

理工科英语阅读小丛书

3

清华大学外语系 选编
第一英语教研组



FURTHER COMPREHENSION
AND PRECIS PIECES

简易短文选

清华大学出版社

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内 容 提 要

本丛书第三册选自英国著名教材编写者希尔(L.A.Hill)和费尔登(R. D. S. Fielden)为外国学生编写的阅读理解读物。共有短文三十篇, 每篇约有二百到五百词。本书题材广泛多样, 语言活泼, 实用性强, 适合我国具有一定英语基础的非英语专业学生作课外阅读之用。书中难懂之处, 酌作注释。书后附有总词汇表, 约有 400 个单词。

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前 言

在理工科大学的英语教学中，我们常常感到如何提高学生的阅读能力是一个不太容易解决的难题。现有的精读教材，由于篇幅和内容的限制，词汇量往往偏窄，各种语言现象的出现和重复受到极大的影响，不利于培养学生的阅读能力。

学习外语必须通过实践，而阅读能力的培养和提高就更有必要通过大量的阅读实践；有了这种实践，才能积累和扩大词汇量，巩固已掌握的语言知识，并在此基础上，进一步学习一些新的习惯表示法；从而提高阅读速度，增强理解力。为此，我们编选了一套理工科大学生英语阅读小丛书。在选材方面，我们尽量考虑到内容的知识性、科学性和趣味性。语言力求生动活泼、清新明快，简洁易懂。每册书后附有总词汇表，以利查阅和记忆。对某些难点作了适当的注释。本丛书总共有十册，包括传记、小品、科普文选以及有关工程技术方面的文章。

本丛书第三册由李相崇教授审阅，黄淑琳同志注释。在此，我们表示深深的谢意。

由于我们水平有限，时间仓促，缺乏经验，缺点和错误在所难免，热切希望得到广大读者的批评和指正。

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1 AEROPLANES

Man's *natural home*¹ is the land, but many thousands of years ago he learnt how to travel on the sea—in fact boats are older than anything built for land transport.

Travel on the sea was not a very difficult problem, ⑤ since wood, which can be found in most places near the sea, floats easily on water. But travel through the air was quite a different matter, since men *knew of nothing*² which could at the same time float in the air and carry a man's weight. For centuries, therefore, flying remained ⑩ only a dream. *In Ancient Greek times*³, there is the story of two men who escaped from an island *by sticking wings made of feathers on to themselves with wax*⁴. (Unfortunately, we are **told**, one of them flew too near the sun, and the wax **melted**, so that he *fell to his death*⁵ ⑮ in the sea.) Then we have the plans of *Leonardo da Vinci*⁶, *the Renaissance*⁷ Italian artist and engineer, as a further example of Man's interest in flying. But *it was not until rather recent times that*⁸ the great dream became a fact. ②

First, man made use of the fact that hot air rises to make a light balloon carry people up a short distance above the ground. Then gases lighter than air were used



in place of ⁹ hot air, and in the 1870-71 war between France and Prussia ¹⁰ a balloon was used by a Frenchman to fly out of Paris when the Prussians were all round it.

But balloons *had the disadvantage of having to go* ⑤ *wherever the wind blew them*¹¹, so that one never knew where they would come down. It was not until the petrol engine was invented that this difficulty could be overcome. During the 1914-18 war, early aeroplanes, made of wood and canvas and *armed with an ordinary* ⑩ *machine-gun each* ¹², were used by both sides. Great progress was made in knowledge about flying as a result of the needs of the war, so that the years between 1918 and the beginning of the Second World War in 1939 saw an extraordinary development of aeroplanes, which ⑮ increased greatly in size, strength, speed and safety.

For thousands of years man *dreamt what seemed impossible dreams about flying*¹³; and then suddenly, in the short space of fifty years¹⁴, aeroplanes were invented and developed into one of the most important means ②① of transport and instruments of war, without which the atom-bomb might never have been thought of.

(About 410 words.)

QUESTIONS

1. Answer the following questions using short-form answers wherever possible.

(a) Why did one of the Greeks who were trying to fly fall into the sea?

(b) Who was Leonardo da Vinci?

