

英语学习 背景知识 新编

美国加拿大部分

北京大学出版社

A NEW BOOK ON CULTURAL BACKGROUND FOR ENGLISH STUDY

英语学 知识新编 (美国加拿大部分)

A New Book on the Cultural Background for English Study

(America and Canada)

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内容简介

本书介绍美国和加拿大的历史、地理、政治以及文化、教育、宗教、生活习俗等人文背景方面的基本情况,尤其是美国近 50 年来发生的一些重大事件。对文中涉及的许多背景知识和语言难点,做了较详细的注解。全书语言标准、规范,且风格各异。读者在提高英语阅读水平的同时,可以一览美国和加拿大两国的概况以及现代国际社会的风云。

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前 言

《英语学习背景知识新编》分美国、加拿大和英国、澳大利亚两部分。

本书为美国、加拿大部分。

本书在选材上注意语言流畅、规范。对文中涉及的背景知识和语言难点,尽可能做详细的注解。

本书在对作者 1984 年出版的《英语学习背景知识》进行修改的基础上,增加了许多新内容,尤其是注意反映有影响的重大事件,如珍珠港事件,朝鲜战争,古巴导弹危机,越南战争,尼克松访华,水门事件,妇女解放运动(又称女权运动),海湾战争等,以及加拿大的多元文化问题和复杂的宗教问题。这些事件对当代国际政治产生了重要影响,有的甚至影响了世界历史的进程,这些问题的知识性极强。

1984 年《英语学习背景知识》出版以来近 10 年间,世界 形势和格局发生了许多变化,越来越多的人们要求了解世界, 尤其渴望了解以英语为主要语言的国家的种种情况,学习英 语的人们也只有在了解各有关国家的重要情况和国际局势的 发展变迁过程中才能更有效地掌握和应用英语。适应这种需 要就是我们出版《英语学习背景知识新编》的目的所在。

> 孟继有 1993 年 2 月

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Part One
The United States of America



1. The Main Regions

North America belongs to people who came there across the Atlantic, most from Europe, some as slaves from Africa. So when we look at this vast country there is good reason for beginning with the east coast, where the first and later immigrants landed. Beginning with the north we have first the area known as New England[®], which runs from the Canadian shore to New York, with a coastline 800 kilometres long (in direct line) and stretching inland for 300 kilometres at its widest point². This area is about the same size as England and Wales, and resembles old England in many ways. Some of the earliest settlement was here, and on the whole the country is small-scale, long established and urban. In character we can divide New England roughly into two parts. The southern section, consisting of the states of Connecticut, Massachusetts and Rhode Island, is the most "English". The ten million people of these states are as

① New England:新英格兰(美国东北部 Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island 和 Connecticut 六个州的总称)。

② with a coastline...point:海岸线长达 800 公里(直线距离),(新英格兰)向内陆伸展,最宽处达 300 公里(即东西的宽度)。

crowded as the English^①, and most live in towns—a quarter of them in and round Boston and another fifth (or nearly so) in the outer parts of the great sprawl^② that runs up the coast from New York City. Boston already had a quarter of a million people 100 years ago, and in its central part many streets are well over 100 years old. In this old-established part the scenery is rather English, with flat country near the coast and hills up to 1,000 metres inland.

Northern New England is rather different, emptier, wilder, more picturesque. The states of Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont together have only two million people in an area as big as England. The southern parts of New Hampshire and Maine are suburban, but everywhere else[®], with lakes and hills up to 1,300 metres in Vermont, spectacular rocky coasts in Maine, this is more than anything[®] an attractive holiday country for the town-dwellers further south: country for enjoyments like yachting, swimming, fishing, skiing and enjoying rural peace—particularly in the "fall" (autumn) , when the colours are glorious.

The southern end of New England merges into the sub-

① as the English: = as the English people living in England.

② sprawl [spro:l]指无计划地扩展的地区。

③ but everywhere else; = in every other place 是副词短语, 修饰下句 this is more...。

④ more than anything:特别是。

⑤ in the fall (autumn): 在秋季。英国把秋季称作 autumn,美国称作 the fall(fall 前一般要加定冠词)。

urbs of New York City, and to the west the great state that takes its name from the city at its southernmost tip. 10 Some say that New York is the world's biggest "town", but it is rather pointless to argue whether or not it is bigger than Tokyo. It all depends how many areas which are more or less attached are included. Manhattan Island includes everything that most people think of when they say "New York": Wall Street and the office skyscrapers clustered around it, Fifth Avenue running up the centre of the island, with Broadway slanting from it, the Empire State Building, Rockefeller Centre, the United Nations Building, the museums and central shops, Central Park (where at times it is dangerous to walk alone), the Negro quarter of Harlem, the docks and the slums behind them; but Manhattan has only around two million residents. New York City is composed of five boroughs²: Manhattan, Brooklyn (on the south of Long Island), the Bronx, Richmond and Queens. Immense bridges join the boroughs with each other and with the suburbs in New Jersey across the Hudson. The city population of nearly eight million has not changed much for a long time, but the

① The southern end of... tip. 新英格兰的南端和纽约市的郊区相连,在西面则和一个大州接壤,这个州是以它最南端的一个城市命名的(这里指的是纽约州)。 and to the west the great state = and to the west New England merges into the great state.

