

CSE AUG. 2017 REVIEWERS

The Language Rank and File

Level of Usage

1. Formal

Uses- Business letters, resumes, cover letters, serious speeches, newspaper articles, scholarship

Characteristics- Standard verbs, adverbs with -ly endings, standard vocabulary, standard punctuation

2. Informal

Uses- Most books, magazines newspapers, business letters, many textbooks, political speeches

Characteristics- Standard verbs, adverbs with -ly endings, standard vocabulary, standard punctuation, contractions, some slang.

3. Nonstandard

Uses- Conversation, movies, television, radio, comic strips, regional expressions

Characteristics- Nonstandard verbs, adverbs without -ly, slang words, nonstandard punctuation, “creative” spelling

The correct level of usage is the one that is appropriate for the occasion. For example, you would use formal usage in a job application letter, resume, and business letter. Informal usage is more fitting for a personal letter, greeting card message, and conversation. Even in these days when everything goes, nonstandard usage is as tacky as rhinestones on tweed.

Nouns: Prime-Time Players

A noun is a word that names a person, place, or thing. Nouns, like house guests, come in different varieties. House guests include those you want, those you hate, and those you're stuck with regardless. Nouns come in these varieties: common nouns, proper nouns, compound nouns, and collective nouns.

1. Common nouns name any one of a class of person, place, or thing.

- boy
- city
- food

2. Proper nouns name a specific person, place, or thing.

- Bob
- New York City
- Rice-a-Roni

3. Compound nouns are two or more nouns that function as a single unit. A compound noun can be two individual words, words joined by a hyphen, or two words combined.

- individual words: time capsule
- hyphenated words: great-uncle
- combined words: basketball

4. Collective nouns name groups of people or things.

- audience
- family
- herd
- crowd

Possessive Nouns

In life, possession shows success; in grammar, possession shows ownership. Follow these rules to create possessive nouns.

1. With singular nouns, add an apostrophe and s.
 - girl: girl's manuscript
 - student: student's ideas
2. With plural nouns ending in s, add an apostrophe after the s.
 - girls: girls' manuscript
 - students: students' ideas
3. With plural nouns not ending in s, add an apostrophe and s.
 - women: women's books
 - mice: mice's tails

Plural Nouns: Two's Company, Three's a Crowd

Here are the guidelines for creating plural nouns.

1. Add s to form the plural of most nouns.
 - boy: boys
 - girl: girls
 - computer: computers
2. Add es if the noun ends in s, sh, ch, or x.
 - class: classes
 - wish: wishes
 - inch: inches
 - box: boxes
3. If a noun ends in consonant -y, change the y to / and add es.
 - city: cities
 - lady: ladies
4. If a noun ends in vowel -y, add s. Words ending in -quy don't follow this rule (as in soliloquies).
 - essay: essays
 - monkey: monkeys
5. Add s to most nouns ending inf. However, the/ endings are so irregular as to be nearly random. If you have any doubts at all, consult a dictionary.

Singular

Plural

- | | |
|---------|--------|
| • brief | briefs |
| • chief | chiefs |
| • proof | proofs |

Exceptions: In some cases, change the / t o fe or v and add es:

Singular

Plural

- | | |
|--------|--------|
| • self | selves |
| • wolf | wolves |
| • leaf | leaves |

Exception: This rule doesn't hold for names. When you're dealing with names, just add s. Thus, Mr. and Mrs. Wolf becomes the Wolfs.

6. In compound words, make the main word plural.

Singular

- mother-in-law
- Passerby
- sister-in-law

Plural

mothers-in-law
passersby
sisters-in-law

Matchmaker, Matchmaker, Make Me a Match

Forget everything you learned about nouns when you start dealing with verbs. That's because we add s or -es to the third-person singular form of most verbs. This is opposite to the way we form singular nouns. For example:

	Singular Verbs	Plural Verbs
1st and 2nd Person	3rd Person	1st, 2nd, 3rd Person
I start	he starts	we start
I do	he does	we do

The helping verbs are even nastier because they aren't regular. The following chart shows the forms of to be.

Singular Be Verbs	Plural Be Verbs
(I) am	(we) are
(he, she, it) is	(they) are
(I, he, she, it) was	(we, they) were
(he, she, it) has been	(they) have been

As a result, subject-verb agreement is most tricky in the present tense.

Exercises

Ex#1

Take a few seconds to catch your breath. Then underline the nouns in each of the following sentences.

1. A hungry lion was roaming through the jungle looking for something to eat.
2. He came across two men.
3. One man was sitting under a tree and reading a book; the other man was typing away on his typewriter.
4. The lion quickly pounced on the man reading the book and devoured him.
5. Even the king of the jungle knows that readers digest and writer's cramp.

Answers

1. lion, jungle, something
2. men
3. man, tree, book, man, typewriter
4. lion, man, book
5. king, jungle, readers, writers

Ex#2

Possess It!

Reduce each of the following sentences to fewer words by using the possessive form. Doing so will improve your writing style. Here's an example:

Original: The comedy routines of the Three Stooges aren't funny to me.

Revised: The Three Stooges' comedy routines aren't funny to me.

1. The original name of Mel Brooks was Melvin Kaminsky.

2. The quack of a duck doesn't echo, and no one knows why.

3. The placement of the eyes of a donkey in its head enables it to see all four feet at all times.

4. The original name of Mickey Mouse was Mortimer Mouse.

5. The real name of Hulk Hogan is Terry Bollea.

6. The milk of a camel does not curdle.

7. In Fantasia by Disney, the name of the Sorcerer is Yensid, which is Disney backward.

8. The urine of a cat glows under a black light.

9. The favorite hobby of my mother-in-law is playing cards with her computer.

10. Keep the boss of your boss off the back of your boss.

Answers

1. Mel Brooks' original name was Melvin Kaminsky.

2. A duck's quack doesn't echo, and no one knows why.

3. The placement of a donkey's eyes in its head enables it to see all four feet at all times.

4. Mickey Mouse's original name was Mortimer Mouse.

5. Hulk Hogan's real name is Terry Bollea.

6. Camel's milk does not curdle.

7. In Disney's Fantasia, the Sorcerer's name is Yensid, which is Disney backward.

8. A cat's urine glows under a black light.

9. My mother-in-law's favorite hobby is playing cards with her computer.

10. Keep your boss's boss off your boss's back.

EX#3

Mix and Match

You know the drill, so sharpen your pencils and get crackin' with the following 10 items. In each case, choose the verb that agrees with the subject.

1. There (is/are) a method to this madness.
2. The hostess trilled: "The Bengels (are/is) here!"
3. One reason for her success (was/were) her sunny personality.
4. The many mistakes made by the tour guide in giving directions (was/were) the reason we fired her.
5. (Does/Do) fig trees grow in this region?
6. (Is/Are) some the pie still in the refrigerator?
7. (Here's/Here are) more freeloaders for the open-house.
8. There (was/were) two good reasons for his decision.
9. Another example of Juan's fine leadership (is/are) the excellent roads.
10. Here (is/are) two gifts I'd especially like to receive: a wheelbarrow filled with cash and a diamond as big as the Ritz.

Answers

1. is
2. are
3. was
4. were
5. Do
6. Is
7. Here are
8. were
9. is
10. are

Ex #4

Make each of the following words plural.

Singular	Plural
1. spoonful	_____
2. sheriff	_____
3. Vietnamese	_____
4. Chief	_____
5. Moose	_____
6. Axis	_____
7. Wolf	_____
8. Criterion	_____
9. Stimulus	_____
10. Basis	_____

Answers

1. spoonfuls
2. sheriffs
3. Vietnamese
4. chiefs
5. moose

6. axes
7. wolves
8. criteria
9. stimuli
10. bases

Too Much of a Good Thing?

