



Yak Yacker
yakyacker.com

Everyday English Idioms

· 250 words · 2026-06-30

Expression	IPA	Meaning	Example
a piece of cake	uh PEES uh KAYK	very easy	The test was a piece of cake.
break the ice	brayk thuh EYESE	make people feel more relaxed	That joke helped break the ice.
under the weather	UN-der thuh WETH-er	sick or not feeling well	I'm feeling under the weather today.
hit the nail on the head	hit thuh NAYL on thuh HED	say exactly the right thing	You hit the nail on the head.
once in a blue moon	wuns in uh BLOO moon	very rarely	I eat fast food once in a blue moon.
spill the beans	spil thuh BEENZ	reveal a secret	Who spilled the beans about the surprise?
on the same page	on thuh SAYM PAYJ	agree; understand each other	Let's make sure we're on the same page.
call it a day	kawl it uh DAY	stop working for now	Let's call it a day and finish tomorrow.
hang in there	hang in thair	keep going; don't give up	Hang in there. The week is almost over.
get cold feet	get kold FEET	become nervous and back out of something	He got cold feet before the wedding.
let the cat out of the bag	let thuh kat out uhv thuh BAG	reveal a secret	Who let the cat out of the bag?
bite off more than you can chew	BYT awf mor than yoo kan CHOO	take on more than you can handle	I bit off more than I could chew with three projects.
cost an arm and a leg	/kɔːst æn ɑːrm ænd ə lɛɡ/	very expensive	That designer handbag costs an arm and a leg.
the ball is in your court	/ðə bɔːl ɪz ɪn jɔːr kɔːrt/	it's your turn to take action or make a decision	I've done everything I can. Now the ball is in your court.
beat around the bush	BEET uh-ROWND thuh BOOSH	avoid saying something directly	Stop beating around the bush and tell me the problem.
cut corners	kut KOR-nerz	do something badly or cheaply to save time or money	Don't cut corners on safety.
get the ball rolling	get thuh bawl ROHL-ing	start an activity or process	I'll send the email to get the ball rolling.
in a nutshell	in uh NUT-shel	in a very short summary	In a nutshell, the plan is delayed.
keep an eye on	keep an EYE on	watch carefully	Can you keep an eye on my bag?
miss the boat	mis thuh BOHT	miss an opportunity	If you wait too long, you'll miss the boat.
pull someone's leg	/pʊl 'sʌmwʌnz lɛɡ/	to tease or joke with someone	I was just pulling your leg about the surprise party.
speak of the devil	/spi:k ʌv ðə 'dɛvəl/	said when someone appears just after being mentioned	Speak of the devil! We were just talking about you.

