

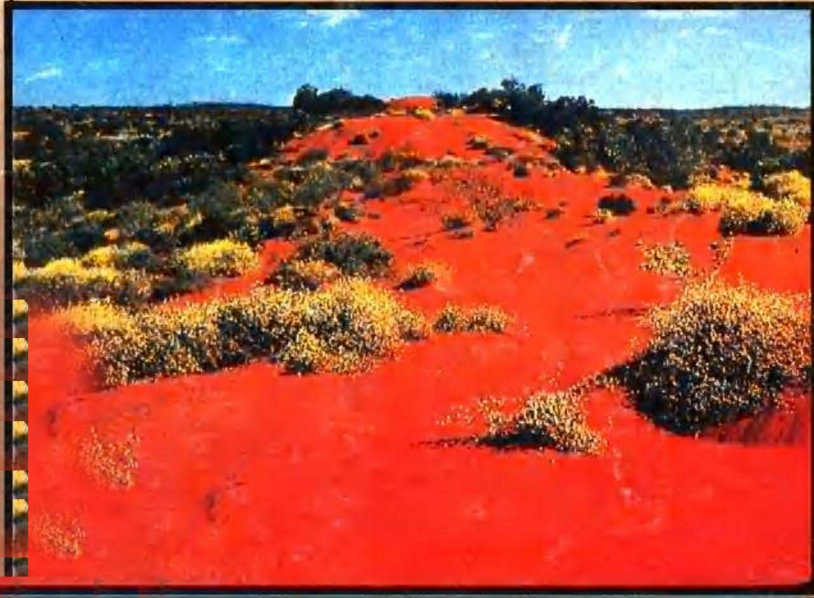


步步高英语系列丛书

Level Four ★★

自然奇观

SURPRISES OF
NATURE



翁燕珩

主编

北京理工大学出版社

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Level Four

Surprises of Nature

自然奇观

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——请读步步高英语系列丛书

《步步高英语系列丛书》是一套快速提高英语阅读能力, 扩大词汇量, 增强英语语感, 从而全面提高英语水平的好书。认真地阅读这套书, 一定会在短期内取得学习英语和使用英语的成功, 长期享用成功的快乐。

这套丛书具有大众性、普及性, 适用于各个不同水平层次的英语学习者。既适用于学生, 又适用于自学者。既适用于中学生, 又适用于大学生。水平偏低的可以用作学习材料, 水平较高的可以用作复习精品。作课内读物很好, 作课外读物亦佳。可精读, 可泛读, 可玩味英语语言之美, 也可领略人类体能和智能的奥妙。

这套丛书专门为非英语国家的人学英语而编, 又有针对中国人阅读理解难点而进行的注释。按照难易程度分为六级, 一级比一级增多 350 个新词和适量的新句型。一级接一级循序而读, 自然而然地由浅入深, 由简到繁, 不知不觉地由低水平上升到高水平, 体现了学习英语的最佳途径和方法。可使读者费力不多, 而收效甚大。

这套丛书内容信息性强, 知识层面广, 读来有趣, 引人入胜, 欲罢不能, 确实是同类书中的上品。因此我诚挚地向广大英语爱好者及有志于掌握英语这一工具的人推荐这套书。

北京师范大学外语系 胡春洞

致 读 者

随着不断的对外开放,人们越来越重视外语学习,各级各类学校对外语教学的要求也越来越高。但是,您是不是也同许多人一样遇到这么一个问题:英语学习多年,单词记了不少,语法也算熟悉,但每当需要用英语进行口头或文字表达时便不知所措,说出来的别人听不懂,写出来的别人看不懂。这主要是对常用词汇和语法缺乏具体感受,对英美文化缺乏一定了解的缘故。由此看来,多读英美国家的作品以增强语感和文化摄入,就显得十分必要了。可是,目前国内出版的选材合理、编排科学,集知识性、趣味性于一体的普及型英语读物实在是太少了。为解广大英语学习者之急需,我们选编了这套《步步高英语系列丛书》。这套丛书有以下几个特点:

取材广泛,内容新颖。这些英美作者的文章,短小精悍,妙趣横生。您从中既可以熟悉常用的词汇和语法,增强语感;又可以撷取大量的文化信息,提高您的阅读理解与表达能力。

分级编排,级级衔接。本丛书分为六级,词汇量分别为350、700……至2100。各级之间紧密衔接,成为一体,在一定程度上填补了目前我国高中与大学英语教学中存在的语言知识“断带”问题。

选词科学,难易适中。本书词汇均来源于《Longman Lexicon of Contemporary English》(《朗曼当代英语词汇》),是根据计算机统计的词频安排的。语法现象也是由易到难,精心设计。读者可以循序渐进,逐步提高。

略加注释,便于阅读。凡文中出现的个别难词、新词、俚

语、短语和比较复杂的语法现象,都略加注释,以免除读者查阅辞典之苦。每篇文章末尾配有练习题,可用以检测您的阅读与理解水平。

本书以国家教委颁布的《九年义务教育全日制初级中学英语教学大纲》初、高中学生应掌握的词汇量为依据,一、二级可供初中学生阅读;三、四级可供高中学生阅读;五、六级可供大专以上的学生阅读。全套书亦可用作英语教学的泛读辅助教材。

愿《步步高英语系列丛书》成为您的朋友!

