

Some common English idioms

A shared conceptual category

colours	verbs / nouns	body parts	animals	nature
<i>black and blue</i>	<i>bark ... worse than ...</i>	<i>cost an arm and a leg</i>	<i>bear / bull market</i>	<i>black hole</i>
<i>black and white</i>	<i>bite</i>	<i>play by ear</i>	<i>bear with a sore head</i>	<i>blizzard of paperwork</i>
<i>black looks</i>	<i>big bang</i>	<i>elbow in</i>	<i>beaver away</i>	<i>a breeze</i>
<i>black market</i>	<i>bite off more than you can chew</i>	<i>keep an eye on</i>	<i>eager beaver</i>	<i>the cliff edge</i>
<i>black out</i>	<i>bite the bullet</i>	<i>see eye to eye</i>	<i>let the cat out of the bag</i>	<i>an Everest to climb</i>
<i>to be in the black</i>	<i>bite your tongue</i>	<i>give your eye teeth for</i>	<i>headless chicken</i>	<i>flood of applications</i>
<i>blue movies</i>	<i>buy the farm</i>	<i>a finger in many pies</i>	<i>chicken livered</i>	<i>fog of confusion</i>
<i>browned off</i>	<i>catch / get a name</i>	<i>make a fist of</i>	<i>cow eyes</i>	<i>forest of legs</i>
<i>be green with envy</i>	<i>catch a programme</i>	<i>best foot forward</i>	<i>a milch cow</i>	<i>gale of laughter</i>
<i>green politics</i>	<i>catch (+ transport)</i>	<i>foot the bill</i>	<i>crocodile tears</i>	<i>light years away</i>
<i>give the green light</i>	<i>catch it</i>	<i>footloose and fancy free</i>	<i>crow about</i>	<i>lightning quick</i>
<i>have green fingers</i>	<i>catch someone</i>	<i>face the music</i>	<i>dog tired</i>	<i>mists of time</i>
<i>men in grey suits</i>	<i>there's a catch</i>	<i>face to face</i>	<i>let sleeping dogs lie</i>	<i>mountain of work</i>
<i>in the pink</i>	<i>go the extra mile</i>	<i>get in someone's face</i>	<i>do the donkey work</i>	<i>ocean of tears</i>
<i>purple prose</i>	<i>grab a quick bite</i>	<i>face up to</i>	<i>elephant in the room</i>	<i>quantum leap</i>
<i>a red-letter day</i>	<i>kick into the long grass</i>	<i>put your foot in it</i>	<i>ferret around</i>	<i>ripple of applause</i>
<i>catch red handed</i>	<i>like it or lump it</i>	<i>have / get cold feet</i>	<i>a fish out of water</i>	<i>river of demonstrators</i>
<i>red blooded</i>	<i>make the grade</i>	<i>a head start</i>	<i>a cold fish</i>	<i>sea of troubles</i>
<i>red carpet</i>	<i>nuclear option</i>	<i>put your head in the sand</i>	<i>a fly on the wall</i>	<i>storm of protest</i>
<i>see red</i>	<i>open your heart</i>	<i>let your hair down</i>	<i>a fly in the ointment</i>	<i>stream of invective</i>
<i>red tape</i>	<i>open and shut</i>	<i>head for home</i>	<i>wouldn't hurt a fly</i>	<i>thunderous footsteps</i>
<i>to be in the red</i>	<i>pay the piper</i>	<i>head in the clouds</i>	<i>get someone's goat</i>	<i>vale of tears</i>
<i>scarlet woman</i>	<i>raise Cain</i>	<i>head over heels</i>	<i>a wild goose chase</i>	<i>wave of protest</i>
<i>yellow bellied</i>	<i>run it up the flagpole</i>	<i>dig your heels in</i>	<i>hare around</i>	<i>wet behind the ears</i>
	<i>run a risk</i>	<i>over my head</i>	<i>flog a dead horse</i>	<i>wet blanket</i>
	<i>throw a party</i>	<i>be neck and neck</i>	<i>back the wrong horse</i>	
	<i>throw a fit</i>	<i>bend the knee</i>	<i>up with the lark</i>	
	<i>throw a wobbly</i>	<i>have a knees up</i>	<i>the lion's share</i>	
	<i>throw in the towel / sponge</i>	<i>put your nose in shoulder</i>	<i>lounge lizard</i>	
	<i>throw someone</i>	<i>responsibility</i>	<i>pig out</i>	
	<i>throw the toys out of the pram</i>	<i>by the skin of your teeth</i>	<i>rabbit in the headlights</i>	
	<i>throw your hat in the ring</i>	<i>have a sweet tooth</i>	<i>smell a rat</i>	
		<i>get your teeth into something</i>	<i>rat on</i>	
		<i>tooth and nail</i>	<i>snake in the grass</i>	
		<i>toe the line</i>	<i>squirrel away</i>	
			<i>pearls before swine</i>	
			<i>keep the wolf from the door</i>	
			<i>a wolf in sheep's clothing</i>	
			<i>worm your way in</i>	

