

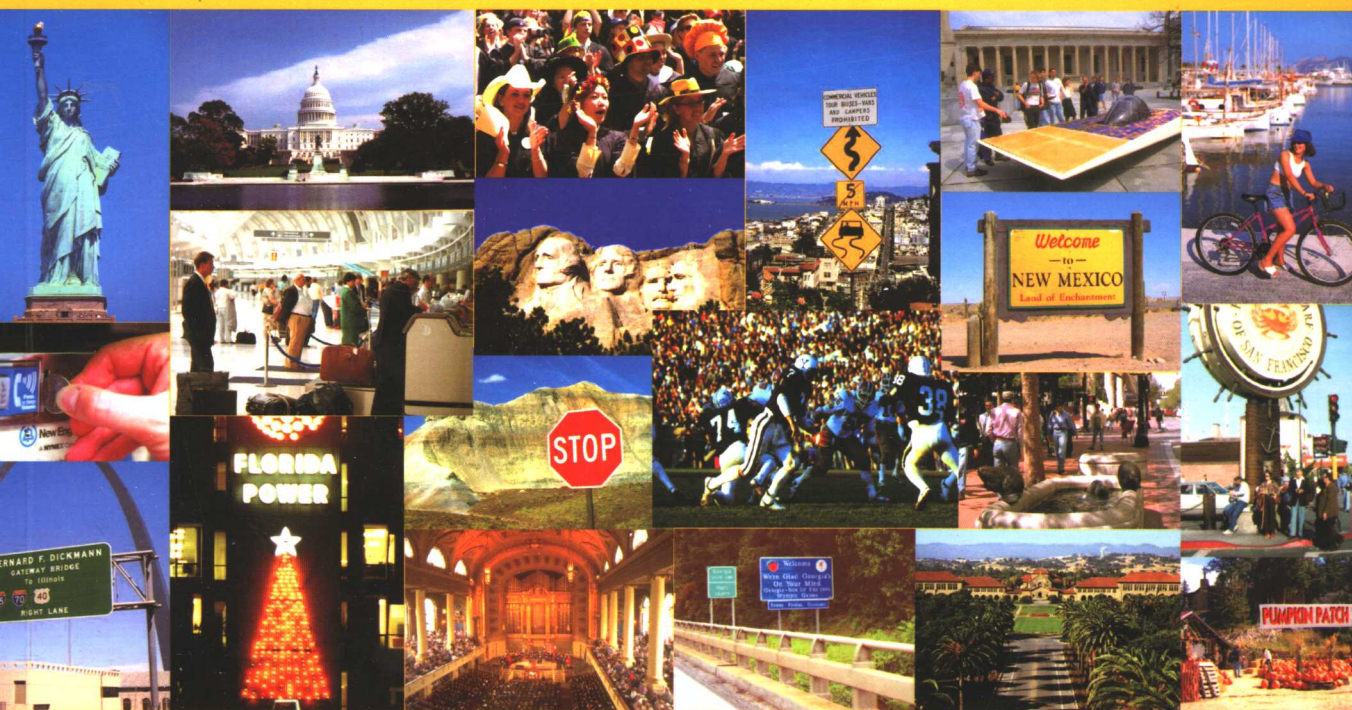
# Cultures & Communication

—A New Practical English Course

# 文化与交际

## 新编实用英语教程

胡穗鄂◎编著



这本书为你打开了一扇通往世界的大门

- 从中你能了解多姿多彩的英美文化
- 从中你能学到真正的实用英语
- 从中你能领悟英美人士所表达的真正含义
- 从中你能掌握更多与英美人士交流的技巧



暨南大学出版社  
Jinan University Press

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—A New Practical English Course

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区炜光◎审校



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# 前 言

随着中国与国际社会交流的日益扩大,人们越来越认识到掌握英语实际应用能力的重要性。然而,语言乃文化之载体,文化乃语言之灵魂。如果不透过语言的外壳去领会文化之精髓,则一切语言学习的努力都可能是事倍功半。以往不少学生之所以从小学到大学,学了十几年英语,仍无法得心应手地参与各种交流活动;或在涉外活动中闹出各种笑话和出各样差错,其重要的原因之一就是他们就语言学语言,而没有了解英美文化和这些国家人们的风俗习惯,或是书本知识与实际应用脱节。目前,涉及语言应用的英语书籍林林总总,但它们仅涉及语言应用的某个方面,如实用英语写作、实用英语口语、实用社交英语等等;关于英美文化的书籍也比比皆是,但以介绍文化知识为背景,涉及英语语言应用诸方面并配合大量语言实践的英语教材却极为少见。为了弥补这些不足,笔者只好尽己所能编写该书。

