

Idioms and Phrases

Idioms are expressions that usually cannot be understood by defining the separate words. Most idioms don't seem to make any sense because their origins are so old. Some of them come from ancient literature or even classic films. Learning the background of idioms can help you to remember them. For example, if your host mother says, "I think it's time to hit the hay", she means, "I think it's bed-time"! You would not be able to understand her by looking up the words hit and hay. Like phrasal verbs, these expressions need to be memorized as a whole. Try visualizing them or drawing pictures when you study them.

Some examples are shown below

1. You want to know why I've got a bee in my bonnet.

- a. a headache
- b. a fly in my head
- c. a problem on my mind
- d. a difficulty with my hair

Ans: (c)

2. Yes, tell me about it. I'm all ears.

- a. listening carefully
- b. listening quietly
- c. listening quickly
- d. listening completely

Ans: (a)

3. You remember I told you about that car that cost me an arm and a leg?

- a. a fair amount of money
- b. a small amount of money
- c. a good amount of money
- d. a huge amount of money

Ans: (d)

4. The one you bought from the man you called the big cheese?

- a. the man with big ears
- b. the man with the important job
- c. the man with the yellow teeth
- d. the man with the big smile

Ans: (b)

5. Well, he's not that at all. He's a bird brain.

- a. a fool
- b. a criminal
- c. a conman
- d. a devil

Ans: (a)

Exercises

Directions—(Q. 1-5) Which of the phrases (A), (B), (C) and (D) given below should replace the phrase given in bold in the following sentence to make the sentence grammatically meaningful and correct. If the sentence is correct as it is and 'No correction is required,' mark (E) as the answer.

1. **Each of the loan** must be approved by the Branch Manager—

- (A) Every loan
- (B) Each one of the loan
- (C) Any of the loans

Note: The Information provided here is Only for Reference. It may Vary the Original.

(D) All of the loan

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(E) No correction required

2. The issue was **taken before** the Municipal Corporation meeting last week—

(A) Taking place at

(B) Taken after

(C) Being taken in

(D) Taken up at

(E) No correction required

3. **He has asked** for the names of those employees involved in the project.

(A) had asked

(B) having asked about

(C) was asked that

(D) is asking

(E) no correction required

4. **Considerate** the traffic, it is better to leave for the airport an hour early—

(A) While considering

(B) Consideration of

(C) Considering

(D) Being considerate to

(E) No correction required

5. He is a good leader, **knowing that** to motivate his employees to achieve—

(A) That known when

(B) Who knows how

(C) Which knows how

(D) Knowing what

(E) No correction required

6. His wife never lets him do what he wants and as a result he **leads a dog's life**.

(A) eats what he can

(B) never sleeps

(C) has an unhappy time

(D) goes everywhere on foot

7. A word of warning: don't let him **make a monkey of you**.

(A) make you jump up and down

(B) make faces at you

(C) make you spend your money

(D) make a fool of you

8. I would advise you to wait and see **which way the cat jumps**.

- (A) what develops
- (B) what goes
- (C) what comes
- (D) what falls

9. I don't honestly think he is capable of being polite as **the leopard never changes his spots**.

- (A) people always complain
- (B) people sometimes differ
- (C) people never change
- (D) people often shout

10. He's very greedy when it comes to eating and always takes the **lion's share of the food**.

- (A) last portion
- (B) smallest portion
- (C) first portion
- (D) largest portion

11. Until he is more serious in his job and stops **playing the goat**, he won't get any more money.

- (A) arriving late all the time
- (B) eating too much all the time
- (C) making too much noise all the time
- (D) making jokes all the time

12. He never makes any silly mistakes because he's got too much **horse sense**.

- (A) common sense
- (B) nonsense
- (C) absolute sense
- (D) full sense

13. Charlie doesn't like getting too tired so he gets his assistant to do all the **donkey work**.

- (A) academic work
- (B) artwork
- (C) homework
- (D) hard work

14. He doesn't really go around with many people because he's a bit of **alone wolf**.

- (A) single person
- (B) lonely person
- (C) unhappy person
- (D) simple person

15. And really the only reason you were there was because **you had a bone to pick with him?**

- (A) you wanted to have a discussion with him
- (B) you wanted to have a chat with him
- (C) you wanted to have a talk with him
- (D) you wanted to have an argument with him

Answers

- 1. (A)
- 2. (D)
- 3. (E)
- 4. (C)
- 5. (B)
- 6. (C)
- 7. (D)
- 8. (A)
- 9. (C)
- 10. (D)
- 11. (D)
- 12. (A)
- 13. (D)
- 14. (B)
- 15. (D)



