

美

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文化背景

The American Ways

美国文化英语教程(第2版)

AN INTRODUCTION TO AMERICAN CULTURE

[美] 玛丽安娜·卡尼·戴特斯曼

乔安·克兰德尔

爱德华·N·卡尼

美国人的

● 价值观念



● 社会习俗



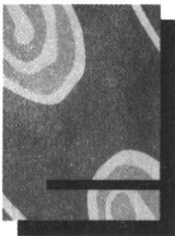
● 行为方式



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世界图书出版公司

北京·广州·上海·西安

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朗文 (Longman) 为培生教育出版集团 (Pearson Education Group) 所拥有之商标。

Original title: The American Ways: an introduction to American culture 2nd ed.
by Maryanne Kearny Datesman, JoAnn Crandall, Edward N. Kearny

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ISBN 0-13-342015-9

This Mainland China edition is published by Pearson Education Ltd. and
Beijing World Publishing Corporation

This Mainland China edition is published under the imprint of Longman,
which is an imprint of Pearson Education Group

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Printed and bound in China

NBAB 16/05

美国文化背景——美国文化英语教程 第2版

编著者: [美] 玛丽安娜·卡尼·戴特斯曼 乔安·克兰德尔 爱德华·N·卡尼
责任编辑: 王志平
装帧设计: 董利

出版: 世界图书出版公司北京公司
Longman 朗文
发行: 世界图书出版公司北京公司
(北京朝内大街 137 号 邮编 100010 电话 64077922)
销售: 各地新华书店和外文书店
印刷: 北京中西印刷厂

开本: 787 × 1092 毫米 1/16 印张: 18.5
字数: 481 千
版次: 1999 年 3 月第 1 版 2000 年 6 月第 2 次印刷
印数: 6001 - 14000
版权登记: 图字 01 - 98 - 2610 号

ISBN 7 - 5062 - 4146 - 3/H·293

定价: 28.00 元

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介绍《美国文化背景》

由 Prentice Hall Regents 出版的第 2 版《美国文化背景》是一本从社会价值观念的角度来介绍美国社会与文化的教科书，书中附有 90 年代有关美国社会的各种最新数据、图表及民意测验结果：如合法移民的来源及去向，美国主要的宗教信仰及其教徒的比例，群众关于谁应对污染负责的看法，受歧视人群——妇女、黑人及说西班牙语后裔的就业比例等等。

本书共有 12 章，每一章有：3~5 个内容提示性的问题，即本章的重点；课文及附图或图表；课文后面有本章的生词及英语解释。为了巩固所学的各章内容，作者精心设计了与内容有关的各种练习：词汇练习、课文理解练习、口语讨论题（大及小的问题）、调查美国人对一些问题看法的题目、总结本章课文内容的填空练习。推荐了进一步了解各章的阅读书目及电影名单。

尽管这本书是为在美国的外国人编写的，但是在美国国土以外，也有许多教育机构和人们在使用它。人们通过这本书不仅学到了地道的语言，更重要的是还了解到了美国的社会与文化，真是“一箭双雕”。因为只有了解了美国的历史和文化，我们才能更好地和更深入地了解美国人民，才能与美国人进行经验和思想的交流。在语言上，我们不仅可以知道在什么场合该说什么，怎样说，还能知道对方是怎么想的，为什么这样说的。这本书是我近来所看到的比较全面地介绍美国社会与文化的书。我相信英语本科生和研究生都可以从书中学到不少有关美国社会与文化的新的信息与知识。

在这本书里，作者突出地提出了 6 个他们认为是最重要的社会价值观念，这就是个人自由、自力更生、机遇平等、竞争、物质财富和奋发图强。在各章里，如关于美国宗教、开拓边疆、高水平的生活、经商、

商业、联邦政府、种族、民族、教育制度、休闲时间、家庭等都是紧紧围绕这几个价值观念，并从美国历史的发展角度来说明它们是如何形成的，在各个历史阶段是如何反映的，在生活的各个方面是如何表现出来的。

与中国相比，美国是一个年轻的国家，她幅员辽阔，资源丰富，人口稀少；是一个多种族、多民族的国家。一句话，美国人是由世界上各个地区、各个国家的人民组成的，是一个移民国家。直到现在，每年都有大批的移民进入美国。对美国多元化的文化有许多种说法，如“大熔炉”、“色拉碗”、“马赛克”和“世界化的国家”等。这本书介绍了这几种提法的时代背景。

