



普通高等教育“九五”国家教委重点教材

大学英语 英语阅读 教程

A GUIDED ENGLISH READER
FOR COLLEGE STUDENTS

高
级

Advanced Level

(上册)

主 编

张定铨


外教社

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ADVANCED LEVEL
BOOK I

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前 言

《大学英语阅读教程》(高级), (A Guided English Reader for College Students) (Advanced Level) 1997年2月被列入普通高等教育“九五”国家教委重点教材。本教材是英语阅读教程, 其主要使用对象是英语专业二年级大学生。但是, 非英语专业学生也完全可以用它作为课外读物或者补充教材。对本教材的编写原则与特点有以下几点说明:

1. 书名中回避使用“泛读”一词, 因为严格地说“Extensive Reading”(泛读)是指一种阅读方式, 不能确切定义一部教材的内涵, 以此冠名课程, 意义限定不确切。在以英语为母语国家的学校课程设置中从无此项命名, 乃至中国留学生在填写成绩单时不得不重新翻译。为同国际惯常作法保持一致, 本教材不用“泛读教程”冠名。
2. 本书编写原则是力求不与其它类似教材雷同, 在编写风格上有自己鲜明的个性, 注重实际教学运用, 选材讲究多样性, 趣味性, 时代性, 练习强调启发理解, 培养学生思辨分析能力, 尽量避免机械性的答案。
3. 阅读教材的目的是要提高学生的语感, 必须有一定的量。本教程分上下两册, 上册17课, 每篇课文长度5000字左右。教学进度一周一篇, 教师授课, 或简或繁, 内容充实, 讲不完的部分可让学生自学。
4. 阅读策略(Reading Strategy)有机地融合在教材讲授之中。每个单元训练一项技巧, 都以课文为基础。
5. 预读问题(Prereading Questions)帮助学生开拓思路, 活跃思想, 使学生投入积极主动的阅读状态。
6. 练习分三大部分: 要义阅读(Reading for General Ideas)、详细阅读(Reading for Details and Better Understanding)与写作与讨论(Topics for Discussion and Writing)。要义阅读是粗略地阅读, 可以读一遍或两遍, 读后能回答有关问题, 对文章要旨有一大致领略。详细阅读帮助学生了解文章的主要语言难点, 掌握语言精华以及对文章发展的来龙去脉有比较清晰的了解。写作讨论题提出一些启发性的问题供学生讨论思考, 在此基础上可以布置写作练习。
7. “诗人角”(Poets' Corner)精选不同风格的短诗, 内容紧扣有关课文的主题; “思索与启迪”(Food for thought)帮助学生通悉诗文要义, 同时也加深对课文的理解。

《大学英语阅读教程》在编写过程中得到英语学院, 上外大教务处以及上外教育出版社有关领导的关心与大力支持; 外籍教师 Don Gadow 审阅了阅读技巧部分, 在此表示衷心感谢。

张定铨

一九九九年

CONTENTS

Unit One 1

TEXT: **Planning Your Time for Study** by Harry Maddox

“A student’s work is not so closely controlled by external circumstances, and for that very reason, set hours of work should be arranged so that study becomes regular and consistent.”

READING STRATEGY: **Reading Titles and Subheadings**

POETS’ CORNER: from **A Psalm of Life** by Henry W. Longfellow

Unit Two 13

TEXT: **The Woman Who Owns *Washington Post*** by Lucette Rolbet Kenan

“The late seventies were years of glory for the *Washington Post*, years of confidence, and in many people’s opinion years of arrogance. Katharine Graham, for her part, was enjoying a position of prominence in the highest Washington circles — at least equal to her husband’s former status. She was showered with awards and honorary degrees, praised, courted — and feared.”

READING STRATEGY: **You Need Not Understand Everything**

POETS’ CORNER: **Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening** by Robert Frost

Unit Three..... 29

TEXT: **The Garden Party** by Katherine Mansfield

“‘I don’t understand,’ said Laura, and she walked quickly out of the room into her own bedroom. ... Is mother right? she thought. And now she hoped her mother was right. Am I being stupid? Perhaps it was stupid.”

