
英语专业四级

阅读 200 篇 (修订版)

200 Passages to Develop Reading Skills for TEM 4

常春藤英语考试研究组 主 编

上海交通大学出版社

内 容 提 要

本书是根据《高等学校英语专业基础阶段教学大纲》和《高校英语专业四级考试大纲》(2004 年新版),专门为参加英语专业四级考试的考生编写的复习应试书,内容为符合英语专业四级考试要求的阅读理解 200 篇,旨在帮助考生迅速提高英语阅读水平和应试能力。

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修订版前言

《英语专业四级阅读 200 篇》是根据《高等学校英语专业基础阶段教学大纲》和《高校英语专业四级考试大纲(2004 年新版)》编写而成的,旨在帮助英语专业学生迅速提高英语阅读水平,达到《大纲》的要求,顺利通过英语专业四级考试。本书内容为符合英语专业四级考试要求的阅读理解(Reading Comprehension)200 篇,分为 40 个单元,每个单元 5 篇材料,共 20 题。

根据最新修订的大纲,从 2005 年起,英语专业四级考试(TEM 4)的阅读理解部分将去掉 Skimming & Scanning 部分,只保留 Reading Comprehension, 占总分值的 20%, 考试时间为 25 分钟,其测试要求为:1. 能够读懂英美国家出版的中等难度的文章和材料。2. 能读懂难度相当于美国 Newsweek 的国际新闻报道。3. 能读懂难度相当于 Sons and Lovers 的文学原著。4. 能掌握所读材料的主旨大意,了解说明主旨大意的事实和细节;既能理解字面意思,又能根据所读材料进行判断和推理;既能理解个别句子的意义,也理解上下文的逻辑关系。5. 能在阅读中根据需要自觉调整阅读速度和阅读技巧。

根据新大纲,阅读理解的测试形式为:采用多项选择题,由数篇阅读材料组成,阅读材料共长 1800 个单词左右。每篇材料后有若干道题。学生应根据所读材料内容,从每题的四个选择项中选出一个最佳答案。测试目的为:测试学生通过阅读获取信息的能力,考核学生掌握相关阅读策略和技巧的程度,既要求准确性,也要求一定的速度,阅读速度为每分钟 120 个单词。

本书选材主要来自近几年英语国家主流报纸杂志以及国内外出版的其他相关阅读材料,在体裁和题材、长度与难度方面与英语专业四级考试大纲的要求相符合。文章包括叙述文、说明文、议论文等体裁,涉及英语国家的社会、科技、文化、经济、日常知识等各方面,文章的语言难度以最新修订的《高等学校英语专业四级考试大纲》的规定为准。

本书可供参加英语专业四级考试的考生作平时的阅读材料或考前强化训练之用,也适用于其他难度相当的英语考试的阅读理解训练。

常春藤英语考试研究组

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UNIT 1

TEXT A

If you intend using humor in your talk to make people smile, you must know how to identify shared experiences and problems. Your humor must be relevant to the audience and should help to show them that you are one of them or that you understand their situation and are in sympathy with their point of view. Depending on whom you are addressing, the problems will be different. If you are talking to a group of managers, you may refer to the disorganized methods of their secretaries; alternatively if you are addressing secretaries, you may want to comment on their disorganized bosses.

Here is an example, which I heard at a nurses' convention of a story which works well because the audience all shared the same view of doctors. A man arrives in heaven and is being shown around by St. Peter. He sees wonderful accommodations, beautiful gardens, sunny weather, and so on. Everyone is very peaceful, polite and friendly until, waiting in a line for lunch, the new arrival is suddenly pushed aside by a man in a white coat, who rushes to the head of the line, grabs his food and stomps over to a table by himself. "Who is that?" the new arrival asked St. Peter. "Oh, that's God," came the reply, "but sometimes he thinks he's a doctor."

If you are part of the group which you are addressing, you will be in a position to know the experiences and problems which are common to all of you and it'll be appropriate for you to make a passing remark about the inedible canteen food or the chairman's

notorious bad taste in ties. With other audiences you mustn't attempt to cut in with humor as they will resent an outsider making disparaging remarks about their canteen or their chairman. You will be on safer ground if you stick to scapegoats like the Post Office or the telephone system.

If you feel awkward being humorous, you must practice so that it becomes more natural. Include a few casual and apparently off-the-cuff remarks which you can deliver in a relaxed and unforced manner. Often it's the delivery which causes the audience to smile, so speak slowly and remember that a raised eyebrow or an unbelieving look may help to show that you are making a light-hearted remark.

