

*A Collection of
English Colloquial Idioms*

英语
通俗习语精选

黄景明 编译

南开大学出版社
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前 言

本书是一部英语词汇工具书。它极适宜做高等院校英语专业三、四年级学生学习词汇学(English lexicology)的辅助读物或参考书。作为英语专业基础三学科(语音学、词汇学、语法学)之一的英语词汇学,极需要有一本关于英语通俗习惯用语(English colloquial idioms)的配套读物。

当前,举国上下正在全面推进素质教育,这是一项复杂的社会系统工程,愿本书能在外语教育领地里配合全国外语教师、外语工作者、爱好者,为培养跨世纪人才提供学习的新材料、新方法。

早自50年代以来,国内各高等院校包括师范院校均已相继开设“词汇学”课程。近来又有一部分省市的师范专科学校升级为师范学院,如湖北省孝感市师专、河北省廊坊师专等校经国务院批准转本,说明我国高等师范院校的数量在增多,因而我国的师资队伍也必随之更加壮大,这也意味着外国语师资队伍的素质要想不断提高,必须加强语言学基础学科的培训力度。

开设英语词汇学课程的院校,讲课一般涉及以下内容:词汇学的意义,英语词汇的理论、定义,英语词汇的来源、结构、组成,语义学(semantics)——研讨语言之含义及其变化,语义的变化(variation of semantics)——着重研讨“修辞手段”(figures of speech),即本书研讨的主要内容实例;此外还包括英语习惯用语(English idioms),英语地区变化,如英国英语(British English)、美国英语(American English)以及加拿大英语(Canadian English)、澳大利亚英语(Australian English)、新西兰英语(New Zealand English)、南非英语(South African English)等,英语词典学(English lexicography)及词典学的研究方法等。当今市场上美国英语成语汇编书籍较多,而英国英语成语汇编则较少见。笔者选择后者,对现代英语通俗习语做了精编精选,收词2105条,配以汉语译文,并补充了90年代以来的常用词条121条,共计2226条。

本书所依蓝本《英语通俗用语词典》的编者、英国的弗来得瑞克·T.伍德博士(Dr. Frederick T. Wood)原打算在序言中对“通俗用语”(colloquialisms)的意义作一说明,但不幸伍德博士在完成序言以前逝世。因此,关于“通俗用语”、“俚语”等的含义未能写出与读者见面。本书则在附录一、二中对上述问题做了较为正规的介绍与阐述,以期对通俗习语的学习者开启一种视界。

编者

2002年8月

使用说明

一、本书内容结构、体例

1. 主题词或词组: 大写 BAG. (Verb.)

2. 简略解释: Take possession of. 占为己有。

3. 例句: The hall is filling up rapidly. We had better bag (v.) a seat while there are still some left.

例句汉译: 大厅里很快就座无虚席了。我们最好趁早找个空位子坐下。

4. (如有) 补充说明: Sometimes the idea of taking possession without first asking permission is implied. 有时意为“不经许可占为己有”。

例句: I've bagged you newspaper. I hope you didn't mind.

汉译: 我拿你的报纸了。希望你不要介意。

I bags, though ungrammatical, is a set form used to stake a claim to something. I bags (要某物为己有) 虽不合乎语法, 但却是表示要某物的固定表达方式。

例句: I bags that seat. I bags first go.

汉译: 我要那个座位。我要先走。

5. 本书出现的主题词均以英文大写字母排序。

6. 词汇、词组及例句的左前方有 * 符号者为编者根据需要加以补充的内容。如:

* BOTTOM (n.) 末尾、基础。

* BECOME CLOGGED UP 为……所阻塞、所妨碍。

* The main street of the town is a blaze of light(s) in the evening. 城里的大街上晚间呈现一片灯火辉煌。

7. 词汇、例句后面右上角有 * 符号者为编者之注释, 如: 注₁, 注₂, 注₃ 等, 且均为页下注。

二、本书出现的主题词、词组、简释及例句示例分类:

1. 政法方面:

KEEP (ONE'S) EYES SKINNED. Watch very intently and closely; be constantly on the look-out. 提高警惕; 专心和密切注视; 保持警戒。

例: Keep your eyes skinned for any suspicious-looking characters. 擦亮眼睛, 注意可疑分子。

HANGING MATTER. A serious matter. (Usually used in the negative, not a hanging matter.) 处以绞刑的案例, 严重案件。(通常用于否定句, 如: 非绞刑案件。)

例: It is unfortunate that you made that mistake, but don't worry; it's not a hanging matter.

