

1 Home and Family

Unit

PART I

Teaching Focus and Topic Exploration

Teaching Focus

	TEXT A	TEXT B
Theme	I Am Home	The Edge
Vocabulary	bored, labor, surroundings, fate, depart, resume, replace, missing, assure, renew, soul	reject, apologize, puzzle, confirm, fasten, handwriting, jealous, blank, flood
Phrases and Expressions	find one's way into; come up; cross one's mind; give/have a shot (at); eat away at	apologize to someone for (doing) something; be big on (something); go to it; be jealous of; a flood of
Grammar	1) How to use the <i>-ing</i> participle as the subject and the <i>-ing</i> participle "being" ("Focusing on Sentence Structure") 2) How to avoid misplaced modifiers ("Basic Writing Skills")	
Writing	Writing e-mail messages ("Practical Writing")	

Topic Exploration

"East or west, home is best." To explore the topic of "Home and Family," you can draw out the students' own thoughts and feelings about being away from home, encouraging them to compare their nostalgia (思乡之情) with the writer's. As a result, the students will identify themselves with the writer and gain a deeper understanding of the meaning of home.

The two questions provided in “Exploring the Topic” in the *Student’s Book* are designed to serve this purpose. For Question One, the following words may be of help: grandparent, the apple trees in the backyard, the old clock by my bedside, my primary school a few miles away, etc. For Question Two, you could give such hints as laughter and joy, mutual trust, etc. As for the open question, you can refer to the Cloze Test in Section B that describes the experience children have when leaving home to go to summer camp.

PART II

Understanding and Learning

Section A

Suggestions for Teaching Text A

Text A describes the unbreakable emotional ties of an American woman with her home and her parents. The writer’s passionate love, as depicted in this text, may help us to get rid of the misconception that American families have fallen apart because of a lack of love between parents and their children. As we can see from the text, the younger generations in the United States cherish (珍惜) their elder generations and the same strong sentiments (感情) about home as our young people in China do. The present text has thus provided a relatively comprehensive picture of today’s American society.

To gain a better understanding of the text, the students’ attention should be drawn to the striking contrast between the writer’s ever-changing life on the one hand, and her love and loyalty (忠诚) to her home and her parents on the other hand. We can see her feelings for her parents have remained unchanged throughout her life, no matter how her surroundings have changed. This contrast reveals the unbreakable bond of affection between the writer and her family.

In teaching this unit, you may provide the students with a form or a table that summarizes the changes that have taken place in the writer’s life. Below is a sample form for your reference:

The Writer's Different Life Experiences in the Three Different Places

	Life on the Farm	Life in Arizona	Life in Los Angeles
Physical	There was lots of space and lots to do.	The dry Arizona air was good for her father; the surroundings were different and strange.	She approached her life like an adventure. After she achieved success, she loved her job and was treated like a queen.
Mental	There was lots of love; she feels very close to her family and very lucky to live on the farm.	She felt excited and had a lot of fun.	Slowly, a dark void found its way into her heart and began to eat away at her happiness.

You could also ask the students to draw up a form that describes the writer's changes at different stages in her life. The following is a sample for your reference:

The Changes the Writer Underwent at Different Stages in Her Life

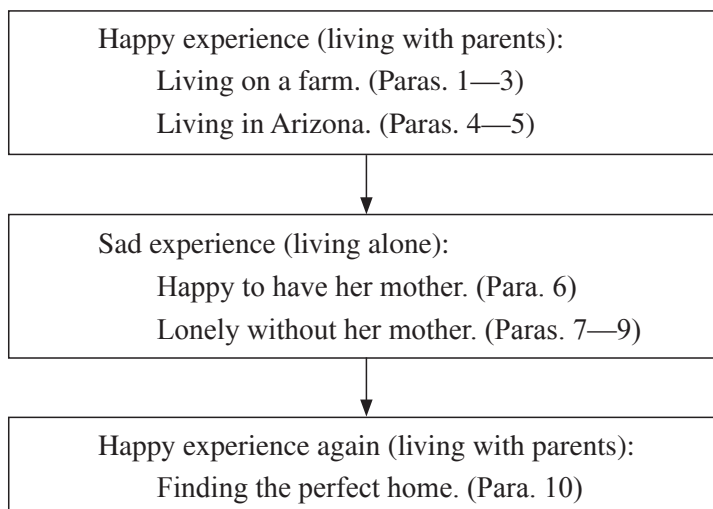
Changes in the Writer's Life	Describing the Changes
Physical Changes	She grew from a farm girl into a woman in a modern city.
Geographical Changes	She moved from her parents' farm to Arizona, then to Los Angeles, a big city in California.
Emotional Changes	She felt close to her family and was never bored with farm work. She felt a void in her life in Los Angeles. Finally, a sense of balance returned to her soul after her parents moved to her new home.

What you can do is give the two forms to the students, with the main information withdrawn. The students should discuss the forms, either during class or after class, before they fill in the blank spaces. In checking with the students, you in fact help them to grasp the message of the text, as well as enable them to master the useful words and expressions in the text.

Text Structure

The whole text is a story about the experience of home. The narrator "I" had two types of experience: the happy one and the sad one. When she was a child, she lived

on a farm with her parents, and felt happy. Then, the family moved to Arizona, where she still felt happy because she was still with her parents. When she grew up, she left her father for Los Angeles, where she seemed to have done well. Not long after, her mother left her and went back to her father. She lived alone. Though “treated like a queen,” she felt “something was missing.” By and by she came to know “what I had to do to be happy”—she went back to be with her parents, thus finding “the perfect home.” The following chart may illustrate the narrator’s experience of home.



Detailed Study of Text A

I Am Home

1. From gardening in the greenhouse to chasing our old goose, feeding the goats to gathering the cattle, the word “bored” never found its way into my vocabulary. (Para. 1)

►► “Feeding the goats to gathering the cattle” = “from feeding the goats to gathering the cattle.” Note that the preposition “from” is omitted here.

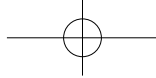
chase

v. **follow rapidly in order to catch** 追逐；追捕

The cat is **chasing** the rat that stole the cake. 猫在追捕那只偷吃了蛋糕的耗子。

Why do modern people **chase** material wealth? 现代人为什么追求物质财富？

n. **[C] an act of chasing someone or something** 追逐；追捕



They gave **chase** to the enemy. 他们追击敌人。

Honor is the noblest **chase**. 荣誉是最崇高的追求。

bored

adj. **tired and uninterested** 厌烦的；不感兴趣的

He is **bored** with swimming. 他对游泳感到厌烦。

find one's way into

be brought to; get into 进入

Computers have **found their way into** millions of households. 计算机已进入了千家万户。

The word “boring” never **finds its way into** my study. 我对学习从不感到厌倦。

2. The work for us was a labor of love. (Para. 1)

Meaning:

For us, this kind of physical labor is enjoyable.

labor

n. (labour *BrE*)

