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英美精粹短文阅读

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DUAN WEN YUE DU

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英文精粹短文 阅读

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内 容 提 要

本书是为准备参加四、六级考试的考生攻克阅读关而编写的,题型是按国内外英语考试阅读理解惯用的五种题型设计的,因此也适合其他类英语考生使用。本书所选录短文涉及哲学、心理、历史、经济、管理、法律、教育、天文、考古、生物、地理、地质、医学、宗教、文学、艺术以及生活小常识等各个方面,题材广泛,应有尽有,包罗无遗,旨在使考生接触各类题材,扩大英语阅读的知识面,以免在考场上遇到陌生题材的阅读文章而陷入被动局面。

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前 言

我们的时代是信息的时代,只有在规定的时间内获取到所需的信息,才能把握住时代的脉搏。信息的载体无论是报刊、杂志、图书、笔记、数据库还是“高速公路”,都是为阅读服务的,阅读乃是当今世界获取信息的最主要方法之一,阅读水平是衡量一个人能否走在时代前列的最显著标志之一。

阅读就是通常所谓的读书,“是要清算过去人类成就的总帐,把几千年人类思想经验在短促的几十年内重温一遍,把过去无数亿万人辛苦获来的知识教训,集中到读者一个人身上去受用。有了这种准备,一个人才能在学问征途上作万里长征,去发现新的世界。”^① 正由于这个缘故,阅读在国内外英语教学中占有极为重要的位置。从我国大学英语四、六级考试各部分分数比例来看,阅读理解占40%。美国英语教育专家布朗斯坦教授认为:“句子填空问题是对阅读理解的一种检验。”^② 照此看来四、六级考试中的“词汇与结构”、“改错”,已被取消的“完形填空”等部分也属于阅读理解范畴,听力部分多选题和新题型英译汉部分也含有相当多的阅读理解成分。可见阅读理解所占的比重实际上大大超过了卷面上的40%。英美的各种英语水平考试和人

① 朱光潜,谈读书,艺文杂谈。合肥:安徽人民出版社,1981年。

② Brownstein and Weiner Barron's How to Prepare for Graduate Record Examination, Third Edition. New York: Barron's Educational Series, Inc. 1977

学考试都有阅读理解部分,美国各大学把研究生入学考试(GRE)的语言能力(Verbal Aptitude)即阅读与词汇部分的得分都看得很重,许多专业都将其当作录取的唯一标准。这与我国研究生入学考试绝大多数非汉语专业不考汉语阅读理解的现实形成了鲜明的对照。由此是否可以说明当今中西方对人文教育的取向存在巨大差异呢?这的确是值得认真研究的现象。

从应试的角度来看,阅读理解也是在规定的时间内最大限度地获取所需的信息,时间是至关重要的。体验考场上的紧迫感,把握住时间,没有什么捷径可走,必须在相同的氛围下进行大量反复的阅读实践。

为给读者创造这样一种氛围,我们按照四、六级阅读理解的题型、难度、题材、篇幅选编了120篇短文(前80篇为四级,后40篇为六级),每篇配有5~6个多选题,共计620题。为了便于自学,每篇习题后还附有词表、答案及其说明。所设计的题型不外乎下列五种:

1. 找出中心思想;
2. 鉴别具体细节;
3. 确定词在上下文中的意义;
4. 根据提示进行推理;
5. 指出所使用的写作技巧。

这些确属实际阅读要达到的目的,是当今国内外阅读考试的通用题型,其中每一项都涉及到基本功的训练,诸如篇章结构、叙事或说理的特点、词汇、逻辑与修辞等方面,这绝不会一蹴而就。

本书的短文绝大多数由长篇节选而来,这为第4种题型设计创造了必要的条件,诸如“上文或下文可能要谈什么?”之类的问题,是阅读全文不可能遇到的问题。节选对找中心思想这种题型说来一般比全文要相对容易些,因为前者是后者的一部分,主

题更加具体明确,这也是节选的一个独道之处。节选的另一个独到之处是能使读者接触到更多的题材和风格,这里选录的短文涉及到人文(liberal arts)、社科(social sciences)、科技(natural sciences)的许多题材,风格迥异,各有千秋,与考试中的阅读文章题材各异、风格不同的实际情况相符合,为掌握第5类题型所需的技巧提供了丰富的素材,也为其它四类题型拓展了更加广阔的空间。

同一读者对不同题材和题型的难易程度可能会作出不同的反应,比如感到社科类比科技类或第1种题型比第2种题型更困难或更容易。

我们殷切希望读者按考试时间要求来完成本书的每一次练习,从而找到自己的薄弱环节。在这种反复的实践中使其得到加强和完善,培养出一种从容不迫的应试感受,使自己的水平得到淋漓尽致的发挥,在规定的时间内最大限度地获取所需的信息。

最后我们再一次强调,得到这种感受要靠对基本功的训练,正如演员“台上一分钟,台下十年功”的道理一样,贵在坚持,在跳舞中学跳舞,在阅读中学阅读,掌握技能,提高速度。有了这样的充分准备,就能在最少的时间内从阅读中获取最多的信息,就能在信息时代的学问和科学征途上披荆斩棘,永开先锋。

编者

1996.7

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Passage 1

passage!

