

Idioms and Phrases in English With Meanings and sentences

Idioms and Phrases in English! Here is the list of 100 most common and daily used idioms and phrases with example sentences and their meanings. These idioms are very helpful to improve your English speaking and fluency.

To beat daggers drawn	(to be ready to start fighting)	They have been at daggers drawn for years.
To be at one's wits' end	(to be confused)	I am at my wits' ends, worrying about how to pay the bills.
To be in one's elements	(to be in one's special field)	When a player talks of games, he is in his elements.
To be in the doldrums	(to be in low spirits)	After his loss, he was in the doldrums.
To be in the same boat	(to be in the same circumstances)	We shall die and live together because we are in the same boat.
To be on tenterhooks	(to be in a state of suspense)	One day before the result, everybody was on tenterhooks.
To be taken up with	(to be busy)	Now, I am taken up with my work.
To beat about the bush	(to talk in an indirect way)	Stop beating about the bush and tell me what you want.
To beggar description	(to make words seem poor)	This extremely beautiful scenery beggars description.
To blow one's own trumpet	(to praise oneself)	We dislike him because he always blows his own trumpet.

To break the ice	(to make a beginning)	When all were hesitant, I broke the ice and advanced.
To bring down the house	(to impress the audience)	With his fiery speech, he brought down the house.
To bring home to	(to convince)	I will try to bring this point home to him.
To burn the candle at both ends	(to spend in a double way)	He burnt the candle at both ends and soon grew poor.
To call a spade a spade	(Speak plainly)	I like him because he calls a spade a spade.
To cast pearls before the swine	(to tell things to a fool)	To advise that fool is like casting pearls before the swine.
To come down upon	(to rebuke buy)	He came down upon his servant for his fault.
To come off with colors	(to achieve success)	In this match, our team will come off with colors.
To curry favors	(to please by flattery)	He always tries to curry favors with his superiors.
To die in harness	(to die in active service)	Brave soldiers always die in harness.
To eat one's word	(to take back one's words)	He realized his mistake and ate his words.

To eat the humble pie	(to be humiliated)	If you come late, you will have to eat the humble pie:
To end in smoke	(to come to nothing)	Because of his carelessness, all his plans ended in smoke.
To face the music	(to face one's critics)	A public leader should have the courage to face the music.
To fall a prey to	(to be a victim of)	He fell a prey to bad habits.
To feather one's nest	(to become rich by unfair means)	Dishonest persons always try to feather their own nest.
To fight shy of	(to be afraid)	He fought shy of introducing that girl to his wife.
To find fault with	(to discover mistake)	She is always finding fault with her maid-servant's work.
To fish in troubled water	(get benefits from other trouble)	When there is some disturbance in our country, others try to fish in troubled water.
To get into hot water	(horrible situation)	If you try to argue with 31 him, you will get into hot water.
To give a bit of one's mind	(to rebuke)	I gave a bit of my mind to my lazy servant.
To give a leg-up	(to support tout)	When my business failed, he gave me a leg-up.
To give a wide berth to	(to keep at a distance)	Give a wide berth to that wicked man.

To go great lengths	(to do one's utmost)	I will go great lengths to help you.
To go on a spree	(to go for outing)	Let us chalk out a programme to go on a spree.
To go through fire and water	(to endure troubles)	We went through fire and water to achieve Pakistan.
To go to the wall	(to be pushed aside)	Several business firms went to the wall this year because of financial crisis.
To go with the stream	(to do as others do)	Great men never go with the stream.
To have an axe to grind	(to have a selfish end in view)	I have no axe to grind; I just want to help you.
To harp on the same string	(to keep talking on the same subject)	His novels are not interesting because he harps on the same string.
To hit below the belt	(to hit unjustly)	He is a man of principle and will never hit below the belt.
To hold a candle to	(Compared with)	You are not fit to hold a candle to him.
To hold one's own	(not to give in)	In the heated discussion, he held his own.
To hold water	(to be effective to)	Your tricks will not hold water here.

