

# 美语生活俗语

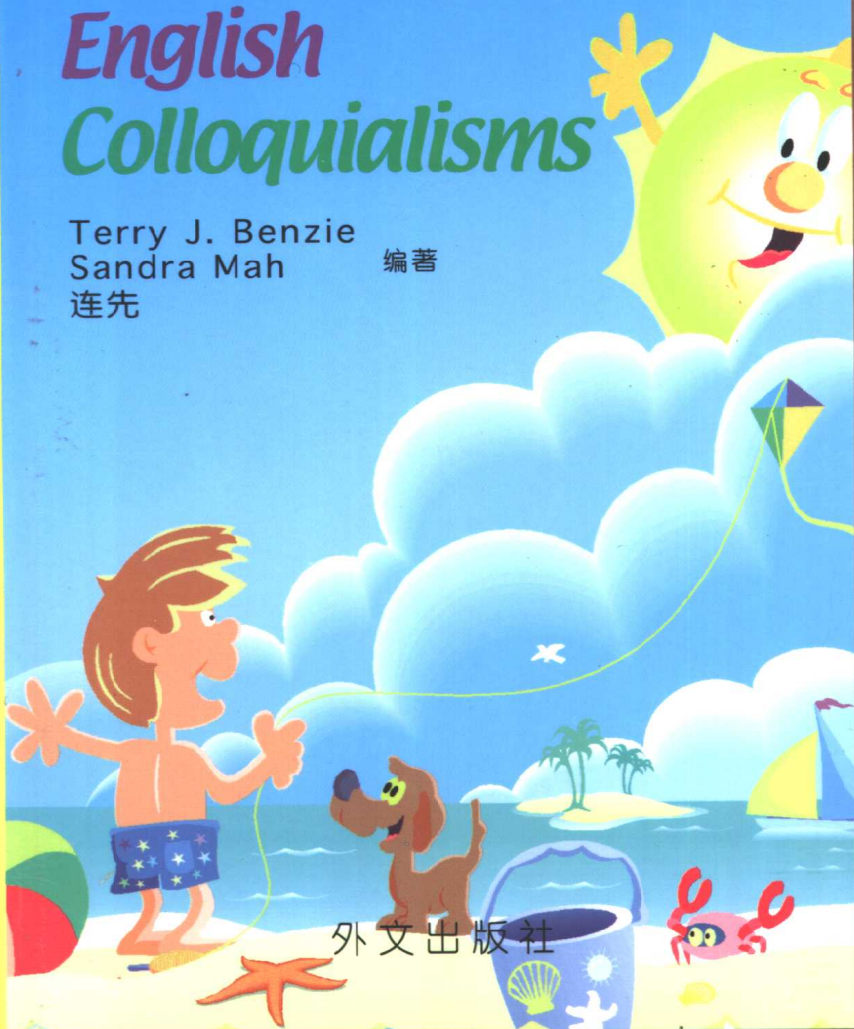
## *American English Colloquialisms*

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编著

连先



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**American English  
Colloquialisms**

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# Preface

Studying a foreign language involves more than simply memorizing vocabulary or rules of grammar; it includes the study of a foreign culture, the words, phrases and expressions people use to communicate many things. One can learn what ideas or issues are important to a specific culture, how people think and how people express their thoughts. The main purpose of this book is to help Chinese students studying English learn the meanings of selected American English colloquialisms. Additionally, we hope it teaches readers that English is more than dry definitions. American people use colloquial expressions to make their speech more colorful, to give it life.

When a non-native speaker of English discovers a phrase in which they understand every word involved though not the entire meaning, it is likely that they have encountered colloquial English. Americans frequently use colloquialisms in daily conversations, movies, music, and literature. By developing a fundamental understand-

ing of these colloquialisms, a student of English gains access to a myriad of new tools for communication.

This book provides 500 common American English colloquialisms with crossreferences to approximately 100 related phrases. The meanings and phrasings of American English colloquialisms change over time in response to social and cultural changes. We hope this book provides the reader with an interesting method of learning English by allowing a glimpse into the culture of the people who have created such phrases.

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*January 2001*

# 前 言

要学好一门语言,特别是外语,词典的作用是不言而喻的。不过,再大再全的词典也有其自身的局限性。因此,对于语言学习者来说,案头或书架上常用的权威类词典至少应该不下四、五部,为的是相互补充。同时,对于需要用英语进行口头交际的人而言,必备的工具书自然应当包括俗语、习语用法词典或自学指南,作为专门性参考书。这些指南类书籍的功能是大部头词典所不及的,从某种意义上讲,它们可以起到填补空白的作用。这本《美语生活俗语》就是本着这个目的,为了满足读者在听力和口语会话上更实际的信息需求而编写的。

本书的一大特点是,与一般词典相比,它包含了更详尽的语用知识。有不少人在学外语时喜欢“背词典”,但事实证明,在大多数情况下这种做法收效甚微。究其原因,要真正认识并掌握一个词或一个习语,单单记住它的释义是远远不够的,还必须了解它的使用场合、对象、习惯搭配和相关的文化礼俗等,否则,在实际应用中要么难以理解对方,要么使自己难堪。

