

## Silhouette

Finance Minister for Louis XV, Etienne de Silhouette, whose father was Basque, a man named Zuloeta, was resented by the people as a tight-fisted penny pincher.

Thus, the popular cheap form of portraiture drawing, a mere outline of the subject, was called a *silhouette*, and therefore an insult became an immortalization.

Here's to you, Etienne de Silhouette; a mere outline of a biography is all you get, one can tell a little from a brief outline and only a little more from a *silhouette*.

Were you a good guy or a bad guy, did you have a sense of humor, or were you content with figures for a life's work and a life's story?

Did you begin to miss your father's name, Zuloeta, and were you pleased when *Black Feather* sang a song in your name on the first season of *Breaking Bad*?

## Cowboy Hat

The cowboy hat derived from the sombrero, from sombra for shade, the hat of Mexican herders, or vaqueros, after vaca for cow, re-styled by John B. Stetson, a traveling hat maker from Philadelphia, who made them popular.

The ten gallon hat, from galon or braid, a vaquero decoration, kept the sun out of a cowboy's eyes and the rain off his back, cowboy was not the name preferred by cattlemen, it was the name for their hired hands, the drifter flunkies who did shit work for little pay.

Gringos were not those who sang "Green Grow the Lilacs", it has a more direct root in griego, for Greek, as in "their language is Greek to me" the nearly universal expression of another's incomprehensibility, I still prefer Gringo the Lilacs, the flower of Caucasian cowboys.

## Nest

Nesting is a universal instinct, the nest is a resting place, for hornets, criminals, dolls, machine guns, nest was made from the sounds for sit and down, a place where birds sit down, it is our instinct to sit down, in a sheltering place, from which we might rise or fly, build a family, or return.

A nest may be pocket-like, or like a bed, a receptacle, a crow's nest may have no crows, a nest egg no eggs, to return to the nest may be fraught with rejection, one can foul one's nest, as well as one can feather it.

A nest is a place from which everything else is away, birds don't build bird houses, they nest, even within the houses provided for them, are we any different?

Nestling is a lovely action of the noun, the ballplayer nestles the ball in his glove, the runner nestles the ball in his arms, nestling is the embrace of the nest in the rest of life.

## Hair

*Hair* seems to have evolved from itself, as if someone called hair *hair* and *hair* it remained, or it may have evolved from a word for bristle, as if the feeling of bristling hair raised the word.

*You bristle* became *you have bristles* became *you have hair*, like a kind of nickname, *look, there's that bristly fellow, the short-haired one.*

I don't suggest the name Harry is related, it isn't, except in jokes, but this one sounds like that, anyway, in its origin, coming nearly from itself, there once were words with no derivation, except in themselves.

Hair became hair, maybe only a scowling grunt of surprise that became the name for our first showy façade of attraction and revulsion.

H and R together are much like *HER*, the one with the lovely hair, or the transgendered *hairry*, not from Henry named, but from his long and softened bristles.

## Coffee

Discovered by Kaldi, a 13th Century Ethiopian goat herder, the name evolved from Arabic words for *wine of the bean*, like the game of telephone, wherein *cup-of-coffee* becomes *cop-it-free* becomes *cough-on-me* becomes *cause-for-pee* becomes *caustic-freeze* becomes *chai-tea-please*.

Another story claims the sight of some lively birds and the sheik who saw them, he tried the beans that the birds were eating and felt his own energy surge.

In another story, a servant tried boiling the beans, the brown liquid revived his spirits, so, of course, he told a holy man, who rejected the idea but not the beans.

The natural elevation of the spirit is not thought to be spiritual, but it's close enough to wink at the accidental blasphemy.

All these stories are apocryphal, as is much of what we have come to know about everything else, similar to the aromatic and liquid residue of coffeehouse conversations.

The coffeehouse is neither home nor work, but a neutral third place, where people meet to drink coffee and tell each other of the origin and the spread of wild ideas.

## Shoe

"Bare feet... best shoes ever invented... never wear out," the old man said to the three boys, laughing as he said it.

*Shoe* first meant to cover or hide, there are those who look to others' shoes to judge their station in life, how good are their coverings, how well are they hiding their true value?

You can shoe your horse, and nothing is hidden, horses' shoes are metal, nailed to the hoof, men and women adorn themselves with shoes, strapped, tied, buckled, and wrapped, either laced or not, some are known to leave their laces loose and untied, there is station to be gained in disregarding the ways of the well-shod.

Some say the shoe has made things worse, that we were better off when we relied on bare feet, that leather, rubber and other synthetic wrappings do nothing to improve our gait but instead inhibit its freedom.

The shoe is another skin on the skin of the foot, another callus on the perfect callus of nature, but the shoe can be removed and replaced, not to mention shined, horses hooves accept nails but human feet do not.

In gambling, the shoe is a chute from which cards are dealt, one may wait for the other shoe to drop, rarely involving the shoe itself, but often, something is left bare, without cover and nowhere to hide.

