

英语专业四级

# 阅读200篇

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

# 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《高等英语专业四级考试大纲》，并参照历年英语专业四级考试的题型编写而成的，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。本书主要内容分为两部分：1. 阅读理解 (Reading Comprehension) 120篇，分为24个单元，每个单元5篇材料，共15题。2. 快速阅读 (Skimming&Scanning) 80篇，分为13个单元，每个单元5至7篇材料，共10题。

英语专业四级考试的阅读部分占总分值的25%，主要检测考生的字面理解能力 (literal comprehension)，推论能力 (inferential comprehension) 和评价能力 (evaluative comprehension)。英语专业四级考试的阅读部分分为1. Reading Comprehension，包括数篇短文，短文共长1500个词左右。文章通常不长，但涉及面较广，难度也较大，考试时间为25分钟。2. Skimming & Scanning，包括数篇文章，共有10道多项选择题，要求考生运用速读及跳读的技巧，在5分钟内完成试题。

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。Reading Comprehension部分的短文有叙述文、说明文、议论文等体裁，涉及科技、文化、社会的方方面面，文章的语言难度以教学大纲的规定为准。Skimming & Scanning所选文章题材、体裁更为丰富，除了一些短小的文章外，多数是英语国家报纸杂志、社会生活中的常见应用文体，如信函、广告、通知、海报等。

本书可供参加英语专业四级考试的英语专业与非英语专业学生作为平时的阅读材料，更可以供英语专业四级或其他难度相当的英语水平测试的考前强化训练之用。

常春藤英语考试研究组

# Contents

Part One	Reading Comprehension.....	1
UNIT 1	.....	1
UNIT 2	.....	11
UNIT 3	.....	21
UNIT 4	.....	30
UNIT 5	.....	39
UNIT 6	.....	48
UNIT 7	.....	57
UNIT 8	.....	67
UNIT 9	.....	76
UNIT 10	.....	84
UNIT 11	.....	93
UNIT 12	.....	102
UNIT 13	.....	111
UNIT 14	.....	121
UNIT 15	.....	130
UNIT 16	.....	139
UNIT 17	.....	148
UNIT 18	.....	158
UNIT 19	.....	166
UNIT 20	.....	175
UNIT 21	.....	186
UNIT 22	.....	194

UNIT 23	.....	202
UNIT 24	.....	210

Part Two	Skimming & Scanning	.....	218
----------	---------------------	-------	-----

UNIT 1	.....	218
UNIT 2	.....	223
UNIT 3	.....	230
UNIT 4	.....	236
UNIT 5	.....	243
UNIT 6	.....	250
UNIT 7	.....	257
UNIT 8	.....	263
UNIT 9	.....	270
UNIT 10	.....	276
UNIT 11	.....	283
UNIT 12	.....	290
UNIT 13	.....	298

Keys	.....	304
------	-------	-----

# Part One Reading Comprehension

## UNIT 1

### Passage 1

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.

### Passage 2

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 information.
  - D. best used in a controlled environment.

### Passage 3

Could the bad old days of economic decline be about to return? Since OPEC agreed to supply-cuts in March, the price of crude oil has jumped to almost \$26 a barrel, up from less than \$10 last December. This near-tripling of oil prices calls up scary memories of the 1973 oil shock, when prices quadrupled, and 1979 ~ 80, when they also almost tripled. Both previous shocks resulted in double-digit inflation and global economic decline. So where are the headlines warning of gloom and doom this time?

The oil price was given another push up this week when Iraq suspended oil exports. Strengthening economic growth, at the same time as winter grips the northern hemisphere, could push the price higher still in the short term.

Yet there are good reasons to expect the economic consequences now to be less severe than in the 1970s. In most countries the cost of crude oil now accounts for a smaller share of the price of petrol than it did in the 1970s. In Europe, taxes account for up to four-fifths of the retail price, so even quite big changes in the price of crude have a more muted effect on pump prices than in the past.

Rich economies are also less dependent on oil than they were, and so less sensitive to swings in the oil price. Energy conservation, a shift to other fuels and a decline in the importance of heavy, energy-intensive industries have reduced oil consumption. Software,

consultancy and mobile telephones use far less oil than steel or car production. For each dollar of GDP (in constant prices) rich economies now use nearly 50% less oil than in 1973. The OECD estimates in its latest Economic Outlook that, if oil prices averaged \$22 a barrel for a full year, compared with \$13 in 1998, this would increase the oil import bill in rich economies by only 0.25~0.5% of GDP. That is less than one-quarter of the income loss in 1974 or 1980. On the other hand, oil-importing emerging economies—to which heavy industry has shifted—have become more energy-intensive, and so could be more seriously squeezed.

