

下册

新编英语阅读

董启明 潘炳信 主编
胡壮麟 审校



世界图书出版公司

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主 编：董启明 潘炳信

副主编：任 强 高志怀 王 琪 李树学 项平锐

编 委：(按姓氏笔划顺序排列)

尹丽娟 王 琪 任 强 李 霞 高志怀

高桂香 董启明 翟福娟 潘炳信 谢来顺

前 言

《新编英语阅读》是为高等院校英语专业学生、夜大学学生、函授生及广大的英语学习者编写的泛读教材，分上、下两册。本书对准备参加托福考试、全国英语水平考试、商务英语证书考试的考生和具有相应水平的英语自学者在扩大词汇量、提高阅读技巧、扩大知识面以及增加对英美国家的了解等方面均有助益和参考价值。

本教材（除个别文学性题材的文章）均选自 80 年代和 90 年代的新材料，体现了教材的时代特征。课文内容涉及面广，集知识性、教育性、新颖性和趣味性于一体。文化、教育、科技、商贸、语言、政治、文学、风土人情、人物传记、动物与植物、宗教故事、百科知识等内容的课文均按较合理的比例收入本教材。

本教材的结构按课前问题、课文正文（多数分为 A，B 两篇）、课文注释、词汇表、练习的顺序编排，便于教师讲解和学生自学。练习一般分为阅读理解性练习、判断性练习和综合性问题三种。每单元的最后是“速读”部分，包括课文和回答问题。学生要在规定的时间内读完课文并回答课后的问题，以提高快速阅读能力。

在本教材的编写过程中，我们参考了大量国内外有关的英文资料，如论著、教材、学术杂志、英文报纸等。在此，我们谨向这些资料的编者表示感谢。

北京大学胡壮麟教授对本书的编写十分关心，在百忙之中抽出时间予以审订；杨永林博士、封宗信博士通读了书稿并提出修

改意见，在此特向他们表示诚挚的谢意。

另外，在编写过程中，我们一直受到河北省教委、省高校外语教学研究会、河北师大外语系等单位有关领导的大力支持；在河北师范大学外语系任教的美国专家 Timothy Taylor 博士和 Isabella Nota 博士仔细阅读了书稿，对文字作了润色，在此一并向他们表示感谢。河北师大外语系的李春燕、黄丽珍、李文丽三位同志承担了本教材的微机文字录入工作，我们对她们的辛勤劳动亦表示真诚的感谢。

由于编者水平有限，加之时间仓促，教材中难免存在疏漏、不妥乃至错误之处，希望各位专家、学者、同仁及使用本教材的广大师生批评指正，以便再版时修正。

编者

1998 年 1 月于河北师范大学

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Unit 1

New Year's Day¹

You should be able to answer the following questions after the first reading of the passage:

1. How did New Year's Day come into being? Say something about the history of New Year's Day.
2. List some Old World traditional customs on New Year's Day.
3. According to the text people may choose different places to see the old year out; please describe in turn how they celebrate the New Year's Day in restaurants, in Time's Square and at churches.
4. What are the typical American traditions on New Year's Day?
5. How do people in Pasadena, California hold the oldest and largest pageants of the New Year?

January 1

"Happy New Year!"

"The same to you, and many more." The familiar greeting heard throughout the United States on January the First has a

counterpart in every land. The words may be different and the dates may vary, but new year greetings everywhere express the hope for renewed life and happiness.

Down through history, primitive and civilized peoples alike have celebrated the coming of a new year. For ancient peoples dependent upon the land, time revolved about the seasons. A new year began for the Egyptians when the life-giving waters of the Nile River² overflowed their banks, and the early Britons counted from the first day of spring, as did the Romans. To this day some countries begin their year with the vernal equinox.

As civilization advanced, a calendar based on the seasons was no longer practical, and in 45 B. C. the Roman Emperor Julius Caesar³ ordered the adoption of a calendar which would correlate the civil and the astronomical years. The Romans arbitrarily chose January 1 as the first day of the year and so it has remained in all parts of the Western world⁴, even though the Gregorian calendar⁵, in general use since 1582, altered the division of the months. Present day New Year's customs also perpetuate many Old World traditions.

