



非英语专业研究生英语系列教材

读·思·研
研究生英语阅读

Read · Reflect · Research
Graduate English Reading

Editor-in-Chief: Gao LiLi



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Preface

Undergraduate English teaching in China has undergone fundamental reform under the guidance of *the College English Curriculum Requirements*. As a result, a number of new textbooks have been published; some of the most influential of these have been *New Era Interactive English*; *New Horizon College English*; *Experiencing English*; *College English (Revised Edition)* and *21st Century College English*, which are now being used in more than 180 universities across China. These achievements in the reform of undergraduate English education are now challenging graduate English teaching and its publishing projects to undergo complementary reforms. The present volume *Read · Reflect · Research — Graduate English Reading* intends to open a way for innovative English teaching and learning during graduate English education.

Read · Reflect · Research is a reading course book for graduate students (non-major) and self-study learners who want to develop their English from intermediate to advanced levels. *The ultimate goal* of this book is not just to teach students to read English text selected for its own sake, but to produce active readers, inquiring readers, independent readers, creative readers, critical readers... thus to develop readers' analytical thinking ability in English as well as their skills in listening, speaking, reading and writing.

There are *eight units* in this book and each unit has *two parts*:

Reading Guidelines and Selected Reading. Part I (Reading Guidelines) covers basic reading skills such as scanning, skimming, getting word meaning by word-formation, reading for comprehension and advanced reading skills like critical reading and reading for artistic appreciation. *The Reading Practices* have been designed to provide experience of using specific reading skills in order to enable readers to develop the skill in question.

Part II (Selected Reading) covers a wide range of topics: language, intercultural communication, education, marriage, family, economic development, environmental, political concerns and issues, literature, music, dancing and painting. The selected reading also provides examples of different uses of the major rhetorical patterns such as argumentation, essay, humor, discourse, speech, governmental document, special report, poem, drama, and short story. The selection maintains a balance between *classic* and *contemporary* writers, from Bacon, Newman, Orwell, Shakespeare, Faulkner, Barna, Wessel, and others. *Part II (Selected Reading)* is divided into two sections, *Text A* and *Text B*. The first of these, *Text A* can be used for classroom reading in order to pursue the following five objectives:

- to develop readers' ability to integrate skills in listening, speaking, reading, writing and thinking;
- to develop readers' ability to learn autonomously along with their cross-cultural awareness and communication skills;
- to develop in readers the ability to learn how to learn;
- to relieve the teacher of the Atlas' complex, bearing the entire burden of transmitting English knowledge to students with a "course-book + blackboard + chalk + lecture";
- to shift classroom practice toward student-centered instruction.

Brainstorming at the beginning of *Selected Reading Text A* is a pre-reading activity in which two or more students can get together to dis-

cuss the five questions that are given. These questions are quite open and they can help generate more good, maybe different ideas concerning the topic of the text. Students need not worry whether their answers are correct, but just speak out or write down everything that is associated with that topic “in a stream-of-consciousness fashion” (Clausen 1987). *Brainstorming* will make their reading journey livelier and more enjoyable.

Vocabulary Bank not only offers phonetic alphabet and word definition of the new word, but also well-chosen examples, thus to save both teachers and readers time and energy to dig in word study.

Comprehension Check is divided into two parts: *Understanding subject* and *Examining technique and style*. The comprehension questions in *Understanding subject* are intended to examine the theme and the main idea of the text. The next 3 ~5 questions in *Examining technique and style* are aimed at understanding the writing technique, style and other writing strategies.

Hip-hop Debate is for Speaking and Discussion. Two topics are presented with background knowledge to encourage one-to-one debate, which will allow each student to think independently and speak confidently. If the debate is set in a group, some students will lose their opportunities to present. They can switch to a different debate partner each time. “Reading makes a full man; conference a ready man.” (Bacon)

Reflection Pond is for Independent Thinking. An active and creative reader can always spend a few minutes making thoughtful reflections upon what he/she has read and connect it to what he/she has already known or experienced. Without taking a connected view of past and present, far and near, the reader will achieve nothing but a few broken

language items from the reading. “ I think, therefore I read, ” can be derived from Descartes’ famous dictum: “I think, therefore I am.”

Research Garden is for Research, Writing and Presentation. Some people hold that “research” can only be done by outstandingly, remarkably gifted, talented persons with an unusual level of commitment and with sophisticated statistical knowledge. How could it be related to English reading class? In fact, research can be done in an English teaching class, since “research” is no more than a careful, patient study and investigation in some field of knowledge, and it is no more than a systematic way of asking questions. In order to establish graduate students’ enquiring habits and to stimulate their discovery and investigation, 10 relevant research questions are designed after reading the text. They can choose one topic or the one they are interested in, to go to find more sources from the library or Internet. They can work with their peers or by themselves on a PPT presentation or a 500-word research paper. Writing and Presentation at this level are very helpful in shaping a use-based & output-based language instruction and in enhancing student-student interaction, teacher-student interaction, students’ learning motivation and learner autonomy.

