

**A STUDY
GUIDE TO English
through
reading**

英语精读文选

辅导材料

安徽科学技术出版社

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By Weng Wei-bao

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INTRODUCTION

The book is a reference one based on **English Through Reading** published by the Macmillan Press Limited in London. The aim writing this book is to help the students to solve the language points themselves and to have a deep and correct understanding of the original textbook. With this, the practical language skill of the students in reading, translation, and writing can be raised rapidly. It may also be used as a reference book for English teachers in their work.

The book has been used for four years in the University of Science and Technology of China and has been warmly praised by the students for its utility and scholarship. The present volume is the result of enlargement and alterations following the valuable suggestions from some colleagues of mine, especially from the English experts of the United States of America. According to the layout of the original textbook, the reference book is also composed of 20 lessons. Each lesson falls into three parts: a brief introduction of the author, note to the text and some exercises. At the beginning of each lesson, a biographical note on the author concerned or the relative figures or the necessary background is given to the students, in order to help them deepen their understanding of the text. The main part of the book is the notes to the texts. Basically speaking, those appearing in the glossaries and the original text notes are not mentioned once more, except where some important phrases or

new words must be given further explanations. The notes are based on the English level of the postgraduate students or the third-year science-college students. As to the exercises, those appearing in the text-book are perfect, especially in the parts of comprehension and vocabulary. The reference book only provides the readers with some sentence translations. The purpose is to help the students to raise their skill of using the new words, phrases or expressions. When the reader reads or uses it, the original textbook cannot be put aside. That is to say, the book is only the complement or supplement to the text-book.

Finally, I want to express my gratitude to my friends and colleagues for their various assistance in my work. For example, I owe a great deal to Professor Margrette Le Roy, who went through the book, checked it and gave me many valuable suggestions; to Associate Professor Shi Zhong-shan (石中珊), who checked the whole book and corrected some mistakes; to Professor Sun Rui-he (孙瑞禾), who read some parts of the book and put forward very good advice about the layout of the book. My grateful thanks also go to all those who suggested additions, modifications or improvement and gave encouragement.

If there are defects or mistakes in the book, they are mine. And any opinion or criticism is appreciated.

Weng Wei-bao

March 10, 1987.

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LESSON ONE

CIVILIZATION AND HISTORY

About the author:

Joad, Cyril Edwin Mitchinson, 1891—1953, English philosopher. He became head of the department of philosophy at Birbeck College, Univ. of London, in 1930. As a rationalist, he was a successful lecturer and writer, his works including *Common Sense Ethics* (1920), *Matter, Life, and Value* (1929), and *Return to philosophy* (1936). After his conversion to religion he wrote *Good and Evil* (1943) and *The Recovery of Belief* (1953).

Detailed Study of the Text.

1. **conquerors** *n.* those who defeat another country...
e. g. William the Conqueror built the Tower of London to protect himself from those he had conquered.
2. **whereas** *conj.* but in contrast, while on the other hand
e. g. Some people like fat meat, whereas others hate it.
3. **who first set a broken leg...**
“First” means before anything or anyone else.
Notice the different meanings between “first” and “at first”.
e. g. (1) Xiao Li always thinks of others first.
(2) I found English difficult at first, but soon mastered it.

4. **launched a seaworthy boat...** fit for sailing in the sea
 launch *vt.* to cause (a ship or a boat, esp. one that has just been built) to slide from land into the water
 e. g. Another Chinese-designed and-built 10,000 tonner was recently launched.
5. **manured a field**
 When "manure" is used as a noun, it means "fertilizer."
 Used as a verb, it means "to put fertilizer in or on something," hence, "manured a field" means "to put fertilizer in or on a field."
 e. g. The old gentleman was manuring his garden at that time.
6. **We do not know... or... or... or...**
 This is the structure of absolute negation which suggests that we know nothing about it at all.
7. **People think a great deal of them, so much so that...**
 i. e. People think highly of them so much so that... "So much so that-clause" is an adverbial.
 e. g. Many people think highly (or a great deal) of the University of Science and Technology of China, so much so that they call it the cradle of young scientists. (or: Many people think so much of USTC that...)
8. **...the figure of a conqueror**
 i. e. ...the statue or image of a conqueror (usu. made from stone, metal or other materials).
9. **...ruled over them as conquerors**
 i. e. ...exercised absolute power over them as conquerors.
 e. g. They have ruled over that country for more than 30 years.

