

A Course of British and American Culture (2)

# 英美文化 教程(下)

主 审: 张绍杰  
主 编: 姜毓锋  
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# 前言

《英美文化教程（下）》是一本关于美国社会与文化的教科书，旨在帮助读者了解美国社会与文化概貌，如地理、历史、政治、宗教、经济、教育、风俗和人物等。读者可通过课文学习和练习训练，丰富其目标语国家的文化背景知识，最终提高跨文化交际能力。本教程凝聚了哈尔滨理工大学、哈尔滨工业大学、北京语言大学、广州大学、湖南大学、哈尔滨医科大学和哈尔滨商业大学的专家、学者以及长期从事英美文化教学教师的辛勤汗水，特别要感谢的是，本教程还得到了东北师范大学副校长、英语博士生导师张绍杰教授的审阅以及美国专家的具体指导。本教程语言地道、原汁原味，内容新颖、通俗易懂，版式设计独特、图片丰富，可作为高校英语专业学生及非英语专业高年级学生英美文化课程教材，也可供具有同等英语水平的自学者使用。

为了帮助读者全面深入了解美国文化，增强整体观察和综合研究的能力，本教程讲述的基本内容采用了树状结构组合，横向展开，拓宽视野讨论美国社会的方方面面；纵向探索，追溯其运动轨迹和因果关系。本教程纵深和广度结合以相互补充，控制篇幅的同时保证信息量，达到兼容并蓄，提高可教性、可读性和参考性，满足多层次、多方位的不同需求。

本教程具有以下特点：

- 兼顾教学需求与自学需要，各章节配有要点提示；
- 各章生词当页标注，方便学生自主学习；各章注释以背景知识为主，复杂语法为辅；
- 各章配有精选练习题，提示本章复习要点；
- 设“名人”专章，凸显人文气息；
- 独有的大事年表以及所附的国旗、国歌、国花等知识为学习者提供方便。

诚然，一个民族的文化范畴包罗万象，大到政治、文化、经济、军事、历史、地理、



宗教、民俗，小到民众的衣食住行，因此，一本教程很难详尽地细数美国文化的林林总总，只能择主干而弃枝叶。但编者希望，借此教程，将以往片面零星、散状分布的材料百川归海、上下贯串，呈献给读者一部脉络分明、内容全面、“整体性”强的美国文化教程。为此，编者力求做到尽善尽美、恰到好处，但定有不足和局限，望研究英美文化与国家概况的专家和读者批评指正。

编 者

2008 年 12 月于哈尔滨

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# Chapter 1

## Geography

### HIGHLIGHTS

introduction to the US — physiographic features — climate and natural disasters — natural resources

#### I. Introduction to the US



The United States is a country in the Western Hemisphere. It consists of 48 contiguous states on the North American continent; Alaska is an enormous **peninsula** (半岛) which forms the northwestern most part of North America, and Hawaii, an **archipelago** (群岛) in the Pacific Ocean. It also holds several United States territories in the Pacific and Caribbean. The country shares land borders with Canada and Mexico and a water border with Russia.

The official full name of the United States is usually referred to as the United States of America. It is often called the United States, the US, the US, the USA, or simply America, or the States in American spoken English. Its nickname is Yankee-land. It is a federal republic of

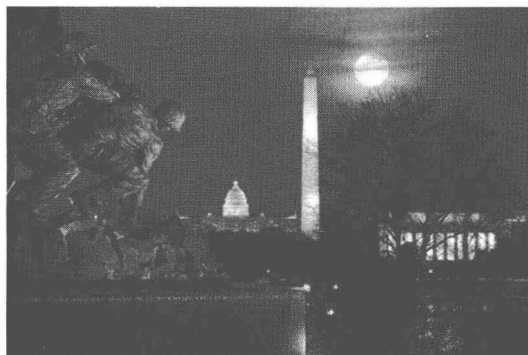
North America. It is divided into 50 federal states and the District of Columbia, which has developed from the original 13 states, and which secured their independence from Great Britain in 1783. Its currency is the US dollar of 100 cents. Its national day is on 4<sup>th</sup> of July (Independence Day).

