

张复满 编著

Amusing
English
Idioms

趣味

英语成语

安徽教育出版社

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前 言

英语成语是我国学生学习英语中的难点之一。有的学生通晓基础语法，也掌握一定的词汇量，但遇到成语往往不知所云，甚至闹出笑话，究其原因，往往是望文生义所致。例如：there are no flies on him, 不能按字面理解成“他身上没有苍蝇”，确切意思是“他颇为聪明能干，不会上当受骗”；再如：cut sb. dead 并非“把某人砍死”，而是指假装不认识某人。由此可见，有些英语成语的意义往往是特定的，超出字面之外的，一般不能逐词翻译，而要把其中的一连串词当作一个整体来学习和接受。英语成语的使用极其普遍，通常我们把“地道的英语”称作 idiomatic English, 可见成语(idiom)在英语中的地位。我们必须下功夫学好它。

为了激发读者学习英语成语的兴趣，我们不揣浅薄，编选了这本小书。收入本书的全部成语来自英美原著，有的直接取自权威的英语成语辞典，其特点是语言地道，文字清新，比喻生动形象，读起来饶有趣味。总之，我们希望这本小书既重实用，又供欣赏；能使读者感到学习英语成语不仅是一种需要，而且是一种乐趣。

全书共分五章，前四章分别为动物成语、器官成语、衣食成语和花木、颜色成语，按该成语的中心词（名词，斜体印刷）字母顺序排列，如同一中心词下含若干条成语，则按成语开头的字母顺序排列；第五章为其他趣味成语，按成语开头的字母顺序排列。每条成语包括条目、英语注释、汉语注释、例句四部分。英语注释做到尽可能确切和简明扼要。汉语注释并

不是英语注释的逐词翻译，而是编者的解释说明，故不宜与原文等同。例句全部选自原文，力求通俗上口；个别例句经过编者的改写和简化；例句均附汉语译文。此外，在有的成语条目后还附有异体形式、同义成语(或近义成语)、反义成语等项，主要是为了进行归纳、比较和辨异。为节省篇幅，这些项目一般不附例句。

编写趣味英语成语，对我们来说还是初次尝试。限于水平，本书在编写体例和内容上一定会存在错误和不妥之处，恳切希望读者批评指正。

本书在编写过程中，得到英语界一些前辈的指导和同行的帮助，在此表示衷心的感谢。

编 者

一九八六年九月

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Section I

Idioms Involving Animals

第 一 章

动物成语

have ants in one's pants

be very nervous, restless or excited 字面意思：裤子里有许多蚂蚁，喻焦虑不安，如坐针毡

e.g. *He has had ants in his pants all week waiting for the exam results.* 他整整一个星期坐卧不宁，等待着考试结果。

【异体形式】have ants in one's skirt (对穿裙子的女士而言)

【同义成语】be like a cat on hot bricks,
be/sit on thorns

an ass in a lion's skin

a coward who hectors; a fool who apes a wise man
直译：披着狮皮的驴子，喻冒充勇士的懦夫，假装聪明的傻瓜；色厉内荏，羊质虎皮，狐假虎威

e.g. *That man is an ass in a lion's skin, he would never have the courage to stand up for any cause.* 那人是个说大话的胆小鬼，他没有勇气为任何事业仗义执言。

【**成语辨异**】 a wolf in sheep's clothing 披着羊皮的狼
ass about with sth.

meddle with sth; play stupidly with sth. 胡乱摆弄; 随意玩弄

e.g. Don't ass about with the TV set. You'll break it.

不要乱动电视机。你会弄坏它的。

【**同义成语**】 fool/monkey around/about with sth.

better be the head of an ass than the tail of a horse
better hold a high position at a low level than a low position at a high level 直译: 宁做驴头, 不做马尾; 喻宁做小庙里的大菩萨, 不做大庙里的小菩萨; 宁为鸡口, 毋为牛后

e.g. You should be glad that they have thrown you out of the first team and made you captain of the second. Better be the head of an ass than the tail of a horse. 他们把你从甲队除名, 叫你当乙队队长, 你应该高兴才是。 “宁为鸡口, 毋为牛后” 嘛!