1) [U] **effort or work, especially tiring physical work** 努力；劳动

Building roads still involves manual **labor**. 修筑道路还需要人工劳动。

The garage charged us for parts and **labor**. 汽车修理厂向我们收取零件和人工费用。

2) [U] **workers, especially those who use their hands, considered as a group or class** 工人；工人阶级

labor relations 劳资关系

There is a shortage of skilled **labor**. 缺少熟练工人。

» A **labor of love** is a set expression, indicating that a particular activity (e.g. gardening in the greenhouse, gathering cattle, etc.) may be troublesome to other people, but you take great care to do the work properly because you really enjoy it—hence, to you, the work is a “labor of love.” For example:

For me, arranging books on the shelf every morning is a **labor of love**. 对我来说，每天早晨把书架上的书摆整齐是件愉快的差事。

Also note that the use of the indefinite article (不定冠词) “a” before the word “labor”. Generally speaking, an abstract noun (抽象名词) such as “labor” is not preceded by “a.” Here, the use of “a” suggests “a kind of.” Compare the following sentences:

The beauty of the scene fills us with enchantment. 这里的美景使我们着迷。

The beauty of a mountain stream in autumn possesses **an** enchantment that is universal. 秋天的山涧美景有一种人人为之着迷的魅力。

3. When I was 12, though, something terrible happened that would change my life forever. (Para. 3)

Meaning:

Yet, when I was 12, a terrible thing happened, which changed my life forever.

- Note that the word “though” in the sentence is an adverb, equivalent to “however,” both in meaning and in grammatical function. It appears in the mid or final, rather than initial position of a sentence.

“It is not useful. It’s pretty, **though**, isn’t it?” “这东西没有什么用处。不过，这东西很好看，对吗？”

“He said he would help me; he didn’t, **though**.” “他说他会帮我，可是他并没那样做。”

- Also note that the relative clause (关系从句) “that would change...” does not follow its antecedent (先行词) “something” (which is the subject in the sentence) immediately so that the subject would not be too heavy.

4. My father suffered a serious heart attack and was diagnosed with heart disease. (Para. 3)

Meaning:

My father had a serious heart attack and the doctor said it was due to heart disease.

attack

- n. 1) [C] a sudden and usually severe period of illness 病发

I had a bad **attack** of flu at Christmas. 圣诞节那天我突然患了重感冒。
He died after suffering a severe asthma **attack**. 他患严重哮喘病后死了。

- 2) [C; U] an act of trying to hurt or defeat somebody or something by using force 攻击

Once again we came under **attack** from enemy planes. 我们又一次受到敌机的袭击。

Security will be increased after yesterday’s **attack** on the president. 昨天发生了袭击总统的事件，今后将加强安保工作。

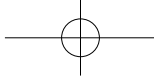
- v. **try to hurt or defeat somebody or something by using force** 攻击

The enemy **attacked** at night. 敌人夜间发动攻击。

She was **attacked** while walking home late at night. 她深夜步行回家时受到袭击。

diagnose

- v. **discover the nature of a disease or fault by making a careful examination** 诊断（疾病）；判断（问题）



His illness was **diagnosed** as a terminal disease. 他的病被诊断为不治之症。

The mechanics are engaged in **diagnosing** the fault in the engine. 机械师正在检查发动机的毛病。

- » Take note that when the subject is “illness,” as is shown in the above sentence, we use “diagnose as.” But when the subject is a person (such as “my father”), as is found in our text, we say “diagnose with (a disease)” or “having/suffering from (a disease).”

5. The doctors informed my dad that he would need to change his lifestyle completely, which meant no more farming life. (Para. 3)

Meaning:

The doctors told my father that he would need to have a different lifestyle, and this meant he had to stop working as a farmer.

- » which = that he would need to change his lifestyle completely

6. We were forced to sell our home and move west. (Para. 3)

Meaning:

The family had to sell the house and go to the western part of the country.

- » The word “west” is used as an adverb. Similar examples:
fight **north** and **south** 南征北战
The window faces **south**. 窗户朝南。

7. While my surroundings were different and strange, they were also exciting and fun. (Para. 4)

Meaning:

Although the environment was no longer familiar to me, it was full of excitement and fun.

surroundings

- n.* (*plural*) everything that surrounds a place or person, especially that which influences the quality of life 周围的事物；环境；气氛
It's important to work in friendly **surroundings**. 在友好的环境中工作很重要。
The house is situated in very pleasant **surroundings**. 那所房子坐落在宜人的环境中。
- » Compared with surroundings, the word “environment” seems to be more strongly suggestive of the natural conditions, such as air, water, and land, in which people and animals live.

- “Fun,” as an adjective, especially in American English, suggests providing pleasure, amusement or entertainment. For example:
She is a **fun** person to be with. 和她相处很有趣。
“Funny” often suggests that something or somebody is laughable or ridiculous, even unexpected, hard to understand, or strange. For example:
It’s a **funny** thing, but I put the book on the table five minutes ago, and now I can’t find it! 真奇怪，我五分钟前把书放在这桌子上，现在却找不到了！

8. As **fate** would have **it**, my life would soon change again, and **in a very big way**. (Para. 4)

Meaning:

As was determined by fate, my life would soon change again, and it would change greatly.

fate

- n.* [U] the power or force that is supposed to be the cause of or in control of all events, in a way that is beyond human control 天命；命运；运数
Fate was against me all the time. 命运一直和我作对。

We mustn’t submit to **fate**. 我们决不能听天由命。

- The word “fate” in the above sentences is used as an abstract noun, which requires no article before it.
►► Also note the use of the pronoun “it”; this pronoun refers cataphorically (指代后项地) to the following main clause: “my life would soon change...” Another example:

As luck would have **it**, I won the million-dollar lottery. 承蒙幸运之神眷顾，我中了百万元的彩票。

In fact, “it” can also be used anaphorically (指代前项地). For example:

Are you forty? You certainly do not look like **it**. 你有40岁了？看上去根本不像。
Here, “it” refers back (that is, anaphorically) to the preceding sentence “You are forty.”

in a big way

substantially; significantly 大大地；重重地

Shanghai has changed **in a big way**. 上海发生了很大的变化。

His English has improved **in a big way**. 他的英语水平大大地提高了。

- Study the following similar expressions using the word “way”:
in a small way 小规模地
in various ways 用种种方法
in one way or another 用各种不同的方法

9. One day, a personal manager from Los Angeles came up to me and asked if I had ever thought about being an actress. (Para. 5)

Meaning:

One day, a person in Los Angeles whose job was to manage the careers of singers, actors, dancers, etc., approached me and asked me whether I had ever wanted to choose actress as a career.

personal manager

people who manage the careers of singers, actors, dancers, athletes, etc. (i.e. secure deals for them, get them in magazines, etc.) 经纪人

The actress did not attend the press conference, but her **personal manager** did. 那位女演员未出席记者招待会，但她的经纪人来了。

►► Please note that a “personal manager” is entirely different from a “personnel manager” (人事经理).

come up

come near, especially by walking; approach 走近；走到跟前

Come up here; you will see better. 走过来，你可以看得清楚点。

The small boat is **coming up** to the ship. 小船驶近了大船。

10. The idea had never crossed my mind. (Para. 5)

Meaning:

I hadn't ever thought of the idea.

cross one's mind

come into one's thoughts (想法) 掠过心头；想起

It didn't even **cross my mind** that he would marry that girl. 我甚至没想过他会娶那个女孩。

Henry confessed it was something that hadn't **crossed his mind** before. 亨利坦言这是他过去所没有想过的事。

11. After talking it over with my parents, we decided that my mother and I would move to Los Angeles for a while and give it a shot. (Para. 5)

Meaning:

After having a talk with my parents over the matter, we decided that my mother and I would live in Los Angeles for a while and have a try at my being an actress.

