

下册  
Extracurricular Reading Series of College English

大学英语课外读物系列

*Humor Part*

# 幽默篇

主编 李学爱



天津大学出版社  
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主编 李学爱

参编 刘 萍 李 霞

李玉平 张凤华



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## 编者寄语

阅读作为英语学习的重要内容,是学习者获得语言知识,获取信息的重要手段和途径,阅读能力也是学生语言综合能力的体现。但在教学中我们注意到,学生提起“阅读”却仿佛“鸡肋”,所谓食之无味,弃之可惜。针对这种情况,我们产生了编写一套学生既感兴趣又看得懂的阅读丛书的想法。于是《大学英语课外读物系列》丛书诞生了。

我国许多英语学习的前辈都在不同场合提起朗读对语言学习的重要作用:朗读可以培养语感,改善语音语调,更是提高口语表达能力最直接最简便的方式。“书读百遍,其意自现”,可见朗读益处多多,但学习中同学们常常为找不到适合朗读的材料而苦恼。于是我们的这套丛书就由《上册:朗诵篇》开始。《上册:朗诵篇》选取的文章,短小精悍,寓意深刻,语言优美,朗朗上口,旨在通过大声朗读帮助同学们开启通向英语世界的大门。兴趣是最好的老师。《中册:时尚篇》以同学们关注的时尚话题为线索,将学生在阅读报纸杂志中经

常遇到的一些困难,以点带面,释疑解惑,引导大家学会这些与我们的生活息息相关的语言表达形式。英语在很多中国学生的心中是“痛苦”的代名词。“头悬梁,锥刺股”的精神固然可贵,但我们真的不能在轻松愉悦的氛围中学习英语吗?现代心理学的研究成果已经证明,快乐是开启心智的良方。《下册:幽默篇》让您带着轻松愉快的心情,了解西方文化,体会英语的玄机与奥妙,在开心的笑声中不知不觉地提高英语水平。如果在从前痛苦的经历中,你依然一无所获,那么《下册:幽默篇》也许将成为你英语学习新的开始。

这是一套为满足学生需求而诞生的丛书,这是一套经实践证明行之有效的阅读材料,这是一套凝结着大学英语教师心血和期望的丛书,我们相信,这套丛书一定会为大家的英语学习开辟新的道路。

由于学识所限,书中不妥及错漏之处恳请诸位同仁及广大读者批评指正。

编者于南开园  
2006年1月4日

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## 1. Honesty

A man went to an insurance office to have his life insured. The manager of the office asked him how old his parents were when they died. "Mother had a bad heart and died at age of thirty. Father died of TB<sup>①</sup> when he was thirty-five." "I am very sorry," said the manager, "we cannot insure your life as your parents were not healthy." As the man was leaving the office, depressed, he met a clerk who had overheard<sup>②</sup> the conversation. "You must not be so frank and tell the truth," said the clerk, "no office will insure you if you speak like that. Use your imagination a little." The man went to another office and was shown into the manager's room. "Well, young man, how old were your parents when they died?" "Mother was ninety-three, and she died from a fall off her bicycle. Father was ninety-eight and he died while he was playing football!"

### Translation

### 诚实

一个男人到保险公司去上人寿保险,保险公司的经理问他,他的双亲去世时多大岁数。“母亲 30 岁时死于心脏病,父亲 35 岁时死于肺结核。”“实在对不起,”经理说,“因为你父母的身体状况欠佳,我们不能给你保人寿险。”就在这人垂头丧气地准备离开时,他碰到了一

① TB (tuberculosis 的缩写) 结核病, 肺结核

② overhear *vt.* 无意中听到



位在旁边听到他们谈话的职员。“你不能这么坦率地说出实情，”这位职员说，“像你那样说，没有保险公司会给你上保险的。稍稍用一下你的想象力。”这个男人又去了另一家保险公司，被领到经理室。“哎，年轻人，你父母多大岁数去世的？”“母亲 93 岁，她是从自行车上跌下来摔死的。父亲 98 岁，他是在踢足球时死的！”

### Remarks

如果从功利的角度来看，诚实并不总能对自己有利，有些事情如果不撒谎就可能办不成。文中这位要上人寿险的先生，因为如实地说出了他父母的寿数，被保险公司拒之门外。但接受别人忠告，经过发挥想象力之后所给出的回答却又如此地离谱。不知道哪个保险公司敢给这样的人上保险？对于不善于撒谎的人来说，撒谎的确是一件难事，就像对于习惯于撒谎的人来说，不让他撒谎也是一件难事一样。

### Open Questions for Discussion

1. Do you think a man should tell the truth under any circumstances? Why or why not?
2. Can you guess whether the manager in another office would insure the man's life or not when he heard the man's answer?
3. Is honesty out of date in your mind?