## Napkin

The first napkin may have been a piece of bread or more crudely a piece of dough to wipe the hands and then eat, as we did when we were kids, such innovators as we were when young, making use of things for which we had not learned the proper use.

One imagines the fumbling look for something to wipe the grease from our fingers when we ripped small animal parts from the fire.

A napkin hangs from the table in "The Last Supper" by the Belgian painter Dierik Bouts, the English called it a diaper, originally a tablecloth, the napkin is relative to it, a bodkin may pierce a napkin, a napkin may clean a bodkin, silverware may be wrapped in napkins before dining.

*Odds bodkin* refers to God's body as *cheese and crackers* once referred to Jesus Christ, for the sacrilegiously timid, and here's where a napkin might come in handy, keeping one's metaphorical snack from one's lap.

The napkin was once kissed by a servant to prove the food being served was not poisoned, the sort of job one doesn't volunteer for, unless one is very hungry, some napkins come with a ring, some are artfully folded, but *-kin* is diminutive, *nappy* is another way of gently diminishing the ignoble face towel.

## Soldier

Named for those who fought for pay, *sou*, a French word for coin, *solidus*, a gold coin in Roman society, the Latin word for firm.

Despite the decimation of soldiers everywhere, the cannon-fodder of warring nations, soldiers continue to be trained to kill other human beings for the sake of a greater good or for the greed of ruling masters.

Those who are called *hero* and *our finest*, are neglected once their use is behind them, they are forced to soldier on, to fight for pay in civilian life, their wounds honor them, as we honor them, their wounds limit them, and we limit them in peaceful times.

The soldier ant is sexually undeveloped with powerful jaws, low ranking members of criminal societies are called soldiers, *be a good soldier* mothers once said to their beleaguered children, any active, loyal member of a movement or a cause may be called a soldier.

Children play soldier, children play with toy soldiers, there is no common equivalent in less deadly professions, only the Barbie Doll and stuffed animals might be as legion.



## Fancy

Fancy is a shorter bite of fantasy, *fant'sy*, it is to imagine, *I fancy a big slice of pie*, or *fancy that, pie for breakfast*.

Fancy is description of decoration, a fancy plate for my pie, fancy silverware, and perhaps a fancy restaurant to serve it.

Fancy means to like, as fantasy once did, to fantasize about, to let liking play in the imagination.

The first known use of *fancy-pants* was in 1945, at the end of WWII.

I suppose, since no one wore anything that wasn't drab during the war, that at the end of the war, fancy broke out, fancy was, once again, free.

## Park

To park is to temporarily leave a vehicle, from parc, from parricus, a tract of land, or an enclosure, a pen, or paddock.

One parks, in a park, either oneself or one's vehicle, within a confined space or in the wide open spaces, an open park might be replaced by a car park, one may park next to a park, or on the road with no park in sight.

*Park it there*, one might say, to direct another to sit, one might put a car in the parking lot, and put the car in parking gear, one may enter the ball park, and park oneself in the seats, to see a hitter park one in the stands.

One may angle-park, double-park, or parallel-park, parking lights are there to see what's coming up behind or to warn others what's coming back toward them, a parking meter is there to regulate how temporary is one's stay in a chosen parking place, spot, or slot.

To park at night may have nothing to do with leaving the car, but to remain in the car, to park one's lips on the lips of another, parcour is to run, jump, climb and leap, over, under, and across everything within one's reach.

## Jacket

A short coat, after Jacques, a French name for peasants, from the Arabic for mailcoat, a chainmail shirt, the skin of a potato, the outer layer of a bullet, the covering of a vinyl record album, it may be a sleeve, it may have sleeves.

It might be a sport, bomber, bush, bolero, or blazer, it might be flak, life, or smoking, it might be named after Eisenhower, Nehru, or Mao, it might be yellow and sting.

A straight-jacket has nothing to do with keeping one straight, it is a corruption of strait-jacket, almost a restraint jacket, but closer to recognizing its wearer in terrible straits, as perhaps are those who restrain those who requires restraint.

It may protect one from the wind or the rain, it may be a decorative covering to a dress or gown, it may protect a book or a pipe, it may carry a letter, it may go to battle, but a jacket is generally a thin coat to be tossed aside.

## Pants

In *comedia dell'arte*, a satirical character, modeled after a Venetian business type, was named Pantalone, Venetians were called Pantaloni, after the patron saint of Venice, Pantaleon, until eventually pantaloons became the name for all trousers, pants took their place in the vulgar lexicon, thanks, in large part, to the writings of Edgar Allan Poe, one gentleman wrote, at the time, that saying pants was like saying gents for his cultured breed.

One eagerly pants to describe their journey from sainthood to vulgarity to the commonplace they have become, one must keep one's pants on, during the telling of the story, to pant is to breath quickly, originally to phantasize, as in fantasy panting, as one pants in a fantasy, perhaps dreaming of being chased by someone wearing pants, or worse, to have one's pants scared off in a dream of a 4<sup>th</sup> Century saint.

