

# 100 COMMONLY USED IDIOMS

120+ COURSES



English



EthicalHacking



IELTS™

# 100 commonly used idioms with their meanings and simple sentences demonstrating their use:

## 1. A blessing in disguise

- **Meaning:** Something that seems bad or unlucky at first but results in something good later on.
- **Example:** "Losing my job turned out to be a blessing in disguise because it pushed me to start my own business."
- **Origin:** The origin of this phrase can be traced back to the early 18th century, although the exact source is unclear. It reflects the idea that sometimes, what appears to be a setback or misfortune may actually turn out to be advantageous in unexpected ways.

## 2. A dime a dozen

- **Meaning:** Something that is very common and not valuable
- **Example:** "Those cheap souvenirs are a dime a dozen at the tourist shops."
- **Origin:** The phrase originated in the United States during the 19th century. It refers to the low value of an item, emphasizing its abundance and widespread availability.



### 3. A piece of cake

- **Meaning:** Something that is very easy to do
- **Example:** "Don't worry about the exam; it's going to be a piece of cake."
- **Origin:** The origin of this phrase is uncertain, but it likely stems from the idea that consuming a piece of cake is a pleasant and effortless experience. It has been in use since the early 20th century.

### 4. Actions speak louder than words

- **Meaning:** What someone does is more important than what they say.
- **Example:** "Instead of just saying you're sorry, show it. Remember, actions speak louder than words."
- **Origin:** This proverb has ancient roots but was popularized in its current form by the English writer Anthony Trollope in the mid-19th century. It encapsulates the idea that actions reveal true intentions and beliefs more effectively than verbal expressions

### 5. Add insult to injury

- **Meaning:** To make a bad situation even worse.
- **Example:** "After I lost my job, my car broke down, adding insult to injury."

- **Origin:** This idiom has origins in ancient Greece but gained prominence in English literature in the 18th century. It conveys the notion of compounding misfortune or indignity, further heightening the adversity faced by an individual.

## 6. All ears

- **Meaning:** Listening attentively.
- **Example:** "When my friend started telling her story, I was all ears."
- **Origin:** The origin of this phrase is uncertain, but it likely stems from the idea of someone figuratively using their ears to catch every sound or piece of information. It has been in use since at least the 17th century.

## 7. All in the same boat

- **Meaning:** In the same difficult situation.
- **Example:** "We're all in the same boat when it comes to dealing with the pandemic."
- **Origin:** This phrase has nautical origins, dating back to ancient times. It refers to the shared experience of passengers or crew members aboard a boat or ship facing the same conditions and challenges.

## 8. All thumbs

- **Meaning:** Clumsy or awkward.
- **Example:** "I'm all thumbs when it comes to using chopsticks."
- **Origin:** This expression dates back to medieval times and is derived from the notion that someone with thumbs of equal size would lack the precision and coordination necessary for fine tasks. It has been used figuratively since the 16th century.

## 9. Apple of my eye

- **Meaning:** Someone cherished above all others.
- **Example:** "My daughter is the apple of my eye; I'm so proud of her."
- **Origin:** This expression has biblical origins, appearing in various translations of the Bible to denote something precious or cherished. It has been in use since at least the 9th century.

## 10. Back to the drawing board

- **Meaning:** To start over after a failed attempt.
- **Example:** "The prototype didn't work, so it's back to the drawing board for our engineers."



- **Origin:** The phrase originated in the context of engineering and design, referring to the literal drawing boards used to plan and sketch designs. It gained broader usage during World War II and has since become a common metaphor for restarting or reassessing endeavors.

## 11. Barking up the wrong tree

- **Meaning:** Looking in the wrong place or accusing the wrong person.
- **Example:** "If you suspect Tom stole your wallet, you're barking up the wrong tree. He was with me all day."
- **Origin:** This phrase has roots in hunting, where dogs might mistakenly pursue prey up the wrong tree. It has been used metaphorically since the early 19th century.

## 12. Beat around the bush

- **Meaning:** Avoiding the main topic; not getting to the point.
- **Example:** "Stop beating around the bush and just tell me what you want."
- **Origin:** The phrase originated from hunting practices, where hunters would beat bushes to drive out birds or small game. It has been used metaphorically since the 16th century.

## 13. Bite off more than you can chew

- **Meaning:** To take on a task that is too big to handle.

