

# 英语时文选读

## COMPREHENSION PIECES ON CURRENT TOPICS

葆青编注

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人民教育出版社

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## 编者的话

这份材料已通过北京广播电台的广播节目向听众同志们作了介绍，现以书面形式印刷出来和大家见面。本材料共分十二讲，每讲有课文一篇，听力课文一篇(较长的篇幅则只包括一篇课文，最后一讲有六篇短文)。为了便于读者理解，每篇课文或听力课文后有较详细的注释以及有关内容方面的说明。

这里所选编的材料绝大部分是选自七十年代后期国外出版物和教材中中等程度的文章，为了适合我们所用，在某些地方作了改动。这些文章的语言浅显上口，习惯语化。所选的题材和内容也力求新颖活泼，多种多样。其中大都是反映资本主义社会中的情况，如英美的工人、妇女、学生、老人的情况，他们的风俗习惯，以及他们社会中的弊病等等。我们认为，对所学语言国家风土人情的了解，会对学这门语言的本身有所裨益。

学习一门外语，要达到听、说、写、读、译五会的目的是要通过各种方法和途径的，但是对吸收外语来说，听和读无疑是两个主要的方面。我们这份材料不能说会对学英语起多大的作用，但至少希望能在听(通过广播或录音)和读的方面，会对听众和读者们有所帮助。

由于这份材料的广播和出版时间都很仓促，错误和不妥之处在所难免，请读者同志们批评指正。

在广播和整理书面材料的过程中，得到李泽鹏同志的帮助，吸收了他的宝贵意见，特此致谢。

**编者**

一九八〇年三月于北京

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## English Is Tough<sup>①</sup>

I am taking an ESL course<sup>②</sup> in this college. This is my first <sup>semesta</sup> semester<sup>③</sup> here. I work with fourteen other students in this class<sup>④</sup>. People call us freshmen, though most of the students in this class are girls<sup>⑤</sup>.

I live in Room 245. It is on the second floor<sup>⑥</sup> of our dormitory building. I share<sup>⑦</sup> the room with two other students.

I like English, though I'm not good at learning it. People say it's an easy language. They may think so, but it certainly is not easy for me<sup>⑧</sup>. I think English spelling is unpredictable<sup>⑨</sup>. And I have a lot of trouble with pronunciation. I speak English with a Chinese accent. Sometimes people don't understand me, and I don't understand them, either<sup>⑩</sup>. I get nervous when the teacher asks me questions<sup>⑪</sup>. The teacher says I make too many mistakes in grammar.

I am working hard, but I am making little progress<sup>⑫</sup>. I don't learn fast. I'm a slow student. The teacher is kind enough to give me a lot of help<sup>⑬</sup>. And I really need<sup>⑭</sup> it.

## 注释

1. tough [tʌf] 在这里作“困难”解,和 difficult 同义。这是比较口语化的,随便的说法,犹如我们常说的“不好学”,“不好对付”。因此,一个人不好对付,可以说 He is tough. 有“强硬”、“不让步”或“身体壮”的意思。此外,一个难题,不好解决的问题,在英语中为 a tough problem; 一块牛排太老,咬不动,也可以说 tough: The steak is tough. 这篇文章中有几个美国人常用的字, tough 就是其中之一。(但这个字现在英国人也常用。)
2. ...take an ESL course 上一门作为第二语言的英语课。take a ...course 是“上一门课”的意思。ESL 是个缩写字,代表 English as a second language 英语作为第二语言。所谓第二语言,是指某人的本国语不是英语,他在用英语的国家生活,必须用英语,这样,英语就是他的第二语言。另外,某些国家除了本国语外,英语也是通用的,甚至是官方语言,那么英语也就是他们的第二语言。ESL 和 EFL (English as a foreign language) 有所不同,后者是指将英语作为外国语来学。

又如 ESP, 是 English for special purposes 的缩写,指科技和其它专业人员以其专业为目的所学的英语。有一种 TOEFL 考试,是 Test of English as a Foreign Language, 指到用英语的国家,尤指到美国留学须通过的英语考试。

