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# 白领英语 畅谈东西方文化

# 4.3

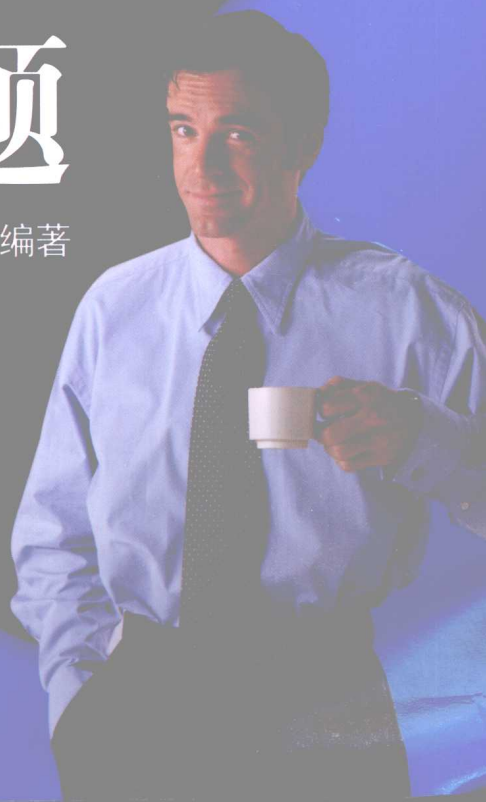
43 Eastern And  
Western Culture Scenes  
For Office Staff

# 情景主题

徐克枢 [美] Jeanette Lochner 邱立中 等◎编著



中国水利水电出版社  
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## 内 容 提 要

本书内容丰富、实用性强、对比鲜明。从说话方式的不同，东西方阴阳观念的差别，到社会的细胞——家庭—血缘关系、体育运动、节假日等都有详细介绍，为读者准备了一顿营养均衡、全面的文化大餐。

本书适用于希望提高英语水平的广大英语爱好者。

### 图书在版编目 (CIP) 数据

白领英语畅谈东西方文化 43 情景主题 / 徐克枢等编著.  
北京: 中国水利水电出版社, 2009  
(白领英语万全通)  
ISBN 978-7-5084-5857-1

I. 白… II. 徐… III. 英语-口语 IV. H319.9

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字 (2008) 第 134471 号

书 名	白领英语万全通 白领英语畅谈东西方文化 43 情景主题
作 者	徐克枢 [美] Jeanette Lochner 邱立中等 编著
出版发行	中国水利水电出版社 (北京市海淀区玉渊潭南路 1 号 D 座 100038) 网址: www.waterpub.com.cn E-mail: sales@waterpub.com.cn 电话: (010) 68367658 (营销中心)
经 售	北京科水图书销售中心 (零售) 电话: (010) 88383994、63202643 全国各地新华书店和相关出版物销售网点
排 版	贵艺图文设计中心
印 刷	北京市地矿印刷厂
规 格	170mm×235mm 16 开本 11.25 印张 297 千字
版 次	2009 年 6 月第 1 版 2009 年 6 月第 1 次印刷
印 数	0001—5000 册
定 价	32.50 元 (附光盘 1 张)

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# 白领英语畅谈东西方 文化 43 情景主题

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## 前言

初出茅庐之时，感觉文化是遥不可及的尤物，认为中国的诗经、李白的名句、莎士比亚的：“Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?（我能把你比作夏天吗？）”才能算作文化。20世纪80年代末，在美国做访问学者时，阅读大师的作品，例如爱德华·T·豪（Edward T. Hall）和哥特·豪斯提德（Geert Hofstede）的书籍，才发现文化中最重要的是我们身边的东西。

中国是东方文化的一个代表；美国是西方文化的一个代表。虽然现在的传播媒介和交通运输与过去相比已经沧海桑田，但是，东方和西方对互相的文化还有不少误解。误解的重要原因之一是穿凿附会。美国盛行着一种谣传，说中餐馆把狗肉掺入菜中，冒充猪肉和牛肉。来过中国的外国人都会很快发现这很可笑，因为狗肉在中国很贵，没有人会那么傻。误解的另一个原因是对双方的文化禁忌缺乏了解。无论你来自东方还是来自西方，要消除这些误解，了解东西方日常文化，都是必不可少的课外作业。

