

英美

Anglo-American

郑燕平

主编

英美文化知识教程

A Course Book on Anglo-American Cultures



中国矿业大学出版社

China University of Mining and Technology Press

英语知识教程

English Knowledge

英美文化知识教程

A Shorter Book on Anglo-American Culture



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英美文化知识教程

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中国矿业大学出版社

内 容 提 要

本书以与大学生英语语言学习密切相关的文化背景知识为主要内容,第一章介绍英国、美国的基本状况,主要涉及两国的民族和地理状况以及首都城市的情况;第二章介绍英国、美国的教育、艺术、体育及娱乐状况;第三章讲述英国、美国的部分历史和现代名人;第四章谈到英国、美国的主要节日和生活习俗;第五章介绍英语语言中的部分重要典故,有源自《圣经》的重要典故,也有源自古希腊、罗马文化和莎士比亚著作等的重要典故;第六章介绍英语语言中的常用习语,包括含颜色词的习语、有关鸟和兽类词的习语以及有关水果和蔬菜类词的习语;第七章重点列举了英语语言中的部分常用美国俚语。

本书紧跟英语文化教学方向,有利于消除学生在语言输入和产出中的文化信息障碍,并逐步培养学生的跨文化交际能力和综合文化素养。

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前 言

英语语言的魅力之一就在于她富含与产生这种语言的政治、历史、地理、社会等文化背景因素密切相关的典故、习语及俚语等语言成分,如“face the music”、“A little bird told me.”、“Lady-killer”、“Mr. Clean”等。这些语言成分字面上不难理解,但其真实的含义可能与其字面意义大相径庭。“face the music”字面意思是“面对音乐”,而其真实的含义是“面对困难,经历艰难;承担责任;自食其果”。其出处有二:一种说法是,首先使用这个短语的是那些在舞台两侧等候上台的演员,他们得到上舞台的暗示后常说:“It's time to go to face the music.”他们上台后正好面对舞台下的乐队。一个演员走上舞台,面对观众;可能会紧张害怕,特别是忘记台词时,还会遭到某些观众的奚落。可是他不能不出台,否则戏就演不成了。所以,“face the music”有“面对困难,经历艰难”的含义。另一种说法是,在美国军队里,如果一个士兵干了坏事,就要被强迫离开军队,并当众蒙受耻辱。乐队不奏乐,只是敲鼓,在悲哀的鼓点声中,那个士兵垂头丧气地离开军队。所以,“face the music”也有“承担责任;自食其果”的意思。而“A little bird told me.”是一种诙谐的表达法。不直说知道某个秘密,而说有人私下告诉了我,就用这个习语。如果听者真想知道是谁告诉的——那就是“小鸟告诉的”。“Lady-killer”为美国俚语,不是指杀死女士的人,而是指“使女人倾倒的男人”。“Mr. Clean”也是美国俚语,指“为人清廉的人,廉洁奉公的人”。

由此可见,要真正掌握英语语言、学会地道的英语,对英语语言中的文化背景知识和其中的典故、习语及俚语应用的把握至关重要。

从外语教学的角度出发,可以把外语教学中的文化知识分为知识文化和交际文化。所谓知识文化,指词语的文化内涵和系统的政治、历史、地理、社会、文学等社会文化知识;所谓交际文化,指由文化因素决定的运用语言进行交际的语用知识。本书以介绍英语的知识文化为主体,其目的是让英语学习者较为全面地了解英语语言所涉及的知识文化,为培养其跨文化交际的能力打下良好的基础,并提高其综合文化素养。

本书涉及英美国国家民族、地理、简要历史、主要名城及特色、教育、艺术、体育及娱乐、主要的历史和现代名人、重要节日、生活习俗、婚俗,源于圣经、古希腊罗马文化和莎士比亚著作方面的重要典故,英语中常用的习语和美国俚语等,内容

