

新世纪大学英语阅读丛书
丛书总主编 宋渭澄

新世纪大学英语世界知识阅读

新世纪 大学英语 世界知识阅读

曲江焯 主编

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总 序

随着改革开放的不断深入和对外交流的进一步扩大,英语在越来越广泛的领域中发挥着重要作用。为适应二十一世纪社会发展和经济建设对各类人才的要求,《大学英语教学大纲》(修订本)在重视打好语言基础和语言应用能力培养的同时,对大学英语教学的教学目的和教学要求都提出了更高要求。《新大纲》重视素质教育,在强调加强学生英语语言基础和提高实际应用能力的同时,提出大学英语学习要四年不断线,提倡学生充分利用在校期间的有利条件,有计划、有目的地使英语水平得到稳步提高,以适应社会发展的总要求。

《新世纪大学英语阅读丛书》就是针对《新大纲》的要求编写的一套以巩固大学基础阶段英语学习成果为目的,以扩大学生各种知识面为目标的阅读丛书。该套丛书共五册,包括:《新世纪大学英语高科技知识阅读》(杨智颖主编)、《新世纪大学英语军事知识阅读》(周评主编)、《新世纪大学英语文史知识阅读》(王少琳主编)、《新世纪大学英语社科知识阅读》(李兆平主编)和《新世纪大学英语世界知识阅读》(曲江烨主编)。丛书由南京国际关系学院副院长、博士生导师、全国高校外语专业指导委员会英语专业组委员宋渭澄教授担任总主编,大学英语教学界诸多有名望的教师担任了编委会委员。各分册主编都是一些著名高校的外语教研室主任,编写人员都是长期工作在大学英语教学第一线并具有丰富教学经验的老师们。

这套丛书重点突出“新”和“泛”,总的来说,它有如下特点:一、选材新颖。丛书选编了不同领域的最新文章,能充分体现时代特色,紧跟时代潮流,反映时代精神。二、知识面广。丛书选编的文章涉及到政治、经济、军事、外交、社会、科技、医学、文学、文化、国家概况等诸多方面,覆盖面广,阅读这些文章必能有所收获。三、文章体裁广泛。丛书中编入了各类文体的文章,有利于学生提高和培养阅读能力。四、专业词汇量大。丛书涉及大量相关领域的词汇,并且很多是相关领域的最新词汇,在阅读中不仅能让了解专业知识,提高阅读兴趣,还能扩充专业词汇,适应毕业后的工作需要。

我们诚挚地希望这套丛书能够对繁荣新时期大学英语教学有所裨益,同时让广大学生在阅读过程中得到启迪和收获。

2001年5月

前 言

随着科学技术的迅猛发展,对外交流的日益频繁,英语越来越广泛地发挥着媒介作用。与之相适应,新的《大学英语教学大纲》对大学英语教学的培养目标提出了更高的要求。新大纲重视素质教育,强调学生的英语语言基础和语言应用能力,它的一个重要特色就是保证大学英语学习四年不断线,激励学生充分利用在校期间的有利条件,使英语水平得到稳步提高,以适应社会发展的要求。

以社会的需要为动力,以《大纲》的要求为准绳,以通过四、六级考试为目标,大学生学习英语的积极性达到了空前的高涨。过硬的语法基础、足够的词汇量、大量的阅读训练以及灵活的学习方法都是学好英语的必要条件。就阅读能力的培养和提高而言,它不仅要求学生多读书,而且还要读好书。因为一本好书不仅有助于提高学生的阅读理解能力,更重要的是,它可以增强学生的学习兴趣,满足学生的求知欲,扩充学生的知识面。这对学生来说无疑是一举两得的好事。

本书的宗旨恰恰如此。它用精炼的语言介绍了世界主要国家的地理、历史、政府、政党、经济、教育和外交等各方面的知识,信息量大,涵盖面广,以期在帮助学生提高英语阅读理解能力的同时,进一步开拓大学生的视野,提高大学生的综合素质。

本书共分四部分,43单元,绝大多数材料选编自英、美国家出版的百科全书,语言地道;对所涉及到的土地面积、人口数量等的统计,我们通过查阅大量的、最新的统计资料做了相应的更正,以保证所提供的数据的可靠性、准确性。作者还在每单元之后还精心设计了若干道多项选择题和讨论题,这一方面可检测学生的阅读理解能力,另一方面可帮助学生消化理解所学到的知识。