本书的第一个特点是内容丰富。从说话方式的不同、东西方阴阳观念的差别，到社会的细胞—家庭—血缘关系。有儿童培养与教育的差别，也有身体接触方面习俗的不同。其他重要方面，例如个人主义、集体主义、光辉榜样、象征、体育运动、节假日、环境和污染也都有详细介绍，为读者准备了一顿营养均衡、全面的文化大餐。

本书的第二个特点是实用性强。如第二章谈话绕圈和高语境文化、第七章身体接触，读了之后，和西方人，尤其是美国人打交道，会收到立竿见影的效果。

本书的第三个特点是对比鲜明。一个话题先由中国的教授讲述中国这方面的文化特性和文化表现，然后再由美国的学者对比说明美国的情况。在加上文字采用英语和中文对照，无论你是中国人还是外国人，立刻就能感受到两种文化之间的一种冲击。

本书附录一是《三字经》的中英文对照本。由何伯特·艾伦·盖尔斯于1900年翻译，我为其写了按语。何伯特·艾伦·盖尔斯是个中国通，也是西方最早的著名汉学家之一。

本人编写了本书中国文化的英文部分，进行了中文翻译，并完成了美国文化部分的中文翻译和每个章节结语部分的写作和翻译。珍妮特·洛克纳女士编写了美国文化的英文部分。宁波职业技术学院的邱立中副教授翻译了体育运动一章。

徐克枢

2008年6月21日

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# Chapter I Characteristics

## 第一章 特点

### Scene 1

#### ► General Characteristics of Chinese Culture

Chinese culture is a culture of jade. Its invaluable beauty can only be truly appreciated by the connoisseur. Chinese culture is also a culture of tea. The difference between sugar water and tea is the flavor over time. Sugar water has a sweet, simple taste that does not change, whereas tea, although bitter at first, is complex, and its flavor transforms over time.

Chinese culture is a background culture. In the Science World — a Channel 10's program of CCTV, a science report said: American scientists conducted an experiment to find the difference between Chinese perceptions and Western perceptions. They asked several overseas Chinese, Japanese, Korean and several Westerners to dive together into the ocean. After they were pulled into the ship, they were asked what they had seen. The Asians said they had noticed the beauty of the underwater scene with its corals and starfish. The Westerners said they had noticed the fish and other creatures in the ocean.

#### ► Collectivism

Collectivism is the nature of Chinese culture. Chinese people usually say “we”. They evaluate themselves and others in groups. Most Chinese pursue group harmony instead of an individual specialty. Chinese usually say, “The exposed part of a rafter in a roof rots first,” or, “The bird that leaves the nest first is shot to death.” The proverbs mean a man or a lady who tries something new or different from others individually and first will mostly fail and not be accepted by the society. The culture discourages individualism and encourages group harmony.

#### ► Kinships

Kinships are still the most important relationships for Chinese people. The members of an extended family support each other financially and spiritually, even after they live in separate houses. For example, the sisters, brothers, cousins, nephews,



nieces, uncles and aunts will still help and support each other when the children get married. During troubling times, Chinese people first seek assistance from their relatives.

### ► Lack of Punctuality

Chinese people do not arrive at appointments or meetings exactly on time. They are usually a few minutes late. Older people and people with senior rank in the society will most likely come a little later than others to show their position in the society. That is a privilege and custom.

### ► Chinese Materialism

Chinese people are beginning to value financial success as a result of globalization. But most of them value their friends and family members more than money.

### ► Avoiding Eye Contact

In the past, making eye contact was offensive to feudal officers and the emperor, so it is now common for children and people of lower social status to avoid eye contact. Shy people usually do it. And people do it out of respect; not to ignore or look down on another, as this practice is often misinterpreted in Western countries.

### ► Making Conversation

Talking about personal topics is very popular in China. It is common for most people to ask about your salary, your family members, your job, and other personal subjects in western countries. It is very offensive in the western countries but it is polite and accepted to do so in China, especially to open conversations. Yet it is polite for foreigners to stay silent or tell Chinese people that discussing these topics is not a Western custom. Most people will then stop. More and more people are getting to know the Western custom.

