

大学英语四、六级辅导丛书

大学英语每日伴读系列

阅读 4

谭福红 主编



天津大学出版社
TIANJIN UNIVERSITY PRESS



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内容提要

本书紧扣大学英语教学大纲,分为技巧篇和实战篇两部分。技巧篇针对全国大学英语四、六级考试委员会于1996年增设的新题型——简短回答题,通过举例分析的方法,详尽论述了简短回答题型以及答题的方法与技巧。实战篇中按照全国大学英语考试委员会制定的题型(包括传统的阅读理解题以及新增设的翻译和简短回答问题)给出100篇阅读理解练习。每篇文章后以注释的形式列出文中出现的常用短语、搭配及习语。同时书后给出练习答案。所以说本书实战性极强。该书尤其适用于大学英语本科二年级下学期的学生,同时也适用于参加大学英语三、四级考试的高自考、成人高考及其他各类考生。

图书在版编目(CIP)数据

大学英语每日伴读系列. 阅读. 4/谭福红主编.
天津:天津大学出版社,2002.9

ISBN 7-5618-1653-7

I.大... II.谭... 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(2002)第061853号

出版发行 天津大学出版社

出版人 杨风和

地址 天津市卫津路92号天津大学内(邮编:300072)

电话 发行部:022-27403647 邮购部:022-27402742

印刷 河北省永清县印刷厂

经销 全国各地新华书店

开本 185mm×260mm

印张 12.5

字数 312千

版次 2002年9月第1版

印次 2002年9月第1次

印数 1-4000

定价 17.00元

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前 言

阅读是掌握语言知识、打好语言基础、获取信息的重要渠道。阅读能力是大部分大学生今后工作所需的主要语言技能。所以,在大学英语学习中要始终注重培养阅读能力。从语言学习的规律来看,英语应用能力的提高是建立在大量的语言输入,尤其是大量的阅读基础之上的。

《大学英语教学大纲》中对阅读能力提出明确要求如下:能顺利阅读语言难度中等(四级)或较高(六级)的一般性题材的文章,掌握中心大意以及说明中心大意的事实和细节,并能就文章的内容进行分析、推理、判断和综合概括,领会作者的观点和态度,阅读速度达到每分钟 70 词。

由于全国统一的大学英语四、六级考试具有科学性和权威性,因而得到了社会的普遍认可。目前,全国每年参加该项考试的考生已达 300 万人。2000 年 9 月国家正式颁布的《大学英语教学大纲》中明确规定:本科生毕业前必须通过四级考试,否则不能授予学士学位。很多用人单位在聘用大学毕业生时都有一条:有英语六级证书者优先。有些单位甚至要求应聘者必须要有六级证书。顺利地通过大学英语四、六级统考是校园中莘莘学子的愿望。时下流行的口号是:要过级,更要得优秀。而在大学英语四、六级统考中,阅读理解题占 40%,与其相关的新题型翻译或简短回答题占 10%,也就是说对阅读能力测试的题占总题量的 40%~50%。由此可以看出,阅读是第一层次的要求。特别是在大学英语四、六级考试委员会实行口语考试之后,很多学生都想参加,而参加口语考试的前提是笔试成绩达到 80 分。由此可见,要想达到 80 分甚至更高的成绩,阅读能力是关键,是学生准备考试的突破口。

本丛书正是针对学生的这一期望和要求而精心设计的。丛书共分为 6 级:阅读 1 针对大学本科一年级上学期的学生;阅读 2 针对大学本科一年级下学期的学生;阅读 3 针对大学本科二年级上学期的学生;依此类推,直到帮助学生顺利通过六级考试。每本书分为两篇,即技巧篇和实战篇。技巧篇从大学英语四、六级考试阅读题型介绍开始,然后分别安排了应试指导、阅读理解题答题技巧、翻译题答题技巧以及简短回答题答题技巧。技巧篇中通过大量举例展开了详尽的论述。实战篇按每学期大概 100 天计算安排了 100 篇阅读文章练习,紧扣大纲,分为多项选择题、翻译题和简短回答题。同时每篇文章后面给出注释,提醒学生千万不要忽视注释这一部分,它不仅是老师们在文章中精心挑选的精彩短

