

# PERFECT IDIOM

یادگیری اصطلاحات روزمره

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# Perfect Idiom

*Street Talk, Slang, Idiom*

چرا این کتاب را لازم داریم؟

این همه سال کلاس زبان می‌رویم، کلی گرامر و لغت یاد می‌گیریم. مهارت‌های چهارگانه‌مان را هم به خوبی تقویت می‌کنیم، اما باز هم فهمیدن خیلی از جملات یک فیلم برای ما سخت است؛ چرا؟

جواب خیلی ساده است: در کنار یادگیری وجه آکادمیک یک زبان، باید اصطلاحات کوچه بازاری را هم آموخت. به این بخش *street talk* هم می‌گویند.

هر گونه نظر، سؤال یا پیشنهاد:

[diranlou@outlook.com](mailto:diranlou@outlook.com)

دانلود کامل‌ترین فیلم آموزش مکالمه انگلیسی

[کلیک کنید](#)

## راهنمای استفاده از کتاب Perfect Idiom

### برای زبان‌آموزان عزیز

زبان‌آموز عزیز این کتاب را هم می‌توانید به عنوان کتاب درسی و هم به عنوان فرهنگ لغت استفاده کنید.

- روش اول: ابتدا اینکه فصل‌های یک تا سه (chapter 1 - 2 - 3) را بخوانید. یادداشت‌برداری کنید و بعداً آن‌ها رو مرور کنید. در سه فصل اول این کتاب، آنقدر اصطلاح پرکاربرد آورده شده است که با یادگیری آن‌ها به راحتی مکالمه‌های زیادی را در هر فیلم متوجه خواهید شد.

- روش دوم: کتاب را یک فرهنگ لغت در نظر بگیرید. هر گاه حین تماشای فیلمی یا شنیدن مکالمه‌ای، به اصطلاحی جدید برخوردید، کتاب را بر روی موبایل یا تبلت یا لپ‌تاپ خود باز کرده و آن عبارت را جستجو کنید و معنای آن را بیابید.

کتاب هم به شکل موضوعی (Section 2) و هم به شکل الفبایی (Section 3) مرتب شده است.

سراسر کتاب پر از مثال‌های مختلف است. از جهت تعداد مثال و همچنین تعداد Idiom و slang این کتاب یکی از کامل‌ترین منابع موجود می‌باشد.

### برای مدرسان گرامی

مدرس گرامی زبان انگلیسی، همانطور که تجربه دارید یکی از بهترین راه‌های پربارتر کردن کلاس درس این است که در کنار تدریس نکات گرامری و انگلیسی آکادمیک، لازم است نکاتی هم از انگلیسی غیررسمی و کوچه‌بازاری که Street Talk هم نامیده می‌شود را در کلاس مطرح کنید.

لذا این کتاب را می‌توانید به دو شیوه مورد استفاده قرار دهید.

- یکی اینکه برای هر جلسه تعدادی Idiom و Slang را از کتاب برگزیده و در کلاس مطرح نمایید. با توجه به اینکه کتاب فهرست موضوعی دارد، می‌توانید متناسب با موضوع درس اقدام نمایید.
- همچنین می‌توانید کتاب را بر روی گوشی موبایل، تبلت یا لپ‌تاپ خود داشته باشید و هر بار که زبان‌آموزی از شما سؤالی پرسید سریع آن را در کتاب جستجو کرده و معنای آن را بیابید.

## چند اصطلاح تخصصی

در ادامه به توضیح چند اصطلاح تخصصی می‌پردازیم.

Street talk شامل Proverb (saying)، expression، slang، idiom و colloquial می‌شود.

با اینکه این‌ها فرق‌هایی با هم دارند، اما در نهایت همه در یک ویژگی مشترک هستند. با استفاده از expression، slang، idiom و ... منظور خود را غیر مستقیم بیان می‌کنیم.

مانند اینکه در فارسی می‌گوییم: با این اوصاف کلاه فلانی پس معرکه است! در انگلیسی هم می‌شنویم که کسی می‌گوید:

The concert! It blew my mind.

### Idiom چیست؟

Idiom به گروهی از کلمات گفته می‌شود که معنایی غیر مستقیم را منتقل می‌کند. این گروه از کلمات می‌توانند یک جمله کامل باشند یا فقط یک اصطلاح. بنابراین یک Idiom را می‌توان به طور مستقل به کار برد، یا اینکه داخل یک جمله دیگر استفاده کرد.

### چند Idiom

To beat around the bush

این Idiom را باید داخل یک جمله‌ی دیگر به کار برد و به معنای این است که فردی در موقعیتی حاشیه‌روی کند و از اصل موضوع بپرهیزد.

Better late than never

این Idiom را مستقلاً استفاده می‌کنیم و به معنای دیر رسیدن بهتر از هرگز نرسیدن است.

## Slang چیست؟

Slang بیشتر یک زبان است. زبانی که گروهی از مردم یک جامعه استفاده می‌کنند. آن هم به صورت درون گروهی! تعداد Slang خیلی زیاد است. در لیستی که من تهیه کرده‌ام این تعداد به ۱۵ هزار رسیده است. اما نکته این است که لازم نیست این همه Slang یاد بگیریم. چون هم اینکه Slang از سالی به سال دیگر تغییر می‌کند. همچنین از انگلستان تا آمریکا، یا شمال لندن تا مثلاً نواحی جنوبی آن Slang های متفاوتی استفاده می‌شوند.

همچنین Slang ها به طبقه اجتماعی و خیلی چیزهای دیگر هم بستگی دارد. بهتر است متداولترین Slang را بیاموزیم. و در وقت خود صرفه‌جویی کنیم.

## چند Slang

- My bad: My mistake.
- Kudos: congratulation!
- Cheesy: cheap and low class.
- Shoot the sh\*t: to start talking with somebody. Small talk.
- Twenty-four-seven (24/7): some shopping center or office, which is open 24 hours of 7 days of the week.

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# Chapter 1

## Idiomatic Expressions and Sayings

## Part 1: Idiomatic Expressions

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### (A) Few X Short of a Y

- **Meaning:** Crazy, mentally impaired.
- **Example:** *Ned seems to make sense when you talk to him at first, but the more you listen, the more it seems he's **a few cards short of a deck**.*

Note: Examples: a few cards short of a deck, a few fries short of a Happy Meal.

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### (Get the) Short End of the Stick

- **Meaning:** (Emerge with) a disadvantage in a deal or negotiation; (get a) bad deal
  - **Example:** *My older brother left me with **the short end of the stick** – he said I could use his car if I lent him money, but it's not running!*
- 

### (In) Full Swing

- **Meaning:** Completely in operation as planned
  - **Example:** *Production was slow to ramp up, but now things are **in full swing**.*
- 

### (The) Door Swings Both Ways

- **Meaning:** The same principle can apply mutually in a relationship
  - **Example:** *In the realm of food, **the door often swings both ways**. For example, American food has borrowed many influences from Japan, but Japanese food has also been influenced by America.*
- 

### (The) Lights Are On, But Nobody's Home

- **Meaning:** This person appears normal but is deficient in mental functioning, stupid
  - **Example:** *Carl couldn't even answer basic questions about the budget. With him, sometimes I think the **lights are on, but nobody's home**.*
- 

### (The) Whole Kit and Caboodle

- **Meaning:** The entire collection of something; all of something
- **Example:** *I'll pay \$300 for **the whole kit and caboodle** – we don't need to waste time arguing over the value of each individual coin.*

### (The) X Factor

- **Meaning:** An aspect of a situation with an unknown impact; an indefinable appeal
- **Example:** *The votes of women will be an **X factor** in this election. No one knows which way they'll go.*

### (To Be) Hoist by Your Own Petard

- **Meaning:** To be hurt by one's own aggressive plans
- **Example:** *The dean implemented a foreign-language requirement for faculty, but then he couldn't pass it himself. He was **hoist by his own petard!** (Note: This idiom comes from Shakespeare.)*

### (To Be) Shit out of Luck (SOL)

- **Meaning:** To be completely out of luck; to experience very bad fortune
- **Example:** *I went to a restaurant in Buffalo, and they were out of Buffalo chicken wings. I guess I was just **shit out of luck!***  
Note: This is obscene and has a slightly humorous flavor.

### (To) Grasp (Grab) at Straws

- **Meaning:** To take desperate actions with little hope of success
- **Example:** *When the teacher called on her, Jean was **grasping at straws** – she had no idea how to answer the question.*  
Note: This is based on the behavior of people who are drowning—"they may grasp at straws in the water."

### (To) Pull Strings

- **Meaning:** Use influence that's based on personal connections
- **Example:** *My uncle **pulled strings** and got me a summer job at a state legislator's office.*  
Note: You can also say that someone is "pulling the strings."

### (To) Shit It In

- **Meaning:** Succeed easily; be doing well
- **Example:** *Don't worry. We had a bad practice, but when game time comes we'll **shit it in.***  
Note: This is obscene. Another form is "shit it in and carry a pig."

## Part 2: A to Z list

### Idiomatic Expressions (A)

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#### A Life of Its Own

- **Meaning:** An independent existence
  - **Example:** *At first, my weaving was just a side project, but it's taken on **a life of its own** – people have been buying my blankets.*  
Note: Generally not said of living things, but of ideas or new phenomena.
- 

#### Above Board

- **Meaning:** Openly, without deceit. Honestly, reputably.
  - **Example:** *You might want to sneak a misleading clause into the contract, but it's better if we keep everything **above board**.*
- 

#### Ace up One's Sleeve

- **Meaning:** A surprise advantage of which others are not aware.
  - **Example:** *Susan had an **ace up her sleeve** when it came to dating Jason – she was friends with Jason's sister, and she knew a lot about his interests.*  
Note: Also “an ace in the hole.”
- 

#### Add Insult to Injury

- **Meaning:** Humiliate someone in addition to doing damage to him or her
  - **Example:** *My boyfriend broke up with me. Then he **added insult to injury** by lying about when he had started seeing Valerie.*
- 

#### Airy Fairy

- **Meaning:** Whimsical, nonsensical, impractical
  - **Example:** *The business plan is full of **airy fairy** ideas that would be impossible to actually implement.*
- 

#### All and Sundry

- **Meaning:** Everyone (separately) Each one.
- **Example:** *She told **all and sundry** that she was ready to forget her breakup and begin dating again.*  
Note: Less common in North America.

---

## All Set

- **Meaning:** Ready, prepared, finished
  - **Example:** *We're **all set**. Everything's packed, Now we just have to get to the airport on time.*
- 

## All the Same

- **Meaning:** Anyway; nevertheless; nonetheless.
- **Example:** *I know you want to leave. **All the same**, I'd rather stay and talk to a few more people.*

Note: Rather old-fashioned.

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## All Very Well

- **Meaning:** True to a certain extent
- **Example:** *That's **all very well**, but your argument breaks down when you try to apply it to the real world.*

Note: Primarily British.

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## American Dream (The)

- **Meaning:** The belief among Americans that hard work leads to material success
  - **Example:** *If we work hard, our children will have a better life than we had. That's the **American Dream**.*
- 

## And All That

- **Meaning:** Et cetera, and so on.
  - **Example:** *For a proper golf experience, you need the right clubs, the right shoes, the right golf balls, **and all that**.*
- 

## And So Forth

- **Meaning:** Indicates that a list continues in a similar manner, etc.
  - **Example:** *Urban areas have many problems: unemployment, bad schools, crime, **and so forth**.*
- 

## And The Like

- **Meaning:** And other similar items, etc.
  - **Example:** *We collect small antique home furnishings: lamps, ashtrays, platters, **and the like**.*
-

## And Then Some

- **Meaning:** And even more than what has just been mentioned
- **Example:** *We'll need all the equipment you've brought, **and then some**.*

## Answer Back

- **Meaning:** Respond impertinently; to talk back.
- **Example:** *Teenagers like to **answer back** when you tell them to do something.*

Note: Uncommon in American English.

## Idiomatic Expressions (B)

### Back At You

- **Meaning:** Same to you (used to return a greeting or insult)
- **Example:** *Hey, it's great to see you! – **Back at you**.*

Note: Also written phonetically, “back atcha.” Also “right back at you.”

### Back in the Day

- **Meaning:** Formerly, when I was younger, in earlier times
- **Example:** ***Back in the day**, we used to bicycle all the way around the island, but I'm not in shape to do that anymore!*

### Beggar Thy Neighbour

- **Meaning:** To do something beneficial for oneself without worrying about how it affects others
- **Example:** *The country's **beggar-thy-neighbour** currency policy will earn it enemies in the long run.*

Note: This expression is often used to describe the actions of governments.

### Best of Both Worlds

- **Meaning:** Combining two qualities that are usually separate
- **Example:** *With this car, you get the **best of both worlds**-it's a high-performance car, but it's also very durable.*

## Borrow Trouble

- **Meaning:** Take needless risks, invite problems
- **Example:** *Probably nothing will happen if we overload the boat, but why **borrow trouble**?*

## Idiomatic Expressions (C)

### Carry the Can

- **Meaning:** To take the blame for something one did not do
- **Example:** *The general manager is being forced to **carry the can** for the mistakes of the owner, who refused to invest in top-flight talent.*

### Catch-22

- **Meaning:** A difficult situation from which there is no escape because options for avoiding it involve contradictions
- **Example:** *It's a **Catch-22** – we can't get the fare discount without the loyalty card, but to get the loyalty card we'd have to take this flight.*

Note: This idiom comes from a novel, *Catch-22*, by Joseph Heller, and describes a situation in which a soldier is considered insane and unfit for combat if he willingly continues to fly missions. However, asking to be relieved from duty on the basis of insanity shows that he is mentally competent. Consequently, he must continue to serve.

### Come By Something Honestly

- **Meaning:** Acquire something honestly, or inherit it
- **Example:** *I **came by that knife honestly** – my father gave it to me.*

### Come Clean

- **Meaning:** To confess; to admit to wrongdoing
- **Example:** *Son, we all know you stole the liquor from the cabinet. It's time for you to **come clean**.*

### Come to Grips With

- **Meaning:** To acknowledge a problem as a prelude to dealing with it

- **Example:** *We need to **come to grips with** the issue of sexual harassment in the workplace.*

## Idiomatic Expressions (D)

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### Draw a Line Under (Something)

- **Meaning:** To conclude something and move on to something else
- **Example:** *It's time to **draw a line under** that relationship. I'm ready to look for someone new.*

### Draw the Line

- **Meaning:** To set a limit to what one will accept
- **Example:** *It's OK if you have a bottle of beer from time to time, but using drugs is where I **draw the line**.*

### Drop a Line

- **Meaning:** To write a letter or send an email
- **Example:** ***Drop me a line** when you're back in the country, and we'll get together.*

### Dry Run

- **Meaning:** A practice execution of a procedure
- **Example:** *The flight went perfectly in a **dry run**. I think we're ready to start accepting charters.*

## Idiomatic Expressions (F)

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### Face the Music

- **Meaning:** To accept judgment or punishment
- **Example:** *We broke the rules for stock trading. It's time to **face the music** – they're going to catch us sooner or later.*

### Fall Prey to

- **Meaning:** Be victimized by; be harmed by; be vulnerable to
- **Example:** *When you're sick, it's very easy to **fall prey to** scammers who sell you worthless medicines.*

### Flash in the Pan

- **Meaning:** A one-time occurrence, not a permanent phenomenon

- **Example:** *Some believed that Donald Trump's popularity was a **flash in the pan**; others thought he would have a more lasting impact.*

Note: This idiom comes from an old expression about exploding gunpowder

### Follow In Someone's Footsteps (Tracks)

- **Meaning:** Follow the example laid down by someone else; supplant
- **Example:** *I know you're worried about what will happen after Ruth retires, but I'm sure that with Jack **following in her footsteps** things will continue normally.*

### For xyz Reasons

- **Meaning:** For multiple reasons, not worth specifying individually
- **Example:** ***For xyz reasons** I don't want to go to the party. You go ahead!*

Note: This is more common in the UK.

### Fourth Estate

- **Meaning:** The media and newspapers
- **Example:** *The **Fourth Estate** can direct public opinion, but they can't shape it.*

Note: This is usually capitalized.

## Idiomatic Expressions (G)

### Get Along (with Someone)

- **Meaning:** To have a satisfactory relationship
- **Example:** *Andrew isn't a perfect employee, but he **gets along** with everyone, and that's important – it helps create a harmonious workplace.*

### Get the Run around

- **Meaning:** Be given an unclear or evasive answer to a question
- **Example:** *Every time I try to ask the boss when we might get raises, I **get the run around**.*

## Get With the Program

- **Meaning:** Figure out what everyone else already knows. Often used sarcastically, as a command
- **Example:** *Everyone else has already moved on to stage three. C'mon, **get with the program!***

## Go Along (With)

- **Meaning:** Agree to something, often provisionally
- **Example:** *i'll **go along** with the plan for now, but if the dollar drops i'll have to reconsider.*

Note: Compare this with “get along.”

## Go Down in Flames

- **Meaning:** Fail in a spectacular way
- **Example:** *After the new model had to be recalled due to the diesel emissions scandal, the entire brand **went down in flames.***

## Idiomatic Expressions (H)

### Hatchet Job

- **Meaning:** A strong attack on someone's reputation; intentionally destructive criticism; calumny
- **Example:** *There's a newspaper here that always supports the government and can be counted on to do a **hatchet job** on any potential opponents.*

### Haul Over the Coals

- **Meaning:** To scold someone severely
- **Example:** *My teacher really **hailed over the coals** today about talking in class.*

Note: “Rake (someone) over the coals” is the usual American version.

### Heart and Soul

- **Meaning:** With all one's energy or affection
- **Example:** *Bob never worked hard before, but he threw himself into his new job **heart and soul.***

Note: “Body and soul” is also used.

---

## Home Truths

- **Meaning:** Honest, often painful criticism
- **Example:** *My teacher expressed some **home truths** to me – I argued with her at first, but I had to admit she was right.*

## Hot Mess

- **Meaning:** Something or someone in a state of extreme disorder
- **Example:** *In my 20s I was a **hot mess**, but after I turned 30 I tried to live a more orderly life.*

---

## Idiomatic Expressions (I, J, K)

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### In One Fell Swoop

- **Meaning:** All at once, in a single action
- **Example:** *I finished all my homework **in one fell swoop**.*

---

### Just for the Record

- **Meaning:** I would like to make it clear that ...
- **Example:** ***Just for the record**, I never said Samantha was doing a bad job.*

---

### Keep (Something) at Bay

- **Meaning:** Maintain a distance from something or someone
- **Example:** *We used my car horn to **keep** the bear **at bay** until the forest rangers arrived.*

---

## Idiomatic Expressions (L, M, N)

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### Let the Genie Out of the Bottle

- **Meaning:** Reveal something hitherto suppressed
- **Example:** *Once the reporter **let the genie out of the bottle** and revealed official corruption, many more examples came to light.*

---

### Live Large

- **Meaning:** Have a luxurious lifestyle
- **Example:** *After I sold my company, I was **living large** – penthouse apartment, big car, eating out every night.*

Note: This is of African American origin.

## Make One's Mark

- **Meaning:** Attain influence or recognition
- **Example:** *I've been working in this field for ten years, but I don't really feel I've **made my mark**.*

## Make Waves

- **Meaning:** Cause controversy, disturb a calm group dynamic
- **Example:** *You just started working here. I'm sure you think there should be changes, but for now don't **make waves**.*

## Nailing Jelly/Jello/Pudding to a Wall/Tree

- **Meaning:** An impossible task
- **Example:** *Getting Mark to commit to marrying me is like **nauling Jello to a tree**.*

Note: This is not common.

## No Names, No Pack Drill

- **Meaning:** If no one can be identified, no one will be punished.
- **Example:** *Certain people around here-"**no names, no pack drill**-"are not contributing enough to the project.*

## Idiomatic Expressions (O)

### Off the Beaten Path

- **Meaning:** Remote; not a usual destination; not easily reached
- **Example:** *This restaurant is **off the beaten path**, but I think you'll find it's worth the trouble in getting there.*

### On a Roll

- **Meaning:** Succeeding consistently
- **Example:** *Ellen is **on a roll** - she's gotten an A on her last three exams.*

### Out of Line

- **Meaning:** Improper, behaving improperly
- **Example:** *Your comment in the meeting was **out of line**. I want you to apologize to Theresa.*

---

## Out of Luck

- **Meaning:** Unlucky in a single instance; temporarily unfortunate
- **Example:** *You're **out of luck**. Debbie just left. She'll be back at 1.*

---

## Out of Nowhere

- **Meaning:** Unexpectedly
- **Example:** *Two horses were neck and neck for most of the race, but a third horse came **out of nowhere** to win.*

---

## Out of Order

- **Meaning:** Not working properly
- **Example:** *The restroom is **out of order**. You'll have to go to the next floor up.*

---

## Out of the Blue

- **Meaning:** Unexpectedly
- **Example:** ***Out of the blue**, John called and said he was going to visit me. I haven't seen him for 15 years.*

---

## Out of the Picture

- **Meaning:** No longer under consideration; eliminated from a contest
- **Example:** *Caitlin says Jack is **out of the picture**. She's trying to choose between William and Jason as her date for the dance.*

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## Idiomatic Expressions (P)

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### Page-Turner

- **Meaning:** A page-turner is an exciting book that's easy to read, a book that's difficult to put down.
- **Example:** *When I go to the beach, I don't want a book that I have to focus closely on-"I prefer a real page-turner." Stephen King's novels are **page-turners**. They may be a thousand pages long, but you can finish them very quickly."*

---

### Point of No Return

- **Meaning:** A place from which it is impossible to go back to the starting point

- **Example:** *We've reached the **point of no return** on this hike – if we keep walking, we won't be able to make it back to town before dark.*

---

### Put the Genie Back in the Bottle

- **Meaning:** Try to suppress something that has already been revealed or done
  - **Example:** *Once you give kids additional freedoms, it's hard to **put the genie back in the bottle** and make them obey rules.*
- Note: This is usually used in the negative-“it's hard to put a genie back in a bottle.

---

## Idiomatic Expressions (Q, R)

### Queer the Pitch

- **Meaning:** Interfere with someone's plans; make something more difficult
- **Example:** *Although he supports the prime minister's party, he's trying to **queer the pitch** for that party's candidates.*

---

### Rake (Someone) Over the Coals

- **Meaning:** To scold someone severely
- **Example:** *My teacher really **raked me over the coals** today about talking in class.*

Note: Rake (someone) over the coals” is the usual American version.

---

## Idiomatic Expressions (S)

### School Of Hard Knocks

- **Meaning:** Difficult real-life experiences from which one has learned
- **Example:** *I never went to college. I worked starting when I was 17, and I got my education in the **school of hard knocks**.*

---

### Set the World on Fire

- **Meaning:** Do something amazing; have a brilliant stretch in one's career

- **Example:** *I don't think Teresa will **set the world on fire** with her writing, but her books are selling consistently.*

---

### Show Me an X And I'll Show You a Y

- **Meaning:** There is a consequence to X that you may not have thought of.
- **Example:** ***Show me a man with a tattoo, and i'll show you a man with an interesting past.**'- Jack London.*

---

### Six of One, a Half Dozen of the Other

- **Meaning:** The two choices have no significant differences.
- **Example:** *It doesn't matter to me whether we go food shopping first or get the car's oil change – it's **six of one, a half dozen of the other.***

Note: Outside the USA, “a six and two threes” is also used.

---

### Small Beer

- **Meaning:** Unimportant, insignificant
- **Example:** *Our sales have risen, but they're still **small beer** compared with those of our main competitor.*

---

### Snafu

- **Meaning:** A malfunction; a chaotic situation
- **Example:** *After all the **snafus**, I'm surprised the product launch is happening even close to the scheduled date.*

---

### Spick and Span

- **Meaning:** Clean and neat
- **Example:** *Your room is messy. I'm leaving now, and when I come home I want to see it **spick and span.***

---

### Stand (Someone) In Good Stead

- **Meaning:** Be useful in the future
- **Example:** *You may not think you need this tool, but it will **stand you in good stead** in the future.*

Note: This is used in the future tense, as in the example.

---

### Sure-Fire

- **Meaning:** Certain to occur

- **Example:** *This horse is a **sure-fire** winner. If you bet on him, you can't lose!*

## Idiomatic Expressions (T)

---

### Take (Someone) to the Cleaners (1)

- **Meaning:** Swindle
  - **Example:** *Be careful when visiting foreign cities – you won't be aware of the con artists' tricks, and they'll **take you to the cleaners**.*
- 

### Take (Someone) to the Cleaners (2)

- **Meaning:** Defeat badly
  - **Example:** *It was predicted to be a close game, but we **took the other team to the cleaners**.*
- 

### Take A Powder

- **Meaning:** To leave, especially in order to avoid a difficult situation
  - **Example:** *Just when we were getting to the hard work, Juan **took a powder**, and we haven't seen him all day.*
- 

### Take the Shine off (Something)

- **Meaning:** To do something that diminishes a positive event
  - **Example:** *We won the championship, but the riots after the match **took the shine off** the team's accomplishment.*
- 

### Take the Starch out of (Someone)

- **Meaning:** Make someone less confident or less arrogant
  - **Example:** *The boss criticized Walter's presentation. It really **took the starch out of** him.*
- 

### Take Your Life in Your Hands

- **Meaning:** Undergo extreme risk
  - **Example:** *They don't maintain that road in winter. If you drive up there, you're **taking your life in your hands**.*
- 

### Tee Many Martoonies

- **Meaning:** Too many martinis, scrambled to suggest drunkenness

**Example:** *I said some things I shouldn't have last night. I probably had **tee many martoonies**.* (Note: This is quite rare.)

---

### Test the Waters

- **Meaning:** Try something out in a preliminary way
  - **Example:** *We haven't decided about expanding into Europe, but we're **testing the waters** with a few stores there.*
- 

### The Jig Is Up

- **Meaning:** A secret illicit activity has been exposed; your trickery is finished
  - **Example:** ***The jig is up** for the stock scammers – the FBI busted the ring last night.*
- 

### Thin On the Ground

- **Meaning:** Rare, seldom encountered
  - **Example:** *Good restaurants are **thin on the ground** in this town.*
- 

### This Has (Person X) Written All Over It

- **Meaning:** [Person X] would really like or be well suited to this.
  - **Example:** *A big German document just came in e-mail. This job **has Frank written all over it** – he speaks fluent German.*
- 

### Throw a Wet Blanket on (Something)

- **Meaning:** Discourage plans for something
  - **Example:** *Barbara **threw a wet blanket on** our plans for a party, reminding us that no alcohol is allowed in the building.*
- 

### To the Letter

- **Meaning:** Exactly (said of instructions or procedures)
  - **Example:** *I followed the instructions in the manual **to the letter**, but I still couldn't replace my timing belt.*
- 

### Tread Water

- **Meaning:** Maintain a current situation without improvement or decline
- **Example:** *I've been working hard for a year, but I'm just **treading water**. I need a job that pays more.*

Note: This idiom has a slightly negative flavor, as in the example.

## Idiomatic Expressions (U, W, Y, Z)

---

### Under Wraps

- **Meaning:** Temporarily hidden, secret
  - **Example:** *I want the new model kept **under wraps** until the product launch on Tuesday.*
- 

### University of Life

- **Meaning:** Difficult real-life experience, as opposed to formal education
- **Example:** *I never had the advantage of an Oxford degree—"all my experience comes from the **university of life**.*

Note: School of hard knocks in North America is similar.

---

### Up for Grabs

- **Meaning:** Available for anyone
  - **Example:** *Positions in our new Hanoi office are **up for grabs** for anyone who speaks Vietnamese. See me if you're interested.*
- 

### Wouldn't be Caught Dead

- **Meaning:** Would absolutely not allow myself to do this
  - **Example:** *I **wouldn't be caught dead** wearing a coat that color.*
- 

### You Know the Drill

- **Meaning:** You are already familiar with the procedure.
  - **Example:** *When you leave, shut off all the lights and lock the room with the safe. **You know the drill**.*
- 

### Zig When One Should Be Zagging

- **Meaning:** To make an error; to choose an incorrect course
- **Example:** *My problem during my 20s was that too often I would **zig when I should be zagging**.*

# Chapter 2

## 150 Most Common Idioms

## 150 Most Common Expressions

---

### 1. A BLESSING IN DISGUISE

Something that appears bad at first but ends up having good results

*Missing that plane turned out to be a **blessing in disguise** because I got to spend more time with my family.*

---

### 2. A SANDWICH SHORT OF A PICNIC

A humorous way of saying someone is stupid or is a bit mad

*He brought only shorts and t-shirts when he went to Sweden in the winter – I think he might be a **sandwich short of a picnic!***

---

### 3. A STONE'S THROW

Something is very close or near

*Luckily the wedding is just a **stone's throw** from our hotel so we can walk there.*

---

### 4. ACTIONS SPEAK LOUDER THAN WORDS

What you do is more important than what you say; someone's words may not be trustworthy

*Person A: "John keeps saying he wants to take me out for dinner, but then he never does!"*

*Person B: "**Actions speak louder than words.**"*

---

### 5. ADD FUEL TO THE FIRE

When someone does something to make a bad situation worse

*When Sarah started laughing during the argument, it really **added fuel to the fire!***

---

### 6. ADD INSULT TO INJURY

To make a bad situation worse

*As if breaking my arm isn't bad enough, **to add insult to injury** I have to pay £1,000 in hospital fees as I didn't have travel insurance!*

---

### 7. ALL EARS

To be eagerly waiting to hear about something

*Person A: "I have to tell you about what happened on our trip to*

Spain...”

Person B: “I’m **all ears!**”

## 8. AT A CROSSROADS

To be at a point in your life when you need to make an important decision

*I was **at a crossroads** when I was offered a job in the US, but my boyfriend wanted to stay in London.*

## 9. BARKING UP THE WRONG TREE

To be wrong or misguided about the reason for something

*He thinks the company’s problems can be solved just by firing the sales team, but he’s **barking up the wrong tree**.*

## 10. BEAT ABOUT THE BUSH

To talk about unimportant things because you’re avoiding a particular topic

*Stop **beating about the bush!** Are you planning to quit university, or not?*

## 11. BETTER LATE THAN NEVER

It’s better to do something late than not at all

*Person A: “Sorry I missed your birthday! There’s a card in the post.”*

*Person B: “Don’t worry. **Better late than never!**”*

## 12. BETWEEN A ROCK AND A HARD PLACE

To be in a difficult situation where both options are bad

*Person A: “If I go to the wedding mum will be upset, but if I don’t go then I’ll be letting down the rest of the family!”*

*Person B: “Sounds like you’re caught **between a rock and a hard place**.”*

## 13. BITE OFF MORE THAN ONE CAN CHEW

To do too much or take something on that is too difficult

*Person A: “I’m going to start that weekend job at the museum on top of my full-time job because I really need the money.”*

*Person B: “Sounds like a lot of work! Don’t **bite off more than you can chew**.”*

---

#### 14. BITE THE BULLET

To decide to do something that is difficult or unpleasant, but necessary

*You're going to have to **bite the bullet** and tell your ex-(girlfriend) that you need the apartment back.*

---

#### 15. BLOW OFF STEAM

To do something that helps you get rid of stress, energy or anger

*After my meeting with the boss, I went for a run to **blow off steam**.*

---

#### 16. BOB'S YOUR UNCLE

To say that a set of instructions or task is simple or easy

*To make the salad dressing, you just put oil, vinegar, honey and mustard into a bowl, mix them together and **bob's your uncle!***

---

#### 17. BOG-STANDARD

Something that is very ordinary or basic, nothing special

*Despite the excellent reviews, we thought the restaurant was just **bog-standard**.*

---

#### 18. BOTCH/BODGE JOB

Work that has been done badly, in a clumsy, lazy way

*The original builders did such a **bodge job** of our kitchen that we had to get it completely redone.*

---

#### 19. BUDGE UP

An informal way of asking someone to move to make room for you

*Could you **budge up** a bit so I can sit down?*

---

#### 20. BUILDER'S TEA

Strongly-brewed English breakfast tea with milk

*I'll have a **builder's tea**, please.*

---

#### 21. BURY ONE'S HEAD IN THE SAND

To refuse to think about or confront serious issues or situations

*Martin just **buries his head in the sand** when it comes to his financial problems.*

---

---

## 22. BUST ONE'S CHOPS

To work very hard on something, or to harass someone  
*I was **busting my chops** all night to get that report finished!  
Stop **busting my chops**! I'll mow the lawn later.*

**Note:** In British English slang, the word 'chops' is used to mean 'mouth'. So the idiom above literally means 'punch in the mouth'.

---

## 23. BY THE SKIN OF ONE'S TEETH

To narrowly succeed in doing something  
*The traffic was terrible so we only made the plane **by the skin of our teeth**!*

---

## 24. CALL A SPADE A SPADE

To state the truth about something even if it's unpopular or unpleasant  
*I know he's your brother, but let's **call a spade a spade**: he's pretty lazy.*

---

## 25. CALL IT A DAY

To stop working on something  
*It's almost 9pm. I think we should **call it a day** and finish the report tomorrow.*

---

## 26. CHEAP AS CHIPS

When something is inexpensive or good value for money  
*It doesn't look it, but our new sofa was (as) **cheap as chips**!*

---

## 27. CHINESE WHISPERS

Information or rumours that have been passed on by many people and are no longer reliable  
*John and Maggie from the office haven't actually announced they're getting a divorce. It's probably just **Chinese whispers**.*

---

## 28. CHIP ON ONE'S SHOULDER

To hold a grudge/be angry about something that happened in the past, or to be arrogant and think too highly of oneself  
*Whenever we mention his childhood, he gets really angry. He's got a **chip on his shoulder** about it.*

---

*The new sales guy at the office has a real **chip on his shoulder**. He's not even that good!*

---

### 29. CLAM UP

To become silent or stop talking

*When Bill came into the room, Jenny just seemed to **clam up**. I think she likes him!*

---

### 30. COLD FEET

To get nervous or to have second thoughts about doing something

*He's getting **cold feet** about the wedding, but I told him that was perfectly normal.*

---

### 31. (THE) COLD SHOULDER

To deliberately ignore someone

*I got the **cold shoulder** from Anna at the party. I guess she's still annoyed with me.*

---

### 32. COST A BOMB

When something is very expensive

*That Italian meal **cost a bomb**! We won't be going back there, unless we win the lottery!*

---

### 33. COST AN ARM AND A LEG

When something is very expensive

*The new bar in town was really fancy, but my drink **cost an arm and a leg**!*

---

### 34. COUCH POTATO

A lazy person who doesn't do much exercise and spends a lot of time on the sofa watching television

*My husband has turned into a **couch potato** since he lost his job.*



My husband has turned into a couch potato since he lost his job.

### 35. COULDN'T CARE LESS

To show indifference to something or a total lack of interest  
*I **couldn't care less** if Harry comes out tonight or not! I don't really like the guy.*

### 36. CURIOSITY KILLED THE CAT

A warning that being inquisitive or curious can get you into trouble

*Person A: "Where are you going at this time of night?"*

*Person B: "**Curiosity killed the cat!**"*

### 37. CUT A LONG STORY SHORT

To get to the point, to not include unnecessary detail

*To **cut a long story short**, she has to move back to the US until her new visa comes through.*

### 38. CUT CORNERS

To do something in the easiest way possible (usually not very well) in order to save time or money

*We had to **cut corners** to get the project done within our budget and by January.*

### 39. CUT SOMEONE SOME SLACK

To avoid being critical or judgmental of someone (even if they deserve it)

Person A: "Hannah's late for the second time this week!"

Person B: "**Cut her some slack!** The traffic's awful this morning."

### 40. CUT TO THE CHASE

To get directly to the point when speaking, to not give unnecessary detail

*I have to leave in a minute so can you **cut to the chase**? What exactly do you want me to do?*

### 41. DIG ONE'S HEELS IN

To refuse to do something or change your mind, especially when people are trying to persuade you

*I wanted to go on the earlier train, but Mary **dug her heels in** so we had to get the later one.*

### 42. DOG EAT DOG (ALSO 'CUT THROAT')

A situation that is very competitive, where people are willing to harm each other's interests to get ahead

*The music industry is **dog eat dog** these days.*

*I'd stay out of the legal sector. It can be a **cut throat** business.*

### 43. DON'T GIVE UP THE DAY JOB

Used in a humorous way to tell someone they're not very good at something

Person A: "What do you think of the haircut I gave Hannah?"

Person B: "**Don't give up the day job, mate!**"

### 44. DON'T PUT ALL YOUR EGGS IN ONE BASKET

A warning not to put all your resources or efforts into just one thing

*Although you've made an offer on this house, I would still visit some others. You **don't want to put all your eggs in one basket.***

### 45. DON'T RUN BEFORE YOU CAN WALK

A warning not to try something difficult before you understand the basics

*If you're not very good at swimming, I'd stay in the shallow end*

and keep close to the side. You **don't want to run before you can walk**.

---

#### 46. DESPERATE TIMES CALL FOR DESPERATE MEASURES

In a very challenging situation you need to take extreme actions  
*She moved to Australia after she found out about her husband's affair. I suppose **desperate times call for desperate measures!***

---

#### 47. EASY DOES IT

To slow down or do something slowly/carefully  
***Easy does it!** Those boxes you're holding are very fragile.*

---

#### 48. EAT A HORSE

To be extremely hungry  
*I am so hungry I could **eat a horse**.*



#### 49. (The) ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM

An important and obvious topic that everyone knows needs to be discussed, but that isn't brought up or mentioned  
*David leaving the company was **the elephant in the room** during that meeting – no one wanted to bring it up!*

---

## 50. EVERY CLOUD HAS A SILVER LINING (often just: EVERY CLOUD...)

Even a bad situation may have a positive aspect to it  
*I might have lost my job, but at least I don't have that awful journey into work every day. **Every cloud...!***

---

## 51. FACE THE MUSIC

To accept responsibility for something bad you have done  
*I'm meeting Hannah tonight and it's the first time I'll have seen her since our argument. I guess I'll finally have to **face the music.***

---

## 52. FIND ONE'S FEET

To adjust or settle into a new environment or situation  
*I've only been at the new company for a month so I'm still **finding my feet.***

---

## 53. FINGER IN EVERY PIE

To be involved or have influence in many things (often has a negative association)

*Person A: "Steve offered to sell me some secondhand TVs and holiday to Spain!"*

*Person B: "That guy's got **a finger in every pie!**"*

---

## 54. (A) FISH OUT OF WATER

When someone is (or feels) out of place in a situation

*Judy was like **a fish out of water** at the kids' party. I don't think she likes children at all!*

---

## 55. FIT AS A FIDDLE

To be in good physical health

*He's in his 90's, but he's **fit as a fiddle!***

---

## 56. FOLLOW IN SOMEONE'S FOOTSTEPS

To do the same as someone else did before you (often a family member)

*All the men in my family are doctors so I'll probably **follow in their footsteps** and go into medicine too.*

---

---

## 57. FREAK OUT

To become very angry, scared or excited (can be negative or positive)

*I **freaked out** when I saw The Rolling Stones perform. I'd wanted to see them my whole life!*

*That Goth at the club **freaked me out** a bit because he was dressed like a vampire!*

---

## 58. FULL OF BEANS

Someone who is energetic, lively or enthusiastic

*You're **full of beans** this evening! You must have had a good day at work.*

---

## 59. GET OFF ONE'S BACK

When someone won't stop criticising, bothering or telling you what to do

*I wish she would **get off my back** about the meeting! I know I have to send the agenda out, but I'll do it in my own time.*

---

## 60. GET OUT OF HAND

To become difficult to control

*The protest **got out of hand** and the police had to intervene when some demonstrators broke down a fence.*

---

## 61. GET OVER SOMETHING

To overcome or move on from a difficult situation

*Moving out of the city for a while might help you **get over** Harry. (This could be the breakup of a personal relationship/marriage, or the person's death)*

---

## 62. GET SOMETHING OUT OF ONE'S SYSTEM

Do something you have wanted to do so that you can then move on from it

*I don't drink much anymore; I **got it out of my system** when I was at university!*

---

## 63. GET UP/OUT ON THE WRONG SIDE OF BED

To wake up in a grumpy or bad mood for no obvious reason

*You're very argumentative today! Did you **get up on the wrong side of bed**, or something?*

---

## 64. GET ONE'S ACT/SH\*T TOGETHER

To take action in order to be more effective

*I haven't got any work done this morning – I really need to **get my act together!***

---

## 65. GIVE SOMEONE THE BENEFIT OF THE DOUBT

To believe or trust what someone tells you (even though it might not be true)

*Hannah said she missed the exam because her car broke down. I'm not sure that was the case, but let's **give her the benefit of the doubt.***

---

## 66. GLAD TO SEE THE BACK OF

To be happy that you no longer have to deal with someone

*I was **very glad to see the back of** John because he made the atmosphere in the office so uncomfortable.*

---

## 67. GO BACK TO THE DRAWING BOARD

Start planning something again because earlier attempts were unsuccessful

*The client didn't like our original concept so let's **go back to the drawing board!***

---

## 68. GO COLD TURKEY

To suddenly and completely stop using an addictive substance

*I gave up smoking by going **cold turkey**; it was difficult but it was also the only thing that worked for me.*

---

## 69. GO DOWN THAT ROAD

To take a particular course of action, both literally and figuratively

*Let's not **go down that road** again! It always leads to an argument.*

---

## 70. GO THE EXTRA MILE

To make more effort than is expected or necessary

*Frank is a great asset to our team as he always **goes the extra mile.***

---

## 71. (The) GRASS IS ALWAYS GREENER

A person who is never satisfied with their own situation. they always think others have it better

*I always think the countryside looks nicer than the city, but I guess the **grass is always greener...**!*

---

## 72. GREEN FINGERS

To be good at gardening, able to make plants grow  
*I've heard you have **green fingers** – we'll have to get your advice about our garden!*

---

## 73. HANG IN THERE

To persist with something, to not give up  
***Hang in there!** I know it's tough but you're almost halfway through the course.*

---

## 74. HAVE EYES IN THE BACK OF ONE'S HEAD

To be able to see or sense what's going on all around you, when you can't physically see everything  
*You need **eyes in the back of your head** when you have two small children!*

---

## 75. HEAD OVER HEELS (IN LOVE)

To be extremely in love with someone  
*They're **head over heels in love** with each other!*

---

## 76. HEARD IT ON THE GRAPEVINE

To hear news about something from someone else, not directly  
*I **heard (it) on the grapevine** that you and Alex are splitting up. Is that true?*

---

## 77. HIT THE BOOKS

To start studying seriously  
*After dinner I'm really going to **hit the books**. Not much time left before my exams!*

---

## 78. HIT THE NAIL ON THE HEAD

To be completely right or correct about something  
*I think Lucy **hit the nail on the head** when she said there's no such thing as an ideal school. There are pros and cons to all of them.*

---

## 79. HIT THE ROAD

To leave somewhere or start a journey

*It's getting late so I'm going to **hit the road**.*

---

## 80. HIT THE SACK

To go to bed in order to sleep

*It's been a long day so I'm going to **hit the sack**. Night night!*

---

## 81. HOLD YOUR HORSES

Another way of saying 'Wait a moment' or 'don't rush'

Person A: 'The train's at 9. Grab the bags, find your shoes and call a taxi!'

Person B: '**Hold your horses!** We've got plenty of time.'

---

## 82. IGNORANCE IS BLISS

Sometimes it's better not to know all the facts about something

Person A: "Did you know that cake you just ate was 600 calories?"

Person B: "I didn't...**ignorance is bliss!**"

---

## 83. IT'S NOT ROCKET SCIENCE

To say something isn't very complicated

*You just need to fill in the form and you'll get an e-ticket. **It's not rocket science!***

---

## 84. JUMP ON THE BANDWAGON

To join an activity, trend or opinion that has become popular

*Everyone thinks Boris is going to win the election so they've **jumped on the bandwagon**.*

---

## 85. JUMP SHIP

To leave or abandon a difficult situation

*I don't think the company is going to survive. We should probably **jump ship!***

---

## 86. KEEP ONE'S CHIN UP

To encourage someone to stay positive in a difficult situation

*It's been a difficult month for you but **keep your chin up!** It will get easier.*

---

## 87. KILL TWO BIRDS WITH ONE STONE

To achieve two things at once

*I could pick up the dry cleaning on my way the doctors. That way we'd be **killing two birds with one stone**.*

---

## 88. LEAVE NO STONE UNTURNED

To do everything you can to achieve something

*During firm's the financial audit they **left no stone unturned**.*

---

## 89. LET SLEEPING DOGS LIE (often just: LET IT LIE)

To leave a situation as it is, in order to not make it worse

*Don't bring up what happened at Alison's party again. You should just **let it lie**.*

---

## 90. LET SOMEONE OFF THE HOOK

To avoid being punished for something or to avoid doing something

*It was my turn to do the washing-up, but mum **let me off the hook** because I wasn't feeling well.*

---

## 91. LET THE CAT OUT OF THE BAG

To reveal a secret by accident

*Their engagement was meant to be a secret, but Adam **let the cat out of the bag!***

---

## 92. LOOK LIKE A MILLION DOLLARS

To look very good, often due to what you're wearing

*You **look like a million dollars** in that black dress!*

---

## 93. LOSE ONE'S TOUCH

No longer able to do something as well as you could before

*I tried to chat a girl up at the bar the other night, but she just ignored me. I must be **losing my touch!***

---

## 94. MISS THE BOAT

To be slow and not take an opportunity when it's offered to you

*I would call the company back now about the job and not wait until the morning. You don't want to **miss the boat!***

---



I would call the company back now about the job and not wait until the morning. You don't want to miss the boat!

