HISTORICAL ALLUSIONS

1. **Attila** - barbarian, rough leader; King of the Huns from 433-453 and the most successful of the barbarian invaders of the Roman Empire.

2. **Berserk** - destructively or frenetically violent, mental or emotional upset; a warrior clothed in bear skin who worked himself into a frenzy before battle

3. **Blarney** – Blarney, Ireland is celebrated the world over for a stone on a fortified wall that is said to endow whoever kisses it with the eternal gift of eloquence , sometimes known as the 'Gift of the Gab'. The word "blarney" has also come to mean to placate with soft talk or to deceive without offending, deriving as custom would have it from the stream of unfulfilled promises of Cormac MacDermot MacCarthy to the Lord President of Munster in the late sixteenth century. Having seemingly agreed to deliver his castle to the Crown, he continuously delayed doing so with soft words, which came to be known as "Blarney talk."

4. **Bowdlerize** - to censor, expurgate prudishly, to modify, as by shortening or simplifying or by skewing content; after Thomas Bowdler (1754-1825), who expurgated Shakespeare

5. **Boycott** - to act together in abstaining from using, buying, or dealing with as an expression of protest or disfavor or as a means of coercion, the act or an instance of boycotting; after Charles C. Boycott (1832-97), of Ireland. Boycott, a former British soldier, refused to charge lower rents and ejected his tenants. Boycott and his family found themselves without servants, farmlands, service in stores, or mail delivery. Boycott's name was quickly adapted as the term for this treatment.

6. **Casanova** - a man who is amorously and gallantly attentive to women; a promiscuous man.; Giovanni Jacopo Casanova De Seingalt (1725-98), an Italian adventurer who established a legendary reputation as a lover

7. **Chauvinist** - one who has a militant devotion to and glorification of one's country, fanatical patriotism, prejudiced belief in the superiority of one's own gender, group, or kind; after Nicolas Chauvin, a legendary French soldier devoted to Napoleon

8. **Cut off one's nose to spite one's face** – to harm yourself in an effort to punish someone else or to make a point because you are angry or upset

9. **Donnybrook** - any riotous occasion; taken from the Donnybrook Fair, held in Dublin County, Ireland until 1855, which was famous for rioting and dissipation

10. **Eat crow** – to admit one’s mistake and apologize for the blunder or misdeed

11. **El Dorado** - a place of reputed wealth; from the legendary city in South America, sought by early Spanish explorers

12. **Fifth Column** - A clandestine subversive organization (an enemy in your midst ) working within a country through espionage or sabotage to further an invading enemy's military and political aims. [First applied in 1936 during the Spanish Civil War to rebel sympathizers inside Madrid when four columns of rebel troops were attacking that city]

13. **Gung Ho** - one of the many phrases that entered the English language as a result of World War II. It comes from a Mandarin Chinese word meaning "to work together," which was used as a motto by the Chinese Industrial Cooperative Society. Lieutenant Colonel Evans F. Carlson (1896-1947) borrowed the motto as a moniker for meetings in which problems were discussed and worked out; the motto caught on among his Marines (the famous "Carlson's Raiders"), who began calling themselves the "Gung Ho Battalion." From there eager individuals began to be referred to as gung ho.

14. **Hackney** - to make something banal or trite by frequent use, a horse for ordinary riding or driving, a horse kept for hire, let out, employed, or done for hire; from Hackney, the most common breed of heavy harness horses in the US.

15. **Horatio Alger** - one who believes that a person can make it on his own merits; from (1832-99) American writer of inspirational adventure books

16. **John Hancock** – One’s signature has become known as “one’s John Hancock” after American Statesman John Hancock who was the first person to sign The Declaration of Independence and whose clear and legible signature is the most prominent on the document.