It is common for Chinese to ask foreigners where they are from. There are quite a lot of young people who want to make friends with foreigners, even when they have just met them. The following conversations are very common in China between foreigners and Chinese:

**Chinese A:** Hello!

**American B:** Hi!

**Chinese A:** Where are you from?

**American B:** I am from the States-USA.

**Chinese A:** I am Guoqing Zhang. My English Name is Peter Zhang.

**American B:** I am Tom Johnsons.

**Chinese A:** What are you?

**American B:** I am an engineer in a motor corporation.

**Chinese A:** How much do you earn a month?

**American B:** I am afraid it is not a western custom to ask the question.

**Chinese A:** How old are you?

**American B:** Twenty Eight.

**Chinese A:** I am twenty six. Let's be friends.

**American B:** I am sorry and it will take some time to be friends in USA.

That is not impolite in China. Nobody means offensive.

### ► Shaking Hands

The Western-style shaking of hands is now a common social behavior. Chinese people do not give hugs to each other frequently. A male stranger who tries to hug to a lady will probably be screamed at, but it is accepted and a custom for a lady to give a hug to another lady even they are strangers to each other when they first meet. It is not common for men to hug each other. It is safe to offer to shake hands with a stranger.

### ► Social Gatherings

Social gatherings such as parties, suburb traveling, dancing and other social activities in China are usually divided along age lines. It is unusual for someone to join a gathering of another age group. Age groups have different preferences. People in their fifties and sixties like old revolutionary songs or music from the war against Japan in the 1940s. The young love pop songs, love songs, and cartoons. The old and middle-aged people love classical things and reading, while the young love Internet talking and satirizing readings.

The old and the young do not gather together not only because they prefer different things but also because a lot of old people thought it is ridiculous to gather together with the young.

### ► 中华文化的一般特征

中华文化是一种玉的文化，只有特殊的鉴赏家才能真正欣赏它无价的美。中华文化也是一种茶的文化，糖水和茶水的差别是一定时间内口味的变化。糖水的甜味到嘴里就能尝出来，没有变化，相反，茶的味道很复杂，开始是苦的，味道随着时间变化。

中华文化是一种背景文化。CCTV10 套的“科学世界”栏目曾经报道说：美国科学家做过一个试验，发现中国人和西方人的感知是不同的。他们让几个海外

中国人、日本人、韩国人和几个西方人一起在大洋里潜水，他们被拉上船后，被问到看到了什么？亚洲人说看到了水下的美景，有珊瑚，有海星。西方人说：看到了鱼和其他动物。

### ► 集体主义

中华文化的本质是集体主义。中国人常说“我们”。他们通常以团体或者集团来评价自己和别人。大多数中国人追求团体的和谐而不追求个性特殊，中国人还经常说：“出头的椽子先烂”，“枪打出头鸟”。这两个俗语的意思是一位先生或者一位女士尝试新东西，或者与他人不同的有个性的东西多半会失败，或者不为社会所接受。这种文化不鼓励个人主义而鼓励集体的和谐。

### ► 血缘

血缘仍然是中国人最重要的关系。一个大家庭的成员即便分开住之后，也在经济上和精神上相互支持。例如：姐妹、兄弟、叔伯姑表，即使孩子们都结婚了，也照样互相帮助支持，困难时期，中国人会先寻求亲戚的帮助。

### ► 不准时

中国人往往不准时赴约或到会，通常晚来几分钟。年龄较大、职位较高的人会晚来一点，以显示他们的社会地位，那是一种特权，也是一种习俗。

### ► 中国的物质至上主义

作为全球化的一个结果，中国人开始注重金钱上的成功。但是，对于大多数人来说，比起金钱来，更重要的是朋友和家庭。

### ► 避免目光直接接触

过去目光直接接触是对封建官僚和皇帝的冒犯，所以现在小孩子和地位低的人还经常避免眼睛的直接接触。害羞的人也经常这样。人们这样做出于尊敬而不是经常像在西方国家被误解的那样是表示对对方的忽视或看不起。

### ► 聊天

在中国谈论个人问题非常普遍，人们通常会问你的收入、家庭成员、工作等在西方国家的人们认为是隐私的一些问题。这在西方国家是很冒昧的，但是在中国，这样做是礼貌的，也是可以接受的，尤其是在公众场合聊天的时候。然而，外国人在这个时候保持沉默或者告诉中国人，谈论这样话题不是西方习俗，都是礼貌的。多数人都会停止这样问。现在越来越多的人开始了解西方习俗。

中国人常问外国人他们从哪里来。相当多的年轻人，即使和外国人刚刚见面，就想和他们做朋友。在中国，外国人和中国人像下边这样的对话非常普遍。

中国人 甲：你好！

美国人 乙：你好！

中国人 甲：你是哪国人？

美国人 乙：我是美国人。

中国人 甲: 我是张国庆。我的英文名字是彼得·张。

美国人 乙: 我叫汤姆·约翰逊。

中国人 甲: 你是干什么的?

