

TEM级不可失

英语专业四、八级考试丛书

英语专业八级考试

阅读精练200篇

主 编：黑玉琴



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主 编：黑玉琴
编 者：秦艳霞 王 红
刘西娟 雷 蕾

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内 容 提 要

本书是一本严格按照《高等学校英语专业英语教学大纲》和《高校英语专业八级考试大纲》(2005年版)编写,针对英语专业八级考试考生量身定做的考前辅导用书。全书分为二个章节:第一章“新大纲下的专业八级阅读及应试技巧”,详细介绍了八级考试的测试内容和考试流程,提供了八级考试阅读理解应试技巧;第二章“阅读实战200篇”下共有五个小节,分别为:社会与人文学科类阅读短文、自然科学与现代科技类阅读短文、综合类阅读短文、时事类阅读短文和历年真题选编。本书所选短文内容新颖,题材丰富,阅读量较大,适合于参加英语专业八级考试的考生使用,亦可作为英语专业高年级学生提高英语水平的练习册。

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主 编 黑玉琴

编 者 秦艳霞 王 红

刘西娟 雷 蕾

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出版人:张鸽盛

社址:重庆市沙坪坝正街174号重庆大学(A区)内

邮编:400030

电话:(023)65102378 65105781

传真:(023)65103686 65105565

网址:<http://www.cqup.com.cn>

邮箱:fxk@cqup.com.cn(营销中心)

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◀ 前 言 ▶

英语专业八级考试随着其权威性与社会影响的日益扩大,愈加受到考生们的重视。在试卷构成方面,阅读理解题所占比重高达 20%,成为“重中之重”。2005 年新大纲中对阅读理解部分的测试要求是“(a)能读懂一般英美报刊杂志上的社论、政治和书评,既能理解其主旨和大意,又能分辨出其中的事实与细节。(b)能读懂一般历史传记及文学作品,既能理解其字面意义又能理解其隐含意义”。此外,阅读理解能力也是做好其他部分的基础。在备考时,把阅读理解作为切入点,可以“一箭多雕”,对于提高考生的整体英语水平有着重要的意义。为此,我们全力推出这本《英语专业八级考试·阅读精练 200 篇》。

本书的最大特点是各章节按题材分类。文章题材丰富、面广,从人文社科到自然科学,再到时事政治,其内容尽量包含阅读短文所涉及的范围。文章及习题的编排遵循由易到难、循序渐进的原则,从难度适中、篇幅较短的基础技能训练,到真题选编或高于真题的实战演练。我们相信广泛的阅读可以提高考生的阅读理解能力,也可以巩固和提高语言应用能力,达到事半功倍的目的。希望更多具有中级以上英文水平的学习者和大学高年级在校英语专业学生,通过本书 200 篇的系统强化训练之后,能提高英文的阅读理解能力和阅读速度,扩大词汇量,能尽快跨越阅读关,获取优异的考试成绩。

本书共分为五章。第一章:新大纲专八阅读考试简介及阅读考试应试技巧;第二章:社会与人文学科类阅读短文及答案解析;第三章:自然科学与现代科技类阅读短文及答案解析;第四章:综合类阅读短文及答案解析;第五章:时事类阅读短文与真题选编。书的末尾附上答案解析。

由于时间仓促,书中难免存在不足之处,敬请广大读者批评指正。

编 者

2009 年 6 月于西安

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第一章

新大纲下的专业八级阅读及解题技巧

第一节 高校英语专业八级考试(2005 新大纲)简介

一、高校英语专业八级考试大纲(2005 新大纲)总则

国家教委《高等学校英语专业高年级英语教学大纲》规定,高等学校英语专业高年级英语的教学任务是“继续打好语言基本功,进一步扩大知识面,重点应放在培养英语综合技能,充实文化知识,提高交际能力上。”同时,《大纲》也指出,“大纲的执行情况主要通过统一测试进行检查。”“测试和评分应力求尽快达到标准化和电脑化,使其具有科学性、客观性和可行性。”

根据《大纲》中的上述规定,英语专业八级考试大纲规定了以下原则及考试内容:

(一)考试目的:

本考试的目的是检查大纲的执行情况,特别是大纲所规定的八级水平所要达到的综合语言技能和交际能力,借以促进大纲的进一步贯彻,提高教学质量。

(二)考试的性质与范围:

