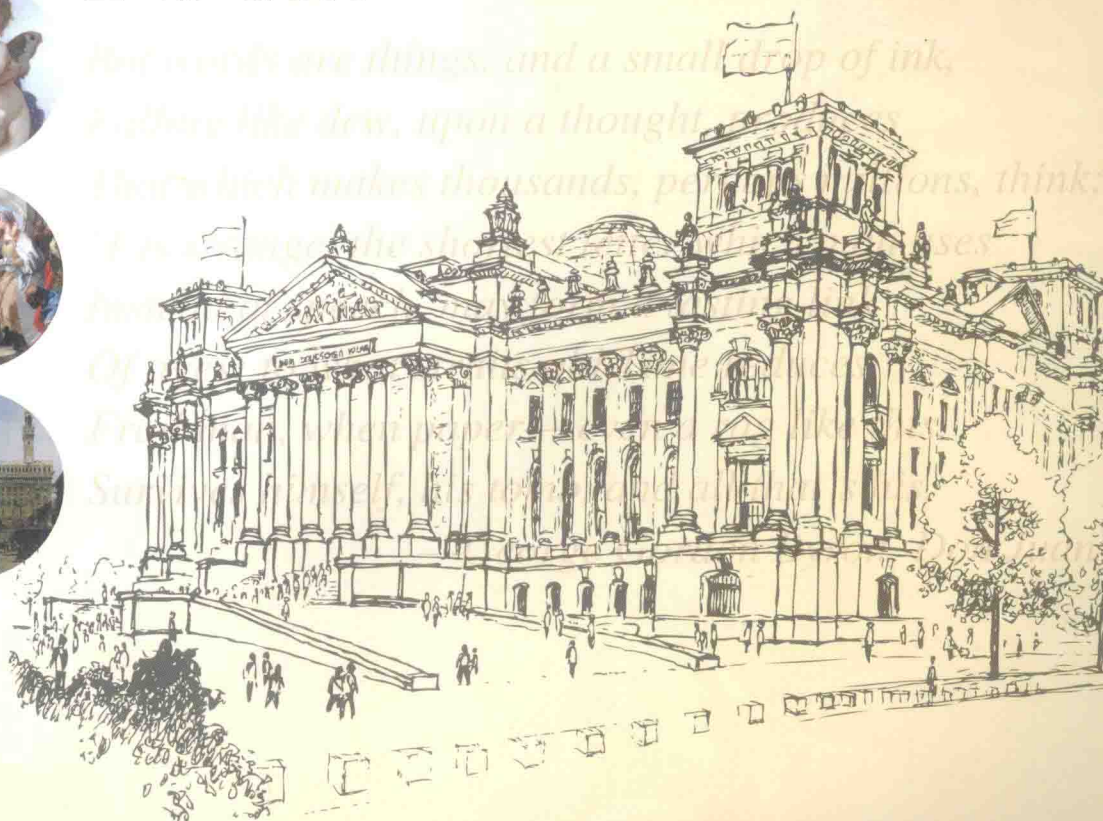


大学英语选修课系列教材

# 英语语言与文化典故

*The English Language and  
Major Sources of Its Allusions*

主 编 邸爱英



重庆大学出版社

<http://www.cqup.com.cn>

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主 编 邸爱英

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## 内容提要

本书以文化典故的角度为着眼点,引导学生在深入了解英语文化的基础上,增强英语学习兴趣,丰富英语语言知识,提高英语应用水平,欣赏英语文学之美。全书共四个章节,涵盖英语习语、圣经文本、希腊罗马神话、莎士比亚著作四个方面,每章节在研读经典的基础上,围绕阅读材料提出问题激发批判性思考,并提供中西方对比主题的延伸阅读以及趣味欣赏。本书适用于英语语言文化类选修课程,也可供具有一定英语水平的学生课外自修。

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# 总 序

我国的大学英语教学起步于20世纪80年代,经过20多年的发展,大学英语在教学水平、课程设置、教学方法、教学环境、师资队伍等各个方面都有了长足的进步和发展。但随着我国加入WTO和国民经济的快速发展,大学英语教学暴露出与时代要求不相称的一面。为适应现代社会对人才培养的实际需求,推动和指导大学英语教学改革,教育部于2003年颁布了《大学英语课程教学要求(试行)》(以下简称《要求》),并于2007年结合对人才能力培养的新要求再次做了修订和调整,作为全国各高校组织非英语专业本科生英语教学的主要依据。

