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BEDTIME READING

床头灯英语学习读本

IV



THE SECRET AGENT

密 探

美国作家改编 英汉对照

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航空工业出版社



10元丛书

图书在版编目(CIP)数据

床头灯. 4:英语学习读本/王若平等主编. —北京:
航空工业出版社, 2004. 11
ISBN 7-80183-488-7

I. 床... II. 王... III. 英语—高等学校—水平考
试—自学参考资料 IV. H310.42

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字(2004)第 112957 号

床头灯. 4:英语学习读本

Chuangtoudeng. 4: Yingyu Xuexi Duben

航空工业出版社出版发行

(北京市安定门外小关东里 14 号 100029)

发行电话: 010-82863351/2 010-82867079

010-64978486 010-84926529

北京富生印刷厂印刷

全国各地新华书店经售

2004 年 12 月第 1 版

2004 年 12 月第 1 次印刷

开本: 787×1092 1/32 印张: 77.5 字数: 1650 千字

印数: 1—8000

(全 10 册) 定价: 100.00 元

本社图书如有缺页、倒页、脱页、残页等情况, 请与本社发行部联系负责
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写在前面的话

——中国人学英语现状分析

◆英语是语言的帝国

全球 60 亿人中,有 8 亿人的母语是英语;2.5 亿人的第二母语是英语。12.3 亿人学习英语,33.6 亿人和英语有关。全世界电视节目的 75%、E-mail 的 80%、网络的 85%、软件源代码的 100% 使用英语。40~50 年后,全球 50% 的人精通英语。全球约 6000 种语言,本世纪末 90% 将消亡。届时英语作为主导语言的地位将进一步得到提升。

目前中国大约有 3 亿人在学英语,超过英国和美国的人口总和,这是中国努力与时代接轨、与国际接轨的一个重要标志。大量中国人熟练掌握国际通用语言是中华民族走向繁荣富强的必要保障。

◆英语学习的远期目标

在中国英语已经远远超过一个学科的范畴,一个人英语水平的高低总是和事业、前途、地位,甚至命运联系在一起。对于个人来讲,英语在人生旅途中具有战略意义,不失时机地在英语上投入时间、投入精力、投入金钱符合与时俱进的潮流,是明智之举。

◆目前存在的问题

尽管在中国学习英语的人数众多,但收效却令人担忧,学了这么多年英语,能够运用自如的人实在是凤毛麟角。由于运用能力差,无法品尝到英语学习成功的快乐,很多人不得不承认学英语的目的只能是学英语,这就是人们常说的“为了学英语而学英语”。

◆考试的压力对英语学习的积极影响

在我国与个人命运休戚相关的各类考试,如中考、高考、四六级、硕士研究生入学考试、博士研究生入学考试、职称考试、出国考试,都考或

只考英语。目前很多人把中国人学不好英语的责任推到英语考试身上,好像中国人学不好英语就是因为有了英语考试,甚至有人还产生了将英语考试废除的想法。

大家可以冷静地反思一下:如果没有各种各样的英语考试,哪里有这么多人坚持学英语?国家正是利用了考试这个指挥棒引导很多人去学英语。说句实话,你不能指望每个中国人都怀着与国际接轨的远大抱负去学英语。中国曾经取消过考试,结果造成了人才10年的断层。所以我的看法是在谈论考试的不足时,首先应该承认它在选拔人才、培养人才方面的不可替代的作用。英语考试对中国人学英语起到了很大的积极作用,功不可没。但必须承认:如果真想把英语学好,光会做几道考试题是远远不够的。

◆不可缺少的环节

没有几百万字的输入无法学好英语。语言的习得是一个长期的过程,需要大量的“输入”。一个由汉语武装起来的头脑,没有几百万字英文的输入,即使要达到一般水平也难。绝大多数的英语学习者正是由于缺少了这一环节,所以停留在一个无奈的水平上。

