**《阅读理解——说明文》 课后作业**

**Exercise 1**

We’ve all been there: in a lift, in line at the bank or on an airplane, surrounded by people who are, like us, deeply focused on their smartphones or, worse, struggling with the uncomfortable silence.

What’s the problem? It’s possible that we all have compromised conversational intelligence. It’s more likely that none of us start a conversation because it’s awkward and challenging, or we think it’s annoying and unnecessary. But the next time you find yourself among strangers, consider that small talk is worth the trouble. Experts say it’s an invaluable social practice that results in big benefits.

Dismissing small talk as unimportant is easy, but we can’t forget that deep relationships wouldn’t even exist if it weren’t for casual conversation. Small talk is the grease (润滑剂) for social communication, says Bernardo Carducci, director of the Shyness Research Institute at Indiana University Southeast. “Almost every great love story and each big business deal begins with small talk,” he explains. “The key to successful small talk is learning how to connect with others, not just communicate with them.”

In a 2014 study, Elizabeth Dunn, associate professor of psychology at UBC, invited people on their way into a coffee shop. One group was asked to seek out an interaction (互动) with its waiter; the other, to speak only when necessary. The results showed that those who chatted with their server reported significantly higher positive feelings and a better coffee shop experience. “It’s not that talking to the waiter is better than talking to your husband,” say Dunn. “But interactions with peripheral (边缘的) members of our social network matter for our well-being also.”

Dunn believes that people who reach out to strangers feel a significantly greater sense of belonging, a bond with others. Carducci believes developing such a sense of belonging starts with small talk. “Small talk is the basis of good manners,” he says.

1. What phenomenon is described in the first paragraph?

A. Addiction to smartphones.

B. Inappropriate behaviours in public places.

C. Absence of communication between strangers.

D. Impatience with slow service.

2. What is important for successful small talk according to Carducci?

A. Showing good manners. B. Relating to other people.

C. Focusing on a topic. D. Making business deals.

3. What does the coffee-shop study suggest about small talk?

A. It improves family relationships. B. It raises people’s confidence.

C. It matters as much as formal talk. D. It makes people feel good.

4. What is the best title for the text?

A. Conversation Counts B. Ways of Making Small Talk

C. Benefits of Small Talk D. Uncomfortable Silence

**Exercise 2**

Cities usually have a good reason for being where they are, like a nearby port or river. People settle in these places because they are easy to get to and naturally suited to communications and trade. New York City, for example, is near a large harbour at the mouth of the Hudson River. Over 300 years its population grew gradually from 800 people to 8 million. But not all cities develop slowly over a long period of time. Boom towns grow from nothing almost overnight. In 1896, Dawson, Canada, was unmapped wilderness (荒野). But gold was discovered there in 1897, and two years later, it was one of the largest cities in the West, with a population of 30,000.

Dawson did not have any of the natural conveniences of cities like London or Paris. People went there for gold. They travelled over snow-covered mountains and sailed hundreds of miles up icy rivers. The path to Dawson was covered with thirty feet of wet snow that could fall without warning. An avalanche (雪崩) once closed the path, killing 63 people. For many who made it to Dawson, however, the rewards were worth the difficult trip. Of the first 20,000 people who dug for gold, 4,000 got rich. About 100 of these stayed rich men for the rest of their lives.

But no matter how rich they were, Dawson was never comfortable. Necessities like food and wood were very expensive. But soon, the gold that Dawson depended on had all been found. The city was crowded with disappointed people with no interest in settling down, and when they heard there were new gold discoveries in Alaska, they left Dawson City as quickly as they had come. Today, people still come and go—to see where the Canadian gold rush happened. Tourism is now the chief industry of Dawson City—its present population is 762.

1. What attracted the early settlers to New York City?

A. Its business culture. B. Its small population.

C. Its geographical position. D. Its favourable climate.

2. What do we know about those who first dug for gold in Dawson?

A. Two-thirds of them stayed there. B. One out of five people got rich.

C. Almost everyone gave up. D. Half of them died.

3. What was the main reason for many people to leave Dawson?

A. They found the city too crowded. B. They wanted to try their luck elsewhere.

C. They were unable to stand the winter. D. They were short of food.

4. What is the text mainly about?

A. The rise and fall of a city. B. The gold rush in Canada.

C. Journeys into the wilderness. D. Tourism in Dawson.

**Exercise 3**

While famous foreign architects are invited to lead the designs of landmark buildings in China such as the new CCTV tower and the National Center for the Performing Arts, many excellent Chinese architects are making great efforts to take the center stage.

