

THE PEP DICTIONARY OF

BUSINESS

PHRASES



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Pep Talk India

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

About the Book

What is Business Communication?

Importance of business communication

Business Idioms & Phrases

A-Z Dictionary of Business Phrases

ABOUT THE BOOK

Pep Talk India is honoured to present this unique collection of top business idioms and phrases that are commonly used in the business world. These business idiomatic expressions and phrases would come in handy while comprehending and communicating effectively in this competitive corporate realm. The ultimate goal of this book is to augment verbal capacity of a learner to speak English confidently and fluently in business meetings, presentations, negotiations and business consultations. Like any other phrase or idiom in English language, these business expressions should be understood in specific context. The book contains 500 frequently used business idioms and phrases which a working professional often come across while navigating through myriads of business situations but hardly have a clue about the actual meaning of the group of words being spoken. Mastering the phrases enlisted in this book will give you much needed confidence to understand and speak effectively in various scenarios without facing the embarrassment of not knowing the complex idiomatic expressions. *“The Pep Dictionary of Business Phrases”* contains a wide range of business expressions like - ‘a full plate’, ‘on cloud nine’ and ‘up-and-coming’ - which will help you develop fuller understanding of precise meaning and application of such unique phrases in day-to-day conversation in the workplace. As each phrase is context dependent, learning every expression with actual meaning along with the example sentence would help student build business vocabulary with ease. Once you learn these phrases and idioms you can seamlessly speak about various business themes like finance, money, investment, deadlines, organizational behavior, management style, market forces, leadership, entrepreneurship and marketing.

Through this business oriented dictionary we have endeavoured to make the whole business communication process simple and streamlined so that you would not face any difficulty in understanding complicated sentence structure and phrases often used in the world of business. The added benefit of being proficient in business idioms is that it makes easier for working professionals to communicate with American or European clients. We sincerely hope that it will add value to your professional journey.

Happy Learning!

What is Business Communication?

Communication is the bedrock of all businesses. No matter which industry you work in – finance, media, insurance, manufacturing, software, pharmaceuticals or FMCG, to streamline business operations and get new business order inflows, smooth business communication is a must.

Business communication can be of two types:

- 1) **Internal:** When you have to conduct staff meetings, in-house interviews, send out emails text messages for internal review and QC etc.
- 2) **External:** When you are dealing with suppliers, clients, or scouting for new business opportunities through tele- or video conferencing, presentations, and seminars.

Importance of business communication

The underlying success of a business depends on how effective its communication channels are. Effective business communication has several benefits, as it helps:

>> Establish a solid relationship between employer and employees

If a company can communicate clearly with its employees regarding its plans and policies, then the smooth exchange of information can help bring a dynamism in the organizational activities, and thus work towards its mission and vision. This also brings us to our next point...

>> Improve productivity

Effective business communication is the key to success for any project in a company. It also helps improve productivity as it boosts efficiency among team members, finish desired tasks quickly, and create a friendly work environment.

>> **Develop and maintain client partnerships**

If a company wants to develop and maintain client partnerships, then it is imperative that a robust business channel is established for effective communication. For instance, if you need to get in touch with your supplier about certain areas that need improvement, or to replace a defective product, then you need to regularly update them about the same.

When a company needs to expand its geographical footprint and bring in more customers towards its products and services, then it needs to partner with other businesses, start local franchises, and form alliances with regional suppliers. If your company has a reputation as an entity that is easy to deal with, then forming business partnerships becomes way easier than usual.

>> **Grow customer base**

One of the most important aspects of sales and marketing for a company is to boost its customer base and retain existing customers. This is possible only when there it develops a solid platform through which it can clearly advertise its products and services, as well as ensure lasting customer satisfaction by way of an after-support service. Any company which can publicize its wares more effectively will be the winner in the market.

>> **Facilitate business innovations**

Effective business communication directly leads to greater innovation. A company that has an open policy wherein any employee can bring forth an idea or opinion will witness higher innovation as compared to a company where the communication channels are closed. More ideas will lead to an increase in funding for research and development. For example, if a new product is expected to be launched by a company, then an internal employee review will be beneficial in smoothening out any glitches or bugs, or suggesting any improvements before the official release.

>> Achieve goals with ease, boost employee morale

In a big multinational firm, it is essential that business communication should be streamlined at all hierarchies so that employees are attentive and aware of the decision-making at the senior management. This will ensure that all jobs and projects are accomplished in a timely manner. This will also result in the employees feeling more invested in the decisions taken by the company, thus boosting their morale.

BUSINESS PHRASES

Idiomatic expressions are fairly common in the business world. Many people hold the opinion that business idioms merely serve to enhance the language by making it sound more flowery, and are not essential to the field itself.

However, nothing could be further from the truth. Business idioms are comprised of basic words, such as:

“You’re pulling my leg.”

“She is cooking the books.”

“The company has gone.”

While each word is easy to understand in isolation, the entire expression would sound alien in meetings with your counterparts from the U.S. and U.K., as native English speakers use idiomatic expressions more naturally than others. Therefore, like some concepts are quintessential to a culture, idioms are also concomitant to the world of business. Mastering this new frontier of Business English would certainly give you a definitive edge in this business world.

A-Z Dictionary of Business Phrases

A BAD WORKMAN ALWAYS BLAMES HIS TOOLS

Meaning: A poor performer always blames his equipment rather than his own lack of skill

Usage: Rather than admitting his skills were not up to the mark, Rakesh always blamed the software he was working on. It was a classic case of **a bad workman blaming his tools**.

1

A BIRD IN THE HAND IS BETTER THAN TWO IN THE BUSH

Meaning: It is better to hold onto something of lesser value than risk losing it for something that is of greater value

2

Usage: It is better to hold onto the small project that gives a guaranteed revenue than other bigger projects that are tough to close. In such cases, it goes without saying that **a bird in the hand is better than two in the bush**.

A BONE OF CONTENTION

Meaning: A topic over which there is continuous disagreement

Usage: Working on the weekends without extra pay was **a bone of contention** between the workers and the HR department.

3

A CAN OF WORMS

Meaning: A situation or problem that can create a lot of difficulties once one starts dealing with it

4

Usage: There is no point referring to the closed investigation file into the embezzlement case. It will just open **a can of worms**.

A DAMP SQUIB

Meaning: Expected to be entertaining or interesting but fails to impress

5

Usage: The office party was a **damp squib** as hardly anyone turned up due to the rain.

A DROP IN THE OCEAN

6

Meaning: A very small amount compared with what is required

Usage: My paltry contribution to the PM Relief Fund was just a **drop in the ocean** to the amount of funds required for restoration of the flood-hit regions.

A FLASH IN THE PAN

Meaning: Something that happens only for a brief time but is not repeated

7

Usage: The startup created a lot of buzz at its inception but soon shut down. It was clear that all the hype was just a **flash in the pan**.

A FOOL AND HIS MONEY ARE SOON PARTED

8

Meaning: A foolish person spends his money recklessly and is likely to be penniless soon.

Usage: Shyam splurged all his inheritance money on casinos and pubs. It is rightly said that a **fool and his money are soon parted**.

A FOREGONE CONCLUSION

Meaning: A result that can be predicted with certainty

Usage: After performing well quarter after quarter, it was **a foregone conclusion** that Deepak would be promoted first.

9

A FULL PLATE

Meaning: A schedule or workload that is chock-filled with tasks

Usage: I will not be able to take up the project as I have **a full plate** tonight.

10

A GLUTTON FOR PUNISHMENT

Meaning: A person who is always eager to undertake hard or unpleasant tasks.

Usage: Shikhar agreed to work on the demanding project for the second time in a row – he was surely **a glutton for punishment**.

11

A GOLD MINE

Meaning: A source of wealth, information, and resources

Usage: The Pep Talk India website is **a gold mine** of information for students seeking to learn more about English and Public speaking.

12

A HALF-BAKED IDEA

Meaning: Something that is not fully thought or conceived

Usage: Implementing **half-baked ideas** in a company is fraught with risks.

13

A LITTLE BIRD TOLD ME

Meaning: To indicate that the person knows something but prefers to keep their source secret

Usage: **A little bird told me** that the accounting department is going to shut down soon.

14

A LOT OF WATER HAS FLOWED UNDER THE BRIDGE

Meaning: Something that has happened in the past that cannot be undone should no longer be a consideration

Usage: People who say **a lot of water has flowed under the bridge** for sexual assault cases that happened many years ago are being callous towards the pain of the victims.

15

A MEANS TO AN END

Meaning: Something that is not valued or important but is useful in achieving a goal

Usage: I decided to join the data entry job because it was **a means to the end** of becoming a high level manager in the company.

16

17

A RIP-OFF

Meaning: An inferior imitation of something

Usage: There were many **rip-off** models of the latest high-end smartphone available in the black market.

A ROLLING STONE GATHERS NO MOSS

Meaning: A person who does not settle in one place will not accumulate wealth or status, or responsibilities or commitments.

Usage: Roshan was always changing his mind about his career and could not stay in one job for long. His well-wishers warned him that **a rolling stone gathers no moss**.

18

19

A SHOESTRING BUDGET

Meaning: Very little money to spend on

Usage: ISRO completed its PSLV rocket launch program at **a shoestring budget**, compared to what NASA spends on its programs.

A SHOW OF HANDS

Meaning: A decision or vote in a group on the basis of raising of hands, with an estimated figure deciding the result

Usage: The decision to scrap the annual trip was taken on the basis of **a show of hands** among the team members.

20

A SKELETON STAFF

Meaning: The minimum number of employees required to operate a business during a vacation, weekend or when full staffing is not necessary.

Usage: The company operated with **a skeleton staff** on Sundays.

21

A SNAKE IN THE GRASS

Meaning: A treacherous or deceitful person

Usage: The new employee turned out to be **a snake in the grass** when it was found he was just gathering information for his previous organization.

22

A STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION

Meaning: An action that advances you towards your goal

Usage: Implementing the Vishakha guidelines for sexual harassment was **a step in the right direction** to ensure the safety of women at the workplace.

23

A STORM IN A TEACUP

Meaning: Showing great excitement or outrage over a petty issue

Usage: The entire controversy in the company turned out to be **a storm in a teacup**.

24

25

A SURE-FIRE METHOD**Meaning:** Certain to be successful**Usage:** Learning R and Python is a **sure-fire method** to become successful in your career.**A SWEEPING STATEMENT****Meaning:** Making a statement that applies to all things or people, even though all the facts have not been considered**Usage:** Shivam made a **sweeping statement** when he said that all call center employees were people who could not find a regular job in any company.

26

27

A THING OF THE PAST**Meaning:** Something that no longer happens or exists**Usage:** Cyber cafes are a **thing of the past**. You can hardly spot any now.**A VESTED INTEREST****Meaning:** A personal reason for involvement in an undertaking or situation, especially an expectation of financial or other gain.**Usage:** The politician had a **vested interest** in the company's profits, so he ignored allegations of corruption.

28

A VICIOUS CIRCLE

Meaning: A series of events in which different unpleasant events and problems lead to a situation of the original problem

Usage: The **vicious circle** of poverty is the reason why India remains a third-world country.

29

A WHOLE NEW BALL GAME

Meaning: A situation that is completely different to the existing one

Usage: Changing my field from IT to digital marketing was a **whole new ball game**.

30

ACHILLES' HEEL

Meaning: A weak or vulnerable spot

Usage: I am trying my best to lose weight, but chocolate is my **Achilles' heel**.

31

AGAINST THE CLOCK

Meaning: In a very limited amount of time (when a task has to be completed)

Usage: We were running **against the clock** to complete the project before the deadline.

32

33

AGAINST THE ODDS

Meaning: Doing something, despite being very likely to fail

Usage: She was down with a severe illness, but **against all odds**, she managed to clear her exams with flying colors.

AHEAD OF THE PACK

Meaning: Be more successful than other people who are trying to achieve the same.

Usage: People who keep upgrading their skills are usually **ahead of the pack** than others.

34

35

ALL IN A DAY'S WORK

Meaning: When something difficult is accepted as part of usual routine

Usage: Dealing with wound discharge is **all in a day's work** for doctors.

ANGEL INVESTOR

Meaning: An affluent individual who provides capital for a business start-up, in return or ownership stake

Usage: The **angel investor** decided to put his money on the new grocery startup as he thought their business fundamentals were quite solid.

