

● 沈素萍 总主编 高云智 总策划

大学英语



阶梯阅读训练

College English
Reading Comprehension

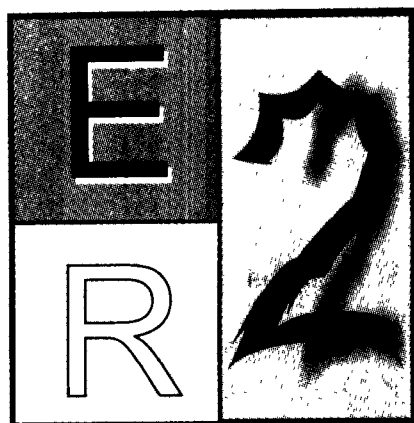
主编 马莹辉



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前 言

为了帮助学生更多地掌握一些英语阅读的素材,我们根据教育部最新修订的《大学英语教学大纲》,编写了这套英语泛读教材。

本套书共分4册,每册收录35~45篇文章。全套书配合英语分级考试以及大学英语四、六级的新题型,每课包括课文、生词和短语、课文注释及阅读理解、难句翻译、简短回答问题等内容。每册书为一级,共四级,适用于具有5000单词量以上的学生使用。

该书的特点是:

1. 内容新颖,题材多样。富有现代生活气息,介绍英美国家的风景名胜、社会现状、传奇故事、寓言故事、体育赛事、科技知识、名人轶事、文化教育、时事报道等内容。希望学生在学习语言的同时获得新信息和西方文化背景知识。

2. 幽默趣味,可读性强。选材注重内容生动活泼,能提高阅读的轻松感,降低学习压力。

3. 语言地道,原汁原味。文章皆选自近几年来有较大影响的国外期刊、书报,语言的规范性强,又体现了现代英语的新发展。

4. 循序渐进,难度适宜。同级各课的难度大体相当,学生可以通读全书,亦可选读部分课文。每册书的难易程度与英语分级考试相关性强。练习答案附在课后,以便读者自测阅读效率。

目前,全国尚缺少能全面地配合分级考试的泛读教材。为落实教学大纲的新精神,对外经济贸易大学一线英语教师编写了这套教材,并充分考虑到对于自学者的适用性。

由于编者水平有限,至于书中存在的缺点和错误,还希望广大读者予以批评、指正。

编 者

2001年7月于北京

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Unit 1

Welcome to Our Bank

Warm-up:

1. What banks do you think tend to become the targets of robbers?
2. How can a bank avoid being robbed? Give your ideas.

"I wish Central Bank would be robbed," George Pickens said to himself. He had been making this wish daily from the time he had started work as a teller^[1] at the bank.

"All over the country banks were being robbed," George thought sourly^[2]. "Why not this bank? Were robbers scornful^[3] of its four-million-dollar capital? (1) Were they afraid of Mr. Ackerman, the old bank guard, who hadn't pulled out his gun in twenty-two years?

Of course, George had a reason for wanting the bank to be robbed. After all, he couldn't simply take the thick bundles^[4] of bills that were under his hands all day long. So he had thought of another way to get them.

One morning George entered the bank feeling something was about to happen. "Good morning. Mr. Burrows," he said cheerfully. The bank president muttered^[5] something and went into his office.

At two o'clock Bank Robber walked in. George knew he was a bank robber. For one thing, he slunk^[6] in. For another thing, he wore a mask.

"This is a holdup^[7]," the man said roughly^[8]. He took a pistol^[9] from his pocket. The guard made a small sound. "You," the bank robber said, "lie down on the floor." Mr. Ackerman lay down. The robber stepped over to George's cage^[10].

"All right," he said. "Hand it over." George reached into his cashbox^[11] and took all the bills from the top section^[12] — close to six thousand dollars. He passed them through the window. The robber

WORDS AND EXPRESSIONS

1. teller *n.* 银行出纳
2. sourly *ad.* 失望地
3. scornful *a.* 蔑视的
4. bundle *n.* 捆, 束
5. mutter *v.* 低声说
6. slink *v.* 潜行, 溜走
7. holdup *n.* 抢劫
8. roughly *ad.* 粗暴地
9. pistol *n.* 手枪
10. cage *n.* 笼子, 窗口
11. cash box *n.* 现金盒子
12. section *n.* 部分

snatched^[13] them, stuffed^[14] them into his pocket, and turned to leave. (2) Then, while everyone watched the bank robber, George calmly lifted off the top section of the cashbox and slipped^[15] bills from the bottom section into his pockets.

