

Common English Proverbs

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Expression	IPA	Meaning	Example
Actions speak louder than words	/ ˈækfənz spi:k ˈləʊdər ðæn wɜːdz/	What you do is more important than what you say.	Q: He keeps promising to help, but never does. A: Well, actions speak louder than words.
A picture is worth a thousand words	/ ə ˈpɪktʃər ɪz wɜːθ ə ˈθaʊzənd wɜːdz/	A visual image can convey a complex idea more effectively than words.	Instead of describing the sunset, she showed a photo. A picture is worth a thousand words.
A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush	/ ə bɜːd ɪn ðə hænd ɪz wɜːθ tu ɪn ðə buʃ/	It's better to hold onto something you have than to risk it for something better that you might not get.	I was offered a stable job, but I'm tempted by a risky startup. A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.
Better late than never	/ ˈbetər leɪt ðæn ˈnevər/	It's better to do something late than not do it at all.	He finally apologized after a year. Better late than never.
Every cloud has a silver lining	/ ˈevri klaʊd hæz ə ˈsɪlvər ˈlaɪnɪŋ/	There is something good in every bad situation.	I lost my job, but I found a better one. Every cloud has a silver lining.
Practice makes perfect	/ ˈpræktɪs meɪks ˈpɜːfɪkt/	Regular practice leads to improvement and mastery.	She struggled with piano at first, but practice makes perfect.
The early bird catches the worm	/ ði ˈɜːli bɜːd ˈkætʃɪz ðə wɜːm/	Those who act promptly get the best opportunities.	I woke up at 5 AM to get tickets. The early bird catches the worm.
A stitch in time (saves nine)	/ ə stɪtʃ ɪn taɪm (seɪvz naɪn)/	Fixing a small problem now prevents a bigger one later.	Fix that leak now, or it'll flood. A stitch in time saves nine.
Absence makes the heart grow fonder	/ ˈæbsəns meɪks ðə hɑːt grəʊ ˈfɒndər/	Being apart from someone makes you appreciate them more.	After a month apart, they realized absence makes the heart grow fonder.
All good things must come to an end	/ ɔːl ɡʊd θɪŋz mʌst kʌm tu ən ɛnd/	Pleasurable experiences cannot last forever.	The vacation was amazing, but all good things must come to an end.
All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy	/ ɔːl wɜːk ənd noʊ pleɪ meɪks dʒæk ə dʌl bɔɪ/	Working without rest makes a person boring and unhappy.	You've been studying all weekend. Remember, all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy.
An apple a day keeps the doctor away	/ ən ˈæpəl ə deɪ ki:ps ðə ˈdɒktər ə ˈweɪ/	Eating healthily can prevent illness.	I eat fruit every morning. An apple a day keeps the doctor away.
Better safe than sorry	/ ˈbetər seɪf ðæn ˈsɒri/	It's better to take precautions than to regret not doing so.	I'll bring an umbrella even if it's sunny. Better safe than sorry.
Blood is thicker than water	/ blʌd ɪz ˈθɪkər ðæn ˈwɔːtər/	Family relationships are stronger than others.	He helped his brother despite their fight. Blood is thicker than water.
Charity begins at home	/ ˈtʃerɪti bɪˈɡɪnz æt hoʊm/	You should take care of your family before helping others.	She donates abroad but ignores her needy cousin. Charity begins at home.
Cleanliness is next to godliness	/ ˈklenlɪnɪs ɪz nekst tu ˈɡɒdlɪnɪs/	Being clean is a virtue close to spiritual purity.	He always washes his hands before meals. Cleanliness is next to godliness.
Curiosity killed the cat	/ ˌkjʊrɪ ˈæsɪti kɪld ðə kæt/	Being too inquisitive can lead to trouble.	Don't ask about his past. Curiosity killed the cat.
Good things come to those who wait	/ ɡʊd θɪŋz kʌm tu ðəʊz hu weɪt/	Patience is rewarded.	She waited years for a promotion, and finally got it. Good things come to those who wait.
Honesty is the best policy	/ ˈɒnɪsti ɪz ðə best ˈpɒləsi/	Being truthful is always the best approach.	He admitted his mistake and was forgiven. Honesty is the best policy.
If it ain't broke, don't fix it	/ ɪf ɪt eɪnt brəʊk, doʊnt fɪks ɪt/	Don't change something that is working well.	The old software works fine. If it ain't broke, don't fix it.
If you can't beat them, join them	/ ɪf ju kæn't bi:t ðem, dʒɔɪn ðem/	If you can't overcome opposition, it's better to cooperate.	The other team was too strong, so we merged. If you can't beat them, join them.
Ignorance is bliss	/ ɪɡnərəns ɪz blɪs/	Not knowing something can be more comfortable than knowing the truth.	He didn't know about the problem, so he was happy. Ignorance is bliss.
Laughter is the best medicine	/ ˈlæftər ɪz ðə best ˈmedɪsɪn/	Humor can help heal emotional pain.	After a tough day, watching a comedy helped. Laughter is the best medicine.
Let sleeping dogs lie	/ let ˈsli:pɪŋ dɒgz laɪ/	Don't disturb a situation that is currently calm.	I won't bring up the old argument. Let sleeping dogs lie.
Look before you leap	/ lʊk bɪˈfɔːr ju li:p/	Consider the consequences before acting.	He invested without research and lost money. Look before you leap.

Expression	IPA	Meaning	Example
Necessity is the mother of invention	/nɪˈsɛsɪtɪ ɪz ðə ˈmʌðər ʌv ɪnˈvɛnʃən/	Difficult situations inspire creative solutions.	When the bridge collapsed, they built a ferry. Necessity is the mother of invention.
No man is an island	/nɒʊ mæn ɪz ən ˈaɪlənd/	Everyone needs help from others; no one is self-sufficient.	He tried to do everything alone, but failed. No man is an island.
Nothing ventured, nothing gained	/ˈnʌθɪŋ ˈvɛntʃəd, ˈnʌθɪŋ ɡeɪnd/	You have to take risks to achieve something.	I was afraid to start a business, but nothing ventured, nothing gained.
One good turn deserves another	/wʌn ɡʊd tɜrn dɪˈzɜrvz əˈnʌðər/	Kindness should be repaid with kindness.	She helped me move, so I helped her study. One good turn deserves another.
Rome wasn't built in a day	/roum ˈwʌzənt bɪlt ɪn ə deɪ/	Great achievements take time.	Don't rush the project. Rome wasn't built in a day.
Slow and steady wins the race	/sləʊ ənd ˈstedi wɪnz ðə reɪs/	Consistent effort is more effective than speed.	He studied a little each day and passed. Slow and steady wins the race.
The pen is mightier than the sword	/ðə pɛn ɪz ˈmaɪtɪər ðæn ðə sɔrd/	Writing and ideas have more power than violence.	The article changed public opinion. The pen is mightier than the sword.
Time is money	/taɪm ɪz ˈmʌni/	Time is valuable and should not be wasted.	Don't waste time on trivial tasks. Time is money.
Too many cooks spoil the broth	/tu ˈmeni kʊks spɔɪl ðə brɒθ/	Too many people involved can ruin a project.	The committee had too many members and nothing got done. Too many cooks spoil the broth.
Two heads are better than one	/tu hedz ɑr ˈbetər ðæn wʌn/	Collaboration leads to better solutions.	We solved the puzzle together. Two heads are better than one.
A chain is only as strong as its weakest link	/ə tʃeɪn ɪz ˈoʊnli æz strɒŋ æz ɪts ˈwi:kɪst lɪŋk/	A group is only as strong as its weakest member.	The team failed because one member was unprepared. A chain is only as strong as its weakest link.
A leopard cannot change its spots	/ə ˈlepərd ˈkænət tʃeɪndʒ ɪts spɒts/	People cannot change their fundamental nature.	He promised to stop lying, but he lied again. A leopard cannot change its spots.
A penny saved is a penny earned	/ə ˈpɛni seɪvd ɪz ə ˈpɛni ɜrnd/	Saving money is as valuable as earning it.	I cut my coffee expenses. A penny saved is a penny earned.
A rolling stone gathers no moss	/ə ˈroulɪŋ stəʊn ˈɡæðəz nɒʊ mɒs/	A person who keeps moving doesn't accumulate responsibilities or attachments.	He changes jobs every year. A rolling stone gathers no moss.
Adversity makes strange bedfellows	/ədˈvɜrsɪti meɪks streɪndʒ ˈbedˌfeləʊz/	Difficult times cause unlikely people to cooperate.	The rivals worked together during the crisis. Adversity makes strange bedfellows.
All roads lead to Rome	/ɔl roʊdz li:d tu roum/	Many different methods can achieve the same goal.	You can learn coding through many courses. All roads lead to Rome.
As you sow so shall you reap	/æz ju sou sɒʊ ʃæl ju ri:p/	Your actions determine your consequences.	He worked hard and succeeded. As you sow so shall you reap.
Barking dogs seldom bite	/ˈbɑ:kɪŋ dɔgz ˈsɛldəm baɪt/	People who make threats rarely carry them out.	He yells a lot but never fights. Barking dogs seldom bite.
Beauty is in the eye of the beholder	/ˈbju:ti ɪz ɪn ði aɪ ʌv ðə biːˈhəʊldər/	Beauty is subjective.	She thinks the painting is ugly, but I love it. Beauty is in the eye of the beholder.
Empty vessels make the most noise	/ˈɛmpti ˈvɛsəlz meɪk ðə moʊst nɔɪz/	People with little knowledge talk the most.	He talks endlessly but knows little. Empty vessels make the most noise.
Familiarity breeds contempt	/fəˈmɪli ˈɛrɪti brɪdz kənˈtɛmpt/	Knowing someone too well can lead to disrespect.	They were close friends but now argue constantly. Familiarity breeds contempt.
First impressions are the most lasting	/fɜrst ɪmˈpreʃənz ɑr ðə moʊst ˈlæstɪŋ/	The first time you meet someone shapes your long-term opinion.	He dressed well for the interview. First impressions are the most lasting.
Give credit where credit is due	/ɡɪv ˈkrɛdɪt wɛr ˈkrɛdɪt ɪz du:/	Acknowledge someone's contribution.	She did most of the work. Give credit where credit is due.
Haste makes waste	/heɪst meɪks weɪst/	Rushing leads to mistakes and wasted effort.	He rushed the report and had to redo it. Haste makes waste.
If the shoe fits, wear it	/ɪf ðə ʃu:fɪts, wɛr ɪt/	If a criticism applies to you, accept it.	When they said someone was lazy, he felt guilty. If the shoe fits, wear it.
Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery	/ɪˈmɪtɪˈteɪʃən ɪz ðə sɪnˈsɪrɪst fɔrm ʌv ˈflætəri/	Copying someone shows admiration.	She copied my hairstyle. Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery.

Expression	IPA	Meaning	Example
It never rains but it pours	/ɪt ˈnevər reɪnz bʌt ɪt pɔːz/	Misfortunes often come together.	First I lost my keys, then my phone died. It never rains but it pours.
Keep your friends close and your enemies closer	/kɪp jɔː frɛndz kloʊs ænd jɔː ˈenəmɪz ˈkloʊsər/	Watch your enemies closely to anticipate their moves.	He invited his rival to the meeting. Keep your friends close and your enemies closer.
Lightning never strikes twice in the same place	/ˈlaɪtnɪŋ ˈnevər straɪks twaɪs ɪn ðə seɪm pleɪs/	An unusual event is unlikely to happen again in the same way.	He won the lottery once; don't expect it again. Lightning never strikes twice in the same place.
Many hands make light work	/ˈmeni hændz meɪk laɪt wɜːk/	A task is easier with many people helping.	Everyone helped clean up. Many hands make light work.
Mighty oaks from little acorns grow	/ˈmaɪti oʊks frɒm ˈlɪtl ˈeɪkɔːnz grəʊ/	Great things can start from small beginnings.	Her small blog became a major website. Mighty oaks from little acorns grow.
Misery loves company	/ˈmɪzəri lʌvz ˈkʌmpəni/	Unhappy people want others to be unhappy too.	He complained all day and wanted me to join. Misery loves company.
Never look a gift horse in the mouth	/ˈnevər lʊk ə ɡɪft hɔːs ɪn ðə maʊθ/	Don't criticize a gift; accept it graciously.	She gave me an old book, but I thanked her. Never look a gift horse in the mouth.
One man's trash is another man's treasure	/wʌn mænz træʃ ɪz ə ˈnʌðər mænz ˈtreʒər/	What is worthless to one person may be valuable to another.	I found a vintage lamp at a garage sale. One man's trash is another man's treasure.
Out of sight, out of mind	/aʊt ʌv saɪt, aʊt ʌv maɪnd/	When something is not visible, it is easily forgotten.	He stopped calling after she moved away. Out of sight, out of mind.
Patience is a virtue	/ˈpeɪʃəns ɪz ə ˈvɜːrtjuː/	Being patient is a good quality to have.	Q: Why are you so calm waiting in line? A: Patience is a virtue, and getting angry won't make it faster.
Prevention is better than cure	/prɪˈvenʃən ɪz ˈbetər ðæn kjʊr/	It's better to stop a problem from happening than to fix it after it happens.	Q: Why do you always wear sunscreen? A: Prevention is better than cure, so I avoid sunburn.
Seeing is believing	/ˈsiːɪŋ ɪz bɪˈliːvɪŋ/	You need to see something to believe it exists or is true.	Q: Do you think the magician really sawed that woman in half? A: Seeing is believing, and I saw it with my own eyes.
Still waters run deep	/stɪl ˈwɔːtəz rʌn diːp/	Quiet people often have deep thoughts or strong feelings.	Q: Sarah never says much in class. A: Still waters run deep; she might be very thoughtful.
Strike while the iron is hot	/straɪk waɪl ði ˈaɪrən ɪz hɒt/	Take advantage of a good opportunity immediately.	Q: Should I ask for a raise now? A: Yes, strike while the iron is hot—the boss is in a good mood.
The squeaky wheel gets the grease	/ðə ˈskwiːki wiːl ɡets ðə ɡriːs/	The person who complains the loudest gets attention or help.	Q: Why did Tom get his computer fixed first? A: The squeaky wheel gets the grease—he complained nonstop.
There's more than one way to skin a cat	/ðeəz mɔːr ðæn wʌn weɪ tuː skɪn ə kæt/	There are many ways to achieve a goal.	Q: I can't figure out this puzzle. A: There's more than one way to skin a cat; try a different approach.
To err is human; to forgive, divine	/tuː ɜːr ɪz ˈhjuːmən; tuː fərˈɡɪv dɪˈvaɪn/	Everyone makes mistakes, but forgiving is a noble act.	Q: I can't believe I messed up. A: To err is human; to forgive, divine. Let it go.
Truth is stranger than fiction	/truːθ ɪz ˈstreɪndʒər ðæn ˈfɪkʃən/	Real life can be more surprising than made-up stories.	Q: Did you hear about the man who won the lottery twice? A: Truth is stranger than fiction!
Waste not, want not	/weɪst nɒt, wɒnt nɒt/	If you don't waste things, you won't be in need.	Q: Why do you save leftovers? A: Waste not, want not—they'll be useful later.
Well begun is half done	/wel bɪˈɡʌn ɪz hæf dʌn/	Starting a task well makes it easier to finish.	Q: I've planned my project thoroughly. A: Well begun is half done; you're on the right track.
A bad excuse is better than none	/ə bəd ɪkˈskjuːs ɪz ˈbetər ðæn nʌn/	Even a poor excuse is better than offering no explanation.	Q: I said I was sick but I wasn't. A: A bad excuse is better than none; at least you said something.
A bad penny always turns up	/ə bəd ˈpeni ˈɔːlweɪz tʊːrnz ʌp/	Unwanted people or things tend to reappear.	Q: That annoying guy showed up again. A: A bad penny always turns up.
A bad workman blames his tools	/ə bəd ˈwɜːrk mən bletɪnz hɪz tuːlz/	A poor performer blames their equipment instead of their own skill.	Q: My pencil keeps breaking, so my drawing is bad. A: A bad workman blames his tools.
A cat may look at a king	/ə kæt meɪ lʊk æt ə kɪŋ/	Even a lowly person has the right to look at someone important.	Q: Why is that child staring at the celebrity? A: A cat may look at a king.
A dog is a man's best friend	/ə dɔːɡ ɪz ə mænz best frɛnd/	Dogs are loyal and loving companions to humans.	Q: Why do you love your dog so much? A: A dog is a man's best friend—he's always there for me.
A drowning man will clutch at a straw	/ə ˈdraʊnɪŋ mæn wɪl klʌtʃ æt ə strɔː/	A desperate person will try anything to save themselves.	Q: He invested in a risky scheme. A: A drowning man will clutch at a straw.

Expression	IPA	Meaning	Example
A fool and his money are soon parted	/ə fu:l ænd hɪz 'mʌni a:r su:n 'pɑ:rtɪd/	Foolish people spend money carelessly and lose it quickly.	Q: He bought a car he can't afford. A: A fool and his money are soon parted.
A friend in need (is a friend indeed)	/ə frɛnd ɪn ni:d (ɪz ə frɛnd ɪn 'di:di/)	A true friend helps you when you are in trouble.	Q: She helped me move even though she was busy. A: A friend in need is a friend indeed.
A friend to everyone is a friend to no one	/ə frɛnd tu: 'ɛvri,wʌn ɪz ə frɛnd tu: noʊ wʌn/	If you try to be friends with everyone, you may not have deep friendships.	Q: He's nice to everybody. A: A friend to everyone is a friend to no one.
A hungry man thinks of bread	/ə 'hʌŋgri mæn θɪŋks ʌv brɛd/	When you are in need, you focus on basic necessities.	Q: Why is he always talking about food? A: A hungry man thinks of bread.
A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step	/ə 'dʒɜ:ni ʌv ə 'θaʊzənd maɪlz bɪ 'gɪnz wɪð ə 'sɪŋgəl stɛp/	Big tasks start with small actions.	Q: I want to write a book but it's overwhelming. A: A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step—just start writing.
A little learning is a dangerous thing	/ə 'lɪtl 'lɜ:rnɪŋ ɪz ə 'deɪndʒərəs θɪŋ/	Knowing a little about something can make you overconfident and cause mistakes.	Q: I read one article, so I know all about it. A: A little learning is a dangerous thing.
A man can do what he wills but he cannot will what he wills	/ə mæn kæn du: wɒt hi: wɪlz bʌt hi: 'kænɒt wɪl wɒt hi: wɪlz/	You can choose your actions, but you cannot choose your desires.	Q: I want to want to exercise, but I don't. A: A man can do what he wills but he cannot will what he wills.
A man with no pants fears no pickpocket.	/ə mæn wɪð noʊ pænts fɪrz noʊ 'pɪk,pɒkɪt/	If you have nothing to lose, you have nothing to fear.	Q: He's not worried about the stock market crash. A: A man with no pants fears no pickpocket.
A mill cannot grind with the water that is past	/ə mɪl 'kænɒt graɪnd wɪð ðə 'wɔ:tər ðæt ɪz pæst/	You cannot use past opportunities; focus on the present.	Q: I regret not studying harder. A: A mill cannot grind with the water that is past; study now.
A miss is as good as a mile	/ə mɪs ɪz æz gʊd æz ə maɪl/	Failing by a little is the same as failing by a lot.	Q: I almost caught the train. A: A miss is as good as a mile—you still missed it.
A new language is a new life (Persian proverb)	/ə nu: 'læŋgwɪdʒ ɪz ə nu: laɪf/	Learning a new language opens up new experiences and perspectives.	Q: Why are you learning Spanish? A: A new language is a new life.
A rising tide lifts all boats	/ə 'raɪzɪŋ taɪd lɪfts ɔ:l bɔ:ts/	An overall improvement benefits everyone.	Q: Why support public education? A: A rising tide lifts all boats.
A ship in harbour is safe, but that's not what a ship is for	/ə ʃɪp ɪn 'hɑ:rbər ɪz seɪf, bʌt ðæts nɒt wɒt ə ʃɪp ɪz fɔ:r/	Playing it safe prevents you from fulfilling your purpose.	Q: I'm afraid to start my own business. A: A ship in harbour is safe, but that's not what a ship is for.
A stopped clock is right twice a day	/ə stɒpt klɒk ɪz raɪt twaɪs ə deɪ/	Even a wrong or foolish person can be correct occasionally.	Q: He predicted the weather correctly once. A: A stopped clock is right twice a day.
A tiger can't change its stripes	/ə 'taɪgər kænt tʃeɪndʒ ɪts straɪps/	People cannot change their fundamental nature.	Q: Do you think he'll stop lying? A: A tiger can't change its stripes.
A watched man never plays	/ə wɒtʃt mæn 'nevər pleɪz/	When someone is watched closely, they may not perform naturally.	Q: Why is the player missing shots? A: A watched man never plays.
A watched pot/kettle never boils	/ə wɒtʃt pɒt/ 'kɛtl 'nevər bɔɪlz/	Time feels longer when you wait impatiently.	Q: Is the water boiling yet? A: A watched pot never boils; go do something else.
Absolute power corrupts absolutely (John Dalberg-Acton, 1887)	/'æbsəlu:t 'pauər kə'rʌpts 'æbsəlu:tli/	Having unlimited power leads to corruption.	Q: Why is the dictator so cruel? A: Absolute power corrupts absolutely.
Accidents will happen (in the best-regulated families)	/'æksɪdənts wɪl 'hæpən (ɪn ðə best 'rɛgjə,leɪtɪd 'fæməlɪz/)	Mistakes are inevitable, even in well-managed situations.	Q: How did you break the vase? A: Accidents will happen.
All good things come to him who waits	ɔ:l gʊd θɪŋz kʌm tu: hɪm hu: weɪts/	Patience is rewarded with good outcomes.	Q: I've been waiting for a promotion for years. A: All good things come to him who waits.
All hands on deck/to the pump	ɔ:l hændz ɒn dɛk/tu: ðə pʌmp/	Everyone must help in an emergency.	Q: The deadline is tomorrow! A: All hands on deck!
All is grist that comes to the mill	ɔ:l ɪz grɪst ðæt kʌmz tu: ðə mɪl/	Everything can be used to your advantage.	Q: Even criticism can be helpful. A: All is grist that comes to the mill.
All that glitters/glistens is not gold	ɔ:l ðæt 'glɪtərz/ glɪsənz ɪz nɒt goʊld/	Appearances can be deceiving; not everything valuable looks valuable.	Q: That ring looks expensive. A: All that glitters is not gold.
All the world loves a lover	ɔ:l ðə wɜ:rlɪd ʌvz ə 'lʌvər/	People are generally happy for those in love.	Q: Everyone is smiling at the couple. A: All the world loves a lover.