### 1. The Land Area

The total land area of the USA is 9,372,615 square kilometers, the fourth largest country in the world after Russia, Canada and China. It stretches 2,575 kilometers from north to south and 4,500km from east to west. Of all the 50 states Alaska is the largest state in land area and Rhode Island the smallest. But on the mainland of the US, Texas, larger than France but half the size of Alaska, is the largest state in the country.

### 2. The Capital

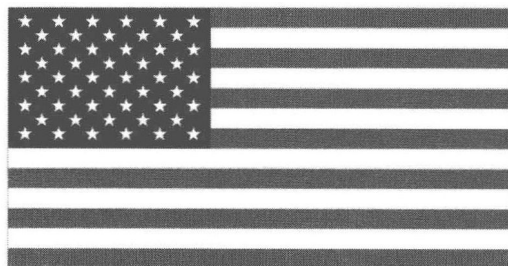
Washington, D.C. is the capital of the United States of America. The city of Washington has the same boundaries as the District of Columbia (D.C.), a federal territory established in 1790 as the site of the new nation's permanent capital. Named after the first US president, George Washington, the city has served since 1800 as the seat of federal government. It is also the heart of a dynamic metropolitan region. During the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area grew rapidly as the responsibilities of national government increased, both at home and throughout the world.



### 3. The National Flag, Emblem and Anthem

The flag of the United States of America consists of 13 equal horizontal stripes of red (top and bottom) alternating with white, with a blue **rectangle** (长方形) in the canton bearing 50 small, white, five-pointed stars arranged in nine offset horizontal rows of six stars (top and bottom) alternating with rows of five stars. The 50 stars on the flag represent the 50 US states

and the 13 stripes represent the original 13 colonies that rebelled against the British Crown and became the first states in the Union. Nicknames for the flag include the Stars and Stripes, Old Glory, and the Star-Spangled Banner.



The bald eagle was chosen on June 20, 1782 as the **emblem** (徽章) of the United States of America because of its long life, great strength and majestic looks, and also because it was then believed to exist only on this continent.

On September 14, 1814, US soldiers at Baltimore's Fort McHenry raised a huge American flag to celebrate a crucial victory over British forces during the War of 1812. The sight of

those "broad stripes and bright stars" inspired Francis Scott Key to write a poem which was later set to the tune of a popular British drinking song and renamed "The Star-Spangled Banner".



*The Star-Spangled Banner* was recognized for official use by the Navy in 1889 and the President in 1916, and was made the **national anthem** (国歌) by a congressional resolution on March 3, 1931, which was signed by President Herbert Hoover.



**Lyrics:**

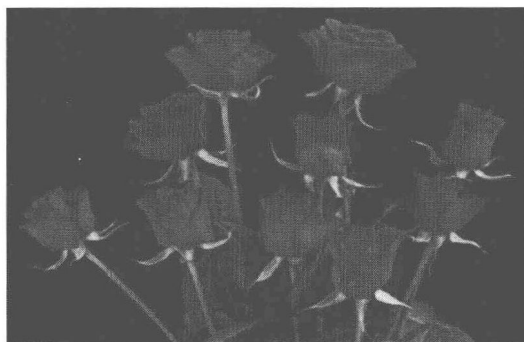
O! say can you see by the dawn's early light  
What so proudly we hailed at the twilight's last gleaming.  
Whose broad stripes and bright stars through the perilous fight,  
O'er the ramparts we watched were so gallantly streaming.  
And the rockets' red glare, the bombs bursting in air,  
Gave proof through the night that our flag was still there.  
O! say does that star-spangled banner yet wave  
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave?  
On the shore, dimly seen through the mists of the deep,  
Where the foe's haughty host in dread silence reposes,  
What is that which the breeze, o'er the towering steep,  
As it fitfully blows, half conceals, half discloses?  
Now it catches the gleam of the morning's first beam,  
In full glory reflected now shines in the stream:  
'Tis the star-spangled banner! Oh long may it wave  
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave!  
And where is that band who so vauntingly swore  
That the havoc of war and the battle's confusion,  
A home and a country should leave us no more!  
Their blood has washed out their foul footsteps' pollution.  
No refuge could save the hireling and slave  
From the terror of flight, or the gloom of the grave:  
And the star-spangled banner in triumph doth wave  
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave!  
O! thus be it ever, when freemen shall stand  
Between their loved home and the war's desolation!  
Blest with victory and peace, may the heav'n rescued land  
Praise the Power that hath made and preserved us a nation.  
Then conquer we must, when our cause it is just,  
And this be our motto: "In God is our trust."  
And the star-spangled banner in triumph shall wave  
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave!



