

101 English Idioms Explained: Unlock the Meaning Behind Common Phrases

Idioms are colorful and often confusing expressions that add depth and nuance to the English language. They can be tricky to understand for non-native speakers, but they're also a great way to improve your fluency and sound more like a native.



101 English Idioms Explained - Volume 2 by George Sandford

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In this article, we'll explore 101 common English idioms, providing clear explanations, examples, and alternative phrases. By the end, you'll have a better understanding of how idioms are used in everyday conversation.

1. A Piece of Cake

Meaning: Something that is very easy to do.

Example: Studying for the test was a piece of cake.

Alternative phrase: Easy as pie

2. All Ears

Meaning: Eager to listen.

Example: I'm all ears. Tell me everything.

Alternative phrase: Ready to hear

3. At the End of Your Rope

Meaning: Feeling exhausted or frustrated.

Example: I'm at the end of my rope with this project.

Alternative phrase: At wit's end

4. Back to the Drawing Board

Meaning: To start over again.

Example: We need to go back to the drawing board on this project.

Alternative phrase: Start over

5. Beat Around the Bush

Meaning: To avoid talking about something directly.

Example: Stop beating around the bush and tell me what you're thinking.

Alternative phrase: Dance around the issue

6. Bend Over Backwards

Meaning: To make a great effort to do something for someone.

Example: I'll bend over backwards to help you.

Alternative phrase: Go the extra mile

7. Bite Off More Than You Can Chew

Meaning: To take on too much responsibility.

Example: I bit off more than I could chew when I agreed to organize the party.

Alternative phrase: Overreach

8. Black Sheep

Meaning: Someone who is different from the rest of the group.

Example: He was the black sheep of the family.

Alternative phrase: Odd one out

9. Blow Your Top

Meaning: To become very angry.

Example: I blew my top when I saw the mess he had made.

Alternative phrase: Lose your temper

10. Break a Leg

Meaning: To wish someone good luck.

Example: Break a leg on your exam!

Alternative phrase: Good luck

11. Break the Ice

Meaning: To make the first move in a conversation or social situation.

Example: I broke the ice by asking her about her job.

Alternative phrase: Start a conversation

12. Burn the Candle at Both Ends

Meaning: To work or study very hard for a long period of time.

Example: I'm burning the candle at both ends to finish this project.

Alternative phrase: Work yourself to the bone

13. Call It a Day

Meaning: To stop working or doing something for the day.

Example: I'm going to call it a day and head home.

Alternative phrase: End the day

14. Change Your Tune

Meaning: To change your opinion or behavior.

Example: He changed his tune when he realized he was wrong.

Alternative phrase: Backtrack

15. Chew the Fat

Meaning: To have a casual conversation.

Example: We sat down and chewed the fat for hours.

Alternative phrase: Chat

16. Come a Long Way

Meaning: To have made a lot of progress.

Example: You've come a long way since you started this job.

Alternative phrase: Make progress

17. Count Your Chickens Before They Hatch

Meaning: To count on something happening before it actually does.

Example: Don't count your chickens before they hatch.

Alternative phrase: Make assumptions

18. Cut to the Chase

Meaning: To get to the point.

Example: Cut to the chase and tell me what you want.

Alternative phrase: Be direct

19. Down to the Wire

Meaning: To be very close to a deadline.

Example: We're down to the wire on this project.

Alternative phrase: Running out of time

20. Drop in the Bucket

Meaning: A small amount compared to what is needed.

Example: My donation was just a drop in the bucket.

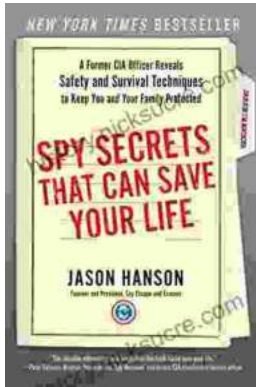


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