【**异体形式**】 better be the head of a dog than the tail of a lion

【**同义成语**】 better to reign in hell than serve in heaven
make an ass of oneself

make oneself appear foolish or ridiculous so that one is laughed at 闹笑话, 出洋相, 失去人们尊敬

e. g. He was not used to public speaking and made a complete ass of himself. 他不习惯在大庭广众之中讲话, 出尽了洋相。

【**同义成语**】 make a fool/monkey of oneself,

make an exhibition of oneself

【成语辨异】make an ass/a fool/a monkey of sb. 愚弄某人，使某人丢丑

as blind as a bat

having very poor eyesight; not being able to see or perceive sth. that is obvious to others 字面意思：象蝙蝠一样双眼全瞎，指视力极差，转喻观察理解能力差

e.g. *Without my glasses I'm as blind as a bat.* 不戴眼镜我什么也看不见。

have/with bats in the belfry

have strange ideas, be slightly mad 不可按字面理解成“钟楼里有许多蝙蝠”，含义是脑子里充斥古怪念头，异想天开，疯疯癫癫

e.g. *When he talked about going to the moon he was thought to have bats in his belfry.* 他谈论登月旅行时，人们认为他异想天开，胡说八道。

like a bat out of hell

quickly; at top speed 速度飞快；风驰电掣

e.g. *The train went like a bat out of hell towards the city.* 那列火车风驰电掣地向该市飞奔。

【同义成语】like a bullet out of a gun,
like a shot

a bear garden

a place or gathering where there is noise and unruly or coarse behaviour 不可直译为“熊的花园”，而是指嘈杂喧闹的场所，或吵吵嚷嚷、没有秩序的集会

e.g. *Go on with your work. Remember, this is a class-*

room, not a bear garden. 继续做功课。记住, 这是课堂, 不是杂耍场。

be like a bear with a sore head

be very bad-tempered, angry 直译: 象头部发炎、疼痛欲裂的熊; 喻狂暴无比, 暴跳如雷

e.g. *What's wrong with you today? You are just like a bear with a sore head.* 你今天怎么啦? 简直象只暴跳如雷的熊。

【同义成语】 **be as cross as two sticks,**

be as cross as a bear with a sore head

loaded for bear

ready for action; prepared and eager 万事俱备, 跃跃欲试

e.g. *The football team arrived on Friday, loaded for bear.* 足球队于星期五到达, 一切准备就绪。

beauty and the beast

the union of sb. who is beautiful with sb. who is ugly or in some way repellent 美人和丑八怪交友结婚, 鲜花插在牛粪上

e.g. *When she married a man old enough to be her grandfather, everyone behaved as if it were beauty and the beast.* 当她嫁给一位老得可以当自己祖父的男人时, 人们都觉得那似乎是鲜花插到牛粪上。

make a beast of oneself

eat or drink greedily **beast** 常比喻凶残粗鲁的人, 此语指贪吃贪喝, 狼吞虎咽

e.g. *The man made a beast of himself and left nothing*

for his companions. 那家伙狼吞虎咽，吃饱喝足，没给自己的伙伴留下一点吃的。

as busy as a bee

very busy and occupied, esp. in a pleasurable or satisfying way 直译：象蜜蜂一样忙碌，喻工作繁忙

e.g. Whenever they have guests for dinner, she is as busy as a bee all day long. 每当他们家请客吃饭，她总是整天忙个不停。

be the bee's knees

be, in sb.'s estimation, just what is wanted; be the best person, thing, idea, etc. 不能译成“蜜蜂的膝盖”，真正的含义是“恰到好处”，“正中下怀”，“了不起的人或物”，“绝妙的主意”等等

e.g. He thinks he is the bee's knees around here, but I don't share his opinion. 他认为自己在这一带算得上凤毛麟角，可我并不赞成他的观点。

have a bee in one's bonnet/head

be concerned or think about only one idea 不能按字面理解成“帽子里面有只蜜蜂”，真正含义是有一种想法老是萦回在脑际，不能排解

e.g. Since he became treasurer of the club he has had a bee in his bonnet about economy. 他担任俱乐部司库以来，一直在考虑理财问题，不能排解。