36

AS A MATTER OF COURSE

Meaning: A usual part of the way in which things are done

Usage: All the safety precautions at work should be done as a **matter of course**.

37

AT ARM'S LENGTH

38

Meaning: At a distance; avoiding intimacy or familiarity

Usage: The manager decided to keep his employees **at an arm's length** until the announcement of the merger.

AT FULL STRETCH

Meaning: Using the maximum possible energy or resources

Usage: I was working **at full stretch** for the assignment.

39

AT THE DROP OF A HAT

40

Meaning: Without hesitation or good reason

Usage: He used to spew expletives **at the drop of a hat**, and was suspended immediately.

AT THE ELEVENTH HOUR

41

Meaning: The latest time before it becomes too late

Usage: The assignment was completed by Rohit **at the eleventh hour**.

BACK THE WRONG HORSE

Meaning: To support something that cannot win or succeed.

Usage: The marketing head was **backing the wrong horse** when he decided to take the suggestion of the much inexperienced trainee over the experienced digital marketer.

42

BACK TO SQUARE ONE

43

Meaning: Back to where one started, with no progress having been made

Usage: After negotiations broke down between the two rival companies, they were **back to square one**.

BAD EGG

Meaning: An individual who turns out to be an unpleasant and disappointing person

Usage: Rohan was the **bad egg** in a family of esteemed engineers and doctors.

44

BALLPARK NUMBER OR FIGURE

Meaning: A rough numerical estimate or approximation

Usage: The broker quoted a **ballpark figure** to determine how much money his client could make in the future.

45

BANG FOR THE BUCK

Meaning: Value for money

Usage: The products and services offered by the company provide a great **bang for the bucks!**

46

BE A BAG/BUNDLE OF NERVES

Meaning: An extremely nervous person

Usage: When Vishal had to go on the stage to deliver a speech, he was a **bundle of nerves**.

47

BE A FAR CRY FROM

Meaning: A situation that is very different from one existing in the past

Usage: The company's massive infrastructure is a **far cry from** the basement it started in during its inception.

48

49

BE A FEATHER IN ONE'S CAP

Meaning: An accomplishment or achievement that one can feel proud of

Usage: Earning the full scholarship to Oxford was a **feather in the cap** for Shalini.

BE A TOUGH NUT TO CRACK

Meaning: Someone who is difficult to know or open up

Usage: Shivam was a **tough nut** to crack and it was very difficult getting to know any personal details about him.

50

51

BE ABLE TO THINK ON ONE'S FEET

Meaning: Be able to think and react quickly

Usage: Sameer was quite witty and he was **able to think on his feet** quickly to any question asked in the interview.

BE ABOVE BOARD

Meaning: Carried out in a legal and honest manner

Usage: The MoU between the two companies was **above the board** with no hidden clauses.

52

BE AHEAD OF ONE'S TIME

Meaning: Someone who has ideas that are too advanced or modern for the current era

Usage: George Orwell's book 1984 was quite visionary and **ahead of its time**.

53

BE AT A CROSSROADS

Meaning: Be at a stage where you have to take a very important decision

Usage: I was **at a crossroads** regarding my career. I could either go abroad and pursue my degree from a foreign university or try for an Indian one and take care of my parents.

54

BE AT ONE'S WITS ENDS

Meaning: Be mentally confused

Usage: I was **at my wits ends** regarding the problem. There seemed to be no solution in sight.

55

BE CUT OUT FOR

Meaning: Have the right qualities for a particular job or role

Usage: He was not **cut out for** a leadership role.

56

BE DEAD BEAT

57

Meaning: Be completely exhausted

Usage: After working tirelessly on the assigned task, I was totally **dead beat**.

BE DEEP IN DEBT

Meaning: Owing a large amount of money

Usage: Due to incessant wasteful expenditure, the startup was **deep in debt**.

58

BE HAND IN GLOVE

Meaning: In close collusion or association

Usage: We need to work hand in glove in order to **stave off** the tough competition.

59

BE HARD HIT

Meaning: Badly affected

Usage: Small firms and businesses were **hard hit** by the demonetization.

60

BE HARD-PRESSED TO DO

Meaning: Having difficulties doing something

Usage: I guess we will be **hard-pressed** to find another capable employee for the project.

61

BE HOME AND DRY

Meaning: Successfully finishing or achieving something

Usage: Rajesh was all **home and dry** after successfully cracking the CAT exam.

62

BE IN CAHOOTS WITH

Meaning: Working together in secret, mainly for some illegal or dishonest purpose

Usage: The investigation showed that consultancy was **in cahoots with** the call centre for the massive fraud.

63

BE IN DIRE STRAITS

Meaning: In a very bad situation

Usage: The kids were **in dire straits** after the administration shut down their school due to a land dispute.

64

65

BE IN THE FIRING LINE**Meaning:** Likely to be criticized**Usage:** The recruiter was **in the firing line** because of his poor record of hiring incompetent people.**BE IN THE KNOW****Meaning:** Be aware of something known to only a few people**Usage:** The advisory firm was **in the know** that their accounting department had messed up the books yet they chose to ignore it.

66

67

BE IN THE RED**Meaning:** To be in debt**Usage:** After incurring heavy losses for the third consecutive quarter, the firm was **in the red**.**BE IN THE RUNNING****Meaning:** Having a solid chance of being successful, especially in an election**Usage:** Our company is **in the running** for 'Best Startup of 2018' and I am pretty optimistic about our chances of winning.

68

BE NECK AND NECK

Meaning: Be level or similar in competition

Usage: The two companies were **neck and neck** in the e-commerce market so it could not be ascertained which one was more successful.

69

BE NOTHING TO WRITE HOME ABOUT

Meaning: Be very mediocre or unexceptional

Usage: The company's products were nothing to **write home about**. They were ordinary in quality and performance.

70

BE ON CLOUD NINE

Meaning: Be extremely happy or excited

Usage: Robert was **on cloud nine** after he was promoted within just six months.

71

BE ON ONE'S LAST LEGS

Meaning: Extremely tired or near death

Usage: After suffering a massive cardiac arrest, Anshika's grandfather was **on his last legs** in the hospital.

72

73

BE ON PINS AND NEEDLES**Meaning:** To be anxious and tense**Usage:** Shyam was **on pins and needles** regarding his test results.**BE ON THE CARDS****Meaning:** Something that is likely to happen**Usage:** Shalini said that she wanted a leave for one month as her sister's marriage was **on the cards**.

74

BE ON THE CUTTING EDGE OF**Meaning:** Involved in the most exciting and latest updates and developments**Usage:** The firm invested a lot in R&D to be **on the cutting-edge of** technology.

75

BE ON THE DOLE**Meaning:** Someone who is usually unemployed and receives money from the government**Usage:** There are many people in the UK who are **on the dole** owing to unemployment.

76

BE ON THE SAME WAVELENGTH

Meaning: Think in a similar manner and understand each other well

Usage: To ensure a company functions properly, we need to have at least 80% of the employees to be **on the same wavelength**.

77

BE OUT OF ONE'S DEPTH

Meaning: Be in a situation that is out of one's capabilities

Usage: Deepa was **out of her depth** in the technical interview conducted by the company.

78

BE OUT ON A LIMB

Meaning: Having an opinion that differs from others and is generally unpopular

Usage: Rahul went **out on a limb** and stated that he found some of the policies of Donald Trump to be beneficial to people, evoking outrage from his colleagues.

79

BE PAR FOR THE COURSE

Meaning: Something that is deemed acceptable or normal

Usage: Gurmeet had practiced public speaking so much that delivering a speech was **par for the course** for him.

80

81

BE PART OF THE FURNITURE

Meaning: A person or thing that has somewhere been so long that it becomes a permanent, unquestioned or invisible feature of landscape

Usage: The IT administrator worked so long for the company that he became **part of the furniture**.

BE PENNY WISE AND POUND FOOLISH

Meaning: Being extremely careful about small amounts of money but not caring enough about large sums

Usage: Sonam was always haggling with the vegetable vendors for petty money but splurged like anything on expensive restaurants. She was **penny wise and pound foolish**.

82

83

BE PLAIN SAILING

Meaning: Smooth and easy progress in some task

Usage: It was quite a task to get all members of the team to work in tandem. There was no **plain sailing** in the process.

BE QUICK (SLOW) ON THE UPTAKE

Meaning: Be quick (or slow) to understand something

Usage: The instructor was irritated by those interns who were **slow on the uptake** during the induction process.

84

BE SNOWED UNDER WITH

Meaning: Be overwhelmed with a large amount of work

Usage: I cannot join you guys for the party because I am **snowed under with** a lot of work.

85

BE STREETS AHEAD OF

Meaning: Be much better or advanced than everyone else

Usage: There is no way we can compete with the MNC in this business. They are **streets ahead of** us in every aspect.

86

BE THANKFUL FOR SMALL MERCIES

Meaning: Appreciate minor benefits and advantages, especially in the difficult or trying circumstances

Usage: Ranjita lost her job during the global recession, but still had her freelancing work to sustain her. Her parents told her to be **thankful for small mercies**.

87

BE THE LAST STRAW

Meaning: The final thing in a series of unpleasant events that convince you that you cannot accept a bad situation.

Usage: The manager's consistent rude behavior was bad enough, but her shouting at me in front of the entire team was **the last straw** and I finally decided to quit.

88

89

BE THE SALT OF THE EARTH

Meaning: A person or group that is regarded as genuine, unpretentious, and morally sound. This idiom is regarded as complimentary.

Usage: Despite being highly successful and wealthy, Azim Premji is **the salt of the earth** due to his philanthropic nature.

Be under the weather

Meaning: Slightly unwell or in low spirits

Usage: Kirti was feeling a **bit under the weather** so she skipped the weekly conference call.

90

91

BE UP THE CREEK

Meaning: Be stupid or misguided

Usage: Whenever it came to appraisals, Gagan was always **up the creek**.

BE UP TO ONE'S EAR IN SOMETHING

Meaning: Be overly involved in something

Usage: I was **up to my ear in** the software project, leaving me no time to have a personal life.

92

BE UP TO SCRATCH

Meaning: As good as expected, required, or demanded

Usage: The book ordered from Amazon was **up to scratch**.

93

BE WET BEHIND THE EARS

Meaning: Someone who lacks experience and is immature

Usage: The trainee is a bit **wet behind the ears** but he will learn the ropes in a few months.

94

BEAR FRUIT

Meaning: Yield positive results

Usage: Our hard work will definitely **bear fruit** in the long run.

95

BELT TIGHTENING

Meaning: Reduced spending by consumers, businesses and the government owing to financial difficulties.

Usage: Due to the ongoing recession, people have to resort to **belt-tightening** in order to have some savings.

96

97

BIG PICTURE

Meaning: The most important facts about a situation; the entire perspective

Usage: When one works as a manager in a company, he or she must ignore the day-to-day trivialities to focus on the **big picture**.

BITE OFF MORE THAN ONE CAN CHEW

Meaning: Take a commitment that you cannot fulfill

Usage: The company had problems galore at work because they had committed to a number of projects and their resources were dwindling. Clearly, they had **bitten off more than one can chew**.

98

BITTER PILL TO SWALLOW

Meaning: Something that is really unpleasant to accept

Usage: Seeing the much younger Shefali being promoted ahead of him was a **bitter pill to swallow** for Pawan, but there was no denying she was way more talented.

99

BLANK CHECK

Meaning: An unlimited freedom of action

Usage: The manager thought that the sharp spike in quarterly profits gave him a **blank check** to do anything he wanted to.

100

BLOT ONE'S COPYBOOK

Meaning: To tarnish or ruin one's reputation by committing a social transgression

Usage: Elon Musk has ruined his reputation through bizarre allegations of pedophilia against a scuba diver and has eventually **blotted his copybook** for no apparent reason.

101

BLOW HOT AND COLD

Meaning: Alternate inconsistently between two moods, attitudes, or courses of action.

Usage: He behaved in a very bad manner with her throughout the date, **blowing hot and cold**.

102

BOUNCE BACK

Meaning: To regain success or confidence after a difficult period or experiencing failure

Usage: After undergoing a prolonged phase of downturn, the startup **bounced back** to experience profits.

103

BREAK GROUND

Meaning: Do something that has not been done before

Usage: Sophia **broke ground** with her latest research in genome studies, making all previous studies redundant.

