

The Best English Essays

修订版

英文散文精选

主编 秦明利

主审 田 强

哈尔滨工业大学出版社



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(修订版)

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序

英语是国际语。在经济全球化大环境中,它不仅是不同文化间相互交流的工具,也是不同国家之间“相互竞争的手段”。英语在 21 世纪的特殊定位为外语教育界提出了新的任务和目标。

今后若干年内,广大外语教师面临的任务是:加强实用性教育,包括尽快提高大学生的综合英语能力,使学生的听说读写等能力得到全面发展;而且在此基础上,使大学生掌握在经济、科技和文化等方面进行跨文化交际的能力。显然,这是直接关系到我们国家能否尽快培养出具有强大竞争力的一流人才的十分艰巨的任务。

面临这样巨大的历史性的挑战,我校外语系部分有丰富阅历和教学经验的英语教师,在教材改革和建设方面集思广益,作出初步尝试,推出《大学英语系列教材》,旨在为培养学生的英语综合能力奠定基础。这一系列主要包括:大学英语听说、大学英语阅读、大学英语写作、大学英语词汇、英文散文精选、大学英语语法、大学英语四级试题分项训练、大学英语六级试题分项训练等。

教材体现较先进的教学理念,引进大量国外资料,涵盖文化、科技、教育、经济、政治等,内容最新,丰富多样,实用性强,有利于开阔学生的视野和扩大他们的知识面。教材实践中,练习的设计有很强的操作性,既有利于培养学生相互交往能力,也有利于培养他们的逻辑推理和解决问题的能力。

此系列教材仅是我们在培养大学生综合英语能力方面所进行的尝试,因经验和水平有限,难免有很多不尽人意之处,恳请同仁和读者指教。

哈尔滨工业大学《大学英语系列教材》

编委会

2002 年 8 月

再版前言

学习语言,无论是中文还是外语,背诵是一个不可或缺的一环。在中国学习英语,没有语言环境,背诵尤其重要。这是外语界前辈的成功经验,也正在为许多学生的外语学习实践所验证。

背诵要有选择性,用于背诵的文章既要在思想方面鼓舞人心,又要在内容方面贴近生活,还应在语言方面流畅优美;背诵也应以适量为宜,学生限于时间和精力,往往只能背诵有限的文章。背诵文选必须要对学生的上述要求给以充分考虑。

《英文散文精选》正是基于以上考虑,尤其是为配合大学英语学习,包括本科生到研究生各个层次而编写的。本书所选编的文章,既包括像培根和罗素等这样的名家名篇经典,也有像 *If I were a Boy Again*, *The ABC of Living a Happy Life* 这样的时尚美文,还特别收入了一些著名演说,使读者能够比较全面地看到各种体裁和题材的精彩文章。其中很多文章在编者执教的哈尔滨工业大学英语教学中使用过,很受学生喜爱。读者通过熟读并背诵这些文章(较长文章可以选背其中部分段落),可以——

培养良好英语语感,为学好语言提供必要的基础;

储备英语语言材料,为说和写提供基本的准备;

了解英语国家文化,激发英语学习兴趣;

欣赏英语精品文章,感悟思想魅力,领略语言之美。

本书出版发行一年来,得到了广大教师和学生的认可,也收到了很多建设性意见和建议。再版之际,编者对关心和支持本书的读者深表感谢。

本次再版,我们对收录的文章作了部分调整,保留了第一版的 64 篇文章,去掉了 44 篇,尽量避免选录同一作者的多篇文章(但有些作家,比如像培根这样的名家也还有选用两篇的情况),并重新编选了 36 篇文章。

为方便学生使用,本次再版还增加了一些注释内容,包括:加注生词音标,省去学生翻查词典的麻烦;长句、难句给出中文注释,有助于学生理解文章内容;对部分文章的结构特点、语言风格做了点评,便于学生欣赏和模仿。

由于编者水平有限,书中难免有疏误之处,恳请专家、读者批评指正。

编者

2003 年 8 月于哈尔滨工业大学

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Equality and Greatness

G. B. Shaw¹

Between persons of equal income there is no social distinction except the distinction of merit². Money is nothing; character, conduct, and capacity are everything. ... There would be great people and ordinary people and little people, but the great would always be those who had done great things, and never the idiots³ whose mothers had spoiled them and whose fathers had left them a hundred thousand a year; and the little would be persons of small minds and mean characters, and not poor persons who had never had a chance. That is why idiots are always in favour of inequality of income (their only chance of eminence⁴), and the really great in favour of equality.