语,而且通过上下文的实际语言环境对学生扩大词汇量、掌握词汇语法搭配都有很大的帮助。这远远胜于死背词汇手册。所以建议读者每天抽出半个小时的时间集中训练,如能循序渐进并坚持不懈,定会取得事半功倍的效果。

如能按照下列要求使用本书,你将获益匪浅:

按照大学英语四、六级考试的要求,完成4篇阅读理解多项选择题(5道题)、翻译题(4~5个句子)、简短回答题(5道题)的时间分别为35分钟、15分钟、15分钟。考虑我们题目数量并结合考试的要求,建议大家每篇阅读理解多项选择题答题时间为8~9分钟;翻译(2个句子)答题时间为6~8分钟;简短回答题答题时间为15分钟。由于本书题型分布均匀,每篇文章由多项选择及翻译题或者简短回答及翻译题构成,因此多项选择及翻译题总共答题时间应为14~17分钟;简短回答及翻译题总共答题时间应为21~23分钟。请读者根据书后的答案在每篇文章后面的自我测评一栏中填出自己实际的答题时间、准确率及最后得分。然后再花上5~10分钟的时间结合上下文认真记忆注释里的短语和词的搭配。可见,只要每天抽出半小时的时间就足够了。

这么明确的目标、周到的安排,你还等什么呢?赶快行动吧!

你的成功,也许就从拥有这本书开始。

编者

2002/7/9 于南开大学

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技巧篇——

简答题的答题方法与技巧

一、试题简介

“简短回答题(Short Answer Questions)”是1996年7月经国家教委高教司批准,由全国大学英语四、六级考试委员会公布的又一新题型。采用这一新题型的目的在于进一步改进全国大学英语四、六级考试,提高考试效果,使考生对教学有较好的反馈作用,促使各校把精力放在正常的课堂教学上,扎扎实实提高学生的实际英语能力。简答题以其“简短”而且“达意”的答题形式,将阅读与写作结合起来,克服了以往在考试中阅读与写作孤立存在的现象。

“简短回答题”安排在“阅读理解”之后,每次考试为一篇文章,篇幅长短与“阅读理解”题中的短文长短相近,大约在300至350个词左右,短文后面附有5个问题或不完整的句子。考生要在阅读短文之后用简短的英语(可以是句子,也可以是单词或短语)回答所提出的问题或补足不完整的句子。考试时间为15分钟。

“简短回答题”实际上是“阅读理解题”的深化和延展,因为“简短回答题”是在“阅读理解”的基础上,再考核学生对英语书面的确切理解能力,即要求考生用简短的书面语言来回答所提出的问题,这就较“阅读理解题”更有难度。

“简短回答题”主要考核考生对英语书面材料的确切理解能力及表达能力。如:考生是否能够掌握所读材料的主旨和大意;是否了解文章中说明主旨和大意的有关事实和细节;是否做到既理解字面意思,还能根据所读材料进行一定的判断和推论;能否既理解个别句子的意义,也理解上下文的逻辑关系等等。要求“写出具体答案”可以起到在一定程度上反映考生的书面表达能力的作用,排除了做选择题的偶然性。从考生的“简短回答题”的答案中还可以看出是否有拼写、语法和修辞等方面的错误,从而更客观地反映出考生的真实水平。

二、评分标准

▲1. 基本要求

简答题要求考生在读懂文章的基础上,用正确简短的英语回答问题。评分时应同时考虑考生的内容和语言,每题满分2分,最低为0分。

▲2. 给分标准

2分——答出全部内容,语言正确。

1分——答出部分内容,语言正确。



0分——没有答对问题。

▲3. 扣分标准

①语言有错误扣0.5分(不包含引起歧义的、明显的拼写错误),每题由于语言错误扣分不能超过0.5分。

②涉及无关内容者扣0.5分;其答案中有相互矛盾的内容,则内容矛盾的部分均不得分。

③整句原封不动照搬应扣分;照搬一句扣0.5分,照搬两句及两句以上者扣2分。

④考生所给答案超过10个单词扣0.5分。

根据简答题的评分标准及原则,考生在做这种题型时应注意以下几点:

①一定要用最简短的语言(in the fewest possible words)回答问题。

②涉及到问题所在的句子或内容,需要“确切”理解,其他的句子可一带而过,并不需要“确切”理解。

③给出的答案要切题,既不要回答与问题无关的内容,也不要回答得不完整。否则,都会影响这道题的得分。

④注意语言正确,即语法是否规范,单词拼写是否正确无误。

⑤切忌照抄原文。按照评分标准,照搬一句扣0.5分,照搬两句及两句以上就不得分了。

三、答题技巧

“简短回答题”是近几年出现的新题型,它不同于传统的阅读理解中的选择题,它更重视考查学生的主观能力。如果掌握了一定的答题技巧和方法,对于提高回答简答题的能力会大有帮助的。

▲1. 答题思路

“简短回答题”属于主观测试题。要想在该题上得高分,需要考生平时加强阅读理解训练,养成良好的阅读习惯,掌握阅读技巧,并具备快速了解文章的主旨、大意、细节,根据上下文猜词悟意,进行逻辑推理、判断、综合、归纳并能正确、清晰地表达自己的能力。

考试时,为了快速答题,第一步可以采用略读(skimming)的方法浏览全文,迅速了解文章大意及中心思想;第二步是阅读文章后面提出的5个问题,了解问题的形式和涉及的范围,明确考题所提的要求;第三步则根据提问寻读(scanning)或研读(study reading)文章,抓住有关信息,确定出答案的大致位置,边读边做题。一般情况下,考题的先后次序与短文叙述的内容是一致的,答题时可按照考题的顺序逐个解答。遇到难题,最后解答。难题往往是那些综合归纳或推理判断题,所涉及的不是某个词语、句子或段落,而是几段或整篇文章。这就需要快速阅读文章并利用多种线索,推理归纳出正确的答案。如果是问答题,就要用最关键、最准确的词来回答问题;如果是填补句子,那就要保证所补足的部分与问题中的部分完整、准确地组合起来。最后,注意要用简单明了的词语或句子正确清晰



地写出答案,既要言简意赅,语法正确,又要书写清楚,使卷面给人一种良好的印象。

▲2. 问题类型与体裁

●(1)问题形式

下面就以 1998 年 6 月全国大学英语六级考试中简答题部分为例介绍一下题型和问题形式。

Part IV

Short Answer Questions

(15 minutes)

Directions: *In this part, there is a short passage with five questions or incomplete statements. Read the passage carefully. Then answer the questions or complete the statements in the fewest possible words (not exceeding 10 words).*

Most Americans spend far more of their leisure time with the mass media than in any other occupation. In addition, most of us hear, see, or read some of the media while engaged in other activities. Thus an extremely large number of our waking hours are spent with the mass media. Of all the media, television is clearly dominant, with newspapers a close second, at least as a source of news and other information. Our exposure to all media is important, however, because all of them contribute materials for the construction of that world in our heads. For most people, increased use of one medium does not decrease use of another. In fact, in certain cases, and especially for certain purposes, the more one uses one medium, the more likely one is to use others.

There are various factors that can cause you to expose yourself to the media selectively, avoiding much of the material with which you disagree. Some of that selective exposure is probably due to the psychological pressure you feel to avoid the discomfort caused by confrontation with facts and ideas contrary to your beliefs, attitudes, or behavior. However, some selective exposure is not due to the pressure for consistency but to other factors, such as your age, education, and even the area in which you live and the people with whom you associate.

Quite a different sort of factor that affects your media experiences is the social context of exposure: whether you are alone or with others when you are exposed to a medium; whether you are at home, at the office, in a theater, and so on. These contexts are as much a potential part of the message you will form as film images on the screen or words on the page. In addition, that social context affects both directly and indirectly the media and the media content to which you become exposed. New friends or colleagues get you interested in different things. Other members of the family often select media content that you would not have selected, and you become exposed to it.

These various factors have so much influence on your media exposure that so little of that exposure is planned.

