

主 编 陈怀志 罗伦全
副主编 赵 彤 肖必恒 耿德英

Ninety English Pieces for
Reading and Reciting

英语

读背
90篇



西南交通大学出版社

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编 者 白 玉 甘岱侠 胡 竹
洪 洁 黄 莺 雷 惠
王拉沙 余 庆 周绍斌

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前 言

大家都知道，语言输入是语言学习过程的一个重要环节，是语言学习的起始点。没有足够的、有效的语言信息输入，学习者是不可能输出语言的。对语言学习者来说，寻找一本或几本适合自己的既能读又能背的阅读教材显得尤为重要，英语语言学习者也不例外。

基于以上观点和理念，我们编写了此书。

首先，本书在选材过程中注意题材和内容的广泛性。当前已有的阅读教材普遍有一个共同点，那就是选材相对单一，内容范围相对狭隘，读者了解的信息相对较少，常常没有阅读兴趣。因此，我们所选的材料，既有演讲和致辞，又有散文，还有诗歌、小说和经典电影对白，题材广泛，内容丰富。

其次，本书在选材过程中注意选材的趣味性。兴趣是最好的老师。如果读者对阅读材料感兴趣，他们自然乐意去阅读和背诵它；相反，如果读者对阅读材料感到乏味，势必会大大影响读者的阅读效果。本书在选材过程中，注意从不同的角度挑选英语国家不同时期和不同背景情况下的名人演讲或致辞以及优美的散文和诗歌，还专门挑选了英语小说和由英语小说改编的电影对白。

再次，为了让读者更好地阅读和理解，我们在编写每篇材料时，除了正文，还设有生词释义、导读和思考题三部分。生词释义帮助读者认识掌握部分难理解的单词，导读部分主要提供作者的相关信息以及该文相关的一些内容或写作背景，思考题部分主要用于帮助读者评估自己对材料的理解程度，从而加深对阅读材料的理解。

本书选材涉及的作者多，时间和内容跨度大，为了编排有序，在编写过程中演讲和致辞部分尽量按演讲和致辞的时间先后排列，散文和诗歌部分尽量按作者的生活时间先后排列。

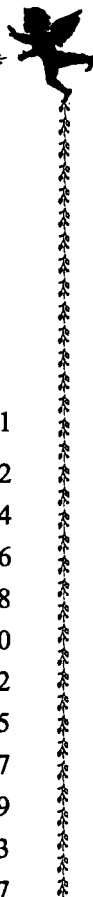
本书既可以作为高校学生的英语阅读教材，也可以作为其他英语学习者的英语阅读材料。

我们在编写本书的过程中，从不同渠道参考、引用了不少宝贵资料，由于时间仓促和联系困难等方面的原因，来不及一一征求意见，这里一并致谢！

由于编者水平有限，书中定有很多不妥之处，敬请读者批评指正。

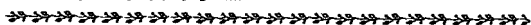
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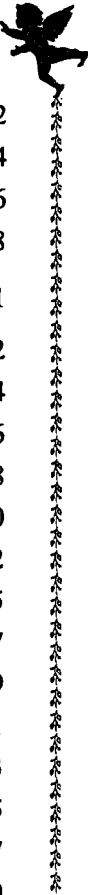
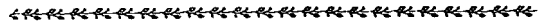


Contents

Section I	Speeches or Addresses	1
No. 1	The Declaration of Independence (Excerpt)	2
No. 2	Address at Gettysburg	4
No. 3	The Road to Success (Excerpt)	6
No. 4	Unconscious Plagiarism	8
No. 5	Farewell to Baseball Address	10
No. 6	Blood, Toil, Tears and Sweat	12
No. 7	Pearl Harbor Address to the Nation	15
No. 8	Speech Accepting the Nobel Prize in Literature	17
No. 9	The Torch Has Been Passed to a New Generation of Americans	19
No. 10	The Fringe Benefits of Failure and the Importance of Imagination (Excerpt)	23
No. 11	I Have a Dream	27
No. 12	Remarks on the Assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr.	31
No. 13	We Choose to Go to the Moon	33
No. 14	Man and the Earth, Where to Go?	35
No. 15	Remarks by Former President of the United States — Nixon at the University of International Business and Economics	39
No. 16	Nobel Address 1979 (Excerpt)	41
No. 17	The Journey of Our America Must Go on	45
No. 18	Keynote Speech at Microsoft Professional Developers Conference	47
No. 19	The Secretary-General's Message for the New Millennium	57
No. 20	Walls and Bridges	59
No. 21	You've Got to Find What You Love	62
No. 22	Remarks by the President in a National Address to America's School Children	67
Section II	Essays	73
No. 23	On Self-Discipline (Excerpt)	74
No. 24	Three Periods of My Youth	76
No. 25	Did You Deal with Fortune Fairly?	78
No. 26	Letter to a Young Friend	80
No. 27	George Washington	82
No. 28	On the Feeling of Immortality in Youth	84



