

英语知识性注释读物

WINDOW
ON
THE
WORLD

英语世界之窗

马雪峰 杨传秀 李双蓉 编注
赵 伐 审阅

成都科技大学出版社

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内 容 简 介

本书为一本集知识性和趣味性为一体的英语读物,用词量在 2100 词以内,介绍了英国议会、医生的一天、肯尼迪总统遇刺事件、英国的三餐、足球俱乐部内情、伊斯兰世界的妇女等二十一个饶有兴味的专题,取材广泛,内容充实,用词简单,配有背景知识和语言难点方面的中文注释,是高中生和大学生学习英语,了解英美社会情况,开阔视野不可多得的知识性读物。

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前 言

学习英语,不仅需要学习英语的语音、词汇、语法等语言方面的知识,而且必须了解英语国家政治、经济、历史、文化、科技、习俗等各方面的社会背景情况。只有这两方面知识都具备的英语学习者,才能顺利完成语言的交际任务。

可是,在英语课堂上,我们常常发现学生因不熟悉英语国家的社会背景而出现理解障碍;在我国的涉外人员中,因国外社会知识贫乏而闹出笑话的事例也不在少数。这都提醒我们不能再把外语教学单纯作为一种语言技能训练,而必须同时教授学生掌握多方面的社会背景知识。为此,我们从国外知识性英语读物中精选部分章节编成此书,并加上语言难点和背景知识方面的注释,以帮助大、中学生在学英语的同时,开阔视野,增长知识。

本书原稿约 70 万字。方飞、王静鸿、朱万河、刘浣波、李宗华、李爱军同志(按姓氏笔划排列)参加了原稿的部分注释工作。马雪峰同志负责对原稿进行剪裁,并做个别文字更动后成书;最后,我们对全书又重新做了注释。

本书承蒙西南师范大学赵伐副教授审阅全部书稿并提出宝贵意见,在此谨致谢意。

由于我们水平有限,书中不足之处在所难免,敬希读者批评指正。

编注者

1991 年 8 月于成都

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The British Parliament

What is Parliament?

The British Parliament is in Westminster¹, in London. It is in some old buildings next to the River Thames², and next to the old clock, Big Ben³. It is a very old Parliament. It is the first. Some people call it the 'Mother of Parliaments'.

The Parliament is three things--the Queen⁴, the House of Commons⁵ and the House of Lords⁶. They work together, but the House of Commons makes the laws. The House of Commons and the House of Lords are different. There are different people in the two Houses, and they do different work. The people in the House of Commons are MPs⁷. The name is 'Members of Parliament', but all the people talk about MPs.⁸

Every country has a Parliament, but they are all different. In some countries the President is the Head of the Parliament. In Britain the Queen is the Head of the Parliament. She is very important, and she puts her name on all the new laws⁹, but she doesn't control the Parliament. She doesn't work in the Parliament buildings, and she cannot make laws or get rid of laws¹⁰.

The Queen goes to Parliament for only one day every year. She goes there to open Parliament¹¹ in November, after the MPs' long summer¹². Then she talks to Parliament, and the country¹³. She talks about the government¹⁴, and what the government is going to do in the next year.

What does Parliament do? It makes new laws for the country, and it can get rid of old or bad laws. The laws say what the

people in the country can do, and what they can't do. Parliament controls the country, too. It talks about the money for roads¹⁵, new schools, for the police or teachers, and it decides how to get this money. It decides how much money to take from the people of the country¹⁶.

The government is not the same as Parliament. The government has only about 200 people, from the big party¹⁷. This party controls the House of Commons, if it has more than 50% of the MPs. In 1983, there are 650 MPs in the House of Commons, from many parties. The government cannot always control Parliament. The 650 MPs can say 'yes' or 'no' to the government's ideas. The MPs can take the money away from the government¹⁸, so the government cannot control the country. The MPs are very important.

The MPs work in the House of Commons, and they talk about the new laws and the money problems of the country. The room is very small. There are 650 MPs, but only 437 places to sit down¹⁹. The room is not always full, because many MPs work in their offices, too.

What does an MP do?

Every MP works for the country, but he works for one part of the country, too. This is his constituency²⁰. A constituency can be a town, a part of a town, or a part of the country. The people of each constituency elect the MP, and they want him to help them and to help their part of the country. They want him to find new jobs, or new houses, or new schools for their town. The MP talks to the government and tries to get money for his constituency. He works for the 65,000—75,000 people in his constituency.

