




每·日·英·語·叢·書

英語

一日一成語

何兆熊 著

商務印書館



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《每日英語叢書》
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叢書總序

香港許多人都熱衷於學習英語，因為英語應用範圍廣泛，方便與外國工商貿易、文化交往；也有助於個人進修、吸收新科技資訊。但是一般英語學習者在學了不少入門知識，作了許多聽、讀、講、寫的練習之後，往往仍然感到不能真正掌握和通曉英語，還需要想辦法進一步提高自己的英語水平。

本叢書就是為這些英語讀者設計的。它從英語的各個方面如詞彙、句子、成語、諺語、書信、翻譯等，都作了有系統的、由淺入深的介紹，同時除了介紹語言知識之外，還特別注意指出有關的西方生活、文化知識和準確而地道的說法，使讀者在原有的基礎上能再進一步。

本叢書為了適應香港讀者繁忙的生活和工作，特別採取每日學一點的形式，文字力求淺白，內容盡量簡明；有分析、有實例；小開本，加插圖，使讀者可以利用自己的零碎時間，隨時隨地學習，輕鬆愉快地在增添英語知識和加強運用能力兩個方面都有所收穫。

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編輯部

1975年10月

前 言

“成語”是指一種語言中長期以來習用的、表達完整意義的、結構相對固定的詞組或短句。任何一種語言都存有許多成語，英語中的成語尤為豐富。成語有兩個主要特徵：語義上的完整性和結構上的固定性。一個成語是一個語義單位，表達一個完整的意思，但它的意義卻不能只從它所包含的單詞的字面意義去推測。例如 under the weather 意為“身體不適”，這和“under”、“weather”的意義都沒有關係；結構上的固定性指的是：一個成語中的詞不能隨意改動或增減，例如 under the weather 就不能改為 below the weather，put on airs 就不能說成 put on air。這兩個特徵顯然給學習者造成困難，因為，學習一個成語就必須死記硬背，記住它的構成，記住它的意義。但另一方面，成語又十分有趣，因為，和任何語言中的成語一樣，英語中的成語並不是英語的使用者生拼硬造的，而是在長期的生活過程中自然地、漸漸地產生、沿用，最終固定下來的，因此，不少成語的背後都有一個和社會生活、民族文化有關的故事。由此可知，能恰如其份地運用成語無疑會使我們的語言表達得更確切和更生動。

迄今為止，英語成語手冊、成語辭典，乃至成語大全之類的書已經出了不少，而這本只收了三百六十五個英語成語的小冊子有甚麼特色和優點呢？

首先，本書有着明確的對象，即具有中等英語水平的讀者，故在編寫過程中，我始終以照顧這層次讀者的特定水平和需要為大前題；其二，本書所收的三百六十五個成語是從英語幾千個成語中挑選出來的，其中剔除了那些用得過濫和那些過於冷僻的，也免去那些在文體上過分正式，或屬於俚語和具有強烈地方色彩的成語，故可以說，所選取的成語均屬英語成語中的“核心”部分；三，本書不僅清楚講解每個成語的意義和出處，而且更通過簡明易懂的例句來展示如何使用該成語，並指出在使用時容易發生的錯誤；四，全書文字力求生動活潑，以談話的風格把一個個成語介紹給讀者，使人讀來感到輕鬆、親切之餘，也加快吸收的速度。

總而言之，我的意圖是把這小冊子寫成為一本集知識性和趣味性於一身，適合中等水平讀者口味和需要的工具書。它“一日一篇”的編排方式能方便讀者在繁忙的、節奏逼促的生活中抽出片刻空暇來日讀一篇，化整為零；同時，它也可以作為英語學習者的一本案頭書，隨時查用。

作者

一九九一年三月

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iii 前言



- ① eat one's head off
- ② hide/bury one's head in the sand
- ③ keep one's head above water
- ④ lose/keep one's head
- ⑤ make head or tail of something
- ⑥ put their heads together
- ⑦ turn one's head
- ⑧ beat one's brains
- ⑨ pick someone's brains
- ⑩ let one's hair down ⑪ not turn a hair



- ⑫ keep an eye on
- ⑬ pull the wool over one's eyes
- ⑭ see eye to eye ⑮ throw dust in one's eyes
- ⑯ turn a blind eye ⑰ with half an eye
- ⑱ forty winks