No. 29	The Ponds (Excerpt).....	86
No. 30	Solitude.....	88
No. 31	Life	91
No. 32	The Love of Beauty.....	93
No. 33	Companionship of Books	95
No. 34	Advice to Youth.....	97
No. 35	The Lowest Animal	100
No. 36	Youth	102
No. 37	If I Rest, I Rust.....	104
No. 38	We Are on a Journey	106
No. 39	The Crab.....	108
No. 40	Find Thyself	110
No. 41	Painting As a Pastime.....	112
No. 42	Becoming a Freethinker and a Scientist.....	114
No. 43	The World As I See It (Excerpt).....	116
No. 44	Late Summer	118
No. 45	True Nobility	120
No. 46	On Meeting the Celebrated	122
No. 47	The Joys of Writing	124
No. 48	The Lover and the Beloved (Excerpt).....	126
No. 49	What Makes a Teacher?	128
No. 50	Three Passions.....	130
No. 51	How to Grow Old.....	132
No. 52	What Is Intelligence, Anyway?	135
No. 53	Sweet September.....	137
No. 54	I Will Live This Day As If It Is My Last.....	141
No. 55	The Use of History	144
No. 56	Be an Expert in Your Field (Excerpt).....	146
No. 57	Strength of a Single Syllable.....	148
No. 58	How Is It Possible to Believe in God	151
No. 59	The Pleasure of Reading	153
No. 60	Ambition.....	155
No. 61	Secret Ingredients of Tough People.....	157
No. 62	There Is No God.....	159
No. 63	To Love and to Be Loved.....	161
No. 64	Write Your Own Life.....	163
No. 65	I Live Four Lives at a Time.....	165
No. 66	Medicine for the Grief of Lovers of Literature	167
No. 67	How to Be True to Yourself.....	170



No. 68	Bill Gates' 11 Rules of Life.....	172
No. 69	Of Studies.....	174
No. 70	The Study of Words.....	176
No. 71	Choose Optimism.....	178
Section III	Poems	181
No. 72	All the World's a Stage.....	182
No. 73	A Red, Red Rose.....	184
No. 74	I Wandered Lonely As a Cloud.....	186
No. 75	She Walks in Beauty.....	188
No. 76	Love's Philosophy.....	190
No. 77	Ode to the West Wind.....	192
No. 78	To Autumn.....	195
No. 79	A Poison Tree.....	197
No. 80	Remembrance.....	199
No. 81	A Psalm of Life.....	201
No. 82	O Captain! My Captain.....	203
No. 83	The Skies Can't Keep Their Secret.....	205
No. 84	When You Are Old.....	207
No. 85	If.....	209
No. 86	Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening.....	211
No. 87	The Road Not Taken.....	213
No. 88	The More Loving One.....	215
Section IV	Novel	217
No. 89	News of the Engagement.....	218
Section V	Movie Dialogue	223
No. 90	Gone with the Wind (Excerpt).....	224

Section I

Speeches or Addresses



No. 1

The Declaration of Independence (Excerpt)

Thomas Jefferson

When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the Powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness.

That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.

That whenever any form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shown, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object, evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security.

Such has been the patient sufferance of these Colonies; and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former Systems of Government. The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States. To prove this, let Facts be submitted to a candid world.



(From http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Declaration_of_Independence)

New words

unalienable *adj.* 不可剥夺的
 institute *v.* 设立; 开创; 开始
 derive *v.* 得到; 从某一源泉得到 (或取得)
 effect *v.* 使发生; 实现, 导致
 prudence *n.* 谨慎, 小心
 dictate *v.* 命令; 规定
 transient *adj.* 短暂的; 暂时的

disposed *adj.* 有倾向的; 愿意的
 right *v.* (古) 为……平反, 补偿
 usurpation *n.* 侵犯, 侵占
 evince *v.* 证明; 表明
 despotism *n.* 专制统治, 暴政
 sufferance *n.* (古) 痛苦, 苦难, 不幸
 candid *adj.* 不囿于偏见的; 公正的

Reading guidance

Thomas Jefferson (1743 — 1826) was one of the most influential Founders of the United States and one of the earliest and most prominent American politicians and statesmen. As a member of the second Continental Congress, he drafted the Declaration of Independence (1776). He was the third President of the United States (1801 — 1809). His presidency was marked by the purchase of the Louisiana Territory from France (1803) and the Tripolitan War (1801 — 1805). A political philosopher, educator, and architect, Jefferson designed his own estate, Monticello, and buildings for the University of Virginia.

