

9.6 CLICHÉS

'Clichés' are commonly used or overused expressions in the English language. Cliche is a worn-out expression used to convey a popular thought or idea. You'll often hear them in both American and British English. Although by definition a clichés is overused and therefore are trite, many journalists and writers use clichés as a shortcut to convey their meaning to their readers. Clichés rely on figurative language. In the beginning, such expression is a fresh way of saying something.

Using idioms or clichés in your written or spoken English can demonstrate your understanding of the language and help you sound like a native-speaker. The first is: 'what goes around comes around'. Commonly used in British English, this expression means that a person's actions, whether good or bad, will often have consequences for them.

Another example is: 'to avoid like the plague'. The 'plague' is a disease that can become a deadly epidemic. Therefore, if we say that you should 'avoid something like the plague', it means to stay far away from it.

"And the list goes on" is an interesting cliché. People tend to use it in speech when they are giving a number of examples. For instance, one is talking about the benefits of studying abroad, like making new friends, learning a new language, getting to know another culture and 'the list goes on.' It's another way to say 'etcetera'.

9.6.1 Types of Clichés

There are various types of Clichés. For example:

1. Proverbs

A proverb is a short, well-known saying which states a general truth or a piece of advice. For example:

- A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.
- A leopard cannot change its spots.

2. Idioms

An idiom is commonly used expression whose meaning does not relate to the literal meaning of its word. For example:

- I am over the moon.
- You have a sword of Damocles hanging over you.
- I'll take any port in a storm.

3. Catchphrases

A catchphrase is a well-known term, especially one that is associated with a particular famous person or brand. For example:

- "Think different." (Apple)
- "Yabba dabba doo!" (Fred Flintstone)
- "You're fired!" (Donald Trump or Alan Sugar from 'The Apprentice')
- "Just do it!" (NIKE)

4. Similes

A simile is a figure of speech which compares one thing with another to create an analogy. Use of 'like' or 'as' in sentences is inevitable. For example,

- This is about as much use as a chocolate teapot.
- He drinks like a fish.
- Her cheeks are pink like a flower.

5. Metaphors

A metaphor is a figure of speech which states one thing is another to create an analogy. It is sort of implied comparison. For example,

- That will put the final nail in the coffin.
- I am banging my head against a brick wall here.

9.6.2 Common Cliché Sayings

- All that glitters isn't gold
- Don't get your knickers in a twist
- All for one, and one for all
- Kiss and make up
- He has his tail between his legs
- And they all lived happily ever after
- Cat got your tongue?
- Read between the lines
- Someone woke up on the wrong side of the bed
- We're not laughing at you, we're laughing with you.

9.6.3 Clichés that Describe Time

- Only time will tell
- In the nick of time
- Lost track of time
- Lasted an eternity
- Just a matter of time
- A waste of time
- Rushed for time
- In a jiffy
- The time of my life
- At the speed of light

9.6.4 Clichés that Describe People

- As old as the hills
- Fit as a fiddle
- Without a care in the world
- A diamond in the rough
- Brave as a lion
- Weak as a kitten
- Had nerves of steel
- Ugly as sin

9.6.5 Clichés that Describe Life, Love and Positivity

- Opposites attract
- Every cloud has a silver lining
- Don't cry over spilt milk
- The calm before the storm

- Laughter is the best medicine
- Love you more than life itself
- Scared out of my wits
- Frightened to death
- All is fair in love and war
- All's well that ends well
- Haste makes waste
- The writing's on the wall
- Time heals all wounds
- What goes around comes around
- When life gives you lemons, make lemonade
- Head over heels in love
- Gut-wrenching pain
- Heart-stopping fear

9.6.6 Examples of More Clichés

1. **Take the bull by the horns:** To “take the bull by the horns” is to tackle a problem head-on, in a direct and confident manner. Here’s an example of this phrase being used:
“It’s time to take the bull by the horns and hand in your notice.”
2. **Avoid like the plague:** Another expression still with us is “avoid like the plague”. This describes something that should be avoided at all costs, like:
“Avoid that area of Delhi like the plague.”
3. **Every cloud has a silver lining:** This phrase means that the cloud (sadness or obstacle) may block out the sun (happiness), but its hidden silver lining will see some good coming out of it. Here’s an example of this phrase being used:
“Even though he had lost the match, he had gained in experience and was now more confident. Yes, every cloud has a silver lining.”
4. **Fit as a fiddle:** The cliché “fit as a fiddle” is used to describe someone who is in a amazing state of health. Here’s an example of this phrase being used:
I felt as fit as a fiddle after my morning walk.
5. **At the end of the day:** It means “when everything has been planned”, and it’s usually used to precede what one considers to be the crux of the matter. An example might be as follows:
“At the end of the day, it’s not up to me. It’s entirely your decision”.

9.6.7 Clichés and Idioms

Idioms are figurative phrases with an indirect meaning; the phrase is not to be taken literally. An example of an idiom is, “having a chip on your shoulder.” That means you think you’re better than everyone else.

Clichés are often idioms. This makes clichés difficult to translate into other languages because their meaning won’t always be understood by people from different cultures.