

A Dictionary of Confusable Phrases

*More Than
10,000
Idioms and
Collocations*

pdfenglish

Yuri Dolgopolov

A Dictionary of Confusable Phrases

This page intentionally left blank

A Dictionary of Confusable Phrases

*More Than 10,000
Idioms and Collocations*

YURI DOLGPOLOV



McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers
Jefferson, North Carolina, and London

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS CATALOGUING-IN-PUBLICATION DATA

Dolgoplov, Yuri.

A dictionary of confusable phrases : more
than 10,000 idioms and collocations /

Yuri Dolgoplov.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-0-7864-5855-4

softcover : 50# alkaline paper ∞

1. English language — Idioms — Dictionaries.
2. English language — Usage — Dictionaries. I. Title.
PE1464.D66 2010 423'.13 — dc22 2010026211

British Library cataloguing data are available

© 2010 Yuri Dolgoplov. All rights reserved

*No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form
or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying
or recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system,
without permission in writing from the publisher.*

Cover design by Mark Durr

Manufactured in the United States of America

*McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers
Box 611, Jefferson, North Carolina 28640
www.mcfarlandpub.com*

Contents

Preface

1

Introduction

*FALSE “FRIENDS” AND
“ENEMIES” IN ENGLISH PHRASEOLOGY*

3

ARRANGEMENT OF THE ENTRIES

6

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS USED

8

DICTIONARY

9

Bibliography

341

Phrase Index

343

Key Word Index

376

This page intentionally left blank

Preface

To really know English one has to master, along with grammar and words, a reasonably large vocabulary of recurrent collocations, idioms, and metaphorical expressions that reflect the environment, history, and culture of the native speakers and form an essential part of their common language, adding color, dimension and vibrancy to the way they speak and write. Familiarity with idioms and colloquial metaphors and ability to use them appropriately in context are distinguishing markers of a native-like command of English.

Learning a language is challenging enough while learning set expressions (a language-within-a-language) becomes really frustrating at times, not the least owing to the existence in English of a very vast number of what we call phraseological “false friends and enemies” — idiomatic and non-idiomatic expressions that, despite their outward similarity or contrast, have unrelated meanings. Their confusion triggered by false analogy may result in misunderstanding and miscommunication so knowing or not knowing the difference between phraseological “false friends” can mean the difference between understanding or not understanding English.

This dictionary has been specifically designed to “diffuse” potentially confusable expressions. The dictionary pairs more than 10,000 idioms and collocations characterized by similarity or contrast in their wording or metaphorical idea that do not show corresponding similarity or contrast in their meanings. Also included are

cases when phraseological units form a semantic mismatch with consonant compound words. This contrastive format enables the language learner to see all potentially confusable units together and so avoid confusing the phrase.

Most dictionary entries are made up of phrases that are in active current use so information about the difference in their meanings and usage is especially essential. Some entries may contain phrases pertaining to professional jargon, slang, expressions that are dated or characteristic of one of the principal regional varieties of English. These, though less relevant in terms of their confusion, demonstrate interesting cases of coincidence in imagery through time and space while their contribution to the dictionary allows it to be also used as a regular explanatory dictionary providing definitions to individual idioms, clichés and set expressions.

There are numerous dictionaries of usage covering the difference in the meaning, spelling and pronunciation of *lexical* “false friends” — homographs, homophones and semantically unrelated words characterized by outward similarity. This comprehensive dictionary, however, representing as it does an important cross-section of the language, is unique in that it is the first attempt ever to provide a complete lexicographic inventory of phraseological pseudo-synonyms and -antonyms, both idiomatic and non-idiomatic.

Intended primarily for ESL students at different levels of proficiency, the dictionary can

also be used by authors of textbooks and other educational materials who may screen the dictionary data for potentially confusable expressions incorporated in their products so as to caution students against this kind of pitfall and

heighten their awareness of phraseological similarities and differences. It can be recommended for use in school and college libraries supporting ESL programs as well as to adults learning English as a second language.

Introduction

FALSE “FRIENDS” AND “ENEMIES” IN ENGLISH PHRASEOLOGY

Even a cursory examination of English phraseology reveals the existence of numerous idiomatic expressions and recurrent word combinations characterized by similarity of wording or imagery without corresponding similarity in their meaning or usage. Phraseological units of this kind usually form pairs and sometimes larger groups of expressions not normally interchangeable in their respective contexts or only interchangeable in some of their meanings so errors can arise whenever one expression is sufficiently close to another to be semantically identified with it, *cf.*: *bring one's mind to something / bring something to mind* or *at the top of the tree / up a tree*. While positive intralingual transfer may help in the case of perceived linguistic similarities, *cf.*: *make hay while the sun shines / strike while the iron is hot*, negative intralingual transfer will lead to problems owing to semantic or grammatical differences between units. The probability of their confusion is conditioned by the extent of similarity while their respective linguistic currency determines which unit in the group is likely to be mistaken for another more familiar and seemingly identical expression.

Alongside such phraseological “false friends” there exist less numerous cases of “false enemies” or pseudo-antonyms whose form may induce the learner to believe that they are opposite in meaning which in reality they are not,* *cf.*: *absence of mind / presence of mind* and *come on the carpet / step off the carpet*.

Whereas errors caused by *interlingual* phraseological interference are predetermined by the student's first language and mostly occur when learners pattern phrases in the target language after the models of their own language, errors caused by *intralingual* phraseological interference are generally due to erroneous identification within the framework of the target language of semantically unrelated phraseological units with conceptually related components. Errors of this kind do not depend on the learners' first language and are common to all EFL/ESL students. They may adversely affect comprehension and usage, so learners are in urgent need for practical resource that will systematically address this problem and “defuse” potentially confusable multi-word units. Nonetheless, prior to the present publication there was no dictionary

*The phenomenon of “false friends” is commonly associated with words of different languages relating as formal equivalents for the reason of their material similarity while their meanings are quite different. A similar phenomenon can be observed at the phraseological level when set expressions of one language have formal, semantically dissimilar equivalents in another language (for instance, the following English expressions have their exact formal counterparts in Russian with altogether different meanings: dirty money, high words, service flat, special school, art film, wind in the head, etc.).

specifically devoted to phraseological pitfalls of this kind even though some dictionaries of idioms would provide random cross-references warning of idiomatic expressions whose form may mislead the user into thinking that they are semantically related. At the same time, there exist numerous dictionaries of usage bringing to the attention of the learner the difference in the meaning, spelling, pronunciation, and the range of application of individual words characterized by outward similarity.* The present dictionary, providing systematic contrastive coverage of all kinds of phraseological “false friends” and “enemies,” is expected therefore to remedy this imbalance and to fill, at least partially, the existing lexicographical lacuna. Primarily intended for EFL/ESL students as a tool of reference and prophylactics, it presents a complete and orderly catalog of multi-word units that require special consideration because of their interferential potential. Furthermore, the sizeable volume of the dictionary and its user-friendly Phrase Index enable it to be used as a regular phraseological dictionary providing definitions to individual idioms, clichés and set expressions.

In the selection of phrases making up the dictionary I proceeded from the broadest possible concept of phraseology and considered both idiomatic and non-idiomatic recurrent word combinations, prepositional collocations and phrasal verbs. No limits have been set with respect to their structural or pragmatic characteristics, the principal criteria being similarity or contrast in the wording or imagery of multi-word units whose meanings or usage do not show corresponding similarity or contrast. Potentially interferential units were culled from the phraseological pool provided by over a hundred mono- and bilingual dictionaries as well as numerous online databases. Contrastive-differentiating analysis of the totality of phraseological units thus selected made it possible to separate groups of semantically and pragmatically similar phraseological synonyms and variants (*cf.*: *add fuel to*

the fire / add fuel to the flames) from interferentially significant “false friends.” This inductive methodology made it possible to concentrate not on the actual interferential interactions of phraseological units (error analysis) but on the hypothetical possibility of their confusion, predicting *all likely cases* of flawed reasoning at phraseological level. As a result, some entries may contain well-known modern phrases whose interferentially relevant oppositions are represented by expressions pertaining to professional or social jargon, slang, as well as by phrases that are regional, dialectal, extinct or rarely heard nowadays. Phraseological oppositions of this sort, though less topical for language learners, demonstrate interesting cases of coincidence in imagery through time and space.

Parallel to potentially confusable phraseological oppositions, there are numerous instances when units longer than the word form similar, semantically contrastive relationships with consonant compound words, *cf.*: *day-man / man of the day*. In many cases dictionaries differ whether to treat a particular two-word combination as a phrase or a compound and there seems to be no hard and fast rule about which category such an item should be in. The distinction between separate and solid writing of such units becomes relevant, however, when it serves to differentiate between semantically dissimilar entities, *cf.*: *back drop / backdrop*, or units functioning as different parts of speech, *cf.*: *common sense / commonsense*. Since their outward similarity may likewise confuse the learner, we deemed it necessary to incorporate all cases involving potentially interferential compounds in the present dictionary.

The dictionary compiled on the above principles is comprehensive in that it encompasses the whole spectrum of phraseological units irrespective of their contemporary status in the language, social currency, or the degree of idiomaticity (that is, semantic interdependence of their components), the units ranging all the way from free word combinations to id-

*See, for example: G. A. Owen, *Dictionary of “Confusibles”* (Somerset: Brodie, 1966); A. Room, *Room’s Dictionary of Confusibles* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979); L. Urdang, *The Dictionary of Confusable Words* (New York: Facts on File, 1988).

idiomatic expressions. In between these two categories there is a vast layer of the so called set phrases institutionalized as such in the language and originated owing to the ability of words to regularly link up with other words forming their lexical environment. Whereas their global meanings are readily grasped from the meanings of their component parts, relatively independent of each other and used in their literal or metaphorical sense, the meanings of idiomatic expressions proper often appear unmotivated and cannot be deduced from the meanings of their constituents. As regards the degree of their structural mobility, idiomatic expressions are generally more or less invariable in form or order and do not admit of the usual grammatical operations which their literal counterparts will permit. Other types of phrases normally show some degree of variation. Phrases making up the dictionary are just as heterogeneous syntactically: some of them are full sentences (catch phrases, proverbial expressions, rhetorical questions and social formulae) while others function like particular parts of speech (nominal, verbal, adverbial and adjectival phrases).

Phraseological units whose meanings may mistakenly appear similar or opposite can be reduced to the following principal types of inter-differentially relevant oppositions (in the order of diminishing similarity of their notional components):

- specific cases of phraseological polysemy or homonymy when formally identical units are used differently by British and American speakers, e.g.:
 - pavement artist (UK)**
 - pavement artist (US)**
- semantically dissimilar units with identical notional components, relating as pseudo-quantitative variants, when one of the phrases is not really just a shortened form of an extended phrase, e.g.:
 - keep one's head**
 - keep one's head up**
- semantically dissimilar units all of whose notional components are identical, e.g.:
 - cut loose from something**
 - cut loose with something**
- phrases forming semantic oppositions to analogous solidly spelled compounds, e.g.:
 - black eye**
 - blackeye**
- morphologically consonant, though unrelated place names, e.g.:
 - Saint John's**
 - Saint Johns**
- semantically dissimilar prepositional phrases with identical notional component preceding the preposition, e.g.:
 - absent from something**
 - absent in something**
- semantically dissimilar prepositional phrases with identical notional component following the preposition, e.g.:
 - in time**
 - on time**
- semantically distinct phrasal verbs with identical verbal component, e.g.:
 - turn on someone**
 - turn to someone**
- semantically dissimilar collocations with identical verbal component taking direct and prepositional object respectively, e.g.:
 - advertise for something**
 - advertise something**
- semantically dissimilar units some of whose components are identical while others relate as paronyms, e.g.:
 - historic event**
 - historical event**
- semantically dissimilar units with paronymic and identical notional components, which belong to different parts of speech, e.g.:
 - curtain raiser**
 - raise the curtain**
- semantically dissimilar units some of whose components are identical while others relate as synonyms, e.g.:
 - hold an appointment**
 - keep an appointment**

- semantically dissimilar units some of whose components are identical while others designate contiguous notions, e.g.:
 turn someone's brain
 turn someone's head
- semantically dissimilar units some of whose components are identical while others associate with the same class of things, e.g.:
 lose one's head
 lose one's mind
- phrasal verbs forming structural and semantic oppositions to compound verbs with formally identical component parts represented in reverse order, e.g.:
 do something over
 overdo something
- phraseological units some of whose components are identical while others relate as antonyms, whose imagery may be mistakenly construed as semantically antonymous, e.g.:
 in deep water
 in low water
- semantically dissimilar phrasal verbs with synonymous verbal components and identical prepositions or adverbs, e.g.:
 come off something
 go off something
- semantically unrelated units of similar structure some of whose notional components may match, whose general phraseological idea may appear similar, e.g.:
 when the balloon goes up
 when the eagle flies
- semantically unrelated units that may differ in structure and have no components in common, whose general phraseological idea or imagery may appear similar, e.g.:
 be dead in the water
 sleep with the fishes
- semantically unrelated units that may differ in structure and have no components in common, whose general phraseological idea or imagery may appear antonymous, e.g.:
 carry the torch
 hide one's light under a bushel

ARRANGEMENT OF THE ENTRIES

The arrangement of material in the dictionary is consistently alphabetical. Each entry highlighting the differences of the units it comprises is introduced by the *heading* in bold print that lists alphabetically all units making up the entry. All entries, in turn, are arranged in the dictionary in the alphabetical order of the first phrases of the entry headings. When arranging phraseological units alphabetically the following principles have been observed:

- initial articles are disregarded when determining the alphabetical order;
- simile phrases introducing comparisons are usually given without their optional initial element *as*;
- in the case of hyphenated compounds the hyphen is treated as a space and phrases written as separate words, or hyphenated compound words, precede solidly spelled compounds;
- many phrases include a variable component indicated by the words *his*, *himself*, *one*, *one's*, *oneself*, *someone*, *someone's*, or *something* that are taken into account for alphabetical order.

