[26, 30]

**abbreviate** something **to** something **1.** and **abbreviate**

something **as** something to make specific initials or an acronym

out of a word or phrase. \_ *The phrase was abbreviated*

*to* ABC. **2.** to make something into a shorter version

of itself. \_ *The act has been abbreviated to just a few minutes.*

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[1132, 1135]

**all over 1.** and **(all) over with** finished. \_ *Dinner is all*

*over. I’m sorry you didn’t get any.* \_ *It’s all over. He’s dead*

*now.* **2.** everywhere. \_ *Oh, I just itch all over.* \_ *She’s*

*spreading the rumor all over.*

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[1558, 1567]

**amount to** something **1.** *Lit.* [for someone or something]

to become worthwhile or successful. \_ *I hope Charles*

*amounts to something some day.* \_ *I doubt that this business*

*will ever amount to anything really profitable.* **2.** *Fig.*

[for something] to be the equivalent of something. \_

*Why, doing this amounts to cheating!* \_ *Your comments*

*amount to treason.* **3.** and **amount (up) to** something [for

a sum of money] to increase [to a large amount]. \_*Is that*

*everything you want to buy? That amounts to twenty dollars.*

\_ *These charges amount up to a lot.*

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[1721, 1726]

**answer the call 1.** *Euph.* to die. \_ *Our dear brother*

*answered the call and has gone to his eternal rest.* **2.** and

**answer the call (of nature)** *Euph.* to find and use the

toilet. \_ *We stopped the car long enoug for Jed to answer*

*the call of nature.* \_*You had better answer the call of nature*

*when you feel it coming.*

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[2341, 2348]

**as long as 1.** and **so long as** since; because. \_ *As long*

*as you’re going to the bakery, please buy some fresh bread.*

\_ *So long as you’re here, please stay for dinner.* **2.** and **so**

**long as** if; only if. \_ *You may have dessert so long as you*

*eat all your vegetables.* \_*You can go out this evening as long*

*as you promise to be home by midnight.* **3.** for a specified

length of time. \_ *You may stay out as long as you like.* \_

*I didn’t go to school as long as Bill did.*

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[2469, 2474]

**ask** someone **for** something **1.** to request something from

someone. \_ *The diners asked the waiter for a type of wine*

*the restaurant didn’t have.* \_ *A special wine was asked for*

*by a number of patrons.* **2.** and **ask** someone **to** something

to invite someone to something. \_ *Janet asked us to a*

*party Friday evening.* \_ *Janet asked us for dinner.*

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[2481, 2490]

**ask** someone **out (to** something**) 1.** and **ask** someone **out†**

**(for** something**)** to invite someone to go out (to something

or some place) [on a date]. \_ *He asked her out to dinner,*

*but she had other plans.* \_ *She couldn’t go, so he asked out*

*someone else.* \_ *Liz asked Carl out for dinner.* **2.** to invite

someone for a visit to a place in the country or some other

location remote from the center of things. \_ *Tom must*

*be tired of the city. Let’s ask him out to our place.* \_ *I don’t*

*want to ask out everyone in the whole family again.* \_ *Oh,*

*let’s ask him out anyway.*

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[2763, 2767]

**at length 1.** after some time; finally. \_*At length, the roses*

*bloomed, and the tomatoes ripened.* \_ *And at length, the*

*wizard spoke.* **2.** and **at some length** for quite a long

time. \_ *He spoke to us about the problem at some length.*

\_ *He described the history of his village at length.*

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[2800, 2805]

**at** one’s **best 1.** and **at its best** to the utmost; to the highest

degree possible. \_ *This restaurant serves gourmet food*

*at its best.* \_*The singer was at her best when she performed*

*ballads.* **2.** in the best of health; displaying the most civilized

behavior. (Often in the negative.) \_ *He’s at his best*

*after a good nap.* \_ *I’m not at my best when I’m angry.*

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[3620, 3628]

**balance the accounts 1.** *Lit.* and **balance the books**

to determine through bookkeeping that accounts are in

balance, that all money is accounted for. \_*Jane was up all*

*night balancing the accounts.* \_*The cashier was not allowed*

*to leave the bank until the manager balanced the books.* **2.**

*Fig.* to get even [with someone]. \_ *Tom hit Bob. Bob balanced*

*the accounts by breaking Tom’s toy car.* \_ *Once we*

*have balanced the accounts, we can shake hands and be*

*friends again.*

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[5778, 5785]

**blow a fuse 1.** to burn out the fuse on an electrical circuit

and lose power. \_*The microwave oven blew a fuse, so*

*we had no power.* \_ *You’ll blow a fuse if you use too many*

*appliances at once.* **2.** and **blow** one’s **fuse; blow a gasket;**

**blow** one’s **cork; blow** one’s **lid; blow** one’s **top;**

**blow** one’s **stack** *Fig.* to explode with anger; to lose one’s

temper. \_ *Come on, don’t blow a fuse.* \_ *Go ahead, blow*

*a gasket! What good will that do?*

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[5815, 5846]

**blow off 1.** *Lit.* [for something] to be carried off something

by moving air. \_ *The leaves of the trees blew off in*

*the strong wind.* \_*My papers blew off the table.* **2.** *Lit.* [for

a valve or pressure-maintaining device] to be forced off

or away by high pressure. (See the examples.) \_*The safety*

*valve blew off and all the pressure escaped.* \_*The valve blew*

*off, making a loud pop.* **3.** *Fig.* [for someone] to become

angry; to lose one’s temper; to blow off (some) steam.

\_*I just needed to blow off. Sorry for the outburst.* \_*I blew*

*off at her.* **4.** *Sl.* to goof off; to waste time; to procrastinate.

\_ *You blow off too much.* \_ *All your best time is*

*gone—blown off.* **5.** *Sl.* a time-waster; a goof-off. (Usually

**blow-off**.) \_ *Fred is such a blow-off!* \_ *Get busy. I*

*don’t pay blow-offs around here.* **6.** *Sl.* something that can

be done easily or without much effort. (Usually **blowoff**.)

\_ *Oh, that is just a blow-off. Nothing to it.* \_ *The*

*test was easy—a blow-off.* **7.** and **blow** someone or something

**off†** *Sl.* to ignore someone or something; to skip an

appointment with someone; to not attend something

where one is expected. \_ *He decided to sleep in and blow*

*this class off.* \_ *It wasn’t right for you to just blow off an*

*old friend the way you did.* **8.** and **blow** someone **off†** *Sl.*

to ignore someone in order to end a romantic or other

relationship. \_ *She knew that he had blown her off when*

*he didn’t even call her for a month.* \_*Steve blew off Rachel*

*before he started seeing Jane.* **9.** *Sl.* the final insult; an event

that causes a dispute. (Usually **blow-off**.) \_ *The blowoff*

*was a call from some girl named Lulu who asked for*

*Snookums.* \_ *When the blow-off happened, nobody was*

*expecting anything.* **10.** *Sl.* a dispute; an argument. (Usually

**blow-off**.) \_ *After a blow-off like that, we all need a*

*break.* \_ *There was a big blow-off in the office today.*

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[6121, 6126]

**boil down to** something **1.** and **boil down** *Lit.* [for a liquid]

to be condensed to something by boiling. \_*Boil this*

*mixture down to about half of what it was.* **2.** *Fig.* [for a

complex situation] to be reduced to its essentials. \_*It boils*

*down to the question of who is going to win.* \_*It boils down*

*to a very minor matter.*

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[6371, 6383]

**bottle** something **up† 1.** *Lit.* to put some sort of liquid into

bottles. \_*She bottled her homemade chili sauce up and put*

*the bottles in a box.* \_*She bottled up a lot of the stuff.* **2.** *Fig.*

to constrict something as if it were put in a bottle. \_ *The*

*patrol boats bottled the other boats up at the locks on the*

*river.* \_*The police bottled up the traffic while they searched*

*the cars for the thieves.* **3.** and **bottle** something **up†**

**(inside (**someone**))** *Fig.* to hold one’s feelings within; to

keep from saying something that one feels strongly about.

