最新大学英语阅读教程 1—4 级

NEW COLLEGE ENGLISH READING COURSE

最新大学英语阅读教程

ZUIXIN DAXUE YINGYU YUEDU JIAOCHENG

三级

黄 贵 主编

安徽大学出版社

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安 徽 大 学 出 版 社

图书在版编目(CIP)数据

最新大学英语阅读教程/俞 进,李长庚主编．—合肥:安徽大学出版社,2001.11
ISBN 7-81052-441-0

Ⅰ.最... Ⅱ.①俞...②李 Ⅲ.英语-阅读教学-高等学校-教材 Ⅳ.H319.4

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字(2001)第 044561 号

最新大学英语阅读教程 1～4 级 俞 进 李长庚主编
最新大学英语阅读教程 三级 黄 贵 主编

出版发行	安徽大学出版社	**经 销**	新华书店
	(合肥市肥西路 3 号 邮码 230039)	**印 刷**	中国科技大学印刷厂
联系电话	总编室 0551-5107719	**照 排**	合肥市女娲照排中心
	编辑部 0551-5106428	**开 本**	787×960 1/16
	发行部 0551-5107784	**印 张**	16.125
电子信箱	ahdxchps@mail.hf.ah.cn	**字 数**	365 千
责任编辑	曹小虹	**版 次**	2001 年 11 月第 1 版
封面设计	张 犇	**印 次**	2001 年 11 月第 1 次印刷

ISBN7-81052-441-0/H·46 **全四册定价 70.00 元**

前　言

根据国家教育部制定的《大学英语教学大纲》的要求，我们组织了一批长期从事大学英语教学，具有丰富教学经验的老师编写了这套《最新大学英语阅读教程》(1～4级)，旨在帮助广大学生以英语为媒介，了解当今国际文化、经济、政治、科技等领域最新发展动态，学习和掌握相关词汇及表达方法，加深语言领悟力，从而提高学生阅读英语文章及参加大学英语四、六级应试的能力。

本套书具有以下几个特点：1.题材广泛、内容新颖、信息量大。所选的文章均来自于英美报刊、杂志、书籍，语言地道、标准。内容涉及政治、经济、文化、艺术、历史、地理、体育、科技等诸多领域，信息量大，时代感强。2.由浅入深，循序渐进，难易适度。本套书按新大纲要求，从一级至四级，由易到难，循序渐进地来编写各分册内容。3.编写、选材力求科学性、知识性及趣味性相结合。

本教程共分四分册，每册20个单元，计60篇文章。每篇文章均配有练习题，书后还附有参考答案。选编的练习有助于学生理解课文，提高学生阅读理解的能力，也便于学生自我检测。参加《最新大学英语阅读教程 三级》编写的人员分工如下：

黄　忠　**Unit** 1－5　阅读文章、练习及参考答案。
杨翠萍　**Unit** 6　阅读文章、练习及参考答案。
尹锡荣　**Unit** 7－10　阅读文章、练习及参考答案。
陈路林　**Unit** 11－13　阅读文章、练习及参考答案。
胡安琳　**Unit** 14－16　阅读文章、练习及参考答案。
黄　贵　**Unit** 17－20　阅读文章、练习及参考答案。

由于时间仓促和经验不足，疏漏之处在所难免，恳请广大读者及外语界同仁批评指正。

编者于2001年11月

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1 UNIT

Passage A

Telecommuters

1 Today we report about the growing number of Americans who stay at home to do their jobs.

2 Most American workers travel everyday to jobs in factories, offices, laboratories, stores and schools. For a growing number, however, the work place is changing. More Americans are choosing to work at home. Link Resources is a research company in New York. The company says about 40 million people work at home. This is about 30 percent of the total work force in the United States. Some of the people work at home part time. Some work at home all the time.

3 About 24 million people in the United States operate business in their home. About 9 million bring work home from their office to complete after business hours. About 7 million people use a computer to work at least one day a week at home. They spend 4 days a week at their company's office. When people drive a car, or take public transportation to their job, they are called commuters. When they are linked to their job by telecommunications equipment, they are called telecommuters. The number of telecommuters in the United States grew about 20 percent last year. That was a faster growth rate than any other kind of home workers.