本书以英美文化为底蕴,大量采用了本人在美国进行文化交流期间所收集的第一手资料和图片。因此,这是一本实用性强、语言新颖、知识涵盖面广、图文并茂、形式生动的大学英语专业用教材。本书共18单元,每单元以阅读或对话等形式介绍英语语言与文化背景知识,同时,通过问题思考、模拟演练、小组讨论、文化知识测试和文化碰撞理解等形式来检测与巩固所学的英语语言知识。本书内容涉及社交往来、国外留学、辨认标识、身体语言、电话交往、社交礼仪、餐桌礼仪、参加招聘、约会购物、入住酒店、英美迷信与幽默、看病就诊、日常交际俚语以及一些实用性写作如:普通书信、个人简历、通知书、招聘广告和请柬等。本书各课独立成章,一般每章需用4个学时完成,较长的可用6个学时,教师可根据需要调整教学进度和取舍教学内容。

从1996年以来,我以这些材料编写成讲义给本校外语学院英语专业和商务英语专业的本科学生讲授,学生对其内容表现出浓厚的兴趣,感觉本教材对他们日后工作会有很强的实用指导意义。本书可作为普通高等院校本科及专科英语专业、商务外贸英语专业、英语文秘专业、旅游英语专业的教材,亦可作为其他成人高等教育的实用英语课程教材。此外,本书对将赴英语国家留学的学生和其他人士、国内涉外工作人员以及其他英语爱好者,也是一本很好的英语文化知识的参考书。

在本书的资料收集、整理过程中,得到广东省立中山图书馆曾庆芳馆员的鼎力相助;在本书的编写过程中,本校外语学院区炜光副院长给予了具体指导,并在百忙之中审校了全部书稿;在本书编辑出版过程中,暨南大学出版社给予了大力支持,在此,向他们表示特别的感谢。同时,向所有关心和帮助过本书编写的朋友们致以衷心的感谢。

毕竟语言文化所包含的内容烟波浩淼,不可能以己之知所概述,所以,本教材一定有不足之处,诚望专家、同行和读者赐教。

胡穗鄂

2005年4月18日于暨南园

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# Unit 1. Associating with People

*Why people from different cultural backgrounds will have a unique way of doing things, analyzing situations, and reacting to circumstances? That is because their perceptions of life which makes up their cultures are different. To get along with people, we need to understand their way of thinking, acting and their cultural rules in communication. At the same time, we need to compare them with our own culture, traditions, and ways of responding to situations. By doing it, we not only can form deeper friendships with others but also learn more about ourselves and our own culture.*

为什么不同文化背景的人会有其独特的方式来分析和处理事情，对所面对的情形作出反应？这是因为构成他们文化的生活感知力不同。要成功地与人交往，我们就必须了解人们的思维和行为的方式以及他们在交际中的文化习惯。同时，我们也需要将我们自己的文化和传统，对事情反应的方式做个比较，这样做不仅能与人更深入地交流，而且还能对我们自己的文化有更深入的了解。

## 1 Face-to-Face Greetings

Everyone wants to meet people and make friends. A smile, a friendly look or an open gesture indicates a person's interest in you. To introduce yourself, approach a person, smile and say, "Hello, my name is. . ." Then shake hands with your friend by firmly taking his or her right hand in yours and pressing it gently but firmly. Look attentively at the person's eyes. You may use the dialogues.

### Formal greetings and introductions

- A. Good morning! My name is \_\_\_\_\_.
- B. Good morning! My name is \_\_\_\_\_.
- A. How do you do?
- B. How do you do?

### Informal greetings and introductions

- A. Hi, my name is \_\_\_\_\_.
- B. My name is \_\_\_\_\_.
- A. Nice to meet you, \_\_\_\_\_ (B's name).
- B. Nice to meet you, too \_\_\_\_\_ (A's name).