Look for the humor. It often comes from the unexpected. A twist on a familiar quote "If at first you don't succeed, give up" or a play on words or on a situation. Search for exaggeration and understatements. Look at your talk and pick out a few words or sentences which you can turn about and inject with humor.

1. To make your humor work, you should _____.
 - A. take advantage of different kinds of audience
 - B. make fun of the disorganized people
 - C. address different problems to different people
 - D. show sympathy for your listeners
2. It can be inferred from the text that public services _____.
 - A. have benefited many people
 - B. are the focus of public attention
 - C. are an inappropriate subject for humor
 - D. have often been the laughing stock
3. The best title for the text may be _____.

A. Use Humor Effectively	B. Various Kinds of Humor
C. Add Humor to Speech	D. Different Humor Strategies

TEXT B

Since the dawn of human ingenuity, people have devised ever more cunning tools to cope with work that is dangerous, boring, burdensome, or just plain nasty. That compulsion has resulted in robotics—the science of conferring various human capabilities on machines. And if scientists have yet to create the mechanical version of science fiction, they have begun to come close.

As a result, the modern world is increasingly populated by intelligent gizmos whose presence we barely notice but whose universal existence has removed much human labor. Our factories hum to the rhythm of robot assembly arms. Our banking is done at automated teller terminals that thank us with mechanical politeness for the transaction. Our subway trains are controlled by tireless robot-drivers. And thanks to the continual miniaturization of electronics and micro-mechanics, there are already robot systems that can perform some kinds of brain and bone surgery with submillimeter accuracy—far greater precision than highly skilled physicians can achieve with their hands alone.

But if robots are to reach the next stage of laborsaving utility, they will have to operate with less human supervision and be able to make at least a few decisions for themselves—goals that pose a real challenge. “While we know how to tell a robot to handle a specific error,” says Dave Lavery, manager of a robotics program at NASA, “we can’t yet give a robot enough ‘common sense’ to reliably interact with a dynamic world.”

Indeed the quest for true artificial intelligence has produced very mixed results. Despite a spell of initial optimism in the 1960s and 1970s when it appeared that transistor circuits and microprocessors might be able to copy the action of the human brain by the year 2010,

researchers lately have begun to extend that forecast by decades if not centuries.

What they found, in attempting to model thought, is that the human brain's roughly one hundred billion nerve cells are much more talented — and human perception far more complicated — than previously imagined. They have built robots that can recognize the error of a machine panel by a fraction of a millimeter in a controlled factory environment. But the human mind can glimpse a rapidly changing scene and immediately disregard the 98 percent that is irrelevant, instantaneously focusing on the monkey at the side of a winding forest road or the single suspicious face in a big crowd. The most advanced computer systems on Earth can't approach that kind of ability, and neuroscientists still don't know quite how we do it.

4. According to the text, what is beyond man's ability now is to design a robot that can _____.
 - A. fulfill delicate tasks like performing brain surgery
 - B. interact with human beings verbally
 - C. have a little common sense
 - D. respond independently to a changing world
5. Besides reducing human labor, robots can also _____.
 - A. make a few decisions for themselves
 - B. deal with some errors with human intervention
 - C. improve factory environments
 - D. cultivate human creativity
6. The author uses the example of a monkey to argue that robots are _____.
 - A. expected to copy human brain in internal structure
 - B. able to perceive abnormalities immediately
 - C. far less able than human brain in focusing on relevant infor-

mation

D. best used in a controlled environment

TEXT C

These days we hear a lot of nonsense about the “great classless society” . The idea that the twentieth century is the age of the common man has become one of the great clichés of our time. The same old arguments are put forward in evidence. Here are some of them; monarchy as a system of government has been completely discredited. The monarchies that survive have been deprived of all political power. Inherited wealth has been savagely reduced by taxation and, in time, the great fortunes will disappear altogether. In a number of countries the victory has been complete. The people rule; the great millennium has become a political reality. But has it? Close examination doesn't bear out the claim.

It is a fallacy to suppose that all men are equal and that society will be leveled out if you provide everybody with the same educational opportunities. (It is debatable whether you can ever provide everyone with the same educational opportunities, but that is another question.) The fact is that nature dispenses brains and ability with a total disregard for the principle of equality. The old rules of the jungle, “survival of the fittest”, and “might is right” are still with us. The spread of education has destroyed the old class system and created a new one. Rewards are based on merit, for “aristocracy” read “meritocracy”; in other respects, society remains unaltered; the class system is rigidly maintained.