(123 words)



1. G. B. Shaw 萧伯纳 (1856 ~ 1950), 英国剧作家, 曾获 1925 年诺贝尔文学奖。
2. merit ['merit] *n.* 价值
3. idiot ['idiot] *n.* 白痴
4. eminence ['eminəns] *n.* 卓越

The Development of Buddhism in China

Thomas L. Kennedy¹

Buddhism filtered² into China from India and central Asia from the 1st to the 6th century. Language difficulties at first hampered³ the Chinese in their attempts to grasp the philosophical subtleties⁴ of the Indian system. Between the 3rd and 8th centuries, however, Buddhist doctrine⁵ was translated and disseminated⁶ through all levels of Chinese society by Chinese pilgrims⁷ returning from India. The teachings of Buddhism were basically religious, offering escape from the sufferings of life and the endless reincarnation⁸ caused by human desires into an indescribable state of no desire known as Nirvana⁹. Buddhism was also of great philosophical importance, because the formulas¹⁰ for achieving Nirvana that it brought to China included sophisticated metaphysical explanations of the nature of existence¹¹.

(128 words)



1. Thomas L. Kennedy 托马斯·肯尼迪, 华盛顿州立大学历史教授。
2. filter ['fɪltə] *vi.* 渗入
3. hamper ['hæmpə] *vt.* 阻碍
4. subtlety ['sʌtlɪ] *n.* 微妙
5. doctrine ['dɒktrɪn] *n.* 教义
6. disseminate [di'semɪneɪt] *vt.* 传播
7. pilgrim ['pɪlgrɪm] *n.* 朝圣者, 取经人
8. reincarnation [ri:ɪnka:'neɪf(ə)n] *n.* 轮回, 转世
9. Nirvana [niə'vɑ:nə] *n.* 涅槃, 天堂
10. formula ['fɔ:mjʊlə] *n.* 办法
11. sophisticated metaphysical explanations of the nature of existence 对生存本质的复杂而精深的形而上学解释。metaphysical [ˌmetə'fɪzɪkəl] *adj.* 形而上学的

The Joy of Living

A. T. Rowe

Joy in living comes from having fine emotions¹, trusting them, giving them the freedom of a bird in the open. Joy in living can never be assumed² as a pose³, or put on from the outside as a mask. People who have this joy do not need to talk about it; they radiate⁴ it. They just live as naturally as bird sings.

And those who have and exhibit the joy of living are never those who have been without care, sorrow, failure, disappointment, and discouragement. They are rather those who have suffered⁵ and conquered⁶, and who are willing to bear their share of the vicissitudes⁷ of life uncomplainingly⁸.

The joy of living never comes to the frivolous⁹, the superficial¹⁰, the selfish¹¹. We can never get it by working for it directly. It comes, like happiness, to those who are aiming at something higher. It is by-product¹² of great, simple living. The joy of living comes from what we put into living, not from what we seek to get from it.

(177 words)



1. fine emotions 细腻的情感
2. assume [ə'sju:m] *vt.* 假设
3. pose [pəuz] *n.* 装腔作势
4. radiate ['reidiət] *vt.* 发光, 放热; 散发
5. suffer ['sʌfə(r)] *vi.* 受苦
6. conquer ['kɒŋkə(r)] *vt.* 攻克
7. vicissitudes [vi'sisiti:dz] *n.* (复数) 兴衰
8. uncomplainingly [ʌnkəm'pleiniŋli] *adv.* 不诉苦地
9. frivolous ['frivoləs] *adj.* 轻佻的
10. superficial [su:pə'fiʃ(ə)l] *adj.* 肤浅的
11. selfish ['selfiʃ] *adj.* 自私的
12. by-product ['bai-'prɒdʌkt] *n.* 副产品

To the Unknown Teacher

Henry Van Dyke

Using the praise of the Unknown Teacher. Great Generals win campaigns¹, but it is the Unknown Soldier who wins the war. Famous educators plan new systems of pedagogy², but it is the Unknown Teacher who delivers³ and guides the young. He lives in obscurity⁴ and contends⁵ with hardship. For him no trumpets⁶ blare⁷, no chariots⁸ wait, no golden decorations are decreed⁹. He knows the watch along the borders of darkness, and makes the attack on the trenches of ignorance and folly¹⁰. Patient in his duty, he strives¹¹ to conquer¹² the evil powers which are the enemies of youth. He awakens sleeping spirits. He quickens the indolent¹³, encourages the eager, and steadies the unstable. He communicates his own joy of learning, and shares with boys and girls the best treasures of the mind. He lights many candles, which, in later years, will shine back and cheer him. This is his reward. No one is more worthy to be enrolled in the democratic aristocracy¹⁴, "King of himself and servant of mankind."