Each culture has its own form of acceptable greeting behavior, usually based on the level of formality found within the society. Some European countries perform the etiquette of kissing the lady's hand. (Hold one of her hands up, then bow towards it with your mouth close to it. You don't really have a kiss on it.) This is applied to the lady to be honored and respected. Many European countries, Middle-Eastern countries and some South East Asian countries apply a face-touching in greeting (first the left, then the right). Some people repeat the action for more than twice. Yet, this must be applied to the one who has close relationship with you and whom you haven't seen for a long time. In Argentina, greetings are usually effusive with plenty of hugging and kissing, not unlike the French *faire la bise* (kiss on both cheeks, first on the left, then on the right and on the left again). This is even the case in business meetings, unless they are of a very highly formal nature. Africans are far less structured in their greetings than Europeans. You will expect a warm physical greeting, an extended handshake or a hand on the shoulder in most African cultures. By contrast the Chinese way of greeting shuns the physical although they adapt a handshake. It is generally a nod or a slight bow. As for Iranians, they don't shake hands with women at all.

## Role-Play

Stand up and turn to the person next to you. Put your hand out, shake hands, and introduce yourself.

## *Small Talk*

After the self-introduction, people naturally turn their talk to the area of specialty since this topic would be of common interest to both of them, such as the weather, work, majors, local events, etc. This is called **small talk**. These topics can be discussed easily without knowing the other person well. They serve as a common ground to start a conversation.

### **Here are some examples**

1. A: Hi!  
B: Hello.  
A: It's a nice day, isn't it?  
B: Yes, and the weather is going to be warm all week...
2. A: Did you see the paper this morning?  
B: No. Why?  
A: There was a terrible accident on the road into town!  
B. Really? What happened?
3. A: Did you see the football game on TV last night?  
B: No. Who was playing?  
A: The Green Bay Packers and the Detroit Lions.  
B: What was the score?



4. A: When is it going to stop snowing?  
B: On TV they predicted snow until evening.  
A: Oh no, really?  
B: Yes, and another storm is moving in!

Here is an example of an introduction followed by small talk:

CHRIS: Hi! I don't think we've met before, have we? My name is Tom, Tom Smith.

JANE: Hi! Tom. My name is Jane, Jane Gibbons. Are you new here?

CHRIS: Not quite! I've been working on an industrial project in New York University for a year.

JANE: How interesting! What is your project about?

CHRIS: About water purification. What about you, Jane?

JANE: I'm a sophomore. I'm doing medicine.

CHRIS: Wow! That's good!

## *Conversational Taboos*

Small talk is often what makes the conversation go round, but it can also present a minefield that can blow up a relationship at the start. The best way to avoid this pitfall is to steer the conversation away from some basic taboos, such as politics, religion, race, etc. If your host insists on discussing a controversial subject, it is important to listen well and remain open-minded. Often it is best to simply let the person vent their feelings.

### **Acceptable topics for conversation**

- Origins
- Majors
- Jobs
- Family
- Current events
- Weather
- Sports
- Food
- Travel experiences

### **Unacceptable topics for conversation**

- Salaries/wages
- Politics
- Class status or racial issues

- A person's age
- Weight and physical features
- Sexual subjects
- How much someone pays for something.

## *Basic Rules for Conversations*

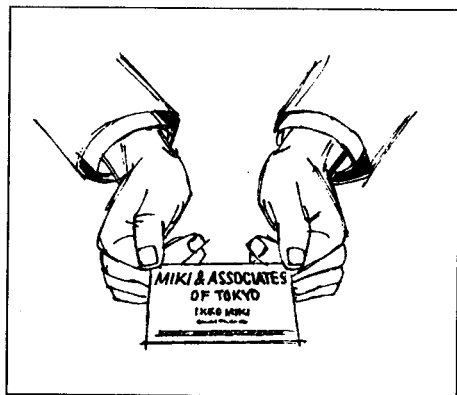
- One should not quit talking suddenly. Before one actually says good-bye, he should excuse himself and express his pleasure in the meeting or talk.
- Nice meeting you, but I'm sorry I've got to go now.
- It was nice talking to you, but I've got to leave.
- Well, I'm afraid I've got to get going now. Fancy meeting you.
- Use a quiet but friendly tone in talking.
- People don't embrace or kiss people of the same sex upon meeting unless they are very close friends. Men kiss each other if they are relatives or very close friends.
- Do not kiss or hug children unless you are one of the family members.
- When talking with your friend, listen carefully and show great interest in his / her talk.
- Don't just ask one question after another or answer with one-word reply.
- Be prepared to tell about yourself as well as to ask about the other person. Always try to think of something to say to fill the gap of silence.

