

现代大学英语精读第一册Unit12 PDF转换可能丢失图片或格式，建议阅读原文

https://www.100test.com/kao_ti2020/265/2021_2022__E7_8E_B0_E4_BB_A3_E5_A4_A7_E5_c67_265205.htm Lesson Twelve TEXT A The Kindness of Strangers Mike McIntyre Pre-class Work I Read the text once for the main idea. Do not refer to the notes, dictionaries or the glossary yet. One summer I was driving from my home town of Tahoe City, Calif, to New Orleans. In the middle of the desert, I came upon a young man standing by the roadside. He had his thumb out and held a gas can in his other hand. I drove right by him. There was a time in the country when you'd be considered a jerk if you passed by somebody in need. Now you are a fool for helping. With gangs, drug addicts, murderers, rapists, thieves lurking everywhere, "I don't want to get involved" has become a national motto. Several states later I was still thinking about the hitchhiker. Leaving him stranded in the desert did not bother me so much. What bothered me was how easily I had reached the decision. I never even lifted my foot off the accelerator. Does anyone stop any more? I wondered. I recalled Blanche DuBois's famous line: "I have always depended on the kindness of strangers." Could anyone rely on the kindness of strangers these days? One way to test this would be for a person to journey from coast to coast without any money, relying solely on the good will of his fellow Americans. What kind of Americans would he find? Who would feed him, shelter him, carry him down the road? The idea intrigued me. The week I turned 37, I realized that I had never taken a gamble in my life. So I decided to

travel from the Pacific to the Atlantic without a penny. It would be a cashless journey through the land of the almighty dollar. I would only accept offers of rides, food and a place to rest my head. My final destination would be Cape Fear in North Carolina, a symbol of all the fears I'd have to conquer during the trip. I rose early on September 6, 1994, and headed for the Golden Gate Bridge with a 50-pound pack on my back and a sign displaying my destination to passing vehicles: "America." For six weeks I hitched 82 rides and covered 4223 miles across 14 states. As I traveled, folks were always warning me about someplace else. In Montana they told me to watch out for the cowboys in Wyoming, In Nebraska they said people would not be as nice in Iowa. Yet I was treated with kindness everywhere I went. I was amazed by peoples readiness to help a stranger, even when it seemed to run contrary to their own best interests. One day in Nebraska a car pulled to the road shoulder. When I reached the window, I saw two little old ladies dressed in their Sunday finest." I know youre not supposed to pick up hitchhikers, but its so far between towns out here, you feel bad passing a person," said the driver, who introduced herself as Vi. I didnt know whether to kiss them or scold them for stopping. This woman was telling me shed rather risk her life than feel bad about passing a stranger on the side of the road. Once when I was hitchhiking unsuccessfully in the rain, a trucker pulled over, locking his brakes so hard he skidded on the grass shoulder. The driver told me he was once robbed at knifepoint by a hitchhiker. "But I hate to see a man stand out in the rain," he added. "People dont have no

heart anymore." I found, however, that people were generally compassionate. Hearing I had no money and would take none, people bought me food or shared whatever they happened to have with them. Those who had the least to give often gave the most. In Oregon a house painter named Mike noted the chilly weather and asked if I had a coat. When he learned that I had "a light one," he drove me to his house, and handed me a big green army-style jacket. A lumber-mill worker named Tim invited me to a simple dinner with his family in their shabby house. Then he offered me his tent. I refused, knowing it was probably one of the family's most valuable possessions. But Tim was determined that I have it, and finally I agreed to take it. I was grateful to all the people I met for their rides, their food, their shelter, and their gifts. But what I found most touching was the fact that they all did it as a matter of course. One day I walked into the chamber of commerce in Jamestown, Tenn. to find out about camping in the area. The executive director, Baxter Wilson, 59, handed me a brochure for a local campground. Seeing that it cost \$12, I replied, "No, that's all right. I'll try something else." Then he saw my backpack. "Most people around here will let you pitch a tent on their land, if that's what you want," he said. Now we're talking, I thought. "Any particular direction?" I asked. "Tell you what. I've got a big farm about ten miles south of here. If you're here at 5:30, you can ride with me." I accepted, and we drove out to a magnificent country house. Suddenly I realized he'd invited me to spend the night in his home. His wife, Carol, a seventh-grade science teacher, was cooking a pot roast when we walked into the kitchen.

Baxter explained that local folks were "mountain stay-at-home people" who rarely entertained in their house. "When we do," he said, "its usually kin." This revelation made my night there all the more special. The next morning when I came downstairs, Carol asked if Id come to their school and talk to her class about my trip. I agreed, and before long had been scheduled to talk to every class in the school. The kids were attentive and kept asking all kinds of questions: Where were people the kindest? How many pairs of shoes did you have? Did anybody try to run you over? Did you fall in love with someone? What were you most afraid of? Although I hadnt planned it this way, I discovered that a patriotic tone ran through the talks I gave that afternoon. I told the students how my faith in America had been renewed. I told them how proud I was to live in a country where people were still willing to help. I told them that the question I had had in mind when I planned this journey was now clearly answered. In spite of everything, you can still depend on the kindness of strangers. 100Test 下载频道开通，各类考试题目直接下载。详细请访问 www.100test.com