

IDIOMS COMPLETE COLLECTION

English (Precis & Composition)



www.thecsspoint.com

Note: This material is intended to be correct and to the point relative with the subject,, but not promised or guaranteed to be accurate. We have gathered this information from different internet sources.

Contact Us.

www.thecsspoint.com

Email: info@thecsspoint.com

Idioms

A Bird In The Hand Is Worth Two In The Bush:

Having something that is certain is much better than taking a risk for more, because chances are you might lose everything.

A Blessing In Disguise:

Something good that isn't recognized at first.

A Chip On Your Shoulder:

Being upset for something that happened in the past.

A Dime A Dozen:

Anything that is common and easy to get.

A Doubting Thomas:

A skeptic who needs physical or personal evidence in order to believe something.

A Drop in the Bucket:

A very small part of something big or whole.

A Fool And His Money Are Easily Parted:

It's easy for a foolish person to lose his/her money.

A House Divided Against Itself Cannot Stand:

Everyone involved must unify and function together or it will not work out.

A Leopard Can't Change His Spots:

You cannot change who you are.

A Penny Saved Is A Penny Earned:

By not spending money, you are saving money (little by little).

A Picture Paints a Thousand Words:

A visual presentation is far more descriptive than words.

A Piece of Cake:

A task that can be accomplished very easily.

A Slap on the Wrist:

A very mild punishment.

A Taste Of Your Own Medicine:

When you are mistreated the same way you mistreat others.

A Toss-Up:

A result that is still unclear and can go either way.

Actions Speak Louder Than Words:

It's better to actually do something than just talk about it.

Add Fuel To The Fire:

Whenever something is done to make a bad situation even worse than it is.

Against The Clock:

Rushed and short on time.

All Bark And No Bite:

When someone is threatening and/or aggressive but not willing to engage in a fight.

All Greek to me:

Meaningless and incomprehensible like someone who cannot read, speak, or understand any of the Greek language would be.

All In The Same Boat:

When everyone is facing the same challenges.

An Arm And A Leg:

Very expensive. A large amount of money.

An Axe To Grind:

To have a dispute with someone.

Apple of My Eye:

Someone who is cherished above all others.

As High As A Kite:

Anything that is high up in the sky.

At The Drop Of A Hat:

Willing to do something immediately.

B

Back Seat Driver:

People who criticize from the sidelines, much like someone giving unwanted advice from the back seat of a vehicle to the driver.

Back To Square One:

Having to start all over again.

Back To The Drawing Board:

When an attempt fails and it's time to start all over.

Baker's Dozen:

Thirteen.

Barking Up The Wrong Tree:

A mistake made in something you are trying to achieve.

Beat A Dead Horse:

To force an issue that has already ended.

Beating Around The Bush:

Avoiding the main topic. Not speaking directly about the issue.

Bend Over Backwards:

Do whatever it takes to help. Willing to do anything.

Between A Rock And A Hard Place:
Stuck between two very bad options.

Bite Off More Than You Can Chew:
To take on a task that is way to big.

Bite Your Tongue:
To avoid talking.

Blood Is Thicker Than Water:
The family bond is closer than anything else.

Blue Moon:
A rare event or occurance.

Break A Leg:
A superstitious way to say 'good luck' without saying 'good luck', but rather the opposite.

Buy A Lemon:
To purchase a vehicle that constantly gives problems or stops running after you drive it away.

C

Can't Cut The Mustard :

Someone who isn't adequate enough to compete or participate.

Cast Iron Stomach:

Someone who has no problems, complications or ill effects with eating anything or drinking anything.

Charley Horse:

Stiffness in the leg / A leg cramp.

Chew someone out:

Verbally scold someone.

Chip on his Shoulder:

Angry today about something that occurred in the past.

Chow Down:

To eat.

Close but no Cigar:

To be very near and almost accomplish a goal, but fall short.

Cock and Bull Story:

An unbelievable tale.

Come Hell Or High Water:

Any difficult situation or obstacle.

Crack Someone Up:

To make someone laugh.

Cross Your Fingers:

To hope that something happens the way you want it to.

Cry Over Spilt Milk:

When you complain about a loss from the past.

Cry Wolf:

Intentionally raise a false alarm.

Cup Of Joe:

A cup of coffee.

Curiosity Killed The Cat:

Being Inquisitive can lead you into a dangerous situation.

Cut to the Chase:

Leave out all the unnecessary details and just get to the point.

D

Dark Horse:

One who was previously unknown and is now prominent.

Dead Ringer:

100% identical. A duplicate.

Devil's Advocate:

Someone who takes a position for the sake of argument without believing in that particular side of the argument. It can also mean one who presents a counter argument for a position they do believe in, to another debater.

Dog Days of Summer:

The hottest days of the summer season.

Don't count your chickens before they hatch:

Don't rely on it until your sure of it.

Don't Look A Gift Horse In The Mouth:

When someone gives you a gift, don't be ungrateful.

Don't Put All Your Eggs In One Basket:

Do not put all your resources in one possibility.

Doozy:

Something outstanding.

Down To The Wire:

Something that ends at the last minute or last few seconds.

Drastic Times Call For Drastic Measures:

When you are extremely desperate you need to take extremely desperate actions.

Drink like a fish:

To drink very heavily.

Drive someone up the wall:

To irritate and/or annoy very much.

Dropping Like Flies:

A large number of people either falling ill or dying.

Dry Run:

Rehearsal.

E

Eighty Six:

A certain item is no longer available. Or this idiom can also mean, to throw away.

Elvis has left the building:

The show has come to an end. It's all over.

Ethnic Cleansing:

Killing of a certain ethnic or religious group on a massive scale.

Every Cloud Has A Silver Lining:

Be optimistic, even difficult times will lead to better days.

Everything But The Kitchen Sink:

Almost everything and anything has been included.

Excuse my French:

Please forgive me for cussing.

Cock and Bull Story:

An unbelievable tale.

