

## Chapter

# 15

## Idioms and Phrases

The command of idiomatic expressions in any language is pre requisite for expressive writing and comprehension. Phrasal verbs, idiomatic adjectives, and noun phrases and idiomatic pairs of nouns, adjectives and adverbs comprise such a vast portion of idiomatic expressions that it is nearly impossible to deal with them comprehensively in such a short space. However, this chapter contains the most important usages that are indispensable for any competitive examination. Students would do well to consult the dictionary for further improvement in this field.

### A

1. **At one's wit's end** (perplexed)—Sohan was **at his wit's end** to find that his younger brother has taken poison.
2. **At one's fingertips** (complete knowledge)—All the rules of synthesis are **at his fingertips**.
3. **At the spur of the moment** (without delay)—In an interview we must reply **at the spur** of the moment.
4. **All in all** (most important)—As he was the only son in a big family, he was **all in all** in his home.
5. **At close quarters** (close examinations)—Many of my friends proved selfish **at close quarters**.
6. **Apple-pie order** (in perfect order)—On the eve of inspection everything was kept in **apple-pie** order.
7. **Above board** (honest and straightforward)—He is known for his **above board** conduct.
8. **Above all** (before everything else)—**Above all**, he is blunt and dare devil.
9. **As fit as a fiddle** (strong and healthy)—He has recovered from illness and now he is **as fit as a fiddle**.
10. **At random** (aimlessly)—The militants fired **at random** killing a lot of innocent persons.
11. **At a loose end** (unoccupied, idle)—Now-a-days he is **at a loose end** because he has wound up his business.
12. **At logger heads** (to be at strife)—The partners of our firm are **at logger heads** these days.
13. **At odds** (in dispute)—The members of the group were **at odds** over the selection procedure.
14. **An apple of discord** (cause of quarrel)—Ancestral property is **an apple of discord** between two sisters.

15. **At cross purposes** (have conflicting intentions)—How can there be peace in their family when husband and wife are **at cross purposes**.
16. **After one's own heart** (to one's liking)—When Deepa met a man **after her own heart**, she got married to him.
17. **At the bottom of** (to be mainly responsible for)—It was found later that Shanu was **at the bottom of** the whole trouble.
18. **At a loss** (to be unable to decide)—I am **at a loss to** know what to do.
19. **At dagger's drawn** (to have bitter enmity)—The quarrel between the two brothers has grown more bitter now and they are **at dagger's drawn**.
20. **At large** (abscond, to keep unchained)—People keep their dogs **at large** at night.
21. **At sea** (applied to a person confused)—My sister is **quite at sea** in Maths; she cannot solve a single problem.
22. **Add fuel to the flame or fire** (to make matter worse)—The attempt to suppress the agitation of the strikers only **added fuel to the flame**.
23. **At sixes and sevens** (in disorder)—There was a robbery in our neighbourhood last night and when I entered the house to inquire, everything was **at sixes and sevens**.
24. **Assume airs** (to pretend superiority)—The rich are in the habit of **assuming airs** in the presence of their poor relations.
25. **Argus eyed** (careful, observant)—As a politician, he is **Argus eyed** and never overlooks even a small matter.
26. **At a stone's throw** (very close)—My friend's house is **at a stone's throw** from mine.

## B

1. **By hook or by crook** (by one means or another)—He is determined to obtain first division in his class **by hook or by crook**.
2. **Bear the brunt of** (to bear the main shock of)—The poor have to **bear the brunt of** increasing prices.
3. **Bell the cat** (to take first step at personal risk)—Many people can boast of their bravery, but very few can **bell the cat**.
4. **Bid defiance** (to ignore)—Rohan **bade defiance** to his father's wish of becoming a doctor and instead became an engineer.
5. **Blow one's trumpet** (to praise oneself)—No one likes to talk to those who are always **blowing their own trumpet**.
6. **Break the news** (to give bad news)—He **broke the news** of her husband's death very gently so as to lessen the intensity of the shock.
7. **Burn a hole in one's pocket** (money spent quickly)—Money given to a spendthrift only **burns a hole** in his pocket.
8. **Bury the hatchet** (to make peace)—India and Pakistan must **bury the hatchet** to bring about peace to the region.
9. **Beside oneself** (to feel excessively)—Due to the accidental death of his wife he was **beside himself** with grief.

10. **Bad blood** (bitter relations)—The riots have created **bad blood** between the two communities in India.
11. **Black and blue** (to beat mercilessly)—The thief was beaten **black and blue** by the police.
12. **Beat about the bush** (to talk in a round about manner)—We should always come to the point and should not **beat about the bush**.
13. **Beat the air** (to make useless efforts)—Some speakers merely **beat the air** in speech while preaching.
14. **Build castles in the air** (to make visionary schemes)—Many people who live in dreams **build castles in the air** and do not succeed in life.
15. **Break the ice** (to speak first after prolonged silence)—In the meeting Rajesh **broke the ice** and suggested the plan to solve the problem.
16. **Bring to book** (to punish, to call to account)—The manager was **brought to book** for his negligence.
17. **Breathe one's last** (to die)—He **breathed his last** in the prime of his life.
18. **Back stairs influence** (by unfair means)—These days many persons are given good posts through **back stairs influence**.
19. **Bird's eye view** (concise view)—We had a **bird's eye view** of the whole fair from the top of a giant wheel.
20. **Bolt from the blue** (sudden or unexpected shock)—The news of her husband's death in the air crash came to her as **a bolt from the blue**.
21. **Burn one's boats** (point of no return)—We had **burnt our boats** by declaring that we were not going to sign C.T.B.T.
22. **By the by** (by the way)—**By the by**, what is your age?
23. **Be upto** (to be equal to)—He is **upto** all the tricks of the trade to grind his own axe.
24. **Bated breath** (in anxiety, expectancy)—The fate of the match hung in balance and every body waited for the result with **bated breath**.
25. **Bandy words** (to wrangle, to argue)—Obedient children don't **bandy words** with their parents when they are advised.
26. **Bee in one's bonnet** (to be fussy)—She seems to have a **bee in her bonnet** because she is always finding faults with others.
27. **Bite the dust** (to be defeated)—Pakistan had to **bite the dust** in the final of the World Cup.
28. **Blue stocking** (educated but pedantic lady)—No body likes to mix with her because she is **a blue stocking**.
29. **Book worm** (a person in the habit of pouring over books)—He has no time for social activities because he is **a book worm**.
30. **Bring down the house** (receive applause)—Though it was his maiden speech, he **brought down the house** because of his oratory skill.
31. **Brow beat** (to bully)—The President of the college union always tries to **brow beat** the students opposed to him.
32. **Bad egg** (a worthless)—He comes of a noble family but he himself is **a bad egg**.

33. **Beside the mark** (irrelevant)—No body agreed with him because his arguments were **beside the mark**.
34. **Burn one's fingers** (to get into trouble)—Those who interfere in the affairs of others, often **burn their fingers**.
35. **Brown study** (reverie, day-dream)—He could not follow the significance of my offer. He was in **brown study**.
36. **Bank on** (depend on, count on)—The rich always **bank on** money to get things done.
37. **Blaze the trail** (to start a movement)—Surinder Nath Bannerjee **blazed the trail** of Indian National Movement.
38. **Bull in a China shop** (one who causes damage)—Most of the leaders of the freedom struggle have proved **bulls in a China shop**.
39. **By the rule of thumb** (according to practical experience)—In older times business was run **by the rule of thumb**.
40. **Big draw** (a huge attraction)—The match between India and Pakistan is always a **big draw**.
41. **Broken reed** (support that failed)—When he needed help, his friend proved a **broken reed**.
42. **By the skin of the teeth** (narrowly)—He escaped death in the accident **by the skin of the teeth**.
43. **Bone of contention** (cause of quarrel)—Since India got independence, Kashmir problem has been a **bone of contention** between India and Pakistan.
44. **Bit/piece of one's mind** (to scold)—My father wrote to my brother giving a **piece of his mind** about his insulting conduct.
45. **Born with silver spoon** (to be born in a rich family)—My friend does not have to worry about spending any amount of money as she is born **with a silver spoon** in her mouth.
46. **Burn candle at both ends** (squander)—After the death of his father he is **burning candle at both ends**.
47. **By fits and starts** (irregularly)—If we study **by fits and starts** we can never be successful in our exams.
48. **By dint of** (by force of)—He achieved success in life **by dint of** hard work.
49. **Blow hot and cold** (to speak in favour and against at the same time)—Do not trust those who **blow hot and cold** in the same breath.
50. **By and by** (gradually)—He is recovering **by and by** after long illness.
51. **Blue blood** (aristocratic blood)—Though my friend **has blue blood** yet her conduct is very mean and vulgar.

## C

1. **Carry matters with a high hand** (to deal with a person strictly)—The owner of the industry **carried matters with a high hand** and expelled two workers who were caught doing mischief in the office.
2. **Clip one's wings** (to weaken the power)—My elder sister is very ambitious but my mother will surely **clip her wings**.



3. Come home to (to understand)—Seema wanted to be a teacher in the college but when it came home to her that she was not fit for the job as she was only a graduate.
4. Come to a standstill (come to a sudden stop)—When we were going to Mumbai yesterday, our car came to a standstill right in the middle of the journey.
5. Come off with flying colours (to come out successfully)—The final football match was very crucial but finally we won and came off with flying colours.
6. Cross one's mind (to occur to oneself)—In the examination hall it crossed my mind that I had left my pen outside on the table.
7. Cry for the moon (to wish for something impossible)—The hope of winning the lottery amounting to lakhs of rupees is simply crying for the moon.
8. Curry favour with (win favour of somebody)—Neena gave a lot of costly presents to her science teacher to carry favour with him.
9. Call a spade a spade (to speak plainly)—People often get angry when one calls a spade a spade.
10. Carry the day (to win a victory)—After initial setback India carried the day in the Test match.
11. Cut a sorry figure (to give a poor show)—The speaker cut a sorry figure in the meeting.
12. Cry over spilt milk (repent)—Careless students often have to cry over spilt milk during the exams.
13. Cut one's coat according to one's cloth (to live within one's means)—A wise man always cuts his coat according to his cloth if he wants to be successful in his life.
14. Call names (to abuse)—Neeta called me names, so she was severely punished by the teacher.
15. Curtain lecture (a reproof by wife to her husband)—My brother never pays any attention to his wife's curtain lecture and does what he thinks.
16. Chip of the old block (resembling one's parents in habits)—My friend is quite helpful like her father, so she is a chip of the old block.
17. Cave in (yield)—Although our team fought bravely, yet had to cave in before the superior power play of the opposite team.
18. Cloven hoof (the evil intention)—The Chinese showed the cloven hoof in 1962.
19. Cut throat (tough)—It is very difficult for Indian Industry to survive in the teeth of international cut throat competition.
20. Call in question (doubt)—You should not call in question my honesty.
21. Cheek by jowl (close together)—In metropolitan cities it is common that affluence and poverty exist cheek by jowl.
22. Come to a pass (a difficult situation)—The things have come to such a pretty pass that he is financially ruined.
23. Close shave (a narrow escape)—As he was driving recklessly in a crowded street, he had a close shave.
24. Cut and dried (readymade form)—There is no cut and dried formula for success in life.

25. **Clinch the issue** (decide the matter)—When he agreed to leave the house for good, it **clinched the issue** in favour of his wife.
26. **Carry one's point** (win approval)—After heated discussion he was able to **carry his point**.
27. **Chequered/Checkered career** (full of ups and downs)—Politicians have generally **chequered career** all along.
28. **Out both ends** (argue in favour of both sides)—He is ambiguous because he always **cuts both ends**.
29. **Cock sure** (very sure and certain)—He was so **cock sure** of his success that he applied for the job before the declaration of the result.
30. **Cock a snook** (to show impudent contempt)—She is so proud of her wealth that she **always cocks a snook** at the acts of her husband.
31. **Chapter and verse** (in full detail, to give proof)—He has such a sharp memory that he can narrate the story **chapter and verse**.
32. **Cool one's heels** (to be kept waiting)—He had to **cool his heels** before he could meet the President of the party.
33. **Carrot and stick policy** (reward and punishment)—A successful businessman follows the **carrot and stick policy** towards his employees.
34. **Come in handy** (to be useful)—Take some woollen clothes. They may **come in handy** in **Simla**.