Before I overwhelm you with the rules, take a break and make each of the following singular words plural. Write your answer in the space provided.

Singular	Plural
1. roach	_____
2. alto	_____
3. cameo	_____
4. lily	_____
5. sex	_____
6. cry	_____
7. potato	_____
8. kitten	_____
9. silo	_____
10. fez	_____

Answers

1. roaches
2. altos
3. cameos
4. lilies
5. sexes
6. cries
7. potatoes
8. kittens
9. silos
10. fezzes

Dictionary of English Idioms and Idiomatic Expressions

~ A ~

A bit much

If something is excessive or annoying, it is a bit much.

A day late and a dollar short

(USA) If something is a day late and a dollar short, it is too little, too late.

A fool and his money are soon parted

This idiom means that people who aren't careful with their money spend it quickly. 'A fool and his money are easily parted' is an alternative form of the idiom.

A little bird told me

If someone doesn't want to say where they got some information from, they can say that a little bird told them.

A OK

If things are A OK, they are absolutely fine.

A penny for your thoughts

This idiom is used as a way of asking someone what they are thinking about.

A penny saved is a penny earned

This means that we shouldn't spend or waste money, but try to save it.

A poor man's something

Something or someone that can be compared to something or someone else, but is not as good is a poor man's version; a writer who uses lots of puns but isn't very funny would be a poorman's Oscar Wilde.

A pretty penny

If something costs a pretty penny, it is very expensive.

A rising tide lifts all boats

This idiom, coined by John F Kennedy, describes the idea that when an economy is performing well, all people will benefit from it.

A rolling stone gathers no moss

People say this to mean that that a go-getter type person is more successful than a person not doing anything.

A steal

If something is a steal, it costs much less than it is really worth.

A1

If something is A1, it is the very best or finest.

Abide by a decision

If you abide by a decision, you accept it and comply with it, even though you might disagree with it.

About face

If someone changes their mind completely, this is an about face. It can be used when companies, governments, etc, change their position on an issue.

Above board

If things are done above board, they are carried out in a legal and proper manner.

Absence makes the heart grow fonder

This idiom means that when people are apart, their love grows stronger.

Accident waiting to happen

If something is an accident waiting to happen, there's definitely going to be an accident or it's bound to go wrong. ('Disaster waiting to happen' is also used.)

Ace up your sleeve

If you have an ace up your sleeve, you have something that will give you an advantage that other people don't know about.

Achilles' heel

A person's weak spot is their Achilles' heel.

Acid test

An acid test is something that proves whether something is good, effective, etc, or not.

Across the board

If something applies to everybody, it applies across the board.

Actions speak louder than words

This idiom means that what people actually do is more important than what they say- people can promise things but then fail to deliver.

Add fuel to the fire

If people add fuel to the fire, they make a bad situation worse.

Add insult to injury

When people add insult to injury, they make a bad situation even worse.

After your own heart

A person after your own heart thinks the same way as you.

Against the clock

If you do something against the clock, you are rushed and have very little time to do it.

Against the grain

If doing something goes against the grain, you're unwilling to do it because it contradicts what you believe in, but you have no real choice.

Age before beauty

When this idiom is used, it is a way of allowing an older person to do something first, though often in a slightly sarcastic way.

Agony aunt

An agony aunt is a newspaper columnist who gives advice to people having problems, especially personal ones.

Ahead of the pack

If you are ahead of the pack, you have made more progress than your rivals.

Ahead of time

If something happens ahead of time, it happens early or before the set time.

Albatross around your neck

An albatross around, or round, your neck is a problem resulting from something you did that stops you from being successful.

Alike as two peas

If people or things are as alike as two peas, they are identical.

All along

If you have known or suspected something all along, then you have felt this from the beginning.

All and sundry

This idiom is a way of emphasising 'all', like saying 'each and every one'.

All ears

If someone says they're all ears, they are very interested in hearing about something.

All eyes on me

If all eyes are on someone, then everyone is paying attention to them.

All fingers and thumbs

If you're all fingers and thumbs, you are too excited or clumsy to do something properly that requires manual dexterity.

'All thumbs' is an alternative form of the idiom.

All hat, no cattle

(USA) When someone talks big, but cannot back it up, they are all hat, no cattle.

All heart

Someone who is all heart is very kind and generous.

All hell broke loose

When all hell breaks loose, there is chaos, confusion and trouble.

All in your head

If something is all in your head, you have imagined it and it is not real.

All mod cons

If something has all mod cons, it has all the best and most desirable features. It is an abbreviation of 'modern convenience' that was used in house adverts.

All mouth and trousers

(UK) Someone who's all mouth and trousers talks or boasts a lot but doesn't deliver. 'All mouth and no trousers' is also used, though this is a corruption of the original.

All of the above

This idiom can be used to mean everything that has been said or written, especially all the choices or possibilities.

All over the place

If something is completely disorganized or confused, it is all over the place.

All over the shop

If something is completely disorganized or confused, it is all over the shop.

All roads lead to Rome

This means that there can be many different ways of doing something.

All set

If you're all set, you are ready for something.

All skin and bone

If a person is very underweight, they are all skin and bone, or bones.

All square

If something is all square, nobody has an advantage or is ahead of the others.

All the rage

If something's all the rage, it is very popular or fashionable at the moment.

All's fair in love and war

This idiom is used to say that where there is conflict; people can be expected to behave in a more vicious way.

All-singing, all-dancing

If something's all-singing, all-dancing, it is the latest version with the most up-to-date features.

Alter ego

An alter ego is a very close and intimate friend. It is a Latin phrase that literally means 'other self'.

Always a bridesmaid, never a bride

If someone is always a bridesmaid, never a bride, they never manage to fulfill their ambition- they get close, but never manage the recognition, etc, they crave.

Ambulance chaser

A lawyer who encourages people who have been in accidents or become ill to sue for compensation is an ambulance chaser.

Amen

Some use 'Amen' or 'Amen to that' as a way of agreeing with something that has just been said.

An old flame

An old flame is a person that somebody has had an emotional, usually passionate, relationship with, who is still looked on fondly and with affection.

And all that jazz

This idiom means that everything related or similar is included.

Answers on a postcard

This idiom can be used to suggest that the answer to something is very obvious or that the person would really like to hear what people think.

Ants in your pants

If someone has ants in their pants, they are agitated or excited about something and can't keep still.

Any port in a storm

This means that in an emergency any solution will do, even one that would normally be unacceptable.

Any Tom, Dick or Harry

If something could be done by any Tom, Dick or Harry, it could be done by absolutely anyone.

Apple of your eye

Something or, more often, someone that is very special to you is the 'apple of your' eye.

Apron strings

A man who is tied to a woman's apron strings is excessively dependent on her, especially when it is his mother's apron strings.

~ B ~

Babe in arms

A babe in arms is a very young child, or a person who is very young to be holding a position.

Babe in the woods

A babe in the woods is a naive, defenceless, young person.

Baby boomer

(USA) A baby boomer is someone born in the years after the end of the Second World War, a period when the population was growing very fast.

Back burner

If an issue is on the back burner, it is being given low priority.

Back foot

(UK) If you are on your back foot, you are at a disadvantage and forced to be defensive of your position.

Back number

Something that's a back number is dated or out of fashion.

Back the wrong horse

If you back the wrong horse, you give your support to the losing side in something.

Back to back

If things happen back to back, they are directly one after another.

Back to square one

If you are back to square one, you have to start from the beginning again.

Back to the drawing board

If you have to go back to the drawing board, you have to go back to the beginning and start something again.

Back to the salt mine

If someone says they have to go back to the saltmine, they have to return to work.

Backseat driver

A backseat driver is an annoying person who is fond of giving advice to the person performing a task or doing something, especially when the advice is either wrong or unwelcome.