Cock and Bull Story:

An unbelievable tale.

F

Feeding Frenzy:

An aggressive attack on someone by a group.

Field Day:

An enjoyable day or circumstance.

Finding Your Feet:

To become more comfortable in whatever you are doing.

Finger lickin' good:

A very tasty food or meal.

Fixed In Your Ways:

Not willing or wanting to change from your normal way of doing something.

Flash In The Pan:

Something that shows potential or looks promising in the beginning but fails to deliver anything in the end.

Flea Market:

A swap meet. A place where people gather to buy and sell inexpensive goods.

Flesh and Blood:

This idiom can mean living material of which people are made of, or it can refer to someone's family.

Flip The Bird:

To raise your middle finger at someone.

Foam at the Mouth:

To be enraged and show it.

Fools' Gold:

Iron pyrites, a worthless rock that resembles real gold.

French Kiss:

An open mouth kiss where tongues touch.

From Rags To Riches:

To go from being very poor to being very wealthy.

Fuddy-duddy:

An old-fashioned and foolish type of person.

Full Monty:

This idiom can mean either, "the whole thing" or "completely nude".

Funny Farm:

A mental institutional facility.

G

Get Down to Brass Tacks:

To become serious about something.

Get Over It:

To move beyond something that is bothering you.

Get Up On The Wrong Side Of The Bed:

Someone who is having a horrible day.

Get Your Walking Papers:

Get fired from a job.

Give Him The Slip:

To get away from. To escape.

Go Down Like A Lead Balloon:

To be received badly by an audience.

Go For Broke:

To gamble everything you have.

Go Out On A Limb:

Put yourself in a tough position in order to support someone/something.

Go The Extra Mile:

Going above and beyond whatever is required for the task at hand.

Good Samaritan:

Someone who helps others when they are in need, with no discussion for compensation, and no thought of a reward.

Graveyard Shift:

Working hours from about 12👁️0 am to 8👁️0 am. The time of the day when most other people are sleeping.

Great Minds Think Alike:

Intelligent people think like each other.

Green Room:

The waiting room, especially for those who are about to go on a tv or radio

show.

Gut Feeling:

A personal intuition you get, especially when feel something may not be right.

H

Haste Makes Waste:

Quickly doing things results in a poor ending.

Hat Trick:

When one player scores three goals in the same hockey game. This idiom can also mean three scores in any other sport, such as 3 homeruns, 3 touchdowns, 3 soccer goals, etc.

Have an Axe to Grind:

To have a dispute with someone.

He Lost His Head:

Angry and overcome by emotions.

Head Over Heels:

Very excited and/or joyful, especially when in love.

Hell in a Handbasket:

Deteriorating and headed for complete disaster.

High Five:

Slapping palms above each others heads as celebration gesture.

High on the Hog:

Living in Luxury.

Hit The Books:

To study, especially for a test or exam.

Hit The Hay:

Go to bed or go to sleep.

Hit The Nail on the Head:

Do something exactly right or say something exactly right.

Hit The Sack:

Go to bed or go to sleep.

Hocus Pocus:

In general, a term used in magic or trickery.

Hold Your Horses:

Be patient.

I

Icing On The Cake:

When you already have it good and get something on top of what you already have.

Idle Hands Are The Devil's Tools:

You are more likely to get in trouble if you have nothing to do.

If It's Not One Thing, It's Another:

When one thing goes wrong, then another, and another...

In Like Flynn:

To be easily successful, especially when sexual or romantic.

In The Bag:

To have something secured.

In The Buff:

Nude.

In The Heat Of The Moment:

Overwhelmed by what is happening in the moment.

In Your Face:

An aggressive and bold confrontation.

It Takes Two To Tango:

A two person conflict where both people are at fault.

It's A Small World:

You frequently see the same people in different places.

Its Anyone's Call:

A competition where the outcome is difficult to judge or predict.

Ivy League:

Since 1954 the Ivy League has been the following universities: Columbia, Brown, Cornell, Dartmouth, Yale, Pennsylvania, Princeton, and Harvard.

J

Jaywalk:

Crossing the street (from the middle) without using the crosswalk.

Joshing Me:

Tricking me.

K

Keep An Eye On Him:

You should carefully watch him.

Keep body and soul together:

To earn a sufficient amount of money in order to keep yourself alive .

Keep your chin up:

To remain joyful in a tough situation.

Kick The Bucket:

Die.

Kitty-corner:

Diagonally across. Sometimes called Catty-Corner as well.

Knee Jerk Reaction:

A quick and automatic response.

Knock On Wood:

Knuckle tapping on wood in order to avoid some bad luck.

Know the Ropes:

To understand the details.

L

Last but not least:

An introduction phrase to let the audience know that the last person mentioned is no less important than those introduced before him/her.

Lend Me Your Ear:

To politely ask for someone's full attention.

Let Bygones Be Bygones:

To forget about a disagreement or argument.

Let Sleeping Dogs Lie:

To avoid restarting a conflict.

Let The Cat Out Of The Bag:

To share a secret that wasn't suppose to be shared.

Level playing field:

A fair competition where no side has an advantage.

Like a chicken with its head cut off:

To act in a frenzied manner.

liquor someone up:

To get someone drunk.

Long in the Tooth:

Old people (or horses).

Loose Cannon:

Someone who is unpredictable and can cause damage if not kept in check.

M

Make No Bones About:

To state a fact so there are no doubts or objections.

Method To My Madness:

Strange or crazy actions that appear meaningless but in the end are done for a good reason.

Mumbo Jumbo:

Nonsense or meaningless speech.

Mum's the word:

To keep quiet. To say nothing.

N

Nest Egg:

Savings set aside for future use.

Never Bite The Hand That Feeds You:

Don't hurt anyone that helps you.

New kid on the block:

Someone new to the group or area.

New York Minute:

A minute that seems to go by quickly, especially in a fast paced environment.

No Dice:

To not agree. To not accept a proposition.