本书由曲江焯任主编,季正明、徐新任副主编。参加各部分编写工作的人员有:曲江焯(第一部分),季正明(第二部分),徐新(第三部分、第四部分),王涛、胡向春(第三部分)。祝良同志为本书做了审校工作,在此,我们表示感谢。

本书的编写体系科学合理,选材得体,语言难度适中,是高校学生以及广大英语爱好者不可多得的一本好书。

编 者

2001年6月

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Part One

The United States



Unit 1

Panoramic View of the United States (1)

【Text】

1. Geographical Position and Territory

The United States of America (or USA for short) is situated in the central-southern part of North America. The total area of America is some 9.37 million square kilometers, which makes it the fourth largest country in the world. With the exception of Alaska, which borders on north-western Canada, and Hawaii, which lies in the Pacific 3,200 kilometers from the mainland, all the other states are on the mainland. The continental United States stretches 4,500 kilometers from the Atlantic Ocean on the east to the Pacific Ocean on the west. It is bordered by Canada on the north and by Mexico and the Gulf of Mexico on the south. Its coastline runs about 22,680 kilometers, which makes it one of the countries with the longest coastline in the world. Washington DC is the nation's capital, a district under the special jurisdiction of the Congress.

2. Physical Features and Topography

So far as its geographical features are concerned, the large territory of the continental United States can be roughly divided into three basic areas: the Atlantic Seacoast and the Appalachian Mountains in the east, the Central Plains and the Rockies west to the Pacific Ocean.

(1) **The Atlantic Seacoast and the Appalachian Mountains** The Atlantic Seacoast, the nearest to Europe from America, was the first to be settled by immigrants. This coastal plain is washed by the Atlantic Ocean and, farther south, by the Gulf of Mexico. It stretches from New York southward through Florida down to the estuary of the Rio Grande. It is so low that the tides from the sea can be seen in the streams for many miles, so it has got the name of tide-water region. The coastal plain is rather narrow in the North, but it widens as it goes south until it becomes as wide as 300 kilometers in the South. Generally speaking, the soil here is very rich and productive. There are all kinds of farm in this region.

To the west of this coastal plain lie the Appalachian Mountains^① which run from northeast to southwest, covering a distance of about 3,000 kilometers. These are old mountains with rounded tops and wooded hills, usually not exceeding 800 meters in height. In the north they nearly reach the sea and leave little room for coastal plain. This gave rise to a number of deep-water harbors

① the Appalachian Mountains: 阿巴拉契亚山脉。美国东部最大山系, 走势与大西洋海岸大体平行。

which have made this region very important in America's foreign trade.

(2) **The Central Plains** The Central Plains lie between the Appalachian Mountains on the east and the Rocky Mountains on the west, and stretch from the Great Lakes in the north to the Gulf of Mexico in the south. Drained by the Mississippi and its tributaries, the plains slope towards the east where they merge with the Atlantic Coast Plain. This area is so large that it takes up about half of the large continental United States. They may be subdivided into two parts: the Central Lowlands and the High Western Plains. The Central Lowlands extend from the US-Canadian border to the Gulf of Mexico, lying in the basin of the Mississippi River. Westward they rise gradually to the High Plains at the base of the Rocky Mountains. The soil here is fertile, the climate favorable, and the rainfall is moderate. Because of this, it is the most important agricultural area in the United States, known variously as "the Barn of America", "the Corn Belt", and so on. The High Western Plains extend from eastern Montana, through Wyoming and eastern Colorado, and southward into Texas. The High Plains are crossed by the Missouri River and other tributaries of the Mississippi River which have cut deep canyons. Apart from the river valleys, the High Plains consist of the great prairies, where millions of head of cattle graze. This area was very important for beef production, although now large tracts of land in this area have been turned into farmland. It remains another important part of the "Barn of America".

(3) **The Rockies^① West to the Pacific Ocean** To the west of the Great Plains are the Rocky Mountains. These majestic mountains stretch all the way from Mexico to the Arctic. They are high, sharp and rugged and often capped with snow. The whole tremendous broken system of the Rockies includes many mountain ranges, such as the Sierra Nevada Mountains and the Cascade Mountains.