104

105

BREATHE DOWN SOMEONE'S NECK

Meaning: To follow or supervise someone too closely

Usage: My boss has been **breathing down my neck** to get the assignment completed.

BRING HOME THE BACON

Meaning: To earn money (especially for your family); to achieve what you needed to achieve

Usage: The team leader was assigned a difficult project but he managed to **bring home the bacon**.

106

BUILD CASTLES IN THE AIR

Meaning: To plan lofty dreams or targets that are seemingly impossible to achieve

Usage: To establish a startup, one needs to have a solid business plan in place so that operations can be scaled up in the future. Initially, it is just like **building castles in the air**.

107

BULLISH ON

Meaning: Extremely confident and self-assertive

Usage: After all the hard work put in by his team, the manager was **bullish on** the success of the marketing campaign.

108

BURN THE CANDLE AT BOTH ENDS

Meaning: Overwork or exhaust yourself by handling too many tasks at the same time

109

Usage: I was **burning the candle at both ends** by doing several jobs at the same time. As a result, my health was being affected.

BURN THE MIDNIGHT OIL

110

Meaning: Keep working until late night

Usage: For my annual exams, I **burned the midnight oil**.

BURY ONE'S HEAD IN THE SAND

Meaning: Ignore the fact; avoid the reality of the situation

111

Usage: When the going gets tough, the weak-willed ones usually **bury their head in the sand**.

BURY THE HATCHET

112

Meaning: End a quarrel or conflict and become friendly

Usage: The rival companies **buried their hatchet** and started discussions for a merger.

113

BY LEAPS AND BOUNDS**Meaning:** Very quick progress**Usage:** Once you join Pep Talk India, your speaking skills improve **by leaps and bounds**.**BY THE BOOK****Meaning:** Strictly according to the rules**Usage:** In order to establish itself as the market leader, the company decided it should not play **by the book**.

114

CALL IT A DAY**Meaning:** To retire**Usage:** The bank manager **called it a day** at office after suffering from overwork.

115

CANNOT SEE BEYOND THE END OF ONE'S NOSE**Meaning:** Be so preoccupied with oneself that you become unaware or uncaring of other people**Usage:** Karan was so involved in the software development project that he **could not see beyond the end of his nose** that his team mates desperately needed a break.

116

CARRY OUT A SPOT CHECK

Meaning: Do a quick examination to check whether something is satisfactory

Usage: The police decided to **carry out a spot check** of the motorists to ensure no one was drunk.

117

CLUTCH AT STRAWS

Meaning: Do, say, or believe anything (even the most unlikely things) that offer a solution for a problem

Usage: Despite losing the debate badly, Ashok started **clutching at straws** by highlighting his opponent's disheveled clothes.

118

COME A CROPPER

Meaning: Suffer a heavy defeat or disaster

Usage: The startup's aim to become the best in the industry **came a cropper** after it suffered heavy losses in its first two years.

119

COME AWAY EMPTY-HANDED

Meaning: Return from an event or experience without gaining anything

Usage: The digital marketing course was a waste of time for me. They only explained the basics and as a result, I **came away empty-handed**.

120

121

COME FULL CIRCLE

Meaning: Return to a past position in an inevitable manner

Usage: Life **came a full circle** for the company after it reverted to selling books on its website.

COME HOME TO ROOST

Meaning: Consequences for actions done in the past

Usage: Never sexually or mentally harass anyone, because your actions will **come home to roost one day**.

122

123

COME TO A BOIL

Meaning: Become more serious and dangerous with time

Usage: Things **came to a boil** between the two employees after one accused the other of mental harassment.

COME TO A HEAD

Meaning: Reach a crisis

Usage: The labor issue **came to a head** after one employee was killed in the protest.

124

COME TO GRIPS WITH

Meaning: Start to understand

Usage: It was only after she stumbled badly on the stage that Monica **came to grips with** her inability to speak fluently.

125

COME TO LIGHT

Meaning: Become widely known

Usage: The sexual harassment case **came to light** only after several women accused the minister of inappropriate behavior.

126

COME UP AGAINST A BRICK WALL

Meaning: Face a very difficult problem when you are trying to do something

Usage: While dealing with the complex mathematical problem, I **came up against a brick wall** where I remained stuck for several days.

127

COME UP THROUGH THE RANKS

Meaning: To reach a significant, prominent position after serving in subordinate ones

Usage: Pooja had the full trust of her employees as she had **come up through the ranks** after serving as a junior associate a decade back.

128

129

COME UP WITH THE GOODS**Meaning:** Do what is expected of you**Usage:** Radhika **came up with the goods** during the client presentation after she was trained hard for it.**COMPARE APPLES TO ORANGES****Meaning:** When two items or group of items are compared in such a manner that they cannot be compared**Usage:** Comparing the performance of the startup to the market leader was like **comparing apples to oranges**.

130

COMPARE NOTES**Meaning:** Exchange information and ideas about a particular topic of study**Usage:** We can **compare notes** on our gender literature analysis and then submit the final thesis.

131

CORNER THE MARKET**Meaning:** (For a company) Being able to sell a product more successfully than others**Usage:** Apple has **cornered the** smartphone **market** with their latest iPhone.

132

CORNER THE MARKET

Meaning: Buy all or most of the commodity so that its stock goes up; produce something so successfully that others are left behind in the same field

Usage: Apple successfully **cornered the** high-end smartphone **market** with its launch of the iPhone X.

133

CORPORATE LADDER

Meaning: A series of increasingly important jobs as you go up in a company's hierarchy

Usage: Mrinalini was a very ambitious girl and planned to climb up the **corporate ladder** in her company.

134

CORPORATE RAIDER

Meaning: An investor or financier who buys a large number of shares in companies to either control them or resell them for a profit

Usage: The fledgling tech startups became a target for **corporate raiders** who wanted to expand their global footprint.

135

COST A PRETTY PENNY

Meaning: Spend a lot of money

Usage: The Italian marble furnishing **cost a pretty penny** to the company.

136

137

COST AN ARM AND LEG**Meaning:** Very expensive**Usage:** The new dress I bought for my job **cost me arm and leg** but it was totally worth it.**CRUNCH SOME NUMBERS****Meaning:** Doing a lot of mathematical calculations to arrive at a solution.**Usage:** To make sure the balance sheets matched with the company, the financial analysts decided to **crunch a lot of numbers**.

138

CURRY FAVORS WITH**Meaning:** Seek to gain or advance through fawning or flattery of a person**Usage:** The builder tried to **curry favors with** the district collector for his construction projects.

139

CUT CORNERS**Meaning:** Do something in such a manner to reduce the time or expenses on something**Usage:** I think it was quite petty of the company to **cut corners** on napkins and tissues used in the washroom.

140

CUT-THROAT

Meaning: Ruthless, merciless

Usage: There is **cut-throat** competition in the telecom market, with players like Jio, Airtel, and Vodafone.

141

DEAD FROM THE NECK UP

Meaning: Stupid, unintelligent

Usage: It was quite a task dealing with the new intern, he was **dead from the neck up**.

142

DO THE DIRTY WORK

Meaning: Do something unpleasant or difficult that someone else doesn't want to do

Usage: Sometimes, I believe that the HR people have to **do the dirty work** of the higher ups in the company.

143

DO THE SPADEWORK

Meaning: Make the preliminary preparations or research for something

Usage: I am **doing the spade work** to start the project report.

144

145

DOWN TOOLS

Meaning: Stop working, as a result of industrial action; to go on strike

Usage: The employees **downed their tools** owing to the management decision to cut jobs in current fiscal.

DRIVE A COACH AND HORSES THROUGH SOMETHING

Meaning: To expose the flaws in something; render something useless

Usage: The lawyer made an excellent point regarding the actions of the company but then **drove a coach and horses through** his own statement by making a contradictory point.

146

DRIVE A HARD BARGAIN

Meaning: Make a deal without uncompromising

Usage: The company's marketing manager **drove a hard bargain** with the suppliers.

147

EASY COME, EASY GO

Meaning: When something is easily obtained, it is typically lost easily as well

Usage: The moment Esha found the INR100 note on the street, she spent it on a generic keychain. **Easy come, easy go.**

148

EVERY CLOUD HAS A SILVER LINING

Meaning: Every bad situation has a positive aspect to it

Usage: Don't worry about getting fired from the job. **Every cloud has a silver lining.** Now you can fully devote yourself to entrepreneurship!

149

FALL BY THE WAYSIDE

Meaning: Fail to persist in an endeavor or undertaking

Usage: The parliament has let many important issues **fall by the wayside** while focusing on trivial issues.

150

FAST TRACK A PROJECT

Meaning: A method which provides a quicker result than the conventional mode

Usage: The team decided to **fast track the project** as the deadline neared.

151

FEATHER ONE'S NEST

Meaning: Make money for oneself in an opportunistic manner

Usage: Being in the accounting department, Rohit kept **feathering his own nest** without any suspicion from the seniors.

152

153

FEEL THE PINCH

Meaning: Experience hardship, especially financially

Usage: I could **feel the pinch** of demonetization when all my finances started drying up.

FEW AND FAR BETWEEN

Meaning: Scarce, infrequent

Usage: In government jobs, opportunities for promotion are **few and far between**.

154

FIDDLE WHILE ROME BURNS

Meaning: Be concerned with trivial issues when more serious developments are happening

Usage: Rohan was unable to believe that the HR manager was attending a party while employees were sitting at a dharna at the office. It was like playing the **fiddle while Rome burns**.

155

FLOOD THE MARKET

Meaning: Excess supply; provided in surplus

Usage: Chinese companies have **flooded the** Indian **market** with their cheap products.

156

FLY OFF THE HANDLE

Meaning: Lose one's temper suddenly

Usage: After all the employees in the company went on an unplanned leave, the manager **flew off his handle**.

157

FOLLOW SUIT

Meaning: Conform to the actions of others

Usage: Once the CFO told us that he needed to keep mum about the financial irregularities in the company's accounts, we decided to **follow suit**.

158

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Meaning: Something that stimulates or intrigues one's mind

Usage: An apple falling from the tree was **food for Newton's thought**.

159

FOOT THE BILL

Meaning: To pay for something

Usage: The company had to **foot the bill** for the onsite accident with the employee.

160

161

FOR DONKEY'S YEARS**Meaning:** A very long time**Usage:** Ashish and Vishal had been close friends **for donkey's years**.**FOREWARNED IS FOREARMED****Meaning:** Having prior knowledge of possible problems or dangers, thus providing a tactical advantage**Usage:** Before you meet the CEO, you should know that he is a bit short-tempered. Being **forewarned is forearmed**, right?

162

GAIN A Foothold**Meaning:** Get a strong position that will prove to be favorable later on**Usage:** Kartik **gained a foothold** on English speaking skills in his BPO job so that he could easily crack interviews later.

163

GAME PLAN**Meaning:** A strategy worked out in advance, especially sports, or business**Usage:** The company's **game plan** was to scale up its business in areas where its customer base was thin.

164

GET A WORD IN EDGEWAYS

Meaning: When you are able to speak something in a conversation or discussion because the other speaker has been talking non-stop

Usage: I was unable to **get a word in edgeways** during the conference call because the client seemed agitated and was not willing to listen to any other point.

165

GET DOWN TO BUSINESS

Meaning: Start a task in earnest

Usage: Without wasting any time, let's **get down to business** and work on the project.

166

GET DOWN TO BRASS TACKS

Meaning: Focus on the main details

Usage: **Let's get down to brass tacks.** What discount would we get if we order 100 copies?

167

GET HOLD OF THE WRONG END OF THE STICK

Meaning: Misunderstand something; not understand something what is said

Usage: My office colleagues **got hold of the wrong end of the stick** when they saw me coming to work with my boss.

168

169

GET INTO THE SWING OF

Meaning: Become comfortable with some task and eventually become efficient with it

Usage: It took Mayank just a couple of weeks to **get into the swing of** things at his new job.

GET OFF ON THE WRONG FOOT

Meaning: Make a wrong start

Usage: The employee **got off on the wrong foot** with his manager, but things soon calmed down between them.

170

171

GET OFF TO A FLYER

Meaning: Begin very well

Usage: Shashank's career **got off to a flyer** when he was promoted three months ahead of everyone.

GET OFF TO A FLYING START

Meaning: Make a great beginning for a project or task

Usage: The marketing team **got off to a flying start** as they acquired several clients.

