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# WORD AND EXPRESSION



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说文解字 (洋话寻根)

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Many a little make a mickie.



## 内容提要

如果某一天,有外国人说您“吃乌鸦”,您千万别以为他真的是让您去吃乌鸦肉。怎么样,您是不是纳闷儿了,费解口呢?请别着急,跟我一起走进这本说文解字,将它揭晓吧!

在这本书中,我们精心挑选了英美文化中最经典的俗语、俚语,并一一为这些洋语寻根,让您了解一些课本之外的英语,比如说“吃乌鸦”,“牛肉在哪儿?”“藏在衣橱里的骷髅”……

阅读洋语故事,领略俚语风情,实现与外国人零距离沟通,这是此书的终极目的。所以该书是每个志愿讲一口流利的英语,能与外国人对话如流者,不可不备的小贴士。

# 前 言

学习英语,尤其是学好英语不存在速成的捷径,只有勤奋刻苦,循序渐进,日积月累,博览精思,大胆实践,打下坚实的语言、知识基础才可能达到英语学习的理想境界。正所谓“锲而不舍,金石可镂;驽马十驾,功在不舍。”

众多成功者的实践和经验证明:初、中级的广大英语学习者,尤其是中、小学生甚或大学生在打基础的阶段,应该听、说、读、写齐头并进,小学生可侧重听、说,扎扎实实打好基础。读书,读书,最重要的还是读书。学习英语,使用英语的整个过程就是一个不断接触、认真模仿和反复练习的过程,业精于勤,功成于练,而首先是阅读实践(应包括朗读、默读、精读和泛读)。无论古今中外,阅读都是培养语感,养成用英语思维,用英语流畅表达思想的最有效的途径之一。阅读的过程就是记忆单词、扩大词汇量和学习词汇用法的过程。大量阅读也是有效促进和提高其他各项听、说、写、译技能的好方法,而简易读物尤其是英汉对照简易读物对提高阅读理解能力、打好语言基础、全面提高综合运用能力极为有效。为此我们推出了《小书虫简易英汉对照读物》系列丛书。本丛书是为中学生、大学生和广大初、中级英语爱好者、自学者精心策划的一套英文原版课外读物。

本丛书编排形式活泼新颖,文章短小精悍,图文并茂,英汉对照,既方便阅读又宜于携带。

本丛书选材广泛,纵横古今中外,品类齐全,丰富多彩,包罗世界文学名著、优美动人的童话、广为流传的名人轶事和人们所喜闻乐见的影视文(章)网(络)的精彩片段。坚持阅读既可开阔视野、陶冶心灵又可激励人生、奋勇向前。

本丛书的实用性极强,通过阅读增加词汇量,提高阅读理解能力,最重要的是可以受到纯正地道英语情境的熏陶,从而增强语感。

最后,在本丛书的成书过程中,许多中、外朋友都付出了大量的时间和辛勤的劳动。我们在此向他们表示由衷的感谢。

本丛书由司树森教授担任主编,熊德轶教授审订。

尽管我们在尽最大努力做好每一件事,但是不妥之处或错误仍在所难免。敬请广大读者不吝指教,以便修正。

**司树森**

2006年5月



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# Word and Expression

## 说文解字

(英语寻根)

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## Eat Crow

The crow has long been part of man's history. More than any other bird, the crow has been both denounced<sup>①</sup> and praised. Some have feared it as a messenger of evil.

To the farmer, the crow is a hungry robber who swoops<sup>②</sup> down to eat his corn shoots. Most people see the crow as a big, noisy, troublesome bird.

It is easy, therefore, to understand how the crow got its name into the language. Any person who talks loudly about himself or his deeds is said to “crow” about himself.

This meaning of the word came from Old English or French. But there is a saying about the crow in America that is different. A person may be too sure of himself and say something in a loud and boastful way. Later, he may admit he is wrong. Then he is “eating crow.”

No one knows how this saying got started. But one story about it appeared in a Louisiana newspaper in 1851:

A man who owned a boarding<sup>③</sup> house served poor food, and his customers complained about it. One day, they complained so loudly that the owner of the house laughed at them and said, “Why, I can eat anything and enjoy it.”

Some decided to test him. They killed a large crow and



## 吃乌鸦



乌鸦在人类历史上早有记载。比起别的鸟来，乌鸦受过更多的指责和赞扬。有些人认为乌鸦是不祥之兆。

对于农民来说，乌鸦是从天而降抢吃玉米苗的饿鬼。大多数人把乌鸦看作是一种喳喳乱叫、惹麻烦的大鸟。

人们容易理解乌鸦的名字何以在人类语言中屡屡出现。一个人高谈阔论，夸耀自己或自己的功绩，人家就会说他像乌鸦一样吹嘘自己。

乌鸦一词的这种含义来源于古英语或法语。但是在美国却有一种不同的说法。一个过分自信、夸夸其谈的人，过后往往只好承认自己错了。那么他就是“吃乌鸦”了。

没人知道是如何产生的。但 1851 年路易斯安那州的报纸上有个故事：

有一个房东出租供应膳食的住房，但他的饭菜很糟，引得房客们纷纷抱怨。一天，他们大发牢骚，于是房东就嘲笑他们说：“嗨，我可什么都能吃，而且总是吃得津津有味。”

有人决定教训他。他们杀了只大

### New Words

- ① denounce [diˈnaʊns] v. 指责  
② swoop [swu:p] v. 突然下降  
③ boastful [ˈbəʊstfʊl] adj. 自夸的





cooked it and made it look nice. Secretly, however, they added hot pepper<sup>①</sup>, snuff<sup>②</sup> and salt. They put the tasty-looking dish before the owner and invited him to eat.