Questions: (注意:答题尽量简短,超过 10 个词要扣分,每条横线限写一个英语单词,标点符号不占格。)

S1. Exposure to all media is important and people sometimes tend to use more media if



_____.

S2. Why are newspapers considered as an important medium according to the passage?

S3. For one reason or another, people's exposure to the media is often _____.

S4. Apart from personal preferences, what determines one's choice of the media and media content?

S5. The last sentence of the passage indicates that one's exposure to the media is _____.

题目中的 5 个问题中第 1、第 3、第 5 个问题是以前未完成句子的形式出现,而第 2、第 4 题是问答题。这 5 道题都是对文章细节或事实的提问。

答题思路:

第一段讲述了美国人花费在大众传媒方面的时间要比花费在其他方面更多;第二段讲述了影响传媒选择的不同因素;第三段补充说明了社会关系也是影响因素之一;最后一段进行了总结:多方面因素影响了你接触大众传媒,所以很难选择接触哪些传媒。第一道题问的是“接触所有的传媒都很重要,人们会更多地使用传媒如果……”,根据原文中的 Our exposure to all media is important, however, because all of them contribute materials for the construction of that world in our heads(……因为所有这一切都会为构建我们的内心世界提供材料,即如果人们想要更多地了解世界)。第二题是问原因的:“根据短文,为什么报纸认为是一种重要的传媒?”根据... with newspapers a close second, at least as a source of news and other information(……报纸排在第二位,至少作为新闻和其他信息的来源),所以答案应该是“因为报纸是新闻和其他信息的来源”。第三题:“因为这样那样的原因,人们接触传媒通常……”,根据原文第二段和第三段的首句,也是段落的主题句, There are various factors that can cause you to expose yourself to the media selectively... 以及 These various factors have so much influence on your media exposure... 我们可以得出“人们接触传媒通常有选择地,并且受到各种因素的影响”。第四题:“除了个人的喜好,什么决定了传媒的选择和内容?”第二段讲述了包括个人喜好在内的影响传媒选择的不同因素,接着在第三段的开头就写到: Quite a different sort of factor that affects your media experiences is the social context of exposure... (影响你的传媒的另一类完全不同的因素是社会关系……),所以可以得出答案: Social context of exposure. 最后一题:“文章的最后一段表明人们接触传媒……”,根据文章的最后一句... so little of that exposure is planned, 可以知道





人们对传媒的接触是无法预计的。

(答案:

S1. they want to know more about the world

S2. Because they are a source of news and information.

S3. selective and influenced by different factors

S4. Social context of exposure.

S5. hardly planned)

●(2)题型介绍

除了上述的对文章细节或事实的提问外,还有一些题型,如:关于文章大意问题;关于文中某些词汇、词组或短语的问题;关于作者的观点、态度、意图的问题等。简答题中的问题 80% 是直接事实题,间接判断、推理和引申题相对较少。

①关于文章大意问题的形式如下:

1) What is the passage mainly about?

2) What do you think this passage is trying to tell us?

3) What can be the best title for the passage?

4) What is the main idea of the passage?

②关于文章细节或事实问题的形式如下:

1) What does the author say about...?

2) According to the passage, the problem of ... partly arises from _____.

3) The author describes ... as ... because _____.

4) A chief factor in ... in the 19th century is _____.

③关于文中某些词汇、词组或短语问题的形式如下:

1) Who does the word "perfectionists" in line ... refer to?

2) The word / phrase / expression "..." probably means _____.

3) The word / phrase / expression "..." is the same meaning as _____.

4) The author uses the phrase "..." to illustrate _____.

④关于作者的观点、态度、意图问题的形式如下:

1) What can be concluded from the last sentence of the passage?

2) The passage is most likely written for _____.

3) The sentence "..." in Para. ... implies that _____.

4) Speaking of ..., the author implies that _____.

