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大学英语

拓展阅读

第 3 册

主 编 张国臣



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前言

学习英语,阅读历来就是一条必不可少的重要途径。这既是提高英语学习者语言综合能力的手段,也是学习语言的重要目标之一。新一轮的大学英语教学改革特别强调培养学生实际使用英语的能力,尤其是通过多种阅读渠道获取知识和信息的能力。教育部颁布的《大学英语课程教学要求》将大学阶段的英语教学分为三个层次:一般要求、较高要求和更高要求。每个层次都对学生的阅读能力提出了具体而明确的要求。其中对阅读理解能力的一般要求为:“能够基本读懂一般性题材的英文文章,阅读速度达到每分钟 70 词,在快速阅读篇幅较长、难度略低的材料时,阅读速度达到每分钟 100 词,能基本读懂国内英文报刊,掌握中心意思,理解主要事实和有关细节。能读懂日常生活中常见的应用文体材料。能在阅读中使用有效的阅读方法。”从 2006 年起,大学英语四、六级考试还增设了“快速阅读”考试题型。因此,为适应仔细阅读和快速阅读的这些新要求,我们组织有关老师编写了《大学英语拓展阅读》系列教材,一方面积极应对大学英语教学改革的要求,倡导大学英语个性化、自主性学习等学习理念;另一方面帮助广大学生扩大阅读范围,增加词汇量,提高阅读速度,培养独立阅读习惯和提高阅读能力。

《大学英语拓展阅读》第 1 册至第 4 册的编写遵循这样的原则:内容新颖,时代感强,选材既有历史、传统的内容,又注重社会、科技发展的最新信息;体裁和题材多样化,考虑到知识的多样性,文、理、工、医等内容兼顾;内容富有知识性和趣味性,既注重对国外社会、文化的介绍,也增加中国传统文化及风俗的描述,以便增长学习者的多元知识;练习题型多样化,既有四、六级考试快速阅读题型“是非判断”和“句子填空”,又设置“多项选择”、“简短问答”和“英汉翻译”。本套教材共 4 册,每册及单元之间由浅入深、由易到难、循序渐进。每

单元以一个主要话题为线索,选取内容相近、体裁不同的阅读材料4篇,其中前两篇为快速阅读材料,后两篇为仔细阅读材料。为了便于学习者及时检验自己的阅读情况,教材后面附有参考答案。本教材每单元的内容,一部分可以作为课堂强化训练,一部分可以作为学习者的课后自主练习。

在编写这套教材过程中,我们还得到了外国语学院孙庆文副院长热心指导和支持。在此表示衷心感谢!

由于编者水平有限,如有不当之处,衷心希望广大教师同仁和同学提出宝贵的批评意见和建议,以便今后改进和完善。

编 者
2009年7月

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Unit 1

Traditional Customs

Fast Reading



Text A-1

Directions: In this part, you will have 15 minutes to go through the passage quickly and answer the 10 questions. For questions 1–7, mark

Y (for YES) if the statement agrees with the information given in the passage;

N (for NO) if the statement contradicts the information given in the passage;

NG (for NOT GIVEN) if the information is not given in the passage.

For questions 8–10, complete the sentences with the information given in the passage.

Thanksgiving in the United States

In the United States, Thanksgiving or Thanksgiving Day is an annual one-day legal holiday to express gratitude for the things one has at the end of the harvest season. It is celebrated on the fourth Thursday in November. The period from Thanksgiving Day to New Year's Day is often collectively referred to as the “holiday season”, and the holiday may be colloquially nicknamed “Turkey Day”.

Thanksgiving is generally considered a secular holiday, and is not directly based in religious canon or dogma. The holiday's origins trace to harvest festivals that have been celebrated in many cultures since ancient times, and most people celebrate by gathering at home with family or friends for a holiday feast. A tradition also exists to share the fruits of the harvest with those who are less fortunate.