Expression	IPA	Meaning	Example
All things come to those who wait	/ɔ:l θɪŋz kʌm tu: ðəuz hu: weɪt/	Patience leads to achieving what you want.	Q: I hope I get a job soon. A: All things come to those who wait.
All things excellent are as difficult as they are rare (Spinoza)	/ɔ:l θɪŋz 'eksələnt ə:r æz 'dɪfɪkəlt æz ðeɪ ə:r rɛr/	Excellent things are both hard to achieve and uncommon.	Q: This masterpiece took years to create. A: All things excellent are as difficult as they are rare.
All things must pass	/ɔ:l θɪŋz mʌst pæs/	Nothing lasts forever; difficult times will end.	Q: I'm sad this vacation is over. A: All things must pass.
All you need is love	/ɔ:l ju: ni:d ɪz lʌv/	Love is the most important thing in life.	Q: What's the secret to happiness? A: All you need is love.
All is fair in love and war	/ɔ:l ɪz fɛr ɪn lʌv ænd wɔ:r/	In love and conflict, any tactic is acceptable.	Q: He lied to win her heart. A: All is fair in love and war.
All is for the best in the best of all possible worlds	/ɔ:l ɪz fɔ:r ðə bɛst ɪn ðə bɛst ʌv ɔ:l 'pɒsəbəl wɜ:rldz/	Everything happens for the best in an ideal world (often ironic).	Q: I lost my job. A: All is for the best in the best of all possible worlds.
All is well that ends well	/ɔ:l ɪz wɛl ðæt endz wɛl/	If the outcome is good, the problems along the way don't matter.	Q: We had a rough start but finished the project. A: All is well that ends well.
An army marches on its stomach	/æn 'ɑ:mi 'mɑ:rtʃɪz ɒn ɪts 'stʌmək/	A group needs proper food and supplies to function.	Q: Why is the chef so important? A: An army marches on its stomach.
An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth	/æn aɪ fɔ:r æn aɪ, ə tu:θ fɔ:r ə tu:θ/	Revenge should be proportional to the harm done.	Q: He broke my phone, so I broke his. A: An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth.
An eye for an eye makes the whole world blind (Mahatma Gandhi (1869–1948), leader of the Indian independence movement)			
An Englishman's home is his castle/A man's home is his castle	/æn 'ɪŋɡlɪʃmənz hoʊm ɪz hɪz 'kæsl/	A person's home is their private sanctuary.	Q: Why won't he let us in? A: An Englishman's home is his castle.
Another day, another dollar	/ə 'nʌðər deɪ, ə 'nʌðər 'dɔ:lər/	Each day brings more work and more pay; routine.	Q: How was work? A: Another day, another dollar.
An honest man doesn't need to remember much	/æn 'ɒnɪst mæn 'dʌzənt ni:d tu: rɪ'membər mʌtʃ/	Honest people don't have to keep track of lies.	Q: Why is he so relaxed? A: An honest man doesn't need to remember much.
An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure	/æn aʊns ʌv prɪ'venʃən ɪz wɜ:rθ ə paʊnd ʌv kjʊr/	Preventing a problem is easier than fixing it later.	Q: Why do you exercise daily? A: An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.
Any port in a storm	/'eni pɔ:rt ɪn ə stɔ:rm/	In a crisis, any solution is acceptable.	Q: I'll take any job right now. A: Any port in a storm.
Any publicity is good publicity	/'eni pʌb'lɪsɪti ɪz gʊd pʌb'lɪsɪti/	Even negative attention can be beneficial.	Q: The article was critical of us. A: Any publicity is good publicity.
April showers bring forth May flowers	/'eɪprəl 'ʃaʊəz brɪŋ fɔ:rθ meɪ 'flaʊəz/	Difficult times can lead to good outcomes.	Q: I'm struggling now. A: April showers bring forth May flowers.
Anything worth doing is hard	/'eniθɪŋ wɜ:rθ 'du:ɪŋ ɪz hɑ:rd/	Valuable achievements require effort.	Q: This training is tough. A: Anything worth doing is hard.
As a tree bends, so shall it grow	/æz ə tri: bɛndz, sɔʃ ʃæl ɪt grəʊ/	Early influences shape a person's development.	Q: He's stubborn because of his upbringing. A: As a tree bends, so shall it grow.
As queer as a three dollar bill	/əz kwɪr æz ə θri 'dɔlər bɪl/	Very strange or suspicious; obviously fake or counterfeit.	That guy's story is as queer as a three dollar bill—I don't believe a word.
As the twig is bent, so is the tree inclined	/əz ðə twɪɡ ɪz bɛnt, sɔʃ ɪz ðə tri ɪn 'klaɪnd/	Early influences shape a person's character for life.	Children learn from their parents; as the twig is bent, so is the tree inclined.
As you make your bed, so you must lie upon it	/əz ju meɪk jɔr bɛd, sɔʃ ju mʌst laɪ ə'pən ɪt/	You must accept the consequences of your own actions.	He skipped all his classes and failed the exam. As you make your bed, so you must lie upon it.
Ask a silly question and you will get a silly answer	/æsk ə 'sɪli 'kwɛstʃən ænd ju wɪl ɡet ə 'sɪli 'ænsər/	If you ask a foolish question, don't expect a serious reply.	Q: Why is the sky green? A: Ask a silly question and you will get a silly answer.
Ask my companion if I be a thief	/æsk maɪ kəm'pænjən ɪf aɪ bi ə θɪf/	A person's character is known by the company they keep.	He hangs out with known criminals—ask my companion if I be a thief.
Ask no questions and hear no lies	/æsk noʊ 'kwɛstʃənz ænd hɪr noʊ laɪz/	If you don't ask, you won't be told something untrue (or unpleasant).	I didn't ask where he was last night. Ask no questions and hear no lies.

Expression	IPA	Meaning	Example
Attack is the best form of defense	/əˈtæk ɪz ðə bɛst fɔrm əv dɪˈfɛns/	Taking aggressive action can be the most effective way to protect yourself.	In the debate, she went on the offensive. Attack is the best form of defense.
At the end of my rope	/æt ði ɛnd əv maɪ roʊp/	Having no more patience or ability to cope.	I've been dealing with this noise all day—I'm at the end of my rope.
Bad news travels fast	/bæd nuz ˈtrævəlz fæst/	Unpleasant information spreads quickly.	Everyone already knows I got fired. Bad news travels fast.
Bad money drives out good	/bæd ˈmʌni draɪvz aʊt gud/	Inferior currency circulates while good currency is hoarded (Gresham's Law).	When counterfeit coins appear, people hoard real ones—bad money drives out good.
Beauty is only skin deep	/ˈbju:ti ɪz ˈoʊnli skɪn di:p/	Physical appearance is not a measure of a person's true worth.	She may be gorgeous, but beauty is only skin deep.
Before setting out on a mission of vengeance, dig two graves	/bɪˈfɔr ˈsetɪŋ aʊt ən ə ˈmɪʃən əv ˈvɛndʒəns, dɪg tu greɪvz/	Revenge often harms the avenger as much as the target.	Think twice before you retaliate—before setting out on a mission of vengeance, dig two graves.
Beggars cannot be choosers	/ˈbɛgərz ˈkæʊnt bi ˈtʃu:zəz/	When you are in need, you must accept whatever is offered.	I didn't like the job, but I needed money. Beggars cannot be choosers.
Behind every great man, there is a great woman	/bɪˈhaɪnd ˈɛvəri greɪt mæn, ðɛr ɪz ə greɪt ˈwʊmən/	Successful men often have the support of a capable woman.	His wife managed the household and encouraged his career. Behind every great man, there is a great woman.
Better to reign in hell than serve in heaven (John Milton, in Paradise Lost)	/ˈbɛtər tu reɪn ɪn hel ðæn sɜrv ɪn ˈheɪvən/	It is preferable to be a leader in a bad situation than a follower in a good one.	He quit his corporate job to start his own business. Better to reign in hell than serve in heaven.
Be yourself	/bi jɔrˈsɛlf/	Act naturally; don't pretend to be someone else.	Don't try to impress them—just be yourself.
Better the Devil you know (than the Devil you do not)	/ˈbɛtər ðə ˈdɛvəl ju nou ðæn ðə ˈdɛvəl ju du nɒt/	It is safer to deal with a known problem than a new, unknown one.	I stayed with my old car rather than buying a used one. Better the devil you know.
Better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all	/ˈbɛtər tu hæv lʌvd ænd lɒst ðæn ˈnevər tu hæv lʌvd æt ɔl/	Experiencing love, even if it ends, is better than never loving.	After the breakup, she said, 'Better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all.'
Better to light one candle than to curse the darkness	/ˈbɛtər tu laɪt wʌn ˈkændəl ðæn tu kɜrs ðə ˈdɑ:knəs/	It is more productive to take positive action than to complain.	Instead of complaining about the problem, he started a fundraiser. Better to light one candle than to curse the darkness.
Better to remain silent and be thought a fool than to speak and remove all doubt	/ˈbɛtər tu riˈmeɪn ˈsaɪlənt ænd bi θɒt ə ful ðæn tu spɪk ænd riˈmu:v ɔl daʊt/	It's wiser to say nothing than to say something foolish.	He almost made a rude comment, but remembered: better to remain silent and be thought a fool than to speak and remove all doubt.
Better wear out than rust out	/ˈbɛtər wɛr aʊt ðæn rʌst aʊt/	It is better to stay active and wear out than to become inactive and decay.	At 80, she still volunteers daily. Better wear out than rust out.
Beware of Greeks bearing gifts (Trojan War, Virgil in the _Aeneid_)	/bɪˈwɛr əv griks ˈbɛrɪŋ gɪfts/	Be suspicious of gifts or favors from enemies.	When a rival company offered free consulting, he remembered: beware of Greeks bearing gifts.
Big fish eat little fish	/bɪg fɪʃ ɪt ˈlɪtəl fɪʃ/	The powerful prey on the weak.	In the corporate world, big fish eat little fish.
Birds of a feather (flock together)	/bɜ:dz əv ə ˈfɛðər flæk təˈɡeðər/	People with similar interests or characteristics tend to associate.	All the artists sit together at lunch. Birds of a feather flock together.
Born with a silver spoon in one's mouth	/bɔ:rn wɪð ə ˈsɪlvər spun ɪn wʌnz maʊθ/	Born into a wealthy, privileged family.	He never had to work for anything—he was born with a silver spoon in his mouth.
Boys will be boys	/bɔɪz wɪl bi bɔɪz/	Boys (or people) will act in a typically childish or rowdy way.	They were roughhousing again. Oh well, boys will be boys.
Brevity is the soul of wit (William Shakespeare)	/ˈbrɛvɪti ɪz ðə soul əv wɪt/	Cleverness is best expressed concisely.	Keep your speech short—brevity is the soul of wit.
Business before pleasure	/ˈbɪznəs bɪˈfɔr ˈpleʒər/	Work should be done before leisure activities.	I'll finish this report first, then we can go out. Business before pleasure.
Buy once, cry once	/baɪ wʌns, kraɪ wʌns/	It's better to spend more on a high-quality item than to buy cheap and replace often.	I bought the expensive boots that will last years. Buy once, cry once.
Buy cheap, buy twice	/baɪ tʃɪp, baɪ twaɪs/	Buying inexpensive items often leads to having to buy replacements.	That cheap tool broke already. Buy cheap, buy twice.

Expression	IPA	Meaning	Example
Caesar's wife must be above suspicion	/ˈsiːzəz waɪf mʌst bi əˈblʌv səˈspɪʃən/	People in prominent positions must avoid any appearance of wrongdoing.	The CEO can't even accept a small gift—Caesar's wife must be above suspicion.
Calm seas never made a good sailor	/kɑːm siz ˈnevər meɪd ə gud ˈseɪlə/	Adversity builds strength and skill.	He grew stronger from his struggles. Calm seas never made a good sailor.
Careless talk costs lives	/ˈkɛrləs tɔk kɔsts laɪvz/	Loose lips can lead to serious harm, especially in wartime.	During the war, posters warned: careless talk costs lives.
Cheats never prosper	/tʃiːts ˈnevər ˈprɒspər/	Dishonest people do not achieve lasting success.	He got caught eventually. Cheats never prosper.
Cheese, wine, and friends must be old to be good.	/tʃiːz, waɪn, ænd frɛndz mʌst bi ɔːld tu bi gud/	Things (and relationships) improve with age.	I value my childhood friends. Cheese, wine, and friends must be old to be good.
Children should be seen and not heard	/ˈtʃɪldrən ʃʊd bi sɪn ænd nɒt hɜːrd/	Children should be quiet and not interrupt adults.	In the old days, children should be seen and not heard.
Christmas comes but once a year	/ˈkrɪsməs kʌmz bʌt wʌns ə jɪr/	It's okay to indulge occasionally because the occasion is rare.	Have another cookie—Christmas comes but once a year.
Civility costs nothing and buys everything (Mary Wortley Montagu)	/sɪˈvɪlɪti kɔsts ˈnʌθɪŋ ænd baɪz ˈɛvrɪθɪŋ/	Being polite is free and can gain you much.	He thanked everyone and got promoted. Civility costs nothing and buys everything.
Clothes don't make the man	/kloʊz daʊnt meɪk ðə mæn/	A person's character is not judged by their clothing.	He may dress shabbily, but clothes don't make the man.
Clothes make the man	/kloʊz meɪk ðə mæn/	People are judged by their appearance and attire.	He wore a suit to the interview—clothes make the man.
Coffee and love taste best when hot (Ethiopian proverb)	/ˈkɒfi ænd lʌv teɪst bɛst wɛn hɒt/	Freshness and passion are best enjoyed immediately.	Don't let your relationship grow cold. Coffee and love taste best when hot.
Cold hands, warm heart	/kəʊld hændz, wɔːm hɑːt/	Someone with cold hands is often affectionate.	She grabbed my icy hand and smiled. Cold hands, warm heart.
Comparisons are odious	/kəmˈpærɪsənz ɑː ˈoʊdiəs/	Comparing people or things is unpleasant and often unfair.	Don't compare your kids—comparisons are odious.
Count your blessings	/kaʊnt jɔː ˈblɛsɪŋz/	Be grateful for what you have.	Instead of complaining, count your blessings.
Courage is the measure of a Man, Beauty is the measure of a Woman	/ˈkʌrɪdʒ ɪz ðə ˈmeɪʒər əv ə mæn, ˈbjʊti ɪz ðə ˈmeɪʒər əv ə ˈwʊmən/	Men are valued for bravery, women for appearance (traditional view).	He proved his bravery, and she her beauty. Courage is the measure of a man, beauty is the measure of a woman.
Cowards may die many times before their death	/ˈkaʊərdz meɪ daɪ ˈmeni taɪmz bɪ ˈfɔː ðeɪ deθ/	Fearful people suffer the agony of death repeatedly in their minds.	He was so anxious about the surgery. Cowards may die many times before their death.
Crime does not pay	/kraɪm dʌz nɒt peɪ/	Criminal activity is not profitable in the long run.	He ended up in prison. Crime does not pay.
Cream rises to the top	/kriːm ˈraɪzɪz tu ðə tɒp/	The best people or things will eventually be recognized.	Don't worry about the competition—cream rises to the top.
Criss-cross, applesauce	/krɪs krɔs, ˈæpəl, sɔs/	A phrase used to instruct children to sit cross-legged.	The teacher said, 'Sit criss-cross, applesauce.'
Cross the stream where it is shallowest	/krɔs ðə strɪm wɛr ɪt ɪz ˈʃæləʊɪst/	Take the easiest or safest path to achieve something.	When solving problems, cross the stream where it is shallowest.
Cut your coat according to your cloth	/kʌt jɔː kəʊt ə ˈkɔːdɪŋ tu jɔː kləʊθ/	Live within your means; adapt to your resources.	We can't afford a big house—we must cut our coat according to our cloth.
Cut the head off the snake (see Lernaean Hydra myth)	/kʌt ðə hɛd ɔf ðə sneɪk/	Eliminate the leader to destroy an organization.	To stop the cartel, cut the head off the snake.
Dead men tell no tales	/dɛd mɛn tɛl noʊ teɪlz/	Killing someone ensures they cannot reveal secrets.	The villain said, 'Dead men tell no tales.'
Denial is not a river in Egypt	/dɪˈnaɪəl ɪz nɒt ə ˈrɪvər ɪn ˈɪdʒɪpt/	Refusing to accept reality is not a geographical location; it's a psychological state.	He thinks he's fine, but denial is not a river in Egypt.
Devil take the hindmost	/ˈdɛvəl teɪk ðə ˈhaɪndməʊst/	Everyone should look out for themselves; the slow or weak will suffer.	In this competitive market, it's devil take the hindmost.
Discretion is the better part of valour	/dɪˈskreʃən ɪz ðə ˈbɛtər pɑːt əv ˈvælər/	It is better to be cautious than to take unnecessary risks.	He decided not to confront the bully. Discretion is the better part of valour.

