

# Idiomatic American English

[美] *Barbara K. Gaines*

## 地道美国英语九百句

——美国日常习惯用语入门

张虎豹 刘若谷 译注  
汤臣健 审校

谢 伦 出

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本书由 100 课组成，汇集了 900 句常用的美国习惯用语

你对美国惯用语熟悉吗？你理解“on the ball (玩得愉快)”，“hold your horses (等待)”，“once in a blue moon (千载难逢)”，“spitting image (完全相象)”这些普通的表达吗？

现在你可以学习这类非正规的惯用语言——地道美国人所讲的英语。

《地道美国英语九百句》给予你：

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- 一百课中900个惯用语：具有明确的解释、特定的情景会话和许多供你温习新词的练习。
- 全部练习的答案：这样你可以马上改正你学习中的错误，提高你的学习效率。
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美国人有丰富的惯用语词汇，你学得越多，你讲美国英语就越容易。学习美国惯用语使你的生活增添无穷乐趣。望君从今天开始学习《地道美国英语九百句》！

### 地道美国英语九百句

Barbara K. Gaines 著

张虎豹 刘若谷 译注

汤臣健 审校

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## 前 言

惯用表达使英语增加了色彩和活力，它们是人们日常会话和报纸、书籍、电视、电影用语中必需的组成部分。

每当你遇到某个短语时，尽管你知道短语中每个词的含意，但却不懂这个短语的意思，那么，你或许碰到了习惯用语。掌握习惯用语需要大量地听、学、练和用，你不应该忽视英语的这个部分，即忽视习惯用语，而应将其与较正规的语法同等看待。本书将使你学会这类非正规的用语，包括惯用语和俚语，所有这些短语通常为所有地道美国人知晓，不管其所受教育的程度如何。

习惯用语的难易程度是不同的，本书在编排每一组课文时，从易学的课文开始，以程度较难的课文结束，然而，你可以按你所喜欢的顺序学习，因为每一课都自成体系。

由于在有意义的上下文中，学习习惯用语效果最佳，因而每课以对话开始，接下来的词汇部分对出现的习惯用语给出清楚、准确的解释。这一部分中注记“neg.”，指该习惯用语通常用于否定句中，例如，have the heart to (忍心) (neg.)，说明该短语一般用于否定句中，如“I didn't have the heart to tell her. (我不忍心告诉她)”。在括号中给出替换词的地方，两个词可以互换，例如，down the drain (浪费或丢弃) (tubes)，意指你既可以说“down the drain”，也可以说“down the tubes”。

每课包括两部分练习。在第一部分中，要求你选择正确的习惯用语完成句子；在第二部分中，你将用习惯用语替换练习中斜体短语或句子，选择合适的动词时态及主谓一致。例如 I face the music (我勇于承担后果)；She faces the music (她勇于承担后果)；Yesterday they faced the music (昨天，他们勇于承担后果)。151 页至 156 页为练习的答案\*。

习惯用语分为几类，下面给出各类的定义：

n.) = 名词惯用语。可以是简单名词，pad (公寓房间)，flop (失败)；也可以是被修饰的名词，eager beaver (做事特别卖力的人)，backseat driver (干涉与自己职责无关事情的人)；或者是名词短语，apple of my eye (珍爱的人，常指儿子或女儿)，Short end of the stick (不公正、不平等的待遇)。

v.) = 动词惯用语。有一词动词，splurge (挥霍)，freeload (占别人的便宜)；双词动词，rip off (骗、偷)，count on (信赖、依靠)；动词短语，throw in the towel (投降、放弃)，face the music (勇于承担后果、临危不惧)。

adj.) = 形容词惯用语。cool (极妙的)，swamped (淹没、充满)，gung-ho (热切的、渴望的)，half-baked (愚蠢的)。

adv.) = 副词惯用语。on easy street (生活优裕)，in a nutshell (简要地说)，once in a blue moon (千载难逢地)。

某些惯用表达为完整的句子，The coast is clear (没有看见敌人)，Mum's the word (别声张)，Let bygones be bygones (过去的事让它过去吧)。

