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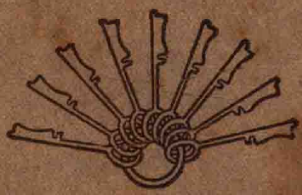

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600 FOUNDATION ENGLISH IDIOMS

By

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600 Foundation English Idioms

1

1. **About**+infinitive—ready to, on the point of, in the act of 將要.
   The train is *about to start.*
   They are *about to be married.*
2. **Above all**—chiefly, before any other consideration 尤其; 尤要者.
   Be cleanly, be sober; be honest; but, *above all*, be truthful.
   He was beloved by all and *above all* by the children.
3. **According to**—in accordance or conformity with, consistent with 依照, 按照.
   Cut your coat *according to* your cloth.
   We find in such cases that the color of the animal changes *according to* whether it is in light or in darkness.
4. **Account for**—to explain 說明; furnish a reason for 與以理由, 表明其所以然之故.
   We all know it when we see it, but we do not know how to *account for* it, or to explain in what it consists.
   His intemperance *accounts for* his poverty.
5. **A few**—a small number, some 少數, 有些.
   I have *a few* friends.
   Every person has *a few* faults.

6. After all—when everything has been considered, upon the whole 畢竟, 總之.
They like their own life, *after all*.
After all, what does it matter whether he comes or not?

EXERCISE 1

1. I like him, not so much because he has few faults, as because he has —— faults.
2. —— the papers, the Cabinet will shortly resign in a body.
3. He was —— out, when Mr Wang came to see him.
4. I cannot —— what it is.
5. ——, fame is the desirable thing in this world, or even the most desirable.
6. Please, ——, do not forget to send me news.
7. He is ill; that —— his absence.

2

7. A good (or **great**) **deal**—a considerable amount, much 許多, 不少 (指量).
I have *a great deal* of work to do.
He was *a good deal* older than his wife.

8. A great many—a large number 甚多 (指數).
The apple-tree bears (生) *a great many* apples this year.
A great many people gathered round the hall.

9. Agree to—to consent to 承諾.
He *agreed to* all the proposals we made.
I offered him $100 a month to do the work, and he *agreed to* the offer.

10. Agree with—to suit 宜於; to be in harmony with, as in opinion 同意; to come to terms 訂約.
This food does not *agree with* me.
I *agree with* you in the opinion you have expressed.
Did you not *agree with* me to work for a penny a day?

11. **All at once**—suddenly 突然, 忽然.
All at once there was a change in her behaviour.
All at once the little man °broke into a laugh (忽然發笑).

12. **All the more**—to a greater degree 愈加, 益加.
He ought to be *all the more* grateful to the teacher.
I like her *all the more*, because she is so childish.

EXERCISE 2

1. —— soldiers have been killed in the civil war.
2. —— the door opened, and in jumped the dwarf.
3. This cost me —— of time.
4. His talents and noble bearing attracted them ——, because he was so modest and so kind.
5. We talked —— with her, and gathered some interesting facts from her conversation.
6. This wine does not —— me.
7. I am sorry to say that I cannot —— your offer.
8. Do you —— me?

3

13. **Answer the purpose**—to serve or suit the purpose 合用.
This will *answer the purpose.*
This knife will *answer my purpose.*

14. **Apply oneself to**—to devote oneself assiduously to 專心於; 委身於.
He *applied himself to* the study of English.
He *applied himself* closely *to* his task lest he should fail.

15. **As a matter of fact**—in point of fact, really 事實上, 其實.
As a matter of fact, all great discoverers worthy of the name have at one time or another been regarded as dreamers, not to say mad.
As a matter of fact, I know nothing about the matter.

16. **As a rule**—generally, usually 大概, 通例.
He behaves well, *as a rule*.
English people *as a rule* eat more meat than is necessary.

17. **As far as**—to the extent or degree that 迄, 止於.
As far as the results are concerned, the National Army °won the day (得勝).
The waves curled and broke into a white sheet of foam *as far as* the eye could reach.

18. **As for**—as regards, with respect to 至於, 關於.
As for me, give me liberty, or give me death.
As for fighting, keep out of it, if you can, by all means.