Expression	IPA	Meaning	Example
Do as I say, not as I do	/du æz aɪ seɪ, nɒt æz aɪ du/	Follow my advice, even if I don't follow it myself.	The father smoked while telling his son not to. Do as I say, not as I do.
Do as you would be done by	/du æz ju wʊd bi dʌn baɪ/	Treat others as you wish to be treated (the Golden Rule).	Remember to be kind—do as you would be done by.
Do not bite the hand that feeds you	/du nɒt baɪt ðə hænd ðæt fɪdz ju/	Do not harm or offend someone who supports you.	He insulted his boss. You shouldn't bite the hand that feeds you.
Do not burn your bridges behind you	/du nɒt bɜːn jɔːr 'brɪdʒɪz bɪ 'haɪnd ju/	Do not destroy relationships or options for the future.	He quit angrily and insulted everyone. Never burn your bridges behind you.
Do not carry coals to Newcastle	/dɒs nɒt 'kæri kəʊlz tə 'nu:kæsl/	Do not take something to a place where it is already plentiful.	Bringing ice to Antarctica is like carrying coals to Newcastle.
Do not cast your pearls before swine	/dɒs nɒt kæst jɔːr pɜːrlz bɪ 'fɔː swaɪn/	Do not offer something valuable to someone who cannot appreciate it.	Q: Should I explain the joke to him? A: No, don't cast your pearls before swine.
Do not cry over spilled milk	/dɒs nɒt kraɪ 'əʊvər spɪld mɪlk/	Do not be upset about something that has already happened and cannot be changed.	I know you failed the test, but don't cry over spilled milk.
Do not change horses in midstream	/dɒs nɒt tʃeɪndʒ 'hɔːrsɪz ɪn 'mɪdstrɪm/	Do not make major changes in the middle of a process.	We're halfway through the project; let's not change horses in midstream.
Do not count your chickens before they are hatched	/dɒs nɒt kaʊnt jɔːr 'tʃɪkɪnz bɪ 'fɔːr ðeɪ ər hæʃtʃt/	Do not assume success before it actually happens.	Q: I'm going to spend the prize money. A: Don't count your chickens before they are hatched.
Do not cross the bridge till you come to it	/dɒs nɒt krɒs ðə brɪdʒ tɪl ju kʌm tə ɪt/	Do not worry about future problems before they arise.	Q: What if the flight is canceled? A: Don't cross that bridge till you come to it.
Do not cut off your nose to spite your face	/dɒs nɒt kʌt ɔf jɔːr noʊz tə spaɪt jɔːr feɪs/	Do not act out of revenge in a way that harms yourself more.	Quitting your job to get back at your boss is cutting off your nose to spite your face.
Do not dish it if you can't take it	/dɒs nɒt dɪʃ ɪt ɪf ju kæn't teɪk ɪt/	Do not criticize others if you cannot handle criticism yourself.	Q: He keeps teasing me. A: Well, he dishes it but can't take it.
Do not judge a book by its cover	/dɒs nɒt dʒʌdʒ ə bʊk baɪ ɪts 'kʌvər/	Do not judge someone or something based solely on appearance.	He looks scruffy, but don't judge a book by its cover; he's a genius.
Do not keep a dog and bark yourself	/dɒs nɒt kɪp ə dɒg ænd bɑːk jɔːr 'self/	Do not do work that you have hired someone else to do.	You hired a manager, so let him handle it; don't keep a dog and bark yourself.
Do not let the bastards grind you down	/dɒs nɒt lət ðə 'bæstərdz graɪnd ju daʊn/	Do not allow difficult people or circumstances to defeat you.	Despite the criticism, she kept working—don't let the bastards grind you down.
Do not let the grass grow beneath (one's) feet	/dɒs nɒt lət ðə græs grou bɪ 'niθ wʌnz fiːt/	Do not delay; take action promptly.	He got the job offer and accepted immediately; he didn't let the grass grow beneath his feet.
Do not look a gift horse in the mouth	/dɒs nɒt lʊk ə ɡɪft hɔːrs ɪn ðə maʊθ/	Do not criticize a gift or find fault with something given freely.	Q: The car is old. A: It's free, so don't look a gift horse in the mouth.
Do not make a mountain out of a mole hill	/dɒs nɒt meɪk ə 'maʊntɪn aʊt əv ə moʊl hɪl/	Do not exaggerate a minor problem.	It's just a small scratch; don't make a mountain out of a molehill.
Do not meet troubles half-way	/dɒs nɒt miːt 'trʌbəlz hæf weɪ/	Do not worry about problems before they happen.	Q: What if the deal falls through? A: Don't meet troubles half-way.
Do not put all your eggs in one basket	/dɒs nɒt pʊt ɔl jɔːr eɡz ɪn wʌn 'bæskɪt/	Do not risk everything on a single venture.	Invest in different stocks; don't put all your eggs in one basket.
Do not put the cart before the horse	/dɒs nɒt pʊt ðə kɑːt bɪ 'fɔːr ðə hɔːrs/	Do not do things in the wrong order.	Planning the party before setting a date is putting the cart before the horse.
Do not put too many irons in the fire	/dɒs nɒt pʊt tu 'meni 'aɪənz ɪn ðə faɪər/	Do not take on too many tasks at once.	He's juggling three projects; he has too many irons in the fire.
Do not put new wine into old bottles	/dɒs nɒt pʊt nu waɪn 'ɪntu ɔuld 'bɒtlz/	Do not try to force new ideas into old systems.	Using outdated software for a new app is putting new wine into old bottles.
Do not rock the boat	/dɒs nɒt rɒk ðə boʊt/	Do not disturb a stable situation.	Everyone is happy; don't rock the boat by bringing up complaints.
Do not shut/lock the stable door after the horse has bolted	/dɒs nɒt ʃʌt/lɒk ðə 'steɪbəl dɔːr 'æftər ðə hɔːrs hæz 'boʊltɪd/	Do not take preventive action after the damage is done.	Installing a lock after the theft is shutting the stable door after the horse has bolted.

Expression	IPA	Meaning	Example
Do not spend it all in one place	/dɒʊ nɒt spɛndɪt ɔl ɪn wʌn plɛs/	A humorous way to say 'don't waste all your money at once.'	Q: I won \$100! A: Don't spend it all in one place.
Do not spoil the ship for a ha'porth of tar	/dɒʊ nɒt spɔɪl ðə ʃɪp fɔr ə 'heɪpərθ əv tɑr/	Do not ruin something important by skimping on a small detail.	Not fixing the leak because it's small is spoiling the ship for a ha'porth of tar.
Do not throw pearls to swine	/dɒʊ nɒt θrəʊ pɜːrlz tə swaɪn/	Same as 'cast pearls before swine'.	Don't explain art to him; don't throw pearls to swine.
Do not teach your Grandmother to suck eggs	/dɒʊ nɒt ti:tʃ jɔr 'grænd,mʌðər tə slʌk ɛgz/	Do not give advice to someone who is more experienced.	Q: Should I tell the chef how to cook? A: Don't teach your grandmother to suck eggs.
Do not throw the baby out with the bathwater	/dɒʊ nɒt θrəʊ ðə 'beɪbɪ aʊt wɪð ðə 'bæθ,wɔtər/	Do not discard something valuable while getting rid of something undesirable.	The system has flaws, but don't throw the baby out with the bathwater.
Do not try to walk before you can crawl	/dɒʊ nɒt traɪ tə wɔk bɪ'fɔr ju kæn krɔl/	Do not attempt advanced tasks before mastering the basics.	Learning calculus before arithmetic is trying to walk before you can crawl.
Do not upset the apple-cart	/dɒʊ nɒt ʌp'set ði 'æpəl kɑrt/	Do not disturb a stable plan or situation.	Everything is arranged; don't upset the apple-cart now.
Do not wash your dirty linen in public	/dɒʊ nɒt wɔʃ jɔr 'dɜːrtɪ ɪn 'pʌblɪk/	Do not discuss private matters in public.	They argued loudly at the restaurant; they shouldn't wash their dirty linen in public.
Do not sympathize with those who can not empathize	/dɒʊ nɒt 'sɪmpə,θaɪz wɪð ðəʊz hu kæn nɒt 'ɛmpə,θaɪz/	Do not feel sorry for people who are unable to understand others' feelings.	Q: He's upset that no one cares. A: Don't sympathize with those who cannot empathize.
Do unto others as you would have them do unto you (a.k.a. the Golden Rule)	/du 'ʌntu 'ʌðəz æz ju wʊd hæv ðɛm du 'ʌntu ju/	Treat others the way you want to be treated.	Q: Should I help him? A: Yes, do unto others as you would have them do unto you.
Doubt is the beginning, not the end, of wisdom	/daʊt ɪz ðə bɪ'ɡɪnɪŋ nɒt ði ɛnd əv 'wɪzdəm/	Questioning things leads to knowledge.	Q: I'm confused about this theory. A: Good, doubt is the beginning of wisdom.
Don't take any wooden nickels	/daʊnt teɪk 'ɛni 'wʊdən 'nɪkəlz/	Be careful not to be cheated.	Q: I'm going to the market. A: Don't take any wooden nickels.
Early to bed and early to rise makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise (Benjamin Franklin (1706–1790), polymath and Founding Father of the United States)	/'ɜːli tə bɛd ænd 'ɜːli tə raɪz meɪks ə mæn 'helθi 'welθi ænd waɪz/	Going to bed early and waking up early leads to success.	Q: Why do you wake up at 5 AM? A: Early to bed and early to rise makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise.
Easier said than done	/'iːəər sed ðæn dʌn/	Something is easier to talk about than to actually do.	Q: Just relax. A: Easier said than done.
East is east, and west is west (and never the twain shall meet)	/ɪst ɪz ɪst ænd wɛst ɪz wɛst ænd 'nevər ðə tweɪn ʃæl mi:t/	Two things are fundamentally different and cannot be reconciled.	Their cultures are so different; east is east, and west is west.
East, west, home is best	/ɪst wɛst hoʊm ɪz bɛst/	No matter where you go, home is the best place.	After traveling for months, I agree: east, west, home is best.
Easy come, easy go	/'iːzi kʌm 'iːzi goʊ/	Something obtained easily is also easily lost.	He won money and spent it all; easy come, easy go.
Easy, times easy, is still easy	/'iːzi taɪmz 'iːzi ɪz sti:l 'iːzi/	Something simple remains simple even when repeated.	Q: Is the task still simple? A: Easy times easy is still easy.
Early marriage, earlier pregnant	/'ɜːli 'mɛrɪdʒ 'ɜːliər 'prɛɡnənt/	Getting married early often leads to early pregnancy.	Q: Why did she have a baby so soon? A: Early marriage, earlier pregnant.
Eat breakfast like a king, lunch like a prince and dinner like a pauper	/ɪt 'brɛkfəst laɪk ə kɪŋ lʌntʃ laɪk ə prɪns ænd 'dɪnər laɪk ə 'pɔpər/	Eat a large breakfast, a moderate lunch, and a small dinner for health.	Q: What's your diet? A: Eat breakfast like a king, lunch like a prince, dinner like a pauper.
Eat, drink and be merry, (for tomorrow we die)	/ɪt dɪŋk ænd bi 'mɛəri fɔr tə'mɔrəʊ wi daɪ/	Enjoy life now because death is inevitable.	Q: Why are you partying so much? A: Eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die.
Enough is as good as a feast	/'ɪ nʌf ɪz æz gud æz ə fi:t/	Having enough is as satisfying as having plenty.	Q: Do you want more food? A: No, enough is as good as a feast.
Even a worm will turn	/'iːvən ə wɜːrm wɪl tɜːn/	Even the meekest person will retaliate if pushed too far.	He finally fought back; even a worm will turn.

Expression	IPA	Meaning	Example
Even from a foe a man may learn wisdom	/ 'ivən frʌm ə fəʊ ə mæn meɪ lɜːn 'wɪzdəm/	You can learn something valuable even from an enemy.	Q: Why listen to his criticism? A: Even from a foe a man may learn wisdom.
Every dog has his day	/ 'evri dɒg hæz hɪz deɪ/	Everyone will have a moment of success or good fortune.	Q: He finally won. A: Every dog has his day.
Every Jack has his Jill	/ 'evri dʒæk hæz hɪz dʒɪl/	Everyone will find a suitable partner.	Q: Will he ever find love? A: Every Jack has his Jill.
Every little bit helps	/ 'evri 'lɪtl bɪt helps/	Even small contributions are useful.	Q: I only donated \$5. A: Every little bit helps.
Every man for himself (and the Devil take the hindmost)	/ 'evri mæn fɔː hɪm 'self ænd ðə 'dɛvəl teɪk ðə 'haɪndməʊst/	In a crisis, everyone looks out for themselves.	When the ship started sinking, it was every man for himself.
Every man has his price	/ 'evri mæn hæz hɪz praɪs/	Everyone can be bribed or persuaded with the right offer.	Q: He refused the money. A: Every man has his price; maybe offer more.
Every picture tells a story	/ 'evri 'pɪktʃər teɪz ə 'stɔːri/	A picture can convey a lot of information.	Q: What does this photo mean? A: Every picture tells a story.
Every stick has two ends	/ 'evri stɪk hæz tu ɛndz/	Every situation has two sides or consequences.	Q: Is this deal good? A: Every stick has two ends; consider the risks.
Everybody wants to go to heaven but nobody wants to die	/ 'evri ,bɑːdi wʌnts tə ɡəʊ tə 'heɪvən bət 'nəʊ ,bɑːdi wʌnts tə daɪ/	People desire rewards but are unwilling to make sacrifices.	Q: He wants success but won't work hard. A: Everybody wants to go to heaven but nobody wants to die.
Everyone has their price	/ 'evri ,wʌn hæz ðeə praɪs/	Same as 'every man has his price'.	Q: Can we convince him? A: Everyone has their price.
Everything comes to those who wait	/ 'evri θɪŋ kʌmz tə ðəʊz hu weɪt/	Patience is rewarded.	Q: I've been waiting for a promotion. A: Everything comes to those who wait.
Every tide has its ebb	/ 'evri taɪd hæz ɪts eb/	Every good situation will eventually decline.	Q: Business is booming. A: Enjoy it; every tide has its ebb.
Failing to plan is planning to fail	/ 'feɪlɪŋ tə plæn ɪz 'plænɪŋ tə feɪl/	Without planning, you are likely to fail.	Q: Why do we need a schedule? A: Failing to plan is planning to fail.
Faint heart never won fair lady	/ feɪnt hɑːt 'nevər wʌn feər leɪdi/	Timidity will not achieve a desired goal.	Q: Should I ask her out? A: Faint heart never won fair lady.
Fair exchange is no robbery	/ feər ɪks 'tʃeɪndʒ ɪz nəʊ 'rɒbəri/	A fair trade is not dishonest.	Q: Is it okay to trade? A: Fair exchange is no robbery.
Faith will move mountains	/ feɪθ wɪl muv 'maʊntənz/	Strong belief can achieve the impossible.	Q: Can we finish this? A: Faith will move mountains.
Fall seven times, stand up eight	fɔːl 'sevən taɪmz, stænd əp eɪt	No matter how many times you fail, you must keep trying and never give up.	After losing his job and his house, he reminded himself: fall seven times, stand up eight.
False friends are worse than open enemies	fɔːls frɛndz ɑː wɜːs ðæn 'əʊpən 'ɛnə ,mɪz	Betrayal by someone you trust is more harmful than having an obvious enemy.	She learned the hard way that false friends are worse than open enemies when her best friend stole her idea.
Fake it till you make it	feɪk ɪt tɪl ju meɪk ɪt	Act confident and capable even if you are not, and eventually you will become so.	Q: I'm nervous about my presentation. A: Just fake it till you make it; soon you'll feel confident.
Feed a cold, starve a fever	fiːd ə kəʊld, stɑːv ə 'fɪvər	Eat when you have a cold, but avoid food when you have a fever.	My grandmother always said, 'Feed a cold, starve a fever,' so she made me soup when I had a cold.
Fight fire with fire	faɪt 'faɪər wɪð 'faɪər	Use the same methods as your opponent to counter them.	When the competitor lowered prices, the company decided to fight fire with fire and cut their own prices.
Fine feathers make fine birds	faɪn 'feðəz meɪk faɪn bɜːdz	Attractive clothing or appearance makes a person look good.	He looked so handsome in his new suit; fine feathers make fine birds.
Finders keepers (losers weepers)	'faɪndəz 'kiːpəz ('lʊzəz 'wiːpəz)	If you find something, you have the right to keep it; the person who lost it must accept the loss.	The child picked up the coin and said, 'Finders keepers!' when his friend asked for it.
Fine words butter no parsnips	faɪn wɜːrdz 'bʌtər nəʊ 'pɑːsnɪps	Kind words are not enough; actions are needed.	He promised to help, but fine words butter no parsnips; I need actual assistance.
First come, first served	fɜːst kʌm, fɜːst sɜːvɪd	Those who arrive first will be served or get the best choice.	The tickets are limited, so it's first come, first served.

Expression	IPA	Meaning	Example
First things first	fɜːst θɪŋz fɜːst	Important matters should be dealt with before others.	Let's finish this report first; first things first.
Fish always rots from the head downwards (The fish rots from the head down)	fɪʃ ˈɔːl weɪz rɒts frɒm ðə hɛd ˈdaʊnwɜːdz (ðə fɪʃ rɒts frɒm ðə hɛd daʊn)	Corruption or problems start at the top of an organization.	The company's scandal began with the CEO; fish always rots from the head downwards.
Fish and guests smell after three days	fɪʃ ænd ɡɛsts smɛl ˈæftər θri deɪz	Visitors overstay their welcome if they stay too long.	I love having friends over, but fish and guests smell after three days.
Flattery will get you nowhere	ˈflætəri wɪl ɡet ju ˈnoʊ, wɛr	Insincere praise will not help you achieve your goal.	He tried to compliment the boss, but flattery will get you nowhere.
Fools rush in (where angels fear to tread)	fuːlz rʌʃ ɪn (wɛr ˈeɪndʒəlz fɪr tu tred)	Inexperienced or foolish people act boldly in situations where wiser people are cautious.	He invested all his savings in that risky startup; fools rush in where angels fear to tread.
For want of a nail the shoe was lost; for want of a shoe the horse was lost; and for want of a horse the man was lost	fɔːr want ʌv ə neɪl ðə ʃu wɒz lɒst; fɔːr want ʌv ə ʃu ðə hɔːs wɒz lɒst; ænd fɔːr want ʌv ə hɔːs ðə mæn wɒz lɒst	Small neglects can lead to major disasters.	He forgot to tighten one bolt, and the whole machine broke; for want of a nail the shoe was lost.
Forewarned is forearmed	fɔːrˈwɔːnd ɪz fɔːrˈɑːmd	Advance warning gives you time to prepare.	I told him about the difficult exam; forewarned is forearmed.
Fortune favours the bold/brave	ˈfɔːtʃən ˈfeɪvəz ðə baʊld/brɛv	Taking risks often leads to success.	She quit her job to start a business, and fortune favours the bold—it succeeded.
Free is for me	fri ɪz fɔːr mi	People like getting things for free.	When the store offered free samples, she grabbed one, saying 'Free is for me.'
From the sublime to the ridiculous there is but a step	frɒm ðə səˈblaɪm tu ðə rɪˈdɪkjələs ðɛr ɪz bʌt ə stɛp	Something very noble can quickly become absurd.	The ceremony was grand, but then the speaker tripped; from the sublime to the ridiculous there is but a step.
From its fruit the tree is known	frɒm ɪts frʊt ðə tri ɪz noʊn	A person's character is judged by their actions.	He always helps others; from its fruit the tree is known.
Genius is an infinite capacity for taking pains	ˈdʒɪnjəs ɪz æn ˈɪnfɪnət kəˈpæsəti fɔːr ˈteɪkɪŋ peɪnz	True genius comes from hard work and attention to detail.	She practiced for hours every day; genius is an infinite capacity for taking pains.
Give a dog a bad name and hang him	ɡɪv ə dɒɡ ə bæd neɪm ænd hæŋ hɪm	Once someone is unfairly labeled, they are condemned.	After one mistake, everyone distrusted him; give a dog a bad name and hang him.
Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime	ɡɪv ə mæn ə fɪʃ ænd ju fid hɪm fɔːr ə deɪ. tiːʃ ə mæn tu fɪʃ ænd ju fid hɪm fɔːr ə ˈlaɪf, taɪm	It is better to teach someone a skill than to provide temporary help.	Instead of giving him money, I taught him budgeting; give a man a fish and you feed him for a day...
Give a man rope enough and he will hang himself	ɡɪv ə mæn ruːp ɪˈnʌf ænd hi wɪl hæŋ hɪm ˈself	If you give someone enough freedom, they will eventually ruin themselves.	The manager let the employee make his own decisions, and soon he made a huge mistake; give a man rope enough...
Give him an inch and he will take a mile	ɡɪv hɪm ən ɪntʃ ænd hi wɪl teɪk ə maɪl	If you give someone a little, they will demand much more.	I let him borrow one book, and now he wants my whole library; give him an inch and he will take a mile.
Give the devil his/her due	ɡɪv ðə ˈdeɪvəl hɪz/hɜːr du	Acknowledge the good qualities in someone you dislike.	I don't like him, but I have to give the devil his due—he did excellent work.
God helps those who help themselves	ɡɒd helps ðəʊz hu help ðəmˈselvz	You should make an effort to solve your own problems rather than relying on divine help.	He studied hard for the exam; God helps those who help themselves.
Good fences make good neighbours	ɡʊd ˈfɛnsəz meɪk ɡʊd ˈneɪbəz	Clear boundaries help maintain good relationships.	We agreed on property lines; good fences make good neighbours.
Good talk saves the food	ɡʊd tɔːk seɪvz ðə fuːd	Pleasant conversation makes a meal more enjoyable.	Dinner was simple, but the conversation was great; good talk saves the food.
Half a loaf is better than no bread	hæf ə ləʊf ɪz ˈbetər ðæn noʊ brɛd	Something is better than nothing.	The salary was lower than expected, but half a loaf is better than no bread.
Handsome is as handsome does	ˈhænsəm ɪz æz ˈhænsəm dɒz	A person's actions define their attractiveness, not their looks.	He may be plain, but he's kind; handsome is as handsome does.

