



普通高等教育“十三五”规划教材

English Lexicology and Vocabulary Building
for College Students
(2nd Edition)

大学实用英语词汇教程

(第2版)

主编 © 张莱湘



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大学实用英语词汇教程

(第2版)

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再版说明

本书是2013年北京理工大学出版社出版的《大学实用英语词汇教程》的再版。

该书的2013年第一版，是对几位有多年一线丰富教学经验的词汇课程老师的教学讲义的综合，主要由三大板块构成：词汇学理论、分类词根及主题分类词汇。该书在六年的教学实践检验过程中，也陆续收到了各种鼓舞编者的赞扬和切合实际的批评建议。因此，在充分吸纳了诸位语言学习者及教学从业者的宝贵意见后，再版时编者们对该书就以下几个方面做了相应调整。

1. 剔除大众非常熟知的词汇示例和一些过时的词义，突出词根板块词汇示例的实用性和指导性。

2. 替换部分过分依赖于语境或语义模糊的例句，便于读者全面了解词汇用法。

3. 增加常用词缀内容，有助于语言学习者活学活用。

4. 增加词汇搭配内容。因为编者在教学实践中发现，语言学习者通过练习或记忆的方式掌握了各种词汇，但是还不能恰当使用它们，因此增加了单词搭配 (Collocation) 章节。

由上可见，再版后的《大学实用英语词汇教程》各个知识板块结构比例更加合理，练习内容的实用性和指导性增强。当然，这一切都得益于各位教材使用者和教学从业者对本书的厚爱、中肯的建议和使用心得，是他们让这本书可以走得更远。寥寥数百字难以表达编者们的感谢之情，只愿再版后的书能为诸位带来更多实际的益处。

词是语言表意的基本单位，脱离词汇，人们无法进行交流与沟通。为了让大学生全面了解英语词汇的演变和发展，以及词汇的内部结构特征，从而扩大词汇量，提高正确使用词汇的能力，我们编写了这本《大学实用英语词汇教程》。

本书体现了“理论为基础，自主趣味学”的理念，由三大板块构成：词汇学理论、分类词根和主题分类词汇。

第一部分以词汇学理论为基础，打破以往介绍词汇学理论只供英语专业学生学习的模式，在本书开始部分向非英语专业的大学生简要介绍英语词汇的基本概念、词汇发展的历史、词汇的构成方法、词汇的不同含义、词义关系、词义变化、词义和上下文的关系等内容，让学生的词汇学习有理论基础，且有文化内涵。

第二部分以分类方式介绍词根，把零散的词根分成“生命之旅”“敢作敢为”“听说睹写”“喜恶悲惧”“心灵世界”“自然宇宙”“战争之束”“法治社会”等八大领域，方便学生记忆。

第三部分围绕主题，特别设计在语境下介绍词汇的使用，提高学生正确使用词汇的能力。主题的选定考虑有趣、有用、有内涵三个原则，选取和学生日常生活相关的“Weather”“Health”“Character”“Crime”“At Home”“Money”“Arts”“Education”“Sports”等话题。借助一些图片，提高学生的兴趣，加深学生对词汇的记忆。

三大部分都设计了形式多样的练习题，使学生的词汇学习脱离了孤立的单词记忆，将学习词汇和巩固练习相结合，从而提高记忆效率。

本书突出实用性，通过向学生介绍词汇的历史、来源等，给学生提供分析词汇、了解词汇的新途径，使学生在英语学习过程中能利用学到的理论和方法来分析词汇，提高英语学习的乐趣和效率。编者坚信，本书对大学生全面提高词汇能力大有裨益。

本书在编写过程中得到北京理工大学外国语学院和北京理工大学出版社的大力支持，谨在此表示衷心的感谢。

由于水平有限，书中会存在疏漏和欠妥之处，欢迎读者和同行批评指正。

编者

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Part I Lexicology



Chapter One

Basic Concepts of Words and Vocabulary

Words are the building blocks of the English language, and in lexicology, basic concepts such as words and vocabulary need to be expounded before exploring word formation and word meaning.

1.1 The Definition of a Word

The definition of a word has always been controversial. Experts and linguists still do not agree on all aspects of a word.

