

外教社

# 英语 惯用语词典

Dictionary of  
English Idiomatic  
Expressions



上海外语教育出版社

外教社 SHANGHAI FOREIGN LANGUAGE EDUCATION PRESS

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冯翠华 编著



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# 英语惯用语词典

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# 前 言

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在英语中,日常使用的口语和书面语含很多惯用语。这些惯用语也被称为通俗语或流行语。这种惯用语的精髓部分存在于任何一种语言中,它们因人们的广泛使用而流传至今。惯用语也在这一过程中不断变化和发展。新的惯用语不断出现,而一些旧的惯用语因长期不用或因其语义不受欢迎而逐渐消失或被淘汰。

我编写《英语惯用语词典》的目的就是让这些浩瀚丰富的英语惯用语的精髓部分能为广大的把英语作为外语或其他语言学习的学生所了解。这些学生通常是在学校学习英语,缺乏以英语为母语的人拥有的那种日常口语或书面语氛围。对于他们来说,这样一部惯用语词典并不能完全解决问题,但当他们在阅读、收看和收听英语节目中碰到这类惯用语时,这部词典至少可以作为参考书。随着长期的使用,词典的使用者甚至会发现他们在口语或书面语中已能娴熟地使用这些惯用语。

本词典中所有词条都源自我收集的资料,并根据我在中国教授英语的经验而收录汇编,因此带有一些主观性和随意性。词条多为主流用法,不包括俚语或行话,不包括粗俗、贬损或歧视性的用法。每一词条的基本含义先用英文解释,后用中文解释其基本含义。每一个词条至少有一个用法范例。学生可以从范例推断出在什么情景下使用什么惯用语才恰当。

本词典中的惯用语按字母顺序排列,这样如果无法确定一个惯用语的第一个词,就会给查找带来困难。为了解决这个问题,本词典为大家提供一个关键词索引。只要能记住一个关键词,您就可以通过索引查找该词然后找到所要找的惯用语。例如,通过索引查找 leap,就可以找到 a leap in the dark。通过索引查找 kid,就可以找到 new kid on the block。然后,您可再到本词典字母 A 和 N 下查找这两个惯用语的含义。

本词典的编写工作涉及人员众多。首先我要感谢王岚教授和濮

建忠教授在编纂这部词典的整个过程中给予我的鼓励和支持。在词典的编写过程中,12 名学生将我手写在纸卡片上的词条输入电脑。其中,聂启平同学首先开始词条的输入工作,并承担起后续原稿修改的全部输入工作。王彦东同学不仅参加了原始词条的输入工作,还对词条进行了整理。王玉兰副教授将前言和字母 A 至 E 中的例句翻译成中文。韩子满教授组织学生翻译字母 F 至 Z 中的例句,并负责编辑以确保风格统一和翻译质量。马茂苓先生负责了最后的校对工作。我由衷感谢以上人员为这部词典所做的工作,没有他们的支持,这部词典需要更长的时间才能问世。

冯翠华

2010 年 12 月

# **Preface**

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Ordinary speech and writing in English contain many idiomatic expressions, which are also called colloquial or popular expressions. In any language, there exists a core of such expressions, many of which have survived through long familiar usage to this day. This core is constantly changing and developing. New expressions are added to it as they appear, while some old ones die out, or are discarded, through non-use, or from semantic disfavor.

My purpose in compiling this Dictionary is to bring this vast and rich core of English idiomatic expressions to the knowledge of the majority of Chinese students who learn English as a foreign language (EFL) or as an additional language (EAL). These students usually learn English in academic environments with little immersion in ordinary spoken or written English of the native-speaker (ENL) type. To them a dictionary of this type is no solution in itself, but at least it can serve as a source of reference should they come across such expressions in their reading, viewing, or listening. In course of time, they might even be able to use them freely in their own spoken or written English.

The choice of entries is based on my own resources and my experience of teaching English in China, and is therefore likely to be subjective and arbitrary. The entries are largely mainstream in usage, and do not include slang or jargon of a specific nature, or expressions which are vulgar, derogatory or discriminatory. For each entry, the basic meaning is first given in English, followed by its basic meaning in Chinese. At least one example of usage is given for each entry. Users can deduct from the example(s) the appropriate situations in which an expression may be used correctly.

