

THE FACTS ON FILE
DICTIONARY OF
PROVERBS

*Meanings and origins of more than
1,500 popular sayings*

英语谚语典故词典

[英] 马丁·H. 曼瑟 主编



MARTIN H. MANSER

中国对外翻译出版公司

英语谚语典故词典

主 编 马丁·H.曼瑟
副主编 罗莎琳德·弗格森
翻 译 许季鸿 黄家宁

中国对外翻译出版公司

图书在版编目(CIP)数据

英语谚语典故词典 / (英)曼瑟主编;许季鸿,黄家宁译. - 北京:中国对外翻译出版公司, 2004. 4

ISBN 7-5001-1208-4

I. 英… II. ①曼… ②许… ③黄… III. 英语-谚语词典英、汉
IV. H313.3-61

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字(2004)第 021622 号

(著作权合同登记:图字 01-2003-2860 号)

Facts On File Dictionary of Proverbs / China Translation and Publishing Corporation

Facts On File Dictionary of Proverbs by Martin Manser©2002

Published under license from Facts On File, Inc., New York

出版发行/中国对外翻译出版公司

地 址/北京市西城区车公庄大街甲 4 号物华大厦六层

电 话/(010)68002481 68002482

邮 编/100044

传 真/(010)68002480

E-mail:/ctpc@public.bta.net.cn http://www.ctpc.com.cn

策划编辑/赵铁伶

责任编辑/黄家宁

责任校对/许 宁

封面设计/王 佳

排 版/宏宇电脑排版中心

印 刷/北京富生印刷厂

经 销/新华书店北京发行所

规 格/880×1230 毫米 A5

印 张/18.25

版 次/2004 年 5 月第一版

印 次/2004 年 5 月第一次

印 数/1-5000

ISBN 7-5001-1208-4/Z·51 定价: 48.00 元



版权所有 侵权必究

中国对外翻译出版公司

前言

谚语是用词简洁、寓意深刻的语句，以生动的言词提出忠告，发表评论和教诲人生。本词典收集了今天英语国家民众广泛认同的谚语。

我们在日常生活中常常引用或提及谚语，如：宁要平安不要遗憾；篱笆那边的草总是更绿；此山望见那山高；如果你最初没有成功，务必再次尝试；失败是成功之母；让睡着的狗躺着；不要捅马蜂窝；分担痛苦，痛苦减轻一半。

① 谚语的排列

在这本词典里，谚语严格按照字母顺序排列，但谚语前面的冠词 A, An 和 The 不列入排序，如：

big fish eat little fish

the bigger they are, the harder they fall

a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush

a bird never flew on one wing

too much of a good thing is worse than none at all

toot your own horn lest the same be never tooted
to the pure all things are pure

通过关键词索引也能查找谚语，所有重要的名词、形容词和动词都已列为关键词。

◎ 谚语的含义

在每条谚语之后已插入汉语译文，随后便是对谚语含义的解释，如：

pride goes before a fall 骄者必败

Arrogance and over confidence often lead to humiliation or disaster; often used as a warning... 傲慢和过分自信往往导致受辱或灾难；往往用来警示别人……

uneasy lies the head that wears a crown

戴着皇冠的脑袋不得安宁；身居高位的人永无宁日

Those in power are weighed down by responsibility, feelings of insecurity, or fears of losing their position and can never rest easy... 拥有权力的人承受责任，不安全感或害怕失去权势的压力，从来不可能从容地休息……

◎ 例句

选择了一些例句来表明谚语的用法，例句不是选自英语文学作品，便是专门为此词典撰写的，如：

boys will be boys 男孩就是男孩；男童必顽

Boys must be forgiven for their bad or boisterous behavior;

also used ironically when grown men behave in an irresponsible or childish manner: "Aunt Sally was a good deal uneasy; but Uncle Silas he said there warn't no occasion to be—boys will be boys, he said, and you'll see this one turn up in the morning all sound and right" (Mark Twain, *Huckleberry Finn*, 1884). 男孩捣乱或吵闹是应该原谅的; 成年人行为不负责任或孩子气, 也可讽刺地应用此谚语: "萨丽婶婶非常不安, 但西拉斯叔叔说, 根本还没机会闹呢——他说, 男孩就是男孩, 明天早晨, 你就会看到, 这孩子变得又健壮又懂事了。" (马克·吐温, 《哈克贝利·芬历险记》, 1884)

a good name is sooner lost than won 好名声得来困难失去容易

It takes a lot of time and effort to earn a good name for yourself, but you can lose it in an instant with a single foolish act: *Think carefully before you get involved in anything that is not strictly legal — remember that a good name is sooner lost than won.* 为你自己营造好名声要花很多时间和精力, 但只要有一个愚蠢的举动, 你一瞬间就会身败名裂: 在卷入一件严格说来不是合法的事情以前你要三思——记住, 好名声得来困难失去容易。