In visual terms, a word can be defined as a meaningful group of letters. In terms of spoken language, a word is viewed as a sound or combination of sounds. In the eyes of semanticists, a word is a unit of meaning. To grammarians, a word is a free form that can function in a sentence.

To sum up, the definition of a word comprises the following points:

- (1) A minimal free form of a language.
- (2) A sound unity.
- (3) A unit of meaning.
- (4) A form that can function alone in a sentence.

A word is a minimal free form of a language that has a given sound and meaning and syntactic function.

1.2 Vocabulary

All the words in a language make up what is generally known as its vocabulary. It can refer to the total number of the words in a language, and it can stand for all the words used in a particular historical period. We can also use it to refer to all the words of a given dialect, a given book, a given discipline and the words possessed by an individual person. The general estimate of the present-day English vocabulary is over one million words.

1.3 Sound and Meaning

A word is a symbol that stands for something in the world. There is a symbolic connection

between the sound and the referent, which is always arbitrary and conventional; there is no logical relationship between the two but people of the same speech community agree to the symbolic relationship. A dog is called a dog not because the sound and the three letters that make up the word just automatically suggest the animal in question. The same language may use the same sound to mean different things and different languages may use different sounds to refer to the same thing.

1.4 Sound and Form

The written form of a natural language is the written record of the oral form. Naturally the written form should agree with the oral form—The sound should be consistent with the form. This is fairly true of English in its earliest stage. In Old English, the speech of the time was represented very much more faithfully in writing than it is today. However, with the development of the language, discrepancies arose.

The internal reason for this is that the English alphabet was adopted from the Romans, which does not have a separate letter to represent each sound in the language so that some letters must do double duty or work together in combination.

Another reason is that the pronunciation has changed more rapidly than spelling over the years, and in some cases the two have drawn far apart.

The third reason is that some of the differences were created by the early scribes to make a line even or for easier recognition. The letters of some short vertical strokes such as *i*, *u*, *v*, *m*, *w*, *n* looked all alike. Consequently, their handwriting caused misunderstanding. To solve the problem in part, the letter *u* was changed into *o* when it came before *m*, *n*, *v*. This is how *sum*, *cum*, *wuman*, *wunder*, *munk* came to be written as *some*, *come*, *woman*, *wonder*, *monk*. Later, printing and dictionary helped to standardize and freeze the spelling of words.

Finally comes the borrowing, which is an important channel of enriching the English vocabulary. The large scale of borrowing words from different languages complicated the situation. Some borrowings stay in their former form and pronunciation; others have their pronunciation or spelling assimilated but not quite conforming to the rules of English language.

All in all, the written form of English is not a perfect representation of its spoken form.

1.5 The Classification of Words

Words may fall into the basic word stock and non-basic vocabulary by use frequency, into content words and functional words by notion, and into native words and borrowed words by origin.

1.5.1 Basic Word Stock and Non-basic Vocabulary

Basic Word Stock

The basic word stock is the foundation of the vocabulary accumulated over centuries and

forms the common core of the language. Though words of the basic word stock constitute a small percentage of the English vocabulary, yet it is the most important part of it. These words have obvious characteristics.

1) All National Character

Words of the basic word stock denote the most common things and phenomena of the world around us, which are indispensable to all the people who speak the language.

They include words relating to:

Natural phenomena: rain, snow, fire, water, sun, moon, spring, wind, hill...

Human body and relations: head, foot, hand, face, father, mother, brother, sister, son, daughter...

Plants and animals: oak, pine, grass, pear, apple, tree, horse, cow, sheep, cat, dog, chicken...

Action, size, domain, and state: come, go, eat, hear, beat, carry, good, evil, old, young, hot, cold, heavy, white, black...

Numerals, pronouns, prepositions, and conjunctions: one, ten, hundred, I, you, your, who, in, out, under, and, but, till, as...

2) Stability

Words of the basic word stock have been in use for centuries. As they denote the commonest things necessary to life, they are likely to remain unchanged.

3) Productivity

Words of the basic word stock are mostly root words or monosyllabic words. They can each be used alone, and at the same time can form new words with other roots and affixes.

4) Polysemy

Words belonging to the basic word stock often have more than one meaning because most of them have undergone semantic changes in the course of use and thus become polysemous.

5) Collocability

Many words of the basic word stock enter quite a number of set expressions, idiomatic usages, proverbial sayings and the like.

