

English Reading
英 语 阅 读

(英语专业基础阶段 1~4 级用书)



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前言

人类创造了文字以后,阅读便成为人类获取知识的主要手段和途径。即使在科学技术高度发达、知识传播媒介先进多样的今天,阅读仍然是人类获得知识和信息的主要途径和手段。就英语学习而言,阅读历来受到教育部门、专家学者和师生的重视。在中国,英语阅读传统上分为精读和泛读。顾名思义,精读要精,精读课文主要解决学生对英语基本词汇和基本语法的学习和使用问题,对精读课文的讲解要精而细;泛读要泛,泛读课文包含的内容和题材广而泛,主要让学生通过大量的阅读去熟悉各种语言现象,了解与英语语言有关的英美国家的社会、文化、地理、历史等背景知识,但由于课时安排得少,泛读课文的讲解只能粗而略,很多学习上的问题,学生只能课后自己去解决。那么,通过泛读学生要解决哪些学习问题呢?根据编者 30 余年的教学经验,认为以下 4 点尤为重要:

1. 通过泛读熟悉、消化、掌握精读课学过的重要词汇,并在此基础上通过联想和归纳,充实和扩大词汇量和习语量。对英语专业四级认知词汇 5 000~6 000 个,八级认知词汇 9 000~12 000 个的词汇量要求,主要应通过泛读来完成。
2. 通过泛读熟悉、消化、掌握精读课学过的语法和结构。
3. 通过泛读熟悉和了解英语的各种体裁和文体。
4. 通过泛读了解和学习英美国家的社会、文化、地理、历史等背景知识。

根据以上理念和大纲的要求,结合目前尚无一套理想的阅读教材能满足学生达到以上目的的实际,我们编写了这套《英语阅读》,供高等学校英语专业学生基础阶段学习使用。

本套教材共 4 册,每学期(或每级)学习 1 册,每册含 16 个单元,每个单元含 3~4 篇文章(text),根据目前英语专业四级考试的考试内容需要,其中 1 篇为快速阅读练习(Speed Reading),由若干小段(passage)组成。为了达到以上所述泛读的目的,根据四级考试内容的需要,每篇文章(快速阅读练习除外)后设有 5 个方面的学习内容:

1. 阅读理解(Comprehension)部分采取多项选择、True or False、填空等多种形式以检验学生的阅读理解能力。
2. 词汇学习与联想(Word Study and Associations)部分旨在帮助学生充实和扩大词汇量,让学生对课文中的重要词汇(学过的或未学过的)进行联想和归纳式学习,包括以下内容:

(1)横向顺向联想——学到一个词联想到它的派生词以及由该词组成的常用短语。例如:universe → universal → universal agreement(全体一致);a universal language(世界通用语言) → universally → It is universally acknowledged that... (普遍认为……)。

(2)横向逆向联想——学到一个词联想到它的反义词。例如:advantage → disadvan-

tage; reveal → conceal。

(3)纵向联想——学到一个词联想到它的同义词。例如:colossal → huge → immense → gigantic → titanic → tremendous。

(4)纵向联想用法辨析——学到一个词联想到它的同义词时,如果其同义词在用法上有区别,指出其区别并用例句加以说明。例如:alter → change。alter 表示使某事物在外观、性质、用途等方面稍作改变,而 change 的词义广泛,常指使某事物在各方面作完全改变。例如:I'll have to alter the plan because some data are wrong. (我必须修改一下计划,因为一些数据有误。)He changed the design of the house completely. (他完全更改了房屋的设计。)

3. 短语与用语(Phrases and Expressions)部分旨在通过对课文中的重要短语和用语的纵向同义联想和归纳,充实和扩大学生的词语量。例如:concentrate one's mind on (sth./doing sth.) → focus/center one's attention on(sth./doing sth.)。

