

● 最新美国概况
● 赴美留学必读

徐正华 刘常华 编

今日美国

——研究生及英语专业
本科生泛读教材



AMERICA TODAY

天津大学出版社

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内 容 提 要

本书为英语泛读教材,主旨在帮助英语专业本科生、非英语专业研究生以及具有一定英语水平的广大读者增加英语阅读量,提高阅读理解能力,并较系统地了解美国简史、政府结构、政党等背景以及 90 年代美国社会及美国文化的诸多方面,使之在进一步提高语言能力的同时,扩大语言知识的摄取量,全面提高交际能力。

全书共 20 单元,内容广泛,涉及美国当代社会的教育状况、生活模式、社会福利、科技与犯罪、党派与政体等诸多方面。其语言具有时代感,文体自然流畅,体现了现代英语的写作风格。

每课后附有精心编选的阅读理解练习及(或)讨论题,书后附有每课课文中难句的参考译文和练习答案,以便自测阅读理解能力及学习效果,并有助于读者理解力的提高。

此书不仅适用于英语专业本科生、非英语专业研究生,还可供有一定英语水平的读者自学或浏览,也可作为应试辅助材料使用。

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前 言

作为文化的载体,语言无处不带有文化的烙印。文化因素的干扰使具有一定语言能力的学生语言错误频频发生,屡见不鲜,这也具体反映出国内外语教学的弱点。近年来,语言与文化的关系越来越受到语言学界和外语教学界的关注,交际能力的培养开始成为外语教学的首要任务。

交际能力包括语言能力,“文化知识”和“文化能力”是其中不可缺少的项目。所谓“文化知识”,即关于所学外语国家的文化背景知识,其中也包括词语文化及其它“交际文化”。

泛读课是外语教学的一个重要环节,也是丰富学生文化知识和对所学语言国家综合了解的有效途径,它在现代外语教学中对交际能力培养的作用不可忽视。遗憾的是,目前国内有关美国概况的泛读教材多编写于70年代和80年代初,文化背景等内容或很少或过于陈旧。随着科学技术的高速发展、社会不断变化,人的价值观及其语言也随之改变。缺乏这方面的了解,将影响学生全方位提高外语水平。

基于为全面提高学生外语交际能力,初步尝试外语教学改革出发点,我们编撰了这本泛读教材。

这本教材共20个单元,编者将40余篇介绍美国当代社会的文章整理归纳为20个专题,以使读者较系统地了解90年代的美国文化,从而进一步消除外语学习中的文化干扰,全方位地提高外语水平。

文章中很多词汇与美国当代文化密切相关,可能成为理解的难点,为此我们做了注释附在文章之后。

另外,编者还为每篇文章中的难句做了中译(按序号附在书后)并编写了阅读理解练习题和(或)讨论题,用以检验和巩固学生对文章的理解和对美国文化的了解,并展开讨论。

在编撰过程中,我们得到了在天津大学任教的外籍教师及专家 Judi Boyer, Juliet Adams 和 Helen Barr 的帮助和指导。另外,美国友人 Paul Jacobi 和 Billie Huddleston 为我们提供了有关资料。对此,我们深表谢意。

天津大学外籍教师 Michael Livingstone 对本书作了全面审定,提出了很多宝贵意见并写了序,在此我们向他表示衷心感谢。

编 者

1997年9月

Dear Editor :

It is my pleasure to recommend this text, by professors Xu and Liu of Tianjin University, for publishing. I believe this to be an excellent resource that will be of great help to anyone wishing to teach an extensive reading course in an English as a Foreign Language class. This book fulfills many vital criteria necessary for being such a text.

It offers many current articles, from various writing styles, that will challenge students to understand the nuances of the English language. From everyday speech, newspaper articles, technical jargon and biographies, among others, a variety of English styles and levels are satisfied.

There are a wide range of topics that spreads the language, like a light, into previously darkened corners of a students understanding about America. This book's breadth satisfies its attempt to be reflection of the American culture in the 1990s. In China, where this culture is trying to be understood, this book supplies timely information to the students who are eager to know what the United States is made of.

The exercises provided by Xu and Liu are creative and challenging as well. The multiple choice and discussion questions, and the true and false statements, are well crafted and thoughtfully designed to push the students to fully understand each article.

The text also provides notes which explain slang terms and new words. Combined with the high interest level among students toward reading factual information about the United States, these help enable students to easily study and learn the English language on their own time. With all that is provided, this book ensures an efficient use of study time for the student as they will unlikely have to access other reference books to understand the material.

I am very pleased to have been selected to help edit the articles and questions within, and expect that this book will turn out to be a productive adventure for every student and teacher who uses it.

