

**THIS COMPILED COURSE BOOK IS PREPARED AND USED FOR  
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**Faculty of Arts**

**3<sup>rd</sup> Year Arts**

**English Dept. Program**

**LISTENING & SPEAKING**

**AY 2023-2024**

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## **LISTENING & SPEAKING**

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**Faculty of Arts**

**3<sup>rd</sup> year Arts**

**Compiled by Dr. Heba Abdelraheim Alkady**

**A Y (2023-2024)**

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Conversational English Expressions

BASIC SOCIAL ENCOUNTERS

Greetings

1 Simple greetings

Hi! Hello! Hello there! Howdy! Hey! Yo! (slang)

2 General greetings How are you? How's it going?

How's it been? How is everything? How's everything?

How have you been?

How have you been? How've you been? How you

been? (informal) How's tricks? (informal) What have

you been up to? What's new? (informal) What's up?

(informal) Wusup? / Wassup? (slang) What's

happening? (slang) What's going on? (slang) 3

Greetings for various times of the day Good

morning. Morning. Mornin'. (informal) How are you this

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bright morning? Good afternoon. Afternoon. Goodevening.

Evening.

Greeting a person you haven't seen in a  
long time

I haven't seen you in years!

Long time no see! (informal) I haven't seen you in  
an age! I haven't seen you in a month of  
Sundays! a month of Sundays = a long time

5 Welcoming someone who has returned Welcome back!

Welcome back, stranger! Long time no see! ( cliché) Where  
were you? Where have you been? Where did you  
go?

6 Expressing surprise at meeting someone

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What a surprise to meet you here! Imagine meeting you here! ( cliché) Fancy meeting you here. ( cliché) Never thought I'd see you here! What are you doing in this neck of the woods? neck of the woods = part of town, location What are you doing in this part of town? What are you doing out of the office?

What are you doing out of the office?

Where've you been hiding yourself? What have you been up to? Shouldn't you be in school? Shouldn't you be at work? Have you been keeping busy? You been keeping busy? Been keeping busy? 7 After you have greeted someone We seem to keep running into each other. Haven't we met before? We have to stop meeting like this. ( cliché) Didn't we meet at that party last week? I'm sorry; I've forgotten your

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name. I've been meaning to call you. 8

Concerning a journey or vacation

How was it? How did it go? Did everything go OK?

Did you have fun? You'll have to tell us all about  
it. Did you take any pictures? Do you have pictures?

Were the locals friendly? Were the natives friendly?

Did you bring me anything? We missed you. We  
missed you around here. We've missed you  
around here. It just wasn't the same without you.

Small Talk

9 Expressing your state of health and happiness Fine.

I'm fine. I'm cool. (slang) Keeping cool. Dandy. (informal)

Fine and dandy. Great. Couldn't be better. Happy as  
a clam. (cliché) Okay. All right. (I) can't complain. No  
complaints. I have nothing to complain about.

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10 Telling how you have been doing—positive Keeping busy.

Keeping myself busy.

Keeping myself busy. Been keeping myself busy. Keeping out

of trouble. Been keeping out of trouble. Been up

to no good. (informal) Been keeping my nose

clean. (informal)

11 Telling how you have been doing—neutral

Getting by. Been getting by. Fair to middling. (folksy)

So-so. (informal) Plugging along. (informal) Could

be worse. Could be better. (Just) muddling through.

Same as always. Same as usual. Same o(l)' same o(l)'

(informal)

12 Telling how you have been doing—negative Not good. Not

so good. Not too good.

Not too good. None too good. Not well. Not very well.

Not so well.



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Not too well. None too well. Not so hot. Not too hot.

None too hot. Not great. Not so great. None too great.

Crummy. (slang) Kind of crummy. (slang) Lousy. (slang)

I've seen better days. I've had better days. Could  
be better. I've been better.

I've been better. I've been under the weather.

13 Explaining that you have been busy I'm busy. Keeping  
busy. Keeping myself busy. Been keeping  
myself busy. I'm swamped. swamped = overwhelmed,  
as with a swamped boat I'm snowed under. snowed  
under = as if buried in snow I don't have  
time to breathe. I don't have time to think. There  
aren't enough hours in the day. Not a moment  
to spare. I've been running around with my head cut

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off. (informal) I've been running around like a

chicken with its head cut off. (informal)

14 Inviting a friend for a drink or coffee Do you  
have time for coffee? How about a cup of  
coffee? Let's go get coffee. Do you have any time?

Let's go for coffee. Let's go for a beer. Let's go for  
a drink. Introductions

15 Introducing someone to someone else

I'd like you to meet my friend Mary. I'd like you  
to meet Mary. This is my friend Mary. John, (this  
is) Mary. Mary, John. Mary, have you met

John? Mary, do you know John? Mary, shake

hands with John Jones. Do you two know each other?

Have you met? Have you two been introduced? Haven't you  
been introduced? Oh, I'm sorry; how silly of me.  
This is Mary. Mary, John is the guy I was

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telling you about. (informal) You two have a lot  
in common

- . 16 When you have just been introduced to someone Good  
to meet you. Nice to meet you. Nice meeting you. How  
nice to meet you. (formal) How very nice to meet  
you. (formal) What a pleasure to meet you. (formal)  
It's a pleasure to have finally met you.  
(formal) I am pleased to make your acquaintance. (formal)  
I'm happy to  
meet you. I'm glad to meet you. Glad to meet you.  
Charmed. (formal) A pleasure. (formal)

- 17 After you have been introduced to someone I've been  
wanting to meet you for some time. John has told me  
all about you. John has told me so much about you. I've  
heard so much about you. I've heard so much about you  
I feel I know you already. So we finally meet face

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to face. We've exchanged e-mails; it's nice to meet  
in person. I'm sorry, what was your name again? I  
didn't catch your name. I'm terrible at names.

18 Asking how someone is

How are you? How's your family? How's the family?

How's the family? How are you doing? How are you  
doing today? How you doing? Are you doing OK?

How are you feeling? How you feeling? Are you  
feeling better today? How have you been? How  
you been?

19 Asking someone how things are going

How're things? How're things with you? How're things  
going? How's with you? How's by you? (slang)

How's business? How's tricks? (slang) How's it shakin'?

(slang) How's everything? How's every little thing?

(folksy) How's everything going?

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How's it going? How goes it? How goes it with you? How  
are you getting on? How are you getting  
along? How's the world (been) treating you?

Ending a Conversation

20 Signaling the end of a conversation Oh, look  
at the time! It's getting later. Well, David, it's  
really good to see you, but I really must go.

It's been fun talking to you. (It's been) nice chatting  
with you. It's so good to see you again. We have  
to make plans to get together some time. Let's do lunch  
sometime.

21 Ending a telephone conversation

I really have to go now. We'll talk sometime.

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I really have to go now. We'll talk sometime.

There's someone on the other line. I must say good-bye  
now. The doorbell is ringing. I'll call you back.

Can I call you back? Something has come up. I have to  
get back to my work. I'll call again later. Can  
we continue this later? My other line is ringing. I  
have to get back to work before the boss sees  
me. I won't keep you any longer. I'll let you go  
now.

22 Ending a conversation abruptly I'm going to  
have to run. Must run. (informal) I'm all out of  
time. I'll have to say good-bye now. Look at the  
time. I really must go. It's been great talking  
to you, but I have to go. Wow! I'm late. Look,  
I'll call you. Sorry, but I have to leave now. Let's  
continue this another time. I really must go.

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Good-Byes

23 Simple good-byes Good-bye. Bye. Bye-bye. So

long. Ta-ta. (informal) Farewell. Cheerio.

Hasta la vista. (Spanish) Adios. (Spanish) Auf wiedersehen.

(German) Sayonara. (Japanese) Arrivederci. (Italian)

Au revoir. (French) Adieu. (French) Ciao. (Italian) Good day.

(formal) Good evening. (formal) Good night. Good-bye

until later. Good-bye until next time. Good-bye for now.

See you later. See you later, alligator. (slang) Later,

gator. (slang) Later. (informal) I'll try to catch you

later. I'll catch you later. Catch you later.

Catch you later. I'll talk to you soon. Let's get together

soon. I'll be seeing you. I'll see you real soon.

See you. See ya. (informal) See you soon. See you real

soon. See you around. See you in a little

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while. See you next year. See you then. See you  
tomorrow.

24 Taking leave of someone Good running into you.

running into you = meeting up with you Nice running

into you. Nice talking to you. Take care. (It was)

good to see you. (It was) nice to see you. Nice

meeting you. It was a pleasure meeting you.

(formal) It is a pleasure to have met you.

(formal) It's been a real pleasure. (formal)

25 Leaving a place

Are we ready to leave? Are you about finished? Are you

ready to go? Ready to go? Ready to roll? (slang)

Are we away? (slang) Let's blow. (slang) blow

= leave Let's get out of this taco stand. (slang)

taco stand = a cheap place; an undesirable

place Let's blow this joint. (slang) = Let's leave this



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place. Let's go while the going's good. ( cliché)

Let's = Time to, We've got to Let's get while

the getting's good. ( cliché) Let's head out. Let's

beat a hasty retreat. ( cliché) Let's make tracks.

(informal) make tracks = leave a trail (as we

go) Let's motor. (slang) to motor = to

leave by automobile Let's hit the road. (slang)

Let's boogie. (slang) Let's split. (slang)

Let's make like a tree and leave. (jocular) Let's make

like the wind and blow. (jocular) Let's make like a

banana and split. (jocular) Exit stage right. Exit stage left.

Retreat! (slang)

26 When someone is leaving on a journey

Bon voyage! Have a good trip! Have a nice flight.

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Have a nice trip. Have a safe trip. Have a safe journey.

Drive carefully. Take care of yourself. Take care. We'll miss  
you. All the best.

27 Making plans to keep in touch with someone

I'll call you when I get home. Call when you get there.

Don't forget to call. Write me. Let's write. You've got my  
e-mail address? Text me. I'm on Facebook. Facebook  
= Twitter, MySpace, LinkedIn, etc. Let's do lunch. I'll  
be in touch. Let's keep in touch. Agreeing

28 Simple agreement

Yes. Yeah. (informal) Yep. (informal) Yup. (informal) Right. You're  
right. Right you are. Right on! Right-o. Uh-huh. Sure. Sure  
thing. You got it. You bet. Absolutely. By all  
means.

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29 Stating your concurrence This is true.

That's true.

That's true. You're right. Ain't that the truth? Ain't it the truth?

That's right. That's for certain. That's for sure. That's for darn sure. That's for damnsure. (mildly vulgar)

Damn straight! (mildly vulgar) It works for me.

Well said. I agree. I agree with you 100 percent. I couldn't agree with you more. I have no problem with that.

We see eye to eye on this. I couldn't have said it better. You took the words right out of my mouth. I'll drink to that!

30 Expressing acceptance

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It's fine. I think it's fine. It's good enough. It's  
satisfactory. It'll do. It'll serve the purpose. I like it. I  
love it. I think it's great. I like the color. I like  
the texture. I like the flavor. It's got a good  
rhythm. It's wonderful. It's fabulous. It's ideal. It's a  
masterpiece.

It's perfect. It's A-1. This is second to none. This is  
perfect. This is far and away the best. This is the  
ultimate. It couldn't be better. Never been better.

There's none better. It doesn't get any better than this.

I've never seen anything like it. This is the cream  
of the crop. ( cliché ) This is the pick of the litter.