Idioms and phrases

A fair crack of the whip	A period of importance
To hold something in leash	To restrain
To wrangle over an ass's shadow	To quarrels over trifles
To play fast and loose	To hurt some body's feelings /to play tricks
All agog	Restless
to give up the ghost	To die
To snap one's fingers	To be anxious
A pipe dream	An impractical plan
To stand to one's guns	To perseverance when hardships press
To loose one's head	To become confused and over exited
By the skin of one's teeth	Only just
To throw one's glove	To give a challenge
To be in abeyance	In suspense
A chip off the old block	Characteristics of one's ancestors
To take people by storm	To captive tem unexpectedly
To throw up the sponge	To surrender or give up the contest
Harp on	To keep on talking
To catch somebody on the hop to	To catch somebody of guard
To spell the beans	To reveal secret information
To bring one's egg to a bad market	To fail in one's plan because one goes to the wrong people for help
To get cold feet	To be afraid
To take a leap in the dark	To do a hazardous thing without any idea of the result
To give get/give the bird	To send away
To be at daggers drawn	To be bitter enemy
To save one's face	to evade disgrace
To spilt hours	To indulge in over-refined arguments
A lady's man	A lover of woman company
Will o' the wisp	Anything which eludes or deceives
To get into scrape	To find oneself in an awkward predicament
To fly off the handle	To lose one's temper
To blaze trail	To initiate work in a movement
To be lost in the cloud	To be perplexed
Hush money	Bribe paid to secure silence
A tall order	A task difficult to perform
To draw bead upon	To take aim at

All and sundry	Everything without distinction
To disabuse one's mind	To remove a misapprehension
To tempt providence	To take reckless risks
To accept the gauntlet	To suffer humiliation
French leave	Absence without permission
To have brush with	To have a slight encounter
To pull one's socks up	To try hard
Within an ace of	Narrowly
To blow hot and cold	To be inconsistent
To give chapter and verse for a thing	To produce the proof of something
To beggars' description	Beyond one's power to describe adequately
To plough the sands	To busy oneself in a way which cannot lead to any profitable result
Foam in the mouth	To be furious
To take umbrage	To be offended
Something up one's sleeve	A secret plan
Adam's ale	Water
To draw the long bow	To make an exaggerated statement
To fight to the bitter end	To carry on a contest regardless of consequences
Queer somebody's pitch	Upset one's plan
To make the grade	To come out successful
To be up and doing	To be actively engaged
To see eye to eye with	To agree
A jaundiced eye	prejudice
To see red	To find fault with
To rip up with old sores	To revive a quarrel which was almost forgotten
To carry off the bell	To bag the first position
To live in clover	To live in great comfort and luxury
Pin-money	Allowance made to a lady for her expenses
Get down to brass tacks	Begin to talk in plain, straight forward terms
Spick and span	Neat and clean
To take the wind out of another's sails	To anticipate another and to gain advantage over him
To carry the coal to Newcastle	To do unnecessary things
To turn the cover	To pass the crisis
A sop to Cerberus	Ransom to an enemy
To hit the nail on the head	To guess right

A baker's dozen	Thirteen
To run amuck	To run about in frenzy
To look down one's nose at	To regard with half-hidden displeasure or contempt
Hard pressed	In difficulties
To be at one's finger's end	To be completely conversant with
To pull strings	To exert hidden influence
A green horn	An inexperienced man
To look sharp	To be quick
To pour oil in troubled water	To calm a quarrel with soothing words
To play on a fiddle	To be busy over trifles
To mind one's P's and Q's	To be careful one's mind
To oil the knocker	To tip the office boy
To cut the crackle	To stop talking and start
To cool one's heels	To be kept watching for sometime
By the rule of thumb	By practical experience which is rather rough
A fool's errand	A useless undertaking
To put somebody in his place	To make him humble
To talk shop	To talk about business or professional affairs
To keep one's head above water	To keep out of debt
To live fast	To lead a life of dissipation
To hold a brief for	To defend someone
To pay off old scores	To harm someone because they have harmed you in the past
To take a leaf out of somebody's book	To take him as a model
To set the Thames on fire	To try to do the impossible
To cast the pearl before a swine	To offer someone a thing which he cannot appreciate
To bear the palm	To win
To change the colour	To shift the allegations to
To cut the Gordian knot	to be victorious
To have one's heart in one's boots	To be deeply depressed
To strike one's colours	To surrender
To cry wolf	To raise a false alarm
To give one's ears	To listen carefully
To hang up one's hat	To make oneself comfortable in another person's home
To get the hang of thing	To understand the meaning of it
To make a shot	To make a guess

A man of weight	A man of importance
Pell-mell	In hurried disorder
To put one on one's mettle	To rouse one to do one's best
To ride hell for leather	To ride with furious speed
To speak daggers	To speak to a person with hostility
Be in the mire	Be in difficulties
To give a rap on the knuckles	To rebuke
Sum and substance	Summary
A drug in the market	Commodities no in demand
Mealy-mouthed	Cunning
Moot point	A debatable point
Give a wide berth	Keep away from
Brought to light	Disclose
Fits and starts	Irregularly
High and low	Everywhere
Intends and purposes	Practically
Rest on my laurels	Be complacent
Clinched the issue	Decided
Call a spade a spade	Be outspoken in language
Point-blank	Pointedly
Neck out	Invite trouble unnecessarily
Green eyes	Jealous
Bird's eye view	General view
Goes to dog	Is ruined
Keep a level head	Remain cool and composed
Turned the corner	Passed the crisis
Fishing in trouble water	Talking advantage of troubled conditions for personal profit
In high sprit	Cheerful
To rock the boat	Upset the balance
Tooth and nail	With strength and fury
Wee hours of the day	At dawn
Put the foot down	Not to yield
In the blues	Depressed
On the wane	Growing less
Fair and square	Upright
Hole and corner method	Underhand
Scream blue murder	Make a great deal of noise and object vehemently