The entries in this dictionary are listed alphabetically. This creates the difficulty of looking up an expression if one does not know the exact first word. To solve this problem, an index of key words is provided. So long as you can remember a key word of an expression, you can look up this word in the index and you will find the phrase you want. For example, by looking up *leap*, you can find *a leap in the dark*. If you look up *kid*, you will find *new kid on the block*. You can then look up the meaning of these two phrases under A and N in the dictionary.

Many people were involved in the making of this dictionary. I would like to express my gratitude first to Professors Wang Lan and Pu Jianzhong for their encouragement and assistance throughout the process. 12 students typed out of my handwritten entry-cards into the computer, and especially Nie Qiping, who started the typing, and took on the responsibility of typing in all later amendments to the original draft, and Wang Yandong, who ended the initial typing. Asso. Professor Wang Yulan translated the preface and the examples of usage under the letters A to E into Chinese. Professor Han Ziman organized a group of students to translate the examples of usage under the letters F to Z. He also edited their work for uniformity of style and quality. Mr. Ma Maoling took the responsibility of the final proofreading. I wish to express my heartfelt thanks to them. Without the help of so many, this dictionary would have taken much longer to see the light of day.

Feng Cuihua  
December, 2010



## 使用说明

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1. 本词典所收的惯用语包括单词、短语和短句(语句)。
2. 词条按字母顺序排列。
3. 若两条惯用语意思相同,则用“同…”的形式设参见;若两条惯用语之间有关联,则用“参见…”的形式设参见,如:  
**boys in the backroom** 同 **backroom boys**  
**have egg on one's face** 参见 **egg on one's face**
4. 圆括号“( )”用于括注:① 可省略的内容;② 解释说明性文字或补充说明性文字,如:  
**make (both) ends meet** earn just enough money to support oneself 使收支相抵;勉强维持生计  
**and then some** (emphatic) much more so (表示加强语气)而更  
**baby boomer** a member of the generation in the U. S. born after WW II, between 1947~1961 “婴儿潮”一代人(指二战后 1947~1961 年之间在美国出生的一代人)
5. 斜杠“/”表示可替换的内容,如:  
**a close/near thing**  
**come/fall apart at the seams**

# Guide to the Dictionary

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1. The headwords of the dictionary include single words, phrases, and short sentences (utterances).
2. The headwords are arranged alphabetically.
3. Cross-references are provided when:

① two entries have the same meaning, e. g.

**boys in the backroom** 同 **backroom boys**

② two entries are closely related, e. g.

**have egg on one's face** 参见 **egg on one's face**

4. Optional component(s) of a headword and illustrative or supplementary words of definition are given in brackets “( )”, e. g.

**make (both) ends meet** earn just enough money to support oneself 使收支相抵;勉强维持生计

**and then some** (emphatic) much more so (表示加强语气)而更

**baby boomer** a member of the generation in the U. S. born after WW II, between 1947~1961 “婴儿潮”一代人(指二战后1947~1961年之间在美国出生的一代人)

5. Slash “ / ” is used between alternatives, e. g.

**a close/near thing**

**come/fall apart at the seams**

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# Aa

**a bed of roses** a comfortable and easy situation; a pleasant situation  
称心如意的境遇; 安乐窝

Life is not *a bed of roses*; you have to take the rough with the smooth.  
生活并不都是充满鲜花; 你必须既能享乐, 又能吃苦。| “Don't think my work as a reporter *is a bed of roses*,” she said. “It can be dangerous at times.” “不要以为我的记者工作轻松舒服,” 她说。 “有时候, 这个工作也会很危险。”

**a bit (too) much** overdoing things; not good manners 有点过分; 不礼貌

It's *a bit much* to give these pupils such a lot of homework. Children need time to rest and play. 给这些小学生留这么多家庭作业, 太过分了。孩子们需要时间休息和玩耍。| His using my computer without my permission is *a bit too much*. 他有点太过分了, 不经我允许就用我的电脑。

**a bit thick** unfair or unreasonable 太过分; 令人受不了!

Well, I must say it's *a bit thick* to spend so much money on that pet of yours. 唉, 我必须说, 你在宠物上花这么多钱有些让人受不了。

**about time** used to imply that something should have happened or been done earlier 早该(认识到、做到等)

Well, it's *about time* you realized how much money you have wasted on these video games. 你早该知道你在电子游戏上已经浪费了多少钱。| It's *about time* he learnt to do things for himself. 他早就该学会自己做自己的事了。

