



2006^年 曹其军考研英语 ①

英语

历年试题解析

主编 曹其军

- 涵盖96-05试题
- 短文试题均译
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国家行政学院出版社



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英语历年试题解析

主编 曹其军
编者 曹其军 王 润
王文珂 章 杰

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曹其军 主编

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研究过去 找出规律 认识现在 掌握重点 预测未来 夺取高分

(代前言)

(一)

对于英语考试来说，试卷本身就是一份量表，它是《英语考试大纲》规定的考试内容和考试要求的具体体现。全国硕士研究生入学考试英语统考试题是广大英语教师及参加命题的专家、教授智慧和劳动的结晶，是一份宝贵的资料。每套试题，既反映了《英语考试大纲》对考生英语知识、能力和水平的要求，又蕴涵着命题的指导思想、基本原则和趋势，因此，对照《英语考试大纲》分析、研究这些试题不仅可以展示出统考以来英语考试的全貌，便于广大考生了解有关试题和信息，把握考试的特点及命题的思路和规律，而且通过反复做历年试题，发现问题，找出差距，以便广大考生能及时查漏补缺，通过研究历年试题，也便于广大考生明确复习方向和复习重点，从而从容应考，夺取高分。

(二)

本书汇集了1996年—2005年历届全国硕士研究生入学统考试题，而且对所有试题均给出了详细解答，特别值得一提的是，本书所列试卷中所有短文都有中文译文，包括选择题的题干和选项。这对于考生分析试题考点、研究命题规律是很有帮助的。本书对每一道试题的解析（长句结构分析），不仅可以帮助考生复习基础知识，更重要的是使考生对所考知识点不仅知其然，而且知其所以然，从中掌握各类题型的解题思路、方法和技巧。不仅如此，本书在每篇短文的参考译文中提供了重点词汇的基本意思，这样既便于考生记忆词汇，同时也有利于提高考生的翻译水平。

(三)

历年试题的规范性、针对性决定了它是最好的训练试题。因此，我们建议：

1. 考生在阅读本书时，应先看《英语考试大纲》，以便明确考试的有关要求，

接着去认真阅读有关参考书，复习完后，再来看本书的试题，以检验自己的水平。

2. 考生在看本书试题时，应该先自己动手在考试规定时间（3 小时）内做题，然后对照答案，给自己记分，最后看本书对每道试题的详细解析，分析自己错因及对的理由。

3. 考生在看本书试题时，不要就题论题，而要通过历年试题，熟悉考试的内容和形式，研究命题规律，找出命题重点，明确自己复习方向。

4. 考生在看本书试题前，应该熟知本书附录中所列大纲基础词汇的基本意思和引申意思。

5. 考生仔细研读本书后，应找一两本质量好且针对性强的阅读理解和短文写作专项复习书进行训练。重点推荐：《考研英语阅读理解 Step by Step》和《考研英语写作 Step by Step》（曹其军主编、国家行政学院出版社出版）。

本书由曹其军主编。在本书出版过程中，国家行政学院出版社的李锦慧作为本书的责任编辑，作了认真细致地编辑工作，在此表示感谢。

本书在编写、编辑和出版过程中，尽管我们抱着对广大考生认真负责的精神，高质量、严要求，但由于时间紧、任务重，加上我们水平有限，难免有许多不足、不尽人意之处。敬请广大读者和专家同行不吝赐教、批评指正。

祝考生复习顺利，心想事成，考研成功！

曹其军

2005 年 2 月

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第一部分 水平测试

Section I Use of English

Directions:

Read the following text. Choose the best word(s) for each numbered blank and mark A, B, C or D on ANSWER SHEET 1. (10 points)

Teachers need to be aware of the emotional, intellectual, and physical changes that young adults experience. And they also need to give serious 1 to how they can best 2 such changes. Growing bodies need movement and 3, but not just in ways that emphasize competition. 4 they are adjusting to their new bodies and a whole host of new intellectual and emotional challenges, teenagers are especially self-conscious and need the 5 that comes from achieving success and knowing that their accomplishments are 6 by others. However, the typical teenage lifestyle is already filled with so much competition that it would be 7 to plan activities in which there are more winners than losers, 8, publishing newsletters with many student-written book reviews, 9 student artwork, and sponsoring book discussion clubs. A variety of small clubs can provide 10 opportunities for leadership, as well as for practice in successful 11 dynamics. Making friends is extremely important to teenagers, and many shy students need the 12 of some kind of organization with a supportive adult 13 visible in the background.