Their efforts have been proven fruitful. Wang Shu, a 49-year-old Chinese architect, won the 2012 Pritzker Architecture Prize—which is often referred to as the Nobel Prize in architecture—on February 28. He is the first Chinese citizen to win this award.

Wang serves as head of the Architecture Department at the China Academy of Art (CAA). His office is located at the Xiangshan campus (校园) of the university in Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province. Many buildings on the campus are his original creations.

The style of the campus is quite different from that of most Chinese universities. Many visitors were amazed by the complex architectural space and abundant building types. The curves (曲线) of the buildings perfectly match the rise and fall of hills, forming a unique view.

Wang collected more than 7 million abandoned bricks of different ages. He asked the workers to use traditional techniques to make the bricks into walls, roofs and corridors. This creation attracted a lot of attention thanks to its mixture of modern and traditional Chinese elements (元素).

Wang’s works show a deep understanding of modern architecture and a good knowledge of traditions. Through such a balance, he had created a new type of Chinese architecture, said Tadao Ando, the winner of the 1995 Pritzker Prize.

Wang believes traditions should not be sealed in glass boxes at museums. “That is only evidence that traditions once existed,” he said.

“Many Chinese people have a misunderstanding of traditions. They think tradition means old things from the past. In fact, tradition also refers to the things that have been developing and that are still being created,” he said.

“Today, many Chinese people are learning Western styles and theories rather than focusing on Chinese traditions. Many people tend to talk about traditions without knowing what they really are,” said Wang.

The study of traditions should be combined with practice. Otherwise, the recreation of traditions would be artificial and empty, he said.

1. Wang’s winning of the prize means that Chinese architects are \_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

A. following the latest world trend B. getting international recognition

C. working harder than ever before D. relying on foreign architects

2. What impressed visitors to the CAA Xiangshan campus most?

A. Its hilly environment. B. Its large size.

C. Its unique style. D. Its diverse functions.

3. What made Wang’s architectural design a success?

A. The mixture of different shapes. B. The balance of East and West.

C. The use of popular techniques. D. The harmony of old and new.

4. What should we do about Chinese traditions according to Wang?

A. Spread them to the world. B. Preserve them at museums.

C. Teach them in universities. D. Recreate them in practice.

**Exercise 4**

As cultural symbols go, the American car is quite young. The Model T Ford was built at the Piquette Plant in Michigan a century ago, with the first rolling off the assembly line (装配线) on September 27, 1908. Only eleven cars were produced the next month. But eventually Henry Ford would build fifteen million of them.

Modern America was born on the road, behind a wheel. The car shaped some of the most lasting aspects of American culture: the roadside diner, the billboard, the motel, even the hamburger. For most of the last century, the car represented what it meant to be American—going forward at high speed to find new worlds. The road novel, the road movie, these are the most typical American ideas, born of abundant petrol, cheap cars and a never-ending interstate highway system, the largest public works project in history.

In 1928 Herbert Hoover imagined an America with “a chicken in every pot and a car in every garage.” Since then, this society has moved onward, never looking back, as the car transformed America from a farm-based society into an industrial power.

The cars that drove the American Dream have helped to create a global ecological disaster. In America the demand for oil has grown by 22 percent since 1990.

The problems of excessive (过度的) energy consumption, climate change and population growth have been described in a book by the American writer Thomas L. Friedman. He fears the worst, but hopes for the best.

Friedman points out that the green economy (经济) is a chance to keep American strength. “The ability to design, build and export green technologies for producing clean water, clean air and healthy and abundant food is going to be the currency of power in the new century.”

1. Why is hamburger mentioned in paragraph 2?

A. To explain Americans’ love for travelling by car.

B. To show the influence of cars on American culture.

C. To stress the popularity of fast food with Americans.

D. To praise the effectiveness of America’s road system.

2. What has the use of cars in America led to?

A. Decline of economy. B. Environmental problems.

C. A shortage of oil supply. D. A farm-based society.

3. What is Friedman’s attitude towards America’s future?

A. Ambiguous. B. Doubtful. C. Hopeful. D. Tolerant.