

# LIST OF IMPORTANT IDIOMS

- 1) **A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush-** Having something that is certain is much better than taking a risk for more, because chances are you might losing everything.
- 2) **A blessing in disguise-** Something good that isn't recognized by first
- 3) **Bull in china shop-** One who causes damage
- 4) **A chip on your shoulder-** Being upset for something that happened in the past
- 5) **A damp squib-** Complete failure
- 6) **A dime A dozen-** Anything that is common and easy to get
- 7) **A doubting Thomas-** A skeptic who needs physical or personal evidence in order to believe something
- 8) **A drop in the bucket-** A very small part of something big or whole
- 9) **A fool and his money are easily parted-** It's easy for a foolish person to lose his/ her money
- 10) **A gentleman at large-** An unreliable person
- 11) **A green horn-** Inexperienced
- 12) **A house divided against itself cannot stand-** Everyone involved must unify and function together or it will not work out.
- 13) **A leopard can't change his spots-** You cannot change who you are
- 14) **A lost cause-** A hopeless case, a person or situation having no hope of positive change.
- 15) **A man of straw-** A weak person
- 16) **A mare's nest-** A false invention
- 17) **A penny saved is a penny earned-** By not spending money, you are saving money (little by little)
- 18) **A picture paints a thousand words-** A visual presentation is far more descriptive than words
- 19) **A piece of cake-** A task that can be accomplished very easily
- 20) **A slap on the wrist-** A very mild punishment
- 21) **A stalking horse-** Pretence
- 22) **A steal-** Very inexpensive, a bargain
- 23) **A taste of your own medicine-** When you are mistreated the same way you mistreat others
- 24) **A toss-up-** A result hat is still unclear and can go either way
- 25) **A wolf in sheep's clothing-** A dangerous person pretending harmless
- 26) **ABC: Very common knowledge about to-** Ready to, just going to
- 27) **Above all-** Mainly, especially
- 28) **Above board-** Fair and honest
- 29) **According to-** In the order of; on the authority of
- 30) **Actions speak louder than words-** It's better to actually do something than hust talk about it
- 31) **Add fuel to the fire-** Whenever something is done to make a bad situation even worse than it is
- 32) **Against the clock-** Rushed and short on time

- 33) **All (day, week, month, year) long-** The entire day, week, month, year
- 34) **All along-** All the time, from the beginning (without change)
- 35) **All and Sundry-** Without making any distinction
- 36) **All bark and no bite-** When someone is threatening and/ or aggressive but not willing to engage in a fight
- 37) **All greek to me-** Meaningless and incomprehensible like someone who cannot read, speak, or
- 38) **All in all-** Considering everything
- 39) **All in the same boat-** When everyone is facing the same challenges
- 40) **All of a sudden-** Suddenly, without warning (All at once)
- 41) **All right-** Acceptable, fine; yes, okay
- 42) **Alpha and omega-** First and last letter of Greek alphabet, means beginning and end
- 43) **An arm and a leg-** Very expensive, A large amount of money
- 44) **An axe to grind-** To have a dispute with someone
- 45) **An eye wash-** A pretence
- 46) **An iron hand-** By force
- 47) **Apple to my eye-** Someone who is cherished above all others
- 48) **As a matter of fact-** Really, actually (also: as to)
- 49) **As for-** Regarding, concerning (also: as to)
- 50) **As high as a kite-** Anything that is high up in the sky
- 51) **As soon as-** Just after, when
- 52) **As usual-** as is the general case, as is typical
- 53) **At all-** To any degree (also: in the least)
- 54) **At heart-** Basically, fundamentally
- 55) **At last-** Finally, after a long time
- 56) **At least-** A minimum of, no fewer (or less) than
- 57) **At odds-** In dispute
- 58) **At sixes and seven-** Persons who are having different opinions
- 59) **At the drop of a hat-** Willing to do something immediately
- 60) **Back and call-** At the service
- 61) **Back and forth-** In a backward and forward motion
- 62) **Back seat driver-** People who criticize from the sidelines, much like someone giving unwanted advice
- 63) **Back to square one-** Having to start all over again
- 64) **Back to the drawing board-** When an attempt fails and it's time to start all over
- 65) **Bag and baggage-** with all goods
- 66) **Baker's dozen-** Thirteen
- 67) **Bank on-** Depend on, count on
- 68) **Barking up the wrong tree-** A mistake made in something you are trying to achieve
- 69) **Bated breath-** In anxiety, expectancy
- 70) **Beat a dead horse-** To force an issue that has already ended
- 71) **Beating around the bush-** Avoiding the main topic, not speaking directly about the issue
- 72) **Bend over backwards-** Do whatever it takes to help. Willing to do anything

