

美国之音

美国英语 成语 俗语 80讲



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出版说明

成语和俗语是英语中的一个重要组成部分,由于数量众多,使用灵活,学习者较难掌握。有些成语和俗语(尤其是较新的)在一般词典上很难查到;有些虽可查到,但释义简单,例句贫乏,令人难以透彻理解。我们认为,本书的出版将对读者有所裨益。

本书是根据美国之音中文台播出的一套英语教学节目编辑而成的。节目共八十讲,每次一般讲解两个成语或俗语。在讲解过程中引用了大量例句。这些例句形象生动,直接来自美国的现实生活。读者在学习语言的同时还能对美国社会有所了解。

这套节目的原名叫《美国英语》(**American English**)。由于内容吸引人,很多朋友都喜欢听,但苦于没有教材。如今,我们对节目进行了编辑整理,更名为《美国英语成语俗语八十讲》予以出版,以飨读者。此外,为了便利读者阅读或收听,书后增加了英文索引。

本书承蒙美国之音中文部提供文字材料,并受到美国使馆文化处的鼎力协助,谨在此表示衷心的感谢。

编者

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目 录

1. Lock, Stock and Barrel	1
2. Greasy Spoon and Pothuck	4
3. To Go in One Ear and out the Other and to Play by Ear ..	7
4. Doggy Bag and Eggs	10
5. In Hot Water and to Throw Cold Water	13
6. To Hold Water and Water off a Duck's Back	15
7. Blow up and Blow out	18
8. To Pull Your Socks up and to Knock Your Socks off ...	21
9. To Be Led by the Nose and Under Your Nose	24
10. Poker Face and Close to the Vest	27
11. The Shoe Is on the Other Foot and to Work Hand in Glove	30
12. Follow the Nose and to Pay Through the Nose	33
13. To Keep an Ear on the Ground and Up to One's Ears ...	36
14. Sweeten the Pot and The Cards Are Stacked against You	39
15. To Fly off the Handle and to Bark up the Wrong Tree	42
16. Right on the Beam and to Fly by the Seat of One's Pants	45
17. To Keep One's Shirt on and to Lose One's Shirt	48
18. A Stuffed Shirt and to Give You the Shirt off His	

Back	51
19. To Bail out and Nose Dive	54
20. Up in Arms and at Arm's Length	57
21. To Shake a Leg and to Pull My Leg	60
22. To Twist Someone's Arm and To Charge Someone an Arm and a Leg	63
23. Taking Candy from a Baby and a Piece of Cake	66
24. Top Gun and Bottom Line	69
25. Just for Laughs and to Laugh up One's Sleeve	72
26. A Horse Laugh and the Last Laugh	75
27. A Red Letter Day and Red Tape	78
28. Black Sheep and White Lie	81
29. Rain Check and It Never Rains But It Pours	84
30. To Stick to One's Guns and Shooting the Breeze	87
31. Green Thumb and Green Light	90
32. Singing the Blue and Like a Bolt out of the Blue	93
33. Apple Pie and Hot Potato	96
34. To Put All His Eggs in One Basket and to Eat Crow	99
35. Monkey Business and to Make a Monkey out of Somebody	102
36. Hot Seat and Hot and Bothered	105
37. To Break Your Neck and to Stick Your Neck out	108
38. Pain in the Neck and Neck and Neck	111
39. To Have a Heart and cross My Heart	114
40. My Heart Stood Still and Heart-to-heart Talk	117
41. To Go All out and to Go Through Hell or High Water	120

42. To Go Broke and to Go Overboard	123
43. To Put One's Best Foot Forward and to Land on One's Feet	126
44. To Get off on the Wrong Foot and to Put Your Foot in Your Mouth	129
45. Cold Feet and Jump in and Get Your Feet Wet	132
46. Ants in Your Pants and to Have Butterflies in One's Stomach	135
47. To Bug Me and to Loue up	138
48. To Get a Foot in the Door and to Be Dead on One's Feet	141
49. To Stand on One's Two Feet and to Throw Oneself at Someone's Feet	144
50. To Be Swept off One's Feet and Don't Let the Grass Grow Under One's Feet	147
51. To Pull no Punches and Straight from the Horse's Mouth	150
52. No Holds Barred and to Let One's Hair Down	153
53. Loose Cannon and Blockbuster	156
54. Bomb and to Drop a Bombshell	159
55. Oddball and Odds and Ends	162
56. Peaches and Cream and Sour Grapes	165
57. Lemon and Going Banana	168
58. To Shoot the Breeze and Through the Grapevine	171
59. A Fish out of Water and to Teach a Fish How to Swim	174
60. To Fish or Cut Bait and Cold Fish	177
61. To Feast Your Eyes on and to Hit Between the Eyes	180