\_ *Let’s talk about it, John. You shouldn’t bottle it up.* \_

*Don’t bottle up your problems. It’s better to talk them out.*

\_ *Don’t bottle it up inside you.* \_ *Don’t bottle up all your*

*feelings.*

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[6419, 6426]

**bounce back (from** something**) 1.** *Lit.* [for something]

to rebound; [for something] to return bouncing from

where it had been. \_*The ball bounced back from the wall.*

\_*A rubber ball always bounces back.* **2.** and **bounce back**

**(after** something**)** *Fig.* [for someone] to recover after a disability,

illness, blow, or defeat. (See also rebound from

something.) \_ *She bounced back from her illness quickly.* \_

*She bounced back quickly after her illness.*

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[6449, 6457]

**bounce** something **off (of )** someone or something **1.** *Lit.* to

make something rebound off someone or something. (*Of*

is usually retained before pronouns.) \_ *She bounced the*

*ball off the wall, turned, and tossed it to Wally.* \_ *She*

*bounced the ball off of Harry, into the wastebasket.* **2.** and

**bounce** something off**†** *Fig.* to try an idea or concept out

on someone or a group. (*Of* is usually retained before pronouns.)

\_ *Let me bounce off this idea, if I may.* \_ *Can I*

*bounce something off of you people, while you’re here?*

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[7256, 7270]

**bring** someone **around† 1.** *Lit.* to bring someone for a

visit; to bring someone for someone (else) to meet. \_

*Please bring your wife around sometime. I’d love to meet*

*her.* \_ *You’ve just got to bring around your doctor friend*

*for dinner.* **2.** and **bring** someone **around (to consciousness)**

*Fig.* to bring someone to consciousness. \_

*The doctor brought around the unconscious man with*

*smelling salts.* \_ *The boxer was knocked out, but his manager*

*brought him around.* **3.** and **bring** someone **around**

**(to** one’s **way of thinking); bring** someone **around**

**(to** one’s **position)** *Fig.* to persuade someone (to accept

something); to manage to get someone to agree (to something).

\_ *The last debate brought around a lot of voters to*

*our candidate.* \_ *I knew I could bring her around if I just*

*had enough time to talk to her.*

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[8220, 8226]

**bump along 1.** and **bump along** something *Lit.* to travel

along a rough road. \_ *We bumped along on the dirt road*

*to the lake.* \_*We bumped along the road, hanging onto our*

*hats.* **2.** *Fig.* [for some plan or situation] to move along

awkwardly and unevenly. \_ *The whole project bumped*

*along to an uncertain conclusion.* \_*The plan bumped along*

*for a while and then we all gave it up.*

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[8279, 8285]

**bundle** someone **into** something **1.** to put someone, usually

a child, into heavy outdoor clothing. \_ *Bill bundled*

*Billy into his parka.* \_ *Tom bundled himself into his parka*

*and opened the door to go out.* **2.** and **bundle** someone **in**

to put someone, usually a child, into bed. \_ *She bundled*

*Sarah into bed after reading her a story.* \_ *June pulled the*

*sheets back and bundled Sarah in.*

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[10175, 10177]

**carve** something **into** something **1.** and **carve** something **in†**

to cut letters or symbols into something. \_ *He carved his*

*initials into a tree.* \_ *He carved in the letters one by one.*

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[10266, 10276]

**cash (**one’s **chips) in† 1.** *Lit.* to turn in one’s gaming

tokens or poker chips when one quits playing. \_ *When*

*you leave the game, you should cash your chips in.* \_ *Cash*

*in your chips before you go.* \_ *I’m going to cash in.* **2.** *Fig.*

to quit [anything], as if one were cashing in gaming

tokens; to leave or go to bed. \_ *I guess I’ll cash my chips*

*in and go home.* \_ *Well, it’s time to cash in my chips and*

*go home.* \_ *I’m really tired. I’m going to cash in.* **3.** and

**cash** one’s **checks in†** *Euph.* to die; to finish the “game

of life.” \_*There’s a funeral procession. Who cashed his chips*

*in?* \_ *Poor Fred cashed in his chips last week.*

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[10617, 10623]

**caught in the crossfire 1.** *Lit.* trapped between two

lines of enemy fire. \_*I was caught in the crossfire and dove*

*into a ditch to keep from getting killed.* **2.** and **caught in**

**the middle** *Fig.* caught between two arguing people or

groups, making it difficult to remain neutral. \_ *Bill and*

*Ann were arguing, and poor Bobby, their son, was caught*

*in the middle.*

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[11261, 11267]

**chew** something **over† 1.** *Inf.* to talk something over; to

discuss something. \_*We can chew it over at lunch.* \_*Why*

*don’t we do lunch sometime and chew over these matters?*

**2.** and **chew on** something *Fig.* to think something over.

\_ *I’ll have to chew it over for a while. I’m not sure now.* \_

*I have to chew on all this stuff for a day or two. Then I’ll get*

*back to you.*

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[12586, 12592]

**come around (to** some place**) 1.** to come to some place

for a visit. \_*You must come around to our place for a while.*

\_ *Do come around and have dinner with us sometime.*

**2.** and **come around (to visit)** and **come around (for**

**a visit)** to pay a casual visit to someone. \_*Why don’t you*

*come around to visit next week?* \_ *Why don’t you come*

*around for a visit? You are welcome any time.*

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[13095, 13099]

**come out (of** something**) 1.** and **come out from** something

*Lit.* to exit from something. \_ *When will they come*

*out of that meeting?* \_*The people came out from the houses*

*and celebrated.* **2.** *Fig.* to result from something. \_ *Nothing*

*at all came out of our discussions.*

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[15063, 15071]

**crash down (around** someone or something**)** and **crash**

**down (about** someone or something**) 1.** and **crash in**

**(on** someone or something**)** *Lit.* [for something] to collapse

on someone or something. \_ *The walls crashed in around*

*the burning house.* \_*The branches of the tree crashed down*

*on the roof.* \_ *The old barn crashed down.* **2.** *Fig.* [for the

structure and stability of one’s life] to fall apart. \_ *Her*

*whole life crashed down around her.* \_ *Everything he was*

*familiar with crashed down about him.*

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[15839, 15845]

**cut across** something **1.** and **cut across** *Lit.* to travel

across a particular area; to take a shortcut across a particular

area. \_ *Please don’t cut across the neighbor’s yard*

*anymore.* **2.** *Fig.* to reach beyond something; to embrace

a wide variety; to slice across a figurative boundary or barrier.

\_*His teaching cut across all human cultures and races.*

\_ *This rule cuts across all social barriers.*

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[16134, 16140]

**cut** something **into** something **1.** and **cut** something **in†** to

mix something, usually a soft baking ingredient, into

something else. (See also fold something into something.) \_

*Carefully cut the butter into the f lour mixture.* \_ *Now, cut*

*in some more butter.* **2.** to slice or chop something into

very small pieces, bits, etc. \_*We cut the meat into one-inch*

*cubes for the stew.*

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[18176, 18183]

**divide** something **into** something **1.** and **divide** something

**in** something to separate something into parts. \_ *I will*

*divide it into two parts.* \_ *I will divide the cake in half.* \_

*If you divide the pie in fourths, the pieces will be too big.*

**2.** to do mathematical division so that the divisor goes

into the number that is to be divided. \_*Divide seven into*

*forty-nine and what do you get?* \_ *If seven is divided into*

*forty-nine, what do you get?*

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[18502, 18509]

**do** something **over† 1.** and **make** something **over†** to

rebuild, redesign, or redecorate something. \_*We did our*

*living room over for the holidays.* \_*We made over the family*

*room because it was looking shabby.* **2.** and **do** something

**over† (again)** to repeat something; to do something

again. \_ *I am afraid that you are going to have to do over*

*the complete series again.* \_ *Would you do this one over,*

*please?*

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[19396, 19404]

**\*down for the count 1.** and **\*out for the count** [of a

boxer] knocked down by an opponent’s punching and

remaining down until the last count, or even beyond.

