

Casablanca

(Drama/Classic) (1942)
© 2000 by Raymond Weschler

Major Characters

- Richard “Rick” Blaine**.....**Humphrey Bogart**
An American businessman who owns a café and bar in Casablanca, Morocco. He arrived there after leaving France in 1940, after the Germans invaded and occupied Paris.
- Ilsa**.....**Ingrid Bergman**
A beautiful young woman from Norway who had a brief affair with Rick in Paris, who unexpectedly arrives in Casablanca a year after she had disappeared from Rick’s life.
- Victor Laszlo**.....**Paul Henreid**
Ilsa’s husband, a highly educated and charming man from Czechoslovakia, who is a leader of the underground movement fighting against the Germans. He has escaped from a concentration camp and has now arrived with Ilsa in Morocco.
- Captain Louis Renault**.....**Claude Rains**
The head of the French police in Casablanca who is charming and friendly, but completely corrupt.
- Major Heinrich Strasser**.....**Conrad Veidt**
An official of the German military who has come to Casablanca in order to find the killer of two German clerks in North Africa.
- Sam**.....**Dooly Wilson**
Rick’s African-American friend, who sings in his café.
- Ugo**.....**Peter Lone**
A corrupt and mysterious man who sells travel visas on the black market, who is arrested for the murder of the German clerks.
- Senor Ferrari**.....**Sydney Greenstreet**
A powerful and corrupt Spanish businessman who also owns a café.
- Cal**.....**SZ Sakal**
The head waiter at Rick’s café.
- Yvonne**.....**Madeleine LeBeau**
A young French woman who often comes to the café.

Plot Summary

This film is the classic story of an American café owner, Rick Blaine, who is living in Casablanca, Morocco, during World War 2. Rick is both a cynical and caring individual who came to Casablanca after falling in love with a Norwegian woman, Ilsa, during his time in Paris. Although their affair was a short one, Rick believed that they would leave Paris together, after the German armies occupied France in the summer of 1940. Unfortunately, and for reasons that Rick did not understand at the time, Ilsa chose to stay in Paris, and apparently leave Rick forever. Naturally, Rick was broken hearted.

A year later, in 1941, Rick is running his own successful café in Casablanca, when Ilsa unexpectedly arrives with her Czechoslovakian husband, Victor Laszlo. Laszlo is well known for leading the underground movement against Hitler's armies in Europe, and for having twice escaped from a German concentration camp. Both Ilsa and Victor had come to Casablanca, like so many others, to find a French exit visa that would allow them to fly to Portugal, and then travel on to America. But when they arrive, Ilsa is shocked to find herself with Rick again, and both Ilsa and Victor find it much harder than they thought it would be to obtain the exit visas that they so desperately need.

While waiting for a chance to escape from Casablanca, Rick learns the real reason that Ilsa had left him back in Paris, and the real story of her marriage to Victor. Although Rick and Ilsa clearly still loved each other, Rick makes sure that when Ilsa and Victor get a chance to escape, Ilsa chooses the man she is truly supposed to be with....

A Background Note on the Geopolitical Situation:

This film takes place in 1941 in the city of Casablanca, which was and is the largest city in the North African country of Morocco. At the time, Morocco was still a French colony, but the situation was complicated by the fact that Germany had invaded France in 1940. When France surrendered, Germany agreed to not invade Southern France, but only if a pro-German government was installed. This government, located in the city of Vichy, was in charge of running France's colonies, including Morocco.

Thus, Morocco was still considered "French soil," although German military officials who came there had a great amount of influence. The French officials who ran the colony were careful not to offend the Germans, although many of them probably supported the "Free French" under General Charles DeGaulle, who was the leader of the French government in exile in London. This group rejected the authority of the government in Vichy, and continued to fight with the British against the Germans.

A note on the English used in this movie: Except for Rick and Sam, no major character in this film is supposed to be a native English speaker. There are Czechs, Italians, Norwegians, Germans, Russians and various others, and while they all have their charming accents, they all speak perfect English. Needless to say, this isn't realistic!

It's also worth noting that while English had already become the most important international language by the time of World War 2, French would have still been the key language of communication between foreigners in Morocco. In fact, there is quite a bit of French and German heard in this film (though no Arabic!). Still, it is English that is presented as the dominant language, thanks to decisions that were not made in Casablanca, Paris or even Berlin, but obviously, in Hollywood....

Some Words and Expressions that You May not Know

Two Germans are shot on their way to Casablanca, but life goes on as normal for Rick, and all the interesting people at Rick's café.

Lisbon became the great embarkation point.

Lisbon is the capital of Portugal. An "embarkation point" is a city or place from which people start a long journey, often across an ocean ("To embark" is to leave on a trip).

A tortuous, roundabout refugee trail sprang up.

A trail that is "tortuous" or "roundabout" is very indirect, going to many out of the way places before reaching its final destination. A "refugee trail" is the road or path that people running away from their countries take. "To spring up" is to suddenly appear.

The fortunate ones...might obtain exit visas and scurry to Lisbon.

"Exit visas" are official documents that allow a person to leave the country that they are in. "To scurry" means to quickly run away.

Two German couriers carrying official documents murdered on train from Oran.