## Ceiling and Floor

Ceiling is celestial, yet to hit the ceiling is rage, to strike at heaven or perhaps to strike at the floor of heaven, *let me in, let me in, wee-oo*, floor is from meadow or ground, yet few demand of the ground, *let me in*.

A ceiling can be of any height higher than the one beneath it, there are price ceilings and glass ceilings, one can be floored by hitting the ceiling, as one can be floored by an idea or by the sight of something or someone, to floor a proposal might be to kill it or simply to move it to the side for later consideration, one calls attention to oneself when one takes the floor.

Floors pile one upon the other in high rises, each has a ceiling that serves as a floor to the floor above, as each floor serves as ceiling to the floor below, the ocean has a floor, so does the forest, the ocean has no ceiling but its surface, but the forest has the ceiling of the sky above.

A dance floor, a factory floor, the floor of the Stock Exchange, all are where one takes steps to put things in motion.

## Tree

Tree evolves from oak, we name a thing after what we know, no matter who hears the word *tree*, they will imagine a tree of their own experience, if you were raised in the forest or the desert, you will carry your own sense of what *tree* means to you, if you find yourself *up* a tree, it becomes a poignant, personal reference.

Tree evolves from wood, in name and form, a tree may be the first thing a child draws, Buddha awakened under a tree, Jesus was hung on a tree, wisdom is the tree of life, another name for the gallows, the *tree of life* is an emblem of eternal life, yet, apparently, there are no trees in heaven.

A tree house is a house in a tree, yet it may be made of the parts of a tree, Redwoods may grow to hundreds of feet, Bonsai may be only inches tall, a shoe-tree is a piece of wood put in a shoe to keep its shape, a clothes-tree is a rack to hang one's clothing on, the genealogical diagram of one's family, or the family of mankind, is called a family tree, it is who we are.

## Buttocks and Butt

Buttocks were once the end piece of one's land, similar to boondocks, but boondocks refers to remote land, still farther beyond the buttocks.

The butt of a joke may butt heads with the jokester and call him a butthead, the butt is a popular reference, butt out, kiss my butt, get off your butt, move your butt, the butt is the seat of who we are as physical beings.

The butt is a cut of pork shoulder, not its flank, also the end of a cigarette, things butt up against other things, the butt was once the stump used as a target for archers, thus it became the target for the slings and arrows of outrageous contempt, a kick in the butt is meant to motivate or insult with grievous injury.

## Polite and Politic

To become polite once meant to polish one's manners, to smooth the rough edges, polite society was polished.

Whereas *politic and politics* refers to the life of citizens, political figures may or may not be skilled in polite society, polite behavior may be *political* in nature, as may be their impolitic speech.

One may polish one's sword, as well as one may polish one's tongue, *you are a scoundrel, sir, to put it politely.*



## Belly

From bell, bag and blow, you get the idea,  
one may be caught in the belly of the beast,  
some sport a potbelly or a Buddha belly, rub it  
for good luck, the wind may belly one's sails.

One can belly up to the bar, but if you do,  
for too long, you may end up belly up,  
pork bellies have a future, the belly  
of a ship holds things and is a hold.

One might dance belly to belly,  
one might spoon belly to back.

Belly dancing is an art, a belly flop is not,  
the belly button is unsewn, if not unseen,  
a belly board may get one safely to shore,  
a belly ache may not, a belly laugh may  
raise one's spirits, belly fat may not.

## Rain

*Rain* seems to have come from *rain*, as if someone looked at rain and said *rain*, cats and dogs came later.

Rain is its own verb, *rain rains, the rain is raining, rain* is said to rain down, although rain may blow in any direction, it's good that rain is made of water, it washes away the residue of its own occurrence.

Almost anything can be said to have rained down on the world and its inhabitants, there may be a rain of bullets, of fists, of blows, of sparks, of plenty, of insults, of kisses, acid rain is poisoned rain that falls.

*Right as rain* is praise, although some events are *called on account of rain*, picnics may be rained out, rain has a family of offspring; rainstorms, rain drops, rain barrel, rain spout, raincoat, rain hat, rain boot, a rain dance is not necessary in the rain forest.

## Lip and Lips

Lips are the fleshy folds that form the mouth, the edge, the rim of an opening, to pay lip service, to lip off, to give someone lip, to smack one's lips, to bite one's lip, to keep a stiff upper lip, to be lippy.

One may use lip gloss, lip balm, lip liner, one may have or trim one's lip hair, one may have a lip ring, liver lips, a fat lip, or puffy lips, one may purse one's lips or choose to take no lip from anyone, a golfer's putt can lip out or hang on the lip of the cup.

One may gaze over the lip of a volcano, one can read another's lips, one can button one's lip, one can curl one's lip or not let something forbidden pass one's lips.

One's lips may be sealed, or something one says or hears may be on everyone's lips, loose lips can sink a ship, if it comes to that.