EXERCISE 3

1. The road, —— I could see, to the right hand and left, was all still and solitary.
2. ——, no man ever did more for another than I did for my uncle.
3. —— me, I have nothing to complain of.
4. —— we get up early in summer.
5. That tool will ——.
6. —— whatever task you do.
7. Now jump up here toward me —— you can!

4

19. **As good as**—amounting to, not falling short of 等於, 同樣.
His word is *as good as* his bond.
As he had eaten nothing for days, he was *as good as* dead.
[參考] He was *as good as his word*.=He was *true to his promise*.

20. **As if; As though**—as it would be if 宛如.
He behaves *as if* mad.
He talks *as if* he were a scholar.

21. As it were—if I may be allowed to say so, in some sort, so to speak 倘余可若是言之, 宛如.

A good teacher is, *as it were*, the intellectual father of his pupils.

The period of the whole human race is, *as it were*, but a moment in the eternity of time.

22. Ask for—to make request for 乞, 求.

He never *asked* me *for* anything.

The beggar *asked for* some coppers.

23. As long as—provided that, since 倘然, 假使, 既然.

As long as you work hard, you will improve.

China will be strong *as long as* she preserves her simplicity.

24. As many as—so great a number as 如此之多.

There are *as many as* fifty boys in one class.

An ant-nest is often an ant-town, with sometimes *as many as* half a million ants living in it.

EXERCISE 4

1. We came to an island, ——, of palm trees.
2. —— it rains we must stop inside the house.
3. A large dog raised its ears —— about to bark.
4. Yesterday he received —— two hundred letters and telegrams.
5. Walk, talk and act —— you were a something, and you are more likely to become such.
6. He has been —— his promise.
7. He has never —— money.
8. I was —— thunderstruck, paralysed with terror.

5

25. As much as—just the same as 同樣.

The payment of a tax is *as much* an exchange *as* any other kind of payment.

Too much modesty is akin to timidity, and there is *as much* difference between the two *as* there is between self-respect and conceit.

26. As soon as—immediately at or after another event 當即, 繼即.

As soon as I got to the station, the train started.

I should be pleased to begin *as soon as* convenient.

27. As to—with regard to: used as a preposition 關於, 至於.

As to that, we shall see about it later.

A dispute once arose between the north wind and the sun *as to* which was the more powerful.

28. As usual—as is customary or frequent 如常, 照常.

As usual, he was late.

In spite of the great turmoil in the world, our people are engaged in their respective work *as usual*.

29. As well—also, too, besides 亦, 另外.

That is true, but it is true of the other *as well*.

Science is the attempt to understand the facts and to explain them, *as well*.

30. As well as—equally with; in addition to 等於, 亦.

This is the case with manufacturing *as well as* with agricultural interests.

The man who does not work, and °thinks himself above it (以爲不屑爲之), is to be pitied *as well as* condemned.

EXERCISE 5

1. She wept aloud —— she heard the bad news.
2. If you have no fountain-pen, a pencil will do ——.
3. The little time one can afford for reading ought to settle the question once for all —— what shall be read.
4. I love you —— I do my son.

5. Work in moderation is healthy, —— agreeable to the human constitution.
6. I went to school, ——.
7. He ran off —— he saw me.

6

31. As (yet)—up to this time 迄今.
They have learnt little English *yet* (or *as yet*).
It is *yet* (or *as yet*) too early to say what idea will prevail.

32. At a distance—a good way off 遠離.
The sailors spied a whale *at a distance.*
He keeps them *at a distance.*

33. At all—a phrase expressing emphasis, found chiefly in negative, conditional, or interrogative sentences 係一增重語勢之語 (常用於否認句, 條件句, 或詢問句中).
Will he not come to see us *at all*?
If you do anything *at all*, you should do it thoroughly.
I do not understand French *at all.*
I have a bad cold (惡傷風) and can smell nothing *at all.*

34. At all events—in any case, without fail 無論如何, 必定.
At all events you had better go to the station at once.
At all events I will visit you during the vacation.

35. At all risks (or **hazards**)—whatever the risks or hazards may be 無論如何危險.
They had to keep the fort *at all risks.*
She will have her diseased limb removed *at all hazards.*

36. At a loss—puzzled, unable to decide 困惑, 躊躇莫決.
I am *at a loss* to know what to do.
When you asked me the other day what I should like to be, I was *at a loss* for an answer, and said I did not know.

