Burning the midnight oil. Sitting duck.

How do you like them apples? Hot potato.

Going to town. Cutting corners.

Last chicken in the shop.

Page-turner. Hanging on someone’s coattail.

Fishing in the wrong pond. Having an axe to grind.

Keep your shirt on! On the fence.

Holding the bag. Bottom falling out.

I Thought I Knew English, But I Didn’t Know That!

Reza Mashayekhi
WHAT OTHERS ARE SAYING

This book makes my job easier. I'll have much more to talk about in my classes. Your book is informative, and I look forward to using it. I encourage ESL students to read it and use it as a reference.

Rachael Chen, English teacher
Taipei, Taiwan

Absolutely brilliant! This book has helped me to expand my understanding of the English language and culture. As a foreigner myself and student of American Politics, I do recommend it to those wanting to expand their understanding of idioms and expressions in a frugal and easy-to-read composition.

Jorge L. Mendoza, Graduate student of American Politics
University of California, San Diego

Thank you for writing this book. So many times, perhaps out of laziness or habit, we cause stress and distrust in life by using an obscure phrase or expression, when we could just as easily use words with our intent clearly stated. I expect that your readers will benefit greatly by learning the true meaning behind so many common expressions we take for granted. In addition, I hope many readers with English as their primary language will take seriously the importance of clarity in thought and speech. As "texting" and other technological shortcuts begin to dominate our communications systems, this will become increasingly important. Congratulations upon completing a most daunting task, and thank you for allowing me to add my comments.

Dorothy Miller, Literary Consultant
San Diego, California

I like the way this book goes beyond the American culture and covers many other countries' sayings, anecdotes and idioms in a very clear and concise language. This way, Reza brings us to the realization that people of different cultures and backgrounds share more or less the same thoughts and idioms on the same subjects. Reza's extensive work is definitely appreciated by me, and being an ESL instructor, I can use it as a valuable guideline in the curriculum of my class.

Angie Moeen, ESL teacher
San Diego, California
I think this book—with its expressions, meanings, and examples—will be very helpful to any foreigner to get to know the English language, and I highly recommend it. It is a useful tool.

Cathy Peterson, Former English teacher in Malta and Iran
Oxnard, California

A practical, entertaining, and sometimes funny look at phrases we take for granted everyday ... This book would be useful for those new to these expressions or for anyone who uses these phrases without really thinking about them.

Alan J. Schretzmann
San Diego, California

This is a great book to keep in your home, office, or brief case. The book lists idioms alphabetically and provides examples for their use, as well as their origin when available. The descriptions are brief and easy-to-understand, and I wish my Japanese mother had had a copy of it when she was raising me! It is a perfect choice for a gift for people who love to learn idioms.

Amy Smith
San Diego, California

In one stop, your book has clarified the definition of many expressions I hear regularly, yet wasn't sure of their real meaning. I found the background and origin information to be very informative, clever, and, at times, very funny! As I deal with a number of foreigners in my line of work, I can see how this book could be very useful for a visitor from another country. It doesn't matter if you are "one taco short of a combination plate" or a "one-trick pony," you will enjoy this book!

Mark Sutton
San Diego, California

This is a useful book for foreigners trying to gain a better command of modern English. It is easy to understand, and I recommend that students learn several new phrases a day. By the end of a year, you will feel much more comfortable conversing with native speakers if you have an understanding of what these expressions mean and how they are used.

Karen Watanabe, Former ESL teacher in Tokyo and NYC
Ann Arbor, Michigan
English Idioms And Expressions For Foreigners, Like Me!

I Thought I Knew English, But I Didn't Know That!

Reza Mashayekhi

East To West Publications
San Diego, California
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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Reza Mashayekhi was born and reared in Tehran, Iran. He later attended the University of Michigan, where he received a degree in aerospace engineering.

Reza has always been interested in learning the intricacies of the English language. This is why, alongside of his engineering work, he has taught English to non-English speakers. He has done this because he has wanted to expand his knowledge of English, and he has a good explanation for his reasoning.

“When you want to learn a subject, you approach it from your own perspective,” he says. “Once you feel that you know enough about it, you typically move on to something else. When you teach a subject, however, you have to learn everything about it before you can satisfactorily answer all of the questions that are raised by the students.”

Reza also consults with non-English speakers to prepare them for their public speaking events, or to help with their day-to-day conversational skills, both in the form of workshops and on a one-on-one basis.

Being a non-native speaker of English, living and working in the U.S., Reza’s experience through the years and his interactions with his students and clients has led to the compilation of this book.
A lack of or incomplete communication has been one of the major causes of conflict and bloodshed throughout history. While addressing major world conflicts is not the goal here, this book is an effective tool for helping to accomplish better communication between at least some of the people. It can help to reduce the possibility of unwanted, and sometimes devastating, consequences.

In 1990, a Boeing 707, from Colombia, crashed in New York before it could reach the airport. The investigation into the crash determined that the pilot’s request for emergency landing had been misinterpreted. (See Appendix.) This miscommunication cost the lives of the 73 people who were on that aircraft.

In another tragic incident, in 1992, a foreign exchange student was accidentally shot to death when he inadvertently walked onto someone’s lawn. He apparently didn’t know what the homeowner meant when he yelled, “Freeze!” (See Dedication.)

These, of course, are extreme examples. Less serious incidents, however, are happening around us, all of the time. They have led to receiving lower grades at school, missing flights, losing business opportunities, having broken hearts, etc.

Although difficulties with idioms and expressions mainly involve non-English speakers and foreign students, people from different regions in English-speaking countries are not necessarily immune either. Even children, as they are growing up, encounter occasional surprises. Imagine the surprised look on a little child’s face upon hearing this for the first time: “You can’t play outside today; it’s raining cats and dogs!”
This book has been compiled with the hope of eliminating some of these misunderstandings. The entries in this book are not usually found in dictionaries. Some are not even idioms or expressions. They are simply words or phrases that are used in daily conversation.

Because we’re routinely using them, it’s easy to forget that common expressions—such as: He ended up with egg on his face, or He has a monkey on his back—sound somewhat strange, especially if it’s the first time you’re hearing them. So, if you’re talking to someone, and you get the feeling that you’re not getting through to them, maybe you should use one of our substitutes!

What has been compiled here will help non-English speakers, especially foreign students. It can also help native English speakers by showing them alternative ways of saying things, if necessary. Who knows, some parents may find it useful, too!

Reza Mashayekhi
San Diego, California
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I cannot thank them enough, but I will try. I’ll start with author and designer Dawn Farson, without whose encouragement this book would still be just another one of many ideas in my head, and author and music instructor Suellen Fast, without whose help and ideas it would still be just another file on my computer.

Wendy Appel, Manuel Arambul, Ana Arteaga, Chris Belton, Matt and Aase Bence, Melanie Dellas, John Descano, Marc Emmelmann, Bahram Fariba, Dragan Giurici, Ana Goebel, Tommy Gonzales, Melanie Heisey, Kanae Hirano, Dilek Koksal, Zvart Malkhassian, Kesha Palmer, Vicki Quarders, Elizabeth Rose, Ron Peterson, Tyson Simon, Jheri St. James, Crossby Vargas, and Yolande Witkin helped so much with ideas, research, explanations, and marketing.

April Nelson did the proofreading and editing of the entire book, which was no small job.

The interior layout and design was done by Scribe Freelance.

Alina Fairy did the beautiful job of cover design.

Azita Mousavi, of azitaart in San Diego, and Sarah Arakaki and Kacie Paik, both graduates of the University of California, San Diego, did the wonderful job of creating the illustrations.

Mojgan Mehran did the still photography.

Also, this is probably the place to mention author and publisher Dan Poynter, whose many publications showed me the way to publish this book without relying on a big publishing company. Dan’s publications have helped numerous authors to put their ideas into print.

Please see the Appendix for contact information for some of the above professionals.
ABOUT THE BOOK

Whether or not you are a native English speaker:
The information here will help you to better communicate with others. It doesn’t matter if you’re a student, teacher, tourist, businessman, employee, or an employer; this book will help.

You will find:

- Easy-to-understand meanings and equivalents for:
  Idioms.
  Phrases.
  Expressions.
  And some commonly used sentences.

- Typical examples showing how the expressions are used.