这本书说明了美国为什么会像一块磁铁似地，每年吸引着大批移民抵达美国。17 世纪初期，第一批来自欧洲英格兰的移民是为了摆脱英国国王的政治、经济和宗教的统治来到北美这块“充满机遇的土地”的。他们带来了英国的政治、经济、文化和语言，在 1776 年建立了美利坚合众国，1789 年通过了宪法，宣布政教分离，在美国永远不会有由政府支持的教会，教会的权限受到了限制。每个人都有信仰自由。正因为如此，新教在美国得以发展。根据新教，每一个信徒可以直接与上帝交流，并强调上帝帮助那些自助者。根据新教伦理，在现世受到上帝保佑，来世上天堂的人，都是经过艰苦奋斗、发奋图强、生活俭朴而发了财的人。美国人认为，正是因为新教将物质和宗教紧紧地结合起来，因此美国近几百年才发展得这样快。在美国，商人得到尊重。人们认为私营企业比联邦政府更有效率，因为它是建立在竞争的基础上，因此它就更支持民主和自由。正因为有竞争力的商业与美国人们所想象的自由紧密相连，美国人喜欢用“私营企业自由竞争”而不用“资本主义”来讲述美国的商业体系。商业中的平等竞争被认为是在强化机遇平等的思想。通过竞争取得成功和社会地位，被认为是取代按家庭出身来决定一个人地位的最好途径，而从商的本身就是鼓励奋发图强。美国人不仅认为经商是最快致富的办法，对个人有利，而且对国家也有利，因为通过竞争，有更多的人富起来。在美国，人们始终对政府是表示不信任和怀疑的，因为人们认为，政府就是要控制人民的自由，是自由的天然敌

II *The American Ways*

人，尽管政府各级官员是人们选举的。所以美国宪法的条款明确提出不允许政府做坏事，并建立了一个权力极为有限的联邦政府。新政府由3个独立的部门——立法、司法和行政——组成，每个部门有明确权力，可以平衡其他两个部门的权力。政府的功能就是要创造良好的环境使个人的潜能和天才得以自由地发展。

就是这些美国人创造了自由、民主、平等的氛围和环境，他们崇尚个人自由。他们认为，要个人自由就得独立，自力更生。因此，美国家庭的主要任务就是要使每一个成员感到高兴和幸福。父母给予孩子很多的自由和平等，他们可以和父母讨论或辩论问题，他们自己选择学校、工作、配偶。他们往往18岁离家，要么工作，要么半工半读。在孩子很小的时候就培养他们独立和自力更生。如果到20几岁还跟父母住，就被认为有毛病了。他们看不起贫困的人和依靠救济生活的人，因为在美国，尤其是在17、18世纪的时候，每个人只要努力劳动，生活肯定会好起来。他们尊重成功者，鄙视失败者。正因为如此，有些人会攻击政府的一些社会福利项目，他们认为，这种项目只会培养一批依赖政府或依靠救济的懒汉。

美国人认为，生活本身就是一场竞赛。每个人只要努力，在竞赛中都可以成功。政府的功能之一就是要保证人人都有平等的机遇参加这场竞赛。尽管一些人出身贫贱，但是到了美国以后，经过艰苦奋斗，他们的社会地位就提高了。因为有成千上万的人到美国后成功了，所以机会均等就成为一个非常重要的社会价值观念。他们也知道，每个人各不相同，这就要有同等的机遇参赛，要公平。为了机遇平等，就要参加无情的竞争。既然每一个人都有平等的机遇去争取成功，那么每一个人就有义务去试一试。因此，在美国，那些愿意去竞争并取得成功的人被誉为胜利者。那些不喜欢参加竞争，但是又必须参加，可又失败的人被称为失败者。为了培养孩子们的竞争意识，学校鼓励他们积极参加各种运动和比赛，培养他们不屈不挠、争取胜利、能输能赢的运动员精神。父母和老师也大力支持学生通过类似正式的竞选当上学生会的各级干部。因为这种经历可以提高他们参与政治和社会的责任感和事业心。美国人一生的竞争压力一直继续到退休。这种竞争的压力使美国人有旺盛的精

力，同时也给他们的情感施加了压力。等到他们退休的时候，他们才从压力下解放出来。这时又出现了一个新的问题，这就是他们觉得自己没有用了，社会不需要他们了。因为美国社会总是给予那些竞争的成功者极大的荣誉和威信，这就是为什么在美国老年人得不到尊重的原因。