But the MP must also work for his party. In Britain there are two big parties, two small parties, and some very small parties. The big parties are the Conservative Party and the Labour Party²¹. The Conservatives²² help businessmen and people with money. The Labour Party is the party of the working people.

The two small parties are the Liberal Party and the Social Democrat Party²³. They work together, and have the name 'The Alliance'²⁴, because they make a big party together. Their ideas are in the middle -- they are not Left or Right in their ideas²⁵.

All the MPs are in one of the parties²⁶, and they agree with the ideas of the party. Perhaps they do not agree with all of the party's ideas, but they must vote with the party when it is important²⁷.

The MPs in one party work together to make new laws, to get rid of old laws, and to help the people in the country. They want to make their party the best party, and they want all the people to vote for²⁸ the men and women in their party. The parties do not pay the MPs -- the Parliament pays the MPs. In the party, the MP works on committees²⁹ with his party friends. There are 10 -- 15 MPs in a committee, and they talk about new ideas and new laws. They talk about how to get money for the government, or how to make the country better.

The MP works on committees in the Parliament, too. He sits with MPs from the other parties, and together they decide what to do about a problem or a new law.

The MP works in his constituency, too. He goes to his constituency at the weekend, or in the Parliament's holidays, and talks to the people there. If they have a problem, he tries to find an answer. He can write letters to the government about a person from his constituency, or he can telephone an important

friend to help a person in the town.

Some MPs want to do other things, too. They write about Parliament for the newspapers, and give the new ideas of their party. Or they work to help a small number of people—perhaps teachers, or old people.

MPs work very hard. They usually work about sixty-five hours a week, with about fifteen hours in the House of Commons. They don't get a lot of money—about £12,000 in 1984.

The House of Lords

There are about 1062 members of the House of Lords. Some of them are Lords (and Ladies) because their family always has a Lord. Some of them are Lords or Ladies because of their work. They work hard for the country, or for the government, and now they are a Lord or Lady.

Some are men of the law³⁰, and some are men of the Church of England³¹. These are the numbers in 1982:

Law lords	23
Men of the church	26
New Lords	155
Old Lords	<u>858</u>
	1062

Usually, only a small number of Lords come to the House of Lords and speak, or listen to the other Lords. The biggest number on one day is 394³². Usually there are 50 to 100 Lords

in the House.

The House of Lords reads and talks about the new laws from the House of Commons. The Lords cannot get rid of the new laws. If they don't agree with the new law, they can send it back to the House of Commons. Then it must wait for a year. But the Lords cannot stop it again.

The House of Lords is important, because it gives the Parliament time to think about a new law. The Parliament has time to decide if this is a good law or not.

A day in the life of an MP

An MP is talking about his work and his life as an MP.

Interviewer An MP does many different things in a day. Can you tell us what you usually do?

MP Well, I go to the House of Commons every day, from Monday to Friday. I work in my office in the morning, and sit in the House³³ in the afternoon.

The first thing I do is read my letters³⁴. I get a lot of letters from people in my constituency. On some days I get a hundred letters, so I must work hard and answer them quickly. My secretary helps me with the letters.

Interviewer What do people write about?

MP They want me to help them with a problem, or they want to tell me their ideas about a new law. Some people want me to go to a meeting and speak to them about Parliament. Some people send me information about different problems.

After my letters, I telephone some people, and I read the newspapers for new information. When I am in a committee or when I am speaking in the House of Commons, I must have a lot of information. I get this information in the morn-

ings—sometimes I go to the House of Commons library and ask for help from the people there.

Interviewer What time do you go to the House of Commons?

MP The House starts work at 2. 30. and I like to be in the House at the start³⁵. There is no meeting in the morning, because the MPs are writing letters or speaking in the committees.

I go to the House every day because the afternoon starts with Question Time³⁶. This is a very important part of the Parliament. The MPs can ask the Prime Minister and the other Ministers³⁷ of the government any question they want. We can ask very difficult questions, and the government must answer them. The government must tell us what it is doing. If we don't agree with what the government is doing, we can talk about it in Parliament.

Interviewer What comes after Question Time?

MP Sometimes I stay in the House and listen to the debate about a new Bill³⁸. Sometimes I want to speak about a new Bill, and so I spend the afternoon in the House. On some days I must go to committee meetings in the afternoon, too. I am working on five committees at the moment³⁹. I must talk to a lot of people every day, and some of them come to see me at the House. So I spend some time with people from the newspapers or the television stations, or I talk to people from my constituency when they are in London.

