

The

"It was as if a light switch had been turned on in my head."

GORILLA
Conscious
sight

GUERRILLA
Conscience
SITE

antidote RAZE ANECDOTE
PROBLEMATIC PAIRS

COMPLIMENT complement
JIBE Jive

SMOG
SMOKE+ROG
portmanteau

Monkey Tail @

Verdosity
EXCESSIVE WORDINESS

[美] 诺曼·杰曼 著
Norman German

翟象俊 高亚萍 译

on
Words

The Play of Language

英词拾趣

——语言的游戏

Hmm, does *sophomore* really mean
"wise moron"?



salt

saline

SAL

salary

复旦大学出版社

The Word on Words:
The Play of Language

英词拾趣

——语言的游戏

〔美〕诺曼·杰曼 著
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英词拾趣——语言的游戏

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Praise from Students
who have taken Dr. Norman German's course

Word Power

修过诺曼·杰曼博士“词汇能力”课的学生
对这门课的赞扬

“It was as if a light switch had been turned on in my head.”

“仿佛在我的脑子里开启了一盏灯。”

“I absolutely loved going to this class!”

“我绝对喜欢去上这门课！”

“Every week I enlightened my family with information I learned in the course.”

“我每个星期都用这门课上学到的知识去启迪家人。”

“The professor is passionately interested in the subject, witty and engaging. We need more of his kind.”

“教授对这门课充满激情、极感兴趣，上课妙趣横生，很有吸引力。我们需要更多这样的课。”

“The most useful and interesting class I've ever taken.”

“这是我上过的最有用、最有趣的课。”

“Fabulous. I learned more in this class than in all my other classes combined.”

“好极了！我在这门课上学到的东西超过了所有其他课的总和。”

Our First Meeting

You are about to read a new kind of vocabulary book. It is not the “work of genius” a colleague declared it, but it does combine learning and entertainment like no text you’ve ever read.

The Word on Words defines 1,500 words, most in the context of mini-essays about history, literature, art, philosophy, pop culture, sports, mythology, religion, psychology, math, biology, and cosmology.

In other words, this is **not** your parents’ vocabulary book. It sometimes cops an attitude. In addition to providing definitions and pronunciations, *The Word on Words* emphasizes the artistic and playful aspects of language—hence its subtitle, *The Play of Language*. As my wife, artist Raejean Clark, says, “You learn better if you have a smile on your face.”

The book has five major focuses: vocabulary, etymology, mnemonic devices, usage, and the **ludic** or playful aspects of language.

Words is ideal for those preparing for aptitude tests or admission exams such as the SAT, ACT, TAKS, TOEFL, GRE, NTE, and even the LSAT and GMAT. You can also profit from *Words* if you simply want to enhance your vocabulary. It’s perfect, too, as a supplemental text in ESL/ESOL classes directed towards those acquiring English as a second language.

It’s all in here: humorous explanations of palindromes, eponyms, acronyms, anagrams, spoonerisms, malapropisms, portmanteau words and even **false splitting**—the way “a napple” transformed into “an apple”—

in the context of revelatory essays about phobias, Mother’s Day, the birds and the bees, Father’s Day, good and evil, the calendar, neologisms, love and war, Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas, euphemisms, place-names, and the origins of first and last names, the days of the week, and the months of the year

all emphasized by entertaining end-of-chapter tests and crossword puzzles!

我们的初次见面

你将要读到的是一种新的词汇书。它并不像一位同事说的那样是一本“天才的著作”，但它的确融学习与娱乐于一体，与你读过的任何课本都不一样。

《英词拾趣》解释了1500个词，大多数是在有关历史、文学、艺术、哲学、通俗文化、体育、神话、宗教、心理学、数学、生物学和宇宙学的短文中介绍来龙去脉。

换句话说，这不是你的父母读过的那种词汇书。它有时候会表明一种态度。除提供释义和发音外，《英词拾趣》更强调语言富有艺术性和好玩的方面——所以才有了它的副标题《语言的游戏》。正如我的妻子、艺术家雷琼·克莱所说：“面带微笑就可以学得更好。”