Michael Livingstone

Foreign Teacher

Foreign Languages Department

Tianjin University

尊敬的编辑：

很高兴能推荐这册由徐、刘两位教授编写的课本出版。我相信它将是一本很好的教材，会为广大承担英语泛读课教学的教师提供极大的帮助。它具备了一本好教材应具备的许多重要条件。

首先，书中容纳了许多当代风格各异的文章，从日常会话到报刊报道，从技术性文章到人物传记，使学生接触并理解英语语言的细微差别，能满足学生对不同风格、不同水平的英语文章的阅读要求。

其次，书中以广泛的话题覆盖英语语言，并像一盏灯，照亮了以往学生理解甚微的领域。此书涉及范围广，实现了编者从各个角度折射 90 年代美国文化的初衷。在中国，人们正努力了解这一文化，对于那些迫切期待了解美国诸方面的学生来讲，这本书无疑提供了及时的信息。

再次，由徐、刘二位编写的练习题同样具有创造性和挑战性。练习以多项选择、判断及讨论等形式出现，皆经精心设计制作，以达到督促学生完整地理解每篇文章的目的。

最后，每篇文章后还附有注解，用来解释文章中出现的俚语和新词。中国学生阅读关于美国真实信息的兴趣很高，这些注释将帮助他们自学提高；同样，由于学生将很难理解并找到相应的参考

书来帮助理解这些文章中的俚语和新词,注释将使他们有效地利用学习时间。

我很高兴被选中帮助校订书中的文章和练习,并期待使用它的每一位教师和学生都有一次硕果累累的探险旅行。

Michael Livingstone

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UNIT 1 HISTORY

历史

身为欧洲移民的后裔,美国人继承了欧洲人的文化和习俗,但性格却明显不同,受到欧洲人的瞩目。美利坚合众国建立在英属殖民地的基础上,政治体制却迥然不同。回顾一下美国简史,读者便不难看到其中的原因。

I

The early 1600s saw the beginning of a great tide of emigration from Europe to North America. Spanning more than three centuries, this movement grew from a trickle of a few hundred English colonists to a floodtide of newcomers numbered in the millions.^① Impelled by powerful and diverse motivations, they built a new civilization on a once savage continent.

The first permanent English settlement in America was a trading post founded in 1607 at ***Jamestown***^{**}, in the ***Old Dominion*** or Virginia. This region was soon to develop a flourishing economy from its tobacco crop, which found a ready market in England. By 1620, when women were recruited in England to come to Virginia, marry, and make their homes, great plantations had already risen along the James River, and the population had increased to a thou-

• 文中的上角①②……表明书后对下划线部分有对应的难句译文,各课同。

•• 文中的黑体斜体表明文后有注解,全书同。

sand settlers.

Most European emigrants left their homelands for greater economic opportunity—an urge frequently reinforced by the yearning for religious freedom, or a determination to flee from political oppression. ^② Between 1620 and 1635 economic difficulties swept England. Many people could not find work. Even skilled artisans could earn little more than a bare living. Bad crops added to the distress. In addition, England's expanding woolen industry demanded an ever-increasing supply of wool to keep the looms running, and sheep raisers began to encroach on soil hitherto given over to farming.

During the religious upheavals of the 16th and 17th centuries, a body of men and women called *Puritans* sought to reform the Established Church of England from within. ^③ Essentially, they demanded more complete *protestantization* of the national church and advocated simpler forms of faith and worship. Their reformist ideas, by destroying the unity of the state church, threatened to divide the people and to undermine royal authority. ^④

During the reign of *James I*, a small group of Separatists—a radical sect, mostly humble country folk who did not believe the Established Church could ever be reformed to their liking—departed for *Leyden*, Holland, where they were allowed to practice their religion as they wished. Later, some members of this Leyden congregation, who became known as the "*Pilgrims*", decided to emigrate to the New World, where, in 1620, they founded the colony of *Plymouth*. They had sailed to America under the auspices of the London (Virginia) Company and were thus intended for settlement in Virginia, but their ship, the *Mayflower*, made its landfall far to the north. After some weeks of exploring, the colonists decided not to make the trip to Virginia but to remain where they were. They

chose the area near Plymouth harbor as a site for their colony.

Soon after *Charles I* ascended to the throne in 1625, Puritan leaders in England were subjected to what they viewed as increasing persecution. Several ministers who were no longer allowed to preach joined the Pilgrims in America, accompanied by their followers. Unlike the earlier emigrants, this second group, which established the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1630, included many persons of substantial wealth and position. By the end of the next decade, a Puritan *stamp* had been placed upon a half-dozen English colonies.

