



成敗得失

宋代蘇洵《管仲論》曰：“功之成，非成於成之日，蓋必有所由起”，指出成功並非朝夕所致，背後總有緣由。在歷史長河中，成功故事多不勝數，遠有大禹治水，近有辛亥革命。天時、地利、人和是成功的三大要素，雖然輕重有別，卻缺一不可。

天時和地利均屬客觀因素，有時更是成功的先決條件。天時就是時機，古語謂“時勢造英雄”，足見時代的客觀形勢與個人的成敗息息相關。春秋戰國時期，眾諸侯國為促進本身的發展，無不鼓吹學術自由，形成諸子百家爭鳴的局面。孔子、墨子、莊子、荀子等，正是乘此風氣，大力弘揚其思想學說，成為受人景仰的賢哲。常言“謀事在人，成事在天”；用現代眼光觀之，天時可理解為機遇。良機稍縱即逝，要佔盡天時，就得審時度勢，伺機而起。

地利指地理環境的優勢。客觀環境本無利害之分，只是人們巧用智慧，使之變為利己的條件而已。古時兩軍交鋒，多以險要之地為據點，目的就是借助地利取得優勢。在《三國演義》中，曹軍潰敗於赤壁，固然是因為諸葛亮作法借東風，上演了一幕“火燒連環船”，還有一點不可不提，就是來自北方的曹軍根本不善水戰，在江中與孫劉聯軍短兵相接，盡失地利。談到“借東風”，俗語有“萬事俱備，只欠東風”的說法，借喻事情一切就緒，獨欠關鍵條件。立身處世，有時就是這“東風”主宰了成敗。

天時和地利皆為客觀條件，但要成就大業，多少取決於人為因素，例如人和。《孟子·公孫丑下》曰：“天時不如地利，地利不如人和”。何謂人和？眾志成城，同心一德是也。從社會角度來看，人和就是廣結人緣，孚合人心，即保持良好的人脈關係。人和所產生的力量，從“人心齊，泰山移”一句可見一斑。大業

並非單憑一人之力可成，往往須借力於同儕。秦末陳勝、吳廣揭竿起義之所以一呼百應，就是因為義士都深忿秦的暴政禍害百姓，心齊力聚，以拯救黎民為己任，這便是人和的實例。

除了天時、地利、人和之外，成功當然還繫於自身條件和個人努力。能成大器者，斷非泛泛之輩。歷史上的顯赫人物，有些足智多謀，有些堅毅不屈，其成功要訣值得後世借鏡。

成功是智慧和謀略的結晶。“一人計短，二人計長”，古時君主有謀臣，現今執政者有智囊團，正好說明集思廣益的好處。春秋吳越之戰，越王勾踐戰敗被俘，淪為吳王夫差的侍從。勾踐在磨難中忍辱負重，在謀臣襄助下，逐步施行各種計策，歷二十載，終能報仇雪恥。俗語云“吃得苦中苦，方為人上人”，勾踐“臥薪嘗膽”的故事，正是大丈夫能屈能伸，不因眼前失意而一蹶不振的典範。

鍥而不捨的精神也是不可或缺的成功竅門。專心致志，持之以恆，當可逐步走近目標。胡適曾說過：“自古成功在嘗試”，如果空有理想而怯於跨出第一步，則成功永遠遙不可及。西晉的左思自幼便抱負不凡，矢志以不朽文章名垂千古。為蒐集資料，他不惜在宮中當秘書郎，以便翻閱珍貴典籍。經過十年苦心經營，左思終寫成《三都賦》，聲名鵲起，時人爭相傳抄，以致洛陽紙貴。

功名一時，氣節千載；急於求成，則往往欲速不達。秦檜、袁世凱這些歷史人物為後世唾罵，全因利欲薰心，為求達到目的而不擇手段。功績不管如何卓著，倘未能樹德昭世，則猶有不足。自古功與德常常相提並論，廣受稱頌的偉人大多兩者兼具。以德服眾，受人擁戴，才是民心所歸。

“失責”與“塞責”

在工作崗位上竭盡所能，執行職務，是克盡厥職的表現。相反，沒有盡本分承擔職責，就是失職。失職的情況有許多，例如“曠職”，即未經批准而缺勤，便是其一。即使沒有曠工，但平日處事馬虎塞責，同屬失職。

