

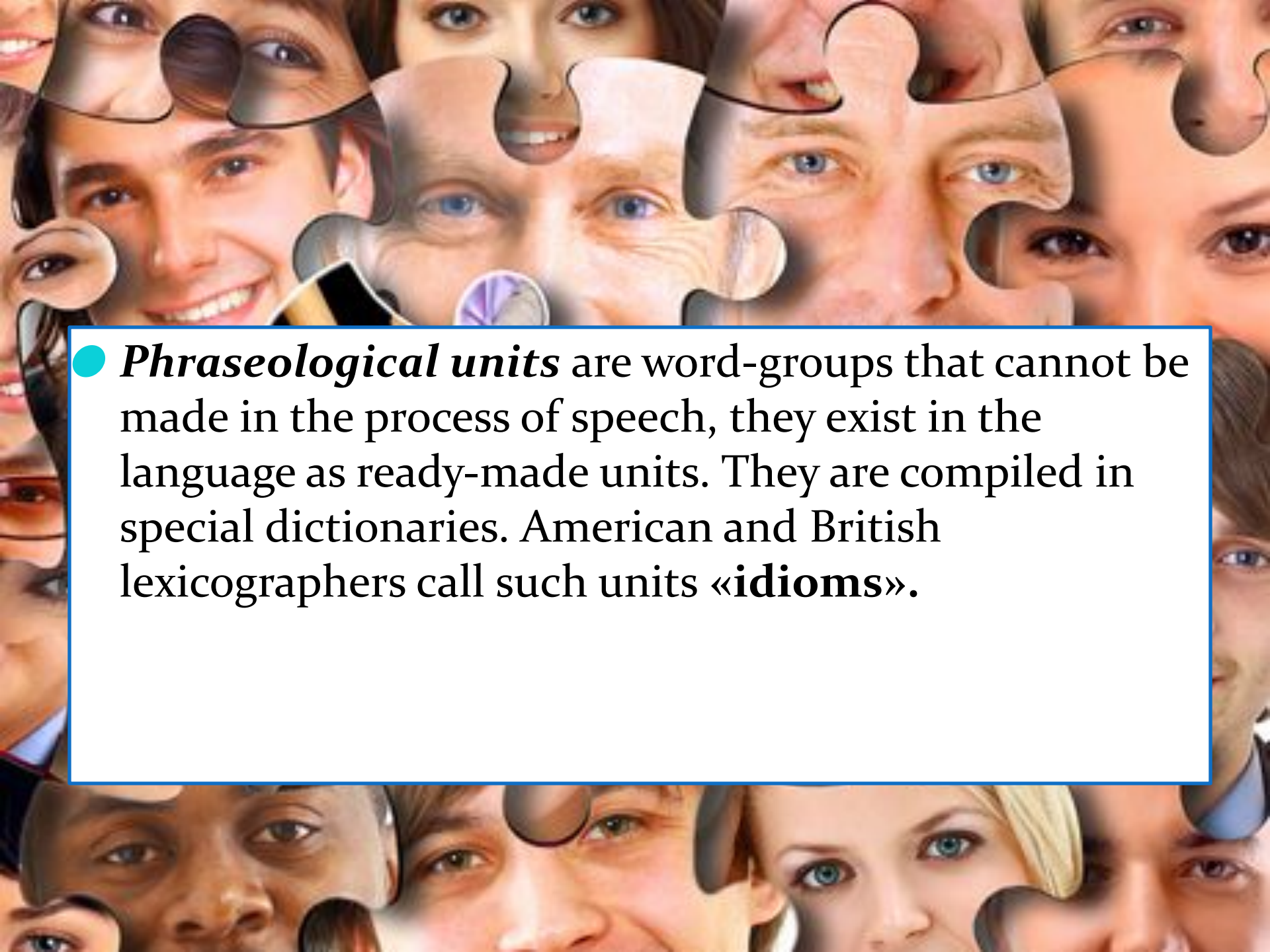


*Proper Names in  
English  
Phraseology*



- the language of informative technologies
- the mother tongue of the global media
- language of Politics and business

- To understand English clearly one should know **not only its standard vocabulary** but also its different styles, dialects, proverbs, sayings, phrasal verbs and idioms, as they are used **in any sphere**: books, films, newspapers, formal speeches. One, looking through some papers, magazines and journals, will discover *the same language to sound quite different*, because he will find **familiar words with unfamiliar meanings**.

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- *Phraseological units* are word-groups that cannot be made in the process of speech, they exist in the language as ready-made units. They are compiled in special dictionaries. American and British lexicographers call such units «**idioms**».