你犯了那种错误是不幸的, 但不要着急; 那还不是要处以绞刑的案子。

HAVE(ONE) UP. Prosecute one at law. 对某人起诉。

例: If he says that sort of thing about me again, I'll have him up for defamation of character.

假如他再说我的那件事, 我就告他诽谤人格罪。

2. 经济方面:

CASH IN ON. Seize an opportunity presented by a situation or occurrence, and turn it to one's own advantage. 靠……赚钱。利用形势或事件, 借机为自己谋取好处。

例: Manufacturers of rainwear were not slow to cash in on the prediction of a wet summer. 雨衣厂商并没有迟滞等待夏日雨季预报而忽视生财之道。

SEE WHICH WAY THE CAT JUMPS. See what turn event will take.

观望形势后再作决策, 以便采取适当措施。

例: I'm not making any further investments while the economic position is so uncertain; I'll wait a while, and see which way the cat jumps. 经济形势尚未稳定时, 我不会进一步投资; 我会静观势态再采取措施。

HAVE THE EDGE ON. Be slightly superior to or better than.

胜过……; 稍优越于……或比……较好。

This make is the dearer of the two so far as initial outlay is concerned, but it has the edge on the other for economy of running-costs. 这个样式是自从涉及到最初支出以来两种之中索价较高的一种, 但在流动成本的经济上则更为优越。

3. 道德规范方面:

COCK OF THE WALK. The recognized leader, whose preeminence and authority no-one dares to challenge. 称王称霸的人。公认的首领, 其支配力权威没人敢与之较量。

例: He had been so used to being cock of the walk in his native village that he found it difficult to accept a subordinate position in his new environment. 他过去习惯于在故乡村子里称雄一时, 以至到了新环境中难以接受一个从属职位。

4. 英国文学方面:

William Shakespeare: 莎士比亚的诗体悲剧 *Hemlet* (《哈姆雷特》) 中第 1 幕第 2 场中下列主题词汇: APPLE-PIE. 井然有序、整整齐齐。

例: By the end of the week we had got everything in apple-pie order.

周末以前我们把一切都安排得井然有序了。

A figure like your father.

(像父亲一样的人物)

Armed at point exactly, cap-a-pie,

Appears before them, and with solemn march,

Goes slow and stately by them.

从头到脚(意为:整整齐齐)准确地武装起来,

严肃地前进,出现在他们的前面,

他们迈着缓慢而庄严的步子。

Charles Dickens: 狄更斯名著 *David Copperfield* (《大卫·科波菲尔》) 第 8 章:

ALL THE WORLD AND HIS WIFE. Everyone. 所有上流社会人士。

All the world and his wife seems to be out in the country today. "Me leave you, my precious!" cried Peggotty. "Not for all the world and his wife. Why, what's put that into your silly little head?"

原主题词组 All the world and his wife 的例句意思是: 当今农村里好像所有的上流社会人士都出去了。本词组援引自 Dickens 原著《David Copperfield》第 8 章的一段对话: 中文意思如下:

"让我把你留下吧, 我的宝贝!" 蓓格梯喊道。"不是为了所有上流社会人士。怎么, 你这个小傻瓜脑袋里装的是什?"

George Bernard Shaw 肖伯纳的 *Epilogue to Saint Joan* (《圣琼思的尾声》)

BEE. A bee in one's bonnet. An idea by which one is obsessed. Charles. Oh, I remember now. I have heard of you. You have a bee in your bonnet about the Maid. Have you been at the inquiry?

奇思怪想。想得入了迷。胡思乱想。被困扰的一个念头。以下是剧中 Charles (查尔斯) 和别人的对话。

查尔斯: 哦, 我现在想起来了, 我所说过你的事。你正迷恋着老修女。你到询问处了吗?

