100 Idioms with Examples and Meanings

Idiom	Meaning
Beat around the bush	**To avoid talking about what's important**
Get your act together	**Get organized and do things effectively**
Hit the sack	**Go to sleep**
Your guess is as good as mine	**I do not know**
Good things come to those who wait	**To have patience**
Back against the wall	**Stuck in a difficult circumstance with no escape**
Up in arms	**Being grumpy or angry about something**
Scrape the barrel	**Making the most of the worst situation or things because you can't do anything about it**
Burn your boats/bridges	**Doing something that makes it impossible to go back to the original state.**
Break fresh/ new ground	**Doing something that has never been done before**
Sell like hot cakes	**Quick sellout**
Run around in circles	**Putting efforts into something that is not worthwhile result**
On cloud nine	**Being very happy**
Left out in the cold	**Being ignored**
Blow hot and cold	**Alternate inconsistently between moods and actions**
Cut corners	**Doing something in an easier and least expensive manner**

Boil the ocean	**Taking up an almost impossible or overly ambitious project**
Keep an ear to the ground	**Staying informed and updated about everything**
Eat like a horse	**Eating too excessively**
A snowball effect	**The aspect of momentum in every event and how they build upon each other**

Idioms with Meanings and Examples

1. In for a penny, in for a pound

Meaning: That someone is intentionally investing his time or money for a particular project or task.
Example: When Athlead was booming, Jim was in for a penny and in for a pound, that's how much dedicated he was.

2. A bird in the hand is better than two in the bush

Meaning: An opportunity in hand, currently, is better than a prospect in the future, because time never repeats itself.
Example: The detective apprehended 3 criminals and saw other one running but didn't chase him, because she knew a bird in one hand is better than two in the bush.

3. Chip off the old block

Meaning: That a person is similar in behaviour or actions like his parents.
Example: When grandmother saw her grandson collecting coins like her son used to do, she knew he was a Chip off the old block.

4. Do unto others as you would have them do unto you

Meaning: Treat people the same way you want to be treated.

Example: I felt Peter was a little cold today towards that homeless man, he should do unto others as he would have them do unto him, because who knows about time.

5. Don’t cry over spilt milk

Meaning: Don’t cry over what has happened as it can not be fixed.
Example: Walter failed his examination but his dad came and said just one thing, “Son, Don’t cry over spilt milk.”

6. Every cloud has a silver lining

Meaning: Bad things one day eventually lead to good things.
Example: See, yesterday you were so morose as your phone was stolen but look at you today, you got a promotion. Is it rightly said that every cloud has a silver lining.

7. Beside yourself with joy

Meaning: To be extremely happy.
Example: I can see that you are beside yourself with joy on being selected for the job, congratulations.

8. Fair and square

Meaning: Being direct or fair.
Example: To tell you fair and square, I did everything that I was meant to do, but I still feel unfulfilled.

9. Having an Ace up the sleeve

Meaning: Have an advantage that is currently being withheld for future purposes.
Example: Brian kept quiet at the board meeting, who knew he had an Ace hidden up his sleeve the whole time.

10. A black sheep

Meaning: Being a disgrace for the family.
Example: They don't talk about Olive anymore, turns out he was the Black sheep for the family, he married someone else while he was still arranged to his fiancé.

11. Hook, line and sinker

Meaning: Doing something or trying to achieve something with thoroughness and passion.
Example: I have set my mind to go through the spreadsheets by Monday and I am working for it Hook, line and sinker.

12. Looking to your laurels

Meaning: Not be lost in your achievements and losing the sight of what is supposed to happen.
Example: Look to your laurels but do not rest on it.

13. Bear a grudge

Meaning: To continue to feel angry or unfriendly for someone or something because of a particular past incident.
Example: I Bear a grudge against him for not taking me into confidence.

14. By the skin of your teeth

Meaning: To just barely get by or make it.
Example: Lester made the dance team By the skin of his teeth, you see the audition gates were about to get closed.

15. Down for the count

Meaning: Tired; giving up.
Example: My pet dog is down for the count after playing the whole day with the frisbee.