- **Example:** "I bit off more than I could chew by agreeing to organize the event by myself."
- **Origin:** This expression likely originated from the literal act of attempting to eat more food than one's mouth can accommodate. It has been used metaphorically since at least the 19th century.

## 14. Break the ice

- **Meaning:** To start a conversation in a social situation.
- **Example:** "Let's tell a joke to break the ice at the party."
- **Origin:** The phrase originated from the literal breaking of ice to allow ships to pass through frozen waterways. It has been used figuratively since the 17th century.

## 15. Burning the midnight oil

- **Meaning:** Working late into the night.
- **Example:** "She was burning the midnight oil to finish her thesis before the deadline."
- **Origin:** This phrase originated from the literal act of using lamps or candles to work late into the night before the widespread availability of electric lighting. It has been used figuratively since the 17th century.

## 16. Butter someone up

- **Meaning:** To be overly kind or complimentary to gain favor.
- **Example:** "She's buttering up the boss because she wants a promotion."
- **Origin:** The phrase likely originates from the act of spreading butter, implying a superficial or artificial attempt to soften someone's attitude or win their favor. It has been in use since the early 19th century.

## 17. By the skin of your teeth

- **Meaning:** Just barely; narrowly escaping failure or disaster.
- **Example:** "I passed the exam by the skin of my teeth; I thought I was going to fail."
- **Origin:** This expression has biblical origins, found in the Book of Job in the Old Testament. It has been used metaphorically since at least the 16th century.

## 18. Can't judge a book by its cover

- **Meaning:** You can't determine someone's character or worth based on appearance alone.
- **Example:** "I thought the movie would be terrible because of the trailer, but you can't judge a book by its cover—it was actually really good."

- **Origin:** The expression likely originated from the literal act of assessing a book's contents based on its cover design. It has been used figuratively since the mid-19th century.

## 19. Caught between a rock and a hard place

- **Meaning:** Having to choose between two equally unpleasant options.
- **Example:** "I'm caught between a rock and a hard place: I can either stay in a job I hate or risk unemployment in this economy."
- **Origin:** This phrase originated in mining contexts, where miners might become trapped between rocks or in narrow passages. It has been used metaphorically since the early 20th century.

## 20. Cost an arm and a leg

- **Meaning:** Very expensive.
- **Example:** "That designer handbag must have cost an arm and a leg."
- **Origin:** The origin of this phrase is uncertain, but it likely stems from the hyperbolic imagery of sacrificing limbs as a form of payment. It has been in use since the mid-20th century.

## 21. Cry over spilled milk

- **Meaning:** Worrying about something that has already happened and cannot be changed.

- **Example:** "I know you made a mistake, but there's no use crying over spilled milk. Let's focus on finding a solution."
- **Origin:** This expression originated from the literal act of spilling milk, which was once considered a valuable commodity. It has been used figuratively since the 17th century.

## 22. Don't cry over spilled milk

- **Meaning:** Don't worry about something that has already happened and cannot be changed.
- **Example:** "I accidentally broke the vase, but there's no need to cry over spilled milk."
- **Origin:** This phrase is a variation of "cry over spilled milk" and has been in use since at least the 19th century.

## 23. Don't count your chickens before they hatch

- **Meaning:** Don't rely on something good happening until it has actually happened.
- **Example:** "I know you're excited about the job offer, but don't count your chickens before they hatch."
- **Origin:** This expression has ancient roots and has been found in various cultures throughout history. It gained prominence in English literature during the 16th century.



## 24. Don't put all your eggs in one basket

- **Meaning:** Don't risk everything on a single venture.
- **Example:** "I'm investing in multiple stocks to avoid putting all my eggs in one basket."
- **Origin:** The phrase likely originated from agricultural practices, where eggs were carried in baskets. It has been used metaphorically since at least the 17th century.

## 25. Down to earth

- **Meaning:** Practical, realistic, and unpretentious.
- **Example:** "Despite her fame, she's very down to earth and easy to talk to."
- **Origin:** The expression likely originated from the idea of being close to the ground, symbolising a lack of lofty ambitions or airs. It has been in use since the 19th century.

## 26. Drop in the bucket

- **Meaning:** A very small amount compared to what is needed.
- **Example:** "The money we raised is just a drop in the bucket compared to what we need for the project."
- **Origin:** This phrase originated from the image of a small drop of liquid in a large bucket or container. It has been in use since the 18th century.