(idiomatic) litter = a group of newborn pups

This is the crème de la crème. ( cliché ) = This  
is the best of the best. This is head and shoulders  
above the rest. That suits me to a T. = That suits  
me fine. That's the ticket. (idiomatic) That's

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just what the doctor ordered. (idiomatic) That's

just what I needed. That hits the spot. (idiomatic)

That fits the bill. (idiomatic) That's it. That's the

greatest thing since sliced bread. ( cliché) It's in

a league of its own. I give it four stars. It

gets two thumbs up. (idiomatic) I've hit the

jackpot. jackpot = sum of money to be won

in gambling Bingo! (slang) = I did it! Jackpot!

(slang) = I did it!; It is good! Bull's-eye!

(slang) Bonus score! (slang)

31 Stating that you understand

I hear you. I hear you, man. I hear what you're  
saying. I see what you're saying. I can see what  
you're saying. I can see that. I see what you

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mean. I see where you're coming from. I

know. I know what you mean. Point well taken. I know

what you're talking about. I understand what

you're saying. Understood. I dig it. (slang) I can dig

it. (slang) I got you. Gotcha. (I) got it.

(I) got it. I follow you. I'm with you. I'm there with

you. I've been there. Read you loud and clear.

Roger. Roger, wilco. wilco = will comply Roger Dodger.

(slang)

32 Making sure you are understood

Do you know what I mean? Do you know what I'm

talking about? Know what I mean? Does that make

any sense? Am I making sense? Are you following

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me? Know what I'm saying? You know? Do you see  
what I mean?

Do you see what I mean? See what I mean? Don't  
you see? Do you get the message? Do you get  
the picture? Get the message? Get the picture?

Get my drift? Do you get it? Get it? Do you  
follow? Do you follow me? Dig? (slang) = Do you  
understand? Understand? Do you understand? Do you hear  
what I'm saying? Do you hear me? Do you see  
where I'm coming from? where I'm coming from  
= what my position is Do you agree? You're with me,  
right? Are you with me on this? Do we see eye  
to eye on this? Disagreeing

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33 Stating simple disagreement or refusal

No. Nope. No way. Not a chance.

Not a chance. Not! (slang) Uh-uh. I don't think so.

34 Stating categorical disagreement

That's not true. That's not right. You've got that  
wrong. You've got it all wrong. Wrong! You  
missed the boat. (idiomatic) You're missing the boat.  
(idiomatic) Wrong on both counts. You're wrong. You're  
dead wrong. You're off. You're way off base



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. 35 Stating strong disagreement

I disagree completely. I couldn't disagree (with you)  
more.

Horsefeathers! (slang) Bullshit. (taboo) That's BS. (mildly  
vulgar) Bull. (mildly vulgar) Baloney. (slang) That's a  
load of crap. (mildly vulgar) That's a lot  
of bull. (mildly vulgar) That's a lot of baloney.  
(slang) That's a bunch of baloney. (slang)  
That's a bunch of malarkey. (slang) Lies! That's  
a lie. That's a big, fat lie. (informal) You're lying  
through your teeth. Look me in the eye and say  
that.

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36 Stating your disagreement with a proposition

That's out of the question. That's unthinkable. That's  
insane. That doesn't even merit a response. I'll give  
that all the consideration it's due

.37 Expressing rejection

I can't stand it. I hate it.

I hate it. I don't care for it. I don't like it. It's not  
my style. It's not for me. It stinks. (informal)

It sucks. (mildly vulgar) It reeks. (informal) My  
kid could do that. It's awful. It's terrible. It's ugly.

It's hideous. It's dreadful. It's hell on earth. (informal) I  
don't get it. Don't quit your day job.

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38 Expressing refusal

No. Nope. (informal) No way.

No way. No way, José. (informal) No can do. (informal)

No, sir. No sirree. (folksy) No sirree, Bob. (folksy)

Sorry. Nothing doing. You're out of luck. In a pig's eye.

(idiomatic) When pigs fly. (idiomatic) When hell

freezes over. (informal) There isn't a snowball's

chance in hell. (informal) Not a chance. No chance.

Not if I can help it. Not likely. Not bloody likely.

(mildly vulgar) Absolutely not! It will be a cold

day in hell before I do that. (informal) Only

in your dreams. Dream on. Save your breath. Save it.

You're barking up the wrong tree. (idiomatic) Over my dead

body. (idiomatic) Forget it. If you think that, you've

got another think coming. Not in a million

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years. Not for a million dollars. You couldn't  
pay me to do it. Not in your wildest  
dreams. You wish. I'll be damned first. (mildly  
vulgar) I'll be damned if I do. (mildly  
vulgar) Damned if I will. (mildly vulgar) Like  
hell. (mildly vulgar) I'll see you in hell first.  
(mildly vulgar)

39 Stating that someone is wrong

What are you talking about?

What are you talking about? You don't know what  
you're talking about. You don't have a leg to stand  
on. You haven't got a leg to stand on. You don't  
know the first thing about it. You're really stretching

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the truth. You're way off base. You can lay that  
notion to rest.

40 Arguing about the facts

You've got it all wrong. You've got the facts wrong.

You've got your facts wrong. You haven't got the facts.

You haven't got the facts right. I don't think you've got

your facts straight. Don't speak until you've got

your facts straight. Next time get the facts straight.

(informal) Next time get the facts first. (informal)

Don't jump to conclusions.

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CONVERSATIONAL ENCOUNTERS

Focusing Attention

41

Getting someone's attention

Pardon me. (formal) Excuse me. Hey! (informal) Hey, you!

(informal) Yo! (slang)

42 Getting someone to listen to you

Look here. (informal) Listen here. (informal) Listen up.

(informal) Get a load of this. (informal) Now hear

this! (informal) Hear me out. Are you ready for this?

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(informal) Listen. (informal) Are you listening to me? Are you paying attention? I'm talking to you. Do you hear me?

Do you hear me? Do I have your ear? (idiomatic) Can I bend your ear a minute? (idiomatic) Am I making myself heard?

43 Directing attention to an object

t Look at this. Take a look at this.

Get a load of this. Take a gander at that. (informal)  
a gander = a look Feast your eyes on this. Look  
what we have here. Lookie here. (informal) Lookit.

(slang) Look here. Can you eyeball this (for a  
minute)? (slang) to eyeball = to look at

Can you believe your eyes? I don't believe my eyes.

Do my eyes deceive me? That's a sight for sore eyes.

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44 Confirming that you are paying attention

I hear you. I heard you. I'm listening. I'm still here.

I'm all ears. Launching the Conversation

45 Starting an informal conversation

Guess what? Have you heard the latest? Have you heard? Did

you hear what happened? Did you hear the news? Did

you get the scoop? (informal) the scoop =

the most recent news You'll never guess what I

heard. You'll never guess what I read online. Guess what

I just saw online. Guess what I just found out.

You won't believe this. You won't believe what Bill

just told me. Get a load of this. (informal) a



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load = a sampling Get this. (informal) Dig this.

(slang) to dig = to understand

46 Inviting someone to talk

You got a minute? Got a minute? I need to talk.

Can we talk? Can I talk to you? May I have a

word with you? (formal) Let's talk. Let's chew the fat.

(slang) Let's shoot the breeze. (slang)

47 Coming to the point of the matter

May I be frank? Let me be perfectly clear. Make no

bones ab it. (idiomatic) = Do not make any

bones of contention about this. Read my lips. (informal)

= Pay close attention to what I am saying. (To

a make a) long story short. ( cliché) Let's call a

spade a spade. ( cliché) Let me spell it out

for you. Here's the bottom line. the bottom

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line = the summation; the final and major  
point

48 Requesting that the speaker get to the point

What's your point? What's the point? What's the upshot?

the upshot = the result What's the bottom line? the

bottom line = the summation; the final and

major point What are you trying to say? What are

you trying to tell me? Get to the point. Get

to the heart of the matter. Cut to the chase.

(idiomatic) = Switch to the focal point of

something.

49 Various conversational phrases If I may

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. = If I may interrupt.; If I may add some  
information. Pardon my French. = Pardon my use  
of vulgar words. No pun intended. = I intended  
to make no joke or play on words. If you know what  
I mean. = I assume you understand what I  
mean. Know what I mean? (informal) = Do you  
understand what I am saying? You know what I'm  
saying? = Do you understand what I am saying?

You know?

You know? = Do you understand what I am saying?

Right? = Is that not so? OK? = Is that not so?

50 Encouraging someone to speak plainly

Enough already. (informal) Out with it! (informal) = Say it!;  
Speak out! Don't mince words. to mince = to  
cut up or disguise Spare (me) nothing. Lay it

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on the line. (informal) Tell it to me like a man.

(informal) Give it to me straight. (informal)

straight = unadorned Give it to me in plain

English. plain English = simple and direct

terms Don't beat around the bush. (idiomatic) Stop

beating around the bush. (idiomatic) Stop

circumventing the issue. Put your cards on the table.

(idiomatic) Stop speaking in circles. What does that

mean in English? (informal) Cut the crap. (mildly

vulgar) crap = dung = needless talk

51 Noting digressions in a conversation

That's beside the point. That's beside the question. That's

not at issue. That's not the issue. That's

irrelevant. That has nothing to do with it. That

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has nothing to do with what I'm talking  
about. That's another story. That's a whole  
'nother story. (folksy) That's a different ball  
of wax. (idiomatic) ball of wax = thing; matter  
That's a different kettle of fish. (idiomatic) kettle of fish =  
thing; matter That's another can of worms.  
(idiomatic) can of worms = set of problems  
That's a horse of a different color. (idiomatic) a horse  
of a different color = a different kind of problem  
altogether You're off on a tangent. You're getting  
off the subject. As you were saying . . .  
Getting back to the point. . . . But I digress.  
(formal)

52 Repeating what you have said

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Let me repeat myself. Allow me to repeat myself. (formal) At the risk of repeating myself . . . . As I've said . . . . As I am fond of saying . . . . To reiterate . . . . To repeat . . . . How many times do I have to tell you?

If I've told you once, I've told you a thousand times. ( cliché) If I've said it once, I've said it a million times. ( cliché)

53 When someone is being repetitious

So you said. Stop beating a dead horse. beating a dead horse = continuing to argue a point that has been won

Stop harping on that subject. harping on = dwelling on; talking about You sound like a broken record.

(idiomatic) broken record = a grooved LP album with a scratch that makes the same track

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repeat endlessly Must you belabor the point? All right,  
already. We get the point, already. We heard you,  
already.

54 Agreeing with a speaker

So it seems. So it would seem. Or so it would  
appear. As it were.

As it were. So to speak. In a manner of speaking.

55 Answers to “How did you find out?”

I heard it through the grapevine. the grapevine =  
a chain of rumors I heard it on the grapevine. A  
little bird told me. ( cliché ) I have my sources. I  
got it straight from the horse’s mouth.  
(idiomatic) from the horse’s mouth = from the

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source It's common knowledge. We live in a  
fishbowl. (informal) = We are completely on  
display.; We are openly visible to everyone. Word  
travels fast. ( cliché) News travels fast. ( cliché)  
Bad news travels fast. ( cliché) None of your  
business. (informal) Just never (you) mind. We have our  
ways (of finding these things out). (jocular) I  
plead the fifth. (informal) I'm taking the fifth.  
(informal) the fifth = the Fifth Amendment to the  
U.S. Constitution, which protects against self-  
incrimination I'm not one to kiss and tell. ( cliché) to  
kiss and tell = to do something secret and tell  
everyone about it Making Friends



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56 Expressing friendship

We're very close. We're the closest of friends. We're  
the best of friends. We're best friends. We're  
pretty tight. They're bosom buddies. She's my best  
friend. She's my closest friend. She's a dear  
friend. She's like a sister to me. He's like the  
brother I never had. We're like brothers.