本书的另一特点是注重了语言的时代感。在信息化社会的今天,英语新语汇层出不穷,现有词

语的用法也在不断推陈出新,这使得辞书的增补永远落后于语言自身的发展。而对学习者而言,绝不希望停留在过去。本书的编者从读者的需求出发,在词条的选择上尽量收集新词和与时代脉搏同步的言语,力争做到雪中送炭。其中突出的一例词条是“go postal”(见正文)。

口语体和书面语体是任何一门语言的两大分支,希望大家不要将两者混为一谈。我们这里研究的对象仅限于罕见于印刷文字的语言——口语,因此我们期待的不仅仅是学习者“通读”本书,更重要的是将自己融于真实的英语环境中去把握和感受美语俗语的存在,同时去体会它的生命力。也只有这样,才能加深记忆,巩固书本提供的知识。

学习俗语的目的是提高听力水平和口语交流的能力,我们希望拥有此书的读者不但学会“念书”,更学会多“听”和多“说”,将无声的字符变成有声的语言,变成自己的语言。当然这离不开反复实践和磨练。

本书适合大、中学生读者扩展课外学习园地,也适合能有机会或即将有机会接触生活美语的各个年龄层次的一般读者。

连先

2001年1月

**[001] A bit trying** 很艰难, 不轻松

Definition: taxing one's resources to complete a task;  
experiencing difficulty in completing  
something (usually a task or assignment)

A: *I don't know how you work in a job where  
you have nobody to help you.*

B: *It's **a bit trying** sometimes, though I don't  
want to look for a new job.*

在口语中, a bit 是常用语, 例如: This is *a bit* much. 有点太过份了, She's feeling *a bit* tired. 她觉得有点累。形容词 trying 可用来形容人或事, 如: a trying patient 令人厌烦的病人; a trying time 一段难捱的时光。

**[002] Absent-minded** 健忘, 心不在焉

Definition: forgetful; constantly having other things on  
one's mind

A: *Do you know where the keys to my  
apartment are?*

B: *That's the third time you've lost them this  
week! How could you be so **absent-minded**?*

A: *I don't know. I guess I am thinking about  
other things.*



It can be said that a person who does not appear to be paying attention to what is happening around him may be described as being physically present but his mind is absent.

英文中 *absent* 和 *present* 是一组互为相反的形容词, 可分别表示某人“不在场”或“在场”。某人可能只是身体“在场”, 但心却“不在场”。*Absent-minded* 便是此意。此词常用来描述学生在课堂不专心的表现, 如: *Harry was absent-minded during the historical lecture.* 哈里在历史课上心不在焉。

### 【003】 *Alibi* 不在场证明

Definition: evidence that a person was in another place  
when a crime was being committed

A: *The jury found him not guilty? How could they do that?*

B: *They must have believed his **alibi** that he was playing golf when the murders happened.*

The word does not always have to do with committing a criminal act and could be used to describe a less serious matter involving a person who does not want to be entirely honest regarding their personal whereabouts.

此词不一定限于法律范畴, 也可用在与案件无关的场合。人们在涉及到自己去向问题时可能不愿实话实说, 这时

也会用到 *alibi*, 作“托辞”解, 例如: *No one would provide an alibi or lie for them.* 没人愿意为他们辩解或扯谎。

**[004] All bark and no bite** 心软嘴硬

Definition: being fiercer in appearance than in actuality

A: *Do you like your new job?*

B: *I like my job but my boss seems to be really mean.*

A: *Oh, my wife used to work for him and he's all bark and no bite. He's really a nice man when you get to know him better.*

A colloquialism based on the action of a dog that makes a lot of noise (barking) though does not bite people.

*all bark and no bite* 原本形容狗的和善: 有一种狗不咬人, 只是汪汪叫几声而已。

**[005] All burned out** 疲惫不堪

Definition: tired of doing something; feeling exhausted from continually doing something

A: *Are you going to study this summer?*

B: *I'm all burned out from studying all year. I don't even want to open a book this entire summer.*

"Burned out" often describes machines that no longer work because an engine or the parts within the machine have physically broken down from overuse. Applying the description to people means a person's energy or drive to do something has been used up.

burned out 的原意是形容机器因长久使用而报废。burned out 用来形容人的精力消耗过大是一种比喻说法。All 一词起了加强语气的作用。还可使用 burn oneself out 表示耗尽精力或累垮身体。

#### [006] All dressed up 穿上体面的衣服

Definition: wearing nice clothes as if for a formal occasion

A: *You look very nice today. Why are you all dressed up?*

B: *I have an important business meeting this evening and want to look nice in order to make a good impression.*

The terms "dressed up" and "dressed down" indicate a person is wearing more formal clothes and wearing more casual clothes, respectively.

在一些较正式的场合,人们一般都要穿上体面的服装,显得与往常不同。dressed up 和 dressed down 分别表示“穿着讲究”和“穿着随便”。

**[007] All fed up** 厌倦了

Definition: unhappy or tired of something or somebody

A: You look upset. What's wrong?