17. **Keep the Ball Rolling** - the phrase owes its origin and popularity to the US presidential election of July 1840. That election is widely regarded as introducing all the paraphernalia of present-day elections, i.e. campaign songs, advertising slogans and publicity stunts of all kinds. Harrison's campaign literature referred to Victory Balls. These weren't, as we might expect, dance parties that celebrated his famous victory, but ten-foot diameter globes made of tin and leather, which were pushed from one campaign rally to the next. His supporters were invited to attend rallies and push the ball on to the next town, chanting 'keep the ball rolling'

18. **Limerick** - a humorous or nonsense verse of five lines; from Limerick, a county in Republic of Ireland where the form is said to have originated

19. **Machiavellian** - of or relating to Machiavelli or Machiavellianism, characterized by expedience, deceit and cunning; after Niccolo Machiavelli (1469-1537), a philosopher known for his treaties and political expediency; wrote *The Prince* (1513)

20. **Marathon** - a long distance race; source of the Victory of the Greeks over Persians in 490 B.C.

21. **Maverick** – After Samuel Maverick, a 19th century American pioneer who refused to brand his cattle as everyone else seemed to do; to call someone a maverick is to identify him or her as an independent individual who does not go along with a group or party

22. **McCarthyism** - modern witch hunt, the practice of publicizing accusations of political disloyalty or subversions with insufficient regard to evidence, the use of unfair investigatory or accusatory methods, in order to suppress opposition; after Joseph McCarthy (1908-57), an American politician who as a US senator from WWI publicly accused many citizens of subversion

23. **Mesmerize** - to induce the state of being hypnotized; F.A. Mesmer, an Austrian physician who used hypnotism and developed a theory called "animal magnetism"

24. **Nostradamus** - fortune teller; (1503-66) French physician and astrologer who wrote a book of rhymed prophecies

25. **Read the Riot Act** - Since the early 19th century we have used 'read the riot act' as a figurative phrase to describe attempts to calm groups of rowdies - along the same lines as 'you noisy louts, don't you know there are people here trying to sleep?' The actual 'Riot Act' was passed by the British government in 1714 and came into force in 1715. The Riot Act, which was more formally called 'An act for preventing tumults and riotous assemblies, and for the more speedy and effectual punishing the rioters' actually contained this warning: "Our sovereign Lord the King chargeth and commandeth all persons, being assembled, immediately to disperse themselves, and peaceably to depart to their habitations, or to their lawful business, upon the pains contained in the act made in the first year of King George, for preventing tumults and riotous assemblies. God save the King." The crowd had an hour to disperse or face imprisonment.

26. **The Real McCoy** - After Kid McCoy (Norman Selby McCoy, 1873-1940), American welterweight boxing champion. The story goes, and there are various versions of it, that a drunk challenged Selby in a bar packed full of admirers to prove that he was actually the champion McCoy and not one of the many lesser boxers trading under the same name. After being knocked to the floor in one punch, the drunk rose to admit that 'Yes, that's the real McCoy'.

27. **Sardonic** - bitterly ironical, sarcastic, sneering; from a Sardinian plant said to bring on fits of laughter

28. **Shanghai** - to cheat or steal, to make drugs, liquor, etc.. to bring or get by trickery or force; a seaport in East China, from Shanghai because sailor for voyages there were often secured by illicit means

29. **Spartan** - frugal and bare, simple, disciplined and stern and brave; having to do with Sparta, an important City in Greece. The Spartans were known for simplicity of life, severity, courage, and brevity of speech.

30. **Stonewall** - hinder or obstruct by evasive, delaying tactics; in cricket: trying to go completely defensive, blocking every ball without trying to score; relating to Stonewall Jackson (Thomas J. Jackson) Confederate General from the remark during the Battle of Bull Run: "Look as Jackson's men; they stand like a stone wall."

31. **Swiftian** - satirical; from Jonathan Swift's famous satire on politics *Gulliver's Travels*

32. **Uncle Sam** - government of people of the United States; derived from the United States of America - Uncle Sam, a businessman with initials on shipping boxes in 1800's

33. **Utopia** - an imaginary and perfect society; British 1610, source Thomas More's novel *Utopia*

34. **To meet one’s Waterloo** – To experience a decisive or final defeat or setback; Waterloo in Belgium was the scene of Napoleon's last defeat, a crushing blow, in 1815