

# Idioms and Phrases

An idiom is an expression that yields a non-literal meaning of it.

## Colourful Idioms/ Idioms with colour:

1. Green thumb - to be skilled at gardening
2. Green horn - inexperienced / novice person
3. Gray area- Something that is unclear/ undefined
4. Catch red handed- to catch someone doing illegal
5. Out of the blue - without any information/warning/ surprisingly
6. Green with envy - to be very jealous
7. Black sheep - odd one out/ unlike others/ bad member of the family
8. Once in a blue moon - very rarely
9. Tickled pink - to be extremely pleased
10. White lie - a small lie to avoid hurting someone's feeling
11. Take the red eye - A late night flight that arrives early in the morning
12. Beet red - Dark red
13. Black and blue - bruised and beaten
14. Black and white - very clear, straight forward
15. Black out - faint
16. Born with a silver spoon in one's mouth - born in a rich family
17. Golden opportunity - the perfect chance
18. The green light/ signal - permission
19. Have the blues - be sad or depressed
20. In the dark - unaware of something
21. In the red - in debt
22. Out of the blue - unexpectedly
23. Red tape - official rules/ procedures marked by excessive complexity which results in delay or inaction
24. Roll out the red carpet - treat someone like royalty
25. Rose colored glasses - Unrealistic view
26. See red - be very angry
27. True colour - real image
28. With flying colours - with distinction
29. Off colour - Not in the usual form
30. A brown study - Completely involved in one's own thought and not paying attention to anything else

## Animal Idioms and phrases:

1. Cat nap - A short sleep
2. Copy cat - doing same as someone else
3. Chicken out - not to do something due to fear
4. Cat's got one's tongue - being unusually quiet / not to speak anything when at a loss of words
5. Dog days - Period of fall / decline or very hot days
6. Ants in one's pants - unable to sit still or stay calm out of excitement or nervousness
7. Birds and the bees - Sex education
8. Fishy - seem suspicious or dishonest
9. Dropping like flies - Giving up or dying quickly
10. Eager beaver - A person who works very hard and is very eager about their work
11. Hold your horses - wait and be patient
12. Have a cow - become excited, angry, agitated
13. Holy Cow ! - Used to express excitement or surprise
14. Get the lion's share - get the largest share
15. Horse around - fooling around
16. In the dog house - in a bad situation due to someone's angry
17. Kitty corner - situated diagonally to someone or something
18. Let the cat out of the bag - reveal a secret
19. Kill two birds with one stone - get two things done with a single effort
20. Monkey see, monkey do - silly people copying one another
21. Nest egg - money saved for the future
22. Make a beeline - go straight for something
23. Smell a rat - begin to suspect deception or foul play
24. Rat race - Severe competition for the survival of life
25. Raining cats and dogs - raining heavily
26. Pig out - To eat a lot
27. Take the bull by the horns - face a challenge boldly
28. Straight from the horse's mouth - direct from the original source
29. Until the cows come home - for a very long time

## Body Idioms and phrases:

1. Break a leg - Bid good luck to someone
2. Cold feet - nervous before a big event
3. Cry one's heart out - weep bitterly at length
4. Face the music - confront an unpleasant situation
5. All ears - Eager to hear something
6. Cost an arm and a leg - be very expensive
7. Get something off one's chest - tell someone one's problem
8. Flesh and blood - Having human feeling not a machine
9. Head over heels - deeply in love
10. At arm's length - to avoid being very close to someone
11. Head start - gain in the beginning of something
12. Give a hand, lend a hand - help/ assist someone in an action
13. Have one's head in the clouds - be unaware or stay unrealistic about something
14. Keep an eye on - watch someone to protect
15. In over one's head - to involve in a task which is not easy to handle
16. Learn by heart / know by heart / get by heart - memorize something
17. Let one's hair down - have fun, relax
18. Makes one's blood boil - make one's angry
19. Lips are sealed - promise to keep a secret
20. Pat on the back - to show well-done or recognition
21. Over one's dead body - to emphasize denial for something
22. Pull one's leg - joke or tease someone
23. Play something by ear - to decide to deal with a situation as it develops rather than acting according to plans made earlier
24. An old hand - an experienced person
25. Neck of the woods - nearby location or region
26. Rule of thumb - basic rule that cannot be followed always
27. See eye to eye - agree with each other
28. Sweet tooth - like to eat sweet things
29. Thick in the head - not very intelligent
30. Stick one's neck out - Speak something bravely that might be criticized
31. By the skin of one's teeth - By a narrow margin
32. Wash one's hands of something - stop dealing with an issue or problem

