# List of 148 well-known Chengyu (or idiomatic expressions)

Below you will find a list of 148 Chengyu and idiomatic phrases that are among the most used in modern China:

1. 不可得兼 (bù kě dé jiān): “you can’t have both at the same time”

2. 不得其法 (bù dé qí fǎ): “not knowing the right way”

3. 心神不宁 (xīn shén bù níng): “to feel bad about nothing”

4. 一本正经 (yī běn zhèng jīng): “to always be serious”

5. 沉鱼落雁 (chén yú luò yàn): “extremely beautiful”

6. 独一无二 (dú yī wú’èr): “unique”

7. 数一数二 (shǔ yī shǔ’èr): “the best; considered among the best”

8. 绝无仅有 (jué wú jǐn yǒu): “one of a kind; unique”

9. 损人利己 (sǔn rén lì jǐ): “to seek benefit at the expense of others”

10. 幸灾乐祸 (xìng zāi lè huò): “to enjoy others’ misfortunes”

11. 力不从心 (Lì bù cóng xīn): “the qualities aren’t at the level of the aspirations”

12. 亦步亦趋 (yì bù yì qū): “to blindly imitate someone”

13. 滔滔不绝 (tāo tāo bù jué): “without interruption”

14. 桃李满天下 (táolǐ mǎn tiān xià): “to have pupils everywhere”

15. 省吃俭用 (shěng chī jiǎn yòng): “to live frugally”

16. 婀娜多姿 (ē nuó duō zī): “to be graceful”

17. 应运而生 (yìngyùn’érshēng): “to emerge thanks to a favorable situation”

18. 厮守终生 (sīshǒu zhōngshēng): “to be together forever”

19. 寓意深远 (yùyì shēnyuǎn): “morale is very low”

20. 一切就绪 (yīqièjiùxù): “everything is in order”

21. 囫囵吞枣 (hú lún tūn zǎo): “to swallow information without assimilating it”

22. 塞翁失马 (焉知非福) (sài wēng shī mǎ (yān zhī fēi fú)): “not all bad comes to cause harm”

23. 狼吞虎咽 (láng tūn hǔ yàn): “to brush away food like a wolf”

24. 避而不见 (bì’ér bù jiàn): “to avoid meeting someone”

25. 成千上万 (chéng qiān shàng wàn): “thousands”

26. 依依不舍 (yī yī bù shě): “to be reluctant to leave something”

27. 如期而至 (rú qī ér zhì): “to arrive in time”

28. 自作聪明 (zì zuò cōngmíng): “to be presumptuous”

29. 废寝忘食f (èi qǐn wàng shí): “forgetting to eat and sleep so as to do something”

30. 一门心思 (yī mén xīn si): “to be solely concentrated on doing something”

31. 深情厚谊 (shēn qíng hòu yì): “long and intimate friendship”

32. 死里逃生 (sǐ lǐ táo shēng): “to find a way out of certain death”

33. 铺天盖地 (pū tiān gài dì): “to cover over everything”

34. 与众不同 (yǔ zhòng bù tóng): “different than the crowd”

35. 心甘情愿 (xīn gān qíng yuàn): “to be extremely happy to do something”

36. 无可奈何 (wú kě nài hé “non): “to have alternatives”

37. 眼见为实 (yǎn jiàn wéi shí): “to believe in what can be seen”

38. 耳听为虚 (ěr tīng wèi xū): “to not believe in what you hear”

39. 十全十美 (shí quán shí měi): “perfect”

40. 星火燎原 (xīng huǒ liáo yuán): “a single spark creates a blaze”

41. 夸大其词 (kuā dà qí cí): “exaggerate”

42. 举目无亲 (jǔ mù wú qīn): “to be a stranger in a strange land”

43. 四海为家 (sì hǎi wéi jiā): “to make every place your home; live as a hobo”

44. 小心翼翼 (xiǎo xīn yì yì): “extremely cautious”

45. 焕然一新 (huàn rán yī xīn): “to take on a completely new appearance”

46. 乱七八糟 (luàn qī bā zāo): “in complete disorder”

47. 不自觉地 (bù zìjué de): “unconsciously”

48. 筋疲力尽 (jīn pí lì jìn): “to feel exhausted”

49. 顺其自然 (shùn qí zì rán): “to let nature take its course”

