

大学英语四六级过关丛书



阅
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阅读理解

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前 言

根据最新四、六级教学大纲的要求,阅读理解在全国统考中占有相当大的比重,而这也正是广大学生比较薄弱的环节。为了帮助参考的学员在阅读理解方面有一个突破,以便在大学英语四、六级考试中顺利过关,我们编写了本书。

本书特点如下:

1. 选材新颖,文章覆盖面广,题材多样化,既有一定的深度又有一定的针对性和实用性。

2. 实用性强,在严格选材的基础上,对所有问题都给出参考答案并进行了分析和讲解,使读者能够及时发现自己的问题,校正阅读方法,提高阅读技巧。

本书可供大专院校非英语专业准备过大学四、六级考生使用,也适用于参加职称考试的考生及 EPT 的考生。

由于时间仓促,在编写过程中难免有疏漏之处,敬请广大读者批评指正。

编 者

1999年10月

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Passage 1

Although April did not bring us the rains we all hoped for, and although the Central Valley doesn't generally experience the atmospheric sound and lightning that can accompany those rains, it's still important for parents to be able to answer the youthful questions about thunder and lightning.

The reason these two wonders of nature are so difficult for many adults to explain to children is that they are not very well understood by adults themselves. For example, did you know that the lightning we see flashing down to the earth from a cloud is actually flashing up to a cloud from the earth? Our eyes trick us into thinking we see a downward motion when it's actually the other way around. But then, if we believed only what we think we see, we'd still insist that the sun rises in the morning and sets at night.

Most lightning flashes take place inside a cloud, and only a relative few can be seen jumping between two clouds or between earth and a cloud. But, with about 2,000 thunderstorms taking place above the earth every minute of the day and night, there's enough activity to produce about 100 lightning strikes on earth every second. Parents can use thunder and lightning to help their children learn more about the world around them. When children understand that the light of the lightning flashing reaches their eyes almost at the same moment, but the sound of the thunder takes about 5 seconds to travel just one mile, they can begin to time the interval between the flash and the crash to learn how close they were to the actual spark.

1. According to the author, in the area of the Central Valley,
_____.
 - A. rains usually come without thunder and lightning
 - B. it is usually dry in April
 - C. children pay no attention to natural phenomena
 - D. parents are not interested in thunder and lightning
2. We believe that lightning is a downward motion because
_____.
 - A. we were taught so by our parents from our childhood
 - B. we are deceived by our sense of vision
 - C. it is a common natural phenomenon
 - D. it is a truth proved by science
3. What is TRUE about lightning according to the passage?
 - A. Only a small number of lightning flashes occur on earth.
 - B. Lightning travels 5 times faster than thunder.
 - C. Lightning flashes usually jump from one cloud to another.
 - D. There are far more lightning strikes occurring on earth than we can imagine.
4. The word “activity”(Para. 3, Line 5)is most closely related to the word(s) _____.
 - A. “cloud”
 - B. “lightning strikes”
 - C. “lightning flashes”
 - D. “thunderstorms”
5. It can be concluded from the passage that _____.
 - A. we should not believe what we see or hear
 - B. things moving downward are more noticeable
 - C. people often have wrong concepts about ordinary phenomena
 - D. adults are not as good as children in observing certain natural

phenomena

Passage 2

An important new industry, oil refining, grew after the Civil War. Crude oil, or petroleum — a dark, thick ooze from the earth — had been known for hundreds of years. But little use had ever been made of it. In the 1850's Samuel M. Kier, a manufacturer in western Pennsylvania, began collecting the oil from local seepages (油苗) and refining it into kerosene. Refining, like smelting, is a process of removing impurities from a raw material.

Kerosene was used to light lamps. It was a cheap substitute for whale oil, which was becoming harder to get. Soon there was a large demand for kerosene. People began to search for new supplies of petroleum.

The first oil well was drilled by E. L. Drake, a retired railroad conductor. In 1859 he began drilling in Titusvill, Pennsylvania. The whole venture seemed so impractical and foolish that onlookers called it "Drake's Folly." But when he had drilled down about 70 feet (21 meters), Drake struck oil. His well began to yield 20 barrels of crude oil a day.

News of Drake's success brought oil prospectors to the scene. By the early 1860's these wildcatters were drilling for "black gold" all over western Pennsylvania. The boom rivaled the California gold rush of 1848 in its excitement and Wild West atmosphere. And it brought far more wealth to the prospectors than any gold rush.

Crude oil could be refined into many products. For some years kerosene continued to be the principal one. It was sold in grocery

stores and door-to-door. In the 1880's and 1890's refiners learned how to make other petroleum products such as waxes and lubricating oils. Petroleum was not then used to make gasoline or heating oil.

1. What is the best title for the passage?
 - A. Oil Refining: A Historical Perspective.
 - B. The California Gold Rush Get Rich Quickly.
 - C. Private Property: Trespassers Will Be Prosecuted.
 - D. Kerosene Lamps: A light in the Tunnel.
2. It can be inferred from the passage that kerosene was preferable to whale oil because whale oil was too _____.
 - A. expensive
 - B. thick
 - C. hot
 - D. polluted
3. According to the passage, many people initially thought that E. L. Drake had made a mistake by _____.
 - A. going on a whaling expedition
 - B. moving to Pennsylvania
 - C. searching for oil
 - D. restoring from his job
4. The author mentions all of the following as possible products of crude oil EXCEPT _____.
 - A. wax
 - B. gasoline
 - C. kerosene
 - D. plastic
5. Why does the author mention the California gold rush?
 - A. To explain the need for an increased supply of gold.
 - B. To indicate the extent of United States mineral wealth.
 - C. To describe the mood when oil was first discovered.
 - D. To argue that gold was more valuable than oil.

