



# 50 MUST-KNOW IDIOMS - Part 2

**1. Better late than never :** It is better for something to happen late than not to happen at all.

- I know I'm late to the party, but better late than never, right?

**2. Get out of hand :** A situation is becoming chaotic or uncontrollable.

- The argument started to get out of hand, and soon everyone was shouting.

**3. Make a long story short :** To summarise a lengthy explanation or story.

- To make a long story short, we missed the train and had to find another way to get there.

**4. Pull yourself together :** To get control of your emotions or actions after being very upset.

- Stop crying and pull yourself together!

**5. That's the last straw :** A situation has reached a point where it can no longer be tolerated.

- When he forgot our anniversary for the third time, that was the last straw.

**6. To compare apples with oranges :** Used to say that two things are completely different and it is not sensible to compare them.

- You're comparing apples with oranges. They are two very different jobs, with very different types of stress.





## Quick Smart English

**7. Don't count your chickens before they hatch :** Advises against relying on something that hasn't happened yet.

- She already planned her vacation with the expected bonus, but her manager reminded her not to count her chickens before they hatch.

**8. Ignorance is bliss :** Said to emphasise that sometimes it is better for you if you do not know all the facts about a situation.

- Before I found out about the company's financial troubles, I was happy; ignorance is bliss.

**9. On thin ice :** Being in a risky or dangerous situation.

- He's on thin ice after repeatedly arriving late to work.

**10. Save money for a rainy day :** Setting aside resources or money for future difficulties or unforeseen circumstances.

- Luckily she had saved some money for a rainy day.

**11. Take a rain check :** Politely declining an invitation but expressing interest in rescheduling.

- Mind if I take a rain check on that drink? I have to work late tonight.

**12. The elephant in the room :** An obvious problem or issue that everyone is ignoring.

- The declining sales were the elephant in the room during the business meeting that no one wanted to address.

**13. Curiosity killed the cat :** Being too curious about something can lead to trouble or danger.

- I wouldn't ask too many questions about his past; you know what they say, curiosity killed the cat.





## Quick Smart English

**14. It takes two to tango :** Both parties involved in a situation are responsible for the outcome.

- The argument was not just his fault; it takes two to tango, and they both contributed to the disagreement.

**15. Time is money :** Time should be used efficiently because it has value, similar to money.

- Let's get this meeting started. Time is money.

**16. When it rains, it pours :** Problems or difficulties tend to come all at once.

- First, I lost my job, and then my car broke down. When it rains, it pours.

**17. Ring a bell :** To sound familiar or to trigger a memory.

- The name doesn't ring a bell; I don't think we've met before.

**18. Rule of thumb :** A practical and approximate guideline.

- As a rule of thumb, you should save at least 10% of your income for emergencies.

**19. Have a sweet tooth :** A strong liking for sweet foods.

- I can't resist desserts; I have a sweet tooth.

**20. Calm before the storm :** A peaceful period before a period of difficulty or disturbance.

- This is the calm before the storm—the dinner rush will turn this place into a madhouse.

**21. Snowed under :** Overwhelmed or buried with a lot of work or tasks.

- I'm sorry; I can't join you for lunch today. I'm completely snowed under with work.





## Quick Smart English

**22. Go with the flow :** To adapt to the current situation or circumstances.

- I don't have a specific plan; I'll just go with the flow and see what happens.

**23. Once in a blue moon :** Something that happens very rarely.

- My sister lives in Japan, so I only see her once in a blue moon.

**24. Bury your head in the sand :** Ignoring or avoiding a problem instead of facing it.

- You can't just bury your head in the sand; you need to address the issues in your relationship.

**25. Don't run before you can walk :** Don't try to do something advanced or difficult before mastering the basics.

- You need to learn the basics of coding first; don't run before you can walk.

**26. Follow in someone's footsteps :** To do the same thing as someone else did previously, especially as a job.

- She decided to follow in her mother's footsteps and pursue a career in medicine.

**27. Get up on the wrong side of bed :** Waking up in a bad mood or starting the day in an irritable manner.

- I don't know what's wrong with him today; it seems like he got up on the wrong side of the bed.

**28. It's not rocket science :** Used to say that something is not difficult to do or to understand.

- It is not rocket science; just give it a try.





## Quick Smart English

**29. Miss the boat :** To miss an opportunity.

- I missed the boat on investing in that company; now the stocks have skyrocketed.

**30. No-brainer :** A decision or choice that is very easy to make.

- Choosing the cheaper option was a no-brainer; it offered the same features at a lower cost.

**31. Hit the nail on the head :** To describe exactly what is causing a situation or problem.

- You really hit the nail on the head with your analysis of the situation.

**32. The early bird catches the worm :** Being early leads to success.

- Waking up early has its benefits; the early bird catches the worm.

**33. Throw in the towel :** To give up or surrender.

- Don't throw in the towel just because you faced a setback; keep trying.

**34. Break a leg :** Good luck.

- I hope you break a leg in your performance tonight!

**35. Cost an arm and a leg :** Very expensive.

- The new smartphone may be impressive, but it costs an arm and a leg.

**36. Chalk and cheese :** Very different from each other.

- The two sisters are like chalk and cheese; they have completely different personalities.

**37. A sight for sore eyes :** A pleasing or comforting thing to see.

- After a long trip, the cosy hotel room was a sight for sore eyes.





## Quick Smart English

**38. The icing on the cake :** Something that makes a good situation even better.

- Sarah really wanted that job, so she said the signing bonus was really just icing on the cake.

**39. Take the bull by the horns :** To face a problem directly.

- It's time to take the bull by the horns and go find a job.

**40. Born with a silver spoon in one's mouth :** Born into a wealthy or privileged family.

- Despite being born with a silver spoon in her mouth, she dedicated herself to charitable work and helping those in need.

**41. Off the top of my head :** Without careful thought or planning; spontaneously.

- I can't recall the exact numbers off the top of my head, but I can look them up for you.

**42. To smell a rat :** To sense that something is wrong or suspicious.

- When the deal seemed too good to be true, I started to smell a rat.

**43. Not be the sharpest tool in the shed :** Not very intelligent or capable.

- Although he's a nice guy, he's not the sharpest tool in the shed.

**44. Stuck between a rock and a hard place :** Facing a dilemma with no easy solution.

- I'm stuck between a rock and a hard place – both options seem equally difficult.

**45. Give someone an inch and they'll take a mile :** If you give someone a small amount, they'll want more.

- I let her borrow my pen once, and now she wants to borrow my laptop. Give someone an inch, and they'll take a mile.





## Quick Smart English

**46. Do something by the book :** To do something strictly according to the rules or procedures.

- Follow the instructions precisely; let's do this by the book.

**47. My hands are tied :** I am unable to act or make a decision due to external constraints.

- I'd like to help, but my hands are tied in this situation.

**48. Be on the same wavelength :** To share similar thoughts or understanding.

- We always understand each other; we're on the same wavelength.

**49. That's not on :** That is not acceptable or not allowed.

- His behaviour at the meeting was inappropriate; that's not on.

**50. Keep your wig on :** Used to tell someone to stay calm or not to get upset.

- I know you're anxious about the presentation, but keep your wig on; you've prepared well, and you'll do great!