## *Business Card Etiquette*

One of the first impressions you will make on a foreign friend is through your business card, and in many cultures, especially in Asia, the exchange of business cards is a meaningful ritual rather than a casual informality. Today, it is more a necessity than a courtesy to have your card translated into the local language of the country you are visiting. Bilingual cards are the norm, with one side printed in your home language and the other side in the foreign language in which you are dealing. If you are using a one-sided card, always hand your card to a friend with the printed face up. Never

fling a card across the table or onto a desk. It is the height of bad manners or devoid of culture. Asians consider it an extraordinarily rude gesture.

If presenting a multitude of foreign contacts at once, give your card to the highest-ranking individual or leader of the delegation first. This is a sign of respect and avoids embarrassing the lesser-ranking members of the delegation who may even refuse your card if the head honcho has not yet received one. In most Asian cultures, presenting a card with two hands conveys respect and an appreciation of the importance



of the ritual. It is best to hold the card by the two upper corners when making the presentation. Likewise, you should receive a business card with both hands. Once you have it in hand, take time to read it—not merely a glance but a deliberate study. Often this is an ideal time to respect the person's name, which will help you connect the face to the name.

In Japan and in many other Asian cultures it is insulting to put the card directly in your pocket, wallet or card case without giving it sufficient study time. In the Islamic world, the left hand is considered unclean. Even in many non-Islamic areas of Africa and Asia, the tradition has evolved of using the right hand in preference over the left. So when presenting or receiving a business card, use the right hand.

In Europe and North America, business cards are far less formalized and are used merely to keep track of who's who during a hectic meeting schedule. If you come to sell in these societies, your hosts will be concentrating on your product, not your business card.

## *The Rules of the Card Game*

- ◆ It's not only polite to have your card translated into the local language, it is now considered a must. Make it work for you.
- ◆ Always present your card with the printed side up or, in the case of bilingual cards, with the local-language side showing.
- ◆ Wait to be introduced before presenting your business card.
- ◆ Present the cards one at a time in the order of the hierarchy of the delegation.
- ◆ Content: including your name and business title. In some cultures it is common to include your academic degrees as well.
- ◆ Business titles can be confusing and often do not translate exactly. If your title is one that is not internationally common, such as Chief Learning Officer, consider using a translation that avoids the literal and rather portrays your status and job in words or concepts that may be more familiar to your host. Don't inflate job titles. Also make sure to check the translation.
- ◆ Well-known or trademarked acronyms (such as IBM) need not be translated nor do words included in logos.
- ◆ Take plenty of cards. It can be highly embarrassing to run out of them and in some cultures it would be an insult.
- ◆ Many executives carry two sets of cards. One set is used purely for introductions and has not direct contact information. The other is used for more serious encounters and includes detailed contact information.
- ◆ Always treat your colleagues' cards with respect.

## Think and Discuss

1. What do you do and say when you first meet with a friend?

2. What are the acceptable and unacceptable topics for conversation in China?
3. What does it tell you about the Chinese people and people in other cultures?
4. What is the value of presenting a personal card or a business card? How do you present it?

## *Distance and Space Requirements*

People from different cultures have different conversation distance requirements. For example, Latin Americans and Middle Easterners stand closer when they talk than do North Americans or Asians.

In the United States and Canada, people need to have greater distances between them physically than do people in any other cultures. Although North Americans are often more affectionate and more likely to touch people they know, they have a great need for privacy, especially in the presence of strangers. They will feel uncomfortable if someone stands closer, they will instinctively move backward. Should this happen, don't be offended. Your listener is merely stepping back to his/her normal conversational distance.

Fill in the following chart with the situations in China. Later listen to your teacher's explanation of the situations in North America.

Situation	Distance People Sit or Stand from Each Other	Type of Body Language People Use
1. Riding on a bus with people you don't know		
2. Waiting in a doctor's office		
3. Waiting in line		
4. Eating lunch in a restaurant or cafe		
5. Talking to your boss or teacher		
6. Talking to friends in a group		
7. Talking to a stranger		
8. Talking to a child		

## 2 Building Friendships

Some people, when they first arrive in North America, say that Americans and Canadians are very friendly, but after living there for a while, they change their minds. A Chinese student explained that when he first came, people were very friendly. They helped him get settled, took him shopping, invited him for dinner, and called to see how he was. After two or three weeks, however, they stopped doing these things, and he was confused and disappointed.

North Americans tend to do what is necessary to help people when they first arrive. They “go all out” doing many things to help new arrivals get settled and often make them feel like part of the family. The new comers expect this warm hospitality to continue in the form of a solid friendship. However, North Americans expect that once people are settled and have been there for a few weeks, they will begin to do things for themselves and become independent.