The striking and varied scenery of the Rockies has given rise to the establishment of many national parks here—38 in all. The most famous is the Yellowstone National Park which covers an area of about 9,000 square kilometers. It is the oldest national park in the world and the largest wildlife preserve in the United States. In this park there are deep canyons, towering waterfalls, great caves far beneath the earth, hot springs and dense virgin forests. The National Grand Canyon Park is also world-famous. The canyon was cut by the Colorado River. It is about 400 kilometers long, nearly 2 kilometers deep and in some places extends as wide as 20 kilometers between the tops of its steep walls. Between the Sierra Nevada Mountains and the Rocky Mountains there is a large area of 170,000 square kilometers which is a desert. Close to the western edge of this region, there is a particularly lonely stretch of desert named Death Valley with an area of 6,700 square kilometers. The valley, 85 meters below sea level, is the lowest and hottest place in America. It got the name because many adventurers died in the valley during the gold rush when explorers rushed to California for gold.

Along the Pacific Coast are the lower and gentler Coast Ranges which include many forested hills and low lands. Between the Coast Ranges and the Sierra Nevada Mountains and the Cascade

① the Rockies: 落基山脉。位于美国西部,北起阿拉斯加,南至墨西哥,全长 4,500 公里,有“北美大陆的脊骨”之美称。

Mountains are two great valleys. The southern valley, more than 800 kilometers long, is called the Great Central Valley, and the northern one, Willamette Valley. The Great Central Valley, in California, is large and fertile. It is largely fed by irrigation systems, and it leads the country in production fruits such as oranges, apricots, grapes, peaches and so on. Willamette Valley is a gentle and fertile region. There are many farms and orchards here which are green all the year round.

Separated from the continental US by Canadian territory, the state of Alaska occupies the extreme northwest portion of the North American continent. The State of Hawaii consists of a group of Pacific islands formed by volcanoes rising sharply from the ocean floor.

3. Rivers and Lakes

The United States is comparatively rich in water resources. Except for some dry areas in the west, especially the southwest, the country for the most part receives enough rainfall for plant growing. Besides, there are many rivers and lakes that can be used to irrigate fields, transport goods, and furnish power.

The Mississippi River^①, often called the "Father of Waters", is the most important and longest river in the country. Nearly all the rivers west of the Appalachian Mountains and east of the Rockies flow toward each other and empty into this river. The Mississippi River system consists of the main river itself and more than 50 tributaries, having a drainage area of 3.2 million square kilometers. Its water comes from areas which account for two-thirds of the United States. The Mississippi flows about 6,262 kilometers from its northwestern source in the Rockies to the Gulf of Mexico. The Missouri River, the Red River, is the largest tributary of the Mississippi. Since the river runs through the dry west, it carries a large amount of soil in its water which is deep brown. Another important river which belongs to the Mississippi drainage system but empties into the Ohio River is the Tennessee River. Originating in the Great Lakes area, the Ohio River meets the Mississippi below St. Louis. Fed by the Tennessee river, the Ohio River contributes over half of the water of the Mississippi.

The Colorado River^② and the Rio Grande River are in Southwest America. The Colorado is very famous for the Colorado Canyon which cuts 1,000 meters deep into the earth and extends 20 kilometers across at some places. A large national park has been set up along part of this river. Hoover Dam, also on this river, produces large amount of electricity for southwest America to irrigate its dry land. The Rio Grande River runs about 3,200 kilometers. It is a boundary river between Mexico and the United States.

In the northwestern corner of the country, there is **the Columbia River**. Its Grand Coulee

① the Mississippi River: 密西西比河。世界上最长的河流之一,印第安人称之“河水之父”。

② the Colorado River: 科罗拉多河。发源于落基山脉的中部。每年冰雪融化时,流水从高山直泻而下,形成汹涌的水势。为利用这一丰富的水利资源,1936年,美国政府在內华达和亚利桑那接壤处建造了举世闻名的胡佛水坝,为西南地区发送电力,提供灌溉用水。

Dam is very famous, and visited by many foreign experts.

All the rivers east of the Appalachians empty into the Atlantic. They are numerous. **The Potomac River** is famous not only because Washington, the capital of the nation, is situated on its Fall Line, but also because it is the dividing line between the South and the North. **The Hudson River** is also famous because New York stands at its estuary. The Hudson River is connected with **Lake Erie** by a canal and New York owed much to this connection for its prosperity in the 19th century. **The St Lawrence River** forms part of the boundary between Canada and the USA serving an international river.

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 belongs to America completely while the other four are shared with Canada. These five lakes cover an area of about 240,000 square kilometers and are the largest lake group in the world. They contain about half of the world's fresh water. All the five lakes are inter-connected, reaching the Atlantic by way of the Lawrence River and the Hudson River. The five lakes slope downward as they go eastward. The 100-meter drop of water from Lake Erie to Lake Ontario forms the world-famous Niagara Falls^① which attract millions of visitors each year.

