

BBC Learning English – Q & A of the Week

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Similar Chinese and English Idioms 汉英对应成语

Yang Li: Welcome to Qanda, I'm Yang Li.

Finn: And I'm Finn.

Yang Li: 今天我们有一个问题呢，虽然没有署名，但是很有意思。这个听友想知道‘一朝被蛇咬，十年怕井绳’这在英语里有没有对应的说法呢？**Well is there, Finn?**

Finn: Actually Li there is, but doesn't involve snakes. But it does involve biting. Do you know it, Li?

Yang Li: Once bitten twice shy?

Finn: That's right.

Yang Li: Anyway, I think we've answered this week's question. But it seems a little early to finish the programme!

Finn: I think it does! So I've prepared some idioms in English which have very similar Chinese equivalents.

Li: **Oh, that's very good.** Finn 现在准备了几个英语成语。这些成语都有汉语对应的翻译。所以现在要考考大家了，请大家准备好。**Finn** 说完了英语后，看看你能不能马上说出汉语。行吗？**Finn? Let's begin, number one!**

Finn: Ok let's do number one. In English it is: can't see the wood for the trees.

Yang Li: Can't see the wood for the trees... 见树不见林!

Finn: That's right.

Yang Li: Did you get it right? Good.

Finn: It's quite similar isn't it?

Yang Li: Yeah, it is. So 'wood' is the whole, and 'trees' are the individual plants. So 见树不见林 – 整体和具体。

Finn: That's right the whole picture and the detail. Next one, number two, in English is: strike while the iron is hot.

Yang Li: Iron... hot...

Finn: Shall we give them a clue?

Yang Li: Yes.

Finn: Iron.

Yang Li: 趁热...

Finn: 打铁!

Yang Li: Ok, 趁热打铁!

Finn: Very good.

Yang Li: Quite similar, isn't it?

Finn: Again very similar, yes. We've got the concept of iron, 铁。We must strike it while it's hot; when you can still move, when you can still shape the iron. Otherwise it becomes too hard and you lose the opportunity.

Yang Li: Isn't it amazing that Chinese and English share so much, and so precisely?

Finn: I think it's great. Let's try number three shall we and see if it's equally similar: seeing is believing.

Yang Li: As we always say, hearing something a hundred times, is not as good as seeing it with your own eyes.

Finn: Hearing one hundred times, 百闻...

Yang Li: 不如一见!

Finn: Very good.

Yang Li: 见到才是真的呢。百闻不如一见。

Finn: Yes, seeing is believing.

Yang Li: Again this is quite is quite precise.

Finn: I think again it's very similar isn't it. Let's do one which is a little bit more different. In English it involves a duck. But in Chinese it's a different animal. Now in English it's: like a duck to water.

Yang Li: A duck to water.

Finn: Like a duck to water.

Yang Li: Hmm, actually Finn, when you talk about water and water animals, I think Chinese would think about fish...

Finn: So which idiom has...

Yang Li: 如鱼得水。

Finn: That's right.

Yang Li: 如鱼得水。 Interesting.

Finn: 如鱼得水。 So it describes, in English, when somebody or something enters a situation where they are very comfortable. It's like a duck swimming on the water. It feels very comfortable.

Yang Li: But not in water – duck *to* water.

Finn: That's an important point. In English we say 'like a duck *to* water'.

Yang Li: Very good. 如鱼得水。 What is your final one, Finn?

Finn: One last one. This one is a bit more violent, and instead of a duck, we're talking about birds this time. And the idiom is: to kill two birds with one stone.

Yang Li: 一箭双雕。 Did you get it? I'm sure you got it. Well this reminds me of our website, doesn't it Finn?

Finn: Yes, why does it remind you of our website, Li?

Yang Li: Well, because what we have here is not only British life and culture and entertainment, but also the language. So if you get on our website you will get both.

Finn: That's right, you can kill two birds with one stone.

Yang Li: 一箭双雕。

Finn: Bird number one is British life and culture, and bird number two is the English language. So why not kill two birds with one stone and 登录:

Yang Li: www.bbcukchina.com

Finn: Or you can email us at chinaelt@bbc.co.uk. We hope to hear from you soon, please send us any more idioms that you can think of.

Yang Li: 谢谢大家，我们下次再会！

Finn: Thank you. 谢谢收听。

Yang Li: Bye!