UNIT 22 LESSON 34

USEFUL PHRASES AND EXPRESSIONS

We sometimes wonder where some of the expressions and sayings used in everyday language come from. In fact many of the words, phrases, idioms and proverbs common in daily usage of English originate from a wide variety of sources such as mythology, folklore, literature, religion and history. Let us see some of the commonly used phrases and expressions.

- **Above board**
  Something that goes above one’s head that is not comprehensible and unable to understand.
  Whatever the teacher said just went above board.

- **All in all**
  Considered as everything - Plays an important role - The most important person who is capable of doing any task
  He is all in all in his class.

- **All the same**
  Notwithstanding – yet
  Too much of coffee is bad for health, all the same I drink coffee at least five times a day.

- **At logger heads**
  Fighting with each other, Disagree – fight – argue intensely
  Ram and Shyam are at logger heads over an important issue in the college.

- **To begin with**
  At first – when it started
  To begin with, I did not like the story but after reading a few pages, I could not close the book.

- **Bed of roses**
  Everything is fine and smooth.
  Life is not a bed of roses. It comes with thorns too.

- **Beggar description**
  No words to describe perfectly
  Words beggar description if I were to describe her beauty.
• **Beat about the bush**
  Circumlocutory – not coming to the point directly – unnecessary frills or description
  Do not beat around the bush when you have to express some important news.

• **Blow one’s trumpet**
  To boast about one self
  Blowing one’s trumpet makes the person unpopular

• **Clean state**
  Everything is clear – honest – direct
  His life is a clean state.

• **Die hard**
  Not able to overcome or control certain things
  Certain habits die hard

• **Eleventh hour**
  Doing something in the last minute. No proper planning
  Many students study for exams in the eleventh hour.

• **Have an eye – keep an eye**
  Just to watch somebody
  Keep an eye on the kid, while you are working or else he may be upto some mischief.

• **Faintest idea**
  Not having any idea or clue about something
  I do not have the faintest idea about Ram’s girlfriend.

• **Feather in one’s cap**
  Adding to one’s achievement
  Winning the grandslam is one more feather in his cap.

• **Get along**
  Able to move/mingle with people – having a good relationship
  I can get along well with my mother-in-law.

• **Your guess is as good as mine**
  Both of us do not know the answer
  As far as the result goes, your guess is good as mine.
• **Hand in hand/hand in glove**
  Two people involved in the same action stealthily – used in negative sense.
  Trouble makers always work hand in hand/hand in glove

• **On the other hand**
  Show two different aspects of the same situation.
  Summer has commenced, yet on the other hand, it is very cold in the morning.

• **Hard and fast**
  Trying to be very strict/rigid
  There is no hard and fast rule as far as closing time of the garden is concerned.

• **Hue and cry**
  Creating problems – throwing tantrums – over reaction
  Do not make a hue and cry over the small misunderstanding.

• **In the offing**
  Something expected to happen in your future
  Ram’s promotion is in the offing.

• **On cloud nine**
  Floating or dreaming about something
  He is often floating on cloud nine as he is to be married shortly.

• **Say no more**
  Do not talk further, put an end.
  Say no more on that topic. I do not like to listen.

• **Once in a blue moon**
  Rarely-once in a way
  She visits her in-laws once in a blue moon.

• **Man of the world**
  Person with worldly wisdom
  A good teacher is expected to be the man of the world.

• **Pull’s strings**
  To influence
  Sometimes people have to pull strings to get things done.
• **Quick as a wink**
  Terribly fast, quick work
  The shooting star disappeared as quick as a wink

• **Red carpet welcome**
  A grand welcome
  The president was given a red carpet welcome during the convocation.

• **Rub it on**
  Do not precipitate matters.
  As it is, he is angry. Do not rub it on further.

• **Second fiddle**
  Playing a secondary and subordinate role
  Playing the second fiddle is not possible for proud people.

• **Vicious circle**
  What goes around comes back.
  Sometimes people around are vicious.
  Sometimes we get caught in a vicious circle due to our follies.