

考 研

英语阅读理解精选 100 篇

王监龙 郭东敏

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西安交通大学出版社

编 者 的 话

本书是根据硕士研究生入学考试《英语考试大纲》(非英语专业)编写的,旨在帮助考研者提高综合运用英语语言知识和阅读技巧来理解英语书面材料的能力,从而在考试中获得良好的成绩。

全书精选短文 100 篇。内容新颖,题材广泛,包括社会生活、人物传记、科普、史地、政治、经济等;体裁多样,包括议论文、记叙文、说明文等。阅读理解题体现了《考试大纲》规定的七项基本阅读能力。短文中出现的难点,均加注释,以利于考研者加深对短文的理解。短文中超纲词汇的处理有下列两种方式:

- 1) 在生词后的括号内注明英语释义;
- 2) 在注解中说明生词的汉语意思。

编者深信:本书定会有助于提高考研者的英语阅读能力与应试能力。
衷心祝愿考研者获得优异成绩!

编 者

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考研英语阅读理解精选 100 篇

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Passage 1

In addition to his theory of colour, Newton developed a theory of how light travels. This is known as the corpuscular theory of light¹, meaning that light travels as a series of tiny bits rather than in continuing waves. Newton sent his writings about light to the Royal Society², where they were given to a committee led by Hooke. Since the corpuscular theory was different from his own theory, Hooke attacked the paper. Soon others started to argue, and Hooke was supported by a scientist from Holland, Christian Huygens. At one time, Newton was so unhappy with the whole affair that he decided never again to publish any of his work.

The bitter argument continued over the years that followed. At first, Hooke and Huygens received most of the support. Later, after Newton had changed his mind and let his work on gravity be published, he became so famous, that things changed. Now people believed Newton could do nothing wrong, and for a hundred years they followed his theory.

Then, in the early part of the 19th century, the experiments of a French scientist, Augustin Fresnel, showed that light could be explained best by a wave theory³. So the scientists changed sides again, saying that Newton's ideas had delayed scientific progress for a hundred years.

Strangely enough, the presently-accepted theory of light combines some of the ideas of both theories. This is known as the quantum theory⁴ and results from the work of such 20th-century scientists as Albert Einstein and Max Planck. The quantum theory assumes that light is given off as separate "packages" of energy. Each "package" travels out in a fixed pattern or wave form. These "packages" of light, or quanta of energy, as they are called, are given off at such a rapid rate that there is no great gap between them.

The quantum theory seems to explain the actions of light better than either of the two earlier theories. However, for many purposes, the wave theory is good enough. So it is used most often to explain light. But who is to say that new experiments and other scientists of our own time or in the future may not provide an even better theory? There is certainly still much work to be done with light and colour.

1. From this passage it seems that Newton was a scientist with ____w
☐ only one important theory
☒ two theories
☐ at least three theories
☐ very many theories
2. The corpuscular theory of light ____w
☐ was never accepted by the Royal Society
☒ was in the end accepted by Hooke and Huygens
☐ was rejected by Hooke and Huygens but immediately accepted by other scientists for

the next hundred years

[Ds was the most popular theory during the eighteenth century

3. The scientists who said that Newton's ideas had delayed scientific progress for a hundred years were _____w

0 s right **A** because Fresnel's wave theory disproved Newton's corpuscular theory

0 **R**s wrong **A** because Fresnel's theory has in turn been disproved

0 s right **A** because the quantum theory supports the wave theory

[Ds wrong, because the quantum theory makes use of some of Newton's ideas

4. The quantum theory seems to be nearest in idea to that of _____w

0] Hooke and Huygen

0 **R**] Fresnel and Newton combined

0] Newton

[Ds Fresnel

5. The evidence of this passage suggests that _____w

0] there would be no progress in our knowledge of light unless we questioned accepted theories

