

中國圖書分類法

第 8 版

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大学英语阶梯阅读系列教程 Band 1
郭浩儒 苏衡 主编

Collections of Popular
Short Stories

通俗短篇小说选

(附注释、练习、答案)

邢春丽 选编

北京航空航天大学出版社

内 容 简 介

本书精选十五篇当代流行短篇小说,内容涉及亲情、爱情、友情多项题材,语言诙谐流畅,感人至深。为方便阅读,对书中偏难词语均做了注解。每篇后面配有理解和语言能力的测试题。

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前 言

在进入新世纪的时候,大学生们无不在通过各种途径提高英语水平,以使自己拥有一个得心应手的交际工具,在激烈的人才竞争中占据有利位置。强烈的学习欲望应该令人称道,但也容易出现饥不择食、把别人成功的方法不加分析地照搬过来,或是人云亦云,受一些商业广告的诱惑,尝试那些似乎是有效的作法。这样做,其学习成效之低犹如寒流到来,学习愿望也会一下子降到零度。这的确令人十分遗憾。究其原因,恐怕是浮躁的学习心态使然。

语言知识的学习是一个认知过程,语言技能的掌握是一个在大量实践活动中一点一滴积累的过程。指导学习活动的方法只有符合了语言能力形成的规律才会发生作用。既然语言能力的形成是个相对漫长的过程,因而不能将提高英语水平寄希望于什么“捷径”或“速成”上。学好一种语言,非得下苦功不可,学好英语除了要多听、多说外,还要大量阅读。在阅读中,可以巩固课堂里学过的知识;可以扩大眼界;可以实践各种各样的阅读技巧;可以熟悉了解西方文化、社会习俗、风土人情、最新科技动态;可以了解英语各种文体的写作方法……一句话,你可以在轻松自然的状态下吸收语言,获得乐趣。何乐而不为!

在大学阶段,教师的主导作用逐渐转化为指导作用,语言环境和学习材料的重要性相对上升,学习者的能动性将发挥很大的作用。英语教学将从单纯课堂教学的模式,转化为大学英语课堂教学与学生课外自主学习相结合的双渠道模式。北京航空航天大学面向 21 世纪,在双渠道教学模式方面进行了探索和实践,要求学生每月读一本外语书,并且以不同方式进行检查。实践证明这不仅可行,而且得到学生的认同。

基于上述认识,我们组织编写了这套阶梯阅读系列教程。由学生根据个人兴趣爱好选读。由于不是指令性阅读,在很大程度上要靠阅读材料本身能够吸引学生。因此每一级读物有若干本,使学生有选择余地。在每一级读物中,有经典名著的简写本,有英美短篇小说选,有介绍最新科技的科技荟萃,有汇集西方社会热门话题的时文选读。此外,由于课外阅读的目的是巩固扩展语言知识,实践

阅读技巧,熟悉了解西方文化,因此我们每四五千字设计了一个练习。练习分为内容理解和语言知识两部分,以主观题为主,题型多样。在适当的时候,有的书还要配上磁带,把文字阅读和有声阅读结合起来。

编 者

1999 年 6 月于北京航空航天大学

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1. The Youngest Cowboy

Gerald Moore

My three-year-old son, Benjamin, watched closely as I battered¹ at a concrete slab in our back yard with a heavy sledge-hammer. Sweating from the effort, I laid the hammer aside. Benjamin ran to it and managed to lift it just high enough to endanger his foot. "Put that down," I said. "It's too big. You'll get hurt. "

"No," he said, straining to lift the hammer higher. "I'm a big, big man. I can do it. "

I hadn't guessed this desire would come so early. Why, I wondered^d did we all have to rush growing up? My thoughts flew back to a summer when I also decided I was a big, big man, and set out to prove it.

I was 14 that year in New Mexico, and impatient. I felt sure I could be a grown-up if only my parents would get out of my way. I wanted to show I could be independent. Often this took negative forms, like bridling at² any guidance from adults.

Mother and Dad put up with me and my petulance³ until school was nearly over that spring. Then, one evening at dinner, Mother said, "I heard Blevins Mckenzie is looking for a cowboy on his ranch this summer. Want to try for the job?"

"He'll think I'm too young. " I said gloomily.

"You won't know unless you ask. " Mother said.