57 Commenting on the uniqueness of someone

He's one of a kind. Sue's one of a kind. What  
a character! They don't make them like him anymore.

(cliché) After they made him, they broke the mold.

(cliché)

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58 Commenting on personal similarities

We're two of a kind. They're two of a kind.

We're cut from the same cloth. We're made from the same mold. We're birds of a feather. ( cliché ) We're like two peas in a pod.

59 Expressions used to make friends at a bar or café

May I join you? Is this stool taken? Is this seat taken? Do you care if I join you? Care if I join you?

Do you mind if I join you? Mind if I join you?

Care to join us? Can I buy you a drink? Could I buy you a drink? Could I get you something to drink? What are you drinking? Do you know who does this song?

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Do you know who does this song? does = sings  
Would you like to play darts? Let's play pool. pool =  
billiards

60 Inviting someone to dance Careto dance?

Would you like to dance? You want to dance?

(informal) Could I have the next dance? May

I have the next dance? (formal)

61 Approaching the opposite sex

That's a pretty outfit. (male to female) That's

a pretty dress. (male to female) What's

shaking? (slang) shaking = happening Don't I know

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you from somewhere? Didn't we go to high  
school together? Haven't I seen you here before? Do  
you come here often?

Do you come here often? What's a nice girl like you  
doing in a place like this? (male to female,  
cliché) Do you have a smoke? a smoke = a  
cigarette Do you have a light? a light = a  
match or cigarette lighter Do you have a cigarette?

Do you have change for the cigarette machine?

Would you like to go somewhere quieter? Are you  
going my way? Going my way? (cliché) Could I  
give you a lift? a lift = a ride Need a  
lift? Where have you been keeping yourself? Where have  
you been all my life? (cliché)

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62 Asking someone for a date

Are you free Saturday evening? Are you free Saturday night? Are you busy on the 15th? What are you upto this weekend? What are you doing next weekend? Would you like to go to dinner? Would you like to go out to dinner with me? I was wondering if you'd like to go out. I was wondering if you'd like to see a movie. If you're not doing anything, would you like to goto a party with me? If you don't have other plans, would you like to go dancing?

63 Turningsomeone down

I'm not interested. I'm seeing someone else. I have other plans. I've got something going on. Something suddenly came up. I have to wash my hair. My calendar is full. You're not my type. Not if

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you were the last man on earth.(rude) You must  
be joking. (rude) I don't feel up to it. I have  
a headache. Please. (with a disgusted tone of  
voice)

64 Bringing a conversation to an end

Let's call it a day. Let's call it a night. Let's  
call it quits. = Let's quit (and leave). Let's get  
out of here. Let's get going.

Let's get going. Let's go. We should be on our  
way. Let's bid our farewell. (formal) Let's say our  
good-byes. (formal) Complex Matters

65 Expressing support for someone

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I'll stand by you. I'm standing behind you. I am  
100 percent behind you. I'm with you. I'm on  
your side. I've got your back. (informal) You've got  
my support. You've got my backing. You've got my  
vote. You can count on me. You can lean on me.

You can trust me. You can put your trust in me.

You can put your trust in me. You can put your faith  
in me.

66 Offering help to someone

If there's anything I can do to help, please let  
me know. Let me know if there's anything I  
can do. I'm here if you need me. I'm here for

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you. If you need me, call. I'll always be there for  
you. I'll go to bat for you. to go to bat for  
you = to support you I'll take the rap.  
(slang) the rap = the blame

67 Expressing trust in someone

I have faith in you. I have the utmost faith in  
you. I have complete faith in you. I trust you  
completely. I trust you implicitly. I have faith in you.  
I have confidence in you.



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68 Expressing encouragement

Go on; you can do it! Just one more. Just a little harder. Hang in there. Stick with it. Stay at it.

Go for it. Give it a try. Give it a shot. a shot = a try Give it your best shot. Give it your best. Keep at it. Keep your nose to the grindstone. (idiomatic)= Keep bent over your work. = Keep working hard. Hang in there.(informal) Hang tough. (slang) Stick it out. (informal)

69 Encouraging someone to try something Have a go at it.

a go= a try Take a shot at it. (informal) a shot = a try Take a stab at it. (informal) a stab = a try

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Take a crack at it. (informal) a crack = a try Have  
a crack at it. Take a whack at it. (informal)  
a whack = a try Come on. (informal) It  
won't hurt you to try it. Everybody's doing it.  
Everyone else is doing it. It's all the rage. the rage  
= the current fad Try your luck. See what you can  
do. Nothing ventured, nothing gained. ( cliché) Go  
on. Get going. Get going already. Get moving. No  
pain, no gain. ( cliché) Get a move on. (informal)  
Get cracking. (slang)

70 Encouraging someone to stop stalling and do  
something

Let's see some action. (informal) It's now or never.

Take no prisoners! (informal) Fish or cut bait! (idiomatic)

Knock yourself out. (idiomatic) = Try really

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hard.; Work as hard as you can. Go for  
broke. (informal) = Risk everything. I expect to  
see some results soon. Are you just going to  
stand there all day? Are you just going to sit  
there? Aren't you going to do anything? Are you  
just going to sit there like a bump on  
a log? (informal) a bump on a log = a  
motionless object You're letting the world pass  
you by.

71 Expressing dissatisfaction with someone's efforts

That won't do. That won't do it.

That won't do it. That doesn't cut it. (idiomatic)to  
cut it = to do what is needed That  
doesn't cut the mustard. (idiomatic)to cut the

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mustard= to measure up to expectations That  
doesn't make the grade. to make the grade= to  
qualify Is that it? It's not up to snuff. Is that  
all? You call that finished? Once more with feeling.  
(cliché)

72 Asking someone to wait

Wait. Wait a moment. Wait a minute. Wait a sec(ond).

Wait one moment. Wait one minute. Wait one sec(ond).

Wait it out. Wait your turn.

Just a moment. Just a minute. Just a sec(ond). Just

one moment. Just one minute. Just one sec(ond).

Hold your horses. (idiomatic)= Wait a bit. Keep your

pants on. (informal) = Wait a bit. Keep your shirt

on. (informal) = Wait a bit.

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73 Encouraging someone to be patient and take things slowly

Take things as they come. Take it as it comes.

Take it one day at a time. Take things one day at a time. Take one day at a time. Time will tell.

(cliché) = We will know more in time. Rome

wasn't built in a day. (cliché) = Big projects

require a lot of time. A watched pot never boils.

(cliché) = Paying constant attention to something

you are waiting for will make the wait seem endless.

Good things come to him who waits. (cliché) One step

at a time.

One day at a time. Good things come to those who

wait. (cliché) Patience is a virtue. (cliché)

In good time. All in good time. Everything in its time.

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There's a time for everything. It will work out in the end.

Everything will come together. Everything will fall together.

Everything will fall into place. In the long run, everything will

be OK. (informal) In the long haul, it will all work

out. Everything will work itself out. I am confident it

will all work out. It ain't over till it's over.

(informal) It ain't over till the fat lady sings.

(cliché) = The opera is not over until the overweight

opera singer has done her solo. = The event will

not conclude until everything that was planned to

happen has happened.

74 Encouraging someone to be prudent—clichés Don't

jump the gun.

Don't jump the gun. to jump the gun = to start a

race before the starting gun is fired = to

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do something too early Don't go off half-cocked.

half-cocked = ill-prepared Don't go chomping at the

bit. chomp = to bite (as with an eager horse)

Don't put the cart before the horse. Don't count your

chickens before they hatch. = Don't base your

plans on something that hasn't developed yet. Don't

cross that bridge till you come to it. = We will

deal with that when the time comes. We'll cross that

bridge when we come to it. Don't get ahead of

yourself.

75 Giving advice to someone whose life is too  
busy

You can't please everybody. ( cliché ) You can't be all

things to all people. ( cliché ) You've got your

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fingers in too many pies. (idiomatic) You've got your

irons in too many fires. (idiomatic) You're burning

the candle at both ends. ( cliché) You're

taking too many things on. You're taking on too

much. You're doing too much. You're trying

to do too much. You're overcommitted. You're

overdoing it. You're carrying the world on your

shoulders. You need to set your priorities.

76 Giving instructions to someone you've lent  
something to

Take care of it. Take good care of it. I'm trusting  
you to take good care of it. Keep an eye on  
it. Guard it with your life. Don't let it out of  
your sight. I want this back. I want it back in



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one piece. in one piece = unbroken; unharmed Bring  
it back in one piece.

77 Introducing a secret

Just between you and me . . . Just between you,  
me, and the lamppost . . . This is  
between you, me, and the bedpost. This is  
between you, me, and the four walls. I'm telling  
you this in confidence. I'm telling you this in  
strict confidence. I'm telling you this in strictest  
confidence.

I'm telling you this in strictest confidence. Can you keep  
a secret? Don't repeat this, but . . . Don't

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let this get around, but . . . . Could you keep  
a secret? Confidentially .

78 Instructions about keeping a secret

Better keep quiet about it. Better keep still about it. Keep it  
to yourself. Don't breathe a word of this to  
anyone. Don't breathe a word of it. Don't let  
it out of this room. it = the secret Don't let  
this go any further. Don't tell a soul. a soul  
= a person Mum's the word. mum = a word  
referring to a closed mouth

It's on the QT. (slang) QT = quiet Play dumb. This is  
top secret. This is for your eyes only. This is  
for your ears only. Don't say I told you. Don't  
say who told you. This is off the record. off the

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record = not to be reported or quoted This  
is not for the record. This is not to be  
quoted. This is not for public knowledge. This is  
not public knowledge. This is not for  
publication.

79 Promising to keep a secret

I won't tell a soul. a soul = a person My lips  
are sealed. (cliché) It won't leave this  
room. Wild horses couldn't drag it out of me.  
(cliché) I'll take it to my grave. = I'll die  
without telling the secret to anyone.

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80 Forgetfulness

Where was I? = What was I saying? What was I  
saying? What were we talking about? I don't remember.

I have a mind like a sieve. a sieve = a  
strainer or colander I'm a little absentminded.

absentminded = forgetful I'd lose my head if it  
weren't attached. (informal) I've lost my train of  
thought. train of thought = sequence of thoughts

It's at the tip of my tongue. = It is about ready to  
be said. It's on the tip of my tongue. It's  
slipped my mind. The thought escapes me. It's left  
my head. What was your name again? What did  
you just say?

It went in one ear and out the other. (cliché)

Are we supposed to be someplace right now?

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81 When you are in trouble I'm in trouble.

I'm in big trouble. I'm in deep trouble. I'm in deep.

I'm in over my head. I'm in way over my head. I'm  
behind the eight ball. (idiomatic)= I'm in trouble  
with someone.

82 When someone is in trouble

Your goose is cooked. (idiomatic)= You are in  
trouble. You've really screwed up. (informal)  
You've done it now. Now you've done it. You've  
really done it this time. You're in for it. You're  
gonna get it. (informal) How could you do something  
so stupid? What kind of mess did you get yourself

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into? That's another fine mess you've gotten us  
into. (informal) How are you going to dig yourself  
out of this one? How are you going to get  
out of this one? You've made your bed; now lie  
in it. = You have created this situation, so you must  
endure it. You're up the creek without a paddle.