A shared source

sports and leisure	warfare	commerce	seafaring
<i>the ball is in your court</i> <i>off his own bat</i> <i>be blinkered</i> <i>push the boat out</i> <i>paddle your own canoe</i> <i>mark someone's card</i> <i>jump the gun</i> <i>be for the high jump</i> <i>jump through hoops</i> <i>hold your horses</i> <i>a marathon not a sprint</i> <i>to give a free rein</i> <i>to keep on a tight rein</i> <i>a front runner</i> <i>be in the saddle</i> <i>shoot your mouth off</i> <i>call the shots</i> <i>skate around the problem</i> <i>snookered</i> <i>to spur on</i> <i>the home stretch</i> <i>a sticky wicket</i> <i>down to the wire</i>	<i>attack a problem</i> <i>bombard with questions</i> <i>have a blitz</i> <i>damage limitation</i> <i>dig in</i> <i>pull up the drawbridge</i> <i>wave a white flag</i> <i>the big guns</i> <i>to steal a march</i> <i>get your head over the parapet</i> <i>take no prisoners</i> <i>rank and file</i> <i>beat a retreat</i> <i>scattershot</i> <i>lay siege to</i> <i>snipe</i> <i>go over the top</i> <i>torpedo an idea</i> <i>circle the wagons</i> <i>a war of nerves</i> <i>a war of words</i> <i>to be in the wars</i>	<i>a blank cheque</i> <i>the bottom line</i> <i>break the bank</i> <i>close a deal</i> <i>corner the market</i> <i>do the business</i> <i>get down to business</i> <i>have a monopoly</i> <i>insider information</i> <i>open an account</i> <i>pay dividends</i> <i>return with interest</i> <i>rig the market</i> <i>sell short</i> <i>sign on the dotted line</i>	<i>be taken aback</i> <i>batten down the hatches</i> <i>brass monkeys</i> <i>a broadside</i> <i>choppy water</i> <i>clear the decks</i> <i>all hands on deck</i> <i>fly the flag</i> <i>hull up</i> <i>hit a rock / reef</i> <i>keep a lookout</i> <i>ride out a storm</i> <i>know / learn the ropes</i> <i>sail before the wind</i> <i>set sail</i> <i>a shot across the bows</i> <i>show your true colours</i> <i>smooth sailing</i> <i>get a head of steam</i> <i>swing the lead</i> <i>toe the line</i> <i>in the wake of</i>