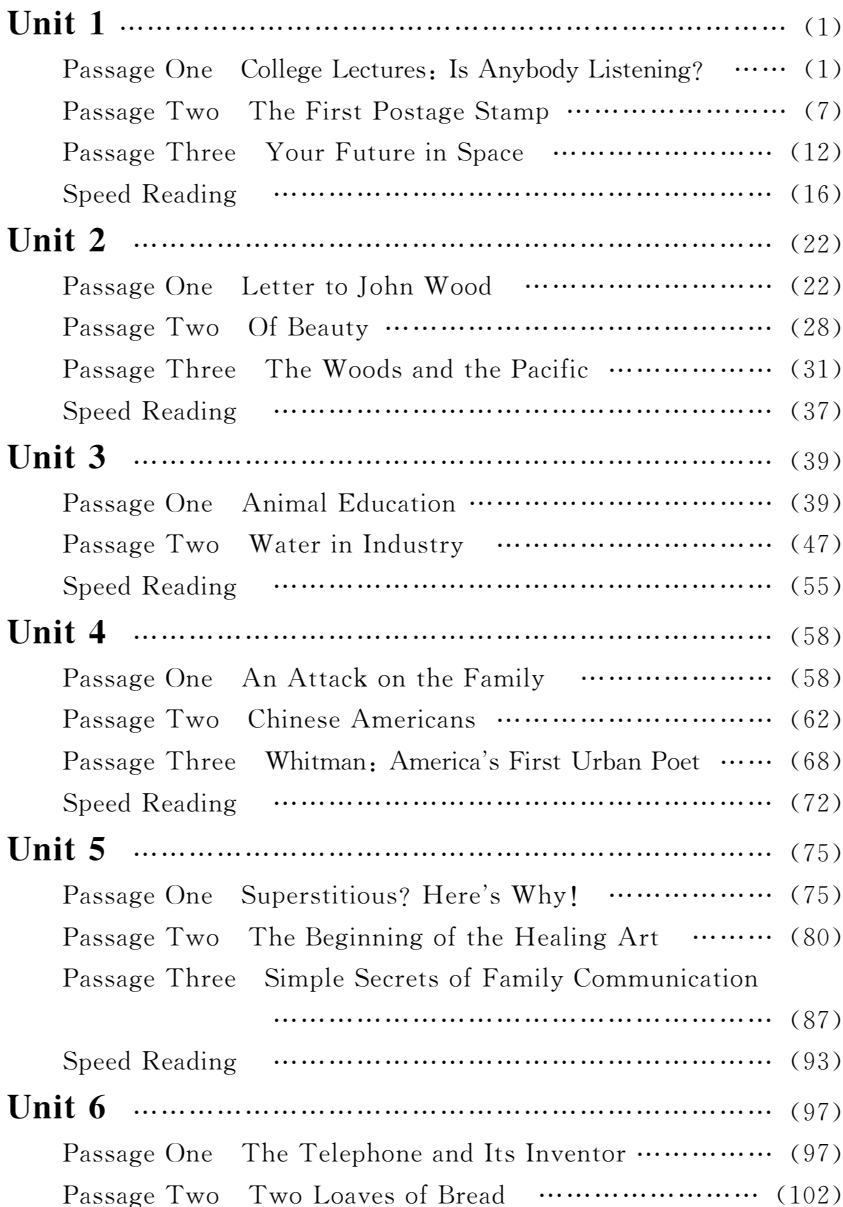
4. 结构与语法(Structure and Grammar)部分采用解释加例句的方式,帮助学生学习 and 掌握课文中的重要句子结构和语法,扫除阅读中的障碍,并学会在语言实践中应用。例如:Highly advanced civilizations may have existed on other planets long before intelligent forms of life evolved on the earth. (在有智慧的生命形式在地球上进化以前,高度发达的文明或许早就在其他星球上存在了。)本句中的情态动词(may) + 动词完成形式(have existed)是表示说话人推测的一种结构。根据说话人推测语气的强弱,情态动词可用 may/might,can/could,should/ought to,must 等,分别表示或许、可能、应当、一定已经发生的事情。例如:She left last night, and she may (might/can/could/should/ought to/must) have arrived in Beijing now. (她昨晚走的,或许(可能/应该/一定)已经到北京了。)

5. 背景知识(Background Knowledge) 部分主要介绍课文中涉及的有关英美国家社会、文化、地理、历史等方面的背景知识,以扩大学生对西方社会了解的知识面。

本书以语言学的基本原理和语用原则为指导,编写上刻意求新,试图以有限的语料拓展出一个较大的语义场及语用语境,让学生利用有限的语料最大限度地获得和提高自己的语言能力和背景知识,从而提高交际能力与应试能力。

李 军

2005 年 7 月



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Unit 1

Passage One

College Lectures: Is Anybody Listening?

