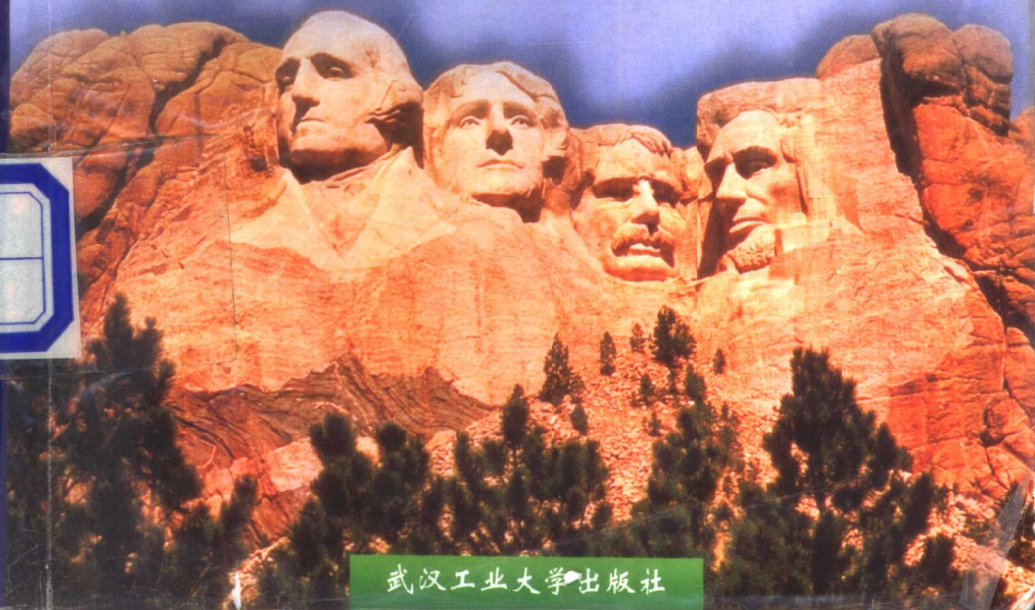


大学英语

文化背景知识

Background Knowledge on College English

郭跃华 主编



武汉工业大学出版社

大学英语文化背景知识

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图书在版编目(CIP)数据

大学英语文化背景知识/郭跃华主编.

—武汉:武汉工业大学出版社,2000.12

ISBN 7-5629-1662-4

I. 大… I. 郭… ①英语-工具书 ②工具书-英汉 N. H317

武汉工业大学出版社出版发行

(武昌路狮子路122号 邮政编码:430070)

各地新华书店经销

武汉工业大学出版社印刷厂印刷

开本:850×1168 1/32 印张:14.75 字数:383千字

2000年12月第1版 2000年12月第1次印刷

印数:1—5000册 定价:22.00元

(本书如有印装质量问题可向承印厂调换)

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前 言

英语学习的三大要素是语言基本知识、语言应用技能和文化背景知识。这三者是一种相辅相成、密切相关的关系,要想学好英语,这三者之间缺一不可。在我们以前的大学英语教学中,往往只重视语言基础知识的教学,似乎是学生们学好了语法,记住了一定数量的单词,掌握了一些句型,在考试中能运用一些考试技巧来对付阅读理解、完型填空、翻译、多项选择等考题,就算是学好了英语。其实不然,我们学习英语的目的是为了与外国人进行交流,交流的方式多种多样,既有面对面的口头交流,也有书信、阅读等书面交流。然而,在交流的过程当中,如何能更迅速、更准确、更恰当地传递信息,并能迅速地接收信息,还须尽量使内容丰富,气氛融洽,避免一些因文化差异而引起的误解和尴尬,这才是最为重要的。而要做到这一点,仅凭一点语言知识是远远不够的。这就要求我们尽可能较为全面地了解西方国家的文化,世界各国的历史、民族、社会、科学技术、经济、习俗、宗教、文学艺术等各方面的情况。不然的话,当美国人提到 Uncle Sam, Soho, Irangate, 恐怕也只能是一脸的茫然了。

《大学英语文化背景知识》(以下简称《背景知识》)是根据上海外语教育出版社出版的《大学英语》(精读)1~4 册编写的。《背景知识》摘录了《大学英语》中出现的大部分与文化知识有关的条目,采用英汉对照的方式进行编写,所涉及的文化知识内容包括英国、美国、加拿大、澳大利亚、新西兰、法国、中国和其他国家,涵盖这些国家的政体、民族、习俗、名人、历史、机构、重大事件、地理、城市与名胜、科学技术、经济贸易、文学艺术、教育、社会问题、宗教、卫生和体育等。在编排体例上按照《大学英语》中的 1~4 册顺序排列,