In these activities, it is important to remember that young teens have 14 attention spans. A variety of activities should be organized 15 participants can remain active as long as they want and then go on to 16 else without feeling and without letting the other participants 17. This does not mean that adults must accept irresponsibility. 18, they can help students acquire a sense of commitment by 19 for roles that are within their 20 and their attention spans and by having clearly stated rules.

1. [A] thought [B] idea [C] opinion [D] advice
2. [A] strengthen [B] accommodate [C] stimulate [D] enhance
3. [A] care [B] nutrition [C] exercise [D] leisure
4. [A] If [B] Although [C] Whereas [D] Because
5. [A] assistance [B] guidance [C] confidence [D] tolerance
6. [A] claimed [B] admired [C] ignored [D] surpassed
7. [A] improper [B] risky [C] fair [D] wise
8. [A] in effect [B] as a result [C] for example [D] in a sense

- | | | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| 9. [A] displaying | [B] describing | [C] creating | [D] exchanging |
| 10. [A] durable | [B] excessive | [C] surplus | [D] multiple |
| 11. [A] group | [B] individual | [C] personnel | [D] corporation |
| 12. [A] consent | [B] insurance | [C] admission | [D] security |
| 13. [A] particularly | [B] barely | [C] definitely | [D] partly |
| 14. [A] similar | [B] long | [C] different | [D] short |
| 15. [A] if only | [B] now that | [C] so that | [D] even if |
| 16. [A] everything | [B] anything | [C] nothing | [D] something |
| 17. [A] off | [B] down | [C] out | [D] alone |
| 18. [A] On the contrary | [B] On the average | [C] On the whole | [D] On the other hand |
| 19. [A] making | [B] standing | [C] planning | [D] taking |
| 20. [A] capabilities | [B] responsibilities | [C] proficiency | [D] efficiency |

Section II Reading Comprehension

Part A

Directions:

Read the following four texts. Answer the questions below each text by choosing A, B, C or D. Mark your answers on ANSWER SHEET 1. (40 points)

Text 1

Traditionally, the study of history has had fixed boundaries and focal points — periods, countries, dramatic events, and great leaders. It also has had clear and firm notions of scholarly procedure: how one inquires into a historical problem, how one presents and documents one's findings, what constitutes admissible and adequate proof.

Anyone who has followed recent historical literature can testify to the revolution that is taking place in historical studies. The currently fashionable subjects come directly from the sociology catalog: childhood, work, leisure. The new subjects are accompanied by new methods. Where history once was primarily narrative, it is now entirely analytic. The old questions "What happened?" and "How did it happen?" have given way to the question "Why did it happen?" prominent among the methods used to answer the question "Why" is psychoanalysis, and its use has given rise to psychohistory.

Psychohistory does not merely use psychological explanations in historical contexts. Historians have always used such explanations when they were appropriate and when there was sufficient evidence for them. But this pragmatic use of psychology is not what psychohistorians intend. They are committed, not just to psychology in general, but to Freudian psychoanalysis. This commitment precludes a commitment to history as historians have always understood it. Psychohistory derives its "fact" not from history, the detailed records of events and their consequences, but from psychoanalysis of the individuals who made history, and deduces its theories not from this or that instance in their lives, but from a view of human

nature that transcends history. It denies the basic criterion of historical evidence; that evidence be publicly accessible to, and therefore assessable by, all historians. And it violates the basic tenet of historical method; that historians be alert to the negative instances that would refute their theses.

