

Common Thai Expressions

Learn Colloquial Thai Phrases

Anything's fine.

À-rai gâw dâi.* (อะไรก็ได้)

lit. anything then can

*The phrase *gâw dâi* (ก็ได้) can be put at the end of other concepts to mean that they are fine, such as *thêe-nâi gâw dâi* (ที่ไหนก็ได้): anywhere is fine--or *mêua-rài gâw dâi* (เมื่อไหร่ก็ได้): anytime is fine.

Busted!

Jàp dâi láeo (จับได้แล้ว)

lit. caught can already

*The word *jàp* (จับ) is used when someone is caught doing something wrong, as well as to refer to when someone is arrested.

Come on... (as when urging someone to do something)

Bpai thùh* nâh. (ไปเถอะ น้า)

lit. go (urge) (soften)

*A similar particle to *thùh* (เถอะ) is *hùh* (เหอะ). Both are used when encouraging someone to do something.

Cheer up!

Râh-ruhng* khâo wái! (ร่าเริงเข้าไว้)

lit. cheerful enter keep

râh-ruhng (ร่าเริง) cheerful = râh (ร่า) joyfully + ruhng (เรีง) lively

Damnit!

Seng* jing. (เซ็ง จริง)

lit. extremely bored truly

*The word *seng* differs from the common Thai word *bèua* (เบื้ออ), meaning *bored*, in that *seng* combines a feeling of strong irritation with boredom.

Exactly!

Châi leuy*! (ใช่ เลย)

lit. yes (emph.)

*In addition to being an article that lends emphasis to a thought, the word *leuy* (เลย) also means *to pass through*.

Forget it.

Châhng* man thùh (ช่าง มัน เถอะ)

lit. let go it (urge)

The word *châhng* (ช่าง) is also an adverb, meaning *indeed/truly*, and a noun, meaning a *technician/mechanic*. Not to be confused with *châhng* (ช้าง), which means *elephant*.

Go ahead.

Ao* leuy. (เอา เลย)

lit. take (emph.)

*The word *ao* (เอา) can mean both *take* and *want*.

Good idea!

Kwahm-khít* dee dee (ความคิด ดีๆ)

Lit. idea good good

*The word *kwahm* (ความ) is placed before verbs to turn them into nouns. In this case it is placed before the verb *khít* (คิด), meaning *think*.

Hold on!

Raw báep! (รอ แป๊บ)

lit. wait just a second*

*In more formal situations, the phrase for *wait one moment* is *sàk-khrôo ná khráp* (สักครู่ นะ ครับ), which literally means: *a moment (soften) (polite)*.

How so?

Yang-ngai là? (ยังไง หล่ะ)

lit. how (soften)

*The particle *là* (หล่ะ) can also be pronounced as *lâ* (ล๊ะ), with a falling tone, and be placed at the end of a sentence to show that the state of something has changed.

Hurry up!

Réo réo sì! (เร็วๆ สิ)

lit. fast fast (urge)

*Note that younger Thais will sometimes replace the particle *sì* with the slang variation *dì* (ดี).

I guess so.

Phõm gâw khít bàep nán. (ผม ก็ คิด แบบ นั้น)

lit. I well think like that

*The *phõm* (ผม) pronoun for *I/me* is used exclusively by men, but the informal *rao* (เรา) pronoun can be used by both sexes for *I/me*.

I give up!

Chăn* yawm-pháe! (ฉัน ขอมแพ้)

lit. I surrender

*The *chăn* (ฉัน) pronoun is the shortened form of the *I/me* pronoun *dì-chăn* (ดีฉัน). Although *dì-chăn* is used exclusively by women, *chăn* is sometimes used by guys when talking to friends.

I don't care.

Mâi sǎn-jai ràwk. (ไม่ สนใจ หรือก)

lit. not interested (emph.)

*sǎn-jai (สนใจ) interested = sǎn (สนใจ) to be interested + jai (ใจ) heart/spirit

I'm just looking.

Doo cheuy cheuy.* (ดูเฉยๆ)

lit. look indifferent indifferent

*This is the expression to use with a salesperson when you don't want to be bothered.

I swear.

Săh-bahn dâi. (สาบาน ใต้)

lit. swear can

*The word dâi (ใต้) can mean both *can* and *do/did*, as well as *receive*.

It's my treat.

Rao líang ayng. (เรา เลี้ยง เอง)

lit. I treat personally

*The *rao* personal pronoun, which in the above means *I*, can also mean *we*. To help clarify things you can say the more formal *phúak-rao* (พวกเรา) to mean *we/us*.

It's no big deal.

Mâi bpen* rai. (ไม่เป็นไร)

lit. not be anything

*The word *bpen* (เป็น) can both be used as a *to be* verb, as seen above, and to mean that you have the *ability/skill* to do something.

It's not worth it.

Mâi khúm ná. (ไม่คุ้ม นะ)

lit. not worthwhile (soften)

*While the particle *ná* (นะ) is often used to soften the sound of a sentence, as seen above, it can also be tacked on to the end of a sentence in the same way English speakers do with *okay?*, *right?*, or *whaddaya ya say?*

No sweat.

