

走进



美国生活英语

My American Life

Christopher Alexander Parsons 著

大连理工大学出版社



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图书在版编目(CIP)数据

走进美国生活英语 / (美)帕森斯(Parsons, C.)著. —大连:大连理工大学出版社, 2005.1

ISBN 7-5611-2805-3

I.走… II.帕… III.英语,美国 IV.H310.1

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字(2004)第 088137 号

大连理工大学出版社出版

地址:大连市凌水河 邮政编码:116024

电话:0411-84708842 传真:0411-84701466 邮购:0411-84707961

E-mail:dutp@dutp.cn URL:<http://www.dutp.cn>

大连理工印刷有限公司印刷 大连理工大学出版社发行

幅面尺寸:148mm×210mm 印张:19 字数:458千字

印数:1~8 000

2005年1月第1版

2005年1月第1次印刷

责任编辑:陈丽莉

责任校对:王秀英

封面设计:孙宝福

定价:26.80元

Foreword

About the Author

Christopher Alexander Parsons, also known as Mr. Magic, has been teaching in China since 1994. He has also been a TV host on CETV and a radio DJ on CRI's EZFM. Born in New York, Professor Parsons left home at age 17 to travel the world. Professor Parsons has studied Filmmaking at the undergraduate level and Education in grad school. His adventures have taken him to diverse countries to teach, such as Korea, Australia, Thailand, Japan, Canada, Britain and finally his beloved China. Parsons is now fluent in Mandarin (so he understands how difficult to learn a foreign language) and he enjoys Tang Dynasty poetry, Beijing duck and the sorrowful sounds of the Erhu.

Parsons has written over 20 textbooks for Chinese English learners, including:

The Real American English series, Office English, 4 Modern English books, one book for New Oriental English, all the Lightning English books, VCD's materials, as well as Mastering the English Interview textbook and four books to help Chinese learners do better on the TOEFL, TOPE and IELTS tests.

Parsons, as Mr. Magic, has also written for, directed or acted in, several educational and entertaining TV shows in China. Those include, Tian Yi Shen Shuai, with Huang Lei, Chinese Restaurant with Ying Da, Married Ten Years, New Standard English, PEP English for Kids, the CBD TV drama and many more.

About the Textbook

Believing that books can be as exciting as TV shows, Parsons used all of his educational and entertainment knowledge to craft My American Life. This useful textbook in story form has five special traits.

1) An intriguing story line and plot. Many twists, turns and surprises keep the story interesting, funny, fascinating and educational. BTW, the story is based on real people from Parsons' life, including a real Chinese girl who bravely went abroad by herself to find an international education and ended up finding a new life, love and new ideas about herself. The storyline aspect of the textbooks promotes memorizing of the new words while facilitating fun. (*Example: It is easier to remember the vocabulary from the exciting scene where Jerry gets beat up and robbed, then trying to remember the words used.*)

2) Keeping it fresh. The Keeping it Fresh or FYI (*For Your Information*) section tells it like it is. It describes common mistakes, what NOT to do in certain situations, as well as sharing how modern people really talk. In addition, it explains the reasons for some seemingly strange customs. This will help a Chinese English learner blend in while in America. It helps the students belong, while understanding the often double meanings of words. (*Example: "He is bad," can also mean "he is great." And "yeah" often means "no." And "Same old, Same old" is the original "So so."*)

3) The practiced activities (*Parsons has used these successfully in class, so he knows they work*) get the readers to have as much fun as the characters in the stories. Also there are Real Life Activities that get the students to really call people on the phone and use only English. Other activities instruct students on how to hold actual special holiday parties

or Western style study groups. (*Like a Halloween party, or a study group at finals cram time.*) Still other activities teach the learners to write important documents step by step, like CV's, business letters and application forms.

4) The well-planned lessons are scaled and built upon each other. The lessons are set up from easy to harder, always reusing new words from unit one in future units as normal words. This built in review keeps the important vocabulary fresh in the minds of the learners. Each lesson also contains a useful Spoken Grammar section, chart and practice. Spoken grammar is different than written grammar; it is in fact more useful. This section also details the difference between similar words. (*Example: Probable, and possible, accept, except and so on*) You may even find some fun tongue twisters!

5) The most special of all traits is the fact that this textbook covers real life situations. Parsons has lived these cool stories, along with his real Chinese friends, and yes, his real beautiful Chinese wife. Education should be fun, and must be useful. There is nothing more useful than sharing what will really happen at one's first semester in America. This pre-knowledge will help you prepare and plan for a productive educational experience abroad. This textbook can also give you the feeling of having been abroad even if you never go.