172

GET ON LIKE A HOUSE ON FIRE

Meaning: When two or more people enjoy one another's company a lot and become good friends.

Usage: Charlie Munger and Warren Buffet **got on like a house on fire** once they met each other.

173

GET ONE'S FINGERS BURNT

Meaning: Suffer an unpleasant consequence for some action and becoming reluctant to do it again

Usage: I am not going to argue with the manager just for the sake of constructive criticism as there is no point in **getting one's fingers burnt**.

174

GET ONE'S FOOT IN THE DOOR

Meaning: Completing the first step in the process

Usage: To **get one's foot in the door** in the field of marketing, doing door-to-door sales is the first step.

175

GET ONE'S TEETH INTO SOMETHING

Meaning: An activity or task that you work with great enthusiasm because you are really interested in it

Usage: The robotics project was really interesting so I **got my teeth's into something**.

176

177

GET OUT OF HAND

Meaning: Become unmanageable and too chaotic to handle

Usage: The office party **got out of hand** when too many people joined in at the dance floor.

GET SOMETHING OFF THE GROUND

Meaning: Start or cause to start happening successfully

Usage: Once the company received its first round of funding, the project **got off the round**.

178

179

GET THE BIT BETWEEN ONE'S TEETH

Meaning: Do a job (a tough one) in a resolute and enthusiastic manner

Usage: Once he got into the IITs, Rajiv was faced with a tough task, but he decided to study diligently once he **got the bit between his teeth**.

GET TO THE BOTTOM OF A MATTER

Meaning: Discover the real reason of something happening

Usage: We need to **get to the bottom of the matter** regarding the surprising downturn in the company's profits.

180

GIVE HIM A BIG HAND

Meaning: To help someone in a significant manner

Usage: Tom **gave Mark a big hand** in his assignment as there was no way the latter could finish it on its own.

181

GIVE SHORT SHRIFT

Meaning: To ignore, exclude or disregard something

Usage: The issue of layoffs was quite important but the company heads decided to **give it a short shrift**.

182

GIVE SOMEONE A FREE HAND

Meaning: Have the freedom to use your own judgement and take decision accordingly

Usage: The CEO gave the new marketing executive to implement ideas as he deemed fit.

183

GIVE SOMEONE ENOUGH ROPE TO HANG HIMSELF

Meaning: Give someone the freedom of bad behavior such that he or she eventually meets their downfall

Usage: Convincing a person that public speaking is not necessary for him is like **giving him enough rope to hang himself**, because ultimately speaking skills matter a lot.

184

185

GIVE SOMEONE THE LOWDOWN ON SOMETHING

Meaning: To provide comprehensive or specific details on something

Usage: The new trainee was **given the lowdown on** the client project and deliverables after his joining.

GIVE THE GO-AHEAD/GIVE THE GREEN LIGHT

Meaning: Give someone the permission to proceed further

Usage: The appellate **gave the employee the go-ahead** to file a case in the Supreme Court.

186

187

GLASS CEILING

Meaning: A metaphor used to signify a barrier to advancement in profession, especially for women and minorities

Usage: In India, there are many women who are smashing the **glass ceiling** to make a mark for themselves.

GO A LONG WAY TOWARD

Meaning: Having considerable effect or influence, be immensely helpful in achieving something

Usage: My supervisor's supportive behavior **went a long way toward** contributing to my professional success.

188

GO AGAINST THE GRAIN

Meaning: Contrary to natural inclination

Usage: Lying to the committee to save the company's misdoings meant **going against the grain** for Neha, who had been taught by her parents never to lie.

189

GO BACK TO THE DRAWING BOARD

190

Meaning: Start something anew because the previous plan failed

Usage: Once our marketing campaign failed, we had to **go back to the drawing board**.

GO BUST

Meaning: Lose all the money

Usage: The firm **went bust** last month because it did not have its finance fundamentals correct.

191

GO DOWN THE DRAIN

192

Meaning: Be totally wasted

Usage: The public funds **went down the drain** owing to mismanagement by the government.

193

GO DOWNHILL**Meaning:** Deteriorate, worsen**Usage:** You need to upskill yourself in order to avoid **going downhill** in the industry.**GO FROM BAD TO WORSE****Meaning:** Something that becomes even more difficult and unpleasant**Usage:** The process ramp down **went from bad to worse** when it was announced that the relieving employees won't be provided any severance as well.

194

GO FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH**Meaning:** Gradually become more successful than before**Usage:** Once he cleared his IIT exams, he **went from strength to strength** by topping his class and clearing the Civil Services exams as well.

195

GO HAYWIRE**Meaning:** Break down and stop functioning properly**Usage:** Once the virus attacked the server, all the systems in the hospital **went haywire**.

196

GO OFF ON A TANGENT

Meaning: Start thinking abruptly on a completely new subject

Usage: The HR manager tried to skirt the issue of pay raise by **going off on a tangent** and talking about the general conditions in the industry.

197

GO OFF THE RAILS

Meaning: Behave in an uncontrollable and unacceptable manner

Usage: Looking at the poor performance of his team, the manager **went off the rails** and started screaming at everyone.

198

GO OUT OF THE WAY TO DO SOMETHING

Meaning: Try very hard to do something, especially for someone else

Usage: The recruiter **went out of his way** to ensure that the deserving candidate was hired.

199

GO OVER OLD GROUND

Meaning: Discussing have-beens or things that have already occurred

Usage: When the two entrepreneurs came together for their startup, they **went over old ground** to discuss the mistakes in their previous company.

200

201

GO THE EXTRA MILE

Meaning: Make a special effort to achieve something

Usage: The senior management of the company **went the extra mile** to make their disabled employees comfortable.

GO THROUGH A BAD PATCH

Meaning: Experience bad or difficult times

Usage: Following his firing from the job, Vijay **went through a bad patch** in his relationship as well.

202

GO THROUGH SOMETHING WITH A FINE-TOOTH COMB

203

Meaning: To analyze something very carefully

Usage: To find out the error in the financial report, we need to **go over it with a fine-tooth comb**.

GO THROUGH THE MILL

Meaning: Undergo a suffering or discipline required to attain a certain degree of knowledge

Usage: To attain his legendary status, Floyd Mayweather had to **go through the mill** daily.

204

GO THROUGH THE MOTIONS

Meaning: Do something without showing interest or thinking that it is important

Usage: After resigning from her job, Pallavi did her work like she was **going through the motions**.

205

GO THROUGH THE ROOF

Meaning: Reach unexpected heights

Usage: The share prices of the company are **going through the roof** after the CEO announced his resignation.

206

GO-TO PERSON

Meaning: The person with great deal of expertise in particular area

Usage: Varun has been organisation's **go-to person** when it comes to designing new products.

207

GO TO THE DOGS

Meaning: Become worse than usual

Usage: The company is **going to the dogs** because there is no management or accountability.

208

209

GREY MATTER**Meaning:** Intelligence; mental power; intellect**Usage:** The due diligence of the company required someone with **grey matter** to handle it.**GRIND TO A HALT****Meaning:** Slow down gradually and come to a stop**Usage:** The rusted machine in the factory eventually **grinded to a halt**.

210

211

HALF A LOAF IS BETTER THAN NONE**Meaning:** Something is better than nothing, even if it is less than what one wanted.**Usage:** He asked for a bike, but got a scooter. Well, at least **half a loaf was better than one**.**HANDS ARE TIED****Meaning:** Unable to act freely because the rules or law restrict him**Usage:** The company head wanted to raise the bonuses of the employees but his **hands were tied**.

212

HANG BY A THREAD

Meaning: Be in a highly precarious state

Usage: The jobs of the workers were **hanging by a thread**, and the final results would be known after the board's decision on the company.

213

HAVE A BONE TO PICK UP WITH

Meaning: Have a disagreement or grievance to discuss

Usage: I **have a bone to pick up with** my team lead who unnecessarily criticized me at the meeting.

214

HAVE A BRAINWAVE

Meaning: Get a sudden clever idea

Usage: During the team meeting, Deepika **had a brainwave** regarding the cost-savings for a new project.

215

HAVE A CHIP ON ONE'S SHOULDER

Meaning: Have an attitude that leads one to become easily angered or combative

Usage: Pooja **had a chip on her shoulder** whenever it came to discussing her career.

216

217

HAVE A CLOSE SHAVE

Meaning: A narrow escape from serious trouble

Usage: Shivangi **had a close shave** when her car almost skirted off the highway.

HAVE A FINGER IN EVERY PIE

Meaning: Involved in several activities

Usage: Elon Musk **has his finger in every pie** owing to his busy involvement in Tesla, SpaceX, and SolarCity.

218

HAVE A FOOT IN BOTH CAMPS

Meaning: Have an interest or stake in two parties or sides

Usage: The hedge fund manager **had a foot in both camps** of the competing e-commerce firms.

219

HAVE A HEAD START OVER

Meaning: Have an advantage over others in a competition

Usage: In the robotic design competition, Arjun's team **had a head start over** everyone else as they had been working on a similar project for the past year.

220

HAVE A SENSE OF PROPORTION

Meaning: Understand the relative importance or seriousness of things

Usage: When analyzing the financial viability of a project, one should **have a sense of proportion** regarding different aspects so that the proper allocation of resources is done.

221

HAVE AN ACE UP ONE'S SLEEVES

Meaning: Be in possession of a secret knowledge or skill that will provide you a significant advantage

Usage: During your presentation, you should **have an ace up your sleeve** in case the situation goes awry.

222

HAVE AN AXE TO GRIND

Meaning: Have a private reason for doing or being involved in something

Usage: The senior manager **had an axe to grind** with the associate, who he felt was disrespectful.

223

HAVE ANOTHER STRING TO YOUR BOW

Meaning: Have an additional resource that you can rely on

Usage: Shilpa decided to go for the master's degree as it would add **another string to her bow**.

224

225

HAVE ONE'S BACK TO THE WALL

Meaning: Have very serious problems that can limit the way you act

Usage: With her credit cards maxed out, Shilpa **had her back to the wall** as she struggled with indebtedness.

HAVE ONE'S HANDS FULL

Meaning: Be extremely busy with something that it leaves you no time to do any other work

Usage: I am afraid I won't be able to take up any freelancing project as I **have my hands full for** now.

226

227

HAVE ONE'S WORK CUT OUT

Meaning: Facing a difficult and lengthy task

Usage: The office party saw a lot of attendees and we **had our task cut** outmanaging everyone.

HAVE OTHER FISH TO FRY

Meaning: Have other important things to do

Usage: I hope the meeting gets over fast – I **have other fish to fry**.

228

HAVE PRIDE OF PLACE

Meaning: The most prominent or significant position among a group of things

229

Usage: My gold medal in graduation **has a pride of place** on my table of achievements.

HAVE SOMEONE IN THE PALMS OF ONE'S HAND**230**

Meaning: Have complete control of someone and be able to make them do anything.

Usage: The client was completely **in the palms of** the investment advisor's **hand**.

HAVE SOMETHING AT ONE'S FINGERTIPS

Meaning: Easily or immediately available

231

Usage: Being a skilled coder, Atul **had** all the solutions **at his fingertips**.

HAVE SOMETHING UNDER ONE'S BELT**232**

Meaning: To have learned something that could benefit you in the future

Usage: After I completed my certifications, it was good to **have something under my belt**.

233

HAVE THE BEST OF BOTH WORLDS**Meaning:** Benefiting from different situations**Usage:** When he was hired at the company, he was both a trainee and employee, thus **having the best of both worlds**.**HAVE THE COURAGE OF ONE'S CONVICTIONS****Meaning:** Acting on your belief despite danger or disapproval**Usage:** Despite being warned that he could lose his job by testifying against the head honcho, Sameer **had the courage of his convictions** and did the same.

234

235

HAVE THE FINAL SAY IN**Meaning:** Say the final words in an argument that decisively close it**Usage:** Everyone tried to **have the final say in** the group discussion but the moderator was having none of it.**HAVING THE MAKINGS OF****Meaning:** The process of making or producing something**Usage:** Shikha **had all the makings of** a great leader as she had demonstrated aptly during several projects.

236

HE WHO PAYS THE PIPER CALLS THE TUNE

Meaning: The person who provides the money for something has the right to determine how it's spent.

