

Idiom Examples

Figurative Language

Idiom	Meaning	Usage	Sentence Example
Break the ice	Make people feel more comfortable	Social Gathering	She told a joke to break the ice at the meeting.
A piece of cake	Something very easy	Work	Finishing the project on time was a piece of cake.
Spill the beans	Reveal a secret	Conversational	He spilled the beans about the surprise party.
Hit the nail on the head	Get something exactly right	Problem-solving	Your explanation hit the nail on the head.

Beat around the bush	Avoid getting to the point	Communication	Stop beating around the bush and tell me what happened.
The ball is in your court	It's your turn to take action	Decision-making	I've done all I can, now the ball is in your court.
Paint the town red	Enjoy oneself flamboyantly	Entertainment	They decided to paint the town red after the exams.
Let the cat out of the bag	Reveal a secret unintentionally	Social Situation	She let the cat out of the bag about the engagement.
A penny for your thoughts	Asking someone what they are thinking about	Conversational	You look deep in thought, a penny for your thoughts?
An arm and a leg	Very expensive	Shopping	This dress costs an arm and a leg.
Hit the sack	Go to sleep	Daily Routine	I'm really tired, I'm going to hit the sack.

Cry over spilled milk	Complain about something that can't be changed	Emotional	There's no use crying over spilled milk.
Cut to the chase	Get to the point	Communication	Enough backstory, cut to the chase.
Let sleeping dogs lie	Avoid disturbing a situation	Problem-solving	He decided to let sleeping dogs lie and not ask her about it.
Throw in the towel	Give up	Sports	He threw in the towel in the final round.
Up in the air	Uncertain	Planning	Our vacation plans are still up in the air.
Head over heels	Deeply in love	Relationships	She's head over heels in love with him.
The last straw	The final problem in a series	Stress	This was the last straw, I can't take it anymore.
At the drop of a hat	Immediately	Timing	He's ready to go at the drop of a hat.

Through thick and thin	In both good and bad times	Relationships	They've been together through thick and thin.
An arm and a leg	Very expensive	Shopping	This dress costs an arm and a leg.
Back to the drawing board	Start over	Planning	The project failed; it's back to the drawing board.
Don't cry wolf	Don't give false alarms	Caution	He's always complaining, but don't cry wolf.
When pigs fly	Something that will never happen	Unlikely	Yeah, I'll clean my room when pigs fly.
In hot water	In trouble	Relationships	He got in hot water for forgetting their anniversary.
A penny for your thoughts	Asking what someone is thinking	Conversational	You seem quiet, a penny for your thoughts?
A taste of your own medicine	Get treated the way you've been treating others	Justice	He was always playing pranks, and

			got a taste of his own medicine.
Break a leg	Good luck	Encouragem ent	You have an exam tomorrow? Break a leg!
A dime a dozen	Something very common	Commonalit y	These kind of t-shirts are a dime a dozen.
Beat around the bush	Avoid answering a question	Conversation al	Stop beating around the bush and get to the point.
Hit the nail on the head	Get something exactly right	Accuracy	You hit the nail on the head with that explanation.
Paint the town red	Go out and have a good time	Recreation	It's Friday night, let's paint the town red.
Bite the bullet	Face a difficult situation bravely	Courage	I hate going to the dentist, but I'll just have to bite the bullet.
Go the extra mile	Do more than what's required	Effort	She always goes the extra mile to make

			her customers happy.
Kill two birds with one stone	Accomplish two things at once	Efficiency	I killed two birds with one stone by picking up dinner on my way.
Take it with a grain of salt	Be skeptical	Skepticism	Take his advice with a grain of salt, he's not an expert.
Burn the midnight oil	Work late into the night	Work	I had to burn the midnight oil to finish the project.
Put all your eggs in one basket	Risk everything on one endeavor	Risk	Don't put all your eggs in one basket; diversify your investments.
Read between the lines	Find the hidden meaning	Understanding	If you read between the lines, you'll see what she really means.
Get out of hand	Become unmanageable	Control	The party got out of hand and the police were called.

Cut to the chase	Get to the point	Communication	Stop beating around the bush and cut to the chase.
Break a leg	Good luck	Wishing	Break a leg in your performance tonight!
Pull someone's leg	Joking with someone	Humor	I'm just pulling your leg, I didn't really forget your birthday.
A penny for your thoughts	What are you thinking?	Inquiry	You look puzzled, a penny for your thoughts?
Out of the blue	Unexpectedly	Surprise	She called me out of the blue after years of no contact.
Get your act together	Become organized	Organization	You need to get your act together if you want to succeed.
It's not rocket science	It's not complicated	Simplicity	Come on, it's not rocket science, just add the two numbers.

Barking up the wrong tree	Pursuing a misguided course of action	Mistake	If you think I took your book, you're barking up the wrong tree.
Piece of cake	Very easy	Simplicity	The exam was a piece of cake.
Cry over spilled milk	Regret a situation that can't be changed	Regret	There's no use crying over spilled milk, just move on.
Hit the nail on the head	Get something exactly right	Accuracy	You hit the nail on the head with that explanation.
A picture is worth a thousand words	A visual presentation is more descriptive	Explanation	No need to explain, a picture is worth a thousand words.
Take the bull by the horns	Face a problem head-on	Courage	Stop avoiding the issue, take the bull by the horns and solve it.
Put all your eggs in one basket	Rely on a single solution	Risk	Don't put all your eggs in one basket;

			diversify your investments.
When pigs fly	Something that will never happen	Improbability	I'll clean my room when pigs fly.
Jump on the bandwagon	Follow a trend	Conformity	Everyone is buying the new phone, so I might as well jump on the bandwagon.
Let the cat out of the bag	Reveal a secret	Disclosure	He let the cat out of the bag and told her about the surprise party.
Through thick and thin	In both good and bad times	Loyalty	We've been best friends through thick and thin.
The ball is in your court	Your move or decision	Responsibility	I've done all I can; now the ball is in your court.
Go the extra mile	Make a special effort	Effort	She always goes the extra mile to make her guests feel welcome.

