associated with each subtype of depression
 - D. the markers can be repaired to cure the different depression
7. According to this article, which statement in the following is not correct?
- A. The new blood test is the first to identify the many different types of major depression.
 - B. Everyone has the markers, the depression markers can be in the normal range or elevated.
 - C. Researchers found 18 of the 26 blood markers could tell which participants had major depression and which also suffered from depression plus an anxiety disorder.
 - D. Current study can help scientists precisely identify which markers are positively associated with each subtype of depression.
8. Blood test is mainly designed to ____.
- A. determine whether a teen is at risk of suicide
 - B. to identify the many different types of major depression, from bipolar disorder to depression driven by severe anxiety
 - C. distinguish the patient of major depression and the healthy person
 - D. be the most appropriate treatments for depressed teenagers
9. Which of the following is not the achievement of Redei?
- A. The new blood test is the first to identify the many different types of major depression.
 - B. 26 genetic markers, or substances were discovered in the blood, which appear to be elevated in depression.
 - C. A treatment can be chosen for different kind of depression.
 - D. 11 genetic markers are found helpful to differentiate the patient in major depression and the healthy person.
10. What is the main idea of this article?
- A. Blood test diagnosing major depression could be especially helpful in designing treatments for teens.
 - B. It is important to objectively diagnose how many kinds of depressions there are, what are the characteristics, and so on.
 - C. In order to suggest the most appropriate treatments doctors must precisely identify which markers are positively associated with each subtype of depression.
 - D. Patients with depression are treated with a variety of medications, but treatment is not always effective because one-size does not fit all.

正确答案:

1. C 2. B 3. A 4. B 5. B 6. B 7. D 8. B 9. C 10. A

● 计算你的理解正确率 Test Score: _____ %

现在,你应该知道自己的阅读速度和理解力情况了,以下的章节将从不同方面进一步介绍英语阅读,帮助你提高阅读的速度和理解能力。

3. 不良的阅读习惯(Bad Reading Habits)

不良的阅读习惯往往让你的阅读效果事倍功半,因此应该找出它们并尽量克服:

1) 发音(Vocalization)

很多人错误地认为阅读是由眼睛的“阅”和嘴巴的“读”组成的,常常边看文章边读出来。其实,发音阅读会大大地降低阅读的理解和速度。为了配合嘴巴出声,眼睛不能完全发挥其扫视的运动,因而速度也会变慢。对于任何读者来说都应克服边看边读出声的不良习惯。

2) 潜在发音(Sub-Vocalization)

在心里默读文章是一种潜在发音,你也许会自然而然产生这种不良倾向。潜在发音使你注意力分散,表面上像是正常的阅读,但是你可能不自觉地默读某个单词、某句话等,这样就破坏了阅读的速度和效果。在分析自己的阅读习惯时,你要判断是不是有这种潜在发音的做法,提醒自己不要在心里默读材料。

3) 头部摆动(Head Movement)

中国古代的读书人读起书来常摇头晃脑。现在有些人在阅读英语材料时也喜欢随视线的移动而摆动头部。这是一个常见却又不必要的小动作,它同样会影响你的阅读速度和效果。所以,在阅读时只运动你的眼睛就够了。

4) 复读(Regression Reading)

当遇到陌生的单词和有难度的句子、段落时,很多读者爱把它们重复读一遍或两遍,甚至多遍,打断了正常的阅读节奏。阅读时过分地关注一些难懂的语言知识同样会阻碍你的阅读速度和效果。语言在语境中能产生细微的差异,脱离整体的语境单独地理解语言中各个字、词、句、段不是有效阅读所应该提倡的方法。当你遇到不熟悉的语言知识时,可以暂时跳过继续读下面的内容。阅读中可运用推断、比较、分析等方法从上下文中获得帮助,从而增强你的理解能力。

5) 潜在翻译(Sub-Translating)

潜在翻译是指读者在阅读时把读到的外语文字翻译成母语以帮助理解。实际上,英语和汉语属于不同的语系,它们在文化习俗、生活习惯以及语言表达上存在着很大差距。因此,要把一篇英语阅读材料在短时间内对等地翻译成中文对你来说是一件出力不讨好的事。假如你把读到的每个句子都翻译成中文来理解的话,阅读速度一定会变慢。

6) 频繁停顿(Frequent Intervals)

