全国高等院校国际商务英语统编教材

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主编 丁 溪

READING ENGLISH FOR INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS

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前　言

加入WTO后，我国对外贸易进入了一个快速发展的轨道。越来越多的世界大型跨国公司及国外中小企业纷纷来华投资设厂，建立研发基地，寻求未来发展的战略空间。2002年我国吸引外资达527亿美元，首次超过美国成为全球吸引外资最多的国家。2003年我国对外进出口总额超过8500亿美元，跃居世界第四位。随着我国经济的快速发展，这一势头将得以持续。

与此同时，我们也应看到随着我国对外开放步伐的不断加快，我国也正面临着与国际惯例接轨的严峻考验。针对我国的反倾销、反补贴等与日俱增，每年给我国造成巨大的经济损失。因此，尽快培养一大批既熟练掌握商务英语并能运用英语进行谈判，同时又了解国际市场行情及各国法律的复合型外经贸人才已成为当前的一项紧迫任务。本教材的出版将对我国商务英语的教学和实践起到巨大的推动作用。

本教材具有以下特点：

1. 选材范围广——所选文章涵盖了国际经济、国际贸易、国际投资、国际金融、国际劳务合作、国际物流、国际保险、国际招投标、知识产权、人力资源管理、企业文化、可持续发展等方面内容。

2. 实用性强——所选文章涉及当前我国经济贸易的各个方面，通过它，学生可了解当前最新国际经贸动态，为未来从事商务活动打下

牢固的基础。

3. 选材内容深刻——所选文章内涵丰富，既适合在大学英语教学过程中进行讨论式教学，也适合广大的自学爱好者独立学习。

4. 语言规范、流畅——所选文章经过多次筛选，具有真实的语境、生动的用词、恰当的比喻等特色，均是原汁原味的佳作。

5. 注释详细、全面——注释既有对背景知识、组织名称等内容的解释，又有个别难句的分析和翻译等。这些都大大方便了学生对课文的深刻理解。

6. 题型多样、难简适度——练习题型设计多样。A 篇有阅读理解、词汇选择、简短回答及小结等。B 篇有术语填空、英译汉等题型。

7. 词汇专业性强、重点突出——每篇文章后附有生词表，词汇附有英、汉两种解释。

8. 文章篇幅适宜——所选文章 A 篇 2000 字左右，B 篇和 C 篇各 1500 字左右，既适用于精读教学，也可用于泛读。

9. 本书附有各章 A、B、C 篇的练习题答案以及每章 A 篇的参考译文。这些对商务英语的初学者来说会有很大帮助。

本教材的主要目的是培养全国高等院校商务英语方向的学生的英文原文阅读能力，同时适用于有一定英语基础的广大商贸英语爱好者。

全书共分 19 章，第一章和第九章由哈工大丁溪、侯银霞同志编写，第二章和第十七章由天津工业大学范彤彤同志编写，第三章和第十一章由安徽工业大学刘爱萍、陈宗伦同志编写，第四章和第六章由秦皇岛外院王建华、王静岩、王丹同志编写，第五章、第十二章和第

十九章由中央财大彭苏颖、路晓红、陈雨松同志编写,第七章由中央财大王晓红同志编写，第八章和第十四章由河北大学秦明霞、张娜同志编写，第十章由河北经贸大学阎红梅同志编写，第十三章由河北经贸大学王成云同志编写，第十五章由西南交大解秀琴同志编写，第十六章和第十八章由云南财贸学院于燕萍、李勤同志编写。

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Chapter 1 Section A

American Government's Role in the Economy

美国政府在经济中的作用

Introduction

America is the strongest power in the world at present. Its economy is prosperous and growing steadily. The GDP, which measures the total output of goods and services in a given year, has risen from more than $3.4 trillion in 1983 to around $8.5 trillion by 1998. In 2002, American GDP was nearly $10 trillion. There is no denying that American economy is a mixed one in which both privately owned business and government play a crucial role.

美国是目前世界上最强大的国家。它经济繁荣，增长稳健，可供衡量其上一年商品和服务价值总量的GDP从1983年的3.4万亿美元增长至1998年的8.5万亿美元。在2002年，其GDP总量接近10万亿美元。不容否认美国经济是一个混合体，在这里私营企业和政府都发挥着重要的作用。

While consumers and producers make most decisions that mold the economy, government activities have a powerful effect on the U.S. economy in at least four areas.

