2016 新題型 ***

大学英语四级听力突破

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新题型

大学英语四级听力突破

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第一部分

命题要求与趋势分析

第一节 大纲要求

听力理解部分在大学英语四级考试中占据着非常重要的地位,分值比例为35%,旨在测试学生实际获取口头信息的能力。录音材料用标准的英式或美式英语朗读,语速约为每分钟130词。

听力理解部分考核的技能是:①理解中心思想和重要细节,包括理解中心思想,听懂重要的或特定的细节,判断说话人的观点、态度等。②理解隐含的意思,包括推论隐含的意义,判断话语的交际功能。③借助语言特征理解听力材料,包括辨别语音特征,如从连续的话语中辨别语音、理解重音和语音语调等;理解句间关系,如比较、原因、结果、程度、目的等。

大学英语四级考试听力理解部分要求考生达到《教学要求》中的一般要求,即"能听懂英语授课,能听懂日常英语谈话和一般性题材讲座,能基本听懂慢速英语节目,语速为每分钟130词左右,能掌握其中心大意,抓住要点,能运用基本的听力技巧帮助理解"。

第二节 命题形式

为了适应新形势下社会对大学生英语听力能力需求的变化,进一步提高听力测试的效度,全国大学英语四、六级考试委员会自 2016 年 6 月考试起对四级考试的听力试题作局部调整,调整的相关内容说明如下:

- ① 取消短对话;
- ② 取消短文听写;
- ③新增短篇新闻(3段)。

其余测试内容不变。调整后四级听力部分的试题结构见下表:

测试内容	测试题型	题量	分值比例	
短篇新闻 3 段	选择题(单选)	7 题	7%(每题1分)	
长对话 2 篇	选择题(单选)	单选) 8题	8%(每题1分)	
听力篇章 3 篇	选择题(单选)	10 题	20%(每题2分)	

对比原来的四级考试听力题型,我们可以看到以下几点变化:

- ① 短对话和短文听写的题型取消,新增短篇新闻听力3段,分值比例为7%;
- ② 长对话部分的分值比例由原来的 7%增加为 8%;
- ③ 听力篇章仍为 3 篇,分值由现在的 10%增加到了 20%,占据了听力部分的半壁江山。

第三节 趋势分析

从以上几点变化,我们可以看到,四级听力的命题在向实用化与国际化的方向发展,强 调考生基础的语言能力与积累,在一定程度上增加了备考难度。

1. 实用化

在四级听力中加入短篇新闻,提高了对考生获取实际信息能力的要求,同时保留长对话题型,则继续强调考生在真实语境中交流互动的能力。提高篇章的分值比例,让考生更加重视背景知识的积累与基础语言能力的训练。

2. 国际化

无论是短篇新闻的加入,还是长对话、篇章题型的微调,都体现了四级考试对托福、雅思等国际权威测试的借鉴和改进,极大提高了四级考试的效度和社会意义。

3. 重能力

经过这次题型调整,以往考生针对短对话等题型所总结的应试技巧将不再适用,这就弱化了四级的应试导向,让考生在备考过程中回归到语言知识和基本听说能力的训练中来,只有平时不断积累和练习,才能在考试中取得成功。

第四节 备考攻略

1. 听说结合,提高听力从自己的标准发音开始

听说能力历来就是密不可分,相辅相成的。考生必须清楚,如果自己无法准确读出基本的音标和单词,不了解基本的口语语音现象,那么在听音时自然就无法正确辨别听力材料。 所以"磨刀不误砍柴工",一定先多读多模仿,多注意省略、连读、不完全爆破、强弱读、意群停顿、英美读音的差异等语音现象,才能让自己的听说能力同时提高。否则,单独的听力练习只会是"事倍功半"。

