

# EDITORIAL WORDS

LEARNING ENGLISH & IMPROVING VOCABULARY

## PHRASE OF THE DAY (01-30JUN21)

1. **out of the blue** (phrase) - used to describe any event that happens unexpectedly (and there is no warning or time to prepare); unexpectedly, suddenly.  
**E.g.** Dominic Thiem loses lead and crashes out of French Open to Pablo Andújar. Thiem leads two sets to love... But then, **out of the blue** at 3-4 in the third set, he inexplicably (unexplainably) threw in four unforced errors in a row and lost his service game to love. The fourth seed and two-times Roland Garros finalist squandered (wasted) his two sets lead in its entirety as Pablo Andújar triumphed 4-6, 5-7, 6-3, 6-4, 6-4.
2. **close to home** (phrase) – affect someone directly, usually in a way that makes him/her feel embarrassed, uncomfortable or upset.  
**E.g.** The grand slams say Naomi Osaka’s decisions about press are ‘injurious’ to tennis. Perhaps they should look **closer to home**.
3. **go all out** (phrase) – use all your energy, effort, enthusiasm, strength, and/or resources to do something (successfully).  
**E.g.** China’s apparent demographic travails (problems) were narrated as an existential threat to the country’s economic and geopolitical future... Then came the suggestion from a high-profile former McKinsey consultant (Winston Mok) that the solution was to “**go all out on** pro-birth policies” by taking a “**carrot and stick**” approach,...
4. **get one’s hands on** (phrase) – get, obtain, acquire, procure, buy, purchase.  
**E.g.** Ever since they emerged from the shock of the pandemic recession last year, carmakers have been unable to **get their hands on** enough semiconductors to make cars to meet demand. Chips are not used just in computers – they are the brains behind a whole range of everyday devices and are integral in car production as vehicles do more and more of the thinking for drivers.
5. **see eye to eye** (phrase) – agree, concur, be in agreement, be of the same mind, be of the same opinion.  
**E.g.** Former US Vice President Mike Pence has said he isn’t sure that he and former President Donald Trump will ever **see “eye to eye”** over what happened on 6 January, when a mob of the president’s supporters stormed the Capitol in an effort to overturn the election.

### Note:

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6. **strike a blow against** (phrase) – to act against something; to oppose something; reject, resist, stand against.  
**E.g.** France, Germany, Italy, and Spain sign letter saying critical moment has been reached to **strike a blow against** tax avoidance. The EU's four biggest economies have raised the pressure for a landmark agreement to curb tax abuse by multinational companies to be reached at G7 meetings in London on Friday.
7. **slam/shut the door on** (phrase) – to refuse to consider/accept something (an idea, plan, solution, etc.); deny, reject, decline, spurn, dismiss (an idea/plan/solution).  
**E.g.** Like the crash of 2008, the pandemic has proved that economies characterised by these features are full of weaknesses. Worse still, in the period between these two events, these defects created seething (raging/furious) tensions that fed into the growth of a new rightwing politics, whose figureheads are now attempting to **slam the door on** globalisation and the movement of people, with apparently **blithe** disregard for both the human and economic consequences.
8. **off the hook** (phrase) – to free someone from an obligation; to release someone from a difficult situation; out of trouble, free, under no obligation.  
**E.g.** Critics said the G7 had let multinationals **off the hook** with a rate that failed to prevent tax havens undermining countries with higher tax rates, needed to pay for costs incurred during the pandemic.
9. **jump on the bandwagon** (phrase) – to suddenly join something (an activity) that has already become popular/successful (so that you can also get the benefits of it); to join the trend.  
**E.g.** There are plenty of politicians who are absolutely avid football fans with a long heritage of genuinely caring about the game, as well as the positive and negative aspects of our society that it reflects (yet crucially, does not create). Notably, these are the ones who don't actually **jump on every passing bandwagon**.