Paint the town red	Have a lively time
Keep the finger crossing	Wait expectantly
At odds	In dispute
Make ducks and drakes	Squandered lavishly
No love lost	Intense dislike
Ride the high horse	Puts in airs
Pull a long face	Looks indifferent
Beside the mark	Irrelevant
Fill in	To tell someone the details about someone or something
Send(one) about one's business	To send someone away , usually in an unfriendly way
Run in the same groove	Advance in harmony
Wolf in sheep's clothing	Hypocrite
Chewing the cud	To muse on, to chat , in an aimless manner
At ease	Embarrassed
Cut corners	Simplify the producers
At the drop of hat	Without delay
Burning question	A widely debated issue
Paddle of own canoe	Depended on himself
At cross purposes	Misunderstanding of each other's purposes
In raptures	Very enthusiastic
Out of place	Inappropriate
Gets on nerves	Irritate
Wear heart on sleeves	Exposing innermost feeling to others
Like a duck in a thunderstorm	Distressed
Herculean task	Work required great effort
An eye to the main chance	Object to make money
Make flesh creep	Frightened
Himself to himself	In unsociable
Leave high and dry	To leave some one unsupported and unable to manoeuvre
Call in questions	Challenges
Means business	Earnest /sincere
A left handed compliment	An insincere
Once in a while	Occasionally
Kick heels	waste time
Lying down	To show no reaction
Gone down the drained	Wasted

in the offing	About to start
Design on	To have plans to exploit or somehow take of someone advantage or something
Queer fish	Strange person
Broken reed	A frustrated man
Gather roses only	Seek all the enjoyment of life
At sea	Confused
Lay by the heels	Chance and capture
Hanky-panky	Jugglery
Stick one's neck out	To Take a risk
Mare's nest	A false invention
Back-chat	Impertinent/disrespectful remarks
Bear in mind	Remember
To cut your teeth	To gain experience
Keeping up appearances	Maintaining outward show
Heads will roll	People will get into serve trouble
Little elbow	Freedom
A bee in bonnet	An obsession about something
Gift of the gab	Fluency of speech
Turn hand	Adapt himself to
Fell flat	Had not effect
Gentleman on large	Has no serious occupation
White elephant	Useless
To let the bygones be bygones	Ignore the past
Come to the crunch	Decisive movement
Keeps a good table	Entertain guest sumptuously
Draw the long bone	Exaggerate
Burn the candle a both end	Overtaxing his energies
Hold the enemy at bay	Prevented the enemy from coming near
To keep the pot boiling	Keep the controversy alive
Far cry	A long way off
Bolt from the blue	Sudden Sock
Win Hands down	Win easily
On and off	At intervals
With a high hand	Oppressively
Make no bone	Do without hesitation
Get hold of the wrong end of the stick	Misjudge the situation
On the wan	Declining
Cool as cucumber	Calm and composed

Catch 22	Absurd , a dilemma or difficult circumstance form which there is no escape because of mutually conflicting of dependent conditions
Pell-mell	In a disorderedly manner
Plough a lonely furrow	Do without the help of others
Great hand	Expert at
Heap coals on someone's t head	Make someone feel sorry
Cocksure	Perfectly confident
Cuts both ends	Argument in support of both sides of the issue
Feather own nest	Act for won future benefits
Throw down the gauntlet	Challenge someone, Behaved as very great and important person
On tenterhooks	An anxious suspense
Ride rough shod over	Treat harshly
Do a good turn by	Do a favour
On its last leg	About to perish/expire
Heart out	Suffer silently
Have the mind	Have the willingness
Cushy job	Financial comfortable job
Now and then	Occasionally
Midas touch	Ability to success in all projects
Paint with bright colour	Exaggerated
To set the Thames on fire	A heroic deed
On the wrong side of fifty	Over fifty years old
Out of question	Unthinkable
Brought matters to a head	Create an atmosphere of confrontation
In a jiffy	In a hurry
Double dealing	Deception
Blow own trumpet	To tell other people how good and successful you are
Let the grass grow under the feet	Stayed out
Cut someone dead	To ignore someone totally
Make both end meet	Earn enough
Make light	Treat lightly
Wear the trousers	Dominant
Hole and corner	Secret
Steal someone's thunder	To lessen someone's force
Yeoman service	Free, generous help
To the backbone	Completely

Lynch law	Law of the mob
Bitten of more than chew	Trying do to too much
Stalking horse	Trick , something that is used to hide someone's real purpose
Make hay while the sun rises	Make the best use of a favourable situation
On the wane	Growing less
Lying down	Show no reaction
Cut out	Suitable
Showing wild oats	Going through a period of irresponsible pleasure seeking
The thin end of the wedge	The beginning of further concessions
To foot the bill	To pay
Breathing down	Watching all actions closely
At a lose end	Nothing to do
As ugly as sin	Exceptionally ugly
Elbow grease	Hard work
In a soup	In trouble
Gall and war mode	A source of anger
At a loss	To be confused
Sitting on the fence	Hesitate between two options
Pretty pass	In a difficulty
A bad business	An unfortunate event
Make no bone about	To admit something readily
Turn out crabs	End in failure
Devil's advocate	On who is against the religion
Dance attendance upon	To Flatter
Go a begging	Go in vain
Grid up one's lions	Get ready for the job
Run the gauntlet	Face criticism
Aegean stable	To remove on evil
Call one's shots	Make intention clear
Tread on one's toes	To give offense
Take time by the forelock	Prepare action before time
To steer clear of	Avoid
To beat a retreat	To march back after a ceremonious parade
Under one's own storm	With one's own effort
In the sequel	Later on
A fifth columnist	Traitor
Not for nuts	Under no circumstances

