

美 国
常用成语及短语
词 典

AMERICAN IDIOMS AND
USEFUL PHRASES

刘光炜 编著

商务印书馆国际有限公司

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美国常用成语及短语词典

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出版说明

本书原由台湾商务印书馆股份有限公司出版(1995年1月初版于台北),是一本学习英文成语的工具书,但它具有不同于一般英文成语词书的几个特点。其一是所收录的都是美国英语中最常用的成语及短语;其二是所援引的例句大都采自90年代美国的主要报刊,如《纽约时报》、《时代》杂志等;其三是例句内容覆盖面广,涉及美国最近十几年来政治、经济、外交、国际、文化娱乐各界的许多新闻热点,如海湾战争、辛普森谋杀案、美日两国汽车进口纠纷,性感歌星麦当娜的演艺活动等等……。可以说,它以最生动活泼的当代美国英语来表现常用成语的活用、引申、转义等多种用法,有助于读者培养阅读英文报刊的能力,又可开阅读者的眼界,使读者得以一窥近20家美国知名报刊的文学风格。编著者的注释简要精当,译文流畅传神,书末的几个附录也十分有用。因此,我们征得原出版者同意,将原书改排为简体字本在此间发行。在改排过程中,编辑部对人、地专名等的译法和个别例句的内容作了一些技术性的处理。

商务印书馆国际有限公司编辑部

1996年4月

序 言

《美国常用成语及短语》是本人近几年来阅读报章杂志时,随手抄录之成语及常用短语,连同例句,加以翻译整理成篇,提供读者。内容完全取自新闻媒体。其最大好处是:(一)词句比较大众化,通俗平易。(二)报纸每日出刊,杂志通常每周一期。所用语言乃时下所通行,没有过时之虞。(三)新闻内容包罗万象,可以增加各种词汇,对于阅读英文报纸尤有帮助。

全书总共收录成语及常用短语将近千句。绝大部分取自美国东部主要报纸如:纽约时报(New York Times)、纽约每日新闻(New York Daily News)、纽约邮报(New York Post)等。小部分摘自以新闻为重点之杂志如:时代杂志(Time)、新闻周刊(Newsweek)等。所有引用例句均注明出处、日期,以及页数。偶因过于冗长而有所删略,必以删节号(…)明示,藉以存真。亦便欲深入了解内容背景者查阅原件。

注解置于例句之后,便于参阅。凡适用于不止一处者则置于书后附录(一)中。注解不仅帮助了解语意,更能使读者窥见美国及世界政经及社会之一斑。凡能在一般字典查得到之生字,均不在注解之例。笔者认为,学习外语必须手到、眼到、口到。勤查字典,乃成功必经之途。

记者及专栏作家有时意图创新,将原成语略事更改,不仅使成语更加活泼或贴切,亦可避免落入俗套。例如本书所录

“shoot oneself in the wallet”, “with a ton of salt”等, 乃将原成语更改一二字, 如此更能传神达意, 读者不可不知。凡遇此情况, 本书均将原成语列入以供参考。1992年7月, 民主党在纽约市召开总统竞选大会。德州州长 Ann Richards 在致词时, 讥布什为“born with a silver foot in his mouth”乃两句成语合并而成: “to be born with a silver spoon in his mouth”(自幼娇生惯养)与“to put one’s foot in one’s mouth”(说错话)。意即: “布什自幼娇生惯养常说错话。”颇具巧思。但若非英文造诣炉火纯青, 不宜妄试。

居住纽约优点之一即为各种报章杂志俯拾即是。市立图书馆各处均设有分馆, 步行可达, 寒来暑往不知消磨多少周末, 获得不少宝贵资料。然而, 编写过程中令我获益最多者莫过于友人之协助。戴四维先生(Mr. Tom Davidson)中文素养为美国汉学界不可多得, 自首至尾逐句校阅原稿, 难能可贵。贾克文先生(Mr. Bruce Chapman), 通晓中、俄、日文, 提供许多高见。日文汉字有些取自纽约世界日报, 有些蒙樱内晃司先生提供或校正, 特此致谢。其他诸人无中文姓名, 并已在英文序中铭谢。不再重复。

