

大学英语考级丛书

丛书主编 李建波 金光辉

大学英语四级

阅读精讲

秦 飞 主编

COLLEGE
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华东理工大学出版社

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前 言

●《大学英语教学大纲》与英语阅读能力

1999年5月,教育部高教司下发了关于印发《大学英语教学大纲(修订本)》的通知。修订后的大纲对大学英语教学目的作了明确的阐述:培养学生较强的阅读能力,一定的听、说、写、译能力。由此可以看出,在大学英语教学中,阅读能力仍然是第一层次的要求。这是因为尽管目前对听、说的要求相当强烈,读仍被认为是一项十分重要的技能。阅读能力仍然是大部分大学生今后工作所需的主要技能,阅读是掌握语言知识、获取信息、提高听说写译能力的基础。修订后的大纲要求四级水平的学生能读懂语言难度中等的一般性题材的文章,一般阅读速度达到每分钟70词,快速阅读速度达到每分钟100词;并且能掌握基本的阅读技能。关于阅读技能,大纲附表四中列出了十一项,主要包括:理解主题和中心思想;辨认主题展开的重要细节;区分事实和看法;进行推论;作总结;略读以获取阅读材料大意;快速查找特定信息;猜测生词的词义;利用上下文猜测短语的含义;理解句内关系;利用参阅的技能。

●本书编写说明

在日常教学过程中,经常有学生询问怎样才能提高英语阅读能力,同时我们也注意到许多学生在参加英语四、六级考试时在阅读方面困难较大。我们走了许多书店,希望能给学生提供几本合适的阅读方面的参考书,发现市面上有关阅读方面的参考书不外乎两种类型,往往不是阅读技能训练就是阅读题集。适逢新大纲出笼,笔者仔细研读大纲,觉得目前学生应该有一本既有一定的基本知识又有一定的示范讲解、既能促进平时学习又对复习应考有

所帮助的阅读辅助书籍。本着这样一个指导思想,我们构思了现在的《大学英语四级阅读精讲》。本书不同于一般的阅读参考书,本书重在讲、重在指导、重在启发。本书具有以下三个特色:(1)体现了英语语言教学研究的最新成果,我们充分尊重学习者的主观能动性、尊重语言学习的自身规律,坚持学习归根结底是学习者自身的原则。(2)体现了《大学英语教学大纲(修订本)》的基本精神,从语篇的角度讨论英语阅读。(3)体现了针对大学英语四级考试的原则。本书的主要服务对象是要参加大学英语四级考试的同学,我们在编写的时候注意到了对四级考试的针对性,虽然如此,本书也可以作为一般英语学习者英语阅读方面的学习参考书。

编者

2001年9月

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第一章 大学英语四级阅读部分 试题题型解析

全国大学外语指导委员会于 1984 年审定的《大学英语教学大纲》中明确指出：“大学英语的教学目的是培养学生具有较强的阅读能力、一定的听和译的能力，以及初步的写和说的能力，使学生能以英语为工具，获取专业所需的信息，并为进一步提高英语水平打下较好的基础。”而新近出台的《大学英语教学大纲》(修订本)中强调指出：“大学英语的教学目的是培养学生具有较强的阅读能力，一定的听、说、写、译能力，使他们能以英语为工具交流信息。”二个大纲都把培养学生的阅读能力放在大学英语教学目标的首位，而对于阅读能力的具体要求，原大纲指出：“学生学完四级英语后，应该能顺利阅读并正确理解难度中等的一般题材的文章和科普、科技读物，阅读速度达到每分钟 50 词，阅读难度略低，生词不超过总词数 3% 的材料时，阅读速度达每分钟 80 词，理解的准确率以 70% 为合格。”新大纲则规定：“能顺利阅读语言难度中等的一般性题材的文章，掌握中心大意以及证明中心大意的事实及细节，并能进行一定的分析、推理和判断，领会作者的观点和态度，阅读速度达到每分钟 70 词，在阅读篇幅较长、难度略低、生词不超过 3% 的材料时，能掌握中心大意，抓住主要事实和有关细节，阅读速度达到每分钟 100 词。”显而易见，无论在阅读难度及速度上，新大纲较原大纲都有所提高，这一点值得我们关注。

大学英语四、六级考试中阅读理解题占 40%，得分权居所有考题首位，这充分体现了阅读能力在大学英语等级考试中的地位。

而这部分试题主要测试学生通过英语阅读获取信息的能力,要有一定的准确度,又要有一定的速度,具体说来,主要考察以下几个方面的能力:

- 1) 掌握所读材料的主旨和大意;
- 2) 了解说明主旨和大意的事实和细节;
- 3) 既能理解字面意思,也能根据所读材料进行一定的判断和推理;
- 4) 既能理解个别句子的意义,也能理解上下文的逻辑关系。

下面我们就从这四个方面对大学英语四、六级考试中阅读试题的题型作一些分析和说明。

第一节 掌握所读材料的主旨和大意

明确一篇文章的中心思想是阅读理解考察的重点之一。任何一篇文章的中心思想是通过该文章的各个组成部分以及其内在联系反映出来的。因而这种类型的问题重要考察的是考生对于全文的理解、分析、把握和归纳能力。其主要提问方式如下:

- 1) The main idea/point/subject of the passage is...
- 2) The passage is mainly about...
- 3) The best title for the passage is...
- 4) The passage could be entitled...
- 5) A suitable title for the passage could be...
- 6) The best summary of this passage is...
- 7) The key point/main purpose of the passage is...
- 8) The article was written to explain...
- 9) What is the author trying to tell us?
- 10) The author's main purpose in writing the passage is...
- 11) Which of the following is the major point of the passage?

- 12) Which of the following best states the theme of this passage?
- 13) The passage mainly discussed. . .
- 14) In the passage, the author is primarily concerned with. . .
- 15) What topic is treated in this passage?

如上所示,此类问题中常常含有 main, key, primary, central, principal 等一类表示基本的、或主要的词汇,以及 idea, theme, point, title, topic 等表示观念、主题、中心等词汇。通过此类词汇考生能够较为顺利和准确地辨认这种题型。在解题过程中我们应当着重注意抓住主题句。文章的中心思想是作者行文的核心,为了让读者能够直接把握文章的中心内容,作者通常会采取运用主题句(topic sentence)的写作手法,即通过一句或数句话来直接表达主题。主题句相对于其他句子来说,结构简约,意思明确,一般不采取长句,难句的形式,而文章或段落中的其他句子或句群多用来对该主题句进行支持拓展,详细阐述,这些句子被称为阐述句(supporting sentences)。解决主题问题的有效途径就是识别主题句。

主题句因作者写作手法的不同而处于文章或段落中的不同位置。在一般的演绎性文章中,作者通常开章明义,即一开始就明确文章的中心思想,然后围绕这个中心进行详细阐述。这样的文章或段落中主题句通常位于篇首。而在归纳性的文章中,作者一般采用引题→论述→总结的写作手法,此时,主题句常常位于文章或段落的末尾以加强其归纳作用和文章的说服力。也有的作者会采取首先引题,接着阐明中心,再进行详细论述的写作手法,在这样的文章或段落中,会有一些陈述性的句子以引出主题句,而且主题句后还会有一些句子进一步铺叙或重申主题。然而,应当注意的是,并不是所有的文章或段落中都存在明确清晰的主题句,有的作者会将其中心思想自然地分布于或融入文章的大量事实和细节中,遇到这类文章或段落,考生切忌生搬硬套,盲目寻找主题句,而应该从作者阐述的事实和细节中去领会和归纳文章或段落的中心

思想。

例一 (2000年1月四级试题阅读理解第二篇)

Believe it or not, optical illusion can cut highway crashes.

Japan is a case in point. It has reduced automobile crashes on some roads by nearly 75 percent using a simple optical illusion. Bent strips, called chevrons, painted on the roads make drivers think that they are driving faster than they really are, and thus drivers slow down.

Now the American Automobile Association Foundations for Traffic Safety in Washington D. C is planning to repeat Japan's success. Starting next year, the foundation will paint chevrons and patterns of stripes on selected roads around the country to test how well the patterns reduce highway crashes.

Excessive speed plays a major role in as much as one fifty of all fatal traffic accidents, according to the foundation. To help reduce those accidents, the foundation will conduct its test in area where speed-related hazards are the greatest—curves, exist slopes, traffic circles, and bridges.

Some studies suggest that straight, horizontal bars painted across roads can initially cut the average speed of drivers in half. However, traffic often return to full speed within months as drivers become used to seeing the painted bars.

Chervons, scientists say, not only give drivers the impression that they are driving faster than they really are but also make a lane appear to be narrower. The result is a longer lasting reduction of highway speed and the number of traffic accidents.

The passage mainly discusses ____.

