

THE HISTORY

英美概况

GEOGRAPHY

CULTURE AND

CUSTOMS OF

AMERICA

AND BRITISH

北京师范大学出版社

中学英语参考读物

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丁 洁 编著

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## 内 容 提 要

这本小册子以对话及书信的形式介绍了英、美两个主要英语国家的历史、地理、文化和风俗习惯等社会背景概况。这是进一步学好英语所必须具备的知识。

它是继中学英语实验教材第六册后的一本读物，也可作为基本掌握一般语法的英语自学者和在校学生提高口语及阅读能力的教学参考书。

全书采用标准的现代美国英语。由澳籍专家 Jane Orton 和美籍专家 Torrey Orton 审订。

为便于学习，我们对实验教材中没出现的单词、词组及某些专用名词作了注释。

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## 1. *Moving*

Bai Di, Two years ago great uncle lived in New York, and until recently in Washington, D.C. But now they've moved to Philadelphia. Isn't it strange that Americans move from place to place so often?

Mr Bai, Many people find it strange that Americans move from place to place so often. Born in one city, they may attend school in a second, start work in a third, and perhaps move several more times during their lives. People in the Middle West may drive their cars 120 to 160 kilometers just to have dinner with friends in a neighboring city. Or, they may go to another town for an evening of theater or music. It is reported that one in every five families in the United States moves every three years. I think one important reason for this is that they want to earn higher pay and have more

responsibility so they have to find a new job and that may be in a different town. Another may be that they just want to change jobs or live in a different part of the country which they think will be more pleasant. For example, people who don't like winter may move to the south where the winter is very mild.

Bai Di,

Mmm, sometimes I wouldn't mind a bit less winter myself.

## 2. *Having Brunch on Sunday*

- Zhang Ning: Hi, Tongtong!
- Bai Tong: Hi, Zhang Ning! Have a seat.
- Zhang Ning: Thanks. Are you having your breakfast or lunch now? It's ten-thirty.
- Bai Tong: I'm having neither breakfast nor lunch. I'm having brunch, which is a meal for late Sunday sleepers.
- Zhang Ning: So you're a late Sunday sleeper. Are you going to have dinner this evening?
- Bai Tong: No, I'm going to have high tea instead.
- Zhang Ning: What is high tea?
- Bai Tong: It's a meal eaten between lunch and supper, if there's no dinner in the evening; at least, that's what they said on 'English on Sunday' today.
- Zhang Ning: What are you having for brunch?
- Bai Tong: A cup of black coffee, some steamed bread, two boiled eggs, a couple of hot dogs and some beans with slices of



meat.

- Zhang Ning: What's black coffee?
- Bai Tong: It's coffee without milk. Would you like some?
- Zhang Ning: Yes, please. Oh, it's strong. I'm afraid I don't like it.
- Bai Tong: Then have some black tea, instead.
- Zhang Ning: Black tea?
- Bai Tong: Yes, black tea, not red tea. Try it with sugar in it.
- Zhang Ning: O.K.
- Bai Tong: Would you like a hot dog?
- Zhang Ning: No, thanks. What is a hot dog?
- Bai Tong: A sandwich made of a hot sausage served in a bread roll. Like this, see?
- Zhang Ning: What a funny name! I've never heard it before. I'd better start watching 'English on Sunday' too.

### 3. *Traffic Regulations*

Mrs Bai, Well! This will be your first time driving by yourself in one of the biggest cities in the States. Now, there are so many cars on the road, you have to really pay attention to the traffic regulations.

Bai Mei, At least cars travel on the right side of the road here just like they do in China.

Mrs Bai, That will make it easier, but there are some other things you need to keep in mind. For example, you should only use the horn if you want to warn someone walking across the street or another driver who's about to turn in front of you. As well, you should be especially careful when you see a school bus. They are usually yellow. If one stops, you must stop too and let the children cross the street. Another point is that you shouldn't stop the car on a

very busy road, such as a freeway. If you have a problem or want to look at a map, pull off to the right side of the road. And if you hear a siren or see the red lights of a police car, fire truck or ambulance, you must move to the right and stop. And you must obey traffic lights and 'stop' signs.

Bai Mei, Aunt Jane, I learned all that to pass my driving test. I haven't forgotten it already!

