

# 英语词趣大全

English  
Words at Play

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外语教学与研究出版社

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陈德彰、杨玲娟 编

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**YINGYU CI QU DAQUAN**

陈德彰、杨玲娟编

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# 前言

大学生、中学生、甚至小学生,还有广播、电视及各类成人学校成千上万的学生,广大的自学者,全国到底有多少人在学英语很难统计。书店里的书架上有各种各样的英语课本,有国内编的,也有从国外引进的,还有数不清的辅导英语学习的书,各类试题汇编,教人们如何应付考试的书以及各种读物(英汉对照的、注释的),还有好几种学习英语的期刊。

学好英语很不容易,首先一关就是记单词,要下功夫,甚至下苦功夫去记,但这不等于说,记单词完全是一件苦差事。首先,就方法而论,光是死记硬背,当然枯燥无味。可以有各种方法,比如,按词的意义分类记,按词的结构成串记等。此外还有没有有趣一些的方法呢?不管做什么事,首先必须对它感到有兴趣才能做好,记单词也不例外,这就是编写本书的目的。我们想提示一些这方面的路子,但并不是提供系统的学习或记忆词汇的方法,而是通过告诉读者英语词汇本身的许多有趣之处,让读者通过做各种文字游戏,对学习英语发生兴趣,从而帮助记住和加深对许多词的意义和用法的理解。除此之外,本书的许多章节会启迪和开阅读者的思路,不少谜语和文字游戏需要按非常规路子去思索,一旦想出来或看一下答案会感到豁然开朗,这对打开思路,提高我们总的学习效率——不光是学习英语——都会大有裨益。

本书介绍了英美国家各种文字游戏,许多形式是首次介绍给国内读者。虽然书名叫作《英语词趣大全》,但我们不想把所有的文字游戏都收进来(实际上也不可能),而是适当介绍不同种类的文字游戏。材料的来源(见书后“参考书目”)取自儿童读物、学校用书、期刊,以及著名语言学家编的书,其中一部分经过编者的加工或完全是编者自己编写的,内容远不仅供饭后茶余消遣,还能给人以一种特有的享受。有的令人捧腹,有的回味无穷,对开发智力也许能起一点作用。

本书中的内容也可供学校用作开展英语课外活动,布置英语俱乐部等的材料。

编者

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编者

# 第一章

## The English Alphabet

§ 1.1 请先看这个问题:

Three of us in six, and five of us in seven,

Four of us in nine, and six in eleven.

这里的数目的是字母。英语是拼音文字,用的是 26 个拉丁字母,所有的词都是由字母拼成的。不过,英语字母本身也有许多有趣的地方。

§ 1.2 除了拼成词外,许多字母本身也有象形作用。下面的词汇就利用了其象形作用:

A-tent	A 型帐篷
C-spring	C 形发条
D-valve	D 形活门
F-holes	提琴上 F 形孔眼
H-beam	H 形梁
H-post	H 形电线杆
I-beam	工字梁
I-column	工字柱
I-girder	工字栋
I-section	工字断面
J-bolt	J 形螺钉
K-frame	K 形架
L-iron	L 形角铁
S-hook	S 形钩
T-bandage	丁字带
T-shirt	短袖圆领男紧身汗衫
T-square	丁字尺
T-bone	牛排
U-bend	U 形急弯
U-tube	U 形管
V-tool	V 形凿
V-thread	V 形螺纹

V-belt	三角皮带
V-8 engine	V 形八汽缸发动机
Y-gun	Y 形双筒炮
Y-joint	Y 形关节
Y-track	三叉轨道
Z-crank	Z 形曲柄
Z-iron	乙字铁

§ 1.3 包含全部 26 个字母的句子叫作字母文。下面是一些例子:

The quick brown fox jumps over a lazy dog.

Pack my box with five dozen liquor jugs.

It was an exquisitely deep blue; just then, with filmy white clouds drawn up over it like gauze.①

§ 1.4 英语字母的谜语很多,不少英美小学教材中都有这类材料,以加强孩子们对学习的兴趣。

第一类字母谜语用字母本身的读音和某个单词的读音谐音组成。如 i 和 eye, T 和 tea 等。也许大家都知道这个问题: Which four letters can frighten a thief? 答案是: o, i, c, u (Oh, I see you!)

下面请大家猜一组字母谜:

- 1) What letter is a part of the head?
- 2) What letter is an insect?
- 3) What letter is neither I nor he?
- 4) What letter is an exclamation of surprise?
- 5) What letter is a large body of water?
- 6) What letter is a drink (a beverage)?
- 7) What letter is a question?
- 8) What letter is part of a house?
- 9) What letter grazes in the pastures? (What letter is a sheep?)
- 10) What letter is a vegetable?
- 11) What letter is a signal or a clue?
- 12) What letter is a verb expressing debt?
- 13) What letter is a bird?
- 14) Which are the most sensible letters?
- 15) What four letters of the alphabet would scare off a burglar?