2. 注重积累,扩大词汇量

影响考生听力理解的另一主要因素是词汇量。当听音中出现一些生词时,考生就会变得很紧张,获取的信息也会减少,导致错误判断。在平时的复习中,考生应该制订切实可行的计划,加强对单词的短暂记忆和长久记忆。同时也要注意积累一些常用的词语搭配和固

定短语。

3. 扩展知识面,不打无准备的仗

短篇新闻和篇章理解的内容取材广泛,可能涉及政治、经济、军事、教育、社会、文化、文学、科技等方面的内容,如果平时没有足够的背景知识储备,在考试中就可能对录音完全不知所云;相反,如果对材料所述内容早就有所了解,对有些选项就可以直接判断,再结合听音,便可以大大提高正确率。考生平时应该多关注英文主流媒体的报道,多了解一些各个国家的人文、地理、社会、政治、经济等各方面的综合知识。

4. 精听与泛听相结合,合理安排时间

精听要求考生听懂每一个单词、每一句话,主要用于对真题或其他一些经典材料的学习;泛听则只要求听懂大意,其意义在于扩展知识面,培养语感。精听与泛听相结合是最高效的听力训练方法。例如,考生每天可以用一个小时的时间来做精听,反复听某个文段,直到完全听懂为止,也可采用听写的方法。另外用半个小时左右的时间来听听 BBC、VOA、CNN 等节目,有时也可看看美剧,听听英文歌曲等。

5. 熟悉考点和出题点,做到有的放矢

标准化测试总是有一定的出题规律和出题重点,考生在复习时要注意多归纳总结,并且多实践,这样在考试中才能做到心中有数。例如,不管题型如何调整,常考的出题点还是会集中在文章的开头结尾处、文中转折处、数字信息处等。平时多注意这些出题点,对各种标志性的词语提高敏感度,就可以大大提高答案定位的能力。

6. 调整心态,相信自己

听力理解有语速快、答题时间短、录音只放一遍等特殊性,所以这个部分是对考生心理素质要求最高的部分。一旦紧张慌乱,就可能出现脑子一片空白、完全听不懂无法答题的情况,所以调整心态、轻松应考也非常重要。一方面,平时充分的准备是减轻心理压力的必要环节,另一方面,平时注意培养好的心理素质、树立自信心,也有助于考场上的良好发挥。



第二部分

新题型样题解析与解题技巧

第一节 短篇新闻

1. 样题解析

短篇新闻是 2016 年 6 月四级考试中全新加入的一个题型,考生对其具体的要求及复习解题等策略都不甚了解,这也成为考生们备考时最没有把握的一个部分。下面我们就先解析四、六级考试委员会在其官网给出的样题,对短篇新闻的难度及要求做一个总体把握。

Section A

Directions: In this section, you will hear three news reports. At the end of each news report, you will hear two or three questions. Both the news report and the questions will be spoken only once. After you hear a question, you must choose the best answer from the four choices marked A, B, C and D. Then mark the corresponding letter on Answer Sheet 1 with a single line through the centre.

Questions 1 and 2 will be based on the following news item.

Kenyan police say one person was killed and 26 injured in an explosion at a bus station in central Nairobi. The blast hit a bus about to set off for the Ugandan capital Kampala. Last July, the Somali group al-Shabab said it was behind the blasts in the Ugandan capital which killed more than 70 people. Will Ross reports from the Kenyan capital.

The explosion happened beside a bus which was about to set off for an overnight journey from Nairobi to the Ugandan capital Kampala. Some eyewitnesses report that a bag was about to be loaded on board, but it exploded during a security check. Windows of the red bus were left smashed, and blood could be seen on the ground beside the vehicle. Just hours earlier, Uganda's police chief had warned of possible Christmas-time attacks by Somali rebels.

- 1. What is the news report mainly about?
 - A. Christmas-time attacks made by Somali rebels.
 - B. An explosion at a bus station in central Nairobi.

- C. The killing of more than 70 Ugandans in Kampala.
- D. Blasts set off by a Somali group in Uganda's capital.
- 2. When did the incident occur?
 - A. On Christmas Eve.