4 The revolution in computer and telephone technology is the main reason for the increase. More Americans now have computers and other telecommunications devices in their home. Computer users can send information to other computer users with a device called a modem. Computer users also can receive many kinds of information from special computer services. More and

more workers also have facsimile or fax machines in their home. This machine uses telephone lines. It can send copies of printed documents to other fax machines anywhere in the world.

5 In the City of Los Angeles workers and employers are reconsidering the possibilities of working at home. In January the city suffered a serious earthquake. The quake destroyed several major roads in the area. It prevented millions of people who live near Los Angeles from driving their cars to their offices in the city. More Los Angeles' companies and government agencies now are permitting their workers to work from home using computers and other telecommunications devices.

6 Two years ago Los Angeles City officials began testing a program to permit more than 240 city workers to work at home. These included designers, engineers and lawyers. A recent study found that such telecommuters were 12 percent more productive than similar workers in city offices. It said they produced more reports, completed more cases, and studied more materials. City officials say telecommuting may be good for another reason. It could save money by reducing the need for office space. Now Los Angeles is proposing to expand telecommuting to as many as 50 thousand workers. This is about 30 percent of the city government's work force.

7 The telecommuting program in Los Angeles was established in 1991. Its goal was to find a way to reduce the number of cars on the roads during early morning and late afternoon. The city began the program because of Amendments to the Federal Clean Air Act. This law says businesses with one hundred or more workers in cities with serious air pollution must reduce the use of cars by workers. Experts say telecommuting is a good solution to the problem of air pollution caused by too many cars.

8 The mayor of Los Angeles, Richard Realdon has started a new telecommunications program. He wants to make Los Angeles the nation's most modern telecommuting center. Mr. Realdon hopes that up to one million people will take part in the program. These people will work in their home, or they will work in a special telecommuting center near their home. The center will be connected to a main office by computers.

9 Designers of new communities are including telecommuting centers. So

people will not have to travel long distances to their office. John Lifdon is a building designer in Telluride, Colorado. He is planning a small town for people who choose to work at home. John Lifdon says his town will be called Skyfield. It will be near Telluride. Two thousand people will live in the town. It will have the most modern telecommunications equipment. It also will have schools and sports centers. He hopes to begin building the town next year. Mr. Lifdon calls people who work at home information-independents. They can live and work anywhere they want. He believes that more information-independents will choose to move from cities to the country during the next 25 years.

10 Telecommuting is big change in the way Americans work. Some employers are not willing to accept the change. Some worry that workers at home will spend too much time resting or watching television instead of working. Others worry that they will not be able to control their workers. Experts are studying and debating the issue. One is Robert Musgowits, president of the American Telecommuting Association. He says workers should be judged by how much work they do, not by how much time they spend in the office.

11 Mr. Musgowits says studies show that telecommuters are about 20 percent more productive than similar workers in offices. They work best when they work one to three days a week at home and the rest of the week in the office. Not all workers work best at home, however. Successful homeworkers must be independent. They must be organized. They must set work goals for themselves. And they must be able to work with little supervision.

12 Most people who work at home do not work for companies. They operate their own business. Many are computer experts. Others sell products or services. Some are writers. Some are designers or engineers. Others are financial advisers, lawyers or criminal investigators. Some provide information or other services for businesses. Many of these people used to work for large companies. Now they use their skills and experience to operate their own business.

13 Experts say the personal computer has become the main tool for many new home businesses. There even is a magazine for home office workers. It is called Home Office Computing. Bernice Ded Grey is the executive editor of the magazine. She says 400 thousand people receive the publication. And she says

the number of readers is growing by 50 percent a year. Home Office Computing magazine offers advice for people who operate business at home using their computer.

14 People enjoy working at home for many reasons. They save time by not having to travel long distances to work everyday. They save money on transportation and business clothes. Some people say they can think more clearly and more creatively in the quiet peaceful atmosphere of their home. And some say they suffer less stress. People who work at home have the freedom to decide for themselves how and when to do their job. This permits them to spend more time with their family.