Traditional celebrations

Foods of the season

US tradition compares the holiday with a meal held in 1621 by the Wampanoag and the Pilgrims who settled in Plymouth, Massachusetts. This element continues in modern times with the Thanksgiving dinner, often featuring turkey, playing a large role in the celebration of Thanksgiving. Some of the details of the American Thanksgiving story are myths that developed in the 1890s and early 1900s as part of the effort to forge a common national identity in the aftermath of the Civil War and in the melting pot of new immigrants.

In the United States, certain kinds of food are traditionally served at Thanksgiving meals. First and foremost, turkey is usually the featured item on any Thanksgiving feast table. Stuffing, mashed potatoes with gravy, sweet potatoes, cranberry sauce, corn (maize), other fall vegetables, and pumpkin pie are commonly associated with Thanksgiving dinner. All of these primary dishes are actually native to the Americas or were introduced as a new food source to the Europeans when they arrived.

To feed the needy at Thanksgiving time, most communities have annual food drives that collect non-perishable packaged and canned foods, and corporations sponsor charitable distributions of staple foods and Thanksgiving dinners.

Giving thanks

Thanksgiving was originally a religious observance for all the members of the community to give thanks to God for a common purpose. Historic reasons for community thanksgivings include the 1541 thanksgiving mass after the expedition of Coronado safely crossing part of Texas and finding game, and the 1777 thanksgiving after the victory in the revolutionary battle of Saratoga. In his 1789 Proclamation, President Washington gave many noble reasons for a national Thanksgiving, including “for the civil and religious liberty”, for “useful knowledge”, and for God’s “kind care” and “his providence”. The only presidents to inject a specifically Christian

focus to their proclamation have been Grover Cleveland in 1896, and William McKinley in 1900. Several other presidents have cited the Judeo-Christian tradition. Gerald Ford's 1975 declaration made no clear reference to any divinity.

The tradition of giving thanks to God is continued today in various forms. Religious and spiritual organizations offer services and events on Thanksgiving themes the weekend before, the day of, or the weekend after Thanksgiving. Bishop Ryan observed about Thanksgiving Day, "It is the only day we have that consistently finds Catholics at Mass. in extraordinary numbers ... even though it is not a holy day of obligation."

In celebrations at home, it is a holiday tradition in many families to begin the Thanksgiving dinner by saying grace. Found in diverse religious traditions, grace is a prayer before or after a meal to express appreciation to God, to ask for God's blessing, or in some philosophies, to express an altruistic (利他主义的) wish or dedication. The custom is portrayed in the photograph "Family Holding Hands and Praying before a Thanksgiving Meal". The grace may be led by the hostess or host, as has been traditional, or, in contemporary fashion, each person may contribute words of blessing or thanks. According to a 1998 Gallup poll, an estimated 64 percent of Americans say grace.

Vacation and travel

On Thanksgiving Day, families and friends usually gather for a large meal or dinner, the result being that the Thanksgiving holiday weekend is one of the busiest travel periods of the year. In the United States, Thanksgiving is a four-day or five-day weekend vacation in school and college calendars. Most business and government workers are also given both Thanksgiving and the day after as paid holidays. Thanksgiving Eve, on the Wednesday night before, has been one of the busiest nights of the year for bars and clubs, both in terms of sales and volume of patrons (庇护人), as many students have returned to their hometowns from college.

Parades

In New York City, the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade, often erroneously (错误地) referred to as the "Macy's Day Parade", is held annually every Thanksgiving Day from the Upper West Side of Manhattan to Macy's flagship store in Herald Square. The parade features parade floats with specific themes, scenes from Broadway plays,

large balloons of cartoon characters and TV personalities, and high school marching bands. The float that traditionally ends the Macy's Parade is the Santa Claus float. This float is a sign that the Christmas season has begun. Thanksgiving parades also appear in many other cities such as the 6abc IKEA Thanksgiving Day Parade in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, which claims to be the oldest parade, the McDonald's Thanksgiving Parade in Chicago, Illinois, the America's Hometown Thanksgiving Parade in Plymouth, Massachusetts, the H-E-B Holiday Parade in Houston, Texas among others.

