

GENERAL ENGLISH

IDIOMS AND PHRASES

Idioms and Phrases అనేవి విశిష్టమైన భావ వ్యక్తీకరణలు. వీటిలోని పదాల అర్థాలను విడివిడిగా తీసుకుంటే అర్థం మొత్తం మారిపోతుంది. 'Blue blood' అంటే రక్తం నీలి రంగులో ఉందని కాదు, 'ఉన్నత లేదా రాచరికపు కుటుంబానికి చెందిన' అని అర్థం. Idioms and Phrases లో పదాల వరుసను మార్చినా లేదా ఈ పదాలకు బదులుగా సమానార్థం ఉన్న వేరే పదాలను వాడినా వాటి ప్రత్యేకతను కోల్పోయి మొత్తం భావమే అర్థరహితంగా తయారవుతుంది. ఉదాహరణకు 'bone of contention' కు బదులుగా 'bone of disagreement' అనో లేదా 'cock and bull story' కి బదులుగా 'bull and cock tale' అనో అనలేం.

Idioms and Phrases can add a level of sophistication to your English and make you sound more like a native speaker. You must try to understand their real implication and learn them by regularly using them in your speech and writing.

Some Popular Idioms and Phrases

- ★ **Achilles heel:** a weakness or vulnerable point
- ★ **Add fuel to fire:** cause a situation or conflict to become more intense
- ★ **Apple of one's eye:** favourite, beloved person or thing
- ★ **At sea:** totally confused or unable to decide what to do
- ★ **At sixes and sevens:** in a state of total confusion or disorder
- ★ **At stake:** at risk
- ★ **At the drop of a hat:** willingness to do something instantly
- ★ **At the eleventh hour:** the last moment or almost too late
- ★ **Beat around/ about the bush:** avoid talking about what is important
- ★ **Bell the cat:** take the danger of a shared enterprise upon oneself
- ★ **Between the devil and deep blue sea:** a type of situation where one must choose between two equally unpleasant situations
- ★ **Bird's-eye view:** a general view from above
- ★ **Black sheep:** a member of a family who is regarded as a disgrace to it
- ★ **Blessing in disguise:** something good and beneficial that did not initially seem that way.
- ★ **Blow one's (own) trumpet/ horn:** talk boastfully about one's achievements.
- ★ **Bolt from the blue:** a sudden and unexpected event
- ★ **Bone of contention:** subject or issue over which there is continuing disagreement
- ★ **Born with a silver spoon:** to have a high social position and be rich from birth
- ★ **Break the ice:** do or say something to relieve tension or get conversation going at the start of a party or when people meet for the first time
- ★ **Burn a hole in one's pocket:** to spend money quickly
- ★ **Bury the hatchet:** end a quarrel or conflict and become friendly

- ★ **By hook or crook:** by any means possible, fair or foul
- ★ **Call a spade a spade:** to say the truth about something, even if it is impolite or unpleasant
- ★ **Castles in the air:** plans or hopes that have very little chances of happening, day dreams
- ★ **Chip of the old block:** someone who is very similar in character or appearance to their father or mother
- ★ **Cock and bull story:** a story that is obviously not true, especially one given as an explanation or excuse
- ★ **Crocodile tears:** to pretend sorrow and sympathy
- ★ **Eat humble pie:** make a humble apology and accept humiliation
- ★ **Face the music:** to accept criticism or punishment for something you have done
- ★ **Feather in one's cap:** an achievement to be proud of
- ★ **Fish in troubled waters:** try to win an advantage from a difficult situation or from someone else's problems
- ★ **Fool's paradise:** a state of illusory happiness
- ★ **Get a raw deal:** bad or unfair treatment
- ★ **Gift of the gab:** the ability to speak with eloquence and fluency
- ★ **Give a piece of mind:** to scold
- ★ **Give cold shoulder:** to ignore
- ★ **Go to the dogs:** worsen shockingly
- ★ **Green-eyed:** envious or jealous
- ★ **Hear it on the grapevine:** to hear rumors about something or someone
- ★ **Herculean Task:** a work that requires great effort or strength
- ★ **Hit the nail on the head:** to describe exactly what is causing a situation or problem
- ★ **In black and white:** in writing or print
- ★ **In the nick of time:** only just in time
- ★ **In vogue:** the prevailing fashion or style at a particular time
- ★ **Jack-of-all-trades and master of none:** a person who can do many different types of work but is not necessarily very competent at any of them
- ★ **Keep the ball rolling:** to let something continue
- ★ **Know no bounds:** have no limits
- ★ **Laughing stock:** a person subjected to general mockery or ridicule
- ★ **Let the cat out of the bag:** To reveal the secret carelessly or by mistake
- ★ **Lion's share:** the largest part or most of something
- ★ **Lose ground:** retreat or lose one's advantage during a conflict or competition