\* 译注：页码已重新编排。

大多数习惯用语有固定的构成，如果你改变其构成，它会失去其原意。严格地按照本书给出的构成，学习并应用它们，仔细地听地道美国人如何使用它们，不久你也会运用自如。

本书最后为完整的词汇表，以字母为序，列出了本书中所出现过的所有习惯用语。词汇表将使你找出你第一次碰到的惯用短语的意思。课文将帮助你在适当的上下文中练习这些惯用表达。

《地道美国英语九百句》对想获得更生动、更完整词汇的任何人都有帮助，尤其会使那些已有正规英语基础的人受益最深。本书的目标是清楚地解释习惯用语，因此，在日常生活中，如果你掌握了它们，那么你就会对普通美国人的讲话，听起来更舒服、更熟悉，你也能够更好地表达自己的思想。

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## Lesson 1. Having a Ball

### Dialogue 对话 (每课相同, 后面不再译出)

Tina: I feel like **having a ball**. Let's **splurge**.

Barbara: Forget it. I'm **broke**.

Tina: Don't worry. I'll **pick up the tab**. I'm **loaded** today. I'll **treat** you.

Barbara: No, we'll **go Dutch**. I don't like to **freeload**.

### Vocabulary 词汇 (每课相同, 后面不再译出)

|                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| have a ball     | v.) enjoy one's self, have a good time    |
| splurge         | v.) spend a lot of money for something    |
| broke           | adj.) having no money                     |
| pick up the tab | v.) pay the bill                          |
| loaded          | adj.) having lots of money                |
| treat           | v.) pay for someone else                  |
| go Dutch        | v.) each pay for himself or herself       |
| freeload        | v.) get things <u>that others pay for</u> |

### Exercise I. Complete the sentences with the correct idiom.

练习一 用正确的惯用短语完成句子。(每课相同, 后面不再译出)

a) pick up the tab b) broke c) loaded d) splurge e) treat f) go Dutch g) freeloads h) have a ball

1. I don't want pizza tonight. Let's go to a fancy restaurant. Let's \_\_\_\_\_.
2. I have so much money today. I'm \_\_\_\_\_.
3. You're going to a party? \_\_\_\_\_.
4. I don't have any money. I'm \_\_\_\_\_.
5. You pay for your meal. I'll pay for mine. We'll \_\_\_\_\_.
6. This dinner was good. You don't have to pay. I'll \_\_\_\_\_.
7. She always eats dinner with us, and never invites us to eat at her house. She always \_\_\_\_\_.
8. Don't pay for that. I will. I'll \_\_\_\_\_.

### Exercise II. Rewrite the phrases in italics, using the proper idiomatic expression.

练习二 使用适当的惯用语替换斜体短语。(每课相同, 后面不再译出)

1. They always *get others to pay for them*. *freeload*
2. I want to *pay for you*.
3. We will *each pay our own bill*.
4. Sometimes I *spend a lot of money* on clothes.
5. After payday, I *always have a lot of money*.
6. Who *paid the check*?
7. When I go to a party, I usually *have a good time*.
8. After I pay all my bills, I *have no money*.

## Lesson 2. Footing the Bill

### Dialogue

Florence: I'm always **running out of** food.

Tina: Why don't you **pick up** some **odds and ends** at the store?

Florence: Because I'm **fed up with** having to **foot the bill**. I don't like to throw my money **down the drain**.

Tina: Have everyone **chip in**.

Florence: No, just **skip it**.

### Vocabulary

|                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| run out of             | v.) finish the supply, use up               |
| pick up                | v.) obtain, get                             |
| odds and ends          | n.) miscellaneous items                     |
| fed up with            | adj.) <u>disgusted with</u> , had enough of |
| foot the bill          | v.) pay                                     |
| down the drain (tubes) | adj. or adv.) wasted, lost                  |
| chip in                | v.) contribute, give jointly                |
| skip                   | v.) forget, pass over                       |

### Exercise I. Complete the sentences with the correct idiom.

a) runs out of b) pick some up c) down the drain d) odds and ends e) fed up with f) counts a bill g) chip in h) skip

1. She doesn't like cooking every night. She's \_\_\_\_\_ it.
2. Everybody occasionally \_\_\_\_\_ bread and milk.
3. He goes to college and lives at home. He doesn't have a job yet. His father is \_\_\_\_\_.
4. I bought a pair of shoes that don't fit me. I wore them once but my feet hurt. I can't wear them anymore. That was money \_\_\_\_\_.
5. Susan wanted to go to the movies but John was too tired. She told him to \_\_\_\_\_ it.
6. I'm almost packed for vacation. I only need suntan lotion, toothpaste and other \_\_\_\_\_.
7. I don't have enough money to buy that color TV. How much do you have? If all of us \_\_\_\_\_, we can buy it.
8. I don't have any bread. I have to \_\_\_\_\_.