A shared function

describing personality	complimenting	complaining
<i>a pain in the neck</i> <i>a dark horse</i> <i>a bright spark</i> <i>a wet blanket</i> <i>a rough diamond</i> <i>the life and soul</i> <i>a wallflower</i> <i>a shrinking violet</i>	<i>She's a diamond</i> <i>You're a trooper</i> <i>You're a brick</i> <i>He's a class act</i> <i>It's worth an Oscar</i> <i>Take a bow</i> <i>You've saved my life</i> <i>You're a star</i>	<i>breathe down someone's neck</i> <i>Pull your weight</i> <i>Get off my back</i> <i>pay through the nose</i> <i>argue the toss</i> <i>have a bone to pick</i> <i>make a mountain out of a molehill</i> <i>a backseat driver</i>

Similes

<i>as blind as a bat</i> <i>as black as night</i> <i>as cheap as chips</i> <i>as clean as a whistle</i> <i>as cool as a cucumber</i> <i>as dead as a doornail</i>	<i>as deaf as a post</i> <i>as fit as a fiddle</i> <i>as flat as a pancake</i> <i>as free as a bird</i> <i>as fresh as a daisy</i> <i>as good as gold</i> <i>as hard as nails</i>	<i>as hard as (a) stone</i> <i>as keen as mustard</i> <i>as large as life</i> <i>as light as a feather</i> <i>as mad as a hatter</i>	<i>as old as the hills</i> <i>as plain as day</i> <i>as poor as a church mouse</i> <i>as quiet as a mouse</i> <i>as regular as clockwork</i> <i>as right as rain</i>	<i>as safe as houses</i> <i>as sharp as a knife</i> <i>as sick as a dog / cat</i> <i>as strong as an ox</i> <i>as stubborn as a mule</i> <i>as thin as a rake</i>
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Nouns	Verbs	Modified nouns
<i>ears like a bat</i> <i>eyes like a hawk</i> <i>a face like a brick wall</i> <i>a face like a torn balloon</i> <i>a face like thunder</i> <i>a grip like a vice</i> <i>a hand like a bunch of bananas</i> <i>a hand like a claw</i> <i>legs like tree trunks</i> <i>a look like thunder</i> <i>a mouth like a trap</i> <i>skin like a rhino</i> <i>a voice like a foghorn</i>	<i>cry like a baby</i> <i>drink like a fish</i> <i>eat like a bird</i> <i>eat like a horse</i> <i>fight like cat and dog</i> <i>fit like a glove</i> <i>go like lightning</i> <i>go like the wind</i> <i>run like clockwork</i> <i>sell like hot cakes</i> <i>sleep like a baby</i> <i>smoke like a chimney</i> <i>spin like a top</i> <i>stick out like a sore thumb</i> <i>work like a Trojan</i>	<i>be like a child in a sweet shop</i> <i>be like chalk and cheese</i> <i>be like a sight for sore eyes</i> <i>be like a dog in a manger</i> <i>be like a fish out of water</i> <i>be like a breath of fresh air</i> <i>be like a bull in a china shop</i> <i>be like a dog with two tails</i> <i>be like two peas in a pod</i> <i>be like a moth to a flame</i> <i>be like the cat that got the cream</i> <i>be like a headless chicken</i> <i>be like watching paint dry</i> <i>be like shooting fish in a barrel</i>