Bad blood

If people feel hate because of things that happened in the past, there is bad blood between them.

Bad egg

A person who cannot be trusted is a bad egg. Good egg is the opposite.

Baker's dozen

A Baker's dozen is 13 rather than 12.

Bald as a coot

A person who is completely bald is as bald as a coot.

Ball is in your court

If the ball is in your court, it is up to you to make the next decision or step.

Ballpark figure

A ballpark figure is a rough or approximate number (guesstimate) to give a general idea of something, like a rough estimate for a cost, etc.

Banana republic

Banana republic is a term used for small countries that are dependent on a single crop or resource and governed badly by a corrupt elite.

Banana skin

(UK) A banana skin is something that is an embarrassment or causes problems.

Bandit territory

An area or an industry, profession, etc, where rules and laws are ignored or flouted is bandit territory.

Baptism of fire

A baptism of fire was a soldier's first experience of shooting. Any unpleasant experience undergone, usually where it is also a learning experience, is a baptism of fire.

Bar fly

A bar fly is a person who spends a lot of time drinking in different bars and pubs.

Bare your heart

If you bare your heart to someone, you tell them your personal and private feelings. ('Bare your soul' is an alternative form of the idiom.)

Barefaced liar

A barefaced liar is one who displays no shame about lying even if they are exposed.

Bark is worse than their bite

Someone whose bark is worse than their bite may well get angry and shout, but doesn't take action.

Barking up the wrong tree

If you are barking up the wrong tree, it means that you have completely misunderstood something or are totally wrong.

Barkus is willing

This idiom means that someone is willing to get married.

Barrack-room lawyer

(UK) A barrack-room lawyer is a person who gives opinions on things they are not qualified to speak about.

Barrel of laughs

If someone's a barrel of laughs, they are always joking and you find them funny.

Basket case

If something is a basket case, it is so bad that it cannot be helped.

Bat an eyelid

If someone doesn't bat an eyelid, they don't react or show any emotion when surprised, shocked, etc.

Batten down the hatches

If you batten down the hatches, you prepare for the worst that could happen to you.

Battle of nerves

A battle of nerves is a situation where neither side in a conflict or dispute is willing to back down and is waiting for the other side to weaken. ('A war of nerves' is an alternative form.)

Be that as it may

Be that as it may is an expression which means that, while you are prepared to accept that there is some truth in what the other person has just said, it's not going to change your opinions in any significant manner.

Bear fruit

If something bears fruit, it produces positive results.

Bear the brunt

People who bear the brunt of something endure the worst of something bad.

Beard the lion in his own den

If you confront a powerful or dangerous rival on their territory, you are bearding the lion in his own den.

Beat about the bush

If someone doesn't say clearly what they mean and try to make it hard to understand, they are beating about (around) the bush.

Beat someone to the draw

(USA) If you beat someone to the draw, you do something before they do.

Beat swords into ploughshares

If people beat swords into ploughshares, they spend money on humanitarian purposes rather than weapons. (The American English spelling is 'plowshares')

Beat the daylight out of someone

If someone beats the daylight out of another person, they hit them repeatedly. ('Knock' can also be used and it can be made even stronger by saying 'the living daylight'.)

Beat to the punch

If you beat someone to the punch, you act before them and gain an advantage.

Beating a dead horse

(USA) If someone is trying to convince people to do or feel something without any hope of succeeding, they're beating a dead horse. This is used when someone is trying to raise interest in an issue that no-one supports anymore; beating a dead horse will not make it do any more work.

Beauty is in the eye of the beholder

Beauty is in the eye of the beholder means that different people will find different things beautiful and that the differences of opinion don't matter greatly.

Beauty is only skin deep

This idiom means that appearances can be deceptive and something that seems or looks good may turn out to be bad.

Beck and call

Someone who does everything for you, no matter when you ask, is at your beck and call.

Bedroom eyes

Someone with bedroom eyes has a sexy look in their eyes.

Bee in your bonnet

If someone is very excited about something, they have a bee in their bonnet.

Bee's Knees

If something is the bee's knees, it's outstanding or the best in its class.

Beeline for

If you make a beeline for a place, you head there directly.

Beg the question

In philosophy "to beg the question" is to assume something to be true that has not yet been proved. I have seen the idiom also to mean that a question is crying out to be asked.

Beggars can't be choosers

This idiom means that people who are in great need must accept any help that is offered, even if it is not a complete solution to their problems.

Behind bars

When someone is behind bars, they are in prison.

Behind closed doors

If something happens away from the public eye, it happens behind closed doors.

Behind someone's back

If you do something behind someone's back, you do it without telling them.

Behind the times

Someone that is behind the times is old-fashioned and has ideas that are regarded as out-dated.

Believe in the hereafter

A belief in the hereafter is a belief in the afterlife, or life after death. It is, therefore, associated with religions and the soul's journey to heaven or to hell, whichever way being just deserts for the person based on how they led their life.

Bells and whistles

Bells and whistles are attractive features that things like computer programs have, though often a bit unnecessary

Belly up

If things go belly up, they go badly wrong.

Below par

If something isn't up to standard, or someone isn't feeling or doing very well, they are below par.

Below the belt

If someone says something that is cruel or unfair, it is below the belt, like the illegal punches in boxing.

Between the devil and the deep blue sea

If you are caught between the devil and the deep blue sea, you are in a dilemma; a difficult choice.

Between the lines

If you read between the lines, you find the real message in what you're reading or hearing, a meaning that is not available from a literal interpretation of the words.

Between you and me and the cat's whiskers

This idiom is used when telling someone something that you want them to keep secret.

Beyond a shadow of a doubt

If something's beyond a shadow of a doubt, then absolutely no doubts remain about it.

Big bucks

If someone is making big bucks, they are making a lot of money.

Big cheese

The big cheese is the boss.

Big fish

An important person in a company or an organization is a big fish.

Big fish in a small pond

A big fish in a small pond is an important person in a small place or organization.

Big hitter

A big hitter is someone who commands a lot of respect and is very important in their field.

Big nose

If someone has a big nose, it means they are excessively interested in everyone else's business.

Big picture

The big picture of something is the overall perspective or objective, not the fine detail.

Big time

This can be used to with the meaning 'very much' - if you like something big time, you like it a lot.

Bigger fish to fry

If you aren't interested in something because it isn't important to you and there are more important things for you to do, you have bigger fish to fry.

Bird in the hand is worth two in the bush

'A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush' is a proverb meaning that it is better to have something that is certain than take a risk to get more, where you might lose everything.

Bird's eye view

If you have a bird's eye view of something, you can see it perfectly clearly

~ C ~

Cake's not worth the candle

If someone says that the cake's not worth the candle, they mean that the result will not be worth the effort put in to achieve it

Call a spade a spade

A person who calls a spade a spade is one who speaks frankly and makes little or no attempt to conceal their opinions or to spare the feelings of their audience.

Call the dogs off

If someone calls off their dogs, they stop attacking or criticizing someone.

Call the shots

If you call the shots, you are in charge and tell people what to do.

Call the tune

The person who calls the tune makes the important decisions about something.

Cast your mind back

If somebody tells you to cast your mind back on something, they want you to think about something that happened in the past, but which you might not remember very well, and to try to remember as much as possible.

Cast your net widely

If you cast your net widely, you use a wide range of sources when trying to find something.

Castles in the air

Plans that are impractical and will never work out are castles in the air.

Cat among the pigeons

If something or someone puts, or sets or lets, the cat among the pigeons, they create a disturbance and cause trouble.

Cat burglar

A cat burglar is a skillful thief who breaks into places without disturbing people or setting off alarms.

Chalk and cheese

Things, or people, that are like chalk and cheese are very different and have nothing in common.