### Exercise II. Rewrite the phrases in italics, using the proper idiomatic expression.

1. We *used all the* milk yesterday.
2. I must *get* a loaf of bread.
3. I'm *disgusted with* riding the subways.
4. Whenever they went for dinner, he had to *pay*.
5. If you gamble, it's money *wasted*.
6. We're buying her a gift and asking everyone to *contribute*.
7. We need some *miscellaneous items* for the party.
8. *Forget it!*

### Lesson 3. Making Ends Meet

#### Dialogue

- Barbara: You're **clotheshorse**.  
Harriet: I know. I love **dressing up**.  
Barbara: Do you **shop around** a lot for bargains?  
Harriet: I'm lucky. I work for a department store and I get a discount on merchandise.  
Barbara: That's **great** because everything is **sky-high**.  
Harriet: Yes, it's difficult **making ends meet**.  
Barbara: We have to **cut corners**.  
Harriet: Me too. I've **cut down on** luxuries.

#### Vocabulary

|                |   |
|----------------|---|
| clotheshorse   | n.) a conspicuously well-dressed person       |
| dress up       | v.) wear one's best clothes                   |
| shop around    | v.) look in many stores                       |
| great          | adj.) terrific, wonderful                     |
| sky-high       | adj.) expensive                               |
| make ends meet | v.) balance one's budget, meet one's payments |
| cut corners    | v.) limit one's buying                        |
| cut down on    | v.) use less, reduce                          |

#### Exercise I. Complete the sentences with the correct idiom.

a) shop around b) great c) clotheshorse d) dress up e) sky-high f) cut down on g) make ends meet h) cut corners

1. She's looking for a particular dress. She can't find it so she has to \_\_\_\_\_.
2. She's too fat. She has to \_\_\_\_\_ food.
3. I have to save some money so I won't be eating in a restaurant for a while. I have to \_\_\_\_\_.
4. A lot of rich people live in that building. The rent is \_\_\_\_\_.
5. You're getting a raise. That's \_\_\_\_\_.
6. I made \$300 but I spent \$400. I can't \_\_\_\_\_.
7. She dresses very well. She's a \_\_\_\_\_.
8. Your clothes look terrible. We're going out to dinner. Why don't you take a bath and \_\_\_\_\_.

#### Exercise II. Rewrite the phrases in italics, using the proper idiomatic expression.

1. I'm *looking for* a television.
2. Rents in New York City are *very expensive*.
3. That's a *terrific* idea.
4. I *got all my debts paid* v. month.
5. I'm *spending all my money*. I must *limit my buying*.
6. He must *reduce* the number of cigarettes he smokes.
7. She is *always very well dressed*.
8. Whenever company comes to their house, the children must *wear their best clothes*.

## Lesson 4. Raking It In

### Dialogue

- Florence: He was in the casino and started to **make a bundle**. He was really **raking it in**.  
George: I bet he thought he **had it made**.  
Florence: Then he started **losing his shirt**.  
George: With his temper, he probably **hit the ceiling**.  
Florence: Sure. The casino **took him to the cleaners**.  
George: Was he a **good sport**?  
Florence: Oh no. He was a **sore loser**.

