

IDIOMS AND PHRASES

S.No.	Idioms & Phrases	Meaning
1.	Rank and File	Ordinary People
2.	By fits and starts	In short periods, not regularly
3.	A wee bit	A little
4.	Out of the wood	Free from difficulties and dangers
5.	Under his thumb	Under his control
6.	At one's wits end	In a state where one does not know what to do
7.	Between the devil and the deep sea	Between two dangers
8.	Burn the midnight oil	Work or study hard
9.	Call a spade a spade	Speak frankly and directly
10.	Come off with flying colors	Be highly successful
11.	Hoping against hope	Without hope
12.	Hit the nail on the head	Do or say the exact thing
13.	An axe to grind	A personal interest in the matter
14.	To get rid of	Dispose of
15.	At daggers drawn	Bitterly hostile
16.	To play ducks and drakes	To act foolishly or inconsistently
17.	To take the bull by the horns	To tackle a problem in a bold and direct fashion
18.	Rain cats and dogs	Rain heavily
19.	To move heaven and earth	To make a supreme effort
20.	No avail	Without any result
21.	Bark up the wrong tree	Accuse or denounce the wrong person
22.	Keep one at bay	Keep one at a distance
23.	Make a clean breast of it	Confess – especially when a person has done a wrong thing
24.	Have a card up one's sleeve	Have a secret plan in reserve
25.	Like a cat on hot bricks	Very nervous
26.	Cat and dog life	Life full of quarrels
27.	Cock and bull story	Made up story that one should not believe
28.	Cry for the moon	Ask for the impossible
29.	The pros and cons	The various aspects of a matter in detail
30.	Be in a tight corner	In a very difficult situation
31.	Cross one's t's and dot	Be precise, careful and one's i's exact
32.	At arm's length	To keep at a distance
33.	Out of the question	Impossible
34.	Out of the way	Strange

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35.	Show a clean pair of heels	Run away
36.	Keep one's fingers crossed	The anxiety in which you hope that nothing will upset your plans
37.	In the nick of time	Just at the last moment
38.	Sitting on the fence	Hesitate between two decisions
39.	Spread like wild fire	Spread quickly
40.	The gift of the gab	Talent for speaking
41.	By hook or by crook	By fair or foul means
42.	Feather one's own nest	Make money unfairly
43.	Throw out of gear	Disturb the work
44.	Take to one's heels	Run away
45.	Tooth and nail	With all one's power
46.	Die in harness	Die while in service
47.	Take a leaf out of one's book	Imitate one
48.	Leave no stone unturned	Use all available means
49.	A man of straw	A man of no substance
50.	Read between the lines	Understand the hidden meaning
51.	In cold blood	Deliberately and without emotion
52.	A thorn in the flesh	A constant source of annoyance
53.	Smell a rat	Suspect something foul
54.	Harp on the same string	Dwell on the same subject
55.	Bury the hatchet	End the quarrel and make peace
56.	Leave one in the lurch	Desert one in difficulties; leave one in a helpless condition
57.	Like a fish out of water	In a strange situation
58.	At one's beck and call	Under his control
59.	To make both ends meet	To live within one's income
60.	In hot water	In trouble
61.	Nip in the bud	Destroy in the early stage
62.	Stick to one's guns	Remain faithful to the cause
63.	To eat humble pie	To apologize humbly and to yield under humiliating circumstances
64.	In high spirits	Very happy
65.	Put the cart before the horse	Put or do things in the wrong order
66.	To all names	To abuse
67.	On tenterhooks	In a state of suspense and anxiety
68.	Wash one's dirty linen	Discuss unpleasant in public-private matters before strangers

