

Clichés! Trite maybe to the most discerning reader but eminently usable for EFL learners like us!

A

a chip off the old block
a clean slate
a dark and stormy night
a far cry
a fine kettle of fish
a good/kind soul
a loose cannon
a pain in the neck/butt
a penny saved is a penny earned
a tough row to hoe
a word to the wise
ace in the hole
ace up his sleeve
add insult to injury
afraid of his own shadow
against all odds
air your dirty laundry
all fun and games
all in a day's work
all talk, no action
all thumbs
all your eggs in one basket
all's fair in love and war
all's well that ends well

almighty dollar
American as apple pie
an axe to grind
another day, another dollar
armed to the teeth
as luck would have it
as old as time
as the crow flies
at my wits end
avoid like the plague

B

babe in the woods
back against the wall
back in the saddle
back to square one
back to the drawing board
bad to the bone
badge of honor
bald faced liar
banging your head against a brick wall
ballpark figure
baptism by fire
bark is worse than her bite
barking up the wrong tree
bat out of hell

be all and end all	bite the bullet
beat a dead horse	bite the dust
beat around the bush	bit the hand that feeds you
bee in her bonnet	bitten off more than he can chew
been there, done that	black as coal
beggars can't be choosers	black as pitch
behind the eight ball	black as the ace of spades
bend over backwards	blast from the past
benefit of the doubt	bleeding heart
bent out of shape	blessing in disguise
best thing since sliced bread	blind ambition
bet your bottom dollar	blind as a bat
better half	blind leading the blind
better late than never	blood is thicker than water
better mousetrap	blood sweat and tears
better safe than sorry	blow off steam
between a rock and a hard place	blow your own horn
beyond the pale	blushing bride
bide your time	boils down to
big as life	bone to pick
big fish in a small pond	bored to tears
big cheese	bored stiff
big man on campus	bottomless pit
bigger they are the harder they fall	boys will be boys
bird in the hand	bright and early
birds and the bees	brings home the bacon
bird's eye view	broad across the beam
birds of a feather flock together	broken record

bull by the horns	cock and bull story
bull in a china shop	cold shoulder
burn the midnight oil	come hell or high water
burning the candle at both ends	cost a king's ransom
burning question	cost/paid an arm and a leg
burst your bubble	count your blessings
bury the hatchet	crack of dawn
busy as a bee	crash course
by hook or by crook	creature comforts
C	cross that bridge when you come to it
call a spade a spade	cry her eyes out
called onto the carpet	cry like a baby
calm before the storm	cry me a river
can of worms	crystal clear
can't cut the mustard	curiosity killed the cat
can't hold a candle to	cut and dried
case of mistaken identity	cut through the red tape
cat got your tongue	cut to the chase
caught in the crossfire	cute as a bugs ear
caught red-handed	cute as a button
caught with his/her pants down	cute as a puppy
checkered past	cuts to the quick
chip on his/her shoulder	D
chomping at the bit	dark before the dawn
cleanliness is next to godliness	day in, day out
clear as a bell	dead as a doornail
clear as mud	devil is in the details
close to the vest	dime a dozen

fish out of water	get his/her back up
fishing for a compliment	get the lead out
fit as a fiddle	get to the bottom of
fit the bill	get your feet wet
fit to be tied	gets my goat
flat as a pancake	gilding the lily
flip your lid	give and take
flog a dead horse	go against the grain
fly by night	go for broke
fly the coop	go him one better
follow your heart	go the extra mile
for all intents and purposes	go with the flow
for the birds	goes without saying
for what it's worth	good as gold
force of nature	good deed for the day
force to be reckoned with	good things come to those who wait
forgive and forget	good time was had by all
fox in the henhouse	greek to me
free and easy	green thumb
free as a bird	green-eyed monster
fresh as a daisy	growing like a weed
full steam ahead	grist for the mill
fun in the sun	H
G	hair of the dog
garbage in, garbage out	hand to mouth
get a kick out of	happy as a clam
get a leg up	hasn't a clue
get down and dirty	have a nice day