在阅读时你应该保持注意力的集中,一气呵成完成整个阅读过程。有些读者做些习惯性的小动作分散了注意力,有些读者喜欢中断阅读过程,过多地分析段落、句子、语法等,还有些读者阅读的时候不时地去查阅词典,这些频繁停顿都让阅读无法连贯地进行下去及达

到最好的效果。

为了达到良好的阅读效果,你可以分析自己的阅读习惯,对照如上列出的不良习惯加以改正。

4. 训练眼睛的移动(Training Eye Movement)

一般的阅读过程是由眼睛摄取到信息,通过大脑对摄入的信息进行解码和整理,最后获得信息的细节和意义。那么,能有效地使用眼睛来摄入信息就是你实现良好阅读效果的关键。

眼睛摄入信息时,最佳的移动方式是由上到下垂直型(请参照图2)。这种移动方式不论在眼睛移动的速度上还是灵活度上都很好。由上到下垂直地阅读就是扩大眼睛扫视的范围,把目光主要停留在中间部分,由上到下垂直移动进行阅读,每行文字的左右两端可以各留出2-3厘米,利用余光快速地扫视它们。眼睛移动的能力可以训练,加快自己的阅读速度。一开始可以选择较窄短的材料(如报纸、杂志中非整幅的文章)训练自己眼睛从上到下垂直扫视的感觉,培养这样阅读的习惯,最大限度地发挥垂直和水平边缘视觉能力,使看清的字数和行数逐渐增多,速度增快。

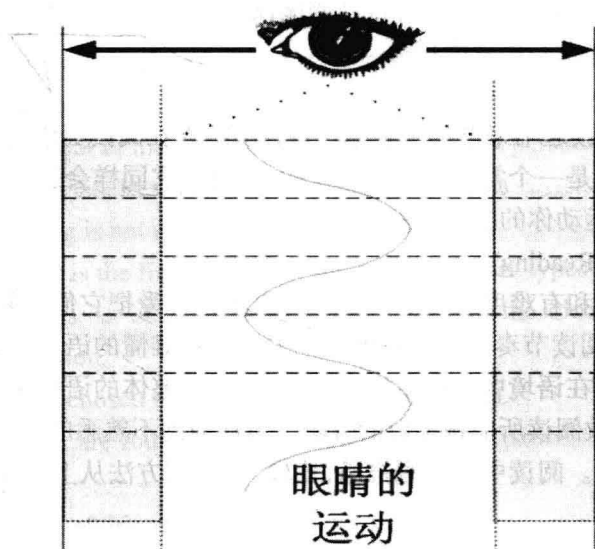



图 2

Exercise 2

请用由上到下垂直型眼睛移动方式快速阅读下文,其中左、右两侧2厘米的阴影部分用眼睛的余光扫视,然后完成问题。



We can not feel speed. But our senses let us know that we are moving. We see things moving past us and feel that we are being shaken.

We can feel acceleration, an increase in speed. But we notice it for only a short time. For instance, we feel it during the takeoff run of an airliner.

We feel the plane's acceleration because our bodies do not gain speed as fast as the plane does. It seems that something is pushing us back against the seat.

Actually, our bodies are trying to stay in the same places, while the plane is carrying us forward.

Soon the plane reaches a steady speed. Then, because there is no longer any change in speed, the feeling of forward motion stops.

眼睛的运动

Question 1: We can tell that we are moving by _____.

- a. watching things moving past
- b. feeling the speed
- c. feeling ourselves being shaken
- d. both a and c

Question 2: Acceleration means _____.

- a. an increase in speed
- b. a steady speed
- c. any kind of movement
- d. the movement of a plane

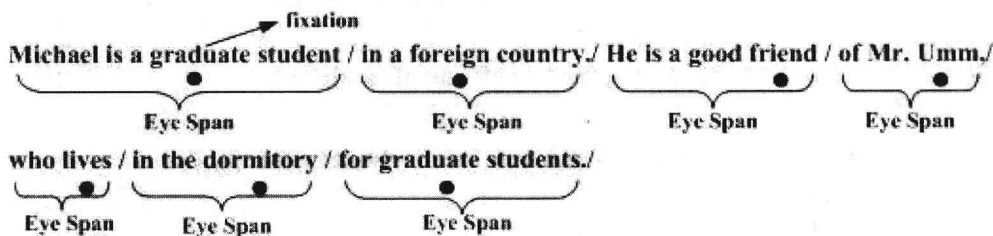
Question 3: We feel the plane's acceleration because our bodies gain speed _____.

