



Learn

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# Metaphorical Idioms

Through Stories

Yousef Seddigh

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Metaphorical  
Idioms  
Through  
Stories

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## **Acknowledgements**

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## **Dedications**

I would like to dedicate this book to the one who directed my soul toward the beauties of the world. She sacrificed her precious seconds for me and pushed me to accomplish this project by giving sweet and promising pieces of advice.

Thank you so much Marjan.

## **INTRODUCTION**

There are quite a few books containing idiomatic expressions on the market familiarizing both teachers and students with the uses of such terms. Some of them are quite bulky and contain different expressions related to a unique subject, some other categorize the idioms in some other ways.

What actually triggered writing this rather arduous book to my mind, was looking for an strategy which could help both EFL and ESL learners to somehow internalized the idioms.

What makes this book different from the other similar sources, is the innovatory use of idioms through simple stories and familiarizing the readership with them in contexts. Moreover, the presented book has been partitioned in a way that each unit contains the idioms related to a certain key word from which the idiom has been made.

Finally, I take the opportunity to ask my beloved readers to provide me with their constructive

comments that can undoubtedly be helpful and will encourage me to do better in forthcoming projects.

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## Section 1: Areas of Metaphor

### Unit 1

#### Business is war

##### IDIOMS

**To gain ground:** to seize the power and popularity

**To join forces with:** to work with others in order to achieve a common goal

**To set targets:** to presuppose purposes

**To take flak:** to receive criticisms

**To go nowhere fast:** to have no progress

**To be one's own worst enemy:** to be the source of one's own failures

If you want to **gain ground** on your competitors you have to bear in mind certain kind of things.

First of all **join forces with** some of the outstanding companies and try to discover the procedures they

follow in order to achieve your goals. Always **set targets** in advance and do your best to achieve what you have planned. You might inevitably **take a lot of flaks** at the beginning of your business and think that you are **going nowhere fast**, but I assure you that the only thing you need is patience and perseverance.

Never underestimate yourself and always behave energetically. Always be confident and trust your competence. You have got to bear in mind that you are your **own worst enemy**.



## Unit 2

### Seeing is understanding

#### IDIOMS

**Can't see past/further than the end of your nose:** not to be able to notice what is happening around you

**Eyes wide open:** completely alert

**To make yourself clear:** to clarify something by explaining every detail

**To see sense/reason:** to listen to good advice and be influenced by it

**To see a situation through somebody's eyes:** to try to think or feel about a matter as somebody else does

**To see through somebody/something:** to realize that someone is trying to deceive you to get an advantage and you understand the truth about the situation

**Hindsight:** the ability to understand an event or a situation only after it has happened

Last year, my cousin, Peter, came to me and said that he was about to buy a Renault. I had already talked to him about buying the car. I knew that it wasn't worth 5000 \$ and that he could think about other choices but he could only **see past the end of his nose**. I explained to him that what he had allocated for buying the car was quite a huge amount of money and asked him to make up his mind with his **eyes wide open**. No matter how much I tried to **make myself clear**, he didn't seem to be willing to **see reason**. I couldn't **see the situation through his eyes** and couldn't also figure out what was so special about the second-hand Renault he wanted to buy.

Anyway, Peter finally decided to go to the car exhibition and asked me to go with him. I was at first reluctant to accompany him but as he insisted, I finally accepted. When we reached to the car exhibition, a very handsome young man approached us and wanted to know if he could help us. I already talked to Peter about the way we needed to conduct in the exhibition, but much to my surprise he went straight to his dreamed car- the Renault.

I **saw through** the exhibition owner as I looked at him. He winked at the young man and the young man started congratulating Peter for his option. I can't exactly remember what happened for the next fifteen minutes but I found that the contract was signed by Peter at the end.

A few months ago I saw my cousin and I was curious to know about his car. He was completely repentant about it. I am sure Renault is a very good company but what I got was a real lemon, he said. It is easy to say that with **hindsight**, he completed his sentence.

## Unit 3

### Life is a journey

#### IDIOMS

**Dead-end job:** a job in which there is no chance of being raised to a better, more important job

**To be in a rut:** to become too fixed in one particular type of job, activity, method, etc

**To go nowhere fast:** not having any progress

**Toss-up:** used to say when either of the two possibilities is equally likely

**Not to know whether you are coming or going:** to be in a very confused state

**To follow in somebody's footsteps:** to do the same thing as someone else did previously

**To be side-tracked:** used to say when one's attention is diverted from an activity or subject to another one which is less important

**There is no short-cut to success:** there is no quick way to attain something precious

**To go off the rails:** to start behaving in a way that is not generally acceptable, especially dishonestly or illegally

My name is Sohrab. I live in Isfahan in the center of Iran. I live with my mother. I work in an office as an accountant but I want to quit my job. I think that's a **dead-end job** and I am sick of working the same chores for the rest of my life. I think I'm **in a rut** and need a change. I was sure that by staying in the office I would **go nowhere fast**.

Personally, I prefer to work in the harbors in the south of the country so that I can make more money. I am not sure whether I am going to make a right decision though. In fact, staying in the boring office or working in the harbor was a **toss-up**. As I thought about it, I became more dubious that I'll be able to make a lot of money in the harbors. I was really confused. **I didn't know whether I was coming or going**. I just knew that I needed a change. I didn't want **to follow in my father's footsteps** at all. He was a nice man when he was alive but he left no fortune for me.



My mother believes that I'd better stay in my job and do not get **side-tracked**. He always says **there is no short-cut to success** and working in the harbors has its own difficulties. My mother is also worried about the friends I am going to make in the South. She doesn't want me to stay far from her. She always says people who work there, **go off the rails** easily from the first month they work in the harbors.

## Unit 4

### Life is gambling

#### IDIOMS

**Lousy hand:** bad chance

**At stake:** in danger

**To have something up your sleeve:** to have secret plans or ideas

**When the chips are down:** when you are in a very difficult or dangerous situation, especially that makes you understand the true value of people or things

**Against (all) the odds:** against all the problems that might have hinder your progress

**To be the luck of draw:** to be the result of chance and something that you have no control over

**To be on the cards:** to be likely to happen

**To hit the jackpot:** to have a big success

When I became aware that Kim has been redundant after working for the company for six years, I felt really sorry for him. That was the third time he was losing his job during his life. I guess he has been dealt a **lousy hand** and his life would be **at stake** very soon. But Kim was not worried about his future at all. He told me that he had **got something up his sleeve**.

He said that he had got some fortune and that he was going to start a small business on his own. I knew that going self-employed can be a bit of a gamble but I assured him that if he played his cards right he would undoubtedly be successful in his new career. Some of his co-workers recommended that he begged the employer and explain to him his difficulties in life so that he might accept him to go back to his work.

They said one day when **the chips are down** you will know that you shouldn't have left the office by any means and there would be no turning back then. But Kim had already made up his mind. He assured everybody that he would succeed **against all the odds**.

A few months passed. One day I saw him going to the outskirts. He said that he was working in his own

greenhouse. Knowing that to own a greenhouse necessitates having a lot of money, I asked him how he could afford to buy such a greenhouse. He explained that he had requested for a loan and they had given him the money very quickly. He said it was **the luck of the draw** to get the money so soon while many people were still waiting for the money they had requested months before.

Time passed and one day I saw him in his BMW. I couldn't believe what I saw. I thought that prosperity is **on the cards** for some people. I told him: hey buddy, you've **hit the jackpot** and he just smiled and left.



"You may be right, my house of cards may have fallen down, but I have an ace up my sleeve."

## Unit 5

### A company is a ship

#### IDIOMS

**To weather the storm:** to successfully deal with a difficult problem

**To rock the boat:** to do or say something which will upset people or cause problems

**To run a tight ship:** to control a business or other organizations firmly and effectively

**To bail somebody out:** to help a person that is in difficulty by giving them money

**To be in the same boat:** to be in the same unpleasant situation as other people

**To pull together:** to work hard as a group in order to achieve something

**To get one's marching orders:** to be asked to leave a place or a job because of having done something wrong

**To know the ropes:** to be familiar with a place or an organization and be able to act effectively within it

Yesterday I found that Michael, who is one of my best friends and has always been my idol, has got a serious problem. Soon I got to the company where he worked as the manager and wanted to know what was going on.

He told that the company was in a bad condition. He said that most of his employees had abandoned their jobs because they had applied for another flourishing firm.

As an economist, I suggested some solutions to **weather the storm** so that we could solve the problem later on.

I asked Mike not to **rock the boat** but **run a tight ship** and promised to lend him some money to **bail him out** from the current situation. I wanted him to save the rest of the employees and assure them that everything will be alright in the near future.

Michael did so. He explained to the workers that they were all **in the same boat** and problems like this came up every now and then. He also asked the workers to **pull together** to save the company and promised to double their wages if they worked hard. He also warned them that in case they dodged, they would undoubtedly get their **marching orders**.

Mike you did a professional job. You **know the ropes** better than anyone. I don't know why you asked me to consult you, I said.



"OK, I've shown you the ropes, given you the low down, and gotten you up to speed. All that's left is actually training you."

## Unit 6

### Moods are weather

#### IDIOMS

**Frosty reception:** an unfriendly or not welcoming reception

**To shoot the breeze:** to talk with someone or a group of people about things which are not important

**Gloomy:** unhappy and without hope

**To be/feel under the weather:** to be ill or feel ill

**To breeze:** to walk somewhere quickly and confidently, without worry or embarrassment

**Wet:** someone who has a weak character and does not express any forceful opinions

**To cloud:** to make gloomy

**To throw caution to the wind(s):** to do something without worrying about the risk or negative results

**To storm in/into:** to enter a place in a way that shows you are angry



**To be under a cloud:** to not be trusted or popular because people think you have done something bad

When Suzan arrived late to the party for the third time, we had no choice but to give her a **frosty reception**. But this time it seemed that she had got a serious problem.

While everybody was **shooting the breeze**, she was reticent. So we wanted to know what had happened to her. Why are you so **gloomy**? I asked. I am **feeling a bit under the weather**, she replied in a low voice. This was the first time we saw Suzan in such a bad mood. She used to be quite dynamic and always **breezed in** our parties and brightened it up but this time she was such a **wet** and now, nobody liked the party to go on. I am afraid the Suzan's feelings had **clouded** the whole party. No one dared to ask her what was going on. After some time, I **threw caution to the wind** and asked her what was wrong. Suzan was about to speak but suddenly we heard that somebody was knocking at the door. We wondered who could that person be.

A friend of mine opened the door and suddenly a stranger **stormed in**. The stranger looked very irate but tried to conceal his feelings. He introduced himself and said that he was Suzan's friend.



"What do you say we throw caution to the wind and order something we can't pronounce?"

It was quite obvious that Suzan was not Ok with the stranger's presence in the party. The stranger said: you

all know Suzan better than I do. You know how punctual she is. She never uses anyone's properties without their permission. My brother told me that Suzan had taken my car to come to this party. I don't remember to have let her use my car but if she had taken it, I must have permitted her to use it because I have become very forgetful nowadays.