《要求》将大学阶段的英语教学分为一般要求、较高要求和更高要求三个层次,强调要贯彻分类指导、因材施教的原则,使英语教学朝着个性化的方向发展,要“将综合英语类、语言技能类、语言应用类、语言文化类和专业英语类等必修课程和选修课程有机结合,形成一个完整的大学英语课程体系,以确保不同层次的学生在英语应用能力方面得到充分的训练和提高”。这样,大力发展大学英语选修课就成了大学英语教学改革的重要课题。

大学英语选修课的开设不仅是《大学英语课程教学要求(试行)》精神的体现,也是《教育部财政部关于实施高等学校本科教学质量与教学改革工程的意见》(以下简称《意见》)的内在要求。《意见》将“学生的实践能力和创新精神显著增强”作为教学改革的重要目标之一,而大学英语教学要在这方面有所作为的话,必须注重培养学生的跨文化交际能力、文化素养和在全球化、信息化的背景下获取知识的能力,这显然是传统的大学英语教学和课程设置所不能胜任的。

近年来,全国许多高校纷纷进行了开设大学英语选修课的尝试,并取得了可喜的成绩。但是,由于指导思想不明晰、教师知识结构单一和配套改革滞后等原因,在大学英语选修课的开设中出现了“因人设庙”,开课随意性强,开课种类单一,各门课程难易不均,课程测试不规范,学生对各门课程的兴趣差异过大等问题。大学英语选修课的开设迫切需要某种程度的规范与引导,需要更为科学地设置选修课程,确实达到《要求》和《意见》中提出的目标。

针对以上问题,我们认为,一套由成熟理念指引的、体系科学的、建立在选修课开设的成功实践基础之上的系列教材能够起到这种规范和引导作用。因此,重庆大学出版社组织来自全国各地的、在选修课开设方面走在前列的高校的专家和教师,在多次交流与反复论证的基础上,组织编写了这套《大学英语选修课系列教材》。该套教材具有以下明显的特点:

第一,教材体系科学、系统。系列教材以《大学英语课程教学要求(试行)》为指导,覆盖语言技能类、语言应用类、语言文化类和专业英语类4个板块,既注重语言基础知识的积累,也充分考虑对学生文化素质的培养,确保不同层次的学生在英语应用能力方面得到充分的训练和提高。

第二,坚持“实用、够用”的原则。在体例安排和内容选择上严格按照选修课的课时要求和学生水平的实际需要,力求精练,避免长篇累牍,在语言难度上体现了与英语专业同类教材的差别。

第三,注重知识与技能相结合,语言与文化相结合。在深入浅出地讲授知识的同时,结合课程内容尽可能多地为学生提供说与写的练习,在雕琢学生语言的同时,尽可能培养学生的跨文化交际能力和批判性思维能力。

第四,强调学生综合能力的培养。考虑到学生在选修课阶段可能不再修综合英语类的课程,各教材在主要训练与课程相关能力的基础上,适当补充了其他能力的训练内容。

第五,吸纳并总结近年来相关高校选修课开设的经验和成果。该套教材的参编者来自全国多所高校,多数教材是由开设该门课程最成功的、最受学生欢迎的学校和教师撰写,教材既吸纳了相关讲义的优点,又根据专家意见,按照学科要求和普遍情况进行了改编,在保证教材科学性的前提下,最大程度地体现了大学英语学生的选修取向。

选修课的开设是大学英语教学改革的重要发展方向,但是,在改革中诞生的事物也必然不断地在改革中被重新定义。因此,我们这套大学英语选修课教材的体系也将是动态的和开放的,不断会有新的教材被纳入,以反映大学英语教学改革在这方面最新的成功尝试。相信随着教学改革不断走向深入,我们的教材体系也将日臻完善。

总主编  
2008年1月

# 前言

从文化角度而言,典故是一个民族历史和文化的浓缩,是一种语言的精华,是“那串联万代的寥寥几字”。由于典故或典故性词语涉及历史、文化、文学中的人、事、物、理,因此被认为是一种重要的文化纽带,是文化遗产的一部分。而典故的使用又体现了一种文化传承,代表着一种文化认同。