(\*Typically: **be ~; go ~**.) \_*Wally is down for the count.*

*Chris is the winner.* **2.** eliminated from something or an

activity for a period of time, perhaps permanently. (\*Typically:

**be ~; go ~**.) \_ *I can’t continue with this course.*

*I’m down for the count.* \_ *I’m down for the count. I have*

*the f lu.*

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[19610, 19617]

**drag** someone or something **through** something **1.** and **drag**

someone or something **through** *Lit.* to pull someone or

something through an opening. \_ *I dragged my brother*

*through the opening into the room.* \_ *We dragged the sofa*

*through the window because we couldn’t get it through the*

*door.* **2.** *Fig.* to debase someone or something. \_ *I don’t*

*want you to drag me through a drawn-out divorce.* \_ *She*

*dragged herself through all sorts of trouble in her autobiography.*

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[19781, 19786]

**draw near 1.** and **draw near (to** someone or something**)**

*Lit. to come near to someone or something.* \_*Draw near to*

*me, and let me look at you.* \_ *Draw near to the table and*

*look at this.* **2.** *Fig.* [for a particular time] to approach. \_

*The time to depart is drawing near.* \_ *As the time for her*

*speech drew near, Ann became more and more nervous.*

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[20812, 20819]

**dump on** someone or something **1.** to snow on someone or

something. \_ *Well, it dumped on us again last night.* \_

*The cold front dumped on the northeast again today.* **2.** and

**do a dump on** someone or something; **dump all over**

someone or something *Sl.* to criticize someone or something;

to destroy someone or something. \_ *There is no need to*

*do a dump on me. I didn’t wreck your car.* \_ *The boss—*

*mad as a wet hen—dumped all over me.*

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[20820, 20825]

**dump** one’s **load 1.** *Sl.* to empty one’s stomach; to vomit.

\_ *He’s had too much to drink and is dumping his load.*

**2.** and **dump a load** *Sl.* to defecate. (Crude. Potentially

offensive. Use only with discretion.) \_*He had to go dump*

*a load.* \_ *He dumped his load and settled back down to*

*work.*

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[21207, 21217]

**eat** something **up† 1.** and **eat** an animal **up†** *Lit.* to devour

all of some food or an animal. \_ *They ate the turkey up,*

*and no one had to eat leftovers.* \_*The lion ate up the zebra*

*very quickly.* **2.** *Fig.* to consume something rapidly, such

as money. \_*Running this household eats my income up.* \_

*The car really eats up gas.* **3.** *Fig.* to believe something. \_

*Those people really eat that stuff up about tax reduction.* \_

*They’ll eat up almost anything you tell them.* **4.** *Fig.* to

appreciate something. \_ *The audience liked my singing;*

*they really ate it up.* \_ *The stuff about the federal budget*

*went over well. They really ate up the whole story.*

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[21857, 21863]

**entangle** someone or something **in** something **1.** and **entangle**

an animal **in** something *Lit.* to catch or tangle up someone,

a group, or an animal in something. \_*Careful! Don’t*

*entangle your foot in the anchor chain.* \_*Somehow I entangled*

*the dog in the fishing net.* **2.** *Fig.* to get someone or a

group involved in something. \_ *She was trying to entangle*

*us in her latest cause.* \_*They entangled us in their lawsuit.*

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[22537, 22547]

**expect** something **from** someone or something **1.** to anticipate

receiving something from someone or a group. \_ *I*

*expect a letter from you at least once a week while you are*

*gone.* \_ *We expect at least a postcard out of you.* **2.** And

**expect** something **(out) of** someone or something to

demand something from someone or something. \_ *I*

*expect more effort from you. Get to work.* **3.** and **expect**

something **(out) of** someone or something to anticipate a

certain kind of behavior from someone or something. \_

*We expected better from you. I’m very disappointed in your*

*behavior.* \_ *We really expected better behavior of you.*

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[23191, 23198]

**fall into a trap 1.** *Lit.* to get caught in a trap. \_*The tiger*

*fell into a trap and leapt out again immediately.* \_*The boys*

*tried to get a squirrel to fall into a trap, but squirrels are too*

*clever.* **2.** and **fall into the trap; fall into** someone’s

**trap** *Fig.* to become caught in someone’s scheme; to be

deceived into doing or thinking something. \_*We fell into*

*a trap by asking for an explanation.* \_ *I fell into his trap*

*when I agreed to drive him home.*

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[25010, 25023]

**flare up 1.** *Lit.* [for something] to ignite and burn. \_*The*

*firewood flared up at last—four matches having been used.*

**2.** *Lit.* [for a fire] to burn brightly again and expand

rapidly. \_ *After burning quietly for a while, the fire suddenly*

*f lared up and made the room very bright.* **3.** *Fig.* [for

a pain or medical condition] to get worse suddenly. \_*My*

*arthritis f lares up during the damp weather.* **4.** *Fig.* [for a

dispute] to break out or escalate into a battle. \_ *A war*

*f lared up in the Middle East.* \_ *We can’t send the whole*

*army every time a dispute f lares up.* **5.** and **flare up at**

someone or something *Fig.* to lose one’s temper at someone

or something. \_ *I could tell by the way he f lared up at me*

*that he was not happy with what I had done.* \_ *I didn’t*

*mean to f lare up.*

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[25167, 25177]

**flesh and blood 1.** *Lit.* a living human body, especially

with reference to its natural limitations; a human being.

\_*This cold weather is more than f lesh and blood can stand.*

\_ *Carrying 300 pounds is beyond mere f lesh and blood.*

**2.** *Fig.* the quality of being alive. \_ *The paintings of this*

*artist are lifeless. They lack f lesh and blood.* \_ *This play*

*needs f lesh and blood, not the mumbling of intensely dull*

*actors.* **3.** and **own flesh and blood** *Fig.* one’s own relatives;

one’s own kin. \_ *That’s no way to treat one’s own*

*f lesh and blood.* \_ *I want to leave my money to my own*

*f lesh and blood.*

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[25693, 25700]

**fly into** something **1.** and **fly in** to go to something or some

place by air; to arrive by air. \_ *When are you going to f ly*

*into the airport?* \_*We will f ly into Detroit tomorrow.* **2.** to

crash into something while flying. \_ *Birds sometimes f ly*

*into tall buildings.* **3.** to pass into something, such as fog,

clouds, wind, etc., while flying. \_ *We f lew into some*

*clouds, but the f light was not rough.* \_ *The plane f lew into*

*some fog as it was landing.*

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[25838, 25844]

**fold** something **into** something **1.** and **fold** something **in†** to

blend something, such as eggs, into batter. (See also cut

something into something.) \_ *Carefully, the chef folded the*

*eggs into the other ingredients.* \_*The chef folded in the eggs.*

**2.** to make an object by folding something, such as paper

or cloth. \_ *He folded the paper into a little bird.* \_ *Wally*

*can fold a sheet of paper into an airplane that f lies.*

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[26716, 26724]

**frighten** someone or an animal **into** something **1.** and

**frighten** someone or an animal **in†** to scare someone or

an animal into entering something or some place. \_ *The*

*trouble in the neighborhood frightened most of the residents*

*into their houses.* \_ *The mouse was out of its hole, but we*

*came in and frightened the little mouse back in.* **2.** to scare

someone or an animal into a particular state. \_ *They*

*frightened me into a quivering mass.* \_ *The mouse was*

*frightened into a state of confusion.*

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[27698, 27703]

**get into a mess 1.** *Lit.* to get some part of one into a

sloppy or messy substance. \_*Look at your shoes! You really*

*got into a mess.* \_ *Please don’t get into a mess in the park.*

**2.** and **get into a jam** *Fig.* to get into difficulty; to get

into trouble. \_ *Now you have really gotten into a mess.* \_

*I got into a real mess at work.*

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[28667, 28676]

**get together (with** someone**) (on** someone or something**)**

**1.** and **get together (with** someone**) (about** someone

or something**)** *Lit.* to meet with someone about someone or

something. \_ *I would like to get together with you on this*

*Wilson matter. What would be a good time for you?* \_*Let’s*

*get together on Fred and his department at our next meeting.*

**2.** *Fig.* to agree with someone about someone or

something. \_ *I would like to get together with you on this,*

*but we are still nowhere near agreement.* \_ *I want to get*

*together on price with the suppliers.*

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[29042, 29046]

**give** someone **a lift 1.** and **give** someone **a ride** *Fig.* to

provide transportation for someone. \_ *I’ve got to get into*

*town. Can you give me a lift?* **2.** *Fig.* to raise someone’s

spirits; to make a person feel better. \_ *It was a good conversation,*

*and her kind words really gave me a lift.*

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[29397, 29405]

**glean** something **from** something **1.** *Lit.* to gather the leftovers

of something from something; to gather the ears of

grain left in a field after a harvest. \_ *The poor people*

*gleaned their entire living from what was left in the fields.*

\_ *We will have to go out and glean something from the*

*fields.* **2.** and **glean something from** someone *Fig.* to

figure something out from bits of gossip. \_ *I was able to*

*glean some important news from Tommy.* \_ *Tell me the*

*news you gleaned from the people in town.*

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[30073, 30081]

**go into** something **1.** and **go in** *Lit.* to enter something; to

penetrate something. \_ *The needle went into the vein*

*smoothly and painlessly.* \_ *It went in with no trouble.*

**2.** *Fig.* to enter some line of business or a profession. \_

*He went into accounting when he got out of college.* \_*I want*

*to prepare to go into law enforcement.* **3.** *Fig.* to examine

or study something; to discuss and explain something.