Have fun reading about love, life, education, personal troubles and the triumphs of friendship. Don't forget to teach, and learn from, your friends whenever possible.

Keep smiling,

Professor Parsons

Acknowledgements

Photos by John Napiorkowski

Edited by Daniel Bass,

David Liu,

Ian Powers,

Hui Zhou,

Shu Zhou

Mr. Magic

Amy Zhuang

Picture edited by Holly Parsons

Special Thanks to:

Penny Chen and Peter Liang

Lily Chen the Editor

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Austin Wingate for Joe

Jen Jen for Sara

Andy for Ray

Shuren Zhou for Jerry

Mark for Dr. Parsons

Brother John for Sara's father

Zheng Li for Tom

David for Lily's father

序

——学英语应从最实际的日常生活学起

我和许多同龄人一样,从小学开始学英语,一直到中学、大学,说起来十年寒窗苦读也算是有了,可还是一提起英语就头疼。尤其是大学毕业后,在国营单位工作了两年,平日里也用不到英语,换工作进入外企时,我的英语简直是遭透了。处理日常的文件还好,因为读写还可以应付,最头痛的是听和说。遇到外籍员工和我谈工作,每次我的脑细胞都因为紧张过度而死掉大半!英语成了我的心病,就算工作的其他方面再出色,也总觉得矮人一截。于是我努力学习,一直梦想能讲一口流利的英语。再后来,我得到了一个在美国深造的机会,于是,我兴奋地来到了美国。

来到美国后,我发现自己的英语沟通能力实在是太差了,我们在国内的课本上学的是一回事,但在实际日常生活中却大多是另外一回事。由于我们的教学习惯是死记硬背式的,虽然学了很多,但都不会灵活运用。而且在美国生活,其文化和习惯跟在国内有很大的不同,我每天都面临着很实际的交流问题。我仍记得刚到美国时闹的一个笑话,曾被我的同学们广为流传。刚入学时,我兴冲冲地跑到 OFFICE MAX——美国专卖文具的连锁店——买学习用品。我选了很多的练习本、笔、文件夹、书档等等,最后想到还要买橡皮,可是找来找去也没找到。于是我就问店员:“Hi, could you please tell me where can find the rubber?” 店员是个看起来十六七岁的打工的白人学生,长得满文弱的。他很疑惑地瞪着双年轻的眼睛看着我,一脸的迷茫。“rubber, rubber, where can find the rubber?”我又问他,心里嘀咕:“没错呀,上中学时学的,橡皮是 rubber。”那男孩终于开口了:“We only sell the stationery here(我们这儿只卖文具)。”我纳闷了,心想:“我买的难道不是文具吗?”我说:“yes, that's correct, I

want to buy the stationery, I want to buy a rubber!”不管我怎么说,那男孩就是不明白,脸都红了。我们的声音引来了值班经理,他问我想要什么,我重复了一遍。那个经理也是一脸的困惑。我也急了起来,一边比划一边解释:“If you write some words wrong on your paper, what do you use to remove the words(要是你在纸上写错了字,你用什么东西擦呢)?”“Ah! Eraser! I know, I know, eraser!”过了好半天,值班经理兴奋地叫了起来,很快地从一处货架上给我取来了一包橡皮。我结了账,走出 OFFICE MAX,心里还在嘀咕:“难道橡皮不叫 rubber 吗?”回到学校,把发生的事讲给我的同屋 Julia 听,她来美国已经两年多了,性格开朗活泼,是我们新生的老前辈。Julia 听了我的故事,笑得前仰后合:“你知道 rubber 在美国是什么意思吗?”“是什么意思?”我丈二金刚摸不着头脑地问。“是——保险套!” Julia 捂着肚子笑得趴到了地上。我伸了伸舌头,想到我——一个中国女孩——在下午对着那小男生气势汹汹地说:“保险套!保险套!我要保险套!”真是哭笑不得。