Săw-baw-maw* (ส.บ.ม.)

lit. These initials stand for the phrase *sà-bai mâhk* (สบาย มาก), which literally means *easily/content very much*.

*The literal Thai word to refer to something *easy to do* is *ngái* (ง่าย), and it is often doubled when used as a stand alone phrase.

No way!

Dtòk-jai leuy ná nía! (ตกใจ เลย นะ เนี่ย)

lit. shocked (emph.) (soften) (emph.)

*The word *dtòk-jai* in this expression could be replaced by the English loanword *cháwk* (ช็อก) when speaking to younger Thais. The pronunciation of the "ch" in *cháwk* is soft, somewhere between a "ch" and "sh" sound.

No way.

Mái dái ràwk. (ไม่ได้ หรือก)

lit. not can (emph.)

*The *ràwk* (หรือก) particle does more than simply emphasize the verb; it implies that your statement is opposite of what the other person thought or was expecting.

Oh, give me a break!

Ôi, nói nói* nòi! (โื้อย น้อยๆ น่นอย)

lit. oh, a little a little (soften)

*Thais double words sometimes to show emphasis; sometimes to make sure the word is understood; and sometimes just because it makes the sentence sound more pleasing to the ear.

Oh, my God!*

Dtai láeo! (ตาย แล่ว)

lit. dead already

*Younger Thais also commonly use the English phrase "Oh, my God!" in a humorous way to show surprise.

Really?

Jing jing rǎw?* (จริงๆ หรือ)?

lit. true true (question)

*The question particle *rǎw* (หรือ) is usually pronounced *lǎw*.

Same here.

Chán gâw* mǎuan gan. (ฉัน ก็ เหมือนกัน)

lit. I also same as together

*The word *gâw* (ก็) also can be used like English speakers use the word *umm* when thinking about something they want to say.

So what?

Láeo ngai à.* (แล้ว ไร อะ)

lit. already what (soften)

*The word *ngai* (ไร) also means *how*, and can be used as a particle to emphasize the obviousness of the statement that precedes it. The particle *à* is a slang shortening of the *ná* (นะ) and *là* (แหละ) particles.

Take it easy.

Chiu chiu nâh. (ช้าๆ น้า)

lit. relax relax (soften)

*One can also use the commonly heard word *jai-yen* (ใจเย็น), meaning *calm*, when trying to get someone to calm down, but the above phrase is more colloquial.

That's a relief!

Lôhng-jai* jang leuy (โล่งใจ จัง เลย)

lit. relieved extremely (emph.)

*lôhng-jai (โล่งใจ) = lôhng (โล่ง) empty + jai (ใจ) heart

That's totally true.

Thòok thêe-sùt (ถูก ที่สุด)

lit. correct most

*thêe-sùt (ที่ สุด) most = thee (ที่) at/to + sùt (สุด) end/most

That's crazy!

Bâh làe! (บ้าแหละ)

Lit. crazy (emph.)

*Use the particle *lâe* (แหละ) to emphasize the statement preceding it when you want to indicate that you are referring precisely to something (this or that).

That's* awesome!

Dèt nâe nâe! (เด็ด แน่ๆ)

lit. great for sure for sure

*Note that in Thai relative pronouns like *this* and *that* are often dropped from sentences, as well as personal pronouns such as *me*, *she*, *I*, and *him*.

That's got nothing to do with it.

Mâi giò sàk-nít (ไม่เกี่ยว สักนิด)

lit. not related one bit

*sàk-nít (สักนิด) one bit = sàk (สัก) just/about + nít (นิด) a little/small

This is ridiculous!

Dtà-lòk sîn-dee* leuy! (ตลก สิ้นดี เลย)

lit. funny extremely (emph.)

*sîn-dee (สิ้นดี) extremely = sîn (สิ้น) to end/finish + dee (ดี) good/nice

Unbelievable!

Mâi chêu leuy wâ! (ไม่เชื่อเลย วะ)

lit. not believe (emph.)

*The *wâ* (วะ) pronoun should be used with some caution and only among friends, as among others it could make you sound aggressive or offensive..

What the heck!

À-rai ná nîa! (อะไรนะ เนี่ย)

lit. what (soften) (emph.)

*Use the particle *nîa* (นี่) for emphasis when you want to indicate a sense of surprise or confusion at something in particular.

Why not?

Tham-mai jà mâi lá? (ทำไม จะ ไม่ ละ)

lit. why will not (soften)

*Try not to confuse the low tone *jà* (จะ), which means *will/shall*, with the high tone *já* (จ๊ะ), which is a particle placed at the end of a sentence to make it sound friendly.

Wonderful!

Thây* jang leuy! (เท่ห์ จัง เลย)

lit. cool extremely (emph.)

*The word *thây* (เท่ห์), which above means *cool*, also means *body/physique*.

You're joking.

Phôot-lên châi-măi*. (พูดเล่น ใช่ไหม)

lit. joking (question)

*The *châi-măi* (ใช่ไหม) question particle is the equivalent of the phrase *right?* which English speakers tack on to the end of a statement to turn it into a question. The Thai word for joking, *phôot-lên* (พูดเล่น), literally means *speak play*.

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