

IDIOMS AND PHRASES

An expression or phrase, often informal that has a meaning of its own that is not apparent from the meanings of its individual words is an IDIOM. For example "round the bend" is an idiom which means "mad." Thus a knowledge of these idioms is important otherwise a key idea may be missed out in a passage etc.

The following pages contain a list of the most commonly encountered idioms and their meanings. Go through this seriously and do revise it thoroughly at least once before the test.

“A”

1. **Abide by** - adhere to, conform to, agree to
Sentence- It is difficult to find people who abide by the law.
2. **Account for** - provide an explanation for
Sentence –She was called to account for her ridiculous behavior.
3. **Above board** - honest, fair, frank, upright
Sentence- You must keep the whole affair above board.
4. **All agog** - in a state of excitement
Sentence – Learning of his GMAT result, she was all agog.
5. **All and sundry** - everyone without exception
Sentence- Today's announcement concerns all and sundry.
6. **All intents and purposes** - practically, in actual practice
Sentence – There are minor differences between the two ideas but to all intense and purposes they both are the same.
7. **An axe to grind** - selfish motive
Sentence – She has no axe to grind; she just wants to help you.
8. **Animal spirits** - natural cheerfulness born of good health
Sentence- Her animal spirit a sight to watch.
9. **Answer a purpose** - to serve a purpose
Sentence- Keep this bag- It may answer a purpose.
10. **Answer for** - take the responsibility for
Sentence-Who is going to answers for this miss-happening?
11. **Apple of discord** - cause of quarrel, a bone of contention.
Sentence- Manisha's platinum ring proved to be an apple of discord.
12. **Apple of one's eye** - an object of love, the most valuable possession
Sentence- He is the apple of her mother's eye.
13. **Apple pie order** - in perfect order
Sentence- His desk is always in apple –pie order.
14. **Ask after** - inquire about one's condition or health
Sentence- He asked after his father.
15. **Ask for** - asked to be given, to run the risk of something negative
Sentence-By breaking her important glasses, she has really asked for it now.
16. **Ask out** - invite to a function (or an outing or a party)
Sentence- She will definitely ask him out one day.
17. **At all events** - positively, without failure
Sentence-The Pm assured the investors that reforms would continue at all events.
18. **At all hazards** –Inspite of risks
Sentence- The PM ordered for surgical strike at all hazard.

19. **At a loss** - to be puzzled

Sentence- A professor was at a loss when quizzed intelligently.

20. **At a low ebb** - in a state of decline

Sentence- He was at a low ebb after the operation.

21. **At a pinch** - in a difficulty

Sentence –At a pinch, we could get home on foot.

22. **At a stone's throw** - very near

Sentence – She lives only at a stone's throw from here.

23. **At a stretch** - continuously, without a break

Sentence –She can't work for more than two hours at a stretch.

24. **At an arm's length** - to keep aloof, to avoid, to keep at a distance

Sentence –He keeps his new neighbors at an arm's length.

25. **At any rate** - in any event, under any circumstances

Sentence – Manish told us that the King will come to see us at any rate.

26. **At home in** - to be strong, to be comfortable with a subject

Sentence – She was at home in Economics.

27. **At one's beck and call** - at one's disposal or command

Sentence –He always has plenty of people at her beck and call.

28. **At one's finger's tips or ends** - to be an expert at something

Sentence –She has the history of the firm at her finger tips.

29. **At par** - on level with, of a similar quality

Sentence – He enjoys cooking but his results are not at par with mine.

30. **At random** - aimlessly, without goals

Sentence –The police were stopping bikes at random and checking their brakes.

31. **At sea** - weak, perplexed

Sentence –Can I help you? You seems all at sea.

32. **At sixes and sevens** - in disorder, pell-mell

Sentence – Two days before the function, the whole house was at sixes and sevens.

33. **At stake** - in danger

Sentence – A great deal of money is at stake.

34. **At the bottom** - real cause

Sentence – You will definitely find her name at the bottom of all scams.

35. **At the eleventh hour** - at a late stage, at the last moment

Sentence – The girl child was saved from the kidnappers at the eleventh hour.

36. **At the mercy of** - in the power of

Sentence – A sailor is at the mercy of the weather.

37. **At the outset** - right in the beginning

Sentence –It's always good to clarify the rules at the outset.

38. **At the risk of** - incurring danger

Sentence – He is advancing credit to me at the risk of my credibility.

A.B.C. - elementary facts

Sentence –This book gives you the ABC of English.

39. **To be at daggers drawn with** - to be enemies, to be on bad terms

Sentence – They've been at daggers drawn for years.

40. **To be at one's wit's end** - to be in a fix or confusion, to be perplexed
Sentence – “I am at my wit's end with this complicated situation,” said Mr. Anurag.

41. **To be at large** - to be free and not under any control
Sentence –The marauding hyena is still at large.

42. **To add fuel to the fire** - to increase anger
Sentence –Prachi added fuel to the fire by saying that people should only talk about things they understand.

“B”

1. **Back out** - to withdraw, to break a promise
Sentence –The Company decided to back out of the construction work due to political pressures.

2. **Bad blood** - enmity, bad feelings
Sentence – There has been bad blood between the two countries for years.

3. **Bag and baggage** - completely, leaving behind nothing
Sentence –She threw him out of the house bad and baggage.

4. **Be off one's head** - to be mad, insane
Sentence –You must be off your head to go for a party on such a cold night.

5. **Bear a grudge** - to have bitter feelings towards someone
Sentence –He bears a grudge against his mother-in law.

6. **Bear in mind** - remember
Sentence – Bear in mind that we have to save some money for bad days.

7. **Bear up** - keep one's spirits under hostile conditions
Sentence –He is bearing up well after her shock.

8. **Bed of roses** - full of joys and pleasures
Sentence – Life is not a bed of roses.

9. **Bed of thorns** - full of sufferings
Sentence – This life has become bed of thorns after his father's death.

10. **Behind one's back** - in one's absence
Sentence – She sometimes bullies his sister behind his mother's back.

11. **Beside the mark** - irrelevant, not to the point
Sentence – Her guess was rather beside the mark.

12. **Between the devil and the deep sea** - to be in a fix or between two difficulties
Sentence – Faced with a choice between starving to death and emigrating, he was between the devil and the deep sea.

13. **Big gun** - an important figure
Sentence – The principal appears to run her branch but all the important decisions are made by the big guns herself the head office in Delhi.

14. **Bird's eye view** - a general view or study
Sentence –The officers had a bird's eye view of the MNCs operations.

15. **Black sheep** - a disgraceful person
Sentence –His brother has always been the black sheep of his family because he has been in prison several times.

16. **Blessing in disguise** - a certain thing which appears to be a curse in the beginning but proves to be a blessing in the end
Sentence –Her death in the accident was a blessing in disguise as she was slowly dying of cancer.

17. **Blow one's own trumpet** - to speak proudly of one's achievements
Sentence – She really isn't very clever but she is always blowing her own trumpet.

18. **Blow over** - to end, to extinguish/terminate

Sentence –The trouble will soon blow over.

19. **Blue blood** - noble blood, nobility of rank

Sentence –He may be poor but he has blue blood in their family.

20. **Boil down** - to reduce, to come down to the basic fact

Sentence –Her speech was a long one but it boiled down to a warning.

21. **Bolt from the blue** - a sudden shock or calamity

Sentence –Rahul's resignation was a bolt from the blue.

22. **Bone of contention** - a cause of quarrel

Sentence –Who should inherit their uncle's estate was bone of contention since 10 years.

23. **Bread and butter** - livelihood

Sentence –Writing Books is my bread and butter.

24. **Break down** - mental or nervous collapse of a person

Sentence –He broke down after his Grandfather's death.

25. **Break in** - enter with the aim of stealing

Sentence –The thief broke in to find the house empty.

26. **Break out** - appear suddenly; escape from prison

Sentence –They decided to break out at mid-night.

27. **Bring up** - to rear the children; to start a topic for discussion

Sentence –Mr. Shukla finally decided to bring up the issue of poverty before the minister.

28. **Buckle under** - to accept under pressure, to give in.

Sentence –Apparently, our country has so far not buckled under threats over the CTBT issue.

29. **Burning question** - an important question or topic of the day.

Sentence –The burning question in the company was who was to be the next.

30. **By far** - beyond all comparison

Sentence –This is the most economic public issue by far.

31. **By hook or by crook** - by all means, fair or foul

Sentence – I'll get him to marry me, by hook or by crook.

32. **By leaps and bounds** - rapidly, at a rapid pace

Sentence –Construction of the new Apartment is going ahead by leaps and bounds.

33. **By no means** - in no way

Sentence –I am by no means certain to lose.

34. **By virtue of** - on account of

Sentence –By virtue of the position she held, she was able to move about freely.

35. **To bank upon** - to depend, to rely

Sentence – He is banking upon my help to run the disco.

36. **To be born with a silver spoon in one's mouth** - born in prosperous circumstances

Sentence –What does she know about hardship – she was born with a silver spoon in her mouth.

37. **To be in the good books** - to be in favor with

Sentence – The student has been in the teaching's good books since he increased last year's marks.