10. **It is just possible they are.**
i. e. Very probably they are the greatest countries. (Notice the omission of "that" and "greatest".)
11. **so do savages** uncivilized persons fight, too.
"Savage" means "an uncivilized person" or "a cruel, fierce person" or "a bad-mannered, rude person".
12. **hence to be good at fighting is to be good in the way in which an animal or a savage is good, but it is not to be civilized.**
i. e. To be good at fighting may be considered good only if it represents animal or savage instincts. It does not represent civilized beings.
(in) the way (in which) = as, usually "in" and "in which" could be omitted.
- e. g. (1) I fixed things the way he wanted.
(2) He does not bother about things (in) the way (in which) his brother does.
13. **other than** (any) otherwise than...
e. g. You can't get there other than (in any other way than) by swimming.
14. **kill off** to destroy in large numbers or totally
e. g. (1) The flood of hunters killed off most of the buffaloes in that areas.
(2) Since the mosquitoes were killed off, the island has become a more pleasant place to live.
15. **be in the right** to have justice and truth on one's side
16. **For that is what going to war means,...**
"What going to war means" is the predicative clause and "going to war" is the "subject" of the clause.
Notice the structure of the above-mentioned sentence. In

some cases, the main clause of a complex sentence may go without the subordinate clause which forms separate sentence for emphasis. Under such circumstances we can regard this kind of sentence as one with the main clause omitted.

e. g. Dialectical materialism holds that the cause of all the motions and changes in the world does not lie in any "highes" spiritual reality, but in the material world itself. For the world is by its very nature material.

Besides "for", some other conjunctions can be used in this way, too. For instance, as, since, etc.,

e. g. But mostly, across the wide spacious land, you could get big continuous "hi" there and "hellos". As I did when summers my Irish immigrant father took us motoring west.

17. might is right

i. e. The winner is right and the loser wrong. However, the original meaning of this sentence might be "having power to enforce one's will gives one the right to do so".

18. And while today... Here the word "while" means "although", introducing the first clause.

e. g. While I like the color of the hat, I do not like its shape.

19. have got to the stage of...

i. c. have reached or arrived at the stage of...

e. g. Many students have got to the stage of doing experiments independently.

20. After all, the race of men has only just started.

i. e. After all, The course of human beings has only just

started.

after all when all things are considered; in the end

e. g. (1) You shouldn't feel guilty for not helping him;
after all, you have helped him many times in
the past.

(2) "Was she not admitted to your house after all?"
Wildeve inquired.

21. **From the point of view of evolution...**

i. e. According to the theory of evolution (the gradual
development of living things from earlier forms, as
stated in Darwins' famous "Theory of Evolution")

22. **Scientists reckon that...**

i. e. Scientists estimate that...

reckon *v.* to guess; to calculate a number without
counting exactly

e. g. (1) I reckon there are at least two hundred people
there.

(2) How much do you reckon she earns?

23. **life of some sort**

The word "some" implies that scientists are not quite sure
what the earliest form of life on the earth is. "Of some sort"
has the same meaning as that of "some sort of." The
difference between them lies only in the word order.

24. **at the (very) outside** at (the) most; at the very most

e. g. At the very outside there were only fifty people
there. (i. e. ... certainly not more than fifty.)

25. **These figures are difficult to grasp.**

i. e. It is difficult to understand these big numbers.

grasp *v.* to handle; to master; to understand

e. g. I failed to grasp your meaning.

26. **Suppose that we reckon the whole past of living creatures on the earth as one hundred years.**

i. e. Take the whole past of living creatures on the earth at about one hundred years.

reckon... as... to suppose... to be...
to consider... as...

e. g. (1) One-fourth of the country is reckoned as un-productive.

(2) They reckon the book as one of his best works.

27. **work out at...** to come to an amount or total (work out to + n.)

e. g. (1) The total works out at £50.00.

(i. e. The total amounts to £50.00.)

(2) How much does it work out at?

(i. e. What is the total?)

(3) The total area works out to 25,000 square miles.

28. **little time to learn in...**

i. e. little time in which to learn...

e. g. (1) the world for us to live in

(2) the apartment for three persons to live in

29. **The past of man has been on the whole a pretty beastly business.**

i. e. The past of human beings has been, generally speaking, a very brutal affair.

on the whole taking everything into consideration

e. g. On the whole, our stay there was quite enjoyable.
pretty beastly rather brutal

"Pretty" here is used as an adverb.

e. g. pretty well; pretty tired; pretty soon

30. **We must not expect even civilized peoples not to have done these things.**
i. e. Maybe, it is natural that even civilized peoples should have done some fighting, bullying, gorging and so on.
31. **... they will sometimes have done something else.**
i. e. all we can ask is that they might sometimes have found ways of settling disputes between nations other than by fighting.

EXERCISES

Translate the following sentences into English, trying to use the new words, phrases or expressions appearing in the text.

