

The Most Common idiomatic expressions (teacher's notes)

1. Lead-in 3 mins

Aim: to set the context of the lesson.

Procedure: write "it takes two to tango" on the board, elicit what the SS think it means. Ask the SS to come up with more idioms they know and board all the relevant ones.

2. Introduction of TL (Activity 1 and 2) 17 min

Aims: to introduce some idiomatic phrases and to see what the students already know and what they will need to learn (TTT approach - test, teach, test).

Procedure: Say: "You will learn more idioms like that. Guess what the idioms in Activity 1 mean. Categorize into "KNOW, DON'T KNOW" columns".

Let the SS work in pairs, monitor to see what's going on. Stop the students after 8 minutes. Elicit some guesses open class but don't comment yet. Deliver the definitions ask SS to try to match the phrases with the definitions. Deliver the Key, let SS check and tick the ones they had got right. Clarify any misunderstandings.

Key:

blissing in disguise	a good thing that seemed bad at first
It's not rocket science.	It's not complicated.
miss the boat	It's too late.
no pain, no gain	You have to work for what you want.
pull yourself together	calm down
so far so good	Things are going well so far.
speak of the devil	The person we were just talking about showed up!
That's the last straw!	My patience has run out.
Your guess is as good as mine.	I have no idea.
Actions speak louder than words.	Believe what people do and not what they say.
Don't count your chickens before they hatch.	Don't count on something good happening until it's happened.
Don't cry over spilt milk	There's no reason to complain about something that can't be fixed.
Every cloud has a silver lining.	Good things come after bad things.
give someone the cold shoulder	ignore someone
Have bigger fish to fry.	Have bigger things to take care of than what we are talking about now.
It takes one to know one.	You're just as bad as I am.
a piece of cake	It's easy.
take a rain check	to politely decline an offer with a possibility to accept it later
watch one's step	Be careful

Anticipated Problems:

Students might have problems understanding the meaning and usage of the following idiomatic phrases.

- **Blessing in disguise** - this phrase refers to something that at first appears to be bad or unlucky but is actually good. Something that is bad at first, but later results in something good.

Example of Use: Losing that job turned out to be a blessing in disguise for him as it forced him to start his own business.

- **No pain, no gain** - this phrase is a proverb that means in order to make progress or to be successful, one must suffer. This suffering may be in a physical or mental sense. It is an informal expression.

Example of use: I really hate studying, but no pain, no gain. If I don't study I'll never get into a good university.

- **Pull yourself together** - This phrase means to get control of your emotions and actions.

Example of Use: Just pull yourself together. There's no point crying about it.

- **So far so good** - This phrase is used to say that something (such as a project or an activity) has proceeded well or without problems up to the present

Example of Use: "How's the work on your house going?" "There's a lot more to do, but so far, so good."

- **Speak of the devil** - This is a phrase used when someone appears who has just been the subject of conversation. The term is a shortened version of the phrase, Speak of the Devil and he will appear. It is an informal phrase.

Example of Use: Do you know what Parker did yesterday? Oh, speak of the devil, here he comes! (Theidioms.com)

- **That's the last straw!** - This phrase is used to describe the last of a series of unpleasant events that makes you understand that you can no longer accept a situation that has been going bad for a while. You can use the idiom 'The Last Straw' when something is the last in a line of bad events. This is an informal phrase.

Example of use: I am not going to wait for the last straw like you always do. I will do something about the problem much sooner than that.

- **Your guess is as good as mine** - This phrase is used when one doesn't know the solution or answer to a problem instead of admitting "I don't know or have the solution or answer."

Example of use: "How long do you think we should have to wait for the bus?" "Your guess is as good as mine."

- **Don't count your chickens before they hatch** - This phrase means that you shouldn't assume that something will definitely happen before it really does. Don't make plans based on predicted results that haven't happened yet. This phrase is often shortened to Don't count your chickens. This is an informal phrase.

Example of Use: Harry: "When Liverpool wins the FA Cup, I'm going to have a huge party!"

