



纯美
英语阅读



English Idiom Stories

英语 成语故事 汇编

汪家丽◎主编



天津大学出版社
TIANJIN UNIVERSITY PRESS



纯美
英语阅读

English Idiom Stories

英语 成语故事 汇编

汪家丽◎主编



天津大学出版社
TIANJIN UNIVERSITY PRESS

图书在版编目 (CIP) 数据

英语成语故事汇编 / 汪家丽主编. —天津:
天津大学出版社, 2013. 3

ISBN 978-7-5618-4641-4

I. ①英… II. ①汪… III. ①英语—成语—语言读物
IV. ①H319. 3

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字 (2013) 第 050907 号

出版发行 天津大学出版社
出 版 人 杨欢
地 址 天津市卫津路 92 号天津大学内 (邮编: 300072)
电 话 发行部: 022-27403647
网 址 publish. tju. edu. cn
印 刷 天津泰宇印务有限公司
经 销 全国各地新华书店
开 本 185mm × 260mm
印 张 11. 25
字 数 323 千
版 次 2013 年 3 月第 1 版
印 次 2013 年 3 月第 1 次
定 价 32. 00 元 (含光盘)

凡购本书, 如有缺页、倒页或脱页等质量问题, 请与我社发行部联系调换
版权所有 侵权必究

前言

没有成语的语言会是什么样子？那就像是没有色彩的黑白电视机，就像是没有加过调料的食物。成语为语言增添了色彩和情趣，让人们的交流更简明生动，它能够用简洁的句子表达出深刻或者是复杂的语意。

但是，让英语学习者感到困惑的是，英语成语中单词之间的组合往往并不是人们所能一目了然的，这是因为英语成语并不能从其单词的字面意义来推断整个成语的含义。事实上，可以这么说，只有在理解了这个成语的形成和语境之后，才能真正了解它的含义，而单单知道成语中每个单词的意思，并不能揭开成语的神秘面纱。

可以说，掌握的一门语言的成语越多就越能正确地理解和灵活地运用该语言。为此，我们专门为英语学习者编写了这本《英语成语故事汇编》，以帮助读者更好地从故事中理解成语的意义、引申和比喻，今后在英语写作和阅读乃至口语对话中正确运用英语成语。总之，英语学习者们只有在英语学习过程中尽量多掌握一些成语，才能真正做到对英语的活学活用。

Contents

- 1 The Story about Selling Combs to Temple Monks
向寺庙和尚卖木梳的故事 / 1
- 2 Two Sheep Falling into the River
跌入河心的两只羊 / 10
- 3 The Royal Romance Riddle
皇家招亲谜题 / 17
- 4 The Sea Dog
水手 / 25
- 5 The Kind King
仁慈的国王 / 33
- 6 The Greenhorn
新手 / 40
- 7 The Cheat
作弊的人 / 49
- 8 The Hotshot
恃才傲物之人 / 57
- 9 Simmering on the High Seas (Part I)
怒火中烧 (一) / 65
- 10 Simmering on the High Seas (Part II)
怒火中烧 (二) / 74

- 11** The Crying Con
爱哭的骗子 / 82
- 12** The Guy Who Loved to Fly
酷爱飞行的人 / 90
- 13** The Two Brothers
哥俩好 / 98
- 14** The Jailbird
囚犯 / 107
- 15** The Oddball
怪人 / 116
- 16** The Retired Teacher
退休教师 / 124
- 17** The Singing Waiter
歌唱的侍者 / 132
- 18** All's Well That Ends Well
结局佳则全局佳 / 141
- 19** The Young Stockbroker
年轻的经纪人 / 150
- 20** The No-name
无名小卒 / 158
- 21** Reindeer and Wolves
驯鹿与狼 / 166



The Story about Selling Combs to Temple Monks 向寺庙和尚卖木梳的故事

A well-paid company decided to expand its business and recruit more people to **take charge** of marketing in various regions. Because this company **had deep pockets**, many applicants who **had their hearts set on** the offer came in crowd soon after the advertisement was put out. The HR manager said, “A competition of sales is much better than an interview. To select real talented salesmen among lots of applicants, we’ll make up a test **out of the ordinary**. That is how you try your utmost to sell combs to the monks in the temples. ”

On the face of it, the monks have no hair on their heads. How can the salesmen **talk them into** buying combs?

