



# Part 2 Diction (1)

*Stylistic Level,  
General and  
Specific Words,  
Idioms*

**Lecturer: Jiang Jie**



# Warming-up

❖ Q: *Can you tell the differences between the following words?*

Water—aquatic—hydro-

Air—aero-

Ask—interrogate

Individual—personal—private

Country—nation—state—land—soil—power—economy



# Warming-up

*People “cry” differently.*

Cry

Sob

Weep

Wail

shed tears

Moan

whimper





# Warming-up

*People “laugh” differently.*

Smile

Grin

Beam

Giggle

Titter

Snigger

Chuckle

Guffaw

chortle





# Warming-up

*Guess the meaning.*

❖ Dog eat dog:

It's a dog eat dog world out there.

❖ A dog's life

His wife's a nag who leads him a dog's life.

❖ A dog's dinner

She was dressed up like a dog's dinner.

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# Discussion



- ❖ What difficulties do students have when using words?
  - (1) inappropriate words: *Synonyms confuse them.*
  - (2) inexact words: *They tend to use general words rather than specific ones.*
  - (3) unidiomatic words: *“Chinglish” collocations and structures appear in their speaking and writing.*
  - (4) uninteresting words: *They need a larger vocabulary.*



# Diction

- ❖ Diction means “the **choice** and **use** of words”

# The features of English Words

- ❧ The English language has a very large vocabulary: as many as 400,000 words are collected in the Oxford English Dictionary.
- ❧ Only a small part of these words are used by ordinary people for ordinary purposes.
- ❧ Students should learn the words in some specific fields so that they can make it easier to hunt for jobs.



# Requirements in the Syllabus

## ❖ Vocabulary:

Band 2: 4,000~5,000 words

Band 4: 5,500~6,500 words

Band 6: 7,000~9,000 words

Band 8: 10,000~12,000 words

# Diction—Stylistic Level—Formal Words

## ❖ 1. Formal words:

They may also be called learned words, or literary words, or “big” words.

### ❖ *Features:*

A. Long words: They contain three or more than three syllables.

B. Most of them are of Greek or Latin origin.

❖ *\* Background information: Thought to be noble languages, Latin, Greek, and French used to play an important role in the language of English.*



# Diction—Stylistic Level—Formal Words

How and when to use them: They mainly appear in **formal writing**.

- ❖ Scholarly or theoretical works
- ❖ Political and legal documents
- ❖ Formal lectures and addresses



# Read and Think



- ❖ Read the paragraph on page 7, and think:
  1. Is it easy to understand the long words in this paragraph?
  2. Why does the author use these words?



# Read and Think



- ❖ Read the first paragraph on page 8, compare it with that one on page 7, and think:
  1. What words are used in this paragraph?
  2. Why does the author use these words?

# Diction—Stylistic Level—Common Words

- ❖ *People use common words everyday and everywhere.*
- ❖ *Common words appear in all kinds of writing.*
- ❖ *Sentences containing common words are usually shorter than those containing formal words.*



# Diction—Stylistic Level—Informal Words

- ❖ ***Informal or colloquial words:***
  - ❧ ***Compared with formal words, most colloquial ones are of Saxon origin.***
  - ❧ ***They are mainly used in informal or familiar conversation, and seldom appear in formal writing.***



## Diction—Stylistic Level

- ❖ There are three levels of words, with the formal at the top, the colloquial at the bottom, and the common in the middle.
- ❖ Students should know when to use the words properly.



# Diction—General and Specific Words

- ❖ *Students should make an effort to master and use specific words wherever possible, for:*
  1. *specific words help to make writing clear, exact, vivid and striking.*
  2. *They are more informative and expressive than general words.*



# Perform and Think

## Laugh:

### ❖ Perform:

How do people smile, grin, beam, giggle, titter, snigger, chuckle, guffaw, or chortle?

### ❖ Think:

How do the above words help to make meaning *clear, exact, vivid and striking*?



# Diction—Idioms

## ❖ Dog

Be going to the dogs

Make a dog's breakfast or something

Not have a dog's chance

Every dog has its day

Like a dog with two tails

A dog in the manger

Put on the dog

.....



# Diction—Idioms

- ❖ They help to make one's language sound natural and idiomatic.
- ❖ Most of them are informal or colloquial in style and can be used in conversation; a few of them are slang and should be used with care.
- ❖ Many idioms have become clichés and should be used sparingly.



# Assignments

- ❖ Finish Task 4 on page 15



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—Thank You—