62. Eyes Pop out and not Even Bat an Eye	183
63. To Have One's Eyes Peeled and to Pull the Wool Over One's Eyes	186
64. To Keep One's Eye on the Ball and Eye-Opener	189
65. Flea Market and to Clam up	192
66. Baloney and Kickback	195
67. To Get a Kick out of and to Kick the Bucket	198
68. To Kick up One's Heels and to Kick off	201
69. At the Drop of a Hat and to Talk Through One's Hat	204
70. Hang on to Your Hat and to Keep Something Under Your Hat'	207
71. To Eat One's Hat and to Eat One's Heart out	210
72. Nerd and Jock	213
73. Wimp and Turkey	216
74. To Throw One's Hat in the Ring and Stump	219
75. Favorite Son and Sound Bite	222
76. Blame Game and Negative Campaigning	225
77. Swing Voters and to Come out Swinging	228
78. Don't Change Horses in the Middle of the Stream and Jump on the Bandwagon	231
79. Sleaze and Gridlock	234
80. Lame Duck and Golden Parachute	237
索引	240

1. Lock, Stock and Barrel

每一种语言都有它独特的成语和俗语。而学习外语的人经常在理解这些习惯用语时会感到很困难。这是因为你不可能从组成某个习惯用语的字面上来懂得它的意思。本书的这篇文章就是专门介绍那些可能在日常生活中遇到的成语或俗语。比如，美国人经常说：

Give me a hand?

按照字面来理解，Give me a hand 就是“给我一只手。”可是，它的意思却是“帮我一下忙。”另外一个例子是：

Foot the bill.

Foot 的意思是“一只脚”，而 bill 在这儿的解释是“帐单。”Foot the bill 并不是把帐单踩在脚底下，而是付帐的意思。

另外，有的时候，一个词汇有好几种解释。就拿下面一句话来做例子吧：

We arrived two hours late at the big blow-out for Charle's birthday because our car had a blow-out.

这句话里第一个 blow-out 是指规模很大的聚会，第二个 blow-out 是指汽车的轮胎炸了。整个句子的意思是：“由于我们车胎炸了，所以我们晚了两个小时才到达查理举行生日宴会的地方。”

还有一些习惯用语从字典上的意思来看是相同的，但是它们使用的场合却不同。下面两个习惯用语就是很好的例子。一个是：

Lock, stock and barrel.

另外一个：

Hook, line and sinker.

Lock, stock and barrel 和 Hook, line and sinker 都是全部的意思，可是用法却不同。我们先来举一个 Lock, stock and barrel 的例子。

Mr. Rockefeller bought the whole oil company lock, stock and barrel.

这句话的意思是：洛克非勒先生把整个石油公司买了下来。换句话说，也就是他买了这个石油公司的大楼，油井和其他属于这个公司的资产。

Hook, line and sinker 虽然也和 lock, stock and barrel 一样是全部的意思，可是它还带有受骗的意思。例如：

I warned Sally not to believe that man's stories about how rich he was, but she swallowed them hook, line and sinker. After she married him, she found out he owed money to everybody in his office.

他说：“我告诉沙利不要相信那个男人说的他多么有钱之类的话。可是沙利却一点都没有怀疑他。等到结了婚才发现这个人几乎向每个同事都借了钱。”

今天我们讲了在学英语过程中经常会碰到的一些问题。有些习惯用语从字面上看不出它们的确切意思，例如：give me a hand 和 foot the bill。另外还有一些习惯用语在不同

场合却表达不同的意思，如 blow out。还有一些俗语，它们在字典上的解释是相同的，但是它们却有不同用法，就像 lock stock and barrel 和 hook, line and sinker。以后我们在每次讲解两个成语、俗语或其他习惯用语。

2. Greasy Spoon and Potluck

今天我们要讲两个和吃东西有关的词汇。第一个是：

Greasy spoon.

Greasy 是油腻的意思，spoon 是指调羹，也就是汤勺。Greasy 和 spoon 这两个字合在一起就是指那些有点像夫妻老婆店那样的小饭馆。这些小饭馆一般来说菜谱上花式品种并不多，碗筷也好像不那么干净，装潢也不讲究，但是菜的味道倒不错，价钱也很公道。下面我们来举个例子。这是一个丈夫在对他的妻子讲话：

Honey, let me take you out to dinner. But I don't feel like dressing up to go someplace fancy. How about just going down the street to the greasy spoon and getting hamburgers.

他说：“亲爱的，让我带你去外面吃晚饭吧。不过，我实在不想穿得必恭必敬的去那些大饭馆。咱们就上街那头那个小饭馆去吃汉堡包，怎么样？”下面我们再举一个例子，这是一个人在和一个朋友说话：

Mike, you ought to try the potstickers at that little Chinese joint on New York Avenue. It looks like a greasy spoon but the potstickers are great and the price is cheap.