No Room to Swing a Cat:

An unusually small or confined space.

Not Playing With a Full Deck:

Someone who lacks intelligence.

O

Off On The Wrong Foot:

Getting a bad start on a relationship or task.

Off The Hook:

No longer have to deal with a tough situation.

Off the Record:

Something said in confidence that the one speaking doesn't want attributed to him/her.

On Pins And Needles:

Anxious or nervous, especially in anticipation of something.

On The Fence:

Undecided.

On The Same Page:

When multiple people all agree on the same thing.

Out Of The Blue:

Something that suddenly and unexpectedly occurs.

Out On A Limb:

When someone puts themselves in a risky situation.

Out On The Town:

To enjoy yourself by going out.

Over My Dead Body:

When you absolutely will not allow something to happen.

Over the Top:

Very excessive.

P

Pass The Buck:

Avoid responsibility by giving it to someone else.

Pedal to the metal:

To go full speed, especially while driving a vehicle.

Peeping Tom:

Someone who observes people in the nude or sexually active people, mainly for his own gratification.

Pick up your ears:

To listen very carefully.

Pig In A Poke:

A deal that is made without first examining it.

Pig Out :

To eat alot and eat it quickly.

Pipe Down:

To shut-up or be quiet.

Practice Makes Perfect:

By constantly practicing, you will become better.

Pull the plug:

To stop something. To bring something to an end.

Pulling Your Leg:

Tricking someone as a joke.

Put a sock in it:

To tell noisy person or a group to be quiet.

Q

Queer the pitch:

Destroy or ruin a plan.

R

Raincheck:

An offer or deal that is declined right now but willing to accept later.

Raining Cats and Dogs:

A very loud and noisy rain storm.

Ring Fencing:

Seperated usual judgement to guarantee protection, especially project funds.

Rise and Shine:

Time to get out of bed and get ready for work/school.

Rome Was Not Built In One Day:

If you want something to be completely properly, then its going to take time.

Rule Of Thumb:

A rough estimate.

Run out of steam:

To be completely out of energy.

S

Saved By The Bell:

Saved at the last possible moment.

Scapegoat:

Someone else who takes the blame.

Scot-free:

To escape and not have to pay.

Sick As A Dog:

To be very sick (with the flu or a cold).

Sitting Shotgun:

Riding in the front passenger seat of a car.

Sixth Sense:

A paranormal sense that allows you to communicate with the dead.

Skid Row:

The rundown area of a city where the homeless and drug users live.

Smell A Rat:

To detect someone in the group is betraying the others.

Smell Something Fishy:

Detecting that something isn't right and there might be a reason for it.

Son of a Gun:

A scamp.

Southpaw:

Someone who is left-handed.

Spitting Image:

The exact likeness or kind.

Start From Scratch:

To do it all over again from the beginning.

T

The Ball Is In Your Court:
It is your decision this time.

The Best Of Both Worlds:
There are two choices and you have them both.

The Bigger They Are The Harder They Fall:
While the bigger and stronger opponent might be alot more difficult to beat,
when you do they suffer a much bigger loss.

The Last Straw:
When one small burden after another creates an unbearable situation, the last
straw is the last small burden that one can take.

The Whole Nine Yards:
Everything. All of it.

Third times a charm:
After no success the first two times, the third try is a lucky one.

Tie the knot:
To get married.

Til the cows come home:
A long time.

To Make A Long Story Short:

Something someone would say during a long and boring story in order to keep his/her audience from losing attention. Usually the story isn't shortened.

To Steal Someone's Thunder:

To take the credit for something someone else did.

Tongue And Cheek:

humor, not to be taken serious.

Turn A Blind Eye:

Refuse to acknowledge something you know is real or legit.

Twenty three skidoo:

To be turned away.

U

Under the weather:

Feeling ill or sick.

Up a blind alley:

Going down a course of action that leads to a bad outcome.

Use Your Loaf:

Use your head. Think smart.

V

Van Gogh's ear for music:

Tone deaf.

Variety Is The Spice Of Life:

The more experiences you try the more exciting life can be.

W

Wag the Dog:

A diversion away from something of greater importance.

Water Under The Bridge:

Anything from the past that isn't significant or important anymore.

Wear Your Heart On Your Sleeve:

To openly and freely express your emotions.

When It Rains, It Pours:

Since it rarely rains, when it does it will be a huge storm.

When Pigs Fly :

Something that will never ever happen.

Wild and Woolly:

Uncultured and without laws.

Wine and Dine:

When somebody is treated to an expensive meal.

Without A Doubt:

For certain.

X

X marks the spot:

A phrase that is said when someone finds something he/she has been looking for.

Y

You Are What You Eat:

In order to stay healthy you must eat healthy foods.

You Can't Judge A Book By Its Cover:

Decisions shouldn't be made primarily on appearance.

You Can't Take it With You:

Enjoy what you have and not what you don't have, since when you die you cannot take things (such as money) with you.

Your Guess Is As Good As Mine:

I have no idea.

Z

Zero Tolerance:

No crime or law breaking big or small will be overlooked.

