

British & American Culture

英语时文阅读(下)

主编：张晓辉 李丽华 魏薇

黑龙江美术出版社

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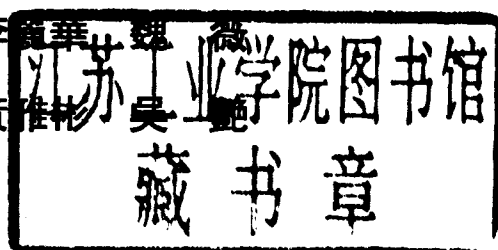
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前言

现代科技的发展,多媒体的诞生,互联网的普及以及经济的高度全球化发展,使得人们渴望了解他国风俗习惯及文化特点,以达到互相交流的目的。因此,文化与交际不仅成为人们的热门话题,而且潜移默化地影响着对外语教学观念的改变,越来越多的外语教育工作者意识到在传授语言知识的同时,应加强文化知识的渗透。

但是在实际授课的过程中,由于受学生、教材、教学内容、教学计划等具体因素的制约,课堂上往往没有大量的时间来介绍、解释和分析语言文化现象和文化背景方面知识。

针对这种情况,《英语时文阅读》应运而生。本书选用了现代英语阅读材料,其中大部分摘自近年来的国内外报纸、期刊及网络。这些文章题材广泛、内容丰富、风格迥异、语言环境真实、文化信息量大,反映了欧美各国多姿多彩的生活侧面和风土人情。使学生在阅读过程中一举两得,不仅能够提高英语的阅读能力,而且可以从中获得大量有价值的信息,丰富他们的英美文化知识,进而扫清语言学习中遇到的文化障碍。

本书主编和其他编者一直工作在外语教育的最前线,有着多年的外语教学经验,并试图在阅读教学中锐意创新,尝试各种先进的文化导入方法。本书经过编者的精心选材和试题设计,设计了大量的热门话题和文化背景知识,使文章难易适中、长短搭配、语言规范、内容与现代生活密切相关,力争将语言学习与文化学习有机地结合起来,引导学生从被动地接受信息到主动地思维求索。书中各篇文章附有生词及含义,供读者阅读时参考。

本书前46篇由张晓辉和魏薇编写,后10篇由李丽华编写。其他编者参加了本书的校对工作。

由于编者水平有限,编译过程中难免有疏漏之处,敬请广大师生批评指正。

——编者

2005年于哈尔滨

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Passage 1

Happily Unmarried

Q: Is there a trend showing that a growing number of men and women are choosing to stay single?

A: It is true that the percentage of Americans who are not married has been increasing since about 1960, but the rate of “singlehood” is by no means unprecedented. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, a higher percentage of women are unmarried (48 percent) than men (44 percent). Most unmarried people would like to be married, but have not found the right person yet, or know that the time is not right. Many others are happily single, or in long-term unmarried relationships. People are delaying marriage more, but the change is not as dramatic as most people think. The average age at marriage dropped artificially low in the 1950s and 1960s—men were marrying at 23, and women at 20. In 1998, it was only slightly higher, 27 for men and 25 for women.

Q: Is there also a rise in the number of couples parenting without a marriage license?

A: One in three babies is born to unmarried parents today. But these are not necessarily “single mothers,” which is how they are often discussed. Forty percent of these births are to cohabiting unmarried couples—two-parent households who are “single” only in the legal sense.

Q: Why has unmarried by choice become an increasingly attractive lifestyle option?

A: Partly it is just because we can—women no longer need husbands to support them, and men no longer need wives to cook and clean. Since being married is no longer required for survival, it is become optional. People today have high standards when it comes to marriages! We may be less likely to “settle” for an unsatisfying relationship, and more likely to leave a marriage that is not working.

Q: Is not marriage good for our health—at least men’s? The studies show that married men stay healthier longer.

A: I am always wary of statistics that claim that some way of living—being married or single or single, living in the suburbs or the city, having pets or not—is better on average than some other way of living. There is a lot of research about whether men or women benefit more from marriage or non-marriage, and lots of different findings. The trouble is averages do not tell you anything about individual lives. The research does show that men seem to

benefit more from marriage than women do. That is probably because women do not get a wife when they get married!

Q: What is the downside of deciding to stay single?

A: Single people run into two kinds of problems. The first is a social one: Our culture assumes that marriage is the ideal for all people, so if you are not married, there is sometimes a sense of failure or inadequacy. The other problem is a legal one. Marital status discrimination is still incredibly common. Since our legal system says a family is anyone related by blood, marriage, or adoption, often unmarried people and families are left out in the cold. This affects unmarried people in every area where families come into contact with the law: housing, employment, immigration, insurance, taxes, and more. Even the word "single" cause confusion. "Single" makes it sound like people are alone. In truth, unmarried people are families, too. Many have children, partners, or friends who are "families of choice". Even people who live alone are connected to families. It is a real mistake to think of single as something separate from family life.

Q: If two people are committed body & soul and living together, why not get married? Is not marriage the end goal of a loving relationship?