Interviewer When do you vote on the new Bills?

MP Oh, that can be at any time in the afternoon or evening. Sometimes I am talking to people in my office, and there is a vote. So I must run into the House and vote with my party. Then I can go back to my meeting⁴⁰.

Interviewer Can people see the work of the Parliament on tele-

vision?

MP No, not at the moment⁴¹. Some of the debates are now on the radio, and you can listen to them. But the MPs don't want to bring television cameras into the House. I think they want it to be private...!

Interviewer What time do you stop work in the House?

MP The House usually stops work at 10. 30 at night, but the debates can go into the night⁴². Sometimes the House is open all night, and there is a vote at 5 o'clock in the morning.

Interviewer What do you do in the evenings, when you don't stay for a debate?

MP I go to a lot of meetings. Sometimes I go to my constituency for a meeting, and come back in the morning. Sometimes I must go to a party meeting in London. The party wants to know what I'm doing, or it wants me to work on a committee. Sometimes we have a meeting to talk about the next election, and we decide how to get money for the party.

Making a new law

When Parliament makes a new law, it is called an Act⁴³ of Parliament. An Act of Parliament is not always a law. It can be about the government's money, and it says that the government can spend money on something. Before it is an Act, the new law or idea is a Bill. Parliament must look at it and talk about it, before it can be an Act.

A Bill can come from the government, or from an MP. Each MP can write a Private Member's Bill⁴⁴, and bring it to the Parliament. But Parliament doesn't have time to talk about all these Bills—it only has time for about 100 Bills a year. Most of these are from the government.

When the new Bill comes to Parliament, it has a first reading⁴⁵. An MP from the government reads the name of the Bill to the Parliament, but the MPs do not talk about it.

Some time after comes the second reading. Now the writer of the Bill talks about the Bill, and the other MPs ask questions. They can talk about it now, and there is a vote, too. If the vote is 'Yes', then the Bill goes to a committee. In the committee there are MPs from all the parties, and they talk about all the ideas in the Bill. They talk about every word, and they can change the Bill and make it better. They can ask other people, not MPs, to come to the committee and give their ideas. The committee is small—about fifteen MPs. But the work of a committee on a Bill can take a long time. They must talk and vote on each change in the Bill. This can take days or weeks.

Then the committee makes a report⁴⁶ to the House of Commons, and the other MPs can talk about the changes in the Bill. They can make more changes if they want to. The debate in the House can take a long time, because every MP can speak about the Bill. At the end, the MPs vote on each change.

Then comes the third reading, and the MPs all vote on the Bill. They cannot change it now. If the MPs vote for the Bill, it goes to the House of Lords. The Lords talk about the Bill, and they can make changes if they want. If they make changes, the Bill goes back to the House of Commons. The House of Commons can vote on the Lords' changes. If they don't agree with them, the Bill must wait for one year. Then the House of Commons can send it to the Queen, and it does not go to the House of Lords again.

If the House of Lords agrees with a Bill, they send it to the Queen, and she puts her name on the Bill. It is now an Act of Parliament, and a new law for the country.

If the Queen, or the King, does not like the Bill, he or she can say no, and not put their name on the Bill. But the Kings and Queens always say 'yes'. For more than 250 years the only answer is 'yes'.

Elections

There is an election in Britain after every five years⁴⁷ of the Parliament. It can be any time, but not more than five years.

In each constituency there are candidates⁴⁸ from the different parties, and the people vote for the person they want. It is easy to be a candidate. A person must be a member of a political party, he must be older than 18, and he must pay £150.

Before the election, there are a lot of election meetings. There are talks on TV and radio, and the candidates go to talk to people in their homes, in the street, in the shops. They want to talk to all the people in the town. They want the people to vote for them. The candidates and their friends from the party usually make papers with a picture of the candidate,⁴⁹ and give it to people in the street, or in their houses.

In Britain the elections are always on Thursday. People can vote from 8 o'clock in the morning to 10 o'clock at night. If people don't want to vote, they can stay at home. A lot of people vote, but not all the people. About 60—75% of the people usually vote.

Each party can take some time on television and talk about its ideas. The government pays for this, and it does not control what the parties say.

The elections are usually about two parties—the Conservative Party and the Labour Party. These two parties usually get about 75—80% of all the votes. The Liberal and SDP⁵⁰ parties

usually get about 15—25% of all the votes. But the election system is not fair. The big parties get 95—98% of the MPs, and the small parties only get 2—5% of the MPs. It is a different system from the other countries in Europe. The Liberal and SDP parties want to change the system, but the big parties like the old system, and don't want to change it.