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69.	To bell the cat	To face the risk
70.	A hard nut to crack	A difficult problem
71.	Let the cat out of the bag	Reveal a secret
72.	A big gun	An important person
73.	Kill two birds with one stone	To achieve two results with one effort
74.	Take one to task	Rebuke
75.	Gain ground	Become Popular
76.	To blow one's own	To praise one's own trumpet achievement
77.	A bosom friend	A very close friend
78.	A brown study	Dreaming
79.	Turn a deaf ear	Disregard / ignore what one says
80.	A close shave	Narrow escape
81.	Turn over a new leaf	Change for the better
82.	Make up one's mind	Decide
83.	In the long run	Eventually; ultimately
84.	Bring to light	Disclose
85.	Pay off old scores	Take revenge
86.	Hard and fast rules	Strict rules
87.	At the eleventh hour	At the last moment
88.	A close shave	Narrow escape
89.	To cut a sorry figure	To make a poor show
90.	With a high hand	Oppressively
91.	Burn one's fingers	Get into trouble by interfering in other's affairs
92.	Laugh one's head off	Laugh heartily
93.	Chew the cud	Ponder over something
94.	Play second fiddle	Take an unimportant part
95.	Above board	Honest and open
96.	Through thick and thin	Under all conditions
97.	Put a spoke in one's wheel	To upset one's plans
98.	At sixes and sevens	In a disordered/disorganized manner, chaotic
99.	At home	Comfortable
100.	Alpha and omega	The beginning and the end
101.	At sea	Confused and lost
102.	A bosom friend	A very close friend
103.	At one's beck and call	At one's service
104.	By leaps and bounds	Rapidly

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105.	To burn one's boats	Go back on a decision
106.	To beat about the bush	Talk irrelevantly
107.	To burn candle at both ends	To waste lavishly
108.	Take one to task	Rebuke
109.	A bone of contention	A source of quarrel
110.	Add fuel to the fire	To aggravate the situation
111.	An acid test	A critical test
112.	At a snail's pace	Very slowly
113.	A bolt from the blue	Something unexpected
114.	To build castles in the air	Make imaginary schemes
115.	Once in a blue moon	Something that happens very rarely
116.	Beating around the bush	Avoiding the main topic
117.	Cry over spilled milk	Complaining about a loss or failure from the past
118.	Chip on your shoulder	When someone is upset about something that happened a while ago
119.	Piece of cake	Something that is easy to understand or do
120.	Golden handshake	A big sum of money given to a person when he/she leaves a company or retires
121.	Spill the beans	To disclose a secret
122.	Blessing in disguise	Something good and useful that did not initially seem that way
123.	Mean business	Being Serious or Dedicated
124.	Come hell or high water	Possible obstacles in your path
125.	Apple of one's eye	Being cherished
126.	Bite off more than you can chew	Not able to complete a task due to lack of ability
127.	The best of both worlds	The benefits of widely differing situations, enjoyed at the same time
128.	Feeling a bit under the weather	Feeling slightly ill
129.	Icing on the cake	Something that turns good into great
130.	Cost an arm and a leg	Be very expensive
131.	Jump the bandwagon	To join a popular activity or trend
132.	Ball is in your court	When it is up to you to make the next decision or step
133.	To be in the doldrums	To be in low spirits
134.	To sit on the fence	To remain neutral
135.	Break the ice	To initiate a social conversation or interaction

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136.	Hear it on grapevine	To hear rumors about something or someone
137.	Can't judge a book by its cover	Cannot judge something primarily on appearance
138.	It takes two to tango	Actions or communications need more than one person
139.	Let the cat out of the bag	To reveal the secret carelessly or by mistake
140.	Black and blue	Full of Bruises
141.	Be on cloud nine	Be very happy
142.	Last straw	The final problem in a series of problems
143.	A bird's eye view	A view from a very high place that allows you to see a very large area
144.	A litmus Test	A method that helps to know if something is correct
145.	At the drop of a hat	Willingness to do something instantly
146.	Afraid of one's own shadow	To become easily frightened
147.	A house of cards	A poor plan
148.	Fool's paradise	False sense of happiness
149.	Get a raw deal	To not be treated as well as other people
150.	Give cold shoulder	To ignore
151.	Hand to mouth	Live on only basic necessities
152.	Make a face	To show dislike or disappointment through facial expressions
153.	It's Greek to me	Something that is not understandable
154.	To pour oil on troubled waters	To make peace
155.	Don't put all your eggs in one basket	Do not put all your resources in one basket (in one place or thing)
156.	To put in a nutshell	To say in a few words or to make something concise
157.	Back out	To withdraw from a promise or contract
158.	Blow up	To explode
159.	Back Up	To support and sustain
160.	Back Upon	To be relevant
161.	Break Down	Failure in something
162.	Break off	To end or discontinue
163.	Break Up	To disperse / dissolve
164.	Bring up	To rear
165.	Call forth	To provoke