As the stranger was still about to continue talking ironically, Suzan left **under a cloud** and we all noticed what had been going on.

## Unit 7

### The office is a battlefield

#### IDIOMS

**To cover your back:** to do something to protect yourself from blame or criticism in the future

**To hold (down) the fort:** to have responsibility for something while someone is absent

**To call the shots:** to be in the position of being able to make the decisions which will influence a situation

**To keep your head down:** to avoid trouble

**To step/be out of line:** to behave in an unsuitable way

**To set your sights on something:** to decide to achieve something

**To break ranks:** to publicly show disagreement or criticism of the group that you belong to

**To stick to your guns:** to continue to have your beliefs, even if other people disagree with you

**To get caught in the crossfire:** to be involved in a situation where people around you, are arguing

**To be gunning for somebody:** to criticize someone or try to cause trouble for them

**To get your marching order:** to be asked to leave a place or a job because of doing something wrong

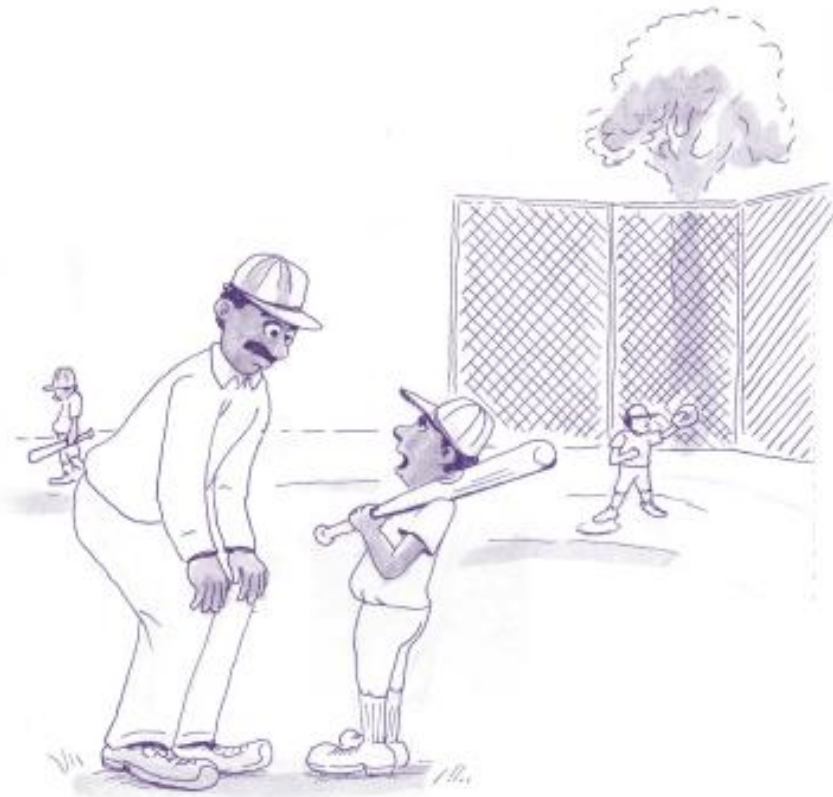
**To go great guns:** to go fast or successfully

Mr. Smith is the second in command in the company and also **has his back covered** by the manager. He is very strict in his job and whenever the manager is away, Mr. Smith has to **hold the fort** and often he becomes very tough because just then he is the one who **calls the shots** in the office. We are all aware that we ought to **keep our head down** and that we should never **step out of line**.

Everybody is quite sure that Mr. Smith has **set his sights** on running the company in the near future and wants to stab the manager in the back one day. Whenever the manager goes to pay a visit to the company's offshoots, Mr. Smith **breaks ranks** by criticizing the policies of the company and claims that the manager never consults him and always **sticks to his gun** no matter how illogical

they are. All staffs of the company like the manager but never dare to talk about the reality as they do not want **to get caught in the crossfire** by any means. Once you feel that Mr. Smiths **is gunning for you**, you have to be sure that you'll **get your marching order** sooner or later.

Poor manager thinks that everything is **going great guns** when he is away.



"Next time up, I'm calling my shot:  
I'm pointing to the catcher's mitt."

## Unit 8

### A project is a race

#### IDIOMS

**To get off a flying start:** to start energetically

**To be on the starting blocks:** to be on the early stages

**To be on the last lap:** to be on the last stage

**Race against time/clock:** used to say when there is a very limited time to do something

**To hand the baton over to somebody:** to entrust a responsibility to someone

If we want to have a developed country in the near future, we need to **get off a flying start**. We, as Iranian people, are still **on the starting blocks** and have to work hard lest we fall behind with our pre-determined schedule. Some of our neighboring countries are **on the last lap** to be entitled as a developed country and that must push us forward to carry out or complete our

project successfully as soon as possible. It is sometimes a major hurdle to finish the projects on time so it is a **race against time**.

We should always bear it in mind that we are not the only people of this land. We need to keep the natural resources and **hand the baton** over to the next generation of this country.



## Unit 9

### Economics is flying

#### IDIOMS

**To plunge:** to (cause someone or something) move or fall suddenly forward, down or into something

**Turbulent:** involving a lot of sudden changes, argument or violence

**To go through the roof:** to rise to a very high level

**To steer clear:** to avoid someone or something which seems unpleasant, risky or dangerous

**To get off the ground:** to start to succeed

The currency in the African country of Zimbabwe is **plunging** to its lowest level after a **turbulent** week's trading. The president gave assurances in a press conference that he wouldn't let the rates **go through the roof**. He affirmed that the economists are doing their best **to steer clear** of the African disaster. He added that

he would regain the control and wouldn't let the share prices plummet.

The president seems to be very confident but the economists around the world depict a non-prosperous image for Zimbabwean economy. The floatation would fail to **get off the ground** and commodity prices would soar, they anticipate.



*"Unless you take those costing clerks off bar duty this party will never get off the ground."*

## Unit 10

### Organizations are gardens

#### IDIOMS

**To dig something out:** to find something that you have not seen or used for a long time

**Cross-fertilization:** the mixing of the ideas, customs, etc. of different places or groups of people, to make it better for all

**To flourish:** to grow or develop successfully

**To weed something /somebody out:** to get rid of unwanted things or people from a group

**To uproot:** to remove a person from their home or usual environment

**To plough something into something:** to invest money in a business, especially to help make it successful or to make more money

**To bear fruit:** to produce successful results

Whenever I have difficulty **digging out** the sale's figures at the end of the month, I ask Alex and he helps me willingly. I do believe in **cross-fertilization** of ideas and always consult with Alex who is my accountant in the company.

At times, he gives some recommendations which help me get rid of my financial problems. He believes that most of our problems stem from hiring unnecessary workers and the only possible way for the company **to be flourished** again is to cut back on expenses by **weeding out** some of poor staffs.

We also need to **uproot** a number of our experts to our new branch in Belgium and that needs a lot of money to accommodate them in Brussels. We must also **plough money into advertising** and branch out into new markets.

Unless we consider all the peripheral circumstances, our promotional campaign will not **bear fruit**.

## Unit 11

### People are liquid

#### IDIOMS

**To teem with something:** to contain large numbers of animals or people

**To trickle in:** to arrive or move somewhere slowly, gradually, and, in small numbers

**Drip:** a boring person without a strong character

**Ripple:** a sound or feeling that spreads through a person or a group of people, gradually increasing and then becoming smaller

**To dry up:** to end

**Surge:** a sudden and great movement forward

**To flood:** to fill or enter a place in large numbers or amounts

The whole area near Iranian borders in the East, is **teeming with Afghans**. They found my country a very safe place to live and find a job.

People around the world **trickle in** developed countries every year. The immigrants are so numerous in some of the western countries that they simply outnumber the local people. Some of these people are really active, others are such a **drip**. Sometimes you cross a street and you hear a **ripple** of laughter among the immigrants while you don't know what is talked about. Anyway, the number of foreigners doesn't seem **to dry up**.

One day I was passing by a Chinese restaurant in New York and saw a sudden **surge** of young Chinese couples rushing out of the restaurant. For a few seconds, I thought I'm in china. I personally believe that having a lot of immigrants in a country, attracts more tourists for they would find their own compatriots in that country.

However, the governments have to be aware to stem the tide of refugees who **flood** the borders illegally.

## Section 2 : Individual Metaphors

### Unit 12

#### Animal idioms

#### IDIOMS

**(Straight) from the horse's mouth:** from a veritable source or from the person who has direct personal knowledge of the matter

**To go to the dogs:** to become run-down

**Pigsty:** a dirty or an untidy place

**For donkey's years:** for a very long time

**Till/until the cows come home:** for a very long time, very late

**To smell a rat:** to recognize that something is not as it appears to be or that something dishonest is happening

**To be foxed:** to be confused or puzzled

**To talk the hind leg(s) off a donkey:** to talk without stopping for a long time

**To have a bee in your bonnet:** to think something is so important or necessary that you keep mentioning it or thinking about it

**Black sheep:** a person who has done something bad which brings embarrassment or shame to their family

**To be like a fish out of water:** to feel awkward because you are in a situation which you have not experienced before or because you are very different from people around you

**To monkey about/around (with something):** to behave, or to use or move things, in a silly and careless way

**Wild-goose chase:** a search which is completely unsuccessful and a waste of time because there is actually nothing to search for

**To let the cat out of the bag:** to allow a secret to be known, usually without intending to

I really love John but I can't stand some of his conduct. He is not tidy at all and does not care about the beauty of



his place. I have never been to his apartment but I **got it straight from the horse's mouth** that it has **gone to the dogs** just like a **pigsty** as if no one has lived there **for donkey's years**.

I think the problem is that he is living alone and consequently, he doesn't see any necessity to clean up his flat. John spends too much time being with his friends and staying out **till the cows come home**. I am quite dubious whether he can change his behavior after getting married. I **smell a rat**, I thought to myself. I needed to talk to somebody to get relaxed.

I was really **foxed** and didn't know what to do. Finally I decided to see John's mother to talk about his son. I already knew that she is a real talker. She can **talk the hind legs off a donkey** and once she starts to talk, nobody can stop her easily. Anyway, when I went to see her, she came before me and accepted me very warmly. She started to talk about the time when John was a school boy. She said that little John had **a bee in his bonnet** about playing soccer at home with a rolled up pair of socks and that she used to call him the **black sheep** of the family for his strange behavior. She said

that whenever they went to see John's uncle, John refused to come because he felt **like a fish out of water** there. Her cousins were well-educated and quite incomparable with him. Besides, his uncle didn't like to see John **monkeying around** and also he used to **send him on a wild goose chase**.

When she finally finished talking about John she wanted to make sure that I wouldn't tell John what she had told me and I promised her not to **let the cat out of the bag** because I had made up my mind and that was to forget John forever.



