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Getting All the Ducks in a Row: Towards a Method for the
Consolidation of English Idioms

Ethan Michael Lynn

A thesis submitted to the faculty of
Brigham Young University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

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ABSTRACT

Getting All the Ducks in a Row: Towards a Method for the Consolidation of English Idioms

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Master of Arts

Idioms play an important role in language acquisition but learners do not have sufficient time to learn all of them. Therefore, learners need to focus on the most frequently occurring idioms, which can be determined by corpus searches. Building off previous corpus studies, this study generated a comprehensive list of English idioms by combining lists from several sources and developed a methodology for organizing and sorting idioms within the list. In total, over 27,000 idiom forms were amalgamated and a portion of the list was compiled, which featured 2,697 core idioms and 5,559 variant idiom forms. It was found that over 35% of idioms varied structurally and thirteen types of idiom variation were highlighted. Additionally, issues concerning idiom boundaries were investigated. These results are congruent with previous findings which show that variation is a commonly occurring element of idioms. Furthermore, specific problematic elements for future corpus searches and English language learners are identified.

Keywords: idioms, corpus linguistics, idiom variation, ESL

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Idioms are a necessary element of language for learners to acquire because they frequently occur in all aspects of language. In fact, Cooper (1998) estimates that people use approximately 980 idiom tokens per day, and 20 million in a lifetime. Idioms also add depth to the language because they “contain rich, unique features of the language and culture” (Liu, 2008, p. 104). Due to their frequency and unique role in communication, idioms “can be a great asset to learners in acquiring a new language” (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999, p. 39). Therefore, it is necessary for learners to acquire idioms in order to promote authentic and natural use of the language (Cooper, 1999; Fernando, 1996). However, idioms can be difficult to acquire because their non-literal nature “[adds] confusion and difficulty to the learning of language” (D'Angelo Bromley, 1984, p. 272). Thus, “the learning of idioms must...be considered an integral part of vocabulary learning” (Irujo, 1986, p.236). Because of the importance of idiom acquisition, how to effectively help English language learners (ELLs) acquire idioms has been an area of focus for teachers and scholars alike.

One of the most important issues to consider is which idioms should be taught. Cooper (1998) admonishes teachers to “choose idioms that are frequently encountered in the target language” because, as Liu (2008) states, “it is impossible for language learners to grasp all idioms, especially in a short period of time” (p. 118). Consequently, “selecting appropriate idioms for instruction is...very important” (p. 118). Even though there is a need for teaching frequently occurring idioms, it has been noted that idiom books and dictionaries are “double-edged swords, since they often contain items that are obsolete, or of little or no value to a specific group of students” (Yorio, 1980, p.439) because “most...sources—general dictionaries, or specialist dictionaries of idioms—record and perpetuate items not necessarily found in current

English” (Moon, 1998, p. 45). Liu (2003) explains that “the selection of idioms in [idiom books and idiom dictionaries] often reflects primarily the authors' intuition rather than any empirical data” (p.672). Clearly, “idiom teaching materials would be more helpful if... [the idioms included in teaching materials] were based on frequency and range of occurrence in authentic language” (Grant, 2007, p. 181). Therefore, corpus studies of the most frequently occurring idioms in the English language are needed because “corpus research has become the most effective method of ascertaining the use frequency of idioms” (Liu, 2008, p.109). The end goal of using a corpus to generate the most frequently occurring idioms is to inform and improve both the teaching of idioms and the materials needed to do so.

Useful studies of idiom frequency using corpora have been conducted in the recent past (e.g., Grant, 2005; Grant, 2007; Grant & Nation, 2006; Liu, 2003; Moon, 1998; Simpson & Mendis, 2003). However, Liu (2003) recommends that “the results of [his] study...need to be interpreted cautiously” (p.687). In fact, this same concern could apply to the results of any of the studies to date. For example, the researchers used differing definitions of idioms, some of which were far too narrow, to capture the full scope of idioms in English. Another concern found in previous studies is that although issues regarding form variation in idioms have been alluded to (Grant & Nation, 2006; Moon, 1998; Liu, 2003; Liu, 2008), problematic features of idiom form that could complicate future corpus studies need to be more thoroughly investigated and analyzed. Finally, the literature neglects how these form-based issues can potentially affect the acquisition of idioms.

To begin addressing these form and definitional issues involving idioms, the current study attempted to present a clear methodology for consolidating and organizing the massive amount of English idioms, allowing corpus researchers to search for, count, and establish

pedagogically useful lists for English language education. This methodology also included an examination of problematic features of idioms that could complicate both corpus searching and the acquisition of idioms for learners.

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

Defining Idiom

Language researchers have not been able to agree upon a definition of idiom because “idiom is an ambiguous term, used in conflicting ways” (Moon, 1998, p.3). Liu (2003) noted that some scholars adhere to a more inclusive definition which includes all fixed phrases, proverbs, formulaic speech, and polysemic words. For example, Cooper (1998) considers metaphoric words like *weigh* as in *weigh a decision*, and slang phrases like *you got it* to be idioms. Yet, others adhere to a narrow and limited definition that excludes decomposable and figurative expressions. To illustrate, Grant and Bauer (2004) consider phrases like *red herring* and *the Big Apple* to be idioms, while rejecting *dog in the manger* and *between the devil and the deep blue sea* as idioms. Furthermore, some scholars include phrasal verbs in their definition of idiom (Liu, 2003), while others choose to segregate idioms and phrasal verbs (Simpson & Mendis, 2003). As a result of the lack of consensus among scholars, some have estimated that there are over 10,000 idioms in English (Brenner, 2003), while others claim that there only 103 (Grant, 2005; Grant & Nation, 2006).

How to define idiom is therefore left to the discretion of the researcher. This is the case because, as Tabossi and Zardon (1993) declare, idioms are “multi-faceted and require differing viewpoints and methodological approaches” (145). Consequently, idioms are defined and identified “on the basis of criteria which strike the analyst as being the most illuminating” (Fernando, 1996, p.40). It is unavoidable that varying criteria and methods will be generated based on the scope and context of a given study.

This study adopts Liu’s (2008) definition of idiom: “[a] multiword expression that [is] invariant or variance-restricted in structure and often (not always) non- or semi-literal in

meaning” (p.15-16). Although this definition asserts that idioms are multiword expressions, compound words can be considered idioms (e.g., *airhead*). This study did not exclude idioms on the basis of not being multiword. Liu’s definition also includes those idioms that are invariant in their form while also considering those with a limited range of variation, which is discussed in further detail below. Finally, this definition includes idioms that are both non-literal and that have a degree of literalness. This is congruent with the work of Fernando (1996) who developed a continuum featuring varying degrees of literalness: non-literal (e.g., *spick and span*), semi-literal (e.g., *drop names*), and literal (e.g., *arm in arm*). It is important to note that this study made no attempt to exclude idioms based on their degree of literalness, because the nature of determining the literalness of an idiom is indeed quite subjective.

As explained above, a liberal interpretation of Liu’s (2008) definition was employed for this study. Therefore, all entries in established idiom dictionaries and/or existing electronic lists can be used, because it can be argued that they adhere to Liu’s (2008) definition. However, phrasal verb dictionaries were not included as sources of idioms because phrasal verbs are distinct enough to merit separate investigation and analysis (Gardner & Davies, 2007). The remainder of this study uses this definition of idiom in developing a methodology for amalgamating and producing an electronic list of idioms for performing corpus searches.

Idiom Form Variation

The balance between invariance and variance-restriction with regard to the structure of idioms merits further investigation. At one extreme, Grant and Bauer (2004) explain that “frozen/fixed” phrases cannot allow “permutation,...paradigmatic replacement, [or] addition or deletion of elements” (p.44). To illustrate, Fernando (1996) states that idioms such as *bread and butter* and *fancy free* have become “conventionally fixed in a specific order and lexical form”

(p.31), and, therefore, are considered idioms. However, Moon (1998) found that, although fixedness is an essential characteristic of idioms, the data from her corpus study “show clearly that [the forms of idioms] are often unstable” (p.120). In fact, nearly 40% of the idioms in her study demonstrated variation, and 14% had two or more examples of variation. Thus, it has been said that idioms are phrases that have “a restricted set of variants” (e.g., *seize/grasp the nettle* and *have/get cold feet*) (Fernando, 1996, p.31-32). Although some variation in idioms is acceptable to some scholars, others do not consider expressions that demonstrate a high degree of variability as idioms. In order to find a balance between an acceptable amount of variation and too much variation, Fernando (1996) explained that the phrases *catch a train* or *catch a bus* are not considered idioms, even though the word *catch* is used idiomatically, because the word *catch* can co-occur with several forms of transportation. Thus, any of the combinations using the idiomatic meaning of *catch* (e.g., *catch a cab*, *catch a ride*, etc.) is considered to be too variable in its form to qualify as an idiom (p.31). It is important to note that this study makes no attempt to evaluate whether an idiom contains a restricted set of variants or if it varies too much because such distinctions can be subjective. Rather, in an attempt to be as inclusive as possible, if an idiom occurs in an idiom dictionary or other idiom resource, it is considered an idiom for this study.

The numerous types of idiom variation have been explored in previous studies. Table 1 shows common types of idiom variation.

Table 1

Types of Variation from Previous Studies

Type of Variation	Example
Verb	Foot/fit the bill
Noun	Tempt fate/providence
Adjective/Modifier	Bad/rotten apple
Particle	Out of/from thin air
Conjunction	Hit and/or miss
Amplification	(out) on a limb
Truncation	Finders keepers (loser weepers)
Creative Blending	Twist someone's arm → arm twisting

Adapted from Moon (1998) and Simpson & Mendis (2003)

Furthermore, there is a difference between idioms found in dictionaries (canonical form) and idioms used in fluent speech. The types of variations encountered in oral communication “could pose difficulties in comprehension when learners encounter idioms as actually used by fluent speakers” (Simpson & Mendis, 2003, p.435-436).

Moreover, variation is particularly problematic for researchers conducting corpus searches (see Grant, 2005; Grant & Nation, 2006; Liu, 2003; Moon, 1998; Simpson & Mendis, 2003). In particular, Grant (2005) noted in her study that “because many idioms...are not fixed or frozen, care had to be taken that the corpus search found all occurrences” (p.438). Furthermore, Liu (2008) cautions that merely performing a “straight-out search...will miss out many examples of an idiom” (p.110). Specifically, punctuation, hyphens, apostrophes, spelling, inflections, word order, substitutions and truncation make corpus searches problematic (Grant & Nation, 2006, p.4-5). For example, a search for *red herring* found 56 occurrences; a search for the hyphenated variation *red-herring* found an additional 2; a search for the plural variation *red herrings* found 26 occurrences. In addition, when the phrase *to be all in* was searched for, all possible variations of the verb *to be* needed to be included in the search (e.g.,

am/is/are/was/were/been/being). Likewise, it was found that when searching for the verbs *look* (*look/looks/looked*) and *feel* (*feel/feels/felt/feeling*), all verb variations also had to be accounted for in similar fashion (Grant & Nation, 2006). As Liu (2003) noted, accounting for such variations in corpus searches can indeed be quite “laborious” (p.680).

Clearly, it is evident that idiom form variation is an important issue to consider. Specifically, many types of variation occur which create difficulties for both the corpus researchers and the language learner.

Corpus-based Idiom Studies

Idiom frequency has received attention recently as seen by the many corpus-based frequency studies that have been conducted (Grant, 2005; Grant, 2007; Grant & Nation, 2006; Liu, 2003; Moon, 1998; Simpson & Mendis, 2003) (see Table 2). These studies have focused on the following aspects of idiom acquisition in English: spoken American English (Liu, 2003), academic speech (Simpson & Mendis, 2003), “core idioms” in the British National Corpus (Grant, 2005; Grant & Nation, 2006), and “figuratives” in both American and British English (Grant, 2007). Such corpus-based frequency studies have provided valuable findings because the use of corpora “provide a large empirical database of natural discourse, so that analyses are based on naturally-occurring structures and patterns of use rather than intuitions and perceptions, which often do not accurately represent actual use” (Biber, Conrad & Reppen, 2004, p.169-170). Despite the valuable insights gained from each study, the lists of idioms used to search the corpora were too limited, mainly because the researchers adhered to exclusive criteria for defining idioms, which limited the findings. To validate this claim, a brief review of each study seems warranted.

Table 2

Summary of Previous Corpus-based Idiom Studies

Study	Number of Idioms Searched	Corpora Used	Size of Corpora (tokens)
Simpson and Mendis (2003)	238	MICASE	1,700,000
Grant (2005)	103	BNC	100,000,000
Grant and Nation (2006)	103	BNC	100,000,000
Grant (2007)	146 (“figuratives”)	BNC, MICASE	11,700,000
Liu (2003)	9,683	CSPAEE, Corpus of American media English, MICASE	6,000,000

Simpson and Mendis Idiom Study

Simpson and Mendis (2003) investigated the most frequently occurring idioms in spoken academic English. In order to give intensive analysis to the frequently occurring idioms in their study, they needed a manageable amount of examples. Therefore, a “narrow definition” of idiom was employed when creating their list of idioms to be considered for the study, which yielded a list of 238 idiom types to be searched for in their study. (p.423). To illustrate, the criteria for defining an idiom featured the following elements: fixedness, institutionalization, and semantic opacity. Specifically, they defined semantically opaque idioms as expressions whose meaning “is not transparent based on the sum of their constituent parts” (e.g., *tongue in cheek* and *on the ball*) (Simpson & Mendis, 2003, p.423). Therefore, idioms that were considered to be too semantically transparent were not considered for the study. Indeed, the quantity of idioms searched for (238 idiom types) was clearly limited due to the “narrow definition” used, which, in turn, limited the results. Furthermore, the small corpus used in this study, the MICASE, limited the amount of idioms found. Clearly, more inclusive criteria for defining idioms are needed in order to generate a more comprehensive list with a larger quantity of idioms.

Grant and Bauer Idiom Studies

The studies of Grant (2005), Grant (2007), and Grant and Nation (2006) all used the same criteria for defining idiom, which was developed by Grant and Bauer (2004). According to Grant and Bauer (2004), an idiom must be both non-compositional and “non-figurative.” A multi-word unit (MWU hereafter) was considered compositional if each word in the expression is replaced with its dictionary definition and the meaning of that expression is retained. A MWU is considered to be non-compositional if each word in the expression is replaced with its dictionary definition and the meaning of that expression is not retained. In other words, for a MWU to be an idiom it cannot be broken down into smaller units in order to derive meaning. Furthermore, figures of speech are distinguished from “core idioms” because Grant and Bauer (2004) argue that “figures of speech can be interpreted according to general cognitive principles, while idioms have to be learnt [sic]” (p.49). Figures of speech, or “figuratives” in their study, have an element of untruth in them which can be pragmatically reinterpreted, whereas the meaning of a “core idiom” cannot be reinterpreted. It is important to note that the terminology used in Grant and Bauer’s (2004) study may be confusing to some. Simply put, if it was determined that the meaning of a MWU could be figured out, the MWU was considered to be a “figurative” and not an idiom. If it was determined that the meaning of a MWU could not be figured out, the MWU was considered a “non-figurative” (even though it could be argued that it contains figurative language) and a candidate to be a “core idiom.”

