



大学生公共基础课创新型精品教材

新素养大学英语综合教程（第四册）

主 编 黄子君

北京出版集团  
北京出版社

# 新素养 大学英语

主 编 黄子君

## 综合教程

AN INTEGRATED COURSE

（第四册）



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# *Unit* **1**

# **Concept of Time**



## Part I Warm-Up



### 1 Quotations Related to the Topic

- 1 关于时间本质的争论仍将继续，而时间仍将是个谜。

The debate will continue about the nature of time. And time will remain a mystery.

- 2 一寸光阴一寸金，寸金难买寸光阴。

An inch of time is an inch of gold but you can't buy that inch of time with an inch of gold.

- 3 一年之计在于春，一日之计在于晨。

The whole year's work depends on a good start in spring while a whole day's job is up to a good beginning in the morning.

- 4 少小离家老大回，乡音无改鬓毛衰。

I left home young and not till old do I come back; my accent is unchanged, my hair is no longer black.

- 5 时不我待，每个人都应该把握时机。

Time and tide wait for no man, and everyone has to grasp his opportunity.

- 6 他常想：“在时间面前，什么是永恒的呢？”

He always thinks: "What is eternal as time goes by?"

## 2 Watch and Learn



Time has always been part of life, seen in the rising sun, changing seasons, and ticking clocks. Long ago, people tracked time by the moon and stars. Newton thought time flowed like a steady stream, the same for everyone. But Einstein changed that idea—he showed time could stretch or shrink. If you move very fast or stand near something heavy like a planet, time slows down. Scientists also wonder why time moves forward. They call this the “arrow of time”, linked to how things in nature slowly become less organized—like ice melting or leaves falling. Is time a real part of the universe, or just something our minds create? As we study black holes and tiny particles, the mystery deepens. Time remains both a simple daily rhythm and a cosmic puzzle waiting to be solved.

A large, light blue, spiral-bound notebook with lined pages. The notebook is open, showing multiple pages with horizontal ruling lines. The spiral binding is on the left side.



## Part II In-Depth Reading

Read the passage, and complete the tasks that follow.

### Text A



## Haste

By Zhu Ziqing

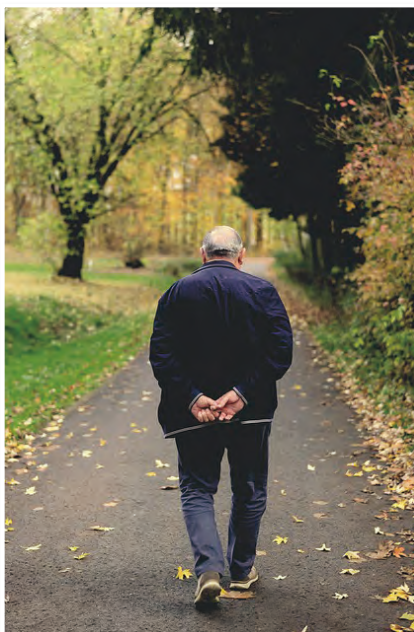
(Translated by Howard Goldblatt)

- 1 The swallows may go, but they will return another day; the willows may **wither**, but they will turn green again; the peach blossoms may fade and fall, but they will **bloom** again. You who are wiser than I, tell me, then: why is it that the days, once gone, never again return? Are they stolen by someone? Then, by whom? And where are they hidden? Or do they run away by themselves? Then, where are they now?

**wither** v. 枯萎

**bloom** v. 开花

2 I do not know how many days I've been given, yet slowly but surely my supply is **diminishing**. Counting silently to myself, I can see that more than 8,000 of them have already slipped through my fingers, each like a drop of water on the head of a pin, falling into the ocean. My days are **disappearing** into the stream of time, noiselessly and without a trace; uncontrollably, my sweat and tears stream down.



3 What's gone is gone, and what is coming cannot be **halted**. From what is gone to what is yet to come, why must it pass so quickly? In the morning when I get up, there are two or three rays of sunlight **slanting** into my small room. The sun, does it have feet? **Stealthily** it moves along, as I too, unknowingly, follow its progress. Then as I wash up, the day passes through my washbasin, and at breakfast through my rice bowl. When I am standing still and quiet, my eyes carefully follow its progress past me. I can sense that it is hurrying alone, and when I **stretch** out my hands to cover and hold it, it soon **emerges** from under my hands and moves along. At night, as I lie on my bed, agilely it **strides** across my body and flies past my feet. And when I open my eyes to greet the sun again, another day has **slipped** by. I bury my face in my hands and heave a sigh. But the shadow of the new day begins darting by, even in the midst of my sighing.