Psychohistorians, convinced of the absolute rightness of their own theories, are also convinced that theirs is the "deepest" explanation of any event, that other explanations fall short of the truth.

Psychohistory is not content to violate the discipline of history (in the sense of the proper mode of studying and writing about the past); it also violates the past itself. It denies to the past an integrity and will of its own, in which people acted out of a variety of motives and in which events has a multiplicity of causes and effects. It imposes upon the present, thus robbing people and events of their individuality and of their complexity. Instead of respecting the particularity of the past, it assimilates all events, past and present, into single deterministic schema that is presumed to be true at all times and in all circumstances.

21. The main point of the passage is

- [A] the approach of psychohistorians to historical study is currently in vogue even though it lacks the rigor and verifiability of traditional historical method.
- [B] traditional historians can benefit from studying the techniques and findings of psycho-historians.
- [C] areas of sociological study such as childhood and work are of little interest to traditional historians.
- [D] history is composed of unique and non-repeating events that must be individually analyzed on the basis of publicly verifiable evidence.

22. It can be inferred from the passage that one way in which traditional history can be distinguished from psychohistory is that traditional history usually

- [A] views past events as complex and having their own individuality.
- [B] relies on a single interpretation of human behavior to explain historical events.
- [C] interprets historical events in such a way that their specific nature is transcended.
- [D] turns to psychological explanations in historical contexts to account for events.

23. It is implied in the passage that the methods used by psychohistorians probably prevent them from

- [A] presenting their material in chronological order.
- [B] producing a one-sided picture of an individual's personality and motivations.
- [C] uncovering alternative explanations that might cause them to question their own conclusions.
- [D] offering a consistent interpretation of the impact of personality on historical events.

24. Which of the following questions can be answered with the information from the passage?

- [A] What are some specific examples of the use of psychohistory in historical interpretation?
- [B] When were the conventions governing the practice of traditional history first established?
- [C] What sort of historical figure is best suited for psycho-historical analysis?
- [D] What is the basic criterion of historical evidence required by traditional historians?

25. Which of the following does the author mention as a characteristic of the practice of psychohistorians?

- [A] The lives of historical figures are presented in episodic rather than narrative form.
- [B] Archives used by psychohistorians to gather material are not accessible to other scholars.
- [C] Past and current events are all placed within the same deterministic schema.

- [D] Events in the adult life of a historical figure are seen to be more consequential than are those in the childhood of the figure.

Text 2

September 11 should have driven home a basic lesson for the Bush administration about life in an interconnected world: misery abroad threatens security at home. It is no coincidence that Osama Bin Laden found warm hospitality in the Taliban's Afghanistan, whose citizens were among the most impoverished and oppressed on earth. If the administration took this lesson seriously, it would dump the rules of realpolitik that have governed U.S. foreign aid policy for 50 years. Instead, it is pouring money into an ally of convenience, Pakistan, which is ultimately likely to expand the ranks of anti-American terrorists abroad.

To enlist Pakistan in the fight against the Taliban, the Bush administration resurrected the Cold War tradition of propping up despotic military regimes in the name of peace and freedom. Its commitment of billions of dollars to Pakistan since September 11 will further entrench the sort of government that has made Pakistan both a development failure and a geopolitical hotspot for decades. Within Pakistan, the aid may ultimately create enough angry young men to make up Al Qaeda's losses in Afghanistan. In South Asia as a whole, the cash infusion may accelerate a dangerous arms race with India.

Historically, the U.S. government has cloaked aid to allies such as Pakistan in the rhetoric of economic development. As a Cold War ally, Pakistan received some \$ 37 billion in grants and loans from the West between 1960 and 1990, adjusting for inflation. And since September 11, the U.S. administration has promised more of the same. It has dropped sanctions imposed after Pakistan detonated a nuclear bomb in 1998, pushed through a \$ 1.3 billion IMF loan for Pakistan, and called for another \$ 2 billion from the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank. The Bush administration is also, ironically, pressing allies to join it in canceling or rescheduling billions of dollars of old (and failed) loans that were granted in past decades in response to similar arm-twisting.

