

# 国际商贸英语



丁溪 侯银霞 主编

哈尔滨工业大学出版社

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主编 丁 溪 侯银霞

主审 孙德智

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# 前 言

面对 21 世纪扑面而来的信息技术的不断发展,我们的社会正在发生着深刻的变化,并将给整个人类社会带来前所未有的深刻影响。

新世纪之初,世界经济增长的发动机——美国经济开始下滑,号称世界第二经济大国的日本,经济也开始停滞不前,欧盟经济增长趋缓,拉美经济也经历着困难,非洲大陆的经济近几年虽然有了一定的发展,但和发达国家的差距不断扩大。很多不发达国家正在被边缘化。

在世界大部分国家和地区经济不景气的情况下,中国、俄罗斯和印度的经济增长令人瞩目。随着内部不断的结构调整和深化改革,中、俄、印等国的经济发展将更加融入世界,成为世界经济增长的新亮点。

本教材根据当前国际经济、政治形势的最新发展,紧扣时代脉搏,以最新的视角、最大的信息量、最新的观点介绍了美国、日本、欧盟、中国和俄罗斯等国目前的经济状况和发展趋势及对世界经济的影响,同时还介绍了一些重要的国际组织的产生、作用和当代一些国际经济理论等。该教材是目前我国高等院校经济类及各经贸类大专院校、中等专业学校专业外语的理想选择,同时也将受到广大专业外语爱好者的欢迎。中国人世后,对专业外语人才的需求将更加迫切,本教材的出版对我国涉外人员、三资企业、独资企业等人员的专业外语水平的提高将有很大帮助。

本教材内容丰富,语言纯正、地道,形式多样,除正文外,每篇课文还配有单词表、阅读材料、注释和练习等,并通过这些内容来加深对课文的进一步理解。

本教材在编写过程中得到哈尔滨工业大学人文学院副院长高长春教授的热情指导和大力支持,并获得许多宝贵的意见,我们对此表示衷心的感谢。

本教材由丁溪、侯银霞同志主编。由于编者的水平有限,疏漏和缺点在所难免,希望使用本书的教师和学生及各届朋友批评指正。

编 者  
2002年5月

# 目 录

## Unit 1

How the United States Economy works (1)

美国经济是如何运转的(1) ..... 1

Reading material: American Economy(1)

美国经济(1) ..... 8

## Unit 2

How the United States Economy works (2)

美国经济是如何运转的(2) ..... 11

Reading material: American Economy(2)

美国经济 ..... 20

## Unit 3

The European Economy Between Global Markets and Internal Challenges(1)

面临全球市场与内部挑战的欧洲经济(1) ..... 22

Reading material: 911 Emergency: The War Against Terrorism  
2001

911 恐怖事件: 2001 反恐战争 ..... 32

## Unit 4

The European Economy Between Global Markets and Internal Challenges(2)

面临全球市场与内部挑战的欧洲经济(2) ..... 36

Reading material: Foreign Exchange Markets

外汇市场 ..... 43

## Unit 5

Structural Reform of the Japanese Economy: Basic Policies  
for Macroeconomic Management

日本经济的结构改革: 宏观经济管理的基本政策 ..... 46

Reading material: Contained Dynamism of the Japanese  
Economy

日本经济的内在活力 ..... 53

## Unit 6

The Russian Economy: Prospects and Retrospect(1)

俄罗斯经济的前景与回顾(1) ..... 56

Reading material: The Virtual Economy

虚拟经济 ..... 62

## Unit 7

The Russian Economy: Prospects and Retrospect (2)

俄罗斯经济的前景与回顾(2) ..... 65

Reading material: Documentation

国际贸易单证 ..... 73

## Unit 8

Euro, European Integration and the World Economy

欧元, 欧洲整合与世界经济 ..... 76

Reading material: The First Year of EMLL

欧元区的第一年 ..... 84

## Unit 9

The World Bank

世界银行 ..... 86

Reading material: History of the world Bank

世界银行的历史 ..... 92

## Unit 10

The Theory of Comparative Advantage(1)	
比较优势理论(1) .....	94

## Unit 11

The Theory of Comparative Advantage(2)	
比较优势理论(2) .....	101
Reading material: Comparative Advantage	
比较优势 .....	107

## Unit 12

The Theory of Comparative Advantage(3)	
比较优势理论(3) .....	110
Reading material: David Ricardo	
大卫·李嘉图 .....	115

## Unit 13

Call Options	
看涨期权 .....	117
Reading material: Basic Option Concepts: How to Use Options	
基本的期权概念:怎样使用期权 .....	123

