

**ESSENTIAL AMERICAN IDIOMS
AND HELPFUL PHRASES**

- **ABC** - fundamentals of something
- **A-1 = A-one = A-number-one = A-OK** - excellent, superior
- **ace in the hole** - someone or something important that is kept as a surprise until the right time so as to bring victory or success
- **ad** - an advertisement, advertising
- **after you** - please go first
- **airhead** - a stupid person
- **a little bird told me** - to have learned something from a mysterious, unknown, or secret source
- **all day (night) long** - the entire day (night)
- **all kidding aside** - laugh later; speaking seriously; finding a reason
- **all the rage** - popular
- **a lot of = a bunch of = a good deal of = a great deal of = a good many = loads of = piles of = plenty of = scores of = a slew of = a gob of = gobs of = a heap of = heaps of = oodles of**
- **answer back** - to answer in a rude way
- **apple polisher** - a person who does favors for a superior
- **Are you all by yourself?** - Are you alone?
- **as American as apple pie** - typically American
- **attaboy** - that's a boy! (admiration)
- **at the eleventh hour** - at the last minute, almost too late
- **babe in the woods** - inexperienced or innocent person
- **backbreaker** - difficult job, that may cause failure
- **back-door** - dishonest
- **back-slapper = glad-hander** - a person who is superficially friendly and is always trying to gain friends
- **bad actor** - a person or animal that is always fighting, quarreling, or doing bad things
- **bad mouth someone** - to say uncomplimentary or libelous things about someone, deliberately to damage another's reputation
- **ball of fire** - a person with great energy and ability, a person who can do something very well
- **bark up the wrong tree** - to choose the wrong person to deal with or the wrong course of action
- **basket case** - a hopeless situation (or person)
- **be a good hand at** - to be talented, gifted or skilled in some activity
- **beans** - money
- **bear in mind** - remember
- **beat a dead horse** - to argue about something that has been settled
- **beat around (about) the bush** - to talk about things without giving a clear answer, avoid the point
- **beat one's brains out** - to work vigorously; to try very hard to understand something difficult
- **beat one's gums** - to engage in idle talk, or meaningless chatter, generally to talk too much

- **Beats me!** - I don't know; I have no idea (often used in response to a question)
- **beat the bushes for = beat the brush for** - to try very hard to find or get something
- **be at sea** - don't know what to do, be confused, be lost
- **be beat** - to be tired; exhausted
- **be beyond one's depth** - to be beyond one's understanding or knowledge
- **be broke** - to be without money
- **be called on the carpet** - to be in trouble
- **be caught off guard** - to be caught by surprise
- **be cocksure** - to be overconfident; very sure
- **be comfortable as an old shoe** - to be pleasant and relaxed; easy to talk and work with
- **be cool as a cucumber** - to be very calm and brave; not nervous, worried, or anxious; not excited
- **be crazy about = be mad about = be nuts about** - to be excessively fond of someone or something
- **be dead tired** - to be very tired, exhausted, worn out
- **be dry behind the ears** - to be experienced; mature
- **bed of nails** - a difficult or unhappy situation or set of circumstances
- **bed of roses = bowl of cherries** - a pleasant easy place, job, or position; an easy life
- **be Greek to someone** - to be beyond comprehension
- **be in a fix** - to be in a bad situation or in trouble
- **be in a good (bad) frame of mind** - to be in a happy (unhappy) mood
- **be in a pickle** - to be in a troublesome or awkward situation
- **be in a zone** - to be in a daze; in a daydream
- **be in charge** - to be in authority or control
- **be in deep water** - to be in distress
- **be in hot water = be in Dutch** - to be in trouble
- **be in the chips = be in the money** - to have plenty of money; to be rich
- **be in the clouds** - to be far from real life; in dreams
- **be in the dark** - to be uninformed, confused
- **be in the driver's seat = be in the saddle** - to be in control
- **be "in the know"** - to be informed; know secrets or special details
- **be in the mood for** - to be interested in doing something
- **be (feel) in the pink** - be in good health; in fine shape
- **be in the same boat** - to be in the same usually bad conditions or situation
- **be in the spotlight** - to be in the center of attention
- **be in the soup** - to be in serious trouble; in disorder
- **be made of money** - to be very rich
- **Be my guest** - Do what you want; feel free; help yourself
- **be neck and neck with** - to be in close competition with
- **be off one's rocker = be off one's trolley** - not thinking correctly; silly; foolish
- **be on board** - to be hired as an employee, especially by the government

- **be on cloud nine** - to be very happy
- **be one's ball** - something one is interested in
- **be on one's high horse** - acting as if you are better than others
- **be on one's knees** - to be in a very weak condition
- **be on one's mind** - to be in one's thoughts
- **be on pins and needles** - to be nervous
- **be on sale = be on special** - to be sold for a special low price
- **be on the air** - to be broadcast on radio or TV
- **be on the clock** - to work, perform your duties
- **be on the fence** - to be undecided
- **be on the go** - to be very busy
- **be on the hook** - to be in a difficult position
- **be on the house** - free; without cost
- **be on the safe side** - to be well prepared
- **be on the table** - ready for discussion
- **be on the tip of one's tongue** - to be at the point of telling or recalling
- **be on thin ice** - to be in a dangerous situation
- **be on time** - to be exactly at the scheduled time
- **be on top of the world = sitting on top of the world = sitting on high cotton** - feeling pleased and happy; feeling successful
- **be on track with time** - to know the limits of time
- **be on your own** - to be independent
- **be out of** - without
- **be out of date** - to be no longer fashionable
- **be out of hand** - to be out of control
- **be out of order** - is not working (about machine); broken
- **be out of question** - impossible; an idea not able to be considered
- **be out of stock** - to be sold out; having none for sale or use
- **be out of the swim** - not active in business or social affairs
- **be out of this world** - terrific; super; very nice or satisfying
- **be over one's head** - to be beyond one's ability to comprehend
- **be short of** - not having enough
- **be sick and tired of** - to feel strong dislike for something
- **be snowed under with** - to be overwhelmed with
- **be snug as a bug in a rug** - to be comfortable; cozy
- **best bib and tucker = glad rags = Sunday best** - best clothes or outfit of clothing
- **be stuck on** - to be very much in love with; crazy about
- **be thrown to the lions** - to be placed in a difficult situation for which one is completely unsuited
- **bet one's bottom dollar** - be absolutely sure of something; bet your last dollar
- **bet on the wrong horse** - to base your plans on a wrong guess about the result of something; misjudge a coming event
- **between the devil and the deep blue sea** - between two dangers or difficulties, not knowing what to do
- **be under the weather** - to be slightly ill
- **be up a creek without a paddle** - to face a problem with nothing to help find a solution
- **be up to one's neck in (work)** - to be overwhelmed with (work)

- **be wet behind the ears** - to be inexperienced and naive
- **be wild about** - liking very much
- **big brain** - intelligent person
- **big cheese = big gun = big shot = big wheel = big wig**
 - an important person, a leader, a high official
 - something very popular
 - to suffer a defeat; fail
- **big hit** - a very talkative person, who can reveal a secret
- **bite the dust** - a person who is considered a disgrace to a particular group, especially a family
- **blabbermouth** - to change one's mind constantly about the value of something
- **black sheep** - to become angry
- **blow hot and cold** - cause a plan or operation to fail as a result of a stupid mistake
- **blow one's top = blow one's cool** - to be depressed
- **blow the deal (work)** - an unexpected event that strikes like lightning from the sky
- **blue = down in the dumps** - a mistake
- **bolt from (out of) the blue** - alcohol
- **booboo** - a place or person who acts as an obstacle to progress or free movement
- **booze** - the last word on a controversial issue; a final decision
- **bottleneck** - never used
- **bottom line** - money
- **brand-new** - a thank you note
- **bread** - Good luck!
- **bread-and butter latter** - to try very hard
- **Break a leg!** - stop being a couple (a boyfriend or girlfriend)
- **break one's neck** - to stop being friendly with
- **break up with** - something very simple and easy
- **break with** - coffee; bear
- **a breeze** - to stress a certain piece of information
- **brew** - to introduce a piece of information
- **bring out a point** - a general view of the whole situation
- **bring up a point** - inaccurate English
- **broad picture** - a person who doesn't go to the cafeteria or to a restaurant for lunch at work, but who brings his homemade lunch to work in order to save money
- **broken English** - a meal eaten in the late morning, a combination of breakfast and lunch
- **brown-bagger** - to refresh one's memory of or skill at by practice or review; improve; make perfect
- **brunch** - a dollar
- **brush up = brush up on** - a very old and shaky car that barely goes
- **buck** - a difficult, complicated or ambiguous situation or problem
- **bucket of bolts** - accepting full responsibility
- **bucket of worms**
- **buck stops here**