38. **To be in the bad books** - to be in disfavor with

Sentence –Ever since she forgot about his birthday she has been in his bad books.

39. **To bear the brunt of** - to bear the consequences

Sentence –As she missed the sales target by a huge margin, she had to bear the brunt of the boss.

40. **To bear the palm** - to win reward

Sentence –We should not expect to bear the palm in case we fail.

41. **To beat about the bush** - to talk irrelevant

Sentence –Stop beating about a bush and tell me what he came for.

42. **To beat a retreat** - to retire, to move back

Sentence –The student beat a retreat when they saw the principal coming.

43. **To beat hollow** - to defeat completely

Sentence –The King was beaten hollow in the battle.

44. **To bell the cat** - to face a risk

Sentence –The question at last of who was to bell the cat.

45. **To bid fair** - likely to be

Sentence – He is bidding fair to be as smart as his father was.

46. **To bide one's time** - to wait for a favorable chance

Sentence –He is just bidding his time until I make a mistake.

47. **To break the ice** - to break the silence, to get over initial shyness

Sentence –let's break the ice by inviting our neighbours for dinner.

48. **To bring credit to** - to bring fame and honour

Sentence –your daughter will bring credit to you.

49. **To bring down the house** - to win general praise

Sentence –At the college function, his impersonation of the principal brought the house down.

50. **To bring to book** - to punish the guilty

Sentence –The robbers finally tracked down and brought to book.

51. **To burn one's fingers** - to get into trouble

Sentence –She got her fingers badly burned speculating in oil shares.

52. **To burn the candle at both ends** - to waste one's energy, time and money uselessly

Sentence –She went to late night shows and got up early at 5 to study – she was trying to burn the candle at both ends.

53. **To burn the mid-night oil** - to work very hard till late at night

Sentence – I got my MBA degree by burning the mid-night oil.

54. **To bury the hatchet** - to forget a quarrel, to make peace

Sentence –Finally, the two nations decided to bury the hatchet.

“C”

1. **A cat's paw** - to make somebody a tool

Sentence: She was just a cat's paw in the bitter power struggle.

2. **A chicken-hearted person** - a cowardly person

Sentence: The IIT B.Tech is definitely not for a chicken hearted person!

3. **A child's play** - something very easy

Sentence: Climbing that mountain child's play to the experienced mountaineer.

4. **A cock and bull story** - an imaginary or false story

Sentence: The tramp told a cock-and-bull story about the hidden treasure under a tree in the park.

5. **A cool head** - a calm judgment

Sentence: Those who can keep a cool head under every circumstances usually are the winners.

6. **A cry in the wilderness** - a useless cry

Sentence: The mortgage's appeals were a cry in the wilderness.

7. **Call on** - to pay a visit

Sentence: The CM called on the ailing minister.

8. **Capital punishment** - punishment of death

Sentence: The jury passed the verdict of capital punishment against him.

9. **Care about** - to feel for someone/something

Sentence: My neighbor cares a lot about me.

10. **Care for** - have respect or regard for someone

Sentence: She cares for her teacher.

11. **Cast down** - depressed, dejected

Sentence: The GD results made him feel cast down.

12. **Casting vote** - a vote which decides the issue when the voting is otherwise equal

Sentence: The minister's casting vote is bound to create a frenzy.

13. **Close shave** - a narrow escape

Sentence: That was a close shave -that bus nearly ran you over.

14. **Come of** - come from, descended from

Sentence: He has come of Austrian origins.

15. **Come off** - to be successful

Sentence: He has finally come off in life.

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16. **Come round** - become conscious; to visit; adopt an opinion

Sentence: The accident victim came round in the hospital.

17. **Come to hand** - receive

Sentence: I was happy when my M.Sc. degree came to my hand.

18. **Count on** - to believe in, rely on

Sentence: Since last seven days I have been counting on the parcel services to deliver my parcel.

19. **Count out** - to disregard

Sentence: If you are planning to loot the ATM, count me out.

20. **Crocodile tears** - false tears

Sentence: Most of the mourners at the minister's funeral shed crocodile tears.

21. **Cut and dried** - in a ready-made form

Sentence: His views on this issue are very cut and dried.

22. **To call a spade a spade** - to speak in plain terms, to speak out openly

Sentence: Many a times the physician avoid to call a spade a spade.

23. **To call into question** - to object to

Sentence: The association's ability to survive has been called into question.

24. **To carry fire and sword** - to cause destruction

Sentence: The bandits at the Chambal always carry fire & sword.

25. **To call for** - to demand

Sentence: I have already called for the new novels for our library.

26. **To carry off one's feet** - to be wild with excitement

Sentence: The CLAT results carried him off his feet.

27. **To carry the day** - to win, to succeed

Sentence: Varun's arguments carried the day for us.

28. **To cast a slur upon** - to bring a blot, to bring discredit
Sentence: Amit cast a slur on his parents by telling a lie.

29. **To cast a spell over** - fascinate or attract
Sentence: The beauty of Shimla will surely cast a spell over you.

30. **To cast into the shade** - to throw into obscure position
Sentence: Vijay's behaviour often casts his brother into the shade.

31. **To catch napping** - to take unawares
Sentence: The managers caught the staff napping during his surprise visit.

32. **To catch tartar** - to meet with fear
Sentence: He is proud of himself, one day he will catch a tarter.

33. **To change colour** - to turn pale with fear
Sentence: She changed colour when she saw the man whom she thought she had killed.

34. **To chew the cud** - to think deeply
Sentence: She sat chewing the cud for hours but never drew anything down.

35. **To clinch the issue** - to decide the matter
Sentence: Her arguments in the court finally clinched the issue.

36. **To come of age** - to be major, to be twenty one
Sentence: The player seems to have come of age.

37. **To come off with flying colours** - to succeed with credit
Sentence: He came off with flying colours in his Entrance exams.

38. **To come to a head** - to reach a crisis
Sentence: Issues came to a head when the dismissed manager refused to hand over the charge to the newly appointed authority.

39. **To come to a stand-still** - to come to a stop
Sentence: Company comes to a stand-still during the load shedding.

40. **To come to grief** - to suffer, to be ruined, to fail
Sentence: The project came to grief.

41. **To compare notes** - to discuss impressions or opinions
Sentence: He decided to compare the matter in the annual general meeting.

42. **To cool one's heels** - to wait for somebody patiently
Sentence: Although he arrived on time for the meeting, he was left cooling my heels for two hour.

43. **To cross one's mind** - to come into one's mind
Sentence: It did cross his mind that he might get lost but he never seriously thought he would.

44. **To cross swords** - to fight
Sentence: She try not to cross swords with her boss but he is the most unreasonable man.

45. **To cry for the moon** - to wish for something impossible
Sentence: Her crying for the moon by asking her to give up her claim to the property.

46. **To cry over spilt milk** - to waste time in vain, repent over lost opportunities
Sentence: You wouldn't have torn your pants if you had entered through the gate instead of trying to jump the fence but now there's no point in crying over spilt milk.

47. **To curry favour** - to seek to win favour by gifts or flattery
Sentence: He wants a rise in his pay, so he is trying to curry favour with the boss.

48. **To cut a sorry figure** - to feel humbled, to make oneself ridiculous, to produce a poor result
Sentence: The 1996 annual meeting cut a sorry figure.

49. **To cut no ice** - to have no effect

Sentence: This sort of flattery cuts no ice with me.

50. **To cut the Gordian knot** - to get over a difficulty by a bold strike

Sentence: The CM tried to cut the Gordian knot by dissolving the minister assembly.

“D”

1. **A dead letter** - no longer in use

Sentence: The problem of wages has become a dead letter today.

2. **A deadlock** - a position in which no progress can be made

Sentence: The negotiations reached a deadlock.

3. **A dog in the manger** - a selfish policy

Sentence: She is a real dog in the manager-even though she doesn't have a car she won't let anyone else use her garage.

4. **A drawn game or battle** - in which no party wins

Sentence: The game of boxing was a drawn game.

5. **A drug in the market** - a thing unsaleable due to its lack of demand

Sentence: The magazine capture has become a drug in the market.

6. **Dark horse** - a competition of unknown capabilities

Sentence: The fourth competitor was a dark horse.

7. **Dead of night** - in the middle of

Sentence: No one will see us leaving if we go in the dead of night.

8. **Dead shot** - a marksman whose aim never goes wrong

Sentence: The captain was a dead shot.

9. **Deal in** - to trade in something, to be busy with something

Sentence: Now a days he is dealing in shoes.

10. **Democle's sword** - an impending danger

Sentence: The report being prepared by our principal is the Democle's sword hanging over our heads.

11. **Die down** - reduce to zero slowly, to diminish and finish

Sentence: The fire will die down before the fire extinguisher comes.

12. **Die hard** - customs that require a long period to die out

Sentence: Only a die hard persons is likely to make it to the IITs.

13. **Dirt cheap** - very cheap

Sentence: She got that bike dirt cheap.

Do away with - reject, get rid of

Sentence: They did away with school uniform at that school years ago.

14. **Do one proud** - to give cause for feeling proud

Sentence: I always do them proud when they come to dinner.