Expression	IPA	Meaning	Example
the last straw	thuh last STRAW	the final problem that makes a situation unbearable	That broken promise was the last straw.
throw in the towel	throh in thuh TOW-uhl	give up	After three tries, she threw in the towel.
up in the air	up in thuh AIR	uncertain; not decided yet	The travel plans are still up in the air.
when pigs fly	when pigz fly	something that will never happen	He'll clean his room when pigs fly.
add fuel to the fire	ad FYOO-əl too thuh FY-er	make a bad situation worse	His rude comment just added fuel to the fire.
back to square one	bak too SKWAIR wun	back to the beginning	The repair failed, so we're back to square one.
burn the midnight oil	burn thuh MID-nyt OYL	work late into the night	I burned the midnight oil to finish the report.
by the skin of your teeth	by thuh SKIN uhv yor TEETH	barely; just in time	He passed the class by the skin of his teeth.
cross that bridge when we come to it	kraws that brij when wee kum too it	deal with a problem later, not now	We'll cross that bridge when we come to it.
cut to the chase	kut too thuh CHAYS	get to the main point quickly	Please cut to the chase and tell me the price.
down to earth	down too URTH	practical, friendly, not arrogant	She's famous, but very down to earth.
every cloud has a silver lining	EV-ree klowd haz uh SIL-ver LY-ning	good things can come from bad situations	Missing the train was frustrating, but every cloud has a silver lining.
get out of hand	get out uhv HAND	become difficult to control	The conversation got out of hand.
go the extra mile	goh thuh EK-struh MYL	do more than expected	The hotel went the extra mile for our family.
hit the sack	hit thuh SAK	go to bed	I'm tired. I'm going to hit the sack.
it's not rocket science	/Its na:t 'rɑ:kɪt 'saɪəns/	it's not very difficult to understand	Just follow the instructions. It's not rocket science.
kill two birds with one stone	kil too burdz with wun STOHN	solve two problems with one action	I picked up groceries and mailed the letter to kill two birds with one stone.
let sleeping dogs lie	let SLEEP-ing dawgz LY	do not bring up old trouble	It's better to let sleeping dogs lie.
on the fence	on thuh FENS	undecided	I'm still on the fence about moving.
out of the blue	out uhv thuh BLOO	suddenly; unexpectedly	She called out of the blue.
see eye to eye	see EYE too EYE	agree	They don't see eye to eye on money.
sit tight	sit TYT	wait patiently	Just sit tight. Someone will help you soon.
take it with a grain of salt	tayk it with uh grayn uhv salt	be skeptical; do not believe it completely	Take that rumor with a grain of salt.
the elephant in the room	/ði 'ɛlɪfənt ɪn ðə ru:m/	an obvious problem that people avoid discussing	Nobody mentioned the budget cuts, but it was the elephant in

Expression	IPA	Meaning	Example
			the room.
through thick and thin	throo thik and thin	through good times and bad times	They stayed friends through thick and thin.
time flies	tym flyz	time passes quickly	Time flies when you're having fun.
under the gun	/ˈʌndər ðə ɡʌn/	under pressure to meet a deadline	We're under the gun to finish this report by Friday.
weather the storm	WETH-er thuh storm	survive a difficult time	The company weathered the storm.
you can't judge a book by its cover	/juː kənt dʒʌdʒ ə bʊk baɪ ɪts ˈkʌvər/	don't judge someone or something based on appearance alone	He looks scruffy, but you can't judge a book by its cover.
a blessing in disguise	uh BLESS-ing in dih-SKYZ	something bad that later turns out to be good	Losing that job was a blessing in disguise.
actions speak louder than words	/ˈækfənz spiːk ˈləʊdər ðæn wɜːrds/	what you do is more important than what you say	He promised to help, but actions speak louder than words.
all ears	awl AIRZ	fully listening	Tell me your plan. I'm all ears.
ballpark figure	/ˈbɔːlpɑːrk ˈfɪɡjər/	a rough estimate	Can you give me a ballpark figure for the project cost?
bark up the wrong tree	bark up thuh wrong TREE	make the wrong choice or accuse the wrong person	If you think I broke it, you're barking up the wrong tree.
best of both worlds	/bɛst ʌv boʊθ wɜːrldz/	a situation where you can enjoy two different advantages	Working from home gives me the best of both worlds: flexibility and productivity.
blessing in disguise	/ˈblɛsɪŋ ɪn dɪsˈɡaɪz/	something that seems bad at first but turns out to be good	Losing that job was a blessing in disguise; I found a better one.
break a leg	brayk uh LEG	good luck	Break a leg in your audition!
caught red-handed	/kɔːt rɛd ˈhændɪd/	caught in the act of doing something wrong	He was caught red-handed stealing from the cash register.
compare apples and oranges	/kəmˈpɛr ˈæpəlz ænd ˈɔːrɪndʒɪz/	to compare two things that are very different	Comparing a startup to a multinational is like comparing apples and oranges.
cry over spilled milk	/kraɪ ˈoʊvər spɪld mɪlk/	to be upset about something that has already happened and cannot be changed	There's no use crying over spilled milk; let's move on.
curiosity killed the cat	/ˌkjʊrɪˈɑːsəti kɪld ðə kæt/	being too curious can get you into trouble	Don't ask too many questions; curiosity killed the cat.
don't cry over spilled milk	/dəʊnt kraɪ ˈoʊvər spɪld mɪlk/	don't be upset about something that has already happened and cannot be changed	I know you made a mistake, but don't cry over spilled milk.
drop the ball	drop thuh BAWL	make a mistake; fail to do your job	We dropped the ball on the deadline.
every now and then	EV-ree now and then	sometimes	I call my cousin every now and then.
face the music	fays thuh MYOO-zik	accept the consequences of your actions	He lied, and now he has to face the music.
get your act together	get yor akt too-GETH-er	start behaving responsibly	You need to get your act together.