本考试是一种测试应试者单项和综合语言能力的尺度参照性水平考试。考试的范围包括大纲所规定的听、读、写、译四个方面的技能。由于大规模口试的条件目前尚不具备,所以有关“说”的技能暂缓测试。

(三)考试时间与命题:

英语专业八级考试于每年3月份举行。由英语专业学生八级考试命题小组负责命题与实施。

(四)考试内容:

本考试包括六个部分:听力理解,校对与改错,阅读理解,人文知识、翻译,写作。整个考试需要时间185分钟。

二、阅读理解(Part II: Reading Comprehension) 考纲要求

测试要求:

- (a)能读懂一般英美报刊杂志上的社论、政治和书评,既能理解其主旨和大意,又能分辨出其中的事实与细节。

(b)能读懂一般历史传记及文学作品,既能理解其字面意义又能理解其隐含意义。

(c)能分析上述题材的文章的思想观点,通篇布局,语言技巧及修辞手法。

(d)能够在阅读中调整自己的阅读速度。

(e)考试时间 30 分钟。

题型:

采用多项选择题,选一最佳答案,数篇材料组成。含 3,000 个单词。每篇材料后面有若干小题。共 20 题。

速度:约 150 个单词/分钟。

选材:

A)题材广泛,社会、文化、科技、经济、日常知识,人物传记

B)体裁:记叙文、说明文、描写文、议论文、广告、说明书、图表

新大纲阅读理解同以往相比有两点需要注意:1)命题方向有所改变。新大纲的修订明显提高了考试的难度,以及对应试者知识面广度和深度的检验,这是社会进步的必然结果,也体现了社会对英语专业人才的需求结构发生了变化。2)复习更重全面实效。题型的改变对备考提出了更高的要求。表面看答得不错,但分数却不高,甚至不能通过。

第二节 英语专业八级阅读理解应试技巧

要顺利通过专八阅读理解,学生需要从三方面准备:(1)阅读技巧和词汇技巧;(2)阅读理解题型;(3)阅读材料题材。以下分别就这几个方面进行详细说明。

阅读理解是语言学习中最重要的一项基本技能之一,阅读是获取语言知识最直接、最有效的方法,阅读能力则是衡量掌握语言综合能力的一项重要标志。学习阅读,学会阅读,提高英语阅读能力,是最终掌握英语,提高整体英语水平的必由之路。英语专业八级考试中也设立了阅读理解部分,而且阅读部分在整个考试中占相当大的比重,该部分的得分直接影响到整个考试的成败,因此无论是教师还是考生都对此非常重视。八级考试中的阅读理解部分主要是依据国家教委批准的《高等学校英语专业英语教学大纲》中对英语阅读教学内容和要求的规定,运用科学的测试手段,检验英语专业学生对于高级英语阅读能力和技巧的掌握,从而检查各有关院校对于大纲规定的教学内容和教学要求的完成和执行情况。

应该说到了准备八级考试的时候,学生已经具备了相当的阅读经验和阅读能力,现在的关键是多做练习,大量阅读,通过阅读来提高阅读水平。如果还存在一些不良阅读习惯的话,比如用手指着读,默读时出声等,就应毫不犹豫地痛下工夫去改正。下面列出了一些常用的阅读技巧,仅作提醒之用。希望考生能仔细对照自己的情况,尽快改掉不良习惯,以便提高自己的阅读效率。

一、练习阅读技巧

1)略读

略读(skimming)是常用的阅读方法之一,其主要特征是选择性地阅读。通常的阅读要求看到每一个词,每次注目看 1~2 个词。略读不需要看到每一个词,眼睛跳动的频率和幅度都有较大的提高,有时甚至从上一行跳到下一行。略读不可能使你对所读内容全部了解,但是你能大大地提高阅读速度,也能获得大量的信息。

略读的主要作用是了解文章的大意。经过略读之后,你对所读内容已经有了大致的了解,再仔细阅读,这时你的印象会更深刻,理解更透彻。

大部分读者不需要正规的训练和指导就可以进行略读。但是有意识地训练会大大地提高你的略读速度和效率。进行略读训练的最简单的方法是强迫自己在规定的时间内读完一篇文章。开始训练时,可以把略读速度定为平常阅读的 $5/4$ 倍,以后逐步提高。略读的关键是增加眼跳的幅度,高度集中注意力,努力捕捉那些能引起注意或者你认为重要的内容。

There are different ways of skimming:

i. If you're very short of time or reading, for example, a newspaper article, you might just read the heading and the first sentence of each paragraph. This is often enough to give you a fair idea of the content.

ii. For texts that you have to understand more fully, you might run your eyes along all the lines of the text, trying to pick out the key words and ignore unknown words and "grammar" words (e. g. to, and, is, the) which do not contribute to the main idea.