### 95. NIP (SOMETHING) IN THE BUD

To stop something at an early stage, before it has a chance to develop

*I've noticed that people are starting to arrive late for work. I think we need to have a meeting about it and **nip this in the bud** before it becomes a real problem.*

### 96. NO PAIN, NO GAIN

You need to suffer or work hard to get what you want or deserve

*Person A: "That gym class was so hard I thought I was going to pass out!"*

*Person B: "No pain, no gain!"*

### 97. NO-BRAINER

An easy decision, something you don't need to think too hard about

*Person A: "Do you think I should get travel insurance before I go to Nigeria?" Person B: "That's a **no-brainer**. Of course you should!"*

### 98. NOT ONE'S CUP OF TEA

Something you don't like or are not interested in

*She's a great cook, but the meal she made really **wasn't my cup of tea**. It was far too spicy.*

---

### 99. OFF ONE'S TROLLEY/ROCKER/NUT/HEAD

Someone who acts very strangely, seems crazy or insane  
*You must be **off your trolley** if you think I'm going to climb up there! It's way too high!*

---

### 100. OFF THE TOP OF ONE'S HEAD

From memory, without a lot of thought or consideration  
***Off the top of my head** I think we're expecting about 18 guests for the party, but I'll check to make sure.*

---

### 101. ON THE BALL

To be alert, quick to understand and react to things  
*You really need to be **on the ball** in this job because it's fast-paced with lots happening all the time.*

---

### 102. ON THE PULL

To go out with the intention of finding someone to have sex with  
*Those lads on the dance floor look like they're **on the pull** tonight!*

---

### 103. ON THE STRAIGHT AND NARROW

To live in a way that is honest and moral, to stay out of trouble  
*He was very wild for many years, but he seems to have grown up and he's **on the straight and narrow** now.*

---

### 104. ONCE IN A BLUE MOON

Something that happens rarely  
*I eat McDonalds **once in a blue moon**, when I feel like a treat!*

---

### 105. PIECE OF CAKE

Something that is very easy  
*My English exam was a **piece of cake**.*

---

### 106. (AND) PIGS MIGHT FLY

Something that will never happen or is very unlikely  
*Person A: "I'm going to play tennis at Wimbledon one day!"  
Person B: "And **pigs might fly!**"*

---

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### 107. PITCH IN

To join in, contribute or help with something

*If we all **pitch in** we can get Charlie a really nice birthday present.*

---

### 108. PLAY IT BY EAR

To plan something in an improvised way (instead of planning ahead), deciding what to do as the plan develops

*Person A: "Shall we have dinner before or after the cinema on Friday?"*

*Person B: "Perhaps we should just **play it by ear** – we don't know how hungry we'll be."*

---

### 109. PULL SOMEONE'S LEG

Tease or joke with someone by saying something that's not true

*You're **pulling my leg!** I don't believe you met Elton John at the pub!*

---

### 110. PULL ONESELF TOGETHER

To regain control of your emotions after you've been upset, to calm down

*You need to **pull yourself together!** Stop worrying about work so much.*

---

### 111. RAISE ONE'S GAME

To make an effort to improve at something or perform better

*You'll need to **raise your game** if you're planning on beating Anna's time in the half marathon.*

---

### 112. RING A BELL

When something seems familiar or you've heard it before

*Person A: "Do you know Hannah Stewart?"*

*Person B: "That name does **ring a bell**, but I can't think why."*

---

### 113. ROCK THE BOAT

To do or say something that could cause a problem or disturbance

*The kids are all getting along fine at the moment so let's not **rock the boat.***

---

### 114. RULE OF THUMB

Judging a situation by experience rather than an exact assessment  
*As a **rule of thumb**, you should use two cups of water for one cup of rice.*

---

### 115. SCRATCH SOMEONE'S BACK

To do someone a favour (favor) in the hope that it will be returned, can relate to corruption (commonly used as: You scratch my back, I'll scratch yours)

*My boss got caught taking free holidays from a company client! I think it was a case of "you scratch my back, I'll scratch yours".*

---

### 116. SEE EYE TO EYE

To agree with someone

*We don't **see eye to eye** when it comes to politics, but I do like her as a person.*

---

### 117. SHED LIGHT ON (SOMETHING)

To reveal information about something or to clarify something

*You were in the office on Tuesday when the incident took place so perhaps you could **shed some light on it** for us?*

---

### 118. SHOOT FROM THE HIP

To speak honestly and directly or to react to a situation very quickly without thinking it through

*Person A: "What do you think we should do about Harry's poor sales this quarter?"*

*Person B: "If I can **shoot from the hip**, I'd say he probably needs to leave."*

---

### 119. SIT ON THE FENCE

To adopt a position of compromise, take neither stance on an issue, not yes or no

*There are a lot of people still **sitting on the fence** over Brexit.*

---

### 120. SIT TIGHT

To wait patiently

***Sit tight!** The nurse will be with you in just a moment.*

---

---

### 121. SLEEP ON IT

To delay making a decision for a short period of time

*You don't have to decide straight away. Why don't you **sleep on it** and let us know in the morning?*

---

### 122. SMELL A RAT

To suspect someone is a traitor, behaving illegally or is up to no good

*I thought I could **smell a rat** when John refused to give me a straight answer about his sales figures! Now we know he's been stealing from the company.*

---

### 123. SO FAR, SO GOOD

To express satisfaction with how a situation is progressing

*Person A: "How is the building work going?"*

*Person B: "**So far, so good...**the house is still standing!"*

---

### 124. (A) SPANNER IN THE WORKS

Something that prevents or disrupts an event from happening

*We had invited everyone round for a BBQ today, but the rain has really thrown a **spanner in the works!***

---

### 125. SPEAK OF THE DEVIL

Said when the person you are talking about appears unexpectedly

*Did you hear about what happened to Michael? ...Oh **speak of the devil**, here he is!*

---

### 126. SPILL THE BEANS

To reveal information that was secret

*We are throwing David a surprise birthday party, but please don't **spill the beans!***

---

### 127. SPLASH OUT

To spend a lot of money on something

*We **splashed out** on new phones for the whole family.*

---

### 128. STAB SOMEONE IN THE BACK

To betray or hurt someone who trusts you

*This industry is so competitive; it's easy to get **stabbed in the back** by your closest colleagues.*

### 129. STEAL SOMEONE'S THUNDER

To take attention or praise away from someone else's accomplishments by outdoing them with your own

*My sister is always **stealing my thunder** – I announce I'm getting married and she tells everyone she's pregnant!*

### 130. STICK TO ONE'S GUNS

To refuse to change your mind or beliefs about something

*I really respect Sarah. She always **sticks to her guns**, even if others disagree.*



### 131. STRAIGHT FROM THE HORSE'S MOUTH

Information straight from the person who saw, heard or experienced the event

*Person A: "Are you sure Andy is quitting his job?"*

*Person B: "Positive. I heard it **straight from the horse's mouth!**"*

### 132. TAKE THE MICKEY (or TAKE THE PI\*S)

To make fun of someone, or to take liberties

*Dave's a laugh, but he always **taking the mickey** out of you down the pub.*

*£4 for a cup of coffee? They must be **taking the pi\*s!***

---

### 133. TAKE (SOMETHING) WITH A PINCH OF SALT

To doubt the accuracy of what someone is telling you

*I would **take Sam's motoring advice with a pinch of salt**. He doesn't actually know much about cars.*

---

### 134. (A) TASTE OF ONE'S OWN MEDICINE

When someone does something unpleasant and the same is wished on him/her

*My boss is a real bully. Someone should give her **a taste of her own medicine!***

---

### 135. THE BALL IS IN YOUR COURT

It is up to you to take the initiative or make the next move

*I've told you how I feel about the wedding so **the ball's in your court now**.*

---

### 136. THE BEST OF BOTH WORLDS

Where you can enjoy the advantages of two different things at the same time – an ideal situation

*He lives in England during the summer and lives in Australia during the winter months so he gets **the best of both worlds**.*

---

### 137. THE LAST/FINAL STRAW

The last in a series of bad things to happen, when your patience has run out

*When the dog destroyed their antique furniture it really was **the final straw**. After that, they decided to give poor Rex away.*

---

### 138. THROUGH THICK AND THIN

To continue to support someone even during difficult times

*John and Chloe have stayed together **through thick and thin**.*

---

### 139. TIME FLIES WHEN YOU'RE HAVING FUN

When you're enjoying something time seems to move faster and you don't notice the passing of time

*I can't believe it's 10pm already! **Time flies when you're having fun!***

---

### 140. TWIST SOMEONE'S ARM

To convince someone to do what you want them to  
*I didn't want to go out tonight, but Ruth **twisted my arm!***

---

### 141. UNDER THE WEATHER

Not feeling very well, a little sick  
*Sarah's not going to come out tonight. She's had a busy week and is feeling **under the weather.***

---

### 142. UP IN THE AIR

A decision or plan is uncertain or unsure  
*Person A: "Are they still getting married?"*  
*Person B: "We don't know as it's all **up in the air** at the moment."*

---

### 143. WASTE NOT, WANT NOT

If you use what you have to the full, then you won't desire or need more  
*Person A: "Are you going to finish those carrots on your plate?"*  
*Person B: "If not, I'll have them. **Waste not, want not!**"*

---

### 144. WE'LL CROSS THAT BRIDGE WHEN WE COME TO IT

To deal with something when it happens rather than worrying about it before  
*Person A: "What if there's bad traffic on the motorway?"*  
*Person B: "**We'll cross that bridge when we come to it**."*

---

### 145. WILD GOOSE CHASE

A hopeless pursuit, something that is unattainable  
*We were told that if we searched the library archives we might get some answers, but it turned out to be a **wild goose chase.***

---

### 146. WOULDN'T BE CAUGHT DEAD

Dislike or would never do something  
*I **wouldn't be caught dead** wearing those shoes – they're so ugly!*

---

### 147. WRAP ONE'S HEAD AROUND SOMETHING

To understand something that is complicated or shocking  
*I can't **wrap my head around** why Megan would leave London for Paris!*

---

## 148. YOU CAN SAY THAT AGAIN

To agree with someone

Person A: *“It’s absolutely boiling in here!”*

Person B: ***“You can say that again!”***

---

## 149. YOU CAN’T JUDGE A BOOK BY ITS COVER

Warning not to judge someone or something just based on appearance

Person A: *“I’ve only met Sam a couple of times, but he seems a bit shy.”*

Person B: ***“You can’t always judge a book by its cover. He’s actually a really outgoing guy once you get to know him!”***

---

## 150. YOUR GUESS IS AS GOOD AS MINE

To have no idea about something

Person A: *“Do you think Ivan is going to remember all 150 idioms in this guide?!”*

Person B: ***“Your guess is as good as mine!”***

# Chapter 3

## Idiom Examples

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## Health Idioms Examples

- *My grandfather was **as pale as a ghost** (extremely pale) when he entered the hospital.*
- *The sales manager was **at death's door** (very near death) after his heart attack.*
- *My mother is **back on her feet** (healthy again) after being sick for two weeks.*
- *I have been **feeling on top of the world** (feel very healthy) since I quit my job.*
- *I'm **going under the knife** (undergo surgery) next month to try to solve my knee problems. Hope it helps!*
- *My colleague was looking a little **green around the gills** (sick) when he came to work today.*
- *My uncle is very sick and **has one foot in the grave** (near death).*
- *Did you have a good vacation? – Not really. I was **sick as a dog** (extremely ill) the whole time.*
- *My boss has been **under the weather** (not feeling well) all week and has not come to work during that time.*

---

## Clothes Idioms Examples

- *A few years ago Uggs were **all the rage** (very fashionable), but now you don't see them so much.*
- *Jacob is unpredictable. He won't leave the office for weeks, but then he'll take off for New York **at the drop of a hat** (suddenly).*
- *Wait until you try the new Yamaha scooters. They'll **knock your socks off!** (amaze you)*
- *The carmaker's sales declined because many consumers found their designs **old hat** (old-fashioned).*

---

## Sports Idioms Examples

- *A **ballpark figure** (a rough estimate) for the cost of the new stadium would be \$150,000,000.*
- *Francesca **hit it out of the park** (succeed brilliantly) with her speech today. It was fabulous.*
- *Madrid won most of our matches during the season, but we **kicked ass** (defeat badly) in the playoffs.*

- *I'll call you back in an hour. The speaker is almost finished, and I'm **on deck** (next).*
- *I thought I was totally exhausted after mile nine of the race. But then I got my **second wind** (renewed energy).*
- *I've helped him as much as I can in that class. Now he's going to have to **sink or swim** (fail or succeed).*
- *Maybe you could **take a hike** (go away) while we discuss salaries.*
- *After losing his queen, the chess player **threw in the towel** (give up) and resigned.*
- *Our competitor's model dominates the market, so ours is facing **tough sledding** (difficult progress).*

---

### Music Idioms Examples

- *Can you guys please be quiet? Your **chin music** (meaningless talk) is distracting me from my work.*
- *News of the new president was **music to my ears** (good to hear) – she's terrific.*
- *You may say you're in love with your boyfriend, but you'll be **singing a different tune** (change your opinion) when you find out what he's been up to.*
- *If you think you can get a ticket for under \$200 at Christmastime, you're **whistling Dixie** (unrealistically optimistic).*

---

### Time Idioms Examples

- *The restaurant is open **around the clock** (at all times).*
- *Blackberry phones used to be extremely popular, but now many people think they're **behind the times** (old-fashioned).*
- *The boxer is ready to **call time** (end) on his long career.*
- *You all look tired. Let's **call it a day** (stop working).*
- *Teamwork and training will **carry the day** (successful).*
- ***Your days are numbered** (will die soon) if you keep driving while drunk.*
- *I'd buy that car **in a New York minute** (very quickly) if I had the money.*
- *I had a beautiful family, a nice home, and lots of money. And then, **in the blink of an eye** (instantaneously), it was all gone.*
- *Kevin says he was completely **in the dark** (unaware) about the CEO's plans to sell the company.*

- *We were going to leave without you, but you got here just **in the nick of time** (just in time).*
- *I'm glad you dropped by! It's been a **month of Sundays** (a long time) since I saw you last.*
- *When I said I would move to New York, she offered me the job **on the spot** (immediately).*
- ***Once in a blue moon** (very rarely) you see the Aurora here, but it's not like farther north.*
- *I don't want to live in the city, but I enjoy visiting **once in a while** (occasionally).*
- *We should **seize the day** (take an opportunity) while prices are low. That won't last forever.*
- ***Take your time** (don't hurry) on the exam. You don't get a bonus for finishing quickly.*
- *If you have problems, call me **twenty-four seven** (at any time); it doesn't matter if I'm sleeping.*
- *Our holiday party is such a bore. **Year in, year out** (annually without change) the owner makes the same dumb jokes.*

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### Number Idioms Examples

- *I have **a million and one** (many) ideas.*
- *He got home from the party **all in one piece** (safely).*
- *The project failed, we're **back to square one** (back to the start).*
- *I've **been in seventh heaven** (extremely happy) ever since I got engaged!*
- *You don't have to do this totally **by the book** (follow instructions exactly).*
- *I can't drive, I **had one too many** (drink too much alcohol).*
- ***Never in a million years** (absolutely never) did I think that I would actually win the lottery!*
- ***Nine times out of ten** (almost always) your first choice turns out to be the right one.*
- *I wouldn't want a **nine-to-five job** (a routine job).*
- *When my mom bought me a computer, I was **on cloud nine** (very happy).*
- *I **put in my two cents** (say your opinion) at the meeting.*
- ***Ten to one** (very likely) I'm going to win.*

- *I can try, but completing the whole ad campaign by the end of the month is a **tall order** (a difficult task).*
- *The runner was far ahead for most of the race, but at the end she won only **by a whisker** (a very short distance).*

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### Travel & Transport Idioms Examples

- *I'm not really part of your group. If I come to the party i'll just be a **fifth wheel** (a superfluous person).*
- *We better **hit the road** (leave) before traffic get even worse.*
- *New Year's Eve is **just around the corner** (occurring soon). Have you made party plans yet?*
- *My brother just spent a lot of money on really questionable stocks. I think he's **off his trolley** (insane).*
- *I'll eat dinner **on the fly** (while traveling) and meet you at 8.*
- *It's too late for you to ask her to marry you – she's involved with someone else now. **That ship has sailed** (that opportunity has passed).*

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### Car & Driving Idioms Examples

- *Higher coal prices **put the brakes on** (slow down) industrial activities in the second quarter.*
- *I'm late for my best friend's wedding. **Put the pedal to the metal!** (drive as fast as possible)*
- *After work I drove home **hell for leather (very fast)**, but I still missed my daughter's birthday party.*
- *It will take time to get the final cost, but a **quick-and-dirty** (approximate) estimate would be \$45,000.*
- *I'll have the order done **quick as a flash** (very fast) – probably by the time you get back to your office.*

---

### Technology Idioms Examples

- *Sure, come into the office, and we can get the documents you need **chop chop** (Quickly).*
- *We're going to **pull the plug on** (terminate) our operation in Taiwan. It's just not succeeding.*
- *Passing this quiz will be **like shooting fish in a barrel** (very easy). I've studied a lot.*
- *Jim is a **straight arrow** (an honest, trustworthy person).*

## Home Idioms Examples

- *I've locked the door. They're **as safe as houses** (very safe).*
- *She said he's out of the **house of correction** (prison).*
- *After struggling with my homework, I finally **threw in the towel** (give up) and went to bed.*
- *That's a worthless investment. He's **throwing his money down the drain** (waste money).*
- *When I found out Tom crashed my car, I **hit the roof** (become very angry).*
- *Jeff **smokes like a chimney** (smoke a lot). I worry about his health.*
- *His diet **went out the window** (disappear) during the holidays.*
- *Please come in and **make yourself at home** (make yourself comfortable).*
- ***Cutting-edge** (innovative) musical styles often originate in Britain.*
- *There are just a few difficulties to **iron out** (resolve), and then we'll be ready to sign the contract.*

## Plant Idioms Examples

- *You're going to jump down from that ledge? Are you **out of your gourd?** (crazy)*
- *Life isn't always going to be a **bed of roses** (comfortable situation). You have to learn to deal with adversity.*
- *There are a few problems with the new website, but they **don't amount to a hill of beans** (unimportant). We did it!*
- *As anyone who has experienced a hurricane knows, **Mother Nature** (the natural world) can be a frightening force.*
- *I'll be **pushing up daisies** (dead) before my daughter decides to get married.*
- *I heard **through the grapevine** (via gossip) that Ivan and Amber are going out. Is it true?*
- *Two years ago we had the field to ourselves with this project. Now there are **too many competitors to shake a stick at** (a large number).*

## Weather Idioms Examples

- *It'll be a **cold day in July** (never happen) when our team wins the championship. We're terrible.*

- *If you think I'm going to climb that rickety ladder, you're **all wet!** (completely mistaken!)*
- *I stayed up all night studying for that exam, and then it turned out to **be a breeze!** (very easy!)*
- ***Come hell or high water** (no matter what happens), we will be in New York for the meeting tomorrow morning.*
- *I listen to the music every day, **come rain or shine** (do regularly).*
- *Let's come back soon before the **heavens open!** (start to rain heavily)*
- *I made a huge mistake. I stayed up all night studying, and I was **in a fog** (confused) when it came time to start the exam.*
- ***Old Man Winter** (Winter) is hanging around this year-it's the middle of March, and we still have a lot of snow.*
- *Cindy was **on cloud nine** (extremely happy) after her boyfriend proposed to her.*
- *It's been **raining cats and dogs** (rain heavily) all day. I'm afraid the roof is going to leak.*
- *Once again, John is **right as rain** (absolutely correct). We should sell the Chicago office building.*
- *I'm sorry to **rain on your parade** (spoil someone's plans), but the park is closed tomorrow, so we can't have our picnic there.*
- *Let's go out and **soak up some sun** (enjoy the sun).*
- *If you keep asking him about his ex-girlfriend, you'll **be on thin ice** (in a risky situation).*
- *Tom stole cameras when he worked here. I'll hire him back **when hell freezes over** (never).*

---

### Appearance Idioms Examples

- *She's **no spring chicken** (young), but she's still very good looking.*
- *She's a **dead ringer** (similar in appearance) for her older sister.*
- *When Samantha was in her teens she looked ordinary, but in her early 20s she turned into a real **knockout!** (an extremely beautiful woman).*
- *Let me just **put my face on** (apply cosmetics), and i'll meet you at the restaurant in 15 minutes.*

## People Idioms Examples

- *He never made a will, **to the best of my knowledge** (as far as you know).*
- *Don't lend her money. I trust her about **as far as I can throw** (only slightly) her.*
- *My grandmother is 92 years old, but she's still **sharp as a tack** (mentally agile).*
- *I'd tell you if you were going **around the bend** (crazy).*

## Daily Routines Idioms Examples

- *OK, i'll come to the party Friday. But Saturday it'll be time to **hit the books** (study).*
- *I have to get up at 5 tomorrow morning. It's time to **hit the hay** (go to bed).*
- *I'll be out of town this weekend, but i'll be **in touch** (in contact) when I get back Sunday night.*
- *Social media are great for finding old friends with whom you've **lost touch** (fall out of contact).*
- *You're **playing with fire** (very risky) if you keep driving that car- the floor under the seat is almost completely rusted out.*
- *The name Susan Thompson **rings a bell** (sound familiar). I think she worked here-let me look it up.*

## Social Life Idioms Examples

- *I was just making a suggestion. Don't **get all bent out of shape** (become angry) out it.*
- *I'd better work late at the office – my husband is **on the warpath** (very angry) because I put a big scratch in his new car.*
- *Sophia acted like she was my friend. But then she **stabbed me in the back** (betray) and went out with my boyfriend.*
- *Bob is a **110-proof** (very strong) Conservative – i've never seen him vote for a Labor candidate.*
- *The beer market used to be controlled by large companies, but now many small firms are producing the **amber nectar** (beer).*
- *Don't bother Joseph when he's **in his cups** (drunk) – he's very irritable.*

- *Give me a beer. I'm having **one for the road** (a final drink before leaving).*
- *I just finished my last exam. Let's go out and **paint the town red!** (go out drinking and partying).*
- *You've been out in the sun for two hours. Come on in and **wet your whistle!** (drink something).*
- *The new engine design is our **ace in the hole** (a hidden advantage) – but we have to keep it secret from our competitors.*
- *I don't think a recession is **in the cards** (likely) this year. Consumer confidence is very strong.*
- *I'm going to **roll the dice on** (take a risk) the plant renovation. If the market collapses we'll be in trouble, but I think it's needed.*
- *I like to go out to the bars with John—he's a real **babe magnet** (a man to whom women are attracted), so I get to meet lots of women too.*

---

### Happy Idioms Examples

- *I always have so much fun when Katie's around—she's a **barrel of laughs!** (funny).*
- *You look **full of the joys of spring** (very happy, full of energy) this morning.*
- *The kids really **had a ball** (have a very enjoyable time) at the birthday party—they won't stop talking about it!*
- *We **had a whale of a time** (enjoy very much) on holiday.*
- *Come on, Jim, this is a party! **Let your hair down** (relax and enjoy) and go a little wild!*
- *The circus was **more fun than a barrel of monkeys** (a very good time).*
- *It's nice to slow down at the week-end and **take it easy** (relax).*

---

### Crazy Idioms Examples

- *I think he'll **blow his top** (lose his temper) when you give him the news.*
- *When I saw the look on Sarah's face, I just know she'd **blow up** (explode).*
- *July will **go ape** (wild excitement or anger) if she ever hears about it.*

- Mom will **freak out** (a wildly irrational reaction) when she found out we broke her vase!
- My parents **went totally ballistic** (fly into a rage) when they found out I'd wrecked the car!
- She **went berserk** (go crazy) and strangled her cat.
- I'll end up **going bananas** (irrational or crazy) if I have to work in this cubicle for one more day!
- My parents are going to **go mental** (extremely angry) if they find out we had a party here!
- The noise caused all the neighbors to **go nuts** (become crazy).
- My parents are going to **hit the roof** (very angry) if they find out we had a party here!

---

### Love Idioms Examples

- I didn't know Chris and Sue **were an item** (having a romantic relationship). They didn't even look at each other at dinner.
- Have you heard? Sophia and Joseph have **split up** (end a relationship).
- I think I'm **falling in love** (start feeling love) **with my best friend**. What should I do?
- Don't be angry! Yes, I was talking to that other girl, but you know you're my **main squeeze!** (committed romantic partner).
- An **old flame** (a former boyfriend or girlfriend) has come back into my life. I'm seeing her tomorrow night.
- When are you and Jenny going to **tie the knot** (get married)? – This year, but we haven't set a date yet.

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### Feeling Idioms Examples

- Yoga pants are **all the rage** (very much in fashion) in North America right now, but in two years probably nobody will be wearing them.
- Sure, you can invest a little money, but don't **get carried away** (overly enthusiastic) – people lose lots of money on the stock market.
- John's suggestions in the meeting were ridiculous. Sometimes I think he's **not playing with a full deck** (stupid).
- Sorry I was so quiet during the meeting. I've been **out of sorts** (slightly ill) all day.

- *Have you heard Dmitri is going to try to climb Mt. Rinjani in the rainy season? He must be **off his rocker** (crazy, insane).*
- *John is **on the ball** (competent, alert). I think we can leave the office under his supervision for a few days.*
- *Gerald used to be one of the most logical people I know. Now he's **mad as a hatter** (mentally ill).*
- *You've been **down in the dumps** (depressed) all week. Let's go to the football game – that'll cheer you up.*
- *Fans are **cock-a-hoop** (excited) about the team's acquisition of the new striker.*

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### Food Idioms Examples

- *The problem of how to motivate employees can be **a tough nut to crack** (a difficult problem) **sometimes**.*
- *Fred **had egg on his face** (embarrassed) after claiming he could climb the tree but then having to give up.*
- *James will tell you all about his adventures in Africa, but **take it with a grain of salt** (be skeptical).*
- *My new girlfriend is very intelligent. That she's beautiful is just **icing on the cake!** (a bonus).*
- *I can't help you with your presentation right now. I **have bigger fish to fry** (have more important things to do).*
- *I just have **a lot on my plate** (a lot to do) right now while I'm finishing up my degree and doing this huge project for work.*
- *I wouldn't go out with him for **all the tea in China!** (great wealth).*
- *James is a **bad egg** (not to be trusted). Don't trust him.*
- *Have you tried the new iphone? It's the **greatest thing since sliced bread** (an innovative development).*
- *My husband may not be the world's most glamorous guy, but he **brings home the bacon** (earn money for the family).*
- *Amazon started out as a bookseller, but now they offer everything **from soup to nuts** (everything).*
- *We went to Mark's Midtown for lunch. I had a grilled chicken sandwich, and it really **hit the spot** (very satisfying).*
- *You should apply to the university now. There are lots of reasons, but **in a nutshell**, it will end up costing*

- I'm really **in a pickle** (in need of help). *I spent all the money I had saved, and I have no way to pay next semester's tuition bill.*
- The kids are always **nutty as fruitcakes** (crazy) when they've had something sugary to eat.
- I've already done the difficult parts – finishing the presentation tonight will be a **piece of cake** (easily done).
- Nothing tastes better than fresh cinnamon rolls, served **piping hot** (very hot).
- Sam is **rotten to the core** (entirely evil). *He steals, he lies, he's violent. I'm glad he's in prison.*
- The new Honda is expected to **sell like hotcakes** (sold very quickly) after it's released.
- We're wasting our time on **small potatoes** (unimportant). *Let's get to the big news that made us have this meeting.*
- We had planned this to be a surprise party for you, but Jason **spilled the beans** (reveal a secret).
- Our principal was a little lady, but she was one **tough cookie!** (a very determined person).

---

### Fruit Idioms Examples

- You only get a **bite at the cherry** (good opportunity) in life.
- Her cheeks were **as red as a cherry** (very red).
- Baseball is **as American as apple pie** (typically American).
- Tom is really a **bad apple** (a trouble making or dishonest person).
- Only the **top banana** (boss, leader) can make a decision of that magnitude.
- Sarah's surprise party **went pear-shaped** (fail) once she accidentally found out about it.
- Do whatever you want, I do **not give a fig** (not care).

---

### Dog Idioms Examples

- **Every man and his dog** (many people) wanted to interview me after I on the race.
- Those two **fight like cat and dog** (continually arguing with each other), so please don't put them together on the project.
- I'll be right back-i've got to **go see a man about a dog** (go to the bathroom).

- *This has always been a nice hotel, but it's **going to the dogs** (become disordered).*
- *At first my marriage was all **puppies and rainbows** (perfect), but then reality set in.*
- *I try to be strict with my daughter, but when she looks at me with those **puppy dog eyes** (a begging look), I buy her candy.*

---

### Cat Idioms Examples

- *I'm going to try to squeeze in a **cat nap** (short sleep during the day) before my next shift starts, or else i'll be feeling sluggish for the entire evening.*
- *Who will **bell the cat** (a difficult or impossible task) and take on the job of reducing corruption in this country?*
- *She's waiting for the doctor to call with her test results, so she's been like a **cat on a hot tin roof all day** (extremely nervous).*
- *Inside, there is **no room to swing a cat** (very small), and everything you see is the most basic junk.*

---

### Animal Idioms Examples

- *Talk to Jon. He's the **big fish** (important person) in the organization. He can help you get things done.*
- *Picking out this item or that for criticism seems unsportsmanlike, **like shooting fish in a barrel** (very easy).*
- *That's just a **fish story** (a big lie). Don't try to fool me.*
- *This game will be the quarterback's **swan song** (a final appearance) – he's retiring after this season.*
- *I was **sick as a parrot** (very disappointed) after Man United lost last night.*
- *I almost didn't go on stage and perform tonight because I **had butterflies in my stomach** (nervous).*
- *I think this is a **wild goose chase** (an impossible task). This library doesn't have the books we need.*
- *Glen is a **lone wolf** (not social) and seldom joins in the activities of the neighborhood.*
- *When we got married, we were both **poor as a church mouse** (very poor) and we had to live with my husband's parents.*
- *What happened when I asked for comments? **Crickets** (silence). So I assume you're all satisfied with the proposal.*

- My **eagle-eyed** (sharp vision) sister spotted the car in the parking lot before anyone else did.
- You'd better pay him more, or one day you'll come to the office and find that he **flew the coop** (left).
- I'm afraid that if we don't reduce staff, we'll **go belly up** (go bankrupt) within a year.
- If you want to reach the island with the treasure, you've got to **swim with sharks** (take a major risk) for a while.
- You're only 22-**the world is your oyster** (have many opportunities). Don't feel you have to get married now.
- It may be very crowded in there. I'll go and **take a gander** (take a look), and then I'll send you a text message.
- If you wait for Jeb to finish his part of the project, you'll be waiting **till the cows come home** (a long time).
- Sure, I'll go out with Cynthia again. **When pigs fly** (never).

### Family Idioms Examples

- I have a **bun in the oven** (pregnant) again! Sophia will have a baby sister.
- Children will be admitted to the concert, but sorry, no **babes in arms** (a baby being carried).
- After learning to drive a stick shift, driving with an automatic transmission is **child's play** (a very easy task).
- The poor baby has a **face only a mother could love** (a very ugly face).
- **Big Brother** (Government) seems to grow more and more powerful as data about individuals is accumulated on social networks.
- Just enter the update code, register the new software, and **Bob's your uncle** (you're almost finished).
- When you go on a trip, it's important to buy souvenirs for your **kith and kin** (family) back home.
- Just watch. Getting her to go out with me will be **like taking candy from a baby** (very easy).
- I bought a ring, and I'm ready to **pop the question** (propose marriage) to Sophia.
- They hadn't planned to get married, but Sophia found out she was **up the duff** (pregnant).

## Body Idioms Examples

- *You shouldn't buy a new car until you've paid off the debt from your student loan. **Use your head!** (think).*
- *It's too bad you didn't get the job, but **keep your chin up** (cheer up) – another one will come along.*
- *OK, I'll tell you the secret about Cynthia, but **zip your lip about it!** (be quiet).*
- *The presentation will begin at 8 **on the nose** (precisely). Don't miss it.*
- *The team was **all eyes and ears** (attentive) as the coach explained the challenges ahead.*
- *I don't **see eye to eye** (agree) with Frances on the workflow, but she's the boss.*
- *I know John is bad for me, but when I get a look at his **baby blues** (blue eyes) I can't resist him.*
- *Why did you delete the file I was working on? I'm **all ears** (Listening willingly).*
- ***Lend an ear** (Listen), and I'll tell you what people said at the meeting yesterday.*
- *This is especially used in hypothetical situations. If Joe asked me, I'd marry him **in a heart beat!** ( immediately).*
- *I like to keep my vocabulary **at hand** (nearby).*
- *Are there enough people **on hand** (available) to hold a meeting?*
- *Employee absenteeism has gotten **out of hand** (out of control).*
- *She'll give you the name of a place to stay – she **knows** the area **like the back of her hand** (very well).*
- *Could you **lend me a hand** (help) with this piano?*
- *Tom was **hands-down** (obviously) the best student at the university.*
- *Shareholders **pointed the finger at** (blame) the board of directors for the losses, and voted most of them out.*
- *The exam's at two. Will you **keep your fingers crossed** (wish for good luck) for me?*
- *We agreed we'd meet at the mall at 3. But you left me **cooling my heels** (wait) for two whole hours.*

- *Don't trust Jack around your expensive glassware – he's **all thumbs** (clumsy).*
  - *It really pleased me that the boss gave me a **thumbs-up** (approval) on my presentation.*
  - *I worry about my son. He's smart enough to succeed, but he doesn't have the **fire in the belly** (strong ambition).*
  - *There I was, in my **birthday suit** (nakedness), when the doorbell rang.*
  - *Three months ago Jack seemed to be at death's door, but now he's **fit as a fiddle** (in very good health) What happened?*
  - *If you're on a long drive, it's helpful to stop and take **forty winks** (a short nap) every few hours if you can.*
- 

### Business Idioms Examples

- *At first I wasn't ready to accept your offer for the house. But you **drive a hard bargain** (negotiate effectively).*
- *Jennifer's presentation was **on point** (well done) – concise, relevant, and accurate.*
- *The election is **up for grabs** (available). Everything is still very chancy.*
- *The salary increase is still **up in the air** (not yet decided) – the boss favors it, but she hasn't gotten approval from her superiors.*
- *Sophia is **in hot water** (in trouble) with her department manager after she blew that sales presentation.*
- *I'll be **burning the midnight oil** (working late) tonight, but I guarantee I'll finish the paper before class tomorrow at 9.*
- *I've been **out of work** (unemployed) since December. Hope I find a new job soon!*

# Chapter 4

## Animal Idioms

## Part 1: Most Common Animal Idioms

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### (A) Leopard Can't Change Its Spots

**Meaning:** People can't successfully disguise or change their essential natures.

**Example:** *Judith swears she'll tell the truth from now on, but a leopard can't change its spots.*

---

### (Don't) Have a Cow

**Meaning:** To get upset, angry (usually used in the negative)

**Example:** *Don't have a cow, man! I was just making a suggestion.*

---

### (Go) Hog Wild

**Meaning:** Act in a completely uninhibited way

**Example:** *I went hog wild at the coin show-I really bought more than I could afford.*

---

### (Have a) Kangaroo Loose In The Top Paddock

**Meaning:** Be slightly crazy

**Example:** *Howard may seem as though he has a kangaroo loose in the top paddock, but he works well under pressure.*

---

### (His) Bark Is Worse Than His Bite

**Meaning:** Hostile in manner, but actually friendly

**Example:** *Don't worry about Ben. He'll give you a hard time at first. But his bark is worse than his bite.*

---

### (Like) Tits on a Bull, As Useless as Tits on a Bull

**Meaning:** Completely useless

**Example:** *I forgot to bring my power supply, and soon my computer was as useless as tits on a bull.*

---

### (On a) Fishing Expedition

**Meaning:** Looking for evidence without any solid suspicion of wrongdoing

**Example:** *This court will not allow the prosecution to go on a **fishing expedition**. Please keep your questions specific and to the point.*

---

### **(Open Up a) Can of Worms, A Whole New Can of Worms**

**Meaning:** Create a new set of difficult problems

**Example:** *We could cut employee wages, but that opens up a **can of worms**.*

---

### **(Play) Whack-a-Mole**

**Meaning:** (Confront) a situation in which when one problem is solved, another appears

**Example:** *It's been a game of **whack-a-mole** at work lately – when I deal with one project, another one is immediately dumped on my desk.*

---

### **(Straight From the) Horse's Mouth**

**Meaning:** Heard directly from one of the people involved

**Example:** *I heard it straight from the **horse's mouth**: the boss is giving us all raises next month.*

---

### **(That's the) Nature of the Beast**

**Meaning:** The essence of something; just the way something is

**Example:** *Parenthood involves lots of responsibilities-that's the **nature of the beast**.*

---

### **(The) Straw That Broke the Camel's Back**

**Meaning:** A single small thing that exceeds a limit of patience

**Example:** *I've put up with Eduardo for a long time, but when he criticized the color of my car, that was **the straw that broke the camel's back**.*

---

### **(The) Worm Has Turned**

**Meaning:** The situation has been reversed.

**Example:** *Barbara has always bossed everyone around, but today in the meeting Caitlin stood up to her. The worm has turned!*

---

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### (To Be a) Fly on the Wall

**Meaning:** To be an unnoticed observer

**Example:** *I would have liked to be a fly on the wall when Judy confronted her boyfriend about cheating.*

---

### (To Have a) Bee in One's Bonnet

**Meaning:** To be excited in a negative way; to express a pet peeve

**Example:** *Jill has a bee in her bonnet about the account reconciliation. I honestly think the way I did it is perfectly good.*

---

### (To Have the) Bit between One's Teeth

**Meaning:** In control of a situation

**Example:** *The team seems to have the bit between their teeth. All the drills are paying off.*

---

### (To) Beat a Dead Horse

**Meaning:** To continue to argue about something that has been settled

**Example:** *You're **beating a dead horse**. We've already decided to stop in Dubai on our way home.*

---

### 800-Pound Gorilla

**Meaning:** A person or group powerful enough to disregard the rules; a big, dominant person or group

**Example:** *Toyota has been the **800-pound gorilla** of Japanese auto manufacturing for many years, but they've run into trouble with safety devices.*

---

## Part 2: A-Z list of Animal Idioms

### Animal Idioms (A)

---

#### A busy bee

**Meaning:** A busy, active person who moves quickly from task to task.

**Example:** *I enjoyed being a **busy bee**, getting things done,' she said in her confident way.*

---

## A guinea pig

**Meaning:** Someone who is part of an experiment or trial

**Example:** *Jane used her husband as a **guinea pig** to try her new baked chicken recipe.*

---

## A lame duck

**Meaning:** A person or enterprise (often a business) that is not a success and that has to be helped.

**Example:** *The company started as a **lame duck** that was saved by an innovative entrepreneur who decided to take some risks and go in a new direction.*

---

## A lone wolf

**Meaning:** Someone who is not very social with other people

**Example:** *Glen is a **lone wolf** and seldom joins in the activities of the neighbourhood.*

---

## A sitting duck

**Meaning:** A person or object in a vulnerable position that is easy to attack or injure.

**Example:** *When my car broke down in a bad neighborhood, I felt like a **sitting duck**, just waiting to get robbed.*

---

## Albatross Around One's Neck

**Meaning:** Something from one's past that acts as a hindrance

**Example:** *My drug arrest when I was a teenager has always been an **albatross around my neck**. When employers find out about it, my job application goes nowhere.*

---

## All Bark and No Bite

**Meaning:** Tending to make verbal threats but not deliver on them

**Example:** *Don't worry about Norm. He's **all bark and no bite**. He won't give you real trouble.*

---

## All Hat And No Cattle

**Meaning:** Pretentious, full of bluster

**Example:** *He's all hat and no cattle. If we put up a united front against him, he'll crumble.*

---

### Ants in Your Pants

**Meaning:** Restlessness

**Example:** *You've got ants in your pants! Calm down until I can finish this, and then we'll go.*

---

### As Poor as a Church Mouse

**Meaning:** Very poor

**Example:** *When we got married, we were both poor as a church mouse, and we had to live with my husband's parents.*

---

## Animal Idioms (B)

---

### Back the Wrong Horse

**Meaning:** To support the losing side

**Example:** *I think we're backing the wrong horse in supporting Jones for the job. The boss seems to have made up his mind to hire Sanchez.*

---

### Bark up the Wrong Tree

**Meaning:** Pursue a mistaken approach or belief; be wrong in a course of action

**Example:** *The new accounting procedures had no impact on the financial loss we reported. You're barking up the wrong tree.*

---

### Bee in one's bonnet

**Meaning:** Someone who has a bee in their bonnet has an idea which constantly occupies their thoughts.

**Example:** *Ever since the blizzard last year, dad has had a bee in his bonnet about moving to a warmer climate.*

---

### Bite the Hand That Feeds You

**Meaning:** Act badly toward someone who has helped you

**Example:** *It was hard for me to criticize the boss after he's helped me so much-I was **biting the hand that feeds me**. But he was wrong in this case.*

---

### **Black Sheep**

**Meaning:** A person who does not fit into a group, especially a family

**Example:** *Bob is the **black sheep** of the family. We all like sports, but he'd rather read a book.*

---

### **Blow the Cobwebs Away (or Out of Something)**

**Meaning:** Make space for fresh ideas, encourage something new

**Example:** *The composer wanted to **blow the cobwebs away** in the world of classical music and expose audiences to new ideas.*

---

### **Bull in a China Shop**

**Meaning:** A clumsy or tactless person

**Example:** *Matthew is good-hearted, but in delicate situations he's a **bull in a china shop**.*

---

### **Buy a Pig in a Poke**

**Meaning:** To buy something with no prior inspection

**Example:** *There's no way we should buy that factory without visiting it first-I never like to **buy a pig in a poke**.*

---

## **Animal Idioms (C)**

---

### **Can't Swing a Dead Cat in (Place) Without Hitting a (Thing)**

**Meaning:** There are many examples of [thing] in this [place].

**Example:** *You **can't swing a dead cat in Massachusetts without hitting** a good pizzeria.*

---

### **Change Horses in Midstream**

**Meaning:** Change plans or leaders in the middle of a process

**Example:** *We all wish Jack was leading the investigation, but since we've already started, it would be a mistake to **change horses in midstream**.*

---

---

## Chickens come home to roost

**Meaning:** The negative consequences of previous actions reveal themselves

**Example:** *We survived for awhile because stocks were increasing in price, but now the **chickens have come home to roost**: our lack of basic research is hurting us.*

---

## Chomp (Champ) at the Bit

**Meaning:** Be eager to do something

**Example:** *Can I give the project to Ellen? She says she's **chomping at the bit**.*

---

## Clip Someone's Wings

**Meaning:** Reduce someone's privileges or freedom

**Example:** *I've noticed my son has been driving recklessly. I think it's time to **clip his wings** and take away his car keys.*

---

## Cock and Bull Story

**Meaning:** A far-fetched story, probably untrue

**Example:** *Do you expect me to believe that **cock-and-bull story**? You're lying to protect your sister.*

---

## Crickets

**Meaning:** Silence

**Example:** *What happened when I asked for comments? **Crickets**. So I assume you're all satisfied with the proposal.*

---

## Cry Wolf (verb)

**Meaning:** To issue a false alarm, to ask for help when none is needed

**Example:** *She says someone is following her, but sometimes she'll **cry wolf** to get attention.*

## Animal Idioms (D)

---

### Dark Horse

**Meaning:** A surprise candidate or competitor, especially one who comes from behind to make a strong showing

**Example:** *With two candidates attacking each other in advertising, a **dark horse** with a cleaner image has come from behind and surged past both of them.*

---

### Dead as the Dodo

**Meaning:** Completely extinct; totally gone

**Example:** *Videotape is **dead as the dodo**; video recording devices are all digital now.*

---

### Don't Look a Gift Horse in the Mouth

**Meaning:** Do not question the value of a gift. The expression comes from the practice of determining the age and health of a horse by looking at its teeth.

**Example:** *It was nice of him to give you the ring. **Don't look a gift horse in the mouth.***

---

### Drain the Lizard

**Meaning:** Urinate

**Example:** *Justin Bieber got a lot of bad publicity for **draining the lizard** in public.*

---

## Animal Idioms (E)

---

### Eager beaver

**Meaning:** The term eager beaver refers to a person who is hardworking and enthusiastic, sometimes considered overzealous.

**Example:** *Give that big project to the new girl, she's a real **eager beaver**.*

---

### Eagle-Eyed

**Meaning:** Having sharp vision

**Example:** *My **eagle-eyed** sister spotted the car in the parking lot before anyone else did.*

---

### **Eat Crow**

**Meaning:** To admit one was wrong, and accept humiliation

**Example:** *I am ready to **eat crow**. My prediction about the game was completely wrong.*

---

### **Elephant in the Room**

**Meaning:** A major problem that no one is talking about

**Example:** *We're coming up with all these great ideas and pretending we can execute them, but funding is the **elephant in the room**. We haven't dealt with that at all.*

---

## Animal Idioms (F)

---

### **Flat Out Like a Lizard Drinking**

**Meaning:** Very busy

**Example:** *I'll be **flat out like a lizard drinking** for my first few weeks on the job.*

---

### **Flew the Coop**

**Meaning:** Left, escaped

**Example:** *You'd better pay him more, or one day you'll come to the office and find that he **flew the coop**.*

---

### **Fox in the Henhouse (Chickenhouse)**

**Meaning:** Someone who causes trouble

**Example:** *The boss's son is a **fox in the henhouse**. He does no actual work, and all he does is stir up problems.*

---

## Animal Idioms (G)

---

### **Get One's Ducks in a Row**

**Meaning:** Have everything organized; get oneself organized

**Example:** *Sorry about all the emails. I'm just trying to **get my ducks in a row** before I go on vacation.*

---

## Get Someone's Goat

**Meaning:** To irritate someone deeply

**Example:** *The way George takes credit for others' work really **gets my goat**.*

---

## Go Belly Up

**Meaning:** To go bankrupt

**Example:** *I'm afraid that if we don't reduce staff, we'll **go belly up** within a year.*

---

## Grab (Take) the Bull by the Horns

**Meaning:** To begin forthrightly to deal with a problem

**Example:** *We're worried about the production problems, but our vice-president is **taking the bull by the horns** and is going to visit the factory tomorrow.*

---

## Guinea Pig

**Meaning:** A test subject, a person who is used as a test to see if something will work

**Example:** *I'm going to be the **guinea pig** for the new payroll system at work. I hope my check comes through all right!*

---

## Animal Idioms (H)

---

### He would put legs under a chicken

**Meaning:** He will talk your head off; he is very talkative

**Example:** *Get ready to do a lot of listening if you go out to lunch with Karl – **he would put legs under a chicken**.*

---

### Hive Mind

**Meaning:** The knowledge of humans as a group

**Example:** *OK, **hive mind**. I have to replace the serpentine belt on my Toyota. What is the quickest way to finish the job?*

---

### Hold Your Horses (generally excl.)

**Meaning:** Stop; restrain yourself; don't be so excited

---

**Example:** *Hold your horses.* We can't even be sure we're getting a raise. You shouldn't start planning an expensive vacation.