(informal) You're up a creek. (informal)

You're up the creek. (informal)

83 When you are out of money

I'm broke. broke = without any money I'm dead broke. I'm  
flat broke. I'm flatter than a pancake. (informal)  
flatter than a pancake = as flat broke as is  
possible I don't have a dollar to my name. to  
my name = in my ownership I don't have a  
penny to my name. I don't have a cent to my

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name. I don't have a red cent. (informal) red cent =  
a copper penny I'm busted. (slang) busted =  
without any money I'm as poor as a church  
mouse. (idiomatic) My pockets are empty. I have  
empty pockets. All I have is the shirt on my  
back. the shirt on my back = the clothes that  
you see me in I've got nothing but the shirt  
on my back. All I have is my good name.  
my good name = my reputation I don't know where  
my next meal is coming from. My savings are  
wiped out. I've lost everything. I'm bankrupt.

84 When someone is in debt

I'm in the red. red = red ink = indebtedness She's  
in over her head (in debt). (idiomatic) I'm up to

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my ears in debt. (idiomatic) Bill's writing rubber checks. a rubber check = a bad check (that bounces back from the bank because there is no money to pay it) I'm borrowing from Peter to pay Paul. (idiomatic) I'm robbing Peter to pay Paul. (idiomatic)

85 Expressing stressor anxiety

I'm going nuts. (slang) nuts = crazy I'm going crazy.

I'm losing my mind. I'm losing my marbles. (informal) losing my marbles = losing my intellect I'm freaking out. (slang) I'm spazzing out. (slang) I'm mad at the world. I need a break. I need some sleep. I'm going to explode. My head



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is going to explode. Everything is getting on  
my nerves. I can't take it anymore. I can't take  
another problem. I can't deal with this anymore. I'm on  
pins and needles. (idiomatic) on pins and needles  
= in anxious anticipation I'm on tenterhooks.

tenterhooks = a type of sharp nail used for fastening  
fabric I'm a bundle of nerves. I've got  
butterflies in my stomach. (idiomatic) = My  
stomach is feeling like it is fluttering. I'm  
coming apart at the seams. I'm falling apart at the  
seams.

86 When you are overworked and doing too much  
I'm burning the candle at both ends. ( cliché) I  
scarcely have time to breathe. I have no time to call  
my own.

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87 When someone is anxious and under stress

Calm down. Simmer down. Control yourself. (informal)

Don't go into hysterics. Don't be such a worrywart.

a worrywart = a person who worries a lot

Don't worry yourself sick. Don't lose sleep over it. Don't let

it get to you. Don't trouble yourself. You'll send

yourself to an early grave. an early grave = an early

death

88 Encouraging someone not to be offended

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—informal Don't get all bent out of shape! Don't get  
your nose out of joint! Don't be so sensitive!  
Learn to roll with the punches. I didn't mean any harm.

89 Encouraging someone not to be excited

Pull yourself together. Don't get excited. Don't get all  
excited. Don't get all worked up. Don't blow your  
stack. (slang) to blow your stack = to lose your  
temper; to go crazy Don't lose your cool. (slang)  
Don't blow your cool. (slang) Don't blow a gasket.  
(slang) Don't go into hysterics. Don't go into  
hysterics on me. Don't fly off the handle. Don't  
pop your cork. (slang) to pop your cork = to  
go crazy Don't work yourself into a tizzy. (informal)  
a tizzy = a dizzy, confused state Don't trun

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around like a chicken with its head cut off.

(informal) Restrain yourself. Would you restrain

yourself? Get a grip (on yourself). (informal) Would

you get a grip? (informal)

90 Encouraging someone to relax

Mellow out. (slang) = Adopt a calm attitude. Chill out.

(slang) Chill. (slang) Keep cool. (slang)

Cool it. (slang) Cool your jets. (slang) Cool off. (informal)

Cool down. (informal) Slow down. Simmer down. Calm

down. Be calm. Calm yourself. Relax. Deal with it.

(informal) Hold your horses. ( cliché) Keep your shirt

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on. (informal) Keep your pants on. (informal) Take a  
deep breath. Take it easy. Take it slow.

Take it slow. Take a tranquilizer! (informal) Take a pill!  
(informal)

91 Encouraging someone to be less aggressive

—informal Don't have a cow! Don't have a conniption  
fit. Don't throw a fit. Don't have a fit. Give  
it a break. Give it a rest. You got ants in  
your pants?

92 When someone is cold and unfeeling

—informal You're as cold as ice. You're a cold fish.

You're cold-blooded. You've got a heart of stone. You've  
got no heart. You're heartless. You're thick-  
skinned. Have you no qualms? Have you no scruples? Have  
you no conscience? Have you no thought for  
anyone but yourself? Think before you speak. Think

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before you act. Try putting yourself in my shoes. =Think what it is like to be in my situation.

93 What to say to a smoker

This is a nonsmoking area. This is a nonsmoking building. You'll have to step outside. Please observe the no-smoking signs. (formal) Can you put that out? Please put that out. I'm sorry, you'll have to put that out. I'm sorry, the smoke is bothering me. Have you ever thought of quitting? It's your funeral. (informal) You smoke like a chimney. (informal)

94 A smoker's response to a nonsmoker's complaint

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Mind your own business. Go to a nonsmoking area.

I can't quit. I tried quitting. I have no intention of  
quitting. Sorry

.95 Questions a smoker might ask

Got a match? You got a lighter? Can I bum a  
light? to bum = to beg Can I bum a  
cigarette off you? Can I have a drag? a drag  
= a puff of smoke Where is the smoking  
room? Where can you smoke around here? Do you  
mind if I smoke? Disputes

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96 Criticism of someone with whom you disagree

You're clueless.

(informal) You're without a clue. (informal) You wouldn't know the truth if it jumped up and bit you on the nose. (jocular) She doesn't know nothing.

(informal) You don't know beans. (informal) You don't know up from down. (informal) You don't know which end is up. (informal) You don't know quality from a hole in the ground. (informal) quality = art, value, truth, engines, etc. Don't you know anything?

Don't you know anything? How can you be so stupid?

(informal) Get your head out of the sand.

(idiomatic) That ain't the way I heard it. (folksy) That's not what I heard. Let me set you straight.



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97      Calling someone    crazy

You're off    your rocker.    (informal) You're    out    of    your  
mind.    (informal) He's two    bricks    shy    of    a    load.

(slang) You're    out    of    your tree. (slang)    You're

out of    your head. (informal) She's out    of    her    skull.

(informal)    You've    lost    your marbles.    (informal)

You're crazy.    (informal) You're    nuts. (informal) They

can't    be    serious. You're a    few    cards shy    of    a

full    deck. (idiomatic) You're    a    few    cards short of

a deck. (idiomatic) You aren't    playing    with    a    full

deck.    (idiomatic) You're one    sandwich    short of    a

picnic. (idiomatic) Your front porch    light    is    out.

You've gone    over the    edge. You've    gone off    the    deep end.

You're nutty    as    a    fruitcake. (cliché)

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98 Questioning someone's sanity Are you crazy?

Is he nuts? (slang) nuts = crazy Are you psychotic, or  
what? Are you out of your mind? Are you out of  
your head? Are you out of your gourd? (informal)  
gourd = head Are you out of your skull?  
(informal) Are you out of your tree? (slang)

Are you out of it? Have you gone crazy? Have you  
gone insane? Have you gone mad? Have you gone  
stark raving mad? Have you gone loco? (informal)  
loco (Spanish) = crazy Have you gone plumb  
loco? (informal) plumb loco = completely crazy

Have you lost your mind? Have you lost your senses?

Have you lost your marbles? Have you wiggled out?

(slang) Have you completely flipped out? (slang) Have  
you flipped your lid? (slang) Have you completely lost it?

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(informal) Have you completely lost touch with reality?

Have you taken leave of your senses?

Have you taken leave of your senses? Do you have a

screw loose? (slang) What planet are you

from? Do you have rocks in your head? (informal)

Do you have bats in your belfry? (slang) Are there

bats in your belfry? (slang) Are you playing

with a full deck? (slang)

99 Asking about the alertness of someone Hello?

(informal) What are you thinking? What's your deal?

(informal) What's your problem? (informal) What

([kind of] drugs) are you on? (informal) What have you

been smoking? (informal) Where's your head?

(informal) What's with you? (informal) Are you

serious? What planet are you on? (informal) Earth to Bill.

(informal)

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100 Encouraging someone to be more sensible

Get a life! (informal) Get real! Snap out of it. Get with  
the program. (informal) Come back to earth.  
(informal)

101 Asking in disbelief or disagreement

Truly? Really? For real? (informal) No kidding? No fooling?  
(informal) No lie? (informal) No way! (informal) Are  
you serious? Are you for real? (informal) Are you  
pulling my leg? Are you bullshitting me? (mildly  
vulgar) You're not making this up, are you?  
You're making this up, aren't you? You're not trying  
to pull one over on me, are you?

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102 When someone says something outrageous Unbelievable!

Get out of town! You're kidding! You've got to be kidding! You've got to be kidding me! Stop it!  
(informal)

Come on! (informal) Get out of here! (informal) I can't believe it! Do you expect me to believe that?

That blows my mind. (informal) Discussion and Resolution

103 Asking for an explanation

What do you mean? What are you saying? What are you trying to get at? What are you getting at? Do you mean to tell me? What's the bottom line? This all boils down to what? (idiomatic) How so? So what's the upshot? What's the point?

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104 Encouraging an explanation

I didn't get that. I didn't hear you. Cut to the chase. (idiomatic)

105 When you do not understand someone

I don't see what you're getting at. I don't get it. I don't follow you. I don't follow.

I don't follow. I'm not sure I follow. I'm not sure I get your point. I'm not sure I know what you mean.

106 When someone does not understand you

That's not what I meant. That's not what I said. I didn't mean that. I didn't say that. I said no

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such thing. I didn't mean to give you that  
impression. I didn't mean to imply that.

107 Criticizing someone's misunderstanding

Listen to me. Open your ears. (informal) Get the wax out of  
your ears. (informal) You're not listening to what  
I'm saying. You're only hearing what you want to  
hear. You're missing the point. That's not my  
point. That's not the point I'm trying to make.

That's not the point I'm trying to make. You've got  
it wrong. You've got it all wrong. You've got me  
wrong. You've twisted my words. You're putting  
words in my mouth. You're quoting me out of  
context. You're taking it out of context. You're  
blowing it out of proportion. You're blowing this  
all out of proportion.

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108 Attempting to put an end to a  
misunderstanding

Let me rephrase that. Let me clarify that. Allow me  
to clarify. Let me make myself clear. Let me make  
myself perfectly clear.

109 Encouraging someone to believe you

Honest.

Honestly. Truly. True. That's the truth. That's the honest  
truth. That's the honest-to-goodness truth. Honest to  
goodness. That's the truth, the whole truth, and  
nothing but the truth. Cross my heart and hope to  
die. (juvenile) Would I lie? Would I lie to  
you? Why would I lie? I swear. I swear to  
you. I swear on a stack of Bibles. (mild oath)  
I swear on my mother's grave. (informal) I



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swear to God. (mild oath) May God strike me down if

I am not telling you the truth.) (mild oath) That's

the gospel truth. (informal)

110 Asking to be trusted Take my word for it. You

have my word.

You have my word on this. I give you my word.

