

高级实用英语系列教材

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美国制度与文化

(引进版)

[美] 埃塞尔·蒂尔斯基(Ethel Tiersky) 编著
马丁·蒂尔斯基(Martin Tiersky)

张卫平 注



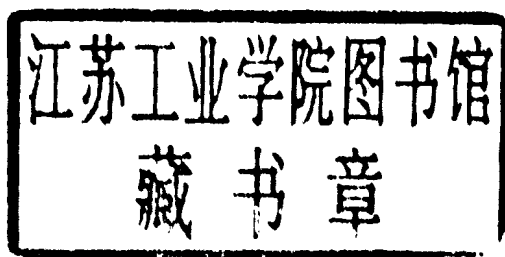
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前言

《美国制度与文化》是一本专门为英语作为第二语言（ESL）的学习者编写的教科书，旨在通过描述的方式介绍美国的文化和传统，从而向读者或学生（如移民、外国学生）客观地展示美国社会文化的全貌，既包括美国文化中的积极因素，也包括其中的弱点，读者可以据此对美国的生活方式做出自己的判断。此书在充分考虑到 ESL 学习者的特点和英语水平的基础上，用地道的美国英语撰写，因此也是一本资料翔实、文化韵味浓厚、语言难度适中的英语阅读教材。使用者能够在了解美国文化和传统全貌的同时，极大地提高英语阅读技巧和水平。

此书由 7 个单元组成，包括思想观念、生活方式、文化的多样性、教育、娱乐、政治体制、公民权、经济、高技术和节日庆典等美国社会和文化生活的各个方面。每个单元进一步细分为一些小的题目，全书共有 24 个小节，涉及的范围十分广泛，如美国的国民性、家庭生活、礼仪、宗教、高等教育、休闲活动、宪法、总统选举、工人，资本主义与美国经济，有争议的英雄哥伦布，感恩节与美国土著人以及两位总统与两次世界大战等。为了帮助读者在阅读前后深入思考和理解美国的文化和传统，同时提高英语阅读能力，全书的每个小节都以不同的方式提供了阅读前的讨论和思考题以及阅读后的理解题。此外，作者还根据小节的内容编写了一些语言学习方面的练习，放在每个小节的后面，其中包括词汇、短语的理解与掌握，阅读技能的提高，议论性短文的写作技巧和练习等。

此书的主要作者埃塞尔·蒂尔斯基（Ethel Tiersky）现任美国哈里·S·杜鲁门学院（Harry S. Truman College）副教授，从事英语作为第二语言的教学已有 30 多年。她撰写的这本《美国制度与文化》于 1975 年第一次出版，目前已出到第四版，在许多国家被广泛使用，被业界誉为本学科领域的“经典之作”。此外，她还出版过 13 部 ESL 教科书，并发表过多篇相关的论文。

我们引进《美国制度与文化》一书，旨在为国内的英语教学提供一本优秀的教科书。目前国内已出版了众多的有关“英美概况”、“英语国家社会与文化”、“英语国家概况”等的教科书，我们希望这本由美国人自己编写的原汁原味的教科书，能成为英语专业大专、英语专业本科和大学英语的“英美概况”或“英语国家概况”等课程所选择的好教材之一。此外，为了帮助使用者更好地阅读和学习这本教材，我们在出版时增加了一定数量的注释，涉及重要人物、重大历史事件、机构名称、特殊专业名词、缩略词语、重要成语、习惯用语和短语等；注释提供较详尽的英语解释，必要时配有中文。

PREFACE

To the Teacher

The U.S.A.: Customs and Institutions was first published in 1972. It has been called “a classic in its field,” a description that thrilled its authors. With each new edition, the book has been updated and expanded. We firmly believe that it has also improved with age.

Over the decades, the primary goals of our text have remained the same: to provide newcomers to the United States an overview of American culture and traditions and to improve the reading comprehension of nonnative speakers of English. The content strives to create a general portrait of the United States, both its virtues and its shortcomings. *The U.S.A.: Customs and Institutions* answers many questions that foreigners and immigrants ask about this nation and helps them understand Americans better.

Teachers familiar with the third edition will find the fourth edition similar in terms of topics covered but different in many other ways. One new chapter has been added—Chapter 18, “High-Tech Communications.” All of the other chapters have been revised extensively, however, to update statistics, include new research, and explain new attitudes and customs. Although the book remains a high-intermediate to advanced reader, we have tried to deal with sophisticated ideas in the easiest language possible. In this edition, the vocabulary has been simplified and the sentences shortened to make the content accessible to a greater number of students. The readings remain long enough and difficult enough to challenge advanced students. However, with sufficient in-class assistance, students in the intermediate range will also be able to understand and enjoy them.