READING STRATEGY: **Guessing Meaning from the Context**

POETS’ CORNER: **Advice** by Langston Hughes

Unit Four 44

TEXT: **The British at Leisure** by B. Elizabeth Pryse

“Some activities and hobbies, like maintaining a sailing boat, collecting antiques or owning horses, are confined to those with considerable financial resources. Others, like an afternoon at a football match or an evening at the cinema or a day at the seaside, can be enjoyed for relatively little money. And some, like visiting museums and art galleries, borrowing books from the public library, strolling in public parks and gardens, require no money at all. So it can be said that in Britain there really is something for everyone.”

READING STRATEGY: **How Is the Text Organized?**

POETS’ CORNER: **The Lake Isle of Innisfree** by William Butler Yeats

| | |
|--|---------|
| Unit Five | 62 |
| TEXT: A Brief History of English by Paul Roberts | |
| “It is not always realized, however, that considerable sound changes have taken place between Early Modern English and the English of the present day. Shakespearean actors putting on a play speak the words, properly enough, in their modern pronunciation. But it is very doubtful that this pronunciation would be understood at all by Shakespeare. ... In these points and a great many others the English language has moved a long way from what it was in 1600.” | |
| READING STRATEGY: What Is Fact and What Is Opinion? | |
| POETS' CORNER: Speaking a Foreign Language by Alastair Reid | |
| Unit Six | 78 |
| TEXT: Two Famous Greek Myths by Bernard Evslin | |
| “Pygmalion embraced the cold marble. He kissed the beautiful stiff lips, and then he felt the stone flush with warmth. He felt the hard polished marble turn to warm silky flesh. He felt the mouth grow warm and move against his. He felt arms come up and hug him tight. He was holding a live girl in his arms.” | |
| “From that night on she roamed the woods, searching. And some say she still searches the woods and the dark places. Some say that Aphrodite turned her into an owl, who sees best in the dark and cries, ‘Who ... ? Who ... ?’” | |
| READING STRATEGY: Reading a Story | |
| POETS' CORNER: She Walks in Beauty by Lord Byron | |
| Unit Seven | 95 |
| TEXT: Aging in America by Georgia M. Barrow | |
| “For some persons, aging may result in self-realization, but for others it may bring despair. We can have more control over the changes aging brings if we are aware of its certainty. Furthermore, knowing more about factors in ourselves and our environment can make aging more successful and rewarding.” | |
| READING STRATEGY: The Skill of Skimming | |
| POETS' CORNER: Loveliest of Trees by A. E. Housman | |
| Unit Eight | 114 |
| TEXT: Gold by Kim Edwards | |
| “‘Who complained?’ Muda asked. He was not surprised to learn that it was a group from another village, latecomers who had found no gold on their faraway plots. Now these strangers stood around the fringes of the gold field, smiling because they already held the required papers in their hands. They looked greedily at the careful stakes and cordoned areas which, with a single government decree, had become ownerless.” | |
| READING STRATEGY: Reading Literary Symbols | |
| POETS' CORNER: Richard Cory by Edwin Arlington Robinson | |

Unit Nine 131

TEXT: **The Pioneer Chinese** by Betty Lee Sung

"Early historians of California are unanimous in their opinions about the contributions rendered by the pioneer Chinese. Theirs were the muscles that opened up the bowels of the earth and wrested from her the riches of gold to add to the wealth of the nation. They tilled the land and harvested the fruit so that thousands of people pouring into the West to populate and tame the wilderness would not hunger. They added dignity and stability, order and tranquillity to a frontier land where laws were yet to be made."

READING STRATEGY: **Learning to Summarize What You Have Read**

POETS' CORNER: **The River-Merchant's Wife: A Letter** by Ezra Pound

Unit Ten 149

TEXT: **The Mighty Damon** by Bryce Courtenay

"How our Mighty Damon survived was a mystery; why he continued to want life was even more bewildering. The need to live is a strong instinct, yet how could this horror be called living? Where did his strength come from? Was it love? Celeste still believed with all her soul that Damon was going to make it."

READING STRATEGY: **Understanding Narration**

POETS' CORNER: **Thinking about Bill, Dead of AIDS** by Miller Williams

Unit Eleven 167

TEXT: **Collecting** by Stephen Hughes

"The new collectors must learn by actually handling enough accurately graded goods. In this case, 'handling' means picking up the object, running your fingers over its surfaces to learn the feel of its texture, the quality of its composition. At the same time you should be looking for the fine points of its construction and any distinguishing details it may have. This is the only way."

