

Y I N G Y U Y U E D U J I A O C H E N G

英语阅读教程

(上册)

主编 潘炳信

中国人民大学出版社

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前 言

学习英语要通过大量阅读英文材料以提高语感，自然吸收语言。《英语阅读教程》是为英语自学者、高等学校英语专业函授生、夜大学生所编写的泛读教材。本教材对参加成人自学考试的学生在扩大词汇量、提高阅读技巧、扩大知识面及增加对讲英语国家文化的了解方面均有所帮助。

本教材的内容选材较新，涉及范围较广，包括教育、科技、商贸、政治、文化、语言、文学、宗教、风土人情、人物传记、百科知识等内容，具有知识性、教育性和趣味性。

教材结构包括课文正文、课文注释、词汇表，以便教师讲解和学生自学。除此之外，还编排了各种形式的练习，一般分为阅读理解性练习、判断性练习和综合性问题三种。快速阅读练习部分则要求学生在规定的时间内读完课文并回答问题，以提高快速阅读能力。

在本教材的编写过程中，我们参考了大量国内外有关的英文资料，如论著、教材、学术杂志、英文报纸等。在此，我们谨向这些资料的编者表示感谢。

另外，在编写过程中，我们一直受到河北省考试院、河北省中小学培训办公室以及河北师大外国语学院有关领导的大力支持，我们谨在此向他们表示真诚的谢意。

由于编者水平有限，加之时间仓促，教材中疏漏、不妥乃至错误之处在所难免。希望专家、学者及使用本教材的广大师生

批评指正。

编者

2001年4月

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Unit One

Text 1 The Romance of Words

Answer the following questions after the first reading of the passage.

1. What is *etymology*? What does this word mean in Greek?
2. What does *calculus* mean in Latin?
3. Try to tell the various meanings of the word *run*.

From now on we want you to look at words intently, to be inordinately curious about them and to examine them syllable by syllable, letter by letter. They are your tools of understanding and self-expression. Collect them. Keep them in condition. Learn how to handle them. Develop a fastidious, but not a fussy, choice. Work always toward good taste in their use. Train your ear for their harmonies.

We urge you not to take words for granted just because they have been part of your daily speech since childhood. You must examine them. Turn them over and over as though you were handling a coin, and see the seal and superscription on each one. *We would like you actually to fall in love with words.*

Words are no dead things. *They are fairly wriggling with life.* They are the exciting and mysterious tokens of our thoughts,

and like human beings, they are born, come to maturity, grow old, and die, and sometimes they are even reborn in a new age. A word, from its birth to its death, is a process, not a static thing.

Words, like living trees, have roots, branches, and leaves.

Shall we stay with this analogy for a few moments, and see how perfect it is?

The story of the root of a word is the story of its origin. The study of origins is called *etymology*, which in turn has *its* roots in the Greek word *etymon*, meaning “true or original meaning”, and the Greek ending *logia*, meaning “science or study”. So *etymology* means the science or study of true or original meanings.

Every word in our language is a frozen metaphor, a frozen picture. It is this poetry behind words that gives language its overwhelming power. And the more intimately we know the romance that lies within each word, the better understanding we will have of its meaning.

For instance, on certain occasions you will probably say that you have “calculated” the cost of something or other. What does the term *calculate* really mean? Here is the story. Years ago, ancient Romans had an instrument called a *hodometer*, or “road measurer”, which corresponded to our modern taxi meter. If you had hired a two-wheeled Roman vehicle to ride, say, to the Forum, you might have found in the back a tin can with a revolving cover that held a quantity of pebbles. This can was so contrived that each time the wheel turned, the metal cover also revolved, and a pebble dropped through a hole into the receptacle below. At the end of your trip you counted the pebbles and *calculated* your bill. You see, the Latin word for pebble was *calculus*, and that’s where our word “calcu-

late" comes from.

There are, of course, many words with much simpler histories than this. When you speak of a *surplus*, for instance, you are merely saying that you have a *sur* (French for "over") *plus* (French for "more") or a *sur-plus*. That is, you have an "over-more" than you need.

Should you be in a snooty mood for the nonce¹, and happen to look at someone rather haughtily, your friends might call you *supercilious*, a word that comes from the Latin *supercilium*, meaning that "eyebrow" you just raised. That person you are so fond of, who has become your *companion*, is simply one who eats bread with you—from Latin *cum*, "with", and *panis*, "bread". *Trumps* in bridge is from the French *triomphe* or "triumph", an old-time game of cards. In modern cards, one suit is allowed to triumph over, or to "trump" the other suits. And still again, in the army, the *lieutenant* is literally one who takes the place of the captain when the latter is not around—from the French *lieu* (we use it in "in lieu of") and *tenir*, "to hold". The *captain*, in turn, derives from the Latin word *caput* ("head"). *Colonel* comes from *columna* (the "column" that he leads).

If, by any chance, you would like to twit your friend, the Wall Street² *broker*, just tell him that his professional title came from the Middle English word *brocour*, a "broacher", or one who opens, or broaches, a cask to draw off³ the wine or liquor. We still employ the same word in the original sense when we say "He broached (or opened up) the subject". The broacher, or broker, became in time⁴ a salesman of wine, then of other things, such as stocks and bonds.

These are the roots of words. We next come to the branches.

The branches of our language tree are those many groups of words that have grown out from one original root.