Here are some salient new features that make the fourth edition an even more effective teaching tool:

- **Prereading discussion questions** strengthen the background brought by students to each reading and introduce some of the vocabulary used in the chapter.
- **Prereading “Guess” questions** arouse curiosity and give students some specific information to look for as they read.
- **Completely new illustrations**—including many photographs and cartoons—stimulate discussion and make American culture come alive through visual images and humor.
- **“Check Your Comprehension” questions** now follow each section of the readings. These questions encourage students to reflect upon what they’ve learned, and teachers can use them as a starting point for general discussion, paired conversation, or writing assignments.

- **Exercises** have been greatly revised and are now longer and more varied in format. They are also more interactive, often involving paired or small-group work and sometimes even games. In addition to being more fun, the exercises are now broader in scope. As before, they emphasize comprehension, vocabulary, idioms, and reading skills. But now there is more work with punctuation, phonics, word parts, word endings, writing style, and dictionary skills.
- **Vocabulary lists** in the “Building Your Vocabulary” exercises contain brief notes that clarify confusing word forms, such as irregular plurals and words used only in the plural.
- The **reading-writing connection** has been strengthened in three ways:
 1. Every chapter includes one or two exercises that practice an important sentence pattern found in the reading.
 2. In the “**Issues**” section (Part A of “Sharing Ideas”), students are asked to discuss major controversies related to the chapter’s topic. After exchanging ideas with classmates, they write about one of the issues.
 3. In “**On a Personal Note**” (Part B of “Sharing Ideas”), students are encouraged to write about their reactions by making cultural comparisons, expressing personal opinions, and discussing their unique experiences. The length of these writing assignments is left for the teacher to decide. For advanced students, some writing topics involve library research.

The U.S.A.: Customs and Institutions, fourth edition, like its predecessors, is designed to give teachers maximum freedom of choice. Chapters can be studied in any order, depending upon student interest and timeliness.

To the Student

This fourth edition of *The U.S.A.: Customs and Institutions* has two main goals. The first is to introduce you to the lifestyles, attitudes, customs, and traditions of Americans. The second is to increase your knowledge of the most widespread American custom of all—the custom of communicating in English. To accomplish the first goal, the readings have been updated to give you a twenty-first century snapshot of life in the United States. To accomplish the second goal, this new edition contains greatly expanded exercises. They will help you to read with greater understanding, discuss your reactions to the ideas presented, learn a specific set of vocabulary words and idioms, and note some important conventions of written English.

The U.S.A.: Customs and Institutions discusses both strengths and weaknesses of American culture. However, its primary intent is to describe and analyze rather than evaluate. It is left to you, the reader, to compare American ways with those of other cul-

tures and to form opinions about American lifestyles.

If your past instruction in English has been in British English, don't worry. The switch to American English will not present major problems. In terms of sentence structure, these two versions of English are almost the same. British English has more irregular verbs than American English (*learnt* versus *learned*, for example). There are some minor spelling differences (such as *colour* versus *color*) and some differences in vocabulary. (The British *lift* is the American *elevator*; a British *vest* is an American *undershirt*.) Still, you will find that British and American English are very much the same language.

As you probably know, English is rapidly becoming the global language of our shrinking world. It is spoken by about 1.5 billion people and is the language of international communication in business, diplomacy, technology, sports, travel, and entertainment. Wherever you go and whatever you do, your knowledge of English will come in handy.

We hope that *The U.S.A.: Customs and Institutions*, fourth edition, will help you improve your understanding of American English and American people. Whether you're living in the United States, visiting the country, working or studying with Americans who live in your country, or perhaps meeting Americans for the first time in the pages of this book, we want to extend you a warm welcome to the U.S.A.!

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Chicago, Illinois

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UNIT 1

Attitudes,

Values, and

Lifestyles

1

The American Character



Faces of the U.S.A.: diversity as a way of life

BEFORE YOU READ

Discuss

1. Compare Americans to people in other countries. What differences have you noticed in behavior, attitudes, and values?
2. Look at the headings and subheadings in this chapter. Can you predict what each section might have to say about the U.S. and its residents?
3. Take a survey of the languages spoken by students in your class. Where in the world are these languages spoken?

Guess

Try to answer the questions. Then look for the answers in the reading.