此外, 本书通俗用语词条中还收入了其他还有许多英、美著名文学家、诗人、

作家的语言摘录,如英国作家 Oliver Goldsmith(1728—1774,歌德斯密)、桂冠诗人 William Wordsworth(1770—1850,华茨华绥)、John Galsworthy(1867—1933,高尔斯华绥)、Alfred Tennyson(1809—1892,但尼生)、美国女诗人 Amy Lowell(1874—1925,洛维尔)等。另有部分词条选自英美著名报刊如 *Reynold's Newspaper*(《雷诺兹报》)等。

5. 美国俚语(American Slang):

SAY YOU! I would never accept any money I had not earned by my own effort. — Say you!

我从来不接受不是凭本事赚来的钱——听你胡说!

THAT'S THAT. I had hoped that I should be able to stay with my parents for the week-end; but I learn that they'll not be at home so that's that. 我曾希望能和父母一起度周末,但现在我了解到他们不在家;事实就是这样。

6. 日常生活方面:

EVERYTHING IN THE GARDEN IS LOVELY. Everything is just as one would wish, and could not be improved. (Often used with a suggestion of sarcasm.) 你家的东西哪有不好的!

每件东西都称心如意,不能再更改了。(通常含有讽刺色彩。)

例: How does Jenniffer like her job? — At the moment everything in the garden's lovely. 詹尼佛喜欢她的新工作吗? ——眼下一切称心如意。

ON THE SHELF. A spinster who is beyond the normal marriage-able age is sometimes said to be left on the shelf. 束之高阁。老处女超过正常结婚年龄,尚未结婚,其现状被称为束之高阁。

例: She refused several offers of marriage, and then, at the age of forty, found herself left on the shelf.

她拒绝了多次求婚,到了四十岁,发现自己被“束之高阁”了。

FIX n. 困境。We're in a fix now; it's going to cost us ten shillings to get home, and we two haven't a penny between us.

我们现在处于困境;我们要花上 10 个先令才能到家,可我俩现在身无分文。(同:分文无有。)

FIX v. 安排。There is only one person who is likely to oppose the proposal scheme, and we can fix him.

只有一个人可能要反对提出的计划,我们可以说服他。

BONE n. Having a bone to pick with someone.

本词汇 bone 与骨头无关,是一句俏皮话,意思是“算账”,表示吃了亏要评理。

例: Wait a minute. I have a bone to pick with you.

且慢,我要跟你算账。

He's always been delicate from a child; I'm afraid he won't make old bones.
他总像是比孩子还要娇气;我恐怕他活不长久。

KICK. n. 刺激 I don't care very much for fruit drinks; I like something that has a kick in it. 我倒不是多么在乎水果饮料,我喜欢是里面的劲头。

v. 开始 We kicked off (A metaphor from the start of a football match.) with soup, and then went on to duck and green peas. (足球比赛开始时用的比喻。)我们(用餐时)先上汤,接着是鸭子和青豆。

POTLUCK. Take potluck 这一习语意为“吃顿便饭”。

(以下是用“吃便饭”指“住一般房间”。)

例: If you don't book your accommodation in advance, you may find that all the best places are full, and you'll have to take potluck. 假如你不预订房间,你会发现,所有好住处都已客满,那么你只好“用家常便饭”了。(实际指“只好住一般房间了”。)

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A

A1 (A-One). Excellent; first-class; good in every respect. Originally used by Lloyd's Register* of Shipping in the classification of vessels as regards general condition, seaworthiness, etc. Colloquially, used as a term of high commendation for anything. The *Oxford Dictionary* gives the following two examples.

"He must be a first-rater," said Sam.

"A1", replied Mr Roker.

(Dickens, *The Pickwick Papers*)

The Chinese police are certainly A1 at such work. (*Reynolds's Newspaper*, 24 Nov. 1861)

A. 1. (A-One). 最好的; 头等; 各方面都好。

早期英国劳埃德商船协会根据船舶一般情况、抗风浪性能等进行了分类。将 A. 1 (A-One) 做为任何事物的高级表扬的通俗用语。《牛津词典》举了以下二例:

例: 1. "他一定是一流评估师," 萨姆说。

2. "A 字一号。" 罗克先生回答道。
(载狄更斯:《匹克威克外传》)

中国警察做这项工作肯定是第一流的。(载《雷诺兹报》1861 年 11 月 24 日版)

ABIDE. (vt. vi.) Bear; endure; put up with. (Usually used in the negative, cannot abide.)

