

100 IELTS Speaking Idioms

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100 IELTS Speaking Idioms

S.No	Idioms	Definition	Example
1	Water Under The Bridge	Past things that are not important anymore	I had some problems with my friends. But, those are water under bridges now.
2	Practice makes perfect!	Constant practice leads to improvement	Try to do the math as much as possible. Practice makes perfect!
3	Hit the nail on the head	Saying things in a precise and right manner	In debate, you have hit the nail on the head towards the opposite group.
4	Back to the drawing board!	Attempts are failed. So, now it's time to start over again with different methods	We have done a poor job in our project. Back to the drawing board!
5	An Arm and A Leg	Very costly	BMW and all is an arm and a leg for me.
6	Over the Moon	Extreme happiness	I was over the moon when I got selected for a job
7	Between a rock and a hard place	Two equally bad choices	I don't like my partner. If I leave her, she could hurt herself. I am between a rock and a hard place .
8	It's Not One Thing, It's the Other	Problems are happening simultaneously	I got rejected from a job. Now, I broke my legs. If it's not one thing, it's the other .
9	Pulling your Leg	Teasing or Joking around	Don't take it personally. I am just pulling your leg
10	You are what you eat	Eating healthy food can make you healthy. And, eating junk food could worsen your health	You are what you eat. So, Eat good food.

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11	Don't judge a book by its cover	Judging someone based on their appearance is misleading	Don't judge a book by its cover , he is an intelligent person.
12	Take a rain check	Rejecting an invitation now. But, when you would like to do it later.	I can't come to the party now. I have to take a rain check .
13	The heat of the moment	Doing or saying something suddenly without thinking about it.	Sorry for what I have said. I said in the heat of the moment
14	Bite my Tongue	Stopping yourself from saying something	I have to bite my tongue now to prevent bad situations
15	Jumping the Gun	Starting or Initiating something too early	Why are you jumping the gun ? Tomorrow is only a festival
16	Once in a Blue Moon	Occurring so rarely	We can see him once in a blue moon
17	Cut to the chase	Getting to the point and leaving out all the non-essential information	Please cut to the chase . We don't want to listen to all your stories.
18	Keep an eye on him	Watching someone in a careful manner	He seems a little suspicious. So, keep an eye on him
19	Rule of Thumb	A principle or guideline based on practice rather than theory	As a rule of thumb , you should take 2000 calories
20	Work against the clock	Not having sufficient time to do something	We have to work against the clock to complete this project

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21	Flogging a dead horse	Working on something that is not going to change	I think we are flogging a dead horse . It's better to focus on some other thing
22	Smell a rat	Sensing something that is not right	Don't try to conceal the truth. I can smell a rat
23	Kicked the bucket	Died	Jack kicked the bucket when he dived into the sea
24	Put all your eggs in the basket	Putting all of one's resources into one thing	Don't put all your eggs in the basket . Invest the money in different stocks.
25	Chip on his shoulder	The feeling of inferiority or unpleasantness	He feels a chip on his shoulder when he thinks about his job.
26	Piece of cake	Very easy	Achieving high marks in science is a piece of cake for me.
27	Cloud has a silver lining	Seeing the positive side in a negative situation	Don't worry about that. Every cloud has a silver lining .
28	Let the sleeping dogs lie	Avoiding a conflict or problem	I don't want to discuss it with him anymore. It's better to let the sleeping dogs lie .
29	Spitting Image	Looking exactly the same thing	He's a spitting image of her brother.
30	Bent over Backwards	Put a lot of effort to do something	I bent over backwards to help her. But, she doesn't even care about me.



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31	Break a leg	Good luck	Today, you are going to take a major exam, right? Break a leg.
32	The Ball's in your court	To tell someone it's their turn to make a decision	Who are you going to marry? The ball's in your court , now.
33	Playing a devil's advocate	Argue for an unfavourable side to provoke a debate	I am playing devil's advocate to know the flaws in my position
34	Until the cows come home	Taking a very long time	He is eating slowly. He will be there until the cows come home.
35	Hold your horses	Telling someone to be patient	Hold your horses , you're behaving so idiotically
36	Tongue-in-cheek	Something said it humorously rather than seriously	Sorry for what I have said. It was just tongue-in-cheek.
37	Sitting on the fence	Not able to make firm and strong decisions	I don't know which career he is going to choose. He is sitting on the fence.
38	Found my feet	Become comfortable with what one is doing	At first, I wasn't able to cook. But, now I have found my feet.
39	A drop in the ocean	A minute part of a bigger thing.	He has a lot of wisdom. What he just said is a drop in the ocean.
40	Blessing in disguise	At first, it seems like the wrong thing but it turns out to be good.	I failed the previous exam which was a blessing in disguise. Now, I got higher marks.

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41	Driving me up the wall	Irritating or Annoying somebody	He is driving me up the wall . He keeps on doing that.
42	Under the Weather	Unwell	He is not talking with us. I guess he is under the weather .
43	Actions speak louder than words	Actions have a better impact than speaking	We have to act instead of thinking too much about that. Actions speak louder than words .
44	It's a small world	Meeting someone who is close in an unexpected context.	I met George in the supermarket. It's a small world .
45	Fixed in their ways	Sticking to conventional or normal ways of things.	My relatives are fixed in their ways . They are compelling me to marry.
46	Go the extra mile	Doing more than what is necessary or required.	He will go the extra mile to irritate others.
47	Over the top	Excessive	Your excitement is over the top . It does not deserve that much.
48	Bite the hand that feeds you	Hurting someone who helped you	Be with your parents when they are old. Don't bite the hand that feeds you .
49	Let the cat out of the bag	Telling something to someone that you are not supposed to	I told your secret to Sanjay. Sorry, I didn't mean to let the cat out of the bag .
50	Got up on the wrong side of the bed this morning	Being in a bad mood	I guess he got up on the wrong side of the bed this morning . That's why he is in a terrible state of mind.