3. semester [si'mestə] 学期。这个字美国人常用,和 term 同义。
4. I work with fourteen other students in this class. 我班上还有其它十四个人(因此,班上共有十五人)。这和 There are fifteen students in our class. 的表达法不同,但意思一样。
5. People call us freshmen, though most of the students in this class are girls. 人们称我们 freshmen, 但是班上大部分的学生是女的。

freshman ['freʃmən] 是大学一年级生,复数为 freshmen. 这个词中虽有 man, 但不只指男性,女学生也叫 freshman. 所以



上面这句话可能有两层意思，一是说话人不知道 *freshman* 可以用于女性，一是虽知道而为了俏皮，故意这样说。这样，*freshman* 就有了双关的意思，这类有双关意思的句子往往很难在译成汉语后仍保留原来的意图。

*freshman* 一字流行于美国大学中。二年级生叫 *sophomore*，三年级生是 *junior*，四年级生是 *senior*。英国学校中常用 *first-year student*, *second-year student* 等。

6. *on the second floor* 在美国用法中是指二层楼。在美国，一层楼叫 *the first floor*，三层楼叫 *the third floor*，这点和我们中国的习惯一样。在英国用法中一层楼叫 *the ground floor*，二层楼叫 *the first floor*，三层楼叫 *the second floor* 等等。
7. *share* 一字有“分享”、“分担”的意思，两人合住一间屋子叫 *share a room*。

例如: *I share the room with another student.*

或: *We share the same room.*

*share* 也可以用于分担开支，

例如: *We share the expenses.*

也可以用于抽象的场合，

例如: *I share your feelings (views).* 我和我的感觉(看法)是一样的。

*We share each other's sorrows and joys.* 我们苦乐与共。

8. *But it certainly is not easy for me.* 在一般情况下副词放在 *be* 动词的后面。

例如: *He is always late.* 他总是迟到。

*You are certainly not joking!* 你当然不是在开玩笑吧!

这里 *certainly* 放在 *is* 的前面是为了强调语气。但是，副词和行为动词连用时，位于动词之前。

例如: *He always comes early.* 他总是来得很早。

*I quite understand what you mean.* 我完全懂得你的意思。

9. **unpredictable** 一字是从动词 **predict** [pri'dikt] (预见、预先测知)加前缀 **un-** 和后缀 **-able** 派生而来的。**unpredictable** 是“无法预见”的意思。如果说一个人 **unpredictable**, 就是说此人反复无常,不知他什么时候会干出什么事情来,也就是口语中常说的琢磨不透、不摸底的意思,这字有贬意。

**English spelling is unpredictable.** 是作者认为英语的拼法不可捉摸,没有规律(事实上,英语的拼法还是有一定的规律的)。这类从动词派生的形容词还有不少,现举几个例子:

<b>unbelievable</b>	不能令人相信的
<b>unthinkable</b>	令人难以想象的
<b>unreliable</b>	不可靠的
<b>uneatable</b>	不可吃的

有时前缀用 **in-** (在 **p, b, m** 前用 **im-**), 后缀用 **-ible**:

<b>incredible</b>	不可相信的、难以置信的
<b>indigestible</b>	不好消化的
<b>impassable</b>	不可通行的

10. **And I don't understand them, either.** 而我也懂他们的话。

**either** 也(不),在这里是个副词,用在否定句中。和它相对的是 **too** (也),用于肯定句。**either** 读作 [ˈaɪðə], 美国读法是 [ˈi:ðə]。

11. **I get nervous when the teacher asks me questions.** 当老师问我问题时,我就紧张。

**get nervous** 是“紧张起来”的意思,又如 **get angry** “生起气来”, **get ill** “生起病来”。**get** 是个连系动词 (**link verb**), 表示从一种状态转变到另一种状态。

试比较: 1) **The tea will get cold. Drink it now.**

茶要凉了,快喝吧。(茶还未凉。)

**The tea is cold. Don't drink it.**

茶凉了,别喝了。

2) **He is angry again. He gets angry easily.**

他又生气了。他动不动就生气。

在这里 *nervous* 是“神经紧张”的意思, 这个字从 *nerve* (神经) 派生而来。在被老师叫起来回答问题, 参加考试, 以及在其它情况下, 心里着急而感到紧张和心神不定时, 可用 *nervous* 一字, 而不是 *excited*。它和 *excited* 一字不同之处是, *excited* 指情绪激动或兴奋, 有时也指生气时的情绪激动。

例如: *Don't get excited.*

不要激动嘛。

*What is there to get excited about?*

有什么好激动(生气)的?