Despite — even because of — all this aid, Pakistan is now one of the most indebted, impoverished, militarized nations on earth. The causes of Pakistan's poverty are sadly familiar. The government ignored family planning, leading to population expansion from 50 million in 1960 to nearly 150 million today, for an average growth rate of 2.6 percent a year. Foreign aid meant to pave rural roads went into unneeded city highways — or pockets of top officials. And the military grew large, goaded by a regional rivalry with India that has three times bubbled into war. The result is a government that, as former World Bank economist William Easterly has observed, “cannot bring off a simple and cheap measles (麻疹) vaccination (预防接种) program, and yet... can build nuclear weapons.”

26. The author's purpose of writing this article is to

- [A] search for the source of Pakistan's poverty.
- [B] seek for the reason for terrorism.
- [C] criticize the realpolitik in U.S foreign aid policy.
- [D] find a solution to the tension in South Asia.

27. By saying "It is no coincidence that Osama Bin Laden found warm hospitality in the Taliban's Afghanistan," the author means
- [A] Osama Bin Laden and Taliban are good friends.
 - [B] America's foreign policy is one of the sources of the misery in Afghanistan.
 - [C] it is not difficult for Bin Laden to find warm hospitality in Afghanistan.
 - [D] Osama Bin Laden is the source of misery abroad.
28. America supports the military regime in Pakistan in order to
- [A] control the government of Pakistan.
 - [B] get the natural resources of Pakistan.
 - [C] keep peace and freedom.
 - [D] draw the support of Pakistan in fighting against Taliban.
29. It implies in the passage that
- [A] the U. S. government has been helping Pakistan's economic development.
 - [B] the U. S. approved Pakistan's detonating nuclear bomb.
 - [C] the Pakistan government is corrupt.
 - [D] the Pakistan government didn't pay much attention to family planning.
30. All of the following can be learned from the passage EXCEPT
- [A] realpolitik has a long history in U. S. foreign aid policy.
 - [B] in the Cold War, the U. S supported some military regimes in Asia.
 - [C] the Pakistan government has intensified the tension in South Asia.
 - [D] the Pakistan government won't spend foreign aid on developing nuclear weapons in future.

Text 3

In large part as a consequence of the feminist movement, historians have focused a great deal of attention in recent years on determining more accurately the status of women in various periods. Although much has been accomplished for the modern period, premodern cultures have proved more difficult: sources are restricted in number, fragmentary, difficult to interpret, and often contradictory. Thus it is not particularly surprising that some earlier scholarship concerning such cultures has so far gone unchallenged. An example is Johann Bachofen's 1861 treatise on Amazons, women-ruled societies of questionable existence contemporary with ancient Greece.

Starting from the premise that mythology and legend preserve at least a nucleus of historical fact, Bachofen argued that women were dominant in many ancient societies. His work was based on a comprehensive survey of references in the ancient sources to Amazonian and other societies with matrilineal customs: societies in which descent and property rights are traced through the female line. Some support for his theory can be found in evidence such as that drawn from Herodotus, the Greek "historian" of the fifth century B. C. , who speaks of an Amazonian society, the Sauromatae, where the women hunted and fought in wars. A woman in this society was not allowed to marry until she had killed a person in battle.

Nonetheless, this assumption that the first recorders of ancient myths have preserved facts is problematic. If one begins by examining why ancients refer to Amazons, it becomes clear that ancient Greek

descriptions of such societies were meant not so much to represent observed historical fact — real Amazonian societies — but rather to offer “moral lessons” on the supposed outcome of women’s rule in their own society. The Amazons were often characterized, for example, as the equivalents of giants and centaurs, enemies to be slain by Greek heroes. Their customs were presented not as those of a respectable society, but as the very anti-those of ordinary Greek practices.