(See also go there.) \_*I need to go into this more.* \_*When*

*we have time, we need to go into this question more thoroughly.*

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[30598, 30609]

**go to seed 1.** and **run to seed** *Lit.* [for a plant] to grow

long enough to produce seed; [for a plant] to spend its

energy going to seed. \_ *The lettuce went to seed and we*

*couldn’t eat it.* \_ *Plants like that ought not to be allowed to*

*go to seed.* **2.** and **run to seed** *Fig.* [for a lawn or a plant]

to produce seeds because it has not had proper care. \_

*You’ve got to mow the grass. It’s going to seed.* \_ *Don’t let*

*the lawn go to seed. It looks so—seedy!* **3.** *Fig.* [for something]

to decline in looks, status, or utility due to lack of

care. (The same as run to seed.) \_ *This old coat is going*

*to seed. Have to get a new one.* \_ *The front of the house is*

*going to seed. Let’s get it painted.*

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[31518, 31523]

**grind** something **into** something **1.** to pulverize something

into powder, grit, particles, etc. \_*The machine ground the*

*rocks into gravel.* \_ *The mill ground the grain into f lour.*

**2.** and **grind something in†** to crush or rub something

into something. \_ *People’s feet ground the cigarette ashes*

*into the carpet.* \_ *Their feet ground in the ashes.*

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[31549, 31556]

**\***a **grip on** something **1.** and **\***a **hold on** something *Lit.* a

good grasp on something. (\*Typically: **get ~; have ~;**

**give** someone **~**.) \_ *Try to get a grip on the ropes and*

*pull yourself up.* \_ *You should get a hold on the knob and*

*turn it firmly.* **2.** *Fig.* a thorough knowledge of some topic.

(\*Typically: **get ~; have ~; give** someone **~**.) \_ *I*

*need to have a grip on the basics of accounting.* \_ *Try to*

*get a hold on all the facts first.*

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[32338, 32345]

**hang by a hair** and **hang by a thread 1.** *Lit.* to hang

by something very thin, such as a thread or a hair. \_ *The*

*tiniest part of the mobile hung by a thread, the rest are on*

*plastic cords.* **2.** and **hang on by a hair; hang on by**

**a thread** *Fig.* to depend on something very insubstantial;

to hang in the balance. \_ *Your whole argument is*

*hanging by a thread.* \_ *John isn’t failing geometry, but his*

*passing grade is just hanging by a hair.*

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[32521, 32528]

**hang up (on** someone or something**) 1.** and **hang up (in**

someone’s **ear)** to end a telephone call by returning the

receiver to the cradle while the other party is still talking.

\_ *She hung up on me!* \_ *I had to hang up on all that rude*

*talk.* **2.** to give up on someone or something; to quit dealing

with someone or something. \_ *Finally, I had to hang*

*up on Jeff. I can’t depend on him for anything.* \_ *We hung*

*up on them because we knew we couldn’t make a deal.*

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[35463, 35471]

**hold** someone or something **off† 1.** and **keep** someone or

something **off†** *Lit.* to do something physical to keep someone

or something away; to stave someone or something

off. \_ *Tom was trying to rob us, but we managed to hold*

*him off.* \_ *We held off the attackers.* \_ *I couldn’t keep off*

*the reporters any longer.* **2.** *Fig.* to make someone or something

wait. \_ *I know a lot of people are waiting to see me.*

*Hold them off for a while longer.* \_ *See what you can do to*

*hold off the reporters.*

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[35560, 35567]

**hold** something **in†** and **keep** something **in† 1.** and **hold**

something **inside ((of )** one(self)); **keep** something **inside**

**((of )** one(self)) *Fig.* to keep one’s emotions inside oneself.

\_ *You really shouldn’t hold those feelings inside of you.* \_

*I have kept all this inside myself too long.* \_ *You shouldn’t*

*hold in all that anger.* **2.** *Lit.* to hold in one’s stomach, gut,

belly, etc. \_*Hold your belly in so you don’t look like a blimp.*

\_ *Hold in your stomach.*

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[35619, 35631]

**Hold the phone. 1.** and **Hold the wire(, please).;**

**Hold, please.; Hold the line(, please).; Hold the**

**phone(, please).; Please hold.** *Fig.* Please wait on the

telephone and do not hang up. (A phrase in use before

telephone “hold” circuitry was in wide use.) \_ *Bill: Hold*

*the wire, please. (Turning to Tom) Tom, the phone’s for you.*

*Tom: Be right there.* \_*Rachel: Do you wish to speak to Mr.*

*Jones or Mr. Franklin? Henry: Jones. Rachel: Thank you.*

*Hold the line, please.* \_*Sue: Good afternoon, Acme Motors,*

*hold please. Bill (hanging up): That makes me so mad!*

**2.** *Fig.*Wait just a minute.; Don’t rush into something. \_

*Hold the phone! Let’s think about it a little longer.* \_ *Hold*

*the phone. I just had another idea.*

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[35642, 35647]

**hold up 1.** *Lit.* to endure; to last a long time. \_ *How long*

*will this cloth hold up?* \_ *I want my money back for this*

*chair. It isn’t holding up well.* **2.** and **hold up (for** someone

or something**)** to wait; to stop and wait for someone or

something. \_ *Hold up for Wallace. He’s running hard to*

*catch up to us.* \_ *Hold up a minute.*

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[36324, 36332]

**howl at** someone or something **1.** *Lit.* [for a canine] to bay

at someone or something. \_ *The dog howls at me when I*

*play the trumpet.* \_ *The wolves howled at the moon and*

*created a terrible uproar.* **2.** and **hoot at** someone or something

*Fig.* to yell out at someone or something. \_*The audience*

*howled at the actors and upset them greatly.* \_ *We*

*hooted at the singer until he stopped.* **3.** *Fig.* to laugh very

hard at someone or something. \_*Everyone just howled at*

*Tom’s joke.* \_ *I howled at the story Alice told.*

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[38083, 38096]

**imprint** something **on(to)** something **1.** to print something

onto something. \_*We imprinted your name onto your stationery*

*and your business cards.* \_ *Please imprint my initials*

*on this label.* **2.** and **imprint** something **into** something

to record something firmly in the memory of

someone. \_ *The severe accident imprinted a sense of fear*

*onto Lucy’s mind.* \_ *Imprint the numbers into your brain*

*and never forget them!* **3.** and **imprint** something **into**

something to make a permanent record of something in an

animal’s brain. (As with newly hatched fowl, which

imprint the image of the first moving creature they see

into their brains.) \_*The sight of its mother imprinted itself*

*on the little gosling’s brain.* \_ *Nature imprints this information*

*into the bird’s memory.*

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[39265, 39274]

**\*in** someone’s **way 1.** *Lit.* in the pathway of someone.

(\*Typically: **be ~; get [into] ~; stand ~**.) \_ *Don’t*

*get in Bob’s way while he is bringing groceries in from the*

*car.* **2.** and **in the way of** someone**(**’s **plans)** *Fig.* interfering

with a person in the pursuit of plans or intentions;

hindering someone’s plans. (\*Typically: **be ~; get ~;**

**stand ~**.) \_ *I am going to leave home. Please don’t get in*

*my way.* \_ *She intends to become a lawyer and no one had*

*better get in her way.* \_ *I would never get into the way of*

*her plans.*

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[39683, 39690]

**in the spotlight 1.** *Fig.* in the beam of a spotlight, as on

a stage. \_ *The singer was in the spotlight but the band was*

*almost in the dark.* **2.** and **in the limelight** *Fig.* at the

center of attention. (*Limelight* refers to an obsolete type

of spotlight, and the word occurs only in this phrase.) \_

*John will do almost anything to get himself into the limelight.*

\_ *I love being in the spotlight.* \_ *All elected officials*

*spend a lot of time in the limelight.*

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[40049, 40056]

**infiltrate into** something **1.** to permeate something; to filter

into something. \_*The sour smell infiltrated into everything*

*in the refrigerator.* \_ *The paint smell infiltrated into*

*every room in the house.* **2.** and **infiltrate** something to

penetrate a group, secretly, for the purposes of spying or

influencing the activities of the group. \_ *The spy infiltrated*

*into the enemy headquarters.* \_*They infiltrated into*

*the government.*

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[41267, 41270]