A. a new way of high-speed control

- B. a new pattern for painting highways
- C. a new approach to training drivers
- D. a new type of optical illusion

[解析]

本文是典型的开宗明义的主题思想类题型。文章第一段就点明了全文的主题,即利用视觉上的幻像以降低高速公路上的车祸。紧接着文章就以日本为例,说明在高速公路路面图画上“人字形”图案,通过视觉幻像来使司机减速,从而减少事故发生的几率,美国也准备仿效,然后作者通过与各种图案进行比较,指出“人字型”图案在控制车速,降低车祸方面的效果最好。因而 A 项符合文章大意。因为文章的主题并不是讨论如何在高速公路上进行漆涂,所以 B 项不正确;而 C 项“训练驾驶员的新方法”显然与文章意思不符;D 项“一种新型的视觉幻像”与文章意思也不符合。

例二 (1995 年 1 月四级试题阅读理解第三篇)

Most people would agree that, although our age exceeds all previous ages in knowledge, there has been no corresponding increase in wisdom, But agreement ceases as soon as we attempt to define “wisdom” and consider means of promoting it.

There are several factors that contribute to wisdom. Of these I should put first a sense of promotion: the capacity to take account of all the important factors in a problem and to attach each its due weight. This has become more difficult than it used to be owing to the extent and complexity of the special knowledge required of various kinds of technicians. Suppose, for example, that you are engaged in research in scientific medicine. The work is difficult and is likely to absorb the whole of your mind. You have no time to consider the effect that your discoveries or inventions may have outside the field of medicine. You succeed (let us say) as modern medicine has succeed, in enormously lowering the infant death rate, not only in Europe and America, but also in Asia and Africa. This has

the entirely unintended result of making the food supply inadequate and lowering the standard of life in the parts of the world that have greatest population. To take an even more dramatic example, which is in everybody's mind at the present time: you study the make-up of the atom from a disinterested desire for knowledge, and by chance place in hands of a powerful mad man the means of destroying the human race.

Therefore, with every increase of knowledge and skill, wisdom becomes more necessary, for every increase augments our capacity for realizing our purposes, and therefore augments our capacity of evil, if our purposes are unwise.

What's the main idea of the passage?

- A. It is unwise to place the results of scientific research in the hands of a powerful mad man.
- B. The more knowledge one has, the wiser one becomes.
- C. Any increase of knowledge could lead to disastrous results without the guidance of wisdom.
- D. Wisdom increases in proportion to one's age.

[解析]

本篇文章中的主题句位于文章的结尾处。本文首先指出,我们的智慧并没有随着我们所拥有的知识的突飞猛进的发展而得到相应的发展。然后,作者进行举例论述:医疗科学的发展降低了婴儿出生死亡率,但也意外地造成了世界上许多人口众多地区的食品短缺和生活水平下降;通过对原子构造的研究我们获取了相关的知识,然而也意外地获得了灭亡人类自身的手段。文章在最后一段作了有力的总结,从而引出了主题:with every increase of knowledge and skill, wisdom becomes more necessary, for every increase augments our capacity for realizing our purposes, and therefore augments our capacity of evil, if our purposes are unwise.(如果我们的目的是不明智的,那么随着我们实现自己目标能力的增强,造就邪恶的能力也随之增强,此时,智慧就显得尤其必要。)

选项 C any increase of knowledge could lead to disastrous results without the guidance of wisdom(没有智慧的引导,任何知识的增加都可能带来灾难性的结果。)正是表达了这一观点,所以 C 是正确答案。选项 A 只是作者用于论证观点的一个反面例子。选项 B 明显与作者观点相悖。而选项 D 所持观点,文章并未涉及。

第二节 辨事实细节

作者常常会运用大量的事实和细节来围绕着文章的中心思想进行阐述和论证。从而为此类题型提供了丰富的命题内容和广阔的命题空间。而对于广大考生来说,就需要在牢牢把握文章主题思想的基础上,能够根据要求迅速、准确地查找出特定的事实或细节。要求考生查找的事实或细节通常以各种形式存在于文章之中,然而值得注意的是,命题者一般不会直接采用原文内容来表述问题,而会运用一些同义的或近义的表达方式来进行提问。所以考生切忌盲目寻找,而应当在理解全文的基础上有针对性地进行查找,而且在阅读过程中对于一些涉及到 who(何人), what(何事), when(何时), where(何地), how(怎样), why(为何)等常考的细节内容进行适当的标记,以利于解题时迅速、准确地查找。另外,在平时阅读过程中注意培养自己的扫读(scanning)能力也会对解题起到巨大作用。辨事实细节类题型的常见提问方式如下:

- 1) Which of the following statement is true?
- 2) Which of the following statement is NOT true?
- 3) Which of the following statement is NOT mentioned in the text?
- 4) The statement made by the author are based on the evidence / example / fact that _____.
- 5) According to the author, who / what / when / where / which / why / how... ?

6) The author states all of the following EXCEPT . . .