To keep a stiff upper lip	(to be patient under tortures of)	In the teeth of so many difficulties, he kept a stiff upper lip.
To keep an open house	(to be ready to entertain visitors tag)	That hospitable person keeps an open house.
To keep body and soul together	(to escape hunger)	These days, it is very difficult to keep body and soul together.
To keep one's head above water	(to keep off debt)	His business failed and he could not keep his head above water.
To laugh in one's sleeves	(to laugh secretly)	When the teacher punished him, all the boys laughed in their sleeves.
To lay a blame at one's door	(to shift the blame to other)	He committed the crime and laid the blame at his friend's door
To let the cat out of the bag	(to disclose the secret)	We tried to keep the matter secret but my sister let the cat out of the bag.
To lick the dust	(to be humiliated)	If you oppose me, you will have to lick the dust.
To look a gift horse in the mouth	(to find fault with a gift)	It is bad to look a gift horse in the mouth.
To look daggers at	(to stare angrily brut)	The two enemies were looking daggers at each other.
To marshal the facts	(to arrange in due order)	First marshal the facts and then analyze them.
To mince matters	(to use polite expressions in condemnation)	He is bold enough not to mince matters.

To nip in the bud	(to finish in the beginning)	We should nip the evil in the bud.
To pay off old scores	(to take revenge of old grievances)	Whenever he gets a chance, he will pay off old scores.
To pay through the nose	(to suffer a loss)	If you enter into a quarrel with him, you will have to pay through the nose.
To play ducks and drakes	(to spend carelessly)	He is playing ducks and drakes with the wealth of his father.
To play one's trumps card	(to make an effective move)	In the end, he played his trump card and succeeded.
To play the second fiddle	(to take the sub-ordinate)	A servant should always play the second fiddle to his master.
To play with fire	(to trifle with dangerous matters)	By taking part in this strike, you are playing with fire.
To poke fun at	(to laugh unkindly)	The children often poked fun at him because of his stammer.
To poke one's nose	(to interfere)	Do not poke your nose in my affairs.
To pour oil on troubled water	(to cool down matters)	He poured oil on troubled water and all were calm and quiet.
To pull a long face	(to be sad and serious)	At my insulting remark, he pulled a long face.

To pull the strings	(to control others)	He is nothing; it is his wife who pulls the strings.
To put out of countenance	(to put to shame)	My remark to his past put him out of countenance.
To put back the clock	(to talk of the past)	This decision will put back the clock thirty years in terms of working conditions.
To put the cart before the horse	(to do things in wrong order)	Sleeping in the day and working at night is to put the cart before the horse.
To read between lines	(to understand the hidden meaning)	Reading between the lines of your letter, I think you dislike me.
To rest on one's laurels	(to be satisfied with achievements)	Great men never rest on their laurels.
To rest on one's oars	(rest after work)	After the examination, we decided to rest on our oars.
To run rampant	(to become wide spread)	Social evils have run rampant in our country.
To run to seed	(to be ruined too)	If you do not follow my advice, your business will run to seed.
To show one's cards	(to show one's intention)	If you show your cards, we will be able to handle the situation in a better way.
To show the white feather	(to show fear)	Brave soldiers never show the white feather in the battle field.
To sow wild oats	(to indulge in foolishness when young)	He sowed wild oats in youth, and now he is suffering.

To split hairs (to reason over small matters) There is no need to split hairs; we both are responsible for it.

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To steer clear of (to avoid) You should steer clear of bad company.

To stick to one's color (to refuse to change opinion) He is a man of principle and will stick to his colors.

To stick to one's guns (to maintain position against attack) No one believed her story but she stuck to her guns.

To stick to the point (not to digress they) If you want to make a good speech, stick to the point.

To take a man at his word (to believe what one says) We should take him at his word because he is a reliable.

To throw dust in the eyes of (to deceive) He threw dust in the eyes of the policeman, and was able to escape.

To throw up the sponge (to surrender) Before his powerful arguments, we had to throw up the sponge.

To throw water upon (to discourage) His repeated failures threw water upon the wishes of his father

To tide over (to overcome) I am sure this brave man will tide over all his difficulties.

To turn to account (to profit from) He does not know how to turn his money to account.

To turn a deaf ear to	(not to listen)	They tried to persuade her not to go, but she turned a deaf ear to their advice.
To turn turtle	(to turn upside down)	The boat turned turtle in the rough sea.
To turn up one's nose at	(to look down upon)	Do not turn up your nose at the poor.
To weather the storm	(to face the troubles)	Don't lose heart; weather the storm.
To win laurels	(to gain reputation)	Work hard and you will win laurels.
To be a sight for sore eyes	(to be a very welcome sight)	Glad! you have come, you are a sight for sore eyes.
To be at logger heads	(to be quarrelling)	We have been at loggerheads with the neighbours for years.
To be green	(to be inexperienced)	Do not start such a big business; you are still green.
To be taken aback	(to be astonished to)	Hearing the news of such a hardworking boy's failure, I was taken aback.
To be within an ace of	(to be very near)	He was sitting within an ace of me.