January, which derives its name from Janus⁶, the Roman god of beginnings, endings, openings and closings, appropriately symbolizes the theme of leaving the old for the new. When we see the old year out and noisily welcome the new one, we are following the ancient tradition of burying the past and frightening away demons that might threaten the future. The modern reveler who blows toy horns or turns on the factory siren is erasing past mistakes or failures with a noisy final gesture. And when he hurls confetti to the winds, whistles and houts, he is showing his joyous expectancy for the new year. Father Time⁷, always shown as a very old man

with a long white beard carrying a scythe, is ceremoniously ushered out, and the round fat cherub, symbolizing the new year redolent with hope, is welcomed amid wild cheers.

Whether the New Year's Eve party is in a luxurious hotel ballroom or in a modest home, it will be gay, noisy and glittery. The music will be loud and carefree, and there will be bright coors, festive foods, and high good spirits to make this last night of the year one of fun and frivolity. At celebrations in restaurants, clubs and shipboard salons, guests are given silly paper hats and noisemakers and as the evening goes on no one remains a stranger. At midnight everyone joins hands and sings, "We'll take a cup of kindness yet, for Auld Lang Syne⁸."

Preparation for the party includes planning what one will wear. If it is a formal affair, men will wear tuxedos and the ladies will put on their most elegant gowns. And even small parties mean "dressing up"⁹. But if it is a masked ball, "dressing up" takes another form. The guests vie for the most original, exotic, humorous or appealing costume. Hidden behind a mask or domino, dignity and care are cast aside, and not until unmasking at midnight must the party-goers discard the illusion of their changed personalities.

Not everyone goes to a party, but almost everyone makes an occasion of New Year's Eve. A favorite place to see the old year out is New York City's Times Square¹⁰. Thousands of New Yorkers and tourists crowd this famous spot (at the intersection of Broadway and Seventh Avenue) and crane their necks to watch for "Happy New Year" to flash across the electronically controlled sign tract that circles the Allied Chemical Tower¹¹. When the moment arrives bedlam breaks forth. Bells ring, whistles blow, people cheer with

unrestrained exuberance.

This chaotic scene is repeated in public squares throughout the country, but not at the same moment. Because of the four time zones in the United States the New Year comes to the Central States one hour later, to the Mountain States two hours later, and finally to the Western States three hours after the Eastern States have noisily said good-bye to another year. So by following the radio and television broadcasts everyone can enjoy the festivities in other parts of the country as well as their own.

Some people prefer to see the old year out at a church service. Although the holiday does not have religious origin, churches of many denominations and faiths hold "Watch Night¹²" services on New Year's Eve. Practices differ among the religions but most of these late evening services include a period of quiet meditation, perhaps a short talk, prayers and hymn singing. The spirit is one of sobriety, joyous renewal and of rededicatin to the principles of the faith.

Then with the arrival of the pristine new year, thoughts turn to the future — a future viewed optimistically and hopefully. Greeting cards and spoken messages convey wishes for health, wealth and long life. A new year allows a fresh start and New Year's resolutions abound.

Grown-ups and children alike enthusiastically vow to get rid of their bad habits and resolve to lead better lives. Children are apt to write down their resolutions with solemn ceremony:

"I resolve to stop teasing my sister."

"I resolve to save part of my allowance."

"I resolve to hang up my clothes before I go to bed." To show

their seriousness they sign their names and deliver the paper to a parent for safekeeping. Adults make equally ambitious resolutions:

“I resolve to stop smoking.”

“I resolve to lose weight.”

“I resolve to learn a new language.” Despite the sincerity of the resolutions, no one seems surprised that the determination to “turn over a new leaf” disappears before the new year is well started.

Just as each person takes year-end stock of his individual progress and needs, business and government leaders also evaluate prospects for national and international affairs. Political analysts summarize the past and predict future trends, and printed charts to show the state of the economy. Authorities in every field broadcast “wrap ups¹³” of the year’s events, and with characteristic new year spirit they predict greater things to come.

Although New Year’s traditions in the United States stem from as many cultures as do the people themselves, they have gradually assumed a typical American flavor. The giving of gifts, for instance, an important part of Roman and Old English tradition, has all but disappeared. Instead, New Year’s cards are exchanged among friends and relatives, and commercial firms combine greetings with advertisement of their products by distributing calendars and small trinkets. There are, of course, notable survivals still followed in their original form. Two of the most cherished came from Scotland: toasting from the wassail bowl and the ever-popular song, “Auld Lang Syne.”

The custom of visiting friends, relatives and neighbors on New Year’s Day is one of the Old World¹⁴ traditions that has taken on a new form in the United States. It is called the Open House¹⁵.