To determine if a MWU was truly a “core idiom”, a simple test was conducted. First, a MWU had to be non-compositional, or the meaning had to be retained when each word of the phrase was replaced with its own definition. If the meaning was retained after such a replacement occurred, the MWU was compositional and not a “core idiom”. For example, the MWU *red book*

is compositional because the words *red* and *book* both contribute to the meaning of the MWU, whereas the MWU *red herring* cannot be broken down further, which makes it a non-compositional. Second, it was important to determine if the meaning of a MWU could be understood by reinterpreting the expression to logically infer its meaning. If an expression could be reinterpreted and the meaning ascertained, then it was considered to be a “figurative” and not a “core idiom”. For example, they argued that the MWU *as good as gold* can be reinterpreted so that its meaning can be ascertained, rendering it a “figurative”. On the other hand, they argued that the MWU *red herring* cannot be understood through a logical reinterpretation. Therefore, *red herring* is a “core idiom” because it is both non-compositional and “non-figurative”, *red book* is neither a “core idiom” nor a “figurative”, and *as good as gold* is considered a “figurative” but not a “core idiom.”

These criteria set the stage for three follow-up studies. Both Grant (2005) and Grant and Nation (2006) conducted corpus-based frequency studies of core idioms. From these studies, it was determined that only 103 “core idioms” occurred in English and that the low-frequency of these core idioms did not merit them worthy of direct instruction. Rather, they advocated for the teaching of interpretation strategies in order to comprehend “figuratives”, which they argued were more common in the language.

Taking the previous studies a step further, Grant (2007) sought to generate a frequency list of “figuratives” occurring in English. Her study indicated that figuratives do present a challenge for language learners. However, only 146 “figuratives” were searched for in this study. Indeed, the quantity of both “core idioms” and “figuratives” that were searched for in these studies was quite small and exclusive.

Liu Idiom Study

Liu (2003) conducted the most broad corpus-based idiom frequency search. In his study, he generated a list of the most frequently occurring idioms in spoken American English, using a combination of three corpora that collectively contained six million tokens. In order to generate a list of idioms to be searched in the corpora, he compiled a list whose contents were taken from four major idiom dictionaries and three major phrasal verb dictionaries. In order for an idiom to be included as part of the list, it had to occur in at least two of the four idiom dictionaries. Similarly, phrasal verbs that occurred in two of the three phrasal verb dictionaries were also included on the list. In total, the list of idioms used in the search contained 9,683 idioms and phrasal verbs.

From the perspective of the current study, the list of idioms used in Liu's was too narrow primarily because of the requirement that an idiom had to occur in two of the four idiom dictionaries. Thus, because the list was limited, numerous idioms were not included in the search. Clearly, more inclusive criteria for compiling a list of idioms are needed, so that a more comprehensive search may be conducted.

While these studies exemplify sound corpus-based research, the extremely narrow criteria for defining idioms severely limited the amount of idioms searched for. Once again, it is evident that a broader definition of idiom is needed so that a more comprehensive list of idioms can be generated for the purpose of conducting corpus-based frequency searches.

Research Aims

The review of the literature regarding the definition of idiom, the role of variation, and previous corpus-based frequency studies indicates that the definition of idiom has not been

agreed upon by scholars, and that idioms vary in their form, which make them difficult to both search for in corpora and to acquire by learners. Furthermore, previous studies have laid a solid groundwork for idiom frequency in English, but were too narrow in their criteria for defining and identifying idioms, resulting in a need for a broader definition, as explained above, in order to compile more-inclusive list of searchable idioms. Therefore, future corpus-based studies of idioms would greatly benefit from a more comprehensive list of idioms. With this in mind, the current study attempts to achieve the following research aims:

1. To make substantial progress in generating a comprehensive and corpus-searchable list of electronic English idioms by consolidating extensive lists from multiple sources.
2. To develop a rationale for objectively consolidating lists of English idioms from multiple sources.
3. To highlight problematic features of idiom entries that might make corpus searches difficult.
4. To illustrate and explain possible problems ELLs might face in acquiring English idioms based on data obtained from 1-3 above.

Chapter 3: Methodology

The purpose of this study is to make substantial progress in generating a comprehensive and corpus-searchable list of electronic English idioms, and to develop a rationale for combining lists of English idioms from multiple sources. In order to achieve the purpose of this study, the following steps will be taken:

1. Bringing together many idioms resources
2. Amalgamating the idioms from those resources
3. Finding varied forms of the same or similar idiom and organizing them systemically
4. Producing a list of core idioms for corpus searching

Idiom Sources and Amalgamation

In order to create a comprehensive and corpus-searchable list of idioms, sources of idioms needed to be identified. To begin, an initial electronic list of idioms was inherited by the author. This list had been compiled several years prior to the study. This list contained idioms from both the Longman American Idioms Dictionary (1999) and the following website: http://home.t-online.de/home/toni.goeller/idiom_wm/¹. For this study, entries were added from the Cambridge International Dictionary of Idioms (1998), Cambridge Dictionary of American Idioms (2003), and Wiktionary. Using computer software, the entries from the two Cambridge dictionaries were scanned. The entries from Wiktionary were already in a digital format. Using a

¹ This site no longer exists under this URL.

pivot table in Microsoft Excel, the idioms from the five sources were amalgamated, with exact matches being eliminated from the list. This process resulted in a final list of over 27,000 idioms, which formed the baseline for the current study.

Combining Variant Forms

Determining the Keyword

The next step was to develop criteria to organize and sort the idioms for the purpose of preparing them for future corpus searches. Following the same pattern found in contemporary idiom dictionaries, idioms were organized under a keyword. Contemporary idiom dictionaries organize idioms based on one or more keywords found within a given idiom. Thus, in order to find a particular idiom, one must search for the keyword. For example, in the Oxford Dictionary of English Idioms (2012), some idioms like *pardon/excuse my French* can be found under one keyword (in this example the sole keyword is *French*). In addition, many idioms like *the world is your oyster* can be found under two keywords (*oyster* and *world* are both keywords for this example). As a result, idioms that have two or more keywords appear twice in the dictionary. For the purposes of this study—which is to prepare a list of idioms for corpus searching—each idiom entry on the list needed to appear only once.

A rationale for determining an idiom's sole keyword was therefore necessary and will be explained below (see Figure 1 at the end of the section).

First Occurring Noun

For each idiom entry, the first noun in the expression was selected as the keyword. For example, in the idiom *beat the system*, *system* is the assigned keyword because it is the only noun. Additionally, in the idiom *keep your eye on the ball*, *eye* is the assigned keyword because it is the

first occurring noun. Nouns that acted adjectivally in the idiom were not counted as nouns but as adjectives. For example, in the idiom *blood money*, *blood* is a noun acting adjectivally so *money* is determined to be the keyword; in the idiom, *back seat driver*, *back seat* is a noun acting adjectivally so *driver* is determined to be the keyword. If the first occurring noun had variation, the next occurring noun was chosen as the keyword (like *a deer/rabbit caught in the headlights*, *barrel/bundle of laughs*, and *pinch/grain of salt*). This same pattern of skipping variant nouns was done until the first non-variant noun was selected as the keyword. The following are examples of other notable occurrences.

1. Compound nouns were not broken down into smaller units. *Horseplay*, *skinhead*, and *wordsmith* were all keywords.
2. Complex and conjoined nouns were also designated as keywords (e.g., *mind your p's and q's*, *play cat and mouse*, and *hand-me-down*).
3. If the first noun was too generic, the next occurring noun was selected as the keyword (*body of water*, *one at a time*, and *all the way down the line*).
4. In phrases whose word order could vary, the most salient noun was chosen (e.g., *bring home the bacon* because *bring the bacon home* could be an acceptable variation).

First Occurring Verb

There were many instances where the following occurred in expressions on this list: (1) there was no noun present; (2) there was at least one noun that functioned adjectivally with no other non-varying noun; (3) there was at least one noun that was considered to be generic with no other non-varying noun; or (4) there was at least one variant noun without another non-varying noun in the idiom. In cases like these, the first lexical verb was chosen. For example, in *laugh [oneself] silly/sick*, *laugh* was assigned to be the keyword because there was no content

noun present. If there was a noun present but the noun had variation, the verb was assigned to be the keyword. This can be seen in the following examples: *sleep like a log/top/baby*, and *if the shoe/hat fits*. In addition, other notable occurrences were encountered:

1. Complex verbs were considered as a single keyword (e.g., *candy-coat* and *two-time*).
2. The root of verbs whose form was changed was considered the keyword (e.g., in the idiom *to be named later*, *name* was assigned as the keyword)
3. If the first verb was considered to be too generic, then the next occurring verb was selected as the keyword (e.g., in the idiom *get your wires/lines crossed*, *cross* was determined to be the keyword instead of *get*).
4. Although phrasal verbs were not explicitly included in the list, they occasionally appeared in idiom dictionaries and they became the keyword (*fire off something*, *fire away*, *sleep in*, *flesh out something*, and *iron out something/the kinks*).

First Occurring Adjective

There were some instances where expressions did not have a noun or verb present, the existing nouns were adjectival, generic, or variant, and the existing verb had variation. In cases like these, the first adjective was assigned to be the keyword, like in the phrase *bloodied but unbowed*. If there was a varying noun present and there was not a non-varying verb present, the adjective was assigned to be the keyword. The following phrases demonstrate this: *golden boy/girl/child* and *an uphill task/job*. If there was no non-varying noun but a varying verb present, the first adjective was determined as the keyword (e.g., *seem/smell/sound fishy*). Within this rule, it is important to clarify that complex adjectives were not broken down and they were considered keywords (e.g., *user friendly*, *down home*, and *dog-tired* were all determined to be respective keywords).

Most Salient Word

There were some instances where idioms behaved in such a way that they could not be organized based on the established criteria. In such cases, the most salient word in the idiom was determined to be the keyword. The researcher and a professional applied linguist discussed each of these cases to determine saliency. Three examples are explained below.

1. The following combination of varying idioms was encountered: *march to a different drummer*, *march to the beat of a different drum*, and *march to the beat of a different drummer*. Based on the particular variant form, either *drummer* or *beat* could be determined as the keyword. It was determined that *drum* was the keyword due to salience.
2. The following combination of varying idioms was encountered: *penny pincher* and *pinch pennies*. It was determined that *pinch* was the most salient word so it was determined to be the keyword.
3. The interjection *whoops-a-daisy* was encountered. It was determined that this phrase could not be broken down. Therefore, the entire expression, *whoops-a-daisy*, was determined as the keyword.

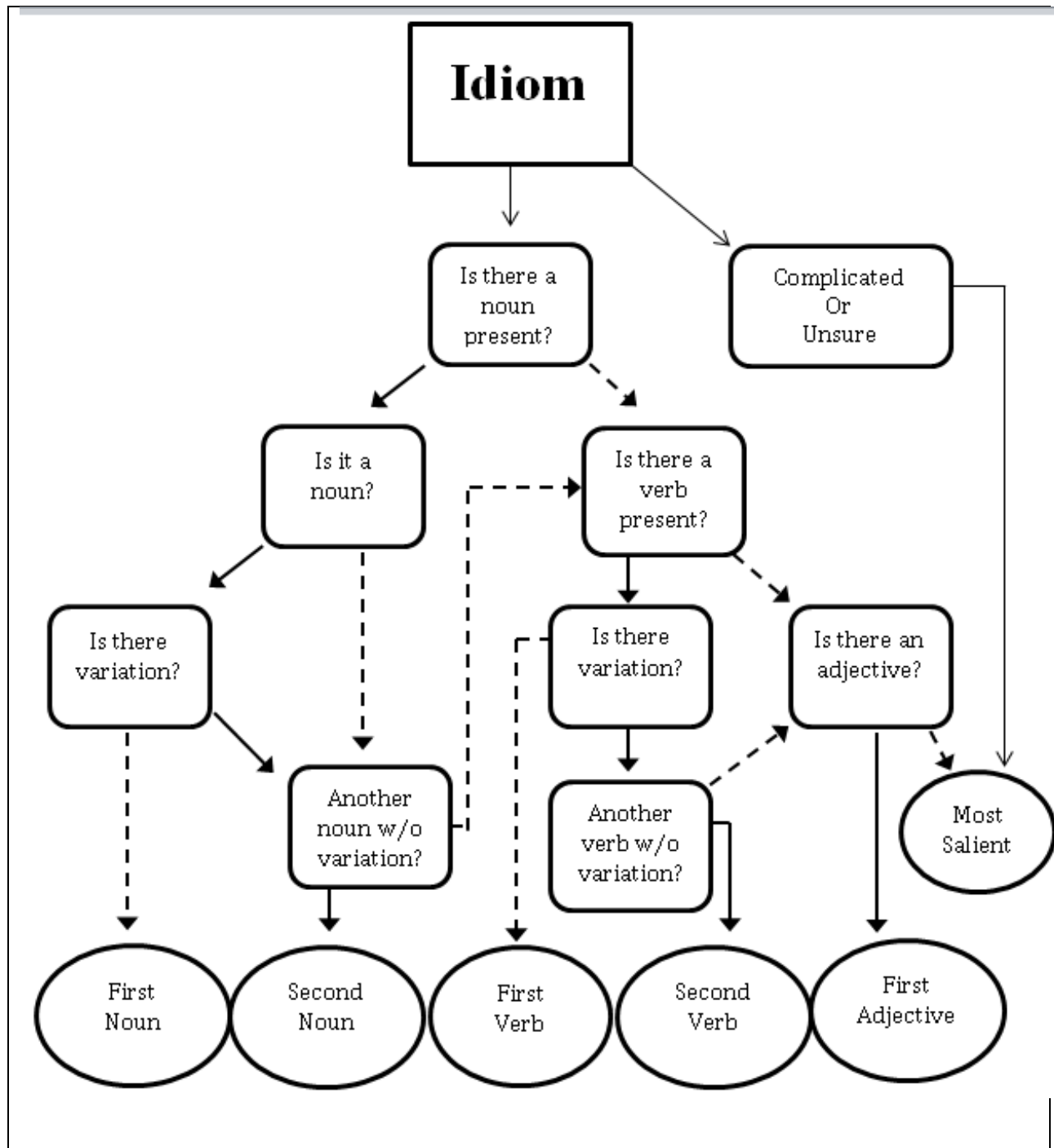


Figure 1: Flowchart of the Process for Determining the Keyword. This chart graphically depicts the process for determining the keyword (represented by the circles at the bottom). Note: solid lines indicate the answer “yes” to the question and dotted lines indicate the answer “no” to the question. It is important to note that this chart is useful for nearly all idioms but there are some exceptions for which the chart does not account.

Organization of Idioms

Searching for the Keyword

Once the rationale for keyword was established, it was necessary to organize and sort the idioms. The following outlines the process by which idioms were organized (see Appendix A for a visual display of this process):

1. The idioms were alphabetized and compiled in Excel and transferred to Notepad.
2. The idioms were imported into the TextPad 5.4.2 program.
3. Using the TextPad program, entries that contained a particular keyword were selected and subsequently extracted from the list.
4. The extracted keywords were pasted into a Microsoft Excel workbook.

To illustrate this, one of the keywords during the search was *mouth*. Using the *find* feature, which is under the *search* tab on the ribbon, the following entry was typed into the search bar: “\<mouth”. It is important to note that the program features a unique set of symbols to facilitate searching. In this case, the symbols employed indicated all entries containing the word *mouth* were to be selected. To select all the idioms that contained *mouth*, the function “mark all” was clicked and a blue flag appeared on the side of each entry containing *mouth*. Under the ribbon heading *edit*, the *cut other* function was selected. Within the *cut other* function, the *bookmarked lines* function was clicked. The entries containing *mouth* were then automatically cut and placed on the computer’s clipboard. The entries were subsequently pasted into a Microsoft Excel workbook.

Grouping Similar Idioms

In the Microsoft Excel workbook, all of the phrases which were extracted from the list were pasted into Column A, which was entitled *Sort and Ship*. Next, all idioms that were similar in form were identified and then grouped together in Column C, entitled *organization*. For example, the idioms *from the horse's mouth*, *straight from the horse's mouth*, and *horse's mouth*, which were originally in Column A, were identified as being similar in form. Subsequently, they were grouped together in Column C using the *cut* and *paste* function.