4 During these **fleeting** days what can I, only one among so many, accomplish? Nothing more than to pace **irresolutely**, nothing more than to hurry along. In these more than 8,000 days of hurrying, what have I to show but some irresolute **wanderings**? The days that are gone are like smoke that has been dissipated by a **breeze**, like thin **mists** that have been burned off under the **onslaught** of the morning sun. What mark will I leave behind? Will the trace I leave behind be so much as a

**diminish** v. 减少

**disappear** v. 消失

**halt** v. 停止

**slant** v. 倾斜

**stealthily** adv. 悄悄地

**stretch** v. 伸展

**emerge** v. 出现

**stride** v. 大步走

**slip** v. 滑过; 溜走

**fleet** v. 飞逝; 疾驰

**irresolutely** adv. 犹豫不决地

**wander** v. 徘徊; 漫步

**breeze** n. 微风

**mist** n. 薄雾

**onslaught** n. 猛攻; 冲击

gossamer thread? Naked I came into this world, and in a twinkling still naked I will leave it. But what I cannot accept this: why should I make this journey in vain?

- 5 You who are wiser than I, please tell me why it is that once gone, our days never return.

**gossamer** *n.* 蛛丝；薄纱

**thread** *n.* 线；线索

**twinkling** *n.* 瞬间；闪烁

## Understanding the Text

### Task 1 Answer the following questions for better understanding of the text.

- 1 How many days does the author calculate have passed in his life?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 2 When does the author FIRST notice the sun's movement in a day?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 3 Through which two household objects does the author feel time passing?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 4 At night, how does time move according to the author?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 5 What physical reaction does the author have when realizing time's passage?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 6 Which body parts does the author mention when describing time's nighttime movement?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 7 What does the author attempt but fail to do with time?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 8 The author describes his daily activities as:  
\_\_\_\_\_



9 What question does the author repeat in both the opening and closing paragraphs?

10 Which adjective describes how the sun moves in the author's room?

11 The author fears his life may end with:

## Task 2 Cloze

|             |              |             |                 |                |
|-------------|--------------|-------------|-----------------|----------------|
| (A) stretch | (B) rage     | (C) strides | (D) craft       | (E) stealthily |
| (F) wither  | (G) underage | (H) boiling | (I) slip        | (J) dissipated |
| (K) run     | (L) homage   | (M) pace    | (N) noiselessly | (O) slants     |

The swallows may go, but they will return; the willows may 1, but they will regreen; the peach blossoms may fade, but they'll bloom again. Yet days never return once gone—are they stolen or do they 2 away?

I've had over 8,000 days 3 through my fingers like water drops into the ocean. Time flows 4, leaving no trace while my tears stream down.

Morning sunlight 5 into my room. Does the sun have feet? It moves 6 as I follow unknowingly. Time passes through my washbasin, rice bowl, and when I try to 7 it, it escapes. At night, it 8 across my sleeping body.

In these fleeting days, I merely 9 irresolutely. Gone days are like smoke 10 by wind or mist burned by sun. What mark remains? Barely a gossamer thread.



## Further Exploration

### Task 3 Vocabulary

**A** These sentences are about the reading. Complete them with the correct form of the words in the box.

|      |         |             |           |            |
|------|---------|-------------|-----------|------------|
| halt | agilely | slant       | fleeting  | dissipated |
| slip | wither  | noiselessly | twinkling | thread     |

- 1 Though the willows may \_\_\_\_\_ in winter's grasp, they shall inevitably turn green again with spring's return.
- 2 I watch helplessly as 8,000 days \_\_\_\_\_ through my trembling fingers.
- 3 My days vanish \_\_\_\_\_ into time's relentless stream, leaving neither ripple nor remembrance.
- 4 Gone is gone forever—lost beyond recall—and what advances toward us cannot be \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5 As morning arrives, three precise sunbeams \_\_\_\_\_ into my small room.
- 6 At midnight, when shadows lengthen across my bedsheets, time \_\_\_\_\_ strides along my resting room.
- 7 These \_\_\_\_\_ days, swift as migrating birds, leave me wondering: what can I accomplish?
- 8 Gone days linger only as memories, like morning mist \_\_\_\_\_ by the first sharp breeze of dawn.
- 9 Bare of possessions I entered this existence, and in a \_\_\_\_\_—swifter than a hummingbird's wingbeat.
- 10 Will what I leave behind be as light and fragile as a gossamer \_\_\_\_\_?