The fat end	The last part
A laughing stock	Looking ridiculous
Ad hoc	For the special purpose
Bon voyage	A good journey for you
De, jure	Rightful , legal
Stave off	Prevent
Awkward silence	Embarrassing silence
Globetrotters	Travellers around the world
The thin end of the wedge	The beginning of further concessions
Tarred with same brush	Posses the same defects
To steal a march	Outshine
Go broke	Become penniless
Set great store	Values greatly
Touch and go	Risky
Give A piece of mind	Scold
Breath down the neck	Watch all actions closely
Egg is egg	Quite certainly
Kick the bucket	To die
A brown study	Absorbed in reading
Fight shy	Avoid form a feeling of mistrust
Damp squib	An utter failure
Steer clear of	Avoid
Brought to book	To punish
Pay by one's nose	Pay dearly
In the dumps	In low spirits
Beat neck and crop	Completely
Hard nose	Tough and aggressive
In a real fix	In a difficult situation
In one's elements	Feel relax and confident
Cold blood	Unfeelingly
Weigh the anchor	Prepare to sail again
To rise like a phoenix	To start afresh from a low position
To have cold feet	To be reluctant
Come cap in the hand	Very humble
Man of straw	Insignificant
At a low key	At reducing
At stake	In danger
To break the duck	To begin
A big shot	Important person

To put the cat among the pigeons	To be placed in a wrong situation
Cut the Gordian knot	To perform the difficult task
To gain the ground	To become more general
Through thick and thin	Under any circumstances
To kick up a row	To make great noise and fuss
To be at the end of one's tether	To have no resources left
Odds and ends	Various article
To shoot a line one's success	To exaggerate about
To feather one's nest	To provide money even dishonestly
To black ball	Prevent from doing something
To be in the black(Of one's money)	To be in credit
To make no bones about something	To do or say a thing openly if it is unpleasant
To foot the bill	To make payment
Cut no ice	To make no effect
Once and for all	For ever
Hole and corner policy	Improper policy
far and away	Certainly
Face value	Superficially
Bring home	To emphasise
To lead one by the nose	To cause to follow blindly
One's cup of tea	What one likes and can do well
To have the floor	To make speech
The cock of the walk	The most dominant person in a group
A cuckoo in the nest	A child whose parentage is doubtful and may therefore not belong by blood to the family
Feet of clay	To be weak or cowardly
A pig in poke	And article which was brought without previous inspection and which turns out to be worth less than what one paid for it.
A Skelton in the cupboard	A past event which is kept secret by a family/ something embarrassing or shameful
To scream blue murder	Make a great deal of noise and object vehemently
To run in the same groove	Advance in harmony
To lead others up the garden	To deceive others
To cut both ends	To argue in support of both sides of the issue
All the same	Nevertheless , but yet
Cut and dried	Settled , decided
Null and void	Invalid , without legal effect

Rough and ready	Not exact , only approximate
Short and sweet	Brisk , without delay
Clock and dagger	Like a spy
Run-of- the mill	An average, an average , ordinary unexciting
An armchair job	A regular job which is considered easy and well-paid
Backstairs gossip	Gossip among servants
A close fistcd man	A mean or stingy man
A curtain lecture	The scolding of a husband by his wife in private
Elbow room	Room on opportunity to move and act freely
Forty winks	Short sleep
An ivory tower	A place or state of life that is out of touch with people and reality
A latchkey child	A child who returns from school etc. To an empty house because both parents working
Soft soap	Flattery
The bill of fare	The menu
An eye on the main chance	Looks after his own welfare
Esprit de corps	Unity
Make a wry face	Show disappointment
For a consideration	Paid to do something
To give currency to	To pay much attention to
Blue blood	An aristocrat
At one's wit's end	To be completely confused
To hold a candle to	To be nearly as good as someone in his/her absence
Black sheep	An unworthy person
Out and out	Absolutely
Not to mince matters	To speak our frankly
To play with	Fool
Rainy days	Unlucky times
To fly off the handle	To get into a rage and lose self-control
The alpha and the omega	The beginning and the end
End in smoke	To give no practical result
Mincing manners	Not to speak plainly
Hanky -panky	Jugglery
Hot head	The fighter
Have a go	Make an attempt