An undifferentiated list

<i>above and beyond</i> <i>above board</i> <i>accident of birth</i> <i>accident waiting to happen</i> <i>ace up one's sleeve</i> <i>ace in the hole</i> <i>Achilles' heel</i> <i>acid test</i> <i>add insult to injury</i> <i>albatross around one's neck</i> <i>alive and kicking</i> <i>all and sundry</i> <i>all bets are off</i> <i>all ears</i> <i>all hands on deck</i> <i>all over bar the shouting</i> <i>all the tea in china</i> <i>all thumbs</i> <i>an axe to grind</i> <i>an early bird</i> <i>an eye for an eye</i> <i>any port in a storm</i> <i>apple of one's eye</i> <i>arm and a leg</i> <i>armed to the teeth</i> <i>as fit as a fiddle</i> <i>as pale as a ghost</i> <i>as poor as a church mouse</i> <i>asleep at the wheel</i> <i>at the drop of a hat</i> <i>at the eleventh hour</i> <i>at the end of one's tether</i> <i>at one's wit's end</i> <i>back of beyond</i> <i>back to square one</i> <i>back to the drawing board</i> <i>bad apple</i>	<i>Freudian slip</i> <i>from pillar to post</i> <i>from scratch</i> <i>full of the joys of spring</i> <i>get a word in edgewise</i> <i>get carried away</i> <i>get off scot free</i> <i>get one's hands dirty</i> <i>get someone's goat</i> <i>get the ball rolling</i> <i>get the picture</i> <i>get the sack</i> <i>get to grips with</i> <i>get wind of</i> <i>give someone a piece of your mind</i> <i>give someone a run for their money</i> <i>give someone the cold shoulder</i> <i>give the green light</i> <i>go bananas</i> <i>go berserk</i> <i>go down in flames</i> <i>go off half-cocked</i> <i>go off the deep end</i> <i>go out on a limb</i> <i>go pear-shaped</i> <i>go the extra mile</i> <i>go to the dogs</i> <i>go viral</i> <i>go with the flow</i> <i>grasp at straws</i> <i>grasp the nettle</i> <i>grease the wheels</i> <i>grind one's teeth</i> <i>guilty pleasure</i> <i>guinea pig</i> <i>hair of the dog</i> <i>hands down</i>	<i>push the envelope</i> <i>pushing up the daisies</i> <i>put the cat among the pigeons</i> <i>put the cart before the horse</i> <i>put your foot down</i> <i>queer the pitch</i> <i>quick as a flash</i> <i>quick-and-dirty</i> <i>small beer</i> <i>quote unquote</i> <i>race against time</i> <i>rain cats and dogs</i> <i>raise the bar</i> <i>raise the roof</i> <i>rank and file</i> <i>read between the lines</i> <i>read the riot act</i> <i>red herring</i> <i>red tape</i> <i>reinvent the wheel</i> <i>right as rain</i> <i>right under one's nose</i> <i>right-hand man</i> <i>ring a bell</i> <i>rock bottom</i> <i>rock the boat</i> <i>rub something in</i> <i>rubber-stamp</i> <i>rule of thumb</i> <i>run out of steam</i> <i>sacred cow</i> <i>sandwich short of a picnic</i> <i>second wind</i> <i>see eye to eye</i> <i>sell like hotcakes</i> <i>set in stone</i> <i>set the Thames on fire</i>
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<p>ball in your court bag of tricks bang one's head against a brick wall bark up the wrong tree basket case batten down the hatches beat a dead horse beat around the bush bed of roses bee's knees behind the scenes behind the times bells and whistles best thing since sliced bread best of both worlds between a rock and a hard place between the devil and the deep blue sea between two stools beyond the pale bird brain bird's-eye view bite off more than you can chew bite the bullet bite the dust bitter pill to swallow black sheep blow hot and cold bolt from the blue bone dry break the ice brush / sweep something under the carpet bump in the road burn the candle at both ends burn the midnight oil bury the hatchet by the skin of one's teeth call a spade a spade call it a day call the shots carrot-and-stick carry the can Catch-22 caught red-handed champ at the bit chase rainbows cherry-pick chew the fat chickens coming home to roost child's play chink in someone's armour chip off the old block claim to fame clear the air</p>	<p>hanging by a thread have one's head in the clouds have a bone to pick with someone have a chip on one's shoulder have a lot on one's plate have a nose for have a whale of a time have an ace up one's sleeve have bigger fish to fry have egg on your face have one's cake and eat it have something in the bag have your say head and shoulders above head over heels head start hear on the grapevine heart and soul hell for leather hit a wall hit the ceiling hit the ground running hit the hay hit the nail on the head hit the road hit the roof hit the sack / hay hit the spot Hobson's choice hold one's peace hot on the heels of hot potato in a heartbeat in a jam in a nutshell in a rut in broad daylight in clover in hot water in one fell swoop in the blink of an eye in the dark in the driver's seat in the limelight / spotlight in the long run in the nick of time in the pipeline in the same boat in the works it's not rocket science itchy feet Jack of all trades join the club jump on the bandwagon jump ship jump the gun</p>	<p>sharp as a tack shoot the breeze shooting fish in a barrel show one's true colours sick and tired of sight for sore eyes silver bullet sink or swim sitting duck sitting pretty six of one, half a dozen of the other sleep like a baby slippery slope smell a rat smoking gun snake oil sore point sour grapes spick and span spill the beans spin a yarn square the circle stab in the dark stab someone in the back stand on one's own two feet stand one's ground steal someone's thunder stem the tide step up to the plate storm in a teacup strike a chord sweep under the carpet / rug swim against / with the tide sword of Damocles take a gander take a rain check take it easy take it or leave it take something with a pinch of salt take the biscuit take the bull by the horns take the edge off take the mickey / piss take the wind out of someone's sails take with a grain of salt take your medicine taste of your own medicine teach an old dog new tricks tear one's hair out ten / two a penny test the waters that ship has sailed there's no such thing as a free lunch thin on the ground think outside the box / envelope</p>
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<p>close, but no cigar cold shoulder come clean come hell or high water come rain or shine cool as a cucumber couch potato crocodile tears cry over spilt milk cry wolf cut corners cut the mustard dance to someone's tune dark horse dead as the dodo dead heat dead ringer devil's advocate dig one's heels in dime a dozen dodge a bullet dog in the manger double-edged sword down in the dumps drag one's feet draw a blank drive a hard bargain drive someone up the wall drop a line dry run dyed-in-the-wool eagle-eyed early bird eat humble pie eat your heart out elephant in the room eleventh hour every man and his dog every man for himself face the music fall prey to fat cat father figure feather in one's cap feather one's own nest fed up with fell off the back of a lorry fight fire with fire fight like cat and dog find your feet fish out of water flash in the pan fly in the ointment fly off the handle food for thought</p>	<p>jump through hoops just what the doctor ordered just the ticket keep a stiff upper lip keep an eye peeled keep it under your hat keep your powder dry kick it into the long grass kick the bucket kick the habit kill two birds with one stone kiss and make up kith and kin know something like the back of one's hand learn / know the ropes leave someone in the lurch let sleeping dogs lie let the cat out of the bag like ... (see similes, above) lion's share look a gift horse in the mouth lose the thread low-hanging fruit make a mountain out of a molehill make ends meet make one's mark meeting of the minds miss the boat move heaven and earth much of a muchness music to one's ears neck and neck nip something in the bud no rhyme or reason to nothing to write home about off the hook off your trolley / rocker once in a blue moon paddle one's own canoe pain in the neck par for the course pass the buck pass with flying colours pencil something in penny-pinching pie in the sky piece of cake pipe dream play it by ear pop your clogs pot calling the kettle black preaching to the choir pull someone's leg pull strings</p>	<p>through the grapevine through thick and thin throw a spanner in the works throw caution to the wind throw down the gauntlet throw in the towel / sponge throw out the baby with the bathwater thumb your nose at tight-lipped till the cows come home time is money tip of the iceberg toe the line tongue-in-cheek too many to shake a stick at touch base tread water turn a blind eye to turn the corner turn the tables twist the knife make a U-turn under / below the radar under someone's thumb under the weather until the cows come home until you're blue in the face up for grabs up in the air up to scratch upset the apple cart use one's head vicious circle virgin territory vote with one's feet waiting in the wings walk on eggshells water under the bridge wet behind the ears wet blanket what goes around comes around when the chips are down wild goose chase window dressing window shop witch hunt work one's fingers to the bone writing on the wall year in, year out you can't judge a book by its cover young at heart your guess is as good as mine yours truly zero in on something</p>
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Binomials joined with coordinators (*and* or *or*/*neither ... nor* etc.)