有些人把“馬虎塞責”寫成“馬虎失責”，其實“塞責”與“失責”意義上有差別。“塞責”是指表面應付一下，不認真履行應盡的責任，換言之，就是敷衍了事。“失責”可解作沒有盡責任，但這個詞不太常用。如與“馬虎”相配，“塞責”較“失責”妥貼。另外，“塞責”可與“敷衍”搭配，構成“敷衍塞責”，意思跟“馬虎塞責”相近。

“塞責”還可用作謙詞，指自己對於應盡的責任不過敷衍了事而已。《儒林外史》第二十九回載，諸葛天申會杜慎卿，認得他就是去年考取詩賦首卷之人，杜慎卿笑道：“這是一時應酬之作，何足掛齒？況且那日小弟小恙進

場，以藥物自隨，草草塞責而已。”對於自己取得佳績，杜慎卿謙稱僅為“草草塞責”。

要表達沒有履行職責的意思，還可用“玩忽職守”。“玩忽”是指用不嚴肅認真的態度去處理事情。比“玩忽職守”更甚的情況，可用“瀆職”來表示。在執行任務時犯了重大過失，稱為“瀆職”。

“尸位素餐”這個成語也指工作不稱職。“尸位”是空佔着職位而無所作為；“素餐”則是白吃閒飯，無功受祿之意。居其位而不履其責，當然也是失職。“尸位素餐”也作“尸祿素餐”，即空受俸祿而未盡職責。

身為公務員，勤於職守，黽勉從公，乃屬理所當然。公事上不管職責輕重，只要認真對待，謹慎而行，就能盡職，不會負上失職之名。

文趣偶拾



“地下”的疑惑

公務員事務局
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內地遊客張小姐來港購物，在某商場內找甲、乙兩家名店。根據旅遊指南上的資料，甲店位於“地下”，乙店則在“一樓”。她決定先光顧“地下”的甲店，便到地下層去找，但在那兒繞了半天圈子仍找不着，只好改往“一樓”找乙店去；怎料來到地面的一層，不見乙店，卻發現甲店就在那兒。後來問人，才知道乙店是在地面上的第二層。張小姐折騰了半天，不禁暗罵：“這本旅遊指南怎麼搞的？把資料都給弄錯了！”

旅遊指南的資料其實並沒有錯，只是張小姐不知道香港和內地對樓層的說法不同，有所誤會而已。在現代漢語中，“地下”一詞有以下三個含義：

1. 地面之下，例如“地下商場”；
2. 秘密的、不公開的，例如“地下活動”；
3. 地面上，例如“地下打掃得很乾淨”。

讀音方面，在以上首兩個義項中，“地下”的“下”普通話唸作“xià”，粵音作“夏”(haa6)。至於第三個義項，“地下”的“下”普通話讀輕聲，粵音則作“吓”(haa2)。由於“地下”一詞本身有“地面之下”的含義，張小姐大概就是按這個意思去理解旅遊指南上的指示，以為甲店位於地底的樓層，於是只管往地下層去找，結果當然找不着。

在香港，“地下”讀作“dei6haa2”時，除表示“地面上”的意思外，也指樓房在地面的一層，而第二層則稱作

“一樓”。這個習慣可能源自英式英文，因為英式英文把樓房在地面的一層叫作“ground floor”，第二層叫作“first floor”。至於內地，樓房在地面的一層一般稱作“一樓”，第二層就稱作“二樓”，這個習慣與美式英文相同，亦即把樓房在地面的一層稱作“first floor”，第二層稱作“second floor”。這也解釋了為什麼張小姐會往地面的一層找乙店。

順帶一提，可能由於英式英文的“first floor”其實是地面上的第二層，以往香港不少樓宇的“first floor”並不稱作“一樓”，而是稱為“二樓”，“second floor”則稱為“三樓”，餘此類推。時至今日，一些唐樓等舊式樓宇的樓層，仍有中英文叫法不一致的情況。

知道了內地和香港對樓層的說法有所不同，就明白為什麼張小姐會這樣懊惱。日後我們接待內地朋友或看見遊客遇到類似的難題時，不妨主動向他們說明本地的習慣，展現香港好客之道。

| 香港 | 內地 | 英式 | 美式 |
|----|-----|----------|----------|
| 二樓 | 三樓 | 2/F | 3/F |
| 一樓 | 二樓 | 1/F | 2/F |
| 地下 | 一樓 | G/F | 1/F |
| 地庫 | 地下室 | Basement | Basement |