1. What is the approximate population of the U.S.? Check (✓) one:
_____ 125 million _____ 275 million _____ 425 million
2. Which is the largest ethnic minority in the U.S.? Check (✓) one:
_____ Hispanics _____ Asians _____ African-Americans

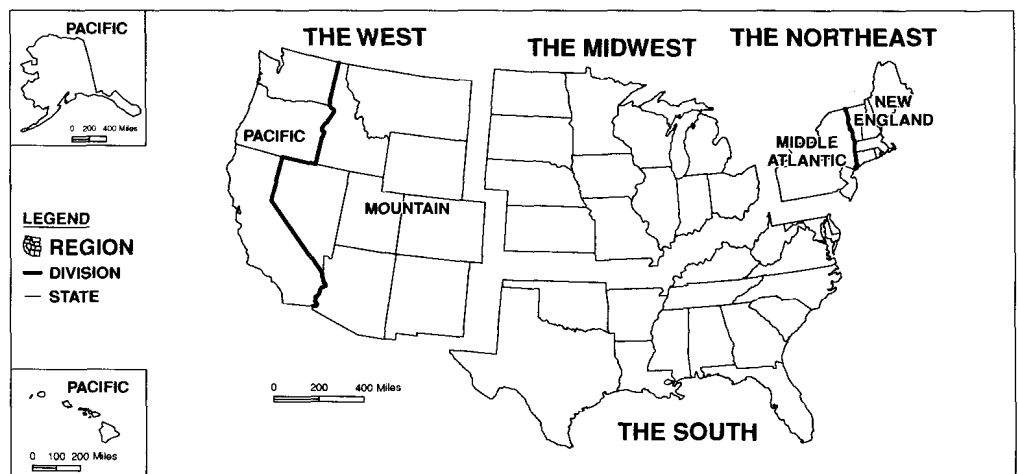
The American Character

A Land of Diversity

- 1 What are Americans like? What do Americans like? These are very different questions. In answering them, this chapter will provide a sketch of the American character. "But wait," some readers say. "In this huge nation of people from everywhere, is there really a national **character**?" Let's tackle this third question first.
- 2 There is great **diversity** in the **ethnic** makeup of America. Nevertheless, many writers have **generalized** about typical American values, attitudes, and beliefs. For example, Mortimer B. Zuckerman¹, editor-in-chief of *U.S. News & World Report*², sees his country as "a unique culture of self-reliance, independence, resourcefulness, pragmatism, and novelty." He goes on to describe his fellow Americans in greater detail: "We are comfortable with change and with people who make things happen. In America, the new is better than the old; taking charge is valued over playing it safe³; making money is superior to inheriting it; education and merit are favored over family ties."
- 3 The most important characteristic of the U.S.A. can be stated in one word: diversity. Most Americans take pride in the great **variety** found in the country's geography and population. Covering 3,700,000 square miles (9,590,000 square kilometers), the U.S. is the fourth-largest nation in the world (after Russia, China, and Canada). Within this vast nation are tall mountains and flat cornfields, deserts and tropical regions, prairies and forests, rugged coastlines and gentle, rolling hills. The climate, too, covers all extremes. In southern Florida, visitors come to swim and sunbathe in December. In northern Alaska, winter temperatures may drop to -75° Fahrenheit (-54° Celsius).
- 4 With roughly 275 million people, the U.S. is the third-largest nation in population after China and India. About 90% of the people now living in the U.S. were born there. Still, the U.S. has one of the world's most varied populations in terms of national ancestry. This diversity is often highlighted and celebrated at school and community festivals. Racially, the U.S. is about 82% white, 13% black, 4% Asian and Pacific Islander⁴, and 1% Native American⁵ (including Eskimo and Aleut). Hispanics are roughly 12% of the entire American population, making Spanish-speaking people the nation's second largest ethnic **minority**⁶. Some newcomers to the U.S. may be surprised by the varieties of skin color they see, but Americans take it for granted. Racism and prejudice are still serious

problems in the U.S.; however, most Americans believe in the ideals of equality and mutual respect.

