

# Collections of English Idiom And Meaning

By Prakash Poudyal, Various Online Sources

*A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush:* What you have is worth more than what you might have later

*A blessing in disguise:* A good thing that seemed bad at first

*A dime a dozen:* Something common

*A little learning is a dangerous thing:* People who don't understand something fully are dangerous

*A penny for your thoughts:* Tell me what you're thinking

*A penny saved is a penny earned:* Money you save today you can spend later

*A perfect storm:* The worst possible situation

*A picture is worth 1000 words:* Better to show than tell

*A piece of cake:* Something is very easy. Example-The English test was a piece of cake.

*A snowball effect:* Events have momentum and build upon each other

*A snowball's chance in hell:* No chance at all

*A stitch in time saves nine:* Fix the problem now because it will get worse later

*A storm in a teacup:* A big fuss about a small problem

*Achilles Heel:* A weakness or vulnerable point. When the hero Achilles was an infant, his sea-nymph mother dipped him into the river Styx to make him immortal. But since she held him by one heel, this spot did not touch the water and so remained mortal and vulnerable, and it was here that Achilles was eventually mortally wounded.

*Actions speak louder than words:* Believe what people do and not what they say

*Add insult to injury:* To make a bad situation worse

*An apple a day keeps the doctor away:* Apples are good for you

*An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure:* You can prevent a problem with little effort. Fixing it later is harder.

*As right as rain:* Perfect

*Barking up the wrong tree:* To be mistaken, to be looking for solutions in the wrong place

*Beat around the bush:* Avoid saying what you mean, usually because it is uncomfortable

*Better late than never:* Better to arrive late than not to come at all

*Birds of a feather flock together:* People who are alike are often friends (usually used negatively)

*Bite off more than you can chew:* Take on a project that you cannot finish

*Bite the bullet:* To get something over with because it is inevitable

*Bolt from the blue:* Something that happened without warning

*Break a leg:* Means good luck (often said to actors before they go on stage). Example-Break a leg Sam, I'm sure your performance will be great.

*Break the ice:* Make people feel more comfortable

*Burn bridges:* Destroy relationship

*By the skin of your teeth:* Just barely

*Call it a day:* Stop working on something

*Calm before the storm:* Something bad is coming, but right now it's calm

*Come rain or shine:* No matter what

*Comparing apples to oranges:* Comparing two things that cannot be compared

*Costs an arm and a leg:* Very expensive

*Curiosity killed the cat:* Stop asking questions

*Cut somebody some slack:* Don't be so critical

*Cut the mustard:* Do a good job

*Cutting corners:* Doing something poorly in order to save time or money

*Do something at the drop of a hat:* Do something without having planned beforehand

*Do unto others as you would have them do unto you*: Treat people fairly. Also known as "The Golden Rule"

*Don't beat a dead horse*: Move on, this subject is over

*Don't count your chickens before they hatch*: Don't count on something good happening until it's happened.

*Don't cry over spilt milk*: There's no reason to complain about something that can't be fixed

*Don't give up your day job*: You're not very good at this

*Don't put all your eggs in one basket*: What you're doing is too risky

*Easy does it*: Slow down

*Every cloud has a silver lining*: Good things come after bad things

*Every dog has his day*: Everyone gets a chance at least once

*Familiarity breeds contempt*: The better you know someone the less you like him

*Fit as a fiddle*: In good health

*Fortune favours the bold*: Take risks

*Get a second wind*: Have more energy after having been tired

*Get a taste of your own medicine*: Get treated the way you've been treating others (negative)

*Get out of hand*: Get out of control

*Get something out of your system*: Do the thing you've been wanting to do so you can move on

*Get wind of something*: Hear news of something secret

*Get your act together*: Work better or leave

*Give someone the benefit of the doubt*: Trust what someone says

*Give someone the cold shoulder*: Ignore someone

*Go back to the drawing board*: Start over

*Go down in flames*: Fail spectacularly

*Go on a wild goose chase*: To do something pointless

*Good things come to those who wait*: Be patient

*Hang in there*: Don't give up

*Haste makes waste*: You'll make mistakes if you rush through something

*Have your head in the clouds*: Not be concentrating

*He has bigger fish to fry*: He has bigger things to take care of than what we are talking about now

*He who laughs last laughs loudest*: I'll get you back for what you did

*Hear something straight from the horse's mouth*: Hear something from the person involved

*He's a chip off the old block*: The son is like the father

*He's not playing with a full deck*: He's dumb

*He's off his rocker*: He's crazy

*He's sitting on the fence*: He can't make up his mind

*Hit the nail on the head*: Get something exactly right

*Hit the sack*: Go to sleep

*Ignorance is bliss*: You're better off not knowing

*It ain't over till the fat lady sings*: This isn't over yet

*It is a poor workman who blames his tools*: If you can't do the job, don't blame it on others

*It is always darkest before the dawn*: Things are going to get better

*It takes one to know one*: You're just as bad as I am

*It takes two to tango*: One person alone isn't responsible. Both people are involved.

*It's a piece of cake*: It's easy

*It's not rocket science*: It's not complicated

*It's raining cats and dogs*: It's raining hard

*Jump on the bandwagon*: Follow a trend, do what everyone else is doing

*Kill two birds with one stone*: Get two things done with a single action

*Know which way the wind is blowing*: Understand the situation (usually negative)

*Leave no stone unturned*: Look everywhere

*Let sleeping dogs lie*: Stop discussing an issue

*Let someone off the hook*: To not hold someone responsible for something

*Let the cat out of the bag*: To accidentally reveal a secret. Example-I let the cat out of the bag about their wedding plans.