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10. **get one's act together** (phrase) – get organized yourself to do something effectively; recover/regain control of oneself, get a grip/hold on oneself.  
**E.g.** It sounds to European ears as if the new White House administration is hoping to set the clock back to a calmer, less combative epoch (time/era/period). In reality, Biden is coming to tell Europe to **get its act together** in the coming race for global supremacy with Beijing.
11. **take a dim view of** (phrase) - disapprove of, find unacceptable, be against, deplore, abhor/hate, frown on/dislike.  
**E.g.** Biden **takes a dim view of** Brexit, seeing it as a pointless sabotage (damage/disruption) of European unity. The White House preferred Britain as a pro-US voice wielding influence inside the EU.
12. **chalk and cheese** (phrase) – when you say that two people are like 'chalk and cheese', you are suggesting that the two are very different from each other; they have nothing in common.  
**E.g.** The US president believes in global cooperation. Britain's prime minister has always pushed in the opposite direction. They're **chalk and cheese**, but that need not matter. Opposites can connect, especially when it suits their mutual self-interest.
13. **lay waste to** (phrase) – destroy, devastate, wipe out, demolish, ravage, wreck completely.  
**E.g.** For the second time in eight months, Rafael Nadal welcomed his greatest rival into his Parisian lair (i.e. Paris den). In last year's French Open final Nadal **laid waste to** Novak Djokovic in three brutal sets, but the world No 1 (Novak Djokovic) had no intention of allowing history to repeat itself.
14. **have one's head in the clouds** (phrase) – be daydreaming, think about something (e.g. an idea, aim, goal, etc) that is impractical.  
**E.g.** Far from a waste of time, daydreaming might be one of the best things you can do with your free time... Using daydreaming as mental rehearsal can do more than just hone job performance. Research has shown that imagining scenarios as visual scenes can provide a boost in mood to people suffering from major depression... Sometimes it pays off to **have your head in the clouds**.

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15. **pull the plug** (phrase) – put a stop to something; put an end to, discontinue, terminate, do away with, get rid of.  
**E.g.** We should **pull the plug** on pointless after-hours emails. In a burnout epidemic, the right to switch off is needed more than ever...  
“Emails start at 5:30am and don’t end until 10pm, because they know you have nowhere else to go. For single people with no families it’s worse, because you don’t get to say, ‘I need to go take care of my kids’.
16. **get something into one’s head** (phrase) – understand, accept, realize, recognize, believe something.  
**E.g.** He (Boris Johnson) later said Britain will “not hesitate” to suspend a post-Brexit protocol governing trade there if the EU refuses to change tack. Stressing the UK is a unified territory encompassing Northern Ireland, he told Sky News that “they just need to **get that into their heads**”.
17. **leave the door open** (phrase) – to make sure that an opportunity/possibility is still there for something to happen at a later time.  
**E.g.** Biden and Putin begin talks at the highly anticipated Geneva summit. The talks have also raised concerns among Russia’s neighbours such as Ukraine, where President Volodymyr Zelenskiy sought an **audience** with Biden to argue the country’s case for Nato membership before this week’s summit. The US has **left the door open** to Ukraine’s accession to the alliance, but did not take meaningful steps to speed up that process.
18. **hang in the balance** (phrase) - to be in a precarious (uncertain/unpredictable) situation and the outcome of it has not yet been decided.  
**E.g.** It used to feel that life **hung in the balance** during US-Russia summits. No longer... A transformed global context and the rise of China put any decisions made at Biden’s meeting with Putin into perspective.

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19. **cut a — figure** (phrase) – to present (oneself) a particular look/appearance/impression.  
**E.g.** In Geneva, by contrast, cool normality was on display. Biden was well prepared for the US-Russia summit. He **cut a relaxed figure**, telling Putin he wanted a “predictable” relationship after a period defined by rogue Kremlin behaviour. The summit flowed along conventional diplomatic lines: a handshake, several hours of intensive talks and separate press conferences afterwards.
20. **turn over a new leaf** (phrase) – it is about new beginnings; it means to change your behaviour or lifestyle, in a positive way; reform, improve, amend.  
**E.g.** The collapse in rape prosecutions has created a climate of **impunity**. Women are right to be furious... The (UK) government’s frank admission of failure is praiseworthy. But promises to **turn over a new leaf** are never enough. Abused women and the organisations that work with them know this better than most.
21. **the devil’s in the detail** (phrase) – something may seem simple at a first look generally, but problematic & complex things are always hidden in the details of it.  
**E.g.** Reaching his twilight (last/final) years, Iran’s Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has been looking for a successor. To the 82-year-old head of state, the ideal successor is a pliant (controllable/accommodating) loyalist who could emulate his own journey from the presidency to the top position in the land. On paper, this is precisely what is unfolding. However, as always, **the devil is in the detail**.
22. **a square peg in a round hole** (phrase) – something/someone that does not fit into a particular situation/position; unfit, unsuitable, unacceptable thing/person.  
**E.g.** For the past nine months, my team and I have been researching how maintaining this way of working in a remote environment is actually what is causing significant damage to employees. It’s never a good idea to force **a square peg into a round hole**. In today’s context, office-centric work is a square peg and the remote environment is a round hole.