## D

1. **Dig the grave** (to tarnish, to destroy)—By taking side of the culprit he **dug the grave** of his reputation.
2. **Draw the long bow** (exaggerate)—In calling him the best politician of the world, his followers **draw the long bow**.
3. **Die in harness** (die while working)—Our Principal **died in harness**.
4. **Dutch courage** (bravery under alcoholic influence)—Drunkards often indulge in **Dutch courage** and boast of their imaginary qualities.
5. **Dare devil** (fearless person)—Only a **dare devil** can face the land mafia.
6. **Dead broke** (penniless)—On account of reckless spending he is **dead broke** these days.
7. **Down and out** (poor and ruined)—After a slump in share market he is **down and out** these days.
8. **Draconian law** (extremely severe law)—During emergency in 1975 the Govt. imposed **Draconian laws** to subdue opposition.
9. **Die-hard** (persistent in struggle)—He is a **die-hard** person and will not easily surrender.
10. **Days of reckoning** (time to answer for one's actions)—You may commit crime after crime but **days of reckoning** are never far off.
11. **Down in the mouth** (out of elements)—Now-a-days he is **down in the mouth** because he has suffered heavy loss in business.

12. **Dog in the manger** (a person who prevents others from enjoying what he himself cannot)—By disrupting Parliament Session the Congress is following a **dog in the manger** policy.
13. **Damp squib** (complete failure)—The visit of our Foreign Minister to China proved a **damp squib** on border issue.

## E

1. **Eat humble pie** (to apologize)—In spite of his constant bragging he lost the match and had to **eat humble pie**.
2. **Eat one's words** (take a statement back)—I warned my friend to be very careful in her speech otherwise she would have to **eat her own words**.
3. **End in smoke/fiasco** (come to nothing)—He spoke a lot about his new film but it all **ended in smoke** and it flopped on box office.
4. **Egg on** (to urge somebody)—The Captain **egged** the players *on* to continue to play foul till the end of the match.
5. **Eke out** (supplement income)—To **eke out** his income he also works as a part time accountant in the evening.
6. **Every dog has his day** (good fortune comes sooner or later)—Don't be disappointed. It is truly said that **every dog has his day**.
7. **Ever and Anon** (now and then, sometimes)—He visits his parents **ever and anon**.
8. **(An) eye wash** (a pretence)—My friend's promise to help me just proved an **eye-wash**.

## F

1. **Flesh and blood** (human nature)—People in some villages are so poor that their sufferings are more than a **flesh and blood** can endure.
2. **Fish in troubled waters** (to take advantage of the trouble of others)—Shrewd businessmen **fish in troubled waters** when there is scarcity of things.
3. **Follow suit** (to act in a like manner)—If you do not obey your elders, your children will **follow suit**.
4. **Fall flat** (to have no effect)—The minister's speech **fell flat** on the audience.
5. **Fight shy of** (to attempt to avoid a thing or a person)—I generally **fight shy of** confronting my elder sister as she is in the habit of making sickening comments.
6. **Fabian policy** (policy of delaying decisions)—Politicians generally follow a **Fabian policy** in order to keep everyone satisfied.
7. **For no rhyme or reason** (any reason whatsoever)—Seema did not appear for her final examinations **for no rhyme or reason**.
8. **Fight to the finish** (fight to the end)—Indian Army has vowed to **fight to the finish** and turn every intruder out of Indian territory.
9. **Few and far between** (very rare)—His visits to his home town are **few and far between** because of his expanding business.

10. **Flog a dead horse** (to revive interest in old matters)—The rivals always **flog a dead horse** to insult their enemies.
11. **Fool's errand** (useless undertaking)—His visit to the States to earn money proved to be a **fool's errand**.
12. **Fall foul of** (to quarrel)—They were once bosom friends but now they have **fallen foul** of each other.
13. **Fly off the handle** (to lose one's temper)—When his father questioned him about money, he **flew off the handle**.
14. **French leave** (to be absent without permission)—Those who take **french leave** should not be pardoned.
15. **Fair and square** (upright)—My father advised me to be **fair and square** in business dealings.
16. **Feather one's own nest** (to provide first for one self)—Our leaders are busy **feathering their own nests** and have no concern for the poor.
17. **From pillar to post** (rush in all directions and suffer much harassment)—You may rush **from pillar to post**, but you stand no chance of getting what you want without a bribe.
18. **Foot the bill** (bear expenses)—Although he hosted the feast, his brother had to **foot the bill**.
19. **Fair weather friend** (selfish friend)—A **fair weather friend** will never stand by you in difficulty.
20. **Flash in the pan** (sudden success)—The success of Indian cricket team is never constant and steady. It is generally a **flash in the pan**.
21. **Fit to hold a candle to** (match for, equal in quality)—He is the son of a famous writer but he is not **fit to hold a candle** to his father.
22. **The Fourth Estate** (the press)—The newspaper is regarded as the **Fourth Estate** of the state.
23. **Feather in one's cap** (additional success)—His success in his M.A. exams has **added a new feather in his cap**.
24. **Fly in the face of** (to defy)—It is disobedience on their part to **fly in the face of** the orders of the Principal.

## G

1. **Gain ground** (to succeed slowly & steadily)—The belief in the abolition of dowry system is **gaining ground**.
2. **Get off scot free** (to escape without punishment)—A murderer can also very easily **get off scot free** for lack of evidence.
3. **Grease the palm** (to bribe)—Now-a-days if you want to get your work done, you will have to **grease the palm of** someone or the other.
4. **Gird up the loins** (to prepare for hard work)—Indians must **gird up the lions** to face any foreign attack on their country.

5. **Go to the dogs** (to be ruined)—The rich industrialist will **go to the dogs** because of his son's bad habits.
6. **Get oneself into a mess** (to drift into trouble)—Due to sheer ignorance, Vijay seems to have **got himself into a mess** in his office.
7. **Give a wide berth** (to avoid)—We should always **give a wide berth** to all selfish and mean persons.
8. **Gentleman at large** (an unreliable person)—We must not believe a **gentleman at large**.
9. **Good Samaritan** (one who helps strangers)—He is a **good Samaritan** because he always comes to the help of the old and the children in difficulties.
10. **Give a good account of oneself** (to act creditably)—As the eldest son of his family he **gave a good account of himself** when calamity befell the family.
11. **Give the devil his due** (give credit to a worthless person for his good qualities)—We should **give the devil his due** for his good qualities.
12. **Green horn** (inexperienced)—Though a **green horn** in political field, he appears to have a bright future.
13. **Give up the ghost** (pass away, die)—After long illness he **gave up the ghost** last week.
14. **Go the whole hog** (to do something thoroughly)—You will have to **go the whole hog** to come out of this mess.
15. **Get into a scrape** (awkward situation)—He **got into a scrape** when his wife refused to let him help his sister.
16. **Go broke** (become bankrupt)—As a result of heavy gambling he had to **go broke** in the long run.
17. **Get into hot waters** (get into trouble)—He **got into hot waters** by marrying a girl of another caste.
18. **Give currency** (to make publicly known)—The Government has refused to **give currency** to a number of scams.
19. **Great hand** (expert)—He is a **great hand** at organising social parties.
20. **Get down to brass tacks** (to deal with the matter straight)—Instead of wasting time in discussion, please **get down to brass tacks**.
21. **Give one a long rope** (to let someone commit mistakes)—He never **gives his employees a long rope**.
22. **Good turn** (an act of kindness)—He did me a **good turn** by recommending me for the post of Vice-president.

## H

1. **Hold water** (sound, tenable)—His statement will not **hold water** as it is not based on facts.
2. **Hang together** (support one another)—The two statements delivered by the leader of the party do not **hang together**.
3. **Hope against hope** (hope inspite of disappointment)—Sohan's case is very weak and everybody knows that finally he will lose, but he is still **hoping against hope**.



4. **Have an axe to grind** (to have a selfish interest)—Reema is very selfish but the way she is being polite with everyone gives the impression that she **has an axe to grind**.
5. **Have the gift of the gab** (art of speaking)—Meena is not highly qualified but she has **the gift of the gab**.
6. **Hit below the belt** (to strike unfairly)—We should always face the enemy boldly and never **hit him below the belt**.
7. **Hold one's tongue** (to keep quiet)—We should always **hold our tongue** before our elders.
8. **Herculean task** (very difficult)—It is a **Herculean task** to root out corruption in India.
9. **Haul over the coals** (to take to task)—She was **hauled over** the coals by her parents for her misconduct.
10. **Have one's finger in everyone's pie** (to partake of something)—My best friend likes to **have her finger in everyone's pie** as she is in the habit of meddling with the affairs of others.
11. **Halcyon days** (peaceful days)—The days we spend in our school life are the **halcyon days** of our life.
12. **Have an iron will** (strong will)—If we have to live among the mean and selfish people, we must **have an iron will**.
13. **Hold out an olive branch** (offer of peace)—The terrorists are not prepared to **hold out an olive branch** to the Government of India.
14. **Hanky Panky** (jugglery)—None of this **hanky panky**, tell me the truth.
15. **Have feet of clay** (full of faults)—The C.B.I. inquiry has revealed that many ministers have **feet of clay**.
16. **Heart and soul** (devotedly)—He took part in the annual function **heart and soul**.
17. **Hard and fast** (strict)—No **hard and fast** rule is laid down about being regular in the college.
18. **Hang fire** (remain unsolved)—Kashmir problem has been **hanging fire** for many years.
19. **High & dry** (a difficult situation)—He was left **high & dry** by his business partners.
20. **Hit the nail on the head** (to do the right thing at the right time)—He **hit the nail on the head** by resigning his job.
21. **Hobson's choice** (no alternative)—The employees in the private sector have **Hobson's choice** because they are forced to accept what they are ordered to do.
22. **Have too many irons in the fire** (doing many things at a time)—He is fickle minded and **has too many irons in the fire**.
23. **Hold in abeyance** (postpone)—For lack of funds the district administration has **held** the construction of road **in abeyance**.
24. **High and mighty** (proud persons)—The **high and mighty** forget that everything in the world is transient.
25. **Hard nosed attitude** (aggressive)—I don't know why my teacher always has a **hard nosed attitude** towards me.
26. **Hold in leash** (to restrain)—As a responsible leader of a party you must **hold** criticism of party workers **in leash**.

27. **Head and shoulders** (superior)—Shri Atal Behari Vajpayee is **head and shoulder** above his predecessors.
28. **Hold a brief** (to defend someone)—It is very improper for parents to **hold a brief** for their children who are in the wrong.
29. **Hush money** (a bribe)—He managed to escape punishment by paying **hush money**.
30. **Hold at bay** (to prevent enemy from coming)—Maharana Partap could not hold the Mughal army **at bay** for long.
31. **Hit the jack pot** (unexpected success)—He **hit the jack pot** by investing his money in shares.
32. **Helter skelter** (here and there)—When the police arrived the rioters ran **helter skelter**.
33. **Have a brush with** (to have encounter)—Our principal **had a brush with** the Vice Chancellor over the appointment of a lecturer.
34. **Hornet's nest** (raise controversy)—The speaker stirred up **hornet's nest** by referring to impending changes in the rules.
35. **Hold somebody to ransom** (to demand concession by making someone captive)—It is a pity that a handful of militants are **holding the nation to ransom**.
36. **Hole and corner** (secret)—I have come to know of your **hole and corner** method of dealing with people.

## I

1. **Ill at ease** (uncomfortable)—A student is often **ill at ease** when he has to see the Principal after he has done something wrong.
2. **In a fix** (In a dilemma)—The whole police department is **in a fix** about the threatening letters written by the kidnappers.
3. **In a fair way** (hopeful)—The doctor feels that patient is **in a fair way** on to recovery.
4. **In the good books of** (to be in favour with a person)—Sunita's brilliant success in her final examination has led her **to be in the good books** of her teachers.
5. **In tune** (in a mood)—The teacher asked the students if they were **in tune** for study.
6. **In the lurch** (to leave a friend in difficulty)—You must never leave your best friend **in the lurch**.
7. **Ins and outs** (secrets)—The servants are generally familiar with **the ins and outs** of the family.
8. **In the blues** (in dumps, depressed)—After his failure in the Examination he is **in the blues** these days.
9. **In the red** (suffer a loss)—Most of our Public Sector Undertakings are **in the red** for lack of efficient administration.
10. **In the limelight** (prominent)—After being out of favour with the leader of the party he is again **in the limelight** these days.
11. **In the teeth of** (inspite of bitter opposition)—Hindu Code Bill was passed **in the teeth** of opposition by various organizations.