<p><i>above and beyond</i> <i>airs and graces</i> <i>alive and kicking</i> <i>all or nothing</i> <i>an arm and a leg</i> <i>apples and oranges</i> <i>assault and battery</i> <i>back and forth</i> <i>ball and chain</i> <i>beck and call</i> <i>beer and skittles</i> <i>bells and whistles</i> <i>for better or worse</i> <i>betwixt and between</i> <i>bits and bobs</i> <i>bow and arrow</i> <i>by and large</i> <i>cat and mouse</i> <i>the chicken or the egg</i> <i>cut and dried</i> <i>cut and run</i> <i>day or night</i> <i>dead and buried</i> <i>dead or alive</i> <i>divide and conquer</i> <i>do or die</i> <i>down and out</i> <i>each and every</i> <i>eyes and ears</i> <i>far and wide</i> <i>guys and girls</i> <i>horse and carriage</i> <i>intents and purposes</i> <i>kill or cure</i></p>	<p><i>kill or be killed</i> <i>knife and fork</i> <i>law and order</i> <i>love nor money</i> <i>lo and behold</i> <i>loud and clear</i> <i>make or break</i> <i>man and boy</i> <i>milk and honey</i> <i>more or less</i> <i>neat and tidy</i> <i>nip and tuck</i> <i>nook and cranny</i> <i>fast and loose</i> <i>fingers and thumbs</i> <i>fire and brimstone</i> <i>first and foremost</i> <i>forever and a day</i> <i>free and clear</i> <i>fight or flight</i> <i>(neither) fish nor fowl</i> <i>fun and games</i> <i>(come) hell or high water</i> <i>(neither) here nor there</i> <i>hit or miss</i> <i>hale and hearty</i> <i>hard and fast</i> <i>hearts and minds</i> <i>here and now</i> <i>high and dry</i> <i>high and low</i> <i>home and dry</i> <i>hope and pray</i> <i>nuts and bolts</i></p>	<p><i>odds and ends</i> <i>pure and simple</i> <i>pepper and salt (hair colour)</i> <i>rags to riches</i> <i>rain or shine</i> <i>research and development</i> <i>room and board</i> <i>sink or swim</i> <i>sooner or later</i> <i>take it or leave it</i> <i>salt and pepper (seasoning)</i> <i>seek and destroy</i> <i>short and / but sweet</i> <i>sick and tired</i> <i>slash and burn</i> <i>smash and grab</i> <i>snakes and ladders</i> <i>stand and deliver</i> <i>supply and demand</i> <i>sweetness and light</i> <i>tables and chairs</i> <i>tar and feather</i> <i>tea and crumpets</i> <i>thunder and lightning</i> <i>time after time</i> <i>to and fro</i> <i>toil and trouble</i> <i>tooth and nail</i> <i>touch and go</i> <i>trial and error</i> <i>up and about</i> <i>vim and vigour</i> <i>wait and see</i> <i>wine and roses</i></p>
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Reduplicated binomials

