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Synonyms of Ordinary 四个近义词

Li: 大家好我是杨莉。欢迎收听《你问我答》。这档节目专门回答有关英语语法时态和词汇等语言问题。今天来自中国的 Hugo 给我们提出了一个词汇方面的问题:

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Hello, my name is Hugo. I come from Guangdong in China. And my question is, what's the difference between these words: normal, simple, common and ordinary. I do want to know the difference between these four words. Thank you very much.

Li: Hugo 想知道四个同义词 **synonyms** 同义词或近一词, **normal, ordinary, simple** 还有 **common**. 这四个词大体上都表示同一个基本意思, 这就是普通的, 平凡的, 所以我一个人恐怕说不清楚, 所以我特意邀请了四位专家到演播室里来为我助阵。他们是 Mr Normal.

Mr Normal: Hello.

Li: Mr Ordinary.

Mr Ordinary: Hello.

Li: Mr Simple.

Mr Simple: Good afternoon.

Li: And Mr Common.

Mr Common: Hi there! It's great to be here!

Li: 哎我觉得你们几位看上去很像, 至少你们的发型是同一种。Welcome to the studio. 今天我们要通过一些例句来回答 Hugo 的问题, 你们每个人可以根据自身的特点来各抒己见。

Synonyms: Sounds like a good idea / why not / that's good.

Li: 首先让我们一起来看看这把椅子。What do you think of this chair, Mr Normal?

Mr Normal: It's a normal chair because it's like most chairs. It's not a special chair.

Mr Ordinary: Yes, I would say it's an ordinary chair for the same reason.



Li: 这不是一把特殊的椅子，比如像古玩啦或轮椅啦。It's a normal chair 或 an ordinary chair 一把普通的椅子。

Mr Simple: It's a simple chair too. It has a very plain design and is easy to use.

Li: 用 simple 来形容椅子，表示这把椅子没有任何华丽的装饰也没有特殊的功能，一把简单的椅子，从这个例子看 Hugo's 提出的这几个单词意思很接近...

Mr Common: [clears throat]

Li: 啊, Mr Common, 我差点忘了你还没发表意见呢，是不是？Is it a common chair?

Mr Common: Yes, it is a common chair but for a slightly different reason. You see chairs like that all the time, and most people have a chair like that.

Li: 就是说在用 common 这个词来形容椅子的时候，其含义是常见的。这是一把很常见的椅子 common 常见的。很好，我来小结一下，normal 和 ordinary 表示普普通通，普通的而不是特制的椅子。如果要强调这把椅子的工艺简单不复杂，那就是 simple. 简易的。

Mr Simple: Or easy to use or understand.

Li: 或容易使用，容易理解的。

Mr Simple: Now, simple things aren't always ordinary. For example, Coco Chanel's little black dress was a very simple item of clothing but it wasn't ordinary or normal or common. It was quite special.

Li: 可可香奈儿的著名小黑裙是另一个例子，虽然 simple 但绝不能用 ordinary 来形容。那另外两个词 ordinary 和 normal 又该如何解释呢？在形容椅子的时候，它们表示同一个意思，对吧？

Mr Ordinary: Well yes but –

Mr Normal: Now, hang on a second – oh sorry.

Mr Ordinary: You carry on old boy.

Mr Normal: Right yes, I was going to say that there is a slightly different meaning. I think the opposite of normal is strange, and the opposite of ordinary is special. So for example, I can say 'It is normal to fall in love when you're a teenager.' That's because it's not strange to fall in love, it's part of growing up.

Li: 我明白了。恋爱是一件正常的事 normal 它是个人成长过程中的正常经历。

Mr Common: Yes, and many people fall in love when they're teenagers. So we can also say "It's common to fall in love when you're a teenager".

- Li: 由于很多人都有过恋爱的经历所以我们可以说这是一件很常见的事 **common**.
- Mr Ordinary: **But falling in love is never ordinary! It isn't strange or unusual but it is still special.**
- Li: **Ah!** 虽然恋爱并不罕见，但那是一种特别的经历 **special**，任何爱情都不能用 **ordinary** 去形容，因为那是一种很特殊的感情。
- Mr Simple: **And there's something else too... Falling in love is never simple! [starts crying]**
- Li: 恋爱绝不是一件简单的事 **not simple**. There there, Mr Simple.
- Mr Ordinary: **Pull yourself together man!**
- Li: 经过这番比较，我想大家对这四个英语单词的细微区别应该有了一些印象。**Hugo** 下面我们再来看看一个更为重要的方面，那就是在我们用这四个词语来描述一个人的时候表达什么含义。**How would you describe yourself, Mr Ordinary?**
- Mr Ordinary: **Well, you know. I'm not really a terribly interesting person. I have a job and a family. I agree with most people about most things most of the time. And importantly, I'm not rich and famous. When we talk about ordinary people, we often mean people who are not famous or successful.**
- Li: 嗯，你说自己是一个很普通的人 **ordinary** 既不富有也不出名。 **What about you Mr Normal? How would you describe yourself?**
- Mr Normal: **Well yes. I'm quite similar to Mr Ordinary. I think I'm normal because I behave like most people. People who are abnormal behave strangely. So I'm not mad and I look and act like other people.**
- Li: **Mr Normal** 说在形容一个人的外表和行为举止很正常，不古怪的时候，就可以用 **normal** 这个词。我们不妨设想一下，当一个女人怀孕了，她一定想生一个正常健康的孩子，对不对？那就是 **normal**。不过，恐怕多数孕妇都不希望自己的孩子平平淡淡 **ordinary**，她们都在想着，啊将来我的孩子一定会了不起的！
- Normal / Ordinary: **Yes, yes, good example Li.**
- Li: **Mr Simple, it's your turn. How would you describe yourself?**
- Mr Simple: **Well, I'm a simple man, a very straightforward man. I don't have lots of ambitions. I don't have lots of opinions about big issues. I just want to live my life and be happy.**
- Li: 这么说 **a simple man** 就是一个抱负不大对大事和要闻没太多看法的人。不过如果你用英语形容某人 **simple** 是不是暗示这个人有点儿傻，不是吗？
- Mr Simple: **That's very rude!**
- Li: 在英国如果你称某人 **common** 那你的意思是这是一个粗俗的人。

Mr Common: Yes, that's also rude. But sometimes you hear the phrase 'the common man' – not a common man, but the common man. That means the average person, the typical person.

Li: The common man 意思是普通人。 Well chaps, we really must leave it there.

Mr Ordinary: I do hope we have helped explain all this, Hugo.

Mr Common: And haven't just confused you more.

Mr Normal: Yes, remember if you're listening and if you have a question you can email us at questions.chinaelt@bbc.co.uk.

Mr Simple: We might answer your question on this programme.

Li: But until next week...

All: Bye.