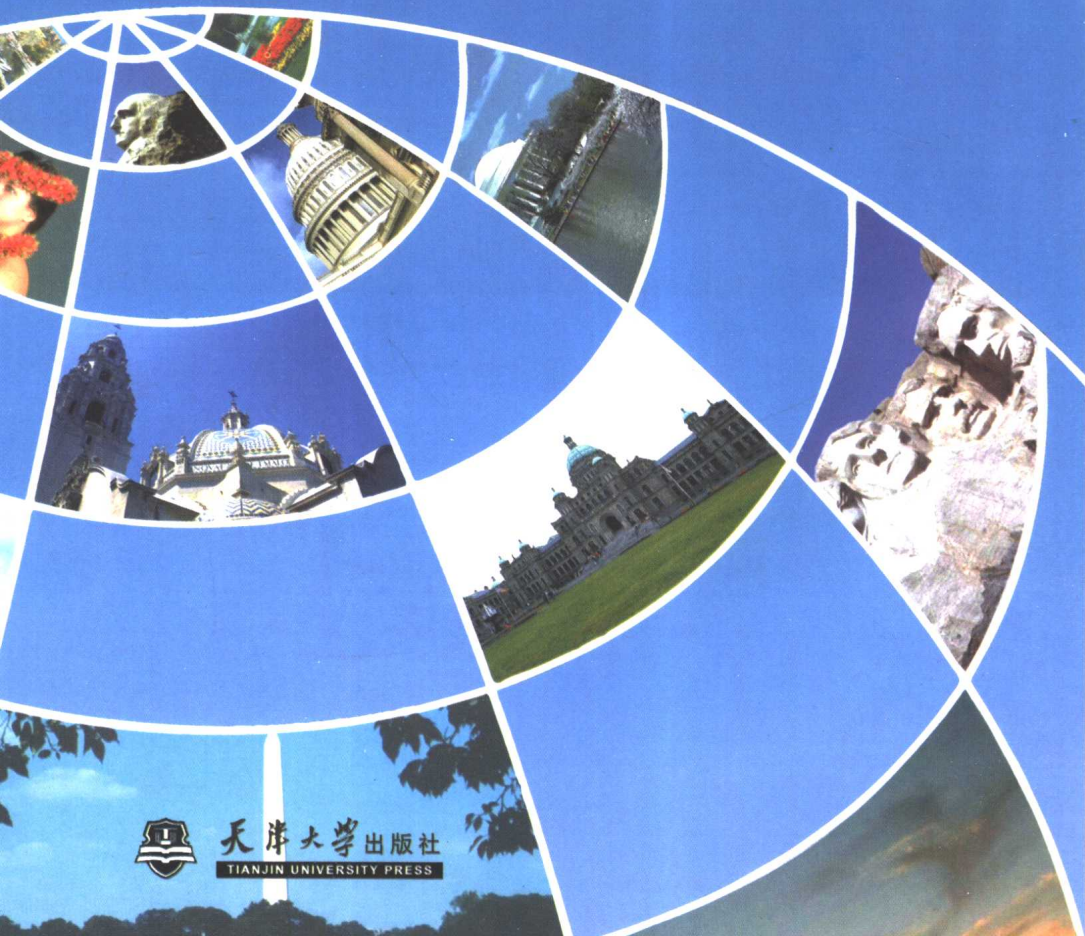


美国风俗英语

American Customs English Reading

主编 陈 亦
杨 晨



天津大学出版社
TIANJIN UNIVERSITY PRESS

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图书在版编目 (C I P) 数据

美国风俗英语: 英汉对照 / 陈亦, 刘锦华主编 — 天津:
天津大学出版社, 2001. 12

ISBN 7-5618-1529-8

I 美… II .①陈…②刘 · III 英语 - 对照读物 - 英、
汉 IV .H319 .4

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字 (2001) 第 079746 号

出版发行 天津大学出版社
出 版 人 杨风和
地 址 天津市卫津路 92 号天津大学内(邮编:300072)
电 话 发行部:022-27403647 邮购部:022-27402742
印 刷 天津市宝坻县第二印刷厂
经 销 全国各地新华书店
开 本 880mm × 1230mm 1/32
印 张 10
字 数 302 千
版 次 2001 年 12 月第 1 版
印 次 2001 年 12 月第 1 次
印 数 1 - 4 000
定 价 15.00 元

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Preface

This book, American Custom English Reading, assists foreign students to understand and adapt to important cultural differences of the host country. The purpose of this book is to introduce a substantial cultural component while emphasizing three of the basic language skills: reading, vocabulary building, and comprehension. The specific goals of the book are:

- ✓ to present aspects of American culture using reading passages;
- ✓ to provide a content for reading and vocabulary development;
- ✓ to assist student's adjustment to life in the United States;
- ✓ to encourage an appreciation of cultural diversity and the process.