Stabilization and growth

Perhaps most importantly, the federal government guides the overall pace of economic activity, attempting to maintain steady growth, high levels of employment, and price stability. By adjusting spending and tax rates (fiscal policy) or managing the money supply and controlling the use of credit (monetary policy), it can slow down or speed up the economy's rate of growth — in the process, affecting the level of prices and employment.

For many years following the Great Depression of the 1930s, recessions—periods of slow economic growth and high unemployment—were viewed as the greatest of economic threats. When the danger of recession appeared most serious, government sought to strengthen the economy by spending heavily itself or cutting taxes so that consumers would spend more, and by fostering rapid growth in the money supply, which also encouraged more spending. In the 1970s, major price increases, particularly for energy, created a strong fear of inflation—increases in the overall level of prices. As a result, government leaders came to concentrate more on controlling inflation than on combating recession by limiting spending, resisting tax cuts, and reining in growth in the money supply.

Ideas about the best tools for stabilizing the economy changed substantially between the 1960s and the 1990s. In the 1960s, government had great faith in fiscal policy—manipulation of government revenues to influence the economy. Since spending and taxes were controlled by the president and the Congress, these elected officials played a leading role in directing the economy. A period of high inflation, high unemployment, and huge government deficits weakened confidence in fiscal policy as a tool for regulating the overall pace of economic activity. Instead, monetary policy—controlling the nation's money supply through such devices as interest rates—assumed growing prominence. Monetary policy is directed by the nation's central bank, known as the Federal Reserve Board, with considerable independence from the president and the Congress.

Regulation and control

The U.S. federal government regulates private enterprise in numerous ways. Regulation falls into two general categories. Economic regulation seeks, either directly or indirectly, to control prices. Traditionally, the government has sought to prevent monopolies such as electric utilities from raising prices beyond the level that would ensure them reasonable profits. At times, the government has extended economic control to other kinds of industries as well. In the years following the Great Depression, it devised a complex system to stabilize prices for agricultural goods, which tend to fluctuate wildly in response to rapidly changing supply and demand. A number of other industries—trucking and, later, airlines—successfully sought regulation themselves to limit what they considered harmful price-cutting.

Another form of economic regulation, antitrust law, seeks to strengthen market forces so that direct regulation is unnecessary. The government—and, sometimes, private parties—have used antitrust law to prohibit practices or mergers that would unduly limit competition.

Government also exercises control over private companies to achieve social goals, such as protecting the public's health and safety or maintaining a clean and healthy environment. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration bans harmful drugs, for example; the Occupational Safety and Health Administration protects workers from hazards they may encounter in their jobs; and the Environmental Protection Agency seeks to control water and air pollution.

American attitudes about regulation changed substantially during the final three decades of the 20th century. Beginning in the 1970s, policy-makers grew increasingly concerned that economic regulation protected inefficient companies at the expense of consumers in industries such as airlines and trucking. At the same time, technological changes spawned new competitors in some industries, such as telecommunications, that once were considered natural monopolies. Both developments led to a succession of laws easing regulation.

While leaders of both political parties generally favored economic deregulation during the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s, there was less agreement concerning regulations designed to achieve social goals. Social regulation had assumed growing importance in the years following the Depression and World War II, and again in the 1960s and 1970s. But during the presidency of Ronald Reagan in the 1980s, the government relaxed rules to protect workers, consumers, and the environment, arguing that regulation interfered with free enterprise, increased the costs of doing business, and thus contributed to inflation. Still, many Americans continued to voice concerns about specific events or trends, prompting the government to issue new regulations in some areas, including environmental protection.

Some citizens, meanwhile, have turned to the courts when they feel their elected officials are not addressing certain issues quickly or strongly enough. For instance, in the 1990s, individuals, and eventually government itself, sued tobacco companies over the health risks of cigarette smoking. A large financial settlement provided states with long-term payments to cover medical costs to treat smoking-related illnesses.

Direct services

Each level of government provides many direct services. The federal government, for example, is responsible for national defense, backs research that often leads to the development of new products, conducts space exploration, and runs numerous programs designed to help workers develop workplace skills and find jobs. Government spending has a significant effect on local and regional economies—and even on the overall pace of economic activity.

State governments, meanwhile, are responsible for the construction and maintenance of most highways. State, county, or city governments play the leading role in financing and operating public schools. Local governments are primarily responsible for police and fire protection. Government spending in each of these areas can also affect local and regional economies, although federal decisions generally have the greatest economic impact.

Overall, federal, state, and local spending accounted for almost 18 percent of gross domestic products in 1997.