从文学和语言角度而言,典故有着联想、隐喻和类比等功效,恰当灵活的运用可大大增强文字的表现力。典故词约义丰,寥寥数字蕴含丰富的文化内涵。用典委婉含蓄,韵味情趣盎然;以古喻今,联想自然,启示深刻。因此,典故不仅是作家们常用的有效文学手段,也是人们在日常交流中常用的语言表达方式。

而学习一门语言就是学习一种文化。很多人会有一种沮丧的感觉:我学习了十几年,单词背了近万个,语法规则都没有问题,怎么有些简单的句子就是读不懂?感觉还是英语语言 and 文化的“局外人”。这就是因为在人们的交往中,如果交流双方对彼此文化背景和语言中典故缺乏基本的认知,就会出现交际困难。

本教材就是通过丰富多样的练习形式,讲述来自古典神话、圣经、莎士比亚和其他经典文学作品以及重大历史事件的典故,使学习者体验英语这一用典丰富的语言,英语学习不能局限在学习它的单词、语法、句法结构和篇章上,更要学习英语语言典故及其丰富的历史文化内涵。

本教材分为以下四章:

第一章为《概论》,着重通过文学作品和日常交流中的语料实例和练习,介绍英语语言中的典故及其文化背景,含典故的定义、分类、作用功能和主要来源。为了便于学习者理解,本章专门通过《红楼梦》和《围城》这两部用典丰富的作品中的实例,分析介绍英汉典故的异同及其翻译策略,希望学习者在理解掌握语言典故的基础上,提高典故的译介和交流意识,真正将语言学习和文化交流结合起来。

第二章为《圣经》,含《圣经》简介、历代名人论《圣经》、失乐园、巴别塔、诺亚方舟等经典圣经故事、《圣经》翻译、《圣经》文化与中国文化对比和《圣经》与科学等主题的阅读和讨论,以及由笑话、漫画、谜语、圣经误读和益智游戏等组成的趣味圣经的欣赏。

第三章为《希腊罗马神话》,含希腊罗马神话简介、名人论古典神话、潘多拉和普罗米修斯等经典神话故事、中西方神话对比等主题的阅读、讨论和欣赏,以及幽默笑话、双关语、字谜游戏、创意写作话题等,让学生创造性地学习神话、解读神话。

第四章为《莎士比亚》,含莎士比亚生平及时代背景、名人论莎士比亚、莎士比亚



十四行诗和戏剧经典选段赏析、莎士比亚对英语语言影响、莎士比亚的人文精神、莎剧经典人物分析、莎剧与同时期中国戏剧比较等丰富内容。趣味莎士比亚则包括漫画、莎翁趣闻轶事和未解之谜以及与莎剧相关的语言益智游戏等。

本教材各部分将课堂内外的阅读与讨论相结合, 阅读欣赏和批评分析相结合, 语言学习和文化理解相结合, 经典选段的严肃阅读与文字碎片的轻松欣赏相结合。因此编者建议, 师生在使用本教材时可尽量灵活, 不拘泥于篇章顺序, 不拘泥于教学进度。如教师能精心组织教学, 通过高质量授课将教材提供内容作为一个起点、一个提纲, 使学生将课内学习有效延伸至课外, 探索、体验更加丰富的英语语言文化世界, 就实现了该课和该教材的目的。

本教材是四人合作的成果。其中, 主编邸爱英负责全书的框架结构和第一章(约5万字)的撰写工作。副主编彭焱负责编写过程中的协调和第二章(约11.6万字)的撰写工作。田径和赵蓉分别负责第三章(约13.5万字)和第四章(约11.4万字)的编写工作。全体编写组共同完成了校稿工作。

该书的完成倾注了许多师生的心血。首先, 感谢成都电子科技大学外国语学院一批志同道合的年轻教师, 他们坚守在英语语言教学的第一线, 他们坚信语言与文化密不可分, 英语语言与文化欣赏与应试技能训练不仅不会冲突矛盾, 还会通过培养学生对英语语言与文化的兴趣提高他们的学习主动性和学习效率。因此, 我们优秀的一线教师们用扎实严谨的工作, 不仅使学生在大学英语四六级考试、托福和雅思等国际测试中有好成绩, 还渐渐学会了欣赏语言, 提高了文化体验的意识。

