A NEW COURSE ON CULTURES OF ENGLISH-SPEAKING COUNTRIES

新编英语国家文化基础教程

周富强 霍海洪



中国社会科学出版社

A NEW COURSE ON CULTURES OF ENGLISH-SPEAKING COUNTRIES

新编英语国家文化基础教程

主编 周富强 霍海洪参编 刘春燕 鲍爱东

江苏工业学院图书馆 藏 书 章

图书在版编目(CIP)数据

新编英语国家文化基础教程/周富强,霍海洪编著.

一北京:中国社会科学出版社,2000.10

新编经贸英语系列教程

ISBN 7 - 5004 - 2887 - 1

I.新··· II.①周··· ②霍··· III.英语 - 语言读物 IV.H319.4

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字(2000)第 55374 号

责任编辑 王半牧

责任校对 宗 合

封面设计 谭国民

版式设计 王炳图

出版发行 中国社会母星出版社

社 址 北京鼓楼西大街甲158号 邮 编 100720

电 话 010-84029453 传 真 010-64030272

M 址 http://www.cass.net.cn

经 销 新华书店

印 刷 北京奥隆印刷厂 装 订 三河鑫鑫装订厂

版 次 2000年10月第1版 印次 2000年10月第1次印刷

开 本 787×1092 1/16

印 张 30.25 插 页 2

字 数 770千字 印 数 1-4000 册

定 价 36.00 元

凡购买中国社会科学出版社图书,如有质量问题请与本社发行部联系调换版权所有 侵权必究

新编经贸英语系列教材编委会

主编 周富强 王长江 编委 (按姓氏笔画为序)

王长江 李贻定 何勇斌 赵军峰 罗爱琼 周杏英 周富强 梁润森 褚东伟 霍海洪 鲍爱东 戴桂玉 魏辉良

总 序

国际国内经济贸易发展的新形势要求我们对国际经济贸易的理论与实践、对世界经济贸易的规律性、对我国坚持实行和进一步扩大对外开放的伟大事业有更深刻的认识与了解。鉴于国际国内经济发展的大趋势,依据高等学校外语专业教育指导委员会就关于外语专业本科教育改革提出的若干意见的要求,考虑到外经贸、商务英语专业的特点及社会对既懂外语又懂经贸、商务专业的复合人才的迫切需求,为满足广大中高级英语水平读者对适合于他们水平的经贸英语教材的强烈愿望,也考虑到目前我国经贸英语教材的现状及未来的发展,我们有责任和义务编写出一批内容新颖、信息可靠、语言规范、具有权威性的经贸英语教材及教学参考书。这套新编经贸英语系列教材就是我们基于上述种种考虑,通过认真研究、反复论证、深入调查、充分准备,编写出的一套吸取其他同类教材优点,又独具特色的最新经贸英语系列教材。希望通过这套系列教材,对我国外语专业及经贸专业院校尽快地、高效地培养更多更优秀的复合型外语人才做出一些贡献。

经贸英语系列教材的编写充分体现了时代特色,强调理论和实践的有机结合。针对英语专业、外贸英语、商务英语专业中高年级学生,国际贸易、国际金融、经济学、工商管理等其他经贸类专业的高年级学生和具有较高英语水平从事经贸商务工作的在职人员虽然过了专业英语八级或大学英语六级但在专业英语学习方面仍有困难的现状,编写出的一套衔接基础英语和专业英语的难度适中的经贸英语系列教材。该系列教材共有十一册。它们分别是《新编经贸英语阅读教程》、《新编经贸英语写作教程》、《新编经贸英语翻译教程》、《新编经贸英语日译教程》、《新编经贸英语听力教程》、《新编经贸英语口语教程》、《新编英语国家文化基础教程》、《新编语言学基础教程》、《新编英美文学欣赏教程》、《新编中国文化基础教程》。

由周富强、王长江编著的《新编经贸英语阅读教程》是一本内容涉及国际贸易、国际经济、工商管理、国际金融、市场营销、财务会计、国际投资、国际服务、国际经济合作、知识经济等各个领域取材宽泛、材料翔实的经贸英语阅读教材。全书分十四个单元。每个单元包括A、B两篇课文、阅读材料、疑难词汇与词组、供思考讨论的问题及注释。课文对国际经济贸易各科理论、实践及其历史沿革和目前发展趋势作出系统的概述;阅读材料展示经贸理论热点;词汇与词组部分就超出大纲的生词及词组和专业术语作出了详细的解释以帮助读者快速理解课文内容;课后讨论问题从不同角度就课文相关内容提出问题以引导读者对所读理论知识作系统深入的思考并运用所学理论分析实际问题;注释就课文相关的理论知识给以较全面的展现,以加深读者对所学知识的理解,进而扩大读者的知识面。