Hearing what they were asked to do, most of applicants felt **at a loss**, and some even were annoyed about this ridiculous test. They thought, “A monk has no hair because he is a monk. Why would the manager ask us to sell the combs to monks? That’s **anyone’s guess** that the person who made up this testing must be crazy or mentally deranged. It’s a thing that never happens. ”

So after a while, the applicants left one by one. They were afraid it was really a difficult task to fulfill. As a result, on the site only three candidates remained still. They were James Li, Johnson Wang and Mike Zhang. The manager let them **take** their **chances** to show their talent in marketing, and he would check the sales outcome within the next ten days.

Time flew. Ten days later, the manager asked James, “How many combs did you sell out?” “Only one.” “How did you do then?” James complained the hardships that he had gone through, because the monks usually scolded him or simply drove him away for selling combs in the temples. “Fortunately on my way down a mountain, I met with a teenage monk. He was sitting in the sun and scratching the dirty and thick skin on his head. **Seeing it fit**, I quickly handed him a comb and let him use it. The young monk happily paid the money after having a good feeling for the comb he used. ”

Next, the manager turned to Johnson, “How many combs did you sell out?” “Ten.” “How did you sell then?” Johnson said that he went to an old temple on the

top of a well-known mountain. He **took notice** that the prayers had their hair blown in disorder due to the strong wind on the high mountain top. Johnson talked with the abbot and said, "The disorderly appearances of prayers don't show a respect to Buddha when they are praying. You should put some combs before the incense burner table so that prayers can comb their hair before praying." The abbot **took up** Johnson's suggestion. There were ten incense burner tables in the temple, each equipped with one comb. In this way ten combs were sold immediately.

Finally the manager asked Mike, "How many combs did you sell out?" "One thousand." On hearing that, the manager was very surprised indeed, "My god! How did you achieve that?" Mike said that he reached a famous temple where the Buddha was born. Though it was located deep in the high mountains, the benefactors **made a beeline** in a continuous stream to get into the temple. Mike **thought twice** before stepping in. He'd **make the best of** so many benefactors to sell the combs. He looked for the abbot and advised him, "All the pilgrims come to the temple far away with their devout hearts. The temple should better present a gift to every pilgrim, wishing them a good luck and encouraging them to do more good deeds. I have some combs available here, and your calligraphy is excellent too. You can first engrave 'Kindness Accumulating Comb' on the combs and then present it to each pilgrim as a gift. The cost could go to the praying tickets."

The abbot was very happy at Mike's advice. He at once bought one thousand combs. He even invited Mike to stay in the temple for several days, attending the first comb presenting ceremony with the honored guests from all **walks of life**.

The benefactors and prayers were also very pleased to receive such gifts from the temple abbot. The news spread **by word of mouth** quickly. More and more benefactors came in to pray the prosperity at the temple. At last the abbot hoped to order a variety of combs for various kinds of benefactors and prayers on different occasions.

take charge

to assume control or command; be in control of
掌控; 主持

Examples

1. As a group leader, you should **take charge**.
你身为组长, 应当负起责任来。
2. Nothing has ever gone amiss since he **takes charge** of the school.
自他主管这所学校以来, 还从未出过问题。

Reference

He is the most capable person in our department. I'm sure that he will soon **take charge** of this department as long as he keeps working that

1 The Story about Selling Combs to Temple Monks 向寺庙和尚卖木梳的故事

hard. 他是我们部门最能干的员工，我确信，只要他继续努力，很快他就会主管这个部门。

■ have deep pockets

if an organization or a person has deep pockets, they have a lot of money
有钱；财力雄厚

Examples

1. You can win anything if you *have very deep pockets*.
财大气粗总能打赢官司。
2. Many foreign students in the U. S. depend on their parents who *have deep pockets*. 许多在美的外国留学生其经济来源是他们有钱的父母。

Reference

"I don't *have deep pockets*, son. You have to pull up your sockets and tighten your belt in order to take off your career."