12. **In a tight corner** (in difficult situation)—After losing in gambling heavily, he is **in a tight corner**.
13. **In cold blood** (to do something deliberately)—The child was murdered **in cold blood**.
14. **In doldrums** (to be depressed)—After his failure in the examination **he is in doldrums** these days.
15. **In the family way** (pregnant)—She has been advised complete rest because she is **in the family way**.
16. **Ivory tower** (imaginary world)—Those who talk of non-violence as a useful tool in international politics live in **Ivory tower**.
17. **In the dumps** (in low spirits)—Her visit cheered me up as I was **in the dumps** before her visit.
18. **In a flutter** (excited)—My sister is in **a flutter** today because she is going for the interview.

## J

1. **Jaundiced eye** (prejudice)—You must not evaluate the success of your rivals with a **jaundiced eye**.

## K

1. **Keep body and soul together** (to maintain life)—These days because of rising prices it is difficult to **keep body and soul together**.
2. **Keep at an arm's length** (to keep at a distance)—Selfish people should always be **kept at an arm's length**.
3. **Keep the wolf from the door** (to avoid starvation)—In India millions of people struggle hard to **keep the wolf from the door**.
4. **Kith and kin** (blood relation)—If we have no love for our **kith and kin**, we cannot be expected to love humanity.
5. **Knit the brow** (to frown)—Her mother-in-law always **knits the brow** at everything she does.
6. **Kick the bucket** (to die)—He **kicked the bucket** after long illness in the prime of his life.
7. **Keep up appearances** (to maintain outward show)—Though he is in financial crisis, he is able to **keep up appearances**.
8. **Keep one's fingers crossed** (to wait expectantly)—We had to **keep our fingers crossed** till the last ball was bowled.
9. **Keep the pot boiling** (earn hardly enough for living)—He is earning only to **keep the pot boiling**.
10. **Kick one's heels** (to waste time in waiting)—As the train was late we had to **kick our heels** at the station.
11. **Keep abreast of** (not to fall behind)—It is very important for the young persons to **keep abreast of** political developments in the country.

## L

1. **Lost in the clouds** (confused)—My psychology teacher is often **lost in the clouds** as she sometimes is unable to explain the questions clearly.
2. **Lose ground** (fail to keep position)—The belief in prophecies and horoscopes is **losing ground** these days.
3. **Laugh in one's sleeves** (to laugh secretly)—The students **laughed in their sleeves** at the teacher's ignorance of the subject.
4. **Leave no stone unturned** (to make all possible efforts)—The minister assured the poor that he shall **leave no stone unturned** to uplift their condition.
5. **Leap in the dark** (to take a risk deliberately)—You must not **leap in the dark** by entering the business without experience.
6. **Look sharp** (to make haste)—**Look sharp**, the bus is moving.
7. **Let the cat out of the bag** (to disclose)—Sunita has, at last, **let the cat out of the bag** by confessing that she had stolen her brother's money.
8. **Live in a fool's paradise** (false hope)—My brother is **living in a fool's paradise** if he thinks that he can be a rich man without working hard.
9. **Lion's share** (large part)—Generally the sons as compared to daughters have a **lion's share** of their mother's affection.
10. **Loaves and Fishes** (material benefit)—Most of the ministers are more concerned with the **loaves and fishes** of office than the service of man.
11. **Live-wire** (energetic)—India needs **live-wire** political leaders who can put the country on the right track.
12. **Look a gift horse in the mouth** (criticize a gift)—One should not **look a gift horse in the mouth** because it is given out of love and regards.
13. **Lose one's head** (to be carried away)—One should not **lose one's head** even in such a victory.
14. **Long and short** (in brief)—The **long and short** of the principal's speech was that examination would be held on time.
15. **Latin and Greek** (incomprehensible)—The speech of literary persons is always **Latin and Greek** to illiterate persons.
16. **Last nail in the coffin** (causing ruin)—Second world war proved to be a **last nail in the coffin** of British imperialism.
17. **Lead up the garden path** (to cheat)—The traders **lead the credulous customers up the garden path** by assuring them of warranty.
18. **Leaps and bounds** (rapidly)—In comparison to India, China has progressed by **leaps and bounds** in every field.
19. **Last straw** (the final trial of patience)—The Rowlet Act was **the last straw** on the Camel's back and the whole India rose in protest against the British rule.
20. **Let the grass grow under feet** (to delay the matters)—We are bound to suffer if we **let the grass grow under feet** by postponing action.

## M

1. **Make both ends meet** (to live within one's means)—As my uncle has to bring up five children, he finds it difficult to **make both ends meet**.
2. **Mend one's fences** (to make peace)—It is high time for the two brothers to bury the hatchet and **mend their fences**.
3. **Make a clean breast** (to confess)—When asked by the Magistrate sternly, the thief **made a clean breast** of the whole crime.
4. **Make amends** (to give compensation)—The government **made amends** to the family for the loss of their earning member in the war.
5. **Make the most of** (to utilize time)—Students should **make the most** of their time if they want to get an administrative job.
6. **Move heaven and earth** (to try utmost)—Ramesh **moved heaven and earth** to gain his end but failed.
7. **Make sure** (to ascertain)—We went to the office **to make sure** if our exams would start in the next week.
8. **Make neither head nor tail** (not to understand)—The students can **make neither head nor tail** of what Mr. Dev teaches them.
9. **Moot point** (a debatable point, undecided)—The question of abolition of child marriage is **a moot point** as far as Indians are concerned.
10. **Meet one's Waterloo** (to face final defeat)—Tipu Sultan **met his Waterloo** in the fourth battle of Mysore.
11. **Man of letters** (literary person)—Dr. Radhakrishnan was a **man of letters**.
12. **Make light of** (not to care)—He is in the habit of **making light** of the advice of his parents.
13. **Midas touch** (a touch which turns anything into gold)—Our manager seems to be gifted with **Midas touch** because he is capable of selling every product.
14. **Man of parts** (a man of qualities)—Our Principal is **a man of parts** and is respected by all and one.
15. **Mealy mouthed** (soft spoken)—A **mealy mouthed** shopkeeper is always successful.
16. **Man of straw** (a weak person)—The king being **a man of straw**, his orders were often disobeyed.
17. **Mince matters** (hide the truth and pretend)—Tell the truth to your parents because it does not pay **to mince matters**.
18. **Mare's nest** (a false invention)—The involvement of teachers in the scheme proved to be **a mare's nest**.

## N

1. **Null and void** (ineffective)—Strangely, the laws made by the British in India are not yet **null and void**.
2. **Next to nothing** (almost nothing)—The thieves made off with everything from the kitchen and there was **next to nothing** left.



3. **Neck and crop** (completely)—The decoits finished him off **neck and crop** beyond recognition.
4. **No love lost** (intense dislike)—There is **no love lost** between the two neighbours.
5. **Nip in the bud** (to destroy in the very beginning)—The evils of the society must be **nipped in the bud**.
6. **Not worth one's salt** (not deserving)—We should not help the persons who are **not worth their salt**.

## O

1. **Off hand** (without preparation or delay)—I am very poor in English grammar & can't answer all the questions **off hand**.
2. **Over head and ears** (excessively)—Mohan is **over head and ears** in love with Neena.
3. **Out of question** (certain)—His success is **out of question** because he is working hard these days.
4. **Out of the question** (unlikely, uncertain)—His success is **out of the question** because he is not working hard these days.
5. **Out of the woods** (out of danger)—The patient is not **out of the woods** yet.
6. **Order of the day** (in fashion)—It is difficult to get any work done without bribery because bribery is the **order of the day**.
7. **On the score of** (on the grounds of)—He was debarred from appearing in the examination **on the score of** indiscipline.
8. **On that score** (for the reason)—You need not worry **on that score**.
9. **Over and above** (moreover, besides)—I shall lend you books **over and above** what I have promised to give you in cash.
10. **Out and out** (completely)—Shri Bhagat Singh was a patriot **out and out**.
11. **Off and on** [occasionally (now & then)]—Since she is over busy these days, she visits me **off and on**.
12. **One's Achilles heel** (a weak point)—Howsoever powerful a person may be, he is vulnerable because of his **Achilles' heel**.
13. **Off colour** (not in usual form)—Once a glamorous actress, she is **off colour** these days.
14. **Odds and ends** (scattered things)—The thief made away with the **odds and ends** lying about the drawing room.
15. **Off the hook** (out of trouble)—He is not yet **off the hook** because Income Tax department is making a thorough inquiry into his financial status.
16. **Oily tongue** (flattering words)—He has often won over the enemies by his **oily tongue**.
17. **On the horns of dilemma** (in a fix)—He is **on the horns of dilemma** in the matter of his marriage.
18. **One's cup of tea** (to one's liking)—Teaching is not my **cup of tea**.
19. **Out of sorts** (to be unwell)—Sohan had been **out of sorts** the whole day and could not do his office work properly.

20. **On its last legs** (about to collapse)—In many sections of Indian society the system of child marriage is **on its last legs**.
21. **On the carpet** (to be under consideration)—What is **on the carpet** these days is in the newspapers.

## P

1. (A) **Past master** (an expert)—He is a **past master** in befooling the people by his oily tongue.
2. **Palmy days** (prosperous, affluent days)—We still remember the **palmy days** of our life when we had nothing much to do and still got everything to fulfil our needs.
3. **Part and parcel** (inseparable part)—Every Indian citizen living in India must regard himself as **part and parcel** of a larger whole.
4. **Pass the buck** (to blame each other)—Political parties **pass the buck** on to one another for failure on economic front.
5. **Pay off old scores** (to take revenge)—The way he is treating his younger brother makes it quite obvious that he is **paying off old scores**.
6. **Pay through one's nose** (to pay dearly)—A hapless customer has to **pay through his nose** when there is shortage of goods in the market.
7. **Pay lip service** (pretend to regard)—Most of the political parties **pay lip service** to the plight of the poor.
8. **Pay one back in the same coin** (tit for tat)—We should not hesitate in paying China and Pakistan **back in their own coins**.
9. **Pin-money** (allowance given to housewife for personal use)—She is frugal and saves even out of **pin-money**.
10. **Pell-mell** (great confusion)—After the thieves had ransacked the house, every thing was **pell-mell**.
11. **Play fast and loose** (repeatedly change one's attitude)—No one can trust Rohan as he is used to **playing fast and loose** with his friends.
12. **Play second fiddle to** (to play a subordinate part)—A self-respecting man can never **play second fiddle to** anyone.
13. **Play truant** (to be absent from duty without permission)—It is a very bad habit of the employees to **play truant** from office.
14. **Play to the gallery** (to gain cheap popularity)—The speeches of our leaders are not sincere; they are intended to **play to the gallery**.
15. **Play ducks and drakes** (to squander money)—After the death of his father he got into heavy debt by **playing ducks and drakes** with money.
16. **Play foul** (to do something wrong)—Don't **play foul** with your well-wishers.
17. **Plough the sands** (futile labour)—He cannot make money because he appears to be **ploughing the sands**.
18. **Pour oil on troubled waters** (to pacify the matters)—The two good friends exchanged hot words but the intervention of their teacher **poured oil on troubled waters**.

19. **Pull a long face** (to look sad)—Seema **pulled a long face** when she was scolded by her teacher for her carelessness.
20. **Pull one's socks up** (work hard)—You must **pull your socks up** to get over financial problems.
21. **Pull strings** (to exercise influence secretly)—He managed his promotion by **pulling strings**.
22. **Put heads together** (consult seriously)—Our leaders should **put their heads together** to solve national problems.
23. **Put a spoke in a wheel** (to obstruct)—He would not like me to succeed; so he always **put a spoke in a wheel**.
24. **Put the cart before the horse** (to do wrong thing first)—Our leaders **put the cart before the horse** by neglecting villages in the name of industrial progress.
25. **Pros and cons** (for and against a thing)—We must always consider the **pros and cons** of any new project that we take in hand.
26. **Pyrrhic victory** (victory at a high cost)—Greek victory over Trojans proved to be **pyrrhic victory**.
27. **Pick holes** (to find fault with)—He is **always picking** holes in every project.

## Q

1. **Queer fish** (strange person)—One cannot make anything out of Sohan's attitude as he is such a **queer fish**.
2. **Quixotic project** (foolishly ideal)—Being not worldly wise he wasted his money in **quixotic projects**.

