

主编 刘慧君 罗志强

英语阅读精选

OR RESPECT

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## English Reading 英语阅读精选

主 编 刘慧君 罗志强

编者马黎燕叶建军卢婧洁沈继荣杨 玲 柏 愔秦 文 秦海花蒋 敬

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电 话 (025)83598077(传真) 83598412(营销部) 83598297(邮购部)

网 址 http://press. njnu. edu. cn

电子信箱 nspzbb@njnu. edu. cn

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阅读课是英语专业学生必修的基础课程之一,旨在帮助学生在提高阅读理解能力的同时掌握规范的语言,了解最新的知识和信息,拓宽视野,熟悉英语国家的风土人情等。《英语阅读精选》严格根据高等学校英语专业教学大纲的要求进行编写,基本满足了这些需求。

本教材选材广泛、内容新颖:既有反映英美文化和风土人情的轻松读物,也有涉及学校教育、社会生活、语言发展、心理和智商等严肃题材的文章,还有不少课文反映了当今世界人们普遍关心的问题,如环境保护、全球化经济、跨文化交际、企业管理、网络通信等。可以说,本书在选材上作了大胆的尝试,突破传统,尽可能地以有限的篇幅反映英语国家的文化、教育、社会、科技等方面的现代信息。本书语言地道规范,绝大多数课文选自英美国家近年出版的书刊报纸,呈现给读者的是原汁原味的现代英语,对学生语言基本功的培养大有裨益。

本教材共分二十个单元,每一单元由主题相似的 Text A 和 Text B 组成,并配有生词脚注,方便学生阅读;注释包括作者简介及相关文化背景知识。Text A 的阅读理解练习分为两类:一类是训练学生摄取具体信息能力的细节题,另一类问题涉及篇章的主旨大意、逻辑结构、修辞特点等;两类练习均采用问答题的形式,旨在激发学生进行多维与深度思考。Text B 阅读练习亦分成两个部分:第一项着眼于对文章内容要点的理解,第二项则设置了综合性的讨论题。每个单元还另外设置了"文化链接"栏目,启发学生查找相关信息,以便进一步拓宽知识面并培养基础科研能力。书后附有部分练习的参考答案。

本教材可供高等院校英语专业二年级学生作为基础阶段的阅读教材使用,也可供具有中等英语水平的广大英语爱好者自学时使用。

本教材在编写和出版过程中获得了南京师范大学重点教材建设项目的出版资助,并得到了南京师范大学出版社的大力支持,在此深表感谢。

编者 2010 年 8 月

#### **CONTENTS**

#### Unit 1

Text A My Life/001

Text B The New Job/005

#### Unit 2

Text A My Oedipus Complex ( I )/011

Text B My Oedipus Complex ( II ) / 018

#### Unit 3

Text A Good Taste in Knowledge/025

Text B Inquiry Can Take the Content out of Education/030

#### Unit 4

Text A The Merits of Meritocracy/034

Text B The Story of the A-Bomb Kid/039

#### Unit 5

Text A Space Speaks/046

Text B Don't Misread My Signals/051

#### Unit 6

Text A Ambushed in the Dentist's Chair as Time Goes By/055

Text B Tea/059

#### Unit 7

Text A The Aims of Education/065

Text B Liberal Arts for the 21st Century/069

#### Unit 8

Text A When You Must Make a Lasting Impression/073

Text B What I've Learned from Men/077

#### Unit 9

- Text A Japanese and American Workers: Two Casts of Mind/084
- Text B The Japanese Approach to Business/091

#### Unit 10

- Text A Miss Amelia and Marvin Macy/096
- Text B Rural Love Story/100

#### Unit 11

- Text A For the Birds/104
- Text B Ten Major Threads to the Environment/110

#### Unit 12

- Text A How to Survive a Disaster ( I )/117
- Text B How to Survive a Disaster ( I )/122

#### Unit 13

- Text A Bad Managers/129
- Text B Loyalty Has to Be Earned/133

#### Unit 14

- Text A The Same Language? /138
- Text B The Role of English in the 21st Century/142

#### Unit 15

- Text A The Curse of Vanishing Wealth/147
- Text B Marketing to Innocents/153

#### Unit 16

- Text A Looking to Eat Nokia's Lunch/158
- Text B House of Cards/164

#### Unit 17

Text A Is America Losing at Globalization? /168

Text B Common Wealth/173

#### Unit 18

Text A How Intelligent Is Intelligence Testing? ( I )/181

Text B How Intelligent Is Intelligence Testing? ( ▮ )/188

#### Unit 19

Text A On Plagiarism/192

Text B The New Plagiarism: Seven Antidotes to Prevent Highway Robbery in an Electronic Age/197

#### Unit 20

Text A Who Was More Important: Lincoln or Darwin? ( I )/203

Text B Who Was More Important: Lincoln or Darwin? ( I )/209

#### Answer Keys/217

# Unit 1

Work is life, you know, and without it, there's nothing but fear and insecurity.