作者在书的最后提到，由于国际和国内情况的变化，美国人的社会价值观念正处于十字路口。可以断定，在 21 世纪，美国将会出现许多让人感到吃惊的事情，然而有几点是可以肯定的；第一，尽管民族和种族之间的矛盾会此起彼伏，但是总会有人出来以“独立宣言”的原则来捍卫民族平等。第二，尽管美国人对强大的政府表示不信任，但是美国人民对美国政府的结构有坚定的信心。这表现在，美国的宪法已制定了 200 多年，却仅仅进行过 26 次修正，而头 10 条“民权法案”仅在宪法制定两年的时候修正过一次。最后的一个修正案是在 1971 年，降低了选举人的年龄，由 21 岁降到 18 岁。第三是言论自由。大到政府的政策，小到个人的性伴侣的性别选择都可以进行自由的辩论或讨论。这样就促进了人们对社会的发展和存在的问题更加关注，同时也有利于找出解决问题的办法。

北京外国语学院英语系

吴青



致 教 师

什么是“文化”？就此有诸多定义。一些人会将其解释为一个民族的艺术、文学和音乐，他们的建筑风格、历史、宗教，他们的传统。另一些人则可能会更注意该民族的风俗和特定的行为。我们选择使用“文化”的一种社会学定义，即“一群人的发展久远和世代相传的生活方式”。这一广泛定义包含了人类生活的各个方面和相互影响。若想仅在一本书中覆盖美国文化的各个层面是不可能的。因此，我们选择了一种价值观方法来进行我们的讨论，聚焦到 200 多年来吸引人们到美国来的传统的主流价值观。在解释了这些传统的价值观如何发展以后，我们会勾画出它们怎样影响美国人生活的各方面。

为什么要出一本论述美国文化的书呢？其原因是多方面的。我们中的那些在美国大学里从事外国学生工作，或者在这里或海外向学生讲授英语的人不断面临关于“在美国的生活”的问题。那些准备到美国来学习的学生和那些已在美国大学中学习第二语言英语课程（ESL）及学习其他课程的学生经常被他们周围的有关价值观念和文化格局的问题弄得糊里糊涂，甚至迷惑不解。就是那些已掌握了足够的英语，在一所美国大学中学习某些课程的学生也会发现，他们还没有充分掌握要成为成功的美国学生所必须具备的文化习惯。许多这样的习惯只有置身于美国总体文化格局的大背景中才能理解。

需要本书中所介绍的此类信息的不仅仅是学生，外国商人、访问学者和政府官员，甚至游客也会发现，假如他们能够更多地了解美国人行为方式和习俗的基本价值观，他们会感觉到在美国度过的时光更惬意。新近到来的移民或难民也会发现，如果能得到有关新居住国及其国民的系统情况的介绍，他们就会发现比较容易适应他们的新家。

因此,《美国文化背景》一书对各类学生都是适用的。它已被作为供外国学生使用的课本,这些课程包括强化第二语言英语课程和非母语英语课程(ESL & EFL)、为外国中学和大专学生在美国办的短期夏季课程、美国大学中每年分四学期或半学年的课程、为外国来访者办的政府项目,以及为移民办的学习班。它还被许多不同场合的美国海外人员,例如美国和平队志愿人员以及其他那些为 ESL & EFL 的学生讲授美国文化的教师作为教科书或参考指南。

当我们研究其他文化时,我们真正要学些什么呢?首要的是,我们要学习我们自己的文化。在我们面对不同的做事方法之前,我们一直以为每个人做事情都采用和我们一样的方式。因而对我们自己的文化,如价值观、观念和行为方式,大都被遮蔽得看不见了。然而,当我们花费一些时间分析其他文化时,我们开始对自己的文化看得更清晰了,并且了解到一些激发我们的行为和见解的微妙之处。其结果是,使用本书的学生们不得不开始更好地了解他们自己的及其本国的文化。为增进这一了解,我们在每章后面附有一系列练习,其中有的练习特别立意要激励学生们对自己的价值观和行为模式进行思考,并同他们正在美国环境中学习的或感受的东西加以比较。我们还收入了许多练习,意欲鼓励外国学生与美国人互相交流和交谈。在这些练习中,我们提供了一套精心组构的、供学生们向美国人提问的问题。这类信息将帮助学生们得到涉及教育、商业、政府、体育和娱乐等等有关美国人的信仰和实践的复合写照。

有些章的练习为同学们提供了一种机会,供他们更充分地探索一种已经被提出来的思想,或与其他学生一起讨论这些思想。或许你想要向不同的学生或各小组学生分配不同的练习,然后要求他们与班中的其他同学分享研究结果和看法。如果可能,各小组中应包括来自不同国家的学生,以便学生们除了学习美国文化和他们本国的文化之外,还可以学到其他国家的文化。