Let's take an example. From the Latin root *spectare*, which means "to look," more than 240 English words have sprouted. We find the root in such words as *spectacle* (those things you look through), *spectator* (one who looks or watches), *respect* (the tribute you give to a person you care to look at again), and *inspect* (to look into). When you treat someone with *disrespect*, you make it plain that you do not care to look at him again (*dis*, "not"; *re*, "again"; *spect*, "look"). *Introspection* is a looking within.

Turning to the Greek language, which has so largely enriched our own, we discover *graphein*, "to write", another prolific source of English words. We have *telegraph* (writing from a distance), *phonograph* (writing by sound), *photograph* (writing by means of light), *stenographer* (one who does condensed writing), and *mimeograph* (to write a copy or imitation).

We have in our language a host of⁵ roots such as these. There is the Latin *spirare*, meaning "to blow or breathe", from which we get such English words as *inspire* (breathe into), *expire* (breathe out), *perspire* (breathe through), *respiration* (breathing again or often).

Our word "liable" comes from the Latin *ligare*, "to bind". This fascinating root has branched out into *oblige* and *obligate* (to bind to do something), *ligature* (bandage or binding), *ligament* (something that ties two things together), and, with the root no longer so obvious, *league* (those nations or other organizations that are bound together), and even the word *ally* (to bind to one another), which is from *ad* and *ligare*.

These, then, are the branches. We turn now to the leaves. If the roots are the origins of words and the branches are the word families that stem out of them, the leaves of this language tree would be the words themselves and their meanings.

Each given word, in its beginning, had, no doubt, only one meaning. But words are so full of life that they are continually sprouting the green shoots of new meanings.

Shall we choose just one word as an instance of the amazing vitality of language? The simple three-letter word *run*, up to this moment of writing, has more than ninety dictionary definitions. There are the *run* in your stocking⁶, the *run* on the bank⁷, and a *run* in baseball⁸. The clock may *run* down⁹, but you *run* up¹⁰ a bill. Colors *run*. You may *run* a race or *run* a business. You may have the *run* of the mill, or, quite different, the *run* of the house when you get the *run* of things. And this dynamic little word, we can assure you, has just begun its varied career with these examples.

Is it any wonder that our unabridged dictionaries contain hundreds of thousands of living and usable words, words sparkling with life, prolific in their breeding, luxuriant in their growth, continually shifting and changing in their meanings?

Words even have definite personalities and characters. They can be sweet, sour, discordant, musical. They can be sugary or acrid, soft or sharp, hostile or friendly.

From this time on, as we enter our word studies, try to become keenly aware of words. Look at them, if possible, with the fresh eyes of one who is seeing them for the first time. If we have persuaded you to do this, you will then be on the way to the success that can be won with a more powerful vocabulary.

Notes

1. **for the nonce**: for the present time; for this occasion
2. **Wall Street**: 美国纽约的华尔街
3. **draw off**: to allow to flow out
4. **in time**: after a certain amount of time has passed
5. **a host of**: a great number of
6. **the run in your stocking**: 长袜的脱针
7. **the run on the bank**: 银行的挤兑
8. **a run in baseball**: 棒球场上的跑垒积分
9. **run down**: to loss power and stop working
10. **run up**: (cause to) grow quickly in amount

Vocabulary

romance 传奇性

intently 一心一意地; 专心致志地

inordinately excessively

fastidious not easily pleased; quick to find fault

seal 印记; 图章

superscription 题字; 标题

wriggle 蠕动; 扭动; 蜿蜒前进

token sign, evidence, guarantee, or mark (of sth.)

analogy 类比

frozen 确实的; 不可推翻的; 不容否认的

correspond be equal (to); be similar (in position, etc.)

revolve go round in a circle

contrive invent; design; find a way of doing (sth.)

receptacle 容器

snooty (colloq.) proudly rude; haughty

trump 以王牌取胜; 出王牌

column 纵队

twit to make fun of; ridicule

broach 在酒桶上开孔并插入活嘴以便汲酒

tribute sth. done, said, or given to show respect or admiration for someone

introspection examining one's own thoughts and feelings

unabridged (esp. of sth. written, a speech, etc.) given in its full form; not shortened

luxuriant strong in growth; abundant

discordant (of sounds) not harmonious; harsh

acrid (of smell or taste) sharp; biting; stinging to the nose or mouth

Exercises

I . Reading Comprehension

1. Words, like living trees, _____.
 - a. are born, come to maturity, grow old, and die
 - b. are reborn in a new age
 - c. have roots, branches and leaves
 - d. can grow and produce more words
2. When you speak of a *surplus*, you mean _____.
 - a. that you have too much
 - b. that you have just as much
 - c. that you have an amount more than needed
 - d. that you have an amount less than needed
3. When someone is called *supercilious*, he or she must _____.
 - a. have beautiful eyebrows

- b. be very surprised
 - c. be very friendly
 - d. be very haughty
4. If we want to tease a Wall Street broker, just tell him that his title came from a Middle English word, *brocour*, _____.
- a. which suggests a very noble origin
 - b. which suggests a very humble origin
 - c. which tells us that they used to be very poor
 - d. which shows that they used to be very rich
5. Words have definite personalities and characters. It means that _____.
- a. words are like human beings
 - b. words are difficult to deal with
 - c. words are changeable
 - d. words are rich and colorful

II . True or False

1. If we know the story lying within each word, we can understand the word better.
2. A companion is originally the person who eats breakfast with you.
3. Quite a lot of words in English are of Greek origin.
4. Each word usually has many different meanings from its beginning.
5. If people pay more attention to words and keep curious about them, they can greatly enlarge their vocabulary.