Determining Core Idioms

Since the purpose of this study was to create a list of electronic idioms for corpus searching, the next step reduced all the variations into a “core idiom.” Simply put, a “core idiom” is the most basic form of an idiom that accounts for and captures all possible variations. Based on the possible variations from Column C, a core idiom was identified and typed in Column D, entitled *Core Idiom*. To illustrate, the example from above contained the following three variations: *from the horse's mouth*, *straight from the horse's mouth*, and *horse's mouth*. In an attempt to account for and capture all possible variations, it was determined that *from the horse's mouth* was the core idiom and it was typed in Column D. The idiom *from the horse's mouth* was chosen because if it were searched for in a corpus, it could capture all possible variations. Specifically, a search for *from the horse's mouth* could find *straight from the horse's mouth*, but a search for *straight from the horse's mouth* would exclude *from the horse's mouth*. Furthermore, the variant form *horse's mouth* was not chosen because it was determined that *from* was a necessary part of the idiom's identity.

As mentioned earlier, all forms of variation needed to be accounted for when determining the core idiom. Therefore, a rationale which employed the use of certain symbols was developed to facilitate accounting for various forms of core idiom variation. For example, similar to Liu's (2003) study, an asterisk (*) was inserted in core idioms as highlighted by Table 3.

Table 3

Use of the Asterisk in Core Idioms

Type of Phrase	Original Idiom	Modified Idiom
Article Variation	given half (a/the) chance	given half * chance
Possessive Determiners	ring [one's] bell	ring * bell
Word Form Variations	silver tongue or silver-tongued	silver*tongue*
Plural Variations	smoke signal(s)	smoke signal*
Hyphens	red(-)letter day	red*letter day
Extra Words	hit a (brick) wall	hit a * wall
Indefinite Pronouns	nail [someone] to the wall	nail * to the wall

Furthermore, the forward slash (/) was used to indicate variation of words within an idiom. The following examples demonstrate the use of the forward slash symbol: *raise/lift a finger*, *frighten/scare the daylights out of*, *bad/rotten apple*, *from the four corners of the earth/globe*, *hard/tough as nails*, *back against/to the wall*, and *ringside seat/view*.

The process of organizing idioms required determining a keyword, grouping similar idioms together, and determining the core idiom. Figure 2 depicts an example of the Microsoft Excel spreadsheet.

<u>Keyword</u>	<u>Organization</u>	<u>Core Idiom</u>
hand	gain /get the upper hand	upper hand
hand	upper hand	upper hand
hand	the upper hand	upper hand
hand	get the upper hand	upper hand
hand	gain the upper hand	upper hand
hand	have the upper hand	upper hand
hand	gain/get the upper hand	upper hand
hand	get one's hands dirty	get * hands dirty
hand	get your hands dirty	get * hands dirty
hand	get [one's] hands dirty	get * hands dirty
hand	get your hands on sb	get/lay * hands on
hand	get your hands on sth	get/lay * hands on
hand	get/lay your hands on sth	get/lay * hands on
hand	get one's hands on	get/lay * hands on
hand	get [one's] hands on	get/lay * hands on

Figure 2. Example of Completed Excel Spreadsheet. This is an example of a section of the Excel spreadsheet featuring the keyword, organization, and core idiom sections.

Managing Unsorted Idioms

As previously illustrated, a rationale was developed for identifying the keyword of an idiom, grouping similar idioms, and determining the core of an idiom. This process was repeated until all idiom entries were properly grouped in Column D entitled *core idioms*. However, many idioms remained unsorted in Column A because, although they contained the keyword, they were not organized under that particular keyword. For example, the entry *put your foot in your mouth* contains the keyword *mouth*, but, in this case, *mouth* is not the keyword because *foot* is the first occurring noun. Such entries were removed from the spreadsheet and pasted back into the Notepad file. A subsequent search for the keyword *foot* would find *put your foot in your*

mouth and, by following the outlined process, it could be sorted under its proper keyword, *mouth*. There were many similar instances to this one, requiring a great deal of manual sorting.

This chapter lays out a clear and objective rationale for determining the keyword of an idiomatic phrase, sets forth the process for organizing the idioms based on keywords, and explains the identification of core idioms. This process allowed a large quantity of idioms to be sorted and provided rich data for analysis. The findings of this study are explained in the following chapter.

Chapter 4: Results and Discussion

As mentioned previously, the purpose of this study was to make substantial progress in generating a comprehensive and corpus-searchable list of electronic English idioms, and to develop a consistent rationale for consolidating lists of English idioms from multiple sources. In total, a list of 2,697 core idioms (see Appendix B) was generated from 5,559 forms, which required over 120 hours of manual sorting. It is important to note that idioms were chosen randomly from the TextPad file based on a particular keyword. Therefore, none of the remaining unsorted idioms will be sorted under any existing keywords or core idioms. Time constraints did not allow for all 27,000 idiom forms to be processed. However, the established method provides a framework for the list to be completed consistently and reliably.

Basic Statistics

By applying the rationale set forth and explained in chapter 3, a list of 2,697 core idioms was compiled. These 2,697 core idioms were derived from 5,559 variant forms of the core idioms. For example, the two expressions *an airhead* and *airhead* were both grouped together in Column C because they were determined to be a variant of the same idiom. From those two examples, the core idiom was determined to be *airhead*. The same process occurred for the following entries: *bend the rules*, *bend/stretch the rules*, and *break the rules*. It was determined that *bend/break/stretch the rules* was the core idiom because it captured all the variations. The ratio of variant forms to core idioms was 2.1:1, which means that for every core idiom there were 2.1 varying forms on average. The core idiom with the most variant forms was *lay/put [something] on the line*, which had nineteen variant forms. The core idiom with the second highest amount of variant forms was *see/show [one's] true colo(u)rs* and possible variations.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, an asterisk (*) was inserted in core idioms which contained article variation, possessive determiners, word form variations, plural variations, hyphens, extra words, and indefinite pronouns, etc. It was found that an asterisk occurred in 31.2% of all core idioms. Core idioms that contained a forward slash (/), which indicated a variation in a lexical word (see chapter 3 for further detail), occurred in 9.5% of all core idioms (e.g., *fingers/hand in the till* and *back to/against the wall*). Core idioms that contained both an asterisk and a forward slash constituted 3.8% of all core idioms (e.g., *bear/keep*[something] in mind* and *back/force *[someone] into a corner*). Entries that contained either an asterisk or a forward slash constituted 36.9% of all core idioms. It is important to note, however, that core idioms often excluded many variations that were not considered to be essential to the core. For example, the variants *behind the times*, *fall behind the times*, and *be behind the times* were reduced to *behind the times*. In this example, the variation in the preceding verbs, *fall* and *be*, are not accounted for because they are not considered part of the core. Thus, the statistics may not capture all potential variations because this also happened in numerous other examples.

Finally, a total of 307 keywords were assigned for all the idioms compiled in this list. For example, the following core idioms were assigned to the keyword *voice*: *voice (crying) in the wilderness*, *with one voice*, *find [one's] voice*, and *give voice to*. The five keywords appearing most frequently in core idioms are as follows: *hand* in 118 core idioms, *time* in 115 core idioms, *eye* in 111 core idioms, *head* in 102 core idioms, and *word* in 69 core idioms. (See Appendix C for a list of all core idioms organized under these keywords.) The ratio of core idioms to keywords is 8.8:1, meaning that under every keyword, an average of 8.8 core idioms was assigned. In addition, the ratio of variant forms to keywords is 18:1, meaning that under every

keyword an average of 18.1 variant forms of core idioms were assigned. Thus, each keyword captured both a great deal of core idioms and form variation.

Types of Idiom Variation

It was found that numerous types of variation occurred in idiom form. The findings corroborate those of both Liu (2003) and Moon (1998). Table 4 illustrates the types of variations, their frequency, and examples.

Table 4

Summary of Types of Idiom Variations

Type of Variation	Examples	Percent of Total
Possessive Determiner	spill [one's] guts break [one's] heart	47.8%
Indefinite Pronoun	whip [someone/something] into shape throw [someone] to the dogs	18.9 %
Verb	come/go cap in hand lift/raise a finger	14.3 %
Phrasal	Straw man; man of straw nose picker/picking; pick one's nose	14.3%
Hyphenation	pie in the sky/pie-in-the-sky boy next door/boy-next-door	7.2 %
Noun	battle/war of nerves fight tooth and claw/nail	6.6%
Adjective/Modifier	best/greatest thing since sliced bread final/last straw	5 %
Particle	get [something] into/through [one's] head baptism by/of fire	4.2 %
Specificity/Amplification	Give someone the (evil) eye scare the (living) daylights out of	3.7 %
Truncation	You can lead a horse to water (but you can't make him/it drink) Cross my heart (and hope to die)	3.3 %
Spelling	off colo(u)r dollars to donuts/doughnuts	1.9 %
Article	hit a/the (brick) wall point a/the finger	1.7 %
Conjunction	day and night/day or night	0.1 %

Syntactic Boundary Distinction

As part of the process of compiling the list, it was necessary to reduce idioms to their core, as explained previously. This next section will highlight two types of common reductions that occurred while compiling the list. The implications of such reductions for both researcher and ELLs will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.

Pre-core Reductions

There were many instances of non-essential parts of idiomatic phrases that preceded the core component of an idiom. Such reductions were labeled pre-core reductions. Table 5 highlights the types of pre-core reductions, and the process by which the reduction was done by displaying the similar variant forms which informed the decision for determining the core idiom.

Table 5

Summary of Pre-Core Reductions

Types of Pre-Core Reduction	Variant Form	Core Idiom
Initial Verb	put lead in your pencil	lead in [one's] pencil
	have lead in your pencil	
	pay top dollar	top dollar
	top dollar	
Phrasal Wording	fly on the wall	fly on the wall
	I'd like to be a fly on the wall	
Be Verb	on the line	on the line
	be on the line	
Articles	a false alarm	false alarm
	false alarm	
Modifiers/Intensifiers	all the bells and whistles	bells and whistles
	bells and whistles	
As	(as) easy as pie	easy as pie
	easy as pie	

Post-core Reductions

Similarly, there were many instances of non-essential parts of idioms that followed the core component. Such reductions were labeled post-core reductions. Table 6 highlights the types of post-core reductions, and the process by which the reduction was done by displaying the similar variant forms which informed the decision for determining the core idiom.

Table 6

Summary of Post-Core Reductions

Types of Post-Core Reduction	Variant Form	Core Idiom
Prepositions	keep the edge keep the edge on keep the edge over	keep the edge
	pick up the pieces pick up the pieces of	pick up the pieces
Object of Preposition	heart is in/to [something]	heart is in/to
	put your money on sb/sth	put your money on
That	cross [one's] fingers	cross [one's] fingers
	cross [one's] fingers that	

Clearly, the results of this study indicate that idioms vary quite frequently and the manner in which they vary is quite extensive. Furthermore, idiom cores are often embedded in larger syntactic chunks, which often contain non-essential elements. Indeed, these results provide valuable insights pertaining to idiom variation, form, and “coreness.” Further discussion of these findings and their ramifications for corpus searching and ELLs is addressed in the following chapter.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

This study both made progress in generating a comprehensive and corpus-searchable list of electronic English idioms, and developed a consistent rationale for consolidating lists of English idioms from multiple sources. Based on the results, problematic features of idiom entries for both researchers and ELLs can be identified. This section will discuss those problematic features and their implications.

Problematic Features for Linguists

Four key points emerged from the data in regards to issues that might complicate future corpus studies.

1. Capturing the varying function words. As the data show, the four most frequently occurring variations found in this study were possessive determiners, indefinite and varying nouns, phrasal variation, and hyphenation. Therefore, capturing and accounting for these types of variations is vital for a future corpus searching. As Liu (2003) suggests, the use of a wildcard symbol (like an asterisk *) could to be employed to capture possessive determiners, indefinite articles, and hyphenation. It is important that the system for capturing these function words is consistent and thorough.
2. Capturing both word variation and phrasal variation. The third most common type of variation found in this study was phrasal variation, which is often created by word variation within the idiom. For example, *as sick as a dog* and *sicker than a dog* are both variants of the same idiom. Within the phrasal variation, the word *sick* varies due to morphological inflection. This change in inflection causes the idiomatic phrase to change form. It is essential for those conducting future corpus studies to account for such

variations when searching a corpus. Furthermore, it has been found in this study that inflections, variant word forms, contractions, and singular/plural variations can all contribute to phrasal variations. Therefore, linguists wishing to conduct corpus searches involving idioms may need to make flexible adjustments to core idioms in order to find all variations.

3. Capturing all possible variations. As part of the rationale set forth in this study, idioms were organized under one keyword. However, some variant forms of the same idiom may be organized and counted as a separate idiom when it should be grouped in with other varying forms. For example, an entry on the list captured the variation of the idiom *if the hat/shoe fits (wear it)*, which was organized under the keyword *fit*. Another variant form of the same idiom, *if the cap fits (wear it)*, was not found in the initial search and therefore was not grouped with the former idiom. If such an error had not been caught, these two variations of the same idiom would have been considered two separate entries and thus they would have been counted twice. Similar issues require direct intervention

4. Knowing the boundary between idioms. As part of the rationale in this study, idioms with similar forms were grouped together. Although the focus was on form, often times meaning came into play when determining which idioms were similar and which were not. To illustrate, as part of the list, there were 55 variations that were grouped together under the keyword *lose*. For example, the following are some of the entries grouped together: *lose one's way*, *lose one's touch*, *lose one's temper*, *lose one's mind*, *lose one's marbles*, and *lose one's edge*, etc. From these examples, should *way*, *touch*, *temper*, *mind*, *marbles*, and *edge* be grouped together or are they semantically different enough to be grouped separately? Determining such distinctions can be difficult. It is thus important

for future corpus studies to make accurate semantic distinctions so that similar idiom variations are grouped together under the same core idiom and different idiom variations are grouped under different core idioms. Because such distinctions may be subjective, linguists ought to provide a rationale explaining why each distinction was made.

Implications for ELLs

While it has been established that idioms are multi-word units and non-literal in meaning, this study has also shown that lexical and semantic variation, and issues regarding boundary distinctions make idioms difficult for ELLs to negotiate and acquire. Therefore, materials developers and those who oversee instruction ought to do the following:

1. Raise learner awareness that idioms frequently vary. Idiom dictionaries often present one form of each core idiom with perhaps one variant form. This can lead learners to believe that the forms found in dictionary entries are the only forms for a given idiom. However, as demonstrated in this study, some core idioms have numerous variations. Principally, learners need to be aware that idioms often vary in their form, and that simply learning one or two forms may not be sufficient. Teachers can assist ELLs by regularly addressing this variation issue.
2. Assist learners to identify how to semantically distinguish between differing idioms. As explained in this chapter and the one previous, idioms with seemingly similar forms may have differing meanings. Indeed, this is especially difficult for ELLs. Therefore, instructional resources and teachers should make learners aware of these semantic distinctions and provide learning opportunities to help ELLs become aware of this issue.

3. Identify and clarify the boundaries of idioms in order to help learners know where an idiom begins and ends. In order to determine a core idiom, many idioms in this study were reduced through the elimination of unnecessary elements. As was demonstrated, some idioms were significantly reduced while others were not reduced at all. Specifically for ELLs, it is important for them to learn the skills of identifying a core idiom in a larger phrase. This has special ramifications for reading but may apply to listening comprehension as well.