Football

American football is often a major part of Thanksgiving celebrations in the United States. Professional games are traditionally played on Thanksgiving Day; until recently, these were the only games played during the week apart from Sunday or Monday night. The National Football League has played games on Thanksgiving every year since its creation; the tradition is referred to as the Thanksgiving Classic.

For many college football teams, the regular season ends on Thanksgiving weekend, and a team's final game is often against a regional or historic rival. Most of these college games are played either on Friday or Saturday immediately after Thanksgiving, but usually a single college game is played on Thanksgiving itself.

Friday after Thanksgiving

The Friday after Thanksgiving, although not a Federal holiday, is often a company holiday for many in the US workforce, except for those in retail. It is also a day off for most schools. The Friday after Thanksgiving, colloquially known as Black Friday, is usually the start of the Christmas shopping season.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thanksgiving_\(United_States\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thanksgiving_(United_States))

1. In the general sense, the holiday of Thanksgiving in the United States has a lot to do with religion. ()
2. Apart from turkey, sweet potatoes, corn and pumpkin pies are also traditionally on Thanksgiving feast table. ()
3. According to the passage, it was in 1789 that President Washington proclaimed Thanksgiving a national holiday. ()
4. Religious organizations hold some Thanksgiving-related activities only on the

day of Thanksgiving. ()

5. Many families express thanks or ask for blessings in their prayer before the Thanksgiving dinner. ()

6. College students can't account for a large proportion of the customers and can't help a lot in sales rise in bars and clubs on Thanksgiving Eve. ()

7. The Santa Claus float in Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade marks the start of the Christmas season. ()

8. As part of Thanksgiving celebrations in the United States, the National Football League has a tradition of _____.

9. The day after Thanksgiving is customarily a rest day for many company employees and students, but not for _____.

10. Because of the featured food on Thanksgiving table, the holiday may be informally called "_____".



Text A-2

Directions: In this part, you will have 15 minutes to go through the passage quickly and answer the 10 questions. For questions 1–7, choose the best answers from the four choices marked A, B, C and D. For questions 8–10, complete the sentences with the information given in the passage.

Localized Celebrations of New Year's Eve

New Year's Eve, on December 31 and the final day of the Gregorian year, is a separate observance from the observance of New Year's Day. In different countries, there are different ways of celebration.

Brazil

New Year's Eve is one of the most exuberant holidays in Brazil. In most Brazilian cities, even those of medium size, there is a massive display of fireworks after midnight, and special musical shows. The most famous celebration is at the Copacabana Beach in Rio de Janeiro, which has an average attendance of 2,500,000

people. The fireworks display last from 15 to 25 minutes and is followed by music shows set on several stages throughout the beach.

The city of São Paulo also has a famous worldwide event: the Saint Silvester Marathon, which traverses streets between Paulista Avenue and the downtown area. It is contested by athletes of many countries, including such Olympic stars as the Kenyan runner Paul Tergat, who won it five times.

Ecuador

Ecuador celebrates a unique tradition on the last day of the year. Elaborate effigies(模拟像) are created to represent people and events from the past year. Often these include political characters or leaders that the creator of the effigy may have disagreed with. The dummies are made of straw, newspaper, and old clothes, with *papier-mâché*(制型纸,纸型) masks. Often they are also stuffed with fire crackers. At midnight the effigies are lit on fire to symbolize burning away of the past year and welcoming of the new year. The origin of the tradition is unknown. It is possible the tradition began after a yellow fever epidemic left many dead. The corpses were then disposed of by burning.

Another well-known tradition is the “Widow” who is usually a man dressed up as the widow of the Old Year effigy who has to make people laugh by pretending to cry. Then the people around will give this “widow” some sort of charity for her dying husband.

Other rituals are performed for the health, wealth, prosperity and protection of each member. These rituals are as followings: Twelve grapes—each person eats twelve grapes before midnight, making a wish with each grape. Yellow underwear—yellow underwear are said to attract positive energies for the New Year. Suitcase—walking around the block with the suitcase will bring the person the journey of their dreams.