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23. **put/throw a spanner in the works** (phrase) - prevent or obstruct something (a plan or activity) from happening/succeeding; disrupt, hinder/hamper, interfere with, create a problem/trouble.  
**E.g.** The last time that 'India reported an increase in poverty was in the first 25 years after Independence, when from 1951 to 1974, the population of the poor increased from 47% to 56%'. So, India is again a "country of mass poverty" after 45 years. This has **thrown a spanner in** the so far uninterrupted battle against poverty since the 1970s. Urgent solutions are needed within, and the starting point of that would be only when we know how many are poor.
24. **take cognisance of** (phrase) – take into account, take into consideration, give attention to, take notice of something.  
**E.g.** The clear political object (purpose) behind the invocation (citation) of the law is to create an atmosphere of fear. This, in a way, is the price which the country had to pay for the retention of the law of sedition, among other draconian (harsh & severe) laws. Therefore, the Supreme Court of India and the High Courts should **take** suo motu **cognisance of** the incidents where the state **ostensibly** uses draconian laws to suppress criticism and protest.
25. **reinvent the wheel** (phrase) – waste time & effort to do/create something that has already been done/created by someone else.  
**E.g.** The gender technology gap has to end... There is no need to **reinvent the wheel**. In the 1950s, dishwashers and washing machines were promoted as a method of **emancipating** women. Household goods producers, for example, target most of their advertising at women because they often control the household budget. Digital technology could be approached similarly.
26. **put/get one over on** (phrase) – to deceive someone (or) to get an advantage over someone; fool, trick, delude, outwit, outsmart, mislead.  
**E.g.** When lockdowns began to lift, this spring and last, some companies noticed a phenomenon of people coming into the office even when they weren't obliged to, seeing it as a chance to **hobnob** with senior managers (often the only people still at their desks) and **get one over on** rivals still stuck obediently at home.

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27. **be here to stay** (phrase) – to be permanent; to be generally accepted; to be present for a long time.  
**E.g.** Just ask the founders of Zoom. Only two years ago, we were all thinking that it would take at least another decade before video-conferencing became an integral part of the way we work in organisations. Then along comes Covid and in three weeks we're all happily Zooming... And now we're more or less **acclimatised** or, at any rate, resigned (accepted with unease) to the idea that remote meetings might **be here to stay**.
28. **know one's way around** (phrase) – to be familiar with something.  
**E.g.** However, it remains to be seen how much of the positivity spills over into the round-of-16 (of Euro 2020)... If ever there was a time for cautious play, it is now, with the competition essentially a single-elimination, winner-take-all affair. France, having won the 2018 World Cup, **knows a way around** such situations, and..., it remains the favourite.
29. **be on the anvil** (phrase) - in a state/condition of discussion (not implemented); being discussed or prepared but it is not yet completed to be put into action.  
**E.g.** India is right now going through its worst economic crisis. The highest-ever contraction in the economy took place last year, unemployment has risen, incomes for growing numbers are falling, bank non-performing assets (NPAs) may be **ballooning**, and the fiscal deficit is rising. In these circumstances, it would be prudent to think through the pros and cons of the aggressive privatisation of public enterprises that **is on the anvil**.
30. **get a handle on** (phrase) - to find a way of understanding/dealing with/controlling a person or situation.  
**E.g.** Although the police and the courts have crushed protest and opposition movements in Russia, the government has been unable to **get a handle on** the **troves** of Russian data that have been leaked and sold on an expansive black market.

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