

The Chinglish Swap Table

中式英语替换表 · 直译陷阱与模板开头

Direct-translation traps and memorised openers, with natural replacements

Two tables. The first fixes collocations carried straight from Chinese. The second removes the openers examiners associate with memorised preparation — phrases that do not merely fail to impress, but actively signal that what follows may be rehearsed.

两张表。第一张纠正直接从中文搬过来的搭配；第二张替换掉考官一听就知道是背诵的开头——这些说法不是「不加分」，而是会让考官反感。

1 · Direct-translation traps 直译陷阱

Each of these is a Chinese collocation carried into English word for word. The meaning survives; the English does not.

What you mean 想表达	Transfer error 常见错误	Natural English 自然表达
turn on the light / TV	open the light / open the TV (开灯 / 开电视)	turn on the light / turn on the TV
scroll through my phone	play my phone / play computer (玩手机)	scroll through / go on my phone
it's delicious	very delicious	delicious / really tasty
improve my English	improve my English level	improve my English
gain knowledge	learn knowledge	gain / acquire knowledge
there are a lot of people	the people are very many	there are a lot of people
I really like it	I very like it	I really like it
I'll contact you	I'll contact with you	I'll contact you
pay attention to	pay attention on	pay attention to
discuss it	discuss about it	discuss it
Although it rained, we went.	Although it rained, but we went.	Although it rained, we went.

2 · Openers that flag memorisation 一听就知道是背的开头

These are so heavily drilled that examiners recognise them instantly. Replace them with specific, natural language.

Avoid 避免	Use instead 改用
"With the development of society / economy..."	"As cities have grown..." / "In recent years..."
"Every coin has two sides."	"There are clear trade-offs here."
"As is known to all..."	"It is widely acknowledged that..."
"It is a hotly debated topic that..."	"Opinions are genuinely divided on..."
"Nowadays, with the rapid development of..."	"These days..." / "Increasingly..."

3 · Confusable pairs 易混词对照

Not false friends — Chinese and English share no script or sound system. These are confusions inside English itself.

Pair 词对	Typical error 典型错误	The distinction 区别
bored / boring	"I am very boring."	You feel bored; a thing is boring.
interested / interesting	"I am very interesting in it."	You are interested; the topic is interesting.
fun / funny	"The trip was very funny."	Fun = enjoyable; funny = makes you laugh.
borrow / lend	"Can you borrow me a pen?"	You borrow from someone; you lend to someone.
economic / economical	"an economical crisis"	Economic = of the economy; economical = cheap to run.
sensible / sensitive	"She is very sensible to criticism."	Sensible = practical; sensitive = easily affected.

Learn each pair as a distinction, not as two separate words. Memorising "boring" alone will not stop you saying

把每一组当作「区别」来记，而不是两个单词。单独背 boring，并不能阻止你说出「I am very boring」。