

ENGLISH IDIOMS

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.

What are idioms?

Definition

An idiom (also called idiomatic expression) is an expression, word, or phrase that has a figurative meaning conventionally understood by native speakers. This meaning is different from the literal meaning of the idiom's individual elements. In other words, idioms don't mean exactly what the words say. They have, however, hidden meaning.

Examples

"Kick the bucket"

"Spill the beans"

The meaning of these expressions is different from the literal meaning or definition of the words of which they are made. Their meaning are however used figuratively. They mean respectively:

"to die "

"to tell people secret information

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 expressions.

THE MOST COMMON ENGLISH IDIOMS

These English idioms are extremely common in everyday conversation in the United States. You will hear them in movies and TV shows and can use them to make your English sound more like that of a native speaker.

Idiom	Meaning	Usage
A blessing in disguise	a good thing that seemed bad at first	as part of a sentence
A dime a dozen	Something common	as part of a sentence
Cut somebody some slack	Don't be so critical	as part of a sentence

Miss the boat	It's too late	as part of a sentence
No pain, no gain	You have to work for what you want	by itself
On the ball	Doing a good job	as part of a sentence
Under the weather	Sick	as part of a sentence
You can say that again	That's true, I agree	by itself
Your guess is as good as mine	I have no idea	by itself

English idioms and Proverbs

Idiom	Meaning	Usage
A little learning is a dangerous thing	People who don't understand something fully are dangerous	by itself
A snowball effect	Events have momentum and build upon each other	as part of a sentence
A snowball's chance in hell	No chance at all	as part of a sentence
A stitch in time saves nine	Fix the problem now because it will get worse later	by itself
A storm in a teacup	A big fuss about a small problem	as part of a sentence
An apple a day keeps the doctor away	Apples are good for you	by itself
As right as rain	Perfect	as part of a sentence
Come rain or shine	No matter what	as part of a sentence
Haste makes waste	You'll make mistakes if you rush through something	by itself
It is always darkest before the dawn	Things are going to get better	by itself
Leave no stone unturned	Look everywhere	as part of a sentence
Time is money	Work quickly	by itself
Waste not, want not	Don't waste things and you'll always have enough	by itself
We see eye to eye	We agree	by itself
Weather the storm	Go through something difficult	as part of a sentence
Well begun is half done	Getting a good start is important	by itself
When it rains it pours	Everything is going wrong at once	by itself
You can catch more flies with honey than you can with vinegar	You'll get what you want by being nice	by itself

You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make him drink	You can't force someone to make the right decision	by itself
You can't make an omelet without breaking some eggs	There's always a cost to doing something	by itself