

*College English*  
*Reading for Understanding*

# 大学英语阅读理解

第二册

靳梅琳 主编

科学出版社

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## 内 容 简 介

本书是为高等院校学生编写的阅读书籍。本书难度适中,英语专业与非英语专业的学生均可使用。本书取材新颖,内容丰富,收入了反映欧美国家的科技发展、文化习俗、社会问题、环保意识、自然景观、校园生活等方面的文章。这些文章均选自 90 年代英美等国现行的书刊,语言与内容富有现代气息,可以帮助大学生提高阅读理解能力。

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靳梅琳 主编

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# 《大学英语阅读理解》(第二册)

## 编辑委员会

主 编：靳梅琳

副主编：姜宝珩 李靖民

委 员：(以姓氏笔画为序)

冯建昇 孙 静

李靖民 苏会来

吴树良 姜宝珩

崔丽娜 靳梅琳

## 前 言

《大学英语阅读理解》是根据国家教育委员会对高等院校英语教学基础阶段阅读课程的要求而编写的,可供大学英语专业一、二年级学生,理工科院校学习公共英语课程的学生,以及英语四、六级考生使用,亦可作为夜大学学员的阅读教材。

阅读理解在英语学习中占有举足轻重的地位。只有通过大量阅读,才能扩大词汇量,拓展语法知识,掌握现代英语中的习语与成语。阅读理解能力的提高不是一蹴而就的,学习者应当广泛阅读用现代英语写成的各种题材的文章,并反复进行阅读理解训练。没有大量的阅读理解训练,就不可能迅速提高阅读理解能力,也就难以显著提高英语学习效果。

《大学英语阅读理解》共分两册,本书是第二册,共 26 课。每课包括课文、注释、练习、课外阅读材料四部分。课文与课外阅读材料均选自近年来英、美、加出版的书刊原文,内容主要包括科技时文、社会透视、焦点分析、历史回顾等方面。内容新颖,题材多样,信息量大,富有时代气息。本书编写由浅入深,循序渐进,难度适中。练习配套严谨,紧扣课文。本书体现了科学性、知识性、可读性与趣味性。

为了方便读者,书后还附有词汇表,免除使用者查找生词之苦。由于编者水平所限,书中可能存在诸多不尽人意之处,欢迎大家提出意见。

编 者

1997 年 8 月

于天津理工学院科技外语系

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# Lesson One

## TEXT

### **The Computer Society: Business**

No one took to the computer more eagerly or saw its usefulness more quickly than the businessman. Now, 24 years after General Electric became the first company to acquire a computer, these versatile machines have become the galley slaves of capitalism. Without them, the nation's banks would be buried under the blizzard of \$ 35 billion checks that rain down on them annually, and economists trying to project the growth of the nation's \$ 2 trillion economy might as well use Ouija boards. In the airline industry, computers make it possible to reserve a seat on a jumbo jet, pay for it by credit card, and enable the plane itself to fly. In many industries, computers design the products the companies sell. Automakers, for example, use computers to view a prospective new car from any angle; then the computers analyze the market to see if the design will sell.

In fact, the ravenous and growing appetite of U. S. companies for data-processing machines and control devices accounted for a major portion of last year's \$ 41 billion computer business.

Only 15 years ago, IBM was for all practical purposes the computer industry. But the explosive rise in demand has surpassed even IBM's ability to gobble up new orders. Though the company continues to grow at a healthy rate...the nation's other manufacturers of large computers — Control Data, Burroughs, NCR, Honeywell and Sperry Univac — are also booming. Meanwhile, the clamoring demand has created markets for smaller and younger companies that make minicomputers and peripheral equipment, such as data storage facilities and keyboard terminals, to be used with the peripheral big "main frames."

Now the arrival of the miracle chip has given a further boost to an already vital industry. Far from rendering the big computer obsolete, the miracle chip has opened the way for the design of custom-made supercomputers more powerful than anything dreamed possible a few years ago. At the same time, the chips are radically lowering the cost of the minicomputers. These small computers, in turn, are being used for more and more of the routine functions that until recently had to be handled by main frames — at considerable cost to the user.