编者

1993年3月

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Surprises of Nature

1

Telekinesis^①

Imagine this scene: a girl is sitting at a table^② on which there are a lot of matches. The girl puts out her hand and makes circles^③ with it above the matches but she does not touch them at all. In a moment, the matches move closer together. They run across the table and fall off the edge. There are no strings between the girl's hands and the matches. She can also make the matches move when they are covered by a glass jar. Next she sits on a chair two metres away from an egg. The egg is broken into a jar of water. The girl looks hard at the egg for a few moments and the egg begins to separate: the white part moves away from the yolk^④ (yellow part). How can she do this?

There are many similar reports—— of people who can bend spoons (make them change shape) without touching

them; who can repair watches by looking at them; who can make objects move across the room. This power is known as telekinesis.

How can they make an object move without touching it or pulling it with strings? People say that such things are impossible; that it is a very clever trick. But if we had lived a hundred years ago, we would not think it was possible to build a flying machine that could travel faster than sound, or that man could travel to the moon. There are probably still many things that we do not understand about ourselves. Two hundred years ago, people did not know about electricity. Perhaps there are other powers we have not found yet and perhaps these powers will explain things which now seem to be impossible.

The girl (described above) who moved matches was tested with special equipment. It was found that she had a magnetic field[®] around her body which was much more powerful than normal[®]. During the tests, the girl's heart-beat became much faster than normal and her body was in a state of excitement, as if she were angry. Afterwards she was tired and very weak as if she had had a shock or serious illness. So it seems that she used a special energy to move the matches.

There are many things that certain people can do which seem to the rest of us to be impossible. Now let us look at some of these 'Man powers'.

Notes

- ① 遥控能力, 搬运功能。
- ② to sit at a table 坐在一张桌子旁边。to sit at table 坐下吃饭。
- ③ to make circles 划圈。
- ④ yolk 蛋黄。
- ⑤ magnetic field 磁场。
- ⑥ 人们发现她周围的磁场比正常人的要强得多。

Exercises

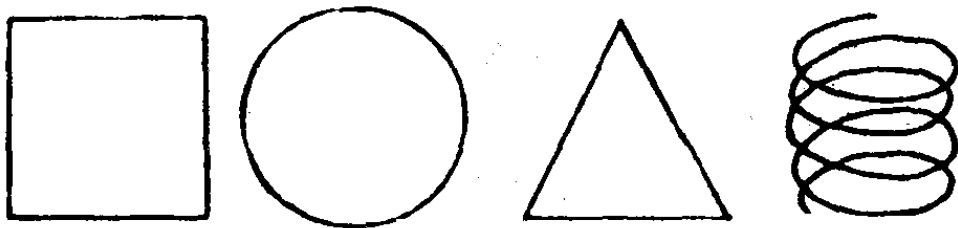
Find the words in the passage which mean the same as the following.

- _____ 1 to set or move apart
- _____ 2 the yellow part of an egg
- _____ 3 to make something change shape
- _____ 4 the power to make an object move without touching it or pulling it with strings
- _____ 5 the state or strong feeling caused by something unexpected and usually very unpleasant
- _____ 6 usual or average
- _____ 7 something done to cheat someone
- _____ 8 of the same kind

2

Man power

In Chapter 1 we looked at the power of telekinesis. There is another kind of power called telepathy^①. People who are telepathic can see things which are not directly in front of their eyes and they do this by reading the thoughts of others. For example, they can describe a picture of an object which someone else is looking at but which they themselves cannot see. A man called Rhine did a lot of tests in the 1930s using a set of 25 cards on which were figures like this:



He tested several telepathic people by placing a screen between himself and the person being tested who had to guess which card he had picked from a set^②. He found that, almost every time, they could say correctly which card he was looking at. Normal people would be correct perhaps five out of twenty-five times^③ but some of the people Rhine tested were right twenty-three out of twenty-five times.

