

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.

1. **A piece of cake** – something very easy

Ex: “This test is a piece of cake.”

2. **Be sick and tired of** – be extremely tired of something

Ex: “I’m sick and tired of my job, it’s so stressful!”

3. **Be/Feel under the weather** – to be sick

Ex: “I can’t go to work today as I’m feeling under the weather.”

4. **Give somebody a hand** – help somebody

Ex: “Can you give me a hand? This box is very heavy.”

5. **In the red** – a negative financial balance

Ex: “OMG! My bank account is in the red!”

6. **Sleep on it** – think about something before you decide

Ex: “I really can’t decide which car to buy. I will sleep on it.”

7. **Be on Cloud 9** – extremely happy

Ex: “James is on Cloud 9 as he passed his driving test first time!”

8. **Take it easy** – to relax

Ex: “Take it easy – we have a lot of time.”

9. **Twenty-four seven (24/7)** – always open

Ex: “I love this shop – it’s open twenty-four seven.”

10. **Ring a bell** – to sound familiar

Ex: “I don’t remember him, but his name rings a bell.”

11. **See eye to eye** – to have the same opinion

Ex: “They finally saw eye to eye about the way forward.”

12. **Once in a blue moon *** – rarely

Ex: “I go to the cinema once in a blue moon.”

13. **When pigs fly** – something will never happen

Ex: “I’ll get a promotion when pigs fly.”

14. **Cost an arm and a leg** – to be extremely expensive

Ex: “Gasoline today costs an arm and a leg.”

15. **Rain cats and dogs** – to rain a lot

Ex: “OMG! It’s raining cats and dogs out there!”

16. **Kill two birds with one stone** – solve two problems at the same time

Ex: “By taking my father on vacation with me, I killed two birds with one stone. I had a vacation and spent some quality time with him.”

Jordan Chiles was 'on cloud nine' after winning an individual bronze medal. Now she has to return it

From CNN's George Ramsay



17. **Cut corners** – to do or make something in a bad way, usually to save time or money
Ex: “They really cut corners when they built this bathroom – the shower is broken already!”

18. **Break a leg** – wish somebody good luck before a performance in the theater
Ex: “Break a leg, Sam! I’m sure you will be great.”

19. **Hit the nail on the head** – describe exactly what the situation demands
Ex: “He hit the nail on the head when he said that the company needs more investment!”

20. **Out of the blue** – totally unexpected
Ex: “Last week my aunt visited me out of the blue. I haven’t seen her for years!”

*** What is a Blue Moon?**

This is a term used to describe the rare occurrence of two full moons in one calendar month. This phenomenon happens about once every three years. The phrase "once in a blue moon" means something rare or unusual. However, the moon can sometimes appear blue, but this is a very rare phenomenon and has nothing to do with the calendar. A blue appearance can happen when the atmosphere contains certain types of particles, such as smoke or dust from volcanic eruptions or forest fires.

Short video: <https://www.youtube.com/shorts/StPqan-1gOU>

Exercise. Use the idioms above to complete the following sentences, conjugating as necessary.

1. My brother is so stressed at work. I told him to _____, but he finds it difficult to relax.
2. Maths is easy! I always think that maths tests are _____!
Everybody in my family enjoys working with numbers.
3. I could never buy a Lamborghini – they _____!
4. John is at home in bed. Apparently, he _____.
5. I’m thinking about changing my job. My boss and I never _____.
Consequently, we always argue. It’s very stressful.
6. El Niño is really affecting the weather in the south of Brazil this year.
It _____ almost every day!
7. I don’t think that I’ve bought stuff from that company, but the name _____.
8. My cousin Lucy visited me today. She appeared _____! I haven’t seen her for ten years!
9. My mum won the lottery yesterday. So, as you can imagine, she is _____!
10. This exercise is very difficult. Can you please _____?