Phraseological units are divided into several types. The most known and popular of the classification proposed by academician V.V.



V.V. Vinogradov has identified three main types of phraseological units:

- phraseological combinations
- phraseological unities
- phraseological fussions

***phraseological combinations*** - are word - groups  
with a *partially changed meaning*.

*They may be said to be clearly motivated, that is the meaning of the units  
can be easily deduced from the meanings of its **constituents**.*

- to be good at smth
- to have a bite
- bosom friends

***unities*** - are word - groups with a completely changed meaning

*the meaning of the unit doesn't correspond to the meanings of its constituent parts.*

- **to loose one's head** (to be out of one's mind)
- **to loose one's heart to sb**(to fall in love)
- **to lock the stable door after the horse is stolen**  
(to take precautions too late)
- **a fish out of water** (a person situated uncomfortably outside its usual environment)

***fussions*** - are word - groups with a completely changed meaning

**But**

in contrast to the units, they *are demotivated*

their *meaning can't be deduced from the meanings of its constituent parts.*

- **To come a cropper** (to come to disaster)
- **to kick the bucket** (To die)
- **red tape** (obstructive official routine or procedure)



# *The main linguistic features of PNs in English*

- the initial-capitalisation in writing  
(to distinguish a PN from a common noun, e.g. *Rosemary* vs. *rosemary*)
- are subject to some word formation processes: for example, **hypocorisms** can be formed from full first names

## FULL FORM

John

Joseph


Richard

## HYPOCORISM

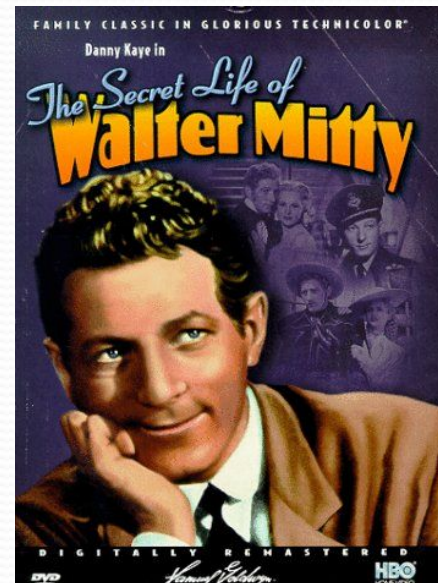
Johnny

Joe

Dick

- 
- can be *mono- or polylexemic*, sometimes incorporating *the article* (e.g. London, John Smith, The Dead Sea
  - They can be modified by adjectives, restrictive relative clauses or PPs
    1. He's the famous George.
    2. This is the Paris I prefer to forget.
    3. The London of my childhood was different.

- **Joe Bloggs** - an average or typical man
- **Florence Nightingale** - a woman who is very kind to someone who is ill  
*(English nurse remembered for her work during the Crimean War (1820-1910))*
- **Walter Mitty** - An ordinary, often ineffectual person who indulges in fantastic daydreams of personal triumphs  
*(From Walter Mitty, the main person in the short story The Secret Life of Walter Mitty by US writer James Thurber)*



- **Colonel Blimp** - an old man who has old-fashioned ideas and believes he is very important

*(a cartoon character created by Sir David Low (1891-1963), British political cartoonist)*

- **Uncle Sam** - a way of referring to the U.S. or the U.S. government

*a man with a white beard and a big hat, wearing clothes in the colors of the U.S. flag. The expression comes from the abbreviation "U.S."*

*((((War of 1812)))*

(Det) + title + PN





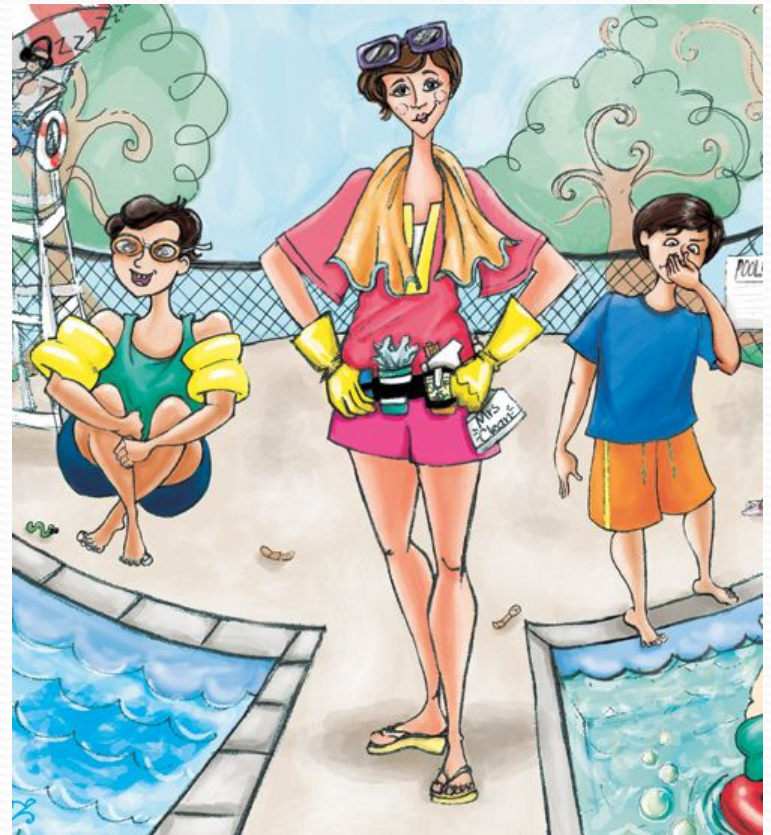
- **Uncle Tom Cobley (or Cobleigh) and all** - used to denote a long list of people