While listing phrases in their basic or the most usual form, we use the word *someone* to refer to somebody other than the subject, and the word *one* is used where the *one* is the same person as the subject of the sentence. The words *his* and *himself* are used purely conventionally and may refer to both sexes. Each unit treated in the entry is followed by a definition and illustrated by authentic examples of usage in the context providing the correct semantic and pragmatic framework. Potentially confusable phrases represented in sample sentences are underlined, sometimes together with words which are not part of the phrase proper but form its immediate lexical surrounding. Where an item has several

meanings the definitions are grouped in numbered sequences of comparative importance. Occasional comments of grammatical nature provided in the dictionary usually signal some grammatical restrictions in the usage of an expression which may refer to certain limitations in tenses and aspects. Such notations and comments may apply to the whole phrase or to some of its meanings. Some entries have cross-references, that is, contain instructions to look up some other entries for the purpose of comparison or caution.

Stylistically colored phrases are normally accompanied by italicized notations which are of special help when the user's knowledge of the language is inadequate as regards recognition of their stylistic value and the ability to use them in specific social contexts. Some of the phrases designated as *dated* show signs of obsolescence though may still be used within limited groups of people, whereas expressions designated as *archaic* are not familiar to the majority of speakers. Other labels may designate various occupational and professional fields with which certain expressions are particularly associated. Phrases contained in the dictionary, both current and obsolete, represent practically all principal stylistical strata: stylistically neutral phrases, colloquial, formal and literary expressions, expressions normally confined to technical use, folksy expressions, dialectal phrases, phrases pertaining to professional or social jargon, slang, as well as expressions peculiar to any of the principal regional varieties of English. Expressions that are not stylistically labeled are considered neutral and may be used in all situations. When stylistic comments apply to all numbered senses of a phrase they are found before the numbered senses, while comments that apply to any one sense are found within the numbered sense be-

fore the definition. The mobility of borderlines between various stylistic categories makes it at times difficult to attach unequivocal stylistic tag and stylistic status of many expressions shows considerable fluctuations in different dictionaries. Stylistically marked phrases must be used with particular care because they reflect a special relationship between speakers or a special social occasion or setting. They belong to ironic, jocular, derogatory, euphemistic or other stylistically marked register and are labeled accordingly. Many of them can only be used in informal spoken English and are inadmissible in formal written English. Phrases marked *taboo* or *coarse slang*, included merely for the sake of completeness, warrant special caution in this respect because most of them deal with race, sex, or ethnic origin and may have offensive or insulting implications.

For readers who want to identify a vaguely familiar expression that includes a particular significant word, are not sure of the precise form of an expression as listed in the dictionary, or simply wish to explore the phrase-building potential of individual words, the Phrase Index is compounded by the Key Word Index in which expressions are listed under their second or another semantically dominating component, their first component being given within the general alphabetical arrangement of phrases in the dictionary body and the Phrase Index. We chose to also include as key words units forming the second parts of hyphenated nominal compounds: thus the reader can find "boat-train" under "train," "angel-water" under "water," "copy-cat" under "cat," etc. While certain words can function as different parts of speech or refer to different homonyms, no attempt has been made to reflect such differences in the Key Word Index.

ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE DICTIONARY

arch.—archaic

attrib.—attribute

Austral.—Australian

biol.—biological

Canad.—Canadian

coll.—colloquial

cf.—compare

derog.—derogatory

dial.—dialect

euph.—euphemism

exclam.—exclamation

Fr.—French

hist.—historical

imper.—imperative

interj.—interjection

joc.—jocular

liter.—literary

med.—medical

negat.—negative

NZ—New Zealand

pejor.—pejorative

pl.—plural

predic.—predicative

RAF—Royal Air Force

Scot.—Scottish

sl.—slang

smb.—somebody

smth.—something

UK—United Kingdom

U.S.—United States

WWI—World War I

WWII—World War II

DICTIONARY

A

à la guerre comme à la guerre • c'est la guerre

à la guerre comme à la guerre—(Fr.) is used to tell a person to make do with what one has or do what one has to do: She walked ... with a certain rebellion burning in her heart. It was not the right sort of heart to take to a love-meeting. But *à la guerre comme à la guerre!*

c'est la guerre—(Fr.) an ironic phrase to provide an excuse for anything that has not gone quite to plan: The long string of projects which were started were never brought to commercial viability.... But, *c'est la guerre*, eh?

abandon ship • give up the ship

abandon ship—1. leave the sinking ship: When the order was given to abandon ship many of the passengers were stunned. They felt that it was safer onboard... 2. (also: *jump ship*) leave a failing organization, etc. before it is too late: For weeks he worked eighteen-hour days, pleading with his staff not to abandon ship.

give up the ship—quit trying and surrender; admit defeat: If you are sidetracked by small setbacks don't be discouraged and give up the ship.

abide by something • abide something

abide by something—stand firm by smth.; remain true to smth.: The rules were fixed, and I must abide by them.

abide something—(negat.) bear or endure smth.: She could not abide the country, and would not be tempted to leave London.

abide someone • abide with someone

abide someone—(negat.) dislike a person very much: In fact, I can't abide him. Whenever I see him on television, I'm inclined to change the channel.

abide with someone—(liter.) remain or stay with a person: If the American dream is to abide with us, it will, at bottom, depend on the people themselves.

above suspicion • under suspicion

above suspicion—too highly respected to be suspected of a crime or wrongdoing: Navy secretary Welles was above suspicion, but he was inexperienced in nautical affairs.

under suspicion—considered as possibly guilty of a crime or wrongdoing: He was under suspicion for other crimes, which gave the investigators the legal right to hold him indefinitely.

Note: *The expression is not equivalent in meaning to the phrase on suspicion—(arrest or detain smb.) on the ground of suspicion:* The police are now free to stop and search anyone merely on suspicion.

absence from something • absence in something

absence from something—being temporarily away from a place: I have no one capable of acting for me in my absence from home.

absence in something—1. staying temporarily at some place: During my absence in France, I find that new words have been introduced into our parliamentary language. 2. lack or non-existence in smth.: For Jane, a salient consequence was the absence in her life of a satisfying intimate relationship.

absence of mind • presence of mind

absence of mind—the mental state of preoccupation, which causes one to do smth. without realizing it: Through absence of mind he walked out of the shop and left his purchases on the counter.

presence of mind—mental alertness which enables one to act quickly in an emergency: With great presence of mind he grabbed the child and pulled it out of the path of the oncoming car.

absorbed by something • absorbed with something

absorbed by something—1. (of liquids) soaked up by smth.: The solution is absorbed by the brick through its untreated surface. 2. (of substances) taken up by chemical action: Whey protein is the best type of protein since it is quickly absorbed by the body. 3. (of people or things) incorporated into smth.: Better build the type of home that will be more quickly absorbed by the market.

absorbed with something—(also: *absorbed in something*) deeply engrossed in smth.: They are often absorbed with their own thoughts and feelings and are fearful of intimacy with others.

abut against something • abut on something

abut against something—rest against the end part of smth. firmly: The mountains are volcanic, and sedimentary deposits abut against them at a lower level.

abut on something—(of a plot of land, etc.) border on smth.; lie next to smth.: Our land abuts on the shopping center's parking lot.

academic junk food • junk food

academic junk food—(coll.) college degree courses of no academic value to students: He describes the disintegration of the curriculum into limitless numbers of "interdisciplinary studies" programs that are often academic junk food.

junk food—food, as potato chips, hamburgers, and hot dogs, that is high in calories but of little nutritional value: Many schools are selling at break time nothing less than junk foods.

accidents can happen • accidents will happen

accidents can happen—is used to say that smth. unforeseen may always occur: Don't commit yourself to completing the book this year—accidents can happen, you know.

accidents will happen—is used to say that some unfortunate events must be accepted as inevitable: Stop going on so about that broken jug. Accidents will happen, you know.

accommodate someone to something • accommodate someone with something

accommodate someone to something—adapt or adjust a person to smth.: One of the solutions [of housing] is to accommodate people to the multistory residential building.

accommodate someone with something—provide a person with smth., especially as a favor: It was very good of you to accommodate me with the ticket for my journey.

according to Cocker • according to Mrs. Beeton

according to Cocker—(U.S. also: *according to Gunter*) absolutely correct; exactly as it should be: So you ought to be, according to Cocker, spending all your time in sick rooms.

according to Mrs. Beeton—(UK) an advice of culinary perfection according to Mrs. Beeton's Book of Household Management (1886): According to Mrs. Beeton, the jar has to be shaken once a week until Christmas when delicious drinks can be served.

accurate in something • accurate with something

accurate in something—free from mistakes in what one says or does: He was basically careful and accurate in his quotations and references to sources.

accurate with something—careful about smth.; treating smth. with responsibility: When writing a composition, be accurate with your quotations.

achieve peace • win the peace

achieve peace—achieve a state in which a nation or community is not at war with another: Neutrality is essential if we are to play a constructive role in achieving peace.

win the peace—carry out successful reconstruction after the war: We may have had enough troops to win the war—but not nearly enough to win the peace.

Achilles of England, the • English Achilles, the

Achilles of England, the—(hist.) 1. the name given to the Duke of Wellington (1769–1852). 2. the name given to John Talbot, first Earl of Shrewsbury (1373–1453): This great captain, whose merit was acknowledged equally by friends and foes, received the appellation of the Achilles of England.

English Achilles, the— = *Achilles of England, the* 2: This man was John Talbot, known as the English Achilles, and hero of countless battles.

act as angel • act like an angel

act as angel—act as a sponsor for a firm, organization, etc.: It was agreed that he should act as angel to the enterprise.

act like an angel—be an excellent performer: She sings and acts like an angel and is extremely pleased because Wolfgang has served her extraordinarily well.

act as someone • act for someone

act as someone—perform as an interpreter, guide, etc.: I had a local student who acted as my translator, as my Spanish is extremely rudimentary.

act for someone—represent smb. as a barrister, etc., in a law court: Mr. Bilmes agreed to act for me, attending court as my legal representative.

act foolishly • act the fool

act foolishly—act without reason or good judgment: She acted foolishly in her business dealings, trusting the wrong people or not trusting her employees enough.

act the fool—(also: *play the fool*) deliberately act so as to appear eccentric or foolish: He was a small, puny lad who acted the fool to stop himself being bullied.

Note: The expression is not equivalent in meaning to the phrase make a fool of oneself—act in a way that makes a person appear ridiculous or stupid: My advice to you is to refrain from making careless comments, for you'll only make a fool of yourself.

act of God • action of God

act of God—1. (legal) the action of forces uncontrollable by man, such as hurricane, etc.: In the event of an act of God, the school reserves the right to suspend training. 2. said of the work of God in creation: The doctrine regarded our *a priori* ideas as infused into the intellect by an act of God.

action of God—(also: *work of God*) = *act of God* 2: Creation is the origin of the totality of the universe by the action of God.

act one's age • show one's age

act one's age—behave in a manner appropriate to one's age (often used in asking children to act in a more grown-up fashion): She doesn't look or act her age, she has no gray hairs, not even crows feet.

show one's age—show signs of being old: Booth is starting to show his age. His face is deeply creased and lined, and his voice has gotten mushy and lispy.

act something out • outact someone

act something out—give expression to thoughts, unconscious fears, etc. in one's actions and behavior: Children often act out their troubled feelings in their games.

Note: The expression does not correlate in meaning with the

intransitive phrasal verb act out—behave anti-socially or misbehave: The child with a learning problem may act out to divert attention from, for example, his inability to read.

outact someone—surpass another person in acting or performing: The man can outact just about anybody out there. His prime example is his portrayal of Rollins in *Devil in a Blue Dress*.

action man • man of action

action man—a person who makes a show of being very vigorous and energetic: I had very little in common with the sort of larger-than-life action man I played in film after film.

man of action—smb. who does things and is not content to just meditate or talk: Foscolo was intended for a man of action and strife: ease and fortune unnerved and demoralized him.

actual time • real time

actual time—the time to be compared with the standard or expected time: The actual time of its [Indian summer] occurrence and the character of the weather appear to vary for different regions.

real time—1. the time during which an event occurs: The date displayed by monitors is from the previous day, making it almost impossible to know the real time of air pollution. 2. said of the processing of data which occurs as it is generated: A higher speed in computers means that they can more easily engage in activities in what we call "real time."

Note: Neither expression is equivalent in meaning to the phrase true time—the time according to the position of the sun: True (nonrelative) time can only be measured by using a constant, such as the objective speed of light.

Adam and Eve • Adam-and-Eve

Adam and Eve—1. said of men and women in general: The great dual law which makes Adam and Eve one humanity, the dry land and the seas one globe. 2. (U.S. diners) two poached or fried eggs: Diner lingo is one example of a mnemonic device that aids memory. "Adam and Eve" refers to two eggs, usually poached.

Adam-and-Eve—a North American orchid: A woman will carry a piece of Adam-and-Eve root in a little bag round her neck. It's really *Aplectrum hyemale*, useful in bronchial troubles.

Adam and Eve on a log • Adam and Eve on a raft

Adam and Eve on a log—(U.S. diners) two poached eggs with link sausage: Adam and Eve on a log are two poached eggs with link sausage, but there are plenty of other short order cook gems like "Bowl of Red" (chili peppers with meat).

