

## Common English Idioms

Every language uses idiomatic expressions. A literal translation is not enough to understand the meaning; you need to understand the context. Using English idioms shows that you have a good level of English. Here are some common English idioms to enrich your vocabulary and make you sound like a native when you speak English.

**Break a leg** - If someone tells you to break a leg, they aren't wishing injury on you. They are simply wishing you good luck. "Break a leg at your job interview today."

**Bite your tongue** - Stop yourself before you say something that you might regret. For example, "I wanted to tell my boss that he was wrong, but I had to bite my tongue."

**Don't bite the hand that feeds you** - This phrase means to not take advantage of, or hurt, someone that has helped you. You wouldn't want to steal from your boss, because you would be "biting the hand that feeds you."

**Don't burn your bridges** - If you "burn a bridge", you destroy a relationship or opportunity. For example, if you want to quit your job, do it respectfully, to maintain a good relationship with the company. Somebody might say "Don't burn your bridges" - which means "do it in a way that doesn't damage the relationship, so maybe you could return one day".

**Don't count your chickens before their hatched** - Don't be too confident about anything until it happens. For example, "You may think that you will get that job, but don't count your chickens before their hatched."

**The early bird gets the worm** - The person that acts first usually has the best chance for success, so, "the early bird gets the worm." For example, "Roger always gets the best deals at Apple stores. The early bird gets the worm!"

**Fish out of water** - When someone says that they feel like a "fish out of water", it means that they feel uncomfortable. It probably means that they are in an unfamiliar or new situation, and need time to get comfortable.

**Got off on the wrong foot** - If you have just begun something, and it went badly, you have "got off on the wrong foot." This can apply to a project, meeting someone new, or anything that you have just started.

**Hit the nail on the head** - When someone says you've "hit the nail on the head", it means that you are exactly right!

**Like two peas in a pod** - If two things are "like two peas in a pod", it means that they are very similar.

**Monkey see, monkey do** - This phrase is usually used when referring to children. It means, that children have a tendency to copy bad habits. If you swear a lot, and your son starts to swear, somebody could say, "monkey see, monkey do".

**Open a can of worms** - If you open a can of worms, you are starting trouble that could be avoided. For example, "Don't ask Bob how his wife got her bruises – you will open a can of worms!"

**The pot calling the kettle black** - If someone uses the phrase "the pot calling the kettle black", it means you are accusing them of hypocrisy. For example, if a person is drinking beer, but he speaks badly of people who drink alcohol, you could say, "The pot calling the kettle black".

**Raining cats and dogs** - When it is raining very hard, a person can say that "it's raining cats and dogs".

**Rings a bell** - This phrase means that something sounds familiar. If someone asks you if you have heard about a man called Jamie Foxx, and the name sounds familiar, you could say "It rings a bell."

**See eye to eye** - When two people have the same point of view, you can say that they "see eye to eye".

**Sick as a dog** - If someone is "sick as a dog", it means that they are extremely sick.

**Kick the bucket** – When somebody dies, you can say that he "kicked the bucket".

**Strike while the iron is hot** - When you hear this phrase, it means that you should act while the opportunity is still there. For example, if you hear of a good job available, you should "strike while the iron is hot", which means, try to get it before other people.

**Until you're blue in the face** - If you've done something "until you're blue in the face", it means that you've tried to do it repeatedly, but with no success. For example, when you tell your teenage son to stop using his phone during meals "until you're blue in the face", it means that you've said it many, many times, but he continues to do it.

**Under the table** - To be paid "under the table" means that you are paid illegally, without telling your boss or the tax office. It is used when money is paid for something clandestinely.

**Under the weather** - When you are not feeling well, you are "under the weather".

**Walking on thin ice** - When you are "walking on thin ice", you are putting yourself in a dangerous situation. For example, "When I told my wife that she was a little overweight, I knew that I was walking on thin ice".

**Wake up on the wrong side of the bed** - If a person is in a bad mood, you can say that they "woke up on the wrong side of the bed."