I can't abide people who are always boasting of their own achievements.

I can't abide a butcher,

I can't abide his meat,

The ugliest shop of all is his,

The ugliest in the street.

(Walter de la Mare, *I Can't*

Abear)

忍耐; 容忍; 容忍 (动词) (讨厌的人或事物等) 通常用于否定句, "不能容忍"。

例: 1. 我不能容忍那些总是夸大自己成绩的人们。

2. 我不能容忍一个屠夫,
我不能容忍他(卖)的肉,
最难看的商店就是他的,
街上最难看的。

(载 Walter de la Mare 著《我不能容忍》)

* 编者注: Lloyd's Register (of British and Foreign Shipping)《劳埃德船舶年鉴》(以劳埃德命名的英国商船协会出版物, 刊有船舶的载明吨位、等级等)

ABOUT. (prep.) Note the colloquial construction *it is + adjective + about + noun*, where *about* refers to a notion implied in *it* + the noun, and understood from the context or situation.

It's very sad about Mrs Brown, isn't it? (i. e. she has died, been injured, or suffered some misfortune).

It's unfortunate about your holiday (i. e. that you have had to cancel it, change the date, etc.).

ABSOLUTE. (adj.) Used for purposes of emphasis, with a meaning approximating to "complete", e. g. *an absolute fool, an absolute nuisance, an absolute pleasure, an absolute treat.*

Hence *absolutely* = completely.

It is absolutely stupid to say that.

It absolutely poured with rain.

You can trust him to be absolutely fair.

ACHES AND PAINS. A cliché used to denote physical pains of various kind.

I wish she would be a bit more cheerful; she is always complaining of her aches and pains.

ACTUALLY. Used to suggest that the fact stated would seem incredible.

The unscrupulous fellow actually robbed his own mother.

Sometimes used also as an exclamation to express surprise or

有关(介词)。注意通俗用语结构 *it is + 形容词 + about + 名词*, 这里 *about* 涉及含有 *it + 名词* 的意思, 可从上下文及情境加以理解。

例: 1. 布朗夫人处境很惨, 是吗?
(指: 她死了, 受伤了或遭不幸。)

2. 你的假期很不如意。(指: 取消了假期, 改变了日期等。)

用于强调目的, 意义接近“完全”, 例: 十足的傻子, 非常讨厌, 绝对高兴, 丰盛的招待。

absolutely = *completely* (绝对地 = 完完全全地)

例: 1. 说这样的话是完全愚蠢的。

2. 下了一场透雨。

3. 你可以相信他是绝对公平合理的。

ACHES AND PAINS. 表示各种生理疼痛的老词语。

例: 但愿她能再高兴一点才好; 可是她总抱怨自己的病痛。

ACTUALLY. 居然, 实际上。(副词)用以表示所说事实似不可信。

例: 这个没良心的家伙居然偷到他自己的母亲头上了。

有时也用来做感叹词, 表示令人惊奇或不可思议。

incredulity.

After cheating me in that way he had the cheek to ask me for a loan of five pounds. —Actually!

ADAM. (pron.) *As old as Adam.* * Of great antiquity; going back a long way in history. (Sometimes used in the literal sense of “to the beginning of the human race”, but more often as hyperbole.)

That custom is as old as Adam.

I shouldn't know him from Adam. I should be quite unable to recognise him.

I knew him when we were at school together, but that's many years ago. If I were to meet him today I shouldn't know him from Adam.

Sometimes used also, though illogically, of a woman. There is no equivalent idiom *I shouldn't know her from Eve.*

The old Adam. Unregenerate human nature.

Despite many centuries of civilisation, there is still a bit of the old Adam in all of us.

例:他用那种方法把我欺骗了以后,竟厚着脸皮向我借五英镑。——竟然有这等事!