#### 4. National Flower, Stone and Bird

September 23, 1986, the House of Representatives passed a joint resolution naming the rose as the “national floral emblem” of the United States. The Senate passed the resolution in 1985. The **measure** (法案) then went to President Ronald Reagan. He signed the resolution into law on October 7, 1986 in a ceremony in the White House Rose Garden. On November 20, 1986, President Reagan signed *Proclamation 5574: The National Floral Emblem of the United States of America*.

The national stone of the United States is blue **sapphire** (蓝宝石) which represents planet Saturn mostly known for regular gains through mass labor industry and development of land. The blue color of sapphire is strongly linked with feelings of sympathy and harmony, friendship and loyalty.



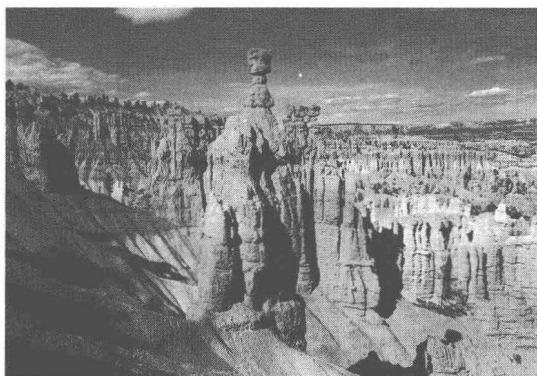
The Founding Fathers of America wanted to choose an animal that was unique to the United States. For six years, the members of Congress engaged in a dispute over what the national emblem should be. As a result of the debate, the bald eagle was chosen because it symbolized strength, courage, freedom, and immortality. The bald eagle was made the national bird of the United States in 1782. The image of the bald eagle can be found in many places in the US, such as on the Great Seal, Federal agency seals, the President’s flag, and on the one-dollar bill. The bald eagle is a large, powerful, brown bird with a white head and tail. The term “bald” does not mean that this bird lacks feathers. Instead, it comes from the word “piebald”, an old word, meaning “marked with white”.

## II. Physiographic Features

### 1. Geographic Divisions

The eastern United States has a varied **topography** (地形). A broad, flat coastal plain lines the Atlantic and Gulf shores from the Texas-Mexico border to the New York City, and includes the Florida Peninsula. Areas further inland feature rolling hills and temperate forests. The Appalachian Mountains form a line of low mountains separating the eastern seaboard from the Great Lakes and the Mississippi River Basin. The five Great Lakes are located in the north-central portion of the country, four of them forming part of the border with Canada. The southeast states contain subtropical forests and, near the gulf coast, mangrove wetlands, especially in Florida. In the west of the Appalachians lie the Mississippi River Basin and two large eastern tributaries, the Ohio River and the Tennessee River. The Ohio and the Tennessee Valleys and the Midwest consist largely of rolling hills and productive farmland, stretching south to the Gulf Coast.

The Great Plains lie west of the Mississippi River and east of the Rocky Mountains. A large portion of the country's agricultural products are grown in the Great Plains. Before their general conversion to farmland, the Great Plains were noted for their extensive grasslands, from tallgrass **prairie** (大草原) in the eastern plains to shortgrass steppe in the western High Plains. Elevation rises gradually from less than a few hundred feet near the Mississippi River to more than a mile high in the High Plains. The generally low relief of the plains is broken in several places, most