- **build castles in the air** - to make extravagant hopes and plans that will never be carried out
- **bug** - to annoy, to bother
- **bull-headed** - stubborn, inflexible
- **bull session** - a long informal talk about something by a group of persons; frank discussion on interesting topics
- **bullshit = B.S.** - a lie, dishonesty
- **burn one's bridges behind you = burn one's bridges = burn one's boats** - to eliminate any possibility of a retreat to a former position; to make a decision that one cannot change
- **burn the candle at both ends** - to do more than one ought to; to overextend oneself
- **burn the midnight oil** - to study late at night
- **bury the hatchet** - to make peace; to agree to end a quarrel
- **butterflies in one's stomach** - a queer feeling in the stomach caused by nervous fear or uncertainty; a feeling of fear or anxiety in the stomach
- **butter up** - to try to get the favor or friendship of (a person) by flattery or pleasantness; to praise or flatter excessively
- **button one's lip = zip one's lip** - to stop talking; keep a secret; be quiet
- **buy a pig in a poke** - to buy something sight unseen
- **buy something for a song** - to buy something very cheaply
- **buy it** - accept, agree
- **by hook or by crook** - by honest ways or dishonest in any way necessary
- **by the skin of one's teeth** - with very little margin
- **by word of mouth** - from person to person by the spoken word; orally
- **call a spade a spade** - to call a person or thing a name that is true but not polite; speak frankly and directly; to avoid euphemism
- **call it a day** - stop working for the day, go home
- **call someone on the carpet** - to call somebody before an authority for a scolding or reprimand
- **calm down** - relax
- **cancer stick** - a cigarette
- **canned music** - recorded music (not live)
- **can of worms** - a complex problem
- **can't make heads or tails of something** - can't understand something at all
- **can't see beyond the end of one's nose** - to have limited vision concerning decisions of the future
- **Can you improve on that?** - can you do better than that?
- **carry coals to Newcastle** - to do something unnecessary
- **carry the ball** - to take the most important or difficult part in an action or business
- **catch cold** - to become sick with a cold
- **catch one red-handed** - to apprehend a person during the act of committing an illicit or criminal act
- **Catch 22 situation** - an irresolvable contradiction or logic trap

- **C.E.O.** - Chief Executive Officer = the head of the company, factory, firm, etc.
- **change one's mind** - to decide to do something different
- **check in (into)** - register at a hotel
- **check out (of)** - leave a hotel; take material (from the library)
- **cheesy** - cheap; outmoded
- **chew the fat** - talking casually about nothing important
- **chicken-brained** - stupid, narrow-minded, unimaginative
- **chicken = chicken-hearted = chicken-livered** - cowardly, easily scared
- **chickens come home to roost** - words or acts come back to cause trouble for a person; something bad you said or did receives punishment; you get the punishment that you deserve
- **child's play** - easy; requiring no effort
- **chow** - food
- **chow down** - to eat
- **cinch** - something that's very easy to do
- **clay pigeon** - a person who, like a clay pigeon in target practice, is immobilized or is in a sensitive position and is therefore easily criticized or victimized
- **clear the air** - to remove angry feelings, misunderstanding, or confusion
- **clear up the problem** - to solve the problem
- **Chill out!** - Relax; Don't get excited
- **climb on the bandwagon** - to join a particular cause or political party
- **clock watcher** - a worker who always quits at once when it is time; a man who is in a hurry to leave his job
- **closed book** - a secret; something not known or understood
- **close down = shut down** - to stop all working, as in a factory; stop work entirely; stop operations in
- **coast is clear** - complete absence of danger; there is no one to see you
- **cock-and-bull story** - a story that is false
- **cold fish** - a queer person; a person who is unfriendly or does not mix with others
- **cold water sandwich** - a beer (Texas slang)
- **come back to earth = come down to earth** - to return to the real world; stop imagining or dreaming
- **come down off one's high horse** - to become less arrogant
- **Come on!** - Hurry! Move more rapidly!
- **come out of one's shell** - to stop being shy or bashful
- **come to the point** - to talk about the important thing; reach the central question or point
- **come out smelling like a rose** - to overcome difficulties; resolve a problem with money; be set free of blame or guilt; pass through danger
- **come to the point** - to arrive at the important part
- **come true** - actually happen or occur
- **come up with** - to present, announce, offer

- **Congratulations on your success!**
- **cook one's goose** - to ruin someone hopelessly; destroy one's future expectations or good name
- **cool** - neat, special, wonderful; superb
- **Cool down! = Calm down!** - Relax!
- **Cool it!** - Don't get excited; Keep calm; Stop talking about it
- **cool one's heels** - to wait for a long time
- **cost an arm and a leg** - very expensive
- **couch potato** - a person who is addicted to watching TV all day
- **cover the high points** - to discuss the main items
- **crack a bottle** - to open a new bottle of alcoholic beverage
- **crack a joke** - to tell a joke
- **cream of the crop** - the best of the group; the top choice (about people or things)
- **cry wolf** - to give a false alarm
- **cultivate one's own garden** - to take care of one's own needs before trying to take care of others
- **cup of tea = dish of tea** - what one likes to do, a special interest; something to think about, matter, etc.
- **cut corners** - to take a short way; to do only what you must do on a job, not more
- **Cut it out!** - Stop (doing) it!
- **cut the ground from under someone** - to make someone fail; upset someone's plans
- **Da bomb** - great, extremely cool
- **dead duck** - a person or thing in a hopeless situation or condition; one to whom something bad is sure to happen
- **dead end** - a street closed at one end; a situation that leads nowhere
- **deadline** - a completion date
- **deadwood** - anything or anybody worthless; useless
- **deep water** - serious trouble or difficulty
- **deli** - "delicatessen", a small shop
- **Devil's advocate** - one who advocates a bad cause for the sake of argument
- **Dig it?** - Do you understand?
- **dig = dig out** - to understand
- **dipstick** - a stupid person
- **dirty laundry = skeleton in the closet** - questionable or scandalous past activity
- **dish the dirt** - to gossip, to spread rumors about others
- **do a snow job (on someone)** - cheat; deceive; misrepresent
- **doesn't see the forest for the trees** - pay too much attention to details
- **dog-and-pony show** - simple, planned presentation
- **dog days** - extremely hot and humid days
- **dog in the manger** - a person who spitefully refuses to let someone else benefit from something for which he has no personal use
- **dog-tired = done in** - worn out; utterly exhausted
- **dog's life** - a life of misery, poverty, unhappiness

- **Don't copy answers from your neighbor.**
- **don't cross that bridge before you come to it**
 - don't worry about future events or trouble before they happen
- **don't give a hang (a damn; a rap; a straw) = don't care a hang**
 - don't have any interest or liking; don't care
- **Don't jump into the water!**
 - Wait a minute!
- **don't knock it**
 - don't criticize
- **don't know if one is coming or going**
 - don't know what to do; not to be able to think clearly
- **don't leave any loose ends**
 - finish the job completely
- **Don't make waves**
 - Don't disturb the situation; maintain the status quo
- **Don't pull my leg**
 - Don't make me believe something which is untrue, don't joke; don't flatter or praise insincerely
- **Don't push the panic button**
 - Don't panic; Stay calm
- **don't see the forest for the tree**
 - to pay too much attention to details
- **don't take it too seriously = Don't take it to heart**
 - don't be too sad about it
- **do one a favor**
 - do something to help someone
- **do one's best**
 - to try as hard as possible
- **do or die**
 - to make maximum effort
- **do Q and A with**
 - to Answer the Questions of the people
- **do something for laughs**
 - do it as a joke
- **dot the i's and cross the t's**
 - to be careful, thorough, and pay close attention to detail
- **double-talk**
 - something said that is worded, either on purpose or by accident, so that it may be understood in two or more different ways
- **downtown**
 - the main commercial area of a city
- **Do you see much of him?**
 - Do you see him often?
- **drawback**
 - obstacle; hindrance
- **draw the line**
 - to set a limit, as of acceptable behavior
- **dressed to kill**
 - to wear one's best or finest clothing
- **drink like a fish**
 - to drink alcoholic beverages in great quantities
- **drive someone bananas = drive someone nuts = drive someone ape**
 - to drive someone crazy; to excite someone to the highest point when he goes out of his mind
- **drop dead**
 - stop bothering someone; to go away or be quiet
- **drop in**
 - to visit someone without warning, informally
- **drop someone a line**
 - to write someone a short letter
- **drop the other shoe**
 - to say the next obvious thing
- **dude**
 - person, especially male; (a greeting)
- **duck soup**
 - easy; something very easy achieved
- **dying for (a cup of coffee)**
 - very eager to have (a cup of coffee)
- **dying to**
 - having a great desire to (do something)