Adam and Eve on a raft—(U.S. diners) two poached eggs on toast: There were Zepps in a Cloud (sausages and mashed) and Adam and Eve on a raft. Cf.: *Adam and Eve on a raft and wreck them*—(U.S. diners) two scrambled eggs on toast: You ask for scrambled eggs on toast, and the waitress says to the chef, "we need an Adam and Eve on a raft and wreck them."

adapted for something • adapted to something

adapted for something—(of things) made suitable for a new use, situation, etc.: The book was adapted for television as a four-part series screened by the BBC.

adapted to something—(of people) accustomed or suitable to smth.: I am not adapted to this business. I was bred a farmer, and ought not to have left that occupation.

add color to something • give color to something

add color to something—(of a story, account, etc.) provide details that would interest and excite readers or listeners: The lecturer told a few jokes to add color to his talk.

give color to something—(also: *lend color to something*) give

plausibility to an account, etc.: His torn clothing gave color to his story that he had been attacked and robbed.

add fuel to the fire • add insult to injury

add fuel to the fire—(also: *add fuel to the flames*) aggravate discord, etc.; make an already bad situation even worse: Now, to add fuel to the fire, new accusations have emerged over the past several weeks that could cost Ward his position.

add insult to injury—wound a person's self-respect even further; add to the damage already done to smb.'s feelings: He was an hour late and then, to add insult to injury, he spent twenty minutes on the telephone.

add in something • add on something

add in something—1. put or pour smth., especially in recipes: Continue to add in the flour and mix each addition until it is well incorporated. 2. attach or include smth., usually in the middle of a calculation: Before you finish the totals, please add in these new figures.

add on something—attach smth. at the end of a calculation, list, etc.: She wrote me a cold letter, even the inquiry about my health looked as if it had been added on as an afterthought.

add to something • add up to something

add to something—increase or enhance smth.: It's an old building so you get creaky sounds of the old building but I guess it adds to its rustic charm.

add up to something—1. (of values) give as a result, when joined: The bombing from B-52 stratofortresses ultimately added up to 800,000 tons of bombs. 2. amount to smth.; signify smth.: All that this adds up to is that you don't want to help, so why not say so at once?

add to taste • add to the taste

add to taste—(in recipes) add in the amount preferred: Tear small pieces from the Hungarian pepper and add to taste; these peppers are very hot.

add to the taste—improve the taste (of a dish): All those spices not only add to the taste but are good for your health.

address oneself to someone • address someone

address oneself to someone—speak or appeal to a person: He came into the room, and addressed himself to me with the best grace in the world.

address someone—1. = *address oneself to someone*: The Education Secretary had to address a hostile crowd of teachers. 2. speak to a person using a nickname or a title: Don't address me as "Colonel"; I'm only a major.

Admiral of the White • White Admiral

Admiral of the White—admiral of the White Squadron (one of the three divisions of the Royal Navy in the 17th century): Admiral of the Red, used to hold the center in an engagement. *Admiral of the White*, used to hold the van.

White Admiral—any of several butterflies of the genus *Limenitis*: He had seen a white admiral circling higher and higher round an oak tree, but he had never caught it.

admit of something • admit to something

admit of something—leave room for smth.: A careful, detached study of his available statements will admit of no other conclusion.

admit to something—agree, often reluctantly, that smth. is true; confess to smth.: Over a third of the juveniles admitted to owning a firearm.

Note: The expression does not fully correlate in meaning with the phrase admit something—1. = *admit to something*: He admitted owning a car which had an index number identical to one Miss Mallalieu had noted. 2. *have room for smth.*; *allow*

smth. to enter: This harbor is dry at low water and admits only small craft even with the tide.

admonish someone for something • admonish someone of something

admonish someone for something—reprove a person on account of smth.: They are frequently admonished for their failure to act quickly.

admonish someone of something—bring smth. to a person's notice as a warning: A gallows erected on an eminence admonished the offenders of the fate that awaited them.

advance of science • advancement of science

advance of science—progress or improvement in science: It is an assumption of our world view that progress consists in the advance of science and technology.

advancement of science—progress in science resulting from the action of an outside agent: The purpose of this legislation was the advancement of science.

advance on something • advance towards something

advance on something—move towards a place (in order to attack, etc.): The enemy advanced on Rome, and at last conquered it.

advance towards something—1. = *advance on something*: The fire has already destroyed about 15 houses in a suburb and is advancing towards the city. 2. be headed for smth.; approach a certain state: The world political system is advancing towards disorder.

advise someone of something • advise someone on something

advise someone of something—give a person information or warning about smth.: The motoring organizations have advised motorists of thick mists on the mountains.

advise someone on something—give a person recommendations or advice about smth.: We are experts in advising people on the best holiday to suit their personal preferences.

Note: The expression does not correlate in meaning with the phrase advise with someone on something—consult with a person about smth.: He advised with them on all matters and followed their directions in all things.

after a time • after time

after a time—when a short time has elapsed: I didn't care for the place at first, but after a time I got to like it.

after time—later than a stipulated time: We cannot wait for anyone who arrives after time.

after all • after all is said and done

after all—1. is used to introduce an additional point which supports the previous statement: They did not expect heavy losses in the air; after all, they had superb aircraft. 2. in spite of what had previously been thought or done: It had to be recognized, after all, that I was still a schoolboy.

after all is said and done—when everything is settled or concluded: After all was said and done, the wedding was a lovely affair.

after the manner of someone • in the manner of someone

after the manner of someone—(of a painting, etc.) executed in conscious imitation of smb.'s manner or style: In those days, I painted human interest subjects, after the manner of Mr. Rockwell. But I still hadn't found myself as an artist.

in the manner of someone—(of a painting, etc.) indicating resemblance to smb.'s style rather than conscious imitation:

They acquired Joan Miro pictures painted in the manner of a 4-year-old struggling to come to terms with the human face.

again and again • every now and again

again and again—(also: *time and again*) habitually; repeatedly: I was absorbed in “The Cloud on the Sanctuary,” reading it again and again.

every now and again—(also: *now and again*) occasionally; from time to time: Every now and again the ear could catch the sudden splash of pike meeting pike.

agree on something • agree to something • agree with something

agree on something—1. have the same view about smth.: Musicians rarely agree on the way a piece of music should be played. 2. decide on smth.: We’ve agreed on Spain for our holiday next year.

agree to something—(of a suggestion, statement, etc.) view with favor; accept what has been proposed: Neither the people, nor their representatives, would agree to the plan.

agree with something—1. go along with a person in an opinion or statement: It is great what Martin has done and I agree with his comment. 2. (of two versions, accounts, etc.) be similar or fully correspond: This bill doesn’t agree with my calculations.

ahead of one’s time • before one’s time

ahead of one’s time—(of people, new ideas, etc.) too advanced to be accepted by one’s contemporaries: Men who are ahead of their time can lead the present into the future.

before one’s time—1. before a person was born, had arrived, etc.: There was at one time a little cinema, but that was before my time. 2. before the due or expected time: His poverty, and continual harassment by the authorities had made him old before his time. 3. = *ahead of one’s time*: Robert Owen, with his enlightened ideas on working conditions in factories, was before his time.

Note: *The expression is not antonymous in meaning to the phrase not before its time—used of smth. that should have been done long ago:* At last they are installing electric light in the main streets, and not before its time.

ahead of time • before time

ahead of time—(usually showing approval) earlier than expected: The homework was finished ahead of time so he went out to play.

before time—prematurely; before the due or expected time: So far was prepunctuality carried, that Her Majesty was ten minutes before time.

aim at something • aim for something

aim at something—1. point the weapon or object in the direction of smth.: He aimed at the far wall and squeezed the trigger. 2. plan or hope to achieve smth.: We are now aiming at a higher production level.

aim for something— = *aim at something* 2: For most people, aiming for a higher position at once is the key to job search success.

air boat • inflatable boat

air boat—1. a seaplane with a boatlike fuselage: This class of seaplanes, variously termed “flying-boat” and “air-boat,” consists essentially of a long boat-shaped hull, wherein the passengers’ seats are contained. 2. a shallow-draft boat driven by an airplane propeller: A Pandora’s Box is opening to release a flood of airboats on the long-suffering landscape of crowded Southern Ontario.

inflatable boat—an air-filled rubber boat (for use in an

emergency, etc.): The crewmen had to be pulled from the freezing water by colleagues in an inflatable boat.

air gun • air gunner

air gun—a gun in which compressed air is used to propel the charge: Darned if he didn’t up with this here air gun and plunk me with a buckshot it carried.

air gunner—an aircrew member whose job is to operate a gun: Too old for piloting he became an air gunner with 235 Squadron Coastal Command.

air lane • airline

air lane—(also: *airway*) a regular route of travel for aircraft: This will enable controllers to squeeze an extra 20 percent traffic into the crowded air lanes.

airline—1. company that carries passengers and cargo by airplane: The airline has announced it will run daily service to Florida. 2. a tube through which air is passed under pressure: Any big truck lives and dies, steers and brakes, on its air-lines.

air letter • airmail letter

air letter—(also: *aerogramme*) a sheet of light paper forming a letter for sending by airmail: An air letter is written on a special form supplied by the Post Office.

airmail letter—a letter to be sent by air: Aerogrammes are less expensive than an airmail letter and have the same delivery time.

alien from something • alien to something

alien from something—differing in nature or character from smth.: I am a Christian; therefore, many of the tenets of Buddhism are alien from my faith.

alien to something—contrary or opposed to smth.: I could not consent to the introduction into our national life of a device so alien to all our traditions as the referendum.

alive to something • alive with something

alive to something—aware of smth.; conscious of smth.: He was alive to the danger that pressure might be put on the police, and he might be forced to take ill-advised action.

alive with something—teeming with smth.; full of smth.: The lake was alive with alligators. These could be seen basking along the low banks...

all along • all along the line

all along—all the time: Her employer said he had suspected the girl of pilfering all along.

all along the line—at every point in the course of an activity: These newer family magazines are making the older ones fight for existence all along the line.

all at once • at once

all at once—suddenly and abruptly: There comes over him, all at once, a sort of cold, creepy shudder.

at once—1. immediately: She doesn’t know where he is... otherwise she would drive to his address at once. 2. simultaneously; at the same time: Fire service says we cannot be in two places at once.

all but • anything but

all but—almost; nearly: We’re all but finished now. We’ll be ready in a moment.

anything but—not at all: My father was anything but pleased when he heard my story.

all day and every day • all the days of one’s life

all day and every day—during the whole of one day and for a number of days afterwards: We had glorious weather, sunshine all day and every day.

all the days of one's life—for as long as one will live, or has lived: They had known only oppression and bitter poverty all the days of their lives.

all dressed up • dressed up

all dressed up—dressed formally; dressed in one's best clothes: She was glad that she was all dressed up and had done her hair that morning.

dressed up—1. = *all dressed up*: We know little about Mary's appearance (the only description we have is when she is dressed up for her daughter's wedding). 2. wearing fancy clothing; disguised: There was a carnival parade in the city. Annabel was dressed up as a clown and Andy as Zorro.

all eyes • all my eye

all eyes—(*predic., coll.*) watching eagerly and attentively: She was all eyes as I unwrapped the package.

all my eye—(*UK sl.*) utter nonsense (*also: all my eye and Betty Martin*): I told him about a secret process, but he knew it was all my eye.

all fur coat and no knickers • all hat and no cattle

all fur coat and no knickers—(*UK derog.*) said of a person or thing having an impressive appearance with no real substance beneath: Wish I had paid more attention to the bad reviews before I booked. This hotel is all fur coat and no knickers.

all hat and no cattle—(*U.S. derog.*) said of smb. who tends to talk boastfully without acting on one's words (*also: big hat and no cattle*): Republican leadership promised to support the mission. Unfortunately, however, they've been all hat and no cattle...

all hands and the cook • all the world and his wife

all hands and the cook—1. (*Nautical*) everybody on the ship: Martin threw on the engine, while all hands and the cook sprang to take in sail. 2. everyone from a particular group of people who can possibly contribute: Soon he was rearing his family, and all hands and the cook were busy as bees in caring for the home. *Cf.: all-hands meeting—a mandatory meeting for all employees called by the management*: Bob called an all-hands meeting this afternoon. It's never a good sign...

all the world and his wife—(*also: every man and his dog*) lots of people; everyone of importance: All the world and his wife were there, so, of course, Dame Margery went also.

all in • all out

all in—(*predic., coll.*) 1. completely exhausted: I was glad that the laboratory was only a few blocks away, for I was all in by the time I got there. 2. completely or enthusiastically involved in smth.: That was a cruel thing to do and I want to know who was all in on it!

Note: *The expression does not correlate in meaning with the compound all-in—(attrib.) inclusive of everything*: If you need surgery, go for a fixed price package—an all-in price, irrespective of how long you stay in the hospital.

all out—(*coll.*) 1. using all one's strength or resources: He made up his mind to go "all out" for his uncle's slum-conversion scheme. 2. entirely; completely: "Were you drunk?" "Not all out, I could keep my feet on the floor." 3. at top speed: The track was ultra-fast all night, with cars running all out the entire evening.

all in all • in all

all in all—1. taking everything into consideration: All in all, they do their best to portray something original. 2. (*of a person or thing*) of supreme importance to smb.: This adventurer made love to the girl that was all in all to me.

in all—in total number: I stayed for three days in all, and

throughout those three days I was sitting in their wonderful library.