100 Important Idioms

IDIOMS MEANINGS

1. To add insult to injury; To intensify a person
2. To be born with a silver spoon in one's mouth; To be born in a rich family
3. A bolt from the blue; An expected disaster
4. To blow one's own trumpet; To boast
5. A bone of contention ; Cause of quarrel
6. To burn one's fingers ; To suffer
7. To beat black & blue ; To beat mercilessly
8. To cast an aspersion ; To bring discredit
9. To cry over spilt milk ; To feel sorry for what has happened

10. To cut a sorry figure ; To make a poor impression
11. To die in harness ; To die while doing one's duty
12. To end in smoke ; To fail
13. To go to the dogs ; To be ruined
14. To hang in the balance ; To remain undecided
15. To hit the nail on the head; To do the right thing at the right time
16. To hold water ; To sound logical
17. To live no stone unturned ; To try one's level best
18. To live from hand to mouth ; To live with great difficulty
19. To make up one's mind ; To decide
20. To see eye to eye with ; Agree
21. To play ducks and drakes ; Waste
22. To put the cart before the hors ; To do a thing in a wrong way
23. To have too many irons in the fire ; To have too many things in hand
24. To read b/w the lines ; To try to understand the hidden meaning
25. To turn over a new leaf ; To change for the better
26. To take the bull by horns; To face difficulties boldly
27. To win laurels ; To distinguish oneself
28. At daggers drawn ; At enmity or fighting
29. Black and white ; Written
30. By leaps and bounds ; Very fast
31. In cold blood ; deliberately
32. Laid up with ; Confined to bed
33. Ins and outs ; Full details
34. A black sheep ; Scoundrel; a bad person
35. A cock and bull story ; An absurd tale
36. A gala day ; A day of festivity; a holiday with rejoicing
37. A hard nut to crack ; A difficult person or problem to deal with

38. A turn coat ; One who changes one's opinion or party
39. A fool's paradise ; In a state of happiness founded on vain hopes
40. Beat a retreat ; To retire before the enemy
41. To be on the horns of a dilemma; To have a choice b/w two equal evils
42. To beat about the bush ; Approach a subject in a round about method
43. Bury the hatchet ; To make peace
44. By fits and starts ; Irregularly
45. Capital punishment ; Death sentence
46. By hook or by crook ; By fair or foul means
47. Eat humble pie ; To face humiliation
48. Hit below the belt ; To act unfairly
49. In apple pie order ; In perfect order
50. Leave one in lurch ; To desert in difficulty
51. To make a clean breast of ; To confess fully one's faults
52. To nip the evil in the bud ; To destroy an evil in early stage
53. Pick holes in another's coat ; To find fault with another
54. Scot free ; To go unpunished
55. Smell a rat ; To have a reason to suspect
56. Through thick and thin ; Through every difficulty
57. True to one's salt ; Faithful to one's master
58. To turn the corner ; To begin to improve
59. With a grain of salt ; To accept a statement with doubt as to its complete true
60. Worship the rising sun ; To respect one rising in power
61. A Herculean task ; An extremely difficult or dangerous task
62. A fish out of water ; In a wrong place
63. A leap in the dark ; An act of which we can't force consequences
64. A thorn in one's side ; A constant source of annoyance
65. To be at one's beck and call ; Under one's absolute control

66. Bread and Butter ; Means of subsistence
67. Burn one's fingers ; To get into trouble
68. Burn the candle at both ends; Use up too much energy
69. To cut the Gordian knot ; To solve the difficulty
70. Cut and dried ; Ready-made
71. Feather one's own nest ; To make money by unfair means
72. To fish in troubled water ; To do something under very unpromising circumstance
73. To give oneself airs ; Affected manners
74. To give the devil his due ; To allow even a bad man the credit due
75. To hang by thread ; To be in a critical condition
76. A henpecked husband ; A man habitually snubbed by his wife
77. Hush money ; Money given as a bribe to hush or make one keep silent
78. Kick up a row ; Make a great noise
79. To let the cat out of the bag; To reveal a secret
80. Null and void ; Not valid; of no effect
81. On the spur of the moment; At once
82. Pay one back in one's own coin ; To treat in the same way as one has been treated
83. Put in cold storage; To forget or neglect something
84. Pull wires ; To manage the show by secret Influence
85. Read b/w the lines ; To hit at the real meaning
86. Sit on the fence ; To avoid taking sides; to remain neutral
87. A square deal ; Justice
88. Sword of Damocles ; Treating danger
89. To take up the gauntlet ; To accept the challenge
90. To eat one's heart out ; To suffer silently, bitterly
91. B/t the devil and the deep sea ; B/w two dangers equally harmful

92. A sweet tooth ; A liking for sweetmeat
93. A dark horse ; An unknown person
94. A bottleneck ; Anything that cause delays
95. To put one's foot down ; To show determination
96. A wet blanket ; A grumbling, depressing person
97. To throw up the sponge ; To acknowledge defeat
98. A feather in one's cap ; Something to be proud of
99. A red letter day ; An auspicious day
100. Bag and baggage ; With all one's belongings

IDIOMS

Animal Idioms

Idiom	Meaning	Example Sentence
ants in one's pants	unable to sit still or remain calm out of nervousness or excitement	Lisa had ants in her pants the day before her interview.
(the) birds and the bees	sex education	I learned about the birds and the bees when my baby brother was born.
cat nap	a short sleep	I'm going to have a cat nap while you're cooking dinner.
cat's got one's	said about someone who doesn't speak	It looks like the cat's got your tongue , Lucy. Are you always this

tongue	(usually due to shyness)	quiet?
chicken out	to decide not to do something out of fear (usually just before)	I was going to take a ride on Geoff's motorcycle, but I chickened out when he gave me a helmet to wear.
clam up	become quiet suddenly	Arthur clammed up when I asked him about his family.
copy cat	a person who does the same thing as someone else	My sister is such a copy cat . First she bought the same car as me, and now she's applying to my school.
dog days	very hot days	I sleep in the basement during the dog days of August.
dropping like flies	dying/giving up quickly	My roses are dropping like flies in this early frost.
eager beaver	a person who is excited about doing certain work	Ever since he got his new drill set my husband has been an eager beaver around the house.
fishy	odd, suspicious	I knew something fishy was going on when I saw all of my friends' cars in my mom's driveway.
have a cow	get extremely upset	My teacher had a cow when she

	(often over something minor)	realized nobody had done the homework.
hold your horses	wait and be patient	Hold your horses! I'll be done in the washroom in a minute.
holy cow!	Wow, I'm surprised!	Holy cow! I can't believe you ate everything on your plate.
horse around	play roughly	If you're going to horse around , please go outside.
get the lion's share	get the greatest percentage	My aunt got the lion's share of the inheritance.
in the dog house	in trouble with another person	I don't think Marsha is coming out tonight. She's still in the dog house for forgetting Aaron's birthday.
kill two birds with one stone	get two things done at once	If you pick the groceries up when you drop George off for his shift, you will kill two birds with one stone .
kitty corner	diagonal direction	The gas station is kitty corner to the library.
let the cat out of the bag	reveal a secret	Who let the cat out of the bag about the surprise party?

