

2019 年真题笔记

2019 年完形

①Today, we live in a world where GPS systems, digital maps, and other navigation apps are available on our smart phones.

②Few of us just walk straight into the woods without a phone.

③But phones run on batteries, and batteries can die faster than we realize.

④If you get lost without a phone or a compass, and you literally can't find north, we have a few tricks to help you navigate back to civilization, one of which is to follow the land.

My Notes

①When you find yourself well off a trail, but not in a completely unfamiliar area, you have to answer two questions: Which way is downhill, in this particular area?

②And where is the nearest water source?

③Humans overwhelmingly live in valleys, and on supplies of fresh water.

④So, if you head downhill, and follow any H₂O you find, you should eventually see signs of people.

My Notes

①If you've explored the area before, keep an eye out for familiar sights—you may be surprised how quickly identifying a distinctive rock or tree can restore your bearings.

My Notes

①Another option: Climb high and look for signs of human habitation.

②For example, even in dense forest, you should be able to spot gaps in the tree line due to roads, train tracks, and other paths people carve through the woods.

③Head toward these breaks to find a way out. At night, scan the horizon for artificial light sources, such as fires and streetlights, then walk toward the glow of light pollution.

My Notes

①Finally, assuming you're lost in an area humans tend to frequent, look for the marks we leave on the landscape.

②Trail blazes, tire tracks, and other features can lead you to civilization.

My Notes

2019 年 Text 1

①Financial regulators in Britain have imposed a rather unusual rule on the bosses of big banks.

②Starting next year, any guaranteed bonus of top executives could be delayed 10 years if their banks are under investigation for wrongdoing.

③The main purpose of this “clawback” rule is to hold bankers accountable for harmful risk-taking and to restore public trust in financial institutions.

④Yet officials also hope for a much larger benefit: more long-term decision-making, not only by banks but by all corporations, to build a stronger economy for future generations.

My Notes

①“Short-termism,” or the desire for quick profits, has worsened in publicly traded companies, says the Bank of England’s top economist, Andrew Haldane.

②He quotes a giant of classical economics, Alfred Marshall, in describing this financial impatience as acting like “children who pick the plums out of their pudding to eat them at once” rather than putting them aside to be eaten last.

My Notes

①The average time for holding a stock in both the United States and Britain, he notes, has dropped from seven years to seven months in recent decades.

②Transient investors, who demand high quarterly profits from companies, can hinder a firm’s efforts to invest in long-term research or to build up customer loyalty.

③This has been dubbed “quarterly capitalism.”

My Notes

①In addition, new digital technologies have allowed more rapid trading of equities, quicker use of information, and thus shorter attention spans in financial markets.

②“There seems to be a predominance of short-term thinking at the expense of long-term investing,” said Commissioner Daniel Gallagher of the US Securities and Exchange Commission in a speech this week.

My Notes

①In the US, *the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002* has pushed most public companies to defer performance bonuses for senior executives by about a year, slightly helping reduce “short-termism.”

②In its latest survey of CEO pay, *The Wall Street Journal* finds that “a substantial part” of executive pay is now tied to performance.

My Notes

①Much more could be done to encourage “long-termism,” such as changes in the tax code and quicker disclosure of stock acquisitions.

②In France, shareholders who hold onto a company investment for at least two years can sometimes earn more voting rights in a company.

My Notes

① Within companies, the right compensation design can provide incentives for executives to think beyond their own time at the company and on behalf of all stakeholders.

② Britain's new rule is a reminder to bankers that society has an interest in their performance, not just for the short term but for the long term.

My Notes

2019 年 Text 2

①Grade inflation—the gradual increase in average GPAs (grade-point averages) over the past few decades—is often considered a product of a consumer era in higher education, in which students are treated like customers to be pleased.

②But another, related force—a policy often buried deep in course catalogs called “grade forgiveness”—is helping raise GPAs.

My Notes

①Grade forgiveness allows students to retake a course in which they received a low grade, and the most recent grade or the highest grade is the only one that counts in calculating a student’s overall GPA.

My Notes

①The use of this little-known practice has accelerated in recent years, as colleges continue to do their utmost to keep students in school (and paying tuition) and improve their graduation rates.

②When this practice first started decades ago, it was usually limited to freshmen, to give them a second chance to take a class in their first year if they struggled in their transition to college-level courses.

③But now most colleges, save for many selective campuses, allow all undergraduates, and even graduate students, to get their low grades forgiven.

My Notes

①College officials tend to emphasize that the goal of grade forgiveness is less about the grade itself and more about encouraging students to retake courses critical to their degree program and graduation without incurring a big penalty.

② “Ultimately,” said Jack Miner, Ohio State University’s registrar, “we see students achieve more success because they retake a course and do better in subsequent courses or master the content that allows them to graduate on time.”

My Notes

① That said, there is a way in which grade forgiveness satisfies colleges’ own needs as well.

② For public institutions, state funds are sometimes tied partly to their success on metrics such as graduation rates and student retention—so better grades can, by boosting figures like those, mean more money.