Change horses in midstream

If people change horses in midstream, they change plans or leaders when they are in the middle of something, even though it may be very risky to do so.

Change of heart

If you change the way you think or feel about something, you have a change of heart.

Change tack

If you change tack, you use a different method for dealing with something.

Change your tune

If someone changes their ideas or the way they talk about them, they change their tune.

Charity begins at home

This idiom means that family members are more important than anyone else, and should be the focus of a person's efforts.

Cheap shot

A cheap shot is an unprincipled criticism.

Cheat death

If someone cheats death, they narrowly avoid a major problem or accident.

Cheek by jowl

If things or people are cheek by jowl, they are very close together.

Cherry pick

If people cherry pick, they choose things that support their position, while ignoring things that contradict it.

Chew on a bone.

If someone is chewing on a bone, he or she is thinking about something intently.

Come out in the wash

If something will come out in the wash, it won't have any permanent negative effect.

Come out of your shell

If someone comes out of their shell, they stop being shy and withdrawn and become more friendly and sociable.

Come rain or shine

If I say I'll be at a place COME RAIN OR SHINE, I mean that I can be relied on to turn up; nothing, not even the vagaries of British weather, will deter me or stop me from being there.

Come to grips

If you come to grips with a problem or issue, you face up to it and deal with it.

Come up roses

If things come up roses, they produce a positive result, especially when things seemed to be going badly at first.

~ D ~

Daft as a brush

(UK) Someone who is daft as a brush is rather stupid.

Damp squib

(UK) If something is expected to have a great effect or impact but doesn't, it is a damp squib.

Dark horse

If someone is a dark horse, they are a bit of a mystery.

Day in the sun

If you have your day in the sun, you get attention and are appreciated.

Daylight robbery

If you are overcharged or underpaid, it is a daylight robbery; open, unfair and hard to prevent. Rip-off has a similar meaning.

Dead air

When there is a period of total silence, there is dead air.

Demon weed

Tobacco is the demon weed.

Derring-do

If a person shows derring-do, they show great courage.

Devil finds work for idle hands

When people say that the devil finds work for idle hands, they mean that if people don't have anything to do with their time, they are more likely to get involved in trouble and criminality.

Devil is in the detail

When people say that the devil is in the detail, they mean that small things in plans and schemes that are often overlooked can cause serious problems later on.

Dip your toes in the water

If you dip your toes in the water, you try something tentatively because you are not sure whether it will work or not.

Dirty dog

A dirty dog is an untrustworthy person.

Discerning eye

If a person has a discerning eye, they are particularly good at judging the quality of something.

Discretion is the better part of valour

This idiom means that it is often better to think carefully and not act than to do something that may cause problems.

Dish the dirt

If you dish the dirt on something or someone, you make unpleasant or shocking information public.

Dutch uncle

A Dutch uncle is a person who gives unwelcome advice.

Dwell on the past

Thinking too much about the past, so that it becomes a problem is to dwell on the past.

Dyed-in-the-wool

If someone is a dyed-in-the-wool supporter of a political party, etc, they support them totally, without any questions.

~ F ~

Face like thunder

If someone has a face like thunder, they are clearly very angry or upset about something.

Face the music

If you have to face the music, you have to accept the negative consequences of something you have done wrong.

Face value

If you take something at face value, you accept the appearance rather than looking deeper into the matter.

Facts of life

When someone is taught the facts of life, they learn about sex and reproduction.

Fair and square

If someone wins something fair and square, they follow the rules and win conclusively

Fall on your sword

If someone falls on their sword, they resign or accept the consequences of some wrongdoing.

Familiarity breeds contempt

This means that the more you know something or someone, the more you start to find faults and dislike things about it or them.

Fast and furious

Things that happen fast and furious happen very quickly without stopping or pausing.

Fat cat

A fat cat is a person who makes a lot of money and enjoys a privileged position in society.

Fat chance!

This idiom is a way of telling someone they have no chance.

Fat head

A fat head is a dull, stupid person.

Fat hits the fire

When the fat hits the fire, trouble breaks out.

Fat of the land

Living off the fat of the land means having the best of everything in life.

Fit as a fiddle

If you are fit as a fiddle, you are in perfect health.

Fit for a king

If something is fit for a king, it is of the very highest quality or standard.

Fit of pique

If someone reacts badly because their pride is hurt, this is a fit of pique.

Fit the bill

If something fits the bill, it is what is required for the task.

Fit to be tied

If someone is fit to be tied, they are extremely angry.

Flash in the pan

If something is a flash in the pan, it is very noticeable but doesn't last long, like most singers, who are very successful for a while, then forgotten.

Flat out

If you work flat out, you work as hard and fast as you possibly can.

~ G ~

Game plan

A game plan is a strategy.

Gather steam

If something gathers speed, it moves or progresses at an increasing speed.

Get your feathers in a bunch

If you get your feathers in a bunch, you get upset or angry about something.

Get along famously

If people get along famously, they have an exceedingly good relationship.

Get away scot-free

If someone gets away scot-free, they are not punished when they have done something wrong. ('Get off scot-free' is an alternative.)

Get in on the ground floor

If you get in on the ground floor, you enter a project or venture at the start before people know how successful it might be.

Get it in the neck

(UK) If you get it in the neck, you are punished or criticized for something.

Give me a hand

If someone gives you a hand, they help you.

Give someone a leg up

If you give someone a leg up, you help them to achieve something that they couldn't have done alone.

Give someone a piece of your mind

If you give someone a piece of your mind, you criticize them strongly and angrily.

Give someone a run for their money

If you can give someone a run for the money, you are as good, or nearly as good, as they are at something

Glutton for punishment

If a person is described as a glutton for punishment, they happily accept jobs and tasks that most people would try to get out of. A glutton is a person who eats a lot.

Gnaw your vitals

If something gnaws your vitals, it troubles you greatly and affects you at a very deep level. ('Gnaw at your vitals' is also used.)

Go against the grain

A person who does things in an unconventional manner, especially if their methods are not generally approved of, is said to go against the grain. Such an individual can be called a maverick.

Grin and bear it

If you have to grin and bear it, you have to accept something that you don't like.

Grin like a Cheshire cat

If someone has a very wide smile, they have a grin like a Cheshire cat.

Grist for the mill

Something that you can use to your advantage is grist for the mill. ('Grist to the mill' is also used.)

Guinea-pig

If you are a guinea-pig, you take part in an experiment of some sort and are used in the testing.

Gunboat diplomacy

If a nation conducts its diplomatic relations by threatening military action to get what it wants, it is using gunboat diplomacy.

Gung ho

If someone is gung ho about something, they support it blindly and don't think about the consequences.

~H ~

Hair of the dog

If someone has a hair of the dog, they have an alcoholic drink as a way of getting rid of a hangover, the unpleasant effects of having drunk too much alcohol the night before. It is commonly used as a way of excusing having a drink early on in the day.

Hairy at the heel

(UK) Someone who is hairy at the heel is dangerous or untrustworthy.

Hale and hearty

Someone who is hale and hearty is in very good health.

Half a mind

If you have half a mind to do something, you haven't decided to do it, but are thinking seriously about doing it.

Have a trick up your sleeve

If you have a trick up your sleeve, you have a secret strategy to use when the time is right.

Have the floor

If someone has the floor, it is their turn to speak at meeting.

Have your cake and eat it too

If someone wants to have their cake and eat it too, they want everything their way, especially when their wishes are contradictory.

Have your collar felt

If someone has their collar felt, they are arrested.

Hold your horses

If someone tells you to hold your horses, you are doing something too fast and they would like you to slow down.

Hold your own

If you can hold your own, you can compete or perform equally with other people.

Holier-than-thou

Someone who is holier-than-thou believes that they are morally superior to other people.