### Vocabulary

|                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| make a bundle                | v. make a lot of money                       |
| rake it in                   | v. make a lot of money                       |
| have it made                 | v. be sure of success, have everything       |
| lose one's shirt             | v. lose all one's money                      |
| hit the ceiling              | v. get angry                                 |
| take someone to the cleaners | v. win all of someone's money, cheat someone |
| good sport                   | n. person who loses well                     |
| sore loser                   | n. person who gets angry when he loses       |

### Exercise I. Complete the sentences with the correct idiom.

- a) take it in   b) made a bundle   c) hit the ceiling   d) lost his shirt   e) sore loser   f) good sport  
g) has it made   h) took him to the cleaners

1. He has a terrific wife, lots of money, a good job, a lot of friends. He \_\_\_\_\_.
2. He went to Las Vegas and came back without any money. He \_\_\_\_\_.
3. When he lost the tennis match, he wouldn't shake his opponent's hand. He's a \_\_\_\_\_.
4. When his son got a poor grade in school, the father \_\_\_\_\_.
5. When it's very hot in the summer, ice cream stores \_\_\_\_\_.
6. He bought that stock at \$1 a share and sold it ten years later at \$100 a share. He \_\_\_\_\_.
7. Even though he lost, he was happy for the winner because he deserved the prize. He's a \_\_\_\_\_.
8. He invested money in a business deal that was bad. They \_\_\_\_\_.

### Exercise II. Rewrite the phrases in italics, using the proper idiomatic expression.

1. He is *very fortunate*. He *has everything*.
2. Don't play with him. He *gets angry if you win*.
3. He's *making a lot of money now*.
4. The owner of the ski lodge *makes a lot of money* when it snows.
5. If you bother him, he'll *get angry*.
6. Bob *cheated him out of his money*.
7. He *bet all his money and didn't win*.
8. I don't mind playing cards with him. *If he loses, he doesn't get angry*.

## Lesson 5. Caught Short

### Dialogue

Karen: At the end of the week, I'm always **caught short**.

Joanne: That's because **money burns a hole in your pocket**. I don't feel sorry for you.

Karen: How can I **tighten my belt**?

Joanne: You're going to have to **do without** in order to **get along**.

Karen: I know. I'll try **brown bagging** it. Within a short time I'll be **in the chips** again.

### Vocabulary

|                             |   |
|-----------------------------|---|
| caught short                | adj.) having an insufficient supply (especially of money) when needed |
| burn a hole in one's pocket | v.) to be spent quickly   |
| feel sorry for              | v.) pity  |
| tighten one's belt          | v.) economize, spend and use less                                     |
| do without                  | v.) live without something  |
| get along                   | v.) manage  |
| brown bag                   | v.) bring one's lunch from home                                       |
| in the chips                | adj.) having plenty of money  |

### Exercise I. Complete the sentences with the correct idiom.

a) money burns a hole in her pocket   b) tighten his belt   c) feel sorry for   d) caught short   e) do without   f) in the chips   g) brown bag   h) to get along

1. Sometimes I don't have enough cake when company comes over. I'm \_\_\_\_\_.
2. She studied so hard for that exam but she failed it. I \_\_\_\_\_ her.
3. As soon as she gets some money she has to spend it. \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Arthur lost his job. He's going to have to \_\_\_\_\_.
5. I can't find a new car in my price range. I think I'll have to \_\_\_\_\_ one.
6. He has a large family to support. It's not easy \_\_\_\_\_ on his salary.
7. He went to work on the holiday but all the restaurants were closed. He had to \_\_\_\_\_ it.
8. His family is very prosperous. They're \_\_\_\_\_.

### Exercise II. Rewrite the phrases in italics, using the proper idiomatic expression.

1. He's trying to save money so he's *taking his lunch to work*.
2. She's on a diet. She *can't have* ice cream.
3. They have a lot of problems. I *pity* them.
4. The bill came to \$25 but I only had \$20 with me. I *didn't have enough*.
5. They have a beautiful home. They're *wealthy*.
6. My car is being repaired. I have to *manage* without it for a while.
7. I'm not making enough money. I'm going to have to *economize*.
8. As soon as he gets some money, he *spends it*.

## Lesson 6. An Arm and a Leg

### Dialogue

Diane: That **car** is in **A-1** condition, but it would cost **an arm and a leg**.

Tina: I didn't **know** you were **in the market for** another car.

Diane: I'm **thinking** about it, but **for the time being**, I'll use this jalopy. It'll do **in a pinch**.

