

高校英语泛读教材

ENGLISH FAST READING TEST

英语快速阅读测试

BOOK 1

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编 者 的 话

本书共二册，是《ENGLISH READING SKILLS AND PRACTICE》的补充配套读物，目的在于给教师提供标准的快速阅读材料，以便教师能随时准确地测试学生的阅读速度和理解率。

本书共有80篇文章，每册40篇。

本书由教师掌握，每周使用一篇。每篇的阅读时间由教师根据“大纲”和学生的具体情况而定。

本书也可单独使用，作为集中训练学生快速阅读能力的教材。或作为自学者自我测试阅读速度和理解率的材料。

本书后有答案，供教师参考。

编 者

一九九〇年二月

于湖南师范大学

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1. Coins in Our Lives

Every day of our lives we use coins in many different ways. We use them in candy machines and telephone booths, on the bus and in the store. We use coins to buy stamps, food, and all the little things that make our lives more comfortable.

Aside from allowing us to buy things with them, coins are an important reminder of our national heritage. They tell about the liberties and freedoms we cherish. The symbols on them tell us of the long history of our country and of the work and sacrifices of our forefathers.

The American colonists suffered under the burden of having to use many different types of coins from England, Spain, France, Holland and Germany. The mixture of these coins was confusing because they did not all have the same value. After the American Revolution, one of the first duties of the new leaders of the United States was to create coins. A law was passed by Congress in 1792 providing for a national coinage and the establishment of a United States Mint to make coins. The first official Mint was located in Philadelphia, where copper cents and half cents were first made for public use.

Other laws permitted the building of Mints in different cities throughout the country and also allowed the government to establish the Bureau of the Mint as part of the United States Treasury Department. The headquarters of both the Mint and the Treasury are in our nation's capital. Today there are three Mints that produce our national coinage. They are located at Philadelphia, Denver, and San Francisco. The Philadelphia and Denver Mints are open daily for visitors.

Coins are round so they won't wear holes in people's pockets. Centuries ago, coins were carried in pouches with a draw-string around the mouth of the bag. The same string allowed people to tie the moneybag to their belts when clothing didn't have a lot of pockets and women didn't carry purses. Another reason coins are round is that round coins are easier to use in vending machines.

The sizes of our coins today are decided by law, but they generally follow a tradition set by the ancient Greeks and Romans. It is necessary for coins to be a convenient size, not too small to be easily lost or over-

looked, and not so large they are uncomfortable or difficult to use and carry. (400 words)

1. The colonists used coins from
 - a. Denmark.
 - b. Portugal.
 - c. Holland.
2. The United States Mint was established in the early
 - a. 1790s.
 - b. 1820s.
 - c. 1830s.
3. The first official mint was located in
 - a. New York.
 - b. San Francisco.
 - c. Philadelphia.
4. The first coins were made of
 - a. silver.
 - b. gold.
 - c. copper.
5. Today, one U. S. Mint is located in
 - a. Denver.
 - b. Chicago.
 - c. Boston.
6. Coins are round so that
 - a. they can be stacked in even piles.
 - b. they will not damage clothing.
 - c. they will take less space in bank vaults.
7. The sizes of American coins are like those used by
 - a. ancient Oriental civilizations.
 - b. early European peoples.
 - c. South American governments.
8. The author implies that a study of coinage reveals
 - a. trends in clothing fashions over the years.
 - b. the history of American expansion.
 - c. people's preferences for certain metals.
9. Most of this selection is concerned with
 - a. laws governing the use of coins.
 - b. the process of minting coins.
 - c. the history of coins.
10. We can conclude that American coins
 - a. are easy to handle.
 - b. are the most popular in the world.
 - c. show historic events.

2. A New Way of Life

The history of our form of government begins with its settlers. Most of the early settlers came from England. They lived in groups called colonies. The King of England was their ruler.

