

# 经典英语 名人名篇阅读

Reading for Ideas



范东生 主编

东华大学出版社

# *Reading for Ideas*

经典英语名人名篇阅读

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东华大学出版社

## 图书在版编目(CIP)数据

经典英语名人名篇阅读/范东生主编. —上海:东华大学出版社,2009.6

ISBN 978-7-81111-473-7

I. 经... II. 范... III. 英语—阅读教学—高等学校—教学参考资料 IV. H319.4

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字(2008)第 209381 号

责任编辑:曹晓虹

封面设计:书衣坊

## 经典英语名人名篇阅读

范东生 主编

东华大学出版社

(上海市延安西路 1882 号 邮政编码:200051)

新华书店上海发行所发行 江苏省南通市印刷总厂有限公司印刷

开本:850×1168 1/32 印张:11.125 字数:356 千字

2009 年 6 月第 1 版 2009 年 6 月第 1 次印刷

ISBN 978-7-81111-473-7/H·213

定价:26.90 元

## ***Foreword***

Stepping into the advanced stage of English reading, students will find that it is the interpretation of meaning rather than the study of difficult vocabulary and grammar that becomes the chief challenge. When I was choosing the materials for this reading textbook, which intends to develop students' ability of interpretation, the ability to gain the ideas, I did one thing for certain, that is, all the texts are very meaningful (or insightful) writings. Most of them have become classic in the Western literary world. So, I decided to name this text book 经典英语名人名篇阅读, or *Reading for the Ideas*.

Traditionally, reading has been regarded as a decoding process. The meaning of a text is assumed to have been encoded by its writer, and the reader is to just understand (decode) every word and every sentence and then catch the meaning, because it is believed that every word and sentence is purposefully put there for the particular theme. Students may be familiar with such a reading class: step one, the teaching of new words, the forms, the meanings, the collocations and connotations; step two, the teaching of some grammatically difficult sentences, the structure, the function, the paraphrases; step three, the teaching of the organization of the text, the relation between sentences, the function of certain paragraphs; step four, summarizing of all the above and finish. This approach to reading, with which the students deal with letters, words, and sentences in rank order, each step depending on the preceding one, is called "bottom up" approach. The belief behind it was that a general understanding depends upon a collection of all correctly understood small details. Yet, it is not uncommon that many students have also such experiences: they know most of the words, they also understand sentence structures, but they just cannot figure out the

idea, or the meaning of the material.

Later on, numerous evidences appear to tell that a good comprehension does not necessarily depend on the thorough understanding of every detail, and “top-down” model has been introduced and become popular since the 1970s. In classroom practice, teachers provide a similar background to the general content of the text, and try to trigger students’ previously stored knowledge and experiences in association. This model has widely replaced the “bottom-up” model. Top-down models assume that the reader gets the meaning by comparing his expectations with a sample of information from the text as he is constructing a meaningful whole.

In my opinion, “bottom-up” strategy has focus on word recognition and “top-down” strategy has focus on integrating background knowledge. Each has its advantages. We hear many reports that effective readers continually adopt a top-down approach to predict the probable theme and then move to the bottom-up approach to check their assumption by examining details.

Although we agree that both sorts of strategies are vital to skilled reading, students still cannot be guaranteed to find the meaning. This is because there is simply no fixed meaning waiting there to be recognized. Meaning is made out by the reader. It is right that the reader gets the meaning by means of word recognition, by sentence understanding, but what is more closer to the fact is, he/she constructs a meaning by using his/her own knowledge of the world, his own previous life experience and, even more importantly, his value system. In the process of understanding, each reader uses his/her previous knowledge and assumptions, both about the world and about the way in which the text is constructed, as an organizing principle

by which the new text information is made out. (Isn't it also many students' experience that a lesson is much easier to understand if it is about a subject they know well?)

Thus, the present textbook is organized in a way that students can get help both from linguistic understanding and from experience familiarization.

Each lesson is presented in such a structure:

1. A framing direction( Set up a Frame). This is to set up a frame for the interpretation. Students will have their previous knowledge and experience similar to the knowledge and experience in the text associated. In this way, some useful information is retrieved from students' long-term memory, and set there in their minds as the background. They are then ready to start framing an interpretation. With the help of a general guiding line, the possibility of wrong direction of understanding is reduced.

2. The text proper.

3. Words and expressions. Only some words that are in critical places in the text are explained, but not all the new words, because I believe that students can deal with most of the new words according to their word formation knowledge and the contexts.