**It’s your move. 1.** and **It’s your turn.** *Lit.* [in a game]

It’s your time to play. \_ *It’s your move, and I think I have*

*you trapped.* **2.** *Fig.* It is time for you to do something. \_

*I’ve done everything I could do. Now, it’s your move.*

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[42422, 42428]

**keep on** something **1.** and **keep on** *Lit.* to work to remain

mounted on something, such as a horse, bicycle, etc.\_*It’s*

*really hard for me to keep on a horse.* \_ *It’s hard to keep on*

*when it’s moving all over the place.* **2.** *Fig.* to pay close

attention to something. (See also keep on top of someone

or something.) \_*Keep on that story until everything*

*is settled.* \_ *This is a problem. Keep on it until it’s settled.*

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[42891, 42899]

**keep** someone or something **still 1.** *Lit.* and **keep** someone

or something **quiet** to make someone or something silent

or less noisy. \_ *Can you please keep the baby still?* \_ *Keep*

*that stereo quiet!* **2.** Go to keep something quiet. **3.** and

**hold** someone or something **still** *Fig.* to restrain or control

someone or something so that the person or thing

cannot move. \_*Please keep your foot still. It makes me nervous*

*when you wiggle it.* \_ *You have to hold the nail still if*

*you want to hit it.*

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[43014, 43017]

**Keep still. 1.** and **Hold still.** Do not move. \_ *Quit wiggling.*

*Keep still!* \_ *“Hold still. I can’t examine your ear if*

*you’re moving,” said the doctor.* **2.** Go to keep quiet

(about someone or something).

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[43228, 43235]

**kick off 1.** *Lit.* to start play in a football game by kicking

the ball. \_ *Tom kicked off in the last game. Now it’s my*

*turn.* \_ *John tripped when he was kicking off.* **2.** and **kick**

**the bucket** *Fig.* to die. \_ *Don’t say that George Washington*

*“kicked off.” Say that he “passed away.”* \_ *My cat*

*kicked off last night. She was tough as a lion.* \_*When I kick*

*the bucket, I want a huge funeral with lots of flowers and*

*crying.*

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[43536, 43541]

**knock around 1.** to waste time. \_ *Stop knocking around*

*and get to work!* \_ *I need a couple of days a week just for*

*knocking around.* **2.** and **kick around** to wander around;

to bum around. \_ *I think I’ll knock around a few months*

*before looking for another job.* \_*We’re just knocking around*

*and keeping out of trouble.*

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[43618, 43625]

**knock** someone **cold 1.** *Fig.* to render someone unconscious

by a violent blow. \_*One swipe, and he knocked him*

*cold.* \_ *If you touch her again, I’ll knock you cold.* **2.** and

**knock** someone **dead** *Fig.* to put on a stunning performance

or display for someone. (*Someone* is often replaced

by ’*em* from *them.*) \_*This band is going to do great tonight.*

*We’re going to knock them dead.* \_ *“See how your sister is*

*all dressed up!” said Bill. “She’s going to knock ’em cold.”*

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[43631, 43638]

**knock** someone **for a loop 1.** *Fig.* to strike someone hard.

\_*You really knocked me for a loop. I hope that was an accident.*

\_*I was really knocked for a loop by the falling branch.*

**2.** and **throw** someone **for a loop** *Fig.* to confuse or

shock someone. (This is more severe and upsetting than

throw someone a curve.) \_ *When Bill heard the news, it*

*threw him for a loop.* \_*The manager knocked Bob for a loop*

*by firing him on the spot.*

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[43759, 43766]

**knock the bottom out (of** something**) 1.** and **knock**

**the bottom out†** *Lit.* to break the bottom of a container.

\_*I knocked the bottom out of the barrel and used it to store*

*compost.* \_*Knock out the bottom and set it right on the soil.*

**2.** *Fig.* [for something] to go down so low as to knock out

the bottom. \_*The bad news knocked the bottom out of the*

*stock market.* \_*The recession knocked the bottom out of our*

*profits.*

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[43889, 43895]

**know** one’s **way around 1.** and **know** one’s **way about**

*Lit.* to know how to get from place to place. \_ *I can find*

*my way. I know my way around.* \_ *I don’t know my way*

*around this city yet.* **2.** *Fig.* to know how to deal with people

and situations; to have had much experience at living.

\_ *I can get along in the world. I know my way around.* \_

*Do you think I don’t know my way around?*

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[44468, 44476]

**lather up 1.** [for a horse] to develop a foam of sweat from

working very hard. \_ *The horses lathered up heavily during*

*the race.* \_*Don’t let your horse lather up!* **2.** [for soap]

to develop thick suds when rubbed in water. \_ *This soap*

*won’t lather up, even when I rub it hard.* \_ *When the soap*

*lathers up, spread the lather on your face and rub.* **3.** and

**lather** oneself **up** [for one] to apply soap lather to one’s

body. \_ *He will spend a few minutes lathering himself up*

*before he rinses.* \_ *He lathered up and then shaved.*

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[44608, 44623]

**lay a (heavy) trip on** someone **1.** *Inf.* to criticize someone.

\_ *There’s no need to lay a trip on me. I agree with*

*you.* \_ *When he finally does get there, I’m going to lay a*

*heavy trip on him like he’ll never forget.* **2.** *Inf.* to confuse

or astonish someone. \_ *After he laid a heavy trip on me*

*about how the company is almost broke, I cleaned out my*

*desk and left.* \_ *After Mary laid a trip on John about leaving*

*him, all he could do was cry.* **3.** and **lay a guilt trip**

**on** someone *Inf.* to attempt to make someone feel very

guilty. \_ *Why do you have to lay a guilt trip on me? Why*

*don’t you go to a shrink?* \_ *Of course, she just had to lay a*

*trip on him about being bossy, self-centered, and aloof.*

**4.** *Inf.* to reveal serious or devastating information to

someone. \_*That’s a powerful story. I didn’t know you were*

*going to lay a heavy trip like that on me.* \_*Man, you really*

*laid a trip on me.*

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[44984, 44990]

**lead** someone **on 1.** to guide someone onward. \_ *We led*

*him on so he could see more of the gardens.* \_ *Please lead*

*Mary on. There is lots more to see here.* **2.** and **lead** someone

**on†** to tease someone; to encourage someone’s roman-

tic or sexual interest without sincerity. \_*You are just leading*

*me on!* \_ *It’s not fair to continue leading him on.* \_ *It’s*

*easy to lead on teenage boys.*

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[46842, 46848]

**line up behind** someone or something **1.** to form or get

into a line behind someone or something. \_*Please line up*

*behind Kelly.* \_*Please go and line up behind the sign.* **2.** and

**get behind** someone or something to organize in support

of someone or something. \_ *We all got behind Todd and*

*got him elected.* \_ *We got behind the most active political*

*party.*

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[47692, 47701]

**look down (at** someone or something**) 1.** to turn one’s gaze

downward at someone or something. \_ *She looked down*

*at me and giggled at the awkward position I was in.* \_ *She*

*looked down and burst into laughter.* **2.** and **look down**

one’s **nose at** someone or something; **look down on**

someone or something to view someone or something as

lowly or unworthy. \_ *She looked down at all the waiters*

*and treated them badly.* \_ *They looked down on our humble*

*food.* \_*Don’t look down your nose at my car just because*

*it’s rusty and noisy.*

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[47734, 47740]

**look into** something **1.** *Lit.* to gaze into the inside of something.

\_ *Look into the box and make sure you’ve gotten*

*everything out of it.* \_*Look into the camera’s viewfinder at*

*the little red light.* **2.** and **check into** something; **see into**

something *Fig.* to investigate something. \_*I’ll have to look*

*into that matter.* \_ *The police checked into her story.* \_

*Don’t worry about your problem. I’ll see into it.*

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[48033, 48041]

**lose** one’s **hold on** someone or something and **lose** one’s

**grip on** someone or something **1.** *Lit.* to fail to keep one’s

handhold on someone or something. \_ *I lost my hold on*

*the child, and she nearly slipped away.* \_ *She lost her grip*

*on the bag of jewels and it fell overboard.* **2.** and **lose** one’s

**hold over** someone or something *Fig.* to give up control

over someone or something. \_ *The manager lost her hold*

*on her employees and was fired.* \_*Fred is losing his grip on*

*his workers.* \_ *He is losing his hold over his empire.*

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[52504, 52513]