*"Honey, the cows have come home!"*

## Unit 13

### Bird idioms

#### IDIOMS

**Swan around:** behave ostentatiously

**To be no spring chicken:** to be no longer young

**To feather you own nest:** to make yourself rich, especially in a way that is selfish or dishonest

**Water off a duck's back:** criticisms that have no effect

**To kill two birds with one stone:** to succeed in achieving two things in a single action

**At/in one fell swoop:** very quickly or all at the same time  
or

**To be in a flap:** to be in a state of nervous excitement

**To be an early bird:** to be used to get up early

**Not to say boo to a goose:** not to the least thing to upset others

**To be as sick as a parrot:** to be very disappointed

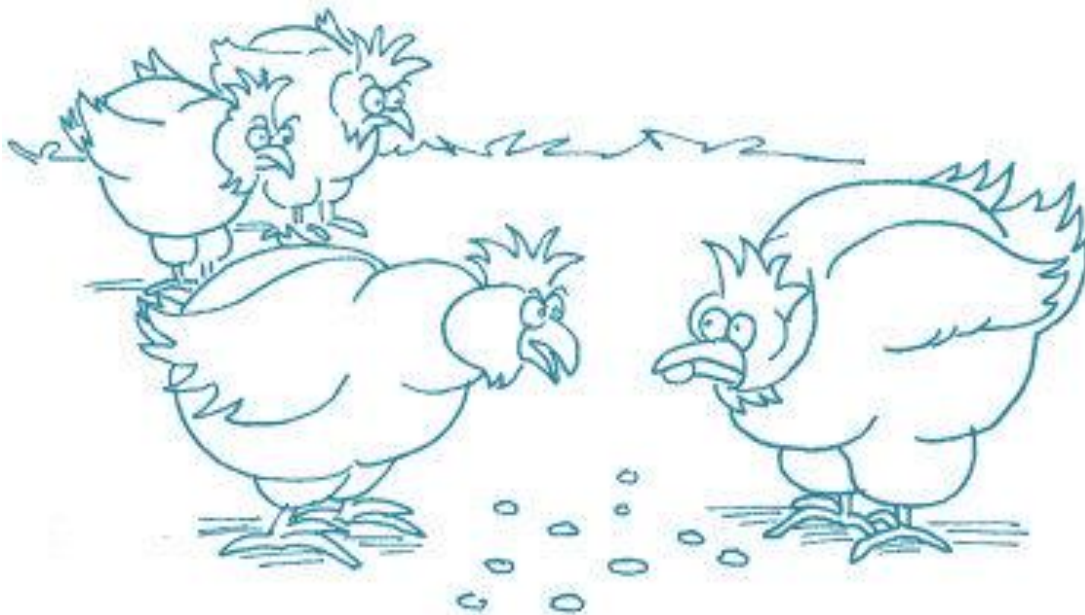
**Pecking order:** an informal social system in which some people or groups know that they are more or less important than others

**Nest egg:** a sum of money that has been saved or kept for a special purpose

We have got two different characters in our office. The secretary who is very stylish and always **swans around** and despite being **no more a spring chicken**, she behaves very childish. She only thinks of herself and tries **to feather her own nest** so the only person whom she is eager to respect, is the manager because she believes it is useless to waste time dealing with the other co-workers. The manager who is very strict and watches the employees like a hawk, has reprimanded her for a couple of times but it seems to be like **water off a duck's back**.

Being respectful and pretending to be obedient to the boss in one hand and aiming to lead her vicious goals in the other, is what the secretary is always after. In fact, she likes **to kill two birds with one stone**. She is not an

honest person at all for she can change her mind **in one fell swoop**. It takes no time that she backbites you after she had praised you a few minutes before. She can't stand anybody's progress and whenever she sees that one of the employees is getting a promotion, she can't help being **in a flap**.



"Oi! There's a pecking order around here, you know."

The other personality in our office is totally different from the secretary. She is **an early bird** and always starts her job a few minutes earlier. She is very nice and always

treats people with cordiality. She is incredibly calm and I can bet she has never **said boo to a goose** so far. When she is noticed that one of the personnel in the office has got a problem, she becomes **as sick as a parrot** about it and tries to do her best to solve the problem. Although she is way down the **pecking order** and consequently she only receives a small amount of money at the end of the month, she has managed to save a nice little **nest egg** for her retirement. I am sure she is going to allocate a part of her income for helping poor families.

## Unit 14

### Body idioms (1)

#### IDIOMS

**To have an old hand in something:** to be experienced in something

**To have a good head for something:** to be eager to work on something

**To be on one's last legs:** to be very tired or near to death

**A pain (in the neck):** someone or something that is very annoying

**To shoulder the responsibility:** to accept that you are responsible for something bad or difficult

**To come to a head:** to reach a point where something must be done about it

**Get something off your chest:** to tell someone about something that has been worrying you or has made you feel guilty for a long time

**To be nosy:** to be too interested in what other people are doing and wanting to discover too much about them

**To put a brave face on something:** to behave as if a problem is not important or does not worry you

My uncle is a very professional mechanic. In fact, he has **an old hand** in it and **a good head** for cars. To me, working for my uncle as an assistant is very amusing.

I remember last summer a young lady came to us to get her car repaired. She said that the car was **on its last legs** and had recently turned to be **a pain in the neck**. She asked my uncle to fix it so that she could drive to the South by the end of the week. My uncle explained to her that he had lots of chores to do and he had **to shoulder a lot of responsibility** but assured her to do his best to repair the car as soon as he could.

As a curious boy I have always liked to manipulate every single thing I see around myself. This time I just wanted to help my busy uncle so that he would be proud of me. I took a look at the car and guessed I could fix it. After working on it for a few minutes I was quite sure that the problem was not serious. Then, suddenly when I twisted



the keys the car did not start. The situation **came to a head** when there was a black smoke all over the engine. I was very scared and embarrassed and didn't know what to do. The only thing I could do, was just to come back to my uncle and pretend that everything was alright.



**“The client was such a pain in the neck, we paid out for pain and suffering to his lawyers.”**

As soon as my uncle cast a look on me, he noticed that something was wrong. Do you want to say something, boy? He said. Come on, **get it off your chest**.

I was resisting at the beginning, but then I told the whole story. My uncle was upset but he cooled down very quickly. He told me that I shouldn't have been so **nosey** and should not have manipulated with everything. But he admired me for **putting a brave face on** this problem and telling him the truth after all.

## Unit 15

### Body idioms (2)

#### IDIOMS

**To dip a/your toe in (the water):** to start very carefully to do something or become involved in something that you are not experienced at

**Not to be your heart in it:** not to feel interested or enthusiastic about something

**To pull someone's leg:** to try to persuade someone to believe something which is not true as a joke

**To give your right arm:** if you say that you would give your right arm to do or have something, you mean you would like it very much

**To be cheeky:** to be slightly rude or showing no respect, but often in a funny way

I am Linda. I play guitar and sometimes compose pieces of music. My father is my lover. He has supported me

from the day I started composing music. He always says that once you doubt starting to do a new career, just **dip your toe in the water** and you'll see that everything will be easy.

My guitar is very outmoded. **My heart is not really in it** but I keep it anyway. I keep most of my musical instruments in the corner of my room which is shared with my younger brother. My brother, Jim, likes me but sometimes he just **pulls my leg**. He always says that he would **give his right arm** if I could be successful in this business but I know that he doesn't really mean it.

One day I was composing a piece of music. I had prepared the music script already. It was a romantic poem created by me. I was taking a break for a few minutes in front of the television that I noticed Jim is not around. When I searched for him, I caught him giggling over my poetry. I shouted at him and said: Don't be so **cheeky!** but he continued to read the poem aloud and make mockery of it. I became so nervous at the moment and slapped him in the face. I didn't really want to be so harsh toward him but he should have watched his behavior too.

## Unit 16

### Breaking idioms

#### IDIOMS

**A broken home:** a home with divorced couples

**Feel fragile:** be sensitive

**To handle/treat somebody with kid gloves:** to be very polite or kind to someone because you do not want to make them angry or upset

**To go/fall to pieces:** to become unable to control one's emotions because of something unpleasant or experiencing a difficult event

**Breaking point:** the stage at which your control over yourself or a situation is lost

**Have a chip on your shoulder:** to seem angry all the time because you have been treated unfairly or feel you are not as good as other people

**Snap back:** to reply angrily

**A smashing person:** an extremely good and attractive person

**He finally cracked:** he finally started to tell the truth

**You could have knocked me down/over with a feather:**  
said when you are extremely surprised

Mr. Parker comes from **a broken home**. May be that's why he is not a normal person. Most of the times, he **feels fragile** so I know I need to **handle him with kid gloves**.

Whenever he thinks about his childhood life and how unfairly his mother was abandoned by his father, he **goes to pieces** and he is at **the breaking point** when you try to approach and sympathize. He has really got **a chip on his shoulder** about his background. Mr. Parker, not surprisingly, is not a successful person in his marital life. I remember once I noticed that he has some problems with his wife and I guessed that he might be in need of some consulting. I just wanted to mend their relationship. I shouted at him and wanted him to watch his behavior. Mind your own business, he **snapped back**.

But there is also another aspect in Mr. Parker's character. Although remembering childhood life was quite a crushing blow to him, he is **a smashing person** whenever he is leading a peaceful life.

Yesterday I was crossing the street when I saw Mr. Parker was coming straight toward me hurriedly. I was afraid a bit and didn't know what to do. When he approached me, he looked at me for a time and finally **cracked** and confessed that he had treated me harshly the other day. I was both surprised and scared at first in a way that **you could have knocked me down with a feather**. Then I just smiled and said: that's alright buddy.



Nanopsychiatry

## Unit 17

### Building idioms

#### IDIOMS

**To go out of the window:** to not exist anymore

**Be like talking to a brick wall:** having no effect because your audience does not listen

**To go out on the tiles:** to enjoy yourself at night by going out to nightclubs or parties

**To smoke like a chimney:** to smoke a lot

**To hit the roof/ceiling:** to become extremely angry

**To come down on somebody like a ton of bricks:** to punish someone very quickly and severely

**To get somewhere from back door:** to achieve something using bribery, ruse etc

**The corridors of power:** the higher levels of government where the most important decisions are made

**Be banging your head against a brick wall:** to try to do something that is very difficult or impossible to achieve and therefore it causes you feel annoyed



**To find one's feet:** to become familiar with and confident in a new situation

**Power has gone to your head:** power has misled you to darkness

Martin is a friend of mine from college. He was very lazy in studying during semesters and had to cover a lot of pages for the final exams. Whenever I told him about having a look on the books for the tests, it would just **go out of the window** as if it was **like talking to a brick wall**. Martin **went also out for the tiles** most of the nights including exam nights and I always doubted he would ever be able to finish the college successfully and get his B.A. He used to **smoke like a chimney** and that was of course I could bear the least. It made me **hit the roof** and **come down on him like a ton of bricks**.

Years passed and much to my surprise, I heard that Martin has been selected as the mayor of our town. I was dead sure that he could not have got the job without getting there **through the back door**. I knew about **the**

**corridors of power** in my town quite well so Martin's post was not a bizarre phenomenon to me. When I thought of my current situation, I found that I was just **banging my head against a brick wall** to get a job and could not find even a part-time one yet.



Yesterday I went to see Martin in his office. He accepted me warmly and promised to find a job for me in his office. He said that he was still **finding his feet**.