A former teacher of mine, Robert A. Fowkes of New York University, likes to tell the story of a class he took in Old English while studying in Germany during the 1930s. On the first day the professor strode up to the blackboard, looked through his notes, coughed, and began, “Guten Tag, Meine Damen and Herren”. (“Good day, ladies and gentlemen.”) Fowkes glanced around uneasily. He was the only student in the course.

Toward the middle of the semester, Fowkes fell ill and missed a class. When he returned, to Fowkes’ astonishment, the professor began to deliver not the next lecture in the sequence but the one after. Had he, in fact, lectured to an empty hall in the absence of his solitary student? Fowkes thought it perfectly possible.

Today, American colleges and universities (originally modeled on German ones) are under strong attack. Teachers, it is charged, are not doing a good job of teaching, and students are not doing a good job of learning. American businesses and industries suffer from uncreative executives educated not to think for themselves but to recite obsolete ideas that the rest of the world has long discarded. College graduates lack both basic skills and general culture. Studies are conducted and reports are issued on the status of higher education, but any changes that result either are largely cosmetic or make a bad situation worse.

One aspect of American education too seldom challenged is the lecture system. Professors continue to lecture and students to take notes much as they did in the thirteen century, when books were so scarce and expensive that few students could own them. The time is long overdue for us to abandon the lecture system and turn to methods that really work.

One problem with lectures is that listening intelligently is hard work. Reading the same material in a textbook is a more efficient way to learn because students can proceed as slowly as they need to until the subject matter becomes clear to them. Even simply paying attention is very difficult: people can listen at a rate of four hundred to six hundred words a minute, while the most spirited professor talks at scarcely a third of that

speed. This time lag between speech and comprehension leads to daydreaming. Many students believe years of watching television have shortened their attention span, but their real problem is that listening attentively is much harder than they think.

Worse still, attending lectures is passive learning, at least for inexperienced listeners. Active learning, in which students write essays or perform experiments and then have their work evaluated by an instructor, is far more beneficial for those who have not yet fully learned how to learn. While it's true that techniques of active listening, such as trying to anticipate the speaker's next point or taking intelligent notes, can enhance the value of a lecture, few students possess such skills at the beginning of their college careers. More commonly, students try to write everything down and even bring tape recorders to class in a clumsy effort to capture every word.

Students need to question their professors and to have their ideas taken seriously. Only then will they develop the analytical skills required to think intelligently and creatively. Most students learn best by engaging in frequent and even heated debate, not by taking down a professor's often unsatisfactory summary of complicated issues. They need small discussion classes that demand a joint effort of teacher and students rather than classes in which one person, however learned, expresses his or her own ideas.

The lecture system ultimately harms professors as well. It reduces feedback to a minimum, so that the lecturer can neither judge how well students understand the material nor benefit from their questions or comments. Questions that require the speaker to clarify obscure points and comments that challenge inadequately constructed arguments are indispensable to scholarship. Without them, the liveliest mind becomes dull. Undergraduates may not be able to make good contributions very often, but by lecturing alone a professor fails to attract the beginner's naive question that could have triggered a fruitful line of thought.

If lectures make so little sense, why have they been allowed to continue? Administrators love them of course. They can cram far more students into a lecture hall than into a discussion class, and for many administrators that's almost the end of the story. But the truth is that faculty members, and even students, conspire with them to keep the lecture system alive and well. Lectures are easier on everyone than debates. Professors can pretend to teach by lecturing just as students can pretend to learn by attending lectures, with no one the wiser, including the participants. Moreover, if lectures give some students an opportunity to sit back and let the professor run the show, they offer some professors an irresistible forum for showing off. In a classroom where everyone contributes, students are less able to hide and professors have less room to show off how smart they are.

Lectures will never entirely disappear from the university scene, both because they seem to be economically necessary and because they spring from a long tradition in a setting that rightly values tradition for its own sake. But the lectures too frequently come

at the wrong end of the students' educational careers — during the first two years, when they most need close, even individual, instruction. If lecture classes were restricted to junior and senior undergraduates and to graduate students, who are more academically independent and more capable of working on their own, they would be far less destructive of students' interests and enthusiasms than the present system. After all, students must learn to listen before they can listen to learn.

