CHINESE BOOST

Idioms and proverbs Chinese vocabulary list

166 words with pinyin, 繁體 and meanings, 139 of them with an example sentence. Every word here links to its entry on the site.

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Intermediate (HSK 4-6)

马马虎虎 馬馬虎虎

mǎmahūhū careless / casual / vague / not so bad / so-so / tolerable / fair

谚语 諺語

yànyǔ proverb

名句

míngjù oft-quoted phrase / famous line

> 这句名句我在书上读过。
> Zhè jù míngjù wǒ zài shū shàng dúguo.
> I've read this famous line in a book.

比喻

bǐyù to compare / to liken to / metaphor / analogy / figure of speech / figuratively

> 老师说，这个比喻很有意思。
> Lǎoshī shuō, zhège bǐyù hěn yǒuyìsi.
> The teacher said this metaphor is very interesting.

形容

xíngróng to describe / countenance / appearance

> 我不知道该怎么形容。
> Wǒ bù zhīdào gāi zěnme xíngróng.
> I can't really describe it.

成语 成語

chéngyǔ Chinese set expression, typically of 4 characters, often alluding to a story or historical quotation / idiom / proverb / saying / adage

> 他说话时爱用成语。
> Tā shuōhuà shí ài yòng chéngyǔ.
> He likes to use idioms when he talks.

方言

fāngyán topolect / dialect / the first Chinese dialect dictionary, edited by Yang Xiong 揚雄|扬雄[Yang2 Xiong2] in 1st century, containing over 9000 characters

> 我对方言很感兴趣。
> Wǒ duì fāngyán hěn gǎnxìngqù.
> I'm very interested in dialects.

典故

diǎngù classical story or quote from the literature / the story behind sth

格言

géyán maxim

出处 出處

chūchù source (esp. of quotation or literary allusion) / origin / where sth comes from
chūchǔ to take office or retire / to advance or withdraw / to take office or retire / to advance or withdraw

> 请你查一查这个词语的出处。
> Qǐng nǐ chá yi chá zhège cíyǔ de chūchǔ.
> Please look up where this expression comes from.

含义 含義

hányì meaning (implicit in a phrase) / implied meaning / hidden meaning / hint / connotation

> 这个词有两种含义。
> Zhège cí yǒu liǎng zhǒng hányì.
> This word has two meanings.

自言自语 自言自語

zìyánzìyǔ to talk to oneself / to think aloud / to soliloquize

> 老人时常自言自语。
> Lǎorén shícháng zìyán-zìyǔ.
> Old people often talk to themselves.

百闻不如一见 百聞不如一見

bǎiwénbùrúyījiàn seeing once is better than hearing a hundred times (idiom) / seeing for oneself is better than hearing from many others / seeing is believing

> 百闻不如一见，这里真漂亮!
> Bǎiwénbùrúyíjiàn, zhèlǐ zhēn piàoliang!
> Seeing is believing, and this place really is beautiful!

熟能生巧

shúnéngshēngqiǎo with familiarity you learn the trick (idiom) / practice makes perfect

> 熟能生巧，多练几次吧。
> Shúnéngshēngqiǎo, duō liàn jǐcì ba.
> Practice makes perfect, so try a few more times.

三心二意

sānxīn'èryì in two minds about sth (idiom) / half-hearted / shilly-shallying

不见不散 不見不散

bùjiànbùsàn lit. Even if we don't see each other, don't give up and leave (idiom) / fig. Be sure to wait! / See you there!

> 咱们说好了，不见不散。
> Zánmen shuōhǎole, bújiànbúsàn.
> It's settled then, see you there.

万事开头难 萬事開頭難

wànshìkāitóunán every beginning is difficult (idiom) / getting started is always the hardest part

> 万事开头难，慢慢来吧。
> Wànshìkāitóunán, mànmànlái ba.
> Every beginning is hard, so take it slowly.

失败是成功之母 失敗是成功之母

shībàishìchénggōngzhīmǔ Failure is the mother of success.

> 别难过，失败是成功之母。
> Bié nánguò, shībàishìchénggōngzhīmǔ.
> Don't be sad, failure is the mother of success.

一模一样 一模一樣

yīmúyīyàng exactly alike / identical

> 他跟哥哥一模一样。
> Tā gēn gēge yìmúyíyàng.
> He is identical to his older brother.

众所周知 眾所周知

zhòngsuǒzhōuzhī as everyone knows

> 他的名字众所周知。
> Tā de míngzi zhòngsuǒzhōuzhī.
> Everybody knows his name.

一帆风顺 一帆風順

yīfānfēngshùn propitious wind throughout the journey (idiom) / plain sailing / to go smoothly / have a nice trip!

> 人生不会总是一帆风顺的。
> Rénshēng búhuì zǒngshì yìfānfēngshùn de.
> Life is not always plain sailing.

人山人海

rénshānrénhǎi multitude / vast crowd

> 那里人山人海。
> Nàli rénshānrénhǎi.
> There's a huge number of people there.

衣食住行

yīshízhùxíng clothing, food, housing and transportation (idiom) / people's basic needs

> 他赚的钱只够付衣食住行。
> Tā zhuàn de qián zhǐ gòu fù yīshízhùxíng.
> The money he earns only covers his basic needs.