- 5 Three significant population trends may change the American character to some extent. First, the U.S. Census Bureau⁷ estimates that, by the year 2050, the country's population will be 394 million. Will more crowded conditions lead to closer friendships or more disputes between neighbors? Second, in recent years, the average age of Americans has been increasing (from 28 in 1970 to about 35 today). This trend, often referred to as the "graying" of America⁸, is expected to continue. By 2023, **demographers** say, about 18% of Americans will be 65 or older. By 2038, that figure will reach 34%. "America is a country of young men," wrote Ralph Waldo Emerson⁹ in the nineteenth century. Americans have often been accused of worshiping youth and undervaluing their elders. Now, the typical American is approaching middle age. Some 72,000 Americans are at least 100 years old! By 2050, there may be 800,000 centenarians. What will happen to the youth culture then? Third, the nation's ethnic and racial minority groups are growing much faster than the general population. Demographers predict that by 2050, this country's minority groups combined will make up the **majority** of the population. No doubt, this change will affect attitudes, values, and customs.
- 6 Regional variations also add diversity to the American character. Travel around the country and you'll notice differences in language, diet, recreation, and even regional character. Some Americans can tell what part of the country other Americans come from just by listening to their accents. Cooking styles also vary from place to place, influenced by the different immigrant groups that have settled in that area and by the edible plants, fish, seafood, and wildlife native to each region. Recreation also varies from place to place, influenced by climate, geography, and ethnic traditions. In addition, attitudes and behavior may differ somewhat from one region of the country to another. For example, New Englanders are commonly described as serious and self-reliant, Southerners as gracious and leisurely, and Westerners as casual and friendly. Californians are said to be eager to try new fads. Midwesterners are considered more **conservative** than Californians and less sophisticated than New Yorkers. Of course, many residents of a particular region do not fit these generalizations.



Regions of the United States

- 7 However, modern communication and mass production¹⁰ tend to decrease regional and ethnic differences. From the East Coast to the West Coast, travelers find similar shopping centers, supermarkets, department and discount stores, restaurants, hotels, motels, and apartment buildings. National advertising creates national tastes in clothing styles and other consumer goods¹¹. National news media influence Americans' reactions to world events. Television, movies, and schools help to create a body of American values and traditions. Despite the nation's great diversity, some generalizations can be made about what the typical American believes in, admires, values, and wants.



**Check Your
Comprehension**

*Why is the U.S. called "a land of diversity"?
What three population trends are predicted?*

Democracy in Action

- 8 American **democracy** is based on the principle of majority rule¹². In a democratic legislative body¹³, decisions are made by voting. In the U.S., voting is not just a tool for selecting political leaders and passing laws. It is also a way of making decisions in the business world, in social groups, in schools, and even within the family. Americans believe that people should take part in making the rules they must live by. American children are introduced to the ideas of majority rule and representative government¹⁴ at a very early age. Many families hold weekly meetings to determine household rules and activities. Most schools have student councils with elected representatives so that students can voice their opinions about school regulations and activities. In the adult world, all kinds of organizations (unions, religious groups, etc.) elect officers and make decisions by voting. In publicly owned companies, stockholders elect the directors.
- 9 "All men are created equal," says the Declaration of Independence. This statement does not mean that all human beings are equal in ability or ambition. It means that all people should be treated equally before the law and given equal privileges and opportunities. Equal opportunity means (among other things¹⁵) an equal chance for a good education and a good job.
- 10 The American commitment to equality of opportunity inspires what is commonly called the American dream¹⁶—the belief that anyone can achieve success through honesty and hard work. For many immigrant Americans, this dream became reality. Financial success has often been the result of taking a risk, of quitting a salaried position and starting one's own new business. Social mobility¹⁷—movement from one social class to another—has always been characteristic of the U.S. It is usually achieved by improving one's educational level, occupation, and/or income.
- 11 A democratic, representative government gives citizens an opportunity (and a responsibility) to encourage positive social change. Ordinary citizens can improve conditions, especially if they unite in a common cause. "Grassroots" movements can bring about changes in laws and policies. In the past half-century, many such groups have forced change in local, state, and federal laws. Some groups have even influenced foreign policy—for example, those that opposed American participation in the Vietnam War of the 1960s. Other groups have persuaded lawmakers to pass stricter laws to pro-

tect Americans from drunk drivers, pollution, and the illegal use of handguns. Still other groups fight for the rights of minorities—African-Americans, Hispanics, gays and lesbians, people with disabilities, senior citizens, and so on. Americans know that, in the battle for human rights, there is strength in numbers¹⁸.



