

Idioms are words, phrases, or expressions that are not taken literally- they have meaning beyond a literal translation of the words. Idioms are generally used in casual, familiar conversation but can also come up in certain business settings. Here are some examples of commonly used American English idioms:

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| <b>better off</b> - in a more fortunate position   | <b>(to) lose one's touch</b> - to no longer be able to do something well                        |
| <b>Big deal!</b> - So what? That doesn't really matter.  | <b>made of money</b> - very rich  |
| <b>(to) blow things out of proportion</b> - to exaggerate; to make more of something than one should                           | <b>needless to say</b> - obviously  |
| <b>(to) call it a night</b> - to stop an activity for the rest of the night  | <b>piece of cake</b> - very easy  |
| <b>dime a dozen</b> - so plentiful as to be nothing special; common  | <b>(to) pitch in</b> - to help  |
| <b>(to) do the trick</b> - to achieve the desired results  | <b>(to) pull an all-nighter</b> - to stay up all night to do work                               |
| <b>(to) give someone the cold shoulder</b> - to ignore someone on purpose; to snub someone                                     | <b>rule of thumb</b> - a useful principle   |
| <b>(to) get the ball rolling</b> - to get started  | <b>(as) sharp as a tack</b> - very intelligent  |
| <b>(to) go back to the drawing board</b> - to start a task over because the last try failed; to start again from the beginning | <b>(to) sit tight</b> - to wait patiently   |
| <b>happy camper [slang]</b> - a happy person; a satisfied participant  | <b>(to) stab someone in the back</b> - to betray someone  |
| <b>(to) have a heart of gold</b> - to be very kind and giving  | <b>(to) tell someone off</b> - to scold; to tell someone in strong words what one really thinks |
| <b>(to be) head over heels in love</b> - very much in love   | <b>When pigs fly! [slang]</b> - never   |
| <b>(to) hit the nail on the head</b> - to be right   | <b>(to) twist someone's arm</b> - to persuade someone; to convince someone                      |
| <b>(to) learn the ropes</b> - to learn the basics  | <b>(to be) up in the air</b> - not yet determined; uncertain                                    |

Many common American idioms come from sports, here are some examples:

**strike out-** to fail or to do poorly at something (*baseball*)

**(to) call the shots-** to make the decisions; to be in charge (*basketball*)

**ballpark-** a guess or an estimate (*baseball*)

**down and out-** lacking money or prospects; penniless or destitute (*boxing*)

**down to the wire-** to the very end or last minute (*horse racing*)

**drop the ball-** to make an error, to miss an opportunity (*football, baseball, rugby*)

**hands down-** with great ease; unconditionally; often (and originally) in the phrase “to win hands down” (*horse racing*)

**(to) have someone in your corner-** to have the support or help of someone (*boxing*)

**(to) hit it out of the park; home run-** to be wildly successful, to do a great job (*baseball*)



To learn even more idioms, visit the following links:

- [Everyday American English Idioms](#) - with example sentences.
- [Useful Idioms for Lower-Intermediate to Advanced Students \(Teacher's Resource\)](#)
- [Idiom Site A-Z](#)
- [Sports Idioms](#)
- [English Language Learning: American English Idioms](#)