

大学英语·美国文选

**Readings in American History,
Culture, and Literature**

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内 容 提 要

本书以各个历史时期美国社会和文化的发展为主线,选材包括殖民地时代的北美社会和文化,美国独立战争,西部开发和西部传统,工业革命、移民潮及现代多元社会、文化的形成,冷战、民权运动和反主流文化,越南战争,全球化时代等。全书分上下两册,共 30 个单元,每个单元收有代表不同观点和风格的文章节选若干篇,并提供了必要的历史背景和作者简介、作品注释以及讨论题。本书适用于英语水平达到大学英语六级或专业英语四级的大学生或自学者。

前 言

当代的外语教学已不再是单纯的语言教学,而是跨文化和跨学科的语言教学。事实证明,要掌握好一门外语,离不开对异域历史和文化的了解。因此,我们有必要为外语教学提供有利于这种教学方式的教学材料。

《大学英语·美国文选》致力于将语言、历史和文化紧密地结合起来,帮助学生在提高英语阅读能力和扩大词汇量的同时扩大知识面,帮助学生更多地了解美式英语丰富多彩的文体风格以及与其相关的多元文化和历史背景,提高理解和独立思考的能力,增强运用各种不同风格的英语进行跨文化交流的能力。

《大学英语·美国文选》适用于英语水平达到大学英语六级或专业英语四级的大专院校学生和英语自学者。教材分上、下两册,以历史时期为主线,分为30个单元。以下是关于教材内容的简要介绍。

一、选材范围

1. 历史:

- (1) 美国重要历史人物的著作和演说,
- (2) 描写和评述美国重要历史人物和历史事件的文章,
- (3) 评述各个历史时期社会热点问题的文章。

2. 文化艺术:

- (1) 美国重要作家的作品和言论,
- (2) 评述美国文学、电影和音乐的文章,
- (3) 评述美国大众传媒和通俗文化的文章。

二、选材标准

1. 选择叙述、论说、描绘、雄辩、书信、诗歌等不同文体的阅读材

料。

2. 尽量选择语言通俗流畅、生动活泼的文章,采用将经典与当代作者的相关评论组合在同一单元的方式,以利于学生了解一些最新的观点,并对美式英语的变化有一个感性的认识。
3. 选择有影响、有思想深度和批判精神的文章。在可能的情况下,对同一主题选用一些代表不同观点的文章,以利于学生扩大视野,培养学生探讨和独立思考问题的能力。
4. 在充分反映传统意义上的主流文化的同时,兼及移民及少数民族对美国社会和文化的贡献。

三、单元构成

1. 阅读材料(文章或文章节选若干篇)
2. 历史背景和人物简介
3. 注释
4. 讨论题。

希望这套教材能对开展跨文化和跨学科的英语教学有所贡献。

编者

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(Volume I)

UNIT 1 COLUMBUS AND HIS TIME

I. CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS AND HIS ENCOUNTER WITH THE “NEW WORLD”

Europe in the late 15th century witnessed dramatic changes in cultural and intellectual life and the development of an increasingly dynamic economy. The growing desire for new sources of precious metals, commodities, trade, and new markets fostered revolutionary advances in shipbuilding, mapmaking, and the invention of more sophisticated navigational instruments. It was an age of wild dreams and daring explorations, and Christopher Columbus (1451–1506) was just one of the greatest dreamers and men of action. His four voyages across the Atlantic (1492–1493, 1493–1496, 1498–1500, and 1502–1504), funded by the Spanish monarchs Ferdinand and Isabella, marked the beginning of sustained contact between Europe and the Americas. The widely published report of his first voyage in 1492 made Columbus famous throughout Europe and secured for him the title of Admiral of the Ocean Sea.

1. The Historical Voyage of 1492

David Gelman, 1991

To finance an Atlantic crossing, Columbus spent many years asking the Portuguese and Spanish monarchs for patronage. After at least two rejections in Spain, he at last obtained support from King

After all the struggle and reflection, Columbus at last had a contract in his pocket, signed by the Spanish monarchs. In the *Capitulations of Santa Fe*, as the document was called, the crown agreed to grant him noble status, together with the offices of admiral, viceroy and governor in all the islands and mainlands that he might claim for Castile¹ in the Atlantic. As for profits from the venture, one tenth, plus some investment options, would go to Columbus and the rest to the crown. . .

Finally, the great voyage of discovery **got underway**. The day before Columbus set sail was also the deadline for all Jews to leave the country. The same tide that bore him seaward carried the last of Spain's estimated 100 000 Jews into centuries-long exile. Samuel Eliot Morison, the patrician yachtsman-historian who wrote what has become the standard reference work on Columbus, imagined the embarkation scene as it might have been painted by El Greco²: "One of those gray, calm days. . . when the sea is like a mirror of burnished steel." The three square-rigged sailing vessels — his largest, the *Santa Maria*, was no bigger than a tennis court—begin moving down the Saltes River at about 5:15 a. m. It is Friday, Aug. 3, 1492. Not a leaf stirs as the men pull the oars. Morison even hears the friars chanting their morning prayer in the monastery of La Rabida on a cliff overlooking the harbor: "The Captain General, who often had joined in that hymn during his stay at La Rabida removes his hat; seamen who are not working follow his example. . ." It's a scene of hushed, poetic piety, one we almost want to believe—because history, in fact, is about to take one of its great leaps.

But between the embarkation and the sighting of land in the Americas, there was almost no drama. There were no storms or prolonged calms; the winds were brisk and steady. Compared with what later befell explorers Vasco da Gama³ and Ferdinand Magellan⁴, or some of Columbus's own subsequent crossings, it was practically a luxury cruise. The days were balmy, the men went swimming at times in the glassy sea; at night they slept on deck.

Not all was serene, even so. Columbus kept a detailed journal of the voyage, which comes down to us in the form of an abstract by a Dominican monk, Bartolome de Las Casas, sometimes in Columbus's words, more often in his own. From the journal and other sources it emerges that, experienced though they were, the crew were scarcely eager to sail off into a limitless sea. It was a measure of their uneasiness that little more than a week after they left the Canary Islands the voyagers began seeing signs of land on every side: "Friday, September 14th: The crew of the *Nina* stated that they had seen a tern and a tropic bird; and these birds never go more than twenty-five leagues from land."

"Monday September 17th: They saw much vegetation and it was very delicate and was weed from rocks... They concluded that they were near land."

By Oct. 8, they did seem to be nearing something. "Thanks be to God," wrote Columbus, "the breezes were softer than in April at Seville... they are so laden with scent." And still there was no land. "Here the men could now bear no more; they complained of the long voyage." By some accounts, the crew wanted to turn back, but Columbus pleaded, if they didn't reach land in two or three days,