

英语阶梯阅读丛书

英语阶梯阅读

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前言

新世纪需要的是新型人才，因此教育要迎接新的挑战，面向现代化、面向世界、面向未来。英语教学的改革更是刻不容缓。英语语言素质不仅表现在掌握英语语言知识的深度，更表现在灵活运用英语的能力上。听、说、读、写四种技能中，阅读能力的培养一直是英语教学中的重要一环，在各项英语测试中对阅读水平的重视程度也是显而易见的。

如何更快更好地提高学生的阅读水平，从而全面提高其语言应用能力，是值得每一位教学者思考的问题。本着用发展的眼光探索英语教学改革新思路的这样一个出发点，我们编写了这套《英语阶梯阅读丛书》。

丛书是根据 2000 年颁布的《英语教学大纲》的要求，结合作者多年的教学经验精心编写完成的。丛书与新教材同步，伴教伴学，其突出的特点是立足课本，夯实基础，注重语境，强化语篇意识，突出能力培养。丛书不仅具有科学性、创新性，更具有很强的针对性和实用性。

本书为《英语阶梯阅读 3》，共设 10 个单元，每单元

选择的文章风格迥异、内容丰富、形式多样；力求贴近生活，与时俱进。书后给出测试题参考答案。

希望该书能成为教师教学的好帮手，学生学习的好伙伴，在减轻学习负担的同时，为全面实施英语素质教育做出贡献。由于时间仓促，水平有限，书中难免有不尽如人意之处，恳请广大读者不吝赐教。

杨 冰

2005 年 5 月

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Unit 1

Making a Difference

Passage A

Stephen William Hawking was born on January 8 , 1942 (300 years after the death of Galileo) in Oxford , England. His parents ' house was in north London , but during World War II , Oxford was considered a safer place to have babies. When he was eight , his family moved to St Albans , a town about 20 miles north of London. At eleven Stephen went to St Albans School , and then on to University College Oxford , his father ' s old college. Stephen wanted to do mathematics , although his father would have preferred medicine. Mathematics was not available at University College , so he did physics instead. After three years and not very much work he was awarded a first class honour degree in Natural Science.

Stephen then went on to Cambridge to do research in

Cosmology , for there was no one working in that area in Oxford at the time. His supervisor was Denis Sciama , although he had hoped to get Fred Hoyle who was working in Cambridge. After gaining his Ph.D. , he became first a Research Fellow , and later on a Professional Fellow at Gonville and Caius College. After leaving the Institute of Astronomy in 1973 , Stephen came to the Department of Applied Mathematics and Theoretical Physics , and since 1979 has held the post of Lucasian Professor of Mathematics. The chair was founded in 1663 with money left in the will of the Reverend Henry Lucas , who had been the Member of Parliament for the University. It was first held by Isaac Barrow , and then in 1669 by Isaac Newton.

Stephen Hawking has worked on the basic laws which govern the universe. With Roger Penrose he showed that Einstein 's General Theory of Relativity implied (暗示) space and time would have a beginning in the Big Bang (大爆炸) and an end in black holes. These results showed it was necessary to unify (统一) General Relativity with Quantum Theory (量子理论) , the other great scientific development of the first half of the 20th Century. One result of such a unification that he discovered was that black holes should not be completely black , but should emit radiation (发出射线) and eventually evaporate and disappear. Another conjecture (推测) is that the universe has no edge or boundary in imaginary time. This would imply that the way the universe began was completely determined by the laws of science.

1. Which of the Following statements about Stephen Hawking is NOT true ?
- A. He first went to the same college as his father did.
 - B. At the beginning he did physics which was against his interest.
 - C. He was awarded a first class honour degree in Natural Science.
 - D. He left Oxford to Cambridge to do mathematics.
2. The underlined word “Cosmology” in the second paragraph is most probably about _____ .
- A. mathematics
 - B. universe
 - C. medicine
 - D. laws of science
3. Put the following facts about Stephen Hawking in order of time :
- a. being awarded a first class honour degree
 - b. becoming a Research Fellow
 - c. becoming a Professional Fellow
 - d. holding the post of Lucasian Professor of Mathematics
- A. a , c , b , d
 - B. a , b , d , c
 - C. b , a , c , d
 - D. a , b , c , d
4. Stephen Hawking 's theory about universe is _____ .
- A. black holes of universe should be completely black
 - B. General Relativity and Quantum Theory should be unified
 - C. black holes should emit radiation and eventually evaporate and disappear
 - D. the way the universe began was determined by laws

Passage B

It was early morning. Peter Corbett helped Mark Wellman out of his wheelchair and onto the ground. They stood before El Capitan, a huge mass of rocks almost three-quarters of a mile high in California's beautiful Yosemite Valley. It had been Mark's dream to climb El Capitan for as long as he could remember. But how could a person without the use of his legs hope to try to climb it?

