



普通高等教育“十五”国家级规划教材

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新世纪网络课程建设工程项目

# 大学体验英语®

## Experiencing English

### 快速阅读教程

# 3

### Fast Reading

总主编 刘龙根 崔 敏



高等教育出版社





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*Fast Reading*

总主编 刘龙根 崔敏  
主 编 殷明玉  
副主编 程力  
编 者 曲鑫 伍思静  
金辉



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## 前 言

英语阅读能力的培养是大学英语教学的重要任务。对此,《大学英语课程教学要求(试行)》做出了定性定量的要求。阅读不仅是获取信息的主要手段,也是学习和掌握语言的有效途径。对于广大非英语专业大学生而言,只有通过大量阅读,才能获得充足的语言输入,进而打下扎实的英语基础,形成较强的英语语感,提高英语综合应用能力。

培养英语阅读能力一方面要依赖足够的阅读实践,在阅读中学会阅读;另一方面,能动地运用元认知策略,理性地改进阅读方法,积极地提高英语阅读技能,无疑能对培养较强的阅读能力起到事半功倍的作用。

英语阅读能力包含多种要素,而快速处理阅读材料所输入信息的能力是其中极其重要的微技能,这一点早已为阅读研究者所认识。Grabe (1991) 曾经指出:“...a description of reading has to account for the notions that fluent reading is **rapid**, purposeful, interactive, comprehending, flexible, and gradually developing.”。Taylor (1975) 也强调“reading has to be **fast** to be successful”。一定的阅读速度是获取主要信息所必需的,是保持阅读兴趣、专注于阅读内容所要求的。尤其是在当今这个“信息爆炸”、新知识以几何级增长的时代,快速阅读技能的重要性愈加突出。这样,快速阅读技能的培养也就必然成为大学英语教学的要务。而大学英语教学中要致力于快速阅读教学,就需要有适当的教材作支撑,适用的教材是保证教学活动顺利开展的必要条件。《大学体验英语快速阅读教程》的编写正是为了满足目前国内大学英语教学的这一实际需要。

本教程的编写以《大学英语课程教学要求(试行)》为依据。

本教程共四册,每册含18个单元,可供大学英语教学1~4学期使用(按每学期18周,每周一个单元计)。各册中每单元分Text A和Text B(一篇用于课堂,另一篇供课后练习)。每册配有“Introduction to Important Reading Strategies and Skills”。本教程的编写采取“主题与技能”相结合的模式,即单元设置围绕内容主题,练习设计针对阅读技能与文章内容。第一、二册练习包括多项选择与正误判断两种题型,第三、四册练习包括多项选择与简短问答两种题型。书后附有全书练习的参考答案。

受编写时间与编者经验和水平所限,教程中不当之处在所难免,诚望广大读者不吝指正。

编 者

2005年6月

## Introduction to Important Reading Strategies and Skills

The following is a summary of some important reading strategies and skills which can be applied to all forms of English reading. While learning to read English, make a conscious effort to put into practice these strategies and skills.

1. Reading in sense groups
2. Predicting
3. Skimming
4. Scanning
5. Detailed reading
6. Guessing unknown words
7. Understanding main ideas
8. Recognizing important facts and details
9. Inferring
10. Understanding text organization
11. Recognizing signal words
12. Understanding figurative language
13. Assessing a writer's purpose
14. Evaluating a writer's attitude

## 1. Reading in sense groups

Understanding what you are reading is important; but the speed with which you read is important, too. While making constant efforts to improve your reading comprehension, you should try consciously to increase your reading speed. Reading in sense groups is an easy, yet effective, way of picking up speed and fluency.

How should you read this sentence?

Example 1: *He could not help thinking that if anything should happen, the nearest person he could contact by radio, unless there was a ship nearby, would be on an island 885 miles away.*

A poor reader is apt to move his eyes *from word to word*, while an efficient reader will move his eyes *from sense group to sense group* so that he will be able to acquire sufficient speed to read fluently with good comprehension:

*He could not help —  
                                thinking that —  
if anything should happen, —  
                                the nearest person —  
he could contact by radio, —  
                                unless there was a ship nearby, —  
would be on an island —  
                                885 miles away.*

## 2. Predicting

Before you read a text in detail, it is possible to predict what information you may find in it. You will probably have some knowledge of the subject already, and you can use this knowledge to help you anticipate what a reading text contains.

After looking at the title, for example, you can ask yourself what you do and do not know about the subject before you read the text. Or you can formulate questions that you would like to have answered by reading the text. These exercises will help you focus more effectively on the ideas in a text when you actually start reading.

To help you predict, you may also use skimming and scanning strategies as described below.