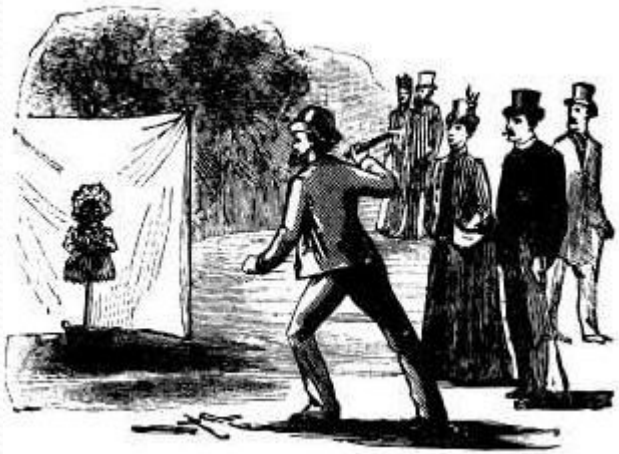
*(comes from a Devon folk song "Widcombe Fair", collected by Sabine Baring-Gould)*

- **a plain Jane** - Plain jane describes a girl that is plain, ordinary and not especially memorable or special

A. *( Plain Jane "unattractive woman" first attested 1912)*

B. *( Another possible origin is from the novel Jane Eyre, published in 1847. Where the protagonist, Jane, is constantly referred in the story as "plain"; a first in the genre.)*





● **Aunt Sally** - a person or thing that's been set up as an easy target for criticism, abuse or blame

A. (a game, popular in Britain under that name from the middle of the nineteenth century at fairgrounds and racetracks)

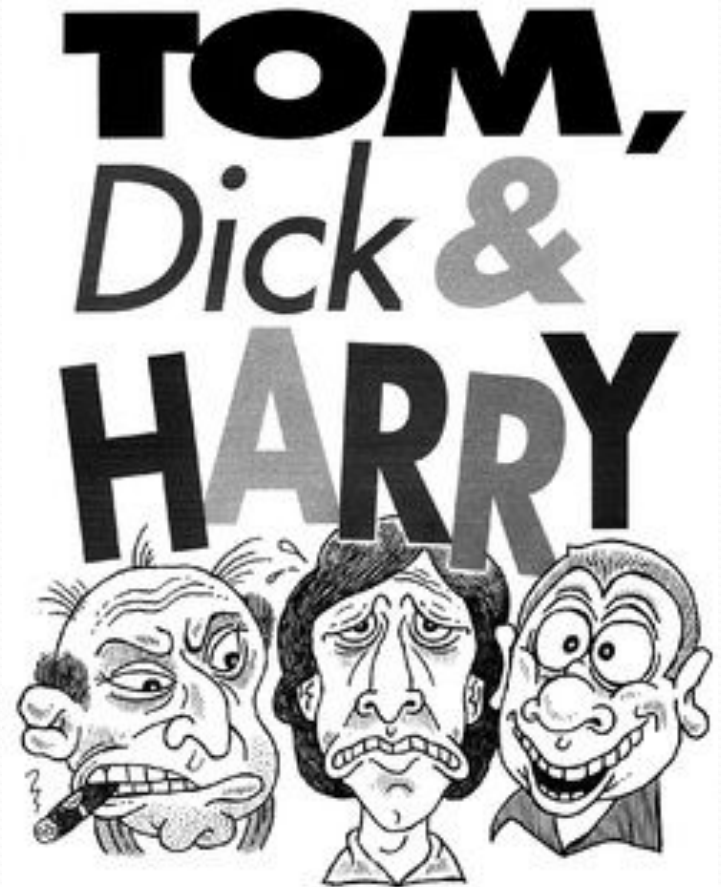
B. (a figure of an old woman's head, typically with a clay pipe, used in fairgrounds and fêtes as a target for balls or other objects)



- **Every Tom, Dick, and Harry** - Anybody at all; a member of the public at large

*( a variation of the phrase can be found in Shakespeare's Henry IV, Part 1 (1597):*

"I am sworn brother to a leash of Drawers, and can call them by their names, as Tom, Dicke, and Francis.")



