

# Idioms

Idioms	Meanings
<b>A</b> a baptism of fire	a difficult or violent introduction to a way of life, profession or new activity
a big fish in the pond	somebody who is important but only in a small community
a blind date	a social meeting arranged between two people of opposite sexes who have never met before
a bone of contention	a cause/subject of dispute
a burning question	an important question that needs to be answered; subject that is greatly discussed
a case in point	somebody/something one mentions as a particular example to illustrate a general statement
a chequered career/history/past	a lifetime or long record of ups and downs in fortune, or variety of experiences
a clean bill of health	a statement that somebody is in a satisfactory, healthy or fit condition
a clean slate	a record of work or conduct that contains nothing to discredit a person
a conspiracy of silence	an agreement among people with certain information not to let it be publicly known
a far cry (from)	very different from something
a free hand	permission to make one's own arrangements in an undertaking
a force to be reckoned with	somebody/something that must be treated seriously
a foregone conclusion	a result, consequence or end that is completely predictable
a hot potato	a matter that is considered too dangerous to tackle or become involved with
a man of letters	a writer of essays, poetry, novels, etc.
a poison pen letter	an anonymous letter that accuses, maligns or slanders (somebody)
a ray of hope	a possibility of something good happening that will improve an unsatisfactory state of affairs
a sitting duck	something that is easy to attack, criticise or exploit
a slap in the face	a harsh rejection or refusal
a slip of the tongue	something that one did not mean to say
a snake in the grass	somebody who appears friendly but is harmful and dangerous

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<p><b>a soft spot for (somebody)</b>  <b>a square peg in a round hole</b>  <b>a stepping stone</b>  <b>afraid of one's shadow</b>  <b>agree to differ</b>  <b>all in all</b>  <b>an open verdict</b>  <b>as and when</b>  <b>at the crossroads</b>  <b>at the eleventh hour</b></p>	<p>a special fondness for (somebody)  somebody whose abilities are not suited to his position or job  a way of reaching a higher professional, social or educational level  extremely timid and nervous  allow each other to keep different opinions about something  taking everything into consideration  a decision of a jury that the cause of someone's death is not known  whenever; at such times as  at a point where a decision has to be made  almost, but not quite too late to do something or for something to be avoided</p>
<p><b>B</b> <b>be (all) in the mind</b>  <b>be cruel to be kind</b>  <b>beat the drum</b>  <b>beg to differ</b>  <b>beyond the pale</b>  <b>bide one's time</b>  <b>bite off more than one can chew</b>  <b>bite the bullet</b>  <b>bite the dust</b>  <b>bite the hand that feeds you</b>  <b>blood and thunder</b>  <b>blow hot and cold</b>  <b>boil down to</b>  <b>bow and scrape</b>  <b>break even</b>  <b>bring (something) to a head</b>  <b>bring (somebody) to his knees</b>  <b>bring (something) to the boil</b></p>	<p>be imaginary, not true or real  use harsh or painful methods to benefit somebody  try to attract public attention to something  claim the right to express an opposite or different opinion  socially unacceptable or beyond the limit of proper behaviour  wait for a good opportunity or suitable occasion to do something  try to agree to do more than one is able to  realise that a person cannot avoid an ordeal or unpleasant truth and accept it with resignation  be killed, defeated, ruined or finished  show ingratitude, harm or abuse to somebody who has helped you  sensational and melodramatic incidents in stories, plays or films  alternate between approving of or wanting something and not doing so  can be summarised as  behave in an insincere, servile way that tries to gain favour  make neither profit nor loss  bring (a troubled or dangerous situation) to a critical or culminating stage  force (somebody) to submit or to humble himself  cause (something) to reach a climax or a high degree of intensity or excitement</p>

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	<b>burn one's boats or bridges</b> <b>burn one's fingers</b> <b>burn the candle at both ends</b> <b>by all means</b> <b>by no means</b> <b>by the skin of one's teeth</b>	cut off one's means of escape or retreat; commit oneself so firmly to a course of action that one cannot reverse it suffer harm or financial loss through being too rash, trusting or optimistic exhaust one's energy by doing too much work of course; certainly of course not; certainly not narrowly; by a small margin
<b>C</b>	<b>clear the air</b> <b>clutch at straws</b> <b>cold comfort</b> <b>come hell or high water</b> <b>come into play</b> <b>come out of one's shell</b> <b>come to a head</b> <b>come to no good</b> <b>come to terms with</b>  <b>cross the Rubicon</b> <b>curry favour with</b>  <b>cut corners</b> <b>cut no ice</b>	lessen or get rid of fears, worries, doubts or suspicions by talking or arguing about them frankly cling to any hope, however slight no or very little help, consolation or sympathy whatever the opposition or difficulties may be begin to operate or have an effect or influence lose or overcome one's shyness reach a critical or culminating stage meet with (deserved) failure or disgrace accept a situation or condition of life and adapt oneself to it as well as one can take an important and irrevocable step try to win somebody's approval by flattery or giving presents so that one may gain some advantage for oneself do something in the quickest, easiest, cheapest way not impress or influence a particular person or group
<b>D</b>	<b>down memory lane</b>	thinking about the past in a fond way
<b>E</b>	<b>eat one's words</b>  <b>elbow room</b>	be forced to withdraw what one has previously said was true  freedom to act or function, especially within certain limits
<b>F</b>	<b>fight a losing battle</b> <b>fit the bill</b> <b>food for thought</b>  <b>from rags to riches</b> <b>from the cradle to the grave</b>	struggle without success to achieve or prevent something be suitable something that emulates thought or needs to be carefully considered from great poverty to wealth from birth to death; throughout one's whole life
<b>G</b>	<b>gain the upper hand</b> <b>get down to business</b> <b>get out of hand</b> <b>give somebody a piece of one's mind</b>	gain a position of mastery, power or control start discussing (something) seriously becomes uncontrollable bluntly and angrily criticise somebody or his behaviour