- The likely origins of some of these expressions.

- Illustrations that serve two purposes:
  1. They add some humor to an otherwise serious reference book; and
  2. They illustrate how some expressions could be misinterpreted by someone who is hearing them for the first time.

- And, finally, some interesting expressions and proverbs from other languages and cultures, which show how people of the world have more things in common than we tend to realize.

This book is not about English grammar. It’s about being able to communicate more effectively. Best of all, it’s good for all language levels.
If English is NOT your native language:

Use this book to better understand what you hear, read, or even say.

If English IS your native language:

Use this book to say things more clearly so that others will understand you better.

It’s important to know that some idioms and expressions may have different meanings under different circumstances. If what you see here does not satisfactorily explain what you’ve heard or read, please let us know.

Finally, we’ve tried to keep it clean. Obscene words are either excluded or only partially spelled.

Please let us know if we’ve missed anything.

***************

WARNING-DISCLAIMER

This book contains definitions and equivalents of commonly used phrases, idioms, and expressions of the English language and should be used as a general guide to facilitate communication. In order to make sure that the correct message is conveyed, if you’re dealing with sensitive issues, you should consult other sources to receive second or third opinions. The author and publisher of this book do not assume any liability or responsibility to any person or entity for any loss or damage caused, directly or indirectly, as a result of using the information presented in this book.
**CLUES TO USE!**

Please read this entire section at least once!

When you refer to *The List* of idioms, phrases, and expressions, please remember the following:

- **Also:** means:
  *The following idiom or expression has the same meaning, or is very similar, but is not necessarily included in this book.*

- **Also see:** means:
  *The following idiom or expression has the same meaning, or is very similar. It, too, is listed in this book.*

- **Compare to:** means:
  *The following idiom or expression has a somewhat different meaning. It, too, is listed in this book.*

- The *hidden meanings* of idioms, phrases, and expressions are provided in this book, but the more obvious (literal) meanings are not.
  
  **Example:** In defining *Coming from behind*, we don’t mention *Approaching from behind*.

  **Example:** In defining *Hot potato*, we don’t say *A potato that is hot*.

- The entries in *The List* have been tabulated alphabetically in their most common form.
  
  **Example:** If you’re looking for the meaning of: *It was raining cats and dogs*, you should look in *The List* for: *Raining cats and dogs*. (Of course, you may also look in *The Index* for one of the key words: *Rain, Raining, Cat, or Dog.*)

- Single words that are defined in dictionaries are not included here, unless they have unique applications.
Dedicated to the memory of

Yoshihiro Hattori

Yoshihiro Hattori was a Japanese foreign exchange student in the United States who lost his life due to an apparent misunderstanding over language.*

It seems that he did not know what a frightened and armed homeowner meant when he said “Freeze!”

A message from the Hattori family:

We hate the word "freeze," which was used when our son was shot to death. We desire the time when America will be safer, and the word "freeze" will disappear.

Masaichi and Mieko Hattori,
Yoshihiro's parents

*For more information about this tragedy, please visit:
http://www11.plala.or.jp/yoshic/index.html
http://www11.plala.or.jp/yoshic/y-frame-eng.html
The List

The more languages you know, the more human you are. *(Czech proverb.)*
However many languages you know, that much more of a human you are. *(Armenian proverb.)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The List</th>
<th>The more languages you know, the more human you are. <em>(Czech proverb.)</em></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.</td>
<td>Don’t risk it. Don’t risk losing what you have. Don’t be greedy. Be content with what you have. You know what you’ve got, but you don’t know what you’ll get.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A camel is a horse designed by a committee.</td>
<td>Decision making by a committee is not an efficient process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A comeback</td>
<td>A smart aleck kind of response. A good verbal rebuttal to an insult. A smart (and somewhat arrogant) kind of response. Also: Comeback line.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A day late, and a dollar short!</td>
<td>Too little, too late! It’s not enough. Besides, it’s too late!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A dollar a pop</td>
<td>A dollar each. Similarly, $65 a pop, five cents a pop, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A drop in the bucket</td>
<td>Insignificant. A very small amount. Q. <em>Did you get a raise?</em> A. <em>Yeah, but it’s a drop in the bucket. I want more!</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **A five-hundred-member-strong club** | A club with 500 members.  
(This is an example. Any organization and any number could be used.) |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| **A handful**                        | Difficult to handle.  
Not very easy to control or take care of. |
|                                      |   **Q. Would you please take care of my dog while I’m gone?**  
**A. No thanks! She’s a handful.** |
| **A hole in the head**               | Something that’s definitely not needed.  
When someone says: *I need it like I need a hole in the head,* they mean to say (with a lot of emphasis), *I don’t need it!* |
|                                      |   **Q. Do you want to buy my limousine? It’s very cheap.**  
**A. Right now, I need a limousine like I need a hole in the head!** |
| **A leg to stand on**                | A support.  
Supporting material.  
Available influence or power.  
When someone says: *He doesn’t have a leg to stand on,* they mean something like:  
*He doesn’t have enough data to support his theory.*  
*He doesn’t have an alibi to help him in his defense.* |
| **A little time in the desert**      | Time spent away from others.  
When someone says: *She needs a little time in the desert,* they mean something like:  
*We’ve seen too much of her. She should go away (disappear) for a while!* |
| **A place of one’s choosing**        | One decides where.  
A place that one chooses.  
Similarly, a time of one’s choosing, an activity of one’s choosing, etc. |
A pretty penny
A lot of money.  
Very expensive.

Buying a house in Tokyo costs a pretty penny.

Also:
A bundle.
A fortune.
A lot of dough.
An arm and a leg.

A question of something
About something.

A question of economics means:
About economics;
A matter of economics;
It has to do with economics; etc.

Similar:
A question of taste, ethics, freedom, etc.

A reach
A difficult thing.

When someone says: This is a reach for me, they mean something like: It's difficult for me to do something like this. I don't know if I can.

Also:
A stretch.

Gulls on land, storm at the sea. (Portuguese.)
Sea bird by solid ground, storm coming ahead. (Venezuelan.)

When things are not in their proper place, there may be trouble somewhere.

A shot in the arm
A boost.
A helpful deed.
Something that gives new energy to a person who is weary emotionally, mentally, physically, financially, etc.

Q. Did you get a year-end bonus?  
A. Yes, and what a shot in the arm it was! I was just about to file for bankruptcy, but now I don't have to.
A shot in the dark  This is about doing something with the hope that it will work. There is no way to predict whether or not it will be successful.

_We’re not having any success, so let’s talk to your dad. Maybe he can help us, maybe not. Anyway, it’s a shot in the dark._

A thing of the past  Obsolete. Dead and gone. Something that has no use any longer.

_Thanks to Craig Newmark and his Craigslist, paying a lot of money for a small ad in a local or global publication is now a thing of the past._

Flatter the sea, but stand on earth when you do so. (Greek.)

A ways off  In the distance.

A long way off  In the distant future.

When someone says: _A new entertainment system is a long way off_, they mean something like: _We won’t see a new entertainment system for a long time._

Q. _Is your brother ready to start all over again?_
A. _Considering the fact that he’s lost everything, he knows that having a normal life again is a long way off._

Above board  With honesty. Without tricks.

Q. _Do we really need to do exactly as the contract says?_
A. _Yes, I want everything to be above board!_

Above the fray  Being above commotion, confusion, etc. Having nothing to do with the usual things, especially bad things, corruption, etc.

Used with verbs such as stay, remain, rise, etc.