I give you my word. I give you my word of

honor. On my honor. Scout's honor. (juvenile) You

can count on it. You can bank on it. You can

take it to the bank.

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111 Stating that something is settled

It's cinched. It's locked up. It's sewn up. It's a sure thing. It's for sure. It's certain. It's in the bag.

It's a done deal. It's as good as done. Nothing can go wrong. What can go wrong? All's well that ends well.

(cliché) That's that. What's to go wrong? It's going to happen. There's no doubt in my mind. There's not a doubt in my mind.

112 Claiming that something is easy to understand

It's as plain as day. It's as clear as day.

It's as clear as day. It's as plain as the nose on your face. (jocular) Do I need to paint you a picture? (informal) Must I paint you a picture?

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(informal) That goes without saying. Any fool can see it. (informal)

113 Showing disbelief

I find that hard to believe. Unbelievable. I find that hard to swallow. I'll take that with a grain of salt. ( cliché) I remain skeptical. I'll believe it when I see it. You can't fool me. You can't pull the wool over my eyes. I wasn't born yesterday.

114 Expressing ignorance

Dunno. (informal) I don't know. I don't know and I don't care. I don't have a clue. I haven't a clue. I'm clueless.

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I don't have the faintest idea. I haven't the faintest idea. I haven't the vaguest notion. I don't have the foggiest notion. Haven't the foggiest. Beats me. (informal)

Beats the heck out of me. (informal) Beats the hell out of me. (mildly vulgar) Got me beat. (informal) You got me (there). Got me stumped. (informal) Got me. How would I know? How should I know? How the hell should I know? (mildly vulgar) Like I would know. (informal) Like I would know? (informal) I give up. (informal)

Search me. (informal) Who knows? Lord knows. (mild oath)

God only knows. (mild oath)

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115 Expressing reluctance

I'm afraid not. 'Fraid not. I'm afraid so. 'Fraid so. If I must. (formal) Well, if I have to. Well, if you insist. Well, if you really think so. Well, if you really want me to. I guess I have no choice in the matter. It doesn't sound like I have a choice. We've got no choice. We have no alternative. There's no alternative. I'd rather not. I'd rather die. I'd sooner die. Never in a thousand years. Not in a million years. Over my dead body. (informal)

116 Making the best of a bad situation

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That's life. That's the way life is. That's how it goes.

That's the way it goes. That's the way the ball

bounces. ( cliché ) That's the way the cookie

crumbles. ( cliché ) Things could be worse. It's not as

bad as all that. Look on the bright(er) side.

( cliché ) Make the best of it. Half a loaf is

better than none. ( cliché ) It's always darkest

before dawn. ( cliché ) Every cloud has a silver

lining. ( cliché ) When life hands you lemons,

make lemonade. ( cliché ) It's the best we can do

under the circumstances. I wish we could do more. You

did the best you could. You did the best that could

be expected. You get an A for effort. The important

thing is that you tried. Winning isn't everything.

( cliché ) You can't win them all. ( cliché ) It's not

whether you win or lose, it's how you play the game.

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( cliché ) You made a noble effort. Truth is stranger than fiction. ( cliché ) It was just one of those things. ( cliché ) ( Don't ask why ; ) it just is.

Why ask why ? ( informal ) Who am I to question ? It's for the best. ( cliché ) It's all for the best.

( cliché ) When God closes a door, He opens a window. ( cliché ) Don't let it get you down. Keep your chin up ! ( cliché ) Chin up ! Cheer up !

Keep a stiff upper lip. ( cliché ) Grin and bear it.

( cliché ) Grit your teeth. ( cliché ) Take it in stride.

( cliché ) Roll with the punches. ( cliché ) Accept your fate. You've made your bed ; now lie in it. ( cliché )

If at first you don't succeed, try, try again.

( cliché ) The important thing is to learn from your mistakes. The third time's the charm. ( cliché )

I'm between a rock and a hard place. ( cliché )

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I'm between the devil and the deep blue sea.

(cliché)

117 Blaming something on fate or destiny

It was destiny. It was destined to happen. It's your  
fate. It was fated to happen. It's fate. It's in the  
cards.

It's in the cards. It's in the stars. It's the cruel hand of  
fate. That's karma. It's God's will. It's all in  
God's plan. It was meant to be. Que sera, sera.  
(Spanish) = Whatever will be, will be. What will  
be, will be. Whatever will be, will be. Don't fight  
it. You can't fight it. You can't fight City Hall. There's  
nothing you can do about it. You have to play the



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hand life deals you. You've got to play the hand  
you're dealt.

118 Knowing something after the fact

I should have known. I should have known better. If

I (only) knew then what I know now . . . . If

I (just) knew then what I know now . . . . If I'd

known then what I know now . . . . If only I

could turn back the hands of time. If I could

only turn back the clock. It's easy to be wise after

the event. That's easy to say in hindsight.

Hindsight is 20/20. 20/20 = good vision in each eye

at twenty feet = hindsight

119 Expressing indifference

I don't care. I couldn't care less. I could care less.

(informal) I don't give a damn. (mildly

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vulgar) Like I give a damn. (mildly vulgar) It  
doesn't matter to me. Really doesn't matter to  
me. Makes no difference to me. Makes me no  
difference. (informal) Makes me no nevermind.  
(folksy) Makes no nevermind to me. (folksy) Either  
way. Whichever. Whatever. Six of one, half (a)  
dozen of the other. (informal) Up to you.

Whatever you prefer. It's not important. I guessso. I guess.

120 A preface to asking a question

Excuse me . . . Pardon me . . . Excuse me  
for asking . . . If you don't mind my  
asking . . . It's none of my business, but

. . . 121

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A preface to making a statement—formal  
If I may say so . . . . If I may be so bold  
. . . . If it's okay with you . . . . If it  
pleases you . . . . Please be advised that .  
. . . . For your information . . . .

It is a pleasure to inform you that . . . . We  
regret to inform you that . . . . As you are  
aware . . . . As you are no doubt aware  
. . . . As you know. . . . As you might know  
. . . . As you may already know. . . .

122

A preface to making a statement—informal  
(To make a) long story short . . . . What I  
would like to say is . . . . But I just  
wanted to say . . . . By the way . . . . If

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you ask me . . . . Not that it's any of my  
business . . . .

123

A preface to making a statement—very polite As you  
requested . . . . For your convenience . . . .  
. We apologize for the inconvenience . . . .

We apologize for the inconvenience . . . . With  
your safety in mind . . . . With your  
comfort in mind . . . . Communication Barriers

124

Asking if someone speaks a particular language Do you  
speak French? French = Spanish, German, Russian,  
Italian, etc. Do you know any French? Do you  
speak any French?

125

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When you do not speak a particular language I'm  
sorry. I don't understand. I'm sorry. I don't  
speak French. French = Spanish, German, Russian,  
Italian, etc. I'm sorry. My French isn't very good.  
I only speak a little French.

126

When you do not understand what was said

Pardon me? Excuse me?

Again, (please). I'm sorry? I'm sorry. I missed that.

missed that = failed to hear what was said I didn't

quite get that. to get that = to hear or

understand what was said What did you say? I'm

sorry. What? What? What was that? Come again.

(folksy) Huh? (informal or rude) Could you

please repeat yourself? Could you please repeat

that?

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When you do not understand what a foreign  
visitor has said I don't understand you. I can't understand  
you. I can't hear you. Please speak more slowly.

Could you please speak slower? Could you please  
speak louder? Could you write it down, please?

Please write it out. Could you spell that? Telling Time

128

Asking the time of day

What time is it? Could you tell me what time it is?

Could you please tell me the time? Could you give  
me the time? Do you know what time it is? Do

you know the time? Do you happen to have the  
time? Do you have the correct time? Do you have  
the time? Could I bother you for the time?

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The time is 12:00 o'clock It's twelve noon.

It's noon. It's twelve midnight. It's midnight.

130

The time is on the hour It's three. It's three o'clock.

It's three o'clock. It's three o'clock sharp. It's three  
o'clock on the dot. It's three o'clock on the nose.  
(informal) It's exactly three o'clock.

131

The time is approximate It's almost three. It's not quite  
three. It's just after three.

132

The time is ten minutes past the hour

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It's ten after three. It's ten after. It's ten minutes after  
three. It's ten past three. It's ten past.

133

The time is fifteen or thirty minutes past the  
hour It's three fifteen. It's a quarter past three.

It's three thirty. It's half past three. It's half past.

134

The time is forty minutes past the hour It's three  
forty. It's twenty of four. It's twenty to four.

It's twenty till four. It's twenty minutes till four.

135

The time is forty-five minutes past the hour It's three  
forty-five. It's quarter to four. It's a quarter



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of four. It's quarter to. It's a quarter of. It's  
a quarter till. It's a quarter till four.

136

The time is fifty minutes past the hour It's ten  
minutes to four. It's ten to four. It's ten to. It's  
ten of. It's ten till.

137

When a timepiece is not accurate

Is this clock right? I think my watch needs a  
new battery. This clock is fast. This clock is slow.

My watch is running fast. My watch has been  
running slow. General Pleasantries

138

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When your moving about may bother someone Excuse me.

Pardon me. Coming through. I beg your pardon. Could I get  
by, please? Watch your feet!

139

Offering to let someone enter in front of you

After you. Ladies first. You first. Age before beauty.

(jocular cliché) Be my guest.

140

Apologizing to someone you have bothered I'm  
sorry. Forgive me. Sorry to be a bother. Sorry  
to be a pest. Sorry for the inconvenience. Please  
forgive the inconvenience.

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141

Returning someone's good wishes Same to you.  
Likewise. Likewise, I'm sure. ( cliché) Thank you.

142

Agreeing to something—polite Of course.  
Of course. Be happy to. Fine. Great. Super. (slang)

143

Explaining that you will attend to someone soon  
I'll be there in just a moment. Be there in a  
minute. I'll be right with you. I'll be with you in  
a moment.

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Asking for permission to leave a place—polite Could I  
be excused? May I be excused? Might I be  
excused? (formal)

145

Saying good-bye—polite Good afternoon. Good evening. Good  
morning. Good day. Good night. Have a nice day.  
Good-bye. Bye. Bye-bye. Farewell. Good-bye until later. Good-bye  
until next time. Good-bye for now.

146

Saying good-bye—informal

So long. Ta-ta. Farewell. Cheerio. See you later. See you later,  
alligator. (slang) Later, gator. (slang) Later.  
I'll try to catch you later. I'll catch you later. Catch

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you later. See you. See ya. See you around. Take  
care. Business Pleasantries

147

Announcing your arrival for an appointment Mr.  
Smith to see Dr. Jones. I'm here to see Mrs.  
Hodges. Could you please tell Mr. Smith I'm  
here?

Could you please tell Mr. Smith I'm here? I have  
an appointment with Mrs. Jones.

148

Being assertive—polite

I'd like my check now, please. I'd like my payment  
now, please. No, I don't think so. = I totally reject  
your assertion. Excuse me? = Did you really  
say what I think you said? May I have your

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name, please? I'd like to speak to the manager.

I'd like to speak to your supervisor. I intend  
to stand my ground. I'm not leaving until I'm  
satisfied. Apologizing and Taking Responsibility

149 Sincere apologies

Sorry. So sorry. I'm (so) very sorry. I'm (so) sorry. I'm really  
sorry. I'm terribly sorry. I'm sincerely sorry. I  
apologize. My apologies. (formal) My sincere  
apologies. (formal) You have my sincere apology.  
(formal) Please accept my apology. Please accept  
my apologies. Please accept my heartfelt  
apology. I offer my most sincere apology. (formal)

150

Offering a very polite apology You cannot believe how  
sorry I am. Words cannot describe how sorry I

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am. I am just mortified. Please send me the bill,  
and I'll take care of it.