## Clothing Idioms and Phrases:

1. Below the belt - beyond what is fair or socially acceptable
2. Bursting at the seams - not fitting anymore
3. At the drop of a hat - immediately, without any delay
4. Caught with one's pants down - unprepared
5. Buckle down - to start to work very hard
6. Have a card up one's sleeve - have a secret or a reserve plan
7. Burn a hole in one's pocket - Eager to spend money
8. Fit like a glove - a dress that fits perfectly
9. Fine tooth comb - do something extremely carefully
10. Handle with kid gloves - treat delicately
11. Hat tricks - three goals consecutively by a person
12. Keep one's shirt on - try to stay calm
13. In one's birthday suit - completely naked
14. Keep something zipped - keep a secret
15. Off the cuff - without preparation or thought
16. Pull up one's socks - try harder
17. Put a sock in it - stop talking
18. Roll up one's sleeves - get ready to hard work
19. Put one's thinking cap on - think harder to solve a problem
20. Put oneself in someone else's shoes - Being empathetic
21. Ride one's coattails - To benefit from other's success
22. Wear the trousers - person in a relationship who makes decisions
23. Wear one's heart on one's sleeve - display emotions openly
24. Take one's hat off to someone - recognize or honor someone for something

## Geographical Idioms and Phrases:

1. On cloud nine - extremely happy
2. Dirt cheap - very inexpensive
3. Dig deep - a thorough investigation for something
4. Down to earth - practical and direct in dealing with people
5. Go with the flow - let the things happen as it works
6. Hit the hay - go to sleep
7. Go downhill - Gradually become worse
8. A field day - To get a lot of enjoy by doing something
9. Fair weather friend - friend only for good times
10. Out of the woods - Out of difficulties or danger
11. Over the hill - Too old to be used
12. Make a mountain out of a molehill - make a small problem very big
13. Keep one's head above water - have enough money to live
14. Know which way the wind blow - know how things will turn out
15. Rain on someone's parade - ruin somebody else's happiness
16. Stick in the mud - One who is slow/ old fashioned or unprogressive
17. Under the weather - ill
18. Take a raincheck - accept at a later date
19. The tip of the iceberg - a small part of a large problem
20. Quick as lightening - very fast
21. Up the creek - in trouble
22. Win by a landslide - win by a lot of points
23. Get wind of something - To hear something that someone was trying to keep secret
24. Hit the road - Set out on a journey

## Food Idioms and phrases:

1. Apple of one's eye: Person who is very lovely to someone
2. Bun in the oven: Be pregnant
3. Bad egg: A person who is often in trouble
4. Big cheese: Very Important Person
5. Bread and butter: the main thing
6. Bring home the bacon: earn the income
7. Butter someone up: being extra nice to someone
8. (Have one's) cake and eat it too- want more than your fair share or need
9. Cheesy- silly
10. Cool as a cucumber- very relaxed
11. Cream of the crop - the best
12. Cry over the spilled milk - get upset over something that has happened and cannot be changed
13. Cup of joe - cup of coffee
14. Cup of tea - Something you enjoy
15. Egg someone on - urge someone to do something
16. Freeze one's buns off - be very cold
17. Full of beans - have a lot of (silly) energy
18. Gravy train - extremely good pay for minimal work
19. (have something) handed to someone on a silver platter - receive without working for something
20. Hard nut to crack - difficult to understand
21. Hot potato - a controversial or difficult subject
22. Couch potato - a man who watches TV a lot
23. In a nutshell - simply
24. Out to lunch - crazy or mad
25. One smart cookie - a very intelligent person
26. Peach fuzz - small amount of hair growth
27. piece of cake - very easy task
28. Put all eggs in one bucket - rely on one single thing
29. Souped up - made more powerful or stylish
30. Sell like hot cakes - bought by many people
31. Spice things up - make something more exciting
32. Spill the beans - reveal the truth
33. Take something with a pinch of salt - don't take something 100% accurate
34. Use one's noodle - use your brain