I was very disappointed with Martin for being so rude. I didn't want him to find a job for me. I was very smart in the college and whenever he had a problem, I was right on his doorstep to help him. I said to him: I think **power has gone to your head**. I do not need a job found by you. I'd rather be unemployed to work for you.

## Unit 18

### Cat idioms

#### IDIOMS

**When the cat's away, the mice will play:** said when the person who is in charge of a place is away, and the subordinate people behave improperly

**Catnap:** a short sleep

**There is not enough room to swing a cat:** said about a place or space that is very small

**Catty:** unkind words that are intended to hurt someone

**To set the fur flying:** to cause a bad argument

**Like a cat on hot bricks:** describes someone who is in a state of extreme nervous worry

**Not to have a cat in hell's chance:** to be completely unable to achieve something

**To come within a whisker of (doing) something:** to almost do something or when something almost happens to you

**To put/set the cat among pigeons:** to say or do something that causes trouble or makes a lot of people very angry

You must have heard about the idiom “**when the cat’s away, the mice will play.**”

My brother and I, used to fight each other whenever my dad was away or had a **catnap** at home. We lived in a small house and there was **not really enough room to swing a cat**. My father was very kind and most of the times, he tolerated our noisy activities. The only thing he disgusted was using bad language while we were playing. Once I made a **catty** remark when playing with my brother which **set the fur flying**.

One day we thought that our daddy is away, so we started to brawl in our room. Suddenly the door was opened and our father stepped in. He was **like a cat on hot bricks**. We found that **there isn’t a cat in hell’s chance** of escaping the scene. It was the third time our

father **had come within a whisker** of catching us while we were fighting.

As an elder brother I was thinking about a way to calm my father down. How was the work daddy? I asked. He looked at me but said nothing. I thought I had just **put the cat among pigeons** and my father would go crazy about me. Instead, my father left the room and the fighting was over. I think sometimes a meaningful look can impress people better than using a thousand words.

## Unit 19

### Clothes idioms

#### IDIOMS

**To tighten your belt:** to spend less money than you did before because you have less money

**To pull your socks up:** to make an effort to improve your work or behavior because it is not good enough

**To fill somebody's shoes:** to take someone's place, often by doing the job they have just left

**To wear the trousers:** (especially of a woman) to be the person in a relationship who is in control and makes decisions for both people

**On a shoestring:** if you do something on a shoestring, you do it with a very small amount of money

**The shirt off somebody's back:** the last thing left for someone

**To take your hat off to somebody:** to admire somebody for what they have done

**To get your knickers in a twist:** to become confused, worried or annoyed about something

**To have something up your sleeve:** to have secret plans or ideas

**Off the cuff:** without any thinking or preparation

**To pull something out of the bag/hat:** to do something unexpected which suddenly improves a bad situation

**To get shirty:** to get annoyed or angry, especially in a rude way

**At the drop of a hat:** immediately and without stopping to think

**Hot under the collar:** embarrassed or angry about something

**To talk through your hat:** to talk about something without understanding what you are talking about

In some of the small towns in my country, people prefer to hold wedding ceremonies at home. Mr. Shirazi had to



**tighten his belt** because he had stopped working for two years then. He had to **pull his socks up** in order to arrange everything for his son's wedding party. Nina as the groom's cousin was responsible for decorating the house. She knew her job very well. You just can't find anyone who might **fill her shoes**.

The grandma also lived with the family. She was the one who **wore the trousers** in Shirazi family but she was also very kind and generous. The Shirazi family would have held the party **on a shoestring** unless the grandma had given her son **the shirt off her back**. I would personally **take my hat off to her**.

The day before the party, Mr. Shirazi was very stressed out and worried about the ceremony. I decided to approach and tell him not **to get his knickers in a twist**. I said that I **would have something up my sleeve** for tomorrow.

As the groom's best friend, I was asked to give a short speech and make a wish for the young couple. I thought that I'd better start my speech with a joke or something. **Off the cuff**, I said to the guests that there was no need to fill themselves up with the fruits on their tables and

that the main course was on the way. As I was thinking how cute I was and I had **pulled something out of the bag**, Mr. Shirazi who seemed to have **got quite shirty** with me, took up the tribune **at the drop of a hat** while he was **hot under the collar**, He said to the audience: please don't take him seriously, he always **talks through his hat**.



"I'd like to make it perfectly clear... speaking off the cuff... I wouldn't want to be quoted... I'm not certain, but there's every likelihood that when I grow up I'll go into politics."

## Unit 20

### Colour idioms (black/white)

#### IDIOMS

**Black look:** an intimidating look, or a look full of anger and hate

**White-collar:** relating to people who work in offices, doing a type of work that needs mental rather than physical effort

**To be in the black:** to have some money and not be in debt

**Black market:** illegal trading of goods that are not allowed to be bought and sold, or that are not enough for anyone who wants them

**Black sheep:** a person who has done something bad which brings embarrassment or shame to their family

**White lie:** a lie that is told in order to be polite or to stop someone from being upset by the truth

**White elephant:** something that has cost a lot of money but has no useful purpose

**The blackest day in my life:** the most grievous or unbecoming day in my life

**To paint a black picture on something/somebody:** to leave a bad memory for somebody

When I was a little child, I was very obedient to my father, not because I respected him but for I feared his **black look**. My father was a **white-collar** worker and always came home very late. I knew the reason he was sometimes bad-tempered was because he had to work very hard every day to make ends meet.

My father really loved us. He did his best to make us happy and his account at the end of the month was **in the black**, though very hard. Sometimes I needed to gain my own allowance by buying some tickets, hoard them and finally sell them on the **black market** so that I could gain some money. I was the only member in our family that did such a thing and the **black sheep** of my family as they say.

My mother didn't like that and said that my dad would get irate if he noticed what I did. My father really liked to bring us up in the right path of life. He always told us to behave properly and not even tell a **white lie**.

I have an intelligent sister who is very serious in her studies. She is a college student. One day she asked for a desk for his architectural projects. After a few days my dad who seemed to have managed to buy the desk came home happily and proudly and said that he had bought the desk. He said that it's a kind of huge one and it can be used for other purposes too. When it was finally brought in the house, I saw nothing in it but a **white elephant**. Time passed and I ridiculed my sister for having such a huge desk. I didn't really like to see that monster in our home and believed that it had occupied quite a large space.

Then **the blackest day of my life** came. One day I was alone at home and was bouncing my soccer ball to the wall. I had no brother and most of the time played alone at home. As I was bouncing the ball, I thought why not use the desk instead. It can make quite a big goal for me.

Guess what happened. By shooting the first kick, the desk smashed and left me desperate. I knew that I couldn't escape from the scene nor could I deny the crime. That evening when my father came home he just sighed and whispered that he had borrowed some money to buy the desk and now he had to pay the money back for nothing. I was very ashamed and didn't know what to say.

That event has **painted a black picture on my mind** until now.



*"I'm encouraging him to stay in school and go into white-collar crime."*

## Unit 21

### Colour idioms (red/blue)

#### IDIOMS

**To scream/shout blue murder:** to show your anger about something, especially by shouting or complaining very loudly

**Until you are blue in the face:** means you are wasting your efforts because you will get no results

**To talk a blue streak:** to talk quickly and without stopping

**To be between the devil and the deep blue sea:** to have two unpleasant or inconvenient choices

My sister, Sarah, lives in Reykjavik so I can only see her once in a blue moon. She married Simon, an Icelandic business man, despite my father's disagreement.

Sarah used to **scream blue murder** whenever she didn't achieve her wishes and my father would let her continue

to yell **until she was blue in the face**. When Simon came to our house to pop the question, he **talked a blue streak** about his assets in order to attract my dad's attention. My dad wasn't sure whether to consent to her daughter's marriage and that letting Sarah live in Iceland was a sane decision. Besides, showing disagreement meant that he had to tolerate Sarah's screams and naggings at home. He was really **between the devil and the deep blue sea**.

As a young boy, I hardly remember how Simon and Sarah could convince my father to agree with their marriage but I am quite sure that my sister is fortunate now.



## Unit 22

### Driving idioms

#### IDIOMS

**To be in the driving seat:** to be in charge or control of a situation

**Take a backseat:** to have a controlling influence but not to be completely in charge

**To be on collision course:** to say or do something which causes a serious disagreement or fight

**To give the green light to something:** to give permission for someone to do something or for something to happen

**To drive/send somebody round the bend:** to make someone very bored or angry

**To steer clear of somebody/something:** to avoid someone or something which seems unpleasant, risky or dangerous

**To catch somebody doing a U-turn:** to persuade somebody to change their mind

**To turn the corner:** if something or someone turns the corner, their situation starts to be improved after a difficult period

**To go /run round in circles:** to think or argue about something without deciding anything or making any progress

Whenever Rose decides to do something she is very strict about it. Once she was criticizing about his step-mother and said that her step-mom liked to be **in the driving seat** and that she didn't ever **take a backseat**.

She say that she is always **on collision course** with her. Once she had asked her step-mommy to let her turn the washing machine on and not only her mom didn't **give the green light to her request**, but also she told her that she was **driving her round the bend**. So Rose was very disappointed in her and always tried **to steer clear** of her mother.

One time she decided to turn on the washing machine and leave it to work without any clothes in. I tried to

change her mind but she said that I wouldn't be able to **catch her doing a U-turn**. I think that Rose's stubbornness is because of her mom's way of conducting toward her. Their relationship does not seem **to turn the corner**.

Rose said that she had been **going round in circles** trying to convince her step-mom that she was wrong in some cases but no sign of progress in their talk has ever been seen.



"Are you back or front seat driving?"

## Unit 23

### Eating idioms

#### IDIOMS

**To make a meal (out) of something:** to spend more time and energy doing something than is necessary

**To go down well:** to happen successfully

**To swallow your pride:** to ignore or forget your feelings of pride

**To eat a horse:** to be very hungry

**To bite someone's head off:** to speak to someone in a quick angry way for no good reason

**To have sweet tooth:** to like to eat sweet foods, especially sweets and chocolate

**Another/a second bite of the cherry:** another opportunity to do something

**To leave a bad taste in your mouth:** to have an unpleasant memory about something

Everybody in my family knows that I love cakes very much. A few months ago we were going to have a party for my father's birthday. My sister had already baked the cake and had put it in the refrigerator in the morning. A few hours before my sister could serve the cake, I went straight to the kitchen, ate a part of it and then quickly left.

On the evening when it was time to serve the cake, my sister went to the kitchen to bring it but she did not come back. The only person who knew what was wrong was me. I tried to pretend that I didn't know anything so I started to complain and said: come on out, we are waiting for you. Why are you **making a meal of everything** you do? I thought that what I said **went down well** but just then my sister stormed out of the kitchen toward me. When do you want to grow up? Why have you eaten a part of the cake? She said.