Expression	IPA	Meaning	Example
give someone the cold shoulder	gɪv SUN-wun thuh kold SHOHL-der	ignore someone on purpose	She gave him the cold shoulder after the argument.
go back to the drawing board	/ˈɡoʊ bæk tuː ðə ˈdɹɔːɪŋ bɔːrd/	to start over because a plan failed	The prototype didn't work, so we have to go back to the drawing board.
good things come to those who wait	/ɡʊd θɪŋz kʌm tuː ðəʊz huː weɪt/	patience is rewarded	I waited months for the promotion, but good things come to those who wait.
ignorance is bliss	/ˈɪɡnərəns ɪz blɪs/	not knowing something can be more comfortable than knowing the truth	I didn't check the news; ignorance is bliss.
it takes two to tango	/ɪt teɪks tuː tuː ˈtæŋɡoʊ/	both parties are responsible for a situation	Don't blame him entirely; it takes two to tango.
jump on the bandwagon	jump on thuh BAND-wag-ən	join something popular	Everyone is jumping on the bandwagon.
keep your chin up	keep yor CHIN up	stay positive	Keep your chin up. Things will improve.
make a long story short	mayk uh long STOR-ee short	give the short version	To make a long story short, he said yes.
no pain, no gain	noh PAYN noh GAYN	you must work hard to get results	No pain, no gain if you want progress.
off the top of my head	awf thuh TOP uhv my HED	without checking carefully; from memory	Off the top of my head, I think the meeting is at 3.
on cloud nine	on KLOWD nyne	extremely happy	She was on cloud nine after the promotion.
put all your eggs in one basket	put awl yor EGZ in wun BAS-kit	risk everything on one plan	Don't put all your eggs in one basket.
read between the lines	reed bih-TWEEN thuh LYNZ	understand the hidden meaning	Read between the lines of that email.
rock the boat	rok thuh BOHT	cause trouble or change in a stable situation	Don't rock the boat before the merger.
take a rain check	tayk uh RAYN chek	accept later, not now	I can't come tonight, but I'll take a rain check.
the whole nine yards	thuh hohl nyn YARDZ	everything; all the way	They offered the whole nine yards.
your guess is as good as mine	yor gess ɪz əz ɡʊd əz maɪn	I do not know either	Where is he? Your guess is as good as mine.
a dime a dozen	uh DYM uh DUH-zən	very common; not special	Cheap phone cases are a dime a dozen.
a drop in the bucket	uh DROP in thuh BUH-kit	a very small amount compared with what is needed	Ten dollars is a drop in the bucket for this project.
all in the same boat	awl in thuh SAYM BOHT	in the same difficult situation	We're all in the same boat during tax season.
at the drop of a hat	at thuh DROP uhv uh HAT	immediately; without much reason	He would travel at the drop of a hat.
back on track	bak on TRAK	returning to normal or correct progress	The team is back on track after the delay.
ball is in your court	bawl ɪz ɪn yor KORT	it is your turn to act or decide	I sent the offer. Now the ball is in your court.