- **eager beaver** - a person who is always eager to work or to do anything extra, perhaps to win the favor of his boss
- **easy come, easy go** - something you get quickly and easy may be lost or spent just as easily
- **easy as ABC = easy as pie** - easy to accomplish or solve
- **easy money** - a co-worker who doesn't do anything
- **eat crow** - to suffer a humiliating experience; to admit you are mistaken or defeated
- **eat humble pie** - to be forced to acknowledge one's deficiencies or errors; admit your error and apologize
- **eat one's words = swallow one's words** - to take back something you have said; admit something is not true
- **egghead** - a very intelligent person
- **enjoy yourself** - have a good time; be happy
- **elbow one's way into (out of)** - to force entry into a place by using one's elbows
- **Even the smartest students can make silly mistakes.**
- **every last man = every man jack** - each man without exception
- **Everything has gone wrong today**
- **Everything is tip-top** - Everything is OK
- **Everything turned out all right**
- **explain oneself** - to make your meaning plainer; make your first statement clearer
- **express oneself** - to say what you think or feel; put your thoughts or feelings into words by speaking or writing
- **face facts** - to be a realist
- **face the music** - to accept unpleasant consequences; accept your punishment
- **face the truth** - be honest with yourself
- **fair and square** - without cheating; honestly; frank and honest
- **fair-haired boy** - a person that gets special favors; favorite; pet
- **fair play** - equal and right action (to another person); justice
- **fair-weather friend** - a person who is a friend only when you are successful
- **fall down on the job** - to fail to work well
- **fall flat (on one's face)** - to fail
- **fall off the wagon** - to return to the consumption of an addictive, such as alcohol or drugs, after a period of abstinence
- **Fancy meeting you here!** -(an expression of surprise)
- **Far-fetched** - difficult to accept or believe
- **fast buck = quick buck** - money earned quickly and easily, and sometimes dishonestly
- **fat cat** - a rich person
- **fat chance** - little or no possibility; almost no chance
- **fat is in the fire** - something has happened that will cause trouble or make a bad situation worse
- **feedback** - reaction to a situation

- **feel blue** - to be depressed; to feel dreary
- **feel for one** - to have sympathy for one's situation
- **feel free to do something** - to take the liberty to do something
- **feel in one's bones = know in one's bones** - to have an idea or feeling but not know why
- **feel like two cents** - to feel embarrassed or foolish
- **feel like a million dollars** - to be in the best of health and spirit
- **feel out of place** - to experience the sensation of not belonging in a certain place or company
- **feel sorry for** - to feel regret, sympathy, or pity
- **feel under the weather** - to be sick; ill
- **fence-sitter** - a person unable to pick between two sides; a person who doesn't want to choose
- **fifth wheel** - a hanger-on; a person who serves no function
- **fight fire with fire** - to fight back in the same way one was attacked
- **figure out** - to decide; to understand
- **fill the gap** - to meet a need; make complete
- **find fault** - to find something wrong; complain; criticize
- **find oneself (as a ...)** - to find out what one is fitted for and succeed in that
- **first and foremost** - as the most important thing; first of all
- **First come, first serve** - the person who comes first will have his turn first
- **First things first** - other things must wait until the most important and necessary things are done
- **fish or cut bait** - decide what you want to do and stop wasting time; either act now or give someone else a chance or turn
- **fish story** - an unlikely or improbable tale
- **fix up** - to repair; to arrange
- **flea in one's ear** - an idea or answer that is not welcome; an annoying or surprisingly sharp reply or hint
- **flick** - a movie
- **flower child** - any person who cannot cope with reality
- **flu** - influenza
- **fly blind** - to do something without understanding what you are doing
- **fly in the ointment** - an unpleasant thing; something small that spoils your fun
- **fly off the handle = lose one's temper** - to become suddenly enraged or very angry
- **follow one's heart** - to do what one wishes to do rather than to follow the voice of reason
- **follow one's nose** - to go straight ahead; continue in the same direction
- **fool around = mess around = play around = monkey around** - to waste time; to spend time playing, fooling, or joking instead of being serious or working

- **for ages** - for a very long time
- **for a song** - at a low price; cheaply
- **for good** - forever; permanently
- **for free** - without having to pay; free
- **for fun** - an amusement, not seriously, as a joke
- **for laughs** - for pleasure; for fun; as a joke
- **for the birds** - worthless; unsatisfactory; unacceptable
- **For real?** - Is it true?
- **fox** - attractive, alluring person
- **freebie** - something that doesn't cost money
- **free riding** - something got free, without any efforts
- **from Missouri** - doubtful; suspicious
- **geek** - someone who works too hard, is more intelligent than usual, and is slightly unattractive

- **get ahead** - to do better than; progress more rapidly than

- **get along with = get on with** - to be friendly with; agree with; manage
- **get back at (someone)** - to do something bad to (someone who has done something bad to you); hurt in return

- **get down to business (work)** - to start being serious; begin to face a problem to be solved
- **get going** - to start; begin
- **get hot under the collar** - to get angry
- **get into the habit of (doing something)** - to become accustomed to

- **get in touch with** - to contact, to communicate with
- **get it** - to understand; comprehend; grasp
- **get it through one's head** - to understand or believe; make someone understand or believe

- **Get lost!** - Go away!
- **Get off my back!** - Stop criticizing or nagging me! Leave me alone!

- **get on = get onto** - to speak to (someone) roughly about something he did wrong; blame; scold
- **get on with** - to begin; start; continue
- **get one's ducks in a row** - to get everything ready
- **get one's feet wet** - to begin; to do something for the first time

- **get one's goat** - to make someone annoyed or angry
- **get one's number = have one's number** - to find out or know what kind of person someone is

- **get out of hand** - to get out of control
- **Get out of my face** - Stay out of my sight!
- **Get outta here!** - You must be kidding!
- **get ready for** - to arrange; prepare
- **Get real!** - Be realistic! Don't be naive!
- **get rid of (something)** - to throw something away; to make something go away

- **get some winks** - to sleep
- **get stoned** - to become very drunk or high on some drug

- **get the axe = get the boot = get the gate = get the sack = get the hook**

- to be fired from a job; to be dismissed from the school for improper conduct, such as cheating
- **get the bounce = get the gate = get the air**
 - to lose one's sweetheart; not be kept for a friend or lover
- **get the go-ahead = get the green light**
 - to receive the permission or signal to start or to proceed
- **get the goods on someone = have the goods on someone**
 - to find out true and, often, bad information about someone; discover what is wrong with someone
- **get the message**
 - to understand clearly what is meant
- **get the picture**
 - to understand what someone tries to convey
- **get to**
 - to arrive at a certain place
- **get together with**
 - to agree; to come to agreement
- **get-together**
 - a party; a gathering
- **get to the bottom of**
 - to find out the real cause of
- **get to the heart of**
 - to find or to understand the most important thing about
- **get under one's skin**
 - to bother; upset; irritate; annoy
- **get up on the wrong side of the bed-**
 - to act unpleasant because the day got off to a bad start
- **get what's coming to someone = get one's**
 - to receive the good or bad that you deserve; get what is due to you; get your share
- **get wind of**
 - to get news of; hear rumors about; find out about
- **gild the lily = paint the lily**
 - to add unnecessarily to something already beautiful or good enough
- **girl Friday**
 - a secretary; very dependable office worker
- **give a cold shoulder**
 - to act unfriendly towards someone
- **give (someone) a hand**
 - to help, assist; to applaud, clap
- **give a hard time**
 - to give trouble by what you do or say
- **give a little hand**
 - to give a prompt, a cue; to remind; to help
- **give a rundown on**
 - to summarize; give a summary of; explain briefly
- **give it a try**
 - try to do it
- **give it some thought**
 - to wait and see
- **give it to someone**
 - to give punishment to someone; beat; to scold
- **Give me a break!**
 - Don't ask me to do that now
- **give one a piece of one's mind**
 - say what you really think to someone
- **give one a ring = give a buzz**
 - to call on the telephone
- **give one some of his own medicine**
 - to treat someone the way he treats others
- **give one song and dance about**
 - foolish or uninteresting talk; a long lie or excuse
- **give one the eye**
 - to look at, especially with interest and liking;

- **give one a tough time**
 - **give the green light**
 - **give (something) thumbs down**
 - **give (something) thumbs up**
 - **give up the ship**

 - **go about one's business**
 - **go along with**
 - **go bananas**

 - **go behind one's back**

 - **God knows = God only knows = goodness knows = heaven knows**
 - **go Dutch**

 - **go fly a kite**

 - **gofer = go-for**
 - **go for it**
 - **go jump in the lake**
 - **goldbrick**
 - **goldfish bowl**

 - **gone goose = gone gosling**
 - **gone with the wind**
 - **good egg = good scout**
 - **good riddance**
 - **goof**
 - **goof off = veg out**
 - **goof up**
 - **(one's) goose is cooked**
 - **go overboard**