151

Accepting the blame for something It's my fault. It's all  
my fault. I'm fully responsible. I take full  
responsibility. I take the blame. I blame no one  
but myself. Mea culpa. (Latin) = I am  
guilty. Maxima culpa. (Latin) = I am completely  
guilty.

152

Admitting your errors

My mistake. I shouldn't have said that. I shouldn't have  
done that. I should have asked you first. I  
didn't mean it. I honestly didn't mean it.

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I didn't mean it, honest. I didn't mean to do it. I  
didn't mean to do that. I didn't mean to say  
that. I didn't mean it that way. I didn't  
intend it that way. I don't know how that could have  
happened.

153

Promising never to repeat a particular mistake It  
won't happen again. It will never happen again. I'll  
see (to it) that it never happens again. I  
won't do it again.

154

Offering to make amends How can I make it up to you?  
How can I ever make it up to you? Is there  
anything I can do (to make it up to  
you)? I promise I'll make it up to you.

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Asking for forgiveness Please forgive me. Can you  
forgive me? Can you ever forgive me? Can you find  
it in your heart to forgive me? How can you ever  
forgive me? I ask your forgiveness. I beg your  
forgiveness. (formal) I throw myself upon your  
mercy. (formal) I ask for your mercy. (formal)

Forgiving

156

Simple forgiveness

I forgive you. You're forgiven. All is forgiven. That's  
allright. It's okay.(informal) That's okay.(informal) Don't  
worry about it. Think on it no more. (formal)  
Think of it no more. (formal) Think no  
more of it. (formal) Don't give it another  
thought. To err is human, to forgive divine.  
(cliché)

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Forgiveness—informal Forget it. Forget about it. Forgive and  
forget. Don't worry about it. Write it off. I'll let  
you off this time. I'll let it slide this time.

I'll let it slide this time. I'll give you another chance. I'll  
turn the other cheek. I won't hold it against  
you. 158 Encouraging someone to end a  
dispute Let's drop the subject. Let's bury the hatchet.  
(idiomatic) Let's bring this matter to a close. It's  
time to kiss and makeup. ( cliché) Showing

Gratitude

159

Saying "thank you"—formal

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Thank you. Thank you very much. Thank you so much.

Thank you for your help. Thank you for all you've  
done. Thank you for everything. You have my thanks.

You have my thanks. You have my gratitude. I'm  
deeply grateful. I'm in your debt. I'm indebted to  
you. Thanks ever so much. Thanks very much.

160

Saying "thank you"—informal Thanks. Thanks much.

Thanks for everything. Thanks so much. Thanks a lot.

Thanks a million. Thanks a bunch. Thanks a bundle. Thanks

heaps. I owe you one. I owe you big. I owe you big-  
time. Returning Thanks

161 Acknowledging someone's thanks—formal

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You're welcome. You're most welcome. You're entirely  
welcome. My pleasure. It was my pleasure. The pleasure  
was mine. The pleasure was all mine. The pleasure  
was entirely mine.

162

Acknowledging someone's thanks—informal It was nothing.

It was nothing. Don't mention it. No problem. No  
sweat. (slang) Any time. No trouble. No skin off  
my nose. No skin off my teeth. No skin off my  
back. Special Occasions

163

Seeing a new baby

Oh, isn't he cute! Isn't he the sweetest thing! Oh, isn't  
she darling! She's beautiful. She's so big! What an  
adorable baby! His eyes are just like his father's.

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His eyes are just like his father's. Her nose looks just like her mother's. She has her father's eyes. He's got his mother's nose.

164

Asking about a new baby How much does he weigh? Was he early? Was she late? What's his name? Who is she named after? Has he been sleeping well? Is she sleeping through the night? Does he sleep through the night yet? Can I hold her? May I hold him?

165

Congratulating someone for doing a good job  
Congratulations! Good going! Good job! Good work! Bravo!

166

Wishing someone well

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Happy Birthday! . . . and many(many) more! Many  
happy returns! Happy Anniversary! Congratulations! Good  
luck! Best wishes! All our best! Bon voyage!  
(French) (said when someone is leaving on a  
sea voyage) Have a good time! Have a good trip!

167

Expressing sympathy at a funeral or wake I'm sorry. I'm  
so sorry. I'm so sorry for your loss. I'm very sorry. You  
have my sympathy. You have my deepest sympathy.  
(formal) Please accept my sympathy. (formal)

My heart goes out to you.

I share your sorrow. I share your pain. How are you  
doing? If you need anything, please let us

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know. If there's anything we can do for you,  
please let us know. Our thoughts are with you.

**IMPOLITE ENCOUNTERS**

Dealing with Unpleasantness

168

When someone is conceited or vain

You love the sound of your own voice. (informal)

You just like to hear yourself talk. (informal) You

talk just to hear yourself speak. (informal) You

think the world revolves around you. The

world doesn't revolve around you. You think

you're the center of the universe. You're all

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wrapped up in yourself. All you think about is  
yourself. Did you ever stop to think about anyone else?

169

When someone is overbearing

Who died and made you king?(informal) Who died and made  
you Pope? (informal) (slang) Know-it-

all. (informal) Get off your high horse. (informal) =

Be less arrogant. Who do you think you are? You

think you're so smart? (informal) You and who

else? (informal) You and what army? (slang) What

makes you so special? (informal) Don't break your

arm patting yourself on the back. (idiomatic) You

think you're so hot. (informal) hot = important



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You think you're such hot stuff. (informal) hot stuff =  
someone or something important 170 When  
someone has been insolent or rude—shocked  
response The nerve of you! nerve = impudence;  
brashness What nerve you have! You have a lot of  
nerve! You've got a lot of nerve! The  
nerve! You have a lot of gall! gall = nerve The  
e gall! The very idea! How dare you! Why, I never!

How could you say such a thing? How could you do  
such a thing? I beg your pardon! 171 When  
someone has been insolent or rude—firm response

Show some courage. Show some spine. Don't be so  
spineless. Don't be such a chicken-shit. (taboo)  
a chicken-shit = a coward Don't be such a  
lily-liver. (informal) a lily-liver = a coward

174 Insulting a coward

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Chicken! (slang) = Coward!

Wimp! (slang) = Coward! Wuss! (slang) = Coward! Fraidy-cat!

(juvenile) a fraidy-cat = a coward Scaredy-cat!

(juvenile) a scaredy-cat = a coward

You're yellow. (informal) yellow = cowardly You yellow-

bellied sapsucker. (informal) = You coward. You are a

gutless wonder. (slang) gutless = cowardly

You're afraid of your own shadow. (informal) Are you a

man or a mouse? ( cliché) Cat got your tongue?

( cliché) = Are you afraid or unable to

speak? Got cold feet? = Are you too frightened to

act? You really wimped out. (slang) wimped

out = withdrew in a cowardly fashion You

really chickened out. (slang) chickened out =

withdrew in a cowardly fashion Lose your

nerve?

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Lose your nerve? = Did you lose your resolve? 175

When someone argues too much Don't contradict me. You see everything in black and white. in black and white= in simple yes-no terms If I said it was black, you'd say it was white. That's as different as day and night. It's (the difference between) apples and oranges. You're just being contrary. You're just disagreeing to disagree.

You're just disagreeing for the sake of disagreeing.

You're just playing the devil's advocate. You're just arguing for the sake of arguing. You just like to hear yourself talk. 176 When someone is being annoying

Would you stop that? Could you please stop doing that?

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Could you please stop doing that? You are really trying my patience. That's really annoying. That's really irritating. That's driving me nuts! (slang)  
That's making me crazy! (informal) That's really bothersome. That's really bothering me. That's really bugging me. (slang) bugging = bothering That's getting on my nerves. (idiomatic) getting on my nerves = annoying me That's grating on my nerves. grating on my nerves = irritating me

177 Inviting an annoying person to leave Scram!  
(slang) = Get out!; Go away! Get lost. (slang) Go blow.  
(slang) Go fry an egg. (slang) Go suck a lemon.  
(slang) Go take a long walk off a short pier.  
(informal) Go take a long walk on a short pier.  
(informal) Make yourself scarce. (slang) Go away! Go climb a tree! (slang) Go fly a kite! (slang) Go jump in the lake! (informal) (Go) jump

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off a cliff. (informal) Go play in traffic! (informal)

Buzz off! (slang) Bug off! (slang) Scat! (slang)

Scram! (slang) Shoo! (informal) Take a hike! (slang) Make like

a tree and leave. (informal) Get lost! (slang) Get out

of here! (informal) Get out of my face! (slang) Go

blow. (slang) Go play in traffic. (informal)

178

When someone is very annoying or hurtful

Why don't you rub a little salt in the wound? Why

don't you twist the knife in my back? You're

going to be the death of me yet. You'd try the

patience of a saint. You really get my goat.

to get my goat = to annoy me You're driving

me up a wall. You're driving me up the

wall. You really know what buttons to push. what

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buttons to push = how to make me angry You're  
pushing my buttons.

179

Getting someone to stop doing something Must you (do  
that)? Must you continue to do that? Stop bothering  
me. Stop pestering me. Quit pestering me. Give it  
a rest. (slang) it = your mouth

Knock it off! (slang) Cut it out! (slang) Enough, already!  
(informal)

180

When someone is making you angry—rude I'm really  
upset with you right now. Get a life! (slang) Get a  
clue! (slang) You're pissing me off. (mildly  
vulgar) I'm really getting P.O.'d. (mildly  
vulgar) P.O.'d = pissed off = angry

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181 Asking to be left alone Let me be.

Let me alone. Leave me be. Please go away. Please  
leave me alone. I'm asking you to leave me  
alone. I just want to be left alone.

182

Describing a bothersome person

. He grates on my nerves. grates on my nerves =  
annoys me He gets on my nerves. He pushes my  
buttons. He rubs me the wrong way. He gets my  
dander up. (informal) dander = temper He raises  
my hackles. hackles = long hairs at the back of  
the neck = temper

183 When someone has done something wrong—polite

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How could you do such a silly thing? How could you  
do such a thing? What could you have been thinking?

What on earth were you thinking? What possessed you to do  
that? What got into you? I hope you're sorry.

When will you ever learn? Now what did you go and  
do that for? (folksy)

184

When someone has done something wrong—amazed

Are you out of your mind? Are you crazy? Have you  
taken leave of your senses? If I've told you once, I've  
told you a hundred times. (informal) If I've  
told you once, I've told you a thousand times.

(informal) I can't believe you embarrassed me like  
that! If that's what you think, you've got another  
think coming. (informal) You've got another think  
coming. (informal)



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When someone has done something wrong—sarcastic Are  
you happy (now)? Are you satisfied?  
Are you satisfied? I hope you're happy. I hope you're  
satisfied. Aren't you proud of yourself? I hope  
you're proud of yourself.

186

When someone makes an unwelcome  
intervention  
Who asked you? (informal) Who asked your opinion? When  
I want your opinion, I'll ask for it. Who invited  
you? You're not invited. You're not welcome here. We  
don't want your kind around here.