- 73) **Between a Rock and a Hard place-** Stuck between two very bad options
- 74) **Between Scylla and Charybdis-** Choice between two unpleasant alternatives
- 75) **Between the cup and the lips-** On the point of achievement
- 76) **Bite off more than you can chew-** To take on a task that is a way to big
- 77) **Bite your tongue-** To avoid talking
- 78) **Black and white-** In writing
- 79) **Blood is thicker than water-** The family bond is closer than anything else
- 80) **Blow hot and cold-** Having no stand, shows favour at one time and unfavour at another
- 81) **Blue moon-** A rare event or occurrence
- 82) **Body and soul-** Entirely
- 83) **Break a leg-** A superstitious way to say 'Good Luck' without saying 'Good Luck',
- 84) **Buy a lemon-** To purchase a vehicle that constantly gives problems or stops running after you drive it
- 85) **By & by-** Gradually
- 86) **By all means-** Certainly, definitely, naturally (also: of course); using any possible way or method
- 87) **By far-** By a great margin, clearly
- 88) **By fits and starts-** Irregularly
- 89) **By heart-** By memorizing
- 90) **By hook or by crook-** By any means
- 91) **By leaps and bound-** speedily
- 92) **By oneself-** Alone, without assistance
- 93) **By the way-** Incidentally
- 94) **Call a spade a spade-** Straight talks
- 95) **Can't cut the mustard-** Someone who isn't adequate enough to compete or participate
- 96) **Cast iron stomach-** Someone who has no problems, complications or ill effects with eating anything
- 97) **Cats and bull story-** Untrue story
- 98) **Cats and dogs-** Heavy rain
- 99) **Charley horse-** stiffness in the leg/ A leg cramp
- 100) **Chew someone out-** Verbally scold someone
- 101) **Chip on his shoulder-** Angry today about something that occurred in the past
- 102) **Chow down-** To eat
- 103) **Clear-** cut- Clearly stated, definite, apparent
- 104) **Close but no cigar-** To be near and almost accomplish a goal, but fall short
- 105) **Close call-** A situation involving a narrow escape from danger
- 106) **Cock and bull story-** An unbelievable tale, untrue story
- 107) **Come hell or high water-** Any difficult situation or obstacle
- 108) **Crack someone up-** To make someone laugh
- 109) **Cross your fingers-** To hope that something happens the way you want it to
- 110) **Cry wolf-** Intentionally raise a false alarm
- 111) **Cup of joe-** A cup of coffee

- 112) **Curtain lecture**- A reproof by wife to her husband
- 113) **Cut and dried**- Ready made form
- 114) **Cut to the chase**- Leave out all the unnecessary details and just get to the point
- 115) **Dark horse**- One who was previously unknown and is now prominent
- 116) **Day in and day out**- Continuously, constantly
- 117) **Dead Ringer**- 100 % identical, a duplicate
- 118) **Devil's advocate**- Someone who takes a position for the sake of argument without believing in that
- 119) **Dog days of summer**- The hottest day of the summer season
- 120) **Don't count your chickens before they hatch**- Don't rely on it until you sure of it
- 121) **Don't look a gift horse in the month**- When someone gives you a gift, don't be ungrateful
- 122) **Don't pull all your eggs in one basket**- Do not pull all your resources in one possibility
- 123) **Doozy**- Something outstanding
- 124) **Down to the wire**- Something that ends at the last minute or last few seconds
- 125) **Drastic times call for drastic measures**- When you are extremely desperate you need to take extremely desperate actions
- 126) **Drink like a fish**- To drink very heavily, drinking anything
- 127) **Dry run**- Rehearsal
- 128) **Egg on**- To urge somebody
- 129) **Eighty six**- A certain item is no longer available. Or this idiom can also mean, to throw away
- 130) **Elvis has left the building**- The show has come to an end. It's all over
- 131) **Ethnic cleansing**- Killing of a certain ethnic or religious group on a massive scale
- 132) **Ever and anon**- Now and then
- 133) **Every cloud has a silver lining**- Be optimistic, even difficult times will lead to better days
- 134) **Every other (one)**- Every second (one), alternate (ones)
- 135) **Everything but the kitchen sink**- Almost everything and anything has been included
- 136) **Excuse my French**- Please forgive me for cussing
- 137) **Fabian policy**- Policy of delaying decisions
- 138) **Face-to-face**- Direct, personal; directly, personally (written without hyphens)
- 139) **Fair and wide**- Equal opportunity to all
- 140) **Far and wide**- Every where
- 141) **Few and far between**- Not frequent, unusual, rare
- 142) **Field day**- An enjoyable day or circumstance
- 143) **Fifty- fifty**- Divided into two equal parts
- 144) **Finding your feet**- To become more comfortable in whatever you are doing
- 145) **Finger licking good**- To become more comfortable in whatever you are doing
- 146) **Fire and brimstone**- A very tasty food or meal
- 147) **Fire and fury**- Fearful penalties
- 148) **First and foremost**- Extreme enthusiasm
- 149) **Fishy: doubtful**- Highest priority
- 150) **Fixed in your ways**- Not willing or wanting to change from your normal way of doing something
- 151) **Flash in the pan**- Something that shows potential or looks promising in the beginning but fails to deliver