Mince one's words	Choose term carefully
Be in the mire	Be in difficulties
Let on	Reveal
To get along	To manage to
Make too much of	Overestimate
Lay bare	Expose
Stem from	Originate
On the nod	On credit
To take a occasion	To rake advantage of and opportunity
Take it ill	Too be offended
Extinct and obsolete	As dead as a dodo
In a delicate state	Hanging in balance
In abeyance	In suspension
With might and main	With full vigour
In a jam	In trouble
To get at	Reach
On the wane	Growing less
At a loss	To be puzzled
At all events	Positively
As a rule	Usually
At sixes and sevens	In disorder
All the same	Yet
To egg on	To urge on
To drive at	To employ
To keep the ball rolling	To maintain progress
To knock the bottom out	To make a scheme
To bear a grudge	To have a better felling
By virtue of	On account of
To beat hollow	To defeat completely
To the backbone	Thoroughly /in detail
A cat's paw	To make somebody a tool
To come of age	To be major
To cry over a spilt milk	To reach a crisis
Fits and starts	Irregularly
Damocles' sword	An impending danger
Cast down	Depressed
To go without saying	Clear
In the nick of time	Just in the time
Jack of all trades	A person supposed to know everything but

	master of none
To lead astray	To misguide
To leap in the dark	Careless action
A man of means	A rich man
Off hand	Without preparation
Neck or nothing	With the use of everything
To pay the piper	To bear the cost
A rolling stone	One who is never constant to one's work
To stir a finger	To make the best effort
To sow the dragon's teeth	To do something
Street Arabs	Homeless and parentless children
To turn one's head	To be proud
To and fro	Backwards and forwards
To while away	To pass in amusement
To win the palm	To win the prize
To wild up	To bring to an end
Wait upon	To serve
Wear and tear	Decrease in value due to constant use
Judas kiss	False love
Black ox	Misfortune
Donkey's year	After a long time
An old flame	Sweet heart
To see pink elephants	To show courage
Blind alley	Unprofitable action
The heels of Achilles	The weak point in a person
Kangaroo court	Unofficial court
Lump in the throat	A highly emotional state
Fabian policy	Policy of cautious persistence
A fly in the ointment	A problem in a situation
Mother wit	Common sense
A grass widow	A woman whose husband is temporarily away from her
To make a pile	To make a fortune
A nig-nog	A fool
Kiss the rod	Accept the punishment
Itsy bitsy	Very small
In the nick of time	Just in time
In lieu of	In place of
In embryo	In under developing stage

A damsel in distress	A helpless woman
At case	Easily
Acquainted with	To meet someone
To catch a tartar	To deal with someone or something that proves unexpectedly troublesome or powerful
Clean breast	Confessed without reserve
At close quarters	Close examinations
As fit as fiddle	Strong and healthy
At a loose end	Unoccupied , idle
At a loss	To be unable to decided
Assumes airs	To pretend to superiority
Bear the burnt of	To bear the main shock of
Bid defiance	To ignore
Break the news	To give the bad news
Beside oneself	To feel excessively
Bated breath	In anxiety , expectancy
Bandy words	To wrangle , to argue
Blue stocking	Educated but pedantic lady
Bring down the house	Receive applause
Brow beat	To bully
By dint of	By force of
Chip of the old block	Resembling one's parents in habits
Cave in	Yield
Cloven off	The evil intention
Cut through	Though
Cheek by jowl	Close together
Come to a pass	Difficult situation
Cock a snook	To show impudent contempt
Dutch courage	Bravery under alcoholic influence
Dare devil	Fearless person
Down and out	Poor and ruined
Draconian law	Extremely serve law
Die hard	Persistent in struggle
Days of reckoning	Time to answer for someone's answer
Down in the mouth	out of elements
Damp squib	Complete failure
Dog in the manger	A person who prevent s others from enjoying what he cannot
Eke out	Supplement income

Ever and anon	Now and then , sometimes
Flesh and blood	Human nature
Flash in the pan	Sudden success
Fly in the face of	To defy
Get off scot free	To escape without punishment
Grid up the loins	To prepare for hard work
Give a wild berth	To avoid
Gentleman at large	Unreliable person
Give the devil his due	Give credit to a wordless person for his good qualities
Give up the ghost	Pass away, die
Go to the whole hog	To do something thoroughly
Go broke	Become bankrupt
Get down to brass tacks	To deal with the matter straight
Hold water	Sound , tenable
Have feet of clay	Full of faults
Live-wire	Energetic
Look a gift horse in the mouth	Criticize a gift
Lose one's head	To be carried away
Latin and Greek	Incomprehensible
Make amends	To give compensation
Make light of	Not to care of
Midas touch	A touch which turns anything into gold
A past master	An expert
Pyrrhic victory	Victory at a high cost
Quixotic project	Foolishly ideal
Rule the roost	To dominate
Spartan life	Life of ascetic
Shot in the arm	Encouraging
Spick and span	In order
Seamy side of the life	Immoral side of society
Sow wild oats	Irresponsible pleasure seeking
Throw a spanner	To be defeated
Take wind out of another's sails	To gain advantage by anticipation
Under the rose	Secretly
Up and doing	Active
Well disposed to	Friendly or helpful to somebody
Willy-nilly	Whether one wishes or not
Window shopping	To look at the goods displayed but not for