A. _The senator’s campaign manager is arguing with the reporters all of the time!_
B. _Yes. She lets the manager do the fighting, but she stays above the fray herself!_
| **Ace in the hole** | Big secret help.  
*Origin: Gambling* | A winning factor kept hidden.  
*She is our ace in the hole. With her at our side, I’m sure we’re going to win this thing. But keep it to yourself for now.*  
*The prosecutor had an ace in the hole: an eyewitness!*
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<tr>
<td><strong>Background:</strong></td>
<td>This may have its origin in the game of poker where you have an ace with the face down, until it’s time to show it.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **According to someone** | As someone says.  
Per someone’s statement.  
When someone says: *According to my brother, you’re not innocent*, they mean something like: *He says you’re not innocent.* |
| **Achilles heel** | A seemingly small, but actually crucial, weakness.  
A very significant weakness in an otherwise very strong person or idea, etc., that can result in complete failure |
| **Background:** | *Her biggest Achilles heel is the number of people who don’t think she is qualified to be their representative.*  
According to Greek mythology, Achilles was invulnerable all over his body except in the area of his heel. He died from an arrow that had been shot into his heel. |
| **Across the board** | All levels, all categories, all employees, etc.  
*Everybody’s happy as they raised salaries across the board.* |
| **Acting in a certain capacity** | Having certain responsibilities.  
Working in a certain capacity.  
*He’s acting in a professional capacity. He can’t just take off and go on a ski trip with you!* |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expression</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
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<tr>
<td>Acting somebody</td>
<td>Temporary somebody or something as in:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Acting something                 | *Acting vice president;*  
*Acting director of public relations;* etc.                                |
<p>|                                  | <em>I’m the acting chairman, not the chairman. I’m acting as the chairman. I’ll be temporarily performing the duties of the chairman until we have a permanent one!</em> |
| Tell me who your friends are, and I will tell you who you are! | <em>(Assyrian, Persian, Spanish, Turkish, etc.)</em> |
| Adding insult to injury          | Making things even worse.                                                |
|                                  | <em>I got a ticket for parking in the wrong place. Then, to add insult to injury, they towed my car while I was talking to the policeman!</em> |
|                                  | Also: Rubbing salt in the wound.                                         |
|                                  | Compare to: Kick in the teeth.                                           |
| Addressing something             | Not ignoring it.                                                         |
|                                  | Talking about it.                                                       |
|                                  | Taking care of it.                                                      |
|                                  | Paying attention to it.                                                 |
| Admission on one’s part          | A person admitting to something.                                        |
|                                  | *This is an admission on my part, means:                                 |
|                                  | <em>I’m admitting it;</em>                                                      |
|                                  | <em>I’m saying I did it;</em>                                                   |
| After the fact                   | After something has happened.                                            |
|                                  | <em>You’ve already signed the contract. You can’t change it after the fact!</em> |
|                                  | <em>Your honor, the evidence was planted at the scene after the fact!</em>      |
| Age before beauty                | Older person first, prettier person next.                                |
|                                  | This is used (mostly by older men) when younger or prettier women let older men do something first, or hold the door for them, etc. It is used as a humorous compliment. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Ahead of the curve</strong></th>
<th>Ahead of the others.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ain’t</strong></td>
<td>Isn’t.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Is not.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Aren’t.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Am not.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Are not.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ain’t that the truth!</strong></td>
<td>I really agree.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>That is the truth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>That is exactly the truth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Airhead</strong></td>
<td>Stupid.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Air head</strong></td>
<td>Ditzy, empty-headed, no brain.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>She’s an airhead. She can’t even spell her own name!</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- A lie has no legs. *(English.)*
- In lies, one has short legs. *(Croatian.)*
- Lies have short legs. *(Czech, German.)*
- Lies have short feet (or memory). *(Armenian.)*

*A lie cannot get too far; the truth will come out.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Airing one’s dirty laundry</strong></th>
<th>Exposing one’s private matters.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Also:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Airing one’s dirty laundry in public.</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>AKA a/k/a</strong></th>
<th>This is an abbreviation for:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Also Known As.</td>
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<td></td>
<td><em>Let me introduce you to Bill, a/k/a the Love Machine!</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Albatross around one’s neck</strong></th>
<th>A punishment. (In the old days.)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A burden that is difficult to get rid of.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A burden to remind the guilty person of his crime.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Also see: White elephant.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Alive and kicking</strong></th>
<th>Alive.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Healthy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Alive and healthy.</td>
</tr>
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</table>
All bets are off. Rules don’t apply any more. All agreements are canceled.

A. And one more thing, I also want a 20 percent raise every year.
B. In that case all bets are off! We’ve never talked about an automatic raise before.

Compare to: No holds barred.

The carpenter’s door is loose. (Arabic.)
The cobbler’s children go barefoot. (English.)

About those who take care of other people’s problems but neglect their own family.

All but

Almost, nearly all, as in:
The chairman’s visit was all but certain. I’m surprised he canceled it!

Everyone (or everything) except, as in:
All but the morons stayed home during the heavy snow.

All hands on deck

Everyone needs to help.
Everybody be ready (to get started).

We have so much to do. Come on everyone! All hands on deck!

Background:
This was originally a seaman’s term. When turbulent seas caused a boat or ship to be in danger, the captain would call All hands on deck! It is now a general term.

All out

Full force.
With all available resources.
All-out war, all-out effort, etc.

All talk and no action

This is said about people who:
Give lip service.
Make promises but never keep them.
Talk a lot, but don’t really do anything.

Continued on the next page.
All talk and no action

Continued from the previous page.

Q. What do you think of the new manager?
   Sounds like he’ll do a lot for us!
A. Don’t be so sure. I know him from before, and I know he’s all talk and no action!

All the same

Still.
However.
In spite of.
Regardless.
Nevertheless.

It was a long trip, but a nice one all the same.
She may have acted stupidly as they say, but she’s a gifted performer all the same.

Making no difference, as in:
Democrat, Republican, they’re all the same.
If it’s all the same to you, I’d rather stay home.

From a thorn a rose emerges and from a rose a thorn. (Greek.)
Children don’t necessarily take after their parents.

All too easy

Too easy.
Very easy.

All walks of life

When you say People from all walks of life were in attendance, it means:
All kinds of people were there.
All professions and classes were represented.

All’s well that ends well.

If it ends well, it’s okay.
The important thing is that it ends well, no matter what else happens.

Along party lines

Political

In line (in agreement) with one’s own party, even if it means going against the will of the people who elected them.

When you say: The senators are voting along party lines, you mean:
They are voting for their own party’s agenda; Democrats for Democrats, and Republicans for Republicans.
Along the lines of

Something like that.

When someone says: *Sohaila said something along the lines of quitting school*, they mean:

*She said she doesn't want to go to school anymore, or something like that.*

Also: *Something to that effect.*

America’s Finest City

This is a nickname for the city of San Diego, although not many people in other cities agree with it!

A pear will fall to its root. (*Turkish.*)
A splinter doesn’t jump far from a log. (*Serbian.*)
The pear falls exactly underneath the pear tree. (*Albanian.*)
The apple doesn't fall far from the tree. (*English, Greek, Slovak.*)

Children take after their parents.

Amounting to something

Becoming successful, having a meaningful life:

Q. *Dad, do you think I’ll ever amount to anything?*

A. *Of course, son. You’re smart, you work hard, and you have a good teacher, me!*

Being the same as, or similar to, something:

A. *I give up. I’m not going to work on this project anymore.*

B. *If you ask me, don’t stop. In my book, quitting amounts to failure!*

A. *They say they want to train us, but they are really threatening us.*

B. *That’s right. This “training” session is really amounting to intimidation!*

And counting

Still going on.

There will be more.

*Layoffs total 45,000 and counting.*

And something to match

If someone says: *She has beautiful eyes and a smile to match,* they mean something like:

*Her smile is equally as beautiful as her eyes; Her smile matches her beautiful eyes; etc.*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>And then some</td>
<td>And even more.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Even more than that.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q.</td>
<td>This lady was nice to offer us food. Did you pay her for the food?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.</td>
<td>I’ve been very generous to her. I’ve paid for the food, and then some!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animal magnetism</td>
<td>Sex appeal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Attractiveness in a rough way.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any one’s guess</td>
<td>No one knows.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any body’s guess</td>
<td>No one knows for sure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>When someone says: The answer is anybody’s guess, they mean: No one knows the answer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>When someone says: What she’ll do is anyone’s guess, they mean: We don’t know what she’ll do.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Also: Your guess is as good as mine!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A woman and the sea</td>
<td>A woman and the sea are the same in anger. (Greek.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anyway you cut it</td>
<td>Anyway you do it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anyway you slice it</td>
<td>Anyway you look at it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>For a little humor:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Anyway you look at it you lose. Ask Mrs. Robinson!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appealing to people</td>
<td>Attractive to people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Something that people like.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Related:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>If something appeals to you, you like it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you cool?</td>
<td>Are you okay?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Is everything okay?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Have you chilled out? (After an argument.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you with me?</td>
<td>Do you understand?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Another meaning:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Do you agree with me?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Related: You’re either with us, or against us!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
English Idioms and Expressions for Foreigners, Like Me!