比较全面、丰富。

本书内容从自然到人文再到社会,各章节既相对独立,又自然衔接,构成一个基本完整的体系,使得英语语言文化知识的展现自然、完整,具有较好的系统性。

本书以英语学习者语言学习过程中时常遇见的文化信息性障碍为突破口,较为透彻地揭示英语语言中的文化背景知识,难易交错,点面结合,具有较强的实用性。

本书是以具有中等及以上的英语水平的学习者对象编写的,适合于英语程度较好、亟待提高英语使用水平的大学生、英语爱好者使用。

本书具体编写分工如下:第一、二、四、五章由郑燕平编写,第三章由周梅艳编写,第六章由栾玉芹编写,第七章由汤平平编写。

在编写过程中,我们参考了大量的中外文献,谨向文献的作者表示衷心的感谢。同时,衷心感谢为本书出版付出努力的各级领导和同事。

由于编者水平有限,书中的缺点与疏漏在所难免,敬请读者不吝批评指正,邮箱地址为:pyzhengaas@yahoo.com.cn。

编 者

2008年1月

体例说明

一、本书的第一章到第四章按照英国内容在前、美国内容在后的顺序编写,具体内容紧扣章节标题的顺序。其中,第三章按各国人物在历史上出现的时间先后为顺,第四章基本上按月份为序进行编排。

二、本书的第五章到第七章内容按典故、习语和美国俚语各个词条的首字母顺序进行编排,涉及颜色、动物及蔬菜、水果类的词条,按照词条中的关键词的字母顺序排列。关键词主要指名词、形容词和动词,如:习语“roll out the red carpet”以 red 作为关键词排序,“behave like an animal”和“ape one's superiors”则分别以 animal 和 ape 为关键词排序,“behave like an animal”在前,“ape one's superiors”在后。

三、本书中的“sb.”和“sth.”分别代表“somebody”和“something”,“SL”代表“slang”,“Colloq”代表“colloquial”。

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第一章 英国、美国的基本状况

Chapter 1 A Brief Introduction to the United Kingdom and the U.S.

Section 1 Land and People

Land and People of the Great Britain

United Kingdom, is a constitutional monarchy (君主政体、政治) in northwestern Europe, officially the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Great Britain is the largest island in the cluster of islands, or archipelago, known as the British Isles. England is the largest and most populous division of the island of Great Britain, making up the south and east. Wales is on the west and Scotland is to the north. Northern Ireland is located in the northeast corner of Ireland, the second largest island in the British Isles. The capital of the United Kingdom is the city of London, situated near the southeastern tip of England.

People often confuse the names for this country, and frequently make mistakes in using them. *United Kingdom*, *UK*, and *Britain* are all proper terms for the entire nation, although the term *Britain* is also often used when talking about the island of Great Britain. The use of the term *Great Britain* to refer to the entire nation is now outdated; the term *Great Britain*, properly used, refers only to the island of Great Britain, which does not include Northern Ireland.

The term *England* should never be used to describe Britain, because England is only one part of the island. It is always correct to call people from England, Scotland, or Wales *British*, although people from England may also properly be called *English*, people from Scotland *Scottish*, and people from Wales *Welsh*.

The United Kingdom is a small nation in physical size. At 244,110 sq km (94,251 sq mi), the United Kingdom is roughly the size of Oregon (美国俄勒冈州) or Colorado (美国西部科罗拉多州), or twice the size of New York State. It is located as far north in latitude as Labrador (拉布拉多半岛) in North America, but, like the rest of northern Europe, it is warmed by the Gulf Stream flowing out of the North Atlantic Ocean.

Despite its relatively small size, Britain is highly populated, with an estimated population density of 251 persons per sq km (650 per sq mi) in 2006. It is highly developed economically, preeminent (卓越的) in the arts and sciences, sophisticated in technology, and highly prosperous and peaceful (平静的, 安宁的). In general, British subjects (国民) belong to one of the more affluent (丰富的, 富裕的) states of Europe and enjoy a high standard of living compared to the rest of the world.

■ Geographical Components

The United Kingdom is bordered on the south by the English Channel, which separates it from the continent of Europe. It is bordered on the east by the North Sea, and on the west by the Irish Sea and the Atlantic Ocean. The United Kingdom's only land border with another nation is between Northern Ireland and Ireland.