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Telling someone to stay away or keep out Keep out. No trespassing. Members only. Employees only. No admittance. No admittance without proper identification. (formal) These premises are for the use of members and guests only. (formal)

188

Asking someone's intentions You got a problem? (informal) What do you mean by that? Were you talking to me? Are you trying to start something? (Just exactly) what are you getting at? (Just exactly) what are you trying to say?

189

Starting a fight Do you want to step outside (and settle this)? Would you like to step outside? Want to make something

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of it? something = an issue to fight about Care to  
make something of it?

190 Asking someone to leave your property alone Hands  
off! Excuse me, that's mine. Did I say you could touch  
that? Look with your eyes not your hands. If you break  
it, you pay for it. If you break it, you've bought  
it.

191

Asking someone to stay out of your affairs

Mind your own business. (informal) Mind your own beeswax.

(slang) beeswax = business M.Y.O.B. (slang) = Mind your

own business. Butt out! (slang) = Mind your own

business! That's none of your affair. Get your nose out

of my business. (informal) Keep your nose out of my

business. (informal)

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When someone is harassing you—angry and direct Get  
off my back!(slang) Lay off, will you! (slang)  
Get off my tail! (slang) Get off it! (slang)  
Come off it! (slang)

193

When someone is harassing you—rude Nuts to you.  
(mildly vulgar) Screw you. (mildly vulgar) Up  
yours. (vulgar)

194 When someone is presumptuous Why would you  
ask such a thing? How could you say such a  
thing?

How could you say such a thing? What right do you  
have to say that? Who gave you the right? Where  
do you come off saying that? Well, I never!

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When someone has underestimated your intelligence How  
dumb do you think I am? (informal) Do you think  
I was born yesterday? (informal) Who do you think  
you're kidding? (informal) Who do you think you're  
talking to? (informal)

196

When someone interrupts with an opinion  
Was I talking to you? Who asked you? I wasn't  
speaking to you. When I want your opinion, I'll  
ask it. When I want your opinion, I'll beat it  
out of you. (jocular) Thank you for sharing.  
(sarcastic) I'll thank you to keep your opinions to  
yourself. I'll thank you to mind your own business! Keep  
your nose out of my business. (informal) Keep your  
opinions to yourself. Mind your own business.

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Mind your own business. Mind your own beeswax. (slang)

beeswax = business M.Y.O.B. (slang) = Mind your  
own business.

197

Apologizing—sarcastic

Well, excuse me. (informal) Excuse me for breathing.

(informal) Excuse me for living. (informal) Pardon  
me for living. (informal)

198

When someone overreacts Relax. Chill. (informal) Don't get

bent out of shape. (slang) Don't make a

federal case out of it. (informal) Like it's such a

big deal. (informal) It's no big deal. (informal)

You're making a mountain out of a molehill. Don't bite

my head off. (informal) Don't jump down my

throat. (informal) Same to you. (informal) So's your

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uncle. (informal) Sue me. (informal) So, sue me.

(informal)

199

When punishment is in store for someone You'll get  
yours.

You'll get yours. You'll get your due. You'll get  
what's coming to you. What goes around comes  
around. (cliché) You'll get your just deserts.

200

Explaining harsh justice What goes around comes around.  
(cliché) It cuts both ways. (cliché) Quid pro quo.  
(Latin) = This for that. An eye for an eye; a  
tooth for a tooth. The chickens have come home to

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roost. Two can play (at) that game. (informal)

Serves you right.

201

Threatening retaliation I'll give you a dose of your own

medicine. ( cliché) I'll fix your wagon. ( cliché) I

dare you. Go ahead, make my day. ( cliché)

202 Requesting silence

Quiet! Be quiet! Keep quiet!

Keep still! Be still! Hush! Silence! (formal) Shut up! (informal)

Shut your mouth! (informal) Shut your trap! (informal) Hold

your tongue! Hush your mouth! (informal) Shush!

(informal) Shh! (informal) Not another word! Button

your lip! (informal) Button in! (informal) Clam up!

(slang) Dry up! (slang)

203 Requesting someone to stop needless talk



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Can it! (slang) Stow it! (slang) Put a cork in it!  
(slang) it = your mouth Put a sock in it!  
(slang) Cut the gab! (slang) gab= needless chatter Cut  
the crap! (mildly vulgar) crap = dung =  
needless chatter

204

When someone is not doing enough

You're not doing your share. You're not doing  
your fair share. You're not carrying your weight.

You're not pulling your weight. You're not pulling your  
own weight. You're not living up to your end  
of the bargain. You're not holding up your end of  
the bargain. You're not reaching your potential.

You're slacking off. Get on the stick. (slang)

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When someone starts trouble

Stop stirring things up. You like to make trouble, don't you? Don't you have anything better to do? You've got too much time on your hands. Can't you leave well enough alone? Get a job! (slang) Get a hobby! (informal) Get a life! (slang)

206 Expressing mocksympathy Aw, poor baby. You poor thing. My heart bleeds for you. I'm all choked up.

207 Expressing mocksympathy—sarcastic Here's a quarter. Call someone who cares. Obviously you've mistaken me for someone who cares. What makes you think I care? Do you think I care?

Do you think I care? Like I care. (informal) As if I care. (informal) As if. (informal) Frankly, my dear,

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I don't give a damn. (mildly vulgar) Good for  
you. I'm happy for you. Thanks for sharing.  
I'm so glad you told us that. Thank you for sharing.  
Isn't that special?

208

When you are helpless to help—rude  
What do you want me to do about it? What do you  
expect me to do about it? What am I supposed  
to do about it? Like I can do anything about it.

209 Asking to visit someone

Guests and Hosts

Are you free later today? Could I come over later  
today? Can I come over? Do you mind if I stop  
by later today? Would you mind if I stopped by  
later? Would it be a problem if I dropped

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by for a few minutes? Would it be all right  
if I dropped by for a few minutes? Are you  
busy or can I come over? When would be  
a good time for me to come over? When's a good  
time for you? I'll be there by seven. I'll be there  
after dinner.

210

When you are invited to an informal meal in a  
home

Do I need to bring anything? Would you like me to  
bring anything? Can I bring something? Can I bring  
anything?

Can I bring anything? Should I bring anything? What  
should I bring? Would you like me to bring  
wine? Shall I bring wine? I'll bring the wine. Let me  
bring dessert.

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211 Asking about an invitation you have received What time should I be there? What do you have planned?

How should I dress? What should I wear? Is it casual or formal? I'm planning to drive.

How's the parking? Can I bring my kids? May I bring a friend? Can I bring something?

something = food

212 Apologizing for being late

I'm sorry I'm late. Sorry I'm late. I'm sorry to have kept you waiting. Sorry to have kept you waiting. 213

Explaining why one is late I misjudged the time. I

didn't realize it was so late. I lost track of

time. I overslept. My alarm didn't go off. I got

a late start. I got sidetracked. sidetracked =

detoured; distracted My last appointment ran over.

I had to run an errand.

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I had to run an errand. I had to drop someone off. I had to get money. I couldn't get a taxi.

I couldn't get a cab.

The train was late. The bus was late. I missed the bus. I missed my ride. My ride didn't show (up).

I had to get gas. I had to stop for gas. I had to stop and get gas. I ran out of gas. Traffic was slow. Traffic was hell. (mildly vulgar) I was stuck in traffic. I got lost. I don't have GPS. I missed my exit.

I missed my exit. There was construction. There was an accident. It took me longer to get here than I thought it would. It took longer than I expected to get here. I didn't realize this was so far away. It was farther than I thought. I was looking for parking. I couldn't find a parking spot. I

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couldn't find a parking place. I couldn't find  
a place to park.

214 When you finally arrive after being late I hope  
you started without me. I'm glad you started  
without me. Were you waiting long? You should have  
started without me. Next time start without me.

215 Greetings for visitors

Look who's here! Well, look who's here! Am I  
surprised to see you! Am I ever surprised to  
see you! Look at what the cat dragged in!  
(folksy) Fancy meeting you here.

216 Inviting a visitor to come in

Come on in. Come right on in. Come right in. Do come in.  
(formal) Please come in. Come in and relax for  
a few minutes. Come in and take a load off your  
feet. (folksy) Come in and take a load off.

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(folksy) Come in and sit down. Come in and set a  
spell. (folksy) Come in and stay a while.

Come in and make yourself at home.

217 After greeting a visitor To what do'

I owe the pleasure of this unexpected visit?

(formal) To what do I owe this visit? What are  
you doing here? What brings you here?

What brings you to this neck of the woods? (folksy)

neck of the woods = location Why this delightful  
surprise? What a delightful surprise! What a nice  
surprise! It's nice to see you again.

It's nice to see you again.

It's a pleasure to see you again. (formal) It's so  
good to see you again. It's so good to see you  
after all this time. Goodseeing you again. I'm  
delighted to have you visit. I'm delighted to have



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you. Delighted to have you here. I'm so happy  
you looked me up. I'm so glad you looked  
me up. I'm so glad you took the trouble to  
look me up. I'm so glad you could come. I'm so  
glad you could come by. I'm so glad you could make  
it. I'm so glad you could drop by. I'm so glad you  
could stop by. I'm so glad you could visit. Glad you  
could come. Glad you could drop by. Glad you could  
stop by.

Glad you could stop by. We've wanted to have you over  
before this. We've wanted to invite you over  
before this. We've been meaning to have you over.  
We've been meaning to invite you over. We've been  
looking forward to seeing you for a long time.  
We've been wanting to see you for a long time.

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218 Making a visitor feel welcome and comfortable

Make yourself comfortable. Make yourself comfy. Make  
yourself right at home. Make yourself at home.

Would you like to take off your coat? Here, let me  
take your coat. Can I take your coat and hat? Can  
I help you off with your things? Let me help you off  
with your things. Take your coat off and stay  
awhile. Why don't you take off your coat and make  
yourself comfortable? Put your things anywhere and  
sit down for a minute. Just drop your coat here.

(informal) 219 Inviting a visitor to stay for  
dinner

Can you stay for dinner? Can you = Would you,  
Are you able to, Will you Can you have dinner

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with us? Can you stay and have dinner with us?

Would you care to stay for dinner?

220 Encouraging a guest to feel at home

Please make yourself at home. Our house is your house. My house is your house. Mi casa es su casa. (Spanish) If there's anything you need, don't hesitate to ask. If there's anything you want, don't hesitate to ask. If there's anything I can do for you, just ask. You're to do exactly as you please. Please do exactly as you please.

Would you like to freshen up a bit? Would you like something to drink? Can I get you something to drink?

221 Offering a guest a seat

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Please sit down. Have a seat. Try this chair. It's more comfortable. Would you like to sit over here?  
Would you prefer a more comfortable chair?

222 Steering a guest to a particular room Please come into the living room. Come on in the living room. Right this way. Everyone seems to be in the kitchen. The other guests are in the library. Would you like to join us in the living room? Everyone is in the living room.  
Would you care to join us?

223 Encouraging a guest to be independent Please go around and introduce yourself to everyone. Could you just introduce yourself to the other guests? Just go in and meet everyone. I hope you don't mind introducing yourself around. Don't stand on ceremony.

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Make yourself known. Get yourself a drink and something to eat. Please feel free to mingle with the other guests. I hope you don't mind getting yourself a drink. The bar's over there. Please help yourself.

224 Mingling with other guests

Mind if I join you? Care if I join you? May I join you? Hello, my name is Lee. Hello, I'm Jane. So how do you know Juan and Maria? I work with Juan. I'm friends with Maria. I'm a friend of Maria's. Have you tried the dip? Great party, huh? (informal) What a great spread! spread = display of party food

225 What a guest says to a host or hostess Where can I put my coat? Do you mind if I smoke? Mind if I smoke? Where is the bathroom

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(, please)? You have a beautiful home. The table looks beautiful.