B. Just before midnight.

C. During a security check.

D. In the small hours of the morning.

解析:这篇新闻讲述了发生于肯尼亚内罗毕中部一个巴士停车场的爆炸,属于灾难事故类。

第1题,答案 B。这是一个主旨题,考查对新闻报道大意的把握。而出题点就在新闻开头的导语: Kenyan police say one person was killed and 26 injured in an explosion at a bus station in central Nairobi. 这篇新闻采用了新闻报道中最常用的倒金字塔结构,即把整个新闻报道中最重要的新闻事实放在整个报道的开头作为导语,把次要的新闻事实放在导语后面。这是新闻报道中采用最多的一种写作形式与结构,考生在听音时应特别留意新闻导语,把握新闻大意。

第2题,答案 C。这是细节题中典型的时间题。出题点在 Some eyewitnesses report that a bag was about to be loaded on board, but it exploded during a security check. 灾难事故类新闻中,事故发生的时间、造成的伤亡人数以及发生事故的原因是常考点,考生平时应该多积累相关的数字表达,关注表示因果关系的逻辑词。这道题除了考查时间,从出题点的句型来看,是转折的逻辑关系,即我们听力中常见的 but 题型。因此考生对于 but, however 等转折标志词也应该特别关注。

Questions 3 and 4 will be based on the following news item.

Woolworths is one of the best known names on the British High Street. It's been in business nearly a century. Many of its 800 stores are likely to close following the company's decision to call in administrators after an attempt to sell the business for a token £1 failed.

The company has huge debts. The immediate cause for the collapse has been Britain's slide toward recession, which has cut into consumer spending. However, the business had been in trouble for years.

Known for low-priced general goods, Woolworths has struggled in the face of competition from supermarkets expanding beyond groceries and a new generation of internet retailers.

Many of the store group's 25,000 employees are likely to lose their jobs. Some profitable areas such as the DVD publishing business will survive.

- 3. What do we learn about Woolworths from the news report?
 - A. It is likely to close many of its stores.
 - B. It is known for the quality of its goods.
 - C. It remains competitive in the recession.

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- D. It will expand its online retail business.
- 4. What did Woolworths attempt to do recently?
 - A. Expand its business beyond groceries.
 - B. Fire 25,000 of its current employees.
 - C. Cut its DVD publishing business.
 - D. Sell the business for one pound.

解析:这篇报道讲述了 Woolworths 公司分店倒闭以及其所面临的经济困境。

第 3 题,答案 A。第 4 题,答案 D。这两道题都是细节题。答案出处在 Many of its 800 stores are likely to close following the company's decision to call in administrators after an attempt to sell the business for a token £1 failed. 这两道题严格遵循了"视听—致"的听音原则,即"听到什么选什么"。而考点在于与数字相关的信息: 800 stores 和 £1。

Questions 5 to 7 will be based on the following news item.

Cairo is known for its overcrowded roads, irregular driving practices and shaky old vehicles, but also for its air pollution. In recent months, though, environmental studies indicate there have been signs of improvement. That's due in part to the removal of many of the capital's old-fashioned black and white taxis. Most of these dated back to the 1960s and 70s and were in a poor state of repair.

After new legislation demanded their removal from the roads, a low interest loan scheme was set up with three Egyptian banks so drivers could buy new cars. The government pays about \$900 for old ones to be discarded and advertising on the new vehicles helps cover repayments.

The idea has proved popular with customers—they can now travel in air-conditioned comfort and because the new cabs are metered, they don't have to argue over fares. Banks and car manufacturers are glad for the extra business in tough economic times. As for the taxi drivers, most are delighted to be behind the wheel of new cars, although there have been a few complaints about switching from black and white to a plain white colour.

