

# 中高级英语

## 常考习语

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## 内 容 提 要

本书针对考生在参加各类英语考试中容易丢分的项目,分17个单元对常考的英语习语进行总结归类,逐一给出释义和例句,并配有相应练习,既方便考生记忆、学习掌握地道的英语,又可以提高考生的英语理解能力和应试能力。

本书编排新颖,内容丰富,语言规范,集知识性和趣味性于一体,是参加大学英语四级、六级、研究生入学英语、TOEFL、EPT、GRE等考试考生的不可缺少的必备书,也是英语教师和英语爱好者不可多得的参考书。

## 前 言

我们在辅导学生参加国家大学英语四、六级考试的过程中,发现不少考生在“听力理解”、“阅读理解”、“词语用法”等项目里,尽管对某个短语中的每个单词都认识,但是却弄不明白这个短语的确切意思,只好望文生义,瞎猜一气,导致轻易丢分,十分可惜。例如:

His name rings a bell.

A little bird told me.

Well, I have to face the music.

其实,ring a bell, a little bird told me, face the music 等都是英语习语,已经脱离了字面的意思。ring a bell 的意思是“听起来耳熟”;a little bird told me 意为“获悉”、“有人告诉我”;face the music 则表示“为自己的行为(决定)承担后果”(详见本书有关单元)。由此可见,要掌握地道的英语,提高英语的综合理解能力、表达能力乃至英语的整体水平,顺利地通过各类英语考试,必须掌握相当数量的英语习语。为此,我们编写了这本《中高级英语常考习语》,以方便广大考生学习、记忆。

全书由十七个单元组成,对常考的英语习语进行归类总结,每个单元对相关的习语逐一给出释义(英、中对照)和例句,并且配有相应的练习(含答案),供考生自测,书后附有索引,便于读者检索。本书编排新颖,内容丰富,语言规范,集知识性和趣味性于一体,是参加大学英语四级、六级、研究生入学英语、TOEFL、EPT、GRE 等考试不可缺少的必备书,也是

英语教师和英语爱好者不可多得的参考书。

本书的编写得到了解放军信息工程学院教务部和基础部领导的热情指导,谨向他们表示衷心的感谢。

限于作者水平与时间仓促,不足之处在所难免,欢迎同行专家和广大读者批评指正。

作 者

1999 年元月于郑州

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# UNIT 1

## BIRDS AND POULTRY (鸟禽类)

### bird 鸟

1. **a bird in the bush**: sth which one hasn't got yet; sth uncertain  
未到手的東西; 无把握的事

He complained to Mark that the book dealt with nothing but *birds in the bush*; It was unpractical. 他向麦克抱怨说这本书瞎吹一气, 一点也不实际。

2. **a bird in the hand**: sth which one has really got; sth certain 已到手的東西; 有把握的事

I'm tired of promises. I'd rather have *a bird in the hand* any day. 我厌倦了空头许诺, 我想得到实实在在的东西。

3. **A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush**: A definite chance or offer is better than an uncertain one. 一鸟在手胜于两鸟在林; 到手的東西才是可靠的

4. **a bird of passage**: sb who doesn't stay anywhere long 漂泊无定居的人

He left for Rome again yesterday. He is usually *a bird of passage*. 他昨天又去罗马了, 他是一个漂泊不定的人。

5. **an early bird**: sb who gets up or arrives early 早起或早到的人  
John's quite *an early bird*; he gets up at 6 o'clock every day of the week. 约翰是个早起的人, 平时都在六点起床。

6. **a home bird**: sb who prefers to stay at home rather than going to

parties, travelling, etc 恋家而不愿外出社交或旅游的人

Don't invite her to our party. She is a *home bird*. 不要邀请她来参加我们的晚会,她不好社交。

7. **The early bird catches/gets the worm. (or: It's the early bird that catches/gets the worm. )**: The one who gets up or arrives early will be successful. 捷足先登

If my bargain is a better one than yours, it's because I was here early; *The early bird gets the worm*. 如果我讨价的条件比你的好,那是因为我来得早,捷足先登嘛。

8. **A little bird told me**: someone told me 有人告诉我;听说(常用于不愿说出消息来源)

*A little bird told me* that they may be getting married soon. 我听说他们会很快结婚。

9. **The bird has flown**: The person needed or wanted has gone away or escaped. 所需(要捉)的人走掉了(逃脱了)

He owed me a lot of money. I was given the address of a flat in London where he was supposed to be living, but when I got there *the bird had flown*. 他欠了我很多钱,有人给了我他在伦敦可能居住寓所的地址,可是当我赶到那儿时,他却逃脱了。

10. **birds of a feather (flock together)**: People with similar tastes or views (often bad) go together (常缩略为: birds of a feather) 物以类聚,人以群分;一丘之貉