## R

1. **Rise to the occasion** (to act as the occasion demands)—To face critical situations boldly you should **rise to the occasion**.
2. **Run short of** (shortage)—These days due to some financial crises my friend is **running short of** money.
3. **Rank and file** (common man)—If we want our country to progress in every field, we must improve the economic lot of the **rank and file**.
4. **Red tapism** (official delay)—**Red tapism** is a bane of Indian bureaucracy.
5. **Rest on one's laurels** (complacent, self satisfied)—Ambitious persons never **rest on their laurels** because they dream of unending achievements.
6. **Rock the boat** (upset the balance)—If your party withdraws the support from the Government, it may **rock the boat**.
7. **Red herring** (something to distract attention)—The demand of inquiry into his conduct is just a **red herring** as there is no truth in it.
8. **Rip up old sores** (to revive forgotten quarrel)—Rahul and his wife can't live in peace; they are always **ripping up old sores**.
9. **Read between the lines** (to understand the hidden meaning)—If her essay is **read between the lines**, we will find that she has made comments against the Government.

10. **Rule the roost** (to dominate)—Today the rich **rule the roost**.
11. **Red rag to a bull** (anything that provokes)—The law against the dowry system is, for the greedy persons, like a **red rag to a bull**.
12. **Ride rough shod over** (to treat in a high handed fashion)—**Don't ride rough shod over** a person when he is down and out.
13. **Rub one the wrong way** (annoy)—If you **rub him the wrong way**, he is bound to react.

## S

1. **Sit on the fence** (not to commit oneself)—When the party split Ramesh was accused of **sitting on the fence**.
2. **Smell a rat** (to be suspicious)—I **smelt a rat** in the bargain that my uncle made with my father.
3. **Shed crocodile tears** (to show false sorrow)—The mother **shed crocodile tears** on the death of her step daughter.
4. **Split hair** (to indulge in over refined arguments)—We should not try to **split hair** with our elders.
5. **Stand in good stead** (to be helpful in need)—During the time of distress the advice of elders always **stands in good stead**.
6. **Show white feather** (to show cowardice)—Brave people never **show white feather** in the face of difficulties.
7. **See eye to eye** (to agree)—Neema could never **see eye to eye** with her elder brother.
8. **Set store by** (to value)—I have always **set store by** my father's opinion.
9. **Snap one's fingers at** (to show contempt)—The industry owner feels that he may **snap his fingers at** the demands of his workers, but he is greatly mistaken.
10. **Speak volumes for** (to have abundant proof)—The amount of sacrifice made by Reena's friend **speaks volumes for** her true love for her friend.
11. **Steal a march** (to get ahead secretly)—Rohan **stole a march** on my brother in business and is very rich today.
12. **Steer clear of** (to avoid)—Everyone, if possible, should **steer clear of** selfish people.
13. **Swan song** (last creation)—'Lament' was the **swan song** of Shelley.
14. **Snake in the grass** (a secret enemy)—The country is always betrayed by the **snakes in the grass**.
15. **Sword of Damocles** (facing imminent danger)—A **sword of Damocles** is always hanging over the head of a soldier in the event of war.
16. **Sail under false colours** (a hypocrite)—We should not believe our leaders because they **sail under false colours**.
17. **Spartan life** (life of ascetic)—Swami Vivekanand led a **spartan life** for promoting health of mind and body.
18. **Save one's face** (to avoid disgrace)—He is making lame excuses to **save his face** because he could not qualify the examination.

19. **A scarlet woman** (a woman with loose morals)—Being a **scarlet woman** she is looked down upon by her neighbours.
20. **Set people by ears** (to incite people)—The communal speeches **set people by ears**.
21. **To set Thames on fire** (to achieve something impossible)—Qualifying Civil Services examination for you is like **setting Thames on fire**.
22. **Sweat of the brow** (hard labour)—The honest persons live by **sweat of the brow**.
23. **Steal someone's thunder** (make a better impression)—The young actor performed so well that he **stole his rival's thunder**.
24. **Straight from the shoulders** (candidly)—My lawyer told me **straight from the shoulders** that my case was weak.
25. **Shop lifter** (one who steals from the shop)—A **shop lifter** often visits a shop as a customer.
26. **Spick and span** (in order)—Her house looked **spick and span** because everything was in its place.
27. **Shot in the arm** (encouraging)—A victory in Kargil war proved a **shot in the arm** of our Defence Forces.
28. **Something up one's sleeve** (a secret plan)—She is quite a mischievous lady. There is always **something up her sleeve**.
29. **Send about one's business** (to dismiss)—His employees **sent him about his business** when he behaved insolently.
30. **Stand one's ground** (remain firm)—He did not yield to pressure and **stood his ground** till the end.
31. **Small fry** (insignificant person)—Who cares for him, he is a **small fry** in the office.
32. **Seamy side of life** (immoral side of society)—The picture depicts realism and presents the **seamy side of life** in modern India.
33. **Sow wild oats** (irresponsible pleasure seeking)—After **sowing his wild oats** Ram has decided to stick to the straight and narrow path in future.
34. **Spill the beans** (to give information)—Continuous interrogation finally made the man **spill the beans** and the disaster was averted.
35. **A stalking horse** (pretence)—The trade union's seemingly rightful demand is only a **stalking horse** to black-mail the management.

## T

1. **Turn the tables** (to reverse the condition)—A batsman often **turns the table** on the opposite team by his good batting.
2. **Turn up one's nose** (to take lightly with contempt)—Meena has failed twice in her class and yet she **turns up her nose** at my advice.
3. **Turn coat** (one who changes political affiliations)—Anti-defection bill is aimed at checking the evil practices indulged in by **turn coats**.
4. **Take up the cudgels** (to support or defend)—One of my lawyer friends **took up the cudgels** on my behalf to defend me.



5. **Turn the corner** (to pass a critical stage)—After long illness at last my friend **turned the corner** and was completely out of danger.
6. **Tall talk** (exaggerate the matters)—No one likes to be in the company of Neema as she always indulges in **tall talk**.
7. **Tooth and nail** (violently)—All the students revolted **tooth and nail** against the partiality of the teachers towards some students.
8. **Throw in a towel** (to be defeated)—When the wrestler could not resist the opponent, he had to **throw in a towel**.
9. **Take with a pinch of salt** (to accept with doubt)—Everybody takes Rahul's problems with a **pinch of salt** because he is an unreliable person.
10. **Turn a hair** (show any reaction)—Although his friends provoked him against Rohit, he did not **turn a hair** and remained calm.
11. **Tall stories** (exaggerated stories)—Since he retired from Army, he has been famous for his **tall stories** which regale the villagers.
12. **Take the floor** (make a speech)—When the Prime Minister **took the floor** in the cabinet meeting there was pin drop silence.
13. **Take lying down** (accept insult)—It is impossible for me to *take* his remarks *lying down*. It amounts to meek surrender.
14. **Turn to account** (turn to advantage)—The brave *turn* their failures *to account*.
15. **Take heart** (feel bold)—You must **take heart** and face life boldly.
16. **Take to heart** (feel excessively)—He *took* his failure **to heart** and lost interest in worldly affairs.
17. **Take bull by horns** (to meet the danger boldly)—You can succeed in life only if you have courage **to take bull by horns**.
18. **Through and through** (entirely)—He was drenched in the rain **through and through**.
19. **To the back bone** (thoroughly)—We need leaders who are selfless **to the back bone**.
20. **Take wind out of another's sails** (to gain advantage by anticipation)—Farsighted Generals can win war by **taking wind out of enemy's sails**.
21. **Throw down the glove/gauntlet** (to challenge)—China had **thrown down the glove** by not recognising Sikkim as part of India.
22. **Take leaf out of somebody's book** (to emulate)—The young should **take leaf out of great men's books**.
23. **Take people by storm** (to surprise unexpectedly)—The successful launching of GSLV-1. **took the nation by storm**.
24. **Tall order** (something difficult)—It is a **tall order** to check population explosion in India.
25. **Throw a spanner** (to sabotage a plan)—He refused to finance my project and so **threw a spanner** in it.
26. **Take to task** (punish, ask for explanation, to scold)—To *took* my younger sister **to task** for not obeying her elders.

27. **Turn a deaf ear** (not to pay attention to, refuse to listen)—All the party members **turned a deaf ear** to their leader.
28. **Throw out of gear** (not working properly)—Many of our small scale industries have been **thrown out of gear** because of lack of finance.
29. **Take to heels** (to run away)—The students making mischief **took to their heels** on seeing the Principal.
30. **Throw cold water** (to discourage)—Instead of encouraging me my business partner **threw cold water** on my plans.
31. **Turn over a new leaf** (to be entirely changed)—After the sudden death of his father Rajesh **turned over a new leaf** and took all the responsibilities of the family on himself.
32. **Take somebody for a ride** (to deceive a person)—The traders **take the customers for a ride** by selling fake foreign goods to them.
33. **Take up arms** (to fight)—The tribals of this region have **taken up arms** against the government.
34. **To and fro** (forward and backward)—He was strolling in the garden **to and fro**.
35. **Throw up the sponge** (surrender)—He never **threw up the sponge** and at last got over his problems.

## U

1. **Uphill task** (difficult task)—The problem of holding exams on time is an **uphill task** for the V.C. of Ch. Charan Singh University.
2. **Ups and downs** (change in fortune)—My uncle has experienced many **ups and downs** in his furniture business.
3. **Under the rose** (secretly)—When the parents of Amul did not agree to the marriage of their son, he married Meeta **under the rose**.
4. **Up and doing** (active)—A labourer should be **up and doing** daily if he has to earn his living.
5. **Under a cloud** (to be under suspicion)—His secret connections with the smugglers have brought him **under a cloud**.
6. **Upto the mark** (as good as should be)—Your speech was upto the mark.

## W

1. **With open arms** (cordially, warmly)—When my cousin came back from England after ten years he was welcomed **with open arms** by all the relatives.
2. **Win laurels** (to win distinction)—Dr. Tagore **won laurels** in the world of literature.
3. **White elephant** (anything with less utility and more expenditure)—The Public Sector Undertakings have proved **white elephants** to our economy.
4. **Well disposed to** (friendly or helpful to somebody)—One is always **well disposed to** those who are honest and hard working.

5. **Writing on the wall** (signal, warning)—The factory owner read the **writing on the wall** and closed down the factory.
6. **When the crunch comes** (the moment of decision)—Brave persons never despair **when the crunch comes**.
7. **Willy-Nilly** (whether one wishes or not)—**Willy-Nilly**, she has to agree to the views of her husband all the time.
8. **Window shopping** (to look at goods displayed but not for buying)—Though I did not have any mind to make purchases, I just went out **window shopping** in the evening.
9. **Wear and tear** (damage caused by use)—**Wear and tear** of the machinery is known as depreciation in accountancy.
10. **Weal and woe** (joy and sorrow)—We must learn to bear **weal and woe** of life patiently.
11. **Wash hands of** (to have nothing to do)—I have **washed hands of** your affairs because you do not take me seriously.
12. **Wide berth** (keep away)—We should give a **wide berth** to bad characters.
13. **Will o' the wisp** (elusive, unreal)—To Romantic poets reality appears to be **will o' the wisp**.
14. **Wry face** (disappointed look)—He made a **wry face** when he was refused admission to the college of his choice.
15. **Win hands down** (win easily)—Australia **won hands down** in the Davis Cup finals.
16. **Within an ace of** (close to something)—When our team was **within an ace of** victory, Iraq scored a last minute goal to draw the game.
17. **Wear the trousers** (dominant)—It is Leena who **wears the trousers** and her husband simply obeys her.
18. **Wee hours** (at dawn)—The old couple was murdered in the **wee hours** of the day.
19. **With a high hand** (oppressively)—He was a king who ruled his subjects **with a high hand**.
20. **Wet blanket** (any person that dampens enthusiasm)—The principal proved a **wet blanket** while the students were on picnic.
21. **Wild-goose chase** (unprofitable)—All the efforts of the government to remove illiteracy in India is like a **wild-goose chase**.
22. **Wind fall** (sudden gain)—The legacy left by his uncle proved a **wind fall** for Arnav.
23. **Wide berth** (keep away)—We should give a wide berth to bad characters.
24. **Wrangle over an ass' shadow** (to quarrel over trifles)—Their long friendship ended because they **wrangled over an ass' shadow**.