Culture Square is for Listening or Reading for Delight. It is intended to develop students’ intercultural sensitivity in language learning, and the awareness of their own and others’ cultural identities, which will help them to interact effectively with people from other cultures.

Selected Reading Text B can be used for out-of-class reading or enlargement. There are two types of comprehension checks: *Understanding subject and Reflections on the author’s ideas*. The last four questions in *Reflections on the author’s ideas* are for either independent thinking or group discussion. A critical reader doesn’t accept facts or the author’s idea passively, but take energetic and simultaneous reflective actions

upon and towards the author's ideas.

If you are interested. . . By reading, reflection and research, students have explored some ideas about the selected readings. Other related issues can be examined by further reading, watching movies, visiting some web sites. If they are interested in making further enquiries, sources listed could help.

Would you like to add? In order to encourage student-orientated and individualized learning, this sub-item is for students to keep down anything interesting and stimulating they have explored in learning. They can also share their "reading journal" with their teacher and classmates: a page of an article review, a book review, a film review; a personal story; a few lines of quotation, a good piece of music, a song. . . it can be everything.

In a narrow sense, *Read · Reflect · Research* is written to improve readers' reading skills and language competence, while in a broad sense, it is for them to be growing both in English knowledge and a full multi-dimensional, dynamic, holistic understanding of the world. This mirrors the concern for English teaching and learning in the future, demonstrating characteristics, such as: Teacher — professionally qualified; interdisciplinary developed; Student — responsible for their own learning; Teaching — humanistic education; Learning — autonomous and confident learning; Assessment — both knowledge-based and performance-based.

Gao Lili
Luojia Hill, Wuhan
January 2006

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Unit One

Language, Culture and Communication

Language, any language, has a dual character: it is both a means of communication and a carrier of culture.

—N. Wa Thiong'o

Culture is communication and communication is culture.

—Edward T. Hall

The limits of my language are the limits of my mind. All I know is what I have words for.

—Ludwig Wittgenstein

There's language in her eyes, her cheek, her lip. Nay, her foot speaks.

—William Shakespeare



Part I Reading Guidelines: *Developing Good Reading Habits*

Do you have any difficulties in reading comprehension? Many students, just like you, are sometimes nervous about reading. However, if you realize reading is just a skill, like swimming or driving, which you were not born knowing, you will feel more confident in dealing with it. Yes, few of us suffer from “genetic” reading difficulties. To be a competent reader, you just develop your reading skill the same way you develop your swimming or driving skills: helpful instructions, strong desire to succeed, and practice, practice and practice.

To be good at reading with understanding, you need to develop a rich vocabulary, to have an implicit understanding of syntax, and to combine that with a wealth of background knowledge about the world. Here, a good starting-point is to develop good reading habits.

1. *Read for ideas and concepts.* Keep in your mind an outline or map of the author's main idea. It is helpful to read the text at least twice: the first time, to obtain an overall impression of the text, then focus on significant details, and how it is organized.

The main idea of a passage or reading is the central thought or message. “Main” means what is important, or key, the heart of the matter. “Idea” means the thought, the thesis or the topic. A main idea sentence has two parts, usually called the topic and the controlling idea. “Topic” refers to the subject under discussion and the “controlling idea” is what you learn, or what you find out in the paragraph about the topic. In English paragraphs, the main idea will most likely be found in one of these

five places: in the first sentence; in the last sentence; in the middle of the paragraph or in the implied sentences where main ideas are not stated in the paragraph directly. Those are where you are likely to get the best statement or clearest expression of the main idea. Pay attention to any idea that is repeated in different ways. If an author returns to the same thought in several different sentences or paragraphs, that idea is the main or central thought under discussion.

2. *Read in thought groups, not word for word.* Think of sentences or even paragraphs, not individual words, as the basic units of meaning. A poor reader usually concentrates on each word separately by moving his/her eyes from word to word. Remember not to read out loud or even whisper the words to yourself while reading; trying to pronounce the words while reading actually slows down your pace. Also, your eyes move faster than you can speak, so reading orally or even self-pronouncing the words under your breath can drag you down.

3. *Reading is enjoying, not "drilling".* And reading performance is best when you are relaxed. No matter when you read or are asked to read, you will have the opportunity to explore many subjects: new places, new ideas and new emotions. You are growing in knowledge, understanding and imagination.

Reading Practice 1

Now read the following passage at your normal speed, trying to get a good general idea of what it is about, and then identify the sentence that best expresses the main idea of the passage.