其次, 我们要感谢成都电子科大的同学们, 十二年来你们对《英语语言文化欣赏》课程的支持与认同给了我们信心; 也是你们每学期对课程教学的反馈使我们能不断调整补充, 使这个教材更加完善。感谢学校外国语学院和教务处领导给予该课程的肯定和教材编写的支持。

感谢重庆大学出版社和领导对教材选题的支持与肯定, 感谢牟妮老师在教材编写过程中对编者的细心指导。相信在全体的支持、鼓励和帮助下, 这样一本读物式的教材不至于淹没在浩如烟海的各类英语考试辅导和应试技巧材料当中。

编者  
2015年3月

*But words are things, and a small drop of ink,  
Falling like dew, upon a thought, produces  
That which makes thousands, perhaps millions, think;  
'T is strange, the shortest letter which man uses  
Instead of speech, may form a lasting link  
Of ages; to what straits old Time reduces  
Frail man, when paper— even a rag like this,  
Survives himself, his tomb, and all that's his.*

—George Gordon Byron, *Don Juan*



# Contents

## Chapter One Where do All the Allusions Come from /1

- I. What Is an Allusion? /1
  - 1. Definition of Allusion /1
  - 2. Key Elements of Allusions /1
  - 3. Quotes about Allusions /2
- II. What Are the Major Categories of Allusions? /3
  - 1. Historical—Religious/Mythological—Literary Allusions /3
  - 2. Allusions to Events—Allusions to Quotes /4
  - 3. Classical Allusions—Modern Allusions /8
- III. Why do Writers and Poets Like to Use Allusions? /9
  - 1. Examples from Miscellaneous Literary Works /9
  - 2. Case Study: *The Isles of Greece* by Lord Byron /11
  - 3. Major Purposes of Using Allusions in Literature /14
- IV. Do People Use Allusions in Daily Communication? /17
  - Most Popular Allusions in Common Speech /18
- V. How do Allusions Travel between English and Chinese? /20
  - 1. Literal Translation /20
  - 2. Substitutes /23
  - 3. Free Translation /24
  - 4. Omissions /25

## Chapter Two The Bible /29

- I. About the Bible /29
  - 1. Basic Facts /29
  - 2. Additional Facts /32
  - 3. Quiz /33
- II. Quotes on the Bible /34
- III. In-class Reading Materials from the Bible /35
  - 1. Passages
    - Passage One *Seven Days of the Creation of the World* /35

Passage Two *Man's Original Sin and the Loss of Paradise* /39

Passage Three *The Tower of Babel* /42

Passage Four *The Ten Commandments* /43

Passage Five *Solomon's Wisdom* /47

Passage Six *The Birth of the Messiah* /49

Passage Seven *The Good Samaritan* /53

2. Language in the Bible /54

#### **IV. Discussions on the Bible** /63

1. Comparative Study /63

2. Inconsistencies in the Bible /67

3. Surviving on Noah's Ark /69

4. Different Voices /69

#### **V. Fun Stuff** /71

1. Jokes /71

2. Cartoon Comics /76

3. Riddles /77

4. Funny Bible Facts /78

5. Ten Misconceptions About the Bible /78

6. Bible Word Search Puzzle Game /80

#### **VI. After-class Assignments** /82

1. Creative Writings /82

2. Oral Presentation /82

3. Readings

*The Trial that Rock the World* /83

*Einstein on God* /89

### **Chapter Three Greek and Roman Mythology** /94

#### **I. About Greek and Roman Mythology** /94

1. Why Is It Necessary to Learn Greek and Roman Mythology? /94

2. What Is It? /95

3. Where did It Originate from? /95

4. How did it Come into Being? /95

#### **II. Quotes on Greek and Roman Mythology** /95

#### **III. In-class Reading Passages from Greek and Roman Mythology** /97

1. Passages

Passage One *The Olympian Gods* /97

Passage Two *The Creation and Recreation of Man* /104

- Passage Three *Cupid and Psyche* /109
- Passage Four *Echo and Narcissus* /117
- Passage Five *The Twelve Labors of Heracles* /120
- Passage Six *The Trojan War* /126