话里有话 話裡有話

huàlǐyǒuhuà one's words carry an implicit meaning

言外之意

yánwàizhīyì unspoken implication / the actual meaning of what was said

Advanced (HSK 7-9)

入乡随俗 入鄉隨俗

rùxiāngsuísú when in Rome, do as the Romans do

> 住在这里就得入乡随俗啊。
> Zhù zài zhèlǐ jiù de rùxiāngsuísú a.
> If you live here, you have to follow the local customs.

俗语 俗語

súyǔ common saying / proverb / colloquial speech

> 这句俗语是什么意思?
> Zhè jù súyǔ shì shénme yìsi?
> What does this saying mean?

名言

míngyán saying / famous remark

> 他常把这句名言挂在嘴边。
> Tā cháng bǎ zhè jù míngyán guàzàizuǐbiān.
> He often has this saying on his lips.

寓言

yùyán fable / allegory / parable

> 这则寓言告诉孩子要诚实。
> Zhè zé yùyán gàosu háizi yào chéngshí.
> This fable teaches children to be honest.

寓意

yùyì moral (of a story) / lesson to be learned / implication / message / import / metaphorical meaning

> 龙在中国文化里寓意吉祥。
> Lóng zài Zhōngguó wénhuà lǐ yùyì jíxiáng.
> In Chinese culture, the dragon symbolizes good fortune.

引用

yǐnyòng to quote / to cite / to recommend / to appoint / reference

> 这个引用出自哪里?
> Zhège yǐnyòng chūzì nǎlǐ?
> Where does this quote come from?

歇后语 歇後語

xiēhòuyǔ anapodoton (a saying in which the second part, uttered after a pause or totally left out, is the intended meaning of the allegory presented in the first part)

惯用语 慣用語

guànyòngyǔ commonly used phrase / idiom / colloquial usage

熟语 熟語

shúyǔ idiom

土话 土話

tǔhuà vernacular / slang / dialect / patois

口头禅 口頭禪

kǒutóuchán Zen saying repeated as cant / catchphrase / mantra / favorite expression / stock phrase

> 这句话成了她的口头禅。
> Zhè jù huà chéng le tā de kǒutóuchán.
> That sentence has become her favorite expression.

一举两得 一舉兩得

yījǔliǎngdé one action, two gains (idiom) / two birds with one stone

> 散步买菜，一举两得！
> Sànbù mǎicài, yìjǔliǎngdé!
> Walking and shopping for groceries at once, two birds with one stone!

半途而废 半途而廢

bàntú'érfèi to give up halfway (idiom) / leave sth unfinished

> 不要半途而废。
> Búyào bàntú'érfèi.
> Once you have begun to do something, never give up.

一心一意

yīxīnyīyì concentrating one's thoughts and efforts / single-minded / bent on / intently

> 她一心一意地工作。
> Tā yìxīn-yíyì de gōngzuò.
> She works with single-minded determination.

画蛇添足 畫蛇添足

huàshétiānzú lit. draw legs on a snake (idiom) / fig. to ruin the effect by adding sth superfluous / to overdo it

> 不要画蛇添足。
> Búyào huàshétiānzú.
> Let well alone.

守株待兔

shǒuzhūdàitù lit. to guard a tree-stump, waiting for rabbits (idiom) / to wait idly for opportunities / to trust to chance rather than show initiative

> 找工作不能守株待兔。
> Zhǎo gōngzuò bùnéng shǒuzhūdàitù.
> You can't just sit around waiting for a job to come to you.

亡羊补牢 亡羊補牢

wángyángbǔláo lit. to mend the pen after sheep are lost (idiom) / fig. to act belatedly / better late than never / to lock the stable door after the horse has bolted

> 亡羊补牢，现在学也不晚。
> Wángyángbǔláo, xiànzài xué yě bù wǎn.
> Better late than never, it's not too late to learn now.

刻舟求剑 刻舟求劍

kèzhōuqiújiàn lit. a notch on the side of a boat to locate a sword dropped overboard (idiom) / fig. an action made pointless by changed circumstances

> 旧地图找新路，是刻舟求剑。
> Jiù dìtú zhǎo xīn lù, shì kèzhōuqiújiàn.
> Using an old map to find a new road is futile, like marking the boat to find a lost sword.

掩耳盗铃 掩耳盜鈴

yǎn'ěrdàolíng lit. to cover one's ears whilst stealing a bell / to deceive oneself / to bury one's head in the sand (idiom)

> 不看成绩就是掩耳盗铃。
> Bú kàn chéngjì jiùshì yǎn'ěrdàolíng.
> Refusing to look at the grades is just fooling yourself.

对牛弹琴 對牛彈琴

duìniútánqín lit. to play the lute to a cow (idiom) / fig. offering a treat to an unappreciative audience / to cast pearls before swine / caviar to the general / to preach to deaf ears / to talk over sb's head

> 对牛弹琴的故事你听过吗？
> Duìniútánqín de gùshi nǐ tīngguo ma?
> Have you heard the story of playing the lute to a cow?