"Yes, father."

"我不是很有钱，儿子。你必须奋发图强、勒紧腰带，才能使你的事业腾飞。"

"是的，父亲。"

■ have someone's heart set on

to want or desire deeply, regardless of practicality or rationality 不顾一切地非常想做某事

Examples

1. I *had my heart set on* speaking good English.
我一心想说一口流利的英语。
2. The child *has his heart set on* that toy; I wish I could buy it for him.
那孩子一直渴望得到那个玩具，我恨不能给他买一件。

Reference

Originally he *had his heart set on* buying the newest, best equipped bicycle. But now he hadn't had enough money, he would have to change his mind and make do with one within the hundred dollar range. 他原来一心要买辆最新式、配置最好的自行车，但是现在他没那么有钱，所以只好改变主意，买辆一百块之内的将就一下。

■ out of the ordinary

exceptional; uncommon; unusual 不寻常的；不正常的

Examples

1. Has anything *out of the ordinary* happened since I've been away?
我不在的时候有不寻常的事情发生吗？
2. The life of the young hero was *out of the ordinary*.
这位青年英雄的一生是不平凡的。

Reference

This expression sometimes, but not always, indicates that something is better than the usual. However, the negative version, nothing out of the ordinary, usually indicates that something is not special or outstanding, as in "It was an interesting lecture, but nothing *out of the ordinary*."

这个成语往往表示某样东西与别的不一樣，比一般的出色。反义词

组是 *nothing out of the ordinary*, 往往表示“没什么特别的, 一般的”, 例如, “这个讲座虽然挺有趣的, 但是也并没有什么特别的。”

■ on the face of it

seemingly; based on available evidence; from appearances alone
从表面上看

Examples

1. *On the face of it*, it seems quite reasonable.
从表面看, 这似乎很合理。
2. *On the face of it*, life was a mixture of the quaint and the archaic.
从表面上看来, 生活是离奇有趣的事物和古老事物的混合体。

Reference

This idiom is used when describing the way a situation appears, while allowing for the possibility that things may be different, as in “*On the face of it*, the company looks very profitable.” (The company appears to be very profitable, but this may not be the case.)

这个成语往往表示“事情表面上看起来是这样, 然而事实有可能并非如此”, 例如, “从表面上看, 这家公司利润很丰厚。”(表面上看起来这家公司利润很丰厚, 但是事实可能并非如此。)

■ talk into

to get someone to agree to something, persuade someone to do something
说服

Examples

1. Don't ever try to *talk me into* that kind of food.
永远不要想让我尝试这种食物。
2. He tried to *talk Wilson into* making concessions on the question.
他试图劝说威尔逊在这问题上做些让步。

Reference

We went shopping last Sunday, and this kind of laptop was on sale. The salesman there listed all of the advantages of the laptop to *talk us into* buying it. Finally, we bought the product.

上周日我们去买东西的时候这款笔记本正好在特卖, 那名销售员把这个笔记本所有的优点都列举出来, 说服我们把它买下来。最后, 我们买了。

■ at a loss

in a state of bewilderment or uncertainty; puzzled
不知如何是好

Examples

1. I was *at a loss* to give response to his challenge.
我不知该对他的挑战做出什么反应。
2. If you asked him why, he would have been *at a loss* to explain.
你若问他为什么, 他可能都会觉得茫然, 不知如何解释。

Reference

I am *at a loss* to find words with which to express my chagrin and grief. All I can do is to keep silent and try to make up in the future.

我实在找不出适当的字句来表明心中的悔恨与悲痛, 只能保持沉默, 努力弥补。

■ anyone's guess

something that no one
knows for sure
谁也说不准

Examples

1. Future earnings are *anyone's guess*. 未来收益如何谁也说不准。
2. Whether a public plan will prevail or not is *anyone's guess*.
公共计划是否能得到执行, 谁也说不准。

Reference

“Will it rain tomorrow?”
“That's *anyone's guess*. It will be sunny according to the weather forecast for tomorrow. But it's still raining outside.”
“明天会下雨吗?”
“谁知道呢。天气预报说明天是晴天, 可是外面还在下雨。”

