

50 Common English Idioms  
You Need to Know



**VOLUME 1**



# Welcome to Volume 1 of 50 Common English Idioms You Need to Know

In this **Introduction**, I will explain why English Idioms are very useful to know and learn.

As well, you will see that they are numbered from 1 to 50 and in alphabetical order to find them easily.

## Ok, so why are Idioms useful?

Idioms are useful to know and learn for several reasons:

**Cultural Understanding:** Idioms are a window into the culture and history of a language. By understanding idiomatic expressions, learners gain insight into the beliefs, values, and customs of a community, helping them communicate more effectively with native speakers.

**Enhanced Communication:** Idioms add color and richness to language. They convey meanings that may not be easily expressed through literal phrases, making communication more vibrant, engaging, and expressive.

**Improved Comprehension:** Idioms are commonly used in everyday speech, literature, and media. Familiarity with idioms helps learners understand conversations, movies, books, and other forms of media, enhancing overall language comprehension.

**Natural Conversations:** Using idioms in conversations can make language learners sound more fluent and native-like. It shows that they have a deeper understanding of the language and its nuances.

**Contextual Usage:** Understanding idiomatic expressions allows learners to recognize when to use them appropriately, enhancing their language skills and preventing potential misunderstandings.

**Better Writing:** Incorporating idioms into writing can make the text more engaging and persuasive. It helps people develop their creative writing skills and adds a level of sophistication to their compositions.

**Humour and Playfulness:** Idioms often include humorous or playful elements, making language learning enjoyable and memorable.

**Higher-Level Proficiency:** Mastering idioms is a sign of advanced language proficiency. It indicates that learners have moved beyond basic vocabulary and grammar and are capable of grasping idiomatic language.

## Conclusion

In summary, idioms are an essential part of language learning as they provide cultural insights, enhance communication skills, aid in comprehension, and add depth and richness to both spoken and written language.

Finally, I hope you find this collection of Idioms useful. Many of them you may know already. But it's good to have them in one place to be able to refer to them easily.

To your success!

Michael



My name is Michael Finemore and I am the owner-operator of Apex English Tutoring.

As an experienced English teacher, I'm passionate about helping people turn their 'poor' English into 'great' English, with easy and effective ways to practice.



1 **All ears** - Listening carefully or attentively.

Example: I'm all ears; tell me your exciting news!

2 **All in the same boat** - Facing the same situation or challenge.

Example: We're all in the same boat; let's work together to find a solution.

3 **An arm and a leg** - Very expensive or costly.

Example: The new iPhone costs an arm and a leg.

4 **At the drop of a hat** - Without hesitation or delay.

Example: She's always ready to help at the drop of a hat.

5 **Back to the drawing board** - Starting over after a failed attempt.

Example: Our project didn't work as planned, so it's back to the drawing board.

6 **Barking up the wrong tree** - Pursuing the wrong course of action or suspecting the wrong person.

Example: If you think I took your wallet, you're barking up the wrong tree.

7 **Beat around the bush** - Avoiding the main topic and not speaking directly.

Example: Stop beating around the bush and tell me what you really think.

8 **Bite the bullet** - To face a difficult situation bravely.

Example: He had to bite the bullet and apologize for his mistake.

9 **Break a leg** - Good luck. Often used for theatrical performances.

Example: Break a leg on your performance tonight!

10 **By the book** - Following the rules strictly.

Example: He always does everything by the book.

11 **Cat got your tongue?** - Used when someone is speechless or quiet.

Example: You're very quiet. Cat got your tongue?

12 **Close but no cigar** - Almost succeeding, but not quite.

Example: She came close to winning the competition, but it was close but no cigar.

13 **Cry over spilled milk** - Regretting something that has already happened and cannot be changed.

Example: There's no point in crying over spilled milk; let's focus on the future.

14 **Curiosity killed the cat** - Being too curious can lead to trouble.

Example: I don't want to know what's inside; curiosity killed the cat.

15 **Cut the mustard** - To meet expectations or perform well.

Example: He may be young, but he really cuts the mustard on the basketball court.

16 **Don't cry over spilled milk** - Don't dwell on past mistakes; move on and learn from them.

Example: I know you made a mistake, but don't cry over spilled milk.

17 **Don't judge a book by its cover** - Don't judge someone or something by appearances alone.

Example: He may seem quiet, but don't judge a book by its cover; he's a talented singer.

18 **Down to the wire** - Close to the deadline or end of a process.