敗北

兩軍對壘，失利的一方敗逃，稱為“敗北”。但為何是“敗北”而不是“敗東”、“敗南”或“敗西”？“敗北”一詞中的“北”，其實並非我們通常理解的北方或北面。

據東漢許慎《說文解字》所載，二人相背謂之“北”。近代文字學家唐蘭《釋四方之名》曰：“北由二人相背，引伸而有二義：一為人體之背，一為北方。”“敗北”中的“北”，不關乎方位，實為背向的意思，指落敗的一方背向着敵人逃走。兩軍相接，當然是正面相向；戰罷，落敗的一方轉身逃走，變成背向敵人，故曰“敗北”。佔上風的一方倘若窮追不捨，可稱為“追奔逐北”或“追亡逐北”。“奔”、“亡”及“北”皆喻指戰敗逃逸的敵人。

由此可見，“敗北”並不是指敗走北方。不管敗方往哪個方向逃走，都得說成“敗北”。《史記·項羽本紀》便有一例：“吾起兵至今八歲矣，身七十餘戰，所當者破，所擊者服，未嘗敗北。”另外，從打敗仗的意義引伸開去，“敗北”也可指科舉考試中落第、運動競技中失利等。唐代柳宗元《上大理崔大卿應制舉不敏啓》曰：“秉翰執簡，敗北而歸，不可以言乎文”，就是失意科場的意思。

丈夫貴不撓，成敗何足論。

陸游

Going South

When we say a robber “goes south” or “heads south”, what does that mean? Does it imply that the robber is going in a southerly direction? Not necessarily. It simply means the robber runs away from the crime scene. “To go south” is to escape, in whichever direction. One possible origin for this expression is that in the United States, in the mid-nineteenth century, a large number of lawbreakers, who sought to escape punishment by the local courts, fled southward to Mexico — which is geographically further south — or lay low in Texas, a state bordering Mexico.

Over the years, the meaning of “going south” has expanded to refer to the act of disappearing or quitting, maybe because the term was a euphemism among Native Americans for dying. For example, “Having missed victory by a hair’s breadth, the frustrated racing driver went south and was not seen any more.” This may mean the driver gave up his car racing career and vanished from the track altogether.

In the financial sector, “to go south” means falling or dropping. This tallies with our concept when map-reading that up is “north” and down is “south”. Metaphorically, south refers to the bottom, north the top. For example, “Hard hit by the scandal, the stock price of the company went south.”

典問

“鰲頭”勝“前茅”？



父母望子成龍，乃人之常情。雖然有不少家長同意“求學不是求分數”，但子女的成績名列前茅，父母總會滿心歡喜；子女能夠獨佔鰲頭，則更值得高興。“名列前茅”和“獨佔鰲頭”這兩個成語都有成績優異、位居前列的意思，但“獨佔鰲頭”專指名列第一，“名列前茅”則沒有指明位居第一，只是籠統地表示名次排在前面。

“名列前茅”典出《左傳·宣公十二年》：“軍行，右轅，左追蓐，前茅慮無，中權，後勁。”“茅”，通“旄”，是楚國一種用牛尾作竿飾的旗幟，也有一說指“茅”即茅草。古代行軍，哨兵走在軍隊最前方，負責偵察敵情。他們手持旄旌或拿着茅草充當旗幟，一遇變故或偵察到敵方位置，便高高舉起，以通知後軍戒備。這些負責偵察的前哨，稱為“前茅”。由於“前茅”走在隊伍最前面，後引伸為排名在前的意思。



“獨佔鰲頭”原指科舉中進士高中狀元，“鰲”是傳說中海裏的巨鰲或大龜。古時殿試，在應試的進士中選出狀元、榜眼、探花；試畢宣旨，新科狀元會趨前，在皇宮前面台階迎榜。台階刻有巨鰲浮雕，狀元所踏之處，正好是巨鰲的頭部，故稱高中狀元為“獨佔鰲頭”。後來，“獨佔鰲頭”引伸指在考試中掄元或在競賽中奪冠。

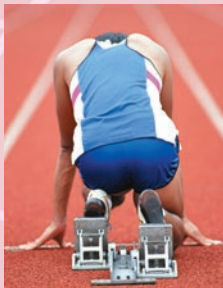
要表達第一位、第一名的意思，還可用“首屈一指”這個成語。一般人扳着手指計算，通常會先彎下大拇指。“首”是指首先，如寫作“手屈一指”便不知所云。“首屈一指”用以表達最出眾、最優秀的意思。宋代高斯得《次韻不浮弟自金陵相過》一詩曰：“此花當屈第一指，徐娘風情猶可喜”，當中“屈第一指”便是最好、最佳之意。