由梁润森等编著的具有较强操作性和模仿性及实践性的《新编经贸英语写作教程》由十二课组成。第一课介绍商业书信的标准格式。第二课介绍通过哪些途径来发展新客户,开拓新市场。第三课介绍如何讯盘某一商品。第四课介绍实盘和虚盘的界定。第五课介绍常见的讨价还价的事实依据。第六课介绍签约和履行合同条款。第七课介绍各种普遍适用的付款方式。第八课介绍包装,租船定舱和集装箱运输。第九课介绍如何审查信用证和要求修改信用证。第十课介绍索赔和解决索赔争端。第十一课介绍电传传真通讯。第十二课介

绍制单收汇。书中的范文体现了在我国对外贸易灵活政策下的国际进出口业务的许多新做法和灵活做法。编者期望读者能从该教程中学会拟写符合规范的外经贸业务英文函电和电传传真,从而提高解决实际业务问题的能力。

由褚东伟等编著的《新编经贸英语翻译教程》是一本经贸翻译实践指导书,分英译汉篇、汉译英篇、翻译的商业化运作篇(翻译过程概说、自由职业、翻译公司和翻译现代化)。其中英译汉篇和汉译英篇为本书的主要部分,每篇分为信函、合同、商业文件和技术资料四个部分,每部分提供了大量的曾经被客户接受的翻译实例并对这些实例进行技术点评和规律总结。读者在学习翻译技巧的同时自然地熟悉各类文体,对英语写作也有一定的提高。翻译的商业化运作篇帮助读者走出篇章,讲述走向市场以翻译为职业、以翻译为事业的技巧。

由李贻定编著的《新编经贸英语报刊选读教程》收入了世界著名英文报刊的最新文章。考虑到世纪之末的世界网络经济发展的突飞猛进,电子商务的欣欣向荣,而在中国的金融部门及制造业等领域的现代化方面却出现了"瓶颈"现象,本书的编选突出了网络经济、电子商务、金融和制造业方面的文章。影响世界经济贸易发展潮流方面的有关市场营销、高科技等方面的文章也有不同程度的选入。鉴于新闻体裁文章的时效性,本教程的选材侧重预测未来的文章,这样就大大延长了本教程的时效性。为了增加该教程的灵活性及个性比,本书介绍了一些新闻体载的阅读技巧,以供读者分析根据自己兴趣所选的文章。本教程还设计了一些使读者通过浏览找出文章观点的问题及概括文意的技巧,并介绍了在飞速发展的信息社会中阅读报刊杂志的一些新方法。

由赵军峰等编著的《新编经贸英语口译教程》分理论篇和实践篇。本书以理论篇为教学 先导,针对口译的性质特征,从理论的角度向读者作一高屋建瓴的概述,使读者对口译的性质、特点、标准、过程、类型乃至译员的素质有一概括性的认识。本书实践篇结合经贸活动诸 层面中出现的具体语境,如迎来送往、广告宣传、参观访问、商务谈判、礼仪祝词、人物专访等等,将口译训练融化在12个单元之中。该书各个单元训练所需的有声和文字材料均具有针 对性、真实性和时效性,大部分取自全真的口译现场录音。该书取材覆盖面广,各单元兼顾 英汉、汉英双向训练,有译前准备、口译笔记、语体模式识别与转换、信息的概括与增删以及 按命题意义重组句型等编辑技巧训练。该书充分体现了口译理论与实践相结合、针对性与 通用性相结合的特点。

由何勇斌等编著的《新编经贸英语听力教程》以培养读者英语笔记能力为重点。选用的材料包括经贸报告、经贸会谈等方面。该教程共分为 18 个单元。每单元可供 4 课时使用。每单元包括听前训练(课前背景材料阅读、词汇训练、难句预读),实听练习(笔记、听力理解监测题),听后练习(口头讨论或写作)三大部分。该教程配有《教师手册》,包括录音的书面材料、练习及答案两个部分。