## Animal Idioms (J,K)

---

### Jump the Shark

**Meaning:** To pass peak quality and begin to decline. Often used to describe television programs or movie series.

**Example:** *Many people believe that the "Seinfeld" television series **jumped the shark** after its fifth season, but it hung on for several more.*

---

### Kangaroo Court

**Meaning:** A court of law where proper procedures are not followed at all; a sham judicial proceeding

**Example:** *After a trial in a **kangaroo court**, where he was not even allowed access to a lawyer, the journalist was sentenced to 15 years in prison.*

---

### Kill a Fly With an Elephant Gun

**Meaning:** Approach a problem with excessive measures

**Example:** *Doctors often prescribe antibiotics even for minor ailments. They're trying to **kill a fly with an elephant gun**.*

---

## Animal Idioms (L)

---

### Lick One's Wounds

**Meaning:** Rest after a bad defeat

**Example:** *Federer will take three weeks off to **lick his wounds** after losing to Nadal.*

---

### Like a Moth to a Flame

**Meaning:** Drawn to something or someone despite the dangers

**Example:** *Sharon is drawn to bad boys **like a moth to a flame**.*

## Like the cat that got the cream

**Meaning:** Looking particularly self-satisfied, often to the annoyance of others

**Example:** *After her promotion, Janet spent the rest of the day looking like the cat that got the cream.*

## Lion's Den

**Meaning:** Any dangerous or frightening place.

**Example:** *Oh, so you're going to the Old City? That's a lion's den down there-be careful.*

## Lion's Share

**Meaning:** The largest part of something

**Example:** *If this project does well, i'll get the lion's share of the credit. But if it doesn't, i'll get the lion's share of the blame.*

## Loaded for Bear

**Meaning:** Prepared for problems, well prepared for a challenge

**Example:** *I know the professor is going to argue with my position. But don't worry – I'm loaded for bear.*

## Loan Shark

**Meaning:** A predatory lender; one who makes high-interest loans to desperate people

**Example:** *Avoid loan sharks. It's better to save up money and deal with a reputable bank. They'll charge you a lower interest rate.*

## Lock Horns

**Meaning:** To lock horns is to argue, to come into conflict.

**Example:** *Two members of Parliament locked horns over funding for their respective districts.*

## Animal Idioms (M,N)

### Mad As a Box of (Soapy) Frogs

**Meaning:** Extremely mentally unstable; psychotic; detached from reality.

**Example:** *Joe thinks the company could fail, but I'd say he's **mad as a box of frogs**.*

---

### **Make a Silk Purse out of a Sow's Ear**

**Meaning:** Turn something ordinary or inferior into something refined and beautiful

**Example:** *Yes, John is an excellent editor. But you wrote the article, and you deserve the credit. He can't turn a **silk purse into a sow's ear**.*

---

### **Never Look a Gift Horse in the Mouth**

**Meaning:** It's rude to examine a gift closely; accept gifts politely.

**Example:** *Your dad gave you the car, so don't criticize it. **Never look a gift horse in the mouth!***

---

## Animal Idioms (O)

---

### **On a Lark**

**Meaning:** Spontaneously, on a whim, for fun

**Example:** ***On a lark**, we decided to go to the seacoast for the weekend.*

---

### **One-Trick Pony**

**Meaning:** Someone who has only a single talent

**Example:** *Carl is talented at estimating costs, but he's a **one-trick pony** – give him a marketing project, and he doesn't know what to do.*

---

## Animal Idioms (P)

---

### **Pecking Order**

**Meaning:** Hierarchy, rank of importance

**Example:** *Courtney is below Suzanne in the **pecking order**, so if you need something done it's better to ask Suzanne.*

---

---

## Play cat and mouse

**Meaning:** Trying to trick someone into making a mistake so you can defeat them.

**Example:** *The 32-year-old singer spent a large proportion of the week **playing cat and mouse** with the press.*

---

## Puppies and Rainbows

**Meaning:** Perfect, ideal (usually used slightly sarcastically, in contrast with a less ideal situation)

**Example:** *At first my marriage was all **puppies and rainbows**, but then reality set in.*

---

## Put Lipstick on a Pig

**Meaning:** Make cosmetic changes to something bad

**Example:** *Yes, the tax cut will help a few people, but the economic program is still very harmful. They're just **putting lipstick on a pig**.*

---

## Put Out Feelers

**Meaning:** Make discreet, informal suggestions, ask around

**Example:** *I've **put out feelers** among the graduating class to find a new programmer, but I haven't had any luck. I think we need to place an ad.*

---

## Put the Cart Before the Horse

**Meaning:** To do things in the wrong order

**Example:** *You haven't even been accepted to the university, and you're already picking out classes? That's **putting the cart before the horse**.*

---

## Put the cat among the pigeons

**Meaning:** Say or do something that causes trouble or controversy

**Example:** *We didn't want to **put the cat among the pigeons**, so we decided not to mention the bomb threat until we knew for certain that it was legitimate.*

---

## Animal Idioms (R)

---

### Raise (Someone's) Hackles

**Meaning:** Make someone angry and defensive

**Example:** *It really **raises my hackles** when David talks about the university like that. I went there, and I got a good education there.*

---

### Red Herring

**Meaning:** A misleading clue; something intended to mislead

**Example:** *In the mystery story, the emphasis on the red van parked outside the house turned out to be a **red herring**.*

---

## Animal Idioms (S)

---

### Screw the Pooch

**Meaning:** To make a serious error

**Example:** *I'm reluctant to assign Jose another sales presentation after he **screwed the pooch** the last time.*

---

### Seize (Take) the Bull by the Horns

**Meaning:** Attack a problem directly

**Example:** *There's no sense in waiting for another report – we need to **seize the bull by the horns** and deal with the product recall.*

---

### Sick as a Parrot

**Meaning:** Very disappointed

**Example:** *I was **sick as a parrot** after Man United lost last night.*

---

### Sitting Duck

**Meaning:** Something or someone easily attacked or criticized

**Example:** *Considering the weakness of our offensive line this year, our quarterback is often a **sitting duck**.*

---

### Smell a Rat

**Meaning:** Suspect deception

**Example:** *My cousin wants to sell me an almost new car for \$6,000. It looks great, but I **smell a rat**-he was in the flood zone last month.*

---

---

## Something to Crow About

**Meaning:** Something to be proud of, an accomplishment about which one is justified in bragging

**Example:** *You took first place in the writing contest. That's something to crow about!*

---

## Stalking Horse

**Meaning:** Someone who tests a concept in advance of its application; a candidate who enters a political race in order to test the strength of the incumbent

**Example:** *Maybe we can use Jones as a **stalking horse** to see whether the mayor is vulnerable.*

---

## Strain at a Gnat and Swallow a Camel

**Meaning:** To make a fuss over something unimportant while ignoring larger issues

**Example:** *Amber wastes time in meetings over the most insignificant things-she has no sense of priorities. She'll **strain at a gnat and swallow a camel**.*

---

## Swan Song

**Meaning:** A final appearance

**Example:** *This game will be the quarterback's **swan song**-he's retiring after this season.*

---

## Swim with Sharks

**Meaning:** To take a major risk

**Example:** *If you want to reach the island with the treasure, you've got to **swim with sharks** for a while.*

---

## Animal Idioms (T)

---

### Take a Gander

**Meaning:** Go to take a look at something

**Example:** *It may be very crowded in there. I'll go and **take a gander**, and then I'll send you a text message.*

---

## The World Is Your Oyster

**Meaning:** You have many opportunities and choices.

**Example:** *You're only 22-**the world is your oyster**. Don't feel you have to get married now.*

---

## Til the Cows Come Home

**Meaning:** For a very long time

**Example:** *I only see Vicki once a year, so when we get together we can talk '**til the cows come home**.*

---

## To have butterflies in your stomach

**Meaning:** To be nervous

**Example:** *I almost didn't go on stage and perform tonight because I had **butterflies in my stomach**.*

---

## Turn Turtle

**Meaning:** Capsize, turn over

**Example:** *The boat **turned turtle** in the waves, but it was designed to right itself again, and it did.*

---

## Animal Idioms (U)

---

### Ugly Duckling

**Meaning:** An awkward child or young person who grows into a beautiful person

**Example:** *Sarah was such an **ugly duckling** at the start. Now she's a beautiful dancer.*

---

### Until the Cows Come Home

**Meaning:** For a long time

**Example:** *If you wait for Jeb to finish his part of the project, you'll be waiting **till the cows come home**.*

---

## Animal Idioms (W)

---

### What's Good for the Goose Is Good for the Gander

**Meaning:** What's OK for a man is OK for a woman, too

**Example:** *My boyfriend complains when I go out, but then I found out he went out with his friends every night this week. **What's good for the goose is good for the gander.***

---

### When Pigs Fly

**Meaning:** Never

**Example:** *Sure, I'll go out with Cynthia again. **When pigs fly.***

---

### White Elephant

**Meaning:** An unwanted item that is difficult to sell or dispose of

**Example:** *We wanted to sell our old office building after we moved out, but it's turned into a **white elephant.***

---

### Wild Goose Chase

**Meaning:** An impossible or futile search or task

**Example:** *I think this is a **wild goose chase.** This library doesn't have the books we need.*

---

## Animal Idioms (Y)

---

### You Can Lead a Horse to Water, but You Can't Make It Drink

**Meaning:** It's very hard to force someone to do something against his or her will.

**Example:** *I know it would be good for my son to go to the state university, but he doesn't want to go. **You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make him drink.***

---

### You Can't Make Fish of One and Fowl of the Other

**Meaning:** People must be treated equally.

**Example:** *The contract calls for new hires to be paid less permanently. But why **make fish of one and fowl of the other?***

---

# Chapter 5

## Body Idioms

## Part One

### Body Idioms (A, B)

---

#### A Hair's Breadth

- **Meaning:** A very small distance or amount
  - **Example:** *He came within a **hair's breadth** of setting a new world record, but he got very tired in the last kilometer of the race.*
- 

#### Bare-Bones

- **Meaning:** Simplest, stripped-down
  - **Example:** *One way to be able to afford a car is to buy a **bare-bones** model-options like heated seats add a lot to the price.*
- 

#### Be a Bundle of Nerves

- **Meaning:** Be extremely nervous
  - **Example:** *I was a **bundle of nerves** before my exam, but I calmed down once we got the questions and started to work.*
- 

#### Bend over Backwards

- **Meaning:** To take great care to accommodate someone or do something right
  - **Example:** *I've **bent over backwards** to please you. But it never seems to be good enough.*
- 

#### Birthday Suit

- **Meaning:** Nakedness
  - **Example:** *There I was, in my **birthday suit**, when the doorbell rang.*
- 

#### Bite One's Tongue

- **Meaning:** Remain silent even though one has a strong desire to say something
  - **Example:** *When Sheila started talking about the failure of the sales campaign, I had to **bite my tongue**—it failed because the materials she was responsible for weren't ready!*
- 

#### Blood Is Thicker Than Water

- **Meaning:** Family relationships take precedence over others

- **Example:** *My uncle will help us. He and I have had some disagreements, but **blood is thicker than water**.*

---

### Brain Drain

- **Meaning:** Departure of talented, well-educated individuals from a place
- **Example:** *Venezuela is experiencing a **brain drain** right now, with many professionals leaving for other countries because of bad conditions at home.*

---

### Breathe Easier (Easy)

- **Meaning:** Feel (more) secure after a period of difficulty
- **Example:** *I think we can **breathe easier** now that we've met the sales quota. The district manager will begin worrying about other offices.*

Note: This idiom is common even though it's grammatically incorrect. No one would say "breathe more easily."

---

### Built Like a Brick Shit-House

- **Meaning:** Strong, well-built, heavy (said of a person)
- **Example:** *Have John help carry those boxes; he's **built like a brick shit-house**.*

Note: You can also say "built like a brick house" to avoid the obscenity "shit."

---

### Bust a Gut (Laughing)

- **Meaning:** Laugh uncontrollably
- **Example:** *When Jack showed up at the party in a clown suit, I thought I was going to **bust a gut** laughing.*

### Bust Someone's Balls

- **Meaning:** To verbally harass or tease someone
- **Example:** *Hey, I told the boss you were looking for a new job. - "Really? How could you do that? - I didn't. I'm just **busting your balls**.*

Note: Outside the USA, "bust one's balls" may also be used to mean "work hard."

---

## Bust Someone's Chops

- **Meaning:** Verbally torment someone
- **Example:** *People keep **busting my chops** over the embarrassing speech I made at the dinner. I wish they'd just forget it.*

---

## Body Idioms (D,E)

---

### Don't Hold Your Breath

- **Meaning:** Don't expect what's under discussion to happen soon.
- **Example:** *We'll eventually get raises, but **don't hold your breath**.*

---

### Eat, Sleep, and Breathe (Something)

- **Meaning:** To have a strong passion for something; to think about it constantly
- **Example:** *Joe **eats, sleeps, and breathes** basketball. Don't even bother talking to him about anything else.*

---

### Elbow Grease

- **Meaning:** Hard physical effort
- **Example:** *Painting your house takes some **elbow grease** – You have to scrape the old paint off first. But it's cheaper than having it done.*

---

## Body Idioms (F)

---

### Fit as a Fiddle

- **Meaning:** In very good health
- **Example:** *Three months ago Eamon seemed to be at death's door, but now he's **fit as a fiddle**. What happened?*

Note: This is rather old-fashioned, but still used and understood.

---

### Forty Winks

- **Meaning:** A short nap
- **Example:** *If you're on a long drive, it's helpful to stop and take **forty winks** every few hours if you can.*

## Body Idioms (G)

---

### Get Blood from a Stone

- **Meaning:** Try to perform a futile or impossible task
- **Example:** *The court can fine me \$1,000 if it wants to, but you can't **get blood from a stone**.*

Note: This expression is used in the negative: you can't get blood from a stone.

---

### Get in Shape

- **Meaning:** Exercise in order to improve one's physical condition
  - **Example:** *I've got to **get in shape**. All I do is sit and watch television. I'm gaining weight.*
- 

### Get on One's Nerves

- **Meaning:** Tax someone's patience, irritate someone
- **Example:** *Bob won't stop talking about last night's game. He's really **getting on my nerves**.*

Note: A stronger form, "on one's last nerve," also exists.

---

### Get One's Ass In Gear

- **Meaning:** Get moving, begin working on something
- **Example:** *OK, let me **get my ass in gear**, and I'll meet you at the coffee shop in an hour.*

Note: A less crude version is "get one's rear in gear."

---

### Go Behind Someone's Back

- **Meaning:** To conceal one's actions from someone
  - **Example:** *Barbara **went behind my back** and went out with George. I'm really mad at her.*
- 

### Gut feeling

- **Meaning:** A sense or impression that your subconscious has about a person or situation
- **Example:** *Jennifer's mother had a **gut feeling** that something was wrong when her daughter wasn't home by 100'clock.*

### Gut Reaction

- **Meaning:** An immediate feeling based on instinct

- **Example:** *My **gut reaction** was that the new Tesla would fail, but it's selling well.*

## Body Idioms (H)

---

### Have a Stick Up One's Ass

- **Meaning:** Be very rigid
- **Example:** *I don't see why Jared **has a stick up his ass** about the schedule—"we've always changed it to suit our needs in the past.*  
Note: This is crude.

### Have One's Back Against the Wall

- **Meaning:** Have few choices, be cornered
- **Example:** *I'm really sorry I had to lay Jason off, but my back was **against the wall**—if I didn't, the company would have shut down our whole division.*

### Have Skin in the Game

- **Meaning:** Be risking something in an undertaking
- **Example:** *I don't **have any skin in the game**, so you can trust my opinion. I'm just trying to say what I think is best for you.*  
Note: This expression is American.

## Body Idioms (J)

---

### Joined at the hip

- **Meaning:** To be exceptionally close to someone
- **Example:** *Amy and her boss were **joined at the hip**; you never saw one without the other.*

### Jump Down Someone's Throat

- **Meaning:** Strongly attack someone verbally
- **Example:** *All I did was suggest that we might want to think about replacing Don, and Helen **jumped down my throat**.*

## Body Idioms (K,L)

---

### Knee-Jerk Reaction

- **Meaning:** An immediate strong reaction to something; a reaction without consideration or thought
  - **Example:** *When I talk about going out with guys, my dad has a **knee-jerk negative reaction**. I wish he'd think about it and realize I'm old enough.*
- 

### Lose One's Nerve

- **Meaning:** To become frightened and abandon one's goals
- **Example:** *I was going to ask Jennifer out, but at the last minute I **lost my nerve**.*

## Body Idioms (N)

---

### No-Brainer

- **Meaning:** A decision that's easy to make; a problem that's easy to solve
  - **Example:** *I like my current job, but the new place is offering me so much money that changing jobs was a **no-brainer**.*
- 

### Not Know Your Ass (UK: Arse) from Your Elbow

- **Meaning:** Be stupid, ignorant
- **Example:** *I wouldn't assign that project to Ed, if I were you. He **doesn't know his ass from his elbow**.*

## Body Idioms (O)

---

### On the Blink

- **Meaning:** Not working, intermittently not working
- **Example:** *The computer's **on the blink**, and we have work piling up!*

Note: An American equivalent is "on the fritz."

---

### On the Nod

- **Meaning:** Without a formal vote

- **Example:** *The president wants us to make the decision **on the nod**, but I think we should vote on it.*

---

### On the Rag

- **Meaning:** Menstruating
- **Example:** *Gina is very cranky today. Wonder if she's **on the rag**.*  
Note: This has a rude, insulting flavor.

---

### On Your Toes

- **Meaning:** Alert
- **Example:** *The district manager is going to be visiting today, but we don't know when. Be **on your toes**.*

---

## Body Idioms (P)

### Pick Someone's Brain(s)

- **Meaning:** Get information from someone well-informed (about a particular topic)
- **Example:** *Could I come by tomorrow? I'd like to **pick your brains** about selling on eBay. I know you've made a lot of money that way.*

---

### Pop Someone's Cherry

- **Meaning:** To break the hymen; to lose one's virginity. Often used as a metaphor.
- **Example:** *The girl I went out with last night is a virgin! I think I'll be **popping her cherry** soon.*  
Note: This is crude.

---

### Put Muscle Behind

- **Meaning:** Exert one's power in support of something; support something vigorously
- **Example:** *The president said he would **put muscle behind** the campaign for reduced carbon emissions.*

---

### Put One's Back Into Something

- **Meaning:** Put forth a strong effort, typically physical

- **Example:** *You'll be able to open the valve, but you'll have to **put your back into it**.*

## Body Idioms (R, S)

---

### Rub Elbows (with)

- **Meaning:** Mingle with; meet in a group; socialize with
  - **Example:** *Come to the party with me. It'll give you a chance to **rub elbows** with people who are already studying in the program.*
- 

### Shanks' Pony; Shanks' Mare

- **Meaning:** The feet as a means of travel
- **Example:** *We could go by **Shanks' pony**, or we could take a cab. Which do you prefer?*

Note: This is old and rather rare.

---

### Skeleton in One's Closet

- **Meaning:** A secret from one's past; an embarrassing secret
- **Example:** *The politician turned out to have **skeletons in her closet** that cost her the election.*

Note: A USA equivalent is "skeleton in the closet."

---

### Skeleton in the Cupboard

- **Meaning:** A secret from one's past; an embarrassing secret
  - **Example:** *We all have a few **skeletons in the cupboard** that we wouldn't like to see revealed.*
- 

### Slap on the Wrist

- **Meaning:** A minor punishment, especially one for a serious crime
  - **Example:** *The mayor's son was arrested for dealing drugs, but he got just a **slap on the wrist**.*
- 

### Smell Blood (in the Water)

- **Meaning:** Sense weakness or vulnerability; be ready to attack
- **Example:** *The opposition party **smelled blood** after the president was hit with corruption charges.*

## Body Idioms (T)

---

### Tear One's Hair out

- **Meaning:** Be extremely worried or frustrated.
  - **Example:** *I've been **tearing my hair out**, wondering how we're going to be able to make this month's rent payment, and all you do is sit there and watch television. Why don't you try to get a job?*
- 

### To Have Butterflies in One's Stomach

- **Meaning:** Nervousness, anxiety, especially in advance of an important event
  - **Example:** *I have **butterflies in my stomach** because I have to give a big speech.*
- 

### To Piss Into the Wind

- **Meaning:** Engage in an activity that's so futile as to be a complete waste of time “
- **Example:** *Don't waste your time trying to talk to Wanda about her spending habits. You're **pissing into the wind**.*

Note: This is slightly crude.

---

### To Work One's Arse Off

- **Meaning:** Work very hard
- **Example:** *We **worked our arses off** to finish the project and the boss didn't even say thank you.*

Note: In the USA, “work one's ass off” is used.

---

### Toe the Line (Mark)

- **Meaning:** To follow regulations or moral principles closely
- **Example:** *During my freshman year I was pretty wild, but now I **toe the line**, and I haven't been in trouble.*

Note: Walk the line is an American variant.

---

### Tongue-in-Cheek

- **Meaning:** Said ironically; not meant to be taken seriously
- **Example:** *The satirist's essay was **tongue-in-cheek**, but many people took it seriously.*

## Body Idioms (U, V)

---

### Up The Wazoo

- **Meaning:** Abundantly, to an excessive degree
- **Example:** *I've got parts **up the wazoo** here, but I don't have enough tools to assemble them.*

Note: This is very informal and slightly obscene; the “wazoo” is the anus.

---

### Vertically Challenged

- **Meaning:** A short person.
- **Example:** *I may be **vertically challenged**, but watch out for me on the basketball court – I can jump!*

Note: This has a humorous flavor.

## Body Idioms (W)

---

### Weak at the knees

- **Meaning:** To feel emotion so strongly that it makes you feel unstable on your feet.
- **Example:** *The thought of kissing him made me go **weak at the knees**.*

### Work One's Tail (Butt) Off

- **Meaning:** Work very hard
- **Example:** *You'll have to **work your tail off** first semester, but Cornell is a very good school.*

Note: These are used euphemistically-”they are more polite than “work your ass off.”

## Body Idioms (Z)

---

### Zip It

- **Meaning:** Be quiet
- **Example:** *OK, I'll tell you the secret about Cynthia, but **zip it!***

## Zonk Out

- **Meaning:** To fall asleep quickly and deeply
- **Example:** *I've been here since 6 a.m. I have to go home and zonk out.*

Note: This is rare. "Crash" would be a more common alternative.

## Part 2

### Idioms with Eyes

- **A Sight for Sore Eyes:** Someone that you're pleased to see
- **All Eyes And Ears:** Attentive
- **All Eyes Are On:** Watching alertly or attentively. Having prominent eyes. Everyone is paying attention to
- **An Eye for an Eye:** Justice in which reparation or vengeance exactly matches the harm caused to the victim
- **Catch Someone's Eye:** Attract someone's attention
- **Cry Your Eyes Out:** Cry hard for a very long time
- **Keep an Eye On:** To keep an eye on something or someone is to watch it periodically, to keep it under surveillance.
- **Keep an Eye Peeled:** Be observant; watch out for something
- **See Eye to Eye:** To concur, agree
- **See Something Out of the Corner of Your Eye:** Use peripheral vision
- **Sight for Sore Eyes:** A sight that makes you happy
- **To be the Apple of Someone's Eye:** To be loved and treasured by someone
- **Turn a Blind Eye:** (to) Choose not to notice something
- **Wandering Eye:** A tendency to look at and desire women or men other than one's committed romantic partner
- **Black Eye:** A mark of shame
- **Blue Eyed Boy:** A person who is a favorite of those in authority; someone whose mistakes are forgiven
- **Baby Blues:** Blue eyes.

---

## Body Idioms: Idioms with Ears

- **All Ears:** Listening willingly, waiting for an explanation
- **Give Someone an Earful:** angrily express an opinion to someone
- **I'm All Ears:** You have my attention, so you should talk
- **Lend an Ear:** Listen
- **Play It by Ear:** To respond to circumstances instead of having a fixed plan
- **That's Music to My Ears:** I am very happy to hear this.
- **The Walls Have Ears We:** may be overheard; be careful what you say
- **Wet Behind the Ears:** inexperienced, immature, new to something

---

## Body Idioms: Idioms with Nose

- **Cut Off Your Nose to Spite Your Face:** To act in a proud way that ultimately damages your own cause
- **Have Your Nose in the Air:** Have a snobbish or disdainful attitude
- **It's No Skin off My (Your) Nose (Back):** The outcome will not affect me personally
- **Keep Your Nose Clean:** Avoid trouble or situations that compromise one's honesty
- **Keeping One's Nose to the Grindstone:** Working hard on something repetitive or tedious
- **On the Nose:** Precisely, at an exact time
- **Powder One's Nose:** To use the restroom (lavatory). This is used by women
- **Right Under (One's) Nose:** In an obvious location, yet overlooked
- **Rub Someone's Nose in (Something):** Humiliate someone by repeating and criticizing his or her mistake
- **Stick Your Nose into Something:** Intrude into something that is not your affair
- **Have a Nose for (Something):** To have natural ability at something, a talent for finding something

---

## Body Idioms: Idioms with Leg

- **The Story Has Legs:** People are continuing to pay attention to the story.

- **To Pay an Arm and a Leg:** A very high cost
- **To Pull Someone's Leg:** Lie playfully
- **Break a Leg:** Good luck! This is used for a stage performer-or for anyone else who is about to give some kind of a performance, such as an important speech
- **A Leg Up:** An advantage, a boost

---

### Body Idioms: Idioms with Teeth

- **By the Skin of One's Teeth:** Barely escaping disaster
- **Cut Your Teeth on Something:** To learn basic skills in a field
- **Grind One's Teeth:** Be very annoyed or angry about something without being able to say anything about it.
- **Armed to the Teeth:** Carrying many weapons

---

### Body Idioms: Idioms with Mouth

- **All Mouth And No Trousers:** Superficial, engaging in empty, boastful talk, but not of real substance
- **Bad Taste In One's Mouth:** Unease, a feeling that something unspecified is wrong in a situation
- **Butter Wouldn't Melt in (Someone's):** Mouth This person is cool in manner, prim and proper
- **By Word of Mouth:** Via personal communications rather than written media
- **Put Your Foot In Your Mouth:** Say something that you immediately regret
- **Run off at the Mouth:** Talk a lot about unimportant things, talk incoherently
- **A Hair's Breadth:** A very small distance or amount

---

### Body Idioms: Idioms with Heart

- **After One's Own Heart:** Similar in a pleasing way
- **Bare One's Heart (Soul):** To confess one's deepest secrets
- **Change of Heart:** A change in one's opinion or outlook
- **Eat Your Heart Out!:** (excl.) Go ahead, be jealous.
- **Follow Your Heart:** Rely on one's deeper feelings and instincts when making a decision
- **From the Bottom of One's Heart:** Sincerely and with deep feeling

- **In a Heartbeat:** Immediately. This is especially used in hypothetical situations
- **Touch One's Heart:** Affect someone emotionally, be touching

---

### Body Idioms: Idioms with Heel

- **Achilles' Heel:** The weak point of an otherwise powerful person or organization
- **(Fall) Head Over Heels:** (To become) infatuated, to fall suddenly in love
- **Cool Your Heels:** Wait
- **Drag One's Feet (or Heels):** To do something reluctantly and slowly
- **Hot on the Heels (of):** In close pursuit

---

### Body Idioms: Idioms with Hand

- **Hands are Tied:** You are prevented from doing something. It is not within your power
- **Hands Down:** Undoubtedly
- **Get One's Hands Dirty:** To do the unpleasant parts of a job
- **Know (Something) Like the Back of One's Hand:** To be very familiar with something, especially an area
- **Right-Hand Man:** Chief assistant
- **Wash Your Hands of (Something):** Decline to take further responsibility; refuse to be involved with something anymore

---

### Body Idioms: Idioms with Thumb

- **All Thumbs:** Clumsy
- **Have Your Thumb Up Your Ass:** Have nothing to do
- **Rule of Thumb:** A general principle or guideline, not a specific formula
- **Thumbs-Up:** Approval

---

### Body Idioms: Idioms with Neck

- **Neck and Neck:** Very close in a competition, with neither of two entities clearly in the lead
- **Pain in the Ass; Pain in the Butt;**
- **Stiff-Necked:** Stubborn; excessively formal
- **Neck of the Woods:** A region, especially one's home region
- **Up to One's Neck:** Nearly overwhelmed

- **Pain in the Neck:** Someone or something making your life difficult

---

### Body Idioms: Idioms with Arm & Belly

- **Arm Candy:** An attractive woman accompanying a powerful or famous man at a social event
- **Keep Someone at Arm's Length:** Avoid close interaction or cooperation
- **Fire in the Belly:** strong ambition
- **Belly Laugh:** Loud, hearty laughter

---

### Body Idioms: Idioms with Feet

- **Drag Your Feet:** Do something very reluctantly; delay doing something
- **Find Your Feet:** To adjust to a new place or situation
- **Jump in with Both Feet:** Begin a new experience wholeheartedly
- **To Get Cold Feet:** To experience reluctance or fear
- **Vote with One's Feet:** To physically depart from something as a way of showing disapproval
- **Have a Lead Foot:** A tendency to drive very fast
- **On the Back Foot:** At a disadvantage
- **Put Your Foot Down:** Use your authority to stop negative behavior

---

### Body Idioms: Idioms with Head

- **Bury (Hide) One's Head In the Sand:** Ignoring something that's obviously wrong, not facing reality
- **Head and Shoulders:** Above Far superior to
- **Head Start:** An advantage over everyone else
- **Heads Up (excl.):** Get ready! Be prepared
- **Heads Will Roll (Are Going to Roll):** People will be fired
- **Off the Top of My Head:** Guessing or estimating without full information
- **Over One's Head:** In a situation where one is overwhelmed with tasks
- **Rear Its Ugly Head (said of a problem or something unpleasant):** Appear, be revealed
- **Turn Something on Its Head:** Reverse something, cause something to be done in a new way

- **Use One's Head:** To think, to have common sense
- **Tongue-in-Cheek:** Said ironically; not meant to be taken seriously
- **Shoulder A Weight Off Your Shoulders:** You no longer worry about something or deal with something difficult
- **Have a Chip on One's Shoulder:** To harbor resentment; to have an angry attitude
- **Give Someone the Cold Shoulder:** act hostile toward someone; to ignore, snub

---

### Body Idioms: Idioms with Face and Chin

- **Put the Best Face On (Something):** Emphasize the positive aspects of a bad situation
- **Rub (Something) in Someone's Face:** Humiliate someone by repeating and criticizing his or her mistake
- **Until You're Blue in the Face:** For a long time with no results
- **Chin Up/ Keep Your Chin Up:** Cheer up; try to be cheerful and strong
- **Take It on The Chin:** Be attacked; suffer an attack

---

### Body Idioms: Idioms with Finger

- **Finger-Pointing:** Blame; a situation within a group where each member attempts to blame others
- **Not Lift a Finger:** Do nothing to help
- **Point the Finger:** At Blame (someone)
- **Someone's Fingerprints Are All Over (Something):** Someone's influence is evident
- **Work One's Fingers to the Bone:** Work very hard over an extended period

---

### Body Idioms: Idioms with Lip

- **Give Lip Service to:** Talk about supporting something without taking any concrete action
- **Keep a Stiff Upper Lip:** Control one's emotions; not give in to fear or grief
- **Tight-Lipped:** secretive, unwilling to explain something
- **Zip One's Lip:** Be quiet

# Chapter 6

## Business Idioms & Sayings

---

## Idioms for Making Decisions

- **(Give Someone) Carte Blanche:** Allow someone complete freedom; entrust a decision to someone
- **All Things Being Equal:** In the event that all aspects of a situation remain the same
- **Up for Grabs:** Available
- **On the Bubble:** One of a group that may be selected for the last spot in a competition
- **All Told:** With everything taken into consideration
- **All Things Considered:** Taking all factors into consideration
- **Up in the Air:** Not yet decided
- **Raise Red Flags:** Warn of trouble ahead
- **Rubber-Stamp (v.):** Approve something without consideration, as a formality
- **Take It or Leave It (command):** You must decide now whether you will accept this proposal
- **Out of the Loop:** Not part of a group that's kept informed about something
- **On the Same Page:** Understanding a situation in the same way
- **Hobson's Choice:** A choice among bad options
- **Flip-Flop (v. Or n.):** To vacillate between two choices, to be indecisive
- **Fish or Cut Bait (usually an exclamation):** Make a decision or give someone else a chance
- **(Have One's) Back Against the Wall:** Have few choices, be cornered

---

## Jobs Idioms

- **Learn the Ropes:** Become more familiar with a job or field of endeavor; be trained
- **Get the Sack, Be Sacked:** To be fired
- **Off the Hook:** Free from blame or responsibility to do something
- **Hanging by a Thread:** In great danger of elimination or failure
- **Burn the Candle at Both Ends:** Work very long hours
- **Rank and File:** The ordinary members of an organization
- **Pink Slip:** A layoff notice; loss of a job, typically because of layoffs

- **Out of Work:** Unemployed
- **Move Up in the World:** Become more successful
- **Give Someone The Old Heave-Ho:** Fire someone, remove someone from a group or team
- **All In A Day's Work (Excl.):** That's what I'm here for; although I have accomplished something, it is part of what I'm expected to do
- **Heads Will Roll (Are Going to Roll):** People will be fired

---

## Finance Idioms

- **Banner Year:** A year marked by strong successes
- **In the Red:** Losing money; (of a market index) below a specified starting point
- **Nest Egg:** Retirement savings; wealth saved for a future purpose
- **Crunch the Numbers:** Do calculations before making a decision or prediction
- **You Can Take It to the Bank:** I absolutely guarantee this
- **Have Skin in the Game:** Be risking something in an undertaking
- **Poison Pill:** A provision or feature added to a measure or an entity to make it less attractive, an undesirable add-on

---

## Money Idioms

- **Nickel and Dime:** To negotiate over very small sums; to try to get a better financial deal, in a negative way
- **A Penny Saved is A Penny Earned:** Every small amount helps to build one's savings
- **Pinch Pennies:** To be careful with money, to be thrifty
- **Pretty Penny:** A lot of money; too much money (when referring to the cost of something)
- **Sticker Shock:** Surprise at the high price of something
- **Cash-Strapped:** In need of money
- **For a Song:** At very low cost
- **Blank Check:** Permission to spend or do whatever one wishes; carte blanche
- **Turn on a Dime:** Quickly reverse direction or position
- **Nice Chunk of Change:** A large amount of money

- **Give One's Two Cents (That's My Two Cents):** Offer an opinion, suggest something
- **Honor System:** A system of payments that relies on the honesty of those paying
- **Bang for Your Buck:** Value for your money
- **Make Ends Meet:** Have enough money to cover basic expenses
- **In For a Penny, In for a Pound:** Committed to something even though the risks are increasing
- **Double-Dip:** Improperly get income from two different sources
- **Feather One's (Own) Nest:** Use one's influence or power improperly for financial gain
- **Take a Flyer:** To take a rise; especially to make a speculative investment
- **Two a Penny:** Ordinary, inexpensive
- **Ten a Penny:** Ordinary, inexpensive
- **Pay Through the Nose (For Something):** Pay a large amount of money
- **A Penny for Your Thoughts:** What are you thinking?
- **Penny-Pinching:** Frugal, avoiding expenses whenever possible
- **Pick Up the Tab:** To pay a bill presented to a group, especially in a restaurant or bar
- **Bang for Your Buck:** Value for money
- **Pass the Buck:** Transfer a problem to someone else
- **(To Go) From Rags To Riches:** Earn a fortune after being poor early in life
- **Flat Broke:** Having no money at all
- **Deep Pockets:** The new owner has deep pockets, so fans are hoping the football team will improve next year with new players
- **(A) Day Late and a Dollar Short:** Too little, too late; both late and insufficient
- **(A) Dime a Dozen:** Very cheap; easily obtained
- **Bet One's Bottom Dollar (On Something):** Be certain that something will happen
- **And Change:** And an additional amount of money that's less than the next round number
- **A Day Late And A Dollar Short:** Too delayed and insignificant to have much effect

---

## Sales & Marketing Idioms

- **All It's Cracked Up To Be:** As good as claims or reputation would suggest
- **Deliver the Goods:** Provide what is expected
- **In the Pipeline:** Being prepared for the marketplace, being worked on
- **Out the Door:** With everything included (said of a price)
- **Price Yourself Out of the Market:** Try to sell goods or services at such a high price that nobody buys them.
- **Sell (Someone) a Bill of Goods:** Trick someone; be deceptive
- **Selling Point:** An attractive feature of something for sale
- **Sold On (Something):** Convinced of something
- **TLC:** Tender Loving Care

---

## Negotiation Idioms

- **Agreement In Principle:** In a negotiation, an agreement in which not all details have been worked out
- **An Offer One Can't Refuse:** An extremely attractive offer
- **Back And Forth:** Dialogue, negotiations
- **Come to Terms With (Something):** Feel acceptance toward something bad that has happened
- **Draw a Line in the Sand:** Issue an ultimatum; specify an absolute limit in a conflict
- **Drive a Hard Bargain:** To negotiate effectively
- **Drive a Wedge Between:** Try to split factions of a united group by introducing an issue on which they disagree
- **Give and Take:** Negotiations, the process of compromise
- **Stand One's Ground:** Refuse to back down; insist on one's position
- **Sweeten the Deal:** Add something to an offer during a negotiation
- **Trial Balloon:** A test of someone's or the public's reaction
- **Big Deal:** An important event or accomplishment
- **Yes Man:** The idiom "yes man" refers to a person who always agrees with others, especially with his or her boss.

---

## Problem Idioms

- **(An) Uphill Climb:** A difficult process
- **(The) Last Straw:** A problem or insult that finally demands a response
- **Above Water:** Not in extreme difficulty. Especially said of finances
- **Come Out in the Wash:** To be resolved with no lasting negative effect
- **Cut Corners:** Economize by reducing quality; take shortcuts
- **In a Jam:** In need of help, in a difficult spot
- **Cut the Gordian Knot:** To solve a complex problem in a simple way
- **Get To Grips With:** To begin to understand and deal with something
- **Head (Go) South:** Decline, get worse
- **In Hot Water:** In need of help; in trouble
- **Red Tape:** Bureaucracy; difficult bureaucratic or governmental requirements
- **Start with a Clean Slate:** To start (something) again with a fresh beginning; to work on a problem without thinking about what has been done before
- **Stumbling Block:** An obstacle, physical or abstract
- **Think Outside the Box:** Try to solve a problem in an original way; think creatively
- **Finger-Pointing:** Blame; a situation within a group where each member attempts to blame others

---

## Review Idioms

- **Mind One's P's and q's:** Be attentive to details; be on one's best behavior
- **All Over The Place:** Everywhere; in many different locations
- **Read Between the Lines:** Perceive what is not explicitly stated
- **Across The Board:** In relation to all categories, for everyone
- **All Over The Board:** Everywhere, in many different locations
- **All Over The Map:** Everywhere; in many different locations

## Schedule Idioms

- **Against The Clock:** Forced to hurry to meet a deadline
- **Busman's Holiday (UK):** A working vacation
- **Burn the Midnight Oil:** Working late into the night
- **Pencil Something In:** Make tentative arrangements
- **Back to the Drawing Board:** Forced to begin something again
- **Eleventh Hour:** The last minute
- **In the Works:** Under development; coming soon
- **(Do Something) By the Book:** According to established procedure
- **Cut It Fine:** To do something at the last moment
- **After The Fact:** Too late; after something is completed or finalized
- **Sit On (Something):** Delay revealing or acting on something
- **Back to the Salt Mines:** It's time for me (us) to go back to work
- **Take Five (Ten):** Take a short break of five (ten) minutes
- **Thank God It's Friday (TGIF):** Let's be happy that the workweek is over!
- **Kick the Can Down the Road:** Postpone an important decision
- **(In the) Fullness of Time:** Eventually, when appropriate; after you wait patiently
- **Call It a Day:** Decide that one has worked enough on something for the day
- **Burn the Candle at Both Ends:** To work too hard, with possible bad consequences for one's health
- **Sneak Peek:** A sneak peek is an opportunity to view something in advance of its official opening or debut
- **Ahead Of The Game:** Making faster progress than anticipated; ahead of schedule
- **Crunch Time:** A period of high pressure when one has to work hard to finish something
- **Business as Usual:** A normal situation (whether related to business or not), typically restored after some change
- **You Snooze, You Lose:** If you delay or are not alert, you will miss opportunities
- **On the Spur of the Moment:** Without advance planning, spontaneously

- **Elevator Pitch:** A brief presentation of an idea, one short enough to be delivered in an elevator
- **Back to Square One:** Forced to begin something again
- **Right-Hand Man:** Chief assistant
- **Ahead Of One's Time:** Offering ideas not yet in general circulation; highly creative
- **Think Tank:** A group of experts engaged in ongoing studies of a particular subject; a policy study group

---

## Leadership Idioms

- **(The) Man:** The boss; authority in general
- **Big Picture:** A wide perspective; a broad view of something
- **Call the Shots:** Make the important decisions in an organization
- **Changing of the Guard:** A change in leadership at an organization
- **Movers and Shakers:** Influential people, especially in a particular field
- **On Point:** Good, well done, effective
- **Cut Someone Some Slack:** Avoid treating someone strictly or severely
- **Light a Fire Under Someone:** Inspire someone to work very hard
- **Rake Someone Over the Coals:** Scold severely
- **Put Someone on the Spot:** Force someone to answer a question or make a decision immediately
- **Ahead Of The Curve:** Offering ideas not yet in general circulation; highly creative
- **Cut to the Chase:** Get to the point; explain the most important part of something quickly; skip the preliminaries
- **Da Man (Slang):** An accomplished or skillful person. Generally used in the compliment “”You da man!””
- **The Powers That Be:** People in charge, often used when the speaker does not want to identify them.
- **After The Lord Mayor's Show (UK):** Anticlimactic; occurring after something impressive
- **(To Be at Someone's) Beck And Call:** To be under someone's total command, to be forced to fulfill someone's orders or whims

- **Too Many Chiefs and Not Enough Indians:** Everyone wants to be a leader, and no one wants to do the actual work
  - **(To) Cross All Your T's And Dot All Your i's:** To take care of every detail, including the minor ones
  - **A Little from Column A, a Little from Column B:** A course of action drawing on several different ideas or possibilities
- 

### Deadline Idioms

- **Burn the Midnight Oil:** To work late into the night
  - **Race Against Time:** To rush to meet a deadline, to be forced to do something very quickly
- 

### Meeting Idioms

- **Hit the Nail on the Head:** To be absolutely correct (said of an utterance)
- **Take the Edge Off (of Something):** To slightly improve something negative

# Chapter 7

## Family Idioms

## Part 1: Most Common Family Idioms

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### (Be the) Spitting Image

- **Meaning:** Have a strong resemblance, often familial
  - **Example:** *Look at Madeleine. She's the **spitting image** of her mother.*
- 

### (Born) Out of Wedlock

- **Meaning:** Illegitimate, born to unmarried parents
  - **Example:** *I was born **out of wedlock** and raised by a single mother.*
- 

### Accident Of Birth

- **Meaning:** Luck in something due to family good fortune
  - **Example:** *Yes, he became company vice-president when he was only 23, but that's an **accident of birth** – his father is one of the major stockholders.*
- 

### And His Mother

- **Meaning:** An intensifier for an inclusive noun or phrase such as everyone, everybody
  - **Example:** *Everybody **and his mother** is going to be at the fireworks. Let's watch the on television.*
- 

### Big Brother

- **Meaning:** Government, viewed as an intrusive force in the lives of citizens; government spying
  - **Example:** ***Big Brother** seems to grow more and more powerful as data about individuals is accumulated on social networks.*
- 

### Blue Blood (adj.: blue-blooded)

- **Meaning:** Person of aristocratic background
  - **Example:** *The **blue bloods** generally keep to themselves, but a charity dance is a good place to see them dress up.*
- 

### Bob's Your Uncle

- **Meaning:** The rest is easy; you're almost finished
- **Example:** *Just enter the update code, register the new software, and **Bob's your uncle**.*

---

## Father Figure

- **Meaning:** A mentor, a person who offers guidance
  - **Example:** *After I joined the company, Frank was a **father figure** to me. He gave me lots of valuable advice.*
- 

## Flesh and Blood

- **Meaning:** Blood relatives, close relatives
  - **Example:** *When all is said and done, few people understand you like your own **flesh and blood**, even if you don't get along with them.*
- 

## Helicopter Parenting

- **Meaning:** Overattentive child-raising
  - **Example:** *The trend these days is toward **helicopter parenting**. When I was young children had much more independence, and I think it helped them.*
- 

## Kith and Kin

- **Meaning:** Family (collectively)
  - **Example:** *When you go on a trip, it's important to buy souvenirs for your **kith and kin** back home.*
- 

## Like Father, Like Son

- **Meaning:** Sons inherit their fathers' traits and preferences, often even without realizing it.
  - **Example:** *John was a great fisherman, and there's his son Matt out on the water. **Like father, like son.***
- 

## Like Taking Candy from a Baby

- **Meaning:** Very easy
  - **Example:** *Just watch. Getting her to go out with me will be **like taking candy from a baby**.*
- 

## My Old Man, My Old Lady

- **Meaning:** My spouse
  - **Example:** *I'd love to go to the mall with you, but I told **my old man** I'd go to the football game.*
- 

## Pop the Question

- **Meaning:** Propose marriage

- **Example:** *I bought a ring, and I'm ready to **pop the question** to Patricia.*

---

### Run in the Family

- **Meaning:** Be inherited (as a trait) by multiple members of a family
- **Example:** *I'm not surprised Maria has started playing in a band. Musical talent **runs in her family**.*

---

### Small Fry

- **Meaning:** People or organizations with little influence; children
- **Example:** *We're still **small fry** compared to the major companies in the field.*

---

### Spare the Rod and Spoil the Child

- **Meaning:** It is necessary to physically punish children in order to raise them right.
- **Example:** *Marlena is too permissive with her children. **Spare the rod and spoil the child**, I say.*

---

### This Is Not Your Father's \_\_\_\_\_

- **Meaning:** This item has been much updated from its earlier versions.
- **Example:** *You may not have liked this bat in the past. But **this is not your father's Louisville Slugger**.*

---

### Throw the Baby Out with the Bath Water

- **Meaning:** Eliminate something good while discarding the bad parts of something
- **Example:** *Yes, the sales presentation has problems, but I don't think we should start fresh with a new one. We don't need to **throw the baby out with the bathwater**.*

---

### Up the Duff

- **Meaning:** Pregnant
- **Example:** *They hadn't planned to get married, but Janice found out she was **up the duff**.*

## Part 2

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### Idioms about Baby and Children

- **(Having a) Bun in the Oven:** Pregnant
- **Babe In Arms:** A baby being carried
- **Babe In The Woods:** An innocent, naive person
- **Baby Boomer:** A person born in the years following World War II, when there was a temporary marked increase in the birth rate
- **Born on The Wrong Side of the Blanket:** Born to parents who were not married
- **Boys will be Boys:** A phrase of resignation used when boys get into trouble or are stereotypically reckless or rowdy
- **Child's Play:** A very easy task
- **Chip off the Old Block:** Someone who resembles a direct ancestor, usually the father
- **Like a Kid in a Candy Store:** To be so excited about one's surroundings that one acts in a childlike or silly way
- **Sleep Like a Baby:** To experience a very deep and restful sleep; to sleep soundly
- **Throw the Baby Out with the Bath Water:** To discard something valuable or important while disposing of something worthless
- **Wet Behind the Ears:** Inexperienced, immature, new to something

---

### Idioms about Mothers

- **A face only a mother could love:** A very ugly face
- **A mama's boy:** A boy or man who allows his mother to have too much influence on him.
- **A mother hen:** A person who looks out for the welfare of others, especially to an overprotective degree
- **A tiger mother:** A strict and demanding mother
- **At one's mother's knee:** If you learned to do something when you were a young child.
- **Be tied to (one's) mother's apron strings:** An adult make deeply attached and needing his mother. Dating from the era when mothers wore aprons

- **Everyone and his mother:** Used to express a large number or a majority of people.
- **Expectant mother:** A pregnant woman.
- **Experience is the mother of wisdom:** This idiom is used to mean that people learn from what happens to them.
- **He that would the daughter win, must with the mother first begin:** This is a proverb, which means that if you intend to marry a woman, first try to win her mother on your side.
- **Like mother, like daughter:** Daughters tend to do what their mothers did before them.
- **Mother house:** The principle house in a religious order
- **Mother Nature:** The force that controls the natural world
- **Mother's milk:** Something necessary and important
- **The mother of all (something):** A large collection of a particular type of thing
- **To keep mum:** To keep quiet about something

# Chapter 8

## Idioms to Express Feelings and Emotions

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## All the Rage

- **Meaning:** Very much in fashion
- **Example:** *Yoga pants are **all the rage** in North America right now, but in two years, probably nobody will be wearing them.*

---

## Meeting of the Minds

- **Meaning:** Strong instinctive agreement on something
- **Example:** *At first the negotiations weren't going well, but when the president of the company and I sat down over drinks, we had a **real meeting of the minds**.*

---

## Scare the Living Daylights out of someone

- **Meaning:** Frighten someone severely
- **Example:** *I know my boyfriend was just trying to be nice, but when I opened the door to my apartment and everyone yelled "Surprise!" It **scared the living daylights** out of me.*

---

## Out of Sight, Out of Mind

- **Meaning:** When you don't see something or someone, you tend to forget about that thing or person.
- **Example:** *When I broke up with Jake, I was heartbroken. But since he moved away, I hardly ever think about him. **Out of sight, out of mind!***

---

## Tear-Jerker

- **Meaning:** A film or book that makes you cry
- **Example:** *The film "Love Story," with its story of young love cut short by death, was one of the most successful **tear-jerkers** of all time.*

---

## Pet Peeve

- **Meaning:** A small thing that you find particularly annoying
- **Example:** *My **pet peeve** is people who bring large numbers of items to the express checkout at the supermarket.*

---

## Pull Yourself Together

- **Meaning:** Control your emotions; recover from a strong emotional upset
- **Example:** *I know it was hard seeing your ex-boyfriend at the bar, but you need to **pull yourself together** so we can go home.*

## Get Carried Away

- **Meaning:** Become overly enthusiastic
- **Example:** *Sure, you can invest a little money, but don't **get carried away** – people lose lots of money on the stock market.*

## Think Big

- **Meaning:** Consider ambitious plans; avoid becoming overly concerned with details
- **Example:** *Sales this year have been good. Caitlin said we should **think big** and consider whole new product lines.*

## Not Playing with a Full Deck

- **Meaning:** Stupid, mentally deficient or impaired
- **Example:** *John's suggestions in the meeting were ridiculous. Sometimes I think he's **not playing with a full deck**.*  
Note: "A few bricks short of a load" is one of many variants.