 - **go over one's head**
 - **go stag**

 - **go steady**

 - **go through hell and high water**
 - **go through the mill**

 - **go toe to toe**
 - **go to pieces**
 - **go to the dogs**
 - **go to town**

 - **go without saying**
 - **go with the flow**
 - **grand**
 - **gravy train**
- to look at, especially in a cold or unfriendly way
 - to make things difficult for a person
 - to give approval to begin or start
 - to disapprove (something)
 - to approve (something)
 - to stop fighting and surrender; stop trying or hoping to do something
 - to mind one's own affairs
 - to agree; follow
 - get very excited; become sad; become worried; become overly dedicated
 - to say something without another's knowledge
 - I don't know and no one else knows
 - to go on an outing or date on which each person pays his or her own way, pays for himself or herself
 - to go away; leave (used to show that you do not accept someone's ideas)
 - a low ranking employee, errand boy
 - to accept a challenge
 - to go away and quit being a bother
 - a lazy person
 - a situation in which it is not possible to keep things secret
 - a person for whom there is no hope
 - gone forever; past
 - a nice fellow; a friendly person
 - a loss that one is glad about
 - a silly and foolish person
 - fool around; to be lazy; to do nothing
 - to make a mistake
 - one's chances are ruined
 - to go to extremes; act excitedly without thinking
 - to be too difficult to understand
 - to go to a party without a companion of the opposite sex
 - to go on dates with the same person all time
 - to go through danger or trouble
 - to have experience; be tested; undergo hardship
 - to compete directly and aggressively
 - to lose control; become very nervous
 - to go to ruins; be destroyed
 - to work hard and fast with great force or energy
 - be clear, be obvious
 - take things as they come
 - one thousand dollars
 - a job or project that requires little effort but yields considerable profits

- **grease one's palm = grease the palm** - to pay a person for something done or given; bribe
- **grease the wheel** - to do something or act to make something go smoothly
- **greasy spoon** - a small, inexpensive restaurant
- **green** - inexperienced
- **guesstimate** - a close guess based on experience (guess + estimate)
- **gut feeling** - an instinctive reaction
- **gut talk** - a sincere, honest talk
- **half the battle** - a large part of the work
- **handle with kid gloves** - to treat very carefully
- **handwriting on the wall** - a sign that something bad will happen
- **hang around** - to stay close by; wait
- **hang on to your hat = hold on to your hat = hold your hat** - watch out; be prepared; get ready for a surprise
- **happy hour** - the after work promotional specials at a bar or restaurant
- **hard nut to crack = tough nut to crack** - something difficult to understand or to do
- **hard times** - times when life is not easy
- **hassle** - a troublesome situation; to bother, annoy
- **hatchet man** - junior executive who is given the task of firing employees
- **have all your eggs in one basket** - to put all interests in a single person or thing
- **have a ball = have a blast = have a good time** - to enjoy oneself
- **have a big mouth** - to talk too much
- **have an ear for** - have a taste or a talent for; be sensitive to something
- **have an eye for** - to be able to judge correctly of; have good taste in
- **have a finger in the pie** - to participate in; have part interest or responsibility
- **have a good head for** - to have a special talent in a certain area
- **have a hand in** - to have a part in or influence over; to be partly responsible for something
- **have a hunch** - to have an intuitive feeling
- **have a leg up on somebody** - to have an advantage over someone
- **have a mind of one's own** - to be independent in one's thinking and judgment
- **have a monkey on one's back** - to have an unsolved or nagging problem
- **have a nose for it** - to have a talent for something
- **have a sweet tooth** - to enjoy eating sweet food
- **have a tiger by the tail** - to have a problem that is much bigger than it was thought to be
- **have a tough time** - to have difficulties
- **have a very high (low) opinion of somebody** - to think that somebody is very good (bad)
- **have a word with** - to discuss something with
- **have character** - to be a strong person who acts according to his/her beliefs

- **have egg on one's face** - to be in an embarrassing situation
- **have in stock** - have something ready to sell or use
- **have kittens** - to become very much worried or upset
- **have one's back to the wall** - to be in a trap with no way to escape
- **have one's cake and eat it too** - wanting the advantages of two things
- **have one's hands full** - to be very busy
- **have one's number** - to know someone well
- **have rocks in one's head** - to be stupid
- **have something in hand** - to control
- **have something on the ball** - to be smart, clever; to be skilled and have necessary know-how
- **have something on the table** - to have something up front, up for discussion
- **have something up one's sleeve** - to have something concealed
- **have the guts (to do something)** - to be brave enough to do something difficult or dangerous
- **have the heart** - to have the courage
- **have the time of one's life** - to have a wonderful time
- **have too many irons in the fire** - to be engaged in too many activities
- **have under one's thumb** - to be obedient to another; under one's control
- **heart-to-heart talk** - speaking freely and seriously about a private subject
- **Hello!?** - Are you there? I'm trying to get your attention; Are you awake?; Are you stupid?
- **hell-on-wheels** - a short-tempered, nagging person, who constantly criticize other people even without any reason
- **he-man** - a strong, brave and healthy man
- **hen-party** - a party to which only women or girls are invited
- **Here you are!** - take this
- **hide one's light under a bushel** - to be very shy and modest and not show your abilities or talents
- **high and dry** - without anyone to help
- **high-hat** - to treat others as inferior; look down on
- **hike** - to travel in the country or mountains on foot
- **hit below the belt** - to say something that is often too personal, usually irrelevant and always unfair
- **hit between the eyes** - to make a strong impression on; surprise
- **hit it off** - to enjoy one another's company, to become friendly
- **hit the books** - to study
- **hit the bull's-eye** - to go to the important part of the matter
- **hit the ceiling = hit the roof** - to become extremely angry; lose temper
- **hit the deck** - to get up from the bed
- **hit the hay = hit the rack = hit the sack** - to go to bed
- **hit the jackpot** - to be very lucky or successful; to win the big prize in a game
- **hit the nail on the head** - do or say the correct thing; describe perfectly; be exactly correct

- **hit the road** - to leave; go
- **hit town** - to arrive
- **Hold it** - Wait; Stop it
- **hold it down** - be quiet; stop making noise
- **hold one's tongue** - be silent
- **Hold your horses** - Wait a minute, please
- **honeymoon is over** - the first happy period of friendship and cooperation is over

- **hook up** - connection between two people or objects
- **hooked on** - addicted to cigarettes, coffee, tea, drugs or alcohol

- **hope against hope** - to try to hope when things look black
- **horn in on (conversation)** - to interfere
- **horse of a different color = horse of another color** - a different matter entirely
- **horse opera** - a Western movie in which cowboys and horses play a major part
- **horse sense** - plain, practical common sense
- **hot** - good, well; popular; sexy
- **hot air** - nonsense; exaggerated talk
- **hot news = the latest poop** - the latest information or news
- **hot potato** - a difficult or controversial problem
- **hot stuff** - coffee
- **house of cards** - a poorly founded plan, hope, action
- **how about = what about** - (used to ask for a decision, action, opinion, explanation)

- **How come?** - Why?
- **How goes it?** - How are you and your affairs in general?
- **hunky dory** - fine; OK
- **hush-hush** - confidential; secret
- **hush money** - a bribe
- **hustle up** - to hurry up
- **I can't figure it out** - can't understand
- **iceberg principle** - the idea that in any situation only a small part of a problem will be visible
- **ice-breaking party** - a get-together party for a new company
- **I.D.** - identification document
- **I'd be pleased to help you if I can**
- **I didn't quite catch what you said** - I don't hear it
- **idiot box** - a TV set
- **I'd like to have a word with him** - to speak with him
- **I don't like being ordered around** - I don't like people always telling me what to do
- **IDWIC** - I do what I can
- **if need be** - if the need arises
- **I have to face these events on my own**
- **I have to run** - I have to leave immediately
- **I know him by name** - I have never met him, but I know who he is
- **I'll bet you my bottom dollar** - I'm absolutely sure
- **I'll tell you what** - Here is an idea
- **I mean what I say**
- **I'm all ears** - I'm ready to listen
- **I'm broke** - I don't have any money
- **I'm completely in the dark** - I don't understand