Limitations

Three main limitations of this study are important to note. First, only a portion of the idioms from the list was organized. Therefore, the statistics given should be interpreted cautiously. They serve to show patterns and trends, but are not definitive by any means. Second, due to scanning constraints, the scope of dictionaries used for this study was limited. The findings would be more robust had more dictionaries been included in the master list. Third, the determination of the core idiom was not definitive. Rather, it was a means to an end, which is to facilitate future corpus searches. The core idioms are subject to revision as that next stage of research is undertaken. Despite this, this study has established a robust rationale that can lead to the completion of the list in a consistent and reliable way. Furthermore, this study provides rich data that shows patterns and trends that can inform idiom research, teaching, and learning.

Future Research

Several directions for future research emerge as a result of this study. First, finishing the consolidation and organization of the list is the next logical step. The methodology section of this study provides an accurate explanation for how this is to be done. It is important to note that 120

hours of manually sorting resulted in about 20% of the list being organized. With such a clear methodology, multiple people can work simultaneously to organize the list in a timely manner. It may also be possible to design programs to assist this manual consolidation process, perhaps saving valuable time. It is also crucial to note that many of the core idioms listed in this study may be one step away from automatic corpus searching. Second, once the list has been organized in its entirety, corpus studies using this list will prove to be invaluable because the list is more comprehensive than lists used in previous corpus studies. It is important to note that the core idioms identified in this study may be modified as needed for these future corpus searches. Third, entries from additional dictionaries can serve to bolster the list and the findings. Such additions could supply variant forms that have not been identified in this study, and supply more additional core idioms, not contained in the dictionaries used. Fourth, making the finished list publicly available can be a great resource for researchers, learners, and teachers, and could become a standard for future corpus studies involving English idioms. As noted previously, there was a lack of consistency in the previous idiom studies, which can be overcome by using this list. Finally, further investigating the keywords could provide great insight into which words tend to be more “idiom-prone.” Out of the 2,697 core idioms recorded in this study, there were only 307 keywords. A study of the most prolific keywords could help identify characteristics of words found frequently in English idioms.

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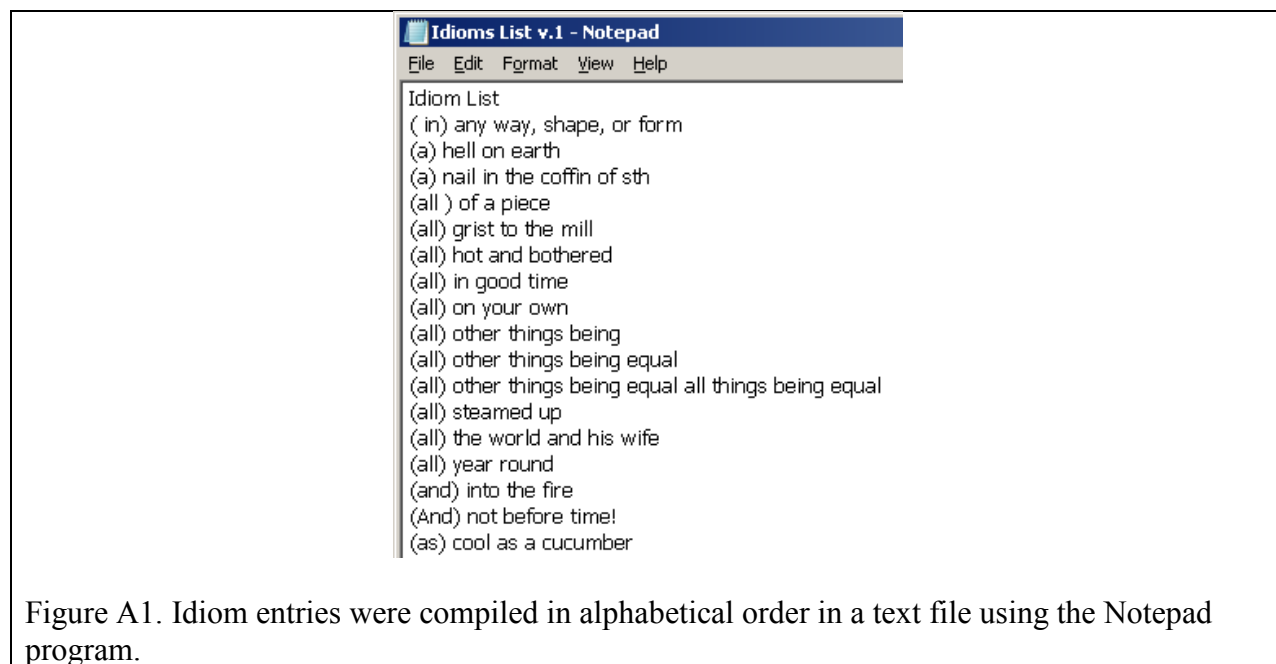
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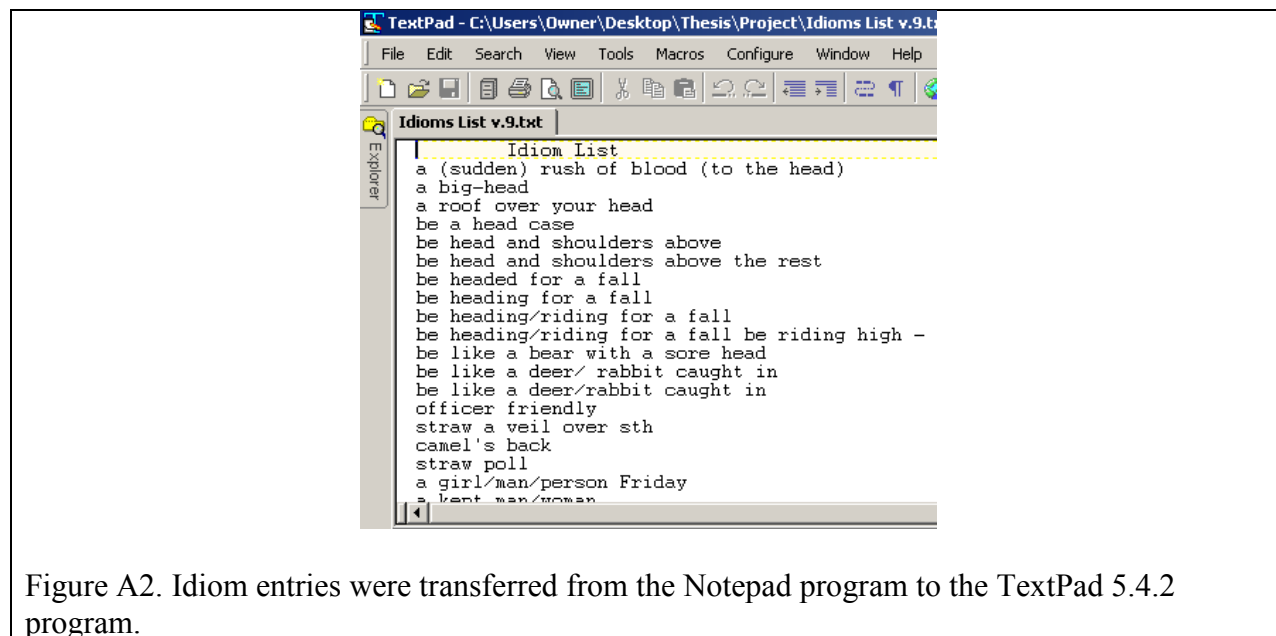
Appendix A

Steps for Organizing Idioms

Step 1



Step 2



Step 3a

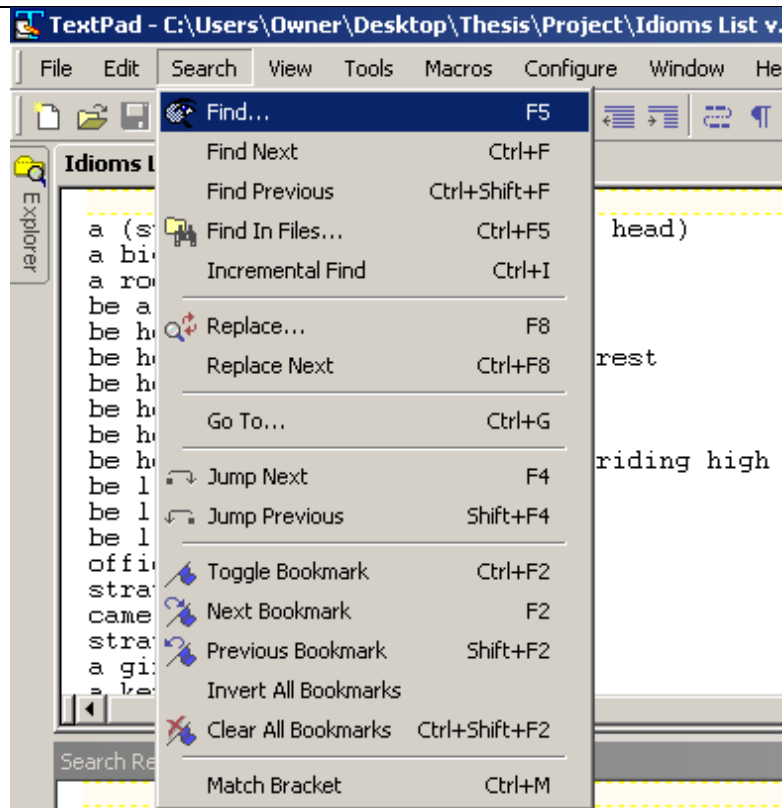


Figure 3A. Under the “Search” tab, the “Find” function was used to extract idioms containing a certain word.

Step 3b

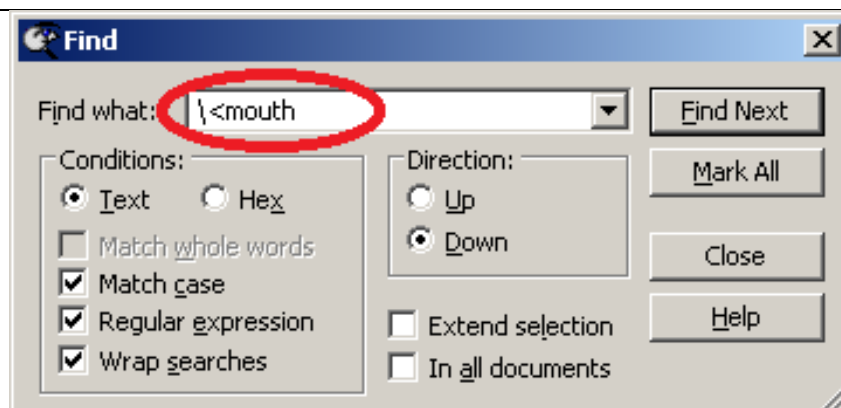


Figure 4A. Within the “Find” function, the certain keyword was typed with symbols unique to the program. The symbols in this example indicate word beginning.

Step 4a

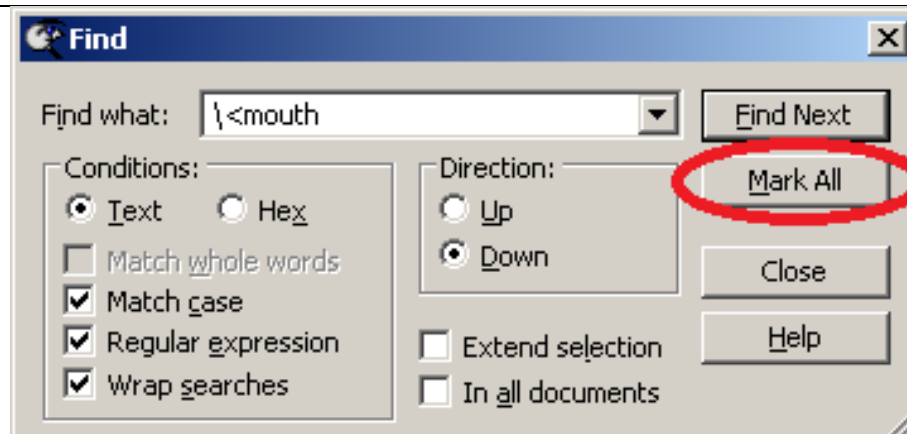


Figure 5A. Once the proper symbols and the keyword were typed, the “Mark All” function was then selected

Step 4b

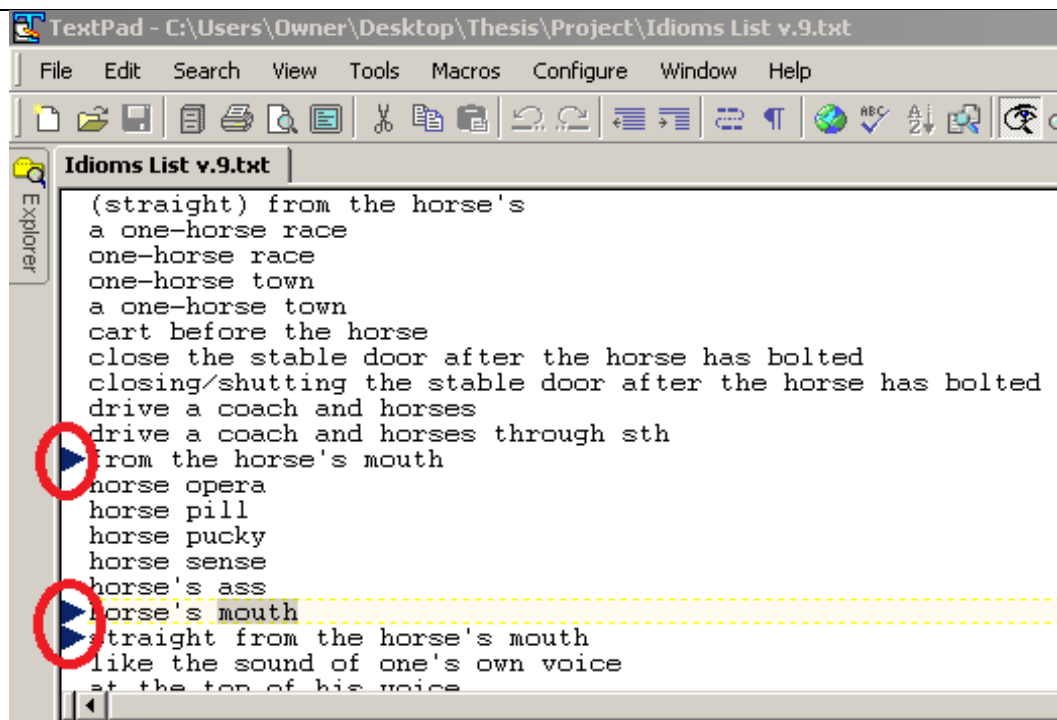


Figure 6A. After the “Select All” function was selected, blue flags appeared beside the idioms which contained what was searched for.

Step 5

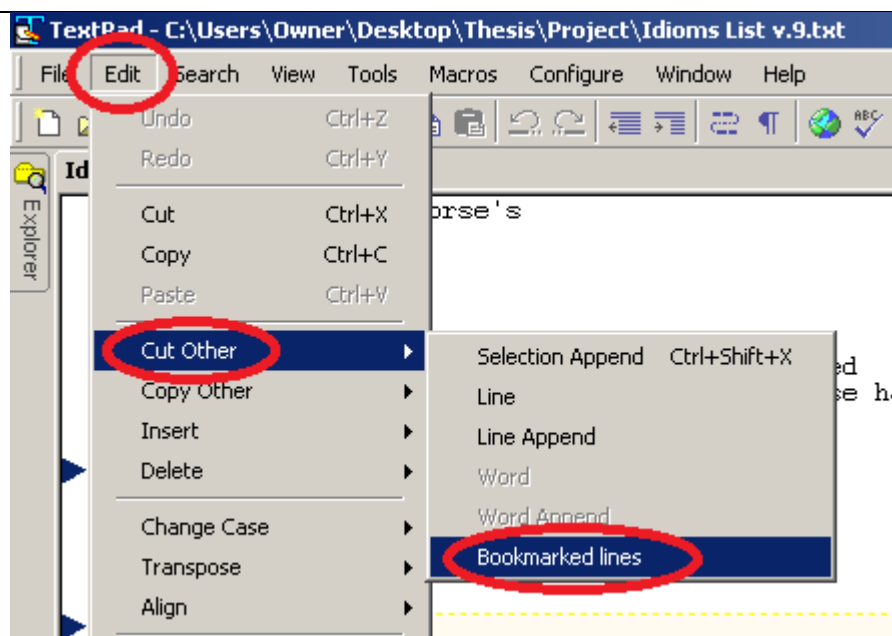


Figure 7A. Under the “Edit” tab, the “Cut Other” function was opened and the sub function “Bookmarked lines” was selected. All the idioms with a blue flag on the side were extracted from the Textpad program.