## Under the Impression

- **Meaning:** Believing something, perhaps mistakenly
- **Example:** *I was **under the impression** that you were going to pick me up at the airport.*

## Out of Sorts

- **Meaning:** Slightly ill; not feeling well
- **Example:** *Sorry I was so quiet during the meeting. I've been **out of sorts** all day.*

## Short Fuse

- **Meaning:** A quick temper; a tendency to anger quickly
- **Example:** *Brandon has a **short fuse**, but he calms down as quickly as he gets angry.*

## Off One's Rocker

- **Meaning:** Crazy, nuts, insane
- **Example:** *Have you heard Dmitri is going to try to climb Mt. Rinjani in the rainy season? He must be **off his rocker**.*

## Bang One's Head Against the Wall (Against a Brick Wall)

- **Meaning:** Try repeatedly to do something without making progress

- **Example:** *Susana has been working on the data for three hours, but she says she's just **banging her head against the wall**.*
- 

### Young at Heart

- **Meaning:** Having a youthful outlook, regardless of age
  - **Example:** *Jack is **young at heart**. He's 84 years old, but he's always willing to go out dancing.*
- 

### Take It Easy

- **Meaning:** Don't hurry; relax; don't get angry
  - **Example:** *I've been working too hard. I just want to head for the islands and **take it easy** for a few days.*
- 

### Passing Fancy

- **Meaning:** A temporary interest or attraction
  - **Example:** *Many people thought Uggs were just a **passing fancy**, but they've been popular for several years now.*
- 

### On the Ball

- **Meaning:** Prepared, alert, competent
  - **Example:** *Ralph is **on the ball**. I think we can leave the office under his supervision for a few days.*
- 

### On the Fence

- **Meaning:** Undecided between two choices
  - **Example:** *I'm **on the fence** about the election – both candidates have their good and bad points.*
- 

### Living in Cloud Cuckooland

- **Meaning:** Having unrealistic or foolish beliefs or plans.
  - **Example:** *Norma thinks she's going to be making \$100,000 euros by next year. She's **living in cloud cuckooland**.*
- 

### Mad as a Hatter

- **Meaning:** Mentally ill, psychotic
- **Example:** *Gerald used to be one of the most logical people I know. Now he's **mad as a hatter**.*

Note: This is rare in the USA.

---

## Freudian Slip

- **Meaning:** Accidental use of an incorrect word; a revealing slip of the tongue
  - **Example:** *That was a real **Freudian slip** when Jane referred to her boyfriend as her father.*
- 

## Fly off the Handle

- **Meaning:** To become suddenly enraged
  - **Example:** *How was I to know Tom would **fly off the handle** when I asked him about his father?*
- 

## Draw a Blank

- **Meaning:** Be unable to remember something
  - **Example:** *I **drew a blank** when she asked me to name all of her sisters.*
- 

## Drive Someone Up the Wall

- **Meaning:** Deeply irritate someone
  - **Example:** *When Marie hums at her desk, it **drives up up the wall**.*  
Note: Some people also say “drives me up a wall.”
- 

## Down in the Dumps

- **Meaning:** Depressed, sad
  - **Example:** *You've been **down in the dumps** all week. Let's go to the football game – that'll cheer you up.*
- 

## Chuck a Wobbly

- **Meaning:** To act in an emotional way
  - **Example:** *I know you're upset. But don't **chuck a wobbly** in your meeting with the boss; he won't like it.*  
Note: You can also say “throw a wobbly.”
- 

## Cock-A-Hoop

- **Meaning:** Elated, excited
  - **Example:** *Fans are **cock-a-hoop** about the team's acquisition of the new striker.*
- 

## Blow One's Stack

- **Meaning:** To lose one's temper and explode in anger

- **Example:** *I swear, if Cindy asks me about the tickets one more time, I'm going to **blow my stack**.*
- 

### At the End of One's Rope (Tether)

- **Meaning:** Running out of endurance or patience
  - **Example:** *Amber keeps whistling in the office. She doesn't even realize she's doing it, but I'm **at the end of my rope**.*
- 

### At Wit's End

- **Meaning:** Frustrated because all measures to deal with something have failed
  - **Example:** *I'm **at my wit's end** trying to deal with the insect infestation – nothing I've tried has worked.*
- 

### Air Rage

- **Meaning:** Angry behavior inside an airplane
  - **Example:** *Most people are calm on long plane flights, but once in a while you have to deal with **air rage**, usually fueled by alcohol.*
- 

### Act One's Age

- **Meaning:** To be mature, not childish
- **Example:** *I don't care if Amber did steal your doll. That's enough crying. **Act your age!***

# Chapter 9

## Food Idioms

## Part 1: Most Common Food Idioms

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### (A) Baker's Dozen

- **Meaning:** Thirteen
  - **Example:** *Your order of a dozen doughnuts is ready. We'll throw in one more to make it a **baker's dozen**.*
- 

### (A) Hard/Tough Nut to Crack

- **Meaning:** A difficult problem
  - **Example:** *The problem of how to motivate employees can be a **tough nut to crack sometimes**.*
- 

### (Have) Egg on One's Face

- **Meaning:** Be embarrassed, feel foolish
  - **Example:** *Fred **had egg on his face** after claiming he could climb the tree but then having to give up.*
- 

### (Put) All One's Eggs In One Basket

- **Meaning:** Rely on a specific course of events
- **Example:** *If we depend on a rise in the price of oil, we're **putting all our eggs in one basket**. What if it falls?*

Note: Generally used with “put,” as in the example.

---

### (Take It with a) Grain of Salt

- **Meaning:** Be skeptical of a statement
  - **Example:** *James will tell you all about his adventures in Africa, but **take it with a grain of salt**.*
- 

### (The) Icing on the Cake

- **Meaning:** A bonus; something that makes a good situation even better
  - **Example:** *My new girlfriend is very intelligent. That she's beautiful is just **icing on the cake!***
- 

### (To Be on the) Gravy Train

- **Meaning:** To make an easy living, to benefit easily from one's association with something that brings profits
- **Example:** *Ever since her company's stock split, Rita's been on the **gravy train** – she was given stock as a benefit.*

Note: This expression probably originates from the language of railroad hoboes.

---

### (To Have) Bigger Fish To Fry

- **Meaning:** To have more important things to do
- **Example:** *I can't help you with your presentation right now. I **have bigger fish to fry**.*

## Part 2: A-Z list of Food Idioms

### Food Idioms (A)

---

#### A Few Sandwiches Short Of A Picnic

- **Meaning:** Abnormally stupid, not really sane
- **Example:** *Sometimes I think John's **a few sandwiches short of a picnic**. He never seems to understand directions.*

---

#### A lot on one's plate

- **Meaning:** A lot to do
- **Example:** *I just have **a lot on my plate** right now while I'm finishing up my degree and doing this huge project for work.*

---

#### Above The Salt

- **Meaning:** Of high standing or honor.
- **Example:** *We'll seat you at the head table-not next to the president, but definitely **above the salt**.*

Note: Very old-fashioned

---

#### Acknowledge The Corn

- **Meaning:** Admit to a mistake, especially a small one; point out one's own shortcomings, or another's
- **Example:** *OK, i'll **acknowledge the corn**. I took the candy bars from the kitchen table.*

---

#### Acquired Taste

- **Meaning:** Something one learns to appreciate only after trying it repeatedly

- **Example:** *Asparagus is an **acquired taste**. I hated it as a child, but now I love it.*

---

### All Sizzle And No Steak

- **Meaning:** Failing to live up to advance promotion or reputation
- **Example:** *Some people feel the Apple Watch is **all sizzle and no steak**.*

---

### All The Tea In China

- **Meaning:** Great wealth, a large payment
- **Example:** *I wouldn't go out with him for **all the tea in China!***

### Apple of One's Eye

- **Meaning:** A favorite person or thing, a person especially valued by someone
- **Example:** *Edward has only one child, and she's the **apple of his eye**.*

---

## Food Idioms (B)

### Bad Egg

- **Meaning:** Someone who is not to be trusted
- **Example:** *James is a **bad egg**. Don't trust him.*

Note: This is much less common than its affectionate opposite, "good egg."

---

### Bar Fly (or Barfly)

- **Meaning:** Someone who spends much of his or her time in bars
- **Example:** *The place was filled with **barflies** and other assorted creatures of the night.*

---

### Best (Greatest) Thing Since Sliced Bread

- **Meaning:** An innovative development
- **Example:** *Have you tried the new iphone? It's the **greatest thing since sliced bread**.*

---

### Big Cheese

- **Meaning:** An important person in a company or organization
- **Example:** *Let's all be on our best behavior today. The **big cheese** (the president) will be visiting the office.*

---

## Bite Off More Than You Can Chew

- **Meaning:** Try to do more than one is capable of doing
  - **Example:** *That's a huge lawn. Are you sure you can finish mowing it today? Don't **bite off more than you can chew**.*
- 

## Bottom of the Barrel

- **Meaning:** Low-quality choices
  - **Example:** *Our top five candidates for the job have all turned us down. We're really getting down to the **bottom of the barrel** here - maybe we should place a new ad.*
- 

## Be like chalk and cheese

- **Meaning:** Things or people who are very different and have nothing in common
  - **Example:** *The hotels here and in Russia **are like chalk and cheese** - you'll find much better service here.*
- 

## Bring Home the Bacon

- **Meaning:** Earn money for one's family
  - **Example:** *I can't complain about my husband. He may not be the world's most glamorous guy, but he **brings home the bacon**.*
- 

## Food Idioms (C)

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### Carrot-and-Stick (Approach)

- **Meaning:** A tactic in which rewards are offered, but there is also the threat of punishment
  - **Example:** *The boss is using a **carrot-and-stick approach**-if we meet the sales target, we'll get raises, but if we don't, he'll cut vacation time.*
- 

### Cherry-Pick

- **Meaning:** To present evidence selectively to one's own advantage
  - **Example:** *The president was accused of **cherry-picking** research to justify her programs.*
- 

### Chew the Fat

- **Meaning:** Chat for a considerable length of time

- **Example:** *We're not doing much – just **chewing the fat** and having a few beers. Why don't you come over?*

---

### Cook Someone's Goose

- **Meaning:** To insure someone's defeat, to frustrate someone's plans
- **Example:** *Let's steal one of the spark plugs from Don's car. That'll **cook his goose!***

---

### Couch Potato

- **Meaning:** A lazy person who watches a great deal of television
- **Example:** *Mark is a **couch potato**. I can't remember the last time he left his apartment except to go to work.*

---

### Cry over Spilt (USA: Spilled) Milk

- **Meaning:** To waste energy moaning about something that has already happened
- **Example:** *The money is gone. Don't **cry over spilt milk** – there will be new opportunities.*

---

### Cut the Mustard

- **Meaning:** Do something adequately
- **Example:** *I don't think I'm too old to **cut the mustard**. If you give me a chance, I'm sure I can do the job well.*

---

## Food Idioms (E)

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### Eat Humble Pie

- **Meaning:** To admit defeat or error, to accept humiliation
- **Example:** *The coach was forced to **eat humble pie** after confidently projecting victory.*

Note: This is also used in the USA but is less common.

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### Eat Someone's Lunch

- **Meaning:** Defeat someone thoroughly
- **Example:** *China is systematically teaching people to speak African languages, but very few Americans can speak them. When it comes to trade with Africa, they're going to **eat America's lunch**.*

## Food Idioms (F)

---

### Food for thought

- **Meaning:** Something that makes you think carefully
  - **Example:** *The teacher's advice certainly gave me **food for thought**.*
- 

### From Scratch

- **Meaning:** From individual ingredients, not using a prepared mix
  - **Example:** *I'm looking forward to tonight – my girlfriend is baking me a cake **from scratch** for my birthday.*
- 

### From Soup to Nuts

- **Meaning:** Everything; from beginning to end
  - **Example:** *Amazon started out as a bookseller, but now they offer everything **from soup to nuts**.*
- 

## Food Idioms (H)

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### Hard nut to crack

- **Meaning:** A difficult problem or a difficult person
  - **Example:** *This problem is getting me down. It's a **hard nut to crack**.*
- 

### Have a Lot on One's Plate

- **Meaning:** Be busy, be in the middle of many ongoing tasks
  - **Example:** *i've **got a lot on my plate** right now, but why don't we meet next week?*
- 

### Have bigger fish to fry

- **Meaning:** Have more important things to do
  - **Example:** *It's really not worth my time; i've **got bigger fish to fry!***
- 

### Have egg on your face

- **Meaning:** They are made to look foolish or embarrassed
  - **Example:** *The CEO really **had egg on his face** after he went on stage to demonstrate the new product and couldn't get it to work right.*
- 

### Have One's Cake and Eat It, Too

- **Meaning:** To want two incompatible things (usually used in the negative)

- **Example:** *If you want lower taxes, you have to expect problems in school funding-you can't **have your cake and eat it too**.*

### Hit the Spot

- **Meaning:** Be very satisfying (said of something eaten)
- **Example:** *We went to Mark's Midtown for lunch. I had a grilled chicken sandwich, and it really **hit the spot**.*

### Hot Potato

- **Meaning:** A controversial subject or difficult project that is best avoided
- **Example:** *Tax increases will be a **hot potato** in this election, and most candidates will try to avoid taking a stand on them even if they think they're necessary.*

Note: This is often used in political contexts.

## Food Idioms (I)

### In a Nutshell

- **Meaning:** Expressed in a few words
- **Example:** *You should apply to the university now. There are lots of reasons, but **in a nutshell**, it will end up costing you more if you wait.*

### In a Pickle

- **Meaning:** In need of help, in a difficult spot
- **Example:** *I'm really **in a pickle**. I spent all the money I had saved, and I have no way to pay next semester's tuition bill.*

## Food Idioms (L)

### Like Two Peas in a Pod

- **Meaning:** Bearing a strong resemblance
- **Example:** *Hallie and Maria aren't related, but they're so similar – **like two peas in a pod**.*

### Low-Hanging Fruit

- **Meaning:** Easy parts of a task; solutions easy to obtain

- **Example:** *It's easy to solve those puzzles – they're **low-hanging fruit**. But the Sunday puzzle is much more difficult.*

## Food Idioms (N)

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### Not Mince Words

- **Meaning:** Moderate or weaken a statement
- **Example:** *The boss **didn't mince words** in my performance evaluation. She said if I didn't improve, I'd be fired.*

### Nutty as a fruitcake

- **Meaning:** Crazy; idiotic; wacky.
- **Example:** *The kids are always **nutty as fruitcakes** when they've had something sugary to eat.*

## Food Idioms (P)

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### Pie in the sky

- **Meaning:** Something that is unrealistic or that cannot be achieved
- **Example:** *He keeps talking about how he'll move to Los Angeles to be a famous actor, but it's just **pie in the sky** if you ask me.*

### Piece of Cake

- **Meaning:** Very easily done
- **Example:** *i've already done the difficult parts – finishing the presentation tonight will be a **piece of cake**.*

### Piping Hot

- **Meaning:** Very hot (generally said of food)
- **Example:** *Nothing tastes better than fresh cinnamon rolls, served piping hot.*

### Pour (Rub) Salt into (on) the Wound (an open wound)

- **Meaning:** Worsen an insult or injury; make a bad situation worse for someone
- **Example:** *Breaking up with George was bad enough, but seeing him out with Carla just **poured salt into an open wound**.*

## Food Idioms (R)

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### Read the Tea Leaves

- **Meaning:** Predict the future from small signs
- **Example:** *Everyone says things are going great for our company, but if you **read the tea leaves** you'll see trouble ahead.*

Note: This comes from the practice of fortune-telling by examining the patterns of tea leaves in the bottom of a cup.

---

### Red Meat

- **Meaning:** Political appeals designed to excite one's core supporters; demagoguery
- **Example:** *The candidate threw **red meat** to the base, blaming immigrants for the country's problems.*

Note: This is often used in the phrase "throw red meat to the base," as in the example.

---

### Rotten to the Core

- **Meaning:** Entirely evil
- **Example:** *Sam is **rotten to the core**. He steals, he lies, he's violent. I'm glad he's in prison.*

## Food Idioms (S)

---

### Sell Like Hotcakes

- **Meaning:** Be sold very quickly
- **Example:** *The new Honda is expected to **sell like hotcakes** after it's released.*

### Simmer Down

- **Meaning:** Become less angry; regain one's composure
- **Example:** ***Simmer down**. I won't discuss this while you're yelling at me.*

### Slower than molasses

- **Meaning:** Exceptionally slow or sluggish; not fast at all.

- **Example:** *This old laptop my dad gave me is a piece of junk. It's **slower than molasses!***

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### Small Potatoes

- **Meaning:** Unimportant, insignificant
- **Example:** *We're wasting our time on **small potatoes**. Let's get to the big news that made us have this meeting.*

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### Sour Grapes

- **Meaning:** Spiteful disparagement of a goal one has failed to achieve
- **Example:** *Since Susan got the job, Francisco has been saying he didn't want it. But that's just **sour grapes**.*

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### Spill the Beans

- **Meaning:** Reveal a secret
- **Example:** *We had planned this to be a surprise party for you, but Jason **spilled the beans**.*

### Food Idioms (T)

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#### Take something with a pinch (grain) of salt

- **Meaning:** If you take what someone says with a pinch of salt, you do not completely believe it.
- **Example:** *I heard that you can get a free movie ticket if you wear red, but Kevin told me that, so I'm going to **take it with a pinch of salt**.*

---

#### Take the Cake

- **Meaning:** Be the most extreme instance
- **Example:** *Julie has made some poor choices in men over the years, but this **takes the cake**.*

Note: This is generally used as “this takes the cake” or “that takes the cake,” as in the example.”

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#### The Whole Enchilada

- **Meaning:** All of something.
- **Example:** *No, I don't want just the basic version of the software. I'll take it all. Give me **the whole enchilada**.*

Note: This expression is North American.

## There's No Such Thing as a Free Lunch

- **Meaning:** Nothing is given to you without some expectation of something in return.
- **Example:** *There's no such thing as a free lunch. You'll have to turn over personal information, and it'll cause you trouble later.*

## Too Many Cooks Spoil the Broth

- **Meaning:** A project works best if there is input from a limited number of people
- **Example:** *Let's divide the project staff into small teams. Too many cooks spoil the broth.*

Note: Too many cooks in the kitchen is another form. This is a proverb.

## Tough cookie

- **Meaning:** A very determined person
- **Example:** *Our principal was a little lady, but she was one tough cookie!*

## Food Idioms (W, Y)

### Wake Up and Smell the Coffee

- **Meaning:** Stop deluding yourself
- **Example:** *Emily, your boyfriend has been seen out with three different women just this week. You need to wake up and smell the coffee.*

### Walk on Eggshells

- **Meaning:** To have to act very sensitively in order to avoid offending someone
- **Example:** *I'm always walking on eggshells when I meet with Tim. He has good ideas, but he gets angry so easily.*

### Watering Hole

- **Meaning:** A place where alcoholic beverages are served, a bar
- **Example:** *Watering holes in New York City range from simple taverns serving a shot and a beer to [spectacular](#) skyscraper bars with 360-degree views and elaborate craft cocktails.*

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## You Can't Make an Omelet (Omelette) Without Breaking Some Eggs

- **Meaning:** Achieving a major goal requires the ability to tolerate some problems
- **Example:** *The staff is arguing over the workload, but we have to continue. **You can't make an omelet without breaking some eggs.***

# Chapter 10

## Idioms about Law and Politics

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## Crime Idioms

- **Caught Red-Handed:** Apprehended while committing a crime
  - **Five-Finger Discount:** Shoplifting
  - **Foul Play:** Crime, typically murder
  - **Get Off Scot Free:** Be accused of wrongdoing but pay no penalty at all
- 

## Law Idioms

- **(Caught) Bang to Rights:** Caught in an unlawful or immoral act without any mitigating circumstances.
  - **Above The Law:** Exempt from the laws that apply to everyone else.
  - **Act Of Congress:** Hard to get, said of authorization
  - **All Rights Reserved:** Said of a published work; all reproduction rights are asserted by the copyright holder
  - **Bail Out:** To rescue someone from a bad situation, to shield someone from the consequences of his or her actions
  - **Ball and Chain:** 1. One's spouse (derogatory but often affectionate); 2. An ongoing burden
  - **Letter of the Law:** The explicit meaning of a law, as opposed to the spirit of the law, the law's general intention
  - **Open-and-Shut Case:** A situation, especially a legal proceeding, with a clear, certain outcome
  - **Take the Fifth:** Refuse to answer because answering might incriminate or cause problems for you
- 

## Police Idioms

- **Throw The Book At:** Prosecute legally as strongly as possible
  - **Blue Light Special:** 1. A temporary sale at a discount store. 2. A traffic stop by the police.
- 

## Politics Idioms

- **Stick It to the Man:** Do something that frustrates those in authority
- **Waka-Jumping:** Change political parties (said of politicians themselves)

- **Think Tank:** A group of experts engaged in ongoing studies of a particular subject; a policy study group
- 

### War Idioms & Expressions

- **(The) Cavalry:** Assistance from a powerful source in a difficult situation.
- **Pin Someone Down:** Demand a decision or clear answer
- **Scorched Earth (Tactics, Policy, etc.):** Ruthless, extremely destructive
- **Shot Across the Bow:** A warning of more serious actions to come
- **Up in Arms:** Angry, protesting (usually said of a group)
- **Weekend Warrior:** Someone who has an office job but enjoys contact sports on weekends; a member of a military reserve force (whose exercises are typically on weekends)

# Chapter 11

## Nature Idioms in English

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## Flowers Idioms

- **Pushing Up Daisies:** Dead
  - **Nip (Something) In The Bud:** Deal with a problem before it becomes large
- 

## Geographical Features Idioms

- **(It's a) Small World!:** It is surprising to encounter connections with familiar people in unexpected places.
- **(The) Grass Is (Always) Greener in the Next Pasture (on the Other Side):** A different situation may often seem better than one's own
- **Across The Pond:** On or to the other side of the Atlantic Ocean.
- **Back Forty:** Remote, inaccessible land
- **Back Of Beyond:** A remote location
- **Between a Rock and a Hard Place:** Caught between two undesirable options
- **Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea:** In a difficult position
- **Beyond the Pale:** Too morally or socially extreme to accept
- **Go with the Flow:** To accept the way things naturally seem to be going
- **King of the Hill:** At the top of one's field; the most influential person in a given field or area
- **Living Under a Rock:** Ignorant of important events. Usually used as a question: Have you been living under a rock?
- **Make a Mountain out of a Molehill:** To take something too seriously; to make too much of something
- **Man Cave:** A part of the house, often the basement, that is left to the man of the household, perhaps with a workshop, a television for watching sports, etc.
- **Out in the Sticks:** In a remote location; far from a city
- **Over the Hill:** Past one's prime
- **Over the Moon:** Extremely happy
- **Set the Thames on Fire:** Do something amazing. Usually used in the negative.
- **Slippery Slope:** A series of undesirable effects that, one warns, could result from a certain action

- **Stem the Tide:** To stop or control the growth of something, usually something unpleasant.
- **Swim Against the Tide:** Do something contrary to a trend or usual opinion
- **Test the Waters:** Experiment with something cautiously
- **The Coast Is Clear:** We are unobserved; it is safe to proceed.
- **Tip of the Iceberg:** A small, visible part of a much larger problem
- **Too Busy Fighting Alligators to Drain the Swamp:** So occupied with multiple challenges that one can't keep the big picture in mind
- **Up a Creek:** In a very bad situation
- **Virgin Territory:** Something that has never been explored, physically or intellectually
- **Water Under the Bridge:** Something in the past that's no longer worth worrying about

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## Plants Idioms

- **(The) Wrong End of the Stick:** To have the wrong idea about something
- **(To Be) Out of One's Gourd:** Crazy, irrational
- **(To) Beat About the Bush (UK); Beat Around the Bush (USA):** To speak in an unclear way and reluctantly instead of being direct and frank
- **Bed of Roses:** A comfortable situation
- **Can't See the Forest for the Trees:** Is unable to maintain a wider perspective
- **Doesn't Amount to a Hill of Beans:** Is unimportant, is negligible
- **Go Out on a Limb:** Assert something that may not be true; put oneself in a vulnerable position
- **Hear (Something) Through the Grapevine:** To learn something via gossip
- **In Clover:** Benefiting from a positive financial situation
- **Knock on Wood; Touch Wood:** Let's hope I have good luck or continue to have good luck.
- **Make Hay (While the Sun Shines):** To take advantage of an opportunity at the right time.
- **Mother Nature:** The natural world

- **No Tree Grows to the Sky:** Growth cannot continue indefinitely.
- **Olive Branch:** A peace offering, an attempt at reconciliation.
- **Put Down Roots:** Establish oneself in a place; settle
- **Stick-in-the-Mud:** A person who dislikes or adapts slowly to new ideas
- **Too Many To Shake A Stick At:** A large number
- **Bean Counters:** Accountants, finance professionals in an organization
- **Out of the Woods:** No longer in danger
- **Beat Around the Bush:** To speak in a roundabout way in order to avoid confronting an unpleasant topic
- **(The) Last Straw:** A problem, burden, or mistake that finally makes someone run out of patience
- **To Bear Fruit:** To develop in a profitable or positive way
- **Apples and Oranges:** Of two different classes, not comparable

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### Weather Idioms

- **(A Breath of) Fresh Air:** Something new and innovative, especially in contrast to a stagnant state of affairs
- **(Every Cloud Has a) Silver Lining:** A positive aspect of a bad situation
- **A Cold Day In July:** (Something that) will never happen
- **Have (one's) head in the clouds:** Not know what is happening around you or out of touch with reality
- **Break The Ice:** To get something started, particularly by means of a social introduction or conversation
- **Brainstorm:** To generate many ideas quickly
- **All Wet:** Completely mistaken
- **A Snowball's Chance in Hell:** Little to no likelihood of occurrence or success
- **Under the Weather:** Feeling ill
- **On Cloud Nine:** Extremely happy
- **Rain Cats And Dogs:** Rain heavily
- **Cold Day in Hell:** A condition for something that would be extremely unlikely to occur
- **In a Fog:** Confused, not mentally alert
- **Chase Rainbows:** To pursue unrealistic goals

- **Batten Down the Hatches:** Prepare for a storm
- **Get Wind of:** Hear about
- **Spit into The Wind:** Wasting time on something futile
- **Cook Up a Storm:** Cook a great deal of food
- **Come Rain and Shine:** Do regularly, whatever the circumstances
- **Right as Rain:** Absolutely correct
- **(Be) a Breeze:** Very easy
- **Blood and Thunder:** A dramatic, spectacular performance
- **Dead of Winter:** The coldest, darkest part of winter
- **A Storm in a Teacup:** Unnecessary anger or worry about an unimportant or trivial matter
- **Take a Rain Check:** Decline an invitation but suggest that you'll accept it at a later time.
- **Throw Caution to the Wind:** To act in a daring way, without forethought
- **Bone Dry:** Completely dry, totally without moisture
- **When Hell Freezes Over:** Never
- **On Thin Ice:** In a risky situation, especially in an interpersonal relationship
- **Dog Days of the Summer:** The hottest day of summer
- **Be Snowed Under:** Be extremely busy with work or things to do
- **Blow Hot and Cold:** Shift one's level of enthusiasm repeatedly
- **Bolt From the Blue:** Something completely unexpected
- **Catch Some Rays:** To sit or lie outside in the sun
- **Come Hell or High Water:** No matter what happens
- **Heavens Open:** Start to rain heavily
- **In the Dark:** Not informed
- **It Never Rains but It Pours:** Bad luck and bad things tend to happen at the same time
- **Old Man Winter:** Winter
- **Once in a Blue Moon:** Very rarely
- **Perfect Storm:** A rare combination of disastrous occurrences
- **Pure as the Driven Snow:** To be innocent and chaste (frequently used ironically)
- **Rain on Someone's Parade:** Spoil someone's plans
- **Soak Up the Sun:** To enjoy the sun
- **Steal Someone's Thunder:** Upstage someone

- **Stormy Relationship:** Relationship that has a lot arguments and disagreement
- **Three Sheets to the Wind:** Very drunk

### Animals Idioms

- **(A) Different Kettle of Fish:** Not comparable (with something that has been under discussion)
- **(A) Leopard Can't Change Its Spots:** People can't successfully disguise or change their essential natures.
- **(Bird in a) Gilded (Golden) Cage:** In a luxurious but confining situation
- **(Don't) Have a Cow:** To get upset, angry (usually used in the negative)
- **(Go) Hog Wild:** Act in a completely uninhibited way
- **(Have a) Kangaroo Loose:** In The Top Paddock Be slightly crazy
- **(His) Bark Is Worse Than His Bite:** Hostile in manner, but actually friendly
- **(Like) Herding Cats:** Difficult to coordinate (said of members of a group)
- **(Like) Tits on a Bull, As Useless as Tits on a Bull:** Completely useless
- **(On a) Fishing Expedition:** Looking for evidence without any solid suspicion of wrongdoing
- **(Open Up a) Can of Worms, A Whole New Can of Worms:** Create a new set of difficult problems
- **(Play) Whack-a-Mole (Confront):** a situation in which when one problem is solved, another appears
- **(Someone's) Goose Is Cooked:** In serious trouble, with no hope of improvement
- **(Straight From the) Horse's Mouth:** Heard directly from one of the people involved
- **(That's the) Nature of the Beast:** The essence of something; just the way something is
- **(The) Straw That Broke the Camel's Back:** A single small thing that exceeds a limit of patience
- **(The) Straw That Broke the Camel's Back:** A final difficulty that exhausts someone's patience or causes the collapse of something

- **(The) Tail That Wags the Dog:** A small part of something that controls the whole thing
- **(The) Worm Has Turned:** The situation has been reversed.
- **(There's) More Than One Way to Skin A Cat:** There are multiple ways to accomplish this task.
- **(To Be a) Fly on the Wall:** To be an unnoticed observer
- **(To Have a) Bee In One's Bonnet:** To be excited in a negative way; to express a pet peeve
- **(To Have the) Bit Between One's Teeth:** In control of a situation
- **(To Put the) Cat Among(st) the Pigeons:** Cause a disturbance or disruption, usually intentionally
- **(To) Beat a Dead Horse:** To continue to argue about something that has been settled
- **800-Pound Gorilla:** A person or group powerful enough to disregard the rules; a big, dominant person or group
- **A Busy Bee:** A busy, active person who moves quickly from task to task.
- **A Cat Has Nine Lives:** Cats seem to get away with dangerous things
- **A Cat Nap:** A short sleep during the day
- **A Cold Fish:** Someone who is not often moved by emotions, who is regarded as being hard and unfeeling.
- **A Cat in Gloves Catches No Mice:** You can't get what you need if you're too careful.
- **A Dog in The Manger:** A person who selfishly prevent others from using, enjoying or profiting from something even though he/ she cannot use or enjoy it himself.
- **A Guinea Pig:** Someone who is part of an experiment or trial
- **A Home Bird:** Somebody who prefers to spend his social and free time at home.
- **A Lame Duck:** A person or enterprise (often a business) that is not a success and that has to be helped.
- **A Little Bird Told Me:** I don't wish to divulge where I got the information
- **A Lone Wolf:** Someone who is not very social with other people
- **A Rare Bird:** Somebody or something of a kind that one seldom sees.

- **A Scaredy-Cat:** Someone who is excessively scared or afraid.
  - **A Sitting Duck:** A person or object in a vulnerable position that is easy to attack or injure.
- 

## Fruits Idioms

- **A Bite at The Cherry:** A good opportunity that isn't available to everyone
- **A Plum Job:** An easy and pleasant job that also pays well
- **Apples and Oranges:** Of two different classes, not comparable
- **As American as Apple Pie:** Very or typically American
- **As Red as A Cherry:** Very red
- **Bad Apple:** A discontented, trouble making, or dishonest person
- **Cherry-Pick:** To select the best or most desirable
- **Cool as A Cucumber:** Calm and composed even in difficult or frustrating situations; self-possessed
- **Go Bananas:** To become irrational or crazy
- **Go Pear-Shaped:** To fail; to go wrong
- **A Lemon:** A vehicle that does not work properly
- **Life is A Bowl of Cherries:** Life is wonderful or very pleasant
- **Not Give A Fig:** To not care at all about something
- **To be A Peach:** Someone or something that is extremely good, impressive, or attractive
- **Peaches and Cream:** A situation, process, etc., that has no trouble or problems
- **Second Banana:** A person in a subservient position
- **Sour Grapes:** Disparagement of something that has proven unattainable
- **Speak with A Plum in (one's) Mouth:** To speak in a manner that is indicative of a high social class.

# Chapter 12

## People Idioms and Sayings

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## Personal Names Idioms

- **Not Know Jack:** Not know anything
- **The Real McCoy:** A genuine item
- **No Names, No Pack Drill:** By not accusing anyone specifically, I may avoid trouble.
- **Any Tom, Dick or Harry:** Any ordinary person
- **Rob Peter to Pay Paul:** Pay off a debt with another loan; solve a problem in such a way that it leads to a new problem
- **On the Fritz:** Not working properly
- **Jack of All Trades:** A person with a wide variety of skills
- **Even Steven:** Owing nothing; tied (in a game)
- **(Between) Buckley's and Nunn:** Almost nil

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## Appearance Idioms & Sayings

- **(Not a) Spring Chicken:** (No longer) young
- **All Dressed Up And Nowhere To Go:** Prepared (with clothing or otherwise) for an event that does not occur
- **All Fur Coat And No Knickers:** Superficially attractive, physically or otherwise
- **Beauty Is Only Skin Deep:** External appearance is a superficial basis for judging someone
- **Clean Up Nicely:** Look good when one is dressed up. Usually said of women
- **Dead ringer:** Very similar in appearance
- **Don't Judge a Book by Its Cover:** Don't be deceived by looks; don't rely on looks when judging someone or something
- **Knockout:** An extremely beautiful woman
- **Put one's Face On:** Apply cosmetics

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## Skills Idioms | People Idioms

- **Amateur Hour:** A display of incompetence
- **As Far as I Can Throw (someone):** Only slightly
- **Bag of Tricks:** A set of methods or resources
- **Beat Someone To The Draw:** To accomplish or obtain something more quickly than someone else
- **Drop the Ball:** Fail to fulfill one's responsibilities; make a mistake
- **Find One's Voice:** Become more confident in expressing oneself

- **Green as Grass:** Lacking training, naïve; often said of young people in new jobs
  - **Lose One's Touch:** Suffer a decline in one's skill at doing something
  - **Not Cut Out for (Something):** Not naturally skillful enough to do something well
  - **Sharp as A Tack:** Mentally agile
- 

### Death Idioms

- **Full Fathom Five:** Lost deep in the sea
  - **Kick the Bucket:** To die
  - **Over My Dead Body:** Under no circumstances
  - **Pop One's Clogs:** To die
  - **Pushing Up Daisies:** Dead and buried
  - **Set in Stone:** Fixed; unchangeable
  - **Six Feet Under:** Dead and buried
  - **Sleep with the Fishes:** Dead, often by murder
  - **Swim with the Fishes:** Have been killed, especially with involvement of organized crime
  - **Whistle Past the Graveyard:** Remain optimistic despite dangers; be clueless
  - **Your Number Is Up:** You are going to die (or suffer some bad misfortune or setback)
- 

### Ethnicity Idioms

- **Jim Crow:** The system of racial segregation in the American South prior to the American civil rights movement.
  - **Get Off Scot Free:** Be accused of wrongdoing but pay no penalty at all
- 

### Nationality Idioms

- **Dutch Uncle:** A highly critical person
  - **French Leave:** Absence without permission
  - **It's All Greek to Me:** It is unintelligible, impossible to understand
  - **Welsh (Welch) on a Deal:** Not observe the terms of an agreement
- 

### Religion Life Idioms

- **(A) Snowball's Chance in Hell:** No chance at all

- **(Going to) Hell in a Hand basket:** Declining rapidly; getting much worse quickly
- **(The) Devil is in the Details:** The idea sounds simple, but it's likely to involve small things that prove difficult.
- **Dance with the Devil:** Knowingly do something immoral
- **All Hell Breaks Loose:** The situation becomes chaotic.
- **All Over Hell'S Half Acre:** All over the place; everywhere.
- **Angel's Advocate:** Someone who takes a positive outlook on an idea or proposal
- **Baptism by Fire:** A difficult task given right after one has assumed new responsibilities
- **Be A Cold Day In Hell:** (Something that) will never happen
- **Cross to Bear:** A problem one must deal with over a long time, a heavy burden
- **Devil's Advocate:** Someone who argues a point not out of conviction, but in order to air various points of view
- **Hail Mary (n. Or adj.):** A desperate, last-ditch attempt
- **Is the Pope Catholic?** Isn't the answer obvious?
- **Not Have a Prayer:** Have no chance of success
- **Preach to the Choir, Preach to the Converted:** To make an argument with which your listeners already agree
- **Preaching to the Choir:** Making arguments to those who already agree with you
- **Sacred Cow:** An individual or organization that one cannot criticize
- **Saving Grace:** Something that redeems a bad situation

# Chapter 13

Social Life Idioms, Phrases and Sayings

## Advice and Criticism Idioms

- **Where There's Smoke, There's Fire:** If there is typical evidence of something, the most likely explanation is that it is actually occurring.
- **A Picture Is Worth a Thousand Words:** A visual presentation can communicate something very effectively
- **It's Not Over Till the Fat Lady Sings:** Do not give up too soon; things may improve.
- **Don't Cry Over Spilled Milk:** Don't worry about minor things.

## Art Idioms

- **Behind the Scenes:** In a way not apparent to the public
- **Waiting in the Wings:** Ready to assume responsibilities but not yet active, ready to become a successor

## Conflict Idioms | Social Life Idioms

- **(To Have) Been Through The Wars:** Hardened, having much experience of difficult conditions, worn out
- **(To Open Up a) Can of Whoop-Ass:** To attack another person physically (very casual, slightly vulgar)
- **Add Fuel To The Fire:** Worsen already existing tension
- **Add Insult To Injury:** Compound a defeat with humiliation or mockery
- **Agree To Disagree:** Accept or set aside a disagreement
- **Ancient History:** Something, such as a disagreement, that happened long ago and ought to be forgotten
- **At Each Other's Throats:** Constantly and strongly arguing
- **At Loggerheads:** In a state of persistent disagreement.
- **Bad Blood:** Enmity or hatred that stems from something in the past
- **Clear the Air:** Defuse tension, be honest about conflict so as to reduce it
- **Cut (Someone) To the Quick:** To deeply hurt someone emotionally
- **Dead Ahead:** Directly ahead, either in a literal or a figurative sense
- **Dirty Look:** A facial manner that signifies disapproval

- **Game of Chicken:** A conflict situation in which neither side will back down for fear of seeming cowardly (chicken)
- **Get Bent Out of Shape:** Become angry, upset
- **Give Someone a Piece of Your Mind:** Angrily tell someone what you think
- **Have It Out with Someone:** To have an argument with someone in order to settle a dispute
- **Let Bygones Be Bygones:** Agree to forget about a past conflict
- **On the Warpath:** Very angry
- **Pick a Fight:** Intentionally provoke a conflict or fight with someone
- **Pissing Contest:** A meaningless argument or competition, typically between males
- **Rake Over the Ashes:** Restart a settled argument; examine a failure
- **Rub It In:** Say something that makes someone feel even worse about a mistake
- **Sore Point:** A sensitive topic for a particular person
- **Spoiling for a Fight:** Combative, wanting conflict, eager to argue or fight
- **Stab Someone in the Back:** To betray (somebody)
- **Take Someone to Task:** Reprimand someone strongly
- **Throw Elbows:** Be combative; be aggressive (physically or figuratively)
- **To Have a Chip on One's Shoulder:** To be combative, to be consistently argumentative
- **Witch Hunt:** An organized attempt to persecute an unpopular group of people and blame them for a problem.
- **Spoiling for a Fight:** Combative, wanting conflict, eager to argue or fight
- **Point the Finger At:** Blame (someone)
- **At Loggerheads:** In a state of persistent disagreement
- **Let Bygones Be Bygones:** Agree to forget about a past conflict
- **Have a Bone to Pick (with Someone):** To want to discuss something someone has done that has angered or annoyed you.