**a breath of fresh air** a pleasant refreshing change 使人耳目一新的事; 给人新鲜感的事

Coming after the heavily made-up and stylishly-dressed applicants, she was like *a breath of fresh air*, with her simple dress and natural rosy lips and cheeks. 出现在浓妆艳抹、穿着时尚的申请者之后, 她简单的服饰和泛着自然的玫瑰红色的唇和颊, 浑身散发出一种清新的气息。

**a breeze** an easy job; an easy thing to do 不费吹灰之力的事

Sending messages by e-mail is *a breeze*, if you know how. 通过电子邮件发送信息易如反掌, 当然, 如果你知道怎么发的话。

**accidents will happen** one can't guard against accidents 事端难免; 事故难免

— Why don't you take a plane? 你为什么 不坐飞机? — I'm afraid of accidents. 我怕出事。 — Well! **Accidents will happen**, whether on land, sea, or in the air. 无论是在陆地上、海上、还是天上,意外总是会发生。

**a chip of the old block** a person who resembles his father, especially in character (尤指性格)酷似父亲的人

He is **a chip of the old block**, even in the way he walks and speaks. 他酷似他的父亲,甚至走路和说话的样子都很像。

**a chip on one's shoulder** a deep grievance, especially about something in particular (尤指对某事)根深蒂固的怨恨情绪

He has **a chip on his shoulder** about the way he was cheated by the tourist agency. 他对旅行社的欺骗行为感到非常不满。

**a close/near thing** ① a narrow escape; 极险的事; 死里逃生 ② (in elections) winning by a slim majority (选举、比赛等)几乎势均力敌; 几乎平局

They escaped from the floods in time, but it was **a near thing**. 他们及时逃离了洪水,但那真是死里逃生。 | The People's Party won the election, but it was **a close thing**. 人民党赢得了选举,但那是一次险胜。

**add/put in one's two cents (worth) to sth.** make unsolicited remarks or comment; contribute one's opinion for what it is worth (未经邀请而)发表意见;随便说两句

Clinton was also intent on **adding his two cents (worth) to** the never-ending partisan argument on health-care. 克林顿也有意就健康保险问题发表自己的意见,这是一个两党各持己见,永不停止争论的议题。 | “I **put in my two cents worth** and I hoped it helped the cause,” he said. 他说:“我也说两句,希望对我们的事业有所帮助。”

**add insult to injury** act in a way that makes worse an already unpleasant situation 雪上加霜;更糟的是

— Why are you so angry with him? 你为什么这么生他的气? — Well, he picked me up late for dinner, and then, to **add insult to injury**, he found he had forgotten his wallet, and made me pay for the meal. 他来接我吃饭时已经晚了,更糟的是,他忘了带钱夹,还得让我付账。

**add sth. to taste** (used in cooking recipes) add amount needed for the desired flavor (用于食谱等的说明)按口味适量地加入

Mix the ingredients together and **add salt or sugar to taste**. 将所有的调料混在一起,再根据口味加入适量的盐或糖。

**add up** make sense; mean something 讲得通;有意义

After listening to her story, he said, “It doesn't **add up**.” 听了她的故事后,他说:“她讲的话莫名其妙。”

**a dog's life** an unhappy life, full of problems and unfair treatment 悲惨的生活

As child soldiers, hundreds of African children are forced to lead **a**

**dog's life.** 作为未成年的士兵,成百上千的非洲孩子被迫过着悲惨的生活。

**a done deal** something completed or settled 解决了的事;不可改变的事

You can't change the plan now. It's **a done deal**. 你现在不能改计划了,那已经是板上钉钉的事了。

**adrenalin (is) pumping** feel tense and highly excited 感到激动和紧张

... And he would go into battle soon ... he could sense the **adrenalin pumping**. 他很快就要进入战斗了,他已经开始兴奋了。

**advance person** a person who makes preparations in advance for somebody's visit or trip, etc. 打前站的人

Bruno was John Kennedy's "**advance person**" in the 1960 campaign. 1960年约翰·肯尼迪竞选总统时,布鲁诺是为他打前站的人。

**a far cry from** very different from 和...相差很远

Life in the big city for the rural workers was **a far cry from** the life in their poor backward villages. 对农民工来说,大城市的生活与他们贫穷、落后的乡村比起来相差太大了。| He found that the tough and disciplined life in the army was **a far cry from** his pampered life at home. 他发现军队艰苦、纪律严明的生活与他在家里放纵的生活有着天壤之别。