井底之蛙

jǐngdǐzhīwā a frog at the bottom of a well (idiom) / a person of limited outlook and experience

> 他就像井底之蛙。
> Tā jiù xiàng jǐngdǐzhīwā.
> He is like a frog in a well.

自相矛盾

zìxiāngmáodùn to contradict oneself / self-contradictory / inconsistent

> 证人的说法自相矛盾。
> Zhèngrén de shuōfa zìxiāngmáodùn.
> The witness's statements are inconsistent.

画龙点睛 畫龍點睛

huàlóngdiǎnjīng to paint a dragon and dot in the eyes (idiom) / fig. to add the vital finishing touch / the crucial point that brings the subject to life / a few words to clinch the point

> 我将增加画龙点睛的功能。
> Wǒ jiāng zēngjiā huàlóngdiǎnjīng de gōngnéng.
> I'll add the finishing touch.

胸有成竹

xiōngyǒuchéngzhú to have a well-thought-out plan in mind

> 她胸有成竹地走上台。
> Tā xiōngyǒuchéngzhú de zǒu shàngtái.
> She walked onto the stage with full confidence in her plan.

理所当然 理所當然

lǐsuǒdāngrán as it should be by rights (idiom) / proper and to be expected as a matter of course / inevitable and right

> 她理所当然的取得了胜利。
> Tā lǐsuǒdāngrán de qǔdéle shènglì.
> She's sure to succeed.

全力以赴

quánlìyǐfù to make an all-out effort

> 他在全力以赴。
> Tā zài quánlì-yǐfù.
> He's doing his best.

迫不及待

pòbùjídài unable to hold oneself back / eager to do sth without delay

> 我迫不及待想见到你！
> Wǒ pòbùjídài xiǎng jiàndào nǐ!
> I can't wait to see you!

取长补短 取長補短

qǔchángbǔduǎn lit. use others' strengths to make up for one's weak points (idiom from Mencius) / to use this in place of that / what you lose on the swings, you win on the roundabouts

> 你该向同事取长补短。
> Nǐ gāi xiàng tóngshì qǔchángbǔduǎn.
> You should learn from your colleagues' strengths to improve your weak points.

后悔莫及 後悔莫及

hòuhuǐmòjí too late for regrets (idiom) / It is useless to repent after the event.

无论如何 無論如何

wúlùnrúhé whatever the case / in any event / no matter what / by all possible means

> 无论如何，谢了！
> Wúlùnrúhé, xièle!
> Thank you all the same.

不耻下问 不恥下問

bùchǐxiàwèn not feel ashamed to ask and learn from one's subordinates

> 经理不耻下问，请教新人。
> Jīnglǐ bùchǐxiàwèn, qǐngjiào xīnrén.
> The manager is not too proud to ask the newcomer for advice.

光阴似箭 光陰似箭

guāngyīnsìjiàn time flies like an arrow (idiom) / How time flies!

一石二鸟 一石二鳥

yīshí'èrniǎo to kill two birds with one stone (idiom)

趁热打铁 趁熱打鐵

chènrèdǎtiě to strike while the iron is hot

> 你该趁热打铁，马上去复习。
> Nǐ gāi chènrèdǎtiě, mǎshàng qù fùxí.
> You should strike while the iron is hot and go review right now.

实事求是 實事求是

shíshìqiúshì lit. to seek truth from facts (idiom) / fig. to be practical and realistic

> 做研究要实事求是。
> Zuò yánjiū yào shíshìqiúshì.
> Research should seek truth from facts.

引人注目

yǐnrénzhùmù to attract attention / eye-catching / conspicuous

> 她的红色礼服使她引人注目。
> Tā de hóngsè lǐfú shǐ tā yǐnrén-zhùmù.
> Her red dress made her stand out.

大街小巷

dàjiēxiǎoxiàng great streets and small alleys (idiom) / everywhere in the city

> 大街小巷都挂满了灯笼。
> Dàjiē-xiǎoxiàng dōu guà mǎnle dēnglóng.
> Lanterns were hung all over the streets and alleys.

千方百计 千方百計

qiānfāngbǎijì lit. thousand ways, a hundred plans (idiom) / by every possible means

> 他千方百计想买到票。
> Tā qiānfāng-bǎijì xiǎng mǎi dào piào.
> He tried every possible means to get a ticket.

措手不及

cuòshǒubùjí no time to deal with it (idiom) / caught unprepared

> 消息来得太快，我措手不及。
> Xiāoxi láide tài kuài, wǒ cuòshǒubùjí.
> The news came so fast that I wasn't ready for it.

家喻户晓 家喻戶曉

jiāyùhùxiǎo understood by everyone (idiom) / well known / a household name

> 这首歌在中国家喻户晓。
> Zhè shǒu gē zài Zhōngguó jiāyù-hùxiǎo.
> This song is known to everyone in China.

从容不迫 從容不迫

cóngróngbùpò calm / unruffled

> 他从容不迫地走上了讲台。
> Tā cóngróngbúpò de zǒu shàng le jiǎngtái.
> He walked up to the podium calmly.

理直气壮 理直氣壯

lǐzhíqìzhuàng in the right and self-confident (idiom) / bold and confident with justice on one's side / to have the courage of one's convictions / just and forceful

> 他理直气壮地说出了自己的想法。
> Tā lǐzhíqìzhuàng de shuōchūle zìjǐ de xiǎngfǎ.
> He confidently stated his views with the courage of his convictions.