The English settlers founded the Virginia colony at Jamestown in 1607. It was the first permanent English colony. In 1620 other English people came to America. They were known as Pilgrims. They went to Holland first. In Holland, their children began to forget the English ways. They decided to leave Holland and go to the New World. They founded Plymouth colony in Massachusetts. They struggled to build homes and to exist. After a hard winter, the Pilgrims who survived held a feast with the Indians who had helped them begin their new way of life. They thanked God for their blessings. This was the first American Thanksgiving.

More Englishmen, as well as people from other European countries, came to live in America. Many, like the Pilgrims, wanted to be free to worship God in their own way. Others were looking for political freedom. Traders were seeking to make money. The poor and the unemployed people wanted jobs and the chance to earn a better living. Businessmen who had money to invest saw promise of success in America.

After many years, all of the colonists came under British rule. Georgia founded in 1733, was the last colony to be formed. In 1776, there were thirteen British colonies in the part of America that later became the United States. These colonies became the first thirteen states.

The King let the colonists elect representatives to make local laws. The colonists were free in many ways. But, as time passed, more and more laws for the colonists were made in Great Britain. Under these laws, the colonists had to pay more taxes. However, the colonists were not asked to help make these laws. They had no spokesmen in Great Britain. They began to feel that some of their rights were being taken away from them. They said they could be taxed only by their own officials. The King refused to change the tax laws.

The colonists decided to hold a meeting to discuss their problems. All of the colonies except Georgia sent men to this meeting. It was held in Philadelphia in 1774. It was the First Continental Congress. They asked

the King for their rights as Englishmen. (400 words)

1. Most of the early settlers of the United States came from
 - a. Germany.
 - b. Denmark.
 - c. England.
2. Jamestown, Virginia, was founded in the early
 - a. 1500s.
 - b. 1600s
 - c. 1700s.
3. Before the Pilgrims came to America, they lived in
 - a. France.
 - b. Scotland.
 - c. Holland.
4. The last colony to be founded was
 - a. Rhode Island.
 - b. Georgia.
 - c. Virginia.
5. The Continental Congress was held in
 - a. Philadelphia
 - b. Boston.
 - c. New York City.
6. Most of the first people who came to America were seeking
 - a. wealth and opportunity.
 - b. religious freedom.
 - c. better jobs.
7. The colonists turned against the King of England when
 - a. they could not make their own money.
 - b. they could not send representatives to England.
 - c. they could not trade with other countries.
8. At the First Continental Congress, the officials did not hear
 - a. any discussion of rights and freedoms.
 - b. any talk about England.
 - c. any speeches from Georgia delegates.
9. The Pilgrims came to America because
 - a. their children were forgetting their English customs.
 - b. they heard that the streets in America were paved with gold.
 - c. the King of England would not allow them to stay in England.
10. We can conclude that
 - a. people from many different countries lived in the colonies.
 - b. the King of England was a weak ruler.
 - c. early colonists wanted to break away from England.

3. To Train a Cat

Cats are clean animals and easy to housebreak. A shallow pan or box can be covered with an inch or so of sand, sawdust, or litter. Litter can be bought at pet stores, supermarkets, and hardware stores. The pan should always be in the same place.

To teach a cat, one must watch him carefully. When he begins to search for one place after another, he must be put into his pan. The litter must be changed often, and the pan must be washed with soap and water every few days.

A cat will scratch to wear off his old claws. He will need a scratching post to reduce damage to furniture. Every time the cat claws at the furniture, the scratching post should be pointed out to him until he learns to use it without help.

A cat enjoys a soft ball, a toy mouse, or some other kind of toy. Such objects should be too large for the cat to swallow.

Most cats enjoy playing. They are independent animals, however, and play only when they feel like it.

Most cats refuse to be disciplined although they may understand "no." They learn their names quickly, and many will come when called. If a cat is told what to do and he likes the trick, he will learn to do it.

A cat should be confined to the house, especially at night. Cats that are allowed to roam disturb the neighbors with their crying and fighting. A female cat should never be allowed to roam during her mating season.

Proper care usually will eliminate the threat of disease or injury. Unusual symptoms should be watched for, and visits to the veterinarian should be regular. A cat must be vaccinated early against rabies and other serious diseases.

