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● 总主编 杜瑞清 ● 本册主编 刘军怀 李晓黎

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总主编 杜瑞清
主 编 刘军怀 李晓黎
审 校 王 峰

总主编 杜瑞清
主 编 刘军怀 李晓黎
丛 书 主 编 王 峰

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序

人类即将迈入 21 世纪,新的时代对我们提出了更高的要求,我们也面临着更多的机遇和挑战。只有及时抓住机遇,主动迎接挑战,才能适应不断发展变化的社会,才能无愧于所处的时代。

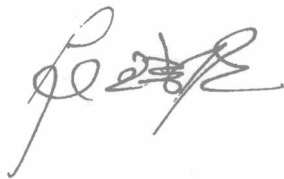
21 世纪是一个国际化、网络化的时代,知识的传播和信息的交流将会更加迅速。因此,作为这些活动的载体——语言,也就显得尤为重要,特别是英语的重要性不言而喻,全世界 70% 以上的出版物均使用英语。改革开放以来,“英语热”持续升温。不过要学好英语谈何容易!怎样学好英语,怎样能够在有限的时间内提高学习效率,广大英语工作者一直在探索行之有效的方法。英语词汇历来是困扰广大学习者的一大难题,只有积累了一定数量的词汇,才能进行训练和提高听、说、读、写、译等基本技能。而词汇的积累主要依靠大量的阅读。由世界图书出版西安公司组织、全国四所高等院校权威专家联合编写的这套《英语阅读突破书系》在此方面作了有益的尝试。全书有以下几个突出特色:

选材得当,资料新颖。全书收集了英语国家出版的最新阅读资料,内容涉及网络、经济、环境、科技、文化、教育等诸多方面。阅读全书,不仅是在提高英语水平,同时也是在最新知识的海洋里遨游。

循序渐进,突出词汇。此套丛书每册分级处理词汇,前后照应,由简到繁,从易到难,按照最新大纲对词汇的要求来编写。

练习多样,重在掌握。本书在每篇课文之后都安排了形式不同的练习,并对课文进行翻译,提供参考答案,以便更好地检查学习效果,巩固所学内容和词汇。

本书不仅可作为在校大学生英语学习的阅读辅助教材,还可为自学考试学生以及广大英语爱好者提供切实的帮助,在短期内收到事半功倍的效果。



2000 年 9 月于西安外国语学院

前 言

《英语阅读突破书系》为循序渐进阅读丛书。编写丛书的目的在于通过丰富、广泛的文章阅读和词汇练习为学习英语的读者提供更好、更新、更科学的语言学习方法,使读者在兴趣盎然的阅读中学习、应用,最终掌握英语单词,扩大词汇量。

丛书共分六册,根据最新《大学英语教学大纲(修订本)》编写,各册词汇量严格按照大纲要求来做。

丛书具有以下特点:

(1)每册内含 18 个单元,每一单元均有两篇阅读文章和一篇篇幅短小且生动有趣的幽默故事。练习设置以单词练习为主,兼顾构词法的学习和练习,练习并不拘泥于形式,各种不同类型相互穿插;力求在阅读实践当中完成词意理解、应用并最终达到掌握的目的。

(2)通过阅读,每册所掌握的词汇数量和重点不同:第一册可掌握词汇 2300,第二册可掌握词汇 3000,第三册可掌握词汇 3500,第四册可掌握词汇 4200,第五册可掌握词汇 5000,第六册可掌握词汇 5500。

(3)考虑到基础阶段读者的词汇量不够丰富的特点,每篇阅读文章中出现的新词、生词均加有标注,协助读者完成连续的、不间断的思维过程,再加之文后的难句注解及背景知识能使读者实现真正意义上的有效阅读。

(4)丛书选材广泛,内容新颖,可扩大读者的语言接触面;同时又图文并茂,既赏心又悦目。希望能通过一种别致、多变的途径使本书成为读者扩大词汇量、提高阅读能力、增见识、长知识的好帮手。

千里之行始于足下,坚实基础奠定需要读者的用心和恒心,本书在给读者提供实践机会的同时,更期望通过本书的引导帮助读者培养阅读的兴趣,养成自觉良好的阅读习惯,从而登上更高的台阶。

限于水平及其他客观原因,本书难免有疏漏之处,敬请各位读者不吝赐教,予以指正。

编 者

2000 年 9 月

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Unit 1



Dividing a Kingdom

分裂王国

大不列颠及北爱尔兰联合王国多年来一直是英格兰、苏格兰、威尔士和北爱尔兰四个部分的联合。但这能持续多久呢？许多人担心英国政府给苏格兰、威尔士更大独立性的计划可能会最终导致英国的分裂。



Pre-reading Questions

1. What are the major political components of Great Britain?
2. Who is the Head of State of Great Britain now?
3. Who is the Prime Minister of Great Britain?
4. What happened to Hong Kong on July 1, 1997?
5. What accounted for the decline of the British Empire?