One more reason not to lose sleep over the rise in oil prices is that, unlike the rises in the 1970s, it has not occurred against the background of general commodity-price inflation and global excess demand. A sizable portion of the world is only just emerging from economic decline. The Economist's commodity price index is broadly unchanging from a year ago. In 1973 commodity prices jumped by 70%, and in 1979 by almost 30%.

7. It can be inferred from the text that the retail price of petrol will go up dramatically if
  - A. price of crude rises.
  - B. commodity prices rise.
  - C. consumption rises.
  - D. oil taxes rise.
8. We can draw a conclusion from the text that
  - A. oil-price shocks are less shocking now.
  - B. inflation seems irrelevant to oil-price shocks.
  - C. energy conservation can keep down the oil prices.
  - D. the price rise of crude leads to the shrinking of heavy industry.
9. From the text we can see that the writer seems

A . optimistic.

B . sensitive.

C . gloomy.

D . scared.

#### Passage 4

The Supreme Court's decisions on physician-assisted suicide carry important implications for how medicine seeks to relieve dying patients of pain and suffering.

Although it ruled that there is no constitutional right to physician-assisted suicide, the Court in effect supported the medical principle of “double effect,” a centuries-old moral principle holding that an action having two effects—a good one that is intended and a harmful one that is foreseen—is permissible if the actor intends only the good effect.

Doctors have used that principle in recent years to justify using high doses of morphine to control terminally ill patients' pain, even though increasing dosages will eventually kill the patient.

Nancy Dubler, director of Montefiore Medical Center, contends that the principle will shield doctors who “until now have very, very strongly insisted that they could not give patients sufficient medication to control their pain if that might hasten death.”

George Annas, chair of the health law department at Boston University, maintains that, as long as a doctor prescribes a drug for a legitimate medical purpose, the doctor has done nothing illegal even if the patient uses the drug to hasten death. “It's like surgery,” he says. “We don't call those deaths homicides because the doctors didn't intend to kill their patients, although they risked their death. If you're a physician, you can risk your patient's suicide as long as you don't intend their suicide.”

On another level, many in the medical community acknowledge that the assisted-suicide debate has been fueled in part by the despair

of patients for whom modern medicine has prolonged the physical agony of dying.

Just three weeks before the Court's ruling on physician-assisted suicide, the National Academy of Science (NAS) released a two-volume report, *Approaching Death : Improving Care at the End of Life*. It identifies the undertreatment of pain and the aggressive use of "ineffectual and forced medical procedures that may prolong and even dishonor the period of dying" as the twin problems of end-of-life care.

The profession is taking steps to require young doctors to train in hospices, to test knowledge of aggressive pain management therapies, to develop a Medicare billing code for hospital-based care, and to develop new standards for assessing and treating pain at the end of life.

Annas says lawyers can play a key role in insisting that these well-meaning medical initiatives translate into better care. "Large numbers of physicians seem unconcerned with the pain their patients are needlessly and predictably suffering," to the extent that it constitutes "systematic patient abuse." He says medical licensing boards "must make it clear that painful deaths are presumptively ones that are incompetently managed and should result in license suspension."

10. From the first three paragraphs, we learn that

- A. doctors used to increase drug dosages to control their patients' pain.
- B. it is still illegal for doctors to help the dying end their lives.
- C. the Supreme Court strongly opposes physician-assisted suicide.
- D. patients have no constitutional right to commit suicide.

- 11 . According to the NAS's report, one of the problems in end-of-life care is
- A . prolonged medical procedures.
  - B . inadequate treatment of pain.
  - C . systematic drug abuse.
  - D . insufficient hospital care.
- 12 . George Annas would probably agree that doctors should be punished if they
- A . manage their patients incompetently.
  - B . give patients more medicine than needed.
  - C . reduce the dosages for their patients.
  - D . prolong the needless suffering of the patients.

#### Passage 5

The human brain contains 10 thousands million cells and each of these may have a thousand connections. Such enormous numbers used to discourage us and cause us to dismiss the possibility of making a machine with human-like ability, but now that we have grown used to moving forward at such a pace we can be less sure. Quite soon, in only 10 or 20 years perhaps, we will be able to assemble a machine as complex as the human brain, and if we can we will. It may then take us a long time to render it intelligent by loading in the right software or by altering the architecture but that too will happen.

I think it certain that in decades, not centuries, machines of silicon will arise first to rival and then exceed their human ancestors. Once they exceed us they will be capable of their own design. In a real sense they will be able to reproduce themselves. Silicon will have ended carbon's long control. And we will no longer be able to claim ourselves to be the finest intelligence in the known universe.

As the intelligence of robots increases to match that of humans and as their cost declines through economies of scale we may use them to expand our frontiers, first on earth through their ability to withstand environments, harmful to ourselves. Thus, deserts may bloom and the ocean beds be mined. Further ahead, by a combination of the great wealth this new age will bring and the technology it will provide, the construction of a vast, man-created world in space, home to thousands or millions of people, will be within our power.