Step 6

	A
1	Sort and Ship
8307	
8308	make [one's] mouth water
8309	make sb's mouth water
8310	from the horse's mouth
8311	horse's mouth
8312	straight from the horse's mouth
8313	be down in the mouth be laughing out of the other side of your mouth be speaking/talking out of
8314	be speaking/talking out of both sides of your mouth be two sides of the same coin split your sides (laughing)
8315	out of the mouths of babes
8316	Out of the mouths of babes (and sucklings).

Figure 8A. The idioms that were cut from the Textpad file were pasted in Column A of an Excel workbook.

Step 7

	A	B	C
1	<u>Sort and Ship</u>	<u>Keyword</u>	<u>Organization</u>
8307			
8308	make [one's] mouth water		from the horse's mouth
8309	make sb's mouth water		horse's mouth
8310			straight from the horse's mouth
8311			
8312			a big mouth
8313	be down in the mouth be laughing out of the other side of your mouth be speaking/talking out of		a big-mouth
8314	be speaking/talking out of both sides of your mouth be two sides of the same coin split your sides (laughing)		
8315	out of the mouths of babes		all mouth and no trousers
8316	Out of the mouths of babes (and sucklings).		all mouth and trousers
8317	out of the mouths of babes and sucklings		
8318			bad taste in my mouth
8319			bad taste in one's mouth
8320	a mouth to feed		
8321	a/your smart mouth		

Figure 9A. Similar idioms were grouped together by cutting them from Column A and pasting them into Column C with a space between each group of similar idioms.

Step 8

C	D
<u>Organization</u>	<u>Core Idiom</u>
from the horse's mouth	from the horse's mouth
horse's mouth	from the horse's mouth
straight from the horse's mouth	from the horse's mouth

Figure 10A. Based on the collection of similar idioms in Column C, a core idiom was determined and typed in Column D next to each variant form.

Step 9

B	C	D
<u>Keyword</u>	<u>Organization</u>	<u>Core Idiom</u>
mouth	from the horse's mouth	from the horse's mouth
mouth	horse's mouth	from the horse's mouth
mouth	straight from the horse's mouth	from the horse's mouth

Figure 11A. The keyword was typed in Column B next to every variant form.

Step 10

A	B	C
<u>Sort and Ship</u>	<u>Keyword</u>	<u>Organization</u>
put [one's] foot in [one's] mouth		
put one's foot in one's mouth		
put your foot in your mouth		

Figure 12A. Although some idioms in Column A contained the keyword, there were some that remained and which were not organized under that particular keyword. Idioms in this circumstance were cut from the workbook and pasted into the Textpad file so they could be properly organized later.

Appendix B

Core Idioms

nail in * coffin
 hard/tough as nails
 hit the nail on the head
 spit nails
 Nail*biter
 on the nail
 cool as a cucumber
 strong as an ox
 ox is in the ditch
 beyond the pale
 fight tooth and claw/nail
 sweet tooth
 long in the tooth
 hen's tooth
 false alarm
 alarm bell*
 be as sound as a bell
 saved by the bell
 bells and whist les
 be waiting with bells on
 clear as a bell
 ring * bell
 hear wedding bells
 Hell's bells
 had * bell rung
 babe in the woods
 babe in arms
 baker's dozen
 cheaper by the dozen
 battle of wills
 battle of wits
 battle/war of nerves
 pitched battle
 running battle
 losing battle
 half the battle
 pick/choose * battles
 do battle
 give battle
 how goes the battle
 the battle of the sexes
 uphill battle
 win a battle but lose the war
 a blood brother
 elder brother
 younger brother
 every* and * brother
 feather in * cap
 cap in hand
 cap over the windmill
 come/go cap in hand
 if the cap fits
 bust/pop a cap
 put * thinking cap on
 set one's cap at
 a fifty-fifty chance
 fighting chance

come/spring to mind
 cross * mind
 do * mind
 don't make no never mind
 get/wrap * mind around
 go out of * mind
 great minds think alike
 half a mind
 have a mind of * own
 closed mind
 have a good mind to do
 mind like a steel trap
 have a mind to
 one*track mind
 half a mind to
 have * mind on
 if * put * mind to it
 right mind
 it's all/only in * mind
 keep * in mind
 know * own mind
 leap to mind
 make up * mind
 mind * buzzing
 mind * in the gutter
 mind go blank
 mind in neutral
 mind over matter
 mind*numbing
 mind you
 never * mind
 pay * no mind
 prey on * mind
 in/at the back of * mind
 put * mind to it
 put * out of your mind
 put * in mind of
 put/set * mind at rest
 read * mind
 say what's on * mind
 set * mind at ease
 slip * mind
 speak * mind
 sticks in * mind
 take * mind off
 banker's dozen
 decimal dozen
 * to the dozen
 six of one, * half a dozen of the other
 dime a dozen
 do a dime
 drop a dime
 not worth a dime
 stop/turn on a dime
 Yankee dime
 lead pipe cinch
 march to * different drum*

toy boy
 whipping boy
 wide boy
 bad boy
 big boy*
 boy in the boat
 boy, oh boy
 boys * toys
 boys in blue
 boys will be boys
 from the boys
 good old boy
 poor boy
 wet boy
 all work and no play makes jack a dull
 boy
 at work
 be a fast worker
 work like a dog/Trojan
 work it
 blue-collar worker
 busy work
 close enough for government work
 detective work
 dirty work
 donkey work
 give * the works
 go to work
 grunt work
 work cut out for
 have work done
 in the works
 keep up the good work
 leather working
 make hard work of doing *
 make light work of *
 make quick/short work of
 nice work if you can get it
 out of work
 put to work
 set to work
 shoot the works
 spade work
 the * works
 work* up
 work * ass/buns/butt/arise/backside/tail
 off
 work it out
 work of art
 work off
 Santa's workshop
 work out
 go/run/work like clockwork
 as regular as clockwork
 a bad workman blames his tools.
 devil finds work for idle hands
 better the devil you know than the devil

a sporting chance
 blow [one's] chance
 Buckley's chance
 by any chance
 chance'd be a fine thing
 chances are
 Chinaman's chance
 dog's chance
 fat chance
 half * chance
 in with a chance
 jump at the chance
 let this chance go by
 miss [one's] chance
 no chance
 not a chance
 ghost of a chance
 not have a cat in hell's chance
 not have a chance
 chance in hell
 snowball's chance in hell
 stand a chance
 off*chance
 outside chance
 slim chance
 smart chance
 sporting chance
 stand a fighting chance
 take * chance*
 eye for an eye
 roving eye
 eyes * bigger than * stomach/belly
 red*eye
 all eyes and ears
 all eyes are on
 eagle*eye*
 eye of the storm
 bat * eye/eyelid/eyelash
 be all eyes
 be easy on the eye
 in the public eye
 bedroom eyes
 believe * eyes
 black eye
 blink of an eye
 can't take/keep * eyes off
 cast/run * eye over
 cast a critical eye over
 cast a professional eye over
 cast an eye on
 catch * eye
 clap eyes on sb/sth
 close/shut * eyes to
 close one's eyes and think of England
 coon eyes
 cry * eyes out
 cut your eye teeth
 do * with * eyes closed
 dry one's eyes
 ears/eyeballs/eyes in sth
 easy on the eye*
 evil eye

give sb/get a bloody nose
 as plain as the nose on * face
 right under * nose
 brown*nose*
 snot*nosed
 toffee-nosed
 hard*nosed
 button nose
 by a nose
 camel's nose
 can't see beyond/past the end of * nose
 cut off * nose to spite * face
 follow * nose
 get up * nose
 nose to the grindstone
 nose around/have a nose around
 a nose for
 nose in a book
 nose in the air
 hold * nose
 in front of * nose
 keep * nose clean
 keep * nose out of sth
 lead * * by the nose
 look down * nose
 nigger nose
 nose * out of joint
 nose to tail
 nose*pick*/pick * nose
 on the nose
 pay through the nose
 poke/stick * nose into
 pope's nose
 powder * nose
 rub * nose in *
 stick * nose in*
 the nose knows
 thumb * nose
 turn up * nose
 under * nose
 no skin off * *
 banana skin
 thick*skin*
 thin*skin*
 skin and bones
 soaked to the skin
 by the skin of * teeth
 comfortable in * own skin
 get under * skin
 give * some skin
 jump in * skin
 jump out of * skin
 make * skin crawl
 save * skin
 skin * alive
 skin in the game
 give/get the skinny on
 skinny dip
 skinhead
 skin a cat
 cat got * tongue
 cat in the meal*tub

you don't know
 between the devil and the deep blue sea
 blue devil
 go to the devil
 devil is in the details
 devil you say
 devil-may-care
 dust devil
 folk devil
 give the devil * due
 devil incarnate
 like the devil
 lucky devil
 speak/talk of the devil
 devil's advocate
 angel's advocate
 sell * soul *
 * rest * soul
 be the soul of discretion
 kindred soul
 lost soul
 pour out * soul
 won't tell a soul
 be the meat in the sandwich
 dead meat
 easy meat
 meat and drink to
 meat and drink to
 beat * meat
 fresh meat
 make easy meat of *
 meat and potatoes
 red meat
 meat and two veg
 meat market
 a cattle market
 in the market for *
 buyer's market
 dark market*
 firm market
 on the market
 play the stock market
 seller's market
 soft market
 the market
 price * out of the market
 bottom drops/falls out of the market
 bottom of the heap/pile
 bottom of the ladder
 rock bottom
 be/lie at the bottom of *
 bumping along the bottom
 bottom drop/fall out
 bottom of the line
 bottom of the ninth
 bottom out
 bottoms up
 from the bottom of * heart
 get to the bottom of *
 knock the bottom out of *
 scrape the bottom of the barrel
 the bottom of the hour

eye of a needle
 eye of the beholder
 see eye to eye
 eyes are popping out of * head
 eyes glaze over
 eyes peeled
 feast *eyes *
 four*eyes
 get your eye in
 give * the eye
 give * the evil eye
 give * eye teeth
 give * the glad eye
 go into * with * eyes closed/open/shut
 have/keep * eye on
 hard on the eyes
 Have * * eye for
 have an eye for/on the main
 have eyes in the back of * head
 have eyes like a hawk
 have stars in [one's] eyes
 have * beady eye on *
 half an eye on
 have/keep one eye on
 one in the eye for
 hit * * between the eye*
 in * mind's eye
 in a pig's eye
 in the twinkling of an eye
 in the wink of an eye
 in * father's eye
 keep * eyes glued
 keep * eyes open
 keep * eye's peeled
 keep a weather eye *
 keep an eye on
 keep *eye on the ball
 keep an out
 keep * eye in
 * eyes on
 look * in the eye*
 make sheep's eyes at
 magic eye
 more * * than meets the eye
 naked eye
 scales fall from * eyes
 not * bat an eye*
 have eyes for
 open * eyes to
 private eye
 pull the wool over * eyes
 * eyes * pop* out of * head
 right before my eyes
 roll * eyes
 do * with * eyes *
 eyes are out on stalks
 see dollar signs in * eyes
 set eyes on
 shut * eyes to
 sight for sore eyes
 snake eyes
 spit in * eye

fat*cat
 smile/grin like the Cheshire cat
 fraidy/scardey cat
 like a cat on a hot tin roof
 cat in the sack
 cat * out of the bag
 like the cat that ate the canary
 cool cat
 copy cat
 swing a cat
 see which way the cat jumps
 fight like cats and dogs
 * the cat dragged in
 kick at the cat
 like the cat that got the cream
 put/set the cat among the pigeons
 when/while the cat's away, the mice will play
 who's *, the cat's mother?
 rain* cats and dogs
 dog my cats
 herd cats
 cat and mouse
 beauty is only skin deep
 beauty is in the eye of the beholder
 beauty sleep
 not lose * sleep over
 big sleep
 can do * in * sleep
 deep sleep
 eternal sleep
 go to sleep
 put * to sleep
 sleep rough/rough sleeper
 sleep around
 sleep in
 sleep * off
 sleep on *
 sleep together
 sleep with
 sleep like a baby/log/top
 beauty queen
 bean queen
 bio queen
 drag queen
 drama queen
 faux queen
 hangar queen
 ice queen
 queen of beasts
 race queen
 rice queen
 riverboat queen
 speed queen
 let sleeping dogs lie
 dog and pony show
 dog in the manger
 hot dog
 as sick as a dog/sicker than a dog
 be like a dog with two tails
 call off the dogs
 can't teach an old dog new tricks

wind up * bottom
 bottom dollar
 almighty dollar
 be as sound as a dollar
 dollars to donuts/doughnuts
 * dollars to donuts/doughnuts
 dollars-and-cents
 look/feel (like) a million dollars
 top dollar
 stretch the dollar
 x number of dollars
 million/64,000 dollar question
 pop/ask the question
 out of the question
 beg the question
 beyond question
 burning question
 call * into question
 good question
 not a question of
 no question
 no questions asked
 open to question
 pointed questions
 shoot first and ask questions later
 without question
 pants /trousers down
 * can't keep a good man/woman down.
 way to a man's heart is through his stomach
 ways and means
 user friendly
 matter of time
 two-time
 fancy-pants
 billet-doux
 pick up the bill /tab
 act/play the fool
 act/play the goat
 horsetrad*
 pink dollar/pound
 night and day
 uphill job/task
 for want of a better word
 mum's the word
 wordsmith
 glamour girl/puss
 golden boy/girl
 poster girl/boy/child
 girl/boy next door
 that a/atta boy/girl
 miracle-worker
 workaholic
 bare * heart/soul
 soul mate
 copper-bottomed
 at the end of the day
 cutting edge
 bottom edge
 close to the edge
 on a knife/razor* edge
 on edge

stars in * eyes
 stink eye
 take * eye off the ball
 apple of * eye
 there wasn't a dry eye in the house
 there's less to * that meets the eye
 throw an eye
 turn a blind eye
 when * was a * twinkle in * father's eye
 with a jaundiced eye
 wipe *eye
 worth a Jew's eye
 with an eye to
 with an eye towards
 with * eyes * open
 would give * eye
 give a black eye
 get an eyeful
 gleam in * eye
 eyeball*to*eyeball
 give * the hairy eyeball
 up to * eyeballs
 eyeball *
 knit * eyebrow
 raise* * eyebrow*
 bird's*eye view
 worm's*eye view
 in plain view
 in view of
 take the long view
 with a view to
 on view
 take a dim view of
 ringside seat/view
 bums/fannies in the seats
 catbird seat
 driver's seat
 seat of * pants
 hot seat
 box seat
 have/take a seat
 take a back seat
 nosebleed seat
 edge of * seat
 fine*tooth* comb
 nail * to the wall
 against a brick wall
 back against/to the wall
 back wall
 off*the*wall*
 climb* the walls
 talking to a * wall
 blue wall of silence
 fourth wall
 up the wall*
 front wall
 go to the wall
 hear the wall
 hit * * wall
 hole*in*the*wall
 side wall
 stare at the wall