The *Declaration of Independence* was a statement adopted by the Continental Congress on July 4, 1776, which announced that the thirteen American colonies then at war with Great Britain were independent states, and thus no longer a part of the British Empire. Written primarily by Thomas Jefferson, the Declaration was a formal explanation of why Congress had voted on July 2 to declare independence from Great Britain, more than a year after the outbreak of the American Revolutionary War. The birthday of the United States of America — Independence Day — is celebrated on July 4, the day the wording of the Declaration was approved by Congress.

Questions for thinking

1. What's your opinion on the American Revolutionary War?
2. What's the theme and significance of the Declaration?
3. What influence did the Declaration bring to the United States?
4. Talk about your understanding of "all men are created equal".



No. 2

Address at Gettysburg

Abraham Lincoln

Fourscore and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.

Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battlefield of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

But, in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate — we cannot consecrate — we cannot hallow — this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us, the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work, which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us — that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion; that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain; that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom; and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

(From <http://www.hxen.com/oralenglish/kyds/2008-06-28/42565.html>)

New words

address *n.* 演说, 讲话

Gettysburg *n.* 葛底斯堡 (美国地名)

fourscore *n. & adj.* 八十 (的)

conceive *v.* 创立, 产生

dedicate *v.* 奉献, 献身

proposition *n.* 主张

engaged *adj.* 忙的, 从事……的

altogether *adv.* 完全, 全然

consecrate *v.* 奉献, 献祭

hallow *v.* 神化

detract *v.* 减损, 贬低

nobly *adv.* 高尚地, 壮丽地

advance *v.* 推进, 促进

devotion *n.* 献身, 忠诚



endure v. 持续, 持久

battlefield n. 战场

portion n. 一部分, 一份

resolve v. 决心, 决意

perish v. 死亡, 毁灭

Reading guidance

Abraham Lincoln (1809 — 1865) served as the 16th President of the United States from March 1861 until his assassination in April 1865. He successfully led the country through its greatest constitutional, military and moral crisis — the American Civil War — by preserving the Union by force while ending slavery and promoting economic modernization. Reared in a poor family on the western frontier, he was mostly self-educated. Lincoln has consistently been ranked by scholars as one of the greatest U.S. Presidents.

This address was delivered by Lincoln during the American Civil War, on the afternoon of Thursday, November 19, 1863, at the dedication of the Soldiers' National Cemetery in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, four and a half months after the Union armies defeated those of the Confederacy at the decisive Battle of Gettysburg. Abraham Lincoln's carefully crafted address, secondary to other presentations that day, came to be regarded as one of the greatest speeches in American history.

Questions for thinking

1. In What situation the Address was delivered?

2. What's your opinion on Abraham Lincoln?

3. What's the main idea of the Address?

4. In the sentence "We are met on a great battlefield of that war", what does "the war" refer to?

And who won the war finally? Why?

5. What do you think of the last sentence?



No. 3

The Road to Success (Excerpt)

Andrew Carnegie

It is well that the young men should begin at the beginning and occupy the most subordinate positions. Many of the leading businessmen of Pittsburgh had a serious responsibility thrust upon them at the very threshold of their career. They were introduced to the broom, and spent the first hours of their business lives sweeping out the office. I notice we have janitors and janitresses now in offices, and our young men unfortunately miss that salutary branch of a business education. But if by chance the professional sweeper is absent any morning, the boy who has the genius of the future partner in him will not hesitate to try his hand at the broom. It does not hurt the newest comer to sweep out the office if necessary. I was one of those sweepers myself.

Assuming that you have all obtained employment and are fairly started, my advice to you is “aim high”. I would not give a fig for the young man who does not already see himself the partner or the head of an important firm. Do not rest content for a moment in your thoughts as head clerk, or foreman, or general manager in any concern, no matter how extensive. Say to yourself, “My place is at the top.” Be king in your dreams.

And here is the prime condition of success, the great secret: concentrate your energy, thought, and capital exclusively upon the business in which you are engaged. Having begun in one line, resolve to fight it out on that line, to lead in it, adopt every improvement, have the best machinery, and know the most about it.