The door swung^[16] and the bank robber was gone. George fainted^[17]. When he woke he smiled up at the worried faces looking down at him. "I'm all right," he said bravely.

As soon as he was safely behind his bedroom door, George took the money from his pockets and counted it.

He had seven thousand dollars. He was very happy.

The next morning when George arrived at the bank, it was not open for business. But everyone was there, helping to examine the bank's records for the special audit^[18] Mr. Bell was taking.

George was called into Mr. Burrows's office. The bank president seemed strangely cheerful. "George," he said, "I want you to meet Mr. Carruthers, who used to be president of our bank."

"Yes, sir, just fine, thanks."

(3) "I'm glad to hear it. That was quite an adventure^[19]. It just goes to show how easy it is to rob our bank."

"Sir?" said George, confused^[20].

"George, I was sorry to give you a hard time yesterday, but with all the banks being robbed these days I thought it would be a good idea to prove that our little bank can be robbed too. I have retired, but I haven't stopped thinking. (4) That's why I played my little game yesterday, just to keep everybody on his toes."

"I don't understand," said George. "What game?"

The old man laughed and whipped^[21] out a mask. He placed it over his face, and said: "All right. Hand it over^[22]!" Mr. Burrows laughed but George did not.

WORDS AND EXPRESSIONS

13. snatch *v.* 抢, 夺
14. stuff *v.* 塞
15. slip *v.* 匆匆地行动, 悄悄地移动
16. swing *v.* 旋转
17. faint *v.* 晕倒
18. audit *n.* 查账, 审计
19. adventure *n.* 奇遇, 冒险的活动
20. confused *a.* 迷惑的
21. whip *v.* 突然拿出
22. hand ... over 把.....交出来

Notes:

1. "I wish Central Bank would be robbed," "我真希望中心银行被抢,"
"wish" 意为"但愿, 希望", 表示某种未实现或无法实现的欲望或希望。
That 从句中常用过去时态, that 通常省略。例如:
I wish I were rich. 我希望我很有钱。
2. What is to prevent Bank Teller B... 什么能阻止银行出纳员 B.....

“be to”加动词不定式表示将来时间：一是表示按计划、安排即将发生的动作；二是表示命令、禁止或可能性等。例如：

1) I am to have supper with Tom today. 今天我要和汤姆一起吃晚饭。

2) You are to stand here. Do you understand? 你要站在这儿，听明白了吗？

3. For one thing, For another thing, . . .

第二个 thing 可省略，意为“首先……，其次”，“一则，二则”，用来引出原因。例如：

We'd better give up the idea of making a long trip. For one thing, there isn't time; for another (thing), we don't have enough money. 我们最好放弃长途旅行的念头。一是没有时间，另外我们也没有足够的钱。

Exercise:

I. Check Your Comprehension.

- George Pickens wished for a robbery because it would _____.
 - help him take money without being caught
 - make him look like a hero
 - show that Central Bank was important
 - make Mr. Ackerman lose his job
- Before coming to George's cage, the robber _____.
 - had a fight with the bank guard
 - told the bank guard to lie down
 - pointed his pistol at another teller
 - let the customers turn back
- Nobody saw George taking money for himself because _____.
 - a crowd had gathered in the bank
 - George took bills from the bottom of his cashbox
 - all people were lying down or facing the wall
 - everyone was watching the robber leave
- George did not learn who the robber really was until _____.
 - Mr. Bell began taking an audit
 - Mr. Gurrows called him in
 - Mr. Carruthers explained it to him
 - Mr. Ackerman revealed the secret
- The bank robber was really _____.
 - Mr. Carruthers, a former president of the bank
 - Mr. Bell, the bank's chief auditor
 - a famous actor hired by the bank
 - a friend of George

II. Translate the Underlined Sentences into Chinese.

III. Short Answer Questions.

- What kind of person was George Pickens?
- What was the way he thought of to get the money from the bank?
- What would happen to him at last?