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	<b>go down in history</b> <b>go hand in hand</b> <b>go through the mill</b> <b>grease somebody's palm</b>	be remembered for a long time to come be closely connected undergo severe discipline, hard training, punishment, etc. give somebody money to get information from him or to influence his opinion
<b>H</b>	<b>have an axe to grind</b> <b>have one's cake and eat it</b> <b>hold sway</b>	have an interest or purpose of one's own, usually a selfish one enjoy two benefits, one of which normally excludes the other be the ruling force
<b>I</b>	<b>in a class by itself</b> <b>in the lap of luxury</b> <b>in the raw</b>	without the equal among things of the same kind in very comfortable surroundings unrefined; not made to appear more pleasant, acceptable, etc. than it really is
<b>J</b>	<b>jump out of one's skin</b>	be very surprised
<b>K</b>	<b>keep one's head</b> <b>keep somebody posted</b> <b>keep up appearances</b> <b>kick up a fuss</b>	remain calm in a difficult situation continue to provide somebody with the latest news on something continue to present an unchanged appearance in public create a great noise and trouble
<b>L</b>	<b>leave (somebody) out in the cold</b> <b>let the grass grow under one's feet</b> <b>lick one's wounds</b> <b>light at the end of the tunnel</b> <b>look down one's nose</b>	be excluded from or neglected or ignored by a community, group or activity be inactive or waste time when there are things that need to be done try to comfort oneself after a defeat, injury or loss success, happiness, etc. after a long period of difficulty or hardship show that one feels superior
<b>M</b>	<b>make a clean breast of (something)</b> <b>make somebody's hair stand on end</b> <b>meet one's Waterloo</b>	confess in full to (something) cause somebody to feel extreme fear or horror suffer defeat or failure
<b>N</b>	<b>no laughing matter</b> <b>not lose sleep over (something)</b>	a subject which is serious and should not be treated lightly or with amusement not be very anxious about (something)
<b>O</b>	<b>on one's last legs</b> <b>once and for all</b> <b>one's daily bread</b> <b>one's heart in one's mouth</b> <b>out of character</b>	not likely to live, continue to function, etc. much longer at this one time and from this time forward one's means of (living) generally sudden fear, worry, or other emotion uncharacteristic of (somebody)

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<b>P</b>	<p><b>paint in glowing colours</b></p> <p><b>parrot fashion</b></p> <p><b>pave the way</b></p> <p><b>pay through the nose</b></p> <p><b>play for time</b></p> <p><b>play to the gallery</b></p> <p><b>preach to the converted</b></p> <p><b>pull the wool over somebody's eyes</b></p> <p><b>put out feelers</b></p> <p><b>put the clock back</b></p>	<p>describe in a flattering way</p> <p>without understanding the meaning</p> <p>prepare for or make the arrival easier</p> <p>have to pay too high a price for (something)</p> <p>try to delay a defeat, decision, etc.</p> <p>behave ostentiously or disrespectfully in order to gain other people's attention</p> <p>talk to people who already hold the views and ideas being communicated</p> <p>hide one's real actions or intentions from somebody</p> <p>discover first thoughts and reactions to a plan</p> <p>return to the past, especially to traditional values</p>
<b>R</b>	<p><b>rest on one's laurels</b></p> <p><b>rise roughshod over</b></p> <p><b>rub shoulders with</b></p>	<p>pause to enjoy one's achievements</p> <p>treat in a harsh, unsympathetic way</p> <p>live, work or associate with closely</p>
<b>S</b>	<p><b>see eye to eye</b></p> <p><b>shoot one's mouth off</b></p> <p><b>spread like wildfire</b></p> <p><b>swallow one's pride</b></p>	<p>have the same viewpoint</p> <p>speak in a loud, indiscreet and boastful way</p> <p>travel with great speed</p> <p>humble oneself, as in admitting one's mistake or one's guilt</p>
<b>T</b>	<p><b>to be-all and end-all (of)</b></p> <p><b>the bottom line</b></p> <p><b>the brain drain</b></p> <p><b>the calm before the storm</b></p> <p><b>the concrete jungle</b></p> <p><b>the corridors of power</b></p> <p><b>the name of the game</b></p> <p><b>the other side of the coin</b></p> <p><b>the scum of the earth</b></p> <p><b>to all intents and purposes</b></p>	<p>the whole extent of; the supreme aim or interest of</p> <p>the important conclusion, judgement or result</p> <p>the considerable loss of a country's qualified professionals to another country</p> <p>a period of deceptive calm before a violent outburst</p> <p>a modern city, thought of as an unfriendly, bewildering or dangerous place</p> <p>the places where important decisions in government are made</p> <p>the real nature of something</p> <p>the contrasting aspect of a matter</p> <p>a group of people thought to be worthless or despicable</p> <p>in almost every way</p>
<b>W</b>	<p><b>weigh one's words</b></p> <p><b>when it comes to the crunch</b></p> <p><b>with one's eyes open</b></p> <p><b>worth one's salt</b></p>	<p>choose carefully the words one speaks or writes</p> <p>when trouble or a difficulty can no longer be avoided</p> <p>fully aware of what one is doing and what the results may be</p> <p>deserving what one earns</p>