独一无二 獨一無二

dúyīwú'èr unique / unmatched / unrivalled

> 这真是好得独一无二！
> Zhè zhēnshi hǎo de dúyī-wú'èr!
> This is uniquely good.

错综复杂 錯綜複雜

cuòzōngfùzá tangled and complicated (idiom)

> 老城区的小巷错综复杂。
> Lǎochéng Qū de xiǎoxiàng cuòzōng-fùzá.
> The little alleys in the old town are a tangled maze.

针锋相对 針鋒相對

zhēnfēngxiāngduì to oppose each other with equal harshness (idiom) / tit for tat / measure for measure

> 兄弟俩一见面就针锋相对。
> Xiōngdì liǎ yí jiànmiàn jiù zhēnfēng-xiāngduì.
> The two brothers go at each other the moment they meet.

斩钉截铁 斬釘截鐵

zhǎndīngjiétiě to chop the nail and slice the iron (idiom) / resolute and decisive / unhesitating / categorical

> 我斩钉截铁地拒绝了。
> Wǒ zhǎndīng-jiétiě de jùjuéle.
> I flatly refused.

力不从心 力不從心
lìbùcóngxīn to lack the ability to do what one would wish
> 工作太多，他力不从心。
> Gōngzuò tài duō, tā lìbùcóngxīn.
> There's too much work, and he can't keep up.

触目惊心 觸目驚心
chùmùjīngxīn lit. shocks the eye, astonishes the heart (idiom) / shocking / horrible to see / a ghastly sight
> 车祸现场的画面触目惊心。
> Chēhuò xiànchǎng de huàmiàn chùmù-jīngxīn.
> The scene of the car accident was horrible to look at.

提心吊胆 提心吊膽
tíxīndiàodǎn nervous / fearful / on edge
> 他开车时总是提心吊胆。
> Tā kāichē shí zǒngshì tíxīn-diàodǎn.
> He is always on edge when he drives.

千军万马 千軍萬馬
qiānjūnwànmǎ magnificent army with thousands of men and horses (idiom) / impressive display of manpower / all the King's horses and all the King's men
> 胃里如同千军万马开过。
> Wèi lǐ rútóng qiānjūn-wànmǎ kāiguo.
> An army marches on its stomach.

Advanced (HSK 7-9), part 2

鸦雀无声 鴉雀無聲
yāquèwúshēng lit. crow and peacock make no sound / absolute silence (idiom) / not a single voice can be heard / absolute silence
> 半夜的小区里鸦雀无声。
> Bànyè de xiǎoqū lǐ yāquèwúshēng.
> The neighborhood is completely silent in the middle of the night.

五花八门 五花八門
wǔhuābāmén myriad / all kinds of / all sorts of
> 超市里的零食五花八门。
> Chāoshì lǐ de língshí wǔhuābāmén.
> The snacks in the supermarket come in all kinds.

接二连三 接二連三
jiē'èrliánsān one after another / in quick succession
> 他接二连三地打喷嚏。
> Tā jiē'èrliánsān de dǎpēntì.
> He sneezed again and again.

犹豫不决 猶豫不決
yóuyùbùjué hesitancy / indecision / to waver
> 他为什么仍然犹豫不决?
> Tā wèishénme réngrán yóuyùbùjué?
> Why did he remain hesitant?

刮目相看
guāmùxiāngkàn to have a whole new level of respect for sb or sth / to sit up and take notice (of sb's improved performance etc)
> 我对你刮目相看了。
> Wǒ duì nǐ guāmùxiāngkàn le.
> I'm seeing you in a new light.

争先恐后 爭先恐後
zhēngxiānkǒnghòu to compete to be first / to scramble to get ahead / to rush forward for fear of falling behind
> 孩子们争先恐后地举手。
> Háizimen zhēngxiānkǒnghòu de jǔshǒu.
> The children all scrambled to be the first to raise their hands.

见多识广 見多識廣
jiànduōshíguǎng experienced and knowledgeable
> 她出国多年，真是见多识广啊!
> Tā chūguó duōnián, zhēnshi jiànduōshíguǎng a!
> She's been abroad for years, and she's really seen a lot of the world!

耐人寻味 耐人尋味
nàirénxúnwèi thought-provoking / to provide food for thought
> 那幅画的名字很耐人寻味。
> Nà fú huà de míngzi hěn nàirénxúnwèi.
> The title of that painting is very thought-provoking.

千变万化 千變萬化
qiānbiànwànhuà countless changes / constant permutation
> 云的形状千变万化。
> Yún de xíngzhuàng qiānbiànwànhuà.
> The shapes of clouds are ever changing.

千钧一发 千鈞一髮
qiānjūnyīfà a thousand pounds hangs by a thread (idiom) / (at the) critical / perilous (moment)
> 那是个千钧一发的时刻。
> Nà shì gè qiānjūnyífà de shíkè.
> That was a critical moment.

默默无闻 默默無聞
mòmòwúwén unknown / unrenowned
> 默默无闻的人也值得尊敬。
> Mòmòwúwén de rén yě zhíde zūnjìng.
> Unknown people deserve respect too.