由周杏英、罗爱琼编著的《新编经贸英语口语教程》分上下篇。上篇包括两大部分。第一部介绍迎接与送别外商的全过程(接待、交通安排、食宿及参观等活动)。第二部分是关于商务洽谈的全过程(询价、订货、运输、付款及索赔等)。下篇为阅读材料篇。主要是关于国内外著名城市、景点、著名宾馆、风俗人情、著名公司及著名产品介绍。上下篇紧密结合,全方位地为读者提供了内容新颖、紧扣时代脉搏的理想的经贸口语学习蓝本。

由周富强、霍海洪编著的《新编英语国家文化基础教程》共分为十四章。第一章概括介绍文化的特征、范畴、文化研究的历史及全球文化的发展。第二章概述主要英语国家简况。第三章介绍主要英语国家国土及其自然资源。第四章介绍英语国家的人民及社会状况。第五章论述英语及其变体的特征;着重比较对比英国英语和美国英语的异同。第六章简述英语国家的历史发展及其沿革规律。第七章比较对比英语国家的政治制度的异同。第八章着

重论述英语国家经济模式及商贸实践。第九章介绍宗教及其在英语国家文化中的地位。第十章使学习者对英语国家的教育体制及其发展状况有一全面的把握。第十一、十二章分别介绍了英语国家的文学和艺术的发展、演变及其特征。第十三章注重英语国家的媒体介绍。第十四章则综述了英语国家的国际关系。通过本教程,编者力图全面地介绍英语国家的民族风格、历史、语言特色、政治制度、经贸、文学、宗教、教育、新闻媒体、家庭生活、社会问题等有关文化背景的方方面面,为经贸英语学习者成功地参与国际商务活动,更有效地进行国际全面合作打下坚实的文化基础。

由戴桂玉等编者的《新编英美文学欣赏教程》具有把文学基本理论与文学名作欣赏融为一体来进行教学的特点,本书共分十六个单元。内容涵盖小说、诗歌和戏剧的基本要素、文学批评的基本原理以及主要的文学流派和写作技巧。本教程精选了一些有代表性和各具特色的作家的作品或选读来加深读者对文学本质、文学流派和文学风格的认识和理解。每篇作品或选读后面都有注释和本单元的文学要点讲解,以及作者的写作技巧、风格和主体的介绍;还有供读者理解的阅读思考题或课堂分析讨论题。本教程旨在让读者既能获得理论上的指导,又能得到文本分析的实践,以便有效地提高读者的文学欣赏水平和英文写作能力。

由魏辉良、谢元花编著的《新编语言学基础教程》是一本依照最新高等学校英语专业英语教学大纲(1999),立意新颖、材料详实、讲解透彻、可读性强的英语语言学教程。其目的在于使学生了解人类语言研究的最新成果,提高他们对语言的社会、人文、经济、科技以及个人修养等方面重要性的认识,培养语言意识,发展理性思维,以帮助拓宽学生的思路和视野,全面提高学生的语言素质。本书共分为十六章,其内容涉及语言的起源、结构、变迁、口语与书面语等普通语言学范畴及语言与思维、语言与大脑、语言与文化、语言习得、语言教学等应用语言学范畴。本书不仅适用于英语专业高年级本科生,也可作为非英语专业的本科生学习语言学基础知识的参考书。

由王长江、刘国华等编者的《新编中国文化基础教程》是一本内容涉及中国历史、宗教、哲学、文学、艺术、政治经济制度、法律、教育、风俗习惯以及中西文化交流等有关中国文化诸层面的基础教程。本书以英语写就,将使读者在学习英语的同时,加深对中国文化底蕴的了解,增强用英语表述中国文化内容的能力。为了帮助读者深刻理解课文内容,对中国文化的诸方面做深入的分析和思考,每章节后都附有词汇表以及思考题。本书除适用于学习英语的中国学生之外,对我国外事工作者、外经贸工作者和对中国文化感兴趣的外籍人员亦有裨益。

广东外语外贸大学 国际经贸学院 新编经贸英语系列教材编委会 2000 年 10 月

前 言

当今世界是一个以全方位交流合作为主旋律的世界。国际文化交流成为每个国家全面发展的重要条件。英语国家在当今国际社会中占有极为重要的地位。广泛深入学习、研究英语国家文化是我们成功地走向世界,进一步加强国际文化交流,尤其是加强和英语国家文化交流的基础,也是学好英语的必要条件。实践表明,成功的英语教学与学习是英语语言教学与学习和文化知识的教学与学习紧密结合的结果。基于这种认识,我们编写了《新编英语国家文化基础教程》。