## 2. Idioms in Greek and Roman Mythology /143

## IV. Discussions on Greek and Roman Mythology /145

- 1. Comparative Studies /145
- 2. Oral Presentations /148

## V. Fun Stuff /148

- 1. Fun Facts about Mythology /148
- 2. Word Play and Jokes /149
- 3. Word Puzzles /150

## VI. After-class Assignments /151

- 1. Creative Writings /151
- 2. Translation /151
- 3. Readings
- Viewpoint: In Defence of Narcissism /154

## Chapter Four William Shakespeare /160

### I. About Shakespeare /160

- 1. Shakespeare's Life /160
- 2. Shakespeare's Plays /161
- 3. Shakespeare's Poems /163
- 4. The Making of Shakespeare /164
- 5. The Influence of Shakespeare /165
- 6. Poems in Praise of Shakespeare /166

### II. Quotes on William Shakespeare /168

### III. In-class Readings from Shakespeare's Works /169

#### 1. Sonnets

- Sonnet 18 *Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?* /170
- Sonnet 19 *Devouring Time, blunt thou the lion's paws* /173
- Sonnet 23 *As an imperfect actor on the stage* /174
- Sonnet 24 *Mine eye hath play'd the painter, and hath stell'd* /175

#### 2. Plays

- Hamlet* /177
- Romeo and Juliet* /189
- The Merchant of Venice* /203

*As You Like It* /210

*Macbeth* /217

3. Shakespearean Quotes /221

4. Shakespearean Idioms /224

**IV. Discussions on Shakespeare** /227

1. Oral Presentation /227

2. About *Hamlet* /227

3. About *The Merchant of Venice* /227

4. About *Romeo and Juliet* /227

5. Shakespeare VS. Tang Xianzu /228

**V. Fun Stuff** /228

1. Cartoon Comics /228

2. Mysteries and Secrets of Shakespeare /229

3. Interesting Facts About William Shakespeare /234

4. Crossword Puzzles /236

**VI. After-class Assignments** /238

1. Role Play: An interview with Shakespeare /238

2. Creative Writing /238

3. After-class Reading /241

**Suggested Keys and Answers to Exercises** /244

**References** /255

# Chapter One

## Where do All the Allusions Come from

### I. What is an Allusion?

#### 1. Definition of Allusion

The word “allusion” originates from Latin “allusionem”, meaning “a playing with, a reference to”.

According to *Oxford Dictionary of Reference and Allusion*, “when we make an allusion we mention the name of a real person, historical event, or literary character, not simply as a straightforward reference (as in ‘Hercules was an ancient Greek hero’), but in order to conjure up some extra meaning, embodying some quality or characteristic for which the word has come to stand.” (Delahunty and Dignen, 2010:x)

M. H. Abrams defined allusion as “a brief reference, explicit or indirect, to a person, place or event, or to another literary work or passage”. (Abrams, 1971)

According to Manser, “an allusion is a reference that evokes a certain set of aspects or features of a person or thing. For example, a kind and selfless person may be referred to as a *Good Samaritan*; a musical genius may be hailed as a *Mozart*; a political, administrative, or financial scandal may be referred to by name with the suffix *-gate*, after *Watergate*; a large-scale nuclear accident may be referred to as another *Chernobyl*; a fatal weakness may be referred to as a person’s *Achilles’ heel*; something that rises anew in the face of defeat may be compared to a *phoenix rising from the ashes*; and 9/11 has become synonymous with terrorist atrocity.” (Manser, 2003)

“Allusion” is roughly equivalent to the Chinese expression “典故” (dian gu), whose original meaning, according to *Ci Hai*, is “典章和掌故”, meaning “literary quotations and classical allusions”. It also refers to the person responsible for the observance and arrangement of rituals. Dian Gu in Chinese later acquires its second meaning: a reference to a story, place, character, or a sentence in literary or classic works.

