大学英语阅读教程

主编 周 晶

编者 郭继荣 刘新法 高丽华
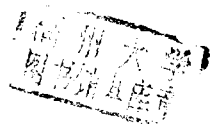
西安交通大学出版社

Reading Workshop

College English Extensive Reading Course

大学英语阅读教程

主编　周　晶

编者　郭继荣　刘新法　高丽华

西安交通大学出版社

内容提要

本教材是大学英语的泛读教程,适用于三年级学生泛读课使用。全书12个单元,共选长短文章48篇。每单元按教学和学习目的分为三部分:技巧,欣赏和速度练习。旨在提高阅读技巧,培养理解能力以及提高阅读速度。本书实用性强,题材广泛,语言地道,循序渐进,习题形式多样。

前　言

　　阅读是伴随一生的学习过程。培根说过："阅读使人充实，辩论使人机警，写作使人精确。"阅读是最基本的学习技能，是人们信息的主要来源。据研究，人类 80％的知识来自阅读。有效的阅读可以使人们在有限的时间里掌握更多的信息，从而节省时间，提高效率。培根在他的《论读书》中还指出了读书的方法："有些书要浅尝则止，有些则需要囫囵吞下，还有一些要细嚼慢咽。"我们这本教材正是一本需要囫囵吞下的书。现代社会越来越讲究效率，阅读的方法，特别是外语学习中阅读的效率尤为重要。除了传统的精读课，泛读课正是以它的阅读技巧和快速阅读训练成为了大学外语教学的一门主要课程。

　　本教材是大学英语的泛读教程，适用于三年级学生泛读课使用。全书 12 个单元，共选长短文章 48 篇。每单元按教学和学习目的分为三部分：技巧，欣赏和速度练习。旨在提高阅读技巧，培养理解能力以及提高阅读速度。总的来说，本书有以下特点：

　　一、实用性强。技巧部分所选文章都是与学习技巧和工作及日常事物有关的内容，课后的习题注重阅读技巧的培养。

　　二、题材广泛。欣赏部分的内容包括了社会学、人类学、历史、科学等各方面。文章除了给读者提供大量信息外，还有较高的学术研究价值，是培养理工科学生人文素质较好的材料。

　　三、语言地道，循序渐进。文章均选自英美大学一、二年级阅读教材，语言规范。考虑读者的英文水平不一，以及在阅读中可能遇到的困难，欣赏课文后作汉语注释。

四、习题形式多样。本书充分发挥了重复在语言学习中的作用,单词、习语、构词法在 12 个单元中反复使用,使读者尽快扩大词汇量。

在教材编写过程中,张传德教授对教材进行了认真的审阅,并提出了很有见地的修改意见;西安交大出版社的秦茂盛同志为本书的编辑付出了辛勤的劳动,在这里编者一并表示感谢。

<div align="right">

编者

1999 年 11 月

</div>

2

CONTENTS

2

Unit one

Section A   Skill Builder

How to Read Faster

Bill Cosby

W HEN I was a kid in Philadelphia, I must have read every comic book ever published. (There were fewer of them then than there are now.)

I zipped through all of them in a couple of days, then reread the good ones until the next issues arrived.

Yes indeed, when I was a kid, the reading game was a snap.

But as I got older, my eyeballs must have slowed down or something! I mean, comic books started to pile up faster than my brother Russell and I could read them! It wasn't until much later, when I was getting my doctorate, I realized it wasn't my eyeballs that were to blame. Thank goodness. They're still moving as well as ever.

The problem is, there's too much to read these days, and too little time to read every word of it.

Now, mind you, I still read comic books. In addition to contracts, novels, and newspapers. Screenplays, tax returns and correspondence. Even textbooks about how people read. And which tech-

niques help people read more in less time.

I'll let you in on a little secret. There are hundreds of techniques you could learn to help you read faster. But I know of 3 that are especially good.

And if I can learn them, so can you—and you can put them to use immediately. They are commonsense, practical ways to get the meaning from printed words quickly and efficiently. So you'll have time to enjoy your comic books, have a good laugh with Mark Twain or a good cry with *War and Peace*. Ready?

Okay. The first two ways can help you get through tons of reading material fast without reading every word.

They'll give you the overall meaning of what you're reading. And let you cut out an awful lot of unnecessary reading.

1. PREVIEW—IF IT'S LONG AND HARD

Previewing is especially useful for getting a general idea of heavy reading like long magazine or newspaper articles, business reports, and nonfiction books.

It can give you as much as half the comprehension in as little as one tenth the time. For example, you should be able to preview eight or ten 100-page reports in an hour. After previewing, you'll be able to decide which reports (or which parts of which reports) are worth a closer look.

