



## "IDIOMS" LIST

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- a leopard can't change its spots** used for saying that someone will never change their behaviour or character: *Jimmy says he's changed, but a leopard can't change its spots, you know.*
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- a stitch in time (saves nine)** used for saying that it is better to solve a problem now, rather than leave it until later when it may be more difficult to deal with: *If there's a problem with your car, it's better to get it looked at now. You know what they say: 'a stitch in time ...'.*
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**bury your head in the sand** ignore a problem or an unpleasant situation and hope that it will disappear: *We shouldn't just bury our heads in the sand and hope that this problem goes away.*

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**commuter belt** area surrounding a large city where many people who work in that city live: *Towns in the commuter belt often seem to lack character.*

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**put two and two together** guess what is happening or what something means based on what you have seen or heard: *He didn't tell us he was retiring, but we could all put two and two together.*

**put your feet up** sit down and relax, especially with your feet raised off the ground: *Put your feet up and I'll make dinner.*

**quick/slow on the uptake** taking a very short/long time to understand or realise something: *I'm sure Chad understood what you were suggesting; he's very quick on the uptake.*

**recharge your batteries** rest after being very busy, so that you will be ready to start working again: *Why don't you take a week off work to recharge your batteries?*

**red tape** documents, rules or processes that cause delays: *Is there a lot of red tape involved in getting a passport?*

**reinvent the wheel** waste time and effort trying to do something that someone else has already done well: *Just use the same document you used last time, because there's no point reinventing the wheel.*

**ring a bell** something that rings a bell sounds familiar to you, although you cannot remember the exact details: *The name rings a bell but I'm not sure if I've ever met her.*

**round the bend** crazy: *That noise is driving me round the bend!*

**satellite town** town or city that is close to and depends on a larger city: *Brentwood is a satellite town just outside London.*

**sb is only human** used for saying someone has been weak in the ways most people are weak and should not be blamed for their behaviour: *I'm sorry I made a mistake, but I'm only human.*

**see eye to eye (with sb)** agree with someone or have the same opinion as them: *Imogen and I have never really seen eye to eye.*

**set your heart on** decide that you want something very much: *I had set my heart on getting married on the beach, but the bad weather meant we couldn't.*

**six of one (and) half a dozen of the other** used for saying that two things are equally good or bad: *We could get there on Saturday night or Sunday morning; it's six of one and half a dozen of the other, really.*

**speak volumes** provide a lot of information, especially in an indirect way: *What he said to Mandy speaks volumes about the way he treats his staff.*

**split hairs** argue or worry about very small details or differences that are not important: *Whether you call them 'terrorists' or 'freedom fighters' is just splitting hairs – the point is that they're killing people!*

**steal the show** receive a lot of attention because you give the best performance in a show or other event: *There was one comedian who really stole the show. She was fantastic!*

**stick to your guns** refuse to change what you are saying or doing despite the opposition or criticism of other people: *I admire Kelly for the way she always sticks to her guns.*

**stop dead in your tracks** suddenly stop, for example because you are surprised: *When I heard the gunshot, I stopped dead in my tracks.*

**take a short cut to** follow a path that is quicker and shorter than the usual way: *I walked to school and I used to take a short cut along the canal.*

**take stock (of)** spend some time thinking about the situation you are in before you decide what to do next: *Let's take a couple of days to take stock of the situation and then we'll make a decision.*

**take the law into your own hands** punish someone in your own way without involving the police or the courts, often by doing something illegal yourself: *I know you're angry, but that's no reason to take the law into your own hands.*

**take the scenic route** follow a longer path than the usual one because it is more attractive: *We're not lost – we're just taking the scenic route.*

**tell tales** tell someone in authority about bad things that someone else has done, because you want them to be punished: *Toby, stop telling tales about your classmates.*

**the edge over** an advantage that makes someone or something more successful than other people or things: *Our product's got the edge over the competition because it's so lightweight.*

**the luck of the draw** used for saying people have limited control over what life brings them: *I never wanted to become a butcher, but I guess that's the luck of the draw.*

**the other day** recently: *There was an interesting item on the news the other day.*

**the powers that be** the people who control a situation: *I don't know if the powers that be will agree to that.*

**the tools of the trade** the skills and equipment that you need in order to do your job: *A good bedside manner is one of the tools of the trade for a doctor.*

**throw the book at sb** punish someone very severely: *They'll really throw the book at him this time.*

**tidy sum/amount** large sum/amount: *I've managed to put away a tidy sum this year.*

**touch wood** used when you have said that you have had good luck in order to prevent bad luck from happening to you: *I'll find a new job before too long, touch wood.*

**turn over a new leaf** change your life by starting to be a better person or stopping a bad habit: *Ralph seems to have turned over a new leaf this term.*

**under sb's thumb** completely controlled by someone else: *I became self-employed because I was sick of being under someone's thumb.*

**up in arms about** angry and complaining about something: *Everyone in the office is up in arms about having to work next weekend.*

**variety is the spice of life** used for saying that different experiences and situations make life enjoyable or interesting: *I do a million different things at work, but I suppose variety is the spice of life.*

**your flesh and blood** your relative: *My family is very important to me because, after all, they're my flesh and blood.*