

FIGURATIVE SAYINGS

to be fit as a fiddle	gesund und munter sein, quietschvergnügt sein	<i>He was in poor health when I last saw him, but now he is as fit as a fiddle.</i>
a flash in the pan	ein Strohfeuer, ein kurzer Einzelerfolg	<i>The success of his first film was a mere flash in the pan.</i>
to put one's foot in it	ins Fettnäpfchen treten, sich verplappern	<i>With his tactless way of talking he has put his foot in it more than once.</i>
to take French leave	sich auf französisch empfehlen, heimlich verschwinden, sich verdrücken	<i>He did not like the people at the party and took French leave as soon as possible.</i>
to jump (or get, fall, leap) out of the frying-pan into the fire	vom Regen in die Traufe kommen	<i>Going up this road we've just got out of the frying-pan into the fire. The traffic here is worse than on the road we've just left.</i>
for good	für immer, endgültig	<i>After his farewell concert he retired for good.</i>
not to let the grass grow under one's feet	nicht lange fackeln (oder zögern), keine Zeit verlieren	<i>If I were you I wouldn't let the grass grow under my feet; I'd buy as many of these shares as I possibly could.</i>
to take a grip on oneself	sich zusammenreißen, sich am Riemen reißen, sich einen Ruck geben	<i>If you want to finish today, you'd better take a grip on yourself and get on with your work!</i>
to cover much (or a great deal of, a lot of) ground	eine beträchtliche Wegstrecke zurücklegen, viel Arbeit erledigen	<i>The hikers covered a great deal of ground today.</i>
That is half the battle	Damit ist die Sache schon halb gewonnen, damit haben wir gewonnenes Spiel, das ist die halbe Miete	<i>As a teacher you should try to win the students' confidence, that is half the battle.</i>
to be hand in glove (with s.o.)	sich (mit j-m) gut verstehen, ein Herz und eine Seele (mit j-m) sein, eng (mit j-m) verbündet sein, zusammenarbeiten, mit j-m unter einer Decke stecken	<i>They were hand in glove, the old man and his brother.</i>
to give (or lend) s.o. a hand (with s.th.)	j-m (bei etw.) helfen (oder behilflich sein, zur Hand gehen)	<i>Could you lend me a hand with the packing, please?</i>
to have had it	am Ende sein, verloren sein, ausgespielt haben, 'verschissen' haben	<i>Don't think I'd help you again. You've had it!</i>
to make hay while the sun shines	das Eisen schmieden, solange es heiß ist	<i>The boss is in a very generous mood today, so we should make hay while the sun shines and ask him for a rise.</i>
to be unable to make head or tale of s.th.	aus etwas nicht schlau (oder klug) werden, mit etwas nicht klarkommen	<i>I can't make head or tale of this picture.</i>
head over heels (1)	kopfüber	<i>He fell head over heels into the water.</i>
head over heels (2)	bis über beide Ohren	<i>He was head over heels in debt.</i>
s.o. has his heart in his boots, s.o.'s heart is in (or goes into) his boots	j-d hat große Angst, j-m rutscht das Herz in die Hose	<i>When the telephone bell rang, my heart went into my boots. I knew bad news was coming.</i>
to hold one's horses	sich zurückhalten, sich im Zaum halten	<i>Don't be so rash! Hold your horses!</i>

(straight) from the horse's mouth	aus erster Hand, aus direkter Quelle	<i>I got the news straight from the horse's mouth.</i>
to be (skating) on thin ice	in einer prekären Lage sein, sich auf dünnem Eis bewegen	<i>He was skating on thin ice in his speech because he had no real knowledge of the subject.</i>
to hit the jackpot	das große Los ziehen, Glück haben	<i>That fellow hit the jackpot when he bought those shares.</i>
to kick the bucket (=slang)	abkratzen, ins Gras beißen, sterben	<i>What about Mr. Jones? Oh, he kicked the bucket long ago.</i>
to know the ropes	den Verein (die Schliche, den Rummel) kennen, sich auskennen, Ahnung haben	<i>Let him act as chairman, as he knows the ropes.</i>
to lead s.o. by the nose	j-n an der Kandare haben (oder halten), j-n am Gängelband führen	<i>She leads her husband by the nose.</i>