50. 恋恋不舍 (liàn liàn bù shě): “to be reluctant to leave”

51. 擦肩而过 (cā jiān’ér guò): “to brush up against someone in passing”

52. 迫不及待 (pò bù jí dài): “impatiently waiting”

53. 无所不谈 (wú suǒ bù tán): “to talk about everything under the sun”

54. 不谋而合 (bù móu’ér hé): “to agree without discussion”

55. 不以为然 (bù yǐ wéi rán): “to consider something unacceptable”

56. 我行我素 (wǒ xíng wǒ sù): “to stick to your own way of doing things”

57. 栩栩如生 (xǔ xǔ rú shēng): “as vivid as life”

58. 莞尔一笑 (wǎn’ěr yī xiào): “to give a faint smile”

59. 胡说八道 (hú shuō bā dào): “to talk nonsense”

60. 眉飞色舞 (méi fēi sè wǔ): “to be exultant, exuberant”

61. 漫无目的 (màn wú mùdì): “to be without a goal”

62. 左顾右盼 (zuǒ gù yòu pàn): “to look to the left and right”

63. 一针见血 (yī zhēn jiàn xiě): “to hit the mark”

64. 轻而易举 (qīng’ér yì jǔ): “easy to do”

65. 全心全意 (quán xīn quán yì): “to do something with all your heart”

66. 相去甚远 (xiāng qù shènyuǎn): “to make a big difference”

67. 彬彬有礼 (bīn bīn yǒu lǐ): “sophisticated”

68. 称兄道弟 (chēng xiōng dào dì): “to be like brothers with someone; to have a great relationship”

69. 相提并论 (xiāng tí bìng lùn): “to be placed at the same level of”

70. 惟妙惟肖 (wéi miào wéi xiào): “to be just like the real thing”

71. 忙里偷闲 (máng lǐ tōu xián): “to find time for pleasure between work”

72. 全神贯注 (quán shén guàn zhù): “absorbed, absorbed in”

73. 缘木求鱼 (yuán mù qiú yú): “to use counterproductive methods to do something”

74. 见钱眼开 (jiàn qián yǎn kāi): “to be desirous of money”

75. 见利忘义 (jiàn lì wàng yì): “to forget integrity so as to achieve gain”

76. 下不为例 (xià bù wéi lì): “it will not set a precedent”

77. 可想而知 (kě xiǎng’ér zhī): “as you can well imagine”

78. 不翼而飞 (bù yì’ér fēi): “to suddenly disappear”

79. 惊慌失措 (jīng huāng shī cuò): “caught in panic”

80. 龇牙咧嘴 (zī yá liě zuǐ): “to grit your teeth in pain”

81. 火上加油 (huǒ shàng jiā yóu): “to throw fuel on the fire”

82. 雪上加霜 (xuě shàng jiā shuāng): “one disaster after another”

83. 如愿以偿 (rú yuàn yǐ cháng): “fully satisfied desires”

84. 无理取闹 (wú lǐ qǔ nào): “to create problems for no reason”

85. 对牛弹琴 (duì niú tán qín): “to speak about someone”

86. 理直气壮 (lǐ zhí qì zhuàng): “to do something while knowing you’re in the right”

87. 思前想后 (sī qián xiǎng hòu): “to accurately ponder over something”

88. 如释重负 (rú shì zhòng fù): “to feel freed of a great burden”

89. 不可开交 (bù kě kāi jiāo): “extremely (busy)”

90. 重温旧梦 (chóng wēn jiù mèng): “to relive an old experience; relive an old dream”

91. 兴致勃勃 (xìng zhì bó bó): “full of enthusiasm”

92. 如影随形 (rú yǐng suí xíng): “inseparable; followed like your own shadow”

93. 千言万语 (qiān yán wàn yǔ): “thousands and thousands of words”

94. 惴惴不安 (zhuì zhuì bù’ān): “on thorns”

95. 大惊小怪 (dà jīng xiǎo guài): “great fuss over something ordinary; to complain unjustifiably”

96. 不足挂齿 (bù zú guà chǐ): “nothing to talk about”

97. 天涯海角 (tiān yá hǎi jiǎo): “far off worlds (expressing a very large distance)

98. 垂垂老矣 (chuí chuí lǎo yǐ): “always older”

99. 白发苍苍 (bái fa cāng cāng): “from white hairs”

100. 低三下四 (dī sān xià sì): “mean, petty”