(177 words)



1. campaign [kæm'peɪn] *n.* 战役
2. pedagogy ['pedəgədʒi] *n.* 教育学
3. deliver [dɪ'livə(r)] *vt.* 递交
4. obscurity [əb'skjʊərɪti] *n.* 默默无闻
5. contend [kən'tend] *vi.* 抗争
6. trumpet ['trʌmpɪt] *n.* 喇叭
7. blare [bleə(r)] *vt.* 奏响
8. chariot ['tʃæriət] *n.* 四轮马车
9. decree [dɪ'kri:] *vt.* 下令
10. folly ['fɒli] *n.* 愚笨
11. strive [straɪv] *vi.* 奋斗
12. conquer ['kɒŋkə(r)] *vt.* 征服

13. indolent [ˈɪndələnt] *adj.* 懶惰的

14. democratic aristocracy 民主的貴族; democratic [deməˈkrætɪk] *adj.* 民主的
aristocracy [ærisˈtɒkrəsi] *n.* 貴族

Imagery and Memory

T. S. Eliot¹

Only a part of an author's imagery² comes from his reading. It comes from the whole of his sensitive life since early childhood. Why, for all of us, out of all that we have heard, seen, felt, in a lifetime, do certain images recur, charged with emotion, rather than others? The song of one bird, the leap of one fish, at a particular place and time, the scent³ of one flower, an old woman on a German mountain path, six ruffians⁴ seen through an open window playing cards at night at a small French railway junction⁵ where there was a water-mill: such memories may have symbolic value, but of what we cannot tell, for they come to represent the depths of feeling into which we cannot peer. We might just as well ask why, when we try to recall visually some period in the past, we find in our memory just the few meager⁶ arbitrarily⁷ chosen set of snapshots⁸ that we do find there, the faded poor souvenirs⁹ of passionate moments.

(177 words)

注释

1. T. S. Eliot 艾略特 (1888 ~ 1965), 英国诗人、批评家, 曾获 1948 年诺贝尔文学奖。
2. imagery ['imidʒəri] *n.* 肖像(总称)
3. scent [sent] *n.* 气味, 香味
4. ruffian ['rʌfiən] *n.* 流氓, 恶棍, 无赖
5. junction ['dʒʌŋkʃən] *n.* 连接, 接合, 交叉点, 汇合处
6. meager ['mi:gə(r)] *adj.* 贫乏的
7. arbitrarily ['ɑ:bitrəri] *adv.* 武断地, 任意地
8. snapshot ['snæpʃɒt] *n.* 快照, 简单印象
9. souvenir [ˌsu:və'niə] *n.* 纪念物

From History of Woman Suffrage

*Elizabeth Cady Stanton*¹

If the object² of government is to protect the weak³ against the strong⁴, how unwise to place the power wholly in the hands of the strong. Yet that is the history of all governments, even the model republic of the United States. You who have read the history of nations, from Moses⁵ down to our last election⁶, where have you ever seen one class looking after the interests of another⁷? Any of you can readily see the defects in other governments, and pronounce sentence against those who have sacrificed the masses to themselves⁸; but when we come to our own case, we are blinded by custom and self-interest⁹. Some of you who have no capital can see the injustice which the laborer suffers; some of you who have no slaves can see the cruelty of this oppression¹⁰; but who of you appreciate the galling¹¹ humiliation, the refinements of degradation to which women (the mothers, wives, sisters, and daughters of freemen) are subject, in this last half of the 19th century¹²?

(178 words)



1. Elizabeth Cady Stanton 伊丽莎白·凯迪·斯丹顿(1815 ~ 1902), 美国社会活动家、女权活动家、废奴主义者。本文发表于 1860 年, 在文中作者呼吁给予妇女平等的选举权。
2. object ['ɒbdʒɪkt] n. 目标
3. the weak 弱者
4. the strong 强者
5. Moses 摩西, 公元前 13 世纪希伯来人的领袖, 率领希伯来人离开埃及, 摆脱奴役。
6. our last election 最近的一次选举。
7. You who have read the history of nations, from Moses down to our last election, where have you ever seen one class looking after the interests of another? 你们读过各国的历史, 从摩西到最近的一次选举, 你们在什么地方看到过一个阶级

关照另一个阶级的利益？

8. Any of you can readily see the defects in other governments, and pronounce sentence against those who have sacrificed the masses to themselves. 你们都能轻易地看到别的政府的缺点，都能大声谴责那些为了自己去牺牲群众利益的政府。
9. When we come to our own case, we are blinded by custom and self-interest. 当轮到自己时，我们就被习俗和一己私利蒙住了双眼。
10. Some of you who have no capital can see the injustice which the laborer suffers; some of you who have no slaves can see the cruelty of this oppression. 没钱的人才能看到劳苦的人遭受的不公平，没有奴隶的人才能看到奴隶压迫的残酷。
11. galling ['gɔ:liŋ] *adj.* 使人恼怒的
12. Who of you appreciate the galling humiliation, the refinements of degradation to which women (the mothers, wives, sisters, and daughters of freemen) are subject, in this last half of the 19th century? 在 19 世纪的后半叶，你们有谁体谅妇女（自由人的母亲、妻子、姐妹和女儿）遭受的恼人的羞辱和巧妙的贬低？