**Around-the-clock**  
Continuously.

**Round-the-clock**  
Twenty four hours a day.

*We’ve been working around-the-clock to meet our deadline, I mean ALL of the time!*

Also:

24/7.

Twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week.

---

If wishes were horses, beggars would ride. (*English.*)  
If they had planted “if,” a tree would have grown in its place.  
(*Persian.*)  
If the word *if* wasn’t there, my father would be a millionaire.  
(*German.*)  
If children’s prayers were answered, there wouldn’t be a single teacher alive. (*Persian.*)

Various plays with the word “if.”

---

**As God is my witness!**  
I swear to God!  
God is my witness.  
God knows I’m telling the truth.  

*As God is my witness, I’ll do my best to defend you!*

---

**As good as dead**  
Dying.  
Not active.  
Will be dead.  
Heading in the direction of being dead.

If you say: *He’s as good as dead,* it could mean any of the following:  

*He’s dying;*  
*He’s not active;*  
*He’ll die very soon;*  
*He will be killed very soon;*  
*If I see him again, he’ll be in trouble,* etc.

Note: Also applies to plans, projects, etc.

---

**As luck would have it**  
As it turned out.  
The way it happened.  

*As luck would have it, I had left my wallet at home. So I couldn’t buy the jacket!*
- Have you seen Joey? I’m late for my meeting, and I need my report.
- He must be around. I’ve told him to burn a few copies of the report for you.

For a definition, see:

- Burning a copy
As much as the next person (guy)  The usual amount.  The same amount.  The normal amount.  

Don’t get me wrong. I love watching political debates as much as the next guy. I just don’t like this one.

As of some time  Depending on how it is used, As of some time means “until,” or “starting.”

As of yesterday, we had not received a notice! (Until yesterday.)
As of yesterday, we’re not friends anymore! (Starting yesterday.)

As sure as Bob’s your uncle  Sure.
You can be one hundred percent sure.

Q. Are you sure this is going to work?  
A. I’ve done it before, and, as sure as Bob’s your uncle, it’ll work for you, too.

Also: There you have it!  
Compare to: Bob’s your uncle.

As we speak  Right now.
Even as we speak  At this very moment.

When you pick up the stick, the robber dog knows. (Armenian.)
When you pick up the stick, the stealing cat gets alert. (Persian.)
When they shouted, “Pumpkin thief,” he touched his shoulder to check. (Indian.)

Guilty people are always on guard, looking over their shoulder.

As well  Too.
As well as  And.
Also.
In addition to.

I’ll buy some food as well as some gas.
I’ll buy some food, and some gas as well.

ASAP  This is an abbreviation for:

As Soon As Possible.

We need some help ASAP!
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The List</th>
<th>31</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Asleep at the wheel** | Missing the problem signals.  
| | Not doing one’s job (properly).  
| **Asleep at the switch** | Not being aware of what’s going on.  
| **Q.** We’re about to go bankrupt. Why isn’t the management doing anything?  
| **A.** They must have fallen asleep at the wheel! |
| Avoid those who constantly praise you. (Swahili.)  
| He who knows to praise sure knows to slander. (Albanian.)  
| Do not believe that a person who lies for you will not also lie to you. (Arabic.)  
| One who tells you about someone else’s business will tell someone else about yours. (Swahili.) |
| **Asset, liability** | Asset is a positive point, an advantage, a good thing to have, as in:  
| | Welcome to our company. Having you on our team is a great asset!  
| | Liability is a negative point, a disadvantage, a bad thing to have, as in:  
| | When someone says: He’ll be a liability for us, they mean:  
| | His presence will hurt us more than it will help. If we keep him, it won’t be good for our image. |
| **Assuming you are right** | If you’re right.  
| | Let’s say you’re right.  
| | Supposing you’re right.  
| | Similarly: Assuming it will rain; assuming we still have time; etc. |
| **At a moment’s notice** | Quickly.  
| | Very fast.  
| | At any time.  
| | Don’t worry! Just call me and I’ll be there at a moment’s notice.  
| | Firemen need to be ready to respond to an alarm at a moment’s notice. |
**At arm’s length**

*Origin: Legal*

At a distance.

When someone says: *He’s been allowed to manage the project at arm’s length,* they mean: *His control over the project is limited.*

In law or real estate:

*At arm’s length* refers to a transaction between parties who are not related to each other.

Also used in terms of relationships:

*She’s been hurt so many times, she is keeping him at arm’s length emotionally.*

**At best, at worst**

The best and the worst possibilities expected in a certain situation.

If someone says: *At best they won’t say hello, and at worst they’ll call the police,* it means something like: *The best thing they might do to me is not say hello, and the worst thing is they’ll call the police to kick me off the field!*

**The day you decide to leave your house naked is the day you run into your in-laws. (Swahili.)**

**At each other’s throats**

Verbally fighting.

Arguing very angrily.

A. *I thought they were going to kill each other.*

B. *I know, they were really going at each other’s throats!*

Similar:

*Duking it out.*

Going at each other. Letting each other have it.

**At large**

As a whole, as in:

*The city at large.*

Not specific to a certain area, as in:

*The representative at large.*

Free, not in captivity, as in:

*The killer is no longer at large. He has been arrested.*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expression</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>At odds with</td>
<td>In disagreement with.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At sea</td>
<td>Confused.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All at sea</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. I don't really think he knows what he's doing.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. No, he doesn't. Let's face it, he's at sea again!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Similar: At a loss.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Also see: Out to lunch.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out of sight, out of mind. (English.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out of the eye, out of the heart. (Dutch.)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Absence makes the heart forget. (Parts of Africa.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He who leaves the eye will leave the heart. (Persian.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eyes that don't see each other, forget about each other. (Greek.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If people don't see you, they'll forget you.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At someone’s expense</td>
<td>When someone says: They're vacationing at DeWitt’s expense, they mean:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>DeWitt is paying for it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>When someone says: They’re laughing at Hamid’s expense, or at the expense of his feelings, they mean:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>They’re making fun of Hamid.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>When someone says: We’re publishing books faster at quality’s expense, or at the expense of quality, they mean something like:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>We’re publishing more books, but with lower quality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At someone’s mercy</td>
<td>When someone says: We’re at April’s mercy, they mean something like:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At the mercy of someone</td>
<td>It’s April’s decision;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>She’ll call if she wants to;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>We’ll have to do what she says;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What we do, or what will be done to us, is all up to her; etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
At the end of the day
In the end.
When it's all over.
All things considered.
Considering everything.

At the end of the day YOU have to decide what you want to do with your life, not me!

Also:
When it's all said and done.

At the risk of
Taking the risk of.
Running the risk of.

If you say: At the risk of offending you, here's what I think, you probably mean:
I hope you don't mind, but I think you're wrong; I may be offending you, but I think you're a moron; I hope I'm not upsetting you, but I think you're crazy; etc.

At the top of one's voice
Very loud.
The loudest voice with which one can talk or sing.

At the top of one's lungs

Q. How's your neighbor doing? Are you glad you're living next door to an opera singer?
A. No, I'm going crazy. She's always singing at the top of her lungs!

A doctor's mistake is God's writing. (Greek.)

AWOL
This is an abbreviation for:
**Absent WithOut Leave.**

When someone says: He's AWOL, it could mean any of the following:
No one knows where he is.
He has left without permission.
He's absent without approval to leave.