have high hopes	in a pinch
haven't got a row to hoe	in a word
have the last laugh	in his/her element
head honcho	in hot water
hear a pin drop	in over his/her head
heard it through the grapevine	in the gutter
heart's content	in the nick of time
hem and haw	in the thick of it
high and dry	in this day and age
high and mighty	in your dreams
high as a kite	it ain't over till the fat lady sings
hit paydirt	it goes without saying
hold your horses	it's a small world
hold your tongue	it's only a matter of time
hold your head up high	it takes all kinds
hold your own	it takes one to know one
honest as the day is long	ivory tower
horse of a different color	J
hot under the collar	Jack of all trades
I	jockey for position
I beg to differ	jog your memory
icing on the cake	Johnny-come-lately
if the shoe fits	joined at the hip
if the shoe were on the other foot	judge a book by its cover
in a jam	jump down your throat
in a jiffy	jump in with both feet
in a nutshell	jump on the bandwagon
in a pig's eye	jump the gun

jump to conclusions

just a hop, skip, and a jump

just the ticket

justice is blind

K

keep a stiff upper lip

keep an eye on

keep it simple, stupid

keep the home fires burning

keep up with the Joneses

keep your chin up

keep your fingers crossed

kick the bucket

kick up your heels

kick your feet up

kid in a candy store

kill two birds with one stone

kick his lights out

kick the bucket

kiss of death

knock his block off

knock it out of the park

knock on wood

knock your socks off

know him from Adam

know the ropes

know the score

knuckle down

knuckle sandwich

knuckle under

Cliche List L-Z:

L

labor of love

land on your feet

lap of luxury

last but not least

last-ditch effort

last hurrah

law of the jungle

law of the land

lay down the law

leaps and bounds

let sleeping dogs lie

letter perfect

let the cat out of the bag

let the good times roll

let your hair down

let's talk turkey

lick your wounds

lies like a rug

life's a bitch

life's a grind

light at the end of the tunnel

lighter than a feather

lighter than air

like clockwork

like father like son	man of few words
like taking candy from a baby	man's best friend
like there's no tomorrow	mark my words
lion's share	missed the boat on that one
live and learn	moment in the sun
live and let live	moment of glory
long and short of it	moment of truth
long lost love	money to burn
look before you leap	more power to you
look down your nose	more than one way to skin a cat
look what the cat dragged in	movers and shakers
looks like death warmed over	N
loose cannon	naked as a jaybird
lose your head	naked truth
lose your temper	neat as a pin
loud as a horn	needless to say
lounge lizard	neither here nor there
loved and lost	never look back
low man on the totem pole	never say never
luck of the draw	nip and tuck
luck of the Irish	nip it in the bud
M	no guts, no glory
make hay while the sun shines	no love lost
make money hand over fist	no pain, no gain
make my day	no skin off my back
make the best of a bad situation	no stone unturned
make the best of it	no time like the present
make your blood boil	no use crying over spilled milk

nose to the grindstone
not a hope in hell
not a minute's peace
not playing with a full deck
not the end of the world
not in my backyard
not written in stone
nothing to sneeze at
nothing ventured nothing gained
now we're cooking

O

off the top of my head
off the wagon
off the wall
older and wiser
older than dirt
older than Methuselah
old hat
on a roll
on cloud nine
on his/her high horse
on pins and needles
on the bandwagon
on the money
on the nose
on the rocks
on the spot
on the tip of my tongue

on the wagon
on thin ice
once bitten, twice shy
one bad apple doesn't spoil the bushel
one born every minute
one brick short
one foot in the grave
one in a million
one red cent
only game in town
open a can of worms
open the flood gates
opportunity doesn't knock twice
over the hump
out of pocket
out of sight, out of mind
out of the frying pan into the fire
out of the woods
out on a limb
over a barrel