By spawning new computers in abundance, many industry experts believe, the chips will indirectly give rise to a whole new industry of "software" companies to develop and market the programs that computers need to do their tasks. Explains Richard Melmon, director of marketing for Umtech Corp., a maker of home computers: "No one would buy a stereo hi-fi if he could not also buy records or tapes to play on it, and it's the same with computers. We soon will see the dawn of a whole new kind of publishing industry."

Benjamin Rosen, chief microelectronics analyst for New York's Morgan Stanley investment banking firm, sees the chips as the major technological development of our time. Says he: "It will have more impact on our society in the next 20 years than any other invention."

Though still in its infancy, the miracle chip has already given rise to one of the most astonishingly competitive and fastest growing industries the nation has ever seen. Among the 50 or so companies producing the versatile little devices are some of the nation's largest electronics and computer firms — IBM, Motorola and Texas Instruments, where Computer Scientist Jack Kilby pioneered in developing the integrated circuit, the predecessor of the chip. Also included are a host of brash upstarts that did not even exist ten years ago. Last year's chip sales of \$ 235 million, while still modest compared with the revenues of the entire computer industry, are expected to grow by a startling 50% annually and exceed \$ 800 million by as early as 1981. Behind this remarkable rise are the incredible economies of scale involved in the manufacture of the chips; once the complex and costly task of designing them and preparing them for production has been completed, the price per chip becomes almost exclusively dependent upon how many are sold. As a result, every time cumulative production doubles, the chips decline in price by about 30%. Meanwhile, declining prices stimulate increased sales, and these in turn lead to further price declines. It has been a long time since the inflation — battered American economy has seen a better example of how prices are supposed to behave in a free market. A typical example: in 1971 a Sharp Electronics pocket calculator sold for

\$ 395; today a more sophisticated model retails for \$ 10. 95. With their low cost and versatility, says Mal Northrup, vice president of Rockwell International, the chips are already "turning many present products into buggy whips."

*Challenge to Industry.* Ironically, the industry's prodigious ability to produce the chips is also its Achilles' heel; the danger that chip makers could eventually produce far more and far more powerful chips than the market can absorb is real. By 1985, according to C. Lester Hogan, vice chairman of Fairchild Camera & Instrument Corp., it will be feasible to build a pocket calculator "that will be more powerful than, and almost as fast as," the \$ 9 million Cray-1, built by Cray Research Inc. in Chippewa Falls, Wis., and recognized as the mightiest computer in the world.

Whether or not consumers are able to buy number-crunching beasts of that sort, industry faces an immediate challenge: what to do with the new and more powerful chips entering the market every few months? Warns William Howard, Motorola's director of strategic operations: "Our biggest problem is going to be finding ways of transforming all this innovation into viable products that are simple to use. If all we do is build more and more intricate devices that look and act like computers, we will not have done our job properly."

So far, nearly 85% of the industry's production is winding up in the retail market, mostly in the form of TV games, digital watches and calculators. Though products like these are giving the chip makers the sales volume needed to boost output and cut prices, they are hardly a durable base for a high-technology industry. For long-term growth, the chip makers are looking to-

ward three key areas with huge potential.

## NOTES

1. take to...: adopt as a practice or hobby  
take to gardening when he retires: 退休后, 他对园艺感兴趣  
take to drinking: 喜欢饮酒
2. General Electric: 通用电器公司
3. versatile machines: the machines having various uses
4. ..., the nation's banks would be buried under the blizzard of \$ 35 billion checks...  
Here it means that the nation's banks would have large quantities of checks worth \$ 35 billion.
5. Ouija boards: board lettered with the alphabet, and with other signs to obtain messages said to come from the spirits of the dead
6. ...the ravenous and growing appetite of U. S. companies for data-processing machines...  
...the ravenous and growing appetite: the greedy and strong desire...
7. IBM: International Business Machinery
8. ...gobble up new orders: new orders increase rapidly
9. miracle chip: or silicon chip, a very small piece of silicon containing a set of electronic parts and their connections
10. home-made computers: the underlined part is an adjective

compound with a noun plus a verb past participle form.

