

Idioms and Phrases

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This lesson will help you to:

- ❖ learn idioms and phrases.
- ❖ Understand their meaning.
- ❖ use them in an effective manner

Real Life Example

Phrases are quite interesting and they add flavour to our language, but with so many of them existing today, eventually you will run into some that you're not familiar with.

Amazing Facts

William Shakespeare added more phrases and sayings to the English language than anyone else. 135 phrases are coined by him.

If it isn't Shakespearian and it isn't nautical, there's a good chance it's Biblical. Around 122 phrases come from the book of Bible.

Quick Concept Review idiom

An Idiom is a combination of words that has figurative or informal meaning that differs from the words' meaning that a dictionary would suggest. For example, an English speaker would understand the phrase "At the drop of hat" to mean willing to do something immediately – it drop your hat". In order to understand and use idioms in day-to-day conversational English, one must learn at least the most common of them.

Examples:

- ❖ "All ears": Listening intently or awaiting an explanation.
- ❖ "From A to Z": Covering a complete range: comprehensively.
- ❖ "Couch Potato": A lazy person.
- ❖ "Put the cat among the 'pigeons": To create a disturbance and cause trouble.
- ❖ "Don't have a cow": Don't overreact.

PHRASE

A phrase is a small group of words that adds meaning to a word. In a phrase the main word or the word that is what the phrase is about, is called the head.

For example:

"A taste of your own medicine", this phrase can be used "when someone is mistreated in the same -way as he/she mistreats others."

PROVERB

A proverb is a simple and concrete saying that expresses a truth based on practical experience.

For example:

A stitch in time saves nine" which means repair something as soon as it is damaged'.

Another example of proverb is "Don't cross your bridges before you come to them", which means "Don't worry about problems before they arrive." phrase and the person.

SOME COMMONLY USED IDIOMS

1. As a matter of fact
-actually
"As a matter of fact, we have been to the sports stadium many times."
2. As far as to the extent or degree of something
As far as I know, the movie will start in a few minutes.
3. Back and forth backwards and forwards, first one way and then the other way
The argument with the lawyer went back and forth before the judge made a decision.
4. Get rid of (something)
-to give or throw something away, to sell or destroy, something, to make a cold or fever disappear
I bought a new television so I want to get rid of my old one.
5. Hang out (somewhere or with someone), to spend one's time with no great purpose, to spend leisure time with friends
Recently, my friend has been hanging out with a bad by "healthy" group of people.
6. Hold on
-to wait a minute, to stop, to wait and not hang up the phone
"Please hold on for a minute while I lock the door". "Hold on, don't say anything, I can't hear the speaker."
7. In other words
- in a different (usually more direct) way
"In other words, if you do not finish the assignment by Wednesday, you will not pass the course."

Historical Preview

Many phrases and sayings have entered the language as quotations by known authors. Some of these are accepted into the language with barely sufficient evidence linking the phrase and the person. For example: 'Mirror, mirror on the wall, who is the fairest of them all?' from the story of "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs."

Misconcept / concept

Misconcept: Saying "to get off scot free" refers to scottish people being tight with money.

Concept: Many people think that this saying refers to Scottish people being tight with money- hence something being free, but in fact the word "scot" is an old Norse word which means "payment"- specifically a payment made to a landlord or sheriff.

Misconcept: In phrase "as fit as a fiddle", the word "fit" is meant by "healthy".

Concept: This is phrase where a single word has confused people- "fit" in the context of this saying does not mean "healthy" which is a 19th century definition. Its original meaning was "suitable"- and it is still used in that context in the sentence. As fit as a fiddle means- "as appropriate as can be"- not "in excellent health"