



大学英语立体化网络化系列教材·拓展课程教材

英美文化与习俗

British and American Cultures and Customs

焦英 钱清 主编

解又明 主审



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前 言

要想学会一门外国语言,必须了解产生、使用这种语言的特定的社会文化背景;否则,就不可能真正掌握这门语言。了解外国文化背景知识不仅有助于学生提高阅读理解水平,培养学生跨文化交际的能力,也可以使学生在认识和了解西方社会文明的过程中,逐步地提高个人的文化素质和修养。

“英美文化与习俗”课程旨在让学生通过大量的篇章阅读,扩大文化背景知识,深入了解英美文化、社会习俗与我国文化和习俗之间的差异。在学习过程中不断地增强语感,提高语篇的理解能力;同时让学生通过对所读文章内容的分析、归纳、判断理解,不断地提高英语语言的的实际应用能力。选修该课程的学生在授课老师的指导下,通过篇章阅读、课堂讨论、个人陈述、测试、问答等各种形式的课堂活动和语言训练,打下较扎实的语言基础,养成自主学习的好习惯,并有助于提高英语的综合应用能力。

“英美文化与习俗”课程也可以为那些准备出国深造的学生提供一个了解西方文化、礼仪、习俗的平台,帮助他们能够更快地适应异国的生活与学习环境。

本教材共分为六个单元:1. 社会风俗与习惯;2. 社交礼仪与礼节;3. 生活方式与风格;4. 食品与饮食习惯;5. 传统节日及其历史;6. 体育竞技与娱乐消遣。其内容贴近生活,语言规范。其中的文章都选自英美原文,内容丰富;注重了趣味性、知识性和实用性。每单元由多篇文章构成,每篇文章 500—2000 字不等。在每篇文章之后提供了一些篇章理解的思考题以及讨论题。这些练习可以在老师的指导下开展个人陈述、小组讨论等交互式的课堂活动;自学者也可以通过这些习题检测个人对所读文章的理解情况。本书最后附有一套测试题,帮助学生检查自己的学习结果。

本书的教学对象主要是在校的大学生,也可以作为备考英语三级的学习者的英语读物。我们希望这本书能成为读者掌握和应用英语的好帮手。

编者

2009 年 1 月

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Unit One

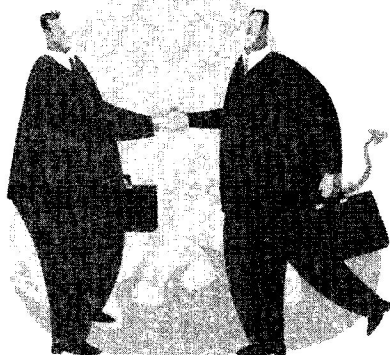
CUSTOMS AND HABITS

Fast modern airplanes seem to have made the world a much smaller place. With increasing frequency, people travel from one country to another to conduct business or just to visit. Many visitors to the United States, in particular, find that customs and habits in America are quite different from those observed in their own countries.

1. Hi, Folks

I think the first thing you ought to know about American customs is how introductions are made in the States. The great difference between American social customs and those of other countries lies in the way in which names are used. Most Americans don't like using Mr., Mrs. or Miss. They find these terms too formal. In the States, people of all ages may prefer to be called by their first names. For example, one may say, "My name is Wilson. James Wilson. Call me James." "Glad to meet you. I'm Miller. But call me Paul." A lady that you meet for the first time might say, "Don't call me Mrs. Smith. Just call me Sally."

So, you see, addressing people



by their first names usually indicates friendliness. Very often, introductions are made by using people's first or last names; for example, "Mary Smith, this is John Jones." In this situation, you are free to decide whether to call the lady "Mary" or "Miss Smith". Sometimes both of you will begin a conversation by using family names, that is, surnames (Mr. Smith; Miss White) and after a while one or both of you may begin using the first names instead. Of course, foreigners who come to the States may feel uncomfortable of using only the first names. For them it is quite acceptable to be more formal. A person may just smile and say, "Excuse my being formal when I meet new friends. I am accustomed to it. After a while I'll use their first names." If American friends do not use your last names or titles, that really doesn't mean any lack of respect. They are used to being informal. I can give you another example of their informality. Yesterday, some members of an American delegation and I came across a few American tourists here in Shanghai. One of the tourists asked, "Hi, folks, where from?" "Los Angeles," answered one delegate member. So you can see how informal we Americans are.