Expression	IPA	Meaning	Example
Hard cases make bad law	hard 'keɪsɪz meɪk bæd lɔ	Difficult or extreme cases can lead to poor legal precedents.	The judge ruled narrowly to avoid setting a bad precedent; hard cases make bad law.
Hard work never did anyone any harm	hard wɜːk 'nevər dɪd ˈeni ˌwʌn ˈeni hɑːm	Working hard is beneficial and not harmful.	Don't be afraid to put in extra effort; hard work never did anyone any harm.
He that goes a-borrowing, goes a-sorrowing	hi ðæt ɡoʊz ə-ˈbɔːrəʊɪŋ, ɡoʊz ə-ˈsɔːrəʊɪŋ	Borrowing money leads to worry and sadness.	He took out many loans and now regrets it; he that goes a-borrowing, goes a-sorrowing.
He who can, does; he who cannot, teaches	hi hu kæn, dʌz; hi hu ˈkænət, ˈtiːtʃɪz	Those who are skilled do things; those who are not skilled teach others.	He couldn't succeed in business, so he became a professor; he who can, does; he who cannot, teaches.
He who hesitates is lost	hi hu ˈhezɪ, teɪts ɪz lɒst	If you delay, you may miss an opportunity.	She didn't apply for the job in time; he who hesitates is lost.
He who laughs last laughs longest	hi hu læfs læst læfs ˈlɒŋɪst	The person who ultimately succeeds has the final satisfaction.	They mocked his idea, but it became a huge success; he who laughs last laughs longest.
He who lives by the sword, dies by the sword	hi hu lɪvz baɪ ðə sɔːd, daɪz baɪ ðə sɔːd	If you use violence, you will eventually suffer violence.	The gang leader was killed in a shootout; he who lives by the sword, dies by the sword.
He who loves the world as his body may be entrusted with the empire – Laozi, Chinese philosopher (604 BC – c. 531 BC)	hi hu lʌvz ðə wɜːld æz hɪz ˈbɔːdi meɪ bi ɪn ˈtrʌstɪd wɪð ði ˈempaɪər	A person who cares for the world as they care for themselves is fit to lead.	The leader showed compassion for all; he who loves the world as his body may be entrusted with the empire.
He who makes a beast out of himself gets rid of the pain of being a man	hi hu meɪks ə bɪst aʊt ɒv hɪm ˈself ɡets rɪd ɒv ðə peɪn ɒv ˈbiːŋ ə mæn	By acting without reason or emotion, one avoids human suffering.	After the tragedy, he became cold and ruthless; he who makes a beast out of himself gets rid of the pain of being a man.
He who pays the piper calls the tune	hi hu peɪz ðə ˈpaɪpər kɔːlz ðə tuːn	The person who provides the money has control.	The investor demanded changes; he who pays the piper calls the tune.
He who knows does not speak. He who speaks does not know – Laozi, Chinese philosopher (604 BC – c. 531 BC)	hi hu nəʊz dʌz nɒt spiːk. hi hu spiːks dʌz nɒt nəʊ	Wise people are quiet; those who talk a lot are often ignorant.	The expert listened more than he talked; he who knows does not speak.
He who sups with the Devil should have a long spoon	hi hu sʌps wɪð ðə ˈdeɪvl ʃʊd hæv ə lɒŋ spuːn	When dealing with dangerous people, keep a safe distance.	He was cautious in the negotiation; he who sups with the Devil should have a long spoon.
Health is wealth	heəlθ ɪz weəlt̪h	Good health is more valuable than money.	After his illness, he realized that health is wealth.
Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned; Heav'n has no Rage, like Love to Hatred turn'd, Nor Hell a Fury, like a Woman scorn'd – William Congreve, _The Mourning Bride_, Act III scene viii	hel hæθ nɒv ˈfjʊəri laɪk ə ˈwʊmən skɔːnd; ˈheɪvən hæz nɒv reɪdʒ, laɪk lʌv tu ˈheɪtrɪd tɜːnd, nɔː hel ə ˈfjʊəri, laɪk ə ˈwʊmən skɔːnd	A woman who has been rejected can be extremely angry and vengeful.	When he left her, she destroyed his reputation; hell hath no fury like a woman scorned.
Hindsight is always twenty-twenty	ˈhaɪnd, saɪt ɪz ˈɔː, weɪz ˈtwenti-ˈtwenti	It is easy to understand something clearly after it has happened.	Looking back, I should have invested; hindsight is always twenty-twenty.
History repeats itself	ˈhɪstəri rɪ ˈpɪts ɪt ˈself	Events tend to happen again in similar ways.	The country is making the same mistakes; history repeats itself.
Home is where the heart is	həʊm ɪz wɛər ðə hɑːt ɪz	Your home is the place you feel most love and belonging.	Even though he travels, he always returns; home is where the heart is.
Hope for the best, and prepare for the worst	həʊp fɔː ðə best, ænd prɪ ˈpeər fɔː ðə wɜːst	Be optimistic but also ready for difficulties.	I hope the weather is good, but I'll bring an umbrella; hope for the best, and prepare for the worst.
Hope springs eternal	həʊp sprɪŋz ɪ ˈtɜːnəl	People always remain hopeful, even in difficult times.	Despite the losses, fans still believe; hope springs eternal.
Horses for courses	ˈhɔːsɪz fɔː ˈkɔːrsɪz	Different people are suited to different things.	He's good at sales, but not management; horses for courses.
How long is a piece of string?	haʊ lɒŋ ɪz ə piːs ɒv strɪŋ	A question that has no definite answer.	Q: How long will it take? A: How long is a piece of string?

Expression	IPA	Meaning	Example
Hunger never knows the taste, sleep never knows the comfort	'hʌŋgə 'nævə nouz ðə teɪst, slɪp 'nævə nouz ðə 'kʌmfərt	When you are truly hungry or tired, you don't care about quality.	After the long hike, he ate anything; hunger never knows the taste.
Idle hands are the devil's workshop	'aɪdl hændz ɑr ðə 'dɛvəlz 'wɜrk ʃɑp	When people have nothing to do, they may get into trouble.	He started causing mischief when he was bored; idle hands are the devil's workshop.
If anything can go wrong, it will (Also referred to as Murphy's law)	ɪf 'eni θɪŋ kæn goʊ rɔŋ, ɪt wɪl	Things will go wrong if there is any possibility.	The computer crashed right before the deadline; if anything can go wrong, it will.
If a job is worth doing, it is worth doing well	ɪf ə dʒɒb ɪz wɜrθ 'duɪŋ, ɪt ɪz wɜrθ 'duɪŋ wɛl	Any task worth undertaking should be done with care.	He spent extra time perfecting the report; if a job is worth doing, it is worth doing well.
If all you have is a hammer, every problem looks like a nail.	ɪf ɔl ju hæv ɪz ə 'hæmə, 'ɛvri 'prɒbləm lʊks laɪk ə neɪl	If you only have one skill, you tend to apply it to every situation.	He's a programmer, so he wants to code everything; if all you have is a hammer, every problem looks like a nail.
If at first you do not succeed, try, try again	ɪf æt fɜrst ju du nɒt sək'sɪd, traɪ, traɪ ə'ɡen	Persevere and keep trying until you succeed.	She failed the test twice but passed the third time; if at first you do not succeed, try, try again.
If God had meant us to fly, he would have given us wings	ɪf ɡɒd hæd mənt ʌs tu flaɪ, hi wʊd hæv 'ɡɪvən ʌs wɪŋz	Some things are not meant for humans to do.	He refused to fly, saying if God had meant us to fly, he would have given us wings.
If ifs and ands were pots and pans, there would be no work for tinkers	ɪf ɪfs ænd ændz wɜr pɒts ænd pænz, ðɛr wʊd bi nou wɜrk fɔr 'tɪŋkɜz	Wishing or speculating about what might have been is useless.	He kept saying 'if only I had studied'; if ifs and ands were pots and pans, there would be no work for tinkers.
If ifs and buts were candies and nuts, we'd all have a merry Christmas	ɪf ɪfs ænd bʌts wɜr 'kændɪz ænd nʌts, wɪd ɔl hæv ə 'mɛri 'krɪsməs	Wishing or making excuses does not change reality.	Q: I could have passed if I had studied more. A: If ifs and buts were candies and nuts, we'd all have a merry Christmas.
If it were not for hope the heart would break	ɪf ɪt wɜr nɒt fɔr hoʊp ðə hɑrt wʊd brɛk	Hope is essential to endure hardship.	Even in the darkest times, remember: if it were not for hope the heart would break.
If it were a snake, it would have bit you	ɪf ɪt wɜr ə sneɪk, ɪt wʊd hæv bɪt ju	Something obvious that you failed to notice.	Your keys are right on the table. If it were a snake, it would have bit you.
If the mountain will not come to Mohammed, then Mohammed must go to the mountain	ɪf ðə 'maʊntən wɪl nɒt kʌm tə moʊ'hæmɪd, ðɛn moʊ'hæmɪd mʌst goʊ tə ðə 'maʊntən	If something won't happen on its own, you must take action.	The store won't deliver, so I'll pick it up myself. If the mountain will not come to Mohammed, then Mohammed must go to the mountain.
If wealth is lost, nothing is lost. If health is lost, something is lost. If character is lost, everything is lost	ɪf wɛlθ ɪz lɒst, 'nʌθɪŋ ɪz lɒst. ɪf helθ ɪz lɒst, 'sʌmθɪŋ ɪz lɒst. ɪf 'kærɪktə ɪz lɒst, 'ɛvriθɪŋ ɪz lɒst	Character is more important than wealth or health.	He lost his job but kept his integrity. Remember: if wealth is lost, nothing is lost; if health is lost, something is lost; if character is lost, everything is lost.
If wishes were horses, beggars would ride	ɪf 'wɪʃɪz wɜr 'hɔrsɪz, 'bɛgɜz wʊd raɪd	Wishing alone does not make things happen.	I wish I were rich. Well, if wishes were horses, beggars would ride.
If you're growing in age, then you're nearing to the graveyard	ɪf ju 'grəʊɪŋ ɪn eɪdʒ, ðɛn ju 'nɪərɪŋ tə ðə 'ɡreɪvjɑrd	Aging reminds us of mortality.	He joked, 'If you're growing in age, then you're nearing to the graveyard.'
If you can't be good, be careful	ɪf ju kænt bi ɡʊd, bi 'kɛrfəl	If you misbehave, at least avoid getting caught or hurt.	Q: Should I sneak out? A: If you can't be good, be careful.
If you can't live longer, live deeper	ɪf ju kænt lɪv 'lɔŋgə, lɪv 'di:pə	Make life meaningful rather than just long.	She traveled and learned new skills. If you can't live longer, live deeper.
If you can't run with the horses, get off the track	ɪf ju kænt rʌn wɪð ðə 'hɔrsɪz, ɡɛt ɒf ðə træk	If you can't keep up, step aside.	He couldn't handle the fast pace, so he quit. If you can't run with the horses, get off the track.
If you can't stand the heat, get out of the kitchen	ɪf ju kænt stænd ðə hit, ɡɛt aʊt əv ðə 'kɪtʃɪn	If you can't handle pressure, leave the situation.	The manager told him, 'If you can't stand the heat, get out of the kitchen.'
If you give a mouse a cookie, he'll always ask for a glass of milk	ɪf ju ɡɪv ə maʊs ə 'kʊki, hi:l 'ɔlweɪz æsk fɔr ə ɡlæs əv mɪlk	One favor leads to another request.	I helped him once, and now he keeps asking for more. If you give a mouse a cookie, he'll always ask for a glass of milk.
If you think that you know everything, then you're a Jack ass	ɪf ju θɪŋk ðæt ju nou 'ɛvriθɪŋ, ðɛn ju ə dʒæk æs	Arrogance makes you look foolish.	He claimed to know it all, but he failed. If you think that you know everything, then you're a jackass.

Expression	IPA	Meaning	Example
If you lie down with dogs, you will get up with fleas (James Sandford, _The Garden of Pleasure_)	ɪf ju laɪ daʊn wɪð dɔgz, ju wɪl ɡet ʌp wɪð fliz	Bad company brings trouble.	Hanging out with troublemakers got him arrested. If you lie down with dogs, you will get up with fleas.
If you pay peanuts, you get monkeys	ɪf ju peɪ ˈpiːnlʌts, ju ɡet ˈmʌŋkɪz	Low pay attracts unskilled workers.	The company hired cheap labor and got poor results. If you pay peanuts, you get monkeys.
If you play with fire, you will get burned	ɪf ju pleɪ wɪð faɪə, ju wɪl ɡet bɜːnd	Taking risks leads to consequences.	He invested in a risky scheme and lost everything. If you play with fire, you will get burned.
If you steal from one author, it is plagiarism; if you steal from many, it is research (Wilson Mizner (1876–1933), American writer and entrepreneur)	ɪf ju stɪl frəm wʌn ˈɔθə, ɪt ɪz ˈpleɪdʒə rɪzəːm; ɪf ju stɪl frəm ˈmeni, ɪt ɪz rɪˈsɜːrtʃ	Taking from many sources is seen as research, not theft.	He copied from several books and called it research. If you steal from one author, it is plagiarism; if you steal from many, it is research.
If you want a thing done well, do it yourself	ɪf ju wʌnt ə θɪŋ dʌn wəl, du ɪt jɔːr ˈself	To ensure quality, do it personally.	I rewrote the report myself. If you want a thing done well, do it yourself.
If you have never seen the bottom of the tree, you cannot know how tall it stands	ɪf ju hæv ˈnevər sɪn ðə ˈbɒtəm əv ðə tri, ju kənət nou hau təl ɪt stændz	Understanding the foundation is key to appreciating the whole.	You need to study the basics first. If you have never seen the bottom of the tree, you cannot know how tall it stands.
If you must dance with the Devil, you might as well know his favorite song (H. Anthony Ribadeneira)	ɪf ju mʌst dæns wɪð ðə ˈdeɪvl, ju maɪt əz wəl nou hɪz ˈfeɪvərɪt sɔŋ	If you engage with evil, be prepared.	He negotiated with a corrupt official. If you must dance with the Devil, you might as well know his favorite song.
If you've got it, flaunt it	ɪf juv ɡʌt ɪt, flɒnt ɪt	Show off your talents or assets.	She wore a designer dress to the party. If you've got it, flaunt it.
In for a penny, in for a pound	ɪn fɔː ə ˈpeni, ɪn fɔː ə paʊnd	Once committed, see it through fully.	I already invested time, so I'll finish the project. In for a penny, in for a pound.
(March comes) in like a lion, (and goes) out like a lamb	mɑːtʃ kʌmz ɪn laɪk ə ˈlaɪən, ænd ɡoʊz aʊt laɪk ə læm	March weather starts harsh and ends mild.	It snowed early March but was warm by the end. March comes in like a lion and goes out like a lamb.
In the kingdom of the blind, the one eyed man is king	ɪn ðə ˈkɪŋdəm əv ðə blaɪnd, ðə wʌn aɪd mæn ɪz kɪŋ	Among those with less ability, even a small advantage makes you superior.	He was the only one who could read, so he became leader. In the kingdom of the blind, the one-eyed man is king.
In the midst of life, we are in death	ɪn ðə mɪdst əv laɪf, wi ər ɪn deθ	Death can happen at any time, even during life.	The sudden accident reminded us: in the midst of life, we are in death.
Into every life a little rain must fall	ˈɪntu ˈevri laɪf ə ˈlɪtl reɪn mʌst fɔl	Everyone experiences hardship.	She lost her job, but she'll recover. Into every life a little rain must fall.
It's the little things	ɪts ðə ˈlɪtl θɪŋz	Small details matter most.	He remembered her favorite flower. It's the little things.
It ain't over till/until it's over	ɪt eɪnt ˈoʊvər tɪl ɪts ˈoʊvər	Don't assume the outcome until it's final.	The team was losing but scored in the last minute. It ain't over till it's over.
It ain't over till the fat lady sings	ɪt eɪnt ˈoʊvər tɪl ðə fæt ˈleɪdi sɪŋz	The outcome is uncertain until the very end.	Don't give up yet; it ain't over till the fat lady sings.
It ain't what you don't know that gets you into trouble. It's what you know for sure that just ain't so	ɪt eɪnt wʌt ju daʊnt nou ðæt ɡets ju ˈɪntu ˈtrʌbl. ɪts wʌt ju nou fɔːr ʃʊr ðæt dʒʌst eɪnt sou	False confidence in wrong knowledge causes problems.	He was sure the bridge was safe, but it collapsed. It ain't what you don't know that gets you into trouble; it's what you know for sure that just ain't so.
It goes without saying	ɪt ɡoʊz wɪˈðaʊt ˈseɪɪŋ	Something is obvious and doesn't need stating.	It goes without saying that you should be on time.
It is a small world	ɪt ɪz ə smɔl wɜːld	People are connected in surprising ways.	I met my neighbor in Paris. It is a small world.
It is all grist to the mill	ɪt ɪz ɔl ɡrɪst tə ðə mɪl	Everything can be used to your advantage.	Even criticism is helpful. It is all grist to the mill.
It is an ill wind (that blows no one any good)	ɪt ɪz ən ɪl wɪnd ðæt bləʊz nou wʌn ˈeni ɡʊd	Every bad situation benefits someone.	The storm damaged houses but helped the repair business. It is an ill wind that blows no one any good.

Expression	IPA	Meaning	Example
It is best to be on the safe side	ɪt ɪz bɛst tə bi ɒn ðə seɪf saɪd	Better to be cautious.	Bring an umbrella; it is best to be on the safe side.
It is better to be smarter than you appear than to appear smarter than you are	ɪt ɪz 'bɛtər tə bi 'smɑrtər ðæn ju ə'pɪr ðæn tə ə'pɪr 'smɑrtər ðæn ju ɑr	True intelligence is better than a false impression.	He listens more than he speaks. It is better to be smarter than you appear than to appear smarter than you are.
It is better to give than to receive	ɪt ɪz 'bɛtər tə gɪv ðæn tə rɪ'sɪv	Giving brings more joy than receiving.	She donated to charity. It is better to give than to receive.
It is better to cultivate a Land with two Bulls, rather working under Boss who never gives Wage when asked	ɪt ɪz 'bɛtər tə 'kʌltɪveɪt ə lænd wɪð tu buːlz, 'ræðər 'wɜ:kɪŋ 'ʌndər bɒs hu 'nevər gɪvz weɪdʒ wɛn æskt	Self-employment is better than an unreliable employer.	He started his own farm instead of working for a stingy boss. It is better to cultivate a land with two bulls than work under a boss who never pays.
It is better to travel hopefully than to arrive	ɪt ɪz 'bɛtər tə 'trævəl 'həʊpəfəli ðæn tə ə'raɪv	The anticipation is often better than the outcome.	The journey was more fun than the destination. It is better to travel hopefully than to arrive.
It is easy to be wise after the event	ɪt ɪz 'ɪzi tə bi waɪz 'æftər ðɪ ɪ'vent	Hindsight is 20/20.	After the crash, everyone knew it was a bad investment. It is easy to be wise after the event.
It's Greek to me	ɪts grɪk tə mi	I don't understand it.	This manual is full of jargon. It's Greek to me.
It is like juggling sand (Ian Murray)	ɪt ɪz laɪk 'dʒʌɡlɪŋ sænd	A futile or impossible task.	Trying to organize this chaos is like juggling sand.
It is never too late	ɪt ɪz 'nevər tu leɪt	You can always start or change.	She went back to school at 60. It is never too late.
It is no use crying over spilt milk	ɪt ɪz nəʊ jus 'kraɪɪŋ 'əʊvər spɪlt mɪlk	Don't dwell on past mistakes.	I broke a vase. Oh well, it is no use crying over spilt milk.
It is no use locking the stable door after the horse has bolted	ɪt ɪz nəʊ jus 'lɒkɪŋ ðə 'steɪbəl dɔr 'æftər ðə hɔrs hæz 'bəʊltɪd	Taking precautions after damage is pointless.	He installed a security system after the burglary. It is no use locking the stable door after the horse has bolted.
It is not enough to learn how to ride, you must also learn how to fall	ɪt ɪz nɒt ɪ'nʌf tə lɜ:n haʊ tə raɪd, ju mʌst 'ɔlsəʊ lɜ:n haʊ tə fɔl	Prepare for failure as well as success.	In martial arts, they teach you how to fall safely. It is not enough to learn how to ride, you must also learn how to fall.
It is on	ɪt ɪz ɒn	A challenge or event is accepted or starting.	Q: Ready for the game? A: It is on!
It is the early bird that gets the worm	ɪt ɪz ðɪ 'ɜrli bɜ:rd ðæt gets ðə wɜ:rm	Being early gives advantage.	She arrived early and got the best seats. It is the early bird that gets the worm.
It is the empty can that makes the most noise	ɪt ɪz ðɪ 'ɛmpti kæn ðæt meɪks ðə moʊst nɔɪz	Those with least substance talk the most.	He boasts constantly but knows little. It is the empty can that makes the most noise.
It is the squeaky wheel that gets the grease	ɪt ɪz ðə 'skwɪki wil ðæt gets ðə greɪs	Complaining gets attention.	If you want a raise, speak up. It is the squeaky wheel that gets the grease.
It is what it is	ɪt ɪz wʌt ɪt ɪz	Accept the situation as it is.	We lost the game. It is what it is.
It needs a hundred lies to cover a single lie	ɪt ni:dz ə 'hʌndrəd laɪz tə kʌvər ə 'sɪŋɡəl laɪ	Lying leads to more lies.	He told one lie and then had to invent many more. It needs a hundred lies to cover a single lie.
It takes a thief to catch a thief	ɪt teɪks ə θɪf tə kætʃ ə θɪf	Someone with similar experience can catch a wrongdoer.	The police used an ex-con to find the criminal. It takes a thief to catch a thief.
It takes a whole village to raise a child	ɪt teɪks ə hu:l 'vɪlɪdʒ tə reɪz ə tʃaɪld	Community is essential for a child's upbringing.	Teachers, neighbors, and family all helped. It takes a whole village to raise a child.
It takes all sorts to make a world	ɪt teɪks ɔl sɔrts tə meɪk ə wɜ:ld	Diversity is necessary.	Some people are quiet, others loud. It takes all sorts to make a world.
It takes one to know one	ɪt teɪks wʌn tə nəʊ wʌn	You recognize similar traits in others.	Q: He's a liar. A: It takes one to know one.
It takes two to tango	ɪt teɪks tu tə 'tæŋɡəʊ	Both parties are responsible for a situation.	Don't blame only him; it takes two to tango.
I'm going to have to give you the pink slip	aɪm 'ɡəʊɪŋ tə hæv tə gɪv ju ðə pɪŋk slɪp	You are fired.	Due to budget cuts, I'm going to have to give you the pink slip.
It will come back and haunt you	ɪt wɪl kʌm bæk ənd haʊnt ju	Past actions will cause future problems.	If you cheat, it will come back and haunt you.
It will be the same a hundred years hence	ɪt wɪl bi ðə seɪm ə 'hʌndrəd jɪz hɛns	Current worries won't matter in the long run.	Don't stress over this mistake; it will be the same a hundred years hence.

