

Famous Idiom Examples

Idiom	Meaning	Usage	Sentence Example
Break the ice	To initiate social interaction	Introduction	She broke the ice by asking about his hobbies.
Hit the sack	Go to bed	Rest	It's late, I'm going to hit the sack.
It's raining cats and dogs	It's raining very heavily	Weather	Take an umbrella, it's raining cats and dogs out there!
A piece of cake	Easy	Simplicity	The exam was a piece of cake.
Kill two birds with one stone	Accomplish two tasks with one action	Efficiency	By studying English, you kill two birds with one stone.

Burn the midnight oil	Work late into the night	Hard work	She was burning the midnight oil to finish the project.
Once in a blue moon	Very rarely	Rarity	I only go to the cinema once in a blue moon.
A penny for your thoughts	Asking what someone is thinking	Inquiry	You seem distant, a penny for your thoughts?
The ball is in your court	It's your decision or responsibility	Decision-making	I've done all I can; now the ball is in your court.
Spill the beans	Reveal a secret	Disclosure	She spilled the beans about their surprise party.
Go down like a lead balloon	To be poorly received	Reception	His joke went down like a lead balloon.
Let sleeping dogs lie	Don't disturb a situation as it may result in trouble	Caution	I decided to let sleeping dogs lie and not bring up the past.
When pigs fly	Something that will never happen	Improbability	He'll tidy up his room when pigs fly.

Kick the bucket	To die	Mortality	He kicked the bucket at the age of 90.
Bite the bullet	Face a difficult situation bravely	Courage	It's time to bite the bullet and quit smoking.
The early bird catches the worm	Arriving early gives you an advantage	Punctuality	She always wakes up early because the early bird catches the worm.
Don't cry over spilled milk	No use regretting over a past mistake	Regret	It's done; don't cry over spilled milk.
Put all your eggs in one basket	Relying solely on a single solution or plan	Risk	Diversify your investments and don't put all your eggs in one basket.
Walk on eggshells	To tread carefully	Caution	With her bad mood, you have to walk on eggshells.
Take with a grain of salt	Don't take something too seriously	Skepticism	Take his advice with a grain of salt.

Break a leg	Good luck	Well-wishing	Break a leg on your performance tonight!
A dime a dozen	Something common or easy to find	Commonality	Those types of mobile phones are a dime a dozen.
A picture is worth a thousand words	Visuals can convey what may take lots of words	Communication	The photos of the event speak for themselves; a picture is worth a thousand words.
Actions speak louder than words	What you do means more than what you say	Integrity	Don't just say you care, show it; actions speak louder than words.
An arm and a leg	Something very expensive	Cost	This car costs an arm and a leg.
Barking up the wrong tree	To make a false assumption about something	Misdirection	You're barking up the wrong tree if you think I was the one who did it.
Beat around the bush	Avoiding the main topic	Evasion	Stop beating around the bush and get to the point.

Better late than never	It's better to arrive late than never arrive	Punctuality	He arrived two hours late to the party, but better late than never.
Cry over spilled milk	Complain about something that can't be fixed	Regret	There's no use crying over spilled milk.
Cut to the chase	Leave out unnecessary details	Directness	Cut to the chase and tell me what you want.
Fit as a fiddle	In good health	Health	After working out regularly, he's as fit as a fiddle.
Get out of hand	To become difficult to control	Control	The party got out of hand and the police were called.
Give the cold shoulder	Ignore someone	Ignorance	She gave him the cold shoulder all evening.
Go back to the drawing board	Start over	Redo	Our plans failed, so it's time to go back to the drawing board.
Hang in there	Keep persevering	Persistence	I know times are tough, but hang in there.

Hit the nail on the head	Do or say something exactly right	Accuracy	You hit the nail on the head when you identified the issue.
In the heat of the moment	Overwhelmed by what is happening	Emotion	In the heat of the moment, he said things he later regretted.
Jump on the bandwagon	Join a popular activity or trend	Trend	They jumped on the bandwagon of the new fitness craze.
Keep something at bay	Keep something away	Avoidance	The vaccine has kept illnesses at bay.
Let the cat out of the bag	Accidentally reveal a secret	Disclosure	He let the cat out of the bag and told them about the wedding.
Miss the boat	It's too late	Lateness	He missed the boat when he forgot to apply for the job.
No pain, no gain	You have to work for what you want	Effort	She works out every day—no pain, no gain.

On the ball	Doing a good job	Competence	Keep up the good work; you're really on the ball.
Pull someone's leg	To joke with someone	Humor	I was just pulling your leg; I didn't mean it.
See eye to eye	Agree	Agreement	They see eye to eye on most issues.
Sit tight	Wait patiently	Patience	Sit tight; your order is coming soon.
Speak of the devil	The person just mentioned appears	Appearance	Speak of the devil, here he comes now!
Take it with a grain of salt	Be skeptical	Skepticism	Take her comments with a grain of salt; she exaggerates.
The best of both worlds	All the advantages	Benefit	By working from home, she has the best of both worlds.
Throw in the towel	Give up	Surrender	He's decided to throw in the towel and quit his job.