►► Please notice that the logic subject (逻辑主语) of “talking” is “I.”
it = being an actress

give/have a shot (at)

(informal) **try to do or achieve something, especially something difficult** (非正规用语) 尝试

(Here “shot” is a noun meaning a chance or attempt at doing something.)

Let me **have a shot at it**. 让我试试。

I'll **give a shot at** catching the train. 我想试试看能否赶上这次列车。

12. Thank goodness my mother was right by my side from the very start.

(Para. 6)

Meaning:

It was a good thing (that) my mother lent her support to me right from the beginning.

►► The sentence can be understood as “Thank goodness that my mother...”

Thank goodness

Thank God! (谢天谢地!)

►► Goodness is a substitute for God in such exclamations as *Goodness knows!* (God knows! 天晓得!) *For goodness' sake!* (For God's sake! 看在老天爷的面子上!)

be/stand by one's side

stand or be on the same side; show support to or demonstrate solidarity with 站在……一边; 支持

Ours is a just cause and all peace-loving people **are by our side**. 我们的事业是正义的事业, 所有爱好和平的人民都站在我们一边。

The woman **stood by her husband's side** through all of his financial difficulties. 那个女人在她丈夫经济困难时期一直支持他。

from the very start

right from the beginning 一开始

He was opposed to this proposal **from the very start**. 他从一开始就反对这个提议。

The plan was wrong **from the very start**. 这计划一开始就错了。

13. Together, we approached it like an adventure. (Para. 6)

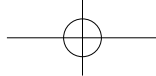
Meaning:

Together, we treated the possibility of becoming an actress as something exciting. (Or: We decided to make the best of this challenging situation.)

approach

v. 1) **begin to deal with or work on** 着手; 开始处理

The problem can be **approached** from different angles. 这个问题可以从不同的角度来处理。



Young people should **approach** life with caution and calm. 年轻人应当沉着审慎地对待生活。

- 2) **come near or nearer (to) in space, time, quality, or quantity** 走近; 靠近
He is easily **approached**. 他很平易近人。

The National Holiday is fast **approaching**. 国庆节快要到了。

▮▮ it = (the possibility of) being an actress

adventure

- n. 1) [C] **a journey, experience, etc. that is strange, exciting, and often dangerous** 冒险活动(经历); 奇遇

Almost every American child has read the novel *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*. 几乎每一个美国小孩都看过《汤姆·索亚历险记》这本小说。

In my opinion, no detective story exceeds *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*. 依我看, 没有一本侦探小说能超过《夏洛克·福尔摩斯探案》。

- 2) [U] **excitement, e.g. in a journey or activity; risk** 冒险; 风险

He's always had a thirst for **adventure**. 他对冒险总是非常向往。

The trip to the city was an **adventure** for her. 进城对她来说是一次冒险。

14. ... my mother and I both decided that it was time for her to depart and resume her life in Arizona. (Para. 6)

Meaning:

... my mother and I both decided that it was time for her to leave and go back to Arizona to continue her life there.

depart

- v. 1) **leave or go away, especially when starting a journey** 离开; 启程
The train to New York **departed** slowly from the platform. 去纽约的火车徐徐离开了月台。
The couple **departed** in tears. 这对恋人挥泪告别。
- 2) **turn away from or stop following (a usual course of action, way of thinking, etc.)** 背离(常规等)
On this occasion, the company **departed** from its normal practice of holding the meetings in public. 这一次公司一反常规, 不举行公开会议。

resume

- v. 1) **begin again after a pause** (中断后) 重新开始; 继续
“Resume” and “continue” share the meaning of “going on with something” or “going on doing something” (继续做某事), but the former emphasizes the idea of an interruption of something (某事的中断). Also, just like the verbs “depart” and “leave,” the verb “resume” is more formal than “continue.”

The students **resumed** their discussion after the teacher left. 老师离开后，学生继续他们的讨论。

They claimed that they could not **resume** peace talks until all their requests were satisfied. 他们声称在没有满足他们所有的要求之前不会恢复和平谈判。

2) **take again** 重新占据

The audience were asked to **resume** their seats to watch the game after the rain had stopped. 雨停后，观众被要求重新回到各自的座位上观看比赛。

15. The little girl from the farm was disappearing and being replaced by a woman in the big city. (Para. 6)

Meaning:

I was changing from a little farm girl to a woman in the big city.

► the little girl = the “I” in the story
replace

v. 1) **take the place of** 取代；代替

No one can **replace** George as forward in the next round. 在下一轮的比赛里没有人能取代乔治的前锋位置。

Private cars are **replacing** bicycles in big cities. 在大城市里，私家车正在取代自行车。

2) **put (something) back in the right place** 把……放回原处

Please **replace** the newspapers after reading them. 看完报纸后请放回原处。

Please **replace** the books on the shelves when you have finished with them. 看完那些书后，请放回书架。

16. Slowly, a dark void found its way into my heart and began to eat away at my happiness. (Para. 7)

Meaning:

By and by, my heart was filled with a miserable emptiness that continuously destroyed my happiness.

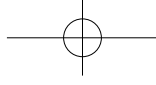
void

n. (*singular*)

1) **a feeling of emptiness or loss** 空虚感；失落感

The death of the old man's son left a **void** in his life. 老人儿子的死亡给他的生活留下的是失落感。

Her mother's leaving left a **void** in the actress' life. 母亲的离去给女演员的生活留下的是空虚感。

2) **a deep empty space** 空隙; 空处

The ground began to shake and a sudden **void** opened underneath his feet. 大地开始震动, 在他脚下突然出现一道裂缝。

adj. 1) **empty of; without; lacking** 空的

That part of town is **void** of interest to the visitors. 游客对该城镇的那部分不感兴趣。

2) **lacking legal force** 没有法律效力的

null and **void** 无法律效力的; 无效的

The unequal treaty was declared null and **void**. 不平等条约被宣布无效。

eat away (at)

consume 侵蚀; 消耗

The river had **eaten away** the banks. 河水侵蚀了河岸。

Rust has **eaten away** the hinge. 铰链已被铁锈腐蚀。

- » The preposition “at” implies an on-going process that is not yet complete. This phrase can be used both figuratively and literally. In the text, it is used figuratively.

17. I tried to remember when I was happiest. (Para. 8)

- » The “when” clause is the object of the verb “remember.” The sentence can be understood as “I tried to remember **the time when** I was happiest.” Try to distinguish it from the context in which the *when* clause is used as an adverbial clause:

I was trying to remember who the person in front of me was **when** he started to speak. 当我正在试图回忆我面前的那个人是谁时, 他开始说话了。

18. I knew what I had to do to be happy. (Para. 8)

Meaning:

I knew what I needed to do if I wanted to be happy.

- » The infinite phrase (不定式短语) “to be happy” functions as an adverbial of purpose (目的状语) in this sentence. “To be happy” is part of the main clause, not part of the relative clause.