I. Comprehension

1. The author begins his article with _____.
 - A. a specific example from his own experience
 - B. a specific example based on a story he heard
 - C. a summary of his main argument
2. He mentions the general criticism of the American education system _____.
 - A. in order to prove that they are unreasonable
 - B. as an introduction to his own specific criticism
 - C. in order to amuse the reader
3. Throughout the article, it's clear that the author considers _____ to be the main aim of higher education.
 - A. memorizing facts
 - B. acquiring the ability to think independently
 - C. observing learned professors display their knowledge
4. The author presents all the following objections to the lecture system EXCEPT that _____.
 - A. it was modeled on the German university system
 - B. it encourages daydreaming
 - C. it provides teachers with too little feedback
5. By "taking intelligent notes" (Para. 6), the author clearly means _____.
 - A. writing down everything or even bringing tape recorders
 - B. enhancing the value of a lecture
 - C. recognizing the points that are important enough to note down
6. The author clearly considers the advantages of lectures _____.
 - A. important only to university administrators
 - B. easier on everyone than debates
 - C. irrelevant to the true aims of higher education
7. The author concludes by recommending that lectures should be _____.
 - A. abandoned completely
 - B. offered only to students who value tradition for its own sake
 - C. offered only when students have acquired active listening skills

II. Word Study and Associations

1. former /'fɔ:mə/ *adj.* 以前的;(两者中的)前面的
2. stride /straɪd/ *vi.* (strode, stridden) 大步行走 → stride a brook 跨越一条小溪 (同义) pace; walk (用法) pace 指以步量面积,指在小范围内来回走动,考虑问题。→ (例句) The lion paced the floor of his cage. 狮子在笼子里的地板上走来走去。stride 常指以大而有规律的步伐行走,也可指精力充沛地昂首阔步。→ (例句) They strode away without saying anything. 他们什么也没说就大步走开了。walk 泛指步行,着重用双脚有规律地走路,或快或慢。→ (例句) She walked with light steps. 她走起路来步态轻盈。
3. sequence /'si:kwəns/ *n.* 顺序,先后 → a sequence of bumper harvests 连续的大丰收
4. solitary /'sɒlɪtəri/ *adj.* 单个的,惟一的;单独的 → solitary evening 惟一的夜晚 → solitary pursuits 独自的追求 (同义) alone; desolate; lone; lonely; lonesome (用法) solitary 词义与 lonely 相近,既可描写人又可描写地方,但该词还可指一种个人选择的而不是他人强加的孤独,即这可能是性格孤僻、喜欢独处或独来独往的人。→ (例句) My uncle is solitary by nature. 我叔叔生性孤僻。alone 指独自一人,既不表示好也不表示不好。→ (例句) I was alone, but not lonely. 我虽单身一人,但并不寂寞。desolate 描写人时,指绝对孤独或被抛弃而无可慰藉、无依无靠;指地方时,既可表示尚未开发的那种荒凉,也可描述一种破落的荒芜。→ (例句) After the war, the town was a desolate place. 战后这座城镇变成了一个孤零零的荒凉之地。lone 只可置于名词前做定语,指单独、孤零零一个,强调没有伙伴。→ (例句) In that cloudy sky only one lone star could be seen. 在那乌云密布的天空中,只能看到孤零零的一颗星。lonely 描述一种由于没有伙伴或缺乏伙伴可以给予的同情而导致的精神状态,即“寂寞孤独”,词义广泛,包括从偶尔与外界隔绝而感到怏怏不乐,到由于长期与他人断绝来往,缺乏真诚的友谊而产生的悲伤与消沉。该词也可用来描述一种人迹罕至的或荒废了的地方。→ (例句) He is used to collective life and feels lonely when he is left alone. 他习惯于集体生活,只剩下他一个人的时候,就感到孤独。lonesome 比 lonely 语气更重。形容人时,常常用来强调与自己非常亲近的人不在身边时的那种失落感,即“孤苦伶仃”、“寂寞凄凉”;指一个地方时,用来表示这个地方不仅荒凉而且有一种令人忧郁的气氛。美国人更爱用这个词来替代 lonely。→ (例句) During the winter holidays, the campus became a lonesome place. 寒假期间,校园变成了一个凄凉的地方。
5. originally /ə'ridʒənəli/ *adv.* 起初,原先 → original *adj.* → (例句) The original owner of the house was the Duke of Wellington. 这房子本来的主人是威灵顿公爵。*n.* 原物;原作品 原文 → studying Greek to read Homer in the original 学习希腊文是为了读荷马原著。
6. discard /dis'kɑ:d/ *vt.* 丢弃,抛弃 → discard one's winter clothes in spring 春天里换下冬装 (同义) abandon; desert; forsake (用法) discard 指抛弃不再需要或追求的人或东西。→ (例句) We discarded all the clothes we'd grown out of. 我们把穿着小的衣服都扔掉了。abandon 指永远、完全地放弃、遗弃或抛弃,特别是指一个人放弃已有的兴趣或所负的责任,其原因可能是自愿的,也可能是被迫的,或是可能为了逃避责任。

