

# CLICHÉS

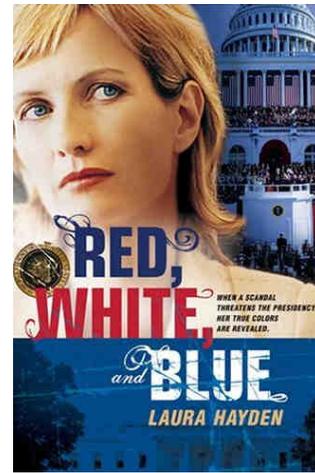
## AVOID THEM LIKE THE PLAGUE

from Laura Hayden's "Left-Brain- Right Brain/Creativity Program"

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***They make for great book titles,  
but lousy writing...***



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### ---A---

- ace in the hole
- ace up your sleeve
- acid test
- airing dirty laundry
- all in a day's work
- all talk, no action
  - all booster, no payload
  - all hat, no cattle
  - all foam, no beer
  - all hammer, no nail
  - all icing, no cake
  - all lime and salt, no tequila.
  - all missile, no warhead
  - all shot, no powder
  - all sizzle, no steak
  - all wax and no wick
- all that and a bag of chips
- all thumbs
- all wet
- all's fair in love and war
- almighty dollar
- always a bridesmaid
- ambulance chaser
- another day, another dollar
- ants in your pants
- apple-pie order
- arm and a leg
- armchair quarterback

### ---B---

- babe in the woods
- back against the wall
- back in the saddle
- back to square one
- back to the drawing board
- bad to the bone
- badge of honor
- Badonkadonk
- ballpark figure
- balls to the wall
- baptism of fire
- bare bones
- bark is worse than the bite
- bark up the wrong tree
- bat out of hell
- bats in the belfry
- battle royal
- beat around the bush
- beat the bushes
- beats me
- behind the eight ball
- bent out of shape
- best foot forward
- bet your bottom dollar
- better half
- better late than never
- better mousetrap
- better safe than sorry
- better than ever

### ---B (cont'd)---

- bird in the hand
- birds and the bees
- birds of the feather
- bite the dust
- bite your tongue
- bitter disappointment
- black as coal
- blast from the past
- bleeding heart
- blind as a bat
- blood is thicker than water
- blood money
- blood on your hands
- blood sweat and tears
- blow this pop stand / joint
- blushing bride
- boil it down to
- bone of contention
- booze and broads
- bored to tears
- born and raised
- born with a silver spoon in your mouth
- born yesterday
- bottom line
- brain drain
- brain dump
- brass tacks
- bring home the bacon

- army brat
- art imitates life
- artsy-craftsy
- artsy-fartsy
- as luck would have it
- as old as time
- at loggerheads

## ---C---

- calm before the storm
- candle at both ends
- can't cut the mustard
- case of mistaken identity
- cat out of the bag
- cat got your tongue
- caught red-handed
- chapter and verse
- checkered career
- chickens come home to roost
- chomping at the bit
- cleanliness is next to godliness
- clear as a bell
- clear as mud
- cold shoulder

## ---E---

- E-ticket
- ear to the ground
- early bird catches the worm
- easier said than done
- easy as 1-2-3
- easy as pie
- eat crow
- eat humble pie
- enough already
- even money

- better the Devil you know
- between a rock and a hard place
- beyond the pale
- bib and tucker
- big as life
- big fish in a small pond
- big man on campus
- bigger they are (the)

## ---C- (cont'd)--

- communist conspiracy
- conniption fit
- could care less
- couldn't care less
- couldn't get to first base
- count your blessings
- countless hours
- creature comfort
- crime in the street
- curiosity killed the cat
- curry favor
- cut a fine figure
- cut and dried
- cut to the chase
- cut to the quick
- cute as a button

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## ---F---

- facts of life
- fair-haired one
- fair weather friend
- fall off of a turnip truck
- fat slob
- favor us with a song
- fear and loathing
- feather your nest
- fellow traveler
- few and far between

- broken record
- brother's keeper (thy)
- bull by the horns
- bull in a china shop
- bump in the night
- busy as a bee
- but seriously
- by and large

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## ---D---

- darkest before the dawn
- dead as a doornail
- death and destruction
- death and taxes
- death's doorstep
- devil is in the details
- dim view
- dog days
- dog in the manger
- don't count your chickens before they're hatched
- don't do the crime if you can't do the time
- doubting Thomas
- down and dirty
- down in the dumps
- down pat
- down the drain/toilet
- down the hatch
- down to earth
- drive you up a wall
- dutch uncle
- dyed in the wool

## ---G---

- garbage in, garbage out
- get the sack
- get your groove back
- gets my goat
- gift horse in the mouth
- gilding the lily
- give a damn
- give me a break
- gives me the creeps
- go him one better

- every dog has its day
- every fiber of my being
- everything but the kitchen sink
- evil twin
- existential angst
- experts agree
- eye for an eye

## ---H---

- hair of the dog
- hard to believe
- have a nice day
- head honcho
- heart's content
- hell-bent for leather
- hidden agenda
- high and the mighty (the)
- high on the hog
- hold a candle to
- hold your horses
- hold your tongue
- hook or by crook
- horse of a different color
- hot knife through butter
- how goes the battle?