《新编英语国家文化基础教程》是经贸英语系列教材的重要组成部分。为经贸英语语言的学习与研究提供宽泛的文化背景。本教程共分为十四章。第一章概括介绍文化的特征、范畴、文化研究的历史及全球文化的发展。第二章概述主要英语国家简况。第三章介绍主要英语国家国土及其自然资源。第四章介绍英语国家的人民及社会状况。第五章论述英语及其变体的特征;着重比较对比英国英语和美国英语的异同。第六章简述英语国家的历史发展及其沿革规律。第七章比较对比英语国家的政治制度的异同。第八章着重论述英语国家经济模式及商贸实践。第九章介绍宗教及其在英语国家文化中的地位。第十章使学习者对英语国家的教育体制及其发展状况有一全面的把握。第十一、十二章分别介绍了英语国家的文学和艺术的发展、演变及其特征。第十三章注重英语国家的媒体介绍。第十四章则综述了英语国家的国际关系。通过本教程,编者力图全面地介绍英语国家的民族风格、历史、语言特色、政治制度、经贸、文学、宗教、教育、新闻媒体、家庭生活、社会问题等有关文化背景的方方面面,为经贸英语学习者成功地参与国际商务活动,更有效地进行国际全面合作打下坚实的文化基础。

《新编英语国家文化基础教程》的特色:1.编排结构新颖独特。编者在本教程中打破了按不同国家的先后顺序编排内容的传统模式,把不同英语国家的同一方面的文化内容放在一起进行比较对比。通过全面的比较、鲜明的对比,通过引发学习者讨论的丰富的思考题,使学习者对所学英语国家文化有更深刻的认识与了解。2.信息涵盖面广、知识面宽。本书内容涉及英语国家的民族风格、历史、语言特色、政治制度、经贸、文学、宗教、教育、新闻媒体、家庭生活、社会问题等各个领域。在系统介绍的同时,在每单元的阅读材料中,编者还为读者提供了更为宽泛的相关阅读材料。

本教程难度适中,不仅是一本英语专业学习教程,也是一本理想的了解英语国家文化背景的参考用书。本教程不仅可作为英语专业、经贸英语专业、商务英语专业二年级学生的英语国家文化教程,也可作为国际贸易、国际金融、国际商务、国际文化交流、工商管理、英语专业自学考试和其他各专业三年级的英语国家文化教材,可供周二学时用一学期。

本书的编写受到了广东外语外贸大学的大学领导的关心重视,得到了教务处、科研处、经贸学院的领导、老师和学生的热情支持,中国社会科学出版社的王半牧先生为本书的出版付出了辛勤的努力,在此,主编谨向他们表示谢意。

主编 2000 年 10 月于广州

Contents

Chapter One	Culture in General ······	1
Section I	Introduction ·····	1
Section II	The characteristics of Culture ······	1
Section III	Categories of Culture ······	5
Section IV	History of the Concept of Culture	14
Section V	.	20
Reading		20
Chapter Two		28
Section I	· ·	28
Section II	United States	30
Section III		32
Section IV		34
Section V		35
Reading		36
Chapter Three		50
Section I		50
Section II		55
Section III	 	61
Section IV	Australian Land & Resources ······	69
Section V	* 1 * 1 · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	73
Reading	2,	74
Chapter Four		88
Section I		88
Section II	American People & Society	97
Section III	Canadian People & Society 1	07
Section IV	Australian People & Society	111
Section V	New Zealand People & Society	115
Reading	Social Problems ····· 1	
Chapter Five	Language ····· 1	
Section I	British English 1	
Section II	American English 1	
Reading	Linguistics	
Chapter Six	History ····	
Section I	British History	
Section II	American History ·····	189