## 27. Elephant in the room

- **Meaning:** An obvious problem that no one wants to talk about.
- **Example:** "Let's address the elephant in the room and discuss the budget cuts."
- **Origin:** The origin of this expression is uncertain, but it likely stems from the idea of an elephant being too large to ignore or overlook. It has been in use since at least the 20th century.

## 28. Every cloud has a silver lining

- **Meaning:** There is something positive to be found in every bad situation.
- **Example:** "I know losing your job is tough, but every cloud has a silver lining—you'll have more time to spend with your family."
- **Origin:** The phrase originated from the belief that clouds, which bring rain and storms, also have silver linings that reflect light and suggest hope. It has been used metaphorically since at least the 17th century.

## 29. Far cry from

- **Meaning:** Very different from.
- **Example:** "His painting is a far cry from what he used to create; it's much more vibrant and expressive now."

- **Origin:** This expression likely originated from hunting practices, where a "cry" referred to the call of an animal. It has been used figuratively since at least the 18th century.

### 30. Feel under the weather

- **Meaning:** To feel unwell or sick.
- **Example:** "I'm feeling a bit under the weather today; I think I might be coming down with a cold."
- **Origin:** This phrase likely originated from maritime terminology, where "under the weather" referred to being affected by rough seas. It has been in use since the 19th century.

### 31. Fit as a fiddle

- **Meaning:** In very good health and physical condition.
- **Example:** "After months of training, she's fit as a fiddle and ready for the marathon."
- **Origin:** The phrase originated from the comparison of physical fitness to the excellent condition of a well-maintained fiddle or violin. It has been in use since at least the 17th century.

### 32. Get cold feet

- **Meaning:** To become too frightened or nervous to do something you had planned to do.

- **Example:** "I was going to ask her out, but I got cold feet at the last minute."
- **Origin:** This expression likely originated from the literal sensation of cold feet as a physical manifestation of fear or anxiety. It has been used figuratively since at least the 19th century.

### 33. Get the ball rolling

- **Meaning:** To start something, especially a process or project.
- **Example:** "Let's get the ball rolling on our new marketing campaign."
- **Origin:** This phrase originated from the literal act of starting a ball moving in a game or sport. It has been used figuratively since at least the 19th century.

### 34. Give the benefit of the doubt

- **Meaning:** To believe someone's statement without proof; to trust someone.
- **Example:** "I'm going to give her the benefit of the doubt and assume she didn't mean to hurt my feelings."
- **Origin:** This expression likely originated from legal contexts, where the doubt in a case should be resolved in favor of the defendant. It has been in use since at least the 19th century.

### 35. Go the extra mile

- **Meaning:** To make a special effort to achieve something or help someone.

- **Example:** "He always goes the extra mile to make sure his clients are satisfied."
- **Origin:** The phrase originated from a teaching of Jesus in the Bible, where he advises going the extra mile when compelled to go one mile. It has been used figuratively since at least the

## 36. Go with the flow

- **Meaning:** To accept a situation as it is and not try to change it.
- **Example:** "Instead of stressing out, just go with the flow and enjoy the party."
- **Origin:** This idiom likely originates from the idea of floating downstream in a river. If you "go with the flow," you're allowing the current to carry you along without resistance. The phrase suggests adopting a relaxed and adaptable attitude towards life's circumstances rather than trying to fight against them.

## 37. Hit the nail on the head

- **Meaning:** Describe exactly what is causing a situation or problem.
- **Example:** "You hit the nail on the head with your analysis of the issue."
- **Origin:** This expression likely originated from the act of hitting a nail directly on its head, achieving the desired result. It has been in use since at least the 16th century.

## 38. Hit the hay

- **Meaning:** To go to bed; to go to sleep.
- **Example:** "It's getting late; I think it's time to hit the hay."
- **Origin:** This phrase has its origins in the early 20th century American slang. "Hit the hay" refers to the practice of hitting or beating down the hay in a bed before going to sleep on it. Before modern mattresses were widespread, many people slept on beds stuffed with hay or straw. So, "hitting the hay" was a literal action before bedtime that has evolved into a figurative expression meaning to go to sleep.