**B** Complete the following sentences with the correct form of the words in the box.

|      |         |             |           |            |
|------|---------|-------------|-----------|------------|
| halt | agilely | slant       | fleeting  | dissipated |
| slip | wither  | noiselessly | twinkling | thread     |

- 1 The snow fell \_\_\_\_\_ outside my window, covering the ground in white.
- 2 The sunlight \_\_\_\_\_ through the blinds, casting long shadows on the floor.
- 3 The old tree's leaves began to \_\_\_\_\_ in the autumn wind.
- 4 Summer days feel \_\_\_\_\_ —they're over before we realize it.
- 5 Time seemed to \_\_\_\_\_ through my fingers as I waited for the bus.
- 6 In a \_\_\_\_\_, the shooting star disappeared into the night sky.
- 7 The cat moved \_\_\_\_\_ across the fence, never losing its balance.
- 8 The morning mist slowly \_\_\_\_\_ as the sun rose higher.
- 9 Her voice was as soft as a gossamer \_\_\_\_\_, barely audible.
- 10 The car \_\_\_\_\_ suddenly when a dog ran into the road.

**Task 4 Sentence Translation**

- 1 燕子去了, 有再来的时候; 杨柳枯了, 有再青的时候。

---

---

- 2 太阳他有脚啊, 轻轻悄悄地挪移了; 我也茫茫然跟着旋转。

---

---

- 3 等我睁开眼和太阳再见, 这算又溜走了一日。我掩着面叹息。

---

---

- 4 在逃去如飞的日子里, 在千门万户的世界里的我能做些什么呢?

---

- 5 过去的日子如轻烟,被微风吹散了,如薄雾,被初阳蒸融了。

### Task 5 Paragraph Translation

改革开放 40 多年以来,中国对高等教育越来越重视,高等教育已经进入稳步发展阶段。高校学生总数已接近 4,700 万人,位居世界第一,随着我国经济的快速发展,人民生活水平不断提高,越来越多的人渴望接受高等教育。我国高校的数量和学科专业持续增加,学生人数逐年上升,教学质量也在不断改进,为更多年轻人创造了接受高等教育的机会。



## Part **III** Extensive Reading

Read the passage, and complete the tasks that follow.

### Text B

## The Chinese Calendar

(A) The beginnings of the Chinese calendar can be traced back to the 14th century BCE.

Legend has it that Emperor Huangdi invented the calendar in 2637 BCE.

The Chinese calendar is based on exact astronomical observations of the longitude of the sun and the phases of the moon. This means that the principles of modern science have had an impact on the Chinese calendar.

### What Does the Chinese Year Look Like?

(B) The Chinese calendar—like the Hebrew—is a combined solar/lunar calendar (considered as yin-yang li by the Chinese) in that it strives to have its years coincide with the tropical year and its months coincide with the synodic months. It is not surprising that a few similarities exist between the Chinese and Hebrew calendars:

An ordinary year has 12 months; a leap year has 13 months.

An ordinary year has 353, 354, or 355 days; a leap year has 383, 384, or 385 days.

(C) When determining what a Chinese year looks like, one must make a number of astronomical calculations:





(D) First, determine the dates for the new moons. Here, a new moon is the completely “black” moon (that is, when the moon is in conjunction with the sun), not the first visible crescent used in the Islamic and Hebrew calendars. The date of a new moon is the first day of a new month.

(E) Second, determine the dates when the sun’s longitude is a multiple of 30 degrees. (The sun’s longitude is 0 at Vernal Equinox, 90 at Summer Solstice, 180 at Autumnal Equinox, and 270 at Winter Solstice.) These dates are called the Principal Terms and are used to determine the number of each month:

Principal Term 1 occurs when the sun’s longitude is 330 degrees.

Principal Term 2 occurs when the sun’s longitude is 0 degrees.

Principal Term 3 occurs when the sun’s longitude is 30 degrees. (etc.)