#### 2. Key Elements of Allusions

- form of the allusion (典面 *dian mian*)
- origin of the allusion (典源 *dian yuan*)
- meaning of the allusion (典义 *dian yi*)
- use of the allusion for a specific purpose in a particular context (用典 *yong dian*)

#### Example 1

**Allusion:** Cleopatra’s nose

**Meaning:** an apparently insignificant thing that is actually of extreme importance and major consequences

**Origin:** Roman history. Cleopatra was the beautiful Queen of ancient Egypt. Julius Caesar and Mark Anthony, both beguiled by the beauty and charm of Cleopatra, offered her military assistance to preserve her throne from the rival claim of her brother, which exerted a profound influence on the history of the ancient world.

**Use of the allusion :** “If the nose of Cleopatra had been shorter, the whole face of the earth would have been changed.” (in Blaise Pascal’s *Thoughts [Pensées]*)

### Example 2

**Allusion:** kick against the pricks

**Meaning:** to resist or protest against prevailing opinion or conditions

**Origin:** From the Bible: Saul is struck by a bright light while on the road to Damascus and addressed by Christ himself: “And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.” (*Act 9:5*)

**Use of the allusion :** “Paul was laid up with an attack of bronchitis. He did not mind much. What happened happened, and it was no good kicking against the pricks.” (by D. H. Lawrence in *Sons and Lovers*)

### 3. Quotes about Allusions

- 1) To borrow and to steal: “One of the surest of tests is the way in which a poet borrows. Immature poets imitate; mature poets steal; bad poets deface what they take, and good poets make it into something better, or at least something different. The good poet welds his theft into a whole of feeling which is unique, utterly different from that from which it was torn; the bad poets throws it into something which has no cohesion. A good poet will usually borrow from authors remote in time, or alien in language, or diverse in interest.” (T. S. Eliot)
- 2) The link between the new and the old: “A little bit of one story joins onto an idea from another, and hey presto, ... not old tales but new ones. Nothing comes from nothing.” (Salman Rushdie)
- 3) Allusion and creation: “There is no creation without tradition; the ‘new’ is an inflection on a preceding form; novelty is always a variation on the past.” (Carlos Fuentes)
- 4) Implicitness of allusions: “An **allusion** which is explained no longer has the charm of allusion. ... In divulging the mystery, you withdraw its virtue.” (Jean Paulhan)
- 5) Failure and effectiveness of an allusion: “When they fail, **allusions** leave us exposed: either enmeshed in inelegant, patronizing explanations or cast adrift with insufficient provisions on the murky seas of a childlike half-understanding. Failed allusions produce feelings of betrayal on all sides because they reveal mistaken assumptions about shared frames of reference and like-mindedness. ...Unlike most tricks, the allusion triumphs only when people know precisely how it is done.” (Elizabeth D. Samet)
- 6) Allusions and plagiarism: “Postmodernist ideas about intertextuality and quotation have complicated the simplistic ideas about plagiarism which were in Destry-Scholer’s day. I myself

think that these lifted sentences, in their new contexts, are almost the purest and most beautiful parts of the transmission of scholarship.”(A. S. Byatt)

- 7) To quote and to be quoted: “It is generally supposed that where there is no quotation, there will be found most originality. Our writers usually furnish their pages rapidly with the productions of their own soil: they run up a quickset hedge, or plant a poplar, and get trees and hedges of this fashion much faster than the former landlords procured their timber. The greater part of our writers, in consequence, have become so original, that no one cares to imitate them; and those who never quote, in return are seldom quoted!” (Isaac D’Israeli)

## II. What Are the Major Categories of Allusions?

### 1. Historical-Religious / Mythological-Literary Allusions

In terms of the **sources of allusions**, they can be classified into the following categories:

- 1) **Historical allusions**, which refer to figures, events and places in history

**Examples in Chinese:** 冯唐易老、李广难封、卧薪尝胆、胯下之辱、华佗在世、诸葛亮、西施、鸿门宴、三顾茅庐、精忠报国、不为五斗米折腰

**Examples in English:** Meet one’s Waterloo, Crusade, the Fifth Column, cross one’s Rubicon, leave no stones unturned, Bruce and Spider, Mayflower, D-Day, Gold Rush, Pearl Harbor, Dunkirk