## Scalp, Scalpel, Scapula

The *scalp* is the skin of one's head, the top of the noggin, or a patch of skin cut from the head as a trophy or even accidentally.

To scalp is to buy tickets to a show or event in order to sell them at a higher price, also a sheath or a husk.

A *scalpel* is a surgeon's knife, once a tool for scraping, not called a scrapel, and not limited to the removing of scalps.

*Scapula* is another name for the shoulder blade, but the shoulder blade is not used for surgery, as a gay blade is not a gay surgeon but a dashing swordsman, unless he has been scalped, and then he is more likely to be dead, less likely to be dashing.

## Lap

That part of the body that appears when one sits and disappears when one stands, a part of a shirt or skirt that hangs, a flap, a part that folds.

To lick or splash, the ocean laps the shore, a dog laps water from its bowl, to lap another in a race is to overcome them by a full circuit of the track.

Good luck falls into one's lap, to live very well is to live in the lap of luxury, a lap was once a piece of cloth sewn to the front of one's garment, it came to be what lay beneath the lap, in reality or in association, in time, we make a vocabulary of our small words.

## Foot

A foot is the end of the pedal extremity, somehow ped is the root of foot, we have been speaking among ourselves for many centuries, and a lot gets lost in the transitions, not to mention the translations, one tries to get off on the right foot, one tries to get one's foot in the door.

Foothills are the lower level of mountains, there's a foot to one's bed, as well as this page, a lead foot drives too fast, whoever pays is said to foot the bill, one may have one foot in the grave and the other foot in one's mouth, to be on one's feet all day is to work hard, foot soldiers do the heavy slogging.

Whatever is *underfoot* has begun, or is being trampled, a group of two or three syllables is a foot, as are twelve inches together, to go on foot is to walk, one sport where the foot is mainly used is called football, another sport where the foot is rarely used is also called football.

We may play footsy with someone we like, we might put a foot to the behind of someone we don't, a foot up is an advantage, putting one's foot down is a rebuke, one might say *my foot*, an expression of disregard to end any further discussion.

## Search

In a search, one circles an area, looking for something, one circulates or goes around, circulating becomes searching.

One searches, one goes on a search, one may search the countryside, a face, or one's own mind, one might click on a search or might authorize an official search.

One might search out, search for, search in, or search about, one might search with a fine tooth comb, with a bloodhound or a magnifying glass, one might go in search of fame and fortune, one's search may be cursory, thorough, exhaustive, or finally abandoned.

One may employ a search engine, one may search the sky or the whole world, but if one cannot find what one is looking for, one might say, when all is said and done, *Search me!*

## Sky

The word for cloud became the word for sky, the name of a particular thing became the name of the whole thing, *out of a clear blue sky*.

*The sky is the limit*, we look to the skies when *to the skies* is the highest we can imagine, to sky a ball is to hit it high, sky high is as high as high can be, clear skies, threatening skies, the old Western bandit says, *Reach for the skies!*

There are gray skies, dark skies, winter skies, blue skies, sunny skies, to sky dive is to dive through and out of the sky.

The skyline is the horizon of land and buildings, the sky mall is purchasing from an airline catalog, a skyscraper is a building that's taller than most.

The night sky is when the stars are most clearly visible, the unobtainable thing one desires most might be only pie in the sky.



## Book

A book is a binding of pages, glued or sewn together, a collection of words, sentences, paragraphs, images, photographs, or pages with something or nothing on them.

One may know another *like a book*, one may book a reservation, *Book it!* means to speed, a criminal may be booked at the station, if you throw the book at someone, they may go to jail for a very long time.

An unusual matter may be *one for the books*, a serious student might *hit the books* before an exam, a booking is how a performer is signed to a job, *in my book* means how I think, a *closed book* means nothing more is revealed, *an open book* means all is revealed.

An accountant keeps the books for another, anyone who *cooks the books* falsifies them, a book burning is the symbolic and real destruction of its contents, book and bark evolved from the same root, we wrote on the skins of trees, we tattooed our limbs to pass a message and still do.

## Save

To save is to make safe, a pitcher saves the game, making the victory safe from further threat, one saves money to keep it safe from loss, one saves someone in danger, one saves a swimmer to keep him or her safe from drowning.

One might save one's money in a safe, leftovers are saved for future use, one saves fuel by not using it, one saves time the same way, or by making wise use of it, so it isn't wasted, one saves waste by composting it.

*Save your breath!* means don't waste it, *Save yourself!* means you're on your own, a shot on goal is saved by being caught or deflected.

Souls are said to be saved, some say soul is what does the saving, one might save up for a vacation, one might save oneself for greater work ahead, one might save oneself the effort, one might save a piece of cake for later or for a loved one, one might save room for pie.

One may be saved by the bell, if someone says, *Save it!* consider it a request to be quiet, *Save me!* is a cry for rescue, *Save the last dance for me!* is a sign of love, *Save up!* means prepare for the future, *savoir faire* is something else, entirely.