12. *make little progress* 没有什么进步。*little* 在这里有否定的意思, 但比 *no* 来得委婉。

例如: *He talks a lot but says little.*

他话说得很多, 但内容很少(即废话连篇)。

*a little* 和 *little* 不同, 前者是肯定的意思, 即“有一点”。它们用于不可数名词前, 在可数名词前要用 *few* 或 *a few*。

例如: *Will you spare me a few minutes?*

我能占你几分钟时间吗?

*He is a man of few words.*

他是个沉默寡言的人。

13. *The teacher is kind enough to give me a lot of help.* 老师真够好, 给了我很多帮助。

*enough* 一字在和形容词连用时, 位置是在被它修饰的形容词之后, 在修饰名词时则放在名词之前。

例如: *If the room is good enough for you, it is good enough for me.*

这间屋子你能住得, 我当然也能住得。

*I don't have enough time to do it.*

我没有那么多时间做这件事。(有时也用 *time enough*, 但比前者文绉绉。)

另外, *enough* 用于否定时常常和 *too* 相对。

例如: 1) *This room is too big.*

这间屋子太大。

*That one is not big enough.*

那间屋子不够大。

2) *There is too much rain this year.*

今年雨太多。

*There was not enough rain last year.*

去年雨量不够。

14. 这篇文章中出現了一些表示状态而不是表示动作的动词。

例如: *think*          认为          *need*          需要

*understand*      懂得          *like*          喜欢

关于这类静态动词, 还可以举出一些例子:

*suppose*          认为          *love*          爱

*consider*          考虑          *like*          喜欢

*know*              知道          *hate*          恨

*remember*        记得          *want*         要

*hope*              希望          *see*          看见

*wish*              愿望          *hear*         听见

这类动词因为有较强的延续性, 所以用于现在时态的句中时, 往往不用进行式。其中某些动词用进行式时, 在意义上有所转变。

例如: *I think English is easy.*

我认为英语很容易。

*I am thinking of my mother.*

我在想我的母亲。

## ***Listening Comprehension***

### **Ramon Tells about His Experience**

My name is Ramon<sup>①</sup>. I work in a factory with a lot of Americans. One afternoon a few months ago, one of my American co-workers started a conversation with me during break time<sup>②</sup>.

“Hey, Ramon. Are you the only child in your family?”

“No, I have three brothers.”

“What are their names?”

“Carmen, Maria and Jose.”

When I said that, the other workers started laughing. One of them called me “stupid.” I walked away from them with a sick feeling in my stomach<sup>③</sup>. I didn't know why they'd laughed or why they'd called me “stupid”, but I felt confused and ashamed.

For the rest of the afternoon, I thought about the reaction of my co-workers to the way I spoke English. I had been in this country for less than a year. Not having any money to go to school to learn English, I listened to the way the Americans at work spoke, and I tried to imitate them. Of course I made a lot of mistakes, but my co-workers<sup>④</sup> were not very helpful. I could tell that they didn't like repeating

for me things I didn't understand. When I didn't understand something, they became impatient. When I made a mistake in grammar or pronunciation, they made strange faces or made fun of me by imitating my mistakes and my accent.

That night I told my older brother about my experience at work. He showed me my mistake. While in my native Spanish "hermanos"<sup>⑤</sup> could sometimes mean both "brothers" and "sisters," it could only mean "brothers" in English. Then I understood why the Americans had called me "stupid". They thought I didn't know the difference between a brother and a sister. The shame I'd felt that afternoon at work returned.