**a fate worse than death** terrible experience, for women, especially rape or seduction (对女性)比死还不幸的遭遇(尤指被强奸)

The women and girls hid in the mountains to escape **a fate worse than death** when the enemy troops approached. 当敌人的部队接近时,为了躲避生不如死的厄运,妇女和女孩子们藏进了山里。

**a feather in one's cap** a performance or a deed to be proud of 某人的荣誉或成就的标志

Winning the 100 m Olympic gold was **a feather in his cap**. 赢得奥运会百米赛跑的金牌是他成功的标志。

**afraid not** polite way of saying "Sorry, but no." 对不起,不行

— Can you lend me your car this weekend? 这个周末,能不能把你的车借我用一下? — (I'm) **afraid not**. I need it myself. 对不起,我自己要用。

**after one's own heart** of the type that one desires or loves best 合某人的心意;称某人的心

— I hear Lucy is getting married to John. 听说露西要和约翰结婚了?

— Yes. He's a man **after her own heart**. They have so much in common. 是的。他正合她的心意。他们俩有很多共同之处。

**after you** polite way of saying "Please go ahead of me." or "You go first." on entering or leaving a place (在进入或离开某地方时的礼貌用语)您先请

— (opening the door) Well, here we are. **After you**. (开门)我们到

了,您先请。— No, *after you*, I'll follow behind. 不,您先请,我跟着您。

**against one's better judgment** contrary to one's feelings of what is right or sensible 明知不可取地;明知不适当地;违心地

By lending them the money to travel abroad, he was really acting *against his better judgment*. 他明知不该这么做,但还是借钱给他们出国旅游。

**a good time was had by all** everyone enjoyed themselves 大家都玩得很高兴

Well, the party was a success. *A good time was had by all*. 嗯,晚会很成功。大家都玩得很痛快。

**a great one for** one who is very good at something 对某事擅长;精通某事

He's *a great one for* crossword puzzles. He does them regularly. 填字游戏他很拿手,经常会玩。| He's *a great one for* playing jokes on people. 他特别会开别人的玩笑。

**agree to disagree** agree not to further discuss something controversial, and to retain one's opinion 同意不再讨论有争议的事而各自保留意见

The two parties agreed on some issues, but *agreed to disagree* on others. 双方在一些议题上达成共识,但在其他议题上同意各自保留意见。

**a hair's breadth** a very small or narrow margin 一点儿,极小量

Success eluded them by *a hair's breadth*. 只差那么一点点他们就成功了。| Running with all their remaining strength, they escaped the forest fire by *a hair's breadth*. 他们用尽剩下的力气奔跑,险险地躲过了森林大火。

**a hard/tough nut (to crack)** a difficult problem, or somebody hard to beat 难题;难对付的人

Global warming is really *a hard nut to crack*. 全球暖化的确是个难题。| He soon found that his rival in the election was *a tough nut (to crack)*. 他很快发现,他选举中的竞争对手是个难对付的人。

**ahead of the game** having an advantage in a contest, or field of activity 在竞争领域处于前列,有优势

As far as the election is concerned, she is well *ahead of the game*. 就选举来说,她有很大的优势。

**a head start** an advantage or a lead at the beginning of something 有利的开端;起步的优势

With her knowledge of English, she had *a head start* over the other applicants for the job. 由于她有英语方面的知识,因此从一开始她就领先于这个工作的其他应征者。

**a holy terror** a badly behaved child; a person who can be fierce and aggressive 顽童;小淘气;脾气厉害的人

That child is a **holy terror**! Why don't his parents teach him manners? 那个孩子真是个小魔王! 他的父母怎么不教教他规矩? | The sergeant can be a **holy terror** when his men are late for drill. 如果那位军士的士兵训练迟到的话,他就会像吃了枪药一样凶巴巴的。

**a home from home** a place as happy or comfortable as one's own home 像自己家里一样的地方,使人感到舒适自在的地方

The hotel advertised itself as **a home from home** for its guests. 这家旅馆在广告里把自己形容成一个宾至如归的地方。| The authorities made great efforts to make the school feel like **a home from home** to its boarders. 学校领导努力让学校成为寄宿学生的第二个家。

**aim for the sky/stars** set high goals; have high ambition or aspirations 有远大理想,有抱负

He was never content to be just fond of snooker. He **aimed for the stars** and vowed one day he would be a world champion. 他永远不满足于只是喜欢台球。他有着远大的理想,并发誓总有一天成为世界冠军。

