idiomatic phrases

1. A hot potato

Speak of an issue (mostly current) which many people are talking about and which is usually disputed

1. A penny for your thoughts

A way of asking what someone is thinking

1. *Add insult to injury*

To further a loss with mockery or indignity; to worsen an unfavorable situation.

1. At the drop of a hat

Meaning: without any hesitation; instantly.

1. Back to the drawing board

When an attempt fails and it's time to start all over.

1. Ball is in your court

It is up to you to make the next decision or step

1. Barking up the wrong tree

Looking in the wrong place. Accusing the wrong person

1. Be glad to see the back of

Be happy when a person leaves.

1. Beat around the bush

Avoiding the main topic. Not speaking directly about the issue.

1. Best of both worlds

Meaning: All the advantages.

1. Best thing since sliced bread

A good invention or innovation. A good idea or plan.

1. Bite off more than you can chew

To take on a task that is way to big.

1. Blessing in disguise

Something good that isn't recognized at first.

1. Burn the midnight oil

To work late into the night, alluding to the time before electric lighting.

1. Can't judge a book by its cover

Cannot judge something primarily on appearance.

1. Caught between two stools

When someone finds it difficult to choose between two alternatives.

1. Costs an arm and a leg

This idiom is used when something is very expensive.

1. Cross that bridge when you come to it

Deal with a problem if and when it becomes necessary, not before.

1. Cry over spilt milk

When you complain about a loss from the past.

1. Curiosity killed the cat

Being Inquisitive can lead you into an unpleasant situation.

1. Cut corners

When something is done badly to save money.

1. Cut the mustard [possibly derived from "cut the muster"]

To succeed; to come up to expectations; adequate enough to compete or participate

1. Devil's Advocate

To present a counter argument

1. *Don't count your chickens before the eggs have hatched*

This idiom is used to express "Don't make plans for something that might not happen".

1. Don't give up the day job

You are not very good at something. You could definitely not do it professionally.

1. Don't put all your eggs in one basket

Do not put all your resources in one possibility.

1. Drastic times call for drastic measures

When you are extremely desperate you need to take drastic actions.

1. Elvis has left the building

The show has come to an end. It's all over.

1. Every cloud has a silver lining

Be optimistic, even difficult times will lead to better days.

1. Far cry from

Very different from.

1. Feel a bit under the weather

Meaning: Feeling slightly ill.

1. *Give the benefit of the doubt*

Believe someone's statement, without proof.

1. Hear it on the grapevine

This idiom means 'to hear rumors' about something or someone.

1. Hit the nail on the head

Do or say something exactly right

1. Hit the sack / sheets / hay

To go to bed.

1. In the heat of the moment

Overwhelmed by what is happening in the moment.

1. It takes two to tango

Actions or communications need more than one person

1. *Jump on the bandwagon*

Join a popular trend or activity.

1. *Keep something at bay*

Keep something away.

1. Kill two birds with one stone

This idiom means, to accomplish two different things at the same time.

1. Last straw

The final problem in a series of problems.

1. Let sleeping dogs lie

Meaning - do not disturb a situation as it is - since it would result in trouble or complications.

1. Let the cat out of the bag

To share information that was previously concealed

1. Make a long story short

Come to the point - leave out details

1. Method to my madness

An assertion that, despite one's approach seeming random, there actually is structure to it.

1. Miss the boat

This idiom is used to say that someone missed his or her chance

1. Not a spark of decency

Meaning: No manners

1. Not playing with a full deck

Someone who lacks intelligence.

1. Off one's rocker

Crazy, demented, out of one's mind, in a confused or befuddled state of mind, senile.

1. On the ball

When someone understands the situation well.

1. Once in a blue moon

Meaning: Happens very rarely.

1. Picture paints a thousand words

A visual presentation is far more descriptive than words.

1. Piece of cake

A job, task or other activity that is easy or simple.

1. Put wool over other people's eyes

This means to deceive someone into thinking well of them.

1. See eye to eye

This idiom is used to say that two (or more people) agree on something.

1. *Sit on the fence*

This is used when someone does not want to choose or make a decision.

1. Speak of the devil!

This expression is used when the person you have just been talking about arrives.

1. Steal someone's thunder

To take the credit for something someone else did.

1. Take with a grain of salt

This means not to take what someone says too seriously.

1. Taste of your own medicine

Means that something happens to you, or is done to you, that you have done to someone else

1. To hear something straight from the horse's mouth

To hear something from the authoritative source.

1. Whole nine yards

Everything. All of it.

1. Wouldn't be caught dead

Would never like to do something

1. *Your guess is as good as mine*

To have no idea, do not know the answer to a question

65. White elephant

An unprofitable investment. Ex: "this institution has become a white elephant to the municipal corporation”

66. Make great strides

Advance considerably, make good progress, as in He made great strides in his study of Latin

67. It's raining cats and dogs

means that it’s raining heavily

68. High as a kite

means that they are on drugs.

69.

Over the moon– to be extremely pleased or happy.

I was over the moon when I passed my speaking test.

Once in a blue moon– happens very rarely.

A student will get a 9 in the IELTS writing test once in a blue moon.

A piece of cake– very easy.

Getting a band 6 in the speaking test will be a piece of cake.

A drop in the ocean– a very small part of something much bigger.

Just learning idioms is a drop in the ocean when it comes to preparing for the speaking test.

Actions speak louder than words– it is better to actually do something than just talk about it.

Lots of people have great business ideas but do nothing about them. Actions speak louder than words, just do it.

Back to the drawing board– when you attempted to do something but failed and have to try again.

I got 4.5 in reading! Oh well, back to the drawing board.

Put all your eggs in one basket- put all your money or effort into one thing.

Don’t put all your eggs in one basket. You should apply to lots of different universities.

The in thing– something fashionable.

The new iPhone is really the in thing at the moment.

The real McCoy– genuine or not fake.

I don’t think her new handbag is the real McCoy.

Off the top of my head– saying something without thinking first.

Off the top of my head, I’d say about 2 or 3.

Run of the mill– average, ordinary

Apple phones are very run of the mill these days.

Soulmate– someone you trust very deeply.

My husband is not just my lover, he’s my soul mate.

Down in the dumps– sad.

I was really down in the dumps after my dog died.

Found my feet– to become comfortable doing something.

Moving to a new city was difficult as first, but I soon found my feet.

Set in their ways– not wanting to change.

My parents are quite traditional and set in their ways.

Go the extra mile– do much more than is required.

I decided to go the extra mile and move to England to really perfect my English.

A hot potato– a controversial topic.

Abortion and capital punishment are hot potatoes in my country at the moment.

Miss the boat– miss an opportunity.

I sent my application in late and I think I missed the boat.

Costs an arm and a leg– really expensive.

Those shoes must have cost an arm and a leg.

Sit on the fence– to be undecided.

I haven’t made my mind up about that issue, I’ll have to sit on the fence.