③ And anything that raises GPAs will likely make students—who, at the end of the day, are paying the bill—feel they’ve gotten a better value for their tuition dollars, which is another big concern for colleges.

My Notes

①Indeed, grade forgiveness is just another way that universities are responding to consumers' expectations for higher education.

②Since students and parents expect a college degree to lead to a job, it is in the best interest of a school to turn out graduates who are as qualified as possible—or at least appear to be.

③On this, students' and colleges' incentives seem to be aligned.

My Notes

2019 年 Text 3

① This year marks exactly two centuries since the publication of *Frankenstein*; or, *The Modern Prometheus*, by Mary Shelley.

② Even before the invention of the electric light bulb, the author produced a remarkable work of speculative fiction that would foreshadow many ethical questions to be raised by technologies yet to come.

My Notes

① Today the rapid growth of artificial intelligence (AI) raises fundamental questions:

“What is intelligence, identity, or consciousness? What makes humans human?”

My Notes

①What is being called artificial general intelligence, machines that would imitate the way humans think, continues to evade scientists.

②Yet humans remain fascinated by the idea of robots that would look, move, and respond like humans, similar to those recently depicted on popular sci-fi TV series such as “Westworld” and “Humans”.

My Notes

①Just how people think is still far too complex to be understood, let alone reproduced, says David Eagleman, a Stanford University neuroscientist,

②“We are just in a situation where there are no good theories explaining what consciousness actually is and how you could ever build a machine to get there.”

My Notes

- ①But that doesn't mean crucial ethical issues involving AI aren't at hand.
- ②The coming use of autonomous vehicles, for example, poses thorny ethical questions.
- ③Human drivers sometimes must make split-second decisions.
- ④Their reactions may be a complex combination of instant reflexes, input from past driving experiences, and what their eyes and ears tell them in that moment.
- ⑤AI "vision" today is not nearly as sophisticated as that of humans.
- ⑥And to anticipate every imaginable driving situation is a difficult programming problem.

My Notes

- ①Whenever decisions are based on masses of data, "you quickly get into a lot of ethical questions," notes Tan Kiat How, chief executive of a Singapore-based agency that is helping the government develop a voluntary code for the ethical use of AI.

②Along with Singapore, other governments and mega-corporations are beginning to establish their own guidelines.

③Britain is setting up a data ethics center.

④India released its AI ethics strategy this spring.

My Notes

①On June 7 Google pledged not to “design or deploy AI” that would cause “overall harm,” or to develop AI-directed weapons or use AI for surveillance that would violate international norms.

②It also pledged not to deploy AI whose use would violate international laws or human rights.

My Notes

① While the statement is vague, it represents one starting point.

② So does the idea that decisions made by AI systems should be explainable, transparent, and fair.

My Notes

① To put it another way: How can we make sure that the thinking of intelligent machines reflects humanity's highest values?

② Only then will they be useful servants and not *Frankenstein's* out-of-control monster.

My Notes

2019 年 Text 4

①States will be able to force more people to pay sales tax when they make online purchases under a Supreme Court decision Thursday that will leave shoppers with lighter wallets but is a big financial win for states.

My Notes

①The Supreme Court's opinion Thursday overruled a pair of decades-old decisions that states said cost them billions of dollars in lost revenue annually.

②The decisions made it more difficult for states to collect sales tax on certain online purchases.

My Notes

①The cases the court overturned said that if a business was shipping a customer's purchase to a state where the business didn't have a physical presence such as a warehouse or office, the business didn't have to collect sales tax for the state.

②Customers were generally responsible for paying the sales tax to the state themselves if they weren't charged it, but most didn't realize they owed it and few paid.

My Notes

①Justice Anthony Kennedy wrote that the previous decisions were flawed.

②“Each year the physical presence rule becomes further removed from economic reality and results in significant revenue losses to the States,” he wrote in an opinion joined by four other justices.

③Kennedy wrote that the rule “limited states’ ability to seek long-term prosperity and has prevented market participants from competing on an even playing field.”

My Notes

①The ruling is a victory for big chains with a presence in many states, since they usually collect sales tax on online purchases already.

②Now, rivals will be charging sales tax where they hadn't before.

③Big chains have been collecting sales tax nationwide because they typically have physical stores in whatever state a purchase is being shipped to.

④Amazon.com, with its network of warehouses, also collects sales tax in every state that charges it, though third-party sellers who use the site don't have to.

My Notes

①Until now, many sellers that have a physical presence in only a single state or a few states have been able to avoid charging sales taxes when they ship to addresses outside those states.

②Sellers that use eBay and Etsy, which provide platforms for smaller sellers, also haven't been collecting sales tax nationwide.

③Under the ruling Thursday, states can pass laws requiring out-of-state sellers to collect the state's sales tax from customers and send it to the state.

My Notes

①Retail trade groups praised the ruling, saying it levels the playing field for local and online businesses.

②The losers, said retail analyst Neil Saunders, are online-only retailers, especially smaller ones.