## Daily Activities Idioms

- **(A) Walk in the Park:** Something simple or easy, in comparison to something more difficult
- **Beat Someone to the Punch:** Do something before or faster than someone else
- **Cooking Up a Storm:** Cooking a great deal of food
- **Crash a Party:** To attend a party without being invited
- **Give Something a Whirl:** Attempt something without being totally familiar with it
- **Have a Tough Row to Hoe:** Be faced with a task that is difficult because of unfavorable conditions
- **Hit the Books:** To study (generally said of students)
- **Hit the Hay:** To go to bed
- **Home Away from Home:** A habitual hangout; a place one frequents often and where one feels welcome
- **In Touch:** In contact
- **Knock Some Sense Into:** To beat someone in order to teach him/her a lesson. May be used figuratively.
- **Lose Touch:** To fall out of contact
- **Make Someone's Day:** Do something pleasing that puts someone in a good mood
- **Me Time:** Activities undertaken for one's own enjoyment, free from responsibilities to others.
- **On a Roll:** Having a consistent run of success
- **Pass With Flying Colors:** To succeed brilliantly, as on an exam or other test
- **Play With Fire:** Do something very risky
- **Put a Thumb on the Scale:** Try to influence a discussion in an unfair way, cheat
- **Ring a Bell:** Sound familiar
- **Spin A Yarn:** Tell a story
- **Take The Mickey (Piss) (Out Of Someone):** Make fun of or ridicule someone
- **Trip the Light Fantastic:** Dance well; do ballroom dancing
- **Hit the Sack:** To go to bed
-

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## Drinking Idioms | Social Life Idioms

- **(See the) Glass (as) Half Empty/Half Full:** To have a pessimistic (optimistic) perspective
- **110 Proof:** Stronger than strong, very strong, pure
- **Amber Nectar:** Beer
- **Back Burner (On The):** Not urgent; set aside until later
- **Bend an Elbow:** Drink alcoholic beverages at a tavern
- **Champagne taste on a beer budget:** Expensive or extravagant tastes or preferences that are beyond one's economic means.
- **Do 12-Ounce Curls:** Drink beer
- **Drink the Kool-Aid:** Accept a set of ideas uncritically, often dangerous ones
- **Dutch Courage:** Alcohol drunk with the intention of working up the nerve to do something
- **Go Cold Turkey:** Stop using an addictive substance suddenly, without tapering off
- **Hair of the Dog (That Bit You):** A small amount of the alcoholic beverage that caused your hangover
- **Hold One's Liquor:** Be able to drink a large amount without being affected
- **In His Cups:** Drunk
- **On the Wagon:** Not drinking alcoholic beverages; having given up drinking alcoholic beverages
- **One for the Road:** A final drink (or something else) before leaving
- **Paint the Town Red:** Go out drinking and partying
- **Wet Your Whistle:** Drink something

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## Drugs Idioms

- **On Steroids:** In a very large form
- **Pipe Dream:** An unrealistic hope, a fantasy
- **Put That in Your Pipe and Smoke It:** Accept and consider what I'm saying, even if you don't like it!
- **Slip Someone a Mickey:** Add a drug to an alcoholic drink in order to knock someone out
- **Up to Snuff:** Meeting a basic standard
- **High as a Kite:** Strongly under the influence of drugs or intoxicants

## Gambling Idioms | Social Life Idioms

- **(Come) Down to the Wire:** (Be uncertain) all the way to the last minute
- **(Having an) Ace Up One's Sleeve:** To have a secret strength or surprise plan
- **(The) Die Is Cast:** The decision has been made; there is no going back.
- **(To) Play One's Ace:** To deploy one's strongest asset
- **According To Hoyle:** Properly, in accordance with established procedures
- **Ace In The Hole:** A hidden advantage
- **All Bets Are Off:** What seemed certain is now unclear
- **All The Marbles:** The entire prize or reward
- **Behind the Eight (or 8) Ball:** At a serious disadvantage
- **Bet the Farm:** Risk everything; spend all one's money on something in hopes of success
- **Break the Bank:** Exhaust one's financial resources
- **Busted Flush:** A failure, someone or something that seemed promising but did not develop well
- **Call a Spade a Spade:** To speak frankly and directly about a problem
- **Cash In One's Chips:** 1. To take advantage of a quick profit 2. To die
- **Have a Lot Riding On (Something):** Be depending on the successful outcome or development of something
- **Have an Ace Up One's Sleeve:** To have a hidden advantage
- **Have Hand of Aces/Hold All the Aces:** To be in a very strong position in a competition
- **Hit the Jackpot:** Do something that brings great success
- **In the Cards:** Likely; likely to occur
- **Play the Percentages:** Bet on or rely on what is most likely to happen
- **Put Your Money Where Your Mouth Is:** Back up your opinions with a financial commitment
- **Roll the Dice On:** Take a risk
- **Run the Table:** Win every game or contest

- **Shell Game:** A method of deception in which you conceal your actions by moving something frequently
- **Show Your Cards:** Reveal your resources or plans
- **Sweeten the Pot:** Increase the amount of winnings potentially available in a game of chance, especially poker
- **The Deck Is (The Cards Are):** Stacked Against You Unfavorable conditions exist.
- **Play the Ponies:** Bet on horse racing.
- **The Only Game in Town:** The sole option for a particular service.
- **Throw the Game:** Intentionally lose a contest, usually in collusion with gamblers
- **Tip One's Hand:** Reveal one's advantages; reveal useful information that one possesses
- **Play Your Cards Right:** Exploit a situation to your best advantage
- **Up the Ante:** Raise the stakes; increase the importance of something under discussion
- **When the Chips Are Down:** When a situation becomes urgent or difficult
- **Throw the Match:** Intentionally lose a contest, usually in collusion with gamblers
- **Throw the Fight:** Intentionally lose a contest, usually in collusion with gamblers

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### Sexuality Idioms | Social Life Idioms

- **Bat/Play for Both Teams:** To be bisexual.
- **Bat/Play for the Other Team:** To be homosexual.
- **Fu\*\* (Or Screw) The Dog (Pooch):** To make an embarrassing error
- **Babe Magnet:** A man to whom women are attracted
- **Bedroom Eyes:** An expression of the eyes that seems to invite sex
- **Boy Toy:** A young man who is the lover of an older, often wealthier woman (see toyboy)
- **Come Out of the Closet:** Reveal a secret about oneself, usually that one is gay (homosexual)
- **Have the Hots for (Somebody):** To be (sexually) attracted to somebody

- **Knock Up:** To impregnate a woman. Often used in the form knocked up.
- **Make Love:** To have sexual intercourse
- **Red-Light District:** A neighborhood with many houses of prostitution
- **Sugar Daddy:** A rich man who is generous with younger women in return for sexual favors
- **The Birds and the Bees:** Human sexuality and reproduction
- **Rob the Cradle:** To be sexually or romantically involved with someone who is very young
- **Wandering Eye:** A tendency to look at and desire women or men other than one's committed romantic partner.

# Chapter 14

## Travel Idioms

## Part 1: Most Common Idioms

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### (Did Not) Come to Town on a Turnip Truck

- **Meaning:** Is not naive
  - **Example:** *You can't fool me. I didn't come to town on a turnip truck, you know.*
- 

### (Not) rock the boat

- **Meaning:** To do or say something that might endanger stable situation or upset the status quo
  - **Example:** *None of my family members are fighting with each other right now, so please don't rock the boat by bringing up politics or any other controversial topics.*
- 

### (That) Train Has Left the Station

- **Meaning:** The process is already underway; the time for discussion is over.
  - **Example:** *I know you don't like it that we're spending money on renovations, but that train has left the station – construction crews are already here.*
- 

### (To) Criticize the Paint Job on the Titanic

- **Meaning:** To obsess over small flaws and miss serious ones
  - **Example:** *Sally will sometimes miss the big picture and criticize the paint job on the Titanic.*
- 

### (To) Send Flying

- **Meaning:** Knock something into the Air
  - **Example:** *The impact of the car hitting my bicycle sent me flying, but I wasn't seriously hurt.*
- 

### (We'll) Cross That Bridge When We Come to It (Get to It)

- **Meaning:** Deal with a situation when it is actually encountered
- **Example:** *I think we should start construction. I know we haven't completed all the financing details, but we'll cross that bridge when we come to it.*

## Part 2: A to Z list

### Travel Idioms & Transport Idioms (A)

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#### All Hands on Deck

- **Meaning:** Everyone must help.
  - **Example:** *We have to finish the new catalogue next week. No one is allowed to go on vacation – I need **all hands on deck**.*
- 

#### Any Port in a Storm

- **Meaning:** If you're in trouble, you'll turn to anything that improves the situation.
  - **Example:** *I'm not crazy about my job, but jobs are hard to find, and i've got bills to pay. **Any port in a storm**.*
- 

#### Asleep at the Wheel (Switch)

- **Meaning:** Not paying attention to one's work; not doing one's job diligently.
  - **Example:** *Josh was **asleep at the wheel**, and we didn't have a response ready when our competition put out a press release attacking our product.*
- 

### Travel Idioms & Transport Idioms (B)

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#### Backseat driver

- **Meaning:** A passenger in a car who gives unwanted advice to the driver is called a backseat driver.
  - **Example:** *John quickly became annoyed at Mary's tendency to become a **backseat driver** whenever he drove her somewhere, so he just began to let her drive.*
- 

#### Bump in the Road

- **Meaning:** A temporary problem, a small setback
  - **Example:** *There are supply shortages for our new product right now, but they're just a **bump in the road**. I'm sure we'll solve the problem quickly.*
- 

#### Burn One's Bridges

- **Meaning:** Leave a job or a relationship on such bad terms that one does not stay in contact

- **Example:** *You may have disliked your last job, but it's never a good idea to **burn your bridges** – you might need a recommendation from them later on.*

## Travel Idioms & Transport Idioms (C, D)

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### Carry Coals To Newcastle

- **Meaning:** Supply something that is unneeded; engage in useless labor
- **Example:** *Trying to market oranges in the USA right now is like **carrying coals to Newcastle** – there's already a market glut there.*

### Circle the Wagons

- **Meaning:** To prepare as a group to defend against attack, adopt a defensive posture
- **Example:** *There's no need to **circle the wagons** after the evaluation of your workgroup. You're basically doing a good job, and I'm just pointing out areas where you can improve.*

### Drive a hard bargain

- **Meaning:** To arrange a transaction so that it benefits oneself.
- **Example:** *Sal is known to **drive a hard bargain**, so I doubt you'll get that car for the price you want.*

## Travel Idioms & Transport Idioms (F)

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### Fall Off the Wagon

- **Meaning:** To begin using alcohol (or another problem substance) after quitting
- **Example:** *I saw Carl drinking a beer tonight. He's **fallen off the wagon**.*

### Fell off the back of a Truck/lorry

- **Meaning:** Probably stolen or illicitly obtained; said of something offered for sale to avoid discussing its origins
- **Example:** *Yes, this computer is cheap. It **fell off the back of a truck/ lorry!***

---

## Fifth Wheel

- **Meaning:** A superfluous person
- **Example:** *I'm not really part of your group. If I come to the party i'll just be a **fifth wheel**.*

---

## Fly by the Seat of One's Pants

- **Meaning:** To improvise, to make decisions without planning or preparation
- **Example:** *I'm going to need the help of the entire team on this project-right now I haven't had time to learn about the subject, and I'm **flying by the seat of my pants**.*

---

## Fly Highs

- **Meaning:** Be very successful, especially temporarily
- **Example:** *The mayor is **flying high** right now since council approved his bridge proposal.*

---

## Travel Idioms & Transport Idioms (G)

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### Give the Green Light to

- **Meaning:** Approve something; allow something to proceed
- **Example:** *The district manager **gave the green light to** our new marketing plan.*

---

### Go Off The Rails

- **Meaning:** To go wrong, to begin acting strangely or badly
- **Example:** *The project really **went off the rails** when Amber took over and fired the best people working on it.*

---

### Go the Extra Mile

- **Meaning:** Put forth greater-than-expected effort
- **Example:** *I appreciate it that you **went the extra mile** and worked late to finish the project.*

## Travel Idioms & Transport Idioms (H)

---

### Highways and byways

- **Meaning:** You take large and small roads to visit every part of the country.
- **Example:** *The city council voted to plant new trees along all the **highways and byways** of the town.*

### Hit the road

- **Meaning:** To leave
- **Example:** *We better **hit the road** before traffic get seven worse.*

## Travel Idioms & Transport Idioms (I)

---

### In a Rut

- **Meaning:** Confined by routine, bored and seeking new experiences
- **Example:** *I'm **in a rut**. I need new challenges at my job, or I'm going to start looking for something else.*

### In Someone's Wheelhouse

- **Meaning:** In someone's strongest area of competence or enthusiasm
- **Example:** *I thought you'd like this article about computer programming – computers are **Example:** , aren't they?*

### In the Driver's Seat

- **Meaning:** In a dominant position, in control
- **Example:** *The New England Patriots are **in the driver's seat**, with a 12-point lead going into the fourth quarter.*

### In the Same Boat

- **Meaning:** In a similar situation; similarly vulnerable
- **Example:** *Peter is worried about losing his job, and we're **in the same boat** – I could lose mine at any time too.*

### Itchy feet

- **Meaning:** A person who has itchy feet is someone who finds it difficult to stay in one place and likes to travel and discover new places.

- **Example:** *I hated living in London, and I started getting **itchy feet**.*

### It's Not Rocket Science

- **Meaning:** It's not difficult to understand.
- **Example:** *Just depress the accelerator and slowly let the clutch out. **It's not rocket science.***

## Travel Idioms & Transport Idioms (J)

### Jump on the Bandwagon

- **Meaning:** To follow a trend; follow the crowd
- **Example:** *Quentin always **jumps on the** latest management **bandwagon**. Last year it was Total Quality Control; this year it's Japanese Motivation Strategies.*

### Jump the Track

- **Meaning:** To shift suddenly from one activity or line of thought to another
- **Example:** *Often Anjali will be talking about one thing, and then she'll **jump the track** and start talking about something else completely.*

### Just Around the Corner

- **Meaning:** Occurring soon
- **Example:** *New Year's Eve is **just around the corner**. Have you made party plans yet?*

## Travel Idioms & Transport Idioms (L, M)

### Light at the End of the Tunnel

- **Meaning:** A sign of hope after a long period of difficulties
- **Example:** *Lindsay has been having a lot of personal problems. But yesterday she said she's seeing **light at the end of the tunnel**.*

### Lower the Boom

- **Meaning:** Implement a punishment; reprimand severely
- **Example:** *A new camera system has been set up, and police are ready to **lower the boom** on people who run red lights.*

## Miss the Boat

- **Meaning:** Be too late for something; miss an opportunity
- **Example:** *There were great jobs available in Indonesia, but the government has tightened work restrictions on foreigners. Guess I missed the boat.*

## My way or the highway

- **Meaning:** If you do not do things the way I want or require, then you can just leave or not participate.
- **Example:** *I'm here to create the best musicians in the world, so in this room, it's **my way or the highway!***

## Travel Idioms & Transport Idioms (O)

### Off His Trolley

- **Meaning:** Crazy, insane
- **Example:** *My brother just spent a lot of money on really questionable stocks. I think he's **off his trolley.***

### On a Wing and a Prayer

- **Meaning:** Relying solely on hope and enthusiasm in a difficult situation
- **Example:** *After my divorce I was broke and jobless. I was getting by **on a wing and a prayer.***

### On the Fly

- **Meaning:** While in motion, while traveling
- **Example:** *i'll eat dinner **on the fly** and meet you at 8.*

### On the home stretch

- **Meaning:** You are approaching the end of a task, a project, a race or a journey.
- **Example:** *Ten exams done and two more to do – you're **on the home stretch** now.*

### On the Right Track

- **Meaning:** Pursuing a correct course in doing or learning something

- **Example:** *I haven't solved the math problem yet, but I'm pretty sure I'm **on the right track**.*

## Travel Idioms & Transport Idioms (P)

---

### Paddle one's own canoe

- **Meaning:** To be able to act independently.
- **Example:** *Now that you're 30, people expect you to **paddle your own canoe**—you can't just live with your parents forever.*

### Puddle Jumper

- **Meaning:** A small airplane, used on short trips
- **Example:** *There's a **puddle jumper** that flies from San Francisco to San Jose. It's expensive, but driving takes forever.*

### Put the cart before the horse

- **Meaning:** To do things out of the proper order.
- **Example:** *If you **put the cart before the horse** and pick out your dream car before you have any money saved up for a down payment, you'll just end up disappointed.*

## Travel Idioms & Transport Idioms (R)

---

### Rearrange the Deck Chairs on the Titanic

- **Meaning:** Taking superficial actions while ignoring a much larger and perhaps fatal problem
- **Example:** *Why are we worrying about the price of office supplies? We could be bankrupt in three months! We're just **rearranging deck chairs on the Titanic**.*

### Rock the Boat

- **Meaning:** Cause a disruption in a group. Often used in the negative: don't rock the boat.
- **Example:** *You'll have a chance later to be heard. For now, **don't rock the boat**.*

### Run a Tight Ship

- **Meaning:** Manage an organization in a strict, well-regulated way

- **Example:** *I know the accounting procedures may seem difficult, but I want to **run a tight ship** here.*

---

### Run on Fumes

- **Meaning:** To be in a situation where one's energy or resources is almost exhausted
- **Example:** *I need to get home and rest. I've been **running on fumes** for hours.*

---

## Travel Idioms & Transport Idioms (S)

### Shift Gears

- **Meaning:** Change the subject, or change what one is doing
- **Example:** ***Shifting gears** a bit, I'd like to talk about next year's budget before we end the meeting.*

---

### Spin One's Wheels

- **Meaning:** Engaging in activity that yields no progress; getting nowhere
- **Example:** *i've been working on this math problem for four hours, but I'm just **spinning my wheels**. It's time to take a break and look at it from a new perspective.*

---

## Travel Idioms & Transport Idioms (T)

### Take the High Road

- **Meaning:** Refuse to descend to immoral activities or personal attacks
- **Example:** *Although my opponent has run negative advertising against me, I'm going to **take the high road** and talk about my accomplishments.*

---

### Take The Wind out of Someone's Sails

- **Meaning:** To reduce someone's confidence, ofte by doing something unexpected
- **Example:** *When my teacher criticized my speech, that really **took the wind out of my sails**.*

---

## That Ship Has Sailed

- **Meaning:** That opportunity has passed.
  - **Example:** *It's too late for you to ask her to marry you – she's involved with someone else now. **That ship has sailed.***
- 

## Third Rail

- **Meaning:** A topic so sensitive that it is dangerous to raise. This is especially used in political contexts
  - **Example:** *Social Security is often called the **third rail** of American politics-”even the suggestion of changing it can be fatal to a politician’s career.*
- 

## Thirty-Thousand-Foot View

- **Meaning:** A very broad or general perspective
  - **Example:** *From a **thirty-thousand-foot view**, I suppose sports contests don't matter much, but they can be very enjoyable.*
- 

## Throw Someone Under the Bus

- **Meaning:** Sacrifice someone else’s interests for your own personal gain” Karina is too ambitious.
  - **Example:** *If it means that she'll get ahead in the company, she's perfectly willing to **throw you under the bus.***
- 

## Touch Water

- **Meaning:** Be launched. Said of a boat.
  - **Example:** *Our catamaran **touched water** 30 years ago for the first time, and we're still sailing her.*
- 

## Train Wreck

- **Meaning:** Anything that develops in a disastrous way
  - **Example:** *After the **train wreck** of my class presentation, I really need to do well on the exam.*
- 

## Turn the Corner

- **Meaning:** To begin to improve after a problem
  - **Example:** *Joe is still suffering from the injuries he received in the accident, but the doctors think he's **turned the corner.***
-

## Travel Idioms & Transport Idioms (W, Y)

---

### Walk the Plank

- **Meaning:** Be forced to resign a position
  - **Example:** *Several of the president's aides will have to **walk the plank** so that he himself can survive.*
- 

### Where (When) the Rubber Meets the Road

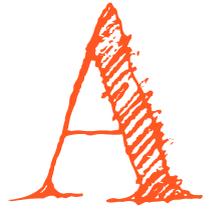
- **Meaning:** In reality; where an idea meets a real-world test
  - **Example:** *The plan looks good on paper. But we'll see what happens **when the rubber meets the road**.*
- 

### Your Mileage May Vary

- **Meaning:** You may get different results. This does not necessarily refer to a car, although it may.
- **Example:** *I think the new database program is great, but **your mileage may vary**, depending on what you use it for.*

# Chapter 15

A - Z list of Idioms



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**A Bit Much:** More than is reasonable; a bit too much

**A Bite at The Cherry:** A good opportunity that isn't available to everyone

**A Busy Bee:** A busy, active person who moves quickly from task to task.

**A Cat Has Nine Lives:** Cats seem to get away with dangerous things

**A Cat in Gloves Catches No Mice:** You can't get what you need if you're too careful.

**A Cat Nap:** A short sleep during the day

**A Cold Day In July:** (Something that) will never happen

**A Cold Fish:** Someone who is not often moved by emotions, who is regarded as being hard and unfeeling.

**A Cut Above:** Slightly better than

**A Cut Below:** Inferior to; somewhat lower in quality than

**A Day Late And A Dollar Short:** Too delayed and insignificant to have much effect

**A Dog in The Manger:** A person who selfishly prevent others from using, enjoying or profiting from something even though he/ she cannot use or enjoy it himself.

**A Few Sandwiches Short Of A Picnic:** Abnormally stupid, not really sane

**A Good Deal:** To a large extent, a lot

**A Great Deal:** To a very large extent

**A Guinea Pig:** Someone who is part of an experiment or trial

**A Hair's Breadth:** A very small distance or amount

**A Home Bird:** Somebody who prefers to spend his social and free time at home.

**A Hundred And Ten Percent:** More than what seems to be the maximum

**A Lame Duck:** A person or enterprise (often a business) that is not a success and that has to be helped.

**A Leg Up:** An advantage, a boost

**A Lemon:** A vehicle that does not work properly

**A Life Of Its Own:** An independent existence

**A Little Bird Told Me:** I don't wish to divulge where I got the information

**A Little Bird Told Me:** I got this information from a source I cannot reveal.

**A Little from Column A, a Little from Column B:** A course of action drawing on several different ideas or possibilities

**A Lone Wolf:** Someone who is not very social with other people

**A Lot on One's Plate:** A lot to do

**A Million and One:** Very many

**A Notch Above:** Superior to; higher in quality

**A Penny for Your Thoughts:** What are you thinking?

**A Penny Saved is A Penny Earned:** Every small amount helps to build one's savings

**A Picture Is Worth a Thousand Words:** A visual presentation can communicate something very effectively

**A Plum Job:** An easy and pleasant job that also pays well

**A Rare Bird:** Somebody or something of a kind that one seldom sees.

**A Scaredy-Cat:** Someone who is excessively scared or afraid.

**A Second Bite At The Cherry:** A Second chance to do something

**A Sight for Sore Eyes:** Someone that you're pleased to see

**A Sitting Duck:** A person or object in a vulnerable position that is easy to attack or injure.

**A Snowball's Chance in Hell:** Little to no likelihood of occurrence or success

**A Stitch in Time Saves Nine:** Fix something quickly, because if you don't, it will just get more difficult to fix

**A Stone's Throw:** A very short distance

**A Storm in a Teacup:** Unnecessary anger or worry about an unimportant or trivial matter

**A Tall Order:** A difficult task

**A Week Is A Long Time In \_\_\_\_\_:** In the field mentioned, the situation may change rapidly

**About Time:** Far past the desired time

**About To:** On the point of, occurring imminently

**Above And Beyond:** More than is expected or required

**Above Board:** Openly, without deceit. Honestly, reputably.

**Above The Law:** Exempt from the laws that apply to everyone else.

**Above The Salt:** Of high standing or honor

**Above Water:** Not in extreme difficulty. Especially said of finances

**Accident Of Birth:** Luck in something due to family good fortune

**Accident Waiting To Happen:** A dangerous way of setting up or organizing something

**According To Hoyle:** Properly, in accordance with established procedures

**Ace In The Hole:** A hidden advantage

**Ace Up One's Sleeve:** A surprise advantage of which others are not aware.

**Acid Test:** A crucial event that determines the worth of something

**Acknowledge The Corn:** Admit to a mistake, especially a small one; point out one's own shortcomings, or another's

**Acquired Taste:** Something one learns to appreciate only after trying it repeatedly

**Across The Board:** In relation to all categories, for everyone

**Across The Pond:** On or to the other side of the Atlantic Ocean.

**Act High and Mighty:** Be arrogant, presume that one is better than others

**Act Of Congress:** Hard to get, said of authorization

**Act One's Age:** To be mature, not childish

**Actions Speak Louder Than Words:** One's character and intentions are shown more accurately by one's actions than by one's words.

**Achilles' Heel:** The weak point of an otherwise powerful person or organization

**Add Fuel To The Fire:** Worsen already existing tension

**Add Insult To Injury:** Compound a defeat with humiliation or mockery

**Add Insult to Injury:** Humiliate someone in addition to doing damage to him or her

**After One's Own Heart:** Similar in a pleasing way

**After The Fact:** Too late; after something is completed or finalized

**After The Lord Mayor's Show (UK):** Anticlimactic; occurring after something impressive

**Against The Clock:** Forced to hurry to meet a deadline

**Against the Clock:** In a very limited amount of time; with a shortage of time being the main problem

**Against The Grain:** Contrary to one's natural inclinations

**Against The Run Of Play:** A typical of the way a game has been going

**Age Before Beauty:** Something said by a younger woman to an older one, for instance allowing her to pass through a doorway

**Agree To Disagree:** Accept or set aside a disagreement

**Agreement In Principle:** In a negotiation, an agreement in which not all details have been worked out

**Aha Moment:** Sudden realization, the point at which one suddenly understands something

**Ahead Of One's Time:** Offering ideas not yet in general circulation; highly creative

**Ahead Of The Curve:** Innovative, devising new ideas in advance of others

**Ahead Of The Curve:** Offering ideas not yet in general circulation; highly creative

**Ahead Of The Game:** Making faster progress than anticipated; ahead of schedule

**Air Rage:** Angry behavior inside an airplane

**Airy Fairy:** whimsical, nonsensical, impractical

**Albatross Around One's Neck:** Something from one's past that acts as a hindrance

**Alive and Kicking:** In good health despite health problems

**All Along:** For the entire time something has been happening

**All And Sundry:** Everyone(separately) Each one.

**All Bark And No Bite:** Tending to make verbal threats but not deliver on them

**All Bets Are Off:** What seemed certain is now unclear

**All Dressed Up And Nowhere To Go:** Prepared (with clothing or otherwise) for an event that does not occur

**All Ears:** Listening willingly, waiting for an explanation

**All Eyes And Ears:** Attentive

**All Eyes Are On:** Watching alertly or attentively. Having prominent eyes. Everyone is paying attention to

**All Fur Coat And No Knickers:** Superficially attractive, physically or otherwise

**All Hands on Deck:** Everyone must help.

**All Hat And No Cattle:** Pretentious, full of bluster

**All Hell Breaks Loose:** The situation becomes chaotic.

**All In A Day's Work (Excl.):** That's what I'm here for; although I have accomplished something, it is part of what I'm expected to do

**All In Good Time:** Eventually; at a more favorable time in the future. This phrase encourages one to be patient.

**All in One Piece:** Safely

**All It's Cracked Up To Be:** As good as claims or reputation would suggest

**All Mouth And No Trousers:** Superficial, engaging in empty, boastful talk, but not of real substance

**All Over But The Shouting:** Certain to end in a specific way

**All Over Hell'S Half Acre:** All over the place; everywhere.

**All Over The Board:** Everywhere, in many different locations

**All Over The Map:** Everywhere; in many different locations

**All Over The Place:** Everywhere; in many different locations

**All Rights Reserved:** Said of a published work; all reproduction rights are asserted by the copyright holder

**All Roads Lead to Rome:** There is more than one effective way to do something; many different methods will produce the same result

**All Set:** Ready, prepared, finished

**All Sizzle And No Steak:** Failing to live up to advance promotion or reputation

**All Talk and No Trousers:** Prone to empty boasts

**All Told:** With everything taken into consideration

**All That Jazz:** Similar things, similar qualities, et cetera

**All The Marbles:** The entire prize or reward

**All The Rage:** Very fashionable

**All the Rage:** Very much in fashion

**All The Same:** Anyway; nevertheless; nonetheless.

**All The Tea In China:** Great wealth, a large payment

**All Things Being Equal:** In the event that all aspects of a situation remain the same

**All Things Considered:** Taking all factors into consideration

**All Thumbs:** Clumsy

**All Very Well:** True to a certain extent

**All Wet:** Completely mistaken

**Along The Lines Of:** In general accordance with, in the same general direction as

**Amateur Hour:** A display of incompetence

**Amber Gambler:** Someone who accelerates to try to cross an intersection before a traffic light turns red

**Amber Nectar:** Beer

**American Dream (The):** The belief among Americans that hard work leads to material success

**An Apple a Day Keeps the Doctor Away:** Eating healthy foods will keep one from getting sick (and needing to see a doctor)

**An Axe: To Grind A grievance,** a disagreement with someone that justifies confrontation.

**An Early Bird:** A person who gets up early in the morning, or who starts work earlier than others.

**An Eye for an Eye:** Justice in which reparation or vengeance exactly matches the harm caused to the victim

**An Offer One Can't Refuse:** An extremely attractive offer

**Ancient History:** Something, such as a disagreement, that happened long ago and ought to be forgotten

**And All That:** Et cetera, and so on.

**And Counting:** And the number just mentioned is increasing (or decreasing)

**And Change:** And an additional amount of money that's less than the next round number

**And His Mother:** An intensifier for an inclusive noun or phrase such as everyone, everybody

**And So Forth:** Indicates that a list continues in a similar manner, etc.

**And So On:** Indicates that a list continues in a similar manner, etc.

**And The Like:** And other similar items, etc.

**And Then Some:** And even more than what has just been mentioned

**Another Nail In One's Coffin:** Something that leads to someone's death, literally or figuratively.

**Answer Back:** Respond impertinently; to talk back.

**Ants In Your Pants:** Restlessness

**Any Port in a Storm:** If you're in trouble, you'll turn to anything that improves the situation.

**Any Tom, Dick or Harry:** Any ordinary person

**Angel's Advocate:** Someone who takes a positive outlook on an idea or proposal

**Angle For:** Aim toward something, try to obtain something, often indirectly or secretly

**Apple of One's Eye:** A favorite person or thing, a person especially valued by someone

**Apple of Someone's Eye:** The person that someone loves most of all and is very proud of

**Apples and Oranges:** Of two different classes, not comparable

**Apples and Oranges:** Of two different classes, not comparable

**Arm Candy:** An attractive woman accompanying a powerful or famous man at a social event

**Armed to the Teeth:** Carrying many weapons

**Around the Clock:** At all times

**As American as Apple Pie:** Very or typically American

**As Far as I Can Throw (someone):** Only slightly

**As Fit as A Fiddle:** To be healthy and physically fit

**As Pale as A Ghost:** Extremely pale

**As Pale as Death:** Extremely pale

**As Poor as a Church Mouse:** Very poor

**As Red as A Cherry:** Very red

**Asleep at the Wheel (Switch):** not paying attention to one's work; not doing one's job diligently.

**At Death's Door:** Very near death

**At Each Other's Throats:** Constantly and strongly arguing

**At Loggerheads:** In a state of persistent disagreement

**At Loggerheads:** In a state of persistent disagreement.

**At Sixes and Sevens:** Someone is in a state of confusion or not very well organized.

**At the Drop of a Hat:** Spontaneously, suddenly

**At the Eleventh Hour:** It happens when it is almost too late.

**At the End of One's Rope (Tether):** Running out of endurance or patience

**At the End of the Day:** In the final analysis; when all is said and done

**At Wit's End:** Frustrated because all measures to deal with something have failed



**Babe In Arms:** A baby being carried

**Babe In The Woods:** An innocent, naive person

**Babe Magnet:** A man to whom women are attracted

**Baby Blues:** Blue eyes.

**Baby Boomer:** A person born in the years following World War II, when there was a temporary marked increase in the birth rate

**Babysitter Test:** An evaluation of the ease of use of household appliances, especially remote control devices

**Back And Forth:** Dialogue, negotiations

**Back At You:** Same to you (used to return a greeting or insult)

**Back Burner (On The):** Not urgent; set aside until later

**Back Forty:** Remote, inaccessible land

**Back in the Day:** Formerly, when I was younger, in earlier times

**Back Of Beyond:** A remote location

**Back Office:** Support services for a business

**Back on One's Feet:** Physically healthy again

**Back to Square One:** Back to the start

**Back to Square One:** Forced to begin something again

**Back to the Drawing Board:** Forced to begin something again

**Back to the Salt Mine(s):** We have to go back to work.

**Back to the Salt Mines:** It's time for me (us) to go back to work

**Back the Wrong Horse:** To support the losing side

**Backing and Filling:** Delaying a decision by making small changes or arguing about small details

**Backseat Driver:** A passenger in a car who gives unwanted advice to the driver is called a backseat driver.

**Backseat Driver:** Someone who likes to give (often annoying) advice to the driver of a car, or the leader of some other enterprise

**Bad Apple:** A discontented, trouble making, or dishonest person

**Bad Blood:** Enmity or hatred that stems from something in the past

**Bad Egg:** Someone who is not to be trusted

**Bad Taste In One's Mouth:** Unease, a feeling that something unspecified is wrong in a situation

**Bag of Tricks:** A set of methods or resources

**Bail Out:** To rescue someone from a bad situation, to shield someone from the consequences of his or her actions

**Ball and Chain:** 1. One's spouse (derogatory but often affectionate); 2. an ongoing burden

**Ballpark Figure:** A rough estimate

**Banner Year:** A year marked by strong successes

**Bang for Your Buck:** Value for money

**Bang for Your Buck:** Value for your money

**Bang One's Head Against the Wall (Against a Brick Wall):** Try repeatedly to do something without making progress

**Baptism by Fire:** A difficult task given right after one has assumed new responsibilities

**Bar Fly (or Barfly):** Someone who spends much of his or her time in bars

**Bare One's Heart (Soul):** To confess one's deepest secrets

**Bark Up the Wrong Tree:** Pursue a mistaken approach or belief; be wrong in a course of action

**Basket Case:** So upset or stunned that one is unable to function; in a hopeless condition

**Bat/Play for Both Teams:** To be bisexual.

**Bat/Play for the Other Team:** To be homosexual.

**Batten Down the Hatches:** Prepare for a storm

**Batten Down the Hatches:** Prepare for a storm

**Be A Barrel of Laughs:** To be fun, funny, and pleasant.

**Be A Cold Day In Hell:** (Something that) will never happen

**Be An Item:** Two people are an item when they are having a romantic relationship

**Be Footloose and Fancy-Free:** To be free of responsibilities, including romantic commitments

**Be Head Over Heels (In love):** Be in love with somebody very much

**Be in Seventh Heaven:** Extremely happy

**Be in Two Minds (about something):** To not be certain about something, or to have difficulty in making a decision

**Be Like Chalk and Cheese:** Things or people who are very different and have nothing in common

**Be Lovey – Dovey:** Expressing your love in public by constantly kissing and hugging

**Be on the Mend:** Be improving after an illness

**Be Snowed Under:** Be extremely busy with work or things to do

**Bean Counters:** Accountants, finance professionals in an organization

**Bean Counters:** Accountants, finance professionals in an organization

**Beat Around the Bush:** To speak in a roundabout way in order to avoid confronting an unpleasant topic

**Beat Someone To The Draw:** To accomplish or obtain something more quickly than someone else

**Beat Someone to the Punch:** Do something before or faster than someone else

**Beat the Drum for (Something):** Speak in favor of something to try to generate support

**Beauty Is Only Skin Deep:** External appearance is a superficial basis for judging someone

**Bed of Roses:** A comfortable situation

**Bedroom Eyes:** An expression of the eyes that seems to invite sex

**Bee in One's Bonnet:** Someone who has a bee in their bonnet has an idea which constantly occupies their thoughts.

**Beggar Thy Neighbor:** To do something beneficial for oneself without worrying about how it affects others

**Behind the Eight (or 8) Ball:** At a serious disadvantage

**Behind the Scenes:** In a way not apparent to the public

**Behind the Times:** Old-fashioned

**Bell the Cat:** Take on a difficult or impossible task

**Bells And Whistles:** Attractive but unnecessary features of a product

**Belly Laugh:** Loud, hearty laughter

**Bend an Elbow:** Drink alcoholic beverages at a tavern

**Best (Greatest) Thing Since Sliced Bread:** An innovative development

**Best of Both Worlds:** Combining two qualities that are usually separate

**Bet One's Bottom Dollar (On Something):** Be certain that something will happen

**Bet the Farm:** Risk everything; spend all one's money on something in hopes of success

**Better late Than Never:** It implies that a belated achievement is better than not reaching a goal at all.

**Between a Rock and a Hard Place:** Caught between two undesirable options

**Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea:** In a difficult position

**Beyond the Pale:** Too morally or socially extreme to accept

**Beyond the Shadow of a Doubt:** Absolutely certain

**Big Apple:** An informal name for New York City

**Big Brother:** Government, viewed as an intrusive force in the lives of citizens; government spying

**Big Cheese:** An important person in a company or organization

**Big Deal:** An important event or accomplishment

**Big Fish:** An important person

**Big Picture:** A wide perspective; a broad view of something

**Big time:** If you do something big time, you do it to a great degree.

**Birds of a Feather:** People having similar characters, backgrounds, interests, or beliefs.

**Bird's-Eye View:** A view from above; a broad perspective on something

**Bite Off More Than You Can Chew:** Try to do more than one is capable of doing

**Bite the Bullet:** To do something even though it involves pain, discomfort, or difficulty

**Bite the Hand That Feeds You:** Act badly toward someone who has helped you

**Bitter Pill to Swallow:** An unpleasant fact that one must accept

**Black and White:** A clear distinction between good and bad, positive and negative

**Black Eye:** A mark of shame

**Black Sheep:** A person who does not fit into a group, especially a family

**Black-and-Blue:** Bruised, showing signs of having been physically harmed

**Blank Check:** Permission to spend or do whatever one wishes; carte blanche

**Blind Date:** When two people who have never seen each other before go on a date

**Blinded by Love:** When a person is so madly in love with somebody that they can't see the person's faults or negative characteristics

**Blood and Thunder:** A dramatic, spectacular performance

**Blow Away the Cobwebs:** If something blows away the cobwebs, it makes you feel more lively and refreshes your ideas.

**Blow Hot and Cold:** Shift one's level of enthusiasm repeatedly

**Blow Off Steam:** To express anger and frustration in a way that does no damage

**Blow One's Top:** Lose one's temper

**Blow One's Stack:** To lose one's temper and explode in anger

**Blow the Cobwebs Away (or Out of Something):** Make space for fresh ideas, encourage something new

**Blow the Whistle:** Reporting an illegal or unacceptable activity to the authorities

**Blow Up:** Explode

**Blow Your Own Trumpet:** Brag; emphasize one's own contributions

**Blue Blood** (adj. blue-blooded): Person of aristocratic background

**Blue Eyed Boy:** A person who is a favorite of those in authority; someone whose mistakes are forgiven

**Blue Light Special:** 1. a temporary sale at a discount store. 2. a traffic stop by the police.

**Bob's Your Uncle:** The rest is easy; you're almost finished

**Bolt From the Blue:** Something completely unexpected

**Bone Dry:** Completely dry, totally without moisture

**Born on The Wrong Side of the Blanket:** Born to parents who were not married

**Borrow Trouble:** Take needless risks, invite problems

**Bottom of the Barrel:** Low-quality choices

**Boy Toy:** A young man who is the lover of an older, often wealthier woman (see toyboy)

**Boys will be Boys:** A phrase of resignation used when boys get into trouble or are stereotypically reckless or rowdy

**Brainstorm:** To generate many ideas quickly

**Break a Leg:** Good luck! This is used for a stage performer-or for anyone else who is about to give some kind of a performance, such as an important speech

**Break Out in A Cold Sweat:** To perspire from fever or anxiety

**Break the Bank:** Exhaust one's financial resources

**Break The Ice:** To get something started, particularly by means of a social introduction or conversation

**Break up/ Split up (With Somebody):** End the relationship

**Bring Home the Bacon:** Earn money for one's family

**Bringing a Knife to a Gunfight:** Underequipped or unprepared

**Brush Under the Carpet:** Attempt to temporarily conceal a problem or error

**Bucket List:** Things you want to see or do before you die

**Bull in a China Shop:** A clumsy or tactless person

**Bump in the Road:** A temporary problem, a small setback

**Bundle Up:** Put on lots of warm clothing

**Burn One's Bridges:** Leave a job or a relationship on such bad terms that one does not stay in contact

**Burn the Candle at Both Ends:** To work too hard, with possible bad consequences for one's health

**Burn the Candle at Both Ends:** Work very long hours

**Burn the Midnight Oil:** To work late into the night

**Burn the Midnight Oil:** Working late into the night

**Bury (Hide) One's Head In the Sand:** Ignoring something that's obviously wrong, not facing reality

**Bury the Hatchet:** Make peace, agree to end a dispute

**Business as Usual:** A normal situation (whether related to business or not), typically restored after some change

**Busman's Holiday (UK):** A working vacation

**Busman's Holiday:** A vacation where you do the same thing you do at work, a working vacation

**Busted Flush:** A failure, someone or something that seemed promising but did not develop well

**Butter Wouldn't Melt in (Someone's):** Mouth This person is cool in manner, prim and proper

**Buy a Pig in a Poke:** To buy something with no prior inspection

**Buy Time:** Cause a delay in something with the aim of improving one's position

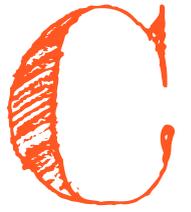
**By a Whisker:** By a very short distance

**By All Means:** Of course, certainly

**By Hook or by Crook:** By some possibly dishonest means

**By the Skin of One's Teeth:** Barely escaping disaster

**By Word of Mouth:** Via personal communications rather than written media



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**Call a Spade a Spade:** To speak frankly and directly about a problem

**Call It a Day:** Decide that one has worked enough on something for the day

**Call It a Night:** End an evening's activities and go home

**Call the Shots:** Make the important decisions in an organization

**Call the Tune:** Making important decisions and controlling a situation.

**Can't See the Forest for the Trees:** Is unable to maintain a wider perspective

**Can't Swing A Dead Cat In (Place):** Without Hitting A (Thing)  
There are many examples of [thing] in this [place].

**Carrot-and-Stick (Approach):** A tactic in which rewards are offered, but there is also the threat of punishment

**Carry a Torch (for):** To continue to be in love with someone even after a relationship has ended

**Carry Coals To Newcastle:** Supply something that is unneeded; engage in useless labor

**Carry the Can:** To take the blame for something one did not do

**Cash In One's Chips:** 1. To take advantage of a quick profit 2. To die

**Cash-Strapped:** In need of money

**Cast the First Stone:** To be the first to criticize or attack someone

**Castle in the Air:** An impractical plan

**Cat Fight:** A fight between two women

**Cat Got Your Tongue?:** Don't you have anything to say?

**Cat on a hot tin roof:** Be extremely nervous

**Cat-and-Mouse (adj.):** In a toying way; playful in an unpleasant way

**Catch One's Death of Cold:** To become very ill (with a cold/flu etc.)

**Catch Some Rays:** To sit or lie outside in the sun

**Catch Someone's Eye:** Attract someone's attention

**Catch-22:** A difficult situation from which there is no escape because options for avoiding it involve contradictions

**Cat's Paw:** A person being used by someone else, a tool

**Caught Red-Handed:** Apprehended while committing a crime

**Circle the Wagons:** To prepare as a group to defend against attack, adopt a defensive posture

**Claim to Fame:** Unusual feature or offering

**Clean Up Nicely:** Look good when one is dressed up. Usually said of women

**Clear the Air:** Defuse tension, be honest about conflict so as to reduce it

**Clip Someone's Wings:** Reduce someone's privileges or freedom

**Close, But No Cigar:** You are very close but not quite correct.

**Cock and Bull Story:** A far-fetched story, probably untrue

**Cock-A-Hoop:** Elated, excited

**Cold Day in Hell:** A condition for something that would be extremely unlikely to occur

**Come By Something Honestly:** Acquire something honestly, or inherit it

**Come Clean:** To confess; to admit to wrongdoing

**Come Hell or High Water:** No matter what happens

**Come Out in the Wash:** To be resolved with no lasting negative effect

**Come Out of the Closet:** Reveal a secret about oneself, usually that one is gay (homosexual)

**Come Out Swinging:** Respond to something very aggressively

**Come Rain and Shine:** Do regularly, whatever the circumstances

**Come to Grips With:** To acknowledge a problem as a prelude to dealing with it

**Come to Terms With (Something):** Feel acceptance toward something bad that has happened

**Coming Down the Pike:** Likely to occur in the near future

**Cook Someone's Goose:** To insure someone's defeat, to frustrate someone's plans

**Cook Up a Storm:** Cook a great deal of food

**Cooking Up a Storm:** Cooking a great deal of food

**Cool as A Cucumber:** Calm and composed even in difficult or frustrating situations; self-possessed

**Cool Cat:** Someone who has the respect of their peers in a young, casual way.

**Cool Your Heels:** Wait

**Couch Potato:** A lazy person who watches a great deal of television

**Crash a Party:** To attend a party without being invited

**Crickets:** Silence

**Cross to Bear:** A problem one must deal with over a long time, a heavy burden

**Crunch Time:** A period of high pressure when one has to work hard to finish something

**Crunch the Numbers:** Do calculations before making a decision or prediction

**Cry Over Spilt (USA: Spilled):** Milk To waste energy moaning about something that has already happened

**Cry Wolf (verb):** To issue a false alarm, to ask for help when none is needed

**Cry Your Eyes Out:** Cry hard for a very long time

**Cry Your Eyes Out:** Cry hard for a very long time

**Curiosity Killed The Cat:** Stop asking questions, don't be too curious

**Cut (Someone) To the Quick:** To deeply hurt someone emotionally

**Cut Corners:** Economize by reducing quality; take shortcuts

**Cut It Fine:** To do something at the last moment

**Cut Off Your Nose to Spite Your Face:** To act in a proud way that ultimately damages your own cause

**Cut Someone Some Slack:** Avoid treating someone strictly or severely

**Cut to the Chase:** Get to the point; explain the most important part of something quickly; skip the preliminaries

**Cut the Gordian Knot:** To solve a complex problem in a simple way

**Cut the Mustard:** Do something adequately

**Cut Your Teeth on Something:** To learn basic skills in a field

**Cutting-Edge:** Very novel, innovative

**Champagne taste on a beer budget:** Expensive or extravagant tastes or preferences that are beyond one's economic means.