**not miss much 1.** and **not miss a thing** *Inf.* not to miss

observing any part of what is going on. (Usually with *do*

as in the examples.) \_ *Ted doesn’t miss much. He is very*

*alert.* \_*The puppy doesn’t miss a thing. He sees every move*

*you make.* **2.** *Inf.* not to miss experiencing something that

really was not worth experiencing anyway. (Usually with

*do* as in the examples.) \_*I missed the big sales meeting last*

*week, but I understand I didn’t miss much.* \_ *Bill: I didn’t*

*see that new movie that is showing at the theater. Tom: You*

*didn’t miss much; it was pretty bad.*

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[55231, 55238]

**\*out of control 1.** *Lit.* [of something, such as a machine]

not responding to direction or instructions. (\*Typically:

**be ~; go ~**.) \_*The computer is out of control and making*

*funny-looking characters all over the screen.* \_ *My CD*

*player is out of control and only makes screeching noises.*

**2.** and **\*out of hand** *Fig.* acting wildly or violently.

(\*Typically: **be ~; get ~**.) \_*Watch out, that dog is out*

*of control.* \_ *The kids got out of hand again.*

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[55437, 55444]

**\*out of step (with** someone or something**) 1.** and **\*out of**

**time (with** someone or something**)** *Lit.* out of cadence

with someone else. (\*Typically: **be ~; dance ~; get**

**~; march ~**.) \_*You’ve gotten out of step with the music.*

\_*Pay attention, Ann. You’re out of time.* **2.** *Fig.* not as upto-

date as someone or something. (\*Typically: **be ~; get**

**~**.) \_ *John is out of step with the times.* \_ *Billy missed*

*three days and now is out of step with the rest of the class.*

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[55524, 55535]

**\*out of the way 1.** and **\*out of** someone’s **way; \*out**

**of the road** *Lit.* not blocking or impeding the way.

(\*Typically: **get ~; get** someone or something **~; move**

someone or something **~**.) \_ *Please get out of my way.* \_

*Would you please get your foot out of the way?* **2.** and **\*out**

**of** one’s **way** *Fig.* not along the way; not included in the

proposed route. (\*Typically: **be ~**.) \_ *I’m sorry, but I*

*can’t give you a ride home. It’s out of my way.* \_*That route*

*is out of our way.* **3.** *Fig.* completed; finished. (\*Typically:

**be ~; get** something **~; have** something **~**.) \_*I’m sure*

*glad to have that test out of the way.* \_*I’ll be happy to have*

*all this medical stuff out of the way.*

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[55629, 55635]

**out to lunch 1.** *Lit.* eating lunch away from one’s place of

work or activity. \_*I’m sorry, but Sally Jones is out to lunch.*

*May I take a message?* \_ *She’s been out to lunch for nearly*

*two hours. When will she be back?* **2.** and **out of it** *Fig.*

not alert; giddy; uninformed. \_*Bill is really out of it. Why*

*can’t he pay attention?* \_*Don’t be out of it, John. Wake up!*

\_ *Ann is really out to lunch these days.*

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[55641, 55647]

**\*out-of-bounds 1.** *Lit.* outside the boundaries of the

playing area. (\*Typically: **be ~; get ~; go ~**.) \_ *The*

*ball went out-of-bounds just at the end of the game.* \_ *The*

*whistle blew when Juan went out-of-bounds.* **2.** and **\*offlimits**

*Fig.* forbidden. (\*Typically: **be ~**.) \_*This area is*

*off-limits. You can’t go in there.* \_ *Don’t go there. It’s outof-*

*bounds.* \_ *That kind of behavior is off-limits. Stop it!*

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[55689, 55698]

**\*over** someone’s **head 1.** *Fig.* [of the intellectual content

of something] too difficult for someone to understand.

(\*Typically: **be ~; go ~; pass ~**.) \_*All that talk about*

*computers went over my head.* \_ *I hope my lecture didn’t*

*go over the students’ heads.* **2.** and **\*over** someone; **\*above**

someone *Fig.* to an authority higher than someone. (\*Typically:

**be ~; go ~**.) \_ *I don’t want to have to go over*

*your head, but I will if necessary.* \_ *I had to go over Fran*

*to get it done.* \_ *My boss wouldn’t listen to my complaint,*

*so I went above her.*

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[55988, 55991]

**pan out 1.** and **zoom out** to move back to a wider angle

picture using a zoom lens. \_ *The camera zoomed out.* \_

*Pan out at this point in the script and give a wider view of*

*the scene.* **2.** Go to turn out (all right).

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[57156, 57163]

**pick holes in** something **1.** and **pick** something **to pieces**

to criticize something severely; to point out the flaws or

fallacies in an argument. \_ *The lawyer picked holes in the*

*witness’s story.* \_ *They will pick holes in your argument.* \_

*Stop picking holes in everything I say!* **2.** to poke or pinch

little holes in something. \_*Look! You’ve picked holes in the*

*bread! How can I make sandwiches?* \_*Who picked holes in*

*the blanket?*

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[57828, 57839]

**\*plain as day** and **\*plain as a pikestaff 1.** *Cliché* very

plain and simple. (\*Also: **as ~**.) \_ *Although his face was*

*as plain as day, his smile made him look interesting and*

*friendly.* \_*Fred: I have a suspicion that Marcia is upset with*

*me. Alan: A suspicion? Come on, Fred, that’s been plain as*

*a pikestaff for quite some time!* **2.** and **\*plain as the nose**

**on** one’s **face** *Cliché* clear and understandable. (\*Also:

**as ~**.) \_ *The lecture was as plain as day. No one had to*

*ask questions.* \_*Jane: I don’t understand why Professor Potter*

*has been so friendly this week. Alan: It’s plain as the nose*

*on your face. He wants to be nominated for Professor of the*

*Year.*

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[57956, 57965]

**play around (with** someone or something**) 1.** and **play**

**about (with** someone or something**)** to play and frolic

with someone or something. \_ *Kelly likes to play around*

*with the other kids.* \_ *The boys are out in the yard, playing*

*about with the neighbor girls.* \_ *Will you kids stop playing*

*about and get busy?* \_ *Stop playing around and get busy!*

**2.** *Euph.* to have a romantic or sexual affair with someone

or persons in general. \_ *Kelly found out that her husband*

*had been playing around with Susan.* \_*I can’t believe*

*that Roger is playing around!*

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[58201, 58211]

**play** something **by ear 1.** to be able to play a piece of music

after just listening to it a few times, without looking at

the notes. \_ *I can play “Stardust” by ear.* \_ *Some people*

*can play Chopin’s music by ear.* **2.** and **play by ear** to play

a musical instrument well, without formal training. \_

*John can play the piano by ear.* \_ *If I could play by ear, I*

*wouldn’t have to take lessons—or practice!* **3.** to improvise;

to decide one’s next steps after one is already involved in

a situation. \_ *If we go into the meeting unprepared, we’ll*

*have to play everything by ear.* \_*He never prepared his presentations.*

*He always played things by ear.*

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[58687, 58693]

**poke around 1.** and **poke about** to look or search

around. \_ *I’ve been poking around in the library looking*

*for some statistics.* \_ *I don’t mind if you look in my drawer*

*for a paper clip, but please don’t poke about.* **2.** to waste

time while moving about. \_ *I just poked around all afternoon*

*and didn’t accomplish much.* \_ *Stop poking around*

*and get moving.*

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[59065, 59074]

**pour cold water on** something **1.** *Lit.* to douse something

with cold water. \_ *Pour cold water on the vegetables to*

*freshen them.* \_ *I poured cold water on my head to cool*

*myself off.* **2.** and **dash cold water on** something; **throw**

**cold water on** something *Fig.* to discourage doing something;

to reduce enthusiasm for something. (Alludes to

cooling passion with cold water.) \_ *When my father said*

*I couldn’t have the car, he poured cold water on my plans.*

\_*John threw cold water on the whole project by refusing to*

*participate.*

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[59994, 59999]

**puff (away) at** something **1.** to blow at or into something

in puffs. \_ *She puffed away at the beach ball, blowing it*

*up as fast as she could.* \_*Todd puffed at the fire until it grew*

*larger.* **2.** and **puff (away) on** something to smoke something,

such as a cigar, cigarette, or pipe. \_*Scott was puffing*

*away at his pipe.* \_*She is always puffing on a cigarette.*

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[60271, 60278]

**pull** something **off† 1.** *Inf.* to manage to make something

happen. \_*Yes, I can pull it off.* \_*Do you think you can pull*

*off this deal?* **2.** and **pull** something **off (of )** someone or

something *Lit.* to tug or drag something off someone or

something else. (*Of* is usually retained before pronouns.)