## Y

1. **Yellow press** (newspaper publishing sensational news)—In recent times there is a spurt of sensational newspapers making **yellow press** popular.
2. **Yeoman's service** (excellent work)—Sardar Patel did a **Yeoman's service** by welding numberless States into one strong nation.

## Work Book Exercise (A)

**Directions :** For each of the following sentences four alternatives are given. You are required to choose the correct meaning of the Idioms given in *italics* in the sentences.

1. The boy turned a *deaf ear* to the pleadings of all his well-wishers.  
 (a) listened carefully (b) was deadly opposed  
 (c) posed indifference (d) did not pay any attention
2. We should give a *wide berth* to bad characters.  
 (a) keep away from (b) publicly condemn  
 (c) give publicity to (d) not sympathise with
3. Sumit had to look *high and low* before he could find his scooter key.  
 (a) nowhere (b) always  
 (c) everywhere (d) somewhere
4. You may *rush from pillar to post*, but you stand no chance of getting what you want without a bribe.  
 (a) be very busy  
 (b) rush in all directions and suffer much harassment.  
 (c) go to all post boxes and post offices.  
 (d) go to many offices and post letters.
5. At a party, he is always in *high spirits*.  
 (a) talkative (b) cheerful  
 (c) drunk (d) uncontrollable
6. She rejected his proposal of marriage *point blank*.  
 (a) directly (b) pointedly  
 (c) absurdly (d) briefly
7. We should guard against our *green-eyed* friends.  
 (a) rich (b) jealous  
 (c) handsome (d) enthusiastic
8. It was clearly a case of the *pot calling the kettle black* when Jagjit said that Ramu was a thief.  
 (a) Someone criticizing another for a fault which he himself has.  
 (b) A person accusing another of being black.  
 (c) A person blaming another for something, he has not done.  
 (d) Both are guilty of the same mistake.
9. Rahul fought *tooth and nail* to save his company.  
 (a) with weapons (b) as best as he could  
 (c) using unfair means (d) with strength and fury
10. The popularity of the yester year's superstar is *on the wane*.  
 (a) growing more (b) at its peak  
 (c) growing less (d) at rock bottom
11. The sight of the accident made my *flesh creep*.  
 (a) worried me (b) frightened me  
 (c) confused me (d) drew my attention
12. He is a *queer fish*. I have failed to understand him.  
 (a) funny person (b) sensitive person  
 (c) strange person (d) quarrelsome person

13. The involvement of teachers in the scheme of education proved to be a *mare's nest*.  
(a) a false invention (b) a noble thing  
(c) a successful (d) a timely sleep
14. Chandu used very ugly words against his kind uncle; he *threw down the gauntlet* before him.  
(a) abused and insulted (b) threw the challenge  
(c) behaved as an important person (d) put conditions
15. The present undergraduate syllabus leaves very little *elbow room* for teachers to be innovative.  
(a) room for elbow (b) space  
(c) freedom (d) ground
16. The members of the group were *at odds* over the selection procedure.  
(a) acting foolishly (b) in dispute  
(c) unanimous (d) behaving childishly
17. There is *no love lost* between the two neighbours.  
(a) close friendship (b) intense dislike  
(c) a love-hate relationship (d) cool indifference
18. I did not mind what he was saying, he was only *talking through his hat*.  
(a) talking insultingly (b) talking irresponsibly  
(c) talking ignorantly (d) talking nonsense.
19. If you pass this difficult examination, it will be a *feather in your cap*.  
(a) you will get a very good job  
(b) additional achievement  
(c) your parents will be very happy  
(d) you will get a scholarship for higher studies.
20. If you *rub him the wrong way*, he is bound to react.  
(a) annoy him (b) abuse him  
(c) flatter him (d) encourage him
21. There was opposition to the new policy by *the rank and file* of the government.  
(a) the majority (b) the ordinary members  
(c) the cabinet members (d) the official machinery
22. Dowry is a *burning question* of the day.  
(a) a dying issue (b) a relevant problem  
(c) an irrelevant problem (d) a widely debated issue
23. His voice gets *on my nerves*.  
(a) makes me sad (b) irritates me  
(c) makes me ill (d) pierces my eardrums
24. Some people have a habit of *wearing their heart* on their sleeve.  
(a) Avoiding being friendly with others.  
(b) Saying something which is not to be taken seriously.  
(c) Exposing their innermost feelings to others.  
(d) Wasting their time on unnecessary details.
25. The doctor says that the patient has *turned the corner*.  
(a) completely recover (b) become worse  
(c) passed the crisis (d) died



## Work Book Exercise (B)

1. Komal was left *high and dry* by her friends when she lost all her money.  
(a) isolated (b) rejected  
(c) wounded (d) depressed
2. The party stalwarts have advised the president to take it *lying down* for a while.  
(a) to show no reaction (b) to take rest  
(c) to be on the defensive (d) to be cautious
3. A movement for the world unity is *in the offing*.  
(a) at the end (b) about to start  
(c) on decline (d) in the air
4. In the Armed Forces, it is considered a great privilege to *die in harness*.  
(a) die with honour (b) die on a horse back  
(c) die while still working (d) die in the battlefield
5. Sita is not *cut out* for this kind of work.  
(a) trained (b) suitable  
(c) recommended (d) considered
6. His most trusted friend proved to be *a snake in the grass*.  
(a) cowardly and brutal (b) an unreliable and deceitful person  
(c) a hidden enemy (d) low and mean
7. The politician was able to sway the mob with *his gift of the gab*.  
(a) fluency of speech (b) flattering words  
(c) abundance of promises (d) political foresight
8. The speaker gave a *bird's eye view* of the political conditions in the country.  
(a) a detailed presentation (b) a biased view  
(c) a general view (d) a personal view
9. After *sowing his wild oats* Ram has decided to stick to the straight and narrow path in future.  
(a) becoming a gardener  
(b) becoming a farmer  
(c) a period of wildness  
(d) going through a period of irresponsible pleasure seeking
10. They sold their house because it was a *white elephant*.  
(a) an expensive one (b) a big one  
(c) a useless one (d) a rare find
11. When he tells stories about himself, he is *inspired to draw the long bow*.  
(a) get excited (b) exaggerate  
(c) get emotional (d) underrate
12. He was a king who ruled his subjects *with a high hand*.  
(a) oppressively (b) kindly  
(c) conveniently (d) sympathetically
13. Discipline is *on the wane* in schools and colleges these days.  
(a) increasing (b) declining  
(c) spreading (d) spiralling

14. He *did me a good turn* by recommending me for the post of Vice-president.  
(a) became suddenly good (b) improved my prospects  
(c) did an act of kindness (d) returned my kindness
15. Being an introvert, he will only *eat his heart out*.  
(a) eat too much (b) keep brooding  
(c) invite trouble (d) suffer silently
16. The question of abolition of private property is still *a moot point*.  
(a) unknown (b) undecided  
(c) not clear (d) uncertain
17. Sumit and I have known each other for a long time but when I met him the other day for some unknown reason, he *cut me dead*.  
(a) abused me (b) treated me as a complete stranger  
(c) shouted at me (d) showed dislike for me
18. I have come to know of your *hole and corner* method of dealing with people.  
(a) strict (b) servile  
(c) secret (d) suspicious
19. Continuous interrogation finally made the man *spill the beans* and the disaster was averted.  
(a) blurt out the truth (b) to give information  
(c) to scatter the truth (d) to scatter the beans
20. The trade union's seemingly rightful demand is only a *stalking horse* to blackmail the management.  
(a) trick (b) proposal  
(c) pretence (d) suggestion
21. The teacher was *as good as his word*.  
(a) incapable of action (b) better than expected  
(c) highly pretentious (d) ready to fulfil his promise
22. The reporter said to the editor. "You need not consult anyone. You can take *my word for it*."  
(a) believe what I say (b) use the work I suggest  
(c) take my promise (d) listen to my explanation
23. If we give them this concession, it will be the *thin end of the wedge*.  
(a) a compromise on principles  
(b) the least we could do for them  
(c) the beginning of further concessions  
(d) inadequate for their needs
24. He is always *picking holes* in every project.  
(a) asking irrelevant questions on  
(b) suggesting improvement in  
(c) finding fault with  
(d) creating problems in
25. After the dinner was over she refused to *foot the bill*.  
(a) to pay (b) to prepare  
(c) to destroy (d) to play trick

## Work Book Exercise (C)

1. Caesar was *done to death* by the conspirators.  
 (a) attacked (b) removed  
 (c) eliminated (d) murdered
2. His boss was *always breathing down his neck*.  
 (a) abusing and ill-treating him  
 (b) watching all his actions closely  
 (c) shouting loudly at him  
 (d) giving him strenuous work
3. He is *not worth his salt* if he fails at this juncture.  
 (a) quite worthless (b) very proud of himself  
 (c) quite depressed (d) very strange
4. After having finished the last project, I find myself at *a loose end*.  
 (a) happy (b) on vacation  
 (c) free of troubles (d) with nothing to do
5. With the existing management, the future of the company is in *doldrums*.  
 (a) dull (b) bright  
 (c) uncertain (d) secure
6. It was such a strange affair that I would not make *head or tail of it*.  
 (a) face it (b) tolerate it  
 (c) remember (d) understand it
7. A good teacher should have the *gift of the gab*.  
 (a) a good personality (b) a blent for acting  
 (c) a talent for speaking (d) an interest in discipline
8. She exhibited remarkable *sang froid* during the crisis.  
 (a) temper (b) irritation  
 (c) composure (d) anger
9. My father *strained every nerve* to enable me to get settled in life.  
 (a) worked very hard (b) spent a large amount  
 (c) tried all tricks (d) bribed several persons
10. Though she herself was *as ugly as sin*, she had the audacity to criticize the looks of her companion.  
 (a) sinfully ugly (b) very ugly  
 (c) exceptionally ugly (d) quite ugly
11. He *bids fair* to be an excellent cricketer.  
 (a) seems likely (b) is ambitious  
 (c) is confident (d) is unlikely
12. He does not like to be friendly with Sarla. He always gives her *a cold shoulder*.  
 (a) pushes her with his shoulder wherever they meet  
 (b) insult her in the presence of others  
 (c) tries to be unfriendly by taking no notice of her  
 (d) argues with her on any issue

13. It was he who *put a spoke in my wheel*.  
(a) tried to cause an accident  
(b) helped in the execution of the plan  
(c) thwarted the execution of the plan  
(d) destroyed the plan
14. The captain played with determination because the honour of the team was at *stake*.  
(a) very tense  
(b) at the top  
(c) in danger  
(d) appropriate
15. His promotion is *on the cards*.  
(a) due  
(b) evident  
(c) certain  
(d) probable
16. He resigned the post of *his own accord*.  
(a) according to his judgement  
(b) which he liked  
(c) voluntarily and willingly  
(d) according to his convenience
17. Being out of job, he is *down in the mouth* these days.  
(a) out of spirits  
(b) always in a fighting mood  
(c) become smelly  
(d) always telling lies.
18. He *faced the music* for reaching home late.  
(a) faced punishment  
(b) faced entertainment  
(c) faced reprimand  
(d) faced pleasure
19. While the ladies continued their *small talk* in the drawing room he felt bored.  
(a) light conversation  
(b) gossip  
(c) backbiting  
(d) whispering
20. He was *carried off his feet* when he was declared to have won the prize.  
(a) became delirious  
(b) danced on his toes  
(c) was dizzy  
(d) was wild with excitement
21. The trial was so important that the entire proceedings were held *in camera*.  
(a) photographed  
(b) made into film  
(c) secret  
(d) not open to the public
22. She was in a *brown study* and not notice my entrance.  
(a) reverie  
(b) fear  
(c) sleep  
(d) dream
23. The authorities *took him to task* for his negligence.  
(a) forced him to resign  
(b) suspended his assignment  
(c) reprimanded him  
(d) gave him additional work
24. I did not know that he was *pulling my leg* all the time.  
(a) befooling me  
(b) degrading me  
(c) defaming me  
(d) complimenting me
25. To tell you in a *nutshell*, lust for power and money has almost spoiled him.  
(a) as objectively as possible  
(b) in simple and brief manner  
(c) an actual experience described vividly  
(d) to take in confidence



