

ring a bell	A: Do you know April O'Neil? B: Hmm. Maybe. That name rings a bell.
on the one hand / on the other hand	On the one hand, Peter's roommate is kind. On the other hand, he's quite messy.
have/keep an open mind	I tried to keep an open mind about Allan even though I'd heard some bad things about him.
on the tip of your tongue	His name was on the tip of my tongue... but I couldn't remember it.
a hangover (noun) / hung-over (adj)	Tyler was too hung-over from last night's party to go to work.
~ish	Let's meet around 4ish.
fed up	I'm fed up with my neighbour's dog.
Big deal!	It takes you 15 minutes to walk to school? Big deal!
Give sb a hand	My dad gave me a hand with my homework.
let the cat out of the bag	It was going to be a surprise party, until Todd let the cat out of the bag.
give it a shot	If you think you can make the team, then give it a shot.
No way!	A: George, I'm pregnant. B: No way!
The more the merrier.	A: Can I invite my brother? B: Sure. The more the merrier.
give it your all	Even though I lost the race, I gave it my all.
first-hand	I saw the accident happen, first-hand.
a dead end	Let's not take this path. It leads to a dead end.
time flies	Time flies when you're having fun.
pull sb's leg	"You have 6 brothers? You're pulling my leg!"
have sth on your mind	When Dana has something on her mind, she likes to go for a long walk by herself.
keep track	I use my watch to keep track of time.
from scratch	My aunt made the cake from scratch.
off the top of your head	He asked me to tell him a joke, but I couldn't think of one off the top of my head.
learn your lesson	The boy learned his lesson. He'll never play with fire

	again.
keep/bear in mind	The professor told his students to keep in mind that they only have 50 minutes to complete the test.
speak your mind	Timmy was afraid to speak his mind in front of his schoolmates.
Just my luck!	It rained on my only day off. Just my luck!
There's nothing to it.	Why don't you make a simple website for your business? There's nothing to it.
get out of hand	The house party got out of hand, so we had to call the police.
cut a long story short	To cut a long story short, Lisa and I have had some interesting experiences together.
a piece of cake	The test was a piece of cake. I finished it in 20 minutes.
go out of your way to do sth	I went out of my way to help Jenny find an apartment, and she didn't even say thanks!
cross your mind	The thought never even crossed my mind.
road rage	I don't like being in the car with Gary. He has difficulty controlling his road rage.
go on about	The old man went on about his school days for nearly an hour.
slip your mind	I was going to return the library books today after work, but the thought slipped my mind.
have/throw a fit	The baby threw a fit when I took his toy away.
The ball is in your court	The ball is in their court now. Let's wait for their decision.
make your day	Finding a fifty-dollar bill on the ground made my day.
a rip off / to rip sb off	"Six dollars for a cup of coffee?! What a rip off!"
get a kick out of sth	I get a kick out of reading science fiction novels.
catch sb's eye	The bright advertisement caught my eye.
jump the gun	I jumped the gun and asked Gail to marry me.
give sb a piece of your mind	The angry worker gave his boss a piece of his mind.

cross your fingers	Kate crossed her fingers and hoped it wouldn't rain on her wedding day.
cost (sb) an arm and a leg	The designer handbag cost her an arm and a leg.
be in hot water	Ken was in hot water about forgetting his wedding anniversary.
an eye-opener	The film on global warming was a real eye-opener for Tom.
let off steam	Ted plays squash when he needs to let off steam.
read between the lines	You can figure out the author's opinion by reading between the lines.
go all out	We went all out and booked a five-star hotel for our trip.
out of line	Mark's comment was out of line. He shouldn't have said that to a client.
be on sb's back	My manager is on my back about being at work on time.
would not be seen/caught dead	I wouldn't be seen dead wearing an ugly dress like that.
have mixed feelings	Larry has mixed feelings about his new job.
draw a blank	When asked for her postal code, Amy drew a blank.
You name it.	A: Daddy, can I have anything on the menu? B: Sure. You name it, you got it.
know your stuff	Jim has been a mechanic for 20 years. He really knows his stuff.
left, right and centre	Businesses were closing in town left, right and centre.
a change of heart	After seeing a mouse on the floor, I had a change of heart about eating at the restaurant.
a long haul	Peter told his boss that he wouldn't quit. He's in it for the long haul.
be man enough	George was the only one man enough to admit he had made a mistake.
be second to none	The apple pie at this restaurant is second to none.
know/learn the ropes	It took me a month to learn the ropes at my new job.
a breath of fresh air	The new employee, Gail, is a breath of fresh air in the office.
get your act together	The coach told me that if I didn't get my act together, I'd