◆“圣人”学英语的做法

在学英语的长远目标和考试的压力共同作用下自然会产生学好英语的强烈愿望,但这一愿望的实现需要有很强的“韧劲”(自我约束力)。春来不是读书天,夏日炎炎正好眠,秋有蚊虫冬又冷,收起书包待明年。随着物质文明的繁荣,总有一些理由使人不能安心学习。这样下去,我们的英语之树永远长不高。古人云:人静而后安,安而能后定,定而能后慧,慧而能后悟,悟而能后得。很有道理。在四川大足佛教石刻艺术中,有一组大型佛雕《牧牛图》,描绘了一个牧童和牛由斗争、对抗到逐渐协调、融合,最后合而为一的故事。佛祖说:“人的心魔难伏,就像牛一样,私心杂念太多太多;修行者就要像牧童,修炼他们,驯服他们,以完美自己的人生。”那些具有很强的心力的人,我们姑且称其为“圣人”,他们能够驯服那些影响我们学习的大牛、小牛,抵制各种诱惑,集中精

力,专心学习,到达成功的彼岸。

◆凡人的困惑

在目前的教育体系中,学好英语是需要坚韧不拔的毅力的。但问题是我们大多数平凡的人无法和圣人相比,所以在学英语的征途上,失败者多,成功者少。客观地讲,在中国英语学习的失败率应该在 99% 以上,即使采用不是太高的标准来衡量——原因是英语的门槛太高了。有的人说难道我们不能把所有的或者是大多数的人都变成圣人吗,这样大多数人就可以学好英语了。我们不得不承认大多数凡夫俗子是不能够成为圣人的。值得我们深思的是目前的英语学习体系中没有给大多数人提供一条平坦的道路。

◆兴趣——英语学习成功的真正源泉

我和大家一样都是凡人,我也曾经遇到过学英语的困惑,干巴巴的课文无论怎样都激不起我的兴趣。幸运的是我有一个在国外生活多年的姐姐,有一次她回国,给我带来很多浅显有趣的读物。我拿起一本一读,觉得很简单,一个星期就读完了。就英语学习而言,一部英文小说其实就是用英语建构的一个“虚拟世界”。那里有人,有人的心灵和人与人之间关系的揭示,有人与自然、与社会的冲突和调和。走进一部英文小说,你实际上就已经“生活”在一个“英语世界”里了,不愁没有东西可学。经典作品要读,写得好的当代通俗小说也要读。我一共读了 50 本,从此对英语产生了兴趣,英语水平有了很大的提高。还是爱因斯坦说得好:“兴趣是最好的老师。”

◆《新概念英语》的主编 L. G. Alexander 的启示

中国人读英语书有个特点,越读不懂越读,习惯于读满篇都是生词的文章。L. G. Alexander 先生是世界著名的英语教学专家,他的经典之作《新概念英语》对于中国的英语教学产生了深远的影响。针对这一现状 Alexander 先生说过,“记住,你的接受型词汇量(即你听或阅读英语时能理解的部分)比你的积极词汇量(即你在说或写时能自如运用的部分)要大得多。如果要扩大词汇量,最好的办法是多听英语,多读英

语,但不要超出自己的水平,即阅读那些比你目前水平稍低的书。”这才是提高英语运用能力的诀窍。

本套读物的特色:

●情节曲折:本书选材的时候非常注意作品的吸引力。比方说:

《查泰莱夫人的情人》(Lady Chatterley's Lover):我当年读大学的时候,班上每个同学都买一本看。有的同学甚至熄灯后,打着手电筒躲在被窝里看。

《吸血鬼》(Dracula):这个故事真吓人,我看完以后好几天没睡觉。后来我的一个学生说他对英语从来不感兴趣,我就把这本小说推荐给他。后来他对我说:“这是我一口气读完的第一本英语书,就是太吓人了。老师,能不能再给我来一本?”

《呼啸山庄》(Wuthering Heights):讲述的是一个骇人听闻的复仇故事,当初没有想到这本书的作者竟然是一个生活在几乎与世隔绝环境中的女孩。

《飘》(Gone with the Wind):几乎所有的美国女孩都读过这本书,主人公斯佳丽是美国女孩的偶像,可以说我见过的每个美国女孩都是一个 Scarlett。

.....