More examples:

home-brewed

man-made

well-tailored

self-restrained

11. We soon will see the dawn of a whole new kind of publishing industry.

Here the sentence means that we will see the beginning of a whole new kind of publishing industry.

12. Though still in its infancy, the miracle chip has already given rise to...

In this sentence, the adverbial phrase replaces the adverbial clause.

More examples:

While heating the milk, Lily jotted down a message to John.

Once defeated, we will not be able to win again.

13. Motorola: American No.3 largest electronic corporation.

In 1986, Motorola established a large electronic company in China producing beeper, mobile telephone and battery with a total investment of \$ 1 billion.

14. ...the price per chip becomes almost exclusively dependent upon how many are sold.

Here the sentence means that the price for every silicon chip becomes almost only dependent on the quantity of chips sold.

15. prodigious ability: surprisingly great ability

16. number-crunching beasts: computers that deal with numbers

17. boost output and cut prices: to increase the production and lower the prices

## EXERCISES

### I . Comprehension questions:

1. Who took to computer more eagerly?
2. Why is computer important in modern life?
3. When did IBM start to produce computers?
4. What has the clamoring demand created market for?
5. What has given a further boost to computer industry?
6. What are the largest electronics and computer firms?
7. List specific ways computers are used as identified in the article.
8. What is the miracle chip? How has it affected the computer industry?
9. What is the challenge to computer industry?
10. What is the meaning of the following sentence:  
"Whether or not consumers are able to buy number-crunching beasts of that sort, industry faces an immediate challenge." ?
11. What is nearly 85 % of the industry's production winding up in? And in what forms are the computer chips made?

### II . Circle one answer you think correct out of a, b, c, and d.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ is the first company to acquire a computer.

- a. General Motors                      b. I. B. M.
  - c. N. C. R.                                d. General Electric
2. Each year, the American banks deal with the checks worth \_\_\_\_\_ dollars.
- a. \$ 2 trillion                              b. \$ 37 billion
  - c. \$ 35 billion                              d. \$ 33 billion
3. Which of the following is not the usage mentioned in the passage?
- a. reserve a seat on a jumbo plane
  - b. pay by credit card
  - c. enable the car to run by itself
  - d. analyze the design
4. Which of the following is not listed as the nation's largest manufacturers of computers?
- a. I. B. M.                                      b. Borroughs
  - c. Sperry Univac                              d. Microsoft
5. ... that make minicomputers and peripheral equipment, such as...
- Which of the following words is closest in meaning with the underlined part?
- a. the most important                      b. be of external boundary
  - c. connected                                      d. disconnected
6. Now the arrival of the miracle chip has given a further boost to an already vital industry.
- Which of the following is closest in meaning with the underlined part?
- a. a layer of metal
  - b. a flat plastic object used in some games



- c. a small piece broken off an object
- d. a very small piece of silicon containing a set of electronic parts
7. The miracle chip will indirectly give rise to a whole new industry of \_\_\_\_\_.  
 a. computer                      b. stereo hi-fi  
 c. software                      d. publishing industry
8. Which of the following is not listed as the nation's largest electronics and computer firms?  
 a. Motorola                      b. Texas Instruments  
 c. General Motors              d. I.B.M.
9. Every time the chips production doubles, the chips lower in price by \_\_\_\_\_.  
 a. 50 %              b. 20 %              c. 30 %              d. 80 %
10. Today, a more complicated pocket computer is sold for \_\_\_\_\_.  
 a. \$ 395                              b. \$ 405.95  
 c. \$ 384.05                      d. \$ 10.95

III. Find the full term of the following acronyms of the company names.

G.M.      G.E.      I.B.M.      BMW  
 P&G      UTC      MD      AT&T  
 CNN      BBC      CBS      ABC

IV. Tell how the following initials or acronyms are formed.

radar      laser      maser      AIDS  
 fax      telex      UFO      VIP