	be kicked off the team.
set your heart on sth	Eric has his heart set on participating in the Olympics.
take sb/sth for granted	Keith took it for granted that his girlfriend would always stay with him. Then, one day, she was gone.
play it by ear	A: How long will you stay in Australia? B: I'm not sure. I'm just going to play it by ear.
put all your eggs in one basket	Greg invested his money in a few different areas. He didn't want to put all his eggs in one basket.
birds of a feather (flock together)	A: It's funny that all of Kate's friends are attractive. B: So is she. I guess birds of a feather flock together.
have second thoughts	I'm starting to have second thoughts about my new apartment.
pay the price for	Don't touch my stuff. If you do, you'll pay the price.
a basket case	Darryl's ex-wife is a total basket case.
on the dot	We arrived at 8 o'clock on the dot.
not have a clue	I don't have a clue where Nunavut is.
have a shot at	Our team has a shot at winning the championship.
the word spread	It took only an hour for word to spread around the office that John had been fired.
safe and sound	I arrived home from my trip safe and sound.
be a pain (in the neck)	My brother is a real pain in the neck sometimes.
be in the same boat	The governments of Portugal and Greece are in the same boat. They both need financial assistance.
be/feel at home	After two years, James felt at home in Prague.
be in sb's good books	Ryan is not in his father's good books right now because he scratched his car.
get out of bed on the wrong side	I'd avoid talking with Bob today. He must've got out of bed on the wrong side.
up-and-coming	Roger is an up-and-coming hockey player from Toronto.
get into gear	You'd better get into gear or you'll be late.
out of the blue	One day, out of the blue, I received a letter from my former schoolmate.

set the record straight	In a TV interview, the politician set the record straight about his experiences in the military.
keep an eye on	The security guard kept an eye on the suspicious man.
a grey area	Because of a grey area in his job description, Peter was not exactly sure what all of his responsibilities were.
get/let sb off the hook	Luckily for her, the policeman let Jane off the hook for parking her car in a no-parking zone.
out of sight, out of mind.	Jim was happy when his ex-girlfriend moved out of his apartment -- out of sight, out of mind.
give sb the cold shoulder	Ted gave his ex-girlfriend the cold shoulder when he saw her at the party.
The ins and outs	It took Alan a year to learn all the ins and outs of his job.
line of work	The fireman said that injuries were common in his line of work.
make do	I forgot to buy groceries so I had to make do with what was left in the fridge.
get sth off your chest	A: Keith, there's something I need to get off my chest. B: What's bothering you? Tell me.
know sth like the back of your hand	Takeshi knows the streets of Kyoto like the back of his hand.
in the bag	After scoring their fourth goal, the victory was in the bag.
be on the ball	Greg isn't on the ball today. He keeps making silly mistakes.
off and on / on and off	Tara and Mike have been seeing each other off and on for a year now.
for the time being	I plan to move into my own apartment in September. For the time being, I'm staying with friend Doug.
burn your bridges	Jack tried to be kind to his boss when he quit in job because he didn't want to burn his bridges.
get/be given the sack / sack (verb)	Alan got the sack for repeatedly coming into work late.
on the back burner	The project was put on the back burner while the company focused on a more immediate problem.
get cold feet	It's normal to get cold feet before your wedding day.
hit rock bottom	After being fired and then kicked out of his apartment,

