

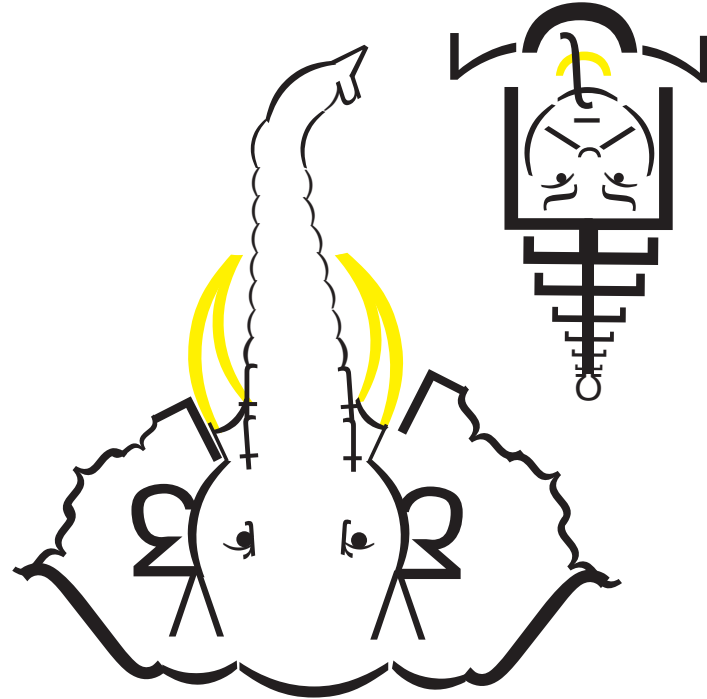
King of Siam and his white elephant in Hectica

“He began to realize what a white elephant he had raised up for himself.”

*Originated in 1851*

In Siam and other asian countries, elephants were working animals. However, white (albino) elephants were considered sacred and therefore could not be put to work, or else it would be considered bad luck. Due to this, white elephants were expensive to take care of since the owner would be left to provide the animal with special food, and access to those who wanted to worship it. In 1851, the King of Siam became dissatisfied with his courtier and gave him a white elephant. The gift would, in most cases, ruin the recipient by the great expenses incurred in maintaining the animal. The King would often present a white elephant to subordinates who he considered obnoxious. The phrase has been adopted from this practice to represent a burden, or something that is inconvenient that one does not know how to get rid of.

## WHITE ELEPHANT



## AS SICK AS A DOG

“We’ve never been so ill. The whole family was sick as dogs.”

*Originated in 1705*

The phrase “as sick as a dog” was first recorded in 1705. In the eighteenth and seventeenth century, it was common to call animals undesirable, and dirty due to the fact that diseases, such as the plague, would travel the globe via animals. Due to the fact that dogs were common pets, they could easily spread disease to people, therefore causing widespread illnesses. Dogs were also looked down upon, because they were thought to be senseless and completely useless animals, due to the fact that they ate everything, including their own vomit. Farmer Harry Hampton was the first to use the phrase because he noticed, one day, that a majority of his animals got terribly sick. He soon found out that his herding dog was the cause of the illness. People had picked up on what he said, and that is why we use the phrase today. To be “as sick as a dog” is to be very ill to the stomach, or mentally ill.

Harry Hampton and his dog in Adobe Caslon Pro



Jacob and his sheep in Baskerville

“I’m a bit more unusual so I consider myself as the black sheep.”

*Originated in the 1500’s*

The phrase “black sheep” derived from a bit of misinterpretation by writers of early English bibles. The writers of the early bibles copied each other without checking their sources. Myles Coverdale’s 1535 Bible, which was the first complete bible printed in English, renders Genesis 30:32 as ‘All blacke shepe amonge the lambes,’ which he translated from a German source. Other bibles have the text stated as ‘every speckled and spotted sheep and every black lamb.’ In the original texts, Genesis 30:32 is the story of the shepard Jacob who had removed any spotted, dark, or otherwise identifiable sheep or goat from his master’s flock in order to be able to demonstrate that he hadn’t stolen any white ones. The ‘black sheep’ were actually a mark of integrity rather than shame, but the phrase has been adopted over the years to have a negative connotation toward those who are unusual, and different than others. Due to the story of Jacob, that’s why we use the phrase today.

# AS SICK AS A DOG

**“We’ve never been  
so ill. The whole  
family was  
sick as dogs.”**

*Originated in 1705*

The phrase “as sick as a dog” was first recorded in 1705. Although there was no specific person who started it, in the eighteenth and seventeenth century, it is was common to call animals undesirable, and dirty by many people due to the fact that diseases, such as the plague, would travel the globe via animals. Rats, parrots, and dogs carried contagious diseases that made many people sick. Due to the fact that dogs were common pets, they could easily spread disease to people, therefore causing widespread illnesses. The phrase was used to describe someone being immensely ill to the point of vomiting. When people are very ill, they describe themselves to be “as sick as a dog” and that is why we use it today.

*Sick Dog in Adobe Caslon Pro*

