



The World of Languages
and Languages of the World

Idiom

Let's learn what an idiom is and how they are used around the world.

Why this lesson?

- We can explain what an idiom is.
- We can give examples of some idioms in English.
- We can see that similar ideas are represented in idioms around the world.



1



2



3



**These 3 pictures represent 3 different idioms in English.
How many do you know?**

**These 3 pictures represent 3 different idioms in English.
How many do you know?**



To skate on thin ice



To bark up the wrong tree



It's raining cats and dogs



So, what is an idiom?

An idiom is a phrase or expression that has a non-literal meaning.

"It's raining cats and dogs" means it's raining a lot.

It doesn't mean there are cats and dogs falling from the sky.



1. *To skate on thin ice*
2. *To bark up the wrong tree*
3. *It's raining cats and dogs*

- a. How would you explain the meanings of these idioms to someone learning English?
- b. Can you put them into a sentence?
- c. Have you ever used one of them?
- d. Have you ever heard/read them? Who used them?
- e. Can you think where the expressions come from?
- f. Why do you think idioms exist?
- g. If you wanted to translate these to another language what would you do?

He's having you on.

He's making you march.


He's pulling your leg.

He's tugging your hair.

He's tying a bear to you.

He's winding you up.

With your partner / group, read these aloud with a suitable tone and decide ...



A) what they have in common.



B) which three of these sentences are the "odd ones out" and why?

From French - *Il te fait marcher.*

He's making you march.

From Spanish - *Te está tomando el pelo.*

He's tugging your hair.

From German - *Er bindet dir einen Bären auf.*

He's tying a bear to you.

The other 3 are English expressions to describe the a similar situation.

He's pulling your leg

Would you use them? If so, how would you decide which to use?

He's winding you up.

Would you use any other expressions for this situation?

He's having you on.



What other idioms do you know?





A final thought...

Why not try this [Idioms Quiz](#)
[from Cambridge University Press, World of Better Learning?](#)