*Like riding a bicycle*: Something you never forget how to do

*Like two peas in a pod*: They're always together

*Live and learn*: I made a mistake

*Look before you leap*: Take only calculated risks

*Make a long story short*: Tell something briefly

*Make hay while the sun shines*: Take advantage of a good situation

*Miss the boat*: It's too late

*No pain, no gain*: You have to work for what you want

*On cloud nine*: Very happy

*On the ball*: Doing a good job

*On thin ice*: On probation. If you make another mistake, there will be trouble

*Once bitten, twice shy*: You're more cautious when you've been hurt before

*Once in a blue moon*: Rarely. An event that happens infrequently. Example-I only go to the cinema once in a blue moon.

*Out of the frying pan and into the fire*: Things are going from bad to worse

*Play devil's advocate*: To argue the opposite, just for the sake of argument

*Pull someone's leg*: To joke with someone

*Pull yourself together*: Calm down

*Put something on ice*: Put a project on hold

*Rain on someone's parade*: To spoil something

*Run like the wind*: Run fast

*Saving for a rainy day*: Saving money for later

*See eye to eye*: This means agreeing with someone. Example-They finally saw eye to eye on the business deal.

*Shape up or ship out*: Work better or leave

*Shotgun Marriage*: An enforced or hurried wedding, especially because the bride is pregnant. A shotgun wedding is a wedding that is arranged to avoid embarrassment due to premarital sex possibly leading to an unintended pregnancy, rather than out of the desire of the participants.

*Slow and steady wins the race*: Reliability is more important than speed

*Snowed under*: Busy

*So far so good*: Things are going well so far

*Speak of the devil*: The person we were just talking about showed up. Means that the person you're just talking about actually turns up at that moment. Example-Hi Tom, speak of the devil, I was just telling Sara about your new car.

*Spill the beans*: Give away a secret

*Take a rain check*: Postpone a plan

*Take it with a grain of salt*: Don't take it too seriously

*That ship has sailed*: It's too late

*That's the last straw*: My patience has run out

*The ball is in your court*: It's your decision

*The best of both worlds*: An ideal situation. Means you can enjoy two different opportunities at the same time. Example-By working part-time and looking after her kids two days a week she managed to get the best of both worlds.

*The best thing since sliced bread*: A really good invention

*The devil is in the details*: It looks good from a distance, but when you look closer, there are problems

*The early bird gets the worm*: The first people who arrive will get the best stuff

*The elephant in the room*: The big issue, the problem people are avoiding

*The pot calling the kettle black*: Someone criticizing someone else he is just as bad

*The whole nine yards*: Everything, all the way

*There are clouds on the horizon*: Trouble is coming

*There are other fish in the sea*: It's ok to miss this opportunity. Others will arise

*There's a method to his madness*: He seems crazy but actually he's clever

*There's no such thing as a free lunch*: Nothing is entirely free

*Those who live in glass houses shouldn't throw stones*: People who are morally questionable shouldn't criticize others

*Through thick and thin*: In good times and in bad times

*Throw caution to the wind*: Take a risk

*Time flies when you're having fun*: You don't notice how long something lasts when it's fun

*Time is money*: Work quickly

*To add insult to injury*: To make a situation worse. Example-To add insult to injury the car drove off without stopping after knocking me off my bike.

*To cost arm and leg*: Something is very expensive. Example-Fuel these days costs an arm and a leg.

*To cut corners*: To do something badly or cheaply. Example-They really cut corners when they built this bathroom; the shower is leaking.

*To feel under the weather*: To not feel well. Example-I'm really feeling under the weather today; I have a terrible cold.

*To get bent out of shape*: To get upset

*To hit the nail on the head*: To describe exactly what is causing a situation or problem. Example-He hit the nail on the head when he said this company needs more HR support.

*To kill two birds with one stone*: To solve two problems at once. Example-By taking my dad on holiday, I killed two birds with one stone. I got to go away but also spend time with him.

*To make matters worse*: Make a problem worse

*Under the weather*: Sick

*Waste not, want not*: Don't waste things and you'll always have enough

*We see eye to eye*: We agree

*Weather the storm*: Go through something difficult

*Well begun is half done*: Getting a good start is important

*We'll cross that bridge when we come to it*: Let's not talk about that problem right now

*When it rains it pours*: Everything is going wrong at once

*When pigs fly*: Something that will never happen. Example-When pigs fly she'll tidy up her room.

*Wrap your head around something*: Understand something complicated

*You can catch more flies with honey than you can with vinegar*: You'll get what you want by being nice

*You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make him drink*: You can't force someone to make the right decision

*You can say that again*: That's true, I agree

*You can't judge a book by its cover*: To not judge someone or something based solely on appearance. Example-I thought this no-brand bread would be horrible; turns out you can't judge a book by its cover.

*You can't have your cake and eat it too*: You can't have everything

*You can't judge a book by its cover*: This person or thing may look bad, but it's good inside

*You can't make an omelet without breaking some eggs*: There's always a cost to doing something

*Your guess is as good as mine*: I have no idea