(a) little bird told me	I heard something (usually secretive or unknown) from someone (not named)	A little bird told me that you are thinking of quitting your job.
make a beeline	go straight for something	My grandma made a beeline for the smoking room as soon as she got off the airplane.
monkey see, monkey do	silly/unintelligent people tend to copy each other's actions	Our one-year-old is saying bad words now. I told my husband, " Monkey see, monkey do! "
nest egg	money saved for the future	We have a nest egg that we might have to use if Jim goes on sick leave.
pig out	eat a lot of something	I pigged out on pancakes so I don't have room for lunch.
raining cats and dogs	raining heavily	I forgot my umbrella, and it was raining cats and dogs .
rat race	fierce, competitive struggle for power, position etc	I'm ready to leave this rat race and retire in Mexico.
smell a rat	begin to suspect trickery etc	I asked my brothers not to tell my parents that I went out, but I could smell a rat as soon as I

		opened the door.
straight from the horse's mouth	directly from the original source	I know Jenny is pregnant, because I heard it straight from the horse's mouth .
take the bull by the horns	face a challenge or danger boldly	If you really think you deserve a promotion, you'll have to take the bull by the horns .
until the cows come home	for a very long time	I could eat pizza and ice-cream until the cows come home .

Body Idioms

Idiom	Meaning	Example Sentence
all ears	fully listening	Give me a minute to finish my work and then I'll be all ears to hear about your project.
break a leg	good-luck	Today's the big game, eh? Break a leg!

cold feet	nervous just before a big event	My sister didn't get cold feet until she put her wedding gown on.
cost an arm and a leg	be very expensive	These cakes are delicious, but they cost an arm and a leg .
cry your heart out	cry very hard	I cried my heart out when my best friend moved away.
face the music	meet, stand up to unpleasant consequences, for example criticism or punishment	I stayed out all night. When I eventually got home I had to face the music from my wife.
(my) flesh and blood	relative	I have to hire Mia. She's my own flesh and blood .
get something off one's chest	tell someone your problems	Thanks for listening to me complain about my boss. I just needed to get this off my chest .
give a hand, lend a hand	help (someone) do something	I can give you a hand when you move if you like.
have one's head in the clouds	be unaware or unrealistic about something	Amy has her head in the clouds if she thinks she's going to pass her exams without studying.

head over heels	deeply in love	My brother is head over heels for his new girlfriend.
head start	an earlier start	The kids gave Anthony a head start in the bicycle race because he was the youngest.
in over one's head	taking on a task that you can't handle	I was in over my head when I agreed to babysit the triplets and the dogs.
keep an eye on	take care of, watch in order to protect	I'll keep an eye on the dinner while you're on the phone.
keep one's chin up	try to be cheerful	Keep your chin up. I'm sure you'll make some friends soon.
learn by heart, know by heart	memorize	I learned my multiplication tables by heart in the fourth grade.
let one's hair down	relax, have fun	Go to the cottage and let your hair down this weekend.
(my) lips are sealed	promise to keep a secret	Don't worry, I won't tell your mother how much you spent. My lips are sealed.

makes my blood boil	makes me very angry	It makes my blood boil when people don't tie up their dogs.
neck of the woods	nearby location or region	I heard that they might be opening a post office in our neck of the woods soon.
(an) old hand	an experienced person	My uncle's an old hand at car repair. He'll know what the problem is.
over my dead body	not unless I'm dead and can't stop you	My daughter wants a tatoo. I told her she'd get one over my dead body .
pat on the back	recognition or a thank-you	The party organizers deserve a pat on the back for a job well done.
play something by ear	do something without a plan	We don't know if the weather will be good enough for camping. We'll have to play it by ear .
pull one's leg	joke or tease someone	I was just pulling your leg . I'm not really a police officer.
rule of thumb	basic rule (not always followed)	The rule of thumb is that the students wear black pants and white shirts.

see eye to eye	agree	The couple don't see eye to eye on how to train their pets.
(by the) skin of one's teeth	just barely	I passed my exam by the skin of my teeth .
stick your neck out	help someone a lot, with possible bad consequences for oneself	I stuck my neck out for Bessie when she was thrown out of her house.
sweet tooth	a love of sugar or sweet things	I need three spoonfuls of sugar in my tea. I have a sweet tooth .
thick in the head	not very intelligent	I'm a bit thick in the head when it comes to reading a map.
wash one's hands of something	stop dealing with an issue or problem	I'm washing my hands of Mary's addiction. She is going to have to get some professional help.

Color Idioms

Idiom	Meaning	Example Sentence
beet red	dark red (usually to describe face)	My sister's face turned beet red when I caught her singing in front of a mirror.
black and blue	bruised and beaten	We found the poor guy black and blue near the train tracks.
black and white	straight forward, very clear	The rules we gave the kids were black and white . No answering the phone or the door.
black out	faint	I always black out at the sight of blood.
black sheep	the odd or bad member of the group	My oldest brother was the black sheep in our family. He dropped out of school at fifteen.
born with a silver spoon in one's mouth	born into a rich family	Keiko hasn't worked a day in her life. She was born with a silver spoon in her mouth .
catch red handed	catch someone in the act of doing something wrong or illegal	The kids were caught red handed stealing chocolate bars.
golden opportunity	the perfect chance	The models' conference was a golden opportunity for me to