- 152) **Flea market-** A swap meet. A place where people gather to buy and sell inexpensive goods
- 153) **Flesh and blood-** This idiom can mean living material of which people are made of, or it can refer to human nature
- 154) **Flip the bird-** To raise your middle finger at someone
- 155) **Foam at the mouth-** To be enraged and show it
- 156) **Fools' Gold-** Iron pyrites, a worthless rock that resembles real gold
- 157) **Foot the bill-** Bear expenses
- 158) **For good-** Permanently, forever
- 159) **For once-** This one time, for only one time
- 160) **For sure-** Without doubt (also: for certain)
- 161) **For the time being-** Temporarily (also: for now)
- 162) **Free and easy-** Natural and simple
- 163) **French kiss-** An open mouth kiss where tongues touch
- 164) **From now on-** From this time into the future
- 165) **From rags to riches-** To go from very poor to being very wealthy
- 166) **Fuddy-duddy-** An old-fashioned and foolish type of person
- 167) **Full monty-** This idiom can mean either, "The whole thing" or "Completely nude"
- 168) **Funny farm-** A mental institutional facility
- 169) **Gall and wormwood-** Source of irritation
- 170) **Get down to brass tacks-** To become serious about something
- 171) **Get over it-** To move beyond something that is bothering you
- 172) **Get up on the wrong side of the bed-** Someone who is having a horrible day
- 173) **Get your walking papers-** Get fired from the job
- 174) **Gird up the loin-** To be ready
- 175) **Give and take-** Compromise, cooperation between people
- 176) **Give him the slip-** To get away from, to escape
- 177) **Give in-** Surrender
- 178) **Go down like a lead balloon-** To be received badly by an audience
- 179) **Go for broke-** To gamble everything you have
- 180) **Go out on a limb-** Put yourself in a tough position in order to support someone/ something
- 181) **Go the extra mile-** Going above and beyond whatever is required for the task at hand
- 182) **Good Samaritan-** Someone who helps others when they are in need, with no discussion for
- 183) **Graveyard shift-** Working hours from about 12:00 am to 8.00
- 184) **Great minds think alike-** Intelligent people think like each other
- 185) **Green room-** The waiting room, especially for those who are about to go on a TV or radio show
- 186) **Gut feeling-** A personal intuition you get, especially when feel something may not be right
- 187) **Had better-** Should, ought to, be advisable to
- 188) **Hand a gloves-** Very intimate friends
- 189) **Hard and fast-** Certain
- 190) **Hard of hearing-** Partially deaf, not able to hear well
- 191) **Haste makes waste-** Quickly doing things results in a poor ending

- 192) **Hat Trick**- When one player scores three goals in the same hockey game.
- 193) **Haughty and naughty**- Arrogant and naughty
- 194) **Have an axe to grind**- To have a dispute with someone
- 195) **Have got**- To have, to possess
- 196) **Have got to**- Must (also: have to)
- 197) **He lost his head**- Angry and overcome by emotions
- 198) **Head and shoulder**- Superior
- 199) **Head over heels**- Very excited and/ or joyful, especially when in love
- 200) **Heart and soul**- With full devotion
- 201) **Hell in a hand basket**- Deteriorating and headed for complete disaster
- 202) **Helter Shelter**- Here and there
- 203) **Herculean task**- A tedious job
- 204) **High five**- Slapping palms above each others heads as celebration gesture
- 205) **High on the Hog**- Living in luxury
- 206) **Hit below the belt**- Contrary the principles of fairness
- 207) **Hit the books**- To study, especially for a test or exam
- 208) **Hit the hay**- Go to bed or go to sleep
- 209) **Hit the nail on the head**- Do something exactly right or say something exactly right
- 210) **Hit the sack**- Go to bed or go to sleep
- 211) **Hiither and thither**- Here and there
- 212) **Hocus Pocus**- In general, a term used in magic or trickery
- 213) **Hold your horses**- Be patient
- 214) **Hole and corner policy**- A secret policy for an evil purpose
- 215) **Hornet's nest**- Raise controversy
- 216) **Hue and cry**- Great noise
- 217) **Hush money**- A bribe
- 218) **Icing on the cake**- When you already have it good and get something on top of what you already have
- 219) **Idle hands are the devil's tools**- You are more likely to get in trouble if you have nothing to do
- 220) **If it's not one thing, it's another**- When one thing goes wrong, then another, and another...
- 221) **Ill at ease**- Uncomfortable or worried in a situation
- 222) **In a hurry**- Hurried, rushed (also: in a rush)
- 223) **In case**- In order to be prepared if the meaning is in order to be prepared if something happens
- 224) **In hand**- Under firm control, well managed
- 225) **In like Flynn**- To be easily successful, especially when sexual or romantic
- 226) **In no time**- Very quickly, rapidly
- 227) **In the bag**- To have something secured
- 228) **In the buff**- Nude
- 229) **In the heat of the moment**- Overwhelmed by what is happening in the moment
- 230) **In the long run**- Eventually, after a long period of time
- 231) **In the worst way**- Very much, greatly



