



Assorted Slang and Terminology

Volume 1 Thieves Cant



Introduction

How to use

Assorted Slang and Terminology

Volume 1

Thieves Cant

Thieves Cant, sometimes referred to as the Cant, rogues' cant or TC for short, was/is a secret language formerly used by thieves, beggars and hustlers in Great Britain and other English-speaking countries.

It is a common trope of the fantasy genre – a series of coded words or phrases so the rogues and thieves can talk about various activities

There are two chapters provided here. One is English -> TC and the other is the reverse, TC -> English.

In the E - > TC translation, if there are multiple versions they are separated by a comma. These can be regional variations and so on.

Using this guide is quite simple:

1. Look up the word you want to translate, either from English to TC (First chapter) or TC to English (second chapter). The words are in alphabetical order and sub-divided into letter groups to make the word you want easier.
2. If there are multiple possible translation, pick the one you think sounds best for the current conversation.

That's all there is to it. The second chapter is, as mentioned earlier, for when you want to translate TC back into English.

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Contents

English to Cant	4
A.....	4
B.....	4
C.....	4
D.....	5
E.....	5
F.....	5
G.....	5
H.....	5
I.....	6
J.....	6
K.....	6
L.....	6
M.....	7
N.....	7
O.....	7
P.....	7
Q.....	7
R.....	8
S.....	8
T.....	8
V.....	9
W.....	9

Cant to English	9
A.....	9
B.....	9
C.....	10
D.....	11
E.....	11
F.....	11
G.....	11
H.....	12
I.....	12
J.....	12
K.....	13
L.....	13
M.....	13
N.....	13
O.....	14
P.....	14
Q.....	14
R.....	14
S.....	15
T.....	16
U.....	16
V.....	16
W.....	16
Y.....	16
Z.....	16

English to Cant

For when you have an English word and want to know what it would mean in TC.

A

Accomplice - hired help

Apron - belly cheat

Arm - fin

Arrested - boned, hooked, invited, nabbed, pulled, roasted, snapt, touched

Assassin - hit man

B

Backside/buttocks - blind cupid

Bailiff - bandog

Beer - bowse

Beggar, faking madness - mad tom

Beggars, fake wounded soldiers - rufflers

Begging - angling for coppers, maunding

Belly/gut - tripe

Betrayer - turncoat

Big - tall man

Boat - ark

Body - quarrome

Booty - quota, swag, whack

Bounty hunter - prig napper

Brandy - bingo

Breeches - farting crackers, hams, kickseys, small clothes

Bribe - expense money, dawb, grease, sop

Brothel - academy, snoozing ken

Brothel mistress - abness

Bully - knight of the blade

Burglery - dose

C

Calf, stolen- blater

Call for police - cry beef

Captured - hooked, snapt

Cart - gaoler's coach

Chains/handcuffs/shackles - darbies, kings plate, ruffles

Cheat - bilk, fob, fun, nip

Cheated - ferreted

Cloak - calle

Club - jordain, oaken towel

Coachman - rattling cove

Coat/cloak - calle, cardinal, caster, joseph, kilkenney, mish topper, toge, vinegar

Con - amuse, bilk, fob, fun, fuzz, hoodwink, sham

Concealed, hand - paum

Confess - to squeak

Conman - sharper

Constable - harman, myrmidons

Constable, senior - hamlet

Copper - rust

Counterfeiting coins - drawing the king's/queens picture

Courthouse - nubbing ken

Criminal - varlets

Crooked person - zad

Crowbar - bess, betty, ginny, jemmy

Cudgel - oaken towel

Cutpurse – nipper

D

Dagger - pig poker

Danger - lay

Death sentence - cramp word

Diamond - chunk o' gin

Die - goin' legit

Dog - fang, bufe

Door - lid

Drunk – clear

E

Earrings - lobe latches

Ears - luggs

Emerald - green beer

Escape - squeak, bing, burning the ken, hike, rub

Excrement - tantadlin tart

Execution - sheriff's ball

Eyes - glimms, peepers, sees, top lights

F

Fake card shuffle - fuzz

Fence - uncle, family man

Flogging - teize

Fool - ben, cullability, gudgeon, gull, milch cow, pigeon

G

Gallows - morning drop, new drop, newman's lift, nubbing cheat, sheriff's picture frame, three-legged mare, three legged stool, topping cheat