- ⑲ all ears/all eyes ⑳ play it by ear
- ㉑ turn a deaf ear ㉒ up to one's ears

②③ wet behind the ears



②④ poke one's nose into something

②⑤ thumb one's nose



②⑥ a big mouth ②⑦ by word of mouth

②⑧ pay lip-service to

②⑨ at the tip of one's tongue

③⑩ bite one's tongue off ③① lose one's tongue

③② with one's tongue in one's cheek



③③ cold shoulder ③④ rub shoulders with

③⑤ catch someone red-handed



③⑥ come in handy ③⑦ eat out of one's hand

③⑧ get the upper hand ③⑨ hand in glove

④⑩ have one's hand full ④① lend a hand

④② live from hand to mouth

④③ throw up one's hands

④④ wash one's hands of ④⑤ all thumbs

④⑥ rule of thumb ④⑦ burn one's fingers

④⑧ cross one's fingers

④⑨ have a finger in the pie

⑤⑩ have ... at one's fingertips

⑤① wind someone round one's finger



- 52 pull one's leg 53 Achilles' heel
54 cool one's heels
55 drag one's feet / heels 56 toe the line



- 57 split one's sides 58 a bag of bones
59 skeleton in the cupboard / closet
60 bleed one white 61 sore spot



- 62 heart and soul 63 cross one's mind
64 have a good mind 65 read one's mind
66 mind one's own business 67 sixth sense

- 68 in high / low spirits
69 mend one's manners 70 at one's wit's end



- 71 above / below par 72 face value
73 hold the purse string 74 a pretty penny
75 be well off



- 76 spin a yarn 77 birthday suit
78 catch somebody with his pants down
79 where the shoe pinches
80 pull one's socks up 81 after a fashion
82 wash one's dirty linen in public
83 wet blanket



- ⑧4 one's cup of tea ⑧5 another cup of tea
⑧6 know which side one's bread is buttered (on)
⑧7 baker's dozen ⑧8 eat humble pie
⑧9 apple-pie order ⑨0 apple of discord
⑨1 apple of one's eye ⑨2 polish the apple
⑨3 full of beans ⑨4 sour grapes
⑨5 a hard nut to crack
⑨6 to put it in a nutshell ⑨7 open sesame
⑨8 beef up ⑨9 a red herring
⑩0 curry favour ⑩1 the salt of the earth
⑩2 worth one's salt ⑩3 sugar the pill
⑩4 bite off more than one can chew
⑩5 be fed up with ⑩6 take pot luck
⑩7 keep the pot boiling
⑩8 born with a silver spoon in one's mouth
⑩9 hit the ceiling / roof
⑪0 darken one's door / doorway
⑪1 mend one's fences ⑪2 sit on the fence
⑪3 back to the wall
⑪4 build castles in the air
⑪5 bring the house down





- ①16 miss the boat / bus
①17 put the cart before the horse
①18 upset the applecart
①19 put a spoke in someone's wheel
①20 steer clear of ①21 give (free) rein to
①22 on the spur of the moment
①23 blind alley ①24 around the corner
①25 cut corners ①26 turn the corner
①27 beaten track ①28 lose / keep track
①29 blaze a trail ①30 come a long way
①31 meet someone half-way
①32 get somewhere
①33 burn one's bridges / boats (behind one)
①34 drive home ①35 bring home
①36 at sea
①37 between the devil and the deep blue sea
①38 in hot water ①39 in the same boat
①40 full steam ahead ①41 plain sailing
①42 paddle one's own canoe ①43 shipshape
①44 give someone / something a wide berth



- ①45 have an axe to grind
- ①46 get down to brass tacks
- ①47 hit the nail on the head
- ①48 nail someone down
- ①49 take the edge off ①50 by hook or by crook
- ①51 know the ropes ①52 without a hitch
- ①53 pull strings/wires
- ①54 at the end of one's tether
- ①55 call a spade a spade
- ①56 square peg in a round hole
- ①57 get the sack ①58 turn the scale
- ①59 sponge on



- ①60 slip of the pen / tongue
- ①61 mind one's p's and q's
- ①62 break one's word
- ①63 have words with someone
- ①64 mince one's words ①65 weigh one's words
- ①66 read between the lines
- ①67 turn over a new leaf ①68 compare notes
- ①69 in one's good / bad books
- ①70 an open / a closed book
- ①71 teach someone a lesson



