



**50 idioms**

**For IELTS Speaking**



## Set 1

Common Idioms	Definitions
It cost me <b>an arm and a leg</b> to take my trip to Australia.	<i>Very expensive</i>
I was <b>over the moon</b> when he asked me to marry him.	<i>Extremely pleased or happy</i>
You are taking your IELTS test next week?? Aren't you <b>jumping the gun</b> . You've only just started studying.	<i>Doing or starting something too early</i>
He comes round to see me <b>once in a blue moon</b> .	<i>Happening very rarely</i>
He's got a <b>chip on his shoulder</b> .	<i>Feeling inferior or having a grievance about something</i>
I reckon getting a band 7 in IELTS will be a <b>piece of cake</b> ! I'm very good at English.	<i>Very easy</i>
The money sent by comic relief to help poverty in Africa is just <b>a drop in the ocean</b> . They need far more than this.	<i>A very small part of something much bigger</i>
Getting a low score the first time I took IELTS was <b>a blessing in disguise</b> . It forced me to study extremely hard so I got a much better score the next time.	<i>Something positive that isn't recognized until later</i>
We have to actually do something about global warming. <b>Actions speak louder than words</b> .	<i>It's better to actually do something rather than just talking about it</i>
I bumped into Jenny in town the other day. <b>It's a small world</b> .	<i>Meeting someone you would not have expected to</i>

## Set 2

Common Idioms	Definitions
Oh well, I got 5.5 in IELTS again. <b>Back to the drawing board!</b>	<i>When an attempt to do something fails and it's time to start all over again using different methods</i>
I hate my job so much I can't bare going to work, but if I quit I don't think I can get another job. I'm really <b>stuck / caught between a rock and a hard place.</b>	<i>Having two very bad choices. (note: stuck/caught can be omitted)</i>
I have to <b>bite my tongue</b> so I don't say what I really think of him!	<i>Wanting to say something but stopping yourself.</i>
Come on, <b>cut to the chase.</b> We haven't got all day!	<i>Leave out all the unnecessary details and just get to the point</i>
Are you putting all of your savings into that company? Don't <b>put all your eggs in one basket.</b>	<i>Putting all of ones resources into one possibility</i>
Try not to worry about it. <b>Every cloud has a silver lining.</b>	<i>Believing that every bad situation has a positive side / eventually leads to something good</i>
It was difficult when I moved to another country but I eventually <b>found my feet.</b>	<i>To become comfortable in what you are doing</i>
My parents are very <b>fixed in their ways.</b> They won't start using the internet.	<i>Not wanting to change from the normal ways of doing things</i>
I think he <b>got up on the wrong side of the bed this morning.</b> He is in a terrible mood.	<i>To refer to someone who is having a bad day</i>
My mother will always <b>go the extra mile</b> to help people.	<i>Doing much more than is required when doing something</i>

## Set 3

Common Idioms	Definitions
I think you've <b>hit the nail on the head</b> . That's the reason he didn't get the job.	<i>Say exactly the right thing</i>
Today's going so badly. <b>If it's not one thing, it's the other</b> .	<i>When everything seems to be going wrong</i>
I just said it in <b>the heat of the moment</b> . I was angry. I know I shouldn't have.	<i>Saying or doing something suddenly without thinking about it</i>
<b>Keep an eye on him</b> . I think he may cheat in the exam.	<i>Watch someone or something carefully</i>
Have you heard? John down the road has <b>kicked the bucket</b> .	<i>Died</i>
I don't want to argue with him again. It's better to <b>let sleeping dogs lie</b> .	<i>Avoid a conflict</i>
I told him what gift you have bought him for his birthday. Sorry, I didn't mean to <b>let the cat out of the bag</b> .	<i>Tell someone something that you were not supposed to</i>
Don't tell her what you really think of her if she's helping you with your English! Don't <b>bite the hand that feeds you</b> .	<i>Hurt or upset someone who is helping you</i>
I'm not sure which party he is going to vote for. He's <b>sitting on the fence</b> .	<i>Not making a firm decision between different choices</i>
Everything she does is very <b>over the top</b> . She can't just have a few drinks – she has to get really drunk.	<i>Excessive</i>

## Set 4

Common Idioms	Definitions
Let's keep studying for IELTS. <b>Practice makes perfect.</b>	<i>Continuously doing something to improve</i>
Don't get upset about what he said. He's just <b>pulling your leg.</b>	<i>Joking around</i>
Sorry but I think I'll <b>take a rain check</b> on that.	<i>To decline an offer that you will take up later</i>
As a <b>rule of thumb</b> , I don't study at weekends. I spend the time with my family.	<i>Principal that is strictly adhered / kept to</i>
I can <b>smell a rat</b> . He said he has a PhD but he can't even remember which university he studied at.	<i>To sense that something is not right</i>
She's <b>the spitting image</b> of her mother.	<i>To look exactly like someone else</i>
<b>The ball's in your court</b> now. What are you going to do?	<i>Telling someone it's now their turn to make a decision</i>
Unfortunately I think he'll be studying for IELTS <b>until the cows come home</b> . His English is very poor.	<i>For a very long time</i>
It was all <b>tongue-in-cheek</b> . He didn't really mean what he said.	<i>Something said in humour rather than seriously</i>
She's feeling <b>under the weather</b> today so she won't be going to work.	<i>Unwell</i>

## Set 5

Common Idioms	Definitions
We've had some big disagreements over the years, but it's all <b>water under the bridge</b> now. We get on fine.	<i>Things from the past that are not important anymore</i>
<b>You are what you eat</b> so it's better to have a healthy diet.	<i>If you eat bad food, you'll be unhealthy, if you eat good food, you'll be healthy</i>
<b>You can't judge a book by its cover.</b> I need to get to know him before I decide what he is like.	<i>The belief that outside appearances do not reveal what someone or something is really like</i>
We're really <b>working against the clock</b> now. We must hurry.	<i>Not having enough time to do something</i>
Why are we bothering? We're <b>flogging a dead horse</b> . Our online business is making no money, so we should move on and do something else.	<i>Attempting to continue with something that is finished / over</i>
I <b>bent over backwards</b> to help him. I hope he appreciates it.	<i>Doing all you can to help someone</i>
So you have the IELTS test today?? <b>Break a leg</b> .	<i>Good luck</i>
Ok, I'm <b>playing devil's advocate</b> here, but if marijuana is legalized, isn't it more likely young people will smoke it?	<i>To put forward a side in an argument that may not be your own in order to show the counter-argument / ensure all sides are discussed</i>
<b>Hold your horses!</b> We haven't won anything yet.	<i>Telling someone who is getting ahead of themselves to wait / be patient</i>
She is <b>driving me up the wall</b> . She won't stop talking.	<i>Annoying or irritating somebody</i>