

What are Idiom and Phrases?

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An idiom is an expression, word, or phrase that has a figurative meaning that is comprehended in regard to a common use of that expression that is separate from the literal meaning or definition of the words of which it is made.

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In English language, there are estimated to be at least 25,000 idiomatic expressions and phrases. Usually, an idiom's meaning is not deducible and does not have an analogue in others languages so it often is quite difficult for non-native speakers, especially ones who are not good at the language, to understand and to use them properly. Nevertheless, many idioms have their equivalents in others meaning relates to the literal meaning. For example, kill two birds with one stone means 'to achieve two things at the same time', and the image in the metaphor supports the meaning. Another example is 'fine and dandy', what means that everything is going well. In other cases, the literal meaning does not make sense at all. For example, to go for an early bath means 'to lose a job or a position because things have gone wrong'. The best way to understand an idiom without using a dictionary is to see it in context. If someone says: He owns some old iron mines that have not been used in donkey's ears, then listener, using the context and common sense understands the meaning 'to last for a very long time'. **(What are Idioms and Phrases)**

Types of Idioms

There are several types of idioms, which are differently formed. Here are some with examples:

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Whole clause or sentence:

- To sort out the men from the boys (a differently or challenging situation tests and shows who is strong and capable and who is not.)
- A millstone around your neck (a very unpleasant problem or responsibility that you cannot escape from)
- To give someone a piece of your mind (someone has annoyed or upset you and you angrily tell them what do you think fo them)

Prepositional phrase:

- First prepositional phrase is '*In your mind's eye*' (to have a clear picture of something in your imagination or memory)
- Second prepositional phrase is '*On the nail*' (to pay something immediately and in cash)
- Third prepositional phrase is '*On the nod*' (something is accepted without being questioned or argued)

Verb + Object/complement (and/or adverbial):

- To keep your nose clean (to behave well and avoid trouble)
- To go nuclear (to get extremely angry and start behaving in a forceful or irrational way as a result)
- To turn the page (to make a fresh start after a period of difficulties and troubles)

Compound:

- Growing pains (temporary difficulties and problems as it develops and grows stronger)
- A paper tiger (a person, country, organization that seems to be powerful and actually does not have any power)
- A close shave (someone was very nearly to have a disaster or an accident, or very nearly suffered a defeat)

Simile (as + adjective + as/like + noun):

- Nice as pie (a very kind, friendly, charming person)
- Nutty as a fruitcake (a strange, foolish or crazy person)
- Old as the hills (something very old, and perhaps old-fashioned or very traditional)

Binomial (word + and + word)

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- A nod and a wink (someone communicates indirectly or by giving some kind of signal)
 - Neck and neck (two competitors are exactly level with each other so that it is impossible to say who will win)
 - Oil and water (two people or things are very different and they cannot work together or exist together successfully)

Trinomial (word + word + and + word):

- Signed, sealed and delivered (an agreement is official and cannot be changed)
- Every Tom, Dick, and Harry (ordinary people who do not have any special skills or qualities)
- Cool, calm and collected (relaxed, in control, not nervous)

Exclamation or saying:

- Act your age! (Something that you say to someone who is being silly to tell them to behave in a more serious way)
- Over my dead body! (Someone is going to do everything to prevent something)
- Bully for you! (Something that you say when you do not think what someone has done deserves praise or admiration, although they think it does)