本书有五大焦点：词汇、词源、助记手段、惯用法和语言顽皮的或好玩的方面。

《拾趣》对那些为参加能力倾向测验或入学考试（如SAT大学入学考试、ACT美国大学测验、TAKS、TOEFL、GRE研究生入学考试、NTE全国教师考试，甚至LSAT法学院入学考试和GMAT管理学科研究生入学考试）作准备的人来说是最合适的。如果你只想扩大词汇量，你也可以从《拾趣》获益。对于以学习英语作为第二语言的人为教学目标的非英语母语班或操其他语种者的英语班来说，本书也是一种理想的补充教材。

一切都在这里了：对回文^①、名祖^②、首字母缩拼词^③、换音词^④、首音互换^⑤、荒唐的用词错误^⑥、紧缩词^⑦甚至false splitting误分音节——如将“a napple”改变成了“an apple”——都在一篇篇揭示性的文章中作了幽默的解释。这些文章的内容涉及

一些恐惧症、母亲节、鸟和蜜蜂、父亲节、善与恶、历法、新词的创造、爱情与战争、万圣节、感恩节、圣诞节、委婉语、地名、姓、名的起源、一周的7天和一年的12个月。

所有这些都在每章结尾有趣的测试和纵横填字游戏中予以强调以引起读者注意。

① 回文指顺读和倒读都一样的词、词组、句、数字等，如：radar, rotator, 又如 name no one man。

② 名祖指姓名被用来命名某民族、地方或机构等的人。

③ 首字母缩拼词指由一组词中各主要词的第一个字母或前几个字母缩合而成的词，如 UNESCO 一词由 United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization 各主要词的第一个字母缩合而成。

④ 换音词指变换字母顺序构成的词，如由 north 构成的 thorn。

⑤ 首音互换亦称斯普纳现象，原指牛津大学新学院院长 Spooner 经常把一些词组首音互换闹出的笑话，如把 tons of soil 变成 sons of toil。

⑥ 荒唐的用词错误指误用发音近似而意义完全不同的词语，如在 I am not under the affluence of alcohol 一句中应用 influence 而误用了 affluence。源自爱尔兰剧作家谢里丹的喜剧《情敌》中的人物马勒普罗普太太，她经常荒唐地误用词语。

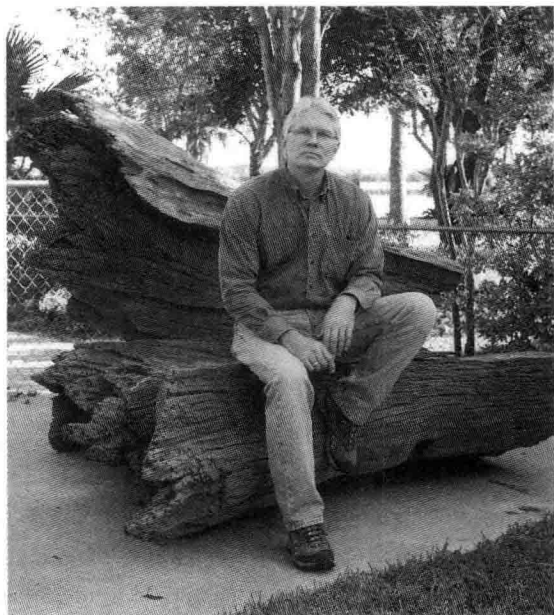
⑦ 紧缩词指由两个词的音义合并而成的词，如 smog 由 smoke 和 mog 合成，motel 由 motor 和 hotel 合成。

Dr. Norman German

诺曼·杰曼博士

sitting on an old-growth cypress stump
that washed over his fence during
Hurricane Ike, 2008

坐在一棵老龄柏树的树墩上，2008年飓风“艾克”肆虐时，
这个树墩冲过了他家的围栏。



I never get writer's block.
I get stumped!

我从未生就一个作家的脑袋。
我（在写作时）经常受挫^①！

Norman German is an award-winning teacher and writer who has taught vocabulary and etymology courses for over thirty years. In addition to publishing nearly 50 pop articles on various aspects of language, his essay “The Veil of Words in ‘The Minister’s Black Veil’” was singled out in 1990 as a significant contribution to Nathaniel Hawthorne scholarship. Among his four novels, the best-selling *A Savage Wisdom* imaginatively reconstructs the life of Toni Jo Henry, the only woman executed in Louisiana’s electric chair.