◎ 出处

许多谚语在社会上已经流传了很多年:

every man is his own worst enemy 每个人最坏的敌人是他自己

... The proverb was first recorded in Thomas Browne's *Religio Medici* (1643) ... 托马斯·布朗的《一个医生的宗教信仰》

(1643) 最早记录了这条谚语。

every man is the architect of his own fortune 每个人是自己命运的设计师

... The proverb is attributed to the Roman politician Appius Claudius Caecus, who held the post of censor from 312 B.C. to 308 B.C. ……这条谚语据说是古罗马政客阿卑厄斯·克劳狄·凯卡斯说的话，克劳狄在公元前 312 年至 308 年曾担任罗马监察吏。

有时，谚语来自引语，如：

the leopard can't change its spots 豹子的花斑是改变不了的；江山易改，秉性难移。

... The proverb is of biblical origin: "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots?" (Jeremiah 13:23) ……这句谚语引自圣经：“古实人岂能改变皮肤呢？豹岂能改变斑点呢？”（耶利米书 13:23）

a rose by any other name would smell as sweet 玫瑰花不管改叫什么名字，闻起来都是香的。

... The proverb comes from Shakespeare's play *Romeo and Juliet* (2:2): "What's in a name? that which we call a rose / By any other name would smell as sweet." ……此谚语出自莎士比亚戏剧《罗密欧与朱丽叶》(2:2): “名字算得了什么？我们称之为玫瑰的，改成其他名字闻起来一样芳香。”

有些谚语是当代的产物，如：

garbage in, garbage out 进的是垃圾，出的也是垃圾；鱼目变成珍珠。

...First recorded in 1964, the proverb originally referred to computer input and output, and is still used in that context, often in the form of the acronym *GIGO*. ……此谚语最早出现于1964年,最初是指电脑的输入和输出,如今仍在此情况下使用,但往往以词头字母缩略形式 *GIGO* 出现。

if it ain't broke, don't fix it 如果东西没有坏,你就别去修它。

...The proverb was first recorded in 1977, popularized by Bert Lance, director of the Office of Management and Budget in President Jimmy Carter's Administration. ……此谚语最早于1977年被收录,由于吉米·卡特总统的政府官员、行政与预算署署长伯特·兰斯的引用而传播开来。

it takes a village to raise a child 全村协力方能使儿童成材。

...Of African origin, the proverb was popularized by Hillary Clinton, wife of President Bill Clinton, in the mid—1990s. ……此谚语出自非洲,由于美国总统比尔·克林顿的妻子希拉里·克林顿的引用而传播开来。

词典给了谚语“最初见于”何处的日期,此日期不是谚语最早出现的日期,因为大多数谚语产生于口头语言,本词典只是提供了谚语已知的最初见诸文字是哪一年。

first impressions are the most lasting 第一印象最持久。

...The proverb was first recorded in William Congreve's play *The Way of the World* (1700) in the form "There is a great deal in the first impression." ……此谚语最初见于威廉·康格里夫的戏剧《如此世道》(1770),该剧的行文是:“第一印象内容很丰富。”

谚语或其他引语的早期形式如果引自己知名的出处，则原引语的拼写不予改变，除此之外，其他引语均采用现代习惯的拼写以方便读者。

nature abhors a vacuum 大自然痛恨真空状态；思想没有真空。

...Of ancient origin, the proverb was first recorded in English in 1551, in Thomas Cranmer's *Answer to Gardiner*: "Naturall reason abhorreth vacuum."此谚语出自古代，最初见于托马斯·克兰麦 1551 年的英文作品《答加德纳》，原文为：“自然的理性厌恶真空。”

a cat has nine lives 猫有九条命。

... The proverb was first recorded in 1546 in the form "A woman has nine lives like a cat."此谚语最初见于 1546 年，原文为：“女人和猫一样有九条命。”

◎ 谚语的变异和用法

在主要条目提供之后会提供其变异形式，如：

a word to the wise is sufficient 对聪明人不必细说，响鼓不用重槌；明人不用细说。

此谚语的变异形式是：a word is enough to the wise.