		sell my beauty products.
grass is always greener on the other side	you always want what you don't have	I always wanted to go to university, but now I wish I had time to get a job. Grass is always greener on the other side.
grey area, gray area	something without a clear rule or answer	Writing personal email in the office is a grey area that needs to be discussed at the next meeting.
the green light	permission	The builders were given the green light to begin the tower.
green with envy	very jealous	I am green with envy over Julio's new wardrobe.
(have a) green thumb	be skillful in the garden	You can tell by her flower garden that Sheila has a green thumb .
have the blues	be sad or depressed	I always have the blues during the winter time.
in the dark	unaware	Antoine left his wife in the dark about their honeymoon destination until they got to the airport.
in the red	in debt	When we were in the red we almost had to sell the house.
once in a blue	very rarely	We only go out for dinner once in

moon		a blue moon.
out of the blue	unexpectedly	I got a phone call from a long lost cousin out of the blue last week.
red tape	official or bureaucratic tasks	There is still some red tape to deal with in terms of the inheritance.
red eye	an airplane flight that takes off after midnight	I caught the red eye so that I would see the sunrise over the mountains.
roll out the red carpet	treat someone like royalty	When relatives come to town my grandmother rolls out the red carpet.
rose coloured glasses	unrealistic view	Paula imagines Hollywood with rose coloured glasses.
see red	be very angry	I saw red when that guy grabbed my sister's purse.
tickled pink	very pleased and appreciative	My mom was tickled pink when my father brought roses home for her.
true colours	real self	Suzanne doesn't show her true colours when we have guests over.
white lie	an innocent lie to	We told Grandma that her cake

	protect another person's feelings	was delicious, which was actually a white lie .
with flying colours	with distinction	I passed my road test with flying colours .

Clothing Idioms

Idiom	Meaning	Example Sentence
at the drop of a hat	without needing any advance notice	My Grandma will babysit for anyone at the drop of a hat .
(have a) bee in one's bonnet	something that is annoying someone	Milan has had a bee in his bonnet all day, but he won't tell me what's wrong.
below the belt	beyond what is fair or socially acceptable	His comment about Manfred's handicap was below the belt .
bursting at the seams	not fitting anymore	I ate too much. I'm bursting at the seams in these jeans.
caught with one's pants down	unprepared	My students caught me with my pants down on Monday. I forgot about the field trip.
(have a) card up one's sleeve	have a secret or reserve plan	I think Josh has a card up his sleeve cause he wants me to wear a dress to the fast-food restaurant.

buckle down	work extra hard	It's almost exam time, so I need to buckle down this weekend.
burn a hole in one's pocket	money that one is tempted to spend	Let's go to the mall after school. There's a hundred dollar bill burning a hole in my pocket .
dress to kill, dress to the nines	dress in nice or sexy clothes	My cousin was dressed to kill on her birthday.
fit like a glove	fit perfectly (tight to one's body)	Anita's prom dress fits me like a glove .
fine-tooth comb	in great detail, extremely carefully	The police looked for fingerprints with a fine-tooth comb .
fly by the seat of one's pants	do by instinct, not by plan	I had never taught art to kids before. I had to fly by the seat of my pants .
handle with kid gloves	treat delicately	Please handle my grandmother's tea set with kid gloves .
hand-me-down	used clothing	We buy hand-me-down skates because the kids' feet grow so quickly.
hat trick	three goals scored by one person	The fans cheered when the hockey player got a hat trick .
in one's	in the nude	The swimmers in the lake were in

birthday suit		their birthday suits.
keep one's shirt on	try to stay calm	I know you're in a hurry, but please keep your shirt on.
keep something zipped	keep something a secret	We know we're having a boy, but we're keeping it zipped from the grandparents.
off the cuff	said without planning	I didn't have a speech prepared. Everything I said was off the cuff.
pull up one's socks	try harder	Marco will have to pull up his socks if he wants to make the football team.
put a sock in it	stop talking	Put a sock in it! I'm trying to tell a story.
put one's thinking cap on	think hard in order to solve a problem	I can't remember where the Christmas decorations are. I'll have to put my thinking cap on.
put oneself in someone else's shoes	imagine what it would be like to be in someone else's situation	Put yourself in Amber's shoes. She doesn't even have a car to drive.
ride one's coattails	let someone else do all of the work	It was a group project, but everyone rode Andrew's coattails.

roll up one's sleeves	get down to hard work	The celebrities rolled up their sleeves and washed cars for charity.
take one's hat off to someone	recognize or honour someone for something	I take my hat off to Jim . The doctors said he'd never walk, and he just ran a marathon.
wear one's heart on one's sleeve	display emotions openly	My Dad's not afraid to cry. He always wears his heart on his sleeve .
wear the trousers	be in charge, make the rules	By the looks of things, the kids wear the trousers in this household.

Food Idioms

Idiom	Meaning	Example Sentence
apple of one's eye	a person that is adored by someone	Baby Jessica is the apple of her father's eye .
(have a) bun in the oven	be pregnant	I don't think Jan will come to the bar because she has a bun in the oven .
bad egg	a person who is often in trouble	I don't want my little brother hanging around with the bad eggs on the street.

big cheese	very important person (VIP)	I thought I was just going to interview the secretary, but they let me talk to the big cheese himself.
bread and butter	necessities, the main thing	Just explain the bread and butter of your report. You don't have to go into details.
bring home the bacon	earn the income	My husband has had to bring home the bacon ever since I broke my leg.
butter someone up	be extra nice to someone (usually for selfish reasons)	We'll have to butter Angie up before we tell her the news about the broken vase.
(have one's) cake and eat it too	want more than your fair share or need	Rick wants to have his cake and eat it too . He wants to be single but he doesn't want me to date anyone else.
carrot top	person with red or orange hair	Simon is the first carrot top I've ever gone out with.
cheesy	silly	I love reading cheesy romance novels because I don't have to think.
cool as a cucumber	very relaxed	I thought I was afraid of flying, but I was cool as a cucumber all the way to England.