本套丛书中包含的都是在你一生中值得去读的作品,读这些作品不但可以提高你的英语水平,而且能够提高你的个人修养。

●语言地道:本套读物均由美国作家执笔,用流畅的现代英语写成。他们写作功底深厚,这是母语为非英语的作者很难达到的。

●通俗易懂:本书是用 3300 个最常用的英语单词写成,易读懂,对于难词均有注释,而且采用英汉对照的形式。你躺在床上不用翻字典就能顺利地读下去。

●配有高质量的音带:这样大家可以在读懂的基础上进行听的训练,请注意:阅读需要量,听力更需要量。大量的语音输入是用英语深入交谈的源泉。

这套读物供你在下课后或下班后闲暇时阅读,其优点是帮你实现英语学习的生活化,使英语成为你生活的一部分。这才是英语成功的真谛,更是任何有难度事情成功的真谛。

王若平 于北京

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床头灯英语学习读本IV

The Secret Agent

密 探

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航空工业出版社



CHAPTER ONE

I n the morning, Mr. Verloc left his store with his wife's brother, which was easily done because he hardly ever had customers, especially late in the afternoon. His store *was located* in the same building as his house. He sold mainly pictures of naked women, sex books, and a couple of funny French cartoon books. These goods usually attracted either very young or very old men. Both types were quite shy about being seen walking into the store. The old men would wear long coats with the collars turned up in order to hide their faces. The young men, on the other hand, would stand on the sidewalk, trying to seem uninterested while taking secret looks at the pictures in the window. Then, when they knew what they wanted, they would run in, buy it, and run back out.

Mr. Verloc did not *care about* his store at all. He did not keep his appearance *nice and* clean for the customers, nor was he very friendly to them. When the broken bell at the top of the door announced that a new customer had arrived, he would walk from his home to the shop and stand silently behind the counter, waiting for the person to buy something expensive and useless.

In the evenings, Mrs. Verloc worked in the store. This often made the customers (all of them being men, of course) quite uncomfortable. However, it was good for business,



第一章

早上，伍洛克先生带着小舅子离开他的商店。他很清闲，因为来店里光顾的人从来都是寥寥无几，傍晚的时候尤为如此。商店和他的房子在同一栋楼里。店里卖的主要是一些裸体女子图片、黄色书籍和几本滑稽可笑的法国漫画书。这些商品经常吸引的要么是非常年轻的小伙，要么是年龄很大的老男人。这两种人都很害羞，怕走进这家店的时候被人瞧见。老男人常穿着长外套，竖起衣领遮着脸。年轻小伙则常站在人行道上，在努力佯装不感兴趣的同时，偷偷地朝摆在橱窗里的图片瞟上几眼。接着，一旦决定了自己想买的东西，他们就会冲进去，买下之后，再冲出来。



伍洛克先生一点也不担心他的店。他既不为顾客保持非常整洁的个人形象，也不对他们十分友好。当门顶上那个破铃宣告有顾客光临的时候，他总是从家中走到店里，然后一言不发地站在柜台后，等着那人买些昂贵却又无用的东西。

晚上，伍洛克夫人会来顶班。这常会让那些顾客（当然，全都是男的）很不自在。然而，这对店里的生意却有好处。为了装作不是只为着买些肮脏的图片才来这里，他们会附带

be located 位于

care about 担心

nice and... 后接形容词或副词，表示满意或赞赏，意思是“很，十分，非常”。如，这里的 *nice and clean* 便不能理解为“美好而又清洁”，而应该理解为“非常清洁”。



because people would also buy other things, like pens or envelopes, *in order to* make it seem like they had not come only to buy dirty pictures.

Most people who came in the evening were not customers, however. Instead of looking around the shop, they would say 'hello' to Mrs. Verloc and walk directly to the back of the store and down some stairs. There was only one entrance and exit from the house, and that was through the door of the store.

Mr. Verloc did not often leave his home. He found that everything he needed to do could be done there. Life at home was quite comfortable for him, because his wife took very good care of him.

He also had his wife's mother around the house. She had once owned an old hotel with a bar on the first floor. It was located in an area that *used to* be considered very wealthy, but was now less fashionable. She rented rooms to anyone who needed them. Most of her customers were quite poor and less than perfect gentlemen.

Mrs. Verloc's mother was quite old and had bad legs. In order to keep the business going, Mrs. Verloc had worked in the bar. She was good at the job, for she was beautiful and enjoyed talking with the customers.