READING STRATEGY: **The Skill of Scanning**

POETS' CORNER: **Innocence** by William Blake

Unit Twelve 183

TEXT: **The Last Passenger** by Jerry Schemmel

"Those of us who survived the disaster could not escape the single most troubling question: why me? We could ignore it for a while, but eventually we would have to stare down fate and settle on a reason we are still here. Some might suggest, in my case, it was so that Sabrina Michaelson would live."

READING STRATEGY: **Using Different Reading Strategies**

POETS' CORNER: **Elegy for Jane, My Student, Thrown by a Horse** by Theodore Roethke

| | |
|---|-----|
| Unit Thirteen | 204 |
| TEXT: The Season of Divorce by John Cheever | |
| “We went to bed, and I woke sometime during the night. I couldn’t see the clock on the dresser, so I don’t know what time it was. There was no sound from the children’s room. The neighborhood was perfectly still. There were no lighted windows anywhere. Then I knew that Ethel had awakened me. She was lying on her side of the bed. She was crying.” | |
| READING STRATEGY: Understanding the Tone of the Author | |
| POETS’ CORNER: Marks by Linda Pastan | |
| Unit Fourteen | 219 |
| TEXT: Carrying Capacity: Earth’s Bottom Line by Sandra Postel | |
| “A successful global effort to lighten humanity’s load on the earth would directly address the three major driving forces of environmental decline — the grossly inequitable distribution of income, resource-consumptive economic growth, and rapid population growth — and would redirect technology and trade to buy time for this great movement.” | |
| READING STRATEGY: Strategies for Attacking Complicated Sentences | |
| POETS’ CORNER: Trees by Joyce Kilmer | |
| Unit Fifteen | 238 |
| TEXT: The Great Moon Hoax or A Princess of Mars by Ben Bova | |
| “So that’s how we got to the Moon and then stopped going. We set up the Apollo program so that a small number of Americans could plant the flag and their footprints on the Moon and then forget about it. The Martians studiously avoided the whole area during the four years that we were sending missions up there. It all worked out very well, if I say so myself.” | |
| READING STRATEGY: Critical Reading | |
| POETS’ CORNER: The Red Wheelbarrow by William Carlos Williams | |
| Unit Sixteen | 257 |
| TEXT: How to Appreciate Music by Aaron Copland | |
| “What the reader should strive for, then, is a more active kind of listening. Whether you listen to Mozart or Duke Ellington, you can deepen your understanding of music only by being a mere conscious and aware listener — not someone who is just listening, but someone who is listening for something.” | |
| READING STRATEGY: Word Attacking Skills — Word Formation | |
| POETS’ CORNER: To Music by Percy Bysshe Shelley | |
| Unit Seventeen | 273 |
| TEXT: The History of Christianity by Lewis Hopfe | |
| “Christianity arose as a sect of Judaism in the first century A.D. when the Roman Empire was at its peak. According to Christian scripture, Jesus was born when Augustus Caesar ruled the | |

world, and Christianity became known in the Roman capital in the last third of the first century.”

READING STRATEGY: **Noticing Signal Words**

POETS' CORNER: **Religion** by Gwendolyn Brooks

Unit One

Planning Your Time for Study

Harry Maddox

Prereading Exercises

1. Strategies for effective reading

The title of the essay best summarizes its content. It is an effective reading strategy to think about the meaning of the title before you start reading the essay itself. Some students, however, tend to neglect this important step. They either take a casual glance at it without actively thinking about its meaning or simply ignore it by immediately reading the essay itself. Some students might think that reading the title is a waste of time since it does not contain any information in detail. They do not understand that a good title is a helpful "thematic guide" which will make their comprehension of the essay much easier. It can set you on your course and tell you what to expect. A simple experiment can prove the point. If two groups of students are given the same essay to read, but one with a title, the other without, the first group will certainly have a better comprehension than the second after a fast reading of the essay. Obviously, to neglect the reading of the title delays one's active participation in the process of comprehension.

Subheadings are also useful textual clues that help effective reading. While the title provides useful information for the whole essay, the subheadings summarize the content of various independent sections. After taking a glance at the title and the subheadings of an essay, the reader can confidently guess what the essay is about.