Hollow victory

A hollow victory is where someone wins something in name, but are seen not to have gained anything by winning, one has their tail up, they are optimistic and expect to be successful.

Hot water

If you get into hot water, you get into trouble.

Hot-blooded

Someone who is hot-blooded is easily excitable or passionate.

Hue and cry

Hue and cry is an expression that used to mean all the people who joined in chasing a criminal or villain. Nowadays, if you do something without hue and cry, you do it discreetly and without drawing attention.

~ I ~

I hereby give notice of my intention

Hereby is used sometimes in formal, official declarations and statements to give greater force to the speaker's or the writer's affirmation. People will say it sometimes to emphasize their sincerity and correctness.

I should cocoa

(UK) This idiom comes from 'I should think so', but is normally used sarcastically to mean the opposite.

I'll eat my hat

You can say this when you are absolutely sure that you are right to let the other person know that there is no chance of your being wrong.

I've got a bone to pick with you

If somebody says this, they mean that they have some complaint to make against the person they are addressing.

I've got your number

You have made mistake and I am going to call you on it. You are in trouble (a threat). I have a disagreement with you.

I understand your true nature.

If it ain't broke, don't fix it

J ~

Jack Frost

If everything has frozen in winter, then Jack Frost has visited.

Jack-of-all-trades

A jack-of-all-trades is someone that can do many different jobs.

Jam tomorrow

(UK) This idiom is used when people promise good things for the future that will never come.

Jane Doe

Jane Doe is a name given to an unidentified female who may be party to legal proceedings, or to an unidentified person in hospital, or dead. John Doe is the male equivalent.

Jersey justice

(UK) Jersey justice is very severe justice.

Jet-black

To emphasise just how black something is, such as someone's hair, we can call it jet-black.

Job's comforter

Someone who says they want to comfort, but actually discomforts people is a Job's comforter. (Job's is pronounced 'jobes', not 'jobs') To improve on a system that already works is pointless and may even hurt it.

K ~

Kangaroo court

When people take the law into their own hands and form courts that are not legal, these are known as kangaroo court.

Keen as mustard

(UK) If someone is very enthusiastic, they are as keen as mustard.

Keep abreast

If you keep abreast of things, you stay informed about developments.

Keep at bay

If you keep someone or something at bay, you maintain a safe distance from them.

Keep body and soul together

If you earn enough to cover your basic expenses, but nothing more than that, you earn enough to keep body and soul together.

Keep it under your hat

If you keep something under your hat, you keep it secret.

Know a hawk from a handsaw

If someone knows a hawk from a handsaw, they are able to distinguish things and assess them.

Know full well

When you know full well, you are absolutely sure that you know.

Know the ropes

Someone who is experienced and knows how the system works know the ropes.

Know which side one's bread is buttered on

If you know which side one's bread is buttered on, you know where your interests lie and will act accordingly to protect or further them.

Know your onions

If someone is very well-informed about something, they know their onions.

Know your place

A person who knows their place doesn't try to impose themselves on others.

~ L ~

Labor of love

A labor of love is a project or task undertaking for the interest or pleasure in doing it rather than the reward, financial or otherwise.

Law unto yourself

If somebody's a law unto themselves, they do what they believe is right regardless of what is generally accepted as correct.

Lay down the law

If someone lays down the law, they tell people what to do and are authoritarian.

Lead someone up the garden path

If someone leads you up the garden path, they deceive you, or give you false information that causes you to waste your time. 'Lead someone down the garden path' is also used.

Lead with the chin

If someone leads with their chin, they speak or behave without fear of the consequences.

Leave no stone unturned

If you look everywhere to find something, or try everything to achieve something, you leave no stone unturned.

Leave well alone

If you leave something well alone, you keep a safe distance from it, either physically or metaphorically.

Left hand doesn't know what the right hand is doing

If the left hand doesn't know what the right hand is doing, then communication within a company, organisation, group, etc, is so bad that people don't know what the others are doing.

Left in the dark

If you are left in the dark about something, you aren't given the information that you should have.

Live wire

A person who is very active, both mentally and physically, is a live wire.

Lo and behold

This phrase is used to express surprise.

Loan shark

A loan shark lends money at very high rates of interest.

Lock horns

When people lock horns, they argue or fight about something.

Lock the stable door after the horse has bolted

If someone takes action too late, they do this; there is no reason to lock an empty stable.

M ~

Mad as a badger

If someone is as mad as a badger, they are crazy.

Mad as a hornet

(USA) If someone is as mad as a hornet, they are very angry indeed.

Mad as a March hare

Someone who is excitable and unpredictable is as mad as a March hare.

Mailed fist

Someone who rules or controls something with a mailed fist is in absolute control and tolerates no dissent. A mailed fist in a velvet glove is used to describe someone who appears soft on the outside, but underneath is very hard. 'Iron fist' is an alternative form.

Major league

Something major league is very important.

Make a better fist

If someone makes a better fist of doing something, they do a better job.

Make a killing

If you make a killing, you do something that makes you a lot of money.

Make a meal

If someone makes a meal of something, they spend too long doing it or make it look more difficult than it really is.

Make a mint

If someone is making a mint, they are making a lot of money.

Make a monkey of someone

If you make a monkey of someone, you make them look foolish.

Make a mountain out of a molehill

If somebody makes a mountain out of a molehill, they exaggerate the importance or seriousness of a problem.

Make a pitch

If you make a pitch for something, you make a bid, offer or other attempt to get it.

Make a request

If you request something, or make a request, you are asking for something you want or need.

My heart goes out to someone

If your heart goes out to someone, you feel genuine sympathy for them.

My way or the highway

This idiom is used to say that if people don't do what you say, they will have to leave or quit the project, etc.

~ N ~

Nail in the coffin

A nail in someone or something's coffin is a problem or event that is a clear step towards an inevitable failure.

Nail-biter

If a game, election, contest, etc, is a nail-biter, it is exciting because the competitors are so close that it is impossible to predict the result.

Nature abhors a vacuum

This idiom is used to express the idea that empty or unfilled spaces are unnatural as they go against the laws of nature and physics.

Neck and neck

If two competitors or candidates, etc, are neck and neck, then they are very close and neither is clearly winning.

Neck of the woods

If someone talks about their neck of the woods, they mean the area where they live.

Needle in a haystack

If trying to find something is like looking for a needle in a haystack, it means that it is very difficult, if not impossible to find among everything around it.

Neither fish nor fowl

Something or someone that is neither fish nor fowl doesn't really fit into any one group.

Neither use nor ornament

Something that serves no purpose and is not aesthetically pleasing is neither use nor ornament.

Null and void

If something's null and void, it is invalid or is no longer applicable.

Number cruncher

A number cruncher is an accountant or someone who is very good at dealing with numbers and calculations.

Nuts and bolts

The nuts and bolts are the most essential components of something.

Nutty as a fruitcake

Someone who's nutty as a fruitcake is irrational or crazy. (This can be shortened to 'a fruitcake'.)

~ O ~

Object lesson

An object lesson serves as a warning to others. (In some varieties of English 'abject lesson' is used.)

Odds and ends

Odds and ends are small, remnant articles and things- the same as bits and bobs.

Off colour

If someone looks off colour/color, they look ill.

Off the beaten track

Somewhere that's off the beaten track is in a remote location.

~ P ~

Packed like sardines

If a place is extremely crowded, people are packed like sardines, or packed in like sardines.

Paddle your own canoe

(USA) If you paddle your own canoe, you do things for yourself without outside help.

~ Q ~

Queen of Hearts

A woman who is pre-eminent in her area is a Queen of Hearts.

Queer fish

(UK) A strange person is a queer fish.

Queer Street

If someone is in a lot of trouble, especially financial, they are in Queer Street.