捲土重來

“永不言敗”是很多成功人士的座右銘。人生必定有得有失，如能從失敗中汲取教訓，再接再厲，則成功可期。以運動員為例，在體壇初次登場便嶄露頭角，一鳴驚人的畢竟不多。他們往往要克服種種挫折，屢敗屢戰才可攀上高峯。英雄出少年的例子雖不鮮見，但大器晚成的為數更多。

兵無常勝，而且長江後浪推前浪，運動員要在體育生涯中長佔冠軍寶座，殊非易事。有些出色運動員比賽落敗後，毫不氣餒，加倍練習，以期捲土重來。談到“捲土重來”這個成語，嘗見報章用“去屆盟主捲土重來”形容昔日冠軍得主為衛冕而戰，這種說法實在令人啼笑皆非。“捲土重來”比喻失敗或受挫後重新聚集力量，試圖再起，因此不能用於上次已摘桂冠者。運動員“捲土重來”，就是說失利於過往的競賽，如今欲東山再起。

唐代杜牧《題烏江亭》一詩云：“勝敗兵家事不期，包羞忍恥是男兒。江東子弟多才俊，卷*土重來未可知。”意謂勝敗難料，男子漢應忍辱負重，他日憑藉江東才傑



之力，或可“捲土重來”。“捲土”形容人馬奔跑，揚起塵土。詩人認為項羽雖戰敗垓下，但只要熬過難關，返回江東重整旗鼓，說不定可與劉邦再爭天下。

另外，“崔護重來”也有再度的意思，不少人因此誤以為可與“捲土重來”互換使用。崔護是唐代詩人，某年清明獨自到長安城南郊遊，口渴時向莊園求水，得一少女開門奉上杯水，為他解渴。詩人歸去後，念念不忘少女嬌媚之態。翌年再訪，門牆如故，偏未能再遇，題詩門扉曰：“去年今日此門中，人面桃花相映紅。人面不知何處去，桃花依舊笑春風。”（《題都城南莊》）崔護邂逅佳人的故事記於唐代孟榮《本事詩·情感》。“崔護重來”就是指崔護舊地尋故人一典。

宋代蘇軾《留別釋迦院牡丹呈趙倅》一詩，借崔護訪佳人這個典故，興歲月催人之歎：“年年歲歲何窮已，花似今年人老矣。去年崔護若重來，前度劉郎在千里。”現今“崔護重來”多用來表示探尋不遇的悵然，而且隱含再會佳人之盼。

可見不論“捲土重來”還是“崔護重來”，都有特定的含意，並非單指再一次而已；因此，使用時要注意語境是否配合。

* “卷”為“捲”的本字。



Electronic Glossary Program

In the course of drafting or translating, some colleagues may need to look for a specific term to describe a vague concept, or come across a proper noun that they are not certain how to render in Chinese or English. In whichever case, consulting a dictionary might give them some idea, but not necessarily the answer, especially if it is a term used in the context of public administration. Take the term “basic allowance” as an example. The dictionary explains only what “basic” means and what “allowance” refers to. In context, this compound noun can actually mean two different things. To get the exact Chinese equivalent, it is advisable to make use of the electronic version of the *Glossary of Terms Commonly Used in Government Departments* compiled by the Official Languages Division (OLD) of the Civil Service Bureau.

The electronic glossary was first launched in 1997, with a database of terms collected from various government departments. Throughout the years, there have been constant updates to include the most up-to-date terms used in government documents. The consolidated entries cover an extensive spectrum of government affairs, such as finance, education, housing, transport, medical services, social welfare and public order. To keep pace with modern technology, a new glossary program has recently been developed with the following major new features:

- ☞ a greater degree of customisation in pre-selecting categories to be searched and font size to be displayed
- ☞ enhanced search functions which generate a faster response and keep track of recent searches

- ☞ improved print functions which allow printing of a particular search result or all entries of a chosen category
- ☞ one-step updating by downloading new terms directly from the Central Cyber Government Office (CCGO)

Colleagues may download the enhanced glossary program from the OLD Intranet (<http://ola.csgo.hksarg/ola/EngAbridge/oladownload.htm>) to their desktop computers for use as a daily reference tool. As an alternative, searches can also be made online by visiting the CCGO website (<http://portal.csgo.hksarg/en/glossary/DisplayGlossaryAction.do>) or the Civil Service Bureau website (http://www.csb.gov.hk/hkgcsb/glossary/glossary_en.php). Whether within or outside office hours, in the workplace or at home, the glossary is there to give a big helping hand. If problems are encountered in using the glossary, colleagues may approach the Research and Support Services Section of OLD on 2867 4455 for advice or assistance.





