

“DO YOU KNOW?”系列读物之三

BELIEVE IT OR NOT

珍闻趣谈

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内容提要

本书为“DO YOU KNOW?”系列读物之三。全书共 85 篇,均选自英美原文,内容包括世界各地珍闻趣谈和文化习俗,文章短小精悍,语言简单易读,知识性强。本书可供高中生(特别是高三学生)以及大学低年级学生课外阅读之用,也可供教师选作泛读教材。本书系列之一 *World Miscellanies*,之二 *Knowing about Britain and America* 已经出版,之四 *A Free Talk about Western World* 亦即将出版。

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主编例言

众所周知,英语学习成功的要素之一就是阅读。读得多,词汇量就丰富;读得广,知识面就宽;读得快,阅读量就大;读得勤,理解力就强。

英语教学是一个系统工程,因此,中学英语和大学英语应该紧密相连。但是,教学实践证明,这两个阶段之间的衔接不够和谐,中学毕业生步入大学后往往不能很快适应大学英语学习,因素固然是多方面的,但比较突出的一个问题就是阅读量不足,阅读能力差,阅读速度慢。为补救这一缺陷,加强中学和大学的衔接,我们编写了这套读物,共分四册,难度和长度逐册递增,第一册 *World Miscellanies* 和第二册 *Knowing about Britain and America* 已由西安交通大学出版社出版。第四册亦即将出版。读物的风格是文章短小精悍,语言浅显易懂,题材生动活泼,融知识性、趣味性于一炉,会可读性、实践性于一书。每篇短文后均编有较详尽的词汇和难点的汉语注释,并配备多种形式的阅读理解题(书后附答案)。

本书的主要对象是高中生(特别是高三学生)和大学低年级学生。当然,凡是对本书感兴趣的读者都是本书的对象。

主编

2001年12月



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1 What Will Man Be Like in the Future ? 未来人的形象 ?

What will man be like in the future? —in 5 000 or even 50 000 years from now? We can only make a guess, of course, but we can be sure that he will be different from what he is today. For man is slowly changing all the time.

Let us take an obvious example. Man, even five hundred years ago, was shorter than he is today. Now, on the average, men are about three inches taller. Five hundred years is a relatively short period of time, so we may assume that man will continue to grow taller.

Again, in modern world we use our brains a great deal. Even so, we still make use of only about 20% of the brain's capacity. As time goes on, however, we shall have to use our brains more and more—and eventually we shall need even larger ones! This is likely to bring about a physical change, too: the head, in particular the forehead, will grow larger.

Nowadays our eyes are in constant use. In fact, we use them so much that very often they become weaker and we have to wear glasses. But over a very long period of time it is likely that man's eyes will grow stronger.

On the other hand, we tend to make less use of our arms and legs. These, as a result, are likely to grow weaker. At the same

time, however, our fingers will grow more sensitive because they are used a great deal in modern life.

But what about hair? This will probably disappear from the body altogether in course of time because it does not serve a useful purpose any longer. In the future, then, both sexes are likely to be bald.

Perhaps all this gives the impression that future man will not be a very attractive creature to look at! This may well be true. All the same, in spite of all these changes, future man will still have a lot in common with us. He will still be a human being, with thoughts and emotions similar to our own.

Notes

1. relatively : adv. 相对地
2. on the average : 平均说来
3. eventually : adv. 最终
4. in particular : 尤其
5. sensitive : adj. 敏感的
6. serve a useful purpose : 有用, 起作用
7. emotion : n. 感情
8. bald : a. 秃头的
9. may well : 很有可能
10. in common with : 与.....相同

Comprehension exercises

Choose the right answer for each question according to the passage.

1. In course of time, man will change all of the following except _____.
- A. height

- B. the forehead
 - C. hair
 - D. thoughts and emotions
2. Which of the following statements is NOT TRUE according to the passage ?
- A. It is certain that some of the physical characteristics of man will change as time goes by.
 - B. Primitive people were shorter than people of today.
 - C. Future man will become a different creature.
 - D. In spite of some changes , human beings will remain unchanged in the long run.

2 Money That Tastes Good !

美味的金钱 !

Salt is very important for people. We need salt for our health and it makes food taste good. In hot countries , people use salt to keep food from going bad. In the days before people learned to get large amounts of salt from the sea or earth , salt was very valuable. Many people used salt as money.

For example , Roman soldiers , around 100 A. D. , were paid with salt. The English word *salary* — the money that you get every week when you work — comes from the Latin word *salarium* , which means “ salt money. ” Today in the United States , if a man is a good worker , his boss will say , “ He is worth his salt. ”

Other countries used different foods as money. For example , in Mexico , in the sixteenth century , Aztec Indians used beans from the cacao tree as money. The beans were small , easy to carry and count , and did not break. Cacao beans were so valuable that some people made false “ beans ” from clay , painted them , and put them in bags with real ones.

The Aztec 's emperor , Montezuma , had a great treasure. Hernando Cortez , the Spanish explorer , thought the treasure was gold and silver. In fact , Montezuma 's storehouse had thousands of bags of cacao beans.

Of course , rich Indians had another use for cacao beans : they

made hot and cold chocolate drinks from them.

Notes

1. worth one 's salt :[口 称职 ,有能力 ,值得雇用
2. Aztec : n. 阿兹台克人(墨西哥印第安人)
3. cacao beans : n. 可可豆
4. clay : n. 粘土

Comprehension exercises

Are these statements TRUE or FALSE according to the passage ?

- ___ 1. Salt was very cheap around 100 A. D. in Rome.
- ___ 2. The Roman army paid its soldiers with cacao beans.
- ___ 3. The English word " salary " comes from a Latin word which means " salt money " .
- ___ 4. Aztec Indians used salt as money.
- ___ 5. Montezuma 's treasure was thousands of bags of gold and silver.

3 **Space Slimming**

太空减肥

Want to be taller? And slimmer? Take a space flight! At least that's what Dr. Story Musgrave, a doctor who was aboard Skylab 3, seems to be saying. He told the three other astronauts who were aboard Skylab 3 with him that they had grown taller since they left the earth. The men grew between one and two inches taller. And they were smaller around the chest and waist.

The increase in height was caused by a shift in fluids in the men's bodies. "Without gravity," Dr. Musgrave said, "the discs in the men's spines were taking in more water, and so were getting longer. And the anti-gravity muscles in the back were not pressing the discs together, as they do on earth."

Notes

1. slim : a. 细长的,苗条的 ; v. 变细,减肥
2. skylab : n. 太空实验室
3. astronaut : n. 宇航员
4. a shift in fluids in the men's bodies : 人体内体液的转移
5. discs in the men's spines : 脊椎盘
6. anti-gravity : n. 反引力,反重力

Comprehension exercises

Are these statements TRUE or FALSE according to the passage?

- ___ 1. This passage mainly talks about “ body changes in space flight. ”.
- ___ 2. If you took a space flight , the chances were that you would become taller and slimmer.
- ___ 3. The reason why people get taller in space is that the anti-gravity muscles in the back are pressing the discs in their spines together.