dirty dog
 dog's breakfast/dinner
 dog *
 dog around
 dog*eat*dog
 dog in the hunt
 dog it
 keep a dog and bark yourself
 every dog has its day
 everyone/everybody/the whole world
 and * dog
 go* to the dogs
 junkyard dog
 lap dog
 like a big dog *
 look for a dog to kick
 lucky dog
 red dog
 put on the dog
 top dog
 throw * to the dogs
 until the last dog is hung
 walk the dog
 yellow dog
 throw on a dog for you
 dog tired
 dog ear
 doggone
 in the doghouse
 central dogma
 could not get elected dogcatcher
 mind/watch * P's and Q's
 like a deer/rabbit * in the headlights
 candy-coat
 nosebleed section
 thin section
 sleep camel
 camel through the eye of a needle
 the straw that broke the camel's back
 a straw in the wind
 clutch/grasp at straws
 bang straw
 draw the short straw
 final/last straw
 straw that stirs the drink
 he-man
 straw man/man of straw
 iron man
 dirty old man
 family man
 hatchet man
 hit man
 a man about-town
 man for all seasons
 man of God
 man of letters
 man of * parts
 man of the cloth
 man's got to (gotta) do what a man's got
 to (gotta) do
 man's man
 marked man

bleeding edge
 drive/push * to the edge
 edge of something else
 edge out
 fray around/at the edges
 gain the edge
 have the edge
 over the edge
 rough edges
 on the ragged edge
 hold the edge
 on the edge of * seat
 keep the edge
 take the edge off
 life/live on the edge
 rough around the edges
 set * teeth on edge
 thin edge of the wedge
 top edge
 double-edged/two-edged sword
 sword of Damocles hangs over * head
 sword and sandal
 beat/turn swords into ploughshares
 cross swords
 fall on * sword
 put to the sword
 sword and sorcery
 pen is mightier than the sword
 slip of the pen
 put pen to paper
 penny wise, dollar dumb
 penny for * thoughts
 A penny saved is a penny earned.
 turn up like a bad penny
 ten/two a penny
 pretty penny
 In for a penny, in for a pound
 not have two pennies to rub
 pennies from heaven
 penny in the fusebox
 spend a penny
 the penny drops
 worth every penny
 lead in * pencil
 sharpen * pencil
 pencil in
 pay the penalty
 kill a penalty
 penny wedding
 white wedding
 shotgun wedding/marriage
 ride shotgun
 bottom line
 all the way down the line
 top of the line
 line of fire
 battle lines are drawn
 fine/thin line
 all along the line
 along/on the * lines
 out of line
 be in line for

wall of silence	medallion man	in * line
handwriting/writing on the wall	poor man's *	on the line
wall*to*wall	Renaissance man	be on the right lines
walls have ears	self-made man	firing line
hell on earth	yes man	front line
for the hell of it	Are you a man or a mouse?	below the poverty line
* like hell	as much as the next man	bring * into line with
hell of a *	as one man	clear * lines
living hell	man in the moon	color inside/outside the lines
the hell you say	barrow man	come on line
all hell break loose	*man	cross the line
blown to hell	* own man	don't give me that line
to hell in a handbasket	be a man	double vertical line
hell on wheels	be man enough to do *	down the line
shot to hell/pieces	be no good/use to man or beast	draw * line
catch/get hell	big man on campus	draw a line under
beat the hell out of	black man	draw a line under
come hell or high water	boldly go where no man has gone before	drop * a line
forty minutes of hell	bottle man	fall in/into line
frighten/scare the hell out of	company man	give/feed/hand * a line
get the hell out	dimber damber upright man	get/have a line on
give * hell	every last man *	hard line*
go through hell and back	every man for himself	on the right lines
hell*for*leather	every man has his price	hold the line
go to hell	every man Jack *	in line
hell and half of Georgia	front man	in the line of duty
hell hath no fury like a woman scorned	see a man about a *	* on the line
hell to pay	grand old man of *	lead the line
in one hell of a hurry	man of the moment	line of authority
cold day in hell	I see, said the blind man	line up
like a bat out of hell	lad* man	read between the lines
match made in hell	leg man	right down the line
no screaming hell	main man	sign on the dotted line
not have a hope in hell	make a man * of *	somewhere along the line
road to hell is paved with good	man after * own heart	step over the line
intentions	man among men	string a line
play * hell with	man and boy	take a soft line
put * through hell	man and wife	toe/tow the line
raise hell	man in the middle	walk a straight line
sure as hell	man in/on the street	walk the line
there* hell to pay	man of few words	penguin suit
* hell freezes over	man of * word	birthday suit
to hell and gone	man of the hour	follow suit
to hell with	man of the people	suit *
hell mend	man up	pencil/pen pusher
hell*bent	man upstairs	at a push
hell*raiser	* man*of*war	hard pushed
would see * in hell before *	man*to*man	push it
what the hell	man's home is his castle	get/give * the push
full*throttle	May the best man win	push comes to shove
easy as pie	old man	push * around
apple*pie order	odd man out	push *
be as nice as pie	* man in	push in
cow*pie	point man	push off
cutie pie	red man	push on
humble pie	see a man	pencil whip
motherhood and apple pie	sick man	crack the whip
pie*in*the*sky	stick it to the man	whip through
slice of the pie	straight man	whips and jingles
sweetie pie	take it like a man	catch * air
piece of cake	low man on the totem pole	air out
conversation piece	the man	turn the air blue/air was blue

a piece/slice of the action
 be * of a piece
 * piece of work
 piece of piss
 thrilled to pieces
 cut to pieces
 fall to pieces
 piece of * mind
 go to pieces
 How long is a piece of string?
 in one piece
 love * to pieces
 pick up the pieces
 pull/pick * to pieces
 piece de resistance
 piece of ass
 piece of crap
 piece of me
 piece of shit
 piece of tail
 piece of the pie
 say * piece
 party piece
 piece out of *
 finger* in * pie*
 all fingers and thumbs
 burn * fingers
 butter fingers
 count * on the fingers of
 put * finger on it
 fingers/hand in the till
 keep * fingers crossed
 cross * fingers
 fickle finger of fate
 finger*pointing
 fingers the size of bananas
 get fingered
 get the finger
 get/pull * finger out
 green fingers
 finger on the pulse
 itchy trigger finger
 lay a finger on
 slip through * fingers
 lift/raise a finger
 long finger
 point * * finger
 pull * finger
 put/stick two fingers up at
 put * finger on
 sticky fingers
 the finger
 wrap/twist * around * * finger
 work * fingers to the bone
 * little finger
 by * fingernails
 at * fingertips
 by * fingertips
 fingerprints are on/all over
 fly on the wall
 fly in the ointment
 bar fly

to a man
 white man
 young man
 your man
 be all things to all men
 Dead men tell no tales
 men in * suits
 separate/sort out the men from the boys
 the men in white coats
 man/woman of means
 a means to an end
 by * means
 by fair means or foul
 it means curtains for *
 * means
 cut * cloth according to * means
 man's best friend
 fine-feathered friend
 fair-weather friend
 a friend in need *
 childhood friend
 false friend
 fast friends
 friend of Bill W.
 friend* with benefits
 friends in high places
 make friends
 With friends like that, who needs
 enemies?
 time and tide wait for no man
 catch * at a bad time
 all in good time
 * not before time
 no time to lose
 about time too
 ahead of * time
 ahead of time
 all the time in the world
 at one time
 at the best of times
 at times
 time bandit/burglar/thief
 bad time
 one at a time
 before * time
 behind * time
 borrowed time
 mark* time
 beat * time
 behind time
 bide * time
 big time
 buy time
 closing time
 copious free time
 do time
 easy time of it
 every time * turns around/round
 for the time being
 from/since time immemorial
 time to time
 get with the times

airs and graces
 float/walk on air
 (up) in the air
 hanging in the air
 clear the air
 cut the air with a knife
 dead air
 thin air
 hot air
 get some air
 on air
 pluck * out of the air
 put on airs
 airhead
 airy-fairy
 hook, line and sinker
 off the hook
 by hook or by crook
 get * hooks into
 hook * up
 hook in
 hook up with
 hooker
 on * hook
 ring off the hook
 sling * hook
 play hookey/hooky
 bright line rule
 rule of thumb
 as a rule
 bend/break/stretch the rules
 follow the rules
 golden rule
 ground rule
 hard and fast rules
 rule in
 rule OK
 rule out
 rule over
 two-second rule
 path/line of least resistance
 pocket of resistance
 line * pockets
 in * pocket
 out of pocket
 dig/dip into * pocket
 deep pockets
 pick * pocket
 vote with * pocketbook
 pocket-sized
 fresh as a daisy
 push up * daisies
 whoops-a-daisy
 press/push * buttons
 (right) on the button
 hot button
 as bright/cute as a button
 press the panic button
 pop * buttons
 button*down
 buttonhole *
 button * lip

wouldn't hurt a fly
 on the fly
 fly* blind
 flying high
 fly*by*night
 fly low
 fly off
 will never fly
 blood run cold
 bad blood
 after * blood
 bay* for blood
 in * blood
 blood * stone
 blood * turnip
 out for blood
 too risky for * blood
 blood and guts
 blood and thunder
 blood in the water
 blood is thicker than water
 blood is up
 blood run* cold
 blood sweat and tears
 blue*blood*
 draw * blood
 fresh blood
 have * blood on * hands
 taste blood
 in cold blood
 blood boil
 new blood
 blood curdle*
 scent blood
 smell blood
 spit blood
 sweat blood
 tie in * blood
 too rich for * blood
 written in blood
 * blood * worth bottling
 young blood
 blood* but unbowed
 bloody minded
 beat/knock the * daylights out of
 broad daylight
 frighten/scare the * daylights out of
 see daylight
 all systems go
 beat the system
 buck the system
 get * out of * system
 spin doctor
 just what the doctor ordered
 doctor * up
 doctors make the worst patients
 bad/rotten apple
 An apple a day keeps the doctor away
 apple doesn't fall far from the tree
 compare apples and oranges
 big apple
 how do you like them apples

give * a rough/hard/bad time
 give the time of day
 go down for the third time
 show */have a good time
 hard times
 hard/rough/thin time of *
 have a lot of time for
 have all the time in the world
 no time for
 no time for *
 have no time to lose
 time of * life
 time on * hands
 time on * side
 high time
 time flies
 in * own good time
 in due time
 in next to no time
 in no time *
 * in time *
 about time
 It's feeding time at the zoo!
 keep up with the times
 time to kill/kill time
 lead time
 lean time
 let the good times roll
 let time take its course
 long time no *
 make good time
 make time
 make up for lost time
 many a time
 many's the time
 mark time
 move with the times
 nine times out of ten
 no time like the present
 not give * the time of day
 not have much time for *
 nut-cutting time
 old time used to be
 on time
 once upon a time
 time will tell
 pass the time of day
 play for time
 pressed for time
 put in time
 real time
 right time
 rotation time
 * time is up
 serve time
 sit on your time
 spend time
 take * sweet time
 take time to smell the roses
 time of the month
 time is ripe
 there's a first time for everything

lippy
 stiff upper lip
 lick * lips
 on everyone's lips
 tight lip*
 bite * lip
 curl * lip
 don't give * any/none of * lip
 fat lip
 lips are sealed
 lip off
 lock lips
 loose lip
 read * lips
 rented lips
 zip * lips
 put lipstick on a pig
 whip hand
 The hand that rocks the cradle (rules the world).
 heavy hand*
 hand-wringing
 high handed
 right-hand man/woman/person
 hands on
 stick/put * hand in * pocket
 go hand in hand
 work hand-in-hand
 gouty-handed
 catch * red-handed
 first*hand
 wait on * hand * foot (and finger)
 hand in the cookie jar
 tip * hand
 hands down
 a firm/steady hand on the tiller
 change hands
 all hands on deck
 all hands to the pumps
 old hand
 at first hand
 at the hands of
 dab hand
 in hand
 in safe hands
 in * hands
 on hand
 high-hat
 bear a hand
 bite the hand that feeds *
 by hand
 by * own hand
 can't keep * hands off
 can't put * hands on it
 cement hands
 close/near at hand
 crawl on my hands and knees over
 broken glass just to see her photo
 dead hand
 dirty * hands
 dishpan hands
 don't hand me that

mix apples and oranges
 road apple
 She'll be apples.
 She's apples.
 wise apple
 down with * apple*cart
 upset the apple*cart
 put the cart before the horse
 cart * off
 cart * away
 get/give * carte blanche
 criss-cross applesauce
 green*eyed monster
 a Frankenstein's monster
 back*seat driver
 designated driver
 Sunday driver
 out of/from the corner of * eye
 around the corner
 back/force * into a corner
 be backed into corner
 be in a tight corner/spot
 box * into a corner
 kitty/catty corner*
 cut corners
 from/to the four corners of the
 earth/globe
 get/have a corner on the market
 got * cornered
 in * corner
 light * corner
 paint * into a corner
 pick corners
 turn * corner
 fresh pair of eyes
 a safe pair of hands
 extra pair of hands
 grow a pair
 have a pair
 pair off
 pair up
 show sb a clean pair of heels
 strap on a pair
 a slice of the pie
 slice of life
 a slice of the cake
 any*way * slice it
 no matter how * slice it
 slice of the action
 three slices short of a full loaf
 whichever way * slice it
 best/greatest thing since sliced bread
 a little bit of bread and no cheese
 bread*and*butter
 bread and circuses
 break bread
 brown bread
 butter * bread on both sides
 cast * bread upon the waters
 know which side * bread is buttered on
 earn * bread
 man cannot live by bread alone

There's a time and a place.
 there's no time like the present
 There's no time to lose.
 third time is a charm
 throwback to a time
 time after time
 time and again
 time and material
 time and time again
 time flies *
 time hangs/lies heavy *
 time is money
 time is of the essence
 time off
 time*out
 time ran out
 time stands still
 time* wasting
 time* up
 tough time of it
 waste no time
 put * pants on one leg at a time
 wear the pants
 catch * with * pants down
 pee/piss/wet * pants
 smarty*pants
 lick/beat the pants off
 bore the pants off
 poop/crap/shit * pants
 keep * pants on
 kick in the pants
 scare the pants off
 ants in * pants
 red ant
 warrior ant
 walk and chew gum at the same time
 black gum
 gum up
 up a gum tree
 bark up the wrong tree
 out of * tree
 three-on-the-tree
 up a tree
 family tree
 fruit of the poisonous tree
 make like a tree and leave
 off * tree
 shake the pagoda tree
 the top of the tree
 dead tree edition
 bash the bishop
 Christmas tree bill
 bill and coo
 clean bill of health
 bill of goods
 bulk bill*
 fill the bill
 fit the bill
 foot the bill
 on * bill
 pay the bills
 tough/hard act to follow

eat out of (the palm) of * hand
 have/hold * in the palm of * hand
 * can get * hands on
 fall into * hands
 into the wrong hands
 fill * hands
 firm hand
 force * hand
 free hand
 from my cold, dead hands
 upper hand
 get * hands dirty
 get/lay * hands on *
 out of hand
 out of * hands
 give * a * hand
 in good hands
 hands full
 hand it to
 ham hand*
 hand down
 hand in
 hand off
 hand on * heart
 hand*out
 hand over
 hand over fist
 hand to mouth
 hand* up
 hands are tied
 have * on * hands
 have a hand in
 clean hands
 have * hand out
 hand it to
 helping hand
 hold * hand
 hot hand
 keep * hand in
 lay * hand* on
 leave * in * hands
 * hand doesn't know what the * hand is
 doing
 life * in * hands
 take * off * hands
 on the gripping hand
 on the one hand
 on the other hand
 on * hands
 overplay * hands
 play into * hands
 play the hand * is dealt
 put * hands together
 raise * hand
 raise * hand against/to
 reject * out of hand
 shake hands with the unemployed
 show * hand
 sit on * hands
 take * in hand
 take the law into * own hands
 take * into your own hands