Mark knew he couldn't finish the climb alone, but his friend Peter, an expert rock climber, would be there to lend a helping hand. He and Mark thought that it would take seven days to reach the top.

Peter climbed about 100 feet up and hammered a piton (岩钉) into the rock. Fastening one end of a 165-foot rope to the piton, he let one end of the rope fall down. Mark caught the rope and fastened it to his belt with a special instrument. This instrument would allow Mark to move upward, but would prevent him from falling even as much as a single inch. He next reached above his head and fastened a T-shaped bar to the rope, using the same kind of instrument.

Mark took a deep breath, pushed the T-bar up almost as far as his arms could reach, and began the first of the 7,000 pull-ups needed to reach the top. High above, Peter let out a cheer, "You're on your way."

Seven years before, at the age of twenty-one, Mark had

fallen while mountain climbing ,injuring his backbone. The fall cost him the use of his legs , but he never lost his love of adventure or his joyful spirit.

For the first four days the two men progressed steadily upward without incident. But on the fifth day an unbearably hot wind began to blow , and as time went by , it became stronger and stronger , causing Mark to sway (摇摆) violently on his rope. But Mark kept on determinedly pushing up the T-bar and pulling himself up. In spite of that , he had to admit that he felt a lot better when the wind finally died down and his body touched solid rock again.

It took them one day more than they had expected , but on July 26 at 1 :45 in the afternoon , the crowd of people waiting on the top went wild with joy as the two heads appeared. Mark Wellman had shown that if you set your heart and mind on a goal , no wall is too high , no dream is impossible.

1. What had Mark Wellman long desired to do ?
 - A. To finish one of the most difficult rock climbs in the world.
 - B. To be the first to climb El Capitan.
 - C. To climb the highest mountain in California.
 - D. To help his friend Peter climb El Capitan.
2. How did Mark climb the mountain ?
 - A. He fastened the rope to his wheelchair.
 - B. He hammered in pitons so that he had something to hold on to.
 - C. He held on to the T-bar and Peter pulled him up.
 - D. He pulled himself up using a T-bar and special equipment.

3. How did Mark lose the use of his legs ?
- A. He lost his footing and fell from the side of a mountain.
 - B. He fell during his first attempt on El Capitan.
 - C. His legs were broken by the falling rocks.
 - D. While working out in the gym , he injured his backbone.
4. What was the worst problem Mark had during the climb ?
- A. He struck against the rock and hurt his arms.
 - B. A strong wind blew him away from the rock.
 - C. He kept falling several inches.
 - D. While swaying in space , he became terrified.
5. How did Mark react to difficulties during the climb ?
- A. He admitted that he was frightened.
 - B. He often worried about his friend 's condition.
 - C. He was able to remain calm and determined.
 - D. He was joking to cheer himself up.

Passage C

It doesn't matter when or how much a person sleeps , but everyone needs some rest to stay alive. That's what all doctors thought , until they heard about Al Herpin. Al Herpin , it was said , never slept. Could this be true ? The doctors decided to see this strange man themselves.

Al Herpin was 90 years old when the doctors came to his home in New Jersey. They thought for sure that he got some sleep of some kind. So they stayed with him and watched every movement he made. But they were surprised. Though they

watched him hour after hour and day after day , they never saw Herpin sleeping. In fact , he did not even own a bed. He never needed one.

The only rest that Herpin sometimes got was sitting in a comfortable chair and reading newspapers. The doctors were puzzled by this strange continuous sleeplessness. They found only one answer that might explain his condition. Herpin remembered some talk about his mother having been injured several days before he was born. But that was all. Was this the real reason ? No one could be sure. Herpin died at the age of 94.

1. The main idea of this passage is that _____.
 - A. large numbers of people do not need sleep
 - B. a person who actually didn 't need any sleep was found
 - C. everyone needs some sleep to stay alive
 - D. people can live longer by trying not to sleep
2. The doctors came to visit Herpin , expecting to _____.
 - A. cure him of his sleeplessness
 - B. find that his sleeplessness was not really true
 - C. find a way to free people from the need of sleeping
 - D. find out why some old people didn 't need any sleep
3. After watching him closely , the doctors came to believe that Al Herpin _____.
 - A. was too old to need any sleep
 - B. often slept in a chair
 - C. needed on sleep at all
 - D. needed some kind of sleep

4. One reason that might explain Herpin 's sleeplessness was

- _____ .
- A. that he hadn 't got a bed
 - B. that he had gradually got tired of the sleeping habit
 - C. his mother 's injury before he was born
 - D. his magnificent physical condition

Passage D

When Bill was a student , he was well ahead of his classmates in mathematics and science. He needed to go to a school that challenged him. His parents decided to send him to Lakeside — an all-boys ' school for exceptional students. It was Seattle 's most exclusive school and was noted for its rigorous academic demands , a place where "even the dumb kids were smart ". Lakeside allowed students to pursue their own interests , to whatever extent they wished. It was the ideal environment for someone like Bill Gates.