to leave no stone unturned	nichts unversucht lassen, alle Hebel in Bewegung setzen	<i>The parents left no stone unturned in their attempts to trace their missing son.</i>
to lick s.o.'s boots	vor j-m kriechen	<i>He is very proud and will never lick anyone's boots.</i>
to live it up	auf die Pauke hauen, sich ein schönes Leben machen	<i>He inherited a fortune two years ago and has been living it up ever since.</i>
lock, stock and barrel	ganz und gar, mit allem Drum und Dran	<i>He took over the duties of his predecessor lock, stock, and barrel.</i>
not for love or money	nicht für Geld und gute Worte	<i>She couldn't get a theatre ticket for love or money.</i>
to make both ends meet	mit seinen Einkünften auskommen, sich nach der Decke strecken, sich einrichten	<i>The young couple had a lot of difficulty in making both ends meet.</i>
to be wiped off the map	vom Erdboden (oder Bildfläche) verschwunden sein	<i>Where's that old pub that used to be at the corner? Oh, it was wiped off the map ages ago.</i>
to give s.o. his (to get one's) marching orders	j-n rausschmeißen oder hinauswerfen oder entlassen (rausfliegen, entlassen werden)	<i>The girl did very poor work, so she soon got her marching orders.</i>
to be beside the mark	nicht zur Sache gehören	<i>All his comments were beside the mark.</i>
Don't mention it.	(Antwort auf Dank:) Bittel!, (das ist) Nicht der Rede wert!; (Antwort auf Bitte um Entschuldigung:) Macht nichts!, Ist schon gut!	<i>I'm so sorry to have troubled you. (reaction by other person:) Don't mention it.</i>
not to mince matters (or one's words)	es ohne Umschweife sagen, kein Blatt vor den Mund nehmen	<i>I told him I wasn't satisfied, and I didn't mince matters.</i>
to be out of one's (right) mind	verrückt (geworden) sein, von Sinnen sein, den Verstand verloren haben	<i>You must have been out of your right mind when you paid \$80 for that dress!</i>
to nail s.o. down to s.th.	j-n auf etwas festnageln	<i>We must nail him down to what he told us before.</i>
to have the nerve to do s.th.	die Kühnheit/Frechheit besitzen, etw. zu tun	<i>That fellow has the nerve to show up again!</i>
to be nuts (about)	verrückt sein (nach)	<i>She thought he was nuts, because he always giggled in such a funny way.</i>
in a nutshell	ganz kurz (zusammengefasst), mit einem Wort, mit wenigen Worten	<i>He put the whole plan in a nutshell and told us about it in 5 minutes.</i>

the odds are that	es ist wahrscheinlich, dass ...	<i>The odds are that she will come just before lunch.</i>
it makes no odds	es spielt keine Rolle	<i>It makes no odds what you do, you'll always be the loser.</i>
to be at odds with s.o.	mit j-m uneins (oder zerstritten) sein	<i>The two sons are at odds with their father.</i>
the odds are against s.o.	j-d ist im Nachteil/im Hintertreffen	<i>He had been in training for only two days, so the odds were against him.</i>
on and off, off and on	von Zeit zu Zeit, hin und wieder, ab und zu	<i>She visited the old lady on and off.</i>
What's on?	Was gibt's?, Was wird (im Theater usw.) gespielt?	<i>What's on at the opera tonight?</i>
one of these days	demnächst einmal, bei Gelegenheit	<i>You must show me the photos one of these days.</i>
the other day	neulich	<i>The other day I saw Harry driving down Lewis Street in his new car.</i>
every other...	jede (-r,-s) zweite ...	<i>It rained every other day during our holidays.</i>
to paddle one's own canoe	auf eigenen Füßen stehen	<i>She could expect no more help from her parents and had to paddle her own canoe.</i>
to be (to give s.o.) a pain in the neck (slang)	einem auf die Nerven gehen, eine Nervensäge sein (j-m auf die Nerven gehen)	<i>I don't want to see this fellow. He's such a pain in the neck. That noisy brat gives me a pain in the neck.</i>
to paint the town red	auf die Pauke hauen, die Gegend unsicher machen	<i>They made a night of it and painted the town red.</i>