Passage 3

In 1978 the political economist Malthus predicted that in time mankind would face starvation, having outgrown the available food supplies. Today, a century and a half later, there are still experts who forecast the same global disaster — unless urgent measures are taken to prevent it.

By the end of the present century there may well be over five thousand million people living on this globe, an increase of over fifty percent of today's figure. In order to keep pace with this increase in mankind, the farmers of the world would have to step up their production of food by at least two percent every year. Such a rate of increase has never been maintained in any country by conventional methods of agriculture, despite modern mechanization and the widespread use of fertilizer. There are no large worthwhile reserves of potential farmland remaining, and good fertile land is continually being diverted to industrial use. Moreover, erosion of the soil takes a constant toll.

Intensive research, carried out over many years in all manners of climatic conditions, has produced a revolutionary method of growing crops without using any soil at all. Hydroponics, as this technique is called, may well be the answer to all our food worries. Already it has accomplished wonders in producing huge crops. Hydroponics was once a complicated and expensive business; now it is well out of the experimental stage. Labor costs are far lower than when methods of agriculture are employed. In fact, it is a completely automatic system. There is no hard manual work, no digging or

ploughing, and no weeding to speak of. Yields can be far higher than they are in soil.

1. Which of the following best sums up the whole passage?
 - A. Malthus' prediction has been proved to be correct by modern experts.
 - B. Hydroponics may be the answer to the world food shortage in the future.
 - C. Hydroponics is a new development in agriculture.
 - D. Conventional methods of agriculture should be improved so as to step up food production by two percent every year.
2. The phrase "having outgrown the available food supplies" in the first paragraph implies that _____.
 - A. the available food supplies will be enough to feed world population
 - B. the earth is too exhausted to support its increasing population
 - C. world population will grow at a rate faster than food production
 - D. food supplies will be too much available for world population
3. According to the author, 2 percent annual increase in the production of food can not be achieved. Which of the following is not the explanation he gave for the problem?
 - A. Conventional methods of agriculture are still prevailing all over the world.
 - B. Modern mechanization and the use of fertilizers are not well popularized in the world.
 - C. There are not enough potential farmland reserves left.
 - D. Land is being lost through erosion and industrialization.

4. Which of the following statements is not true of hydroponics?
- A. Hydroponics is considered a revolutionary method of agriculture.
 - B. Hydroponics is still too complicated and expensive for practical use.
 - C. Hydroponics had created wonders in agriculture.
 - D. Hydroponics had already been employed in food production.
5. Judging from the passage, the most important advantage of hydroponics should be _____.
- A. higher yield
 - B. lower labor costs
 - C. more automation
 - D. less hard manual work

Passage 4

When you refer to your brain, you should probably say "brains". Most modern scientists studying the brain have concluded that there are three major parts of our brain, that each is separate from the others, and that each has its own functions and distinctive processes.

Brain 1 includes the spinal cord, the medulla — which sits directly atop the cord — and the middle section of the brain. It includes the controls for involuntary reproduction. The structure of the human brain 1 is little different from the structures of the brains of mammals and reptiles. Brain 1 is apparently responsible both for aggressive and social behavior.

Brain 2 is an area surrounding brain 1. In this second brain are the various glands(腺体) located in the brain, such as the pituitary and amygdala. Scientists studying brain 2 are convinced that human

emotions such as excitement, fear, and love are centered here, as well as the senses of taste and smell. Memory and learning are also controlled by brain 2. Electrical charges applied to this section of the brain causes seizures and psychotic behavior.

Brain 3 is the neocortex (新皮质), the thick covering that surrounds the top and side portions of the brain. This is the "gray matter" we often think of when we speak of the brain. Only the higher orders of animals have brain 3, and none is as highly developed as the human neocortex. Brain 3 sends information from the other two brains to the body and receives data from the body. It is apparently brain 3 that makes us fully human. Brain 3 allows us to stand erect, to plan and anticipate the future, to see, to speak, to write, to use symbols and tools, and to remember. Brain 3 apparently also acts as a unifying control of the other two brains. As scientists continue to study the brain, they discover specific areas that control particular functions of the body and particular emotions. It is interesting to speculate about the future of the old idea of "the mind". As we learn more about our three brains, will we be more or less awed by our own complexity?

1. Excitement, fear, and love are centered in _____.
A. brain 2 B. medulla
C. the spinal cord D. brain 3
2. Which can be concluded from the passage?
A. Little is known about the brain.
B. Brain 3 is all we need to survive.
C. No other animals have the neocortex section of the brain.
D. There is still a lot to learn about the brain.

3. "Gray matter" is a synonym for ____.
- A. the medulla B. the neocortex
C. the spinal cord D. brain 2
4. The passage suggests ____.
- A. "mind control" will be possible very soon
B. research on the human brain is one of the most important types of research scientists are engaged in
C. we have learned as much as we are capable of understanding about the human brain
D. the human beings is the only animal that has emotions
5. The passage mainly talks about ____.
- A. the human brain
B. the areas that control different kinds of behavior
C. complexity of the human brain
D. the functions of the three sections of the brain

Passage 5

America is a mobile society. Friendships between Americans can be close, constant, intense, generous, and real, yet fade away in a short time if circumstances shift. Neither side feels hurt by this. Both may exchange Christmas greetings for a year or two, perhaps a few letters for a while — then no more. If the same two people meet again by chance, even years later, they pick up the friendship where it left off and are delighted. This can be quite difficult for us Chinese to understand, because friendships between us here in our country flower more slowly but then may become lifelong attachments, with mutual obligations, extending sometimes deeply