	buying
Weal and woe	Joy and sorrow
Wide berth	Keep away
Wry face	Disappointed face
Yellow press	Newspaper publishing sensational news
Yeoman's service	Excellent service
At back and call	At disposal
In the books off	In favour with
To run one down	To disparage someone
In character with	Found to be in keeping with
To get into a stew	To have an anxious state of mind
To go by	to be guided by
Put up with	Tolerate
Ran riot	Acted without restrained
Give in	Yield
Turn an honest penny	Make a legitimate living
Done for	Ruined
On the level	Mentally compatible
Went to the winds	Dissipated
Burnt his boats	Left no means of retreat
Brought up	Criticised vehemently
Cut no ice with me	Had no influence with me
A sore point	Something which hurt
Out of thin air	Appear suddenly
Join the majority	To die
To go for the juggler	To make a destructive attack
Lead somebody to the altar	To marry somebody
The primrose path	The pursuit of pleasure
Odds and ends	Miscellaneous things
To champ at the bit	To be restlessly impatient
With a flea in one' ear	To be rebuked
Pie in the sky	Event likely to happen
On the blink	Not in the working order
The worse for wear	Shabby from use
To borrow beat	To bully
Come a cropper	To fail
The lie of the land	Assessment of a situation
Plain as pike staff	Very obvious
In tatters	Ruined

At a rate of knots	Sluggishly
Raise somebody's hackle	To make somebody angry
A bread and butter letter	An appointment letter
Take up the cudgels	To support somebody
As the crow flies	In a straight line
With in an ace of	falling, escaping by a narrow margin
To play the ape	To mimic,
to imitate to go ape over	To be extremely enthusiastic over
In the arms of Morpheus	In the lap of sleep
No vie like avarice	Greed is greater than any other vice
To get the axe	To be dismissed from a job
A man before the mast	A common sailor
All the better to	Same to
To back side	To fall back in morals
To back spear	To question in order to bring out some information
On the ball	Alert ,competent
To forbid the banns	To object the banns
To sell one a bargain	To befool someone
To have a bash at	To attempt something for the first time
To have bats in one's belfry	To have crazy ideas , to be very peculiar or foolish
To be at one's beds	To worship
To tell one's beads	To day ones prayer
To bear away the palm	To win
A bear garden	A place or scene of tumult
Narrow bed	Grave
To bill and coo	To whisper endearments as lovers
To make one's bow	To appear first time in publically
To brace oneself for	To prepare for something unpleasant or difficult
Brain sauce	Wisdom
Bread and cheese	Simple food
As snug as a bug in the rug	Very cosy and snug
On the bum	Living the life of a tramp
To bury one's head in the sand	To avoid the reality
To mean business	To be serious
To care a damn/farthing	To have no care at all
To carry with one	To satisfy

A cast of the eye	A squint
To cast into the shade	To make less noticeable
To catch/clutch at a straw	To try any expedient however useless
To cast a chill over	To spread sadness
To serve with the colours	To be a member of the armed forces
To condemn to death	To award punishment of death
A gone coon	One whose case is hopeless
Till the cows come home	For a long time
To cross one's mind	To occur , strike
To cry Halves	To claim with equal share
To cry stinking fish	To decry one's own good
To cry shame upon	To oppose, to protest against
Off the cuff	Imparting information ,
on credit in one's cup	Under the influence of liquor
To cut somebody down	To kill somebody
To go to the devil	To fail completely
To die in shoes	To be murdered
A dog's chance	No hope at all
To eat one's terms	To study for the bar(law)
To bid fair	To seem likely
To fall aboard of	To start fighting/ quarrelling
To fall foul of	To quarrel
To chew the fat	To chat
To kill the fatted calf	To celebrate especially at a prodigal's return
To ruffle somebody's feather	To annoy somebody
To feel in one's bone	To know or sense some thing intuitively
To snap one's finger (at)	To show contempt for
To fish in troubled water	To try to win advantages for oneself from a disturbed state of affairs, to take advantage of troubled or uncertain conditions for personal gain
To get into a flap	To be in a state of agitation , confusion, nervous, excitement etc.
The flesh	Physical or bodily desires , sensual appetites
To fly in the face of	To act in defiance of authority , facts , custom
To be nobody's fool	To be wise
To fool around	To waste time
To the fore	Prominent
To blow the gaff	To reveal a secret

To get into bad odour	To become popular
Worth one's weight in cold	Invaluable
To cook one's goose	To ruin one's chances or plans completely
Gravy train	Source of much or easy; money
Like grim death	Very firmly
To let one's hair down	To behave informally
To hand in one's cheeks	To die
To run with the hue and hunt with the hounds	To be on good terms with both sides in a dispute
Hare and hound	Paper chase
To take up the hatchet	To prepare for or go to war
Heavy tidings	Bad news
Hell for leather	As quick as possible
Cat in hell's chance	No chance at all
Like a bat out of hell	At top speed
High and mighty	Arrogant
A hill of beans	A thing of little value
to hoist with one's own petard	To be caught in ones own trap
From the horse's mouth	From a reliable source
To take issue	To be in disagreement
everyman jack	Everyone without exception
The cut of one's jib	A person's personal appearances or manner
To kick against the pricks	To hurt oneself by useless resistance
At the rate of knots	Very fast
The last straw	An addition to a task, burden, etc. Which strained one's patience to the limit
To be all legs	To be a tall and very thin person
To have a hollow leg	To have a large appetite
A lick and a promise	A feeble attempt
Out on a limb	In a dangerous situation
To live by one's wits	To get money by ingenious and irregular methods not necessarily honest
The devils own luck	Good luck
To have a memory like a sieve	To have a faint memory
Middle of the road	Average
To have a monkey on one's back	To be addicted to narcotic drug
The mote in somebody's eye	A very minor mistake (of somebody)
To go through the motions	To work carelessly
In a muck	In an untidy situation