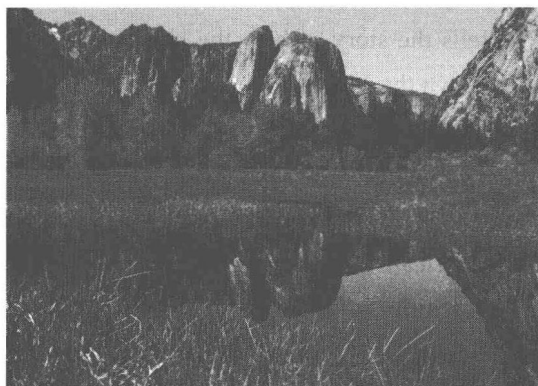
notably in the Ozark and Ouachita Mountains, which form the US Interior Highlands, the only major mountainous region between the Rocky Mountains and the Appalachian Mountains. The Great Plains come to an abrupt end at the Rocky Mountains. The Rocky Mountains form a large portion of the Western US, entering from Canada and stretching nearly to Mexico. The Rocky Mountains generally contain fairly

mild slopes and low peaks compared to many of the other great mountain ranges, with a few exceptions (such as the Teton Mountains in Wyoming and the Sawatch Range in Colorado). In addition, instead of being one generally continuous and solid mountain range, it is broken up into a number of smaller, **intermittent** (断断续续的) mountain ranges, forming a large number of

series of basins and valleys.

In the west of the Rocky Mountains lies the Intermontane **Plateaus** (高原) (also known as the Intermountain West), a large, arid desert lying between the Rockies and the Cascades and Sierra Nevada ranges. The large southern portion, known as the Great Basin, consists of salt flats, drainage basins, and many small north-south mountain ranges. The Southwest is predominantly a low-lying desert region. A portion known as the Colorado Plateau, centered on the Four Corners region, is considered to have some of the most spectacular scenery in the world. It is accentuated in such national parks as **Grand Canyon** (大峡谷), Arches, and **Bryce Canyon** (布赖斯峡谷) among others. The Grand Canyon is among the most famous locations in the country.

The Intermontane Plateaus come to an end at the Cascade Range and the Sierra Nevada. The Cascades consist of largely intermittent, volcanic mountains rising prominently from the surrounding landscape. The Sierra Nevada, further south, is a high, rugged, and dense mountain range. It contains the highest point in the contiguous 48 states, Mount Whitney. These areas contain some spectacular scenery as well, as evidenced by such national parks as **Yosemite** (约塞米蒂国家公园) and Mount Rainier. West of the Cascades and Sierra Nevada is a series of valleys, such as the Central Valley in California and the Willamette Valley in Oregon. Along the coast is a series of low mountain ranges known as the Pacific Coast Ranges. Much of the Pacific Northwest coast is inhabited by some of the densest vegetation outside of the Tropics, and also the tallest trees in the world (the Redwoods).



Alaska contains some of the most dramatic and untapped scenery in the country. Tall, prominent mountain ranges rise up sharply from broad, flat tundra (冻土地带) plains. On the islands off the south and southwest coast are many volcanoes. Hawaii, far to the south of Alaska in the Pacific Ocean, is a chain of tropical, volcanic islands, popular as a tourist destination for many from East Asia and the mainland United States.

## 2. Rivers in the US

The United States of America has over 250,000 rivers. The longest river in the USA is the Missouri River, but the biggest in terms of water volume is the deeper Mississippi River.

### 1) *The Missouri River*

The Missouri River is 4,090km long. It rises in southwest Montana and joins the Mississippi at St. Louis. Over its course it typically is a broad, silt-laden river, giving rise to its nickname “Big Muddy”. The vast drainage basin of the Missouri and its tributaries covers an area of about 1,502,200 sq km. Many dams were built on the river for flood control, hydroelectric power, and irrigation.

### 2) *The Mississippi River*

The Mississippi River is the most important river in the country. It flows about 3,730km from its northwestern source in the Rockies to the Gulf of Mexico. It drains all the central area of the USA and has a wide **delta** (三角洲), and many tributaries. Before America completed her railway system, the Mississippi had been the most important artery of transportation in the country.