There are two different types of titles. A descriptive title announces the topic clearly, accurately, and as briefly as possible. A suggestive title more clearly conveys the writer's attitudes and attempts to draw the reader into the essay. Suggestive titles are less formal and are more likely to appear in popular magazines. "A Broken Heart", for example, can be the title of an essay on an immigrant's sad experiences in America. *Planning Your Time for Study*, the title of this essay, is descriptive. It is direct and plain. Still, a tentative guess about the content of Harry Maddox's essay will make the reading more effective.

2. Prereading questions

- (1) What practical suggestions do you expect Maddox to offer in the essay? Take a glance at the subheadings. Can you add more to your expectations?
- (2) The English essayist Francis Bacon said, "In studies, whatsoever a man commandeth upon himself, let him set hours for it." Do you think it is necessary to set hours for your study?
- (3) What are the advantages and disadvantages of setting up a study plan?

TEXT

- 1 By far the most common difficulty in study is simple failure to get down to regular concentrated work. This difficulty is much greater for those who do not work to a plan and have no regular routine of study. Many students muddle along, doing a bit of this subject or that, as the mood takes them, or letting their set work pile up until the last possible moment.
- 2 Few students work to set time-table. They say that if they did construct a time-table for themselves they would not keep to it, or would have to alter it constantly, since they can never predict from one day to the next what their activities will be.
- 3 No doubt some people take much more kindly to a regular routine than others. There are many who shy away from the self-control of weekly time-table, and dislike being tied down to a definite program of work. Many able students claim that they work in cycles. When they become interested in a topic they work on it intensively for three or four days at a time. On other days they avoid work completely. It has to be confessed that we do not fully understand the complexities of the motivation to work. Most people over about 25 years of age have become conditioned to a work routine, and the majority of really productive workers set aside regular hours for the more important aspects of their work. The "tough-minded" school of workers is usually very contemptuous of the idea that good work can only be done spontaneously, under the influence of inspiration. That most energetic of authors, Anthony Trollope, wrote, "There are those ... who think that the man who works with his imagination should allow himself to wait till inspiration moves him. When I have heard such doctrine preached, I have hardly been able to repress my scorn."
- 4 Not many people are gifted with Trollope's great energy and physical strength, but he was undoubtedly right in declaring that a person can always do the work for which he is fitted if he will give himself the habit of regarding regular daily work as a normal condition of his life. Many creative writers have in fact disciplined themselves to perform a fixed amount of work every day. The great Italian dramatist, Alfieri, even made his servant tie him to his study table.
- 5 Those who believe that they need only work and study as the fit takes them have a mistaken belief either in their own talent or in the value of "freedom". Freedom from restraint and discipline leads to unhappiness rather than to "self-expression" or "personality development". Our society insists on regular habits, time-keeping and punctuality, and whether we like it or not, if we mean to make our way in society we have to comply with its demands. We need not stick too rigidly to plans and time-tables, but plans there must be. Otherwise effort is wasted and time is dribbled away to no purpose. A sensible routine of work, so far from destroying spontaneity or creativity, should in fact, by reducing to a minimum the effort of coping with the ordinary activities of life, actually foster the best conditions for creative work.
- 6 The other obstacles to the regular planning of study are the many distractions of student life: new sports and activities, novel surroundings, friendships and love affairs, organizations, clubs and societies. You need to find a sensible balance between all these competing demands

on your time. To do this you need to be quite clear about your goal. The primary goal of any sort of higher study must be scholarship and professional qualification. The other things, friendship, sports, societies, discussions on the nature of the Universe, and having a good time, are no doubt important and traditional parts of student life; but they are secondary to your primary goal of study.