### 3. Skimming

Skimming involves reading quickly through a text to get an overall idea of its contents. Features of the text that

can help you include the following:

- (a) Title
- (b) Subtitle(s)
- (c) Details about the author
- (d) Abstract
- (e) Introductory paragraph
- (f) First, second and last sentences of body paragraphs
- (g) Concluding paragraph

A text may not contain all of these features—there may be no abstract, for example, or no subtitles—but you can usually expect to find at least (a), (e), (f) and (g). Focusing on these will give you an understanding of the overall idea or gist of the text you are reading—in other words, a general understanding as opposed to a detailed reading.

Another term for this kind of reading is **surveying**. Surveying can be described as looking quickly through a book, chapter of a book, article from a journal, etc., to decide whether or not it is suitable for your purpose. To decide whether or not a text is suitable, especially if it is a book, you will also need to focus on the following features in addition to those mentioned above:

- (a) Edition and date of publication
- (b) Table of contents
- (c) Foreword
- (d) Introduction
- (e) Index

#### 4. Scanning

When you scan a text, again you look quickly through it. However, unlike skimming, scanning involves looking for specific words. Scanning involves rapid reading for the specific rather than the general; for particular details rather than the overall idea.

When you read a text, for example, you may want to find only a percentage figure or the dates of particular historical events instead of the main ideas. Scanning will help you find such information more efficiently.

#### 5. Detailed reading

A second and third reading of a text will focus on the secondary ideas and details which support, explain and develop the main ideas. This can be described as a more comprehensive reading. It involves a slower and more careful reading process. At this stage you can also try to guess the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary.

#### 6. Guessing unknown words

It is unlikely that you will understand 100 percent of the vocabulary in a text, especially at a first reading. Use first the context and then your own knowledge of the subject to help you guess the meaning of unknown words. At your first reading of a text it is usually best not to stop and consult your dictionary. This will interrupt your process of reading and understanding. Often the meaning of unfamiliar words and phrases becomes clear as you continue to read through the text. The dictionary can be used at a later stage.

In using context to help you guess unknown vocabulary, refer first to **immediate context** and then to the **wider context** in which a word is found. The immediate context is the sentence in which a word is found, and sometimes the sentences immediately before and after this. The wider context can include other sentences and even other

paragraphs in a text. Both forms of context can often provide important information that helps you guess the meaning of unfamiliar words. It is possible to find hints or clues about a word's meaning from the context. *Definition, restatement, general knowledge, related information, examples, comparison, contrast* and *word formation* could give you some hints or clues to the meaning of unfamiliar words.

Example 2: This includes *poultry* for the main course (e.g. chicken, turkey, duck, goose), salads, breads, and vegetables, and features a variety of *desserts*, for example, pies, puddings, and ice cream.

## 7. Understanding main ideas

You will practice recognizing the main ideas contained within a text. In the process of skimming you will already have identified some of these main ideas. During a second and third reading you can recognize and understand them more fully. Each paragraph will usually contain one main idea, sometimes referred to as the paragraph topic.

The reading materials provide several exercises which help you identify and understand the main ideas in a text. Knowing the key points in a reading text is vital in assessing its importance and relevance for your needs. Understanding the main ideas will also lead you to an understanding of a writer's organization.

Example 3: One hundred years ago, school teachers were expected to provide a variety of services in addition to their teaching duties and to behave themselves in an exemplary (serving as an example) manner. They cared for the oil lamps, tended the fire, and supplied their students with sharp pencils. After a long day in the classroom, they were expected to spend some time every evening reading the Bible. Women teachers could not marry, and barber shops were off limits to men teachers. Of course, alcohol and tobacco were forbidden.

Which statement best expresses the main idea?

- A. Teachers performed domestic tasks.
- B. The teaching profession demanded total dedication.
- C. Teachers needed the guidance of religion.
- D. Teachers set good examples by not using tobacco and alcohol.

## 8. Recognizing important facts and details

To understand the main idea thoroughly, however, you must recognize the important facts or details which help develop or support it. These facts and details give you a deeper understanding of the main idea. They may prove a point, show a relationship between ideas, or serve as examples to help you understand the main idea more fully. Here are some ways to help you recognize important facts or details:

- 1) Read for the main idea. If you have identified the main idea, you can more easily recognize the important facts that support it.
- 2) Keep it in mind that not all facts or details are equally important. Look only for the facts that related to the main idea.
- 3) To check on your understanding of the material you have read, review the facts or details which you have identified as the main idea. If adding up the facts or details does not lead logically to the main idea, you have failed either to identify the main idea or to recognize the important supporting details.

## 9. Inferring

Sometimes a writer will suggest or express something indirectly in a text. In other words, a writer will imply something and leave it to the reader to infer or understand what is meant. When writers do this, they rely to some extent on the knowledge of their readers—knowledge of a subject or cultural knowledge, for example. Inferring a writer's meaning is sometimes important in the process of understanding a reading text. Readers have to read between the lines for complete understanding of a passage. Compare the following examples:

Example 4: When the phone finally rang, Joe leaped from the edge of his chair and grabbed for it.