Genuine ability, animal cunning, skill, the knack of seizing opportunities, all bring material rewards. And what is the first thing people do when they become rich? They use their wealth to secure the best possible opportunities for their children, to give them “a good

start in life”. For all the lip service we pay to the idea of equality, we do not consider this wrong in the western world. Private schools which offer unfair advantages over state schools are not banned because one of the principles in a democracy is that people should be free to choose how they will educate their children. In this way, the new meritocracy can perpetuate itself to a certain extent; an able child from a wealthy home can succeed far more rapidly than his poorer counterpart. Wealth is also used indiscriminately to further political ends. It would be almost impossible to become the leader of a democracy without massive financial backing. Money is as powerful a weapon as ever it was.

In societies wholly dedicated to the principle of social equality, privileged private education is forbidden. But even here people are rewarded according to their abilities. In fact, so great is the need for skilled workers that the least able may be neglected. Bright children are carefully and expensively trained to become future rulers. In the end, all political ideologies boil down to the same thing; class divisions persist whether you are ruled by a feudal king or an educated peasant.

7. What is the main idea of this passage ?
 - A. Equality of opportunity in the twentieth century has not destroyed the class system.
 - B. Equality means money.
 - C. There is no such society as classless society.
 - D. Nature can't give you a classless society.
8. According to the author, the same educational opportunities can't get rid of inequality because _____.
 - A. the principle “survival of the fittest” exists
 - B. nature ignores equality in dispensing brains and ability

- C. material rewards are for genuine ability
 - D. people have the freedom how to educate their children
9. Who can obtain more rapid success ?
- A. Those with wealth.
 - B. Those with the best brains.
 - C. Those with the best opportunities.
 - D. Those who have the ability to catch at opportunities.
10. Why does the author say the new meritocracy can perpetuate itself to a certain extent ? Because
- A. money decides everything.
 - B. private schools offer advantages over state schools.
 - C. people are free to choose the way of educating their children.
 - D. wealth is used for political ends.
11. According to the author, “class divisions” refers to _____.
- A. the rich and the poor
 - B. different opportunities for people
 - C. oppressor and the oppressed
 - D. genius and stupidity

TEXT D

Biologically, there is only one quality which distinguishes us from animals: the ability to laugh. In a universe which appears to be utterly devoid of humor, we enjoy this supreme luxury. And it is a luxury, for unlike any other bodily process, laughter does not seem to serve a biologically useful purpose. In a divided world, laughter is a unifying force. Human beings oppose each other on a great many issues. Nations may disagree about systems of government and human relations may be plagued by ideological factions and political camps, but we all share the ability to laugh. And laughter, in turn, depends on that most complex and subtle of all human qualities: a

sense of humor. Certain comic stereotypes have a universal appeal. This can best be seen from the world-wide popularity of Charlie Chaplin's early films. The little man at odds with society never fails to amuse no matter which country we come from. As that great commentator on human affairs, Dr. Samuel Johnson, once remarked, "Men have been wise in very different modes; but they have always laughed in the same way."

A sense of humor may take various forms and laughter may be anything from a refined tingle to an earth-quaking roar, but the effect is always the same. Humor helps us to maintain a correct sense of values. It is the one quality which political fanatics appear to lack. If we can see the funny side, we never make the mistake of taking ourselves too seriously. We are always reminded that tragedy is not really far removed from comedy, so we never get a lop sided view of things.

This is one of the chief functions of satire and irony. Human pain and suffering are so grim; we hover so often on the brink of war; political realities are usually enough to plunge us into total despair. In such circumstances, cartoons and satirical accounts of somber political events redress the balance. They take the wind out of pompous and arrogant politicians who have lost their sense of proportion. They enable us to see that many of our most profound actions are merely comic or absurd. We laugh when a great satirist like Swift writes about war in *Gulliver's Travels*. The Lilliputians and their neighbors attack each other because they can't agree which end to break an egg. We laugh because we meant to laugh; but we are meant to weep too. It is too powerful a weapon to be allowed to flourish in totalitarian regimes.

The sense of humor must be singled out as man's most important quality because it is associated with laughter. And laughter, in turn, is

associated with happiness. Courage, determination, initiative—these are qualities we share with other forms of life. But the sense of humor is uniquely human. If happiness is one of the great goals of life, then it is the sense of humor that provides the key.