The Advantages of a Time-Table

- 7 Plans and time-tables are even more necessary to the student than to others because, outside the classroom, he is free, within limits, to do what he will. Farmers, businessmen, lawyers, doctors and professional men of all kinds must work to a time-table and plan the best use of their time, but their times are largely decided by factors over which they have no control. A student's work is not so closely controlled by external circumstances, and for that very reason, set hours of work should be arranged so that study becomes regular and consistent.
- 8 The advantages of a time-table are the savings in time and effort, and the efficiency which results from taking an overall view of your total work load. Without a time-table you are likely to spend much time in indecision, in making up your mind when and what to study, in getting together the necessary books and materials and in getting into the appropriate frame of mind for productive work. Much mental energy is needlessly consumed in trying to choose between alternative and in deciding what to do next. According to William James: "There is no more miserable human being than one in whom nothing is habitual but indecision and for whom the lighting of every cigar, the drinking of every cup, the times of rising and going to bed every day, and the beginning of every bit of work, are subjects of express volitional deliberation." To avoid this unhappy state we should make automatic and habitual as many useful actions as we can. Handing over the details of our daily life to habit frees the higher powers of mind for their proper work.
- 9 The second advantage is in the proper use of time. It is easy to dribble time away. If you do not impose set hours on yourself you are more than likely to spend the time when you should be studying in watching TV, reading a magazine, conversing idly over the tea- and coffee-cups, or in doing any of those hundred and one things which weak students are ready to do rather than get down to work. If you have a time-table and mean to stick to it, it has all the force of a law which must not be disobeyed, and in time adherence to it becomes effortless, and you begin to regard it as a natural part of your life.
- 10 But perhaps the biggest saving comes from intelligently arranging your various activities; in making sure that you do each piece of work at the best possible time; and, eventually, in the confidence and sense of competence which comes from regular daily work.
- 11 Regularity, then, is the ideal that you should aim at. Even if you decide not to work to a detailed time-table, you should at least set aside certain hours for study and plan to do a certain quantity of work each week.

Long-Term Plans and Weekly Time-Tables

- 12 In tackling any course of study you should make for yourself (1) a long-term plan for the year's work, planning even further ahead when necessary and (2) a weekly time-table, constructed afresh each week.
- 13 For the long-term plan you must find out all about the various subjects you will have to cover, the textbooks which you must read and learn, the practical work and other requirements which you have to fulfill. Set yourself "deadlines" for completing important pieces of work, such as essays, practical notebooks or investigations. Always plan ahead as far as you possibly can and don't live from hand to mouth. Of course these long-term plans may have to be revised from time to time, but you should have a broad general picture of your year's work. You may not be able to make those long-term plans until you have had some weeks' experience of your courses, but do not neglect them. More than any other factor they distinguish the good student from the bad. All good teachers provide their students with outlines of their courses at the beginning, so that they "know where they are going". If any of your teachers fail to do this, you should tactfully ask them to do so.
- 14 A detailed time-table needs to be made out at the beginning of each week, in keeping with the changing requirements of your courses, and in the light of your experience. The weekly time-table allows flexibility but at the same time ensures that you will be prepared to do each piece of work at the best possible time. Many students intend to study on set evenings, but are only too ready to cancel or postpone their work on a small pretext. If you have a definite time-table you will be less likely to do so.

The Amount of Study Needed

- 15 As regards the total amount of study time, it is useful to know roughly how much work most students actually do. The average study time is about 40 hours a week. Arts students generally have about 15 classroom hours a week, and spend about 25 in private study — reading, writing essays, etc. Science students spend up to 30 hours a week in the classroom and laboratories, but usually do not do more than 15 hours of private study. These are only average figures of course. Within the general framework each person has to determine for himself how much time to spend in private study, but almost certainly your total hours should lie within the range 30 – 50 hours. Clever students work faster than those of less ability, but two equally clever students may spend very different amounts of time in study. One, satisfied with just getting by, may average only a few hours a week; the other, driven by intellectual curiosity or a desire to excel, may read widely and do far more than the minimum requirements.
- 16 It should be said that most students overrate their speed of work and the amount that they can accomplish in a set time. Hence it is good practice to allow a few extra hours as a "safety factor". At the same time your hours of work should not be excessive. Industrial studies show that if excessively long hours are worked over a long period, output actually declines and becomes less than the output that could be achieved in shorter hours. Your total working

hours will have to exceed about 70 a week, however, before you need start worrying about this!