- a. just as fast as the plane
- b. faster than the plane
- c. more slowly than the plane
- d. before the plane

Key: 1. d 2. a 3. c

5. 协调的注视节奏(Harmonious Fixation)

优秀的阅读者可以像个演奏家演奏音乐一样,有节奏、有重心地阅读。前面说过的眼睛扫视范围是眼睛的识别幅(eye span),识别幅越宽,阅读速度就越快,反之亦然。而和识别幅关系紧密的是眼睛的注视点(fixation)——眼睛在摄入信息时最终聚焦的位置。你可以确定一定长度以内的由3-4个词组成的语言意群作为一个识别幅,像词组 in the afternoon, write in English, be widely accepted, people all support that;同时把眼睛的注视点放在当中某一个关键词上(如 afternoon, English, accepted, support)。下面以一个长句为例:



Exercise

请你划分短文意群,尝试确定每个意群的关键词,即注视点(fixation)。

Michael is a graduate student in a foreign country. He is a good friend of Mr. Umm, who lives in the dormitory for graduate students. They share a similar sense of humor and enjoy many activities together. Since Michael is interested in architecture, Mr. Umm decides that it would be a good idea for Michael to meet his older friend Mr. Smith, a professor of design at the university. First he tells Michael all about Mr. Smith's architectural research. As it turns out, Mr. Smith's research is exactly what Michael needs for his thesis. Michael is so excited that the next day he goes directly to Mr. Smith's office, introduces himself, and briefly mentions Mr. Umm's name. The two men spend several hours discussing their research ideas. That evening Michael tells Mr. Umm how much he enjoyed meeting Mr. Smith. Mr. Umm reacts very coldly. His serious tone tells Michael that something is wrong, but Michael has no idea what the problem might be.

Reference Key:

Michael is a graduate student / in a foreign country. / He is a good friend / of Mr. Umm, /
 who lives / in the dormitory / for graduate students. / They share / a similar sense of humor /
 and enjoy / many activities together. / Since Michael is interested / in architecture, /
 Mr. Umm decides / that it would be a good idea / for Michael to meet / his older friend Mr. Smith, /
 a professor of design / at the university. / First he tells Michael / all about Mr. Smith's /
 architectural research. / As it turns out, / Mr. Smith's research is / exactly what Michael needs /
 for his thesis. / Michael is so excited / that the next day / he goes directly / to Mr. Smith's office, /
 introduces himself, / and briefly mentions / Mr. Umm's name. / The two men /
 spend several hours / discussing their research ideas. / That evening / Michael tells Mr. Umm /
 how much he enjoyed / meeting Mr. Smith. / Mr. Umm reacts very coldly. /
 His serious tone tells Michael / that something is wrong, / but Michael has no idea /
 what the problem might be.

6. 浏览:确定文章的体裁 (Skimming for Types of Writing)

Skimming, 略读, 又称跳读或浏览。它要求读者的目光根据所需扫视有关的词, 跳过某些不必要的细节, 有选择地进行阅读, 从而抓住文章的大概, 迅速地获取文章的大意或主题思想和整体的行文结构。

文章的体裁不同, 其结构特点就会各异。同时, 不同文体阅读要求与方法不尽相同。因此, 读者准确、快速定位要找的信息最有效的方法之一就是首先确定文章的体裁。一旦确定了文章的体裁, 读者就能根据存储于大脑中相关的体裁知识, 预测文章的行文趋势。

英语文章的体裁主要有三类: 记叙文、说明文和议论文。本单元首先介绍如何通过略读确定文章的体裁。

文章的标题一定程度上能够反映文章的体裁, 因此通过标题, 读者可以分析判断出文章的体裁。

请看下面几篇文章的标题:

- (1) Differences in Wedding Attire between China and America
- (2) The Biological Clock
- (3) The Gratitude We Need
- (4) Individuals Should Pay for Their Higher Education

(5) My First Job

(6) A Miserable, Merry Christmas

标题(1)和(2)不仅给出了文章的关键词,而且表明了文章的体裁是说明文。标题(3)和(4)是具有典型的议论文的标题特点,同时也表明了文章的论点。(5)和(6)的标题是我的第一份工作和一个既悲惨又快乐的圣诞节,因此文章的体裁属于记叙文。