A "courier" is a person who carries papers or documents from one city or place to another. Oran is a major city in Algeria, east of Morocco.

Murderer and possible accomplices headed for Casablanca.

An "accomplice" is a person who helps another commit a crime, although they are usually not present when it actually takes place.

Round up all suspicious characters and search them for stolen documents.

“To round up” a group of people is to find them and put them in a jail or prison. “Suspicious characters” are those people who are thought likely to have something wrong or illegal. A “document” is any kind of paper that gives proof or support about something else.

These papers expired three weeks ago; You’ll have to come along.

A paper that has “expired” is no longer valid or up to date.

This is the customary round-up of refugees, liberals and beautiful girls for Monsieur Renault, the prefect of police.

“Customary” means usual, common place or frequently done. The “prefect of police” is a high ranking officer, though this term is rare.

Unfortunately, the scum of Europe has gravitated toward Casablanca.

“Scum” is a very negative noun that refers to the dirty film or material found on bathroom walls, and more generally, to evil or disgusting people. “To gravitate” toward a place is to steadily move toward it.

This place is full of vultures! Vultures everywhere!

A type of bird that eats the bodies of dead animals, and thus, a person who takes advantage of, or steals from, other people.

Amusing little fellow.

If a person is “amusing,” they are funny or entertaining, and “fellow” is a British word for a man or guy.

Major. Captain. Lieutenant.

Different levels of power in the military.

You may find the climate of Casablanca a trifle warm.

Another way of saying a bit, or a little.

We know who the murderer is. :: Good, is he in custody?

If a person is “in custody,” they’re being held by the police, often in jail.

Bring 15,000 francs in cash.

An important phrase referring to real money, as opposed to checks, official promises to pay, etc.

What makes saloon keepers so snobbish?

A “saloon keeper” is the owner of a saloon, which is an old-fashioned word for a bar or café. A person who is “snobbish” is arrogant and looks down on others (However, note that “snobby” is more common).

The leading banker in Amsterdam is now the pastry chef in our kitchen.
A “pastry chef” makes fine desserts, cakes and breads.

And his father is the bellboy.
The person in a hotel who brings a guest’s luggage up to their room.

Of all the nerve! I know there is gambling in there!
Another way of saying “How dare You!,” or a poetic way of expressing anger that someone would deny you what you want.

This is outrageous!
A good word for completely ridiculous, unacceptable or shocking.

*Ugate gives Rick the invaluable letters of transit,
and then finds himself in very big trouble.*

They got a lucky break; Yesterday they were just two German clerks and today they’re all honored dead.
“A lucky break” is a piece of good luck, or an unexpected opportunity.
A “clerk” is a low level office worker. If a person is “honored,” they are officially shown great respect or admiration.

You are a very cynical person.
A person who is “cynical” basically thinks people act only in their own interests and sees very little good in the world.

You despise me, don’t you? :: If I gave it any thought, I probably would.
“To despise” is a powerful verb meaning to hate with great passion.

Think of all those poor refugees who must rot in this place if I don’t help them.
“To rot” is to decay, or perhaps grow old and die.

Think of all the poor devils who can’t meet Renault’s price.
An affectionate term for people without money or hope, but of course the “devil” is literally a bad angel, or symbol of evil.

I get it for them for half. Is that so parasitic?
If a person is “parasitic,” they live off the labor and bodies of others (The adjectival form for a parasite).

I don’t mind a parasite. I object to a cut-rate one.
“To object” to something is to disapprove of it. “Cut-rate” is an interesting word for a person or product that is extremely cheap.

After tonight, I'll be through with the whole business.

"To be through" with something is to be finished with it.

Who did you bribe?

"To bribe" a person is to offer them money or some other gift in order to influence them unfairly, often in order to get an illegal service.

Letters of transit signed by General DeGaulle.

An important term in this film that refers to official exit visas or papers that allow people to leave the country. General DeGaulle was the leader of the Free French forces fighting Germany during the war.

They cannot be rescinded, not even questioned.

"To rescind" an order is to cancel or overturn it.

I'll share my good luck with your roulette wheel.

A popular casino game in which people gamble on the number that a spinning wheel will stop on.

I heard a rumor those two German couriers were carrying letters of transit.

A "rumor" is a piece of unofficial news that may or may not be true, spread by word of mouth.

Don't you frown...just knock on wood. [Song]

"To frown" is to make a face of disapproval, disappointment or anger.

"Knock on wood" is a way telling a person to hope for good luck.

Too bad, that's Casablanca's leading commodity.

A commodity is any product that is sold in the marketplace, especially a grain or mineral, such as wheat or gold.

You can work for me in the black market.

The unofficial marketplace in which illegal products from drugs to false visas are sold on the streets, and sales taxes are never paid.

When will you realize...that isolation is no longer a practical policy?

"Isolation" is the act or process of keeping separated from others.

A "policy" is a plan or course of action in dealing with politics, business or other human affairs.

What a fool I was to fall for a man like you.

"To fall for" a person is a colloquial way of saying to either like them very much or perhaps fall in love with them.

How extravagant you are, throwing away women like that.

An “extravagant” person is very wasteful, especially with money.

