

英汉双解 美国习语词典

(第4版)

[美] 亚当·马凯 主编
翟象俊 主译

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主 编

[美] 亚当·马凯

M·T·博特纳 J·E·盖茨

修订增补者

亚当·马凯

主 译

翟象俊

副主译

施 英 邢沛玲 戴晓东

译 者

查 莉 赵燕君 金 喻

刘丽苑 魏婷玉

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Acknowledgements

This dictionary is the result of the work of many hands. It was first published in 1966 in West Hartford, Connecticut, and later republished in 1969, copyrighted by the American School for the Deaf under the title *A Dictionary of Idioms for the Deaf*, edited by Maxine Tull Boatner, project director, aided by chief linguistic advisor, J. Edward Gates. The consulting committee consisted of Dr. Edmund E. Boatner, Dr. William J. McClure, Dr. Clarence D. O'Connor, Dr. George T. Pratt, Jack Brady, M. A., Richard K. Lane, and Professor H. A. Gleason, Jr., of the Hartford Seminary Foundation. Special editors for various subcategories, such as usage, sport terms, etc., were Elizabeth Meltzer, and E. Ward Gilman; Loy E. Golladay helped as language consultant with reviewing and editing. Definers were Edmund Casetti, Philip H. Cummings, Anne M. Driscoll, Harold J. Flavin, Dr. Frank Fletcher, E. Ward Gilman; Loy E. Golladay, Dr. Philip H. Goepp, Dr. Beatrice Hart, Dr. Benjamin Keen, Kendall Litchfield, Harold E. Niergarth, Ruth Gill Price, Thomas H. B. Robertson, Jess Smith, Rhea Talley Stewart, Harriet Smith, Elizabeth D. Spellman, John F. Spellman, and George M. Swanson, Barbara Ann Kipfer, and Justyn Moulds. The following have cooperated as simplifiers; Linda Braun, Dr. G. C. Farquhar, Carey S. Lane, Wesley Lauritsen, Nellie MacDonald, Ruth S. McQueen, and Donald Moores. In 1975 an edition was prepared for Barron's Educational Series, by the well-known expert on idioms Professor Adam Makkai of the University of Illinois at Chicago Circle.

For the second edition, Professor Makkai deleted obsolete material, updated old entries, and added hundreds of modern idiomatic phrases to the collection. Many of these new entries were of the slang character,

originating within recent cultural movements; others reflect the popular usage of specialized areas of endeavor, including computer technology. Professor Robert A. Hall, Jr. of Cornell reviewed the manuscript of the revision and made invaluable suggestions.

In this new, thoroughly revised and updated fourth edition, Professor Makkai added *more than 2,000* new entries, making it the largest dictionary of American idioms available on the market today.

The ever-increasing international demand for more and better dictionaries of American idioms necessitated the inclusion of nine foreign language prefaces explaining what idioms are and how this book works. We wish to acknowledge the help of the following individuals in preparing these foreign language prefaces:

- Arabic*: Hussein, Quwaider, Ph. D.,
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4. We also acknowledge with thanks the numerous inquiries and letters from readers of this dictionary. Their questions and suggestions have been a most welcome source of inspiration for further research. Once again we urge all interested users of this book to jot down any queries, suggestions, and questions that occur. Please send all such correspondence to c/o Barron's Educational Series, 250 Wireless Blvd., Hightstown, N.J. 08520, USA.

由会民委同...
 克...
 金基...
 文...
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鸣 谢

这本词典是很多人的劳动成果,它最初于1966年在康涅狄格州西哈特福德出版,后来由美国聋人学校获得版权于1969年再次出版,书名为《聋人习语词典》,主编为项目主持人马克辛·塔尔·博特纳,副主编为语言学总顾问J.爱德华·盖茨。顾问委员会由下列人士组成:埃德蒙·E·博特纳博士,威廉·J·麦克卢尔博士,克拉伦斯·D·奥康纳博士,乔治·T·普拉特博士,杰克·布雷迪硕士,理查德·K·莱恩和哈特福德神学院基金会的小H·A·格利森教授。担任惯用法、体育用语等子范畴的特约编辑有伊丽莎白·梅尔策和E·沃德·吉尔曼。洛伊·E·戈拉戴作为语言顾问参与了审读与编辑。释义撰写者有埃德蒙·卡塞蒂、菲利普·H·卡明斯、安妮·M·德里斯科尔、哈罗德·J·弗莱文、弗兰克·弗莱彻博士、E·沃德·吉尔曼、洛伊·E·戈拉戴、菲利普·H·戈普博士、比阿特丽斯·哈特博士、本杰明·基恩博士、肯德尔·利奇菲尔德、哈罗德·E·尼尔加思、鲁思·吉尔·普赖斯、托马斯·H·B·罗伯逊、杰斯·史密斯、雷亚·塔利·斯图尔特、哈里特·史密斯、伊丽莎白·D·斯佩尔曼、约翰·F·斯佩尔曼以及乔治·M·斯旺森、巴巴拉·安·基普弗和贾斯汀·莫尔兹。参与简化工作的有琳达·布朗、G·C·法夸尔博士、凯里·S·莱恩、韦斯利·劳里森、内利·麦克唐纳、鲁思·S·麦奎因和唐纳德·穆尔斯。1975年,由著名习语专家、伊利诺伊大学芝加哥分校的亚当·马凯教授为“巴伦教育丛书”编纂了一版。