Principal Term 11 occurs when the sun’s longitude is 270 degrees.

Principal Term 12 occurs when the sun’s longitude is 300 degrees.

(F) Each month carries the number of the Principal Term that occurs in that month.

(G) In rare cases, a month may contain two Principal Terms; in this case, the months, numbers may have to be shifted. Principal Term 11 (Winter Solstice) must always fall in the 11th month.

(H) All the astronomical calculations are carried out for the meridian 120 degrees east of Greenwich. This roughly corresponds to the east coast of China.

(I) Some variations in these rules are seen in various Chinese communities.

#### **What Years Are Leap Years?**

(J) Leap years have 13 months. To determine if a year is a leap year, calculate the number of new moons between the 11th month in one year (i.e., the month containing the Winter Solstice) and the 11th month in the following year. If there are 13 new moons from the start of the 11th month in the first year to the start of the 11th month in the second year, a leap month must be inserted. In leap years, at least one month does not contain a Principal Term. The first such month is the leap month. It carries the same number as the previous month, with the additional note that it is the leap month.

#### **How Does One Count Years?**

(K) Unlike most other calendars, the Chinese calendar does not count years in an infinite sequence. Instead, years have names that are repeated every 60 years. (Historically, years used to be counted since the accession of an emperor, but this was abolished after the 1911 revolution.)

(L) Within each 60-year cycle, each year is assigned a name consisting of two components:

(M) The first component is a Celestial Stem. These words have no English equivalent: jia, yi, bing, ding, wu, ji, geng, xin, ren, and gui.

(N) The second component is a Terrestrial Branch. The names of the corresponding animals in the zodiac cycle of 12 animals are given in parentheses: zi (rat), chou (ox), yin (tiger), mao (hare, rabbit), chen (dragon), si (snake), wu (horse), wei (goat), shen (monkey), you (rooster), xu (dog), and hai (pig).



(O) Each of the two components is used sequentially. Thus, the 1st year of the 60-year cycle becomes jia-zi, the 2nd year is yi-chou, the 3rd year is bing-yin, etc. When we reach the end of a component, we start from the beginning: The 10th year is gui-you, the 11th year is jia-xu (restarting the Celestial Stem), the 12th year is yi-hai, and the 13th year is bing-zi (restarting the Terrestrial Branch). Finally, the 60th year becomes gui-hai.

(P) This way of naming years within a 60-year cycle goes back approximately 2,000 years. A similar style of naming of days and months has fallen into disuse, but the date name is still listed in calendars.

(Q) It is customary to number the 60-year cycles since 2637 BCE, when the calendar was supposedly invented. The first 60-year cycle started in that year.

### When Were Foreign Calendars Introduced?

(R) Although the yin-yang li has been continuously employed by the Chinese, foreign calendars were introduced to China—the Hindu calendar, for instance, during the T'ang (Tang) dynasty—and were once used concurrently with the native calendar. This situation also held true for the Muslim calendar, which was introduced during the Yuan dynasty. The Gregorian calendar was taken to China by Jesuit missionaries in 1582, the very year that it was first used by Europeans. Not until 1912, after the Gregorian calendar was officially adopted, did the yin-yang li lose its primary importance.

(S) Western (pre-Copernican) astronomical theories were introduced to China by Jesuit missionaries in the seventeenth century. Gradually, more modern Western concepts became known. Following the revolution of 1911, the traditional practice of counting years from the accession of an emperor was abolished.

## Vocabulary

**astronomical** *adj.* 天文的

**conjunction** *n.* 合 (天体位置)

**synodic** *adj.* 朔望的 (与月相相关)

**tropical** *adj.* 热带的; 回归年的

**meridian** *n.* 子午线

**Equinox** *n.* 分点 (春分 / 秋分)

**solstice** *n.* 至点 (夏至 / 冬至)

**leap year** 闰年

**zodiac** *n.* 生肖

**abolished** *v.* 废除

**Gregorian** *adj.* 公历的 (格里高利历)

**Celestial** *adj.* 天体的; 天干的

**Terrestrial** *adj.* 地支的; 陆地的

**longitude** *n.* 经度

**Principal Term** 节气

**Dynasty** *n.* 朝代

**missionary** *n.* 传教士

**Revolution** *n.* 革命

**concurrently** *adv.* 同时地

**disuse** *n.* 废弃

## Skimming and Scanning

The following are several statements attached to the text we have just read. Each statement contains information given in one of the paragraphs. Identify the paragraph from which the information is derived. You may choose a paragraph more than once.