2) 扫读

扫读(scanning)是以最快的速度扫视所读材料,在找到所需信息时才仔细阅读该项内容。如查找某个人名、地名、时间、地点等,也即在寻找特定信息、寻找具体事实、寻找答题所需内容时都用这种方法。

In order to answer a specific questions or to locate a specific bit of information, the student may want to scan an article in a newspaper or magazine, or a section of an encyclopedia or similar source of reference. It may not be necessary to read the entire article to find the particular information needed. Instead, the student will want to save time by scanning to locate that part of the article that will be useful. In order to scan quickly and efficiently, the student must become familiar with the arrangement of the material. Taking a few minutes to read the title and subheads, to look at the illustrations, and to read the first and last paragraphs, the student will get a general idea of the order of ideas and topics. Once familiar with the arrangement of thoughts in the selection, the student will know better where to locate the information and can quickly turn to that section of the material.

Keep Clue Words in Mind.

When the student has found the section likely to contain the information needed, he or she is ready to begin scanning. Some clue words or phrases associated with the specific facts will aid in the scanning. For example, when, the student is scanning the telephone directory, the clue word would be the person's last name. In the case of a newspaper sports page, the clue words for locating the baseball scores would be baseball, run, the names of the teams, and the cities the teams represent.

Clue words are also useful when scanning magazine articles and encyclopedias. To find out the population of New York City, for example, one would locate the section of the encyclopedia that discusses New York City. The clue words when scanning this section would be *population*, *census*, *inhabitants* and, of course, any numbers.

Steps involved in Scanning:

We read differently depending on our goal for reading. Sometimes we only need to locate a particular piece of information. For example, we might read the newspaper to discover the final score of a sports event, or to find out when and where a lecture will be held. To scan is to read quickly in order to locate specific information. The steps involved in scanning are the following:

1) Decide exactly what information you are looking for, and think about the form it may take. For example, if you want to know when something happened, you would look for a date. If you want to find out who did something, you would look for a name.

2) Next, decide where you need to look to find the information you want. You probably would not look for sports scores on the front page of the newspaper, nor look under the letter S for the telephone number of Sam Potter.

3) Move your eyes as quickly as possible down the page until you find the information you need. Read it carefully.

4) When you find what you need, do not read further.

The following scanning exercises will help you to improve scanning skills and to become more flexible readers.

Practice 1

Answer questions 1-4 as quickly as possible using the text below. Use your watch to time yourself. It should take you 1 minute.

1. How much of the human body is water?
2. How much water does the average person use for bathing?
3. How many people die per day from disease related to dirty water?
4. How many litres of water does it take to make one pair of leather shoes?

The human body is about 65 per cent water. If you stopped drinking water (or drinks and food containing water) you would die within three or four days. But the water you drink must be clean.

Each day an average person uses the following amounts of water:

| | |
|----------------------|--------------|
| Toilet flushing | 35 litres |
| Cooking and drinking | 30 litres |
| Bathing | 30 litres |
| Using a shower | 12-20 litres |

The average daily total per person is 140 litres. The average family uses 480 litres of water a day.

Water can carry diseases. According to a recent report published by the United Nations, every day throughout the world about 25,000 people die from diseases related to dirty water.

It takes 31,600 litres of water to make one car and 4,124 litres to make one tonne of steel. It takes 53 litres of water to make one pair of leather shoes and 9 litres of water to make every comic that you read.

Practice 2

Before you answer the following questions, decide what kind of answer, or which words from the question, you are looking for. Then answer the questions. You have 2 minutes.

1. Give two examples of cities which have no sewerage.
2. Where is half of household income spent on water?
3. What must Lagos inhabitants do on "sanitation day"?
4. Where do more than 60% of the Third World People live?
5. In the 1970s, how many people had no proper means of waste disposal?