I was about to tell a lie but I didn't because I knew that nobody would believe me. So I **swallowed my pride** and said that I was so hungry in the morning that I could **eat a**

**horse**. There was nothing in the refrigerator but the birthday cake.

My father, who is very kind toward me, said: there is no need **to bite his head off**. I know that **you have got a sweet tooth**, but you shouldn't have eaten the cake, he said. Anyway, we are going to give you **a second bite of the cherry**. You have to cook a birthday cake for tomorrow night, he said.

We all laughed at the end of the night but this memory **left a very bad taste in my mouth**.



"IM AFRAID I HAVE BAD NEWS FOR YOU .  
THAT SWEET TOOTH HAS GOT TO COME OUT."

## Unit 24

### Eating idioms

#### IDIOMS

**Not to take your eyes off somebody/something:** to not stop looking at someone/something

**To have eyes in the back of your head:** to know everything that is happening around

**To turn a blind eye:** to ignore something wrong

**To be up to your eyes in something:** to be very busy doing something

**To run eye on something:** to have a look on something

**To pull the wool over someone's eyes:** to deceive someone in order to prevent them from discovering something

**To keep your eyes peeled/skinned:** to watch carefully for someone or something

**To be more to something than meets the eye:** to be more difficult to understand than you thought at the beginning

**To see eye to eye:** to agree

**Not to bat an eyelid:** to show no sign of surprise or worry when something unexpected happens

**To give your eyeteeth for something:** to like something very much

My name is Ariana. I am the mother of a twin boy. You know how difficult it is to grow up a twin. You can't **take your eyes off them**. You need to **have eyes in the back of your head** and never **turn a blind eye** to what they do. I am **up to my eyes** in household chores and in cleaning kids' room and also **running my eye over** their homework assignments every night.

Whenever we go to a party, I try to **pull the wool over my eyes** and let them play with other kids in their age but I also **keep my eyes peeled** lest I miss a sign of misbehavior. Normally **there is more to them than meets the eye** when we are at a party.



Fortunately my husband and I get along very well and we **see eye to eye** about most of the things. When I tell our kids off, he doesn't meddle in nor does he **bat an eyelid** and lets me treat our children my own way. Sometimes, my children are very untidy and jump up and down all day and I get very annoyed but my husband tells me that most women would **give their eyeteeth** for kids like ours. I really adore him for he always calms me down.

## Unit 25

### Face idioms

#### IDIOMS

**To be wiped/disappeared off the face of the earth:** to disappear completely

**To stare somebody in the face:** to be very easy to see or obvious

**Until you are blue in the face:** said to somebody that their effort is useless and they will get no results

**To be written all over someone's face:** quite clear

**Straight face:** a serious expression on your face that you use when you do not want someone to know that you think something is funny

**To face the music:** to accept criticism or punishment for something you have done

**To fall flat on your face:** to fall and land with your face down

When I was just packing my school bag, I found that my chocolate was not there. I searched it again but it seemed that it had been **wiped off the face of the earth**. I knew who had eaten it. Where is my chocolate? I asked. The answer was **staring me in the face**. I was sure that it was my younger brother, Andy, who had taken the chocolate. He really loves chocolates. He eats them whenever he catches them no matter whose chocolates they are. Once he asks for chocolates, he insists so much till he is **blue in the face**.



Haven't you seen my chocolate? I asked him. Of course not. He replied. But it had been **written all over his face**. He had not even wiped his lips after eating it.

Try not to **keep a straight face**, yes it might be funny for you, I said. But this time you are going to **face the music** for what you have done. Then as he was just trying to escape from the scene, I couldn't suppress my anger and pushed him. Poor Andy just fell **flat to his face**.

## Unit 26

### Fingers and thumbs idioms

#### IDIOMS

**To twist somebody around your** little finger: to be able to persuade someone to do anything you want, usually because they like you very much

**At your fingertips:** quite accessible or easily achievable

Under somebody's thumb: under someone's control

**Rule of thumb:** a practical and approximate way of doing or measuring something

**To keep your finger crossed:** to hope that things will happen in the way that you want them to

**To get/have your fingers burnt:** to suffer unpleasant results of an action, especially loss of money

**To twiddle your thumbs:** to do nothing for a period of time, usually while you are waiting for something to happen

**To get/pull your finger out:** to start working hard, especially after a period of low activity

**To have/keep your finger on the pulse:** to be/stay familiar with the most recent changes or improvements

Mary can **twist Tom around her little finger**. Tom reports everything happening around him to his wife so any information she needs is **at her fingertips**. Mary has the family policy **under her thumb** so as a **rule of thumb** they should never quarrel with each other but that's not true.

Two years ago Mary forced her husband to invest 8000 \$ in promising stocks and shares. Mary was very hopeful about their future and **kept her fingers crossed**, but Tom soon realized that **he has got his fingers badly burnt**.

Mary became very irate and was feeling very stupid to have been **twiddling her thumbs** for nothing. She couldn't believe that they had lost most of their fortune in a couple of months. Although it wasn't Tom's fault, Mary started to criticize him. She said that instead of depending on the profits he had to **get his finger out** and make more and more money.

Tom, who was always obedient and no one in the earth had seen him speaking loudly, shouted at his wife and was about to slap her in the face. He said to her: it's over girl. You have been **keeping your finger on the pulse** and now it is time to resign and hand it over to me. I don't want to live a miserable life by trusting your absurd plans.

## Unit 27

### Fire idioms

#### IDIOMS

**Burning ambition:** a seemingly unachievable ambition

Not to set the world on fire: not to be very exciting or successful

**A blazing row:** a very angry argument

**A fiery temper:** becoming angry or excited very quickly

**To go up in smoke:** to disappear suddenly and completely

**To shoot somebody/something down (in flames):** to refuse to accept someone's suggestion or idea and not consider it at all

**Sparks fly:** when the sparks are flying, people are arguing angrily

**To get on like a house on fire:** to like each other very much and become friends very quickly

**To burn your bridges/boats:** to destroy all possible ways of going back to your previous situation



I love soccer. I've got a **burning ambition** to play in Europe but I think I am **not going to set the world on fire** because I have not done anything about it yet. At last, dreaming about how to earn a lot of money fired my imagination to go to Europe and present myself as a soccer player.

Yesterday I had **a blazing row** with my brother who has got a **fiery temper**. He didn't want me to talk about football and going abroad. He believes that it costs a lot for the family. I am afraid all my plans would **go up in smoke** unless he gives in. To me, going to Europe and specially Spain was a dream and I had already prepared myself to tackle every problem.

Therefore, I stood in front of my brother and said: why do you **shoot me down in flames** every time I express my feelings. You don't even listen to me. Why the **sparks fly** while we can talk?

After talking vigorously and defending myself, it seemed that my brother had nothing else to say and I thought

that **we had got on like house on fire**. He just asked me to make sure I had arranged everything in advance. He didn't want me to **burn my bridges** because I was about to take 15000 Euros with me and that was a huge amount of money for a family like mine.

## Unit 28

### Fishing idioms

#### IDIOMS

**Cold fish:** someone who seems unfriendly and who does not share their feelings

**To be a big fish in a small pond:** to have a lot of influence only over a small area

**To fall for something hook, line and sinker:** to completely believe in what someone tells you but it's not true

**Fishy:** seeming dishonest or false

**Minnow:** an organization or a person that is not important and has little influence or power

**To flounder (about/around):** to experience great difficulties or to be completely unable to decide what to do or say next

**To slip through the net:** to escape a punishment or to be missed by a system that should deal with you or protect you

**To have a whale of time:** to enjoy yourself very much

**To be off the hook:** to escape from a difficult situation

**To rise to the bait:** to accept an offer or suggestion that seems good but it's really a trick

**To spawn something:** to cause something new, or many new things, to grow or start suddenly

**Red herring:** a fact, idea or subject that takes people's attention away from the central point being considered

Mark was a young gymnastic coach. Although he was a professional trainer, his sport club had no modern sport equipments compared with other clubs in the city.

Besides, he was **a cold fish** so nobody liked to communicate with him. He was very proud and was really **a big fish in a small pond**.

However, after training young gymnasts for a couple of months, Mark found that some of his athletes were moving on to the other clubs. At first, some of his outstanding gymnasts came to Mark and said that they

would be away for a couple of days or need some days off because of a private matter and he just **fell for them hook, line and sinker**. But after some time he found that something **fishy** was going around because the number of his champions was shrinking. He thought that it was a serious problem and his wicked rivals in other clubs were not **minnows** at all. He **floundered about** for a minute but just then decided to do something to save his other club members from **slipping through the net**.

Mark had an idea. He was aware that he didn't have **a whale of time** to take it easy nor had he any friend around to help him and let him **off the hook**. He was thinking what suggestion his athletes might have received to **rise so easily to the bait**.

Mark was desperate. He was thinking about the last eight years that he had worked in his club as a trainer and **spawning** a remarkable number of sportsmen to the world of championship.

After a few months he realized that he was getting depressed in his club and could no more train young boys coming to him. So he decided to shut his club down and get a hobby for a time. He started playing golf as a **red**

**herring** but soon found that he had to go back to what he was an expert in and open the club again, behaving much cordial and amiable this time.



"How's the red herring?"

## Unit 29

### Food idioms

#### IDIOMS

**Bread and butter:** a job or activity that provides you with the money you need to live

**To be the best thing since sliced bread:** to be an excellent person or thing

**To be the salt of the earth:** to be a very good and honest person

**To stew (in your own juice):** to think about or suffer the results of your own silly actions, without anyone giving you any help

**To sell/go like hot cakes:** to be bought quickly in large numbers

**To go pear-shaped:** to fail

**To be in a (pretty/right) pickle:** to be in a difficult situation

**To have egg on face:** to look stupid because of having done something wrong

**To put all your eggs in one basket:** to depend on a single person or plan of an action for your success

**To give somebody food for thought:** to make someone think seriously about something

Journalism's my **bread and butter**, though I write novels for local magazines as well. I have got so many friends in my office, some of them are very nice and the best of them is Jahan. To me, he is **the best thing since sliced bread**. He is benevolent and loves everybody. I call him **the salt of the earth**. He hates letting people **stew in their own juice** even when they betray him or do something unfair to him.

As an editor of a weekly magazine, I like our copies to **be sold like hot cakes** so I do whatever I can to have a good sale at the end of the week. One day Reza who is one of our reporters in sports events was absent and his column was empty for a couple of days. I had started to panic and thought that all my plans for having a good sale would **go pear-shaped**. I was **in a pickle** and quite



desperate. I knew that having no sport column would **leave us with egg on our face**. I was thinking that I had to choose an assistant for Reza so that in case he was absent, the assistant would do his job. Indeed, I shouldn't have **put all the eggs in one basket**.



**"Don't put all your eggs in one basket."**

When Jahan saw that I was not in a good condition, he began to calm me down. He said that we had still plenty of time and that we could post one of our hot news and a

perfect picture of the last decades to satisfy our readership.