他说：“麦克，你得上纽约大街那个中国小饭馆去尝尝他们的锅贴。那饭馆看起来不像样，可是他们的锅贴味道真好，价钱又便宜。”

今天要介绍的第二个词汇是：

Potluck.

Pot 的意思是锅子，Luck 是运气。可是，我们现在讲的 potluck 是一个字，pot 和 luck 连在一起的。Potluck 作为一个字，它指的是美国一种经常举行的聚会形式。也就是在某一个人，或几个人的提议下举行一个午餐会，或晚餐会，但是参加聚会的每个人都要带一个菜或者带一种饭后甜食。主人为聚会提供场地外，也只要准备一个菜，或买一些饮料就行了。这就叫做：

Potluck lunch, or potluck supper.

可以想象，举行 Potluck 的时候，大家能够尝到许多不同的食品。可是，要是你运气不好，好几个人带的东西你都不爱吃的话，那你只好回家去那个 greasy spoon 吃点儿什么了。Potluck 还有另外一个意思，那就是：有什么就要什么。用在吃的方面就成了：有什么吃什么的意思。比如，一个人碰到了好几年没见面的老朋友，他说：

Say, Charley, if you don't have plans for tonight, why don't you come out to our house and take potluck with us. Helen won't have time to cook anything special, but she can put an extra plate on the table for you.

他说：“喂，查理，你要是晚上没事，就上我家来便饭，有什么吃什么。我太太不一定有时间做什么特别的菜，但是多加一付碗筷是绝没有问题的。”

今天我们讲了两个日常用的词汇。一个是：

Greasy Spoon.

Greasy Spoon 是指价廉物美的小饭馆。今天讲的另外一个词汇是：

potluck.

potluck 是每个人都带一样菜的一种聚会。现在你就懂得下面这句话的意思了：

I've been so busy lately. Last week I went to a greasy spoon with a friend and this Sunday I've got to go to a potluck.

这句话的意思是：“我最近可忙了。上个周末我和一个朋友去一家小饭馆吃饭，这个星期天我得做一个菜去参加一个聚会。”

3. To Go in One Ear and out the Other and to Play by Ear

今天，我们要讲几个和耳朵，也就是 ear 有关的成语。中国人经常说那些不听劝告的人对别人的话总是“一个耳朵进一个耳朵出”或者说：“左耳朵进，右耳朵出。”美国人和中国人在这个说法上是完全一模一样。他们是这样说的：

It goes in one ear and out the other.

下面是一个父亲在说他的女儿：

I told Sally it was foolish to marry that man, but it went in one ear and out the other. Now she wishes she'd listened to me. He drinks and gambles and she wants to leave him.

这位爸爸说：“我早就告诉沙利不要那么笨，去和那个人结婚。可是，对于我的话，她是一个耳朵进一个耳朵出。结了婚她才知道那人又喝酒又赌钱。现在她后悔当初没听我的话，想要和他分手啦。”

下面这个例子是一个老板在对他的秘书说话：

How many times have I told you to get to work on time. But my words just go in one ear and out the other. So I don't have any choice but to fire you.

他说：“我告诉了你多少次上班要准时。可是，你对我的

话老是一个耳朵进一个耳朵出。现在，我没有办法了，只好解雇你了。”

下面要讲的一个习惯用语是：

Play by ear.

Play 就是玩的意思。可是，Play by ear 的意思并不是“玩耳朵。”这个词汇的来源和音乐有关系。它原来指的是那些会弹钢琴，或某种乐器，但是却不会看五线谱的人。每当他们要弹奏某个曲调时，他们只能凭着上一回听到的记忆来弹。可是，Play by ear 现在已经成为日常用语了，意思是做一件事不是事先有计划的，而是走着瞧，临时决定。例如，你被请到某处去讲话，可是又没有时间准备。你就可以对听众说：

I haven't had a chance to prepare any notes so all I can do is start talking and play it by ear.

这话的意思是：“我今天没有什么准备，所以就只好讲到那儿就算那儿了。”

下面一个例子是一个人在和朋友约会：

I am not sure if my wife wants me to go shopping with her on Sunday. If she decides to go with her sister instead, then I can play tennis with you. Let's just play it by ear.

他说：“我还不知道星期天我太太是否要我陪她去买东西。要是她决定和她姐姐一起出去，那我就能和你去打网球。我们就瞧着办吧！”

今天我们讲了两个习惯用语，一个是：

To go in one ear and out the other.

这个习惯用语的意思是：左耳朵进，右耳朵出。

我们今天讲的另外一个习惯用语是：

To play by ear.

也就是：到时候再看着办。