- 232) **In time to-** Before the time necessary to do something
- 233) **In touch-** Having contact
- 234) **In vain-** Useless, without the desired result
- 235) **In your face-** An aggressive and bold confrontation
- 236) **Ins and outs-** Full detail
- 237) **Inside out-** With the inside facing the outside
- 238) **Intents and purposes-** Practically
- 239) **It figures-** It seems likely, reasonable, or typical
- 240) **It takes two to tango-** A two person conflict where both people are at fault
- 241) **It's a small world-** You frequently see the same people in different places
- 242) **It anyone's call-** A competition where the outcome is difficult to judge or predict
- 243) **Ivory tower-** Imaginary world
- 244) **Ivy league-** Since 1954 the Ivy league has been the following universities: Columbia, Brown, Cornell
- 245) **Jaywalk-** Crossing the street (from the middle) without using the crosswalk
- 246) **Joshing me-** Tricking me
- 247) **Keep an eye on him-** You should carefully watch him. Keep an eye on
- 248) **Keep body and soul together-** To earn a sufficient amount of money in order to keep yourself alive
- 249) **Keep your chin up-** To remain joyful in a tough situation
- 250) **Kick the bucket-** Die
- 251) **Kith and kin-** Blood relatives
- 252) **Kitty-corner-** Diagonally across. Sometimes called Catty- Corner as well
- 253) **Knock on Wood-** Knuckle tapping on wood in order to avoid some bad luck
- 254) **Know the ropes-** To understand the details
- 255) **Last but not least-** An introduction phrase to let the audience know that the last person mentioned is also very important
- 256) **Last straw-** The final event in a series of unacceptable actions
- 257) **Latin and Greek-** Unable to understand
- 258) **Leave no stone unturned-** Make all possible efforts
- 259) **Lend me your ear-** To politely ask for someone's full attention
- 260) **Length and breadth-** All over
- 261) **Let along-** and certainly not (also: not to mention, to say nothing of)
- 262) **Let the cat out of the bag-** To share a secret that wasn't suppose to be shared
- 263) **Level playing field-** A fair competition where no side has an advantage
- 264) **Life and soul-** Main support
- 265) **Like a chicken and its head cut off-** To act in a frenzied manner
- 266) **Liquor someone up-** To get someone drunk
- 267) **Little by little-** Gradually, slowly (also: step by step)
- 268) **Live-wire-** Energetic
- 269) **Loaves and fish-** Material interests
- 270) **Lock and key-** In safe place
- 271) **Long in the tooth-** Old people (or horses)

- 272) **Loose cannon**- Someone who is unpredictable and can cause damage if not kept in check
- 273) **Make no bones about**- To state a fact so there are no doubts or objections
- 274) **Method to my madness**- Strange or crazy actions that appear meaningless but in the end are done for a good reason
- 275) **Might and main**- With all enthusiasm
- 276) **Milk and water**- Weak
- 277) **More or less**- Approximately, almost, somewhat, to a certain degree
- 278) **Mumbo Jumbo**- Nonsense or meaningless speech
- 280) **Mum's the word**- To keep quiet, To say nothing
- 280) **Narrow-minded**- Not willing to accept the ideas of others

## TIPS TO IMPROVE YOUR COMMUNICATION

### "Have Fun"

**L**et's face it. It's far easier to learn something new when you're having fun. Inject silliness into your speaking practice by talking to yourself when you're alone, singing along with popular songs in English, doing tongue twisters (Try our top tongue twisters) or doing one-minute "impromptu speeches" on randomly-chosen topics (such as snakes, coffee, India or subjects such as "If I ruled the world, I would...", "Three surprising facts about me," or "Which came first, the chicken or the egg?"). Great practice and great, silly fun.