(1) In the last century, Britain was the largest and most powerful nation on Earth. But, for much of this century, the British Empire¹ has been becoming smaller. It finally came to an end on July 1, 1997 when the last significant colony²—Hongkong—was handed over to China.

(2) Until recently, it was thought that the United Kingdom³ could not become smaller any further, since all that is left are the small islands that make up the union itself. But now, Britain's Labour government⁴ plans to create new parliamentary assemblies⁵ in Scotland and Wales, raising fears that the union might disappear altogether.

(3) Britain's Prime Minister⁶, Tony Blair, argues that his policy of devolution⁷ may be the only way to prevent the fall of the UK. The giving of additional powers to Scotland⁸ and Wales⁹ will, he believes, put a stop to the ongoing demands for total independence for those countries.

(4) The more important of the new governing bodies is the Scottish Parliament¹⁰ in Edinburgh, which is planned to take office at the start of the year 2000. The 129 members of the Parliament will set up an executive¹¹, which will have most of the powers of a full government over Scotland's five million citizens. The only functions of government that will still be determined in Westminster¹² will be constitutional affairs¹³, foreign and defence policy, national security and economic affairs (although the new Parliament will have the power to make income tax rates up to three percent higher or lower than they are in the rest of Britain.)

(5) Nationalists¹⁴ argue that Scotland should be independent from the UK because it is so different from Britain as a whole. The most obvious differences are cultural—kilts, bagpipes and certain sports and games are unique to Scotland. But the systems of law, education and religion also differ considerably to those of the rest of the Britain.

(6) But even those who don't want Scotland to become a completely separate country agree that a parliament in Edinburgh may be necessary to ensure that the £ 14 billion the British government gives to Scotland every year is spent properly.

(7) The same argument applies to Wales, where the British government spends about £ 7 billion a year. However, the proposed Welsh Assembly will not have the same power as Scotland's. It won't be able to raise or lower taxes, nor introduce any laws that have not already been approved by Westminster. In short, the Welsh Assembly will do little more than distribute money given by London. This, say critics, makes it little more than a large local authority¹⁵.

(8) Although Wales's three million citizens have a rich and distinct culture, as well as their own language—spoken by just under 20 percent of the population—at present there is little popular support for a complete break with London. However, opponents of independence fear that the Welsh Assembly will make further independence seem more attractive, especially if the Scottish Parliament is successful.

(9) More pressing though are the problems that the new assemblies could cause in London. Scotland and Wales will continue to have MPs¹⁶ in Parliament at Westminster. This means they will be in the strange position of having a say over the affairs of England, with its far greater population of 48 million, but not over matters in their own countries. In England, there is already unpleasant feeling

about this, and there are fears that it could lead to calls for a separate Parliament for England itself. If that happens, there is little chance of the UK holding together in its current form.

(10) Most British politicians agree that devolution will mark a step into unknown territory for the UK. But people like Alex Salmond, leader of the Scottish National Party, which wants total independence for Scotland, believe that history is on their side. "We see a pattern of big nations breaking up and separatist parties gaining ground throughout the world," says Mr. Salmond. "Within the European Union¹⁷, there is clearly room for an independent Scotland to take its place alongside the new democracies of the former Soviet Union, eastern and central Europe."

(11) Even those who disagree with Mr. Salmond believe that the end of the Cold War¹⁸ has encouraged moves towards independence by small nations, and not just in Europe but in countries as different as Canada and India. Indeed, some experts in government law believe that a federal system¹⁹ similar to that of the US or Germany may prove the best solution for Britain. This would include a new English Parliament which, like those of Scotland and Wales, would have major powers to negotiate international agreements.

(12) In such a situation, the UK would stay as the overall sovereign²⁰ power with the British Monarchy²¹ at its head. But many of its responsibilities would be handed over to regional parliaments. In the long run, this may be the best that those strongly in favor of a united Britain can hope for.