- 2) **Religious classics, mythological stories, legends and fables**

**Examples in Chinese:** 聚沙成塔、三生有幸、六根清净、醍醐灌顶、愚公移山、自相矛盾、杞人忧天、高山流水遇知音、三过家门而不入、牛郎织女、田螺姑娘、五福临门

**Examples in English:** the last supper, Judas, Helen, Prometheus, Cupid, the emperor’s new clothes, Midas’ touch, sour grapes, make bricks with no straw, Magi’s gift, the last straw, birds of a feather, to cry crocodile’s tears, a Baker’s dozen, honeymoon, down and out, take a French leave, have burning ears, a bird of ill omen, a chip on one’s shoulder

- 3) **Literary allusions**, which refer to characters, plots, places, quotes, etc. in literary works

**Examples in Chinese:** 晓风残月、大江东去、桃花源、杏花村、窈窕淑女、祥林嫂、陈世美、武大郎开店、阿 Q 精神、弄璋弄瓦

**Examples in English:** A pound of flesh, tilt at windmills, Catch-22, Uncle Tom, Utopia, Holmes, Man Friday, the Artful Dodger





## 2. Allusions to Events—Allusions to Quotes

According to **Chinese literary tradition**, allusions can be grouped into two categories:

1) **Allusions to events** (Shi Dian, 事典), allusions that involve a story or plot

**Examples in Chinese:** 三顾茅庐、毛遂自荐、朝三暮四、杯弓蛇影

**Examples in English:** Pandora's box, burn one's boat. These allusions usually originate from a myth, legend, fable, anecdotes of a historic figure, etc. Allusions to events can be very short and concise. The following is a detailed analysis of an example from the English language: *albatross around one's neck*:

Albatross is considered as the most legendary of all birds. It has been a tradition that when sailors caught the birds, they usually let them free again. The possible reason is that it was believed that albatrosses were often regarded as the souls of lost sailors and killing them was supposedly viewed as bringing bad luck.

The expressions "albatross around one's neck" alludes to Samuel Taylor Coleridge's poem *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* (1798). In the poem, an albatross starts to follow a ship, which is a good omen. However, a mariner shoots the albatross with a crossbow, and this brings curse to the ship — the ship is mysteriously sent to uncharted and becalmed waters:

Day after day, day after day,  
We stuck, nor breath nor motion;  
As idle as a painted ship  
Upon a painted ocean.  
Water, water, every where,  
And all the boards did shrink;  
Water, water, every where,  
Nor any drop to drink.

Even when they are too thirsty to speak, the sailors stare at the mariner, blaming his action for the curse. He feels as though the albatross is metaphorically hung around his neck. The symbolism used in the Coleridge poem is its highlight:

Ah! Well a day! What evil looks  
Had I from old and young!  
Instead of the cross, the Albatross  
About my neck was hung.

Then, the ship encounters a ghostly vessel, on whose board are a skeleton, Death, and a deathly-pale woman, the "Night-mare Life-in-Death". They are playing dice for the souls of the crew. Death wins the lives of the crew members and Life-in-Death the life of the mariner. Her name implies that the mariner will endure a fate worse than death as a punishment for killing the albatross. Indeed, right

in front of him, the crew members die one by one and he sees the expressions in their eyes and on their faces. He suffered for seven days and nights.

Alone, alone, all, all alone,  
Alone on a wide wide sea!  
And never a saint took pity on  
My soul in agony.  
The many men, so beautiful!  
And they all dead did lie:  
And a thousand thousand slimy things  
Lived on; and so did I  
I looked upon the rotting sea,  
And drew my eyes away;  
I looked upon the rotting deck,  
And there the dead men lay.

The curse is lifted only after he starts, even unconsciously, to appreciate the beauty of sea creatures swimming in the water and bless them:

I looked to Heaven, and tried to pray:  
But or ever a prayer had gusht,  
A wicked whisper came, and made  
my heart as dry as dust.

I closed my lids, and kept them close,  
And the balls like pulses beat;  
For the sky and the sea, and the sea and the sky  
Lay like a load on my weary eye,  
And the dead were at my feet.

The cold sweat melted from their limbs,  
Nor rot nor reek did they:  
The look with which they looked on me  
Had never passed away.

An orphan's curse would drag to Hell  
A spirit from on high;  
But oh! more horrible than that  
Is a curse in a dead man's eye!