●(3)文章体裁

从文章的体裁来分,即按记叙文、说明文、议论文来分,问题的形式各有特点。现就中分别举例说明。

例 1:

I was in lodgings now, on my own, but the other lodgers had streams of visitors up and down the stairs past my door. None of these disturbed me except one girl who sang softly to



herself an old Russian folk song as she ran up to the room above. It was a sound of extraordinary sweetness, musical, soft, unselfconscious and happy. I began to listen out for it, jump up from my table, and throw open the door to catch a glimpse of her as she passed, but I was always too late. I asked the people upstairs who she was, and described the beautiful sounds she made. They became rather reserved and exchanged glances and hesitatingly admitted it might be Sally. I gathered she was someone special, not to be discussed in the ordinary way. But the last thing I wanted at that stage was to get involved with anybody. I'd just come to the end of a rather painful friendship, and now I had work to do.

One day, I came face to face with a girl on the landing. It was certainly her; whoever made that noise would look as she did. We stood and stared at each other too long for comfort. I broke the moment and, excusing myself, moved past her because it was too like the movies. I thought for some time of that long, silent stare, and laughed. She was tall and proud-looking with a slight, round-shouldered look that made me breathless and I didn't know why.

Questions:

1. Who often disturbed the author?
2. Why did the author like to be left alone?
3. What was the attitude of the others when the author asked them about the girl?
4. Before coming face to face with Sally, how did the author feel about her?
5. Why didn't the author make friends with Sally?

题解:这是一篇记叙文,记叙文的问题多以事实为内容,比较简单,但回答问题时必须注意根据题目中的时态来确定答案的不同时态。

1. A girl who sang softly an old Russian folk song. 这是关于细节的问题。根据第一段第二句 None of these disturbed me except one girl who sang softly to herself an old Russian folk song as she ran up to the room above(所有这些人没有打扰我,除了一个女孩,她跑上楼时,自己轻声哼唱着一支古老的俄罗斯民歌),那么也就是只有那个唱歌的女孩打扰了我。

2. Because he was disappointed in his love affair. 这个问题的答案需要考生推理、归纳、总结。根据第一段的最后两句,可以看出作者此时不想与任何人在一起,因为 I'd just come to the end of a rather painful friendship,因此可以推断出他刚刚结束了与另一个人的友谊,这令他很痛苦。

3. They were reserved and didn't tell him much. 这是关于细节的问题。第一段中提到“我问他们她是谁”, They became rather reserved and exchanged glances and hesitatingly admitted it might be Sally,可以知道“他们相当保守,不肯讲太多”。

4. He felt curious about her 这又是关于细节的问题。原文第一段提到“我想她是个很特殊的人物,别人没有像通常那样讨论她”,所以 became vaguely curious to meet her。

5. Because she was proud and made him breathless. 这是对细节加以综合的问题。根据原文最后一句 She was tall and proud-looking with a slight, round-shouldered look that





made me breathless ... 所以可以总结出原因是 she was proud and made him breathless.

例 2:

Around 1975 a number of books were written about strange occurrences in the Bermuda Triangle, a part of the Atlantic Ocean off the southeast coast of the U. S. . They told the stories of planes and ships that disappeared for no understandable reason and were never found again. They told about ships which were found undamaged but with no one on them. According to the books, more than 1,000 people disappeared in the Triangle from 1945 to 1975.

According to some writers, there were no natural explanations for many of the disappearances, so they suggested other explanations. For example, according to one writer, some strange and terrible power exists in the Triangle. According to another writer, people from space are living at the bottom of the Atlantic, and sometimes they need human sailors and airmen for their research. These ideas were not scientific, but they were good advertisements. The books about the Bermuda Triangle were immediate successes.

However, the books give little evidence to support their unusual ideas. In addition, they ignore at least three important facts that suggest natural reasons for many of the occurrences. First, messages from some of the ships and aircraft which later disappeared give us evidence of problems with navigational instruments. Similar stories are told by officers who were on duty on planes and ships which finally managed to come through the Triangle without disaster. Second, the weather in this part of the Atlantic Ocean is very unpredictable. Dangerous storms that can cause problems even for experienced pilots and sailors can begin suddenly and without warning. Finally, the Bermuda Triangle is very large, and many people, both experienced and inexperienced, sail and fly through it. Perhaps the figure of 1,000 deaths in thirty years shocks some people, but, in fact, the figure is not unusual for an area of ocean that is so large and that is crossed by so many ships.