如上所述,问题中有时含有 NOT, EXCEPT, BUT 等表示否定、排除等意义的词语,需要进行逆向思维。因此考生一定要保持思维清晰,认真审题,紧扣题义答题,不宜匆忙武断。

例一 (2000年1月四级试题阅读理解第一篇)

Unless we spend money to spot and prevent asteroids now, one might crash into Earth and destroy life as we know it, say some scientists.

Asteroids are bigger versions of the meteoroids that race across the night sky. Most orbit sun far from and don't threaten us. But there are also thousands of asteroids whose orbits put them on a collision course with Earth.

Buy \$ 50 million worth of new telescopes right now. Then spend \$ 10 millions a year for the next 25 years to locate most of the space rocks. By the time we spot a fatal one, the scientists say, we'll have a way to change its course.

Some scientists favor pushing asteroids off course with nuclear weapons. But the cost wouldn't be cheap.

Is it worth it? Two things experts consider when judging any risk are: 1) How likely the event is; and 2) How bad the consequences if the event occurs. Experts think an asteroid big enough to destroy lots of life might strike Earth every 500,000 years. Sounds pretty rare—but if one did fall, it would be the end of the world. “If we don't take care of these big asteroids, they'll take care of us,” says one scientist “It's that simple.”

The cure, though, might be worse than the disease. Do we really want fleets of nuclear weapons sitting around on Earth? “The world has less to fear from doomsday rocks than from a great nuclear fleet set against

them," said a New York Time article.

What does the passage say about asteroids and meteoroids?

- A. They are heavenly bodies different in composition.
- B. They are heavenly bodies similar in nature.
- C. They are more asteroids than meteoroids.
- D. Asteroids are more mysterious than meteoroids.

[解析]

本题是典型的涉及文章具体细节类的题目,询问的是小行星和流星之间的关系。根据文章第二段开头第一句:Asteroids are bigger versions of the meteoroids that race across the night sky.可知,小行星和流星是本质相近的天体,区别只在于大小的不同,因此 B 选项:They are heavenly bodies similar in nature. (它们是本质相似的天体。)符合题义。A 选项:They are heavenly bodies different in composition. (它们是构造不同的天体。),而文章并未涉及小行星和流星的构造问题;C 选项:文章并未就小行星和流星的数量多少进行比较;D 选项:关于小行星和流星那种天体更加神秘文章中也没有提及。

例二 (1996年6月四级试题阅读理解第一篇)

Exchange a glance with someone, and then look away. Do you realize that you have made a statement? Hold the glance for a second longer, and the meaning has changed again. For every social situation, there is a permissible time that you can hold a person's gaze without being intimate, rude, or aggressive. If you are in an elevator, what gaze time are you permitted? To answer this question, consider what you typically do. You very likely give other passengers a quick glance to size them up and to assure you mean no threat. Since being close to the another person signals the possibility of interaction, you need to emit a signal telling others you want to be left alone. So you cut off eye contact, what sociologist Erving Goffman (1963) calls "a dimming of the lights" You look down at

the floor, at the indicator lights, anywhere but into another passenger's eyes. Should you break the rule against staring at a stranger on a elevator, you will make the other person exceedingly uncomfortable, and you are likely to feel a bit strange yourself.

If you hold eye contact for more than 3 seconds, what are you telling another person? Much depend on the person and situation. For instance, a man and a woman communicate interest in this manner. They typically gaze at each other for about 3 seconds at a time, and then drop their eyes down for 3 seconds, before letting their eyes meet again. But if one man gives another man a 3-second-plus stare, he signals, "I know you", "I am interested in you," or "You look peculiar and I am curious about you." This type of stare often produces hostile feelings.

If you want to be left alone on a elevator, the best thing to do is _____.

- A. to look into another passenger's eyes
- B. to avoid eye contact with other passenger
- C. to signal you are not a threat to anyone
- D. to keep a distance from other passengers

[解析]

本题考察的是对文章具体细节的把握。如果你在电梯里不想被别人打扰,那么最好_____。答案存在于第一段中:Since being close to the another person signals the possibility of interaction, you need to emit a signal telling others you want to be left alone . So you cut off eye contact , what sociologist Erving Goffman (1963) calls "a dimming of the lights" . You look down at the floor, at the indicator lights , anywhere but into another passenger's eyes.从这几句话中我们不难看出,如果想不被别人打扰就切断("cut off")与别人的目光交流,其意正好与 B 选项(避免与别人的目光交流)相符,所以 B 选项为正确答案。A 选项与事实恰恰相反;C 选项表义不确切,与本题关系不大;D 选项文章中并没有提及。