寵辱不驚 去留無意

古往今來，功名利祿曾教幾許人陷於萬劫不復之地，無法自拔。要摒棄爭名逐利的欲望，不為所動，談何容易。虛心探究古人的至理名言，總有助益。讀古書能增長智慧，讀《菜根譚》則更有助於提高修養。

《菜根譚》是一本富於處世哲學的語錄，為明代隱士洪應明所撰。嘉靖、萬曆年間，朝綱廢弛，黨爭紛起，文人要靠攀附權貴才能有所作為。洪應明逢此濁世，選擇避俗安身。他把所感所悟記之於文，成為教人立身處世的箴言雋語。

洪應明把涉世滋味比作菜根的味道。菜根之味，有別於花葉的芳香，要心境澄明才能領略。書云：“醜肥辛甘非真味，真味只是淡；神奇卓異非至人，至人只是常。”人生百味，唯有平淡才歷久常新；人中騏驎，也不外是個普通人。經過歲月的洗禮，方會看透世情，在平淡中找到真諦。宋代儒學家汪信民曰：“咬得菜根，則百事可為”，說明清心寡欲，澹泊自守何其重要。

《菜根譚》主要體現儒家修身齊家的中庸之道，兼納道家清靜無為的思想和佛家超凡脫俗的禪理，可謂集三家之大成。人生於世，有時難免會在成敗得失之間百般盤算，自困其中。如能領悟《菜根譚》的妙理，參透世情，相信可擺脫名枷利鎖。正如書中所言，“此身常放在閒處，榮辱得失誰能差遣我”。凡事不強求，隨遇而安，自然不易受蒙蔽。這與東晉詩人陶淵明樂天知命、恬淡自得的哲學十分相近。

人生路上有何風光，得看際遇而定。畢生一帆風順，概屬少數。如何在跌宕浮沉中保持泰然自若的心境，是一門高深的學問。書中云：“居逆境中，周身皆針砭藥石，砥節礪行而不覺；處順境內，眼前盡兵刃戈矛，銷膏靡骨而不知”，指出無論順逆，都要理智面對，自我調整。逆境可以磨煉心志，砥礪的作用有如針砭藥石；相反，順境容易消磨意志，其害一如兵刃戈矛。

事情不暢順，容易教人洩氣。《菜根譚》提出自我開導的妙法：“事稍拂逆，便思不如我的人，則怨尤自消；心稍怠荒，便思勝似我的人，則精神自奮。”平日遇到不如意事，想想還有人比自己

境況差，就不會自怨自艾；相反，事事順遂，意志開始散漫時，只要想到還有人比自己強，自會加倍抖擻精神。明白“比上不足，比下有餘”的道理，當更容易自足，又不至於消極怠慢。只要思想正面，便懂得在逆境中疏導情緒，在順境中自我振奮。心胸廣闊，思想豁達，“當順逆一視，而欣戚兩忘”。

不少人以名利富貴來衡量人生的成敗得失，無異作繭自縛。在《菜根譚》的醒世良言中，這兩句話引用得最多：“寵辱不驚，閒看庭前花開花落；去留無意，漫隨天外雲卷雲舒”。洪應明勸世人以平常心看人生幻變，當名利權位都能等閒看待時，便得之不喜，失之不憂。淡名利，輕富貴，自求閒適，當可臻更高境界。為人涉世，能收能放，就可知足常樂，不會患得患失。即使薄有成就，也不宜驕矜自大，總得明白山外有山的道理。正所謂“謙受益，滿招損”；韜光斂彩，才是處世之道。楊修因為鋒芒太露，引起曹操猜忌，終招致殺身之禍，足以為鑑。

三國爭雄的故事，人人樂道，明代楊慎以一闕《臨江仙》概之。當中“是非成敗轉頭空，青山依舊在，幾度夕陽紅”一句，殊堪細味。成與敗不過是人生的變遷，只有天與地才是永恆；既然如此，何苦太在意得失，太看重成敗？其實成敗不足以論英雄，得失也宛如過眼煙雲，無須掛掛心頭。是非功過乃身後之事，武則天便有這種笑罵由人的豁達胸襟，超然於榮辱得失之外。這位女皇帝死後留下一塊無字碑，任由後人對其評功論過。

