

What are idioms?

Idioms are words, phrases or expressions which are commonly used in everyday conversation by native speakers of English. Learning the most well-known idioms will help make your English sound more fluent.

Idioms are often metaphorical and make the language more colourful. People use them to express something more vividly and often more briefly. They serve as an image or mental picture.



Example: *Let the cat out of the bag:* If you *let the cat out of the bag*, you reveal a secret.

Idiom	Meaning	Usage
A blessing in disguise	a good thing that seemed bad at first	as part of a sentence
A dime a dozen	Something common	as part of a sentence
Beat around the bush	Avoid saying what you mean, usually because it is uncomfortable	as part of a sentence

Idiom	Meaning	Usage
Better late than never	Better to arrive late than not to come at all	by itself
Bite the bullet	To get something over with because it is inevitable	as part of a sentence
Break a leg	Good luck	by itself
Call it a day	Stop working on something	as part of a sentence
Cut somebody some slack	Don't be so critical	as part of a sentence
Cutting corners	Doing something poorly in order to save time or money	as part of a sentence
Easy does it	Slow down	by itself

Idiom	Meaning	Usage
Get out of hand	Get out of control	as part of a sentence
Get something out of your system	Do the thing you've been wanting to do so you can move on	as part of a sentence
Get your act together	Work better or leave	by itself
Give someone the benefit of the doubt	Trust what someone says	as part of a sentence
Go back to the drawing board	Start over	as part of a sentence
Hang in there	Don't give up	by itself
Hit the sack	Go to sleep	as part of a sentence
It's not rocket science	It's not complicated	by itself

Idiom	Meaning	Usage
Let someone off the hook	To not hold someone responsible for something	as part of a sentence
Make a long story short	Tell something briefly	as part of a sentence
Miss the boat	It's too late	as part of a sentence
No pain, no gain	You have to work for what you want	by itself
On the ball	Doing a good job	as part of a sentence
Pull someone's leg	To joke with someone	as part of a sentence
Pull yourself together	Calm down	by itself
So far so good	Things are going well so far	by itself

Idiom	Meaning	Usage
Speak of the devil	The person we were just talking about showed up!	by itself
That's the last straw	My patience has run out	by itself
The best of both worlds	An ideal situation	as part of a sentence
Time flies when you're having fun	You don't notice how long something lasts when it's fun	by itself
To get bent out of shape	To get upset	as part of a sentence
To make matters worse	Make a problem worse	as part of a sentence
Under the weather	Sick	as part of a sentence

Idiom	Meaning	Usage
We'll cross that bridge when we come to it	Let's not talk about that problem right now	by itself
Wrap your head around something	Understand something complicated	as part of a sentence
You can say that again	That's true, I agree	by itself
Your guess is as good as mine	I have no idea	by itself

Common English idioms & expressions

These English idioms are used quite regularly in the United States. You may not hear them every day, but they will be very familiar to any native English speaker. You can be confident using any of them when the context is appropriate.

Idiom	Meaning	Usage
A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush	What you have is worth more than what you might have later	by itself

Idiom	Meaning	Usage
A penny for your thoughts	Tell me what you're thinking	by itself
A penny saved is a penny earned	Money you save today you can spend later	by itself
A perfect storm	the worst possible situation	as part of a sentence
A picture is worth 1000 words	Better to show than tell	by itself
Actions speak louder than words	Believe what people do and not what they say	by itself
Add insult to injury	To make a bad situation worse	as part of a sentence
Barking up the wrong tree	To be mistaken, to be looking for solutions in the wrong place	as part of a sentence

Idiom	Meaning	Usage
Birds of a feather flock together	People who are alike are often friends (usually used negatively)	by itself
Bite off more than you can chew	Take on a project that you cannot finish	as part of a sentence