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166.	Call out	To shout
167.	Call upon	To order
168.	Carry on	To continue
169.	Cast away	To throw aside
170.	Catch up with	To overtake
171.	Come off	To take place
172.	Cry Down	To make little of
173.	Catch up with	To overtake
174.	Cry out against	To complain loudly against
175.	Cut out	Designed for
176.	Drop in	To Visit Casually
177.	Drop out	To fall
178.	Fall back	To Recede; To Retreat
179.	Fall down	From a higher position to a lower one
180.	Fall off	To Withdraw; To Drop Off
181.	Fall under	To come under
182.	Get along	To Prosper; To Progress; To Proceed
183.	Get on with	To Live Pleasantly Together; To Progress
184.	Get into	To be involved in
185.	Give in	To Surrender; To Yield
186.	Give over	Not to do any longer
187.	Go after	To Follow; To Pursue
188.	Go Down	To be accepted
189.	Go without	To remain without
190.	Go by	To follow
191.	Hang about	To Loiter near a place
192.	Hang upon	To depend upon
193.	Hold out	To Endure; To Refuse to yield; To continue; To offer
194.	Hold to	Abide By
195.	Keep off	To ward off
196.	Keep up with	To keep pace with
197.	Knock out	To win by hitting another one
198.	It takes two to tango	Both people involved in a bad situation are responsible for it
199.	Last straw	The final problem in a series of problems
200.	Keep something at bay	Keep something away
201.	Kill two birds with one stone	To solve two problems at a time with just

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202.	Let sleeping dogs lie	one action Leave something alone if it might cause trouble
203.	Open the floodgates	Release something that was previously under control
204.	Out of the blue	Happen unexpectedly
205.	Out on a limb	Do something risky
206.	Over the Top	Totally excessive and not suitable for the occasion
207.	Pen is mightier than the sword	Words and communication have a greater effect than war
208.	Push one's luck	Trying to obtain more than what one has
209.	Reap the harvest	Benefit or suffer as a direct result of past actions
210.	Roll up sleeves	To get yourself prepared
211.	See eye to eye	To be in agreement with
212.	Shot in the dark	A complete guess
213.	Sink your teeth into	Do something with a lot of energy and enthusiasm
214.	Take with a grain/pinch of salt	To doubt the accuracy of information
215.	Skating on thin ice	Do or say something risky
216.	Tight spot	A difficult situation
217.	Strike while the iron is hot	To act at the right time
218.	Take the plunge	Venture into something of one's interest despite the risks involved
219.	Take a nosedive	Rapid drop or decrease in value
220.	Think the world of	Admire someone very much
221.	Stand in a good stead	To be useful or be of good service to someone
222.	Take a back seat	Choose to be less important in a role
223.	Wave a dead chicken	Do something useless
224.	Whale of a time	Enjoy a lot
225.	Wrap one's brain around	Concentrate on something to understand
226.	Zero in on something	Focus all attention on one thing
227.	Above all	Chiefly, Mainly
228.	On Account of	Due to
229.	On no account	Not for Any Reason
230.	A Fidus Achates	A faithful friend or a devoted follower
231.	The Heel of Achilles	A Weak Point

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232.	An Adonis	A very handsome man
233.	To assume airs	To affect superiority
234.	To stand aloof	To keep to oneself and not mix with others
235.	To lead to the altar	To marry
236.	An Ananias	A Liar
237.	An Apollo	A Man with Perfect Physique
238.	To Upset the Apple Cart	To disturb the peace
239.	Apple Pie Order	In perfect order
240.	Arcadian Life	A blissful, happy, rural and simple life
241.	To take up arms	To fight or go to the war
242.	To Grind	To have some selfish objective in view
243.	To break the back of anything	To perform the most difficult part
244.	To backbite a person	To speak disguise about someone
245.	He has no backbone	He has no will of his own
246.	To cause bad blood	To Cause Enmity
247.	Bag and Baggage	With all one's belongings
248.	To keep the ball rolling	To keep things going
249.	Barmecide feast	Imaginary Benefits
250.	Bee-line	The shortest distance between two places
251.	Behind one's back	Without one's Knowledge
252.	Behind the scenes	In Private
253.	To hit below the belt	To act unfairly in a contest
254.	To bite the dust	To be Defeated in Battle
255.	A Wet Blanket	A person who discourages enjoyment or enthusiasm
256.	In Cold Blood	Deliberately
257.	A blue Stocking	A learned/educated or intellectual woman
258.	At First Blush	At first sight
259.	A Bolt from the Blue	Something completely unexpected that surprises you
260.	One's bread and butter	One's means of livelihood
261.	To breadth one's last	To Die
262.	To make bricks without straw	To attempt to do something without proper materials
263.	To kick the bucket	To die
264.	Good wine needs no bush	There is no need to advertise something good