"Okay," I answered cautiously. "I'll call him up. "

I was astonished to hear Mr. Mckenzie say, "The job is yours. Start June 1 and bring a saddle. I pay \$ 60 a month and room and board. "

My parents had grown up on ranches and they both had vivid memories. "You can come home if it gets too rough. "

Mother said.

But I felt sure I had all the skills. We owned several horses and I often rode after school. I could take care of myself.

“I want to tell you one thing, son.” Dad said. “On that ranch, you’ll be the youngest cowboy. They don’t have much time for kids. They’ll treat you like a man whether you are one or not.”

“I can do it.” I said, looking my dad steadily in the eye.

What I did not know was that I had just taken the bait in a carefully conceived⁴ conspiracy⁵ to let me be as grown-up as I was able. The previous Sunday, Mother had spoken to Mr. McKenzie after church and set the final link in place.

Bad beginning. The first day of June, I had all the trapping of a good wrangler⁶ — saddle, ten-gallon hat, spurs⁷ — when Wink, a seasoned⁸ cowboy, came to pick me up.

“Remember, don’t bite off more than you can chew,” Dad said. “The only guy looking out for you now is you.”

Wink headed his battered pickup truck west along Route 66. It was late afternoon when we reached the lonely dirt road to the McKenzie ranch. We were probably 40 miles from the nearest town. I felt the first stirrings of doubt.

Wink showed me to an empty bedroom in the big house where I would sleep. The McKenzies would arrive later in the summer.

We walked up the hill to meet Ben, the foreman. A tough Texan, Ben greeted me coolly. He shook my hand, sized me up⁹ and said he’d see me in the barn at four the next day.

I don’t know why I assumed Ben meant 4 p. m. , except that I needed time to unpack and arrange my room. I made supper and watched a spectacular New Mexico sunset. I went to bed early — awaking to hear pounding on the door. “Everybody’s waiting for you at the barn,” Wink called. “I already milked

your cow. ”

I dressed hurriedly and ran for the barn. It was a bad way to begin^d I knew^d but why hadn't Ben said four in the morning? No one paid any attention as I stepped into the corral¹⁰. Finally Ben called to me, “Catch that little bay. He has a hard mouth, so watch him. He's likely to run off with¹¹ you. ”

We were well away by sunrise, moving across grassy hills. I looked at my five companion riders and realized that I was, at last, working in a man's world. I sat a little taller in the saddle, proud to be doing adult things.

We rode on, hour after hour. By noon, I realized with a sinking heart that I was getting saddle-sore. The worst of that day, I could see, was yet to come.

Collision With Cactus. About 1 p. m. , we began gathering cattle into a small herd. Soon we had 30 or 40 head, and the real riding began. The cows lost patience with our drive, and bold ones began to bolt¹². I restrained myself from pushing into the action until a calf bolted straight past me and I had to give chase.

I spurred my bay to a thundering gallop¹³ before Ben's warning about him came back to me. Calf and horse ran neck and neck for 50 yards, then the calf lost heart and turned back. But my horse paid no attention when I drew in the reins. He spotted a big cactus¹⁴ up ahead, and his dim brain recognized an opportunity to rid himself of me. The cactus needles missed the bay's shoulder by millimeters and stabbed into my leg.

The bay pounded on toward a deep gully. He jumped it and nearly lost me. Only when he was winded¹⁵ did he slow to a trot.

I expected an outpouring of sympathy when I rejoined the others, but Ben said simply, “Ride on back and rest. ”

Gratefully but embarrassed, I headed home. I limped into the house, painfully worked my boot off, and pulled out the larger cactus thorns from my leg. Then I stuffed bread and

cheese into myself and washed my face. A deep determination began working within me. I would not, I promised myself, give up and go home. Then I looked out the window and saw the cowboys and cattle slowly approaching.

Here was an opportunity to make up for my earlier performance. A boy would stay in the kitchen, resting. A man would rejoin the work. I pulled on my boot and ran to open the gates for the cattle.

Ben waved and shouted as I ran toward them. I assured he wanted me to hurry. I ran faster.

First one and then two of the lead cows saw me and stopped. Then they bolted, scattering all the others. Cows and calves ran in every direction until there was not a single one in sight, just hot, tired, dispirited cowboys alone with their thoughts. My grand gesture had cost us all a day's work.