The river was named by the Indians the Mississippi, meaning “Father of Waters”, or the “Old Man River”. On the river there is a famous town of Hannibal where the noted American writer Mark Twain was raised. His most popular and important writings are concerned with this area. His book *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* tells the story of how the boy Huckleberry Finn and his black friend Jim, a runaway slave, sailed down the Mississippi on a raft.

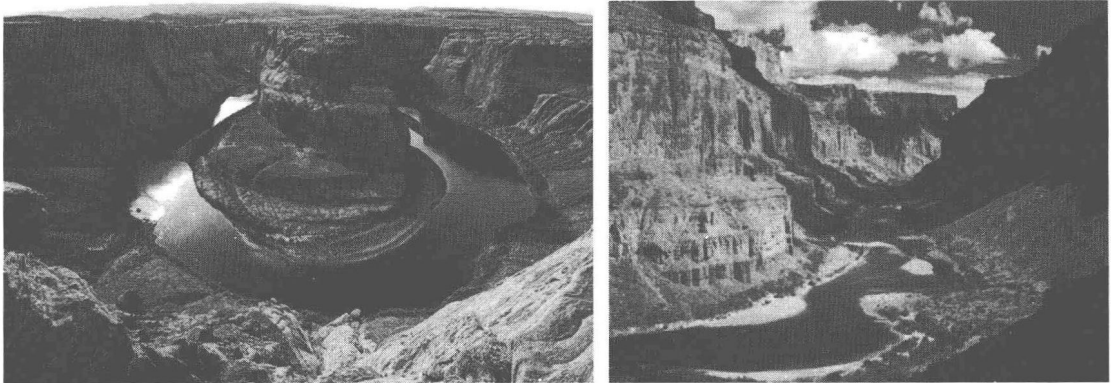
### 3) *The Ohio River*

The Ohio River, 1,579km long, is the major eastern tributary of the Mississippi. The river had great significance in the history of the Native Americans. It was a primary transportation route during the westward expansion of the early US. It runs from the rainy east and joins the Mississippi at Cairo, Illinois, and finally reaches the Great Lakes area. Its drainage basin, including all tributaries, is about 490,603 sq km.

### 4) *The Colorado River*

The Colorado River rises in the snow-capped Rocky Mountains, flowing 2,330km through Colorado, Utah, Arizona and north Mexico into the Gulf of California. It drains an area of 629,100 sq km, and slashes its way through a wilderness of mountains, plateaus,

and deserts, which offer some of the most dramatically beautiful scenery to be found anywhere in the world. The river is cliff-bound nine tenths of its way and travels 1,600km through deep canyons.



### ***5) Rio Grande***

The Rio Grande River is another large river in southwest America. It runs about 3,034km which, for much of its length, forms the border between Texas and Mexico. It rises in the southern Rocky Mountains in Colorado and flows to the Gulf of Mexico. The economic importance of the river is restricted to areas in northern New Mexico and Southern Texas. The deserts and plains remain for the most part unaffected by the river.

### ***6) The Columbia River***

The Columbia River, about 2,000km long, rises in British Columbia on the western slope of the Rocky Mountains. It flows first northwestward, then generally southward through British Columbia and Washington, and finally westward to the Pacific Ocean. In its lower course it forms the border between Washington and Oregon. The volume of the Columbia's flow is second only to that of the Mississippi, among US rivers.

### ***7) Other Rivers***

The Potomac River is famous not only because Washington D.C. is located on its bank but also because it is the dividing line between the South and the North.

The Hudson River is famous because New York stands at its estuary. It is connected with Lake Erie by a canal and New York City owed much to this connection for its prosperity in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

### 3. Lakes in the US

The most important lakes in America are the Great Lakes which include five big lakes: Lake Superior, Lake Michigan, Lake Huron, Lake Erie, and Lake Ontario. Only Lake Michigan is wholly in the United States; the other four are shared with Canada. The Great Lakes and their connecting channels form the largest fresh surface water system on the Earth. The Great Lakes, in their current state, are actually one of the youngest natural features on the North American continent. Covering more than 764,000 sq km and draining more than twice as much land, these “Freshwater Seas” hold an estimated six quadrillion gallons of water, about one-fifth of the world’s fresh surface water supply and nine-tenths of the US supply.