4. Questions for thinking. All questions are open for discussion. During the reading( that is, interpretation), students might have multiple associations between what they are reading and their own world knowledge and life experience. Through the after reading discussions the extensive choices for possible ideas will be narrowed and a more reasonable understanding can be developed.

What I want to emphasize here is to call an attention to the last question of each lesson. It is a significant part. The question requires a conscious look at the process of the reader's understanding. How does he/she set up a frame for

understanding; how does he/she make the decision on the relations between the details; how does he/she link some visions in the text with the pictures in his/her own life experience, etc. In one word, the question intends to help students to draw a meaningful experience from this lesson. In most cases reading interpretation undergoes without reader's awareness. A good reader should know his/her reading strategy, and keep aware of those elements affecting his/her understanding. In this way, he/she is surely going to be a more successful reader.

I should give my acknowledgement to the resources where these texts are taken from. Most of them are taken from *Dolphin Reader* ( by Douglas Hunt & Melody Richardson, Daily Houghton Mifflin Company, 1987). Others are from *Story to Anti-story* ( by Mary Rohrberger, Houghton Mifflin Company) and *Studies in Fiction* ( by Blaze O. Bonazza, Emil Roy, Sandra Roy, Harper & Row Publishers Inc. ). Due to the tight time schedule, I have not been able to find the original publishers. Though the book will be only used for classroom teaching, I will welcome the contacts from the above-mentioned publishers.



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## 1. *Insouciance*

*D. H. Lawrence*

**A** **bout the author:** David Herbert Lawrence, 1885 — 1930, English author, one of the primary shapers of 20th – century fiction. In 1909 some of his poems were published in the *English Review*, and in 1911, the first novel, *The White Peacock*. He died at the age of 45 of tuberculosis, a disease with which he had struggled for years.

Lawrence believed that industrialized Western culture was dehumanizing because it emphasized intellectual attributes to the exclusion of natural or physical instincts. One aspect of this “blood consciousness” would be an acceptance of the need for sexual fulfillment. His three great novels, *Sons and Lovers* (1913), *The Rainbow* (1915), and *Women in Love* (1921), concern the consequences of trying to deny humanity’s union with nature. After World War I, Lawrence began to believe that society needed to be reorganized under one superhuman leader. The novels containing this theme — *Aaron’s Rod* (1922), *Kangaroo* (1923), and *The Plumed Serpent* (1926) — are all considered failures. Lawrence’s most controversial novel is *Lady Chatterley’s Lover* (1928).

Lawrence’s works include stories, poems, and essays, plays, travel books such as *Etruscan Places* (1932), and volumes of literary criticism, notably *Studies in Classic American Literature* (1916).

**Set up a frame:** We relish the taste for places of interest. When rushing for them, facing them, seemingly possessing them, yet we deviate from and are thus deprived of the preoccupation.

My balcony is on the east side of the hotel, and my neighbors on the right are a Frenchman, white-haired, and his white – haired wife; my neighbors on the left are two little white-haired English ladies. And we are all mortally shy of one another.

When I peep out of my room in the morning and see the matronly French lady in a purple silk wrapper, standing like the captain on the bridge surveying the morning, I pop in again before she can see me. And whenever I emerge during the day, I am aware of the two little white-haired ladies popping back like two white rabbits, so that literally I only see the whisk of their shirt-hems.

This afternoon being hot and thundery, I woke up suddenly and went out on the balcony barefoot. There I sat serenely contemplating the world, and ignoring the two bundles of feet of the two little ladies which protruded from their open doorways, upon the end of the two *chaises longues*<sup>1</sup>. A hot, still afternoon! The lake shining rather glassy away below, the mountains rather sulky, the greenness very green, all a little silent and lurid, and two mowers mowing with scythes, downhill just near: slush! slush! sound the scythe-strokes.

The two little ladies become aware of my presence. I become aware of a certain agitation in the two bundles of feet wrapped in two discreet steamer rugs and protruding on the end of two *chaises longues* from the pair of doorways upon the balcony next me. One bundle of feet suddenly disappears; so does the other. Silence!

Then lo! with odd sliding suddenness a little white-haired lady in gray silk, with round blue eyes, emerges and looks straight at me, and remarks that it is pleasant now. A little cooler, say I, with false amiability. She quite agrees, and we speak of the men mowing; how plainly one hears the long breaths of the scythes!