15. **Do up** - put in better condition

Sentence: The mechanic promised him that he will do up his car.

16. **Down and out** - completely beaten

Sentence: Pakistan, considered down and out, staged a marvelous comeback.

17. **Draw in** - to pull into something

Sentence: The octopus will draw in its tentacles if disturbed.

18. **Dress down** - to scold, censure, rebuke

Sentence: His tutor gave him a dressing down for not learning the given chapter.

19. **Dutch courage** - fictitious courage induced somehow

Sentence: She needs some Dutch courage before asking him to marry her.

20. **To be dashed to the ground** - to fail

Sentence: Even after the long efforts to clear her hopes were dashed to the ground.

21. **To dance attendance upon**- to wait on somebody always

Sentence: He expects everyone to dance attendance upon.

22. **To dance to one's tune** - to carry out orders

Sentence: He makes everyone in the office dance to his tune.

23. **To decline with thanks** - to refuse or neglect

Sentence: He declined his boss' offer to go to U.S.A with thanks.

24. **To die in harness** - to die while working till death

Sentence: Jawaharlal Nehru died in harness.

25. **To do full justice** - to have one's fill, to do a thing thoroughly

Sentence: He did full justice to the painting he was doing.

26. **To drive home** - to lay emphasis on, to make something very clear

Sentence: The CEO drove home the need for employees to try to save the firm's money.

“E”

1. **At the eleventh hour** - at the last moment

Sentence: Most jobs get done at the eleventh hour.

2. **Eat into** - to destroy

Sentence: The fire ate into the whole block of flats.

3. **Eat one out of house and home** - to eat in a gluttonous manner

Sentence: His brother's huge dog is eating him out of house and home.

4. **Eat one's heart out** - to worry excessively

Sentence: He ate his heart out at the bash.

5. **Eat one's words** - to take back one's words

Sentence: I'll make him eat his words!

6. **Eat out of one's hand** - give no trouble

Sentence: The strict manager had the employees eating out of his hand.

7. **Enough and to spare** - in plenty

Sentence: Mr.Dey had made enough and to spare in his son's wedding.

8. **Every inch** - completely

Sentence: He is every inch a noble man.

9. **Eye for eye** - tit for tat

Sentence: He wants her to lose her job as she made him lose his – He believes in the principle of an eye for an eye.

10. **Eye wash** - means of deceit

Sentence: The incentive is an eye wash -the actual interest rate is too high.

11. **To eat humble pie** - to offer an humble apology

Sentence: You'll have to eat humble pie if she is proved right in the court.

12. **To eat one's words** - to go back on one's promise, to back out

Sentence: Financial contingencies forced her to eat her own words.

13. **To egg on** - to keep urging regarding something

Sentence: She egged on her friend to steal the ipad.

14. **To end in smoke** - to come to nothing

Sentence: All her dreams ended in smoke.

15. **To extend the hand of friendship** - to express a desire for friendship

Sentence: It is apparently impossible for Korea to extend a hand of friendship towards America.

“F”

1. **A fairhand** - a beautiful and clear hand

Sentence: The boss is on the lookout for a fair hand for his cart making unit.

2. **A fair weather friend** - a selfish friend

Sentence: As soon as she found herself in trouble over money, all her fair weather friends deserted her.

3. **A fatal disease** - a disease that ends in death

Sentence: AIDS is a fatal disease.

4. **A far cry** - a long way or distance

Sentence: That job is a far cry from the last one he had.

5. **A feather in one's cap** - another achievement to be proud of

Sentence: The prize he won was a feather in his cap.

6. **A fish out of water** - to be in an uncomfortable position

Sentence: The middle-aged man felt like a fish out of water at his son's party.

7. **A flying visit** - a hasty and brief visit

Sentence: The CM gave a flying visit to the plane mishap site.

8. **A fool's paradise** - state of joy based on false hopes

Sentence: Those who think the population situation will get better shortly are living in a fool's paradise.

9. **By fits and starts** - irregularly

Sentence: She did her work by fits and starts.

10. **Face to face** - personally

Sentence: We finally met face to face to discuss the problem.

11. **Fair play** - impartial treatment

Sentence: She's not involved in the contest – she's only here to see fair play.

12. **Fall flat** - collapse, flop, fail to generate interest

Sentence: His attempt at humour fell flat.

13. **Fall foul of** - to incur the disfavour of

Sentence: She fell foul of his manager by not doing the routine office work.

14. **Fall over one another** - to try and do something before others

Sentence: Both the clerks tried to fall over each other in order to influence the manager.

15. **Fall over oneself** - to be extremely enthusiastic to do something

Sentence: As soon as the film star appeared in the hotel the waiters fell over themselves.

16. **Fed up** - to be tired of, to be sick of

Sentence: I am fed up with all this work!

17. **Few and far between** - few and rare

Sentence: Instances of bravery in public life are few and far between.

18. **First and foremost** - important

Sentence: First and foremost I must thank you for your help.

19. **Flesh and blood** - human nature

Sentence: Savagery cannot be tolerated by flesh and blood.

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20. **Fly at** - attack

Sentence: The minister flew at the staffers.

Sentence: The minister flew at the staffers.

21. **Fly in the face of discretion** - foolishly take a course that is not logical

Sentence: By resigning from the job now, he will be flying in the face of discretion.

22. **Fly off at a tangent** - to start discussing something totally irrelevant

Sentence: It is difficult to have a sensible conversation with him, as he keeps flying off at a tangent.

23. **For good** - for ever

Sentence: He is not going to America for a holiday - he is emigrating for good.

24. **Foul play** - bad intentions

Sentence: An old man has been found dead and the police suspect foul play.

25. **From hand to mouth** - a miserable existence

Sentence: After his parent's death he lead a life from hand to mouth.

26. **To face the music** - to face trouble, to face consequences of one's actions

Sentence: She had to face the music as she was caught red handed taking the bribe.

27. **To fall out** - to fight

Sentence: I have fallen out with my sister.

28. **To fall through** - to collapse

Sentence: We had planned to go to London but the plans fell through.

29. **To fall to the ground** - to come to nothing

Sentence: She fell to the ground in her business.

30. **To fan the flames** - to increase excitement

Sentence: Cinema fanned the flames of her passionate youth.

31. **To feather one's nest** - to care for one's selfish interest

Sentence: All the time she has been a member of the committee she has been feathering her own nest.

32. **To feel at home** - to feel happy or at ease

Sentence: I always feel at home in France when I go there on holiday.

33. **To fight shy of** - to attempt to avoid a thing or person

Sentence: He fought shy of introducing her to his wife.

34. **To fish in troubled waters** - to take advantage of the troubles of others

Sentence: During the war, his firm had been quietly fishing in troubled waters by selling arms to both sides.

35. **To fizzle out** - failed out gradually

Sentence: Her enthusiasm gradually fizzled out as the rigorous training progressed.

36. **To flog a dead horse** - to waste one's energy and time

Sentence: Trying to revive old manners is akin to flogging a dead horse.

37. **To fly in the face of** - to insult

Sentence: He flew in the face of the team leader in the annual general meeting.

38. **To follow in the foot-steps of** - to follow somebody's example

Sentence: When she joined the police force she was following in her father's footsteps.

39. **To follow suit** - to follow example of

Sentence: I went to bed and he followed suit after a few minutes.

40. **To foot the bill** - to pay the bill

Sentence: Everyone enjoyed the wedding except Rahul's father, who was footing the bill.

“G”

1. **Gala day** - a day of rejoicings

Sentence: My best friend's wedding day was a gala day for me.

2. **Gift of the gab** - fluency of speech

Sentence: Politicians need to have the gift of the gab.

3. **Give and take** - the making of mutual concessions, quid pro quo

Sentence: There must be some give and take in discussions between management and trade unions.

4. **Give currency to** - to give wide publicity

Sentence: The media gave a currency to the Miss Universe show.

5. **Go in for** - to take up as an occupation

Sentence: My son is going in for Medicine.

6. **Go off the deep end** - to lose temper

Sentence: She really went off the deep end when she heard that he had not booked the tickets.

7. **Go the rounds** - be circulated

Sentence: Her first novel went the rounds for two year before she finally found a publisher for it.

8. **Grain of salt** - to believe only a part of statement

Sentence: The public took the leader's speech with a grain of salt.

9. **To be Greek** - unintelligible, not clear

Sentence: The doctors were discussing my illness but what they were talking was Greek to me.

10. **To be a good hand at** - to be expert

Sentence: He is a good hand at carpentry.

11. **To gain ground** - to progress

Sentence: Her views are now gaining ground rapidly.

12. **To get at the bottom of** - to find out the truth

Sentence: I'll get at the bottom of this matter even if it takes me a year!

13. **To get away with** - to do something without the fear of any repercussion

Sentence: She got away with the task of resigning from her old job.

14. **To get back at** - to retaliate

Sentence: She's likely to get back at him after her humiliating defeat at the hustings.

15. **To get down to brass tacks** - decide about the practical details

Sentence: Let's stop arguing about these things and get down to brass tacks.

16. **To get into a mess** - to get into muddle

Sentence: Due to her forged passports, she got into a terrible mess.

