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# 大学英语阅读高手

## 第1册

◆ 苏州大学出版社

# 大学英语阅读

## 第1册

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## 图书在版编目(CIP)数据

大学英语阅读高手. 第1册/黄廷慧主编. —苏州: 苏州大学出版社, 2007. 7

ISBN 978-7-81090-884-9

I. 大… II. 黄… 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(2007)第 102942 号

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## 大学英语阅读高手 第1册

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苏州大学出版社出版发行

(地址: 苏州市干将东路 200 号 邮编: 215021)

常熟高专印刷有限公司印装

(地址: 常熟市元和路 98 号 邮编: 215500)

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开本 787mm×960mm 1/16 印张 13.5 字数 229 千

2007 年 7 月第 1 版 2007 年 7 月第 1 次印刷

ISBN 978-7-81090-884-9 定价: 18.00 元

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苏州大学版图书若有印装错误, 本社负责调换

苏州大学出版社营销部 电话: 0512-67258835

# 序

## · 大学英语阅读高手 ·

在当代社会,阅读是我们每一个人在学习、生活和工作中最为基本的一项技能。我们接受外界的知识和信息,处理日常生活中的各种问题,在很大程度上需要阅读文字材料,从中获取自己所需的东西。学习英语,阅读历来就是一项必不可少的重要途径,这既是提高学习者语言综合能力的手段,也是学习语言的重要目的之一。无论在国内,还是在海外,阅读理解一直是衡量外语水平的重要标准。美国的 TOEFL、GRE,英国的雅思,国内的中考、高考、PETS,大学英语四、六级考试,英语专业四、八级考试,阅读理解都是必测项目,而且所占得分比重很大。阅读理解对我们每个人来说,其作用自古至今都不容置疑。

长期以来,阅读教学一直是我国外语教学中的重要环节,教师们期望以读带动听、说、写、译等四种能力的提高。几年前,我应一家外语杂志的邀请,开辟了“蔡博士专栏”,定期撰写这方面的文章,通过实例来探讨这个课题,以求解决英语学习者的困惑。后来因工作过于繁忙,虽只坚持了两年多,但收获还是很大的,而且这个栏目受到了广大师生的好评,在社会上也产生了较大的反响。这虽是一种尝试,但值得继续深入探究,为后来者提供参考与借鉴。

2004年初,教育部颁布了《大学英语课程教学要求(试行)》,进一步明确了大学英语的教学目标是“培养学生的英语综合应用能力”,注重“英语语言知识与应用技能、学习策略”,使他们“在今后工作和社会交往中能用英语有效地进行口头和书面的信息交流,同时增强其自主学习能力,提高综合文化素养,以适应我国社会发展和国际交流的需要”。该要求虽然提升了听说在日常教学中的地位,但对阅读理解能力的重要性丝毫没有减弱。它将大学阶段的英语教学要求分为三个层次:一般要求、较高要求和更高要求,每个层次都对学生的英语阅读能力提出了具体而明确的要求。在一般要求层次中规定,“在阅读篇幅较长、难度略大的材料时,阅读速度达到每分钟 100 词。能基本



读懂国内英文报刊,掌握中心意思,理解重要事实和有关细节。能读懂工作、生活中常见的应用文体的材料。能在阅读中使用有效的阅读方法”。

但在日常教学中,要做到《大学英语课程教学要求(试行)》规定的各项要求,还有很大的差距,况且中国这么大,各地的生源差别又十分明显。我们的大学英语教学,由于条件和课时的限制,课堂教学偏重精讲多练,阅读量远远不够,学生们普遍反映阅读能力和词汇量很难提高。我想,这与大学英语的自身发展过程中存在的问题有很大关系。当前大学英语教学过于功利和教条,在较大程度上受四、六级统考所左右,教学理论多从欧美照搬照抄,方法时旧时新,西方的洋东西没有较好地融于本土,忘记了“中学为体,西方为用”的祖训。一些教师更偏向口语能力的训练,错误地认为只有听说才是语言交际的唯一途径,忽略了阅读在非母语语境中的应有地位。其实,读写在第二语言学习中扮演着十分重要的交际角色。在日常教学中,不少人把阅读与应试等同起来,一些老师不去想方设法扩大学生的阅读量与提高学生阅读兴趣和阅读方法,而是片面追求阅读在考试中的得分,因而把阅读课当成应试课上,使学生对阅读、甚至对大学英语教学产生厌倦或恐惧,其结局就可想而知了。