to have an itching palm	aufs Geld aus sein; sich bestechen (oder schmieren) lassen	<i>The attendant has an itching palm. Slip him a pound or two and you'll be all right.</i>
a penny for your thoughts	Jetzt gäbe ich was darum, wenn ich wüsste, was du gerade denkst!	<i>You're looking so pensive. A penny for your thoughts!</i>
in for a penny, in for a pound	Wer A sagt, muss auch B sagen	<i>It's no use flinching now that things are getting to a more difficult stage. In for a penny, in for a pound!</i>
to pin s.o. down to s.th.	j-n auf etwas festnageln (oder festlegen)	<i>The electrician promised me to come on Monday, but I couldn't pin him down to an exact time.</i>
to play safe	kein Risiko eingehen, auf Nummer sicher gehen	<i>We have to play safe and not take on any new commitments.</i>
to play it cool (=colloquial)	die Situation mit Ruhe (oder souverän) meistern, die Ruhe selber bleiben	<i>He played it cool when he was obliged to fork up \$1000.</i>
to pull s.o.'s leg	j-n zum besten (oder zum Narren) halten, j-n verkohlen	<i>You mustn't take what he said too seriously. He was just pulling your leg.</i>
to pull a fast one on s.o.	j-n reinlegen, j-n hintergehen	<i>He pulled a fast one on his friend and lost his friendship by it.</i>
to pull the strings	die Fäden in der Hand halten	<i>Officially he retired last year but in actual fact he is still pulling the strings in that insurance company.</i>
to pull strings (or wires)	seine Beziehungen spielen lassen	<i>We won't get seats for the concert without pulling strings.</i>
Put that in your pipe and smoke it!	Merk dir das!, Lass dir das gesagt sein!, Das sag ich dir!	<i>I'll never come back. Put that in your pipe and smoke it!</i>
at any rate (1)	auf jeden Fall, jedenfalls	<i>At any rate we rely on your being here at eight o'clock.</i>

at any rate (2)	zumindest, jedenfalls	<i>The minister at any rate is not to blame.</i>
off the record	inoffiziell, nicht für die Öffentlichkeit (oder Allgemeinheit) bestimmt	<i>Some of what the chancellor said at his press conference was off the record.</i>
to be in the red	in den roten Zahlen stehen	<i>They got into the red by spending so much.</i>
to get out of the red	aus den roten Zahlen herauskommen	<i>How will they ever get out of the red with such mismanagement?</i>
without rhyme or reason, have neither rhyme nor reason	ohne Sinn und Verstand (oder ohne jede Logik, unsinnig) sein	<i>The new syllabuses are without rhyme or reason.</i>
to take s.o. for a ride	j-n reinlegen, veräppeln	<i>The jeweler took you for a ride when he sold you this watch.</i>
to ring a bell with s.o.	j-m bekannt vorkommen, eine Erinnerung in j-m wachrufen	<i>The name rings a bell with me. Where have I heard it before?</i>
on the rocks (1)	pleite, am Ende	<i>The firm was on the rocks in a brief space of time.</i>
on the rocks (2)	mit Eiswürfeln	<i>Waiter, a vermouth on the rocks, please!</i>
to rub s.o. (up) the wrong way	j-n verärgern	<i>His tactlessness easily rubs people up the wrong way.</i>
in the long run	auf die Dauer	<i>Crime doesn't pay in the long run.</i>
to get (to give s.o.) the sack	„fliegen“, rausgeschmissen werden (j-n rausschmeißen)	<i>The employee got (or was given) the sack for petty embezzlements.</i>
to sail close to (or near) the wind	sich hart an der Grenze des Erlaubten (oder am Rande der Legalität) bewegen	<i>By taking this measure we don't actually offend against the law, but we are sailing very close to the wind.</i>
to start from scratch	ganz von vorn (oder mit nichts) anfangen	<i>After the war most of us had to start from scratch.</i>
to see s.o. home	j-n nach Hause begleiten, j-n heimbegleiten	<i>He saw his girl-friend home long after midnight.</i>
to set one's mind on s.th., to be set (up) on s.th.	fest zu etw. entschlossen sein, sich etw. fest vornehmen	<i>Martin has set his mind on learning foreign languages.</i>
to set out to do s.th.	sich vornehmen (oder sich dranmachen, darangehen), etw. zu tun	<i>He set out with the best intentions to help people.</i>