本词典还介绍谚语的变更，简略和幽默用法，如：

once a thief always a thief 贼永远是贼，狗改不了吃屎。

...Other words may be substituted for *thief*, such as *crook*, *drunkard*, *fool*, or *whore*, and the proverb is occasionally applied to those with enduring virtues rather than persistent vices,

as in “Once a lady, always a lady.” …… “贼”字也可用其他字代替，如“恶棍”、“醉汉”、“傻瓜”或“娼妓”，有时，此形式的谚语不再指持久的恶，而指持久的善，如“一旦成淑女，终生为淑女。”

to err is human, to forgive divine 人孰无过，宽恕为上。

...A modern facetious variant is “To err is human, but to really foul things up requires a computer.” ……现代一种开玩笑的变异形式是：“犯错误是人性，但要真正把事情搞糟需要有一台电脑。”

◎ 参照

按字母顺序与主要条目距离较远的所有变异条目，都提供参照，如：A word is enough to the wise. 参照 A WORD TO THE WISE IS SUFFICIENT。

◎ 含义相似或相反的谚语

表达相似或相反含义的谚语列在词条的末尾，如：

actions speak louder than words. 行动胜过言论。

Proverb expressing similar meaning: DEEDS ARE FRUITS. WORDS ARE BUT LEAVES. 表达相似含义的谚语：“行为是果实，言论只不过是叶子。”

absence makes the heart grow fonder 分离使柔情更浓；小别胜新婚。

Proverb expressing opposite meaning: OUT OF SIGHT, OUT OF MIND. 表达相反含义的谚语：眼不见为净。

◎ 索引

本词典后面附了两个索引：

主题词索引——按主题分类收集谚语

关键词索引——按名词、形容词和动词分类收集谚语

马丁·H·曼瑟

罗莎琳德·弗格森

2001年9月

目 录

前 言	1
字母 A 至 Z	1
关键词索引	366
主题词索引	506
参考书目	571



absence is the mother of disillusion
分离是幻灭之母; 远距离看得更真 A period of separation may enable you to consider people or things more objectively and see them in a truer but less favorable light: *While her boyfriend was away she became increasingly aware of all his little faults, which she had ignored when they were together — absence is the mother of disillusion.* The proverb is recorded as a regional expression in the United States.

absence makes the heart grow fonder
分离使柔情更浓; 小别胜新婚 Your affection for those close to you — family and friends — increases when you are parted from them: "... meantime he exhorts me to the exercise of patience, 'that first of woman's virtues,' and desires me to remember the saying, 'Absence makes the heart grow fonder,' and comfort myself with the assurance that the longer he stays away the better he shall love me when he returns" (Anne Brontë, *Tenants of Wild-*

fell Hall, 1848). The proverb was first recorded c. 1850, but the sentiment is expressed in earlier literature — for example, by James Howell (1593?—1666), who wrote "Distance sometimes endears friendship, and absence sweeteneth it." Compare Sextus Propertius (c. 54 B. C. — 2 A. D.), "*semper in absentes felicius aestus amantes* [passion is always warmer toward absent lovers]."

Proverb expressing opposite meaning: OUT OF SIGHT, OUT OF MIND.

the absent are always in the wrong
不在场者总有错 See HE WHO IS ABSENT IS ALWAYS IN THE WRONG.

the absent are never without fault nor the present without excuse 不在场者永远不会没错, 在场者不会没有错
□ See HE WHO IS ABSENT IS ALWAYS IN THE WRONG.

accidents will happen in the best-regulated families 管理最严的家庭也会发生事故; 智者千虑, 必有一失 No matter how careful you are, you may still

action is worry's worst enemy

do something by accident or mistake; often used to console somebody who has done such a thing: “‘Copperfield,’ said Mr. Micawber, ‘accidents will occur in the best-regulated families; and in families not regulated by... the influence of Woman, in the lofty character of Wife, they must be expected with confidence, and must be borne with philosophy’” (Charles Dickens, *David Copperfield*, 1850). The proverb was first recorded in George Colman’s play *Deuce Is in Him* (1763) in the shorter form “accidents will happen.”