	Jake really hit rock bottom.
talk shop	Everyone agreed not to talk shop at the staff party.
start/get the ball rolling	It's time we start the ball rolling on the new project.
get your foot in the door	Janice took a position as an administrative assistant to get her foot in the door at the famous fashion company.
well-off / well-to-do	Lloyd comes from a well-to-do family. His friends often ask to borrow money from him.
pull your weight	Lisa had to work extra hard because a few members of the team weren't pulling their weight.
a gut feeling	I have a gut feeling that something bad is going to happen today.
if need be	If need be, we can take a taxi home.
in the middle of nowhere	Their car broke down in the middle of nowhere.
go with the flow	Jake didn't want to go to another bar, but everyone else did, so he went with the flow.
play your cards right	If Linda plays her cards right, she could be the department manager by next year.
follow in sb's footsteps	Bill chose to follow in his father's footsteps and become a dentist.
have your heart set on sth	Alan has his heart set on participating in the 2020 Olympics.
You can say that again!	A: I met your boss today. He's a real jerk. B: You can say that again!
I'm all ears	A: Doug, I've discovered the meaning of life. B: Really? I'm all ears.
small talk	After some small talk, the interview began.
put sth on hold	Greg had to put his weekend plans on hold and go into the office on Saturday for a few hours.
common ground	The two boys had some common ground: they both loved football.
politically (in)correct	Marcel told a politically incorrect joke at the company party. No one laughed.
have had it up to here	"I've had it up to here with this mess! Clean your room now!"
have your work cut out	If we want to finish this by Friday, then we've really got our work cut out for us.
get the picture	A: The fight was horrible. One man kept punching the other again and again and again-- B: OK. That's

	enough. I get the picture.
see eye to eye	Mike and his father don't see eye to eye on the issue of abortion.
call it a day	It's already 6 pm. Let's call it a day.
twist sb's arm	I really had to twist my sister's arm to get her to pick me up from the airport.
bring sth to light	The report brought some previously unknown facts to light about the causes of cancer.
be in the dark / keep sb in the dark	Most of the employees were kept in the dark about the merger until the last minute.
go up in smoke	After breaking his leg, Darryl's dream to play professional hockey went up in smoke.
go downhill	After his wife divorced him, Victor's life really went downhill.
at your fingertips	With the World Wide Web, people have a vast amount of information at their fingertips.
poke fun at	The kids poked fun at George because he was wearing his t-shirt backwards.
Easier said than done.	A: You should get a girlfriend who's beautiful AND kind. B: Easier said than done.
the bottom line	A: Doctor, what's the bottom line? B: If you don't quit smoking, you'll die within a year.
call the shots	The boss told Janet to call the shots while he was away.
know/learn sth by heart	Hank knows every Elvis song by heart.
get a move on	If we don't get a move on, we'll miss the bus.
miss the point	"You missed the point. The book was about the problems of capitalism, not how to make money."
hold/stand your ground	Although their enemy outnumbered them, the soldiers stood their ground.
be child's play	The tennis match was child's play for Ben.
be only a matter of time	The scientist said it's only a matter of time before a big earthquake hits California.
push your luck	A: Dad, can I have another ice cream cone? B: Don't push your luck, kid.
raise (a few) eyebrows	Francine's short skirt raised a few eyebrows.
a matter of opinion	The best restaurant in Europe is, of course, a matter of opinion.
be that as it may	A: Tyler is such a selfish guy. B: Be that as it may, he's your brother. You have to love him.
if/when push comes to shove	If push comes to shove, I'll be here to support you.
against your better judgement	Against his better judgement, Jim let his friend drive home drunk.