少数成语仅在其他成语例句中出现, 亦列于索引中以供参考, 置于括弧中以别之。例如: (at hand), see “make no bones about”。表示在本书中成语“at hand”并未正式收录, 但可在“make no bones about”成语例句中找到, 而收一石两鸟之效。

书中所举每一实例自成单元, 可用做阅读、翻译及写作参考教材。编者建议阅读每一单元时, 先将译文遮盖, 反覆阅读原文, 揣摩其意, 然后揭开译文, 如与自己了解有所出入, 则应

仔细推敲,直至豁然贯通。有志翻译者,亦可依上法遮住译文,将该单元译成中文,然后与书中译文比较。读者或有心得,中英句法迥异,各人风格不同,故译文不必求同。再者,如将英文原文遮盖,根据中文译回英文,再与原文比较,可以增进英文写作能力。以上刍见,愿与读者共勉。

刘光炜 谨识

1994 年 8 月

于纽约

Preface

This collection of American idioms and useful phrases has been prompted by the belief that unless one has come to terms with idioms, he or she will not have a good grasp of the language. By limiting the collection to usage in the news media the author wishes to take advantage of the fact that journalistic expressions are current and are targeted at the general public. The effort dates back to 1985 but was not pursued in earnest until 1988, as the dates of the entries will indicate. While this book is very useful to those who wish to improve their ability to read English newspapers, it is essentially a book of idioms and is organized as such.

Notes, when needed, follow the illustrative paragraphs, unless they are used for more than one entries, in which case they are placed in Appendix (1). They provide the background knowledge and help the reader understand the paragraph and the idiom illustrated therein. Often, these notes also shed light on historical events that have had tremendous impact on corporate America and US politics. Hence, this is also a good source book for journalism and international politics majors. As for Chinese immi-

grants, I hope this humble effort will make their lives in their adopted land somewhat easier.

Being a New Yorker I am privileged to have easy daily access to a vast selection of newspapers and magazines and public libraries within walking distance. But absolutely crucial in determining the currency of idioms and the subtle nuances of many selections is the ever-ready assistance from my friends: Mr. Tom Davidson, who is totally bilingual in Chinese and English, went over the entire manuscript and offered many valuable suggestions. He went out of his way verifying certain entries in the city libraries. Ms. Mary Holmes, who has a phenomenal knowledge of American idioms, became an arbiter of correct usage. Mr. Bruce Chapman, a midwesterner well-versed in Chinese, Russian and Japanese, has added much to the accuracy of my work. Mr. Cecil Spurlock, whose insightful comments and patience in going over parts of the manuscript, put the icing on the cake. At the final stage of the project, Mr. Del Owens kindly put the finishing touches on the last few chapters. I am also indebted to Dr. Zirkka Derlycia and Mrs. Lydia Demko for their advice on Russian and Eastern European topics, and Mrs. Lydia Negron for subjects relating to Latin America. On Middle Eastern matters, I have consulted Dr. Houssam H. Khalil. To Susan Peters I owe a note of thanks for her generosity in sharing her reference books. Thanks to the weekly

meetings with Mr. Vincent Sullivan, a trained lawyer, early in this endeavor, the project got off to a good start. I must also thank Mr. Koji Sakurai for reviewing the *kanji* of Japanese names, that occasionally appeared in the text. Their help has cut down tremendously on my leg work and hours I had to spend in the libraries.

To all the people mentioned above credit must go; however, needless to say, errors are entirely mine.

Michael K. Liu, M.A.
August 8, 1994, New York

Preface

(2nd Edition)

The fact that the first edition was sold out in less than a year gives evidence to the readers' need for a collection of American idioms selected firsthand from the news media. The book contains not only idioms of current usage, but also quoted passages that let us relive history's dramatic moments with better insight, as is always the case after the dust has settled. Thus in the process of learning the language, we also keep abreast of world events. While most readers have given high praise to this book in more general terms, some find the Chinese translation first-rate and urge me to write a textbook on translation. Others find its main thrusts to be the idioms in "living" contexts and the notes, which contain a wealth of information not easily available elsewhere. The three ways of using the book suggested in the last paragraph of the Chinese preface to the first edition will benefit the reader immensely if pursued in earnest.