0 **R**s the presently **E**accepted theory of light will very soon be replaced

0] scientists do not know enough to be able to explain the theory of light

[Ds scientists change their opinions too often

Notes

1. the corpuscular theory of light 光的微粒理论(指光系由粒子所组成的理论。现在认为这是量子论的极限情况——亦称牛顿的光学理论)
2. the Royal Society 英国皇家学会
3. wave theory 光的波动理论, 该理论认为光是波动而不是粒子流
4. the quantum theory 量子论

Passage 2

Let children learn to judge their own workw **A** child learning to talk does not learn by being corrected all the timea if corrected too much, he will stop talking. He notices a thousand times a day the difference between the language he uses and the language those around him use. Bit by bit¹, he makes the necessary changes to make his language like other people's. In the same way, children learning to do all the other things they learn to do without being taught — to walk, run, climb, whistle, ride a bicycle — compare their own performances with those of more skilled people, and slowly make the needed changes. But in school we never give a child a chance to find out his mistakes for himself, let alone correct them². We

do it all for him. We act as if we thought that he would never notice a mistake unless it was pointed out to him, or correct it unless he was made to. Soon he becomes dependent on the teacher. Let him do it himself. Let him work out, with the help of other children if he wants it, what this word says, what the answer is to that problem, whether this is a good way of saying or doing this or not.

If it is a matter of right answers, as it may be in mathematics or science, give him the answer book. Let him correct his own papers. Why should we teachers waste time on such routine work? Our job should be to help the child when he tells us that he can't find the way to get the right answer. Let's end all this nonsense of grades, exams, marks. Let us throw them all out, and let the children learn what all educated persons must some day learn, how to measure their own understanding, how to know what they know or do not know.

Let them get on with this job in the way that seems most sensible to them, with our help as school teachers if they ask for it. The idea that there is a body of knowledge³ to be learnt at school and used for the rest of one's life is nonsense in a world as complicated and rapidly changing as ours. Anxious parents and teachers say, "But suppose they fail to learn something essential? something they will need to get on in the world?" Don't worry. If it is essential, they will go out into the world and learn it.

1. What does the author think is the best way for children to learn things?
☐ s By copying what other people do. **W**
☒ s By making mistakes and having them corrected. **W**
☐ s By listening to explanations from skilled people. **W**
☐ s By asking a great many questions. **W**
2. What does the author think teachers do which they should not do?
☐ s They give children correct answers. **W**
☒ s They point out children's mistakes to them. **W**
☐ s They allow children to mark their own work. **W**
☐ s They encourage children to copy from one another.
3. The passage suggests that learning to speak and learning to ride a bicycle are _____ **W**
☐] not really important skills
☒] more important than other skills
☐] basically different from learning adult skills
☐ s basically the same as learning other skills
4. Exams, grades and marks should be abolished because children's progress should only be estimated by _____ **W**
☐] educated persons
☒] the children themselves
☐] teachers
☐ s parents

5. The author fears that children will grow up into adults who are _____w
- 0] too independent of others
- 0**R**] too critical of themselves
- 0] unable to think for themselves
- [Ds unable to use basic skills

Notes

1. bit by bit 一点一点地；逐渐
2. let alone correct them 更不用说改正错误
3. a body of knowledge 大量的知识

Passage 3

An old woman was collecting mussels¹ from the rocks on the beach when she stopped to examine a small white shell lying at the bottom of a sandy pool, half-hidden by fronds² of seaweed. It seemed to gleam with a steady light in the cool, clear water, so she bent down to pick it up, feeling the seaweed brush against her hand and disturbing a crab that scuttled away in alarm³.

The shell was smooth, shaped like an inverted saucer⁴, and its rim was marked with a regular pattern of what appeared to be lines, circles and dots. She let it rest in her hand, unable to decide whether it was worth the trouble of opening, and it continued to gleam. That is, the gleam had now become a glow, spreading her old, wrinkled hand with a warm, bright light**A**growing stronger every minute**w**Vaguely alarmed**A**she bent closer**w**Was that a faint ticking inside the shell**l**

Not knowing quite what to do, the old woman set down her pail of mussels and, carrying the shell carefully in her hand, sat down on a slab of rock⁵. The glow was now so intense that it seemed to set light to the sands, spreading outwards until it reached the sea, firing the waves until the whole bay lay shining with light, while in the midst of all this strangeness the old woman sat on a small, damp rock with a pail of mussels by her side.