Expression	IPA	Meaning	Example
Islands depend on reeds, just as reeds depend on islands (Myanmar proverbs)		Everything and everyone is interconnected and mutually dependent.	Q: Why should we care about the small businesses in our town? A: Islands depend on reeds, just as reeds depend on islands. The local economy thrives when we support each other.
Jack of all trades, master of none/one/some	/dʒæk əv ɔ:l treɪdz, 'mæstər əv nʌn/wʌn/sʌm/	A person who has many skills but is not an expert in any one; sometimes used positively to mean versatile.	He can fix cars, paint houses, and play guitar, but he's a jack of all trades, master of none.
Judge not, that ye be not judged	/dʒʌdʒ nɒt, ðæt ji: bi: nɒt dʒʌdʒd/	Do not criticize others, because you will be criticized in the same way.	Before you condemn her for being late, remember: judge not, that ye be not judged.
Keep your chin up	/ki:p ʃɑ:r tʃɪn ʌp/	Stay positive and confident in a difficult situation.	I know you failed the test, but keep your chin up—you'll do better next time.
Keep your powder dry (Valentine Blacker, 1834 from _Oliver's Advice_)	/ki:p ʃɑ:r 'paʊdər draɪ/	Be prepared and ready for action.	We don't know when the opportunity will come, so keep your powder dry.
Kill the chicken to scare the monkey	/kɪl ðə 'tʃɪkɪn tə skɛr ðə 'mʌŋki/	Punish someone as a warning to others.	The manager fired one employee to scare the rest into working harder—kill the chicken to scare the monkey.
Kill the goose that lays the golden egg(s)	/kɪl ðə gu:z ðæt leɪz ðə 'ɡoʊldən ɛɡ(z)/	Destroy a valuable resource out of greed or short-sightedness.	By overfishing, we are killing the goose that lays the golden eggs.
Kill two birds with one stone.	/kɪl tu: bɜ:rdz wɪð wʌn stəʊn/	Achieve two goals with a single action.	I can drop off the package and pick up groceries on the same trip—kill two birds with one stone.
Kindness in words creates confidence. Kindness in thinking creates profoundness. Kindness in giving creates love (Laozi, Chinese philosopher, 604 BC – c. 531 BC)		Kindness expressed in different ways leads to confidence, depth, and love.	Remember Laozi's wisdom: kindness in words creates confidence, kindness in thinking creates profoundness, kindness in giving creates love.
Knock on (or touch) wood	/nɒk ən (ɔr tʌtʃ) wʊd/	An expression to avoid tempting fate after a boast or prediction of good luck.	I've never had a car accident, knock on wood.
Know which side (one's) bread is buttered (on)	/nəʊ wɪtʃ saɪd (wʌnz) brɛd ɪz 'bʌtəd (ən)/	Know where one's advantage lies and act accordingly.	He always agrees with the boss because he knows which side his bread is buttered on.
Knowledge is power, guard it well	/'nɒlɪdʒ ɪz 'paʊər, ɡɑrd ɪt wɛl/	Knowledge gives power, so protect it carefully.	In the digital age, knowledge is power, guard it well with strong passwords.
A language is a dialect with an army and navy	/ə 'læŋɡwɪdʒ ɪz ə 'daɪə,lekt wɪð ən 'ɑrmi ænd 'neɪvi/	The distinction between a language and a dialect is political, based on power and military might.	Q: Why is Mandarin considered a language but Cantonese a dialect? A: A language is a dialect with an army and navy.
The last drop makes the cup run over	/ðə læst drɒp meɪks ðə kʌp rʌn 'oʊvər/	A small addition can cause a situation to become overwhelming.	I was already stressed, and then my car broke down—the last drop made the cup run over.
Laugh before breakfast, cry before supper	/læf bɪ'fɔr 'brɛkfəst, kraɪ bɪ'fɔr 'sʌpər/	Excessive joy early in the day may be followed by sorrow later.	Don't celebrate too early; laugh before breakfast, cry before supper.
Laugh and the world laughs with you, weep and you weep alone	/læf ænd ðə wɜ:rlɪd læfs wɪð ju:, wɪ:p ænd ju: wɪ:p ə'ləʊn/	People enjoy sharing happiness but avoid sharing sorrow.	When she won the lottery, everyone celebrated with her, but when she lost her job, no one came—laugh and the world laughs with you, weep and you weep alone.
Late lunch makes day go faster	/leɪt lʌntʃ meɪks deɪ ɡəʊ fæstər/	Having lunch later can make the workday seem shorter.	I had lunch at 2 PM and the afternoon flew by—late lunch makes day go faster.
Learn a language, and you will avoid a war (Arab proverb)	/lɜ:n ə 'læŋɡwɪdʒ, ænd ju: wɪl ə'vɔɪd ə wɔ:r/	Communication through language learning prevents conflict.	Q: Why should I study Arabic? A: Learn a language, and you will avoid a war.
Least said, soonest mended	/li:st sɛd, 'su:nɪst 'mɛndɪd/	Saying less about a problem helps resolve it quickly.	After the argument, he apologized briefly and moved on—least said, soonest mended.
Less is more	/ləs ɪz mɔ:r/	Simplicity and minimalism are often more effective.	The minimalist design of the app is elegant—less is more.
Let bygones be bygones	/let 'baɪ,ɡɒnz bi 'baɪ,ɡɒnz/	Forgive past offenses and move on.	We had a disagreement, but let's let bygones be bygones and work together.

Expression	IPA	Meaning	Example
Let not the sun go down on your wrath	/lət nɒt ðə sʌn ɡəʊn daʊn ɒn jɔːr ræθ/	Resolve anger before the day ends.	They made up before bedtime, remembering to let not the sun go down on your wrath.
Let sleeping Aussies lie	/lət 'sliːpɪŋ 'ɔːzɪz laɪ/	Do not disturb a situation that is currently calm (variant of 'let sleeping dogs lie').	He didn't bring up the old argument—better to let sleeping Aussies lie.
Let the buyer beware	/lət ðə 'baɪər brɪ'weər/	The buyer is responsible for checking the quality of goods before purchase.	The car had hidden defects, but the seller said 'let the buyer beware.'
Let the cat out of the bag	/lət ðə kæt aʊt əv ðə bæɡ/	Reveal a secret unintentionally.	She let the cat out of the bag about the surprise party.
Let the dead bury the dead (N.T.)	/lət ðə dɛd 'bɛrɪ ðə dɛd/	Focus on the future and let the past be forgotten.	After the scandal, the company decided to let the dead bury the dead and move forward.
Let the punishment fit the crime	/lət ðə 'pʌnɪʃmənt fɪt ðə kraɪm/	Penalties should be proportional to the offense.	The judge gave him community service instead of jail—let the punishment fit the crime.
Let well alone	/lət wɛl ə'loʊn/	Do not interfere with something that is already satisfactory.	The system works fine, so let well alone and don't change it.
Let your hair down	/lət jɔːr hɛr daʊn/	Relax and behave informally.	After work, she let her hair down and went dancing with friends.
Lie back and think of England	/laɪ bæk ænd θɪŋk əv 'ɪŋɡlənd/	Endure a duty or unpleasant situation passively (historically about marital sex).	She didn't enjoy the formal dinner, so she just lied back and thought of England.
Life begins at forty	/laɪf brɪ'ɡɪnz æt 'fɔːrtɪ/	Middle age is a time of new opportunities and vitality.	He started a new career at 45—life begins at forty!
Life is too short not to do something that matters.	/laɪf ɪz tuː ʃɔːrt nɒt tə duː 'sʌmθɪŋ ðæt 'mætərz/	Don't waste time on trivial pursuits; pursue meaningful goals.	She quit her job to volunteer abroad because life is too short not to do something that matters.
Life is not all beer and skittles	/laɪf ɪz nɒt ɔːl bɪr ænd 'skɪtəlz/	Life is not just fun and pleasure; it has difficulties.	He thought college would be easy, but life is not all beer and skittles.
Life is what you make it	/laɪf ɪz wɒt juː meɪk ɪt/	Your attitude and actions determine your life's quality.	Don't complain about your situation—life is what you make it.
Like father, like son	/laɪk 'fɑːðər, laɪk sʌn/	Sons often resemble their fathers in behavior or character.	He's a great mechanic, just like his dad—like father, like son.
Like white on rice	/laɪk waɪt ɒn raɪs/	Very close or attentive; inseparable.	The toddler stuck to his mother like white on rice.
Little pitchers have big ears	/'lɪtl̩ 'pɪtʃərz hæv brɪɡ ɪrz/	Children often hear and understand more than adults think.	Don't gossip in front of the kids—little pitchers have big ears.
Little strokes fell great oaks	/'lɪtl̩ strəʊks fɛl greɪt əʊks/	Persistent small efforts can achieve great results.	He saved a little each month and eventually bought a house—little strokes fell great oaks.
Little things please little minds	/'lɪtl̩ θɪŋz pliːz 'lɪtl̩ maɪndz/	Trivial things amuse people with simple tastes.	He was thrilled with a new pen—little things please little minds.
Live and let live	/lɪv ænd lɛt lɪv/	Be tolerant of others' differences.	They have different lifestyles, but they live and let live.
Live each day as if it were your last and one day you will surely be right	/lɪv iːtʃ deɪ æz ɪf ɪt wɜːr jɔːr læst ænd wʌn deɪ juː wɪl 'ʃʊrli biː raɪt/	Seize the day because eventually you will die.	He traveled the world because he believed in living each day as if it were your last.
Live for today, for tomorrow never comes	/lɪv fɔːr tə'deɪ, fɔːr tə'mɔːrəʊ 'nevər kʌmz/	Focus on the present because the future is uncertain.	Stop postponing your dreams—live for today, for tomorrow never comes.
Live to fight another day (This saying comes from an English proverbial rhyme, "He who fights and runs away, may live to fight another day")	/lɪv tə faɪt ə'nʌðər deɪ/	Retreat now to preserve strength for future battles.	The army withdrew to live to fight another day.
Loose lips sink ships	/luːs lɪps sɪŋk ʃɪps/	Careless talk can cause disaster.	Don't share confidential information—loose lips sink ships.
Love is blind – _The Two Gentlemen of Verona_, Act II, Scene 1	/lʌv ɪz blaɪnd/	Love makes people overlook flaws.	She ignores all his bad habits—love is blind.

Expression	IPA	Meaning	Example
Love of money is the root of all evil	/lʌv əv 'mʌni ɪz ðə ru:t əv ɔ:l 'i:vəl/	Greed for money leads to wrongdoing.	He committed fraud because of greed—love of money is the root of all evil.
Love makes the world go around	/lʌv meɪks ðə wɜ:rd ɡoʊ ə 'raʊnd/	Love is the driving force of life.	Despite all the problems, love makes the world go around.
Love will find a way	/lʌv wɪl faɪnd ə weɪ/	Love overcomes obstacles.	They were separated by distance, but love will find a way.
Make hay while the sun shines	/meɪk heɪ waɪl ðə sʌn ʃaɪnz/	Take advantage of favorable conditions.	The economy is good, so make hay while the sun shines and invest.
Make love not war	/meɪk lʌv nɒt wɔ:r/	Promote peace and love instead of conflict.	The protesters chanted 'make love not war.'
Man does not live by bread alone	/mæn dʌz nɒt lɪv baɪ brɛd ə 'loʊn/	People need spiritual or emotional nourishment, not just material goods.	He works for passion, not just money—man does not live by bread alone.
Man proposes, heaven disposes	/mæn prə 'pəʊzɪz, 'heɪvən dɪ 'spəʊzɪz/	People make plans, but fate determines outcomes.	We planned a picnic, but it rained—man proposes, heaven disposes.
Man thinks, God laughs	/mæn θɪŋks, ɡɒd læfs/	Human plans are often futile; a higher power has the last laugh.	He thought he had everything figured out, but then he lost his job—man thinks, God laughs.
Manners maketh man	/'mænərz 'meɪkɪθ mæn/	Good manners define a person's character.	He always says please and thank you—manners maketh man.
Many a little makes a mickle	/'meni ə 'lɪtəl meɪks ə 'mɪkəl/	Small amounts accumulate into a large amount.	Saving a dollar a day adds up—many a little makes a mickle.
Many a mickle makes a muckle	/'meni ə 'mɪkəl meɪks ə 'mʌkəl/	Same as 'many a little makes a mickle' (often used humorously).	He saved coins for years and finally had enough for a car—many a mickle makes a muckle.
Many a true word is spoken in jest	/'meni ə tru: wɜ:rd ɪz 'spəʊkən ɪn dʒɛst/	Jokes often contain hidden truths.	He joked about being fired, but many a true word is spoken in jest.
March comes in like a lion and goes out like a lamb	/mɑ:rtʃ kʌmz ɪn laɪk ə 'laɪən ænd ɡoʊz aʊt laɪk ə læm/	March weather often starts harsh and ends mild.	It snowed on March 1st but was sunny on the 31st—March comes in like a lion and goes out like a lamb.
Marriages are made in heaven	/'mæɪrɪdʒɪz ɑ:r meɪd ɪn 'heɪvən/	Soulmates are destined by fate.	They met by chance and fell in love—marriages are made in heaven.
Marry in haste, repent at leisure	/'mæri ɪn heɪst, rɪ'pɛnt æt 'li:ʒər/	Rushing into marriage leads to long-term regret.	They got married after a month and divorced within a year—marry in haste, repent at leisure.
Memory is the treasure of the mind	/'meməri ɪz ðə 'treɪzər əv ðə maɪnd/	Memory is a valuable mental asset.	She can recall every detail of her childhood; truly, memory is the treasure of the mind.
Men are blind in their own cause – Heywood Broun (1888–1939), American journalist	/mɛn ɑr blaɪnd ɪn ðeɪr oʊn kɔ:z/	People are often unable to see faults in their own arguments or actions.	He insists he's right, but he's blind in his own cause.
Men get spoiled by staying, women get spoiled by wandering	/mɛn ɡet spɔɪld baɪ 'steɪɪŋ, 'wɪmɪn ɡet spɔɪld baɪ 'wɒndərɪŋ/	Men become lazy if they stay home too much, women become discontent if they travel too much.	He never leaves the house; men get spoiled by staying.
Might is right	/maɪt ɪz raɪt/	Those who are powerful can do what they want.	The bully took his lunch; might is right.
Might makes right	/maɪt meɪks raɪt/	Power justifies any action.	The dictator seized control; might makes right.
Milking the bull	/'mɪlkɪŋ ðə bʌl/	Trying to get something from a source that cannot provide it.	Asking him for money is like milking the bull.
Moderation in all things	/'mɒdə'reɪʃən ɪn ɔl θɪŋz/	Avoid extremes; practice balance.	She eats sweets but only a little; moderation in all things.

Expression	IPA	Meaning	Example
Monday's child is fair of face, Tuesday's child is full of grace, Wednesday's child is full of woe, Thursday's child has far to go, Friday's child is loving and giving, Saturday's child works hard for its living, and a child that is born on the Sabbath day is fair and wise and good and gay	/ˈmʌndeɪz tʃaɪld ɪz fɛr əv feɪs, ˈtuːzdeɪz tʃaɪld ɪz fʊl əv greɪs, ˈwɛnzdeɪz tʃaɪld ɪz fʊl əv wəʊ, ˈθɜːzdeɪz tʃaɪld hæz fɑː tu goʊ, ˈfraɪdeɪz tʃaɪld ɪz ˈlʌvɪŋ ænd ˈgɪvɪŋ, ˈsætərdɛɪz tʃaɪld wɜːks hɑːd fɔː ɪts ˈlɪvɪŋ, ænd ə tʃaɪld ðæt ɪz bɔːn ɒn ðə ˈsæbəθ deɪ ɪz fɛr ænd waɪz ænd ɡʊd ænd geɪ/	A nursery rhyme attributing personality traits to the day of birth.	She was born on Wednesday; according to the rhyme, Wednesday's child is full of woe.
Money does not grow on trees	/ˈmʌni dʌz nɒt groʊ ɒn triːz/	Money is limited and not easily obtained.	Stop asking for expensive toys; money doesn't grow on trees.
Money earned by deceit, goes by deceit	/ˈmʌni ɜːnd baɪ dɪˈsɪt, ɡoʊz baɪ dɪˈsɪt/	Dishonestly gained money is soon lost dishonestly.	He cheated his way to wealth, but lost it all; money earned by deceit goes by deceit.
Money is not everything	/ˈmʌni ɪz nɒt ˈɛvrɪθɪŋ/	There are more important things than wealth.	He's rich but unhappy; money is not everything.
Money demands care, you abuse it and it disappears – Rashida Costa	/ˈmʌni dɪˈmændz keɪ, ju əˈbjuːz ɪt ænd ɪt ˈdɪsəˈpɪrɪz/	Money must be handled wisely or it will be lost.	He spent recklessly and now he's broke; money demands care.
Money makes the world go around	/ˈmʌni meɪks ðə wɜːld ɡoʊ əˈraʊnd/	Money is essential for modern life and drives society.	In business, money makes the world go around.
Money talks	/ˈmʌni tɔːks/	Wealth gives influence and power.	The rich donor got his way; money talks.
Money makes many things, but also makes devil dance	/ˈmʌni meɪks ˈmeni θɪŋz, bʌt ˈɔːlsəʊ meɪks ˈdɛvəl dæns/	Money can cause both good and evil.	He used his wealth for corruption; money makes the devil dance.
More haste, less speed	/mɔːr heɪst, lɛs spiːd/	Rushing leads to mistakes and slower progress.	He rushed the project and had to redo it; more haste, less speed.
Mud sticks	/mʌd stɪks/	Accusations or slander can permanently damage reputation.	Even after the rumor was disproven, mud sticks.
Music has charms to soothe the savage breast	/ˈmjuzɪk hæz tʃɑːrmz tu suːð ðə ˈsævɪdʒ brɛst/	Music can calm even the most agitated person.	After a stressful day, she listened to classical music; music has charms to soothe the savage breast.
Nature abhors a vacuum	/ˈneɪtʃər æbˈhɔːrɪz ə ˈvækjuəm/	Empty spaces tend to be filled.	When he left, someone else took his place; nature abhors a vacuum.
Nature does not do anything in vain	/ˈneɪtʃər dʌz nɒt du ˈɛniθɪŋ ɪn veɪn/	Everything in nature has a purpose.	Even the smallest insect has a role; nature does nothing in vain.
Needs must when the devil drives	/niːdz mʌst wɛn ðə ˈdɛvəl draɪvz/	Sometimes you must do something unpleasant because you have no choice.	I had to work overtime; needs must when the devil drives.
Never cast a clout until May be out	/ˈnevər kæst ə klaʊt ən ˈtɪl meɪ bi aʊt/	Don't remove winter clothes until May ends.	It's warm today, but never cast a clout until May is out.
Never give advice unless asked	/ˈnevər ɡɪv ædˈvaɪs ən ˈlɛs æskt/	Unsolicited advice is often unwelcome.	He kept telling me what to do; I wish he'd never give advice unless asked.
Never give a sucker an even break	/ˈnevər ɡɪv ə ˈsʌkər æn ˈiːvən breɪk/	Take advantage of gullible people.	The con artist tricked him; never give a sucker an even break.
Never judge a book by its cover	/ˈnevər dʒɪdʒ ə bʊk baɪ ɪts ˈkʌvər/	Don't judge based on appearance.	He looked scruffy but was a genius; never judge a book by its cover.
Never let the sun go down on your anger	/ˈnevər lɛt ðə sʌn ɡoʊ daʊn ɒn jɔːr ˈæŋɡər/	Resolve anger before the day ends.	They argued but made up before bed; never let the sun go down on your anger.
Never let the truth get in the way of a good story	/ˈnevər lɛt ðə truːθ ɡɛt ɪn ðə weɪ əv ə ɡʊd ˈstɔːri/	A good story is more important than accuracy.	He exaggerated his adventure; never let the truth get in the way of a good story.
Never put off until tomorrow what you can do today	/ˈnevər pʊt ɒf ən ˈtɪl təˈmɔːrəʊ wʌt ju kæn du təˈdeɪ/	Don't procrastinate.	Finish your homework now; never put off until tomorrow what you can do today.