- I'm done - I have finished my work
- I'm full - I have eaten so much that I can't eat any more
- I'm lost! - I don't know what to do (to say, etc)
- I'm on your side - I agree with you
- I'm outdoor type - I like to go out, especially to walk in the country
- I'm pressed for time - I'm in a hurry
- I'm rather tied up at the moment - I'm busy right now
- I'm short of cash - I don't have enough money
- I'm so touched! - I'm feeling strong emotions
- I'm the type of person who needs as much information as possible, even if the news isn't good
- I'm torn! - I'm uncertain, not sure what to decide
- I'm up to my ears in work - I have a lot of work to do
- I'm with you - I agree with you
- in brief = in short = in a word - briefly; in summary
- Indian giver - a person who gives one something, but later asks for it back
- I need to wash up - I need to wash my face and hands
- I never touch coffee - I never drink coffee
- in hot water - in deep trouble
- in nice weather - when (if) the weather is fine
- in one's heart of hearts - deep down in one's innermost feelings
- in short supply - not enough
- in the black - profitable, not showing a financial loss
- in the end - at last, finally
- in the long run - looking ahead to the distant future
- in the red - unprofitable, showing a financial loss
- in time - not late; early enough
- in two shakes of lamb's tail - quickly; in no time at all
- I propose a toast in honor of ...
- I ran out of money - I spent all my money
- I see your point - I see what you mean; I understand what you are saying
- I take it from your silence that you don't want to do that!
- it costs next to nothing - it costs very little
- It figures! = It makes sense! = It makes a point!
- It gives me great pleasure to be here today
- It goes without saying that - It's obvious; easily understood
- It had to be done at short notice - with very little warning time
- It has nothing to do with you - it is not your problem
- It's a deal! - OK; It's agreed!
- It's beyond me - I don't understand
- It's beyond my means - It is too expensive for me to buy it
- It's child's play = It's a snap = No sweat = a piece of cake - it is very easy
- It's high time - It's overdue
- It's no big deal - It's not very difficult
- It's no use sitting here - It's not necessary to sit (and wait) here
- It's OK with me - I agree; I'm satisfied
- It's out of question - it is impossible
- It's time to turn in - It's time to go to bed

- **It's your deal!** - It's your responsibility so you make the plans
- **It was wise of you to do it**
- **I've changed my mind** - I've decided to do something different
- **I've got something on my mind!** - I'm worrying about something
- **I want to make it plain that...** - easy to see; easy to understand
- **I want to put a question to the speaker**
- **jawbreaker** - a word or name that is hard to pronounce
- **jerk** - stupid or annoying person
- **jock** - someone good at sports
- **Joe Doakes** - a name used informally for the average man
- **John Doe** - a name used for an unknown person
- **John Hancock = John Henry** - your signature; your name in writing
- **John Q. Public** - a name used informally for the average citizen
- **jump on = jump all over = land on = land all over (someone)** - to scold; blame; criticize
- **jump the gun** - to go first, before you are supposed to, to do something too early
- **jump through a hoop** - to do whatever you are told to do
- **jump to a conclusion** - to make a quick but unjustified decision
- **jump to conclusions** - to make a hasty decision before the information is complete
- **junker** - an old car in bad condition
- **junk food** - snack foods that are not good for you
- **just about** - nearly; almost
- **just for the fun of it** - merely as a matter of amusement
- **just in case** - for an emergency
- **just now** - at the present time
- **just what the doctor ordered** - a good thing; exactly what is needed or wanted
- **K** - a thousand
- **keep after someone** - to be like someone
- **keep an eye on = keep one's eye on = have one's eye on** - to watch something carefully; to look after something, so it doesn't get harmed or stolen
- **keep a straight face** - to remain serious; try not to laugh
- **keep cool** - to stay calm
- **keep from** - to hold oneself back from
- **keep in hand** - to control
- **Keep in mind = Bear in mind** - Remember it!
- **keep in touch with** - to be in communication with
- **Keep it down! = Keep cool** - to keep from progressing
- **keep it under one's hat** - keep it a secret
- **keep it up!** - keep doing the same
- **keep one in the picture** - to keep someone informed; advised
- **keep one's chin up** - to be brave; face trouble with courage
- **keep one's ear to the ground** - to try to get any information you can get
- **keep one's eyes on the ball** - to pay attention to something
- **keep one's feet on the ground** - to understand what can be done

- **keep one's fingers crossed** - to hope that something will happen as one wants it to happen; to hope that nothing will happen to bring bad luck or to ruin one's plans
- **keep one's head** - don't get excited
- **keep one's nose clean** - to stay out of trouble
- **keep one's nose out of** - don't be bothering
- **keep one's shirt on** - to wait; don't be in a hurry
- **keep one's word** - to fulfill one's promise
- **keep out of** - to stay out of something
- **keep the ball rolling** - to continue the action or activity
- **keep track of** - to know about changes; keep a count or record
- **keep up with the Joneses** - striving to achieve or own as much as the people around you
- **kick back** - to pay money illegally for favorable contract arrangements; to relax
- **kick in the pants = kick in the teeth** - unexpected scorn or insult when praise was expected
- **kick off** - to begin
- **kick off = kick the bucket** - to die
- **kick up one's heels** - to have a merry time; celebrate
- **kill time** - to waste time
- **kill two birds with one stone** - to accomplish two objectives with a single action
- **kind of = kinda** - rather, more or less, a little
- **kiss (someone or something) goodbye** - to lose or give up someone or something forever
- **knee pad promotion** - a promotion of a complete idiot to a better paying job
- **Knock it off** - Stop it; shut up; cease
- **knock oneself out** - to work very hard; make a great effort
- **knockout** - a beautiful woman, a handsome man
- **knotty problem** - a very complicated problem to solve
- **know-it-all** - a person who acts as if he knows all about everything
- **know one's onions = know one's stuff** - to have experience and skill in an activity
- **know people in high places** - to be connected with people in power
- **know something inside out = know what's what = know like the back of one's hand** - know something very well
- **know the ropes** - to be familiar with the details; have experience in the situation
- **know the score** - to understand the situation; be informed
- **know which side one's bread is buttered on** - to know who can help you and try to please him
- **lay an egg** - to fail; to have one's efforts fall flat
- **lay the card on the table** - to explain all the details; make one's intentions clear
- **leave a bad taste in one's mouth** - make one feel disgusted
- **leave in the lurch** - to leave one alone in trouble; refuse to help or support
- **legless** - so drunk that you can't stand up

- **loaded** - being really drunk
- **lemon** - something that is defective
- **lend a hand = give a hand = bear a hand**
 - to help
- **let bygones be bygones** - to let the past be forgotten
- **let George do it** - to expect someone else to do the work
- **let it lay** - forget it; leave it alone
- **Let me tell you something** - Let me give you some advice, let me explain something to you
- **let one's hair down** - to behave informally; act freely and naturally
- **Let's change the subject.**
- **let's don't = don't let's** - let's not; I suggest that we don't
- **Let's get going**
- **Let's get started**
- **let sleeping dogs lie** - don't cause or make trouble if you don't have to
- **Let's play heads or tails** - let's throw a coin in the air to see which side comes down on top
- **let the cat out of the bag** - to reveal a secret unintentionally
- **lick one's boots** - to flatter or act like a slave; do anything to please another
- **lie down on the job** - to purposely fail to do your job
- **like a fish out of water** - helpless; out of one's accustomed surroundings
- **like water off a duck's back** - having no effect; without changing one's feelings or opinions
- **lip service** - support shown by words only and not by actions
- **listen to reason** - to accept advice; be reasonable
- **live and let live** - to live in the way you prefer and let others live as they wish without being bothered by you
- **live from hand to mouth** - to live on little money without saving for the future
- **live in the fast lane** - to live a full and very active life pursuing wealth and success
- **lock the barn door after the horse is stolen** - to be careful or try to make something safe when it is too late
- **lone wolf** - a man who likes to work or live alone
- **long face** - a sad disappointed look
- **look after** - to take care of
- **look back** - to review the past; think of what has happened
- **look down on = look down upon** - to think of a person or thing as less good or important
- **look forward to** - to expect
- **look into** - to find out the facts about; study; inspect
- **look like the cat that ate the canary = look like the cat that swallowed the canary** - to appear very proud and satisfied
- **Look out! = Watch out!** - Be careful!
- **look over** - check, examine carefully
- **look sharp** - to appear stylish; good
- **look up the word in the dictionary** - try to find its meaning in the dictionary

- **lose heart** - to lose hope of success
- **lose one's head = lose one's temper = lose one's cool**
 - to become excited; lose one's normal self control; to become angry
- **lose one's heart** - to fall in love
- **lose one's shirt** - lose all one's money
- **lose one's tongue** - to be highly embarrassed or surprised
- **lose one's way** - become lost
- **lose touch** - to fail to keep in contact or communication
- **lose track** - to forget about something; not stay informed
- **loud mouth = big mouth** - a noisy, boastful or foolish talker
- **lucky dog** - a very fortunate person
- **mad as a hatter** - very angry
- **mad as a hornet = mad as hops = mad as a wet hen**
 - very angry; in a fighting mood
- **main squeeze** - the top ranking person in an organization or in a neighborhood; a boss
- **make a big deal about = make a federal case of = make a mountain out of a molehill** - to exaggerate an insignificant event
- **make a clean breast of something** - to admit your guilt; to tell about your wrong doing
- **make a fuss over** - to quarrel about someone or something; to worry
- **make a hit** - to become very popular
- **make a living** - to earn one's livelihood
- **make a long story short** - to summarize a lengthy narrative
- **make a scene** - to act hysterically
- **make certain** - be sure
- **make clear** - to clarify, explain
- **make ends meet** - to earn enough income to provide for basic needs
- **make fun of** - to joke about; laugh at
- **make little of** - to make something seem unimportant
- **make mincemeat out of** - to destroy completely
- **make much of** - to make something seem of more worth or importance than it really is
- **make one's bed and lie in it** - to be responsible for what you have done
- **make oneself at home** - act as if you were in your own home
- **make oneself comfortable** - to choose a soft chair, etc.
- **make one's mouth water** - to look or smell very good
- **make sense** - understandable
- **make sure** - be certain
- **make up one's mind** - to decide
- **make waves** - to cause difficulty
- **man in the street** - the man who is just like most other men; the ordinary man
- **Many Happy Returns** - (greetings said to someone on their birthday)
- **many moons ago** - a long, long time ago
- **markdown** - a reduction in price
- **mark one's words** - to pay close attention to what one says
- **master of ceremonies = M.C. = emcee**

