



To play cat and mouse



To play cat and mouse with someone means :

1. To try to trick an enemy into making a mistake so that you can have the advantage.
2. To change your behaviour often to make an opponent nervous or unsure.

*E.g.: The actor spent all the week **playing cat and mouse with the press***



En français, « **Jouer au chat et à la souris** »

To rain cats and dogs

To rain cats and dogs means :

To rain very heavily



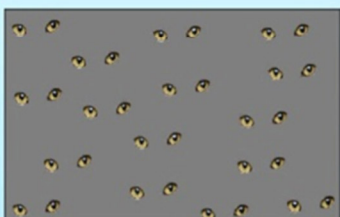
Origin: Odin, the Norse god of storms, was often pictured with dogs and wolves, which were symbols of wind. Witches, who supposedly rode their brooms during storms, were pictured with black cats, which became signs of heavy rain for sailors. Therefore, "raining cats and dogs" refers to a storm with wind (dogs) and heavy rain (cats).

*E.g.: The sky suddenly turned grey and it **rained cats and dogs** for 20 minutes.*



En français, « **Pleuvoir des cordes** », « **Pleuvoir comme vache qui pisse** », « **Pleuvoir (tomber) des hallebardes** ».

In the dark, all cats are grey



In the dark, all cats are grey means :

Physical appearance is of no consequence whatsoever when the candles have been blown out.

Origin: Benjamin Franklin, one of the founding fathers of the US, and famous scientist, used this figurative expression, while advising a young man, that taking an older woman to bed shouldn't be deemed as an unpleasant experience, as when the lights are put off, appearances cannot be made out.



En français, «**La nuit, tous les chats sont gris**»

When the cat's away the mice will play



When the cat's away, the mice will play is :

an expression describing how people will behave badly or as they like when a supervisor or other authority figure is not present.

*E.g.: I left the classroom for a few minutes and when I returned it was chaos. Ugh, **when the cat's away the mice will play.***



En français, «**Quand le chat n'est pas là, les souris dansent**».

Let the cat out of the bag



Let the cat out of the bag means :

To give away or let out a secret.

Origin: Centuries ago, sellers used to cheat their customers by selling a cat instead of a pig in the market. They asked the buyer not to open the bag till they reached home, so that the trickery wouldn't be made out beforehand. If you let the cat out of the bag, you disclosed the trick and people avoided buying a pig.

*E.g.: we were planning to bake a cake as a surprise for my mother's birthday, but my little brother told her **and let the cat out of the bag.***



En français, «**Vendre la mèche**»

Like the cat that got the cream



Like the cat that got the cream means:

Looking particularly self-satisfied, often to the annoyance of others

Variante américaine: Like the cat that ate the canary.

*E.g.: Now that Jane scored top marks in English, she's **like the cat that got the cream.***



En français, « Avoir l'air très content de soi ».

To fight like cats and dogs

To fight like cats and dogs means :

1. To fight all the time.
2. To argue jealously and violently all the time.



E.g.: Mike and John fight like cats and dogs, it is exhausting.



En français, « **Etre comme chien et chat** »,
« **S'entendre comme chien et chat** », « **Se battre
comme des chiffonniers** »

To put the cat among the pigeons

To put the cat among the pigeons means:

To do or say something that causes trouble or makes a lot of people very angry.



*E.g.: Sending the most unpopular manager to talk to the team was like **putting the cat among the pigeons**.*



En français, « **Jeter un pavé dans la mare** », « **Laisser le
loup entrer dans la bergerie** ».

To have (or to take) a catnap

To have or to take a catnap means :
To sleep during the day for a short while.



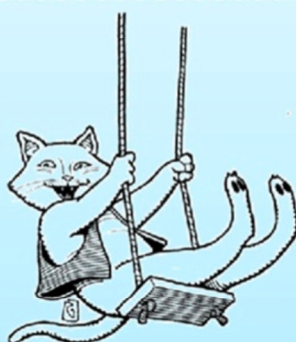
E.g.: After I came home from school, I took a catnap before I did my homework.



En français, «**Faire un petit somme**», «**piquer un roupillon**»

Not enough room to swing a cat

Not enough room to swing a cat means:
A very cramped space.



*E.g.: Flats in Hong Kong don't have **enough room to swing a cat**.*



En français, «**Ne pas avoir la place de se retourner**»,
«**Grand comme un mouchoir de poche**».