Meanwhile, people in the Third World can only Envy the levels of health risk faced by those of us who can turn on a tap or flush a toilet. Most cities in Africa and many in Asia — Dakar, Kinshasa and Chittagong, for example, have no sewerage of any kind. Streams, gullies and ditches are where most human excrement and household waste end up. People draw their drinking water from a standpipe which only operates for a few hours each day. Women still wash clothes and bathe their children in a muddy stream. In Nairobi, Jakarta, Bangkok and elsewhere, families are forced to purchase water from a vendor, paying ten times the rate charged to houses with mains connections (in Khartoum it is 18 times more expensive). In some parts of Sudan, half of household income is spent on water.

As city population rapidly expand, water and sanitation services are put under pressures unimaginable to those who build them. But at

least fear of epidemic — repeating the terrible ravages of cholera in nineteenth-century Europe — encourages action in city halls. Lagos, for example, used to be a watchword for urban filth. Now there is a monthly "sanitation day" on which moving around the city is banned: everyone must pick up a shovel and clean their neighborhood.

But until very recently, the sanitary environment inhabited by more than 60 percent of Third World people — the countryside — was left to take care of itself. The woman carrying her container to the well, washing her laundry in the stream, leaving her toddlers to squat in the compound, had never seen a pipeline nor a drain; no faucet graced her village square, let alone her own backyard. At the end of 1970s, 1.2 billion people in the Third World were without a safe supply of drinking water and 1.6 billion without any proper means of waste disposal.

3) 研读

研读(study reading)就是仔细阅读,对文章有透彻深刻的理解。根据考题,运用上下文、逻辑关系、背景知识进行判断和推论。难句的理解和推理类的问题用得着这种方法。

二、掌握词汇技巧

A. 利用上下文线索进行有根据的猜测:

阅读过程中不可避免地要遇到生词。大纲中规定允许有3%的生词,也就是说2000个词中允许有60个左右的生词,但一般不会有这么多的生词。有的人一遇到生词就停下来查

字典,有的则读完一两页后查字典,有的人则完全不管生词。其实阅读中遇到生词只要不影响你对篇章主要意思的理解,一般应该继续往下读。如果生词的确影响你对内容的理解,查字典当然是一种办法,但很不方便,而且频繁地查字典不仅影响阅读速度,而且影响对文章内容的整体理解。所以在平时阅读时,遇生词最好的方法是通过上下文猜测。上下文猜测可以借助以下的线索:

Types of Context Clues

1) **Definition**: The unknown word is defined within the sentence or paragraph.

Example:

The explorers landed in an alien environment, a place both foreign and strange to their beloved homeland.

2) **Elaborating details**: Descriptive details that suggest the meaning of the unknown word.

Example:

The natives were hostile when the settlers approached their village. They lined up across the road and drew their weapons. The settlers were afraid to go farther.

3) **Elaborating examples**: An anecdote or example before or after the word suggests the meaning.

Example:

The birds' appetite is voracious. In one day he ate enough worms to equal three times this body weight.

4) **Comparison**: A similar situation suggests the meaning of the unknown word.

Example:

The smell of the flower was as compelling as a magnet's pull on a paper clip.

5) **Contrast**: An opposite situation suggests the meaning of the unknown word.

Example:

In America, she is an eminent scientist, even though she is virtually unknown in England.

Practice

1) If we have to have a pet around the house, get one that is docile and easy to manage.

- a. gentle b. short c. sick d. young

2) Eating lunch on the edge of a dangerous precipice is a precarious position for a summertime picnic.

- a. exciting b. lovely c. risky d. scenic

3) The dancer's movements were not rehearsed, but were a spontaneous response to the music.

- a. planned b. simple c. unpremeditated d. smooth

4) Since there is always a first time for everything, each of us is a novice at some point in our lives.

- a. fool b. master c. manager d. beginner

5) I cannot even conjecture what interest rates will be by next year.

- a. calculate b. guess c. admit d. wish

B. 利用词缀和词性进行推测 (Word formation and part of speech)

分析生词的构成,尤其是词的前缀和后缀。英语中很多词都是加前缀或后缀变来的。看看生词在文章中的词性,即看这个词是名词、动词、形容词、副词或其他词类。另外再看看这个词在文中与哪些词搭配使用,再根据自己的其他知识,就可以进行正确的猜测。英语单词的构成如下所示:

Root: the stem or basic part of the word.

duc, duct, duce: conducive, aqueduct, introduction, abduct, educate, induction
(duc means to lead)

Prefix: a group of letters added to the beginning of a word.

Trans: across, over, beyond

Transcend, transcribe, transgress, transform, transcontinental, translucent

Suffix: a group of letters added to the end of a word.