Expression	IPA	Meaning	Example
Never reveal a man's wage, and woman's age	/ˈnevər rɪˈvɪl ə mənz weɪdʒ, ænd ˈwʊmənʒ eɪdʒ/	Don't ask about salary or age.	He asked her age; she replied, 'Never reveal a man's wage, and woman's age.'
Never speak ill of the dead	/ˈnevər spɪk ɪl əv ðə dɛd/	Show respect for the deceased.	Even though he was mean, never speak ill of the dead.
Never say die	/ˈnevər seɪ daɪ/	Never give up hope.	Despite the setbacks, never say die.
Never say never	/ˈnevər seɪ ˈnevər/	Don't rule out possibilities.	I thought I'd never travel, but now I'm abroad; never say never.
Never tell tales out of school	/ˈnevər tɛl teɪlz aʊt əv skul/	Don't gossip or reveal secrets.	She told everyone his secret; never tell tales out of school.
Never too old to learn	/ˈnevər tu ould tu lɜːn/	Learning is lifelong.	My grandmother started painting at 80; never too old to learn.
Nine tailors make a man,	/naɪn ˈteɪlərz meɪk ə mən/	A well-dressed man is made by many tailors.	He looked sharp in his suit; nine tailors make a man.
No friends but the mountains	/nəʊ frɛndz bʌt ðə ˈmaʊntənz/	Nature is a reliable companion.	He felt isolated; no friends but the mountains.
No guts, no glory	/nəʊ ɡʌts, nəʊ ˈɡlɔːri/	Risk is needed for reward.	He took the chance and succeeded; no guts, no glory.
No man can serve two masters	/nəʊ mən kæn sɜːv tu ˈmæstərz/	You cannot serve two opposing interests.	He tried to work two jobs but failed; no man can serve two masters.
No names, no pack-drill	/nəʊ neɪmz, nəʊ pæk drɪl/	If no one is named, no punishment follows.	The culprit wasn't identified; no names, no pack-drill.
No news is good news	/nəʊ nuz ɪz ɡʊd nuz/	Lack of news means nothing bad happened.	I haven't heard from him; no news is good news.
No one can make you feel inferior without your consent	/nəʊ wʌn kæn meɪk ju fiːl ɪnˈfɪəriə wɪˈðaʊt jɔː kənˈsɛnt/	Your self-worth is under your control.	She ignored the insults; no one can make you feel inferior without your consent.
No pain, no gain	/nəʊ peɪn, nəʊ ɡeɪn/	Effort is required for achievement.	He trained hard; no pain, no gain.
No rest for the wicked	/nəʊ rɛst fɔː ðə ˈwɪkɪd/	Bad people are always busy or troubled.	He's always working; no rest for the wicked.
Not all those who wander are lost – "All that is gold does not glitter" J.R.R. Tolkien	/nɒt ɔːl ðəʊz hu ˈwɒndə əː lɒst/	Wandering doesn't mean being lost; appearances can be deceiving.	He travels aimlessly, but not all those who wander are lost.
Nothing is certain but death and taxes	/ˈnʌθɪŋ ɪz ˈsɜːrtən bʌt deθ ænd ˈtæksɪz/	Death and taxes are inevitable.	You can't avoid them; nothing is certain but death and taxes.
Nothing succeeds like success	/ˈnʌθɪŋ sək ˈsɪdʒ laɪk sək ˈsɛs/	Success attracts more success.	After his first win, opportunities poured in; nothing succeeds like success.
Oil and water do not mix	/ɔɪl ænd ˈwɔːtə du nɒt mɪks/	Two incompatible things cannot be combined.	They argued constantly; oil and water do not mix.
Of course my horse	/əv kɔːrs maɪ hɔːs/	An expression of enthusiastic agreement.	Q: Will you come? A: Of course my horse!
Old sins cast long shadows.	/əʊld sɪnz kæst lɔŋ ˈʃædəʊz/	Past wrongdoings have lasting consequences.	His crime haunted him for years; old sins cast long shadows.
Old soldiers never die, (they simply/just fade away). From a Great War soldiers' song; the phrase was most notably referred to by U.S. General Douglas MacArthur (1880–1964) in his farewell address to the Congress.	/əʊld ˈsəʊldʒərz ˈnevər daɪ, ðeɪ ˈsɪmplɪ feɪd ə ˈweɪ/	Veterans are never forgotten, they just gradually disappear.	The veteran said, 'Old soldiers never die, they just fade away.'
Once a(n) _, always a(n) _	/wʌns ə, ˈɔːlweɪz ə/	A person's essential nature doesn't change.	Once a cheater, always a cheater.
Once bitten, twice shy	/wʌns ˈbɪtən, twaɪs ʃaɪ/	A bad experience makes you cautious.	After being scammed, he's wary; once bitten, twice shy.

Expression	IPA	Meaning	Example
One half of the world does not know how the other half lives	/wʌn hæf əv ðə wɜːld dʌz nɒt noʊ haʊ ði 'lðər hæf liːvz/	People are unaware of others' different circumstances.	The rich don't understand poverty; one half of the world does not know how the other half lives.
One hand washes the other	/wʌn hænd 'wɔːtʃ ði 'lðər/	Mutual cooperation benefits both.	They helped each other; one hand washes the other.
One kind word can warm three winter months	/wʌn kaɪnd wɜːd kæn wɔːm θri 'wɪntər mɒnθs/	Kindness has a lasting positive effect.	Her compliment cheered him for weeks; one kind word can warm three winter months.
One man's meat is another man's poison	/wʌn mænz mit ɪz ə 'nʌðər mænz 'pɔɪzən/	What one likes, another dislikes.	He loves spicy food, but I hate it; one man's meat is another man's poison.
One man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter	/wʌn mænz 'tɛrərɪst ɪz ə 'nʌðər mænz 'frɪdəm 'faɪtər/	Perspective determines labeling.	The rebel is seen as a hero by some; one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter.
One might as well be hanged for a sheep as a lamb	/wʌn maɪt əz wɛl bi hæŋd fɔː ə ʃɪp əz ə læm/	If the punishment is the same, commit the greater crime.	He stole a car; one might as well be hanged for a sheep as a lamb.
One might as well throw water into the sea as to do a kindness to rogues	/wʌn maɪt əz wɛl θrou 'wɔːtər 'ɪntu ðə si əz tu du ə 'kaɪndnəs tu rougz/	Helping dishonest people is futile.	He lent money to a known swindler; one might as well throw water into the sea.
One law for the rich and another for the poor	/wʌn lɔː fɔː ðə rɪtʃ ənd ə 'nʌðər fɔː ðə puːr/	Justice is applied unfairly based on wealth.	The rich man got a light sentence; one law for the rich and another for the poor.
One who hates gifts shall live		A person who dislikes receiving gifts will live a long life.	Q: Why does Grandpa refuse every birthday present? A: He believes 'one who hates gifts shall live' and wants to stay healthy.
Opportunity does not knock until you build a door		Opportunities come only after you prepare and create the conditions for them.	Stop waiting for a lucky break; remember, opportunity does not knock until you build a door.
One swallow does not make a summer		A single positive sign does not mean a situation is completely good or certain.	Q: I got one good grade, so I'll pass the class. A: One swallow does not make a summer; keep studying.
One who believes in Sword, dies by the Sword		Those who rely on violence will ultimately be destroyed by violence.	The warlord learned too late that one who believes in the sword dies by the sword.
One who speaks only one language is one person, but one who speaks two languages is two people. Turkish Proverb		Learning another language gives you a new perspective and identity.	After moving abroad, she felt like a different person when speaking English—truly, one who speaks two languages is two people.
One year's seeding makes seven years weeding		A single mistake or bad decision can cause long-term problems.	He cheated on his taxes and now faces audits for years—one year's seeding makes seven years weeding.
Only fools and horses work		Working hard is for fools and animals; clever people avoid unnecessary labor.	Q: Why won't you take the overtime? A: Only fools and horses work; I'd rather enjoy my free time.
Open confession is good for the soul.		Admitting your mistakes honestly brings relief and moral cleansing.	He felt guilty until he told the truth—open confession is good for the soul.
Opportunity never knocks twice at any man's door		A unique opportunity rarely comes again; seize it when it appears.	Q: Should I apply for that job? A: Yes, opportunity never knocks twice at any man's door.
Other times other manners.		Customs and behaviors change over time; what was acceptable before may not be now.	Q: Why don't people dress up for flights anymore? A: Other times other manners.
Out of the frying pan and into the fire		Escaping one bad situation only to end up in a worse one.	She left her stressful job for a more demanding one—out of the frying pan and into the fire.
Out of the mouths of babes (and sucklings)		Young children sometimes say surprisingly wise or truthful things.	Q: Why did you listen to a five-year-old? A: Out of the mouths of babes—she was right.
Parsley seed goes nine times to the Devil		Parsley seeds take a long time to germinate, as if they visit the devil repeatedly.	I planted parsley weeks ago and nothing—parsley seed goes nine times to the devil, I guess.
Pearls of wisdom		Valuable pieces of advice or insightful comments.	Grandpa shared some pearls of wisdom about saving money.

Expression	IPA	Meaning	Example
Penny wise and pound foolish		Being careful with small amounts of money but wasteful with large amounts.	He drives across town to save a dollar on gas but buys expensive coffee daily—penny wise and pound foolish.
People who live in glass houses should not throw stones		Don't criticize others if you have similar flaws yourself.	Q: He called me messy. A: Look at his desk—people who live in glass houses shouldn't throw stones.
Physician, heal thyself		Before criticizing others, fix your own problems first.	The coach who smokes tells players not to smoke—physician, heal thyself.
Play stupid games, win stupid prizes		Engaging in foolish or risky behavior leads to negative consequences.	He pranked the boss and got fired—play stupid games, win stupid prizes.
Possession is nine-tenths of the law		Being in physical possession of something gives a strong legal advantage.	Q: Can they take my car? A: You have the keys—possession is nine-tenths of the law.
Power corrupts; absolute power corrupts absolutely		Having power makes people corrupt, and unlimited power makes them completely corrupt.	The dictator started with good intentions but became ruthless—power corrupts, absolute power corrupts absolutely.
Practice what you preach		Act according to the advice you give others.	Q: My dad tells me to be honest but he lies. A: He should practice what he preaches.
Preaching to the choir		Trying to convince people who already agree with you.	Q: Why is he explaining recycling to environmentalists? A: He's preaching to the choir.
Pride comes/goes before a fall		Being too proud or arrogant often leads to failure or humiliation.	He bragged about passing the exam without studying, then failed—pride comes before a fall.
Procrastination is the thief of time		Delaying tasks wastes time and causes stress.	I kept putting off the project until the deadline—procrastination is the thief of time.
Putting the cart before the horse		Doing things in the wrong order; prioritizing the less important before the essential.	Q: He bought a car before getting a license. A: That's putting the cart before the horse.
Put your best foot forward		Make a good first impression by showing your best qualities.	For the interview, dress professionally and put your best foot forward.
Put your money where your mouth is		Back up your words with action or financial commitment.	Q: You say you support the charity. A: Then put your money where your mouth is and donate.
Rain does not fall on one roof alone.		Troubles and misfortunes happen to everyone, not just one person.	Q: Why is everyone stressed? A: Rain does not fall on one roof alone; we all have problems.
Reason is the slave of passion		Emotions often override logical thinking.	He knew he shouldn't gamble, but his excitement took over—reason is the slave of passion.
Red sky at night, shepherd's delight; red sky in the morning, shepherd's warning		A red sunset indicates good weather next day; a red sunrise warns of bad weather.	Q: Should I bring an umbrella? A: Red sky this morning—shepherd's warning, so yes.
Repetition is the mother of learning		Repeating something helps you learn and remember it.	Practice your vocabulary daily—repetition is the mother of learning.
Respect is not given, it is earned.		You must act in a way that deserves respect; it is not automatic.	Q: Why don't they respect me? A: Respect is not given, it is earned—show them your integrity.
Revenge is a dish best served cold		Revenge is more satisfying when delayed and carried out calmly.	He waited years to expose his rival's fraud—revenge is a dish best served cold.
Revenge is sweet		Getting back at someone who wronged you feels satisfying.	When she won the award over her critic, she smiled—revenge is sweet.
Right or wrong, my country		Loyalty to one's country regardless of its actions.	Q: Do you support the government's decision? A: Right or wrong, my country—I stand by it.
Risk it for the biscuit		Take a chance to get a reward.	Q: Should I invest in that startup? A: Risk it for the biscuit—it could pay off big.
Rules for thee, not for me.		Hypocritical application of rules where the speaker exempts themselves.	The manager fines employees for lateness but arrives late himself—rules for thee, not for me.
Rules were made to be broken		Rules are not absolute; sometimes breaking them is acceptable or necessary.	Q: Why did you ignore the dress code? A: Rules were made to be broken—I wanted to express myself.

Expression	IPA	Meaning	Example
See a pin and pick it up, all the day you will have good luck; See a pin and let it lay, bad luck you will have all day		A superstition: picking up a pin brings good luck; ignoring it brings bad luck.	Q: Why did you pick up that pin? A: See a pin and pick it up, all the day you will have good luck.
See no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil		Ignore wrongdoing by not seeing, hearing, or talking about it.	When asked about the corruption, he just smiled—see no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil.
Seek and ye shall find		If you look for something diligently, you will find it.	Q: I can't find my keys. A: Keep looking—seek and ye shall find.
Set a thief to catch a thief		Use someone with similar skills or background to catch a wrongdoer.	The police hired a former hacker to trace the cybercriminal—set a thief to catch a thief.
Shiny are the distant hills		Things far away seem more attractive than what you have nearby.	Q: Why does she want to move abroad? A: Shiny are the distant hills—she thinks it's better there.
Shrouds have no pockets		You can't take material possessions with you after death.	Q: Why does he give away so much money? A: Shrouds have no pockets—he values generosity.
(Speech is silver but) Silence is golden		Sometimes it's better to say nothing than to speak.	During the argument, he stayed quiet—silence is golden.
Sit crooked and talk straight		Even if you are in a difficult position, speak honestly and fairly.	Q: How can he be honest after cheating? A: He sits crooked but talks straight—he admitted his mistake.
Slow is smooth, smooth is fast		Taking deliberate, careful action leads to efficiency and speed in the long run.	Q: Why are you going so slowly? A: Slow is smooth, smooth is fast—I'll make fewer mistakes.
Slowly but surely		Making steady progress even if it's slow.	She's learning piano slowly but surely.
Snake in the grass		A deceitful or treacherous person who seems harmless.	Q: I trusted him with my secret. A: Be careful—he's a snake in the grass.
Softly, softly, catchee monkey		Proceed gently and patiently to achieve a goal.	Q: How do you negotiate with him? A: Softly, softly, catchee monkey—don't rush.
Some are more equal than others		Despite claims of equality, some people have more privileges.	Q: Isn't everyone treated equally? A: In practice, some are more equal than others.
Spare the rod and spoil the child		Without discipline, a child will become unruly.	Q: Why is he strict with his kids? A: He believes spare the rod and spoil the child.
Speak as you find		Give your honest opinion based on your own experience.	Q: What do you think of the restaurant? A: I speak as I find—the food was great.
Speak of the devil and he shall/is sure/will appear		When you talk about someone, they often show up unexpectedly.	Q: Where's John? A: Speak of the devil—here he comes.
Speak softly and carry a big stick		Be diplomatic but have strong power or resources as a backup.	The negotiator spoke calmly but hinted at sanctions—speak softly and carry a big stick.
Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me		Physical attacks can hurt, but insults should not affect you emotionally.	Q: He called you names. A: Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me.
Stupid is as stupid does		A person is judged by their actions, not their appearance or words.	Q: He looks smart. A: Stupid is as stupid does—he just lost his keys again.
Success has many fathers, while failure is an orphan		Many people claim credit for success, but no one wants to take responsibility for failure.	After the project succeeded, everyone took credit—success has many fathers, while failure is an orphan.
(A) swarm in May is worth a load of hay; a swarm in June is worth a silver spoon; but a swarm in July is not worth a fly		The timing of a bee swarm indicates its value: early swarms are more valuable for honey production.	Q: Should I capture that swarm? A: It's July—a swarm in July is not worth a fly, so skip it.
Sucks to suck		A blunt expression of sympathy or mockery for someone's misfortune due to their own fault.	Q: I failed because I didn't study. A: Sucks to suck.
Take care of the pennies, and the pounds will take care of themselves	/teɪk keə əv ðə 'pɛnɪz, ænd ðə paʊndz wɪl teɪk keə əv ðəm 'selvz/	If you look after small amounts of money, the larger amounts will accumulate naturally.	Q: Why do you always save your spare change? A: Take care of the pennies, and the pounds will take care of themselves.

Expression	IPA	Meaning	Example
Talk is cheap	/tɔk ɪz tʃɪp/	It's easy to say you'll do something, but actions are more important than words.	He keeps promising to help, but talk is cheap—I'll believe it when I see it.
Talk of Angels, and hear the flutter of their wings	/tɔk əv 'eɪndʒəlz, ænd hɪr ðə 'flʌtər əv ðər wɪŋz/	When you speak of someone, they often appear soon after.	Q: I was just talking about you! A: Talk of Angels, and hear the flutter of their wings.
Tell me who your friends are, and I'll tell you who you are	/tɛl mi hu jɔr frɛndz ɑr, ænd aɪl tɛl mi hu ju ɑr/	A person's character can be judged by the company they keep.	Q: Why do you care about his friends? A: Tell me who your friends are, and I'll tell you who you are.
Tell the truth and shame the Devil (Shakespeare, _Henry IV_)	/tɛl ðə truθ ænd ʃeɪm ðə 'dɛvəl/	Speaking honestly will defeat evil or embarrassment.	When caught in a lie, he decided to tell the truth and shame the Devil.
The age of miracles is past	/ði eɪdʒ əv 'mɪrəklz ɪz pæst/	Extraordinary events no longer happen; we must rely on ordinary means.	Q: Do you think he'll recover? A: The age of miracles is past, so we must accept reality.
The apple does not fall/never falls far from the tree	/ði 'æpəl dʌz nɒt fɔl/ 'nɛvər fɔlz fɑr frəm ðə tri/	Children often resemble their parents in character or behavior.	She's a talented musician, just like her mother—the apple doesn't fall far from the tree.
The best condiments are authentic flavors	/ðə bɛst 'kɒndɪmənts ɑr ɔ 'θɛntɪk 'fleɪvərz/	Natural, genuine tastes are superior to artificial ones.	Q: Why don't you use sauce? A: The best condiments are authentic flavors.
The best defense is a good offense	/ðə bɛst dɪ 'fɛns ɪz ə gʊd ə 'fɛns/	Attacking or being proactive is more effective than merely defending.	In negotiations, he argued aggressively—the best defense is a good offense.
The best-laid plans of mice and men often go awry	/ðə bɛst-leɪd plænz əv maɪs ænd mɛn 'ɔfən goʊ ə 'raɪ/	Even careful plans can fail due to unforeseen circumstances.	We prepared everything, but the weather ruined our picnic—the best-laid plans of mice and men often go awry.
The best things in life are free	/ðə bɛst θɪŋz ɪn laɪf ɑr frɪ/	The most valuable experiences, like love and friendship, don't cost money.	Q: Why do you enjoy hiking so much? A: The best things in life are free.
The bigger they are, the harder they fall	/ðə 'bɪgər ðeɪ ɑr, ðə 'hɑrdər ðeɪ fɔl/	Powerful or successful people suffer more when they fail.	The scandal brought down the CEO—the bigger they are, the harder they fall.
The boy is the father of the man	/ðə bɔɪ ɪz ðə 'fɑðər əv ðə mæn/	Childhood experiences shape the adult you become.	His early love of reading made him a writer—the boy is the father of the man.
The bread never falls but on its buttered side	/ðə brɛd 'nɛvər fɔlz bʌt ɒn ɪts 'bʌtərd saɪd/	Misfortune always seems to strike in the worst possible way.	I dropped my sandwich and it landed butter-side down—the bread never falls but on its buttered side.
The cobbler always wears the worst shoes	/ðə 'kɒblər 'ɔlwɛɪz wɛrɪz ðə wɜrst ʃuːz/	Professionals often neglect their own needs while serving others.	My mechanic's car is always broken—the cobbler always wears the worst shoes.
The comeback is greater than the setback	/ðə 'kɒmbæk ɪz 'grɛɪtər ðən ðə 'sɛtbæk/	Recovering from failure is more impressive than never failing.	After losing his job, he started a successful business—the comeback is greater than the setback.
The course of true love never did run smooth	/ðə kɔrs əv tru lʌv 'nɛvər dɪd rʌn smuð/	Romantic relationships always face difficulties.	They argued often, but the course of true love never did run smooth.
The customer is always right	/ðə 'kʌstəmər ɪz 'ɔlwɛɪz raɪt/	In business, you should always agree with the customer to keep them happy.	Even when the complaint seemed unfair, the manager said, 'The customer is always right.'
The darkest hour is just before the dawn	/ðə 'dɑrkɪst aʊər ɪz dʒʌst bɪ 'fɔr ðə dɔn/	Things often seem worst just before they improve.	Don't give up now—the darkest hour is just before the dawn.
The Devil finds work for idle hands to do	/ðə 'dɛvəl faɪndz wɜrk fɔr 'aɪdəl hændz tu du/	People who are bored or lazy are more likely to get into trouble.	Q: Why do you keep the kids busy? A: The Devil finds work for idle hands to do.
The Devil looks after his own	/ðə 'dɛvəl lʊks 'æftər hɪz ɔʊn/	Bad people often seem to have undeserved good luck.	He cheated and got away with it—the Devil looks after his own.
The die is cast	/ðə daɪ ɪz kæst/	A decision has been made and cannot be changed; the outcome is inevitable.	Once he signed the contract, the die was cast.
The end justifies the means	/ði ɛnd 'dʒʌstɪfaɪz ðə miːnz/	A good outcome excuses any methods used to achieve it.	He lied to get the job, believing the end justifies the means.
The enemy of my enemy is my friend	/ði 'ɛnəmi əv maɪ 'ɛnəmi ɪz maɪ frɛnd/	Two parties can become allies if they share a common enemy.	The two rival companies teamed up against a larger competitor—the enemy of my enemy is my friend.