Notes

1. British Empire 英帝国
2. colony *n.* 殖民地
3. the United Kingdom 联合王国(英国) 其全称是 the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland 大不列颠及北爱尔兰联合王国
4. Labour government 工党政府
5. parliamentary assemblies 立法会
6. Prime Minister 首相
7. devolution *n.* 分权
8. Scotland 苏格兰
9. Wales 威尔士
10. Parliament 议会
11. executive *n.* 行政长官
12. Westminster 威斯特敏斯特, 英国议会所在地
13. constitutional affairs 立宪事务
14. nationalists *n.* 民族主义者
15. local authority 地方政府
16. MPs; Members of Parliament 议员
17. European Union 欧洲联盟
18. the Cold War 冷战
19. federal system 联邦政体 也叫 federalism



Exercises

I. Choose the one that best explains the underlined part.

1. ...when the last significant colony was handed over to China.
A. transferred B. returned C. passed D. sent
2. ...since all that is left are the small islands that make up the union itself.
A. invent B. put together C. form D. complete
3. ...raising fears that the union might one day disappear altogether.
A. come into being B. go out of sight C. expand D. diminish
4. The giving of additional powers to Scotland and Wales...
A. joined B. extra C. desired D. unusual
5. The only functions of government that will still be determined in Westminster...
A. limited B. ascertained C. resolved D. decided
6. But the systems of law, education and religion also differ considerably...
A. weightily B. importantly C. greatly D. thoughtfully
7. The proposed Welsh Assembly will not have the same powers as Scotland's.
A. offered B. recommended C. suggested D. intended
8. ...at present there is little popular support for a complete break with London.
A. thorough B. immediate C. fulfilled D. perfect
9. ...and there are fears that it could lead to calls for a separate Parliament for England itself.
A. isolated B. independent C. united D. different
10. We see a pattern of big nations breaking up...
A. weakening B. ending C. disintegrated D. building up

II. Fill in the blanks with suitable prepositions.

1. In the past few years, Bill Gates has been regarded as the richest man on Earth.
2. I personally hope the Middle East peace talks will come to a good end soon.
3. American English cannot be totally different from British English in pronunciation and vocabulary.
4. No one is sure whether there is a popular support for independence in Puerto Rico.
5. In the company he does not have a final say over the affairs concerning the whole company since he is just an employee rather than the boss.
6. According to our history professor, a number of events led to the outbreak of WWI.
7. In the war, both countries claimed that God was on their side.
8. My little nephew is similar to my elder brother in many ways.
9. In the long run, China's auto industry will enjoy a broader and brighter prospect.
10. Those who are in favor of my suggestion please put up your hands.



Text II

Tony Blair

托尼·布莱尔

年轻有为的英国新首相托尼·布莱尔，因重塑工党的形象而使工党终于走出低谷，赢得大选。他正雄心勃勃地创造英国的未来。



Pre-reading Questions

1. How much do you know about Margaret Thatcher?
2. What are the two major political parties in Britain?
3. Which political party is Tony Blair from?
4. Do you know anything about Tony Blair's reform of his party?
5. Can you name three famous British prime ministers?

(1) The landslide victory by the Labour Party¹ in this year's (1997) general election² was so large that it shocked everyone, including Labour and its leader, Tony Blair. His achievement was twofold: he had modernised his Party and so convinced the electorate³ that, after 18 years in opposition⁴, Labour was capable of governing Britain. And he had shown that, at 44, he could be trusted as Britain's youngest Prime Minister this century.

(2) On the night of 1 May, when the election votes were being counted, Tony Blair was quietly confident of victory, but he had not predicted the large number of people who would change their support from Conservative to Labour. By the end of the night, the Labour Party had won 43.1 per cent of total votes, which gave them 179 Members of Parliament (MPs), and the largest total number of seats (418) ever won by the Party in its 100-year history.

(3) Most commentators agree that Tony Blair's personal appeal played a decisive role in this victory. But supporters say there was more to the result than just his ability to perform on television and his youthfulness. They say his most important contribution has been his work to reform the Labour Party's image and structure.

(4) When Blair took over as leader of Labour in 1994, the Party had already been defeated in

four general elections since 1979. The Conservatives⁵, led by Margaret Thatcher⁶ and later John Major⁷ had convinced the electorate that Labour was not fit to govern, and the Party's old-fashioned left-wing⁸ image and internal divisions, reinforced the idea that the party was in disorder.

(5) The last defeat in 1992, convinced reformers within the Party that it needed new direction and new policies. In his campaign to be elected Party leader, Tony Blair was able to show that he had the qualities which a "new" Labour Party needed: he was young, he did not come from a traditional working class background, so he would appeal to middle class voters, and he was committed to getting rid of old, socialist policies like government intervention in industry⁹ and redistribution¹⁰ of wealth. Some members of the Party saw this as a betrayal¹¹ of the past but as the election result has proved, it was the message many voters wanted to hear.

(6) Tony Blair was born in a middle-class household, and grew up, first, in Edinburgh, and then in the city of Durham in the northeast of England. He was educated at an important and admired private school, before going to Oxford University to study law.

