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3

快速阅读

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新 思 路

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为适应我国高等教育发展的新形势,推动大学英语教学改革,提高大学英语教学质量,培养符合新时期国家和社会发展需要的合格人才,教育部于2004年初颁布了《大学英语课程教学要求(试行)》(以下简称《课程要求》),作为全国各高校实施大学英语教学的重要依据。

为了便于各高校确定教学目标并组织教学,《课程要求》将“培养学生的英语综合应用能力”作为我国大学英语教学的总体目标,并将大学英语教学的具体要求分为三个层次:一般要求、较高要求和更高要求。每个层次都对学生的英语快速阅读能力做出了具体规定。在一般要求层次,《课程要求》规定,“在快速阅读篇幅较长、难度略低的材料时,阅读速度达到每分钟100个单词。能基本读懂国内英文报刊,掌握中心意思,理解主要事实和有关细节。能读懂工作、生活中常见的应用文体的材料。能在阅读中使用有效的阅读方法。”

教育部2005年9月下旬公布了大学英语四、六级考试改革的新题型,2006年又进行了修订。改革后的大学英语四、六级考试增加了快速阅读理解测试,快速、准确地获取信息是测试的重点。

依据《课程要求》的总体目标和具体规定,结合大学英语四、六级考试的最新要求,我们组织了大批多年在教学一线的大学英语教师,精心编写了这套《新思路大学英语快速阅读》,以期通过长期、系统的快速阅读实践循序渐进地提高大学生的英语快速阅读水平,从而提高他们的英语综合应用能力。

《新思路大学英语快速阅读》全套分为四册,达到了《课程要求》规定的一般要求层次对于快速阅读的具体要求。全套教材在选材长度、题型设计和阅读速度等方面参考了《课程要求》和大学英语四、六级考试快速阅读理解测试的相关要求,以帮助学生培养对英语文章阅读的兴趣,熟悉题型,逐渐提高英语快速阅读能力。

《新思路大学英语快速阅读》全套教材的编写融科学性、系统性与创新性于一体。全书创造性地以主题为基本的编写单元,从一名大学生的视角设计了从入学直至大学毕业可能经历的大学学习和生活的方方面面。选材贴近中国大学生的生活,注重趣味性和知识性,信息性和创新性,题材广泛,内容丰富,涉及语言、文化、文学、科普、体育、科技、法律、管理、社会焦点等方面。此外,教材还选取了应用文体裁的文章。全套教材四册的编写遵循了由易到难、由浅到深的基本原则,阅读文章的长度从第一册的300至500词逐渐过渡到第四册的1300词左右,难度不高于《大学英语精读》的系列教材。

本书为《新思路大学英语快速阅读》系列教材的第3级。全书共12单元,每单元由4篇阅读短文组成,涉及的主题包括经济生活、婚姻家庭、法律、人物、建筑、娱乐、热点追踪、国家地理、社会、环境、时势政治、文学艺术等12项。所选短文长度约1000词左右,

生词不超过短文词汇总量的3%，练习形式主要为选择题、判断题、回答问题和补全信息，建议标准阅读速度为每分钟120词。

本书在编写过程中，参考了大量期刊杂志和网络资料，在此，向这些著作的作者们深表感谢。同时，囿于水平，书中错漏在所难免，敬请广大读者和同仁不吝指正。

编者

2009年3月

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Passage 1

Taxes in America

In the United States, when you get your *paycheck* (薪水) at the end of the first pay period at a new job, it's always interesting to see your net pay. Most of us expect more than we get. By the time you get your check, it has been cut up like a pizza, with several entities taking a piece of the pie. The entities that take money differ from person to person, company to company and state to state. However, almost every income earner has to pay federal income tax.

Taxes in Early America

Taxes have always left a sour taste in the mouth of American citizens. This national hatred for taxes dates back to the tax burden placed on the American colonies by Great Britain. Colonists were taxed for every consumer goods, from tea and tobacco to legal documents. This "taxation without representation" led to many revolts, such as the Boston Tea Party, in which colonists dumped tea into the Boston Harbor rather than pay the tax on it.

Although the American colonists fought for independence from British rule and British taxes, once the United States

government formed, its main source of *revenue* (税收) was derived from the same items that were taxed by Great Britain. In 1812, in an effort to support an expensive war effort, the U.S. government *imposed* (征税, 强加) the first sales tax, which was placed on gold, silverware, jewelry and watches.