成與敗，得與失，皆是相對而言。如何評斷，莫衷一是，皆因人人心中自有繩尺。常人每以財富和地位來論高低，其實人生的價值、生活的意義豈止於此。《菜根譚》成書於晚明，距今近四百年，但當中的哲理和智慧，經久彌新。這本智慧語錄流傳海外，曾在日本江戶時代**風行一時，可見無論古今中外，均有值得借鑑之處，不失為處世寶訓。正如書序所言，讀《菜根譚》“可以補過，可以進德”，對修身養性、待人接物裨益不淺。

* “譚”與“談”相通。

** 即1603至1867年，約為明清年間。

我們論人不能以成敗為斷。

林語堂



Waterloo is a small city south of Brussels, Belgium. Despite its small size, it is a name of great significance in world history. It was there, in 1815, that Napoleon Bonaparte suffered a decisive military defeat which put an end to his rule as the French emperor — a battle said to have changed the course of European history. From the Battle of Waterloo is thus derived the idiom “to meet one’s Waterloo”. This expression is used to refer to a severe and unexpected defeat — a final fiasco usually preceded by a spate of successes. For example, if electoral candidates who used to be popular among voters fail to win enough votes for a seat, they are said to have “met their Waterloo”.



The defeat at Waterloo was undoubtedly something that Napoleon remembered for the rest of his life. It was such a devastating blow that “words failed him” when the time came to accept this awful fate. When we say “words fail us”, it means the emotions are so overwhelming that we have become dumbstruck — wanting words to convey our feelings. This idiom can also be used in a good sense, such as to express our

wonder and amazement at the sight of a spectacular scene of nature.

But in what situation will we say “someone fails us”? This is when someone has not lived up to our expectations, or even has betrayed our trust in him or her. A relevant scenario would be, for example, when a trusted business partner has been discovered offering intelligence to a market competitor.

From failures, there is always something to learn. This is the spirit underlying the maxims “Failure teaches success” and “Failure is the mother of success”. Experiences drawn from failures may open the door to future achievements. But those blessed few who are born to be successful do not need to overcome a lot of hurdles to attain their goals. “Without fail”, their success stories are the dreams of many. Here “without fail” means absolutely and without exception. This expression can also be used to emphasise that something will happen for sure. For example, we may say, “A low tax regime, without fail, attracts foreign investment.”



Effective Phrases for Effective Assessment

For certain civil service grades, the staff appraisal cycle coincides with the calendar year. Therefore, with the year drawing to a close, supervisors will be busy filling in the appraisal forms of their subordinates. Writing up a performance assessment can be a challenging task. This is especially true for those supervisors who have a couple of officers under their direct command.

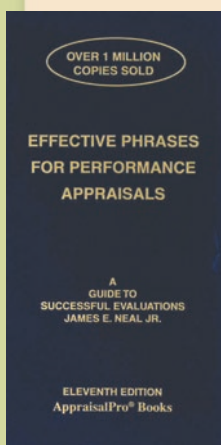
In cases where these supervisors are scratching their heads and wondering what expressions should be used to describe precisely the performance of their subordinates, the little book *Effective Phrases for Performance Appraisals: A Guide to Successful Evaluations*, by James E. Neal Jr., may help. Under a merit system, making assessments that truly and accurately reflect an officer’s performance is of paramount importance. So it is essential to find the right words.

Designed for supervisors who need to evaluate their subordinates’ performance regularly, this guide contains ready-to-use phrases for describing staff performance in various aspects, ranging from “customer service”, “time management” and “writing skills” to “goals and objectives”, “leadership” and “professionalism”. These assessment criteria

are organised alphabetically into some sixty groups for easy reference. Under each category, there is a list of phrases for appraisers to select appropriate ones for a particular case. For example, under “motivation”, a choice of almost one hundred phrases is offered. To name but a few, there are “displays a strong incentive to succeed”, “strives for excellence at every opportunity”, “demonstrates strong will power and determination”, “maintains fresh enthusiasm” and “sustains a high level of momentum” to choose from.

Apart from phrases by topic, the book includes brief sections on helpful adjectives and verbs, as well as expressions about performance rankings and denoting frequency. These sections can be of great help when appraisers have difficulties in putting their thoughts into words.

This guide is especially useful for fledgling supervisors who may be at a loss as to what approach to take in completing an assessment. Even if the phrases suggested may not suit a particular context, they are still good catalysts for arriving at the right words. Scanning through the pages, users are likely to come up with some relevant ideas. Indeed, for both novice and experienced supervisors, *Effective Phrases for Performance Appraisals: A Guide to Successful Evaluations* is a reference worth consulting in their workplace. With the help of this handy tool, writing staff appraisals should no longer be a taxing and time-consuming job.



The greatest barrier to success is the fear of failure.