Break the ice	Initiate a conversation or ease tension	Social Skills	He broke the ice with a joke at the meeting.
Beat around the bush	Avoid getting to the point	Evasion	Stop beating around the bush and tell me what you want.
Barking up the wrong tree	Pursuing a mistaken or misguided course of action	Mistake	He's barking up the wrong tree by blaming her.
A penny for your thoughts	Asking for someone's opinion	Inquiry	You look puzzled, a penny for your thoughts?
An arm and a leg	Very expensive	Cost	This dress costs an arm and a leg.
Get out of hand	Lose control	Chaos	The party got out of hand, and the police were called.
In hot water	In trouble	Difficulty	You'll be in hot water if you don't submit the project on time.
Hold your horses	Slow down	Patience	Hold your horses, we haven't won yet!

A piece of cake	Easy task	Simplicity	The test was a piece of cake.
The ball's in your court	It's your decision or turn to act	Responsibility	I've done all I can; now the ball's in your court.
Hit the nail on the head	Be exactly correct	Accuracy	You hit the nail on the head with that explanation.
Go down in flames	Fail spectacularly	Failure	His proposal went down in flames.
Out of the frying pan into the fire	From a bad situation to a worse one	Dilemma	I thought changing jobs would solve my problems, but it was out of the frying pan into the fire.
Turn over a new leaf	Make a fresh start	Renewal	He turned over a new leaf and started exercising.
A penny saved is a penny earned	Saving money is as good as making money	Thriftiness	Remember, a penny saved is a penny earned.

Cut to the chase	Get to the point	Directness	Enough small talk, let's cut to the chase.
You can't judge a book by its cover	Don't judge something by its appearance	Non-judgment	He may look intimidating, but you can't judge a book by its cover.
Up in arms	Angry, upset	Anger	The community was up in arms about the new development.
Pull someone's leg	Joke or tease someone	Humor	I'm just pulling your leg; of course I'll help you.
A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush	It's better to have a certain advantage than the possibility of a greater one	Caution	Don't give up your day job for a risky venture; a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.
Through thick and thin	In both good and bad times	Loyalty	They've been best friends for years, through thick and thin.
Jump on the bandwagon	To join a popular activity or trend	Conformity	When the team started winning,

			everyone jumped on the bandwagon.
Raining cats and dogs	Raining very heavily	Weather	Take an umbrella, it's raining cats and dogs out there.
Give someone the cold shoulder	To ignore someone	Indifference	She gave me the cold shoulder at the party last night.
Don't cry over spilled milk	Don't waste time worrying about things you can't change	Optimism	There's no use crying over spilled milk; just move on.
A picture is worth a thousand words	An image can tell a story better than words	Expression	This photograph of the sunset is stunning—a picture is worth a thousand words.
Let the cat out of the bag	Reveal a secret	Honesty	Who let the cat out of the bag about the surprise party?
It takes two to tango	Actions or communications	Cooperation	You can't blame it all on her; it takes two to tango.

	need more than one person		
Hold your horses	Be patient	Patience	Hold your horses; we'll get there soon.
Put all your eggs in one basket	Rely on a single solution or plan	Risk	Investing all your money in one stock is like putting all your eggs in one basket.
Beat around the bush	Avoid getting to the point	Communication	Stop beating around the bush and tell me what you want.
Hit the nail on the head	Get something exactly right	Accuracy	You hit the nail on the head with that explanation.
Pull someone's leg	To joke with someone	Humor	Are you pulling my leg, or did you really win the lottery?
Off the record	Something said in confidence that the one speaking doesn't want attributed to him/her	Trust	Let's talk off the record; I don't want this to get out.

Break a leg	Good luck	Encouragement	You have an exam today? Break a leg!
Spill the beans	Reveal a secret	Honesty	Come on, spill the beans! What's the big news?
Out of the blue	Unexpectedly	Surprise	I got a call out of the blue from an old friend.
Blow off steam	Release pent-up emotion	Emotional relief	I went for a run to blow off steam after our argument.
Cut to the chase	Get to the point	Communication	Enough with the preamble, let's cut to the chase.
The ball is in your court	It's your decision or turn to act	Responsibility	I've done all I can; now, the ball is in your court.
Jump on the bandwagon	Join a popular trend or activity	Popularity	Everyone is buying that phone; I might as well jump on the bandwagon.

Hit the hay	Go to bed	Sleep	It's late, time to hit the hay.
Through thick and thin	In both good and bad times	Loyalty	She stood by her husband through thick and thin.
Get your act together	Improve your behavior or performance	Improvement	You need to get your act together if you want to pass the course.
Piece of cake	Something that is easy	Simplicity	Finishing that project was a piece of cake.
The elephant in the room	An obvious problem that is being ignored	Ignorance	No one mentioned Bob's affair, it was the elephant in the room.
Don't cry over spilled milk	Don't waste time worrying over past mistakes	Regret	You lost your job, but don't cry over spilled milk. Focus on the future.
Burning the midnight oil	Working late into the night	Hard work	She was burning the midnight oil to finish her assignment.

Hit the road	Begin a journey	Starting	We should hit the road early to avoid traffic.
Under the weather	Feeling unwell	Sickness	She couldn't attend the meeting because she was feeling under the weather.