1. Break the ice

**Meaning**: To get the conversation going. Provide a conversation prompt.

**Example**: Starting class with a joke or subjects students like will help to **break the ice**.

1. A dime a dozen

**Meaning**: Very common: quite ordinary

**Example**: I thought it was something special but it turns out they're **a dime a dozen**.

1. Beat around the bush

**Meaning**: To avoid saying something

**Example**: Don't **beat around the bush**. Just tell me what happened.

1. Back against the wall

**Meaning**: Forced to do something that you would rather not.

**Example**: I really don't want to do this but my **back is against the wall**.

1. Bite the bullet

**Meaning**: Doing something you don't want to but also expressing that you're making a proactive choice.

**Example**: I'm going to go ahead and **bite the bullet** rather than waiting around.

1. Wrap one's head around something

**Meaning**: To understand something that may take a bit of time and effort.

**Example**: That's really complicated. It's going to take a moment to **wrap my head around** that.

1. Under the weather

**Meaning**: Sick. Typically used to describe minor illnesses like a cold.

**Example**: Sorry I'm feeling a bit **under the weather** and won't be able to come in today.

1. Better late than never

**Meaning**: Describes things that are better done than not, even if it takes a long time.

**Example**: I went back to college at 30 years old and figured **better late than never**.

1. Cut corners

**Meaning**: To skip steps or not do things completely.

**Example**: This is an important project so don't **cut any corners** on this one.

1. Get out of hand

**Meaning**: When a situation gets out of control.

**Example**: I meant to just have a small party but too many people came and it quickly **got out of hand**.

1. A snowball effect

**Meaning**: Something that can continue to get more and more out of control

**Example**: I just invited a couple of people over but there was a bit of **a snowball effect** and now there's a giant party at my house.

1. We'll cross that bridge when we get to it

**Meaning**: Let's avoid addressing the problem until later on.

**Example**: We won't find out until next month so **we’ll cross that bridge when we get there**.

1. To cut someone some slack

**Meaning**: To not manage someone very strictly or to not be critical.

**Example**: **Cut me some slack**. I'm trying.

1. To be hard on someone

**Meaning**: To criticize or to manage someone very strictly.

**Example**: You don't have **to be so hard** on your employees to be successful.

1. Get something out of one's system

**Meaning**: To do something you really want to and have been waiting to.

**Example**: I really want to go to karaoke, sing a few songs and just **get it out of my system**.

1. Burn bridges

**Meaning**: To do something or anger someone to where you cannot go back to how things were and cannot expect help in the future.

**Example**: Don't **burn bridges** with your employer. You may need their help in the future.

1. Sell like hotcakes

**Meaning**: To sell very quickly or be in high demand.

**Example**: I didn't think my crafts would be that popular but they're **selling like hotcakes**.

1. Fish out of water

**Meaning**: To be in an unfamiliar or uncomfortable place.

**Example**: I don't want to change schools and be a **fish out of water**.

1. Step up one’s game

**Meaning**: To work harder or perform better.

**Example**: You need to **step up your game** if you want a promotion this year.

1. Your guess is as good as mine

**Meaning**: I don't know either.

**Example**: I haven't found out anything so **your guess is as good as mine**.

1. Leave out in the cold

**Meaning**: To be ignored or not considered.

**Example**: Not being invited to any of the meetings lately has me feeling **left out in the cold**.

1. Keep an ear to the ground

**Meaning**: To listen for new information.

**Example**: I'll **keep an ear to the ground** for any updates on the project.

1. Up in arms

**Meaning**: To be angry or overreact.

**Example**: Don't get **up in arms**. I'm just telling you what happened.

1. Run around in circles

**Meaning**: To put effort into something while making little or no progress.

**Example**: My boss has me **running around in circles** with unnecessary tasks that aren't getting us anywhere.

1. Scrape the barrel

**Meaning**: To make choices you don't want to or normally wouldn't.

**Example**: They're not great but I was really **scraping the barrel** to find something.

1. Blessing in disguise

**Meaning**: Something that seems bad but provides some benefit.

**Example**: I hated that assignment but it was a **blessing in disguise** since it taught me things that I use for the job I have now.

