

Coursebook for PETS


全国英语等级考试

教材

第五级

全国英语等级考试教材编写组



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全国英语等级考试教材

第 5 级 PETS

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序言

普及社会英语教育 培养我国急需人才

改革开放以来,我国政治、经济、文化的各个领域不断地吐故纳新、融合交流,国际上先进的技术与经验不断地传到了我们的身边,对外交往的深度与广度都在进一步地加大。

随着时代的发展,我们的外语教育与实际需求之间的矛盾也日益凸现:一方面,随着改革开放、对外交往的不断深入,急需大量的外语人才,其中英语人才的需求最为突出;另一方面,我国的外语教育仍落后于社会的需要,没能有效地培养学生听、说、读、写的实际交际能力。而社会教育方面则欠缺有力的指导和整体的规划,社会人员学习外语总是感到吃力和困惑。林林总总的难题,使外语人才在质量和数量方面都跟不上形势的发展。

建国以来,我国领导人就一直关注和重视外语教学工作,曾多次指示从英语着手进行外语教育、考试的研究和改革。教育部考试中心经过精心策划、设计,在英国国际发展部(DFID)的资助以及英国剑桥大学地方考试委员会(UCLES)的大力支持下,于1999年6月向社会推出了全国英语等级考试体系(Public English Test System,简称PETS),同年9月首次在北京、天津、山东、辽宁、浙江、湖北和广东等10个省、市开考,报考总人数达到28,577人。在PETS全面推广的几年内,报考人数逐年增加,已经成为我国重要的英语类考试体系。

从1999年9月开始,PETS第五级替代原有的公派出国留学人员英语水平考试(WSK·EPT);根据级别不同,考试成绩可以替代高等教育自学考试专科或本科的公共英语考试。2000~2002年已用相关级别改造了高考和研究生入学考试;用PETS1~5级分别逐步替代中考,中职、高职外语加试成绩,高中会考以及成人高考等英语成绩。

与此同时,一些国家机关、事业单位和三资企业已开始使用 PETS 的考核成绩作为对干部考评、员工录用的英语水平鉴定标准;2003 年中国人民解放军在全军推行该考试;中国银行、航空航天系统等部门已与考试中心接触,将在其系统内使用该项考试成绩。

与其他英语考试相比,PETS 具有统一的系统评价标准,在考试成果的使用上也有统一的对照和准确的引用标准,更重视听力和口语的考核。命题的各项设置非常细致和明确,结构的整体和局部均理念独到、架构缜密,在级别的划分和难度的设置上也考虑周全,使其尽可能地趋于规范、合理和实用。

更值得赞赏的是,PETS 面向全国的任何一个英语学习者,是一个全国性的非学历性外语考试平台。无论任何职业、年龄和学历,都可以参与到这项考试中来。考试的宽广程度可以满足学习者和用人单位的需求,为对外交流和经济建设提供了一个稳固的桥梁。

PETS 完善各种考核手段,尤其重视听力和口语的考查,使学习者的学习和考试成果可以在实践中得到完整的应用。“考试为了学习,学习为了应用”也同样是 PETS 考试最大的意义。

本套教材编委会经过长期的策划,组织了我国著名大学的专家、教授,联合编写了 PETS 一至五级的学习教材,希望读者通过这套教材的学习,圆满完成 PETS 的各项考核,提高英语水平,对自身的发展有所裨益,更好地为社会做出贡献。

我们相信,在 21 世纪这个知识经济和快速发展的国际交流的新时代,在教育部考试中心的精心组织和领导下,在全国各有关专家、学者的大力配合下,全国英语等级考试一定会在各个领域的发展中发挥其重要的作用,为国家的经济建设和对外交流做出更多的贡献。

孙亦丽
于北京大学

提 要

全国英语等级考试体系(Public English Test System, 简称PETS)是由教育部考试中心设计开发的系列考试之一。PETS考试面向社会开考,共分为五个等级。它的目的是根据我国英语教学的实际情况和社会发展的需要,在同一能力量表的基础上合理设置各级考试的评价标准,重点测试听、说、读、写的能力,确保相同级别不同考次之间考生成绩的等值,逐步将有关的升学、出国、自学考试联系起来,使考生成绩使用达到多样化。

PETS第五级为五个级别中的最高级,其标准相当于我国大学英语专业二年级结束时的水平。通过该级考试的考生,其英语水平基本满足在国外攻读硕士研究生(非英语专业)或从事学术研究的需要。该水平的英语也能满足他们在国内外从事专业和管理工作的基本需要。

本教材共有十六个单元,每单元覆盖一个交际话题,内容包括:

1. 课文

课文是体现话题的阅读材料。部分单元有两篇课文。为提高考生的兴趣和帮助考生对课文的理解,并联系本人所熟悉的信息进行口头练习,每单元课文后附有几个问题。

2. 单词和短语

单词和短语是本单元课文中出现的生词和短语,该部分给出了单词的国际音标、词性、中文释义和短语的中文释义。

3. 构词法

每单元均对构词法进行了简单讲解。

4. 注释

注释针对课文,内容包括三方面:一是介绍相关的文化背景知识,加深考生对课文的理解;二是从语法、词汇等方面点拨课文中的难点;三是对长难句进行语法分析,并举例讲解语言点、知识点,目的是训练考生灵活运用语言的能力。

5. 练习

练习是针对各单元的话题和重点内容设计的,考生可以对该单元的学习情况进行检测。该部分题型与考试大纲一致,以便于考生备考 PETS 第五级。

本教材最后有 7 个附录,包括:(1) 笔试样卷;(2) 功能意念表;(3) 语言技能表;(4) 课文问题答案;(5) 听力练习录音稿;(6) 课后练习答案;(7) 单词和短语总表。

随书赠送的 MP3 光盘内容包括:课文、生词以及课后听力题材料的录音稿,可以在电脑,以及具有 MP3 功能的 CD 机、VCD 机和 DVD 机上播放。

本教材另配有课后听力练习的录音磁带。

所有录音部分均由北美人士原声朗读。

本书中的插图由刘有金、王晓玲两位老师绘制,在此深表感谢。

愿所有考生顺利通过考试,学到真正有用的知识!

编写组

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Unit 1

Education

Text A

The Revolution That Turned Education Sentimental

At some point in the mid-1960s the picture of the classroom in the national imagination changed. Before, it consisted of ranks of traditional, slope-surfaced wooden desks at which sat uniformed children, their heads bowed, before an authoritarian and perhaps eccentric teacher. After, there were tables organized into groups, no uniforms and a nice, friendly teacher who probably liked the same pop music as his pupils.

This is a cartoon view, but it depicts a real change. It was an educational revolution that was well-meant, benignly inspired by concern for our children and apparently, endorsed by some of the greatest minds of our age. Its ideal was to help children grow and its politics were egalitarian. With Shirley Williams's abolition of most grammar schools and the introduction of comprehensives, the plan was in place.

It was, as we and the Prince of Wales now know, an unmitigated disaster. Understanding why we did it and why it fails is a gloomy but necessary business.

Perhaps it was simply because it seems like a nice thing to do. Of course teachers should help children to grow up; of course comprehensives should break down class divisions; of course grim authority should give way to happy enthusiasm. These were simple ideals, but they were created by a thought process and it is this that now has to be dismantled.

The first point is not to be confused by the politics. Today's teachers are not the raging extremists of Tory and tabloid mythology. Indeed, more than 50% of them, according to one estimate, vote Conservative.

The real root of the problem is inadequately understood and misapplied theory. Take, for

example, the specific issue raised by the prince—why Shakespeare was not being widely and enthusiastically taught. The immediate reason is that educationists and teachers have colluded on a view that contemporary and multicultural work is more relevant and that Shakespeare, indeed all pre-1990 literature, is left to be inaccessible to less able pupils.

At one level this is a result of the “child-centered” philosophy defined by the Plowden report in the 1960s. Lady Plowden’s committee led us all into unstructured classrooms and the accompanying glorification of childish ignorance. It effectively wrote the script for the liberal education establishment that has dominated our schools ever since.

Keeping the Plowden faith alive now is the wildly misguided figure of Frank Smith, preacher of the “real books” approach to reading. This is the liberal theory in its most decadent phase: children are expected to read almost solely by being in the presence of books. Some benign osmosis is supposed to function. What Smith and his followers cannot see is that reading is an artificial activity, an arbitrary code demanded by our culture.

Emerging from ill-digested Freud, which, in turn, was modified Nietzsche, and a corrupted version of Rousseau, the beliefs of these people aspired to turn education into a process whereby the child dictated the pace. The whole educational emphasis swung from transmitting a culture to nurturing individual development. It encouraged sentimentality, the primary emotional evil of our day, and a sort of caring blandness. More alarmingly, it offered teachers the chance to be social engineers.

In practical terms, it undermined the authority of what was being taught. It is not necessary, indeed it is impossible, for a primary school child to understand the principle behind the eight-times table. Numbers of theorists over the world would dearly like to know that principle for themselves. But child-centeredness demands understanding rather than learning, so tables are not taught properly and children are severed from a culture which depends for its coherence on the simple, authoritative certainty that seven times eight is 56.