A: There are lots of reasons people in committed relationships do not get married. Some women do not want to be wives, and would rather be partners. Some have had horrible experiences with divorce and do not want to risk that again. Some people would lose significant financial benefits if they married, like senior citizens who can lose a pension from a deceased spouse. Commitment and marriage often go together, but not always. Of course, there are married couples who are not very committed, and whose unions do not last long. And there are also unmarried partners whose relationships last many decades, who are as committed the most loving married pair. We need to learn to understand marriage and commitment as existing separately from each other, sometimes going together, sometimes not.

Reading Comprehension

1. Why are the people who would like to be married unmarried?

- A. They haven't found the right person yet.
- B. They know the time isn't right.
- C. They are not allowed to do that.
- D. Either A or B.

2. _____ percent of the unmarried births are to cohabiting unmarried couples.

- A. 20
- B. 30
- C. 40
- D. 50

3. According to the speaker, which is the following statement is not true?

- A. If you're not married, there's sometimes a sense of failure.
- B. Often unmarried people and families are left out in the cold.
- C. Unmarried people are alone.
- D. People who live alone are connected to families.

4. If two people are committed body and soul and living together, why not get married?

- A. Some women don't want to be wives.
- B. Some don't want to risk the experience of divorce.
- C. Some people would lose significant financial benefits if they marry.
- D. All the above.

5. What is the relationship between marriage and commitment?

- A. They are the same.
- B. They exist separately.
- C. They rely on each other.
- D. They are contradictory.

Passage 2

Dot It Well or Not at All

I lived with my grandparents until I left home at 16. Don't get me wrong; my mom was around too. But she was a single parent and had me when she was young--just 21. She still needed the support her parents provided, and we lived with them in Queens, N.Y., for many years. So all three of them--my mom, Ondrea Smith, and my grandparents Eugene and Ellen Griffith--raised me.

My grandfather looked like a big Buddha, and his overall vibe was jolly, like Santa. He was from a West Indian family, and people from the West Indies are known for their frugality--like they work 300 jobs and spend no money. He had been a medic in the Army in World War II, and when I lived with him, he worked for the post office. I'd see him leave every morning, go to work and come home at night. Then he'd do things like fix his own car. And instead of relaxing, he'd be out on the block, patrolling the neighborhood, making sure it was safe for his family. At age 72, he went back to school to take specialized courses in engineering.

He loved music. He was in a jazz band when he was younger, and he turned me on to jazz--you know, Miles Davis, Jimmy Smith. I used to listen to jazz, but no one listened more loudly than my grandfather. He used to play the music so loud that he needed a hearing aid when he got older. There's something about peeking around the staircase and looking at your grandfather buried behind tons of records, with the music blasting and all you can see is the back of his bald head, moving real fast to jazz music.

My grandfather was cheap, but he was kind. My grandmother--she was generous, but she was tough. When I say tough. When I say tough, I mean she was the kind of person that didn't want to be kissed or hugged, but she would show you all the love in the world. Talk about a kid being blessed, and God looking out for me from the beginning. My grandmother worked in a toy factory!

They let the employees have certain stuff, damaged goods. She used to bring little race cars and other toys home to me every day.

She also showed her love by fixing the best food in the world. She was from down South, and my grandfather's family was from Barbados. So she'd make things like collard greens and turnip greens and all the West Indian dishes. Every body in the neighborhood wanted to come sit in her kitchen, to talk with her. She would hear you out, and she'd always have a bit of wisdom

that would help you solve your problem and give you something to think about.

When I was 11,I begged my grandparents for a minibike. My grandmother thought I needed something to keep me out of trouble, so My grandfather, now wanting to keep me off the the streets, then persuaded my grandfather to buy me two turntables and a mixer, the equipment I'd need so I could get into rap music. I got into rap music because I wanted to be heard .I wanted to make a record and heat it on the radio. It was that simple.

My grandmother really had to do some convincing to get my grandfather to spend the \$2000 for the equipment, which is what it cost. Not long after he did, I'm sure he wondered what he'd done. He couldn't understand why I was the heart of rap music. But the purchase of that equipment ended up changing my life, Not only did it lead to me becoming LL Cool J, but it showed how my grandparents really supported my dreams and believed in me .I have four kids now ,and I believed in them. I know they can do anything if they put their minds to it.

My grandparents were married for 50 years, and became like two halves of a whole. My grandfather died when he was 75,in 1984,and my grandmother passed last November at age 86.Yes, they supported me in whatever I wanted to do, but they also guided me, taught me how to live my life. I wanted to do, but they also guided me, taught me how to live my life, I learned so much about hard work and dedication from my grandfather. And it wasn't what he told me—it was what he showed me. Having a grandmother like mine gave me a deep, deep respect and appreciation for women. So even though a lot of my songs may be risqué, they're never degrading to women.

My grandmother had a saying: "if a task is once begun, never leave it till it's done. Be my labor great or small, do it well or not at all. That was the motto I grew up with. Whatever you love, you go fully into it and commit all the way. Rise above and transcend and you'll succeed. Even if all you're doing at first is scratching records in the basement, and your dreams seem a million miles away.