19. I'm buying a place out here... (Para. 9)

Meaning:

I am going to buy a house in this area (probably in the suburbs, not in the city)...

- ▶▶ Pay attention to the use of the present progressive aspect in this sentence. It suggests that the action denoted by the predicate verb “buy” will happen in the future, rather than at the present time. The verbs in the following sentences are all in the progressive aspect to indicate future action:

Dinner is ready. **We are having** fish for dinner. 晚饭准备好了，我们晚餐吃鱼。
I'm **spending** my holiday in Japan this year. 今年我将去日本度假。

- ▶▶ Also pay attention to the adverb “out”; it indicates that the speaker is quite a distance from her current home and renders the sentence more sentimental. While the omission of this word would not alter the meaning of the sentence significantly, it would change the feel of the sentence.

20. My father wasn't too keen on the idea of being back in the rat race, but I assured him that this time it would be nothing like that. (Para. 9)

Meaning:

My father didn't like the idea of resuming a busy, competitive life, but I promised him that this time things would be an entirely different situation.

be keen on

(of a person) have a strong active interest in doing something (人) 热衷；渴望（做某事）

He **is keen on** going abroad. 他渴望出国。

Nowadays many young people **are dead keen on** pop music. 现在许多青年酷爱流行音乐。

rat race

a difficult, tiring, often competitive activity or routine (困难的、令人疲惫的、常常充满竞争性的) 活动或日常安排

Sometimes I feel like my life has become a **rat race**—running from one place to the next and never really getting anywhere. 有时候我感觉我活得疲于奔命——从一处跑到另一处，永远没个完。

As soon as you have kids, you join in the never-ending **rat race** with the rest of us parents. 你一旦有了孩子，就会加入到我们这些为人父母的行列，忙得晕头转向。

assure

vt. 1) **inform positively and with certainty and confidence** 使确信

He **assured** me that there was nothing serious to report. 他向我保证没有任何要事要报告。

John **assured** Alice confidently that she is sound and well. 约翰自信地向爱丽丝保证她安全无虞。

2) **make certain of** 确保

Nothing can **assure** permanent happiness. 没有什么能确保永久的幸福。

We booked early to **assure** ourselves of seats. 我们尽早订票以确保有位子。

▣▣ it = things (or the situation)

21. So we began looking for a place just like I remember growing up in.

(Para. 9)

Meaning:

So we began looking for a place just like **THE ONE** I remember growing up in.

22. Then one day we found it: the perfect home, **nestled** in a warm and sunny valley with pear trees in the yard. (Para. 10)

Meaning:

Then one day we found the place: the perfect home, which was located in a warm and sunny valley with pear trees in the yard.

nestle

- v. 1) **(cause to) settle or lie in a close comfortable position** (使) 舒适地安顿下来; (使) 偎依
 The child **nestles** himself in his mother's breast. 孩子偎依在母亲的怀抱里。
 The baby **nestles** its face close to its mother's. 婴儿的脸贴在母亲的脸上。
- 2) **lie half-hidden** 掩映
 The cottage **nestles** itself amongst the trees. 小农舍掩映在树丛中。

23. The move **renewed** my family's happiness... a sense of balance returned to my soul. (Para. 10)

Meaning:

This action restored my family's happiness... I regained peace in the depth of my heart.

▣▣ The move = the action, i.e. buying a house and asking my parents to live with me
renew

- v. 1) **give new life and freshness to** 使……康复; 使……获得新生
 After recovering from her illness, the old lady felt **renewed**. 这位老太太在病愈后有一种获得新生的感觉。
- 2) **replace (something old) with something new of the same kind** 更换; 更新

Water in the tank must be **renewed** every two weeks. 每隔两周水箱必须换水。

You must **renew** the library books if they are due. 图书到期时你得续借。

3) **repeat (an action)** 重新开始（某个行动）

The army **renewed** their attack at dawn. 军队在黎明时分重新发起进攻。

The father and son **renewed** their correspondence. 父亲和儿子恢复了通信。

soul

n. [C] the part of a person that is not the body and is thought not to die; the central or most important part of a person; the quality that makes a person human 灵魂；心灵

He is the **soul** of our team. 他是我们团队的灵魂。

Public employees must serve taxpayers (with) their heart and **soul**. 公务员必须全心全意为纳税人服务。

24. I was home, again. (Para. 10)

» Note that the comma is used to add emphasis. For example:

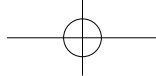
He said he would never be late, but he was late **this time, again**. 他说他再也不会迟到了，但这次他又迟到了。

Section B

Suggestions for Teaching Text B

Text B and Text A share both similarities and dissimilarities. Like Text A, the message the writer wishes to get across in Text B is that all the members in her family love and care for each other, in spite of their different attitudes about life and different pursuits (追求) in life. As we can learn from the text, it was out of love and care that the writer's father was strongly opposed to her plan of going to Israel. Similarly, the writer's sister drove her to the airport in spite of the risk of angering their father if he should find out. At the end of the text, the sister revealed her sympathy for the writer's pursuits in life and expressed her understanding and love for the writer, although the two sisters had entirely different lifestyles.

However, unlike Text A, Text B devotes much space to the description of the differences within the family, and even the conflicts among the members of the family. The main character in this story, also a young American woman, does not gain the understanding of her family because of her different ways of living. Therefore,



although “war” is mentioned in the beginning of the text, the writer indicates that she had “heard the same things all (her) life.”

Yet, in spite of all this, you should bear in mind that the main theme of the text is to demonstrate the familial affinity (家庭的亲密), rather than familial conflict. The students would be misled if their attention were drawn mainly to the generation gap between the father and the daughter.

Just like the teaching of Text A, you are advised to draw out the students’ experience in overcoming differences with their parents in the past. You can ask the students to talk about their parents. Are their parents democratic? Do their parents respect their views and their wishes? What would their parents do in situations where they found themselves disagreeing with their children? How are the differences solved? If you find any student who has touching stories about how they and their parents overcame their differences after a “quarrel,” you could ask them to share their stories with the entire class.

Detailed Study of Text B

The Edge

1. The Edge (Title)

- » There is a common expression in English used to describe the lifestyle of someone who enjoys risk: living on the edge. So, in this case, the text is describing how the woman is off to a dangerous land (at least in her family’s mind), and the use of “the edge” could be referring to her lifestyle and her love of risks and challenges. As well, “the edge” could be referring to the risk her sister took in telling her how proud of her she is, as this is something not normally done in their family. While there are perhaps a few interpretations that could be made, the basic one is that the title refers to the writer’s desire to take risks, especially in the eyes of her rather reserved family.

2. When these “discussions” took place, my sister, Kristy, would always try to break the tension. (Para. 2)

Meaning:

When we had these so-called “discussions” (or when the quarrel started), my sister would always try to do something to prevent the situation from becoming tense.

tension

n. [C; U] an anxious, untrusting, and perhaps dangerous situation in the relationship between people, countries, etc. 紧张关系

Some people don't like the **tensions** of life in a big city. 有些人不喜欢大城市紧张的生活。

People of the world hope to see the easing of racial **tensions** in that region. 全世界的人们都希望看到该地区紧张的种族关系得到缓和。

3. It's not dangerous and it's still overseas. (Para. 2)

Meaning:

It is safe there, yet it is nonetheless a foreign country (just as Israel is).