③Those retailers may face headaches complying with various state sales tax laws.

④The Small Business & Entrepreneurship Council advocacy group said in a statement,

“Small businesses and internet entrepreneurs are not well served at all by this decision.”

My Notes

2019 年 新题型

① These tools can help you win every argument—not in the unhelpful sense of beating your opponents but in the better sense of learning about the issues that divide people, learning why they disagree with us and learning to talk and work together with them.

② If we readjust our view of arguments—from a verbal fight or tennis game to a reasoned exchange through which we all gain mutual respect, and understanding—then we change the very nature of what it means to “win” an argument.

My Notes

① Of course, many discussions are not so successful.

② Still, we need to be careful not to accuse opponents of bad arguments too quickly.

③ We need to learn how to evaluate them properly.

④A large part of evaluation is calling out bad arguments, but we also need to admit good arguments by opponents and to apply the same critical standards to ourselves.

⑤Humility requires you to recognize weaknesses in your own arguments and sometimes also to accept reasons on the opposite side.

My Notes

①None of these will be easy, but you can start even if others refuse to.

②Next time you state your position, formulate an argument for what you claim and honestly ask yourself whether your argument is any good.

③Next time you talk with someone who takes a stand, ask them to give you a reason for their view.

④Spell out their argument fully and charitably. Assess its strength impartially.

⑤Raise objections and listen carefully to their replies.

My Notes

①Carnegie would be right if arguments were fights, which is how we often think of them.

②Like physical fights, verbal fights can leave both sides bloodied.

③Even when you win, you end up no better off.

④Your prospects would be almost as dismal if arguments were even just competitions—like, say, tennis games.

⑤Pairs of opponents hit the ball back and forth until one winner emerges from all who entered.

⑥Everybody else loses.

⑦This kind of thinking is why so many people try to avoid arguments, especially about politics and religion.

My Notes

①In his 1936 work *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, Dale Carnegie wrote:

“There is only one way... to get the best of an argument—and that is to avoid it.”

②This aversion to arguments is common, but it depends on a mistaken view of arguments that causes profound problems for our personal and social lives—and in many ways misses the point of arguing in the first place.

My Notes

①These views of arguments also undermine reason.

②If you see a conversation as a fight or competition, you can win by cheating as long as you don't get caught.

③You will be happy to convince people with bad arguments.

④You can call their views stupid, or joke about how ignorant they are.

⑤None of these tricks will help you understand them, their positions or the issues that divide you, but they can help you win—in one way.

My Notes

①There is a better way to win arguments.

②Imagine that you favor increasing the minimum wage in our state, and I do not.

③If you yell, “yes,” and I yell, “No,” neither of us learns anything.

④We neither understand nor respect each other, and we have no basis for compromise or cooperation.

⑤In contrast, suppose you give a reasonable argument: that full-time workers should not have to live in poverty.

⑥Then I counter with another reasonable argument: that a higher minimum wage will force businesses to employ fewer people for less time.

⑦Now we can understand each other's positions and recognize our shared values, since we both care about needy workers.

My Notes

2019 年 翻译

①It was only after I started to write a weekly column about the medical journals, and began to read scientific papers from beginning to end, that I realised just how bad much of the medical literature frequently was.

②I came to recognise various signs of a bad paper: the kind of paper that purports to show that people who eat more than one kilo of broccoli a week were 1.17 times more likely than those who eat less to suffer late in life from pernicious anaemia.

③(46) There is a great deal of this kind of nonsense in the medical journals which, when taken up by broadcasters and the lay press, generates both health scares and short-lived dietary enthusiasms.

My Notes

①Why is so much bad science published?

②A recent paper, titled “The Natural Selection of Bad Science”, published on the Royal Society’s open science website, attempts to answer this intriguing and important question.

③It says that the problem is not merely that people do bad science, but that our current system of career advancement positively encourages it.

④What is important is not truth, but publication, which has become almost an end in itself.

⑤There has been a kind of inflationary process at work: (47) nowadays anyone applying for a research post has to have published twice the number of papers that would have been required for the same post only 10 years ago.

⑥Never mind the quality, then, count the number.

My Notes

①(48) Attempts have been made to curb this tendency, for example, by trying to incorporate some measure of quality as well as quantity into the assessment of an applicant's papers.

②This is the famed citation index, that is to say the number of times a paper has been quoted elsewhere in the scientific literature, the assumption being that an important paper will be cited more often than one of small account.

③(49) This would be reasonable if it were not for the fact that scientists can easily arrange to cite themselves in their future publications, or get associates to do so for them in return for similar favours.

My Notes

①Boiling down an individual's output to simple metrics, such as number of publications or journal impacts, entails considerable savings in time, energy and ambiguity.

②Unfortunately, the long-term costs of using simple quantitative metrics to assess researcher merit are likely to be quite great.

③(50) If we are serious about ensuring that our science is both meaningful and reproducible, we must ensure that our institutions encourage that kind of science.

My Notes