Expression	IPA	Meaning	Example
The exception which proves the rule	/ði ɪk 'sɛpʃən wɪtʃ pru:vz ðə rul/	An unusual case tests and confirms the general rule.	Q: But he's always on time! A: That's the exception which proves the rule.
The female of the species is more deadly than the male	/ðə 'fimeɪl əv ðə 'spɪʃɪz ɪz mɔː 'dedli ðən ðə meɪl/	Women can be more dangerous or aggressive than men.	In many animal species, the female is more deadly than the male.
The good die young	/ðə gʊd daɪ jʌŋ/	Kind or virtuous people often die early.	He was so kind and passed away at 30—the good die young.
The grass is always greener (on the other side) (of the fence)	/ðə græs ɪz 'ɔlweɪz 'grɪnə (ən ði 'lðər saɪd) (əv ðə fens)/	Other people's situations always seem better than your own.	She envied her friend's job, but the grass is always greener on the other side.
The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world	/ðə hænd ðæt rɔks ðə 'kreɪdəl rulz ðə wɜːld/	Mothers have great influence over future generations.	Q: Why is early childhood education so important? A: The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world.
The husband is always the last to know	/ðə 'hʌzbənd ɪz 'ɔlweɪz ðə læst tu nəʊ/	A spouse is often unaware of their partner's secrets or affairs.	Everyone knew she was unhappy except her husband—the husband is always the last to know.
The innocent seldom find an uncomfortable pillow – William Cowper, English poet	/ði 'ɪnəsənt 'seldəm faɪnd ən ən 'kʌmfərtəbəl 'pɪləʊ/	People with a clear conscience sleep well.	After confessing, he slept peacefully—the innocent seldom find an uncomfortable pillow.
The labourer is worthy of his hire	/ðə 'leɪbərəz ɪz 'wɜːði əv hɪz haɪr/	Workers deserve to be paid fairly for their work.	Q: Should we pay him for the extra hours? A: The labourer is worthy of his hire.
It is the last straw that breaks the camel's back	/ɪt ɪz ðə læst stro ðæt breɪks ðə 'kæməlz bæk/	A small problem that follows many others causes a final breakdown.	He tolerated the delays, but the missed deadline was the last straw.
The law is an ass (from English writer Charles Dickens' novel _Oliver Twist_)	/ðə lɔ ɪz ən æs/	The legal system can be stupid or unjust.	Q: How could the court rule that way? A: The law is an ass.
The leopard does not change his spots	/ðə 'leɪpərd dʌz nɒt tʃeɪndʒ hɪz spɒts/	People cannot change their fundamental nature.	He promised to reform, but the leopard does not change his spots.
The left hand doesn't know what the right hand is doing	/ðə left hænd dɒznt nəʊ wɒt ðə raɪt hænd ɪz 'duɪŋ/	Lack of communication within an organization or between people.	The marketing team launched a campaign without telling sales—the left hand doesn't know what the right hand is doing.
The light is on but nobody is home	/ðə laɪt ɪz ən bʌt 'nəʊbadi ɪz hoʊm/	Someone is physically present but mentally absent or unintelligent.	He stared blankly—the light is on but nobody is home.
The longest day must have an end	/ðə 'lɒŋɪst deɪ mʌst hæv ən end/	Even the most difficult situations eventually pass.	Keep going—the longest day must have an end.
The longest journey starts with a single step	/ðə 'lɒŋɪst 'dʒɜːni stɑːts wɪð ə 'sɪŋɡəl stɛp/	Big achievements begin with small actions.	Q: How do I write a book? A: The longest journey starts with a single step.
The Moon is made of green cheese	/ðə mʌn ɪz meɪd əv grɪn tʃiːz/	A ridiculous or impossible claim.	Q: Is that true? A: And the Moon is made of green cheese.
The more the merrier	/ðə mɔː ðə 'mɛriər/	The more people there are, the more enjoyable the event.	Q: Can I bring a friend? A: Sure, the more the merrier.
The more things change, the more they stay the same	/ðə mɔː θɪŋz tʃeɪndʒ, ðə mɔː ðeɪ steɪ ðə seɪm/	Despite apparent changes, underlying realities remain unchanged.	New management, same problems—the more things change, the more they stay the same.
The nail that sticks out gets hammered down	/ðə neɪl ðæt stɪks aʊt gets 'hæmərd daʊn/	People who stand out or are different are often criticized or suppressed.	He was punished for his innovative ideas—the nail that sticks out gets hammered down.
The only way to understand a woman is to love her	/ði 'əʊnli weɪ tu 'ʌndə'stænd ə 'wʊmən ɪz tu lʌv hɜːr/	Love is necessary to truly comprehend a woman's nature.	Q: Why does she act that way? A: The only way to understand a woman is to love her.
The old wooden spoon beats me down	/ði ould 'wʊdən spun bɪts mi daʊn/	A traditional punishment or hardship wears one out.	Q: Why are you so tired? A: The old wooden spoon beats me down.
The only way to find a friend is to be one	/ði 'əʊnli weɪ tu faɪnd ə frɛnd ɪz tu bi wʌn/	To have friends, you must be friendly and supportive yourself.	Q: How can I make more friends? A: The only way to find a friend is to be one.
The pot calling the kettle black	/ðə pɒt 'kɒlɪŋ ðə 'ketəl blæk/	Criticizing someone for a fault you also have.	He called her lazy—that's the pot calling the kettle black.
The proof of the pudding is in the eating	/ðə pruːf əv ðə 'puːdɪŋ ɪz ɪn ði 'iːtɪŋ/	The true value of something is shown by practical experience.	Q: Is this recipe good? A: The proof of the pudding is in the eating.

Expression	IPA	Meaning	Example
The rich get richer and the poor get poorer	/ðə rɪʃ ɡet ˈrɪtʃər ænd ðə pʊr ɡet ˈpʊrər/	Wealth tends to accumulate for the wealthy while the poor become more impoverished.	Q: Why is inequality increasing? A: The rich get richer and the poor get poorer.
The road to Hell is paved with good intentions	/ðə roʊd tu ˈhɛl ɪz peɪvd wɪð ɡʊd ɪn ˈtenʃənz/	Good intentions don't guarantee good outcomes; inaction can lead to failure.	He meant to help, but never did—the road to Hell is paved with good intentions.
The shoemaker's son always goes barefoot	/ðə ˈʃuːmeɪkərz sʌn əlweɪz ɡoʊz ˈbeɪfʊt/	People often neglect their own needs while serving others.	My dentist has terrible teeth—the shoemaker's son always goes barefoot.
The squeaky wheel gets the oil	/ðə ˈskwɪki wɪl ɡets ði ɔɪl/	The most vocal or problematic person gets attention or help.	Q: Why does he always get served first? A: The squeaky wheel gets the oil.
The streets are paved with gold	/ðə striːts ɑr peɪvd wɪð ɡoʊld/	A place (often a city) is believed to offer easy wealth and opportunity.	He moved to New York thinking the streets are paved with gold.
The truth will set you free	/ðə truθ wɪl set ju fri/	Being honest, even if difficult, brings liberation from guilt or problems.	Q: Should I confess? A: The truth will set you free.
The way to a man's heart is through his stomach	/ðə weɪ tu ə mænz hɑrt ɪz θru hɪz ˈstʌmək/	Cooking delicious food is a way to win a man's affection.	She baked his favorite pie—the way to a man's heart is through his stomach.
The work praises the man.	/ðə wɜrk ˈpreɪzɪz ðə mæn/	A person's work reflects their character and skill.	Q: How do you know he's talented? A: The work praises the man.
There ain't no such thing as a free lunch	/ðer eɪnt noʊ sʌtʃ θɪŋ æz ə fri ˈlʌntʃ/	Nothing is truly free; everything has a cost.	Q: They're offering free money! A: There ain't no such thing as a free lunch.
There are more ways of killing a cat than choking it with cream	/ðer ɑr mɔr weɪz əv ˈkɪlɪŋ ə kæt ðən ˈtʃoʊkɪŋ ɪt wɪθ kriːm/	There are many ways to achieve a goal, not just one obvious method.	Q: How can we solve this? A: There are more ways of killing a cat than choking it with cream.
There are none so blind as those who will not see – attributed variously to Edmund Burke or George Santayana	/ðer ɑr nʌn soʊ blaɪnd æz ðoʊz hu wɪl nɒt si/	People who refuse to accept the truth are the most ignorant.	He ignored all evidence—there are none so blind as those who will not see.
There are two sides to every question	/ðer ɑr tu saɪdz tu ˈevri ˈkwɛstʃən/	Every issue has multiple perspectives.	Q: Who is right? A: There are two sides to every question.
There but for the grace of God go I	/ðer bʌt fɔr ðə ɡreɪs əv ɡɒd ɡoʊ aɪ/	I could have suffered the same misfortune as someone else if not for luck or divine mercy.	Seeing my friend lose his job made me think, 'There but for the grace of God go I.'
There is an exception to every rule	/ðer ɪz ən ɪk ˈsɛpʃən tu ˈevəri rul/	No rule applies in all cases; there is always at least one instance where it does not hold.	Q: 'I thought you never eat dessert.' A: 'Well, there is an exception to every rule—this is my birthday!'
There are always more fish in the sea	/ðer ɑr ˈɔlweɪz mɔr fɪʃ ɪn ðə si/	After a romantic breakup, there are many other potential partners available.	After his girlfriend left him, his friends said, 'Don't worry, there are always more fish in the sea.'
There is honour among thieves	/ðer ɪz ˈɒnər ə ˈmʌŋ θɪvz/	Even criminals have a code of conduct and loyalty to each other.	The gang members refused to testify against each other, proving there is honour among thieves.
There is many a good tune played on an old fiddle	/ðer ɪz ˈmeni ə ɡʊd tuːn pleɪd ɒn ən ɔʊld ˈfɪdəl/	Older people can still perform well or be valuable.	At 70, she won the piano competition—there is many a good tune played on an old fiddle.
There's many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip	/ðɜz ˈmeni ə slɪp ˈtwɪkst ðə kʌp ənd ðə lɪp/	Even when success seems certain, something can still go wrong at the last moment.	He was sure he'd get the job, but there's many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip—they hired someone else.
There is no accounting for tastes	/ðer ɪz noʊ ə ˈkaʊntɪŋ fɔr teɪstz/	People's preferences are subjective and cannot be explained or judged.	Q: 'Why would anyone like that movie?' A: 'There is no accounting for tastes.'
There is no fool like an old fool	/ðer ɪz noʊ ful laɪk ən ɔʊld ful/	An older person acting foolishly is worse because they should know better.	He invested his retirement savings in a scam—there is no fool like an old fool.
There is no I in team	/ðer ɪz noʊ aɪ ɪn tiːm/	Teamwork requires putting the group's success ahead of individual glory.	The coach told the star player, 'Remember, there is no I in team—pass the ball more.'
There's no need to wear a hair shirt	/ðɜz noʊ nid tu wɛr ə heɪ ʃɑrt/	You don't have to punish yourself or feel guilty unnecessarily.	You made a small mistake, but there's no need to wear a hair shirt—just apologize and move on.
There is no place like home	/ðer ɪz noʊ pleɪs laɪk hoʊm/	Home is the most comfortable and best place to be.	After a long trip, she sighed, 'There is no place like home.'

Expression	IPA	Meaning	Example
There is no shame in not knowing; the shame lies in not finding out.	/ðeɪ ɪz noʊ ʃeɪm ɪn nɒt 'noʊɪŋ; ðə ʃeɪm laɪz ɪn nɒt 'faɪndɪŋ aʊt/	It's okay to be ignorant, but it's wrong to stay ignorant when you could learn.	The teacher said, 'Don't be afraid to ask questions—there is no shame in not knowing; the shame lies in not finding out.'
There is no smoke without fire/Where there is smoke, there is fire	/ðeɪ ɪz noʊ smoʊk wɪ 'ðaʊt faɪər/	Rumors usually have some basis in truth.	When the scandal broke, people said, 'There is no smoke without fire.'
There is no such thing as a free lunch	/ðeɪ ɪz noʊ sʌtʃ θɪŋ æz ə fri ˈlʌntʃ/	Nothing is truly free; everything has a hidden cost.	The offer seemed too good to be true, and indeed there is no such thing as a free lunch—they charged hidden fees.
There is no such thing as bad publicity	/ðeɪ ɪz noʊ sʌtʃ θɪŋ æz bæd ɹʌb 'lɪsɪti/	Any media attention, even negative, can increase fame or sales.	The celebrity's arrest actually boosted album sales—there is no such thing as bad publicity.
There is no time like the present	/ðeɪ ɪz noʊ taɪm laɪk ðə 'prezənt/	Now is the best time to do something; don't delay.	Q: 'When should I start learning guitar?' A: 'There is no time like the present—start today!'
There are none so deaf as those who will not hear	/ðeɪ ɑr nʌn soʊ def æz ðoʊz hu wɪl nɒt hɪr/	People who refuse to listen are the hardest to reach.	I tried to warn him, but there are none so deaf as those who will not hear.
There's nowt so queer as folk	/ðeɪz naʊt soʊ kwɪr æz foʊk/	People are strange and unpredictable.	He collects garden gnomes—well, there's nowt so queer as folk.
There is one born every minute	/ðeɪ ɪz wʌn bɔrn 'evəri 'mɪnɪt/	There are many gullible people ready to be deceived.	The scammer knew there is one born every minute, so he kept selling fake watches.
There is safety in numbers (Proverbs 11:14)	/ðeɪ ɪz 'seɪfti ɪn 'nʌmbərz/	Being in a group reduces risk.	They decided to walk home together because there is safety in numbers.
They that sow the wind shall reap the whirlwind	/ðeɪ ðæt soʊ ðə wɪnd ʃæl rɪp ðə 'wɜrlwɪnd/	Small harmful actions can lead to severe consequences.	The company's unethical practices eventually caused its collapse—they that sow the wind shall reap the whirlwind.
Third time is a charm	/θɜrd taɪm ɪz ə tʃɑrm/	The third attempt is likely to succeed after two failures.	He failed the driving test twice, but the third time is a charm—he passed.
Those who do not learn from history are doomed to repeat it – George Santayana	/ðoʊz hu du nɒt lɜrn frəm 'hɪstəri ɑr duːmd tu rɪ'pɪt ɪt/	Ignoring past mistakes leads to making them again.	The politician ignored the lessons of the past, and those who do not learn from history are doomed to repeat it.
Those who live in glass houses should not throw stones	/ðoʊz hu lɪv ɪn glæs 'haʊzɪz ʃʊd nɒt θroʊ stəʊnz/	Don't criticize others if you have similar flaws.	He mocked her for being late, but he's always late himself—those who live in glass houses should not throw stones.
Those who know many languages live as many lives as the languages they know (Czech proverb)	/ðoʊz hu noʊ 'meni 'læŋgwɪdʒɪz lɪv æz 'meni laɪvz æz ðə 'læŋgwɪdʒɪz ðeɪ noʊ/	Learning a language gives you access to a new culture and perspective.	After learning Japanese, she felt she had a new identity—those who know many languages live as many lives as the languages they know.
Those who sleep with dogs will rise with fleas (James Sandford, _The Garden of Pleasure_)	/ðoʊz hu slɪp wɪð dɔgz wɪl raɪz wɪð flɪz/	Associating with bad people will bring you trouble.	He started hanging out with criminals and soon got arrested—those who sleep with dogs will rise with fleas.
Time and tide wait for no man	/taɪm ənd taɪd weɪt fɔr noʊ mæn/	Time passes without waiting for anyone; don't delay.	He kept postponing his trip, but time and tide wait for no man—he never went.
Time flies	/taɪm flaɪz/	Time passes quickly, especially when you're enjoying yourself.	Q: 'Is it already midnight?' A: 'Yes, time flies when you're having fun.'
Time goes by slowly when you are living intensely	/taɪm goʊz baɪ 'sləʊli wɛn ju ɑr 'lɪvɪŋ ɪn 'tɛnsli/	When you are fully engaged in life, each moment feels longer.	During the adventure, every second felt stretched—time goes by slowly when you are living intensely.
Time is a great healer	/taɪm ɪz ə greɪt 'hɪlə/	Emotional pain lessens over time.	After the breakup, she was devastated, but time is a great healer—she feels better now.
Time is wasted without purpose	/taɪm ɪz 'weɪstɪd wɪ 'ðaʊt 'pɜrpəs/	Spending time without a goal is wasteful.	He spent hours on social media with no aim—time is wasted without purpose.
(Only) time will tell	/'oʊnli taɪm wɪl tɛl/	The outcome will be known in the future.	Q: 'Do you think the new policy will work?' A: 'Only time will tell.'
To be worn out is to be renewed – Laozi, Chinese philosopher (604 BC – c. 531 BC)	/tu bi wɔrn aʊt ɪz tu bi rɪ'nud/	Exhaustion can lead to a fresh start or renewal.	After the long project ended, he felt exhausted but also refreshed—to be worn out is to be renewed.

Expression	IPA	Meaning	Example
To each his own	/tu itʃ hɪz oʊn/	Everyone has their own preferences; it's fine to differ.	Q: 'You like that weird music?' A: 'To each his own.'
To learn a language is to have one more window from which to look at the world (Chinese proverb)	/tu lɜːn ə 'læŋgwɪdʒ ɪz tu hæv wʌn mɔː 'wɪndəʊ frəm wɪtʃ tu lʊk æt ðə wɜːld/	Learning a language gives you a new perspective on life.	Studying Arabic opened her eyes to a new culture—to learn a language is to have one more window from which to look at the world.
To the victor go the spoils	/tu ðə 'vɪktər gou ðə spɔɪlz/	The winner gets all the rewards.	After winning the championship, they celebrated—to the victor go the spoils.
To travel hopefully is a better thing than to arrive	/tu 'trævəl 'həʊpəfəli ɪz ə 'betər θɪŋ ðæn tu ə 'raɪv/	The anticipation of a journey is often more enjoyable than the destination.	She loved planning trips more than actually going—to travel hopefully is a better thing than to arrive.
Tomorrow is another day	/tə 'mɔːru ɪz ə 'nʌðər deɪ/	There is always hope for a fresh start tomorrow.	After a bad day, she said, 'Tomorrow is another day.'
Tomorrow never comes	/tə 'mɔːru 'nevər kʌmz/	If you keep putting things off, they never get done.	He always says he'll start exercising tomorrow, but tomorrow never comes.
Too little, too late	/tu 'liːtl, tu leɪt/	An effort is insufficient and comes after the deadline.	The company's apology was too little, too late—customers had already left.
Too much rain makes a flood	/tu mʌtʃ reɪn meɪks ə flʌd/	Excess of anything can be harmful.	He gave too many details in his speech—too much rain makes a flood.
Trust, but verify	/trʌst, bʌt 'verɪfaɪ/	Have trust but also confirm facts independently.	The manager said, 'I trust you, but trust, but verify—show me the report.'
Truth is more valuable if it takes you a few years to find it – often attributed to French author Jules Renard	/truθ ɪz mɔːr 'væljuəbəl ɪf ɪt teɪks ju ə fju jɪrz tu faɪnd ɪt/	Knowledge gained through effort is more appreciated.	After years of research, he discovered the answer—truth is more valuable if it takes you a few years to find it.
(The) truth will out	/ðə truθ wɪl aʊt/	The truth will eventually be revealed.	He tried to hide his mistake, but the truth will out.
Turn your face toward the sun and the shadows fall behind you	/tɜːn jɔːr feɪs tə 'wɔːd ðə sʌn ənd ðə 'ʃædəʊz fɔːl bɪ 'haɪnd ju/	Focus on the positive and the negative will be behind you.	When feeling down, she remembered: turn your face toward the sun and the shadows fall behind you.
Two birds with one stone	/tu bɜːrdz wɪð wʌn stəʊn/	Achieve two goals with a single action.	By walking to work, I exercise and save money—two birds with one stone.
Two can play at that game	/tu kæn pleɪ æt ðæt geɪm/	I can retaliate with the same tactic.	He spread rumors about me, but two can play at that game.
Two is company, but three is a crowd	/tu ɪz 'kʌmpəni, bʌt θri ɪz ə kraʊd/	A pair enjoys intimacy, but a third person spoils it.	They wanted a romantic dinner alone—two is company, but three is a crowd.
Two wrongs (do not) make a right	/tu rɔːŋz du nɒt meɪk ə raɪt/	Revenge or repeating a wrong does not fix the original wrong.	He cheated you, but cheating him back won't help—two wrongs do not make a right.
Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown	/ʌn 'ɪzi laɪz ðə hed ðæt weəz ə kraʊn/	Leaders have heavy responsibilities and worries.	The president admitted, 'Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown.'
United we stand, divided we fall	/ju 'naɪtɪd wi stænd, dɪ 'vaɪdɪd wi fɔːl/	Together we are strong; apart we are vulnerable.	The union's motto: 'United we stand, divided we fall.'
Until the lions have their historians, tales of the hunt shall always glorify the hunter (African Proverb)	/ən 'tɪl ðə 'laɪənz hæv ðeɪ hɪ 'stɔːriənz, teɪlz əv ðə hʌnt ʃæl 'ɔːlweɪz 'glɔːrɪfaɪ ðə 'hʌntər/	History is written by the victors; the losers' perspective is ignored.	The colonial records only tell one side—until the lions have their historians, tales of the hunt shall always glorify the hunter.
Use it or lose it	/juz ɪt ɔːr luːz ɪt/	If you don't practice a skill, you'll lose it.	He stopped playing piano for years and forgot how—use it or lose it.
Ugly is as ugly does	/'ʌɡli ɪz æz 'ʌɡli dʌz/	A person's character, not appearance, defines ugliness.	She may be plain, but she's kind—ugly is as ugly does.
Up a creek without a paddle	/ʌp ə kriːk wɪ 'ðaʊt ə 'pædəl/	In a difficult situation with no way out.	He lost his wallet and phone—he was up a creek without a paddle.
United we bargain; divided we beg	/ju 'naɪtɪd wi 'bɑːɡɪn; dɪ 'vaɪdɪd wi beɡ/	Collective action gives power; disunity leads to weakness.	The workers formed a union because united we bargain; divided we beg.
Unity is strength	/'juːnɪti ɪz strɛŋkθ/	Being together makes you stronger.	The team won because unity is strength.