Hours later, we milked in silence. I had been a man for a single day, and I had failed. I walked up to the house and fell onto my bed, exhausted.

I started when I heard Wink's boots on the porch. I was still dressed. My lights were still on. It was dark outside. "You up?" he asked softly, "Oh, yeah." I said casually. It was time to work again.

I stuffed bread into my mouth and ran. Ben assigned a big white gelding¹⁶ to me that day. "This fellow won't run away with you," he said. "And tomorrow morning, you bring in the horses."

Sheer pride sustained me that second day as my soreness grew more acute. I thought of quitting, but I had bragged too much to my friends about my summer job. I was trapped. The only way out was just to survive until September.

We penned¹⁷ the cattle about sunset. I heard Wink on the steps. I needed to talk to someone. For the first time in a long

while, I actually wanted advice. "Ben told me to get the horses in tomorrow," I said. "What time should I leave?"

"About 3:30." Wink said. "But I'd eat first," he added. "You'll have to milk when you get back."

It was 8:15. If I went to bed immediately, which I could not, I could sleep less than seven hours. Wink said, "You better come eat supper with us."

I never cherished an invitation more. We sat down to steak and beans and biscuits, which I ate in embarrassing quantities. After dinner we had steaming mugs of coffee, and I sat just enjoying being in a family again.

When I struggled out of bed next morning at three I was surprised at how well I felt. I ate quickly. Outside the air was cool and clean. When I got the horses penned I felt free and exhilarated.

Painful Lesson. In another two weeks I was comfortable in a saddle for 12 hours. My self-confidence grew as I fell into a routine of eating, sleeping and working. But some of my old recklessness¹⁸ remained.

One day Wink and I were sent to paint the inside of a water tank. Painting was practically recreation compared with wrestling calves. I would show Wink how much I could do.

Wink noticed I was getting a lot of the paint on my hands. "I'd be careful not to get that stuff on me." He said quietly. "It can burn you bad."

"Right." I said absently. I was careful for a few minutes, but I was determined to apply more paint than Wink and I got more on my hands.

When we finished late in the afternoon, I had paint up above both wrists and had to wash in gasoline. By bedtime my hands had started to ache. Soon the pain was intense, and I began to feel sick at my stomach.

At dawn I found I could not stand sunlight on the burns. I pulled on a pair of heavy gloves. Our assignment that day: digging post holes.

No one asked about the gloves or my obvious discomfort. Hour after hour, I pounded away. Back at the ranch, I pulled off my gloves. The skin had reddened and was beginning to crack. "Look at my hands." I said to Wink.

"I know," Wink said. "I told you."

"You didn't say it would be this bad," I said.

"I did," Wink said. "I said that stuff will burn you. I didn't think you cared."

I had been stupid, and didn't like to admit it. I was beginning to understand what Dad had meant about being treated like a man, and about looking out for myself.

Blessed Dependence. Mr. McKenzie arrived with his family, and life got easier. When I returned from milking now there was a huge breakfast already on the table. I had eased up in my headlong¹⁹ flight to prove my maturity.

We were branding²⁰ that day. Normally, to prove my ability, I would have claimed one of the more difficult assignments. But today I applied my muscle, instead of my pride, to the job. I flanked²¹ and held calves all day long, getting kicked several times in the process. I didn't try to prove anything. I just worked.

That night after dinner Mr. McKenzie said simply, "You did real good today, boy."

I was astonished. I tried to remember some special thing I had done, but couldn't think of anything.

"I don't understand," I said to Wink the next day. "I just worked like everyone else."

"That's how," Wink said, smiling. "Yesterday you worked like the youngest cowboy, instead of like the foreman."

“Oh,” I said, suddenly understanding. “I guess I bit off more than I could chew a lot of times.”

“Sometimes,” Wink said. “We all figured you’d quit and go home, but you stuck. You chewed it.” He paused and then added. “Ease up. You’re doing just fine — for a kid.”

Mother drove out to pick me up on the last day of August. I had matured a lot at the ranch. I now knew something of the price of independence and something of its value. But I realized I had discovered more about dependence than anything else — wonderful, blessed dependence.

“Well,” Mother said, “you must have learned a lot this summer.”

“Yep,” I said as I tossed my soiled²² hat on the back seat. “I found out that I’m a very lucky kid.”