The other large lake in the United States is **the Great Salt Lake** in the arid Great Basin of Utah. It is the largest inland salt lake in North America.

4. Natural Resources

The United States is rich in mineral resources. It ranks among the countries with the greatest reserves of coal, iron ore and oil. It also abounds in lead, copper, zinc, gold, aluminum, phosphate rock, and silver.

America has enough coal to last centuries. Most of the coal reserves are found in the Appalachians, the Central Plain, and the Rockies.

America has a large reserve of iron ore. Most of it is found in the Appalachians and in the areas to the west and south of Lake Superior. The most important mining area is in the state of Minnesota.

Most of America's oil reserve is along the coast of the Gulf of Mexico. Texas, Louisiana, and Oklahoma produce more than half of the country's total. Alaska has also much oil. But large scale production and big consumption have made America insufficient in oil supply. The insufficiency has to be met by imports from Mexico, England, Venezuela and the Middle East.

Today the nation's largest open-pit copper mining center is Birmingham, Utah. Utah is also famous for its Great Salt Lake which contains about 6,000 million tons of salt.

The lead and zinc deposits of Utah, Idaho and Tennessee are estimated at 32 million and 26

① the Niagara Falls: 尼亚加拉瀑布。流经伊利湖和安大略湖之间,由从陡峭的断崖上冲滚下来的巨大水流所形成。瀑布分两股,一股在美国,瀑布落差高 51 米,水帘宽 304 米;另一股在加拿大,瀑布落差高 48 米,水帘宽 914 米。这两股大瀑布相互毗连,构成一幅极为壮观、令人惊叹的奇景。

million tons respectively.

Other minerals such as gold, silver and mercury are also found in the mountains. However, the ruthless exploitation of these minerals has led to great waste and the rapid depletion of the once a rich natural resources of the United States. The United States also gobbles up such strategic minerals as nickel, tin, manganese, and diamonds from other countries.

The United States has a potential source of immense hydro-electric power, estimated at more than 130 billion watts. These resources come mainly from the Columbia River, the Colorado River, the Ohio River, the St Lawrence River and the five Great Lakes.

About 47 percent of the land area of the United States is farmland. Owing to the vast amount of arable land, about one-fourth of the country's territory is covered with forests. Areas covered by dense forests are scattered over the Rockies, the Cascade Range, the Nevada Mountains, the Coastal Range, the Appalachians and the Peninsula of Florida and Alaska.

Prairies and highland pastures cover 28 percent of the country's total area.

5. Climate and Weather

The United States is mainly situated in the northern temperate zone, and there are great climate variations between the seven main climatic areas.

(1) **The humid area with a temperate continental climate** This region lies largely in the northeastern part of the country and the land around the Great Lakes. It is very cold in winter and the average temperature in January ranges from 0°C to minus 12°C. The average freezing period in the Great Lake area is four months. There are frequent snowstorms and ice-storms in winter; in summer it is hot and rainy. The total annual rainfall in the greater part of this area is about 1,000 millimeters.

(2) **A subtropical humid area** This region stretches over the greater part of the southeastern United States. Influenced by the warm Gulf Stream, it is characterized by mild winters and hot summers with rainfall throughout the entire year. Since in America there is no mountain range running from east to west, occasional cold air from the north may bring frost in winter, causing great loss to fruit farmers. Some of the Southeastern states are harassed by another natural disaster, hurricanes.

(3) **A tropical humid area** This refers to the southern part of the Florida peninsula. There is no winter here, and Miami Beach attracts a million tourists every year.

(4) **A sub-humid area** This region covers the dry High Plain west of longitude 100° W. Temperatures are strikingly continental, cold in winter and hot in summer.

(5) **A semi-arid and arid area** Semi-arid and arid conditions prevail in the inland plateaus including much of the area between the Cascade-Sierra Nevada ranges and the Rockies, and parts of Nevada, Utah, Arizona, New Mexico, southeastern California and southwestern Texas. Here, the weather is dry and the annual rainfall is often less than 500 millimeters.

(6) **A humid area with a temperate oceanic climate** This humid or super-humid area lies along the section of the north Pacific Coast. Climate in this region is characterized by a mild win-

ter, and cool summers with ample rainfall evenly distributed throughout the year. The average annual rainfall is over 2,000 millimeters.