England is the largest, most populous, and wealthiest division of the United Kingdom. It makes up 130,410 sq km (50,352 sq mi) of the United Kingdom's total 244,110 sq km (94,251 sq mi). The area of Scotland is 78,790 sq km (30,420 sq mi), the area of Wales is 20,760 sq km (8,020 sq mi), and the area of Northern Ireland is 14,160 sq km (5,470 sq mi). This means that England makes up 53.4 percent of the area of the United Kingdom, Scotland 32.3 percent, Wales 8.5 percent, and Northern Ireland 5.8 percent.

The island of Great Britain can be divided into two major natural regions—the highland zone and the lowland zone. The highland zone is an area of high hills and mountains in the north and west. The lowland zone in the south and east consists mostly of rolling plains. The zones are divided by an imaginary line running through England from the River Exe on the southwest coast to the mouth of the River Tees on the northeast coast. The lowland zone has a milder climate and better soils for farming. Historically, most people in Britain have lived in the lowland zone rather than in the harsher highland zone.

The highland zone contains what is often called rough country, consisting to a large extent of rugged hills, mountains, and eroded areas frequently broken by valleys and plains. The highest elevations in the British Isles are in the highland zone; the highest point is Ben Nevis at 1,343 m (4,406 ft), located in the Highlands of Scotland. The highland zone is cooler than the lowland zone, and receives more rainfall and less sunlight. In many places farming is impossible. Even where it is feasible, the soil is often thin and stony, with a hard rock formation below. Rainwater often cannot escape readily, so many areas tend to be waterlogged.

Wales, Scotland, and parts of England are located in the highland zone. The

parts of England in the highland zone include the Pennine Chain of mountains, extending down into northern England and into the southwestern peninsula. The Pennine Chain is sometimes called the backbone of England. It is a massive upland area extending 260 km (160 mi) north to south, starting at the Cheviot Hills on England's border with Scotland and ending in the Midlands of central England. It is made up of several broad, rolling, windswept moorlands separated by deep river valleys. Many of England's major industrial areas lie on the flanks of the Pennine Chain, where there are many coalfields. To the west of the northern Pennines are the Cumbrian Mountains, a mountainous dome of ancient rocks deeply eroded by glaciers. This region contains the Lake District, famous for its lakes and scenic beauty.

The lowland zone, in general, is a great plain with a gentle, undulating surface and extensive areas of almost-level ground. It receives less rain and more sunshine than the highland zone and much of the soil in the zone is fertile. Most of the lowland region is less than 150 m (500 ft) above sea level, and the hills rarely reach more than 300 m (1,000 ft) above sea level. It has been extensively inhabited, farmed, and grazed for thousands of years. Most of Britain's population lives densely packed into the lowland zone, which covers most of England. The metropolis of London and most of Britain's large cities are located in the lowland zone.

The flattest lands in the lowland zone are in the east, particularly on the large, hump-shaped area called East Anglia. The inlet called the Wash is located off East Anglia's northern coast. The Wash was once surrounded by the flat, swampy areas of the Fenlands, or the Fens, most of which has now been drained. The broad, rolling Midland Plain is south of the Pennine Chain. Northwest of this plain, on the western side of the Pennines, is the Lancashire-Cheshire plain. Another plain extends from the eastern slope of the Pennines to the sea. It is broken in the north by the Yorkshire Moors, a high wasteland overgrown with coarse plants.

■ Climate

The Atlantic Ocean has a significant effect on Britain's climate. Although the British Isles are as far north in latitude as Labrador in Canada, they have a mild climate throughout the year. This is due to the Gulf Stream, a current of warm water that flows up from the Caribbean(加勒比海) past Britain. Prevailing(占优势的,流行的) southwesterly winds moving across this warmer water bring moisture and moderating temperatures to the British Isles. The surrounding waters moderate(缓和) temperatures year-round, making the UK warmer in winter and cooler in summer than other areas at the same latitude. Great Britain's western coast tends to

be warmer than the eastern coast, and the southern regions tend to be warmer than the northern regions.

Winds blowing off the Atlantic Ocean bring clouds and large amounts of moisture to the British Isles. Average annual precipitation(降雨量) is more than 1,000 mm (40 in), varying from the extremes of 5,000 mm (196 in) in the western Highlands of Scotland to less than 500 mm (20 in) in the driest parts of East Anglia in England. The western part of Britain receives much more moisture than the eastern areas. It rains year-round, and in the winter the rain may change to snow, particularly in the north. It snows infrequently in the south, and when it does it is likely to be wet, slushy(泥泞的), and short-lived.