→ (例句) The cruel man abandoned his wife and child. 那个残忍的人抛弃了妻子和孩子。desert 指违背其信仰、誓言、允诺、责任、义务或命令的情况下,放弃岗位、职责、忠诚或法律上的关系。→ (例句) The village had been hurriedly deserted, perhaps because bandits were in the district. 全村的人都已匆匆逃走,也许因为该地区有土匪出没。forsake 的意思是不但在物质上而且在精神上断绝个人依恋之情。它通常含有对所眷恋的或所依赖的人的一种失望情绪,不仅暗示一种消极的信念,而且缺乏积极的行动,但不一定有责备之意。→ (例句) She decided to forsake the world and enter a convent. 她决定与世隔绝,去当修女。

7. cosmetic /kəz'metik/ *adj.* (1) 装饰性的;装门面的 → cosmetic fenders on cars 汽车上的装饰性栏杆。(2)化妆用的 → cosmetic surgery 美容手术
8. overdue /'əuvə'dju:/ *adj.* 过期的;早该有的 → an overdue check 过期支票 → overdue debt 过期债款
9. scarcely /'skæslɪ/ *adv.* 几乎不 → (例句) There was scarcely anything mentioned about that contract. 关于那份合同几乎什么也没提到。(用法) scarcely 有否定的意味,因此当它与另一否定形式一起用时被认为是不正确的,如在 I couldn't scarcely believe it 中。在 scarcely 之后用 when 或 before 引导从句是正确的;than 的用法虽然常见,但对于一些语法家来说仍然不能接受,会议刚开始(或者 before 但非 than)就被打断了。The meeting had scarcely begun when (or before but not than) it was interrupted.
10. lag /læɡ/ *n.* 滞后;延迟 *vi.* (behind)落后;滞留 → (例句) The elder people and children always lag behind when we go for a walk. 我们出门散步时,年纪大的人和孩子们总是落在后头。
11. comprehension /'kəmpri'hensjən/ *n.* 理解;理解力 → (例句) The problem is above [beyond] my comprehension. 这个问题超出我的理解力。
12. comprehensive /'kəmpri'hensiv/ *adj.* 广泛的;综合的 → (例句) a comprehensive history of the revolution 革命事件广泛的历史
13. passive /'pæsɪv/ *adj.* 被动的;消极的 → passive improvement trade 被动加工贸易 (反义) active
14. enhance /'ɪnhɑːns/ *vt.* 提高(价值、吸引力、能力等) → (例句) Passing the English examination should enhance your chances of getting the post. 通过了英语考试该会增加你获得这个职位的机会。(同义) increase; multiply; augment; add (用法) enhance 一般指好的东西(如价值、优点、重要性、吸引力等)的增加。在现代英语中,这个词只用作及物动词。→ (例句) The reviews of the poet's most recent book enhanced his reputation. 对这位诗人最新发表的一本著作的评论增加了他的名望。increase 是最普通的用语,表示通过增加数量或自然增大而在数目、规模、分量、程度等方面的增长,常含有递进性或按比例增加之意。→ (例句) The government has recently increased taxation. 政府最近又增加了税收。multiply 常指自然生殖或同类事物的不断重复而造成的增加,也可以指大幅度或成倍的增加。→ (例句) Efficiency will be multiplied several times. 效率将增加数倍。augment 多用于书面语,常可与

increase 换用,但 augment 无递进增加的含义,可以是零起点的增加,而 increase 则指在一定规模基础上的增加。→ (例句) The sound of traffic augments during the morning rush hour. 清晨高峰期间交通噪音增大。add 主要指通过添加而导致在数量、大小、重要性等方面的增加。add 常与介词 to 连用。→ (例句) We have also added to our committee two women workers. 我们的委员会也增加了两名女工作人员。