Section III	Canadian History 198
Section IV	Australian History 217
Section V	New Zealand History
Reading	History & Historiography231
Chapter Seven	Government
Section I	British Government····· 234
Section II	American Government 247
Section III	Canadian Government 252
Section IV	Australian Government 254
Section V	New Zealand Government 258
Reading	Government····· 260
Chapter Eight	Economy & Trade ····· 265
Section I	British Economy & Trade
Section II	American Economy & Trade · · · · · 275
Section III	Canadian Economy & Trade
Section IV	Australian Economy & Trade · · · · 293
Section V	The Economy of New Zealand
Reading	Economy and Civilization 304
Chapter Nine	Religion 308
Section I	British Religion 308
Section II	American Religion ······ 309
Section III	Religion in Canada ······ 314
Section IV	Religion in Australia
Section V	Religion in New Zealand 316
Reading	Religion 316
Chapter Ten	Education ····· 321
Section I	British Education
Section II	American Education
Section III	Education in Canada
Section IV	Education in Australian
Section V	Education in New Zealand · · · · 337
Reading	Voices in Education ····· 338
Chapter Eleven	Literature 344
Section I	British Literature ····· 344
Section II	American Literature
Section III	Canadian Literature
Section IV	Australian Literature 384
Section V	Literature in New Zealand 388

Reading	Literary Criticism	39
Chapter Twelve	Art 40	90
Section I	British Art ······ 40	ЭО
Section II	American Art ······ 40	80
Section III	Canadian Art ····· 41	11
Section IV	Australian Art ······ 41	
Section V	New Zealand Art····· 41	
Reading	Art 41	
Chapter Thirteen	Mass Media ····· 42	
Section I	British Media · · · · 42	
Section II	American Media · · · · 42	
Section III	Media in Canada ····· 4	
Reading	BBC World Service ····· 44	
Chapter Fourteen	Foreign Relations · · · · 4	46
Section I	British Foreign Relations 42	46
Section II	American Foreign Relations 45	53
Section III	Canada's Foreign Relations 45	58
Section IV	Australian Foreign Relations 40	62
Section V		
Reading	United Nations 4	67
Section V	New Zealand Overseas Trade ····· 4	

Chapter One Culture In General

SECTION I INTRODUCTION

Culture, in anthropology, the patterns of behavior and thinking that people living in social groups learn, create, and share. Culture distinguishes one human group from others. It also distinguishes humans from other animals. A people's culture includes their beliefs, rules of behavior, language, rituals, art, technology, styles of dress, ways of producing and cooking food, religion, and political and economic systems.

Culture is the most important concept in anthropology (the study of all aspects of human life, past and present). Anthropologists commonly use the term *culture* to refer to a society or group in which many or all people live and think in the same ways. Likewise, any group of people who share a common culture -- and in particular, common rules of behavior and a basic form of social organization -- constitutes a society. Thus, the terms *culture* and *society* are somewhat interchangeable. However, while many animals live in societies, such as herds of elk or packs of wild dogs, only humans have culture.

Culture developed together with the evolution of the human species, *Homo sapiens*, and is closely related to human biology. The ability of people to have culture comes in large part from their physical features: having big, complex brains; an upright posture; free hands that can grasp and manipulate small objects; and a vocal tract that can produce and articulate a wide range of sounds. These distinctively human physical features began to develop in African ancestors of humans more than four million years ago. The earliest physical evidence of culture is crude stone tools produced in East Africa over two million years ago.

SECTION II THE CHARACTERISTICS OF CULTURE

Culture has several distinguishing characteristics. (1) It is based on *symbols* -- abstract ways of referring to and understanding ideas, objects, feelings, or behaviors -- and the ability to communicate with symbols using language. (2) Culture is shared. People in the same society share common behaviors and ways of thinking through culture. (3) Culture is learned. While people biologically inherit many physical traits and behavioral instincts, culture is socially inherited. A person must learn culture from other people in a society. (4) Culture is adaptive. People use culture to flexibly and quickly adjust to changes in the world around them.

A Culture Is Symbolic

People have culture primarily because they can communicate with and understand symbols. Symbols allow people to develop complex thoughts and to exchange those thoughts with others. Language and other forms of symbolic communication, such as art, enable people to create, explain, and record new ideas and information.

A symbol has either an indirect connection or no connection at all with the object, idea, feeling, or behavior to which it refers. For instance, most people in the United States find some meaning in the combination of the colors red, white, and blue. But those colors themselves have nothing to do with, for instance, the land that people call the United States, the concept of patriotism, or the U.S. national anthem, *The Star Spangled Banner*.

To convey new ideas, people constantly invent new symbols, such as for mathematical formulas. In addition, people may use one symbol, such as a single word, to represent many different ideas, feelings, or values. Thus, symbols provide a flexible way for people to communicate even very complex thoughts with each other. For example, only through symbols can architects, engineers, and construction workers communicate the information necessary to construct a skyscraper or bridge.