亚当(代词)。[旧约圣经说他是人类始祖、原始第一人。]很古老的……;回顾历史的久远年代。(有时用于字面意思“溯自人类种族的起源”,但更多的用于夸张。)

例:那个风俗很古老。

我与他素不相识。我完全认不出他来了。

例:当我们上学时,我认识他,但那是多年前的事了。如果我现在看见他就会认不出他来了。

尽管不合逻辑,此短语有时也可用于妇女。没有与之相当的成语:我和这女人素不相识。

The old Adam. 此处意为不能改变的人类天性。

例:虽然经过几个世纪的文明,在我们身上仍然存在或多或少难以改变的原始本性。

ADVERT or AD (noun). An 广告或 AD. (名词)。advertisement 的

* 注: as old as Adam 直译是“与亚当一样老”,因为亚当是最早的人类,这个习语自然是指很久以前的,极古老的。not know someone from Adam 从字面上看“不知道某人与亚当有什么区别”,同样,由于亚当是人类的始祖,没有什么人会见过他,所以这个习语的意思就成了“完全不知道(他是什么人)”。如:When I met her again a few days later, it appeared that she didn't know me from Adam. (几天后我又碰见她,她好像早已忘了我姓甚名谁。)

——载《英语学习》2000年第1期第45页曹君鸿著《从 raise Cain 谈起》

abbreviated form of *advertisement*, sometimes heard in spoken English (e. g. *put an advert in the newspaper*), but usually regarded as a vulgarism or illiteracy.

AFFAIR(n.) Used loosely in the sense of "thing", "object", or even "a piece of work" or "performance".

What's that strange-looking affair over there?

His car is only a second-hand affair.

The concert was rather an amateurish affair.

Usually used disparagingly, though not necessarily so. It is quite possible to describe something as "rather a neat little affair".

Her hat was a wonderful affair.

缩写形式,有时在英语口语中可以听到,(如:在报纸上登一则广告),但通常当做粗俗及文盲用语。

不严格地用于表示“事情”、“物体”乃至“一项工作”或“演出”的意思。

例:1. 那里发生了什么怪事?

2. 他那辆汽车不过是一辆旧车。

3. 音乐会不过是业余表演水平。

通常用于贬义,尽管不必要。很可能用以描写一件比较整洁的小东西。

例:她的帽子是一件绝妙之物。

AFTER ALL. 1. Contrary to what was supposed or expected.

1. I managed to get to the meeting after all.

2. We took our raincoats with us, but we did not need them after all.

II. When everything else is taken into consideration.

Jack may have treated you rather shabbily, but if he is in serious difficulties, I think you should help him. After all, he is your brother.

1. 与假设或预期的情况正相反。

例:1. 我终于设法到会。

2. 我们都随身携带着雨衣,但我们都不需要。(都没用上)

II. 当时每件事都已考虑过。

例:杰克过去可能怠慢了你,但如果他的处境非常困难,我想你应该帮助他。因为他必竟是你的弟兄。

AGE. (n.) See AGES.

I haven't seen you for ages.

很长一段时间,(名词,常用复数)。参见 AGES 条。

AGES. A very long time.

It has taken me ages to get this garden in order.

That happened ages ago. I have not been to the pictures [i. e. the cinema] for ages.

An age is also used with a similar meaning (e. g. *a few minutes that seemed like an age*), but this is mainly in literary and more formal spoken English.

For *this day and age*, see under DAY.

ALIVE AND KICKING. Very vigorous and active.

I thought your grandfatehr was dead. —Far from it; he is very much alive and kicking.

The reference may originally have been to a new-born baby.

ALIVE WITH. Infested with living creatures of a verminous or destructive kind.

All my best cabbages were alive with caterpillars.

Figuratively:

The town was alive with rumours of one sort and another.

The whole square was alive with singing and rejoicing.

ALL AGOG. (adv. adj.) In a state of excited expectancy.