Although many books lend to the integration of language instruction and intercultural learning, there often is only a random exposure to culture. This book has been designed to permit a systematic and graded presentation of language and culture. Each chapter has three parts:

- ✓ cultural notes and new words about the text;
- ✓ reading about selected areas of American customs;
- ✓ exercises about the reading.

The chapters in the book include: Acquaintance, Custom in Language, The Silent Language, Various Relationships, Attitude towards Family, Characteristic Education, Attitude towards Work and Leisure, Unique



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Time Concept, The Meaning of Space, Cross-cultural Problems, and Do in Rome as the Romans Do. We hope that the knowledge the students gain will help them avoid culturally-based misunderstandings.

The readings are designed to develop an awareness of subtle area of culture and to encourage students to analyze aspects of American society. By necessity, certain generalizations have been made about the "dominant" culture in the United States. We are aware of the tremendous heterogeneity of our society and have been cautious in our interpretations of cultural behavior. Thus, when students read, "Americans prefer that..." or "Americans may react in this way when...", they should realize that this does not mean all Americans and may not, in some cases, even mean most Americans. The purpose of such generalizations is to provide students with descriptions of broad tendencies or norms in "American" behavior. When we refer to the American culture, we are referring to, in sociological terms, the dominant culture. We hope that students will argue our descriptions with examples of cultural diversity. It is beyond the scope of this book to delve into variations of thought, behavior, and values of the numerous ethnic and racial groups in the United States.

The focus on American values and behavior in the first half of each of the chapters is designed to serve as a background for the cross-cultural activities in the second half of each chapter. These activities can help students become aware of the role



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that their cultures play in influencing their personal observations, judgments, and actions. Just as learning a second language often leads to a deeper understanding of one's native language, understanding the values of a second culture can lead to the discovery of values in one's own culture. Ideally, this discovery enhances communication between people from different cultures.

Intercultural communication is the process whereby one's culture affect interaction with a person from another culture. Despite its apparent simplicity, this definition does not immediately suggest the difficulties that are sometimes encountered in the process. When interacting with people from different cultures, one's tendency is to judge them according to one's own values, a tendency which often interferes with successful cultural adjustment and intercultural communication. With intercultural understanding, students can learn to identify the ways that culture influences an individual's values, assumptions, and beliefs about the world.

It is our hope that this book will enable students to explore components of culture as well as intercultural similarities and differences. While assisting the students to achieve fluency in English, this book attempts to aid successful communication by providing an integrated curriculum of language and culture.







Chapter One **Acquaintance**

Before Reading

Cultural Notes

- ✓ In a formal introduction, Americans often use titles until they are told they may use first names.
- ✓ When two people are introduced by a third person, the first and last names are usually given. For example:

A FRIEND: Michael, I'd like you to meet my friend,
Diane Rae. Diane, I'd like you to meet Michael
Lipsett.

Note: In less formal introductions, last names
may be dropped.

- ✓ The following is a list of titles used in





introductions and conversations. (Except when noted, these titles are followed by a person's last name.)

Dr. (Doctor)	used to address medical doctors (M.D.) and university professors who have earned a doctorate degree (Ph.D.)
Prof. (Professor)	used to address a college or university teacher
Teacher	used by very young children in school (Note: The word "teacher" is not usually followed by a name.)
Mrs.	used to address a married woman (teacher, director, etc.)
Miss	used to address an unmarried woman (teacher, waitress, businesswoman, etc.)
Ms.	used to address an unmarried or married woman (teacher, housewife, professional, etc.)
Mr.	used to address a man (teacher, businessman, etc.)



- ✓ The following phrases may be used if a name given in an introduction is not understood or is forgotten.





Informal:

"Excuse me, I didn't catch your name."

"I'm sorry, what is your name again?"

"Could you spell your first name? That will help me pronounce it better."

Formal:

"May I please have your name again?"

"Would you please repeat your name?"

- ✓ In traditional introductions, a man shakes a woman's hand if she extends her hand first. However, this custom is changing and some men offer their hand first. Some women shake hands with each other although the majority still do not.

New Words & Expressions

exemplify	reduced	status
firm	appropriate	tendency
customary	appropriate	rapport
staring	advisable	briefly
likewise	prolonged	arise
trivial	coincidence	vary
impression	initiate	flowed
considerably	ritual	impolite
palm	purpose	"small talk"
to have something in common		
How about you? to get to know		





Reading

Chapter One

PROFESSOR: Mr. Smith, I would like to introduce you to Dr. Johns, director of the language institute. Dr. Johns, this is Mr. Smith, the academic adviser from Barnum College.

MR. SMITH: How do you do, Dr. Johns?

DR. JOHNS: It's a pleasure to meet you, Mr. Smith. I'm glad that we finally have the occasion to meet.

* * *

FRIEND: I'd like you to meet my friend, Nancy Smith. Nancy, this is my brother, Jack.