People have the capacity at birth to construct, understand, and communicate through symbols, primarily by using language. Research has shown, for example, that infants have a basic structure of language -- a sort of universal grammar -- built into their minds. Infants are thus predisposed to learn the languages spoken by the people around them.

Language provides a means to store, process, and communicate amounts of information that vastly exceed the capabilities of nonhuman animals. For instance, chimpanzees, the closest genetic relatives of humans, use a few dozen calls and a variety of gestures to communicate in the wild. People have taught some chimps to communicate using American Sign Language and picture-based languages, and some have developed vocabularies of a few hundred words. But an unabridged English dictionary might contain more than half-a-million vocabulary entries. Chimpanzees have also not clearly demonstrated the ability to use grammar, which is crucial for communicating complex thoughts.

In addition, the human vocal tract, unlike that of chimpanzees and other animals, can create and articulate a wide enough variety of sounds to create millions of distinct words. In fact, each human language uses only a fraction of the sounds humans can make. The human brain also contains areas dedicated to the production and interpretation of speech, which other animals lack. Thus, humans are predisposed in many ways to use symbolic communication.

B Culture Is Learned

People are not born with culture; they have to learn it. For instance, people must learn to speak and understand a language and to abide by the rules of a society. In many societies, all people must learn to produce and prepare food and to construct shelters. In other societies, people must learn a skill to earn money, which they then use to provide for themselves. In all human societies, children learn culture from adults. Anthropologists call this process *enculturation*, or cultural transmission.

Enculturation is a long process. Just learning the intricacies of a human language, a major part of enculturation, takes many years. Families commonly protect and enculturate children in the households of their birth for 15 years or more. Only at this point can children leave and establish

their own households. People also continue to learn throughout their lifetimes. Thus, most societies respect their elders, who have learned for an entire lifetime.

Humans are not alone in their ability to learn behaviors, only in the amount and complexity of what they can learn. For example, members of a group of chimpanzees may learn to use a unique source of food or to fashion some simple tools, behaviors that might distinguish them from other chimpanzee groups. But these unique ways of life are minor in comparison to the rich cultures that distinguish different human societies. Lacking speech, chimps are very limited in what they can learn, communicate to others, and pass on from generation to generation.

C Culture Is Shared

People living together in a society share culture. For example, almost all people living in the United States share the English language, dress in similar styles, eat many of the same foods, and celebrate many of the same holidays.

All the people of a society collectively create and maintain culture. Societies preserve culture for much longer than the life of any one person. They preserve it in the form of knowledge, such as scientific discoveries; objects, such as works of art; and traditions, such as the observance of holidays.

C1 Ethnocentrism and Cultural Relativism

Self-identity usually depends on culture to such a great extent that immersion in a very different culture -- with which a person does not share common ways of life or beliefs -- can cause a feeling of confusion and disorientation. Anthropologists refer to this phenomenon as culture shock. In multicultural societies -- societies such as the United States into which people come from a diversity of cultures -- unshared forms of culture can also lead to tension.

Members of a society who share culture often also share some feelings of *ethnocentrism*, the notion that one's culture is more sensible than or superior to that of other societies. Ethnocentrism contributes to the integrity of culture because it affirms people's shared beliefs and values in the face of other, often contradictory, beliefs and values held by people of other cultural backgrounds. At its worst, ethnocentrism has led people to commit *ethnocide*, the destruction of cultures, and genocide, the destruction of entire populations. This happened, for example, to Jews living in Nazi Germany in the 1940s.

Anthropologists, knowing the power of ethnocentrism, advocate cross-cultural understanding through a concept known as *cultural relativism*. Someone observing cultural relativism tries to respect all cultures equally. Although only someone living within a group that shares culture can fully understand that culture, cultural relativists believe that outsiders can learn to respect beliefs and practices that they do not share.

However, most anthropologists believe that cultural relativism has its limits. In theory, an extreme relativist would uncritically accept the practices of all cultures, even if those practices harm people. For example, anthropologists have debated over whether they should accept or approve of the practice of female circumcision, performed in many African societies. Female

circumcision involves removing part or all of a woman's labia and clitoris and is usually performed on girls entering adolescence. This practice is painful, and often harmful, to the women of societies that perform it, but many of those societies claim that the practice is important and deeply rooted in their culture.