By now we are *tête-à-tête*<sup>2</sup>. We speak of cherries, strawberries, and the promise of the vine crop. This somehow

leads to Italy, and to Signor Mussolini<sup>①</sup>. Before I know where I am, the little white-haired lady has swept me off my balcony, away from the glassy lake, the veiled mountains, the two men mowing, and the cherry trees, away into the troubled ether of international politics.

I am not allowed to sit like a dandelion on my own stem. The little day in a breath blows me abroad. And I was so pleasantly musing over the two men mowing: the young one, with long legs in bright blue cotton trousers, and with bare black head, swinging so lightly downhill, and the other, in black trousers, rather stout in front, and wearing a new straw hat of the boater variety, coming rather stiffly after, crunching the end of his stroke with a certain violent effort.

I was watching the curiously different motions of the two men, the young thin one in bright blue trousers, the elderly fat one in shabby black trousers that stick out in front, the different amount of effort in their mowing, the lack of grace in the elderly one, his jerky advance, the unpleasant effect of the new “boater” on his head — and I tried to interest the little lady.

But it meant nothing to her. The mowers, the mountains, the cherry trees, the lake, all the things that were actually there, she didn't care about. They even seemed to scare her off the balcony. But she held her ground, and instead of herself being scared away, she snatched me up like some *ogress*<sup>3</sup>, and swept me off into the empty desert spaces of right and wrong, politics,

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① Benito Mussolini (b. 1883 — d. 1945). Fascist dictator of Italy from 1922 to 1943. He centralized all power in himself as the leader (il duce) of the Fascist party and attempted to create an Italian empire, ultimately in alliance with Hitler's Germany. The defeat of Italian armies in World War II brought an end to his imperial dream and led to his downfall. In April 1945, just before the Allied armies reached Milan, Mussolini, along with his mistress Clara Petacci, was caught by Italian partisans as he tried to take refuge in Switzerland. They were both executed.

Fascism and the rest.

The worst ogress couldn't have treated me more villainously. I don't care about right and wrong, politics, Fascism, abstract liberty, or anything else of the sort. I want to look at the mowers, and wonder why fatness, elderliness, and black trousers should inevitably wear a new straw hat of the boater variety, move in stiff jerks, shove the end of the scythe-strokes with a certain violence, and win my hearty disapproval, as contrasted with young long thinness, bright blue cotton trousers, a bare black head, and a pretty lifting movement at the end of the scythe-stroke.

Why do modern people almost invariably ignore the things that are actually present to them? Why, having come out from England to find mountains, lakes, scythe-mowers and cherry trees, does the little blue-eyed lady resolutely close her blue eyes to them all, now she's got them, and gaze away to Signor Mussolini, whom she hasn't got, and to Fascism, which is invisible anyhow? Why wasn't she content to be where she is? Why can't she be happy with what she's got? Why must she care?

I see now why her round blue eyes are so round, so noticeably round. It is because she "cares." She is haunted by that mysterious bugbear of "caring". For everything on earth that doesn't concern her she "cares". She cares terribly because far-off, invisible, hypothetical Italians wear shirts, but she doesn't care a rap that one elderly mower whose stroke she can hear, wears black trousers instead of bright blue glassy slope and say to the fat mower: "*Cher monsieur, pourquoi portezvous les pantalons noirs?* Why, oh, why do you wear black trousers?" — then I should say: What an on-the-spot little lady! — But since she only torments me with international politics, I can only remark: What a tiresome off-the-spot old woman!

They care! They simply are eaten up with caring. They are so busy caring about Fascism or League of Nations or whether

France is right or whether Marriage is threatened, that they never know where they are. They certainly never live on the spot where they are. They inhabit abstract space, the desert void of politics, principles, right and wrong, and so forth. They are doomed to be abstract. Talking to them is like trying to have a human relationship with the letter X in algebra.

There simply is a deadly breach between actual living and this abstract caring. What is actually living? It is a question mostly of direct contact. There was a direct sensuous contact between me, the lake, mountains, cherry trees, mowers, and a certain invisible but noisy *chaffinch*<sup>4</sup> in a clipped *lime*<sup>5</sup> tree. All this was cut off by the fatal shears of that abstract word Fascism, and the little old lady next door was the Atropos<sup>①</sup> who cut the thread of my actual life this afternoon. She beheaded me, and flung my head into abstract space. Then we are supposed to love our neighbors!