Note: *The expression does not correlate in meaning with the phrase at all—under any circumstances*: If that is so, why write at all?

all in one piece • all of a piece

all in one piece—(*also: in one piece*) without injury; relatively unharmed: I was covered in plaster and my eyes were full of dust, but I was all in one piece and thankful to be alive.

all of a piece—1. of the same kind or quality: It's all of a piece here. The men effeminate, the women unsexed. 2. (*with*) in harmony or consistent with smth.: His rejection of health-care reform is all of a piece with his disregard for the underprivileged.

all kinds of something • all sorts of something

all kinds of something—1. many different kinds of smth.: For many years, Tutt Library has accepted donations of all kinds of books from community supporters. 2. (*coll.*) plenty of smth.; a large amount of smth.: The reality is that the government has all kinds of money. They have more money than they know what to do with.

all sorts of something— = *all kinds of something* 1: Classrooms should be stocked full of all sorts of books and school libraries should be as desirable a destination as the local bookstore.

all mouth and no trousers • all mouth and trousers

all mouth and no trousers—(*UK derog.*) said of smb. who talks or boasts a lot but doesn't take any action (*also: all talk and no trousers*): How much longer will it take to realize that the leader is all mouth and no trousers?

all mouth and trousers— = *all mouth and no trousers*: Jack is all mouth and trousers, he never does anything he says he will.

all-overs • overalls

all-overs—(*coll.*) a feeling of great unease or extreme nervousness: We're out of sorts for want of a smoke. We've got the all-overs, haven't us, deary?

overalls—a one-piece garment worn to protect a worker's clothes; loose-fitting work pants with shoulder straps: A man dressed in overalls came out. I caught a glimpse of machinery...

all-red line • thin red line

all-red line—(*UK hist., also: all-red route*) a telegraph line lying throughout in British territory: Green tells of Fleming's advocacy of a Pacific Cable and the All-Red Line.

thin red line—(*UK*) 1. (*dated*) the British army (*used with the implication of its supposed invincibility*): Napoleon Bonaparte soon found that in the "thin red line" he had more than met his match. 2. the heroic resistance of few against many: England's thin red line of intellectual royalists is being overrun by "progressive" reformers who sabotage old-fashioned academic virtues.

Note: *The expression does not correlate in meaning with the phrase thin line—a significantly blurred borderline between two things*: There is often only a thin line between a successful launch and devastating destruction. Rockets are an unforgiving technology.

See also: ragged blue line / thin blue line.

all-red route • red route

all-red route—(*UK hist., also: all-red line*) a telegraph line lying throughout in British territory: Because all of these locations were part of the British Empire, the cable was also known as the "All Red Route" (as red was the color associated with Britain).

red route—(UK) a proposed expressway marked by a red line along the edge of the road: The idea of the red route as a way of easing traffic congestion was devised by a group of Conservative politicians called the red route group.

all right for you • all right with you

all right for you—usually accompanies a threat of revenge as said by a child angry at a playmate: All right for you, John. See if I ever play with you again.

all right with you—(also: *all right by you*) suits you; is acceptable to you: Please let me know if that time is all right with you.

all right guy • right guy

all right guy—(coll.) a reliable or trustworthy person: We took a big chance by inviting you and ... you turned out to be an all right guy.

right guy—1. = *all right guy*: I told Gains what the hotel clerk said and how lucky we were he happened to be a right guy. 2. (coll., also: *Mr. Right*) a perfect romantic or marriage partner: When she moved to Madrid she joked that she would never return home if she met the right guy.

all the best • all the better

all the best—is used as a farewell or to close an informal letter: I think your comments are important and will make sure our health writer sees them as well. All the best.

all the better—even more so: He said nothing of this to Miss Celia; but she found it out, and liked him all the better for keeping some of his small worries to himself.

all the time • all the while

all the time—1. through the whole period; continuously: Sue said she knew it all the time. 2. very often; many times: Ruth talks about her trip to Europe all the time. 3. essentially; first and last: You probably are a politician all the time, which is why you never get to behave badly.

Note: *The expression does not correlate in meaning with the phrase all hours—very late or very early hours*: It is dark: it must be all hours.

all the while— = *all the time* 1: Mary went to college in her home town, and lived at home all the while.

all the way • all the way live

all the way—(U.S. coll., of hamburgers, etc.) with all available extras, such as mustard, relish, etc.: I'd like one double cheeseburger—all the way.

all the way live—(coll.) very exciting; excellent: Man, this place is all the way live.

all together • altogether

all together—perform an action or undergo smth. collectively; assembled in a group: We were herded all together in some detaining room.

altogether—1. entirely; completely: Our results demonstrate an altogether new approach to fabrication of electronic devices. 2. with all included or counted: Invited from abroad were, altogether, about 20 scholars from France, Germany, and other countries. 3. having considered everything; on the whole: Altogether, I am inclined to suspect much less noble ideas motivating Miller's decision.

all washed out • all washed up

all washed out—1. (of colors) faded: I think the picture showed a guy in armor kneeling.... No way to tell for sure with colors all washed out. 2. (coll.) very tired; quite exhausted: I'm all washed out. I haven't the energy to do anything at all.

all washed up—(coll.) 1. utterly undone: He can perhaps

work as a coach, but as a player he is all washed up. 2. = *all washed out* 2: Eventually, I went home feeling all washed up. I just hung around the house.

allied to a nation • allied with a nation

allied to a nation—(of a nation) related to another nation or connected by common origin: This group of nations is closely allied to the Eastern Asiatics.

allied with a nation—(of a nation) having joined forces with another nation: Britain was allied with the United States many times in history.

allow for something • allow of something

allow for something—(also: *make allowance for something*) take smth. into consideration: It will take thirty minutes to get to the station, allowing for traffic delays.

allow of something—leave room for smth.: There are more than ten other important issues whose settlement allows of no delay.

Note: *Neither expression correlates in meaning with the phrase allow something—permit smth.*: Do not allow smoking in the car when non-smokers are in it.

ally oneself to someone • ally oneself with someone

ally oneself to someone—unite or affiliate with a person: She sought to ally herself to the older committee members.

ally oneself with someone—unite with a person in opposition to smb. else: The professor allied herself with John against the committee.

along the line • along the lines

along the line—at some point during the course of a situation or activity: Somewhere along the line your strategy has gone badly wrong.

along the lines—(also: *on the lines*) following a certain pattern or trend: The Communist leadership organized the country along the lines prescribed by the Soviet Union.

amiable person • amicable person

amiable person—smb. of a kind that deserves to be liked: He is an amiable person who willingly obliged and took time carefully to craft his answers to our posed questions.

amicable person—a person exhibiting goodwill or acting as a friend: They ended up shouting at one another. This was somewhat shocking because Steve is such an amicable person.

amoral behavior • immoral behavior

amoral behavior—behavior demonstrating an utter absence of morality: Psychopaths are antisocial persons who can carry out criminal or amoral behavior while perfectly able to distinguish right from wrong.

immoral behavior—behavior demonstrating low or corrupt moral standards: Television heroes whose immoral behavior is often sumptuously rewarded have become role models for many young Americans.

amuse oneself with something • be amused by something

amuse oneself with something—do smth. to pass the time and not become bored: The women amuse themselves with a game something like jack-stones.

be amused by something—think smth. funny and usually laugh because of it: I was highly amused by a comment Bernard Shaw made once.

ancient lights • Old Lights

ancient lights—(UK Law) the legal right of a house owner to receive daylight through windows: England has a doctrine

of ancient lights which was firmly rejected here [in the United States].

Old Lights—(*hist., also: Old Light men*) religious traditionalists who believed the new religious movement (New Lights) threatened established religion: Old Lights won the passage of a law restricting the activities of traveling preachers.

ancient world • old world

ancient world—the region and civilizations (especially of the Greeks and Romans) known during ancient history: Cartagena was recognized as being one of the wealthiest cities of the ancient world.

old world—1. (*Old World, the*) Europe, Asia and Africa: In all the apes of the Old World the same number and kinds of teeth are present as in man. 2. one's previous setting of existence with its customs, traditions, etc.: Kylie found herself back in her old world of Melbourne to spend Christmas with her family.

Note: *The expression does not correlate in meaning with the phrase olde worlde—(UK attrib.) attractively old-fashioned (but not necessarily authentic): This olde worlde pub is on the narrow road down to the sea and coast guard station.*

and all • and all that

and all—and all other things included: Duncan had stepped backwards over the gunwale of his boat and fallen, camera and all into the Indian Ocean.

Note: *The expression does not correlate in meaning with the phrase any and all—a redundant expression meaning “any”: A licensed physician should be consulted for diagnosis of any and all medical conditions.*

and all that—(*coll.*) and other similar things considered unnecessary to mention: Ah, but he's known her all his life. Childhood sweethearts and all that.

angel-water • holy water

angel-water—a perfume or cosmetic in which a plant *Angelica* (*Herba angelica*) is a chief ingredient: Angel-water, an excellent perfume: also a curious wash to beautify the skin.

holy water—water blessed by a priest, used in the Roman and Greek ritual: Before the High Mass on Sundays the celebrant sprinkles the people with holy water.

another kettle of fish • another turn of the screw

another kettle of fish—(*also: different kettle of fish, a*) a completely different matter or situation: I'd driven an automatic for years but learning to handle a car with gears was another kettle of fish altogether.

another turn of the screw—an action which makes a bad situation worse, especially in order to force a person to do smth.: Each letter from my bank manager was another turn of the screw.

Note: *Neither expression correlates in meaning with the phrase another side on the boat—an alternative way of doing smth.: There is another side on the boat; you don't have to do it that way.*

See also: other side of the coin, the / other side of the hill, the.

answer for something • answer to something

answer for something—be accountable or responsible for smth.: He has to answer for his indifference to Aboriginal people.

answer to something—1. act in response to smth.: The birds after answering to the call, darted off again. 2. be suitable or satisfactory for smth.: We've been able to find the solution that answers to our needs. 3. match or correspond to smth.: He doesn't answer to the description of the missing man.

answer is a lemon, the • it's a lemon

answer is a lemon, the—(*coll.*) the answer is unsatisfactory

or non-existent: Do all and sundry succeed? Very frankly, “the answer is a lemon.” Luck does not support all...

it's a lemon—(*U.S. coll.*) it is of poor quality and continuously breaks down: What happens if you buy a new car only to find out a month later that it's a lemon?

answer one's calling • answer the call of nature

answer one's calling—fulfill one's destiny in terms of profession by doing what one has a talent for: Makeup artist Elisabeth Fry said in an interview that she “answered her calling” to design jewelry.

answer the call of nature—(*euph.*) go to the bathroom to relieve oneself: The locals did not have modern toilets. Mong people preferred to dig a hole in their fields to answer the call of nature.

answer someone • answer to someone

answer someone—say smth. to a person in response to a question: I didn't know how to answer her.

answer to someone—be responsible or accountable to a person: The chain of command is such that the Chief of Staff answers to the Defense Minister.

ant's pants • have ants in one's pants

ant's pants—(*Austral. sl.*) the height of fashion; the ultimate in novelty or style: You always think it's the ant's pants, and then something better comes along.

have ants in one's pants—(*coll.*) 1. fidget constantly because of extreme nervousness: Why can't you stand still, do you have ants in your pants? 2. be impatient or restless: The boss has ants in his pants and wants us to have it all ready for him on Tuesday morning.

anxious about something • anxious for something

anxious about something—uneasy about smth.; disturbed about what may happen: And then, all the time you were so worried and anxious about the food and the serving.

anxious for something—wishing smth. very much; eager to get or obtain smth.: An incredible silence reigned among the people, anxious for the event, and lost in suspense.

any day • any time

any day—1. on any one day from now: This, too, is something that may happen any day now or that could be a few years off. 2. (*coll.*) is used to express one's willingness or preference: I'd work with Murphy in Canada any day rather than stay in here. 3. (*coll.*) without doubt: You are a good deal better-looking than her, Barbara. You are, any day.

any time—1. at a time which may be very soon: She is going to give birth any time now. 2. at any time one chooses: John is in a private ward, so you can get in any time. 3. no matter when; whenever: Any time you're stuck for a meal come around. 4. is used in response to an expression of gratitude: “Thanks for helping me.” “Any time.”

any one • anyone

any one—whichever one (person or thing) you choose: Join the Disc of the Month Club, and we will send you any one of these recordings.

anyone—any person; anybody: Is there anyone so wise as to learn by the experience of others?

any place • anyplace

any place—1. anywhere: Most people that travel any place other than the USA can recognize distances in kilometers as well as miles. 2. is used to refer to a specific kind of place: Do you know of any place in Vietnam that would be good for saltwater fly fishing?

anyplace— = *any place* 1: As of June first everyone will need a passport to travel anyplace outside the U.S.

any way • anyway

any way—in any way or manner: The series focuses on three people as they navigate the Hollywood maze, trying to succeed any way they can.

anyway—1. in spite of that; nevertheless: Her mom would know she was telling a white lie, she always knew, but they played the game anyway. 2. = *any way*: During this period of social exploration you may see him trying to get your attention anyway he can. 3. in any case; no matter what: Well I don't know what he said exactly — he didn't like me anyway.

appear as someone • appear for someone

appear as someone—(of an actor) come before the public in any character: The following year he appeared as Hamlet in a controversial production.

appear for someone—represent smb. as a barrister, etc. in a law court: Inspector Sammut prosecuted while Roberto Montalto appeared for the accused.

apply oneself to something • apply to something

apply oneself to something—put all one's energy into smth.: If you apply yourself to the job in hand, you'll soon finish it.

apply to something—1. turn to an organization for help, support, etc.: You must apply to the proper office for permission. 2. (of rules, laws, etc.) affect smth.; be relevant to smth.: These policies apply only to very large companies.

approve of something • approve something

approve of something—1. be willing to accept or support smth.: Her father will never approve of her marriage to you. 2. like or admire smth.: The wine was the very same which they had all approved of the day before.

approve something—formally confirm or sanction smth.: The minutes of the meeting were read and approved.