Note:
This is a military term, but it is being used outside the military as well.
| Back in the day | A long time ago. 
Years, maybe decades or generations, ago. 
Q. *Isn’t it funny that your mom still sends handwritten letters to her friends?* 
A. Yeah. Actually, *back in the day*, that was the only way to communicate! |
| Back of the barn | This has a sexual connotation. 
When you say: *They’ve been to the back of the barn*, you mean something like: 
*They’re more than friends;* 
*They know each other very well;* 
*They have (had) a sexual relationship;* etc. |
| Back on one’s feet | Back to one’s normal condition with respect to health, finances, etc. 
*I’ve been down with the flu, but I hope to get back on my feet soon.* 
*He lost everything due to the economy, but he hopes to find a job and get back on his feet again.* |
| You look prettier when you're quiet. (Spanish.) |
| Don't speak if you can’t improve on the silence. (Spanish.) |
| If talk is made of silver, then silence is made of gold. (Arabic.) |
| Back story | Not the main story. 
The story in the background. 
*I’d like to know more about Batman’s back story. I already know what he does. I want to know what made him who he is.* |
| Back-story | |
| Back to square one | Starting over again. 
Re-doing everything from the beginning. 
A. *Hideko, the test results don’t look good!* 
B. *Well, I guess it’s back to square one, right?* 
Also: 
Starting from scratch. |
Backhanded compliment
An insult.

An insult that sounds like a compliment at first.

*Your wife is so charming that I don’t want to believe what people say about her!*

Backhanding
Hitting with the back of the hand.

Returning a shot with the back of the hand.

*After he made a joke at her expense, she playfully backhanded him on the arm.*

Backing down
Yielding after being aggressive at first.

Changing one’s position or decision under pressure.

Backseat driver
Someone who complains about how badly other people do things, but won’t do anything about it himself, or herself, similar to a person in a car who’s not driving but corrects the driver and/or tells the driver what to do.

Backstabber
A person who:

Back stabber
Attacks you unfairly behind your back.

Hurts you when you’re not expecting it.

Back-stabber
Befriends you but betrays you to others behind your back.

Assures you of his or her support, but does not support you when you need it.

Bad blood
Friction.

Hostility.

Bad history.

Q. *Why can’t those two get married?*
A. *There’s bad blood between their families. They won’t let them.*

Bad news
When you say: *Stay away from her, she’s bad news,* you might mean one of the following:

*She does drugs;*

*She’s a bad influence;*

*She writes bad checks;*

*She regularly misses school;*

*She might get you in trouble;* etc.
| **Bad seed** | Really bad. |
| **Bad to the bone** | Completely bad, pure evil. Not just bad on the surface but all the way through to the bone. |
| **Bailing (out)** | Quitting. *After only one week on the job, he bailed (out).* |
| **Bailing (out) on someone** | Leaving them. Abandoning them. *My wife has bailed out on me!* |
| **Bailing someone out** | Helping, as in: *I’m tired of bailing you out of your problems.* *Next time, call someone else!* Related: Helping someone out of jail by paying the bail money. |
| **Bait and switch** | Telling a lie at first, and changing one’s word later, in order to cheat someone. *They’re using a bait-and-switch strategy. They get you interested in their plan with a low interest rate, but tell you about the hidden fees later, at which time they encourage you to accept their plan with a higher interest rate!* |
| **Balancing act** | Multi-tasking. Doing, or trying to do, more than one thing at a time. 

A. The government needs to do a lot about health care, jobs, the war, recession, etc. 
B. They will need to do a real balancing act if they don’t want to fail. |
| **Ball is in your court.** | It’s up to you. It’s your turn. It’s your decision. *Origin: Sports* |
### Bang for one’s buck

Value for one’s money.

When someone says: **You get the most bang for your buck here,** they mean something like:

- Our prices are the lowest;
- Here you get more for what you pay;
- Your dollar goes a long way in this store; etc.

### Bar none

No exceptions.

When someone says: **This restaurant has the best steak in town, bar none,** they mean something like: **It has the best steak in town without any exceptions.**

### Bare knuckle fight

A fight with no rules.

### Bare knuckle race

A fight where anything is allowed.

*Sports*

Also see:
- All bets are off.
- No holds barred.

### Bargaining table

Negotiation.

A place for negotiations.

When someone says: **They’re still at the bargaining table,** they mean something like:

- There’s still hope;
- They’re still talking;
- They haven’t stopped negotiating;
- They haven’t come to a decision yet; etc.

### Bases in baseball

*Sports*

First, second, and third base refer to various stages in the game of baseball. Home run, or home base, is the ultimate stage.

All of these terms also refer to various levels of success in any activity, where **first base** refers to **minor success,** and **home run** refers to achieving a goal in a big way.

*Continued on the next page.*
Bases in baseball  Continued from the previous page.
All of these terms also refer to various stages in a romantic or sexual relationship, where first base refers to kissing, and home run refers to full sexual intercourse.

When someone says: He didn’t get anywhere, not even to first base, they mean something like: He wasn’t very successful in his business, or, He didn’t even get to kiss her!

Taking rye to Kerman. (Persian.)
Carrying water to the sea. (Dutch.)
Carrying owls to Athens. (German.)
Carrying coal to Newcastle. (English.)
Taking water to the Danube. (Hungarian.)
Crossing the stream to get water. (Danish.)
About doing something that is a waste of time.

Be as it may  However.
Be that as it may  Although that may be true.
A.  I think John means well.
B.  Be that as it may, he’s an idiot!

Be put under  Be sedated or drugged into unconsciousness.
Medical
Q.  Why didn’t you tell them they were operating on the wrong knee?
A.  I was put under! I didn’t know what was going on.

Bean counter  An accountant.
A financial officer.

Beating a dead horse  Repeatedly talking about something.
Talking about something that has already been decided.
Wasting one’s time talking about something that won’t change.
Q.  Can we talk about my trip now?
A.  Come on, stop beating a dead horse! We have already decided that you’re not going.
Beating a rap  
*Origin: Legal*

Getting out of a bad situation without being punished.

Q. *Didn’t they arrest him for stealing from his mother?*
A. *Yeah, but somehow he beat the rap and avoided going to jail.*

Also see:  
Getting away with something.

Beating around the bush

Speaking indirectly.  
Not saying what’s on one’s mind.

*Of course I’ve asked her about her plans, but she always beats around the bush. She never gives me a straight answer.*

Also:

Dance around the issue.  
Dance around something.

The pot calling the kettle black. *(English.)*
The donkey called the rooster bigheaded. *(Greek.)*
The ragged says to the naked: Why don’t you get dressed? *(Portuguese.)*

Beating someone to it

Doing something before someone else gets a chance to do it.

Q. *Did you pick up the free tickets?*
A. *I was going to, but my so called friend beat me to it.*

Also:

Beating someone to the punch.

Beating the heck out of someone

An exaggerated, but polite, way of saying:

*Beating someone up seriously.*

*Really beating someone at a game.*

The following mean the same thing but are not polite:

*Beating the hell (or the ho-ho’s, or the bejesus, or the sh-t, or the crap) out of someone.*
Beating the odds
Origin: Sports, Gambling

Winning despite low probabilities.
Succeeding despite low expectations.

It’s difficult but I know that she can do it. She’ll beat the odds and surprise everyone.

Related:
The odds are against it, means: It’s very risky.
The odds are in its favor, means: It isn’t very risky.

He even has bird's milk. (Greek.)
For some, cows die; for others, bulls give birth. (Portuguese.)

A wealthy, or lucky, person can have anything.

Beauty is in the eye of the beholder.

People have different opinions.
Beauty means different things to different people.

A. I don’t know what he sees in her. She’s as ugly as a bulldog.
B. He thinks she’s the most beautiful creature alive. Truly, beauty is in the eye of the beholder!

Also see: Different strokes for different folks.

Been around the block

Experienced. (Could be positive or negative.)

I think you should listen to your older brother. He’s been around the block. (Positive.)

I don’t want my son hanging around with that girl sitting over there. She’s obviously been around the block. (Negative. It refers to sexual promiscuity.)

Been there, done that!

I’ve tried it already.
It has been done before.

Before one could say ...

Quickly.
Very fast.

He is the fastest locksmith I’ve ever seen. He unlocked the door before I could say: This is the door!
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expression</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Begs the question</td>
<td>Makes you wonder. Raises the question.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q. The teacher’s decision yesterday begs the question: Did she consider all of the facts?</td>
<td>A. I’ve asked myself the same question. I don’t think she considered everything!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behind closed doors</td>
<td>In private. Private matters.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toshiro wanted all family matters to stay behind closed doors. His wife didn’t; she decided otherwise!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behind the eight ball</td>
<td>In a tough spot. In a difficult situation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Background:</td>
<td>From the game of pool, where, if you’re behind the eight ball, you will be in trouble.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I can’t be a burning candle for those who count on me, then what’s the use?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being above doing something</td>
<td>If someone says: Susan feels she is above being a secretary, they mean something like: Susan thinks being a secretary is beneath her, or is not good enough for her, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compare to:</td>
<td>Not being above doing something.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being carded</td>
<td>Being checked for identification.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting carded</td>
<td>If someone says: She was carded at the door, they mean: Someone checked her identification card when she arrived.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Being critical of ...
Criticizing someone or something.
Not approving someone or something.