4. I rejected the idea of England because it was not exciting enough. (Para. 3)

Meaning:

I refused to accept my sister's suggestion of going to England because England would not provide me with the same exciting experiences (as Israel would).

reject

v. **refuse to accept, consider or use** 拒绝接受

She **rejected** my suggestion. 她拒绝了我的建议。

If women of childbearing age **reject** red meat, they will be at great risk of losing iron. 育龄妇女如果拒吃红肉，就会有失铁的巨大危险。

5. My sister and I are three and a half years apart in age, but a world apart in the way we live our lives. (Para. 4)

Meaning:

My sister and I were born only three and a half years apart, but our lifestyles could not be more different.

►► The adverb “apart” is generally used to denote physical distance between two objects, people, etc. For example:

The wife and the husband live **apart**. 丈夫和妻子是分开住的。

It may also be used figuratively:

Any agreement is not likely, as the two sides in the dispute are a long way **apart**. 争论双方分歧很大，不大可能达成任何协议。

a world apart

worlds apart; greatly different 天壤之别

The twins are **a world apart/worlds apart** in personality, though identical in

appearance. 这对双胞胎虽然外表一模一样，但个性上却有天壤之别。

6. I've spent most of my adult life apologizing to my family for being different, for embarrassing them by something I wear, something I do or something I say. (Para. 4)

Meaning:

Since I've become an adult, I feel I've had to say "I'm sorry" to my family all the time for what I wear, do, and say.

apologize

v. (apologise *BrE*) say one is sorry, e.g. for having done something wrong, or for causing pain or trouble 道歉; 谢罪

He **apologized** for his lateness. 他为迟到而道歉。

I must **apologize** to you for not answering your letter in time. 我没有及时回信，得向你道歉。

7. Essentially, they think I'm a nut. (Para. 4)

Meaning:

All in all, they think I'm sort of crazy.

essentially

adv. in reality, though perhaps not in appearance; basically 本质上; 根本上

Essentially, men and women are equal in intelligence. 男女从智力上来说基本上是一样的。

nut

n. 1) [C] a person who is or seems to be mad 疯子; 怪人

He's a bit of **nut**. 他多少有点疯疯癫癫。

There is some **nut** out there with a gun. 那儿有个疯子，手里拿着枪。

2) [C] a dry fruit with a kernel (=seed) surrounded by a hard shell 坚果

The crust of a **nut** is harder than that of a peanut. 坚果的壳比花生的壳要坚硬。

3) [C] a difficult thing, person to deal with 难以对付的问题或人

The problems were a hard **nut** to crack, but we managed to cope. 这些问题很棘手，但我们还是对付下来了。

8. I think I puzzle her—she just can't seem to figure me out. (Para. 5)

Meaning:

I think I am a mystery to her—she just can't understand me.

puzzle

- v. 1) **make (someone) feel helpless and uncertain in the effort to understand something** 使（某人）感到迷惑；使糊涂
 It **puzzled** me that they never answered the phone. 他们不接电话，这使我感到不可理解。
- 2) **make a great effort of the mind in order to find an answer to a question** 苦思冥想；因……伤脑筋
 They are **puzzling** their wits all day long. 他们整天在冥思苦想。
 Scientists are **puzzling** over the results of the drug research. 科学家正在思索着这药的研究结果。
- n. [C] **something one cannot understand or explain** 难题；难解之事；谜
 Their son is a **puzzle** to them. 儿子对他们来说是个谜。
 The reasons for his action have remained a **puzzle** to historians. 他为什么采取这种行动，历史学家们仍然大惑不解。

9. My family is not big on emotional goodbyes, so with a “Go to it, tiger” and a quick “I love you, too,” my sister was gone. (Para. 8)

Meaning:

My family does not like to show emotions on occasions, like saying goodbye. After saying “Good luck, my brave girl” (or “have fun”) and “I love you, too,” my sister left.

be big on (something)

enjoy (something) 喜欢

I **am not big on** hot temperatures. 我不喜欢热天气。

Many girls **are not big on** football. 很多女孩不喜欢足球。

» Go to it = Good luck

“Go to it, tiger” is an expression one would use in a very casual setting, like at a baseball game, to wish someone good luck. It simply means “good luck” or “have fun” or “You can do it!” However, in this text, the speaker, having made reference to how unemotional her family tends to be, gives us this example of “Go to it, tiger” to reveal just how awkward her sister must have been feeling. To clarify: This situation is NOT a casual one (like a baseball game), as the woman is leaving for a dangerous country. Yet, the sister’s inappropriate casual comment does not serve to show that she doesn’t care—indeed, quite the opposite. It conveys how hard this must be for her, and not being one to show emotion, she gives a casual remark like “Go to it, tiger” instead. This “Go to it, tiger” implies a lot of unspoken emotions, based on how the speaker has

described her family.

tiger

- n. 1) [C] a person like a tiger in fierceness, courage, etc. 强悍的人; 英雄
He is a **tiger** for work. 他干活是好样的。
- 2) [C] a very large fierce Asian cat that has yellowish fur with black bands 虎; 老虎
The jungle is home to the **tiger**. 丛林是老虎的家。
The hunters followed the **tiger's** trail. 猎人跟踪老虎的踪迹。

10. I was sad because this just confirmed for me that she didn't understand.

(Para. 8)

Meaning:

I was sad because the way she'd said "goodbye" to me made it quite clear that, I felt, she still did not understand me.

- »» The word "this" refers to what has been described in the previous sentence; that is, the way she'd said "goodbye" to me.

confirm

- v. 1) give support or certainty to (a fact, belief, etc.), e.g. by providing more proof or by stating that something is true or correct 证实; 进一步确认
I'd like to **confirm** a reservation for a double room on the first of July. 我要对7月1日预订的双人房进行确认。
I'd like to **confirm** what the financial arrangements were. 我想进一步确认财政安排的情况。
- 2) give formal approval to (a person, agreement, position); agree to; ratify 批准; 确认
The senate **confirmed** the president's nomination. 参议院批准了总统的提名。
The general manager **confirmed** my plan for promotion. 总经理批准了我的推销计划。

11. I checked in and fastened myself into the plane seat. (Para. 9)

Meaning:

I went through security, got on the plane, and sat down in my seat with the safety belt tightened around me.

fasten

- v. make or become firmly fixed or closed 缚紧; 系牢
I **fastened** the pages together with a paperclip. 我用一个纸夹把那几页纸夹在一起。

How can I **fasten** these pieces of wood together? 我怎么才能把这些木条捆扎起来?

12. There, along with my passport, visa, and other important documents, was a small white envelope with “Kathy” written on it in my sister’s handwriting. (Para. 9)

Meaning:

In the bag, I saw my passport, visa, other important documents, and a small white envelope. On the envelope there was the word “Kathy,” written by my sister.

▶▶ Please notice the inversed order of the sentence.