Someday they may be scarce.

A product that is “scarce” is rare or hard to find.

Maybe I’ll pay a call on Yvonne. Maybe get her on the rebound.

“To call on” a person is to visit them at home. In this context, a person who is “on the rebound” has just broken up with their partner, and is trying to emotionally recover from the relationship (“To rebound” is to go back up, or get healthy again).

If he gets a word in, it will be a major Italian victory.

In this context, to “get a word in” is to be able to talk, despite the fact another person has a big mouth and is doing most of the talking.

I’ve often speculated on why you don’t return to America.

“To speculate” on something is to seriously wonder or think about it.

Did you abscond with the church funds?

“To abscond with” something is a fancy way of saying to steal it.

“Funds” are a supply of money, in this case belonging to a church.

What in heaven’s name brought you to Casablanca?

An old-fashioned but interesting expression added to Wh questions in order to show great surprise, excitement or other emotion.

What waters? We’re in the desert. :: I was misinformed.

Note that water is almost always a non-count noun, but when referring to great sources of water such as lakes, it could be plural, as it is here.

If a person is “misinformed,” they have been told false information.

I’m awfully sorry.

A surprisingly common adverb that simply means very.

This is no ordinary arrest. :: A murderer, no less.

An “arrest” is the official act of physically holding a person and putting them in jail after charging them with a crime.

“No less” is a stylish way of showing emphasis.

I stick my neck out for nobody.

Rick’s way of saying that he will not risk his own safety to help somebody else. A very famous line from this movie.

Out of my high regard for you, we're staging it here.

To have "high regard" for a person is to greatly respect them.

"To stage" an event, in this case an arrest, is to do it in a way that can be seen by many people, or the public in general.

Rick, Captain Renault and Major Strasser discuss the murders, the fate of Victor Laszlo, and the role of Germany in world affairs.

Major Strasser of the Third Reich.

An official term for the government that Hitler led in Germany.

He certainly didn't come to witness a demonstration of your efficiency.

"To witness" something is to see it or observe it. "Efficiency" refers to the speed and quality with which work or a project is done.

Louis, you got something on your mind. Why don't you spill it?

"To spill" a liquid is to accidentally let it fall from a container, but to spill something on your mind is to talk honestly about your thoughts.

How observant you are.

A useful adjective for a person who usually notices what is going on around them.

He will offer a fortune to anyone who will furnish him with an exit visa.

"A fortune" is an enormous or huge amount of money. "To furnish" someone with something is to physically give it to them.

It will be interesting to see how he manages.

"To manage" a difficult situation is to deal with it.

He escaped from a concentration camp.

The horrible prisons and work camps where Hitler sent his enemies.

This is the end of the chase. :: 20,000 francs says it isn't.

Rick's way of saying "I bet you 20,000 francs that you're wrong."

I'm only a poor corrupt official.

If a person is "corrupt," they are dishonest and involved in bribes and other activity in which they illegally or immorally use their power. In this case, an "official" is simply a member of the government.

No matter how clever he is, he needs an exit visa.

A popular word in England for smart, intelligent or resourceful.

I suspect that under that cynical shell, you are at heart a sentimentalist.

A “cynical” person does not trust or like people, but a “sentimentalist” is a person who likes people and generally tries to help them. In reality, this word is rarely used, though “sentimental,” meaning romantic or driven by sweet emotions, is still common.

Let me point out two things; In 1935, you ran guns to Ethiopia, and in 1936, you fought in Spain on the loyalist side.

“To point out” something is to make it noticeable or understood.

“To run guns” is to secretly supply guns to one side in a war. This is Louis’ way of saying that Rick had a history of fighting against fascism, (in Spain and Ethiopia) and thus he really did care about people.

You overestimate the influence of the Gestapo.

“To overestimate” something is to consider it more important or stronger than it really is. The “Gestapo” was the hated German police.

In Casablanca, I am the master of my fate.

A poetic way of saying “I control what will happen to me” (“Fate” is another word, like destiny, that refers to a person’s future, and the mysterious forces that determine what that future will be like).

I’m sorry there was a disturbance folks, but it’s all over now.

A “disturbance” is any kind of noise, or perhaps violence, that distracts people from what they were doing.

What is your nationality? :: I’m a drunkard.

A strong word for a person who drinks too much and is often drunk.

I understand you came here from Paris at the time of the occupation.

A word that refers to a situation where foreign troops control a country (In this case, the German occupation of France).

You can’t imagine the Germans in your beloved Paris?

An emotional adjective that means much loved or cherished.

There are certain sections of New York, Major, that I wouldn’t advise you to try and invade.

“To invade” a nation is to militarily attack it in order to later occupy it.

You weren’t always so neutral. We have a complete dossier on you.

A person who is “neutral” doesn’t take sides in a conflict between countries or people. A “dossier” is a set of papers or files containing lots of personal information.

The reason is a little vague.
A useful adjective meaning not clear.

Don't worry; We won't broadcast it.
"To broadcast" something is to play it on TV or radio.

We are checking up on anybody who can be of help to us.
In this context, to "check up" on a person is to find them and ask them various questions to see what they know about a particular situation.