15 Other people who work at home admit there are problems. Some say they can not separate their personal life and their work life. They begin working too many hours at home. Another problem is loneliness. One man says he feels lonely because he is the only person on his street who is at home during the day. Some home workers say they need to be with other people to communicate and develop new ideas. And some say it is more difficult to get a better job when you are not seen in the company's office everyday. Finally, there is a problem of holiday. As one woman says, "The main problem with working at home is that you never get a day off."

◇ New Words and Expressions

telecommuter /ˌteliˌkəˈmjuːtə/ *n*. 居家上班者
telecommunication /ˈtelikəˌmjuːniˈkeiʃən/ *a*. 电信
facsimile /fækˈsimili/ *n*. 传真
telecommute /ˌteliˌkəˈmjuːt/ *vi*. 居家上班
amendment /əˈmendmənt/ *n*. 修正案,修正,改善
supervision /ˌsjuːpəˈviʒən/ *n*. 管理,监督
investigator /inˈvestigeitə/ *n*. 调查员,侦查员

◇ Notes

1. Amendments to the Federal Clean Air Act 《联邦空气保护法修正案》
2. American Telecommuting Association 美国远程上班协会

◇ Exercises

- *Choose the best answer according to the passage.*

1. What was the growth rate of telecommuters in the United States last year?
   A. 30% B. 20% C. 40% D. 12%
2. The purpose of Los Angeles's establishing a telecommuting program in 1991 was _____.
   A. to prove the possibilities of working at home
   B. to make it possible for office workers to work during a serious earthquake
   C. to raise the work efficiency of office workers
   D. to reduce air pollution caused by too many cars on roads
3. The work of the telecommuters should be evaluated by _____.
   A. how much time they spend in front of the computers
   B. how efficiently they can use the telecommunication equipment
   C. how much work they can fulfill
   D. whether they are independent or not
4. One of the disadvantages of working at home is that _____.
   A. there is little difference between personal life and work life
   B. there is no need to travel long distances to work everyday
   C. there is no restriction to decide when and how to do a job
   D. there is no need to hurry to work
5. The purpose of the writer in writing this article is _____.
   A. to praise those who work at home
   B. to urge more people to use telecommuting system
   C. to tell what the telecommuting program is
   D. to prove the advantages of working at home

- *Short answer questions.*

1. What is the main reason for the increase of the telecommuters in the United States?
2. What devices are important for telecommuters working at home?
3. How many people will Los Angeles' modern telecommuting program allow to work at home or in a special telecommuting center?
4. Why do some people worry about the telecommuting program?
5. What groups of people are especially suitable to operate their business at home by using a computer?

Passage B

The Difference between a Brain and a Computer

1 The difference between a brain and a computer can be expressed in a single word: complexity.

2 The large mammalian brain is the most complicated thing, for its size, known to us. The human brain weighs three pounds, but in that three pounds are ten billion neurons and a hundred billion smaller cells. These many billions of cells are interconnected in a vastly complicated network that we can't begin to unravel as yet.

3 Even the most complicated computer man has yet built can't compare in intricacy with the brain. Computer switches and components number in the thousands rather than in the billions. What's more, the computer switch is just an on-off device, whereas the brain cell is itself possessed of a tremendously complex inner structure.

4 Can a computer think? That depends on what you mean by "think". If solving a mathematical problem is "thinking", then a computer can "think" and do so much faster than a man. Of course, most mathematical problems can be solved quite mechanically by repeating certain straightforward processes over and over again. Even the simple computers of today can be geared for that.

5 It is frequently said that computers solve problems only because they are "programmed" to do so. They can only do what men have them do. One must remember that human beings also can only do what they are "programmed" to do. Our genes "program" us the instant the fertilized ovum is formed, and our potentialities are limited by that "program".

6 Our "program" is so much more enormously complex, though, that we might like to define "thinking" in terms of the creativity that goes into writing a great play or composing a great symphony, in conceiving a brilliant scientific theory or a profound ethical judgment. In that sense, computers certainly can't think and neither can most humans.