In 1863, the federal government collected the first income tax. This *graduated tax* (累进税) was similar to the income tax we pay today. Those who earned \$600 to \$10,000 per year paid at a rate of 3 percent. A higher rate was paid by those who earned in excess of \$10,000. Five years later, in 1872, the national income tax was *abolished* (废止) altogether.

Inspired by the Populist Party's 1892 campaign, Congress passed the Income Tax Act of 1894. The income tax was short-lived, as the U.S. Supreme Court struck it down only a year after it was passed. The justices wrote that, in their opinion, the income tax was *unconstitutional* (违反宪法的) because it failed to *abide by* (遵守) a constitutional guideline. This guideline required that any tax *levied* (征

收) directly on individuals must be levied in proportion to a state's population.

In 1913, the income tax became a permanent part of the U.S. government. Congress avoided the constitutional roadblock mentioned above by passing a constitutional amendment. The 16th Amendment reads, "the Congress shall have power to lay and collect taxes on incomes, from whatever source derived, without *apportionment* (分摊) among the several states, and without regard to any *census* (人口普查) or *enumeration* (调查)." ."

Alternative Tax Ideas: Flat Tax or National Sales Tax

Since the 16th amendment was passed in 1913, there has been no shortage of people proposing new tax systems since then. If you follow presidential campaigns, there are usually talks from some of the candidates on revising the tax system. Here's a quick look at two of these alternative tax plans.

The Flat Tax

We currently use a graduated tax, in which the percentage you pay in taxes varies based on your income. Under a flat tax system, you pay a flat rate on your income. In other words, there is a single tax *bracket* (分类) for all taxpayers. A common percentage thrown out for a flat-tax system is 17 percent. This is the rate proposed by former presidential candidate

Steve Forbes and U.S. Representative Dick Armey.

Supporters of a flat-tax system say that it would do away with the complicated tax code and tax forms. You would merely add up wage, salary and pension income, subtract any personal *allowances* (津贴, 补助) and pay 17 percent of your taxable income.

Critics of the flat tax say that it would favor the wealth and could put a higher tax burden on those who make less money. Under Dick Armey's proposed flat tax, the group who would benefit the most is wealthy Americans who now pay upward of 33 percent in federal income tax.

The National Sales Tax

Even more controversial than the flat tax is the idea of abolishing the federal income tax entirely by abolishing the 16th amendment. In place of an income tax, some propose the use of a national sales tax. Alan Keyes, who ran unsuccessfully for the 2000 Republican presidential nomination, is one of the biggest supporters of doing away with a federal income tax. Keyes has argued that a national sales tax would put more money back into the pockets of the consumers, letting them decide how to spend their own money.

Opponents have said that replacing the income tax with a national sales tax would put a heavy burden on the less

wealthy, who buy a lot of the products that would be taxed. Another problem facing a national sales tax is that it would probably double the current taxes on consumer goods, and could force local and state governments to initiate or increase state income taxes.

Taxes are a bitter subject in almost every country. America has one of the

most complicated tax systems in the world, and it grows more complex every year. In the end, whether you agree with paying taxes or not, you probably have April 15 circled on your calendar, embedded in your brain and on your list of dreaded days.

(979 words)

Comprehension Exercise

For each of the following statements, put a **T** in the blank if the statement is true or an **F** if it is false.

- _____ 1. In history, Great Britain placed heavy tax burden on the American colonists.
- _____ 2. The United States government imposed the first national income tax as early as in 1812.
- _____ 3. The income tax became a permanent part of the federal government because Congress passed an amendment in 1913.
- _____ 4. The tax system in the United States has long been a campaign issue in the presidential elections.
- _____ 5. The critics of the flat tax system argue that the wealthy people in the United States would be most benefited rather than people with low income.
- _____ 6. The national sales tax was opposed by former presidential candidate Alan Keyes.
- _____ 7. With the development of the society, American tax system has become less complicated.

Passage 2

Chinese Tourism Market

A Japanese travel agency recently got approval from the Chinese authorities to set up a totally foreign-funded company in China, the first of its kind so far. What does it mean? Is it a challenge or chance for local companies to compete with increasing power?

China boasts a large population and vast geographical areas. They are natural *catalysts* (催化剂) for the development of its tourism industry. The recent few years have seen a boom in this sector with a trend of cooperation among different countries. It resulted from *fluidity* (流动性), one feature of the tourism industry, as well as ongoing economic globalization. Thanks to China's opening-up policies, the tourism sector is being turned into a *vanguard* (先锋) in helping the country make further economic progress.

