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Special Days ***Special Ways***

**Western Holidays with
Associated Customs
and Culture**

TEXTBOOK 1

PROGRAMS 1 - 10

Preface

PAGES 1 - 330

Appendix A

by
Harvey M. Taylor, Ph.D.

**Peking University Press
Beijing 100871, China**

Special Days, Special Ways

Video Lecture Series

TEXTBOOK 1

by

Harvey M. Taylor, Ph.D.

Pages 1 - 330

Vocabulary Lists

translated by

Shan Shuming

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

The content of these programs — both visual and textual — would not have materialized without the valuable feedback given by our many students in China since August of 1980. It is they who have taught me to look at my culture through Asian learners' eyes. Their questions forced me to re-interpret what I saw and to let go of many preconceived ideas and "normal" American cultural assumptions. To my students in China at BELC, Radio English on Sunday, BOC-Training Center, Bei-Wai, Bei-Da, Kempinski, CIP, UIBE, and elsewhere (you'll recognize the places), I give my thanks. I'll be pleased if something in one of these programs can help even you.

As will be evident from the programs, hundreds of friends and friends-of-friends have generously loaned or contributed commercial and personal equipment, information, music, pictures, and expertise to this project, waiving normal fees and on-screen credits. My special thanks to Dan H. Hinds, Jr. and Enock Neves Freire for coming to China to help tape and edit the programs which carry their names

The on-screen credits acknowledge only a few of the contributions made to each program by my wife, Nina Ellen (Woodward) Taylor. Her advice, encouragement, and daily care have contributed to the final completion of this project — and to preserving my sanity.

Each of my Chinese colleagues involved in this series has made this "impossible" project possible. Ms. Shan Shuming, the Series Director, has taught me how to put my ideas on screen and has herself provided more ideas than I ever had. Besides, she has been superbly patient with this "big nose" outsider as I learned to use the Peking University A-V Center equipment and work with her competent production crew.

She deserves additional credit as the Chinese translator of the vocabulary items in this textbook, as advisor on ways to make my presentations more understandable to viewers, and *especially as friend.*

Thank you, Lao Shan

It is too much to hope that everyone will find my treatment of each topic sufficiently objective. As far as possible, I have first consulted original texts and/or sympathetic scholars and sources before considering more negatively critical writers.

But in the end, of course, any unconscious bias, misjudgements, or uncorrected errors are solely my responsibility.

Harvey Taylor
Beijing, China
July, 1995

NOTES about the written texts:

1 — Each lecture has been written down exactly as it was spoken. Therefore, these written texts represent one American English lecture style, including certain contractions. Written texts such as these are not meant to be examples of "good" written English.

2 — The dates of holidays are given as abbreviations of the ordinal numbers, e.g. 1st, 2nd, etc.

3 — Most other numbers are spelled out to help English learners recognize normal pronunciations.

For example, "the 1920's" is written as it should be read: "the nineteen-twenties" (never "the one thousand nine hundred and twenties").

4 — Dates with A.D. or B.C. are not spelled out.

5 — A few slips of the tongue have been left uncorrected in the recordings, and these therefore appear in the written texts. The correct form usually follows within square brackets "[]."

INTRODUCTION

To varying degrees the holidays ("Special Days") and customs ("Special Ways") presented in these lectures are an integral but sometimes unconscious part of the world view of English speakers worldwide

The primary goal of these programs is to help improve the quality of English education primarily in countries where English is not the language of the home. These "windows" into the culture of some North American English speakers may provide insights into other parts of the English-speaking world — places where English has become the language of business and commerce or of tourism or of science, or of higher education, or most likely the language of popular music, film, and TV.

By understanding the background of the language and customs of English speakers, you may avoid potential misunderstandings. Such cross-cultural sensitivity can lead to mutual respect, lasting friendship, and more skillful use of English between those who "know" English and those of us who daily discover new things about this language and its cultural roots.

It is hoped that these lectures will contribute to more conceptually accurate, grammatically correct, culturally appropriate, and especially **COMFORTABLE** English communication worldwide.

SECTION 1

SUGGESTIONS FOR SELF-STUDY USING THE TEXTBOOKS AND VIDEO PROGRAMS

STEP 1 — Preparation for viewing and listening

A. DO NOT READ THE WRITTEN TEXT BEFORE VIEWING OR LISTENING!

B. These programs have been prepared so that each can be understood independently of the others, and therefore they can be watched in any order. However, the first one introduces the programs, and the last one summarizes them all. Some are spoken more slowly than others, but otherwise the main points in each one can be grasped by intermediate-level English learners.

C. Select a program and study the titles for each of its **PARTS** given on the first (title) page for that program's text, using a dictionary for any unfamiliar terms. This will give you a general idea of what you will hear and see.

D. Study the vocabulary for the first **PART** of the program from the list at the end of this book. Note the particular meaning of each English expression as it is used in that program.

E. Check the pronunciation of any new words, and try to say them so you can recognize them more quickly when you hear them.