**Change Horses in Midstream:** Change plans or leaders in the middle of a process

**Change of Heart:** A change in one's opinion or outlook

**Change One's Tune:** To alter one's opinion about something.

**Changing of the Guard:** A change in leadership at an organization

**Chase Rainbows:** To pursue unrealistic goals

**Cheap Shot:** An unfair attack; a statement that unfairly attacks someone's weakness

**Cherry-Pick:** To present evidence selectively to one's own advantage

**Cherry-Pick:** To select the best or most desirable

**Chew the Fat:** Chat for a considerable length of time

**Chickens Come Home To Roost:** The negative consequences of previous actions reveal themselves

**Child's Play:** A very easy task

**Chill Out:** Do something that helps them to calm down and relax for a while.

**Chin Music:** Meaningless talk

**Chin Up/ Keep Your Chin Up:** Cheer up; try to be cheerful and strong

**Chip off the Old Block:** Someone who resembles a direct ancestor, usually the father

**Chomp (Champ) at the Bit:** Be eager to do something

**Chomp at the Bit:** To be eager to do something

**Chop Chop:** Quickly, without delay

**Chop Shop:** A shop where stolen cars are disassembled for parts

**Chuck a Wobbly:** To act in an emotional way



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**Da Man (Slang):** An accomplished or skillful person. Generally used in the compliment “You da man!”

**Dance to Someone’s Tune:** Consistently follow someone’s directions or influence

**Dance with the Devil:** Knowingly do something immoral

**Dark Horse:** A surprise candidate or competitor, especially one who comes from behind to make a strong showing

**Darken Someone’s Door (Step):** Make an unwanted visit to someone’s home

**Dead Ahead:** Directly ahead, either in a literal or a figurative sense

**Dead as the Dodo:** Completely extinct; totally gone

**Dead Eye:** A good shooter, a good marksman

**Dead Heat:** An exact tie in a race or competition

**Dead of Winter:** The coldest, darkest part of winter

**Dead ringer:** Very similar in appearance

**Dead Run:** Running as fast as possible

**Dead Shot:** A good shooter, a good marksman

**Deep Pockets:** The new owner has deep pockets, so fans are hoping the football team will improve next year with new players

**Deliver the Goods:** Provide what is expected

**Devil’s Advocate:** Someone who argues a point not out of conviction, but in order to air various points of view

**Dirty Look:** A facial manner that signifies disapproval

**Do 12-Ounce Curls:** Drink beer

**Dodge a Bullet:** To narrowly escape disaster

**Doesn't Amount to a Hill of Beans:** Is unimportant, is negligible

**Dog Days of the Summer:** The hottest day of summer

**Dog in the Manger:** A person who prevents others from using something, even though the person himself or herself does not want it

**Dog-and-Pony Show:** A flashy presentation, often in a marketing context

**Dog-Eat-Dog:** Intensely competitive

**Don't Judge a Book by Its Cover:** Don't be deceived by looks; don't rely on looks when judging someone or something

**Don't Cry Over Spilled Milk:** Don't worry about minor things.

**Don't Look a Gift Horse in the Mouth:** Do not question the value of a gift. The expression comes from the practice of determining the age and health of a horse by looking at its teeth.

**Double-Dip:** Improperly get income from two different sources

**Double-Edged Sword:** Something that can be helpful or harmful; something beneficial that also has a downside

**Down in the Dumps:** Depressed, sad

**Down the Road:** In the future (in your lifetime)

**Drag One's Feet (or Heels):** To do something reluctantly and slowly

**Drag Your Feet:** Do something very reluctantly; delay doing something

**Drain the Lizard:** Urinate

**Draw a Blank:** Be unable to remember something

**Draw a Line in the Sand:** Issue an ultimatum; specify an absolute limit in a conflict

**Draw a Line Under (Something):** To conclude something and move on to something else

**Draw a Long Bow:** Exaggerate, lie

**Draw the Line:** To set a limit to what one will accept

**Dressed Up to the Nines:** Someone is wearing very smart or glamorous clothes

**Drink the Kool-Aid:** Accept a set of ideas uncritically, often dangerous ones

**Drive a Hard Bargain:** To arrange a transaction so that it benefits oneself.

**Drive a Hard Bargain:** To negotiate effectively

**Drive a Wedge Between:** Try to split factions of a united group by introducing an issue on which they disagree

**Drive Someone Up the Wall:** Deeply irritate someone

**Drop a Line:** To write a letter or send an email

**Drop the Ball:** Fail to fulfill one's responsibilities; make a mistake

**Dry Run:** A practice execution of a procedure

**Dutch Courage:** Alcohol drunk with the intention of working up the nerve to do something

**Dutch Uncle:** A highly critical person

**Dyed-In-The-Wool (adj.):** Consistent in an affiliation or opinion over a long period; inveterate



**Eager beaver:** The term eager beaver refers to a person who is hardworking and enthusiastic, sometimes considered overzealous.

**Eagle-Eyed:** Having sharp vision

**Early Bird [noun or adjective]:** Someone who does something prior to the usual time, or someone who gets up early.

**Eat Crow:** To admit one was wrong, and accept humiliation

**Eat Humble Pie:** To admit defeat or error, to accept humiliation

**Eat Someone's Lunch:** Defeat someone thoroughly

**Eat Your Heart Out!:** (excl.) Go ahead, be jealous.

**Eighty-Six (v.):** 1) Discard, eliminate. 2) Throw someone out of a bar or store.

**Elephant in the Room:** A major problem that no one is talking about

**Elevator Music:** Pleasant but boring recorded music that is played in public places.

**Elevator Pitch:** A brief presentation of an idea, one short enough to be delivered in an elevator

**Eleventh Hour:** The last minute

**Even Steven:** Owing nothing; tied (in a game)

**Every Dog Has His (Its):** Day Everyone has a moment of fame, power, or influence

**Every Man and His Dog:** Many people

**Every Man for Himself:** Pursue your own interests; don't expect help from others.

**Excused Boots:** Allowed to avoid mandatory tasks



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**Face the Music:** Dealing with consequences of one's actions

**Face the Music:** To accept judgment or punishment

**Fall for Something:** Hook, Line, and Sinker To be completely deceived

**Fall in Love with Somebody:** Start feeling love towards somebody

**Fall Off the Wagon:** To begin using alcohol (or another problem substance) after quitting

**Fall on One's Sword:** To accept blame; to sacrifice oneself

**Fall Prey to:** Be victimized by; be harmed by; be vulnerable to

**Fancy Someone (British English):** To find someone very attractive

**Farther (On) Down the Road:** Later, at some unspecified time

**Farther (On) Down the Road:** Later, at some unspecified time

**Fashion-Forward:** Tending to adopt new styles quickly

**Fat Cat:** A highly placed, well-paid executive

**Father Figure:** A mentor, a person who offers guidance

**Feast Your Eyes On:** To take great pleasure in looking at someone or something

**Feather in One's Cap:** An achievement for which one is recognized; a noteworthy achievement

**Feather One's (Own) Nest:** Use one's influence or power improperly for financial gain

**Feather One's Nest:** To take advantage of one's position to benefit oneself

**Fed Up With:** Refusing to tolerate something any further; out of patience

**Feel Like a Million Dollars:** To feel great, to feel well and healthy.

**Feel On Top of The World:** To feel very healthy

**Fell off a Truck:** Probably stolen or illicitly obtained; said of something offered for sale to avoid discussing its origins

**Fell off the Back of a Lorry:** Probably stolen or illicitly obtained; said of something offered for sale to avoid discussing its origins

**Fifteen Minutes of Fame:** Temporary renown

**Fifth Wheel:** A superfluous person

**Fight Fire with Fire:** Use the same measures that are being used against you, even if they're stronger than you would usually use

**Fight Like Cat and Dog:** Continually arguing with each other

**Find One's Voice:** Become more confident in expressing oneself

**Find Your Feet:** To adjust to a new place or situation

**Finger-Pointing:** Blame; a situation within a group where each member attempts to blame others

**Finger-Pointing:** Blame; a situation within a group where each member attempts to blame others

**Fire in the Belly:** strong ambition

**First In, Best Dressed:** The first people to do something will have an advantage

**Fish for Compliments:** Try to manipulate people into praising you

**Fish or Cut Bait** (usually an exclamation): Make a decision or give someone else a chance

**Fish Out of Water**: A person who is in unfamiliar, confusing surroundings

**Five-Finger Discount**: Shoplifting

**Flash in the Pan**: A one-time occurrence, not a permanent phenomenon

**Flat Broke**: Having no money at all

**Flat Out Like a Lizard**: Drinking Very busy

**Flesh and Blood**: Blood relatives, close relatives

**Flew the Coop**: Left, escaped

**Flip-Flop** (v. or n.): To vacillate between two choices, to be indecisive

**Fly by the Seat of One's Pants**: To improvise, to make decisions without planning or preparation

**Fly High**: Be very successful, especially temporarily

**Fly Off The Handle**: Lose one's temper suddenly and unexpectedly

**Fly off the Handle**: To become suddenly enraged

**Follow In Someone's Footsteps (Tracks)**: Follow the example laid down by someone else; supplant

**Follow Your Heart**: Rely on one's deeper feelings and instincts when making a decision

**Food for Thought**: Something that makes you think carefully

**For a Song**: At very low cost

**For a Song**: At very low cost

**For Crying Out Loud (excl.)**: An expression of extreme annoyance

**For Xyz Reasons:** For multiple reasons, not worth specifying individually

**Foul Play:** Crime, typically murder

**Fourth Estate:** The media and newspapers

**Fox in the Henhouse (Chickenhouse):** Someone who causes trouble

**Freak Out:** A wildly irrational reaction or spell of behavior

**French Leave:** Absence without permission

**Freudian Slip:** Accidental use of an incorrect word; a revealing slip of the tongue

**From Pillar to Post:** From one place to another, in a forced, random way

**From Scratch:** From individual ingredients, not using a prepared mix

**From Soup to Nuts:** Everything; from beginning to end

**From the Bottom of One's Heart:** Sincerely and with deep feeling

**FUBAR:** Hopelessly ruined, not working, messed up.

**Fu\*\* (Or Screw) The Dog (Pooch):** To make an embarrassing error

**Full Fathom Five:** Lost deep in the sea



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**Game of Chicken:** A conflict situation in which neither side will back down for fear of seeming cowardly (chicken)

**Get A Charley Horse:** To develop a cramp in the arm or the leg

**Get A Word In Edgewise:** Be able to say something while someone else is talking a lot

**Get Along (with Someone):** To have a satisfactory relationship

**Get Bent Out of Shape:** Become angry, upset

**Get Carried Away:** Become overly enthusiastic

**Get In on the Ground Floor:** Invest in or join something while it is still small

**Get in Shape:** Undertake a program of physical conditioning; exercise regularly

**Get Off Scot Free:** Be accused of wrongdoing but pay no penalty at all

**Get Off Scot Free:** Be accused of wrongdoing but pay no penalty at all

**Get One's Ducks in a Row:** Have everything organized; get oneself organized

**Get One's Hands Dirty:** To do the unpleasant parts of a job

**Get Someone's Goat:** To irritate someone deeply

**Get To Grips With:** To begin to understand and deal with something

**Get the Ball Rolling:** Do something to begin a process

**Get the Picture:** Understand what's happening

**Get the Runaround:** Be given an unclear or evasive answer to a question

**Get the Sack, Be Sacked:** To be fired

**Get the Third Degree:** To be questioned in great detail about something

**Get Wind of:** Hear about

**Get With the Program:** Figure out what everyone else already knows. Often used sarcastically, as a command

**Go Along (With):** Agree to something, often provisionally

**Go Ape:** Express wild excitement or anger

**Go Ballistic:** Fly into a rage

**Go Bananas:** To become irrational or crazy

**Go Bananas:** To become irrational or crazy

**Go Belly Up:** To go bankrupt

**Go Berserk:** To go crazy

**Go Bonkers:** To be or become wild, restless, irrational, or crazy; to act in such a way

**Go Cold Turkey:** Stop using an addictive substance suddenly, without tapering off

**Go Down in Flames:** Fail in a spectacular way

**Go Mental:** To suddenly become extremely angry

**Go Nuclear:** Use an extreme measure; because extremely angry

**Go Nuts:** To become crazy

**Go Off Half-Cocked:** To say or something prematurely, with a negative effect

**Go Off the Deep End:** To unexpectedly become very angry, especially without a good reason

**Go Off The Rails:** To go wrong, to begin acting strangely or badly

**Go Out on a Limb:** Assert something that may not be true; put oneself in a vulnerable position

**Go Pear-Shaped:** To fail; to go wrong

**Go See a Man About a Dog:** Go to the bathroom (said as a euphemism)

**Go to the Dogs:** To become disordered, to decay

**Go to the Mattresses:** To go to into battle

**Go the Extra Mile:** Put forth greater-than-expected effort

**Go Under the Knife:** Undergo surgery

**Go Viral:** Begin To spread rapidly on the Internet

**Go with the Flow:** To accept the way things naturally seem to be going

**Grab (Take) the Bull by the Horns:** To begin forthrightly to deal with a problem

**Grasp (Grab) at Straws:** To take desperate actions with little hope of success

**Grease Monkey:** A mechanic, especially an auto mechanic

**Grease the Wheels:** Do something to make an operation run smoothly

**Greasy Spoon:** An inexpensive restaurant that fries foods on a grill

**Green Around the Gills:** To look sick

**Green as Grass:** Lacking training, naive; often said of young people in new jobs

**Grind One's Teeth:** Be very annoyed or angry about something without being able to say anything about it.

**Guilty Pleasure:** Enjoying something which is not generally held in high regard, while at the same time feeling a bit guilty about it, is called a guilty pleasure.

**Guinea Pig:** A test subject, a person who is used as a test to see if something will work

**Give and Take:** Negotiations, the process of compromise

**Give 'em Hell (often excl.):** Express something passionately to a group

**Give Lip Service to:** Talk about supporting something without taking any concrete action

**Give Lip Service:** to Talk about supporting something without taking any concrete action

**Give One's Two Cents (That's My Two Cents):** Offer an opinion, suggest something

**Give Someone a Holler:** Contact someone

**Give Someone a Piece of Your Mind:** Angrily tell someone what you think

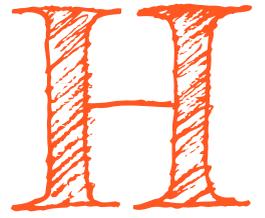
**Give Someone a Run for Their Money:** Compete effectively with the leader in a particular field

**Give Someone an Earful:** angrily express an opinion to someone

**Give Someone the Cold Shoulder:** act hostile toward someone; to ignore, snub

**Give Someone The Old Heave-Ho:** Fire someone, remove someone from a group or team

**Give Something a Whirl:** Attempt something without being totally familiar with it



**Hail Mary (n. or adj.):** A desperate, last-ditch attempt

**Hair of the Dog (That Bit You):** A small amount of the alcoholic beverage that caused your hangover

**Hands are Tied:** You are prevented from doing something. It is not within your power

**Hands Down:** Undoubtedly

**Hang It Up:** To retire, to end an activity one has pursued for a long time

**Hang Tough:** Maintain one's resolve

**Hanging by a Thread:** In great danger of elimination or failure

**Happy-Go-Lucky:** If you are a happy-go-lucky person, you are cheerful and carefree all the time.

**Hard Nut to Crack:** A difficult problem or a difficult person

**Has the Cat Got Your Tongue?:** Why are you not saying anything?

**Hat Trick:** Scoring three goals in hockey or soccer (football), or accomplishing three of anything.

**Hatchet Job:** A strong attack on someone's reputation; intentionally destructive criticism; calumny

**Haul Over the Coals:** To scold someone severely

**Have (one's) head in the clouds:** Not know what is happening around you or out of touch with reality

**Have A Ball:** To have a very enjoyable time

**Have a Bone to Pick (with Someone):** To want to discuss something someone has done that has angered or annoyed you.

**Have a Bone to Pick (with Someone):** To want to discuss something someone has done that has angered or annoyed you.

**Have a Chip on One's Shoulder:** To harbor resentment; to have an angry attitude

**Have a Dog in the Hunt (Fight, Race):** To support a certain person in a competition

**Have a Lead Foot:** A tendency to drive very fast

**Have a Lot on One's Plate:** Be busy, be in the middle of many ongoing tasks

**Have a Lot Riding On (Something):** Be depending on the successful outcome or development of something

**Have a Nose for (Something):** To have natural ability at something, a talent for finding something

**Have a Screw Loose:** Be slightly unbalanced or crazy

**Have a Tough Row to Hoe:** Be faced with a task that is difficult because of unfavorable conditions

**Have A Whale of A Time:** To enjoy yourself very much

**Have an Ace Up One's Sleeve:** To have a hidden advantage

**Have Bigger Fish to Fry:** Have more important things to do

**Have Egg on Your Face:** They are made to look foolish or embarrassed

**Have Foot-in-Mouth Disease:** To embarrass oneself through a silly mistake

**Have Hand of Aces/Hold All the Aces:** To be in a very strong position in a competition

**Have It Out with Someone:** To have an argument with someone in order to settle a dispute

**Have One Foot in The Grave:** To be near death (usually because of old age or illness)

**Have One Over the Eight:** A person is slightly drunk.

**Have One Too Many:** Drink too much alcohol

**Have One's Cake and Eat It, Too:** To want two incompatible things (usually used in the negative)

**Have Skin in the Game:** Be risking something in an undertaking

**Have Something in the Bag:** Be certain to win

**Have the Hots for (Somebody):** To be (sexually) attracted to somebody

**Have the Hots for Somebody:** Finding somebody extremely attractive

**Have The Time of Your Life:** If you have the time of our life, you enjoy yourself very much.

**Have the Time of Your Life:** To have a very fun, exciting, or enjoyable time

**Have Your Nose in the Air:** Have a snobbish or disdainful attitude

**Have Your Say:** Express your opinion on something

**Have Your Thumb Up Your Ass:** Have nothing to do

**He Who Laughs Last Laughs Best:** Being victorious is often a matter of simply surviving a conflict

**He Would Put Legs Under A Chicken:** He will talk your head off; he is very talkative

**Head (Go) South:** Decline, get worse

**Head and Shoulders Above:** Far superior to

**Head and Shoulders:** Above Far superior to

**Head Start:** An advantage over everyone else

**Heads Up (excl.):** Get ready! Be prepared

**Heads Up!:** Be careful!

**Heads Will Roll (Are Going to Roll):** People will be fired

**Heads Will Roll (Are Going to Roll):** People will be fired

**Hear (Something) Through the Grapevine:** To learn something via gossip

**Heart and Soul:** With all one's energy or affection

**Heavens Open:** Start to rain heavily

**Heavy Hitter:** A powerful, influential person

**Helicopter Parenting:** Overattentive child-raising

**Hell for Leather:** Very fast, as fast as possible

**High as a Kite:** Strongly under the influence of drugs or intoxicants

**High as a Kite:** Strongly under the influence of drugs or intoxicants

**High as a Kite:** Strongly under the influence of drugs or intoxicants

**Hightail It (Out of There):** Flee

**Highways and Byways:** You take large and small roads to visit every part of the country.

**Hit a Wall:** suddenly stop making forward progress

**Hit It Out of the Park:** Succeed brilliantly

**Hit the Books:** To study (generally said of students)

**Hit the Ground Running:** To begin a job or project with no learning or training period needed

**Hit the Hay:** To go to bed

**Hit the Jackpot:** Do something that brings great success

**Hit the Nail on the Head:** To be absolutely correct (said of an utterance)

**Hit the Road:** To leave

**Hit the Roof:** Explode in rage; become extremely angry

**Hit the Roof:** To become very angry

**Hit the Sack:** To go to bed

**Hit the Spot:** Be very satisfying (said of something eaten)

**Hive Mind:** The knowledge of humans as a group

**Hobson's Choice:** A choice among bad options

**Hold One's Liquor:** Be able to drink a large amount without being affected

**Hold One's Peace:** Be silent

**Hold the Phone:** Wait a moment (whether you're on the phone or not)

**Hold the Phone:** Wait a moment (whether you're on the phone or not)

**Hold Your Horses (generally excl.):** Stop; restrain yourself; don't be so excited

**Home Away from Home:** A habitual hangout; a place one frequents often and where one feels welcome

**Home Truths:** Honest, often painful criticism

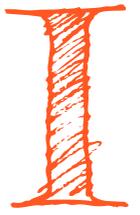
**Honor System:** A system of payments that relies on the honesty of those paying

**Hot Mess:** Something or someone in a state of extreme disorder

**Hot on the Heels (of):** In close pursuit

**Hot on the Heels (of):** In close pursuit

**Hot Potato:** A controversial subject or difficult project that is best avoided



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**I Wouldn't Put It Past (Someone):** I think it's quite possible that [this person] would do this.

**If It Had Been a Snake, It Would Have Bitten Me:** It was very obvious, but I missed it.

**If the Shoe Fits, Wear It:** If this description of you is accurate, accept it.

**I'm All Ears:** You have my attention, so you should talk

**In a Fog:** Confused, not mentally alert

**In a Heartbeat:** Immediately. This is especially used in hypothetical situations

**In a Jam:** In need of help, in a difficult spot

**In a New York Minute:** Very quickly

**In a Nutshell:** Expressed in a few words

**In a Pickle:** In need of help, in a difficult spot

**In a Rut:** Confined by routine, bored and seeking new experiences

**In Broad Daylight:** When something occurs in broad daylight, it means the event is clearly visible

**In Clover:** Benefiting from a positive financial situation

**In For a Penny, In for a Pound:** Committed to something even though the risks are increasing

**In Full Swing:** When something, such as an event, gets into full swing, it is at its busiest or liveliest time.

**In His Cups:** Drunk

**In Hot Water:** In need of help; in trouble

**In One Fell Swoop:** All at once, in a single action

**In One's Element:** In a situation which is entirely suitable, familiar, or enjoyable.

**In Someone's Wheelhouse:** In someone's strongest area of competence or enthusiasm

**In Touch:** In contact

**In the Blink of an Eye:** Quickly, seemingly instantaneously

**In the Cards:** Likely; likely to occur

**In the Crosshairs (Cross Hairs):** Targeted for blame or criticism

**In the Dark:** Not informed

**In the Dark:** Unaware of something

**In the Driver's Seat:** In a dominant position, in control

**In the Hot Seat:** Undergoing criticism or scrutiny; under pressure publicly

**In the Interim:** It denotes a period of time between something that ended and something that happened afterwards

**In the Limelight, In the Spotlight:** Receiving large amounts of publicity or attention

**In the Long Run:** Over an extended period of time

**In the Nick of Time:** Just in time; with no time to spare

In the opinion of the speaker, a person has just spent money unnecessarily and is, therefore, a fool.

**In the Pipeline:** Being prepared for the marketplace, being worked on

**In the Red:** Losing money; (of a market index) below a specified starting point

**In the Same Boat:** In a similar situation; similarly vulnerable

**In the Toilet:** In disastrous condition

**In the Works:** Under development; coming soon

**Iron Out (Problems, Difficulties):** To resolve

**Is the Pope Catholic?:** Isn't the answer obvious?

**It Never Rains but It Pours:** Bad luck and bad things tend to happen at the same time

**It Takes Two to Tango:** When something goes wrong involving two people, it's likely that they share the blame; cooperation is necessary

**It Takes Two to Tango:** You say this when you think that a difficult situation or argument cannot be the fault of one person alone.

**It Won't Fly:** It won't work; it won't be approved.

**Itchy Feet:** A person who has itchy feet is someone who finds it difficult to stay in one place and likes to travel and discover new places.

**It's a Wash:** A positive and a negative development cancel each other out, so the situation has neither improved nor gotten worse

**It's All Greek to Me:** It is unintelligible, impossible to understand

**It's No Skin off My (Your) Nose (Back):** The outcome will not affect me personally

**It's Not Over Till the Fat Lady Sings:** Do not give up too soon; things may improve.

**It's Not Rocket Science:** It's not difficult to understand.



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**Jack of All Trades:** A person with a wide variety of skills

**Jam Session:** Playing improvised music in an informal setting

**Jim Crow:** The system of racial segregation in the American South prior to the American civil rights movement.

**Join the Club (excl.):** I feel sympathy for you because I have experienced something similar.

**Jump in with Both Feet:** Begin a new experience wholeheartedly

**Jump on the Bandwagon:** To follow a trend or craze

**Jump on the Bandwagon:** To follow a trend; follow the crowd

**Jump the Gun:** Start doing something too soon

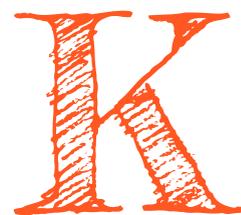
**Jump the Shark:** To pass peak quality and begin to decline. Often used to describe television programs or movie series.

**Jump the Track:** To shift suddenly from one activity or line of thought to another

**Jump Through Hoops:** Complete a series of tasks in order to satisfy someone

**Just Around the Corner:** Occurring soon

**Just for the Record:** I would like to make it clear that ...



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**Kangaroo Court:** A court of law where proper procedures are not followed at all; a sham judicial proceeding

**Keep (Something) at Bay:** Maintain a distance from something or someone

**Keep a Stiff Upper Lip:** Control one's emotions; not give in to fear or grief

**Keep an Eye On:** To keep an eye on something or someone is to watch it periodically, to keep it under surveillance.

**Keep an Eye Peeled:** Be observant; watch out for something

**Keep It Under Your Hat:** Don't tell anyone; don't reveal this secret

**Keep Someone at Arm's Length:** Avoid close interaction or cooperation

**Keep Your Nose Clean:** Avoid trouble or situations that compromise one's honesty

**Keep Your Powder Dry:** Do not attack until you are ready.

**Keeping One's Nose to the Grindstone:** Working hard on something repetitive or tedious

**Kick Ass, Kick Butt:** 1) Defeat badly; 2) be excellent or highly effective (only kick ass would be used for 2)

**Kick the Bucket:** To die

**Kick the Can Down the Road:** Postpone an important decision

**Kill a Fly With an Elephant Gun:** Approach a problem with excessive measures

**Kill Two Birds with One Stone:** Act in such a way as to produce two desirable effects

**Kill Two Birds with One Stone:** Solve two problems with one move

**Kill the Goose That Laid the Golden Egg:** To destroy a source of ongoing profits or benefits

**Kink in One's Neck:** A cramp in one's neck that causes pain

**King of the Hill:** At the top of one's field; the most influential person in a given field or area

**Kiss and Make Up:** Make peace after an argument

**Kith and Kin:** Family (collectively)

**Knock on Wood; Touch Wood:** Let's hope I have good luck or continue to have good luck.

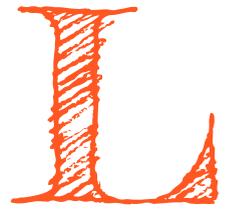
**Knock Some Sense Into:** To beat someone in order to teach him/her a lesson. May be used figuratively.

**Knock Someone's Socks Off:** Amaze someone

**Knock Up:** To impregnate a woman. Often used in the form knocked up.

**Knockout:** An extremely beautiful woman

**Know (Something) Like the Back of One's Hand:** To be very familiar with something, especially an area



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**Larger Than Life:** Conveying a sense of greatness, imposing

**Last But Not Least:** What I have just said does not reflect a ranking in importance.

**Laughter is the Best Medicine:** Laughing a lot is a very effective means of recovering from physical or mental injury

**Learn the Ropes:** Become more familiar with a job or field of endeavor; be trained

**Leave Someone in the Lurch:** Abandon someone in a difficult situation

**Lend an Ear:** Listen

**Let Bygones Be Bygones:** Agree to forget about a past conflict

**Let Bygones Be Bygones:** Agree to forget about a past conflict

**Let Off Steam:** To express anger and frustration in a way that does no damage

**Let One's Hair Down:** To relax and enjoy themselves.

**Let Sleeping Dogs Lie:** To avoid stirring up a problem; to leave things alone

**Let the Cat Out of the Bag:** Reveal a secret, usually a secret you or others are trying to keep

**Let the Genie Out of the Bottle:** Reveal something hitherto suppressed

**Letter of the Law:** The explicit meaning of a law, as opposed to the spirit of the law, the law's general intention

**Lick One's Wounds:** Rest after a bad defeat

**Life is A Bowl of Cherries:** Life is wonderful or very pleasant

**Light a Fire Under Someone:** Inspire someone to work very hard

**Light at the End of the Tunnel:** A sign of hope after a long period of difficulties

**Like a Kid in a Candy Store:** To be so excited about one's surroundings that one acts in a childlike or silly way

**Like a Moth to a Flame:** Drawn to something or someone despite the dangers

**Like Father, Like Son:** Sons inherit their fathers' traits and preferences, often even without realizing it.

**Like Shooting:** Fish in a Barrel Very easy

**Like Taking Candy from a Baby:** Very easy

**Like Two Peas in a Pod:** Bearing a strong resemblance

**Like The Cat That Got The Cream:** Looking particularly self-satisfied, often to the annoyance of others

**Lion's Den:** Any dangerous or frightening place.

**Lion's Share:** The largest part of something

**Live Large:** Have a luxurious lifestyle

**Living in Cloud Cuckooland:** Having unrealistic or foolish beliefs or plans.

**Living on Borrowed Time:** Following an illness or near-death experience, many people believe they have cheated death

**Living Under a Rock:** Ignorant of important events. Usually used as a question: Have you been living under a rock?

**Loaded for Bear:** Prepared for problems, well prepared for a challenge

**Loan Shark:** A predatory lender; one who makes high-interest loans to desperate people

**Lock Horns:** To lock horns is to argue, to come into conflict.

**Long Shot:** Something with little chance of success

**Look the Other Way:** Take no notice of violations of laws or rules, unofficially condone something

**Look What the Cat Dragged In:** Someone unwelcome has arrived.

**Loose Cannon:** Someone out of control; someone who speaks or acts recklessly

**Lose It:** To suddenly become unable to behave or think in a sensible way

**Lose One's Touch:** Suffer a decline in one's skill at doing something

**Lose Touch:** To fall out of contact

**Lose the Thread:** Be unable to follow someone's reasoning

**Love at First Sight:** Falling in love with somebody the first time you see them

**Love Rat:** Somebody who cheats on his/her partner

**Love Someone With All of One's Heart And Soul:** To love someone completely

**Lower the Boom:** Implement a punishment; reprimand severely



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**Mad As A Box Of (Soapy) Frogs:** extremely mentally unstable; psychotic; detached from reality.

**Mad as A Hatter:** Mentally ill, psychotic

**Main Squeeze:** Committed romantic partner

**Make a Break for It:** Try to escape, run off

**Make a Mountain out of a Molehill:** To take something too seriously; to make too much of something

**Make a Silk Purse out of a Sow's Ear:** Turn something ordinary or inferior into something refined and beautiful

**Make Ends Meet:** Have enough money to cover basic expenses

**Make Hay (While the Sun Shines):** To take advantage of an opportunity at the right time.

**Make Love:** To have sexual intercourse

**Make Nice:** Act cordial despite conflict

**Make One's Mark:** Attain influence or recognition

**Make Someone's Day:** Do something pleasing that puts someone in a good mood

**Make Waves:** Cause controversy, disturb a calm group dynamic

**Man Cave:** A part of the house, often the basement, that is left to the man of the household, perhaps with a workshop, a television for watching sports, etc.

**March to the Beat of Your Own Drum:** When someone does things the way they want to, without taking anybody else or anything else into consideration.

**Match Made in Heaven:** A relationship in which the two people are great together, because they complement each other so well

**May-December (adj.):** Significantly different in age. Said of couples where one member is much older. The most common usage is May-December romance.

**May-December Marriage:** A marriage between a younger and an older partner, typically a young woman and an old man.

**Me Time:** Activities undertaken for one's own enjoyment, free from responsibilities to others.

**Meeting of the Minds:** Strong instinctive agreement on something

**Mend Fences:** Improve relations after a dispute

**Mind One's P's and Q's:** Be attentive to details; be on one's best behavior

**Miss the Boat:** Be too late for something; miss an opportunity

**Monday Morning Quarterback:** Someone who offers criticisms or comments after already knowing the outcome of something

**Month of Sundays:** A long time, many months

**More Fun Than A Barrel of Monkeys:** A very good time; a pleasant occasion

**Mother Nature:** The natural world

**Move Heaven and Earth:** Take all possible steps in trying to accomplish something

**Move the Needle:** Have a measurable effect on something

**Move Up in the World:** Become more successful

**Movers and Shakers:** Influential people, especially in a particular field

**Much Of A Muchness:** Essentially equal, not significantly different (said of a choice)

**Mum's the Word:** This is secret; don't talk about this. Often used as an answer to a request not to talk about something.

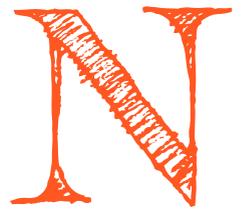
**Music to My Ears:** Good to hear; welcome news

**Mutton Dressed Up as Lamb:** A woman who dresses in a style appropriate to someone of a younger age

**My Dogs Are Barking:** My feet hurt.

**My Old Man, My Old Lady:** My spouse

**My Way or the Highway:** If you do not do things the way I want or require, then you can just leave or not participate.



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**Nail-Biter:** A suspenseful event

**Nailing Jelly/Jello/Pudding To A Wall/Tree:** An impossible task

**Neck and Neck:** Very close in a competition, with neither of two entities clearly in the lead

**Neck of the Woods:** A region, especially one's home region

**Nest Egg:** Retirement savings; wealth saved for a future purpose

**Never in A Million Years:** Absolutely never

**Never Look a Gift Horse in the Mouth:** It's rude to examine a gift closely; accept gifts politely.

**New Wrinkle:** A novel aspect to a situation, a new development

**Nice Chunk of Change:** A large amount of money

**Nickel and Dime:** To negotiate over very small sums; to try to get a better financial deal, in a negative way

**Nine Times Out of Ten:** Almost always

**Nine-to-Five Job:** A routine job in an office that involves standard office hours

**Nip (Something) In The Bud:** Deal with a problem before it becomes large

**No Holds Barred** (usually adj., often hyphenated):  
Unrestricted, without rules

**No Love Lost Between:** There is a mutual animosity between two people

**No Names, No Pack Drill:** By not accusing anyone specifically, I may avoid trouble.

**No Names, No Pack Drill:** If no one can be identified, no one will be punished.

**No Rhyme or Reason (to):** Without logic or pattern

**No Room to Swing A Cat:** Very small, not big enough

**No Shit, Sherlock:** That's very obvious!

**No Tree Grows to the Sky:** Growth cannot continue indefinitely.

**Not Cut Out for (Something):** Not naturally skillful enough to do something well

**Not Enough Room to Swing a Cat:** A very small space

**Not Give A Fig:** To not care at all about something

**Not Have A Cat In Hell's Chance:** Have no possibility of succeeding, coming to pass, or achieving something

**Not Have a Prayer:** Have no chance of success

**Not Know Jack:** Not know anything

**Not Lift a Finger:** Do nothing to help

**Not Mince Words:** Moderate or weaken a statement

**Not One's Cup of Tea:** Not something one is interested in

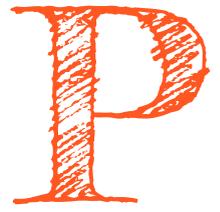
**Not Playing with A Full Deck:** Stupid, mentally deficient or impaired

**Not Ready for Prime Time:** Not yet perfected; inexperienced

**Not Sit Well with (Someone):** Be difficult to accept; make someone uncomfortable

**Nothing to Write Home About:** Unspectacular, ordinary

**Nuts and Bolts:** Everyday details of something



**Pack Heat:** Carry a gun

**Paddle One's Own Canoe:** To be able to act independently.

**Page-Turner:** A page-turner is an exciting book that's easy to read, a book that's difficult to put down.

**Pain in the Ass; Pain in the Butt;**

**Pain in the Neck:** Someone or something making your life difficult

**Paint the Town Red:** Go out drinking and partying

**Par for the Course:** What would normally be expected. This has a negative connotation.

**Pass the Buck:** Transfer a problem to someone else

**Pass With Flying Colors:** To succeed brilliantly, as on an exam or other test

**Passing Fancy:** A temporary interest or attraction

**Pay Through the Nose (For Something):** Pay a large amount of money

**Peaches and Cream:** A situation, process, etc., that has no trouble or problems

**Pecking Order:** Hierarchy, rank of importance

**Pencil Something In:** Make tentative arrangements

**Penny-Pinching:** Frugal, avoiding expenses whenever possible

**Pep Talk:** An encouraging speech given to a person or group

**Perfect Storm:** A rare combination of disastrous occurrences

**Pet Peeve:** A small thing that you find particularly annoying

**Pick a Fight:** Intentionally provoke a conflict or fight with someone

**Pick Up the Slack:** Do something that someone else is not doing; assume someone else's responsibilities

**Pick Up the Tab:** To pay a bill presented to a group, especially in a restaurant or bar

**Pie in the Sky:** Something that is unrealistic or that cannot be achieved

**Piece of Cake:** Very easily done

**Pin Someone Down:** Demand a decision or clear answer

**Pinch Pennies:** To be careful with money, to be thrifty

**Pink Slip:** A layoff notice; loss of a job, typically because of layoffs

**Pipe Dream:** An unrealistic hope, a fantasy

**Piping Hot:** Very hot (generally said of food)

**Pipped to the Post:** Defeated by a narrow margin

**Pissing Contest:** A meaningless argument or competition, typically between males

**Play Ball:** Cooperate, agree to participate

**Play Cat And Mouse:** Trying to trick someone into making a mistake so you can defeat them.

**Play Hardball:** Adopt a tough negotiating position; act aggressively

**Play it by Ear:** To play a piece of music without referencing sheet music or a recording

**Play It by Ear:** To respond to circumstances instead of having a fixed plan

**Play the Percentages:** Bet on or rely on what is most likely to happen

**Play the Ponies:** Bet on horse racing.

**Play With Fire:** Do something very risky

**Play Your Cards Right:** Exploit a situation to your best advantage

**Point of No Return:** A place from which it is impossible to go back to the starting point

**Point the Finger At:** Blame (someone)

**Point the Finger:** At Blame (someone)

**Poison Pill (n):** A provision or feature added to a measure or an entity to make it less attractive, an undesirable add-on

**Poison Pill:** A provision or feature added to a measure or an entity to make it less attractive, an undesirable add-on

**Pop One's Clogs:** To die

**Pop One's Cork:** To release one's anger; to blow one's top

**Pop the Question:** Propose marriage

**Pot Calling the Kettle Black:** Accusing someone of something of which you are also guilty; being hypocritical

**Pour (Rub) Salt into (on) the Wound (an open wound):**

Worsen an insult or injury; make a bad situation worse for someone

**Powder Keg:** An explosive situation, a situation in which people are angry and ready to be violent

**Powder Keg:** An explosive situation, a situation in which people are angry and ready to be violent

**Powder One's Nose:** To use the restroom (lavatory). This is used by women

**Preach to the Choir, Preach to the Converted:** To make an argument with which your listeners already agree

**Preaching to the Choir:** Making arguments to those who already agree with you

**Pretty Penny:** A lot of money; too much money (when referring to the cost of something)

**Price Yourself Out of the Market:** Try to sell goods or services at such a high price that nobody buys them.

**Puddle Jumper:** A small airplane, used on short trips

**Pull Out All the Stops:** Do everything possible to accomplish something

**Pull Strings:** Use influence that's based on personal connections

**Pull the Plug On:** Terminate (something)

**Pull Yourself Together:** Control your emotions; recover from a strong emotional upset

**Puppies And Rainbows:** Perfect, ideal (usually used slightly sarcastically, in contrast with a less ideal situation)

**Puppy Dog Eyes:** A begging look

**Puppy Love:** Adolescent love or infatuation, especially one that is not expected to last

**Pure as the Driven Snow:** To be innocent and chaste (frequently used ironically)

**Push the Envelope:** Go beyond common ways of doing something, be innovative

**Pushing Up Daisies:** Dead

**Pushing Up Daisies:** Dead and buried

**Put a Thumb on the Scale:** Try to influence a discussion in an unfair way, cheat

**Put Down Roots:** Establish oneself in a place; settle

**Put in One's Two Cents:** Say your opinion

**Put Lipstick on a Pig:** Make cosmetic changes to something bad

**Put one's Face On:** Apply cosmetics

**Put Out Feelers:** Make discreet, informal suggestions, ask around

**Put Someone on the Spot:** Force someone to answer a question or make a decision immediately

**Put That in Your Pipe and Smoke It:** Accept and consider what I'm saying, even if you don't like it!

**Put the Best Face On (Something):** Emphasize the positive aspects of a bad situation

**Put the Brakes On:** Slow something down

**Put the Cart Before The Horse:** To do things in the wrong order

**Put the Cart Before the Horse:** To do things out of the proper order.

**Put the Cat Among The Pigeons:** Say or do something that causes trouble or controversy

**Put the Genie Back in the Bottle:** Try to suppress something that has already been revealed or done

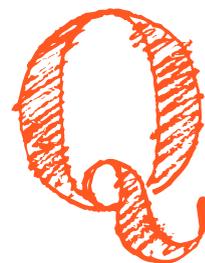
**Put the Pedal to the Metal:** Drive as fast as possible

**Put Up with (Something):** Tolerate, accept

**Put Words Into Someone's Mouth:** Attributing an opinion to someone who has never stated that opinion

**Put Your Foot Down:** Use your authority to stop negative behavior

**Put Your Foot In Your Mouth:** Say something that you immediately regret



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**Quake In One's Boots:** To be very frightened

**Quarter Past:** Fifteen minutes after the hour

**Quarter To/Of:** Fifteen minutes before the hour

**Queer the Pitch:** Interfere with someone's plans; make something more difficult

**Quick as a Flash:** Very fast

**Quick-and-Dirty:** Approximate, hastily done

**Quote Unquote:** Ironically speaking; suggesting that if a phrase were written out, it would be in quotation marks to convey sarcasm



**Race Against Time:** To rush to meet a deadline, to be forced to do something very quickly

**Rain Cats And Dogs:** Rain heavily

**Rain Cats and Dogs:** Rain very heavily

**Rain on Someone's Parade:** Spoil someone's plans

**Raise (Someone's) Hackles:** Make someone angry and defensive

**Raise One's Voice:** Talk loudly

**Raise Red Flags:** Warn of trouble ahead

**Raise the Bar:** Increase standards in a certain competition or area of endeavor

**Raise the Roof:** Make a great deal of noise (said of a crowd)

**Rake (Someone) Over the Coals:** To scold someone severely

**Rake Over the Ashes:** Restart a settled argument; examine a failure

**Rake Someone Over the Coals:** Scold severely

**Rank and File:** The ordinary members of an organization

**Read Between the Lines:** Perceive what is not explicitly stated

**Read the Tea Leaves:** Predict the future from small signs

**Rear Its Ugly Head (said of a problem or something unpleasant):** Appear, be revealed

**Rearrange the Deck Chairs on the Titanic:** Taking superficial actions while ignoring a much larger and perhaps fatal problem

**Red Flag:** A warning; a sign of trouble ahead

**Red Herring:** A misleading clue; something intended to mislead

**Red Meat:** Political appeals designed to excite one's core supporters; demagoguery

**Red Tape:** Bureaucracy; difficult bureaucratic or governmental requirements

**Red-Light District:** A neighborhood with many houses of prostitution

**Reinvent the Wheel:** Devise a solution to a problem for which a solution already exists

**Riding High:** Enjoying success

**Right as Rain:** Absolutely correct

**Right Under (One's) Nose:** In an obvious location, yet overlooked

**Right-Hand Man:** Chief assistant

**Right-Hand Man:** Chief assistant

**Ring a Bell:** Sound familiar

**Ring a Bell:** When something seems familiar

**Rob Peter to Pay Paul:** Pay off a debt with another loan; solve a problem in such a way that it leads to a new problem