## 39. Hold your horses

- **Meaning:** To wait or be patient.
- **Example:** "Hold your horses; we need to make sure everything's in order before we leave."
- **Origin:** This idiom comes from the days when horses were a primary mode of transportation. When riding a horse-drawn vehicle, such as a carriage or wagon, it was essential to hold back the horses to control their speed or to stop them entirely. "Hold your horses" thus means to exercise patience or restraint, often used to caution someone against acting too hastily or impulsively.

## 40. Jump on the bandwagon

- **Meaning:** To join a popular trend or activity.

- **Example:** "After seeing everyone getting into yoga, she decided to jump on the bandwagon."
- **Origin:** The phrase originated from the literal act of politicians or performers riding on a bandwagon during parades or campaigns to attract attention. It has been used figuratively since at least the 19th century.

## 41. Keep an eye on

- **Meaning:** To die.
- **Example:** "He kicked the bucket peacefully in his sleep."
- **Origin:** The origin of this phrase is uncertain, but it likely stems from the imagery of a person standing on a bucket and then kicking it away to hang themselves. It has been in use since at least the 18th century.

## 43. Let the cat out of the bag

- **Meaning:** To reveal a secret.
- **Example:** "I accidentally let the cat out of the bag about the surprise party."
- **Origin:** This phrase likely originated from the medieval practice of dishonest merchants substituting cats for pigs in sacks sold as suckling pigs. It has been in use since at least the 18th century.

## 44. Miss the boat

- **Meaning:** To miss an opportunity.

- **Example:** "I missed the boat on investing in that company, and now their stocks are soaring."
- **Origin:** This phrase likely originated from the literal act of missing a boat or ship that one intended to board. It has been used figuratively since at least the 20th century.

## 45. No pain, no gain

- **Meaning:** You have to work hard and endure difficulties to achieve success.
- **Example:** "I know exercise is tough, but remember, no pain, no gain."
- **Origin:** The phrase likely originated in the context of physical fitness or athletics, emphasizing the discomfort of exercise as a prerequisite for strength and conditioning. It has been in use since at least the 19th century.

## 46. On cloud nine

- **Meaning:** Extremely happy or elated.
- **Example:** "After getting promoted, she was on cloud nine for weeks."
- **Origin:** Like many idiomatic expressions, it's possible that "on cloud nine" evolved simply through linguistic creativity and cultural usage, without a specific historical origin.

## 47. On the ball

- **Meaning:** Alert, competent, and attentive.

- **Example:** "She's always on the ball during meetings, never missing important details."
- **Origin:** The idiom "on the ball" likely originated from sports, particularly from ball games such as soccer, basketball, or baseball. In these games, being "on the ball" means being focused, alert, and ready to react quickly to any situation that arises during the game. Players who are constantly attentive and aware of the ball's movement are more likely to make effective plays and contribute to their team's success.

## 48. Piece of cake

- **Meaning:** Something that is very easy to do.
- **Example:** "Don't worry about the exam; it's going to be a piece of cake."
- **Origin:** The origin of this phrase is uncertain, but it likely stems from the idea that consuming a piece of cake is a pleasant and effortless experience. It has been in use since the early 20th century.

## 49. Pull someone's leg

- **Meaning:** To tease or joke with someone.
- **Example:** "I wasn't being serious; I was just pulling your leg."
- **Origin:** The origin of this phrase is uncertain, but it likely originated from the literal act of tripping someone by pulling their leg. It has been in use since at least the 19th century.

## 50. Rain on someone's parade

- **Meaning:** To spoil someone's plans or happiness.
- **Example:** "I don't want to rain on your parade, but have you considered the potential risks?"
- **Origin:** This phrase likely originated from the literal act of rain falling during a parade, ruining the festive atmosphere. It has been used figuratively since at least the mid-20th century.

## 51. Scratch the surface

- **Meaning:** To only begin to understand or deal with a problem or subject.
- **Example:** "We've only scratched the surface of the issue; there's much more to explore."
- **Origin:** The phrase likely originated from the literal act of scratching the surface of an object or material, revealing only a small portion of what lies beneath. It has been in use since at least the 19th century.

## 52. Speak of the devil

- **Meaning:** When the person you were just talking about enters the conversation.
- **Example:** "Speak of the devil! We were just talking about you."

- **Origin:** The phrase likely originated from the superstition that speaking about the devil would summon him. It has been in use since at least the 17th century.