每册中又以每单元的顺序排列,每单元中的词条按照在课文中出现的顺序排列。在《背景知识》后附有英语国家行政划分、世界重大节日和索引。

《背景知识》的全部英文条文选自英语国家出版的最新的百科全书、专著、辞典、教材或书刊杂志等,经过我们删节、压缩或改写,每个条目内容简洁、详实,具有代表性。书中已经出现的条目后面不再重复,而用“见 Unit...,Book...”来表示。

我们希望《大学英语文化背景知识》能帮助大学生们更多地了解西方国家的各方面的文化知识,成为他们英语学习的良师益友,也能成为各层次的英语教师或从事外事、外经活动人士的好帮手。

编 者

2000 年 12 月

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Unit 1

How to Improve Your Study Habits

怎样改进你的学习习惯

grading system 评分等级

Schools, colleges and universities in Great Britain and the United States commonly use letter grades to indicate the quality of a student's academic performance: A (excellent), B (good), C (average), and F (failing). In the United States, work rated C or above is usually required of an undergraduate student to continue his/her studies; work rated B or higher is usually required of a graduate student to continue. In percentage scales, 100 percent is the highest mark, and 70 percent (or 65 percent) is usually the lowest passing mark.

在英国和美国的学校、学院和大学都使用字母表示的等级计分法,用以表示一个学生的学业水平:A表示优秀,B表示良好,C表示一般,F表示不及格。在美国,大学生要想继续学业必须得到C级或更高的分数,而研究生要求获得B级或更高的分数。如果用百分制,100分是最高分数,70分(或65分)通常是最低及格分数。

Chicago 芝加哥

The third largest city in the United States at the south end

of Lake Michigan in Illinois, and is the chief railway centre for the U. S. A.

The city's rise was rapid and largely unplanned, much like that of Houston, Dallas, or Las Vegas. As Chicago grew, it was considerably spread out across the surrounding countryside, and many outlying districts are as automobile-oriented as Los Angeles. Chicago also prided itself on being the center of industrial innovation with what were the late 19th-century equivalents of today's high-tech industries. Chicago regarded itself as much more informal, sincere, and democratic than the stuffy, elite-led cities of the East coast. While now regarded by those living nearer the Pacific Ocean as part of the East, Chicago for much of its history regarded itself as the capital of the West.

芝加哥是位于伊利诺斯州的密歇根湖南端的美国第三大城市,是美国主要铁路中心。

芝加哥发展迅速,然而杂乱无章,在许多方面与休斯敦、达拉斯或拉斯维加斯有相似之处。随着芝加哥的发展,城市向周围的郊区扩张,许多边缘地区成为与洛杉矶一样的以汽车制造业为主导的工业区。芝加哥还能引以为豪的是,它是工业变革的中心,今天的高科技工业与19世纪的工业革命一样受人瞩目。芝加哥人自认为他们比精英云集的东部沿海城市的人们更随意、更真诚、更加民主。现在,尽管生活在太平洋附近的人们将芝加哥看成是东部的一部分,但在历史上很长时期,芝加哥认为它是西部的首府。

Anglo-Saxons 盎格鲁撒克逊人

The Anglo-Saxons refer to the Germanic or Teutonic people who invaded Britain in the 5th, 6th centuries. They came from the area that is now Denmark, northern Germany and the

Netherlands. Teutonic tribes from northwestern Europe began to raid Roman-occupied Britain in the 3rd century. Not long after Roman troops were withdrawn from Britain (407~410A. D.), bands from 3 distinct but closely related tribes—the Angles, Saxons and Jutes—sailed across the North Sea in search of land for settlement into Britain. For nearly 2 centuries, a steady stream of Teutonic invaders followed. Roman civilization was destroyed; its language, religion, and customs disappeared. Most of the Celtic people were killed, enslaved or driven into Wales and to Brittany in the northwestern part of France. By the beginning of the 7th century, they had set up seven kingdoms, often referred to as the Heptarchy in history. These were Northumbria, Mercia, East Anglia, Essex, Sussex, Wessex and Kent.

盎格鲁撒克逊人是指在五、六世纪入侵不列颠的日尔曼人和条顿人。他们来自位于现在丹麦、德国北部和荷兰的地区。条顿部落于三世纪开始袭击当时被罗马人占据的不列颠，在罗马军队撤离不列颠后不久（公元 407~410），大批来自三个不同部落，却关系紧密的盎格鲁人、撒克逊人和朱特人，渡过北海，为寻求殖民土地进入不列颠。在近两个世纪里，不断有条顿入侵者接踵而来，罗马文明被毁，其语言、宗教、习俗不复存在。大多数凯尔特人被害，有的成为奴隶，有的被赶到威尔士和位于法国西北部的布利特尼。到 7 世纪初，他们建立了七个王国，史称“七国”：诺森布里亚、麦西亚、东盎格利亚、埃塞克斯、苏塞克斯、威塞克斯和肯特。