1. Having an Ace up the sleeve

**Meaning**: To have a hidden or untold advantage.

**Example**: I thought he was definitely going to lose but he **had an ace up his sleeve** and caught up in points.

1. Buy it

**Meaning**: To believe something.

**Example**: That guy told me he's related to the president but I don't **buy it**.

1. Hook line and sinker

**Meaning**: To be deceived completely.

**Example**: I told him that I would pay him $1,000,000 and he bought it **hook line and sinker**.

1. Piece of cake

**Meaning**: Very Easy.

**Example**: Winning the game is a **piece of cake** once you understand how to play.

1. Once in a blue moon

**Meaning**: Very rare.

**Example**: She doesn't like it here and only comes **once in a blue moon**.

1. On the line

**Meaning**: To risk something or have something at risk.

**Example**: I invested my life savings in this business and have everything **on the line**.

1. A quick buck

**Meaning**: An easy way to make money quickly.

**Example**: Translation work is kind of boring for me but it's **a quick buck**.

1. Sights set on | Set sights on

**Meaning**: To desire something or to make a goal.

**Example**: I have my **sights set on** going to France next year. | I **set my sights** on going to France next year.

1. Add fuel to the fire

**Meaning**: To make a situation worse.

**Example**: You should wait until later to say something. Sometimes arguing just **adds fuel to the fire**.

1. Bone to pick

**Meaning**: To be angry about something and want to discuss it.

**Example**: You might not think you did anything wrong but I have a **bone to pick** with you about that.

1. Go the extra mile

**Meaning**: To do extra work or put in extra effort.

**Example**: She **went the extra mile** and got our seats upgraded even though she didn’t have to.

1. Hang in there

**Meaning**: To not give up.

**Example**: I know things are hard but **hang in there**.

1. Down for the count

**Meaning**: To give up or not be able to keep going.

**Example**: I tried everything and it took so much out of me. I'm **down for the count** on this one.

1. Rest on your laurels

**Meaning**: To stop trying as hard because of your past achievements.

**Example**: The work still isn't finished and things are just going to get more difficult. This is no time to **rest on your laurels**.

1. Give it a whirl

**Meaning**: To try something.

**Example**: I'm willing to **give it a whirl** even though I've never done it before.

1. It's not rocket science

**Meaning**: It's not as difficult as you might think.

**Example**: Of course, I figured it out. **It's not rocket science**.

1. Get bent out of shape

**Meaning**: To get upset at times when others don't think you should.

**Example**: Hey it's just a joke. Don't **get bent out of shape**.

1. Spill the beans

**Meaning**: To tell a secret.

**Example**: I already know you did it. Your best friend **spilled the beans**.

1. Sit on the fence

**Meaning**: To be undecided.

**Example**: I'm still **sitting on the fence** about whether I'm going to buy that car.

1. Don't cry over spilled milk/ No use in crying over spilled milk

**Meaning**: What has already happened cannot be undone so you shouldn't cry but you should think of what to do going forward.

**Example**: I know it wasn't your fault but there's **no use in crying over spilled milk**. Think of what you're going to do next.

1. Fair and square

**Meaning**: To do things in a fair way with no advantages given to either side.

**Example**: No do-overs. I won **fair and square**.

1. Straight from the horse's mouth

**Meaning**: To hear information directly from the person involved.

**Example**: I already know the truth. I heard **straight from the horse's mouth**.

1. Bigger fish to fry

**Meaning**: There is something more important to take care of.

**Example**: I can't think about that right now. I have **bigger fish to fry**.

1. At face value

**Meaning**: As something seems or as one claims it to be.

**Example**: Don't take what he says **at face value.** He's been known to lie.

1. Read between the lines

**Meaning**: To look for the real meaning when something is said.

**Example**: I don't just listen to what people tell me. I know how to **read between the lines**.

1. Wild goose chase

**Meaning**: To waste time trying to do something you cannot.

**Example**: My mom sent me on a **wild goose chase** trying to find things that aren't available anywhere.

1. Call it a day

**Meaning**: To stop working.

**Example**: Hey let's go home. It's time to **call it a day**.

1. Chip off the old block

**Meaning**: To be similar to one's parents in one way or overall.

**Example**: She's a really higher achiever like her mom. A real **chip off the old block**.

1. The apple doesn’t fall far from the tree.

**Meaning**: Similar to one’s parents. This is used at the time when you observe that someone is doing something their parents would.

