

Common English Idioms – Worksheet 1

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____ Score: / 36



Do this worksheet
online and check your
answers instantly

Exercise 1: Match the idioms with their meanings

Match each idiom with its meaning from the box. There are two extra meanings you do not need.

Example: on cloud nine → very happy

WORD BOX

to start a conversation in an awkward situation feeling slightly ill very easy
to be very expensive to study hard to reveal a secret by mistake very rarely undecided
to be very angry to work late at night

1. break the ice → _____
2. under the weather → _____
3. a piece of cake → _____
4. cost an arm and a leg → _____
5. hit the books → _____
6. let the cat out of the bag → _____
7. once in a blue moon → _____
8. on the fence → _____

Exercise 2: Complete the idioms

Complete each sentence with a word from the box. There are two extra words.

Example: I was so happy I felt like I was on cloud _____. → nine

WORD BOX

hit boat bush nail day cover fingers ropes hand table

9. I'm so tired that I'm going to _____ the sack early tonight.
10. We're all in the same _____, so let's help each other.
11. Stop beating around the _____ and tell me what happened.
12. You've hit the _____ on the head – that's exactly the problem.
13. Let's call it a _____ and finish the rest tomorrow.
14. Don't judge a book by its _____.

15. I'll keep my _____ crossed for your job interview.

16. The new manager is still learning the _____.

Exercise 3: Use the correct verb form

Complete each idiom with the correct form of the verb in brackets.

Example: She ____ (break) the ice with a funny story. → broke

17. Jamal _____ (spill) the beans about the surprise party yesterday.

18. I've been _____ (burn) the midnight oil all week to finish this report.

19. When Dad saw the broken window, he _____ (hit) the roof.

20. Are you _____ (pull) my leg? I can't believe it!

21. They _____ (bite) off more than they could chew when they agreed to organise the whole festival.

22. Maria has finally _____ (get) the hang of driving in the city.

23. Thanks for _____ (keep) an eye on the kids last night.

Exercise 4: Correct the mistakes

Each sentence has one wrong word in the idiom. Write the correct sentence.

Example: I'm over the sun about my new job. → I'm over the moon about my new job.

24. The test was a piece of pie.

25. It's raining cats and cows outside.

26. I'm feeling a bit under the rain today.

27. Don't put all your eggs in one box.

28. That new car must have cost an arm and a foot.

29. We see each other once in a red moon.

30. Sarah has a heart of silver; she always helps everyone.

Exercise 5: Put the words in order

Put the words in the correct order to make a sentence with an idiom.

Example: cake / was / of / a / it / piece → It was a piece of cake.

31. the / let / out / she / bag / cat / of / the

32. on / still / I'm / the / fence

33. hit / I / books / to / the / need

34. ice / a / to / joke / break / told / he / the

35. blessing / disguise / was / it / a / in

36. ball / court / the / in / is / your / now

Answer key – Common English Idioms – Worksheet 1

Exercise 1: Match the idioms with their meanings

1. **to start a conversation in an awkward situation**
You 'break the ice' when you make people feel relaxed at the start of a meeting or party.
2. **feeling slightly ill**
If you are 'under the weather', you feel a little sick.
3. **very easy**
Something that is 'a piece of cake' is very easy to do.
4. **to be very expensive**
If something 'costs an arm and a leg', it is extremely expensive.

5. **to study hard**
To 'hit the books' means to study seriously, often before an exam.
6. **to reveal a secret by mistake**
You 'let the cat out of the bag' when you accidentally tell a secret.
7. **very rarely**
Something that happens 'once in a blue moon' happens very rarely.
8. **undecided**
If you are 'on the fence', you have not decided yet.

Exercise 2: Complete the idioms

9. **hit**
'Hit the sack' means to go to bed.
10. **boat**
'In the same boat' means in the same difficult situation.
11. **bush**
'Beat around the bush' means to avoid saying something directly.
12. **nail**
'Hit the nail on the head' means to describe something exactly right.

13. **day**
'Call it a day' means to stop working for now.
14. **cover**
This idiom means you shouldn't judge someone or something by appearance.
15. **fingers**
'Keep your fingers crossed' means to hope for good luck.
16. **ropes**
'Learn the ropes' means to learn how to do a new job.

Exercise 3: Use the correct verb form

17. **spilled**
The reviewer's answer 'spilled' is already accepted, alongside 'spilt', as the past simple for a finished action yesterday, so no change is needed.
18. **burning**
Present perfect continuous needs the -ing form after 'have been'.
19. **hit**
The past simple of 'hit' is 'hit'; 'hit the roof' means to become very angry.

20. **pulling**
Present continuous question: 'Are you pulling my leg?' means 'Are you joking?'
21. **bit**
Past simple of 'bite' is 'bit'; the idiom means to take on too much.
22. **got**
Present perfect needs the past participle: 'got' (British) or 'gotten' (American).
23. **keeping**
After a preposition like 'for', we use the -ing form.

Exercise 4: Correct the mistakes

24. **The test was a piece of cake.**
The idiom is 'a piece of cake'.
25. **It's raining cats and dogs outside.**
The idiom is 'raining cats and dogs', meaning raining heavily.
26. **I'm feeling a bit under the weather today.**
The idiom is 'under the weather'.
27. **Don't put all your eggs in one basket.**
The idiom is 'put all your eggs in one basket'.

28. **That new car must have cost an arm and a leg.**
The idiom is 'cost an arm and a leg'.
29. **We see each other once in a blue moon.**
The idiom is 'once in a blue moon'.
30. **Sarah has a heart of gold; she always helps everyone.**
The idiom is 'a heart of gold', meaning very kind.

Exercise 5: Put the words in order

31. She let the cat out of the bag.

Subject + verb + the fixed idiom 'let the cat out of the bag'.

32. I'm still on the fence.

'Still' goes after the verb 'be' and before the idiom.

33. I need to hit the books.

'Need to' + infinitive, followed by 'hit the books'.

34. He told a joke to break the ice.

'To break the ice' explains the purpose of telling a joke.

35. It was a blessing in disguise.

'A blessing in disguise' is something that seems bad but turns out good.

36. The ball is in your court now.

'The ball is in your court' means it's your turn to decide or act.

Notes for teachers: Start with Exercise 1 as a pair activity so learners can guess meanings before checking. Learners often change one word in an idiom, for example 'a piece of pie' or 'all your eggs in one box', so stress that idioms are fixed and only the verb changes form. As a follow-up, ask learners to write a short story or dialogue using at least five idioms from the worksheet.