

A HARD NUT TO CRACK

A TOUGH NUT TO CRACK

- ◉ A problem or a person (who is very difficult to understand)

A HEAVY CROSS TO BEAR

A CROSS TO BEAR

- ⦿ **an unpleasant or painful situation or person that you have to accept and deal with, although you find it very difficult**

A BITTER PILL TO SWALLOW

A BITTER PILL

- ⦿ Sth that is very unpleasant but must be accepted
- ⦿ *Losing to a younger player was a bitter pill to swallow.*

ALBATROSS

- ◉ Sth or sb that you want to be free from
- ◉ *Her own supporters see her as an albatross who could lose them the election.*

THE BANE OF STH

- ⦿ A cause of continuous trouble or unhappiness
- ⦿ *That cat is the bane of my life!*

- ⦿ *curse*
- ⦿ *scourge*

PLAGUE

- ◉ UK /pleɪg/ US /pleɪg/
- ◉ C2 to cause worry, pain, or difficulty to someone or something over a period of time:
- ◉ *Financial problems have been plaguing their new business partners.*

STUMBLING BLOCK

- ⦿ something that prevents action or agreement:
- ⦿ One potential stumbling block could be the difficulty of accessing the data.

SNAG

- ⦿ Informal
- ⦿ A problem, difficulty or disadvantage
- ⦿ *We don't anticipate any snags in/with the negotiations.*

BE DEAD MEAT

- ◉ If someone is dead meat, they are in a lot of trouble
- ◉ *He'll be dead meat if his girlfriend finds out.*

CHILL

- ◉ A sudden unpleasant feeling (C2)
- ◉ *I suddenly realized, with a chill of apprehension, the danger ahead.*

EQUATION

- ◉ a difficult problem that can only be understood if all the different influences are considered:
- ◉ *Managing the economy is a complex equation of controlling inflation and reducing unemployment.*

INCUBUS

- ◉ Sth that causes unpleasant problems for sb
- ◉ *They are powerless to throw off the incubus of the past.*

LABYRINTH

- ⦿ Confusing situation (literary)
- ⦿ *He was no stranger to the labyrinth of love.*

LIABILITY

- ⦿ Risk (C1)
- ⦿ Sth or sb that causes a lot of trouble
- ⦿ *After a certain age, a car's just a liability.*
- ⦿ *Sue always manages to upset somebody when we go out - she's a real liability.*

LIFE IS A BITCH (AND THEN YOU DIE)

- ◉ Saying
- ◉ **said when you find a situation difficult or have had a bad experience**

THE SHARP END

- ◉ the part of an activity, such as a job, where the most problems are likely to be found:
- ◉ A job like hers would be much too demanding for me, but she enjoys being at the sharp end.

TIE-UP

- ⦿ a temporary problem that delays progress, such as too much traffic on the road:
- ⦿ *I missed my flight because of a tie-up on the interstate.*

THE HARD WAY

- ⦿ a way of doing something that makes it more difficult than it needs to be:
- ⦿ She always does things the hard way
- ⦿ **C2** If you learn something the hard way, you learn from unpleasant experiences rather than by being taught:
- ⦿ *If she won't listen , she'll have to learn/find out the hard way.*

THORN IN YOUR FLESH

THORN IN YOUR SIDE

- ⦿ a person or a thing that repeatedly annoys you or causes you pain:
- ⦿ *A relentless campaigner, he was a thorn in the government's side for a number of years.*

TIP OF THE ICEBERG

- ⦿ C2 a small, noticeable part of a problem, the total size of which is really much greater:
- ⦿ *These small local protests are just the tip of the iceberg.*

a show of anger, worry, or excitement that is unnecessary or greater than the situation deserves:

Getting our passports renewed was such a to-do.

TO-DO

TWIST

- ⦿ a complicated situation or a plan of action:
- ⦿ The twists and turns of fate

CANCER

- ◉ a harmful activity that spreads quickly:
- ◉ *Drug abuse is a cancer that is destroying our society.*

BUGGER

- ⦿ Sth that is very difficult or annoying
- ⦿ *This tin is a bugger to open.*

BUGBEAR

- ⦿ A particular that annoys or upsets you
- ⦿ Smoking is a particular bugbear of his.