The opposition is being critical of the
government’s latest economic plans.

Walls have ears; doors have eyes. (Thai.)
Walls have mice; mice have ears. (Persian.)
Birds listen to day-words, and rats listen to night-words. (Korean.)

Be careful. Someone might be listening!

Being decent.
Being properly dressed.
Having one’s clothes on.

Being even with someone
Not owing them anything.

A. Thanks for the ride. I’ll make it up to you.
B. No, we’re even. You bought me lunch the other day.
A. Are you sure?
B. Yes, I don’t owe you anything, and you don’t owe me anything!

Compare to: Don’t get mad, get even!
Getting even with someone.

Being framed
Legal

If someone says: Boris was framed, they mean something like:
He didn’t do what they say he did.
Someone arranged things to make him look guilty.
Someone gave false testimony (lied) to make him look guilty.
Someone planted (put) evidence somewhere to make him look guilty.

Similar:
Being set up.

Being let go
Getting fired.
Being dismissed from a job.

Q. What happened to Jenny?
A. They found her sleeping on the job. She was let go this morning.
### Being up to something
Planning to do something sneaky, as in:

I don’t usually see you at the office on weekends, but you’re here today! What are you up to?

Ricky is up to something. I can tell by the way he stops talking whenever I come around. He’s hiding something. He’s up to no good!

Being able or willing to do something, as in:

Q. Are you up to going to the movies?
A. No, not today. Let’s do it tomorrow.

---

### In the land of mad people, there are insane rituals. (Nepalese.)

### Believe you me!
Believe me!

### Believe me you!
Also: You better believe it!

### Below the belt
**Origin: Sports**

Not fair.
Not by the rules.
Excessively mean.

Q. Did you hear what your opponent said about your background yesterday?
A. Yes. It was below the belt, not worthy of him, and definitely not appreciated.

Compare to:
Cheap shot.

---

### Bending someone’s ear
Talking to someone for a long time.

Also:
Talking someone's ear off.

---

### Bending the rules
Breaking the rules
**Origin:** Legal, Political

Doing things that are against the rules.
Changing the rules a little to suit your needs or the needs of someone you want to help.

*If you want the work to be done fast, we need to bend some rules!*

We don’t usually take orders without a small deposit. I’m going to bend the rules in your case, however, because you’ve been our client for a long time.
- I feel for her. She’s been burning the candle at both ends for a while now.
- She must be good at it. I tried it once, and I got wax all over the carpet!

For a definition, see:
- Feeling for someone
- Burning the candle at both ends
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Idiom</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beside oneself</td>
<td>Excited, emotional, upset, etc. Stunned to the point of coming out of your body and being beside your own self.</td>
<td><em>She was so excited to see her baby again, she didn’t know what to do. She was beside herself with joy!</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not to be mistaken with <em>besides</em> which means <em>in addition to</em>.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q. Why aren’t you coming with us?</td>
<td>A. I’m too tired. <em>Besides</em>, it’s too late.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beside the point</td>
<td>Not the issue. Something else. Not what we’re talking about.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q. Did you also want to talk about my trip?</td>
<td>A. Yes, <em>but that’s beside the point</em>. That is not really why I called you.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better half</td>
<td>One’s spouse, girlfriend, boyfriend, etc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q. Where is your better half?</td>
<td>A. <em>Oh she couldn’t come, but she sent her regards.</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Also: Significant other.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better off</td>
<td>Doing better.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q. Do you feel better now that she’s gone?</td>
<td>A. Yes, <em>I’m much better off without her.</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better part of</td>
<td>Most of.</td>
<td><em>I spend the better part of the year in California; We were sleeping for the better part of the lecture; etc.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Betting a cup of coffee</td>
<td>This is about being (or not being) sure about something.</td>
<td><em>I wouldn’t bet a cup of coffee on that rumor,</em> they obviously don’t trust that rumor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Note: Anything of little value could be used in place of coffee.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Betting one’s bottom dollar</strong></td>
<td>Being very sure about something.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>You can bet your bottom dollar I’ll be at that race next week. Count on it!</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Between a rock and a hard place</strong></th>
<th>Being in a position where one doesn’t have any good choices available to choose from.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Between the devil and the deep blue sea</strong></td>
<td>When someone says: <em>I’m between a rock and a hard place</em>, they mean something like:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>I can’t do anything; I don’t know what else to do; etc.</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

He who is bitten by a snake fears a lizard. *(Parts of Africa.)*
Whoever gets burnt by hot milk blows on the cool yogurt. *(Greek, Turkish.)*
A person once bitten by a snake will be scared by an old rope. *(Parts of Africa.)*
One who’s been bitten by a snake is afraid of a black-and-white rope. *(Persian.)*
He who has scalded himself on milk weeps when he sees a cow. *(Spanish.)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Between the two of us</strong></th>
<th>The two of us together.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Between the two of us, we make a lot of money!</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Beyond a shadow of a doubt</strong></th>
<th>Without any doubt.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Legal</strong></td>
<td><em>Q. Did they really find her innocent? A. Yes and, what’s more, they found her innocent beyond a shadow of a doubt.</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>BFF</strong></th>
<th>This is an abbreviation for:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Best Friends Forever.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>It is used by the younger, Internet and texting generation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Big Apple** | This is a nickname for New York City. |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Big brother</strong></th>
<th>The government.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Be careful, big brother is watching us! They are listening to our phone conversations, too!</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Big mouth
Blabber mouth
A person who can’t keep a secret, or talks more than he should, or exaggerates a lot, etc.

Big shoes to fill
Hard to replace.

I’ve known your former director, and I know these are big shoes to fill but, as your new director, I’ll try to do my best.

Big shot
An important person.

Big wheel
Q. How’s your uncle doing?
A. He’s doing alright. He’s a big shot now, which is how I got this job!

Don’t open a wall of your house. (Thai.)
Don’t air your dirty laundry in public. (English.)
Washing one’s dirty laundry must be done as a family. (French.)
Home affairs are not talked about on the public square. (Parts of Africa.)

Don’t talk about private matters in public.

Big timing
Being too busy for others.
Ignoring or avoiding others, especially if you’re in a more important position than you were before.

He’s been big timing me since he’s become the president!

Bill of goods
Origin: Legal
A plan or list of promises, especially one that’s not honest.

A. The new mayor was promising a lot of things before, but nothing is happening now!
B. Can’t you see? He sold us a bill of goods just to get himself elected.

Bitch slapping
Slapping with the open hand.
Slapping not meant to hurt, but meant to humiliate and to show authority and to put the slapped person in his or her place.

Compare to:
Jack slapping.
Biting off more than one can chew

Trying to do more than one is able to do.

_This is probably too big of a mortgage for me to handle. I may be biting off more than I can chew, but I’m going to do it. Besides, I’ll be getting a raise soon!_

Also see: Over one’s head.

Biting the dust

Dying.
Failing, breaking apart.
Falling down when wounded or dead.

A. _We are really getting old._
B. _Oh, I know. Every now and then another one of our friends bites the dust!_

Q. _Do you know what time it is?_
A. _Sorry! My watch battery just bit the dust._

Bless you!

An expression used when someone sneezes.

God bless you!

An expression of gratitude used to show well-wishing.

Similar:
Bless your soul!
May God bless you!
God bless your soul!

Note:
In response to sneezing, the German word _Gesundheit_ is also used.

Half-filled pots splash more. (_Indian._)
Noisy is the can that contains nothing. (_Filipino._)
Hollow barrels sound the loudest. (_Dutch, Slovak._)
Empty vessels make the most noise. (_Danish, English._)

_A loud person does not necessarily know more than others and is not necessarily more correct than others._

Blessed with something

Fortunate or lucky to have a special skill, or gift, or position, or home, etc.