The climate has affected settlement and development in Britain for thousands of years. The mild, wet climate ensured that thick forests rich in game, as well as rivers and streams abundant with fish, were available to prehistoric hunters and gatherers. Britain was regarded as a cold, remote, and distant part of the ancient Roman Empire in the first few centuries A.D. so relatively few Romans were motivated to move there for trade, administrative, or military reasons. Preindustrial settlements clustered in southern England, where the climate was milder, the growing season longer, and the rich soil and steady rainfall produced bountiful harvests. Successive waves of invaders made the plains of southern England their primary objective. After the Industrial Revolution began in the 18th century, populations grew enormously in areas with rich resources beneath the ground, particularly coal, even though these resources were sometimes located in the colder, harsher northern regions of England or the western Lowlands of Scotland.

■ Ethnic Groups

Britain has a diverse population that includes people with connections to every continent of the world. The ethnic origins of this population have been complicated by immigration, intermarriage, and the constant relocation of people in this highly developed industrial and technological society. Nevertheless, a few particulars about the historical formation of the population are noteworthy.

Britain's predominant historical stock is called Anglo-Saxon. Germanic peoples from Europe—the Angles, the Saxons, and the Jutes—arrived in Britain in massive numbers between the 5th and 7th centuries A.D. These people tended to be tall, blond, and blue-eyed. Their language became the foundation of the basic, short, everyday words in modern English. These groups invaded and overwhelmed Roman Britain, choosing to settle on the plains of England because of the mild climate and good soils. Native Britons fought the great flood of Germanic peoples, and many

Britons who survived fled west to the hill country. These refugees and native Britons were Celts who had absorbed the earliest peoples on the island, the prehistoric people known as Iberians. Celts tended to be shorter than Anglo-Saxons and have rounder heads. Most had darker hair, but a strikingly high percentage of Celts had red hair.

After the Anglo-Saxon conquest, the Celts remained in Wales, Scotland, Ireland, and the West Country (the southwestern peninsula of Britain), where Celtic languages are still used to some extent and Celtic culture is still celebrated. This geographic separation between the Germanic Anglo-Saxons and the Celts has broken down over the centuries as people have migrated and intermarried.

A substantial number of Scandinavians raided and settled in Great Britain and Ireland during the 9th century. By then the Anglo-Saxons had established agricultural and Christian communities, and eventually they succeeded in subduing and integrating the Scandinavians into their kingdoms. In 1066 the Normans, French-speaking invaders of Norse origin, conquered England, adding yet another ethnic component. Although the Normans were the last major group to add their stock to the British population, waves of other foreigners and refugees have immigrated to Britain for religious, political, and economic reasons. Protestant French (*see* Huguenots/Huguenot n. 雨格诺教徒) sought refuge in the 17th century, sailors of African ancestry came in the 18th century, and Jews from central and eastern Europe immigrated in the late 19th century and during the 1930s and late 1940s.

Most British people attribute their origins to the early invaders, calling themselves English, Scottish, Irish, Welsh, or Ulsterites. The Ulsterites are an ethnically controversial group—some claim they are Scottish and others identify themselves as Protestant Irish. The remaining share of the population consists of minorities who arrived, for the most part, in the decades following the end of World War II in 1945.

These minorities—Chinese, Asian Indians, Pakistanis, Africans, and Caribbean people of African ancestry—came to Britain in substantial numbers after 1945. Immigration from the South Asian subcontinent (India and Pakistan) stabilized in the 1990s, but immigration from African countries continued to rise. By the late 1990s more than half of the people in these categories had been born in the United Kingdom. These newer ethnic groups tend to live in the more urban and industrial areas of England, especially in London, Birmingham, and Leeds. In 2004 the right to work in Britain was opened to people in central Europe and the Baltic countries, and they began to form the latest group of immigrants.