Gang - birds of a feather

Gaol - repository

Gold ring - jem

Good - bene, rum

Gloves - fams, mitts

Gold - yellow tin

Gullible person - gudgeon, gull

H

Hair, red - carrot

Hair, white/fair - turnip pate

Hair, yellow - sorrel

Hand(s) - daddles, fam, mauley, paws,

Handkerchief - clout, fogle, wiper

Hang - crop, dangle, swing, turn off

Hanged - climbed up a ladder to bed, jammed, scragged, tucked up

Hanging - nubbing, stretching

Hangman - jack ketch, nubbing cove,
sheriff's journeyman, topping cove

Hat - bever, castor, kelp, shallow, shappo,

Head - costard, crown office, idea pot,
jobbernole, knob, noodle, pate

Heavy - fat lady

Highway - pad

Highwayman - gentleman's master, knight
of the road, rank rider

Hit - click

Home invader - rushers

Honest man - cull

Horse - prad

Horse thieves - pad borrowers, priggers of
prancers

House - ken, panny

House breaker - ken miller

I

Illegal goods – contraband

Inform - cackle, long tongued, nose, office,
peach, rat, sing

Informant - a hole in need of a plugging

Injury – scratch

Injury, serious - broken finger

Informant - rat

Innkeeper – bluffer

Innocent – dodgies

J

Jail - guesthouse

Jailbreak - goin' home

Jewel - booze

Jewellery - fancy booze

Judge - beak, fortune teller, grandpa

K

Kill - crash, have a chat with, use up

L

Lantern - darkee, glim

Lawyer, bad - cuisositor

Lead coins - dumps

Lead, stolen from roofs - moss

Legs - pins, stamps, stumps

License - jukrum

Lie - amuse, gamon, palaver

Light - thin woman

Lockpick - charm, dub, kate, screw

Lookout - pair of eyes

Loot - stuffing

Lungs – bellows

M

Magic – flash

Magic item - bagged flash

Man – cove

Money - bits, blunt, iron, lowre, plate, poney, ready, rhino, ribbin

Money, paper - rag

Mouth - blubber, bone box, gab, gob, gan, mummer, oven

Mugger - ding boy/girl

Murder – hush

N

Naked - abram

Neck - crag, gutter lane, red lane, squeeze, whistle

Necklace - noose

Night time – darkmans

Night watchman - moon pigs

Nose - conk, gig, smeller, trunk

O

Oath, begger - salmon

Open - tell a joke

Organ pipes – squeakers

P

Pawn - pop, vamp

Pawnbrokers - pop shop, two to one shop

Pearl - milk

Pickpocket (act) – dive

Pickpocket (person)- purse collector, cannon, bung nipper

Pilferer - sneak

Pillory - penance board, wooden ruff

Pirate - rovers

Pirate, river - waterpad

Pocket - boung, bung, cly, sack, skin

Police officer - pig

Prison - porridge, pound, sheriff's hotel, shop, spring-ankle warehouse

Prison guard - underdubber

Prisoner - jailbird

Prostitute - fen, laced mutton, public ledger, tail

Punish - trounce

Purse – boung

Q

Quiet – smooth

R

Receiver of stolen goods - family man, fence

Rich - oak, well dressed

Ring - jem, onion, finger joint

Riot - hubbub

Risk - boredom

Rob - heave

Robbery - game

Rogue - rascal

Rope - danglestuff

Ruby - chunk o' brandy

Run-away - hike, rub

S

Safe/secure - rug

Sapphire - berry wine

Seal/signet ring - onion

Secure - rug

Sell - switch

Shoplifter - bob

Seize - nab

Silver - tin

Share of the booty - quota

Shirt - camesa, commission, kemesa, mish, smish

Shoes - crab shells, flyers, stampers

Silver plate - wedge

Small - short man

Spectacles - barnacles

Spur - bleeder, digger, rippon

Steal - bite, bite the blow, borrow, cloy, heave, hoist, lift, nim

Stocks - bilboes, harmens, penance board, wooden ruff

Stolen - ard, made

Stomach - victualling office

Swap - bug, ring the changes

T

Tavern owner - beggar maker

Teeth - grinders, head rails, ivories, the target of a confidence game - mark

Theft - game

Thief - prig, priggers

Thief, common - footpad

Thief, experienced - old hand
Thief specialized in cracking safes - box-man

Thief who replaces valuable goods with worthless ones - pennyweighter

Thief, head - arch rogue, dimber damber, prince prig, upright man

Thief, independent - lone wolf

Thieves' cant - flash lingo, gibberish, patter flash, slang

Thieves cant, use - patter flash

Thieves, group of - mob

Thieves, successful - robert's men

Tie up - dress up

Torture - have tea with the pigs

Thieves, young - kiddeys

Tounge - clack, red-rag, velvet

Trap – bite

Trick – sham

Trial – show

V

Victim - content, provender

W

Whipping post - jigger

Widow - ace of spades, hempen widow

Wig - jasey, perriwinkle, strum

Con't to English

For when you have a word in TC and want to know the translation in English.