Q. _Do you think she has a great voice?_
A. _Oh, yes! She’s blessed with one of the greatest voices ever._
| **Blessing in disguise** | A good thing that you don’t recognize at first. Something that initially appears to be unfavorable but turns out to be beneficial.  
*My having the flu was a blessing in disguise. That’s how the doctor found out about my heart problem!*  
A. *I’m sorry I couldn’t come to meet you today. I think I have the flu.*  
B. *Well, if you do, it’s a blessing in disguise because there was a shooting at work.*  
Also see:  
Silver lining. |
| **Blowing hot air** | Exaggerating. Talking about nothing.  
A. *Your friend says he’s becoming a company executive.*  
B. *He’s blowing hot air. Don’t take him seriously.*  
Also:  
Full of hot air.  
Pompous windbag. |
| **Don’t look for noon at two o’clock. (French.)** | *Don’t complicate the issue.* |
| **Blowing in the wind** | This has different meanings for different people.  
Being present or clear.  
Being in a state of motion.  
Being in a place that nobody knows.  
*The answer’s blowing in the wind. It’s there for everyone to see.* |
| **Blowing one’s own horn** | Bragging about oneself.  
Praising one’s own accomplishments. |
| **Tooting one’s own horn** | *I’m not trying to blow my own horn, but admit it, I was really good!* |
| **Blowing out of proportion** | Making something seem more serious (or important, or spectacular, etc.,) than it actually is.

A. *I’m sure this was a minor accident but, the way your son explained it, I was really worried.*
B. *I know, he has a habit of blowing things out of proportion.* |

| **Blowing out of the water** | Really surprising someone.
Completely destroying someone or something. |

| **Blowing someone’s mind** | Being amazing.

*It will blow your mind,* means:
*It’s great;*
*You’ll love it;*
*It’s unbelievable;*
*You’ll be so surprised;* etc.

Also see: Knocking someone’s socks off. |

| **Blown to smithereens** | Blown to very small pieces.
Also: Blown to bits. |

| **Blue in the face** | Angry, excited, exhausted, etc.
Exerting yourself to the point of depriving yourself of oxygen and turning blue.

*She’ll argue until she’s blue in the face,* means:
*She’ll argue for a very long time.* |

| **Bob’s your uncle!** | It’s done.
You’re done.
Your job is done.

Q. *How do I know I’m doing it right?*
A. *Just follow the instructions carefully, and Bob’s your uncle!*

Compare to: As sure as Bob’s your uncle. |

---

A good day is apparent in the morning. *(Swahili.)*
A good year is apparent from the spring. *(Persian.)*
Body language  The way people act physically.

Q. *How can you tell she's happy? I certainly can't!*
A. *Well, I've known her for a long time. I know her body language.*

A good word will bring out the rat from the hole. *(Maltese.)*
He pulls a snake out of the nest with his tongue. *(Persian.)*
With a soft tongue, you can pull a snake out of its nest. *(Armenian.)*

Boiling down to ... Coming down to ...  
Basically meaning ...  
Removing all of the extra things and giving the main idea or point or the heart of the matter.

When someone says: *It all boils down to them not liking us,* they mean something like:

*Considering everything, they don't like us; The conclusion is, they don't like us; etc.*

Bone headed  Stupid.
Simple.

Also: Knucklehead.

Bone of contention  Reason for conflict.
The subject of a disagreement.

*She had previously worked for another company, which was a bone of contention between her and her new boss, until he explained the history for the tension between them.*

Background:  
This apparently comes from the fact that when a bone is thrown to dogs it causes a fight among them.

Booya!  Booyah!  Boo-yah!  Boo-yeah!  
This is an expression showing extreme joy and excitement due to a success of some sort, and can mean any of the following:  
Yes! Yeah! All right! Hell, yes! Awesome!
**Bottom line**  
In the end.  
The end result.  
The main point.  

When someone says: *The bottom line is that you have to pay*, they mean something like:  
*You have to pay, no matter what.*  
*All things considered, you have to pay.*

---

| The illiterate person is like an uncarved piece of wood. *(Greek.)*  
The more you strike the steel, the more beautiful it becomes. *(Albanian.)* |
|-------------------|--------------------------------------------------|

**Bottoming out**  
Failing badly.  

**Bottom falling out**  
A thing you’ve been working on completely getting destroyed.  
Also the uncertainty due to worries about such great failure.  

A. *I hope I’m wrong, but I have a feeling that the bottom is falling out of the economy.*  
B. *You bet. The bottom is falling out of everything!*  

---

**Bottoms up!**  
This phrase is used when people drink and it means:  
*Cheers!*  
*Let’s drink to that!*  

---

**Brain drain**  
Mentally exhausting, as in:  
*Reading a physics book is a brain drain, especially for my brother!*  

Migration of top minds, as in:  
*Our top scientists and engineers are leaving us to work at larger companies for higher pay. A sad case of brain drain.*  

---

**Bread and butter**  
One’s main source of food.  
One’s basic source of income.  

Q. *You’re not quitting your job, are you?*  
A. *Of course not. It’s my bread and butter. I don’t have a rich uncle, you know!*  

---
### Breaking bread

Eating.
Sharing food.
Eating together.
Sharing your belongings with others.
Spending quality time with them, close enough to eat with.
Making others comfortable by sharing things with them.

---

### Breaking in

Training someone, as in:

*It'll take a few days to break in our new secretary.*

The initial period of usage, as in:

*I'm not supposed to drive my new car too fast during the recommended break-in period.*

Entering a place without permission or authorization, as in:

*There was a break-in at our company headquarters earlier today.*

Also see:

Breaking into a place.

---

**No answer is also an answer.** *(German.)*

*He who is quiet agrees.** *(Dutch, Spanish.)*

Silence is the sign of agreement. *(Persian.)*

_Taking someone’s silence as a sign of agreement._

---

### Breaking into a place

**Legal**

Any illegal entrance by force.
Going into a place forcefully and without a key, by breaking a door or window, etc.

Also: Breaking and entering.

Compare to:

Breaking in.

---

### Breaking the mold

Doing something in a new way, as in

*I broke the mold when I showed up at work in my slippers. Later, of course, I was fired!*

Eliminating duplication, as in:

*They broke the mold when they made her. She is so unique!*
Breath of fresh air  A refreshing change.  
A change that is welcome. 

A. *This new girl at the office is like a breath of fresh air. She has such a nice personality!* 
B. *Are you sure it’s her personality, and not her miniskirt that has attracted you?*

Those who’ve lost dreaming are lost.  
The more you know, the less you need.  
Keep your eyes on the sun, and you will not see the shadows.  
We are all visitors to this time, to this place. We are just passing through. Our purpose here is to observe, to learn, to grow, to love.  
And then we return home. 
*Aboriginal Australian*

Bridging the gap  Finding a solution.  
Making a compromise.  
Making a connection where a big difference exists. 

Bring it on!  I’m ready when you are! 

Bringing down the house  Causing enthusiastic applause.  
Being very good at what you do. 

Bringing in a clean broom  Starting over with intention to do good. 

Bringing to  
*Medical*  
Bringing someone into consciousness.  
Waking someone up after they were passed out or drugged. 

Q. Were you out?  
A. Yes, I think I was out for several minutes before they brought me to.  

Compare to: Coming to. 

Bro  Brother.  
Male friend. 

Broken man  A real loser.  
A man who really, really feels he’s a failure.  
Also a man who has suffered a huge loss or is in deep grief.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expression</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brotha, sista</td>
<td>One way of referring to an African American man or woman by another African American.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bruised ego</td>
<td>Hurt feelings. Someone’s pride being hurt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brushing something off</td>
<td>Being dismissive. Not taking it seriously.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bucket list</td>
<td>A list of things someone wants to do before he or she dies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burden of proof</td>
<td>The task of proving something.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Brotha, sistah**

Brotha, sistah is a term used to refer to an African American man or woman by another African American.

**Bruised ego**

Bruised ego refers to hurt feelings or pride being hurt.

**Brushing something off**

This expression means being dismissive or not taking something seriously. For example, if someone doesn’t accept criticism, they may simply brush it off.