例:我很久没看见你了。

很长一段时间。

例:1. 我花了很长时间把这花园整理得井然有序。

2. 那是很久以前的事了。我很久没有看电影了。

an age 也用于表示相同意义(即几分钟像很久),仅限于文学语言和更为正式的英语口语中。

this day and age 今天这个时代。参见 DAY 条。

很生动、活泼。

例:1. 我以为你的祖父死了。——没有想到他还活得好着呢。

2. 这本参考书可能本来是针对新生婴儿的。

充满(长满),侵袭,被害虫或有害小生物侵袭。

例:我所有的好卷心菜都长满了毛毛虫。

比喻意义地:

例:1. 这座城市充满这样那样的谣言。

2. 整个广场歌声嘹亮,喜气洋洋。

急着要(副词、形容词作表语);兴奋地期待。

The children were all agog to hear the story.

例:孩子们都兴奋地期待着听故事。

ALL ALONG. From the very beginning of an affair, project, etc.

从某件事情、计划等的最初时候起。

I said all along he was not a person to be trusted, but you would not listen to me.

例:我当初就说过他这个人不可靠,但是你们不听我的话。

ALL AND SUNDRY. Strictly, all taken collectively and individually, but in colloquial usage merely a periphrasis for *all or everyone*.

全部地。严格来讲,包括全体和个别,但在通俗用语中用法仅仅是作为 *all* 或 *everyone* 的迂回词语来用。

We shall have to restrict the number of guests; we can't invite all and sundry.

例:我们将对来宾的人数加以限制;因为我们不能邀请所有人。

ALL AT ONCE. Suddenly.

忽然地。

I had been puzzling over the problem for over an hour without any result, when all at once the solution flashed across my mind.

例:1. 我在这个问题上困惑了一个多钟头,一点结果都没有,忽然间一个解决的方法闪现在我脑海之中。

All at once I saw a crowd,

2. 我忽然间看见一群,

A host of golden daffodils.

一束金黄色的水仙花。

(Wordsworth, *The Daffodils*)

(载 W. 华兹华斯:《水仙花》)

(But this idiom must not be confused with the same sequence of words in such a sentence as *We shall have to make several journeys for the goods; we cannot take them all at once*. Here *all* is part of the object of *take*, and *at once* is an adverb phrase meaning "in a single operation".)

但此成语不要与下句中相同语序的单词相混:

“我们不能把这些货物(*them all*)马上运走;我们得分几次运走。”这里 *all* 是 *take* 的宾语之部分, *at once* 是副词短语,作状语用,意为“通过一次操作”。

He left all at once.

all at once 可分为以下几种情况:

例:1. 突然;他突然离开。

2. 同时;大家不要同时发言。单独

* 注: W. 华兹华斯(William Wordsworth)(1770—1850):18—19 世纪英国诗人,1846 年—1850 年为桂冠诗人。

Don't talk all at once. Speak one by one.

轮流讲。

ALL AT SEA. Completely confused.

The guide was ready enough with his usual pate on the history of the place, but as soon as you began to question him on anything outside that, he was all at sea.

We've only a foggy idea of the matter, we're at sea as what to do next.

不知所措。

例:1. 这位导游对本地掌故准备充足,对答如流,但是当你开始问他外地的情况时他就不知所以了。

2. 我们对那件事情只有一个模糊概念,我们全然不知下一步该怎么办。

ALL BUT. Nearly; almost. (Used mainly before adjectives and past participles, but sometimes also before finite verbs.)

The new building was all but complete when it was destroyed by fire.

The work is all but finished.

She all but wept when she heard the news.

几乎;接近(主要用于形容词和过去分词的前面,但有时用在限定性谓语动词前面。)

例:1. 这座新楼差一点就建完了,却被一把火烧了。

2. 这工作接近尾声了。

3. 当她听到这消息,几乎哭出来。

ALL FOR. Entirely or completely in favour of.

I'm all for anything that makes life easier.

As usual, John was all for going: taking the risk, and getting out of Germany. But Peter was cautious. (Eric Williams, *The Wooden Horse*, Phase II, ch. ix)

全面或完全赞同……

例:1. 凡是使生活安逸一些的事我都赞成。

2. 约翰和往常一样是赞成出行的:去冒险,离开德国。但彼得是谨慎的。(Eric Williams 著:《木马》第九章,第二阶段)。

ALL IN. Everything included.

I reckon it costs me two hundred pounds a year to run my car, all in.

一切包括在内。

例:1. 我计算起来,开这辆车,一年各项开销,总共花了200英镑。