Direct assistance

Government also provides many kinds of help to businesses and individuals. It offers low-interest loans and technical assistance to small businesses, and it provides loans to help students attend college. Government-sponsored enterprises buy home mortgages from lenders and turn them into securities that can be bought and sold by investors, thereby encouraging home lending. Government also actively promotes exports and seeks to prevent foreign countries from maintaining trade barriers that restrict imports.

Government supports individuals who cannot adequately care for themselves. Social Security, which is financed by a tax on employers and employees, accounts for the largest portion of Americans' retirement income. The Medicare program pays for many of the medical costs of the elderly. The Medicaid program finances medical care for low-income families. In many states, government maintains institutions for the mentally ill or people with severe disabilities. The federal government provides Food Stamps to help poor families obtain food, and the federal and state governments jointly provide welfare grants to support low-income parents with children.

Many of these programs, including Social Security, trace their roots to the "New Deal" programs of Franklin D. Roosevelt, who served as the U.S. president from 1933 to 1945. Key to Roosevelt's reforms was a belief that poverty usually resulted from social and economic causes rather than from failed personal morals. This view repudiated a common notion whose roots lay in New England Puritanism that success was a sign of God's favor and failure a sign of God's displeasure. This was an important transformation in American social and economic thought. Even today, however, echoes of the older notions are still heard in debates around certain issues, especially welfare.

Many other assistance programs for individuals and families, including Medicare and Medicaid, were begun in the 1960s during President Lyndon Johnson's (1963–1969) "War on Poverty." Although some of these programs encountered financial difficulties in the 1990s and various reforms were proposed, they continued to have strong support from both of the United States' major political parties. Critics argued, however, that providing welfare to unemployed but healthy individuals actually created dependency rather than solving problems. Welfare reform legislation enacted in 1996 under President Bill Clinton (1993–2001) requires people to work as a condition of receiving benefits and imposes limits on how long individuals may receive payments.

Poverty and inequality

Americans are proud of their economic system, believing it provides opportunities for all citizens to have good lives. Their faith is clouded, however, by the fact that poverty persists in many parts of the country. Government anti-poverty efforts have made some progress but have not eradicated the problem. Similarly, periods of strong economic growth, which bring more jobs and higher wages, have helped reduce poverty but have not eliminated it entirely.

The federal government defines a minimum amount of income necessary for basic maintenance of a family of four. This amount may fluctuate depending on the cost of living and the location of the family. In 1998, a family of four with an annual income below $16,530 was classified as living in poverty.

The percentage of people living below the poverty level dropped from 22.4 percent in 1959 to 11.4 percent in 1978. But since then, it has fluctuated in a fairly narrow range. In 1998, it stood at 12.7 percent.

What is more, the overall figures mask much more severe pockets of poverty. In 1998, more than one-quarter of all African-Americans (26.1 percent) lived in poverty; though distressingly high, that figure did represent an improvement from 1979, when 31 percent of blacks were officially classified as poor, and it was the lowest poverty rate for this group since 1959. Families headed by single mothers are particularly susceptible to poverty. Partly as a result of this phenomenon, almost one in five children (18.9 percent) was poor in 1997. The poverty rate was 36.7 percent among African-American children and 34.4 percent among Hispanic children.

Some analysts have suggested that the official poverty figures overstate the real extent of poverty because they measure only cash income and exclude certain government assistance programs such as Food Stamps, health care, and public housing. Others point out, however, that these programs rarely cover all of a family's food or health care needs and that there is a shortage of public housing. Some argue that even families whose incomes are above the official poverty level sometimes go hungry, skimping on food to pay for such things as housing, medical care, and clothing. Still others point out that people at the poverty level sometimes receive cash income from casual work and in the "underground" sector of the economy, which is never recorded in official statistics.

In any event, it is clear that the American economic system does not apportion its rewards equally. In 1997, the wealthiest one-fifth of American families accounted for 47.2 percent of the nation's income, according to the Economic Policy Institute, a Washington-based research organization. In contrast, the poorest one-fifth earned just 4.2 percent of the nation's income, and the poorest 40 percent accounted for only 14 percent of income.

Despite the generally prosperous American economy as a whole, concerns about inequality continued during the 1980s and 1990s. Increasing global competition threatened workers in many traditional manufacturing industries, and their wages stagnated. At the same time, the federal government edged away from tax policies that sought to favor lower-income families at the expense of wealthier ones, and it also cut spending on a number of domestic social programs intended to help the disadvantaged. Meanwhile, wealthier families reaped most of the gains from the booming stock market.

In the late 1990s, there were some signs these patterns were reversing, as wage gains accelerated—especially among poorer workers. But at the end of the decade, it