

中国石油职称英语考试通用教材电子版（2007年）五十五

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55. Why Antarctica Is Being Explored(为什么要勘探南极洲) 1. When the United States was born, the continent of Antarctica was as remote as the moon more so, in a way, because the moon was clearly visible and the very existence of Antarctica was uncertain. But now that remote land area is so attainable and so important that it has become the subject of an international treaty which protects it from national rivalries yet leaves it open to all for exploration and use. The pact arranging this is even being viewed as a model applicable to the moon and other celestial bodies. 1、在美国诞生之时，对人们来说南极洲就像月球一样遥远从某种角度说，甚至更远，因为月亮清楚可见，而南极大陆是否真实存在还无法确定。但是今天，这块遥远的陆地已变得如此触之可及并且如此重要，以致它已受到一个国际公约的保护，使其免于成为国家间竞相抢夺的对象，而是对所有国家开放，供大家共同开发和利用。这个公约甚至被视为一个范本，适用于月球和其他天体的开发。 2. Yet many people, thinking of the distant continent only as a bleak, rocky, cold and inhospitable land mass, may wonder: Why all the fuss? Why protect something so unpromising? 2、至今仍有很多人认为这块遥远的大陆仅仅是一大片荒凉、寒冷、岩石林立、根本无法居住的土地。他们可能很奇怪：为什么如此小题大做？为什么要保护这样一块毫无前途的土地？ 3. The answer lies in a number of factors, not the least of which is isolation itself. Antarctica

is a very large area of the earth ' s surface, but until recent years was the least studied. More knowledge of it is important for all mankind.

3、 这些问题的答案由许多因素所决定，并不仅仅是这块大陆本身与世隔绝这么简单。南极洲是地球表面上一块巨大的土地，但是，直到近年，人类的研究都很少涉及于此。更多地了解南极洲对全人类来说都非常重要。

4. A look at a globe is perhaps the best way to appreciate the significance of this peculiar continent. The globe shows that the entire southern hemisphere is preponderantly water the widest parts of the Atlantic and Pacific, the unbroken sweep of Antarctic seas circling the world. Although much of South America, parts of Africa and all of Australia lie south of the equator, most of the world ' s land lies north of the line.

4、 仔细观察地球仪也许能帮助我们了解这个神奇大陆的重要性。地球仪显示，水在整个南半球占绝对优势包括大西洋和太平洋最广阔的部分以及环抱地球的南极海洋。尽管绝大部分南美洲、部分非洲以及整个澳洲位于赤道以南，但地球上的大部分陆地还是分布在赤道以北。

5. Antarctica stood in splendid even awesome isolation from the rest of the world for countless years. Its forbidding climate and wild seas prevented the migration and development of land animals such as the Arctic regions know. On the continent itself are a few insects, some lichens and mosses, but nothing else that is land supported. However, there are amphibious penguins and seals and a rich marine life, ranging from the minute organisms called plankton to the biggest creature the world has ever known, the blue whale.

5、 南极洲的壮丽引人敬畏，在无数的岁月里，它就这样孤独傲立于世界。和人们已熟知的北极区域

一样，它那令人难以亲近的气候和狂野的海浪使得陆地动物无法迁移至此和繁衍。依附于南极洲陆地生存的只有很少的一些昆虫、地衣和苔藓。然而，这里却有着两栖的企鹅和海豹以及丰富的海洋生命包括从被称为浮游生物的微小生物，直到迄今所知世界上最大的动物蓝鲸。

6. The Antarctica treaty applies to all areas (the high seas excepted) below latitude 60 degrees south. This line, running around the globe some 2,000 miles from the South Pole itself, just misses the lower tip of South America, and is well below the Cape of Good Hope and New Zealand. There are a number of small islands between this line and the Antarctic continent, but the waters here are known to mariners as "the screaming Sixties" because there is so little obstruction to the world-circling winds.

6、《南极洲公约》适用于除公海以外位于南纬60度以南的所有区域。南纬60度线距南极点大约2000英里，它环绕地球，刚好错过南美洲的最南端，远为好望角和新西兰之南。该线和南极洲之间分布着一些小岛，但是，这里的海域被水手们称为“狂啸的60度”，因为这里障碍物很少，阻挡不了“世界环风”。

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