Here's how to preview: Read the entire first two paragraphs of whatever you've chosen. Next read only the first sentence of each successive paragraph. Then read the entire last two paragraphs.

Previewing doesn't give you all the details. But it does keep you from spending time on things you don't really want or need to read.

Notice that previewing gives you a quick, overall view of long, unfamiliar material. For short, light reading, there's a better technique.

2. SKIM—IF IT'S SHORT AND SIMPLE

Skimming is a good way to get a general idea of light reading—like popular magazines or the sports and entertainment sections of the paper.

You should be able to skim a weekly popular magazine or the second section of your daily paper in less than *half* the time it takes you to read it now.

Skimming is also a great way to review material you've read before.

Here's how to skim: Think of your eyes as magnets. Force them to move fast. Sweep them across each and every line of type. Pick up *only a few key words* in each line.

Everybody skims differently.

You and I may not pick up exactly the same words when we skim the same piece, but we'll both get a pretty similar idea of what it's all about.

To show you how it works, I circled the words I picked out when I skimmed the following story. Try it. It shouldn't take you more than 10 seconds.

My brother Russell thinks monsters live in our bedroom closet at night. But I told him he is crazy.

"Go and check then," he said.

I didn't want to. Russell said I was chicken.

"Am not," I said.

"Are so," he said.

So I told him the monsters were going to eat him at midnight. He started to cry. My Dad came in and told the monsters to beat it. Then he told us to go to sleep.

"If I hear any more about monsters," he said, "I'll spank you."

We went to sleep fast. And you know something? They never did come back.

Skimming can give you a very good idea of this story in about half the words and in *less* than half the time it'd take to read every word.

So far, you've seen that previewing and skimming can give you a general idea about content fast. But neither technique can promise more than 50 percent comprehension, because you aren't reading all the words. (Nobody gets something for nothing in the reading game.)

To read faster and understand most — if not all — of what you read, you need to know a third technique.

3. CLUSTER—TO INCREASE SPEED AND COMPREHENSION

Most of us learned to read by looking at each word in a sentence—one at a time.

Like this:

My—brother—Russell—thinks—monsters ···

You probably still read this way sometimes, especially when the words are difficult. Or when the words have an extra-special meaning as in a poem, a Shakespearean play, or a contract. And that's O. K..

But word-by-word reading is a rotten way to read faster. It actually cuts down on your speed.

· 4 ·

Clustering trains you to look at groups of words instead of one at a time—to increase your speed enormously. For most of us, clustering is a *totally different way of seeing what we read*.

Here's how to cluster: Train your eyes to see all the words in clusters of up to 3 or 4 words at a glance.

Here's how I'd cluster the story we just skimmed:

My brother Russell thinks monsters live in our bedroom closet at night. But I told him he is crazy.

"Go and check then," he said.

I didn't want to. Russell said I was chicken.

"Am not," I said.

"Are so," he said.

So I told him the monsters were going to eat him at midnight. He started to cry. My Dad came in and told the monsters to beat it. Then he told us to go to sleep.

"If I hear any more about monsters," he said, "I'll spank you."

We went to sleep fast. And you know something? They never did come back.

Learning to read clusters is not something your eyes do naturally. It takes constant practice.

Here's how to go about it: Pick something light to read. Read it as fast as you can. Concentrate on seeing 3 to 4 words at once rather than one word at a time.

Then reread the piece at your normal speed to see what you missed the first time.

Try a second piece. First cluster, then reread to see what you missed in this one.

When you can read in clusters without missing much the first

time, your speed has increased. Practice 15 minutes every day and you might pick up the technique in a week or so. (But don't be disappointed if it takes longer. *Clustering* everything takes time and practice.)

So now you have 3 ways to help you read faster: <u>Preview</u> to cut down on unnecessary heavy reading. <u>Skim</u> to get a quick, general idea of light reading. And <u>cluster</u> to increase your speed and comprehension.

With enough practice, you'll be able to handle more reading at school or at home in *less time*. You should even have enough time to read your favorite comic books and *War and Peace*!

(1,300 words)

COMPREHENSION CHECK

Circle the letter before the best answer to each question below. Don't look back at the article.