- (     ) 1 Foreign calendars (Hindu, Muslim, Gregorian) were introduced alongside the Chinese calendar but only replaced it after 1912.
- (     ) 2 Principal Terms mark divisions of the solar year at 30° longitude intervals (e.g., 0° at Spring Equinox), determining month numbers.
- (     ) 3 The Chinese calendar is a solar-lunar hybrid system (yin-yang li), similar to the Hebrew calendar, aligning months with lunar phases and years with solar cycles.
- (     ) 4 All calculations use the 120° east meridian, corresponding to China's east coast, though minor regional variations exist.
- (     ) 5 If a month contains two Principal Terms, adjustments ensure Winter Solstice always falls in the 11th month.
- (     ) 6 The Chinese calendar dates back to ancient times (14th century BCE) and combines precise astronomical observations of the sun and moon.
- (     ) 7 Western astronomy entered China via Jesuit missionaries, and post-1911 reforms abolished imperial year-counting traditions.
- (     ) 8 Leap years are determined by counting 13 new moons between consecutive Winter Solstices, inserting a leap month without a Principal Term.
- (     ) 9 Years are named in a 60-year cycle combining Celestial Stems (e.g., jia) and Terrestrial Branches (e.g., zi for Rat).
- (     ) 10 Leap months replicate the number of the preceding month but are marked as intercalary to maintain alignment.

## Part IV Extracurricular Exercises

### Speaking Task

**Topic:** Comparing the Cultural Significance of the Chinese Calendar and the Western Gregorian Calendar

**Instructions:**

Comparing the Cultural Significance of the Chinese Calendar and the Western Gregorian Calendar

**Guidelines:**

- How does the Chinese calendar resolve discrepancies with the “intercalary month”? How does the Gregorian calendar handle leap years?
- Why does the Chinese calendar emphasize intergenerational continuity (e.g., 60-year cycles)? How does this differ from the Western linear perception of time?
- If the Chinese calendar were still mainstream, how might modern society differ in terms of festivals, work schedules, or cultural practices?



# Reading in Depth

## Passage One

**Questions 1 to 5 are based on the following passage.**

It is the season for some frantic last-minute math—across the country, employees of all stripes are counting backward in an attempt to figure out just how much paid time-off they have left in their reserves. More of them, though, will skip those calculations altogether and just power through the holidays into 2017: More than half of American workers don't use up all of their allotted vacation days each year.

Not so long ago, people would have turned up their noses at that kind of dedication to the job. As marketing professors Silvia Bellezza, Neeru Paharia, and Anat Keinan recently explained in Harvard Business Review(HBR), leisure time was once seen as an indicator of high social status, something attainable only for those at the top. Since the middle of the 20th century, though, things have turned the opposite way—these days, punishing hours at your desk, rather than days off, are seen as the mark of someone important.

In a series of experiments, the researchers illustrated just how much we've come to admire busyness, or at least the appearance of it. Volunteers read two passages, one about a man who led a life of leisure and another about a man who was over-worked and over-scheduled; when asked to determine which of the two had a higher social status, the majority of the participants said the latter. The same held true for people who used products that implied they were short on time: In one experiment, for example, customers of the grocery-delivery service Peapod were seen as of higher status than people who shopped at grocery stores that were equally expensive; in another, people wearing wireless headphones were considered further up on the social ladder than those wearing regular headphones, even when both were just used to listen to music.

In part, the authors wrote in HBR, this pattern may have to do with the way work itself has changed over the past several decades.

We think that the shift from leisure-as-status to busyness-as-status may be linked to the development of knowledge-intensive economics. In such economies, individuals who possess the human capital characteristics that employers or clients value (e. g. , competence and ambition) are expected to be in high demand and short supply on the job market. Thus, by telling others that we are busy and working all the time, we are implicitly suggesting that we are sought after, which enhances

our perceived status.

Even if you feel tempted to sacrifice your own vacation days for fake busyness, though, at least consider leaving your weekends unscheduled. It's for your own good.

(     ) **1. What do most employees plan to do towards the end of the year?**

- A) Go for a vacation.
- B) Keep on working.
- C) Set an objective for next year.
- D) Review the year's achievements.