My interest in whether Victor Laszlo stays or goes is strictly a sporting one.
Rick's way of saying he has bet money on Laszlo's future, but he doesn't care emotionally whether Laszlo is able to escape from Morocco.

You have no sympathy for the fox? :: Not particularly,
I understand the point of view of the hound, too.
A "fox" is a beautiful animal that is sometimes hunted by humans.
A "hound" is a type of dog that people use to help them hunt.

He continued the scandal sheets from a cellar.
A "scandal sheet" is a negative expression for a newspaper that concentrates on sensational news and sex scandals. A "cellar" is the basement or underground part of a building or house.

Three times he slipped through our fingers.
"To slip through a person's fingers" is to escape after being captured or almost caught.

Victor and Ilsa arrive in Casablanca, in search of Ugate's transit papers, and soon Ilsa discovers that Rick is in town.

Such a bargain.
A "bargain" is an important word for a very good deal, or cheap price on a service or product.

Mr. Laszlo, it isn't often we have so distinguished a visitor.
A "distinguished" person is very accomplished and respected.

The present French administration hasn't always been so cordial.
"Cordial" is a way of saying polite, but not warm or friendly. The administration that Laszlo is referring to is the Vichy government.

That was a gross understatement.

As an adjective, “gross” means complete or absolute. An “understatement” is a statement that is not strong enough.

I’m sure you’ll excuse me if I’m not gracious.

Another word for polite, but friendlier than cordial.

You were a Czechoslovakian. Now, you are a subject of the German Reich.

An interesting use of “subject” to mean a person who is officially under the control of a foreign power, in this case, the Germans.

I never accepted that privilege, and I’m now on French soil.

“Soil” is another word for dirt or ground. During the war, Morocco was still a colony, under the Vichy French.

Let us say it is my request.

“A request” is an expressed desire, as opposed to “an order,” which is a command.

A very clever tactical retreat.

A “tactical retreat” is a strategic or military decision to retreat or go backward, in order to be able to advance or move forward later.

In a concentration camp, one is apt to lose a little weight.

If a person is “apt to” do something, they are likely to do it.

We are organized and underground, like everywhere else.

A reference to “the underground,” which are secret groups which fight against a repressive or dictatorial government.

It’s been a long time. :: Yes, mam, a lot of water under the bridge.

Sam’s poetic way of saying that a lot time has passed since he saw Ilsa.

Play it once, Sam. For old time’s sake.

A gentle expression which means “for the good memories we have.”

Play “As Time Goes By.” :: I’m a little rusty on it.

If a person is “rusty” at a song (or a language), this means that they need to practice it in order to perform it well.

I’ll hum it for you.

“To hum” is to sing the melody of a song with your lips closed.

A kiss is just a kiss, a sigh is just a sigh. [song]

A “sigh” is the act of letting out a deep breath slowly, to show sadness or other emotion. This is a very famous line from the song “As Time Goes By,” which has become a classic because of this movie.

Well, a precedent is being broken.

A “precedent” is an action or principle of behavior that is continued, simply because it has been followed in the past.

I can't get over you two. She was asking about you earlier in a way that made me very jealous.

To not be able “to get over” something is to be unable to accept it or forget about it, perhaps because it is so shocking or amazing.

It's late. :: So it is, and we have a curfew here in Casablanca.

A “curfew” is a law that prevents people from being outside of their homes after a certain time, usually from night until early morning.

I hope we didn't overstay our welcome. :: Not at all.

If you “overstay your welcome,” you stay longer at a place than your host would have preferred that you stay.

I'll call you a cab. Gasoline rationing, time of night.

“Rationing” is the act of limiting the amount of goods that any one person can buy. Gas rationing is common during wars.

A puzzling fellow, this Rick.

If a person is “puzzling,” they are mysterious or perhaps act strangely.

Of all the gin joints, in all the towns, in all the world, she walks into mine.

This is one of the most famous lines in the history of the movies!

A “gin joint” is a silly and never used expression for a bar or saloon (Gin is a type of liquor, and a joint is a slangy word for a club or bar).

If she can stand it, I can! Play it!

Note this verb is usually used in the negative, in the expression “I can't stand it,” which means “I hate it.” Here, it means “I can survive it.”

Rick looks back on his days with Ilsa in Paris....

Here's looking at you, kid.

Another extremely famous line, and Rick's way of telling Ilsa how happy he is to be with her, or perhaps how pretty she is.

A franc for your thoughts.

A “franc” is a unit of French money. In the US, we say “a penny for your thoughts,” which is a way of telling a person you want to know what they’re thinking (A penny is one cent, or almost worthless!).

I’m on their blacklist already. Their roll of honor.

A “blacklist” is a list of people who are considered enemies or at least undesirable, and is usually kept by a repressive government. A “roll of honor” is a list of people who are greatly respected or admired for some particular accomplishment (though here it is used jokingly).

This ought to take the sting out of being occupied. :: You said it.

A “sting” is a sharp pain, which may or may not be caused by the stinger of an insect such as a bee. “You said it” is a good expression to say when you strongly agree with what was just said.

With the whole world crumbling, we pick this time to fall in love.

“To crumble” is to fall apart into tiny little pieces.

10 years ago? I was having a brace put on my teeth.