## Garden

A garden is an enclosed space, a space inside a greater space, a garden is a place where plants are planted or flowers grown, there are public and private gardens, a garden is a place of cultivation and culture, to garden is to grow, to *lead someone down the garden path* is to mislead them, to deceive them.

There are rock gardens, flower gardens, roof gardens, tea gardens, sunken gardens, there is a garden party, *I never promised you a rose garden* is a denial of ease, a garden weasel is a tool for loosening the soil, a beer garden is for planting oneself in one place to drink it in.

*Garden-variety* means ordinary, *to get back to the garden* is to return to an idyllic time or place, nothing grows in a stone garden, a community garden is shared by many, a zoological garden is a zoo, Madison Square Garden is where those who have grown taller than others, flower.

## Spirit

*Spirit* is born from breath, to breathe, it came to be an otherworldly being, essential nature, consciousness, high spirits are positive feelings, as in the spirit of the law, of the team, of the country, the spirit world is full of ghosts.

To spirit away is to remove something or someone in secret, spirits are alcoholic liquids or those of alchemy, spirit is bravery, courage, desire, ambition, any feeling that permeates a being or group of beings, one might feel the spirit or its absence in nearly any endeavor, one might infuse, or be infused. with spirit.

There is a spirit lake, spirit mountain, spirit river, spirit of God, spirit of Man, spirit of hope and healing, spirit of victory and failure, spirit of forgiveness and vengeance, of wonder, wisdom, and woe.

Nearly everything and everyone claims spirit for itself or themselves, nearly everything breathes, and breathing is a spiritual practice for some, and for others, spirit is merely the presence of their own reality, passing in and out, like the breath of life, in the breath of every living thing.

## Gasp

If one gapes and yawns at the same time, one might gasp, one might take in a sharp, brief breath in sudden surprise.

The last gasp may precede one's death, or it might mean a last chance moment, one might have a gasp of fear, of pain, of surprise, of joy, of wonder, or it might be a gasp for air.

One might gasp in amazement, astonishment, disbelief, or horror, a gasp is a short, convulsive intake of air or a short, convulsive expression, but when *Gasp!* is spoken, there is too much thought for any actual gasping to have occurred.

## Think

To think is to make something appear to oneself, or to let it appear, *think* is related to *thank*, one is not always grateful for this appearance in mind, *I think* seems to be a redundancy, when we identify ourselves *by* our thinking, so much that we ourselves *as* our thinking, a *think piece* is the result of deliberative thinking by the writer.

One thinks of, thinks on, thinks out, thinks up, or thinks through, to *think fit* is to agree that something belongs as it is, to *think nothing of* is to disparage, to *think twice* and *think again* are to reconsider, to *think better of* is to change one's mind about something, to say one is *thinking too much* is to turn one's thinking away or off.

*You've got another think coming!* means one's thinking has been in error, try again, to think aloud means to speak one's thoughts, *come to think of it* means one has begun to consider it, *think big* means to expand one's thinking about what is under consideration.

The abrupt *Think!* means the other doesn't like one's thinking or one's failure to think, *I think* means *this is my opinion or my judgment*, *That's what you think!* means someone has a differing analysis of what one is thinking, *Just think of it!* means, *Wow!*

## Smile

A smile was once a small laugh, the look of a laugh, a quiet laugh, a smirk is the look of laughing down on, or at, someone or something.

When one smiles, the corners of the mouth turn up, in amusement, pleasure, satisfaction, or their opposites, a smile can be derisive, ironic, scornful, one may smile upon another's good fortune or misfortune, one may smile at one's situation in acceptance or rejection, one may smile in welcome or fear, to show that no harm is meant, or to hide harmful intent.

One may be *all smiles* or like the Mona Lisa, enigmatic, one may have smiling eyes, one may *wear a smile like an umbrella*, a grimace is a forced smile, a grin is a broad smile.

An authentic Duchenne smile includes raised cheeks and crinkling crow's feet, the fake *Pan-Am* smile is without either, it takes more muscles to frown than it does to smile, it takes no muscles to do neither.

A smile may be a mile wide, a smile may be *a frown turned upside down*, if one's mother says, *Smile!* it may mean one has been showing another kind of expression, less welcome at the moment of her chastisement.

## Laugh

Laugh it up, laugh it off, laugh yourself silly, he who laugh last may laugh longest or may laugh alone, one might use a laugh track, canned laughter, or laughing gas to encourage a reaction,

if things don't go well, one might end up laughing out of the other side of one's mouth, if things go quietly well, one might laugh up one's sleeve, if things go very well, one might laugh all the way to the bank, if things go badly, one might laugh to keep from crying.

*Don't make me laugh!* expresses disbelief, to laugh in someone's face expresses defiance, a belly laugh is a big laugh, laugh lines are wrinkles that appear when one laughs, a laugh riot may be someone intensely funny or just the opposite, a laugh-a-minute implies someone who is a lot of fun.