There are many stories of people who have had messages from other people who were many miles away at the time (often members of their family, husbands or wives). This usually happens when the sender of the message^④ is very ill or dying. For example, a wife may see her husband who is away at war in another country. Later, she may discover that he was killed on the same day he appeared to her. This sort of message is especially common between identical twins^⑤. It has been known for the second twin to become ill with the same illness as the first and at the same time, although they may be living many miles apart and may not even know of the other's illness.

The surprising thing about telepathy is that distance is not important. A Russian named Vasiliev tried to find out how people could send messages to each other. He took two people who had the power to do this: one was able to make the other go to sleep whenever he wanted, just by thinking about it.

This may explain witchcraft^⑥ which many people in the world still believe in. They believe that certain people (called witches^⑦ if they are women or sorcerers^⑧—— or sometimes witch-doctors——if they were men) can call on unseen powers^⑨ to bring good or bad to the lives of others. If a witch or sorcerer is angry with someone, this unlucky person may suddenly become ill and die in a few days without reason^⑩.

This may also explain the power of some people to make others do things that they do not really want to do, simply by the power of their ideas^⑩. Great leaders have changed the ideas of large numbers of people and men and women of less importance may also be changing the lives of just a few people around them. Perhaps the reason some people seem to be natural leaders is that they have a power that others do not have; the power to change people's ideas and to make them do what they want them to do.

Even in the classroom it has been shown that a teacher can have the power to make the pupils successful or unsuccessful. In one study a new teacher was told that certain pupils in a class were clever and that others were stupid. In fact, those that were clever were called stupid and those that were stupid were called clever. When the teacher began teaching the class the pupils behaved in the way he expected them to. The stupid ones started to give correct answers and the clever ones answered wrongly. Even in their classroom test results it was found that the pupils had changed as a result of the expectations of the teacher.

Let us now look at a different kind of power which only very few people have; the power to heal^⑪ (that is, to make sick people healthy again) without the use of drugs or any of the tools of modern medicine. This power is known as faith-healing^⑫.

A traveller to Brazil has told of a man who could oper-

ate on people using only a kitchen knife. He said that this surgeon^⑭ was able to cut open the part of the body that was sick without the person showing any sign of pain and without the appearance of blood. After the operation the cut immediately closed without leaving any mark and the now healthy person was able to get up and walk away. Perhaps the appearance of cutting open the body was a trick but the fact that a sick person was made healthy shows that a very unusual power was used.

Usually in faith-healing there is no operation. Healing is brought about^⑮ by the healer laying his hands on the sick part of the body. It may be the patient's belief in the healing power or it may be the faith-healer's power of thought which brings success^⑯. We know that many illnesses are caused by stress^⑰, that is, the problems of modern life, unhappiness, dissatisfaction with conditions and so on. Perhaps faith-healers have the power to take away feelings of stress or unhappiness and can therefore remove the sickness caused by them.

Other people have strange powers over their own bodies. In Tibet, for example, there are people who train themselves not to feel the cold. They live high in the mountains where there is ice and snow all around them and, although they wear nearly nothing and have no heating, they do not become ill as normal people would. Other people in Tibet can run extremely fast over long distances. By training,

they learn to breathe in a special way so that they can run continuously for as long as thirty hours.

We have all heard about Indians who lie on beds of nails. This is not a trick. It is possible, by training over many years, to stop the feeling of pain. It is even possible to train the body to stop the blood flowing. There are stories about Indians who allow themselves to be buried (put into a hole under the ground) while still alive. They may stay there for days before others dig them up again. During this time they hardly breathe and their heart beats very very slowly. They seem to die but can come alive again when they choose¹⁸.

Other people have power over plants. There is a saying in England that some people have 'green fingers'¹⁹. It means that they are very good at making plants grow. Others believe that if they talk to their plants using kind words and a soft voice, they will help them to grow better but if they shout or use bad language they will stop their plants from growing. It is rather difficult to say whether or not this is true. However, some studies have shown that music can affect plants. An American woman student tried playing different kinds of music to plants. When she played classical music²⁰ (Bach²¹ or Beethoven²²), she found that the plants grew towards and around the loudspeakers; but when she played pop music, the plants grew in the opposite direction as if they were trying to escape from it! So if plants like soft

music and not loud music, perhaps they also like the sound of soft voices rather than loud voices.

Another strange power that a few people have is to be able to find water under the ground. This is known as dowsing^② and the man who does it is called a dowser^②. The usual way to do it is to hold a stick in both hands, with the arms out straight in front of the body, and to walk along like the man in the diagram^②. When there is water under the ground, the stick begins to move; to shake or jump in the dowser's hands. This method of finding water is so successful that in many countries dowsers are paid by the Government to do their work.