Some experts point out that China is expected to open its *outbound* (出境的) travel business to foreign-funded enterprises within two years. They believe that the development of China's tourism market will help the recovery of the world's tourism industry. Given the accelerated

process toward a more open policy and environment, local travel services should be prepared. Competition for even small pieces of the tourist pie will be fierce.

In mid July this year, an official Chinese delegation paid a visit to Japan. The main goal of the trip was to further promote bilateral cooperation in the tourism sector. The most substantial and attractive gift is the government's approval for one Japanese travel agency to set up its solely funded company in China. And it came much earlier than the country's commitment to the WTO required.

"For the professionals in the Chinese tourism sector, the inflow of foreign capital is not a fresh or a frightening matter. They have already been used to such things. However, we have to face the impact of the establishment of solely foreign-funded travel agencies in China on the local enterprises and the tourism sector. From the positive perspective, a foreign-funded company can introduce some new methods of management, for instance, the overall operation of a travel agency, the organization of its client source, as well as

the exploitation and management of the internal human resources. Furthermore, it can offer quality services to the mass market,” said Wu Bihu, professor of Peking University.

Given the ever more open policy laid out by China for its tourism sector, Jalpak International Corporation becomes the early and lucky bird to get the benefit. *Affiliated* (附属的) with the Japan Airlines Group, the company to be set up in Beijing will have some 600,000 U.S. dollars in registered capital and will focus on *inbound* (入境的) travel in China. Last year, Jalpak brought 25,000 tourists to China through its Beijing office. With an expected schedule by year end, it will organize many more Japanese tour groups to China and take a bigger share in the country’s tourism market. However, many people will be wondering whether this foreign company will cause big *ripples* (波动) in the comparatively open sector in China.

As the Chinese tourism market expands at high speed, a good environment is being created to further drive its development. The process of inbound and outbound travel is becoming more simple for the convenience of tourists. More products in the tourism sector are coming forward to meet the increasing demand from both the domestic market and abroad. Accompanying the market expansion, fiercer competition is unfolding in

waves. The green light to allow the setup of foreign-funded travel agencies now shines brightly in the eyes of the local companies and demands their attention.

The local travel agencies do have their own advantages in the competition with their foreign competitor, for example, their familiarity with the country’s geographic conditions and human characteristics. However, compared with the sustainable strength of many big foreign companies, the local ones have a lot to catch up. Fortunately, there is time left, though it is limited.

“Before the foreign enterprises enter China, they have conducted thorough market research and study. Once they decide to come here, they are sure to gain profit a few years later instead of making the decision on a sudden impulse. The current one to two years are a period for them to make observations and adjustments and to move steadily. I believe that they will make rapid progress in two years and pose a huge threat to us. So the local travel agencies should always keep alert, or in other words, raise their sensitivity towards relevant changes,” said Wu Bihu.

Stakeholders want to boost China’s tourism industry by allowing more engagement of foreign capital. The establishment of foreign-funded travel agencies is among the first steps taken. With the market further opened, people from

around the world will be able to visit this great nation with a long history and beautiful scenery, while it will also be easier for Chinese people to travel to other

countries. More business opportunities will surely abound.

(888 words)

Comprehension Exercise

Complete the statements with the information given in the passage.

1. Recently, a Japanese travel agency got approval from Chinese government to set up _____.
2. Some experts say that China will open its outbound travel business to foreign-funded companies within _____ years.
3. In July of this year, _____ paid a visit to Japan and the main goal of the trip was to further promote bilateral cooperation in the tourism market.
4. We have to face the influence of the establishment of solely foreign-funded travel agencies in China on _____.
5. As an early bird, _____ brought 25,000 tourists to China through its Beijing office last year.
6. In the competition, the local travel agencies do have their own advantages, for example, _____.
7. With the establishment of foreign-funded travel agencies as the first step taken, stakeholders want to boost China's tourism industry by _____.

Passage 3

Auto Industry

It's a moment to be remembered in China's auto industry, marking half a century of independent motor manufacturing in China. A week-long auto fair, the third of its kind in Changchun, was held to mark the 50th birthday of China's auto industry. Nine international automobile giants including Volkswagen, Daimler Chrysler AG, Mercedes-Benz, Citroen, Toyota, Volvo and Fiat, as well as major Chinese automotive *conglomerates* (联合企业) were all in attendance at the fair, bringing with them their latest models for display. Auto fairs large and small become a stage for car manufacturers to promote sales and display their new models. Music, performances and beautiful girls take the *limelight* (众人注目的中心) on these occasions. For car owners, enthusiasts and potential buyers, they also become a place to check out their favorite fashions.