Now the ticking increased. It changed to an urgent beating. There was a short pause, then a whirr⁶, a tiny click and the shell opened.

Two fishermen, coming down to inspect their lobster pots⁷ a couple of hours later, found the old woman sitting upright on the rock. She was quite dead. In her hand she was clutching a small, blackened piece of metal. "Funny the things people pick up on the beach," thought one of the fishermen**A**and threw it into the sea**w**

1. Why had the old woman come down to the beach**l**

- [s To fish for mussels**w**
 0**Rs** To examine the rocks**w**
 0 s To gather shellfish**w**
 [Ds To collect shells**w**
2. Why did the old woman keep the shell in her hand? She _____**w**
 0] was uncertain what to do with it
 0**R**] thought it would glow more strongly
 0] hoped it would open
 [Ds was afraid to open it
3. “...in the midst of all this strangeness the old woman sat on a small**A** damp rock with a pail of mussels by her side” (lines 13-14). Why does the writer draw attention to the old woman here?
 0 s She was behaving so strangely**w**
 0**Rs** She looked so ordinary**w**
 0 s She was the only person on the beach**w**
 [Ds She seemed very frightened.
4. We understand that the moment before the shell opened it _____**w**
 0] made a slight sound
 0**R**] shook violently
 0] ticked loudly
 [D] made no sound at all
5. Why had the two fishermen come down to the beach?
 0 s To inspect their fishing nets**w**
 0**Rs** To set traps for lobsters**w**
 0 s To examine their fishing lines**w**
 [Ds To check their catch.

Notes

1. mussels 淡菜
2. fronds 藻体
3. scuttled away in alarm 惊恐地匆匆逃走
4. shaped like an inverted saucer 形状像一只翻转过来的浅碟
5. a slab of rock 一块岩石
6. a whirr 呼呼声
7. lobster pots 捕大螯虾(或龙虾)用的篓

Passage 4

Millions of Americans run to the bank or visit automated teller machines¹ when they need cash. They use credit cards when they want to buy clothes, VCRs², or television sets.

But there is an underclass — people with low incomes and no credit history — who visit their neighbourhood pawnshops³ when they need cash or a loan.

An estimated 20 percent of the US population has no bank account, more than half of this group don't have credit cards and cannot get bank loans.

"These people are borrowing an average of \$ 50," said John P. Caskey of Swarthmore College in Swarthmore, Pennsylvania. "If you add up in terms of how much dollar value pawnshops provide they don't look very important. If you add up how much of the population they serve or the number of loans they make, they are important."

Because they make loans, pawnshops are a type of bank, often calling themselves "the bank of the little people".

Caskey and Swarthmore student Brian Zikmund in 1989 looked at the importance of pawnshops in the US economy — the first serious study of the subject since the 1930s^W

Their conclusion^a pawnshops are the consumer's lender of last resort⁴.

Pawnshop customers typically cannot get credit at mainstream financial institutions. They have poor credit records, excessive debt in relation to their incomes, low and unstable incomes, or cannot maintain positive bank account balances⁵.

Typically, pawnshop customers borrow relatively small amounts that traditional lenders are unwilling or unable to provide on a secured basis.

"If you look at total consumer credit, the amounts provided by pawnshops remain small," Caskey said. "They are lending primarily to low-income people. In terms of the population they serve, they're really important."

In 1988, about 6,900 pawnshops operated in the United States — one for every two commercial banks. Data suggest these pawnshops made about 35 million loans, providing what Caskey and Zikmund estimate as 1 percent of the nation's consumer credit.

1. The best title for the passage would be _____^W

☐ Credit Cards for the Poor

☒ Banks for the Poor

☐ Pawnshops Versus Banks

☐ Commercial Banks

2. What is the percentage of the population in the United States that doesn't get bank loans?

☐ Roughly 20 percent^W

☒ The article didn't say^W

☐ More than 10 percent.

