**English Idioms:**

**What is an Idiom?**

**Idioms are**[phrases](https://liberalarts.oregonstate.edu/wlf/what-phrase-oregon-state-guide-grammar)**which cannot be understood simply by looking at the meaning of the individual words in the phrase.**

English idioms, proverbs, and expressions are an important part of everyday English. They come up all the time in both written and spoken English. Because idioms don't always make sense literally, you'll need to familiarize yourself with the meaning and usage of each idiom. That may seem like a lot of work, but learning idioms is fun, especially when you compare English idioms to the idioms in your own language.

Learning to use common idioms and expressions will make your English sound more native, so it's a good idea to master some of these common expressions.

**1/Stab someone in the back**

While it still hurts, the idiomatic meaning of this phrase is not nearly as painful as literally being stabbed. What this actually means is to hurt someone who trusted you by betraying them.

\*I can’t believe she would cheat and stab me in the back like this! I really trusted her.

**2/ Twist someone’s arm**

To twist someone’s arm would be rather painful if you took it literally, but it really means they’ve been convinced to do something they wouldn’t have done otherwise.

\*I wasn’t going to go to the party, but my friends twisted my arm and got me to go.

**3/ Ring a bell**

When someone says something that you may have heard before, but don’t remember entirely, you can use this phrase to let them know it’s familiar but you may need a reminder.

\*That name rings a bell, but I can’t quite remember where I know her from.

**4/ Cut to the chase**

When somebody tells you to cut to the chase, it means that you’ve been talking too long and you need to get to the point. Be careful how you use this idiom; it could be rude or disrespectful if used with someone like a boss or teacher.

\*Hi, guys. We don’t have much time here, so I’m going to cut to the chase.

**5/ To go Dutch**

This is used when everyone pays for their own meal at a restaurant. (Note that this may be perceived as offensive to or by Dutch people.)

\*Usually we go Dutch when we eat out, but this time I paid for her food since it was her birthday.

**6/ A piece of cake**

A piece of cake refers to a task or job that’s easy to do, like eating a delicious piece of cake! If you don’t prefer cake, you can also say it’s easy as pie.

\*I expected the English test to be difficult, but it was a piece of cake.

**7/ Cool as a cucumber**

Cucumbers have a refreshing taste and leave you with a cool, calm feeling. If you’re cool as a cucumber, you’re someone who’s very calm and relaxed.

\*My friend is nervous about taking his driving test, but I’m cool as a cucumber.

**8/ In hot water**

When someone is in hot water, they’re in a bad situation or serious trouble.

\*Idris is in hot water after committing tax fraud.

**9/Under the weather**

Feeling ill / Getting a cold

\*My mom was feeling a bit under the weather.

**10/ Cold feet**

To have cold feet means to get nervous.

\*It was her chance to speak and she was getting cold feet.

**11/Apple of my eye**

It is used to refer to someone whom you are very fond of or like.

\*My younger brother is the apple of my eye.

**12/Walk on eggshells**

It means to be very careful with your actions and words.

\*Talking to my mom about my grades made me feel like I was walking on eggshells.

**13/ Break a leg**

We use it instead of saying GOOD LUCK.

\*The teacher asked us to break a leg at the annual day dance.

**14/A blessing in disguise**

Something that you think is bad but turns out to be a blessing.

\*Me catching a cold was a blessing in disguise.

**15/It’s not rocket science**

It means that it is not that difficult to comprehend.

\*Cooking couscous is easy; I will figure it out. After all, it is not rocket science.

**16/ Break the ice**

To make people feel comfortable with those who are unfamiliar to them.

\*The communication trainer conducted an activity to break the ice.

**17/Once in a blue moon**

It means very rarely.

\*We met each other only once in a blue moon.

**18/ Judging a book by its cover**

To judge or form an opinion on someone based on appearances.

\*People are known to always judge a book by its cover.

**19/ It rains cats and dogs**

We use it instead of saying that it is raining heavily.

\*It has been raining cats and dogs since yesterday.

**20/ A pain in the neck**

It refers to a person who is annoying.

\*Imen was a constant pain in the neck.

**21/ Hear it from the horse’s mouth**

To know something from the person involved.

\*We finally heard it from the horse’s mouth.

**22/ Like riding a bicycle**

A skill that you learn and will never forget.

\* Learning a language is like riding a bicycle; you will never forget it.

**23/On top of the world**

A state of extreme happiness.

\*Khadidja seemed to be on top of the world since she heard the news of her son’s promotion.

**24/ Speak of the devil**

A phrase used to refer to a person who appears as soon as they are being mentioned.

\*Speak of the devil! Here he comes.

**25/ Call it a day**

To stop doing something.

\*After the movie, we had planned to go to the beach, but we decided to call it a day as everyone was tired.