

赴美向导

TICKET TO THE UNITED STATES

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Abstract

The purpose of this conversational material is to acquaint those Chinese students coming to the United States for further study with the particular vocabulary, colloquialisms, idiomatic expressions and forms of address used in different situations. Those students will find the material useful when they are involved in the United States culture, since the material is based on the writer's own observation and experiences living and studying in the United States.

The project consists of written material (conversation textbook), visual aids (slides) and audio aids (tape).

The textbook covers 15 topics and each consists of conversation text, notes, discussion questions and role-playing exercises. Each topic is supported by slides providing specific cultural information and each text has a tape, recorded by native speakers, which provides students with the opportunity to listen to real speech.

Introduction

I am an English teacher of the Shanghai Foreign Language Institute and have been training students preparing to come to the United States for further study. They are the backbone of the scientific and technological contingents of the People's Republic of China. Their success in their study abroad will give great impetus to the realization of the four modernizations of China.

To ensure their better survival and greater success in their study during the time they stay in the United States, I think it is significant to provide some material both in language and culture which students will find helpful in the situations they are sure to be involved in the United States.

One year, from September 1983 to August 1984, my living and studying in the United States enabled me to work on this project which will serve the above mentioned purposes.

The whole project consists of written material (conversation text), visual aids (slides) and audio

aids (tape).

The text covers 15 topics, each consisting of four parts: conversation, notes, questions for discussion and a role play. The slides and tapes, supporting the texts, provide specific cultural information and the real speech of the native speakers. The textbook is written with the particular vocabulary, colloquialisms, idiomatic expressions and form of address used in different situations.

The project is based on my own observations and experiences in the United States and I hope it will be useful for students coming to the United States.

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FORMAL INTRODUCTIONS

The conversation is between new students on their first day of school.

— Hello. I'm Tim Cook. I'm from Washington, D. C.

— I'm Susan Kaufman. I'm from California. You're a new student in the Language Department, aren't you?

— Yes. I am. How about you?

— I am, too.

— Oh, how do you do? I'm very glad to meet you.

— Nice to meet you, too.

Notes

1. "Hello" is an expression used in greeting both in formal and informal situations. Nowadays it is used especially when people first meet each other.
2. "Tim Cook" is a person's full name. Tim is the first name, the given name, and Cook, the last name, the family name.
3. "I'm" and "you're" are the contractions for "I am" and "you are," respectively. Native speakers use them very often in speech.
4. "Aren't" is the contraction for "are not," e.g.,

"They aren't new students in the program"
Only the contraction form may appear sentence-initially. *e. g.*, "Aren't you happy?" It is incorrect to say. "Are not you happy?"

5. "How do you do?" Though a question mark is used, it is not a question, meaning: "How are you? It is a formal way of greeting the first time people meet.

Questions for Discussion

1. When people first meet and introduce themselves to one another, do they use first names, last names, or full names?
2. What is the difference between the names of an American and a Chinese?
3. Use contractions correctly in the following dialogue:
 - Are you from China?
 - Yes, I'm.
 - Are you from China, too?
 - No, I am not, I am from Japan. Some times it is difficult to tell Chinese from Japanese.

Role Play

You have arrived at Kennedy Airport in New York and someone from the reception office of the school where you are going to study has come to meet you. This is the first time you have met.

INFORMAL GREETING

George, a student meets Peggy, his teacher.

— Hi, George.

— Hi, Peggy. How are you doing?

— Fine. And you?

— All right. What's new with you?

— Well, I bought a new house.

— That's great. Where is it?

— It's in town. We are getting a lot of new students for the next program and I've been reading their applications and interviewing them.

— You must be busy. By the way, are you going to the party tonight?

— Oh, sure.

— That's good.

— Well, I have to rush off. I'm interviewing one of the applicants in a minute. I'll see you at the party.

— See you then. Take it easy.

— Bye.

Notes

1. "Hi" is used in greetings and is more casual than hello. Americans are often very informal. They usually say "hi" when they greet each other.
2. "George" and "Peggy" are the speakers' first names. Americans often call one another by their first names even when they do not know one another well. In some colleges and universities in the U.S., students sometimes call their teachers by their first names. But it is common to address teachers by Mr., Mrs., or Ms. followed by their last names.
3. "By the way" is a natural way to shift from one topic to another.
4. "That's great." A colloquial expression, meaning "that's good."
5. "Rush off" means to leave in a hurry.
6. "Take it easy." Used very often when people say good-bye to each other, expressing good wishes. It also means to relax.