**a leap in the dark** a daring and risky step 冒险举动;瞎闯

By investing so much money in the new stock, he was really making **a leap in the dark**. 在这支股票上投注这么多钱,根本就是瞎冒险。

**all at sea** confused or helpless in dealing with something 茫然;困惑;不知所措

Don't ask him. He is **all at sea** regarding this issue. 别问他,他对这件事完全是一头雾水。| You'd better learn how the system works, or you'll be **all at sea** when you have to use it. 你最好了解一下这个系统是如何运作的,免得你用到它时不知所措。

**all bets are off** used to express earlier predictions or bets are no longer valid 以前所作的预测、打赌都不算了

As soon as they saw him collapse in the 4th round, they knew **all bets were off**. He would lose the game. 他们一看到他第四轮垮掉的样子就知道所有预测都落空了。他肯定会输掉比赛。

**all burned up** very angry; annoyed 十分恼火;生气

He was **all burned up** when he found some hacker had accessed his PC and messed up his files. 当发现黑客袭击了他的电脑并把文件搞得一团糟,他气疯了。

**all ears** listening eagerly; eager to hear 洗耳恭听

— Want to hear the latest gossip on Angela? 想不想听有关安杰拉的最新传闻? — I'm **all ears**. 洗耳恭听。

**all fingers and thumbs** clumsy or awkward in action 笨手笨脚;笨拙  
When we grow old, we can't do even simple jobs well. We seem to be **all fingers and thumbs**. 等我们老了,我们甚至连简单的工作都做得不好。我们会显得笨手笨脚的。

**all hell broke loose** used to describe sudden pandemonium; state of utter confusion 大乱起来;一片混乱

As soon as the first bombs fell on Pearl Harbor, **all hell broke loose** on



the base. 第一批炸弹刚落在珍珠港上,整个基地就全乱了。| When their team lost the match, the angry fans ran onto the field, and **all hell broke loose**. 当他们队输掉比赛时,愤怒的球迷冲进球场,全场一片混乱。

**all in good time** in course of time; without haste 不着急地;到今后适当时候

Don't worry. Things will improve, but **all in good time**. 别担心,情况到时候就会好起来的。船到桥头自然直嘛。

**all manner of** various kinds of 形形色色的;各种各样的

You'll meet **all manner of** people at these mass gatherings. 在这么大的集会上,你会遇到各种各样的人。

**all my own work** used in ironical, self-deprecatory or humorous tone to indicate the work was done without help from others, whether the work is good or bad (表示幽默地自我夸赞)这全是我自己做的

— Well! I must say this painting is not bad. 我得说这画儿还真不赖。

— **All my own work**. 都是我自己瞎画的。

**all over bar / but the shouting** (of a contest) almost finished and therefore virtually decided (比赛)大局已定;胜利在握

At the last minute, he scored a penalty goal, and it was **all over bar the shouting**. 最后一分钟时,他罚中点球,因此大局已定。

**all systems are go** everything is ready for action 一切准备就绪

— It's time to leave for the deep sea exploration. 深海探险的时候到了。— Yes, we can start off now. **All systems are go**. 是的,该出发了。一切准备就绪。

**all that** so very 那么;如此

They didn't realize the floods were **all that** bad. 他们没想到水灾的情况那么糟。| You say this novel is good, but I find it not **all that** interesting. 你认为这小说不错,可我觉得它没什么意思。

**all that jazz** all such stuff; all that rubbish 诸如此类

They were talking about the movies, the latest DVDs, and video games, and **all that jazz**. 他们在谈论电影、最新的光碟和电脑游戏,诸如此类的东西。

**all the more** used to emphasize the degree of something (强调程度)更加;格外

Now she's getting better, you should be **all the more** attentive to her needs. 她现在比以前好了,你应该更加关心她,看她需要哪些帮助。

| With oil prices going up, we should be **all the more** economical in using fuel. 随着油价上升,我们在使用燃油时应该更加节约。

**all the rage** a wide spread craze or fashion 风靡一时的事物;时尚

Multi-purpose cell-phones are **all the rage** now. 多功能手机是当今最时尚的用品。

**all there** with all one's mental faculties intact 脑子清醒;不糊涂

He may be old and weak, but he is still **all there**. 他可能又老又弱,但