Learn how to use these fixed phrases in various situations so that you can use language in a flexible way.

1. Not be bothered (infinitive) – not fancy
   *I can´t be bothered to do my homework this evening.*
2. Be bound (infinitive) – be likely
   *It is bound to happen again if you don´t try to change your habits.*
3. At its height – in the best moment
   *At its height the American economy was one of the most successful of all time.*
4. At that time – then
   *At that time, I still hadn´t found out about his mental problems.*
5. Ever since – from that point
   *Ever since you told me the news, I can´t think about anything else.*
6. For a long time to come – from now on
   *I think you shall enjoy your life here for a long time to come.*
7. On the outskirts – in the suburbs
   *When I have kids, I´d love to live on the outskirts of the city.*
8. Be on good terms with – get on well with
   *Although they are divorced, they are still on good terms.*
9. Bear in mind – take into consideration
   *We ought to bear in mind the deadline when making our plan of action.*
10. Brace yourself for – be prepared
    *You ought to brace yourself for any issues that might come up.*
11. For some... for others – not for everyone
   *For some people this means the end of a relationship, for others it does not.*

12. Pull yourself together – focus on something
   *Before we begin you need to pull yourself together and be ready to start.*

13. Stand the test of time – show its value over a long period
   *I reckon the internet will stand the test of time.*

14. On average – as a norm
   *On average, people take about 4 months to prepare for the exam.*

15. As a result – in the end
   *As a result, we were late for the show and missed the first act.*

16. All in all – on balance
   *All in all, the meeting went as had been planned.*

17. Go with the flow – let yourself be influenced by the environment
   *I prefer to just go with the flow instead of trying to control everything.*

18. Instead of – rather than
   *Instead of complaining about it, maybe you should look for a solution.*

19. Change your mind – adapt your viewpoint
   *I was going to go out but I have changed my mind now.*

20. As well as – in addition to
   *As well as his lack of punctuality, he also reeks of alcohol.*
21. As long as – provided that
   As long as he arrives on time, I don’t mind what he does.
22. I’d rather + verb (do) – would prefer
   I would rather unwind by reading than disconnect by watching TV.
23. Regret (not) + ing – feel sorry for
   I regret not getting the job at the law firm.
24. Be worth + ing – deserve the effort
   Is it worth travelling to the west coast of the USA?
25. As soon as – at the moment of
   As soon as you arrive, give me a call.
26. By the time – when
   By the time the bus left, I was already fast asleep.
27. On/at the point of – just about to
   I was on the point of dropping out of university when I was offered a scholarship, so I stayed.
28. Take ages – take a long time
   It took ages to find a job in the end.
29. Take by surprise – not expect
   I was taken by surprise by her initial reaction.
30. From time to time – every now and again
   Could you come and visit me from time to time?
31. A matter of time – a question of time
   *It is only a matter of time before you find a girlfriend.*
32. At this point - At a time
   *At this point I was beginning to get frustrated.*
33. During which – in this time
   *I did an internship during which I made some useful contacts.*
34. No longer – not any more
   *No longer am I going to wait for you to get ready.*
35. Undergo a change – experience a change
   *The company is undergoing huge changes*
36. Lead the way – give direction to
   *Part of running a company is leading the way by example.*
37. Be in demand – be popular
   *Electric cars are in great demand nowadays*
38. On purpose – intentionally
   *I’m so sorry, I didn’t do it on purpose.*
39. By accident – without intention
   *I broke your vase by accident, please forgive me.*
40. Be willing (infinitive) – want to
   *I am willing to try again if you give me the chance.*
41. Be praised for – receive a compliment for
   *I was praised for being the best student on the programme.*

42. Better/worse than expected – not as good as first though
   *The weather is going to be worse than expected.*

43. The pros and cons of – the advantages and disadvantages of
   *The pros and cons of being self-employed are debatable.*

44. On time – at the correct time
   *If you can’t arrive on time, you should get up earlier.*

45. On and on – again and again
   *You should persist and go on and on.*

46. Every now and then – occasionally
   *I get a little bit worried about my studies every now and again.*

47. Be just about to – be at the point of
   *I was just about to say that! You took the words out of my mouth.*

48. In this day and age – currently
   *In this day and age the job market is extremely competitive.*

49. From day to day – each day
   *From day to day you seem to be getting lazier and lazier.*

50. Sooner or later – at some point in time
   *Sooner or later, you will have to tell him the news.*
51. Any day now – soon
   I will get paid any day now.
52. Ages ago – a long time ago
   It seems like ages ago since we last spoke.
53. Be about time – at long last
   It is about time you got a job and moved out of your parent’s house.
54. Day by day – step by step
   I seem to be improving day by day
55. Little by little – bit by bit
   Little by little you will recover from your injury and the accident.
56. Last but not least - at the end but not less important
   We must do the shopping and last by not least, take the dog for a walk.
57. Against the law – not legal
   You are not allowed to do that; it’s against the law.
58. Safe and sound – secure
   We arrived home safe and sound at around 8pm.
59. In fact – actually
   He is quite lazy, in fact, I am thinking of firing him.
60. In terms of – regarding
    *What do you do? In terms of work, I mean.*