*Just for laughs* implies an activity is not serious, *I had to laugh!* mocks the subject of one's attention, a horse laugh may be aimed at a laughing-stock, one might laugh one's head off, a laughing hyena is someone with an unpleasant laugh, *laughter is the best medicine* is advice for the sick at heart.



## Cook

*What's cooking?* and *What's cooking?* are not the same, one is about food being prepared, the other is about anything that might be happening, if one's goose is cooked, it might be time for dinner, or it might mean it's all over, one can *cook up* a tasty dish, an outlandish excuse, or a great idea, one might even cook one's opponent in a fierce contest.

If one cooks the books, it means there has been serious deceit in the accounting, a *cook out* is dining al fresco, often with hotdogs and burgers, a *cook-off* is a contest between cooks, a *cook's tour* is a quick review of any subject, a fry cook prepares food on the grill, a meth cook makes illegal drugs, too many cooks spoil the broth if they get in each other's way.

A cookie is sweet, but not cooked, one's cookie is a sweetheart, but also not cooked, unless he or she is imaginary, then it has been cooked up, to cook for someone is to make them a meal, the Cook Islands are not to be mistaken for the Sandwich Islands.

## Skin

A skin is the fur, the pelt, or the hide of an animal, a human, or a peach, a skin-flint is a miser, a skinhead is one with his hair cut off, to skin something is to remove it's outer layer, to get by, by the skin of one's teeth is by the slightest margin, to get under someone's skin is to irritate or bother them, if something is just under the skin, it's close to the surface.

To skin one's knee is to have the skin worn off, to save one's skin is to survive, to divide into shirts and skins is to create two sides in a contest, to say something is no skin off one's nose is to say it's not a big deal, to be thick-skinned is to be impervious to insult, to jump out of one's skin is to be startled, to be thin-skinned is to be sensitive to injury, if one has skin in the game, one has a stake in its outcome.

Skins are drums made from the stretched skin of animals, to skin is to fleece, to swindle goods or money from others, to be brothers under the skin imply a kinship that may or may not be that of a family, a skin may be a container, to get skinned is to be beaten badly, beauty may be skin deep, but skin is the face of who we are.

## Finger

The fingers of a hand are called the index finger or forefinger, fool's finger or middle finger, physics finger or ring finger, ear finger, little finger, or pinkie finger.

To finger is to point out, to identify a criminal, to have a finger in the pie is to be involved somehow, to give someone the finger is to hold up the middle finger in a show of scorn or anger.

To keep one's fingers crossed is a sign of hopefulness, to finger an instrument is to play it with the fingers, to have someone wrapped around one's little finger is to have complete control over them.

A finger bowl is for washing the fingers, the fingernail grows at the end of a finger, *I can't put my finger on it* means *I can't quite remember it*.

A finger of land is a spit or a small peninsula, if one can't lay a finger on someone, one can't harm them, if one doesn't lift a finger for someone, one doesn't support them in any way, if one lets something slip through one's fingers, it got away.

If one burns one's fingers on something, one thinks one has suffered from the contact, finger painting is hands-on, finger foods are easy to pick up, to put a finger in the dike is to prevent further damage.

To pull someone's finger, upon their request, is to invite their deliberate flatulence, as a kind of practical joke.

## Tooth and Teeth

Toothsome means tasty, toothy means showing lots of teeth, sweet tooth means having a consistent desire for sweets, to sink one's teeth in is to get a bite of or to begin earnest engagement, to show one's teeth is to show one is ready to fight, to fly into the teeth of a storm or anything else is to enter its fiercest part, to fight tooth and nail is to fight with fearsome ferocity.

Toothbrush, toothpick, toothpaste, toothache, baby teeth are temporary, the teeth of a saw are the sharp points of its cutting edge, a law with no teeth is unenforceable.

Someone long in the tooth is old, to *cut one's teeth on* is to use for a beginning, to learn on, harsh sound may set one's teeth on edge, the tooth fairy is said to appear in the night to replace baby teeth that have fallen out with money, anything that makes one's teeth itch an irritation that can't be scratched.

## Plant

One might plant a kiss or a flower, to plant is to place, a spy might be planted behind enemy lines, a plant is a building or a series of buildings designed to be a place for the manufacture of goods.

One might plant plants, or crops, or fields, to plant one's foot is to place it firmly, one might plant an idea in the mind of others by mentioning it in their company, the plant kingdom is all living and extinct plants.

One may plant an object so that it will be found, like a gun on a criminal suspect, or so that it will have an effect later, one might plant a right cross on the jaw of one's opponent in the boxing ring.

There are bottling plants, smelting plants, packing plants, recycling plants, disposal plants, houseplants, garden plants, poisonous plants, industrial plants, manufacturing plants, and potted plants, a magician may have a plant seated in the audience to assist in the deceptions.

## Time

Time may be on one's side, time may be of the essence, time and tide wait for no man, time flies, time heals all wounds, time is money, time marches on, it's high time, time was, and time will tell.