15. capture /'kæptʃə/ *vt.* (1) 获得;占领;迷住 → capture the queen in chess 下国际象棋时吃掉王后 → captured the liberal vote 赢得自由党的选票。(2) 俘获;捕获
16. captive /'kæptiv/ *adj.* (1) 被俘虏的 → a captive bird 被捕获的鸟。(2) 不得自由行动的;被监禁的
17. analytical /ˌænə'lɪtɪkəl/ *adj.* 分析的;用分析方法的
18. unsatisfactory /'ʌnɪsætɪsfæktəri/ *adj.* 不能令人满意的
19. satisfactory /ˌsætɪs'fæktəri/ *adj.* 令人满意的 → (例句) Her school report says her French is satisfactory. 她成绩单上记载法语尚可。→ satisfaction /ˌsætɪs'fækʃən/ *n.* 满意;满足
20. summary /'sʌməri/ *n.* 总结;概要 → (例句) The chemistry book had a summary at the end of each chapter. 那本化学书于每章末均附有一概要。→ *adj.* 概括的,扼要的,简明的 → a summary account 简略的论述
21. feedback /'fiːdbæk/ *n.* 反馈 → compensating feedback 补偿反馈
22. obscure /əb'skjʊə(r)/ *adj.* (1) 不清楚的;费解的 → an obscure corner 昏暗的角落 → an obscure view 朦胧的景色。(2) 无名的,默默无闻的 → an obscure poet 无名诗人
23. fruitful /'fruːtful/ *adj.* 硕果累累的;多产的 → a fruitful author of fiction 多产的小说作家
24. cram /kræm/ *vi.* (1) 把……塞进;把……塞满 → (例句) The hall was crammed with many people standing. 这大厅里挤满了站着的人。(2) (为应考等)临时抱佛脚
25. conspire /kən'spaɪə/ *vi.* (与他人共同)密谋(尤指干坏事)阴谋;图谋;密谋 → (例句) The criminals conspired to rob a bank. 歹徒密谋抢劫一家银行。→ conspiracy /kən'spɪrəsi/ *n.* (同义) plot; intrigue (用法) conspiracy 指“一伙人为一非法目的而在一起的密谋”。→ a conspiracy to seize the throne 篡夺王位的阴谋。plot 指为实现某一阴谋而秘密拟订的计划 → (例句) Two men formed a plot to rob the bank. 两人制定了抢劫那家银行的秘密计划。intrigue 指“更复杂的阴谋”,强调“其阴谋的违法性”。→ (例句) All his intrigues are doomed to failure. 他所有的阴谋诡计注定要失败。
26. participant /pɑː'tɪsɪpənt/ *n.* 参加者,参与者 → an active participant in social work 积极参加社会活动的人
27. forum /'fɔːrəm/ *n.* 论坛 → (例句) The letters page of this newspaper is a forum for public argument. 这份报纸的读者来信栏是公众意见的论坛。

III. Phrases and Expressions

1. in the absence of 在……不在场的情况下

2. be under attack 遭到攻击(或抨击)
3. alive and well 盛行的,依然存在的
4. with no one the wiser 谁都没察觉
5. run the show 掌握一切,操纵局势
6. show off 炫耀,卖弄
7. for sb's/sth's own sake 出于对某人/某事本身的兴趣
8. be destructive of 对……造成极大的损害(或破坏)

Passage Two

The First Postage Stamp

Postage stamps were unknown in the early nineteen century. In the eighteen-thirties people complained bitterly about the high postage rates and objected very much to having to pay postage when they received letters, particularly if the letters were ones that they did not wish to receive at all. At this time a schoolmaster named Rowland Hill became interested in printing newspapers and hence, in the postal charges connected with them. He found that the cost of delivering mail was not great; the main expense came from employing people to collect the postage on delivery. As a result he prepared plans which, in the end, were carried out by the government.

