

【双语阅读】

# The robotic vehicles 机器人汽车

Thirteen vehicles lined up last March to race across the Mojave Desert, seeking a million in prize money. To win, they had to finish the 142-mile race in less than 10 hours. Teams and watchers knew there might be no winner at all, because these vehicles were missing a key part — drivers.

去年3月,13辆车在莫哈韦沙漠排成一条线,寻求一百万的比赛奖金。为了赢,他们必须在不到10个小时的时间里完成142英里的比赛。所有团队和观赛者都明白这次可能没有赢家,因为这些车辆少了一个关键部分——司机。

DARPA, the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, organized the race as part of a push to develop robotic vehicles for future battlefields. But the Grand Challenge, as it was called, just proved how difficult it is to get a car to speed across an unfamiliar desert without human guidance. One had its brake lock up in the starting area. Another began by throwing itself onto a wall. Another got tied up by bushes near the road after 1.9 miles.

美国国防部高级研究计划局表示,组织比赛的目的是为未来的战场开发机器人驾驶汽车做好准备。但这个大挑战,正如其名,已经证明让一辆无人

驾驶的汽车在一个陌生的沙漠行驶是多么困难。一辆车在起始地区锁定其制动;另一辆撞到墙上;又一辆在行驶至1.9英里处被附近灌木丛拖住。

One turned upside down. One took off in entirely the wrong direction and had to be disabled by remote (远距离的) control. One went a little more than a mile and rushed into a fence; another managed to go for six miles but stuck on a rock. The “winner,” if there was any, reached 7.8 miles before it ran into a long, narrow hole, and the front wheels caught on fire.

一辆车翻了。一辆向完全错误的方向飞去,而且远距离控制失控。有一辆行驶了一英里多,然后冲进栅栏;另一辆走了六英里之后被一块岩石困住。如果说有“赢家”的话,就是那辆走到7.8英里后,冲进一个又长又狭窄的洞中,导致前轮着火了。

“You get a lot of respect for natural abilities of the living things,” says Reinhold Behringer, who helped design two of the car-size vehicles for a company called Sci-Autonics. “Even ants (蚂蚁) can do all these tasks effortlessly. It’s very hard for us to put these abilities into our machines.”

“你会特别尊重生物的生存能力,”莱因霍尔德·勃林格说,他帮助一



家名为西奥托尼克斯公司设计的两辆车,“即使是蚂蚁也能毫不费力地完成所有任务。我们很难把这些能力运用在我们的机器上。”

The robotic vehicles, though with necessary modern equipment such as advanced computers and GPS guidance, had trouble figuring out fast enough the blocks ahead that a two-year-old human recognizes immediately. Sure, that very young child, who has just only learned to walk, may not think to wipe apple juice off her face, but she already knows that when there’s a cookie in the kitchen she has to climb up the table, and that when she gets to the cookie it will taste good. She is more advanced, even months old, than any machine humans have designed.

机器人汽车,尽管配备了现代设备诸如先进的电脑和GPS导航,也很难快速识别街区,而一个两岁的孩子却能快速做到。当然,幼小的孩子,刚刚学会走路,可能不会因为苹果汁弄花脸而擦掉它,但她已经知道,如果有一块曲奇饼干在厨房的桌子上,她就会爬上桌子,而且她拿到饼干时会觉得它会很好吃。她是更高级的,尽管只有几个月大,却胜过人类设计过的任何机器。

■今天你答对了吗

- 1) The photographs will show you \_\_\_\_\_.  
A. what does our village look like  
B. what our village looks like  
C. how does our village look like  
D. how our village looks like

- 2) The bridge, which \_\_\_\_\_ 1688, needs repairing.  
A. is dated from  
B. was dated from  
C. dates from  
D. dated from

【答案及解析】

1) 答案:B。这道题考查了两个知识点:(1) 宾语从句中的特殊疑问句需要改为陈述语序,直接排除A和C。(2) “what”和“how”在句中分别充当的成分不同,looks like缺少宾语,所以要用what,不能用副词how,在B和D中,锁定B。

2) 答案:C。容易误选B或D,认为句中用了1688这个过去时间,所以应选过去时态,又因为dated from不用于被动语态,所以只能选C。实际上,因为date from的意思是“自某时起存在至今”(=have existed since),它通常用于一般现在时,而不用过去时态(尽管其后接的总是表示过去的时间),除非所谈论的东西现在已不复存在,如:The church, which dated from the 13th century, was destroyed in an earthquake two years ago.



在美国生活,每每发现英语为母语者的用词习惯和国内的朋友有明显的不同,我都会觉得很有意思,随手记上一笔。“呕吐”就是这样一个例子。

美国人最常用的“呕吐”的说法是throw up。无论是医生还是百姓,throw up都是第一选择。举例如下:

Trent: You look awful, George. What’s the matter? (Trent: George, 你看起来非常糟糕。怎么回事啊?)

George: Maybe there’s something wrong with that hot dog I just had. I feel like throwing up. (George: 可能刚才吃的

那个热狗有点儿问题。我想吐。)

Doctor: If the medicine doesn’t work and you keep throwing up, I’d suggest you have a thorough check-up. (医生:如果这药不管用,你仍旧呕吐不止的话,我建议你进行一次彻底的检查。)

Patient: Got it. Thanks, doc. (病人:知道了。谢谢医生。)

用词习惯的不同在这里就完全体现了出来:美国人最常用throw up,而国内的朋友很少用throw up。讲到“呕吐”,他们常常会说vomit。事实上,vomit连第二都排不上,关于“呕吐”第二常用的说法应该

是puke。比如:

Just the thought of seeing a dead body makes me want to puke. I don’t think I have what it takes to be a coroner. (光是想想看到死尸的情景我就要吐了。我是肯定没本事当验尸官的。)

使用频率排在第三的才是vomit,用法与throw up和puke一致。puke和vomit还可以作名词,意思是“呕吐物”。两者的区别在于,puke作俚语还可以表示“令人讨厌的人”,而vomit没有这样的用法。比如:

Get away from me, you puke! (你这

个讨厌的家伙,离我远点儿!)

最后再回到throw up,用词习惯的不同还体现在:美国人听到这个短语,第一反应是“呕吐”,而国内的朋友听到throw up,第一反应是“往上扔”。其实“往上扔”也是正确的理解,只不过使用机会不会太多。最典型的例子还是在聚会上或舞厅里DJ总爱说的那句话:

Ladies and gentlemen, throw your hands up in the air and dance! (女士们,先生们,让我们随着音乐尽情舞动!)

【趣味英语单词】

throw up