应有尽有 應有盡有
yīngyǒujìnyǒu everything that should be here is here (idiom) / all one can think of is on hand / to have all one needs
> 我们应有尽有。
> Wǒmen yīngyǒujìnyǒu.
> We have what we need.

水落石出
shuǐluòshíchū as the water recedes, the rocks appear (idiom) / the truth comes to light
> 真相很快就会水落石出了。
> Zhēnxiàng hěn kuài jiù huì shuǐluò-shíchū le.
> It won't be long before we know the truth.

弄虚作假 弄虛作假
nòngxūzuòjiǎ to practice fraud (idiom) / by trickery
> 考试时不能弄虚作假。
> Kǎoshì shí bùnéng nòngxūzuòjiǎ.
> You must not cheat during exams.

古今中外
gǔjīnzhōngwài at all times and in all places (idiom)

> 他读遍了古今中外的名著。
> Tā dú biànle gǔjīnzhōngwài de míngzhù.
> He has read the famous works of every age and country.

摇摇欲坠 搖搖欲墜
yáoyáoyùzhuì tottering / on the verge of collapse

> 那间老房子的围墙摇摇欲坠。
> Nà jiān lǎo fángzi de wéiqiáng yáoyáoyùzhuì.
> The wall around that old house is tottering.

博大精深
bódàjīngshēn wide-ranging and profound

> 你觉得中医博大精深吗?
> Nǐ juéde zhōngyī bódàjīngshēn ma?
> Do you think traditional Chinese medicine is wide-ranging and profound?

重中之重
zhòngzhōngzhīzhòng of the utmost importance / of highest priority

> 当前的重中之重是什么?
> Dāngqián de zhòngzhōngzhīzhòng shì shénme?
> What is the highest priority right now?

引人入胜 引人入勝
yǐnrénrùshèng to enchant / fascinating

> 这本小说的故事很引人入胜。
> Zhè běn xiǎoshuō de gùshi hěn yǐnrénrùshèng.
> The story of this novel is fascinating.

记忆犹新 記憶猶新
jìyìyóuxīn to remain fresh in one's memory (idiom)

> 我仍然记忆犹新。
> Wǒ réngrán jìyìyóuxīn.
> It is still fresh in my memory.

半信半疑
bànxìnbànyí half believing, half doubting / not quite convinced / skeptical

> 大家对这个消息都半信半疑。
> Dàjiā duì zhège xiāoxi dōu bànxìnbànyí.
> Everyone is skeptical about this news.

异口同声 異口同聲
yìkǒutóngshēng different mouths, same voice / to speak in unison (idiom)

> 他们异口同声，都说不去。
> Tāmen yìkǒutóngshēng, dōu shuō bú qù.
> They all said in unison that they weren't going.

锦上添花 錦上添花
jǐnshàngtiānhuā to add flowers to brocade (idiom) / to make sth good even better / to add an extra (often nonessential) benefit or embellishment

> 你的礼物真是锦上添花!
> Nǐ de lǐwù zhēnshi jǐnshàngtiānhuā!
> Your gift is the perfect finishing touch!

齐心协力 齊心協力
qíxīnxiélì to work with a common purpose (idiom) / to make concerted efforts / to pull together / to work as one

> 全家人齐心协力搬了新家。
> Quánjiā rén qíxīnxiélì bānle xīn jiā.
> The whole family pulled together to move into the new home.

诸如此类 諸如此類
zhūrúcǐlèi things like this (idiom) / and so on / and the rest / etc

> 他常问天气、路线诸如此类。
> Tā cháng wèn tiānqì, lùxiàn zhūrúcǐlèi.
> He often asks about the weather, routes, etc.

见义勇为 見義勇為
jiànyìyǒngwéi (usu. of a passer-by who comes across a critical situation) to step in and help / to take brave or selfless action

> 他跳进河里救人，真是见义勇为!
> Tā tiàojìn hé lǐ jiù rén, zhēnshi jiànyìyǒngwéi!
> He jumped into the river to save someone, which was truly brave and selfless!

力所能及
lìsuǒnéngjí as far as one's capabilities extend (idiom) / to the best of one's ability / within one's powers

> 帮邻居做点力所能及的事。
> Bāng línjū zuò diǎn lìsuǒnéngjí de shì.
> Help the neighbors with whatever you're able to do.

俗话 俗話
súhuà common saying / proverb

> 你听过这句俗话吗?
> Nǐ tīngguo zhè jù súhuà ma?
> Have you heard this saying before?

交头接耳 交頭接耳
jiāotóujiē'ěr to whisper to one another's ear

> 上课不能交头接耳。
> Shàngkè bùnéng jiāotóujiē'ěr.
> You must not talk to each other in class.

千姿百态 千姿百態
qiānzībǎitài to come in many different shapes / to display a great variety of forms

> 公园里的花千姿百态，非常好看。
> Gōngyuán lǐ de huā qiānzībǎitài, fēicháng hǎokàn.
> The flowers in the park come in all shapes and forms, and they're beautiful.