NANCY: Hi, Jack. Nice to meet you.

JACK: Hi, Nancy.

* * *

FRIEND: Hi, George, have you met Bill?

GEORGE: No, I haven't. Hi, Bill.

BILL: Hi! How ya doing?

Varieties of Introductions

What do you notice about the above three introductions? Why is the style of language in all three different? These introductions exemplify typical American introductions which range from formal to informal. Although Americans tend to use informal language as illustrated in the second and third introductions, there are situations where formal introductions are appropriate. When meeting a president of a university, it is advisable to say, "How





do you do?" rather than "How ya doing?" Likewise, someone, who is your age or younger would probably say, "It's nice to meet you." rather than "How do you do?"

In the first introduction the speakers use longer sentences, titles (Dr., Mr.), and formal words and phrases ("I would like to introduce you to...", "How do you do?" and "It's a pleasure to meet you."). The relationship between the speakers in the first introduction is a formal one. The next two introductions, which are more informal, use reduced words and sentences and simpler language. "It's nice to meet you." becomes "Nice to meet you." "How are you doing?" becomes "How ya doing?" A very informal introduction does not use titles or last names.

Use of Titles in Introductions

Often when there is a difference in status or age between two individuals formal titles and last names are used unless the person of lower status is told to use the first name. For example:

ACCOUNTANT(age 50): Hello, my name is Bob Thomas.

STUDENT (age 20): It's nice to meet you, Mr. Thomas.

ACCOUNTANT: Please, just call me Bob.



In informal introductions there is a tendency to reduce status differences by using first names. In more formal situations, the title along with the last





name is appropriate. For example, when a student introduces herself to a university professor, she might say:

SUSAN (student): Hello, Dr. Smith. My name is Susan Hall and I would like to ask you about your course.

Chapter One

Susan used her professor's title (Dr.) and his last name, whereas when she introduced herself, she used her first name and last name and no title (Some professors prefer an informal rapport with students and allow them to use first names both in and out of the classroom).

Eye Contact and Handshaking in Introductions

Direct eye contact and firm handshakes during introductions are customary in the United States. In introductions as well as in general conversations, speakers maintain frequent eye contact. Most people become nervous if frequent eye contact turns into staring. When shaking hands, people shake firmly and briefly. The expression, "He shakes hands like a dead fish" refers to a limp handshake, a sign in the American culture of weak character. Prolonged handshaking is not usual.



Problems can arise when these customs are unfamiliar to foreign visitors. One foreign student remarked, "I'm beginning to think that there's something wrong with me. I have the impression that people





in the United States don't like me. When I shake hands with them, they always pull their hands away quickly." Is his impression correct or is he misinterpreting a cultural ritual? American visitors sometimes pull their hands away too quickly in countries where prolonged handshaking is common.

"Small Talk" after Introductions

Immediately after introductions are made, there is usually a period of time in which impersonal or trivial subjects are discussed. This type of conversation, called "small talk", is important because it often helps to maintain conversations and it can lead into interesting discussions. Usually speakers initiate small talk with such questions as: "Do you live in this area?", "How do you like living here?" or "What are you studying?" It is also common for people to ask, "What do you do?" which means "What is your job?" but it is uncommon and considered impolite to ask, "How much money do you make?" or "How much does your house cost?" Other questions such as: "Are you married?" or "How old are you?" (to an adult) are generally considered too personal for initial meetings.

In an introductory meeting, maintaining a conversation is easier when two people find that they have something in common. In the following dialogue, small talk takes place until the speakers discover that they share the same experience.





SUE: It's nice to meet you. My friend told me about you.
Have you lived in Seattle long?

MARK: No, only three months. How about you?

SUE: I moved here three years ago from California.

MARK: Oh really! I'm from California too. Where did you
live in California?

SUE: In Gilroy, not far from San Jose.

MARK: This is really a coincidence. I'm from Gilroy, too!
I like telling people I'm from the garlic capital
of the world. Did you usually go to the summer
garlic festival?

SUE: I used to go every summer. How about you?

MARK: I went to most of them. I thought the one in 1998
was great. Did you go to that one?

In this conversation, Sue and Mark asked each other small talk questions before they found that they had a common background. Once they discovered this, the conversation flowed easily.

Cultural Variations in Introductions

Styles of introductions, including initial conversations and nonverbal rituals, vary among individuals and situations. The introduction of a university president to a new professor is considerably more formal than that of two people of the same status in a social situation. At a business meeting, an introduction is likely to be more formal than one made at a party. In addition, styles of introductions vary from country to country. Bowing to show respect





is customary in parts of the Far East. In the Western Hemisphere and in other parts of the world shaking hands is the common practice. Putting the palm of the hand to the heart is traditional in North Africa. Despite the cultural variations, the purpose of all introductions is always the same—to provide an opportunity for people to get to know each other.

