

大学英语伴读系列

四 级 阅 读

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西安交通大学出版社

内容提要

本书是根据大学英语教学大纲对阅读的要求编写的,是大学英语现行教科书的同步辅助阅读教材。

本书有 40 余篇精选短文,内容丰富,题材多样。每篇短文后均标明单词数,读者可进行计时阅读;每篇文章中的文化背景、语言难点及超纲生词均加以注释;同时还配有阅读理解与词汇练习各 10 道题。书末附有参考答案、四级范围内词汇和词组表、速读查询表。书中涉及的四级词汇均可在词汇表中查到。

本书适合大学英语四至六级非英语专业学生课外阅读,也适合作课内速读强化训练教材。

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前 言

“大学英语伴读系列”是西安交通大学面向 21 世纪教学内容和课程体系改革研究项目资助课题之一,是对大学英语阅读教学内容的补充。

为了提高学生的阅读效率,扩大阅读量,我们编写了这套“大学英语伴读系列”,它一方面对现行教材特别是速读教材进行了补充,另一方面可以帮助学生掌握教材中的词汇并提高阅读能力。我们曾将本“系列”的读物引入课堂教学,进行对比实验,经过 10 周的计时阅读训练之后,绝大部分学生的阅读速度及对文章理解的准确性都有显著提高。

“大学英语伴读系列”其难易度与现行教材同步,在出版了 1~3 册后,得到读者的广泛好评,为了满足读者的要求,我们续编了《四级阅读》,全书共 4 册,每册选编短文 40 余篇,大多选自近几年国内外报刊、百科全书和其它阅读书籍,亦有部分来自网上。每篇文章均标出计时提示,并编写了相应的注释、阅读理解练习和重点词汇练习,旨在把提高阅读能力、拓宽知识面、巩固词汇量,与增强等级考试能力有机地结合在一起。本“系列”特点如下:

1. 快速提高学生的阅读能力,力求“准确”与“流利”相结合。在加强阅读的同时,注意提高阅读速度。本“系列”对此做了有益的尝试。其一,每篇阅读后均设 10 个阅读理解题,题型均按照《大学英语教学大纲》对阅读技巧提出的要求编写,包括事实记忆,主旨与细节的区分,中心思想的归纳,引伸含义的推测,上下文猜词等。读者可根据书后的有关附表,掌握自己阅读理解准确率的情况。其二,每篇阅读材料之后均标出“First Reading _____ (WPM)”与“Second Reading _____ (WPM)”以提示读者阅读计

时。首次阅读要求读者迅速读完全文,掌握文章大意;反复阅读时,需要搞清文章中的每个难点。每篇文章阅读的速度及每分钟阅读的词数均可通过查阅“速读查询表”做出记录。

2. 突出篇章重点词汇,注重通过上下文记忆和掌握词汇。通过阅读来掌握词汇被公认为是一种好的方法。本“系列”词汇练习正是本着这一科学方法而编写的。读者在学习词汇时,可将注意力集中于文中的斜体重点词部分,通过阅读上下文来掌握重点词汇的确切意义。每课的重点词及大纲规定的四级词汇均可在书后词汇表和词组表中查找到准确的中文释义。

3. 选材丰富,内容多样。书中收录有神话传说、名人轶事、科学知识、历史事件、异域风情等。这不仅有助于拓宽读者的视野,也有助于提高读者学习英语的兴趣。

本系列在编写过程中,得到美籍教师 Judy Jadron 女士的热情帮助,在此致以诚挚的谢意。

马晚梅策划、主编了本“系列”,并编写了《一级阅读》和《二级阅读》的部分内容,参与全书编写工作的还有:温玉娟和陈丽参加《一级阅读》的编写工作,张丽娟和徐亚丽参加《二级阅读》的编写工作,李奇和何惠勤参加《三级阅读》的编写工作,刘丹翎、解珊以及温玉娟负责《四级阅读》的编写工作。

由于我们经验不足,水平有限,书中难免有诸多不当之处,望广大读者和同仁不吝指正。

编者

2001.6

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1. *Conversational Piece*

神奇的会话软件

Time Started _____

*A Space Odyssey*¹ has *assumed* that one day we would talk to our computers instead of tapping keyboard. To date², that prediction hasn't panned out. Yes, since the late 1980s we've been able to *dictate* text to PCs—but only as long as we spoke in slow, staccato³ sentences like robots. Now, *thanks to* recent advances in speech *recognition* technology that led to products like IBM's Via-Voice, we can create text by talking normally, but we can't yet hold a conversation with a machine. What's needed is software that understands the natural *rhythms* and meanings of ordinary speech to produce a conversational interface⁴, allowing a human being to talk to and be understood by a computer.