也许,一门文化课程的真正目的是帮助我们对文化差异变得更加敏感,使我们更能接受。然而,对于另一种文化,无论我们可能对它的了解程度有多大,总有些我们不“喜欢”的东西。因此,本书的目的并非打算去说服别人赞同。而是帮助他们更充分地了解美国生活的方方面面,并且

在他们，甚至哪怕只是暂时地，想要适应美国社会的时候，能够做到这一点。人们总会有利用自己的“外国性”的机会。但是他们也会遇到这样的時候，来自不同的文化背景给他们带来很多麻烦或使他们陷入窘境。如何去做，最终的选择取决于每个人自己。但是我们希望这篇前言和文化概述能够使那些与美国人共同工作或学习的人在了解更多信息的情况下作出更明智的选择。

To the Teacher

What is “culture”? There are many definitions. Some would define it as the art, literature, and music of a people, their architecture, history, religion, their traditions. Others might focus more on the customs and specific behavior of the people. We choose to use a sociological definition of *culture as the way of life of a group of people, developed over time and passed down from generation to generation*. This broad definition includes every aspect of human life and interaction. It would be impossible to cover every facet of American culture in a single book. We have, therefore, chosen to take a values approach to our discussion, focusing on the traditional mainstream values that have attracted people to the United States for over 200 years. After explaining how these traditional values developed, we will trace how they affect various aspects of American life.

Why a book on American culture? There are many reasons. Those of us who have worked with foreign students in American universities or who have taught English to students both here and overseas are repeatedly confronted by questions about life in the United States. Students who are preparing to come to the United States to study, or who are already enrolled in English as a Second Language or other programs in American universities, frequently are confused or even mystified about the values, attitudes, and cultural patterns that surround them. Even those students who have mastered enough English to take courses in an American university may find that they have not adequately mastered the cultural rules that are required for them to be successful American students. Many of these rules can be understood only within the broader context of American cultural patterns in general.

It is not only students who need information of the kind presented here. Foreign business people, visiting scholars or government officials, and even tourists would find their time spent in the United States more satisfying if they were able to understand more of the values underlying American behavior patterns and institutions. Newly arrived immigrants or refugees, as well, would find adaptation to their new home easier if they had a systematic introduction to their new country and its inhabitants.

Thus, *The American Ways* is suitable for a variety of students. It has been used as a text in a number of programs for foreign students, including intensive ESL or EFL programs, short summer courses in the United States for foreign high school and college students, both quarter and semester courses at American universities, government programs for foreign visitors, and classes for immigrants. It has also been used in many different settings outside the United States, both as a text for students and as a reference guide — for American Peace Corps volunteers, for example, and others who are teaching American culture to ESL or EFL students.

What do we really learn when we study about other cultures? First and foremost, we learn about our own. Until we are confronted by a different way of doing things, we assume that everyone does things the same way that we do, and thus our own culture — our values, attitudes, behavior — is largely hidden from our view. When we spend some time analyzing another culture, however, we begin to see our own more clearly and to understand some of the subtleties that motivate our behavior and our opinions. Therefore, students using this book cannot help but begin to understand themselves and their own cultures better as a result. To enhance this understanding, we have followed each of the chapters with a series of exercises, some of them specifically designed to encourage students to think about their own values or patterns of behavior and to compare these with what they are learning about or experiencing in American settings. We have also included a number of exercises that are intended to encourage foreign students to interact with and talk with Americans. In these exercises, we have provided a set of carefully structured questions that students can ask Americans. This information will help students get a composite picture of American beliefs and practices as they relate to education, business, government, sports, recreation, and so on.

Some of the chapter exercises will provide students with an opportunity to explore more fully an idea that has been presented or to discuss these ideas with other students. You may wish to assign different exercises to different students or small groups of students and then ask them to share their findings and opinions with the rest of the class. If possible, small groups should include students from different countries so that in addition to learning about American culture and their own, they are also learning about others.

Perhaps this is the real goal of a culture course: to help us become more sensitive to cultural differences and more accepting of them. However, there will always be things about another culture that we do not “like,” no matter how much we might understand it. Thus, the objective of this book is not to persuade others to approve of all facets of life in the United States but rather to help them understand it more fully and be able to adapt, even if only temporarily, whenever it is desirable to do so. There are always opportunities for exploiting one’s “foreignness,” but there are also times when being from a different culture can be a real liability. The ultimate choice is up to the individual, but we hope that this introduction and cultural overview will enable people working or studying with Americans to make more informed choices.



About the Second Edition . . .

