



Important Idioms and Phrases

1. Rank and File Ordinary People
2. By fits and starts In short periods, not regularly
3. A wee bit A little
4. Out of the wood Free from difficulties and dangers
5. Under his thumb Under his control
6. At one's wits end In a state where one does not know what to do
7. Between the devil and the deep sea Between two dangers
8. Burn the midnight oil Work or study hard
9. Call a spade a spade Speak frankly and directly
10. Come off with flying colors Be highly successful
11. Hoping against hope Without hope
12. Hit the nail on the head Do or say the exact thing
13. An axe to grind A personal interest in the matter
14. To get rid of Dispose of
15. At daggers drawn Bitterly hostile
16. To play ducks and drakes To act foolishly or inconsistently
17. To take the bull by the horns To tackle a problem in a bold and direct fashion
18. Rain cats and dogs Rain heavily
19. To move heaven and earth To make a supreme effort
20. No avail Without any result

21. Bark up the wrong tree Accuse or denounce the wrong person
22. Keep one at bay/Keep one at a distance
23. Make a clean breast of it Confess – especially when a person has done a wrong thing
24. Have a card up one's sleeve Have a secret plan in reserve
25. Like a cat on hot bricks Very nervous
26. Cat and dog life Life full of quarrels
27. Cock and bull story Made up story that one should not believe
28. Cry for the moon Ask for the impossible
29. The pros and cons The various aspects of a matter in detail
30. Be in a tight corner In a very difficult situation
31. Cross one's t's and dot Be precise, careful and one's t's exact
32. At arm's length To keep at a distance
33. Out of the question Impossible
34. Out of the way Strange
35. Show a clean pair of heels Run away
36. Keep one's fingers crossed The anxiety in which you hope that nothing will upset your plans
37. In the nick of time Just at the last moment
38. Sitting on the fence Hesitate between two decisions
39. Spread like wild fire Spread quickly
40. The gift of the gab Talent for speaking
41. By hook or by crook By fair or foul means
42. Feather one's own nest Make money unfairly
43. Throw out of gear Disturb the work
44. Take to one's heels Run away
45. Tooth and nail With all one's power
46. Die in harness Die while in service

47. Take a leaf out of one's book Imitate one
48. Leave no stone unturned Use all available means
49. A man of straw A man of no substance
50. Read between the lines Understand the hidden meaning
51. In cold blood Deliberately and without emotion
52. A thorn in the flesh A constant source of annoyance
53. Smell a rat Suspect something foul
54. Harp on the same string Dwell on the same subject
55. Bury the hatchet End the quarrel and make peace
56. Leave one in the lurch Desert one in difficulties; leave one in a helpless condition
57. Like a fish out of water In a strange situation
58. At one's beck and call Under his control
59. To make both ends meet To live within one's income
60. In hot water In trouble
61. Nip in the bud Destroy in the early stage
62. Stick to one's guns Remain faithful to the cause
63. To eat humble pie To apologize humbly and to yield under humiliating circumstances
64. In high spirits Very happy
65. Put the cart before the horse Put or do things in the wrong order
66. To call names To abuse
67. On tenterhooks In a state of suspense and anxiety
68. Wash one's dirty linen Discuss unpleasant in public-private matters before strangers
69. To bell the cat To face the risk
70. A hard nut to crack A difficult problem
71. Let the cat out of the bag Reveal a secret
72. A big gun An important person
73. Kill two birds with one stone To achieve two results with one effort

74. Take one to task Rebuke
75. Gain ground Become Popular
76. To blow one's own To praise one's own trumpet achievement
77. A bosom friend A very close friend
78. A brown study Dreaming
79. Turn a deaf ear Disregard / ignore what one says
80. A close shave Narrow escape
81. Turn over a new leaf Change for the better
82. Make up one's mind Decide
83. In the long run Eventually; ultimately
84. Bring to light Disclose
85. Pay off old scores Take revenge
86. Hard and fast rules Strict rules
87. At the eleventh hour At the last moment
88. A close shave Narrow escape
89. To cut a sorry figure To make a poor show
90. With a high hand Oppressively
91. Burn one's fingers Get into trouble by interfering in other's affairs
92. Laugh one's head off Laugh heartily
93. Chew the cud Ponder over something
94. Play second fiddle Take an unimportant part
95. Above board Honest and open
96. Through thick and thin Under all conditions
97. Put a spoke in one's wheel To upset one's plans
98. At sixes and sevens In a disordered/disorganized manner, chaotic
99. At home Comfortable
100. Alpha and omega The beginning and the end