The metal strip that keeps teeth where they belong in your mouth, though note that today it always said in the plural (braces).

Was that canon fire, or my heart pounding?

A “canon” is a large weapon that is used to fire missiles, and the “fire” associated with a canon is the actual noise and smoke made when it is used. Note that your heart will “pound” when you’re nervous, meaning to beat fast and strongly.

Don’t forget, there’s a price on your head.

If a person has a “price on their head,” this means that they are in great danger because somebody will pay to have them killed or captured.

Say, why don’t we get married in Marseilles?

An interesting little filler word that people use at the beginning of a sentence when they are about to suggest something interesting.

Come on, Mr. Richard, let’s get out of here.

The most versatile phrasal verb in English, but here used for its most common meaning, “let’s go.”

Mostly, I remember the last one. The wild finish.

Rick’s way of referring to the craziness of his last day with Isla in Paris.

A guy standing on a platform in the rain, with a comical look on his face, because his insides have been kicked out.

A “platform” is a walking area, often found between train tracks at a train station. If a person’s “insides have been kicked out,” they have suffered great emotional pain.

He opened up for her a world full of knowledge and thoughts and ideals.

“To open up” a different point of view or perspective for a person is to show them it in such a way that they seriously consider its truth or validity. “Ideals” are high standards, goals or models of perfection.

She looked up to him and worshipped him.

“To look up to” a person is to greatly respect or admire them.

“To worship” a person is to idealize them as if they were a God.

As a matter of fact, they went along with the sound of a tinny piano playing in the parlor downstairs.

“As a matter of fact” is an alternative way of saying “in fact.”

If a piano sounds “tinny,” it sounds hollow, as if made with thin metal. A “parlor” is a large room for eating or other social events.

Laszlo considers his options as Strasser makes him an offer, and the transit papers remain missing.

I strongly suspect that Ugate left the letters of transit with Mr. Blaine;

I suggest you search the café immediately and thoroughly.

“To suspect” something is to believe it, even though there is no actual evidence or proof. “Thoroughly” means completely, or very carefully.

My impression was that he was just another blundering American.

A “blundering” person is one who is socially awkward, or one who has lots of accidents because they’re so physically clumsy or uncoordinated.

I’m delighted to see you both.

A common adjective which means very happy or pleased.

Very well, Laszlo, we will not mince words.

“To mince words” is to talk in an indirect and unclear way. This is a useful expression that is usually used in the negative, as it is above.

You’re an escaped prisoner of the Reich;

So far you have been fortunate in eluding us.

“To elude” the police is to continue to avoid them by always being one or more steps in front of them.

My regrets, Sir.

One way of telling a person that you are sorry for what has happened.

You may be in Casablanca indefinitely.

An important word that means for a period of time that currently has no ending point (although there may be one given in the future).

You may leave for Lisbon tomorrow on one condition.

In this case, a way of saying “if you agree to do one thing.”

If you furnish me with their names and whereabouts, you'll have your visa in the morning.

A good word for the place or location where a person or thing is.

If I didn't give them to you in a concentration camp, where you had more persuasive methods at your disposal, I certainly won't give them to you now.

“Persuasive methods” is a gentle way of referring to physical torture (to persuade somebody is to try and convince them of something). If something is “at your disposal,” it is available for you to use.

What if you track down those men and kill them?

“To track down” a person is to try and find them, especially by investigating places where they may have already been.

Laszlo, you have a reputation for eloquence which I now understand.

A person who is “eloquent” expresses themselves with intelligence and grace (and eloquence is the nominal form of this adjective).

You won't dare to interfere with me here; This is still unoccupied France.

“To dare” to do something is to find enough courage to do something that is very dangerous. In this case, “to interfere” with a person is to harass, disturb or possibly even arrest them. “Unoccupied France” refers to the Southern part of France that the Germans did not occupy (and which still controlled French colonies such as Morocco).

Any violation of neutrality would reflect on Captain Renault.

This is Laszlo's way of saying that in theory, Renault should not follow the orders of the Germans since the Vichy French government was officially neutral (In reality, the Germans had enormous influence).

In so far as it is in my power.

One way of saying “To the extent that I am able to...”

You would find the conversation a trifle one-sided.

A rarely used but interesting word which means to a very small degree.

We haven't quite decided whether he committed suicide or died trying to escape.

Note when people kills themselves, the verb is to *commit* suicide.

Another visa problem has come up. :: Show her in.

If something "comes up," it unexpectedly arrives.

"Show her in" is a formal way of saying "tell her to come in."

Senor Ferrari practically has a monopoly on the black market here.

"Senor" is a Spanish word for "Mr." A "monopoly" is an important word for a business that controls all or nearly all of the marketplace.

Don't be disheartened; Perhaps you can come to terms with Captain Renault.

If a person is "disheartened," they are very sad or disappointed.

"To come to terms" with a person is to reach an agreement with them.

Every time you send my shipment over, it's always a little bit short. :: Carrying charges, my boy, carrying charges.

"Carrying charges" are the expenses that a business charges its customers for the cost of shipping or storing a product.

You're a fat hypocrite; You don't feel any sorrier for Ugate than I do.