Queer your pitch

If someone queers your pitch, they interfere in your affairs and spoil things.

Question of time

If something's a question of time, it's certain to happen, though we don't know exactly when.

~ R ~

Rack and ruin

If something or someone goes to rack and ruin, they are utterly destroyed or wrecked.

Rack your brain

If you rack your brain, you think very hard when trying to remember something. ('Rack your brains' is an alternative.)

Ragged blue line

(USA) This term was used to signify the Union forces (who wore blue uniforms) in the American Civil war .

Rags to riches

Someone who starts life very poor and becomes rich goes from rags to riches.

Raining cats and dogs

When it is raining cats and dogs, it is raining very heavily.

Rainy day

If you save something, especially money, for a rainy day, you save it for some possible problem or trouble in the future.

Rocket science

If something is not rocket science, it is not very complicated or difficult to understand. This idiom is normally used in the negative.

Roll out the red carpet

If you roll out the red carpet, you treat someone in a special way, especially when welcoming them.

~ S ~

Sacred cow

Something that is a sacred cow is held in such respect that it cannot be criticised or attacked.

Safe and sound

If you arrive safe and sound, then nothing has harmed you on your way.

Safe bet

A proposition that is a safe bet doesn't have any risks attached.

Safe pair of hands

A person who can be trusted to do something without causing any trouble is a safe pair of hands.

Safety in numbers

If a lot of people do something risky at the same time, the risk is reduced because there is safety in numbers.

Saigon moment

(USA) A Saigon moment is when people realise that something has gone wrong and that they will lose or fail.

Sail close to the wind

If you sail close to the wind, you take risks to do something, going close to the limit of what is allowed or acceptable.

Sail under false colours

Someone who sails under false colours (colors) is hypocritical or pretends to be something they aren't in order to deceive people.

Salad days

Your salad days are an especially happy period of your life.

Ship came in

If your ship has come in, something very good has happened to you.

Shipshape and Bristol fashion

If things are shipshape and Bristol fashion, they are in perfect working order.

Shoe is on the other foot

If the shoe is on the other foot, someone is experiencing what they used to make others experience, normally negative things.

Shoestring

If you do something on a shoestring, you try to spend the absolute minimum amount of money possible on it.

Shoot yourself in the foot

If you shoot yourself in the foot, you do something that damages your ambition, career, etc.

Spot on

If something is spot on, it is exactly right.

Sprat to catch a mackerel

If you use a sprat to catch a mackerel, you make a small expenditure or take a small risk in the hope of a much greater gain.

Spur of the moment

If you do something on the spur of the moment, you do it because you felt like it at that time, without any planning or preparation.

~ T ~

Tables are turned

When the tables are turned, the situation has changed giving the advantage to the party who had previously been at a disadvantage.

Tackle an issue

If you tackle an issue or problem, you resolve or deal with it.

Take a leaf out of someone's book

If you take a leaf out of someone's book, you copy something they do because it will help you.

Take a punch

If somebody takes a blow, something bad happens to them.

Take a raincheck

If you take a rain check, you decline an offer now, suggesting you will accept it later. ('Raincheck' is also used.)

Take a straw poll

If you take a straw poll, you sound a number of people out to see their opinions on an issue or topic.

There's the rub

The meaning of this idiom is 'that's the problem'.

Thick and fast

If things are happening thick and fast, they are happening so fast they seemed to be joined together.

Thick as thieves

If people are thick as thieves, they are very close friends who have no secrets from each other.

Tie the knot

When people tie the knot, they get married.

Tight rein

If things or people are kept on a tight rein, they are given very little freedom or controlled carefully.

Tight ship

If you run a tight ship, you control something strictly and don't allow people much freedom of action.

Tighten your belt

If you have to tighten your belt, you have to economise.

Till the pips squeak

If someone will do something till the pips squeak, they will do it to the limit, even though it will make other people suffer.

Till you're blue in the face

If you do something till you're blue in the face, you do it repeatedly without achieving the desired result until you're incredibly frustrated.

Tilt at windmills

A person who tilts at windmills, tries to do things that will never work in practice.

U ~

U-turn

If a government changes its position radically on an issue, especially when they have promised not to do so, this is a Uturn.

Ugly as a stick

(USA) If someone is as ugly as a stick, they are very ugly indeed.

Up to scratch

If something doesn't come up to scratch, it doesn't meet the standard required or expected.

Up to snuff

If something isn't up to snuff, it doesn't meet the standard expected.

Up to speed

If you bring someone up to speed, you update them on something.

Up to the neck

If someone's in something up to the neck, they are very involved in it, especially when it's something wrong.

Up to your neck

If someone is very involved in something, they are up to their neck in it, especially if it is something bad or immoral.

Upper crust

The upper crust are the upper classes and the establishment.

Upper hand

If you have the upper hand, you have the advantage.

Upset the apple cart

If you upset the apple cart, you cause trouble and upset people.

~ V ~

Vale of tears

This vale of tears is the world and the suffering that life brings.

Velvet glove

This idiom is used to describe a person who appears gentle, but is determined and inflexible underneath. ('Iron fist in a velvet glove' is the full form.)

Vent your spleen

If someone vents their spleen, they release all their anger about something.

~ W~

Waiting in the wings

If someone is waiting in the wings, or in the wings, they are in the background, but nearby, ready to act on short notice.

Wake-up call

A wake-up call is a warning of a threat or a challenge, especially when it means that people will have to change their behaviour to meet it.

Walk a fine line

If you have to walk a fine line, you have to be very careful not to annoy or anger people or groups that are competing. ('Walk a thin line' is an alternative.)

Walk a mile in my shoes

This idiom means that you should try to understand someone before criticizing them.

Walk a tightrope

If you walk a tightrope, you have to be very careful not to annoy or anger people who could become enemies.

~ X ~

X factor

The dangers for people in the military that civilians do not face, for which they receive payment, are known as the X factor.

X marks the spot

This is used to say where something is located or hidden.

X-rated

If something is x-rated, it is not suitable for children.

~ Z ~

Zero hour

The time when something important is to begin is zero hour.

Zero tolerance

If the police have a zero tolerance policy, they will not overlook any crime, no matter how small or trivial.

Zip it

This is used to tell someone to be quiet.

EASIER ENGLISH BASIC SYNONYMS

ability noun

Synonyms: ability, skill, competence, talent, capability

Antonym: inability

Synonyms:

ability

a natural tendency to do something well

I admire his ability to stay calm in difficult situations.

skill

the ability to do something well as a result of training or experience

Portrait painting needs a lot of skill. _ This job will help you develop management skills.

competence

the quality of being able to do a job or task well enough

Does she have the necessary competence in foreign languages?

talent

an usually good natural ability, especially for something artistic

She's done well in the theatre – we always knew she had talent.

capability

the practical ability to do something

We have the capability to produce a better machine than this.

Antonym:

inability

the state of being unable to do something

break verb

Synonyms: break, crack, smash, burst

Antonym: mend

Synonyms:

break

to make something divide into pieces accidentally or deliberately

She broke her leg when she was skiing. _ Break the chocolate into four pieces.

crack

to make a long thin break in something

The stone cracked the glass.

smash

to break something into pieces, often using force or violence

Demonstrators smashed the windows of police cars.

burst

to break open or explode suddenly, or cause something to break open or explode suddenly

One of the tyres had burst. _ The heat from the fire might burst the balloon.

Antonym:

mend

to repair something which is broken or damaged

clean adjective

Synonyms: clean, pure, spotless, hygienic

Antonym: dirty

Synonyms:

clean

not dirty

Wipe your glasses with a clean handkerchief. _ Tell the waitress these cups aren't clean.

pure

not spoiled by being mixed with other things or substances of a lower quality

a bottle of pure water _ a pure mountain stream

spotless

completely clean, with no dirty marks at all

The tablecloths must be spotless. _ a spotless white shirt

hygienic

clean and safe because all germs have been destroyed

The food must be stored in hygienic conditions. _ Some areas of the factory didn't look very hygienic.