237

Usage: The investor has the right to direct how the money should be spent. After all, **he who pays the piper calls the tune.**

HEDGE ONE'S BETS

Meaning: To take an action that offsets potential future loss

238

Usage: To offset the impact of the rainy season, smart investors **hedge their bets** on different commodities.

HIS BARK IS WORSE THAN THE BITE

Meaning: Though a person may seem scary and threatening, his actions won't be as bad.

239

Usage: The CEO of the MNC often flew into a rage but there was nothing to worry as **his bark was worse than his bite.**

HIT ROCK BOTTOM

Meaning: The lowest possible level

240

Usage: The morale of the employees **hit rock bottom** once it was announced that there would be no bonus for the year.

241

HIT THE NAIL ON THE HEAD

Meaning: Describe exactly what has happened, hit upon a correct solution

Usage: Vishal really **hit the nail on the head** by coming up with an innovative solution at the meeting.

HOLD PURSE STRINGS

Meaning: Have the power to determine how the money will be spend

Usage: The angel investor was not impressed with the way things were proceeding with the firm he invested in so he decided to **hold the purse strings** for some time.

242

243

IF THE WORST COMES TO THE WORST

Meaning: To indicate if a situation develops in the most unfavorable way possible

Usage: **If the worst comes to the worst**, and we are not able to find a hotel tonight, we will book a trip to the nearest town.

IN A NUTSHELL

Meaning: In the fewest possible words

Usage: The CEO described his company, **in a nutshell**, as an innovation lab.

244

IN FITS AND STARTS

Meaning: With irregular bursts of activity

Usage: Shashi had a problem with his speech and spoke **in fits and starts**.

245

IN FULL SWING

Meaning: When the level of activity is the highest

Usage: After the final batch of interns were hired, the project continued **in full swing**.

246

IN TANDEM WITH

Meaning: Work together

Usage: The two partners were working **in tandem** to ensure the company stayed afloat.

247

IN THE DOGHOUSE

Meaning: Be in disgrace or disfavor

Usage: I'm **in the doghouse** as I lost the important documents I was supposed to submit in the court.

248

249

IN THE DRIVER'S SEAT**Meaning:** Be in control of things**Usage:** Once Tushar was **in the driver's seat**, things at workplace were more manageable than before.**IN THE HEAT OF THE MOMENT****Meaning:** Being very angry or excited for a temporary moment**Usage:** I accidentally blurted out a cuss word **in the heat of the moment** while arguing with my boss. Now I am in a world of trouble.

250

251

IN THE LONG RUN**Meaning:** After a long period of time; eventually**Usage:** Investing in good professional relationships gives good ROI **in the long run**.**IN THE PIPELINE****Meaning:** Something that is being developed and will happen in the future**Usage:** There is a lot of work **in the pipeline** that needs to be finished before the client visit.

252

IN THE TEETH OF

Meaning: In spite of difficulty, danger, or grave opposition

Usage: Shekhar pulled his startup **in the teeth of** recession and managed to turn a profit.

253

IT NEVER RAINS BUT IT POURS

Meaning: When one bad thing happens, it is followed by a lot of other bad things that make the situation worse

Usage: After getting fired from his job, Mayank's health also worsened. **It never rains but it pours.**

254

IT'S A STEAL

Meaning: When something is available at a very cheap or good price

Usage: The expensive purse is available at a very low price. **It's a steal.** Don't miss out.

255

IT'S AN ILL WIND THAT BLOWS NOBODY ANY GOOD

Meaning: Even the worst of situations can bring good luck to someone

Usage: The ramping down of the process resulted in Ankita finding a better job. The situation became **an ill wind that blows nobody any good.**

256

257

IT'S THE BLIND LEADING THE BLIND

Meaning: When a person who knows almost nothing in a particular field is guided by a similar person

Usage: Karan's hiring manager was Ravikant. The amusing fact was that both were in the corporate finance field and didn't have any solid knowledge. It was like **the blind leading the blind**.

JUMP THE GUN

Meaning: Act before the proper or appropriate time, to act prematurely.

Usage: Rohan **jumped the gun** in the meeting when he mentioned the client deal to the CEO before the manager could.

258

259

KEEP EVERYONE ON THEIR TOES

Meaning: Keeping you alert and ready for any situation

Usage: The CEO's dire announcement **kept everyone on their toes** for a future layoff situation.

KEEP ME POSTED

Meaning: Keep someone informed of the latest trends and happenings

Usage: The takeover of the company is expected to be completed soon. **Keep me posted** about the updates!

260

KEEP ONE'S EARS TO THE GROUND

Meaning: Pay attention to, look for clues in order to understand what is going to happen

Usage: The news of the acquisition has not been declared but we should **keep our ears to the ground** to understand what lies in store.

261

KEEP ONE'S EYE ON THE BALL

Meaning: Keep one's attention focused on the matter in hand

Usage: The sexual harassment case had distracted the entire company, so the CEO asked everyone to **keep their eye on the ball**.

262

KEEP ONE'S NOSE TO THE GRINDSTONE

Meaning: Work very hard for a long period

Usage: Owing to the high pressure job, I had to **keep my nose to the grindstone**.

263

KEEP ONE'S OPTIONS OPEN

Meaning: Not commit oneself

Usage: One should **keep all options open** when you have to opt for a graduation course at Delhi University.

264

265

KEEP OUR HEADS ABOVE WATER

Meaning: Be able to manage, especially when you are having financial difficulties

Usage: Despite the difficulties faced in business, we just managed to **keep our heads above water**.

KEEP SOMEONE ON TENTERHOOKS

Meaning: To keep someone in suspense

Usage: The management **kept the employees on tenterhooks** regarding the salary hike.

266

267

KEEP TABS ON

Meaning: Scrutinize the activities of someone

Usage: Pulkit has been **keeping tabs on** any important mail expected from the client.

KNOW ONE'S ONIONS

Meaning: Be fully acquainted with a subject

Usage: To be able to give an impressive presentation, one must **know one's onions**.

268

LAND ON ONE'S FEET

Meaning: Be successful or lucky, especially after a difficult period

Usage: Sahil got mixed up with some crooks but he managed to **land on his feet** by recovering all his money.

269

LAY ONE'S CARDS ON THE TABLE

Meaning: Be honest and open in declaring your intention and attitude

Usage: While trying to strike an agreement with the company, the negotiator **lay all his cards on the table** to show his intent was genuine.

270

LAY ONESELF WIDE OPEN TO

Meaning: To expose oneself

Usage: With his unwarranted remarks on women, he **lay himself wide open to** an investigation by the ethics department.

271

LEARN THE ROPES

Meaning: Learn how to do a particular job

Usage: Once he joined the company, it took him hardly any time to **learn the ropes**.

272

273

LET BYGONES BE BYGONES

Meaning: Forget past issues and offences and reconcile

Usage: It has been quite some years since our major argument. **Let bygones be bygones** now.

LET SOMETHING SLIP THROUGH FINGERS

Meaning: When you fail to grab hold of an opportunity

Usage: When the chance to enroll in the free training module came up, Jitendra was absent, thus **letting it slip through his fingers**.

274

275

LIKE GETTING BLOOD FROM A STONE

Meaning: Cracking a very tough deal; persuading someone difficult in your favor

Usage: Getting the permission of the CEO for the trip was **like getting blood from a stone**.

LIVE BEYOND ONE'S MEANS

Meaning: Spending more than they can afford

Usage: Himanshu was spending a lot on expensive meals daily; he was clearly **living beyond his means**.

276

LONG SHOT

Meaning: Something you try although it is unlikely to be unsuccessful

277

Usage: Though it is a **long shot**, we can try to double our profits by the end of this year.

LOSE THE THREAD

Meaning: Be unable to understand or remember what is being said

278

Usage: In the lengthy discussion about artificial intelligence, I **lost the thread** regarding the focus of the topic.

MAKE A DENT IN

Meaning: Start to accomplish something

Usage: The singer managed to **make a dent in** the music industry with his best-selling albums.

279**MAKE A KILLING**

Meaning: Have great financial success

280

Usage: Once he had mastered the art of intra-day trading, Sanjeev **made a killing** at the trading market.

281

MAKE AMENDS FOR

Meaning: To compensate for an injury or loss

Usage: He tried to **make amends for** the inadvertent insult by sending her flowers.

MAKE ENDS MEET

Meaning: Earn just enough money to buy what you need

Usage: Due to spiraling inflation costs, it was becoming difficult for Ashok to **make ends meet**.

282

MAKE HEADWAY

Meaning: Forward movement or progress

Usage: In the midst of heavy traffic, the bus **made very little headway**.

283

MAKE INROADS INTO SOMETHING

Meaning: Have an important effect or influence

Usage: The company **made major inroads into** the Indian telecom market.

284

MAKE NO BONES ABOUT

Meaning: Have no hesitation in sharing something, no matter how awkward or unpleasant it is.

Usage: The CEO of the company **made no bones about** the indiscipline of the employees, despite many of them being with the company for several years.

285

MAKE ONE'S BED AND LIE IN IT

Meaning: Accept the consequences of your actions, no matter how unpleasant

Usage: You sought to crush the workers' morale by taunting them all the time. When it's time for employer feedback to HR, you will have to **make your bed and lie in it**.

286

MAKE SHORT WORK OF

Meaning: To deal with or dispose of something in a quick manner

Usage: We made **short work of** the deadline set by the client as the project was really easy.

287

MIDDLE-OF-THE-ROAD

Meaning: Taking a moderate path, avoiding the extremes

Usage: The CEO had a **middle-of-the-road** nature and was not at all a strict martinet as many employees had said.

288

289

MISS THE BOAT

Meaning: Fail to take advantage of an opportunity

Usage: Owing to his illness, James **missed the boat** to sign up for the scholarship.

MONEY TO BURN

Meaning: Having more money than required

Usage: After the surplus profits in the previous quarter, the firm has enough **money to burn** on renovating its office.

290

291

MOVE WITH THE TIMES

Meaning: Stay updated with current developments and affairs

Usage: Indian education needs to **move with the time** and do away with the rote method of learning.

NEVER PUT OFF TILL TOMORROW WHAT YOU CAN DO TODAY

Meaning: Do not delay or hesitate to do something that you can finish today

Usage: My aim is to complete the book today, because you should **never put off till tomorrow what you can do today**.

292

NO-BRAINER

Meaning: Something that involves very little mental effort

Usage: It was a **no-brainer** for the team to go for the most cost-effective approach in the project.

293

NOT BAT AN EYELID

Meaning: Show no surprise when something unexpected happens

Usage: The projects team **did not bat an eyelid** when the pink slips were issues as they already knew about it.

294

NOT DO A HAND'S TURN

Meaning: Do no work at all

Usage: After he received no bonus from his employer, Dinesh did **not do a hand's turn** at the job.

295

NOT DO THINGS BY HALVES

Meaning: Put in a lot of effort and enthusiasm in doing something

Usage: Salman decided that if he had to improve his writing, he would **not do things by halves**.

296

297

NOT GOING TO FLY

Meaning: An action or idea that won't pass muster, work, or be agreeable to certain parties

Usage: The whole idea of launching three new smartphones at Mobile World Congress is **not going to fly**.

NOT HAVE A DOG'S CHANCE

Meaning: Very unlikely to happen

Usage: Shivani **doesn't have a dog's chance** to qualify for the interview because she has been whiling her time away when others have been preparing hard.

298

NOT HAVE A LEG TO STAND ON

Meaning: Have no good arguments to support your stance

Usage: His defense for the sexual harassment allegations were quite weak; in fact, he did **not have a leg to stand on**.

299

NOT HOLD WATER

Meaning: Something that does not appear to be supported by facts or seems verifiable

Usage: His arguments were baseless and would **not hold water** in a court of law.

300

NOT LOSE ANY SLEEP OVER

Meaning: Not let anything worry you

Usage: Despite all the workers putting down their tools, the plant manager said he would **not lose any sleep over** it.

301

NOT MINCE ONE'S WORDS

Meaning: Voice one's disagreement in a clear and direct manner

Usage: The auditor did not **mince any words** in criticizing the state of affairs at the company.

302

NOTHING SUCCEEDS LIKE SUCCESS

Meaning: Success encourages you to be even more successful

Usage: One must not stop after achieving academic success. Strive to be excellent in whatever you do and reach greater heights, because **nothing succeeds like success**.