Literature in schools was specifically compromised by other cases of remote high-intellectual theories trickling down into the classrooms. In the late 1960s and the early 1970s, structuralism swept through British universities to be followed later by post-structuralism. A whole generation of French thinkers—Derrida, Barthes, Lacan, Levi-Strauss, Foucault—appeared to have discovered that literature was dead.

All that was left was “the text”. Great authors and their intentions were exposed as elaborate delusions. Meaning was unconsciously embodied in the text, any text. Hamlet, from this perspective, has no greater intrinsic worth than the list of ingredients on a can of beans.

Barthes and Derrida were brilliant and Rousseau and Freud, the cultural grandfathers of the

1960s revolution, were geniuses. The average teacher has probably never read any of them, but without knowing, he has absorbed an intellectual tradition that had distorted their thought into cheap sentimentality. Handing such tradition to a low-grade educational establishment is like giving a Kalashnikov to a four-year-old.

There is one final layer of intellectual corruption that needs to be exposed—cultural relativism. This is the most deeply hidden of all because it is the most pervasive. In essence, it is the deadening conviction that all cultures are equal and that, therefore, ours is of no special value. It can even be glimpsed in the current moronic Nationwide Building Society television advertisement in which dancing natives carrying spears are unquestioningly characterized as springing from an “older, wiser” culture. Hamlet and the eight-times table are cast aside. Anything can be taught.

Why do we feel the need to believe this? Why have we lost the power to celebrate what we are?

Yet cultural relativism is the instinctive belief of our entire educational establishment and, consequently, of their pupils. It explains all the supposedly “relevant” material that makes its ways into classrooms as well as the abject “multiculturalism” that destroys our ability to assert that Hamlet is better than either a baked bean can or the latest rap star.

Prince Charles began to see the point when he read of a speech delivered by George Walden, the Tory MP, in June 1990. Walden is the Jonathan Swift of our age, hurling dangerously literate abuse at the tat and trash of our culture.

The speech, ostensibly on the subject of diplomacy, veered into a withering evocation of a culturally depraved nation—whose economic recovery is as recent as it is likely to change, whose educational and cultural levels remain lamentably low, and whose main conurbations—which already include some of the most desolating cityscapes in Europe—are becoming environmentally suffocated. He spoke of “a trashed society, trashy broadcasting, trashy newspapers, trashy values, a national past trashed by a trashy education system”. We were “the thick man of Europe”.

It is difficult to imagine anybody wishing to be King of such a place. So Walden, who is very clever, met Charles, who is not, and helped to steer him in the direction of education as the root of the malaise.

As with architecture, it was a potentially explosive populist issue. People seemed unable to get what they wanted from a band of haughty professionals. And, as with architecture, throwing the prince into this morass was to play a highly risky wild card.

The key to what the prince, and therefore Walden, is saying is bewilderment. After 12 years

of radical Tory rule and in a climate of popular conviction that the state education system has been a disastrous failure, why are our schools still so bad? And why do they still seem so vulnerable to the kind of ideas that have proved so disastrous for so long?

The political problem was that schools never made Margaret Thatcher angry in the same way as unions or nationalized industries. She felt that people ought to look after themselves and bad schools became, in this context, a kind of bracing, self-improving hazard of life.

It was a terrible, tragic mistake. Of all the failed establishments of post-war Britain, education was the one most urgently in need of a Thatcher revolution. But her ministers, with their children at private schools, never did enough to force her to re-examine her prejudices.

So the bewilderment of the prince is inspired both by a political failure and by deeply-embedded intellectual corruption. The hope must be that his intervention will focus the popular conviction that something is badly wrong and force the issue out of the wilderness to which Thatcher consigned it.

Unfortunately taking on the liberal educational establishment is like trying to disperse a fog with hand grenades. To discuss the issue with them is to run into a damp barrier of terrifying complacency. They will focus on “resources”, on the specialist expertise of teachers or on the availability of Shakespeare on video. What they will not do is to accept the bad and violent failure of the education system to transmit the most glorious cultural heritage in the world. This is, of course, because they themselves are substantially ignorant of that culture.

The prince is aspiring to exalted company. Apart from Walden, in this country the historian, Correlli Barnett, has damned the education system for producing “a segregated, subliterate, unskilled, unhealthy and institutionalised proletariat hanging on the nipple of state maternalism”. And in America, Allan Bloom with his book, *The Closing of the American Mind*, has indicted liberal educationists for the almost total destruction of the nation’s culture.

But the truth is that, both in the United States and Britain, these prophets are surveying a defeat. The damage has been done. As a result, both countries have resigned themselves to living with a swelling, disaffected, subliterate underclass.

Teaching Shakespeare or tables has nothing to do with such vast social problems, the liberals will say. The horror is that they still believe it.