Expression	IPA	Meaning	Example
bend over backwards	bend OH-ver BAK-werdz	make a big effort to help	She bent over backwards to make us comfortable.
bet your bottom dollar	bet yor BAH-təm DAH-lər	be completely sure	You can bet your bottom dollar he'll be late.
bury the hatchet	BAIR-ee thuh HACH-it	end a conflict and become friendly	They finally buried the hatchet.
butterflies in my stomach	BUH-ter-flyz in my STUH-mək	nervous feeling	I get butterflies in my stomach before presentations.
call the shots	kawl thuh SHOTS	make the decisions	She calls the shots in that team.
catch someone red-handed	kach SUN-wun red-HAN-did	catch someone while doing something wrong	The kids were caught red-handed stealing cookies.
change of heart	chaynj uhv HART	a change in opinion or feeling	He had a change of heart and stayed home.
chip in	chip IN	contribute money, help, or ideas	Everyone chipped in for the gift.
come in handy	kum in HAN-dee	be useful	This extra charger will come in handy.
count your blessings	kownt yor BLESS-ingz	be grateful for what you have	When life is hard, count your blessings.
devil's advocate	DEV-uhlz AD-vuh-kət	someone who argues the opposite side to test an idea	I'll play devil's advocate for a minute.
dog days of summer	dawg dayz uhv SUM-er	the hottest, most uncomfortable part of summer	The dog days of summer are brutal here.
don't count your chickens before they hatch	dohnt kownt yor CHIK-inz bih-FOR thay HACH	don't assume success too early	Don't count your chickens before they hatch.
easy does it	EE-zee DUHZ it	slow down; be careful	Easy does it with that heavy box.
elephant in the room	EL-uh-fənt in thuh ROOM	an obvious problem people avoid talking about	No one mentioned the layoffs, but that was the elephant in the room.
fair and square	FAIR and skwair	honestly and fairly	She won the race fair and square.
far cry from	far KRY frum	very different from	This tiny apartment is a far cry from my old house.
fiddle while Rome burns	FID-I while ROHM burnz	ignore a serious problem and do something useless	The company was fiddling while Rome burned.
fight tooth and nail	fyt tooth and NAYL	fight very hard	They fought tooth and nail to keep the business open.
fit as a fiddle	fit az uh FID-I	very healthy	My grandfather is 80 and still fit as a fiddle.
fit the bill	fit thuh BILL	be exactly right for a purpose	This small car fits the bill for city driving.
fly off the handle	fly awf thuh HAN-dl	become suddenly very angry	Don't fly off the handle over one mistake.
for crying out loud	for KRY-ing out LOWD	express frustration	For crying out loud, turn off the alarm.
get a kick out of	get uh KIK out uhv	find something funny or enjoyable	She gets a kick out of old cartoons.

Expression	IPA	Meaning	Example
get down to business	get down too BIZ-nis	start the main work	Let's get down to business.
get the hang of it	get thuh HANG uhv it	learn how to do something	It took me a week to get the hang of it.
go out on a limb	goh out on uh LIM	take a risk by saying or doing something	I'll go out on a limb and say she's right.
go overboard	goh OH-ver-bord	do too much	Don't go overboard with the decorations.
go with the flow	goh with thuh FLOH	adapt to what happens	I don't have a strict plan; I'll just go with the flow.
green light	green LYT	permission to start	The project got the green light yesterday.
have a bone to pick	hav uh bohn too pik	have a complaint or problem with someone	I have a bone to pick with you.
have bigger fish to fry	hav BIG-er fish too fry	have more important things to do	I can't argue now. I have bigger fish to fry.
have mixed feelings	hav mikst FEE-lingz	feel both positive and negative	I have mixed feelings about moving.
it's not rocket science	its not RAH-kit SY-ens	it is not very difficult	Relax. It's not rocket science.
jump the gun	jump thuh GUN	act too early	We may be jumping the gun with this announcement.
kick the bucket	kik thuh BUH-kit	die	That old machine finally kicked the bucket.
know the ropes	noh thuh ROHPS	know how something works	She knows the ropes at the office now.
lay it on thick	lay it on THIK	exaggerate praise or emotion	He was laying it on thick with the compliments.
like a broken record	lyk uh BROH-kən REK-erd	repeat the same thing too much	You sound like a broken record.
like pulling teeth	lyk POO-ling teeth	very difficult or annoying	Getting him to answer was like pulling teeth.
live and learn	liv and lern	learn from a mistake	I forgot the tickets, but live and learn.
long story short	long STOR-ee short	to give the short version	Long story short, we missed the flight.
look on the bright side	look on thuh bryt SYD	focus on the positive part	Look on the bright side. At least it didn't rain.
make ends meet	mayk ENDZ meet	have enough money for basic needs	It's hard to make ends meet these days.
move the goalposts	moov thuh GOHL-posts	change the rules or expectations unfairly	They keep moving the goalposts.
my hands are tied	my handz ar TYD	I cannot help because of rules or limits	I'd like to help, but my hands are tied.
near and dear	neer and DEER	very important emotionally	This issue is near and dear to my heart.
open the floodgates	OH-pən thuh FLUD-gayts	allow a lot of something to happen at once	The apology opened the floodgates for complaints.