## 2. Getting License

Nina Smith patiently stood in line waiting her turn to fill out a driver's license application.

Finally reaching the window, she handed the proper forms to the middle-aged woman behind the desk.

Looking through them, the woman commented, "We need proof that you are over 18 years of age before we can process this."

Mrs. Smith, 72, stepped back, startled by the request.

"Look at me. Don't you think I look older than 18?" she asked incredulously<sup>①</sup>.

Thinking back on the incident, the gray-haired woman just laughs. "It was definitely the joke of the day for my friends and me. We all got a big laugh out of it."

Mrs. Smith, who was applying for a driver's license for a new golf cart, said she had to leave the license bureau empty-handed because she couldn't prove her age.

"I've never heard of anything like it," she said. "It was so stupid. You should have heard all the people snickering<sup>②</sup> in the line behind me."

"The girl behind the window was serious," Mrs. Smith said. "I handed her my rec<sup>③</sup> card, but she said it wasn't good enough. She told me she was just following the rules, and she didn't make them."

Arizona Law requires identification to establish the correct name and

① incredulously *adv.* 不相信地

② snicker *vi.* 窃笑, 暗笑

③ rec (record 的缩写) 此处指行驶记录

date of birth for applicants, said a representative from the State Motor Vehicle Department.

“She must be a pretty spry<sup>①</sup>-looking 72-year-old,” he chuckled. “But if she didn’t have a past driver’s license, the woman was right in requesting verification. We do require a passport, birth certificate or a certificate of baptism<sup>②</sup>.”

Because her driver’s license expired in 1974, Mrs. Smith said her husband, Jed, is searching through records in their safe deposit box for her passport or birth certificate.

Once the document is found, she plans a second trip to the bureau, preparing for the possibility of being “carded<sup>③</sup>”.

“It was just hilarious<sup>④</sup>,” she said. “If it had been a man, though, I would have just smiled and said, ‘Thank you, sir. I’ll go find it.’”

## Translation

### 执照趣事

奈娜·史密斯耐心地站在队伍中,等着轮到她填写驾驶执照申请表。

终于,她来到了窗口,将正式填好的表格递给了桌子后面的那位中年妇女。

① spry *n.* 〈口〉小年轻

② baptism *n.* 浸礼,洗礼

③ card *vt.* 向……要身份证

④ hilarious *adj.* 引人发笑的,滑稽的

那位女士把表格从头到尾看了一遍,然后说:“在办理这个之前,我们需要你年龄超过 18 岁的证明。”

72 岁的史密斯夫人向后退了一步,被这个要求吓了一跳。

“看看我,难道你认为我看起来没有超过 18 岁吗?”她不敢相信地问道。

回想起这件事情,这位满头白发的妇人就笑了。“这当然成了我和我朋友们当时的笑料。我们都对此大笑不已。”

史密斯夫人是为了一辆新高尔夫球车申请驾驶执照的。她说她不得不空手离开执照局,因为她不能证明自己的年龄。

她说:“我从来没听说过这样的事。太愚蠢了!你真该听听我后面队伍中所有的人都在窃笑!”

“窗户后面的姑娘却很严肃,”史密斯夫人说道,“我把我的行驶记录卡递给她,但她说不行。她告诉我她只是照章行事,并非自造规矩。”

亚利桑那州法律规定对于申请人需要身份证以证实其真实的姓名与出生日期。一位来自州机动车辆部门的代表解释说。

他笑呵呵地说:“她一定是一位看上去非常生气勃勃的 72 岁老人。但是如果她没有过去的驾驶执照,那位女士要求证实,也是无可厚非的。我们的确需要护照、出生证明或者受洗证明。”

史密斯夫人说由于她的驾驶执照在 1974 年就到期了,她的丈夫杰德正在保险箱里的证件中翻找她的护照或出生证明。

一旦找到证件,史密斯夫人打算二度去执照局,准备好被要求“出示证明”。

“这简直太有趣了,”史密斯夫人说,“不过如果当时是位男士,我会只是笑笑,然后说,‘谢谢你,先生。我这就去找。’”

### Remarks

我们常说,制度是死的,人是活的。严格按照规章制度办事固然没错,但有时太过僵硬死板,却未免不近情理,或贻笑大方。当然,做事情也不能太灵活,当灵活掌握已经变得失去了尺度时,制度也就成为一纸空文了。看看我们的周围,是不是存在很多这种视制度为无物,什么都灵活掌握的情况呢?这牵涉到治理社会最根本也是最重要的一个问题,即:是要法制,还是要人制?要法制,就得严格遵守制度,牺牲一些自由;要人制,法律制度就形同虚设。鱼与熊掌是不可兼得的。

### Open Questions for Discussion

1. In your opinion, is the woman at the License Bureau right in requesting verification from Mrs. Smith?
2. Do you agree that almost every rule has its exceptions?