Chemist, terrorist, humanist, evangelist, alarmist, accompanist

Multiple meanings of a word:

Joyce showed *industry* and perseverance in doing her work.

If we *pool* our money, we can afford the sofa.

C. 利用文章的内容进行猜测

看看同一生词是否在上下文的其他地方出现,把两处的语境相比较,也许能更加准确地猜出词义。充分利用你已有的知识,帮助猜测词义。

为了巩固阅读过程中的生词,在读完一篇后,你可以把本篇中最重要的生词查一下字典,准确地了解该生词在文中的意思。因为我们训练的篇章都是大纲规定的题材,在真题中也可能遇到这方面的文章,甚至单词。

三、扩大词汇量

很多学生对词汇的复习存在一定的盲目性,认为专八没有词汇题就不重视词汇的复习与记忆。专八试题取材较为广泛,语体正式,尤其是有较多的文学类文章,因此不仅要求考生有较大的词汇量(15,000 左右为佳),而且词汇涉及的领域要广。专八对词汇的广度和深度均有要求,词汇的学习不能像有些人认为的那样,只要背词汇表就可以了。

提高阅读理解和速度的一个重要内容是扩大词汇量。其必要性表现在以下几个方面:

1) 词汇量决定了你的阅读理解能力,词汇量越大,你阅读得越广,视野就越开阔,你阅读理解的得分就越高。

2) 有限的词汇量必然会影响你阅读理解能力的提高。生词的含义只有在上下文中才能完全展现出来,并易于被识记、理解、掌握。换句话说,是上下文给某个词以特定含义,而这个特定含义往往是字典无法提供的。有的人或许会说,我们从中学到大学英语词汇都是通过背生词表来记的。但是这样说的读者忽视了很重要的一点:所学课文后面的词汇表都是为课文服务的,而且,教师上课时对某些词或表达方式所举的实例,实质上是为它们设置了上下文。不少教师鼓励学生背句子、段落或整篇文章,都是出于同一目的,即要学生在上下文中理解并掌握词汇和短语。

3)多读是扩大词汇量的最好的方法。不仅要读不同体裁的书和文章,而且要多接触不同题材,才能适应考试的需要。

四、熟悉阅读理解题型

同其他考试的阅读理解类似,专八的阅读理解部分一般会涉及下面几类题型:

1)判断中心思想

任何阅读材料都有主要意思,即大意(main idea)。文字材料的大意有不同的层次。一个比较长的句子可以说很多事情,但一般只有一个大意,可以用几个词概括;一个段落包括很多句子,但也只有一个大意,通常是段落的主题句(topic sentence)包含段落的大意。通常人们说“大意”指的是整篇材料的中心思想。

非小说体的阅读材料通常有比较明显的大意,其结构也比较清楚。文章的开头部分(introduction)会比较明确地指出文章的中心思想。文章主体部分的每一段也往往有主题句,通常在段首或段尾。有些文章的结尾还会对全文作一个总的概括。

2)找出细节

任何阅读理解都涉及对一些重要细节的把握,如重要人物、事件发生的时间和地点以及其他一些事实和信息等。在阅读理解题目中,判断出细节类的题目,应用跳读的方法快速找到相关的地方,然后仔细阅读,做出准确的选择。

3)理解词汇

为了测试学生在上下文中准确理解词汇的意思,避免死记硬背,阅读理解题目中常常设计1~2道词汇题。因此,要充分利用一些上下文线索去分析和理解所给出的词汇。

4)推论出段落的隐含意思

有时,为了某种目的,作者往往不直接说出某一意思,而是含蓄地表达。这种隐含的意思有时是篇章的主要意思。所以阅读短文经常需要推论(making inference)。有时一句话的含义需要推论,有时整个篇章的含义需要推论。以下几条建议可以帮助你进行推论:

(1)结合作者的思想观点、写作背景进行推论。

(2)寻找作者直接陈述的诸多事件之间的联系。

(3)仔细体会某些重要词的含蓄意义及其感情色彩。比如 politician 和 statesman 的意思都是“政治家”,但前者有贬义的色彩,即“政客”,后者则没有。