## Work Book Exercise (D)

1. He is a plain, simple and sincere man. He will always call a *spade a spade*.
  - (a) say something to be taken seriously
  - (b) desist from making controversial statement
  - (c) find meaning or purpose in your action
  - (d) avoid controversial situations
2. She is a *cut above* other teachers in the schools.
  - (a) inferior
  - (b) worthy
  - (c) superior
  - (d) worthless
3. Harassed by repeated acts of injustice he decided to *put his foot down*.
  - (a) resign
  - (b) not to yield
  - (c) withdraw
  - (d) accept the proposal unconditionally
4. At Christmas, even the elderly fathers *paint the town red*.
  - (a) indulge in rioting
  - (b) paint the house red
  - (c) spill red wine
  - (d) have a lively time
5. His letters to his ward *speak volumes* for his forbearance and good sense.
  - (a) show indications of
  - (b) speak ill of
  - (c) are intended to impress
  - (d) serve as strong testimony
6. He is in the habit of *chewing the cud*.
  - (a) accusing other
  - (b) crying over spilt milk
  - (c) forgetting things
  - (d) to muse on
7. I just paid him a *left handed compliment*.
  - (a) an honest
  - (b) a well deserved
  - (c) an insincere
  - (d) a flattering
8. The new C.M. *stuck his neck out* today and promised 10 kgs free wheat a month for all rural families.
  - (a) extended help
  - (b) took an oath
  - (c) caused embarrassment
  - (d) took a risk
9. He *burnt his fingers* by interfering in his neighbour's affairs.
  - (a) got rebuked
  - (b) got himself insulted
  - (c) burnt himself
  - (d) got himself into trouble
10. When the police came, the thieves *took to their heels*.
  - (a) were taken by surprise
  - (b) took to flight
  - (c) took shelter in a tall building
  - (d) unconditionally surrendered
11. The dispute regarding the emoluments of junior doctors *came to a head* this week.
  - (a) settled amicably
  - (b) reached a crisis
  - (c) took a turn for the better
  - (d) resulted in senseless violence
12. He is a strange fellow, it is very difficult to deal with him, it seems that he has a *bee in his bonnet*.
  - (a) an achievement to be proud of
  - (b) an obsession about something
  - (c) to face problems as a result of his senseless actions
  - (d) a peculiar habit of confusing others



13. It will be wise on your part to let the *bygones be bygones*.  
(a) resist the past (b) ignore the past  
(c) recollect the past (d) revive the past
14. The boy had a *hair-breadth* escape from a street accident.  
(a) lucky (b) easy  
(c) narrow (d) quick
15. In spite of the efforts of all peace loving people, world peace is still a *far cry*.  
(a) an abstract ideal (b) a long way off  
(c) an impracticable idea (d) out of reach
16. The management dismissed him and *made no bones* about it.  
(a) made no secret of it (b) did not consult anyone  
(c) did not defend the act (d) had no scruple about it
17. He has reached present position in his job through *elbow grease*.  
(a) his persistent fighting (b) his good connections  
(c) flattering his superiors (d) his hard work
18. I am afraid there is something *fishy* about the Bofors deal.  
(a) full of fish (b) very clear  
(c) black at the bottom (d) as lucid as water
19. Ram could not get to Kolkata for vacation since he was *banking on* his arrears of pay which he did not get in time.  
(a) depending on his bank (b) sloping on  
(c) relying on (d) calling on
20. In the organized society of today no individual or nation can *plough a lonely furrow*.  
(a) remain unaffected  
(b) do without the help of others  
(c) survive in isolation  
(d) remain non-aligned
21. He always follows *cut and dried* religious dogmas.  
(a) works for religion (b) inflicts injuries  
(c) unalterable (d) behaves honestly
22. The new economic policy is likely to *run into rough weather*.  
(a) make things difficult (b) confuse matters  
(c) encounter difficulties (d) create problems
23. Sumit thought he was very clever but found himself *in a soup*.  
(a) involved (b) ruined  
(c) in trouble (d) stranded
24. He cannot make *both ends meet*.  
(a) work hard (b) manage the business  
(c) earn enough (d) control affairs
25. The soldiers laid *down their arms*.  
(a) put their arms on the ground (b) surrendered  
(c) refused to obey orders (d) put the arms in their place

## Work Book Exercise (E)

1. India was in a *pretty pass* over the question of signing the CTBT.  
 (a) in a beautiful passage (b) in a pretty way  
 (c) in a difficulty (d) in a problem
2. The scenery of Kashmir *beggars* description.  
 (a) beyond the power of description (b) beg for description  
 (c) describe a beggar (d) description of a beggar
3. As her result is likely to be declared in a day or so she is on *tenter hooks* these days.  
 (a) sitting on hooks (b) confuse'  
 (c) pleased (d) anxious suspense
4. It is a pity that our politicians are more interested in the *loaves and fishes* than with the uplift of the poor.  
 (a) bread and butter (b) kinds of fishes  
 (c) worldly benefits (d) means of power
5. Eloquent lamentations regarding the fate of the flora and fauna are certain to be rendered as a *cry in the wilderness*.  
 (a) a cry in vain (b) an unpleasant situation  
 (c) a cry with a laughter (d) a laughter having no end
6. India *carried the day* by defeating Australia in hockey series.  
 (a) lose (b) loose  
 (c) win (d) decisive victory
7. In modern democratic societies *lynch law* seems to have become a common feature in almost all the spheres of life.  
 (a) law of the parliament (b) law of the constitution  
 (c) law of the mob (d) law of the underworld
8. India must not expect any super power at the *beck and call* at the time of attack.  
 (a) at the service (b) ask for service  
 (c) at the back of (d) call to help
9. The Principal proved to be a *wet blanket* at the party of the students.  
 (a) discouraged from enjoying (b) damp clothes  
 (c) blanket wet in the rain (d) cold blank
10. In a parliamentary democracy the Prime Minister is at the *helm of national affairs*.  
 (a) in the main position (b) in the centre  
 (c) helm of a boat (d) centre of attraction
11. The arrival of the mother-in-law in the family proved a *rift-in the lute*.  
 (a) brought about disharmony  
 (b) brought about a disciplined atmosphere  
 (c) caused unnecessary worries  
 (d) caused a pleasant atmosphere
12. Seema is a little *hard of hearing*.  
 (a) inaudible (b) disinterested  
 (c) deaf (d) insensitive



13. The statement made by Pakistan about Kashmir problem was *Gall and Warrmwood* to every Indian.  
(a) woodworm (b) a source of anger  
(c) a great fuss (d) beyond reason
14. You cannot *have your cake and eat it too*.  
(a) enjoy forever (b) have it both ways  
(c) run away from responsibility (d) absolve yourself of guilt
15. He is an eloquent speaker and is never *at a loss* for a suitable word.  
(a) under a loss (b) to lose something  
(c) to be confused (d) suffer a loss
16. He is accused of *sitting on the fence*.  
(a) confused (b) observing the scene  
(c) hesitating between two options (d) resting on the fence
17. Mohan was over *head and ears* in love with Reena and insisted on marrying her.  
(a) excessively (b) in the long run  
(c) with all efforts (d) with all might
18. This regular absenteeism is a *bad bussiness* since no work is being completed.  
(a) bad for business (b) unbusiness like  
(c) an unfortunate event (d) creating ill will
19. Why do you wish to tread *on their toes*?  
(a) to give offence to them (b) To follow them grudgingly  
(c) To treat them indifferently (d) to be kicked by them
20. The people were *all agog* at the airport at the arrival of our victorious team.  
(a) all ready (b) in a state of excitement  
(c) a ringing bell (d) nervous
21. On the sight of the thieves in the night, my neighbour developed *cold feet* and could not even raise his voice.  
(a) to show indifference (b) to get afflicted with cold  
(c) to fall down (d) to feel frightened
22. My friend *got the sack* from his first job.  
(a) resigned (b) got tired  
(c) was demoted (d) was dismissed
23. Our forces *made a mincemeat* of the enemy.  
(a) warned (b) did no care for  
(c) appealed for cease-fire (d) destroyed completely
24. They have decided to go *hand in hand* in this business.  
(a) work in competition (b) keep parallel accounts  
(c) move in unision (d) make joint venture with others
25. Qualities of character are *at a discount* in this *material world*.  
(a) not in demand (b) out of question  
(c) at a disadvantage (d) unsuitable

## Work Book Exercise (F)

**Directions :** In each of the following questions an idiomatic phrase is given followed by four alternatives. Choose the alternative that best expresses the meaning of the expression.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. Hang together<br>(a) confirm each other<br>(c) hang with each other               | (b) live together<br>(d) go together                            |
| 2. Hard boiled<br>(a) boiled hard<br>(c) hardened                                    | (b) extremely hot<br>(d) hardly boiled                          |
| 3. Get cold feet<br>(a) to run for life<br>(c) to be afraid                          | (b) to get cold<br>(d) to become discourteous                   |
| 4. Make no bones about<br>(a) to make no effort<br>(c) to make fuss about            | (b) to admit something readily<br>(d) to create no hindrance    |
| 5. Turn out crabs<br>(a) end in failure<br>(c) to bring up crabs                     | (b) to be successful<br>(d) to be victorious                    |
| 6. Devil's Advocate<br>(a) an advocate of a Devil<br>(c) disscussion of an Advocate  | (b) an advocate like a Devil<br>(d) one who is against religion |
| 7. Between the Devil and the Sea<br>(a) in a fix<br>(c) in a worse situation         | (b) a Devil in the sea<br>(d) a compromising situation          |
| 8. Dance attendance upon<br>(a) to flatter<br>(c) to attend upon                     | (b) to dance with a partner<br>(d) to attend to                 |
| 9. Go abegging<br>(a) go in vain<br>(c) beg for going                                | (b) go for begging<br>(d) request for something                 |
| 10. A Gala day<br>(a) a day of success<br>(c) an eventful day                        | (b) a day of merry-making<br>(d) a day of singificance          |
| 11. Go hot & cold<br>(a) get angry<br>(c) get out of cold                            | (b) get irritated<br>(d) sudden feeling of fear and anxiety     |
| 12. Gird up one's Loins<br>(a) get ready for a job<br>(c) hunt for lions             | (b) leave bag & baggage<br>(d) a loin cloth                     |
| 13. Pocket an insult<br>(a) bear insult without protest<br>(c) sit over a resolution | (b) not to take any action<br>(d) ignore a case                 |

14. In pretty pass  
(a) problems of a passage  
(c) in a difficult way  
(b) in difficulties  
(d) caught in heavy traffic
15. Small talk  
(a) light conversation  
(c) back biting  
(b) gossip  
(d) whispering
16. Plough a lonely furrow  
(a) work single handedly  
(c) plough the sands  
(b) plough the field  
(d) work in a furrow
17. Rub shoulders with  
(a) come in contact with  
(c) rub shoulders of someone  
(b) quarrel with a person  
(d) have a cause to fight
18. Run the gauntlet  
(a) lash with gauntlet  
(c) face criticism  
(b) run away with gauntlet  
(d) accept a challenge
19. Rest on one's oars  
(a) take rest after working long  
(c) tired of boating  
(b) tired of working  
(d) rest with oars
20. On the cards  
(a) a winner  
(c) play at cards  
(b) accept defeat  
(d) likely to happen
21. Join the majority  
(a) on the side of majority  
(c) a turn coat  
(b) to die  
(d) have the majority
22. Wash dirty linen in public  
(a) to criticise  
(c) to talk dirty things in public  
(b) make personal quarrels public  
(d) to wash clothers.
23. At the eleventh hour  
(a) at eleven o'clock  
(c) arrive late  
(b) at the last hour  
(d) at the last possible time
24. Augean stables  
(a) to remove an evil  
(c) a place for horses  
(b) to clean the stables  
(d) stables for Augean horses.
25. At the helm of  
(a) at the helm of the ship  
(c) in the centre of a storm  
(b) at the main situation  
(d) in the centre of the ship
26. An apple of discord  
(a) the cause of a contention  
(c) a quarrel  
(b) sour apple  
(d) a fight for an apple
27. Call one's shot  
(a) make intentions clear  
(c) shoot at a call  
(b) call with a shot  
(d) to show determination
28. Call it a day  
(a) good bye to active life  
(c) call in day time  
(b) name the day  
(d) call on someone