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265.	To burn the candle at both ends	To expend energy in two directions at the same time
266.	If the cap fits, wear it	If you think the remarks refer to you, then accept the criticism
267.	Care killed the cat	Don't fret and worry yourself to death
268.	To Catch one's eye	To attract attention
269.	To take the chair	To preside a meeting
270.	She is no chicken	She is older than she says
271.	To pick and choose	To make a careful selection
272.	To square the circle	To attempt something impossible
273.	Every cloud has a silver lining	Adverse conditions do not last forever
274.	Close fistcd	Mean
275.	Cut your cloth according to your cloth	Live within your income
276.	A cock and bull story	A foolishly incredible story
277.	To be cock sure	To be perfectly sure or certain
278.	To throw cold water upon anything	To discourage efforts
279.	Off color	Not in the usual form
280.	To commit to memory	To learn by heart
281.	Too many cooks spoil the broth	Where there are more workers than necessary
282.	Crocodile tears	Hypocritical Tears
283.	By hook or by crook	By fair or foul means
284.	Cut and dried	Readymade
285.	Up to date	Recent
286.	Evil days	A period of misfortune
287.	Halcyon Days	A time when there are peace and happiness in the land
288.	To step into dead man's shoes	To come into an inheritance
289.	Go to the devil	Be off
290.	Devil's bones	Dice
291.	Devil's Playthings	Playing Cards
292.	Give a dog a bad name and hang him	Once a person loses his reputation
293.	Every dog has his day	Sooner or later, everyone has his share of good fortune
294.	To throw dust in one's eyes	To try to deceive someone or mislead someone
295.	A white elephant	A useless possession which is extremely expensive to keep
296.	To set the Thames on fire	To do something sensational or

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297.	A burnt child dreads the fire	remarkable One who has had a previous unpleasant experience is always scared of situations where such experiences are likely to be repeated
298.	A fish out of water	Anyone in an awkward
299.	Foul play	Cheating
300.	To jump from a frying pan into fire	To come out of one trouble and get into a worse
301.	All that glitters are not gold	Things are not always as attractive as they appear
302.	To die in harness	To continue at one's occupation until death
303.	Make hay while the sun shines	Take advantage of all opportunities
304.	Lock, stock and barrel	The whole of everything
305.	A miss is as good as a mile	Comes nowhere near it. If someone narrowly misses the target it still is treated as a missed one or failure.
306.	To move heaven and earth	To exert all efforts
307.	One swallow does not make a summer	It is unreliable to base one's conclusions on only a single test or incident
308.	If wishes were horses, beggars might ride	If wishing could make things happen, then even the most destitute people would have everything they wanted
309.	A nine days' wonder	An event which relates a sensation for a time but is soon forgotten
310.	Yellow press	Newspapers which publish sensational and unscrupulous stories and exaggerates the news to attract readers.
311.	A ball park figure	A general financial figure
312.	To balance the books	To make certain that the amount of money spent is not more than the amount of money received.
313.	A cash cow	A product or service that makes a lot of money for a company
314.	Devil's Advocate	To present a counter argument
315.	Don't give up the day job	You are not very good at something. You could not do it professionally.
316.	To cook the books	To modify financial statements
317.	To get the sack	To be dismissed from your job
318.	To be snowed under	To be very busy

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| 319. | To work your fingers to the bone
Or
To sweat blood | To work really hard |
| 320. | Hear it on the grapevine | To hear rumors |
| 321. | In the heat of the moment | Overwhelmed by what is happening in the moment |
| 322. | Not a spark of decency | No Manners |
| 323. | Speak of the devil! | This expression is used when the person you have just been talking about arrives |
| 324. | Whole nine yards | Everything. All of it |
| 325. | Your guess is as good as mine | To have no idea about anything |