Before they were married, Mr. Verloc was a frequent visitor of the hotel. He would leave the hotel late in the evening and return very early in the morning. He always told the young *barkeeper* that he had just come back from abroad,



买些别的东西，像笔呀，信封呀。

然而，大多数晚上来这里的人并不是顾客。他们不是在店里四下看看，而是和伍洛克夫人打声招呼，然后径直朝小店里走，接着下楼。进出这栋房子只有一个通道，那就是穿过店门。

伍洛克先生不常外出。他觉得需要做的一切在家里都可以完成。对他来讲，家中生活非常舒适，因为他的夫人把他照料得舒舒服服的。

家里还住着他的岳母。她曾在二层经营一家带酒吧的老旅店。旅馆所在的街区曾被认为非常富裕，但现在已不再为上流社会所欢迎。谁想租房，她就租给谁。这些房客大多很穷，算不上绅士。

伍洛克夫人的母亲上了年纪，腿也不好。为了维持生意，伍洛克夫人曾在酒吧帮忙。她长得漂亮，加上喜欢同客人聊天，所以在那儿干得不错。

婚前，伍洛克先生是这家旅馆的常客。他常常晚上很晚才离开店，早上又很早过去，而且总是告诉这位年轻的酒吧招待员他刚从国外做生意回来，却从来没讲清过做的是什么生意。

in order to 为了

used to 强调过去常发生但现在不再发生的动作；*would*：只表示过去的习惯动作，常常，总是，不强调与现在的对比。

barkeeper ['bɑː,ki:pə] *n.* 酒吧老板或酒吧招待员



where he had been doing business. He never made clear what kind of business he had done.

When they got married, Mr. Verloc decided that his mother-in-law's business would have to be sold so that he and his wife could start their own business. They moved into the home that was described earlier and Mr. Verloc began to spend most of his evenings out. The result was that Winnie hardly ever saw him, and was never taken out for a night on the town, like a good husband would do. When she asked him what kind of work he did, he would only say that it was related to politics. She accepted this and treated his political friends very well when they occasionally came over in the evenings.

When Mr. Verloc's *mother-in-law* moved in with her daughter and son-in-law, her health got worse. She could no longer walk at all. Realizing the kind of shop that Mr. Verloc owned, she was a little surprised. However, she accepted it, because she liked him. It made her happy to know that both her daughter and son, Stevie, would be taken care of for the rest of their lives. She was especially worried about Stevie, because he had a disability that would make him like a child for all of his life. Winnie was very close to her brother and planned to always care for him in the future.

Stevie worked as Mr. Verloc's *delivery boy*. However, because he found everything on the street so interesting, he would often make mistakes or forget where he was going.

When he was fourteen, a friend of the family gave him a



婚后，伍洛克先生决定得把岳母的店卖掉，这样他和妻子才能开始自己的生意。于是他们搬进了前面写到的房子，伍洛克先生也开始经常夜不归宿。结果，温妮便很少见到他，丈夫也从来没有像一个好丈夫那样在晚上带她进城。当她问他从事什么工作时，他常只说跟政治有关。她相信了他的说法，并且，当他的政治圈的朋友偶尔在晚上过来时，她也将他们待为上宾。

伍洛克先生的岳母自打搬来和她的女儿女婿同住后，健康状况便每况愈下。她再也不能走动了。了解到女婿经营着一家什么店后，她有些吃惊。然而，对女婿的喜爱让她接受了这个事实。知道女儿和儿子史蒂夫下半辈子都会有人照顾后，她就开心了。她尤其挂心的是史蒂夫，因为他有点弱智，这使得他这一辈子都会像个小孩。温妮很亲近他弟弟，打算将来永远照顾他。

史蒂夫曾做过伍洛克先生的送报员。可是由于他觉得街上的一切都那么有趣，他常常会出错或者忘了他要去哪儿。

在他十四岁的时候，家里的一个朋友为他

mother-in-law 婆母，岳母
delivery boy 送报员



job in his office helping the workers with small tasks. One day, however, he surprised everyone in the company by lighting many *fireworks* inside the building. The loud noise and smoke *frightened* many people and caused them to run outside, fearing for their lives. When asked why he had done it, Stevie said that two other boys in the company had upset him. The manager fired him immediately. It was clear that Stevie would not be able to work among the rest of society. Now, he had a room on the first floor of Mr. Verloc's home, next to his mother's. When he was not helping his sister with housework, he spent his time drawing circles on a piece of paper with a pencil.