Unit 2

Fire Fighters

Warm-up:

1. What did people do to fight fires in the early days?
2. Where did the fire brigade appear first?

Since time began, man has lived in fear of fire. For hundreds of years only simple methods were used to fight this cruel enemy. Men did little more than throw buckets^[1] of water on the flames^[2]. Yet as far back as the ancient days of Egypt, men knew that they must work as a team against this peril^[3]. The oldest known device^[4] was a water pump^[5]. It was in use in Alexandria about 200 B. C. A short time later the Greeks^[6] and Romans^[7] were using hand-operated fire engines.

Rome was the first city in the world to have a fire brigade^[8]. During the reign of Augustus Caesar, from 27 B. C. to A. D. 14, there were between six thousand and seven thousand fire fighters. Slaves were also trained to fight fires. Although Rome was a rich and beautiful city, it did have a slum quarter^[9]. The houses there were built of wood. Each family kept a flame burning on an open altar^[10] at all times to honor the gods. No wonder so many fires started.

Roman firemen wore metal helmets^[11], leather jackets, and leather trousers. Some carried "siphones", which were wooden hand pumps. Others were armed with axes, hammers, and iron bars. Some carried short ladders that could be hooked together. These were used to climb to the tops of tall structures.

"Nocturnes" were stationed^[12] along the streets of Rome. These men would shout the alarm along the line to the nearest "castra", or firehouse. The fire brigade would then rush to the burning building.

The first men to arrive were the "aquari". Each man carried a light earthenware^[13] vase^[14]. (1) The men formed two human chains to

WORDS AND EXPRESSIONS

1. bucket *n.* 水桶
2. flame *n.* 火焰
3. peril *n.* 危险
4. device *n.* 设备, 仪器
5. pump *n.* 泵
6. Greek *n.* 希腊人
7. Roman *n.* 罗马人
8. fire brigade 消防队, 救火队
9. slum quarter 贫民区
10. altar *n.* 圣坛
11. helmet *n.* 头盔
12. station *v.* 安置, 驻扎
13. earthenware *n.* 陶器
14. vase *n.* 瓶, 花瓶

the nearest well. One chain passed full vases. The other chain passed empty ones for refilling^[15]. Soon the jars would begin pouring a steady stream of water into the siphones. About this time a chariot^[16] bearing^[17] the “prefectus vigilum”, the fire chief, would arrive.

(2) There were also doctors ready to care for the injured or for those overcome by smoke. Pillow bearers were on hand^[18] too. Each brought a large leather pillow stuffed with feathers. Anyone forced to leap out of a window would jump onto the pillow.

The most feared of all the Roman officials would be the last to arrive. He was the “questionarius”. His duties were like those of a modern fire marshal^[19]. He tried to find how the fire started and who was to blame.

(3) Rome's fire-fighting brigade remained until the fall of the empire in the fourth century. In the Dark Ages that followed, it was believed that fires were God's punishment of the people for their sins. And from the fourth to the fourteenth century, men often did not try very hard to put out the fires that flared up^[20]. Many families were made homeless, and there was much needless suffering. It was not until well into the 1600s that towns and cities in Europe started their own fire brigades.

Today modern equipment helps the trained fireman to do a much better job. (4) Fire will remain a hazard, but the men of the fire departments all over the world will continue to lessen the dangers.

WORDS AND EXPRESSIONS

15. refill *v.* 再充满, 再注满
16. chariot *n.* 马车
17. bear *v.* 负载, 携带
18. on hand 现有(的), 在近处(的), 出席(的)
19. marshal *n.* 法警
20. flare up(火) 突然燃烧起来

Notes:

1. Each family kept a flame burning on an open altar at all times to honor the gods. 每个家庭始终在公开的圣坛点一把火来祭神。
at all times 始终
honor the gods 祭神
2. No wonder so many fires started. 难怪发生了这么多火灾。
no wonder 后面省略了“that”, 也可以说成 “It is no wonder (that) ...”, 意思是“难怪, 一点也不奇怪”。例如:
No wonder that he has passed the examination. 难怪他考试及格了。

Exercise:

I. Check Your Comprehension.

1. Under Augustus Caesar, Rome had _____.
 - a. almost no firemen
 - b. several hundred firemen
 - c. several thousand firemen
 - d. there are no details mentioned in the article
2. The duty of a “nocturne” was to _____.
 - a. raise the fire alarm
 - b. operate the hand pump
 - c. climb the fire ladder
 - d. no details are mentioned in the article
3. Who arrived first?
 - a. The “prefectus vigilum”
 - b. The “aquari”
 - c. The “questionarius”
 - d. The “siphones”
4. Like the “questionarius”, today’s fire marshal _____.
 - a. organizes the brigade
 - b. trains the firemen
 - c. mans the fire engine
 - d. investigates the cause of fires
5. When fire destroyed a home during the Dark Ages, people _____.
 - a. felt that the fire was a punishment by God
 - b. tried to learn why the fire started
 - c. wished the brigade had arrived earlier
 - d. fought it bravely

II. Translate the Underlined Sentences into Chinese.

英语锦言妙语

Books and friends should be few but good.

书与友, 贵精不贵多。

Knowledge comes from diligence.

知识源于勤奋。

Unit 3

The Earth's Spreading Deserts

Warm-up:

1. What does the word "desert" mean? Give a definition.
2. Can you describe the life in the desert areas?

Only a generation ago, Mauritania's^[1] city was many days' walk from the Sahara. Today it is in the Sahara^[2]. (1) The sand blows through the city streets and piles up against walls and fences. The desert stretches^[3] out as far as the eye can see.

In some parts of the Amazon^[4] rain forest in Brazil, all the trees have been cut down. The earth lies bare^[5] and dry in the hot sun. Nothing grows there any more.

Over vast areas of every continent, the rainfall and vegetation^[6] necessary for life are disappearing. Already more than 40 percent of the earth's land is desert or desert-like. About 628 million people — one out of seven — live in these dry regions. In the past, they have managed to survive, but with difficulty. Now, largely through problems caused by modern life, their existence is threatened by the slow, steady spread of the earth's deserts.

Many countries first became concerned^[7] in the 1970s after a terrible drought^[8] and famine^[9] destroyed Africa's Sahel, the fragile^[10] desert along the south edge of the Sahara. (2) Thousands of people died even though there was a worldwide effort to send food and medicine to the starving people.

Droughts and crop failures are not new in desert regions. They have been a fact of life for thousands of years. However, few people lived in desert regions in the past. They kept few animals, and they moved frequently. Today's problems are caused in great part by distinctly^[11] modern factors. In the Sahel, for example, Africans benefited from

WORDS AND EXPRESSIONS

1. Mauritania *n.* 毛里塔尼亚
2. Sahara *n.* 撒哈拉沙漠
3. stretch *v.* 延伸, 伸展
4. Amazon *n.* 亚马逊河
5. bare *adj.* 无遮蔽的
6. vegetation *n.* 植物, 草木
7. concern *v.* 关心, 关注
8. drought *n.* 旱灾, 干旱
9. famine *n.* 饥荒
10. fragile *a.* 脆弱的, 易损坏的
11. distinctly *ad.* 清楚地
12. topsoil *n.* 表土层

improvements in public health and modern farming methods. New water wells encouraged people to settle down on the land near the wells. The population grew. Farmers planted more crops and enlarged their herds of cattle, sheep, and goats. They became dependent on the new wells. When the drought came, the crops failed and the cattle ate all the grass around the overworked wells, the fragile land quickly lost its topsoil^[12] and became nothing but sand and dust.

Many countries are experiencing similar problems. Poor land is farmed^[13] until it is worn out, and trees are cut for firewood, leaving the soil unprotected against wind and rain. In Peru^[14], Chile^[15] and Brazil^[16], some areas that once were covered with forests now look like the moon. In India, some land has been so badly damaged by farming and tree cutting that mud now slides into the Indus^[17] and Ganges^[18] rivers. Cattle, sheep, and goats add to the problem by eating grass and other plants faster than they can grow back. In the United States, some highly populated areas (such as Los Angeles) are really deserts. Water must be piped in from hundreds of miles away and this affects the water supply of other California communities.

(3) Scientists still do not understand all the complex problems of the desert, but there have been many ideas for saving the land. Saudi Arabia^[19] has planted 10 million trees to help keep the sand from taking over fertile^[20] areas. The Israelis are again using some of the water collection systems left by the ancient people in the Negev desert. They plan to water their orchards with the extra water. Some Sahel farmers still raise cattle on their poor farm land, but before the cattle are sold, they are taken to greener lands in the south to get fat.