A cat will lick his fur to clean it. As he licks it, he will swallow hairs that form little felt-like balls in his stomach and intestines.

Although hair balls can be prevented by brushing a cat daily, some will form anyway. A veterinarian can prescribe a remedy to help a cat eliminate the hair.

A cat should never be dropped because he can be seriously injured. Cats do not always land on their feet as many people think. (400 words)

1. A cat's litter box must be washed with soap and water
 - a. every few days.
 - b. once a week.
 - c. once a month
2. A cat scratches objects
 - a. to sharpen his claws.
 - b. to wear down his claws.
 - c. to exercise.
3. Cats should not be given playthings that are
 - a. too small.
 - b. too large.
 - c. too rough.
4. The author says that cats are
 - a. proud.
 - b. quick.
 - c. independent.
5. Cats should be vaccinated to prevent
 - a. rabies.
 - b. heartworm.
 - c. distemper.
6. A cat will learn a trick
 - a. if he is fed immediately before the trick.
 - b. if he is scolded when he fails to do the trick.
 - c. if he enjoys what he is doing.
7. To housebreak a cat, the owner should
 - a. change the litter in the box every few hours.
 - b. keep the litter box in the same place.
 - c. reward the cat if he uses the litter box.
8. Cats should be kept indoors at night because
 - a. they are noisy.
 - b. they may catch cold.
 - c. they may run away.
9. A veterinarian is
 - a. a pet store owner.
 - b. an animal trainer.
 - c. an animal doctor.
10. We can conclude that
 - a. cats are very difficult to housebreak.
 - b. cats are intelligent and easy to train.
 - c. cats require a minimum of care.

4. The Needs of the People

The Constitution has been changed to serve the needs of the people. When it was accepted in 1789, there were no large cities. There were no railroads and very few factories. Most of the people lived on farms. Today, most people live in cities. Their lives are tied together. Our government had to serve new needs of the nation as they arose. How was this done?

The Constitution has developed through general laws. The Congress, the President, and the courts have needed help to carry out their duties. Boards have been set up to study the needs of the people and to advise the Congress of changes that should be made in the laws. The Congress has set up other government boards and offices with authority to make rules.

The Congress has passed laws giving the president more departments in his Cabinet. In 1789, there were only four departments. Today there are eleven departments. The Congress has added new federal courts as they have been needed. By these and other general laws, the Congress has helped to organize the government under the Constitution. The government has been changed to meet the new needs of the people.

The Constitution has developed also through treaties. The United States must get along well with other nations. We trade with people in many lands. The ships of other nations often carry our goods. Our citizens travel, live, and die in other countries. The citizens of other nations live and trade here.

The writers of the Constitution did not know what matters should be covered by treaties. They decided to let the president and the Senate develop this part of the Constitution. They declared in Article II that the President "shall have power, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, to make treaties, provided two-thirds of the senators present concur."

The Constitution does not say when or on what subjects treaties shall be made. These matters are left to the President and to the Senate. For example, the Constitution does not say whether citizens of other countries can own land in the United States. But the President and the Senate have made treaties with other nations giving their citizens the right to own land in the United States. Texas came into the Union by a treaty with the United States. These are two examples that show how treaties help to give

Life to the Constitution. (400 words)

1. The Constitution was written in
 - a. 1776.
 - b. 1789,
 - c. 1823.
2. The greatest number of people today live in
 - a. cities.
 - b. towns.
 - c. rural areas.
3. How many departments did the first United States Cabinet have?
 - a. Three
 - b. Four
 - c. Five
4. What state came into the Union by a treaty?
 - a. Arizona
 - b. Texas
 - c. Georgia
5. To help carry out its duties, the Congress sets up
 - a. departments.
 - b. boards.
 - c. courts.
6. According to the article,
 - a. the Constitution has been rewritten.
 - b. the government has been changed.
 - c. the role of the President has been changed.
7. The Constitution is able to meet the changing needs of the people through.
 - a. treaties.
 - b. declarations.
 - c. popular votes.
8. The author uses "treaty" to mean
 - a. law.
 - b. agreement.
 - c. power.
9. Article II of the Constitution deals with
 - a. Presidential power.
 - b. foreign countries.
 - c. trade agreements.
10. The author states that Congress
 - a. makes laws.
 - b. enforces laws.
 - c. breaks laws.