\_ *Sam pulled the covers off the bed and fell into it, dead*

*tired.* \_ *He pulled off his clothes and stepped into the*

*shower.*

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[60561, 60568]

**push ahead (with** something**) 1.** *Lit.* to go on ahead,

pushing with something. \_*The worker pushed ahead with*

*the plow, moving the snow to the side of the road.* \_ *Our*

*car followed the snowplow, which was pushing ahead at a*

*fast clip.* **2.** and **push ahead (on** something**)** *Fig.* to continue

to progress with something. \_*Let’s push ahead with*

*this project immediately.* \_ *I want to push ahead on this*

*project.*

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[61211, 61222]

**put** someone **away† 1.** *Sl.* to kill someone. (Underworld.)

\_ *The gangster threatened to put me away if I told the*

*police.* \_ *They’ve put away witnesses in the past.* **2.** *Euph.*

to bury someone. \_*My uncle died last week. They put him*

*away on Saturday.* \_ *They put away my uncle in the cold*

*ground.* **3.** and **send** someone **away** *Euph.* to have someone

put into a mental institution. \_*My uncle became irrational,*

*and they put him away.* \_ *They put away my aunt*

*the year before.* **4.** and **send** someone **away** *Euph.* to sentence

someone to prison for a length of time. (Underworld.)

\_ *They put Richard away for fifteen years.* \_ *The*

*judge put away the whole gang.*

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[62831, 62837]

**reach for the sky 1.** and **aim for the sky; shoot for**

**the sky** *Fig.* to set one’s sights high. \_ *Reach for the sky!*

*Go for it!* \_*You should always reach for the sky, but be prepared*

*for not attaining your goals every time.* **2.** *Fig. Inf.* to

put one’s hands up, as in a burglary. \_ *The gunman told*

*the bank teller to reach for the sky.* \_ *Reach for the sky and*

*give me all your money!*

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[63774, 63784]

**remain on 1.** to continue to stay in one place. (The *on* is

an adverb, not a preposition.) \_ *Everyone else left, but I*

*decided to remain on there.* \_*I remained on for a while during*

*the time they were training my replacement.* **2.** and

**remain on** something to continue to be on something;

to continue to serve on a body. \_ *Will you remain on the*

*board of directors for another year?* \_ *I will remain on this*

*committee as long as I am needed.* **3.** to continue to take a

particular medicine. \_ *How long should I stay on these*

*pills?* \_ *I want you to remain on this medication until you*

*run out.*

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[65902, 65908]

**run in circles 1.** *Lit.* to run in a circular path. \_*The horses*

*ran in circles around the corral for their daily exercise.* \_

*The children ran in circles around the tree.* **2.** and **run**

**around in circles** *Fig.* to waste one’s time in aimless

activity. \_*Stop running in circles and try to organize yourself*

*so that you are more productive.* \_ *I have been running*

*around in circles over this matter for days.*

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[66223, 66229]

**run the gauntlet 1.** *Lit.* to race, as a punishment,

between parallel lines of men who thrash one as one runs.

\_ *The knight was forced to doff his clothes and run the*

*gauntlet.* **2.** and **run the gauntlet of** something *Fig.* to

endure a series of problems, threats, or criticism. \_ *After*

*the play, the director found himself running the gauntlet of*

*questions and doubts about his ability.*

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[66294, 66298]

the **runt of the litter 1.** *Lit.* the smallest animal born in

a litter; the animal in a litter least likely to survive. \_ *No*

*one wanted to buy the runt of the litter, so we kept it.* **2.** and

the **runt of the family** *Fig.* the smallest child in the family.

\_*I was the runt of the litter and the butt of all the jokes.*

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[68803, 68810]

**\*sewed up 1.** *Lit.* [the sewing of a gap in cloth] completed.

(\*Typically: **get** something **~; have** something

**~**.) \_ *Have you got that tear sewed up yet?* **2.** and

**\*wrapped up** *Fig.* settled or finished. (\*Typically: **get**

something **~; have** something **~**.) \_*I’ll take the contract*

*to the mayor tomorrow morning. I’ll get the whole deal*

*sewed up by noon.* \_ *Don’t worry about the car loan. I’ll*

*have it wrapped up in time to make the purchase.*

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[68902, 68908]

**shake** something **out† 1.** *Lit.* to clean something of dirt or

crumbs by shaking. \_ *Please shake the tablecloth out.* \_

*Can you shake out your coat? It’s really dusty.* **2.** and **shake**

something **down†** *Fig.* to test something to find out how

it works or what the problems are. \_*I need to spend some*

*time driving my new car to shake it out.* \_*We need to shake*

*down this car before I buy it.*

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[68963, 68969]

**\*sharp as a razor 1.** very sharp. (\*Also: **as ~**.) \_ *The*

*penknife is sharp as a razor.* \_ *The carving knife will have*

*to be as sharp as a razor to cut through this gristle.* **2.** and

**\*sharp as a tack** very sharp-witted or intelligent.

(\*Also: **as ~**.) \_ *The old man’s senile, but his wife is as*

*sharp as a razor.* \_ *Sue can figure things out from even the*

*slightest hint. She’s as sharp as a tack.*

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[70534, 70539]

**slip away 1.** and **slip off** to go away or escape quietly or

in secret; to slip out. \_ *I slipped away when no one was*

*looking.* \_*Let’s slip off somewhere and have a little talk.* \_

*I’ll try to slip out for an hour or two when Tom is asleep.*

**2.** *Euph.* to die. \_ *Uncle Charles slipped away in his sleep*

*last night.*

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[70551, 70557]

**slip by 1.** and **slip by** someone or something to move by

someone or something quickly or unnoticed; to move

through a tight area or past someone or something in a

tight area. \_*The hall was narrow, and I could hardly have*

*slipped by.* **2.** [for time] to pass quickly or unnoticed. \_

*Goodness, almost an hour has slipped by! How time f lies.* \_

*The entire workday slipped by before I knew it.*

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[70861, 70868]

**slow on the draw 1.** *Lit.* slow in drawing a gun. (Cowboy

and gangster talk.) \_ *Bill got shot because he’s so slow*

*on the draw.* \_*The gunslinger said, “I have to be fast. If I’m*

*slow on the draw, I’m dead.”* **2.** and **slow on the uptake**

*Fig.* slow to figure something out; slow-thinking. \_ *Sally*

*didn’t get the joke because she’s sort of slow on the draw.* \_

*Bill—who’s slow on the uptake—didn’t get the joke until it*

*was explained to him.*

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[71182, 71194]

**smooth** something **out† 1.** *Lit.* to flatten or even something

by smoothing or pressing. \_*Wally smoothed the bedspread*

*out.* \_*Wally finished making the bed by smoothing out the*

*spread.* **2.** *Fig.* to polish and refine something. \_*The editor*

*smoothed John’s style out.* \_*You need to smooth out your*

*delivery when you are speaking.* **3.** and **smooth** something

**over†** *Fig.* to reduce the intensity of an argument or a misunderstanding;

to try to make people feel better about

something disagreeable that has happened. (Fig. on Q.)

\_ *Mary and John had a terrible argument, and they are*

*both trying to smooth it over.* \_ *Let’s get everyone together*

*and try to smooth things out. We can’t keep on arguing with*

*one another.* \_ *We can smooth over the whole affair.*

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[73849, 73856]

**\***a **start 1.** and **\***a **jump(start)** battery power to help start

someone’s car, etc. (\*Typically: **get ~; have ~; give**

someone **~**.) \_ *My car is stalled. I need to get a start.* \_ *I*

*got my car going. I got a jump from John.* **2.** help in beginning

one’s career; a first opportunity in the beginning of

one’s career. (\*Typically: **get ~; have ~; give** someone

**~**.) \_ *She got a start in show business in Cincinnati.*

\_ *She had a start when she was only four.*

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[74394, 74400]

**step into** something **1.** *Lit.* and **step in** something to step

into something wet, messy, or dirty. \_ *Don’t step in the*

*mud!* \_ *What is that stinky stuff you stepped into?* **2.** *Fig.*

to involve oneself in some matter; to intervene in an affair

or dispute. \_ *I will have to step into the business and settle*

*the problem.* \_*Please don’t step into something that does*

*not concern you.*

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[76944, 76947]

**take a jab at** someone **1.** and **take a punch at** someone

to hit at someone; to poke someone. \_ *Max took a jab at*

*Lefty and missed.* \_ *Lefty took a punch at Max.* **2.** Go to

take a dig at someone.