cream of the crop	the best	We hired the cream of the crop to entertain us at the Christmas party.
(don't) cry over spilled milk	get upset over something that has happened and cannot be changed	The mirror is broken and we can't fix it. There's no need to cry over spilled milk .
cup of joe	cup of coffee	Let's stop for a cup of joe before we head to work.
(not my) cup of tea	something you enjoy (usually used negatively)	Opera isn't exactly my cup of tea .
egg someone on	urge someone to do something	The gang tried to egg us on but we didn't want to fight.
freeze one's buns off	be very cold	I froze my buns off at the ice rink.
full of beans	have a lot of (silly) energy	The kids were full of beans after the circus.
gravy train	extremely good pay for minimal work	The unionized grocers have been enjoying the gravy train for twenty years.
(have something) handed to	receive without working for something	The professor's daughter had her college diploma handed to her on a silver platter .

someone on a silver platter		
hard nut to crack	difficult to understand (often a person)	Angelo is a hard nut to crack when something is bothering him like this.
hot potato	a controversial or difficult subject	Choosing a location for our new store is a hot potato right now.
in a nutshell	simply	In a nutshell , I'm having a bad day.
nuts about something, someone	like a lot	I'm nuts about classical music these days.
out to lunch	crazy or mad	Harry has been out to lunch ever since he lost his job.
one smart cookie	a very intelligent person	Your daughter is one smart cookie . She reads much higher than her grade level.
peach fuzz	small amount of hair growth	Except for a bit of peach fuzz , the baby came out bald.
piece of cake	very easy	The exam was a piece of cake .
put all of ones eggs in one basket	rely on one single thing	Even though I'm majoring in Art, I'm taking a maths course because my Dad says I shouldn't put all of my eggs in one basket .

souped up	made more powerful or stylish	The car was souped up with shiny rims and a loud stereo.
sell like hot cakes	bought by many people	The new Harry Potter books sold like hot cakes .
spice things up	make something more exciting	I wanted to spice things up in the office, so I bought some red and gold paint.
spill the beans	reveal the truth	On Monday, I'm going to spill the beans about my travel plans.
take something with a pinch (grain) of salt	don't consider something 100% accurate	Take Mandy's advice with a pinch of salt . She doesn't always do her research.
use your noodle	use your brain	You're going to have to really use your noodle on this crossword puzzle. It's an extra difficult one.

Geography and Weather Idioms

Idiom	Meaning	Example Sentence
(on) cloud nine	extremely happy	Andrea was on cloud nine when she bought her new car.
dig deep	look hard for information	I had to dig deep to find my old report cards.

dirt cheap	very inexpensive	The clothes at the thrift shop are dirt cheap .
down to earth	natural or real (personality)	Lucile is really down to earth for a woman with so much money.
fair-weather friend	a person who is only a friend in good times	I can't talk to Nancy about my boyfriend problems. She's only a fair-weather friend .
a field day	a very enjoyable time	The kids had a field day at the water slide park.
go downhill	get progressively worse	My grades started going downhill when I got a part-time job.
go with the flow	continue in the same way as others	Nobody trained me at work. I just went with the flow .
hit the hay	go to sleep	I'm exhausted. I think I'll hit the hay early tonight.
hit the road	leave	It's getting late. We had better hit the road .
keep one's head above water	have just enough money to live	It's hard to keep my head above water with all of these medical bills.
know which	know how things will	Who knows which way the

way the wind blows	turn out	wind will blow? I just hope Jesse gets one of the jobs he's applied for.
make a mountain out of a molehill	make a small problem seem big	The car only got a tiny dent. You're making a mountain out of a molehill .
out of the woods	clear of danger	The doctor said my heart is doing better, but I'm not out of the woods yet .
over the hill	past middle age	I knew I was over the hill when I started needing glasses to read.
rain on someone else's parade	ruin somebody else's happiness	Whenever I had a dance recital, my older brother always rained on my parade .
stick-in-the-mud	a loner or person who won't join in	They didn't bother inviting Charles to the party because he's always a stick-in-the-mud .
(as) quick as lightning	very fast	Wow! Your shower was as quick as lightning .
the tip of the iceberg	a small part of a large problem	The lost tickets were just the tip of the iceberg .
take a	accept at a later date	I'd love to go out for dinner, but

raincheck		can I take a raincheck ?
under the weather	ill	I was feeling under the weather so I went back to bed.
up the creek	in trouble	If my Dad finds out I had a party I'll be up the creek .
win by a landslide	win by a lot of points	The skier in the green coat won by a landslide .
(get) wind of something	overhear something about someone or something (often gossip)	My Dad has a new girlfriend. I got wind of it over dinner tonight.

Sports Idioms

Idiom <i>sport of origin</i>	Meaning	Example Sentence
across the board <i>cards</i>	equal for everyone	Ten percent raises were given across the board .
at this stage in the game <i>any sport</i>	at this time	Nobody knows who is going to win the election at this stage in the game .
the ball is in your court	it's your decision or responsibility to do	"Do you think I should accept the job offer?"

<i>tennis</i>	something now	"Don't ask me. The ball is in your court now".
bark up the wrong tree <i>hunting</i>	you've got the wrong person or idea	I think you're barking up the wrong tree by blaming Matt for the missing money.
blind-sided <i>any sport</i>	to not see something coming	George blind-sided Eric with his fist at the bar.
blow the competition away <i>any sport</i>	win easily	If you wear that dress to the beauty pageant you are going to blow the competition away .
call the shots <i>billiards</i>	make the decisions	While our boss is on vacation, Bob will call the shots .
chip in <i>gambling</i>	help by donating money or time	The staff members chipped in 5 dollars each to buy Jody a birthday gift.
down to the wire <i>horse racing</i>	right at the end	It's coming down to the wire to get these done on time.
front runner <i>track</i>	one of the people who is expected to win	Angela is a front runner for the new supervisor position.
get a head start	start before all others	They gave the walkers a head