When it comes to living, we live through our instincts and our intuitions. Instinct makes me run from little over-earnest ladies; instinct makes me sniff the lime blossoms and reach for the darkness cherry. But it is intuition which makes me feel the uncanny glassiness of the lake this afternoon, the sulkiness of the mountains, the vividness of near green in thunder-sun, the young man in bright blue trousers lightly tossing the grass from the scythe, the elderly man in a boater stiffly shoving his scythe-strokes, both of them sweating in the silence of the intense light.

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① Atropos was the oldest of the Three Fates, and was known as the "inflexible" or "inevitable", who chose the mechanism of death and ended the life of each mortal by cutting their thread with her "abhorred shears." She worked along with her sisters Clotho, who spun the thread, and Lachesis, who measured the length.



### Words and expressions:

1. Chaises longues 仅一端有靠背可坐可躺的长靠椅
2. tête-à-tête (两人之间的)私下谈话
3. ogress 女妖怪
4. chaffinch 苍头燕雀
5. lime 椴树



### Questions:

1. In this essay, the author and the two British women, in confronting beautiful scenery, stand for two kinds of people respectively. What are they? Do they have something in common? What tells them from each other?
2. Answer the series of questions in the eleventh paragraph.
3. Summarize the main idea of the essay in one or two sentences.
4. Keep a journal and write down your experience and understanding in reading. For example, do you see eye to eye with the author as he processes in commenting on the two women and demonstrating his own idea?

## 2. *My Wood*<sup>①</sup>

E. M. Forster

**About the author:** About the author: Edward Morgan Forster, (1879 — 1970), was an English novelist, short story writer, essayist, and librettist. He is known best for his ironic and well-plotted novels examining class difference and hypocrisy in early 20th-century British society. Forster's humanistic impulse toward understanding and sympathy may be aptly summed up in the epigraph to his 1910 novel *Howards End*: "Only connect".

Forster was homosexual, but this fact was not widely known during his lifetime. His posthumously published novel *Maurice* tells of the coming of age of an explicitly homosexual male character.

**Set up a frame:** We are all seduced to possess wealth. When the aim answered, what effect will fall on us?

A few years ago I wrote a book which dealt in part with the difficulties of the English in India. Feeling that they would have had no difficulties in India themselves, the Americans read the book freely. The more they read it the better it made them feel, and a check to the author was the result. I bought a wood with the check. It is not a large wood — it contains scarcely any trees, and it is intersected, blast it, by a public foot-path. Still, it is the first property that I have owned, so it is right that other people should participate in my shame, and should ask themselves, in accents that will vary in horror, this very

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① First published in 1926, E. M. Forster's "My Wood" appears in the collection *Abinger Harvest* (1936, reprinted in 1996 by Andre Deutsch Ltd. ).



important question: What is the effect of property upon the character? Don't let's touch economics; the effect of private ownership upon the community as a whole is another question — a more important question, perhaps, but another one. Let's keep to psychology. If you own things, what's their effect on you? What's the effect on me of my wood?

In the first place, it makes me feel heavy. Property does have this effect. Property produces men of weight, and it was a man of weight who failed to get into the Kingdom of Heaven. He was not wicked, that unfortunate millionaire in the parable, he was only stout; he stuck out in front, not to mention behind, and as he wedged himself this way and that in the crystalline entrance and bruised his well-fed flanks, he saw beneath him a comparatively slim camel passing through the eye of a needle and being woven into the robe of God<sup>①</sup>. The *Gospels*<sup>1</sup> all through couple stoutness and slowness. They point out what is perfectly obvious, yet seldom realized: that if you have a lot of things you cannot move about a lot, that furniture requires dusting, dusters require servants, servants require insurance stamps, and the whole tangle of them makes you think twice before you accept an invitation to dinner or go for a bathe in the Jordan<sup>②</sup>. Sometimes the Gospels proceed further and say with Tolstoy that property is sinful; they approach the difficult ground

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① Matthew (19:24). there was a city gate in the walls of Jerusalem known as "The Eye of the Needle". Presumably, it was very difficult for a man riding a camel to squeeze through the narrow opening. There are two accounts of this, one being where the camel had to go through on his knees, or the camel had to go through unburdened. Either way, it was difficult.

② The crossing of the Jordan River symbolizes for the Christian the death to self and the self nature, his identification with Christ, and his walking in the newness of resurrection life in Christ through faith.