(7) **A Mediterranean climatic area** This sub-tropical region is found along the southern part of the Pacific Coast. This Mediterranean-type climate is characterized by mild and wet winters and dry summers. It is never cold in south California. During the winter, central California receives the westerly winds which blow in-shore bringing rain. But in summer, when the wind belts move towards the north, central California lies in the northeast trade winds belt which blows off-shore and thus brings no rain to this region.

【New Words & Expressions】

- panoramic *a* 全景的, 全貌的
jurisdiction *n* 管辖范围; 司法(权), 裁判权
topography *n* 地形; 地志
estuary *n* 海湾, 港湾
tributary *n* 支流
fertile *a* 肥沃的, 富饶的
barn *n* 谷仓
Montana *n* 蒙大拿[美国州名]
Wyoming *n* 怀俄名[美国州名]
Colorado *n* 科罗拉多[美国州名]; [the ~]
科罗拉多河
canyon *n* 峡谷
prairie *n* 大草原
graze *v* (牲畜)吃草
tract *n* (土地、森林等的)一片; 一片土地
arctic *a* 北极, 北极区(的)
rugged *a* 不平的, 崎岖的; 多岩石的
virgin *a* 处女(般)的; 未开发的; 未经利用的
steep *a* 险峻的, 陡峭的
orchard *n* 果园
drainage *n* (河流的)流域; 排水区域
Missouri *n* 密苏里[美国州名]
Ohio *n* 俄亥俄[美国州名]
Tennessee *n* 田纳西[美国州名]
Erie *n* 伊利
Superior *n* 苏比利尔
Michigan *n* 密执安
Huron *n* 休伦湖(= Lake ~)
Ontario *n* 安大略
Niagara *n* 尼亚加拉(河)
arid *a* 干旱的, (土地)贫瘠的
Utah *n* 犹他[美国州名]
lead *n* 铅
zinc *n* 锌
aluminum *n* 铝
phosphate *n* 磷酸盐
Minnesota *n* 明尼苏达[美国州名]
Louisiana *n* 路易斯安那[美国州名]
Oklahoma *n* 俄克拉荷马[美国州名]
consumption *n* 消费(量); 消耗
Venezuela *n* 委内瑞拉[拉丁美洲]
open-pit *n* 露天开采的(地); 露天开采的矿
山
deposit *n* 矿床; 沉积
Idaho *n* 爱达荷[美国州名]
mercury *n* 水银, 汞
ruthless *a* 无情的, 残忍的
depletion *n* 竭尽, 耗尽
gobble (up) *v* 贪食; 吞并
nickel *n* 镍
manganese *n* 锰
hydro-electric *a* 水利发电的
Nevada *n* 内华达[美国州名]
pasture *n* 牧场
minus *a* 负的
millimeter *n* 毫米
subtropical *a* 副热带的, 亚热带的
harass *v* 使烦恼, 折磨

hurricane *n* 飓风

Miami *n* 迈阿密[美国港市]

prevail *v* 流行; 普遍

plateaus *n* 高原

Arizona *n* 亚利桑那[美国州名]

【Reading Comprehension】

1. The United States today is the _____ largest country in size in the world.
A. second B. third C. fourth D. fifth
2. The first settlement for the immigrants is _____.
A. the Appalachian Mountains B. the Atlantic Seacoast
C. the Rio Grande D. the Central Plains
3. _____ are known as “the Corn Belt”.
A. The Central Plains B. The High Western Plains
C. The Atlantic Seacoast D. The Central Lowlands
4. The lowest and hottest place in America is _____.
A. Willamette Valley B. the Silicon Valley
C. Death Valley D. the Great Central Valley
5. The longest and most important river in America is _____, and _____ is the largest tributary of it.
A. the Mississippi River; the Missouri River
B. the Missouri River; the Ohio River
C. the Tennessee River; the “Father River”
D. the Great Lakes; the Mississippi
6. The boundary river between Mexico and the United States is called _____.
A. the Columbia River B. the Rio Grande River
C. the Colorado River D. the Hudson River
7. The dividing line between the south and the north of America is _____.
A. the Fall Line B. the Hudson River
C. the Lawrence River D. the Potomac River
8. The largest inland salt lake in North America is _____.
A. the Great Lakes B. Lake Ontario
C. the Great Salt Lake D. Lake Michigan
9. Most of America’s oil reserve is _____.
A. in Texas B. in Alaska
C. along the coast of the Gulf of Mexico D. in Louisiana
10. _____ refers to the southern part of the Florida peninsula.
A. The tropical humid area B. The subtropical humid area
C. The Mediterranean climatic area D. The semi-arid and arid area