add insult to injury	To add insult to injury, Greg's wife left him for his best friend.
the last straw	When the boss told me to come in to work on Saturday, that was the last straw.
be up in the air	Jim's vacation plans were still up in the air.
not have the faintest/foggiest idea	I don't have the faintest idea where Wollongong is.
the icing on the cake	Paula enjoyed the concert, and getting to meet the artist backstage after the show was the icing on the cake.
get/jump/leap on the bandwagon	Janet doesn't normally watch hockey but she jumped on the bandwagon because her city's team was in the playoffs.
the fine/small print	My father reads the fine print on every contract he signs.
stuck/be in a rut	The singer was stuck in a rut. All of her recent songs sounded the same.
run-of-the-mill	Kate is a waitress at a run-of-the-mill bar and restaurant in London.
face the music	Tina knew that one day her parents would see her tattoo and then she'd have to face the music.
to keep sth/sb at bay	Bodyguards kept the reporters at bay while the movie stars entered the theatre.
be up in arms	People were up in arms [about/over] the government's plan to raise the retirement age.
bite your tongue	Jack bit his tongue while his manager criticized his performance.
leave a lot to be desired	The design of our office building leaves a lot to be desired.
off the beaten track	Mike and Mary had dinner at a quiet restaurant off the beaten track in Paris.
pick sb's brains	Mike is a marketing genius. People often invite him to lunch or dinner so they can pick his brains.
whet your appetite	The 30-second trailer was designed to whet people's appetites.
sour grapes	A: People with nice cars just want attention. B: That sounds like sour grapes because you can't afford one.
a blessing in disguise	Losing his job turned out to be a blessing in disguise. Afterwards, Roger found his dream job.
give sb the benefit of the doubt	I told the teacher that it wasn't me who broke the window. Thankfully, he gave me the benefit of the doubt.

jog sb's memory	Jeff said he couldn't remember the song's lyrics, but hearing the first few words jogged his memory.
foot the bill	George agreed to foot the bill for dinner.
have it in for sb	A: Why are you hiding from your brother? B: He has it in for me. He knows I lost his football.
be in the red	The company has been in the red since September.
get/catch wind of sth	Once the school principal caught wind of the problem, she called a teachers' meeting.
a rule of thumb	As a rule of thumb, I don't eat food that smells bad.
be on the same wavelength	The group members were all on the same wavelength, so they were able to finish their project quickly.
up to speed	After her holiday, it took Kate a few hours to get back up to speed on the recent developments in her company.
play devil's advocate	Although Jim is against the death penalty, he told his friend he was for it just to play devil's advocate.
bend/lean over backwards	Lisa bent over backwards to get her brother a job in her company, so she was surprised to learn he quit today.
pass the buck	The politician passed the buck onto someone else instead of accepting responsibility for the problem.
call sb's bluff	When Mike heard his friend say she knew all of the world's capitals, he called her bluff and asked her to name the capital of Mozambique.
have a chip on your shoulder	Tim has had a chip on his shoulder about businesswomen since he lost his job to a woman three years ago.
breathe down sb's neck	Jim found it hard to focus on his work with his boss breathing down his neck.
climb to the top of the career/corporate ladder	John was happy with his promotion to senior salesperson. He was slowly climbing the corporate ladder.
red tape	Mark's visa application was held up for six months because of red tape.
give sb free rein	When his father died, Mark was given free rein to do whatever he liked with the family business.
the be-all-and-end-all	Getting into Harvard Law School became the be-all-and-

	end-all of Tony's existence.
blow sth out of proportion	The media blew the story out of proportion.
take the plunge	Jerry has finally decided to take the plunge. Tomorrow he'll start looking for a full-time office job.
in a bind	Susan is really in a bind. She has two essays due tomorrow and she hasn't started either of them.
break the ice	At the start of the meeting, Mike tried to break the ice by telling a joke.
bury the hatchet	Susan and Mike agreed that it was time to bury the hatchet. They apologized and decided to be friends.

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