303

OFF THE RECORD

Meaning: Not an official or attributable statement

Usage: **Off the record**, the government employee revealed to me that no was serious about doing any work in the public sector.

304

305

ON AN EVEN KEEL

Meaning: Functioning normally after a difficult phase

Usage: Mohit was getting back his life **on an even keel** after suffering a heavy loss in business.

ON GOOD GROUND

Meaning: Having a solid reason for doing, saying, or believing something

Usage: The argument for dissolution of the company was made **on good ground** as there was rampant corruption among the higher levels.

306

307

ON THE BRINK OF

Meaning: On the verge of something imminent happening (usually harmful)

Usage: The partnership between the two companies was **on the brink of** disaster after allegations of embezzlement were levied against a senior executive.

ON THE DOT

Meaning: Exactly on time

Usage: Aakriti reported **on the dot** for her HR interview.

308

ON THE SAME PAGE

Meaning: In agreement

Usage: During the meeting, all employees were **on the same page** with the proposal of the team lead.

309

ON THE SLY

Meaning: In a secretive fashion

Usage: Manish always talked about his upcoming promotion **on the sly**.

310

ON THE SPUR OF THE MOMENT

Meaning: Doing something on impulse, without making any plan in advance

Usage: When Shekhar went on the stage for his speech, he discarded all his plans and spoke whatever inspired him **on the spur of the moment**.

311

ON TOP OF TRENDS

Meaning: Be in control of a situation and be aware of the changes

Usage: The manager was **on top of trends** after he was apprised of the new developments in the company.

312

313

OUT IN THE OPEN

Meaning: Some information or situation that is exposed to everyone

Usage: After the intern came out with the accusation, all the sexual harassment rumors against the senior manager were **out in the open**.

OUT OF LINE WITH

Meaning: Not in alignment or accordance with something

Usage: The salary structure at several startups is **out of line with** than many MNCs in the country.

314

315

OUT OF THE ORDINARY

Meaning: Unusual, remarkable

Usage: There was nothing **out of the ordinary** in the annual report of the company, which was mired in controversy.

PASS THE BUCK

Meaning: Shift the responsibility to someone else

Usage: Political leaders have the habit of **passing the buck** to government authorities for their own incompetency.

316

PAVE THE WAY FOR

Meaning: Create the circumstances to enable something to happen

Usage: After Srikanth cleared the Civil Services prelims, it **paved the way** for fully focus on his task of becoming an IAS officer.

317

PAY CASH ON THE NAIL

Meaning: Pay for something immediately

Usage: She decided to **pay cash on the nail** in order to be address her legal fines.

318

PAY LIP SERVICE

Meaning: Agree with something in words but do nothing to prove your support

Usage: The politician merely **paid lip service** to the victim of sexual harassment, but didn't take any punitive action against the culprits.

319

PAY OVER THE ODDS

Meaning: Pay a higher price than usual or reasonable

Usage: In India, most consumers **pay over the odds** to procure the latest edition of an iPhone.

320

321

PAY THROUGH THE NOSE**Meaning:** Pay much higher than the fair price**Usage:** The company **paid through the nose** for the corporate training sessions.**PAY TOP DOLLAR****Meaning:** Pay a lot of money, especially the highest price, to obtain something that is in high demand or of superior quality**Usage:** I **paid top dollar** for the latest iPhone but it was totally worth it.

322

PICK UP THE PIECES**Meaning:** Return to a satisfactory situation slowly and surely

323

Usage: After being jailed for a year for insider trading, Robert slowly **picked up the pieces** of his life and returned to a respectable job.**PILE IT ON THICK****Meaning:** To exaggerate or overstate something**Usage:** The team lead **piled it on thick** about his professional achievements, but it was evident that he was lying.

324

PLAY DEVIL'S ADVOCATE

Meaning: Argue and attack an idea or proposition (even if you favor it) just to strengthen the debate or examine its validity

325

Usage: At times the manager needs to **play devil's advocate** in order to get the best performance out of the team members.

PLAY IT BY EAR

Meaning: Dealing with a situation as it develops, instead of acting according to plans made earlier

326

Usage: After the cancellation of the project, the team decided to **play it by the ear**.

PLAY ONE'S CARDS CLOSE TO ONE'S CHEST

Meaning: To keep one's plans and intentions secret from everyone else

Usage: The marketing team decided to **play their cards close to their chest**, lest any important details of the project were leaked to competitors.

327**PLAY SECOND FIDDLE TO**

Meaning: Have a subordinate or secondary role

328

Usage: Vikas always **played second fiddle to** Narendra, who kept emphasizing the importance of leadership and harmony to people.

329

POUR COLD WATER

Meaning: To discourage someone from doing something, usually with the aim to reduce their enthusiasm or interest in it

Usage: Aanchal's parents **poured cold water** on her ambitions to become an anchor, saying it was not a clean profession.

PRICE ONESELF OUT OF THE MARKET

Meaning: Being unable to compete commercially

Usage: Owing to their inability to innovate, the telecom company **priced itself out of the market**.

330

331

PRICE SKYROCKETED

Meaning: Rise extremely quickly in value

Usage: The **prices** of oil **skyrocketed** after Gulf Countries reduced oil supply.

PULL ONE'S SOCKS UP

Meaning: Make an effort to improve one's behavior, work, or performance

Usage: Steven was asked by his supervisor to **pull his socks up** after performing poorly in the last two quarters.

332

PULL ONESELF UP BY ONE'S BOOTSTRAPS

Meaning: Improving a situation by your own efforts

Usage: After facing several adversities, the employees managed to **pull themselves up by their bootstraps**.

333

PULL OUT ALL THE STOPS

Meaning: Make a great effort to achieve something

Usage: Shyam decided to **pull out all stops** to crack the Civil Services exam.

334

PULL OUT THE RUG FROM UNDER SOMEONE'S FEET

Meaning: Suddenly taking away support from someone

Usage: The U.S. government **pulled out the rug from the feet** of American citizens when it passed a resolution to repeal the Medicare act.

335

PULL RANK

Meaning: Use the power in your authority by making someone lower-ranked do what you want

Usage: The senior officers in the army consistently **pull rank** and make their juniors do menial jobs for them.

336

337

PULL STRINGS

Meaning: Make use of one's influences and contacts to gain an advantage.

Usage: The CEO tried to **pull some strings** with the police to avoid getting a notification.

PULL THE WOOL OVER THEIR EYES

Meaning: To deceive or fool someone

Usage: The salesman regularly **pulled the wool over the eyes** of his customers by selling fake products.

338

PUT A PREMIUM ON SOMETHING

Meaning: Treat something as valuable and important

Usage: The tech company **puts a premium** on constant innovation and customer support.

339

PUT A SPOKE IN SOMEONE'S WHEELS

Meaning: To disrupt, foil, or cause problems to one's plans, activity, or project

Usage: The withdrawal of the event management team **put a spoke in the wheels** of the party program.

340

PUT ALL ONE'S EGGS IN ONE BASKET

Meaning: (*Financial field*) that one should not focus or invest all their resources in one area as you could lose everything.

Usage: Tushar advised his client not to **put all his eggs in one basket** but to have a diversified portfolio.

341

PUT HIS NOSE OUT OF JOINT

Meaning: To offend or upset someone, especially by getting something that the other person wanted for himself.

Usage: Pawan's **nose** was really **put out of joint** when found out that Supreet was promoted and he wasn't.

342

PUT IN A GOOD WORD FOR

Meaning: Words in recommendation or defense of a person

Usage: She **put in a good word for** her teammate during the appraisal process.

343

PUT IT DOWN IN BLACK AND WHITE

Meaning: Write down the terms of an agreement; to draw a written contract

Usage: After agreeing on all the terms of the deal it was time to **put it down in black and white.**

344

345

PUT ONE'S FOOT DOWN

Meaning: Use authority to stop something from happening

Usage: Rajat thought his employees were playing truant way too much and finally decided to **put his foot down**.

PUT ONE'S OWN HOUSE IN ORDER

Meaning: Take care of your own affairs before criticizing others

Usage: It was high time we stopped focusing on our competitors and **put our own house in order**.

346

347

PUT ONE'S SHOULDER TO THE WHEEL

Meaning: Apply yourself or concentrate fully on something

Usage: The team decided to **put their shoulder to the wheel** for the critical project.

PUT OUT FEELERS

Meaning: Make casual suggestions in order to learn something discreetly

Usage: The CEO **put out some feelers** in order to know the mood of the employees before he announced the bonuses.

348

PUT OUT HEADS TOGETHER

Meaning: Consult and work together

Usage: We need to **put out heads together** to figure how the project should be delivered by the team in such a short span of time.

349

PUT SOMEONE OUT TO PASTURE

Meaning: Force someone to retire

Usage: The company decided to **put** the average performing employees **to pasture**.

350

PUT THE BRAKES ON

Meaning: slow something down

Usage: The robotics company will **put the brakes on** the marketing expenditure this quarter.

351

PUT THE CART BEFORE THE HORSE

Meaning: Have things out of the proper order

Usage : There is no point of bringing electric cars to India unless you have a proper charging system in place. It's like **putting the cart before the horse**.

352

353

PUT YOUR MONEY WHERE YOUR MOUTH IS

Meaning: Encourage someone to spend their money to solve a problem instead of just talking about improving it

Usage: Wipro chairman Azim Premji contributes a lot to philanthropic causes. You should also **put your money where your mouth is**.

QUICK BUCK

Meaning: Easily and quickly earned money

Usage: Day time traders always look to make a **quick buck** with intraday trading strategies.

354

RAISE THE BAR

355

Meaning: Raise the standards that need to be met to qualify for something

Usage: The India food association should **raise the bar** for food quality by following the EU food standards.

REACH A DEAD END

Meaning: Reaching towards a situation where no conclusion is reached

Usage: The two negotiators **reached a dead end** regarding the merger of the companies.

356

READ BETWEEN THE LINES

Meaning: When there is a meaning to something that is not explicit but implied

Usage: When the chairman of the company indicated he would raise the salaries with higher efficiency in work, the employees failed to **read between the lines** that it meant working on the weekends as well.

357

READ SOMEONE LIKE A BOOK

Meaning: Understand someone's thoughts and motives easily

Usage: The HR manager could **read the employee like a book**, and knew exactly what to say during the appraisal process.

358

REALITY CHECK

Meaning: Something that serves as a reminder of reality by rectifying a misconception

Usage: The employees of the company had the misconception that all was hunky dory. They got a **reality check** only when the quarterly report came in.

359

RED TAPE

Meaning: Excess bureaucratic procedures or adherence to official rules and formalities

Usage: The prevalence of **red-tape** has restricted freedom of business in India.

360

361

REST ON ONE'S LAURELS

Meaning: Be quite satisfied with what one has achieved such that no further effort is being made

Usage: After creating an Olympics record of gold medals, Usain Bolt could **rest on his laurels**.

RISE FROM THE ASHES

Meaning: Make a comeback after a disaster or tragedy that almost finishes you

Usage: The company **rose from the ashes**, turning a huge profit, after almost going under in the last financial year.

362

ROCK THE BOAT

363

Meaning: Say or do something to disturb the status quo and upset people

Usage: The negotiations continued between the two companies but there was fear that the belligerent CEO could **rock the boat**.

ROUND THE CLOCK

Meaning: All day and all night

Usage: I've got a team working **round the clock** to make sure the financial reports are complete on time.

364

RULE OF THUMB

Meaning: A general rule developed as a result of practical means rather than empirical means

Usage: A **rule of thumb** while creating YouTube videos is to make them as dramatic as possible.

365

RUN-OF-THE-MILL

Meaning: Something that is ordinary and lacks extraordinary characteristics

Usage: His performance was just **run-of-the-mill** in the competition. There was nothing exciting as suggested by the commentators.

366

SAFE BET

Meaning: A thing that can be said to certainly succeed in the future

Usage: Many people thought it was a **safe bet** to invest on Bitcoin.

367

SAME BOAT

Meaning: Be in the same unpleasant situation as other people

Usage: Both the rival startups shut down within two years and found themselves in the **same boat**.

368

369

SAVE SOMETHING FOR A RAINY DAY

Meaning: Reserve something (especially money) for difficult days

Usage: I opened a fixed deposit so that I could have sufficient funds for my marriage. In my experience, it is always wise to **save money for a rainy day**.