1/2 I came to live here where I am now between Wounded Knee Creek and Grass Creek. Others came too, and we made these little gray houses of logs that you see, and they are square. It is a bad way to live, for there can be no power in a square.

2/2 You have noticed that everything an Indian does is in a circle and that is because the Power of the World always works in circles, and everything tries to be round. In the old days when we were a strong and happy people, all our power came to us from the sacred hoop of the nation, and so long as the hoop was unbroken, the people flourished. The flowering tree was the living center of the hoop, and the circle of the four quarters nourished it. The east gave peace and light, the south gave warmth, the west gave rain, and the north with its cold and mighty wind gave strength and endurance. This knowledge came to us from the outer world with our religion. Everything the Power of the World does is done in a circle. The sky is round, and I have heard that the earth is round like a ball, and so are all the stars. The wind, in its greatest power, whirls. Birds make their nests in circles, for theirs is the same religion as ours. The sun comes forth and goes down again in a circle. The moon does the same, and both are round. Even the seasons form a great circle in their changing, and always come

back again to where they were. The life of a man is a circle from childhood to childhood, and so it is in everything where power moves. Our ~~tepees~~ were round like the nests of birds, and these were always set in a circle, the nation's hoop, a nest of many nests where the Great Spirit meant for us to hatch our children.

But the Wasichus have put us in these square boxes. Our power is gone and we are dying, for the power is not in us any more. You can look at our boys and see how it is with us. When we were living by the power of the circle in the way we should, boys were men at twelve or thirteen years of age. But now it takes them very much longer to mature.

1. The two things being compared are ☒ D.
 - A. the gray houses and logs.
 - B. the circle and the triangle.
 - C. the balls and the nests of birds.
 - D. the circle and the square.
2. What are the ways in which American Indian life depends on the circle? ☒ D.
 - A. The hoop of the nation nourished from all four directions.
 - B. The sky is round; the earth and stars are round.
 - C. Birds nest in circles; the sun and the moon have circular paths; and so on.
 - D. All of above.

3. The American Indians (
- A. always lived in square houses.
 - B. lived in round tepees but then decided to move into square houses.
 - C. lived in round tepees but then were forced to live in square houses.
 - D. will never move from round tepees.
4. This selection was spoken by Black Elk to John Neihardt over half a century ago. What happened to members of Black Elds tribe once they moved into square houses? B
- A. Everyone fell ill and died.
 - B. Boys took longer to grow into men.
 - C. The tribe stayed mighty.
 - D. They had to move to other houses.
5. Black Elk feels that
- A. circle and squares both have strong magic. (
 - B. squares give much power, but circles make the tribe weak.
 - C. circles give much power, but squares make the tribe weak.
 - D. it is time to give up the old ways of life.

Vocabulary

sacred *a.* 神圣的; 宗教上的

hoop *n.* 圆状物

whirl *n.* 旋转

篷;小屋

tepee *n.* (北美印第安人的)帐

hatch *v.* 孵卵

Explanatory Answers

1. D 对。见第 1 段第 2 句和第 2 段第 1 句 “We made these little gray houses of logs, they are square. It is a bad way to live, for there can be no power in a square” 和 “Everything an indian does is in a circle and that is because the Power of the World always works in circles, and everything tries to be round”。

2. D 对。见第 2 段,从 sacred hoop(神圣圆状物)一直到东南西北,天地月日以及小巢等都是圆状物,美国印地安人相信圆状物表示力量,这种宗教信仰体现在他们的生活方式中。

3. C 对。见第 3 段 “But the Wasichus have put us in these square boxes. Our power is gone and are dying…”。

4. B 对。见第 3 段 “When we were living by the power of the circle in the way we should, boys were men at twelve or thirteen years of age. But now it takes them very much longer to mature”。

5. C 对。从第 3 段中可以看出,自从 Black Elk 人被迫迁入四方形的房屋以后,他们感到 The power is not in us any more,小孩也长不大了,这都是由于 square 使这个部落衰败了。

melt

(moulton) 熔岩

Passage 2

Rocks which have solidified directly from molten materials are called igneous rocks. Igneous rocks are commonly referred to as primary rocks because they are the original source of material found in sedimentaries and metamorphics. Igneous rocks compose the greater part of the earth's crust, but they are generally covered at the surface by a relatively thin layer of sedimentary or metamorphic rocks. Igneous rocks are distinguished by the following characteristics: (1) they contain no fossils; (2) they have no regular arrangement of layers; and (3) they are nearly always made up of crystals.