当今,市场上的阅读书籍五花八门,多不胜数,但应试书过多,而适合各种层次各个学段的学生阅读的书则太少,教师对学生课外阅读抓得不紧,学生喜爱的读物又很难弄到,这无疑对学生学习英语不利。试想,从小学到大学,光那几本教材就能学好英语?加上在校园里还是在校园外,能经常运用英语的机会十分有限,大学毕业过不了几年就交还给老师了。因此,我认为,没有必要规定所有学生都要学习外语,更没有必要让所有学生学习英语。许多非通用语种学了以后或许对学生将来的事业更有益处。所有这些,都值得我们深思,都急待我们去解决。

应苏州大学出版社的盛情邀请,我和田穗文教授根据多年教学心得和新课程要求,组织了一些高校大学英语骨干教师一起探究阅读教学,结合我们教学的实际需要,费时费力,编写了这套阅读课本,但愿能给各位同学带来一些裨益,并盼老师和同学不吝赐教。

蔡昌卓

2007年6月13日于山水甲天下的桂林

# 目 录

## · 大学英语阅读高手 ·

### Unit 1

<b>Part I Reading Comprehension(Skimming and Scanning)</b> .....	(1)
Text A .....	(1)
Text B .....	(3)
<b>Part II Reading Comprehension(Reading in Depth)</b> .....	(6)
Text C .....	(6)
Text D .....	(8)

### Unit 2

<b>Part I Reading Comprehension(Skimming and Scanning)</b> .....	(11)
Text A .....	(11)
Text B .....	(13)
<b>Part II Reading Comprehension(Reading in Depth)</b> .....	(16)
Text C .....	(16)
Text D .....	(18)

### Unit 3

<b>Part I Reading Comprehension(Skimming and Scanning)</b> .....	(21)
Text A .....	(21)
Text B .....	(24)
<b>Part II Reading Comprehension(Reading in Depth)</b> .....	(27)
Text C .....	(27)
Text D .....	(29)

## Unit 4

<b>Part I Reading Comprehension(Skimming and Scanning)</b>	(32)
Text A	(32)
Text B	(34)
<b>Part II Reading Comprehension(Reading in Depth)</b>	(38)
Text C	(38)
Text D	(39)

## Unit 5

<b>Part I Reading Comprehension(Skimming and Scanning)</b>	(42)
Text A	(42)
Text B	(44)
<b>Part II Reading Comprehension(Reading in Depth)</b>	(48)
Text C	(48)
Text D	(49)

## Unit 6

<b>Part I Reading Comprehension(Skimming and Scanning)</b>	(53)
Text A	(53)
Text B	(56)
<b>Part II Reading Comprehension(Reading in Depth)</b>	(59)
Text C	(59)
Text D	(61)

## Unit 7

<b>Part I Reading Comprehension(Skimming and Scanning)</b>	(64)
Text A	(64)
Text B	(66)
<b>Part II Reading Comprehension(Reading in Depth)</b>	(70)
Text C	(70)
Text D	(71)

## Unit 8

<b>Part I Reading Comprehension(Skimming and Scanning)</b>	(74)
Text A	(74)
Text B	(77)
<b>Part II Reading Comprehension(Reading in Depth)</b>	(80)
Text C	(80)
Text D	(81)

## Unit 9

<b>Part I Reading Comprehension(Skimming and Scanning)</b>	(85)
Text A	(85)
Text B	(87)
<b>Part II Reading Comprehension(Reading in Depth)</b>	(91)
Text C	(91)
Text D	(92)