Example 5: Joe was very nervous and anxious as he waited for an important phone call. Unable to relax for a moment, he sat on the edge of his chair. When the phone rang, Joe reached for it with great eagerness.

## 10. Understanding text organization

Writers structure, or organize, their writing in many different ways. Recognizing the way in which a text has been organized will help you understand its meaning more fully. A writer may want, for example, to outline a situation, discuss a problem and propose a solution. This will usually result in a particular pattern of organization. Or a writer may want to compare and contrast two ideas and will choose basic structures commonly used to compare and contrast.

Another feature related to organization is a writer's use of time. To give an account of events or describe a process, writers will often use a chronological order, in which events are recounted in the order in which they have occurred. Other writers will choose to organize an account of events in different ways, perhaps with repeated contrasts between past and present time.

## 11. Recognizing signal words

Signal words, which authors use in writing, provide an aid for the reader to grasp the thread of thought in the material. By using signal words to predict what may come next, the reader can decide whether he should speed up his reading, slow down or pause to make sure what is being read is understood. Recognizing signal words, therefore, becomes important to improvement both in reading speed and in comparison.

There are five basic groups of signal words. You probably know all of them as words, but perhaps you've never realized their important function in reading and writing. The five groups are:

- 1) words that signal more of the same, including *furthermore, and, more than that, also, likewise, moreover, in addition, what is more, for instance, for example*;
- 2) words that change the direction of thought, including *although, however, on the contrary, but, in spite of, otherwise, despite, nevertheless, yet*;
- 3) words that signal an order or sequence of events, including *first, second, third, and so on, then, after, before, next, last, afterwards, finally*;
- 4) words that signal a summary, including *as a result, finally, therefore, accordingly, in short, thus, consequently, in conclusion, so, in brief, in a word*;
- 5) words that signal cause and effect, including *because, for this reason, so, therefore, as, since, consequently*.

## 12. Understanding figurative language

Writers use figurative language—language that compares—to produce images in their descriptions or narrations. Sometimes non-human things are given human features (**personification**); sometimes comparisons are made using the



words *like* or *as* (**simile**); more often comparisons are not stated but suggested (**metaphor**).

Example 6: Time and tide wait for no man.

He is as stupid as an ass.

All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players.

Figurative language is an important stylistic device that writers use. It makes their description or narration more vivid and interesting. Understanding figurative language is an important reading skill which helps readers to recognize the "secret power" of words and appreciate the sensory impression and emotional reactions created by authors.

### **13. Assessing a writer's purpose**

Once you understand the organization of a text, you can then recognize the writer's purpose more clearly. The text organization a writer selects will partly depend upon his or her particular purpose. A writer may want to inform or persuade, and he or she will select a structure or pattern of organization according to this purpose.

A writer may also intend to do both of these things in a written text—to inform as well as persuade. In such cases it is often helpful to try to assess which of these purposes seems to be more important or dominant.

### **14. Evaluating a writer's attitude**

Writers are not necessarily neutral or objective when they write, particularly if they are trying to persuade readers to agree with their opinions. It is important that you recognize what an author's attitude is in relation to the ideas or information being presented. This is because such attitudes can influence the ways in which information is presented. You will be looking at ways in which a writer's attitude may be identified. You will also practice evaluating how relatively neutral or biased his or her attitude may be.

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# ***Unit One***

## ***Man and Nature***

**Text A**

**The Nuclear Age**

**Text B**

**Tornadoes**





## Text A

## The Nuclear Age



For years, geologists have known that fossil fuels would not last forever. Sooner or later, other energy sources would be needed. It was anticipated that nuclear power could produce electricity in such large amounts and so cheaply that we would phase into an economy in which electricity would take over virtually all functions, including the generation of other fuels, at *nominal* (极少的) costs. Following World War II, determined to show the world that the power of the atom could benefit humankind, the U.S. government *embarked* (开始) on a course to lead the world into the Nuclear Age.

Thus did the U.S. government move into the research, development, and promotion of commercial nuclear power plants (along with the continuing development of nuclear weaponry). Utilizing this research, companies such as General Electric and Westinghouse constructed nuclear power plants that were ordered and paid for by utility companies, with assurances from the federal government, via the Price-Anderson Act of 1957, that these corporations and utilities would be *exempt* (免除) from any legal liabilities incurred. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), formerly the Atomic Energy Commission, an agency in the Department of Energy (DOE), set and enforced safety standards for the operation and maintenance of the new plants, as it does today.