EXERCISE 6

1. I am —— to understand his motive.
2. If you do it ——, do it well.
3. I have never failed ——.
4. I will let you know in the course of tomorrow ——.
5. He never was in debt ——.
6. We one day descried some shapeless object drifting ——.
7. I tried to save him ——.
8. Do you know ——?

7

37. At any cost—whatever may be requisite to secure the object 無論如何犧牲, 無論如何.

I will accomplish my purpose *at any cost.*

He is determined to do it *at any cost.*

38. At any rate—at all events, certainly 無論如何, 必定.

At any rate I will go and see him.

At any rate she was not so learned.

39. At a time—once 一次.

Do not attend to two things *at a time.*

You should never try to learn more than one thing *at a time.*

40. At first—at the beginning 起初.

I put him to light work (命彼爲輕鬆之工作) *at first.*

At first his wound was thought to be mortal, yet which proved but slight.

41. At hand—near in time or place 將近 (指時間與地方).

It was an artificial light, almost close *at hand.*

The flags of ice-shops flapping by the roadside tell us that the summer is *at hand.*

42. At home—at one's own house, or dwelling 在家; at one's ease 安適; in one's own country 在國內; conversant or familiar (with a subject) 精通, 諳悉.

Is your father *at home?*
Please make yourself *at home.*
Dr Hu Shih is famous both *at home* and abroad.
He is *at home* in French.
One person in the company was *at home* in mathematic.

EXERCISE 7

1. As a doctor only sees one patient ——, so do you concentrate on one thing only.
2. It would be well to have a good dictionary ——.
3. He was not —— when I called yesterday.
4. ——, we could see the aeroplanes distinctly.
5. We should acquire the habit of early rising ——.
6. He received me so cordially that I was —— with him at once.
7. —— you must do your best.
8. I am writing in pencil, as I have no ink ——.

8

43. At intervals—coming or happening with intervals between, now and then 間或, 時時.
He comes here *at intervals.*
She watched and dozed *at intervals.*

44. At large—free, unrestrained, 逍遙法外, 自由, 未受羈勒; fully, to the full extent 詳盡; in general, as a whole 大概, 一般, 全體.
The people *at large* are °against war (反對戰爭).
His dog is chained in the day time, but is *at large* at night.
I told him the story *at large.*

45. At last—at the end, finally 至終, 到底, 最後.
At last he has succeeded in the entrance examination.
At last the Roman empire arose, swallowed them all up, and Rome °became the mistress of the world (稱霸於世).

46. At least (or **At the least**)—at the least estimate, consideration, chance, etc. 至少.

Give me *at least* three days to think it over.

One who wishes to see the sights of Peiping should be prepared to spend *at least* two or three days, if not a week.

47. At length—at the end or conclusion, after a long period 到後來, 許久以後.

At length the ax was sharpened.

This °bookish inclination (嗜好讀書) *at length* determined my father to make me a printer.

48. At most (or **At the most**)—at the utmost 至多, 充其量.

It is *at most* a fault.

There was °a poor house (聽衆不多) at the concert last night owing to the dirty weather; the hearers were about 300 *at most*.

Exercise 8

1. It will require —— several thousand dollars to go round the world.
2. Speak out your opinion ——.
3. In spite of many hindrances they have —— succeeded.
4. —— his subscription will not be over twenty dollars.
5. Cars run —— of ten minutes.
6. The robber escaped and is still ——.
7. The wind blew fiercely ——.
8. —— he began to recover.
9. Scientific men and artists do not benefit any one nation in particular but the world ——.
10. After a tedious voyage we —— reached our destination.

9

49. At once—immediately 立刻, 立即.
Tell the servant to come *at once.*
The patient was *at once* sent to the °isolation hospital (隔離病院).

50. At present—at the present time, now 現今, 目下.
This is all we *at present* desire.
The matter is under investigation *at present.*

51. At random—without definite direction, rule, or method; aimlessly 無定向, 無定規, 無定法; 無目的.
He talks *at random.*
They read *at random,* history, biography, travels, fiction, the valuable and trashy, good, bad, and indifferent, just as it happens.

