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Idioms & Phrases

Idiom	Meaning
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 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
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	Good luck
Break the ice	Make people feel more comfortable
Burn bridges	Destroy relationships
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	Give away a secret
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
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
Shape up or ship out	Work better or leave
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!
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
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 get bent out of shape	To get upset
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
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 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

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