Thus, I would argue, the purpose of accounts of the Amazons for their male Greek recorders was didactic to teach both male and female Greeks that all-female groups, formed by withdrawal from traditional society, are destructive and dangerous. Myths about the Amazons were used as arguments for the male-dominated status quo, in which groups composed exclusively of other sex were not permitted to segregate themselves permanently from society. Bachofen was thus misled in this reliance on myths for information about the status of women. The sources that will probably tell contemporary historians most about women in the ancient world are such social documents as gravestones, wills, and marriage contracts. Studies of such documents have already begun to show how mistaken we are when we try to derive our picture of the ancient world exclusively from literary sources, especially myths.

31. The primary purpose of the passage is to
- [A] compare competing new approaches to understanding the role of women in ancient societies.
 - [B] investigate Bachofen’s theory about the dominance of women in ancient societies.
 - [C] analyze the nature of Amazonian society and uncover similarities between it and the Greek world.
 - [D] criticize the value of ancient myths in determining the status of women in ancient societies.
32. The author suggests that the main reason for the persisting influence of Bachofen’s work is that
- [A] feminists have shown little interest in ancient societies.
 - [B] Bachofen’s knowledge of Amazonian culture is unparalleled.
 - [C] reliable information about the ancient world is difficult to acquire.
 - [D] historians have been primarily interested in the modern period.
33. The following problems are thought to be connected with the sources for knowledge of premodern cultures EXCEPT
- [A] partial completeness.
 - [B] restricted accessibility.
 - [C] limited quantity.
 - [D] difficulty of interpretation.
34. The author’s attitude toward Bachofen’s treatise is best described as one of
- [A] qualified approval.
 - [B] profound ambiguity.
 - [C] studied neutrality.
 - [D] pointed disagreement.
35. The author cites the case of Johann Bachofen mainly to
- [A] show the value of studies on premodern women’s status.
 - [B] justify the unchallenging works of earlier scholars.
 - [C] present to readers an ancient women-ruled community.
 - [D] prove the difficulty in the research of premodern cultures.

Text 4

"Much of the world is better fed than it was in 1950", concedes L. R. Brown, the president of the World Watch Institute, an environmental research group in Washington, D. C. "But that period of improvement is ending rather abruptly." Since 1984, he says, world grain production per capita has fallen one percent a year. In 1990, eighty-six nations grew less food per head than they had a decade before. Improvements are unlikely, in Brown's view. "Our past success has brought us alarmingly close to the ecological ceiling." There's a growing sense in the scientific community that it will be difficult to restore the rapid rise in agricultural yields we saw between 1950 and 1984, he says. In agriculturally advanced nations there just isn't much more that farmers can do. "Meanwhile", Brown says, "number of mouths keeps up its frantic rate of increase. My sense is that we're going to be in trouble on the food front before this decade is out."

Social scientists disagree. An FAO study published in 1982 concluded that, by using modern agricultural methods, the Third World could support more than 30 billion people. Other technologists see genetic engineering as a route to growth that is almost without end. Biologists greet such pronouncements with loud scoffs. One widely touted analysis by Ehrlich and others maintains that humanity already uses, destroys, or "co-opts" almost 40 percent of the potential output from terrestrial photosynthesis. Doubling the world's population will reduce us to fighting with insects over the last scraps of grass.

Neither side seems willing to listen to the other; indeed, the two are barely on speaking terms. The economist, Julian Simon, of the University of Maryland, asserts that there is no evidence that the increase in land use associated with rising population has led to any increase in extinction rates — despite hundreds of biological reports to the contrary. The biologist Edward O. Wilson, of Harvard University, argues that contemporary economics is "bankrupt" and does not accommodate environmental calculations — despite the existence of a literature on the subject dating back to the First World War. A National Academy of Sciences panel dominated by economists argued in 1986 that the problems of population growth had been exaggerated. Six years later the academy issued a statement, dominated by biologists, claiming that continued population growth will lead to a global environmental catastrophe that "science and technology may not be able to prevent". Told in an exchange of academic gossip that an eminent ecologist has had himself sterilized, an equally eminent demographer says, "That's the best news heard all week!" Asking himself what "deep insights" professional demographers have contributed, Garrett Hardin answers, "None."

