

科普英语注释读物

UFOs 飞碟

Lewis Jones 原著



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清华大学外语教研室
英语读物注释小组 译注

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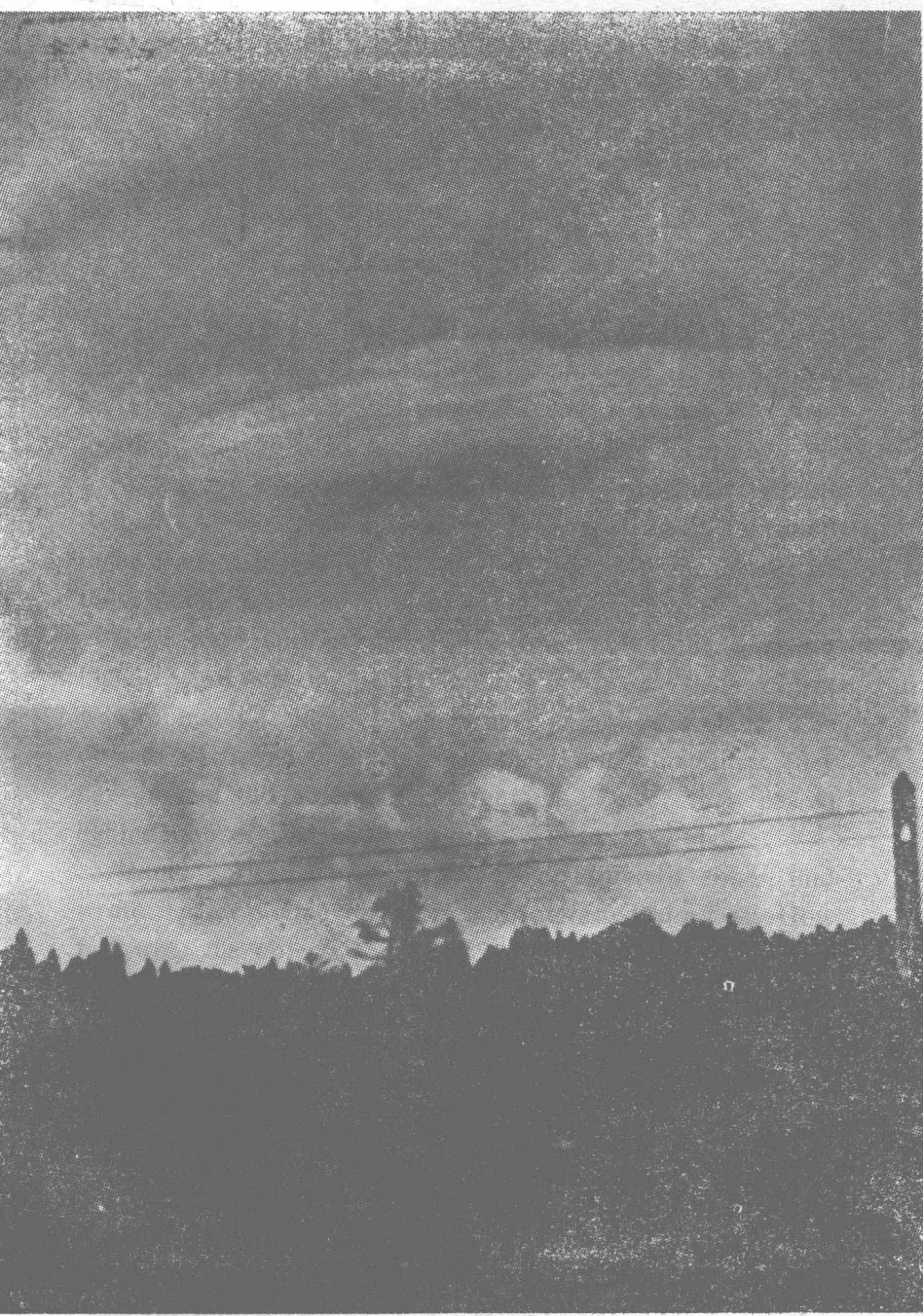


Fig. 1

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1. Saucers in the sky

On June 24, 1947, Kenneth Arnold was flying his plane above the Cascade Mountains of Washington, in the United States. He owned a company that sold things for fire-fighting, and he used his plane for carrying them.

At three o'clock in the afternoon he was near Mount Rainier. A plane was lost in the area, so Arnold flew round for a time¹ and looked for² it. He was looking down at the ground, when he noticed some lights away to his left.³

There were nine of them in a line: the front one was highest, and the one at the back was lowest. Each object was round and shining, and almost as big as a plane. The objects all travelled in line together, and sometimes they flew in and out among the mountains. Once, they passed behind one of the mountain-tops.