Like other aspects of culture, friendship is perceived differently in various parts of the world. In North America, the word friend has a broad meaning, including everyone from a casual acquaintance to a long-time best friend. The following chart describes some of these levels of friendship.

Term	Definition	Customary Behavior
Neighbor	Someone who lives next door, across the street, or on the same block	Neighbors generally say hello when they see each other. Some become good friends. They often help each other, borrow things, and watch each other's houses when no one is at home.
Acquaintance	Someone you have been introduced to but do not know well	Acquaintances generally say hello when they meet and make small talk.
Best friend	Someone you can rely on and of whom you would feel comfortable asking for assistance at any time	Best friends generally share good and bad times together and spend free time together.
Boyfriend/girlfriend	Someone of the opposite sex for whom you have romantic feelings	People go on dates, share affection, and walk arm in arm in public with their boyfriends or girlfriends.
Girlfriend	A female friend of another woman ( “boyfriend” not used by men and boys to refer to their male friends )	Girlfriends spend time together and share common interests.
Classmate	A student in your class	Classmates say hello, make small talk, and sometimes study together.
Business associate or colleague	Someone who works in the same place of business as you do	Colleagues share business information, discuss problems related to their work, and occasionally socialize.

## *Sharing Good and Bad Times*

Friends are people with whom we share both good and bad times. We share happiness, excitement, anxiety, and sadness with them.

Sharing your joys and happiness is one of the most pleasant parts of friendship. The conversations that follow contain many expressions commonly used to express excitement.

### **Dialogues**

1. A: I can't believe it! I got an A on my science test!  
B: Congratulations! That's great!  
A: Thanks. I'm so happy! I really worked hard for that A.  
B: I know you did. You deserve it.
2. A: I have the most wonderful news!  
B: What happened?  
A: My sister finally had a baby girl. It's great, because she has three boys!  
B: How wonderful!
3. A: You'll never believe this!  
B: What happened?  
A: I won five dollars in the school raffle! How about that!  
B: Boy, are you lucky!

### **Role-Play**

With a partner, choose one item from each question and develop a dialogue.

1. You have just become an aunt or an uncle.
2. You received an A on an English essay.
3. You have been offered a job at which you will be earning \$15 an hour.
4. You meet a friend you haven't seen for ten years.

Worry is a common feeling that can be alleviated by sharing with friends. People respond to worry in many ways. Some people become irritable, others become very quite and intense, and still others may become sad and distracted. Here are some ways to express and respond to worry.

### **Dialogues**

1. A: I'm upset.  
B: What's the matter? What happened?
2. A: I really need to talk to you. Do you have a minute?  
B: Sure. What's bothering you?

3. A: I have a real problem. I don't know what to do?  
B: What is the trouble? How can I help you?
4. A: What's wrong? You really look worried and upset.  
B: My dog was hit by a car.  
A: That's terrible! Is he okay?  
B: I don't know. He is at the vet's.  
A: I hope he will be all right.  
B: Thank you. So do I.
5. A: I'm so worried. I haven't heard from my family in three months.  
B: How often do they really write?  
A: Oh, at least once a month. Either my father or my mother writes.  
B: The mail is really slow sometimes. I'm sure you'll hear from them soon.  
A: I hope so.  
B: You know the saying, "No news is good news." If something were wrong, they would have contacted you.  
A: Maybe you're right. Thank you.

## Role-Play

Choose a tense situation from the list that follows and develop a dialogue with your partner.

1. You are worried about failing math.
2. Your family hasn't written or called for a long time.
3. Your 16-year-old sister wants to get married.
4. You lost your job.
5. You lost \$ 100 from your wallet.

A wide range of religions exist in the U. S. and many Americans are deeply religious. Churches and other places of worship frequently serve as cultural and social centers of the community. The variety of places of worship offers a unique opportunity for international students to explore. Church services are open to the public and, frequently, immediately before or after the service, a "coffee hour" is held to meet people. Mutual respect of different religious beliefs is important to the maintenance of the social fabric. Religious conviction tends to be a private matter with most Americans, but many are willing to answer questions and will express interest in your beliefs.

## *Gift Giving*

Giving the appropriate gift in a timely fashion not only cements personal relationship in some cultures but it can truly enhance a company or personal image. The right gift conveys respect to the individual and by the same token can convey a company and personal image of global sophistication, even power. In relationship-driven cultures, the gift reflects the company image and intentions and gives a

potential partner insight into how both you and your company think and are likely to act in the future. Still the purpose of any gifts should be to please and honor the recipient.