BRAINTEASER

- ⦿ A problem for which is hard to find an answer **especially one which people enjoy trying to solve as a game**:
- ⦿ The tribe has the option to dig down several feet and search to uncover an answer key to solve the brainteaser.

BODY BLOW

- ⦿ **something that causes serious problems and disappointment for a person trying to do something:**

- ⦿ **As a result, essential services will be cut, and that will be a severe body blow to all.**

BE OUT OF THE WOOD

- ◉ To be no longer in danger or difficulty (informal)
- ◉ *The project has been given funding for another year, but it's not out of the woods yet.*

HYDRA

- ⦿ A difficult problem that keeps returning
- ⦿ As soon as one false statement is knocked on the head then, like a hydra, another one appears and has to be refuted.

CLEAR

- ◉ Without problems or difficulties
- ◉ *This is the first time in his life that he's been clear of (= without) debt.*

TAKE SOME DOING

- ◉ To be difficult to do
- ◉ Running a marathon takes some doing

CONUNDRUM

- ◉ A problem that is difficult to deal with
- ◉ *Arranging childcare over the school holidays can be a real conundrum for working parents.*

HANDICAP

- ⦿ Difficulty
- ⦿ *I found that not having a car was quite a handicap while on holiday.*

HARDSHIP

- ◉ C1 (something that causes) difficult or unpleasant conditions of life, or an example of this

- ◉ *economic hardship*

IRRITANT

- ◉ Sth that causes trouble
- ◉ *The report is bound to add a new irritant to international relations.*

HICCUP

- ⦿ a problem that delays or interrupts something for a while, but does not usually cause serious difficulties:
- ⦿ *We've had one or two **slight** hiccups, but progress has generally been quite steady*

HINDRANCE

- ⦿ **UK** /'hɪn.drəns/ **US** /'hɪn.drəns/
- ⦿ **something that makes it more difficult for you to do something or for something to develop:**
- ⦿ *I've never considered my disability a hindrance, but other people have.*

GLITCH

- ⦿ a small problem or fault that prevents some thing from being successful or working as well as it should:
- ⦿ *We'd expected a few glitches, but everything's gone remarkably smoothly.*

IMPEDIMENT

- ⦿ something that makes progress, movement, or achieving something difficult or impossible
- ⦿ Formal
- ⦿ *In*
a number of developing countries, war has been an additional impediment to progress.

LONG SHOT

- ⦿ **something you try although it is unlikely to be successful:**
- ⦿ *It's a long shot, but you could try phoning him at home.*

LOOSE CANNON

- ⦿ **someone who behaves in an uncontrolled or unexpected way and is likely to cause problems for other people:**
- ⦿ *He's seen as something of a loose cannon by other team members.*

VILLAIN

- INFORMAL
- something or someone considered harmful or dangerous:
- *We've always been told that cholesterol was a major cause of heart disease but, actually, saturated fat is the worst villain.*

POTHOLE

- ◉ **UK** /'pɒt.həʊl/ **US** /'pɑ:t.hoʊl/
- ◉ A problem
- ◉ *The road to economic recovery is full of potholes.*

OBSTACLE COURSE

- ⦿ a series of problems that you have to solve in order to achieve something
- ⦿ It is like going over an obstacle course to get near the train.

NEMESIS

- ◉ **Someone's nemesis is a person or thing that is very difficult for them to defeat.**
- ◉ **Seldom has nemesis triumphed as it did on that occasion.**

RIDDLE

- ⦿ something that is confusing, or a problem that is difficult to solve:
- ⦿ *Scientists may have solved the riddle of Saturn's rings.*

TRIAL

- ⦿ a person or thing that is annoying and causes a lot of problems:
- ⦿ *She was a real trial to her parents when she was younger.*

WALL

- ◉ **A wall of people or things is a mass of them formed in such a way that you cannot get through or past them:**

THE CHILL WIND OF STH

- ◉ Literary
- ◉ The problems caused by sth
- ◉ *Many more businesses are feeling the chill wind of the recession.*

TEETHING TROUBLES

- ⦿ **problems that happen in the early stages of doing something new:**
- ⦿ **That there were teething troubles we all know.**