apt at doing something • apt to do something

apt at doing something—able to do smth. efficiently: He is very apt at picking up a new subject.

apt to do something—having a tendency to do smth.: Babies who are small at birth are apt to grow faster.

archaic word • archaistic word

archaic word—a word that is no longer in general use but is still encountered in literature and sometimes used for special effect: Though sparingly ... he weaves some archaic words into his own writing.

archaistic word—a word from an earlier time that is no longer used: The author divided the dialectal vocabulary into the following strata: archaistic words and contemporary words.

arm in arm • hand in hand

arm in arm—with one's arm under or around another person's arm: Sally and Joan were laughing as they walked arm in arm down the street.

hand in hand—1. holding hands: Molly and her stepmother wandered about in the gardens hand in hand, like two babes in the wood. 2. in close association: It provides a unique mix of a professionally educated workforce working hand-in-hand with volunteers.

armchair general • armchair pilot

armchair general—smb. who speaks critically of military matters, etc. but has no real experience: You've never served in the military, which confirms my suspicion that you're just another armchair general.

armchair pilot—a person whose hobby is computer based flight simulation: Authentically modeled after the F-16 control column, this controller is intended for the advanced armchair pilot.

armed forces • armored forces

armed forces—the military forces of a country including the army, navy, air force, etc.: Armenia has followed a policy of developing its armed forces into a professional, well trained military.

armored forces—armored fighting vehicles such as tanks: German armored forces aimed to thrust deep into the enemy rear to sow confusion and disorganization.

around the bend • around the corner

around the bend—(also: *round the bend*) 1. about to happen very soon: Saint Patrick's day is around the bend and I need a partner for the jig contest. 2. (coll.) crazy; insane: Mars is completely around the bend and not the kind of guy you'd want your daughter to go on a date with.

around the corner—(also: *round the corner*) = *around the bend* 1. Halloween is just around the corner and candy seems to be everywhere (and at good prices!).

arrive dead on time • be dead on arrival

arrive dead on time—arrive exactly at the expected or pre-arranged time: We arrived dead on time at Cape Town where we were met by Che in the arrivals hall.

be dead on arrival—be without any chance for success: The idea of legalizing some drugs is a concept that's dead on arrival in many law enforcement circles.

art film • artful film

art film—a film intended to be a serious artistic work, often experimental and not designed for mass appeal: Because it was an art film, it probably reached the wrong audience.

artful film—a skillful, ingeniously crafted movie: Leni succumbed to every filmmaker's dream — an unlimited budget to make an artful film and not just "a boring newsreel."

Note: *Neither expression correlates in meaning with the phrase art film*—a film characterized by a showy, pretentious display of artistic skill: As an arty film, it would have been acceptable. As a major, mainstream release, it was a failure.

art work • work of art

art work—(also: *art-work*) a fine painting, piece of sculpture, etc.: They dreamed of great art-works, lovely compositions, impassioned song.

work of art—1. = *art work* 1: Whether buying stocks or works of art he adopted the same technique. 2. (hyperbolic) said of smth. very skillfully made: His own papers were works of art on which he labored with loving care.

as a last resort • in the last resort

as a last resort—as a last means; when everything else has been tried and failed: The imprisonment of a child should be used only as a last resort.

in the last resort—ultimately; in the end: He was worried about his production figures. In the last resort it was the human factor that counted.

as a man • like a man

as a man—1. (of a group of people) acting unanimously and at exactly the same time (also: *as one man*): They came forward as a man to welcome their leader. 2. in respect of smb.'s personal character: The stature he acquired both as a man and a leader gave added impetus and credibility to the movement. 3. in the manner appropriate to men, as opposed to women: Mary, still dressed as a man, was soon recruited to Rackham's crew.

like a man—1. in the manner of a brave and honest man: I think, if you haven't the guts to act like a man, you ought to leave this girl alone. 2. in one's normal condition of mind and body: I never had anyone in my life before like this family who make me feel like a man again.

as a matter of fact • fact of the matter is, the

as a matter of fact—as it happens; actually: As a matter of fact, I recently found two small stories that provoked more thought than the other articles I read.

Note: *The expression does not correlate in meaning with the phrase as a matter of course—as part of a standard procedure; as smth. that one expects automatically to happen:* Medical insurance is provided for students by the Institute as a matter of course.

fact of the matter is, the—the essential or important thing is: The fact of the matter is that she only married me because Zeeman wouldn't get a divorce, and she was punishing him.

as a reward for something • in reward for something

as a reward for something—is used of smth. given to reward a person: I receive as a reward for my services a post with which I am well satisfied.

in reward for something—is used with reference to the reason for the reward: He was presented with a gold watch in reward for his services.

as anything • like anything

as anything—an intensifier used as part of an informal comparison: Natasha was one of these people who's nice as anything until you don't do something she says.

like anything—(coll.) *do smth. with great energy or enthusiasm:* He waved to us and we waved back like anything.

Note: *The expression is not antonymous in meaning to the phrase like nothing on earth—(coll.) 1. extremely strange; highly unusual: You may yet meet with a lumbering native bear, like nothing on earth so much as a child's woolly toy. 2. feeling or looking very ill or miserable: That dreadful period when you're just coming out of an anesthetic and feeling like nothing on earth is not the time when you want a visitor.*

as big as a barn • as big as all outdoors

as big as a barn—very large: The restaurant is as big as a barn—and as plain and welcoming as a farmhouse kitchen.

Note: *The expression is not equivalent in meaning to the phrase as big as they come—used of a size not likely to be exceeded: If he did really catch a 20 lb. salmon, he was lucky; that's about as big as they come.*

as big as all outdoors—1. very vast and spacious: The store room is as big as all outdoors. 2. huge; great: Bob likes a challenge that's as big as all outdoors.

Note: *Neither expression is related in meaning to the phrase as big as life—(also: as large as life) used of smb. actually present, especially in a place where a person is not supposed to be: I thought Tom had gone to Europe. There he is, as big as life.*

as far • so far

as far—(also: *this far*) to a specified point or place: They opened more clinics since people couldn't travel as far for medical care.

so far—1. until now; up to the present time: There has not so far been any book-length study focused on postmodernism. 2. = *as far*: It really makes you think about how amazing it is that you can travel so far in one day.

as far as • so far as

as far as—1. up to a point or place mentioned: We went as far as the Marble Lodge, a keeper's cottage, and came back the same way. 2. to the extent that: As far as I can tell, people reply according to what their experience and knowledge is and to the best of their ability.

so far as—= *as far as* 2: So far as I can remember, I've always been success-driven and goal-oriented, and all it's gotten me is a mediocre job.

as far as one can see • as far as the eye can see

as far as one can see—in one's opinion: Pete wants nothing serious because as far as he can see we wouldn't get along because we argue all the time.

as far as the eye can see—to the very horizon: A panorama of Lake Michigan and dunes stretching as far as the eye can see unfolds before you.

as good as • as well as

as good as—practically; almost: He as good as promised me the job.

as well as—in addition: We will travel by night as well as by day.

as hell • like hell

as hell—(coll.) extremely; very much (*is used to intensify adjectives*): Nobody believed him of course, and this made him sore as hell.

like hell—1. (*interj.*) not at all; on the contrary (*is used to emphatically contradict a statement*): "I've quite enjoyed it here." "Like hell I have," she added under her breath. 2. (coll.) madly; frantically (*is used to intensify verbs*): I fired when something came into my sights and then turned like hell as something fired at me!

as is • as it is

as is—just the way it is (*usually said of goods that may be slightly damaged, without guarantee, etc.*): We bought this samovar as is from an antique dealer.

as it is—1. = *as is*: It was actually a demo but the producers were so impressed with the quality that they took it as it is. 2. in the actual state of affairs; as the situation is: He might have been killed; as it is he was severely injured.

as it was • as it were

as it was—1. just the way it was (*usually said of goods that may be slightly damaged, without guarantee, etc.*): The family bought the estate as it was: ruined, discredited, its buildings in bad condition. 2. in the actual state of affairs; as the situation was: If we had been able to find a taxi, we should have caught the train. As it was we were late.

as it were—in a way; so to speak: He was, as it were, the missing link between the artist and the commercial public.

as much • as much again

as much—1. is used to express equality with the amount specified: The Irish Independent also reports that we've never earned as much. 2. *think or say* virtually the same thing: That a plant will be built is not in doubt: the Government has said as much.

as much again—twice as much: People who sell you goods earn as much again if they sell you this insurance too.

as of now • for now

as of now—from this moment: It's been over a month and a half and still no word. So, as of now I will never order there again.

for now—temporarily; for the time being: The status quo may be good enough for now, but it's not good enough for tomorrow.

as one man • to a man

as one man—(of a group of people) acting unanimously and at exactly the same time (*also: as a man*): As he uttered these words, the members of the convention rose as one man to their feet.

to a man—(also: *to the last man*) 1. (of a group of people) every person without exception: The inhabitants, almost to a man, had left the city. 2. (of combatants) *keep fighting* until

none is left alive: The Persian army closed in on them, and the Spartans died fighting to a man.

as security • for security

as security—1. as a pledge against possible financial loss: It is not unusual to require one or more partners to pledge their own property as security for a loan. 2. as a guarantee for the performance of some action: Three of the leading men were seized as security. The Mayor paid the sum and the “bonds” men were released.

for security—in order to ensure safety from possible harm: For security, the door was chained as well as locked.

as thick as peas in a pod • like two peas in a pod

as thick as peas in a pod—(also: *as thick as peas in a shell*) intimate or very friendly: He and I are as thick as peas in a pod. He comes to me with most of his troubles.

like two peas in a pod—very similar; almost exactly alike: She and Karen are like two peas in a pod—they both sing in clubs, share the same dirty laugh, smoke the same brand of cigarettes.

ask another • ask me another

ask another—is used as an expression of boredom or a protest against a worn-out joke: “I say, Joe, when’s a door not a door?” “Oh, ask another.”

ask me another—is used to tell that one does not know the answer: “Are you fond of birds, uncle Nic?” “Ask me another, Greta!”

ask for someone’s hand • ask someone for a hand

ask for someone’s hand—propose to a woman: I’ve told him I have asked for your hand in marriage and that you’ve rejected me.

ask someone for a hand—1. ask smb. to help in what one is doing: Sometimes you feel a bit stupid asking someone for a hand. 2. ask the audience, etc. for applause: Asking the audience for a hand for the band he showed his confidence in their abilities.

ask someone in • ask someone out

ask someone in—invite a person into one’s home, office, etc.: I sent them my information and they asked me in for an interview.

ask someone out—invite a person out to a disco, restaurant, etc.: I am just not too sure about how to ask her out.

ask someone to leave • ask someone’s leave

ask someone to leave—1. ask a person to depart from a place: She said that what she had heard was self-explanatory and asked him to leave. 2. dismiss smb. from employment: The company thought it did not look good, so they asked him to leave. They are very concerned about integrity...

ask someone’s leave—(formal) ask smb.’s permission: When he offered her freedom to do as she wished, she asked his leave to join the Order.

ask the question • put the question

ask the question—1. call to a person for an answer to or about smth.: I heard your voice tremble as you asked me the question. 2. (Horse races) call upon the horse for a special effort: I asked King Lud the question. He answered in the most generous manner possible and won.

Note: The expression does not correlate in meaning with the phrase beg the question—1. *take for granted the very point that needs to be proved*: You’re simply begging the question in assuming that O’Neill wasn’t a racist. 2. *used to indicate that the question really ought to be addressed*: This year’s budget deficit is half a trillion dollars. This begs the question: how are we going to balance the budget?

put the question—ask those present at a meeting, etc. to record their votes for or against the proposal: I must put the question to the House, and the House must say “Aye” or “No.”

assimilate something into something • assimilate something to something

assimilate something into something—adapt smth. making it part of a larger group: The costs of assimilating a traffic artery into an existing urban area are a massive community burden.

assimilate something to something—make smth. like smth. else: The laws of the defeated country were assimilated to those of the stronger country.

associate with someone • be associated with someone

associate with someone—spend a lot of time in smb.’s company (especially if that person is objectionable): Those extramoralists refuse to associate with a convict legally pardoned.

be associated with someone—be connected in people’s mind with smb. (because of common interests, etc.): He was associated with, although he never joined, the British environmentalists.

at a birth • at birth • at the birth

at a birth—during a single act of reproduction: Cats sometimes have four or five young at a birth.

at birth—at the time when a baby or an animal is born: No animal at birth is mature or perfect in intelligence.

at the birth—1. present or attending during the birth: Josephine did not want her husband at the birth of her own children. 2. during the emergence of smth.: The UN had been the indispensable midwife at the birth of their country.

at a clap • in a clap

at a clap—(dated) with one effort; at once: It was a good occasion to kill all Caesar’s Enemies at a clap.

in a clap—(dated) in a moment; immediately (also: *in a clap or two*): Our Master will be on us all now in a clap.

at a distance • in the distance

at a distance—1. not too near: This is where you get truly wonderful views of the Acropolis—seeing it at a distance, the Parthenon grows more impressive. 2. a long way away from smth. in time: Remembering this disaster at a distance, I now feel sure that it was not her fault.

in the distance—far away: A sliver of an island appeared in the distance. The plane made a wide turn and continued its slow descent.

at a draft • on draft

at a draft—*drink all of smth.* during one continuous action of swallowing: He drank half a pint of beer at a draft.

on draft—(usually of beer) served from a barrel and not sold in bottles: We had no beer on draft and a handful of bottled beers.

at a glance • at first glance

at a glance—*notice smth.* immediately without having to look carefully: When I warm up for a road race I can usually tell at a glance the newcomers to the sport.

at first glance—(also: *at first sight*) when first seen or considered: This arrangement pleases at first glance, but soon fatigues the eye by its uniformity.

at a good price • at a goodly price

at a good price—1. *sell* at a fairly high price: It’s wise to look far ahead in order to use the market to your advantage and sell at a good price. 2. *buy* at a very low price (also: *at a great price*): He lends people hospital beds, which he happened to get at a good price.

at a goodly price—1. *buy* at a fairly high price: He purchased the fabric at a goodly price, which drove up the cost on the finished product. 2. = *at a good price* 1: The Venus, being a rare and beautiful example of Roman sculpture, might well be sold at a goodly price.

at a heat • in heat

at a heat—(*coll.*) at a single intense effort or action: The new articles having been “thrown off at a heat,” stood particularly in want of re-revision.

in heat—(*of animals*) in the state of sexual excitement during the breeding season (*also: on heat*): “I’m no bitch in heat,” she said between tight teeth, “take your paws off me.”