5. Grading of Eggs

The U.S. Department of Agriculture requires that a grade mark be used on eggs. It is printed on the carton or on a tape used to seal the carton. It shows both the grade and the size of the eggs. Sometimes the size is not printed in the grade mark but is printed on the carton.

There are three grades for eggs. The top grade is U.S. Grade AA, or Fresh Fancy Quality. The next is U.S. Grade A. U.S. Grade B is the lowest grade.

Some stores sell all three grades, and there may be quite a difference in price between the grades.

The top two grades, AA and A, are best for frying and poaching. They don't spread out very much in the pan, and the yolk is firm and not easily broken.

Grade B eggs are just as good to eat. But the white is thinner. Also, the yolk may be flatter than in eggs of the higher grades.

In most states, eggs marked with a grade and size must meet state laws. Many state grade standards are the same as those of the U.S..

Eggs come in different sizes. But the size has nothing to do with the quality. So you have two decisions to make in buying eggs—the grade and the size.

A dozen Small eggs must weigh at least 18 ounces. Mediums must weigh at least 21 ounces. Large eggs must weigh at least 24 ounces. As you can see, there is a 3-ounce difference between each size.

Smaller eggs sell for less than the bigger ones because you really buy them by weight just as you do meat and other foods.

For example, let's say Large Grade A eggs are selling for 80 cents a dozen. To be of equal value, a dozen Medium Grade A eggs would sell for about 7 cents less, or 73 cents. Small Grade A eggs would sell for 7 cents less than the Mediums, or 66 cents. If the smaller sizes were priced much below this, you could get more for your money by buying the smaller sizes.

A buyer should watch for bargains in these smaller-sized eggs in late summer and fall when they're plentiful. If a person makes it a habit to check the price difference between sizes, then he'll be able to spot the

bargains when they're available. (400 words)

1. Which federal department **requires** grade marks on eggs?
a. Commerce b. Interior c. Agriculture
2. Grade marks indicate
a. size and quality b. color and texture. c. price and shape
3. The lowest grade allowed for eggs is
a. Grade B. b. Grade C. c. Grade D.
4. Grading marks are usually located on
a. the eggs. b. the carton. c. the tag.
5. What is the weight difference between each size of eggs?
a. 2 ounces b. 3 ounces c. 4 ounces
6. Some states label eggs Jumbo.
a. This labeling is not legal.
b. These eggs would be larger than Large.
c. No one would be able to afford these eggs.
7. A person who wishes to use eggs for baking a cake should buy
a. Grade AA, Medium.
b. Grade A, Large.
c. Grade B, Medium.
8. Which one of the following should be the most inexpensive?
a. Grade AA, Medium
b. Grade A, Large
c. Grade B, Medium
9. U.S. Grade A eggs
a. have firm yolks.
b. are often smaller than other grades.
c. have thinner shells.
10. We can conclude that
a. supermarkets offer the lowest egg prices.
b. grade does not necessarily indicate price.
c. Medium and Large eggs are priced lower in winter.

6. Tea and Taxes

The cost of a war is always high. The British had had to fight France both in Europe and in America. Great Britain needed more money.

The King thought that the colonists were using goods on which taxes had not been paid. He ordered his officers to search for such goods without giving any reasons.

The colonists were not pleased. They were Englishmen. They said that they could not be searched unless the officer gave them a written statement telling why the search was made. But the officers took orders from the King and refused to listen to the colonists.

For many years the King and the parliament had taxed goods that were brought into the colonies from other countries. Great Britain wanted the colonies to trade with her. She had told the colonists what goods they could make and with whom they could trade. But Great Britain had not placed heavy taxes on the colonists. She had not asked that the colonists give much money to support the mother country.