**Rob the Cradle:** To be sexually or romantically involved with someone who is very young

**Rob the Cradle:** To be sexually or romantically involved with someone who is very young

**Rock Bottom:** An absolute low point

**Rock the Boat:** Cause a disruption in a group. Often used in the negative: don't rock the boat.

**Roll the Dice On:** Take a risk

**Roll With the Punches:** Deal with problems by being flexible

**Rome Wasn't Built in a Day:** Complex projects take time

**Rookie Mistake:** An error made by an inexperienced person

**Rotten to the Core:** Entirely evil

**Rub (Something) in Someone's Face:** Humiliate someone by repeating and criticizing his or her mistake

**Rub It In:** Say something that makes someone feel even worse about a mistake

**Rub Someone's Nose in (Something):** Humiliate someone by repeating and criticizing his or her mistake

**Rubber-Stamp (v.):** Approve something without consideration, as a formality

**Rule of Thumb:** A general principle or guideline, not a specific formula

**Run a Tight Ship:** Manage an organization in a strict, well-regulated way

**Run in the Family:** Be inherited (as a trait) by multiple members of a family

**Run in the Family:** To be a common family characteristic

**Run into a Buzz:** Saw Encounter severe and unexpected problems

**Run into a Buzz:** Saw Encounter severe and unexpected problems

**Run off at the Mouth:** Talk a lot about unimportant things, talk incoherently

**Run on Fumes:** To be in a situation where one's energy or resources is almost exhausted

**Run Out of Steam:** Lose momentum, become tired



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**Sacred Cow:** An individual or organization that one cannot criticize

**Saving Grace:** Something that redeems a bad situation

**Scare the Living Daylights Out of Someone:** Frighten someone severely

**Scorched Earth (Tactics, Policy, etc.):** Ruthless, extremely destructive

**Screw The Pooch:** To make a serious error

**School Of Hard Knocks:** Difficult real-life experiences from which one has learned

**Second Banana:** A person in a subservient position

**Second Stringer:** A substitute player in a sport; a substitute for a job who is not the most talented person

**Second Wind:** Renewed energy

**See Eye to Eye:** To concur, agree

**See Something Out of the Corner of Your Eye:** Use peripheral vision

**Seize (Take) the Bull By the Horns:** Attack a problem directly

**Seize the Day:** Take an opportunity

**Sell (Someone) a Bill of Goods:** Trick someone; be deceptive

**Sell Like Hotcakes:** Be sold very quickly

**Selling Point:** An attractive feature of something for sale

**Set in Stone:** Fixed; unchangeable

**Set something to Music:** To write a piece of music to accompany a set of words

**Set the Bar (Too) High:** To set a high standard for something

**Set the Thames on Fire:** Do something amazing. Usually used in the negative.

**Set the World on Fire:** Do something amazing; have a brilliant stretch in one's career

**Shake the Dust off Your Shoes (Feet):** Make a clean break with a relationship or situation

**Shape Up or Ship Out:** Behave properly or leave the organization

**Sharp as A Tack:** Mentally agile

**Shell Game:** A method of deception in which you conceal your actions by moving something frequently

**Shift Gears:** Change the subject, or change what one is doing

**Shipshape And Bristol Fashion:** Tidy, clean

**Shit a Brick:** Be extremely fearful.

**Shoot from the Hip:** Talk or act without consideration

**Shoot Off One's Mouth:** Talk without considering one's words

**Shoot Oneself In The Foot:** Do something that damages oneself or one's own cause

**Short Fuse:** A quick temper; a tendency to anger quickly

**Shot Across the Bow:** A warning of more serious actions to come

**Shoulder A Weight Off Your Shoulders:** You no longer worry about something or deal with something difficult

**Show Me an X And I'll Show You a Y:** There is a consequence to X that you may not have thought of.

**Show One's True Colors:** Reveal one's true nature

**Show Your Cards:** Reveal your resources or plans

**Sick and Tired of:** Extremely annoyed by something that occurs repeatedly

**Sick as a Dog:** Extremely ill.

**Sick as a Parrot:** Very disappointed

**Sight for Sore Eyes:** A sight that makes you happy

**Silver Bullet:** Something simple that resolves a difficult problem

**Simmer Down:** Become less angry; regain one's composure

**Sink or Swim:** Fail or succeed

**Sing a Different Tune:** Change your opinion

**Sit On (Something):** Delay revealing or acting on something

**Sit Tight:** Wait and do not go anywhere

**Sitting Duck:** Something or someone easily attacked or criticized

**Sitting Pretty:** In a favorable situation

**Six Feet Under:** Dead and buried

**Six Feet Under:** Dead and buried

**Six of One, a Half Dozen of the Other:** The two choices have no significant differences.

**Six Ways to (from) Sunday:** In every possible way

**Slam Dunk:** An effort that is certain to succeed

**Sleep Like a Baby:** To experience a very deep and restful sleep; to sleep soundly

**Sleep with the Fishes:** Dead, often by murder

**Slip Someone a Mickey:** Add a drug to an alcoholic drink in order to knock someone out

**Slippery Slope:** A series of undesirable effects that, one warns, could result from a certain action

**Slower than Molasses:** Exceptionally slow or sluggish; not fast at all.

**Small Beer:** Unimportant, insignificant

**Small Fry:** People or organizations with little influence; children

**Small Potatoes:** Unimportant, insignificant

**Smell a Rat:** Suspect deception

**Smoking Gun:** indisputable evidence of a crime

**Snafu:** A malfunction; a chaotic situation

**Snake Oil:** A useless medicine; a quack remedy; a product or measure promoted as a solution that really does nothing to help

**Snake Oil:** Medicine of unproven value; fraudulent medicine

**Sneak Peek:** A sneak peek is an opportunity to view something in advance of its official opening or debut

**Soak Up the Sun:** To enjoy the sun

**Sold On (Something):** Convinced of something

**Some Eggs:** Achieving a major goal requires the ability to tolerate some problems

**Someone's Fingerprints Are All Over (Something):**  
Someone's influence is evident

**Something to Crow:** About Something to be proud of, an accomplishment about which one is justified in bragging

**Son of a Gun:** 1) A rogue. 2) An exclamation of surprise.

**Sore Point:** A sensitive topic for a particular person

**Sour Grapes:** Disparagement of something that has proven unattainable

**Sour Grapes:** Spiteful disparagement of a goal one has failed to achieve

**Spare The Rod And Spoil The Child:** It is necessary to physically punish children in order to raise them right.

**Speak of the Devil (and He Shall Appear):** The person we have just been talking about has entered.

**Speak with A Plum in (one's) Mouth:** To speak in a manner that is indicative of a high social class.

**Spick and Span:** Clean and neat

**Spill the Beans:** Reveal a secret

**Spin A Yarn:** Tell a story

**Spin One's Wheels:** Engaging in activity that yields no progress; getting nowhere

**Spit into The Wind:** Wasting time on something futile

**Spoiling for a Fight:** Combative, wanting conflict, eager to argue or fight

**Spoiling for a Fight:** Combative, wanting conflict, eager to argue or fight

**Square the Circle:** Attempt an impossible task

**Stab Someone in the Back:** To betray (somebody)

**Stalking Horse:** Someone who tests a concept in advance of its application; a candidate who enters a political race in order to test the strength of the incumbent

**Stand (Someone) In Good Stead:** Be useful in the future

**Stand On One's Own Two Feet:** To be independent and self-sufficient

**Stand One's Ground:** Refuse to back down; insist on one's position

**Start with a Clean Slate:** To start (something) again with a fresh beginning; to work on a problem without thinking about what has been done before

**Steal Someone's Thunder:** Upstage someone

**Stem the Tide:** To stop or control the growth of something, usually something unpleasant.

**Step Up One's Game:** Work to advance to a higher level of a competition

**Step Up to the Plate:** Prepare to take action, be the person in a group who takes action

**Stick It to the Man:** Do something that frustrates those in authority

**Stick Your Nose into Something:** Intrude into something that is not your affair

**Sticker Shock:** Surprise at the high price of something

**Stick-in-the-Mud:** A person who dislikes or adapts slowly to new ideas

**Sticky Wicket:** A difficult, tricky situation

**Stiff-Necked:** Stubborn; excessively formal

**Storm in a Teacup:** A commotion that dies down quickly, about something unimportant

**Stormy Relationship:** Relationship that has a lot arguments and disagreement

**Stumbling Block:** An obstacle, physical or abstract

**Straight Arrow:** An honest, trustworthy person

**Strain at a Gnat and Swallow a Camel:** To make a fuss over something unimportant while ignoring larger issues

**Strike A Chord:** Used to describe something that is familiar to you, reminds you of something or is connected to you somehow.

**Sugar Daddy:** A rich man who is generous with younger women in return for sexual favors

**Sure-Fire:** Certain to occur

**Swan Song:** A final appearance

**Swan Song:** This expression is used to describe a final act before dying or ending something.

**Sweep Under the Carpet:** Attempt to temporarily conceal a problem or error

**Sweep Under the Rug:** Attempt to temporarily conceal a problem or error

**Sweet Dreams!:** Sleep well!

**Sweeten the Deal:** Add something to an offer during a negotiation

**Sweeten the Pot:** Increase the amount of winnings potentially available in a game of chance, especially poker

**Swim Against the Tide:** Do something contrary to a trend or usual opinion

**Swim with Sharks:** To take a major risk

**Swim with the Fishes:** Have been killed, especially with involvement of organized crime

**Swing for the Fences:** Attempt to achieve the largest accomplishment possible

**Swing for the Fences:** Attempt to achieve the largest accomplishment possible

**Sword of Damocles:** Something that causes a feeling of constant threat.



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**Take (Someone) to the Cleaners:** 1) Swindle; 2) defeat badly

**Take a Deep Dive (Into):** Explore something extensively

**Take a Flyer:** To take a rise; especially to make a speculative investment

**Take a Gander:** Go to take a look at something

**Take a Hike:** Go away

**Take A Powder:** To leave, especially in order to avoid a difficult situation

**Take a Rain Check:** Decline an invitation but suggest that you'll accept it at a later time.

**Take Five (Ten):** Take a short break of five (ten) minutes

**Take Five:** To take one brief (about five minutes) rest period

**Take It Easy:** 1) Relax, rest; 2) (as a command) Calm down!

**Take It Easy:** Don't hurry; relax; don't get angry

**Take It Easy:** When you relax, or do things at a comfortable pace, you take it easy.

**Take It on The Chin:** Be attacked; suffer an attack

**Take It or Leave It (command):** You must decide now whether you will accept this proposal

**Take Someone to Task:** Reprimand someone strongly

**Take Something with a Pinch (grain) of Salt:** If you take what someone says with a pinch of salt, you do not completely believe it.

**Take the Cake:** Be the most extreme instance

**Take the Edge Off (of Something):** To slightly improve something negative

**Take the Fifth:** Refuse to answer because answering might incriminate or cause problems for you

**Take the Gloves Off:** Negotiate in a more aggressive way

**Take the High Road:** Refuse to descend to immoral activities or personal attacks

**Take The Mickey (Piss) (Out Of Someone):** Make fun of or ridicule someone

**Take the Shine Off (Something):** To do something that diminishes a positive event

**Take the Starch out of (Someone):** Make someone less confident or less arrogant

**Take The Wind Out of Someone's Sails:** To reduce someone's confidence, ofte by doing something unexpected

**Take Your Life in Your Hands:** Undergo extreme risk

**Take Your Medicine:** Accept something unpleasant, for example, punishment, without protesting or complaining

**Take Your Time:** Don't hurry, work at a relaxed pace

**Taste of Your Own Medicine:** The same unpleasant experience or treatment that one has given to others

**Teach an Old Dog New Tricks:** To change someone's long-established habits. Usually used in the negative: You can't teach an old dog new tricks.

**Tear One's Hair out:** Be extremely worried or frustrated

**Tear-Jerker:** A film or book that makes you cry

**Tee Many Martoonies:** Too many martinis, scrambled to suggest drunkenness

**Tell It to the Marines:** I don't believe you; you must think I'm gullible.

**Tempest in a Teapot:** A commotion about something unimportant

**Ten a Penny:** Ordinary, inexpensive

**Ten to One:** Something very likely

**Test the Waters:** Experiment with something cautiously

**Test the Waters:** Try something out in a preliminary way

**Tie the Knot:** Get married

**Tighten the Screws:** Increase pressure on someone

**Tight-Lipped:** secretive, unwilling to explain something

**Til the Cows Come Home:** For a very long time

**Time is Money:** time is valuable, so don't waste it.

**Tip of the Iceberg:** A small, visible part of a much larger problem

**Tip One's Hand:** Reveal one's advantages; reveal useful information that one possesses

**TLC:** Tender Loving Care

**To be A Peach:** Someone or something that is extremely good, impressive, or attractive

**To be Smitten With Someone:** To be completely captivated by someone and feel immense joy

**To be someone's One and Only:** To be unique to the other person

**To be the Apple of Someone's Eye:** To be loved and treasured by someone

**To Bear Fruit:** To develop in a profitable or positive way

**To Bear Fruit:** To develop in a profitable or positive way

**To Carpool:** To travel to the same place with a group of people in one car. e.g. work/school

**To Each His Own:** People have different tastes.

**To Get Cold Feet:** To experience reluctance or fear

**To Have a Chip on One's Shoulder:** To be combative, to be consistently argumentative

**To Have Butterflies In Your Stomach:** To be nervous

**To Have One For the Road:** To have one last (alcoholic) drink before you go home

**To Pay an Arm and a Leg:** A very high cost

**To Pop (one's) Cherry:** To do something for the first time

**To Pull Someone's Leg:** Lie playfully

**To Run Hot and Cold:** To be unable to make up one's mind

**To the Letter:** Exactly (said of instructions or procedures)

**Toe the Line:** Accept authority, follow the rules

**Tone-Deaf:** Not good at perceiving the impact of one's words, insensitive

**Tongue-in-Cheek:** Said ironically; not meant to be taken seriously

**Too Busy Fighting Alligators to Drain the Swamp:** So occupied with multiple challenges that one can't keep the big picture in mind

**Too Many Cooks Spoil the Broth:** A project works best if there is input from a limited number of people

**Too Many Chiefs and Not Enough Indians:** Everyone wants to be a leader, and no one wants to do the actual work

**Too Many To Shake A Stick At:** A large number

**Toot Your Own Horn:** Brag; emphasize one's own contributions

**Top Banana:** The boss, the leader

**Toss a Wrench (Spanner) Into:** Sabotage; cause a process to stop

**Touch Base:** Meet briefly with someone

**Touch One's Heart:** Affect someone emotionally, be touching

**Touch Water:** Be launched. Said of a boat.

**Tough Cookie:** A very determined person

**Tough Cookie:** Someone who can endure hardship; especially: a strong negotiator

**Tough Sledding:** Difficult progress

**Turn a Blind Eye:** (to) Choose not to notice something

**Turn on a Dime:** Quickly reverse direction or position

**Turn Someone Inside Out:** To cause strong emotional turmoil; to completely change someone

**Turn Something on Its Head:** Reverse something, cause something to be done in a new way

**Turn Turtle:** Capsize, turn over

**Turn the Corner:** To begin to improve after a problem

**Turn the Tables:** Reverse a situation

**Turnabout Is Fair Play:** If you suffer from the same suffering you have inflicted on others, that's only fair

**Twenty-Four Seven:** At any time

**Twist the Knife (in Deeper):** Make someone's suffering worse

**Twist the Knife (in Deeper):** Make someone's suffering worse

**Two a Penny:** Ordinary, inexpensive

**Two Peas in A Pod:** Two people who are very similar in appearance

**Thank God It's Friday (TGIF):** Let's be happy that the workweek is over!

**That Ship Has Sailed:** That opportunity has passed.

**That's Music to My Ears:** I am very happy to hear this.

**That's a Stretch:** What you are suggesting is very difficult to believe; I am very skeptical

**That's All She Wrote:** That was the end of the story.

**The Apple Never Falls Far From the Tree:** Family characteristics are usually inherited

**The Birds and the Bees:** Human sexuality and reproduction

**The Cat Is Out of the Bag:** The secret has been revealed.

**The Coast Is Clear:** We are unobserved; it is safe to proceed.

**The Cherry On the Cake:** The final thing that makes something perfect

**The Deck Is (The Cards Are):** Stacked Against You Unfavorable conditions exist.

**The Jig Is Up:** A secret illicit activity has been exposed; your trickery is finished

**The More Things Change, The More They Stay The Same:** Although something may seem superficially new, it has not altered the basic situation.

**The Only Game in Town:** The sole option for a particular service.

**The Powers That Be:** People in charge, often used when the speaker does not want to identify them.

**The Real McCoy:** A genuine item

**The Story Has Legs:** People are continuing to pay attention to the story.

**The Time is Ripe:** If you say that the time is ripe, you mean that it is a suitable point for a particular activity

**The Walls Have Ears We:** may be overheard; be careful what you say

**The Walls Have Ears:** We may be overheard; be careful what you say

**The Whole Enchilada:** All of something.

**The Whole Shebang:** Everything, all the parts of something

**The World Is Your Oyster:** You have many opportunities and choices.

**There But For The Grace Of God Go I:** I could easily have done what that person did.

**There's More Than One Way to Skin a Cat:** There's more than one way of achieving a certain goal.

**There's No Such Thing as a Free Lunch:** Nothing is given to you without some expectation of something in return.

**Thin On The Ground:** Rare, seldom encountered

**Think Big:** Consider ambitious plans; avoid becoming overly concerned with details

**Think Outside the Box:** Try to solve a problem in an original way; think creatively

**Think Tank:** A group of experts engaged in ongoing studies of a particular subject; a policy study group

**Think Tank:** A group of experts engaged in ongoing studies of a particular subject; a policy study group

**Third Rail:** A topic so sensitive that it is dangerous to raise. This is especially used in political contexts

**Third Time's a Charm:** Even if you fail at something twice, you may well succeed the third time.

**Thirty-Thousand-Foot View:** A very broad or general perspective

**This Has (Person X) Written All Over It:** [Person X] would really like or be well suited to this.

**This Is Not Your Father's \_\_\_\_:** This item has been much updated from its earlier versions.

**Three Sheets to the Wind:** Very drunk

**Through the Grapevine:** Via gossip

**Through Thick and Thin:** In good times and bad

**Throw a Wet Blanket on (Something):** Discourage plans for something

**Throw a Wrench Into:** To sabotage; to cause to fail

**Throw Caution to the Wind:** To act in a daring way, without forethought

**Throw Down the Gauntlet:** To issue a challenge

**Throw Elbows:** Be combative; be aggressive (physically or figuratively)

**Throw in the Towel:** To give up, admit defeat

**Throw Someone for a Loop:** Deeply surprise someone; catch someone off guard

**Throw Someone Under the Bus:** Sacrifice someone else's interests for your own personal gain

**Throw the Baby Out with the Bath Water:** Eliminate something good while discarding the bad parts of something

**Throw the Baby Out with the Bath Water:** To discard something valuable or important while disposing of something worthless

**Throw The Book At:** Prosecute legally as strongly as possible

**Throw the Fight:** Intentionally lose a contest, usually in collusion with gamblers

**Throw the Game:** Intentionally lose a contest, usually in collusion with gamblers

**Throw the Match:** Intentionally lose a contest, usually in collusion with gamblers

**Thumbs-Up:** Approval

**Train Wreck:** Anything that develops in a disastrous way

**Trash Talk:** Insults directed at one's opponent in a sporting event or contest

**Tread Water:** Maintain a current situation without improvement or decline

**Trial Balloon:** A test of someone's or the public's reaction

**Trip the Light Fantastic:** Dance well; do ballroom dancing



**U Turn:** A complete change of opinion, direction, etc.

**Ugly Duckling:** An awkward child or young person who grows into a beautiful person

**Under (Below) the Radar:** Not generally perceived, below popular consciousness

**Under Someone's Spell:** Fascinated, entranced by someone

**Under the Impression:** Believing something, perhaps mistakenly

**Under the Table:** Without being officially recorded

**Under the Weather:** Feeling ill

**Under the Weather:** Not feeling well

**Under Wraps:** Temporarily hidden, secret

**University of Life:** Difficult real-life experience, as opposed to formal education

**Until the Cows Come Home:** For a long time

**Until You're Blue in the Face:** For a long time with no results

**Up a Creek:** In a very bad situation

**Up for Grabs:** Available

**Up for Grabs:** Available for anyone

**Up in Arms:** Angry, protesting (usually said of a group)

**Up in the Air:** Not yet decided

**Up to One's Neck:** Nearly overwhelmed

**Up to Scratch:** Meeting a basic standard of competence or quality

**Up to Snuff:** Meeting a basic standard

**Up the Ante:** Raise the stakes; increase the importance of something under discussion

**Up the Duff:** Pregnant

**Upset the Apple Cart:** To disorganize or spoil something, especially an established arrangement or plan

**Use One's Head:** To think, to have common sense



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**Vale of Tears:** The world in general, envisioned as a sad place; the tribulations of life

**Vicious Circle:** A situation in which an attempt to solve a problem makes the original problem worse.

**Victory Lap:** Visible public appearances after a victory or accomplishment

**Virgin Territory:** Something that has never been explored, physically or intellectually

**Vote with One's Feet:** To physically depart from something as a way of showing disapproval



**Waiting in the Wings:** Ready to assume responsibilities but not yet active, ready to become a successor

**Waka-Jumping:** Change political parties (said of politicians themselves)

**Wake Up and Smell the Coffee:** Stop deluding yourself

**Wake Up on the Wrong Side of the Bed:** Be grumpy or ill-humored. Generally used in past tense

**Walk on Eggshells:** To have to act very sensitively in order to avoid offending someone

**Walk the Plank:** Be forced to resign a position

**Wandering Eye:** A tendency to look at and desire women or men other than one's committed romantic partner

**Wandering Eye:** A tendency to look at and desire women or men other than one's committed romantic partner

**Wash Your Hands of (Something):** Decline to take further responsibility; refuse to be involved with something anymore

**Water Under the Bridge:** Something in the past that's no longer worth worrying about

**Watering Hole:** A place where alcoholic beverages are served, a bar

**Weekend Warrior:** Someone who has an office job but enjoys contact sports on weekends; a member of a military reserve force (whose exercises are typically on weekends)

**We'll Cross That Bridge:** When We Come to It We'll deal with that problem if and when it comes up

**Welsh (Welch) on a Deal:** Not observe the terms of an agreement

**Wet Behind the Ears:** inexperienced, immature, new to something

**Wet Behind the Ears:** Inexperienced, immature, new to something

**Wet Blanket:** Someone who dampens a festive occasion

**Wet Your Whistle:** Drink something

**What Do You Make of (Him)?:** What is your evaluation of this person?

**What Goes Around Comes Around:** The kind of treatment you give to others will eventually return to you; things go in cycles

**What's Good for the Goose Is Good for the Gander:** What's OK for a man is OK for a woman, too

**When Hell Freezes Over:** Never

**When In Doubt, Leave It Out:** When unsure about something, omit it.

**When in Rome, Do as the Romans Do:** When you visit a new place, follow the customs of the people there

**When It Rains, It Pours:** Problems tend to come in groups.

**When Pigs Fly:** Never

**When the Chips Are Down:** When a situation becomes urgent or difficult

**Where (When) the Rubber Meets the Road:** In reality; where an idea meets a real-world test

**Where There's a Will, There's a Way:** If you have a strong desire to accomplish something, you will achieve it even in the face of considerable odds.

**Where There's Smoke, There's Fire:** If there is typical evidence of something, the most likely explanation is that it is actually occurring.

**Whisper Sweet Nothings (in Someone's Ear):** Speak meaningless romantic utterances

**Whistle in the Dark:** To be unrealistically confident or brave; to talk about something of which one has little knowledge

**Whistle Past the Graveyard:** Remain optimistic despite dangers; be clueless

**Whistling Dixie:** Being unrealistically optimistic

**White Elephant:** An unwanted item that is difficult to sell or dispose of

**Who's She, the Cat's Mother?:** Why does she have such a high opinion of herself?

**Wild Goose Chase:** An impossible or futile search or task

**Window Dressing:** A misleading disguise intended to present a favorable impression

**Window Shop:** To look at merchandise in a store without intending to buy it

**Witch Hunt:** An organized attempt to persecute an unpopular group of people and blame them for a problem.

**With Bells On:** Eagerly, willingly, and on time.

**Work One's Fingers to the Bone:** Work very hard over an extended period

**Worn to a Frazzle:** Exhausted, completely worn out

**Wouldn't Be Caught Dead:** Would absolutely not allow myself to do this



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**Year In, Year Out:** Annually without change

**You Can Lead a Horse to Water, but You Can't Make It Drink:**

It's very hard to force someone to do something against his or her will.

**You Can Say That Again!:** I agree totally!

**You Can Take It to the Bank:** I absolutely guarantee this

**You Can't Judge a Book by Its Cover:** You can't know people (or things) well by their external appearances.

**You Can't Make an Omelet (Omelette):** Without Breaking

**You Can't Make Fish of One and Fowl of the Other:** People must be treated equally.

**You Know the Drill:** You are already familiar with the procedure.

**You Snooze, You Lose:** If you delay or are not alert, you will miss opportunities

**Young at Heart:** Having a youthful outlook, regardless of age

**Your Guess Is as Good as Mine:** I don't know; I have no idea

**Your Mileage May Vary:** You may get different results. This does not necessarily refer to a car, although it may.

**Your Number Is Up:** You are going to die (or suffer some bad misfortune or setback)

**You're Driving Me Nuts:** To make someone giddy or crazy

**Yours Truly:** Me



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**Zero In On:** Focus closely on something; take aim at something

**Zig When One Should Be Zagging:** To make an error; to choose an incorrect course

**Zip One's Lip:** Be quiet

# Chapter 16

## Popular British Slang Words

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## 1. Tosh

When you say that something is tosh, you mean that this is a bunch of nonsense. The word “baloney” can also be used in the same context. For example, you might say that an article about the Earth being flat that you’ve read was tosh.

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## 2. Chuffed

When you’re feeling chuffed, you’re pleased, happy, or proud of something. For instance, if your parents give you a birthday present that you’ve been dreaming of, you’ll be chuffed with it. Or, if you go to the gym every week now and have already lost five pounds, you’ll also feel chuffed.

---

## 3. Gander

This word is usually used as part of the phrase “take a gander” which means “take a look”. For example, if you’re struggling with your Math homework, you can ask one of your friends to take a gander at the equation and help you with it.

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## 4. Cheeky

When someone is cheeky, they are doing something disrespectful and maybe even slightly rude, but in a way that everyone thinks is funny and cute. Eating the last biscuit without asking if anyone else wants it might be considered cheeky. If you’re on a diet but still go to your favorite fast food place for dinner, you can say that you’re eating a cheeky burger: something that you aren’t supposed to eat.

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## 5. Mate

When you say that someone is your mate, you simply mean that this person is your friend. For example, you can introduce your best friend to a new company, saying that he’s your best mate. Usually, this word is very friendly and casual. Nevertheless, if you hear someone using it in an annoyed tone, it might mean that you’re in trouble.

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## 6. Gutted

This is a very popular British slang word. When someone's feeling gutted, they're very sad, disappointed, and devastated. For instance, you might feel gutted if you don't pass an important exam you've spent weeks studying for.

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## 7. Fag

If you're familiar with American slang, you probably know this word to be an insulting term to use towards someone who's gay. However, in British slang, it just means a cigarette. Someone you work with might be a smoker, and he'll say that he's going outside for a fag: to smoke a cigarette.

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## 8. Bum

This word can mean "bottom" but this isn't its only meaning. It also can be a verb that refers to using or getting something without paying for it. For example, if you also smoke but forget your cigarettes at home this time, you can ask to bum a fag from your mate.

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## 9. Trollied

"Trolly" is a British word for a shopping cart. However, the adjective that comes from this word has nothing to do with shopping carts: in fact, it means being drunk. So, when your mate has had too many beers at a bar, you can describe him as trollied.

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## 10. Bloody

This is one more word that has different definitions in standard English and in British slang. In Britain, bloody doesn't necessarily refer to something covered in blood; it can also mean "damned" and show frustration or anger. So, saying "bloody traffic" will show how angry you are at the fact that you'll be late for work. "Bloody British slang", on the other hand, is an expression to show how frustrated and confused you are with so many British slang words and phrases.

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## 11. Knackered

When you hear somebody say that they are ‘knackered’ they are usually referring to the fact that they are extremely exhausted or tired. This word can also be used to talk about an inanimate object which is broken. For example, ‘that lamp won’t switch on, I think it’s knackered.’

---

## 12. Bants

This is a reasonably new slang word which has become popular over recent years, mostly due to the word being used on TV shows. Bants is a shorter way of saying banter, meaning friendly joking. A good example of how to use this word would be ‘I went out with my mates last night, we had some good bants.’

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## 13. Cuppa

This is a term you will hear very often when in the United Kingdom, and the reason for this is that we are a country of big tea drinkers. What does that have to do with this slang word? Cuppa is a term used to refer to a cup of tea, or sometimes coffee. When you go to visit a friend or family member in Great Britain you will likely be greeted with the phrase ‘do you fancy a cuppa?’

---

## 14. Ledge

This word is another shorter version of a word. Ledge is short for legend. The term is not usually used to refer to a legend as in a story but is used to talk about a person who is considered to be a legend. When using the word legend to describe a person, it means that this person is very famous or successful at what they do. For example, you might hear someone say ‘I absolutely love Elton John, what a ledge!’

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## 15. Mardy

Mardy is a term used to describe someone who is not in a very good mood. You might hear this word used in a way such as this; ‘Ben is slamming around in there, I think he’s being a bit mardy because

he has lost his phone.’ Another word you might hear that is used to describe someone being in a bad mood, is narky or narked.

---

## 16. Legit

When you hear someone tell you to ‘leg it’ in Britain, you are being told to make a quick exit, or run away. A good example of when this phrase could be used is if a group of teenagers were out doing something a bit mischievous, and one of them sees an adult approaching, he might say ‘Quick we are gonna get caught, leg it.’

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## 17. Bloke

A bloke is simply used to talk about a man. You might hear someone say ‘I like Martin, he is a decent bloke.’

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## 18. Lurgy

Lurgy is a word used to describe a contagious illness, for example you might hear someone say ‘I wouldn’t go near John today, he’s got the lurgy.’ This could mean that John has a cold or a virus that you want to avoid catching yourself.

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## 19. Bog

We are not talking about an area of muddy, soggy land, bog is used in Britain to talk about the toilet. This is a very commonly used word in the UK and you will likely hear it very often. ‘I’ve got to go to the bog, I’m busting.’ In this sentence, the word busting refers to the speaker urgently needing to use the toilet.

---

## 20. Daft

Daft is a word used to describe someone or something that is a little bit silly. It is not used to describe something that is outrageously silly, it is more of an endearing term. You might hear it used in a sentence like ‘Barry has dropped his drink again, he is so daft.’ It can also be used to tell someone, in a kind way, that their idea is a bit silly. For example, ‘You can’t go out without a coat, you’re daft.’

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## 21. Codswallop

Although this term is not used as frequently in the UK these days, it is still used and perfectly understood. Codswallop means nonsense and can be used in a situation where, for example, someone has told you that they have just been chased by a dinosaur, you might reply ‘what a load of old codswallop!’

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## 22. Dodgy

This word is used extremely frequently in Britain. The word means something that is suspicious. You might hear it in a sentence like ‘I don’t trust that house, the building looks a bit dodgy to me.’ You might also use it to describe a person who is acting in a questionable way. ‘Dave is acting a bit dodgy, he keeps going out at 3am and nobody knows why.’

---

## 23. Nowt

This is a word which is used to say ‘nothing.’ It might be heard in a sentence such as ‘I really must go shopping, I’ve got nowt at all in the fridge.’

---

## 24. Hard

This is not talking about something that is solid to touch. When you hear the word hard used in British slang, it is referring to a person who is considered to be tough and able to look after themselves in a fight. ‘I wouldn’t get on the wrong side of Bill, he’s hard.’ It may also be used to talk about somebody who thinks they are tough, but are not really. In this instance you might hear someone say ‘He thinks he’s a hard man.’ or ‘he thinks he’s well hard.’

---

## 25. Pear-shaped

We are not talking about something that is a similar shape to the piece of fruit. Pear shaped is referring to a situation that has gone wrong or not as expected. ‘Well, the car cut out halfway to our destination, the whole journey went a bit pear-shaped.’

---

## 26. Mug

This word is not referring to a type of drinking vessel, a mug in the UK refers to someone who will believe anything or who regularly falls prey to pranks and wrongdoings. It is another, more common word for gullible. An example of a sentence in which mug can be used would be ‘Steve has fallen for another online scam, he is such a mug.’

---

## 27. Snog

A snog is a term used to talk about a passionate or French kiss. It is a very common slang term in the United Kingdom and might be heard in a sentence like ‘Look at Bob and Mary, they’re having a good old snog.’

# Chapter 17

## Popular American Slang Words

## Part 1: Universal American Slang Words

Use these slang words and phrases anywhere across the continental U.S. – even if you’re not a native speaker, you’ll soon be sounding the part!

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### 1. Basic

Its most recognized definition is as an adjective, to mean simple or fundamental. But Americans have also adopted this word to refer to someone or something that is boring, unsophisticated or mainstream. A basic b\*tch likes drinking pumpkin spiced lattes from Starbucks in the fall, for instance.

---

### 2. For real

This versatile phrase can be used in three ways: (1) to agree with someone, (2) to emphasize a statement and (3) to ask whether someone is joking. If Johnny tells you he can hold his breath for five minutes, you may check his ego by asking, “for real”? (Spoiler alert: he probably can’t). Which brings us to...

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### 3. Spoiler

This is when someone reveals a previously unknown aspect of something that you would have preferred to learn about on your own. When your friend watches the new episode of your favorite TV show without you (and let’s face it – what kind of friend would do that?!), you might preface your next convo by insisting that he/she not reveal any spoilers.

---

### 4. Cray

This list is cray! JK, not really. Americans use the word “cray” as an abbreviation of the word “crazy” to intimate that something is wild or out of control. “JK” is internet slang for “just kidding”.

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### 5. I can’t even

Americans may say “I can’t even” to express a feeling of being overwhelmed (either in a bad or good way). This is usually meant in a playful and joking manner.

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## 6. Vanilla

Apparently vanilla ice cream is not a fan-favorite in the U.S., as “vanilla” is used to describe someone or something that is ordinary, boring or uninspiring. It serves a similar purpose as “basic”, although at least “basic” has the distinction of implying someone is a slave to mainstream trends. “Vanilla” doesn’t merit that recognition. Just as vanilla ice cream is seen as a very normal flavor, a “vanilla” person is someone with a plain and unexciting personality.

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## 7. Buck

A “buck” is both a male deer and a dollar bill – but when someone says “give me the buck”, they’re referring to the latter.

---

## 8. No sweat

You sweat when you’re exercising. A sweaty person has clearly exercised effort to do whatever it is they are doing. Similarly, “no sweat” is a way to say that something is easy or not a problem. You want us to help you out with examples of common American slang? Sure, no sweat.

---

## 9. YOLO

The not-so-serious abbreviation is short for “you only live once”. It is along the same lines of the Latin “carpe diem” (seize the day), though with much less serious undertones. [YOLO](#) was popularized by American rapper Drake, and acts as a call to live life to the fullest. Eat that whole pizza. Go to that party. Make out with that cute guy/girl at the bar. YOLO.

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## 10. FOMO

“Fear of missing out” is a real worry for many Americans, apparently.

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## 11. Screw up

To mess up or make a mistake.

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## 12. Legit

Short for legitimate (meaning authentic or real), Americans say “legit” to affirm that something is good or worthwhile.

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## 13. K (or kk)

This is most commonly used as text or email slang. If your crush texts you to hang out, you don’t want to seem too eager, right? Right. So resist the urge to text back a bunch of heart-face emoticons, and try just writing “K.” That’ll keep ’em on their toes.

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## 14. My bad

My mistake.

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## 15. Hit me up

Please, no hitting your fellow Americans. “Hit me up” is used to tell someone to contact you. You may additionally hear someone ask you to “holler at them”, meaning to give them a call.

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## 16. Binge

The dictionary defines “binge” as an “excessive indulgence”. Given the rise of “Netflix and Chill” culture, it’s common for Americans to admit to “binge-watching” a favorite TV show.

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## 17. A piece of cake

Unfortunately, there are no literal cakes involved with this slang phrase – but wouldn’t it be great if there were! Instead, a piece of cake refers to something as being very easy.

---

## 18. For the birds

This one is a little more obscure – but we stuck it in here just to double check you’re paying attention. When someone says “that’s for the birds”, it could mean anything. Birdseed? Does something have feathers? Is “birds” supposed to be some kind of metaphor you’re missing? Nope, none of the above. “For the birds” actually means that something is trivial or worthless.

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## 19. Kudos

Kudos means “congrats” or “great work”! It can be used in all situations.

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## 20. Take a rain check

This was once a baseball term. If a game was rained out, spectators received a “rain check”, or a ticket admitting them entrance to a future ball game. These days, it has ceased to refer to literal weather, and broadly means that an event will be re-scheduled for a later date.

---

## 21. Jonesing

“Jones” has its roots in narcotics, as it was a term previously used for a heroin addiction. Now, the word can be applied to anything. In the context of American slang, “jonesing for” means to be craving something. Right now we’re jonesing for a glass of wine, for example.

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## 22. Zone out

Whether it’s listening to a boring presentation or trying to make sense of a dense textbook, we’ve all zoned out before. This common slang phrase means to get distracted and lose track of whatever is happening around you

---

## 23. Break a Leg

While it may sound like the speaker is wishing someone ill, the exact opposite is true. Telling someone to “break a leg” before a performance is actually a term of good luck.

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## 24. To feel blue or have the blues

Just as the color blue can be associated with emotions of loneliness or melancholia, Americans use this slang phrase to express sadness.

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## 25. Cheesy

Nope, it doesn't actually have anything to do with cheese. Something that's cheesy is cheap or tacky, such as a cheesy pick-up line or a cheesy movie.

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## 26. Crash

This word has a plethora of meanings. In the context of slang, "crash" can mean to go to sleep quickly and suddenly (for instance, "I crashed as soon as I got home") or to show up somewhere without invitation. The popular American film *Wedding Crashers* features titular characters who show up uninvited at weddings to meet girls. Hijacks ensue.

---

## 27. Dead

This isn't what you think. Americans use "dead" to describe bars and clubs as empty, quiet or sad – for instance, "let's get out of here; this place is dead anyway."

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## 28. Drive up the wall

If someone is driving you up the wall, they're likely irritating you.

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## 29. 411

Previously, Americans would dial 411 to reach directory assistance and be provided with information. While this is no longer common, 411 lives on in slang speech. Asking someone the 411 is the equivalent of asking "what's the gossip" or "what's the info".

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## 30. I feel you

Here's a case where you can translate literally. If a person "feels you", they are quite literally feeling, understanding and empathizing with what you're saying.

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## 31. Shoot the sh\*t

How's the weather? Did you have a nice weekend? Workin' hard, or hardly workin'? Americans refer to this small talk as shooting the sh\*t.

---

### 32. Hold your horses

Hold up! Wait just a moment.

---

### 33. Score

In soccer, an offensive player's aim is to score a goal. Similarly, to score is to achieve something you want. Upon receiving a candy or video game, little kids might gleefully yell "Score!" For teenagers and adults, saying they scored with that guy/girl last night usually implies sexual connotations.

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### 34. Twenty four seven (24/7)

This extremely common phrase refers to something that's non-stop or around the clock – for example, "Walgreens is open 24/7."

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### 35. Shotgun; to ride shotgun

Shotgun is the front passenger seat in a vehicle, so-called because of the position of the shotgun-armed guard on a horse-drawn carriage or wagon train. If someone calls shotgun today, they are announcing their intention to sit in the passenger seat.

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### 36. That hits the spot

Usually spoken in conjunction with food or drink, you can say something hits the spot to express that it was exactly what you needed.

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### 37. It's not rocket science

A non-English speaker might be asking what a rocket has to do with the conversation at hand. For a native speaker, "it's not rocket science" explains something by hyperbolically stating what it is not. Something that's not rocket science isn't difficult; therefore, it's easy.

## Part 2: Regional American Slang Words

While the U.S. was once a sprawling map of hyper-localized speech, the technology age has helped homogenize the way we speak to one another. That being said, Americans have still retained a few regional gems – most notably words like “whoopensocker” (Wisconsin) and “shoots” (Hawaii).

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### 1. Wicked (Northeast)

The quintessentially Boston word is liberally used in place of adjectives like “really” or “very”. It is believed to have originated around the 1600s, in conjunction with the Salem Witch Trials in Massachusetts. During this time period, the demonology-obsessed Puritans used the word “wicked” to describe accused witches. Over time, the adjective gradually transformed itself into an adverb, morphing from “wicked” to “awful” and finally “awfully” – which carries a similar meaning to today’s intensifiers like “really” or “very”.

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### 2. Whoopensocker (Wisconsin)

This word is essentially a cuter version of “whopper”, and describes something to be exceptionally large – for example, that’s a whoopensocker of a pizza!

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### 3. Cattywampus (Alabama)

Originating from the 19th century, this is a variation of the word “catawampus”, which roughly translates to “destructive”. Because in Alabama, things aren’t ever sideways or messed up. They’re “cattywampus”.

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### 4. Shoots (Hawaii)

Hawaiians substitute this word in for “yeah” or “sure”.

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### 5. Y’all (Southeast)

Y’all is a proper contraction but you’ll never hear a true Southerner say “you all”.

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## 6. Pretty as a peach (Southeast)

If you live in a state known for its peaches (we're looking at you Georgia), then comparing someone to a peach is as good a compliment as it gets.

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## 7. Blue Norther (Texas)

The East Coast calls their storms "nor-easters", but Texas wins for the most creative storm name. A Blue Norther is a fast-moving cold front marked by a rapid decrease in temperature, and sometimes dark blue skies. The cold front swoops down from the north (hence norther) and beware – a Blue Norther can send temperatures plummeting by as much as 20 or 30 degrees in mere minutes.

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## 8. To have a hankerin' for (Southeast)

You're likely to hear this in the Deep South. It means to have a craving for something (usually food).

# Chapter 18

## Popular Australian Slang Words

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## 1. What's the John Dory?

This one has its roots in English slang. Cockney is conspicuous for its sing-song, rhyming style, and “John Dory” [rhymes](#) with story. While an actual John Dory is a fish found in Sydney Harbor, this phrase is asked when someone wants to know the gossip, or what's going on.

---

## 2. Do the Harry

Harry Holt was a prime minister who mysteriously disappeared in 1967. While some suggest he may have been abducted, others believe he quite literally bolted from the responsibilities of his political role. Either way Harry lives on in infamy, as Australians refer to someone getting the hell out as “doing the harry”.

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## 3. Arvo, smoko, bottleo, defo

If an Aussie can find a way to shorten a word, they will. A smoke break turns into “smoko,” a liquor store is a “bottleo,” “definitely” becomes “defo”, and “afternoon” gets gutted down to “arvo.”

---

## 4. Gone walkabout

This phrase derives from indigenous culture, as “walkabout” was a foot journey taken by Aborigines into the bush in order to live according to traditional indigenous practices. Today, many native Australians enjoy going “walkabout”, for example backpacking, traveling, hiking, etc. If you're looking for someone only to be told they've gone “walkabout” – don't worry too much.

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## 5. Bonzer

Also spelled “bonza,” it means “excellent” or “great” – essentially the Australian equivalent of the American “awesome.” This truly versatile word can be used as an adjective (“bonzer mates”), a noun (“that concert was a real bonzer”) an adverb (“that food went down bonzer”) and an exclamation of joy or agreement (“BONZER!”).

---

## 6. Bikkie, brekkie, barbie

In the land down under, the diminutive “ie” suffix is just as common as “o”. Case in point, the word “bikkie”, which takes inspiration

from the British “biscuit.” Australian slang is full of words just like this. “Barbie” is short for “barbecue”, “brekkie” is short for “breakfast”, and “Aussie” is widely recognized slang for “Australian”.

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## 7. Stubbie holder

If you go to a game or the beach, you’ll likely bring along your stubbie holder. Another word for a koozie, a stubbie holder is so-named because it holds your stubbie (beer).

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## 8. Go troppo

Oz is known for its unforgiving sunshine and humid tropical heat. To go troppo refers to the daze brought on by such heat, and means to go crazy.

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## 9. G’day

What list would be complete without the most classic of all Aussie slang? “G’day” combines the word “good” and “day” into one.

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## 10. Bogan

The pejorative term refers to a redneck or uncultured person. Popularized by the Australian show *Bogan Hunters*, a bogan is considered white trash, typically someone with a mullet and/or bad teeth, who engages in uncivilized behavior.

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## 11. Crikey

RIP Steve Irwin. We will never forget your bewildering (yet endearing) love for some of nature’s fiercest reptiles. Crikey is an exclamation of surprise, often interchangeable with “blimey” or “holy sh\*t”.

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## 12. Thongs

It’s not what you’re thinking, OK? Thongs are sandals.

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### 13. Deadset

True. If you ask an Aussie about the best country in the world, they're likely to respond that no other place beats the land down under. Deadset.

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### 14. Grommet

A young surfer.

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### 15. True blue

How to distinguish a *real* Australian? True blues are loyal friends and family members with solid personalities. Examples of famous true blues include Steve Irwin, Scott Cam, Paul Hogan, Ned Kelly and Austen Tayshus.

---

### 16. Woop Woop

There's the outback, and then there's the woop woop. The phrase loosely translates to "middle of nowhere" or "the boonies."

---

### 17. Mate's rate

A friend's discount. If you have a friend working at your local bar, then lucky you; you're likely to get a few pints at a mate's rate.

---

### 18. Have a Captain Cook

Named in honor of the first Brit to map eastern Australia, Captain James Cook, this phrase means to have a look or brief inspection.

---

### 19. She'll be right

No worries mate; everything's going to be OK.

---

### 20. Two-pot screamer

We've all got that friend who has more than one drink and immediately starts lurching around and making a fool of themselves. A two-pot screamer is someone who can't hold their liquor. They might be better off keeping the boozing to a minimum.

---

## 21. Carrying on like a pork chop

We've never met a pork chop we didn't like, but apparently the Aussies have. To carry on like a pork chop means to act unreasonable.