<i>horse racing</i>		start in the run for cancer.
get into the full swing <i>tennis</i>	be comfortable doing something after some time	It will probably take a month of working at my new job before I get into the full swing of things.
get off the hook <i>fishing</i>	escape, have responsibility removed	The child got off the hook for stealing because the security camera was broken.
give something or someone a fair shake <i>gambling</i>	try for a while before giving up	You should give Nadine a fair shake before you decide she isn't good enough for the job.
get a second wind <i>sailing</i>	have a burst of energy after tiring	I was exhausted after 3 kilometres of running, but I got a second wind after I passed the beach.
give it your best shot <i>hunting</i>	try your hardest	Give it your best shot and you may just make it to the finals.
give one a run for one's money <i>horseracing</i>	try one's hardest to defeat another person	I know the other team is expected to win, but let's give them a run for their money tonight.
go overboard <i>sailing</i>	do or say more than you need to	You can't believe everything Janice says about Rick. She tends

		to go overboard when she's complaining about him.
go to bat for someone <i>baseball</i>	defend someone	Andy is asking for a salary increase, and I'm going to go to bat for him if the boss says no.
have the upper hand <i>cards</i>	have a better chance of winning or succeeding	The Blues have the upper hand in the tournament, because none of their players is injured.
hit below the belt <i>martial arts</i>	do or say something that is very unfair or cruel	Amanda was hitting below the belt when she called Adrian an unfit father.
hit a snag <i>boating</i>	come up against a problem	The renovations were going along great until we hit a snag with the carpet installation.
hold all the aces <i>cards</i>	expected to win or succeed	The children hold all the aces when it comes to the father-son baseball tournament.
the home stretch <i>baseball</i>	almost the end	I think Alice's pregnancy is in the home stretch .
hot shot (big shot) <i>hunting</i>	a person who thinks they are the best	Even though Luke only placed 20th in the ski race, he thinks he's a hot shot .

jump the gun <i>track</i>	start too early	I guess I jumped the gun by buying Pam and Steve a wedding gift. They called off the engagement.
keep one's head above water <i>swimming</i>	try not to fall behind in work or other duties	We are so busy during the tourist season I can barely keep my head above water .
learn the ropes <i>sailing</i>	understand new things	The first week on the job you will just be learning the ropes .
let her rip <i>boating</i>	go ahead now	Okay, here are the keys to your new car. Let her rip!
level playing field <i>any field sport</i>	everyone has an equal chance	The spelling bee is a level playing field because all of the kids are in grade nine.
long shot <i>hunting</i>	a very difficult thing to accomplish	Jim thinks we can afford the house, but I think it's a long shot .
make the cut <i>any sport</i>	be chosen to be part of a team or group	I didn't get a second interview, so I'm pretty sure I won't make the cut .
neck and neck <i>horse racing</i>	to be in a close tie with someone	George and Stan are neck and neck in the hockey pool. Either of them could win the money.
no sweat	no problem	I told Lily it was no sweat for us

<i>any sport</i>		to babysit next weekend.
not playing with a full deck of cards <i>cards</i>	not having full brain capacity	I think Jerry was still drunk at work on Sunday because he wasn't playing with a full deck of cards .
not up to par <i>golf</i>	not good enough for a job or position	I'm afraid your resume isn't up to par for the engineering position.
to be off base <i>baseball</i>	not making a fair or true remark	You were way off base when you said Bill needed to lose weight.
on target <i>darts</i>	doing the right thing to succeed	We are on target to meet our budget this month.
on the ball <i>baseball</i>	ready and able	The new receptionist is really on the ball when it comes to answering the phone.
out in left field <i>baseball</i>	nowhere near being true, nowhere near doing something correctly	All of the students laughed when Joe gave an answer that was out in left field .
out of someone's league <i>team sport</i>	not as good as someone	I'd like to date Maria, but I'm afraid I'm out of her league .

par for the course <i>golf</i>	an expected circumstance	Waiting in line is par for the course at Christmas time.
plenty of other fish in the sea <i>fishing</i>	there are many other men and women to date	I know you still love Jack, but remember there are plenty of other fish in the sea .
race against time <i>track</i>	there is almost no time left to accomplish something	It's a race against time to find a kidney donor for my cousin.
settle a score with someone <i>any sport</i>	get even with a person after a previous battle	My brother wants to settle the score with that guy who stole my wallet.
shot in the dark <i>hunting</i>	a guess	I was lucky to win the quiz. All my answers were shots in the dark .
skate on thin ice <i>skating</i>	do something risky, take a chance	You're skating on thin ice by not sending in your college application before now.
start the ball rolling <i>ball sports</i>	begin something	Please can everyone be seated so we can start the ball rolling .
step up to the plate <i>baseball</i>	do the honourable thing, take responsibility	It's time you stepped up to the plate and apologized for your mistake.

take a rain check <i>baseball</i>	accept at a later time	Sorry, I can't go to the movies today, but I'd love to take a rain check .
take sides <i>any sport</i>	choose a person or group to support	I hate to take sides , but I think Jerry is right about the paint colour.
take the bull by the horns <i>bull fighting</i>	accept the challenge and try your hardest	Even though this new job will mean relocating, I think you should take the bull by the horns for once.
take the wind out of one's sails <i>sailing</i>	make someone feel deflated	I think I took the wind out of Angela's sails when I told her she was a terrible singer.
throw in the towel <i>boxing</i>	give up	If they don't accept our offer this time we are going to throw in the towel and look at houses elsewhere.
time out <i>any sport</i>	break	Let's take some time out and grab a coffee.
three strikes and you're out <i>baseball</i>	you only get three chances	The school's no smoking policy is three strikes and you're out .
two strikes	you only have one	Nancy is going to be fired in no

against <i>baseball</i>	chance remaining	time. She already has two strikes against her for coming in late.
under the table <i>gambling</i>	illegally	I don't have a work visa, so they have to pay me under the table.
win hands down <i>gambling</i>	easy victory	The other team was missing half of its players. We won hands down.