17. **To get into a scrap** - to be involved in a difficult situation

Sentence: He got into a scrap when he reached Dubai.

18. **To get into hot water** - to get into scrap, to get into trouble

Sentence: You will get into hot water if you come late again.

19. **To get on one's nerves** - to be a source of worry

Sentence: His behaviour really gets on my nerves.

20. **To get the better of** - to overpower, to defeat

Sentence: In the third round she began to get the better of her opponent.

21. **To get the sack** - to be dismissed

Sentence: You'll get the sack if you arrive at the office late.

22. **To get the upper hand** - to become stronger, to get the better position

Sentence: Samira managed to get the upper hand in the end.

23. **To get wind of** - to come to know of

Sentence: The police got the wind of a try to rob the bank, so they surrounded the building.

24. **To gird up one's loins** - to prepare oneself for a work

Sentence: Since the job had to be done, Parul girded up her loins and set to work.

25. **To give a bit or a piece of one's mind** - to rebuke; to scold

Sentence: If she does that again, he's going to give her a piece of his mind.

26. **To give a person the cold shoulder** - to show a person apathy

Sentence: All the neighbours gave him the cold shoulder because he ill-treated his children.

27. **To give a slip** - to escape

Sentence: The thief gave the policeman the slip.

28. **To give a wide berth to** - to avoid, to keep aloof from

Sentence: He gave a wide berth to his ex-wife.

29. **To give away** - to reveal, betray, disclose

Sentence: He gave away our hiding-place.

30. **To give chapter and verse** - to give full proof

Sentence: She wanted us to give her chapter and verse for our belief that her department spent too much.

31. **To give in** - to yield to pressure, to succumb

Sentence: The only way to win a battle is to keep fighting and never think about giving in.

32. **To give oneself airs** - to assume a superior attitude, to feel proud

Sentence: She gives herself too much airs.

33. **To give quarter to** - to have sympathy with

Sentence: Due to his ill health everyone has given him a quarter.

34. **To give the cold shoulder** - to receive in a cold and careless manner

Sentence: To avoid getting entangled in an argument, she cold shouldered the shareholder.

35. **To give way** - collapse, replace by

Sentence: The lengthy and old course has given way to a new and short one.

36. **To go against the grain** - against one's likings

Sentence: It goes against the grain for him to tell lies.

37. **To go all out for** - to make the maximum possible effort

Sentence: You'll have to go all out for the victory.

38. **To go by** - to judge something by

Sentence: He decided to go by his own views.

39. **To go easy** - not to use excessively

Sentence: He went easy with his Law studies.

40. **To go hand in hand** - to go together

Sentence: Poverty and crime go hand in hand.

41. **To go scot free** - to escape unpunished

Sentence: The older of the two girls was fined but the younger got off scot free.

42. **To go the whole hog** - to go to the fullest extent; to agree

Sentence: I've bought a new dress - He think He'll go the whole hog and buy pants and a hand bag.

43. **To go through fire and water** - to make every sacrifice

Sentence: He brought up a his child by going through fire and water.

44. **To go to dogs** - to be utterly ruined

Sentence: Her business has gone to the dogs due to his indifference.

45. **To go to the wall** - to be ruined to, be hard pressed

Sentence: Several large firms went to the wall in the past financial year.

46. **To go with the current** - to follow the general trend

Sentence: All the students decided to go with the current.

47. **To go without saying** - to be clear

Sentence: It goes without saying that I didn't lose.

48. **To go home to** - to appeal

Sentence: To win his confidence, you will have to go home to him.

49. **To grease the palm** - to bribe

Sentence: He greased the palms of the Tax officer to avoid being taxed.

“H”

1. **A hair breadth escape** - a narrow escape

Sentence: She had a hair breadth escape from the accident.

2. **A hard nut to crack** - a difficult problem, a stubborn person

Sentence: The Excise official was a hard nut to crack.

3. **Hair standing on end** - a sign of fear and surprise

Sentence: That film really made my hair stand on end.

4. **Hale and hearty** - very healthy and sound

Sentence: After coming back from London she has become hale and hearty.

5. **Hammer and tongs** - with all might

Sentence: They fought for the country hammer and tongs.

6. **Hand in gloves with** - on very intimate terms

Sentence: Some well-known political leader have been found to be hand in glove with gangsters.

7. **Hang by a thread** - to be in a miserable condition

Sentence: His life is hanging by a thread.

8. **Hang heavy** - difficult to pass

Sentence: The assignment is hanging heavy over my head.

9. **Happy go lucky** - careless, depending on good luck

Sentence: She is such a happy-go-lucky person.

10. **Hard and fast** - strict

Sentence: The rules of the college regarding the admissions are hard and fast.

11. **Hard of hearing** - somewhat deaf

Sentence: His grandfather is hard of hearing due to old age.

12. **Hard up** - in financial difficulty

Sentence: I am a bit hard up at the moment.

13. **Haunted house** - in which ghosts or spirits are supposed to live

Sentence: They say that the collector' sunglow is a haunted house.

14. **Heads and shoulders above others** - very superior

Sentence: Mohan thinks himself to be heads and shoulders above others.

15. **Heart and soul** - with full energy

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Sentence: I tried to settle the matter heart and soul.

16. **Heels of Achilles** - vulnerable point

Sentence: Manisha was a ruthless business woman but her uncritical love for her daughter was his Achilles heel.

17. **Helter-skelter** - pellmell, to run in confusion

Sentence: Seeing the lion he ran helter-skelter.

18. **Henpecked** - a husband under the control or thumb of his wife

Sentence: He never does anything without asking his wife Mojo is completely henpecked.

19. **Herculean task** - a work requiring great efforts

Sentence: Climbing the mountain was really a Herculean task.

20. **High spirits** - to be very happy

Sentence: She seem to be in high spirits today. What's the good news?

21. **High time** - proper time

Sentence: It is high time that this job was finished.

22. **Hobson's choice** - no choice at all

Sentence: Since this is the only car you can find for sale it's a case of Hobson's choice.

23. **Hold good** - to be valid

Sentence: Does that rule hold good in every case?

24. **Hold on** - to continue efforts

Sentence: Hold on to those shares, they'll appreciate soon!

25. **Hold out** - not yield

Sentence: She says she knows nothing about it but I think she's holding out on us.

26. **Hole and corner** - secret and underhand

Sentence: I hate hole and corner affairs.

27. **Horns of dilemma** - to be in a fix

Sentence: Her decision left him on the horns of dilemma as he could not decide whether to risk offending her or agree to something he disapproved of.

28. **Hue and cry** - to raise a great cry and or stir, to raise alarm

Sentence: There will be a great hue and cry about your decision.

29. **Hush money** - a bribe, price of silence

Sentence: The criminals gave the boy hush money when they realized that she had overheard their plans for the robbery.

30. **To be hoisted with one's petard** - to be killed with one's own sword

Sentence: The doctor who introduced parking restrictions to the office was hoist with his own petard when she was herself fined for parking wrongly.

31. **To hammer out** - to plan, to devise

Sentence: It was hammered out that the terrorist camp be attacked at midnight.

32. **To hang in the balance** - undecided

Sentence: Her fate was hanging in the balance till the final verdict was passed.

33. **To hang fire** - delayed

Sentence: Our plans for the new business are hanging fire at the moment.

34. **To harp on the same string or scheme** - to talk continuously of the same matter

Sentence: Don't harp on the same string - the consumer selection has changed.

35. **To have a bee in one's bonnet** - to take the remarks seriously

Sentence: He has a bee in his bonnet about going to America.

36. **To have a finger in every pie** - to interfere unnecessarily

Sentence: Before reforms, Australian business houses believed in having a finger in every pie.

37. **To have a windfall** - unexpected good fortune

Sentence: Getting the lottery draw on him name was a windfall for her.

38. **To have an old head on young shoulders** - ripe in wisdom but young in years

Sentence: She is just sixteen years old degree holder and thus an old head on young shoulders.

39. **To have one's hands full** - to be over busy

Sentence: She must have her hands full with those three children to look after.

40. **To have one's way** - to do one's own will

Sentence: That child always cries if she doesn't get his own way.

41. **To hit below the belt** - to be mean, to fight unfairly

Sentence: Offering the product below the cost price is like hitting the competitors below the belt.

42. **To hit the ceiling** - to give an outlet to anger

Sentence: The boss hit the ceiling when she came to know that the staff was on strike.

43. **To hit the nail on the head** - to do what is proper at a proper time

Sentence: She hit the nail on the head when you described him as being naive.

44. **To hold a brief** - to support by action or influence

Sentence: She expects her father to hold a brief for him.

45. **To hold a candle to** - to be equal to, to be comparable to the other

Sentence: Our new boss is not fit to hold a candle to the last one.

46. **To hope against hope** - to entertain hope when there is no hope

Sentence: His dog had been missing for five weeks but he was still hoping against hope that it would come back to him.

47. **To hold the baby** - be burdened with a task that should be shared by others too

Sentence: No sooner had she said that we would do the job than she went abroad, leaving me holding the baby.

48. **To hold one's own** - to maintain one's position boldly

Sentence: The others tried to prove that she was wrong but she managed to hold her own.