Lake	Surface Area (km <sup>2</sup> )	Characteristics	Fun Facts
Lake Superior	82,413	Superior has the largest surface area of any freshwater lake in the world. Lake Superior has a surface area of 82,413 sq km. Its shoreline is nearly 4,387km long. Superior is also the coldest and deepest of the five Great Lakes. Average depths are close to 147m; the deepest point in the lake reaches 406m.	Lake Superior’s volume is so large that it could contain all the other Great Lakes plus three additional lakes the size of Lake Erie.
Lake Huron (including Georgian Bay)	59,596	Lake Huron is the second largest of the Great Lakes by volume, holding nearly 3,540 km <sup>3</sup> of water. The shores of Huron extend more than 6,157km and are characterized by shallow, sandy beaches and the rocky coasts of Georgian Bay. Lake Huron is 245km wide and approximately 332km from north to south. Home to many ship wrecks, the lake averages a depth of 59m.	Lake Huron has the longest shoreline of the Great Lakes, counting the shorelines of its islands.
Lake Michigan	58,016	Lake Michigan, ranked the third largest of the Great Lakes according to volume, is the only Great Lake entirely within the United States. Averaging 85m deep, the lake reaches 281m at its deepest point. Lake Michigan is approximately 190km wide and 494km long and boasts more than 2,633km of shoreline, including many sandy beaches.	The world’s largest freshwater sand dunes (沙丘) line the shores of Lake Michigan.  Lakes Michigan and Huron are actually “one” Great Lake, separated by the Straits of Mackinaw. The Mackinac Bridge (the “Mighty Mac”) spans the straits, connecting Michigan’s upper and lower peninsulas.



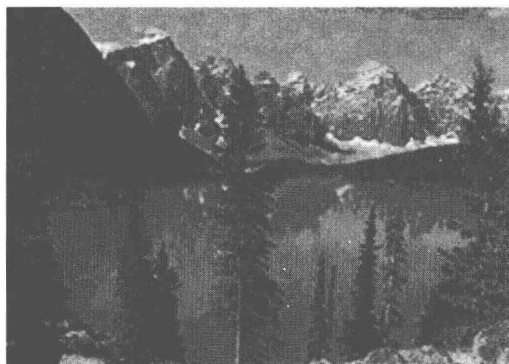
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Lake	Surface Area (km <sup>2</sup> )	Characteristics	Fun Facts
Lake Erie	25,745	Lake Erie is the shallowest of the Great Lakes and overall the smallest by volume. Erie is also exposed to the greatest effects from urbanization and agriculture. Lake Erie measures 388km wide and 92km from north to south, and has 4385km of shoreline. Because it is not as deep as the other lakes, Erie warms rapidly in the spring and summer and is frequently the only Great Lake to freeze over in winter.	Lake Erie is the warmest and most biologically productive of the Great Lakes. Built in 1822, Marblehead Lighthouse on Lake Erie is the oldest active light tower on the Great Lakes.
Lake Ontario	19,529	Lake Ontario is a much deeper lake, averaging 86 m deep. Comparing their volumes, Lake Ontario holds almost four times more water than Lake Erie. Ontario ranks the fourth among the Great Lakes in maximum depth, but its average depth is second to Lake Superior.	Lake Ontario lies 99m below Lake Erie, at the base of Niagara Falls. The oldest light-house on the US side of the Great Lakes was set up at Fort Niagara in 1818 to aid navigation.

In northwest Utah lies the Great Salt Lake, the largest inland salt lake in North America, rather rectangular in shape. In an average year the lake covers an area of around 4,400 sq km, but the lake's size fluctuates substantially due to its shallowness. Its average depth is 4m. The Great Salt Lake is several times more **saline** (咸的) than seawater. It contains about 4.4 billion tons of minerals. Approximately three fourths of this total is common table salt.

#### 4. Mountains in the US

There are two mountain ranges — The Rocky Mountains, running slightly from the northwest to southeast, and the Appalachian Mountains, running slightly from the northeast to southwest.



The Rocky Mountains Ranges