SCALE BACK

Meaning: Decrease something in size, volume or production

Usage: The Company had to **scale back** its operations after suffering a heavy loss.

370

SCALE UP

Meaning: Increase something in size, volume or production

Usage: The startup decided to **scale up** its manufacturing capacity after received Series A funding.

371

SCRATCH THE SURFACE

Meaning: Deal with a matter only in a brief way

Usage: The latest expose by the media channel concerning the wrongdoings of the firm barely **scratched the surface** of the matter.

372

SEE EYE TO EYE

Meaning: Be in full agreement

Usage: The two managers didn't see **eye to eye** on any issue.

373

SEE SOMETHING THROUGH

Meaning: Persist with something till the end when it is finished

Usage: It was crucial that the manager see the solar power project **through the end**.

374

SEE THE LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL

Meaning: See something positive in a difficult and dangerous situation

Usage: After hearing the news, the CEO felt that at last she could **see the light at the end of the tunnel**.

375

SEE THE WRITING ON THE WALL

Meaning: An ominous warning; a prediction of bad luck

Usage: The audit department failed to **see the writing on the wall** of the company.

376

377

SELF-MADE MAN

Meaning: An individual who has had humble beginnings but eventually became successful

Usage: Dhirubhai Ambani can be defined as a 'self-made man' as he successfully built a major business empire from modest means.

SELL LIKE HOTCAKES

Meaning: Bought quickly in large numbers

Usage: The latest novel released by the noted author is **selling like hotcakes**.

378

SELL SOMEONE A BUM STEER

379

Meaning: Provide incorrect information (intentionally or unintentionally) to someone

Usage: The printing machine I purchased turned out to be faulty. The vendor has **sold me a bum steer!**

SERVE NO PURPOSE

Meaning: Have no particular use or function

Usage: The facilities department **serves no purpose** in a startup. It is better to get rid of it altogether.

380

SET THE PACE OF

Meaning: Lead the way in doing something

Usage: The senior manager **set the pace** of the project by burning the midnight oil and giving the much required impetus to the team.

381

SET THE RECORD STRAIGHT

Meaning: Give the true version of events that have been incorrectly reported

Usage: It was time to **set the record straight** on the baseless rumors swirling around regarding the company's dissolution.

382

SET THE STAGE FOR

Meaning: Prepare the conditions to make it possible for something to happen

Usage: We worked extensively on the financial aspects of the project, thus **setting the stage for** the final presentation to the client.

383

SHOOT DOWN IN FLAMES

Meaning: Refuse someone's idea or suggestion completely

Usage: The suggestion of the trainee was **shot down in flames** because it seemed really unrealistic.

384

385

SHOOT ONE'S MOUTH OFF**Meaning:** Boast or talk too much**Usage:** One should become happy at small successes and start **shooting one's mouth off**. It is better to stay restrained and humble.**SHOOT SOMETHING DOWN****Meaning:** To reject, foil, or turn down something**Usage:** The proposal of the trainee was **shot down** by the manager.

386

387

SIT ON THE FENCE**Meaning:** Not make a decision when two options or possibilities are presented**Usage:** I decided to **sit on the fence** when it came to voting for the senior HR executive as both candidates were unfit.**SIT ON THE SIDELINES****Meaning:** A position in which one is not actively participating**Usage:** When there was no project in the company, it benched its employees. That meant you had to **sit on the sidelines** and do nothing productive.

388

SKATE ON THIN ICE

Meaning: In a delicately precarious situation

Usage: Mohan was **skating on thin ice** through his constant arguments with managers.

389

SMOOTH SAILING

Meaning: Easy progress, without any difficulty

Usage: There was no **smooth sailing** in the company's acquisition discussions with its stakeholders.

390

SPILL THE BEANS

Meaning: Reveal some secret details unintentionally

Usage: Mohit **spilled the beans** of the planned bonus by the company, which was supposed to be a surprise during the appraisal period.

391

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Meaning: Reveal some secret details unintentionally

Usage: Mohit **spilled the beans** of the planned bonus by the company, which was supposed to be a surprise during the appraisal period.

392

393

STAND ONE'S GROUND

Meaning: Be firm on one's position, in the face of some solid opposition

Usage: Despite the harsh criticism from her superiors, Priyanka **stood her ground**.

START FROM SCRATCH

Meaning: Start from the very beginning, without any prior knowledge or preparation

Usage: If you want to make it big in the field of data science, you need to **start from the scratch** and learn coding.

394

START/GET THE BALL ROLLING

395

Meaning: Cause something to start happening

Usage: Once we receive the funding, let's **get the ball rolling** on all our pending projects.

STICK ONE'S NECK OUT

Meaning: Put yourself at personal risk by speaking your own mind

Usage: Please don't let me down by indulging in fraudulent activities. I have **stuck my neck out** more than once for you.

396

STICK TO ONE'S GUNS

Meaning: Refuse to budge or change a stand despite facing immense criticism

Usage: Despite the client's critical feedback, the team **stick to their guns** regarding the project they had completed.

397

STRAIGHT FROM THE HORSE'S MOUTH

Meaning: Hearing directly from an authoritative or dependable source

Usage: The entire confusion was cleared after we heard **straight from the horse's mouth**. The CEO himself dispelled any rumors of the company being dissolved.

398

STRAIGHT FROM THE SHOULDER

Meaning: In a frank and candid manner

Usage: The company head expressed his disappointment at the performance of the employees in a speech **straight from the shoulder**.

399

STRETCH A POINT

Meaning: Do something that is usually not acceptable

Usage: You are my friend's son and that's why I am **stretching a point** for you. Otherwise, this kind of behavior is not acceptable.

400

401

STRIKE A HAPPY MEDIUM

Meaning: Find a compromise position between two extremes

Usage: Mary wanted to stay in an upscale hotel while John wanted to stay at a guesthouse. They decided to **strike a happy medium** by settling for a 3-star hotel.

SWEEP SOMETHING UNDER THE CARPET

Meaning: Hide a problem or difficulty in the hope that it will be forgotten

Usage: The whistleblower's allegations of a toxic work culture in the company were **swept under the carpet** by the top management.

402

403

SWING THE LEAD

Meaning: Shirk duty by making excuses

Usage: The newly-hired girl started **swinging the lead** by making various excuses.

TAKE A DIM VIEW OF

Meaning: Regard with disapproval

Usage: The marketing head **took a dim view** of the employee's suggestion because he did not have a lot of experience in the field.

404

TAKE A HARD LINE ON

Meaning: Be severe in the way you deal with something or someone

Usage: The company decided to **take a hard line on** every employee accused in the #MeToo scandal and suspended to you.

405

TAKE A LEAF OUT OF SOMEONE'S BOOK

Meaning: Imitate or copy someone successful in a specific manner

Usage: **Taking a leaf out of Steve Jobs' book**, many entrepreneurs have revolutionized their way of thinking.

406

TAKE CARE OF THE PENNIES AND THE POUNDS WILL TAKE CARE OF THEMSELVES

Meaning: Take care of the little things and the bigger things will take care of themselves

Usage: If we take care of the small habits on a daily basis, we wouldn't have to worry about bigger problems. **Take care of the pennies and the pounds will take care of themselves.**

407

TAKE IT WITH A PINCH OF SALT

Meaning: Regard something as exaggerated and suspect its credibility

Usage: The senior manager's threat to shut down the company was **taken with a pinch of salt** by everyone as she always made such threats.

408

409

TAKE THE BULL BY THE HORNS

Meaning: Deal with a dangerous situation in a smart and decisive manner

Usage: After being burdened with excessive projects, Mohit **took the bull by the horns**.

TAKE THE EASY WAY OUT

Meaning: Do something in the easiest way possible, especially in a difficult situation, than handle it properly

Usage: Rather than prepare and face his fears for the business presentation, Akhilesh **took the easy way out** by skipping it altogether.

410

411

TAKE THE LONG VIEW OF

Meaning: Think about things long-term instead of the things that are happening right now

Usage: We should only pursue those courses after **taking a long view of** the future trends in various job sectors.

TAKE THE PLUNGE

Meaning: Commit yourself to something that you are a bit reluctant or nervous about

Usage: In order to improve his communication skills, Sanchita decided to **take the plunge** and join a good coaching institute.

412

TAKE THE ROUGH WITH THE SMOOTH

Meaning: Accept the unpleasant aspects of life as well as the good

Usage: In sports, one must learn to **take the rough with the smooth** as wins and losses keep happening.

413

TALK AT CROSS-PURPOSES

Meaning: Talk or discuss something without understanding one another's goals

Usage: The two officials realized they were **talking at cross-purposes** when their topics went into different tangents.

414

TELL A FEW HOME TRUTHS

Meaning: Tell some unpleasant facts about someone

Usage: It is time to **tell Shalini a few home truths**. If she doesn't practice, she won't be able to become a fluent public speaker ever.

415

TELL WHERE TO GET OFF

Meaning: Express criticism or disagreement in a very direct and angry manner

Usage: I am really annoyed with the work I have been burdened with. The next time she asks me for another task, I will ask her **where does get off**.

416

417

THAT'S A DIFFERENT KETTLE OF FISH

Meaning: Something or someone that is completely different from what was discussed

Usage: When we met the boss, he seemed quite warm and affable, unlike our perception of him. He was a **different kettle of fish**.

THAT'S THE WAY THE COOKIE CRUMBLES

Meaning: Used when something bad has happened and one has to accept the way things are

Usage: I didn't qualify for the interview despite giving my best. I guess **that's the way the cookie crumbles**.

418

THE BALL IS IN YOUR COURT

Meaning: It is up to you to make the next move

Usage: I have done everything on my part. Now **the ball is in your court** and you need to take a decision regarding the allocation of

419

THE BE-ALL AND END-ALL

Meaning: Something which is considered to be a perfect specimen or the best or most desired example

Usage: The Oscars are **the be-all and end-all** of everything in moviemaking.

420

THE BEGINNING OF THE END

Meaning: The point at which everything starts to crumble or break down

Usage: Once the client projects started reducing, we knew it was the **beginning of the end**.

421

THE CALM BEFORE THE STORM

Meaning: A peaceful and tranquil period before something chaotic

Usage: Girish could fathom **the calm before the storm** in the office. He knew that the silence of the employees would soon be followed by outrage over the sexual harassment claims.

422

THE DRIVING FORCE

Meaning: A person or thing that motivates

Usage: Your own will-power has to be **the driving force** behind your success.

423

THE ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM

Meaning: A serious issue that is undesirable, but is being intentionally ignored

Usage: During the meeting, everyone spoke their point but no one wanted to bring up **the elephant in the room** about the senior manager's sexual harassment.

424

425

THE EXCEPTION PROVES THE RULE

Meaning: Something which contradicts, thus proving it is almost true

Usage: Most men do not mature until they are 28 years old. However, some of them show wisdom at the age of 15 itself. They are the **exceptions that prove the rule**.

THE GROUND RULES

Meaning: The basic principles

Usage: To ensure the successful completion of a project, it is essential to set **the ground rules**.

426

427

THE INS AND OUTS OF

Meaning: The additional details required to do something

Usage: You should know **the ins and outs of** the catering business before venturing into this field.

THE LONG AND SHORT OF IT

Meaning: The main idea, the important points

Usage: **The long and short of** the speech was that it highlighted the issue of women's safety.

428

THE MORE THE MERRIER

Meaning: The more people or things there are, the better a situation will be

Usage: The project collaboration among the four countries was welcomed by the head of the research division. **The more the merrier!**

429

THE NUTS AND BOLTS

Meaning: The basic practical detail

Usage: To work on projects in financial modeling, one should know **the nuts and bolts** of accounting reports.

430

THE PECKING ORDER

Meaning: The hierarchical system in an organization

Usage: He was merely an associate in **the pecking order** of the company, and it would be several years before he became a manager.

431

THE PENNY DROPPED

Meaning: To indicate that someone has finally understood something

Usage: During the annual meeting, the shareholders realized that the CEO was talking about a rise in dividends. **The penny dropped** only when the CEO started talking about preference shares.