### 53. Take the bull by the horns

- **Meaning:** To confront a problem directly and with courage.
- **Example:** "I decided to take the bull by the horns and ask for a promotion."
- **Origin:** This phrase likely originated from the practice of bullfighting, where the matador faces the bull directly by grabbing its horns. It has been in use since at least the 18th century.

### 54. The ball is in your court

- **Meaning:** It's your responsibility to make the next move or decision.
- **Example:** "I've given you all the information you need; now the ball is in your court."
- **Origin:** The phrase likely originated from tennis, where a player must hit the ball back after it has been served to them. It has been used figuratively since at least the mid-20th century.

### 55. Under the weather

- **Meaning:** Feeling unwell or sick.

- **Example:** "I can't come to the party tonight; I'm feeling under the weather."
- **Origin:** The phrase likely originated from the maritime practice of describing rough or stormy seas as being "under the weather." It has been in use since at least the 19th century.

## 56. Up in the air

- **Meaning:** Uncertain or undecided.
- **Example:** "Our vacation plans are still up in the air; we haven't decided where to go yet."
- **Origin:** The phrase likely originated from the image of something being tossed into the air and remaining suspended without direction or certainty. It has been in use since at least the early 20th century.

## 57. Vanishing act

- **Meaning:** Disappearing suddenly and without explanation.
- **Example:** "He pulled a vanishing act right before the project deadline."
- **Origin:** The phrase likely originated from the image of a magician performing a trick where they appear to vanish from the stage. It has been in use since at least the early 20th century.

## 58. Wear your heart on your sleeve

- **Meaning:** To show your emotions openly and without reservation.
- **Example:** "She wears her heart on her sleeve, so you always know how she's feeling."
- **Origin:** The phrase likely originated from medieval jousting tournaments, where knights would display a lady's favor by wearing it on their sleeve. It has been in use since at least the 16th century.

## 59. X marks the spot

- **Meaning:** A phrase used to indicate the location of something, often used in treasure hunting.
- **Example:** "According to the map, X marks the spot where the treasure is buried."
- **Origin:** The phrase likely originated from the practice of marking a specific location with an X, such as on a map or document. It has been in use since at least the 19th century.

## 60. You can't make an omelet without breaking eggs

- **Meaning:** Achieving something worthwhile often requires sacrifices or difficulties.
- **Example:** "Starting a business is challenging, but you can't make an omelet without breaking eggs."
- **Origin:** The phrase likely originated from the idea that cracking eggs is necessary to make an omelet, despite the mess it creates. It has been in use since at least the 18th century.

## 61. Zig when one should zag

- **Meaning:** To make the wrong decision or take the wrong action.
- **Example:** "I zigged when I should have zagged, and now I'm lost in the woods."
- **Origin:** The phrase likely originated from the visual imagery of zigzagging or moving in a zigzag pattern, contrasting with the straightforward movement of "zagging." It has been used figuratively since at least the mid-20th century.

## 62. A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush

- **Meaning:** It's better to have something that is certain than to risk losing it by trying to get something better.
- **Example:** "I know you want a higher salary, but remember, a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush."
- **Origin:** The phrase likely originated from medieval falconry, where having a bird in hand was more valuable than the prospect of catching two in the bushes. It has been in use since at least the 15th century.

## 63. A chip on your shoulder

- **Meaning:** Holding a grudge or feeling resentful about something.
- **Example:** "Ever since he lost the competition, he's had a chip on his shoulder."

- **Origin:** The phrase likely originated from the practice of placing a wooden chip on one's shoulder as a challenge to others to knock it off, indicating readiness for a fight. It has been in use since at least the early 19th century.

## 64. A drop in the bucket

- **Meaning:** A very small amount compared to what is needed.
- **Example:** "The money we raised is just a drop in the bucket compared to what we need for the project."
- **Origin:** This phrase originated from the image of a small drop of liquid in a large bucket or container. It has been in use since the 18th century.

## 65. A flash in the pan

- **Meaning:** Something that is briefly successful or popular but doesn't last long.
- **Example:** "The viral video was just a flash in the pan; nobody remembers it now."
- **Origin:** The phrase originated from the early use of firearms, where gunpowder sometimes ignited without firing the bullet, resulting in a flash in the pan but no shot. It has been used figuratively since at least the 17th century.

## 66. A taste of your own medicine

- **Meaning:** Being treated the same way you have treated others.