Japan

The day is a preparation day to welcome toshigami (年神), new year's god. Therefore, traditionally, people clean their home and prepare Kadomatsu, literally “gate pine”, and/or Shimenawa (a kind of rope with decorations) to welcome the god before New Year's Eve.

Buddhist temples ring their bells 108 times on midnight, during 31 December to

1 January. The bell rings represent 108 elements of *bonnō* (烦恼) or defilements, which is said people have in their mind. The bells are rung to repent(忏悔) 108 of the *bonnō*.

Philippines

Filipinos(菲律宾人) usually celebrate New Year's Eve with the company of family and close friends. Traditionally, most households stage a dinner party in their homes. Typical dishes include *pancit*, *Hamon* and if the family could afford it, *Lechon*, which is usually considered as the centerpiece of the dinner table. Barbecued food is also an integral part of the menu.

Most Filipinos follow a set of traditions that are typically observed during New Year's Eve. Included among these traditions is the customary habit of wearing clothes with circular patterns like polka dots. This signifies the belief that circles attract money and fortune. Throwing coins at the stroke of midnight is said to increase riches that year. Traditions also include the serving of circularly-shaped fruits, shaking of coins inside a metal casserole(焙盘) while walking around the house, jumping high which is believed to cause an increase in physical height and making loud noises to drive away "evil" spirits among others. Households also spend money to buy firecrackers and pyrotechnics that would be ignited at the strike of midnight.

Spain

Spanish New Year's Eve celebrations usually begin with a family dinner, traditionally including shrimp and lamb or turkey. Spanish people believe that wearing red underwear on New Year's Eve brings good luck. The actual countdown is primarily followed from the clock on top of the *Casa de Correos*(邮局大厦) building in *Puerta del Sol*(太阳门) square in Madrid. It is also traditional to eat twelve grapes, one on each chime of the clock. Nowadays, the tradition is followed by almost every Spaniard, and the twelve grapes have become synonymous with the New Year. After the clock has finished striking twelve, people greet each other and toast with sparkling wine such as *cava* or *champagne*, or alternatively with *cider*.

After the family dinner and the grapes, many young people attend New Year parties at pubs, *discothèques*(迪斯科舞厅) and similar places, which usually last until the next morning. Early next morning, party attendees usually gather to have the traditional winter breakfast of "chocolate con churros", that is, hot chocolate and



fried pastry.

The United States

In the United States, New Year's Eve is a major social holiday. In the past 100 years the "ball dropping" on top of Times Square in New York City, broadcast to all of America, is a major component of the New Year celebration. The 1,070-pound, 6-foot-diameter Waterford crystal ball located high above Times Square is lowered, starting at 23:59:00 and reaching the bottom of its tower at the stroke of midnight (00:00:00). It is sometimes referred to as "the big apple" like the city itself; the custom derives from the time signal that used to be given at noon in harbors.

Religious communities. Many religious communities have a tradition of New Year's Eve being known as "Watch Night". The faithful of the community congregate in worship services commencing New Year's Eve night and continuing past midnight into the new year. The Watch Night is a time for giving thanks for the blessings of the outgoing year and praying for divine favor during the upcoming year.

Local celebrations. Many cities in the United States of America have their own local version of the celebration. Many cities, echoing the New York tradition of ball drop, also descend or lower an object. For example, big balloon drops are traditional at the Professionals Guild singles New Year's Eve parties in Sacramento and in the San Francisco Bay Area.

New Year's Eve is a major event in Las Vegas, Nevada, where the Las Vegas Strip is shut down as several hundred thousand people party. New Year's Eve is traditionally the busiest day of the year at Walt Disney World in Florida and Disneyland in California, where the parks stay open late and the usual nightly fireworks are supplemented by an additional New-Year's-Eve-specific show at midnight.

Many cities also celebrate First Night, a non-alcoholic family-friendly New Year's Celebration, generally featuring performing artists, community events, parades, and fireworks displays.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Year%27s_Eve

1. Which of the following activities is **NOT** a Brazilian way of celebrating New Year's Eve? _____