Sven-Göran Eriksson

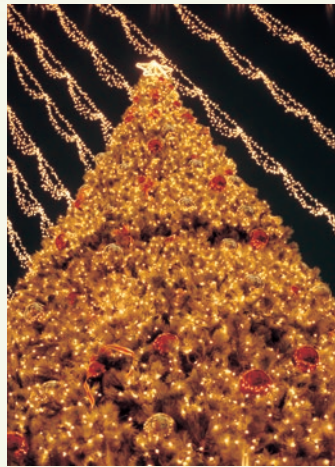


Our Wish for...

Ricky Tong
Senior Official Languages Officer
Civil Service Bureau

The beautifully decorated Christmas tree was glittering under the pale, translucent sky of Central, casting its glow on the crowded Statue Square and carrying the wishes of the loved and the unloved. People were busily taking pictures and the laughter-filled Square was illuminated with flickering flashlights. The commercial gaiety of the holiday made the happy happier and the lonely lonelier.

Woody was standing among the crowd under the Christmas tree, holding his cane tight and trying hard to straighten his back. He attempted to raise his drooping lips but failed. "Cheers!" I shouted. He failed again. "Forget it. Stay there. It's a nice pose," I reassured him. His glasses slipped down his nose, showing his hollow and sunken eyes, an indelible mark of a young man's imprisonment in an old folks' home for years. Yiu Lai, much smaller and shorter than Woody, was hiding herself behind him to support his back, fearing that he might fall down at any moment, and her bony arms, if revealed, would screw up our annual shoot. The three of us sat down on a bench. Woody was wiping his forehead awkwardly with his yellowing handkerchief, Yiu Lai rubbing her tired arms, and I browsing through the photos. We were so happy that this annual event, which meant so much to each of us, was accomplished without a hitch.



I first met Yiu Lai and Woody when we were in Primary Five. In those days, Yiu Lai was always late for school. When asked to explain her habitual unpunctuality, she just looked blandly at our class mistress, nicknamed "Fatty" Wong because of her size, and defied her by returning to her seat with a wicked and triumphant smile. She was our idol because no one dared to challenge the evil Fatty Wong.

Woody was also a troublemaker. He could always find excuses to fight with Kam, a plump girl sitting behind him. No one liked Kam. She "informed" on what we did and what we said to Fatty Wong, who once punished the whole class by making us copy a long Chinese poem one hundred times. Despite our age, some of us, in particular Woody, already harboured the idea of revenge. One day, while Kam was being "teacher's-petted" by Fatty Wong in the teachers' room, we held an emergency meeting to work out a plan to punish the traitor. I stood guard outside the classroom, clutching the doorknob with my sweating hands and praying that I would not be discovered. The meeting was brief. Woody opened the door and gave me an assuring nod. I knew something really bad was going to happen.

In an unsupervised art lesson two days later, a show was staged to reveal sinful human nature of the Lord-of-the-Flies kind. We were instructed by our art teacher to paint a landscape with watercolours. Woody intentionally leaned back while Kam was drawing. As predicted, she yelled at Woody. And as plotted, three other girls, one being Yiu Lai, came up to stop Woody as if they were doing it for the good of Kam. A "nosy" boy then dashed forward and bumped into Yiu Lai, who, as rehearsed, dropped the wet palette onto Kam. The action was flawless and the revenge perfect. Years later, when we talked about this, we still thought what we had done was right.

After graduation, we went to different secondary schools and made new friends. We did not reunite until a decade later when we went camping on Lantau Island. Woody and Yiu Lai told me they had already left school. Woody, much taller and darker, was a shipping clerk, and Yiu Lai, as rebellious and defiant as before, was a receptionist. We did not get a wink of sleep that night. We sat around a bonfire and talked on and on, reliving our mischievous days in primary school, and our laughter echoed across the hilltops. The wintry wind was blowing against our faces and the undergrowth was swaying under a crescent moon. The night was warm.

We promised we would see each other more often. But we did not keep our words. After a long separation, we met again in an old folks' home when Woody had been found suffering from degeneration of the brain. On this reunion night, Woody was sitting quietly in a corner, with his head bent low. I went up to him, pondering how to start our conversation. I patted his shoulder and he raised his head slowly, revealing his expressionless, gaunt face. "Hi, buddy. How're you doing?" He gave no answer but I pressed for a reply — "You can't speak?" He lowered his head a bit and I was standing there, motionless and speechless.