- John Lennon (1940-1980, English rock musician)

#### O Text A

### My Life

- 1 In the summer of 1957 I complete my degree courses at New York University, and in the autumn I pass the Board of Education exam for teaching high school English.
- **2** An afternoon paper, the *World-Telegram and Sun*, has a school page where teachers can find jobs. Most of the <u>vacancies</u> are for vocational high schools, and friends have already warned me: "Don't go near those schools. The kids are killers. They'll chew you up and spit you out."
- 3 I want to work in one of the suburban schools where the boys and girls are bright, cheerful, smiling, attentive—their pens poised as I discourse on **Beowulf** and **The Canterbury Tales**. I'd be admired, and once the boys and girls had passed my classes, their parents would surely invite me to dinner at the finest houses.
- 4 The teacher recruiters from suburban high schools tell me I seem intelligent and enthusiastic, but really my thick Irish accent would be a problem. Nobody hires me and I end up doing other jobs.
- 5 Then, in the middle of March of 1958, there's a notice in the paper: Vacancy for English teacher at Ralph Mckee Vocational and Technical High School on

- Staten Island<sup>3</sup>. The assistant principal examines my license and takes me to see the principal, who doesn't move from his chair behind his desk where he <u>squints</u><sup>①</sup> through a cloud of smoke drifting from his nose and cigarette in his hand.
- 6 He says this is an emergency situation. The teacher I'd be replacing has made an abrupt decision to retire in the middle of the term. He says he does not have a full English program for me that I'd have to teach three classes in Social Studies every day.
  - 7 "But I don't know anything about Social Studies."
  - 8 He puffs and squints and says, "Don't worry about it."
- 9 I tell him I know nothing about economics or citizenship, and he says, "Just stay a few pages ahead of the kids. Everything you tell them will be news."
- 10 I'll have to forget the suburbs. I have here on my lap the book that will help me through my first day of teaching, Your World and You. I flip through a short history of the United States from an economic point of view, chapters on American government, the banking system, how to read the stock-market pages, how to open a savings account, how to keep household accounts, how to get loans and mortgages. At the end of each chapter are questions of fact and questions for discussion.
- 11 I don't know how I'll be able to stand before these American teenagers and talk to them about the branches of government and preach the virtues of saving when I owe money everywhere.
- 12 The principal tells me this is golden opportunity to jump right in and start my teaching career. I'm young. I'll like the kids; they'll like me.
- 13 Of course I say yes, I'll be in tomorrow.
- 14 On my first day at school, students jostle me in the hallway. They push and scuffle<sup>®</sup> and laugh. Don't they know I'm a teacher? Can't they see under my arm two attendance books and Your World and You?
- 15 When I walk into the classroom and place my books on the teacher's desk they'll surely stop throwing things. But they ignore me and I don't know what to do till the words come out of my mouth, the first words I ever utter as a teacher: "Stop throwing sandwiches."
- 16 They look at me as if to say, Who is this guy?
- 17 The bell signals the start of class, and the students sidle into their seats. They whisper to each other, they look at me, laugh, and whisper again. I am sorry I ever set foot in Staten Island.