The use of "nicknames" is fairly common among people in the United States. A nickname is not the person's real name but a name assigned to him or her because of certain physical characteristics, behavior patterns, or some other factors. Foreign students often get nicknames if their names seem too long or unpronounceable to their American friends. Being called by a nickname is not usually uncomplimentary; on the contrary, it may indicate that the student is viewed with respect and even affection.

Words and Expressions

1. **frequency** /'fri:kwənsi/ *n.* the repeated or frequent happening of something 经常性; 频繁性

2. **conduct** /kən'dʌkt/ *v.* to do, direct or lead 经营; 管理; 引导
3. **observe** /əb'zə:v/ *v.* to obey or follow a custom; to celebrate 遵守习俗; (正式) 举行仪式或庆祝
4. **lie in** (*phrasal verb*) to remain or be kept in the stated condition or position; to locate 在于; 位于
5. **term** /tə:m/ *n.* a word with a special meaning 专用名词; 术语
6. **indicate** /'indikeit/ *v.* to show or point to something 表示; 表明
7. **after a while** (*a phrase*) after a period of time 一会儿; 一段时间
8. **be (become, get) accustomed to** (*phrasal verb*) to be (get) used to 习惯于
9. **informality** /'infə:'mæliiti/ *n.* in a way of being friendly and relaxed or suitable for not serious situation 非正式; 不拘礼节
10. **come across** (*phrasal verb*) to meet someone or find something that one does not expect 偶遇
11. **assign** /ə'sain/ *v.* to give as a share or for use 分配; 分给
12. **unpronounceable** /'ʌnpɾə'naʊnsəbl/ *adj.* unable to be pronounced 无法发音的
13. **uncomplimentary** /'ʌn,kəmpli'mentəri/ *adj.* not expressing admiration, praise, respect, etc. 无法恭维的; 不能称赞的
14. **affection** /ə'fekʃən/ *n.* gentle, lasting love or fondness 爱情; 深情; 喜爱

Content Questions

1. What is the great difference between American social customs and those of other countries?
2. What names do Americans prefer to use when they address each other? And why?
3. What names do American people like to use when they are introduced to each other?
4. How do foreign visitors feel when they are called only by their first names?
5. What is the American characteristic displayed in this passage?

A Question for Thinking and Discussion

How do Chinese differ from Americans in using names?

2. How Titles Are Used

In addition to Mr., Mrs. and Miss, there is one more term, Ms, which is becoming more and more popular in the United States. Ms is used either for a married woman or unmarried woman. So when you are not certain whether to call the lady “Miss” or “Mrs.” you may just call her Ms. But be sure that the four terms, Mr. Mrs. Miss and Ms, are followed by the last names.

When you first meet an American and want to be respectful, you can always use “sir” or “madam” in place of their names. The person you address (so) will probably realize that you are not sure of the proper title to use and will help you by telling you the correct term.



However, you’ ll find formal titles very seldom used in the United States, except in some special occupations—judges, high government officials, certain military officers, medical workers, doctors, professors and religious leaders. Most of these titles are followed by surnames. For example, Judge Harley, Senator Smith, General Clark, Dr. Brown (medical), Dr. Green (professor), Bishop Gray. But for a professor, who is nearly always a university professor, you may call him professor, with or without his surname.

One more point about “sir” and “madam.” They are not followed by either the first names or the last names. Don’t say “Sir

Ford," "Madam Smith" except when "sir" is used as the title of a knight or baronet in England, e. g. Sir John. His wife is addressed as Dame or Lady Smith.

"Sir" and "madam" show respect for position and seniority, but there is some slight difference in actual usage. For instance, at school, students address their man teacher "sir," but seldom address their woman teacher "madam".

