

美语听说教程

American Today

|今|日|美|国|

李月菊/主编

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前言

在 21 世纪, 中国将成为世界贸易组织的成员国, 对外交流与合作将日益频繁。英语在国际交流中作为媒介手段和信息转换工具也越来越受到社会各界的重视。然而, 一个对英语国家的社会文化了解甚少的人, 跟英美人士交往时会遇到许多困难。英语学习与社会文化密不可分。美国是我们经济合作与文化交流的重要伙伴, 也是一个主要的英语国家。学习美国英语, 了解美国社会与文化, 增进两国人民的理解和友谊, 是《今日美国》一书的指导思想。

《今日美国》内容丰富、新颖, 体裁多样, 并配有原声带。

作者以精心挑选的 2000 年美国社会生活中的重大事件为基础, 归纳为 11 个单元 52 课, 重点介绍了美国在政治、经济、科技、法律、文化、教育、体育、环保等领域的最新发展。读者可以本书为窗口, 了解美国社会的方方面面。

《今日美国》有故事、新闻报道、广告以及总统演说、名人访谈等多种形式。

《今日美国》语言新颖活泼, 词汇丰富, 具有充满活力的美国口语的特色。

《今日美国》配有 4 盒与课文对应的原声带。读者不仅可以模仿资深的播音员和节目主持人那清晰、纯正、流利的美音, 还可以欣赏美国副总统戈尔、新任美国总统布什演讲的实况录音。

为满足不同程度读者的需要, 本书在内容上难易兼顾, 并在每课课文后附有单词表及注释。为便于自学, 在本书最后附有每篇课文的汉语译文。

《今日美国》是广大英语爱好者学习美国英语, 了解美国社会与文化, 提高英语听、说、读、写、译综合能力的理想书籍。

限于编者的经验与水平, 书中不足之处, 敬请广大读者批评指正。

主编

2001 年 1 月

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Unit 1 Education

Lesson 1 Online Conservatory. Com.

High technology is making a lot more difficulties for kids to find excuses not to practice their Internet piano lessons, unless there is the power shortage. Daniel Steallen explains how the information highway could be the ban of childhood excuses.

Reporter: Anny Kazasky here is getting ready for his piano lesson. But his home is in New Jersey, and his teacher, Arry Gordon, is three thousand miles away in Longdale, California.

Gordon: OK. We'll begin today's lesson. With the blue scale, we'll get something like this. (piano music)

Reporter: The web site online conservatory dot com. for students and teachers together with a click of mouse. Using specially designed software, teachers and students can follow each other's keystrokes by watching the keyboard on the computer screen. And they can talk to each other in real time.

Gordon: OK. Good. That's a good start.

Reporter: Kazasky says he always wants to learn to play, but never seems to have the time. Now he takes lessons right in his own living room, and time that fits his schedule.

Kazasky: To have our lesson, you'll need half an hour of your time.

Reporter: Since January, more than eight hundred students in fifty-five countries from America to Afghanistan have taken lessons to the online conservatory.

Gordon: I made a statement. It will forever change the way people

learn their music. And it's true.

Speaker: Students can choose their own music style from classic to hi-pop, and they can choose their teacher. And the costs vary from instructors. The average price for half an hour is twenty dollars. But students say it's the convenient and they can fit it.

Kazasky: So, and thanks.

Gordon: OK, take care. Good-by.

New Words

kid	n.	小孩, 少年
excuse	n.	借口
power shortage		停电, 断电
information highway		信息高速公路
ban	v. /n.	禁止
New Jersey		(美国)新泽西州
Longdale	n.	(美国加州)郎岱尔
scale	n.	(音乐)音阶
key	n.	钢琴的键
stroke	n.	敲击钢琴的键
keyboard	n.	钢琴之键盘
screen	n.	(计算机的)屏幕
schedule	n.	时间表
Afghanistan	n.	阿富汗
classic	n.	古典作家(的音乐作品)
pop	n.	流行音乐
instructor	n.	教师, 教练

Notes

1. 本课 unless 是连词,意思是“如果不”,“除非”。例句如下:
 - a) I shall go there unless it rains.
如果不下雨,我将到那里去。
 - b) I will not go unless I hear from him.
如果他不通知我,我就不去。
2. 本课 conservatory 同 conservatoire, 音乐学校,戏剧学校。

Exercise

I . Decide whether the following statements are true or false.

