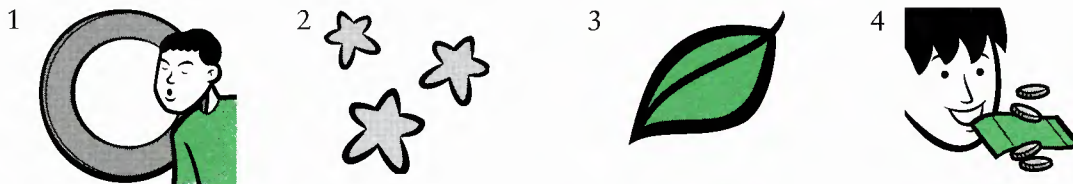


Exercises

42.1 Look at A. Which idioms do these pictures make you think of?



42.2 Complete each sentence with an idiom.

- The club needs money desperately. Charlie says he wants to help, so he should
- I know you don't want to tell her the bad news, but you have to
- Come on, work harder! You have to !
- The teacher told his students to be ambitious and to
- You need to stop lying and be honest. It's time to

42.3 Choose the correct word to complete each idiom.

- You should think [over / double / twice] before you give anyone your personal details.
- I wouldn't upset [the appplecart / the fruitcart / the apple tree] at work. Just say you agree with your manager.
- The company realised that it had to [change / tighten / trim] its sails because of the economic recession.
- Let's not book the holiday until mum has had her operation and she's out of hospital. We don't want to [test / try / tempt] fate.
- It's going to be a difficult year for us financially, but we'll just have to tough it [out / through / over].
- You've been wearing the same boring old clothes for years. Come on, let's go shopping. It's time to ring [a change / the changes / the change]!

42.4 What could you say in these situations? Use the idioms in the box.

be (skating) on thin ice tough it out bite off more than you can chew stick your neck out

- A friend buys an old, ruined house, then finds out it will cost a lot of money and take a lot of time to make it habitable.
- A friend speaks out at a public meeting and gives an opinion that most people do not agree with. You think it was not a good idea to speak out in this way.
- A friend is in financial difficulties and asks you to help, but you can't. You think they just have to accept their situation.
- A classmate sends an email to your teacher containing a very strong criticism of her. You think the classmate is taking a big risk.

FOLLOW UP

A lot of idioms are based on parts of the human body (for example, *put your shoulder to the wheel* and *stick your neck out* in this unit). Find one more idiom for *shoulder* and one more for *neck* and record them in your vocabulary notebook.

Telling stories

A The office party

The office party was embarrassing, to say the least¹. It all went wrong from the word go², when I couldn't find the venue and was two hours late. I'd only been working at the company for a week, and didn't really know anybody there, so there was a lot at stake³ in terms of getting to know my new colleagues and making a good first impression. I started talking to someone who was, to put it mildly⁴, one of the most boring people I've ever met, so I escaped quickly and started talking to Alice, who I sit next to at work. I was complaining about the man I'd been talking to and noticed she had gone very quiet. The penny dropped⁵ when she said, 'He's my husband.' I later discovered that, for good measure⁶, he's also a director of the company. I can't believe I dropped such a clanger⁷.

¹ expression used to indicate that something is more serious or important than your words may suggest

² from the very start

³ to lose

⁴ expression used to describe something as more extreme than your words may suggest

⁵ I suddenly understood (informal)

⁶ in addition

⁷ said something very embarrassing

B Getting a job

I'm sure I got my job more by luck than judgement¹. My CV wasn't very good, to say nothing of² the disastrous interview. I nearly fell off my chair³ when they offered me the job, and I even got a company car into the bargain⁴. There's a lot to be said for⁵ not worrying about things until you know the final outcome.

¹ by chance rather than skill

² and in addition there is / was

³ I was extremely surprised

⁴ as well as other things mentioned

⁵ there's a lot in favour of

C Other stories

John told me he'd won the lottery and for a split second¹ I believed him!

Between you and me², I think Kate's thinking of dropping out of university.

Guess who I bumped into on the way to work? Sara! It was a real bolt from the blue³. I've not seen her for years.

The exam looked really easy at first glance⁴, but it was actually really difficult, and I think I've failed.

They may seem a strange couple, but when all's said and done⁵, they're really happy together.

That's a real turn-up for the books⁶ – I just got a pay rise I wasn't expecting.

¹ for a very brief moment

² said when you are going to tell someone something confidential

³ an unexpected and very surprising event

⁴ when you first look at it

⁵ said when you are about to say the most important fact in a situation

⁶ strange or surprising event

Exercises

43.1 Complete each idiom.

- 1 I felt at home in my new flat from the word
- 2 It took a while for the penny to , but eventually Joe realised I was joking.
- 3 Kathy nearly fell off her when she saw a film star in her local restaurant.
- 4 For a second I was afraid the car was going to crash.
- 5 He doesn't like spending money, to it mildly.
- 6 Just you and me, I'm thinking of applying for a new job.
- 7 Be careful what you say in the meeting – there's a lot at
- 8 I dropped a at Jane's party: I asked where her cat was, but apparently it died last week!