[Ds Less than 10 percentw

3. What do the underclass people do when they need cash?

0 s They go to local banks for helpw

0Rs They apply for credit cardsw

0 s They ask for a loan from large banksw

[Ds They apply for a loan in a pawnshopw

4. What can we learn about pawnshops?

0 s Poor people come to pawnshops as their last resortw

0Rs Most people prefer pawnshops for their need of cashw

0 s Pawnshops are an important part of the state economyw

[Ds Pawnshops are not important because they constitute only 1 percent of the nation's
consumer
credit.

5. According to John P. Caskey, pawnshops are important because _____w

0] they provide great dollar value to the poor

0R] they make big loans

0 s they are serving the majority of the populatiot

[Ds they make a large number of loans to the poor

Notes

1. automated teller machines 自动付款机

2. VCRs b videocassette recorder (盒式磁带录像机)

3. pawnshops 当铺

4. last resort 最后一招, 最后的解决办法

5. bank account balances 银行存款结存

Passage 5

Trees should only be pruned¹ when there is a good and clear reason for doing so and, fortunately, the number of such reasons is small. Pruning involves the cutting away of overgrown and unwanted branches, and the inexperienced gardener can be encouraged by the thought that more damage results from doing it unnecessarily than from leaving the tree to grow in its own way.

First, pruning may be done to make sure that trees have a desired shape or size. The object may be to get a tree of the right height, and at the same time to help the growth of small side branches² which will thicken its appearance or give it a special shape. Secondly, pruning may be done to make the tree healthier. You may cut out diseased or dead wood, or

branches that are rubbing against each other³ and thus causing wounds. The health of a tree may be encouraged by removing branches that are blocking up the centre and so preventing the free movement of air.

One result of pruning is that an open wound is left on the tree and this provides an easy entry for disease⁴, but it is a wound that will heal. Often there is a race between the healing and the disease as to whether the tree will live or die, so that there is a period when the tree is at risk. It should be the aim of every gardener to reduce that risk of death as far as possible. It is essential to make the area which has been pruned smooth and clean, for healing will be slowed down by roughness. You should allow the cut surface to dry for a few hours and then paint it with one of the substances available from garden shops produced especially for this purpose. Pruning is usually done in winter, for then you can see the shape of the tree clearly without interference from the leaves and it is, too, very unlikely that the cuts you make will bleed. If this does happen, it is, of course, impossible to paint them properly.

- 1. Pruning should be done to _____w
 - 0] make the tree grow taller
 - 0**R**] improve the shape of the tree
 - 0] get rid of the small branches
 - [Ds make the small branches thicker
- 2. Trees become unhealthy if the gardener _____w
 - 0] allows too many branches to grow in the middle
 - 0**R**] does not protect them from the wind
 - 0] forces them to grow too quickly
 - [D] damages some of the small side branches
- 3. Why is a special substance painted on the tree?
 - 0 s To make a wound smooth**w**
 - 0**Rs** To prevent disease entering a wound**w**
 - 0 s To cover a rough surface**w**
 - [Ds To help a wound to dry.
- 4. A good gardener prunes a tree _____w
 - 0] at intervals throughout the year
 - 0**R**] as quickly as possible
 - 0] occasionally when necessary
 - [D] regularly every winter
- 5. What was the author’s purpose when writing this passage?
 - 0 s To give practical instructions for pruning a tree**w**
 - 0**Rs** To give a general description of pruning**w**
 - 0 s To explain how trees develop diseases.

[Ds To discuss different methods of pruning.

Notes

1. prune 修剪(树枝等)
2. side branches 边枝
3. rubbing against each other (树枝)互相摩擦
4. an easy entry for disease 容易生病

Passage 6

The great river Nile¹ flows gently in its course through the hot plains in the first half of the year but later on when the melting snows and the rains on the mountains far to the south swell its tributaries², the Nile overflows. It spreads rich, muddy soil from Ethiopia over its valley and forms deep stretches of green, fertile lands along its banks. The settlers found that in the soft rich earth barley³ and wheat and other crops could be planted, even without the use of the plough, and they began to make many settlements of farmers. They used stone implements for cultivating the soil, and flint⁴ for their weapons, and as time passed they learnt the use of copper.