In 1953, China established the First Automotive Works in northeast city of Changchun in Jilin Province, marking the start of China's own auto industry. At the same time, Tsinghua University began to award the country's first degrees in Automobile Engineering. The First Automot-

tive Works was then a typical enterprise, turning out "Jie Fang" motor cars and trucks. That was the starting *phase* (阶段) of China's auto industry. The second phase lasted from the Cultural Revolution to the time before China's opening up. The Second Automotive Works and the Capital Automotive Works were established, manufacturing heavy trucks for combat readiness. The third phase came after China's opening up. This period of auto manufacturing centers on international cooperation and aims to *offset* (弥补) the imbalance between heavy and light auto production. Passenger cars are being developed very fast. Technology transfer, especially in the production of passenger cars, is the feature of the time. We set up many joint ventures and achieved good result in mass production. This is a historical leap forward.

The total output of the auto industry was only 500,000 cars in 1990. While in the first quarter of this year, the entire industry produced over 1 million vehicles. In the course of becoming a global manufacturing center, the auto industry has become the driving force for China's mod-

ernized industry. The latest research from China's National Bureau of Statistics shows that auto production has become the country's fifth largest manufacturing sector. The figures suggest that China will become the fourth largest auto manufacturing country in the world after the U.S., Japan and Germany. China's auto industry began to display strength on the international stage, drawing auto giants worldwide to transfer their technologies, manufacture cars or set up joint ventures in China.

Consumption became the powerhouse of production in the market situation and provided the internal drive for the industry to grow. Study of international car market demonstrates that cars become affordable to ordinary families when the average price is two to three times their annual income. The *ratio* (比率) of private car purchasing is surging in China's auto market. Family cars are in *vogue* (流行). This is also of milestone significance because the auto industry relies on the market, a mass market for growth.

Car sales have been brisk so far this year in China's major cities. As the income of China's urban population keeps growing, the automobile has become one of the most important commodities in personal consumption. For young people living in Beijing or Shanghai, owning a car is almost an essential part of their career

advancement. The truth is, ordinary Chinese have already become the chief driving force in the nation's booming car market. Today, the automobile has become for many Chinese families, a daily necessity. The latest statistics show that car purchases by individuals accounted for nearly 80 percent of China's auto sales in the first quarter of this year. Vois, a Toyota model, became a best seller as soon as it rolled off the production line. *Time-honored* (历史悠久的) brands are often big sellers.

After-sale services in auto markets are developing rapidly. Auto dealers and stores have set up all over the country, offering customers convenient environments for purchasing. Local governments also laid out corresponding promotion plans. Major cities regard cars not only as a means of transport, but as sport as well. Beijing has one or two markets specializing in auto sports activities. It shows that auto related industries are developing very fast. Next comes car culture. Customers are spending a lot on auto sound systems and car *customizing* (改装). Some may spend 100,000 yuan buying a car, and more than that sum on customizing their new car. Auto information is becoming a large industry all over the country.

There are basically three ways of purchasing a car: cash, *installment* (分期付款) or credit loans. Purchasing on loans is

a rather new concept for most Chinese people. According to car dealers, credit loans account for 20–30 percent of all car sales in Beijing. This is not much compared with industrialized countries. Generally, that figure is 50–80 percent in those countries. But more and more people begin to identify with this method of consumption. With China's economy on the fast track, a rich middle class is taking shape and growing rapidly. They are mostly young, open-minded and confident about their future. They dare to spend,

even tomorrow's money.

To many people in China, cars are still a status symbol. Owning a car not only means freedom of mobility, but also shows that you have entered the class of the *nouveau* (新近产生的) richness and are keeping up with the trend. For the majority of people in China, cars are still a luxury. But many of them are beginning to dream about owning a car. With more and cheaper cars available on the market, their dream may soon become a reality.

(989 words)

Comprehension Exercise

For each of the following statements, put a **T** in the blank if the statement is true or an **F** if it is false.

- _____ 1. The week-long auto fair held in Changchun marked the 50th birthday of China's auto industry.
- _____ 2. In 1953, China established its own auto industry, the First Automotive Works in Jilin Province.
- _____ 3. The figures from China's National Bureau of Statistics show that auto production has been the country's largest manufacturing sector.
- _____ 4. The consumption by ordinary Chinese has become the main driving force in our car market.
- _____ 5. Cars are considered as a means of transport as well as sport in major cities in China.
- _____ 6. There are three ways of purchasing a car: cash, installment or credit loans. 20–30 percent of all car sales in industrialized countries are credit loans.
- _____ 7. Nowadays cars are not only a means of transport but also a status symbol to many people in China.