**Check Your
Comprehension**

*What American attitudes are related to democratic ideals?
What does majority rule mean?*

“Try It—You’ll Like It”

- 12 The great American novelist and humorist Mark Twain described the typical Englishman or -woman as a “person who does things because they have been done before” and the typical American as “a person who does things because they haven’t been done before.” Americans love to try something new out of curiosity and a belief that newer may be better.
- 13 As a nation of immigrants, the U.S. has had a continual influx of people with a pioneering spirit, with the courage to make major changes in their lives. In the mid-nineteenth century, this spirit led American settlers to make the long, difficult, and dangerous journey westward¹⁹ in search of gold or free land. The desire to make a fresh start in a new place is still noticeable throughout the nation. About 42 million Americans change residences every year. Some moves are due to changing jobs or going off to college. Other people move from big cities to suburbs (or vice versa). Some move to find adventure or a more pleasant climate. The pioneering spirit of Americans is evident in the working world, too. Employees change jobs and even careers as opportunities change.
- 14 Americans love science and technology because these fields involve new discoveries. The U.S. has embraced the age of communication with great enthusiasm. From preschoolers to senior citizens, Americans are learning to use computers—at school, at work, and at home. Robots, lasers, and other inventions of modern technology fascinate them. Americans subsidize all kinds of space exploration, from outside the Earth to inside the atom, in order to uncover the secrets of the universe.
- 15 Love of change is closely tied to faith in improvement. Americans have always been optimistic, believing in the perfectibility of people, the basic goodness of their country, and the ability of American ingenuity to improve the quality of life. But people have come to realize that, if life can become better, it can also become worse. The dangers of air and water pollution, nuclear power, and overpopulation have become clear.



**Check Your
Comprehension**

What are some examples of the American pioneering spirit?

Typical American Behavior and Values

- 16 Watching Americans in action, foreigners sometimes see behavior that seems rude, misguided, or just plain silly. Among them are the following traits, which are characteristically, but certainly not exclusively, American.

- 17 *Hurry, Hurry, Hurry.* Almost every American wears a watch, and, in nearly every room in an American home, there's a clock. "Be on time." "Don't waste time." "Time is money." "Time waits for no one." All these familiar sayings reflect the American obsession with promptness and efficiency. Students displease their teachers and employees displease their bosses when they arrive late. This desire to get the most out of every minute often makes Americans impatient when they have to wait. The pressure to make every moment count sometimes makes it difficult for Americans to relax.
- 18 The desire to save time and do work more quickly and easily leads Americans to buy many kinds of machines. These range from office equipment such as calculators, photocopy machines, and computers to dozens of home and personal appliances, such as microwave ovens.
- 19 *The Importance of Money.* After visiting the U.S. in the 1830s, the French historian Alexis de Tocqueville²⁰ wrote, "I know of no country . . . where the love of money has taken stronger hold . . ." Americans are often accused of being **materialistic**, of valuing wealth and **possessions** above all else. Money is valued both as a symbol of success and also for a more obvious reason—its purchasing power. Many items that didn't even exist 50 years ago are now considered necessities in the American home. In addition, purchases are made in order to "keep up with the Joneses," to show friends that one can afford a bigger house or a fancier car. Also, advertising encourages people to keep buying things far beyond what they need. In the mid-nineteenth century, the American author Henry David Thoreau²¹ advised his countrymen, "Simplify your needs!" However, Americans have moved in the opposite direction. Now, just as Thoreau predicted, many find that their possessions own them. They must work hard to earn enough money to buy and maintain the many possessions they consider necessities.
- 20 Yes, Americans love to make a lot of money and spend it on themselves—to buy things that save time, give them pleasure, or serve as status symbols²². However, Americans are also very generous and very willing to donate money to good causes. The American character includes a strong sense of obligation to help those in need.
- 21 *Say What You Mean, and Mean What You Say.* Americans believe that "honesty is the best policy." They are direct and **assertive**. They ask for what they want. In many cultures, respect for those in positions of authority keeps people from expressing their true feelings or intentions. In the U.S.A., however, children often argue with their parents and citizens express opposition to actions of the government. If the soup is cold or the meat is tough, the diner can complain to the waiter. If a teacher is wrong or confusing, a student may say so. If the boss makes a mistake, an employee may politely point it out. Assertive behavior sometimes seems improper and rude to foreigners, but it works well for Americans. In fact, assertiveness is almost a necessity in the business world.
- 22 *The Need to Win.* The extremely competitive nature of Americans is often criticized. Of course, **competition** isn't always bad. In fact, it promotes excellence by encouraging individuals (and businesses) to try to do their best. But the desire to get ahead of others sometimes causes people to do things that are unkind and even dishonest.
- 23 *The Practical Outlook.* Americans admire what is practical, fast, **efficient**, and new. Sometimes they fail to appreciate cultures that prefer more traditional, leisurely ways of doing things. Conversely, people from other cultures may dislike the practical, hectic American lifestyle.