**Example**: Of course, he got into Harvard. **The apple doesn’t fall far from the tree**.

1. In for a penny in for a pound

**Meaning**: To make sure a task is complete no matter what once someone has spent any effort or money towards the goal.

**Example**: I'm **in for a penny in for a pound** on this one. I've already spent seven hours getting this project off the ground.

1. By the skin of one’s teeth

**Meaning**: To barely get something done.

**Example**: I passed that test **by the skin of my teeth** with a 61/100.

1. Draw the line

**Meaning**: To decide on a stopping past which you will not let something continue.

**Example**: I'm going to have to **draw the line here**. I can't do any more work until you pay your balance.

1. To not see/to lose the forest for the trees

**Meaning**: To fixate on trivial details to the point of ignoring the overall meaning or more important facts.

**Example**: Don't **lose the forest for the trees** here. The first few questions are only worth one point each so make sure you leave enough time for the open-ended questions.

1. Penny wise and pound foolish

**Meaning**: To worry about or obsess over unimportant details while ignoring the important ones.

**Example**: He did every homework assignment but didn't submit his major project. Absolutely **penny wise and pound foolish**.

1. Cry wolf

**Meaning**: To ask for help or attention by lying about a situation.

**Example**: If you keep **crying wolf**, nobody is going to help you when you really need it.

1. Play devil's advocate

**Meaning**: To present the other side or both sides of an argument.

**Example**: I just need you to support me, not to keep trying to **play devil's advocate**.

1. On thin ice

**Meaning**: In a dangerous or risky situation with much margin for error.

**Example**: I used 9 out of my 10 absences so my teacher told me I'm **on thin ice**.

1. The best thing since sliced bread

**Meaning**: Really, really good.

**Example**: The iPhone was **the best thing since sliced bread**. It really changed the world.

1. Take it with a pinch of salt

**Meaning**: Don’t believe it to be 100% true.

**Example**: He lies a lot so **take what he says with a pinch of salt**.

1. The whole nine yards

**Meaning**: Everything to the greatest extent.

**Example**: I want everything on the menu. Appetizers, entrees, desserts, **the whole nine yards**.

1. Bite off more than you can chew

**Meaning**: To take on a task that is more difficult than you can handle.

**Example**: I regret agreeing to cook dinner for 100 people. I really **bit off more than I could chew**.

1. A second wind

**Meaning**: To have more energy or more appetite after being tired or full.

**Example**: I was completely full but once the dessert came, I had **a** **second wind**.

1. Play it by ear

**Meaning**: To improvise or wait for more information to come to a decision.

**Example**: I can't decide on what to do until I know what my manager's decision will be so I have to **play it by ear.**

1. Put something on ice

**Meaning**: To stop progress on something or put it on hold.

**Example**: Hey I need you to work on this project that's due today so you're going to have to **put what you're doing on ice**.

1. 24/7

**Meaning**: All the time, always. (24 hours a day, 7 days a week)

**Example**: I didn't invite him to my party because he's in medical school and studying **24/7**.

1. Lose one's touch

**Meaning**: To not be as good at something as one used to be.

**Example**: It took me 10 tries to get a basket. I'm really **losing my touch**.

1. Sit tight

**Meaning**: Please wait patiently.

**Example**: Hey I still have a few tasks to do before I can head out to dinner so **sit tight** and I'll be there soon.

1. Twist my arm

**Meaning**: To convince someone with persistence.

**Example**: Alright I wasn't planning on buying a new car today but you **twisted my arm**. I'll take it.

1. Turn a deaf ear

**Meaning**: To ignore someone.

**Example**: I could really use some help but everyone around me has **turned a deaf ear**.

1. Hit the books

**Meaning**: To study (more often used to imply studying hard)

**Example**: Final exams are coming up and I need a high score to maintain my A. I'm going to **hit the books** hard today.