Under the weather	Feeling ill	Illness	I'm feeling under the weather today, so I'll stay home.
We'll cross that bridge when we come to it	Deal with a problem when it arises	Procrastination	We don't know what they'll say, so let's cross that bridge when we come to it.
You can't judge a book by its cover	Don't judge based on appearance	Prejudice	She may look unfriendly, but you can't judge a book by its cover.
Add insult to injury	To make a bad situation worse	Aggravation	Losing his job was bad enough, but the company added insult to injury by taking away his bonus.
A leopard can't change its spots	A person can't change their nature	Character	He always cheats; a leopard can't change its spots.
An apple a day keeps the doctor away	Regular preventive care helps maintain good health	Health	She eats fruits and vegetables because an apple a day keeps the doctor away.

At the drop of a hat	Without any hesitation	Spontaneity	She would help you at the drop of a hat.
Be all ears	Listen carefully	Attention	I'm all ears, tell me what happened.
Bite off more than you can chew	Take on more than you can handle	Overcommitment	He took on too many projects and bit off more than he could chew.
Cat got your tongue?	Unable to speak	Speechlessness	You haven't said anything. Cat got your tongue?
Chip on your shoulder	Carrying a grudge	Resentment	He has a chip on his shoulder ever since the promotion was given to someone else.
Don't put all your eggs in one basket	Diversify your resources	Risk management	Invest in multiple stocks; don't put all your eggs in one basket.
Easier said than done	More difficult than it appears	Challenge	Making a successful product is easier said than done.

Every cloud has a silver lining	Positive aspect in a bad situation	Optimism	Losing that job led her to a better opportunity; every cloud has a silver lining.
Get a taste of your own medicine	Receive the same treatment you've given others	Retribution	He got a taste of his own medicine when his pranks were turned against him.
Hit the books	To study	Study	She needs to hit the books for her exams.
Ignorance is bliss	Not knowing is better	Ignorance	She chose not to know the details; ignorance is bliss.
It's not rocket science	It's not complicated	Simplicity	Just follow the instructions; it's not rocket science.
Jump to conclusions	Make a judgment without sufficient facts	Assumption	Don't jump to conclusions without all the information.
Keep your eyes peeled	Stay alert	Vigilance	Keep your eyes peeled for any signs of trouble.

Like comparing apples to oranges	Comparing two things that can't be compared	Comparison	Comparing their skills is like comparing apples to oranges.
Make a long story short	Tell something briefly	Brevity	To make a long story short, we missed the flight.
Not playing with a full deck	Lacking intelligence or common sense	Stupidity	He thinks the earth is flat; he's not playing with a full deck.
Off the hook	No longer have to do something	Relief	The meeting was canceled, so you're off the hook.
Out of the frying pan into the fire	From a bad situation to a worse one	Deterioration	After leaving his job, he found a worse one; out of the frying pan into the fire.
Play your cards right	Make good decisions	Strategy	If you play your cards right, you might get promoted.
Read between the lines	Understand the hidden meaning	Interpretation	The letter was polite, but reading between

			the lines, you could sense the frustration.
Steal someone's thunder	Take the attention away from someone else	Attention-stealing	She wore the same dress to the party and stole my thunder.
Take the bull by the horns	Deal with a problem decisively	Courage	He decided to take the bull by the horns and resolve the issue himself.
Test the waters	To cautiously try something new	Experimentation	Before launching the new product, they decided to test the waters with a soft launch.
Throw in the towel	To give up	Surrender	After hours of trying to solve the problem, he finally threw in the towel.
Turn a blind eye	To ignore something intentionally	Negligence	The teacher turned a blind eye to the minor misconduct in the classroom.

Up in arms	Angry and protesting	Anger	The community was up in arms over the new development project.
Walk on eggshells	To be extremely cautious	Caution	Ever since the argument, he's been walking on eggshells around her.
You can't judge a book by its cover	Don't judge something based solely on appearance	Judgment	She seemed shy, but you can't judge a book by its cover; she turned out to be really outgoing.
Zero in on	To focus closely	Concentration	She zeroed in on her main goal for the year and made a plan to achieve it.
A penny for your thoughts	Asking someone what they are thinking about	Inquiry	You look lost in thought, a penny for your thoughts?
A picture is worth a thousand words	An image can tell a story better than words	Expression	The photo of the smiling child spoke volumes; a picture is worth a thousand words.

Cut to the chase	Get to the point	Directness	We're short on time, so let's cut to the chase. What's your main concern?
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