The owner took a big bite out of the crow. It was horrible. He pushed the dish away from him. "Yes," he said, "I can eat crow, but I'll be damned if I like it! "

So, being too certain has its price, if later you must admit you are wrong. You may have to swallow<sup>③</sup> your pride as well as your words. And that may be as unpleasant as eating crow.

In 1948, many journalists and opinion poll-takers paid such a price. The country laughed as they had to eat crow. At the time, President Harry F. Truman was campaigning<sup>④</sup> to stay in office. His opponent was Republican Thomas E. Dewey of New York.

Journalists and poll-takers were sure that Dewey would win. One of them was H.V. Kaltenborn. Before the final election count was known, he broadcast over the radio that Dewey had won.

President Truman, on election night, had gone to bed early.

The next morning, Kaltenborn was shocked to learn that Truman had won. Truman laughed at the poll-takers and journalists. He made fun of them on the radio.

Many Americans enjoyed seeing the experts admit they were wrong, being forced, so to speak, "to eat crow."



乌鸦,把它做熟了,表面上看来挺好吃。却偷偷地撒了辣椒、鼻烟和盐粒。他们把这盘样子很香的菜给他吃。

房东咬了一大口,味道太可怕了。他把盘子一把推开,说:“是呀,乌鸦我是能吃,但要说爱吃那就见鬼了。”

所以,过分自信过后还得认错是要付出代价的。你可能要忍气吞声收回自己的话。这就会像吃乌鸦一样让人难受。

1948年,很多记者和搞民意测验的人就付出了这样的代价。当他们“吃乌鸦”时,全国都笑话他们。当时,哈里·杜鲁门正在竞选连任。他的对手是纽约的共和党人托马斯·杜威。

新闻记者们和搞民意测验的都肯定杜威会当选。其中有一位叫H·V.卡通伯恩,他在大选最后结果未宣布前就在电台中宣布杜威已经获胜。

在大选的当天晚上,杜鲁门总统早早地上床休息了。

第二天早晨,卡通伯恩吃惊地发现杜鲁门获胜。杜鲁门嘲笑了这些人,他在广播中拿他们取笑。

很多美国人喜欢看到专家承认自己错了,比方说这些人被迫“吃了乌鸦”。

#### New Words

- ①pepper ['pepə] n. 胡椒粉
- ②snuff [snʌf] n. 鼻烟
- ③swallow ['swɒləʊ] v. 吞
- ④campaign [kæm'peɪn] v. 竞选





## Where's the Beef?

Some expressions are commonly used for many years. Others are popular for just a short time. One such American expression was "Where's the Beef?" It questioned if something was as good or as honest as it claimed to be.

In the early nineteen-eighties, "Where's the Beef?" was one of the most popular expressions in the United States. It seemed as if everyone was using it. Then—after a few months—one rarely heard it said.

Beef, of course, is the meat from a cow. And there is probable no food more "American" than a hamburger made from beef.

In the nineteen-sixties, a businessman named Ray Kroc began building small restaurants that sold hamburgers at a low price. Kroc called his restaurants MacDonald's. Kroc cooked the hamburgers quickly, so people in a hurry could buy and eat them without waiting. By the end of the nineteen-sixties, the MacDonald's company was selling hamburgers in hundreds of restaurants from California to Maine.

Not surprisingly, Ray Kroc became one of the richest businessmen in America. Other business people watched his success. Some of them opened their own hamburger restaurants.



## 牛肉在哪儿？



有的词语流行许多年，有的词语只流行一阵子。美国有一句话：“牛肉在哪儿？”就只盛行了一阵子，说这句话是怀疑东西是否名副其实。

在 19 世纪 80 年代初，“牛肉在哪儿？”成为美国人最爱说的词语之一。好像每个人都在用它。然而过了几个月，就很少有人说了。

牛肉自然是指牛的肉。可能没有比用牛肉做的汉堡包更称得上是典型的美国食品了。

早在 19 世纪 60 年代，一个名叫雷·克罗克的商人就开始建造小餐馆，出售廉价的汉堡包。克罗克的餐馆叫做麦克唐纳餐馆，克罗克的汉堡包制作快捷，顾客不用等候，随到随买，拿起就吃。到 19 世纪 60 年代末，麦克唐纳公司出售汉堡包的餐馆遍布加利福尼亚州到缅因州的城乡。

毫无疑问，雷·克罗克已跻身美国富商大贾之列。其他商人看到他发了财，纷纷仿效。开起自己的汉堡包餐馆。







One company, called Wendy's, began to compete with MacDonald's. Wendy's <sup>日本</sup>claimed its hamburgers were bigger than those sold by MacDonald's or anyone else.

The Wendy's company created the expression, "Where's the Beef?" to make people believe that Wendy's hamburgers were the biggest. It produced a television advertisement to sell this idea.

The Wendy's television advertisement showed three old women looking at hamburgers they had just bought. The bread that covered the meat was very big. But inside, there was only a tiny bit of meat. One of the women protested<sup>①</sup>. "Where's the Beef?" she shouted in a funny voice.

These advertisements for Wendy's hamburger restaurants were a success from the first day they appeared on television. As we said, it seemed everyone began using the expression "Where's the Beef?"

At about that time, the Democratic Party was holding debates among its candidates<sup>②</sup> for the nineteen-eighty-four presidential nomination. There were three candidates: Walter Mondale, Gary Hart, and Jesse Jackson.

In one debate, Gary Hart claimed that he had the best new ideas to govern America. Walter Mondale disagreed. He thought Gary Hart was making a claim that was not supported by facts. So Mondale said to Hart: "Where's the

