

Cats and Secrets

In English, there is a **common idiom** “let the cat out of the bag.” It means to tell a secret. But where did this idiom start?

It came from a **section** of England. Long ago, people there went from town to town to sell things like vegetables, clothes, and pigs. They had strong **beliefs** about **honesty**. They didn’t like lying. One day, a man went to the section’s **center** to sell things.

“I have a baby pig for sale! It won’t **cost** much,” he said. He held the animal **above** his head. His style was **different** from honest people’s style. He was a **master** of tricking people and lying.

A woman named Beth **scanned** his pig. He offered her the pig for one gold coin. That was a very small **amount**. Beth gave him the coin. He put it in his pocket. He walked **ahead** of Beth to get the pig.

He gave her a closed bag and said, “Here’s your pig.” He then left very quickly.

Beth looked at the bag’s **surface**. It was moving. She opened it to let the pig out. A cat was **inside**! “He tricked me! That isn’t **proper**,” she said.

Later, the man returned to trick more people. Beth saw him and the **memory** of the cat came back. She told her friends. They stopped him. But no one knew what to do next.

Someone said, “We need an **independent** and fair person to decide that.” They went to the judge. Beth told him about the cat in the bag.

The judge asked, “Is there **evidence**? Can you **demonstrate** how he did it?”

“Look in his bag,” said Beth. She opened it and let a cat out of the bag. They learned the man’s secret, and he went to jail.

That’s how the idiom “let the cat out of the bag” came to mean to tell a secret.