The neighbours thought that she and her boyfriend were *birds of a feather*. 邻居们都认为她和她的男朋友是一丘之貉。

11. **eat like a bird**: eat very little 吃得极少

She couldn't understand why she failed to lose weight when she was, as she said, *eating like a bird*. 她弄不明白,她已经像她说的那样吃得极少了,体重却减不下去。

12. **for the birds**: worthless, silly (常作表语)毫无意义;荒唐可笑



I think that plan is *for the birds*; don't even suggest it to the boss. 我认为那个计划内容荒唐,没有必要提交给老板。

13. **give sb the bird**: make rude noises at him 用嘘声奚落某人;喝倒彩

They started to *give the actor the bird* when they saw his performance was bad. 当他们看到那个演员的演技拙劣时,便开始向他喝倒彩。

14. **It's an ill bird that fouls its own nest.**: 弄脏自己巢的不是好鸟;家丑不可外扬

The parents warned the son to keep his mouth shut as *it's an ill bird that fouls its own nest*. 父母告诫儿子保持沉默,家丑不可外扬。

15. **kill two birds with one stone**: use one cause to get two results 一箭双雕;一举两得

Jane *killed two birds with one stone* by shopping and visiting the museum on the same trip. 珍妮出去一趟既买了东西又参观了博物馆,真是一举两得。

16. **the birds and the bees**: basic facts about sex, esp as told to children (婉转对儿童讲的)基本的性知识

The mother is telling her child *the birds and the bees*. 母亲告诉孩子基本的性知识。

### **brood 孵(蛋)**

1. **brood above/over**: overlook; envelope 俯视;笼罩

The house on the hill *brooded above* the village. 山顶的房屋俯瞰着村子。

Hate *brooded over* the town. 仇恨笼罩着小镇。

2. **brood on/over**: think deeply, quietly and long about sth 细想;盘算

She *brooded over* the plan, trying to find some mistake in it.

她反复阅读这个计划,试图找出错误。

## chicken 小鸡

1. **chicken**: youthful person thought of as inexperienced 没经验的年轻人

He tried to sound like a man of forty but he's just a *chicken*. He couldn't be more than nineteen. 他极力装着四十岁人的腔调,但是嫩了点,他顶多十九岁。

2. **chicken**: who lacks courage; coward 胆小鬼;懦夫

You're a *chicken*; that's why you won't climb the tree. 你是个胆小鬼,所以才不敢爬这棵树。

3. **chicken out (or: chicken out of doing sth)**: decide not to do sth because one is afraid 因害怕而决定不做某事

Bill *chickened out* when the job got too difficult. 当工作变得艰难时,比尔退了出来。

4. **Don't count sb's chickens (before they're hatched)**: Don't take for granted sth that has still to happen. 蛋未孵出先数雏;过早乐观

It's quite possible that you will get the new contract but *don't count your chickens before they're hatched*. 你极有可能得到这份新合同,但是也不要过早乐观。

5. **no spring chicken**: (used mostly of women) no longer young (多指女性)已不年轻了

She needs lots of make-up to hide the fact that she's *no spring chicken*. 她画了浓妆来掩饰自己已不再年轻了。

6. **sb's chickens have come home to roost**: (of a bad action) have a bad effect on the doer (所干坏事)对本人产生不利,自食恶果

When the police discovered that my uncle had been cheating money from the public, everyone was glad that *his chickens*

*had come home to roost* at last. 当警察破获我叔叔一直在骗取公众金钱时,每个人都很高兴,他终于得到报应。

7. **That's your chicken.** ; *That's your own business.* 那是你自己的事

I'm sorry we can't help you. *That's your chicken.* 很抱歉我们帮不了你,那是你自己的事。

8. **Which came first, the chicken or the egg?** : (used to say that it is difficult or impossible to decide which of two things came first or which action is the cause and which is the effect) 是先有鸡还是先有蛋?

Let's stop arguing! No one can answer *which came first, the chicken or the egg.* 别争了,没人能说清是先有鸡还是先有蛋。

9. **a chicken and egg situation/problem/thing** : a situation in which it is impossible to decide which part caused another and which is the effect of another 一个难于明确因果关系的局面、难题等

The committee is facing *a chicken and egg situation.* 委员会遇到了难题。

## **cock** 公鸡

1. **cock and bull story** : fantastic, usually false, story 荒诞的故事; 无稽之谈

He told *a cock and bull story* about being robbed by giants. 他说自己被巨人抢劫了,真是无稽之谈。

2. **cock of the walk/loft** : chief person of a group, esp one who is too proud 称王称霸的人; 地头蛇

That boy was *cock of the walk* until my brother beat him in a fight. 那个男孩称王称霸,直到我哥哥痛打了他一顿。