52. At stake—in jeopardy 在危險中.
Life itself may be *at stake.*
My honour is *at stake.*

53. Attend to—to pay heed or regard to 注意, 留意.
Attend to your business first.
Boys, *attend to* my words!

54. At the cost (or **expense**) **of**—at the sacrifice of 犧牲.
He gained wealth *at the cost of* his honour.
If a man get wealth *at the expense of* health, he can scarcely be said to have succeeded in life.

EXERCISE 9

1. I have some important business to ——.
2. Don't read books ——.
3. They got what they wanted —— a clean conscience.
4. People of culture can be recognized ——.
5. I must succeed this time, for my reputation is ——.

6. We see multitudes busy in the pursuit of riches —— wisdom and virtue.
7. I am old and weak, and —— unable to say more.
8. She talks ——.

10

55. At the disposal of (or **At one's disposal**)—in the control or power of 在 · · · 之掌握中或權力中.
This money is entirely *at the disposal* of our team.
He has money *at his disposal.*

56. At the mercy of (or **At one's mercy**)—wholly in the power of 全在 · · · 之權內, 一任 · · · 之處置.
The poor lunatic was *at the mercy of* his servants, who robbed, laughed at, and neglected him.
The wreck had been drifting *at the mercy of* the waves.

57. At times—now and then 時時, 有時.
The boy was studious *at times.*
At times he was °in good temper (高興); *at times* bad.

58. Avail oneself of—to make use of, take advantage of 利用, 乘機.
I have *availed myself of* the very first opportunity.
You should *avail yourself of* hearing a good speaker.

59. Bear in mind—to keep in memory 牢記於心.
You must *bear* the maxim *in mind.*
This is my advice to you, my boy, and I wish you to *bear* it *in mind.*

60. Because of—on account of 因爲, 由於.
What a misfortune it is °to be handicapped throughout one's life (一生不利) *because of* not starting right.
He cannot work *because of* his age.

EXERCISE 10

1. I blame myself ——.
2. The Syrians found themselves —— their enemies.
3. He promised to —— the subject ——.
4. Sufficient funds have been placed ——the Government.
5. I —— the holidays to go on a tour of study.
6. He lost his situation —— neglect of duty.
7. He has a good library ——.

11

61. Become of—to be the end of, be the fate of 結局.
No one seemed to care what had *become of* me.
What has *become of* the clerk who ran away with his master's money?

62. Before long—soon 不久, 立刻.
I hope to see you *before long*.
The train will arrive *before long*.
[比較] Long before 遠在 . . . 之前.

63. Begin with—to enter upon first 以 . . . 開始.
Let us *begin with* this book.
The first word of a sentence should *begin with* a capital letter.

64. Believe in—to trust 信任; to believe that a thing is beneficial or good 信爲有益.
I do not *believe in* him.
[比較] I do not *believe* him. 我不信其言.
When I am ill I *believe* more *in* diet than *in* drugs.

65. Belong to—to be the property of 屬於, 爲 . . . 所有.
This watch *belongs to* my wife.
Does this pen *be ong to* you?

66. Beware of—to be on one's guard against 謹防, 留心.
Beware of pickpockets!
Let us then *beware of* evil company.

EXERCISE II

1. The rainy season will set in ——.
2. He —— total abstinence.
3. The child is lost and no one knows what has —— it.
4. Formosa now —— Japan.
5. We have to —— insular prejudice.
6. Every proper noun should —— a capital letter.
7. God is powerful, let us —— Him.

12

67. Beyond measure—excessively 非常, 過分.
He was pleased by his suit *beyond measure*, and stood before the looking-glass when first he put it on.
But the brightness and lustre so dazzled the eyes both of mother and son, that they were astonished *beyond measure*.

68. Bid fair—to promise 似將, 有 · · · 之望.
He *bids fair* to be a learned man.
This enterprise *bids fair* to be a success.

69. Break down—(*trans.*) to demolish, destroy 打壞, 毀壞; to crush, overwhelm 壓倒, 克服. (*intrans.*) to come down by breaking, collapse 瓦解, 陷落; to fail in health or strength 衰弱, 無力, 失康健.
They *broke down* part of the house.
He made every effort to *break down* all opposition.
It often happens that a very good-looking horse *breaks down*.
His health almost suddenly *broke down*.

70. Break in (a horse)—to train him and accustom him to do work 養馴, 敎練.
A horse well *broken in* is more valuable than one unbroken (未曾馴練過者).