Expression	IPA	Meaning	Example
pain in the neck	PAYN in thuh NEK	annoying person or thing	This printer is a pain in the neck.
pay through the nose	pay throo thuh NOHZ	pay too much money	We paid through the nose for parking.
piece of the pie	pees uhv thuh PY	a share of something, especially money or success	Everyone wants a piece of the pie.
pull someone's leg	pool SUN-wunz LEG	joke with someone	Relax, I'm just pulling your leg.
put your foot in your mouth	put yor foot in yor MOUTH	say something embarrassing or rude by mistake	I really put my foot in my mouth at the party.
rain on someone's parade	rayn on SUN-wunz puh-RAYD	ruin someone's plans or mood	Sorry to rain on your parade, but the store is closed.
red tape	red TAYP	slow, annoying official rules and procedures	The permit process is full of red tape.
right up my alley	ryt up my AL-ee	perfectly suited to my interests	That museum is right up my alley.
ring a bell	ring uh BEL	sound familiar	The name rings a bell.
roll with the punches	rohl with thuh PUN-chiz	adapt to difficult changes	We had to roll with the punches.
same old, same old	saym old saym old	nothing new; usual routine	How's work? Same old, same old.
sell like hotcakes	sel lyk HOT-kayks	sell very quickly	The new phone sold like hotcakes.
shoot the breeze	shoot thuh BREEZ	chat casually	We sat outside and shot the breeze.
sleep on it	sleep on it	think about it overnight before deciding	Don't decide now. Sleep on it.
small talk	smol tawk	light, casual conversation	I'm bad at small talk at parties.
so far, so good	soh far soh good	everything is fine up to now	So far, so good with the new job.
square peg in a round hole	SKWAIR peg in uh rownd HOHL	someone or something that does not fit well	He felt like a square peg in a round hole at that company.
stick your neck out	stik yor NEK out	take a risk, especially by supporting someone or something	I'll stick my neck out and recommend her.
take something with a pinch of salt	tayk SUN-thing with uh PINCH uhv solt	British English for "take it with a grain of salt"	Take it with a pinch of salt.
the tip of the iceberg	thuh tip uhv thuh EYESE-berg	only a small visible part of a bigger problem	The delays are just the tip of the iceberg.
throw someone under the bus	throh SUN-wun UN-der thuh BUS	blame someone else to protect yourself	He threw his teammate under the bus.
tied up	tyd up	busy; unable to stop	I'm tied up in a meeting right now.
touch base	tuch BAYSE	contact someone briefly	I'll touch base with you tomorrow.
turn a blind eye	turn uh blynd EYE	ignore something on purpose	The manager turned a blind eye to the mistake.
upper hand	UP-er HAND	advantage or control	The home team has the upper hand.