61. In relation to – linked to
    *In relation to the meeting yesterday, we need to check out your progress in the company.*

62. Be reluctant to – not want
    *I am reluctant to take up a new hobby.*

63. On account of – owing to
    *On account of the weather, the trip shall be cancelled.*

64. Be at fault – be to blame
    *He was at fault for the error.*

65. Drop a hint – insinuate
    *My teacher dropped a hint that the exam would be tough.*

66. Slip out of – drop
    *The vase just slipped out of my hand.*

67. As far as I know – I gather
    *As far as I know, we will need to replace the motor.*

68. To result in – ending in
    *The project resulted in us having to repeat almost all of the investigation.*

69. Take care of – look after
    *We ought to take care of ourselves.*

70. On foot – walking
    *Do you go to work on foot?*
71. Be similar to – like
   *It is similar to what happened yesterday.*

72. Take a look – view/check out
   *Could you take a look at my bike, please?*

73. as though – as if
   *He seemed as though he were uninterested.*

74. By chance – by coincidence
   *By chance, they had the exact thing I was looking for.*

75. By no means – not at all
   *By no means is he the strongest candidate.*

76. Owing to – because of
   *Owing to delays on line 3, you ought to try and take a bus.*

77. By oneself – on one’s own
   *I enjoy working by myself more than in a team.*

78. In no time – soon
   *I learned German in no time.*

79. A means by which – a way of
   *He is very determined, a means by which he always achieves successful results.*

80. Take a chance – risk
   *I don’t want to take any chances on the deadline.*
81. Take place – be in a location
   *The film takes place in Tokyo.*

82. As it happens – as a matter of fact
   *As it happens, I have met you before.*

83. At a guess – I am no expert, but
   *At a guess, I would say that the play will last for 4 hours.*

84. It so happens that – as a result
   *It so happens that I speak fluent Spanish.*

85. Make sense – be logical
   *That makes sense since you used to work in the USA.*

86. Make up one’s mind – decide
   *I can’t make up my mind what to order.*

87. By all accounts – according to
   *By all accounts he is one of the best lecturers in the field.*

88. Pay attention to – focus on
   *We must pay attention to the teacher.*

89. See no point in – not understand the logic behind
   *I don’t see the point in learning Catalan.*

90. Have (little/no) difficulty in – have no trouble (ing)
   *I have difficulty in learning phrasal verbs.*
91. The benefit to/ of – the advantage of
   *The benefits of having good language skills are endless.*

92. On balance – in conclusion
   *On balance, I think you ought to practise every day to improve.*

93. The downside of – the drawback of
   *The downside of being so intelligent is that most other people seem a little dim.*

94. Be in two minds – be undecided
   *I am in two minds on whether to order the fish or a salad.*

95. In a nutshell – to sum up
   *In a nutshell, you could either order by phone or online.*

96. Be up to date – be current
   *I am not up to date with the gossip in our office.*

97. Sort of – more or less
   *I sort of enjoy spending time at the beach.*

98. Just because – not reason behind something
   *Why do you like eating chocolate? I’m not sure, just because.*

99. Just in case – if needed
   *Just in case you need any information, you can visit our website.*

100. Only just – be the skin of one’s teeth
    *We only just made it out alive.*
101. Under no circumstances – no way
   Under no circumstances should you be late for the exam.
102. Be in one’s interest – be good for
   It is in your interest to attend the meeting.
103. Had better (bare infinitive) – should
   We had better set off early if we want to arrive on time.
104. Get something across to someone – explain to someone
   It can sometimes be difficult to get your point across to someone else.
105. Place the blame on – say someone is at fault
   I placed the blame on one of my employees.
106. Go ahead – permission to proceed
   You can go ahead and continue with your studies if you like.
107. Be capable of – be able to
   You are much more capable of learning a language than you think.
108. Take for granted – not give credit for
   You should not take your friends for granted.
109. Beforehand – in advance
   I would book beforehand if I were you.
110. Have no recollection of – not remember
   I have no recollection of that happening.