Variant of this proverb: accidents will happen in the best of families.

action is worry's worst enemy 行动是忧虑的死敌;行动是克服忧虑的良药

You can banish anxiety by keeping busy and active, or by taking action to solve the problem that is worrying you: *Action is worry's worst enemy, so don't just sit there brooding—do something!*

actions speak louder than words 行动胜过言论

What you do is more important than what you say, or what you promise to do: “The gallant foreigner, who could not tell them how he sympathized with them, but whose actions spoke louder than words” (F. McCullagh, *With the Cossacks*, 1906). The first recorded use of the proverb, in the form “actions are more precious than words,” was in a speech by the English politician John Pym in 1628.

Its current form is of U.S. origin.

Proverb expressing similar meaning: DEEDS ARE FRUITS. WORDS ARE BUT LEAVES.

action without thought is like shooting without aim 不经思索的行动有如

无的放矢;鲁莽行事必无成 Think before you act in order to achieve the best results: *Disregarding the proverb that action without thought is like shooting without aim, he went straight out and bought a computer that proved to be totally unsuitable for his needs.*

Proverb expressing similar meaning: LOOK BEFORE YOU LEAP.

adventures are to the adventurous

有冒险精神的人才会历险;敢字当头乐融融 Those who are not bold, and who take no risks, will not have exciting lives or achieve spectacular things: “He told himself that adventure was to the adventurous.... If he could not make the effort for the small he would miss the big adventure” (Thomas Hinde, *Mr. Nicholas*, 1952). The proverb was first recorded in Benjamin Disraeli’s *Coningsby* (1844).

adversity makes strange bedfellows

灾难催生同床异梦;遇祸不择友 In times of hardship or misfortune people often befriend or form alliances with those whose company they would normally avoid: *The merger of the two companies surprised everybody, but these are hard*

times for the industry and adversity makes strange bedfellows. The proverb was first recorded in Shakespeare's play *The Tempest* (2:2) in the form "Misery acquaints a man with strange bedfellows."

Variants of this proverb: misery makes strange bedfellows; poverty makes strange bedfellows.

after a storm comes a calm 暴风雨之后必会平静;雨过天必晴 A period of anger or trouble is usually followed by a period of relative peace: "After a storm comes a calm. Wearied with a former blustering they began now to repose themselves in a sad silence" (Thomas Fuller, *Church History of Britain*, 1655). The proverb was first recorded in this form in 1582, but the sentiment it expresses is found in writing more than 200 years earlier. It has given rise to the cliché *the calm before the storm*, which reverses the order of things and describes a period of peace before an upheaval.

Proverbs expressing similar meaning: THE DARKEST HOUR IS JUST BEFORE DAWN; WHEN THINGS ARE AT THE WORST THEY BEGIN TO MEND.

after dinner rest awhile, after supper walk a mile 正餐之后要休息,晚餐之后要散步 It is best for the digestion to rest after a heavy meal and take some exercise after a light meal: "As the proverb says, for health sake, after dinner, or rather after supper, willing-

ly then I'll walk a mile to hear thee" (Philip Massinger, *The Unnatural Combat*, 1639). The proverb was first recorded in 1582 in a slightly different form, with *talk* in place of *rest*.

Variant of this proverb: after dinner sit awhile, after supper walk a mile.

age before beauty 年长者比貌美者优先;长者优先 Older people have precedence over those who are younger and more attractive; said when standing back to let another person go first or when pushing in ahead of somebody: "Age before beauty," she said as she stepped in front of the young woman at the head of the line. The proverb was first recorded in 1843. Facetious retorts or extensions to the proverb include "Beauty before the beast," "Grace before meat," and "Pearls before swine."

the age of miracles is past 奇迹年代已成过去;当今无奇迹 Miracles no longer happen; used when some desirable occurrence seems highly unlikely: *I didn't expect the authorities to take any action in response to my complaint — the age of miracles is past.* The proverb occurs in Shakespeare's play *All's Well that Ends Well* (2:3) in the form "They say miracles are past," which implies that it is of earlier origin.