A

A hole in need of plugging – informant

Abbess - brothel mistress

Abram – naked

Academy – brothel

Ace of spades - widow

Amuse – con

Amuse – lie

Angling for coppers – begging

Arch rogue - head thief

Ard – stolen

Ark – boat

B

Bagged flash – magic item

Bandog – bailiff

Barnacles - spectacles

Beak - judge

Begger maker – tavern owner

Bellows – lungs

Belly cheat – apron

Ben – fool

Bene – good

Berry wine - sapphire

Bess – crowbar

Betty – crowbar
Bever – hat
Bilboes - stocks
Bilk – cheat, con
Bing – escape
Bingo – brandy
Bite – steal
Bite - trap
Bite the blow – steal
Bits – money
Blater - calf, stolen
Bleeder - spur
Blind cupid – backside/buttocks
Blubber – mouth
Blunt – money
Bob - shoplifter
Bone box – mouth
Boned – arrested
Booze – jewel
Boredom - risk
Borrow - steal
Boung – pocket, purse
Bowse – beer
Box – thief experienced in cracking safes
Broken finger – serious injury
Bufe – dog
Bug – swap
Bung - pocket
Bung nipper - pickpocket (person)

Burning the ken – escape

C

Cackle - inform
Calle - coat/cloak
Camesa – shirt
Cannon - pickpocket (person)
Cardinal – coat/cloak
Carrot – red hair
Caster - coat/cloak
Castor - hat
Charm - lockpick
Chunk o' gin - diamond
Chunk o' brandy – ruby
Clack - tongue
Clear – drunk
Click - hit
Climbed up a ladder to bed - hanged
Clout – handkerchief
Cloy - steal
Cly - pocket
Commission - shirt
Conk – nose
Content - victim
Contraband – illegal goods
Costard – head
Cove – man
Crab shells – shoes
Crag – neck

Cramp word - death sentence

Crash - kill

Crop - hang

Crown office - head

Cry beef - call for police

Cull – honest man

Cullability – fool

Curisositor – bad lawyer

D

Daddles – hands

Dangle – hang

Danglestuff – rope

Darbies - chains/handcuffs/shackles

Darkee – lantern

Darkmans - night time

Dawb – bribe

Digger – spur

Dimber damber - head thief

Ding boy/girl - mugger

Dive – pickpocket (act)

Dodgies – innocent

Dose – burglary

Drawing the kings/queens picture -
counterfeiting coins

Dub – lockpick

Dumps – lead coins

E

Expense money – bribe

F

Fam - hands

Family man - receiver of stolen goods

Fams – gloves

Fancy booze – jewellery

Fang - dog

Farting crackers - breeches

Fat lady – heavy

Fen – prostitute

Fence - receiver of stolen goods

Ferreted - cheated

Fin – arm

Finger joint – ring

Flash – magic

Flyers - shoes

Fob – cheat, con

Fogle – handkerchief

Footpad – common thief

Fortune teller – judge

Fun – cheat, con

Fuzz – con

Fuzz - fake card shuffle

G

Gab – mouth

Game – robbery

Game - theft

Gamon – lie

Gan - mouth

Gaoler's coach - cart
Gentleman master – highwayman
Gig - nose
Ginny – crowbar
Glim – lantern
Glimms - eyes
Gob – mouth
Goin' legit - die
Goin' home – jailbreak
Grandpa – judge
Grease – bribe
Green beer - emerald
Grinders – teeth
Gudgeon – fool, gullible person
Guesthouse – jail
Gull – fool, gullible person
Gutter lane – neck

H

Hamlet - constable, senior
Hams – breeches
Harman – constable
Harmens - stocks
Have a chat with – kill
Have tea with the pigs – torture
Head rails – teeth
Heave – rob
Heave – steal
Hempen widow - widow

Hike - escape
Hike – run away
Hired help – accomplice
Hitman - assassin
Hoist - steal
Hoodwink – con
Hooked – arrested
Hooked – captured
Hubbub - riot
Hush – murder

I

Idea pot – head
Invited – arrested
Iron – money
Ivories – teeth

J

Jack ketch – hangman
Jailbird – prisoner
Jammed – hanged
Jasey - wig
Jem – gold ring
Jem - ring
Jemmy - crowbar
Jigger – whipping post
Jobbernobble – head
Jordain - club
Joseph - coat/cloak
Jukrum – license

K

Kate – lockpick
Kelp - hat
Kemsa - shirt
Ken – house
Ken miller – house breaker
Kickseys – breeches
Kilkenny - coat/cloak
Kings plate - chains/handcuffs/shackles
Knight of the blade - bully
Knight of the road – highwayman
Knob – head