16. Draw the line

Meaning: To stop before a point where something okay gets not okay.
Example: Hey buddy, that's enough, Draw the line before someone comes and beats you to a pulp.

17. Easier said than done

Meaning: Not as easy as it appears to be.
Example: Listen, losing weight is easier said than done, many people lack commitment.

18. Break a leg

Meaning: Saying good luck to someone.
Example: Hey Barry, it's time for you to get on the stage and present your monologue, break a leg.

19. Up a creek without a paddle

Meaning: In an unlucky situation.
Example: Dan tried to dine and dash yesterday at a Chinese place but he was stopped by the waiters, guess he was up a creek without a paddle yesterday.

20. Give it a whirl

Meaning: To give something a try.
Example: I am absolutely terrified of skydiving, but I think once in my life, I will give it a whirl.

21. Fish out of water

Meaning: To be out of your comfort zone.
Example: Tom felt like a fish out of water when his girlfriend took him to a Star Wars convention in LA.

22. In the fast lane

Meaning: A life filled with excitement.
Example: When Chris turned forty, he decided to live his life in the fast lane and quit his job for his hobbies.

23. Go the extra mile

Meaning: To make an extra effort.
Example: He was willing to go the extra mile for the love of his life, Mia.

24. Snug as a bug in a rug

Meaning: Warm and cosy.
Example: The baby looks as snug as a bug in a rug next to her mother.

25. Step up your game

Meaning: To start performing better
Example: Jennifer better step up her game if she wants to make big in Basketball.

26. To not see the wood for the trees

Meaning: To be so involved in trivial matters that you don't get the important facts.
Example: He always argues on the silliest topics, it's like he can't see wood for the trees.

27. Lose your marbles

Meaning: To go insane.
Example: Our mailman has lost his marbles, every day he drops Mr. Smith's mail on our door.

28. Straight from the Horse's mouth

Meaning: Directly from the person involved.
Example: Listen to the news straight from the horse's mouth, his factory burned down right in front of his eyes.

29. Crying Wolf

Meaning: To ask for help when you don't need it.
Example: You have cried Wolf so many times that no one believes you now.

30. Palm off

Meaning: Pass off something as genuine when it is spurious.
Example: This shopkeeper always palms off old stock to the customers.

31. Has bigger fish to fry

Meaning: Has more important work to do.
Example: Please don’t bother me today with any calls, I have bigger fish to fry.

32. Look before you leap

Meaning: Calculate the risks before advancing towards a possibility.
Example: You can’t just sell all of your shares when the market is low, look before you leap, Trump is coming tomorrow, it is possible the shares will grow.

33. On thin ice

Meaning: In a precarious or risky situation.
Example: Andy played hooky from work for a week saying he was sick, now his boss said that he is on very thin ice.

34. Play devil’s advocate

Meaning: To argue, just for the sake of it.
Example: He was not agreeing to back off, as if he was playing devil’s advocate.

35. Rain on someone’s parade

Meaning: To spoil a moment.
Example: He told his wife that he doesn’t want to rain on her parade, but they had to shift their vacation dates.

36. Take a rain check

Meaning: Postpone a plan.
Example: He asked me whether I would like to have dinner with his family, but I had a thing so I said, rain check.

37. Take it with a grain of salt

Meaning: Don’t take it too seriously.
Example: She tells great tales but we take whatever she says with a grain of salt.

38. Like a cakewalk

Meaning: So easy task.
Example: Everyone took hours to write the code but Adam did it like a cakewalk.

39. Throw caution to the wind

Meaning: Take a risk.
Example: The caretaker threw caution to the wind by taking a sick baby outside.

40. Penny wise and Pound foolish

Meaning: Careful in trivial matters but wasteful or extravagant in large matters.
Example: That man eats Ramen noodles daily for dinner but for his dog, he threw a big party. He is indeed penny wise and pound foolish.

41. The whole nine yards

Meaning: Everything, all the way.
Example: I want to know everything there is to know about this merger, the whole nine yards of the deal.