- **Mcjob**
 - the person introducing participants in a show
 - low-paying position in service companies (as McDonalds Company)
- **mean business**
 - to be serious
- **meat-and-potatoes man**
 - prefer to eat meat and potatoes as the main meal
- **meatball**
 - a dull, boring, or uninteresting person
- **meat of the matter/question**
 - an important, critical point
- **megabucks**
 - a large amount of money
- **Mickey Mouse**
 - a stupid person; a policeman; a white man as used by blacks; something very primitive, unsophisticated
- **mind one's P's and Q's**
 - to pay attention to details
- **mind one's own business**
 - to not interfere in the affairs of others
- **mind your (pronunciation)**
 - be careful about your (pronunciation)
- **miss the boat = miss the bus**
 - to lose an opportunity; misunderstand; to fail because of slowness; to delay doing something until it is too late
- **monkey business**
 - any activity that is dishonest, illegal, objectionable
- **monkey on one's back**
 - the responsibility for
- **motor-mouth**
 - someone talking non-stop
- **Mud in your eye!**
 - Cheers! (a cheering exclamation when people drink)
- **music to one's ears**
 - a good thing to hear
- **My heart isn't in it!**
 - I have lost interest in it
- **My heart sank**
 - I feel very sad, embarrassed
- **My lips are sealed**
 - I will not give away a secret
- **nada**
 - nothing (from Spanish)
- **nail one to the cross**
 - to impose or inflict the most severe punishment
- **neat**
 - cool; great
- **needle in a haystack**
 - something that will be very hard to find
- **Never mind!**
 - Don't worry! Forget about it
- **Never say die!**
 - Don't quit; don't be discouraged
- **new money**
 - people who have become rich recently
- **news flash**
 - short piece of important news
- **Niger in the woodpile**
 - something unexpected that changes a situation; a hidden factor or trick
- **night owl**
 - a person who sleeps during the day and stays up or works during the night
- **nine times out of ten**
 - very often
- **nine-to-five job**
 - a typical office job that starts at 9 a.m. and ends at 5 p.m. with a one-hour lunch break at 12 noon or 1 p.m.
- **No charge! = It's on the house! = There's no cost = It's free**
- **no go = no deal = no dice = no sale = no soap**
 - unsuccessful; of no use; certainly not
- **no good**
 - not satisfactory; not approved
- **no matter**
 - regardless
- **no picnic**
 - something that requires great effort to do
- **no strings attached**
 - freely with no limitations
- **nothing to write home about**
 - not special in any way
- **not know which way to turn = not know which way to jump**

- **not the only fish in the sea**
 - **not to know beans about**
 - **no two ways about it**
 - **No way!**
 - **no wonder**
 - **nut**
 - **nuts and bolts of**
 - **off-color = off-colored**
 - **off-the-book job**
 - **Oh dear!**
 - **old boy network**
 - **old hand (at)**
 - **old hat**
 - **once in a blue moon**
 - **on earth**
 - **one damn thing after another = ODTAA**
 - **on foot**
 - **on hand**
 - **on schedule**
 - **on second thought**
 - **on the air**
 - **on the rocks**
 - **on time**
 - **open house**
 - **open one's heart**
 - **other fish to fry**
 - **paddle one's own canoe**
 - **page:**
 - turn the page;
 - look at (the top of) the next page;
 - open the book to page 6;
 - on the next page;
 - on page 6.
 - **pain in the neck**
 - **Pardon me**
 - **Pardon?**
 - **parting of the ways**
 - **pass the buck**
 - **pay attention to**
- not know what to do to get out of trouble
 - one of many; not the only one available
 - to know nothing about
 - no other choice; no alternative
 - Absolutely not! Forget it! Never!
 - naturally; it is not surprising
 - an odd or crazy person; a fan
 - the basic facts or details of something
 - in bad taste; not of the proper kind for polite society; dirty
 - business done without records as a means to avoid taxation; job paid in cash
 - What a nuisance! How surprising!
 - a system consisting of people who went to the same school and help each other to get good jobs
 - an experienced and highly skilled expert
 - someone or something old-fashioned; not new
 - (to do something) very rarely
 - (phrase used to make questions stronger: Why on earth did you do that?)
 - if there is one problem, there will be more
 - walking (to go there on foot)
 - in someone's possession; ready
 - as planned or expected; at the right time
 - after reconsidering
 - on the radio or TV
 - served with ice cubes
 - happening at the right time
 - a party that is open to anyone who wants to come
 - to talk about your feelings honestly
 - other things to do; other plans
 - to work without help; support oneself
 - start at the top line on page 6;
 - someone or something extremely bothersome, unpleasant
 - Please let me pass; Please forgive me
 - What did you say?
 - the point where a road divides; a deciding point
 - pass a problem or responsibility to another instead of taking care of it yourself; to shift blame from oneself to another person
 - to observe and listen carefully

- **pay the piper = pay the fiddler** - to suffer the results of being foolish or wasting money
- **pay through the nose** - to pay unreasonably high prices
- **peanuts** - very little money
- **pep talk** - a short talk designed to inspire or create enthusiasm
- **perform very well** - to work very well; to get good results
- **petty person** - a person who creates a lot of trouble by his constant criticism about minor and unimportant details
- **piece of cake** - easy, simple
- **pick a quarrel** - to seek the opportunity for a fight or a quarrel
- **pick holes in** - to criticize or find fault with something, such as a speech, a statement, a theory
- **pick on somebody** - to choose someone in order to attack him or her
- **pie in the sky** - an unrealistic wish or hope
- **pig in a poke** - an unseen bargain; something bought without looking at it carefully
- **pissed off** - angry, upset
- **plain Jane** - a common or simple looking young woman or girl
- **play ball with someone** - to cooperate with someone
- **play fair** - to do what is right to others; act in a fair and truthful way
- **play fast and loose** - to act so carelessly or unfairly that people cannot depend on you; be very unreliable
- **play hooky** - to avoid going to school
- **play possum** - to pretend to be asleep; try to escape attention by inactivity
- **play the field** - to date many different people
- **play tricks on** - to make another the victim of some trick or joke
- **play with fire** - to be engaged in a dangerous act
- **polish the apple** - to try to make someone like you; to try to win favor by flattery
- **pooped out** - tired; exhausted
- **poor as a church mouse** - extremely poor
- **pop quiz** - unannounced short test
- **pot calling the kettle black** - criticizing others for the very fault one possesses
- **potluck dinner = covered dish dinner** - a meal in which each guest brings part of the dinner
- **pour oil on troubled waters** - to quiet a quarrel
- **powder room** - the ladies' rest room
- **pretty penny** - a lot of money
- **promise the moon** - to promise something impossible
- **pull one's leg** - to make someone believe something which is wrong as a joke; to tease or fool someone; flatter or praise insincerely
- **pull one's weight** - to do your full share of work

- **pull strings = pull wires** - to use personal connections to obtain a position; use personal influence
- **pull the wool over one's eyes** - to fool someone into thinking well of you
- **pull together** - to join your efforts
- **pull yourself together** - to become calmer
- **push the panic button** - to panic; get extremely excited
- **put all one's eggs in one basket** - to place all efforts or hopes in a single person or thing
- **put an end to = put a stop to** - to stop
- **put in a word for** - to speak in favor of someone
- **put in one's place** - remind someone of low rank or position
- **put it on the line = lay it on the line** - to say plainly; tell truthfully
- **put on an unhappy (happy) face** - to have sad (happy) expression of your face
- **put one in the picture** - to inform someone of all the facts about a situation
- **put one's best foot forward** - try to make the best possible impression
- **put one's cards on the table** - to be frank
- **put oneself in another's place = put oneself in another's shoes** - to understand another person's feeling imaginatively
- **put one's finger on it** - to be specific, explain
- **put one's foot in one's mouth = put one's foot in it** - to say something one should not have said; hurt another's feelings without intending to
- **put ones' heads together = lay ones' heads together** - to plan or consider things together
- **put one's shoulder to the wheel** - to cooperate; help
- **put on one's thinking cap** - to think hard and long about some problem
- **quick and dirty** - cheap, easy but often second-rate solution to a problem; done fast but not well
- **quick on the trigger = trigger happy** - fast at answering questions or solving problems
- **R and R** - rest and relaxation (a vacation)
- **rainy day** - a time of need (especially for money)
- **rap** - to talk
- **rat race** - a confusing scramble or way of living that does not seem to have purpose
- **read between the lines** - to understand all of a writer's meaning by guessing
- **read one like a book** - to understand someone completely
- **read one's mind** - to know what someone else is thinking
- **read someone's mind** - know what someone is thinking
- **red flag** - warning sign
- **red herring** - something designed to divert an opponent's attention in argument from the central issue; misleading story
- **regular guy = regular fellow** - a friendly person who is easy to get along with
- **rents** - parents
- **ride a dead horse** - don't change one's way of doing things