13. After I read the writing on the inside, I realized that my sister—who I had decided just couldn’t understand—actually did. (Para. 10)

Meaning:

After I read what my sister had written inside (the envelope), I began to see that my sister did, in fact, understand me, although I had believed up to that point that this would never happen.

▶▶ The clause introduced by “who... just couldn’t understand” that is separated by a dash (破折号) can be regarded as an embedded relative clause (嵌入式关系从句). This clause, on the one hand, functions as the post-modifier of the noun “sister,” but on the other hand, it is the object of the verb “had decided.”

A similar example:

She has an adopted child **who she says** was an orphan. 她收养了一个孩子, 据她说是一个孤儿。

Here, the embedded relative clause “who... was an orphan” functions as a post-modifier of the noun phrase “adopted child.” Yet, at the same time, it is the objective clause (宾语从句) of the verb “says.”

▶▶ “Did” stands for “understood.” The subject of “did” is “my sister.” The subject “my sister” and the predicate “actually did” are separated by the clause “who I had decided couldn’t understand.”

14. It seemed there was a small part of her that was jealous of what I was doing. (Para. 10)

Meaning:

No matter how happy she said she was for me, I could see she felt some envy toward my accomplishments—even if she tried her best to fight it.

- The writer is basically saying that she could tell that her sister was happy for her, but that there were some feelings of envy—the “small part of her” reference leads the readers to believe that her sister was trying her best not to let this envy overtake her happiness for the writer.

jealous

adj. 1) **wanting what others have** 艳羡的; 羡慕的

Her colleagues are **jealous** of her success. 她的同事羡慕她的成功。

2) **envious** 妒忌的; 嫉妒的; 吃醋的

The two sisters were bitterly **jealous** of Cinderella. 这两个姐姐极端妒忌灰姑娘。

- Note that although “jealous” and “envious” are synonyms and interchangeable in certain contexts, the former is usually considered as a more unpleasant feeling than the latter. Compare the following pair:

- a) Tom has a nice family. I'm **envious** of him, indeed. 汤姆有一个幸福的家庭, 我真羡慕他。
- b) Tom has a good job, of which Jack is very **jealous** because he thinks he should have gotten it. 汤姆有一份好工作, 这让杰克非常妒忌, 因为他认为本来该他得到这份工作。

15. The card was **blank** except for what my sister had written. (Para. 10)

Meaning:

There was nothing but my sister's writing on the card.

blank

adj. 1) **(of a surface) not written or printed** 空白的

He tore a **blank** page from his notebook. 他从笔记本上撕下一页白纸。

We could put some of the pictures over on that **blank** wall over there. 我们可以在那边的空白墙上贴一些画。

2) **void of expression** 无表情的

She stood there with a **blank** stare. 她站在那里, 茫然凝视着。

My mind went completely **blank** and I forgot what I was supposed to be doing. 我脑子完全麻木了, 连我本来要做什么都想不起来了。

n. [C] **a space left to be filled in a document** 空白

Please fill in these **blanks** in the form. 请把表格里的空白填写好。

except for

apart from; with the exception of 除了……之外

- Note that although both “except for” and “except” can be translated as “除了” in Chinese, the difference between them is noticeable, as is shown in the following pair of sentences:

- a) All **except** Tom are here. 除了汤姆, 大家都来了。
b) Your composition is good **except for** a few mistakes here and there. 你的作文写得很好, 除了个别地方还有些错误。

In a), “except” is used because Tom and “all” are of equal status. “Except” implies that a part is “subtracted” from the whole. In b), the word “mistakes” that follows “except for” is not of equal status to “composition.” The “except for” phrase partially negates or revises the proposition of the sentence (the composition is good).

Occasionally, “except” and “except for” are interchangeable: **Except for/Except** John, the whole class passed the exam (除约翰外, 全班都通过了考试). The use of “except for,” however, is restricted to the context in which it occurs before a noun or a pronoun.

16. I really admire you for experiencing life in such a full way. (Para. 11)

.....
Meaning:

You have won my heartfelt respect because you dare to lead an exciting life.
.....

17. That day, my sister, for one brief moment, showed me a side of herself that she had never shown before. (Para. 15)

.....
Meaning:

That day, my sister briefly revealed one aspect of her personality/character that had never been revealed before.
.....

||>> a side of = an aspect of 一个方面

18. Or maybe I had never looked deeply enough. (Para. 15)

.....
Meaning:

Or perhaps I had not thought of the matter (whether my sister really understood me or not) hard enough.
.....

19. With a flood of tears running down my face, I turned and looked out of the window. (Para. 15)

.....
Meaning:

Tears ran down my face, and I turned away from the letter and looked out of the window.
.....

flood

- n.* 1) [C] **a very large number of things or people that arrive at the same time**
The UN appealed for help with the **flood** of refugees crossing the border.
大量难民涌过边界，联合国呼吁援助。
- 2) [C] **the covering with water of a place that is usually dry; a great overflow of water** 水灾；洪水
A heavy **flood** caused the bridge to collapse; no one could cross the river without boats. 一场大洪水把桥梁冲塌了，没有船就没人能过河了。
- v.* 1) **(cause to) be filled or covered with water** (使) 为水淹没
The houses were **flooded** roof-deep. 这些房子的屋顶被洪水淹没了。
- 2) **cover or spread into completely; overflow** 充满；涌来
Letters of congratulation **flooded** in after his research findings were reported in the newspaper. 他的研究成果见报后，大批贺信潮水般涌来。

a flood of**a large quantity of** 大量的**a flood of people** 汹涌的人潮She received **a flood of** letters after the accident. 出事后，她收到了大量的信。**20. As the plane backed out of the gate, I saw her lips say “I love you.”****(Para. 15)****Meaning:**

Just as my plane was moving away from the gate backwards and was on the point of taking off, I caught a glimpse of my sister as she mouthed the words “I love you” to me.

- »» When the plane is stationary on the airport ground, it is in contact with the lounge, so to speak, by the gangway. Therefore, “out of the gate” in the text suggests that the plane was out of touch with the gate of the lounge where her sister was watching her. “Gate” here is translated as “登机口”. When horses race, for instance, we say that they are “out of the gate” as soon as the race begins; that is, they have left the gate and are on their way along their designated path. We also say *The car was backing out of the driveway* (汽车从私用车道倒退出来).

21. ... I knew she really did. (Para. 15)**Meaning:**

... I knew she really loved me; she meant it.

- »» Here, “did” refers to “love” in the preceding sentence.

Section C

Suggestions for Teaching Section C

In teaching Section C, you are supposed to have two basic things in mind: the layout and the writing of an e-mail.

It is highly advisable to present some illustrations (both in Chinese and English) to the students when you talk about the outline of the e-mail.

Then you may proceed to talk about some guidelines for writing e-mail messages. The following is only for reference.

Guidelines for Writing E-mail Messages

I. Message Addresses

1. Be careful when addressing your e-mail. There are addresses that may go to a group, but the address looks like it is just one person. Know to whom you are sending each message.
2. Watch cc's when replying. Don't continue to include the people irrelevant if the mail has become a two-way conversation.
3. Verify all addresses before initiating a long or personal discourse.