美国人 乙: 一个动力机械公司的工程师。

中国人 甲: 你一个月挣多少钱?

美国人 乙: 恐怕问这个问题不是西方习俗。

中国人 甲: 你多大岁数?

美国人 乙: 28 岁

中国人 甲: 我 26 岁。咱们做个朋友吧!

美国人 乙: 对不起, 在我们美国做朋友要花点时间。

这样的对话在中国, 没有人认为是不礼貌的, 没有人感到被冒犯。

### ► 握手

西式的握手在中国现在是普通的社交行为。中国人并不频繁互相拥抱, 一位陌生男士去拥抱一位女士, 会引来一声尖叫。然而即使是第一次相见的陌生人, 一位女士拥抱另外一位女士是被认可的, 也是习俗。男士们互相拥抱并不常见。稳妥起见, 还是握手为好。

### ► 社交聚会

在中国社交聚会有聚餐、郊游、舞会等社交活动, 这些社交聚会是根据年龄划线的。人们很少参加另一个年龄段的聚会。不同的年龄段有不同的偏爱, 五六十岁的人们喜欢革命歌曲和 20 世纪 40 年代的抗战歌曲。年轻人喜爱流行歌曲、爱情歌曲和卡通片。老年人、中年人喜爱古典的东西, 喜欢阅读。年轻人喜欢在互联网上聊天, 喜欢看讽刺漫画。

老年人和青年人不在一起聚会, 不仅由于他们偏爱不同, 还由于许多老年人认为和年轻人一起聚会荒唐可笑。

### Words

connoisseur *n.* 美术品的鉴定

家, 行家, 权威

transform *vi.* 改变, 转化

perception *n.* 感知, 理解

coral *n.* 珊瑚, 珊瑚虫

collectivism *n.* 集体主义

individualism *n.* 个人主义

specialty *n.* 特别, 特质

harmony *n.* 和谐

kinship *n.* 血缘关系

punctuality *n.* 准时

privilege *n.* 特权

materialism *n.* 物质至上

give hugs 拥抱

preference *n.* 偏爱

satirizing *n.* 讽刺

## Questions

Is it common for a man to give hugs to a lady as a stranger? Why?  
How do Chinese join in social gatherings?

## Scene 2

### ► General Characteristics of American Culture

Because of the history of the United States, American society has many different classes, groups, races, and lifestyles. The cultural behavior of people in the United States depends upon which part of the country they live in, and many times also depends upon which countries their family members came from. Individuals can be quite different from each other. However, there are general cultural characteristics that determine the behavior of most people, even though every person you may come in contact with will not behave in the same way.

The following is a list of some common cultural characteristics important for foreigners to know.

#### ◆ *INDIVIDUALISM*

Being independent and self-reliant is the American way. Most Americans do not think of themselves as being representatives of their communities, families, or social classes. It is important for teachers to see their students as individuals and allow them to work by themselves and produce original work.

#### ◆ *EQUALITY*

The Declaration of Independence states, "all men are created equal". The word "men" means all human beings, not just males. In America, that statement is truly believed. For example, if you want to apply for a job, it does not matter whether you are female or male; young, middle-aged, or older. Your race does not matter, either. The determining factors will be your education, experience, and ability.

#### ◆ *INFORMALITY*

People usually treat one another very informally, even in the presence of great differences in age or social status. This is not a lack of respect; this is the custom in the United States. For example, you may be invited to a party where there are old people, young people, and middle-aged people; people who are rich and people who are not at all rich; people of different races; and people who hold jobs of different social statuses. However, each person will be treated informally — treated the same. Again, this is not a lack of respect; this is the custom in the United States.

### ◆ *PUNCTUALITY*

Most people in the United States are punctual. That means they want to be on time for any event. The people must be on time for their jobs, or they may lose their jobs. If people must attend a business appointment, they should arrive a few minutes early, because the appointment will begin at the exact time stated. If you cannot be on time, you should let someone know. It is considered rude to be late. If you are invited to a social event, you should not arrive early, but on time. It is also permissible to arrive five or ten minutes late.