He has also published articles on Ernest Hemingway, Gwendolyn Brooks, Ray Carver, James Dickey, Ralph Ellison, Zora Neale Hurston, and other important American writers. His short stories have been featured in leading literary magazines like *Shenandoah* and *The Virginia Quarterly Review*, as well as commercial venues, including *Salt Water Sportsman* and *Sport Fishing*.

Norman has studied literature, linguistics, Latin, Greek, French, Spanish, and German at McNeese State University, the University of Texas at Austin, and the University of Louisiana at Lafayette. He is a professor of English at Southeastern Louisiana University.

诺曼·杰曼是位获奖教师和作家，讲授词汇和词源课已有30多年。除就语言的多个方面发表过近50篇通俗文章外，他的论文“《牧师的黑面纱》中词的面纱”于1990年获得霍桑学术研究重大贡献奖。在他的4部长篇小说中，最畅销的《野蛮的智慧》富有想象力地重现了托妮·乔·亨利——在路易斯安那州的电椅上被处死的唯一女性——的一生。

他还发表过论欧内斯特·海明威、格温多林·布鲁克斯、雷·卡弗、詹姆斯·迪基、拉尔夫·埃利森、佐拉·尼尔·赫斯顿和其他美国重要作家的论文。他的短篇小说曾以显著地位刊载在一些主要的文学杂志上，如《谢南多厄》和《弗吉尼亚评论季刊》以及一些商业广告性的杂志上，包括《海上运动爱好者》和《垂钓》。

诺曼曾先后在麦克尼斯州立大学、得克萨斯大学奥斯丁主校园和路易斯安那大学拉斐特分校学习过文学、语言学、拉丁语、希腊语、法语和德语。他现在是东南路易斯安那大学的英语教授。

^① 作者坐在树墩 (stump) 上，所以有意幽默地说：“I get stumped!”stump作为动词，本义是“把(树)砍得只剩树墩”，但在口语中还有“使……为难，把……难住，使受挫”的意思。

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The Word on Words:

The Play of Language

英词拾趣

——语言的游戏

At 10:00, I am into a guy who reads vocabulary books like novels. I still have two of them. I look at them now with fondness, those classics of their day: William F. O'Connell's 30 Days to a Rich Vocabulary and Peter F. Jones's 10 Days to a Rich Vocabulary. (Funny names!) Since it's a exciting freshman year, I've learned thousands of words. But don't get me wrong. After a R.A. who had given me an M.A. in English and philosophy and a Ph.D. in literature, I'm still vocal in my depth. As you probably know, knowledge is relative.

That, most things, my investment can give me a more powerful vocabulary. Thirty more months of undergraduate studies to words expanded my verbal horizons even further. Now, after thirty years of higher study, I feel ready to contribute what I have discovered about words — as well as some techniques to make learning about words more efficient and even intriguing.

P.S. A graduate student revealed one theory of the evolution of the name and piece of furniture called a chest of drawers. The story is that the great Puritans needed the chest that carried their papers and so the New World as a piece of bedroom furniture. The advantage of taking everything out in order to get something from the bottom of the chest resulted in the convenience of a drawer inserted at the bottom of the chest. I stole a second and then a third drawer were added; the top was permanently sealed and, voilà, the chest of drawers.

With a few enlightening exceptions, this book will not introduce obscure words that few people use. I've taught vocabulary and word origins for a quarter of a century, but I've never read or heard a single instance of words like *reverberate*. Although these words appear in good vocabulary books, the names seemed to be forgotten for words that few had heard of in order to justify the existence of the book.

Chapter One

WITH APOLOGIES to Will Rogers, I never met a vocabulary book I didn't like. Why? Because when I graduated from high school, I was "vocabularially deprived." You see, I grew up in a house with a "flicewater" in the broom closet and a "chester" drawers in my bedroom. I was in fourth grade before the dazzling epiphany hit me—that thing in the broom closet was a fly swatter!

In the sixth grade, I snuck—yes, snuck—a look in our vocabulary book and saw a picture of a chester drawers. Underneath was a phrase that rocked my world: chest of drawers. If I had known the word *surreptitiously*, I would have looked around surreptitiously to see if anyone recognized my abysmal ignorance.