② five boroughs:纽约市的五个行政区,即 Manhattan [mæn'hætən]曼哈顿(纽约市中心区)、Brooklyn ['brukln]布鲁克林、Bronx[broŋks]布朗克斯、Richmond ['ritʃmənd]里士满、Queens [kwi:nz]昆斯。

area of continuous town can be taken to include in addition about seven million people in New York State, New Jersey and southern Connecticut. In the mid-1970s the population fell rapidly.

Eastern New York State is really the same thing as the valley of the Hudson River, but the State extends 500 kilometres to the west to Lakes Ontario[®] and Erie [®]and Canada, and finally Niagara Falls. The state is as big as England. Half of its eighteen million people live in or near New York City, while the rest are mainly concentrated in the line of Hudson valley towns and near the Great Lakes, leaving much of the hill and lake country empty. It has sometimes been argued that New York City might as well be a state on its own[®]. To the south of the state is Pennsylvania, which also spreads out to the borders of the middle west, with well-separated areas of coal mining and heavy industry among its hills. Philadelphia, well up the Delaware River, is the metropolis of Pennsylvania, with five million people in its "metropolitan area", or city plus suburbs. In the western part of the state the steel area around Pittsburgh is already across the mountains and on the Ohio River; water flows south to the Gulf of Mexico. Pennsylvania is the main part

might as well be alstate on its own:自己就很可以算是一个州。

6

① Ontario [ɔn'tɛəriəu]:安大略湖。

② Erie [ˈiəri]:伊利湖。

of the mid-Atlantic area^①, which includes New Jersey and Maryland, bounded at the south by the Potomac River. This is the clearest dividingline in the United States, because across the river is the south.

It was on this border that the founding fathers chose the site for the national capital city of Washington. They set apart for it a square territory which they called the District of Columbia, at taken out of the states of Maryland and Virginia to form the national capital territory, outside the jurisdiction of any state and subject only to the control of the Federal Congress.

The whole of New England and the mid-Atlantic states together can conveniently be regarded as a single section of the United States, comprising eleven states together with the District of Columbia. This is the base from which America was built, and it still has more than a quarter of the whole population, in one-fifteenth of the land area.

The north-east as a whole is slightly smaller than France in area but larger in population. More than half of its fifty-five million people are concentrated in the coastal area

① mid-Atlantic area:美国中部滨临大西洋地区(一般指纽约、新泽西和滨夕法尼亚三个州,广义上还包括特拉华和马里兰两个州,因滨临大西洋,且位居新英格兰和南方之中间而得名)。

② They set apart...of Columbia:他们为华盛顿划分出一块他们称之为哥伦比亚特区的地带。

of early settlement. The train from Boston through Providence^①, New York, Philadelphia and Baltimore^② to Washington travels between buildings for most of the way, and the part from Philadelphia to New York, and a good way beyond in each direction, is almost solidly built up. With good roads and universal car ownership^③ each of the big cities in this string spreads out its suburbs towards its neighbour, and people talk of this as megalopolis. ^④

It hardly seems sensible to talk of Boston and Washington as parts of a single urban complex, when they are 600 kilometres apart, but this area contains the political capital of the United States as well as the commercial capital and most of the established centres of culture.

On southwards down the Atlantic coast are the tobacco and cotton states, with Washington on the border between south and north. This was slave-owning country before the civil war, and has not prospered much since then. Economically these south-eastern states are notoriously backward, with much rural poverty surviving among whites as well as negroes⁽⁵⁾, more recently they have attracted a great new

① Providence ['providens]: 普罗维登斯(港市)。

② Baltimore ['bo:ltimo:]:巴尔的摩(城市)。

③ universal car ownership:普遍地(或人人)拥有汽车的情况。

④ megalopolis:特大城市,来源于(希腊语 megalo(特大的)+polis(城市)

⑤ with much rural... as well as negroes:不但在黑人中,而且在白人中仍然存在着许多农村的贫困现象。这是一个 with 后带有逻辑主语的分词结构(或with+复合宾语)做状语,表示伴随情况。

wave of industrial development, helped by federal plans and hydro-electric power.