1. Cold turkey

**Meaning**: To quit suddenly rather than gradually.

**Example**: If I start playing video games at all, I won't stop for hours so I had to quit **cold turkey**.

1. Go down in flames

**Meaning**: To fail suddenly and severely.

**Example**: A couple of scandals after her debut caused her career to **go down in flames**.

1. Pitch in

**Meaning**: To put in effort or to make a contribution.

**Example**: It's a lot of work but if everyone **pitches in**, we'll be done in no time.

1. Cut to the chase

**Meaning**: To get directly to the point.

**Example**: I'm in a rush so I need you to **cut to the chase** and just tell me what the problem is.

1. Off the table

**Meaning**: Unavailable, the offer has been revoked.

**Example**: If your offer is still **on the table**, I'd like to accept the job.

1. Ship has sailed

**Meaning**: It is too late for the opportunity. You waited too long for the opportunity and it is no longer available.

**Example**: You waited too long and the job isn't available anymore. **That ship has sailed** so keep looking.

1. Blow off steam

**Meaning**: To do fun activities to help relieve stress.

**Example**: I had a long day at work and went to the batting cages to **blow off some steam**.

1. Come rain or shine

**Meaning**: No matter what.

**Example**: I promise, **come rain or shine**, I'll be at your graduation. You can count on it.

1. See eye to eye

**Meaning**: To agree, compromise or understand the other person's perspective.

**Example**: It's been six weeks and they can't come to any agreement because they just can't **see eye to eye**.

1. Rings a bell

**Meaning**: Sounds familiar or reminds you of something.

**Example**: What you just said **rings a bell**. There's this thing I forgot to tell you earlier.

1. A class act

**Meaning**: Of great character or able to perform to high standards.

**Example**: He puts on a good show every time and then shakes hands and takes pictures with fans. He's a real **class act**.

1. Break the bank

**Meaning**: To be very expensive.

**Example**: I got the car I wanted but it really **broke the bank**.

1. Cost an arm and a leg

**Meaning**: To be very expensive. (Typically less used for items less expensive than ones that you would use "break the bank" for).

**Example**: Replacing my broken car stereo **cost me an arm and leg**.

1. Face the music

**Meaning**: To accept reality.

**Example**: You failed every audition. It's time to **face the music** and accept that you're not a very good actor.

1. Darkest before the dawn

**Meaning**: Things will get better (Useful for when several bad things happen at once)

**Example**: I know that a lot of bad things happened to you this week but it's **darkest before the dawn**.

1. Through thick and thin

**Meaning**: Throughout good times and bad times.

**Example**: It doesn't matter if it's difficult or if bad things happen. I said I would help you **through thick and thin**.

1. Fortune favors the bold

**Meaning**: Taking a risk can pay off.

**Example**: There's only a 10% chance of success but the payout is 20 times higher if I win. You know what they say, **fortune favors the bold**.

1. Don't put all your eggs in one basket

**Meaning**: You're taking too big of a risk or putting too much effort and resources into one risky option.

**Example**: I'm really glad that people like my art but I'm not going to make art full time. I don't want to **put all my eggs in one basket**.

1. Throw caution to the wind

**Meaning**: To stop thinking about something and take the risk.

**Example**: My parents told me not to put all my eggs in one basket but I decided to **throw caution to the wind** and be a full-time artist.

1. Look before you leap

**Meaning**: To think before you do something.

**Example**: The opportunity to move to another country is really exciting but I want you to **look before you leap**.

1. Jump on the bandwagon

**Meaning**: To follow a trend or not to do something until it's popular.

**Example**: She didn't care about K-pop before but now that it's popular, she's **jumped on the bandwagon**.

1. Pour one’s heart out

**Meaning**: To tell or confess something emotional.

**Example**: I don't like soap operas. They're so unrealistic with the way everyone **pours their heart out** about everything.

1. Right as rain

**Meaning**: There is nothing that can be improved.

**Example**: The dish was **right as rain**. I wouldn't change a thing about it.

1. Pull one's leg

**Meaning**: To lie or tease

**Example**: That doesn't sound right. Are you pulling my leg?