Beth: "Don't count your chickens before they hatch! They haven't even played the semi-finals yet!"

- **Don't cry over spilt milk** - This phrase means there's no use in worrying over past events which cannot be changed.

Example of Use: "I know you didn't mean to break my phone, so there's no use in crying over spilt milk now."

• **Every cloud has a silver lining** - This phrase means: You can derive some benefit from every bad thing that happens to you.

Example of use: "I found a new job after all and I like this one much better than the last!"

Answer: "You see, every cloud has a silver lining."

• **It takes one to know one** - This phrase is used for saying that someone must have a bad quality themselves if they can recognize it in other people. This is an informal phrase.

Example of Use: A: "You're such a bad person!" B: "Yeah, well, it takes one to know one!"

• **Watch one's step** - This is a phrase used for saying that someone must be careful about what they are saying, or how they behave

Example of Use: 'He'll have to watch his step if he wants to keep that job of his!'

If necessary, set the SS in new pairs, ask them to find the equivalents of the phrases in their L1 if they exist. Share a google docs, or an online platform if you are using one, ask the SS to post their comments, so that everyone can see it. Alternatively, you can ask the SS to share the equivalents randomly OC.

3. Controlled Practice (Activity 3) 15 min

Aim: to encourage students to use the idioms in sentences to understand the context better.

Procedure: Instruct: "Complete the sentences using the idioms in the box." Set the SS in pairs to proceed with the task, monitor to assist where necessary.

Keys:

1. While it's sad that the results have not been as good as you expected, you should now focus on moving ahead and achieving better results next time; there is no use crying over spilt milk.
2. "My car broke down again, but maybe it was a blessing in disguise; I've been wasting too much time driving around anyway."
3. My coach always said, "Basketball is not a rocker science. It's about putting the ball in the basket."
4. It's no use sitting and speaking of success, you have to act on it. Remember, actions speak louder than words.
5. I know that your job is not going well, and you are stressed out, but don't worry, things will be better soon. Every cloud has a silver lining.
6. There are others waiting to take an opportunity like this; if you don't act fast, you are going to miss the boat.
7. The road to becoming a good professional is long, hard and exhausting! But no pain, no gain.
8. 'He's a complete idiot!' 'Well, it takes one to know one!'
9. You may get the job, but don't count the chickens before they hatch; wait until you get the offer letter before you throw the party.

10. You're going to get into trouble again if you don't watch your step!
11. I thought she really liked me, but the next day she gave me the cold shoulder.
12. Though you've had a hard day, it would be better for everyone if you could pull yourself together and get on with your work.
13. I'll have to work really hard for the interview. The practical exercises will be a piece of cake, because I've been practicing for so long.
14. A: "How's the project going?"
B: "So far, so good. We just need to finalize the user interface."
15. I want Chris to help me with this project, but he says that he has bigger fish to fry right now.
16. "Did you hear what happened to Mary today? – oh, speak of the devil, there she is."
17. Suzy lying to me about the money was the last straw. We broke up.
18. I'll take a rain check on the party tonight. I have a lot of work to finish right now.
19. "Do you think she'd go out with me if I asked her?" "Hmm, your guess is as good as mine."

4. Freer practice (Activity 4) 20 min

Aim: to provide speaking for fluency practice.

Procedure: Say: "You are going to act out role-plays using the idioms. Choose a situation from the list. choose 5-7 idioms that you will use during the role-play. Do more if you can". Give the SS 4 minutes to choose the situation and the idioms. Set a time limit of 12 minutes to act out the role-play with a partner, monitor to take notes on the good usage of the target language as well as some misuses if any. Ask a couple of volunteer groups to act out the dialogue open class. The rest of the class should list and write down the idioms used.

5. Optional Extension 10 min

Procedure: Use the "[Revision pictures](#)" presentation as revision. Show the pictures, let the SS guess what the phrase is.

6. Sum up. 2-3 mins

Praise the SS for good work and give a delayed error correction feedback.