- 13 . In what way can we make a machine intelligent?
- A . By making it work in such environments as deserts, oceans or space.
  - B . By working hard for 10 or 20 years.
  - C . By either properly programming it or changing its structure.
  - D . By reproducing it.
- 14 . What does the writer think about machines with human-like ability?
- A . He believes they will be useful to human beings.
  - B . He believes that they will control us in the future.
  - C . He is not quite sure in what way they may influences us.
  - D . He doesn't consider the construction of such machines possible.
- 15 . It can be inferred from the passage that
- A . after the installation of a great number of cells and connections, robots will be able of self-reproduction.
  - B . with the rapid development of technology, people have come to realize the possibility of making a machine with human-like ability.
  - C . once we make a machine as complex as the human brain, it will possess intelligence.

D . robots will have control of the vast, man-made world in space.

## UNIT 2

### Passage 1

It's a rough world out there. Step outside and you could break a leg slipping on your doormat. Light up the stove and you could burn down the house. Luckily, if the doormat or stove failed to warn of coming disaster, a successful lawsuit might compensate you for your troubles. Or so the thinking has gone since the early 1980s, when juries began holding more companies liable for their customers' misfortunes.

Feeling threatened, companies responded by writing ever-longer warning labels, trying to anticipate every possible accident. Today, stepladders carry labels several inches long that warn, among other things, that you might—surprise! —fall off. The label on a child's Batman cape cautions that the toy “does not enable user to fly. ”

While warnings are often appropriate and necessary—the dangers of drug interactions, for example—and many are required by state or federal regulations, it isn't clear that they actually protect the manufacturers and sellers from liability if a customer is injured. About 50 percent of the companies lose when injured customers take them to court.

Now the tide appears to be turning. As personal injury claims continue as before, some courts are beginning to side with defendants, especially in cases where a warning label probably wouldn't have changed anything. In May, Julie Nimmons, president of Schutt Sports in Illinois, successfully fought a lawsuit involving a

football player who was paralyzed in a game while wearing a Schutt helmet. “ We’ re really sorry he has become paralyzed, but helmets aren't designed to prevent those kinds of injuries, ” says Nimmons. The jury agreed that the nature of the game, not the helmet, was the reason for the athlete's injury. At the same time, the American Law Institute— a group of judges, lawyers, and academics whose recommendations carry substantial weight— issued new guidelines stating that companies need not warn customers of obvious dangers or bombard them with a lengthy list of possible ones. “ Important information can get buried in a sea of trivialities, ” says a law professor at Cornell Law School who helped draft the new guidelines. If the moderate end of the legal community has its way, the information on products might actually be provided for the benefit of customers and not as protection against legal liability.

- 1 . Manufacturers as mentioned in the passage tend to
  - A . satisfy customers by writing long warnings on products.
  - B . become honest in describing the inadequacies of their products.
  - C . make the best use of labels to avoid legal liability.
  - D . feel obliged to view customers' safety as their first concern.
- 2 . The author's attitude towards the issue seems to be
  - A . biased.
  - B . indifferent.
  - C . puzzling.
  - D . objective.

## Passage 2

In the first year or so of Web business, most of the action has revolved around efforts to tap the consumer market. More recently, as the Web proved to be more than a fashion, companies have started to buy and sell products and services with one another. Such business-to-business sales make sense because businesspeople

typically know what product they're looking for.

Nonetheless, many companies still hesitate to use the Web because of doubts about its reliability. "Businesses need to feel they can trust the pathway between them and the supplier," says senior analyst Blane Erwin of Forrester Research. Some companies are limiting the risk by conducting online transactions only with established business partners who are given access to the company's private interest.

Another major shift in the model for Internet commerce concerns the technology available for marketing. Until recently, Internet marketing activities have focused on strategies to "pull" customers into sites. In the past year, however, software companies have developed tools that allow companies to "push" information directly out to consumers, transmitting marketing messages directly to targeted customers. Most notably, the Pointcast Network uses a screen saver to deliver a continually updated stream of news and advertisements to subscribers' computer monitors. Subscribers can customize the information they want to receive and proceed directly to a company's website. Companies such as Virtual Vineyards are already starting to use similar technologies to push messages to customers about special sales, product offerings, or other events. But push technology has earned the contempt of many Web users. Online culture thinks highly of the notion that the information flowing onto the screen comes there by specific request. Once commercial promotion begins to fill the screen uninvited, the distinction between the Web and television fades. That's a prospect that horrifies Net purists.

But it is hardly inevitable that companies on the Web will need to resort to push strategies to make money. The examples of Virtual Vineyards, Amazon.com, and other pioneers show that a web site