Jahan's idea was perfect and really helpful. His advice always **gives me food for thought.**

## Unit 30

### Foot idioms

#### IDIOMS

**To foot the bill:** to pay

**To think on your feet:** to make a quick decision or give an answer quickly

**To get itchy feet:** to start to want to travel or do something different

**To get cold feet:** to suddenly become too frightened to do something you had planned to do

**To put your foot down:** to use your authority to stop something happening

**To have/keep your feet on the ground:** to be very practical and see things as they really are

**To get off on the right/wrong foot:** to make a successful/unsuccessful start in something

**To rush/run somebody off their feet:** to cause someone to be very busy

**To be dead on your feet:** to be very tired

**To fall/land on your feet:** to be successful or lucky, especially after a period of not having success or luck

I really get along very well with my boss. We eat out at least once a week and he is almost always the one who **foots the bill**.

One day he called me to his room in the office and wanted to know my idea about working in the new branch of the company in Arusha as the manager. He asked me to **think on my feet** and said there was no time to waste. I **got itchy feet** when I was single and used to work in Tanzania but for this special case as a married man, I had to talk about it to my wife and get her opinion too.

When I broached the matter, she just **got cold feet** for a moment and then started to **put her foot down**. She said it was not easy at all to move from Dar-es-salaam. She said that I had better **keep my feet on the ground** and forget about the proposed job in the mountainous town

of Arusha. As a good husband I agreed with her and decided to stay in Dar.

The next day I went to my boss and said that I had made up my mind and that I'd rather stay in the office but surprisingly he said that there was no place for me there because he had already given my post to a new clerk. He said that he was quite sure that I would accept the new post in Arusha and that was why he employed a new bureaucrat. For a while, I felt dizzy then I decided to leave the office at once because I didn't want to **get off on the wrong foot** with him in the conversation.



For the next few days I looked for a new job and finally I could find one. I was applied as a tax inspector.

Everything was good except walking to different firms and listening to the illogical statements by some of the managers in different companies. I was **rushed off my feet** at work and when I came back home, I was **dead on my feet**. I was in a very tough situation at those days but I was getting used to it and **landing on my feet** little by little and also feeling happy for abandoning the office.

## Unit 31

### Hand idioms

#### IDIOMS

**To read everything you have your hands on:** to read everything you find or have access

**To take the law into your own hands:** to do something illegal and often violent in order to punish someone because you know the law will not punish that person

**To have time on your hands:** to be aware of the passage of time

**To fall into the wrong hands:** to be controlled by a dangerous person or an enemy

**To change hands:** to go from one owner to another

**To reject something out of hand:** to reject something completely, even without being eager to receive it

**Could count on (the fingers of) one hand:** used to say when something doesn't happen very often or exists in a very small number or amount

**To live (from) hand to mouth:** to have just enough money to live on and nothing extra

Margaret was a very smart and brave student. She used to **read everything she could get her hands on** in order to come up with a very worthy article. One day her purse was stolen in the campus and she just **took the law into her own hands** and could find the thief. Last semester was a nightmare for her. We were supposed to deliver our assignments by the end of October. I told Margaret to wrap it up this time and suggested to give her a hand to deliver her article in time, otherwise things might have got out of her control but she said that **she had time on her hands** and insisted that she had to search for other sources to write her essay. Almost all of the classmates had handed theirs in but Margaret. She hid the folders in her laptop so that it wouldn't **fall into the wrong hands** and always assured me that she **had time on her hands** and that there was nothing to be worried about the time.



Finally she was ready to deliver her essay, so we went together to the stationery we used to go but it had **changed hands**. You have no idea how shocking that scene was. We had no chance but to look for another place where she could get her hard copy. It was almost 11 O'clock when she was done. Although the deadline was over, we hurried to the professor's office but he **rejected Margaret's article out of hand**. **I can count the number of times you deliver your assignments on the fingers of one hand** but I don't accept your article to teach you a good lesson this time, and that's punctuality; the professor said. Poor Margaret had **to live from hand to mouth** to save some money so that she would be able to take sociology class again.

## Unit 32

### Head idioms

#### IDIOMS

**To make head or tail of something:** to be able to understand something

**To laugh your head off:** to laugh a lot loudly

**Need your head examined/examining:** used to say to someone who does stupid or strange things

**Go over somebody's head:** not to be understood

**To have/get your head in the clouds:** not to know the facts of a situation

**Standing on your head:** to do something standing on your head means to do something very easily

**Off the top of your head:** from the knowledge you have in your memory

**To have your head screwed on (the right way):** to be practical and wise

**To have/put your head on the block:** to risk a bad thing happening to you by doing something or helping someone

**To put your head together:** to seek for all the possible ways and solutions together

I **couldn't make head or tail** of what my nephew said. At first I just **laughed my head off** when he began to talk about going abroad without a passport and I just told him that **he needed his head examined** but as days passed, the situation seemed to be serious.

I had already clarified the risks of changing the identity but what I said would just **go over his head** a few minutes later. My nephew used **to get his head in the clouds** and thought that everything would be done with money. He said that he had a friend who could fabricate a version of identity cards and passports **standing on his head**. **Off the top of my head**, I'd say it costs 2500\$, he continued.

I asked him again to stop whatever he was following. I thought **you have got your head screwed on** by now. Don't you know how dangerous this might be, I said. Leave me alone. **It's my head that's on the block**, he said rudely.

I am very worried about what will be happening for my foolhardy nephew who can't go abroad legally. I have asked him several times to let us **put our head together** and decide wisely, but he doesn't seem to yield.

## Unit 33

### Heart idioms

#### IDIOMS

**To have a heart of gold:** to be very kind and generous

**After your own heart:** having the same opinions or interests as you

**Heart-to-heart:** a serious conversation between two people, usually close friends, in which they talk honestly about their feelings

**To bare your heart/soul:** to tell someone your secret thoughts and feelings

**In your heart of hearts:** in your most secret and true thoughts

**To have someone's (best) interests at heart:** to care about someone and want to do what is best for them

**Your heart isn't in it:** you do not feel enthusiastic or interested about it

**To break somebody's heart:** to say or do something unfavorable especially to your lover

From the first day I saw her, I fell in love with her. I thought that she was the one I had ever looked for or dreamed about. She was indescribable and had a **heart of gold**. I realized that she was a girl **after my own heart**.

It took time before we had a **heart-to-heart** about our future. I was too shy to pop the question or to get close to her. I could hardly look at her in the eyes or talk to her without stress. Soon, I realized that I really needed to approach her and **bare my soul**. I was sure that **in her heart of hearts** she loved me too, though she didn't reveal her feelings at first.

She **had my best interests at heart** and I really loved her. Whenever I suggested something, she never disagreed even if **her heart was not in it** lest she wouldn't **break my heart**. I think I had found an angel who had come to brighten my life.

I don't know how to express my feelings or thank her. I just say:

I love you Marjan

## Unit 34

### Horse idioms

#### IDIOMS

**To keep a tight rein on somebody/something:** to have a lot of control over someone or something

**To get on your high horse:** to start criticizing angrily about something bad someone has done as if you are better or more clever than they are

**To fall at the first hurdle:** to fail at the first step

**To saddle somebody with something:** to give someone a responsibility or problem which they do not want or may cause a lot of work or difficulty for them

**Horses for courses:** something that you say which means that is important to choose suitable people for particular activities because everyone has different skills

**To horse about/around:** to behave in a silly and noisy way

**To eat like a horse:** to always eat a lot of food

**On the hoof:** if you do something on the hoof, you do it while you are moving about or doing something else, often without giving it the attention it deserves

**To put the cart before the horse:** to do things in the wrong order

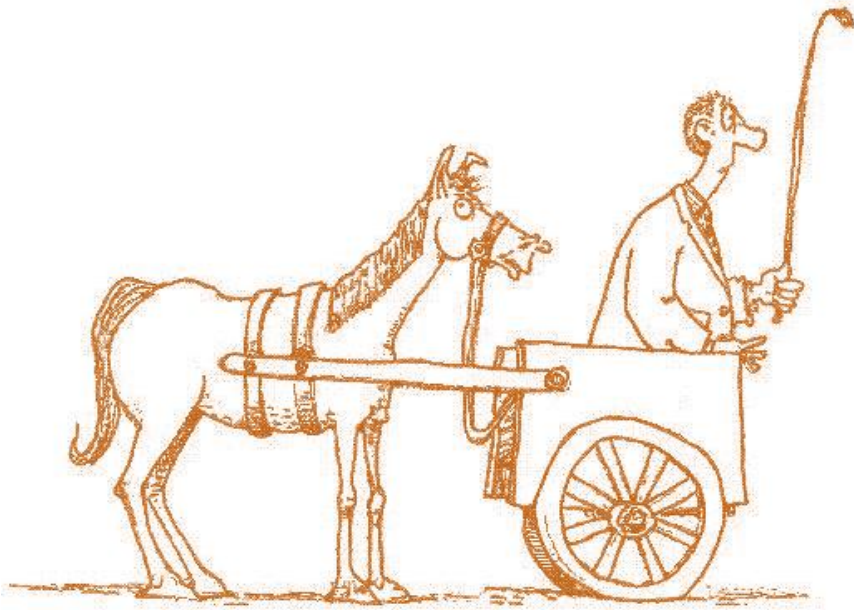
**Wild horses wouldn't drag me:** nothing can persuade me to go anywhere or to do anything

My father was a dictator. He always **kept us on a tight rein**. He also used to **get on his high horse** every time we discussed about a matter and soon I noticed that everyone else's idea would **fell at the first hurdle**.

My father has a French friend who pays a visit to us almost twice a year. I am the only person who can speak French fluently in the family, so my father asks me to sit beside him and translate whatever the French guy says whenever we have him in our house. I don't usually feel good to play a part as a translator but finally I **get saddled with it** for I don't dare to evade.



The French man is a nice guy. Sometimes he plays football with us in the backyard and whenever he has difficulty catching the ball or scoring a goal, he says **horses for courses**. He also likes to make us laugh by **horsing around** like a child. He also feels at home at the dinner table and **eats like a horse** because of consuming so much energy during the day. Every night he solves a puzzle **on the hoof** while watching TV.



**To put the cart before the horse**

One day I decided to take the opportunity by the presence of the French man and ask my dad to take his car for a couple of hours. I was quite sure that my dad

would stand in ceremony and agree so I began to get dressed and ready but then I decided not to **put the cart before the horse** and waited to see my dad's reaction. **Wild horses couldn't have dragged me** into my dad's room to ask him for his car unless his French friend was not around.

## Unit 35

### Home idioms

#### IDIOMS

**To be/feel at home:** to feel comfortable and relaxed

**Home from home or home away from home:** a place where you feel as comfortable as you do in your own home

**Nothing to write home about:** not exciting or not being special

**To be home and dry:** to have successfully finished something

**Home truth:** a piece of information which is not pleasant or wanted, but it is true

**To hit home:** to cause you to fully realize how unpleasant or difficult something is

**No one's home:** nobody is caring or listening

**To bring something home to somebody:** to make someone understand something much more clearly than they did before, especially something unpleasant

Every year in the spring we go to the northern part of Iran. We normally go to Mr. Tehrani's villa. He is my dad's best friend and is very kind to my family and makes us **feel at home**. Mr. Tehrani's villa is a real **home from home** for all of us. Whenever we go to his villa he just leaves us alone so that we can have more room to relax. Only the janitor stays to take care of the situation. The janitor is very kind and obedient but not handsome at all. There is **nothing to write home about** his way of getting dressed.