Tina: I'm **sure** a new one will **set you back** 10 grand. **That ain't hay!**

### Vocabulary

|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| A-1                | adj.) excellent                           |
| set one back       | v.) cost                                  |
| an arm and a leg   | n.) a large amount of money               |
| in the market for  | adj.) wanting or ready to buy             |
| for the time being | adv.) at the present time                 |
| jalopy             | n.) old car usually in poor condition     |
| in a pinch         | adv.) okay when nothing else is available |
| grand              | n.) \$1,000                               |
| That ain't hay!    | That's a lot of money.                    |

### Exercise I. Complete the sentences with the correct idiom.

a) in the market for   b) for the time being   c) in a pinch   d) that ain't hay   e) grand   f) set me back  
g) an arm and a leg   h) jalopy   i) A-1

1. I exercise every day and I'm in \_\_\_\_\_ shape.
2. I finally bought a fur coat but it \_\_\_\_\_ \$3,000.
3. A gold watch costs \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Newlyweds are usually \_\_\_\_\_ a new house.
5. It's not time for dinner and I'm hungry. \_\_\_\_\_ I'll just have a candy bar.
6. When a teenager buys a car, he usually can only afford a \_\_\_\_\_.
7. If you don't have a needle to sew something together, a safety pin will do \_\_\_\_\_.
8. It will cost you more than one \_\_\_\_\_ to fly to Australia. You have to admit \_\_\_\_\_.

### Exercise II. Rewrite the phrases in italics, using the proper idiomatic expression.

1. Five thousand dollars? *That's a lot of money.*
2. All I seem to find are *old cars in bad condition.*
3. Sending a child through college today can cost parents *a lot of money.*
4. *I want to buy* a very good leather jacket.
5. There was no food in the house except for a dozen eggs. I don't like eggs that much but I eat them *when there's nothing else.*
6. I just had a big lunch so *at the present time* I'm not hungry.
7. I bought a used typewriter. It's *in excellent condition.*
8. I'm sure that new car *cost him* a lot of money.



## Lesson 7. A Nest Egg

### Dialogue

Stan: He's always **squawking about** money.

Jim: If he had a **nest egg**, he wouldn't have to worry.

Stan: It's difficult to **salt away** money today.

Jim: That's true. And he tries to **keep up with the Joneses**.

Stan: Not really. He tries to save, but the family expenses are **on his shoulders**. That's why he's **on pins and needles**.

Jim: Why doesn't he play the lottery?

Stan: Because he can **bank on** the fact that he's not going to **make a killing** that way.

### Vocabulary

|                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| squawk about             | v. / complain about                           |
| nest egg                 | n. / extra money saved                        |
| salt away                | v. / save, keep hidden until needed           |
| keep up with the Joneses | v. / try to equal your neighbors' lifestyle   |
| on one's shoulders       | adj. / or adv. / one's responsibility         |
| on pins and needles      | adj. / nervous, excited                       |
| bank on                  | v. / count on, be sure of                     |
| make a killing           | v. / earn a large amount of money at one time |

### Exercise I. Complete the sentences with the correct idiom.

a) salts away b) keep up with the Joneses c) made a killing d) squawks about e) nest egg f) bank on g) on his shoulders h) on pins and needles

1. Anybody who goes into the army \_\_\_\_\_ the food.
2. When you retire at 65 years old, it's good to have a \_\_\_\_\_.
3. He wants a new car, so every week he \_\_\_\_\_ some money.
4. He's getting married tomorrow. He's \_\_\_\_\_.
5. Many years ago, he bought stock at \$10 a share. It's now worth \$1,000 a share. He sold it and \_\_\_\_\_.
6. The cost of real estate will go much higher. You can \_\_\_\_\_ that.
7. If his neighbor gets a new car, he does too. He thinks he has to \_\_\_\_\_.
8. Any president has the problems of his country \_\_\_\_\_.

### Exercise II. Rewrite the phrases in italics, using the proper idiomatic expression.

1. He *made a large amount of money* in real estate.
2. School children always *complain about* having a lot of homework.
3. He's waiting to hear if he got the job. He's *very nervous*.
4. *Anything her neighbor has, she wants.*
5. It's always nice to have *extra money available*.
6. If you make a lot of money, you're going to have to pay a lot of taxes. You can *count on* that.
7. He's *responsible for all the work in his office*.
8. He's going to retire in a couple of years. He *saved* money so that he would have it when he needed it.