Rowland Hill's proposals were — briefly — a uniform charge for the conveyance of letters, at the rate of one penny per half-ounce in weight and, most important, the prepayment of postage. Later, having in mind the newspaper stamp tax whose imprint enabled the newspaper to be carried free in the mails, he proposed the sale of franked, or stamped, wrappers and sheets of paper to the public. These could be folded and sealed to show the stamp, and cancelled by the postal clerk to prevent re-use.

So anxious was Rowland Hill to ensure prepayment of *all* letters, he next considered the problem of unstamped wrappers and envelopes which would, he knew, still be tendered to the Post Office by the ignorant and the illiterate. Thus it came about, almost as an afterthought and certainly with no great enthusiasm on his part, that he had the idea of “using a bit of paper just large enough to bear the stamp, and covered at the back with a glutinous wash which, by applying a little moisture, might be attached to the back of the letter...”

Everyone knows the Penny Black. As a work of philatelic art, it is the oldest and finest of “Old Masters”; as an example of the engraver's craftsmanship, it is a gem. Not a flawless gem, perhaps, because the Perkins, Bacon machinery for reproducing steel engravings was then quite new and revolutionary, and was being used for the first time

to produce postage stamps.

Not so well known but equally attractive, the Twopence Blue was adapted from the Penny Black and is almost identical in design, except, of course, that the words “Two Pence” appear along the foot of the stamp instead of “One Penny”. Both black and blue stamps were placed on sale at post offices throughout Great Britain on the same day — 6th May 1840.

In the Strand we have hailed a smart hansom cab and the horses are “clip-clip-clip-clopping” along to the General Post Office at St. Martin’s-le-Grand in the City of London, where we shall buy some of the “new-fangled” One Penny labels.

“Pon my soul!” exclaims the cab-driver, as we draw near the majestic portico of the Post Office building. It seems that all London is here on this bright May morning, eager and curious to see and buy the new postage stamps, wrappers and envelopes. Inside the spacious hall, well-whiskered postal clerks tolerantly regard a jostling crowd on the other side of the broad mahogany counter, and exchange many a sheet of newly-minted Penny Blacks for a shining golden sovereign. Caught up in the general excitement we, too, buy a whole sheet of the new stamps.

Around the entire sheet is a wide margin which bears the inscription: “Price 1 d. per Label, 1s per Row of 12, £1 per Sheet. Place the Labels above the Address and towards the Right Hand Side of the letter. In wetting the Back be careful not to remove the Cement.”

Ridiculous as it may seem, we pause to count the number of stamps in the sheet. Yes, there are two hundred and forty, arranged in twenty rows of twelve stamps across. We see rows of identical heads of the young Queen Victoria, little realizing at the time that the Queen herself was to regard her stamp portrait with such affection that it was not to be changed in the sixty long years of her glorious reign! An ever-youthful monarch was depicted on the postage stamps of Great Britain from 1840 until the turn of the century.

Above and below her portrait are the words “POSTAGE” and “ONE PENNY” respectively, and since there are this time no other postage stamps in existence anywhere in the world, the name of the country is not shown, a tradition which has continued right up to the present day for British stamps.

There are four little squares, one in each corner of the stamp. In each of the upper corners is a Maltese Cross, which to many people appears at first sight to be a spider or a crab! A single capital letter of the alphabet is engraved in each of the lower corners. The left-hand letter indicates the row in the sheet, and the right-hand one the place in the row. So the first stamp in the row of the sheet is lettered “AA”; the first stamp in the second row is “BA”, and so on, up to “TL”, which is the last stamp in the bottom row.

The purpose of this system of lettering, and also the ornate “bank-note” back-

ground of the stamps, was to confound the forger. The task of forging steel plates for two hundred and forty stamps would be too much for him, and if he concentrated on one combination of letters he would surely be found out. The corner letters also served to identify the position of any particular stamp in its original sheet, should the need have arisen. They also assist stamps collectors to reconstruct the post office sheet, not an enviable occupation.

The Penny Black is generally neither rare nor very valuable, contrary to popular belief. Its value to a stamp collector can range from a few shillings to a few pounds for a used copy, varying according to condition. In mint condition, they are scarce and a fine, unused Penny Black with ample margins is worth thirty pounds or more, while blocks of four or more unsevered stamps in the mint state are quite valuable and rare. But there are enough Penny Blacks in existence today for everyone; seventy-two millions of them were issued to the general public from May 1840 to June 1841.