3. **cock a/sb's snook/snoot at** : put sb's thumb to sb's nose to

offend (把大姆指抵在鼻尖上表示对某人不礼貌) 轻蔑;不屑一顾

The football player was severely punished as he *cocked his snook* at the referee. 那个足球运动员因为侮辱裁判而遭到严厉惩罚。

4. **go off at half cock:**

A. become angry 生气;发火

My boss *went off at half cock* and shouted at his secretary for being late. 老板火冒三丈,痛斥秘书来晚了。

B. (of a plan, ceremony, etc.) start before everything is ready; happen or begin too early, so that something goes wrong (计划,仪式等)因没完全准备好就开始而出差错;仓促行事

The plan to murder the president *went off at half cock* because the signal was given before it should have been. 由于动手暗号提前发出,谋杀总统的计划破产了。

5. **keep an ear cocked:** pay close attention because you want to be sure you hear sth you expect or think may happen 竖起耳朵听

She *kept an ear cocked* for the sound of Joe's key in the front door. 她竖起耳朵听乔开前门钥匙转动的声音。

6. **knock sb/sth into a cocked hat:** defeat completely; cause to fail 击溃;致使失败

He'll *knock* all the other competitors *into a cocked hat*. 他将击败所有的对手。

7. **live like fighting cocks:** live very well, esp eating the best food 吃得好;生活阔气

The family won a big bet on the Derby and began to *live like fighting cocks*. 这一家在德比赛马中赌赢了一大笔钱,生活变得阔气起来。

## **crow** 乌鸦;(公鸡)啼叫

1. **as the crow flies**: the straight distance between two points 按直线地;笔直地

It's only a few miles *as the crow flies*, but more like twenty through the mountain roads. 直线只有几英里,但是走盘山公路得有二十英里。

2. **a white crow** sth which is rare 珍奇的东西

His collection of stamps is regarded as *a white crow*. 他的集邮被认为是珍品。

3. **crow about**: speak proudly 夸夸其谈;吹嘘

I wish John would stop *crowing about* his examination results. 但愿约翰别再吹嘘自己的考试成绩。

4. **crow over**: delight in the defeat or misfortune of a rival (因对手的失利)炫耀胜利;洋洋得意

Harold's *crowing over* beating George at golf. 哈罗德打高尔夫赢了乔治,洋洋得意。

5. **crow sb's head off**: boast 大吹大擂

The Tories *crowed their heads off* when they won the 1970 General Election against the predictions of all the opinion polls. 出乎所有民意测验的预料,保守党赢得1970年的大选时,他们大吹大擂。

6. **eat (boiled) crow**: be forced to admit humbly that one was wrong 被迫认错;忍辱

His predictions were completely wrong, and he had to *eat crow*. 他的预测完全错了,不得不认错。

7. **have a crow to pick/pluck/pull with sb**: have an unpleasant matter to talk about with sb 有一件非与(某人)争论不可的事  
Kirk *had a crow to pick with* the manager as he was fired with no reason at all. 柯克无故被解雇,他非得和经理讲明白。

8. **stone the crows**: (used as an exclamation of surprise, shock, disgust, etc) (用作感叹, 表示惊讶、震惊、嫌恶等)

Well, *stone the crows*, he's done it again! 哎呀, 他又干了。

### **cuckoo 杜鹃**

1. **cuckoo**: silly; mad (常作表语) 愚蠢; 疯狂

He's gone completely *cuckoo*. 他愚蠢透顶。

2. **a cuckoo in the nest**: a child whose parentage is doubtful 双亲不明的孩子; 夺取他人骨肉(父母)之爱的人

His parents died early and he became *a cuckoo in the nest*. 他父母早亡, 身世不明。

### **duck 鸭**

1. **a dead duck**: scheme, etc which has been abandoned, or will fail 被放弃的或将失败的计划等

The plan is *a dead duck*; there's no money. 这个计划由于缺乏资金而搁浅了。

2. **a lame duck**: a person or a business that is helpless or a failure 不可挽救的人或企业

The government should not waste money supporting *lame ducks*. 政府不应浪费资金扶持这些濒于倒闭的企业。

3. **a sitting duck**: sb or sth that can easily be hit or attacked 易击中的目标

We're *sitting ducks* here. We'll have to move around behind the hill where we can't be seen. 我们呆在这儿是等着挨打, 得躲到这座山后才不易被发现。

4. **duck out of (doing sth)**: avoid (duty, responsibility etc) 躲避、推委(义务, 责任等)