Not for nuts	Under no circumstances
To sport one's oak	To keep one's door close
Odd and even	Game of chance
to carry off the palm	To be victorious
To be par for the course	To be what one would expect to happen or expect somebody to do
To pay the debt of nature	To die
To know (somebody) off his pedestal	To show that he is no longer highly regarded
Penny wise and pound foolish	shaving small sums at the risk of large ones
To be in the picture	To be familiar with the matter
To pip(somebody) at the post	To defeat at the last moment
To stretch a point	To make an exception
Printer's devil	The youngest apprentice in a printing office
To put out feelers	Cautiously check the views of others
a/the sixty four dollar question	An important question that is very difficult to answer
The quick and dead	All people alive or dead
In a flat spin	In a state of panic
To be the dead spit of	Exact counterpart or likeness of
To stew in one's own juice	To suffer the consequences of one's own action
To strike a chord	To say something that other people sympathize or identify with
To have the sun in one's eye	To drink
A month of Sundays	A long period of time
to put to the sword	To kill
Not for all the tea in china	No matter how great the reward
The king of terror	Death
As thick as thieves	Very friendly
The tip of the iceberg	Small but evident part of a much larger concealed situation
A man about town	A man who spends much time at fashionable parties, clubs, theatres
To lay someone under tribute	To impose tax on somebody
To swear like a trooper	To use very obscene or blasphemous language
To twiddle one's thumb	To be idle
To be up before somebody	To appear in court
To take the veil	To become a nun

Beyond the veil	In the world high above
Null and void	Not legally binding , invalid
Waifs and strays	Homeless children, odds and even
Weal and woe	Prosperity and adversity
A wild cat strike	Illegal strike
Neck of the woods	Area, neighbourhood
Under duress	Uncontrolled
Look a gift horse in the mouth	Find fault with a gift
To bear up with	To endure
To strike one	To realise suddenly
Four days on end	For a long time
To drive home	To emphasize
Thrust down one's throat	Remind repeatedly
Sing froid	To remain calm and composed in the difficult situation
Argus eye	Observant
Big draw	A huge attraction
Cog in the wheel	An important person
To seize the nettle	To deal with firmly
Took exception to	Object to
To pass the buck	To pass the responsibility
Leaps and bounds	Rapidly
Bids fair	Seem likely
Backstairs influence	Underhand means
Worth of salt	Of value
Make a wry face	Show disappointment
Flesh and blood	Children
At a premium	Valued highly
Speak volumes	Serve as strong testimony to
Get a kick	Get a thrill
To curry favour	Gain favour
On the cards	Certain
Wipe the nose	To Cheat
Family way	Pregnant
Have an eye	Have an extra talent
Keep your nose clean	Keep out of trouble
Small talk	Light conversation
Botch something up	To mess something up, to do a bad job of something

Come to a head	To reach a crisis
See through the design	Be aware of the trick
To a hair	Exactly
Held in camera	Not open to the public
Prodigal son	Extravagant
Die in harness	Die while still working
Take people inn	Cheat people
Carry off of the feet	Wild with excitement
Like a fish out of water	In troubled situation
Running riot	Behaving wild
Hard of hearing	deaf
Jew's eye	A possession of high value
In a nutshell	In a simple and brief manner
To carry the can	Accept the blame
Every lecture's cup of tea	What one likes and can do well
Put/Throw an spanner in the works	To do something that prevents a plan or activity from succeeding
A scarlet women	A whore , a prostitute
To rate soundly	Censure strongly
Bad blood	Angry feeling
Carrot and stick	Reward and punishment
Through thick and thin	Through days of struggle
Straight from the shoulder	Without evasion
Come down from ivory towers	Detachment and seclusion
Bite the dust	Humiliated
To meet half way someone	Come to a compromise with someone
Put some one to mettle	Arouse some one to do his best
Take heart	Cheered up
Falling foul of	Quarrelling with
Take up the cudgels for	Defend vigorously
High words	Angry words
Tiptoe	Anxious
Green horn	Novice
Ere long	Shortly
Turn the coat	Change the party
Play ducks and drakes with	Squandering
Make parade of	Speak highly of
Egged on	Instigate

Monkey's monkey	Kind not cash
Long and short	Main point
Look blank	Surprise
Null and void	Invalid
Out of pocket	Without money
A man of parts	A man of ability
At loose ends	Badly managed
Bad debts	Unrealisable debts
Ever and anon	Frequently
Fast living	Luxurious living
Born in the purple	Born of royal parents
In the long run	Ultimately
Kith and kin	Relatives
Look blue	Appear disturb

Phrase

Bear away	Won
Bear down	Overpower
Bear with	Tolerate
Bear hard	Press heavily
Bear out	Confirm
Bear up	Keep up spirits
Break froth	Come out suddenly
Break through	Fail to keep
Break with	Cease to be friendly with
Call at	Visit
Call to	Address loudly
Call for	Demand for
Call up	Recollect
Call over	Recite in order
Called on	Paid a brief visit
Called out	challenge to fight
Called off	Divert attention
Take away	Remove
Take for	Misunderstand
Taken to	Resorted to
Take after	Resembles