1. High technology makes children difficult to find excuses not to practice their Internet piano lessons.
2. Anny Kazasky and his teacher, Array Gordon, live in the same state in America.
3. Teachers and students cannot see each other's keystrokes on the computer screen.
4. Kazasky takes piano lessons right in his living room.
5. Students can choose their own music style, but cannot choose their teacher.
6. The average price for an hour is forty dollars.

II . Topic for discussion.

Do you like having lessons through Internet? Why?

Lesson 2 Whiz Kids

All children possess an energy reserve that can be developed if parents take an active role in their child's learning development. The learning is from birth through age 6, because the brain develops fastest during this time. Newborns learn the fastest, followed by one-year-olds. Welcome back to this special parenting edition of Your Health.

All children are special, each bringing something unique to the world. But every once in a while, a child is born with an extraordinary gift that simply cannot be explained. You're about to meet one such child, a boy with an incredible intellect and wisdom well beyond his years.

"Beautiful. "

Gregory Smith is reaching unimaginable heights. At only 11 years old, this precocious young boy with a mop of blond hair is bounding off to his second year of college.

"I think I have been given a special gift from God, and, I'll use this gift, hopefully someday, to become the president of United States. "

With an I.Q. so high it can't be measured, " $P(x) = \sin(x)/x$ ", Gregory's brilliance is a constant source of wonder and amazement just about everyone, including his own Mum.

"Did you learn this today?"

"Yes. "

"He taught it and you learned it, and now you are teaching it to me. "

"OK. "

"All right. "

"There is no explanation for how he knows, what he knows, how he went from point A to where he is now. I can't explain. "

His gift was apparent from the start. He began talking at two and a half months, reciting the alphabet before he could walk.

Gregory skipped most of the elementary and all of middle school, going from second grade to finish high school in just 3 years. On his graduation, two days after his tenth birthday, he picked up a high school diploma and lost a baby tooth. Today he's settling into his sophomore year at Randolph-Macon College in Ashland, Virginia. Fast to become fluent in French, and soaking up the language of science, Gregory has a passion for math. Yet the boy with such tremendous intellect is still a kid, a kid whose favorite treat is a scoop of vanilla ice-cream with sprinkles and between licks he sprinkles his conversation with adult insight on global issues.

"Do you think we'll see peace in the Middle East in your life time?"

"Hard to say. What we need to do is to start with children, because they're going to be the next generation. "

He already has the attention of world leaders and devotes his personal website to promoting non-violence.

"In my life, I can think of 3 heroes that I've been countered: Martin Luther King Jr. , Muhammad Gandhi and Jesus Christ. "

If he keeps going at this pace, this little man on campus could graduate and go on to earn a Master's Degree before he is old enough to get his driver's license. But Gregory's favorite escape is here, high on the top of the Blueridge Mountains of Virginia, a place where this remarkable young boy leaves his college course low and behind, but still thinks big.

"I don't know why people set the sky's limit. It's just not to me. Why does the sky have to be a limit? Why can't it be further, why can't it be the universe? I don't care where we set the boundary in the

sky. ”

And keep in mind gifted children also have special needs. While the government sets aside billions of dollars each year for children with learning disabilities, only a fraction of that amount is really marked for the needs of gifted children. Well, that's our show for this week, thanks for joining us for the special parenting edition of Your Health.

New Words

incredible	adj.	难以置信的
mop (of hair)	n.	乱蓬蓬的头发
bound off		跳着离开
skip	v.	跳过, 略过
diploma	n.	毕业文凭, 学位证书
sophomore	n.	(大学)二年级
fluent	adj.	流利的, 流畅的
a scoop of vanilla icecream		一勺香草冰淇淋
sprinkles	n.	撒在面上的一层东西
	v.	点缀
promote non-violence		倡导非暴力
boundary	n.	界限
disability	n.	残疾, 无能
fraction	n.	小部分, 一点

Exercises

I . Multiple choices: choose the best answer to each question.