It's his turn to wash up but he'll try and *duck out of it*. 轮到他清扫了, 但是他极力躲避。

5. **a fine day for young ducks**: a rainy day 雨天

Well, it's really a *fine day for young ducks* today. 嗯,今天的雨下得真够大的。

6. **like (a) duck in (a) thunderstorm**: looking with upturned eyes, as if faint or rejected 惊慌失措; 垂头丧气

Stop looking *like a duck in a thunderstorm*, and try to be patient with your aunt, even if she is difficult. 别垂头丧气的, 尽管你婶婶很难说话, 但是你要耐心些。

7. **like water off (a) duck's back**: (usu criticism or sharp words) without any effect (常指批评、指责等)不起作用; 毫无效果  
To most politicians, insults are *like water off a duck's back*.  
辱骂对大部分政客们来说不起作用。

8. **play ducks and drakes**: make flat stones skip across the surface of the water 打水漂

Tony is very good at *playing ducks and drakes* as he has practised a lot. 托尼经常练习, 所以打水漂很在行。

9. **play ducks and drakes with**: spend money carelessly; have adventure with 挥霍; 浪费; 拿……冒险

We can't go on *playing ducks and drakes with* the company's prosperity. 我们不能再拿公司的繁荣来冒险了。

10. **take to sth like a duck to water**: learn or get used to sth naturally and very easily 轻而易举地学会或适应(某事)

Mike's delighted. He *took to* his new job *like a duck to water*.  
麦克很高兴, 他干这份新工作如鱼得水。

11. **Will a duck swim?**: There isn't any need to question sth as it's easy to see (用于反问)那还用问吗?

—Can you drive? 你会开车吗?

—*Will a duck swim?* 那还用问吗?

## egg 蛋

1. **a curate's egg**: sth that is satisfactory in some ways but not in

others 既有长处也有不足;好坏混杂

The book is something of a *curate's egg*. 这本书有长处,也有不足。

2. **a nest egg**: money saved for future use 储备金

They have their *nest egg* in the bank—they hope to buy a house in two or three years. 他们在银行里存了些钱,期望两三年后买座房子。

3. **as sure as eggs are/is eggs**: without any doubt 毫无疑问

*As sure as eggs is eggs*, they will be married in less than a year. 毫无疑问,他们俩年内将结婚。

4. **egg sb on**: encourage sb; urge sb 鼓动、怂恿某人

Mary *egged* her husband *on* to save up some money and start his own business. 玛莉鼓励丈夫存点钱,自己开公司。

5. **have/put all sb's eggs in one basket**: make all sb's plans depend on the success of one thing; risk everything on one attempt, as by putting all sb's money into one business 将所有的钱投入一项生意;孤注一掷

By spreading their investments over a wide range of securities, they avoid the risk of *putting all their eggs into one basket*.

他们通过投资购买各种不同的证券,避免将所有的钱投入一项生意带来的危险。

6. **have egg on/all over sb's face**: seem foolish 显得愚蠢;当众出丑

The train robbers seem to have got away with no trouble at all; the police *have egg on their faces* today. 火车窃贼似乎轻而易举地逃脱了,警察今天是丢尽了脸。

7. **in the egg**: not ready; at the early stage 尚在初期

When the president learnt some of his generals were planning to kill him in a car accident, he ordered his assistants to kill the plot *in the egg*. 当总统获悉几名将军在谋划利用车祸来干



掉自己,便命令助手们将此阴谋消灭在萌芽之中。

8. **lay an egg**: fail badly, esp while trying to entertain (尤指想消遣时)败下阵

With that last joke he really *laid an egg*. 说完最后一个笑话,他败下阵来。

9. **teach sb's grandmother (how) to suck eggs**: try to teach or give advice to sb who is more knowledgeable or experienced than oneself 班门弄斧

He is always telling the director how to run the business; that's like *teaching his grandmother to suck eggs*. 他老是向主管诉说如何管理企业,简直是班门弄斧。

### feather 羽毛

1. **a feather in sb's cap**: sth to be proud of 引以自豪的事

It was *a feather in Janet's cap* being made head secretary. 成为主管秘书令珍妮特引以为豪。

2. **as light as a feather**: very light in weight 轻如鸿毛

—Let me carry your case. 让我来拿你的箱子。

—No, thanks. It's *as light as a feather*. 谢谢,不用。箱子很轻。

3. **fine feathers make fine birds**: (prov) a person can look important, rich, etc, just by wearing fine clothes (谚)人靠衣裳马靠鞍

As the saying goes: *fine feathers make fine birds*. David looks so smart in his recently-bought jacket. 俗话说:人靠衣裳马靠鞍。大卫穿上新买的衣服真是棒极了。

4. **in fine/full/good/high feather**: in good condition, health, or humour; cheerful and happy 身强力壮;富有幽默;兴高采烈

Bill seems *in very high feather* since his book was so successful. 比尔的新书很成功,他看上去很高兴。