(     ) **2. How would people view dedication to work in the past?**

- A) They would regard it as a matter of course.
- B) They would consider it a must for success.
- C) They would look upon it with contempt.
- D) They would deem it a trick of businessmen.

(     ) **3. What did the researchers find through a series of experiments?**

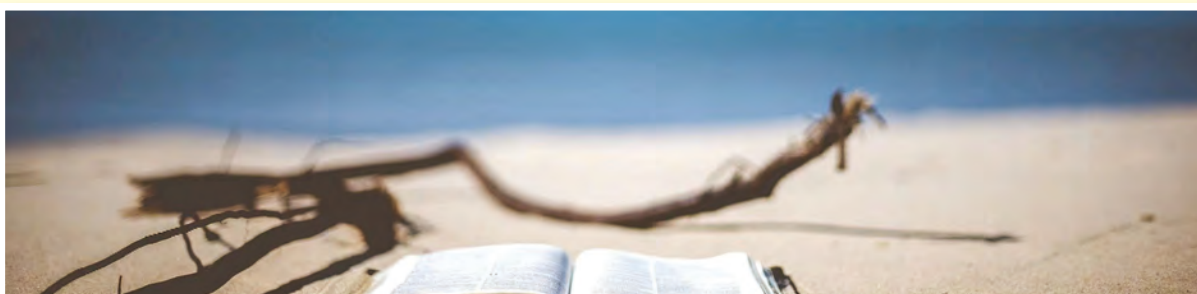
- A) The busier one appears, the more respect one earns.
- B) The more one works, the more one feels exploited.
- C) The more knowledge one has, the more competent one will be.
- D) The higher one's status, the more vacation time one will enjoy.

(     ) **4. What may account for the change of people's attitude towards being busy?**

- A) The fast pace of life in modern society.
- B) The fierce competition in the job market.
- C) The widespread use of computer technology.
- D) The role of knowledge in modern economy.

(     ) **5. What does the author advise us to do at the end of the passage?**

- A) Schedule our time properly for efficiency.
- B) Plan our weekends in a meaningful way.
- C) Find time to relax however busy we are.
- D) Avoid appearing busy when we are not.



## Passage Two

**Questions 6 to 10 are based on the following passage.**

Emulating your conversation partner's actions is a common human behavior classified as "mirroring" and has been known and studied by psychologists for years. We all tend to subconsciously copy gestures of people we like. But why do we act like this?

As a rule, mirroring means that conversationalists enjoy their communication and that there's a certain level of agreement between them. The topic of discussion is equally interesting for both and they know their interests meet.

Repeating someone's behavior is typical of talented communicators, not always because the person is sympathetic, but because there is a goal to be achieved. In this way new idols have been brought to the stage: politicians, celebrities, and other big names. Popular culture makes people want to look popular, and act and speak like popular people.

Nowadays celebrities steal lyrics from each other and struggle with copyright violation accusations or straightforwardly claim themselves to be the authors, even though all the work was done by other people.

Among celebrities, it's trendy nowadays to use their own speech writers as politicians do. The so-called "ghostwriting" can take various forms: books, articles, autobiographies, and even social media posts.

Who is a true copycat (抄袭者) and who gets copycatted? Sometimes, it is a hard nut to crack without an expert's help. But new authorship defending methods based on identifying individual writing patterns are already here. Their aim is to protect intellectual property. Using scientific methods, some of them can define authorship with 85% accuracy.

Writing is not an easy craft to master. If you want to write like a professional without plagiarism (抄袭), there are a few lessons to learn and the first one is: "Copy from one, it's plagiarism; copy from two, it's research." The correct interpretation of this statement is not about copying, but rather about creating your own style. When you study an author's writing style, don't stop on a single one, but explore numerous styles instead. Examine types of sentences they use, pay attention to their metaphors, and focus on stories you feel you could write a pretty cool sequel (续篇) to.

Imitation is rather paradoxical. As an integral part of learning, it brings about positive changes, making people develop and grow. However, it may do a lot of harm. Copying someone's thoughts, ideas or inventions is completely unacceptable. It infringes on intellectual property rights of others.

Still, many things we do are about copying others one way or another. So if you want to compliment someone on the work they have done and imitate it, just make sure you do it the right



way to avoid committing plagiarism.