为了第二版,马凯教授删除了一些过时的材料,对老的条目作了增补,并增加了数百条新的习语。这些新的条目中有许多具有俚语性质,产生于近期的文化运动;另外一些则反映了一些特殊领域,包括电脑技术在内的一些流行的用法。康奈尔大学的小罗伯特·A·霍尔教授审读了修订稿,提出了一些宝贵的建议。

为了这本新的、彻底修订和增补的第4版,马凯教授又增加了

2000多新条目,使本词典成为今天市场上最大的一本美国习语词典。

国际上对更多更好的美国习语词典日益增长的需求使我们有必要将本书的序言译成9种外语^①,解释什么是习语及如何使用这本词典。我们谨向下列人士表示感谢,感谢他们将本书的序言译成了外

阿拉伯语:巴斯大学库韦德·候赛因博士

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议提供了极受欢迎的灵感。我们愿再次鼓励本书所
遇到的问题和想到的建议以及疑问记下来,并寄
给我们转交给编者。信函可寄:

Editor, c/o Barron's Educational Series, 250 Wireless Blvd.,
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① 本版本仅保留汉译序言。

The Most Useful Dictionary of American Idioms

As you compare this *Dictionary of American Idioms* with similar works, please be aware that you are holding the most comprehensive dictionary of its kind on the market:

- More than 8,000 entries taken from real life and based on actual observations of how Americans use them.
- A dictionary with an international scope that aims at anybody whose native language was not American English. Prefaces written in ten languages help explain what an idiom is, what kinds there are, and how they work.
- A totally revised and updated edition that capitalizes on its astounding past success and brings brand-new idioms from all areas of human endeavor.
- Logical ordering of information that includes the parts of the sentence, clear explanations, enlightening examples, and cross-references in alphabetical order on every pertinent page.

最有用的美国习语词典

(英文版说明)

当你将这本《美国习语词典》与同类著作进行比较时,请注意,你
这本词典是市场上同类词典中最全面的一本:

所有习语条目,均取自于现实生活并基于对美国人如何使用
习语。读者对象为母语不是美国英语的
学习者。本书首先解释了什么是习语、习语有
哪些种类,在这一过程中充分利用了以往惊
人的材料。本书从人类所有的活动领域中吸取了许多全新

习语。本书所列合乎逻辑,所提供的信息包括词性、清晰的释义、富
有代表性的例句及每一相关单页上按字母顺序排列的相互参

Introduction

WHAT IS AN IDIOM?

If you understand every word in a text and still fail to grasp what the text is all about, chances are you are having trouble with the idioms. For example, suppose you read (or hear) the following:

Sam is a real cool cat. He never blows his stack and hardly ever flies off the handle. What's more, he knows how to get away with things... Well, of course, he is getting on, too. His hair is pepper and salt, but he knows how to make up for lost time by taking it easy. He gets up early, works out, and turns in early. He takes care of the hot dog stand like a breeze until he gets time off. Sam's got it made; this is it for him.

Needless to say, this is not great literary style, but most Americans, especially when they converse among themselves, will use expressions of this sort. Now if you are a foreigner in this country and have learned the words *cool* 'not very warm,' *cat* 'the familiar domestic animal,' *blow* 'exhale air with force,' *stack* 'a pile of smothering, or material heaped up,' *fly* 'propel-oneself in the air by means of wings,' *handle* 'the part of an object designed to hold by hand'—and so forth you will still not understand the above sample of conversational American English, because this basic dictionary information alone will not give you the meaning of the forms involved. An idiom—as it follows from these observations—is the assigning of a new meaning to a group of words which already have their own meaning. Below you will find a 'translation' of this highly idiomatic, colloquial American English text, into a more for-

mal, and relatively idiom free variety of English:

Sam is really a calm person. He never loses control of himself and hardly ever becomes too angry. Furthermore, he knows how to manage his business financially by using a few tricks... Needless to say, he too, is getting older. His hair is beginning to turn gray, but he knows how to compensate for wasted time by relaxing. He rises early, exercises, and goes to bed early. He manages his frankfurter stand without visible effort, until it is someone else's turn to work there. Sam is successful; he has reached his life's goal.