A "hypocrite" is a person who says one thing, but whose actions make clear they don't really believe what they say (like many politicians!).

"To feel sorry for" a person is to feel badly because of what has happened to them.

If I could lay my hands on those letters, I could make a fortune.

"To lay one's hands" on something is to grab and take possession of it.

I have a proposition for whomever has those letters. I'll handle the entire transaction.

A "proposition" is a proposal, "to handle" something is, in this case, to take care of it, and a "transaction" is a business deal or arrangement.

Get rid of the letters and take all the risk for a small percentage?

"To get rid of" something is throw it away or eliminate it.

Naturally, there would be a few incidental expenses.

A business phrase that refers to small charges related to the sale of a product or service, that when added together, are often not that small!

I'll put my cards on the table.

A colloquial way of saying "I will show you exactly what I have to work with." This is often used in business or political negotiations.

That's why I came here; To give them a chance to ransack my place.
 "To ransack" a building is to search it completely,
 usually in order to take anything of value that's in it.

Take me into your confidence.
 A very formal way of saying "trust me."

Senor Ferrari is the fat gent at the table.
 A short and rare but interesting way of saying gentlemen or man.

***Rick tries to find out what happened in Paris, and
 helps a desperate couple from Bulgaria get to America.***

The story had me a little confused. Or maybe it was the bourbon.
 A type of hard liquor.

You can tell me now; I'm reasonably sober.
 A useful word that means not drunk, or serious and in control.

I got stuck with a railway ticket. I'm entitled to know.
 To be "entitled to" do something is to deserve to do it, often
 because of what you have done or accomplished in the past.

Did you run out on me because you knew.....you couldn't
take it, hiding from the police, running away all the time?
 "To run out on" a person is to leave them suddenly, often after being
 romantically involved with them. If a person "can't take it," they are
 not strong or courageous enough to handle the situation.

I'm settled now. Above a saloon, it's true.
 In this case, to be "settled" is to be living permanently in one place,
 perhaps after having moved from place to place over a long period of
 time. A "saloon" is an old-fashioned word for a bar.

Walk up a flight; I'll be expecting you.
 This is short for a "flight of stairs," which leads to higher floors.

I might as well be frank; It would take a miracle to get
 you out, and the Germans have outlawed miracles.
 "Might as well" is a curious way of simply saying "should." If a person
 is being "frank," they are being completely honest. A "miracle" is an
 amazing event or occurrence that seems like an act of God.

Please Ilsa, don't be hasty.

To do something in a "hasty" manner means to do it very quickly, and perhaps carelessly or without paying close attention.

Why didn't you leave me then? :: I meant to, but something always held me up.

In this case, "to hold up" a person means to prevent them from making progress or moving forward.

You know you're being shadowed? :: Of course, it becomes an **instinct**.

A person who is being "shadowed" is being secretly followed.

A person's "instinct" is the feeling they have about something, generally based on previous experience, but no actual knowledge.

That's some going-over your man gave my place this afternoon.

If the police give a building a "going-over," they treat it very roughly or even badly damage it, while searching for something inside (If a person is given a bad going-over, they are badly beaten or physically hurt).

Are you pro-Vichy or Free French?

To be "pro" Vichy is to support the French in Vichy (see notes before glossary on the Vichy and Free French governments).

Serves me right for asking a direct question; The subject is closed.

"Serves me right" is a way of saying "I deserve what I got for being so stupid," and if a subject is "closed," it will no longer be discussed.

Yvonne's gone over to the enemy.

"To go over" to the enemy is to join them or support their cause.

In her own way, she may constitute an entire second front.

"To constitute" means to help form, make or create. In this case, a "second front" refers to a military front or line, that could be used to help fight the Germans (in this case, by using the power of romance).

It's time for me to flatter Major Strasser a little.

"To flatter" a person is to say very complimentary or positive things about them, often in order to be well treated by them later.

What I said is **none of your business**.

If something is "none of your business," it is either very personal or secret, and something that you should not know. A common phrase.

I don't like disturbances in my place, so either lay off politics or get out.

A “disturbance” is a violent or loud interruption that prevents people from concentrating on what they were doing before. “To lay off” something is to stop doing it (In this case, to stop discussing politics).

My dear captain, we cannot regulate the feelings of our people.

“To regulate” a person is to control them, often by the use of laws or rules.

I have no conviction, if that's what you mean.

In this case, a “conviction” is a deeply held belief or philosophy.

I blow with the wind, and the prevailing wind happens to be for Vichy.

The “prevailing” wind is the dominant or stronger one. This is Renault's way of saying he supports whichever side is winning!

We know that every French providence in Africa is honeycombed with traitors.

A “providence” is a territory, or in this case, a colony. If a land is “honeycombed” with something, it is completely covered with it (though this word is never used). A “traitor” is a person who turns against their own country, often to help its enemies.

How did you get in here? You're underage.

A person who is “underage” is legally too young to be doing what they are doing (in this case, drinking in a bar).

Captain Renault is getting broad minded.

A “broad minded” person is willing to seriously consider different opinions and other points of views.

What kind of man is Captain Renault?

:: He's like any other man, only more so.