Arnold noticed where they were at different times, and wrote it down. One question that interested him was: How fast were the objects flying? When he landed, he looked at his notes: 75 kilometres in 102 seconds. That meant the objects were travelling at 2700 kilometres an hour.⁴ That's what he told the newspapers later.⁴

1. for a time: 暂时, 暂且, 一些时候, 一段时间。 2. look for: 寻找。 3. He was looking ..., when ... away to his left: 他正朝地面望去的时候, 恰好发现左侧稍远的地方有几个发光的物体。when 的这种句型通常用于生动的描写, 表示时间上的紧凑性, 它的特点是主句和从句的时序是颠倒的, 主句的谓语动词一般用进行时态。 4. That's what ... later: 这就是后来他告诉报界的内容。what 意同 the thing which.

The newspapermen asked him: 'How were these objects moving?'

'Each one moved up and down as it travelled,' he said, 'like a saucer when you throw it along the top of the water.'¹

This answer was taken up by² most of his listeners. And next day newspapers all over the United States said Kenneth Arnold saw 'flying saucers' over the Cascade Mountains.

Arnold didn't say that at all.³ He talked of objects that *moved like* saucers thrown across water. He didn't say they *looked like* saucers. But it was too late to⁴ make changes. Flying saucers were in the news.

2. Questions with no answers

A few days later, in Nevada, someone else in a plane saw five or six round objects, away to his right. That same night⁵, four Air Force officers in Alabama saw a strange light in the sky. As it travelled, it sometimes turned left, sometimes right. Sometimes it moved very fast, sometimes slower.

A woman saw ten of them shoot across the sky above her house⁶. A driver in Iowa saw thirteen of them. In New

1. like a saucer when...of the water: 象沿水面抛出去的一个碟子。when 引出的是一个定语从句,说明 a saucer. 2. be taken up by...: 被...采纳。3. not ... at all: 根本没有。4. too+a. (或 ad.)+to+inf.: 太... 以致于不能(做...),对(做...)来说是过于...了。5. That same night: 同一天晚上,还是那天的晚上。6. A woman saw... above her house: 句中ten of them 是 saw的宾语, shoot across 这一定式短语是宾语补足语。注意在 see, watch, feel 等词后面, 用作宾语补足语的不定式都不带 to.

Mexico several people in a car watched a strange light cross the whole sky in thirty seconds. In Chicago a woman saw one 'with legs'.

A policeman in Portland, Oregon, looked up one day and saw five large objects like saucers.¹ They were travelling very fast, and they seemed to be turning round and round as they went. A few minutes later, two other policemen noticed three of the same objects. Then some of the other people in Portland began to see them.

That night, the crew of a plane in Idaho saw five 'some-things'.

One morning, five Air Force men were sitting in a truck when four of them saw an unusual object in the sky. There were two pieces on top that seemed to turn slowly. The object made no sound. After about 90 seconds, the men lost it.

All this—and more—less than two weeks after Arnold's story.²

When United States Air Force planes began to find their way into newspaper stories,³ the Air Force became troubled. It wasn't answering any more⁴ questions from newspapers: it just stopped talking. This made people feel uneasy.

Why was the Air Force saying nothing? What did it know? Why was it hiding things? Was the truth too fearful to tell?

1. **objects like saucers:** 象碟子一样的东西。like 是介词, 这个介词短语说明 objects, 作后置定语。 2. **All this ... story:** 所有这些都是阿诺德报导以后不到两个星期之内发生的。这是一个省略句, 省掉了谓语 (happened)。and more 是插入语。 3. **find their way into newspaper stories:** 出现在新闻报导中。find one's way into 此处作'进入, 进入...境遇'解。 4. **not...any more:** 已不再, 再也不。

3. Visitors from another world?

Maybe this uneasiness caused even more trouble. People began *trying* to see flying saucers. More people began looking at the sky. They saw things they hadn't noticed before. Anything unusual¹ *may* be a strange flying object, so² more people telephoned their newspaper—and there were more flying saucer stories. And the Air Force were still not talking.

It's useful to understand their reasons³. There had been⁴ other stories of strange flying objects since the war. More than a thousand of these stories came from Sweden in 1946 alone. Some people thought those objects were Russian—Sweden was a long way from the United States.

But here was something quite different—now unknown objects were flying across the United States itself.

'What's happening?' people wanted to know 'Do these objects come from Russia? Are they *safe*?'