42. The best thing since sliced bread

Meaning: A really good invention.
Example: Bluetooth is officially the best thing since sliced bread.

43. Bite off more than you can chew

Meaning: Take on a difficult work that is beyond your capabilities.
Example: Andrew told his boss that he will triple the sales but in reality, he bit off more than he can chew and now all of us are in trouble.

44. Play by the ear

Meaning: To improvise.
Example: I just went to Canada and did everything by the ear, no itinerary, no schedules.

45. Ignorance is bliss

Meaning: You are better off not knowing some things.
Example: His wife always asked him what it was he did late at night, turned out, he was insider trading. But she knew nothing about this so she won't be convicted, sometimes ignorance is bliss.

46. Put something on ice

Meaning: To put something on hold.
Example: As per the boss' order, Michael has put his personal matters on ice.

47. You can say that again

Meaning: That's absolutely true.
Example: "The Earth is bleeding", you can say that again, pal.

48. Bite the bullet

Meaning: To get something over with because it is inevitable.
Example: Vik was diagnosed with second stage cancer but he didn't want to get chemotherapy. By the will of his wife, he bit the bullet.

49. Go back to the drawing board

Meaning: Start over.
Example: It is not too late to go back to the drawing board and assess your mistakes.

50. Call it a day

Meaning: Stop working on something.
Example: Ah! So what we didn't complete the puzzle today, let's call it a day and come back again tomorrow.

51. Beating Around the Bush

Meaning: To talk about unnecessary things.
Example: When I asked my secretary about the missing file and documents, she was beating around the bush.

52. Be in a Tight Corner.

Meaning: Being in a difficult situation.
Example: Radha's low grades despite her constant efforts has put her in a very tight corner.

53. At the 11th Hour

Meaning: At the last moment.
Example: While leaving for Shimla, Harshit kept his mobile phone charger in the bag at the 11th hour.

54. Swan Song

Meaning: The last piece of work of an artist before his/her death.
Example: This painting was M.F Hussain's swan song.

55. Wild Goose Chase

Meaning: Futile Chase
Example: Catching the two thieves together on a jam-packed road was no less than a wild goose chase for the policeman.

56. Bury the Hatchet

Meaning: Ending a quarrel to make peace.
Example: My father buried the hatchet by equally diving the pasta between me and my sister.

57. To Bell the Cat

Meaning: To face a risk.
Example: He belled the cat when he was trying to escape the prison.

58. Turn a deaf ear

Meaning: To ignore what someone is saying.
Example: Whenever her mother complained of her excessive use of mobile phone, Anu turned a deaf ear.

59. At Sea

Meaning: Confused
Example: I was at sea while choosing a lehenga for my sister's wedding at Manish Malhotra's store.

60. To be in the doldrums

Meaning: To be in a low spirit
Example: When I got to know about the increasing cases of COVID 19 in my area, I was in the doldrums.

61. Hit the books

Meaning: Going to study
Example: I won't be able to come for the dinner as I have to hit the books for my half-yearly examinations.

62. Twist someone's arm

Meaning: To convince someone
Example: I was not planning to come to the party but by remaining me of all the good food you twisted my arm!

63. Stab someone in the back

Meaning: To betray a close person
Example: My uncle trusted his driver so much but he stabbed him at the back when he saw all the money bags.

64. Go cold turkey

Meaning: To quit or stop addictive or dangerous behaviour
Example: No one could believe that my father left eating sweets! He went cold turkey when the doctors told him that he has diabetes.

65. Ring a bell

Meaning: Sounds familiar
Example: Why does this name ring a bell in my head? Was this girl in my school?

66. Cut to the chase

Meaning: Getting to the important point
Example: As the submissions were to be made tonight, boss cut to the chase and asked us to start working.

67. Blow off steam

Meaning: Experiencing strong feelings like anger or stress
Example: Shina went running to blow off steam as she had a huge fight with mother.

68. Face the music

Meaning: Face the reality
Example: Shikha asked her husband to not run away from the problem and just face the music once!