练习: 根据标题,请判断下列文章属于哪类体裁

(1) American Kids' Leisure Time

(2) Thinking: A Neglected Art

(3) Animal Language

(4) A Difficult Interview

(5) Intelligent Children Should be Taught Separately and Given Special Treatment

(6) My Childhood in an Indian Village

(7) The United Nations: The World in One Building

(8) A Brave Man

(9) Human's Seven Gifts Given by Nature

(10) Honesty: Is It Going to out of Style

答案: (1)、(3)、(7)和(9)是说明文; (2)、(5)和(10)是议论文; (4)、(6)和(8)是记叙文。

除了根据标题判断文章的体裁外,读者还可以根据首段原则和首尾句原则来了解作者的思路,确定文章的体裁。通常文章开头段大致包含了文章的大意、背景情况、作者的文章风格、口吻或语气等。另外,据统计,大约有80%的主题句是段落的首句,其余20%左右的是尾句,所以,读者还可以通过阅读文章开头段以及中间段的首句或尾句来确定文章的体裁。

请看下文:

Sport is not only physically challenging, but it can also be mentally challenging. Criticism from coaches, parents, and other teammates, as well as pressure to win can create an excessive amount of anxiety or stress for young athletes. Stress can be physical, emotional, or psychological, and research has indicated that it can lead to burnout. Burnout has been described as dropping or quitting of an activity that was at one time enjoyable.

Coaches and parents should be cautious that sport participation does not become work for children. The outcome of the game should not be more important than the process of learning the sport and other life lessons. In today's youth sport setting, young athletes may be worrying more about who will win instead of enjoying themselves and the sport. Following a game, many parents and coaches focus on the outcome and find fault with youngsters' performances.

The early years of development are critical years for learning about oneself. The sport setting is one where valuable experiences can take place. Young athletes can, for example, learn how to cooperate with others, make friends, and gain other social skills that will be used

throughout their lives. Coaches and parents should be aware, at all times, that their feedback to youngsters can greatly affect their children. Youngsters may take their parents' and coaches' criticisms to heart and find flaws(缺陷)in themselves.

Research indicates that positive reinforcement motivates have a greater effect on learning than criticism. So, positive reinforcement(正面强化)should be provided regardless of the outcome while criticism can create high levels of stress, which can lead to burnout.

在文章的首段,作者明确表明了自己的观点:“Sport is not only physically challenging, but it can also be mentally challenging.”第二段的尾句:“Following a game, many parents and coaches focus on the outcome and find fault with youngsters' performances.”和第三段的尾句“‘Youngsters may take their parents' and coaches' criticisms to heart and find flaws(缺陷)in themselves.”作者论及父母、教练的批评对年轻运动员所产生的压力,以此论证了他的观点。在文章的结尾段“‘So, positive reinforcement(正面强化)should be provided regardless of the outcome while criticism can create high levels of stress, which can lead to burnout.”作者建议父母和教练应给予孩子们更多的正面强化教育。根据文章的首尾段和中间段的首句或尾句,读者就可以判断出这篇文章的体裁为议论文。

练习一 根据给出的文章首段和中间段的首句或尾句判断文章的体裁

Boys' schools are the perfect place to teach young men to express their emotions and are more likely to get involved in activities such as art, dance and music, according to research released today.

Boys at single sex schools were said to be more likely to get involved in cultural and artistic activities that helped develop their emotional expressiveness, rather than feeling they had to conform to the “boy code” of hiding their emotions to be a “real man”.

“Also, in single sex schools teachers are able to tailor lessons to boys' learning style, letting them move around the classroom and getting them to compete in teams to prevent boredom”, wrote the study's author, education expert Abigail James, of the University of Virginia. Teachers could encourage boys to enjoy reading and writing with specifically “boy-focused” approaches such as themes and characters that appeal to them. Boys in boys' schools “loved” to pen verse because they enjoyed the “inherent structure in poems”, James said. Because, the researchers say, boys generally have better spatial skills, more acute vision, learn best through touch, and are more impulsive and more physically active; they need to be given “hands-on” lessons where they are allowed to walk around, with this natural impulse not seen as disruptive. “Boys in mixed schools view classical music as feminine and prefer the modern genre in which violence and sexism are major themes,” James wrote.

Single sex education made it less likely that boys would feel they had to conform to a stereotype gained from the media by girls that men should be “masterful and in charge” in relationships. “In the present sexualized atmosphere prevalent in mixed schools, boys feel coerced into acting like men before they understand themselves”.