■ take chance

to accept the risks, to re-
sign oneself to whatever
happens
试试看; 碰碰运气

Examples

1. I've no idea whether this scheme will work; I'll just *take my chance*.
我也不知道这个计划能否行得通, 但是我还是想试试看。
2. “Of course we can't afford to *take our chances*,” agreed Winston dutifully. “当然啦, 我们不能抱侥幸心理,” 温斯顿顺从地同意。

Reference

Some people take the view that sometimes in life we have to *take our chances* in order to make progress. Like everyone else, they fear failing, but they refuse to let fear control them. And finally they succeed.
有些人认为我们在一生之中, 有时候必须冒点险以求提高。跟别人一样, 他们也害怕失败, 但他们不会屈服于恐惧, 最终他们成功了。

■ time flies

time passes quickly
时光飞逝

Examples

1. *Time flies* and life is short. 光阴似箭而人生短暂。
2. *Time flies* and a century rolls away. 时光如飞, 一个世纪过去了。

Reference

I remember when I first saw you, you were a newborn baby. Now you are 20 years old already and have been a college student. *Time flies!*
我还记得第一次见你的时候, 你才刚出生。可是现在你已经是个20岁的大学生了。时间过得真快啊!

■ see fit

to decide it is right, to
decide it is good
认为合适

Examples

1. You may go or not as you *see fit*. 你去不去随便。
2. You can make this article either long or short, as you *see fit*.
这篇文章可长可短, 你觉得怎么合适就怎么办吧。

Reference

I don't *see fit* to tell him all our plans. He has nothing to do with the

take notice

observe with special
attention 注意

plan, and I don't think he will keep secret.

把我们的全部计划都告诉他,我看不太合适。他跟这个计划一点关系也没有,而且我不觉得他能保密。

Examples

1. Please *take notice* of my announcement. 请注意听我的通知。
2. He is too proud to *take notice* of others. 他很骄傲,不理睬别人。

Reference

Did she take some medicine? A cold is not a serious problem, but if we don't *take notice*, it would become pneumonia. 她吃药了吗?感冒不是什么严重的问题,但是如果没注意,它会变成肺炎的。

take up

to accept an offer that
someone has made
接受某人所做的某事

Examples

1. My friend said that next time dinner would be on him, and I *took* him up on that. 我朋友跟我说下次他请吃晚饭,我欣然接受。
2. I was *taking* you up on your offer. 我想让你帮忙。

Reference

"I just moved to a new place and it has a swimming pool! You'll have to come over to swim sometime."

"I'll definitely *take* you up on that."

"我刚搬新家了,新家有个游泳池!你一定要找时间过来游游泳。"

"那我就不客气啦!"

make a beeline

to go directly and quickly
towards 直奔至某处或直奔
向某物

Examples

1. When the train finally arrived, cold and weary travelers *made a beeline* for it. 火车最终抵达时,又冷又疲的旅行者拥向前去。
2. He *made a beeline* for an expensive wedding ring without asking her if she would accept him or not. 他径直朝昂贵的结婚戒指处走去并买下,也不问问她是否接受他的求婚。
3. People who *make a beeline* for the front row during lessons are clearly more interested in learning than those who hide in the back. 上课时,直接走向前排座位的人比躲在后排的人求知欲望明显要高。

Reference

"*Make a beeline*" is an American idiom. It's a phrase based on the idea that a bee travels in a direct path to its hive where it lives. For a person to *make a beeline* for some place, they know exactly where they're heading — and so they go straight there without distraction or detour. You can also *make a beeline* for another person, in which case you go directly to them. "make a beeline" 是美国成语,源自于人们的思维——蜜蜂往返蜂巢时飞的是直线。对一个人来说,他径直走向某

处，说明他知道该处，不会三心二意或绕路行走。找一个人也是这样，你可以直接朝他们走去。

■ think twice

to consider and reconsider
carefully 三思

Examples

1. You must *think twice* before you take this step.
你在走这一步之前，应当三思。
2. The teacher advised Luis to *think twice* before deciding to quit school.
老师劝路易斯在决定退学前要好好考虑。