- **Example:** "He's always teasing his siblings. Maybe it's time he got a taste of his own medicine."
- **Origin:** The phrase likely originated from the concept of using medicine to treat the symptoms caused by a particular ailment, implying that experiencing similar treatment provides insight into its effects. It has been used figuratively since at least the 19th century.

## 67. Beggars can't be choosers

- **Meaning:** Those in need must accept whatever help they are offered.
- **Example:** "I know it's not exactly what you wanted, but beggars can't be choosers."
- **Origin:** The phrase likely originated from the idea that beggars, lacking resources or options, cannot afford to be selective about the assistance they receive. It has been in use since at least the 16th century."

## 68. Better late than never

- **Meaning:** It's better to do something late than to never do it at all.
- **Example:** "I know I'm late to the party, but better late than never, right?"
- **Origin:** The phrase likely originated from the Latin phrase "Better late than never" which was later translated into English. It has been used in its current form since at least the 18th century.

## 69. Caught red-handed

- **Meaning:** Caught in the act of doing something wrong.
- **Example:** "The thief was caught red-handed with the stolen goods."
- **Origin:** The phrase likely originated from the idea that blood on one's hands is a clear sign of guilt, especially when associated with a crime. It has been in use since at least the 15th century.

## 70. Don't put the cart before the horse

- **Meaning:** Don't do things in the wrong order.
- **Example:** "You need to finish your education before you start worrying about getting a job. Don't put the cart before the horse."
- **Origin:** The phrase likely originated from the literal scenario of placing a cart in front of a horse, which would prevent proper movement. It has been in use since at least the 16th century.

## 71. Every dog has its day

- **Meaning:** Everyone will have a chance to be successful or lucky at some point.
- **Example:** "I may not have won this time, but every dog has its day."

- **Origin:** The phrase likely originated from the idea that even the least likely or overlooked individuals will experience success or good fortune eventually. It has been in use since at least the 16th century.

## 72. Give someone the cold shoulder

- **Meaning:** To intentionally ignore or be unfriendly towards someone.
- **Example:** "I tried talking to him, but he gave me the cold shoulder."
- **Origin:** This expression dates back to medieval times and has its roots in social etiquette. In medieval England, guests who overstayed their welcome were served a cold shoulder of meat rather than a warm meal. This gesture was meant to subtly signal to the guest that it was time to leave. Over time, the phrase evolved to symbolize deliberately ignoring or being unfriendly towards someone, much like offering them the undesirable "cold shoulder" in social settings.

## 73. In hot water

- **Meaning:** In trouble or facing difficulties.
- **Example:** "I'm in hot water with my boss for missing the deadline."
- **Origin:** The phrase likely originated from the association of hot water with discomfort or pain, especially when used for punishment or cleansing. It has been in use since at least the 16th century.

## 74. It's raining cats and dogs

- **Meaning:** Raining heavily.
- **Example:** "I can't go out; it's raining cats and dogs out there."
- **Origin:** The origin of this phrase is uncertain, but it may have originated from the idea of animals being swept away by heavy rain or from the sounds of heavy rain resembling the pitter-patter of small animals. It has been in use since at least the 17th century.

## 75. Jump down someone's throat

- **Meaning:** To react angrily or defensively to something someone says or does.
- **Example:** "I was just trying to help, but she jumped down my throat."
- **Origin:** This idiom likely originates from the imagery of a person reacting aggressively or defensively by metaphorically "jumping down" another person's throat in response to something they said or did. The phrase emphasizes the suddenness and intensity of the reaction, likening it to an attack or confrontation.

## 76. Kill two birds with one stone

- **Meaning:** To accomplish two tasks with one action.
- **Example:** "By carpooling, we can kill two birds with one stone: save money and reduce emissions."

- **Origin:** The phrase likely originated from the literal act of using a stone to kill birds for food or sport. It has been in use since at least the 17th century.

## 77. Let sleeping dogs lie

- **Meaning:** To avoid restarting or stirring up old conflicts or issues.
- **Example:** "I know you want to confront him, but let sleeping dogs lie."
- **Origin:** The phrase likely originated from the idea that disturbing a sleeping dog could lead to aggression or trouble. It has been in use since at least the early 19th century.