Non-basic Words include the following categories:

(1) **Terminology** consists of the technical terms used in particular disciplines and academic areas (penicillin, algebra).

(2) **Jargon** refers to the specialized vocabularies by which members of particular arts, sciences, trades or professions communicate among themselves (paranoid for suspicious).

(3) **Slang** is a substandard language not acceptable in serious speech (buck for dollar). Slang is created by changing or extending the meaning of existing words though some slang words are new coinages altogether. Slang is colorful, blunt, expressive and impressive.

(4) **Argot** generally refers to the jargon of criminals (dip for pickpocket).

(5) **Dialectal Words** are the words used only by the speakers of the dialect in question (beauty for excellent in Australian English).

(6) **Archaisms** are the words or forms that were once in common use but are now restricted only to the specialized or limited use (thou for you, and quoth for said).

(7) **Neologisms** are the newly-created words or expressions, or words that have taken on new meanings (futurology, seckill).

1.5.2 Content Words and Functional Words

By notion, words can be grouped into content words and functional words.

Content words denote clear notions and thus are known as notional words. They include nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs and numerals, which denote objects, phenomena, actions, qualities, states, degrees, and quantities.

Functional words do not have the notions of their own. Therefore, they are also called empty words. As their chief function is to express the relation between notions, the relation between words as well as between sentences, they are known as form words. Pronouns, prepositions, conjunctions, auxiliaries and articles belong to this category.

However, functional words do far more work of expression in English on average than content words.

1.5.3 Native Words and Borrowed Words

Native Words

Native words are the words brought to Britain in the fifth century by the German tribes: the Angles, the Saxons, and the Jutes, thus known as Anglo-Saxon words. Native words are limited in number, but form the core of the English language.

Apart from the characteristics mentioned of the basic word stock, in contrast to borrowed words, native words have two other features:

(1) **Neutral in style:** They are not stylistically specific. Stylistically, native words are neither formal nor informal, whereas the words borrowed from French or Latin are literary and learned, thus appropriate in formal style.

(2) **Frequent in use:** Native words are most frequently used in everyday speech and writing.

Borrowed Words

Words taken over from foreign languages are known as borrowed words or loan words or borrowings in simple terms. It is estimated that English borrowings constitute 80 percent of the modern English vocabulary. The English language is noted for the remarkable complexity and heterogeneity of its vocabulary because of its extensive borrowings. Borrowed words are divided into 4 types.

(1) **Denizens** are borrowed words early in the past and now assimilated into English words such as *pork* (French) and *change* (French).

(2) **Aliens** are the borrowed words which have retained their original pronunciation and

spelling such as *blitz* (Greek) and *kowtow* (Chinese). These words are immediately recognizable as foreign in origin.

(3) **Translation-loans** are the words and expressions formed from the existing material in the English language but modeled on the patterns of another language such as *mother tongue* (Latin) and *long time no see* (Chinese).

(4) **Semantic-loans** are the native forms with borrowed meaning. The words of this category are not borrowed with reference to the form. But their meanings are borrowed such as *dream* and *pioneer*. *Dream* originally meant “joy” and “music,” and borrowed from the Norse its modern meaning. *Pioneer* originally meant “explorer” and later borrowed the new meaning of “a member of the Young Pioneer” from Russian. In other words, English has borrowed a new meaning for an existing word in the language.

Quiz of Chapter One

I. Choose the best answer.

- In Old English there was _____ agreement between sound and form.
A. more B. little C. less D. gradual
- Which of the following words is a functional word? _____.
A. Often B. Never C. Although D. Desk
- The term “vocabulary” is used in different ways because of all the following reasons EXCEPT that _____.
A. it can refer to the common core of a language
B. it can refer to the total number of the words in a language
C. it can represent all the words used in a certain historical period
D. it can stand for words in a given dialect or field
- Which of the following characteristics of the basic word stock is the most significant? _____.
A. Stability B. Collocability C. Productivity D. National character
- The written form of English is a(an) _____ representation of the spoken form.
A. selective B. adequate C. imperfect D. natural
- Which of the following is NOT correct?
A. A word is a meaningful group of letters.
B. A word is a unit of meaning.
C. A word is a sound or combination of sounds.
D. A word is a form that cannot function alone in a sentence.
- Words fall into the basic word stock and non-basic vocabulary by _____.
A. use frequency B. notion C. productivity D. origin
- The pronunciation has changed _____ spelling over the years.
A. more slowly than B. as quickly as

Chapter Two

The Development of English Vocabulary

It is estimated that there are about 5,000 languages all over the world, which can be grouped into about 300 language families, such as Sino-Tibetan Family, Indo-European Family and so on.