Although stamped wrappers and envelopes were available at that time, it was still the custom to fold the actual letter sheet, seal it and affix the stamp to the face of it, above the address. Thus the Penny Blacks and Twopence Blues were filed with the letters and there is always the possibility in these modern times of old letter files coming to light — treasure trove for the stamp collector.

I. Comprehension

1. Rowland Hill proposed that _____.
 - A. postage of letters should be based on weight and on the distance covered
 - B. each letter should be charged one penny of postage regardless of weight
 - C. the sender of the letter instead of the receiver should be responsible for the payment of postage
 - D. both A and C
2. Which of the following can **NOT** be learned from the passage?
 - A. The words in the margin around the entire sheet tell people the price of an individual stamp, the place to attach a stamp on the envelope and the way of doing it.
 - B. If you buy 120 stamps, you will have to pay half a pound.
 - C. Queen Victoria became ruler of Great Britain just as the postage stamps came into being.
 - D. Queen Victoria never grew old as far as British stamps are concerned.
3. It is true that _____.
 - A. you can see the words “Great Britain” on British stamps nowadays
 - B. Great Britain is the first country to issue postage stamps
 - C. on a Penny Black, you can see the words “One Penny” above the picture of Queen Victoria
 - D. the words “One Penny” appear along the foot of the stamp while the words “Two

Pence” don't

4. According to the system of lettering of stamps, we can know easily that _____ can be labeled “JE”.
A. the fifth stamp in row ten
B. the tenth stamp in row five
C. the fifth stamp in row five
D. the tenth stamp in row ten
5. We can conclude from the passage that _____.
A. it would not be profitable to forge stamps that cost only one penny
B. it would be no easy job to forge steel plates for a whole sheet of stamps because of the system of lettering as well as the background of the stamps
C. no British stamps have been forged since 1840
D. the lettering system is adopted to give color to the stamps
6. The passage tells us that _____.
A. Penny Blacks are not as rare and valuable as most people believe
B. it is no longer possible to find more Penny Blacks now
C. even a used copy of Penny Black can be worth at least a few pounds
D. people have more chances to find Twopence Blues now

II. Word Study and Associations

1. imprint /'imprint/ *n.* 印痕;标志 → the imprint of a foot in the sand 沙滩上的足迹 → imprint /im'print/ *v.* 压印;(比喻)铭记 → details imprinted on his memory/mind 铭记于他的记忆中[头脑中]的细节详情
2. franked /fræŋkt/ *adj.* 盖免费邮戳的 → frank /fræŋk/ *v.* 在(信件等)上做记号、加印记(以示邮资已付或免费邮寄)
3. cancel /'kænsəl/ *vt.* (用邮戳等)盖销(邮票)(以防再用)
4. illiterate /i'litərət/ *adj.* 文盲的 → an illiterate child 不识字的孩子 → illiteracy /i'litərəsi/ *n.* [U] 文盲;缺乏教育;无知 → (例句) Illiteracy is a major problem in some developing countries. 在一些发展中国家,文盲是个大问题。
5. afterthought /'ɑ:ftəθɔ:t/ *n.* 事后产生的想法,再思;事后添加的 → (例句) The film was made first and the music was added as an afterthought. 这部电影是先拍摄画面的,音乐是后加上的。
6. glutinous /'glutənəs/ *adj.* 黏性的;(比喻)缠绵的 → the film's glutinous sentimentality 这部影片的缠绵悱恻 → gluten /'glu(:)tn/ *n.* 面筋;谷朮
7. moisture /'moɪstʃə/ *n.* 湿润 → (例句) The sun dries the moisture on the ground. 太阳晒干了地上的潮气。→ moist /məɪst/ *adj.* 潮湿的;湿润的(同义) wet; damp; dank; humid (用法) moist 指轻微的潮湿。→ (例句) She stood at the shore where the moist breeze from the ocean gently stirred her beautiful long hair. 她站在岸边,湿润的海风轻轻地撩起她秀丽的长发。wet 不但指被液体覆盖或浸泡,而且还指表面不干燥。→ (例句) Wet weather is a feature of life here in June and July. 六月和七月阴