101. At sea Confused and lost
102. A bosom friend A very close friend
103. At one's beck and call At one's service
104. By leaps and bounds Rapidly
105. To burn one's boats Go back on a decision
106. To beat about the bush Talk irrelevantly
107. To burn candle at both ends To waste lavishly
108. Take one to task Rebuke
109. A bone of contention A source of quarrel
110. Add fuel to the fire To aggravate the situation
111. An acid test A critical test
112. At a snail's pace Very slowly
113. A bolt from the blue Something unexpected
114. To build castles in the air Make imaginary schemes
115. Once in a blue moon Something that happens very rarely
116. Beating around the bush Avoiding the main topic
117. Cry over spilled milk Complaining about a loss or failure from the past
118. Chip on your shoulder When someone is upset about something that happened a while ago
119. Piece of cake Something that is easy to understand or do
120. Golden handshake A big sum of money given to a person when he/she leaves a company or retires
121. Spill the beans To disclose a secret
122. Blessing in disguise Something good and useful that did not initially seem that way
123. Mean business Being Serious or Dedicated
124. Come hell or high water Possible obstacles in your path
125. Apple of one's eye Being cherished
126. Bite off more than you can chew Not able to complete a task due to lack of ability

127. The best of both worlds The benefits of widely differing situations, enjoyed at the same time
128. Feeling a bit under the weather Feeling slightly ill
129. Icing on the cake Something that turns good into great
130. Cost an arm and a leg Be very expensive
131. Jump the bandwagon To join a popular activity or trend
132. Ball is in your court When it is up to you to make the next decision or step
133. To be in the doldrums To be in low spirits
134. To sit on the fence To remain neutral
135. Break the ice To initiate a social conversation or interaction
136. Hear it on grapevine To hear rumors about something or someone
137. Can't judge a book by its cover Cannot judge something primarily on appearance
138. It takes two to tango Actions or communications need more than one person
139. Let the cat out of the bag To reveal the secret carelessly or by mistake
140. Black and blue Full of Bruises
141. Be on cloud nine Be very happy
142. Last straw The final problem in a series of problems
143. A bird's eye view A view from a very high place that allows you to see a very large area
144. A litmus Test A method that helps to know if something is correct
145. At the drop of a hat Willingness to do something instantly
146. Afraid of one's own shadow To become easily frightened
147. A house of cards A poor plan
148. Fool's paradise False sense of happiness
149. Get a raw deal To not be treated as well as other people
150. Give cold shoulder To ignore
151. Hand to mouth Live on only basic necessities
152. Make a face To show dislike or disappointment through facial expressions
153. It's Greek to me Something that is not understandable

154. To pour oil on troubled waters To make peace
155. Don't put all your eggs in one basket Do not put all your resources in one basket (in one place or thing)
156. To put in a nutshell To say in a few words or to make something concise
157. Back out To withdraw from a promise or contract
158. Blow up To explode
159. Back Up To support and sustain
160. Back Upon To be relevant
161. Break Down Failure in something
162. Break off To end or discontinue
163. Break Up To disperse / dissolve
164. Bring up To rear
165. Call forth To provoke
166. Call out To shout
167. Call upon To order
168. Carry on To continue
169. Cast away To throw aside
170. Catch up with To overtake
171. Come off To take place
172. Cry Down To make little of
173. Catch up with To overtake
174. Cry out against To complain loudly against
175. Cut out Designed for
176. Drop in To Visit Casually
177. Drop out To fall
178. Fall back To Recede; To Retreat
179. Fall down From a higher position to a lower one

180. Fall off To Withdraw; To Drop Off
181. Fall under To come under
182. Get along To Prosper; To Progress; To Proceed
183. Get on with To Live Pleasantly Together; To Progress
184. Get into To be involved in
185. Give in To Surrender; To Yield
186. Give over Not to do any longer
187. Go after To Follow; To Pursue
188. Go Down To be accepted
189. Go without To remain without
190. Go by To follow
191. Hang about To Loiter near a place
192. Hang upon To depend upon
193. Hold out To Endure; To Refuse to yield; To continue; To offer
194. Hold to Abide By
195. Keep off To ward off
196. Keep up with To keep pace with
197. Knock out To win by hitting another one
198. It takes two to tango Both people involved in a bad situation are responsible for it
199. Last straw The final problem in a series of problems
200. Keep something at bay Keep something away
201. Kill two birds with one stone To solve two problems at a time with just one action
202. Let sleeping dogs lie Leave something alone if it might cause trouble
203. Open the floodgates Release something that was previously under control
204. Out of the blue Happen unexpectedly
205. Out on a limb Do something risky
206. Over the Top Totally excessive and not suitable for the occasion