Expression	IPA	Meaning	Example
water under the bridge	WAW-ter UN-der thuh brij	something in the past that is no longer important	That argument is water under the bridge now.
wear many hats	wair MEN-ee hats	have many roles or responsibilities	At a startup, people wear many hats.
what goes around comes around	what gohz uh-ROUND kumz uh-ROUND	people eventually get what they deserve	He was unkind, and what goes around comes around.
where there's a will, there's a way	wair thairz uh wil thairz uh WAY	if someone is determined, they can find a solution	We can do this. Where there's a will, there's a way.
within arm's reach	wih-THIN armz REECH	very close	Keep your passport within arm's reach.
wishy-washy	WISH-ee-WAH-shee	not clear; weak; unable to decide	His answer was too wishy-washy.
you can't judge a book by its cover	yoo kant juhj uh book by its KUV-er	you should not judge by appearance only	You can't judge a book by its cover.
zero in on	ZEER-oh in on	focus closely on something	Let's zero in on the main issue.
ace up your sleeve	ays up yor SLEEV	secret advantage	She has an ace up her sleeve.
all bark and no bite	awl bark and noh BITE	sounding scary but not acting scary	The dog is all bark and no bite.
at your wit's end	at yor WITS end	very frustrated and out of ideas	I'm at my wit's end with this app.
behind the scenes	bih-HYND thuh seenz	not visible to the public; privately	There was a lot happening behind the scenes.
blow off steam	bloh awf STEEM	release stress or anger	I went for a run to blow off steam.
born with a silver spoon in your mouth	born with uh SIL-ver spoon in yor MOWTH	born into wealth	He was born with a silver spoon in his mouth.
bottom line	BOT-əm lyn	the most important point	The bottom line is that we need more time.
by the book	by thuh BOOK	following rules exactly	She does everything by the book.
cash cow	kash KOW	a product or thing that makes a lot of money	That app is a cash cow for the company.
clear as day	kleer az DAY	very easy to see or understand	The message was clear as day.
come out of your shell	kum out uhv yor SHEL	become more confident and social	She's coming out of her shell at school.
crack the code	krak thuh KOHD	solve a difficult problem	We finally cracked the code.
dead giveaway	ded GIV-uh-way	an obvious sign	The stain was a dead giveaway.
down the drain	down thuh DRAYN	wasted; ruined	All that effort went down the drain.
down to the wire	down too thuh WYR	until the last possible moment	The decision went down to the wire.
drag your feet	drag yor FEET	do something slowly because you do not want to do it	Stop dragging your feet and submit the form.
drop a line	drop uh LYN	send a short message or contact someone briefly	Drop me a line when you arrive.
feel at home	feel at HOHM	feel comfortable and relaxed	I felt at home right away.

Expression	IPA	Meaning	Example
find your feet	fynd yor FEET	become comfortable in a new situation	It takes time to find your feet in a new city.
fresh out of	fresh out uhv	have none left	We're fresh out of milk.
get a move on	get uh MOOV on	hurry up	We need to get a move on.
get the message	get thuh MEH-sij	understand the hint or meaning	She wasn't interested, but he didn't get the message.
go bananas	goh buh-NA-nəz	become very excited or crazy	The crowd went bananas.
go downhill	goh down-HIL	get worse	The relationship went downhill after the move.
go for broke	goh for brohk	risk everything to try to win or succeed	We went for broke on the final round.
go haywire	goh HAY-wyr	stop working normally; become chaotic	The system went haywire.
grab the bull by the horns	grab thuh bool by thuh HORNZ	face a problem directly	We need to grab the bull by the horns.
half the battle	haf thuh BAT-əl	the most difficult or important part	Starting is half the battle.
head over heels	hed OH-ver heelz	deeply in love	They're head over heels for each other.
hit a wall	hit uh WAWL	reach a point where progress stops	After three hours, I hit a wall.
hit the ground running	hit thuh grownd RUN-ing	start something with strong energy and speed	She hit the ground running in her new job.
in hot water	in hot WAW-ter	in trouble	He's in hot water with his boss.
in the loop	in thuh LOOP	informed; included in updates	Keep me in the loop.
keep tabs on	keep TABZ on	monitor or watch	I keep tabs on my expenses.
knock it off	nok it awf	stop doing that	Knock it off. I'm trying to work.
last but not least	last but not leest	said before the final item, showing it is still important	Last but not least, thank you all for coming.
learn the hard way	lern thuh hard WAY	learn by making a mistake	I learned the hard way to save backups.
light at the end of the tunnel	lyt at thuh end uhv thuh TUN-əl	hope after a difficult period	There's light at the end of the tunnel.
lock horns	lok HORNZ	argue or compete strongly	The two candidates locked horns in the debate.
log in	log in	enter a computer or online account	Please log in to continue.
loose cannon	loos KAN-ən	a person who is unpredictable	He's a bit of a loose cannon.
make a scene	mayk uh seen	create a public disturbance	Please don't make a scene.
make waves	mayk wayvz	cause trouble or attract attention by changing things	She made waves with her comments.
miss the mark	mis thuh mark	fail to achieve the goal	The speech missed the mark.
needless to say	NEED-ləs too say	obviously; it goes without saying	Needless to say, we were disappointed.
no strings attached	noh stringz uh-TACHT	with no hidden conditions	It's a free trial with no strings attached.