① 眯着眼睛瞧

② 抵押贷款

③ 扭打,混战

④ 侧身而行

- 18 What am I supposed to do with this class, the first in my whole career, pelting<sup>①</sup> each other with chalk, cheers, bologna<sup>②</sup> sandwiches? Some are leaning out the windows calling to others across the schoolyard.
- 19 They don't want to read and they don't want to write. "Aw, Mr. McCourt," they say, "all these teachers want us to write about dumb things like our summer vacation or the story of our life. Boring. Every year since first grade we write the story of our life and teachers just give us a check mark and say, 'Very nice.'"
- 20 I soon learn in the English class they're cawed by the midterm test with its multiple-choice questions. When I hand out the tests in Economic Citizenship, there is muttering. I tell them, "Do your best, and I'll be reasonable with report-card grade." But there is coldness and resentment in the room, as if I had betrayed them.
- 21 While the class is taking the test I explore the closets at the back of the room and find them stuffed with old books, newspapers and hundreds of uncorrected student compositions going back to 1942. I'm about to dump everything into the trash till I start reading the old compositions.
- 22 The boys back then yearned to fight, to avenge the deaths of brothers, friends, neighbors. One wrote, "I don't want to go in the Army if they tell me to kill Italians because I'm Italian. I could be killing my own cousins."
- 23 The girls would wait. "When Joey comes home he and I are gonna get married and move to Jersey and get away from his crazy mother," wrote one.
- I pile the crumbing papers on my desk, and in the weeks that follow I begin reading them to the class. They sit up. There are familiar names. "Hey, that was my father," someone would say. "He was wounded in Africa." Another would say, "Hey, that was my uncle Sal that was killed in Guam<sup>®</sup>."
- 25 Dozens of Staten Island and Brooklyn' families are named in these papers so brittle<sup>®</sup> we worry they'll fall apart. We want to save them and the only way is to copy them by hand, the hundreds still stacked in the closets.
- 26 No one objects. We are saving the immediate past of immediate families. Everyone has a pen, and all through the rest of the term they decipher and write. Tears flow and there are outbursts. "This is my aunt and she dies having a baby."
- 27 They are suddenly interested in composition with the title, "my life", and I want to say to them, "See what you can learn about your fathers and uncles and aunts? Don't you want to write about your own lives for the next generation?"

① 投掷

② 一种大红肠

③ 关岛

④ 脆的;易碎的

- 28 But I let it pass. I don't want to interfere with a room so quiet the principal has to come and investigate. He walks in, looks at what the class is doing, and says nothing. I think he is grateful for the silence.
- 29 In June I give everyone a passing grade, thankful for the crumbing compositions that helped me in my first months of teaching.

#### **Notes**

- 1. **Beowulf**: an old English heroic epic poem of unknown authorship, dating as recorded in the Nowell Codex manuscript from between the 8th to the early 11th century, and relates events described as having occurred in what is now Denmark and Sweden. Commonly cited as one of the most important works of Anglo-Saxon literature, *Beowulf* has been the subject of much scholarly study, theory, speculation, discourse, and, at 3,182 lines, has been noted for its length.
- 2. The Canterbury Tales: a collection of stories written by Geoffrey Chaucer in the 14th century. The tales are told by a group of pilgrims on a pilgrimage from London to the shrine of Saint Thomas Becket at Canterbury Cathedral. The Canterbury Tales are written in Middle English.
- 3. **Staten Island:** a borough of New York City, situated almost entirely on the island of the same name in the extreme southwest part of the city. With a population of 477,377, Staten Island is the least populated of the five boroughs but is the third largest in area at 59 square miles (153 km<sup>2</sup>).
- 4. **Brooklyn:** one of the five boroughs of New York City, located at the western end of Long Island. An independent city until its consolidation with New York in 1898, Brooklyn is New York City's most populous borough, with 2.5 million residents, and the second largest in area.

#### Reading Comprehension

#### I. Understanding details:

- 1. Why do the author's friends warn him against vocational high schools?
- 2. Why can't the author find a job in his ideal schools?
- 3. What kind of job does the author find in the end, and which subjects does he have to teach?
- 4. How do his students behave on the author's first day at school?
- 5. How does the author feel? How can you tell that?
- 6. Why don't the students like reading and writing?
- 7. What does the author do to arouse the students' interest in writing?

#### 

- 1. How does the story begin? What do you think of such a beginning?
- 2. What do you think of the author as a teacher? Give evidence to support your opinion.
- 3. What's your impression of the principal? Give evidence to support your opinion.
- 4. In the text we can find some detailed description about persons or things. What kind of effect do they bring about?
- 5. What do you think of the teacher's method to arouse his students' interest in writing? Could you make any other suggestions for the same purpose?