The difference in the forecasts — prosperity or penury, boundless increase or zero — sum game, a triumphant world with 30 billion or a despairing one — is so extreme that one is tempted to dismiss the whole contretemps as foolish. If the experts can't even discuss the matter civilly, why should the average citizen try to figure it out? Ignoring the fracas might be the right thing to do if it weren't about the future of the human race.

36. The disputes between natural scientists and social scientists center on

[A] whether the human race is not advancing at all in today's society.

- [B] whether genetic engineering is a reliable approach to increase the world's grain output.
 - [C] what the best way to limit population growth is.
 - [D] whether population growth will bring any future food shortage.
37. What does the sentence "Biologists greet such pronouncements with loud scoffs" (Para. 2) mean?
- [A] Biologists support the application of genetic engineering.
 - [B] Biologists disapprove of applying genetic engineering to growing grain.
 - [C] Biologists back up the two pronouncements in the above two sentences.
 - [D] Biologists regard the two pronouncements in the above two sentences foolish talks.
38. It can be concluded from the third paragraph that
- [A] quarrels between biologists and economists can be traced as far back as to World War I.
 - [B] the National Academy of Sciences includes specialists from social science as well as those from natural science.
 - [C] a demographer is someone who hates the human race.
 - [D] the world's population will keep growing at a higher and higher rate.
39. What does the author think of the quarrels between social scientists and natural scientists?
- [A] He regards neither side as civilized persons.
 - [B] He thinks it hard for common people to understand what they're quarreling about.
 - [C] He thinks that they are quarreling about the future of the human race.
 - [D] He believes that such quarrels are constructive in solving problems.
40. What is the purpose of the author's writing the article?
- [A] To persuade the reader to accept one opinion over another.
 - [B] To refute both opinions.
 - [C] To point out two solutions to a problem.
 - [D] To introduce two conflicting opinions.

Part B

Directions:

In the following article, some sentences have been removed. For Questions 41—45, choose the most suitable one from the list A—G to fit into each of the numbered blank. There are two extra choices, which do not fit in any of the gaps. Mark your answers on ANSWER SHEET 1. (10 points)

While disease is present prior to social organization, communal life creates special hazards. While the organization of society can reduce the dangers of disease, trade and urbanization, with their consequent problems of sanitation and pollution, can also aggravate such dangers. 41) _____.

To the economist, efforts to combat these risks are at least partially public goods. The benefits from public goods are indivisible among beneficiaries. A sole private purchaser of health care would give others in society a "free ride" with respect to the benefits obtained. To market theorists, such goods are lawful objects of governmental intervention in the market. While the theory of public goods helps explain aspects of public health law and assists in fitting it into modern economic theory, it omits a critical point. Ill

health is not a mere byproduct of economic activity, but an inevitable occurrence of human existence. As a result, wherever there is human society, there will be public health. Every society has to face the risks of disease. 42) _____.

43) _____.

Those who criticize the United States government today for not providing health care to all citizens equate the provision of health care with insurance coverage for the costs of medical expenses. By this standard, seventeenth and eighteenth-century America lacked any significant conception of public health law. 44) _____.

Organizations responsible for health regulation were less stable than modern bureaucracies, tending to appear in crises and fade away in periods of calm. The focus was on epidemics which were seen as unnatural and warranting a response, not to the many prevalent and chronic conditions which were accepted as part and parcel of daily life. Additionally, and not surprisingly, religious influence was significant, especially in the seventeenth century. Finally, in an era which lacked sharp divisions between private and governmental bodies, many public responsibilities were carried out by what we would now consider private associations. 45) _____.