## Unit 10

<b>Part I Reading Comprehension(Skimming and Scanning)</b>	(95)
Text A	(95)
Text B	(98)
<b>Part II Reading Comprehension(Reading in Depth)</b>	(101)
Text C	(102)
Text D	(103)

## Unit 11

<b>Part I Reading Comprehension(Skimming and Scanning)</b>	(106)
Text A	(106)
Text B	(109)
<b>Part II Reading Comprehension(Reading in Depth)</b>	(112)
Text C	(112)
Text D	(113)

## Unit 12

<b>Part I Reading Comprehension(Skimming and Scanning)</b> .....	(116)
Text A .....	(116)
Text B .....	(119)
<b>Part II Reading Comprehension(Reading in Depth)</b> .....	(122)
Text C .....	(122)
Text D .....	(123)

## Unit 13

<b>Part I Reading Comprehension(Skimming and Scanning)</b> .....	(126)
Text A .....	(126)
Text B .....	(129)
<b>Part II Reading Comprehension(Reading in Depth)</b> .....	(132)
Text C .....	(132)
Text D .....	(134)

## Unit 14

<b>Part I Reading Comprehension(Skimming and Scanning)</b> .....	(137)
Text A .....	(137)
Text B .....	(140)
<b>Part II Reading Comprehension(Reading in Depth)</b> .....	(144)
Text C .....	(144)
Text D .....	(146)

## Unit 15

<b>Part I Reading Comprehension(Skimming and Scanning)</b> .....	(149)
Text A .....	(149)
Text B .....	(152)
<b>Part II Reading Comprehension(Reading in Depth)</b> .....	(155)
Text C .....	(155)
Text D .....	(157)
<b>答案与解析</b> .....	(160)

# Unit 1

## **Part I    Reading Comprehension (Skimming and Scanning)**

### Text A

#### **The Rose Is a Special Flower**

In American culture the rose plays a special role. Every New Year's Day in Pasadena, California there is the famed Rose Bowl football game with its array of floats and flowers. In addition, the city of Portland, Oregon on the west coast is nicknamed "The City of Roses" and several states, namely New York, Iowa and North Dakota, have designated the rose as their state flower.

Roses come in a variety of colors ranging from white, pink, yellow and red, but it is the red rose which is most admired perhaps because red is the color of one's heart and the heart is the seat of one's passion. It is not strange, therefore, that the rose has a special meaning among flowers for Americans; it is a symbol of beauty, perfection and love. On special occasions, a dozen long-stemmed roses sent to the right person say more than a thousand words. For, if anything, the rose is a symbol of love.

The fragrance of a rose is unsurpassed among flowers. Some may be as fragrant, but none more so. What set the rose apart from other flowers are the thorns which both protect it and cause pain to those who dare to



touch them unwisely. The well-known proverb, "Every rose has its thorn" reminds us that every joy which comes into our life brings its own shadow of sorrow.

A rose, therefore, becomes a metaphor for love. It is both beautiful to the eyes and painful to the touch. This combination of contrasts perfectly symbolizes the poetic meaning of love with all its beauty and suffering.

Roses, therefore, are given only on special occasions and to special people. They are never picked at random and given to just anybody. Birthdays, anniversaries, weddings, and graduations provide the special setting for this appropriate expression of affection. Since roses themselves are so delicate in their beauty, it is commonly believed that they should be given only to women and preferably by men. It would appear most strange indeed for a woman to send a man a dozen long-stemmed roses. For a man to send the same to a woman would emit a definite signal that she is very special in his life. The rose, regardless of its color, is a symbol of innocence and purity.

In associating the rose with love, there is yet one more feature which should be considered. A rose is so delicate that it must be treated with the greatest of care. It is not as sturdy as a carnation which can last a long time. If it is not properly watered, its petals will soon wither and fall from the stem. Such is the delicacy and transience of love. Beauty may be eternal, but we must be careful, it can be easily lost if not properly attended, and pain should never be a deterrent from its pursuit for "Every rose has its thorn".