The evidence which exists, therefore, supports one conclusion about Bermuda Triangle: We do not need stories about people from space or strange unnatural powers to explain the disappearances.

Questions:

1. What does "they" stand for in the sentence "They told the stories of planes and ships that disappeared for no understandable reason"?
2. What made the books about the Bermuda Triangle get immediate success?
3. What's the direction of the U. S. to the Bermuda Triangle?
4. Which conclusion about the disappearances is supported by the passage?
5. What's the third paragraph mainly about?

题解:说明文的问题主要是关于文中信息的问题,形式一般为直接提问式或类似于填空的形式。

1. A number of books. 这是一道细节题。这句话的前一句的主语是 a number of



books, 可以看出 they 指代的是 a number of books。

2. Unnatural explanations of the disappearances. 这道细节题需要进行综合分析。根据第二段的第一句 ... there were no natural explanations for many of the disappearances, so they suggested other explanations 以及最后一句 The books about the Bermuda Triangle were immediate successes, 也就是说因为无法对这些失踪作出合理的解释, 所以他们就提出了一些 unnatural explanations, 而正是这些 unnatural explanations 使得这些书立刻获得成功。

3. Northwest. 根据文章的第一句 ... Bermuda Triangle, a part of the Atlantic Ocean off the southeast coast of the U.S., 即百慕大三角在美国的东南, 那么美国应在百慕大的西北。

4. The disappearances are natural occurrences. 这是一道推理题。文章的第三段讲述了解释这一现象的三点自然原因 (natural reasons), 最后一段做了总结“我们不需要什么太空或超自然力量的故事来解释失踪现象”, 即失踪现象只是自然现象。

5. Three natural reasons for the occurrences. 这道题需要对第三段进行归纳、总结, 得出段落的主旨。第三段的开头就提出了这些超自然的想法缺乏证据, 而忽视了解释这一现象的三点非常重要的原因。接着, 后面分别叙述了这三点的内容。则可以归纳出这一段主要讨论的是 three natural reasons for the occurrences。

例 3:

Good news is bad news and bad news is good news, newsmen often say to one another. And when you look at the media it's only too easy to see what they mean. A dictionary definition of the media is mass communications, e. g. the press, television, radio. The media sees its main purpose as giving the public news. Naturally to provide the public with news it has first to gather it. The whole function and purpose of the media, then, seems to depend on the word "news", but more important, on how the word is interpreted.

The media like any big business venture today is an extremely competitive world of its own. In providing material for its public it has constantly to make sure it serves the right diet. No public will waste time on your paper or your TV channel otherwise. The sad truth is that there seems only one way to catch an audience — hit them right between the eyes. What started as a mild tap has now become a sledge-hammer blow that goes by the name of sensationalism.

A report chooses — has to choose — a news story because of its sensation value. The young inexperienced cub reporter rings his news editor about a car crash. He starts to explain the details to him but the experienced editor asks the cub one question: "Anyone killed" and to himself he thinks, why do we offer jobs to children?

Questions:

1. Why does the author say "bad news is good news"?
2. What's the exact function and purpose of the media?
3. How do you explain the meaning of "hit them right between the eyes"?





4. According to the passage, what is the most important to the reporter?
5. How do the experienced news editors think of some reporters?

题解:议论文提问的方式多种多样,尤其要求答题者进行归纳、总结、推理的形式和内容多见。这也是四、六级考试中经常出现的命题形式。解答关于议论文的题目,考生一定要首先明确作者的观点,即作者想说明什么、赞成什么、批评什么、支持什么、反对什么,这样才能进行正确的归纳、总结和推理。

1. Because of its sensation value. 文章第二段最后举例说明了坏新闻如何变成好新闻的——What started as a mild tap has now become a sledge-hammer blow that goes by the name of sensationalism,其中 sensationalism 是关键词,即因为它的轰动效应,接着在最后一句的第一句又进一步指出记者选择某个新闻正是出于它的 sensation value。

2. To give and interpret news to the public. 这道题需要考生进行综合,并总结出答案。从第一段的 The media sees its main purpose as giving the public news 以及 The whole function and purpose of the media ... how the word (news) is interpreted, 可以得出媒体的目的和作用传播、解释新闻。