#### **Cultural Links**

#### Find information about the following:

- vocational high schools in America
- American school subjects such as Social Studies and Economic Citizenship

#### O Text B

#### The New Job

#### Sara Gran<sup>1</sup>

- 1 The first hint that my new job would be different from any I had had before was the problem with lunch.
- 2 It was close to one o'clock in the afternoon on my first day. No one had mentioned anything about a break, and so I knocked on my boss's door and asked if I could go out for a bite to eat.
- 3 "No," he said. "I don't buy into the lunch myth." He turned back to his desk. In my nervousness over my first day at work—which had proven to be well-founded—I had

skipped breakfast. I lied to my boss and told him I was <a href="https://hypoglycemic">hypoglycemic</a> and had to eat. He rolled his eyes and sent me off to the copy room. When I got back to my office a large grape, a pale yellow banana, and a white-tinged strawberry were arranged in a row on the edge of my desk. I was hungry, and I ate the fruit quickly, even though I suspected it had been grown somewhere in the building; it tasted like <a href="fluorescent">fluorescent</a> lighting and recycled air. Every day after that I would be sent to the copy room sometime between twelve and one, often with nothing to copy, and when I came back to my desk a grape, a banana, and a strawberry would be waiting. It wasn't enough, so I took to hiding bags of mini rice cakes in a cabinet under the sink in the ladies' room. Other girls in the office, I suspected, were hungry, too; the rice cakes disappeared quickly and soon I was buying the economy size.

- 4 The work itself was, or should have been, easy. I was supposed to be working with the department on writing proposals, meeting goals, and filing reports on our progress. This was fine, and in my previous job I had done quite well. Many of the ideas I proposed had been implemented and the managers had raved over my meticulous<sup>®</sup> reports. But here at the new job, nothing I did was right. For example, when I filed my first progress report it was sent back to me with an unsigned note: "Please check your predecessor's reports—follow her form!" I was surprised, because I had followed standard procedure to the letter and proofed my report twice. That afternoon I looked through the department records until I found my predecessor's files. Like me, she had included progress notes, short-term goals, and a table of contents. But hers was written in calligraphy<sup>®</sup>, on aged cream parchment paper.
- 5 Curious, I looked through the rest of the department files—some, I admit, I probably should not have been looking at. Everyone in the department did their reports this way. Some even had intricate scroll work drawn around the edges and illuminated first letters, crafted from mythical beasts in the Celtic style<sup>2</sup>.
- 6 Another mistake I made at the new job was the recycling. At first I was told that all paper was to be used on both sides, a request I was happy to comply with. But when I took a handful of used paper to the recycling bin the office manager snatched it out of my hands and reprimanded me for not following company policy. Then the other girls explained to me that when a sheet was used on both sides, I was to cut out any usable words and string them together with tape for my next project. I was to do this until

① 血糖过低的

② 发荧光的

③ 一丝不苟的

④ 手写体,书法

⑤ 责备

nothing of the original sheet was left. It was time-consuming, but with this system a sheet of single-spaced typed paper could last several weeks—although we did use quite a bit of tape—and I told myself it was probably for the best.

- 7 And there were the proposals. The first time I turned in a proposal to my boss, he asked me to wait while he looked it over. I had put a lot of thought into my proposal, and I was proud of my work; I stood by his desk and waited eagerly for his response. Ten minutes went by. An hour went by. Five o'clock came and went, and he was only on the third page. It was after midnight when he finally read the last line.
- 8 "Well," he said without emotion, "I guess it'll do."
- 9 The second time I turned in a proposal, this one strung together from available recycled words, I prepared ahead of time. In the ladies' room I fully emptied my <u>bladder</u>, put cotton in the toes of my shoes, and ate a large handful of rice cakes. But there was no wait this time. My boss read the first few lines and then closed his eyes and leaned back in his leather chair, sighing deeply.
- 10 "I'm not sure what your thinking was here," he said. "I want you to see the company priest."
- 11 I lied again and told my boss I was Jewish. He said that was all the more reason I should go.
- 12 The company chapel was high on the 21st floor, in between the executive dining room and the president's office. It was a room similar in design and decor to my boss's office; the only difference was that the ceiling was arched, and one of the windows had been replaced with a colorful stained-glass depiction of Jesus and the <u>disciples</u> around a conference table. Each disciple—and Christ—had a pad, a pen, and a glass of water in front of him. At a small table off to the side, Mary Magdalene took notes on a stenography machine.
- An elderly priest and a fresh-faced young nun sat at the desk, deeply engrossed in a discussion about papal infallibility. When they saw me the nun smiled and excused herself. She walked out through a back door into a room I couldn't see. A strong smell of incense and wax wafted through before she shut the door behind her. The priest gestured for me to sit in her chair. I explained that my boss had sent me up to speak with him about my report. The priest smiled with fatherly compassion and read aloud from a leather-bound edition of the company manual: "God is in the details," he read. He recommended I meditate.