Although the villa is very nice and clean, my mother always asks us help her clean the already washed dishes and sweep away the invisible dust from the floor. She says let's just clean up the rooms then we are **home and dry** and can enjoy more from our stay in the villa. My younger sister always dodges when she is told to give a hand and one time I am going to **tell her a few home truths**.

Anyway, the first night in the villa, everything was quiet and calm and the whole family was enjoying the supper. When we were still eating, my dad turned the TV on and just then the news of a horrible accident **hit home** and

made me stop eating. The accident had happened in the same road we took to come to the villa. I thought for a while that the accident could have happened to us because I am used to violating the speed limit most of the times. My father always asks me to slow down in the corners but sometimes it seems as if the lights are on but **there's no-one home**. That TV show, really **brought it home to me** and I decided not to drive so fast any longer.

## Unit 36

### House idioms

#### IDIOMS

**As safe as houses:** very safe

**To get on like a house on fire:** to like each other very much and become friends very quickly

**To bring the house down:** to make people watch, laugh or clap very loudly for the performance in a play or a show

**In-house:** done within an organization by its employees rather than by other people

**To eat somebody out of house and home:** to eat a lot of the food that someone has got in their house

**To put/get your own house in order:** to solve your own problems

My friends and I have been performing street shows for five years. We play one of Shakespeare's writings every

weekend in one of our town's main streets. I can claim that there is no place in the town with lack of security. Even down-town streets are **as safe as houses**.

Unfortunately we do not enjoy any sponsorship and it is quite perceivable how arduous it is to stay together for such a long time. Had not we **got on like a house on fire**, we wouldn't have kept working together in such a condition. After each show we become very happy to have **brought the house down** and to have received a good amount of money by some of our audience. We also need to make our stage and cloths **in-house**.

Most of our shows are comic. Last week's show was about a man who had been invited to a party and just **ate the host out of house and home**. Norman played the role of the gluttonous guy and made people laugh. During the show a chubby boy asked Norman to stop eating the food. What Norman answered back had people in stitches. He said: **put your own house in order**, pudgy.

## Unit 37

### Life and death idioms

#### IDIOMS

**To scare/frighten the life out of somebody:** to frighten someone very much

**To look/feel like death warmed up:** to look or feel very ill

**Larger than life:** if someone is larger than life, they attract a lot of attention because they are more exciting or interesting than most people

**A new lease of/on life:** if someone has a new lease of life, they become more healthy, energetic and active than before

**To dice with death:** to do something extremely dangerous and silly

**To sign your own death warrant:** to do something that is harmful to your own position



Yesterday I went to see my best friend, Steve, who is one of the best surgeons in the town. He had not gone to work for a whole week so I wanted to know what was wrong. He **frightened the life out of me** as I saw his pale face and haggard eyes. You **look like death warmed up**, what's wrong buddy? I asked.

He could hardly speak but he managed to explain everything to me. He said that from the first day he stepped in the central hospital he was familiarized with a very witty young doctor. He said that the young doctor was very inconsiderate and used to make fun of every single thing. He was **larger than life** and everybody liked his jokes. He also gave me **a new lease of life**.

One day we had to perform an autopsy by examining through a dead body, he said. Everybody was trying to concentrate for the operation except the young doctor. He started to do and say funny things as he came to the operation room. He pinched the dead body's skin out of the professor's sight and tried to make us laugh. He winked at me and persuaded me to pinch the corpse too. A friend of mine warned me of having **diced with my death**. But since I didn't want to seem gutless, I moved

my hand toward the dead thigh but just then the professor saw the scene. What happened next? I asked.

He sighed and said: I didn't know what to say. I left the hospital. I think I have **signed my own death warrant**.

That stupid young doctor made my life a misery.

He said that he shouldn't have made fun of the corpse.

Why did I do that? My friend murmured.



*“When did you first notice you were larger than life?”*

I know you can't do funny things to save your life, I said. But it's over. You know you're guilty and that's on. Go

back to the hospital and explain everything to the professor.

Then, as I saw that Steve was not in a normal condition, I left his home and let him ponder my words.

## Unit 38

### Gold and silver idioms

#### IDIOMS

**To strike gold:** to make a large profit or to become rich

To be worth your weight in gold: to be very useful or helpful

**Gold dust:** said about something that is very difficult to get because a lot of people want it

**Every cloud has a silver lining:** said to emphasize that every difficult or pleasant situation has some advantage

**Born with a silver spoon in your mouth:** to have a high social position and be rich from birth

**Silver-tongued:** if you are silver-tongued, you speak in a way that charms or persuades people

**Golden rule:** an important rule or principle, especially in a particular situation

**Golden handshake:** a large payment made to someone when they leave their job, as a reward for very long or good service in their job

I think we really **struck gold** when we recruited Maria. She is punctual, smart and very considerate. She never forgets my appointments and arranges everything as it should be arranged. She is **worth her weight in gold**. Finding a secretary like her was just like **gold dust**. Whenever I have to make a decision which might lead to a bad consequence and obliges me to spend lots of money, she just makes me hopeful and depicts a prosperous future for the company. She always says that **every cloud has a silver lining**.

I know a very big company in Dresden whose owner was born **with a silver spoon in his mouth** and he has hired some **silver-tongued** counselors who can tempt the most outstanding clerks and engineers in Germany. I have no idea whether they have phoned Sally or not yet but I will do my best to save her for my company and **the golden rule** is to raise her salary. I also want to give her a good **golden handshake** when she retires.

## Unit 39

### Metal idioms

#### IDIOMS

**To rule something with an iron hand/fist:** to control a group of people very firmly, having complete power over everything they do

**To get down to brass tacks:** to start talking about the most important or basic facts of a situation

**Pump iron:** to lift heavy weights for exercise

**To have nerves of steel:** to be very brave

**To go down like a lead balloon or to sink like a stone:** to attract no support, attention or interest

**(as) bold as brass:** with extreme confidence or without the respect or politeness that people usually show

**Brass neck:** if someone has (a) brass neck, they are extremely confident about themselves and are unable to understand that their behavior is unacceptable to others

My uncle is a body-builder. He has got six children and you can guess who difficult it is to deal with them all. But he has an idea. He **rules with an iron fist**. He is very tough and never shows mercy to his children. My father always asks him to make friends with his children. My father believes that the best way to treat naughty children is to talk to them in private. Anyway, let's **get down to brass tacks** and read my true story.

One day, one of my cousins who is a body-builder too and is not afraid of his powerful father, told me that he is going to ask his father to buy him a car. I already knew that my uncle is not in a good financial condition so I asked my cousin to put it off to some other time but he didn't agree. I tried to divert his attention by telling a joke and said I do not think those who **pump iron**, also have **nerves of steel**. My cousin was very strict in his decision. My joke **went down like a lead balloon** and it didn't even bring a smile to my cousin's face. The next day he walked straight to my uncle **as bold as brass** and asked his father to buy him a car within a week.

You must **have the brass neck** to ask me such a thing after damaging your motorcycle, my uncle said.

## Unit 40

### Mind idioms

#### IDIOMS

**Not to be in your right mind:** not to think clearly or to be mentally ill

**To put your mind at rest:** to feel relaxed by accomplishing a burden, settling an account, etc

**To be in/of two minds:** to be unable to decide about something

**Take your mind off something or take a weight off your mind:** to stop worrying or thinking about a particular thing

**Mind over matter:** used to say that you can use your thoughts to control physical feelings or an unpleasant situation

**To spring to mind:** to come quickly to mind

**To give somebody a piece of your mind:** to speak angrily to someone about something they have done wrong



Nobody **in their right mind** would ever buy a car like mine for it is costly and not economical at all. Last month I finally paid back my car loan and **put my mind at rest**. That was really **a weight off my mind**.

I knew that it was not a right decision to buy that car. Although I was **in two minds** about it at first, but I **couldn't take my mind off it**. Now I own a car which is not worth its price at all and it seems that I have been ripped off.

My uncle always tells me that it is a case of **mind over matter** whenever I want to take risks or make crucial decisions. He believes that one must not stick to the first thing that **springs to their mind**.

I always welcome his preaches and I guess buying a car like that was a stupid mistake. I know that it was my fault to be too hasty in my decisions and my uncle is right if **he gives me a piece of his mind**.

## Unit 41

### Number idioms

#### IDIOMS

**To put two and two together:** to guess the truth about a situation from what you have seen or heard

**Two's company, three's a crowd:** said when two people are relaxed and enjoying each other's company but another person would make them feel less comfortable

**Six of one and half a dozen of the other:** said when you think that neither of two choices is better than the other

**To knock somebody sideways/for six:** to shock someone very much, or to make someone very ill

**At sixes and sevens:** in a confused, badly organized or difficult situation

**To be two/ten a penny:** to be common and/or of very little value

**The eleventh hour:** the last moment or almost too late

**To be second to none:** to be the best

My wife can always guess what I have bought for her and when I ask her how she knew that, she simply replies: I **put two and two together**.

She really loves me but we disagree in some of the things in our life. When I broach the matter of having a kid, she says: No way. **Two's company, three's a crowd**. And when I ask her about the gender of the baby, she says: **it's six of one and half a dozen of the other**. She says that thinking about having a baby **knocks her for six**.

Last Wednesday, I was busy at work completing my architectural scheme. There were a number of ambiguous points in my plan and I didn't know who to consult with to solve my problem. I was **at sixes and sevens** and completely desperate.

Suddenly one of my colleagues who seemed to have nothing to do, stepped into my room. He started to pester me by telling stupid jokes and killing my time. I really hate his conducts. These guys **are ten a penny**. I explained to him that I needed to be alone to

concentrate on my project. I didn't want to hand my scheme to my boss at **the eleventh hour**.



"Get lost, two's company, three's a shoal."

That working day came to an end and I got back home. As I entered the house I found that nobody was home. Then I saw my wife is coming toward me smiling and holding a flower bouquet. She hugged me, kissed me and gave me the best news I had ever heard. I am expecting a baby, she said.

The only thing I could say in response was to tell her that she was **second to none**.

## Unit 42

### Sport idioms

#### IDIOMS

**To throw in the towel/sponge:** to admit defeat

**On the ropes:** doing badly and likely to fail

**Not to pull any/your punches:** to speak in an honest way without trying to be kind

**To touch base:** to talk to someone for a short time or to find out how they are or what they think about something

**To back the wrong horse:** to make the wrong decision and support a person or action that is later unsuccessful

**Horses for courses:** something that you say which means that is important to choose suitable people for particular activities because everyone has different skills

**Neck and neck:** if two competitors are neck and neck, they are level with each other and have an equal chance of winning

**Saved by the bell:** something you say when you are in a difficult situation and you get out of it before you have to say or do something that you don't want to

**To be par for the course:** not to be good, but normal enough as you would expect

Today, I am going to the football stadium to support my team. They have lost four out of five recent matches but the coach is too confident and proud to **throw in the towel**.