101. 安贫乐道 (ān pín lè dào): “happy to live a virtuous life even if in a state of poverty”

102. 光明磊落 (guāng míng lěi luò): “in broad daylight; cards showing; correctly and legitimately”

103. 知足常乐 (zhī zú cháng lè): “to be content with what you have”

104. 东山再起 (dōng shān zài qǐ): “to stage a return”

105. 完璧归赵 (wán bì guī zhào): “to give something back to its owner in excellent condition”

106. 如虎添翼 (rú hǔ tiān yì): “with double the power”

107. 夜深人静 (yè shēn rén jìng): “in the silence of deepest night”

108. 班门弄斧 (bān mén nòng fǔ): “to show your talent is of little account in front of a true expert on the material”

109. 乘风破浪 (chéng fēng pò làng): “to have great ambitions”

110. 程门立雪 (chéng mén lì xuě): “to honor the master and respect his teachings”

111. 狐假虎威 (hú jiǎ hǔ wēi): “to intimidate someone by flaunting your relationship with important people”

112. 孟母三迁 (mèng mǔ sān qiān): “a wise mother works to find a healthy educational environment for her children”

113. 愚公移山 (yú gōng yí shān): “to want to is to be able to”

114. 画蛇添足 (huà shé tiān zú): “more than enough”

115. 开卷有益 (kāi juàn yǒu yì): “reading always brings benefits”

116. 世外桃源 (shì wài táo yuán): “paradise if peace; utopia”

117. 津津有味 (jīn jīn yǒu wèi): “to do something with gusto”

118. 落英缤纷 (luò yīng bīn fēn): “flower petals that fall like snowflakes”

119. 虚怀若谷 (xū huái ruò gǔ): “to be extremely open-minded”

120. 心如止水 (xīn rú zhǐ shuǐ): “a peaceful heart; a heart as calm as still water”

121. 随遇而安 (suí yù ér’ān): “to feel adequate wherever you are”

122. 厚德载物 (hòu dé zài wù): “to be of strong moral character”

123. 大智若愚 (dà zhì ruò yú): “the wise one appears stupid”

124. 知行合一zhī xíng hé yī): “the union of practice and knowledge”

125. 相濡以沫 (xiāng rú yǐ mò): “to help each other out despite both being in delicate condition”

126. 阳光明媚 (yáng guāng míng mèi): “the sun is particularly bright”

127. 忐忑不安 (tǎn tè bù’ān): “disquieted; preoccupied; uncomfortable”

128. 说三道四 (shuō sān dào sì): “to gossip”

129. 不顾一切 (bù gù yī qiè): “indifferent to everything”

130. 一日为师，终身为父 (yī rì wèi shī, zhōngshēn wèi fù): “teacher for a day, father for a lifetime”

131. 不管三七二十一 (bù guǎn sān qī èr shí yī): “not caring about the consequences”

132. 开门见山 (kāi mén jiàn shān): “to get right to the chase”

133. 一蹴而就 (yī cù’ér jiù): “to be successful on the first try”

134. 惹是生非 (rě shì shēng fēi): “to start a dispute; begin a conflict”

135. 安居乐业 (ān jū lè yè): “to live in peace, without disturbance”

136. 难兄难弟 (nàn xiōng nàn dì): “brothers of misfortune”

137. 笑里藏刀 (xiào lǐ cáng dāo): “a dagger hidden behind a smile”

138. 海市蜃楼 (hǎi shì shèn lóu): “to build castles in the air; mirage”

139. 厮守终身 (sīshǒu zhōngshēn): “to be together for one’s whole life”

140. 伶牙俐齿 (líng yá lì chǐ): “to be clear and eloquent”

141. 日积月累 (rì jī yuè lěi): “to accumulate for a long time”

142. 雷打不动 (léi dǎ bù dòng): “to be determined, unshakable”

143. 家常便饭 (jiā cháng biàn fàn): “routine”

144. 一头雾水 (yī tóu wùshuǐ): “to feel confused”

145. 大汗淋漓 (dà hàn lín lí): “to be soaked with sweat”

146. 有条不紊 (yǒu tiáo bù wěn): “methodical, systematic”

147. 知难而退 (zhī nán’ér tuì): “to run from difficulty”

148. 似懂非懂 (sì dǒng fēi dǒng): “to not fully understand”