## 78. Out of the frying pan and into the fire

- **Meaning:** From one difficult situation to an even worse one.
- **Example:** "I thought quitting my job would solve my problems, but now I'm in even more debt. It's out of the frying pan and into the fire."
- **Origin:** The phrase likely originated from the image of jumping from a hot frying pan, representing one problem, into a fire, representing a more dangerous situation. It has been in use since at least the 16th century.

## 79. Play devil's advocate

- **Meaning:** To argue against something for the sake of debate or to explore its weaknesses.

- **Example:** "I don't actually believe in astrology, but I'll play devil's advocate for a moment."
- **Origin:** The phrase likely originated from the practice of arguing against someone's beliefs or positions as if representing the devil's perspective. It has been in use since at least the early 19th century.

## 80. Pull the wool over someone's eyes

- **Meaning:** To deceive or trick someone.
- **Example:** "Don't trust him; he's trying to pull the wool over your eyes."
- **Origin:** The phrase likely originated from the literal act of pulling a woolen garment over someone's eyes to blindfold them, making it easier to deceive them. It has been in use since at least the early 19th century.

## 81. Saved by the bell

- **Meaning:** Rescued from a difficult or embarrassing situation by a timely intervention.
- **Example:** "I was about to embarrass myself in front of everyone."
- **Origin:** To prevent fighters from being seriously injured, a bell would ring to signal the end of a round. If a boxer was in trouble just before the bell rang, they were "saved" from further punishment. This concept was later metaphorically extended to refer to being rescued from any challenging or embarrassing situation by a timely intervention.

## 82. A penny for your thoughts

- **Meaning:** Asking someone what they are thinking.
- **Example:** "You seem deep in thought. A penny for your thoughts?"
- **Origin:** This expression dates back to the 16th century in England, where a penny was a small but significant amount of money. The phrase likely originated as a playful way of asking someone to share their thoughts, with the implication that their thoughts are valuable enough to be worth a penny.

## 83. All bark and no bite

- **Meaning:** Someone who is threatening but not willing to act.
- **Example:** "Don't worry about him. He's all bark and no bite."
- **Origin:** This phrase likely originated from the behavior of dogs, where barking is often seen as a warning or a display of aggression, but without actually biting or attacking. It has been in use since at least the 17th century.

## 84. Break a leg

- **Meaning:** A way to wish someone good luck, especially before a performance.
- **Example:** "Break a leg on your audition! You'll do great!"

- **Origin:** The exact origin of this phrase is uncertain, but it likely originated from the superstition that wishing someone good luck directly would bring bad luck. Instead, wishing them the opposite was believed to bring good luck. It has been a part of theater slang since at least the early 20th century.

## 85. Cut to the chase

- **Meaning:** To get to the main point without wasting time.
- **Example:** "Let's cut to the chase and discuss the most important issues."
- **Origin:** This phrase originated in the early days of filmmaking when silent films often ended with chase scenes. Cutting to the chase meant skipping past the buildup and getting to the exciting or crucial part of the film. It has been in figurative use since at least the 1940s.

## 86. Dead as a doornail

- **Meaning:** Completely lifeless or inactive.
- **Example:** "After the accident, the car was dead as a doornail."
- **Origin:** The phrase likely originated from the practice of securing doornails by hammering them through the wood and bending the protruding end to prevent them from coming loose. Once bent, the nail was considered "dead" or unusable for future purposes. It has been in use since at least the 14th century.

## 87. Don't throw the baby out with the bathwater

- **Meaning:** To discard something valuable while trying to get rid of something unwanted.
- **Example:** "We shouldn't abandon the entire project just because of one setback. Let's not throw the baby out with the bathwater."
- **Origin:** This phrase originated in Germany in the 16th century as a literal cautionary tale against accidentally discarding a baby while disposing of dirty bathwater, though there is no historical evidence of this actually happening. It has been used figuratively since at least the 19th century.

## 88. Get off on the wrong foot

- **Meaning:** To start a relationship or activity poorly.
- **Example:** "I think we got off on the wrong foot when we first met, but now we're good friends."
- **Origin:** This phrase likely originates from the world of dance, where a poorly timed step or incorrect foot placement at the beginning of a routine can throw off the entire performance. By extension, it came to mean starting any endeavor or relationship on an unfavorable or awkward note.

## 89. Hit the sack

- **Meaning:** To go to bed or sleep.
- **Example:** "It's been a long day; I'm going to hit the sack."