【异体形式】 have one's head full of bees

make a bee-line for

go quickly or by the shortest way towards 走直路，抄近路，径直奔向

e. g. As soon as I got to the school, I made a bee-line for the reading-room. 我一到学校，就径直奔向阅览室。

a bird's-eye view

a view from the air; general survey of a subject 鸟瞰，俯瞰；概览

e. g. You get a good bird's-eye view of the town from the top of the church tower. 你从教堂的塔顶可以俯瞰全城。

a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush

a thing which is certain is worth more than a risk which might be profitable 直译：双鸟在林不如一鸟在手，喻冒险多得不如稳妥现得

e. g. If you invest this money you might make a fortune; but a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush. 如果你把这些钱拿去投资，也许会交上好运；但冒险多得不如稳妥现得。

a bird of passage

a person who does not stay long in one place 原义候鸟，转指飘忽不定、四海为家的人，游子

e. g. He was a bird of passage until he married and bought a house. 他在结婚并买下住宅之前一直四海为家，行踪不定。

a little bird told/whispered me

I have been told, I have heard 不可按字面译成“一只小鸟告诉我”，真正含义是“有人私下跟我说”，但究竟是谁告诉的，“我”不愿公开

e.g. A little bird told me your wife is expecting a baby.

我听说你妻子怀孕了。

a lone bird/wolf

sb. who lives, works, as far as possible, without the social support of others; sb. of solitary habits 离群索居; 孤家寡人

e.g. He is in some ways a lone bird but he cannot be called lonely. 在某种程度上他是个孤僻的人, 但他并不孤单。

an early bird

sb. who gets out of bed early in the morning or does sth. earlier than most other people 早起者; 遇事赶早的人

e.g. I expect several early birds will be in soon. 我希望有几个赶早的人不久就会到达。

an odd bird/fish

a person whom others find hard to understand or tolerate 古怪的人, 难以相处的人

e.g. He was an odd bird. I only saw him about a half dozen times. 他是个古怪的人。我只见过他五六次。

a rare bird

sb./sth. of a kind seldom seen or met with 绝无仅有的人; 罕见的物品

e.g. Suits are rare birds and suddenly look very attractive. 套服很罕见, 突然间显得非常引人注目。

as free as a bird/the air

without ties, duties, obligations 自由自在, 无牵无挂

e.g. I have a huge old garden where he can be as free as a bird. 我有一个古老的大花园，在那儿他可以象小鸟一样自由自在，无忧无虑。

be for the birds

be worthless; be fit only for people who are easily deceived or misled 不可直译成“为了鸟类”，确切含义是毫无价值，兴味索然，只适合傻瓜

e.g. I think History is for the birds. 我觉得历史课枯燥无味。

birds of a/one/the same feather flock together

people of similar tastes, characters etc. seek each other's company 直译：同样羽毛的鸟儿聚集在一起，喻物以类聚，人以群分

e.g. You say his wife is also a poet? Well, birds of a feather flock together. 你说他妻子也是诗人？唔，他们是志趣一致相聚在一起了！