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[79274, 79282]

**That does it! 1.** *Inf.* That completes it!; It is now done just

right! \_ *When Jane got the last piece put into the puzzle,*

*she said, “That does it!”* \_ *John (signing a paper): Well,*

*that’s the last one! That does it! Bill: I thought we’d never*

*finish.* **2.** and **That tears it!** *Inf.* That’s the last straw!;

Enough is enough! \_ *Bill: We’re still not totally pleased*

*with your work. Bob: That does it! I quit!* \_*Sally: That tears*

*it! I never want to see you again! Fred: I only put my arm*

*around you!*

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[80523, 80532]

**throw** someone **off the track 1.** and **throw** someone **off**

**the trail** *Lit.* to cause someone to lose the trail (when following

someone or something. See also put someone off

the track). \_ *The raccoon threw us off the track by running*

*through the creek.* \_ *The robber threw the police off*

*the trail by leaving town.* **2.** *Fig.* to cause one to lose one’s

place in the sequence of things. \_*The interruption threw*

*me off the track for a moment, but I soon got started again*

*with my presentation.* \_*Don’t let little things throw you off*

*the track. Concentrate on what you’re doing.*

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[80878, 80884]

**tickle** someone **to death 1.** *Fig.* to tickle someone a great

deal. \_ *Bobby nearly tickled Tim to death. Tim was left*

*breathless.* \_ *We got him down and tickled him to death.*

**2.** and **tickle** someone **to pieces** *Fig.* to please someone

a great deal. (See also tickle someone pink.) \_ *What you*

*told her just tickled her to death!* \_ *That story just tickles*

*me to pieces.*

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[81012, 81021]

**\*tight as a drum 1.** stretched tight. (\*Also: **as ~**.) \_

*Julia stretched the upholstery fabric over the seat of the chair*

*until it was as tight as a drum.* \_ *The skin on his scalp is*

*tight as a drum.* **2.** sealed tight. (\*Also: **as ~**.) \_ *Now*

*that I’ve caulked all the windows, the house should be tight*

*as a drum.* \_ *Your butterf ly died because the jar is as tight*

*as a drum.* **3.** and **\*tight as Midas’s fist** very stingy.

(\*Also: **as ~**.) \_ *He won’t contribute a cent. He’s as tight*

*as a drum.* \_ *Old Mr. Robinson is tight as Midas’s fist.*

*Won’t spend money on anything.*

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[82817, 82823]

**tune in (on** someone or something**)** and **tune in (to** someone

or something**) 1.** *Lit.* to adjust a radio or television set

to receive a broadcast of someone or something. \_ *Let’s*

*tune in on the late news.* \_ *I don’t want to tune in tonight.*

**2.** and **tune in (to** something**)** *Fig.* to pay attention to

someone or something. \_*I just can’t tune in on these professors.*

\_ *I listen and I try, but I just can’t tune in.*

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[83011, 83019]

**turn over 1.** *Lit.* to rotate so that the side that was on the

bottom is now on top. \_ *The turtle turned over and*

*crawled away.* \_ *She turned over to get some sun on her*

*back.* **2.** and **kick over** *Fig.* [for an engine] to start or to

rotate. \_ *My car engine was so cold that it wouldn’t even*

*turn over.* \_ *The engine kicked over a few times and then*

*stopped for good.* **3.** *Fig.* to undergo exchange; to be

replaced. \_*The employees turn over pretty regularly in this*

*department.*

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[83570, 83579]

**\*under pressure 1.** and **\*under a deadline; \*under**

**the gun (about** something**)** *Fig.* facing or enduring

something such as pressure or a deadline. (\*Typically: **be**

**~; get ~**.) \_ *I have to get back to work. I am under a*

*deadline.* \_*I am under a lot of pressure lately.* \_*The management*

*is under the gun for the mistakes made last year.*

**2.** [of a gas or liquid] being forced, squeezed, or compressed.

(\*Typically: **be ~; deliver** something **~; put**

something **~**.) \_ *The gas in the pipes leading to the oven*

*are under pressure.*

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[83948, 83958]

**\*up to speed 1.** *Fig.* moving, operating, or funtioning a

normal or desired rate. (\*Typically: **be ~; bring** something

**~; get ~; get** something **~**.) \_ *Terri did everything*

*she could to bring her workers up to speed, but*

*couldn’t.* \_ *Can we get this production line up to speed?*

**2.** and **\*up to speed on** someone or something *Fig.* fully

apprised about someone or something; up-to-date on the

state of someone or something. (\*Typically: **be ~; bring**

someone **~; get ~; get** someone **~**.) \_ *Please bring me*

*up to speed on this matter.* \_ *I’ll feel better about it when I*

*get up to speed on what’s going on.*

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[84538, 84544]

**wait up (for** someone or something**) 1.** *Fig.* to stay up late

waiting for someone to arrive or something to happen. \_

*I’ll be home late. Don’t wait up for me.* \_*We waited up for*

*the coming of the new year, and then we went to bed.* **2.** and

**hold up (for** someone or something**)** *Fig.* to wait for someone

or something to catch up. \_*Hey! Don’t go so fast. Wait*

*up for me.* \_ *Hold up! You’re going too fast.*

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[84992, 85000]

**warm up 1.** [for the weather or a person] to become

warmer or hotter. \_ *I think it is going to warm up next*

*week.* **2.** *Fig.* [for someone] to become more friendly. (A

warm person is a friendly person.) \_*Todd began to warm*

*up halfway through the conference.* \_ *After he had worked*

*there for a while, he began to warm up.* **3.** and **warm up**

**for** something *Fig.* to prepare for some kind of performance

or competition. \_*The team had to warm up before*

*the game.* \_ *They have to warm up.*

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[85197, 85206]

**watch out for** someone or something and **look out for**

someone or something **1.** to be on guard for someone or

something; to be on watch for the arrival or approach of

someone or something. \_*Watch out for someone wearing*

*a white carnation.* \_ *Look out for John and his friends.*

*They’ll be coming this way very soon.* **2.** and **look out;**

**watch out** *Fig.* to try to avoid a confrontation with

someone or something. \_ *Watch out! That car nearly hit*

*you!* \_*Look out for John. He’s looking for you, and he’s really*

*mad.* \_ *Thanks. I’d better look out.*

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[88104, 88113]

**work** oneself **(up) into a lather** and **work** oneself **(up)**

**into a sweat 1.** and **work up a sweat** *Lit.* to work

very hard and sweat very much. (In the way that a horse

works up a lather.) \_ *Don’t work yourself up into a lather.*

*We don’t need to finish this today.* \_ *I worked myself into*

*a sweat getting this stuff ready.* **2.** *Fig.* to get excited or

angry. (An elaboration of work oneself up to something.)

\_ *Now, now, don’t work yourself up into a lather.*

\_*He had worked himself into such a sweat, I was afraid he*

*would have a stroke.*

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[88121, 88128]

**work** oneself **up (to** something**) 1.** to prepare oneself with

sufficient energy or courage to do something. \_ *I can’t*

*just walk in there and ask for a raise. I have to work myself*

*up to it.* \_*I worked myself up and went into the boss’s office.*

**2.** and **work** one’s **way up (to** something**)** to progress in

one’s work to a particular rank or status. \_*I worked myself*

*up to sergeant in no time at all.* \_ *Claude worked his way*

*up to master sergeant.*

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[88825, 88832]

**writhe with** something **1.** and **writhe in** something [for

someone or an animal] to squirm because of something,

such as pain. \_ *Carl writhed with pain and began to cry.*

\_ *He was writhing in pain when the paramedics arrived.*

**2.** [for something] to support or contain something that

is writhing. \_ *The pit was writhing with snakes and other*

*horrid things.* \_ *The f loor of the basement was writhing in*

*spiders and crawly things.*

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[89690, 89700]

**zoom in (on** someone or something**) 1.** and **pan in (on**

someone or something**)** to move in to a close-up picture of

someone or something, using a zoom lens or a similar lens.

\_ *The camera zoomed in on the love scene.* \_ *The camera*

*operator panned in slowly.* **2.** to fly or move rapidly at

someone or something. \_ *The hawk zoomed in on the*

*sparrow.* \_ *The angry bees zoomed in on Jane and stung*

*her.* \_*When the door opened, the cat zoomed in.* **3.** to concentrate

on a matter related to someone or a problem. \_

*Let’s zoom in on this matter of debt.* \_ *She zoomed in and*

*dealt quickly with the problem at hand.*

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