24. Despite these traits, which many foreigners may view as faults, Americans are usually considered very likable. Most are friendly, kind-hearted, and eager to help visitors and immigrants. In this nation of immigrants, the foreigner does not remain an outsider for long.
-

NOTES

1. **Mortimer B. Zuckerman** (1937—) Canadian-born self-made American billionaire magazine editor, publisher, and real estate magnate. He is the current Editor-in-Chief of *U.S. News & World Report* and the publisher/owner of the *New York Daily News* since 1993. 美国出版商、房地产巨头莫蒂默·B·朱克曼
2. **U.S. News & World Report** one of the big-three U.S. weekly newsmagazines published in Washington, D.C. by U.S. News & World Report, L.P. Founded in 1933 as *United States News*, it merged with *World Report* in 1948. In 1984, it was purchased by Mortimer Zuckerman. 美国著名新闻周刊《美国新闻与世界报道》
3. **play it safe** exercise caution and take few risks 谨慎行事
4. **Asian and Pacific Islander** (also **Asian-Pacific American**) term, increasingly used in the United States to include both Asian Americans and Americans of Pacific Island ancestry 亚裔和太平洋岛裔美国人
5. **Native American** (also known as **Indian**, **American Indian**, or **Original American**) indigenous people within the territory that is now encompassed by the continental United States, including parts of Alaska down to their descendants in modern times 美国土人；美国印第安人
6. **ethnic minority** group of people of a different race from the main group in a country 少数民族
7. **U.S. Census Bureau** part of the United States Department of Commerce, responsible for collecting statistics about the nation, its people, and economy 美国人口普查局
8. **"graying" of America** referring to the increasing proportion of older people in the United States 美国的老齡化
9. **Ralph Waldo Emerson** (1803—1882) American lecturer, poet, and essayist, and leading exponent of New England Transcendentalism 美国著名演讲家、诗人和作家拉尔夫·W·爱默生
10. **mass production** (also **flow production**) production of large amounts of standardized products on production lines. It was popularized by Henry Ford in the early 20th Century, notably in his Ford Model T. 大量生产
11. **consumer goods** goods that are bought by consumers and are not used to produce other goods 消费品
12. **majority rule** rule or law that requires more than half of the members of a political organization who cast a vote to agree in order for the entire polity to make a decision on the measure being voted on 多数决定原则；多数裁决
13. **legislative body** official body, usually chosen by election, with the power to make, change, and repeal laws 立法机构
14. **representative government** form of government or democracy founded on the exercise of popular sovereignty by the people's elected representatives 代议制政府
15. **among other things** used to say that you are only mentioning one or two people or things out of a much larger group 除了别的以外；包括
16. **American dream** faith held by many in America that through hard work and determination one

can achieve success, prosperity and thus a better life for oneself, usually through the earning of money 美国梦

17. **social mobility** capacity for individuals in a society to change their class or social status within their lifetimes 社会流动
18. **strength in numbers** emotional and morale strength drawn from a group of people 人多势众
19. **Westward Movement** movement of the American population from the eastern seaboard to the Pacific Coast from the colonial period to the end of the 19th century 西进运动
20. **Alexis de Tocqueville** (1805—1859) French political thinker and historian. After touring the United States (1831—1832), he wrote *Democracy in America* (1835), a widely influential study of American institutions. 法国政治思想家和历史学家亚历西斯·德·托克维尔
21. **Henry David Thoreau** (1817—1862) American author, development critic, naturalist, transcendentalist, pacifist, tax resister and philosopher who is famous for *Walden*, on simple living amongst nature, and *Civil Disobedience*, on resistance to civil government and many other articles and essays 美国著名作家亨利·戴维·梭罗
22. **status symbol** possession that is a sign of wealth or prestige 社会地位的象征

AFTER YOU READ

I. Getting the Message

Work with a partner. Put a check (✓) in the correct column for each phrase listed below.

	Americans like or approve of this.	Americans don't like or approve of this.
1. forming groups to bring about change		
2. wasting time		
3. allowing citizens to influence lawmakers		
4. allowing social mobility		
5. protesting social evils non-violently		
6. doing things the way they've always been done in the past		
7. making decisions by voting		
8. buying as few possessions as possible		
9. being assertive		
10. competing to be the winner or the best		