还有一次,也是我刚到美国不久,一切都安顿妥当后,我就照了一卷照片,想让挂念我的父母看看他们的女儿在美国一切都好,我照了我的学校,我的宿舍,我的社区,这的商店、邮局、银行,我每早去锻炼的山……很快就照满了一卷。我跑到超市的 1 HOUR PHOTO(1 小时快速冲相)洗照片,突然我发现我不知道冲洗照片怎么说。总不会是“wash picture”吧。要知道, wash 这个词的意思是真的用水洗东西呀。我犯难了,店员问我:“How can I help you, lady?”我卡壳了,真是度秒如年哪!没办法,我只得装酷,一言不发的把底片往店员面前一推。店员一定觉得我很没礼貌,不过他还是很有礼貌的说:“You want to develop the film, right?” “Yes, yes.”我赶紧回答。Develop film——冲相片,这个词我是不会忘了。

经过两年的学习,我终于拿下了我的研究生学位。也渐渐融入了美国的生活。我发现,其实英语并不是那么难学。中国学生口语不好是因为在我们的教学中存在着一些弊病。我们学习的往往是很多理论上的东西,而不是从实际生活需要出发的。想想在我们呀呀学语的时候,有哪个是从语法学起,然后背单词的呢?我们学习母语,都是从实际生

活需要中学来的。即使是一个字都不会写的文盲,也可以口若悬河、滔滔不绝。可我们说英语的时候,就会先想:这个句子应该用什么动词?什么时态?这个动词的过去分词是规则的还是不规则的?等把整个句子想清楚,在脑子里翻译过来以后,跟你说话的人可能早就转换话题了。所以,哪怕你的理论成绩再好,但表达不出来,无法进行日常的沟通,无疑对你的信心会有很大的打击,每次张嘴前就会紧张,越紧张越说不好,越说不好越没信心,越没信心越加强你的心理暗示:我的口语不行,我的英语不好!事实上,这正是许多中国学生的心理暗示。有这种心理暗示的学生会羞于张嘴,又怎么能讲一口流利的英语呢!

要说好英语,就要先相信自己的英语很好,要先树立自己的信心。如何树立信心呢?首先应该从简单的、实用的生活常用语练起,不用很多,越贴近生活越好,从你日常的起居,从你每日生活必须接触的东西学起,熟练掌握它们,不要去学它们的语法结构,先学会说,最好能不通过大脑脱口而出。当你在日常生活中的沟通没有问题了,你的信心就会大增,你就敢于和人交流,而交流的快乐会让你越来越想探索更深层的海洋,你就会像海绵吸水那样畅快淋漓地提高你的英语水平了。

这时,说英语就会变成一种享受……

祝君早日成功!

著 者

2005. 1

Characters

人物表



Lily Zhou: A 21 year-old Chinese girl from Beijing who just got into graduate school at Yale University. She is modern, friendly and ready to learn about new cultures. She is also beautiful, clever, and kind — so many boys are fighting over her. Lily's hobbies are Shopping, shopping and more shopping. (And some studying!)

Lily's favorite movie is, "Gone with the Wind."

Her favorite saying is, "I am a Shoppaholic!"

周莉, 21岁, 中国北京女孩。刚刚得到进入耶鲁大学学习的机会。她很时尚、友好, 而且充满求知欲。莉莉很漂亮、聪明又善良……所以有许多男孩子拜倒在她的石榴裙下。但莉莉有购物的癖好。她常说的一句话是“我是购物狂!”。莉莉最喜欢的电影是《乱世佳人》。



Jerry Hans: A poor 25 year-old German exchange student from Berlin. Jerry is studying English at Yale, (on scholarship) and all is well until he falls in love with Lily — then the troubles begin! Jerry's Hobbies include drinking German beers and studying from dusk till dawn! Jerry's favorite movie is "Titanic." His favorite

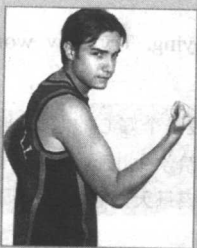
saying is, "How can I help you?"

杰瑞, 从德国柏林到美国的拮据的交换学生, 25岁。杰瑞在耶鲁学习英文, 一切都很顺利, 直到他遇到了莉莉……麻烦接踵而来! 杰瑞喜欢喝德国啤酒, 喜欢学习从太阳下山直到太阳再次升起! 杰瑞最喜欢的电影是《泰坦尼克号》, 他最常说的话是: “我能帮你吗?”



Sara Rachel Baris: A 23 year-old transfer student from Harvard, now studying at Yale. Sara is a teacher's assistant as well as Lily's roommate. She is teaching Lily all about American life, culture and dating. Sara's hobbies include: tutoring buddies, shopping with pals and catching movies with friends. Her favorite movie is, "Sleepless in Seattle." Sara's favorite saying is, "I have a pet snake, want to see?"