(       ) **6. What do people tend to do while engaging in a conversation?**

- A) Repeat what their partners say one way or another.
- B) Focus as much as possible on topics of mutual interest.
- C) Imitate their partners' gestures without their knowing it.
- D) Observe carefully how their partners make use of gestures.

(       ) **7. When does mirroring usually take place in a conversation?**

- A) When both sides are sympathetic with each other.
- B) When both sides have a lot of things in common.
- C) When both sides make interesting contributions.
- D) When both sides try to seek common ground.

(       ) **8. When does mirroring usually take place in a conversation?**

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(       ) **9. Why is the saying “copy from two, it's research” a lesson to learn?**

- A) It facilitates the creation of one's own writing style.
- B) It helps to protect one's intellectual property rights.
- C) It fosters correct interpretation of professional writing.
- D) It enables one to write intriguing sequels to famous stories.

(       ) **10. Why does the author say imitation is rather paradoxical?**

- A) It is liable to different interpretations.
- B) It is by and large a necessary evil.
- C) It can give rise to endless disputes.
- D) It may do harm as well as good.



## Skimming and Scanning

In this section, you are going to read a passage with ten statements attached to it. Each statement contains information given in one of the paragraphs. Identify the paragraph from which the information is derived. You may choose a paragraph more than once. Each paragraph is marked with a letter.

### The Best Retailers Combine Bricks and Clicks

A) Retail profits are falling sharply. Stores are closing. Malls are emptying. The depressing stories just keep coming. Reading the earnings announcements of large retail stores like Macy's, Nordstrom, and Target is about as uplifting as a tour of an intensive care unit. The Internet is apparently taking down yet another industry. Brick and mortar stores ( 实体店 ) seem to be going the way of the yellow pages. Sure enough, the Census Bureau just released data showing that online retail sales surged 15.2 percent between the first quarter of 2015 and the first quarter of 2016.

B) But before you dump all of your retail stocks, there are more facts you should consider. Looking only at that 15.2 percent "surge" would be misleading. It was an increase that was on a small base of 6.9 percent. Even when a tiny number grows by a large percentage terms, it is often still tiny.

C) More than 20 years after the internet was opened to commerce, the Census Bureau tells us that brick and mortar sales accounted for 92.3 percent of retail sales in the first quarter of 2016. Their data show that only 0.8 percent of retail sales shifted from offline to online between the beginning of 2015 and 2016.

D) So, despite all the talk about drone ( 无人机 ) deliveries to your doorstep, all the retail executives expressing anxiety over consumers going online, and even a Presidential candidate exclaiming that Amazon has a "huge antitrust problem," the Census data suggest that physical retail is thriving. Of course, the closed stores, depressed executives, and sinking stocks suggest otherwise. What's the real story?

E) Many firms operating brick and mortar stores are in trouble. The retail industry is getting reinvented, as we describe in our new book Matchmakers. It's standing in the Path of what Schumpeter called a gale ( 大风 ) of creative destruction. That storm has been brewing for some time, and as it has reached gale force, most large retailers are searching for a response. As the CFO of Macy's put it recently, "We're frankly scratching our heads."

F) But it's not happening as experts predicted. In the peak of the dot. com bubble, brick and mortar retail was one of those industries the internet was going to kill-and quickly. The dot. com

bust discredited most predictions of that sort and in the years that followed, conventional retailers' confidence in the future increased as Census continued to report weak online sales. And then the gale hit.

G) It is becoming increasingly clear that retail reinvention isn't a simple battle to the death between bricks and clicks. It is about devising retail models that work for people who are making increasing use of a growing array of internet-connected tools to change how they search, shop, and buy. Creative retailers are using the new technologies to innovate just about everything stores do from managing inventory, to marketing, to getting paid.

H) More than drones dropping a new supply of underwear on your doorstep, Apple's massively successful brick-and-mortar-and-glass retail stores and Amazon's small steps in the same direction are what should keep old-fashioned retailers awake at night. Not to mention the large number of creative new retailers, like Bonobos, that are blending online and offline experiences in creative ways.

I) Retail reinvention is not a simple process, and it's also not happening on what used to be called "Internet Time." Some internet-driven changes have happened quickly, of course. Craigslist quickly overtook newspaper classified ads and turned newspaper economics upside down. But many widely anticipated changes weren't quick, and some haven't really started. With the benefit of hindsight ( 后见之明 ), it looks like the Internet will transform the economy at something like the pace of other great inventions like electricity. B2B commerce, for example, didn't move mainly online by 2005 as many had predicted in 2000, nor even by 2016, but that doesn't mean it won't do so over the next few decades.