69. To have sticky fingers

Meaning: Thief
Example: The cashier had a sticky finger, he stole around $2000 and ran away from the bank.

70. Break the bank

Meaning: To be very expensive
Example: I had to break the bank to but these shoes!

71. Face the music

Meaning: Confront the unpleasant consequences of one's actions.
Example: We have done it and now it's time to face the music!

72. It is always darkest before the dawn

Meaning: Things will get better
Example: I know you have gone through the worst, but remember it is always darkest before the dawn.

73. Jump the gun

Meaning: To act on something promptly before the right time
Example: I think I jumped the gun by sending the e-mail before they tell the time.

74. Wear your heart on your sleeve

Meaning: Expressing yourself too openly
Example: She wears her heart on her sleeve and often gets hurt.

75. Cut no ice

Meaning: Fail to make an impact
Example: Your poetry cuts no ice with me.

76. Light at the end of tunnel

Meaning: Seeing signs of improvement in the future
Example: I see the light at the end of the tunnel for my relationship with her.

77. Through thick and thin

Meaning: Through good and bad times
Example: Books and music stay by your side through thick and thin.

78. Cry for the moon

Meaning: To ask for something that is rather difficult
Example: You are crying for the moon for this concert's tickets!

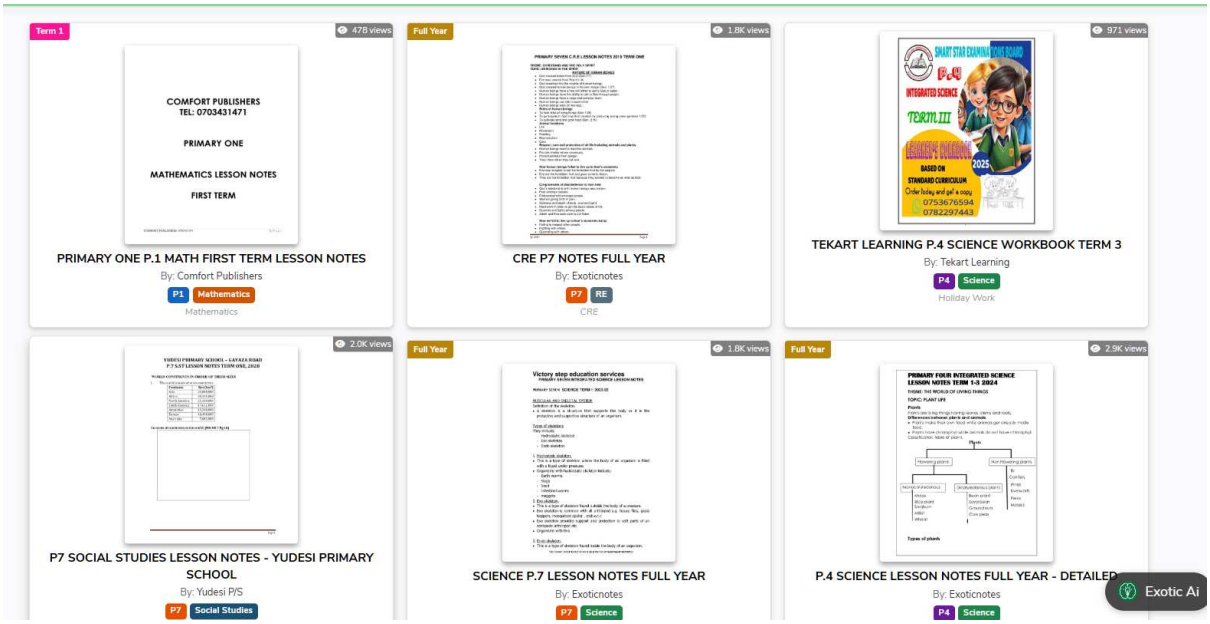
79. Read between the lines

Meaning: Understanding the real message behind something
Example: If you try to read between the lines, her song is actually about me.

80. Pour out one's heart

Meaning: To express openly
Example: I can't pour my heart out to you if you are too distracted by everything around yourself.

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