① 膀胱

② 门徒,弟子

③ 速记

④ 沉思,反省

times. I told him I would do so that evening.

- "Now," he said, a smile still on his face. I started to recite, and he stopped me with a wave of his hand. He pointed down at the thinly carpeted floor, and after a moment I understood. I crawled down to my knees and put my hands in the prayer position. In this way I finished my one hundred and fifty repetitions. When I was done the priest gave me communion. Thankfully, it was quarter after five by then, so after eating the body of Christ and drinking his blood I could go home.
- 15 My career at the company wasn't progressing as I had planned, but I still hoped I could fit in. After all, each company has its own culture, and there's always a period of adjustment when starting a new job. Then one day I had an interesting phone call: it was a headhunter who recruited for the top firms in my field. He said he had heard I was doing a bang-up job here, and he wanted to talk to me about moving to a higher-paying position at a different company right across the street. When I looked out the window I could see this other company through two sets of gray-tinted windows, and they seemed to be doing pretty much the same work over there as we were doing over here. But I didn't want to mislead the headhunter or get myself into some kind of trouble, so I told him he must be mistaken—I was barely treading water in this job.
- 16 "That's not what I hear," he said. "I hear you're shaking things up in your department. Your proposals are excellent, your reports are killer, you're setting goals and looking forward. You're exactly what we're looking for."
- Despite my protests, the headhunter assured me he had this all on the most reliable sources. After a few days of consideration I took the offer, to start in immediately. My boss had instituted a fitness program whereby we were required to clean off our desks, lie on top of them, and do sixty-five sit-ups first thing every morning. My abdominal muscles ached, and the headhunter swore to me that the new job offered only the regular, optional, type of health plan.
- I was sure this new position could only be an improvement, and I snuck out of the building at lunchtime to rush across the street, a hat shadowing my face. I wasn't sure what, exactly, the official resignation process entailed, but I knew it could take several weeks, and I wanted to start at the new company as quickly as possible. Rumor had it that at one point before leaving you were required to receive Last Rites! from the priest; at another point your supervisor was expected to tear his shirt above the left breast and wail.
- 19 The headhunter had promised me that at the new company, I would be able to use my professional skills to their best advantage. My first assignment, however, was to groom the horses in the company stable. As a rule I liked animals, but I suspected these

① 【非正式】极好的

horses had been mistreated in the past. They kicked and sometimes bit, and it was not the fun I had imagined it to be. And in the long run I was never sure if I had made the right decision, to leave the last job for this.

#### Notes

- 1. Sara Gran: American author who wrote the novels Dope, Come Closer, and Saturn's Return to New York. Her work has been published in nine languages and fourteen countries. Her essays have appeared in The New York Times and New Orleans Times Picayune.
- 2. Celtic style: art style associated with people known as Celts, those who spoke the Celtic languages in Europe from pre-history through to the modern period. Typically, Celtic art is ornamental, avoiding straight lines and only occasionally using symmetry, and it often involves complex symbolism. Celtic art has used a variety of styles and has shown influences from other cultures.
- 3. Mary Magdalene: described as a devoted disciple of Jesus in the New Testament. She is considered by the Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox(东正教), and Anglican churches(英国圣公会) to be a saint, with a feast day of July 22nd.
- 4. **papal infallibility**: belief of the Roman Catholic Church that God protects the pope from error when he speaks about faith or morality.
- 5. communion(圣餐): also called Holy Communion or The Lord's Supper, is a Christian ceremony in which people eat a small piece of bread and drink a small amount of wine as signs of Jesus Christ's body and blood. It is considered by many to be, by consecrating bread and wine, a commemoration of the Last Supper, the final meal that Jesus Christ shared with his disciples before his arrest, and eventual crucifixion, when he gave them bread saying, "This is my body," and wine saying, "This is my blood."
- 6. Last Rites(临终圣礼): the ceremony performed in some religions, especially the Catholic religion, for people who are dying. The normal order of administration is: first is Penance, then Anointing, and then Viaticum, a word whose original meaning in Latin was "provision for the journey".

#### Reading Comprehension

- I . Read the following statements and decide whether they are true or false according to the text:
- The author made some mistakes on her first day with the new job because she didn't have any office-work experience.
- 2. There was no lunch hour in that company.
- 3. The boss sent back her first report and asked her to check the content.