以身作则 以身作則
yǐshēnzuòzé to set an example (idiom) / to serve as a model

> 要孩子读书，先以身作则。
> Yào háizi dúshū, xiān yǐshēnzuòzé.
> If you want your child to read, set an example first.

刻不容缓 刻不容緩
kèbùrónghuǎn to brook no delay / to demand immediate action

> 水管破了，修理刻不容缓。
> Shuǐguǎn pòle, xiūlǐ kèbùrónghuǎn.
> The water pipe has burst, and it can't wait to be fixed.

异想天开 異想天開

yìxiǎngtiānkāi to imagine the wildest thing / to indulge in fantasy

> 别异想天开了，这不可能！
> Bié yìxiǎngtiānkāi le, zhè bù kěnéng!
> Stop dreaming up wild ideas, this is impossible!

开天辟地 開天闢地

kāitiānpìdì to split heaven and earth apart (refers to the Pangu 盘古|盘古[Pan2 gu3] creation myth) (idiom) / unprecedented / first of its kind

> 登月是人类开天辟地的大事。
> Dēngyuè shì rénlèi kāitiānpìdì de dàshì.
> Landing on the moon was an unprecedented event for humankind.

数一数二 數一數二

shǔyīshǔ'èr reckoned to be best or second best / one of the very best / to list one by one

> 这家饭馆的鱼数一数二。
> Zhè jiā fànguǎn de yú shǔyīshǔ'èr.
> The fish at this restaurant is among the very best.

持之以恒 持之以恆

chízhīyǐhéng to pursue unremittingly (idiom) / to persevere

> 学外语必须持之以恒。
> Xué wàiyǔ bìxū chízhīyǐhéng.
> Learning a foreign language takes perseverance.

对症下药 對症下藥

duìzhèngxiàyào lit. to prescribe the right medicine for an illness (idiom) / fig. to study a problem to find the right way to solve it / to take appropriate steps

> 先找出原因，才能对症下药。
> Xiān zhǎochū yuányīn, cái néng duìzhèngxiàyào.
> You have to find the cause first before you can take the right steps.

勇往直前

yǒngwǎngzhíqián to advance bravely

> 他带着队伍勇往直前。
> Tā dàizhe duìwǔ yǒngwǎngzhíqián.
> He led the team forward without fear.

指手画脚 指手畫腳

zhǐshǒuhuàjiǎo to gesticulate while talking (idiom) / to explain by waving one's hands / to criticize or give orders summarily

> 不要让她对你指手画脚。
> Búyào ràng tā duì nǐ zhǐshǒuhuàjiǎo.
> Don't let yourself be bossed around by her.

狼吞虎咽 狼吞虎嚥

lángtūnhǔyàn to wolf down one's food (idiom) / to devour ravenously / to gorge oneself

> 别狼吞虎咽，慢慢吃！
> Bié lángtūnhǔyàn, mànmàn chī!
> Don't wolf your food down, eat slowly!

锲而不舍 鍥而不捨

qiè'érbùshě to chip away at a task and not abandon it (idiom) / to chisel away at sth / to persevere / unflagging efforts

> 他锲而不舍地学游泳。
> Tā qiè'érbùshě dì xué yóuyǒng.
> He kept at his swimming lessons without giving up.

优胜劣汰 優勝劣汰

yōushèngliètài survival of the fittest

> 市场竞争就是优胜劣汰。
> Shìchǎngjìngzhēng jiùshì yōushèngliètài.
> Market competition is survival of the fittest.

化险为夷 化險為夷

huàxiǎnwéiyí to turn peril into safety (idiom) / to avert disaster

> 他冷静处理，终于化险为夷。
> Tā lěngjìng chǔlǐ, zhōngyú huàxiǎnwéiyí.
> He stayed calm and finally turned the danger into safety.

悲欢离合 悲歡離合

bēihuānlíhé joys and sorrows / partings and reunions / the vicissitudes of life

> 火车站里每天都有悲欢离合。
> Huǒchēzhàn lǐ měitiān dōu yǒu bēihuānlíhé.
> Every day at the train station there are partings and reunions.

挨家挨户 挨家挨戶

āijiā'āihù to go from house to house

> 他挨家挨户兜售保险。
> Tā āijiā'āihù dōushòu bǎoxiǎn.
> He peddles insurance from door to door.

座右铭 座右銘

zuòyòumíng motto / maxim

> 你的座右铭是什么？
> Nǐ de zuòyòumíng shì shénme?
> What is your motto?

孤陋寡闻 孤陋寡聞

gūlòuguǎwén ignorant and inexperienced / ill-informed and narrow-minded

> 你别笑我孤陋寡闻。
> Nǐ bié xiào wǒ gūlòuguǎwén.
> Don't laugh at me for being so ignorant.

凤毛麟角 鳳毛麟角

fèngmáolínjiǎo lit. as rare as phoenix feathers and unicorn horns (idiom) / fig. few and far between

> 好老师现在真是凤毛麟角。
> Hǎo lǎoshī xiànzài zhēnshi fèngmáolínjiǎo.
> Good teachers are truly few and far between these days.

出口成章

chūkǒuchéngzhāng (of one's speech) eloquent / articulate

> 那位老教授上课总是出口成章。
> Nà wèi lǎo jiàoshòu shàngkè zǒngshì chūkǒuchéngzhāng.
> That old professor is always articulate when he teaches.