**It’s no use crying over spilled milk.** *(English.)*

Thinking first is an asset; regret later is useless. *(Indonesian.)*

Don’t say the first thing that comes to your mind. *(Parts of Africa.)*

If you speak the word, it shall own you. If you don’t, you shall own it. *(Arabic.)*

*About the need for thinking before doing or saying something.*

**Bucket list**

A list of things someone wants to do before he or she dies.

Also see: Kick the bucket.

**Bull’s eye**

The small circle in the center of a target.

*Origin: Sports*

When someone says: *He has a bull’s eye on his back,* they mean something like: *He is an easy target.*

Also:

When you want to tell someone that you think he’s right about something, you say: *Bull’s eye,* which is another way of saying: *Yes, you’re right on target on the issue.*

**Bum’s rush**

A rush.

*There was a bum’s rush to get the job done yesterday.*

**Burden of proof**

The task of proving something.

*The burden of proof for my brother’s innocence is on me. I’ll do my best. He’s my kid brother, you know.*
| **The List** |  
| --- | --- |
| **Burning a copy** | Making a copy.  
(Mostly applies to CDs and DVDs) |
| **Burning bridges** | Cutting off connections.  
Terminating relationships.  
*If you burn your bridges behind you, you cannot go back!*

When someone says: *Stop burning bridges with your friends*, they mean something like:  
*Don't cut off your relationships with them because, if you need them again, they won't be there.*
| **Burning rubber** | Driving very fast.  
Taking off quickly.  
Accelerating so fast that you leave (burned) tire marks on the road.  
*Faster, faster! I want to see you burn rubber!*

Also see:  
Putting the pedal to the metal.  

**Better is a wise enemy than an insane friend!** *(Greek.)*  
**A good enemy is better than a bad friend!** *(Jewish/Yiddish.)*  
**A wise enemy is better than an unwise friend!** *(Azerbaijani.)*  
| **Burning the candle at both ends** | Working too hard.  
Overextending oneself.  
Doing too many things at once. |
| **Burning the midnight oil** | Studying or working very late. |
| **Burning the late night oil** |  
**Q. Are you ready for the final exams?**  
**A. No, I guess I've got to start burning the midnight oil again!** |
| **Bursting at the seams** | Too fat.  
Falling apart.  
Someone who really wants to (or needs to) say something, but they can’t.  

Compare to: Coming apart at the seams.  
Slang, but incorrect: *Busting at the seams.* |
Burying one’s head in the sand
Hiding one’s head in the sand
Ignoring the surroundings.
Being embarrassed for doing a stupid thing.
Not wanting to be aware, or pretending not to be aware, of what’s going on.

Q. Mindy’s daughter is on drugs. Why doesn’t she do something about this?
A. She’d rather bury her head in the sand. She can’t face the truth.

How come you are going barefoot on the thorns? (Greek.)
Why are you getting into this difficulty unprepared?

Butterflies in stomach
A sign of being nervous.
It was time for me to give my first lecture, but I had butterflies in my stomach and just couldn’t move.

Buttering the bread
Making things more interesting.
We’re buttering the bread for our employees and giving them more benefits and vacation time.

Also:
Sweetening the lemonade.
Sweetening the deal (or the pot.)
Okay, I’ll sweeten the deal by giving you a free sixth night if you stay at our hotel for five nights in a row. How about that?!
Also see: Up the ante.

Buttoning up
Keeping quiet.
Not saying a word.
I want you to button up about this meeting. No one is supposed to know about it, got it?

Buying in bulk
Buying as a wholesaler.
Buying in large amounts.

Q. How much for the pencils?
A. Do you want a few, or are you buying in bulk? If you buy in bulk it’ll be cheaper.
Excuse me sir, do you have some midnight oil?

For a definition, see:

- Burning the midnight oil
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Buying something</strong></th>
<th>Believing or accepting something.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>When someone says: <em>No one’s buying your story</em>, they mean: <em>Nobody believes you.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Also: Buying it. Buying into something.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>By a hair</strong></th>
<th>By a very small amount.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>By a nose</strong></td>
<td><em>He almost made it, but missed it by a hair. He came in third among two thousand contestants!</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>By a whisker</strong></td>
<td><em>Maxwell Smart missed it by that much!</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>By this much</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>By that much</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>By a long shot</strong></th>
<th>By a large margin.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Origin:</strong> Gambling, Sports</td>
<td>By a large amount.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>When you say: Our team won the game by a long shot, you mean something like: When we won, our team was ahead by many points.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>When you say: We’re not out of trouble by a long shot, you mean something like: We’re not out of trouble at all. We have a long way to go.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Also: <em>It’s a long shot, means: It’s unlikely.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q. <em>Do you think they can win?</em></td>
<td>A. <em>No, it’s a long shot.</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>By all means</strong></th>
<th>For sure. Of course.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q. <em>Will you cooperate with us?</em></td>
<td>A. <em>Yes, by all means. You can be sure.</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>By any means</strong></th>
<th>Any way possible, as in: (Positive.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>necessary</strong></td>
<td>Q. <em>Are you sure we can get a ticket to the game?</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>possible</strong></td>
<td>A. <em>Yes, I’m going to get it by any means possible.</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Q. <em>Are you sure we can get a ticket to the game?</em></td>
<td>A. <em>Yes, I’m going to get it by any means possible.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q. <em>Are you sure we can get a ticket to the game?</em></td>
<td>A. <em>Yes, I’m going to get it by any means possible.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>necessary</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>possible</strong></td>
<td>Not at all, as in: (Negative.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q. <em>Are you sure we can get a ticket to the game?</em></td>
<td>A. <em>That is not the whole story by any means!</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q. <em>Are you sure we can get a ticket to the game?</em></td>
<td>A. <em>That is not the whole story by any means!</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By proxy</td>
<td>Through a representative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal</td>
<td>When the political prisoner married her husband, she did it by proxy because they wouldn’t let him in the prison!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By the book</td>
<td>Correctly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal</td>
<td>According to the law, or according to the rules.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I want you to do everything by the book to make sure that we won’t make a mistake again!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A large-pot without cover does not hold water. (Haitian.)</td>
<td>People who talk too much can’t keep a secret.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By the wayside</td>
<td>Wayside means the side of the road, but it is also used as follow:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Falling by the wayside, means: Giving up.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Leaving something by the wayside, means: Leaving it behind.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Going by the wayside, means: Being left alone, obsolete, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Call me!</td>
<td>Telephone me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Also:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Give me a call (or a ring, or a buzz, or a jingle).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calling for something</td>
<td>Asking for something, as in:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Q. What do these people want?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A. Nothing unusual. They’re calling for justice!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Requiring something, as in:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Q. What kind of an agreement do you have?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A. Well, for one thing, it calls for the strike to end on Monday.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Being appropriate for something, as in:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A. I got my raise.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B. Great, this calls for a celebration!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calling it a day</td>
<td>Stopping to work, usually for the day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>That’s enough work for today. It’s time for me to call it a day and go home, or to the movies, whichever is closer!</td>
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### Calling it like it is

Telling the truth.  
Making an honest comment.

<table>
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<th>Answer</th>
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<td>Q. When you appraise a property, do you usually say it's worth more than it really is, or less?</td>
<td>A. I call it like it is, no more, no less.</td>
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</table>

Also:  
Shooting from the hip.  
Calling it like you see it.

### Calling it quits

Stopping or ending something.

By now, we know that we're not going to succeed. We might as well call it quits, before we lose all of our savings.

### Calling on

Making a request.

I'm calling on you to punish her.  
I'm calling on all of you to participate in our fight against elderly abuse.

### Calling out

Challenging.

I would like to have called him out on his claim, but I wasn’t so sure myself.

### Calling someone on something

Pointing out a mistake, an exaggeration, a deception, or a lie.

Q. Why did you interrupt the principal in the middle of his report?  
A. Well, he was obviously exaggerating. I had to call him on those numbers!

---

One idiot throws a stone in the well, and it takes a hundred wise men to (try to) get it out. *(Armenian, Persian.)*

### Calling the shots

Making the decisions.  
Telling people what to do.

Q. Who’s calling the shots around here?  
A. I am.  
Q. Well, then, can I borrow your step ladder for a few minutes?  
A. I don’t know. Let me ask my wife!
APPENDIX

Contact information for the professional people who helped with the publication of this book.

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Reference articles for the plane crash in New York:
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