<p><i>again and again</i> <i>all in all</i> <i>around and around</i> <i>arm in arm</i> <i>back to back</i> <i>bit by bit</i> <i>bumper to bumper</i> <i>by and by</i> <i>cheek to cheek</i> <i>closer and closer</i> <i>coast to coast</i> <i>day to/ by day</i> <i>elbow to elbow</i> <i>end to end</i> <i>dog eat dog</i> <i>from ear to ear</i> <i>an eye for an eye</i></p>	<p><i>eye to eye</i> <i>face to face</i> <i>hand in hand</i> <i>head to head</i> <i>heart to heart</i> <i>higher and higher</i> <i>horror of horrors</i> <i>less and less</i> <i>little by little</i> <i>lower and lower</i> <i>man to man</i> <i>more and more</i> <i>mouth to mouth</i> <i>neck and neck</i> <i>never say never</i> <i>nose to nose</i> <i>on and on</i></p>	<p><i>one by one</i> <i>out and out</i> <i>over and over</i> <i>round and round</i> <i>shoulder to shoulder</i> <i>side to side</i> <i>step by step</i> <i>strength to strength</i> <i>through and through</i> <i>time after time</i> <i>(from) time to time</i> <i>two by two</i> <i>toe to toe</i> <i>up and up</i> <i>wall to wall</i> <i>for weeks and weeks</i> <i>woman to woman</i></p>
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Binomials with rhymes or similar sounds