The book deals with American English, as opposed to British English for the simple reason that while Americans and the British generally speak the same language, differ-

ences in vocabulary and usage also abound. For Americans the car runs on *gas* or *gasoline*, but for the British, it runs on *petrol*. An American takes the *elevator*, while an Englishman, the *lift*. An American tourist in England would be at a loss when he heard someone say, "Put your baggage in the *boot* of the car," when he meant the *trunk* of the car. Winston Churchill once said, "Great Britain and the United States are two nations divided by one common tongue." They speak essentially the same language, yet they speak differently enough to be two nations. Failing to make the distinction will cause confusion.

I had the privilege of consulting my friends in New York when working on the first edition. But it was Prof. Eugene Y. C. Liu (刘佑知教授), a senior editor and project director with the Commercial Press in Taiwan that I owe for making the book a reality. He patiently went over the entire manuscript and offered many invaluable suggestions.

Michael K. Liu
April 12, 1996,
New York

本书内容取自下列诸媒体：

ABC = American Broadcasting Corporation

CBS = Columbia Broadcasting System

CT = Chicago Tribune

DN = New York Daily News

HC = Houston Chronicle

NBC = National Broadcasting Corporation

Nswk = Newsweek

NYN = New York Newsday

NYP = New York Post

NYT = New York Times

NYT Mag = New York Times Magazine

Parade Mag = Parade Magazine

PBS = Public Broadcasting Service

PI = Philadelphia Inquirer

Time = Time Magazine

US News = US News and World Report

WP = Washington Post

WSJ = Wall Street Journal

例句末尾均注明出处、页数、日期，如：

[NYT, Sun, 1/24/93, E19, 1] = New York Times,
Sunday, January 24, 1993, Section E, page 19, Col-
umn 1

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A

a la carte ordering single items you want, not a package
按自己需要个别选购单项,而非整套交易。

Pay-cable channels are still free from regulation, and the rules could prod cable companies to modernize so that nearly all programs are sold *a la carte*, giving consumers more choice. [NYT, Sun, 4/4/93, Sec. 4, 2, 2]

有线电视仍未受管制,新规定将促使有线电视公司采用新办法,尽量个别提供所有节目,予消费者较多选择。

【注】(1)现行规定,用户安装有线电视必须首先安装整套,包括几个销路不佳的节目,然后才能安装自己喜爱之个别节目。

(2)Pay-cable: 见附录〈一〉。

about face, do an to do something directly opposite
one's former position 做与早先立场完全相反之事;改
变初衷。

Ito initially ruled that Simpson's team could run its own DNA tests — but he *did an about face* when Clark protested: "You are taking evidence out of our hands forever." [DN, Tu, 7/26/94, 7, 4]

伊藤判定辛普森的人可以做自己的 DNA 试验——可是当克拉克抗

议说,“你把我们的证据永远拿走了,”他又收回成命。

【注】(1)Lance Ito 为高等法院法官,日裔, Marcia Clark 为检察官, team 指律师们。

(2)Simpson, 美国橄榄球星,体育电视节目著名主持人,被控谋杀其前妻之男友。

abreast of, stay to be informed of 知晓。

It would have been in keeping with Bush's character to *stay abreast of* everything Gregg was up to. [NYP, Wed, 2/3/88, 25, 6]

按照布什的个性,格雷格的所做所为,他应全然知晓。

abuzz with full of activity 活动频繁。

At year's end, when our media are *abuzz with* men, events and personalities of the year, I venture a more dubious and disturbing speculation. What do 1987 — and the '80s thus far — show us about whether America is itself in decline? [NYP, Wed, 12/30/87, 19, 1]

时届岁尾,新闻媒体忙于报导本年闻人与时事,容我放胆做一个令人置疑而又令人不安的遐思。1987年——以及80年代到目前为止——究竟有哪些事物表示美国本身是否在走下坡路呢?

Popular interest in the topic has soared, even though it is old stuff to science fiction authors and fans. *Life* magazine in May devoted a long article to the terraforming idea. Its cover carried a large photo of Mars surrounded by inky blackness, "Our Next Home" emblazoned above the photo. Radio talk