

文化篇

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# 《21世纪报》 英语读物精粹



*The Best from The 21<sup>st</sup> Century*  
— Our Kaleidoscopic World

何兆熊 选编

上海外语教育出版社



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*The Best from The 21<sup>st</sup> Century*  
— Our Kaleidoscopic World

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## 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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# Natural wonders of the US

## Introduction

The United States is a large country with many different natural wonders. It goes from the shores of the Atlantic Ocean to the islands of Hawaii in the Pacific, and from cold, snowy northern Alaska to sunny Florida in the southeast. The US experiences almost every kind of weather. Also, it has many kinds of landscapes — from rocky coasts, to dry empty deserts, powerful rivers, wide plains and grasslands, lakes of all sizes, high mountains, great forests, sunny beaches, and lands of endless winter.

More than 235 million people live in the US. But the country is very big, so there is still a lot of open space and natural scenery outside the cities. Americans have tried to save many of the most beautiful wild areas of the United States. There are more than 300 national parks, national seashores, national forests, and recreation areas. The Grand Canyon, Yosemite Valley, and Yellowstone are among the more famous national parks. National forests are areas like the great redwood forests of the Pacific Northwest. National seashores protect coastal areas and keep them open for the

public to enjoy.

Recreation areas include lakes and parks in and around cities such as the Golden Gate Recreation Area near San Francisco. These places are popular for boating, swimming, and other outdoor activities.

There are also many state parks and forest areas. In these parks and wild lands, you can enjoy the beauty and power of wild America.

## Yellowstone park

Yellowstone is the United States' first and most famous national park. This large wilderness area<sup>①</sup> is very high in the Rocky Mountains of the northwestern US. It includes large areas of Montana, Wyoming, and Idaho, and it is bigger than the smallest state in the US.

Yellowstone became the world's first national park in 1872.

Yellowstone has many different kinds of unusual scenery. Although millions of people visit the park, the land remains unchanged — still a wilderness. The valley of the Yellowstone River has beautifully coloured rocks and three large waterfalls. In the early morning or evening, visitors sometimes see moose<sup>②</sup>, large deer-like animals, or buffalo eating grass along the shores of Lake Yellowstone. The high mountains around Yellowstone are covered with evergreen forests.

Great grizzly bears live there. The bears sometimes come down into the campgrounds to look for food. Then the

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① wilderness area 荒野区域

② moose /mu:s/ 北美麋

park rangers<sup>①</sup> must catch the bears and take them back into the high mountains. Other wild animals move around freely in the park.

Yellowstone Park has many areas with hot springs and geysers<sup>②</sup> or hot water fountains. These are caused by heat from the hot centre of the earth. Old Faithful geyser is the most famous. Every 70 minutes, Old Faithful sends hot water about 150 feet high into the air. Mammoth Hot Springs is at the northern entrance to the park.

Here, hot spring water runs down over rocks into deep pools. It looks rather like a fantastic white cake.

When you visit Yellowstone, why not live like a cowboy? You can stay at a “dude ranch,” an Old West country hotel. You’ll enjoy typical cowboy food at an outdoor barbecue. You can ride a horse, or hike along one of the many paths or trails<sup>③</sup>.

There are over 1,000 miles of trails around Yellowstone. If you like excitement, take a boat trip down the fast Snake River. Or spend a quiet summer day fishing by a river or a blue mountain lake.

In winter, Yellowstone Park is covered with heavy snow, but visitors still come to ski and skate. With clouds of steam above them and snow all around, Yellowstone’s hot springs look even more wonderful.

## The rocky coast of Maine

The first English settlers built towns from Maine in the north of the United States to Virginia in the south. In these

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① park ranger 公园管理人员

② geyser /'gaɪzə/ 喷柱

③ trail /treɪl/ 小道

Atlantic coast states, there have always been fishermen and boat builders. In modern times, the northeast coast has also become a place of summer houses for the rich, a workplace for writers and artists, and a popular vacation area for city people. But many people there still make their living from the sea.

Fishing is hard work and you can't always be sure you will catch anything, as every Maine fisherman will tell you. Fishermen start work at four o'clock in the morning. The weather is changeable; fogs and terrible storms can come very suddenly. In winter, it snows and is freezing cold.

Sometimes fishermen are killed at sea. Many light-houses have been built on the Maine coast to warn seamen of dangerous rocks.

Sometimes the fishermen can't catch enough fish. When there are too many fish on the market, the price goes down, and fishermen don't make much money. Sometimes the government makes fishermen throw fish back into the sea, because the number of fish in the ocean is getting too small.