---

① 这一句出自 Sarah Grand 编的 The Beth Book. 不是故意凑成的字母文。

- 16) Why does B come before C?
- 17) What letter of the alphabet separates Spain from Africa?
- 18) Why is the letter A like a honeysuckle?
- 19) Why is the letter D like a sailor?

§ 1.5 最常见的字母谜是根据字母在某个单词或某几个单词中的位置构成的。例: What is that we have in December but we don't have in any other month?答案是 The letter D。(其它月份的名词中都没有 d 这个字母)。因为谜面上没有讲到是字母(letter),所以乍一看不知所问,有人会从别的思路去考虑,但往往不得其解,如果知道是字母谜,问题就容易多了。

- 1) What is it that we have in December but we don't have in any other month?
- 2) What is the difference between here and there?
- 3) What is the end of everything?
- 4) What is the difference between a pear and a pearl?
- 5) What is never out of sight?
- 6) What happens twice in every moment, once in every minute and never in a thousand years?
- 7) What is that every pauper possesses yet is had by neither man, woman, nor child?
- 8) What is it that is  
the beginning of eternity,  
the end of time and space,  
the beginning of every end, and  
the end of every race?
- 9) What is in the middle of March?
- 10) What is the center of gravity?
- 11) What is the most important thing in the world?
- 12) What part of New York is in Chicago?
- 13) What's in the church But not the steeple? The parson has it, But not the people.
- 14) What is found in the center of Australia and America?
- 15) What is in fashion but always out of date?
- 16) What's found twice in any corner but only once in every room?
- 17) I am part of joys and sorrows, and home would not be home without me.

- 18) I partake alike in your joys, and your sorrows,  
and your home would not be home without me.
- 19) Luke had it first, Paul had it last; boys never have it; girls have it  
but once; Miss Sullivan had it twice in the same place, but when  
she married Pat Murphy she never had it again.
- 20) What beverage represents the beginning of time?
- 21) I'm not in earth, nor the sun, nor the moon.  
You may search all the sky —— I'm not there.  
In the morning and evening —— though not in the noon  
You may plainly perceive me, for, like a balloon,  
I am midway suspended in air.  
Though disease may possess me, and sickness and pain,  
I am never in sorrow nor gloom;  
Though in wit and wisdom  
I equally reign,  
I am the heart of all sin and have long lived in vain;  
Yet I ne'er shall be found in the tomb.

§ 1.6 下面一类字母谜也是根据字母在单词中的位置构成的,但比上一类多绕了一个弯。例: What letter is like twelve o'clock? 答案是 A, 后面还必须加上一个说明: because it is in the middle of day. (字母 a 在单词 day 中间, 在“白天”中间, 所以象中午 12 点钟。)

- 1) What letter is like twelve o'clock?
- 2) What letter is like an island?
- 3) Why is the letter F like a cow's tail?
- 4) What letter in the alphabet can travel the greatest distance?
- 5) Why is U the jolliest letter?
- 6) Why is I the happiest of the vowels?
- 7) Why is a false friend like the letter P?
- 8) Why is the letter G like the sun?
- 9) Why is the letter E always discontented?
- 10) Why is the letter O the noisiest of all the vowels?
- 11) Why is the letter R absolutely necessary to friendship?
- 12) Why is the letter E so unfortunate?
- 13) Why is N the most powerful letter?
- 14) Why is the letter U important to your happiness?

- 15) Why is W the nastiest letter?
- 16) Why is the letter F like Paris?
- 17) How is your nose like the S in visitor?
- 18) Why are the 15th and 14th letters of the alphabet so important to an ambitious young man?
- 19) Why are the Isthmus of Suez and the first U in cucumber similar?
- 20) Why is the letter A like a flower?
- 21) Why are the letters C and S in the word "cloves", although separated, closely attached?
- 22) Why is the letter S like a pert repartee?
- 23) What letter is always nine inches long?
- 24) In what way are the letter A and noon alike?
- 25) Which two letters of the alphabet have nothing between them?
- 26) If all the letters of the alphabet were invited to a luncheon what six letters would fail to arrive on time?
- 27) If the whole alphabet were invited to a party, when would the last six letters start?

§ 1.7 因为英语是字母拼音文字,一个词加上一个字母就成了另一个单词。根据这种情况构成的英语字母谜也很多,而且往往带有双关,非常有意思。例: Why is the letter O like a pain?答案是 Because it makes man moan。答案字面有两个意思,一是“使人呻吟”,二是“将 man 这个单词变成 moan”。

- 1) Why is the letter O like a pain?
- 2) Why is the letter W like scandal?
- 3) Which letter is most useful to a deaf woman?
- 4) What letter makes pies inquisitive?
- 5) What letter will set one of the heavenly bodies in motion?
- 6) Why is a sewing machine like the letter S?
- 7) Why should boys and men avoid the letter A?
- 8) Why should a housekeeper never put the letter M in her refrigerator?
- 9) What does the letter B do for boys as they grow up?
- 10) How can the letter W be used to bring music up to date?
- 11) Why is the letter B like a fire?
- 12) What changes a pear into a pearl?
- 13) Why is the letter D like a bad boy?