Example: We finished the project but it came down to the wire.

19 **Drive someone up the wall** - Annoy or irritate someone greatly.

Example: His constant whining drives me up the wall.

20 **The early bird catches the worm** - Being early gives you an advantage.

Example: I always arrive early for the meetings; the early bird catches the worm.

21 **Every cloud has a silver lining** - There's something positive in every difficult situation.

Example: Even though she lost her job, every cloud has a silver lining; she got the opportunity to pursue her passion.

22 **Fish out of water** - Feeling uncomfortable in a new or unfamiliar situation.

Example: I'm not used to this environment; I feel like a fish out of water.

23 **Get a taste of your own medicine** - Experience the same negative treatment you have given to others.

Example: She lied to her friend, and now she's getting a taste of her own medicine.

24 **Get cold feet** - To become nervous or have second thoughts about a decision.

Example: He got cold feet and backed out of the bungee jumping event.

25 **Get the ball rolling** - To initiate or start something.

Example: Let's get the ball rolling on the new project.

26 **Give someone the benefit of the doubt** - To trust someone's statement or judgment without being skeptical.

Example: Even though he's often late, I'll give him the benefit of the doubt.

27 **Go the extra mile** - To make additional effort or go beyond expectations.

Example: She always goes the extra mile to help her customers.

28 **Hit the nail on the head** - To be exactly right or accurate.

Example: Your explanation hit the nail on the head; that's exactly what happened.

29 **In a nutshell** - To summarize something in a concise way.

Example: Can you explain the movie plot in a nutshell?

30 **It's a piece of cake** - Something very easy.

Example: Don't worry; fixing the issue is a piece of cake. (See 37)

31 **Keep an eye on** - To monitor or watch something or someone closely.

Example: Please keep an eye on the kids while I finish cooking.

32 **Kick the bucket** - A euphemism for dying or passing away.

Example: Unfortunately, my grandfather kicked the bucket last night.

33 **Let the cat out of the bag** - To reveal a secret.

Example: I accidentally let the cat out of the bag about the surprise party.

34 **Like a bull in a china shop** - Clumsy or careless in delicate situations.

Example: Be careful with those fragile vases; you're like a bull in a china shop!

35 **Make a long story short** - To summarize a story or explanation briefly.

Example: To make a long story short, we missed the train and had to take a taxi.

36 **Miss the boat** - To miss an opportunity.

Example: She missed the boat by not applying for the scholarship on time.

37 **Not a piece of cake** - Something challenging or difficult.

Example: Climbing the mountain was not a piece of cake; it required great effort.

38 **On thin ice** - In a risky or precarious situation.

Example: After making a mistake at work, he's on thin ice with his boss.

39 **Once in a blue moon** - Very rarely or infrequently.

Example: We only see each other once in a blue moon, as we live far apart.

40 **Out of the blue** - Unexpectedly or without any warning.

Example: He called me out of the blue, and we ended up having a long conversation.

41 **Over the moon** - Extremely happy or delighted.

Example: She was over the moon when she got accepted into her dream college.

42 **Play it by ear** - To make decisions as events unfold, without a definite plan.

Example: We don't have a set schedule; let's play it by ear and see what happens.

43 **Pull someone's leg** - To tease or joke with someone.

Example: Don't take him seriously; he's just pulling your leg.

44 **Put all your eggs in one basket** - To risk everything on a single plan or venture.

Example: Don't invest all your money in one stock; it's putting all your eggs in one basket.

45 **Put two and two together** - To draw logical conclusions from the available information.

Example: When he saw the broken window and the open door, he put two and two together and realized there had been a burglary.

46 **Rain cats and dogs** - To rain heavily.

Example: We had to cancel our plans due to it raining cats and dogs.

47 **Read between the lines** - To understand the hidden or implied meaning in something.

Example: She didn't say it directly, but if you read between the lines, she's not happy with the decision.

48 **See eye to eye** - To agree with someone or have the same opinion.

Example: They don't see eye to eye on the issue, so they often argue.

49 **Shoot for the moon** - To set ambitious or high goals.

Example: Don't be afraid to shoot for the moon and aim for success.

50 **Sit on the fence** - To remain neutral or undecided in a situation.

Example: I can't decide which option is better; I'm sitting on the fence.

**This has been Volume 1 of 50 Common English Idioms You Need to Know sent out to my Newsletter Subscribers and nobody else.'**

**I plan to produce a second Volume with another 50 common Idioms that you need to know. I'll let you know when it's ready.**

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