### 3. *Charity Begins at Home*

A local charity office realized that it had never received a donation from the town's most successful lawyer. The person in charge of contributions called to persuade him to contribute. "Our research shows that out of a yearly income of at least \$ 500, 000, you give not a penny to charity. Wouldn't you like to give back to the community in some way?"

The lawyer mulled<sup>①</sup> this over for a moment and replied, "First, did your research also show that my mother is dying after a long illness, and had medical bills that are several times her annual income?"

Embarrassed, the rep<sup>②</sup> mumbled<sup>③</sup>, "Um... No."

"Or that my brother, a disabled veteran, is blind and confined to a wheelchair?"

The stricken<sup>④</sup> rep began to stammer<sup>⑤</sup> out an apology but was interrupted, "...or that my sister's husband died in a traffic accident," the lawyer's voice rising in indignation, "leaving her penniless with three children?!"

The humiliated rep, completely beaten, said simply, "I had no idea..."

On a roll<sup>⑥</sup>, the lawyer cut him off once again, "...and if I don't give

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① mull *vt.* 仔细考虑, 反复思考

② rep *n.* 〈口〉代表

③ mumble *vi.* 含糊地说, 咕哝

④ stricken *adj.* 被打中的, 遭受挫折的

⑤ stammer *vi.* (与 out 连用) 结结巴巴地说, 口吃地说

⑥ on a roll 在连续势头中

them a penny, why should I give any to you?!”

### Translation

## 吝啬鬼

当地一家慈善机构发现,它从来没有收到过本镇最成功的一名律师的捐款。捐款负责人打电话给他,以说服他慷慨解囊:“我们调查发现,你年收入至少 50 万美元,但没有给慈善机构捐过一分钱。你不想以某种方式回报社会吗?”

律师略假思索后回答:“首先,你们调查过没有,我母亲长期卧病,奄奄一息,她的医疗费是她年收入的几倍?”

这位慈善代表颇为尴尬,喃喃地说:“呃……没有。”

“再者,我兄弟是个残疾老兵,双目失明,身陷轮椅。你们调查过吗?”

感到震惊的慈善代表开始结结巴巴地道歉,但被律师打断了,律师因义愤而提高了嗓门:“还有,我妹夫死于车祸,身后留下三个孩子,却没有给我妹妹留下分文。你们调查过吗?!”

羞愧难当的慈善代表彻底败下阵来,直说:“我不知道……”

律师不依不饶,再次打断他的话说:“……如果我一个子儿都不给他们,那么我凭什么该给你们呢?!”

### Remarks

一个连自己生病的老母、残疾的兄弟和寡居的妹妹都不管的人,还想指望他给慈善机构捐款,这位捐款负责人也太“不识时务”了,难怪最后会“彻底败下阵来”!

按照正常人的逻辑思维,当这位慈善代表听到律师先生有这么

多需要帮助的亲友时,他会想当然地认为律师不需要再捐助他人了。但到了最后这位律师老兄才暴露出庐山真面目,原来他所说的需要他帮助的亲友也并没有从他那里得到一个子儿的帮助!

### **Open Questions for Discussion**

1. How do you think of the lawyer?
2. Why did the person in charge of contributions fail to persuade the lawyer into donating any money to charity?



#### 4. *The Captain's Parrot*

A magician was working on a cruise ship in the Caribbean. He has a different audience each week, so he allowed himself to perform the same act over and over again. There was only one problem: the captain's parrot saw the shows each week and began to understand how the magician did every trick.

Once he understood, he started shouting in the middle of every show. "Look, that's not the same hat! Now he's hiding the flowers under the table! Hey, why are all the cards the Ace of Spades?" The magician was furious but couldn't do anything about it. After all, it was the captain's parrot.

One day the unthinkable happened. The ship had an accident and sank! The magician found himself on a piece of wood in the middle of the ocean with the parrot. They glared at each other, but did not utter a single word for days.

After a week the parrot finally broke the silence and said: "OK, I give up. Where'd you hide the boat?"

#### Translation

#### 船长的鹦鹉

一位魔术师在加勒比海的一艘游船上工作。每周的观众都不同,因此他一次又一次地表演同一套魔术。唯一的问题是:船长的鹦鹉每周都观看表演,逐渐看透了他的每一个把戏。