At that time, Russia and the United States were not at all friendly. The Russians were building many new planes that could reach the USA. Maybe they had new bombs as well.⁵

The USA was planning to send⁶ its U-2 plane high over Russian skies. Maybe the flying objects were Russian, doing

1. **Anything unusual**: 任何异常的东西。说明 anything, something, nothing 的定语都是后置的。 2. **so**: 因此, 所以。so 在这里是并列连词。 3. **It's ... reasons**: 了解人们忧虑的原因是有益的。it 是先行代词, 引出后面的真实主语 to understand their reasons. 4. **There had been ...**: 曾经有过...。这是 there is (are) 的过去完成时。 5. **as well**: 同样, 也, 又。 6. **plan to + inf.**: 计划(做), 准备(做), 期望(做)。

the same kind of thing in the USA—looking, watching, learning.¹ Perhaps an enemy was bringing a new kind of war to the skies over the USA. Were Kenneth Arnold's flying saucers part of that war?

These were the questions that troubled the United States government. It's not surprising that² the Air Force stopped talking to newspapers.

But people were still asking questions. Kenneth Arnold (among others) was happy to give them answers. Like the newspapers, he too was soon talking of saucers that flew. He wrote a small book of fifteen pages—*The Flying Saucer as I saw it*.³ And to the question 'Where do they come from?' he had a clear answer: 'From another world.'

A newspaperman who wrote about a saucer (Arnold said) died of unknown causes. A plane hit Mount Rainier, and everyone in the plane was killed. This was *before* Arnold saw his flying objects, but still (he said) this had something to do with⁴ the saucers.

A bridge in Idaho was strangely set on fire⁵ by 'something'. One saucer was able to get away⁶ because it knew the *thoughts* of the man who flew after it.

When the Air Force was asked, 'Is all this true?' they still had nothing to say. And that only made things worse.⁷

1. **doing ... learning:** 到美国来做一些同样的事情——观察、监视和侦查。doing ... thing in the USA 是一个分词短语,起状语作用; looking, watching, learning 是动名词,是 the same kind of thing 的同位语。2. **It's not surprising that ...:** 对...不会感到惊奇。it 是引导词,引出后面 that 连接的主语从句。3. **as I saw it:** 如我所见到的飞碟。as 引出定语从句,说明 the flying saucer。4. **have something to do with ...:** 同...有某种关系。5. **set ... on fire:** 放火焚烧,纵火。6. **be able to get away:** 能逃掉。7. **And that only made things worse:** 这只能使事情变得更糟。that 是指示代词,指代前句,worse 是 bad 的比较级,作 made 的宾语补足语。

People thought: 'If all these stories are untrue, the government will just say so.¹ But they're not saying anything. Why not? The stories must be true.'

So there was the answer at last. Arnold must be right. The flying saucers must be visitors from another world.

4. What killed Captain Mantell?

'Do you believe in flying saucers?' At first, this meant, 'Do you believe Kenneth Arnold?' Then—when other people saw unusual things—it meant, 'Are these things truly there in the sky? Or only in people's minds?'

But soon it meant something different: 'Do you believe these objects come from another world?'

The *believers* answered, 'Yes. We do have visitors², and they are not from our world.'

The *non-believers* answered, 'No. There must be some other cause.'

The believers couldn't give good reasons, and the non-believers couldn't think of good causes. But the believers seemed more sure of themselves—they certainly made the most noise. It was mostly the believers who³ telephoned the newspapers and wrote the books. But their story needed another chapter—an interesting one⁴, something surprising.

1. the government ... say so: 政府满可以这样说。so 这里是代词。
2. We do have visitors: 确实有些来客到过我们这里。do 是助动词, 用来强调句中主要动词 have 的语气。
3. It was ... who ...: 给报社打电话的、写书的, 多半就是那些相信的人。这是个强调句型, 强调 the believers。
4. an interesting one: 有趣的一章。one(复数用 ones) 可用来代替上文中刚提过的可数名词, 以避免重复。

A few months after Arnold's flight, they got one. It happened at an airport in Kentucky, on January 7, 1948.

That afternoon the airport got a telephone call from the police. Several people were phoning the police about a strange flying object.

'Can you identify it?' the police asked.

The airport said there were no flights in the area.

About twenty minutes later, the police called again. This time, people from two other towns were seeing the object. They said it was round, about 90 metres across, and moving quite fast. The airport made some phone calls of its own, then called the police.

'There are no planes in the area from any airport,' they said. 'There's nothing.'

Then the people at the airport itself saw it. Several officers looked at it long and carefully through field-glasses, but they couldn't identify it. At half-past two, everyone was wondering what to do about it,¹ when four fighter-planes came towards the airport.