- **riding for a fall** - behaving in an overconfident way that is likely to lead to trouble
- **ring a bell** - to make you remember something; sound familiar
- **rob Peter to pay Paul** - to harm one person in order to do good to another
- **rock the boat** - to make trouble and risk losing or spoiling a plan
- **Roll up your sleeves = Roll your sleeves up** - Get ready to do some hard work
- **room and board** - a room for rent with meals included
- **rosy scenario = Rosie Scenario** - very optimistic prediction
- **rotten egg** - a person whose character or way of acting is not good
- **roughly speaking** - speaking in general; approximately
- **round-eyed = wide-eyed = large-eyed** - very much surprised
- **royal road** - an easy path
- **R.S.V.P.** - "Repondez s'il vous plait"=Please reply to this invitation
- **rub salt into one's wounds** - to deliberately add pain when one feels shame, regret or defeat
- **rug rat** - a child
- **rule of thumb** - a practical principle that comes from the wisdom of experience and is usually but not always valid
- **rule the roost** - to be leader or boss
- **run for office** - to try to get elected
- **run off at the mouth** - to talk too much; be unable to stop talking
- **run out of** - to have no more
- **Run that by me again!** - Repeat what you just said, as I couldn't understand you!
- **rush hour** - the time in the morning and late afternoon when people are going to or coming from work
- **sacred cow** - anything or anyone that is beyond criticism
- **safe and sound** - not harmed; safe and not damaged
- **sail close to the wind** -to be on the borderline between legality and illegality
- **sail under false colors** - to pretend to be what you are not
- **salad days** - time of youth when one is inexperienced or "green" like salad
- **sales car dealer** - not reliable person; a cheating person
- **salt of the earth** - a basically good or valuable person
- **sandbag** - to mislead, attack from behind
- **save one's neck = save one's skin** - to save one from danger or trouble
- **say something tongue in cheek** - not be really serious
- **say uncle = cry uncle** - to say that you surrender, give up
- **scapegoat** - one, who is blamed
- **schmooze** - to chat, to talk casually
- **scratch one's back** - to do something kind and helpful for someone or to flatter him in the hope that he will do something for you

- **Search me! = Beats me!** - I don't know! How should I know?
- **second thought** - a change of ideas or opinions resulting from more thought or study
- **second to none** - excellent; first rate
- **see beyond one's nose = see beyond the end of one's nose** - to make wise judgments
- **see into** - to know or understand the real nature or meaning of
- **see one off** - to go to say or wave goodbye to
- **see one home** - to walk a person home
- **see red** - to become very angry
- **see the light** - to understand or agree
- **see through** - to understand the real meaning of or reason for
- **seize the opportunity** - to exploit a chance
- **self-made** - having achieved wealth, fame and success on one's own
- **sell down the river** - to betray
- **sell short** - to think that someone or something is less good or valuable than is true; underestimate
- **sell snow to Eskimos** - to sell something to people who already have a large amount of the same goods
- **setback** - a disadvantage; a delay
- **set one's face against** - to be very much against
- **set one's heart on** - to want very much
- **set one's mind at rest about** - to reassure someone about
- **set one's mind on** - to determined to; decide to
- **set the world on fire** - to do something outstanding
- **settle on** - to decide which one to choose among different alternatives
- **shake a leg** - to hurry
- **shape up or ship out** - either improve one's disposition (behavior), or quit (leave)
- **sharp = sharp as a tack** - bright; intelligent; smart; efficient
- **ships that pass in the night** - people who meet for a brief but intense moment and then part, never to see each other again
- **shoe is on the other foot** - the opposite is true: places are changed
- **shoot from the hip** - to act or talk rashly and irresponsibly
- **shoot off one's mouth = shoot off one's face** - to express one's opinion loudly
- **shoot the breeze = shoot the bull = bat the breeze = fan the breeze** - to talk; conversation
- **shout from the housetops = shout from the rooftops** - to tell everyone, especially one's own personal business
- **silver lining** - the happy part of a situation that seems difficult
- **sink-or-swim situation** - a situation in which we must save ourselves by our own means or else fail
- **sit on one's hands** - to do nothing
- **sit on the fence** - to remain neutral; to refuse to take sides in a dispute
- **six bits** - 75 cents

- **sixty-four dollar question** - a most important and difficult to answer question
- **size up the situation** - to make an evaluation of the situation
- **skate on thin ice** - to take a chance; risk danger
- **skeleton in the closet** - a potentially embarrassing secret
- **skip it** - to forget all about it
- **skirt around** - to avoid something
- **sky is the limit** - there is no limit to something
- **slave-driver** - a boss or employer who exacts the utmost from his employees
- **sleep on it** - postpone a decision until the next day
- **slip of the pen** - the mistake of writing something different from what you planned
- **slip of the tongue = slip of the lip** - an error of speech; something said unintentionally
- **small talk** - general idle conversation
- **smell a rat** - to become suspicious; to suspect
- **Smell the flowers!** - Take time to enjoy yourself
- **snake in the grass** - an unfaithful traitor
- **snap** - something that's very easy to do
- **so be it = be it so** - let it be that way; all right
- **so far, so good** - until now things have gone well
- **so it goes** - that's life (c'est la vie)
- **solid** - really good; cool
- **something slipped one's mind** - to forget something
- **so much for** - enough has been said or done about
- **son of a gun** - a bad person
- **sort of** - rather, somewhat
- **spamming** - mass marketing using e-mail addresses
- **speak off the cuff** - to speak without preparation
- **speak off the top of one's head** - to speak without thinking hard; quickly
- **speak one's mind** - to say openly what you think
- **speak the same language** - to have similar feelings, thoughts, tastes
- **special offer** - goods which are on sale at a reduced price
- **spell out** - to explain something very clearly
- **spill the beans** - to tell the secret
- **spit into wedding cake** - to spoil someone's pleasure by doing or saying something harsh
- **split hairs about** - to argue over minor matters
- **spread oneself too thin** - to try to do too many things at one time
- **square peg in a round hole** - a person who does not fit into a job or position
- **stab in the back** - an act or lie that hurts a friend or trusting person
- **stand on one's own feet** - to be (financially) independent
- **stand one's ground** - to refuse to change one's opinion or decision
- **start the ball rolling** - to begin, start something
- **state-of-the-art** - the best and the latest, most advanced
- **steal one's thunder** - to upstage someone; to destroy the effect of what someone does or says by doing or saying the same thing first
- **step into one's shoes** - to do what someone else usually does after he has stopped doing it

- **Step on it!** - Hurry up!
- **stew in one's own juice** - to suffer from something that you have caused to happen yourself
- **stick together** - to remain close together in a situation
- **stick to one's knitting = tend to one's knitting** - to do your own job and not bother other people
- **stick to the point** - to stay on course during a discussion
- **still waters run deep** - quiet people probably are profound thinkers
- **stock answer** - standard or ready for use reply
- **stone wall = brick wall** - something hard to overcome; an idea that is hard to change
- **stop by** - visit informally; go to see
- **straight from the horse's mouth** - directly from a reliable source or a person
- **straight from the shoulder** - frankly and directly
- **straw boss** - the boss of a few workers who is himself under another boss
- **straw in the wind** - a small sign that hints of something that is about to happen
- **strike out at** - to attack someone verbally or physically
- **string along** - to deceive; fool
- **Sure thing!** - Of course; certainly
- **swap (switch) horses in midstream-** to change leaders or adopt a different strategy in the middle of a course of action
- **sweet deal** - outstanding opportunity; excellent bargain; wonderful career
- **swim against the current = swim against the stream** - to do opposite of what most people want to do
- **swing one's weight** - to use your personal power to get something done
- **take a back seat** - to accept a poorer or lower position
- **take a break** - to have a brief rest period during the work
- **take a chance** - to accept the risk of failure or loss
- **take a dig at** - to attack verbally
- **take advantage of** - to use something for one's own benefit
- **take a look** - to look at
- **take a powder** - to make a quick departure
- **take a seat** - to be seated
- **take care of** - to be responsible for; deal with
- **take charge of** - to assume control or direction of
- **take for** - to mistake for
- **take for granted** - to assume to be true without further investigation
- **take French leave** - to slip away from a place secretly and without saying good-bye to anyone
- **take into account** - to consider
- **take it easy** - don't get excited; don't hurry
- **take it or leave it** - to decide yes or no; accept or refuse
- **take one's medicine** - to accept one's punishment without complaining