That same night I decided that I didn't want to suffer any more shame and humiliation because of the way I spoke English. I didn't want to hear the laughter of others any more. I made up my mind not to speak English at work unless I absolutely had to, or unless I was sure that what I was saying was absolutely correct.

### 背景说明

这篇文章是一个居住在美国的墨西哥人雷曼，叙述他在学英语方面所受到的挫折，这是他的亲身体会。作为一个墨

西哥人, 雷曼的本国语是西班牙语。

在美国有不少墨西哥的移民, 有一些是偷渡格朗德河 (Rio Grande) 到美国去的, 所以常常被人叫作 wetbacks。他们在美国一般只能得到条件较差的工作。

### 注释

1. Ramon 西班牙语人名, 读作 [ra'mɒn]。英语中与之相应的名字是 Raymond ['reimənd]。Jose 也是西班牙语的人名, 读作 [ho'se]。以上均为男子名。Carmen ['kɑ:mən] 和 Maria [mə'riə] 是女子名。
2. break time 中间休息。有时称作 tea break 或 coffee break, 即是给职工一个喝茶或咖啡的休息时间。
3. a sick feeling in my (one's) stomach (听到侮辱性的语言) 心里非常厌恶, 很反感。

sick 一字不但作“生病”解, 在有些情况中也可以解释为“恶心”、“作呕”。

例如: It makes me feel sick.

这使我作呕。

I am sick and tired of it.

我对此厌烦(腻味)透了。

4. co-worker 同事, 一起做工作的人。co- 是个前缀, 有“共同”、“合作”的意思。

例如: cooperate 合作  
cooperative 合作的, 合作社  
co-education 男女同校  
co-ed 男女同校的学校中的女学生

5. hermano(s) 西班牙语, 兄弟。姐妹是 hermana(s)。

## 2

### A Pretty Fishy Story

Nick was a student who came from, shall we say<sup>①</sup>, Ruritania<sup>②</sup>. He was eighteen years old when he first arrived in England to study in London. Like most students he was not very rich, but he managed to make ends meet<sup>③</sup>. He worked in the evening as a receptionist in a private hotel. Everybody liked Nick. He was a pleasant, well-mannered, good-natured<sup>④</sup>, humorous fellow. Moreover, he was intelligent. He worked hard; he studied well. He did exceptionally well in the language laboratory<sup>⑤</sup> and his teachers were very pleased with<sup>⑥</sup> his progress. But all of them agreed that although good at phonetics, he was poor at spelling. This was mainly because in his own language the words were written the same way as they were sounded.

Nick took his first examination<sup>⑦</sup> at the end of the year. In one of the tests he had to write the word 'fish'. Curiously enough<sup>⑧</sup>, he had never seen this word written<sup>⑨</sup> and he began to wonder how he could spell it<sup>⑩</sup>. "Well," he said to himself, "[f]; that's the



sound of 'gh' in the word 'cough'." So he wrote 'gh'. "[i]; well, that's the sound of 'o' in the word 'women'." So he added 'o'. "[f]; well, that's easy. That's the sound of 's' in the word 'expression' and 't' in 'examination'." So he finally wrote 'g-h-o-s-t'. But in spite of this curious idea Nick passed his examination.

### 关于题目

题目中 fishy 一字从 fish 而来,有“鱼腥味”,并有“令人怀疑”的意思。在这里这字有双关的含意,一是故事中的事实与 fish (鱼)有关,一是故事的主人公将 fish 一字胡乱拼成 ghost,很成问题,使人产生疑问。因此,如果觉得某事有令人怀疑之处,例如,有贪污、作弊等行为,可以说, There is something fishy in it. 或 It's pretty fishy. pretty 在此是付词,和 rather 或 quite 同义。双关字很难译成另一种语言,所以题目中的 fishy 也很难找到能表达其双关意义的汉语词汇,往往译成汉语后,就失去原文俏皮的味了。

有趣的是,在英语里说到令人怀疑或不对头的事时,常常和闻味道联系起来。除了 fishy 外,还有一个习惯用语是 smell a rat 如果说, I smell a rat somewhere. 就是说“我感到这里面有可疑之处”。

### 注释

1. shall we say... 我们不妨说…