The pilot of one of the planes was Captain Thomas Mantell. The airport called him on the radio. They asked him to take a look at² the object, and try to identify it. One of the four pilots hadn't much fuel left³, so he flew on to his own airport. The other two pilots stayed with Mantell, and the three planes began to look for the object.

At first the three pilots could see nothing, and the air-

1. everyone was wondering what to do about it: 谁也不知道对此该做些什么。what to do about it 这个不定式短语,作 wondering 的宾语。2. take a look at: 看一看。3. hadn't much fuel left: 没有剩下很多燃料了。left 是 leave 的过去分词。

port had to help them. Mantell went up to 3000 metres, and left the other two pilots behind. At 2.45 he called the airport and said, 'I see something above me. I'm going up.'

One of the other two pilots asked the airport, 'What are we looking for?'

The airport called Mantell: 'Can you identify the object?'

'It's still above me,' he called back. 'But I'm getting closer. I'm going up to 6000 metres.'

By now¹ Mantell was far above the other two pilots, and they lost him. They called him on the radio, but they got no answer. They thought he must be in trouble.² But they couldn't find him, and soon they hadn't much fuel left, so they had to return to their own airport. When they landed, one pilot refuelled and flew back again. He flew all round the area³, but he didn't see Mantell, and he didn't see the object. At 3.50 the airport lost the object.

A few minutes later they had some news. Mantell was dead. His plane crashed into the ground and he was killed at once. No one knew why it crashed.

But the believers knew why Mantell was dead. He fought with a flying saucer and lost. And with a dead pilot, of course the plane crashed.

The believers' story had its surprising new chapter—an Air Force pilot was killed by something (someone?) from another world.

1. By now: 现在已经; 这时(已)。 2. be in trouble: 处于困境。 3. all round the area: 在这个地区各处 (绕了一圈)。

5. A new word comes into English

Questions rained hard and fast on to¹ the US Air Force. How did Mantell die? What happened to his plane? And of course—what was the Air Force hiding?

The Air Force weren't hiding anything: they were busy trying to find the truth themselves, and it all took time. In the months that followed,² reports began to come in from other countries. In Norway and Denmark and Sweden and Germany, people were reporting 'balls of fire traveling slowly across the sky.' The reports were unclear, and most of them were from newspapers. Soon there were reports from all over Europe and South America.

In the USA, the Air Force was having word trouble. 'Flying saucer' was changing its meaning. At first it meant 'something unusual in the sky'. Now it meant 'something from another world'. And not all reports spoke of things in the form of a saucer. The Air Force didn't want to talk of flying saucers any more. So they made up³ a new name—Unidentified Flying Object⁴.

Almost at once it became known by its first letters: UFO.

A UFO could be *anything*. But not everyone was happy with the new name. If something is only in a man's mind, ought you to call it an *object*? If it isn't moving in the sky, or if it's only a light, can you say it's flying? Sup-

1. rained hard and fast on to: 倾盆大雨般地...袭来。2. In the months that followed: 在随后几个月内。3. make up: 编造,捏造。4. Unidentified Flying Object: 不明飞行物。

pose you can't *identify* it, but someone else can. It's a UFO for you, but not for him.

'Unidentified' means *hasn't* been identified. (It may be identified later.) But surely we're talking about something quite different: things that can't be identified—by anyone¹. If you can identify my Unidentified Flying Object, isn't it then an Identified Flying Object? Has my UFO become your IFO?

Today it's best not to² think of the three letters or the three words. UFO is just one word, and it's new. Today it means *the cause of a report*. The report may be wrong. The thing may be in someone's mind, or it may be a true object. Maybe it's flying and maybe it isn't. It may be in the sky, or it may be on the ground (and someone believes it has just landed). Maybe some people can identify it and some can't.

None of this matters³. As soon as someone *reports* it, it becomes a UFO. Today, the word tells you that someone has made a report—nothing more, nothing less⁴.

But in 1948, the US Air Force was not only in word trouble. It didn't know that 1948 would bring the third of the great UFO reports.

6. Three great UFOs

At 8.30 in the evening on October 1, a plane was coming

1. **things that ... by anyone:** 这些东西任何人都不能辨别。things 是前面 something 的同位语。2. **it's best not to + inf.:** 最好不要(做)。3. **None of this matters.** 无论上述那种情况都没关系。这里 matter 是动词, 作谓语。4. **nothing more, nothing less:** 不多,也不少。这里强调说明有人除了写过一篇报告以外,没作别的。