Turkish bread	catch * in the act	talk to the hand
be/live below/on the breadline	balancing/juggling act	third hand
hair's breadth	act of Congress	throw in * hand
balls to the wall	act out	tie * hands
ground ball with eyes	act up	top hand
ball and chain	class act	try * hand
ball*breaker	clean up * act	turn * hand to
a different ball of wax	disappearing/vanishing act	wandering hands
a slime ball	Dutch act	wash * hands of
ball * in * court	get * act together	with one hand tied behind * back
ball of fire	get in on the act	with * bare hands
balls off a brass monkey	in the act	with * own fair hands
balls-out	read * the riot act	wring * hand*
balls-up	rearguard action	lip service
behind the eight*ball	out of action	put * into service
on the ball	take action	yeoman's service
break/bust * balls	actions speak louder than words	press into service
carry the ball	extracurricular activity	hat in hand
drop the ball	bad actor	buy straw hats in winter
set/start/keep/get the ball rolling	dead duck	all hat and no cattle
have/got the balls	lame*duck	tip * hat
have/got * by the balls	sitting duck	old hat
have a ball	all duck or no dinner	talk through * hat
head-the-ball	ugly duckling	eat * hat
kick in the balls	break * duck	hang * hat
have a lot on the ball	duck out	hang up * hat
low*ball	ducks in a row	hats off *
pick up/take the ball and run	ducking and diving	* hat on
play ball	ducks in order	take * hate off to
spike the ball	golden duck	under * hat
take one's ball and go home	hunt where the ducks are	pass the hat around
take the ball and run	just ducky	pull * out of * hat
that * the way the ball bounces	odd duck	pull a rabbit out of * hat
whole ball of wax	take to * like a duck to water	stovepipe hat
throw * a curve ball	like water off a duck's back	throw/toss * hat into the ring
too many balls in the air	body of water	top hat
wait for the ball to drop	above water	wear * hat*
flesh*and*blood	bath water	wear the black hat
become one flesh	dead in the water	white hat
exchange flesh	deep water	brick in * hat
flesh out	hot water	You can't make bricks without straw
make * flesh crawl/ creep	tread* water	brick* and mortar
meet/see * in the flesh	water over the dam	brick by brick
press the flesh	water under the bridge	brick in
put flesh on * * *	Blood is thicker than water.	like a ton of bricks
retake * flesh	blow * out of the water	drop * like a hot brick
thorn in * flesh/side	carry * water	drop a brick
thorny *	carry water for	brick* short of a full load
pound of flesh	could talk under water	he like talking to a brick
pack/pile on the pounds	don't miss the water till the well runs dry	thick as a brick
pound salt/sand	hold * water	hit the bricks
quarter-pounder	muddy the waters	yellow brick road
spirit is willing but the flesh is weak	navigable waters	down the road, not across the street
free spirit	pass water	further down the road
* the spirit moves you	pour/throw cold water on	get out of the road
dampen * spirits	running water	hit the road
Dunkirk spirit	still waters run deep	in the road
enter/get into the spirit	test the waters	take the low road
kindred spirit	under water	on the road
raise/lift * spirits	walk on water	one for the road
spirit away	water to * mill	road to Damascus
spirit of the law	water down	rocky road

that's the spirit
 the moving spirit
 an ounce of prevention is worth a pound
 of cure
 above the salt
 worth * salt
 attic salt
 salt of the earth
 below the salt
 covenant of salt
 old salt
 rub salt in/into * wound*
 pinch/grain of salt
 salt away
 buil* on sand
 bring sand to the beach
 the shifting sands of
 pound the pavement
 hit the pavement
 go through * like a dose of salts
 get/give * a does/taste of * own
 medicine
 in small doses
 in/at a pinch
 feel the pinch
 pinch to grow an inch
 pinch
 pinch hit*
 grain of truth
 against the grain
 bury/stick/put * head in the sand
 raise/rear * * head
 beat/bang * head against a * wall
 a cool head
 a wise head on young shoulders
 an old head on young shoulders
 banging/hitting * head
 hanging over * head
 head over heels
 off * head
 out of * head
 over * head
 bite * head off
 bite/snap * head off
 bring * to a head
 head of steam
 butt heads
 standing on * head
 can't make head* nor tails* of
 clear * head
 come to a head
 head to head
 cool head
 cooler heads prevailed
 do * head in
 from head to foot/toe
 funny in the head
 head out of the clouds
 get * head together
 get a big head
 get * into/through * head
 in over * head

like a fish out of water
 flying fish
 bigger/other fish to fry
 a big fish
 big fish in a small/little pool/pond
 cold fish
 sleep with the fishes
 neither fish nor fowl
 bottom fishing
 drink like a fish
 fish and company stink after three days
 fish out
 queer fish
 shooting fish in a barrel
 need * like a fish needs a bicycle
 odd fish
 other/plenty more fish in the sea
 seem/smell/sound fishy
 straw horse
 * can lead a horse to water (but * can't
 make * drink).
 piss like a race horse
 * and the horse * rode in on
 charley horse
 dark horse
 horse of another/a different color
 stalking horse
 Trojan horse
 back the wrong horse
 flog/beat a dead horse
 change horses in mid*stream
 high horse
 choke a horse
 could eat a horse
 Don't spare the horses.
 eat like a horse
 get back on the horse that bucked *
 * look a gift horse in the mouth
 hold * horses
 horse and rabbit stew
 horse around
 horses for courses
 no horse in this race
 pick the wrong horse
 strong as a horse
 wild horses would/could not drag * away
 willing horse
 horseplay
 go through fire and water
 pull * bacon out of the fire
 bacon-faced
 bacon-fed
 save * bacon
 bring home the bacon
 get the bacon bad
 a good voice to beg bacon
 voice * in the wilderness
 with one voice
 find * voice
 give voice to
 home away from home
 An Englishman's home is his castle

take the high road
 rubber meets the road
 burn rubber
 lay rubber
 rubberneck
 rubber-chicken dinner
 be done like a (dog's) dinner
 show on the road
 after the Lord Mayor's show
 go to show
 show*stop*
 all show
 gong show
 good show
 have * to show for
 horror show
 run the show
 show * around
 show * up
 show off
 steal the show
 The show must go on.
 showboat
 showdown
 show/fly/wave the flag
 like holding/waving a red flag in front of
 a bull
 freak flag
 keep the flag flying
 drape/wrap * in the flag
 flag down
 Put the flags out!
 raise the flag and see who salutes
 white flag
 red flag
 Spanish flag
 strike * flag
 wrap * in the flag
 run * up the flagpole and see who salutes
 show/bare * teeth
 armed to the teeth
 as scarce as hen's teeth
 back teeth are floating
 like pulling teeth
 gnash* * teeth
 cut * teeth
 get/sink * teeth into
 grit * teeth
 have teeth
 lie through * teeth
 make * teeth itch
 would give * teeth
 teething pains/troubles/problem
 HE-double-toothpicks
 true colo(u)rs
 flying colo(u)rs
 off colo(u)r
 local color
 sail under false colo(u)rs
 see the colo(u)r of * money
 nail * colo(u)rs to the mast
 the ropes

get/wrap * head around
 get/put/keep * head down
 give * head a shake
 give * * head
 head start
 give * a big head
 go to * head
 hang * head
 head in the clouds
 * head on * shoulders
 head screwed on
 a head for *
 have * head read
 hold * over * head
 * hanging over * head
 have * head * up
 head * buzzing
 head and shoulders above
 stand * on * head
 head down *
 head is spinning
 head*on
 head out
 head south
 head to toe
 head up *
 head [modal] roll
 heads or tails
 heads*up
 hold * head high or head held high
 keep * head above water
 keep * head* together
 put/keep/stick * head above the parapet
 laugh * head off
 knock heads
 lay * head on the block
 lose * head
 make *head spin
 melon head
 mop head
 need * head examin*
 need * like * a hole in the head
 need * head testing
 not * right in the head
 off the top of * head
 price on * head
 pumpkin head
 stick/put * head in a noose
 put * head in the lion's mouth
 put * head on the block
 put * heads together
 put a gun to * head
 put ideas into sb's head
 scratch * head
 scream * head off
 sleepy head
 soft in the head
 stand on * head
 * comes into your mind
 swelled head
 stand/turn * on * head
 take * into * head to do *

make * at home
 be at home
 close to home
 home and dry
 home and hosed
 bring * home *
 come home to roost
 come home to *
 drive/hammer * home
 hit/strike * home
 home sweet home
 no one/nobody is home
 * to write home about
 play away from home
 stay at home
 romp home
 down*home
 home free
 home run
 not give * house room
 halfway house
 house of cards
 basket house
 as safe as houses
 big house
 get on like a house on fire
 bottom the house
 brick house
 eat * out of house and home
 bring down the house/bring down the house
 clean house
 full house
 get/set/put * house in order
 go * round the houses
 haunted house
 house of ill fame
 keep house
 move house
 nut house
 on the house
 poor house
 rock the house
 household name
 name-calling
 name-dropper
 to be named later
 name to conjure with
 give * bad name
 * middle name
 name of the game
 big name
 blacken * name
 call * names
 clear * name
 common name
 drag/sift * name through the mud
 drop * name*
 go by the name of
 have * name on *
 have * name taken
 * name written all over *

piss up a rope
 on the ropes
 give * enough rope and * will hang *
 skip/jump rope
 rope into
 money for old rope
 spend money like water
 blood money
 piss money up the wall
 money maker
 you pays * money and you takes * chances
 more money than brains
 right on the money
 mint/coin money
 in the money
 conscience money
 dirty money
 made of money
 easy money
 even money
 for my money
 found money
 funny money
 money to burn
 hush money
 laundered money
 mad money
 money doesn't grow on trees
 money for jam
 money is no object
 money talks
 money to hum
 Monopoly money
 money is on *
 need money to make
 new money
 old money
 pin money
 money where * mouth is
 put up the money
 raise money
 run for * money
 seed money
 silly money
 smart money
 spending money
 take the money and run
 throw * money around
 throw good money after bad
 throw money around
 throw money at sin
 throw money away
 with money to burn
 you need money to make money
 moneybags
 license to print money
 poetic license
 fool and his money are easily/soon parted
 nobody's fool
 flannelled fool

take * head off
 talk over * head
 talking head
 think with * head
 touched in the head
 tube head
 turn * head
 two heads are better than one
 use * head
 guiding light/spirit
 wall flower
 paper flower
 belle of the ball
 alarm bells ring
 bells and whistles
 ring a bell
 bell out
 with bells on
 pull the other one, it's got bells on
 ring a bell
 warning bells ring
 bell the cat
 belly up
 Delhi belly
 yellow*bell*
 had a bellyful
 fire in * belly
 into the fire
 quick*fire
 play with fire
 come under fire
 breathe fire
 catch fire
 draw * fire
 escape fire
 fat hit the fire
 fat*in the fire
 fight fire with fire
 fire away
 fire off
 hang fire
 hang/hold * fire
 keep the home fires burning
 start/light a fire under
 light * fire
 on fire
 open fire
 fired up
 pull out of the fire
 put out a fire
 rediscover fire
 set fire
 * irons in the fire
 bad iron
 iron out
 pump iron
 shooting iron
 strike while the iron is hot
 baptism of/by fire
 skeleton in * closet
 mind your tongue
 slip of the tongue

name in lights
 put a name to *
 in all but * name
 in heaven's name
 in name only/alone
 in the name of
 make a name for *
 name and shame
 name is mud
 name names
 put * name in the hat
 take * name in vain
 what/why in the name of heaven
 you name it, * has/got *
 remain nameless
 name/choose * poison
 what's * poison
 poisoned chalice
 poison-pen letter
 dead letter
 Dear John letter
 French letter
 chain letter
 dash off a letter
 to the letter
 letter of the law
 letters after * own name
 letter-perfect
 red*letter day
 take it one day at a time
 plain as day
 black day
 cold day in July
 day late and a dollar short
 dog days
 all the livelong day
 clear/plain as day
 back in the day
 bad hair day
 banyan day
 as honest as the day is long
 big day
 call it a day
 carry the day
 dawn of a new day
 day after day
 day and age
 day by day
 day in * day out
 day of days
 day of reckoning
 day of the family farm
 day out
 halcyon days
 day*to*day
 days are numbered
 days of yore
 field day
 rainy day
 give * * any day
 glory days
 good day

fool around
 fool away
 fool with
 fool you
 fools rush in where angels fear to tread
 more fool *
 suffer fools gladly
 play * for a fool
 play the fool
 You could've fooled me.
 fool's paradise
 paradise on earth
 fool's errand
 lost errand
 run an errand
 for love or money
 all's fair in love and war
 it is better to have loved and lost than
 never to have loved at all
 cupboard love
 fall in love
 first love
 for the love of *
 love * and leave
 love at first sight
 love conquers all
 love is blind
 love is where you find it
 loved up
 make love
 no love lost
 play for love
 progressive love
 puppy love
 the love of your life
 tough love
 labor/labour of love
 misery loves company
 put * out of * misery
 a misery guts
 hate * guts
 slog/sweat/work * guts out
 duck's guts
 bust/split * gut
 got guts
 guts for garters
 rot gut
 down the gut-filer
 gut-bucket
 gut-wrenched
 spill * guts
 gut reaction
 chain reaction
 knee-jerk reaction
 a rubber check
 gut check
 rain check
 body check
 hold/keep * in check
 checks and balances
 check is in the mail
 check * out

bite * tongue
 cat's tongue
 find * tongue
 forked tongue
 guard * tongue
 hold * tongue
 keep a civil tongue in your head
 loosen * tongue
 roll/trip of the tongue
 set/start tongues wagging
 sharp tongue
 silver*tongue*
 tongue*in*cheek
 tongue*tied
 watch * tongue
 wicked tongue
 low*profile
 keep * options open
 chin up
 have more chins than * Chinese phone
 book
 be up to your chin
 take * on the chin
 lose *
 pour gasoline on the fire
 where there's smoke, there's fire
 there's no smoke without fire
 blow smoke
 chain smoker
 smoke like a fire/chimney
 up in smoke
 holy smoke
 smoke*and*mirrors
 smoke like a *
 smoke out
 big smoke
 throw smoke
 put/stick * in * pipe *
 between the pipes
 in the pipe five by five
 lay the pipe
 pipe down
 be in the pipeline
 he who pays the piper calls the tune
 wet dream
 pipe dream
 set of pipes
 set of wheels
 set off
 smoke signal*
 add/pour fuel to/on the *
 belly laugh
 laugh a minute
 for laughs
 have/get a laugh
 last laugh
 he who laughs last laughs *
 laugh oneself *
 laugh at
 laugh off
 not know whether to laugh or cry
 be laughing out of the other side of *

good old days
 put in a hard day
 have * day in court
 have a nice day
 have/see * day
 see better days
 heavy day
 hump day
 in all my born days
 early in the day
 not * day
 one of these/those days
 late in the day
 live to fight another day
 make * day
 make a day of it
 market day
 match day
 rue the day
 salad days
 save the day
 seize the day
 slow day
 take each day as it comes
 that'll be the day
 the other day
 Those were the days!
 haven't got/don't have all day
 win the day
 zero day
 day and night
 day or night
 from day one
 don't give up/quit * day job
 a bang up job
 hatchet job
 put-up job
 snow job
 inside job
 asleep on the job
 do a job on *
 do the job
 lie down/fall down on the job
 get a job
 give * up as a bad job
 good job
 have the devil's own job doing *
 more than * job is worth
 jobs for the boys
 joe*job
 lay/put * job on the line
 make the best of a bad job
 take this job and shove it
 four-letter word*
 mark my words
 buzz word
 dirty word
 word to the wise *
 get a word in edge*
 bad word
 as good as * word
 eat * words