The spread of the deserts affects most countries. (4) The big question today is, how can an expanding world population find food and space without destroying the land it lives on? For many countries, battling the desert is the only chance to avoid starvation, destruction, and disaster.

WORDS AND EXPRESSIONS

13. farm *v.* 耕作(土地)
14. Peru *n.* 秘鲁
15. Chile *n.* 智利
16. Brazil *n.* 巴西
17. Indus *n.* 印度河
18. Ganges *n.* 恒河
19. Saudi Arabia 沙特阿拉伯
20. fertile *a.* (土地)肥沃的,多产的,富饶的

Notes:

1. The desert stretches out as far as the eye can see. 沙漠向外伸展到目力所及的地方。
“as far as”意为“就……限度,到……程度”。比较: as far as I know 据我所知;
as far as I'm concerned 就我而言,以我来说。

2. Poor land is farmed until it is worn out ... 贫瘠的土地被耕作得更加贫瘠……
“wear out” 意为“使……耗尽,耗尽”。
3. Saudi Arabia has planted ... from taking over ...
沙特阿拉伯人栽了一千万棵树以防止沙漠侵蚀肥沃的土地。
“take over” 意为“占据,接受,接收”等。

Exercise:

I. Check Your Comprehension.

- In paragraph 4, what is the Sahel ?
 - The great drought and famine in Africa.
 - The desert along the south edge of the Sahara.
 - The death of thousands of people.
 - A place where the Sahara is.
- In paragraph 5, improvements in public health and modern methods are examples of _____.
 - distinctly modern factors
 - the droughts and crop failures
 - a fact of life in dry regions
 - overworked wells
- In paragraph 6, “many countries are experiencing similar problems”. “Similar problems” refer to _____.
 - simple problems
 - the problems discussed in paragraph 5
 - problems that have existed for thousands of years
 - the same problems
- In paragraph 7, “they are taken to the greener lands in the south.” “They” refer to _____.
 - the Sahel farm land
 - the farmers
 - the cattle
 - the sheep
- In paragraph 8, the words “starvation, destruction, and disaster” _____.
 - have no emotional meaning
 - are used because a group of nouns are considered a good style at the end of an article
 - are emotional words used to emphasize the terrible situation
 - are used for the effect of exaggeration

II. Translate the Underlined Sentences into Chinese.

III. Short Answer Questions.

- How much of the earth's land is desert or desert-like?
- What are the common things in desert regions?
- What causes the desert?

Unit 4

Twenty Thousand Leagues^[1] Under the Sea

Warm-up:

1. Who was Jules Verne?
2. How many books did he write?
3. What are the features of his books?

Twenty thousand leagues under the sea is a fascinating^[2] tale of adventure with Captain Nemo ("No Name") in his submarine^[3] ship, the NAUTILUS. We find the story thrilling^[4], readers of Jules Verne's day must have found it much more exciting. Nobody at that time had made a practical^[5] submarine. The NAUTILUS was the product of the author's imagination.

Jules Verne had been around ships and boats most of his life. But his trip to America in 1867 was his first ocean voyage.

The ship that carried Verne from his native France was the GREAT EASTERN. She was the largest and most splendid passenger ship of the time. But Verne was not interested in her because of what she was in 1867; his interest was in what she had been the year before. Without her splendid fittings^[6], she had been used to lay the first successful Atlantic cable^[7] linking England and America.

Many who had helped were still members of the crew^[8]. And Cyrus Field, whose vision^[9] had led to the work, was a passenger. This was a wonderful opportunity for Verne. He might find an answer to a question that had long interested him: What was on the bottom of the ocean?

(1) Verne made the most of this opportunity. With his notebook, he followed crew members around. What kind of submarine life had they brought up by the huge grapples^[10] used to find the end of the cable when it broke? What kind of fish had they seen? What sea weeds? What shells? What did they know about the ocean's currents^[11]? It's

WORDS AND EXPRESSIONS

1. league *n.* 里格 (旧时长度单位)
2. fascinating *a.* 令人着迷的
3. submarine *n.* 潜水艇
4. thrilling *a.* 令人激动的
5. practical *a.* 真实的
6. fitting *n.* 设备
7. cable *n.* 电缆
8. crew *n.* (全体) 船员
9. vision *n.* 远见, 洞察力
10. grapple *n.* 铁钩
11. current *n.* 水流