3. To attract the audience's attention. 第二段中提到的 hit them right between the eyes 说明了它前面的内容——to catch an audience,即引起听众、观众或读者的注意。

4. Attractive news. 这道题需要考生进行归纳、总结、推理。这一问题的答案主要根据最后一段,它讲述了一个没什么经验的记者对一件车祸的报道,而有经验的编辑更关注在车祸中是否有人丧命,即这则新闻是否吸引人。所以可以推出,对于一名记者来说,最重要的是所报道的新闻吸引听众、观众或读者。

5. They are too immature / inexperienced. 这道题同样要对最后一段进行推理。有经验的编辑对于新手的汇报更关注“Anyone killed”,原文中提到 to himself he thinks, why do we offer jobs to children? 也就是说,“我们为什么让这么幼稚、缺乏经验的人干这件事”。所以他会认为有些记者太不成熟、太缺乏经验。

▲3. 答题技巧

“简短回答题”属于阅读理解的一种形式,所以阅读理解中的答题技巧大多适用于“简短回答题”。但是,“简短回答题”又不同于传统的阅读理解中的选择题,它比客观的四选一题型更注重主观的归纳、总结、推理等综合能力。下面就不同的题型分别举例说明。

例 1:

January 1st is the beginning of a new year. As far back in history as we can tell, people have celebrated the start of a new year. The people of ancient Egypt began their new year in summer. That is when the Nile River flooded its banks, bringing water and fertility to the land. The people of ancient Babylon and Persia began their new year on March 21st, the first day of spring, and some native American Indians began their new year when the nuts of the oak tree became ripe, that was usually in late summer. Now almost everyone celebrates New Year's Day on January 1st.



Today, as before, people observe the new year's holiday in many different ways. The ancient Babylonians celebrated it by forcing their king to give up his crown and royal clothing. They made him get down on his knees and admit all the mistakes he had made during the past year. This idea of admitting wrongs and finishing the business of the old year is found in many societies at New Years. So is the idea of making resolutions. A resolution is a promise to change your ways; to stop smoking, for example, or to get more physical exercises. Noise making is another ancient custom at the new year. The noise is considered necessary to chase away the evil spirits of the old year. People around the world do different things to make a lot of noise. They may hit sticks together, or beat on drums, or blow horns, or explode fireworks.

Americans celebrate the new year in many ways. Most do not have to go to work or school. So they visit family and friends, attend church services, share a holiday meal or watch new year's parades on television. Two of the most famous parades are the mummers parade in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and the rose parade in Pasadena, California. Those have existed for many years. Americans also watch football on television on New Year's Day. Most years university teams play in special holiday games. For those who have been busy at work or school, New Year's Day may be a day of rest. They spend the time thinking about and preparing for the demands of the new year.

Question: What's the main idea of the passage?

题解:此题要求回答出文章的主旨大意。有时候,文章中会直接给出主题句,但在简答题的文章中,往往需要考生自己总结。这时,要特别留意文章的起始句,并总结出各段的主题句,汇总到一起就是文章的主旨大意。这篇文章的开头讲了“1月1日是新的一年开始”,然后三段分别叙述了古代、现代以及美国人如何庆祝新年,所以这篇文章主要讲述了 How do people celebrate New Year's Day 或 Customs on New Year's Day 或 Celebration of New Year's Day。

例 2:

“It's best if you carry on with your teaching”, said Arnold, “while I'm away, something to stop you worrying. We'll get married a bit later, say after Christmas. It'll all be over by then, they say, and we can settle down without parting.”

The next day Arnold and a dozen other young men drove into Caxley to the recruiting center. Dorothy never forgot that summer morning. Harold Miller, some of the men who had let her father have the cottage so long ago, held the reins at the front of one of his own farm wagons which was freshly painted bright blue, with red wheels. Two massive black carthorses pulled it, their coats shining like coal in the sunlight. It was a brave, gay turnout, which matched the spirits of the young men riding upon the wagon, and the villagers waved enthusiastically.

They were all dressed in their Sunday suits. White collars, or clean white scarves,