Reading Comprehension

1.What's the meaning of "frugality" in paragraph two?

- A. Generosity
- B. Meanness
- C. Kindness
- D. Indifference

2. Why did I get two turntables and a mixer?
- A. I begged for them.
 - B. My friend gave me as a gift.
 - C. My grandmother wanted to keep me off the streets.
 - D. My mother bought me them.
3. What was the influence of the purchase of that equipment?
- A. It wasted much of my time.
 - B. It led to me becoming LL Cool J.
 - C. It had no influence on me.
 - D. It made me commit crimes.
4. Of all the following statements, which is true about grandmother?
- A. She was poor and kind.
 - B. She supported me in whatever I wanted to do, but she didn't guide me.
 - C. She was generous, but she was tough.
 - D. She encouraged me to give up what I couldn't do.
5. In the last paragraph, "your dreams seem a million miles away" means that _____.
- A. You can never realize your dream.
 - B. You can realize your dream after a long distance.
 - C. You will realize your dream soon.
 - D. Your dream will not come true.

Passage 3

My Unforgettable Moment

The old saying that you should live each day as though it's your last is a nice sentiment, but it doesn't work. Take it from me .it tried it once here's what I learned: if I pursued only happiness and lived just for the moment, I'd a poor husband and father, a waster with a perpetual three-day growth on my chin cancer taught me that. Suffering, I learned is as essential to a good life, and as inextricable, as bliss

Before cancer, whatever I imagined happiness to be, pretty soon I wrote it out, take it for granted or threw it away .a portfolio, a Porsche ,a coffee machine –these things were important to me .so was my hair .then I lost them; including the hair .

When I was 25, I was diagnosed with advanced testicular cancer, which had metastasized into my lungs and brain. I sold my car, gave my career as a world-class cyclist, lost a good deal of money and barely hung on to my life. When I went into remission, I thought happiness would mean being self-indulgent. Not knowing how much time I had left, I didn't intend to suffer ever again.

I had suffered months of fear, chemotherapy so strong it left burn-like marks under my skin and surgery to remove two tumours. happiness to me then was waking up.

I ate Mexican food, played golf and lay on the couch .the pursuit of happiness meant going to my favorite restaurant and pursuing a plate of enchiladas with tomatillo sauce.

Two events changed me .the first happened one night at dinner. My wife Kristin put down her fork and said, "you need to decide something: are you going to a golf-playing ,beer-drinking, Mexican-food-eating slob for the rest of your life ?if you are ,I'll still love you .but I need known because., if so ,I'll go and get a job .I'm not going to sit at home while you play golf ."

I stared at her.

"I'm so bored," she supposed

Suddenly I understood that I was bored too. Bored and purposeless.

I realized that responsibility, the routines and habits of shaving in the morning ,having a job to do and a wife to love-these were the things tied my days together and gave them a pattern deserving of the term living .

In days I was back on my bike .for the first time in my life, I rode with strength and stamina-and purpose.

The second moment arrived along with the birth of my son luck .i grew up with a father; he left home before I was able to walk .so I vowed that if I ever had a child, I would be there for him in every way –the whole day .

Because of cancer ,having a child would obviously not be easy .i had had sperm frozen .Kristin had to have an operation ,and Luck was conceived by in vitro fertilization .he developed normally ,but Kristin had trouble during the delivery .the baby was in crisis and doctor had to use forceps .he was tiny ,blue ,not crying and his lungs weren't filling air .so they grabbed him from Kristin ,whisked him into aside room ,put a mask over his face and pumped air into his lungs .

I remember just standing there helplessly, Kristin looking at me, asking, "what's wrong? What's wrong?" And I didn't have a answer .I could the doctors working, yet I was helpless .I have been through a lot of scary stuff, but that topped everything.

Medical personnel dashed in and out of the room .I was thinking .Cry, please cry.

I was petrified .at that moment I would have done anything just to hear him scream.

Then I saw them remove the mask .I opened his mouth and scrunched his face and let out a big, strong "whaaaaaaaaa!"

It sounded like the wail of life .i had wanted to show him, but he had just shown me, that life was about staying tough .you fight to go on.

Cancer was the making of me: through fear and pain I became a more compassionate and intelligent man, husband and father –and therefore a more alive one.

I remember many nights after we first brought Luck home. Sometimes I'd lift him out of his cot and take him back to bed with me, and I'd lay him on my chest.

Every cry of delighted me. He'd throw back his head and his chin would tremble, his hands would claw the air and he'd wail. "Yeah, that right," I'd tell him. "Go on."

Reading Comprehension

1. Which is the topic sentence in the first paragraph?
 - A. The old saying is a nice sentiment.
 - B. I tried it once and here's what I learned.
 - C. Cancer taught me that.
 - D. Suffering is as essential to a good life as bliss.
2. According to the passage, which is not true about the author?
 - A. It was difficult for him to have a chill.
 - B. He was diagnosed with cancer after his son was born.
 - C. He gave up his career as a cyclist because of cancer.
 - D. He became a more intelligent man through fear and pain.
3. What does his son's cry symbolize?