Chinese is a member in the Sino-Tibetan Family, while English is a member in the Indo-European Family, which hosts most languages of Europe, the Near East, and India. The branch of Indo-European (See Appendix One) that includes English is called the Germanic group.

The English people are of a mixed blood. The early inhabitants of the island we now call England were Celts or Britons. In 55 B.C. Britain was invaded by the Roman conqueror Julius Caesar. In 410 A.D. all the Roman troops returned to the Continent, thus ending the Roman occupation of Britain.

At the beginning of the fifth century Britain was invaded by the three tribes from Northern Europe: the Angles, Saxons and Jutes. These three tribes merged into one, and the three dialects they spoke naturally grew into a single language—the English language.

The history of the English language is divided into three periods:

- (1) The Old English (450–1150).
- (2) The Middle English (1150–1500).
- (3) The Modern English (1500–present).

2.1 The Old English (450–1150)

The history of the English language begins with the conquest and settlement of what is now England by the Angles, Saxons, and Jutes from about 450 A.D. The language they spoke was Anglo-Saxon, which replaced the Celtic spoken by the former inhabitants Celts.

The OE (Old English) vocabulary, estimated at the size of 50,000 to 60,000 words, is almost purely Germanic. Although some 85% of it is no longer in use, those that survive all belong to the basic word stock of Modern English.

Owing to the Christianizing of Britain and the Vikings' invasions, the relatively few borrowings are mainly Latin and Scandinavian. Some 500 Latin words, many of which have to do with religious life (*candle, amen, apostle, altar, etc.*) appear in English writings. At least 900 everyday words of Scandinavian origin (*skill, skirt, egg, get, they, leg, etc.*) have survived in Modern Standard English.

2.2 The Middle English (1150–1500)

The Middle English period is from 1150 to 1500. The most important event to affect the history of English, the Norman Conquest (1066), took place at the end of the Old English period. The big changes that this invasion produced in the English society were accompanied by equal effects in the vocabulary of Middle English.

After their victory in 1066 at the Battle of Hastings under William the Conqueror, the Normans quickly assumed leadership and privilege in England. The Normans were originally Vikings—their name comes from North man (i.e., Norse). In a sense, the Norman Conquest can be seen as yet another Germanic invasion. But there was a difference this time. The Normans had earlier been given the control of a large piece of land along the northern coast of France—Normandy. As French subjects, they had adopted French culture. So the language they brought with them was not a Germanic language, but French.

The Norman French imposed a new political and cultural life on the land of Anglo-Saxon, and changed greatly the development of the English language. The Norman Conquest virtually introduced French-English bilingualism into England. The English were defeated, but not killed off, nor were they driven from their country. They were reduced to the status of an inferior people. Norman French became the polite speech. The Norman dialect of French became the language of the upper class, while English completely lost its scholarly and literary importance, and was used only by the peasants and people of the working class.

By the end of the 11th century, almost all of the people who held political or social power and many of those in powerful church positions were of Norman French origin. This resulted in a massive borrowing of French words into the English vocabulary.

By the end of the 13th century, English gradually came back into schools, law courts, and government and regained social status thanks to Wycliff's translation of the Bible and the writings of Chaucer.

Between 1250 and 1500, about 9,000 words of French origin (*state, power, prince, duke, pork, bacon, fry, coat, dress, mercy, peace*, etc.) poured into English. We can find those words relating to every aspect of human society.

2.3 Modern English (1500–present)

2.3.1 Early Modern English Period (1500–1700)

Modern English began with the establishment of printing in England. In the early period of Modern English, Europe saw a new upsurge of learning ancient Greek and Roman classics. This is known in history as the Renaissance.

Thanks to the Renaissance (early 14th C–1650), great numbers of Latin and Greek words were added to English. Latin and Greek were recognized as the languages of the Western world's