Officially inaugurated by George Washington during his first term as president, it is now as much a part of New Year's Day as floral parades and football games. On January 1, 1789, President Washington first opened the doors of his official residence, then in Philadelphia, to all who wished to come. Then, when the capital was moved to the Federal City¹⁶ in 1800 the White House became the scene of the annual open house. Over the years the occasion grew increasingly elaborate. The vice-president and his wife and the cabinet members and their wives were added to the receiving line, and sumptuous food and patriotic music created an atmosphere of elegant conviviality. This White House tradition came to an end with the presidency of Franklin D. Roosevelt¹⁷, whose physical handicap prevented him from standing, but the Open House is still a very popular way for clubs, civic organizations and individuals to observe the holiday.

An open house is just what the name implies: the front door is left open, inside there is a spirit of relaxed cordiality, and guests are free to arrive and leave when they like. Invitations may say simply, "Drop in after the game." or "Come drink a New Year's toast with us." At a large party, and most of them are large, guests serve themselves from festive buffet tables laden with cold roast beef, turkey and ham (along with cranberry sauce and other holiday specialties), a chafing dish of tiny meat balls or a cheese fondue, and platters of decorative and delicious hors d'oeuvres. They meet new friends, greet old ones, and drink repeated toasts from the punch bowl.

Americans love parades and nowhere more than in the New Year's Day spectacles do we note remnants of medieval pageantry.

Lively music, fine horsemanship, and athletic finesse create an excitement clearly reminiscent of the Roman circus. Chariot races were even a part of the early Tournaments of Roses¹⁸. First the glitter and drama of the colorful parade and then the football stadium becomes the arena for the cheering crowds.

At New Year's Day most of the United States is blanketed in cold winter weather, but in California and the Southern States January is generally fair and mild. Gardens are in full bloom, the citrus crops ripen, and balmy weather invites outdoor recreation. The now famous New Year's parades and Bowl games have grown up in this atmosphere. Their names typify the region; Pasadena¹⁹, California, has its Tournament of Roses and Rose Bowl²⁰ game; in Miami²¹, Florida, it is the Orange Bowl; at Dallas²², Texas, the Cotton Bowl; and at New Orleans, Louisiana, the Sugar Bowl. Recently, two more have appeared: the Gator (alligator) Bowl at Jacksonville, Florida, and the Sun Bowl at El Paso, Texas.

The Tournament of Roses is the oldest and largest of the New Year's pageants. From a small village celebration started some 75 years ago when members of the Valley Hunt Club decorated their surreys with flowers to celebrate the ripening of the oranges, it has grown into an internationally renowned event. Three and a half million spectators line the Pasadena streets and another 70 million television viewers watch miles of flower-bedecked floats transform the city into a make-believe world of beauty and imagination. Each year there are 50 or 60 floats made entirely of live flowers, mostly from Southern California, although some are shipped in from the Netherlands²³, Africa and Hawaii. Some depict storybook characters, others suggest the sponsor's hallmark, and some

represent abstract ideas. Exotic figures from the Arabian Nights²⁴ and such fabulous personages as Jack and the Bean Stalk²⁵ enchant the children as well as their parents. Giant flowercovered animals bow to the onlookers and mysteriously articulate, "Happy New Year, " while at gardenia-encrusted world revolves slowly above a platform where marigolds spell out PEACE; and the float carrying the Citrus Queen²⁶ sprays orange scented perfume along the parade route.

Preparation for the New Year's parades and games represents a year-long effort. Themes, floats and entertainment are planned far in advance and teams of professionals spend months creating the floats. The queens and their courts are usually elected from college student bodies, and before they mount their flowery thrones they are presented at gala coronation balls.

Several days before the old year ends the city of Pasadena suspends all other activities and devotes itself to the Tournament of Roses. Special committees arrange accommodations for the thousands of visitors to already populous southern California, and by New Year's Eve the parade fans are setting up their locations along the parade route. There they camp until the parade passes the following day.

As the last floats pass by, the crowds are beginning to move toward the football stadium. The Rose Bowl game, the most eagerly awaited sports contest of the year, matches the winner of the "Big Ten"²⁷ with a representative of the Pacific Coast Conference²⁸ chosen by the Intercollegiate Conference Committee²⁹ unofficially assisted by every sports writer in the country and innumerable partisan fans.

Marching bands in trim uniforms keep the crowd entertained