43.2 Answer these questions about the idioms on the opposite page.

- 1 Which two idioms talk about the beginning of something?
- 2 Which three idioms comment on something being surprising?
- 3 Which three idioms can be used to add extra information to other points mentioned?
- 4 Which idiom can be used to emphasise that you want to say something significant?
- 5 Which two idioms relate to chance and risk?

43.3 Replace the underlined part of each sentence with an idiom.

- 1 There are many advantages to working in an open-plan office.
- 2 Very briefly, I believed Tom when he said he was moving to Australia; then I realised he was joking.
- 3 Initially, the project seemed quite simple.
- 4 He passed his driving test first time, but I'd say it was more thanks to good fortune than to any special ability.
- 5 Don't tell anyone else, but I think Sue and Larry may be going out together.
- 6 Their decision to marry came as a complete surprise.
- 7 It was, at best, a risky thing to do.
- 8 Both the brothers are very clever, as is their brilliant sister.

43.4 Correct the mistakes in these idioms.

- 1 The party was fantastic – delicious food, a great band and all my favourite people there for full measure.
- 2 She's pretty, clever and nice for the bargain.
- 3 When all's told and done, I think you made the right decision.
- 4 No one thought the film would be a success, so it was a real turn-up in the books when it won three Oscars.
- 5 I feel very nervous about this exam; there is a lot at the stake.
- 6 I didn't understand what he meant at first, but then the pound dropped.
- 7 We got on really well from the word start.
- 8 I think you were rather rude to her, to tell it mildly.

**FOLLOW
UP**

Choose three idioms that you particularly want to learn from this unit. Look them up in an online dictionary, e.g. <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/>. Write down the example sentences using these idioms that you find there. Then write another example using the idiom in a context relevant to you.

Responding to what people say

The idioms in this unit are used mainly in informal spoken language or in informal writing, e.g. emails to friends. They are not used in formal speaking or writing.

A Short responses

In these conversations, the second speaker uses an idiom to react to what the first speaker says.

A: What's Joe doing these days?

B: **You may well ask!** [when someone asks you about something which you think is strange, funny or annoying (humorous)]

A: Do you think Gill will come and help us tomorrow morning?

B: **Fat chance!** She never gets up before ten o'clock! [you think this will definitely not happen]

A: Did you know Nina's boyfriend was a basketball player?

B: Actually, he's a volleyball player.

A: Well, **same difference**. [you admit you were wrong, but think the difference is unimportant]

A: Farah has an amazing job. She travels the world as some millionaire's personal assistant.

B: **Nice work if you can get it!** [an easy job that you would like to have if you could]

A: Teresa and Harry are bringing their four noisy kids and their dog when they come to stay.

B: Oh, no! They're bad enough, but their kids and dog too? **That's all we need!** [something even worse will be added to an already bad situation]

A: Petra has resigned. She's leaving at the end of the month.

B: Well, **good riddance**, I say! I've never liked her. [you are pleased that someone or something you didn't like has gone; you can also say 'good riddance to bad rubbish' (impolite)]

A: Richard says he's going to move to Hollywood and become a famous film star.

B: Oh, **give me a break!** He's the worst actor I've ever seen! [you don't believe what you have just heard]

A: When shall we tell Lily the bad news?

B: Well, **there's no time like the present**. [it's better to do something immediately rather than wait]

B Reacting to news and events

Maria: Hi, Tara. You know Kerry's split up with Matt? Well, **the plot thickens**¹ – she's going out with James!

Tara: **I thought as much**²! I saw them together this morning.

Maria: **What is the world coming to**³? Matt's lovely! **Don't get me wrong**⁴, James is gorgeous, but he's not a very nice person, and he's really boring. He needs to **get a life**⁵!

Tara: I know, **it will all end in tears**⁶! What does she see in him?

Maria: **You've got me there**⁷. Didn't you use to like him?

Tara: **Do me a favour**⁸! I **wouldn't trust him as far as I could throw him**⁹. He cheated on his last girlfriend, you know.

Maria: **Fair enough**¹⁰. I was only asking!

Tara: Oh well. **Time will tell**¹¹ whether they stay together or not.