The Common Pattern of Working Hours

- 17 If you are a full-time student, the pattern of set classes into which you must fit your private study periods is usually something like this: from Monday to Friday you will have set classes for most of the morning hours, with occasional free periods between the lectures and classes. The afternoons will be taken up with practical or laboratory periods in Science, and left rather more free in Arts. There is a period each day from about 4:00 – 7:00 p.m. when not a great deal of work is done — this is the usual time for teas and social gatherings, clubs and societies. If you usually start going to bed around 11:00 p.m., this means that the greater part of your private study will have to be done in the weekday evenings between about 7:00 and 11:00 p.m. Saturday mornings are worked by many Science but by few Arts departments. Saturday afternoons are, by custom, set aside for sport and entertainment; Sundays for thought, relaxation, or outings into the country.
- 18 It follows that the most natural arrangement for Arts students is to plan their 25 hours of study time to fall in the afternoons (4x2 hours) and evenings (4x3 hours) on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, finding the odd five hours in free morning periods or at week-ends. Science students will plan their 15 hours of study (assuming they are fully occupied with practical work in the afternoons) to fall in the evenings (4x3 hours) on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, making up the rest at odd morning hours or at the week-end.
- 19 Unless you are an exceptional individual, you will be wise not to depart too far from this general pattern of hours. It is usually a mistake to set yourself a big program of work on Saturday evenings, for example, when the rest of the world is out for enjoyment. The pull of counter-attractions will be greater and more energy will be consumed in concentrating on your task. Conversely, if you keep to the common pattern of work, the sight of others studying or the mere knowledge that they are doing so, helps your own task.

Avoid Late Hours

- 20 A common departure from this sensible arrangement is to start work late, possibly after a round of social activities, and to work through until the early hours of the morning. Some students claim that they can do their best work late at night, undistracted, while others sleep. If these late hours become habitual, however, it is clearly not very easy to get up and be alert and attentive at a lecture at 9:00 a.m. next morning, unless indeed you take a short sleep each afternoon. Work done under the midnight oil often fails to stand up to the cold light of day. As an occasional technique for completing some big task, working into the night may be all very well, but most regular classes, where much of the important instruction is given, take place in the mornings; and to be fresh and alert in the mornings you must have had a good night's sleep.

- 21 Since colleges and universities all put their most demanding work into the mornings, it is only sensible to ensure that you are fit and alert for morning work. If you are not, examine your habits of sleep, diet and exercise, looking for the cause and trying to alter them. In my view the morning hours are easily the most valuable, and, for most people, the best time for serious work.

Constructing an Effective Time-Table

- 22 The next questions which arise concern how best to apportion your various tasks within the periods of time which you have set aside for study, to decide on the best length for individual "units" of study, on rest intervals and on the amount of time to allocate to each subject.
- 23 Since you cannot at first be quite sure how much time to allocate to the various subjects of your course, you must make the best guesses you can. If you find some particular subject difficult allot more time to it than the others. Do not neglect it in favor of another subject which you find easier and more interesting. Make a fresh time-table at the beginning of each week.
- 24 The best time to write up your lectures or experiments is as soon as possible after the event. If you have to keep a practical notebook, for example, it is a good rule to write it up the same day when the material is fresh in your mind. If you set it aside it will only take you longer to do in the end. Likewise the best time for the first revision of your lecture notes is immediately after the lecture, or at least on the same day.

The Length of Individual Study "Units"

- 25 The length of your individual study "units" deserves serious thought. The most efficient arrangement depends on: (1) the complexity and size of the task (2) the characteristics of the individual learner.
- 26 If you have a large task such as writing a long essay, it may be uneconomic to work on it for half an hour or even for an hour at a time. Time is needed for you to assemble your materials and your thoughts, and to "warm up" to the task. By the time you have got your ideas straight it may be time to stop — before you have made any tangible progress.
- 27 Usually, therefore, if you have an experiment to report or an essay to write, it is best to complete it at a single sitting, once you have assembled all the necessary materials, provided that it can be done in a total of 2 or 3 hours.
- 28 Individuals differ in the ease to which they can take up a fresh task, work on it, and then turn to something else. If you find it easy to switch from one subject to another, you will be able to work efficiently in smaller "units" than those who not only take a long time to get started on a task, but also find it hard to stop thinking about it afterwards.
- 29 A very common difficulty for everyone, however, is to find enough long uninterrupted periods in which to perform those tasks which cannot be completed in a single hour.
- 30 The single hour is the common unit of instruction for lectures and tutorials, and may well be as long as most people care to work on a single subject, without an intervening rest period. For practical work, on the other hand, 2- or 3-hour sessions are usual. Probably for many

tasks and for most people, a working period of about an hour, followed by a few minutes' rest or relaxation is quite effective. Some individuals much prefer to switch to a different task after about an hour. As a general rule, for reading, note-taking and learning from books, an hour is a suitable work unit; but, particularly as you advance to the more complex and difficult aspects of a subject, larger work units may be more effective. Most university students prefer work periods of 2 – 3 hours for many forms of private study.