We have tried to change this book as little as possible, concentrating on updating events that have occurred since its original publication in 1984. If you have previously used the text, however, there are some changes that you should watch for. Perhaps the most significant difference is the addition of material on multiculturalism. We believe that this issue deserves special attention because the United States has become much more culturally diverse since the early 1980s. It is now even more difficult to describe "the American culture" than it was then. In fact, we modified the title of the book to *The American Ways* to reflect this multiculturalism. The basic conceptual framework of values is the same, but now these values are referred to as *traditional*, basic values. The first and last chapters have undergone extensive revision; the material on television has been moved from Chapter 5 *The Heritage of Abundance* to Chapter 10 *Leisure Time: Organized Sports, Recreation, and Television*. Also, Chapter 11 *The American Family* has new information about nontraditional families, reflecting changing American lifestyles. For each chapter, we have added a list of movies that may be used to illustrate ideas or themes presented in the chapter. You may choose segments, or show a whole film, depending on your class. Please be sure to preview all films because some segments are *likely* to contain material that may offend or be totally inappropriate for your students.

We have been delighted to hear from many teachers about creative ways they have used *The American Way* — not only to introduce American culture, but also in cross-cultural communication, listening/speaking, reading/writing, academic preparation, and even literature courses. Teachers have used the values framework to design courses where students could explore ways in which the values appear in American literature or current events, for example, focusing on materials the teacher developed from other sources and presented in addition to the text.

Originally, we envisioned this book primarily in ESL/EFL courses, preparing students to study in American universities. Because we believe that these students need experience presenting information and voicing their own personal opinions to others, they should be encouraged to make oral reports and participate in debates and formal discussions. We have written many exercises that suggest appropriate topics and activities. The first edition also included other exercises that could be used to help the student become more effective in an American university. For example, the outlining exercises provided instruction on how to organize information into main ideas and supporting details. For the second edition, however, we have eliminated the outlining and the skimming exercises to make room for more pair work and small group discussion activities of general interest. But the outlining work is not lost! New outlines for the second edition have been done and are published in the *Teachers' Resource Manual* that accompanies *The American Ways*. In this manual you will find the exercises from the first edition, as well as answer keys, lesson plans, and graphic organizers — all presented as reproducible masters. The manual includes many other ideas for listening/speaking activities using movies and videos available commercially.

The Book at a Glance

Purpose	To increase students' awareness and understanding of the cultural values of the United States, their own country, and, we hope, other countries. To provide interesting cross-cultural activities for small group and class discussions, and topics for oral presentations, research, and writing projects.
Level	High intermediate to advanced. The vocabulary level is in the range of 3,000 to 4,000 words. Grammatical structures are not controlled, although an effort has been made to avoid overly complex patterns. (The level of the second edition is somewhat higher than the first.)
Content	Information about the traditional basic American values, where they came from, and how these values affect various institutions and aspects of life in the United States: religion, business, government, race relations, education, recreation, and the family.
Types of Exercises	Vocabulary practice, comprehension check, questions for discussion, cloze summary paragraphs, values clarification, questions for Americans, suggestions for research and oral reports, suggestions for writing, debate topics, proverbs, people watching, understanding the media, suggestions for further reading, recommended movies, pair and small group activities, and experiments.
Use of Text	• To orient students to American culture • To foster cross-cultural communication • To promote reading, discussion, and composition • To encourage conversation • To serve as a conceptual framework and accompany other materials focusing on literature, the media, current events, and so on.

Acknowledgments

Our great appreciation goes to Elizabeth Coppolino, Gwen Blase, and Vivian García for helping us with research, photos and permissions. Our thanks also to Sheryl Olinsky, Barbara Barysh, Todd Ware, Marita Froimson, and Steven Greydanus at Prentice Hall Regents. We wish to acknowledge the comments and encouragement we have received from many colleagues who have used this book in a wide range of settings all over the world. We would also like to thank the numbers of foreign students we have worked with over the years for sharing their insights and perceptions of the United States with us, and in the process, for helping us to better understand our own American culture.

M. K. D.
J. A. C.
E. N. K.

Dedicated to Lisa Kearny and Joseph Keyerleber

About the Second Edition

XI



American mosaic: Beyond the "melting pot" Steve Schapiro



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CHAPTER 1



Introduction

Culture hides much more than it reveals, and strangely enough what it hides, it hides most effectively from its own participants. Years of study have convinced me that the real job is not to understand foreign culture but to understand our own.

Edward T. Hall

Before You Read

1. What is "culture"?
2. What do you know about the **ethnic diversity** of the American population? Where did the people originally come from?
3. How have patterns of immigration to the United States changed over the years?
4. Do you think it is possible to make **generalizations** about Americans?