Spanish Idioms – to use in oral and written communication

Está bien/está bueno okay, correct, right, all right

Dar las gracias to thank

Pensar en to think about

Ganarse la vida to earn (make) a living

De memoria by heart

Poner la mesa to set the table

Valer la pena to be worth the trouble, effort

Tener cuidado to be careful

Hay que + inf one must…

Otra vez again, once more, another time or "go" at something

Ir de compras to go shopping

Estar de luto to be in mourning

Dar una vuelta to go for a walk, stroll, go for a spin

Dar el pésame por to express sympathy, offer condolences

A carta cabal fully, completely, in every respect

Tal vez perhaps

Querer decir to mean

Por extenso in detail, at great length

Por casualidad by chance, by the way, incidentally

Poco a poco little by little

Estar de moda to be fashionable, in style

En punto on the dot, sharp

Desde hace over a period of, for (a period of time), starting from, dating from

De nuevo once again, once more, anew

Preocuparse de to worry about

Preguntar por to inquire after someone, ask about someone

Por lo menos at least

Ida y vuelta round trip

Hacer cola to line up, form a line

Ocurrírsele a uno to occur to one, cross one's mind

De todas maneras at any rate, anyway

Hasta la fecha up to now, to date

Hacerse tarde to be getting late

Frente a in front of\

Equivocarse de to be mistaken or wrong about something

Decidirse a to decide to do something, make up one's mind, revolve to

De enfrente across from, directly opposite (such as a street)

Alegrarse de to be glad about something

Acabar de + inf to have just (done something)

Sin querer unintentionally, without meaning or wanting to

Por lo visto apparently, seemingly, evidently

Pasar un buen rato to have a good time, enjoy one's self

Parece mentira to seem hardly possible

No hay de qué don't mention it, think nothing of it

Lo de menos of little importance, insignificant

La mayor parte (de) the majority (of), the bulk (of)

En /de broma as a joke or in jest

Hacer caso a to pay attention to, heed, obey or give importance to someone

Faltar a to be absent from, miss OR show disrespect to someone

Hacer buenas migas to get along well together (also: llevarse bien con)

Echar a perder to spoil, ruin, go to waste

Delante de in the presence of, in front of (someone)

Dentro de inside (of); in or within a period of time

Dar que hacer to make or cause (extra) work

Al revés the contrary, opposite; wrong side of (inside out)

Tanto como as much as

Por primera vez for the first time

Por poco almost, just about, nearly (used with the present to refer to past events)

Por ahora for now, for the present

Parecido a like, similar to

Pagar a plazos to pay on installments

Oír hablar de to hear about, to hear tell of (compare: Oír decir que to hear it said that)

Por adelantado beforehand, in advance

Mientras tanto meanwhile, in the mean time

Meterse en lo que no le importa to pry into what doesn't concern one

Estar de acuerdo to agree, be of the same opinion

En lugar de in place of, instead of

En cuanto as soon as, the moment that (+ subjunctive if action is anticipated)

Dejar de + inf to quit…

De ahora en adelante from now on, in the future

De más too much, too many

Con mucho gusto gladly, willingly, with great pleasure

Tener la culpa to be to blame, be at fault

Tener ganas de + inf to feel like, desire, wish to…

Quedarse con to take (as in choosing or buying); remain or stay with

No poder ver ni en pintura to not be able to stand the sight of (something or someone)

Por fuera on the outside, on the exterior, superficially

Ir del brazo to walk arm in arm

Importarle a uno to matter to one, or be of importance, concern

Hacer falta to be necessary, to have need of, lack

Fijarse en to pay attention to, mark one's word

Estar con to have (an illness or other malady); to be with (something or someone)

Encargarse de to take charge of, assume responsibility for

En vano in vain

En el fondo deep down, at heart, by nature

Detrás de behind, in back of

Dentro de poco soon, in a little while, shortly

De mal en peor from bad to worse

En el extranjero abroad

Tener deseos de + inf to want to, be eager to (compare "tener ganas de)

A propósito by the way (compare "por casualidad")

Dar lástima to cause pain, grief, pity

Dar cuerda a to wind (a clock)

Todavía still, yet (also "aún")

Darle a uno vergüenza to be shameful to one, cause shame or bashfulness

Tarde o temprano sooner or later

Tan pronto como as soon as (also en cuanto, así que; + subjunctive if action is anticipated)

Sobre todo especially, above all, particularly

Sin remedio hopelessly, beyond solution

Por última vez for the last time

Pedir prestado to borrow

Ocuparse de to take care of, attend to

No poder ver a alguien not be able to tolerate someone (also no poder verle ni en pintura)

Mejor dicho or rather, better yet

Llamar la atención to attract attention, call attention to; to reprimand, censure, chide

Poner el grito en el cielo to scream and yell, make a great fuss (complaining, protesting)

Hacerle daño a uno to harm another; to not agree with one (physically, such a bad food)

En vez de instead of (also en lugar de)

Frente a frente face to face

En cambio on the other hand, but

Empleársele bien a uno to serve someone right, get one's due

De aquí (or de hoy) en adelante from now on, from here on in

Cuando quiera whenever you want, as soon as you're ready

Al principio at first, initially

Y pico and some odd (with numbers) NOTE: Do not use in Chile

Y así sucesivamente and so on, et cetera

Tomarle el pelo a uno to pull someone's leg

Tener razón to be right

Sin falta without fail

Quedar en + inf to agree on, come to a mutual understanding or decision about something

Por supuesto of course

Por aquí cerca around here, nearby

Ponerse de acuerdo to come to an agreement, be in accord

Perderse de vista to be lost from sight, vanish, disappear

Pensar de to think of, have an opinion about someone or something

Pasar el rato to kill time, pass the time away

Menos de less than (used with numbers; but note más que)

Llevarse bien con to get along well with (also hacer buenas migas)

Hasta cierto punto up to a point

Estar rendido to be exhausted, worn out

Estar (or quedar) entendido que to be understood that…

En la mitad de in the middle of

En fila in (a) line, row

El día menos pensado when one least expects (also: cuando menos lo espera)

Después de after, following

Desde que since, ever since, from the moment that

Dejar en paz to leave alone

A más tardar at the latest

Por fin at last

No ser ni la sombra de uno to be barely a shadow of one's former self (as in after an illness)

Poco después de soon after, a little after

Limitarse con to be bounded, bordered by; to be held down or back

Hecho y derecho mature, grown-up, full-fledged

En resumidas cuentas in short, in a word, in a nutshell

En representación de as an emissary of, representing

Desde entonces since then, ever since that time

De repente suddenly

De ninguna manera by no means, under no circumstances

De la noche a la mañana overnight, all at once (also en un abrir y cerrar de ojos)

Costar mucho trabajo to be difficult, hard

Read more: <http://www.brighthub.com/education/languages/articles/6317.aspx#ixzz14f8IbSGz>