- 5. What change took place in Cairo recently?
 - A. All taxis began to use meters.
 - B. All taxis got air conditioning.
 - C. Advertisements were allowed on taxis.
 - D. Old taxis were replaced with new cabs.
- **6.** What helped bring about the change?
 - A. A low interest loan scheme.
- B. Environmentalists' protests.
- C. Taxi passengers' complaints.
- D. Permission for car advertising.
- 7. Why do customers no longer argue with new cab drivers?

- A. There are no more irregular practices.
- B. All new cabs provide air-conditioning.
- C. New cabs are all equipped with meters.
- D. New legislation protects consumer rights.

解析: 这篇新闻讲述了开罗政府为了应对汽车尾气导致的环境污染而采取的措施卓有成效。

第5题,答案 D。出处在: In recent months, though, environmental studies indicate there have been signs of improvement. That's due in part to the removal of many of the capital's old-fashioned black and white taxis.

第6题,答案 A。出处在: After new legislation demanded their removal from the roads, a low interest loan scheme was set up with three Egyptian banks so drivers could buy new cars.

第7题,答案 C。出处在: The idea has proved popular with customers—they can now travel in air-conditioned comfort and because the new cabs are metered, they don't have to argue over fares.

三道题均为细节题,遵循"视听一致""边听边选"的原则。文中的 due to, because 等表示因果关系的标志词都可以帮助定位答案。

综上所述,新闻听力主要考查听取细节的能力,只要平时多听、多练、多积累,做题时细心捕捉信息,新闻听力也并非无法攻克。

2. 新闻听力的解题技巧

了解新闻的题材内容

新闻的题材广泛,从国际政治、外交、军事、经济、贸易、科学技术、能源、交通、工业、农业、文化、教育、体育、卫生到法律、宗教、社会问题乃至各种灾难事故,几乎无所不有。在备考中,考生应该一方面积累英语新闻的高频词汇,另一方面结合社会新闻热点,储备相关背景知识。

熟悉新闻的文体特征

新闻通常由三部分组成,即标题、导语和正文。四级听力篇章一般不出现新闻标题,考生应该特别关注导语部分,导语通常会概括出新闻的大意。而正文则主要提供一些细节信息,例如,时间、人物、事件、原因、地点、方式等。

精听与泛听相结合

考生应该精选 BBC、VOA、CNN 等原版新闻材料,进行精听与泛听相结合的听力训练,只要方法得当,并持之以恒的训练,必能有所收获。

所谓精听,是指反复地收听一则新闻,在较好理解了新闻大意的基础上,将新闻听写下来。考生在精听时必须充分利用听力连贯的技能,反复回听全文,在掌握了新闻大意以后再动笔,以句群为单位听写,切不可一个词一个词地听记,否则会破坏句子的连贯性,影响对新闻整体意思的把握。

所谓泛听,是指每天听一定量的节目,以了解大意、了解时事为目的,增强英语语感。泛 听的原则是"坚持不懈,大量广泛"。

记忆新闻高频词汇

新闻词汇因其特殊性,有着与其他四级词汇不同的特点。例如,国家地区名字的专有名词、随着社会科技进步出现的新词、法律经济科技等领域的专业词汇等。考生一方面要注意归类记忆,另一方面要明确新闻词汇的含义,以免对听力篇章的大意出现误解误判。

强化数字训练

新闻报道中经常出现数字信息,而与数字相关的事实常常是考点所在。考生应该熟悉时间、数量、距离、速度、价格、货币、分数小数等数字表达,以及相关的货币单位、容量、长度、重量等单位的英文表达,在听音中要做到快速反应,迅速判断。

第二节 长 对 话

1. 样题解析

长对话题型相对于本次取消的短对话题型,具有更强的语境性和交互性,更能考查考生的实际交际能力。通过长对话的测试,可以反映考生在一定语境或情景中所表现出的快速反应、获取口头信息、推理判断的能力。从这次的样题来看,长对话题型基本保持不变,只是单词数量有少量增加,问题增加了一个,但基本的解题思路和方法是不变的。

Section B

Directions: In this section, you will hear two long conversations. At the end of each conversation, you will hear four questions. Both the conversation and the questions will be spoken only once. After you hear a question, you must choose the best answer from the four choices marked A, B, C and D. Then mark the corresponding letter on Answer Sheet 1 with a single line through the centre.