In these early times they did not of course understand why the river overflowed each year. But they knew that their crops and, therefore, their lives, depended upon its magic floods, and they explained the miracle as the work of gods.

But there came some years when there was a "bad Nile". Sometimes the floods were not full and did not bring enough soil. The crops were poor and the people starved. At other times the waters were so great that they destroyed houses and villages, and drowned men and beasts. It took perhaps many centuries before the farmers learned how to control the Nile waters. The need to do this led to many great discoveries and advances.

Wise men among them watching the position of the stars year by year found that they could foretell when the annual rising of the Nile would come. Thus they began to learn about astronomy and could make a calendar of the years. They also learnt how to store the waters for use in dry seasons by digging canals and dams and making reservoirs. And how to measure out the land so that it could be divided fairly again after the boundaries of the farms had been washed away by great floods. In this way there came about ancient knowledge of engineering and of geometry.

1. The Nile is _____
0] always a gentle flowing river
0Rs hot in the first half of the year but cold later on

- ☐ likely to overflow at various times of the year
[Ds a life-giving river
2. The settlers began farming in the Nile Valley because _____w
☐ they discovered that the soil was fertile
0R] they did not realise that the river would overflow
☐ they could till (cultivate) the soil without using the plough
[Ds they realised that their crops depended on the floods
3. A "bad Nile" was when _____w
☐ the floods destroyed the crops
0R] the floods were empty
☐ the river did not flood enough
[Ds the river overflowed
4. We can be sure that the Egyptians of that time _____w
☐ learned how to control the flooding of the Nile
0R] had not fully discovered how to control the Nile floods
☐ invented astronomy
[Ds were the first people to make use of scientific principles from an earlier age

Notes

1. the Nile 尼罗河, 在非洲北部, 是世界最大河流之一, 流经坦桑尼亚、卢旺达、布隆迪、乌干达、埃塞俄比亚、苏丹和埃及等国
2. tributaries 支流
3. barley 大麦
4. flint 燧石, 打火石

Passage 7

By far the most common snake in Britain is the adder¹. In Scotland, in fact, there are no other snakes at all. The adder is also the only British snake with a poisonous bite. It can be found almost anywhere, but prefers sunny hillsides and rough open country, including high ground. In Ireland there are no snakes at all.

Most people regard snake bites as a fatal misfortune, but not all bites are serious, and very few are fatal. Sometimes attempts at emergency treatment turn out to be more dangerous than the bite itself, with amateurs heroically, but mistakenly, trying do-it-yourself surgery and other unnecessary measures.

All snakes have small teeth, so it follows that² all snakes can bite, but only the bite of the adder presents any danger. British snakes are shy animals³ and are far more frightened of you

than you could possibly be of them. The adder will attack only if it feels threatened, as can happen if you take it by surprise⁴ and step on it accidentally, or if you try to catch it or pick it up, which it dislikes intensely. If it hears you coming, it will normally get out of the way as quickly as it can, but adders cannot move very rapidly and may attack before moving if you are very close.

The effect of a bite varies considerably. It depends upon several things, one of which is the body-weight of the person bitten. The bigger the person, the less harmful the bite is likely to be, which is why children suffer far more seriously from snake bites than adults. A healthy person will also have better resistance against the poison.

Very few people actually die from snake bites in Britain, and though these bites can make some people very ill, there are probably just as many cases of bites having little or no effect, as there are of serious illness.