12. The most important of all human qualities is _____.
- A. a sense of humor B. a sense of satire
C. a sense of laughter D. a sense of history
13. The author mentions about Charlie Chaplin's early films because _____.
- A. they can amuse people
B. human beings are different from animals
C. they show that certain comic stereotypes have a universal appeal
D. they show that people have the same ability to laugh
14. One of the chief functions of irony and satire is _____.
- A. to show absurdity of actions
B. to redress balance
C. to take the wind out of politicians
D. to show too much grimness in the world
15. What do we learn from the sentence "it is too powerful a weapon to be allowed to flourish in totalitarian regimes?"
- A. It can reveal the truth of political events with satire.
B. It can arouse people to riot.
C. It shows tragedy and comedy are related.
D. It can make people laugh.
16. Who is Swift?
- A. A novelist. B. A poet.
C. A dramatist. D. An essayist.

TEXT E

Greece, economically, is in the black. With very little to export other than such farm products as tobacco, cotton and fruit, the country earns enough from “invisible earnings” to pay for its needed, growing imports. From the sending out of things the Greeks earn only \$285 million; from tourism, shipping and the remittances of Greeks abroad, the country takes in an additional \$375 million and this washes out the almost \$400 million by which imports exceed exports.

It has a balanced budget. Although more than one drachma out of four goes for defense, the government ended a recent year with a slight surplus—\$66 million. Greece has a decent reserve of almost a third of a billion dollars in gold and foreign exchange. It has a government not dependent on coalescing incompatible parties to obtain parliamentary majorities.

In thus summarizing a few happy highlights, I don't mean to minimize the vast extent of Greece's problems. It is the poorest country by a wide margin in Free Europe, and poverty is widespread. At best an annual income of \$60 to \$70 is the lot of many a peasant, and substantial unemployment plagues the countryside, cities, and towns of Greece. There are few natural resources on which to build any substantial industrial base. Some years ago I wrote here:

“Greek statesmanship will have to create an atmosphere in which home and foreign savings will willingly seek investment opportunities in the backward economy of Greece. So far, most American and other foreign attempt have bogged down in the Greek government's red tape and shrewdness about small points.”

Great strides have been made. As far back as 1956, expanding tourism seemed a logical way to bring needed foreign currencies and

additional jobs to Greece. At that time I talked with the Hilton Hotel people, who had been examining hotel possibilities, and to the Greek government division responsible for this area of the economy. They were hopelessly deadlocked in almost total differences of opinion and outlook.

Today most of the incredibly varied, beautiful, historical sights of Greece have new, if in many cases modest, tourist facilities. Tourism itself has jumped from approximately \$31 million to over \$90 million. There is both a magnificent new Hilton Hotel in Athens and a completely modernized, greatly expanded Grande Bretagne, as well as other first-rate new hotels. And the advent of jets has made Athens as accessible as Paris or Rome-without the sky-high prices of traffic-choked streets of either.

17. The title below that best expresses the ideas of this passage is _____.
- A. Greek income and expenditures
 - B. The improving economic situation in Greece
 - C. The value of tourism
 - D. Military expenditures
18. Many peasants earn less than _____.
- A. \$60 a week
 - B. \$2 a week
 - C. \$1 a day
 - D. \$10 a month
19. The Greek Government spends _____.
- A. more than 25% of its budget on military terms
 - B. more than it collects
 - C. a third of a billion dollars in gold
 - D. less than 25% of its budget on military terms
20. According to the passage, Greece has _____.
- A. a dictatorship
 - B. a monarchy
 - C. a single majority party
 - D. too much red tape

UNIT 2

TEXT A

In the United States, the need to protect plant and animal species has become a highly controversial and sharply political issue since the passage of the Endangered Species Act in 1973. The act, designed to protect species' living areas, and policies that preserve land and forests compete with economic interests. In the 1990's, for example, the woodcutters in the Western United States were challenged legally in their attempt to cut trees for timber in the Cascade Mountains. The challenge was mounted to protect the endangered spotted owl, whose remaining population occupies these forests and requires the intact, ancient forest for survival. The problematic situation set the interests of environmentalists against those of corporations and of individuals who stood to lose jobs. After months of debate and legal battles, the fate of the woodcutters — and the owls — was still undecided in mid-1992.

Similar tensions exist between the developed and the developing nations. Many people in industrialized nations, for example, believe that developing nations in tropical regions should do more to protect their rain forests and other natural areas. But the developing countries may be impoverished, with populations growing so rapidly that using the land is a means to temporarily avoid worsening poverty and starvation.

Many of the changes to Earth that concern scientists have the potential to rob the planet of its biological richness. The destruction