Rick's response here is one of the great lines of this movie (Obviously, without an adjective, this answer is ridiculous).

Is he trustworthy?

A useful word for a person who can be trusted or counted on.

He is so kind, he wants to help us. :: Yes, I bet.

In this context, a way of saying “I'm sure.”

Will he keep his word?

“Will he do what he promises?”

Everybody in Casablanca has problems. Yours may work out.

If a person's problems are "worked out," they are solved or eliminated.

The geography may be a little difficult to arrange.

The study of the countries of the world, as well as the earth's physical features such as its lakes and mountains. Here, though, Sam uses it to refer to the physical location of tables in his own café.

I believe that's your favorite tune.

A colloquial word for a song.

Cash it in and don't come back.

"To cash in" casino chips is to exchange them for real money.

As I suspected, you're a rank sentimentalist.

In this context, an interesting adjective which means complete or total.

Why do you interfere with my little romance?

:: Put it down as a gesture to love.

"Put it down as" is a way of saying "The reason is..."

A "gesture" is a small act done to show one's true feeling.

I'll be in tomorrow with a breathtaking blonde,
and it will make me very happy if she loses.

"Breathtaking" is a powerful adjective meaning extremely beautiful or notable. A "blonde," of course, is a woman with blond hair.

Rick learns the painful truth about Isla and Laszlo, and soon he must decide if he will help this woman who hurt him so badly.

It's rather confidential, what I have to say.

If some information is "confidential," it is expected that the person who hears it will keep it secret and not tell others.

It's my privilege to be one of the leaders of a great movement.

A "privilege" is a great honor (as opposed to a right or entitlement).

A social "movement" is a group of many people who try and fundamentally change the world (In this case, the underground movement to try and overthrow Hitler's rule in Europe).

You fought against the fascists in Spain. :: What of it?

An interesting way of saying "Why do you mention this?"

Isn't it strange to always be fighting on the side of the **underdog**?

A great word for the person, team or country that is expected to lose.

If Laszlo's presence in a café can inspire this unfortunate demonstration, what more will his power in Casablanca bring on?

This is Strasser's way of saying that he thinks Laszlo is too dangerous to be allowed to stay free.

I advise that this place be **shut up** at once.

A dated phrasal verb that means to close. Today, a place is shut *down*.

This café is closed **until further notice**. **Clear** the room at once.

If something is closed "until further notice," it is to remain closed until the authorities officially announce that they changed their decision.

In this context, "to clear" a room is to empty it of people.

How can you close me up? **On what grounds**?

When a person asks "on what grounds" is an action being taken, they are asking what is the legal or moral reason for the decision.

Your **winnings**, Sir.

A rare plural noun, referring to money that is won while gambling.

You should return to **occupied France**, **under safe conduct** from me.

Occupied France was that part of the country occupied by German troops, including Paris. To be transported "under safe conduct" is Strasser's way of saying with his official protection.

In Casablanca, **human life is cheap**.

A way of saying that people are frequently murdered, with the killers often facing little or no punishment.

Besides, it isn't often that a man gets to **display heroics** before his wife.

"Besides" is one way of saying "in any case." If a person "displays heroics," they show great courage, like a true hero.

Should I remain in this hotel, or should I **carry on** the best I can?

In this case, "to carry on" is to continue with life as well as possible, despite a very difficult situation.

A **bribe** has worked before.

A secret payment in exchange for a favor, in this case a payment to Renault so that he will agree to allow Rick to reopen the café.

In the meantime, everybody stays on salary.

In this case, to “stay on salary” means Rick’s employees will continue to get paid like normal, even though the café has been closed down.

You finish locking up, will you Carl?

“To lock up” a store is to close it down, and to make sure that all the doors that need to be locked are so. Very common among store keepers.

It’s “Richard” again; we’re back in Paris.

Rick’s way of noting that Isla calls him “Richard” when she wants to be romantic or close to him.

I went through that with your husband; It’s no deal.

“To go through” a topic with somebody is to seriously discuss it.
“It’s no deal” is Rick’s way of saying that there is no agreement.

I’m asking you to put your feelings aside for something more important.

If a person “puts their feelings aside,” they decide to not consider their own emotions or beliefs, but rather to follow the wishes of another.

It’s the only cause I’m interested in.

A political or social “cause” is usually a great goal to change the world (In this case, to overthrow the rule of the Germans in Europe).

With so much at stake, all you can think of is your feelings.

If there is a lot “at stake,” there is much at risk that could be lost.
(In the plural, stakes are simply anything that can be won or lost).

A woman has hurt you and you’ll take your revenge on the rest of the world.

“To take revenge” against a person (or the world) is to try and punish them for something bad that they have done to you.

You’re a coward and weak.

A very negative word for a person without courage or bravery.

I’m going to die in Casablanca. ∴ It’s a good spot for it.

A dot or mark, although in this case a rarely used word for a place.

I tried to reason with you.

“To reason” with a person is to try and change their mind by showing as logically as possible why they should.

“Victor Laszlo apprehended. Sent to concentration camp.”

“To apprehend” a person is to capture them.

I was frantic. For months, I tried to get word.

If a person is “frantic,” they are extremely nervous or anxious.
In this case, to “get word” means to find out any news.