Although population censuses have been taken in the United Kingdom every decade

since 1801, the 1991 census was the first to include a question on ethnic origin. In the 2001 census just over 92 percent of the population was described as white. Asian Indians made up 1.8 percent of the British population; Pakistanis, 1.3 percent; Caribbeans, 1 percent; Africans, 0.8 percent; Bangladeshis, 0.5 percent; and Chinese, 0.4 percent.

The United Kingdom is generally a prosperous, well-educated, and tolerant society, and ethnic differences have sparked relatively little violence and hostility. Local and national government programs exist to seek fairness and justice for ethnic minorities. Educational programs and the law bolster equal opportunity. The Race Relations Act of 1976 makes it illegal to discriminate against any person because of race, color, nationality, or origin, and it is a criminal offense to incite racial hatred. However, class tensions and racial unrest—especially conflict between white police forces and nonwhite immigrants—have flared from time to time in crowded and impoverished urban neighborhoods. In addition, high unemployment rates have made it difficult for immigrants to find jobs. Tensions heightened in July 2005 after four young British Muslims were implicated in the suicide bombings of three underground trains and a bus in London. Although the bombings were linked to Britain's participation in the U. S.-Iraq War, some politicians sought to tighten British immigration policy in the aftermath of the bombings.

Land and People of the United States

The United States of America is a federal republic on the continent of North America. It has an area of 9,826,630 sq km (3,794,083 sq mi) and is the third largest country in the world after Russia and Canada. The estimated U. S. population for the year 2006 is 298,444,220, third in the world behind China and India.

The United States consists of 48 contiguous states and the noncontiguous states of Alaska and Hawaii. In addition, the United States includes a number of outlying areas, such as the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands of the United States, which are located on the Caribbean Sea, and the islands of American Samoa and Guam, located in the Pacific Ocean. The national capital is Washington, D. C. , located along the banks of the Potomac River between the states of Maryland and Virginia.

The 50 U.S. states vary widely in size and population. The largest states in area are Alaska at 1,717,854 sq km (663,267 sq mi), followed by Texas, and California. The smallest state is Rhode Island, with an area of 4,002 sq km (1,545 sq mi). The state with the largest population is California (36,132,147, 2005 estimate), followed

by Texas, and New York. Only 509,294 people (2005 estimate) live on the plateaus and rugged mountains of Wyoming, the least populous state.

Each state is subdivided into counties, with the exception of Louisiana, where comparable political units are called parishes. Within these counties and parishes, there are communities that range in size from small villages to towns to cities. Extensive areas of urban sprawl exist in larger metropolitan areas such as Los Angeles, California; Chicago, Illinois; and New York City.

■ Geographic Diversity

During the settlement of the nation, immigrants moved westward across the United States and found a rich and varied natural environment. From the original coastal colonies, settlers made their way over the Appalachian Mountains beginning in the 1700s. Beyond the mountains lay the vast rolling territory drained by the Mississippi River and the Great Lakes. There settlers encountered the rich farmlands of the Ohio Valley, the Mississippi Delta, and the Great Plains. For decades, the rugged peaks of the Rocky Mountains and the arid landscape of the Southwest discouraged movement further west. In the mid-1800s, however, spurred by the discovery of gold in California, determined settlers followed trails through the mountain passes to reach the West Coast. In the valleys of California and Oregon, they found productive agricultural land, and they began harvesting the timber reserves from the untouched forests of the Pacific Northwest. The purchase of Alaska in 1867 added a mountainous northern territory rich in natural resources. The annexation of Hawaii in 1898 gave the United States what would be its only tropical state. The United States has been blessed with many natural advantages, such as climates favorable for agriculture, extensive internal waterways, and abundant natural resources.

All four of the world's most productive agricultural climates are found in the United States. These climatic regions display a favorable mix of rain and sun as well as a long growing season, and together, they cover more than a third of the country. Favorable climates have allowed farmers to produce vast quantities of grain for human consumption and crops to feed animals. These remarkable climatic areas make the United States one of the world's leading agricultural countries.

Another major natural advantage—one that is taken for granted by most Americans—is that the major river systems (the Mississippi, Missouri, Ohio, Colorado, and Rio Grande systems) flow south. If these rivers flowed north, as rivers do in Russian Siberia, ice and frozen soil would block the meltwater, causing floods that would saturate the land and render it unusable for agriculture. Instead,

when spring thaws arrive in the interior mountains of the United States, meltwater flows unimpeded through the river systems to the warm waters of the Gulf of Mexico or the Gulf of California. This almost uninterrupted flow of water provides ample supplies for drinking water and for crop irrigation and industrial production.