49. **To hold water** - to be valid

Sentence: His explanation doesn't hold water.

“|”

1. **An iron hand** - severe-hand

Sentence: Our country needs politicians willing to rule with an iron.

2. **An iron will** - strong determination

Sentence: He left the house with an iron will.

3. **An irony of fate** - happening of events contrary to natural expectations

Sentence: It was an irony of fate that she lost his parents at such a young age.

4. **In a nut-shell** - briefly, as a summary

Sentence: It would take 8 hours to describe exactly what happened but in a nutshell she tried to make us look silly and failed.

5. **In black and white** - in writing

Sentence: Would you put that down in black and white?

6. **In cold blood** - cruelly

Sentence: He killed them in cold blood.

7. **In full swing** - in great progress

Sentence: The work of building roads was in full swing.

8. **In the air** - wide-spread, prevalent

Sentence: The news the bank robbery is in the air.

9. **In the course of** - during

Sentence: We served him spicy food in the course of their dinner.

10. **In the face of** - in spite of

Sentence: She succeeded in the face of great difficulties.

11. **In the guise of** - in the dress of

Sentence: He tried to escape in the guise of a pathan.

12. **In the light of** - keeping in view

Sentence: The experiment has been abandoned in the light of modern discoveries.

13. **In the long run** - in the end

Sentence: I find it hard to save the money in the long run.

14. **In the nick of time** - just in time

Sentence: She arrived in the nick of time.

15. **In the teeth of** - in the face of

Sentence: They were walking in the teeth of a gale.

16. **In the twinkling of an eye** - in no time

Sentence: She arrived in the twinkling of an eye.

17. **In the wake of** - behind

Sentence: She made several valuable business bargaining in the wake of her appearance on television.

18. **In tune with** - in keeping with

Sentence: The sunny weather was in tune with her happy mood.

19. **In vogue** - to be in fashion

Sentence: This pattern of costumes dress is in vogue again.

20. **Ins and outs** - full details

Sentence: She alone knows all the ins and outs of this scheme.

21. **Iron out** - smoothen

Sentence: The inter-college meet was planned to iron out the differences between the students.

22. **To be in one's elements** - in one's proper sphere

Sentence: She is in her element when she is organizing something.

“J”

1. **Jack of all trades** - a person supposed to know everything partially

Sentence: She is jack of all trades as she can do the work from laying concrete to mending bikes.

2. **Jail bird** - a person who has been to jail many times

Sentence: Preet is not ashamed of anything bribe as he has become a jail bird.

3. **Jump at** - to accept immediately

Sentence: Manish jumped at the cakes which were offered to him.

4. **Jump down one's throat** - to reply in an angry manner

Sentence: She jumped down his throat before he had a chance to apologize.

5. **Jump on** - to scold severely

Sentence: She jumped on her son, who had told a lie.

6. **Jump to the conclusion** - to arrive at a conclusion soon

Sentence: Don't jump to conclusion on so little information, let your teacher explain everything to you.

“K”

1. **Keep to** - stick to, adhere to

Sentence: Keep to the standard formula given.

2. **Keep up with** - to keep pace with

Sentence: If you wish to keep up with the world, regular updation is a must.

3. **Kick up the dust** - to create disturbance

Sentence: Please do not kick up the dust in the meeting.

4. **Kith and kin** - relatives

Sentence: All her kith and kins gave her full support.

5. **To keep a good table** - to entertain

Sentence: She keeps a good table whenever the guests comes to her house.

6. **To keep a straight face** - to avoid smiling or laughing

Sentence: He kept a straight face all throughout the party.

7. **To keep abreast of** - to be familiar with

Sentence: I am keeping abreast of the latest developments.

8. **To keep body and soul together** - to remain alive

Sentence: She has to have a snack in the middle of the morning to keep body and soul together until lunch.

9. **To keep one's head** - to remain mentally calm in an emergency

Sentence: He kept her head when he found the flats were on fire.

10. **To keep one's head above water** - to tide over difficulty, to escape debt

Sentence: Praveen not making lot of money but he keeping his heads above water.

11. **To keep the ball rolling** - to maintain interest of a conversation

Sentence: Manish can be relied on to keep the ball rolling.

12. **To keep the powder dry** - to be ready for any work

Sentence: In the office he keeps the powder dry.

13. **To keep the wolf from the door** - to keep away, hunger and starvation

Sentence: The job which Ravi has will help him keep the wolf from the door.

14. **To keep up appearances** - to maintain outward show

Sentence: Riya hasn't much money but she buys expensive clothes in order to keep up appearances.

15. **To kick up a row** - to make a great noise

Sentence: When the flight was cancelled without prior notice, the passengers kicked up a row at the airport.

16. **To knock down** - to defeat

Sentence: She was very angry when she was knocked down in the competition.

17. **To knock off** - to reduce; stop working

Sentence: What time do you knock off in this factory?

“L”

1. **A left-handed compliment** - a false praise

Sentence: She said she liked me a lot which I thought was rather a left-handed compliment.

2. **At a low ebb** - on the decline

Sentence: He was at a low ebb after the operation.

3. **Labour of love** - work undertaken not for profit but for service

Sentence: It took him a long time to make his son's dress - but it was a real labour of love.

4. **Laughing stock** - an object of ridicule

Sentence: She always makes a laughing stock of herself by wearing absurd dresses.

5. **Lay off** - to remove from work

Sentence: The company has decided to lay off a half of its workforce.

6. **Leap in the dark** - a careless action

Sentence: Since she was quite unknown as an artist, employing her to sketch such an important scenery was rather a leap in the dark.

7. **Lend oneself to** - allow to be carried away

Sentence: You should not lend yourself to emotional blabbering.

8. **Let down** - to fail to keep promise

Sentence: Do come for the party, otherwise you will let us down before everybody.

9. **Let off** - released

Sentence: Let off the calf, the cow is searching for it.

10. **Let up** - to be sluggish

Sentence: Don't let up just when victory is in sight.

11. **Life and soul** - main figure

Sentence: She dances, sings and tells jokes with all boys - she's the life and soul of the party.

12. **Lion's share** - a major share

Sentence: When his money was divided, his elder son got the lion's share.

13. **Live up to** - to maintain certain standards

Sentence: Is it possible for us Indians to live up to the ideals?

Loaves and fishes - material comforts

Sentence: After lot of efforts he has gained loaves and fishes.

14. **Lock, stock and barrel** - with all belongings

Sentence: They moved the business lock, stock and barrel.

15. **Look blue** - to feel nervous or depressed

Sentence: She looked blue when she came to the office.

16. **Look down one's nose** - to regard others contemptuously

Sentence: His mother looks down her nose at his wife.

17. **Look forward to** - to expect with pleasure

Sentence: I am looking forward to seeing you.

18. **Look on** - watch carefully

Sentence: She promised that she will look on the new project.

Look out - take care

Sentence: He said he will look out for the new house.

19. **Look to** - to request for help

Sentence: The citizens look to their leaders in moments of crisis.

20. **Look up** - to verify

Sentence: Before signing any cheque, better look up the past record of the company.

21. **Look up to** - to admire something/someone

Sentence: We all look up to our leaders in crises.

22. **To lend an ear** - to listen to

Sentence: If you will lend an ear, I shall explain the arrangements.

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23. **To land on one's feet** - to be lucky

Sentence: She lost his job last year but she really landed on her feet as she got a better job.

24. **To laugh in one's sleeves** - to laugh in secret but not openly

Sentence: I had the feeling he was laughing in his sleeves at something I didn't understand.

25. **To lead a cat and dog life** - to lead a life of constant quarrelling

Sentence: Both the partners lead a dog and cat life.

26. **To lead a dog's life** - to lead a miserable life

Sentence: Manish leads a dog's life, living with his father - he won't let him do anything he disapproves of.

27. **To lead astray** - to misguide

Sentence: She lead the investigators astray by giving them wrong info regarding the murder.

28. **To leave in the lurch** - to leave in time of difficulty and trouble

Sentence: Soon after her company fired he went off and left her in the lurch.

29. **To leave no stone unturned** - to make all possible efforts

Sentence: The policeman left no stone unturned to find the thief.

30. **To let bygones be bygones** - to ignore the past

Sentence: She agreed to let bygones be bygones and not to refer to the incident again.

31. **To let off steam** - to react aggressively to release the tensions

Sentence: A noisy quarrel can be a way of letting off steam.

32. **To lie in wait for** - to wait for in concealment

Sentence: The family was lying in wait for Rajesh when he turned up.

33. **To live in glass-houses** - to be open to criticism

Sentence: Don't throw stones upon others if you live in glass houses.

34. **To lose head** - to lose balance of mind, to be proud

Sentence: He must apologize - he rather lost my head when he thought you had burned the only copy of my manuscript.

“M”

1. **A man of straw** - a man with no voice or will of his own

Sentence: Our politicians are men of straw.

2. **A mare's nest** - an unfounded rumour

Sentence: She is not a very reputable researcher - she is always discovering mare's nest.

3. **A moot point** - a point or question still open to discussion

Sentence: Whether Africa is truly making any progress whatsoever is a moot point given the hunger problem.