The British Parliament

注 释

1. Westminster: 威斯特敏斯特, 伦敦市中心的一个区, 英国议会所在地。
2. next to the River Thames: 紧贴泰晤士河, next to (空间上) 贴近的。
3. Big Ben: 英国议会大厦上的大钟 (直径2.8米, 重13,500公斤)。
4. the Queen: 女王, 此处指英国女王。
5. the House of Commons: (英国议会) 下院。
6. the House of Lords: (英国议会) 上院, 也称贵族院, lord: 贵族。
7. MPs: (英国议会) 下院议员, Members of Parliament 的缩写, 复数。
8. but all the people talk about MPs: 但是人们都说 MPs (而不说 Members of Parliament)。
9. she puts her name on all the new laws: 所有的新法律都须经她签字 (方能生效)。
10. make laws or get rid of laws: 制订或废除法律, get rid of: 摆脱, 除去。
11. to open parliament: 召开议会, 此处指议会休会后重新开始开会。
12. long summer: 漫长的暑假。每年夏天为议会休会期, 此时议员们有很长的休假期。
13. Then she talks to Parliament, and the country: 然后她向议会和全国发表讲话。
14. talks about the government: 谈政府的工作, talk about: 谈到, 谈及。
15. talks about the money for roads: 讨论修工路的资金问题, talk about: 讨论。
16. It decides how much money to take from the people of the country: 它

决定向本国公民征收多少钱(税收)。

17. the big party: 大党, 此处指在下院中拥有一半以上议员的执政党。
18. The MPs can take the money away from the government; 下院议员可决定政府的财政开支(直译为: 下院议员可将钱从政府那里拿走)。
19. but only 437 places to sit down; 但仅有437个座位。
20. constituency: 选区。
21. the Conservative Party and the Labour Party: 保守党和工党。
22. the Conservatives: 保守党人。
23. the Liberal Party and the Social Democrat Party: 自由党和社会民主党。
24. The Alliance: 联盟, 同盟。这里指社会民主党和自由党的联盟。
25. Their ideas are in the middle -- they are not Left or Right in their ideas; 他们采取中间立场, 观点既不偏左, 也不偏右。
26. All the MPs are in one of the parties; 所有的下院议员都是上述某一政党的党员。
27. but they must vote with the party when it is important; 但在重大问题上, 他们投票时所采取的立场必须与党的立场相一致。vote with; 和...投同样的票。
28. vote for sb/sth; 投票选(某人); 投票赞同(某事)。
29. work on committees; 任(几个)委员会的委员。
30. men of the law (=law lords); 上院执掌司法的议员。
31. men of the Church(of England); 上院中英国国教的主教。
32. The biggest number on one day is 394; 参加会议人数最多的一天有394人。
33. sit in the House; 参加下院会议。
34. read my letters; 读给我的来信。这是省掉了to的不定式, 在句中作表语。当句子主语部分含有一个动作动词do时, 其后作表语的不定式可省略to。例如 All I did was empty the box. 我只是把箱子腾空了。The best way to do is open the door. 最好是把门打开。
35. I like to be in the House at the start. 我喜欢一上班就赶到议会(准时上班)。at the start; 开始; 起初。
36. the afternoon starts with Question Time; 下午一上班就是质询时间。Question Time; (英国议会中议员向大臣提问的)质询时间。

37. the Prime Minister and the other Ministers; (英国)首相及其他大臣。
38. the debate about a new Bill; 关于新议案的辩论。
39. at the moment; (与现在时态连用)此刻,目前。
40. Sometimes I am talking to people in my office, and there is a vote. So I must run into the House and vote with my party. Then I can go back to my meeting; 有时我正在办公室和人谈话,可同时又遇上投票。我必须跑进议会大厅,根据我党的立场参加投票。然后又回到办公室,继续会见来访者。
41. No, not at the moment; 不行,现在还不行。
42. go into the night; 持续到深夜。
43. Act; 法令。
44. Private Member's Bill; (由非内阁阁员的)普通议员所提的议案。
45. first reading; 议案交付审议时的正式初读。
46. make a report; 提交一份报告。
47. every five years; 每五年。
48. candidates; 候选人,复数。
49. make papers with a picture of the candidate; 印制附有候选人相片的宣传品。
50. SDP; Social Democrat Party 的缩写。