The concerns which fail are those which have scattered their capital, which means that they have scattered their brains also. They have investments in this, or that, or the other, here, there, and everywhere. “Don’t put all your eggs in one basket” is all wrong. I tell you “put all your eggs in one basket and then watch that basket”. Look round you and take notice; men who do that not often fail. It is easy to watch and carry the one basket. It is trying to carry too many baskets that breaks most eggs in this country. He who carries three baskets must put one on his head, which is apt to tumble and trip him up. One fault of American businessmen is lack of concentration.

To summarize what I have said: Aim for the highest, never enter a bar room; do not touch liquor, or if at all only at meals; never speculate; never indorse beyond your surplus cash fund;



make the firm's interest yours; break orders always to save owners; concentrate; put all your eggs in one basket and watch that basket; expenditure always within revenue; lastly, be not impatient, for as Emerson says, "No one can cheat you out of your ultimate success but yourselves."

(From <http://www.kekenet.com/Article/200905/70651.shtml>)

New words

subordinate *adj.* 下级的, 级别低的

threshold *n.* 入门; 开端; 开始

janitor *n.* (主北美) 门房, 看门人

salutary *adj.* (尤指不受欢迎的或使人不愉快的事) 有益的, 有利的

apt *adj.* 有……的倾向

trip sb. up 使(某人)绊倒

speculate *v.* 做投机买卖

indorse *v.* 背书, 在(支票、汇票)背面签字

Reading guidance

Andrew Carnegie (1835 — 1919) was a Scottish-American industrialist, businessman, entrepreneur and a major philanthropist. He earned most of his fortune in the steel industry. In the 1870s, he founded the Carnegie Steel Company, a step which cemented his name as one of the "Captains of Industry". By the 1890s, the company was the largest and most profitable industrial enterprise in the world. Carnegie sold it in 1901 for \$480 million to J. P. Morgan, who created U.S. Steel. Carnegie devoted the remainder of his life to large-scale philanthropy, with special emphasis on local libraries, world peace, education and scientific research. His life has often been referred to as a true "rags to riches" story.

These paragraphs are taken from "THE ROAD TO BUSINESS SUCCESS: A TALK TO YOUNG MEN", an address to Students of the Curry Commercial College, Pittsburg, June 23, 1885. Achieving complex and difficult goals requires focus, long-term diligence and effort. Success in any field requires forgoing excuses and justifications for poor performance or lack of adequate planning; in short, success requires emotional maturity. The measure of belief that people have in their ability to achieve a personal goal also affects that achievement. Long term achievements rely on short-term achievements. Emotional control over the small moments of the single day makes a big difference in the long term. These are what this address can advocate.

Questions for thinking

1. How do you understand "be king in your dreams"?
2. Do you like to put all your eggs in one basket or in several baskets?
3. Do you agree with the statement "no one can cheat you out of ultimate success but yourselves"?
4. According to your personal experience, what is your road to success?



No. 4

Unconscious Plagiarism

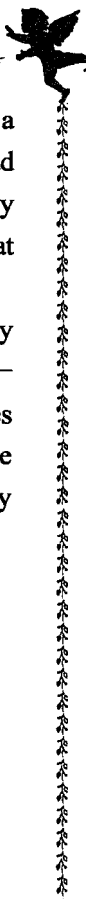
Mark Twain

Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen:

I would have traveled a much greater distance than I have come to witness the paying of honors to Dr. Holmes. For my feeling toward him has always been one of peculiar warmth. When one receives a letter from a great man for the first time in his life, it is a large event to him, as all of you know by your own experience. You never can receive letters enough from famous men afterward to obliterate that one, or dim the memory of the pleasant surprise it was, and the gratification it gave you. Lapse of time cannot make it commonplace or cheap.

Well, the first great man who ever wrote me a letter was our guest — Oliver Wendell Holmes. He was also the first great literary man I ever stole anything from, and that is how I came to write to him and he to me. When my first book was new a friend of mine said to me, "The dedication is very neat." "Yes," I said, "I thought it was." My friend said, "I always admired it, even before I saw it in the *Innocents Abroad*." I naturally said, "What do you mean? Where did you ever see it before?" "Well, I saw it first some years ago as Dr. Holmes's dedication to his *Songs in Many Keys*." Of course, my first impulse was to prepare this man's remains for burial, but upon reflection I said I would reprieve him for a moment or two, and give him a chance to prove his assertion if he could. We stepped into a bookstore, and he did prove it. I had really stolen the dedication, almost word for word. I could not imagine how this curious thing had happened; for I knew one thing, for a dead certainty, that a certain amount of pride always goes along with a teaspoonful of brains, and that this pride protects a man from deliberately stealing other people's ideas. That is what a teaspoonful of brains will do for a man, — and admirers had often told me I had nearly a basketful, though they were rather reserved as to the size of the basket.