172 with flying colours 173 show one's colours

174 black and blue 175 be green with envy

176 green / red light 177 red tape

178 a red letter day

179 roll out the red carpet 180 white lie



181 put two and two together

182 at sixes and sevens

183 a nine-day wonder

184 at the eleventh hour

185 against time / the clock

186 round / around the clock

187 call it a day 188 carry / win the day



189 face the music 190 (as) fit as a fiddle

191 play second fiddle

192 blow one's own trumpet 193 out of step



194 put one in the picture 195 draw a blank

196 draw a line 197 finishing touches



198 play the game 199 play (it) safe

200 below the belt 201 pull one's punches

202 throw up the sponge / towel

203 come to grips with

- ②04 keep the ball rolling ②05 jump the gun
 ②06 by leaps and bounds
 ②07 pull one's weight
 ②08 go down like ninepins ②09 ace in the hole
 ②10 a card up one's sleeve ②11 follow suit
 ②12 The die is cast.



- ②13 cross swords with
 ②14 lock, stock and barrel ②15 all-clear
 ②16 bear the brunt ②17 gain ground
 ②18 half the battle



- ②19 meet one's Waterloo
 ②20 Dutch treat ②21 take French leave
 ②22 be Greek to ②23 on the Greek calends
 ②24 carry coals to Newcastle
 ②25 call someone names ②26 Hobson's choice
 ②27 Jack of all trades
 ②28 before one can say Jack Robinson
 ②29 keep up with the Joneses
 ②30 Judas kiss ②31 rob Peter to pay Paul
 ②32 Gordian knot ②33 Pandora's Box



- ②34 the seventh heaven ②35 ask for the moon
②36 once in a blue moon
②37 a bolt from the blue ②38 out of the blue
②39 steal one's thunder
②40 a storm in a tea-cup
②41 air one's knowledge ②42 beat the air
②43 clear the air ②44 in the air
②45 put on airs ②46 tread/walk on air/clouds
②47 a stone's throw
②48 leave no stone unturned
②49 a blot on the landscape
②50 sit on a volcano ②51 break the ice
②52 hold water ②53 throw cold water on
②54 add fuel to the flame
②55 burn the midnight oil ②56 go up in smoke
②57 see the light ②58 throw light on
②59 beat about the bush ②60 gild the lily
②61 rest on one's laurels ②62 a bed of roses
②63 can't see the wood for the trees
②64 bee in one's bonnet
②65 butterflies in one's stomach
②66 play ducks and drakes with



- ②67 kill the goose that lays the golden eggs
 ②68 talk turkey ②69 a feather in one's cap
 ②70 crocodile tears ②71 fish out of water
 ②72 a pretty kettle of fish
 ②73 a bull in a china shop
 ②74 a red rag to a bull
 ②75 take the bull by the horns
 ②76 green horn
 ②77 last straw that breaks the camel's back
 ②78 bell the cat ②79 let the cat out of the bag
 ②80 rub up the wrong way
 ②81 count one's chickens before they
 are hatched
 ②82 dog in the manger ②83 go to the dogs
 ②84 Let sleeping dog lie. ②85 top dog
 ②86 bark up the wrong tree ②87 pass the buck
 ②88 white elephant ②89 dark horse
 ②90 ride one's high horse
 ②91 straight from the horse's mouth
 ②92 a mare's nest ②93 lion's share
 ②94 buy a pig in a poke ②95 play possum
 ②96 smell a rat ②97 black sheep



- ②98 cry wolf
- ②99 be neither here nor there
- ③00 beg the question
- ③01 come thick and fast
- ③02 far cry ③03 cut a good / poor figure
- ③04 cut it / things fine
- ③05 cut a long story short
- ③06 cut someone / something short
- ③07 cut both / two ways ③08 cut to the quick
- ③09 cut and run ③10 die hard
- ③11 be dying for / to ③12 fall flat
- ③13 find fault with
- ③14 get out of bed from the wrong side
- ③15 get to the bottom of ③16 go far
- ③17 have it out with
- ③18 can't have it both ways
- ③19 jump the queue ③20 keep company
- ③21 keep up appearances
- ③22 leave in the lurch ③23 lord it over
- ③24 make do ③25 make it
- ③26 make a point of ③27 make shift with
- ③28 make short work of ③29 pass muster