4. **Maiden speech** - a speech made for the first time

Sentence: She made a memorable maiden speech at the House of Lords.

5. **Man in the street** - an ordinary person

Sentence: The man in the street often has little interest in politics.

6. **Man of letters** - a scholar with literary tastes

Sentence: He is really a man of letters.

7. **Man of moment** - an important person

Sentence: Because of his diplomatic relations, he is often considered to be the man of the moment.

8. **Man of word** - a reliable person

Sentence: If she said she would come, she will come - she is a woman of word.

9. **Much ado about nothing** - to make fuss

Sentence: The government's claims that the service sectors in India were rapidly increases was described by a scribe as much ado about nothing.

10. **To make a clean sweep of** - to remove

Sentence: South Korea made a clean sweep of the series against Africa.

11. **To make a dash** - to go quickly

Sentence: I made a dash to the accident spot.

12. **To make a mark** - to distinguish oneself

Sentence: Rohan is beginning to make a mark as an actor.

13. **To make a mess of** - to bungle

Sentence: She made a mess of herself.

14. **To make a mountain of mole hill** - to exaggerate difficulties or trifles

Sentence: You don't have to assume that the child has had an accident just because he's late - you're always making mountains of mole hills.

15. **To make a point of** - to do something (certainly).

Sentence: I'll make a point of wishing her today.

16. **To make amends for** - to compensate for damage or injury

Sentence: He gave her a bouquet to make amends for his anger.

17. **To make an example of** - to punish someone to make it a warning to others

Sentence: The judge decided to make an example of the young thief and sent him to prison for four years.

18. **To make away with** - to carry off

Sentence: The thief made away with the suitcase full of currency.

19. **To make both ends meet** - to live within one's income

Sentence: The farmer and her five children found it very difficult to make both ends meet.

20. **To make do without** - to manage without something

Sentence: The break is over, so we'll have to make do without it today.

21. **To make free with** - to take liberty with

Sentence: Her husband suspected him of making free with the clerk in the office.

22. **To make hay while the sun shines** - to make the best use of the opportunity

Sentence: We have been given an unexpected leave tomorrow, so I think I'll make hay while the sun shines and get started on the cleaning.

23. **To make headway** - to progress slowly and steadily

Sentence: We are not making much headway with this new venture.

24. **To make light of** - to treat lightly, to attach no importance

Sentence: He had a bad habits but made light of his cuts and carried on.

25. **To make much of** - to make an issue of something trivial

Sentence: He made much of the fact that the salaries were paid way later than the due date.

26. **To make neither head nor tail of** - not to understand

Sentence: He can make neither head nor tail out of the topic.

27. **To make one's way** - to succeed, to prosper

Sentence: They made their way towards the front of the concert.

28. **To make the flesh creep** - to cause horror

Sentence: That Hollywood science fiction story really made my flesh creep.

29. **To make the heart bleed** - to be filled with sorrow or pity

Sentence: My heart really bleed for him when I heard she was now so poor she had to sell one of her five holiday homes.

30. **To make up** - to compensate

Sentence: Next month we'll try to make up for lost time.

31. **To make up one's mind** - to resolve

Sentence: She made up her mind to change the job.

32. **To make up with** - to compose one's differences

Sentence: Realizing her mistake, the husband finally made up with his wife.

33. **To make way** - to make room for others

Sentence: The crowd parted to make way for the fire brigade.

34. **Wide of the mark** - irrelevant

Sentence: Her answer was wide of the mark.

“N”

1. **A narrow escape** - to be saved with a great difficulty

Sentence: Thank God he had cancelled his ticket. - it was a narrow escape for him, because the train met with an accident that day.

2. **A necessary evil** - something which cannot be avoided

Sentence: He had to make a necessary evil of telling a lie for his daughter's benefit.

3. **Neck and neck** - side by side; even in a race or contest

Sentence: The top three students were obviously neck and neck for the first position.

4. **Nook and corner** - everywhere

Sentence: They searched for the autograph book in every nook and corner.

5. **Not worth the salt** - good for nothing

Sentence: If she can't even do that, she's not worth her salt.

6. **Now and again** - occasionally

Sentence: I see him at the party every now and again.

7. **Null and void** - invalid, of no effect

Sentence: The law has become null and void now.

8. **To nip in the bud** - to destroy a thing at the very beginning

Sentence: The army nipped the attack in the bud.

9. **To nurse a grudge** - to have jealousy or revenge

Sentence: She nurses a grudge against me - her words express that.

“O”

1. **Odds and ends** - different things, big and small

Sentence: There were various odds and ends lying about on the floor.

2. **Off hand** - without previous preparation

Sentence: He made an offhand proposal.

3. **Of no avail** - of no use

Sentence: This scheme is of no avail.

4. **Of one's own accord** - of one's own free will

Sentence: Russia conducted the N-tests of its own accord.

5. **On one's last legs** - about to fall

Sentence: The firm is on its last legs now.

6. **On the sly** - privately

Sentence: We think he's helping Rohan to the firm's stationery on the sly.

7. **On the spur of the moment** - without any deliberation, at once
Sentence: We decided to go to London on the spur of the moment.

8. **Order of the day** - something common or general
Sentence: Hats with lilies are the order of the day at fashionable parties this year.

9. **Out of pocket** - without money, short of
Sentence: His last trip has left him out of pocket.

10. **Out of the wood** - out of danger or difficulty
Sentence: They're not out of the woods yet by a long way.

11. **Once for all** - finally
Sentence: Once for all, I quit!

12. **Out of joint** - in disorder and confusion
Sentence: He has put all the issues out of joint.

13. **On the face of it** - apparently
Sentence: On the face of it, the task was quite easy but it actually turned out to be more difficult.

14. **On the ground of** - for
Sentence: He took a leave from the office on grounds of his weakness.

15. **To be on the look out for**-- to be in the search of
Sentence: She is on the look out for a private teacher for her daughter.

16. **To be on the right side of** - to be less than or below
Sentence: The secret of his popularity is that he has always managed to be on the right side of the leaders that be.

17. **To be on the verge of** - on the point of, about to
Sentence: She was on the verge of committing a crime when her mother reached there.

18. **To be on the wane** - to decline
Sentence: His reign is on the wane.

19. **To be on the wrong side of** - to be more than
Sentence: Having found himself on the wrong side of the deal, he meekly gave up.

“P”

1. **Pillar to post** - from one place of shelter to another
Sentence: He was driven from pillar to post in search of a new home.

2. **Point blank** - frankly
Sentence: You can discuss point blank with your troubles for the raise in income.

3. **Pros and cons** - arguments for and against
Sentence: Let's hear all the pros and cons before we came.

4. **To pay in the same coin** - to give tit for tat
Sentence: Competitive people always pay back in the same coin.

5. **To pay lip service** - sympathy, to pretend to be faithful
Sentence: He has stopped even paying lip-service to the rules & regulations.

6. **To pay off old scores** - to have revenge
Sentence: We have to pay off some old scores to him.

7. **To play ducks and drakes** - to spend lavishly
Sentence: The officials are not allowed to play ducks and drakes with the funds.

8. **To play fast and loose** - to say one thing and to do another (be inconsistent)
Sentence: The mother warned her daughter not to play fast and loose with her.

9. **To play into the hands of** - to be under the control of

Sentence: By accepting the favor she has played right into my hands.

10. **To play second fiddle** - to be in a subordinate position

Sentence: He hate playing the second fiddle so he started his own business.

11. **To play to the gallery** - to appeal to lower taste

Sentence: The Founder of the Company played to the gallery by firing only his lady staff member.

12. **To play truant** - to stay away from class

Sentence: The professor gave him a good lesson for playing truant.

13. **To plead guilty** - to confess one's crime

Sentence: At last the accused pleaded guilty.

14. **To pocket an insult** - to bear insult quietly

Sentence: He pocketed all the insults just for the sake of his family.

15. **To poison one's ears** - to prejudice

Sentence: If you keep listening in one party speaker speeches, you are likely to poison your ears.

16. **To poke one's nose** - to interfere with

Sentence: She is always poking her nose into my business deals.

17. **To pull a long face** - to look sad and worried

Sentence: He pulled a long face as he was not selected for the final round.

18. **To pull one's legs** - to make a fool of

Sentence: You haven't really got a call from oxford - he's only pulling your leg.

19. **To put a spoke in one's wheel** - to hinder one's progress

Sentence: It's time someone put a spoke in her wheel - she always seems to get what she wishes for.

20. **To mit heads together** - to consult

Sentence: We can buy a good product if we put our heads together.

21. **To put one's foot down** - to show determination

Sentence: He wanted to go to Spain but I put my foot down and refused to let him to

22. **To put the best foot forward** - to do one's best

Sentence: If you put your best foot forward you will rise against the crowd.

23. **To put the cart before the horse** - to do things in a wrong manner

Sentence: Isn't it rather putting the cart before the horse to renovate the house when you are planning to sell the house.

24. **A rainy day** - a time of difficulty or poverty

Sentence: I don't spend my whole salary - I put some in the bank for a rainy day.

25. **A red letter day** - auspicious day of rejoicing, lucky and important day

Sentence: The day I won a prize in writing competition was a real red letter day.