They were hiding him in a freight car outside of Paris.

A “freight car” is a large storage car on a train in which various goods, from food to furniture, is transported.

This might come in handy.

If something “comes in handy,” it is very useful.

The world will be out of its misery.

If a person is “out of their misery,” they were miserable while they were alive, but now they are dead. A common expression, here applied to the whole planet!

Each of us has a destiny, for good or for evil.

“Destiny” is the future that each person must have, perhaps because of religious or supernatural forces that are hidden and not understood.

It’s a strange circumstance, that we should both be in love with the same woman.

“Circumstances” are the facts, conditions or events that influence people’s lives (and despite the usage here, it is usually in the plural).

Mr. Laszlo, we have a warrant for your arrest. :: On what charge?

A “warrant” for a person’s arrest is an official document, often signed by a judge, ordering that person be arrested and jailed. A “charge” means actual criminal accusations, such as murder or robbery.

You’re not very subtle, but you are effective. I get the point.

“Subtle” is an important adjective which means very slight, or difficult to notice, and can refer to anything from a political point in a speech to a flavor in cooking. To “get the point” is to understand what the speaker is really trying to say.

Instead of the petty charges, you could get something that would chuck him in a concentration camp for years.

“Petty charges” are unimportant criminal charges that do not result in a lot of prison time (such as stealing only a little money).
“To chuck” something is to throw it.

That would be quite a feather in your cap, wouldn’t it?

A silly but still used expression for an accomplishment that others will notice, particularly employers. A “cap” is type of hat.

I'll have Laszlo come to pick up the letters of transit, and that will give you the criminal grounds on which to make the arrest.

In this case, the legal excuse to officially charge Laszlo with a crime.

To the Germans, that will be just a minor annoyance.

If something is “minor,” it is unimportant, and an “annoyance” is something that is bothersome or disturbing, but not serious.

How do I know you'll keep your end of the bargain?

“To keep your end of a bargain” is to do what you promised to do, after coming to an official agreement.

You're the only one in Casablanca with even less scruples than I.

“Scruples” are moral principles, or the desire to do what is right (Note that it's usually used in the negative---“he has no scruples...”).

By the way, call off your watchdogs when you let him go this afternoon.

“To call off” a person is to tell them to stop looking for or hunting another person. A “watchdog” is a person, perhaps a policeman, who is spying or looking close after somebody.

I'm taking no chances, not even with you.

If a person is “taking no chances,” they are doing nothing that involves any unnecessary risks.

***Isla decides between the two men she loves,
but Rick makes sure that she does the right thing.....***

Love, it seems, has triumphed over virtue.

“To triumph” is to win or be victorious, and “virtue” is moral goodness or good character.

Have you taken leave of your senses?

If a person “takes leave of their senses,” they start to act in ways that are irrational and perhaps seem crazy.

Under the circumstances, I will sit down.

Another way of saying “given the present situation.”

This gun is pointed right at your heart. ∴ That is my least vulnerable spot.

“Vulnerable” means easily hurt or weak.

Have a squad of police meet me at the airport at once.

A “squad” is a small group of people working as a team.

You fill in the names, that will make it even more official. :: You think of everything, don't you?

A common thing to say to a person who has thought of every possible thing that needs to be done in order to make a plan successful.

It all adds up to one thing; You're getting on that plane with Victor, where you belong.

If a situation "adds up to" something, it is a way of saying that it is equal to or equivalent to it.

Nine chances out of 10, we'd both wind up in a concentration camp.

If a person "winds up" in a place, they finish in that place.

But what about us? :: We'll always have Paris.

Rick's way of saying that they will always have their memories of their time in Paris together. One of the most famous lines in the movie.

I'm no good at being noble, but it doesn't take much to see that the problems of three little people don't amount to a hill of beans in this crazy world.

A person who is "noble" acts in a very moral way, and is deserving of great praise. The rest of this phrase is Rick's (very well known) way of saying that the problems that he, Isla and Victor have are unimportant compared to the huge problems that effect millions of people.

That fairly tale you invented to send her away with him.

A "fairly tale" is a fantastic story about fairies and other magical people, that is usually told to please children (A fairy is a tiny supernatural being, and a tale is a story).

Major Strasser has been shot; Round up the usual suspects.

Captain Renault's favorite thing to say when he needs to show that the police are working hard on a crime, and have arrested those people who are most likely to have been involved.

There's a Free French garrison over at Brazzaville.

A "garrison" is a group of soldiers, often living in a town to defend it. Brazzaville is a city in the Congo, which was a French colony in Africa.

Louis, this is the beginning of a beautiful friendship.

The last words in the movie, and one of the most famous lines in the history of cinema.

Casablanca

Possible Questions for ESL Class Discussion

1. Was Richard a cold hearted and cynical person, or as Renault says, was he a “rank sentimentalist”? Why do you think so?
2. Were there certain things about this movie that did not appear very realistic (apart from the fact everybody spoke perfect English)?
3. How would you describe Renault to a friend?
4. If you had been Isla at that airport, what would you have done?
5. Some people think this is one of the greatest movies ever made; Do you agree? Why or why not? Regardless, how many famous lines did you recognize?