

文化篇

21st Century
The newspaper for the new millennium
THURSDAY, MARCH 30, 2000
第340期 2000年3月30日 邮发代号: 1-181 每份定价: 1.5元

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《21世纪报》 英语读物精粹

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The Best from The 21st Century
— Our Kaleidoscopic World

何兆熊 选编

上海外语教育出版社 外教社



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上海外语教育出版社

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图书在版编目(CIP)数据

《21 世纪报》英语读物精粹. 2. 文化篇 / 何兆熊选编.

上海: 上海外语教育出版社, 2000. 4

ISBN 7-81046-825-1

I. 2… II. 何… III. 英语-语言读物-文化

IV. H319.4

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字(1999)第 54560 号

《21 世纪报》英语读物精粹(2)

出版发行: 上海外语教育出版社

(上海外国语大学内) 邮编: 200083

电 话: 021-65425300 (总机), 65422031 (发行部)

电子邮箱: bookinfo@slep.com.cn

网 址: <http://www.slep.com.cn> <http://www.slep.com>

责任编辑: 汪义群

印 刷: 中共上海市委党校印刷厂
经 销: 新华书店上海发行所
开 本: 850×1092 1/32 印张 8.75 字数 235 千字
版 次: 2000年 6 月第 1 版 2000年 10 月第 2 次印刷
印 数: 8 000 册

书 号: ISBN 7-81046-825-1 / G · 909

定 价: 12.90 元

本版图书如有印装质量问题, 可向本社调换

编者前言

《21 世纪报》是颇受广大读者,尤其是青少年读者欢迎的一份国内出版的英文报纸。这份报纸之所以能拥有较大的读者群,无疑是因为它具有较高的可读性。所谓可读性体现在内容和文字两个方面。就内容而言,除了重大的国内外时事新闻外,这份报纸刊登的许多文章的内容都是广大青少年读者感兴趣的,和他们的生活十分贴近的;就文字而言,这份报纸的英语比较浅近,具有高中以上英语水平的人大体都能阅读。

尽快、尽好地掌握英语,是广大青少年的迫切愿望。大量阅读是学习外语的一种重要方法。但总的来说,目前适合青少年阅读的英语出版物还不够多。于是我们便萌发了从《21 世纪报》中挑选一些精粹文章汇编成册,以飨读者的想法。我们翻阅了 1995 年以来的《21 世纪报》,根据内容分别汇编成《文化篇》、《语言篇》、《科技篇》和《思考篇》四种,为减少阅读过程中的阻力,我们对文集集中的部分生词、难点和难句作了一些注释。这样的读物具有很强的知识性和趣味性。读者不仅能获得大量有关世界各国的社会文化知识、有关英语语言的知识、最新的科技发展信息,学会不少做人的道理,同时也必将提高自己的英语水平。可以说是“轻轻松松学英语”的一种好方式。

我们相信我们所做的这项工作是有意义的,广大读者一定能从这套读物中获益。对《21 世纪报》编辑部给予的支持,我们在此表示感谢。

2000 年 5 月

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US high school students live colourful lives

Editor's note:^①

In this series, you'll read the names of Jodie, Robert and Sarah very often. They are three children from the same family. Jodie, 19 years old, is the oldest child and goes to college. Robert is Jodie's brother, two years younger than she is. He is still in high school. Sarah is the youngest and she goes to elementary school.

Social life

In US high schools, there is often as much interest in other students as there is in school subjects. You can see this when you look at a typical high school yearbook, there is a picture of every teacher and student. Other photos show teachers and students at football and basketball games, in class, at club meetings, or at school dances.

① editor's note 编者按

Choosing leaders is a large part of high school life. The children decide which students should help direct school business and lead them in the Student Council.^① The council is usually a group of five or six students who talk to the school administration and teachers about what happens at school. About once a month, some of the Student Council leaders go to a meeting of the PTSA (Parent Teacher Student Association). There they work with parents and teachers to make their school better.

For many students in US high schools, the important things in their lives are making friends, being popular, and having a good social life. Many students go out together after school — to fast food restaurants, movies, or dances. One big social event that takes place in high schools is the “prom,” (from the word promenade; originally French for “to walk”) or school dance. The students go to the prom in couples. The boys wear “tuxedos,”^② and the girls wear beautiful dresses.

During the high school years, students make strong friendships. They remember high school friends and other students long after they have finished school. So every 10 years or so, they come together. They have a special party called a “class reunion”. with others from their graduating class and all the students who finished school the same year. At that big class party, the students look at old yearbook photos and talk about what happened at school and what has happened since then. They often remember the high school years as the best years of their lives.

① The children decide ... Student's Council. 由孩子们决定哪些学生组成学生会帮助管理学校和领导学生。

② tuxedo /tʌk'si:dəu / (美) (男子在晚间正式场合所穿的) 黑色礼服

Sports in school

Americans learn sports as part of their education. They learn two or more ball games, such as football or basketball. At high school, they choose groups of boys or girls to make teams. They choose those who are best at that sport. These teams compete against teams from other schools. In many schools students learn wrestling, running, tennis, golf and swimming. They have teams for some of these sports, too.