26. **A red rag to a bull** - highly irritating, a cause for anger

Sentence: Appreciating the liberal party in front of her is like a red rag to a bull.

27. **A rolling stone** - one who is never constant to one work or the other

Sentence: He changes his plans after every two minutes - she is a rolling stone.

28. **A rough diamond** - an illiterate but noble person

Sentence: The cast of a regional film is often a usually diamond.

29. **A royal road** - an easy way to achieve an end

Sentence: There is no royal road to the success.

30. **Rain or shine** - under all circumstances

Sentence: She goes for a jogging every evening, rain or shine.

31. **Red tapism** - official formalities causing excessive delays

Sentence: Red tapism has been the nemesis of many a project in India.

32. **Right hand man** - a very useful person on whom one can depend

Sentence: He couldn't do without Rohan - he is my right hand man.

33. **Rise from the ranks** - to rise from a humble position

Sentence: Today she is a manager but she has risen from the ranks.

34. **Root and branch** - completely, entirely

Sentence: The evil system of castism must be destroyed root and branch.

35. **Run over** - go over

Sentence: Don't let the pets out of the backyard or he'll get run over.

36. **Run to seed** - to become weak

Sentence: He has run to seed after her treatment.

37. **The rank and file** - the masses

Sentence: The rank and file in a company do not always agree with their heads.

38. **To rack one's brains** - to think hard

Sentence: She racked her brains at the issues.

39. **To read between the lines** - to read carefully

Sentence: He said he was all right but reading between the lines I could see he was exhausted.

40. **To rest on one's laurels** - to rest satisfied with the honours, already won

Sentence: He thinks it used to be a good college but it has been resting on its laurels for thirty years or so.

41. **To rest on one's oars** - to rest after hard work

Sentence: After the efforts of the last few days, I think I am entitled to rest on my oars for a day or two.

42. **To ride roughshod over** - to be inconsiderable or cruel

Sentence: She is so competitive that she rides roughshod over her classmate.

43. **To rise to the occasion** - to be found equal to the task

Sentence: I had never been asked to lead the task before but I rose to the occasion magnificently.

44. **To rub shoulders with** - to come in close touch with

Sentence: They rub shoulders with some very strange people in their job.

45. **To run amuck** - to go mad

Sentence: He ran amuck with regrets.

46. **To run down** - weak in health

Sentence: He has run down after a long illness.

47. **To run riot** - to wander without restraint

Sentence: When the professor left the room the students ran riot.

48. **To run the gauntlet** - to undergo severe criticism

Sentence: The official always has to run the gauntlet of the business unions.

“S”

1. **A sharp tongue** - a bitter tongue

Sentence: She could bear her friend's sharp tongue no longer.

2. **A sheet anchor** – the chief support

Sentence: The manager is the sheet anchor of the company.

3. **A square deal** – A fair bargain

Sentence: we always get a square deal in that market.

4. **A square meal** – full meal

Sentence: Poor children never seem to get a square meal.

5. **A square peg in a round hole** – a misfit

Sentence: The director of the film dismissed her because she was like a square peg in a round hole.

6. **A stepping stone** – source of success or help.

Sentence: This grooming course is a stepping stone towards the battle ahead.

7. **A stumbling block** – a great obstacle

Sentence: The proposition would be excellent but its base cost is the main stumbling block.

8. **By the skin of one's teeth** – very narrowly

Sentence: They escaped by the skin of their teeth.

9. **Scapegoat** - a person who is made to bear the blame of others

Sentence: He has become a scapegoat in the company.

10. **Scot free**- to go without punishment

Sentence: Rashid apparently went scot free.

11. **See through** – understand

Sentence: The team saw through him and his little plan.

12. **Shake off** – to get rid of

Sentence: By running very hard he managed to shake off his pursuers.

13. **Sing low** – to express one's views in an inconspicuous manner

Sentence: Due to the nature of his boss, he sang low throughout the project.

14. **Sink differences** – to forget/overlook differences

Sentence: For the sake of the firm they are going to sink their differences and work together.

15. **Smooth sailing** – no difficulty

Sentence: Prepare meticulously and you'll have a smooth sailing for the rest for your life.

16. **Sniff at** – to show derision for

Sentence: Having lives in the London for so long, it would be unfair of you to sniff at the way Indians live.

17. **Stand by** – to support

Sentence: He stood by his father throughout his trial.

18. **Sum and substance** – gist, purport

Sentence: The sum and substance of the meet was that the firm did not want to go in merge.

19. **Swelled head** – pride

Sentence: He got a swelled head when he got the top position in the firm by sitting aside his colleagues.

20. **To do a snow job** – to fool someone

Sentence: The shopkeeper did a snow job when he offered 40% discount for an absolute article.

21. **To sail in the same boat** – to be equally exposed

Sentence: India and Nepal are sailing in the same boat.

22. **To save one's skin** - to accept without loss

Sentence: When they were attacked by wild animals he somehow saved his skin by pretending to be dead.

23. **To set at naught** – to disregard

Sentence: I set her at naught after hearing her.

24. **To set Thames on fire** – to try to achieve an impossible distinction

Sentence: By projecting a 200% growth in sales he is trying to set Thames on fire.

25. **To show the white feather** - to show signs of cowardice

Sentence: She refused to join the rally and the others blamed her of showing the white feather.

26. **To sing the blues** – to exhibit a discouraged attitude

Sentence: When officials gave the proposal a negative appraisal, he began singing the blues.

27. **To sit pretty** – to be in a safe and comfortable

Sentence: They were sitting pretty after the judge's verdict in their favour!

28. **To sit up** – to take notice of

Sentence: That'll make them all sit up!

29. **To sow the wild oats** – to indulge in youthful follies

Sentence: Children should not waste time sowing their wild oats.

30. **To speak volumes** – to bear sufficient evidence for a against

Sentence: he said nothing but his face spoke volumes.

31. **To split hairs** – to go into minute details

Sentence: There's no need to split hairs about who committed crime – we both had a hand in it.

32. **To stand in good stead** – to be useful and serviceable

Sentence: Her knowledge of Spanish stood her in good stead when she lost her money in Spain.

33. **To stand up for** – to support

Sentence: I thanked them for standing up for my business ideas.

34. **To stare in the face** – to threaten

Sentence: The accumulated debt are staring the country in the face.

35. **To stick to one's guns** - to stand firm, to stick to one's principles

Sentence: None believed her business idea but she stuck to her guns.

36. **To strain every nerve** - to try one's best

Sentence: I strained every nerve to bring a them to conclusion.

To stretch a point - to bend the rules

Sentence: The students are allowed only one sports period a day but we might stretch a point today.

37. **To swallow the bait** - to fall an easy victim to temptations

Sentence: He swallowed the bait when he saw his favourite sweet in the plate.

“T”

1. **A thorn in the flesh** - to be a source of anger or displeasure

Sentence: His step father's words are a thorn in his flesh.

2. **A turncoat** - a person who changes opinions

Sentence: Her uncle is a turncoat.

3. **A turning point** - anything that brings change

Sentence: Joining corporate world was a turning point in her life.

4. **On tenterhooks** - in a state of suspense and anxiety

Sentence: Students were all on tenterhooks waiting for the result of the general election.

5. **Take ill** - fall ill; consider unfavorably

Sentence: He will take ill if you refuse his request.

6. **Take the cake** - to be the topmost

Sentence: This idiot really takes the cake.

7. **Tall talk** - boastful and exaggerated talk

Sentence: Her tall talk impresses no one.

8. **Thankless task** - a selfless work for which we cannot expect anything

Sentence: Feeding the poor and needy is always a thankless task.

9. **The thin edge of the wedge** - small beginning with bright future

Sentence: This order is only the thin end of the wedge -soon they'll command more and more.

10. **The three R's** - reading, writing and arithmetic

Sentence: It is often said that modern education spends less time on the three Rs.

11. **Through thick and thin** - under all circumstances

Sentence: We are friends through thick and thin.

12. **Tied to the apron string of** - to be dependent upon somebody

Sentence: She is still tied to her father's apron strings and is unable to earn for himself.

13. **To be on the right scent** - to be going in right direction

Sentence: He has finished his graduation and now he is doing MBA in english- he is on the right scent.

14. **To be taken aback** - to be extremely surprised

Sentence: He was taken aback when he saw the man whom he had heard was dead.

15. **To take a fancy to** - to like something

Sentence: He bought that shirt because his wife took a fancy to it.

16. **To take a leaf out of another's book** - to follow somebody's example

Sentence: It would be better if you take a leaf out of Lara's book and write that exam.

17. **To take a thing lying down** - to pocket an insult without a murmur

Sentence: His boss scolded him in front of everyone, which he took lying down.

18. **To take after** - to resemble in features

Sentence: She takes after her mother.

19. **To take an issue** - to quarrel

Sentence: They were warned from taking the issue again & again.

20. **To take away one's breath** - to surprise

Sentence: She nearly took away my breath when he landed up from China without prior info.

21. **To take by storm** - to conquer rapidly

Sentence: The drummer took the audience by storm.