(7) He became a lawyer in London in 1976 and through his work he met his wife, Cherie, a fellow-lawyer. Both became Labour candidates¹² in the 1983 general election but only Tony won a seat. Cherie continued her career as a lawyer and is now at the top of her profession. They have four children. (Their fourth child was born in May 2000.)

(8) According to Tony Blair's biographer¹³, John Rentoul, of the *Independent* newspaper, Blair had clear ambitions from an early age.

(9) "I think he had quite idealistic views about what needed to be done in the world. He saw politics as a way of putting them into practice. I don't know whether he thought of himself as a future Prime Minister, but he certainly wanted to become a leader and put into practice his moral values."

(10) Those moral values are based on his Christian beliefs and his socialist principles, but although Blair talks about how they shape his personal life, he has not yet made them part of his Party's policies.

(11) After he became an MP in 1983, representing a strongly working class constituency¹⁴ not far from his home city of Durham, he began to rise rapidly in the Party. He served as Labour's spokesman¹⁵ for, first, employment, then home affairs, before becoming leader. One of his first acts as leader was to modernise the Party's internal structure, making it more open and accountable¹⁶. To emphasize how much the Party had changed he unofficially renamed it "New Labour".

(12) In the three years before the general election, Tony Blair developed and presented Labour's wider policies. These emphasized the need for sound financial management in government. He also worked hard to convince the business community that a Labour government would be good for their interests and he appealed to the middle-class by promising, for example, not to raise income tax rates.

(13) The result of this new policy direction, say critics, is that the Labour Party has stopped to offer anything new and that its policies are closer to the Conservative's than those of "old" Labour. But Tony Blair's answer, repeated during the election campaign, was that he was being sensible and careful and that his party would not make any promises that it could not keep, once elected.

(14) Now that he has achieved his ambition the wisdom of this approach is clear: the British public

are not expecting radical¹⁷ change. Labour's most ambitious policy is to improve education, but other changes, like giving more independence to Scotland and Wales and reforming the election system, will only have limited impact nationwide.

(15) Instead, many people will be looking to see what influence Tony Blair's personal beliefs will have on British political life. On the night of his victory, Tony Blair called the election a "vote for the future for a new era of politics in Britain, so that we can put behind us the battles of the past century and address the challenges of the new century." He has five years until the next general election to bring his future closer.



Notes

1. the Labour Party 工党, 英国政党之一
2. general election 普选、大选
3. electorate *n.* 选民
4. in opposition 反对党
5. Conservative: the Conservative Party 保守党, 英国政党之一
6. Margaret Thatcher 玛格丽特·撒切尔, 保守党前领袖, 1979 年至 1991 年任英国首相
7. John Major 约翰·梅杰, 保守党前领袖, 1992 年接替撒切尔出任英国首相, 1997 年下台
8. left wing 左派, 左翼
9. government intervention in industry 政府干预工业
10. redistribution of wealth 重新分配财富
11. betrayal *n.* 背叛
12. candidate *n.* 候选人
13. biographer 传记作家
14. constituency *n.* 选区
15. spokesman *n.* 发言人
16. accountable *adj.* 负责的
17. radical *adj.* 激进的, 赞成根本改革的

Career Design



Exercises

I. Decide whether the following statements are true or false according to the given passage.

Put a "T" if you think the statement is true. Put an "F" if it is not.

- ____ 1. Tony Blair was surprised that his party won such a big victory in the general election. T
- ____ 2. The Conservative Party and the Labour Party are the only two political parties in the UK. F
- ____ 3. A great number of people who were in favor of the Conservative Party changed their mind and voted for the Labour Party on April 30, 1997. T

4. In the general election of 1992, the Conservative Party defeated the Labour Party and formed the British government. **T**
5. 43.1 percent of total votes means 179 seats in the Westminster Parliament. **T**
6. Tony Blair's reform of his Labour Party has won a nationwide popular support. **F**
7. Tony Blair was so ambitious that he wanted to be the British Prime Minister from an early age. **F**
8. Tony Blair was fond of such policies as government intervention in industry and redistribution of wealth. **F**

II. Guess the meanings of the following words and phrases from the context by matching each word in Column A with the word or phrase in Column B that is similar in meaning.

Column A

1. victory **g**
2. contribution **f**
3. take over **h**
4. campaign **c**
5. profession **d**
6. disorder **b**
7. emphasize **e**
8. unofficially **j**
9. business community **a**
10. nationwide **l**

Column B

- a. business world
- b. confusion; disarray
- c. series of activities to gain a special aim
- d. across the country
- e. stress
- f. achievement
- g. triumph; success
- h. assume control of
- i. career
- j. informally; privately

career design

Exercises



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