- 29. Few and far between**  
 (a) very small in number  
 (c) very small in quantity  
 (b) very small in distance  
 (d) between near & far
- 30. Force an issue**  
 (a) make an issue  
 (c) solve an issue  
 (b) force a decision  
 (d) bring an issue
- 31. To lose face**  
 (a) to look angry  
 (c) to be helpless  
 (b) to be humiliated  
 (d) to look vacant
- 32. Much ado about nothing**  
 (a) to make a noise  
 (c) a play by Shaw  
 (b) to make a fuss over small matter  
 (d) talk about nothing
- 33. Make the best of a bad bargain**  
 (a) to turn failure to best advantage  
 (c) to make the best bargain  
 (b) to make a bad bargain  
 (d) to make a bargain
- 34. Chapter and verse for a thing**  
 (a) to produce proof  
 (c) to make publicity  
 (b) to praise a thing  
 (d) to attach value to a thing
- 35. Bid fair**  
 (a) have a good prospect  
 (c) try in a fair manner  
 (b) to be just  
 (d) fair effort
- 36. Talk shop**  
 (a) talk about shop  
 (c) talk business  
 (b) talk in shop  
 (d) talk to the point
- 37. Tread on one's toes**  
 (a) to give offence  
 (c) tread with toes  
 (b) walk on toes  
 (d) flatter someone
- 38. Carry the can**  
 (a) accept the blame  
 (c) face the repercussions  
 (b) get into trouble  
 (d) share the responsibility
- 39. Take time by the forelock**  
 (a) forecast on event  
 (c) talk one's own time  
 (b) forecast time  
 (d) prepare for action before time
- 40. All agog**  
 (a) all happy  
 (c) restless  
 (b) rife with rumours  
 (d) playful
- 41. Toe the line**  
 (a) mark the line  
 (c) hit on the toe  
 (b) cross the line  
 (d) follow others
- 42. Throw up one's cards**  
 (a) accept defeat  
 (c) throw cards in the air  
 (b) spoil the card's game  
 (d) throw away the game

43. Turn tail  
(a) run like a coward  
(c) run with a tail  
(b) one who changes ideas  
(d) run at the end
44. Shot in the dark  
(a) go in dark  
(c) shoot when dark  
(b) done as a guess  
(d) to take risk
45. A skeleton in one's cupboard  
(a) a skeleton in a closet  
(c) something embarrassing kept as a secret  
(b) a secret murder  
(d) a hidden skeleton
46. A storm in a tea cup  
(a) impending storm  
(c) danger to come  
(b) excitement over something trivial  
(d) something trivial but important
47. Smell a rat  
(a) foul smell  
(c) suspect something foul  
(b) to misunderstand  
(d) the hidden meaning
48. Sail in the same boat  
(a) in similar circumstances  
(c) a boat with sails  
(b) sail in one boat  
(d) enjoy boating
49. Show a clean pair of heels  
(a) run away when chased  
(c) clean the heels  
(b) cool heels  
(d) show heels
50. Fast and loose  
(a) to beguile others  
(c) to play with feelings  
(b) to play tricks  
(d) to be losing fast
51. Foar in the mouth  
(a) bitten by a snake  
(c) extreme hatred  
(b) to reveal the sceret  
(d) to be furious (Investigator 2005)
52. Have the last laugh  
(a) be of a cheerful nature  
(b) laugh only after understanding something  
(c) to be victorious at the end of an argument  
(d) to crack the final joke
53. Turn a deaf ear  
(a) disregard  
(c) defy  
(b) disobey  
(d) dismiss
54. A dark horse  
(a) an unforeseen competitor  
(c) a nightmare  
(b) a black horse  
(d) an unknown person
55. To run across  
(a) to have an appointed meeting  
(c) to run in the playground  
(b) to meet by chance  
(d) to run very fast
56. To steer clear of  
(a) drive carefully  
(c) explain clearly  
(b) avoid  
(d) escape

57. To beat a retreat  
 (a) to withdraw in defeat or humiliation  
 (b) to withdraw after scoring a victory  
 (c) to march back after a ceremonious parade  
 (d) to run away in fear
58. To blaze a trail  
 (a) to lead the way as a pioneer  
 (b) to light a track  
 (c) to set up a fire  
 (d) to wear a blazer while running
59. A red-letter day  
 (a) a colourful day  
 (b) fatal day  
 (c) happy and significant day  
 (d) hapless day
60. At one's wit's end  
 (a) to understand thoroughly  
 (b) to be puzzled  
 (c) to be stupid person  
 (d) to behave irrationally
61. At beck and call  
 (a) at rest  
 (b) at disposal  
 (c) at work  
 (d) at their desks
62. In the long run  
 (a) permanently  
 (b) occasionally  
 (c) universally  
 (d) ultimately
63. In the good books of  
 (a) work well for the boss  
 (b) praise the boss  
 (c) in favour with  
 (d) co-operate with the boss
64. By leaps and bounds  
 (a) very slowly  
 (b) irregularly  
 (c) very quickly  
 (d) very systematically
65. Pros and cons  
 (a) measure the ingredients  
 (b) observe etiquette  
 (c) consider all facts  
 (d) postpone action
66. Got the sack  
 (a) resigned  
 (b) was demoted  
 (c) got rid of  
 (d) was dismissed
67. The green-eyed monster  
 (a) anger  
 (b) envy  
 (c) hatred  
 (d) jealousy
68. To fight tooth and nail  
 (a) to fight a losing battle  
 (b) to oppose resolutely  
 (c) to have a physical fight  
 (d) to lodge a formal protest
69. To run one down  
 (a) to be in a hurry  
 (b) to be weak and tired  
 (c) to disparage someone  
 (d) to run down a lane

[Audit (SO) 2006]

70. At snail's pace  
 (a) to do things very slowly  
 (c) to lack interest in work  
 (b) to walk like a snail  
 (d) to do things in a methodical manner
71. To take to one's heels  
 (a) to run off  
 (c) to turn around  
 (b) to show one's heels  
 (d) to walk leisurely
72. To have something up one's sleeves  
 (a) having a practical plan  
 (c) having an ambitious plan  
 (b) having an important project  
 (d) having a secret plan
73. To end in smoke  
 (a) to have a smoking session  
 (c) to come to nothing  
 (b) to be on fire  
 (d) to burn slowly
74. At one's wit's end  
 (a) to work hard  
 (c) to be intelligent  
 (b) to get puzzled  
 (d) to be stupid
75. To take someone to task  
 (a) to scold someone  
 (c) to take someone to his place of work  
 (b) to assign work to someone  
 (d) to praise someone for the work done
76. To face the music  
 (a) to be greeted rudely  
 (c) to enjoy a musical programme  
 (b) to be offered warm hospitality  
 (d) to bear the consequences
77. To blow one's own trumpet  
 (a) to play on one's own trumpet  
 (c) to create noisy disturbances  
 (b) to praise one's own self  
 (d) to have a high-pitched voice
- (Translator 2006)*
78. Make bricks without straw  
 (a) cheat  
 (c) do the impossible  
 (b) do the right thing  
 (d) make hollow bricks
79. As fit as a fiddle  
 (a) as slim as a fiddle  
 (c) extremely healthy  
 (b) good at fitting up fiddles  
 (d) of the fiddling type
80. In character with  
 (a) found to be good  
 (c) found to be in keeping with  
 (b) found to be peculiar  
 (d) found to be familiar with
81. Rank and file  
 (a) the upper class  
 (c) ordinary folk  
 (b) the rich  
 (d) one section of people
82. Tied the culprit in knots  
 (a) they tied him a rope  
 (c) they bewildered him to a great extent  
 (b) they tied his limbs and interrogated him  
 (d) they beat him in the joints
83. To get into a stew  
 (a) to get into trouble  
 (c) to run into danger  
 (b) to take shelter  
 (d) to have an anxious state of mind

84. A man of letters  
 (a) a man who wrote many letters  
 (c) a scholar with literary taste  
 (b) a leader who received more letters  
 (d) a good reader of letters
85. Once in a blue moon  
 (a) rarely  
 (c) frequently  
 (b) always  
 (d) often
86. To go by  
 (a) to throw away  
 (c) to disobey  
 (b) to be guided by  
 (d) to avoid

*(Commercial Auditor 2005)*

87. Reading, between the lines  
 (a) reading slowly and haltingly  
 (b) understanding the sense rather than the actual words.  
 (c) understanding the meaning of words and not the sense  
 (d) reading superficially
88. By fits and starts  
 (a) consistently  
 (c) in high spirits  
 (b) irregularly  
 (d) enthusiastically
89. Put up with  
 (a) excuse  
 (c) refuse  
 (b) accept  
 (d) tolerate
90. Talking through one's hat  
 (a) talking nonsense  
 (c) talking irresponsibly  
 (b) talking ignorantly  
 (d) talking insultingly
91. Through fire and water  
 (a) approach everybody for help  
 (c) use any conceivable method  
 (b) avail himself of any opportunity  
 (d) undergo any risk
92. Ran riot  
 (a) behaved cleverly  
 (c) wandered aimlessly  
 (b) acted without restraint  
 (d) had the best of time
93. Give in  
 (a) accede  
 (c) oblige  
 (b) yield  
 (d) conform
94. Cheek by jowl  
 (a) very near  
 (c) very far  
 (b) tongue tied  
 (d) irritated
95. Gave the game away  
 (a) lost the game  
 (c) played badly  
 (b) gave out the secret  
 (d) withdrew from the game
96. Turn an honest penny  
 (a) make a legitimate living  
 (c) have dealings in white money  
 (b) make a good living  
 (d) become more honest
97. Made a clean breast of  
 (a) confessed  
 (c) suffered  
 (b) took off his shirt  
 (d) spoke ill



98. Done for  
(a) ruined  
(c) answered
99. On the level  
(a) equally rich  
(c) honest and sincere
100. Made ducks and drakes  
(a) squandered  
(c) spent
101. Went to the winds  
(a) dissipated  
(c) got speed of the winds
102. Made my flesh creep  
(a) thrilled me  
(c) excited me
103. Burnt his boats  
(a) felt dejected  
(c) ruined himself
104. Can not hold a candle  
(a) equal to  
(c) cannot be compared to
105. Brought up  
(a) discussed at great length  
(c) criticised vehemently
106. Cut no ice with me  
(a) had no influence on me  
(c) did not benefit me
107. A fair weather friend  
(a) a good friend  
(c) one who deserts you in difficulties
108. Die in harness  
(a) riding a horse  
(c) in a uniform
109. Keep under wraps  
(a) covered  
(c) unpacked
110. Like a phoenix  
(a) with a new life  
(c) with royal gait
111. A sore point  
(a) something which hurts  
(c) something memorable for
- (b) rewarded  
(d) questioned
- (b) mentally compatible  
(d) ready for sacrifices
- (b) distributed  
(d) gave in charity
- (b) spread all over  
(d) became well-known
- [Combined Audit (SO) 2006]**
- (b) horrified me  
(d) frightened me
- (b) blasted his hopes  
(d) left no means of retreat
- (b) not as clever as  
(d) duller than
- (b) introduced for discussion  
(d) vaguely referred to
- (b) did not hurt me  
(d) did not make me proud
- (Tax Assistant 2006)**
- (b) a friend who meets difficulties calmly  
(d) a favourable friend
- (b) in a stable  
(d) still in service
- (b) protected  
(d) secret
- (b) with a start  
(d) with vengeance
- (b) something that brings fear to  
(d) something pleasurable to

112. On the verge of  
 (a) on the brink of  
 (c) in the midst of  
 (b) at the outset of  
 (d) at the sisk of
113. Out of thin air  
 (a) appear suddenly  
 (c) fall down quickly  
 (b) descend gradually  
 (d) enter from space
114. A bolt from the blue  
 (a) something unexpected  
 (c) something horrible  
 (b) something unpleasant  
 (d) something unexpected and unpleasant  
*(CDS 2006)*
115. Touch-and-go  
 (a) a weak person  
 (c) to catch a chief  
 (b) uncertain as to the result  
 (d) a tough competitor
116. To mind one's Ps & Qs  
 (a) to have an illegible handwriting  
 (c) to be careful & polite  
 (b) to overdress  
 (d) to remember poetry by heart
117. To go for the jugular  
 (a) to play a music instrument  
 (c) to go to watch a circus  
 (b) to make a destructive attack  
 (d) to go for hunting
118. Lead somebody to the altar  
 (a) to make somebody to learn games  
 (c) to arrest somebody  
 (b) to marry somebody  
 (d) to pass judgement
119. The primrose path  
 (a) A modern market place  
 (c) the right of self determination  
 (b) the pursuit of pleasure  
 (d) process using high technology
120. Odds & ends  
 (a) Quarrelsome persons  
 (c) miscellaneous things  
 (b) various intentions  
 (d) nonsense
121. To kick the bucket  
 (a) to start an account  
 (c) to die  
 (b) to start a serious journey  
 (d) to start agricultural activity
122. To champ at the bit  
 (a) to be careless in making preparations  
 (c) to be restlessly impatient  
 (b) to show off  
 (d) to win in a tournament
123. With a flea in one's ear  
 (a) to know secrets  
 (c) to be rebuked  
 (b) to have severe headache  
 (d) to flatter someone
124. Pie in the sky  
 (a) beautiful surroundings  
 (c) rainy season  
 (b) event unlikely to happen  
 (d) foreign traditions  
*(NDA 2006)*
125. On the blink  
 (a) apologetically  
 (c) legally  
 (b) blindly  
 (d) not in working order