See also: at a white heat / in a dead heat.

at a moment • at the moment

at a moment—at one point in time (out of many): He looked up from the desk, caught her at a moment when, against her will, tears had filled her eyes.

Note: The expression does not fully correlate in meaning with the phrase in a moment—1. *in a very short time*: The maids are busy preparing your room but they will be done in a moment. 2. = *at a moment*: He forced the responsibility of two lives upon me, and, in a moment of indecision, I failed them.

at the moment—1. at present; just now: There are twenty residents in a converted private house, and at the moment many of them share a room. 2. at a specific point in time: That gentleman was really ruined, and that at the moment when he was about to attain his end.

at a price • at the price

at a price—1. *bought or sold* at a high cost; very expensive: There’s fresh asparagus in the shops — at a price! 2. at the cost of much effort and sacrifice: Such is his grip on the market, though it is one obtained at a price.

at the price—1. at the cost indicated: Other wines difficult to beat at the price include three good dry whites from Hungary. 2. at the expense of smth.: The issue will be whether the government will introduce the harsh measures at the price of its own popularity.

at a push • at one push

at a push—(*coll.*) if compelled by need or circumstances: We can sleep seven or eight people in the house at a push.

at one push—with one act of pushing: Do not press the shutter at one push, or otherwise the photograph may be blurred.

at a run • on the run

at a run—*moving* at a running pace: Suddenly, there he was, at a run, hurrying my son to unpack the rifle and climb the mountain with him.

on the run—(*predic.*)—1. running: Although I am perfectly still, I find myself taking quick short breaths, as if I too am on the run. 2. (*also: on the trot*) busy moving from one task to another: It was vacation, and I shouldn’t feel bad if I am not on the run every minute of the day. 3. (*also: on the trot*) running away from prison, the police, etc.: He went to meet a *Franc-Tireur* who was on the run after killing several Germans. 4. (*of troops*) retreating; severely defeated: They all believed that this first success should be fully exploited while the enemy was on the run.

at a stretch • on the stretch

at a stretch—1. continuously; without interruption: It was impossible to work for more than an hour or so at a stretch. 2. by making a special effort; by stretching one’s resources: We have provided food for fifty people, but we might be able to make it do for sixty at a stretch.

on the stretch—1. tightened and extended: By the inspiratory effort the elastic tissue of the lungs is put on the stretch. 2. = *at a stretch* 1: Though several cars remained stranded for hours on the stretch, the situation was brought under control. 3. (*coll.*) using exaggerated statements: He’s always on the stretch.... He never tells the truth except by mistake. 4. (*of nerves*) in the state of tension: The insects whirred and buzzed and the noise kept Harry’s nerves on the stretch. 5. (*also: at full stretch*) working as hard as possible: Me and my stoker were on the stretch all the time attending to the engine.

at a stroke • at the stroke

at a stroke—suddenly and with a single action or effort: Some companies were in trouble because Mr. Heath changed strategy at a stroke.

at the stroke—at exactly the time stated or agreed upon: We agreed to meet for lunch, and he arrived at the stroke.

at a time • at one time

at a time—1. simultaneously: We present items, three at a time, and ask informants to pick the one that is most different from the other two. 2. is used of a particular period of time: She grew up in the capital at a time when its artistic life was at its most brilliant.

Note: The expression does not correlate in meaning with the phrase at times—now and then: Our work is cut out for us, even though it can be heartbreaking at times.

at one time—1. = *at a time* 1: Let’s start the dance again, all at one time. 2. at some time in the past: At one time most school teachers were men.

at a walk • in a walk

at a walk—at the ordinary gait: He watched her as she went past at a walk.

in a walk—(*coll.*) 1. quickly and without much thought: If you bother me too much, I’ll leave you in a walk! 2. easily and without effort: Sunday is election day, and Viktor Yushenko is expected to win in a walk.

at a white heat • in a dead heat

at a white heat—in a state of intense or extreme emotion: I saw him once while at a white heat of vexation in the library of the White House.

in a dead heat—(*of a race, etc.*) finishing at practically the same time: The horses came to the finish in a dead heat, and, without a photograph, the results were too close to call.

See also: at a heat / in heat.

at a word • in a word

at a word—following the word of command: At a word from the guard they all splashed into the water and washed their faces thoroughly.

in a word—(*introductory or parenthetical*) briefly; in short: Another morning came, but no wife. In a word, she was never heard of more.

at all events • in any event

at all events—anyhow; at any rate: Our landlady may be a bad cook, but at all events she does her best.

in any event—whatever may happen: I hope to go tomorrow; in any event I shall go before Saturday.

Note: The expression is not equivalent in meaning to the phrase in either event—no matter which of two possibilities happens: You will be notified on the phone or via e-mail. In either event, we will not charge your credit card for a product until it is shipped to you.

at all hours • at any hour

at all hours—continuously, especially at unusual or irregular

times: His songs are heard everywhere in the country and at all hours. Cf.: *until all hours*—(also: *until all hours of the night*) *until very late at night*: I lived the crazy life of a student—studying until all hours, living in front of my computer, all that.

Note: *The expression does not correlate in meaning with the phrase at all times—on all occasions; always:* The accessibility of Italy upon this side was at all times a matter of anxiety to her rulers.

at any hour—at any time; whenever one chooses: The knowledge that he might at any hour be called upon stimulated his studies of his duties.

See also: at any one time / at any time.

at an end • at the end

at an end—1. said of smth. used up or exhausted: I must warn you that my patience is almost at an end. 2. be finished; be over: When a checkmate is obtained, the game is at an end.

at the end—1. in the last part of smth.: I think the film's a bit weak at the end. 2. in the farthest part of smth.: The tube is very short and closed at the end.

Note: *The expression is not equivalent in meaning to the phrase in the end—1. finally; ultimately:* Three months were spent in the drafting of a document which in the end was rejected. 2. *taking one thing with another; as things turn out:* In the end, boys and girls don't communicate the same way.

at any cost • at any price

at any cost—regardless of how much effort or sacrifice is needed: In plain English, it is murder, and it must be stopped at any cost.

at any price—1. = *at any cost*: Peace at any price will not be a long peace. There will be more price to pay, over and over again. 2. (*negat.*) is used to state that under no circumstances will one accept or do smth.: I'm going to leave you. I can't stand my father-in-law at any price.

at any one time • at any time

at any one time—on each separate occasion: These were what were known as “bottle shops,” and could not sell less than a bottle of spirits at any one time.

at any time—1. at any given moment: The navigational system enabled our bombers to know exactly where they were at any time en route to Germany. 2. at a time which may be very soon: We may need the trucks at any time. I'll phone if I want you to roll them. 3. at any time one chooses: Anyone is welcome to join in at any time during the day. 4. no matter when; whenever: If at any time you have questions, please feel free to call.

See also: at all hours / at any hour.

at arm's length • close at hand

at arm's length—1. as far away from one as one can reach with the arm: The curtains fell together as the girl and the man stood at arm's length from one another. 2. away from close contact or familiarity: Deep inside she does have a bit of affection for him, but their rivalry has her keeping him at arm's length.

close at hand—1. near enough; in close proximity: The monks were always mindful to establish themselves where there was water close at hand. 2. on close inspection: He was found, close at hand, to be no mean acrid man; but at heart a healthful, strong, sagacious man. 3. (*of an event, etc.*) coming on shortly: This was the moment at which the fortunes of Montague reached the meridian. The decline was close at hand.

at best • at one's best

at best—(*introductory or parenthetical*) even under the most favorable conditions: He can only tie the score, at best.

at one's best—(*predic.*) said of smb. in the best state or condition: Although he was not at his best, he won the match.

at call • within call

at call—(also: *on call*) 1. (*of a doctor, etc.*) available if required: She served as president, then ... twenty years as treasurer, always at call, and handling the money carefully. 2. (*of money, etc.*) available on demand: As a first step, I secured my vast property, so that the income would be certain, and always at call.

within call—near enough to be summoned by calling: Ross was still away on duty, and there was nobody except the native servants within call.

at command • in command • on command

at command—said of smth. at one's disposal (and ready to be used): A constant supply of hot water is at command over the whole house.

in command—1. having the authority to command: Like all those who are seldom in command, the master was proportionally tyrannical and abusive. 2. having control over a situation: He was looking more relaxed and in command than ever before.

on command—at the order given: On command the mother ship would have oriented itself and determined when to launch its subsatellites.

at danger • in danger

at danger—(*of a signal on a railway line, etc.*): in the position giving a warning of danger: A signal is said to be “on,” when it is at danger.

in danger—at risk: The euphoria which accompanies altitude sickness robs the pilot of the opportunity of recognizing that he is in danger.

Note: *The expression does not correlate in meaning with the phrase on the danger list—(of a patient in the hospital) dangerously ill:* Five patients on the danger list were slightly better, the hospital said.

at dusk • in the dusk

at dusk—at the time when the twilight is setting in: The cathedral is closed to the public at dusk each day.

in the dusk—surrounded by the dusk; while it is dusk: One cannot see very far in the dusk.

at first • first of all

at first—in the beginning; originally: At first I disliked spinach, but now I quite love it.

Note: *The expression does not correlate in meaning with the phrase from the first—from the start:* Although he found English difficult he liked it from the first.

first of all—before anything else: First of all, we need to decide who to invite.

at full length • at great length

at full length—1. with the body stretched out and flat: He never walked again, but was drawn about lying at full length in a sort of bed-carriage. 2. *describing smth.* thoroughly and in detail: The purism of modern times would not allow me to give this story at full length.

at great length— = *at full length* 2: He went on at great length about his favorite hobby.

Note: *The expression does not fully correlate in meaning with the phrase at length—1. = at great length:* He dwelt at length on the considerable opposition to the entry of Britain into the Common Market. 2. *after a long time or pause:* At length he spoke again, softly, as if he was debating with himself.

at full strength • in full strength

at full strength—1. *working or performing* at maximum ca-

capacity: Four refineries that were shut down are now operating at full strength. 2. (*of a group of people*) with all its members present: Although none of our teams were at full strength they all put in spirited performances.

in full strength—(also: *in full force*) = *at full strength* 2: The ladies were in full strength ... each of them bringing a dish prepared by themselves.

Note: Neither expression correlates in meaning with the phrase **with all one's strength**—using as much physical effort as one can: He looped the rope over the branch and pulled with all his strength.

at full time • in the fullness of time

at full time—reaching the normal mass or dimension: At full time the fetus weighs from six and one-half to eight pounds.

Note: The expression does not correlate in meaning with the phrase **full time**—1. *the regular number of hours allotted to daily or weekly work*: All the factories we visited were running full time. 2. (also: *high time*) *time when smth. should be done at once*: The vessel is going to pieces, and it is full time for all who can, to leave her.

in the fullness of time—at the proper or destined time: In the fullness of time, your children and your in-laws become friends.

at hand • in hand

at hand—(also: *on hand*) within easy reach; close by: Keep a good dictionary at hand as you write. Proofread carefully.

in hand—1. said of smth. being dealt with: If you apply yourself to the job in hand, you'll soon finish it. 2. (also: *on hand*) in one's possession: Sometimes it is a better idea to borrow money than to wait until you have the money in hand.

at hazard • on the hazard

at hazard—1. at random; without plan: The following examples were selected at hazard. 2. at stake; in danger: Their worldly interests were at hazard.

on the hazard— = *at hazard* 2: Messala's whole fortune was on the hazard.

at high pressure • under high pressure

at high pressure—1. (*of matter*) when strongly pressed: Steam and oxygen at high pressure are introduced at the lower end of the gasifier. 2. *acting with great energy and speed*: As for Robert, he, of course, was living at high pressure all round.

under high pressure—1. = *at high pressure* 1: The new material loses its resistance only under high pressure. 2. when strongly persuaded or compelled: Working under high pressure for sustained periods results in stress.

at home • on home ground

at home—(*predic.*) very competent in smth. (*with the implication that it makes a person feel confident and relaxed*): Melanie is equally at home singing oratorio, jazz or performing in musical theater.

on home ground—1. in the area where one works or lives: It was nice to renew acquaintances of students I've taught and to meet them on "home ground." 2. = *at home*: Godber is on home ground, writing with cold-eyed affection about the Yorkshire mining communities.

at home in something • at home with something

at home in something—very competent in a particular subject (*with the implication that it makes a person feel confident and relaxed*): Richard was at home in mathematics and physics as well as Greek.

at home with something—feeling easy and confident about

using smth.: From the day we arrived he was completely at home with the camera.

at home to someone • at home with someone

at home to someone—prepared and willing to receive visitors: Mrs. Hill is not at home to anyone except relatives.

at home with someone—1. on friendly terms with smb.: She described his charm as "magnetic" and said "he was at home with everybody." 2. *feeling comfortable in a person's company*: His genial manner made me feel quite at home with him.

at interest • with interest

at interest—(*of money*) *borrowed or lent* on the condition that interest is to be paid: The sum was placed in a bank at interest and not to be drawn before a set maturity date.

with interest—1. (*of money*) *paid* with interest included: The company will return your original investment to you with in-
terest. 2. *return or repay* with increase or addition: The boys make monkey faces at me and I return the compliment with interest.

at it • in it

at it—1. hard at work exerting oneself: He never gives himself any rest; he's always at it. 2. doing smth., especially repeatedly, of which the speaker disapproves: Those children lighting fires in the park. So they are at it again, are they? 3. arguing or quarrelling, especially when this happens repeatedly: There they are at it now, with their caterwauling, squealing, all together. 4. (*euph., sl.*) indulging in sexual intercourse: The couple next door have been at it all night.

in it—taking part in an activity; engaged in smth.: There is no money in boxing. Those of us who started it many years ago are really not in it for the money.

at large • in large

at large—1. not in confinement or captivity: The suspect was not found, and was still at large, police said. 2. unemployed; without an occupation: Are you at large or have you any other occupation? 3. is used of people in general: Did the people at large approve of the government's policy? 4. without definite aim; at random: A single stroke well aimed returns a better result than a score which are delivered at large. 5. at great length; in detail: My mother and I talked at large on the subject.

in large—(also: *in the large*) as a whole: Are they pledging allegiance to a piece of cloth rather than their family and neighbors: their community in small and in large?

at last • at the last

at last—after much waiting or delay: It is an uplifting thought that truth is to be told at last.

at the last—during the final period: Ah, but you never saw him at the last. He was not at all what he used to be.