Expression	IPA	Meaning	Example
not my cup of tea	not my KUP uhv TEE	not something I like	Horror movies are not my cup of tea.
once and for all	wuns and for awl	finally and completely	Let's settle this once and for all.
on the edge	on thuh EJ	very nervous or tense	The suspense kept everyone on the edge.
open a can of worms	OH-pən uh kan uhv WERMZ	create a complicated problem	That question opened a can of worms.
out of hand	out uhv HAND	not controlled	The argument got out of hand quickly.
over the moon	OH-ver thuh MOON	very happy	She was over the moon about the news.
push your luck	poosh yor LUK	ask for too much or take too many risks	Don't push your luck.
rain or shine	rayn or SHYN	whatever the weather or situation	We walk every morning, rain or shine.
raise the bar	rayz thuh BAR	set a higher standard	This teacher really raised the bar.
run in circles	run in SER-kulz	do a lot without making progress	We're just running in circles.
scratch the surface	skrach thuh SUR-fis	only understand a small part	We've only scratched the surface.
shake a leg	shayk uh LEG	hurry up	Shake a leg. We're late.
show your true colors	shoh yor troo KUL-erz	reveal your real personality or intentions	He showed his true colors after the deal.
sit on the fence	sit on thuh FENS	avoid choosing a side	She's sitting on the fence.
something to write home about	SUM-thing too ryt hohm uh-BOUT	not especially impressive	The meal was okay, but nothing to write home about.
spill the tea	spil thuh TEE	share gossip or juicy news	Come on, spill the tea.
storm in a teacup	storm in uh TEE-kup	a small problem made to seem big	The argument was just a storm in a teacup.
take the bull by the horns	tayk thuh bool by thuh HORNZ	deal with a problem directly	She took the bull by the horns and fixed it.
the ballpark	thuh BAWL-park	a rough estimate or general range	Can you give me a ballpark number?
time is money	tym iz MUN-ee	time is valuable	Let's hurry. Time is money.
toss and turn	tos and TURN	sleep badly, moving a lot in bed	I tossed and turned all night.
twist someone's arm	twist SUN-wunz ARM	persuade someone strongly, often jokingly	You don't need to twist my arm.
up and running	up and RUN-ing	working or operating properly	The new system is up and running.
walk on eggshells	wawk on EG-shellz	be very careful not to upset someone	I feel like I'm walking on eggshells.
warm up to	worm up too	begin to like or accept something	I'm warming up to the idea.
wear your heart on your sleeve	wair yor hart on yor SLEEV	show your feelings openly	He wears his heart on his sleeve.
weigh the pros and cons	way thuh prohz and konz	compare good points and bad points	We need to weigh the pros and cons.

Expression	IPA	Meaning	Example
when in doubt	when in dɔwt	if you are unsure	When in doubt, ask for help.
white lie	wyte LY	a small lie told to avoid hurting someone	It was just a white lie.
work out	werk out	exercise; or succeed; or solve a problem	We need to work out the details.
you're pulling my leg	yor POO-ling my LEG	you are joking with me	You're pulling my leg, right?
zip your lip	zip yor LIP	be quiet	Zip your lip and listen.