---

## 22. Have a roo loose in the top paddock

Similarly to the American phrase, a few fries short of a happy meal, this Australian colloquialism describes an intellectually impaired person. And the more loose roos, the more moronic the person.

---

## 23. Give it a burl

To have a go at something. Sure, we'll give it a burl.

# Chapter 19

## Popular Canadian Slang Words

---

## Eh?

It is one of the most commonly heard slang words in Canada; it is unique to their culture. Canadians use it for a variety of reasons. But there are three widespread occurrences. When a Canadian says eh, they could be looking for confirmation of what you said. They could be agreeing with you. It's also used to express yes or no. It would be inaccurate to believe that Canadians use the word eh after every sentence.

For example, you won't hear them say, "good morning, eh?"

The vast majority of times, Eh, it's only heard at the end of a sentence if they're looking for you to agree with them.

- *Nice day today? Eh?*
- *Wow, that was some match? Eh?*

---

## Loonie

This is a word used to describe a \$1 coin. It's straightforward \$1 coin has a picture of a loon on it. This is a common aquatic bird in Canada that has like a duck. The overtime people have begun to refer to the one-dollar coin is a loonie.

- *For example, if you're in the shop or store the person behind the counter says to you I'm sorry I don't have a \$5 bill, is it okay if I give you five **loonies** instead.*

---

## Toonie

With every loonie comes a toonie. Canada they also have a \$2 coin, I suppose it makes sense that two loonies, over time, will make a toonie. Even though it's got a polar bear on it instead of a bird.

- *If you go into the shop and ask for change for a **Toonie**, you will most likely be given two loonies.*

---

## Toque

Another piece of Canadian slang, but you will not hear a little Canada, symptoms of warm it did winter hats. During the winter, it is common to hear people say that you shouldn't go out without a **toque**.

---

## Chesterfield

If you hear someone tell you to take a seat on the **Chesterfield**, just telling you to sit on the couch or sofa.

---

## Timmies

Tim Hortons is a trendy Canadian chain of coffee shops, its popularity late to them now being affectionately nicknamed Timmies. Like Starbucks in America, that is Tim Hortons everywhere. It's ridiculous sometimes you'll find them directly across the street from each other.

- *It's widespread to hear someone say. "do you want a coffee? Eh? Let us stop at **Timmies**.*
- 

## Double double

This Canadian slang term will commonly be heard in Timmy's across Canada. It merely means a mug of coffee with Two Sugars and two creams.

- *If this tickles your fancy, pop into Tim Hortons and ask. "can I have a **double-double**, please?"*
- 

## Pop

In Britain, they call it the fizzy drink; in America, it is referred to as a soda. In Canada, a POP is a carbonated beverage, such as a Coca-Cola or a Sprite.

- *If you're in the convenience store, it is ubiquitous to hear someone ask. "excuse me, where do you keep the **pop**?"*
- 

## Mickey

In Canada, the locals use the word Mickey to describe a 375ml bottle of alcohol. If you're driving to a house party and someone asks you to stop at the store because I need to buy a Mickey of vodka. now you know what they mean.'

---

## Two six or Twenty Sixer

Another popular Canadian slang term for a bottle of alcohol, because they come in 26 ounces are 750 ml bottles.

- *I need to grab a **two-six** of rum for the birthday party.*

### Extra

This Canadian slang term is not exclusive to Canadians; you will hear us there quite a loss. It's used to describe someone or something obnoxious. So you might overhear someone representing one of their friend's dresses, "it is a little extra."

### Beauty

Also, a term does not excuse ITS Canada; it's used to describe someone who's charming art describes something that was done very well.

- *My friend Bob is a **beauty**.*
- *That was a **beauty** of a score.*

### Give' r

This is more common in rural areas of Canada, but it's used to describe giving 100% to something. Are some people work very, very hard.

All ready to finish painting the house I'm going to give' r. It isn't unusual to hear it used here to use when referring to alcohol consumption. it also means to party a little hard Its Bob's birthday, we are going to give' r

### Homo Milk

No, it's not homosexual milk, and yes, the phrase is used ubiquitously in grocery stores throughout Canada. Not to be confused with whole milk, this is what Americans call homogenized milk.

### True

Locals substitute this word for "OK." Rather than denoting the truth of a statement, it merely acts as a term of acknowledgement.

### Pencil Crayon

Americans say "pencils" and "crayons" to mean different things – but in an unexpected power move, Canadians say "pencil crayons"

to mean “colored pencils.” This is likely rooted in French origin, as les Français say “crayon de couleur”.

---

## Skookum

Deriving chiefly from British Columbia, this means exceptional or awesome. Don't be offended if a local says that you're looking “skookum” in your dress – it's a compliment.

---

## Hang a Larry; Hang a Roger

Let's imagine a scenario in which you're driving a car somewhere in Vancouver. A Canadian named Mike is sitting in the passenger seat, and he unexpectedly tells you to “hang a Larry”. Are you visiting a friend named Larry? Nope. Mike is just telling you (in his own charming way) to turn left. Similarly, to “hang a Roger” means to take a right turn.

---

## Chocolate bar

This seems self-explanatory. In fact, it's what Americans call a candy bar. However, Canadians say “chocolate bar” in reference to all bars that have any amount of chocolate in them. The next time you walk into a convenience store, try asking for a chocolate bar with a little bit of homo milk. You'll blend right in with the locals in no time!

---

## Parkade

Canadians refer to a multi-level parking structure as a “parkade”, while Americans mostly call it a parking garage.

- *Any more spots left in that **parkade**, eh?*
- 

## Bunnyhug

This is a fun one. A “bunnyhug” is a Saskatchewan-based term for a hooded sweatshirt with a front pocket but no zipper. Theories abound as to where exactly the term came from and why it's used (almost exclusively) in Saskatchewan. It's believed there was a bunny overpopulation in the area about a century ago, and residents turned bunny pelts into wraps that loosely resemble today's version of the sweatshirts. **Another theory:** back in the 1600s, muffs were

lined with bunny or rabbit fur, with each end left open to allow the hands to be tucked in at the front of the waist. And of course, we'd be remiss not to mention the "Bunny Hug": a scandalous (for the time, anyway), grinding, hip-holding dance from the 20th century that was popularized in the Barbary Coast dance halls.

---

## Darts

Got a light for my dart? Confused? Don't be. A "dart" is just Canadian slang for "cigarette".

---

## Tippy Canoe

You don't have to be in an actual canoe for this saying to apply to you. Canadians use the phrase "tippy canoe" to refer to just about everything.

- Case in point: *Careful over there, that table looks like a real tippy canoe.*
- 

## Sophonsified

You know that feeling of eating too much turkey on Thanksgiving Day? Now you have the perfect (Canadian) word to describe it. "Sophonsified" is the opposite of hungry, meaning sufficiently full and satisfied.

---

## Jesus Murphy

Is this Jesus' Irish disciple? The name of a local Canadian bar where you can buy car bomb shots? Neither. Canadians largely use "Jesus Murphy" in the same context as "God damnit". The exclamation can be used to convey frustration, fear or annoyance.

---

## The Dep

This abbreviation of the word "depanneur" is the Quebec version of an NYC bodega or 7-11. The word comes from the French "la panne", meaning breakdown. A repairman is called a "depanneur", so the linguistic thinking here is that a corner store can fix just about any problem you might have. Need some darts? Food? Booze? Just head to your local dep to get your fix.

---

## Freezies

PSA – they’re not popsicles. Popsicles come on a stick, while these icy treats come in tiny plastic tubes that seem like they should be a hazard for children, but ... what do we know.

---

## Jam-busters

Jelly-filled donuts.

---

## Rink Rat; Puck Bunny

Every country has a sport they go crazy for – and for Canadians, it’s hockey. So it’s natural that the Canucks have their own slang for fans of the sport. A rink rat is someone who spends the majority of their time at a hockey rink – regardless of whether they actually play hockey. Similarly, a puck bunny is a girl who does the same.

---

## The Habs

While we’re on a hockey vein, we may as well bring up “habs”, a term used to refer to the Montreal hockey club. “Habs” is an abbreviation of the French “les habitants”, and also describes the inhabitants of present day Quebec.

---

## Biffed

No shame here – we’ve all biffed before. The word means to fall down, to slip or eat sh\*t.

---

## Fill yer boots

This Canadian slang is the equivalent of encouraging someone to “go for it”, “help yourself” or “enjoy yourself”.

---

## Worst Case Ontario

This one might be familiar for any viewers of *Trailer Park Boys*. The Canadian mockumentary TV series focuses on the misadventures of a group of trailer park residents, one of whom – Ricky – coined the phrase “Worst Case Ontario”, meaning worst-case scenario.

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## Kitty-Corner

This spacial reference is used to describe the location of a building that is diagonally across from another reference point. For instance – you can buy your homo milk at the dep kitty-corner to your house.

# Chapter 20

## Common Internet Slang Words

Believe it or not, social media has its own vocabulary and it keeps developing like a regular language. This is why this chapter discusses 200+ common social media slang words, which you should know.

---

### List of internet slang words and acronyms from A to Z.

- **2day**: Today
- **2moro**: Tomorrow
- **2nite**: Tonight
- **4EAE**: For Ever And Ever
- **ABT**: About
- **ADN**: Any Day Now
- **AFAIC**: As Far As I'm Concerned
- **AFAICT**: As Far As I Can Tell
- **AFAIK**: As Far As I Know
- **AFAIR**: As Far As I Remember
- **AKA**: Also Known As
- **AMA**: Ask Me Anything
- **ASAIC**: As Soon As I Can
- **ASAP**: As Soon As Possible
- **ATM**: At The Moment
- **B4**: Before
- **B4N**: Bye For Now
- **Bae**: Babe/Before Anyone Else
- **BBL**: Be Back Later
- **BBT**: Be Back Tomorrow
- **BCNU**: Be Seeing You
- **BD**: Big Deal
- **BF**: Boy Friend
- **BFF**: Best Friends Forever
- **BMT**: Before My Time
- **BOL**: Be On Later
- **BOT**: Back On Topic
- **BRB**: Be Right Back
- **BRO**: Brother
- **BT**: But
- **BTW**: By The Way

- **CFY:** Calling For You
- **CU:** See You
- **CUL:** See You Later
- **Cuz:** Because
- **CYA:** Cover Your Ass
- **DAE:** Does Anyone Else
- **DBA:** Doing Business As
- **DFTBA:** Don't Forget To Be Awesome!
- **DIKU:** Do I Know You
- **DM:** Direct Message
- **DND:** Do Not Disturb
- **DR:** Double Rainbow
- **DWBH:** Don't Worry, Be Happy
- **ELI5:** Explain Like I'm 5
- **EOM:** End Of Message
- **EOS:** End Of Story
- **F2F:** Face To Face
- **FAQ:** Frequently Asked Question
- **FB:** Facebook
- **FBF:** Flash Back Friday
- **FF:** Follow Friday
- **FIFY:** Fixed It For You
- **FITB:** Fill In The Blank
- **FML:** F\*\*\*\* My Life
- **FOMO:** Fear Of Missing Out
- **FTFY:** Fixed That For You
- **FTL:** For The Loss
- **FTW:** For The Win
- **FWB:** Friends With Benefits
- **FWIW:** For What It's Worth
- **FYE:** For Your Entertainment
- **FYEO:** For Your Eyes Only
- **FYI:** For Your Information
- **GA:** Go Ahead
- **GAL:** Get A Life
- **GF:** Girl Friend
- **GM:** Good Morning

- **GN:** Good Night
- **Gr8:** Great
- **GTR:** Getting Ready
- **HAND:** Have A Nice Day
- **HB:** Hurry Back
- **HBD:** Happy Birthday
- **HBU:** How About You
- **HMB:** Hit Be Back
- **HMU:** Hit Me Up
- **HRU:** How Are You
- **HTH:** Hope This Helps
- **IAC:** In Any Case
- **IC:** I See
- **ICYMI:** In Case You Missed It
- **IDC:** I Don't Care
- **IDK:** I Don't Know
- **IG:** Instagram
- **IIRC:** If I Remember Correctly
- **IKR:** I Know Right
- **ILY:** I Love You
- **IMHO:** In My Humble Opinion
- **IMMD:** It Made My Day
- **IMY:** I Miss You
- **IRL:** In Real Life
- **IS:** I'm Sorry
- **ISO:** In Search Of
- **IU2U:** It's Up To You
- **J4F:** Just For Fun
- **JAM:** Just A Minute
- **JFY:** Just For You
- **JIC:** Just In Case
- **JK:** Just Kidding
- **JSYK:** Just So You Know
- **KK:** Okay
- **L8:** Late
- **L8R:** Later
- **LMA:** Leave Me Alone

- **LMAO: Laughing My Ass Off**
- **LMBO: Laughing My Butt Off**
- **LMK: Let Me Know**
- **LOL: Laugh Out Loud**
- **LTNS: Long Time No See**
- **LYLAS: Love You Like A Sister**
- **M/F: Male or Female**
- **M8: Mate**
- **MP: My pleasure**
- **MSM: Mainstream Media**
- **MU: Miss You**
- **MYOB: Mind Your Own Business**
- **NAGI: Not A Good Idea**
- **NBD: No Big Deal**
- **NE1: Anyone**
- **NM: Not Much**
- **NP: No Problem**
- **NSFL: Not Safe For Life**
- **NSFW: Not Safe For Work**
- **NTS: Note To Self**
- **NVM: Never Mind**
- **OC: Original Content**
- **OH: Overheard**
- **OIC: Oh ! I See**
- **OMD: Oh My Damn**
- **OMG: Oh My Goodness**
- **OMW: On My Way**
- **OT: Off Topic**
- **OFC: Of course**
- **PAW: Parents Are Watching**
- **Pls: Please**
- **POTD: Photo Of The Day**
- **POV: Point Of View**
- **PPL: People**
- **PTB: Please Text Back**
- **Q4U: Question For You**
- **QQ: Crying**

- **RBTL: Read Between The Lines**
- **RIP: Rest In Peace**
- **RL: Real Life**
- **ROFL: Rolling On the Floor Laughing**
- **RT: Retweet**
- **RTM: Read The Manual**
- **SIS: Sister**
- **SITD: Still In The Dark**
- **SM: Social Media**
- **SMH: Shaking My Head**
- **SMY: Somebody**
- **SNH: Sarcasm Noted Here**
- **SOL: Sooner Or Later**
- **Some1: Someone**
- **SRSLY: Seriously**
- **STBY: Sucks To Be You**
- **Str8: Straight**
- **SYS: See You Soon**
- **TBA: To Be Announced**
- **TBH: To Be Honest**
- **TBT: Throwback Thursday**
- **TBT: Truth Be Told**
- **TFH: Thread From Hell**
- **TFTI: Thanks For The Invite**
- **TGIF: Thank God It's Friday**
- **THX: Thanks**
- **TIA: Thanks in Advance**
- **TIL: Today I Learned**
- **TIME: Tears In My Eyes**
- **TL;DR: Too Long; Didn't Read**
- **TLC: Tender Loving Care**
- **TMI: Too Much Information**
- **TTYL: Talk To You Later**
- **TTYS: Talk To You Soon**
- **Txt: Text**
- **TYVM: Thank You Very Much**
- **U: You**

- **U4F: You Forever**
- **UR: Your**
- **VBG: Very Big Grin**
- **VSF: Very Sad Face**
- **WB: Welcome Back**
- **WBU: What About You?**
- **WEG: Wicked Evil Grin**
- **WKND: Weekend**
- **WOM: Word of Mouth**
- **WOTD: Word Of The Day**
- **Wru: Who Are You**
- **WTH: What The Heck?**
- **WTPA: Where The Party At?**
- **WU?: Whats Up**
- **WYCM: Will You Call Me?**
- **WYWH: Wish You Were Here**
- **XOXO: Hugs and Kisses**
- **YGM: You've Got Mail**
- **YNK: You Never Know**
- **YOLO: You Only Live Once**
- **YT: YouTube**
- **YW: You're Welcome**

# Chapter 21

## Internet Slang Conversations

You need to keep in mind that generation after generation, take common traditional slang words and add a new meaning(s) to it. Here you will find examples of some slang words where the perception of the word and intended uses have changed or increase over the years. These terms have gained popularity and recognition among all generations.

---

### **Internet Slang Example 1:**

Mom: Your great aunt just passed away. LOL

Peter: Why is that funny?

Mom: It's not funny Peter! What do you mean?

Peter: Mom lol means laughing out loud!

Mom: Oh My Godness!! I sent that to everyone I thought It meant lots of love. I have to call everyone back, oh god.

---

### **Internet Slang Example 2:**

Mom: The road was a little icy out today. Be careful when you drive.

Son: I will

Mom: YOLO.

Son: It's usually not meant as a warning, Mom.

---

### **Internet Slang Example 3:**

Son: Mom! I got a 94 on my Math exam!

Mom: WTF, honey!

Son: Mom, what do you think WTF means?

Mom: Well that's fantastic!

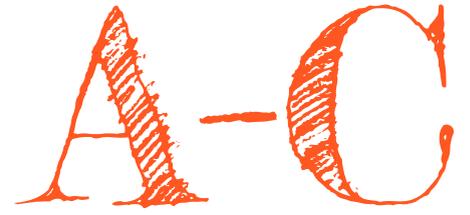
Son: No mom...

# Chapter 22

## Text Abbreviations List

## SMS Language

Learn list of 270+ texting abbreviations in English from A to Z.



List of texting abbreviations that start with numbers, A, B and C.

- **121** = One-to-one (private chat initiation)
- **2day** = Today
- **2M2H** = Too Much Too Handle
- **2moro** = Tomorrow
- **2nite** = Tonight
- **4EAE** = For Ever And Ever
- **AAF** = As A Friend
- **AAR** = At Any Rate
- **AAZF** = As Always, Your Friend
- **ABD** = Already Been Done
- **ACK** = Acknowledge
- **ADIH** = Another Day In Hell
- **ADN** = Any Day Now
- **ADR** = Address
- **AEAP** = As Early As Possible
- **AFAIC** = As Far As I am Concerned
- **AFAIK** = As Far As I know
- **AKA** = Also Known As
- **AMA** = Ask Me Anything
- **AMBW** = All My Best Wishes
- **AML** = All My Love
- **AOTA** = All Of The Above
- **ASAP** = As Soon As Possible
- **ATB** = All The Best
- **ATEOTD** = At The End Of The Day
- **ATM** = At The Moment

- **AWOL** = Absent Without Leave
- **AYDY** = Are You Done Yet?
- **AYEC** = At Your Earliest Convenience
- **AYOR** = At Your Own Risk
- **AYS** = Are You Serious?
- **AYSOS** = Are You Stupid Or Something?
- **AYT** = Are You There?
- **B/C** = Because
- **B4** = Before
- **B4N** = Bye For Now
- **BAU** = Business As Usual
- **BBIAF** = Be Back In A Few
- **BBIAM** = Be Back In A Minute
- **BBIAS** = Be Back In A Sec
- **BBS** = Be Back Soon
- **BBT** = Be Back Tomorrow
- **BCNU** = Be Seeing You
- **BCOY** = Big Crush On You
- **BD** = Big Deal
- **BF** = Best Friend
- **BFAW** = Best Friend At Work
- **BFD** = Big Freaking Deal
- **BFF** = Best Friends Forever
- **BFFN** = Best Friend For Now
- **BFN** = Bye For Now
- **BG** = Big Grin
- **BGWM** = Be Gentle With Me
- **BHL8** = Be Home Late
- **BIB** = Boss Is Back
- **BN** = Bad News
- **BOL** = Be On Later
- **BOT** = Back On Topic
- **BOYF** = Boyfriend
- **BRB** = Be Right Back
- **BRH** = Be Right Here
- **BRO** = Brother
- **BRT** = Be Right There

- **BT** = But
- **BTW** = By The Way
- **BYOC** = Bring Your Own Computer
- **CMB** = Call Me Back
- **CMIIW** = Correct Me If I'm Wrong
- **COB** = Close Of Business
- **CSL**= Can't Stop Laughing
- **CU** = See You
- **CUA** = See You Around
- **CUL**= See You Later
- **CWYL** = Chat With You Later
- **CYA** = Cover Your Ass
- **CYE** = Check Your E-mail
- **CYO** = See You Online

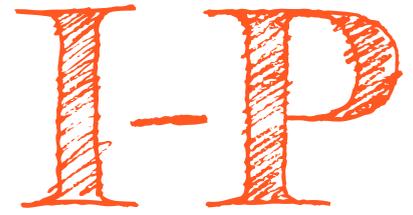
### Texting abbreviations/ text acronyms examples – Image 2



- 
- **DKDC** = Don't Know, Don't Care
  - **DM** = Direct Message
  - **DTS** = Don't Think So
  - **DUR** = Do You Remember?
  - **DWBH** = Don't Worry, Be Happy
  - **E1**= Everyone
  - **EF4T** = Effort
  - **EOD** = End Of Discussion
  - **F2F or FTF** = Face To Face
  - **FAQ** = Frequently Asked Questions
  - **FB** = Facebook
  - **FF** = Follow Friday
  - **FISH** = First In, Still Here
  - **FITB** = Fill In The Blank
  - **FTBOMH** = From The Bottom Of My Heart
  - **FTL** = For The Loss / For The Lose

- **FTW** = For The Win
- **FWB** = Friend With Benefits
- **FWIW** = For What It's Worth
- **FYEO** = For Your Eyes Only
- **FYI** = For Your Information
- **G4C** = Going For Coffee
- **GA** = Go Ahead
- **GAC** = Get A Clue
- **GAS** = Greetings And Salutations
- **GB** = Goodbye
- **GBU** = God Bless You
- **GF** = Girl Friend
- **GFN** = Gone For Now
- **GLHF** = Good Luck, Have Fun
- **GMTA** = Great Minds Think Alike
- **GNITE** = Good Night
- **GR8** = Great
- **GRATZ** = Congratulations
- **GRL** = Girl
- **GTSY** = Great (or good) To See You
- **H&K** = Hugs & Kisses
- **H2CUS** = Hope To See You Soon
- **H8** = Hate
- **HAG1** = Have A Good One
- **HAGN** = Have A Good Night
- **HAND** = Have A Nice Day
- **HAWT** = Have A Wonderful Day (out-dated, see next in list)
- **HMB** = Hit Be Back
- **HMU** = Hit Me Up
- **HOAS** = Hold On A Second
- **HRU** = How Are You
- **HT** or **H/T** = Hat Tip or Heard Through
- **HTH** = Hope This Helps / Happy To Help
- **HW** = Homework

**Texting abbreviations/ text acronyms examples – Image 3**



- 
- IAC = In Any Case
  - IAE = In Any Event
  - IANAL = I Am Not A Lawyer
  - IAO = I Am Out (of here)
  - IC = I See
  - ICYMI = In Case You Missed It
  - IDC = I Don't Care
  - IHNI = I have no idea
  - IIRC = If I Remember Correctly
  - IKR = I Know Right
  - ILY = I Love You
  - IM = Instant Message
  - IMHO = In My Humble Opinion
  - IMO = In My Opinion
  - IMS = I Am Sorry
  - IRL = In Real Life
  - ISLY = I Still Love You
  - ISO = In Search Of
  - IU2U = It's Up To You
  - IYKWIM = If You Know What I Mean
  - J/K = Just Kidding
  - J4F/JFF = Just For Fun
  - JIC= Just In Case
  - JLMK = Just Let Me Know
  - JMO = Just My Opinion
  - JSYK = Just So You Know
  - JW = Just Wondering
  - K or KK = Okay
  - KISS = Keep It Simple, Stupid
  - KIT = Keep In Touch
  - L8 = Late

- L8R = Later
- LHO = Laughing Head Off
- LMAO = Laughing My Ass Off
- LMBO = Laughing My Butt Off
- LMK = Let Me Know
- LOL = Lots Of Love
- LOL = Laughing Out Loud
- LOTI = Laughing On The Inside
- LTNS = Long Time No See
- LYLAS = Love You Like A Sister
- LYSM = Love You So Much
- MC = Merry Christmas
- MGMT = Management
- MM = Music Monday
- MSM = Mainstream Media
- MU = Miss You
- MYOB = Mind Your Own Business
- NAGI = Not A Good Idea
- NFM = Not For Me
- NFS = Not For Sale
- NM = Nothing Much
- NM = Not Much
- NOYB = None Of Your Business
- NP = No Problem
- NSFL = Not Safe For Life
- NSFW = Not Safe For Work
- NTS = Note To Self
- NVM = Never Mind
- OH = Overheard
- OIC = Oh, I See
- OMG = Oh My God
- OMW = On My Way
- ORLY = Oh, Really?
- OT = Off Topic
- OTB = Off To Bed
- OTOH = On The Other Hand
- OTP = On The Phone

- OTT = Over The Top
- PAW = Parents Are Watching
- PCM = Please Call Me
- PLS = Please
- POV = Point Of View
- PPL = People
- PTB = Please Text Back
- PTMM = Please Tell Me More



- 
- QQ = Crying
  - RAK = Random Act of Kindness
  - RBTL = Read Between The Lines
  - RIP = Rest In Peace
  - RL = Real Life
  - ROFL = Rolling On the Floor Laughing
  - RT = Real Time
  - RTM or RTFM = Read The Manual
  - RYS = Are You Single?
  - SBY = Somebody
  - SFAIK= So Far As I Know
  - SH= Sh\*\* Happens
  - SIMYC = Sorry I Missed Your Call
  - SIS = Sister
  - SITD = Still In The Dark
  - SMH = Shaking My Head
  - SOL = Sooner Or Later
  - SRSLY = Seriously
  - SRY = Sorry
  - SSDD = Same Stuff, Different Day
  - STBY = Sucks To Be You

- SWAK = Sealed (or Sent) With A Kiss
- SWYP = So, What's Your Problem?
- TAFN = That's All For Now
- TBA = To Be Announced
- TBC = To Be Continued
- TBH = To Be Honest
- TBL = Text back later
- TCB = Take care of business
- TFH = Thread From Hell
- TFS = Thanks For Sharing
- TFTI = Thanks For The Invitation
- TGIF = Thank God It's Friday
- THX = Thanks
- TIA= Thanks In Advance
- TIAD = Tomorrow Is Another Day
- TIME = Tears In My Eyes
- TLC = Tender Loving Care
- TLK2UL8R = Talk To You Later
- TMI = Too Much Information
- TMRW = Tomorrow
- TTYL = Talk To You Later
- TTYS = Talk To You Soon
- TYFYC = Thank You For Your Comment
- TYVM = Thank You Very Much
- U4E = You Forever
- UR = Your
- VAT = Value Added Tax
- VBG = Very Big Grin
- VSF = Very Sad Face
- WAM = Wait A Minute
- WB = Welcome Back
- WC = Who Cares
- WE = Whatever
- WEG = Wicked Evil Grin
- WITP = What Is The Point?
- WKND = Weekend
- WTF = What The F\*\*\*

- WTH= What The Heck?
- WTPA = Where The Party At?
- WUF = Where Are You From?
- WYCM = Will You Call Me?
- WYWH = Wish You Were Here
- XLNT = Excellent
- XOXO = Hugs and Kisses
- YCMU = You Crack Me Up
- YGM = You've Got Mail
- YMMV = Your Mileage May Vary
- YOLO = You Only Live Once
- YTB = You're The Best
- YW = You're Welcome
- YWSYLS = You Win Some, You Lose Some

# Chapter 23

+170 More Slang Words

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## All right?

Used most commonly as a greeting and certainly not one that requires a response. Brits will welcome friends and family members alike by grunting these two words to one another.

---

## Arse

There could be an entire English dictionary devoted to variations of this single word. Referring to what in the US would be your ass, this word can be coupled with a variety of other words to create whole new realms of British slang (see below).

---

## Arse over tit

The undignified process of falling over, most commonly occurring when completely arseholed (drunk).

---

## Arseholed

See above. Be sure not to fall arse over tit.

---

## Ass

In the British English dictionary, this is not really a curse word, just a donkey. You have been warned.

---

## Baggy

One of the first words learned by children throughout the British Isles, shouting baggy is a way of staking a claim on something. The equivalent of calling shotgun, a successful Baggy is legally binding in an English court of law (not really).

---

## Bloke

A man. What in American English might be called a dude.

---

## Baccy

The tobacco that you use to roll your own fags (no, that's not what you think it is – see below).

---

## Bog

Not a muddy marsh, unless you've got digestive problems, but a toilet. British people will often find themselves bustin' for the bog.

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## Bog roll

The paper you use in the bog.

---

## Botched

Something that has not gone according to plan.

---

## Barmy

If someone calls you this then they're not being kind, it means you are bonkers (see below).

---

## Bonkers

It means you are a bit barmy (see above!).

---

## Cheesed off

Annoyed or displeased. The British population spends most of their time cheesed off with the weather.

---

## Chips

Many an American has come ashore and innocently ordered chips, only to be right royally cheesed off. In the UK, chips are deep-fried strips of potato, and chunky ones at that. In the US, thin bastardized versions of British chips might call themselves french fries.

---

## Chock-a-block

A place that is very busy. A road, street, or shop full to the rafters could be described this way.

---

## Chuffed

Thrilled to bits. Happy. Delighted. Just don't show it outwardly, we're British, remember?

---

## Codswallop

A load of rubbish, something that is clearly nonsense.

---

## Daft

A bit stupid. Not particularly offensive, just mildly silly.

---

## Dishy

A person, usually male, who is very good-looking. David Beckham could be described as dishy, or in fact, a bit of a dish.

---

---

## Dodgy

Used to describe something a little bit suspicious or questionable. The American English equivalent is shady.

---

## Dosh

Money. Cash. Slang for all types of currency.

---

## Dog's Bollocks

A strange but surprisingly popular term in British slang. If something is exceptionally good it is known as the dog's bollocks.

---

## Easy peasy

If something is not difficult then it is loudly pronounced as being easy peasy.

---

## Faff

Faffing around is a very British pleasure. It's taking unnecessary time over something that should be straightforward. A Brit likes nothing more than a good faff.

---

## Fag

A cigarette.

---

## Fiddlesticks

A harmless curse word held in reserve solely for use by British grandmothers. Dropping a vase of freshly cut daisies could result in a gently whispered fiddlesticks.

---

## Filch

Simply to steal.

---

## Flog

To sell something.

---

## Fluke

If something happens purely by chance then it is a fluke. It's a lucky occurrence that doesn't often happen.

---

## Flutter

To bet or place a wager. Most usually used to describe someone who likes to have a small stake on a horse race, for example, Mr. Smith likes to have a flutter.

---

---

## Full of beans

Someone who is full of energy might be described as being full of beans. It's possessing endless quantities of get up and go, almost to the point of annoyance.

---

## Gallivanting

Strutting or striding about with a seemingly endless supply of confidence.

---

## Gander

To take a look around.

---

## Give us a bell

Calling somebody on the telephone. In this instance 'us' actually means 'me'.

---

## Gobsmacked

Completely and utterly awestruck in amazement.

---

## Gormless

A person who has little clue or idea about what is going on around them.

---

## Gutted

Being incredibly upset about something. If your favorite sports team has just lost then you might be gutted.

---

## Haggle

To negotiate or argue over the price of something, entering into a heated and lengthy discussion about its value and worth.

---

## Hanky panky

In American English this would be known as making out.

---

## Hard

The British slang definition of hard is somebody who is ready to take on anyone or anything in a fight. Usually a self-inflicted state of mind after several pints of British ale, a hard man is someone to be avoided.

---

## Hard lines

A way of saying bad luck.

---

---

## Her Majesty's pleasure

While this sounds like a pleasant invitation to tea at the Palace, it's best to avoid a stint at Her Majesty's pleasure, as it means spending time in prison.

---

## Honking

Being violently sick.

---

## Jammy

Consistently being on the right side of good fortune. If you are repeatedly lucky you might be described as jammy.

---

## Khazi

British slang for the toilet. Don't forget your bog roll.

---

## Kip

A short power nap, the English word for a snooze.

---

## Knees up

A proper British party, full of warm beer and loud music. Just don't end up honking.

---

## Leg it

To run away, usually from trouble.

---

## Lurgy

If you have the dreaded lurgy then you are unwell with either the flu or a cold.

---

## Mate

A good friend or acquaintance. Regularly used as a greeting or term of affection.

---

## Mufti

A military term that has seeped its way into British slang to mean casual or civilian clothes.

---

## Mug

If you are a bit of a mug then you are gullible, and will believe anything.

---

## Mush

Slang for your mouth, i.e. shut your mush.

---

---

## Naff

Something that is a bit uncool would be described as naff.

---

## Narked

Cheesed off, irritated. If you're in a bad mood you might be labeled as narked or even a bit narky.

---

## Nick

To steal or take something that doesn't belong to you. If you are then caught by the police/law/fuzz then you would be nicked.

---

## Nitwit

An inoffensive way of describing someone a bit silly.

---

## Nosh

Food! You might describe a tasty meal as a good nosh up.

---

## Not my cup of tea

A classic British phrase that is trundled out to describe a situation or circumstance that does not bring one pleasure.

---

## Nowt

Originating in the North of England (another instance where an entire subcategory of British slang terms could be procured) this word has entered mainstream language to mean nothing.

---

## Nut

To headbutt someone. Not pleasant.

---

## Off-colour

Sick, poorly, or generally under the weather. If you are looking off-colour then the chances are you don't look well.

---

## Off your trolley

Someone who is described as such is usually behaving in a crazy manner.

---

## On your bike

A not so polite way of telling someone to go away.

---

---

## Pants

Tricky for our US cousins to get their heads round, but British pants are our undergarments. They go underneath our trousers. To show one's pants is very uncouth.

---

## Parky

Used to describe cold weather. Not drastically cold, just a bit chilly.

---

## Pear-shaped

When something has not gone entirely to plan, it is said to have gone a bit pear-shaped.

---

## Piece of cake

When something is easy peasy it could be described as a piece of cake. No food or confectionery necessary.

---

## Pinch

Another word for stealing, or purchasing something at a heavily discounted rate.

---

## Pissed

This doesn't mean annoyed or angry as in American English. It means blind drunk.

---

## Plastered

Another British slang term for being drunk. Anyone would think the Brits like a drink.

---

## Porkies

Spreading lies. Anyone not being straight with the truth could be accused of telling porkies.

---

## Porridge

Doing a stretch in porridge means serving time in prison.

---

## Prat

A low-key curse word for a stupid person. Prating around could also be used to describe someone behaving in a foolish way.

---

## Put a sock in it

This is a fairly rude way of telling someone to be quiet.

---

---

## Quid

Slang word for a British pound.

---

## Rubbish

Everything a Brit throws in the bin is called rubbish. Not trash or garbage, but rubbish.

---

## Scrummy

A word to describe something deliciously tasty.

---

## Skive

To skive off work or school is to bunk off or play truant. Hopefully not getting caught in the process.

---

## Sloshed

Yep, another way to describe being drunk, pissed, blotto, trashed, plastered...

---

## Smarmy

A person, usually male, who is too smooth for their own good and comes across not as charming, but saccharine sweet to the point of repulsion.

---

## Snog

A kiss.

---

## Snookered

Appearing in the English dictionary thanks to the ancient game of snooker, to be snookered means you are in a situation from which you can see no obvious escape.

---

## Sod's law

When something can go wrong, it will, owing largely to Sod's law.

---

## Shirty

Someone who is demonstrating signs of irritability might be described as getting shirty.

---

## Spend a penny

This means going to the bathroom. Originating from a time when public toilets charged one penny for their services.

---

---

## Squiffy

On the way to being drunk. Not quite sloshed but only a few drinks away.

---

## Starkers

Nude. Naked. Without clothing.

---

## Strop

A public display of displeasure might be described as having a strop.

---

## Swear

In the United Kingdom to swear is the same as to cuss or curse.

---

## Ta

Short for thanks.

---

## Toodle pip

An old English word that means goodbye.

---

## Twee

Small, dainty, or quaint. A very British term to describe lots of aspects of life in the United Kingdom.

---

## Taking the biscuit

if you are taking the biscuit when you are starting to push your luck. A similar phrase in American English is to take the cake.

---

## Waffle

To endlessly drone on about nothing. Someone talking incessantly would be described as waffling on.

---

## Welly

If you give something welly you've given it a really good go.

---

## Wobbler

To have a tantrum or throw a strop.

---

## Yakking

Talking too much.

---

---

## Yonks

A general term for a long period of time, i.e. We haven't visited there for yonks.

---

## (To) ace (v.)

To pass a test, exam, etc. really easily. "Robert aced his physics exam."

---

## A-Game

One's best self, often in relation to a competition. "I'll bring my A-game"

---

## All-ears

When someone says "I'm all ears", they are telling you that they are listening to you, that they are giving you their undivided attention.

---

## All-nighter (n.)

A period of work or study that lasts all night. Most often used with the verb "pull" (To pull an all-nighter) - "We pulled an all-nighter in order to finish the project."

---

## Are you kidding me?

Phrase often used rhetorically to express frustration or excitement.

---

## Around-the-clock

24/7, all day and night, non-stop

---

## ASAP

Stands for 'as soon as possible'

---

## B-Ball

Often used to abbreviate basketball

---

## Blow or Bomb

To fail or to be unsuccessful

---

## Blue or Have the Blues

To feel depressed or sad

---

## Bro

A friend, often used for a masculine friend

---

---

## Buck

One dollar

---

## By the skin of your teeth

Just barely

---

## Cash (n.)

Money

---

## Cashback

An option available to retail consumers when, during a debit card transaction, the customer can request to add an extra amount to the purchase price and receive the added amount in cash. Cash back using debit provides customers a convenient method of withdrawing cash when purchasing goods and services without having to make a separate trip to an ATM or bank.

---

## Cheesy (adj.)

Cheap, tacky. "A cheesy pick-up line", "A cheesy song", etc.

---

## Chill

Relax.

---

## Come on

Used to express frustration.

---

## Cool (adj.)

Nice, great, impressive, popular, interesting "a cool dress", "a cool guy", "a cool bar"

---

## Cop (n.)

Police officer.

---

## Couch Potato

A lazy person, one who sits on a couch and watches TV.

---

## Cram

To study feverishly before an exam.

---

## Crash

To go to sleep, or to show up without invitation "Can I crash here tonight?"

---

---

## DC

UMass term for the dining commons

---

## Dead

Empty; quiet (said of bars, clubs, restaurants, etc.) "It's really dead in here tonight" (It's empty in here tonight/there are very few people here tonight).

---

## Drive up the wall

To irritate. "He is driving me up the wall." Dutch or go Dutch: each person pays for his/her own meal.

---

## FYI

Acronym "for your information"

---

## Get under one's skin

Bother

---

## Give the cold shoulder

Ignore

---

## Hang out

To gather in a casual, and social manner.

---

## Hip

Cool, popular.

---

## Hit the books

Study.

---

## Hit the road

To leave.

---

## Hold your horses

Wait a minute!

---

## Hyped (adj.)

Really excited. "We're all hyped about the concert next weekend."

---

## I feel you

I understand/empathize with you

---

## In no time

Very soon. "*Don't worry - We'll be there in no time.*"

---

---

## It is what it is

It's a fact that cannot be changed.

---

## Jacked

Really strong/muscular. *"He's jacked"*

---

## Jonesing

To want something badly. *"I'm jonesing for a coffee"*

---

## Lemon

A bad buy or purchase.

---

## Lighten up (v.)

To relax, to not take things too seriously. "You gotta learn to lighten up a bit!"

---

## LOL

Text acronym for 'laugh out loud'

---

## My Bad

my fault or my mistake.

---

## No problem

you're welcome, not a big deal

---

## OMG

Text acronym for 'oh my god'. Used to express surprise or excitement.

---

## On the hour

an idiom for at every hour exactly; one o'clock, two o'clock, and so on. An extension of this idiom is every hour on the hour, meaning every time the clock's big hand reaches twelve, "The bus passes by the house every hour on the hour."

---

## Once in a blue moon

infrequently

---

## Pass the buck

transfer responsibility to someone else.

---

## Piece of cake

easy or effortless.

---

---

## Put up a front

trying to act/appear tough

---

## R.S.V.P.

Stands for a French phrase, repondez, s'il vous plait. A formal reply to an invitation, by phone or mail.

---

## Recap

to state something again

---

## Ride shotgun (v.)

To ride in the front passenger seat of a car. "I wanna ride shotgun!"

---

## Rip-off

overcharge.

---

## Score

to get something you want.

---

## Screw up (v.)

To make a mistake, do something badly/wrong "I really screwed up my audition."

---

## See ya

See you, goodbye

---

## Shoot the breeze

casual conversation.

---

## Snagged/Nabbed

to take something without asking or slyly

---

## Spill the beans

reveal a secret.

---

## Take a rain-check

do at another time.

---

## Take for granted

to assume.

---

## That hit the spot

---

(When talking about food/drinks) that was really good; that's just what I needed.

---

### The bomb

if something 'is the bomb', it is awesome

---

### Trash (v.)

To destroy. "The band trashed the hotel room."

---

### Twenty four seven (24/7)

Non-stop, around the clock. "That place is open 24/7. It never closes."

---

### UCard

UMass term for the University student identification card

---

### What's up

How are you?

---

### Wicked

(In New England) used as adjective (meaning "amazing") or a modifier (meaning: "really").

---

### Wrap up (v.)

To finish; to bring something to a close. "OK, let's wrap things up for today."

---

### You bet

of course or no problem.

---

### You can say that again!

Phrase meaning "I agree with you completely."

---

### You're telling me!

Phrase meaning "I know exactly what you mean"; Similar to "Don't I know it!"

---

### To have a blast

No, this hasn't got anything to do with explosions or things blowing up. Actually, it's about having fun. Simply put, if you're having a blast, you're having the time of your life!

*OMG, this party is lit! I'm having a blast!*

*Last night was amazing! I had a blast!*

---

## Babe

A "babe" is a woman that you find utterly attractive or "hot"!

*Are you guys talking about Linda? She's such a babe!*

*The show is gonna be filled with babes!*

---

## To give a ring (to someone)

If you have someone in your life you love and you'd possibly like to marry them one day, don't ever call him or her a "babe".

Rather, give them a ring. However, that's the literal meaning of the expression.

In slang, "to give a ring" to someone means to give them a call or phone them.

*Give me a ring when you come home, okay?*

*I'd love to hang out. Give me a ring sometimes!*

---

## To give (someone) the cold shoulder

If you give someone the cold shoulder, it simply means that you're ignoring them or don't care about what they have to say.

*Wendy is in such a bad mood! I greeted her this morning and she just gave me the cold shoulder!*

*I tried talking to him but he just gave me the cold shoulder!*

---

## For real

If you say you're "for real", it means you're totally honest or serious about something.

*I'm for real about learning English this year!*

*Yo, that threat she made was for real!*

---

## Fortnight

A typical British slang word which indicates a time period of "two weeks".

*I'll see you in a fortnight.*

*The deadline for this project is in a fortnight.*

P.S. Please, don't mistake this for the increasingly popular game *Fortnite*.

## Five-O, po-po, the fuzz

These are all just popular street names for the police. However, "Five-O" and "po-po" are predominantly used in the U.S. while "the fuzz" is mostly used in the UK.

*Everybody lay down! Five-O!*

*A-yo, it's the po-po coming through!*

*I hate it when the fuzz comes around!*

## John Hancock

If you ever get apprehended by the "po-po", chances are they'll ask you for your John Hancock. This expression is actually a few centuries old. It replaces the word "signature" and is frequently used in highly formal settings, as well.

*All that's needed now is your John Hancock and this deal is done.*

*When I wanted to buy that car, they asked for my John Hancock first.*

## To lose (one's) marbles

Your marbles are your brains. Whenever this phrase is used, people are generally either completely out of line or just totally crazy!

*Jason's acting out. He's completely lost his marbles!*

*He did what?! That man's definitely lost his marbles!*

## To spill the beans

Yes, it's a pretty big deal if you spill the beans on the floor. It's painful!

The same goes for when you reveal a secret (intentionally or unintentionally), especially if someone trusted you with it.

*Guys, Tasha is pregnant! Joe spilled the beans last night!*

*None of us had said a word about it for months, but Jim spilled the beans!*

## To be amped, hyped, stoked

If you're any of the three adjectives listed above, you're just overly excited about something.

*The new PlayStation is coming out next month! I'm so amped!  
Ooh-wee, I'm so hyped about that new Avengers movie!  
Dude, I'm always stoked to see you play ball like that!*

---

### Sweet, tight, dope

These are all adjectives that describe how good or cool something is.

*Yo, that new iPhone is sweet!  
Man, your ride is tight!  
My God, Black Panther was so dope!*

---

### To call/ride shotgun

I bet you've watched a movie and heard the actors in it shout "shotgun" and race to a car at least once before. If someone "calls" or "rides shotgun", it means they're riding in the passenger's seat.

This phrase has its origins in the old Native American days of the U.S. when a guard who rode alongside a stagecoach driver was ready to use his shotgun to ward off bandits or hostile Native Americans.

*Shotgun! Get in the back 'cause I said it first!  
Guys, let's take a ride. I call shotgun!*

---

### Wheels

If you've got "wheels", it means you own a car or vehicle of some sort.

*Sean, get your wheels ready because we're going on a road trip!  
Sorry, guys. I've got no wheels today. My pops took the car.*

---

### (To take a) raincheck

Don't grab your umbrella just yet, as this saying has nothing to do with the rain. This phrase has originated from an old practice in the U.S. back in the 1880s when baseball game ticketholders would be given a pass to a game that must be rescheduled due to bad weather.

In that same way, when you "take a raincheck" with someone, you postpone or reschedule something, e.g. a meeting, you had planned before.

*Oh no, I gotta go now! Raincheck?*

*I'm afraid something's come up. We'll have to take a raincheck.*

---

### **To wrap (something) up**

The same way you wrap up a package to make it completely closed is how you end certain discussions or events in your life. If you want to put a stop or end to something, you "wrap it up".

*Come on, guys. Let's wrap it up!*

*Okay, wrap it up! It's time to go home!*