## ● Achilles' heel - A seemingly small but actually crucial weakness

*(In Greek mythology, when Achilles was a baby, it was foretold that he would die young . To prevent his death, his mother Thetis took Achilles to the River Styx, which was supposed to offer powers of invulnerability, and dipped his body into the water. But as Thetis held Achilles by the heel, his heel was not washed over by the water of the magical river. Achilles grew up to be a man of war who survived many great battles. But one day, a poisonous arrow shot at him was lodged in his heel, killing him shortly after. Still, Achilles is remembered as one of the greatest fighters who ever lived.)*





- **Adam's ale** - humorous water (wine)
- **Sword of Damocles** - If you have a sword of Damocles hanging over you/your head, something bad seems very likely to happen to you

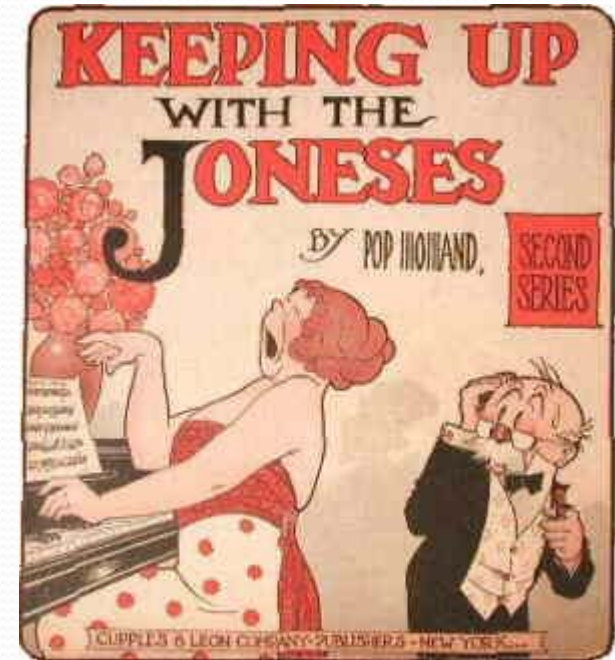


- **Alice in Wonderland** - completely bizarre, illogical, or fantastic
- **Jack of all trades** - a person who is good at many things but has no particular specialty
- **Potemkin village** - used to describe a fake village, built only to impress

*(Russian minister Grigory Potemkin led the Crimean military campaign. According to the story, he erected fake settlements, along the banks of the Dnieper River, in order to fool Empress Catherine II, during her visit to Crimea in 1787. )*

## ● Keep up with the Joneses

*(This idiom originated in a 20th century American comic strip called "Keep Up With The Joneses" by Arthur (Pop) Momand that was first published in the New York Globe. The strip was a satire that made fun of people who strive to rise in the ranks of "society". The main characters were always trying to seem as classy as their neighbours, the Joneses.)*



- **Rob Peter to pay Paul –solve one problem, but create another in doing so**

*(The Peter tax referred to the tax that people had to pay to fund the building of St. Peter's Church, while the Paul tax referred to the tax that the people had to pay to fund the building of St. Paul's Cathedral.)*

- **Fiddling while Rome burns** - To occupy oneself with unimportant matters and neglect priorities during a crisis.

*(The source of this phrase is the story that Nero played the fiddle (violin) while Rome burned, during the great fire in AD 64.)*

*=== invention of the violin - the 16th century*

- **Like painting the Forth Bridge** - used to indicate that a task is never-ending

*( It was opened on 4 March 1890, and spans a total length of 2,528.7 metres (8,296 ft). It is often called the Forth Rail Bridge or Forth Railway Bridge to distinguish it from the Forth Road Bridge, although it has been called the "Forth Bridge" since its construction, and was for over seventy years the sole claimant to this name.)*



# Types of sources:

- the Bible
- literary texts
- classical heritage ( mythology and figures of Greek and Roman antiquity)
- popular culture
- real people, rarely legendary figures

# *Sources*

- Linguistik online 36, 4/2008
- Phraseology A. P. Cowie
- Oxford Dictionary of Idioms
- Longman Dictionary of English Idioms