126. Forty winks  
(a) a person beyond 40 years  
(c) ordeals of life  
(b) a studious person  
(d) a short nap
127. The worse for wear  
(a) worrisome  
(c) hostile  
(b) financially poor  
(d) shabby from use
128. To brow beat  
(a) to bully  
(c) to give a hint  
(b) to chase  
(d) to revive old friendship
129. Come a cropper  
(a) to come as a surprise  
(c) to get injured  
(b) to fail  
(d) to get unexpected success
130. The lie of the land  
(a) protection of environment  
(c) assessment of a situation  
(b) spirit of adventure  
(d) mountaineering
131. An eager beaver  
(a) an enthusiastic person  
(c) a rich person  
(b) fond of travelling  
(d) a successful politician
132. Plain as pike staff  
(a) polished surface  
(c) extremely poor  
(b) extremely honest  
(d) very obvious
133. In tatters  
(a) in prison  
(c) ruined  
(b) under mortgage  
(d) under confusion
134. At a rate of knots  
(a) very rapidly  
(c) technology savvy  
(b) sluggishly  
(d) highly opinionated
135. Raise somebody's hackle  
(a) to praise somebody  
(c) to flatter somebody  
(b) to deceive somebody  
(d) to make somebody angry
136. Beneath contempt  
(a) guilt  
(c) animosity  
(b) completely unworthy of respect  
(d) under wraps
137. In the fullness of time  
(a) by sheer hard work  
(c) night of full moon  
(b) at leisure  
(d) at the appropriate time (CDS 2007)
138. A bread and butter letter  
(a) a contract termination letter  
(c) a request to get donation  
(b) a letter to thank a host  
(d) an appointment letter
139. Cloak and dagger  
(a) involving intrigue  
(c) family feud  
(b) to become very weak  
(d) fond of hunting
140. A fair crack of the whip  
(a) to go for a morning walk  
(c) to get unexpected success  
(b) to get a fair chance  
(d) to be routed

- 141.** Take up the cudgels  
(a) to support somebody  
(c) to go on a holiday  
(b) to start a new business  
(d) to relax
- 142.** As the crow flies  
(a) to wander in jungles  
(c) to protect environment  
(b) in a straight line  
(d) to travel to a foreign land
- 143.** Chew the cud  
(a) Chew grass  
(c) Chew something  
(b) think over  
(d) get into trouble
- 144.** On the anvil  
(a) an instrument  
(c) depend on  
(b) in the making  
(d) equal to
- 145.** Off the cuff  
(a) The aid of a sleeve  
(c) speak without preparation  
(b) take off the cuff  
(d) without cuff links



# Review Exercise

**Directions :** Some of the following sentences are grammatically correct and some are incorrect. Find out which part of the sentence has an error and mark that part. If there is no error mark that part as your answer.

1. Continuous drizzle in the city kept the people indoors today No error  
 a b c d e
2. For a long time I did not know who was sitting besides me because  
it was very dark. No error  
 a b c d e
3. The professor tried his very best to bring home on the students the  
need for hard work. No error  
 a b c d e
4. She has been practicing medical profession for a long time but is yet to attain  
perfection. No error  
 a b c d e
5. My friends insisted that I should see the movie from beginning to the end.  
No error  
 a b c d e
6. Irregardless of what people say, I must repeat that these are the facts concerning  
the requirements for the position. No error  
 a b c d e
7. A nationwide survey has brought up an interesting finding  
regarding infant mortality-rate in India. No error  
 a b c d e
8. Several prominent figures, involved in the scandal are required to appear  
to the investigation committee. No error  
 a b c d e
9. It is wrong on your part to call into question the integrity of your elder brother  
No error  
 a b c d e
10. You are never practical and your suggestions hold no water  
because they are not convincing. No error  
 a b c d e





27. For safe travel you are advised not to get down from the moving bus. No error  
a b c d
28. It is evening and please open the light. No error  
a b c d
29. On the eve of independence the Congress party leaders pledged to wipe out tears  
from every eye. No error  
a b c d
30. Shruti was accused of sitting at the fence by her husband when he was in trou-  
ble. No error  
a b c d
31. The university has invited alumnus to the annual functions. No error  
a b c d
32. The Government is likely to announce an interim measures to check the  
inflation. No error  
a b c d
33. He introduced his fiance to the guests present at the banquet. No error  
a b c d
34. Everybody was attracted to literatur present in the audience last night.  
No error  
a b c d
35. She is working as a couturier in the boutique. No error  
a b c d
36. She has fallen off with the boy she wanted to marry. No error  
a b c d
37. Even after taking tuition my daughter is not at the home in Physics. No error  
a b c d
38. Even though our team took the field, the opposition made them  
eat the humble pie. No error  
a b c d
39. The student turned the deaf ear to the advice of his teacher. No error  
a b c d
40. Though he is working hard, his success is out of question. No error  
a b c d

# ANSWERS

## UNIT-V

### 14. Phrasal Verbs

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#### Work Book Exercise (A)

1. (b) 2. (b) 3. (c) 4. (c) 5. (c) 6. (b) 7. (b) 8. (c) 9. (c) 10. (b)  
11. (b) 12. (c) 13. (b) 14. (b) 15. (a) 16. (b) 17. (c) 18. (c) 19. (b) 20. (b)  
21. (a) 22. (b) 23. (c) 24. (a) 25. (a)

#### Work book exercise (B)

1. (b) 2. (b) 3. (b) 4. (c) 5. (c) 6. (b) 7. (a) 8. (a) 9. (c) 10. (c)  
11. (b) 12. (a) 13. (c) 14. (c) 15. (b) 16. (b) 17. (b) 18. (a) 19. (c) 20. (b)  
21. (c) 22. (a) 23. (c) 24. (b) 25. (a)

### 15. Idioms and Phrases

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#### Work Book Exercise (A)

1. (d) 2. (a) 3. (c) 4. (b) 5. (b) 6. (a) 7. (b) 8. (a) 9. (d) 10. (c)  
11. (b) 12. (c) 13. (a) 14. (b) 15. (c) 16. (b) 17. (b) 18. (d) 19. (b) 20. (a)  
21. (b) 22. (d) 23. (b) 24. (c) 25. (c)

#### Work Book Exercise (B)

1. (a) 2. (a) 3. (b) 4. (c) 5. (b) 6. (c) 7. (a) 8. (c) 9. (d) 10. (a)  
11. (b) 12. (a) 13. (b) 14. (c) 15. (d) 16. (b) 17. (b) 18. (c) 19. (b) 20. (c)  
21. (d) 22. (a) 23. (c) 24. (c) 25. (a)

#### Work Book Exercise (C)

1. (d) 2. (b) 3. (a) 4. (d) 5. (c) 6. (d) 7. (c) 8. (c) 9. (a) 10. (c)  
11. (a) 12. (c) 13. (c) 14. (c) 15. (c) 16. (c) 17. (a) 18. (c) 19. (a) 20. (d)  
21. (d) 22. (a) 23. (c) 24. (a) 25. (b)

#### Work Book Exercise (D)

1. (b) 2. (c) 3. (b) 4. (d) 5. (d) 6. (d) 7. (c) 8. (d) 9. (d) 10. (b)  
11. (b) 12. (b) 13. (b) 14. (c) 15. (c) 16. (d) 17. (d) 18. (c) 19. (c) 20. (b)  
21. (c) 22. (c) 23. (c) 24. (c) 25. (b)

## Work Book Exercise (E)

1. (c) 2. (a) 3. (d) 4. (c) 5. (a) 6. (c) 7. (c) 8. (a) 9. (a) 10. (a)  
 11. (a) 12. (c) 13. (b) 14. (b) 15. (c) 16. (c) 17. (a) 18. (c) 19. (a) 20. (b)  
 21. (d) 22. (d) 23. (d) 24. (c) 25. (c)

## Work Book Exercise (F)

1. (a) 2. (c) 3. (c) 4. (b) 5. (a) 6. (d) 7. (a) 8. (a) 9. (a) 10. (b)  
 11. (d) 12. (a) 13. (a) 14. (b) 15. (a) 16. (a) 17. (a) 18. (c) 19. (a) 20. (d)  
 21. (b) 22. (b) 23. (d) 24. (a) 25. (b) 26. (a) 27. (d) 28. (a) 29. (a) 30. (b)  
 31. (b) 32. (b) 33. (a) 34. (a) 35. (a) 36. (c) 37. (a) 38. (a) 39. (d) 40. (c)  
 41. (d) 42. (a) 43. (a) 44. (b) 45. (c) 46. (b) 47. (c) 48. (a) 49. (a) 50. (b)  
 51. (d) 52. (c) 53. (a) 54. (a) 55. (b) 56. (b) 57. (c) 58. (a) 59. (c) 60. (b)  
 61. (b) 62. (d) 63. (c) 64. (c) 65. (c) 66. (d) 67. (d) 68. (b) 69. (c) 70. (a)  
 71. (a) 72. (d) 73. (c) 74. (b) 75. (a) 76. (d) 77. (b) 78. (c) 79. (c) 80. (c)  
 81. (c) 82. (c) 83. (d) 84. (c) 85. (a) 86. (b) 87. (b) 88. (b) 89. (d) 90. (a)  
 91. (d) 92. (b) 93. (b) 94. (a) 95. (b) 96. (a) 97. (a) 98. (a) 99. (b) 100. (a)  
 101. (a) 102. (b) 103. (d) 104. (c) 105. (b) 106. (a) 107. (c) 108. (d) 109. (d) 110. (a)  
 111. (a) 112. (a) 113. (a) 114. (d) 115. (b) 116. (c) 117. (b) 118. (b) 119. (b) 120. (c)  
 121. (c) 122. (c) 123. (c) 124. (b) 125. (d) 126. (d) 127. (d) 128. (a) 129. (b) 130. (c)  
 131. (a) 132. (d) 133. (c) 134. (b) 135. (d) 136. (b) 137. (d) 138. (d) 139. (a) 140. (b)  
 141. (a) 142. (b) 143. (b) 144. (b) 145. (c)

## Review Exercise

1. (a) 'continual' for 'continuous'  
 3. (b) 'bring home to' is correct expression  
 5. (d) Say 'from beginning to end'  
 7. (b) Say 'bring out'  
 9. (b) Say 'call in question'  
 11. (b) Say 'both his hands'  
 13. (a) Say 'hold on'  
 15. (b) Say 'carry on'  
 17. (a) Say 'call at'  
 19. (b) Say 'put up with'  
 21. (d) No error  
 23. (b) Delete 'up'  
 25. (b) Say 'made of' for 'made up with'  
 27. (c) Delete 'from'  
 29. (c) Say 'wipe away'  
 31. (c) Use 'alumni' for 'alumnus'  
 33. (b) Say 'fiancee' for 'fiance'  
 35. (b) Say 'couturiere' for 'couturier'  
 37. (b) Say 'at home'  
 39. (b) Say 'turned deaf ear'  
 2. (c) Use 'beside'  
 4. (a) Use 'practise'  
 6. (a) Say 'regardless'  
 8. (d) Say before for 'to'  
 10. (c) Say 'do not hold water'  
 12. (c) Say 'are not always'  
 14. (b) Say 'kept on'  
 16. (c) Delete 'on'  
 18. (a) Say 'come of'  
 20. (c) Say 'laid up with'  
 22. (c) Say 'look up' for 'see'  
 24. (c) Say 'take off'  
 26. (b) Delete 'away'  
 28. (b) Say 'switch on/turn on' for 'open'  
 30. (b) Say 'on the fence'  
 32. (c) Say 'measure for measures'  
 34. (b) Say 'literati' for 'literatur'  
 36. (a) Say 'fallen out'  
 38. (c) Say 'eat humble pie'  
 40. (c) Say 'out of the question'