Rather different from the rest of the south is its most extreme part, the state of Florida, with its swamps and pine forests, its orange plantations, its beaches, inland springs and waterways in a Caribbean climate. Thousands of retired northerners live in Southern Florida, enjoying the warm winter climate and hoping not to see their homes destroyed in a hurricane some autumn. Miami, with its long row of huge holiday hotels, is now not only a holiday resort but also a great centre of prosperous new industries, as well as being the home of 400,000 refugees from Castro's Cuba.

Behind and through the eastern states runs the range of the Appalachian mountains^①, beginning far south in Georgia and continuing, with slight interruptions, northwards to Vermont and Canada. Sections of the range have different names, but the different parts have much in common. Rounded hills and forests are the main feature. The highest point is only 2,000 metres above the sea.

The mountains were a barrier to early movement westwards for the early generations, but beyond the mountains the vast central plain stretches all the way to the Rocky

① Behind and through... Appalachian mountains:座落在这些东部州的后面,且横贯其中的是阿巴拉契亚山脉。因介词短语在句首,故主谓倒装,谓语动词runs 放在主语 the range 的前面。

Mountains^①, with the water from the Ohio and Missouri Rivers joining the Mississippi to flow down to New Orleans and the Gulf of Mexico. Half the area of the United States lies in this vast basin bounded by the Appalachians on the east and the Rocky Mountains to the west, with, to the north, the scarcely perceptible watershed which divides the Mississippi waters from those that flow north into the Great Lakes^② and St Lawrence^③.

The north-eastern part of this great basin is known as the Middle West. The term is confusing because in fact it describes the north-eastern quarter of the United States except for the states close to the Atlantic. But in 1776 all this area was still west of the fully-settled territory of the original states. The great "mid-western" plain was first developed for farming, and Chicago, with its navigable water routes east across the Great Lakes to the St Lawrence River, and its central position, soon became its chief town. Now Chicago is an industrial and commercial city comparable with Paris or London, dominating the five industrial mid-western states east of the Mississippi. Each of these five states, Illi-

① the Rocky Mountains:落矶山脉。

② the Great Lakes:北美洲五大湖,即:苏必利尔湖(Superior),休伦湖(Huron),密执安湖(Michigan),伊利湖(Erie)和安大略湖(Ontario),是世界上最大的淡水湖群。

③ St Lawrence [sənt'lərəns]:圣劳伦斯河。

nois, Michigan, Indiana, Wisconsin and (with more diffusion) Ohio, includes huge, sparsely-populated open spaces. Together they have a total area slightly greater than France, but more than half of their forty million people live in a dozen industrial cities with their suburbs. The biggest of these (next to Chicago) is Detroit, Michigan, home of the great American gods, Ford, General Motors and Chrysler. More than two million people live in its suburbs, and the two million in the city proper produce more murders each year than the whole of Britain or West Germany. By the standards even of the Atlantic states these great Western inner cities may be new, but parts of their central areas already suffer from decay.

Further west still the great plain which occupies the middle of the United States from Canada down to Texas is empty, featureless country, where one can drive for hours with little change of scene, and where the vastness of America is palpable. The plains run from the Gulf of Mexico in the south up to the Canadian border and beyond—an endless open space comparable with Siberia. Few places in the world can compare with these great plains for uniformity and

① with more diffusion:(与其他四州相比人口)比较分散。

② Ford, General Motors and Chrysler: 福特汽车公司,通用汽车公司和克莱斯勒汽车公司(美国三大汽车公司)。

③ in the city proper:在城市市区(不包括郊区)。proper 是形容词,此处放在所修饰的名词后面,意为"本身"。

monotony, and they are only part of a continuous system which goes northwards to the barren lands of the Arctic. The eastern part has a moderate rainfall, but in general the rainfall declines towards the mountain barrier of the Rockies in the west. Although there are great extremes of cold in winter and of heat in summer the plains are more favourably placed than those of Siberia. Running from thirty to fortynine degrees north they can produce wheat in large quantities¹, and the endless space is good for the use of mechanisation on a huge scale. One can well imagine the sense of isolation of the early settlers in this region, but the new developments of road transport have changed all this for the modern farmer. The four states forming the heart of the plains, North and South Dakota, Nebraska and Kansas, have a combined area nearly as great as France and Italy together, and only five million inhabitants including those who live in and around the two big cities on the Missouri river, which joins the Mississippi from the west at St Louis.

At the southern end of the plains is the huge state of Texas, largest in the Union until surpassed[®] in size by the addition of sub-arctic and arctic Alaska. Texas is relatively arid, and has always had a distinctive quality, first with its

① Running from...quantities:Running...north 是句子的状语,意为"从 北纬 30 度跨越到 49 度",they 代表上句中的 plains。

② until surpassed = until it was surpassed