check off
 check over
 check that
 check through
 check up on
 spot check
 check-out
 checkup
 checkered career
 check * bags
 couldn't * * way out of a * paper bag
 squint like a bag of nails
 bag of bones
 grab bag
 doggy bag
 mixed bag
 bag and baggage
 bag of rations
 bag of shells
 bag of tricks
 bag of wind
 be * bag
 bag of nerves
 in the bag
 leave * holding the bag
 brown bag
 douche bag
 excess baggage
 not be * bag
 pack * bags
 pull * out of the bag
 use * as a punching bag
 rag bagger
 three-bagger
 handbags at dawn
 the handbags come out
 prove/show * mettle
 be on * mettle
 test * mettle
 a coffee table book
 open book
 closed book
 be a walking history book
 in * good books
 in * bad books
 be one for the books
 blue book
 be singing from the same hymn book
 blot * copy book
 booked up
 bring * to book
 by the book
 can't/shouldn't judge/tell a book by its
 cover
 close the book on *
 cook the books
 crack * book*
 curl up with a good book
 double booked
 hit the books
 in * book
 in the books

face/mouth	lost for words	know like a book
barrel/bundle of laughs	last word in *	make book
don't make me laugh	break * word	on the books
catch heat	breathe a word	read * like a book
dead heat	word of mouth	throw the book at
heat is on	mince words	turn up for the book
if you can't stand the heat, get out of the kitchen	exchange words	wrote the book on *
heat of the moment	f-word	smart/sharp cookie
pack heat	famous last words	tough cookie
put the heat on *	from the word go	Oreo cookie
take the heat	get the word out	that's the way the cookie crumbles
take the heat off *	give * * word	toss * cookies
turn up the heat	good word	woof * cookies
bang/beat the drum	hang on * every word	cookie-cutter
drum up	have * word* with *	burn a hole in * pocket
feathers fly	have a word in * ear	drinking/watering hole
as light as a feather	final/last word	hole* in * head
knock * down/over with a feather	in a word	a hole in the wall
horse feathers	in other words	full of holes
ruffle * feathers	in so many words	in * hole
smooth ruffled feathers	words of one syllable	blow/make a hole in
spit feathers	say the word	put * in a hole
birds of a feather flock together	keep * word	dig * into a hole
A bird in the hand (is worth two in the bush).	loaded word	dig/get * out of a hole
little bird told *	my word	go into the hole
early bird	no word	hole in one
free as a bird	not believe a word of it	hole up
* for the birds	not say a word	need * like (you need) a hole in the head
bird in the bosom	on my word	pick holes
bird of * brain	word is law	rabbit hole
birds and * bees	or words to that effect	shuck on down to the fraidy hole
dicky-bird	pen those words	white hole
early bird gets/catches the worm	put in a good word for *	ace in the hole
eat like a bird	put words in/into * mouth	ace of spades
flip/give * the bird	send word	ace up * sleeve
ghetto bird	spoken word	within an ace of
have * bird	spread the word	have/hold all the aces
kill two birds with one stone	take * word for it	play * ace
naked as a jay bird	take * at * word	heart rule * head
rare bird	take the words * out of * mouth	hear and soul into
strange bird	operative word	bleeding heart
The bird has flown.	s-word	heart of gold
wading bird	the word is	heart of stone
bird*brain	There's many a true word spoken in jest.	after * own heart
no*brainer	twist * words	at heart
out of * brain	upon my word	be all heart
brains behind	weasel word*	be still my heart
beat/blow * brain* *	weigh * word	break * heart
bored out of * brains	without a word of a lie	know/learn * by heart
brain is fried	won't hear a word *	close/dear to * heart
get * brain in gear	word*for*word	cross my heart (and hope to die)
popcorn brain	word has it	cry/sob * heart out
rack * brains	man/woman of * word	have the heart to
what a brain	word is good	eat * heart out
pick * brain*	word is out	faint of heart
on the brain	word of honor	find it in * heart
brain*storm	word on the street	follow * heart
head honcho	word on the wire	from the heart
chicken with its head cut off	words fail *	get to the heart of
like a headless chicken	tomorrow is another day	harden * heart
	no tomorrow	have a big heart
	here today, gone tomorrow	have a heart

chicken and egg	jam tomorrow	heart is in the right place
dilemma/problem/situation	God's gift to *	heart set on
spring chicken	gift of gab	heart bleeds
chicken in every pot	business as usual	heart goes out to
like a chicken on a June bug	be in business	heart in/into *
chicken out	not in the business of doing *	heart missed/skipped a beat
chickens * come home to roost	business is business	heart of glass
choke the chicken	do a land-office business	heart to heart
don't count * chickens before they hatch	do a roaring business	heart * in * mouth
get up with the chickens	do * business	heart of hearts
like a chicken with the pip	do the business	open * heart
play chicken	fifth business	pour * heart out
grab/hit make the headlines	funny business	heart is in * boots
* candy	get down to business	heart sinks
like/ as easy as taking candy from a baby	give * the business	sick at heart
like a kid in a candy store	go about * business	steal * heart
bull*headed	got/have no business	straight from the heart
like a bull in a china shop	like nobody's business	strike at the heart of
full of bull	make it * business to do	take * to heart
like a bull at a gate	mean business	take heart
strong as a bull	Mind your own business!	tear your heart out
take the bull by the horn*	mix business with pleasure	way to * heart
sweat bullets	monkey business	wear * heart on *sleeve
dodge a bullet	none of * business	win the hearts
magic bullet	risky business	with all * heart
silver bullet	strictly business	young at heart
take a bullet	take care of business	knife-edge
bite the bullet	business girl	money's worth
number one with a bullet	call girl	two pennies' worth/two penn'orth
faster than a speeding bullet	bunny girl	pencil-neck*
open mind	chill girl	penalty box
all in * mind	comfort girl	crack the line-up
bored out of * mind	sweater girl	get your lines/wires crossed
frightened out of * mind	poor little rich girl	whip * into shape
of two minds	working girl	air/wash * dirty laundry in public
be of * mind	big girl's blouse	pocket dial
on * mind	blue-eyed boy	hand-me-down
out of * mind	backroom boy*	back-handed compliment
worried out of * mind	fair-haired boy	hand waving
clear * mind	one of the boys	hand-in-glove
blow * mind	mama's/mummy's/mother's boy	hat trick
boggle * mind/ mind*boggling	rent boy	If the hat/ shoe fits (wear it).
bring * to mind	cast * mind back	off-roader
bear/keep * in mind	change * mind	no-show
love-in	from the horse's mouth	money-spinner
ready cash/ money		

Appendix C

Keywords with the Most Core Idioms

Keyword: Hand

whip hand	can't put * hands on it	hand over
The hand that rocks the cradle (rules the world).	cement hands	hand over fist
heavy hand*	close/near at hand	hand to mouth
hand-wringing	crawl on my hands and knees	hand* up
high handed	over broken glass just to see her photo	hands are tied
right-hand man/woman/person	dead hand	have * on * hands
hands on	dirty * hands	have a hand in
stick/put * hand in * pocket	dishpan hands	have * hand out
go hand in hand	don't hand me that	hand it to
work hand-in-hand	eat out of (the palm) of * hand	helping hand
gouty-handed	have/hold * in the palm of * hand	hold * hand
catch * red-handed	* can get * hands on	hot hand
first*hand	fall into * hands	keep * hand in
wait on * hand * foot (and finger)	into the wrong hands	lay * hand* on
hand in the cookie jar	fill * hands	leave * in * hands
tip * hand	firm hand	* hand doesn't know what the * hand is doing
hands down	force * hand	life * in * hands
a firm/steady hand on the tiller	free hand	take * off * hands
change hands	from my cold, dead hands	on the gripping hand
all hands on deck	upper hand	on the one hand
all hands to the pumps	get * hands dirty	on the other hand
old hand	get/lay * hands on *	on * hands
at first hand	out of hand	overplay * hands
at the hands of	out of * hands	play into * hands
dab hand	give * a hand	play the hand * is dealt
in hand	give * a big hand	put * hands together
in safe hands	in good hands	raise * hand
in * hands	hands full	raise * hand against/to
on hand	hand it to	reject * out of hand
high-hat	ham hand*	shake hands with the unemployed
bear a hand	hand down	show * hand
bite the hand that feeds *	hand in	sit on * hands
by hand	hand off	take * in hand
by * own hand	hand on * heart	take the law into * own hands
can't keep * hands off *	hand*out	take * into your own hands
with * own fair hands	wring * hand*	talk to the hand
		third hand
		throw in * hand
		tie * hands
		top hand
		try * hand
		turn * hand to
		wandering hands
		wash * hands of
		with one hand tied behind * back
		with * bare hands

Keyword: Time

time and tide wait for no man

catch * at a bad time

all in good time

* not before time

no time to lose

about time *

ahead of * time

ahead of time

all the time in the world

at one time

at the best of times

at times

time bandit/burglar/thief

bad time

one at a time

before * time

behind * time

borrowed time

mark* time

beat * time

behind time

bide * time

big time

buy time

closing time

copious free time

do time

easy time of it

every time * turns around/round

for the time being

from.since time immemorial

time to time

get with the times

give * a rough/hard/bad time

give the time of day

go down for the third time

show */have a good time

hard time*

hard/rough/thin time of *

no time for *

have no time to lose

time of * life

time on * hands

time on * side

high time

time flies

in * own good time

in due time

in next to no time

in no time *

* in time *

about time

It's feeding time at the zoo!

keep up with the times

time to kill/kill time

lead time

lean time

let the good times roll

let time take its course

long time no *

make good time

make time

make up for lost time

many a time

many's the time

mark time

move with the times

nine times out of ten

no time like the present

not give * the time of day

not have much time for *

nut-cutting time

old time used to be

on time

once upon a time

time will tell

have a lot of time for *

have all the time in the world

real time

right time

rotation time

* time is up

serve time

sit on your time

spend time

take * sweet time

take time to smell the roses

time of the month

time is ripe

there's a first time for everything

There's a time and a place.

there's no time like the present

There's no time to lose.

third time is a charm

throwback to a time

time after time

time and again

time and material

time and time again

time flies *

time hangs/lies heavy *

time is money

time is of the essence

time off

time*out

time ran out

time stands still

time* wasting

time* up

tough time of it

waste no time

pass the time of day

play for time

pressed for time

put in time

Keyword: Eye

eye for an eye	four*eyes	open * eyes to
eye for an eye	get your eye in	private eye
roving eye	give * the eye	eyes glaze over
eyes * bigger than *	give * the evil eye	eyes peeled
stomach/belly	give * eye teeth	feat *eyes *
red*eye	give * the glad eye	pull the wool over * eyes
all eyes and ears	go into * with * eyes	* eyes * pop* out of * head
all eyes are on	closed/open/shut	right before my eyes
eagle*eye*	have/keep * eye on	roll * eyes
eye of the storm	hard on the eyes	do * with * eyes *
bat * eye/eyelid/eyelash	Have * * eye for	eyes are out on stalks
be all eyes	have an eye for/on the main	see dollar signs in * eyes
be easy on the eye	have eyes in the back of * head	set eyes on
in the public eye	have eyes like a hawk	shut * eyes to
bedroom eyes	have stars in [one's] eyes	sight for sore eyes
believe * eyes	have * beady eye on *	snake eyes
black eye	half an eye on	spit in * eye
blink of an eye	have/keep one eye on	stars in * eyes
can't take/keep * eyes off	one in the eye for	stink eye
cast/run * eye over	hit * * between the eye*	take * eye off the ball
cast a critical eye over	in * mind's eye	apple of * eye
cast a professional eye over	in a pig's eye	there wasn't a dry eye in the house
cast an eye on	in the twinkling of an eye	there's less to * that meets the eye
catch * eye	in the wink of an eye	throw an eye
clap eyes on sb/sth	in * father's eye	turn a blind eye
close/shut * eyes to	keep * eyes glued	when * was a * twinkle in *
close one's eyes and think of	keep * eyes open	father's eye
England	keep * eye's peeled	with a jaundiced eye
coon eyes	keep a weather eye *	wipe *eye
cry * eyes out	keep * eye on * *	worth a Jew's eye
cut your eye teeth	keep an out	with an eye to
do * with * eyes closed	keep * eye in	with an eye towards
dry one's eyes	* eyes on	with * eyes * open
ears/eyeballs/eyes in sth	look * in the eye*	would give * eye
easy on the eye*	make sheep's eyes at	give a black eye
evil eye	magic eye	
eye of a needle	more * * than meets the eye	
eye of the beholder	naked eye	
see eye to eye	scales fall from * eyes	
eyes are popping out of * head	not * bat an eye*	
not * bat an eye*		

Keyword: Head

bury/stick/put * head in the sand	head screwed on	put a gun to * head
raise/rear * * head	a head for *	put ideas into sb's head
beat/bang * head against a * wall	have * head read	scratch * head
a cool head	hold * over * head	scream * head off
a wise head on young shoulders	* hanging over * head	sleepy head
an old head on young shoulders	have * head * up	soft in the head
banging/hitting * head	head * buzzing	stand on * head
head over heels	head and shoulders above	* comes into your mind
off * head	stand * on * head	swelled head
out of * head	head down *	stand/turn * on * head
over * head	head is spinning	take * into * head to do *
bite * head off	head*on	take * head off
bite/snap * head off	head out	talk over * head
bring * to a head	head south	talking head
head of steam	head to toe	think with * head
butt heads	head up *	touched in the head
standing on * head	head [modal] roll	tube head
can't make head* nor tails* of	heads or tails	turn * head
clear * head	heads*up	two heads are better than one
come to a head	hold * head high or head held high	use * head
head to head	keep * head above water	
cool head	keep * head* together	
cooler heads prevailed	put/keep/stick * head above the parapet	
do * head in	laugh * head off	
from head to foot/toe	knock heads	
funny in the head	lay * head on the block	
head out of the clouds	lose * head	
get * head together	make *head spin	
get a big head	melon head	
get * into/through * head	mop head	
in over * head	need * head examin*	
get/wrap * head around	need * like * a hole in the head	
get/put/keep * head down	need * head testing	
give * head a shake	not * right in the head	
give * * head	off the top of * head	
head start	price on * head	
give * a big head	pumpkin head	
go to * head	stick/put * head in a noose	
hang * head	put * head in the lion's mouth	
head in the clouds	put * head on the block	
* head on * shoulders	put * heads together	

Keyword: Word

four-letter word*
 mark my words
 buzz word
 dirty word
 word to the wise *
 get a word in edge*
 bad word
 as good as * word
 eat * words
 lost for words
 last word in *
 break * word
 breathe a word
 word of mouth
 mince words
 exchange words
 f-word
 famous last words
 from the word go
 get the word out
 give * * word
 good word
 hand on * every word
 have * word* with *
 have a word with *
 have a word in * ear
 final/last word
 in a word
 in other words
 in so many words
 words of one syllable
 say the word
 keep * word
 loaded word
 my word
 no word
 not believe a word of it
 not say a word

pen those words
 put in a good word for *
 put words in/into * mouth
 send word
 spoken word
 spread the word
 take * word for it
 take * at * word
 take the words * out of * mouth
 operative word
 s-word
 the word is
 There's many a true word spoken in jest.
 twist * words
 upon my word
 weasel word*
 weigh * word
 without a word of a lie
 won't hear a word *
 word*for*word
 word has it
 man/woman of * word
 word is good
 word is out
 word of honor
 word on the street
 word on the wire
 words fail *
 on my word
 word is law
 or words to that effect