In China, I often hear students address their teacher "Teacher Wang," "Teacher Li." This is not practiced in the United States. And administrative titles like director, manager, principal, dean, chancellor, etc. are not used as forms of address.

Words and Expressions

1. **title** /'taɪtl/ *n.* a word used in front of a surname to show one's profession, rank, etc. 尊称; 头衔
2. **address** /ə'dres/ *v.* (*formal*) to speak to someone or call someone or something 称呼(正式)
3. **Ms** /mɪz/ *n.* a word used before a woman's name 女士(专用名词)
4. **in place of** (*a phrase*) instead of someone or something 代替; 替代
5. **occupation** /ɒkju'peɪʃən/ *n.* a job or profession 工作; 职业
6. **bishop** /'bɪʃəp/ *n.* an important and high ranked priest 主教
7. **knight** /naɪt/ *n.* a man of high rank in the Middle Ages while riding a horse 骑士; 武士; 勇士
8. **baronet** /'bærənɪt/ *n.* a member of noble ranking below baron (英国的)从男爵(世袭)
9. **dame** /deɪm/ *n.* (title of a) woman who has been awarded the highest grade of the Order of the British Empire (古)夫人; 贵妇人
10. **seniority** /sɪ'nɪərɪti/ *n.* high rank or position in an organization 地位高的; 资格老的
11. **actual** /'æktʃuəl/ *adj.* exact or real 真实的; 确切的

12. **administrative** /əd'mɪnɪstrətɪv/ *adj.* executive; managing 行政上的; 管理的
13. **principal** /'prɪnsəpəl/ *n.* a person in charge of a school, a schoolmaster (中、小学)校长
14. **dean** /di:n/ *n.* the head of academic faculty 院长; 系主任; 教务长
15. **chancellor** /'tʃɑːnsələ/ *n.* a high government official; the head of a university 政府首脑; (大学)校长

Content Questions

1. Why has “Ms” become a more popular term to address a woman?
2. What titles do you use to show your respect for people?
3. When are formal titles used to address people?
4. What titles do Americans use without being followed by surnames?
5. For what purpose do people use “sir” “madam”?
6. What titles are rarely used in the U.S. as forms of address?

A Question for Thinking and Discussion

What is the difference between Chinese and Americans in using titles?

3. Reasons for Being Informal

Often you see men working at office desks without their suit coats and ties. They may lean far back in their chairs and even put their feet up on the desk while they talk on the phone. But this is not meant to be rude. They are informal, most likely because they are always in a great hurry: city people always appear to be hurrying to

get where they are going and would be very impatient if they are delayed even for a brief moment.

But when they discover that you are a stranger, most Americans will become quite kindly and will make a point of helping you. If you need help or want to ask a question, choose a friendly looking person and say, "Excuse me, I am a stranger here. Can you help me?" Most probably, I believe, he will stop, smile at you, and help you find your way or answer



your questions. Occasionally, you will find the person too busy, too rushed to give you aid. Please do not be discouraged. Just ask someone else. And most Americans are especially friendly to Chinese. So if you go to the United States and are in need of help, do not hesitate to ask for it.

There is one more point I'd like to tell you so that you will not misunderstand the Americans when you visit the United States. When you have just got acquainted with an American, he may ask you: "Where do you work?" "How many children do you have?" "How large is your house?" or "Have you had a vacation yet?" Such questions are considered too personal in Europe and are not supposed to be asked if two people are not on very close terms. But Americans do ask such questions to learn what they may have in common with you or just in order to begin a conversation.

This is also the way that Americans themselves become familiar with one another. Because people move from place to place in the United States so often, this type of asking questions has become the normal way that they get to know the many new people they meet. In some countries, it may take a very long time before a visitor is asked questions about personal subjects, such as his family, job, or home. Because things move much faster in the United States,

Americans do not have the time for formalities. They must get to know you today because in a short time they may move to another city far across the country.