Robert's high school basketball team is very good. They have won the most games against other high school basketball teams in their state. Robert's parents, friends, and teachers all travel with the team to other schools to watch them play.

Robert's team practices often. The team meets every day after school, and two Saturdays a month. Sometimes Robert wishes he had more time to meet with his friends, and he doesn't like getting up early on Saturdays. But most of the time he is happy to be on the team. He loves basketball, and he enjoys playing against other schools.

The games between schools are often very exciting. Other students, the ones not on the team, love to watch them. They let everyone know this by shouting and cheering when their team plays well.

There is a special club of girls and boys (mostly girls) who jump up and down and shout for their football team. They call themselves cheerleaders^①, because they lead everyone in shouts and cheers. They wear clothes of a special colour — the colour of their school's team. The football players wear that colour, too. Each school has a team colour

① cheerleaders 啦啦队领头

and a team name. Cheerleaders call out the team name in their cheers. They practice many hours to learn the special jumping and cheering. Cheerleading is almost a sport itself.

Every classroom has an American flag in it. From elementary to high school, students start each day by standing up and saluting the flag. They put their hands over their hearts and say the “Pledge of Allegiance^①.” This is a promise to the country. It was written by people who came to the US over 200 years ago. Saluting the flag helps people think about the United States and its freedoms.

Ceremonies in school

At many high schools and universities there is a big football game once a year and a parade afterwards. This is called “Homecoming.” Students who graduated from the school like to return for Homecoming to see their old friends and teachers again. In the parade cheerleaders and football players walk together. The school band plays loud music for their fans and team. The parade is full of the school colours.

In US schools there are ceremonies for students who have done good work in school or who are excellent at sports. At these special ceremonies all the students and teachers come together. They watch the school director give prizes to the students. Sometimes the prize is money to be used for study at university.

When students graduate from high school, each of them gets a prize. The prize they get is the high school diploma, written on nice paper with the name of the student and the school. Afterwards the graduating class has a big party, or “prom.” Everyone wears fine clothes and a band plays dance

① Pledge of Allegiance 效忠誓言

music. It is a party to remember. Students, teachers, and parents have worked hard for each diploma^①. Graduation is the greatest ceremony of all in US schools.

① diploma 毕业证书, 文凭

A new trend as US public schools offer foreign languages

WASHINGTON — As ties between distant nations deepen and spread, US public schools in almost every state now offer core subjects in a language other than English — a new development for a nation with a historic tradition of isolationism and monolingualism.^①

The teaching of key, non-language subjects in foreign languages, or “language immersion programmes”^② — which were first established in Canada — have become ever more popular in the United States.

“It’s definitely a trend,” said Nancy Rhodes, a spokeswoman for the Washington-based Centre for Applied Linguistics (CAL), a nonprofit organization.

Since 1995 alone, according to CAL, 15 US school districts have started new immersion programmes in languages ranging from French, Spanish and German to Chinese, Hawaiian and others.

① isolationism and monolingualism 孤立主义和单语主义

② language immersion programme (学习外语时)沉浸式强化训练教学

One programme under study by CAL has nearly 700 students “immersed” in French, in two elementary schools, two middle schools and one high school, all located near Washington in Prince George’s County, Virginia.

The students are taught the country’s full course curriculum in French starting in kindergarten.

Bonnie Bundy, an aide to Prince George’s County superintendent Jerome Clark, said the magnet language programme was created in 1984 partly to help desegregate^① county schools, where more than 70 per cent of their 130,000 students are African-American.

The immersion programme is growing every year, with the county school board meeting this week to consider a second high school French immersion programme, Bundy said.

The immersion programme is not meant to be a mere “language programme,” said Pat Barr-Harrison, the county school district supervisor of foreign languages.

The goal is to teach students the core subjects, she said, as well as to learn a second language.

The first students to go through the programme will complete high school next June with an international baccalaureate (qualification for higher education).

Elementary school students study in French all day starting in kindergarten. Results have shown that the students tend to do very well academically, Barr-Harrison said.

Kindergarten students could answer questions in French just one month after the beginning of the school year, according to Bundy. “I found that fascinating that they could pick up the language so quickly,” she said.

Bundy said the programmes will stay because parents, many of whom do not speak French, demand it.

① desegregate 废止种族隔离

“It’s a very popular programme,” she said.

Isaac Yehiel, a French immersion teacher at Greenbelt Middle school, said he was proud of his students.

The parents, he says, are very interested in their children’s education and come to the parent-teacher conferences.

Jay Gordon, who has two middle and high school children who went through the programme, said both of his children had excellent teachers.

Gordon, who speaks no French, said he wanted his children to have the advantage of learning a second language in elementary school.

“I thought it would be valuable for them to learn a language when it’s the easiest,” he said.

“It’s been a great education experience,” he said. “I’d send my kids again.”