**Directions:** Answer the questions. For questions 1-7, mark  
Y (for YES) if the statement agrees with the information given in the  
passage;  
N (for NO) if the statement contradicts the information given in the



passage;

**NG** (for NOT GIVEN) if the information is not given in the passage.

For questions 8–10, complete the sentences with the information given in the passage.

1. The rose is very special in New York. ( )
2. The city of Portland, Oregon is nicknamed “The City of Roses”. ( )
3. The rose symbolizes beauty, perfection, love and wealth in America.  
( )
4. The Rose Bowl Parade is held in Pasadena, California each year. ( )
5. The proverb “Every rose has its thorn” means every joy brings its own sorrow. ( )
6. A woman sends a dozen long-stemmed roses to a man would signify that he is very special in her life. ( ).
7. The more roses you receive, the more love you are given. ( )
8. The hidden significance of a rose is it must be treated with great care because \_\_\_\_\_.
9. Roses are given only on special occasions and to \_\_\_\_\_.
10. A symbol of pain in a rose is \_\_\_\_\_.

## Text B

### **Jazz and Country-western**

Among the many contributions Americans have made to the arts, one of the most significant contributions has been in the field of music. During her short history America has evolved several musical forms which really capture the American Spirit.

The first of these is jazz. Around the turn of the century, the American public began to tire of the sentimentality of ballads. Negro bands were forming throughout the country beginning in the South and



moving to cities up North. These musicians brought with them their skill on the piano, trumpet and drums and their wonderful changing improvised rhythms.

Emerging from the depths of the black man's soul which desired for freedom, jazz is one of the freest of all musical forms with its numerous impromptu(即兴的) variations. No two pieces are ever played alike and no one piece is ever played the same. For this reason it remains one of the most difficult types of music to perform and many a well-trained professional musician cannot play jazz well unless he can "feel" rather than "read" the music. Being born of the black man's captivity, it flourished in the south finding a home in the French Quarter of New Orleans.

When it moved up north its cultural center was located in Harlem and today it is widely performed and appreciated throughout the world. From being the music of a localized area, it has truly become international. Although there are many jazz singers, it is the instrumental aspect of the music which has the greatest appeal.

Jazz is not so much a "kind" of music as it is a "way" of playing music. Almost any music can become jazz if it is played with a jazz treatment. In jazz, musical ideas are born and the musicians play impromptu together for hours without recourse to written music. There is an element of fun in the performing of jazz brought on by its spontaneity(自发性).

On the other hand country-western music which finds its home in Nashville, Tennessee, generates a different mood. Centered in the heart of the eastern mountains of America, it expresses itself best in words. This music has a distinctly melancholic charm. Its melodic lyricism stands in contrast to the strong and heavy rhythms of jazz. The lyrics of all country-western songs speak of lost loves, lost homes, broken hearts and faithful dogs. The lyrics are simple but accessible. Their message is direct



and immediate. There is a lyrical bent to country music and the songs have a huge dose of pity and sadness which make them easy to listen to. It remains perhaps one of the most popular forms of music today in America and the Grand Ole Opry in Nashville is said to be the music capital of the world where its summer festival attracts large crowds. Many country-western singers are held up as idols by their admiring fans.

**Directions:** Answer the questions. For questions 1-6, mark

**Y** (for YES) if the statement agrees with the information given in the passage;

**N** (for NO) if the statement contradicts the information given in the passage;

**NG** (for NOT GIVEN) if the information is not given in the passage.

For questions 7-8, complete the sentences with the information given in the passage.

1. Americans have made many contributions to arts, including music. ( )
2. At the turn of the century, American begins to tire of classical music. ( )
3. Its impromptu variations make jazz one of the freest of all musical forms. ( )
4. Jazz is difficult to perform because it takes years to play it well. ( )
5. When jazz moved up north, its cultural center was located in Harlem, New York City. ( )
6. Jazz and country-western music are very popular in America, so Americans don't like pop music any more. ( )
7. The theme of the country-western music is about \_\_\_\_\_.
8. It is said that the music capital of the world is \_\_\_\_\_.