Words and Expressions

1. **lean** /lin/ *v.* to rest against something, or rest something against something else 依靠; 倾斜
2. **make a point of** (*phrasal verb*) to do something in a very deliberate or obvious way 明确表示(刻意)要做
3. **too rush to give aid** (*a phrase*) too busy to offer a person a help 太忙而无法给予帮助
4. **hesitate** /'heziteit/ *v.* to wait slightly before you do something 犹豫; 踌躇
5. **get (be) acquainted with** (*phrasal verb*) to get to know someone or something 熟悉; 了解
6. **be on (close, good, bad) terms with someone** (*a phrase*) to have a (close, good, bad) relationship with someone 与某人……(关系密切, 关系好, 关系不好)
7. **have (little, much, something) in common with** (*a phrase*) to have the same interest, experiences, tastes, etc. as someone else 与某人……(没有多少, 有许多, 有一些)共同点

Content Questions

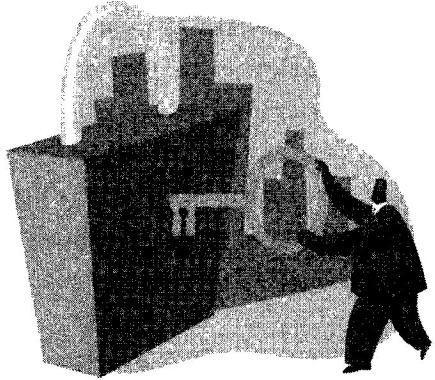
1. How do Americans behave in their office?
2. What are the reasons for Americans being informal?
3. What suggestion does the author give to the Chinese who are in need of help in the United States?
4. What questions do you usually avoid asking in Europe but you needn't do so in America?
5. How do Americans get familiar with one another?
6. Why do Americans have no time for formality?

A Question for Thinking and Discussion

How do Chinese usually behave and act in the office?

4. Concept of Privacy

However, there are still quite a few questions which you are not supposed to ask even in the United States. It is considered impolite to inquire a person's age, marriage, status, income, religious belief, choice in voting, and other aspects of privacy. It is, therefore, advisable to get familiar with the American idea of personal privacy before going to the States, for people in China might have quite a different concept.



In order to understand the American, or Western idea of personal privacy, you should start by thinking of a nation's concept of "territoriality." A nation has borders or boundaries, and everything within those boundaries belongs to that nation and no other. And so is it in the case of a private house. If one enters a private house without asking for permission, he is likely to be accused of trespassing or even burglary.

And there is, again, individual territory, even in a house; a person's bedroom, for example, is his or her territory. Those who do not live in that bedroom must not enter without permission and must not open the closet, desk or drawer in that room. On the top of the desk, there may be letters, business papers or other articles.



You must not pick up one of these and read it. If a person is reading something, you must not lean over his shoulder to “share” it with him. It is his private property.

The same concept is true in the office. If it is somebody else’s office, always ask, “May I come in?” and wait for an affirmative answer before entering the room.

In the United States, one’s income is the top secret. People working in the same office have the faintest idea of how much each person earns, except the boss.

It is also considered impolite to inquire about one’s property. If one of your American friends shows you something that he has just bought, you will, of course, say, “What a nice skirt. It looks fabulous.” or something like that, but don’t inquire about its price.

In the United States, one must not ask about people’s age. If you do, they will feel unhappy, especially ladies, young and old. Americans hate to find they are getting old. If an American lady tells you about her age, you may say, “Oh, dear me ! You don’t expect that I believe you.” or “No, really you don’t look it.”

Words and Expressions

1. **concept** /'kɒnsɛpt/ *n.* notion 概念; 观念
2. **privacy** /'praɪvəsi/ *n.* personal life or details unknown to other people 隐私
3. **inquire** /ɪn'kwaɪə/ *v.* to ask for information 询问, 打听, 咨询
4. **It is advisable... to do something or that** (*a phrase*) It is wise or desirable to do something 做……是明智的
5. **territoriality** /,teri'tɔ:ri'æliiti/ *n.* land that belongs to a particular country or organization 领土; 领地
6. **border** /'bɔ:də/ *n.* the place where two countries meet 边境; 国界
7. **boundary** /'baundəri/ *n.* the limiting and dividing line between spaces, countries, etc. 疆界; 边界