萨兰, 23岁, 从哈佛转学到耶鲁的学生。萨兰既是助教, 又是莉莉的同屋。她教给莉莉美国的风俗、文化以及如何约会。萨兰的爱好包括: 帮助别人, 与好朋友购物, 还有和朋友看电影。她最喜欢的电影是《西雅图不眠夜》, 她常说的话是: “我有一条宠物蛇, 想看看吗?”



Big Joe Trivonno: A rather tall, and rather rich 24 year-old American basketball-playing hunk! Joe's hobbies include: being a playboy and sports of all kinds. He also enjoys American beers for breakfast, lunch and dinner. His favorite movie is, "007." Joe's favorite saying is, "Hi babe, what is your phone number?"

乔, 24岁, 个头高大且富有的美国篮球运动员帅哥! 乔的喜好包括: 喜爱所有的运动项目。他还喜欢在每天的早餐、中餐及晚餐喝美国啤酒。他喜欢的电影是《007》。他常挂在嘴边的话是: “嗨, 美女, 你的电话号码是多少?”



Ray Wang: A 25 year-old Chinese student in Yale's computer program. A skilled bookworm nerd, Ray can fix any computer, but his love life is another story — his heart is always broken. Ray is Jerry's best friend, and many times Ray has to lend his friend money, fix his computer or save his life! Ray's hobbies include: chatting on line, surfing the net and playing video games until the sun comes up. His favorite movie is "The Lord of the Ring I". Ray's favorite saying is, "See you online!"

王瑞, 25岁, 在耶鲁学计算机的中国学生。瑞是计算机书呆子, 他能修任何计算机, 但他的爱情生活就是另外一个故事了——他总是心碎。瑞是杰瑞最好的朋友, 而且他不得不经常借钱给他的朋友或帮忙修计算机。他喜欢的电影是《指环王I》。瑞最常说的话是: “网上见!”



Professor Parsons: The most famous English professor at Yale University, Professor Parsons is a nice teacher who believes teaching is caring professionally. The funny Professor Parsons also helps new students adjust to university life. His hobbies include: writing textbooks, giving super hard tests and dancing with his pregnant wife. Parsons' favorite movie is “Forest Gump,” because that is where he met his beautiful wife!

His favorite saying is, “Don't have a favorite saying. Try new words every day!”

帕森斯教授, 耶鲁大学著名的英语教授。帕森斯教授是个好心的老师, 他风趣而且帮助学生适应大学的生活。他的喜好包括: 写课本, 给学生出超级难的考试以及与怀孕的太太跳舞。他常说的话是: “别形成口头禅, 应该每天试着说新的词!”



Mr. Zhou: Lily's dad. Mr. Zhou doesn't want his daughter to go so far away to school. Plus he has a secret past at Yale himself. Will Lily ever find out what her father did when he was young? Mr. Zhou's hobbies include: punishing his daughter, making his daughter clean the house and trying to control everything. (But somehow he is sweet and caring at the same time.) His favorite movie is, “Hero.” Mr. Zhou's favorite saying is, “Can't you wait another year before going away to school?”

周先生, 莉莉的父亲。周先生并不想让女儿去那么远的地方学习, 再加上他自己有在耶鲁学习的秘密经历。(莉莉会发现他爸爸年轻的时候在耶鲁做过什么事吗?) 周先生的喜好包括: 和女儿开玩笑, 让女儿整理房间, 还有总想控制所有的事。(但从某些方面来讲, 他也很体贴和温柔。) 他喜欢的电影是《英雄》。周先生的口头禅是: “你不能再等一年再去求学吗?”



Tommy: A 22 year-old boy living in Beijing. Tommy has secretly liked Lily for a long time, but he was too shy to tell her before she left for Yale. Tommy's hobbies include: helping beautiful girls carry their bags, giving feet massages and back rubs, and just plain being too nice all the time. His favorite movie is "Love Story." Tommy's

favorite saying is, "Please don't go!"

汤姆, 22岁的北京男孩。汤姆暗恋莉莉很长时间了, 但他太内向, 一直没向莉莉表白, 直到莉莉要去耶鲁。汤姆的喜好包括: 足浴, 帮漂亮的女孩提包以及总是特别热心。他最喜欢的电影是《爱情故事》。汤姆的口头禅是: “请别走!”

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