One might do time, a criminal can be sentenced to hard time, one might live in hard times, one's time is near if one is dying, one might party with a good time Charlie, one might be ready for bed time, springtime,

There is double time, full time, and overtime, time release and time payments, one might have time on one's hands, things may occur from time to time, or for the time being, but the time is now.

One might be ahead of time, behind the times, or on time, one might gain time, lose time, save time, keep time, have time, it might be half-time, one might take time out or time off.

Sometimes, time's up, things may occur in good time, in no time, or in one's own time, one might make time, lose time, pass time, or waste time, one might arrive in the nick of time, and remain, in the meantime.

One might take time, a long time, a short time, no time at all, there are time bombs, time cards, time clocks, time capsules, time out, one might give someone the time of day, one might experience the time of one's life, there are time shares, time travel, time zones, when one is killing time, it's time to say goodbye.

## Smart

To be smart is to be intelligent, smart money is spent or bet by those in the know, smart talk is backtalk, a smarty-pants is like a smart-alec, is like a smart ass, who is an arrogant know-it-all.

A smart bomb is designed for accuracy, if something smarts, it stings or hurts, smart style is chic and fashionable, a smart mouth is a sign of impudence, one may or may not have the smarts it takes to do the job right.

There is a smart crowd, a smart car, a smart house, a smart phone, a smart card, a smart salute, one may be too smart for one's own good, to step smartly is to step lively, to smarten up is to get smarter, somehow.

## Paste

Paste is like dough like pasta, a form of adhesive or a tasty mix like almond or anchovy paste, one might paste a poster on a wall, one might paste one's opponent in the boxing ring.

To get pasted is to get drunk or to lose in a contest by a large margin, there are hard pastes and soft pastes, one can paste on a computer file by sticking in something new or paste on paper, pasteboard is cardboard with a paper facing, paste jewelry is fake.

Wallpaper paste keeps the wallpaper stuck to the wall, eating paste made of flour and water may do no harm, or it might cause a stomach ache, it's not the same as food that sticks to one's ribs.



## Crack

Somebody made a sound like *crack*, and someone called it *crack*, one can crack a whip, crack a smile, crack a book, one can open a crack, one can fall in a crack, one can step on a crack and fear for one's mother's back, a crack shot will hear the crack of the rifle, mirrors crack, and so do defendants under fierce cross-examination.

Cracked lips may hurt, smoked crack can kill, to crack a case is to solve it, a crack-up on the highway is dangerous, a crack-up in the mind is just as bad, to crack into the big time is commendable, a crackerjack player is one of the best, to crack down is to take steps to curtail something, to fall through the cracks is to be overlooked or missed, one might crack a blow or a nut.

If one cracks a window, it is opened slightly, if one cracks the glass, it may shatter, if one cracks a joke, someone may laugh, if one cracks a code, someone may die or be saved, if one takes a crack at something, it's a start, the crack of dawn starts the day, to crack a safe is to open it, a wisecrack may not be wise, the crack of doom is the end of the world.

## Copy

Copy once meant *plenty* as in *copious*, one may copy a document or the actions of another, one may copy a move, a look, or an idea, good copy is workable material for journalists, one may copy down or copy out, copies may be exact or poor, one may copy by freehand or by tracing, a clone is a copy.

A forgery is a copy, as is a duplicate, *copy that* means I get what you are saying, copy is a command on one's computer, a copycat is someone who habitually acts like someone else, a copy editor is one who prepares work for publication, a copy machine is just that, copy paper goes in the copy machine.

Copyright guarantees no one can copy one's work, a copy shop is a business that produces copies, a copywriter writes advertising copy, a carbon copy uses inked paper to make a copy of typing, a photocopy uses a photographic process for copying, parrots copy sound, to pirate is to copy but not necessarily pirates.

## Couch, Coach, and Coax

To lie down became couch, similar to a sofa, *to couch in* means to say something a certain way, a couch potato lies in a relaxed state, a coach is a carriage or one who carries someone through something, or on to greater success, one may coach another off the couch.

A coach might couch his or her instruction in soft or harsh language, trains have cars called coaches, coach on a plane is not first class, a stage coach once carried passengers long distances in stages, a coachman is the driver of a coach.

One may coach or coax someone or something, like a splinter from one's thumb with careful steps, to coax is to persuade, a couch potato may coax another to bring more potato chips and then coach the other on how to open the bag.

A coach may coax players to play more effectively, to coax first meant a fool or to fool, then to deceive, then to convince, as one might coax a coach onto the couch in a coach on the way to the big game.

## Toe

Toe was once the word for fingers and toes, to *toe the line* is to play by the rules, to *toe a nail* is to place it at an angle.

To *toe a ball* is to kick it, to *put one toe in the water* is to test the situation, to be *on one's toes* is to be ready, to *step on someone's toes* is to offend or hurt them in some way.