1. Parents should take an active role in their child's learning development from birth through age 6 because _____.
 - a. the body develops the fastest during this period of time
 - b. the brain develops the fastest during this period of time

- c. children of this age group are obedient
 - d. teachers do not play an active role
2. Which of the following statements is not true?
- a. Gregory is a child whose extraordinary gift can hardly be explained.
 - b. His intellect and wisdom goes beyond his years.
 - c. His mother knows exactly why he is so outstanding.
 - d. He thinks God gives his gift.
3. Which of the following statements is not true?
- a. His gift was apparent from the start.
 - b. He could recite the alphabet as soon as he could walk.
 - c. He skipped most of the elementary and all of the middle school.
 - d. He lost a baby tooth on graduation day from high school.
4. Which of the following statements is not true of Gregory's sophomore year?
- a. He is settling into his sophomore year.
 - b. He becomes a sports star on campus.
 - c. He is fast to become fluent in French.
 - d. He has a passion for math.
5. Gregory enjoys himself on the top of the mountains because _____.
- a. here he can talk to the three heroes he admires
 - b. here he can leave his college course behind and think big
 - c. here he can organize a party with his classmates
 - d. he enjoys a sense of greatness on the top of the mountains

II . Topic for discussion .

What should the government, schools, and parents do for gifted children?

Lesson 3 Sex Education in America

Today the focus is on the family, from your children's health to choosing the right sport. But first we turn to the topic of sex education in the nation's schools. Today it is more than simply talking about the birds and the bees. And according to a new survey, the vast majority of parents say that their children aren't getting enough information to make those difficult real life decisions.

Even though sex education is considered as a standard part of the curriculum, parents say the nation's junior and senior high schools are not going for enough.

Parents want their kids to be prepared for real life. And they want them to have sex information they need too, to be prepared to handle the different situations that they might face.

The findings are based on interviews with more than 4,000 students, parents and educators. Two out of three parents say sex education deserves more class time. That includes covering topics that are considered controversial. The majority of parents surveyed want teachers to talk about Aids, abortion and homosexuality. For most students, sex education is taught in just a handful of classes, often limited to the birds and the bees basics.

"If you just, you know, have it one year, and let it go, that cannot do anything. People aren't going to pay attention. If you keep it going, you know, really hammered in, I think maybe kids will be affected by it. "

A separate study, just released by Ellen Goop Marker Institute, also finds sex education in public schools falls short and concludes programs pushing abstinence have failed.

New Words

the birds and the bees		(对儿童解说的)有关两性关系的基本知识
curriculum	n.	必修课程, (一个学校专业或学科的)全部课程
findings	n.	结论, 研究结果
controversial	adj.	有争议的
abortion	n.	流产
homosexuality	n.	同性恋
abstinence	n.	禁欲, 节制

Exercises

I . Answer the following questions.

1. What is the focus of the program?
2. What will we first deal with?
3. What are the findings of a new survey?
4. How was the survey carried out?
5. What is the conclusion of a separate study released by Ellen Goop Marker Institute?

II . Topic for discussion.

Do you think sex education in middle schools is important? Why?

Lesson 4 The Future of Education

As early as 1830s, students on the American frontier then engaged in distance learning through commercial correspondence courses. In the 20th century, radio and television enhance learning from a far. But it's to be Internet to revolutionize distance learning. It's now called E-learning. And it's one of the fastest growing pieces of \$ 700 billion education pie. Kitty Pilgrim reports.

Reporter: Carla Tisdale-Walker walks across the street from Thomas Edison state college in 20 New Jersey. She is working on a degree there. But she rarely sets foot on campus. Carla is on the road to an online masters in management. Her classroom maybe virtual, but the credit she earns via the Internet are real.

Walker: Back I come home. I can be at home, stay at home, do I need to do as a mother, as a wife, and still be able to go online and do my homework. It's on some discipline to get online every week.

Reporter: Carla works full time for the New Jersey Secretary of the State. Her husband is a police officer with a very unpredictable schedule. She also has two boys. (boys screaming)

Walker: Right now they are four and five, and they have to be picked up by daycare by six o'clock. Or you know, I have nobody, you know, to actually watch and look after them after six o'clock. So for me to go to class after six would be impossible.