- ★ **Make both ends meet:** to have just enough money to live on
- ★ **Man of letters:** a male scholar or author
- ★ **Midas touch:** the ability to make money out of anything one undertakes
- ★ **Move heaven and earth:** to do everything you can to achieve something
- ★ **Nine days wonder:** something that attracts great interest for a short while but is then forgotten
- ★ **Null and void:** having no legal or binding force; invalid
- ★ **On cloud nine:** extremely happy and excited
- ★ **On the bandwagon:** join others in doing or supporting something fashionable or likely to be successful
- ★ **On the wane:** becoming weaker or less extensive
- ★ **Once in a blue moon:** very rarely
- ★ **Open Pandora's Box:** something that creates a lot of new problems that are not expected
- ★ **Order of the day:** something that is very common in the current scenario
- ★ **Paper tiger:** a person or thing that seems very strong and dangerous but is really weak and not harmful
- ★ **Poke one's nose into something:** interfere in other's affairs without invitation or necessity
- ★ **Pour oil on troubled waters:** try to settle a disagreement or dispute with words intended to pacify those involved
- ★ **Put in a nutshell:** to say in the fewest possible words
- ★ **Put the cart before the horse:** to do things in the wrong order
- ★ **Queer fish:** a person whose behaviour seems strange or unusual
- ★ **Rank and file:** ordinary members of an organization
- ★ **Raw deal:** bad or unfair treatment
- ★ **Red carpet:** privileged treatment of a distinguished visitor
- ★ **Red letter day:** a special, happy, and important day that you will always remember
- ★ **Read between the lines:** to try to understand the hidden meaning of the writer or speaker
- ★ **Rise to the occasion:** perform very well in response to a special situation or event
- ★ **Showing somebody the door:** asking someone to leave
- ★ **Sleeping partner:** one who invests in business but doesn't show interest in management
- ★ **Snake in the grass:** an unpleasant person who cannot be trusted
- ★ **Spill the beans:** reveal a secret unintentionally or carelessly
- ★ **Stick to one's guns:** refuse to compromise or change, despite criticism
- ★ **Swansong:** a person's last piece of work, achievement, or performance
- ★ **Turn a deaf ear:** refuse to listen or respond to a statement or request

- ★ **Wee hours:** the early hours of the morning after midnight
- ★ **White elephant:** a possession that is useless or troublesome, especially one that is expensive to maintain or difficult to dispose of
- ★ **Wild goose chase:** a foolish and hopeless search for something unattainable

PRACTICE TEST

Directions (1 – 7): In each of the following questions an Idiomatic Expression / Phrase has been given, followed by certain alternatives. Choose the alternative which best expresses the meaning of the given idiom / phrase.

1. Achilles heel

- 1) walk bare foot
- 2) run fast
- 3) the weak point in a person
- 4) a gigantic personality who suffers from aching heels

2. To let the cat out of the bag

- 1) to get into troubles
- 2) to make a whistle of disapproval made at a public meeting
- 3) to be free from the guilt
- 4) to reveal a secret

3. At the eleventh hour

- 1) in danger
- 2) just in time
- 3) time of crisis
- 4) at the wrong time

4. Crocodile tears

- 1) crying loudly
- 2) show sympathy exceedingly
- 3) insincere sorrow
- 4) emotional outburst

5. Beat about the bush

- 1) approach in a roundabout way
- 2) the art of plain speaking
- 3) hit the shrubs hard
- 4) hide in order to escape from a hazard

6. Red letter day

- 1) an insignificant day
- 2) a dangerous day
- 3) the day the Communist Party was founded
- 4) an important day

7. A white elephant

- 1) a notorious member of a family
- 2) official national animal of Thailand
- 3) a burdensome possession
- 4) an elephant in fair skin tone

Directions (8 – 9): For each of the following sentences four alternatives are given. You are required to choose the correct meaning of the Idioms given in italics in the sentences.

8. He *spills the beans* about our new project

- 1) creates false hype
- 2) lets out a secret
- 3) makes bad propaganda
- 4) tries to spoil the image

9. I have many *green-eyed* friends.

- 1) rich 2) loving 3) jealous 4) clever

ANSWERS

1-3; 2-4; 3-2; 4-3; 5-1; 6-4; 7-3; 8-2; 9-3.

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