任重道远 任重道遠

rènzhòngdàoyuǎn a heavy load and a long road / fig. to bear heavy responsibilities through a long struggle (cf Confucian Analects, 8.7)

> 保护环境，我们任重道远。
> Bǎohù huánjìng, wǒmen rènzhòngdàoyuǎn.
> Protecting the environment is a heavy responsibility and a long road for us.

Advanced (HSK 7-9), part 3

敬而远之 敬而遠之

jìng'éryuǎnzhī to show respect from a distance (idiom) / to remain at a respectful distance

> 同事们对他都敬而远之。
> Tóngshìmen duì tā dōu jìng'éryuǎnzhī.
> His colleagues all keep a respectful distance from him.

包罗万象 包羅萬象

bāoluówànxiàng all-embracing / all-inclusive

> 这家超市的商品真是包罗万象。
> Zhè jiā chāoshì de shāngpǐn zhēnshi bāoluówànxiàng.
> The goods in this supermarket are truly all-inclusive.

天伦之乐 天倫之樂

tiānlúnzhīlè family love and joy / domestic bliss

> 全家团聚，才是天伦之乐。
> Quánjiā tuánjù, cái shì tiānlúnzhīlè.
> Having the whole family together is true family joy.

废寝忘食 廢寢忘食

fèiqǐnwàngshí to skip one's sleep and meals / to be completely wrapped up in one's work

> 他废寝忘食地准备考试。
> Tā fèiqǐnwàngshí de zhǔnbèi kǎoshì.
> He is forgetting sleep and food to prepare for the exam.

见利忘义 見利忘義

jiànlìwàngyì to abandon moral principles in the pursuit of profit

> 你怎么能见利忘义呢?
> Nǐ zěnme néng jiànlìwàngyì ne?
> How can you forget your principles just for profit?

断章取义 斷章取義

duànzhāngqǔyì to quote out of context

> 这样引用他的话是断章取义。
> Zhèyàng yǐnyòng tā de huà shì duànzhāngqǔyì.
> Quoting him like this is taking his words out of context.

改邪归正 改邪歸正

gǎixiéguīzhèng to mend one's ways (idiom) / to turn over a new leaf

> 你真的打算改邪归正吗?
> Nǐ zhēnde dǎsuàn gǎixiéguīzhèng ma?
> Do you really intend to turn over a new leaf?

势不可当 勢不可當

shìbùkědāng impossible to resist (idiom) / an irresistible force

> 洪水势不可当，一下子冲过了桥。
> Hóngshuǐ shìbùkědāng, yíxiàzi chōngguole qiáo.
> The flood was irresistible and swept over the bridge in an instant.

引经据典 引經據典

yǐnjīngjùdiǎn lit. to quote the classics / to quote chapter and verse (idiom)

> 他引经据典地反驳了对方。
> Tā yǐnjīngjùdiǎn de fǎnbóle duìfāng.
> He rebutted the other side, citing chapter and verse.

争分夺秒 爭分奪秒

zhēngfēnduómiǎo lit. fight minutes, snatch seconds (idiom) / a race against time / making every second count

> 救援队在争分夺秒地救人。
> Jiùyuánduì zài zhēngfēnduómiǎo de jiù rén.
> The rescue team is racing against time to save people.

众志成城 眾志成城

zhòngzhìchéngchéng unity of will is an impregnable stronghold (idiom)

> 全班众志成城，赢了比赛。
> Quánbān zhòngzhìchéngchéng, yíngle bǐsài.
> The whole class pulled together as one and won the competition.

成家立业 成家立業

chéngjiālìyè to get married and start a career (idiom) / to settle down / to establish oneself

> 他三十岁前就成家立业了。
> Tā sānshí suì qián jiù chéngjiālìyè le.
> He had married and started his career before he turned thirty.

损人利己 損人利己

sǔnrénlìjǐ harming others for one's personal benefit (idiom) / personal gain to the detriment of others

> 损人利己的事我不做。
> Sǔnrénlìjǐ de shì wǒ bú zuò.
> I won't do things that harm others for my own gain.

前赴后继 前赴後繼

qiánfùhòujì to advance dauntlessly in wave upon wave (idiom)

> 救灾时志愿者前赴后继。
> Jiùzāi shí zhìyuànzhě qiánfùhòujì.
> During the disaster relief, volunteers came forward in wave after wave.

鹤立鸡群 鶴立雞群

hèlìjīqún a crane in a flock of chicken (idiom) / way above the common / manifestly superior

> 她一出场就鹤立鸡群。
> Tā yì chūchǎng jiù hèlìjīqún.
> The moment she walked on stage, she stood out above everyone else.

南辕北辙 南轅北轍

nányuánběizhé to act in a way that defeats one's purpose (idiom)

> 你要南辕北辙了。
> Nǐ yào nányuánběizhé le.
> You're not going in the right direction.

愚公移山

yúgōngyíshān the old man moves mountains (idiom) / fig. where there's a will, there's a way

> 做事要有愚公移山的精神。
> Zuòshì yào yǒu yúgōngyíshān de jīngshén.
> You need the spirit of the Foolish Old Man who moved mountains.