- **take pains (with something)** - to be very careful when you are doing something
- **take part** - to participate
- **take place** - to happen; occur
- **take potluck** - to share as a guest an everyday meal without special preparation
- **take sides** - to join one group against another in a debate
- **take someone under one's wing** - to protect
- **take steps** - to begin to make plans or preparations
- **take the bull by the horns** - to take the initiative in confronting a difficult position
- **take the cake** - to be the best; to take the first prize
- **take the floor** - to rise and make a speech at a meeting
- **take the words out of someone's mouth** - to say something that someone else was about to say
- **Take your time!** - It is not necessary to hurry
- **talk a blue streak** - to talk on and on very fast
- **talk in circles** - to waste time by saying words that don't mean very much
- **talk of the town** - something very popular
- **talk someone into** - to convince somebody to ...
- **talk someone out of** - to convince somebody not to ...
- **talk something over** - to discuss
- **talk through one's hat** - to say something without knowing or understanding something
- **talk turkey** - to discuss in a straightforward manner; speak frankly and forcefully to
- **tearjerker** - a sentimental movie or novel
- **teller** - a person who works at the counter in a bank
- **Tell it to the marines! = tell it to Sweeney** - Tell it to a non-existent body because the story is so ridiculous no one is going to believe it; I don't believe you!
- **tell stories** - to lie
- **tell tales out of school** - to tell something that is secret
- **ten-four = 10-4** - Do you understand?
- **ten to one = two to one** - almost certainly
- **terrific** - very good
- **thanks to** - with the help of
- **That dog won't hunt!** - That idea will not work!
- **That figures! = That makes sense! = It means something!** - That's the way it was expected; corresponds to expectations
- **That makes me blue** - That makes me depressed
- **That rings a bell** - it reminds me of something
- **That's it!** - That is the end!
- **That's music to my ears** - It sounds great to me; that's what I want to hear
- **That's the rub!** - That's the problem!
- **That's the ticket!** - Excellent, correct!
- **That's the way the cookie crumbles! = That's the way the ball bounces** - That's the way things seem to happen

- **That's tough!** - That's too bad!
- **That won't wash with me!** - It's not easy for me to believe
- **The buck stops here !** - I'm the ultimately responsible person in this organization
- **The cat did it!** - I don't know who have done it and who is to be blamed
- **the ins and outs** - all the details
- **the last straw** - the last in a series of grievances or burdens that finally exceeds the limits of endurance
- **the old man** - your father or boss, etc.
- **the real McCoy** - the best of its kind, the real thing
- **there is more than one way to get a pig to market = ... to flay a fox = ... to skin a cat** - there are always different ways to fulfil a tough task
- **there is no point in/to** - there is no purpose in; there is no reason to (do something)
- **the three R's** - wRiting, Reading, aRithmetic - the three basic skills of elementary education
- **Think carefully = Use your brains = Use your head!** - Think intelligently! You ought to know the answer yourself
- **think highly of somebody = think well of somebody** - to admire somebody very much
- **think little of** - think that someone or something is not important
- **think over** - to think about something carefully
- **This is a case in point** - an example that proves something or helps to make something clearer
- **This is a new territory for me** - This is a new and unfamiliar situation
- **throw away** - to get rid of something unwanted
- **throw cold water on = pour cold water on = dash cold water on** - to discourage
- **throw in the towel throw in the sponge = throw up the sponge** - to quit in defeat; admit defeat
- **throw one's weight around** - to use one's position or influence openly
- **throw one to the wolves** - to send someone into danger without protection
- **throw the book at someone** - to give a person the maximum punishment
- **tied up** - busy
- **tighten one's belt** - to live on less money than normal; use less food
- **time is running short** - not much time remains
- **time to kill** - spare time
- **tip of the iceberg** - only a hint or suggestion of a much larger or more complex issue or problem
- **tongue-in-cheek** - not serious; ironic
- **toot one's own horn** - to praise oneself; to call attention to one's skill, intelligence, or success; to boast
- **top man = top banana = top dog** - a boss
- **totally** - very much
- **tough cookie** - a hardheaded person with whom it is difficult to deal

- **tough nut to crack** - a difficult problem to solve
- **tough pill to swallow** - something unpleasant to be endured
- **tough problem** - difficult problem
- **toy teen** - one less than fourteen (in NY)
- **tricks of the trade** - knowledge; skills; information known to those who perform a particular job
- **trump card** - something kept back to be used to win if nothing else works
- **try on** - test clothing before buying
- **try out** - test a product before buying
- **try one's wings** - to try out a recently acquired ability
- **turn a blind eye to** - to pretend not to see; not pay attention
- **turn a deaf ear to** - to pretend not to hear; not pay attention
- **turn the tables** - to change the situation just opposite
- **two bits** - 25 cents; a quarter of a dollar
- **Uncle Sam** - the US government
- **under one's heel** - in one's power or control
- **under the table (the counter)** - secret, illegal
- **upbeat** - cheerful; optimistic
- **ups and downs** - good and bad changes
- **upset the apple cart** - to ruin the plans
- **up-to-date** - current; as of this moment
- **use one's brains = use one's head = use one's bean = use one's noodle = use one's noggin** - to think intelligently; have common sense
- **vanilla** - plain
- **veg out** - to relax
- **Wait a bit!** - Wait a little
- **Wait for the other shoe to drop** - to await an event casually linked to the previous event.
- **wake up and smell the coffee** - to become alert and aware
- **walk the chalk = walk the chalk line = walk the chalk mark** - to act exactly as you are supposed to; behave properly
- **warm-up** - a preparation for a game or other activity
- **Was my face red!** - I was very embarrassed
- **watch one's language** - to be careful of your speaking; avoid saying impolite or vulgar things
- **watch one's step** - be careful
- **watering hole** - a bar
- **water over the dam = water under the bridge** - something that happened in the past and cannot be changed
- **W-cubed** - whatever, wherever and whenever you want
- **wear one's heart on one's sleeve = pin one's heart on one's sleeve** - to show your feelings openly
- **wear two hats** - to act in two or more jobs at once
- **Welcome aboard!** - Welcome to our group (team)!
- **well put** - expressed clearly
- **wet blanket** - a person or thing that keeps others from enjoying life
- **wet noodle** - a person with no energy, passive and inactive
- **What are you driving at?** - What do you mean? What is your point?
- **What are you up to?** - What are you doing?

- **What do you do for a living?** - What is your job?
- **What do you have in mind?** - What are you thinking of?
- **What's cooking?** - What's going on; what's happening?
- **What's the good news? = What's the good word?**
 - What's the latest news?
 - Why are you going so fast?
- **What's the hurry?**
- **What's the weather like today?**
- **What's up?** - What is going on?
- **What time is it by your watch?**
- **wheelhorse** - a reliable and industrious worker on whom one may depend
- **wheels** - a car or motorcycle
- **when hell freezes over = when pigs fly** - never
- **where the shoe pinches** - where or what is the discomfort or trouble
- **whipping boy** - the person who gets punished for someone else's mistake
- **white elephant** - an unwanted or financially burdensome possession, or a project that turns out to be of limited value
- **windbag** - one who talks too much; a boring person
- **wipeout** - a total failure
- **wise guy** - a person who acts as if he were smarter than other people
- **work one's fingers to the bone** - to work very hard
- **work (something) out** - to find an answer to a problem
- **worry wart** - one who worries about details
- **X-rated** - pornographic
- **yak** - to talk idly; chatter
- **yak yak** - a great deal of unnecessary talk
- **yank** - to bother, harass
- **yes-man** - a person or employee who tries to be liked by agreeing with everything said
- **yoo-hoo** - (a shout to attract attention)
- **You are at the top of your class.**
- **You are a top student in the class.**
- **You are dead wrong** - You are absolutely wrong
- **You are doing very well - keep it up!**
- **You are going to be a great success**
- **You bet!** - You can be sure
- **You can take it to the bank!** - You can believe it
- **You can't teach an old dog new tricks** - It's hard to train an older person to acquire new skill
- **You did badly on your English test (exam).**
- **You don't say!** - Really? Is that really true?
- **You don't work hard enough.**
- **You failed your English exam.**
- **You guessed right!** - You got the right answer
- **You have a point** - You are right
- **You have brains** - You are smart
- **You know something!** - I really want to say this to you!
- **You made several careless mistakes.**
- **You must brush up on your English if you are going to use it.**

- **Your answer is not correct - try again!**
- **Your time is up** - You have had all the time allowed
- **You were a great help!**
- **yucky** - terrible, distasteful, very unpleasant
- **yummy** - delicious
- **zilch = zip** - zero; nothing
- **zillion = jillion = gazillion = bazillion** - a large indeterminate number
- **Zip your lip!** - Keep something secret