Reference

Someone walked into your office, and asked for five minutes of your time. You agreed, but your conversation lasted for far more than five minutes. So *think twice* next time someone asks you for “five minutes of your time” — it could cost you more than you think. 有人走进你的办公室，请求你给他五分钟的时间，你同意了，然而你们的对话持续了远不止五分钟。所以如果下次再有人对你说“占用你五分钟时间”的话，你千万考虑清楚再答复，因为可能结果不是你所想象的只有五分钟这么简单。

■ make the best of something

to make an unsatisfactory
situation as pleasant as
possible
善用某事或机会

Examples

1. We should *make the best of the chance* we got.
我们要充分利用得到的机会。
2. Those that *make the best of their time* have none to spare.
能充分利用时间者不会有多余的光阴。

Reference

We must *make the best of our opportunities* to speak English, for example, we can take up some English courses, we can take part in the English corner, we can listen to some English songs and also we can watch some English movies. 我们必须尽量利用机会讲英语，比如我们可以选修一些英语的课程，参加英语角活动，听英语歌曲或者看英语电影。

■ walks of life

various levels of social po-
sition or achievement
各行各业

Examples

1. English is used in almost all *walks of life*.
英语几乎在各个方面都能用上。
2. In most *walks of life*, you only get out what you put in.
在大多数领域，你付出多少才能收获多少。

Reference

Opportunities to develop talent and raise status are available in all *walks of life*. In the entire society, no job can be despised indeed.
在各行各业都有发展才能，提高地位的机会。在整个社会中，实在

没有哪一个工作是可以藐视的。

■ by word of mouth

in speech but not in writing

□耳相传; □碑

Examples

1. He received the news *by word of mouth*. 他得到的是口头的消息。
2. Reputation passes *by word of mouth*. 名声要靠口碑。

Reference

According to many literatures, movies were affected easily *by word of mouth*. Nevertheless, studios didn't know how to make use of the power of word of mouth effectively even they realized its impact.

根据许多文献记载, 电影是一种相当容易受口碑影响的产品。然而, 电影从业者虽深知口碑的影响力, 却无法对其进行有效利用。

Exercises

I. Match each idiom with the correct definition.

- | | | |
|--------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| a) talk into | b) time flies | c) at a loss |
| d) anyone's guess | e) take chance | f) take charge |
| g) have someone's heart set on | h) out of the ordinary | i) on the face of it |
| j) have deep pockets | | |

- _____ to be in control
- _____ to have a lot of money
- _____ to want or desire something deeply
- _____ exceptional; uncommon
- _____ seemingly, from appearances alone
- _____ to persuade someone to do something
- _____ in a state of uncertainty; puzzled
- _____ something that no one knows for sure
- _____ to accept the risks to do something
- _____ time passes quickly

II. Complete each sentence with the proper idiom from the list. Make sure words are in the correct form.

- | | |
|---------------|----------------------------|
| see fit | take notice |
| take up | make a beeline |
| think twice | make the best of something |
| walks of life | by word of mouth |

1. Jenifer suggested her boss expanding the company's business to the remote areas, and the boss _____ her advice.
2. As soon as the school bell rang, the hungry students _____ the canteen for lunch.
3. The publishers _____ the event that Chinese writer Mo Yan won the Noble Prize for Literature, and they sold lots of books written by Mo Yan.
4. Skiing on the high mountains is a dangerous sport. My father asks me to _____ before I decide to go skiing alone in the winter vacation.
5. Normally the international airport is a place where you can see the people from all _____.
6. The teacher _____ that Xiao Zhang was not in good mood. Probably he had got cold.
7. Obviously you can write to your ex-husband, if you _____.

III. Comprehension questions.

1. Why don't the monks need to use the combs?
2. What does "have deep pockets" mean in general?
3. On hearing what they were asked to do, most of applicants gave up the chance for testing, why?
4. Why did three candidates get quite different sales outcomes?
5. Please tell Mike's successful experience in selling 1, 000 combs to a temple.

2

Two Sheep Falling into the River 跌入河心的两只羊

There is a deep river in the forest, with its water flowing rapidly and rushing toward a far-away place. On the river there is so narrow a wooden bridge that only one person can pass at a time. But it **cuts corners** for people to go around.