In the future, speech *recognition* software will be integrated into all sorts of technology, from PCs to refrigerators. A digital fridge⁵ with advanced verbal skills might sound like a piece of futuristic frippery⁶, but governments and businesses clearly think the technology is going to be useful—and attractive—to consumers. The U.S. Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) is *pumping up* to \$15 million annually into speech research, and this year Intel has invested \$30 million and Microsoft a further \$15 million in speech technology specialists Lernout & Hauspie (L&H), based in Ieper, northwest Belgium.

The main focus of this research is fitting speech recognition into today 's incredible *shrinking* gadgets⁷ , most notably the combination cell phones and personal digital assistants promised by companies such as Nokia and Ericsson. Voice control is a must because , as the products get tinier , “ you can 't type with toothpicks⁸ , ” says Victor Zue , head of M. I. T 's Spoken Language Systems Group. Zue and others working in the field imagine the day when you can do more than merely tell your cell phone to “ Phone John , ” or get it to read out your e-mail , as you can now through services like California-based General Magic 's myTalk. “ You 'll be able to ask your computer , ‘ How many e-mails do I have today ? ’ and it will answer with a number , then tell you : ‘ The first is from your brother—should I read it to you ? ’ ” says Kuo Shih-Chung , manager of the speech recognition project at Taiwan 's government-funded Industrial Technology Research Institute (ITRI).

L&H already has technology that lets you read a map without taking your hands off the wheel : tell a dashboard computer , such as the Clarion AutoPC where you are and where you want to go , and it explains how to get there. The same technology could be used to operate household *appliances* by simple verbal commands. ITRI 's commercial *applications* under development include controls for appliances like microwave ovens and VCRS. “ For some complicated home appliances , most people never use all the functions—they find it too hard to operate , ” says ITRI 's Kuo. In the future , someone *frustrated* at being unable to program their VCR to record a favorite TV show could be given step-by-step *instructions* through dialogue with the machine.

Total Words 490 Time Finished

First Reading _____ WPM

Second Reading _____ WPM

Notes :

1. A Space Odyssey 《太空奥德赛》(科幻小说)
2. to date 到目前为止 迄今
3. staccato [stə'kɑ:təu] a. 不连续的
4. interface ['intəfeis] n. 界面
5. digital fridge 数码冰箱 fridge 即 refrigerator
6. futuristic frippery 未来的不实用的东西 ,futuristic [,fju:tʃə'ristik] a. 未来的 , 未来派的 ,frillery ['fripəri] n. 无用之物
7. gadget ['gædʒɪt] n. 装置
8. toothpick ['tu:θpɪk] n. 牙签

A. Reading Comprehension

Choose the best answer according to the passage you have read.

1. According to the passage , which of the following statements is TRUE ?
 - a. So far people can talk to computers instead of tapping a keyboard
 - b. Since 1980s people can dictate text to PCs at the normal speed.
 - c. In the future , people can hold a conversation with computers.
 - d. So far , with the advanced products , people can make text by talking slowly to computers.
2. The phrase " panned out " in paragraph 1 most probably means _____.
 - a. failed
 - b. succeeded
 - c. ceased
 - d. changed
3. Which of the following statements about speech recognition software is NOT TRUE ?
 - a. It will enable people to hold a conversation with computers in the future.
 - b. It has overcome the problem of understanding the natural rhythms and meanings of ordinary speech.
 - c. It will be combined into all sorts of technology.

- d. It still needs further research.
4. In paragraph 2 , several figures are provided to illustrate that _____.
- a. the companies mentioned all have a lot of money
 - b. speech technology is important in the future
 - c. companies like to compete with each other
 - d. speech technology has wasted a great deal of money
5. “ This ” in paragraph 3 , line 1 refers to _____.
- a. the speech research carried out by companies such as Nokia and Ericsson
 - b. the speech research carried out by factories which manufacture home appliances
 - c. the research of digital fridge with verbal skills
 - d. the speech research carried out by DARPA and Microsoft
6. Lernout and Hauspie has already mastered the following technologies except _____.
- a. the technology that enables people to read a map without taking hands off the wheel
 - b. the technology that people can tell their computers where they are
 - c. the technology that enables people to operate household appliances by talking to them
 - d. the technology that computers suggest the way to people
7. With California-based General Magic 's my Talk , people can _____.
- a. ask their cell phones to read out e-mails
 - b. hold a conversation with computers
 - c. know how many e-mails they have that day by asking computers
 - d. ask their cell phones to send e-mails
8. According to the passage , in the future , people who don 't know how to operate their home appliances could _____.
- a. consult specialists
 - b. follow the instructions through dialogue with the machine
 - c. phone the company that manufactures them
 - d. refer to the specification
9. The attitude of the author towards the future speech recognition software is

most probably _____.