Now if you were to explain how the units are organized in this text, you would have to make a little idiom dictionary. It would look like this:

to be a (real) cool cat

to blow one's stack

to fly off the handle

what's more

to get away with something

of course

to be getting on

pepper and salt

to make up for something

lost time

to take it easy

to get up

to be a really calm person

to lose control over oneself, to become mad

to become excessively angry

furthermore, besides, additionally

to perpetrate an illegitimate or tricky act without repercussion or harm

naturally

to age, to get older

black or dark hair mixed with streaks of gray

to compensate for something

time wasted, time spent at fruitless labor

to relax, to rest, not to worry

to rise from bed in the morning or

	at other times
<i>to work out</i>	to exercise, to do gymnastics
<i>to turn in</i>	to go to bed at night
<i>like a breeze</i>	without effort, elegantly, easily
<i>time off</i>	period in one's job or place of employment during which one is not performing one's services
<i>to have got it made</i>	to be successful, to have arrived
<i>this is it</i>	to be in a position or in a place, or to have possession of an object, beyond which more of the same is unnecessary

Many of the idioms in this little sample list can be found in this dictionary itself. The interesting fact about most of these idioms is that they can easily be identified with the familiar parts of speech. Thus some idioms are clearly verbal in nature, such as *get away with*, *get up*, *work out*, and *turn in*. An equally large number are nominal in nature. Thus *hot dog* and *cool cat* are nouns. Many are adjectives, as in our example *pepper and salt* meaning 'black hair mixed with gray.' Many are adverbial, as the examples *like the breeze* 'easily, without effort,' *hammer and tongs* 'violently' (as in *she ran after him hammer and tongs*), and so forth. These idioms, which correlate with the familiar parts of speech, can be called *lexemic idioms*.

The other most important group of idioms are of larger size. Often they are an entire clause in length, as our examples *to fly off the handle*, 'lose control over oneself,' and *to blow one's stack*, 'to become very angry.' There are a great many of these in American English. Some of the most famous ones are: *to kick the bucket* 'die,' *to be up the creek* 'to be in a predicament or a dangerous position,' *to be caught between the devil and deep blue sea* 'to have to choose between two equally un-

pleasant alternatives,' to *seize the bull by the horns* 'to face a problem and deal with it squarely,' and so on. Idioms of this sort have been called *tournares* (from the French), meaning 'turns of phrase,' or simply *phraseological idioms*. What they have in common is that they do not readily correlate with a given grammatical part of speech and require a paraphrase longer than a word.

Their form is set and only a limited number of them can be said or written in any other way without destroying the meaning of the idiom. Many of them are completely rigid and cannot show up in any other form whatever. Consider the idiom *kick the bucket*, for example. In the passive voice, you get an unacceptable form such as *the bucket has been kicked by the cowboy*, which no longer means that the 'cowboy died.' Rather it means that he struck a pail with his foot. Idioms of this type are regarded as *completely frozen forms*. Notice, however, that even this idiom can be inflected for tense, e. g., it is all right to say *the cowboy kicked the bucket, the cowboy will kick the bucket, he has kicked the bucket*, etc. Speakers disagree as much as do grammarians whether or not, for example, it is all right to use this idiom in the gerund form (a gerund being a noun derived from a verb by adding *-ing* to it, e. g., *singing* from *sing*, *eating* from *eat*, etc.) in *His kicking the bucket surprised us all*. It is best to avoid this form.

The next largest class of idioms is that of well established sayings and proverbs. These include the famous types of *don't count your chickens before they're hatched* (meaning 'do not celebrate the outcome of an undertaking prematurely because it is possible that you will fail in which case you will look ridiculous'); *don't wash your dirty linen in public* (meaning 'do not complain of your domestic affairs before strangers as it is none of their business'), and so forth. Many of these originate from some well known literary source or come to us from the earliest English speakers of the North American Continent.

Lack of predictability of meaning (or precise meaning) is not the

only criterion of idiomaticity. Set phrases or phraseological units are also idiomatic, even though their meanings may be transparent. What is idiomatic (unpredicable) about them is their construction. Examples include *How about a drink? What do you say, Joe?* (as a greeting); *as a matter of fact, just in case; just to be on the safe side*, and many more.