Questions for Discussion

1. When you meet someone you are familiar with, how do you begin the conversation? How do you end the conversation?

2. Can you tell the difference between the way of addressing teachers and professors in Chinese and in English?
3. What do you think of the following conversation?
 - Hi. How are you doing?
 - Fine. How about you?
 - Not bad. What's new with you?
 - Well, I just bought a new car.
 - Great. How much was it?
 - It was expensive.
 - By the way, how's your sister?
 - She got a promotion.
 - I'm glad to hear that.
 - Excuse me, I have to go to the meeting now.
 - Me too. Let's go together.

Role Play

You have been in the U. S. for some time and have made some new friends. Now you meet one of them and he or she tells you that he or she got laid off and is looking for a new job. You want to get together later.

AT THE BUS STATION

-- Is this the Greyhound Bus Company?

— Yes, can I help you?

— Could you tell me how to get to Providence?

— You'll have to transfer in Springfield, Massachusetts.

There's no bus going directly to Providence.

— When does the bus leave in the morning?

— Let me look it up for you. Well, at eight thirty and it gets to Springfield at a quarter of ten. The bus starts at eleven fifteen there and gets to the station in Providence at two thirty.

— Fine. How much is the fare?

— Round trip is forty dollars and one way is thirty-one.

— A round-trip ticket is cheaper, isn't it? But I won't be back in three months.

— It'll be good for six months.

— I'm leaving in two days. Can I buy the ticket in advance?

— Sure. We don't assign seats.

— I'll have to take a big suitcase with me

Will there be any charge for that?

— Nope.

— Which gate does the bus leave from?

— Gate 23.

— I think I'll buy the ticket now, but I believe I have to go to another window.

— Yeah, go to the fourth window on your right, marked "Transfer."

— Thank you.

— Have a nice trip.

Notes

1. "Providence" is the capital of Rhode Island. It is the smallest state in the U.S.
2. "Springfield" is in Massachusetts. There are various Springfields. There's one in Vermont and one in Illinois, too.
3. "To look it up" means to find it in a book of reference.
4. "A quarter of ten" means "a quarter to ten." Americans usually use "of" instead of "to."
5. "A round trip" means a trip to a place and back again. In the U.S., bus, railroad and airline companies often sell round-trip tickets.
6. "To be good for" means to be effective, to be valid.
7. "In advance" means beforehand.

Questions for Discussion

1. Where does this conversation take place?
2. Which is more expensive, a one-way or a round-trip ticket?
3. Why do bus companies, railroads and airlines sell roundtrip tickets at a rate lower than the cost of two one-way tickets?
4. Do those companies in China sell round-trip tickets?
5. Have you ever heard of other forms of tickets?

Role Play

You'll study at Harvard University in Massachusetts. You are now in New York. It's Monday and you have decided to take a bus there tomorrow. You go to the bus station in New York (Port Authority Building) to buy the ticket. You have the following timetable. You want to be in Boston by 5:00 p.m., but you want to spend as much time as possible in New York.

To Boston, MA.

Leave	Arrive
12:15a	5:25a
3:50a	9:25a
6:00a	11:25a
9:00a	1:35p Nonstop
FSU 12:01p	4:35p
4:00p	8:35p Nonstop

ASKING THE WAY

— Could you tell me the way to the nearest subway station?

— Let me see. You turn left at the traffic light. Go straight ahead and walk down two blocks. Then take a right and walk past the post office. Further on down the street you'll see a big building, the First National Bank on the corner of Park Street and Waterman Avenue. Next to it is the subway station.

You can't miss it.

— Wow. It's far away.

— I think you'll find it easily.

Notes

1. "Subway" is an underground electric railway.
2. "Block" is an area in a city bounded by four streets; the length of one side of a city square.
3. "On the corner of" means the place where two streets meet.
4. "You can't miss it." You can find it.
5. "Wow" is an exclamation, expressing sudden feeling.

Questions for Discussion

1. Do you think the person who gives the directions appears well-informed about the place?
2. When you are in a strange city, whom do you usually ask for directions?
3. Is there any similarity between the ways of giving directions in Chinese and English? Can you tell the difference?
4. What are the main means of transportation in China? Have you ever taken a subway in your own country? Where?

Role Play

You invite your classmate to dinner, he or she does not know how to get to your place from the place where he or she lives. You give him or her the directions according to the following map.