At fourteen , Bill was already writing short programs for the computer to perform. Early game programs such as Tic-Tac-Toe , Noughts and Crosses , and Lunar Landing were written in which was to become Bill 's second language , BASIC.

BASIC was a success because until it came along there had been no efficient (高效的) way of getting computers to carry out instructions. Although he had not yet completed his degree , Gates left Harvard and went to work full time for the company

he had formed called Microsoft.

His next project was the software program that made him famous and very rich. It was called DOS , short for Disk Operating System , and it was bought by IBM in 1980. Today it is the operating system used in more than 14 million personal computers around the world.

As chief executive officer of Microsoft , Gates is known as a brilliant man , but one who is not easily satisfied. To most people now , Gates is a person who is , in spite of his great wealth , humble and ordinary. He spends his money carefully. He eats in fast food restaurants and flies economy class. And when praised for Microsoft 's great success , he has been heard to say , "All we do is to put software in a box and if people see it in the stores and like it , they buy it. "

1. When Gates was a student , he was good at _____.
A. history and science B. politics and mathematics
C. history and politics D. science and mathematics
2. Gates formed the new company Microsoft _____.
A. because he did not want to stay at university
B. and left university to work there full time
C. because he was already working on DOS
D. because he could not use DOS while he was at university
3. _____ made him famous and very rich.
A. His company Microsoft
B. His idea to sell his software programs
C. The software program DOS
D. BASIC

4. Most people think of Gates _____ , in spite of his richness.
- A. as a crazy person
 - B. as a person who lives an expensive way of life
 - C. as a proud person who is only interested in making money
 - D. as a quite ordinary , normal person

Passage E

Computer programmer David Jones earned £ 35 000 a year by designing new computer games , yet he cannot find a bank prepared to let him have a check card. Instead , he has been told to wait another two years until he is 18.

He works for a small firm in Liverpool , where most young of his age are finding jobs. David 's biggest headache is what to do with his money. Though he has high payment , he cannot drive a car , or get credit cards (信用卡).

David got his job four months ago , a year after leaving school with six O-levels (普通成绩) and working for a time in a computer shop. "I got the job because the people who run the firm knew I had already written some programs , " he said.

"I suppose £ 35 000 sounds a lot but I hope it will come to more than that this year. " He spends some of his money on records and clothes , and gives his mother £ 20 a week as he lives with his parents. But most of his spare time is spent working.

"Unfortunately , computing was not part of our studies at

school,” he said. “But I had been studying it in books and magazines for four years in my spare time. I knew what I wanted to do and never considered staying on at school. Most people in this business are fairly young , anyway. I would like to earn a million and I suppose early retirement (退休) is a possibility. You never know when the market might disappear. ”

1. Why is David so different from other young people of his age ?
 - A. He gets an extremely high payment.
 - B. He has got a job.
 - C. He lives at home with his parents.
 - D. He does not go out much.
2. David 's greatest problem is that _____.
 - A. he can 't be treated as an adult by the bank
 - B. he doesn 't make as many games as he wishes
 - C. he doesn 't know what to buy with the money
 - D. he is too young to drive a car
3. He was employed by the company because _____.
 - A. he had worked in a computer shop
 - B. he had written some computer programs
 - C. he is clever and works hard at his lessons
 - D. he had learnt to use computers at school
4. He left school after taking six O-levels because _____.
 - A. he was afraid of getting too old to start computing
 - B. he did not enjoy school
 - C. he wanted to work with computers

- D. he wanted to earn a lot of money
5. Why does David think he might retire early ?
- A. He thinks computer games might not always sell so well.
- B. He wants to stop working when he is a millionaire.
- C. One has to be young to write computer programs.
- D. He thinks his firm might close down.

Passage F

Early one morning , more than a hundred years ago , an American inventor called Elias Howe finally fell asleep. He had been working all night on the design of a sewing machine but he had run into a very difficult problem : it seemed impossible to get the thread to run smoothly around the needle.

Though he was tired , Howe slept badly. He turned and turned. Then he had a dream. He dreamt that he had been caught by terrible savages whose king wanted to kill him and eat him unless he could build a perfect sewing machine. When he tried to do so , Howe ran into the same problem as before. The thread kept getting caught around the needle. The king flew into the rage and ordered his soldiers to kill Howe. They came up towards him with their spears raising. But suddenly the inventor noticed something. There was a hole in the rip of each spear. The inventor awoke from the dream , realizing that he had just found the answer to the problem. Instead of trying to get the thread to run around the needle , he should make it run through a small hole in the center of the needle. This was the