### ◆ *MATERIALISM*

Success in the United States is often measured in dollars. Many people think about money and material possessions much of the time. As a result, you may think that people ignore the more important things in life, like love and friendship. This is not true; like people in every country, most people in the United States value friendship more than wealth.

### ◆ *MAKING CONVERSATION*

Most people just have general conversation or “small talk” with acquaintances. That means they talk about such things as sports, jobs, the weather, and past experiences. Most people will not talk about religion, politics, or personal feelings with strangers. Sex and bodily functions are also not discussed. This kind of general conversation does not mean that people don’t like you. Rather, personal information is only discussed with close friends and family members.

There are a few very common conversational exchanges in English, such as, “How are you?” and, “How’s it going?” These are just greetings, not true questions about your life. Typical ways of saying good-bye are, “See you later,” or “See you soon.”

People in the United States are curious. They will ask you a lot of questions. Some of their questions may appear ridiculous, uninformed, and elementary, but try to be patient in answering them. You may be the first person from your country they have met, and they will have very little understanding of your life. Most people are sincerely interested in learning about you.

### ◆ *EYE CONTACT*

When you have a conversation with someone in the United States, the speaker may briefly look into the listener’s eyes, and then briefly look away. However, the listener should look at the speaker’s eyes continuously. If you do not look into the eyes of the person who is speaking to you, he or she will assume that you are not listening, or that you are not very trusting.

### ◆ *TOUCHING*

It must be understood that different parts of the United States have different

customs about touching. Some people will greet a new acquaintance with a hug, or with a hug and kiss on each cheek — usually people in the southern United States, often people whose families are originally from Spain or South America. When you greet someone in the most parts of USA for the first time, there will usually be a handshake. After that, touching someone makes him feel very uncomfortable. You should keep an arm's-length distance between you and whomever you are talking to.

#### ◆ *SHAKING HANDS*

Men usually shake right hands when they first meet. Men did not usually shake hands with a woman unless she offered her hand first in the past. Many older people still observe it. Shake hands the first time you meet someone but not the second time, and don't shake hands when you are leaving. In a business environment, it's customary to shake hands with everyone, regardless of gender, and women are taught nowadays to shake hands as well.

Right hands are clasped at waist level and at arm's length. A firm squeeze occurs while the hands are raised slightly, then lowered and released. Do not squeeze too lightly or too strongly, and do not prolong the handshake.

#### ◆ *PHYSICAL CLEANLINESS*

Americans do not like bad odors, especially coming from human bodies. Americans think that bad breath and natural body odor are very offensive. Since it is considered so offensive, if you have bad breath or body odor, most people will not mention it to you. So Americans believe that we must have a bath or shower, wear clean clothes, and brush our teeth every day. To mask body odor, Americans use deodorant, which is applied to the underarms after taking a bath or shower. Toothpaste and good dental hygiene will take care of bad breath.

Toilets and bathrooms are also not supposed to have bad odors. There are many kinds of scented air sprays for use in bathrooms and around the toilet.

#### ◆ *SOCIAL GATHERINGS*

Social gatherings are quite informal in the United States. Parties are opportunities for people to gather, talk with each other, and relax. As a result, the host-guest relationship, which is quite formal in many cultures, is very informal. Your host wants you to "feel at home". You may be greeted at the door with "Make yourself at home." You enter the home just as if it were your own. Be comfortable and relaxed, and serve yourself if food and drinks are laid out.

Invitations are usually informal. Often, someone will just telephone you to ask you to come to a party or to dinner and will tell you the time and place: "Will you come over Tuesday evening at 8:00?" A statement such as, "Come and see me sometime," or, "Drop in" is not an invitation. It means you must telephone before you go to visit.

If you accept an invitation, it is important that you be punctual. The host expects you to call as soon as possible if you cannot attend the party or dinner. It is considered rude to simply not show up. If you are not interested in the invitation, it is better to politely refuse the date or appointment when it is offered. Refusing a date is not considered rude in the United States.

A formal, written invitation requires a response and, often, a written response.