见仁见智 見仁見智

jiànrénjiànzhì opinions differ (idiom)

> 大家的看法见仁见智。
> Dàjiā de kànfǎ jiànrénjiànzhì.
> Everyone sees it differently.

礼尚往来 禮尚往來

lǐshàngwǎnglái lit. proper behavior is based on reciprocity (idiom) / fig. to return politeness for politeness

> 中国人讲究礼尚往来。
> Zhōngguórén jiǎngjiu lǐshàngwǎnglái.
> Chinese people place importance on reciprocity in courtesy.

水滴石穿

shuǐdīshíchuān dripping water penetrates the stone (idiom) / constant perseverance yields success / You can achieve your aim if you try hard without giving up. / Persistent effort overcomes any difficulty.

> 别急，水滴石穿，慢慢来。
> Bié jí, shuǐdīshíchuān, mànmànlái.
> Don't rush; persistent effort overcomes any difficulty, so take it slowly.

小菜一碟

xiǎocàiyīdié a small appetizer / a piece of cake / very easy (idiom)

> 你放心，这种小事小菜一碟。
> Nǐ fàngxīn, zhèzhǒng xiǎoshì xiǎocàiyìdié.
> Don't worry, a small matter like this is a piece of cake.

鹏程万里 鵬程萬里

péngchéngwànlǐ the fabled roc flies ten thousand miles (idiom) / one's future prospects are brilliant

> 祝你毕业以后鹏程万里！
> Zhù nǐ bìyè yǐhòu péngchéngwànlǐ!
> I wish you a brilliant future after graduation!

Outside HSK

叶公好龙 葉公好龍

yègōnghàolóng lit. Lord Ye's passion for dragons (idiom) / fig. to pretend to be fond of sth while actually fearing it / ostensible fondness of sth one really fears

> 你这样不是叶公好龙吗？
> Nǐ zhèyàng bú shì Yè Gōnghàolóng ma?
> Aren't you just pretending to love something you actually fear?

狐假虎威

hújiǎhǔwēi lit. the fox exploits the tiger's might (idiom) / fig. to use powerful connections to intimidate people

杯弓蛇影

bēigōngshéyǐng lit. to see a bow reflected in a cup as a snake (idiom) / fig. unnecessary suspicions / overly fearful

拔苗助长 拔苗助長

bámiáozhùzhǎng to spoil things through excessive enthusiasm (idiom)

塞翁失马 塞翁失馬

sàiwēngshīmǎ lit. the old man lost his horse, but it all turned out for the best (idiom) / fig. a blessing in disguise / it's an ill wind that blows nobody any good

滥竽充数 濫竽充數

lànyúchōngshù lit. to play the yu 竽 mouth organ to make up numbers (idiom) / fig. to make up the numbers with inferior products / to masquerade as having an ability / token member of a group

九牛一毛

jiǔniúyīmáo one hair from nine oxen (idiom) / a drop in the ocean

> 九牛一毛是什么意思？
> Jiǔniúyìmáo shì shénme yìsi?
> What does "one hair from nine oxen" mean?

有志者事竟成

yǒuzhìzhěshìjìngchéng a really determined person will find a solution (idiom) / where there's a will, there's a way

百年树人 百年樹人

bǎiniánshùrén it takes many years to raise children to be upstanding citizens

> 百年树人，教育不能急。
> Bǎiniánshùrén, jiàoyù bùnéng jí.
> Raising people takes many years, so education can't be rushed.

温故知新 溫故知新

wēngùzhīxīn to review the old and know the new (idiom, from the Analects) / to recall the past to understand the future

知己知彼

zhījǐzhībǐ know yourself, know your enemy (idiom, from Sunzi's "The Art of War" 孫子兵法|孙子兵法[Sun1 zi3 Bing1 fa3])

血浓于水 血濃於水

xuènóngyúshuǐ blood is thicker than water / fig. family ties are closer than social relations

> 兄弟吵架，但血浓于水。
> Xiōngdì chǎojià, dàn xuènóngyúshuǐ.
> The brothers quarreled, but blood is thicker than water.

哑巴吃黄连 啞巴吃黃連

yǎbachīhuánglián no choice but to suffer in silence (idiom) / (often precedes 有苦說不出|有苦说不出[you3 ku3 shuo1 bu5 chu1])

言简意赅 言簡意賅

yánjiǎnyìgāi concise and comprehensive (idiom)

警句
jǐngjù aphorism

发人深省 發人深省
fārénshēnxǐng to provide food for thought (idiom) / thought-provoking

> 他说的话真发人深省。
> Tā shuō de huà zhēn fārénshēnxǐng.
> What he said was really thought-provoking.

老生常谈 老生常談
lǎoshēngchángtán an old observation (idiom) / a truism / banal comments

> 早睡早起是老生常谈了。
> Zǎoshuìzǎoqǐ shì lǎoshēngchángtán le.
> Going to bed and getting up early is an old refrain by now.

陈词滥调 陳詞濫調
chéncílàndiào cliché / commonplace / truism / stereotype

金玉良言
jīnyùliángyán gems of wisdom (idiom) / priceless advice