<i>belt and braces</i>	<i>hire and fire</i>	<i>out and about</i>
<i>box and cox</i>	<i>hither and thither</i>	<i>pell-mell</i>
<i>chalk and talk</i>	<i>hocus-pocus</i>	<i>ping-pong</i>
<i>chit-chat</i>	<i>hodgepodge</i>	<i>pitter-patter</i>
<i>claptrap</i>	<i>hoity-toity</i>	<i>razzle-dazzle</i>
<i>dilly-dally</i>	<i>horses for courses</i>	<i>riff-raff</i>
<i>ding-dong</i>	<i>hubble-bubble</i>	<i>roly-poly</i>
<i>double trouble</i>	<i>huff and puff</i>	<i>shillyshally</i>
<i>even Stevens</i>	<i>hurly-burly</i>	<i>time and tide</i>
<i>fender-bender</i>	<i>hustle and bustle</i>	<i>tip-top</i>
<i>fiddle-faddle</i>	<i>meet and greet</i>	<i>tittle-tattle</i>
<i>flim-flam</i>	<i>mish-mash</i>	<i>town and gown</i>
<i>flip-flop</i>	<i>namby-pamby</i>	<i>use it or lose it</i>
<i>hanky-panky</i>	<i>name and shame</i>	<i>wear and tear</i>
<i>harum-scarum</i>	<i>near and dear</i>	<i>willy-nilly</i>
<i>helter-skelter</i>	<i>knickknacks</i>	<i>wine and dine</i>
† <i>higgledy-piggledy</i>	<i>nitty-gritty</i>	<i>wishy-washy</i>
<i>high and dry</i>	<i>odds and sods</i>	<i>yea or nay</i>

† there is disagreement about the spelling of this item so we may see, *higgelty-piggelty*, *higgeldy-piggeldy* as well.

Hyphenation is also variable and idiosyncratic with some items so we also see *flimflam*, *shilly-shally*, *mishmash*, *chitchat*, *knick-knacks*, *dingdong* etc.

trinomials

<i>beg, borrow or steal</i>	<i>hook, line and sinker</i>	<i>reading, writing and arithmetic</i>
<i>blood, sweat and tears</i>	<i>hop, skip and jump</i>	<i>red, white and blue</i>
<i>cool, calm and collected</i>	<i>judge, jury and executioner</i>	<i>sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll</i>
<i>eat, drink and be merry</i>	<i>left, right and centre</i>	<i>tall, dark and handsome</i>
<i>ear, nose and throat</i>	<i>lights, music, action</i>	<i>Tom, Dick and / or Harry</i>
<i>gold, silver and bronze</i>	<i>lock, stock and barrel</i>	<i>shake, rattle and roll</i>
<i>guns, germs and steel</i>	<i>nasty, brutish and short</i>	<i>this, that and the other</i>
<i>healthy, wealthy and wise</i>	<i>planes, trains and automobiles</i>	<i>way, shape or form</i>
<i>here, there and everywhere</i>	<i>ready, willing and able</i>	<i>win, lose or draw</i>

Comma use is shown here without the Oxford comma (after *and*) as above but that is often inserted.