207. Pen is mightier than the sword Words and communication have a greater effect than war
208. Push one's luck Trying to obtain more than what one has
209. Reap the harvest Benefit or suffer as a direct result of past actions
210. Roll up sleeves To get yourself prepared
211. See eye to eye To be in agreement with
212. Shot in the dark A complete guess
213. Sink your teeth into Do something with a lot of energy and enthusiasm
214. Take with a grain/pinch of salt To doubt the accuracy of information
215. Skating on thin ice Do or say something risky
216. Tight spot A difficult situation
217. Strike while the iron is hot To act at the right time
218. Take the plunge Venture into something of one's interest despite the risks involved
219. Take a nose dive Rapid drop or decrease in value
220. Think the world of Admire someone very much
221. Stand in a good stead To be useful or be of good service to someone
222. Take a back seat Choose to be less important in a role
223. Wave a dead chicken Do something useless
224. Whale of a time Enjoy a lot
225. Wrap one's brain around Concentrate on something to understand
226. Zero in on something Focus all attention on one thing
227. Above all Chiefly, Mainly
228. On Account of Due to
229. On no account Not for Any Reason
230. A Fidus Achates A faithful friend or a devoted follower
231. The Heel of Achilles A Weak Point
232. An Adonis A very handsome man
233. To assume airs To affect superiority

234. To stand aloof To keep to oneself and not mix with others
235. To lead to the altar To marry
236. An Ananias A Liar
237. An Apollo A Man with Perfect Physique
238. To Upset the Apple Cart To disturb the peace
239. Apple Pie Order In perfect order
240. Arcadian Life A blissful, happy, rural and simple life
241. To take up arms To fight or go to the war
242. To Grind To have some selfish objective in view
243. To break the back of anything To perform the most difficult part
244. To backbite a person To speak disguise about someone
245. He has no backbone He has no will of his own
246. To cause bad blood To Cause Enmity
247. Bag and Baggage With all one's belongings
248. To keep the ball rolling To keep things going
249. Barmecide feast Imaginary Benefits
250. Bee-line The shortest distance between two places
251. Behind one's back Without one's Knowledge
252. Behind the scenes In Private
253. To hit below the belt To act unfairly in a contest
254. To bite the dust To be Defeated in Battle
255. A Wet Blanket A person who discourages enjoyment or enthusiasm
256. In Cold Blood Deliberately
257. A blue Stocking A learned/educated or intellectual woman
258. At First Blush At first sight
259. A Bolt from the Blue Something completely unexpected that surprises you
260. One's bread and butter One's means of livelihood

261. To breadth one's last To Die
262. To make bricks without straw To attempt to do something without proper materials
263. To kick the bucket To die
264. Good wine needs no bush There is no need to advertise something good
265. To burn the candle at both ends To expend energy in two directions at the same time
266. If the cap fits, wear it If you think the remarks refer to you, then accept the criticism
267. Care killed the cat Don't fret and worry yourself to death
268. To Catch one's eye To attract attention
269. To take the chair To preside a meeting
270. She is no chicken She is older than she says
271. To pick and choose To make a careful selection
272. To square the circle To attempt something impossible
273. Every cloud has a silver lining Adverse conditions do not last forever
274. Close fistad Mean
275. Cut your cloth according to your cloth Live within your income
276. A cock and bull story A foolishly incredible story
277. To be cock sure To be perfectly sure or certain
278. To throw cold water upon anything To discourage efforts
279. Off color Not in the usual form
280. To commit to memory To learn by heart
281. Too many cooks spoil the broth Where there are more workers than necessary
282. Crocodile tears Hypocritical Tears
283. By hook or by crook By fair or foul means
284. Cut and dried Readymade
285. Up to date Recent
286. Evil days A period of misfortune
287. Halcyon Days A time when there are peace and happiness in the land

288. To step into dead man's shoes To come into an inheritance
289. Go to the devil Be off
290. Devil's bones Dice
291. Devil's Playthings Playing Cards
292. Give a dog a bad name and hang him Once a person loses his reputation
293. Every dog has his day Sooner or later, everyone has his share of good fortune
294. To throw dust in one's eyes To try to deceive someone or mislead someone
295. A white elephant A useless possession which is extremely expensive to keep
296. To set the Thames on fire To do something sensational or remarkable
297. A burnt child dreads the fire One who has had a previous unpleasant experience is always scared of situations where such experiences are likely to be repeated
298. A fish out of water Anyone in an awkward
299. Foul play Cheating
300. To jump from a frying pan into fire To come out of one trouble and get into a worse