## Part II Reading Comprehension (Reading in Depth)

### Text C

#### A Mime in a Zoo

One day an out-of-work mime (哑剧表演者) is visiting the zoo and attempts to earn some money as a street performer. As soon as he starts to draw a crowd, a zoo keeper grabs him and drags him into his office. The zoo keeper explains to the mime that the zoo's most popular attraction, a gorilla, has died suddenly and the keeper fears that attendance at the zoo will fall off. He offers the mime a job to dress up as the gorilla until they can get another one. The mime accepts.

So the next morning the mime puts on the gorilla suit and enters the cage before the crowd comes. He discovers that it's a great job. He can sleep all he wants, play and make fun of people and he draws bigger crowds than he ever did as a mime. However, eventually the crowds tire of him and he tires of just swinging on tires. He begins to notice that the people are paying more attention to the lion in the cage next to his. Not wanting to lose the attention of his audience, he climbs to the top of his cage, crawls across a partition, and hangs from the top to the lion's cage. Of course, this makes the lion very angry, but the crowd loves it.

At the end of the day the zoo keeper comes and gives the mime a raise for being such a good attraction. Well, this goes on for some time, the mime keeps laughing at the lion, the crowds grow larger, and his salary keeps going up. Then one terrible day when he is dangling over the furious lion he slips and falls. The mime is terrified.

The lion gathers itself and prepares to pounce. The mime is so scared

that he begins to run round and round the cage with the lion close behind. Finally, the mime starts screaming and yelling, "Help, Help me!", but the lion is quick and pounces. The mime soon finds himself flat on his back looking up at the angry lion and the lion says, "Shut up, you idiot! Do you want to get us both fired?"

**Directions:** Select the most appropriate answer for each of the following questions.

1. What did the zoo keeper ask the mime to do?
  - A) To help him earn money to buy a new gorilla.
  - B) To attract more people by his performance for the zoo keeper.
  - C) To make up the lost of his most popular attraction, a gorilla.
  - D) To invite more visitors to the zoo.
2. What did the zoo keeper think of the mime's work?
  - A) The zoo keeper was appreciated with the mime's work that he gave the mime a raise in salary.
  - B) The zoo keeper was angry with him because he made the lion furious.
  - C) The zoo keeper wanted to drive him away because the audience was tired of his performance.
  - D) The zoo keeper was very pleased because he needn't to buy a new gorilla.
3. Why did the mime challenge ~~the~~ lion?
  - A) Because he wanted to make friends with him.
  - B) Because he wanted to make fun of him.
  - C) Because he wanted to keep the attention of his audience.
  - D) Because he wanted to win the zoo keeper's raise.
4. What does the underlined phrase "flat on his back" ( the last paragraph) mean?



- A) Very angry. B) Very helpless.  
C) Very lonely. D) Very tired.
5. What can you infer from the last sentence?
- A) The lion was very clever because he could talk.  
B) The mime and the lion would have a fight.  
C) The mime and the lion would be fired by the zoo keeper.  
D) The lion was also a man who dressed up as a lion.

## Text D

## The Pencil-box

I was deep in thought at my office, preparing a lecture to be given that evening at a college across town, when the phone rang. A woman I had never met introduced herself and said that she was the mother of a seven-year-old boy and that she was dying. She said that her therapist had advised her that discussing her coming death with her son would be too shocking and upsetting for him, but somehow that didn't feel right to her.

Knowing that I worked with grieving children, she asked my advice. I told her that our heart is often smarter than our brain and that I thought she knew what would be best for her son. I also invited her to attend the lecture that night since I was speaking about how children cope with death. She said she would be there.

I wondered later if I would recognize her at the lecture, but my question was answered when I saw a frail woman being half carried into the room by two adults. I talked about the fact that children usually sense the truth long before they are told and that they often wait until they feel adults are ready to talk about it before sharing their concerns and questions. I said that children usually can handle truth better than denial, even though the denial is intended to protect them from pain. I said that respecting children meant including them in the family sadness, not