II. Message Content

1. Think first! Remember that the other person cannot see your face or hear your voice and therefore cannot determine the emotional context of the message. Sarcasm (讲反话) can easily be misinterpreted.
2. Be careful with upper case. Upper case looks as if you're shouting, which may be considered rude.
3. Be brief without being overly terse. When replying to a message, include enough original material to be understood, but no more. It is extremely bad form to reply to a message by including the entire previous message; edit out all the irrelevant material.

III. Attachments & the Size of E-mails

Know how large a message you are sending. Including large files such as postscript files or programs may make your message too large to deliver or at least consumes excessive resources. A good rule of thumb would be not to send a file larger than 50 kilobytes. Consider file transfer as an alternative, or cutting the file into smaller

chunks and sending each as a separate message. In the rare cases where it is necessary to send a large file, keep in mind that the UXB Internet Servers will not accept e-mail messages larger than 3 megabytes.

IV. Instructions for Sending and Receiving an E-mail

Sending an E-mail

1. Open the Outlook Express by double clicking on the icon on your desktop or click on Start/Programs/Internet Explorer/Outlook Express.
2. Click on the Compose Message icon at the top left of the window.
3. You will now have the Mail Message window appear on screen, as shown below.

From:
To:
Cc:
Subject:
Date:

In order to send the message successfully, you will need to fill in the following pieces of information:

To: Type the e-mail address of the person you are sending the message to. The address must be typed in correctly or the message will not reach them. A typical address will look something like this: somebody@lincsat.com.

Cc: Carbon copy recipients will receive a copy of the message you are sending. Enter their addresses in this field.

Bcc: Blind carbon copy recipients will also receive a copy of the message, but their names will not appear in the message header so they can remain anonymous.

Subject: The title of your message—the first part that the recipient will see on their screen.

Attachments:

If you want to attach a file to your e-mail message, simply follow these instructions:

1. Click on the Paper Clip icon at the top of the window and a new window will appear.
2. Select the file from your hard disk that you wish to add as an attachment. The name of the file will appear in the File name box.

3. Click on the Attach button. The attached file will appear as an icon at the bottom of your message. If you receive messages with such icons attached, simply double click on them to open the files.
4. To send the message, click on the Send button. If you are not connected to the Internet, your message will go to your Outbox. The message will not be sent until you connect to the Internet again and click on the Send and Receive icon at the top of the Outlook Express window.

Receiving an E-mail

To collect your messages, simply open the Outlook Express and click on the Send and Receive button on the top of the window. This will automatically connect you to the Internet and will download any message that are waiting for you on your server. At the same time, any messages in your Outbox will be sent.

V. Making E-mail Content Effective

1. Personalize your e-mail message

The opening salutation of your e-mail message provides an excellent opportunity to demonstrate to the recipient that you know who they are. E-mail messages that do so immediately gain a level of acceptance that is otherwise impossible to obtain.

Message personalization can be as simple as including the name of the recipient in the salutation. If, for some reason, this information is not available when you send the e-mail message, consider using a salutation that reflects the customer's relationship with your organization. For example, "Dear (product) user" or simply "Dear Sir" clearly establishes the company-client relationship in the mind of the recipient.

2. Keep the message content brief and to the point

Many of those who receive e-mail regularly are busy people, and this is especially true during business hours. When these people receive lengthy e-mail messages, they are simply more prone to push it aside, sometimes with the intention of returning to it later.

3. Establish good e-mail etiquette guidelines

Strive to ensure that your e-mail message content follows common e-mail etiquette guidelines.

For example, you should never write e-mail messages (including subjects) in ALL CAPS. It's also wise to avoid sending e-mail attachments to customers unless you're confident that they will be well received.

Attachments can be burdensome for the recipient to download and provide additional risks related to virus contamination. Further, attachment file formats are

not typically universal.

4. Focus on a single subject

Since you don't wish to contact your customers via e-mail very frequently, it may be tempting when developing e-mail message content to tell the customer about everything you're doing at the moment. Resist this temptation!

Never forget that, in general, your readers are busy people with short attention spans. They will likely have sufficient time and interest to digest only a single message from you at a time.

PART III

Key to Exercises

Section A

Reading Out

- | | | | |
|------------|---------------|------------|--------------|
| 1) grew up | 2) greenhouse | 3) feeding | 4) gathering |
| 5) into | 6) labor | | |

Getting the Message

1. She wrote in Paragraph 1 that “the word ‘bored’ never found its way into my vocabulary” and that “the work was a labor of love.”
2. Her father suffered a serious heart attack and was diagnosed with heart disease.
3. She felt them, on the one hand, different and strange, and on the other, exciting and fun.
4. Because she decided to take on her career as an actress in Los Angeles.
5. They decided that it was time for her mother to go back to Arizona and resumed her life there.
6. She meant that for some reason or other she began to feel unsatisfied with her life in Los Angeles and that no matter what she tried, she could not get rid of this feeling of emptiness.
7. She found out the cause of her unhappiness by recalling when she was happiest and

asking herself what was important to her.

8. It was nestled in a warm and sunny valley with pear trees in the yard.

Using the Right Word

- | | | | |
|----------------|--------------|-----------------|---------------|
| 1. has assured | 2. missing | 3. resume | 4. greenhouse |
| 5. labor | 6. departing | 7. surroundings | 8. fate |

Working with Expressions

- | | | | |
|---------|---------|-------|------------|
| 1. from | 2. up | 3. As | 4. through |
| 5. from | 6. with | 7. on | 8. as |

Focusing on Sentence Structure

- A**
1. Passing math tests was never difficult for me.
 2. Helping you was a great pleasure for me.
 3. Seeing you back home was a great joy to me.
- B**
1. It has been hard for me to adjust to the idea of being a junior clerk.
 2. His illness accounted for his not being here yesterday.
 3. According to the passage, the writer's diving gave him a sense of being successful.

Translating

- A**
1. What do you think one can do to be a happy person?
 2. Since she left Shanghai and resumed her country life last year, a void has found its way into my heart.
 3. It didn't even cross my mind that he would win the first prize.
 4. I grew up in a big city, so the rat race is no longer new to me.
- B**
1. 慢慢地，我的心里产生了一种阴暗的空虚感，它开始吞噬我的幸福。
 2. 我父亲对回到那种你争我夺的生活不怎么感兴趣，但我向他保证，这一次绝对会有所不同。
 3. 像是命运的安排，我的生活很快又发生了变化，而且是巨大的变化。
 4. 我的环境不一样了，它既陌生，但同时又激动人心和有趣。

Using Topic-related Terms

- | | | | |
|------------|-------------|----------|-----------------|
| 1) replace | 2) grown up | 3) moved | 4) surroundings |
| 5) void | 6) missed | 7) fill | |

Basic Writing Skills

1. With a beating heart, I opened my mouth for the doctor.
2. Driving along the road, we noticed several dead animals.
3. Fred spent nearly three hours in the office.
4. Books with hard covers don't sell well in the bookstores.
5. Joan put aside in her savings the fifty dollars she had earned over the weekend.
6. Newspapers all over the world reported that the plane had landed safely.
7. Ann returned to the supermarket the milk that had gone bad.
8. Sue carried on her arm her coat, which she had just bought the other day.