- **Origin:** The phrase likely originated from the practice of filling mattresses with sacks of hay or straw, making "hitting the sack" a literal action before sleeping. It has been in use since at least the 19th century.

## 90. In the same boat

- **Meaning:** In the same difficult situation.
- **Example:** "We're all in the same boat when it comes to dealing with the pandemic."
- **Origin:** This phrase has nautical origins, referring to passengers or crew members sharing the same vessel and experiencing the same conditions. It has been in use since at least the 17th century.

## 91. Keep something at bay

- **Meaning:** To prevent something unpleasant from happening or approaching.
- **Example:** "Regular exercise can help keep illness at bay."
- **Origin:** This phrase originated from the world of hunting, where "at bay" referred to keeping dangerous animals cornered or restrained to prevent them from attacking. It has been in figurative use since at least the 14th century.

## 92. Make a long story short

- **Meaning:** summarize or condense a lengthy narrative or explanation. It suggests a desire to provide a concise version of a story or account.

- **Example:** "To make a long story short, we missed our flight and had to spend the night at the airport."
- **Origin:** The phrase likely originated from the desire to abbreviate lengthy or tedious narratives. It has been in use since at least the 19th century.

### 93. Make a mountain out of a molehill

- **Meaning:** To exaggerate a problem or issue.
- **Example:** "Don't make a mountain out of a molehill; it's just a small mistake."
- **Origin:** This phrase likely originated from the visual contrast between a small molehill and a large mountain, highlighting the idea of blowing something out of proportion. It has been in use since at least the 16th century.

### 94. Needle in a haystack

- **Meaning:** Something that is difficult or impossible to find.
- **Example:** "Finding my keys in this mess is like looking for a needle in a haystack."
- **Origin:** This phrase originated from the literal difficulty of finding a small object like a needle within a large pile of hay. It has been in use since at least the 16th century.



## 95. On thin ice

- **Meaning:** In a risky or precarious situation.
- **Example:** "After missing the deadline twice, I knew I was on thin ice at work."
- **Origin:** This phrase originated from the literal danger of walking on ice that is not thick enough to support one's weight, risking falling through into freezing water below. It has been in use since at least the 17th century.

## 96. Steal someone's thunder

- **Meaning:** To take credit or praise away from someone by doing something similar first.
- **Example:** "He announced his engagement right before mine, stealing my thunder."
- **Origin:** This phrase originates from playwright John Dennis in the early 18th century. He invented a machine to simulate the sound of thunder for his play, but when another play used it first, he accused them of stealing his invention. The phrase has since evolved to refer to any instance of someone having their moment overshadowed.

## 97. Through thick and thin

- **Meaning:** In good times and bad; during both favorable and unfavorable circumstances.
- **Example:** "I'll stand by you through thick and thin; you can always count on me."

- **Origin:** This phrase originated from medieval jousting tournaments where knights would face various challenges, including thick and thin barriers. Over time, it evolved to symbolize unwavering support or endurance through all conditions. It has been in use since at least the 14th century.

## 98. Two peas in a pod

- **Meaning:** Two people who are very similar or closely related.
- **Example:** "Those two are like two peas in a pod; they even finish each other's sentences."
- **Origin:** This phrase originated from the visual similarity of two peas found within the same pod, suggesting a close resemblance or connection. It has been in use since at least the 16th century.

## 99. Up a creek without a paddle

- **Meaning:** In a difficult situation with no easy solution.
- **Example:** "After my car broke down in the middle of nowhere, I was up a creek without a paddle."
- **Origin:** This phrase likely originated from the literal difficulty of navigating a canoe or boat without a paddle in a waterway like a creek. It has been in use since at least the early 19th century.

## 100. When pigs fly

- **Meaning:** Something that will never happen or is impossible.
- **Example:** "You think he'll apologize? Yeah, when pigs fly!"
- **Origin:** This phrase originated from the medieval belief that pigs could not fly due to their physical characteristics. It has been in use since at least the 16th century.



Learn a **New Skill** at  
**FITA Academy & Get Your**

# **Dream IT Job in 60 Days**

like these Successful Students!



 **93450 45466**



Any  
Queries?

## Classroom Locations



Chennai



Bangalore



Coimbatore



Madurai



Pondicherry



fitaacademy



fita\_academy



@fita\_academy



@fitaacademy



fitaofficial



www.fita.in