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51	Fresh as a daisy	Someone who is active, lively, and jovial	Though my mother aged, she is still as fresh as a daisy
52	Couch potato	A lazy person or someone who is watching TV without doing any work.	My friend is a couch potato . He is watching TV programmes though he has a lot of work.
53	Bad egg	A person who is not trustworthy.	I think you should not tell your secrets to mohan. He is such a bad egg .
54	Party Pooper	A person who is not participating in fun activities or enjoyment.	Why Sam is so sad in this function. Party Pooper!
55	Eager beaver	A person who is enthusiastic and hardworking.	Vignesh is an eager beaver . He can finish any work on time.
56	Throw in the towel	Giving up	I don't think it will work anymore. I'll throw in the towel .
57	Get a headstart	Start prior to others	The only way to win the competition is to get a headstart .
58	Down to earth	A person who is practical and realistic	George is such a down to earth person. He can offer practical solutions to problems rather than confusing us.
59	Burned the Midnight oil	Staying up too late	I burned the midnight oil to complete the homework.
60	Crash course	A quick lesson	I have done an IELTS crash course to get a good band score.



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61	Out of the blue	Something occurred in an unexpected way	I got shocked since he surprised me, out of the blue
62	Pass with flying colours	Passing a test with high grades or marks	My daughter passed with flying colours in her college exams
63	To follow in someone's footsteps	Achieving things that someone already did	Following someone's steps is not a bad thing since it guides us.
64	Break the ice	To start a conversation in a social situation	He told a joke to break the ice at the party.
65	Cost an arm and a leg	Extremely expensive	That smartphone costs an arm and a leg .
66	Face the music	Accept the unpleasant consequences	You lied to your teacher, now face the music .
67	Hit the books	Start studying seriously	My exams are next week, it's time to hit the books .
68	In hot water	In trouble	He was in hot water after missing the deadline.
69	On cloud nine	Extremely happy	She was on cloud nine after getting the scholarship.
70	Kill two birds with one stone	Achieve two things with a single action	By cycling to work, I kill two birds with one stone —exercise and commute.

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71	Once bitten, twice shy	Fearful after a bad experience	He failed once and is now hesitant— once bitten, twice shy .
72	The last straw	Final problem after a series of issues	Losing my wallet was the last straw on a bad day.
73	Under one's belt	Achieved or experienced something useful	I have a few achievements under my belt before applying.
74	Cut corners	Do something poorly to save time or money	They cut corners while building the bridge, risking safety.
75	Go with the flow	Accept situations as they come	On holiday, I prefer to go with the flow rather than plan.
76	In the same boat	In a similar difficult situation	We're all in the same boat during this project crunch.
77	Keep your fingers crossed	Hope for the best	I'm keeping my fingers crossed for good weather tomorrow.
78	Miss the boat	Miss an opportunity	I missed the boat on that job opening.
79	Pull yourself together	Calm down after being upset	After crying, she pulled herself together and continued.
80	Spill the beans	Reveal a secret	Don't spill the beans about the surprise party.

S.No	Idioms	Definition	Example
81	Throw caution to the wind	Take a risk	He threw caution to the wind and started his own business.
82	Break the bank	Spend too much money	Buying a new car will break the bank .
83	A blessing in disguise	Something bad that turns out to be good	Losing that job was a blessing in disguise .
84	Burn bridges	Destroy relationships	He burned bridges with his former boss by resigning rudely.
85	Call it a day	Stop working for the day	Let's call it a day and finish tomorrow.
86	Cold feet	Nervousness before a big event	She got cold feet before her presentation.
87	Easier said than done	Difficult to accomplish	Staying positive is easier said than done .
88	Get out of hand	Become uncontrollable	The party got out of hand when too many people arrived.
89	Hit the sack	Go to sleep	I'm exhausted, going to hit the sack now.
90	Make a long story short	Say something briefly	To make a long story short , we won the match.

S.No	Idioms	Definition	Example
91	Off the top of my head	Without thinking too much	Off the top of my head , I'd say we need 5 more people.
92	On the ball	Alert and efficient	Our new intern is really on the ball .
93	Pull the plug	Stop something from continuing	They pulled the plug on the project due to lack of funds.
94	Right off the bat	Immediately	He offered me the job right off the bat .
95	Take it with a grain of salt	Don't take it too seriously	Take those rumors with a grain of salt .
96	The tip of the iceberg	A small part of a bigger problem	What we see is just the tip of the iceberg .
97	Time flies	Time passes quickly	Time flies when you're having fun.
98	Up in the air	Uncertain	Our holiday plans are still up in the air .
99	Your guess is as good as mine	I don't know	Your guess is as good as mine about the results.
100	Beat around the bush	Avoid saying something directly	Stop beating around the bush and tell me the truth.
101	Ballpark figure	An approximate number	Can you give me a ballpark figure for the cost?
102	In full swing	At its peak activity	The festival was in full swing when we arrived.
103	Keep your chin up	Stay positive	I know times are tough, but keep your chin up .