(4)从作者的语气、语调、措辞等文体特征,读出作者的“言外之意”(reading beyond the lines)。

(5)得出某一推断后,尽量从上下文中寻找证据。

(6)充分利用自己已有的各方面的知识,把文章中所述的事情和自己的阅历或熟悉的事情联系起来考虑。

5)预测下文内容

预测下文内容也是提高阅读效率的重要手段。预测与猜测不同。猜测是对自己没有把握的文字意思的假设,预测则是根据已掌握的信息假想下文将会发生什么事情。预测之所以能够提高阅读效率,是因为它使你产生某种“期待”(expectations)。带着这种期待去读下文,你会努力为你的假想寻找证据,你的注意力将更加集中在文中的重要内容上。

当然,预测也不是随意的,必须根据已经发生的事情或已了解的内容加上你自己的一般

常识进行符合逻辑的预测。当你继续阅读下文时,你的预测要么被肯定,要么被否定。无论是肯定还是否定,都会加深你对原文的理解。以下是几条建议:

(1)如果你对段落的主题思想已有初步的了解,想一想关于这一主题通常要描写哪些方面的事情,这些事情在本文中会发生吗?

(2)运用你的英语语言知识及语言在具体语境中的习惯用法,预测文章将要写什么。

考试中每篇文章,先读试题和选项,然后再有的放矢地进行阅读,选择跳读或扫读的方法。做题时,如果遇到有些题解不了,或是文章中某几句看不懂的情况,应该暂时放弃,先做其他题或继续阅读其他部分。在做完其他试题后,有时间,再来做这些没有把握的试题。千万不能为了一道题或一段文字而停滞不前。及时丢卒保车,才能保证总体成绩。

阅读能力的提高不是靠短时间的突击就能提高的,需要学生持之以恒,长期进行正确的操练。英语专业八级考试是科学的语言测试,具有相当的信度和效度,靠投机取巧是不可能取得好成绩的,所以,只能通过训练,真正地提高自己的语言能力,在八级考试中取得好的成绩。

五、文章归类阅读,考前复习有奇效

阅读文章成千上万,如何从有限中把握规律才是关键。阅读文章总是按照每套试题四篇文章分布,于是众多学子也就按部就班。可是如果我们把自己读过的所有文章按照主题分类,比如分为校园类、医学类、家庭类、环境类等,到了考前,再按类别复习这些文章,我们不仅能系统掌握某一类别文章常用的词汇,也能把握该类文章的结构特点和出题规律。

最好的方法是,一开始就制定分类标准,每做完一篇文章就在其标题后或首句前注明文章的类别,这样到了考前,归纳起来就容易多了,因此,后面的阅读文章就是按这种方法进行编排的,便于学生熟悉考试中阅读材料的不同题材。

少数事实上,专八阅读理解部分的内容看起来并不难,但涵盖面广,人文、社科、文化等均有覆盖,而且信息量很大,考生普遍反映读不完,抓不住关键问题。这就要求考生们在充分掌握一定的阅读技巧的前提下,多读些原文的杂志、名著、通俗的文学作品,如《简·爱》、《老人与海》等名篇,《新闻周刊》、《纽约时报》、《经济学家》、《国家地理》等外文期刊杂志,提高词汇量、培养语感。另外可以做一些 GRE 阅读,会对考试有很大帮助。可以这么说,专八是对英文原版信息量掌握的杰出挑战,所以在备考时一定不能局限于课本,要有系统的准备。

第二章

阅读实战 200 篇

第一节 社会与人文学科类阅读短文

Social Science and Humanities

Text 1

Family is, if anything, the link between generations, the focal point of social reproduction, and cultural transmission. It's not just a "big tent" where everyone can enjoy the show. Both marriage and family involve ongoing obligations and shared care, not just the pursuit of happiness, that strange goal of the modern age.

It seems that love has got out of hand. The modern nuclear family is rooted in the rise of effective individualism — the desire to live happily in a more equal partnership marriage, where the nurture of children and investment of both parents in their lives are guaranteed by bonds of friendship based on rational love.

There is an inherent instability in any marriage based on voluntary affection, but marriage as such pins it down by defining kinship ties and the obligations of parents to children. What people call the new Love Family, unfortunately, replaces permanence with the norm of unfettered choice.

We can now not only choose marriage partner, but also divorce that partner at will, subordinate children to our own adult in pursuit of happiness, deny the other parent ongoing contact with their offspring. We can even, if we want, define as our family people who are not related to us either by blood, marriage or adoption — a set of friends who support one another. Throw in the faithful dog if you like. Family is what we want it to be.