P

pain and suffering
panic button
par for the course
part and parcel
party pooper
pass the buck
patience is a virtue

pay through the nose	
penny pincher	quick as a bunny
perfect storm	quick as a lick
pig in a poke	quick as a wink
pile it on	quick as lightning
pillar of the community	quiet as a dormouse
pin your hopes on	
pitter patter of little feet	rags to riches
plain as day	raining buckets
plain as the nose on your face	raining cats and dogs
play by the rules	rank and file
play your cards right	reap what you sow
playing the field	red as a beet
playing with fire	red herring
pleased as punch	reinvent the wheel
plenty of fish in the sea	rich and famous
poor as a church mouse	rings a bell
pot calling the kettle black	ripped me off
pull a fast one	rise and shine
pull your punches	road to hell is paved with good intentions
pulled the wool over his/her eyes	rob Peter to pay Paul
pulling your leg	roll over in the grave
pure as the driven snow	rub the wrong way
put one over on you	running in circles
put the pedal to the metal	
put the cart before the horse	salt of the earth
put your best foot forward	scared out of his/her wits
put your foot down	scared stiff

scared to death	spilled the beans
sealed with a kiss	spinning your wheels
second to none	spitting image of
see eye to eye	spoke with relish
seen the light	spring to life
seize the day	stands out like a sore thumb
set the record straight	squeaky wheel gets the grease
set your teeth on edge	start from scratch
sharp as a tack	stick in the mud
shoot the breeze	still waters run deep
shoot for the moon	stitch in time
shot in the dark	stop and smell the roses
shoulder to the wheel	straw that broke the camel's back
sick as a dog	strong as an ox
sigh of relief	stubborn as a mule
signed, sealed, and delivered	stuff that dreams are made of
sink or swim	stuffed shirt
six of one, half a dozen of another	sweating blood
skating on thin ice	sweating bullets
slept like a log	T
slinging mud	take a load off
slippery as an eel	take one for the team
slow as molasses in January	take the bait
smooth as a baby's bottom	take the bull by the horns
snug as a bug in a rug	take the plunge
sow wild oats	takes one to know one
spare the rod, spoil the child	takes two to tango
speak of the devil	the more the merrier

the real deal	tough as nails
the real McCoy	trials and tribulations
the red carpet treatment	tried and true
the same old story	trip down memory lane
there is no accounting for taste	twist of fate
thick as a brick	two cents worth
thick as thieves	two peas in a pod
think outside of the box	U
third time's the charm	ugly as sin
this day and age	under his/her thumb
this hurts me worse than it hurts you	under the counter
this point in time	under the gun
three sheets to the wind	under the same roof
three strikes against him/her	until the cows come home
throw in the towel	unvarnished truth
tie one on	up his sleeve
tighter than a drum	up the creek
time and time again	up to his ears in trouble
time is of the essence	uphill battle
tip of the iceberg	upper crust
to each his own	upset the applecart
to the best of my knowledge	V
toe the line	V for victory
tongue-in-cheek	vain attempt
too good to be true	vain effort
too hot to handle	vanquish the enemy
too numerous to mention	vested interest
touch with a ten foot pole	

W

waiting for the other shoe to drop

wakeup call

warm welcome

watching the clock

watch your p's and q's

watch your tongue

water under the bridge

weather the storm

went belly up

wet behind the ears

weed them out

week of Sundays

what goes around comes around

what you see is what you get

when it rains, it pours

when push comes to shove

when the cat's away

when the going gets tough, the tough get going

white as a sheet

whole ball of wax

whole hog

whole nine yards

wild goose chase

will wonders never cease?

wisdom of the ages

wolf at the door

words fail me

work like a dog

world weary

worst nightmare

wrong side of the bed

Y

yanking your chain

yappy as a dog

years young

you are what you eat

you can run, but you can't hide

you only live once

young and foolish

young and vibrant

you're the boss