- [A] And because it must, every society searches to make disease comprehensible within the context of the society's own particular culture, religion, or science. In this sense, health care is public not only because its benefits are indivisible and threats to it arise from factors outside of the individual but also because communal life gives individuals the cultural context in which to understand it.
- [B] However, despite the general paucity (scarcity) of bureaucratic organization in pre-industrial America, the vast extent of health regulation and provision stands out as remarkable. Of course, the public role in the protection and regulation of eighteenth-century health was carried out in ways quite different from those today.
- [C] Even in the mid-twentieth century, during the brief calm between the polio and AIDS epidemics, epidemic health risks associated with carcinogens (cancer-producing substances) from polluted air threatened the industrialized world.
- [D] Governments typically have assumed an active role with respect to health care, acting as if their role were obligatory. How governments have fulfilled that duty has varied throughout time and across societies, according not only to the wealth and scientific sophistication of the culture but also to its fundamental values—because health is defined in part by a community's belief system, public health measures will necessarily reflect cultural norms and values.
- [E] The government today addresses health concerns that formerly were not considered serious enough to warrant government involvement.
- [F] But now, the public roles in the protection and regulation are still weak.
- [G] Nevertheless, the extent of public health regulation long before the dawn of the welfare state is remarkable and suggests that the founding generation's assumptions about the relationship between government and health were more complex than commonly assumed.

Part C

Directions:

Read the following text carefully and then translate the underlined segments into Chinese. Your translation should be written clearly on ANSWER SHEET 2. (10 points)

Both the state of teacher salaries and the possibility of performance-based pay advances have become hot topics in education in the past week due to the actions of the nation's leading teachers' unions. While the unions obviously favor improvements in teacher salaries, they are wholly opposed to the introduction of merit-based pay. 46) The unions' arguments against a merit-based system are certainly voluble, but they hold no real weight, as the current system creates large inefficiencies that potentially restrain teacher salary growth and even negatively impact student performance.

Currently, teacher salaries are primarily determined by the number of years they have spent in classrooms or whether they hold a master degree. 47) This so-called pay-for-seniority system has been in effect since the earliest days of the public education system; support for the perpetuation of the present arrangement, as well as continued opposition to the introduction of merit-based pay, was restated at the conclusion of the National Education Association's (NEA) annual meeting last Wednesday. On the same day, the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) released their teacher salary survey for 1998 — 1999. The report revealed educator salaries, at both advanced positions and entry levels, to lag significantly behind those of other occupations.

Both unions oppose performance-based pay, warning of the supposed deleterious effects of introducing teacher competition into the education system. This abhorrence for competition, however, is most likely a primary factor restraining the growth of teacher salary levels and the performance of the educational system in general. 48) While the teachers' unions would not like to demonize the concept of competition, the fact remains that competition, and reaping the rewards of competing successfully, is the very basis of our entire economic system.

Consider the case of the domestic economy, wherein the competition-induced advances of the private business sector have powered the U. S. to a record-setting expansion. To succeed, a firm must prove that it can provide a better service or better product than its competitors. The introduction of merit-based pay would allow the best educators to demonstrate that they are the most capable and allow them to demand a better salary commensurate with their success in the classroom.

The current pay-for-seniority policy also introduces a number of inefficiencies to the educational system. The present framework creates incentives that are not necessarily compatible with the overall goal of the public education system, that is, providing the highest quality schooling to the nation's young population. 49) By rewarding teachers for longevity rather than value of output, the pay-for-seniority policy holds the potential to discourage the best teachers, while allowing mediocre educators to benefit, both of which hold the possibility of lowering educational quality and student performance.

Qualified educators are valuable commodities, but they will not receive their just due until healthy competition among teachers is introduced into the educational system. 50) The current pay-for-seniority system is inefficient and not necessarily compatible with providing the best education possible; it is un-