The table looks beautiful. I love what you have done with the living room. You have a wonderful place. You have wonderful taste.

226

Starting a conversation using the topic of weather

Nice weather we're having. Lousy weather, isn't it?

Horrible weather we're having. Lovely weather for ducks.

(sarcastic) It's raining again. Hot enough for you?

(ironic) Cold enough for you? (ironic) It's not the heat; it's the humidity. (cliché)

227 Asking a question to start a conversation What's new? What's up? What time is it? Do you have the time? This food is good, isn't it?

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Starting a conversation with someone you know well How have you been? How's work? How's your family? How's the family? Looks like you just got a haircut. I like your hair. I like your outfit. That dress is lovely. That dress looks nice on you. Where did you buy that sweater? I've been wanting to get one.

229

Starting a conversation in a waiting room Can I take a look at your paper? What are you listening to? What book are you reading? Read any good books lately? Did you see that show last night? Seen any good movies recently? Do you have a breath mint? I'm going to get a coffee. Would you like one?

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Talking about the weather

Nice weather we're having. The sun is shining. It's  
bright and sunny. It's eighty degrees. Lousy  
weather, huh? Horrible weather we're having.

Lovely weather for ducks. (sarcastic) It's not the heat; it's  
the humidity. (cliché) It's raining again. It's  
raining cats and dogs. (cliché) What a storm! What  
a downpour! What a snowstorm! What a  
blizzard! Hot enough for you? (ironic) Cold enough  
for you? (ironic) It's raining. It's snowing. It's  
cold. It's hot. It's humid. It's foggy. It's smoggy. It's  
muggy. It's windy.

231 What to say when in a crowded place



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It's too crowded in here. I feel like a sardine.

We're packed in like sardines. We're crammed in like  
sardines. We're crammed solid. This party is wall-to-

wall people. It's absolutely jam-packed. I'm getting

claustrophobic. I need some elbowroom. There's no room

to breathe. There's not enough room to swing a

cat. (folksy) Would you like to go somewhere

quieter? Would you like to go somewhere less

crowded?

232 Preparing to leave home

Do we have everything? Have we forgotten anything?

Did we forget anything? Do you have your keys? Did

you leave a light on?

Did you leave a light on? I can't find my keys. Wait,

I forgot my wallet. Did you bring the map? Do you

have the directions? Are the kids ready? Is the

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answering machine on? Did you go to the  
bathroom? Did you unplug the iron? Did you turn  
off the TV? Did you turn down the heating? Did  
you turn off the stove? 233 Stating when you will  
return home

I'll be gone just a few minutes. See you in an hour.  
I won't be late. I'll be back by ten. I'll be home  
late. Don't wait up for me.

Don't wait up for me.

234

Preparing to leave a host or hostess Well,  
it's getting late. Is it that late already? Is it  
that time already? Looks like it's that time. The time  
has come. I hate to eat and run. I don't want to  
wear out my welcome. I need my beauty sleep.  
(jocular) We have to get up early tomorrow. We

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have a big day tomorrow. big = busy I need  
to run. I'm afraid I must run. I'm afraid I  
must be going. I've got to be running.

I'm afraid I have to be going. I've got to be  
going. I'd better be off. I'd best be off. I'd  
best leave now. I better get moving. I better  
hit the road. I must be off.

I must be off. I must say good night. I've got to hit  
the road. (idiomatic) I better get on my  
horse. (idiomatic) I'm off. (informal) I'm out of here.  
(slang) I'm history. (slang) Better be going. Better  
be off. Better get moving. Better hit the road. (idiomatic)

Time to call it a day. Time to call it a  
night. Time to go. Time to run. Time to hit the  
road. Time to move along. Time to push along.

Time to push off. Time to shove off. Time to split.

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(slang) Time flies when you're having fun. ( cliché)  
Gotta go. Got to hit the road. Got to run. Got  
to shove off. Got to split. (slang) Got to take  
off. Got to be shoving off. Got to fly. Got to  
get moving. Got to go home and get my  
beauty sleep. (jocular) Have to be moving  
along. Have to go now. Have to move along. Have  
to run along.

Have to run along. Have to shove off.

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When departing Thanks for having me over. Thank you  
for a lovely evening. (formal) Thank you  
for a lovely time. (formal) Thank you for  
having us. Thank you for inviting us.

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Questions asked of departing guests Do you want a cup  
of coffee before you go? Are you sober enough  
to drive? Can I call you a taxi? Can you find your  
way home? Will you get home all right? Will you  
get home okay? (informal) Do you have  
everything? everything = everything that you arrived  
with

237

Saying good-bye to departing guests

It's been a delightful visit. (formal) It's been delightful.

It's been our pleasure.

So good to see you. Do you have everything? Thank  
you for coming. Thanks for coming. Thanks for

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dropping in. Thanks for dropping by. Thanks for  
stopping over. I'm so glad you stopped by. Glad  
you could come. Glad you could drop by. Glad you  
could stop by. Come back soon. Come back anytime.  
Come back when you can stay longer. Do come back soon. Let's  
do this again soon. We have to do this again sometime.  
See you soon

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. MISCELLANEOUS EXPRESSIONS Comments and Phrases

238 General exclamations

Wow! Gosh! Golly! Gee! Gee whiz! Holy cow! S Holy crap!

(vulgar) Holyshit! (vulgar) Holy smoke! Holy Toledo!

Son of a gun!

Son of a bitch! (mildly vulgar) Son of a sea

biscuit! Well, I'll be! I'll be darned! I'll be

darned! (mildly vulgar) Well, I'll be a

monkey's uncle! What do you know? Imagine that!

Can you beat that! Fancy that! Isn't that something! Well

if that ain't the cats' meow. By gum! (folksy) By

golly! (folksy) By Jove! By George! Great Scott! Oh,

my! Myword! Oh, my goodness! My goodness! Goodness!

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Heavens! Good heavens! For heaven's sake! For Pete's sake!  
For pity's sake! Good gracious! Good grief! Goodness  
gracious! My God! (oath) Oh my God! (oath) God forbid!  
(mild oath) Great!

Great! Excellent! Hot dog! Hot diggety! (folksy) Good Lord! Hot  
damn! (mildly vulgar) Lordy! (mild oath) Lordy be!  
(mild oath) Lord have mercy! (mild oath) Saints  
preserve us! (mild oath) Glory be! Hush my  
mouth! (folksy) Shut my mouth! (folksy) As I  
live and breathe! My stars! Zounds! Gadzooks! You  
don't say! Will wonders never cease! 239 Religious  
expressions

Amen! = I agree!

Hallelujah! = Hooray! Alleluia! = Hooray! Hosanna! = Hooray!

Glory (be) to God! Praise be to God! Thanks be  
to God.



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240 Expressions meaning “almost” Nice try. (sarcastic) Not quite. So near and yet so far. So close and yet so far. Close, but no cigar.(cliché) You were within a hair’s breadth. Close enough for government work. (informal) Almost only counts in horseshoes and hand grenades. (cliché) It’s all or nothing. A miss is as good as a mile. (cliché)

241 Leaving things as they are  
Let it be. Leave it be. Let it go. Let things be.  
Live and let live. If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it.  
(cliché) Let sleeping dogs lie. (cliché) Don’t make waves. (idiomatic) Don’t rock the boat. (idiomatic) Don’t make trouble. Don’t go looking for trouble.

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Expressing differences between people—

clichés different strokes for different folks. We'll agree to disagree. One man's meat is another man's poison. One man's trash is another man's treasure. Tastes differ. There's no accounting for taste.

Variety is the spice of life. It takes all kinds. It takes all kinds to make a world. Vive la difference!  
(French) = Hooray for the difference!

243 Warnings

Be prepared! Be careful! Watch out! Watch it! Look out! Look sharp! Watch your step! Heads up! Behind you! To your right! On your left! Coming through! Gangway! Make way! Fore! (said in golfing when the ball is struck) Duck! Hit the pavement! Hit the deck! Beware!

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Beware! Caution! Proceed with caution. Man overboard! (said when someone falls from a boat into the water) Fire!

Take care. Safety first. Look before you leap. Let's take this one step at a time. ( cliché) Leave nothing to chance. ( cliché) Slow down. Take your time. Play it cool. Play it safe. Don't blow your cover. Stop, look, and listen. Look both ways before you cross the street. Let the buyer beware. Caveat emptor.

(Latin) = Let the buyer beware. We're not out of the woods yet. (idiomatic) We're skating on thin ice.

244 Giving and receiving— clichés

What goes around, comes around. You scratch my back, I'll scratch yours. One hand washes the other. Do unto others as you would have them do unto you. Do as you would be done by. As

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a man sows, so shall he reap. Tit for tat. = This  
in return for that. Quid pro quo. (Latin) = Tit for  
tat.

245 Cause and effect— clichés April showers bring May  
flowers. You made your bed; now lie in it. As the twig  
is bent, so is the tree inclined. As the twig is  
bent, so grows the tree. One good turn deserves  
another. One thing leads to another.

246 Saying the obvious— clichés

It's not over 'til it's over. Boys will be boys. East is  
east, west is west. That's that. Life is life. That's  
life. Enough is enough.

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Expressions for a forgotten word or name

Whats it. Whaddy call it. Whatchamacallit. Whatchamajig.

Th ingamajig. Th ingamajigger. What's 'er name. What's  
'isname. What's 'is face. What's 'er face. You know  
who.

You know what I mean. Thatcertain something. Je ne  
sais quoi. (French) = I don't know. 248 Regarding order  
and procedure There is a time and a place for  
everything. (cliché) A place for everything and  
everything in its place. (cliché) Everything has its  
season. (cliché) All in due time. (cliché) First  
things first. (cliché) First come, first served.  
(cliché) The first shall be last and the last shall be  
first. (Biblical) Rules are made to be broken.  
(cliché) Rules are meant to be followed, not

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broken. When in Rome, do as the Romans do. ( cliché) Don't put the cart before the horse. ( cliché) Don't count your chickens before they are hatched. ( cliché) Let's cross that bridge when we come to it. ( cliché) Do what you are told. Do as you are told. I just do what I am told. I just do as I am told. I just work here. I'm just the help. Follow the rules. That's how we do it here. Go by the book. You must go through proper channels.

249 Describing a messy place

This place is a mess. This place is a pigsty. This place is a disgrace. What a mess. What a pit. (slang) What a dump. (slang) What a junk heap. (slang) This place looks like a tornado hit it. This place looks like a national disaster

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(area). This place looks like a disaster area. This place looks like it went through the war. This place looks like it's been through a war. This place looks like it's been through World War III. How can you find anything in here? How do you expect to find anything in this mess? Were you raised in a barn? How about cleaning up a little around here? If you would put things where they belong, they wouldn't get lost. 250 Concerning unity—clichés United we stand; divided we fall.

United we stand; divided we fall. A house divided against itself cannot stand. All for one and one for all. Birds of a feather flock together.

Many hands make light work. 251 Concerning nostalgia

When I was a kid . . . . When I was your age . . . . In my day . . . . In my time . . . .

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. In that day and age . . . Those were the  
days. Those were the good old days. They don't make them  
like they used to. 252 Concerning strength—  
clichés You don't know your own strength. You're as strong  
as an ox. A chain is only as strong as its  
weakest link.