~~Sedimentary~~ rocks are composed largely of minute fragments derived from the disintegration of existing rocks and in some instances from the remains of animals. As sediments are transported, individual fragments are assorted according to size. Distinct layers of such sediments as gravels, sand, and clay build up, as they are deposited by water and occasionally wind. These sediments vary in size with the material and the power of the eroding agent. Sedimentary materials are laid down in layers called strata.

When sediments harden into sedimentary rocks, the names applied to them change to indicate the change in physical state. Thus, small stones and gravel cemented together are known as conglomerates; cemented sand becomes sandstone;

and hardened clay becomes shale. In addition to these, other sedimentary rocks such as limestone frequently result from the deposition of dissolved material. The ingredient parts are normally precipitated by organic substances, such as shells of clams or hard skeletons of other marine life.

Both igneous and sedimentary rocks may be changed by pressure, heat, solution, or cementing action. When individual grains from existing rocks tend to deform and interlock they are called metamorphic rocks. For example, granite, an igneous rock, may be metamorphosed into a gneiss or a schist. Limestone, a sedimentary rock, when subjected to heat and pressure may become marble, a metamorphic rock. Shale under pressure becomes slate.

1. Which one of the following is a metamorphic rock?
A. Granite. B. Shale.
C. Slate. D. Limestone.
2. One factor that does not cause a change in rock structure is
A. heat. B. wind.
C. pressure. D. solution.
3. If a rock formation is stratified, we may assume that it
A. was built up over a period of years.
B. is the result of volcanic action.
C. is crystalline in structure.
D. is organic in composition.
4. In a granite quarry, we may expect to find

- A. strata. 地层
 B. metamorphic rocks. 变质岩
 C. gravel beds. 砾石
 D. no trace of fossils.
5. The person most interested in the ideas found in this passage would most likely be a B
- A. archeologist. 考古学家
 B. geologist.
 C. sculptor. 雕刻家
 D. palenotologist. 古生物学家

Vocabulary

solidify ^{凝固} v. 坚硬; 成固体	ingredient n. (混合物)成分
igneous rock 火成岩	precipitate v. 坠下
sedimentary ^{沉积的} rock 水成岩	shell n. 壳
metamorphic ^{变质} rock 变(成)质岩	clam n. 蛤; 蚌
fragment n. 断片	skeleton n. 骨骼
disintegration n. 风化作用, 瓦解, 分解	marine a. 海中的
sediment n. 沉淀物; 冲积物	deform v. 使不成形
assort v. 配合; 结合	interlock v. 使连接
gravel n. 碎石	granite n. 花岗岩
erode v. 腐蚀	gneiss n. 片麻岩
strata ^{地层} n. 地层, 层	schist n. 片岩, 片麻岩
conglomerate ^{砾岩} n. 砾岩	limestone n. 石灰石
shale n. 页岩	slate n. 板石

Explanatory Answers

1. C 对。按文章 metamorphic rock (变质岩)是经过热、压形成的,而 slate (板岩)是由 shale (页岩)受压而形成的,所以 slate 属变质岩。见末段最后一句“Shale under pressure becomes slate”。

2. B 对。见末段第 1 句“Both igneous and sedimentary rocks may be changed by pressure, heat, solution, or cementing action”。故 wind 不是引起岩石结构变化的一种因素。

3. A 对。水成岩是经过很长时间形成的,它是一种物理变化。见第 3 段第 1 句:“When sediments harden into sedimentary rocks, the names applied to them change to indicate the change in physical state.”

4. D 对。在花岗岩石场上,我们找不到化石的痕迹。根据文章,花岗岩属于水成岩,其特性之一是无化石。见第 1 段“they (指 igneous rocks) contain no fossils”及末段“For example, granite (花岗岩), an igneous rock, may be…”。

5. B 对。文章主要谈地质构造,因此地质学家最感兴趣。而 archeologist (考古学家), sculptor (雕刻家), paleontologist (古生物学家)则不一定。