The trouble is that the problem of children and the wider problem of care are ignored. If marriage exists only as an intimate relationship that can be terminated at will, and family exists only by virtue of bonds of affection, both marriage and family are relegated to the marketplace of trading places, with individuals maximizing their psychological capital by moving through a series of more or less satisfying intimate relationship. Children, kin, the ties of mutual obligation and

care are left behind.

Freewheeling adults may find this okay. But children can't be described in marketplace terms; they demand sacrifice and altruism, a long-term investment of parental time and money.

The whole point of marriage is that it imposes clear obligations, not just the right to pursue your own happiness. And the main obligation is to provide both emotional and practical nurture for children. The glow of burning passion may have faded, your love for your spouse may not be as exciting or satisfying as it once was, but going off in search of another love will not help your children. The Love Family is either too amorphous for children — your friends have no obligation to provide for them — or it's too unstable, with adults moving on if the relationship no longer answers their search for perfect happiness.

What divorce does is to damage children. I am aware of the complex research surrounding the effects of divorce on children and I acknowledge that some children are better off without a violent father; an income boozed or gambled away, unhappy parents taking out their spleen on everyone in the family.

But divorce severs the stability, security and continuity that children need; it results in poverty for many women and children; it damages the voluntary link between father and children and replaces it with one of the regulated, arranged parenthood; it removes the father from co-residence, the only sensible basis for a working parental relationship; it overloads the mother-child bond and leaves her with a double burden; and it often disrupts the child's schooling, friendships and neighborhood contacts, those underpinnings of trust and social capital that every child must have. It even weakens the child's links with grandparents and other kin, and few para-parents are willing to take on real responsibility for the child's well-being.

Love is not enough, compared with the presence and support of both parents. Nor, I would venture to suggest, is love enough to sustain an ongoing marital relationship. The Love Family, in the end, doesn't have to care. And unfettered freedom will become our chain, leaving us with no recourse but lonely isolation. (668w)

1. The main idea of this passage is that _____.
 - A. Love is not enough
 - B. Divorce damages children
 - C. Love is not enough to sustain an ongoing marital relationship
 - D. Love demands sacrifice and altruism
2. The point of marriage is _____.
 - A. pursuing individual happiness
 - B. supporting each other
 - C. intimate relationship
 - D. forcing clear obligations to the couple
3. The word "freewheeling" in paragraph 6 means "_____".
 - A. not caring about responsibility

- B. not caring about principles
C. not caring about formal behaviours
D. not caring about money
4. According to the passage, the following are the functions of family, EXCEPT _____.
A. link between generations
B. focal point of social reproduction
C. access to pursuing individual happiness
D. cultural transmission
5. The author's attitude towards "Love Family" can best be described as _____.
A. doubtful B. approving C. factual D. critical

Text 2

WASHINGTON — Defaults on home mortgage touched another all-time high at the end of the last year as foreclosures surged on adjustable-rate mortgage, an industry group reported Thursday.

The latest data is expected to put further pressure on policy makers and the mortgage industry to move faster to *contain losses* and help more homeowners. In recent days, regulators and lawmakers have begun suggesting that the federal government might need to take a more interventionist role in the mortgage business.

The Mortgage Bankers Association reported Thursday that the number of loans past due or in foreclosure jumped to 7.9 percent, from 7.3 percent at the end of September and 6.1 percent in December 2006. Before the third quarter, the rate had never risen past 7 percent since the survey began in 1979.

The report helped drive down the stock and credit markets on Thursday. The Standard & Poor's 500 stock index fell 1.2 percent and the Dow Jones industrial average fell about 130 points, or 1.1 percent.

Much of the increase in delinquencies and foreclosures came from a handful of states, particularly California and Florida. Those two states account for about 21 percent of all mortgages but had 30 percent of the new foreclosures started in the quarter. Nevada, Arizona, Michigan and Ohio also had high default rates.

Defaults were highest on adjustable-rate mortgages, those that start with lower fixed interest rates at first but reset to higher, variable rates after a few years. While many of the loans made to people with blemished, or subprime, credit were past due or in foreclosure, the number of prime adjustable-rate loans also rose rapidly to 8.1 percent from 4.3 percent in December 2006.

Douglas Duncan, the chief economist for the Mortgage Bankers, said the rates would probably rise further for much of this year as house prices fall further and banks and investors remain unwilling to lend and buy mortgage securities.

"We don't expect to see the peak in delinquencies and foreclosure until mid-to late 2008," he said in a conference call.