## Mixed Idioms:

1. 24/7 - all the time/ constantly
2. A short fuse- A quick temper
3. Butterflies in one's stomach- to be nervous
4. By the skin of one's teeth- Manage to do something/ a very narrow margin
5. Crying wolf- Call for help when it is not needed
6. Not a spark of decency - No manners
7. To cook the books - to change figures in the financial accounts.
8. A cash cow - A product or service that makes a lot of money
9. Pink slip - A notice of dismissal from the employment
10. A nine days' wonder - an event which brings a sensation but disappear very soon
11. To move heaven and earth - to exert all efforts
12. Make hay when the sun shines - take advantage of all opportunities
13. To die in harness - To continue at one's occupation until death
14. Yellow press - newspapers which publish sensational stories and exaggerates the news to attract readers.
15. If wishes were horses, beggars might ride - if only wishing could make everything happen, then even the most destitute people would have everything they wanted
16. To jump from a frying pan into fire - TO come out of a trouble but get into the worse
17. Foul play - cheating
18. A fish out of water - An awkward situation
19. A burnt child dreads the fire - One who fears the same experience which s/he has already experienced
20. To throw dust in one's eyes - To try to deceive someone or mislead someone
21. Crocodile's tears - Hypothetical tears
22. Burn the midnight oil - Study or work very hard
23. Rank and file - An ordinary people
24. Out of the wood - Free from difficulties and dangers
25. Under his thumb - under his control
26. Between the devil and the deep sea - Between two dangers
27. A wee bit - by a very small amount
28. At one's wit's end - Completely puzzled and confused
29. By fits and starts - not regularly, in short period
30. Call a spade a spade - straight forward and direct speaking
31. Hoping against hope - without hope
32. Hit the nail on the head - Do and say the exact thing
33. An axe to grind - A selfish motive in in any matter
34. Be at daggers drawn - be bitterly hostile with each other



## Mixed Idioms:

35. To play ducks and drakes - to act foolishly and inconsistently
36. Keep one at bay - Keep someone at a distance
37. Bark up the wrong tree - Following the wrong course of action
38. Cry for the moon - Ask for the impossible thing
39. The pros and cons - The various aspects of a matter in detail
40. Cat and dog life - Life full of quarrels
41. Cock and bull story - Hypothetical story that no one believe
42. Be in a tight corner - in a very difficult situation
43. Out of the question - Impossible
44. Out of the way - strange
45. Keep one's fingers crossed - Hope that nothing will upset the running plans
46. In the nick of time - at the last moment/ just before the last moment when something bad will happen
47. Sitting on the fence - Someone who lacks to decide out of two choices
48. Spread like wild fire - spread quickly
49. The gift of the gab - the ability to speak clearly and confidently
50. By hook or by crook - do something by fair or foul means
51. Take to one's heels - to run away
52. Read between the lines - Understand the hidden meaning
53. A thorn in the flesh - A constant source of annoyance
54. In cold blood - Do something with cruelty
55. Harp on the same string - To recur to a subject tiresomely and monotonously
56. Leave one in the lurch - Leave someone in the helpless condition
57. Bury the hatchet - end the quarrel and make peace
58. Like a fish out of water - in a strange situation
59. At one's beck and call - under one's control
60. To make both ends meet - To live within one's income
61. Stick to one's guns - remain faithful to the cause
62. Put the cart before the horse - Put or do things in wrong order
63. IN high spirits - very happy
64. Nip in the bud - To stop something immediately so that it does not become a worse problem
65. A big gun - An important person
66. Gain ground - become popular
67. A bosom friend - a very close friend
68. Bring to light - disclose something
69. Pay off old scores - take revenge

## Mixed Idioms:

70. A close shave - A narrow escape
71. In the long run - Eventually
72. Turn over a new leaf - Change for the better
73. Make up one's mind - Decide something
74. Turn a deaf ear - Ignore what one says
75. To blow one's own trumpet - to boast about one's achievement
76. Hard and fast rules - strict rules
77. Burn one's fingers - Get into trouble by interfering in other's matter
78. Chew the cud - To think slowly and carefully about something
79. To cut a sorry figure - Make one's poor impression
80. Laugh one's head off - laugh heartily
81. Through thick and thin - under all conditions
82. Put a spoke in one's wheel - to upset one's plan
83. At sixes and sevens - in a disorganized manner
84. Above board - honest and open
85. Play second fiddle - take an unimportant part / treated as less important
86. With a high hand - Showing no regard for the rights, feeling and concerns of others
87. Alpha and omega - The beginning and the end
88. A bone of contention - a source of quarrel
89. An acid test - a critical test
90. At a snail's pace - very slowly
91. A bolt from the blue - something unexpected
92. Add fuel to the fire - to intensify a bad situation to worse
93. To beat about the bush - Talk without relevance
94. To burn one's boats - to destroy all possible ways
95. Take one to task - rebuke someone
96. By leaps and bounds - rapidly
97. At sea - confused and lost
98. At home - comfortable
99. To build castles in the air - make imaginary plans
100. Chip on one's shoulder - An unpleasant feeling caused by a belief that someone has been treated unfairly in the past
101. Blessings in disguise - An apparent misfortune that eventually has good results
102. Piece of cake - something very easy to do or to understand