B: I am **all fed up** with my job. I really don't like anything about work anymore.

A: It'll be ok. Everybody gets tired sometimes.

It indicates that unsatisfactory events have been happening for an extended period of time. Could also indicate being bored or depressed.

此语表现出人的烦躁情绪或压抑感,感到不尽人意的事旷日持久,实在腻味了。**Fed** 是动词 **feed** 的过去分词形式, **be fed up** 原意为“吃得过饱”,指“对某事厌烦”时,与介词 **with** 连用,又如 **fed up with his constant complaints**。

**[008] All gone** 没有了,全光了

Definition: lacking tangible items that one previously possessed

A: Mommy, can I have some ice cream?

B: Sorry, the ice cream is **all gone**.

参照 **all out** 释义[2]。两者的区别是:**all gone** 指一个较长久的状态,而 **all out** 意味着短期内会有补充。

### [009] All lined up 万事俱备

Definition: prepared

A: Do you have everything ready for your trip?

B: Yes, everything is **all lined up** and ready to go. All I need to do is go to the airport and catch my plane.

Often indicates a high level of organization in the preparation process based on the proper alignment of objects and/or people.

line up 的原意是“排成队”，如 The soldiers were ordered to *line up* in front of the gate. 其引伸义是“有条不紊的计划安排”或“充分的准备工作”。另外还有复合词 *line-up* 的用法，如：There was a good *line-up* of musical and comedy acts on television. 电视中的音乐和喜剧节目安排得很好。

### [010] All out

(1) Definition: to proceed with 100% effort

全力以赴

A: Do you think that your team will win the football game?

B: I don't know, but we are prepared to go **all out**.

(2) Definition: lacking something, perhaps temporarily

## 暂时缺货

A: *Excuse me, do you have any orange juice in small bottles?*

B: *I'm sorry. We are **all out** of small bottles. All we have left are the larger bottles and boxes.*

A: *Will you be getting any more small bottles?*

B: *We should have a new shipment next Thursday.*

第一种用法常见的动词搭配有: go all out, run all out, be all out (to do something)。第二种用法的释义请参见上文“all gone”。

【011】 **Always the case** 一成不变, 绝对如此

Definition: in every circumstance or on every occasion

A: *Do you think that people who steal are bad people?*

B: *I don't think that is **always the case**. Though stealing is wrong, there might be rare circumstances that would justify doing so.*

由 case 组成的短语很多, 常见的还有: as is often the case 如往常一样; a case in point 恰当的例子; in no case 在任何情况下也不; in this (that) case 既然是这(那)样。

**[012] Are you going to a fire?**

救火去啊? (急什么?)

Definition: Are you in a hurry?

A: *Slow down! Are you going to a fire?*

B: *Sorry, I have a lot of things to do before my class this afternoon.*

The question is asked when a person observes someone else moving very quickly, sometimes in a panicked manner.

这个说法出自人们的联想。在十万火急的情况下人们常常手忙脚乱;因此,当看到别人心急火燎的神态,人们不免这样发问:Are you going to a fire?

**[013] Are you kidding me? 别开玩笑**

Definition: Are you joking?

A: *I think that the Bulls will win the NBA Championship next year.*

B: *Are you kidding me? They have been terrible since Michael Jordan retired.*

此句也可简化成 *Are you kidding?*, 类似的语句还有: *You're kidding!* 和 *No kidding!*。这些都是很口语化的习语,用来表达说话人的惊讶或疑惑。

**[014] As clear as crystal** 明摆着的事儿

Definition: perfectly obvious; with no confusion

A: *Why did you decide to move to New York?*

B: *New York offers higher salaries, better jobs, more entertainment and a higher standard of living. The decision wasn't really overly difficult — in fact, when I really thought about it, it was **as clear as crystal**.*

Crystal is usually transparent which means it is possible to see light through the material so that anything within the material is visible.

这里比喻事物的明晰程度如同水晶一样,一目了然,无须费力即可领悟。

**[015] At one's finger tips** 在手头,当下就有

Definition: readily accessible

A: *Do you know how much money our department spent last month on travel expenses?*

B: *I don't have that information **at my finger tips** though I could get it to you by tomorrow morning.*

A: *That's fine. Please have it on my desk by 9 o'clock.*



Usually describes something physically very close to a person than can literally be touched.

此语通常与动词 have 搭配, 构成 have something at one's finger tips 或 have something at the tips of one's fingers, 用来形容唾手可得的東西。也可指对某事很精通, 如: Ask that man over there; he's got the subject *at his finger tips*. 去问那边的那个人吧, 这事他熟悉。类似的表达还有: at hand, 在手边, 在附近, 即将到来; on hand, 在手头, 在附近, 出席。

### [016] At your disposal 由你吩咐

Definition: at your service/ ready or prepared to do what is desired

A: *Did you cancel your appointments for the entire day?*

B: *Yes, I am free and **at your disposal** for the rest of the day. Tell me what you need done and I will do it!*

People sometimes use the word "dispose" to mean take care of something.

动词 dispose 和其名词形式 disposal 有时用来指“料理、经办”某事。