STEP 2 — Listening comprehension practice

A. Watch the first **PART** of the program without writing anything (and without looking at the written text).

B. Review the vocabulary list for the first **PART** again

C. Listen and watch the first **PART** again, making brief notes of the important points, perhaps on that program's title page. This should help you be an active listener, and you will better remember what is said

STEP 3 — Using the written text of the program

A. Read the written text for the first **PART**, marking any words which you still do not understand. Do not stop reading to look up the words. The expressions and words underlined in the text are in the **VOCABULARY LISTS**

B. After you finish reading all of the first **PART**, look in a dictionary for any unfamiliar words which you think are important for you to understand the program. Write their meaning in the margin at the end of the line in which they occur, not next to the word. (To review these words, cover the margin and try to recall their meanings.)

STEP 4 — Improving silent reading speed and pronunciation

A. Listen to the first **PART**, while following the words in the written text. Follow with just your eyes, not with your finger. Do not read aloud nor move your lips as you silently read.

B. Next read aloud while listening, imitating the speaker's speed, intonation, and pronunciation.

STEP 5 — Organized writing practice

A. Organize the notes you have taken in **STEP 2** by drawing boxes around items which are related. Then number the boxes logically.

B. Using your organized notes, write a 100 - 200 word summary of the main points in the first **PART**. Your summary may emphasize just new ideas and information you have learned, it may focus on your opinions about what you heard, or it may be just a brief restatement of what was said.

Follow these same five **STEPS** for each **PART** of each program.

C. When you finish the complete program, write a general summary of the information you have learned.

STEP 6 — Consolidation

A. Watch the entire program without stopping.

B. Note down anything you still do not understand. Look it up in the written text later.

Optional STEP 7 — Speaking practice

Using your notes from **STEP 2**, tell a classmate or friend what you remember about the program, emphasizing your opinions and feelings about what was said, rather than just repeating the information. Sharpen your communication skills by using your own words. Don't just repeat phrases you have heard in the program.

SECTION 2

SUGGESTED TEACHER'S GUIDE USING THE TEXTBOOKS AND VIDEO PROGRAMS

STEP 1 — Preparation for viewing and listening

- A.** Students should not have the textbooks, or at least should not look at the text of the programs before they see them the first time
- B.** Read aloud the program title and the titles of each **PART** of the program. Ask students to predict anything they can about the general content of the program just from hearing what you have read to them
- C.** Dictate the titles for the students to write down. Spell and define any unfamiliar words as you dictate
- D.** Read aloud the **VOCABULARY ITEMS** for the first **PART**. Select some probably unfamiliar words for dictation. Spell and define them so students will more easily recognize them in the program

STEP 2 — Viewing and listening

- A.** Without stopping, play just **PART 1** for slower students or the entire program for faster students
- B.** Have students write three to ten main ideas from what they have seen. Allow from two to five minutes for this kind of "fast writing" practice
- C.** Students exchange papers to compare what they understood and wrote. Call on a few to read their partner's main ideas. Return the papers to the authors. The teacher should not give a grade for this writing, since the purpose is only to encourage listening for main ideas and practicing writing quickly in English

STEP 3 — Listening and taking notes

- A.** Students watch and listen to each **PART** again.
- B.** Have students take brief notes of the important points they hear, as this will help them become active listeners.
- C.** At the end of each **PART** have students compare their notes with a partner

STEP 4 — Listening and reading

- A.** If students have their own books, have them follow in their books as you again play each **PART** of the program.
- B.** If they do not have books, play one **PART** just for further listening practice
- C.** Pause the video occasionally and ask for a definition or explanation of words that appear on the screen.

STEP 5 — Vocabulary study

- A.** Read selected new vocabulary items and ask a student to explain the meaning as used in the Program.
 - B.** If students have the textbooks, warn them not to write translations of words within the text, but rather only in the margin.
- Point them to the instructions given above in "**SUGGESTIONS FOR SELF-STUDY**" – SECTION 1, STEP 3, PART B.

STEP 6 — Writing in an organized way

A. Have students organize the notes they took in **STEP 3** by drawing a box around items which are related. Number the boxes logically.

B. For homework or for in-class practice, have students write a 100- or 200-word summary of the main points given in one of the **PARTS**, using their organized notes. Various students can be assigned to summarize different **PARTS** of the same program.

Assign or have each choose their writing approach (thesis) — whether to emphasize new ideas and information, or their personal opinions about what was heard, or a brief summary of the information given.

C. Call for various summaries to be read aloud.

STEP 7 — Closure to these activities

A. Explain to the students how each activity can help them improve their use of English in listening, reading, speaking, or writing.

B. Ask students what cultural information they found most useful or interesting in each **PART** of the program.

C. Encourage one appropriate, active, personal response to something in the program — perhaps by making and/or sending a holiday greeting card, perhaps by telling a friend about the holiday, or by showing appreciation to parents or friends on Mother's Day, Father's Day, Valentine's Day, and other special occasions.

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