Subject and Main Idea

1. The subject of the article is _____ .
    a. Better reading skills
    b. Reading techniques that improve speed
    c. Reading in clusters
    d. How to preview
2. The main idea is that _____ .
    a. everyone is a slow reader
    b. people are poor readers because they don't read enough
    c. people can learn to read faster
    d. reading groups of words instead of reading them one at a time helps you read faster

· 6 ·

Details

3. Bill Cosby came from _____.
    a. New York City   b. Pittsburgh
    c. Los Angeles   d. Philadelphia
4. An effective technique for getting the main idea from light reading material is _____.
    a. previewing   b. skimming
    c. thorough reading   d. all of the above
5. Cosby advises previewing _____.
    a. comic books   b. everything
    c. heavy reading   d. instead of reading
6. Previewing as compared to reading _____.
    a. takes as little as one-tenth of the time
    b. yields as much as half the comprehension
    c. allows you to skip what you don't need to read
    d. does all of the above

Inferences

7. You can infer from the article that Bill Cosby _____.
    a. was a good reader as a child
    b. had visual problems as a child
    c. read *War and Peace* when he was a child
    d. had to learn hundreds of reading techniques before he became a good reader
8. Before you can learn to skim you must _____.
    a. identify minor details
    b. have a superior vocabulary
    c. take a speed-reading class

d. identify main ideas

9. Which sentence is clustered properly?

a. Concentrate /on seeing three to four words at /once rather/ than one /word at a /time

b. Concentrate on /seeing three /to four/ words at /once rather /than one/ word at/ a time

c. Concentrate on seeing /three to four words at once/ rather than /one word at a time

d. Concentrate on /seeing three to /four words at once rather / than one word at/ a time

10. Bill Cosby probably has his doctorate in _____.

a. chemistry   b. computer science
c. mathematics   d. education

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. Cluster the following paragraph by circling groups of words as in Bill Cosby's article.

Here's how to preview: Read the entire first two paragraphs of whatever you've chosen. Next read only the *first sentence* of each successive paragraph. Then read the entire last two paragraphs.

Previewing doesn't give you all the details. But it does keep you from spending time on things you don't really want or need to read.

Notice that previewing gives you a quick, overall view of long, *unfamiliar* material. For short, light reading, there's a better technique.

2. Explain the differences between *previewing* and *skimming*.

VOCABULARY IN CONTEXT

Fill-in

Write the best word from this list in the blank in each sentence below.

> doctorate   novel   correspondence
>
> efficiently   nonfiction   successive

1. Because they receive so many letters, many companies now answer _____ by computer.
2. In a _____ book, information must be factual.
3. The only president to earn a _____ was Woodrow Wilson, the twenty-eighth president of the United States.
4. With each _____ heart attack, the patient became weaker.
5. *The Spy Who Came In From the Cold* was the first thriller _____ to make the best-seller list.
6. Because the library is quieter, many students study more _____ there than at home.
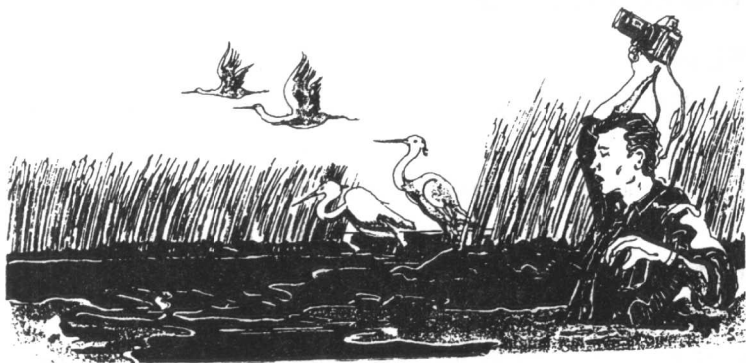
Section B   Power Builder

The Great Migrator[1]

John O'Reilly

Migrating Canada geese, flying northward, their steady wing beats accompanied by that familiar wild honking[2], herald springtime to people who live in the North. Some people, seeing the great wedges of geese[3] flying over them, break into a run, as though eager to follow the homing waterfowl. Others take deeper breaths as they turn their heads to the sky and stand in wistful contemplation. Still others yell back at the honkers[4] as if to

cheer them on their way.

2 Those pointed wedges and those wild cries in the blue mean that the members of that flock are heading north to the very meadows, marshes, or stream banks where they were hatched and reared. This homing instinct[5], this insistence upon returning to the same locality each year, makes Canada geese one of the most interesting of all North American wildfowl. Because they return to the same area each year to breed, the species has developed many distinct strains[6]. As a result, Canada geese may range in size from big twelve-pounders[7] to birds about the size of mallard ducks[8].

3 Canada geese are essentially North American birds. The best breeding grounds are in northern Canada, but the birds breed as far south as the northern part of California, Nevada, Utah, Colorado, South Dakota, Nebraska, Indiana[9], and over to the Gulf of St. Lawrence and Newfoundland[10]. They once bred farther south; and isolated groups are occasionally found in regions south of the breeding range.

4 As migration time approaches in the early spring, the geese assemble in flocks and seem to be making preparations for their long trip.