- If the invitation says “RSVP,” you must call or write to the host and tell him whether or not you will be there. If you cannot attend or do not plan to attend, say so. Do not say, “yes” just to be polite. The “RSVP” is to help the host plan how much food and drink to prepare; an accurate count is necessary.
- If your invitation says, “Regrets only,” you only need to tell your host if you do not plan to attend. If you are unsure how to dress because you do not know whether the gathering is casual or formal, call the host and ask, “What should I wear?”
- Student gatherings are much less formal. The time you arrive makes little difference, because people come and go all the time. Many student parties are “BYOB” (bring your own beverage). You will make enemies rapidly if you go to parties and drink other people’s beverages. If a party is BYOB, then you should BYOB!

### ► 美国文化的一般特征

美国的历史决定，美国社会由许多不同的阶级、团体、种族和生活方式构成。美国人的文化行为决定于他们住在美国的哪一部分，多数情况下，还决定于他们的家庭成员来自于哪个国家。从个人来说，美国人之间有很大不同，然而，即使你所接触的每个人的行为方式不同，但是，有些文化的一般特征，决定了大多数人的行为。

下面就是一些外国人需要知道的一些常见的文化特征。

#### ◆ 个人主义

独立和靠自己是美国人的方式。多数美国人不认为他们自己是他们所在团体、家庭或者社会阶层的代表。重要的是教师们要把他们的学生看成独立的个人，允许他们自己独立完成作业，并且做出原创作品。

#### ◆ 平等

独立宣言宣告：“人人生而平等”。人这个词，指所有人类，并不仅仅指男人。在美国，人们非常认真地相信这个原则。举例来说，你想要申请一个工作，你是男是女，年轻、中年或老年都不重要，和你的种族也没有什么关系。决定因素是你所受的教育、你的经验和能力。



### ◆ 非正式

无论年龄和社会地位的巨大差别，美国人之间待人接物非常不正式，非常随意。这并不代表怠慢，这是美国习俗。举例来说，你可能应邀赴一个聚会，那里既有老人、年轻人、也有中年人，既有富人也有不那么富裕的人，不同种族的人，不同社会地位的人。然而，对于每个人的接待都不正式，都一样。重复一遍，这并不是怠慢，只是美国的习俗。

### ◆ 准时

多数美国人都办事准时。这就意味着他们办任何事都准时。人们必须准时上班，否则，他们就会失去工作。人们去谈生意时，会早几分钟到，这是因为商务谈判会准时开始。你如果不能准时，应该让别人知道。迟到被认为是不礼貌的。如果你被邀请去参加一个社交聚会，你不能早去，而要准时。这种场合，迟到5~10分钟也是允许的。

### ◆ 物质至上主义

在美国，成功经常是用美元来衡量的。许多人多数时间都是在想着金钱和物质占有。结果，你也许认为人们忽视了生命中更重要的东西，如爱情和友谊，这并不是事实，像其他国家人民一样，美国多数人在财富和友谊中，更加看重友谊。

### ◆ 交谈

大多数人只是和熟人进行一些一般的交谈或简短的谈话。他们仅仅谈论一些例如体育、工作、天气和过去的经历一类的事情。大多数人不愿意和生人谈论宗教、政治或者个人感情。性和身体功能有关的事也不是谈论的话题。这种一般性的谈话，并不意味着人们不喜欢你，而是有关个人的私事，只和亲密朋友和家庭成员谈。

英语中有些常见的对话，例如：“你的身体好吗？”或者“事情进展得怎样？”这些都是问候语，并不是有关你生活的真正问题。告别时，常用再见语有：“回头见”或“很快会见面的”。

美国人好奇心强。他们会问你许多问题。一些问题会显得可笑、不正式或是常识性的。但是要试着耐心回答，你可能是他第一次看到的从你们国家来的人。他们对你们的生活缺乏了解。多数人是真的有兴趣了解你。

### ◆ 目光接触

在美国，你和人交谈，说话者的目光会短暂地直视听话人的眼睛，然后短暂离开。然而，听话人必须持续地注视说话人的眼睛，如果你不看说话人的眼睛，他或者她就会认为你没有在听，或者你不值得信任。

### ◆ 接触

不同地方的美国人对接触的理解不同，一些人会和新认识的人拥抱，或者拥抱并且亲吻两侧脸颊，美国南部的人常这样，他们的家庭源于西班牙或者南美。多数地方的美国人，第一次和人打招呼通常要握手，握手之后，再有身体接触，就会使他感到非常不自在。和人谈话的时候最好能保持一个胳膊的距离。