One day morning, a sheep from the east hill wanted to go to the west hill to pick up some strawberries, while a sheep from the west hill wanted to go to the east hill and look for some oak fruit. Coincidentally the two sheep walked onto the bridge almost the same time, met in the middle and **faced** with each other **head-on**. Consequently, neither of them could pass the bridge.

The west-hill sheep said first, "I'm an **early bird**. **As plain as the nose on your face**, I've **set feet** on the bridge a few steps earlier than you. You should **give way** to me." The east-hill sheep replied, "No. Do you know I'm older than you and I **bring home the bacon**? Well, to show your respect to the older, you shouldn't **get in the way**, instead, you should **make way** to me." The west-hill sheep didn't listen, just with his eyes half-closed.

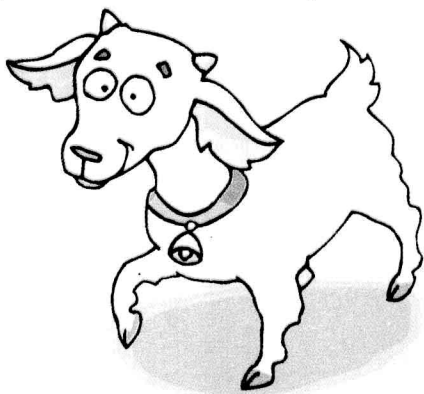
A long time passed, and the west-hill sheep had no intention of **backing off** a little. The east-hill sheep coldly said again, "Hey, are your eyes on your bottom? Haven't you seen I'm older than your father?"

"I think you don't even have eyes, otherwise, why would you block my way? I'm the first one to cross the bridge." The west-hill sheep rebuked with a sarcastic remark.

"Will you leave or not? Or I will rush over you." The east-hill sheep shook his head, which means "my horns are like two sharp swords, and they just want to taste your fat meat".

"Hum, **pick a fight** with me and you are sure to lose!" They began to **call names** and **fly off the handle**.

The west-hill sheep drew a deep sigh and then used his horns to bump the east-hill sheep. "Good guy, you've lived long enough?" The east-hill sheep had to **face off against** the



west-hill sheep.

With a snap, the two sheep were colliding with their horns on the narrow bridge.
Both sheep fell into the river immediately.

Soon the forest became quiet. The two sheep were drowned, and their corpses quickly washed away by rapids.

■ cut corners

to do something in the easiest or most inexpensive way 走捷径; 抄近路

Examples

1. Don't hurry. You cannot *cut corners* if you want to do a perfect job.
别急! 如果你想干得出色, 就不能只图简便。
2. Since time is limited, we have to *cut corners* to finish it.
由于时间有限, 我们不得不走捷径来完成这项工作。

Reference

- I wonder how Jack managed to come so soon. He was still in his office when we started out.
- I suppose he *cut corners* in a hurry.
- 我很纳闷, 杰克怎么这么快就赶到了。我们出发的时候他还在办公室呢!
- 估计他急冲冲抄了近路。

■ face something head-on

to deal with the problem in a direct and determined way 正面应对

Examples

1. We must *face all these troubles head-on* and not try to get out of them. 我们必须正面应对所有麻烦事, 而不应设法逃避。
2. If anything goes wrong it is he who will have to *face it head-on*.
如果有任何差错, 该由他来直接面对这事。

Reference

Accidents arise from carelessness. It was his lack of forethought that has caused all this to happen, and he has to *face the facts head-on*, and take what might be coming to him.

疏忽大意往往会引起事故的发生。由于他缺乏预见才导致这一切的发生, 因此他必须面对现实, 接受可能发生的事情。

■ early bird

a person who arises early in the morning 早起的人

Examples

1. In the business world, do remember: The *early bird* gets the worm.
身在商界, 切记: 早起的鸟儿有虫吃。
2. You're a bit of an *early bird*, aren't you? 你起得很早嘛。

Reference

Jobs are not easy to get these years. Mike is going to graduate next summer, and he plans to begin looking for a job one year early; he