Proverb expressing opposite meaning: WONDERS WILL NEVER CEASE!

alcohol will preserve anything but a secret 烈酒保不住秘密;酒后吐真情

People have a tendency to talk too freely and become indiscreet when they are drunk: *I hoped that he would not have too much to drink at the reception — I had told him about Kate's pregnancy in confidence, and it's well known that alcohol will preserve anything but a secret.* The proverb is recorded as a regional expression in the United States.

all animals are equal, but some are more equal than others 一切动物均平等,但有的动物更平等

In a society or organization where all are supposedly equal, it is often the case that some have special privileges, or greater power than others: "Thus, even on the night of such personal triumph, Jason Gilbert was once again reminded that although all Harvard undergraduates are equal, some are more equal than others" (Erich Segal, *The Class*, 1985). Other words may be substituted for *animals*, as in the above quotation. The proverb comes from George Orwell's novel *Animal Farm* (1945), where it is the ultimate slogan of a supposedly egalitarian regime set up by the animals of a farm, which gradually becomes as tyrannical as the human one it replaced.

Proverb expressing similar meaning: ALL MEN ARE CREATED EQUAL.

all arts are brothers, each is a light to

the other 一切艺术皆兄弟,触类可旁通

The arts should not be considered as separate entities but as parts of one whole, each complementing and leading to a better understanding and appreciation of the others: *Looking at a great painting can move me in the same way as listening to a fine piece of music — they say all arts are brothers.* The proverb was first recorded in 1847.

Variant of this proverb: all arts are one, all branches on one tree.

all bad things come in threes 一切坏事均成三;祸不单行 See THINGS COME IN THREES.

all cats are gray in the dark 黑暗中猫都是灰色的;黑夜遮百丑

People have no distinguishing features, and their appearance becomes unimportant, in the dark; sometimes used with reference to a person's choice of sexual partner: "You forgot that all cats are grey in the dark and so are uniformed policemen" (Jonathan Ross, *Dark Blue and Dangerous*, 1981). The proverb was first recorded in this form in 1596. It was used with sexual connotations in a letter written by Benjamin Franklin in 1745: "And as in the dark all Cats are grey, the Pleasure of corporal Enjoyment with an old Woman is at least equal, and frequently superior."

Variants of this proverb: all cats are black at night; at night all cats are gray.

all chiefs and no Indians 个个都是酋长,没有印第安人;官多兵少 *See* TOO MANY CHIEFS AND NOT ENOUGH INDIANS.

all commend patience, but none can endure to suffer 人人赞美忍耐,无人能够忍耐 *It is far easier to tell somebody else to be patient than to be patient yourself: She said I should wait and see, but it was difficult to take her advice — all commend patience, but none can endure to suffer.* The proverb was first recorded in 1948 in a U. S. proverb collection.

all good things come in threes 一切好事均成三;交好运者万事通 *See* THINGS COME IN THREES.

all good things come to those who wait 耐心等待必有好报 *See* ALL THINGS COME TO THOSE WHO AWIT.

all good things must come to an end 一切好事都会结束;好戏都得收场;天底下没有不散的宴席 *Nothing lasts forever; often said resignedly when a pleasant experience or sequence of events finally ends: We had had a wonderful vacation, but all good things must come to an end.* The proverb was first recorded c.1440: "Ye wote wele of all thing moste be an ende" (*Partonope of Blois*). The word *good* was probably not added until the 19th or early 20th century.

all is fish that comes to the net 收进

网里的都是鱼;娶进门的就是媳妇 *Anything that comes along is accepted and turned to advantage: "I don't know that she cares for one more than the other. There are a couple of young Air Force chaps too. I fancy all's fish that comes to her net at present"* (*Agatha Christie, Murder in Mesopotamia, 1936*). First recorded c. 1520, the proverb is sometimes applied to a particular person by substituting *my, his, her*, and so on for *the*, as in this example.

Proverb expressing similar meaning: ALL IS GRIST THAT COMES TO THE MILL.

all is grist that comes to the mill 送到磨房的都是待磨成粉的谷物;能人眼中无废物 *Everything, no matter how small or unpromising, can be put to use: She carried a notebook and pencil with her wherever she went—for a writer, all is grist that comes to the mill.* The proverb was first recorded, with slightly different wording, in 1655. It also occurs with *my, his, her*, and so on in place of *the* and in the figurative phrase *grist to the mill*, as in Charles Dickens's novel *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859): "The clearance was effected at last; the Stryver arrears were handsomely fetched up; everything was got rid of until November should come with its fogs atmospheric, and fogs legal, and bring grist to the mill again." *Grist* is grain brought to a mill to be ground.