## ---K---

- keep an eye on you
- keep it down
- keep it simple, stupid
- keep up with the Joneses
- keep your cards close to vest
- keep your chin up
- keep your fingers crossed
- keep your powder dry
- kick ass
- kickbutt
- kick the bucket
- kick up your heels

- field this one
- fifteen minutes of fame
- fish nor fowl
- fly by night
- fly the coop
- for the birds
- fox in the henhouse
- freudian slip
- fun and games
- fun in the sun

## --I---

- I beg to differ
- if the shoe fits
- I'm okay, you're okay
- in a nutshell
- in a pinch
- in a wink
- in harm's way
- in the tank
- in your dreams
- in your face
- inexorably drawn
- info dump
- influence peddling
- intents and purposes
- it was a dark and stormy night
- it won't fly

## ---K (cont'd)---

- King's English
- king's ransom
- kiss and tell
- kiss ass
- kiss of death
- kit and kaboodle
- knee-high to a grasshopper
- knock it out of the park
- knock on wood
- knock your socks off
- knocked up
- know him from Adam
- know the ropes

- goes without saying
- good deed for the day
- good time was had by all
- greek to me
- green thumb
- green-eyed monster
- grist for the mill
- guiding light

## --J---

- Jack of all trades
- jockey for position
- Johnny-come-lately
- joined at the hip
- jump down your throat
- jump in with both feet
- jump on the bandwagon
- jump the gun
- jump her/his bones
- junk in the trunk
- jury is still out
- justice is blind

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## ---L---

- labor of love
- lap of luxury
- last but not least
- last-ditch effort
- last hurrah
- law of the jungle
- law of the land
- lay down the law
- leaps and bounds
- let sleeping dogs lie
- let the cat out of the bag
- let's split
- liberal media

- kick you to the curb
- kick your feet up
- kid in a candy store
- kill two birds with one stone

- know the score
- knuckle down
- knuckle sandwich
- knuckle under

- lie like a rug
- life and limb
- life imitates art

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### ---L (cont'd)---

- life's a bitch
- lighten up
- lights out
- like a sore thumb
- like butter
- like the plague
- like there's no tomorrow
- lion's share
- litmus test
- little black book
- live and learn
- long and short of it
- long lost love
- look before you leap
- lounge lizard
- loved and lost
- low man on the totem pole
- luck of the draw
- luck of the Irish

### ---M---

- make my day
- male chauvinist
- man's best friend
- many moons
- many-splendored thing
- mark my words
- meaningful relationship
- mellow out
- moment of glory
- moment's respite
- Monday morning  
quarterback
- monkey suit
- monkey see, monkey do
- motherhood and apple pie
- movers and shakers
- moving experience
- my two cents

### ---N---

- neat as a pin
- needless to say
- nip it in the bud
- no guts, no glory
- no love lost
- no pain, no gain
- no stone unturned
- no time like the present
- nose to the grindstone
- not in my back yard
- not on your tintype
- number one fan
- numerous to mention

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### ---O---

- off the wagon
- old college try
- old meets new
- older and wiser
- older than dirt
- older than Methuselah
- on the bandwagon
- on the nose
- on the wagon
- on thin ice
- one born every minute
- one foot in the grave
- one in a million
- only game in town

### ---P-Q---

- p's and q's
- pain and suffering
- panic button
- party pooper
- patter of little feet
- pass the sniff test
- pay through the nose
- peas in a pod
- perfect storm
- pig in a poke
- pillar of society
- pinko
- plenty of fish in the sea

### ---R---

- radical chic
- rags to riches
- raining buckets
- raining cats and dogs
- rank and file
- read my lips
- red herring
- redheaded stepchild
- reign supreme
- remember the alamo
- road to hell is paved with  
good intentions
- rob Peter to pay Paul

- only to be met
- out of pocket
- out of the frying pan
- out on a limb

- poison pen
- poor as a churchmouse
- poor excuse for
- pot calling the kettle black
- proud possessor
- put my/your foot down
- quick as a bunny
- quick and the dead

- rock and a hard place
- rocket science/scientist
- rope a dope
- run it up the flagpole
- running dog lackey