However, I thought the thing out and solved the mystery. Two years before I had been laid up a couple of weeks in the Sandwich Islands, and had read and reread Dr. Holmes's poems until my mental reservoir was filled up with them to the brim. The dedication lay on top, and handy, so, by and by, I unconsciously stole it. Perhaps I unconsciously stole the rest of the volume, too, for many people have told me that my book was pretty poetical, in one way or another. Well, of course, I wrote Dr. Holmes and told him I hadn't meant to steal, and he wrote back and said in the kindest way that it was all right and no harm done; and added that he believed we all unconsciously worked over ideas gathered in



reading and hearing, imagining they were original with ourselves. He stated a truth, and did it in such a pleasant way and salved over my sore spot so gently and so healingly, that I was rather glad I had committed the crime, for the sake of the letter. I afterward called on him and told him to make perfectly free with any ideas of mine that struck him as being good protoplasm for poetry. He could see by that that there wasn't anything mean about me; so we get along right from the start.

I have met Dr. Holmes many times since. And lately he said, however, I am wondering wildly away from the one thing which I got on my feet to do, that is to make my compliments to you — my fellow teachers of the great public. And likewise to say I am right glad to see that Dr. Holmes is still in his prime and full of generous life; and as age is not determined by years, but by trouble and infirmities of mind and body, I hope it may be a very long time yet before any can truthfully say, "he is growing old."

(摘自《敢说名人演讲英语》，浩瀚编著，中国水利水电出版社，2008)

New words

plagiarism *n.* 剽窃

reprieve *v.* 缓期执行

lapse *n.* 流逝

protoplasm *n.* 原生质

Reading guidance

Samuel Langhorne Clemens (1835 — 1910), better known by his pen name Mark Twain, was an American author and humorist. He is noted for his novels *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1885), called "the Great American Novel", and *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1876). He achieved great success as a writer and public speaker. He was lauded as the "greatest American humorist of his age", and William Faulkner called Twain "the father of American literature".

This Speech was delivered by Mark Twain at the dinner given by the publishers of the Atlantic Monthly to Oliver Wendell Holmes, in honor of his 70th birthday, August 29, 1879, who was an American physician, professor, lecturer, and author and regarded by his peers as one of the best writers of the 19th century. Mark Twain expressed his appreciation for Dr. Holmes's care and generosity in a very humorous and witty way.

Questions for thinking

1. Where does Mark Twain's sense of humor lie in this letter?
2. Could Mark Twain be excused since his behavior of plagiarism is unconscious?
3. Does this letter serve ingeniously as a dedication to Dr. Holmes' 70th birthday? What virtues of Dr. Holmes are skillfully mentioned in it?



No. 5

Farewell to Baseball Address

Lou Gehrig

Fans, for the past two weeks you have been reading about a bad break I got. Yet today I consider myself the luckiest man on the face of the earth.

I have been in ballparks for seventeen years and have never received anything but kindness and encouragement from you fans. Look at these grand men. Which of you wouldn't consider it the highlight of his career just to associate with them for even one day?

Sure I'm lucky.

Who wouldn't consider it an honor to have known Jacob Ruppert? Also, the builder of baseball's greatest empire, Ed Barrow? To have spent six years with that wonderful little fellow, Miller Huggins? Then to have spent the next nine years with that outstanding leader, that smart student of psychology, the best manager in baseball today, Joe McCarthy?

Sure I'm lucky.

When the New York Giants, a team you would give your right arm to beat, and vice versa, sends you a gift — that's something. When everybody down to the groundskeepers and those boys in white coats remember you with trophies — that's something.

When you have a wonderful mother-in-law who takes sides with you in squabbles with her own daughter — that's something.

When you have a father and a mother who work all their lives so you can have an education and build your body — it's a blessing.

When you have a wife who has been a tower of strength and shown more courage than you dreamed existed — that's the finest I know.

So, I close in saying that I might have been given a bad break, but I've got an awful lot to live for.

(From <http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/lougehrigfarewelltobaseball.htm>)

New words

ballpark *n.* 球场

highlight *n.* 最精彩的部分, 最重要的时刻或事件