Antonym:

dirty

not clean

defeat verb

Synonyms: defeat, beat, conquer, overcome, triumph, thrash

defeat

to succeed against someone in a game, fight or vote

Our team has not been defeated so far this season. _ The soldiers defeated the enemy's attempt to take the town. _ The ruling party was heavily defeated in the presidential election. _ The proposal was defeated by 10 votes to 3.

beat

to win a game against another player or team

They beat their rivals into second place. _ Our football team beat France 2 – 0. _ They beat us by 10 goals to 2. _ My children can usually beat me at tennis.

conquer

to defeat people by force

The army had conquered most of the country.

overcome

to gain victory over an enemy

The boys quickly overcame their attackers.

triumph

to achieve a great success

The team triumphed over their long-term rivals.

thrash

(informal) to defeat another person or team easily

She expects to be thrashed by the champion.

easy adjective

Synonyms: easy, simple, straightforward, uncomplicated

Antonyms: hard, difficult

Synonyms:

easy

not difficult, or not needing a lot of effort

The test was easier than I expected. _ My boss is very easy to get on with.

simple

easy to do or understand

The machine is very simple to use.

straightforward

easy to understand or carry out

The instructions are quite straightforward.

uncomplicated

easy to deal with or understand

In children's books, the writing should be clear and uncomplicated. _ The procedure is relatively quick and uncomplicated.

Antonyms:

hard

not easy

difficult

not easy to do or achieve

fail verb

Synonyms: fail, neglect, forget, omit, overlook

fail

not to do something

The car failed to stop at the red light. _ She failed to tell us of her change of address.

neglect

not to do something that should have been done

He neglected to tell the police that he had been involved in an accident.

forget

not to remember

He's forgotten the name of the restaurant. _ I've forgotten how to play chess. _ She forgot all about her doctor's appointment.

omit

to leave something out, especially something that is helpful or important

She omitted the date when she signed the contract. _ They omitted to tell me the price of the ticket.

overlook

not to notice something

She overlooked several mistakes when she was correcting the exam papers.

fatal adjective

Synonyms: fatal, lethal, deadly, mortal, terminal

fatal

causing people to die

There were three fatal accidents on this road last year.

lethal

dangerous and able to kill someone

a lethal dose of painkillers _ a lethal mixture of drugs and alcohol _ Being out in the sun too long can be lethal.

deadly

likely to cause people to die

The terrorists turned the car into a deadly weapon.

mortal

referring to injury serious enough to cause someone to die

a mortal wound

terminal

referring to the last period of a serious illness that will lead to death

The condition is terminal. _ terminal cancer

fragile adjective

Synonyms: fragile, delicate, breakable, flimsy

Antonyms: sturdy, strong

Synonyms:

fragile

made from materials that are easily broken

Be careful when you're packing these plates – they're very fragile.

delicate

made from materials that are thin and light and easily damaged

a delicate fabric _ delicate skin

breakable

that can break easily

glasses and other breakable items

flimsy

likely to break because of being badly made

The shelter was a flimsy construction of bamboo and leaves.

Antonyms:

sturdy

well made and not easily damaged

strong

with a lot of strength and not easy to damage

guide verb

Synonyms: guide, direct, lead, steer, conduct

guide

to show someone the way to somewhere

She guided us up the steps in the dark.

direct

to tell someone how to get to a place

Can you direct me to the nearest post office?

lead

to go in front to show someone the way

She led us into the hall.

steer

to make a person or vehicle go in a particular direction

We steered the children quickly away from the barking dogs. _ She steered the car into the garage.

conduct

(formal) to take someone to a place

The guests were conducted to their seats.

harm verb

Synonyms: harm, damage, hurt, injure, wound

harm

to physically affect something or someone in a bad way

Luckily, the little girl was not harmed. _ The bad publicity has harmed our reputation.

damage

to break, partially destroy or badly affect something

A large number of shops were damaged in the fire. _ These glasses are easily damaged. _ His career was badly damaged by the newspaper reports.

hurt

to have pain, or to cause someone to feel pain

My tooth hurts. _ No one was badly hurt in the accident. _ Did you hurt your leg when you fell?

injure

to cause pain or damage to someone or to a part of the body

He injured his back playing rugby.

wound

to hurt someone badly by cutting into their flesh

Two of the gang were shot and wounded in the bank robbery. _ The attacker pulled a knife, wounding him on the arm.

increase verb

Synonyms: increase, expand, enlarge, extend

Antonyms: decrease, drop

Synonyms:

increase

to make a level or amount higher

The boss increased her salary. _ The number of soldiers in the area has been increased to fifty thousand.

expand

to increase the size or extent of something

We have plans to expand our business.

enlarge

to make something bigger

We need to enlarge our house now that we have four children. _ Could you enlarge this photograph?

extend

to make something longer or bigger

We are planning to extend our stay in London. _ The company has extended my contract for another two years. _ We're going to extend our kitchen.

Antonyms:

decrease

to become less

drop

to decrease

kill verb

Synonyms: kill, murder, assassinate, execute, slaughter, put down

kill

to make someone or something die

Sixty people were killed in the plane crash. _ A long period of dry weather could kill all the crops.

murder

to kill someone deliberately

He was accused of murdering a policeman.

assassinate

to kill a famous person, especially for political reasons

They were shocked by the news that the President had been assassinated.

execute

to kill someone as a legal punishment for a crime, or for something they

have done

Some countries still execute murderers. _ The government's political enemies were executed.

slaughter

to kill many people or animals at the same time, or to kill an animal for its meat

Thousands of civilians were slaughtered by the advancing army.

put down

to kill an animal that is old or ill painlessly, using drugs

The cat will have to be put down.

lack noun

Synonyms: lack, shortage, deficiency, deficit

lack

the fact that you do not have something

The children are suffering from a lack of food. _ The project was cancelled through lack of funds.

shortage

the fact that you do not have something you need

a shortage of skilled staff _ During the war, there were food shortages.

deficiency

not enough of something needed to make someone or something healthy or complete

Their diet has a deficiency of calcium or has a calcium deficiency.

deficit

an amount by which something is less than it should be

The company announced a two-million-pound deficit in its accounts.

moving adjective

Synonyms: moving, emotional, pathetic, stirring, touching

moving

making you feel emotion

a moving story about a girl who finally finds her real parents _ The funeral was very moving.

emotional

causing you to feel emotion, or showing emotion

We said an emotional farewell to our son. _ The music made her feel very emotional and she started to cry.

pathetic

making you feel sympathy

She looked a pathetic figure standing in the rain.

stirring

making you feel strong emotions, especially pride or enthusiasm

a stirring tune _ Some of his speeches are very stirring.

touching

making you feel emotion, especially affection or sympathy

I had a touching letter from my sister, thanking me for my help when she was ill.

naked adjective

Synonyms: naked, bare, nude, undressed

naked

not wearing clothes

The little children were playing in the river stark naked. _ A naked man was standing on the balcony.

bare

not covered by clothes or shoes

He walked on the beach in his bare feet. _ I can't sit in the sun with my arms bare.

nude

not wearing clothes, especially in situations where people are expected to wear some clothes

Nude sunbathing is not allowed on this beach. _ She has appeared nude on stage several times.

undressed

having just taken off your clothes, usually to put on other clothes or clothes for sleeping in

The children are undressed ready for bed.

There is and there are

Use there with is and are to say what exists or what you can have. Use there is with singular nouns, and there are with plural nouns.