(c) What was a balloon used for during the war between France and Prussia in 1870?

(d) What were the early planes made of?

2. Give brief answers to the following questions using ONE COMPLETE sentence for each. Use your own words as far as possible, but your answer must be based only on the information in the piece.

(a) Why was it not difficult for men to be able to travel on the sea?

(b) Why was it hard to discover how to travel through the air?

(c) What was the disadvantage of flying in a balloon?

(b) What reasons does the author give for the extraordinary development of aeroplanes between 1918 and 1939?

Notes

1. 本土。

2. 不知道有什么东西。

3. 在古希腊时代。

4. by + 动名词短语 (sticking...with wax) 作状语。说明如何从岛上逃出来。可译为“用蜡将用羽毛制成的翅膀粘贴在身上”。

5. 摔死了。

6. 达·芬奇 (1452—1519) ——意大利文艺复兴时期的 艺术家、工程师、科学家。
7. 文艺复兴, 指欧洲 14—16 世纪的文艺复兴运动。
8. 一直到近代。这是强调句中被强调的部分, 是全句中的状语。
9. 代替。
- 10 普鲁士 (德国北部的一个古王国)
- 11 have to “不得不”, 由于放在介词后需要用动名词形式; 连词 wherever “无论到哪里”, 引导一个状语从句说明 to go。译为“有风把它吹到哪儿就飘到哪儿的缺点”。
- 12 每架飞机上装配有一挺普通的机枪。
- 13 what 引导的从句作 dreamt 的宾语。“做着似乎不可能实现的飞行之梦。”
- 14 在短短的五十年中。

2 THE BEST AGE TO BE¹

How often one hears children wishing they were grown up², and old people wishing they were young again. Each age has its pleasures and its pains, and the happiest person is the one who enjoys what each age gives him without wasting his time in useless regrets.

Childhood is a time when there are few responsibilities to make life difficult³. If a child has good parents, he is fed, looked after and loved, whatever he may do. It is improbable that he will ever again in his life be given so much without having to do anything in return⁴. In addition⁵, life is always presenting new things to the child—things that have lost their interest for older people because they are too well-known. A child finds pleasure in playing in the rain, or in the snow. His first visit to the seaside is a marvellous adventure. But a child has his pains: he is not so free to do as he wishes⁶ as he thinks older people are; he is continually being told not to do things, or being punished for what he has done wrong. His life is therefore not perfectly happy.

When the young man starts to earn his own living⁷,

he becomes *free from*⁸ the discipline of school and parents; but at the same time he is forced to accept responsibilities. He can *no longer*⁹ expect others to pay for his food, his clothes, and his room, but has to work if he wants to live comfortably. If he spends most of his^⑤ time *playing about*¹⁰ *in the way that he used to as a child*¹¹, he will *go hungry*¹². And if he *breaks the laws*¹³ of society as he used to break the laws of his parents, he may go to prison. If, however, he works hard, *keeps out of trouble*¹⁴ and has good health, he can have the^⑩ great happiness of seeing himself make steady progress in his job and of *building up for himself his own position in society*¹⁵.

Old age has always been thought of as the worst age to be; but it is not necessary for the old to be unhappy.^⑮ With old age should come wisdom and the ability to help others with advice wisely given. The old can have the joy of seeing their children making progress in life; they can watch their grandchildren growing up around them; and, perhaps best of all, they can, if their life has^⑳ been a useful one, feel the happiness of having come through the battle of life safely and of having reached a time when they can *lie back*¹⁶ and rest, leaving others to continue the fight.

(About 350 words.)

②⑤

QUESTIONS

Give brief answers to the following questions using **ONE COMPLETE** sentence for each. Use your own words as far as possible, but your answer must be based only on the information in the piece.

- (a) What kind of person is the happiest according to the author?
- (b) What things are mentioned that the child enjoys very much?
- (c) What may happen if the young man breaks the law?
- (d) What are the pleasures of old people?