22. **To take exception to** - to object

Sentence: The grandmother took exception to the rudeness of her children.

23. **To take French leave** - leave without permission

Sentence: The man took French leave because he wanted to see his mother.

24. **To take heart** - to pluck up courage

Sentence: The police took heart when they heard that reinforcements were on their way.

25. **To take off the hat to** - to show respect

Sentence: I always take off the hat to my elders.

26. **To take one's cue** - to take a hint

Sentence: You should take your cue and enter the stage.

27. **To take root** - to become firmly established

Sentence: The new business took root.

28. **To take stock of** - to observe and estimate

Sentence: She had no time to take stock of the situation.

29. **To take the bull by the horns** - to face a difficulty boldly

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Sentence: If you want to get over the situation you must take the bull by the horns.

30. **To take the lead** - to surge ahead in a competition

Sentence: India has taken a lead in the manufacturing sector.

31. **To take the plunge** - to take a bold decision

Sentence: She was hesitant about trying to learn a new language but finally decided to take the plunge.

32. **To take time by the forelock** - to act at once, to avoid delay

Sentence: Don't fight Take time by the forelock.

33. **To take to heart** - to feel

Sentence: One mustn't take his unkind remarks to heart.

34. **To take to heels** - to run away

Sentence: The burglar took to heels when the police arrived.

35. **To take to task** - to call to account, to scold, to require explanation

Sentence: Teacher took him to task for his rudeness to her parents.

36. **To take up the cudgels** - to defend, to fight for somebody's claims

Sentence: She's taken up the cudgels on behalf of her brother's right.

37. **To talk shop** - to discuss exclusively of one's business on profession

Sentence: They agreed not to talk shop at any party.

38. **To talk (someone) into** - persuade by talking

Sentence: She talked me into changing my house.

39. **To talk (someone) out of** - to discourage

Sentence: She tried to talk her husband out of divorce.

40. **To talk through a hat** - to exaggerate or bluff or make wild statement

Sentence: Don't believe what he says - she always talks through her hat.

41. **To tax one's patience** - to irritate

Sentence: They taxed my patience by not showing up even after planning.

42. **To tell upon** - to affect

Sentence: The pair of looking after her invalid father is obviously telling upon her.

43. **To thank one's stars** - to consider oneself fortunate

Sentence: Thanks to my stars, I was not in the plane which met had a crash.

44. **To the letter** - completely

Sentence: She followed her father's instructions to the letter.

45. **To the tune of** - to the amount of

Sentence: She received the bills to the tune of Rs 1000.

46. **To throw cold water on** - to discourage

Sentence: He often has good ideas but his boss throws cold water on all of them.

47. **To throw down the gauntlet** - to give an open challenge

Sentence: She threw down the gauntlet by calling her opponent a liar.

To throw mud at - to abuse, to vilify

Sentence: After the downfall of politician's people have been coming forward to throw mud at his works.

48. **To tide over** - to overcome

Sentence: The world bank promised a loan to the govt. of India to help it tide over the crisis.

49. **To tip off** - to give a secret hint

Sentence: She tipped me off about his arrival.

50. **To toe the line** - to follow another's opinion or partly under pressure

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Sentence: They aren't allowed to do as they like in that company-they make them toe the line.

51. **To turn a deaf ear to** - to refuse to listen to

Sentence: Everyone tried to persuade her not to leave the firm but she turned a deaf ear to their advice.

52. **To turn one's back on** - to refuse to help

Sentence: All her known turned their back on her when she went bankrupt.

53. **To turn one's head** - to be proud

Sentence: Hamilton's success at the race course has turned his head.

54. **To turn over a new leaf** - a change for the better

Sentence: Sam has been in prison several times but now he seems to have turned over a new leaf.

55. **To turn tail** - to withdraw cowardly

Sentence: He turned tail to the fight.

56. **To turn the corner** - to pass the critical stage

Sentence: Rohan was very ill but he's turned the corner now.

57. **To turn the tables on** - to reverse the situation

Sentence: I'll turn the tables on you one day and I will be the head.

58. **To turn turtle** - to upset, to capsize

Sentence: The boat turned turtle in the storm.

59. **Tooth and nail** - furiously, violently

Sentence: They argued tooth and nail.

60. **True to one's salt** - to be loyal to someone

Sentence: Everyone gave her big offers but she was true to her salt and thus rejected them all and continued with the same job.

61. **Twinkling of an eye** - very quickly

Sentence: She arrived in the twinkling of an eye.

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“U”

1. **An uphill task** - a difficult work

Sentence: Making him express his feelings was an uphill task.

2. **Under a cloud** - in disfavour or disgrace

Sentence: He wasn't fired from the organization but he certainly left under a cloud.

3. **Under lock and key** - carefully

Sentence: I always keep all sharp objects under lock and key so the kids can't get hold of them.

4. **Under the thumb of** - under the control of

Sentence: She is completely under the thumb of her best friend.

5. **Up and doing** - active

Sentence: He likes to be up and doing early when he has guests at home.

6. **Up one's sleeves** - something hidden but ready for use in reserve

Sentence: I am keeping this money up my sleeves for the time being.

7. **Up to the mark** - up to certain standard

Sentence: Her work hasn't been up to the mark for some time now.

8. **Ups and downs** - good and bad times

Sentence: We all have our ups and downs in life.

9. **Utopian scheme** - a visionary scheme, not practicable

Sentence: Your proposal has become an utopian scheme in today's time.

“V”

10. **A vexed question** - a question regarding which there has been much controversy but no solution has been arrived at

Sentence: We still have not solved the vexed question of who is responsible for the better meal of students.

11. **To vie with** - to compete with

Sentence: Our organization is going to vie with the Hyundai.

“W”

1. **A wet blanket** - kill joy, a dull fellow who spoils our joy

Sentence: Don't take him to the party - he's such a wet blanket.

2. **A white elephant** - an expensive burdensome but use less thing

Sentence: That enormous carpet your brother gave us has been nothing but a white elephant.

3. **A white lie** - a harmless lie

Sentence: She'd rather tell her mother a white lie than tell her the truth and upset her.

4. **A wild goose chase** - a foolish and useless search

Sentence: The false clue sent us north on a wild-goose chase, while the criminals escaped northwards.

5. **A wolf in a sheep's clothing** - a hypocrite, a deceiver

Sentence: He always suspected that his friends meek little wife was a wolf in sheep's clothing.

6. **To be within an ace of** - almost nearly

Sentence: She was within an ace of success.

7. **To be worth its weight in gold** - to be very precious

Sentence: This article is worth its weight in gold.

8. **To wash one's dirty linen in public** - to tell people about one's private matters

Sentence: If you contest this case, it will simply result in a lot of washing of dirty linen in public.

9. **To wash one's hands of** - to have no connection

Sentence: He told his team that if they wouldn't listen to his advice, he would wash his hands of the project.

10. **To weather the storm** - to come out safely through a difficulty

Sentence: Next two year will be very difficult for our firm but I think we will weather the storm.

11. **To while away** - to pass in amusement

Sentence: All students whiled away their vacations.

12. **To win laurels** - to achieve success or win fame

Sentence: She won laurels for her family by becoming an IAS.

13. **To win the palm** - to win a prize

Sentence: She won the palm in essay writing.

14. **To wind up** - to bring to an end

Sentence: He will wind up his work and go to live with his son in Australia.

15. **To worship the rising sun** - to respect the man who is rising in power

Sentence: Indian politics is all about worshipping the rising sun.

16. **Wait upon** - to serve

Sentence: They waited upon us happily when we came to their house for dinner at an odd hour.

17. **Walk over** - very easy victory

Sentence: In the cricket match the A team walked over the C team, as the players in C team were new.

18. **Wash out** - quite dull

Sentence: The contest was an entire wash out.

19. **Ways and means** - resources

Sentence: You must use any ways and means you can think of to get the work done.

20. **Wear and tear** - decrease in value due to constant use

Sentence: I can't pay you more than Rs. 1000 for this table, taking into consideration its wear and tear.

21. **Wheels within wheels** - complication

Sentence: It would seem as easy problem but there are unfortunately wheels within wheels.

22. **When all is said and done** - as a conclusion

Sentence: Now let us stop discussing the issue- when all is said and done.

23. **Wide of the mark** - beside the purpose

Sentence: Please stop discussing; you all are going wide of the mark.

24. **Willy-nilly** - somehow or the other

Sentence: I shall go and get the order willy-nilly.

25. **Windfall** - unexpected good fortune

Sentence: Rihan's coming to my house was a windfall for me.

26. **Wishful thinking** - belief founded on wishes rather than facts

Sentence: His belief that she will marry a poor man like him is only wishful thinking.

27. **With a grain of salt** - with some reservation, not at the face value of

Sentence: Please take this assessment with a grain of salt.

28. **With one accord** – unanimously, with one voice.

Sentence: With one accord everyone stood up to cheer Sachin.

29. **With open arms** - warmly and cordially

Sentence: in India we receive visitors with open arms.

30. **Within an ace of** - almost, to be nearly

Sentence: She was within an ace of success.

31. **Word of mouth** - a solemn promise

Sentence: The deal has been clinched only on the basis of word of mouth.