## Unit 14

Green Ideas for Pollution Control in Developing Nations	
发展中国家控制污染的绿色构想 .....	125
Reading material: Economic Goods	
经济物品 .....	137

## Unit 15

Stocks(1)	
股票 .....	139
Reading material: Modern Portfolio Theory Made Easy	



当代证券组合理论浅析 .....	146
<b>Unit 16</b>	
Stocks(2)	
股票 .....	148
Reading material: International Trade	
国际贸易 .....	156
<b>Unit 17</b>	
History of ASEAN (1)	
东盟的发展史(1) .....	158
Reading material: Advertising	
广告 .....	165
<b>Unit 18</b>	
History of ASEAN (2)	
东盟的发展史(2) .....	167
Reading material: Letter of credit	
信用证 .....	174
<b>Unit 19</b>	
William H. Gates	
威廉·比尔盖茨 .....	176
Reading material: Internet Economy	
网络经济 .....	182
<b>Unit 20</b>	
The Accounting System	
会计系统 .....	184
Reading material: Electronic currency	
电子货币 .....	190
<b>Unit 21</b>	
Accountant	

会计师 .....	194
Reading material: Working with Your Accountant	
与会计师工作 .....	199

## Unit 22

Multimodal Transport	
多样运输方式 .....	201
Reading material: Bill of Lading	
提单 .....	207

## Unit 23

What Is the Internet Economy	
什么是网络经济 .....	209
Reading material: Green Trade Opportunities and Obstacles for Developing Countries	
发展中国家的绿色贸易机会和障碍 .....	214

## Unit 24

China's Economic Conditions	
中国的经济状况 .....	217
Reading material: Benefits of Free Trade under Monopolistic Competition	
垄断竞争条件下自由贸易的益处 .....	224

## Unit 25

China's Trade Patterns	
中国的贸易方式 .....	227
Reading material: The Quality Management Principles	
质量管理原则 .....	236

## Unit 26

Major Issues in China-U.S. Economic Relations	
中美经济关系的主要问题 .....	239

Reading material: How to Become a Good Manager 如何成为一名优秀的管理者(一个好经理) .....	246
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## Unit 27

The Thirteenth APEC Ministerial Meeting (1) 第十三届 APEC 部长级会议(1) .....	248
Reading material: APEC 亚太经济合作组织 .....	257

## Unit 28

The Thirteenth APEC Ministerial Meeting (2) 第十三届 APEC 部长级会议(2) .....	259
Reading Material: Future Brokers 期货经济人 .....	267

## Unit 29

The Thirteenth APEC Ministerial Meeting (3) 第十三届 APEC 部长级会议(3) .....	270
Reading Material: Futures Investing Strategy 期货投资战略 .....	277

## Unit 30

The Thirteenth APEC Ministerial Meeting (4) 第十三届 APEC 部长级会议(4) .....	280
Reading material: Cross-Cultural Negotiation 跨文化谈判 .....	287

## Unit 31

In PR, You Get What You Pay For 公共关系, 付出就会得到 .....	289
Reading material: Brief History of Lloyd's 劳埃德的简史 .....	294

## Unit 32

### The Product Life Cycle

产品的生命周期 ..... 296

### Reading material: The Product Life Cycle

产品的生命周期 ..... 301

Key to Exercise ..... 304

参考文献 ..... 312

# Unit 1

## How the United States Economy Works (1)

——美国经济是如何运转的

The marriage between the United States economy and the free enterprise system has been a hugely successful one, but not one without problems. From the time of early American statesman Alexander Hamilton, there has been conflict over what should be the proper role of government in the economy; at various times government has intervened to stimulate the growth of certain industries, to regulate business when abuses began to appear, to appear, to provide protection in the form of tariffs for industries hurt by imports, and sometimes to redistribute wealth. Government's role has ebbed and flowed, according to the needs of the time.

The United States has what is usually described as a capitalist economy. But capitalism is a term coined by Karl Marx that referred to the concentration of control of the most important parts of the economy by a small group of capitalists. By contrast, most Americans think of capitalism as meaning "free enterprise," a system that benefits millions, not just a few. Free enterprise as an idea can be simply described, but it is how this idea is applied to

real life that is important. This chapter attempts to describe how free enterprise works in the United States as evidenced by the historical record.