C2 Sharing Culture Across Societies

Since no human society exists in compete isolation, different societies also exchange and share culture. In fact, all societies have some interactions with others, both out of curiosity and because even highly self-sufficient societies sometimes need assistance from their neighbors. Today, for instance, many people around the world use similar kinds of technology, such as cars, telephones, and televisions. Commercial trade and communication technologies, such as computer networks, have created a form of global culture. Therefore, it has become increasingly difficult to find culture that is shared within only a single society.

Cultural exchange can provide many benefits for all societies. Different societies can exchange ideas, people, manufactured goods, and natural resources. Such exchanges can also have drawbacks, however. Often the introduction of aspects of another society's culture can disrupt the cohesive life of a people. For example, the introduction of consumerism into many small societies has led to what anthropologists refer to as *cargo cults*. In cargo cults, people focus much of their religious energy and time on trying to magically acquire commercial goods.

Cross-cultural exchange often results in what anthropologists call acculturation, when the members of one culture adopt features of another. This has happened, for example, when indigenous peoples in the western hemisphere adopted the language and many of the customs of Spain, which colonized South and Central America beginning in the 1500s.

C3 Subcultures

Some groups of people share a distinct set of cultural traits within a larger society. Such groups are often referred to as subcultures. For instance, the members of a subculture may share a distinct language or dialect (variation based on the dominant language), unique rituals, and a particular style of dress. In the United States and Canada, many strongly integrated religious groups, such as rural Mennonite communities, have the characteristics of subcultures.

D Culture Is Adaptive

Culture helps human societies survive in changing natural environments. For example, the end of the last Ice Age, beginning about 15,000 years ago, posed an enormous challenge to which humans had to adapt. Before this time, large portions of the northern hemisphere were covered in great sheets of ice that contained much of the earth's water. In North America, large game animals that roamed the vast tundra provided people with food and materials for clothing and simple shelters. When the earth warmed, large Ice Age game animals disappeared, and many land areas were submerged by rising sea levels from melting ice. But people survived. They developed new technologies and learned how to subsist on new plant and animal species. Eventually some people settled into villages of permanent, durable houses and farms.

Cultural adaptation has made humans one of the most successful species on the planet. Through history, major developments in technology, medicine, and nutrition have allowed people to reproduce and survive in ever-increasing numbers. The global population has risen from 8 million during the Ice Age to almost 6 billion today.

However, the successes of culture can also create problems in the long run. Over the last 200 years, people have begun to use large quantities of natural resources and energy and to produce a great amount of material and chemical wastes. The global population now consumes some crucial natural resources -- such as petroleum, timber, and mineral ores -- faster than nature can produce them. Many scientists believe that in the process of burning fuels and producing wastes, people may be altering the global climate in unpredictable and possibly harmful ways. Thus, the adaptive success of the present-day global culture of production and commerce may be temporary.

Culture must benefit people, at least in the short term, in order for it to be passed on to new generations. But it can clearly also harm some people. The number of people living in severe poverty near the end of the 20th century was larger than the entire population of the world in AD 1500.

SECTION III CATEGORIES OF CULTURE

Anthropologists have described a number of different categories of culture. For example, a simple distinction can be made between cultural objects, such as types of clothing, and cultural beliefs, such as forms of religion. Many early anthropological definitions of culture are essentially descriptions of categories of culture or cultural items.

British anthropologist Edward B. Tylor gave one of the first complete definitions of culture in his book *Primitive Culture* (1871). His definition stated that culture includes socially acquired knowledge, beliefs, art, law, morals, customs, and habits. In 1930 American anthropologist George P. Murdock went much further, listing 637 major subdivisions of culture. Murdock developed an elaborate coding system, known as the Human Relation Area Files. He used this system to identify and sort hundreds of distinctive cultural variations that could be used to compare different cultures.

Later anthropologists came up with simpler categorizations of culture. A common practice is to divide all of culture into three broad categories: material, social, and ideological. A fourth category, the arts, has characteristics of both material and ideological culture.

Material culture includes products of human manufacture, such as technology. Social culture pertains to people's forms of social organization -- how people interact and organize themselves in groups. Ideological culture relates to what people think, value, believe, and hold as ideals. The arts include such activities and areas of interest as music, sculpture, painting, pottery, theater, cooking, writing, and fashion. Anthropologists often study how these categories of culture differ across different types of societies that vary in scale (size and complexity).