Note: a) The expression does not correlate in meaning with the phrase **at the last minute**—*at the last possible moment*: The plane took a nose dive. The pilot was able to bring it out at the last minute...

b) The expression does not correlate in meaning with the phrase **at the latest**—*used of smth. that must happen at or before a particular time*: Changes will become necessary by the autumn at the latest.

at need • in need

at need—in time of need: They had the support of older men whose experience could be called upon at need.

in need—requiring help: Many elderly people who are in need fail to apply for a supplementary allowance.

at no time • in no time

at no time—on no occasion; never: This organization has at no time been an official subdivision of the Labor Party.

in no time—very soon: Our lessons by professional instructors will have you phobia-free and swimming in no time.

at noon • in the afternoon

at noon—in the middle of the day; at twelve o'clock: The committee will meet at noon on the third Monday of each month.

in the afternoon—in the period between mid-day and evening: The morning will be set aside for committees to meet and the full group will meet in the afternoon.

at one • in one

at one—in agreement: Here is an inner core of Evangelism in which all true believers are at one.

in one—combined; together: He is President, Chairman and Secretary in one.

at one time and another • at one time or another

at one time and another—from time to time; occasionally: He wanted the robust exchange of love and passion such as he had had with her at one time and another.

at one time or another—1. = *at one time and another*: Most people suffer from headaches at one time or another. 2. one day; sooner or later: God has told the prophets that these events will happen at one time or another.

at one's back • on one's back

at one's back—1. said of smb. pursuing or chasing a person: He hopped on the bike and tore out of the lot, as though the hounds of hell were at his back. 2. said of smb. giving support or protection to a person: He has the head of the Department at his back.

on one's back—1. said of smb. causing trouble to a person: He wants to know who's going to be Sheriff. That's the person who's going to be on his back. 2. said of smb. being a burden to a person (causing expense, etc.): We're the backbone of the country, but you see, Bob, there's too many people on our backs.

Note: *The expression does not correlate in meaning with the phrase on one's shoulders—being smb.'s responsibility:* I'd like to get the decision made as early as possible because I don't want to have it on my shoulders for the whole season.

at one's command • under one's command

at one's command—1. at smb.'s word or phrase by which an order is given: He presented, at her command, a rose that he gathered. 2. ready to be used; at one's disposal: Never was his inventive force more flexible and more at his command.

under one's command—under smb.'s charge or control: The editorial policy of the Daily Mail was under his total command.

at one's fingertips • to one's fingertips

at one's fingertips—(of facts, information, etc.) readily available thanks to thorough knowledge (*also: at one's finger-ends*): Thanks to an excellent filing system, he has all the figures at his fingertips.

to one's fingertips—(also: *to one's finger-ends*) completely; thoroughly: Frank was a gentleman to his fingertips. He was always good to meet and has a word for one and all.

at one's risk • at risk

at one's risk—accepting responsibility; agreeing to make no claims: The consumer shall, at his risk, install and retain control over the equipment.

at risk—exposed to danger; subject to hazard: The initiative aims at developing techniques for identifying individuals at risk for heart attacks.

at one's time of life • in one's lifetime

at one's time of life—at one's age (especially middle age): If I can't bear a bit of pain at my time of life I'm no sports-woman.

in one's lifetime—for the duration of one's life; while a person is alive: In my lifetime, four things have happened to revolutionize farming.

at one's worst • at the worst

at one's worst—said of smb. in the worst or most undesirable state: Glennie was at her worst: still unchanged, wearing her dirty forenoon wrapper.

at the worst—in the worst possible case: If a man played long enough he was sure to win at last, or at the worst, not to come off a loser.

at play • in play

at play—1. playing games: It's a bit like watching children at play, creating an imaginative world that they believe in completely. 2. engaged in gambling (playing cards, etc.): This gentleman has been at play at that there gaming-house over the way.

in play—1. said of smth. done for amusement and not intended to be taken seriously: Don't be offended; I only said it in play. 2. said of factors actively involved or having influence: Mighty forces are in play in the present round of negotiations.

Note: *The expression does not correlate in meaning with the phrase in full play—in full action or operation; acting with full force:* A desperate fight was going on ... the rebel batteries were in full play.

at present • in the present

at present—right now; at this time (*of a situation that might be temporary*): John lives in London, but at present he is on holiday abroad.

in the present—said of a period of time we are living in: She thinks the world has always been the way it is now, in the present. She probably thinks that George Washington communicated with Thomas Jefferson by email.

Note: *The expression does not correlate in meaning with the phrase for the present—for the time being; for now:* We have enough butter for the present, though we may have to buy some more next week.

at quiet • on the quiet

at quiet—at peace; in a state of calm or repose: The lives of the poor people arrested were saved, and the country remained at quiet.

on the quiet—said of smth. done privately or in secret: If you are engaged and have got married on the quiet then there is nothing to be ashamed of.

at short hand • in short hand

at short hand—in the short term; quickly: The demo failed because the problem could not be solved at short-hand.

in short hand—using a quick way of writing which utilizes signs instead of words: He had attended all the lectures taking them down in short-hand.

at sight • in sight

at sight—(also: *on sight*) 1. *shoot a person* immediately on seeing him: Had we shot Jodl at sight, that piece of evidence would never have been obtained. 2. *reading music* without previous study: That pianist can read the most difficult music at sight. 3. (*of bank drafts, etc.*) to be paid on presentation: I'll give you a check at sight on the Pennsylvania Bank.

Note: *The expression does not correlate in meaning with the phrase at first sight—(also: at first glance) when first seen or considered, often with the implication that one's first impression is*

probably wrong: At first sight, it would seem they have a point. However, this reasoning is a bit short sighted.

in sight—1. within view: The small jet began to lose height, and soon airport buildings, a runway, and taxi strips were in sight. 2. in one's mental or spiritual vision: His sagacious mind immediately recognized and caught on to the only plan of salvation in sight. 3. said of smth. likely to happen soon: That such a development is not now in sight does not offer conclusive proof of technical infeasibility.

at the back of something • on the back of something

at the back of something—1. behind smth.: At the back of the house there was a large garden. 2. in the part which is farthest from the front: a room at the back of the house; a door at the back of a building. 3. responsible for smth., especially smth. bad: Mr. Tillotson is at the back of the plan to demolish those fine old buildings.

on the back of something—1. on the reverse side of smth.: On the back of the letter was a diagram. 2. in addition to smth.; immediately following smth. (*usually of an unfortunate event*): The child had the measles, and then on the back of that came the scarlet fever.

at the beginning • to begin with

at the beginning—(*also: in the beginning*) initially; at first: At the beginning, he was simply darling to me. Lately, he is distant and not very responsive.

to begin with—(*also: to start with*) 1. most importantly: There were other considerations that made Dudley unsuitable. To begin with he was already married.... 2. = *at the beginning*: To begin with he was against the Turks, later he suddenly changed policy and joined them for a short period.

at the bottom of something • in the bottom of something

at the bottom of something—1. in the lowest part outside smth.: I stood there at the bottom of the steps. 2. in the part farthest from the front: The poor relations were seated at the bottom of the long table. 3. being the real cause of smth. undesirable: Greed lies at the bottom of our ecological predicament.

in the bottom of something—in the lowest part inside smth.: The fish we had caught were flopping about in the bottom of the boat.

at the bottom of the bag • at the bottom of the barrel

at the bottom of the bag—(*also: in the bottom of the bag*) remaining as a last resource or possibility: If there's one small favour left at the bottom of the bag, clean-slate my bank account and credit history please.

at the bottom of the barrel—(*also: in the bottom of the barrel*) among the worst or the least desirable elements of a group: Corporations that don't have time to deal with these issues will find themselves at the bottom of the barrel.

at the conclusion • in conclusion

at the conclusion—at the finish of an event or activity: At the conclusion they remarked that it was a useful exercise and perhaps should happen more often.

in conclusion—1. finally; in the end; He changed sides so often, that in conclusion no side trusted him. 2. to sum up: In conclusion, everybody has his own ways of expressing emotions. In any case we should not let our rage out.

at the conference • in conference

at the conference—1. in the course of the conference: A good deal of discussion at the conference has been about pluralism.

2. attending the conference: The gays at the conference were all people who had "come out"—that is, openly declared themselves to be homosexual.

in conference—busy at a meeting to discuss smth. or exchange views: He went to see the managing editor, but Percy was in conference with the publisher.

at the cutting edge of something • on the knife-edge of something

at the cutting edge of something—(*also: on the cutting edge of something*) involved in the most advanced developments in a particular field: It is unrealistic to expect to be at the cutting edge of the fashion industry for anything longer than fifteen years.

on the knife-edge of something—(*also: on the razor's edge of something*) on the brink of smth. bad or dangerous: The expansion of trade hasn't closed the gap between those who live on the cutting edge of the global economy and the billions who live on the knife-edge of survival.

at the depth of something • in the depth of something

at the depth of something—at a specified distance from the top down: At the depth of 180 feet, at what was called the third gallery, the width of ore was, as I have said, 45 feet.

in the depth of something—1. in the deepest or most central part of smth.: In the depth of the valley, there is a lochan (the diminutive of loch) of superlative beauty. 2. in the middle of the winter or night (when the cold or darkness is most intense): In the depth of winter it is quite enough to fire up twice in the twenty-four hours.

at the end of something • in the end of something

at the end of something—1. in the farthest or last part of smth.: The player tries to catch with his teeth a cherry suspended at the end of a string. 2. at the finish of an event or activity: The audience gave him a big hand at the end of the performance. 3. at the conclusion of a period: The fully Anglicized spelling *genteel* came in at the end of the 17th century.

in the end of something—1. = *at the end of something 1*: I adjusted the knot in the end of the rope to be as small as possible and as close to the end of the rope as possible. 2. = *at the end of something 3*: The latter pronunciation appears to have been the only one in common use in the end of the 18th century.

at the end of the day • late in the day

at the end of the day—(*coll.*) after one has considered all the relevant facts: The question at the end of the day is whether the house is actually worth that amount.

late in the day—1. said of an action taken somewhat late and consequently not fully effective: It's a little late in the day to start talking about policy changes. 2. eventually; at almost the last possible time: It was the pensioners' vote late in the day which influenced the election of Mr. Simmons.

at the feet of someone • at the foot of something

at the feet of someone—on the floor in front of a person, especially to show homage: One of the lay-followers threw her a cloak and ... she prostrated at the feet of the Buddha.

at the foot of something—at the bottom of hills and mountains: The city stretches out at the foot of the mountain, low houses dwarfed by the immensity of the snowcapped peak.

at the front • on the front

at the front—1. (*also: in front*) in the position nearest to the front part of smth.: A loudspeaker system is a box with a grille at the front through which the sound comes. 2. fighting as a member of the armed forces in a war: Women must keep the

home industries going for the boys who were fighting at the front.

on the front—1. on the foremost or most important side of smth.: The label on the front of the packet lists the actual net weight. 2. = *at the front* 2. While the Austrian troops were falling back in collapse, German formations on the front retreated with discipline.

at the heart of something • in the heart of something

at the heart of something—at the basis of smth.: The two-stage module is at the heart of the plans to land two men on the moon.

in the heart of something—in the central part of smth.: The Verbas, another Bosnian river, rises in the heart of the country.

at the least • in the least

at the least—(also: *at least*) 1. at all events; anyway: The process looks rather laborious but at the least it is not dangerous. 2. not less than: At the least a dozen ideas were considered and rejected.

in the least—(negat.) to the smallest degree: So long as the noise is satisfactory the musical quality does not trouble him in the least.

at the market • in the market • on the market

at the market—1. offered for sale: The fact that the wheat from the new crops appeared at the market, allowed to bring down its deficit. 2. (*Stock Exchange*) at the current market price: I never buy at the market. My orders are always a point or two under the market price.

in the market—1. = *at the market* 1: A substance from New York has lately made its appearance in the market under the name of butterine. 2. (*for*) trying to obtain smth. specified: Not everybody watching the advertisement is in the market for our products.

on the market— = *at the market* 1: This vaccine won't be on the market for another six months.

at the maximum • to the maximum

at the maximum—is used of the largest possible quantity: The regiment represents around 500 men at the maximum.

to the maximum—to the greatest degree possible: We must exploit tactical surprise to the maximum.

at the minimum • to the minimum

at the minimum—1. at least the amount or number specified: They could accommodate 100 booths, 50 at the minimum. 2. at the very least: At the minimum we would be under pressure to reveal the names.

to the minimum—to the smallest degree possible: Delay in the hearing of cases should be reduced to the minimum.

at the outside • on the outside

at the outside—as the highest possible figure: This woman is young, I suppose at the outside not thirty.

on the outside—1. on the outer surface: Make sure the contents are clearly labeled on the outside. 2. (*sl.*) out of prison: The funny thing is — on the outside, I was an honest man. I had to come to prison to be a crook.

at the ready • in readiness

at the ready—(*of a weapon*) in readiness for immediate use: He stalked along, one hand swinging free, the other with his machete held at the ready.

in readiness—1. in a ready or prepared state: Stacks of “no parking” cones were dotted in readiness round the village. 2. ready or prepared to do smth.: The admiral gave orders for the troops to be in readiness to land.

at the rise • on the rise

at the rise—at the start of smth.; at an early stage in smth.: The book portrays American cities at the rise of industrialism.