David Hitchcock's study, entitled "Asian Values and the United States—How Much Conflict" is intended to ascertain *the differences between Asian and American values*. Here are the differences, which Hitchcock finds between Asian and American values. On personal values, Asians emphasize the importance of respect for learning, honesty and self-discipline, whereas Ameri-

cans emphasize achieving success in life, personal achievement and helping others. On societal values, there are three differences. First, 71% of the Asians compared to 11% of the Americans emphasize the importance of orderly society. Second, 82% of the Americans compared to 32% of the Asians emphasize the importance of personal freedom. Third, 78% of the Americans compared to 29% of the Asians emphasize the importance of individual rights. Hitchcock's survey findings confirm that there are significant differences between the personal and societal values of Asians and Americans. To recapitulate, Asians emphasize the importance of orderly society whereas Americans emphasize the importance of personal freedom and individual rights. Asians emphasize the importance of respect for learning and self-discipline whereas Americans emphasize the importance of success, personal achievement and helping others.

The main idea sentence is the _____ sentence of the passage.

Reading Practice 2

Read the following passage and select the statement that best expresses its main idea.

Our effectiveness as intercultural communicators depends largely upon the cultural similarities and differences between ourselves and others. Cultural similarities usually facilitate communication while cultural differences tend to inhibit it. Although most people recognize the importance of understanding the culture of the other person involved in the communication, very few of us see the need to understand our own cultural conditioning and its influence on our communicative behavior. So *cultural self-awareness* could make it easier for us to diagnose difficulties in intercultural communication. It enables us to examine such difficulties

from the point of view of discovering what cultural aspects of our own thinking may have caused the difficulty. Ordinarily, we react to not being able to communicate what seems to be a self-evident idea by speculating on what shortcomings of the other person might explain the difficulty. As we increase our cultural self-awareness we should be able to suspend judgment when confronted in an intercultural encounter by behavior that appears odd. We should be more ready to suspect that the appearance of oddness may be caused by cultural influences in our own thinking and behavior.

1. It is difficult for us to recognize cultural difference in intercultural communication.
2. According to the author, cultural self-awareness can help us to diagnose difficulties in intercultural communication.
3. In intercultural communication, we should suspect appearance of oddness.
4. Understanding the culture of the other person is different from discovering cultural aspects of our own thinking.

Reading Practice 3

Read the following passage and then write a sentence expressing the main idea.

Within the past few centuries, the number of interactions between culturally diverse people has greatly increased due to the increase in world population and the advances in technology. The world population and technological advances have grown at an exponential rate. Undoubtedly all related aspects, such as personal interaction, have also grown at an exponential rate. Past advances in transportation and telecommunication technologies, for example, ships, jets and telephones, have brought ever-increasing waves of intercultural contact. One of the newly and rap-

idly developing telecommunication technologies, the Internet, is bringing the next wave of increased contact. The Internet and its precursors have in the past been commonly used to send and receive vast amounts of business and scientific data around the globe. Increasing in popularity, however, is the use of the Internet for person-to-person communication, called *computer-mediated communication*.

Over the computer networks, people exchange written documents instantaneously, at low cost, and over long distances. The growth of global computer networks and the increased power and lowering cost of computers has brought computer-mediated communication to many people around the world. In the past it took some effort to get involved in intercultural communication. People would have had to travel on long and difficult trips to come in contact with the culturally different. Nowadays, on the global computer networks, we can, with a few key-strokes on our computer terminals, near instantaneously come in contact with people from other cultures. We do not have to physically travel to partake in intercultural communication. Instead, we can electronically travel through cyberspace and partake in a new form of communication: intercultural computer-mediated communication.

The main idea of the passage: _____

Reading Practice 4

Try to read the following passage in thought groups, and you will be an efficient reader if you keep on practicing this good reading habit, or strategy.

Planet Earth stands on the cusp of disaster and people should no longer take it for granted that their children and grandchildren will survive in the environmentally degraded world of the 21st century. This is not the doom-laden talk of green activists but the

considered opinion of 1,300 leading scientists from 95 countries, who published a detailed assessment of the state of the world at the start of the new millennium, *The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment*. The 22 national science academies from around the world find that two-thirds of the delicately balanced ecosystems they have studied have suffered badly at the hands of man over the past 50 years. The dry land regions of the world, for example, which account for 41 per cent of the earth's land surface, have been particularly badly damaged and yet this is where the human population has grown most rapidly during the 1990s. Over the past 50 years, humans have changed ecosystems more rapidly and extensively than at any time in human history, largely to meet rapidly growing demands for food, fresh water, timber and fiber. The full costs of this are only now becoming apparent. Some 15 of the 24 ecosystems vital for life on earth have been seriously degraded or used unsustainably — an ecosystem being defined as a dynamic complex of plants, animals and micro-organisms that form a functional unit with the non-living environment in which they coexist. The scale of the changes seen in the past few decades has been unprecedented. Nearly one-third of the land surface is now cultivated, with more land being converted into cropland since 1945 than in the whole of the 18th and 19th centuries combined. The amount of water withdrawn from rivers and lakes for industry and agriculture has doubled since 1960 and there is now between three and six times as much water held in man-made reservoirs as there is flowing naturally in rivers. Meanwhile, the amount of nitrogen and phosphorus that has been released into the environment as a result of using farm fertilizers has doubled in the same period.

The assessment warns that unless the international community takes decisive action, the future looks bleak for the next generation: we are spending earth's natural capital, putting such