Conversation One

- W: Morning, this is TGC.
- M: Good morning. Walter Barry here, calling from London. Could I speak to Mr. Grand, please?
- W: Who's calling, please?
- M: Walter Barry, from London.
- W: What is it about, please?
- M: Well, I understand that your company has a chemical processing plant. My own company, LCP, Liquid Control Products, is a leader in safety from leaks in the field of chemical processing. I would like to speak to Mr. Grand to discuss ways in which we could help TGC protect itself from such problems and save money at the same

time.

- W: Yes, I see. Well, Mr. Grand is not available just now.
- M: Can you tell me when I could reach him?
- W: He's very busy for the next few days—then he'll be away in New York. So it's difficult to give you a time.
- M: Could I speak to someone else, perhaps?
- W: Who in particular?
- M: A colleague for example?
- W: You're speaking to his personal assistant. I can deal with calls for Mr. Grand.
- M: Yes, well, could I ring him tomorrow?
- W: No, I'm sorry he won't be free tomorrow. Listen, let me suggest something. You send us details of your products and services, together with references from other companies and then we'll contact you.
- M: Yes, that's very kind of you. I have your address.
- W: Very good, Mr....
- M: Barry. Walter Barry from LCP in London.
- W: Right, Mr. Barry. We look forward to hearing from you.
- M: Thank you. Goodbye.
- W: Bye.

Questions 8 to 11 are based on the conversation you have just heard.

- 8. What do we learn about the woman's company?
 - A. It has a partnership with LCP.
- B. It is headquartered in London.
- C. It specializes in safety from leaks.
- D. It has a chemical processing plant.
- 9. What do we learn about the man?
 - A. He is a chemist.

B. He is a salesman.

C. He is a safety inspector.

- D. He is Mr. Grand's friend.
- 10. What is the woman's position in her company?
 - A. The public relations officer.
- B. Mr. Grand's personal assistant.
- C. Director of the safety department.
- D. Head of the personnel department.
- 11. What does the woman suggest the man do?
 - A. Wait for Mr. Grand to call back.
 - B. Leave a message for Mr. Grand.
 - C. Provide details of their products and services.
 - D. Send a comprehensive description of their work.

解析: 这是一段商务场合的电话录音,男士是 LCP 公司的产品推销员,打电话找 TGC 公司的 Mr. Grand,想要推销其公司的一款产品。而 Mr. Grand 不在,接电话的女士是

Mr. Grand 的私人助理,她建议对方把相关产品简介寄来公司,等 Mr. Grand 看后再联系。

第8题,答案 D。出题点在 M: Well, I understand that your company has a chemical processing plant. 一阵寒暄之后,这句话是开始正题的第一句话,遵循了文章开头出题的原则。

第 9 题,答案 B。第 10 题,答案 B。这两道题都属于职业身份题。第 9 题,M:...My own company, LCP, Liquid Control Products, is a leader in safety from leaks in the field of chemical processing. I would like to speak to Mr. Grand to discuss ways in which we could help TGC protect itself from such problems and save money at the same time. 通过 男士对其所在公司的业务介绍,可以推论出男士销售人员的身份。第 10 题,W: You're speaking to his personal assistant. I can deal with calls for Mr. Grand. 女士自己说出自己在公司的职位,可以边听边选择。

第 11 题,答案 C。出题点在 W: ... Listen, let me suggest something. You send us details of your products and services, together with references from other companies and then we'll contact you. 属于意见建议类题型。请考生注意对话中出现的 listen 等表示强调或引起对方注意的词语,其后必会出现重要内容。同时熟悉各种提建议的句型,例如,I suggest.... Maybe you'd better.... Maybe you should.... Why don't you...等等。

Conversation Two

M: You're going to wear out the computer's keyboard!