Embarrassingly, another year passed before I realized that I was still wrong about the phrase. I thought a chest of drawers was a piece of furniture where I put my "drawers" (my underwear), not a piece of furniture with slide-out compartments.

GHOST WORDS—that's what I've come to call words that we *think* we know, words that guard a buried treasure inside them. Like the word **breakfast**. We know the word's meaning but have lost the original idea that breakfast is the meal we eat to **break** the **fast** of not eating while asleep.



At college, I ran into a guy who read vocabulary books like novels. I still have two of them. I look at them now with fondness, those classics of their day: Wilfred Funk and Norman Lewis's *30 Days to a More Powerful Vocabulary* and Peter Funk's *It Pays to Increase Your Word Power*. Funky times!

Since that exciting freshman year, I've learned thousands of words. But don't get me wrong. After a B.A. in history and pre-law, an M.A. in English and philosophy, and a Ph.D. in literature, I'm still vocabularially deprived. As you probably know, knowledge is relative.

That initial thirty-day investment *did* give me a more powerful vocabulary. Thirty more months of undergraduate attention to words expanded my verbal horizons even further. Now, after thirty years of linguistic study, I feel ready to contribute what I have discovered about words—as well as some techniques to make learning about words more efficient and even intriguing.

P.S. My graduate studies revealed one theory of the evolution of the name and piece of furniture called a chest of drawers. The story is that the frugal Puritans recycled the chest that carried their possessions to the New World as a piece of bedroom furniture. The annoyance of taking everything out in order to extract something from the bottom of the chest resulted in the convenience of a drawer inserted at the bottom of the chest. Later, a second and then a third drawer were added, the top was permanently sealed and, voilà, **the chest . . . of drawers.**

With a few tantalizing exceptions, this book will not introduce obscure words that few people use. I've taught vocabulary and word origins for a quarter of a century, but I've never read or heard a single instance of words like *condign* or *temerarious*. Although these words appear in good vocabulary books, the authors seemed to be reaching for words that few had heard of in order to justify the existence of the book.

① 原著页码，下同。

第一章

① fly swatter

② chest of drawers

③ surreptitious 偷偷的

④ tantalizing 诱人/诱人

模仿威尔·罗杰斯^①的名言，我要说我从未遇到过一本我不喜欢的词汇书。为什么这么说呢？因为高中毕业时，我仍然“词汇贫乏”。你知道，我小时候住的房子里，在放扫帚的壁橱里有一个“flicewater”，而在我的卧室里则有一个“chester” drawers。到了四年级我才恍然大悟——放扫帚的壁橱里的那样东西原来是一个苍蝇拍(fly swatter)！

六年级时，我曾偷偷地——是的，偷偷地——看了一眼我们的词汇书，看到一张chester drawers的图片。图片下面的一个词组令我大吃一惊：是chest of drawers（五斗橱）。如果我当时知道“鬼鬼祟祟”这个词，我一定会鬼鬼祟祟地环顾四周，看看是否有人看出了我极度的无知。

令人难堪的是，又过了一年我才意识到，我对那个词组的理解仍然不对。我原以为五斗橱是用来放我drawer（内裤）的家具，其实却是一件带抽屉的家具。

鬼词^②——此后我便把那些我们自以为认识的词，那些里面埋藏着珍宝的词称作鬼词。像breakfast（早餐）这个词。我们知道这个词的意思，但却不知道它原来的意思，即早餐乃是打破睡眠时不吃东西的禁食而吃的那顿饭。

打破禁食

读大学时，我偶然遇到一个读词汇书像读小说一样入迷的家伙。这种词汇书我仍有两本。我现在看到它们还备感亲切，那可是当年的两本经典名著啊。一本是威尔弗里德·芬克与诺曼·刘易斯合著的《30天获取更大的词汇量》，一本是彼得·芬克的《增加词汇量好处多多》。那真是两位芬克走红的年代^③！

自令人激动的大一那年以来，我已学会了数以千计的词。但不要误解我的意思。在获得了历史学和法律预科学士、英语和哲学硕士及文学博士学位之后，我仍然是“词汇贫乏的”。正如你也许知道的那样，知识是相对的。