### **BASIC INGREDIENTS OF THE U.S. ECONOMY**

Every economic system tries to anticipate and then meet human needs through the production and distribution of goods and services. The economic system is the mechanism that brings together natural resources, the labor supply, technology, and the necessary entrepreneurial and managerial talents. Although the type of economic system used by a nation is the result of a political decision, it is also in even larger part the result of a historical experience that, over time, becomes a national culture.

The first ingredient of an economic system is the natural resources from which goods are produced. The United States is a land rich in mineral resources and fertile farm soil, together with a moderate climate.

Second, the amount of available labor helps determine the health of an economy. Generally, the United States has been fortunate in having enough people to provide the labor necessary for a constantly expanding economy. Until shortly after World War I, most of these workers were either immigrants (or their immediate descendants) who came to America from Europe, or African whose forebears were brought to America as slaves. When too many laborers arrived to be absorbed on the East Coast, they could usually move on to farmland in the interior and be productively absorbed in that part of the economy.

In the early years of the 20th century, large numbers of Asian (Chinese, Japanese, Filipino) immigrants came to the United States, while large number of Latin American immigrants came in

the later years. Economic opportunity also attracted black Americans from Southern farms to Northern cities in the first half of the 20th century.

Although the United States has sometimes experienced periods of acute unemployment or the reverse, labor shortages, on the whole, immigrants came when work was plentiful. The U. S. economy usually grew fast enough to absorb the newcomers, provided they were willing to work productively at slightly less than the wage rates paid to acculturated workers. Overall, immigrants prospered, earning far more than they would have in their native lands, and the economy of the nation prospered as well.

Another factor in any economic system is the quality of available labor — how hard people are willing to work and how skilled they are. In the United States, the frontier demanded hard work, and the Protestant work ethic supported that demand. The strong emphasis placed on education, including technical and vocational education, also contributed to America's economic success. Likewise the willingness to experiment, to change and to invest in technology was significant in a land that had prided itself on being a new experiment in freedom.

But the existence of abundant natural resources and a skillful and willing labor force accounts for only part of the structure of an economic system. The resources must be directed as efficiently as possible into the areas where they will be most productive. In the American economy, managers of enterprises responding to signals from markets perform this function.

Large blocks of resources must be available for major investments. In America, entrepreneurs accumulate money and

then invest in projects — but supplies, hire workers and sell products — that seem likely to give a high return on the original investment. This is determined on the basis of and assessment of the wants and needs of those who buy goods and services — what is known as consumer demand.

In the United States, the corporation has proved to be an effective device for accumulating funds for investment. This is a voluntary association of owners, known as stockholders, who form a business enterprise that is marked by limited liability.

Once the first entrepreneurial investment of capital has been made, someone must be hired to manage the new business, factory or other endeavors. Modern America has developed a chain of managerial command, from the foreman at the loading dock to the chief executive in the boardroom, whose job is to see that the business runs smoothly and efficiently. Good management often can make the difference between a successful or unsuccessful operation. In early 20th century America, management was said to be based heavily on systematic analysis; “scientific management” became a veritable movement. But later in the century, views on management became more diverse.

#### **A MIXED ECONOMY: THE U.S. SYSTEM**

The economic system of the United States is principally one of private ownership. This system, often referred to as a “free enterprise system,” can be contrasted with a socialist economic system, which depends heavily on government planning and public ownership of the means of production planning and public ownership of the means of production.

Yet government has to some extent always been involved in regulating and guiding the U.S. economy. At the same time, U.



S. citizens have always had the freedom to choose for whom they will work, and what they will buy. Most importantly, Americans vote for officials who set economic policy.

In the U.S. economic system, consumers, producers and the government make decisions on a daily basis, mainly through the price system. The dynamic interaction of these three groups makes the economy function. The market's primary force, however, is the interaction of producers and consumers; this has led analysts to dub the U.S. economic system a "market economy."

As a rule, consumers look for the best values for what they spend, while producers seek the best price and profit for what they have to sell. Government, at the federal, state and local levels, seeks to promote the public safety, assure reasonable competition, and provide a range of services believed to be better performed by public rather than private enterprise. Some of these public services include the administration of justice, education (although there are many private schools and training centers), the postal (but not the telephone) service, the road system, social statistical reporting and, of course, national defense.

In this system, when economic forces are unfettered, supply and demand establish the prices of goods and services. Entrepreneurs are free to develop their businesses. In theory, unless they can provide goods or services of a quality and price to compete with others, they are driven from the market, so only the most efficient and those who best serve the public remain in business. In practice, government regulations can interfere with pure competition in order to promote other national policy objectives such as price and income stability, regional development or environmental preservation. Similarly, businesses