For almost 80% of the matches, we are **on the ropes**, though no substitution ever takes place. I was at the stadium for the previous match as usual and I saw some of our fans were not **pulling any punches** in apportioning blame to the team members and of course to the head-coach. The fans crave to **touch base** with the coach and exchange ideas but that has never been achieved.

There were a lot of criticisms in the stadium about the team's performance. Some of the fans yelled "**we are**

**backing the wrong horse.**” And some others shouted **“horses for courses”** while referring to the coach.

It was quite a boring game and the two teams were **neck and neck** at the match. My team managed to finish the game by drew and get one score. The only expression which comes to mind is **saved by the bell**. Any way, it was as I expected or as they say **par for the course**.

## Unit 43

### Sports idioms (balls)

#### IDIOMS

**To be on the ball:** to be quick to understand and react to things

**To keep several balls in the air:** to do several things or jobs at the same time and adroitly

**To drop the ball:** to make a mistake, especially by doing something in a stupid or careless way

**A whole new ball game:** a completely different situation, often one which is difficult or which you know little about

Jorgen is one of my best friends and the best staff in the company. It is his duty to deal with our branches' problems and pay a visit to our offshoots around the country. He is really **on the ball** and his comprehensive reports are really helpful. Jorgen is the one who can **keep several balls in the air**.



Last week he had the flu and couldn't come to the office, so I had to ask my assistant to do his job instead, but he wasn't as professional as Jorgen. My assistant couldn't actually accomplish his mission and on his trip to one of our branches, he just **dropped the ball**. My assistant had misled the managers in that branch and I had to go there myself to clarify the situation. It was **a whole new ball game** and I needed to take some documentary files with me to enlighten the managers with the figures so that they would get the point.

It is in such terrible situations that the key persons' absence in a company is touched.



**To drop the ball**

## Unit 44

### Swimming idioms

#### IDIOMS

**To keep your head above water:** to be able to manage, especially when you have financial difficulties

**Out of your depth:** not having the knowledge, experience, or skills to deal with a particular subject or situation

**To dive in/into something:** to start to do something suddenly and energetically, often without stopping to think about it

**To drown something out:** to prevent something from being heard

**To make a splash:** to become suddenly very successful or very well known

**To go/swim against the tide:** not to follow what everyone else is doing

**To be riding/on the crest of a wave:** to be successful for a limited period of time

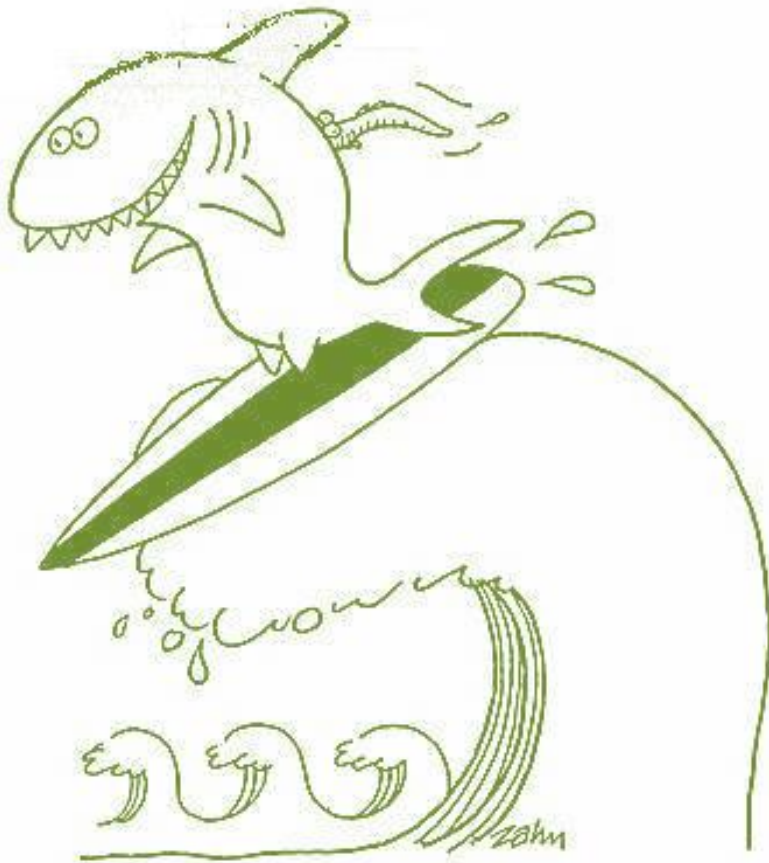
**To throw somebody a lifeline:** to help somebody by giving them some money, so that they would lead their life in a satisfactory way

**To go under:** to fail financially

**To tread water:** to advance in any way

When I was a teenager, my family could hardly **keep our heads above water**. I always dreamed to make money for my poor family, so I decided to give up school and step in small businesses. In spite of the difficulties of working with adults for a young boy like me, I would never leave my working place because I was **out of my depth** in the world of business and needed to learn. I kept seeking for a job and assured the employers that I would just **dive into** every kind of activities no matter how arduous they might be. I was very busy at work, I used to pay a visit to the harbors for 3 hours every day and sometimes I couldn't answer my cell-phone for the noise **drowned out** the sound of it. Soon I got promoted

and they put me in the customs office and I could earn quite a great amount of money.



### On the crest of a wave

In about one year or two, I really **made quite a splash** in my job and turned to be a very outstanding face among my colleagues. After some time, I thought there must be

a short-cut to success and I began to accept some bribes so that I could turn a blind eye to some of the commodities that were illegally imported to the country. It was a kind of **swimming against the tide** because nobody dared to do such an evil thing.

One day, just as I was feeling that I'm **on the crest of a wave** of richness, I was caught by the police red-handedly. Not only I was sacked but also I was fined 35000 \$ and detained for six months in prison. Had it not been for Robert's help to **throw me a lifeline** by lending me some money, I would have undoubtedly **gone under** and would have been unable to **tread water**.

## Unit 45

### Temperature idioms

#### IDIOMS

**Hot potato:** a problem, situation, etc that is difficult to deal with and causes a lot of disagreement

**Frosty reception:** an unfriendly reception

**To lose your cool:** to lose your temper

**In the cold light of day:** used to say when you want to assure that you are thinking clearly, calmly and without any emotions you had at the time it happened

**To pour/throw cold water on something:** to criticize someone's opinions or ideas and stop people believing them or being excited about them

**Hot under the collar:** embarrassed or angry about something

**In the heat of the moment:** if you say or do something in the heat of the moment, you say or do it without thinking because you are very angry or excited

**Hotbed:** a place or situation where a lot of a particular activity, especially an unwanted or unpleasant activity, is happening or might happen

Last week was a very tough one in the office. The boss invited me and some other high-ranked stuffs to discuss about the higher tax imposed by the government. It was really a kind of **hot potato** for us. Everybody suggested solutions but what David said got **frosty reception** and made the boss **lose his cool**.

**In the cold light of day**, we had better pay the tax instead of looking for a solution to dodge it, David suggested. You should have seen the boss, not only he **poured cold water** on Dave's idea, but also he got **hot under the collar**. He even said something which was very insulting and caused David to leave the room. Later, he apologized to David and said that he didn't mean it and that he had said it **in the heat of the moment**.

Anyway that day was over without any solution. It seems that our boss is still looking for a way to escape from

paying the extra tax. He always says that the tax office is a **hotbed** of corruption.



## Unit 46

### Train idioms

#### IDIOMS

**To have a one-track mind:** to think about one particular thing and nothing else

**Run into/hit the buffers:** an activity or a plan that hits the buffers is stopped and does not succeed

**To let/blow off steam:** to do or say something that helps you to get rid of strong feelings or energy

**To go off the rails:** to start behaving in a way that is not generally acceptable, especially dishonestly or illegally

**To run out of steam:** to suddenly lose the energy or interest in a way that you can't continue what you were doing

**To be on the right track:** to be doing something in a way that will bring good results

**Light at the end of the tunnel:** sign of improvement in a situation which has been bad for a long time

When Sam's dad died, he was in high school. He is the greatest son the family so he decided to quit school and start working. I talked to him and said that he had better finish school in order to find a good job but he had already made up his mind and it seemed he had **got a one track mind**. He started to work in a restaurant from early in the morning till late at night and unfortunately made some bad friends there. Things were quite good at the beginning but then everything seemed **to hit the buffers**. Soon he began to drink too much alcohol and when I asked him to quit, he said that he was working very hard and needed something to **let off steam**. He had undoubtedly **gone right off the rails**.

Sam was very smart at school and so it was very sad to see he was in such a disastrous condition. I decided to help him anyway. I knew he wanted to get out of his nasty life but he had **run out of steam** and could not help himself. Last week, I went to him and promised to do my best to get him **on the right track** again. I told him: If you quit drinking, there will be still **light at the end of the tunnel**.

## Unit 47

### Water idioms

#### IDIOMS

**To water something down:** to intentionally make something less extreme or forceful so that other people will accept it

**To float the idea:** to suggest an idea or a plan to be considered/ to broach a matter

**A wave of protests:** a protest by a larger number of people

**To be at sea:** to be confused

**To leave somebody high and dry:** to do something which is not convenient at all for someone and put them in a very difficult situation

**Water off a duck's back:** criticisms that have no effect on a person

**Come hell or high water:** used to say when you are determined to do something, despite any difficulties

**A sea change:** a total change

**Hold water:** if a reason, argument or explanation holds water, it is true

**A drop in the ocean:** a very small amount compared to the amount needed

**To spend money like water:** to spend lavishly and without thinking

**Floating voter:** someone who does not always vote for the same political party

**Water under the bridge:** a forgotten problem that has not been or cannot be solved

The chief executive of our football team used to make a fiery speech whenever he called us into his office. One day we were informed that he was going to speak about the contract we were about to sign.

We had sit and worried about what he was going to put. The chief executive's speech had been **watered down** to avoid upsetting among us but as he **floated the idea** that the amount of money paid for the football players for the

next year would be reduced by 15%, **a wave of protests** broke out. We were all **at sea** and had no idea what to say. The goalkeeper stood up and talked to the chief executive. He tried to explain the athletes' problems and that the athletes would be **left high and dry**, but it was **like water off a duck's back**. The chief executive was always very determined in his decisions and just did what he said **come hell or high water**. The chief executive tried to explain that he aimed to cut back on expenses and that there would be **a sea change** in the federation but it didn't seem to **hold water**. He also added that a 15% reduction is in fact **a drop in the ocean** of our asset.



"This entire campaign is focused on the undecided voters...all 9 of them."

We all knew that the federation **spends money like water** on trivial subjects but when it comes to paying our incomes, they get cold feet. We swore that we wouldn't vote for the chief executive in the next election, even the **floating voters** were determined not to vote for him as long as they were in the team.

Six months passed and it was time to vote for the new federation president. One day the chief executive came to the football field and greeted all of us with cordiality and wanted us to settle the arguments. We said to him that there was no need to mention it and what happened was **water under the bridge**, but actually we had already made up our mind. No vote for him again.

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