Note: The expression does not correlate in meaning with the phrase **at rise**—(*Theater*) when the rising curtain discloses a scene: At rise we see an interview room with a desk and simple furnishings.

on the rise—1. on the increase: The stealing of intellectual property is on the rise. 2. (*of prices*) going up: Now, with an improving economy, gas prices are on the rise.

at the same time • in the same time

at the same time—1. in addition; as well: The method reduced the cost of processing information and at the same time accelerated the speed of producing data. 2. at the same moment; simultaneously: The same stock may be quoted at the same time in the exchange markets of distant places. 3. nevertheless (*is used to express reservation*): That's all fine and well, but at the same time it seems increasingly unlikely that we will achieve these goals.

in the same time—taking the same amount of time: This explains why a planet travels from point A to point B in the same time that it takes to cover the much shorter span between C and D.

at the side of someone • on the side of someone

at the side of someone—(*coll.*) compared with another person: She is quite clever at the side of other girls.

on the side of someone—giving support to smb. in a conflict, etc.: Despite Callas' harsh nature, she was always on the side of her students.

at the side of something • on the side of something

at the side of something—situated or placed beside smth.: He fancied he heard the tramp of a troop of horse at the side of the wood.

on the side of something—1. = *at the side of something*: As I was driving I passed the car on the side of the road again. This time the lights were not on. 2. on the side surface of smth.: The Stock Exchange waiter strikes three strokes with a mallet on the side of a rostrum before making formal declaration. 3. supporting smth.; in favor of smth.: Normally, and as a whole, human law is on the side of divine order.

at the sight of someone • in the sight of someone

at the sight of someone—on seeing a person: Does running away at the sight of the police give officers reason enough to stop and search you on the street?

in the sight of someone—1. near enough to be seen by a person: He was brutally killed in the sight of the townspeople. 2. in a person's opinion; as regarded by smb.: In the sight of the world, they were a happily married couple.

at the start • to start with

at the start—(also: *at the beginning*) initially; at first: At the start he was merely an incompetent abroad, but being a man of intelligence he adapted quickly.

to start with—(also: *to begin with*) 1. as a first consideration; most importantly: Kurosawa's tale wasn't all that original to start with — it was lifted from Hammer's Red Harvest. 2. = *at the start*: To start with, she was both advising customers and working on the counter but she quickly progressed to concentrate on providing advice.

at the time of something • in the time of something

at the time of something—at the particular point of time: I was in India at the time of my father's death.

in the time of something—(also: in the times of something) during the period associated with smth.: The payment of annates had originated in the time of the crusades.

at the top of the heap • on top of the world

at the top of the heap—(also: at the top of the tree) 1. as high as possible in one's career or profession: Regardless of who is at the top of the heap in our government we are still the most diverse nation. 2. of the highest rank within a group of items: At the top of the heap are private colleges and universities such as Yale, Williams and Harvard which are world renowned.

*on top of the world—*extremely happy: I was on top of the world and it seemed like just the beginning of a long and glorious career.

at the top of the tree • up a tree

at the top of the tree—(also: at the top of the heap) 1. as high as possible in one's career or profession: You're asking us to believe that a man right at the top of his particular tree, is going to commit forgery. 2. of the highest rank within a group of items: You may be selling products on behalf of another company, or you might be the company at the top of the tree...

up a tree—1. (coll.) in trouble or difficulty (*also: up a gum-tree*): The news that no hotel accommodations were obtainable left me rather up a tree. 2. (*sl.*) alcohol intoxicated: Only two glasses of booze and he was up a tree for sure.

Note: a) The expression does not correlate in meaning with the phrase up the pole—(sl.) 1. (*UK*) confused or muddled: The Pope told Galileo that he was up the pole for pretending the world was round. 2. (*Irish*) pregnant: "Is she up the pole?" "Better ask Seymour that."

b) The expression is not anonymous in meaning to the phrase out of one's tree—(sl.) crazy; lacking common sense: I do believe that Bill was out of his tree when he made this decision.

at the trail • on the trail

at the trail—(Military) carrying a rifle in the right hand, the arm at full length, and the gun horizontal: The volunteers are in step, rifles are carried uniformly horizontal at the "trail."

on the trail—1. following a path in a wild or uninhabited region: In discrete valleys were a few cabins, and they stayed in them or *siwashbed* (camped on the trail). 2. following traces or tracks in hunting: Jacob's dog leads them into the woods on the trail of a fox, and there they come upon the wreckage of a small plane. 3. following smb.; in pursuit of a person: The police are on the trail of a group of Satanists, believed to have caused a young man's death.

at the utmost • to the utmost

at the utmost—(also: at the most) not more than the number or amount specified: The administration has promised to spend one billion dollars at the utmost on the operation.

*to the utmost—*to the highest possible degree: The land and the sea were exploited to the utmost for the islanders' subsistence.

at the view of someone • in the view of someone

*at the view of someone—*at the sight of smb.; on seeing a person: He tried not to laugh out loud at the view of his son dressed like a woman.

in the view of someone—1. near enough to be seen by smb.: She stood in the view of everybody and uttered that strange prediction. 2. in the opinion of a person: In the view of the magistrate, the offence was not a serious one.

at the view of something • with the view of something

*at the view of something—*at the sight of smth.; on seeing

smth.: As you step into the courtyard you are amazed at the view of the trees, grass and flowers.

*with the view of something—*for the purpose of doing smth.: He commenced a tour of the continent, with the view of acquiring a knowledge of European life.

See also: in view of something / on view of something.

at this minute • this minute

at this minute—(also: at the minute) at present; just now: She's feeding the baby at this minute.

*this minute—*at once; immediately: You don't have to make a decision this minute.

at this time • this time

*at this time—*at present; now: A local man is under suspicion but there isn't enough evidence to justify an arrest at this time.

Note: The expression is not equivalent in meaning to the phrase at this time of day— in present circumstances; when things have reached the stage they now have: It's no good changing our minds at this time of day; we ought to have done that before.

*this time—*on this occasion: With the new scroll placed on the bulletin board, all may see who made the honor roll this time.

at work • in work

at work—1. at one's place of employment: He's at work now, but he'll be back at six. 2. engaged in a particular activity: The poor woman was still hard at work at an ironing-table. 3. having a particular influence or effect: The same disastrous processes are at work in the whole of this area.

in work—1. having employment: He has been out of work for a year. He'll be glad to be in regular work again. 2. in process of preparation or completion: The company has three films in work right now. 3. (*of a horse*) in training: I had two horses in work during November and December.

Note: a) The expression does not fully correlate in meaning with the phrase in the works— = in work 2: A plan of reorganization is reported to be now in the works.

b) The expression does not correlate in meaning with the phrase in labor—experiencing the pains and efforts of childbirth: Vane had been in labor for eight hours before her twin daughters were finally born.

attach oneself to someone • attach to someone

*attach oneself to someone—*associate with a person; become smb.'s constant companion: Fred seems to have attached himself to a much older woman.

attach to someone—(of blame, fault, etc.) become fixed onto a person: A lot of guilt attaches to Henry for his part in the plot.

attached home • semi-detached house

attached home—(U.S.) a house attached to another house on the other side of the shared wall: One son lives in an attached home adjacent to our home.

semi-detached house—(UK) = attached home: What are people's experiences of having a piano in a semi-detached house? Does it depend on how thin the walls are?

attempt at something • attempt on something

*attempt at something—*an effort to do smth.: This publication is the first attempt at a representation of our knowledge about vitamins and avitamines.

attempt on something—1. an act of trying to accomplish smth. difficult: When he makes his next attempt on the world's record, he will be using a "jet-propelled" speed-boat. 2. (*in the phrase "attempt on someone's life"*) an act of trying to kill smb. (*usually of an unsuccessful attack or assault*): Musharraf survived a second attempt on his life when attackers rammed a car bomb into his motorcade.

attend on someone • attend to someone

attend on someone—1. act as a servant; carry out smb.'s wishes: A king would have as many as one hundred people attending on him. 2. give personal help to smb. (as a nurse, doctor, etc.): Jane has been attending on her sick mother for years.

attend to someone—1. give one's attention to smb.: Attend to me, children, I shan't repeat these instructions. 2. = *attend on someone* 2: She was attending to her sick grandmother when her father came to the door.

attend something • attend to something

attend something—1. go to or be present at an event: Prince Harry attended the ceremony along with other members of the Royal Family. 2. go regularly to an institution such as a school, etc.: As a child, he attended church services with his parents. 3. occur along with smth.: In contrast to the air of celebration which usually attended the sailings of these super-tankers, there was an air of gloom.

attend to something—(also: *tend to something*) take care of smth.; deal with smth.: They ought to attend to the business without unnecessary delay.

attract someone's attention • draw someone's attention

attract someone's attention—get the attention of a person: She spoke loudly to attract everyone's attention.

draw someone's attention—make a person especially aware of smth.: The judge drew the attention of the jury to this detail.

au fait • in fact

au fait—(Fr., UK sl.) familiar with something: We deem it's important that you be au fait with another concept.

in fact—in reality; actually: In fact, it was a wonder anyone survived in the circumstances.

aural signal • oral signal

aural signal—a signal perceived by the ear: Where an aural signal is used in a building security system, a corresponding visual signal must be provided.

oral signal—a signal transmitted by speech: They need to be able to communicate with the minimum of oral signals when the engine is running.

Austral English • Australian English

Austral English—the variety of English spoken by most inhabitants of Australia and New Zealand: The term Austral English is sometimes used to cover the language of the whole of Australasia.

Note: *The expression does not correlate in meaning with the phrase Austral language—the language of the Austral Islands (an archipelago in the South Pacific inhabited by Polynesians): The origin of the Khasis is still an enigma.... Their language is considered a branch of austral languages.*

Australian English—the variety of English spoken by most inhabitants of Australia: There is Australian English, and American English, and Indian English—recognizable ... as a matter of idiom and accent.

autograph book • autographed book

autograph book—a book in which signatures of famous people are collected: As I turn the pages of my autograph book now, each name encapsulates its own little bit of history.

autographed book—a book bearing the author's own signature: In this first edition autographed book, Eugene Cernan describes his personal involvement in mankind's reach for the moon.

autographed copy • autographic copy

autographed copy—a copy of a book, etc. signed by the author: On the day of its publication, Hank had gone jubilantly to Isobel's back door, armed with an autographed copy for her and her husband.

autographic copy—the original copy written by the author: The Library of Congress houses the autographic copy of the Declaration of Independence with corrections by Thomas Jefferson himself.

avenge oneself on someone • avenge someone

avenge oneself on someone—(also: *revenge oneself on someone*) get even with a person in return for an offence or injury inflicted on oneself: He has avenged himself on those who betrayed him.

avenge someone—(also: *revenge someone*) get satisfaction for an offence or injury done to another person: If Hamlet wants to avenge his father, what stands in his way?

avoid arrest • evade arrest

avoid arrest—escape being arrested: The government failed to prove that he left Montana with the intent to avoid arrest or prosecution.

evade arrest—escape being arrested, especially for a prolonged period, by cleverness, deceit, etc.: The two men have managed to evade arrest but they have done so in different ways.

B

babe in Christ • child of God

babe in Christ—a newly-made convert to Christianity: Suppose a new Christian man comes from a not so ideal background, and there are elders that are not willing to deal with this babe in Christ.

child of God—1. (also: *God's child*) a human being born of God, that is by God's creation: The meanest peasant felt himself ennobled as a child of God. 2. a member of the untouchable class in Hindu society: She decided he was a Harijan, a child of God, an untouchable.

baby blue-eyes • blue-eyed babies

baby blue-eyes—a delicate California herb (*Nemophila menziesii*) having blue flowers with dark spots: Baby Blue Eyes. This beautiful porcelain blue flower is as delicate as its name.

blue-eyed babies—the plants *Houstonia patens* and *Houstonia caerulea*: The names for the starry *Houstonia* are so charming one scarcely knows which to choose. Blue-eyed Babies, Quaker Ladies, Angel Eyes...

Note: *The expression does not correlate in meaning with the phrase blue-eyed boys—people singled out for special favors by smb. in authority: During this difficult period, farmers were "blue-eyed boys."*

baby-minder • babysitter

baby-minder—a woman who takes small children into her own home and looks after them while their parents are at work: The art of conversation cannot be acquired when eating a solitary television supper with the baby-minder.

babysitter—a woman who goes to smb. else's home to look after small children while their parents are at work: Can't you find a babysitter and come over for dinner.

back bench, the • back seat

back bench, the—1. (UK Parliament) members who do not