¹ something has happened to make a strange situation even stranger ² I thought so ³ said when you are shocked by events ⁴ said before you criticise someone, to make the criticism less severe ⁵ stop doing boring things and start doing exciting things ⁶ it will end badly ⁷ said when you don't know the answer to a question ⁸ said when you don't believe what someone has said or you disagree very much with it ⁹ I do not trust him at all ¹⁰ I accept your point of view ¹¹ the truth will become clear after a period of time

37.5 Possible answers:

- 1 That TV programme about child poverty reduced me to tears.
- 2 I wouldn't give that politician's opinions house room.
- 3 Amos's arrogance gets my goat.
- 4 I was a bundle of nerves when I was waiting for my exam results.
- 5 I could have kicked myself when I let your secret slip.
- 6 Watching cricket is not my bag.
- 7 Wild horses couldn't make me sing in public.
- 8 My friend's accident knocked me for six.

Unit 38

- 38.1** 1 ball 3 pig's 5 plot
2 light 4 nightmare

- 38.2** 1 pull the rug from under (my feet)
2 can't see the wood for the trees
3 a slap in the face
4 sweep it under the carpet

- 38.3** 1 I'm not making as many sales as I used to. I must be losing my touch.
2 I don't know why Bill is still so determined to settle a score with Jack.
3 I wonder if you could help me out of a tight corner.
4 His neighbours' expensive new car certainly put Ted's nose out of joint.
5 He realised he'd made a terrible mistake in the cold light of day.
6 No one in this business can afford to take their eye off the ball.
7 There have been problems all week – it's just been a chapter of accidents.
8 You need to stand back from the problem so you can see the wood for the trees.

- 38.4** 1 I agree. We're in over our heads.
2 I know, it's really put her nose out of joint.
3 Yes, there's no point trying to sweep it under the carpet.
4 You're right, I think he's lost / losing his touch.
5 Good idea. At the moment we can't see the wood for the trees.
6 Me too. I feel like I'm losing the plot!
7 You're right. You can't take your eye off the ball.
8 Yes, he's in a tight corner / spot.

Unit 39

- 39.1** 1 False. The mayor is going through a difficult period.
2 True.
3 False. It was made at the last minute.
4 True.
5 True.
6 False. 'Marathon' means that they were long.

- 39.2** 1 in 3 under, of 5 out
2 in 4 into

- 39.3** 1 The forest fires resulted in some entire villages being engulfed in flames.
2 The robbers got into the house under cover of darkness.
3 It will not be easy for the two sides to hammer out an agreement.
4 The reasons for the bank manager's disappearance are still shrouded in mystery.
5 The power cuts plunged the whole area into chaos.

- 39.4** 1 big 4 uneasy 7 last-ditch
 2 mounting 5 for 8 war-torn
 3 bloody 6 blood

39.5 *Possible answers:*

- 1 something totally covered by fire or water
- 2 something going down very fast, often into water
- 3 something totally covered – a shroud is the cloth that traditionally covers a dead body
- 4 a battle (The last ditch is the last part of an army's defences, i.e. the last point at which it can avoid defeat.)
- 5 something being saved in the last few moments before disaster strikes (at twelve o'clock)
- 6 a country divided into pieces by war.

They are all dramatic images, which is why journalists like them.

Unit 40

- 40.1** 1 world of, between 4 wildest dreams
 2 of its time 5 packs, punch
 3 hands down 6 the mark

- 40.2** 1 Yes, there was a world of difference between them.
 2 Yes, it did us the world of good.
 3 Yes, he certainly lives life to the full.
 4 Yes, it certainly packs a punch.
 5 Yes, it must be hard to stand out from the crowd these days.
 6 Yes, it's taken years off her. I think I might have one done myself!

- 40.3** 1 b) in chess, the players make moves
 2 a) you use a watch to tell the time
 3 c) washing powder makes clothes clean

- 40.4** 1 a new gift shop (a shop which has the perfect presents for people)
 2 an exhibition of pictures of a village taken 100 years ago (if you have a photographic memory, you remember everything perfectly, just like a photograph in your mind)
 3 a new range of luxury watches ('quality time' is time you spend doing things you like and which are important to you, for example being with your family, doing a hobby, etc.)
 4 a cookery course to encourage people to stop eating fast food ('slowly but surely' means that something is happening, usually positive, but it takes time)
 5 an airline with beds in its first-class cabin ('flat out' means at high speed, so the flight is fast, and the beds are flat)

Unit 41

- 41.1** 1 least 3 foremost 5 on
 2 on 4 by 6 analysis

41.2 *Possible answers:*

- 1 **On no account** should we forget the history behind this conflict.
- 2 **In the final analysis**, doctors must trust their own judgement.
- 3 I can see both arguments, but **on balance** I am in favour of extending the school-leaving age.
- 4 **First and foremost**, we must give a definition of family law before we can apply it to the case in question.
- 5 **Last but not least**, let us consider the role of the media in this debate.
- 6 **By and large**, the writer uses traditional poetic style.