- | | |
|----------------|----------------|
| a. confident | b. doubtful |
| c. pessimistic | d. indifferent |

10. The major point discussed in the passage is _____.

- a. the development of home appliances
- b. the problems of computers
- c. the invention and development of computers
- d. the research of speech technology and its applications

Comprehension _____ %

B. Vocabulary

Interpretation of the words and phrases underlined : Choose the best answer .

1. A Space Odyssey has assumed that one day we would talk to our computers instead of tapping a keyboard.

- | | |
|-------------|--------------|
| a. claimed | b. declared |
| c. supposed | d. concluded |

2. Since 1980s we 've been able to dictate text to PCs.

- | | |
|---------|-----------|
| a. type | b. create |
| c. read | d. write |

3. Now , thanks to recent advances in speech recognition technology , we can create text by talking normally.

- | | |
|----------------|----------------|
| a. because | b. owing to |
| c. in spite of | d. by means of |

4. What 's needed is software that understands the natural rhythms and meanings of ordinary speech to produce a conversational interface.

- | | |
|-----------------------|-------------|
| a. patterns of sounds | b. stresses |
| c. patterns of beats | d. pauses |

5. In the future , speech recognition software will be integrated into all sorts of technology , from PCs to refrigerators.

- | | |
|---------------|-------------------|
| a. processing | b. identification |
| c. perception | d. comprehension |

6. The U. S. Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency(DARPA) is pumping

- up to \$ 15 million annually into speech research.
- a. raising
 - b. investing
 - c. reducing
 - d. spending
7. The main focus of this research is fitting speech recognition into today 's incredible shrinking gadgets.
- a. tiny
 - b. developing
 - c. increasing
 - d. contracting
8. The same technology could be used to operate household appliances by simple verbal commands.
- a. robots
 - b. devices
 - c. problems
 - d. furniture
9. ITRI 's commercial applications under development include controls for appliances like microwave ovens and VCRs.
- a. uses
 - b. projects
 - c. designs
 - d. researches
10. Someone frustrated at being unable to program their VCR to record a favorite TV show could be given step-by-step instructions through dialogue with the machine.
- a. helpless , words
 - b. unsatisfied , notes
 - c. surprised , conversations
 - d. discouraged , advices

Vocabulary _____ %

2. *Fairy Tales*

小议童话

Time Started _____

Fairy tales have been loved by children through the ages¹ and in every part of the world. A child who reads a fairy tale is carried away into a wonderful land of make-believe² where handsome princes *rescue* beautiful maidens³, where ugly witches⁴ and giants⁵ are put to death by daring⁶ heroes, where a tiny seed becomes a beanstalk⁷ that reaches high up into the sky. As soon as a fairy story begins, the reader enters a new and exciting world, a world where impossible but thrilling events take place. How *marvelous* to wander through an enchanted⁸ palace, to ride on a swift black steed⁹, or to travel in a beautiful coach! How frightening to come face to face with a giant, to meet a *wicked* wolf, or to duel with¹⁰ a dragon who spouts¹¹ fire!

Often fairy tales are not about fairies at all. The stories may be about witches, giants, or talking animals. But the name "fairy tale" is given to all stories in which wonderful things happen through magic. Fairy tales have their roots in folklore¹²—the traditional tales, customs, and sayings of a people. Folktales were handed down for generations by word of mouth before anyone wrote them down. Later came the *literary* fairy tales, related to folktales and written by creative artists.

Almost all fairy tales follow the same *pattern*. They tell a sim-

ple story in simple language. No words are wasted , and no time is spent in describing characters except to say that they are “ beautiful ” or “ ugly , ” “ good ” or “ wicked. ”

The story starts with “ Once upon a time ” or “ Long , long ago. ” Then the characters are introduced , and their troubles are told. In almost every tale the hero or heroine¹³ faces a problem that seems impossible to solve. Sometimes the most beautiful girl in the village is about to be *sacrificed* to a dragon ; or a poor orphan is being cruelly mistreated¹⁴ , or an elderly , childless couple wish *desperately* for a child of their own.

Just when things seem *absolutely* hopeless , a fairy or a dwarf¹⁵ or some other creature with magical power appears. Often , before the magic will work , the hero must perform three difficult tasks or go on three dangerous journeys. *Eventually* even the most serious problems are solved with the help of patience and magic. The story always ends happily ; good always *triumphs* over evil.

Total Words 397

Time Finished

First Reading WPM

Second Reading WPM

Notes :

1. through the ages 古往今来
2. make-believe 虚构
3. maiden ['meɪdn] n. 少女
4. witch [wɪtʃ] n. 女巫
5. giants ['dʒaɪənt] n. 巨人 , 大力士
6. daring ['dæərɪŋ] a. 勇敢的
7. beanstalk ['biːnstɔːk] n. 豆茎
8. enchanted [ɪn'tʃɑːntɪd] a. 被魔法迷惑的