

# 了解美国

American Topics

贾海鹰 洪卫 周燕来 编著



西安电子科技大学出版社

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1998

## 图书在版编目(CIP)数据

了解美国=American Topics/贾海鹰,洪卫,周燕来编著. —西安:西安电子科技大学出版社,1998.10

ISBN 7-5606-0644-X

I. 了… I. 贾… I. ① 英语—语言读物② 美国—概况  
N. H319.4

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字(98)第 17590 号

责任编辑 马乐惠

出版发行 西安电子科技大学出版社  
(西安市太白南路 2 号)

邮 编 710071

电 话 (029)8227828

经 销 新华书店

印 刷 西安电子科技大学印刷厂

版 次 1998 年 10 月第 1 版

1998 年 10 月第 1 次印刷

开 本 850 毫米×1168 毫米 1/32 印张 9.25

字 数 222 千字

印 数 1~6 000 册

定 价 9.50 元

ISBN 7-5606-0644-X/H·0039

\* \* \* 如有印制问题可调换 \* \* \*

## 内 容 简 介

自中国实行对外开放以来，中国与世界各国在各个领域的交流与合作日趋频繁。为了帮助众多去美国工作、学习、访问和旅游的人们更好地了解美国，我们编写了《了解美国》一书。

《了解美国》具有很强的针对性和较高的实用价值。全书共有十四部分，分别是：美国人民，传统及文化，在美国学习，住宿，食物，购物，银行，邮电，交通，娱乐，健康和保险，美国城市，政府等。这些内容比较全面和详细地介绍了美国的基本情况，以及应了解的常识。读者通过这本书将会了解美国人的生活、风俗习惯、文化差异以及一些十分重要的有关美国的知识，并将会在美国工作、学习、访问期间受益。

## 前 言

对于广大英语学习者来说，广泛、大量的阅读是提高英语学习效果的最佳途径。本书本着求是、务实的原则，通过精心选材，全面、细致、系统地介绍了美国的风土人情及美国人民的生活情况，语言地道流畅，具有幽默感；内容翔实生动，饶有兴味。相信读者利用闲暇进行轻松的阅读之后，能在不知不觉中提高英语的表达能力，丰富知识，开阔眼界。特别重要的是，对于那些即将赴美留学、工作或参观访问的读者来说，本书更是一册理想的美国生活指南和综合性指导读物。

考虑到多数读者的实际情况以及本书的泛读性质，编者除对一些难懂的词语作必要的说明外，还特别添加了一些关于背景 and 文化的注释，帮助读者扫平阅读障碍，寓学习于消遣之中，力求使读者彻底摆脱传统学习的单调和枯燥感，收到事半功倍的效果。

本书可供各专业的大学生、研究生及具有一定英语水平的学习者参考使用。对于其他渴望了解美国社会及文化背景的英语爱好者来讲，本书也是一本颇有裨益、非常实用的好读物。

限于编写水平、经验和时间，疏漏不当之处在所难免，恳请读者朋友们及时反馈批评、建议及想法。

编 者

1998 年 5 月

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# TOPIC ONE

## American People 美国人民

当今有二亿五千万人称美国为“家”，但他们中的大部分人的祖先来自于世界各地。美国人今天过的多半是一种“并存”的生活，来自不同国家的民族仍保留着许多他们自身的东西。



## Unit 1 Gateway to the U. S. A.

### 进入美国

Perhaps no single monument in the U. S. A. is as famous as the Statue of Liberty. Standing on a small island in New York Harbor, the crowned lady, holding aloft<sup>1</sup> in her right hand the torch of freedom and in her left hand a tablet which is inscribed "July 4th, 1776"<sup>2</sup>, is a symbol of American democracy. She is colossal<sup>3</sup>. She is 151 ft<sup>4</sup>. high and the pedestal on which she stands is almost as much<sup>5</sup>. An elevator takes visitors to the top of the pedestal, around which a balcony runs. A spiral staircase<sup>6</sup> goes up to the crown, and another to the torch. The Statue of Liberty was a gift to the U. S. A. from France in 1886, as a mark of friendship and also in memory of the aid France gave the Americans during the American Revolution.

For millions of immigrants, the Statue was their first sight of the promised land<sup>7</sup>, and for a few it was also the last, as they sailed back home again to a desolate future. About a mile from Liberty Island, there is another small island<sup>7</sup>, called Ellis Island, which was looked upon with dread by the immigrants. For it was here that they had to wait their turn to be examined by doctors and officials. Most of the immigrants could not speak a word of English. But only two out of 100 immigrants were refused admission to New York City. Often the person refused turned out to be a grandmother or a weary, frightened girl mistakenly labeled "feeble-minded"<sup>8</sup>. Sometimes husbands and wives were parted because one of them

happened to have a bad cough and was suspected of having tuberculosis. 结核病

New York City was a bitter disillusionment<sup>9</sup> to some immigrants. Far from being a city paved with gold, it was a city teeming with overcrowded, unhealthy and unsafe ghettos<sup>10</sup>. The immigrants looked for earlier immigrants of their own nationality or religion. So Italian, Polish, Irish, Jewish neighborhoods grew up. Because they could not speak English, the newcomers found it difficult to get work at once, and their living quarters<sup>11</sup> were often slums<sup>12</sup>. 贫民窟

However, they found in the U. S. A. opportunities of bettering themselves and of escaping from the tyranny<sup>13</sup> which many of them had suffered in their own countries. To that extent, the Statue of Liberty did give them an honest welcome. 暴政

Today, immigrants no longer have to endure the indignities of Ellis Island<sup>14</sup>. The grim buildings<sup>15</sup> were closed down in 1924. In 1976, Ellis Island became an historic monument.

Most immigrants from Europe now pass through New York City via Kennedy Airport. But for immigrants from Asia—Koreans, Filipinos, Chinese—the gateway to the U. S. A. is San Francisco, not New York City.

## Notes

1. aloft 在高处。
2. a tablet which is inscribed "July 4th, 1776" 刻有“1776年7月4日”的石碑。
3. colossal 巨大的, 庞大的。
4. 151ft 151英尺, 相当于46米。
5. the pedestal on which she stands is almost as much 自由女神

像的基座高度与神像的高度几乎相等。

6. spiral staircase 螺旋式的扶梯。
7. promised land 充满希望的土地。
8. a weary, frightened girl mistakenly labeled "feeble-minded" 一名因困乏、惊恐而被误划为“弱智”的女孩。
9. a bitter disillusionment 痛苦的幻灭。
10. a city teeming with overcrowded, unhealthy and unsafe ghettos 一座充满了拥挤不堪，不卫生，而且不安全的贫民区的城市。
11. living quarters 驻扎地；住宿点。
12. slum 贫民窟，用作复数时指下层社会。
13. tyranny 专制，暴政。
14. endure the indignities of Ellis Island 忍受埃利斯岛上的冒犯。  
Ellis 岛是 1892~1943 年期间美国的主要移民站。所有进入美国的移民必须在此受到有损人格的检查。现该岛已经改为一个博物馆。
15. grim buildings 可怕的、冷酷无情的建筑。

## Unit 2 America—the Melting Pot<sup>1</sup>?

### 美国——熔炉

Is the United States a melting pot? In other words, have immigrants to the U. S. A. merged with<sup>2</sup> the native Americans and ceased to be Germans, Japanese, Poles, Irish, etc.? It has been suggested that a “pot of stew”<sup>3</sup> might be a more suitable word than “melting pot”, for in a stew, the meat and vegetables keep their own characteristics, but thanks to the spices and the way it is cooked, the stew has a distinctive flavor of its own.