Section B

Getting the Message

1. **A.** In Paragraph 1, the father said to the writer that there was a war in Israel.
2. **C.** Paragraph 2 says that when there was a quarrel in the family, "my sister, Kristy, would always try to break the tension."
3. **D.** Paragraph 4 says that the writer takes too many risks and loves adventures.
4. **D.** At the end of the text, the writer realizes that her sister does understand her. This shows that the writer understands her sister, too.
5. **B.** From the text we can see the family actually understand the writer, though they don't express it clearly.

Using the Right Word

- | | | | |
|-------------|------------|-------------|-----------|
| 1. passport | 2. fasten | 3. blank | 4. reject |
| 5. neat | 6. confirm | 7. document | 8. admire |

Working with Expressions

- | | | | |
|---------|----------|--------|--------|
| 1. over | 2. apart | 3. for | 4. out |
|---------|----------|--------|--------|

5. except for 6. to... for 7. along with 8. out of

Cloze

1. B 2. A 3. C 4. B 5. B 6. A 7. B 8. A 9. C 10. A

Section C

- A**
1. Jackson He; jhe@sina.com.
 2. sw347@cam.ac.uk
 3. Sat, August 10, 2013
 4. ljiang@yeah.net; li_0821@nju.edu.cn.
 5. It's about asking for response to a meeting summary.

- B**
- | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1) sw347@cam.ac.uk | 2) jhe@sina.com |
| 3) wwjohn@online.sh.cn | 4) reply to meeting summary |
| 5) open-ended | 6) Jackson |
| 7) no questions | 8) thinking about the promotion plan |
| 9) good | 10) perfect |
| 11) have a market investigation | 12) Snow |

- C** 1. A 2. A 3. C 4. C 5. B

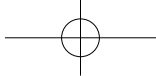
PART IV

Translation

Text A

我回家了

我在农场里长大，生活在一个大家庭里。家中洋溢着爱，空间也很大，我们有



做不完的事。从暖房除草到赶我家那老迈的鹅，从喂山羊到赶牛群，我从来没有说过“厌倦”这个词。干这些活儿我们都非常卖力。

我和我的家人亲密无间，大多数夜晚我们玩游戏或讲故事，直到睡觉的时候方肯罢休。我从来没有睡不着的问题。我听着鸟儿的欢唱，梦想农场另一天的到来。这就是我的生活，我知道我是个幸运儿。

然而，在我12岁时，一件可怕的事情发生了，它永远改变了我的生活。我父亲的心脏非常不舒服，被确诊为心脏病。医生告诉我的父亲他需要完全改变他的生活方式，这意味着他无法再过农耕生活。我们不得不卖掉我们的房子，举家西迁。

亚利桑那州的干燥空气对我的父亲有好处，我也在适应新的学校、新的朋友和新的生活。我的环境不一样了，它既陌生，但同时又激动人心和有趣。像是命运的安排，我的生活很快又发生了变化，而且是巨大的变化。

有一天，洛杉矶有个经纪人来找我，问我是否想过当演员。这个想法在我脑海里从来不曾有过。和父母讨论后，母亲和我决定搬到洛杉矶住一阵子试试看。

谢天谢地，母亲从一开始就和我在一起，我们母女俩对待这件事就像对待探险似的。当我的第一部电影成功后，我和母亲一致决定母亲现在可以离开我，重新过她亚利桑那州的生活。农场的那个小姑娘正在消失，取而代之的是一个大城市的女性。

我确实很热爱我的工作，而且享受女王般的待遇。可是，我总觉得缺了些什么，慢慢地，我的心里产生了一种阴暗的空虚感，它开始吞噬我的幸福。

我试图弄清我失去了什么，我就先试试更努力地工作，然后又试试减少一点工作。我结交了新朋友，和老朋友失去了联系。然而我所做的一切都无法填补这种空虚。我努力回忆着我最幸福的时光，我问自己什么东西对我最重要。最后，我有了答案，我懂得了为了幸福我该做什么。我的生活再次面临着改变。

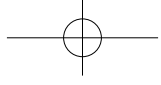
我打电话给我的父母亲说：“我太想念你们了，我要在这里买房子，我要你们搬到加州来。”我父亲对回到那种你争我夺的生活不怎么感兴趣，但我向他保证，这一次绝对会有所不同。这样，我们开始寻找一个家，像记忆中伴我成长的那个家一样。

后来有一天我们找到了：我们完美的家，坐落在温暖、阳光明媚的山谷里，院子里长着梨树。这次行动让我重拾家庭的欢乐，我内心的黑洞开始消失，我的心灵重新获得了平衡。我回家了，我再次回家了。

Text B

边缘线上

在我出发去以色列的前一个晚上，我听着我一生老是听到的那些话。“可为什



么是以色列呢？”我的父亲问我。“你知道，那里在进行战争。”“是的，爸爸，我知道。战争到处都有，”我回答说。

当这些“讨论”发生时，我的姐姐克里斯蒂总设法打破这种紧张的局面。“凯西，”她建议道，“你为什么不去英国上暑期学校？那里没有危险，而且那里也是国外。”

我拒绝去英国是因为那里不够刺激，我想体验不同的东西。

姐姐和我相差三岁半，但我们的生活方式却截然不同。她的生活井井有条、安安静静。而我总是冒险，并且乐此不疲。长大成人后，我因自己和他们不一样而道歉，就这样度过了我大部分的时光，我为我的穿着、我的言论、我的行动使他们感到尴尬而道歉。归根结底，他们认为我是个怪人。

由于我的姐姐和我如此不同——或者说我和她如此不同——我们并不十分亲密。我想我令她感到迷惑不解——她似乎根本无法理解我。

因为姐姐似乎对我的暑期计划担心最少，所以我请她开车送我去机场。“没有问题，”她说，“不过不要告诉爸爸！”我笑了笑答应了。

第二天在去机场的路上，姐姐像往常一样显得很安静。但是，自从我作出去以色列的决定后，她首次开始问起我的旅行了：计划去哪里旅游？住哪里？看来她真正产生了兴趣。

我的家人不善于表达离别感情。一句“去吧，好样的”和一句匆匆的“我也爱你”之后，姐姐就走了。我很难受，因为这恰恰证实了她对我的不理解。

检票登机后，我系好座位上的安全带。我朝姐姐替我提进机场的包里瞥了一眼。包里除了护照、签证和其他重要文件，还有一个白色的小信封，信封上有我姐姐亲笔写的“凯西”字样。我打开信封，看到里面有一张贺卡。

看完里面的内容后，我认识到我的姐姐——一个我曾经以为肯定不会理解我的人——事实上很理解我。看上去姐姐还有一点羡慕我的行为。贺卡很空，唯有姐姐写的如下字句：

我真的羡慕你如此充分地体验人生。我爱你！

你的姐姐，克里斯蒂

在贺卡的另一面，她写道：

我真希望能和你一块儿去以色列。

那天，姐姐短暂地流露出她从未向我流露过的一面。也许是我从来没有试图认真地理解她。眼泪如潮水般流下我的脸颊，我转头把目光投向窗外，看到姐姐在机场里微笑着向我招手。飞机徐徐离开机场的登机口，我看到她的嘴唇在说“我爱你”。我也报之一笑，因为我第一次知道姐姐真的理解我。