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### ---S---

- safe than sorry
- salt of the earth
- save face
- scared stiff
- scared to death
- school's out
- screaming meemies
- senses reel
- set the record straight
- shake a stick should of
- shoulder to the wheel
- shouldered his way
- shut your trap
- sigh of relief
- significant other
- silence is golden

### ---S (cont'd)---

- slept like a log
- small world
- snake in the grass
- snow job
- snug as a bug
- some of my best friends
- something the cat dragged in
- spade a spade
- spare the rod
- spitting image
- spring to life

### ---S (cont'd)---

- squeaky wheel gets the grease/oil
- start from scratch
- stick in the mud
- stick in your craw
- still waters run deep
- stop and smell the roses
- store bought
- stranger than fiction
- straw that broke the camel's back
- stubborn as a mule
- stuff that dreams are made of
- stuffed shirt

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### ---T---

- take one for the team
- take the bull by the horns
- take the plunge
- takes one to know one
- talk turkey
- ten foot pole
- the earth moved
- the final analysis
- the real McCoy
- the same old story
- these things happen
- thick as thieves
- think outside of the box
- third time's the charm

### ---T (cont'd)---

- this day and age
- this point in time
- three strikes and you're out
- through the grapevine
- throw in the towel
- tiger by the tail
- till the fat lady sings
- time and time again
- time is of the essence
- tip of the iceberg
- 'tis the season
- to err is human
- to the best of my knowledge

### ---T (cont'd)---

- tongue-in-cheek
- too hot to handle
- touch of blarney
- tough as nails
- tough luck
- tough row to hoe
- traditional family values
- trials and tribulations
- tried and true
- trip down memory lane
- true blue
- turn your smile/frown upside-down
- twist of fate
- twists and turns
- two to tango

**--U-V--**

- under the gun
- under the same roof
- understated elegance
- unexpected twist
- until the cows come home
- up his sleeve
- up the creek
- up the wrong tree
- very real concern
- view with alarm

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**---W---**

- wakeup call
- was my face red
- watch your tongue
- web of intrigue
- week of sundays
- what a bummer
- what comes around, goes around
- what the cat dragged in
- what the dickens
- what the heck/hell
- what you see is what you get
- what's not to like
- wheeler-dealer
- when in doubt, punt
- when push comes to shove
- when rubber meets the road
- when the cat's away
- when the going gets tough, the tough get going

**---W (cont'd)---**

- who has everything
- whole ball of wax
- whole hog
- whole nine yards
- whole other story
- wild goose chase
- wild oats
- will wonders never cease
- wimp
- win friends and influence people
- win one for the Gipper
- winning is everything
- wisdom of the ages
- without benefit of clergy
- wolf at the door
- words fail
- work like a dog
- worst nightmare
- wrong side of the bed

**---XYZ---**

- years young
- yellow journalism
- you are what you eat
- you can run, but you can't hide
- you know what they say
- young and foolish
- young and restless
- yuppie

**---Numerical---**

- 20/20 hindsight

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*Got a cliché to add?  
Email us.*

**Latest contributor  
thanks to:**

*John F., Tom G.,  
Cyla A., Steve Y., Izlar A.*

**-EXTRA EXTRA!****Euphemisms for  
"Stupid"**

- His elevator doesn't go to the top floor
- All foam, no beer.
- His bread ain't done
- His yeast went bad.
- He couldn't pour water out of a boot with instructions
- The light is on, but nobody is home.
- There's nothing in the attic but cobwebs.
- He's not the sharpest knife in the drawer.
- He's not the brightest crayon in the box.
- The wheel is turning, but the hamster is dead.
- If you gave him a penny for his thoughts, you'd get change.
- Somewhere a villiage is missing its idiot
- He donated his brain to science. Science sent it to him
- He fell out of the Stupid Tree and hit every branch on the way down.

- printed on the heel.
- The cheese slid off his cracker.
  - He's:
    - One taco short of a combination plate
    - One brick shy of a load
    - One pickle short of a barrel
    - One sandwich short of a picnic
    - One step short of a flight (of stairs)
    - One fry short of a Happy Meal®
  - Body by Fisher, brains by Mattel.
  - The gates are down, the lights are flashing, but there is no train.
  - He's dumber than a box of rocks.
  - He's dumber than a bag of hammers.
  - He couldn't think his way out of a paper bag.
  - He's a walking advertisement/poster boy for birth control/planned parenthood.
  - The starting gate is open he's still asking directions
  - A few cans short of a six-pack.
  - His pilot light isn't lit.
  - He's as useful as tits on a wart/boar hog.
  - If brains were dynamite, I couldn't blow his nose.
  - It takes him an hour to cc Minute Rice.

Also see [these](#) cliches.

#### Interesting Non-American English euphemisms for stupid

##### Australia:

- A kangaroo loose in the top paddock