Take up with	Be friendly with
Take down	Record
Taken in	Deceived
Take in	Comprehend
Take in	Admit
Taken with	Pleased with
Took on	Undertook
Struck dumb	Astonished
Struck work	Refused to work
Struck off	Erased
Strike up	Begin to play
Stand against	Withstand
Stood up	Oppose
Stand for	Present as candidate
Set in	Begun
Set out	Started on
Set off	Depart
Set upon	Attacked
Set about	Begin
Set down	Recorded
Set forth	Explain
Set on	Incited
Draw down	Attract
Draw in	Pull inside
Draw off	Divert
Draw up	Drafted
Hold with	Agree with
Hold back	Conceal, prevent the progress or development
Hold good	Applicable
Hear out	Listen until somebody has finished
Hush up	Hide , conceal (information about a situation especially something bad or shocking)
Hold over	Postpone
hold out	Last , continues
Hold off	Away
Kept up	Maintained
Keep off	Ward off
Keep at	Continue doing

Keep to	Maintain
Keep from	Abstain from
Keep down	Prevent from rising
Let loose	Set free
Let in	Allowed to enter
Let down	lowered
Let out	To hire
Let off	Release , free
Put away	Discard
Put in	Presented
Put out	Extinguish
Put by	Lay aside for future use
Put down	Suppress
Put up at	Stayed in
Put up with	Endure
Put off	Postponed
Put forth	Exerted
Put up to	Incited
Brought about	Caused
Brought up	reared
Bring out	Highlight
Brought out	Published
Bring off	Rescue
Bring down	Humble
Bring round	Convert
Brought forward	Adduced
Bring over	Persuade to change side
Come off	Take place
Come about	Happen
Come by	Acquire
Come down	Descend
Come to	Amount to, arrived at
Come at	Get within reach
Come across	Meet accidentally
Come up with	Overtake
Come round	Agreed , recover
Got off	Dismounted
Get off	Escape
Get out of	Free from

Get away	Escape
Get down	Came down
Get abroad	Become public
Getting on	Progressing
Get in	Revive
Getting along	Prospering
Get before	In forward position
Get about	Go about
Get at	Reach
Run down	Weak and tired
Stand up	Vindicate
Called name	Abuse
Held up	Detained
Square up	Settle
Cut out	Suitable
Pare down	Reduce indictment
Pass off	Pretend to be
Bid fair	Seems likely to be
Blown up	Exaggerated
Set down	To snub
Cut to quick	Hurt intensely
Die out	Disappear
Cry down	Depreciate
Over and above	In addition to
Work upon	Influence
Casting aspersions	Passing slanderous remarks
Look up	Visit
Fall out	Had a quarrel
On edge	Nervous
Worked upon	Influence
Carried off	Killed
Tore up	Ran up
At home	Comfortably
Put across	To convey
Cried up	Extolled /praised
Put out	Disturbed
Make away	Steal
Make away with	Get rid of, commit suicide
part with	Give up, give away, desert

Play at	To do something without any effort or real interest
Push off	Go leave
Put in for	Apply for
Send for	Summon , ask or order somebody / something to come
Make after	Chase , follow
Brought home	Emphasised
Hold over	Postponed
Fall in	Agree
Work up	Excite
Rake up	Revive
Hold out	Resisted
Put out	Irritate
Eaten away	Corroded
Taken aback	Surprised
Out and out	Thoroughly
Hard up	Not having enough money
Knocked about	Wandered about
Cine round	Recover
Went for	Attacked
Laid out	Invested
Standing off	Championing the cause off
Drawn off	To withdraw
Go over	Study carefully
Closed with	Denied
Bowled over	Overwhelmed
Fell upon	Attacked
Passed by	Overlooked
Dob away with	Abolish
Advise of	Acquainted with
Dashed off	Wrote
Act on /upon	Have and effect on/upon
Allow for	Including something when you are calculating something or planning something
Allow of	Make possible
Answer fro	Be responsible
Be off	Leave, go, especially in a hurry
Bear out	Support

Beat down	Persuade to reduce the price
Blow out	Extinguish
Blow up	Explode , be destroyed by and explosion
Bring off	Manage successfully
Burst in	Interrupt
Call down	Request for
Catch up	Overtake
Carry off	Win
Close with	Accept
Come in for	Get, obtain
Cut into	Interfere
Die away	Become gradually fainter till inaudible
Die off	Die one by one
Dispose of	Sell, finish
Do away with	Abolish, get rid of , eliminate
Do something in	Kill
Drag on	Progress very slowly
Drag up	Educate , train , etc, very badly
Draw in	Become shorter
Draw away	Spend time in a lazy way
Drink to	Wish somebody/something good luck , success or happiness , by raising your glass and then drinking
Dwell in	Think, talk or write about something for too long
Enter into	Start, open, begin to discuss or deal with some thing or sympathize with
Explain away	Show why one should not be blamed for a fault , mistake etc.
Fall on /upon	Attack violently
Feel for	Search with the hands
Get out	Circulate, spread, gradually
Get along	Manage
Get at	Reach
Get down	Swallow
Get in	Reach ,arrive
Get round	Persuade somebody , make contact with
Go for	Attacked
Go through	Pass through ,be approved , be passed

Leave off	Stop
Clear out	Go, away, leave

