



Idioms and Phrases

Idiom	Meaning	Usage
1. A blessing in disguise	a good thing that seemed bad at first	Losing that job turned out to be a blessing in disguise for him.
2. Beat around the bush	Avoid saying what you mean, usually because it is uncomfortable	Don't beat around the bush and tell me frankly what you wish to say.
3. Better late than never	Better to arrive late than not to come at all	I know that it took me weeks to do this work, but better late than never .
4. Break a leg	Good luck	Raj's family told him to break a leg before he went up on stage.
5. Call it a day	Stop working on something	I am feeling tired now, let's call it a day .
6. Get out of hand	Get out of control	Things started to get out of hand at the police station.
7. Get your act together	Work better or leave	If he does not get his act together soon, he will risk losing his job.
8. Miss the boat	It's too late	She missed the boat when she did not apply for the job on time.
9. No pain, no gain	You have to work for what you want	Work on yourself and live your dreams. No pain no gain!
10. On the ball	Doing a good job	I could not sleep well last night, so I am not on the ball today.
11. Pull someone's leg	To joke with someone	Don't worry about what he said. He's just pulling your leg .
12. Under the weather	Sick	He was feeling under the weather , so he decided not to go to the picnic with his friend.
13. A bird in hand is worth two in a bush	What you have is worth more than what you might have later	He has always thought that a bird in hand is worth two in a bush and remained true to his first friend.
14. A penny saved is a penny earned	It is important to save money	Now that she has financial difficulties she will realise that a penny saved is a penny earned .
15. A picture is worth 1000 words	Better to show than tell	The newspaper report carried more pictures of the event than descriptions and a picture is worth a thousand words indeed.
16. Actions speak louder than words	Believe what people do and not what they say	Every one says Delhi Capitals can't win against Mumbai Indians, but they also believe that actions speak louder than words .



Idiom	Meaning	Usage
17. Add insult to injury	To make a bad situation worse	First, they lost the match, and then, to add insult to injury , one of players was fined for violating the code of conduct.
18. Birds of a feather flock together	People who are alike are often friends	The lawyers who attended the seminar were all birds of a feather flocking together who did not interact outside their group.
19. Break the ice	Make people feel more comfortable	Someone suggested that we play a game in order to break the ice among the freshers.
20. Don't count your chickens before they hatch	Don't count on something good happening until it has happened	They may hire you, but don't count your chickens before they hatch .
21. Don't cry over spilt milk	There's no reason to complain about something that has already happened.	She was not ready to accept the reality of her friend's fake side and continued crying over spilt milk .
22. Every cloud has a silver lining	Every bad situation has a hopeful aspect	Even though they lost the match, they gained experience and are now more confident. Every cloud has a silver lining .
23. Give someone the cold shoulder	Ignore someone	I thought he really liked me, but the next day he gave me the cold shoulder .
24. Good things come to those who wait	Be patient	Always remember that good things come to those who wait .
25. Hit the nail on the head	Get something exactly right	I think he hit the nail on the head when he said that the kids would not want to buy this product.
26. Ignorance is bliss	You're better off not knowing	He never cares to know about the troubles in the world because he believes that ignorance is bliss .
27. Kill two birds with one stone	Get two things done with a single action	He is trying to kill two birds with one stone .
28. Let the cat out of the bag	Give away a secret	Rahul let the cat out of the bag about my surprise birthday party.
29. Look before you leap	Take only calculated risks	Whatever you decide, it pays to look before you leap .
30. On thin ice	On probation. If you make another mistake, there will be trouble	I had skated on thin ice and, so far, got away with it but I may not always be so lucky each time.
31. Once in a blue moon	Rarely	My uncle lives in Dubai, so I only see him once in a blue moon .
32. Slow and steady wins the race	Reliability is more important than speed	Like the tortoise and the hare, slow and steady wins the race , it must be noted by promising young students.
33. Spill the beans	Give away a secret	We had everything organised for Nisha's surprise party, but Nupur accidentally spilled the beans to her.