She laughed her big hearty laugh. She knew exactly what I meant.

- | | |
|------------|------------|
| 1. 敲打 | 12. 跑开 |
| 2. 对…表示不满 | 13. 急驰, 飞奔 |
| 3. 闹气, 性急 | 14. 仙人掌 |
| 4. 构思, 设想 | 15. 喘气的 |
| 5. 共谋, 阴谋 | 16. 阉马 |
| 6. 牛仔, 角力士 | 17. 关入栏中 |
| 7. 马刺 | 18. 卤莽 |
| 8. 经验丰富的 | 19. 轻率地 |
| 9. 估量, 打量 | 20. 给牛打烙印 |
| 10. 畜栏 | 21. 侧翼包围 |
| 11. 难以被驾驭 | 22. 弄脏的 |

Exercise One

Understanding

I. True or False:

1. The author didn't expect his son to have the desire to be a grown-up only at the age of three.
2. When the author was fourteen, he tried to prove he could be independent by listening to his parents' instructions.
3. The author got the job from Mr. McKenzie because he had proved to be a worthy cowboy.
4. The author didn't take his father's advice seriously at first.
5. Ben, the foreman, told the boy to start work the next afternoon.
6. The worst thing of the boy's first day at work was that he was getting saddle-sore.
7. The boy was hurt by the cactus thorns because he spurred his bay too hard and couldn't make it stop.
8. After the collision with cactus, the boy made up his mind to quit.
9. When Ben told the boy to get the horses in the next day, he asked advice from Wink because he really needed it.
10. The boy's hands being burnt by the paint showed that he was still somewhat reckless.
11. The boy became more mature when he didn't try to prove his maturity.
12. The other cowboys had never cared whether the boy would give up or else.

II Answer the following questionsI

1. What did the author's parents do when they couldn't put up with his petulance?
2. What did the boy mean by a bad beginningS
3. What did the boy expect from the others after he got hurt by

the cactus thornsS

4. After pulling out the cactus thorns^d what did the boy do to make up for his earlier performance? And what about the result?
5. Why couldn't the boy quit the jobS
6. After the boy had successfully got the horses in the barn^d what did he feel?
7. What was the painful lesson the boy got from the job of painting the inside of a tankS
8. Why did MrRMckenzie praise the boyS
9. What did the boy mean when he said "I'm a very lucky child"?
10. What do you think of the sentence "Don't bite off more than you can chew"? Did you have any such experienceS

III. Translate the following sentences from English into Chinese:

1. Often this took negative forms, like bridling at any guidance from adults.
2. What I did not know was that I had just taken the bait in a carefully conceived conspiracy to let me be as grown-up as I was able.
3. I restrained myself from pushing into the action until a calf bolted straight past me and I had to give chase.
4. He spotted a big cactus up ahead, and his dim brain recognized an opportunity to rid himself of me. The cactus needles missed the bay's shoulder by millimeters and stabbed into my leg.
5. Cows and calves ran in every direction until there was not a single one in sight, just hot, tired dispirited cowboys alone with their thoughts.
6. Sheer pride sustained me that second day as my soreness grew more acute.
7. I never cherished an invitation more. We sat down to steak

and beans and biscuits, which I ate in embarrassing quantities.

8. I was careful for a few minutes, but I was determined to apply more paint than Wink and I got more on my hands.
9. I had eased up in my headlong flight to prove my maturity.
10. Normally, to prove my ability, I would have claimed one of the more difficult assignments. But today I applied my muscle, instead of my pride, to the job.

Language Knowledge

IV. Fill in the blanks with the following phrases in their proper forms:

ease up,	bridle at,	collision with,
work...off,	compare with,	draw in,
assign...to,	restrain...from,	run off with,
lose patience with		

1. I love my grandmother so much because she never _____ me.
2. Mary _____ her mother's unkind remarks about Jim.
3. He was an inexperienced rider, and the horse soon _____ him.
4. His _____ his father about which college to enter made him sick at heart.
5. It's difficult to _____ oneself _____ eating too much.
6. The fishermen _____ their nets full of fish.
7. Can you _____ this lid _____ S It seems to be stuck.
8. It is wise to _____ special exercises _____ the weaker students.
9. Social life in a village can't _____ that of a large city.
10. I wish you could _____ on the children; their behavior gets worse when you make them nervous.