L

Laced mutton – prostitute
Lay – danger
Lid - door
Lift – steal
Lobe latches - earrings
Lone wolf – independent thief
Long tounge – inform
Lowre – money
Luggs - ears

M

Mad tom – beggar who is faking madness
Made – stolen
Mark – target of a confidence game
Mauley – hands

Maunding – begging
Milch cow – fool
Milk – pearl
Mish – shirt
Mish topper - coat/cloak
Mitts – gloves
Mob – group of thieves
Moonpig – night watchman
Morning drop – gallows
Moss – lead that has been stolen from roofs
Mummer – mouth
Myrmidons – constable

N

Nab – seize
Nabbed – arrested
New drop – gallows
Newmans lift – gallows
Nim - steal
Nip – fun
Noodle – head
Noose – necklace
Nose – inform
Nubbing – hanging
Nubbing cheat – gallows
Nubbing cove - hangman
Nubbing ken – courthouse
Nypper – cutpurse

O

Oak – rich
Oaken towel – club, cudgel
Office – inform
Old hand – experienced thief
Onion – ring, seal, signet ring
Organ pipes – squeakers
Oven – mouth

P

Pad – highway
Pad borrowers – horse thief
Pair of eyes - lookout
Palaver – lie
Pate – head
Patter flash – use of thieves cant
Paum - concealed, hand
Paws – hands
Peach – inform
Peepers- eyes
Penance board – pillory, stocks
Pennyweighter - thief who replaces valuable goods with worthless ones
Perriwinkle - wig
Pig – police officer
Pig poker - dagger
Pigeon – fool
Pins – legs
Plate – money
Poney – money

Pop – pawn
Pop shop – pawnbrokers
Porridge – prison
Pound - prison
Prad – horse
Prig – thief
Prig napper – bounty hunter
Priggers - thief
Priggers of prancers – horse thief
Prince prig - head thief
Provondor - victim
Public ledger – prostitute
Pulled – arrested
Purse collector – pickpocket (person)

Q

Quarrome – body
Quiet - smooth
Quota – booty, share of the booty

R

Rag – paper money
Rank rider – highwayman
Rascal - rogue
Rat – inform, informer
Rattling cove – coachman
Ready – money
Red - tongue
Red lane – neck
Repository – gaol

Rhino – money
Ribbin - money
Ring the changes - swap
Rippon – spur
Roasted - arrested
Rovers – pirate
Rub – escape
Rub – run away
Rufflers – beggar, faking being an ex-soldier
Ruffles - chains/handcuffs/shackles
Rug – safe/secure
Rum – good
Rushers – home invader
Rust – copper

S

Sack – pocket
Salmon – oath from a beggar
Scragged – hanged
Scratch – injury
Screw – lockpick
Sees- eyes
Shallow – hat
Sham – con
Sham - trick
Shappo – hat
Sharper – conman
Sheriff's ball - execution
Sheriffs hotel – prison

Sheriffs journeyman - hangman
Sheriffs picture frame – gallows
Shop – prison
Show - trial
Sing – inform
Skin - pocket
Slang – thieves cant
Small clothes – breeches
Small man - small
Smeller – nose
Smish – shirt
Snapt – arrested
Snapt – captured
Sneak - pilfer
Snoozing ken – brothel
Sop – bribe
Sorrel – yellow hair
Spring - prison
Squeak – escape
Squeeze – neck
Stampers - shoes
Stamps – legs
Stretching – hanging
Strum - wig
Stuffing – loot
Stumps - legs
Swag – booty
Swing – hang
Switch – sell

T

Tail – prostitute
Tall man – big
Tantadlin tart – excrement
Teize – flogging
Tell a joke – open
Thin woman – light
Three-legged stool – gallows
Tin - silver
To squeak – confess
Toge - coat/cloak
Top lights - eyes
Topping cheat – gallows
Topping cove - hangman
Touched – arrested
Tripe – belly/gut
Trouch - punish
Trunk – nose
Tucked up – hanged
Turn off – hang
Turncoat – betrayer
Turnip pate – white hair
Two to one shop – pawnbrokers

U

Uncle – fence
Underdubber – prison guard
Upright man
Use up – kill

V

Vamp – pawn
Varlets – criminal
Victualling office - stomach
Vinegar - coat/cloak

W

Waterpad – river pirate
Wedge – silver plate
Well dressed - rich
Whack – booty
Whistle – neck
Wiper – handkerchief
Wooden ruff – pillory, stocks

Y

Yellow tin – gold

Z

Zad - crooked person