Most of the settlers who came to America in the 17th century were English, but there was a sprinkling of Dutch, Swedes, and Germans in the middle region, a few French *Huguenots* in South Carolina and elsewhere, and a scattering of Spaniards, Italians, and Portuguese. Still, non-English settlers represented barely 10 per cent of the total. For the most part, non-English colonists adapted themselves to the culture of the original settlers. But this did not mean that all settlers transformed themselves into Englishmen. True, they adopted the English language and law and many English customs, but only as these had been modified by conditions in America. The result was a unique culture—a blend of English and continental European conditioned by the environment of the New World.^⑤

Although a man and his family could move from Massachusetts to Virginia, or from South Carolina to Pennsylvania, without making many basic readjustments, distinctions between individual colonies were marked.^⑥ They were even more marked between regional groups of colonies.

II

In all phases of colonial development, a striking feature was the lack of controlling influence by the English government. During their formative period, the colonies were, to a large degree, free to develop as circumstances dictated. The English government had taken no direct part in founding any of the colonies except Georgia, and only gradually did it assume any part in their political direction.

The fact that the King had transferred his immediate sovereignty over the New World settlements to stock companies and proprietors did not, of course mean that the colonists in America would necessarily be free of outside control. Under the terms of the Virginia Company and Massachusetts Bay charters, complete governmental authority was vested in the companies involved, and it was expected that these companies would be resident in England. Inhabitants of America, then, would have no more voice in their government than if the King himself had retained absolute rule.^⑦

In one way or another, however, exclusive rule from the outside was broken down. The first step was a decision by the London (Virginia) Company to grant Virginia colonists representation in the government. In 1618 the Company issued instructions to its appointed governor providing that free inhabitants of the plantations should elect representatives to join with the governor and an appointive council in passing ordinances for the welfare of the colony.

This proved to be one of the most far-reaching events in the entire colonial period. From then on, it was generally accepted that the colonists had a right to participate in their own government. In most instances, the King, in making future grants, provided in the

charter that freemen of the colony involved should have a voice in legislation affecting them.

At first, the right of colonists to representation in the legislative branch of the government was of limited importance. Ultimately, however, it served as a stepping stone to almost complete domination by the settlers through elective assemblies, which first seized and then utilized control over financial matters. In one colony after another, the principle was established that taxes could not be levied, or collected revenue spent—even to pay the salary of the governor or other appointive officers—without the consent of the elected representatives.® Unless the governor and other colonial officials agreed to act in accordance with the will of the popular assembly, the assembly refused to appropriate money for vital functions. Thus there were instances of recalcitrant governors who were voted either not salary at all or a salary of one penny. In the face of this threat, governors and other appointive officials tended to become pliable to the will of the colonists.

In the New England, for many years, there was even more complete self-government than in the other colonies. If the Pilgrims had settled in Virginia, they would have been under the authority of the London (Virginia) Company. However, in their own colony of Plymouth, they were beyond any governmental jurisdiction. They decided to set up their own political organization. Aboard the *Mayflower*, they adopted an instrument for government called the "Mayflower Compact," to "combine ourselves together into a civil *body politic* for our better ordering and preservation...and by virtue hereof (to) enact, constitute, and frame such just and equal laws, ordinances, acts, constitutions, and offices...as shall be thought most meet and convenient for the general good of the colony..."®

Although there was no legal basis for the Pilgrims to establish a system of self-government, the action was not contested and, under the compact, the Plymouth settlers were able for many years to conduct their own affairs without outside interference.

The large measure of political independence enjoyed by the colonies naturally resulted in their growing away from Britain, becoming increasingly "American" rather than "English."^⑩ This tendency was strongly reinforced by the blending of other national groups and cultures that was simultaneously taking place.

How this process operated and the manner in which it laid the foundations of a new nation were vividly described in 1782 by French-born agriculturist J. Hector St. John Crevecoeur.^⑪ "What then is the American, this new man?" he asked in his *Letters from an American Farmer*. "He is either a European, or the descendant of a European, hence that strange mixture of blood, which you find in no other country.... He is an American, who, leaving behind him all his ancient prejudices and manners receives new ones from the new mode of life he has embraced, the new government he obeys, and the new rank he holds...."

NOTES

1. **Jamestown** a village in E Virginia; first permanent English settlement in North America 1607; restored in 1957; 詹姆斯敦
2. **Old Dominion** the state of Virginia (used as a nick name) (1770—1780); 弗吉尼亚的别名
3. **Puritan** a member of a group of Protestants that arose in the 16th century within the Church of English, demanding the simplification of doctrine and worship, and greater strictness in religious discipline; 清教徒
4. **protestantization** protestantize refers to convert or cause to conform to Protestantism which is the religion of Protestants. Protestant refers to any