There are over 3,000 islands along the Maine coast. Mount Desert Island in Acadia National Park is one of the most famous. Acadia is the only national park in the northeastern United States. Here, the cold waters of the north Atlantic crash against tall cliffs and onto rocky beaches.

Whales swim in the ocean and deer live in the forests. There are over 300 types of birds in the park, and 500 kinds of wild flowers. The American millionaire John D. Rockefeller gave some land to start Acadia National Park. Now about 4 million visitors come every year to enjoy this beautiful area of Maine's rocky coast.

*by Teresa Cox / Longman*

## Music represents a living history of America

Music is a very important part of our lives. Music is for dancing, drinking, eating, loving and thinking. Some songs remind us of our childhood or youth. Others remind us of the people we love. Many important occasions, like weddings and funerals, have special music. Every nation has a national song like the American "The Star-Spangled Banner."<sup>①</sup>

In the US, high schools and colleges have school songs too. Music is a part of the history of America. It expresses the problems and feelings of its people.

As the years pass, the music grows and changes. Modern science has also changed music. Inventions like records, radio, movies, electric instruments, tape recorders and videos have changed the way we play and listen to music. They have helped to make music an important form of international communication.

American music, from the earliest folk songs to modern

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① The Star-Spangled Banner 星条旗歌(美国国歌)

“pop”, is known around the world. Music is one of America’s most important exports. It brings the people of the world together. Even when people cannot understand the same language, they can share the same music.

Many people learn and practice English by singing songs. Understanding American music can help you understand American people, their history and culture. So, as the song says, “Put a dime in the jukebox<sup>①</sup>, baby.” Let’s listen to the music!

## **The first American music**

Native Americans lived in America before Columbus arrived. They had songs for many occasions and they used drums and other musical instruments. Dancing and music was an important part of their life and their religion. You can still hear native American music and see dancing at special festivals.

The first British people who came to America were very religious. They came for religious freedom. Their songs were simple and they did not use musical instruments in church.

Soon other people with different forms of the Christian religion arrived in America. They brought different kinds of church music from Europe and they used musical instruments like the organ and the piano in the church.

Not all early music was church music. Some people liked to drink and dance. Many drinking places opened and fiddle(violin) music and European songs entertained the people.

American farmers soon left the east coast to begin new

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① jukebox 投币自动电唱机

farms further west. The farms were big and far apart. There were not many towns or churches. Religious leaders, called preachers, rode horses around the country and brought religion to the farm people.

To bring the country people together in a large group, these preachers held “camp meetings.” These religious meetings were held in big tents. Sometimes thousands of people went to hear the preachers. Camp meetings often went on for several days. Popular religious songs were sung and the music was very lively. People clapped their hands and tapped their feet to the music<sup>①</sup>.

The first camp meeting was held in 1800 and they are still held today. Many pop stars, for example, Elvis Presley, first learned to sing and to love music at these meetings.

## Early black music

In the South there were large cotton farms called plantations. Growing cotton was very hard work. Slaves were brought from Africa to work in the fields. The white slave owners did not let the slaves have drums. They knew that Africans could use drums to send messages. They were afraid the slaves would help each other to run away.

Most slave owners did not let the slaves practice their African dances or their religions. All the slaves had to become Christians. They sang in their own churches on Sunday. They sang white religious songs but they added African rhythms to the music. We call these songs “spirituals<sup>②</sup>.” Some spirituals told about the hard life of the slaves or their

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① ... clapped their hands and tapped their feet to the music 随着音乐拍手跺脚

② spiritual 黑人圣歌



wish to run away.

Although the slaves could not do African dances, in church they clapped their hands and moved their whole bodies. Today, black religious music is called gospel music.

In Louisiana and the city of New Orleans the slave owners were French. They let the slaves and the free blacks play drums and horns. They also let them keep their African dances. Black musicians in New Orleans put European musical instruments and songs together with African rhythms. They made a new musical sound which was later called jazz.

Many of the first jazz instruments were home made. Black people also made rhythm with their hands, feet and bodies. Later black brass bands, in the French style, became common. These bands played at special times like weddings and funerals. This new music was called New Orleans jazz. Some white bands played it too and gave it the name Dixieland jazz. You can still hear this early form of jazz in the city of New Orleans.

The slaves were set free in 1865 after the Civil War between the North and the South. Since that time black gospel music and jazz have become an important part of popular music in America.

*by Sonia Eagle / Longman*