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大学体验英语

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快速阅读教程

4

Fast Reading

总主编 刘龙根 崔 敏



高等教育出版社



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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。

受编写时间与编者的经验和水平所限,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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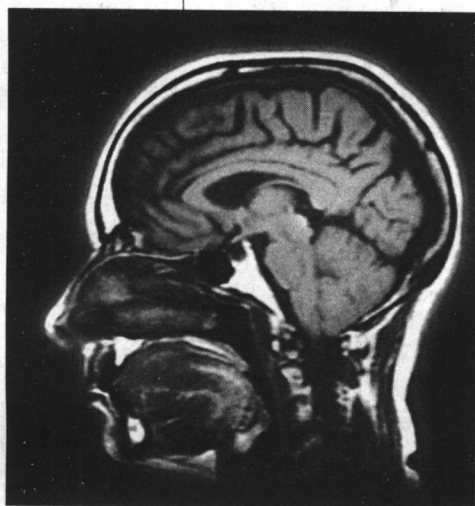
Unit One

Learning

Text A	Learning and the Brain
Text B	Corporate Learning

Text A

Learning and the Brain



Sensations such as sounds and images enter our brain through our sensory memory and are temporarily stored in our short-term memory. At this point, the brain decides whether to consolidate the memory and store it into long-term memory.

Memories are not stored **intact**; they are separated and then distributed in different regions of the brain. When you listen to the lyrics of a song you store the words in one area and the melody in another. Separate memory areas have been identified for nouns and verbs, touch and feel, sounds (other than language) and motion. As you attempt to retrieve a memory, your brain searches simultaneously in various regions for the parts that constitute the memory. If the search is successful, the brain delivers a unified memory to your consciousness. This process of recollection occurs within seconds.

Areas of the brain vary dramatically in their flexibility and their capability to create long-term memories. The area of our brain that learns and comprehends language and speech sounds is highly adaptable throughout childhood, but loses flexibility as we age, making it more difficult to learn a second language in adulthood. This contrasts with the area of the memory that stores word meanings. The ability to acquire new vocabulary not only remains flexible, but expands throughout life. Therefore, our ability to add to our storehouse of word meanings remains robust and permanent throughout life. This flexibility is characteristic of an ever-changing brain as memories are constantly refashioned. What we already know shapes what we select to remember with the brain naturally altering old networks to incorporate new learning. Indeed, to remember we need to reflect on new information and relate it to what we already know.

Additional research findings offer us some clues as to how we can assist our adult learners in remembering information. Brain imaging has revealed that the longer certain areas in the *cortex* (皮层) are activated the better information is remembered. What causes this area to remain activated?

First, complex cognition increased the chance of remembering. For

How fast do you read?

497 words ÷ _____ minutes

= _____ wpm

Unit One

example, asking learners to analyze a word helped them to remember the word. Subjects asked to analyze whether words were concrete or abstract remembered words better than those given a list and told to memorize the list. Second, personal experiences caused longer activation. When shown a picture of Paris, those who had been to Paris showed longer activation. Third, focus and concentration made a difference in activation. Those reminded to pay attention and focus on material remembered better than those given no such directions. Fourth, in *Searching for Memory* (1996), Schacter's research demonstrated that the more elaborately a memory is encoded — with vision, sound, smell, and movement, the easier it is to access. Fifth, repetition causes neural connections to re-activate and increases the likelihood of memory retention (保持). Lastly, learning that engages the emotions creates a stronger activation. Emotions not only impact our ability to remember but our ability to think rationally. (497 words)

Exercises



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

1. The example of "the lyrics of a song" is meant to illustrate that _____.
 - A) our sensory memory will become our short-term memory
 - B) memories are separately stored in different areas of the brain
 - C) the retrieval of a memory of something, such as a song, is complex
 - D) the flexibility and capability of the different areas of the brain are different
2. The word "intact" (Line1, Para.2) is closest in meaning to _____.
 - A) interrupted
 - B) interrelated
 - C) unseparated
 - D) unsettled
3. According to the author, as we become older, _____.
 - A) our ability to learn and comprehend language and speech sounds decreases
 - B) we lose flexibility in all areas of the brain
 - C) our ability to acquire new vocabulary remains unchanged
 - D) our brain ages and we are not able to learn a second language in adulthood

4. If we intend to remember better, we'd better _____.
A) try to make abstract words more concrete
B) expand our personal experiences, especially by paying a visit to Paris
C) make certain areas in the brain cortex stimulated longer
D) acquire more knowledge in our childhood
5. From the last paragraph, it can be concluded that _____.
A) the more associated information we have, the easier it is for us to remember something
B) retaining a certain memory is likely caused by an increase of attention
C) emotional involvement may impact our ability to remember but not our ability to think
D) we will not focus on material remembered if not reminded to