Expression	IPA	Meaning	Example
Variety is the spice of life. William Cowper, English poet	/vəˈraɪəti ɪz ðə spaɪs əv laɪf/	New experiences make life interesting.	She tried different cuisines every week—variety is the spice of life.
Virtue is its own reward	/ˈvɜːtʃu ɪz ɪts oʊn rɪˈwɔːrd/	Doing good is satisfying in itself, without external reward.	He helped the old lady without expecting thanks—virtue is its own reward.
Walls have ears	/wɔːlz hæv ɪrz/	Be careful what you say; someone might be listening secretly.	They whispered in the corner, but walls have ears—the boss heard everything.
Walnuts and pears you plant for your heirs	/ˈwɔːlnʌts ænd pɛrz juː plænt fɔːr jɔːr ɛrɪz/	Plant trees that take a long time to grow so that your children or grandchildren will benefit.	My grandfather planted these walnut trees decades ago. Walnuts and pears you plant for your heirs.
What does not kill me makes me stronger	/wʌt dʌz nɒt kɪl miː meɪks miː ˈstrɒŋər/	Difficult experiences build character and resilience.	After losing his job, he started his own business. What does not kill me makes me stronger.
Well done is better than well said	/wəl dʌn ɪz ˈbetər ðæn wəl seɪd/	Actions speak louder than words; it's better to accomplish something than to just talk about it.	Instead of promising to help, he just showed up and did the work. Well done is better than well said.
What cannot be cured must be endured	/wʌt ˈkænɒt biː kɜːrd mʌst biː ɪnˈdʒʊrd/	If a problem cannot be fixed, you have to accept it and bear it patiently.	The traffic is terrible, but there's no alternative route. What cannot be cured must be endured.
What goes around, comes around	/wʌt ɡəʊz əˈraʊnd, kʌmz əˈraʊnd/	The consequences of your actions will eventually come back to you, whether good or bad.	He cheated on his taxes and now he's being audited. What goes around, comes around.
What goes up must come down	/wʌt ɡəʊz ʌp mʌst kʌm daʊn/	Everything that rises will eventually fall, often used for stock markets or success.	The stock market has been booming, but remember, what goes up must come down.
What you lose on the swings you gain on the roundabouts	/wʌt juː luːz ɒn ðə swɪŋz juː ɡeɪn ɒn ðə ˈraʊndəbaʊts/	Losses in one area are balanced by gains in another; overall, things even out.	I lost money on that investment, but my other stocks did well. What you lose on the swings you gain on the roundabouts.
What is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander	/wʌt ɪz sɔːs fɔːr ðə ɡuːs ɪz sɔːs fɔːr ðə ˈɡændər/	What is acceptable for one person should be acceptable for another; equal treatment.	If he can take a day off, then I should be able to too. What is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander.
What is the worst that can happen?	/wʌt ɪz ðə wɜːrst ðæt kæn ˈhæpən/	A rhetorical question to encourage taking a risk by considering the worst possible outcome.	I'm nervous about asking for a raise. But what is the worst that can happen? They say no.
What the eye does not see (the heart does not grieve over)	/wʌt ðɪ aɪ dʌz nɒt siː ðə hɑːrt dʌz nɒt ɡriːv ˈoʊvər/	If you are unaware of a problem, you won't be upset by it.	He didn't know his son was skipping school. What the eye does not see, the heart does not grieve over.
When in Rome, (do as the Romans do). St. Ambrose, 347 AD	/wɛn ɪn roum, duː æz ðə ˈroumənz duː/	When visiting a foreign place, follow the local customs and behavior.	In Japan, it's polite to bow. When in Rome, do as the Romans do.
Whatever floats your boat	/wʌt ˈevər fləʊts jɔːr bəʊt/	Do whatever makes you happy or works for you; an expression of tolerance.	You want to paint your room purple? Whatever floats your boat.
When it rains it pours	/wɛn ɪt reɪnz ɪt pɔːrɪz/	When something bad happens, many bad things happen at once.	First my car broke down, then I lost my wallet. When it rains it pours.
When life gives you lemons, make lemonade	/wɛn laɪf ɡɪvz juː ˈlemənz, meɪk ˌleməˈneɪd/	Turn a negative situation into a positive one.	He lost his job but started his own business. When life gives you lemons, make lemonade.
When the cat is away, the mice will play	/wɛn ðə kæt ɪz əˈweɪ, ðə maɪs wɪl pleɪ/	When the person in charge is absent, people will misbehave or take advantage.	As soon as the teacher left the room, the students started talking. When the cat is away, the mice will play.
When the going gets tough, the tough get going	/wɛn ðə ˈɡəʊɪŋ ɡets tʌf, ðə tʌf ɡet ˈɡəʊɪŋ/	Strong people take action when faced with difficulties.	When the project hit a snag, she worked overtime to fix it. When the going gets tough, the tough get going.
When the oak is before the ash, then you will only get a splash; when the ash is before the oak, then you may expect a soak	/wɛn ðɪ oʊk ɪz bɪˈfɔːr ðɪ æʃ, ðɛn juː wɪl ˈoʊnli ɡet ə splæʃ; wɛn ðɪ æʃ ɪz bɪˈfɔːr ðɪ oʊk, ðɛn juː meɪ ɪkˈspekt ə soʊk/	A weather proverb: if oak leaves appear before ash, the summer will be dry; if ash appears first, it will be wet.	The oak is leafing out before the ash this year, so we'll only get a splash of rain.

Expression	IPA	Meaning	Example
When you have seen one, you have seen them all	/wɛn ju: hæv si:n wʌn, ju: hæv si:n ðeɪm ɔ:l/	Things of the same type are so similar that seeing one is enough to know what the others are like.	I don't need to visit every cathedral; when you have seen one, you have seen them all.
When you're in a hole, stop digging	/wɛn jʊr ɪn ə hoʊl, stɒp 'dɪɡɪŋ/	If you are in a bad situation, don't make it worse by continuing the same actions.	He kept lying to cover up his mistake. I told him, when you're in a hole, stop digging.
What is learnt in the cradle lasts to the tombs	/wʌt ɪz lɜ:nt ɪn ðə 'kreɪdlə læsts tu: ðə tu:mz/	Lessons learned early in life stay with you forever.	My grandmother taught me to be kind. What is learnt in the cradle lasts to the tombs.
What the eye does not see, the heart does not grieve over	/wʌt ðɪ aɪ dʌz nɒt si:, ðə hɑ:rt dʌz nɒt gri:v 'oʊvər/	If you are unaware of a problem, you won't be upset by it.	He didn't know his son was skipping school. What the eye does not see, the heart does not grieve over.
Where there is a will there is a way	/wɛr ðeɪr ɪz ə wɪl ðeɪr ɪz ə weɪ/	If you are determined enough, you will find a way to achieve your goal.	She was determined to learn piano despite her age. Where there is a will there is a way.
Where there is muck there is brass	/wɛr ðeɪr ɪz mʌk ðeɪr ɪz bræs/	Dirty or unpleasant work often brings money.	He made his fortune in waste management. Where there is muck there is brass.
Where there is life there is hope	/wɛr ðeɪr ɪz laɪf ðeɪr ɪz hoʊp/	As long as someone is alive, there is a chance for improvement or recovery.	The doctors say he might recover. Where there is life there is hope.
Whether you think you can, or you think you can't, you're right	/'weðər ju: θɪŋk ju: kæn, ɔ:r ju: θɪŋk ju: kænt, jʊr raɪt/	Your mindset determines your success; believing you can or cannot will make it true.	He was sure he would fail the exam, and he did. Whether you think you can, or you think you can't, you're right.
While there is life there is hope	/waɪl ðeɪr ɪz laɪf ðeɪr ɪz hoʊp/	As long as someone is alive, there is a chance for improvement or recovery.	The doctors say he might recover. While there is life there is hope.
Who will bell the cat?	/hu: wɪl bɛl ðə kæt/	Who will take on a dangerous or risky task for the common good?	Everyone wants the boss to know about the problem, but who will bell the cat?
Whom the Gods love die young	/hu:m ðə gɔ:dz lʌv daɪ jʌŋ/	Good people often die young, implying that the gods take them early because they are favored.	He was so talented and kind, and he passed away at 25. Whom the Gods love die young.
Why keep a dog and bark yourself?	/waɪ ki:p ə dɔ:g ænd bɑ:rk jɔ:r 'self/	If you have someone to do a task for you, don't do it yourself.	You hired an assistant, but you're doing all the work yourself. Why keep a dog and bark yourself?
With great power comes great responsibility (often attributed to Marvel Comics superhero Spider-Man)	/wɪθ greɪt 'paʊər kʌmz greɪt rɪ,spɒnsə'bɪlɪtɪ/	Those who have power must use it wisely and be accountable for their actions.	As a manager, you have authority over your team. With great power comes great responsibility.
Woe to the vanquished	/wəʊ tu: ðə 'væŋkwɪʃt/	The losers in a conflict suffer harsh consequences.	After the war, the defeated nation had to pay heavy reparations. Woe to the vanquished.
Woman is the root of both good and evil	/'wʊmən ɪz ðə ru:t ɒv bəʊθ gʊd ænd 'i:vəl/	Women can be the source of both positive and negative outcomes.	He blamed his troubles on his wife, but also credited her for his success. Woman is the root of both good and evil.
Wonders will never cease	/'wʌndərz wɪl 'nevər si:s/	An expression of surprise at something unexpected, often ironic.	He actually arrived on time! Wonders will never cease.
Work expands so as to fill the time available	/wɜ:rk ɪk'spændz sɔʊ æz tu: fɪl ðə taɪm ə'veɪləbəl/	If you have more time to do a task, you will tend to use all of it, even if the task doesn't require it.	I gave myself a week to write the report, and it took the whole week. Work expands so as to fill the time available.
Worrying never did anyone any good	/'wɜ:riɪŋ 'nevər dɪd 'eni,wʌn 'eni gʊd/	Worrying is pointless and doesn't solve problems.	Stop stressing about the exam; worrying never did anyone any good.
You are never too old to learn	/'ju: ɑ:r 'nevər tu: ould tu: lɜ:rn/	Learning is possible at any age.	My grandmother started painting at 80. You are never too old to learn.
You are what you eat	/'ju: ɑ:r wʌt ju: i:t/	Your health and well-being are directly affected by the food you consume.	If you eat junk food, you'll feel unhealthy. You are what you eat.
You can have too much of a good thing	/'ju: kæn hæv tu: mʌtʃ ʌv ə gʊd θɪŋ/	Even pleasant things can become harmful or unpleasant in excess.	I love chocolate, but eating a whole cake made me sick. You can have too much of a good thing.
You can lead a horse to water, but you cannot make it drink	/'ju: kæn li:d ə hɔ:rs tu: 'wɔ:tər, bʌt ju: 'kænɒt meɪk ɪt drɪŋk/	You can provide opportunities, but you cannot force someone to take them.	I gave him all the resources to learn, but he didn't study. You can lead a horse to water, but you cannot make it drink.

Expression	IPA	Meaning	Example
You can never/never can tell	/ju: kæn 'nævər/ 'nævər kæn tɛl/	The future is uncertain; anything can happen.	It might rain tomorrow, but you can never tell.
You cannot always get what you want	/ju: 'kænɒt 'ɔ:lweɪz get wʌt ju: wɒnt/	Life doesn't always give you what you desire; accept disappointment.	I wanted the promotion, but it went to someone else. You cannot always get what you want.
You cannot burn a candle at both ends.	/ju: 'kænɒt bɜ:rn ə 'kændəl æt boʊθ endz/	You cannot work too hard without rest; you will exhaust yourself.	She's working two jobs and studying. She'll burn out soon. You cannot burn a candle at both ends.
You cannot have your cake and eat it too	/ju: 'kænɒt hæv jɔ:r keɪk ænd i:t it tu:/	You cannot have two incompatible things at the same time; you must choose.	He wants a high salary and lots of free time. You cannot have your cake and eat it too.
You cannot get blood out of a stone	/ju: 'kænɒt get blʌd aʊt əv ə stəʊn/	You cannot get something from someone who has none to give.	I tried to get him to pay, but he's broke. You cannot get blood out of a stone.
You cannot make a silk purse from a sow's ear	/ju: 'kænɒt meɪk ə sɪlk pɜ:rs frʌm ə saʊz ɪr/	You cannot turn something of poor quality into something fine.	That old car will never be a luxury vehicle. You cannot make a silk purse from a sow's ear.
You cannot make an omelette without breaking eggs	/ju: 'kænɒt meɪk ən 'ɒmlɪt wɪ 'ðaʊt 'breɪkɪŋ eɡz/	To achieve something, you must accept some damage or sacrifice.	Laying off workers was hard, but the company had to cut costs. You cannot make an omelette without breaking eggs.
You cannot make bricks without straw	/ju: 'kænɒt meɪk brɪks wɪ 'ðaʊt strɔ:/	You cannot do a job without the necessary materials.	We can't build the shed without wood. You cannot make bricks without straw.
You cannot push a rope	/ju: 'kænɒt pʊʃ ə roʊp/	You cannot force something that is not designed to be forced; some things require a different approach.	Trying to force him to agree is useless. You cannot push a rope.
You cannot run with the hare and hunt with the hounds	/ju: 'kænɒt rʌn wɪð ðə heɪr ænd haʊnt wɪð ðə haʊndz/	You cannot support both sides of a conflict; you must choose one.	He claims to be loyal to both parties, but you cannot run with the hare and hunt with the hounds.
(You cannot) teach an old dog new tricks	/ju: 'kænɒt ti:tʃ ən ould dɔ:g nu: trɪks/	It is difficult to change someone's habits or teach them something new, especially when they are older.	My father refuses to use a smartphone. You cannot teach an old dog new tricks.
You cannot unscramble eggs	/ju: 'kænɒt ʌn 'skræmbəl eɡz/	Once something is done, it cannot be undone.	He already sent the email. You cannot unscramble eggs.
You cannot win them all	/ju: 'kænɒt wɪn ðeɪm ɔ:l/	You cannot succeed every time; accept failure as part of life.	I lost the game, but you cannot win them all.
You catch more flies with honey than with vinegar	/ju: kætʃ mɔ:r flaɪz wɪð 'hʌni ðæn wɪð 'vɪnɪɡər/	Being kind and polite is more effective than being harsh or rude.	If you want him to help, ask nicely. You catch more flies with honey than with vinegar.
You either die a hero or live long enough to see yourself become the villain	/ju: 'aɪðər daɪ ə 'hɪrəʊ ɔ:r lɪv lɔ:ŋ ɪ 'nʌf tu: sɪ: jɔ:r səlf bɪ 'klʌm ðə 'vɪləɪn/	If you stay in power or live long enough, you may eventually do something that makes you seem bad.	The beloved leader eventually became corrupt. You either die a hero or live long enough to see yourself become the villain.
You pay your dime and you takes your chances	/ju: peɪ jɔ:r daɪm ænd ju: teɪks jɔ:r 'tʃænsɪz/	When you spend money or take a risk, you accept the uncertain outcome.	Investing in that startup is risky. You pay your dime and you takes your chances.
You pay your money and you take your choice	/ju: peɪ jɔ:r 'mʌni ænd ju: teɪk jɔ:r tʃɔɪs/	You have the freedom to choose, but you must accept the consequences.	You can buy the cheaper model, but it may break sooner. You pay your money and you take your choice.
Youth is wasted on the young	/ju:θ ɪz 'weɪstɪd ɒn ðə jʌŋ/	Young people do not appreciate their youth and energy, which older people would value.	He spends his days playing video games instead of traveling. Youth is wasted on the young.
You may/might as well be hanged/hung for a sheep as (for) a lamb	/ju: meɪ/maɪt əz wɛl bi: hæŋd/hʌŋ fɔ:r ə ʃi:p əz fɔ:r ə læm/	If the punishment is the same for a small crime as for a big one, you might as well commit the bigger one.	Since I'm already late, I might as well take my time. You may as well be hanged for a sheep as for a lamb.
You must have rocks in your head	/ju: mʌst hæv rɒks ɪn jɔ:r hed/	You are foolish or crazy.	You're going to climb that mountain in this weather? You must have rocks in your head.
You scratch my back and I will scratch yours	/ju: skrætʃ maɪ bæk ænd aɪ wɪl skrætʃ jɔ:rɪz/	If you do a favor for me, I will do a favor for you; mutual back-scratching.	If you help me with this report, I'll cover your shift next week. You scratch my back and I will scratch yours.
Your future is created by what you do today, not tomorrow	/jɔr 'fju:tʃər ɪz kri'eɪtɪd baɪ wʌt ju du: tə'deɪ nɒt tə'mɔrəʊ/	The actions you take now determine your future; procrastination leads to missed opportunities.	Q: Why are you studying so hard for an exam that's months away? A: Your future is created by what you do today, not tomorrow.

Expression	IPA	Meaning	Example
You only live once.	/ju 'ounli liv wʌns/	Life is short, so take risks and enjoy experiences because you won't get a second chance.	Q: Should I quit my job to travel the world? A: You only live once—go for it!
You'll never get if you never go	/ju'l 'nɛvər get ɪf ju 'nɛvər goʊ/	You won't achieve anything unless you take action or take a chance.	Q: I'm afraid to apply for that job overseas. A: You'll never get if you never go—just apply!
You're never fully dressed without a smile	/jɔr 'nɛvər 'fʊli drɛst wɪ 'ðaʊt ə smaɪl/	A smile is the most important accessory; it makes you approachable and attractive.	Q: Why do you always tell me to smile before I leave? A: You're never fully dressed without a smile!
You've got to separate the wheat from the chaff	/juv gət tu 'sɛpəreɪt ðə wɪt frʌm ðə tʃæf/	You must distinguish what is valuable or useful from what is worthless.	Q: How do I choose which job offers to consider? A: You've got to separate the wheat from the chaff—focus on the ones with growth potential.
You've made your bed and you must lie in/on it	/juv meɪd jɔr bɛd ænd ju mʌst laɪ ɪn/ɒn ɪt/	You must accept the consequences of your own actions or decisions.	Q: I regret dropping out of college. A: You've made your bed and you must lie in it—now make the best of it.
Zeal without knowledge is fire without light	/zil wɪ 'ðaʊt 'nɔɪdʒ ɪz 'faɪər wɪ 'ðaʊt laɪt/	Enthusiasm without understanding or skill is useless or even harmful.	Q: He's so eager to help but keeps making mistakes. A: Zeal without knowledge is fire without light—he needs training.
(A) Zebra, is it black or could it be white?	/ə 'zɪbrə ɪz ɪt blæk ɔr kʊd ɪt bi waɪt/	A question about perspective or ambiguity; things are not always as they seem.	Q: Is the glass half full or half empty? A: A zebra, is it black or could it be white? It depends on how you see it.