

English Progressive Reading

英语升级阅读

(供高中学生使用)

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编 者 的 话

数年前,曾因工作需要旅美,在旅途中收集到许多英语短文。这些短文浅显易懂,反映了英语国家的风土人情,涉及天文、地理、历史、动物、植物等内容,知识面广。现将其中的80篇汇编成4级,并配上生动的插图。为了检测使用者的阅读水平,每篇短文后都有自测练习和答案。

A、B级适合初二、初三学生;C、D级适合高中各年级和其他英语爱好者、自学者。这些英语短文也可供英语教师作挑选课内、外阅读材料之用。

编 者

2000.7

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C 级

1. Pigeons and People



Pigeons¹ like large city parks where people will feed them peanuts² , popcorn³ , and bread. Crowded street corners , where people wait for buses and trains , are favorite spots with pigeons , too. Pigeons seem to like the smoke and noise of busy places. They are not at all afraid of people. In some ways⁴ they are even like people.

Many people think that pairs of pigeons stay together as long as they live. The pigeon father helps the pigeon mother take care of the babies. And pigeons feed their babies pigeon milk. So you

see the pigeon family is like the human family in all these ways.

Young pigeons are called squabs⁵. They are very good to eat. Some people raise them for food.

Notes

1. pigeon (*n.*) 鸽子 2. peanut (*n.*) 花生
3. popcorn (*n.*) 爆玉米(花) 4. in some ways
在某些方面 5. squab (*n.*) 雏鸟(尤指出生约四
星期、重一磅左右的雏鸟)

Testing Yourself

1. What are young pigeons called ?

2. From the story you can tell that _____.
 - a. pigeons build nests in quiet places
 - b. pigeons can be eaten for food
 - c. pigeons are always alone
3. The story as a whole is about _____.
 - a. what pigeons eat
 - b. squabs
 - c. what pigeons are like
 - d. people who raise pigeons
4. Pigeons feed their babies a milk-like juice.
 - a. Yes b. No c. Does not say

5. Pigeons eat insects.
a. Yes b. No c. Does not say
6. Which word in the passage means the same as
“ man ”?
-

Key

1. Squabs . 2. b 3. c 4. a 5. c 6. “Human” .

2. Around and Around



The ostrich¹ is the largest bird in the world. From far away , it looks more like a camel² than a bird. It has a long neck , long legs , and a walk like a camel. Its eyes are very large and sharp³. Like the camel , the ostrich can go for a long time without water. It lives in sandy deserts , too.

Its wings are too short for flying , but they do help the ostrich to run fast. The wind gets under the wings and lifts the bird off the ground. This way , it can take very long steps. An ostrich can run faster than a horse.

Ostriches are big and strong , but sometimes they do not seem very smart. When they are afraid , they run around in circles⁴.

Ostrich eggs are large. The shells are very strong. They are so strong that they can be used for cups and bowls⁵.

Notes

- | | |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. ostrich (<i>n.</i>) 鸵鸟 | 2. camel (<i>n.</i>) 骆驼 |
| 3. sharp (<i>adj.</i>) 敏锐的 | 4. circle (<i>n.</i>) 圆圈 |
| 5. bowl (<i>n.</i>) 碗 | |

Testing Yourself

1. What does the ostrich look like from far away ?

2. From the story you can tell that _____.
 - a. an ostrich might beat a horse in a race
 - b. ostriches need to drink lots of water
 - c. the ostrich is very clever
3. The story as a whole is about _____.
 - a. camels
 - b. ostrich egg shells
 - c. the largest bird in the world
 - d. why an ostrich cannot fly
4. When the ostrich is afraid , it may hide its

head.

- a. Yes b. No c. Does not say

5. The ostrich has wings , but cannot fly.

- a. Yes b. No c. Does not say

6. Which word in the passage means “ raise ”?

Key

1. A camel . 2. a 3. c 4. c 5. a 6. “Lift” .

3. Birds of Prey¹



Eagles² are birds of prey. Hawks³ and owls⁴ are birds of prey , too. Birds of prey eat live animals such as squirrels⁵ , mice , and frogs. They catch these little animals with their feet.

An eagle's toes⁶ are thick and very strong. All of the toes are tipped with long , hooked⁷ claws⁸. The toes and claws are used to take hold of⁹ the animals which the eagle catches and eats.

All eagles have hooked claws , and they all have large , strong bills¹⁰. Still , there are many different kinds of eagles.

In our country , only two kinds of eagles are seen. They are the bald eagle¹¹ and the golden eagle.

Eagles are very large birds. Their nests , too , are large. Some are as wide as eight feet across.

Notes

1. prey (*n.*) birds of prey 食肉猛禽 2. eagle (*n.*) 雕 , 鹰 3. hawk (*n.*) 鹰 4. owl (*n.*) 猫头鹰 5. squirrel (*n.*) 松鼠 6. toe (*n.*) (动物的) 趾 7. hooked (*adj.*) 钩状的 , 有钩的 8. claw (*n.*) (动物的) 爪 , 脚爪 9. take hold of 握住 , 抓住 10. bald eagle 秃鹰

Testing Yourself

- Birds that catch live things to eat are called birds of _____.
- From the story you can tell that _____.
 - the bald eagle is a very small bird
 - eagles are strong birds
 - there are many kinds of eagles in this country
- The story as a whole is about _____.
 - hawks
 - the eagles
 - eagles' nests

- d. what eagles eat
4. The bald eagle is the biggest eagle.
- a. Yes b. No c. Does not say
5. Eagles' nests are larger than those of any other birds.
- a. Yes b. No c. Does not say
6. Which word in the passage means "having a sharp bend"?
-

Key

1. prey 2. b 3. b 4. c 5. c 6. "Hooked"

4. Fine Feathers¹



Birds' feathers help them fly , but feathers are a help to birds in other ways , too.

The color of its feathers helps a bird to hide. Some birds' feathers are brown or gray. A bob-white² looks like part of the ground to an animal hunting it. It looks like old leaves or grass. Some birds' feathers are bright. A yellow goldfinch³ feeding on yellow dandelions⁴ in the summer is hard to see. Bright or not , their feathers help birds to hide.

Some birds have feathers that please other

birds. A male's bright colors say ,“ Here I am !” to the female. The blue jay uses its colors in still another way. This little bird loves to quarrel⁵ with squirrels and crows and hawks. Its feathers seem to say ,“ See me !See me !”

Notes

1. feather (*n.*) 羽毛 ;翎毛 2. bob-white (*n.*)
(北 美 产) 鹌 3. goldfinch (*n.*) 金翅雀
4. dandelion (*n.*) 蒲公英 5. quarrel (*v.*) 争
吵 ,吵架

Testing Yourself

1. What do the colors of birds' feathers help them to do ?

2. From the story you can tell that _____.
 - a. female birds have brighter colors than male birds
 - b. blue jays are hidden by their colors
 - c. a bob-white is not brightly colored
3. The story as a whole is about _____.
 - a. how birds' feathers help them
 - b. birds with dark feathers
 - c. birds with bright feathers