7 Surely, though, if a computer can be made complex enough, it can be as

creative as we. If it could be made as complex as a human brain, it could be the equivalent of a human brain and do whatever a human brain can do.

8 To suppose anything else is to suppose that there is more to the human brain than the matter that composes it. The brain is made up of cells in a certain arrangement and the cells are made up of atoms and molecules in certain arrangements. If anything else is there, no signs of it have ever been detected. To duplicate the material complexity of the brain is therefore to duplicate everything about it.

9 But how long will it take to build a computer complex enough to duplicate the human brain? Perhaps not as long as some think. Long before we approach a computer as complex as our brain, we will perhaps build a computer that is at least complex enough to design another computer more complex than itself. This more complex computer could design one still more complex and so on and so on and so on.

10 In other words, once we pass a certain critical point, the computers will take over and there is a "complexity explosion." In a very short time thereafter, computers may exist that not only duplicate the human brain — but far surpass it.

11 Then what? Well, mankind is not doing a very good job of running the earth right now. Maybe, when the time comes, we ought to step gracefully aside and hand over the job to someone who can do it better. And if we don't step aside, perhaps Supercomputer will simply move in and push us aside.

◇ New Words and Expressions

mammalian /mæ'meiljən/ *a*.	哺乳动物的
neuron /'njuərɔn/ *n*.	神经细胞
unravel /ʌn'rævəl/ *vi*.	解释，阐明
intricacy /'intrikəsi/ *n*.	错综复杂
gear /giə/ *vt*.	适合，一致
fertilize /'fə:tilaiz/ *vt*.	使受精
ovum /'əuvəm/ *n*.	卵；卵细胞
conceive /kən'si:v/ *vt*.	构想
equivalent /i'kwivələnt/ *n*.	等价物；相等物

molecule /'mɔlikju:l/ *n*. 分子，克分子
duplicate /'dju:plikeit/ *vt*. 复制；复写

◇ Notes

1. 艾萨克·阿西莫夫(1920－1992)，俄裔美籍小说家、散文家、出版过250多部作品。代表作有《星星，就像尘土》(1951)、《地球ABC》(1971)等。《人脑与电脑的区别》探讨了电脑超过人脑，取代人脑的可能性。

◇ Exercises

- *Short answer questions*.
  1. The difference between a brain and a computer is _____.
  2. In what way can a computer think?
  3. Why can computers solve problems?
  4. In terms of _____, computers can't think.
  5. What does the author think of man's running the earth?
- *Translate the underlined sentences in the passage into Chinese*.

Passage C

Robots and Supertelevision

ROBOTS

1 Robots have been the stuff of popular culture for so long that we think of them mostly as fun. In the next decade they will finally become practical beyond factory assembly lines. Granted, they won't perform the wondrous stunts they do in sci-fi movies; the first generation of "real" robots may seem a bit crude. But by the end of the decade, we may well encounter tiny robots cooking hamburgers in fast-food restaurants, mopping up shopping malls, even delivering meal trays in hospitals.

2 Two factors are pushing the development of robotics: technology and economics. Artificial intelligence is the key to a successful robot, but some of the simplest tasks for a human mind are difficult for a robot. One example: the ability to look at the corner of a room, where walls and ceiling meet, and know that the corner goes in, not out. Easy for humans, very tough for robots. But new neural-network computers, which more closely resemble the human brain, look particularly promising for teaching robots how to adapt to their surroundings. Neural networks may someday give robots enough artificial sense to, say, vacuum the carpet in a simple office without knocking over the water cooler, at least not more than once.

3 Economics is the key to the acceptance of robots. As declining birthrates lead to a shortage of entry-level workers in much of the industrialized world, researchers are designing robots that can manage at least portions of such jobs as burger flippers or hospital orderlies. The robot orderly, for example, can deliver meals and prescriptions; it still can't make the bed. Fastfood robots will probably cook and package food; humans will still greet the public at the counter and make incorrect change.

4 By the late 1990s, improved robots will be inexpensive enough to serve as aides for the disabled, giving even quadriplegics the ability to feed themselves and perform office work. Not all robots will be so benign. Another model