In the 1960s and early 1970s, utility companies moved ahead with plans for numerous nuclear power plants. By 1975, 53 plants were operating in the United States, producing about 9% of the nation's electricity, and another 170 plants were in various stages of planning or construction. Officials estimated that by 1990 several hundred plants would be on-line and by the turn of the 20th century as many as a thousand would be operating. A number of other industrialized countries got in step with their own programs, and some less developed nations were going nuclear by purchasing plants from industrialized nations. (307 words)

How fast do you read?

307 words ÷ \_\_\_\_\_ minutes

= \_\_\_\_\_ wpm

## Unit One

### Exercises



**Choose the most appropriate answer for each of the following items according to the information in the passage.**

1. Which of the following is the main advantage of nuclear power mentioned in the passage?
  - A) It is cheap.
  - B) It is everlasting.
  - C) It is powerful.
  - D) It is clean.
2. Why did the U.S. government move into nuclear development?
  - A) To strengthen its armed forces.
  - B) To promote its economic development.
  - C) To contribute to the world with nuclear power.
  - D) To show the world that nuclear power could be beneficial.
3. The federal government assured those utility companies which ordered and paid for the nuclear power plants that \_\_\_\_\_.
  - A) they would be safeguarded by the NRC
  - B) they would be funded by the government
  - C) they would be protected by the Price-Anderson Act
  - D) they would be free from legal responsibilities involved
4. In the passage it was estimated that \_\_\_\_\_.
  - A) 53 plants would be built by 1975
  - B) 170 plants would be constructed after 1975
  - C) 1000 plants would be in operation by 1990
  - D) 1000 plants would be in operation by the end of the 1990s
5. According to the final paragraph, it can be anticipated that nuclear power \_\_\_\_\_.
  - A) will be exploited only in industrialized countries
  - B) will see increasing use in both developed and less developed countries
  - C) will be used less and less for military purposes
  - D) will surely replace fossil fuels in a decade or two

## Text B

## Tornadoes



Some disasters, such as *tornadoes* (龙卷风), are impossible to anticipate. Each year in the United States, on average, 780 tornadoes strike, *spawned* (产生) from the severe weather accompanying thunderstorms. Because of the tendency for cold, dry air masses from the north to mix with warm, humid air from the Gulf of Mexico, the central United States generates more tornadoes than anywhere else on Earth. Of short duration, they develop into some of the most destructive forces known in nature, with winds reaching as high as 300 miles per hour. The most intense tornadoes have killed hundreds of people. On April 3, 1974, for example, a line of tornadoes from Canada to Georgia took more than 300 lives and caused untold property damage.

The most *devastating* (破坏性的) consequences of natural hazards usually occur to those who are least capable of anticipating them and dealing with their effects. For example, in October 1998, Hurricane Mitch developed in the Caribbean Sea and slowly made its way across Central America. The combination of storm surge, winds, and rain devastated the developing countries of Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Guatemala, killing over 10 000 people. Some locations received a year's worth of rain in one day, and the result was mudslides that *obliterated* (淹没) whole villages. An earthquake in Gujarat, India, in January 2002 killed over 19 000. Orissa State in India was hit with a massive cyclone in November 1999, killing at least 3 000 and displacing no fewer than 2 million people. In December 1999, Venezuela's Caribbean coast was lashed by devastating rains, triggering massive mudslides and floods that killed more than 30 000. Mozambique and South Africa were *inundated* (淹没) by floodwaters in early 2 000, leaving over a million homeless. Every year brings its list of disasters and the toll in deaths and in the miseries of people left homeless. (302 words)

How fast do you read?  
302 words ÷ \_\_\_\_\_ minutes  
= \_\_\_\_\_ wpm

## Unit One

### Exercises



**Choose the most appropriate answer for each of the following items according to the information in the passage.**

1. Tornadoes are impossible to anticipate because \_\_\_\_\_.  
A) they are spawned by the severe weather  
B) they are generated by thunderstorms  
C) they can develop into destructive forces very quickly  
D) they result from the mixture of cold, dry air and warm, humid air
2. Besides tornadoes, other natural disasters mentioned in the passage occurred with \_\_\_\_\_.  
A) tide  
B) rain  
C) cave  
D) snow
3. What kind of countries are likely to be destroyed by the natural hazards according to the passage?  
A) Countries in Central America and Africa.  
B) Developing countries with long coastline.  
C) Countries which are least able to forecast and cope with the hazards.  
D) Countries which attach inadequate importance to fighting against natural disasters.
4. Which of the following is the direct reason for the mudslides and floods that beat Venezuela's Caribbean coast in December 1999?  
A) Rains.  
B) Cyclone.  
C) Hurricane.  
D) Floodwaters.
5. Which of the natural hazards mentioned in the passage left more people homeless?  
A) Hurrican Mitch  
B) The earthquake in Gujarat  
C) The cyclone in Orissa  
D) The flood in Mozambique