J) But the gale is still blowing. The sudden decline in foot traffic in recent years, even though it hasn't been accompanied by a massive decline in physical sales, is a critical warning. People can shop more efficiently online and therefore don't need to go to as many stores to find what they want. There's a surplus of physical shopping space for the crowds, which is one reason why stores are downsizing and closing.

K) The rise of the mobile phone has recently added a new level of complexity to the process of retail reinvention. Even five years ago most people faced a choice. Sit at your computer, probably at home or at the office, search and browse, and buy. Or head out to the mall, or Main Street, look and shop, and buy. Now, just about everyone has a smartphone, connected to the internet almost everywhere almost all the time. Even when a retailer gets a customer to walk in the store, she can easily see if there's a better deal online or at another store nearby.

L) So far, the main thing many large retailers have done in response to all this is to open online stores, so people will come to them directly rather than to Amazon and its smaller online rivals. Many are having the same problem that newspapers have. Even if they get online traffic, they struggle to

make enough money online to compensate for what they are losing offline.

M) A few seem to be making this work. Among large traditional retailers, Walmart recently reported the best results, leading its stock price to surge, while Macy's, Target, and Nordstrom's dropped. Yet Walmart's year-over-year online sales only grew 7 percent, leading its CEO to lament (哀叹), "Growth here is too slow." Part of the problem is that almost two decades after Amazon filed the one-Click patent, the online retail shopping and buying experience is filled with frictions. A recent study graded more than 600 internet retailers on how easy it was for consumers to shop, buy, and pay. Almost half of the sites didn't get a passing grade and only 18 percent got an A or B.

N) The turmoil on the ground in physical retail is hard to square with the Census data. Unfortunately, part of the explanation is that the Census retail data are unreliable. Our deep look into those data and their preparation revealed serious problems. It seems likely that Census simply misclassifies a large chunk of online sales. It is certain that the Census procedures, which lump the online sales of major traditional retailers like Walmart with "non-store retailers" like food trucks can mask major changes in individual retail categories. The bureau could easily present their data in more useful ways. But they have chosen not to.

O) Despite the turmoil, brick and mortar won't disappear any time soon. The big questions are which, if any, of the large traditional retailers will still be on the scene in a decade or two because they have successfully reinvented themselves, which new players will operate busy stores on Main Streets and maybe even in shopping malls, and how the shopping and buying experience will have changed in each retail category. Investors shouldn't write off brick and mortar. Whether they should bet on the traditional players who run those stores now is another matter.

- (     ) 1 Although online retailing has existed for some twenty years, nearly half of the internet retailers still fail to receive satisfactory feedback from consumers, according to a recent survey.
- (     ) 2 Innovative retailers integrate internet technologies with conventional retailing to create new retail models.
- (     ) 3 Despite what the Census data suggest, the value of physical retail's stocks has been dropping.
- (     ) 4 Innovative-driven changes in the retail industry didn't take place as quickly as widely anticipated.
- (     ) 5 Statistics indicate that brick and mortar sales still made up the lion's share of the retail business.

- ( ) 6 Companies that successfully combine online and offline business models may prove to be a big concern for traditional retailers.
- ( ) 7 Brick and mortar retailers' faith in their business was strengthened when the dot com bubble burst.
- ( ) 8 Despite the tremendous challenges from online retailing, traditional retailing will be here to stay for quite some time.
- ( ) 9 With the rise of online commerce, physical retail stores are likely to suffer the same fate as the yellow pages.
- ( ) 10 The wide use of smartphones has made it more complex for traditional retailers to reinvent their business.



## Writing

**Directions:** For this part, you are allowed 30 minutes to write an essay on the topic below. You should write at least 120 words but no more than 180 words.

Topic: The Cultural and Scientific Foundations of the Chinese Calendar

Requirements:

- Explain two scientific principles behind the calendar (e.g., astronomical observations, calculation of Principal Terms).
- Discuss one cultural aspect (e.g., 60-year cycle, zodiac symbolism).
- Compare it briefly with the Gregorian calendar to highlight uniqueness.