One year, Yiu Lai and I went to see Woody just before Christmas with a box of dark chocolates. We sat quietly in the dimly lit corner, licking our chocolate-stained fingers and enjoying the idyllic tranquility of the evening. "Why don't we go to Central and take some photos?" suggested Yiu Lai. That was how our annual Christmas shoot started.

We were in Central again, sitting on a bench, exhausted but contented. Woody was twitching his lips to smile and Yiu Lai yawning and stretching lazily. I fumbled in a shopping bag for a box of chocolates. The Christmas tree before us was glittering in the dark, carrying our wish for a miracle. We each tasted a tiny piece of chocolate and the bitterness melted slowly on our tongues.

Success is not final, failure is not fatal:
it is the courage to continue that counts.

Winston Churchill

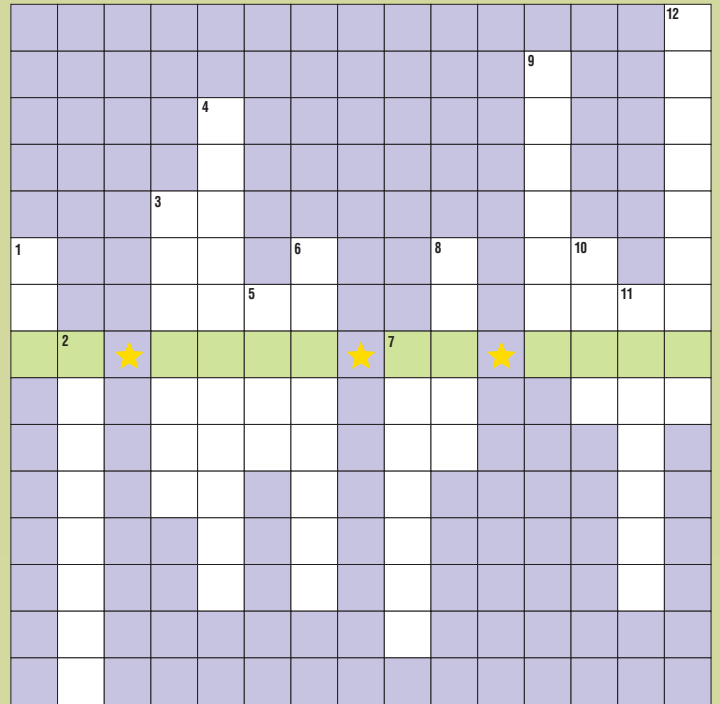


Not-a-Mindboggler

Words of Wisdom

Proverbs are old, pithy sayings that offer advice or inculcate morals. Here are a dozen of proverbs on gains and losses, but each with one word missing. Can you figure out the missing words and put them in the appropriate squares of the puzzle on the right? When all the missing words are in place, you will get a thirteenth maxim in the middle row. Get started and see what you come up with.

- 1 You _____ a few, you lose a few.
- 2 You cannot make an _____ without breaking eggs.
- 3 Finders keepers, losers _____.
- 4 What you lose on the swings, you gain on the _____.
- 5 What you've never had, you never _____.
- 6 Nothing _____, nothing gained.
- 7 If you run after two hares, you will catch _____.
- 8 You must lose a fly to catch a _____.
- 9 Nothing comes of _____.
- 10 As you sow, so you _____.
- 11 There's no great loss _____ some gain.
- 12 A little loss _____, a great one tames.



Please send your entry to the Editorial Board of *Word Power*, Official Languages Division, Civil Service Bureau, Room 2310, High Block, Queensway Government Offices, 66 Queensway, Hong Kong before 12 February 2010. Watch out for our coming issue to see if you get all the answers right and if you are one of the lucky five to win a prize. The Editorial Board will have the final say on the answers.

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第三十七期答案



| 琴 | 棋 | 書 | 畫* |
|------|------|------|------|
| 金石絲竹 | 落子無悔 | 蠶頭燕尾 | 沒骨丹青 |
| 游魚出聽 | 橘中雅戲 | 春蚓秋蛇 | 成竹在胸 |
| 引商刻羽 | 舉手不回 | 顏筋柳骨 | 尺幅千里 |
| 六馬仰秣 | 手談取樂 | 顛張醉素 | 韓馬戴牛 |
| 珠落玉盤 | 紋枰對坐 | 鐵畫銀鈎 | 青藤白陽 |
| 繁弦急管 | 滿盤落索 | 胡肥鍾瘦 | 曹衣出水 |

* “輕描淡寫”多用於表達寫文章或說話時着力不多，輕輕帶過的意思。由於此語原指繪畫時以淺淡色彩輕描，因此也當正確答案論。

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