### **Gift Presentation Rules**

- ◆ A gift, regardless of its expense, should always be wrapped; failing to wrap a gift signifies an uncaring attitude and undermines the impact of the gift.
- ◆ In choosing the appropriate wrapping, be aware of any cultural color taboos. Also the wrapping should be appropriate for the recipient.
- ◆ Always enclose a card with a personal comment with the gift. A business card, while not ideal, can work provided you include a personal note on the back.
- ◆ Give the gift in a timely manner. Waiting till you return home from an overseas assignment may be too late. Delaying the presentation of a gift also diminishes its impact.
- ◆ It is best and safest to receive with two hands.
- ◆ Reciprocation is commonplace in gift giving. Make sure you reciprocate with equal value. Never outshine the host when offering gifts.
- ◆ Gifts should never replace the basics of good business practices and etiquette. They are a supplement to, not a substitute for, a sound business proposition. Of course, a gift should never take on the appearance of a bribe, even in countries where such practices are commonplace. A gift is just that—a freely given token that shows appreciation or respect. A bribe is part of the mandatory cost of doing business in some places in the world.

Frequently in North American and European cultures, company policy states that an employee, regardless of rank, is not allowed to receive a gift of any size. As a courtesy to international colleagues, most companies and company executives will mention this up front to avoid any embarrassment to the giver.

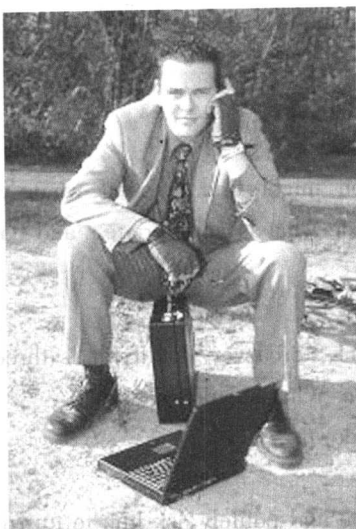
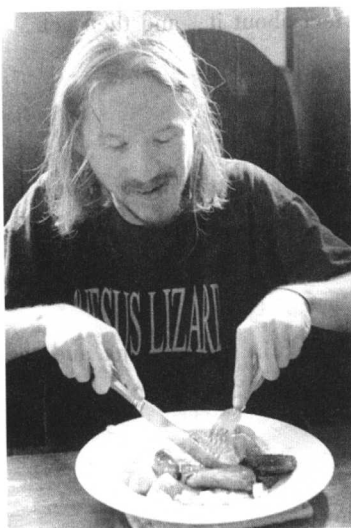
## **3 Making Good Image**

What is image? It is the way you appear to others.

One's image plays a very important role, rightly or wrongly, in the way we feel about people. In reality, how you look goes a long way in making the first impression. Clothes, hairstyles, makeup, cleanliness, posture, and even a person's name tell you a great deal about someone. However, your physical appearance is also the form of communication that you can maintain a great deal of control over. Therefore, it is very important for you to make a good image of yourself.

Look at the pictures here, decide how you feel about each person and answer the questions.





1. In English we have these expressions: "Clothes make the man." "You can't tell a book by its cover." Do you agree with these sayings? Why or why not?
2. What personal characteristics do Chinese people admire and respect (for example, dress, appearance, friendliness)?
3. What is your idea of a beautiful person?
4. Why do people have different ideas of beauty?

Not only the sense of sight, but also the sense of smell can help you feel about a person. English people are offended if a person smells of sweat or has bad breath. They are also sensitive to body odor (or B. O. , as it is called). Therefore, apart from showering daily, they use a deodorant under their arms, brush their teeth twice a day, and use breath fresheners when they believe their breath smells stale, after smoking or after eating onions or garlic. Clothes, especially shirts and blouses, are washed after one or two wearing, even if they appear to be clean.

Realize it or not, you communicate through what you wear, your hairstyle, the polish of your shoes and even the look of your fingernails. Clothes may not make the man—or the woman—but the reality is that how you look goes a long way in leaving a great first impression. Clothes should serve as a gentle backdrop to your personality and mission. Outlandish hairstyle, excessive makeup, mountains of jewelry or a strong scent of perfume or cologne may cloud your image as a professional and send the wrong signal to your foreign colleague.

## 4 Problem Situations

Sometimes you will find yourself in a situation that requires you to act in a way that is contrary to what your friends want or believe is correct. These situations are often difficult to handle. You will