

# Glossary of Commonly Used Idioms

Idiom	Meaning
<b>a black sheep</b>	: someone who is regarded as a disgrace to the family or group
<b>a bolt out of the blue</b>	: something that happens unexpectedly
<b>a bull in a china shop</b>	: a very clumsy person
<b>a chip off the old block</b>	: a son who is like his father
<b>a close shave</b>	: a narrow escape
<b>a cock and bull story</b>	: a silly and incredible story
<b>a greenhorn</b>	: someone new and inexperienced
<b>a pain in the neck</b>	: somebody who is annoying or tiresome
<b>a rolling stone</b>	: a person who moves from one job to another
<b>a stone's throw</b>	: a very short distance
<b>a tall story</b>	: a story that is hard to believe
<b>a wet blanket</b>	: someone who tries to spoil other people's fun
<b>a white lie</b>	: a lie one tells in order to avoid hurting someone
<b>add fuel to fire</b>	: make a bad situation even worse
<b>all and sundry</b>	: everyone, not just a selected few
<b>an old hand</b>	: someone with a lot of experience
<b>at one's fingertips</b>	: to know thoroughly
<b>at the eleventh hour</b>	: at the last moment
<b>blow one's own trumpet</b>	: boast about oneself
<b>break the ice</b>	: to make people who have not met before feel more relaxed so that they are willing to talk to each other
<b>building castles in the air</b>	: daydreaming
<b>burning the midnight oil</b>	: to work or study till late at night
<b>bury the hatchet</b>	: agree to stop quarrelling and become friends again
<b>by hook or by crook</b>	: by fair means or by foul means
<b>by leaps and bounds</b>	: very much, very quickly
<b>by trial and error</b>	: to test different methods of doing something in order to find the best method
<b>child's play</b>	: a very easy job or task
<b>cry wolf</b>	: to appeal for help unnecessarily
<b>donkey's years</b>	: a very long time
<b>eat one's words</b>	: to admit what one said was wrong

<b>Idiom</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
<b>face the music</b>	: to accept the punishment
<b>face to face</b>	: very close and in front of
<b>follow someone's footsteps</b>	: to do the same job as someone else who did it before you
<b>follow suit</b>	: to act in the same way as someone did previously
<b>forty winks</b>	: a very short sleep
<b>give someone the cold shoulder</b>	: to make someone feel unwelcome
<b>give the green light</b>	: to give (someone) the permission to do something
<b>hard of hearing</b>	: almost deaf
<b>has a sweet tooth</b>	: likes to eat sweet things
<b>in black and white</b>	: write it down on paper
<b>in cold blood</b>	: deliberately and calmly
<b>in the nick of time</b>	: only just in time
<b>in the same boat</b>	: in the same difficult situation
<b>in the red</b>	: owe more money than one has
<b>jack-of-all-trades</b>	: someone who can do many things, but is not skilled in any one of them
<b>keep one's fingers crossed</b>	: to hope that something will be successful
<b>keep the ball rolling</b>	: to keep things going
<b>kill two birds with one stone</b>	: to achieve two aims from one action
<b>like a bear with a sore head</b>	: to be very bad-tempered
<b>live from hand to mouth</b>	: just able to survive with no savings
<b>make a beeline for</b>	: to go quickly and directly towards someone or something
<b>make a clean breast of</b>	: to confess in full
<b>mind one's P's and Q's</b>	: to be careful how one behaves
<b>(not) make head or tail of (something)</b>	: (not) to make sense of (something)
<b>no laughing matter</b>	: a serious matter
<b>once in a blue moon</b>	: very rarely
<b>out of the question</b>	: not possible or allowed
<b>pour cold water on (someone)</b>	: to make someone feel discouraged
<b>pull one's socks up</b>	: to make an effort to improve one's work
<b>put on airs</b>	: to behave in a way that makes one seem more important than other people
<b>put one's foot down</b>	: to be firm
<b>see eye to eye</b>	: to have the same point of view
<b>see red</b>	: to lose one's temper

<b>Idiom</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
<b>show one's true colours</b>	: to reveal one's real character
<b>smell a rat</b>	: to suspect that something is wrong
<b>the lion's share</b>	: the largest part
<b>to be chicken-hearted</b>	: to be weak and cowardly
<b>to be on cloud nine</b>	: to be extremely happy
<b>to be up to the mark</b>	: to be up to a certain standard
<b>to bear in mind</b>	: to remember
<b>to carry weight</b>	: to be important
<b>to cry over spilt milk</b>	: to be upset over something about which nothing can be done
<b>to drop someone a line</b>	: to write a letter to someone
<b>to feel run-down</b>	: to feel unwell
<b>to fly into a rage</b>	: to become angry suddenly
<b>to foot the bill</b>	: to pay the bill
<b>to get into hot water</b>	: to get into serious trouble
<b>to have a big mouth</b>	: not being able to keep secrets
<b>to have green fingers</b>	: to be good at making plants grow
<b>to hit the nail on the head</b>	: to come to the right conclusion
<b>to hold one's tongue</b>	: to keep quiet
<b>to keep a person at arm's length</b>	: to avoid being too familiar with a person
<b>to keep an eye on</b>	: to watch carefully
<b>to keep in touch</b>	: to keep in contact
<b>to learn by heart</b>	: to memorise
<b>to leave no stone unturned</b>	: to try one's hardest
<b>to lend a ear</b>	: to listen to someone
<b>to lend a hand</b>	: to help
<b>to look daggers at</b>	: to look angrily at someone
<b>to lose heart</b>	: to feel discouraged
<b>to make a mountain out of a molehill</b>	: to exaggerate
<b>to make ends meet</b>	: to spend within one's income
<b>to mind one's own business</b>	: to concern oneself with one's own affairs
<b>to pass the hat round</b>	: to collect donations
<b>to pass with flying colours</b>	: to do very well in a test
<b>to pick and choose</b>	: to choose very carefully
<b>to pull a face</b>	: to change one's expression

<b>Idiom</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
<b>to rain cats and dogs</b>	: to rain very heavily
<b>to receive with open arms</b>	: to welcome cordially
<b>to save for a rainy day</b>	: to save for a time when money is needed
<b>to shed crocodile tears</b>	: to shed false tears
<b>to show the white flag</b>	: to surrender
<b>to strike while the iron is hot</b>	: to seize the opportunity when it comes
<b>to take to one's heels</b>	: to run away at great speed
<b>to talk through one's hat</b>	: to talk nonsense
<b>to turn a blind eye to</b>	: to pretend not to see (something)
<b>to turn a deaf ear to</b>	: to deliberately ignore
<b>to turn over a new leaf</b>	: to change one's conduct for the better
<b>to turn tail</b>	: to run away
<b>to turn turtle</b>	: to turn upside down