- 14) Why is the letter F like death?
- 15) Why is the letter Y like a divorced mother?
- 16) Why is the letter D like a wedding ring?
- 17) Why is a teacher of girls like the letter C?
- 18) Why is summer like the letter N?
- 19) Why does a young lady depend upon the letter Y?
- 20) Why is the letter S like thunder?
- 21) Why is the letter N like a pig?
- 22) Why does the letter I seem to frighten people?
- 23) Why should a stupid student study the letter P before taking a test?
- 24) Why is the letter M so important to you?
- 25) In hockey, what makes the letter T so important to a stick handler?
- 26) What makes an organ of hearing a pet name?
- 27) What changes water into food?
- 28) What stretches a small stipend into a journey?
- 29) What changes a boat into a sign?
- 30) What makes age glitter?
- 31) What changes a room into something to sweep with?
- 32) What makes a bump fatter?
- 33) How can you make seven even?
- 34) How can you make varnish disappear?
- 35) Why should everyone go to sleep immediately after drinking a cup of tea?
- 36) Why are two T's like hops?
- 37) What is the easiest way for a young lady to become a lad?
- 38) How can we make road wider?
- 39) What makes a word become a sword?
- 40) I claim no magic power,  
Yet a fast I can make a feast;  
I am never among the first,  
But the last I can make the least.  
The gust of the wildest storm,  
I can change to a welcome guest;

- In the North or the South I'm unknown,  
But I am found in the East or the West.
- 41) If all the letters of the alphabet were on top of a mountain which letter would leave first?
- 42) In what way are the letters O and E neatly kept house alike?
- 43) Where as by you I have been driven  
From 'ouse from 'ome, from 'ope, from 'eaven,  
And placed by your learned society  
In Hexile, Hanguish, and Hanxiety;  
Nay, charged without one just pretence,  
With Harrogance and Himpudence——  
I here demand full restitution,  
And beg you'll mend your Helocution.  
A petition to the inhabitants of Kidderminster,  
England, popularly attributed to Byron.
- 44) How do you make notes out of stone?
- 45) Can you change the letters of new door to form one word?

## 第二章

# The English Words Words Short and Long

§ 2.1 有人估计英语的总词汇量达 100 万,但 95%的日常用语的词汇量不超过 3,000 千个。

1775 年 Samuel Johnson 编的第一部英语词典收词 5 万条。1911 年问世的 The Oxford English Dictionary(《牛津英语词典》,俗称“牛津大词典”),连同 1933 年出的补编共收词 50 万条。1961 年出版的 Webster's Third International Dictionary(第三版《韦氏国际英语词典》)收词 45 万条。

莎士比亚写作的词汇量在两万个左右,但其中只有五分之一,即 4,000 词左右是属于当地的 Anglo-Saxon 词,其余的都是外来词,主要是拉丁词、



希腊词和法文词。

§ 2.2 英语中由一个字母构成的单词只有两个: I, a.前者要大写。

英语里由两个字母组成的单词很多,除了大家熟悉的 am, an, as, at, be, by, do, go, he, if, in, is, it, me, my, no, of, on, or, to, up, us, we 之外,常见的还有下列:

ad [非正式]: 广告 (advertisement 之缩略).

ay [诗歌用语]: 永远

el [美口语]: 高架铁道或火车

ex 不; 没有; 无权

hi [招呼用语]: 嘿

ma [非正式]: 妈妈

os (解剖学上的)开口

pa [非正式]: 爸爸

当然还可以举出 ah, eh, ha, ho, lo, oh 等感叹词,及 OK。(常写作 O.K. 或 okay。)

英语里由 3 个字母组成的词就相当多了。下面是一些常见的 3 个字母组成的英语词,不过它们的字母顺序被弄乱了,你能说出原来的词吗?(例: arb — bar; geg — egg)别小看了这道题,能很快拼对其中 20 个,你的英语词汇量就算不错了。

1. wlo    2. pcu    3. dgo    4. tiw    5. eew
6. oth    7. ipz    8. sta    9. arf    10. eto
11. snu    12. pho    13. het    14. toa    15. aor
16. hpi    17. eor    18. ese    19. ipl    20. ryd
21. tpi    22. abt    23. ofx    24. eyr    25. pto
26. wse    27. wsa    28. mja    29. esy    30. wot
31. tik    32. ddo

§ 2.3 你能说出 10 个由三个字母组成的、表示身体部位的英语词吗?

§ 2.4 有人统计了英语国家成年人写的 500 万词,使用频率最高的 10 个词依次为: I, the, and, to, of, in, we, for, you 和 a。这 10 个词都不超过 3 个字母。

§ 2.5 一词多义在英语中是很普遍的。现在给你 20 组定义或提示,每组 3 个提示表示同一个由 3 个字母拼成的英语词。你能拼出多少?

- 1) acting signal; billiard stick; pigtail
- 2) pickpocket; downward slope; swim