to be in s.o.'s shoes	„in j-s Haut stecken“, an j-s Stelle sein (oder stehen)	<i>You are not to be envied. I wouldn't like to be in your shoes.</i>
to talk shop	fachsimpeln	<i>He can't stop talking shop at mealtimes.</i>
to put on a show	eine Schau abziehen	<i>The boy isn't really hurt, he's just putting on a show.</i>
to run the show	„den Laden schmeißen“	<i>He runs the show, even though he's not the boss of the undertaking.</i>
to be six of one and half a dozen of the other	gehupft wie gesprungen sein, Jacke wie Hose sein	<i>Whether you do the shopping now and the housework afterwards or vice versa is really six of one and half a dozen of the other.</i>
a slip of the tongue	sich versprechen (etwas sagen, was man eigentlich nicht sagen wollte)	<i>I didn't mean to hurt her feelings when I mentioned the name of her ex-husband; it was just a slip of the tongue.</i>

to smell a rat	Lunte (oder den Braten) riechen, einen Verdacht hegen, Verdacht schöpfen	<i>No matter what we tell them, they will smell a rat.</i>
to call a spade a spade	das Kind beim (richtigen) Namen nennen	<i>I'm not afraid to call a spade a spade: He is an impostor.</i>
to stand up for s.o. (s.th.)	für j-n (etw.) eine Lanze brechen, für j-n (etw.) eintreten	<i>She's my sister anyway, and I must stand up for her. Stand up for your rights, but sit when you pee.</i>
within a stone's throw of...	nur ein Katzensprung von ... (entfernt)	<i>They live within a stone's throw of the British Museum.</i>
to do a stretch	„sitzen“ (= eine Haftstrafe verbüßen)	<i>His wife divorced him while he was doing a three-year stretch in prison.</i>
to have a sweet tooth	ein Leckermäulchen sein, Süßigkeiten mögen	<i>I'll take her some chocolates. I know she has a sweet tooth.</i>
Take my word for it!	Verlass dich drauf! Das sag' ich dir!	<i>I'll pay you back for your insolent behavior. Take my word for it!</i>
take it or leave it	Mach, was du willst!	<i>I think \$ 2000 is far too much for this carpet. I've seen much cheaper ones elsewhere. Take it or leave it. That's my price!</i>
to talk turkey (to s.o.)	(mit j-n) Fraktur reden, ernsthaft (mit j-m) reden	<i>Someone should talk turkey to him and remind him of his duties as a government official.</i>
to talk s.o.'s head off	j-m ein Loch in den Bauch reden	<i>Here comes Mrs. Collins. Once she's got a hold of you, she'll talk your head off.</i>
there is no telling	man kann noch nicht sagen..., man weiß noch nicht	<i>There's no telling what will happen when he becomes president.</i>
to be on good (bad) terms with s.o.	mit j-m auf gutem (schlechtem) Fuß stehen	<i>The woman lived on good terms with her neighbors.</i>
to have s.th. on the tip of one's tongue	etw. liegt (oder schwebt) einem auf der Zunge	<i>I had his name on the tip of my tongue, but then I had to answer the telephone and couldn't think of it any more.</i>
to give s.o. tit for tat	j-m mit gleicher Münze heimzahlen	<i>He insulted her severely, but she gave him tit for tat.</i>
Touch wood!	Toi, toi, toi!	<i>I haven't had an accident with this car as yet, touch wood!</i>
to turn one's nose up at s.o. (or s.th.)	die Nase über j-n (etw.) rümpfen	<i>She has become rich over night and turns her nose up now at such simple meals.</i>
to be up and about (or around)	wieder auf den Beinen sein	<i>She's up and about again after her severe illness.</i>
to be up against it	in der Klemme sein, „aufgeschmissen“ sein	<i>If help doesn't come soon, we shall be up against it.</i>
to draw a veil over s.th.	etw. verschleiern (oder verbergen), über etw. schweigen	<i>Let's draw a veil over what happened later on.</i>
to walk out on s.o.	j-n verlassen, j-m davonlaufen	<i>He can't be blamed for walking out on his wife. She's such a vixen (zänkisches Weib).</i>
So what?	Na und? Na wenn schon!	<i>She has an illegitimate child. So what?</i>
to be out of the wood	das Schlimmste überstanden haben, über den Berg sein	<i>Once we had paid the last installment on our furniture we felt we were out of the wood.</i>