Mrs Bai, I know. But it's not so easy when you get out there by yourself. Now, don't forget: when you're parking the car, read the signs carefully. The parking rules vary in different parts of the city at different times of the day and on different days of the week.

Bai Mei, Don't worry, Aunt Jane. Everything's going to be fine. Can I be off now?

#### 4. *Schools in the U. S. A.*

Bai Di,            Anything interesting in the book you're reading?

Wang Tong, Yes. I'm reading the part about schools in the U. S. A.

Bai Di,            Oh, read it to us, will you?

Wang Tong, O. K. "In the United States, boys and girls start school when they are six years old. In some states they must stay in school until they are sixteen. Most students are seventeen or eighteen years old when they graduate from high school. Today about half of the high school graduates go on to colleges or universities. Almost half of the college students in the United States work while they are studying. "

Bai Di,            In an English program on the radio it was said that studying in a university in the states is different from studying in a university in China.

They also said that in America nearly every student does something besides studying, and the most common thing is to work part-time. They work in all kinds of places, on campus and off. American college students try to be more or less economically independent of home. No matter whether they are rich or poor, they work and earn their own money because most students don't like to ask for money from home. Even school children like earning some money of their own.

Wang Tong: What jobs can children do?

Bai Di: Well, lots of teenagers do baby-sitting for their neighbors, mow lawns or deliver newspapers and magazines in their neighborhood. And even younger ones sell newspapers on the street or wash cars.

## 5. *Schools in Britain*

Bai Di,           What are you looking up in the dictionary?

Zhang Ning:     There's a sentence on page 80 of English Course(2), "Simon's waiting for his 'O level' exam results". Do you know what an 'O level' exam is? You see, the dictionary doesn't say anything about it, or about the British education system.

Bai Di,           I know all about their system. I read about it in a newspaper not long ago, I'll tell you. In Britain all children begin their education sometime after they turn five. At the age of eleven a very important thing happens, they move to a secondary school. Which school they go to is often determined by an exam which is called the 'Eleven Plus' exam, because that's how old they are when they take it.

                  There are three main streams of

secondary education in England, the Grammar Schools, the Technical Schools and the Secondary Modern Schools.

Any child may leave school at the age of fifteen, and most students at Secondary Modern Schools do. But at the Grammar Schools and the Technical Schools almost all the students stay on until the age of sixteen. They then take the 'Ordinary Level' exam which is run by the examining boards of various universities. For the majority this is a kind of school-leaving certificate. But for some it is only a preliminary to a further exam, the 'Advanced Level', which is taken at the age of eighteen. It is a kind of higher leaving certificate. It is also the exam taken by almost everybody who wants to enter university, because it is on the results of this examination that most of the universities choose.

Zhang Ning, I see. The 'O level' exam must be short for the 'Ordinary Level' exam, so Simon must be about sixteen. Thanks.

## 6. *The Climate of the United States*

Liu Kai,

Welcome to our class! In the past three years, you've given us a lot of help in our English study. Every day we listen to your recordings. Let me, on behalf of our class, thank you for coming here. We hope you will tell us something about your country, for example, about the climate of the United States, schools in the U.S.A. and so on.

Jane,

Thank you. It's very kind of you to invite me here to talk with you. Well, the United States stretches from Canada to Mexico and the Gulf of Mexico, and from the Atlantic to the Pacific. It has mountains that are covered with snow most of the year, and fields that are always green. Naturally, with a country as large as the United States, the climate also varies from coast to coast. On the west coast the



temperature changes very little between summer and winter, but the north central states have a very different kind of climate. In those states, people wear light clothing during the summer, but they need heavy wool or fur clothing in the winter.

In the southwest, the climate is pleasantly warm during the winter, but the summer is unpleasantly hot. In the eastern part of the United States, summer temperatures are very different from winter temperatures. Summers are usually hot, and winters are usually cold. Spring temperatures are comfortably warm, and fall temperatures are pleasantly cool.

Years ago, people in the cold parts of the United States did not often get fresh fruit and vegetables during the winter. Today, however, trucks and trains carry fruit and vegetables very quickly to all parts of the United States. In this way, Americans "send their climates" from one part of the country to another.