【**成语辨异**】 **birds of a/one/the same feather** 相同类型的人，一丘之貉 **birds of a different feather** 不同类型的人

do bird/porridge

serve a prison sentence 坐牢，服刑

e.g. The boy had done bird before his 27th birthday.
那男孩在二十七岁生日前一直在服刑。

eat like a bird

eat very little, have little appetite 食量极小，食欲不振

e.g. She eats like a bird and is very thin. 她食量很

小，长得很瘦弱。

【反义成语】 **eat like a horse** 食量大如牛； **be as hungry as a hunter** 食欲旺盛（尤指体力活动后胃口大开）

fine feathers make fine birds

smart clothing makes a person look more impressive than he really is 直译：美丽的羽毛打扮出漂亮的鸟儿，喻“佛要金装，人要衣装”，“人要衣裳马要鞍”（常用于讽刺）

e.g. When Mary came down dressed for the dance her father said, "Fine feathers make fine birds." 玛丽打扮好了下楼参加舞会，她父亲说：“真是人要衣裳马要鞍啊！”

【同义成语】 **clothes make the man; the tailor makes the man**

【反义成语】 **fine feathers do not make fine birds; clothes do not make the man** 不可以衣帽取人
beauty is but/only skin deep 人不可貌相

give sb. the bird

hiss or boo at sb. 不可按字面译成“把鸟送给某人”，真正意思是向演员发嘘声，喝倒采或解雇某人

e.g. When he forgot his lines the audience gave him the bird. 他忘记台词时，观众向他喝倒采。

kill two birds with one stone

achieve two aims at once 一石二鸟，一举两得，一箭双雕

e.g. I killed two birds with one stone by going to the

bank on my way to the shops. 我在去商店路上顺便上了银行，这一趟可真是一举两得。

the early bird catches/gets the worm

a person who rises earlier in the morning or acts more promptly than others has the best chance of succeeding 直译：早起的鸟儿有虫吃，喻捷足先登，先下手为强

e.g. Go down to the shop as early as you can, because it's the early bird that catches the worm. 尽可能早些去商店，因为早到可以买到好东西。

【近义成语】first come, first served

a big bug

an important person 直译：大臭虫，喻要人，大人物，达官贵人（含贬义）

e.g. The Mayor and some other big bugs will be here this week. 市长和其他几位要人将于本周来到此地。

a bug in one's ear

a hint, secret information given to sb. 直译：耳朵里的小虫，喻暗示，私下叮咛或警告

e.g. I saw Mary at the jeweler's admiring the diamond pin; I'll put a bug in Henry's ear. 我看见玛丽在珠宝店里对钻石别针赞不绝口。我得私下告诉亨利。

as snug as a bug in a rug

very comfortable 直译：象厚毛毯里的臭虫一样温暖舒适，喻非常舒服，饱食终日，无所用心

e.g. There is a nice little cottage for him when he retires. He'll be as snug as a bug in a rug there. 他

退休后将搬进一所精巧的小别墅。他将在那里舒舒服服地生活。

a cock and bull story

a long-winded and complicated story 不能按字面译成“公鸡和公牛的故事”，确切含义是长篇大论，荒诞故事，无稽之谈

e.g. He admitted that he had invented a cock and bull story. 他承认自己编造的故事纯属无稽之谈。

like a bull at a gate

in a headlong, vigorous or aggressive way; without care, finesse or tact 直译：象入口处的公牛，喻愤怒欲狂，凶悍无比

e.g. He barged past me like a bull at a gate. 他凶悍地从我身旁撞过。

【异体形式】like a bull at a five-barred gate

like a bull in a china shop

in a very clumsy, rough way 直译：象闯进瓷器店的公牛，喻行为笨拙鲁莽，好闯祸

e.g. The workman stamped around the kitchen like a bull in a china shop. 那工人跺着脚在厨房里走来走去，样子笨拙鲁莽。

like a red rag to a bull

a cause of anger 字面意思：象对公牛挥动的小红旗，转指导致愤怒的原因

e.g. To a bank manager, carelessness in money matters is like a red rag to a bull. 财务问题上的粗枝大叶是银行经理深恶痛绝的事。