Value of Rest Periods

- 31 There are best periods of work and rest for every task and for every individual. In the course of study rest periods are invaluable. Although the speed and accuracy of mental work actually declines very little, boredom and dissatisfaction with the task tend to set in after about two hours, if there is no break. During a session of continuous work on the same task, rest periods should be short in relation to the work period — of the order of 5 minutes or so. If longer rests are taken, momentum will be lost and possibly considerable effort may be required before you become warmed up to the task again. A rest should be taken whenever you feel that you are slowing down and making errors. After working on a task for some time, a growing distaste for it occurs, together with an increasing desire to stop work altogether. But if you resolve, instead of doing this, to rest and relax for 10 minutes and then to get back to work, the desire to get down to the task again often returns and you get your “second wind”.
- 32 Changes in activity or posture during the rest are desirable, such as walking around the room, stretching your arms, etc. Rest intervals between different tasks may well be longer — about 10 or 15 minutes. Then a short, brisk walk outside or some light refreshment often serves to restore your energies to their former level. In manual work 5 or 10 minutes' rest each hour is beneficial, and you should not need to break off much more frequently than this. Remember that much of mental fatigue springs from boredom or lack of interest rather than any real inability to continue with the task.
- 33 In general, then, it is sensible to take 15-minute breaks at convenient times between tasks, and smaller breaks of a few minutes in the course of a task. It is much better to take a definite rest interval and then get back to hard work, than work half-heartedly for too long.

Holidays

- 34 In most colleges and institutions of higher education the session extends over only about seven or eight months of the year: or it may be even less, most of the real work being done in the autumn and spring terms. The student often has a month at Christmas, a month at Easter, and three months in the summer free of set work.
- 35 These long holidays derive in part from the days when higher education was for the well-to-do. Students were supposed to supplement their studies by wide and extensive reading, particularly in the long vacation. Nowadays many students find it necessary to work in the holidays in order to make enough money to live on. The first question that arises, then, is should you take paid work in the vacation?

- 36 Although some authorities think that students should study in the vacation, and not take on paid outside employment, particularly manual labor, surveys show that neither those students who take employment, nor those who do not, study very much in the vacations. In my view there is everything to be said for working in the vacations, particularly if the work bears some relation to study: engineers and chemists should work in industry, technicians on farms, social workers as nurses, language students abroad, etc. Academic learning is only one sort of learning: students and their teachers are always in danger of getting out of touch with the larger world of industry, trade and agriculture. Everyone should explore the society in which he lives, and get first-hand knowledge of how people live in social classes other than his own. There is no evidence to show that those who take paid employment in the vacations do any worse at their studies than those who do not. On the contrary, American research shows that students who take part-time employment are more earnest and more purposeful, and better students than those who do not.
- 37 There is substantial agreement that people who take longish holidays away from their work are more productive workers than those who do not. Certainly many businessmen claim that they can do twelve months' work in nine months, but not in twelve months. Work should not become an obsession. At the same time my view is that the sort of idle seaside holiday which may suit a tired factory worker is not the best sort of holiday for students. Something more active and purposeful is required, such as walking, mountaineering, work-camps, and field studies.
- 38 In general, the common advice to "get away from it all" and make a complete break from your work seems to be good advice. You should, however, set aside a part of the long vacation for revision and for going over parts of your work that you may have fallen behind with.

The Distribution of Practice

- 39 Taking a long view, and considering the course of learning over a period of weeks or months, spaced or distributed learning sessions are more effective than "massed" practice. Both long-term retention and understanding will be better if you spread out your learning, rather than try and cram it into a single session. For instance, if you have a total of three hours in which to learn about a topic, it will usually be better to study it, say, for an hour on one evening, for a further hour a few days later, and for a third time a week or ten days later, than to work on it for three hours in one evening and then do no further work on it. In distributed learning each learning session serves to revise and to reinforce your knowledge, and you have more time to think about it and organize it. There is a limit to the amount of information that can be properly assimilated at any one time: time is needed for thinking and for consolidating your knowledge. The worst form of learning, both from the point of view of understanding and of long-term retention, is cramming before examinations: you merely fill your head with a mass of ill-digested facts which are very soon forgotten.

Summary

- 40 By now it should be clear that you can construct a flexible time-table which will not tie you to