The United States has many other natural advantages. A wide array of valuable mineral resources, such as oil, natural gas, iron ore, coal, lead, zinc, phosphate, silver, and copper, benefits mining and industry. The shallow waters along the coastline, known as the continental shelf, serve as a rich breeding ground for marine life, which promotes commercial and sport fishing. The comprehensive network of rivers also provides transportation routes for bulk cargo and the potential for the development of hydroelectricity.

■ Climate

The United States is a large country, and different types of climates are found in different parts of the country. Because of its midlatitude location and vast size, the United States experiences a wide variety of climates. At one extreme are the tropical islands of Hawaii; at the other, the arctic conditions of northern Alaska. The majority of Americans live between these two extremes in a group of climatic regions with unique moisture and temperature patterns.

Geographers have traditionally divided the 48 contiguous United States into two broad patterns of continental climate: the humid East and the arid West. The dividing line most often used is 100 degrees west longitude, an imaginary north-south line extending through the Great Plains from Texas to North Dakota.

The humid east receives abundant precipitation throughout the year. Winters in the northern part are very cold with much snowfall. In the southern part, rainfall is plentiful; summers are very hot but winters are mild. Because of its bountiful moisture, the humid east has also traditionally been a very important agricultural area. Once a land of vast forests, early settlers cleared the land as they moved westward. In some areas, cleared lands were cultivated, abused, exhausted, and eroded away. In other areas, vast forests have been replanted, as in the South, the Appalachians, and parts of the Midwest.

A climatic transition zone occurs on either side of the 100 degrees west longitude line. The eastern woodlands gradually give way to tall grass prairies, which in turn give way to steppes, where short grasses flourish. Few natural tall grass prairies exist today on the Plains. Over the past few centuries, farmers cultivated and planted most of the region with corn or wheat.

In the arid West, precipitation diminishes from east to west and eventually

reaches the point where it becomes impossible to raise crops without irrigation. Some desert areas of Arizona, Nevada, and southern California receive less than 125 mm (5 in) of precipitation annually. The grazing of livestock is an important agricultural activity in these areas of mesquite bushes and cacti.

Not all of the West is dry. In fact, one of the wettest areas of the United States is located in the Pacific Northwest. On the west-facing slopes of the Cascades and the Coast Ranges, moisture-laden winds blow from the Pacific Ocean and drop their rain on the mountain slopes. This type of mountain-induced rainfall is known as orographic(山形的,地形的) precipitation. It occurs when wet air rises along the slope of a mountain. As the air moves upward into cooler temperature zones, it expands and cools, releasing the moisture as precipitation. Because of this effect, the climate of the Northwest is cool and moist, and the land is covered with vast, coniferous forests.

■ Cultural Diversity

The United States is certainly one of the most diverse countries of the world, both from a cultural and an environmental perspective. The land that is now the United States was home to diverse cultures when the first Europeans and Africans arrived. It was inhabited by a variety of Native American peoples who spoke more than 300 different languages. The Europeans and Africans added their own varying cultures to this diversity.

The 13 colonies they founded along the eastern seaboard became the United States in the late 18th century. During the following century, the new nation added huge chunks of territory, and millions of immigrants arrived, mainly from Europe and especially during the years from 1860 to 1914. A second migration occurred in the Southwest, where Hispanics pushed northward from Mexico, leaving an indelible imprint. In addition, slaves were brought from Africa to work on agricultural estates in the South, where they formed a large percentage of the population(see Slavery in the United States).

Of those who chose to come to the United States, many saw it as a land of plenty, and certainly that was true. However, many Americans faced extraordinary hardships as they adapted to a natural and cultural environment that was sometimes harsh and demanding.

■ From Diversity, a Unified Country

The United States resembles a colorful quilt stitched together from geographic regions that maintain unique cultural patterns. Life in rural Alabama, for example, is quite different from life in suburban California or in the highly urbanized