Following the war with France, Great Britain kept an army of soldiers in the colonies. The King, George III, decided that the colonists should pay the cost of the army. So the parliament passed a new tax law. It forced the colonists to buy tax stamps and to put them on newspapers, deeds, and all business papers. The colonists could neither buy nor sell anything without paying the new taxes.

The colonists were not against taxes. But they did not like to be taxed against their wishes. They did not have representatives in the Parliament. They said that it was wrong to force the colonists to pay the taxes. It was against their rights as Englishmen. For a hundred years, all Englishmen had said that they could be taxed only by their own representatives.

At first King George III and the Parliament refused to change the tax laws. Many of the colonists would not buy the tax stamps. Some of the people took the stamps and burned them. At last, the friends of the colonists in the Parliament had the tax laws changed.

The Parliament then put a tax on all paint, paper, glass, lead, and tea that were brought into the colonies. Again, the colonists did not like the new taxes. They refused to buy any goods from Great Britain until

the tax laws were changed. (400 words)

1. The English government taxed
 - a. tobacco.
 - b. paint.
 - c. coffee.
2. The colonists did not mind being searched if the officers
 - a. were French.
 - b. paid a tax.
 - c. had search papers.
3. The King mentioned in the article is
 - a. George III.
 - b. Henry VIII.
 - c. Edward I.
4. Tax stamps were used on
 - a. cigarettes.
 - b. letters.
 - c. newspapers.
5. Most of the colonists were
 - a. French.
 - b. English.
 - c. German.
6. England taxed goods shipped to the colonies from other countries
 - a. because England wanted all the trade.
 - b. because goods from foreign countries were not well made.
 - c. because England wanted a war with the colonies.
7. According to the article, the stamp tax
 - a. was a great success for many years.
 - b. was ignored by the colonists.
 - c. was a complete failure.
8. This article is mostly concerned with
 - a. the cost of war.
 - b. the English government.
 - c. British power in the colonies.
9. The author states that the colonists
 - a. hated all taxes.
 - b. would not pay a tax to vote in elections.
 - c. wanted to be taxed by their own officials.
10. Early colonists were unable to make
 - a. pewter.
 - b. paper.
 - c. pans.

7. Beaks and Bills

When one thinks of birds and their mouths, many different types come to mind. An observer might wonder why they are all so different.

Unlike humans who have hands and tools to prepare their foods to fit their mouths, birds must have mouths to fit their foods. A person might study a few different types of birds, the shapes of their mouths, and the types of food they eat.

Having a backyard feeder allows one to be most familiar with the seed eaters. They have short, stout bills that are well suited for cracking hard seed coats to expose the tender kernels. The sharp tip of the beak is useful for capturing insects, which are also part of their diet.

Insects play a large part in the diet of many birds. Insect eaters have thin bills that allow them to remove insects and insect eggs from in and among the leaves and pieces of bark.

There are also flying insect eaters. Although these birds have tiny, weak beaks, their mouths open wide like traps to scoop up insects in flight. Purple martins, members of the swallow family, are well known for their insect-eating abilities. People often build martin houses to attract them.

Woodpeckers have hard bills with which they hollow out their nests and bore for grubs in tree bark. Woodpeckers have long bills and, like hummingbirds, they are the only birds with tongues that can extend beyond the tips of their bills to help in food gathering. Once the hole has been bored and the insect is found, the woodpecker sticks his pointed tongue into the hole to pull out the insect.

Since the hummingbird's food is the sweet nectar found deep within flower blossoms, nature has given this bird a long, thin bill for searching deep into flowers. The long tongue, like a tube, can extend beyond the tip of the bill. It can reach into the deepest blossom to suck the nectar. Tiny insects inside the flowers also are eaten. Changes within the species have caused some hummingbirds to have either longer or shorter bills. Some have bills that are straight, curve up, or curve down to fit more easily into flowers that are common in an area.

Birds of prey, such as eagles, owls, hawks, and falcons have sharp-edged, hooked bills that are used to tear bite-sized pieces of flesh from