- (1) 在美国黑人工作最辛苦，但得到的报酬最少。
- (2) 自从1970年中国成功地发射了第一颗人造地球卫星以来，中国在空间技术方面取得了极大的成就。
- (3) 这块地现已施了200公斤粪肥。
- (4) 除了那本英文书，你再没有别的了吗？
- (5) 我的意见大体与你相同。
- (6) 我的薪水每月从1号开始算。
- (7) 我估计礼堂里最多只有五百人。
- (8) 人们认为这本书是查尔斯·狄更斯最优秀的作品之一。
- (9) 算出来每英里要收的车费是四角钱。
- (10) 这虽然对某些人是适用的，但并不是对一切都是适用的。

Key to the Exercises:

- (1) In the U. S. A., the black people (or coloured people) work (the) hardest, but get paid (the) least.

- (2) Since the first man-made earth satellite was successfully launched in China in 1970, much more progress has been made in Chinese space technology.
- (3) The field has been manured with 200 kilograms of dung now.
- (4) Have you no other English books than that one?
- (5) My opinion is, on the whole, the same as yours.
- (6) My pay is reckoned from the first of every month.
- (7) I reckon there are at most 500 people in the auditorium.
- (8) The book was reckoned (as) one of the best works of Charles Dickens.
- (9) The fare charged worked out at 40 cents a mile.
- (10) While this is true of some people, it is not true of all.

LESSON TWO

THE FUN THEY HAD

About the author:

Asimov, Isaac, 1920—, American scientist and author, b. USSR, grad. Columbia (S. S., 1939; M. A. 1941; Ph. D. 1948). He became professor of biochemistry at Boston Univ. in 1955 and gained note with serious scientific works, but he reached wider audiences with his much-admired science-fiction stories such as *I, Robot* (1950, repr. 1970), *The Caves of Steel* (1954), and *The Gods Themselves* (1973). Asimov also received high praise for his popular introductions to science written for the layman; among them are *The Intelligent Man's Guide to Science* (2 vol., 1960, rev. ed. 1965), which surveys the fields of modern science; *Wellsprings of Life* (1960), which concerns evolutionary theory; and *The Atom* (1961) is a representative of his books for high school students.

Detailed Study of the Text:

1. **Margie**=Margaret; **Tommy**, **Tommie** or **Tom**=Thomas
a term of endearment, or as we say, "nickname"
Further examples:
Freda=winifred; Jim=James, etc.
2. **On the page headed May 17,2155, she wrote...**
i. e. on the page titled May 17,2155, she wrote...

head *v.* to give as a headline or mention in a headline

The same word as "head" as we often use is
"date".

e. g. I have received your letter dated May 7th., 1986.

3. **...and it was awfully funny to read words that stood still instead of moving the way they were supposed—on a screen, you know.**

i. e. ...and it was very amusing to read words that stood motionless instead of moving as they were expected to --on a screen, you know.

awfully *adv.* very much or very (an oral expression)

e. g. (1) Thanks awfully for your help.

(2) It was raining awfully hard.

be supposed to to be expected to

e. g. Is the servant supposed to clean the outside of the windows or only the inside?

4. **"Gee!" said Tommy, "What a waste. When you're through with the book, you just throw it away, I guess."**

gee *int.* slang term in U. S. A., mild exclamation indicating surprise, admiration, etc.

e. g. Gee, I like your new hat!

be through with... to finish doing something or with something

e. g. (1) I shall be pleased when we are through with this business.

(2) When will you be through with the book?

5. **Our television screen must have had a million books on it and it's good for plenty more.**

i. e. I'm sure our television screen has had a million books on it and it's suitable for containing much more.

must+perfect infinitive "I think sb. has done sth. or
should have done sth."

e. g. (1) They must have arrived by now.

(i. e. I think they have certainly arrived by
now.)

(2) I'm afraid she must have gone home.

(i. e. Probably she has gone home, but I am not
quite sure.)

be good for... to be suitable for...; to be useful for...

e. g. (1) These apples are no good for cooking.

(2) That boy is worthless, he is good for nothing.

6. **"same with mine", said Margie.**

i. e. "same as mine", said Margie.

Both "same...with..." and "same...as..." are the same in
meaning and usage.

e. g. (1) She lived in the same house with him.

(2) I got the same marks as yours.

7. **He was a round little man with a red face and a whole box
of tools with dials and wires.**

i. e. He was a fat short man with red face and with a whole
box full of tools with dials and electrical wires.

8. **He smiled at her and gave her an apple, then took the
teacher apart.**

i. e. He smiled at her and gave her an apple, then
disassembled the machine (teacher).

smile at... to direct a smile towards (sb.)

e. g. It often prevents an argument if you smile at people
who are rude to you.

take sth. apart (to cause) to separate sth. into its parts

e. g. we had to take the whole engine apart to discover the