If something *makes your toes curl*, it's embarrassing, if one can touch one's toes, one is demonstrating flexibility.

To *turn up one's toes* is to end up dead, the outer edge of a spoon is called its toe, to stand on *tiptoe* is to stretch as far as one might.

A *toehead* is more accurately a *towhead* from the flax that was once towed through a comb of nails, the short strands were called tow, *toe jam* is the detritus that accumulates between the toes.

A *toe kick* uses only the front of the boot, a *toe loop* is an ice skating jump, the toenail protects the toe and may be used to decorate it.

*Toe rings* are like finger rings, *toe socks* and *toe shoes* have individual compartments for separate digits, *toe shoes* in ballet are designed for dancers to stand on their toes, standing *toe-to-toe* is standing as close as possible to another, for good or ill, something that is *toe-up* is thought to be unattractive, *head-to-toe* includes everything in-between.

## Mind

Mind is to think, to have it *on one's mind*, to *bear in mind*, to *call to mind*, a great mind is one of high mental ability, to change one's mind is to change one's thinking on a subject, to lose one's mind is to lose mental abilities, an adult minds children by taking care of them, children mind adults by obeying them.

If one *minds* doing something, one doesn't care to do it, imagination is said to be *all in the mind*, when one gives another *a piece of one's mind* it implies criticism or judgment, *peace of mind* is serenity, to be *of two minds* is to be undecided, to *make up one's mind* is to decide.

*Never mind* means not to be bothered by, *mind your own business* means not to meddle in others' affairs, *mind you* means to pay attention, to *blow your mind* means to be astounded by, mind control is a form of severe persuasion, *playing mind games* is a kind of attempted deception.

*Mind over matter* means disregarding pain or discomfort, *mind reading* is the supposed ability to know what someone else is thinking, *mind your manners* means to act in a socially acceptable way, if an idea or image *crosses one's mind* a thought has occurred, so that it's now *in mind* or *on one's mind*.

## Idea

Rooted in *to see*, an *idea* is a thing of the mind, if one has *no idea* what to do, there is no plan, *the very idea* is a negative statement of emphasis, *to get ideas* is to become ambitious, *not my idea* is disagreement, *that's an idea* is a statement of possible agreement.

An *idea bank* is a place to deposit new ideas, an *idea center* is similar, *idea factory*, *idea lab*, *idea kitchen*, and *idea generator* are for creating new ideas, an *idea map* shows the parts of an idea.

A *wild idea* is original or unwelcome, a *rough idea* is an estimate, *some idea* is an approximation, a *general idea* is an impression.

## Spend

One can spend an hour or spend a dollar,  
if something is all gone it has been spent.

A spent cartridge is one that has been shot,  
spent fuel rods are from a nuclear reactor.

To be exhausted is to feel spent, to spend down is  
to reduce, a spendthrift is not thrifty but extravagant.

To misspend one's time is to waste it, to outspend  
another is to exceed them in financial outlay.

To overspend is to spend more than one can afford,  
To underspend is to spend less than might be required.

## Thunder

Thunder and lightening, like Santa's reindeer Donder and Blitzen, thunder-thighs means they are big, to thunder means to roar in nature, in anger or loudly, a thundering idiot is extremely stupid.

A thunderbolt is lightening followed by thunder, something called a thunderbolt is a sudden surprisel a thunderhead is a cumulonimbus cloud seen during a thunderstorm, a thunderstorm is an electrical or lightening storm.

*Thunder Alley* is that part of the country where the most tornados occur, the thunderbird is a legendary bird of power among native Americans.



## Cool

Cool originally came from to be cold, to be calmly bold, a cool greeting is unfriendly, a cool operator is in control, to play it cool is to be nonchalant, a cool million is all of it, if passions cool, they become less ardent.

Tempers cool and so does the weather, to cool one's heels is to be kept waiting, to keep one's cool is to keep one's poise, to cool it is to relax or back off, to cool out, cool off, or cool down is to take a break.

To say *that's cool* is to approve, to make cool is to assuage, to lose one's cool is to no longer be coolheaded, cool beans is a compliment, cool jazz has a relaxed tempo and lighter tones, cool kicks are popular shoes, be cool is a warning, to blow one's cool is to lose it, big time.

A cooler is a refrigerator, also a jail, too cool for school is very cool, a *long tall cool drink of water* is someone slim and attractive, a cool cat is someone with style and social ease.

## School

School once meant a place of leisure, a school of fish is a large grouping, one might school another in any skill or manner of learning, any group with a unifying method or manner might be called a school, to be old school is to follow a tried and true way, the school of hard knocks is learning through difficulties, to home-school is to educate at home.

Day school, night school, summer school, grade school, grammar school, middle school, prep school, graduate school, law school, med school, school of cosmetology, school of visual arts, school of journalism.

School teacher, school master, school boy, school girl, school building, school day, school year, school mate, school bag, school bus, school bell, school uniform, schoolhouse, school marm, school book, school break.