1. There is a tree in our garden.
2. There is a girl called Farah in my class.
3. There is fish for dinner.
4. There is nothing to do when it rains.
5. There's a cat sitting on the bench.
6. There's a boy in my class who can walk on his hands.
7. There are cows in the field.
8. There are some very big ships in the harbor today.

The Present Progressive Tense

The present progressive tense is used to talk about things that are continuing to happen. Make the present progressive tense by using am, is or are with a verb that ends in ing.

1. I am learning how to swim.
2. I am eating my lunch.
3. I am watching television.
4. She is reading a book.
5. Dad is baking a cake.
6. My sister is listening to music.
7. Uncle David is cleaning his car.
8. The dog is barking in the garden.
9. We are singing our favorite song.
10. My brother and I are playing a computer game.
11. The teachers are showing us a film.
12. They are bringing a television set into the classroom.

The present progressive tense is also used to talk about **things that are planned for the future.**

1. I am going to the library tomorrow.
2. My sister is giving me her bike when she gets her new one.
3. We can't go to the movies tomorrow because my mom is working.
4. We are having a barbecue on Sunday.
5. All my friends are coming to my party next week.
6. We're taking my cousin to the zoo later today.

Exercise

Fill in the blank spaces with the present progressive tense of the verbs in parentheses. Try to use contractions such as I'm, she's and they're where you can.

1. We ____ (go) to the zoo tomorrow.
2. He _____ (fix) my bike in the garage.
3. I _____ (help) Mom in the kitchen.
4. My sister and I ____ (watch) television in our bedroom.
5. The train ____ (leave) in ten minutes.
6. They ____ (come) with us to the museum.
7. We _____ (paint) some pictures for Aunt Susan.
8. The boys and girls _____ (dance) in the hall.
9. The cat _____ (chase) some birds.
10. My brother _____ (tickle) me.

ANALOGY

1. _____ : trail :: grain : trail

- a. train
- b. path
- c. wheat
- d. holy

2. particular : fussy :: _____ : subservient

- a. meek
- b. above
- c. cranky
- d. uptight

3. _____ : horse :: board : train

- a. stable
- b. shoe
- c. ride
- d. mount

4. tureen : _____ :: goblet : wine

- a. napkin
- b. soup
- c. spoon
- d. pilsner

5. 4 : 6 :: _____ : 16

- a. 2
- b. 14
- c. 8
- d. 10

6. son : nuclear :: _____ : extended

- a. father
- b. mother
- c. cousin
- d. daughters

7. quixotic : pragmatic :: murky : _____

- a. rapid
- b. cloudy
- c. clear
- d. friendly

8. smear : libel :: heed : _____

- a. represent
- b. doubt
- c. consider
- d. need

9. nymph : _____ :: seraphim : angel

- a. maiden
- b. sinner
- c. candle
- d. priest

10. poetry : rhyme :: philosophy : _____

- a. imagery
- b. music
- c. bi-law
- d. theory

11. jibe : praise :: _____ : enlighten

- a. jib
- b. delude
- c. worship
- d. wed

12. marshal : prisoner :: principal : _____

- a. teacher

- b. president**
- c. doctrine**
- d. student**

13. fecund : infertile :: _____ : fleet

- a. rapid**
- b. slow**
- c. fertilizer**
- d. damp**

14. _____ : plant :: stable : horse

- a. cow**
- b. unstable**
- c. oat**
- d. nursery**

15. dictionary : definition :: _____ : map

- a. direction**
- b. south**
- c. atlas**
- d. longitude**

16. groom : horse :: _____ : child

- a. track**
- b. nanny**
- c. gallop**
- d. infantry**

17. _____ : house :: anklet : sock

- a. shoe**
- b. foot**
- c. cottage**
- d. mansion**

18. annex : _____ :: insert : book

- a. shelf**
- b. building**
- c. page**
- d. wing**

19. _____ : retirement :: settlement : injury

- a. golf**
- b. lawyer**
- c. hospital**
- d. pension**

20. ragtime : United States :: raga : _____

- a. cloth
- b. country
- c. piano
- d. India

21. miserly : cheap :: homogeneous : _____

- a. extravagant
- b. unkind
- c. alike
- d. friendly

22. skew : gloomy :: slant : _____

- a. glee
- b. foible
- c. desperate
- d. gloaming

23. eider : _____ :: cedar : tree

- a. snow
- b. plant
- c. duck
- d. pine

24. gerrymander : divide :: filibuster : _____

- a. bend
- b. punish
- c. delay
- d. rush

25. vapid : _____ :: rapid : swift

- a. inspired
- b. turgid
- c. wet
- d. insipid

26. denim : cotton :: _____ : flax

- a. sheep
- b. uniform
- c. sweater
- d. linen

27. obscene : coarse :: obtuse : _____

- a. subject
- b. obstinate
- c. obscure
- d. stupid

28. diamond : baseball :: court : _____

- a. poker
- b. jury
- c. grass

d. squash

29. lawless : order :: captive : _____

a. trouble

b. punishment

c. jail

d. freedom

30. quarry : marble :: _____ : honey

a. hive

b. bee

c. spread

d. reservoir

ANSWERS-ANALOGY

1. **a.** **Train** becomes trail when the “n” is replaced by an “l,” and grain becomes grail when the “n” is replaced by an “l.”
2. **a.** Particular is a synonym for fussy, and **meek** is a synonym for subservient.
3. **d.** To **mount** means to get on a horse, and to board means to get on a train.
4. **b.** A tureen is used to hold **soup**, and a goblet is used to hold wine.
5. **b.** 4 plus 2 is 6, and **14** plus 2 is 16.
6. **c.** A son is part of a nuclear family, and a **cousin** is part of an extended family.
7. **c.** Quixotic is an antonym for pragmatic, and murky is an antonym for **clear**.
8. **c.** To smear is a synonym of to libel, and to heed is a synonym of to **consider**.
9. **a.** A nymph is a **maiden**, and a seraphim is an angel.
10. **d.** Poetry is often comprised of rhyme; philosophy is often built on **theory**.
11. **b.** To jibe is an antonym of to praise, and to **delude** is an antonym of to enlighten.
12. **d.** A marshal is a person in charge of a prisoner, and a principal is a person in charge of a **student**.
13. **b.** Fecund is an antonym for infertile and **slow** is an antonym for fleet.
14. **d.** A **nursery** houses plants, and a stable houses horses.
15. **c.** A dictionary is a book containing definitions, and an **atlas** contains maps.
16. **b.** A groom takes care of a horse, and a **nanny** takes care of a child.
17. **c.** A **cottage** is a smaller version of a house, and an anklet is a smaller version of sock.
18. **b.** An annex is a structure added to a **building**, and an insert is something added to a book.
19. **d.** A **pension** is money awarded after retirement, and a settlement is money awarded after an injury.
20. **d.** Ragtime is a type of music from the United States, and raga is a type of music from **India**.
21. **c.** Miserly is another word for cheap, and homogeneous is another word for **alike**.
22. **c.** To skew is a synonym of to slant, and to be gloomy is a synonym for **desperate**.
23. **c.** An eider is a type of **duck**, and a cedar is a type of tree.
24. **c.** To gerrymander is a political term meaning to divide land, and to filibuster is to **delay** legislature.
25. **d.** Vapid is another word for **insipid**, and rapid is another word for swift.
26. **d.** Denim is a fabric made from cotton, and **linen** is a fabric made from flax.
27. **d.** Obscene is a synonym for coarse, and obtuse is a synonym for **stupid**.
28. **d.** Baseball is played on a diamond, and **squash** is played on a court.
29. **d.** To be lawless is to lack order, and to be captive is to lack **freedom**.
30. **a.** A quarry yields marble, and a **hive** yields honey