1. Adders are most likely to be found _____w
☐ in wilder parts of Britain and Ireland
☒ in Scotland and nowhere else
☐ on uncultivated land throughout Britain
[Ds in shady fields in England]
2. If you are with someone who is bitten by an adder you should _____w
☐ try to catch the adder
☒ make no attempt to treat the bite
☐ not worry about the victim
[Ds operate as soon as possible]
3. We are told that adders are _____w
☐ normally friendly towards people
☒ unlikely to bite except in self defence
☐ aggressive towards anyone in their territory
[Ds not afraid of human beings]
4. If an adder hears you approaching, it will usually _____w
☐ move out of your path
☒ take no notice of you at all
☐ disappear very quickly
[Ds wait until you are close then attack]
5. We are told that in general British people think snakes are _____w
☐ not very common in Britain
☒ usually harmless
☐ more dangerous than they usually are
[Ds unlikely to kill people by their bite]

Notes

1. adder 蝰蛇(一种小毒蛇)*u*
2. so it follows that... 因此(说)……。这一句型表示事出有因的结果和现象或有正当前提的推断。例如: We've made great achievements, but it doesn't follow that there're no shortcomings. (我们已经取得了很大的成绩,但不能因此说我们就没有缺点了。)
3. shy animals 易受惊的动物
4. take it by surprise 对它突然袭击

Passage 8

Radial tires¹ are the newest kind available. They were first manufactured and used successfully in other countries before appearing in the U. S. . and have been available here for about twenty years.

The radial tire has oneA twoA or three plies (layers), with the body cords running at right angles to the center line of the tire tread. All radial tires are belted with up to four plies underneath the treadW Radial body cords offer a choice of materialsa polyester, rayon, and nylon². Belts may be made of steel or fiberglass.

Radial construction creates a flexible sidewall, and the tires appear to be in need of air even when properly inflated. This characteristic makes it even more important to have your own tire gauge and to check the tire pressure at regular intervals. Ask the tire dealer for the proper inflation pressures.

Radials run coolerA give the longest mileage hsome radial tires are guaranteed by the manufacturer for 40,000 miles), are the safest, and cost the most of any tire available. Radial tires squirm³ lessA and keep more tread on the road because of their belts and because they flex h bendM without heat build-up. This provides better traction, superior handling, and stability in turnsW Most reports state that radials also give better gas mileageF about 7 percent better mileage is the national average for cars.

If you prefer radials on a new car that does not have them, consult with the dealer about swapping the tires before you drive the car. If you are now using belted tires and would like to change to radials as your tires wear out — which I recommend for sustained highway driving and greatest tire dependability A there is one serious problema you will have to buy five radial tires and have them installed all at once. (Your spare has to be a radialA too). Do not mix radial tires and conventional tires on your carv To do so is courting disaster⁴ as the car will sway easily, and steering can be difficult and dangerous. Before installing radials, check with the tire dealer to learn whether a special front-end alignment⁵ is required. All newly installed tires must be balanced. A dealer normally charges separately for balancing

and does not include this in the price of the tire. Radials usually make a little more noise than conventional tires — another factor to consider before switching to radials.

1. According to this passage, _____.
☐ radial tires don't have to be balanced
☒ radial tires are approved by the federal government
☐ radial tires are the safest tires available
☐ radial tires require constant maintenance
2. The writer recommends radial tires because _____.
☐ they were first manufactured outside of the U.S.
☒ they are more dependable
☐ they are cheaper
☐ their belts may be made of steel or fiberglass
3. We may infer from this passage that _____.
☐ tire dealers are likely to deceive buyers
☒ the writer is under 25
☐ Americans drive faster than Europeans
☐ rich people are more likely to buy radial tires than poor people are
4. You should not put radial tires and conventional tires on your car at the same time because _____.
☐ conventional tires don't last long
☒ your car will be harder to steer
☐ the inflation pressure is different for radial tires
☐ radials are belted

Notes

1. radial tires 子午线轮胎(一种充气轮胎, 轮胎内延伸到轮胎沿口的层帘线与胎面中心线成直角)
2. polyester, rayon, and nylon 涤纶、人造丝和尼龙
3. squirm 蠕动
4. court disaster 招致灾难
5. alignment 直线

Passage 9

The great advance in rocket theory 40 years ago showed that liquid-fuel rockets were far superior in every respect¹ to the skyrocket with its weak solid fuel, the only kind of rocket