Another important case of idiomaticity is the one-word idiom that occurs when a word is used in a surprisingly different meaning from the original one. Examples include *lemon*, said of bad watches, cars, or machines in general; and *dog*, said of a bad date or a bad exam. (*My car is a lemon, my math exam was a dog.*)

Why is English, and especially American English, so heavily idiomatic? The most probable reason is that as we develop new concepts, we need new expressions for them, but instead of creating a brand new word from the sounds of the language, we use some already existent words and put them together in a new sense. This, however, appears to be true of all known languages. There are, in fact, no known languages that do not have some idioms. Consider the Chinese expression for 'quickly,' for example. It is *mǎ shāng*, and translated literally it means 'horseback.' Why should the concept of 'quick' be associated with the back of a horse? The answer reveals itself upon a moment's speculation. In the old days, before the train, the automobile, and the airplane, the fastest way of getting from one place to the other was by riding a horse, i. e., on horseback. Thus Chinese *mǎ shāng* is as if we said in English *Hurry up! We must go 'on horseback,'* i. e., 'Hurry up! We must go quickly.' Such a form would not be unintelligible in English at all, though the speaker would have to realize that it is an idiom, and the foreigner would have to learn it. However, in learning idioms a person may make an incorrect guess. Consider the English idiom *Oh well, the die is cast!* What would you guess this means—in case you don't know it? Perhaps you may guess that the speaker you heard is acquiescing in something because of the *Oh well* part. The expression means 'I made an irreversible

decision and must live with it.' You can now try to reconstruct how this idiom came into being: The image of the die that was cast in gambling cannot be thrown again; that would be illegal; whether you have a one, a three, or a six, you must face the consequences of your throw, that is, win or lose, as the case may be. (Some people may know that the phrase was used by Caesar when he crossed the Rubicon, an event that led to war.)

How, then, having just learned it, will you use this idiom correctly? First of all, wait until you hear it from a native speaker in a natural context; do not experiment yourself with using an idiom until you have mastered the basics of English grammar. Once you have heard the idiom being used more than once, and fully understand its meaning, you can try using it yourself. Imagine that you have two job offers, one sure, but lower paying, and one that pays more, but is only tentative. Because of nervousness and fear of having no job at all, you accept the lower paying job, at which moment the better offer comes through and naturally you feel frustrated. You can then say *Oh well, the die is cast...* If you try this on a native speaker and he looks at you with sympathy and does not ask 'what do you mean?'—you have achieved your first successful placement of a newly learned idiom in an appropriate context. This can be a rewarding experience. Americans usually react to foreigners more politely than do people of other nations, but they can definitely tell how fluent you are. If a person always uses a bookish, stilted expression and never uses an idiom in the right place, he might develop the reputation of being a dry, unimaginative speaker, or one who is trying to be too serious and too official. *The use of idioms is, therefore, extremely important. It can strike a chord of solidarity with the listener.* The more idioms you use in the right context, the more at ease Americans will feel with you and the more they will think to themselves 'this is a nice and friendly person—look at how well he expresses himself!'

We will now take a look at some practical considerations regarding

the use of *A Dictionary of American Idioms*.

HOW TO USE THIS DICTIONARY

This dictionary can be used successfully by nonnative speakers of English, students, workers, immigrants—in short, anybody who wants to make his English more fluent, more idiomatic. It contains phrases of the types mentioned above, lexemic idioms, phrase idioms, and proverbial idioms, that have a special meaning. When a phrase has a special meaning that you cannot decode properly by looking up and understanding the individual words of which it is composed, then you know you are dealing with an idiom. You may already know some of these idioms or may be able to imagine what they mean. Look in the book for any of the following idioms that you may already know well; this will help you to understand how you should use this book: *boyfriend*, *girlfriend*, *outer space*, *piggy bank*, *get even*, *give up*, *going to*, *keep on*, *keep your mouth shut*, *lead somebody by the nose*, *look after*, *show off*, *throw away*, *all over*, *in love*, *mixed-up*, *out of this world*, *I'll say*, *both X and Y*.

A dictionary is like any other tool: You must familiarize yourself with it and learn how to use it before it begins to work well for you. Study the directions carefully several times, and practice looking up idioms. That way, searching for an idiom and finding it will become second nature to you. If you hear an idiomatic expression that is not in this book, after using it for a while, you will develop the ability to track down its meaning and write it down for yourself. Keep your own idiom list at home, right beside your regular dictionary. If you read a technical text, or a novel or a newspaper article and do not understand an expression, look it up in your regular school dictionary first; if you do not find it, try this one.

How do you find out if this dictionary can help you understand a hard sentence? Sometimes you can easily see what the phrase is, as with