Notes

- 1. 最佳年龄。
- 2. one, (任何) 一个人。wishing 作 children 的补足语, 它后面的宾语从句用虚拟语气, 表示不可能实现的事实。
“人们常听孩子们说希望他们(自己)快快长大”。
- 3. 没有什么负担, 不会造成生活困苦。
- 4. 他一生中不再可能出现只受照顾, 而自己却不必干什么来作为报答的情况了。in return 作为回报。
- 5. 此外。
- 6. 不能随心所欲地想干什么就干什么。
- 7. 自己谋生。
- 8. 不受……的约束, 摆脱……。

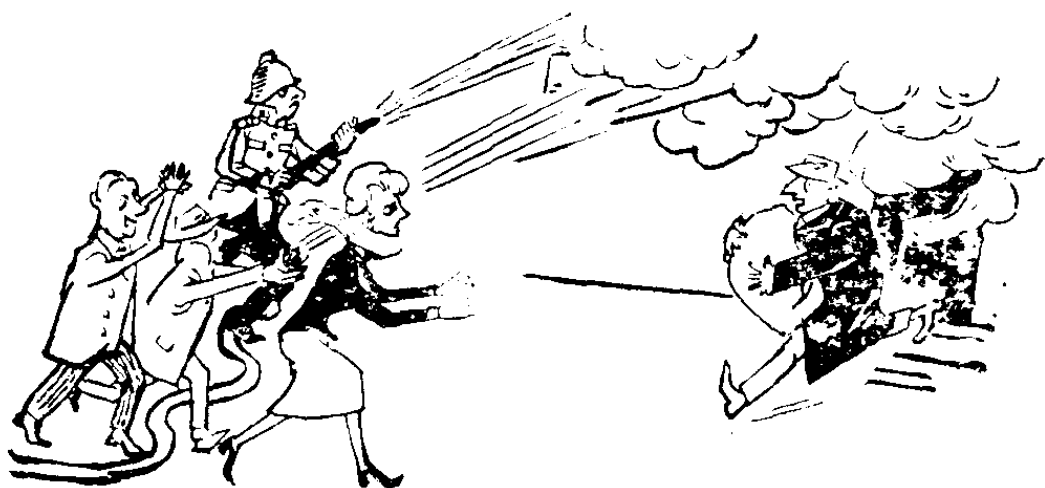
9. 不再。
10. 到处玩耍。
11. 就象他小时候那样。
12. 挨饿。
13. 犯法。
14. 没有烦恼。
15. 在社会上逐步获得一定的地位。build up 逐步树立。
16. 仰卧，休息。

3 THE HERO

“Fire! Fire!” What terrible words to hear when one wakes up in a strange house in the middle of the night! It was a large, old, wooden house—*the sort that burns beautifully*¹ — and my room was on the top floor. I ⑤ *jumped out of bed*², opened the door and *stepped out into the passage*³. It was full of thick smoke.

I began to run, but as I was still only half-awake, instead of going towards the stairs I went *in the opposite direction*⁴. The smoke grew thicker and I could see ⑩ *flames all around*⁵. The floor became hot under my bare feet. I found an open door and ran into a room to get to the window. But before I could reach it, one of my feet *caught in something soft*⁶ and I fell down. The thing I had fallen over *felt like a bundle of clothes*⁷, and ⑮ I picked it up to protect my face from the smoke and heat. Just then the floor *gave way*⁸ under me and I *crashed to the floor below*⁹ with pieces of burning wood all around me.

I saw a flaming doorway in front, put the bundle ⑳ *over my face* and ran. My feet burned me terribly, but I got through. As I reached the cold air outside, my



bundle of clothes gave a thin cry. I nearly dropped it in my surprise. Then I saw a crowd gathered in the street. A woman in a night-dress¹⁰ and a borrowed man's coat screamed as she saw me and came running madly. ⑤

"My baby! My baby!" she cried. The crowd *cheered wildly*¹¹ as she took the *smoke-blackened bundle*¹² out of my arms. I had some difficulty in recognizing her. She was the Mayor's wife, and I had saved her baby. I was a hero! ⑩

(About 300 words.)

QUESTIONS

Give brief answers to the following questions using ONE COMPLETE sentence for each. Use your own words as far as possible, but your answer must be based only on the information in the piece.