432

THE PROS AND CONS**433****Meaning:** Advantages and disadvantages**Usage:** There are a lot of **pros and cons** with a night shift job – you get higher professionally but at the same time your body cycle also gets disturbed.**THE RANK AND FILE****Meaning:** The ordinary members of an organization**434****Usage:** The **rank and file** of a company are what make up a company's strength.**THE THIN END OF THE WEDGE****435****Meaning:** The beginning of something bad that might seem harmless at present but can cause problems in the future**Usage:** The communal remarks seemed harmless at first but they were **the thin end of the wedge** of something that could blow up in the future.**THE TIP OF THE ICEBERG****Meaning:** A small, noticeable part of a much bigger problem**436****Usage:** The sexual harassment remarks by the CTO were just **the tip of the iceberg**. There were much serious allegations awaiting him.

THE TOP BRASS

Meaning: The highest authority in the organization

437

Usage: The decision to double the bonuses of the employees came from **the top brass** itself.

THE WHYS AND WHEREFORES**438**

Meaning: Underlying causes or reasons

Usage: Before taking over the reins of the company, it is mandatory to look over **the whys and wherefores** of its downfall.

THERE ARE NO TWO WAYS ABOUT IT

Meaning: When you have to emphasize that something is true

439

Usage: **There are no two ways about it** – our marketing pitch was weak and that's why we lost most clients to our competitor.

THERE'S MORE TO THIS THAN MEETS THE EYE**440**

Meaning: When the situation is not as simple as it seems

Usage: We need to read mutual funds offer documents carefully as there's **more to them than meets the eye**.

441

THERE'S NO SMOKE WITHOUT FIRE

Meaning: If negative things are said about someone or something, there is probably a good reason for it

Usage: If so many women are accusing the senior journalist of harassment then it could probably be true, as **there is no smoke without fire.**

THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX

Meaning: Think in an original or creative, not following the conventional thought process

Usage: Whenever MNCs come for campus placements in engineering colleges, they require the student to be able to **think outside the box.**

442

443

THROUGH THICK AND THIN

Meaning: Under all circumstances, no matter how difficult

Usage: The core team of the firm stayed together **through thick and thin**, thus contributing to its long-term success.

THROW CAUTION TO THE WINDS

Meaning: Behave in a way that is not considered sensible or careful

Usage: I **threw caution to the winds** and drove as fast as I could because it was an emergency.

444

THROW IN THE TOWEL

Meaning: Admit defeat

Usage: The basketball team **threw in the towel** after seeing they were no match for their much stronger opponents.

445

THROW THE BABY OUT WITH THE BATH WATER

Meaning: To discard something valuable when getting rid of something outdated or useless

Usage: One should not altogether dispose of old traditions while adopting new order. One should not **throw the baby out with the water**.

446

TIE ONESELF UP IN KNOTS

Meaning: Create problems for oneself

Usage: The more Rohit tried to deal with the complicated derivatives problem, the more he **tyed himself up in knots**.

447

TIE UP LOOSE ENDS

Meaning: Deal with some unresolved business

Usage: By addressing the employee grievances, we have **tyed up the loose ends** in an issue that could have potentially become a huge problem.

448

449

TIGHTEN ONE'S BELTS

Meaning: Take measures to reduce expenditure

Usage: Due to the rising inflation costs, the firm had to **tighten its belt** in order to avoid insolvency.

TILL THE COWS COME HOME

Meaning: For an indefinitely long time

Usage: The two managers could discuss and debate the issue **till the cows come home**.

450

451

TIME IS MONEY

Meaning: Time is a valuable resource, so it is better to things as quickly as possible

Usage: Rohit complained about the lack of time in his life, which was affecting his personal life. Indeed, **time is money**.

TIP THE SCALES IN ONE'S FAVOR

Meaning: Take a decision that causes the situation to be in your favor

Usage: Atul's decision to learn Big Data **tipped the scales** of the interview in his favor.

452

TO BE HIT HARD BY

Meaning: A situation that affects you a lot and you have difficulty dealing with it.

453

Usage: The employees were **hit hard by** the global recession.

TO BE SECOND NATURE

454

Meaning: Be so well-versed with a skill or habit that using it becomes an easy task for you

Usage: Archana had been listening to French shows for so long that it **became second nature** for her to converse in the language.

TO CLAMP DOWN ON

Meaning: Suppress or prevent something in a harsh manner

455

Usage: The company **clamped down on** any ideas by the employees to create a union.

TO DROP THE BALL

456

Meaning: Make a mistake, mishandle things

Usage: The marketing manager **dropped the ball** by ignoring the call of one of the biggest clients in the region.

457

TO GET WIND OF

Meaning: Learn a piece of information that is supposed to be secretive

Usage: Shalini **got wind of** the CEO's resignation through the internal channels of the company.

TO GO PRIVATE

Meaning: When a publicly traded company turns into a private entity

Usage: Elon Musk's plan to **go private** with Tesla did not sit well with the SEC, which imposed a heavy fine on him.

458

TO HAVE SEEN BETTER DAYS

459

Meaning: To be in a poor condition

Usage: The company's dilapidated infrastructure **had seen better days**.

TO KEEP UNDER WRAPS

Meaning: Keep something concealed until some future time

Usage: The scandalous affair at the company was **kept under wraps** until the client left.

460

TO LAY OUT A PLAN

Meaning: To arrange something in plan or position

461

Usage: The director **laid out the plan** earmarking the company's success at the

TO MAKE A VIRTUE OF NECESSITY

462

Meaning: Do something unpleasant with dignity and grace only because they are forced to

Usage: Once Sanjay was fired from his job, he **made a virtue of necessity** by stressing on the importance of being cautious with money.

TO PAY A PREMIUM

Meaning: An amount that is usually more than the regular

463

Usage: To get the iPhone at an early date, you will have **to pay a premium**.

TO PLUG A PRODUCT

464

Meaning: To publicize or advertise a product

Usage: After writing his latest book, the author kept **plugging his product** on social media.

465

TO PUT A LID ON**Meaning:** Put a stop to something**Usage:** It was time to **put a lid on** all the nefarious activities happening in the country.**TO RALLY THE TROOPS****Meaning:** To gather around people and urge them to work harder**Usage:** As the deadline for the project approached, the team leader **rallied the troops** and goaded them to work harder.

466

TO THE TUNE OF

467

Meaning: Amounting to or involving**Usage:** The company was deep down in debt **to the tune of** Rs. 120 crores.**TO THROW COLD WATER ON****Meaning:** Be discouraging or negative about**Usage:** The manager **threw cold water** on the plans of the team to go for an outing.

468

TOE THE LINE

Meaning: Accept the rules and policies of an official authority (in an unwilling manner)

469

Usage: Shashank was asked **to toe** the official company **line** and not make a hue and cry about the different pay structure.

TOUCH BASE

470

Meaning: Communicate with someone for a short period of time

Usage: The salesperson decided to **touch base** with the client at the nearby mall.

TURN THE TABLES ON

Meaning: Change a situation so that you have an advantage over someone who earlier had an advantage over you

471

Usage: Rashmi **turned the tables on** her accusers when she pulled up their records of corruption and fraud.

TWIST SOMEONE'S ARM

472

Meaning: Pressurize someone into doing something that they are reluctant to do

Usage: The director twisted **his manager's arm** and now he will work on Saturdays as well to meet the deadline.

473

UNDER THE TABLE**Meaning:** A secret, hidden action**Usage:** The deal was done **under the table**, away from prying eyes.**UP-AND-COMING****Meaning:** Looking promising and likely to be successful**Usage:** Big data and solar energy are two **up-and-coming** domains for the tech company.

474

475

UP AND RUNNING**Meaning:** In operation, functional**Usage:** Tesla's new Gigafactory in China is **up and running** since last month.**UP IN ARMS****Meaning:** Protest strongly against something**Usage:** The people were **up in arms** against the new medicare policy implemented by the government.

476

UPHILL BATTLE

Meaning: A very difficult struggle

Usage: Sustaining your start-up in a difficult business environment is an **uphill battle** for entrepreneurs.

477

UPPER HAND

Meaning: Gain an advantage; a dominating or controlling position

Usage: The company gained the **upper hand** over its rival firm by properly understanding the needs of its consumers.

478

UPS AND DOWNS

Meaning: A succession of good and bad experiences

Usage: If you are a risk-taking investor, then **ups and downs** in the market are part of the experience.

479

WALKING A TIGHTROPE

Meaning: Be in a very difficult situation where a small mistake could lead to very harmful results

Usage: Keeping everyone happy is akin to **walking a tightrope**, as people can feel offended very easily.

480

481

WARTS-AND-ALL

Meaning: Refers to features and qualities that are not attractive or appealing

Usage: They accepted the president **warts-and-all**, despite knowing about his abusive behavior towards women.

WASH ONE'S HANDS OF

Meaning: Stop being involved intentionally with someone or something

Usage: In the wake of the Me Too accusations, the comedy company decided to **wash its hands off** the matter by denying any prior association with the accused.

482

483

WASTE NOT, WANT NOT

Meaning: Advice to use a resource carefully as it might be needed in the future

Usage: One should be careful with the amount of stationery used at office, as excess expenditure can be curbed through its judicious use. **Waste not, want not.**

WE'LL CROSS THAT BRIDGE WHEN IT COMES TO IT

Meaning: Delay worrying about something until it actually does happen

Usage: What happens if I get fired from the company? Well, we **will cross that bridge when it comes to it.**

484

WEIGH IN ON

Meaning: To give one's opinion or analysis on something

Usage: Rakesh decided to **weigh in on** the sexual harassment case, even though his comments were not welcome.

485

WHAT MAKES SOMEONE TICK

Meaning: What motivates someone

Usage: The promise of monetary rewards is a big factor in **making someone tick**.

486

WHAT YOU LOSE ON THE SWINGS YOU GAIN ON THE ROUNDABOUTS

Meaning: When negative aspects of a situation are balanced by positive elements.

Usage: The increase in taxes was associated with a rise in social welfare benefits. So **what you lose on the swings you gain on the roundabouts**.

487

WHEEL AND DEAL

Meaning: Try various methods to seek and advantage or profit, often unscrupulously

Usage: There are many investors at the Wall Street who **wheel and deal** their way to a fortune.

488

489

WHEN IT COMES TO THE CRUNCH

Meaning: When a situation becomes extremely critical and a decision needs to be taken

Usage: **When it comes to the crunch** with your superior's behavior, you need to take a decision and quit.

WHEN THE CHIPS ARE DOWN

Meaning: When a situation becomes very dangerous or critical

Usage: **When the chips are down**, our CEO came out all guns blazing to secure a major deal for the company.

490

491

WHET ONE'S APPETITE FOR

Meaning: Arouse one's interest or eagerness

Usage: On the job, making frequent presentations will **whet your appetite for** public speaking.

WISHFUL THINKING

Meaning: Imagining an unlikely event to happen in the foreseeable future

Usage: Apple Inc. today is the result of **wishful thinking** of Steve Jobs.

492

WORD OF MOUTH

Meaning: The passing of information from person to person through oral communication

493

Usage: The movie became popular only through the **word of mouth**, as no marketing budget had been allocated.

WORTH A FORTUNE**494**

Meaning: Worth a great deal of money

Usage: The antique piece was **worth a fortune** in the market.

WORTH ONE'S SALT

Meaning: Good or competent at one's profession

495

Usage: Any good teacher **worth his salt** can easily inspire students.

WRONG SIDE OF THE BED**496**

Meaning: An expression to say that you started the day feeling grumpy, tired, and uncomfortable

Usage: I have had a bad day. It seems like I woke up on the **wrong side of the bed**.

497

YOU CAN'T KEEP A GOOD MAN DOWN

Meaning: A competent and efficient person will always recover from setbacks

Usage: If you are skilled enough, you will be in demand no matter what the job situation is.
You can't keep a good man down!

YOU CAN'T SEE THE WOOD FOR THE TREES

Meaning: Be unable to understand a situation because you are too involved in it

Usage: By focusing too much on the accounting details, the manager overlooked the corporate finance issues of the company. This happens when **you can't see the wood for the trees**.

498

YOU CAN'T TEACH AN OLD DOG NEW TRICKS

Meaning: It is quite difficult to change the character or teach new skills to someone

Usage: Despite teaching my father numerous times how to use the smartphone, he was still clueless. I guess you **can't teach an old dog new tricks!**

499

YOU SCRATCH MY BACK, I WILL SCRATCH YOURS

Meaning: Tell someone them that if they help you, you will help them

Usage: If you help me get the contract, I will ensure you get your part of it. **You scratch my back, I will scratch yours!**

500