W: Oh, hi.

M: Do you have any idea what time it is?

W: About ten or ten-thirty?

M: It's nearly midnight.

W: Really? I didn't know it was so late.

M: Don't you have an early class to teach tomorrow morning?

W: Yes, at seven o'clock. My commuter class, the students who go to work right after their lesson.

M: Then you ought to go to bed. What are you writing, anyway?

W: An article I hope I can sell.

M: Oh, another of your newspaper pieces? What's this one about?

W: Do you remember the trip I took last month?

M: The one up to the Amazon?

W: Well, that's what I'm writing about—the new highway and the changes it's making in the Amazon valley.

M: It should be interesting.

W: It is. I guess that's why I forgot all about the time.

M: How many articles have you sold now?

W: About a dozen so far.

- M: What kind of newspapers buy them?
- W: The papers that carry a lot of foreign news. They usually appear in the big Sunday editions where they need a lot of background stories to help fill up the space between the ads.
- M: Is there any future in it?
- W: I hope so. There's a chance I may sell this article to a news service.
- M: Then your story would be published in several papers, wouldn't it?
- W: That's the idea. And I might even be able to do other stories on a regular basis.
- M: That would be great.

Questions 12 to 15 are based on the conversation you have just heard.

- 12. What is the woman's occupation?
 - A. Teacher.

B. Journalist.

C. Editor.

D. Typist.

- 13. What is the woman writing about?
 - A. Some newly discovered scenic spot.
 - B. Big changes in the Amazon valley.
 - C. A new railway under construction.
 - D. The beautiful Amazon rain forests.
- 14. Where do the woman's articles usually appear?
 - A. In news weeklies.

B. In a local evening paper.

C. In newspapers' Sunday editions.

D. In overseas editions of U.S. magazines.

- 15. What does the woman expect?
 - A. To become a professional writer.
- B. To be employed by a newspaper.
- C. To get her life story published soon. D. To sell her articles to a news service.

解析: 这是一篇较简单的日常对话。女士是教师,偶尔给报刊杂志供稿。男士询问女 土正在写作的文章内容和发表前景。

第 12 题,答案 A。职业身份题。根据男士问 Don't you have an early class to teach tomorrow morning? 女士回答 Yes, at seven o'clock. My commuter class, the students who go to work right after their lesson. 可以推论女士的身份为教师。

第 13 题,答案 B。出题点为 W: Well, that's what I'm writing about—the new highway and the changes it's making in the Amazon valley.

第 14 题,答案 C。出题点为 W: ... They usually appear in the big Sunday editions where...四个选项都是 in...,可归为地点方位类,听音时注意涉及发表文章刊物的说法,录 音中同样用了 in...。

第 15 题,答案 D。出题点为 W: I hope so. There's a chance I may sell this article to a news service. 文章结尾处,谈及未来的发展前景,听到什么选什么。

综上所述,长对话同样以日常生活及工作场景为主,注重实际交流,测试考生口头信息的获取能力,遵循"视听一致"的原则。

2. 长对话听力的解题技巧

熟悉常考题材及题型

长对话主要涉及学生学习生活的日常场景、商务场合的简单对话以及围绕社会文化生活的人物访谈。主要考查的题型有:

- ① 主旨大意题: 询问谈话的主要话题。这种题型一般可以在对话的开头或结尾定位答案,同时考生也要注意在对话中反复出现的一些关键词,有助于总结对话的主题。
- ② 职业身份题:询问说话者的职业、身份或者询问谈话双方的关系。这种题的解题关键在于寻找与职业身份相关的关键词,同时从语气、用词等判断双方关系。
- ③ 地点方位题:询问对话发生的地点与场景。考生应注意对话中与特定地点有关的特定关键词,通过关键词判断地点。常见的地点场景有学校、银行、医院、餐馆、宾馆、机场、车站、邮局等。
 - ④ 时间数字题: 询问对话中与时间数字相关的信息,偶尔涉及简单计算。
- ⑤ 观点态度题:询问说话者对某事或某话题的看法和观点。考生应该熟悉表达观点的一些常用句型,如 I think..., It seems to me that..., As far as I'm concerned, I could say...等。同时要注意关于建议和请求的句型(详见样题分析第 11 题)。

掌握出题形式,抓住听音重点

在长对话的几道题中,考点分布还是比较有特点可循的。除了以上提到的常考题型以外,考生应该注意到,虽然长对话是两个人在谈话,但只有一个人是主要的信息提供者。另一个人在对话中的主要功能就是不断提问,引出答案,而回答的内容才是理解对话和解题的关键。

预读选项,有的放矢

放音前预读选项,根据选项特点预测即将听到的问题以及对话谈论的主题,这样在听音时会更有目的地捕捉有用信息,提高正确率。在录音只放一遍的情况下,有效地预读选项非常重要。

视听一致,边听边选择

一般来说,细节题出题的顺序会和对话发展的顺序一致,考生应该一边听音,一边将与录音内容一致的选项标记出来,等问题被读到时,再对照此选项是否与问题相对应即可。千万不可听完后再选择,那样可能会遗忘一些细节,降低正确率。

注意语言功底的积累

英语语言水平的提高是通过四级考试的必备基础。在语音方面,考生应特别注意连读、 失去爆破、句子重音、强弱读等常见的口语语音现象;在词汇方面,注意积累听力常见的词汇 以及口语习惯用语。

第三节 听力篇章

1. 样题解析

听力篇章的题材多样,涵盖科学、文化、教育、风俗、历史、人物、日常生活等各方面的内容,体裁一般可分为记叙文、说明文、议论文和应用文。主要考查考生理解文章中心思想,捕捉重要细节的能力。篇章信息量大、题材广泛、句子较长、句式复杂,使得解题难度大大增加。从2016年6月四级考试开始,篇章部分的分值比例提高了20%,如果不充分准备,这可能会成为考生失分的重灾区。从样题来看,篇章部分的选材长度、题材及考查点并无明显改变。我们先分析样题:

Section C

Directions: In this section, you will hear three passages. At the end of each passage, you will hear some questions. Both the passage and the questions will be spoken only once. After you hear a question, you must choose the best answer from the four choices marked A, B, C and D. Then mark the corresponding letter on Answer Sheet 1 with a single line through the centre.

Passage One

In today's class, we'll discuss Toni Morrison's novel *Beloved*. As I'm sure you all know, Morrison is both a popular and a highly respected author, and it's not easy to be both. Born in 1931, Morrison has written some of the most touching and intelligent works on the African-American experience ever written by anyone, and yet to call her an "African-American writer" doesn't seem to do her justice. In many ways, she's simply an American writer—and certainly one of our best.

Beloved is a truly remarkable work. It was recommended for nearly every major literary prize, including the National Book Award and the National Book Critics Circle Award, and it in fact won the Pulitzer Prize for fiction in 1988. Morrison herself is distinguished for having won the Nobel Prize for literature in 1993.

What makes *Beloved* unique is the skillful, sure way in which Morrison blends intensely personal storytelling and American history, racial themes and gender themes, the experience of Blacks with the experience of all people everywhere, the down-to-earth reality of slavery with a sense of mysterious spirituality.

We'll be paying special attention to these themes as we discuss this work. I'm particularly interested in your views on the relative importance of race and gender in this book. Is it more important that Sethe, the main character, is black or that she's a woman? Which contributes more to her being? What does Morrison tell us about both?