

BBC Learning English
Q and A of the Week 你问我答
Misplaced and mislaid
放错和错置



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Chris: Hello and welcome to Question and Answer of the Week, the programme where we answer your questions about learning English. I'm Chris and with me in the studio today is Helen.

Helen: Hi there Chris. I'm really sorry I'm late – I couldn't find my glasses. I searched everywhere this morning. I finally realised that they were on my head after all! 今天早晨上出门之前我到处找眼镜儿，急得要命，最后一照镜子发现其实眼镜就挂在我自己的头顶上！

Chris: You left them on your head? Oh Helen, that's quite funny. How long were you looking for them?

Helen: For about 20 minutes! 足足有 20 分钟!

Chris: Well, I'm glad you found them. You'll be able to help me with this week's question – it's on a similar topic.

Helen: Really? What is it about?

Chris: Today's question has been sent in from Shan in Hong Kong, who writes: "I wonder if you could explain the difference between the words, 'mislay' and 'misplace'?"

Helen: 香港的 Shan 给我们发邮件提问英语里的两个单词 mislay 和 misplace 有什么区别。

Chris: When you couldn't find your glasses, you had misplaced them – or mislaid them. They both mean that you have put something down where it cannot be found very easily. As there isn't any difference between the two, you can use either.

Helen: 这么说 mislay 和 misplace 都表示把什么东西放错地方找不见了的意思，可以交替使用。Here are some examples:

Inserts

Person 1: Has anyone seen my phone? I think I've misplaced it.

Person 2: I mislaid my wallet this morning, but I've got it back.

Person 3: You've misplaced a comma in this sentence.

- Chris:** Misplaced and mislaid usually refer to objects. You can say, "I've misplaced my pen" but it's unlikely you would say, "I'm misplaced". You would normally say "I'm lost".
- Helen:** 注意 *misplace* and *mislaid* 只能形容物，不能形容人，如果一个人迷失了方向，那就应该使用 *lost*.
- Chris:** To lose something is usually accidental, whereas to misplace something means you can't find it easily because you've forgotten where it is.
- Helen:** To lose something 是丢失了什么东西的意思，这同把什么东西放错地方，或忘记把什么东西放在了何处，意思不一样。
- Chris:** Shan also writes, "I also know there's a phrase called 'misplaced affection' and I don't know its meaning. What does it mean?"
- Helen:** Does it mean that you've lost the ability to love?
- Chris:** Well, good guess, but you're not quite right. If I was to put my trust in you and then you lied to me, my trust would have been misplaced – I shouldn't have trusted you. So misplaced affection is when you give your affection or love to the wrong person, or someone inappropriate.
- Helen:** 这个短语的意思是爱错了人。
- Chris:** Well, Shan, I hope that we've answered your question today. Don't forget to keep sending us your questions about learning English and we'll try and answer those too! Helen, what's our email address?
- Helen:** Erm... hang on. I had written it down on a piece of paper somewhere. 我刚才把咱们的电子邮箱网址写在了一张纸上，怎么找不见了？Where is it?
- Chris:** So, you've misplaced the piece of paper with the email address on it?
- Helen:** It looks like it, I'm afraid.
- Chris:** Oh dear... Here, have mine.
- Helen:** Thanks Chris! 如果大家有什么英语问题请来信我们的电子邮箱是：questions.chinaelt@bbc.co.uk. 千万收好，不要丢了！
- Chris:** Until next time, goodbye!
- Helen:** Bye!