最初那30天的投入确实使我词汇量大增。大学本科30个月里对词的关注进一步拓宽了我的文字视野。现在，经过了30年的语言研究，我觉得已经可以把我学习词汇的心得体会和一些使词汇学习更为有效甚至有趣的技巧奉献出来了。

补充说明：我读研究生时发现了“五斗橱”这种家具名称演化的一种说法。据说一向勤俭节约的清教徒把装载他们物品带到新世界来的箱子重新利用，改造成一件卧室内用的家具。要从箱子底部取一样东西就必须把所有的东西都拿出来，这令人烦恼不已，结果就有了一个方便省力的办法，即在箱子底部嵌入一个抽屉。以后又加上第二个、第三个抽屉，而顶部则一直是封住的，于是，你瞧，就成了五斗橱。

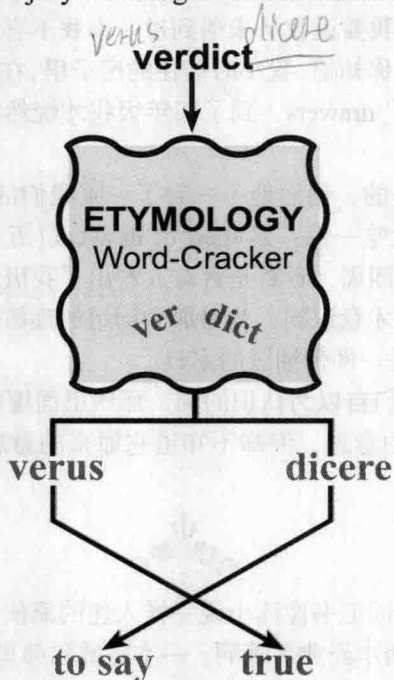
除了少数引人入胜的例外，本书不会介绍很少人会用的生僻词。我已经教了25年的词汇和词源，但我从未读到或听到过使用像condign（罪有应得的）或temerarious（鲁莽的）这类词的句子。虽然这些词出现在一些很好的词汇书中，但这些书的作者搜罗很少人听到过的这类词似乎只是为了证明其书的存在是有理由的。

① 威尔·罗杰斯（1859—1935）美国著名幽默作家，其幽默评论通过各种媒体广为传播，受到普遍欢迎。其广为流传的讽刺妙语中有一句是：“我从未遇到过一个我不喜欢的男人。”

② 鬼词指误用或生造的词，亦即中文中的错别字。

③ 原文Funky times一语双关。一是指两本书由两位姓Funk的作者所写，而funky作为形容词又有“时髦的、走红的”意思。

ONE OF THE BEST WAYS to get to know a familiar word even better is to learn its etymology, or origin, and one of the best ways to trace its etymology is by fracturing the word into its Latin roots. You know, for example, that a **verdict** is a jury's finding in a trial. But breaking the word into its constituent parts gives us a new insight:



Thus, to deliver a verdict is, in essence, to speak the truth. A number of English words are related to the Latin *verus*. Starting with the most obvious, the list might look like this:

verify	to prove the truth of by presentation of evidence or testimony
verisimilitude	the quality of appearing to be true or real
veracity	truthfulness
aver	to assert as a fact, especially in court
very	extremely, absolutely, truly
verily	in truth; used in archaic expressions like, "Verily, I say unto you . . ."

Don't forget *aloe vera*!

The Latin *verus* is also the basis of several place names like Vera Cruz, which translates as "True Cross."

It can also be found in **high** places like Harvard, whose motto is *Veritas* (Truth), and The Johns Hopkins University, whose motto is *Veritas Vos Liberabit* (The Truth Shall Make You Free) . . .

related to **liberate**

. . . and **low** places like *National Lampoon's* Animal House motto, *In vino, veritas. In curricula, nullus*, which can be rendered, "In wine, truth. In school, nothing."

CAUTION: If you see the root *ver-* in a word, don't assume it means *truth*. **Vermin**, a word based on the Latin *vermis*, meaning worm, can be anything from lice to roaches to rats.

Lesson 1: Free-style etymologizing can be dangerous!