American Indians 美洲印第安人

American Indians were the earliest known inhabitants of the Americas. Their ancestors entered America from Asia more than

20,000 years ago. Some archaeologists have suggested that this migration began much earlier—by at least 40,000 ago. When Columbus discovered America in 1492, the continents may have been peopled by as many as 25 ~ 50 million Indians. This population was concentrated chiefly in the area from Mexico southward, through the Peruvian-Bolivian highlands. Not over one million natives, perhaps less, were scattered sparsely over the area north of Mexico. The domestication of previously unknown food plants was perhaps the greatest of American Indian contributions to man. Of the hundreds of plant species the Indians cultivated, more than 50 are now of major significance worldwide, which include maize, potatoes, cassava, beans, squash, tomatoes, cashews etc. For centuries after European contact, native American populations suffered rapid decline. The influence of the Indians and Indian ways of life upon European settlers and hence upon the civilization in many parts of America today includes elements of the aboriginal cultures.

美洲印第安人是已知的美洲最古老的居民。他们的祖先在两万多年前从亚洲来到美洲,有的考古学家认为这一迁移开始得还要早,至少在四万年以前。当哥伦布 1492 年发现美洲时,约有两千五百万至五千万印第安人,人口主要集中在墨西哥,往南至秘鲁——玻利维亚高地。不到一百万甚至更少的土著人散居在墨西哥以北的地区。最早种植以前不为人所知的作物可能是美洲印第安人对人类的最伟大的贡献,在印第安人栽培的众多作物中,有 50 多种在全世界都极为重要,包括玉米、马铃薯、木薯、大豆、笋瓜、西红柿和腰果等。印第安人及其生活方式对欧洲殖民者的影响,继而对现代美洲大部分地区文明的影响,涵盖了许多土著文化因素。

tuition 学费

The cost of higher education in the United States varies by type of institution. Tuition is highest at private four-year institutions, and lowest at public two-year institutions. The private four-year colleges doubled their average tuition rates between 1985 and 1995. For private four-year colleges, tuition and fees for the 1996 academic year averaged about \$15,581, compared with \$3151 at public four-year colleges. The cost of attending an institution of higher education includes not only tuition and fees, however, but also books and supplies, transportation, personal expenses and, sometimes, room and board. Although tuition and fees generally are substantially lower at public institutions, than at private ones, the other student costs are about the same. The average cost for tuition, fees, and room and board for the 1996 academic year at private four-year colleges was \$22,469. At public four-year colleges the average combined cost was \$7451.

美国高等教育费用根据学校性质的不同而变化。四年制私立大学的学费最高,而两年制的公立大学的学费最低。四年制的私立大学在1985年至1995年间将平均学费翻了一番。私立大学1996学年的学费和费用平均约为15,581美元,而公立大学只要3151美元。上大学的费用不仅仅是学费和杂费,而且还包括书本费及其他用品费用、交通费、零用钱,有时还需要交食宿费。公立大学的学费和杂费虽然一般比私立大学的费用低,但是其他费用却基本上相同。1996年在四年制私立大学的平均学费、杂费、食宿费为22,469美元,而四年制的公立学院的综合平均费用是7451美元。

classical music 古典音乐

The term classical music has several meanings. Music from the classical age—the Western historical period of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven—is classical music. In China classical music refers to the ancient Chinese music before the influence of Western art forms. In the West it has come to be a synonym for art music in contrast to popular and folk musics and is used here in this sense.

该词有几种意思：古典时期的音乐——西方的海顿、莫扎特、和贝多芬历史时期——是古典音乐；在中国，古典音乐指受到西方艺术形式影响之前的中国音乐。在西方国家，古典音乐已经成为与流行音乐和民间音乐形成鲜明对照的艺术音乐的同义词。

hobbies 业余爱好

A leisure-time interest or activity taken up primarily for pleasure. A hobby may involve the development of intricate knowledge of or capability in a special field. For example: fishing, stamp-collecting, coin-collecting, photography, travelling, etc.

主要作为娱乐的休闲兴趣或活动，业余爱好指对某个特别方面的专门知识和能力的培养。例如：钓鱼、集邮、收集钱币、摄影、旅行等。

habits 习惯

A tendency to repeat an act again and again, or a behaviour pattern that has a degree of unconscious stubborn repetition. For

example: a habit of scratching one's head when thinking, the habit of smoking, a habit of thrift, a reading habit, and a note-taking habit.

习惯指不断重复某种动作或在某种程度上无意识地、不断地重复的一种行为方式。例如：思考时搔头的习惯，吸烟的习惯，节俭的习惯，阅读习惯，以及记笔记的习惯。