

IDIOMS

By Oasis Study Centre

Total Number of Idioms by Alphabets:

- A – 26
- B – 51
- C – 34
- D – 13
- E – 8
- F – 24
- G – 22
- H – 36
- I – 18
- J – 1
- K – 11
- L – 20
- M – 18
- N – 6
- O – 21
- P – 27
- Q – 2
- R – 13
- S – 35
- T – 35
- U – 6
- W – 24
- Y – 2

Total number of Idioms is 453

A

1. At one's wit's end (perplexed- হতবুদ্ধি):

Sohan was at his wit's end to find that his younger brother has taken poison.

2. At one's fingertips (complete knowledge - নখদর্পণে):

All the rules of synthesis are at his fingertips.

3. At the spur of the moment (without delay):

In an interview we must reply at the spur of the moment.

4. All in all (most important):

As he was the only son in a big family, he was all in all in his home.

5. At close quarters (close examinations):

Many of my friends proved selfish at close quarters.

6. Apple-pie order (in perfect order):

On the eve of inspection everything was kept in apple-pie order.

7. Above board (honest and straightforward):

He is known for his above board conduct.

8. Above all (before everything else):

Above all, he is blunt and dare devil.

9. As fit as a fiddle (strong and healthy):

He has recovered from illness and now he is as fit as a fiddle.

10. At random (aimlessly):

The militants fired at random killing a lot of innocent persons.

11. At a loose end (unoccupied, idle):

Now-a-days he is at a loose end because he has wound up his business.

12. At logger heads (to be at strife - বিবাদে থাকতে):

The partners of our firm are at logger heads these days.

13. At odds (in dispute):

The members of the group were at odds over the selection procedure.

14. An apple of discord (cause of quarrel):

Ancestral property is an apple of discord between two sisters.

15. At cross purposes (have conflicting intentions):

How can there be peace in their family when husband and wife are at cross purposes.

16. After one's own heart (to one's liking):

When Deepa met a man after her own heart, she got married to him.

17. At the bottom of (to be mainly responsible for):

It was found later that Shanu was at the bottom of the whole trouble.

18. At a loss (to be unable to decide):

I am at a loss to know what to do.

19. At dagger's drawn (to have bitter enmity):

The quarrel between the two brothers has grown more bitter now and they are at dagger's drawn.

20. At large (abscond, free, to keep unchained):

People keep their dogs at large at night.

21. At sea (applied to a person confused):

My sister is quite at sea in Maths. She cannot solve a single problem.

22. Add fuel to the flame or fire (to make matter worse):

The attempt to suppress the agitation of the strikers only added fuel to the flame.

23. **At sixes and sevens** (in disorder):

There was a robbery in our neighbourhood last night and when I entered the house to inquire, everything was at sixes and sevens.

24. **Assume airs** (to pretend superiority):

The rich are in the habit of assuming airs in the presence of their poor relations.

25. **Argus eyed** (careful, observant):

As a politician, he is Argus eyed and never overlooks even a small matter.

26. **At a stone's throw** (very close):

My friend's house is at a stone's throw from mine.

B

27. **By hook or by crook** (by one means or another):

He is determined to obtain first division in his class by hook or by crook.

28. **Bear the brunt of** (to bear the main shock of):

The poor have to bear the brunt of increasing prices.

29. **Bell the cat** (to take first step at personal risk):

Many people can boast of their bravery, but very few can bell the cat.

30. **Bid defiance** (to ignore):

Rohan bade defiance to his father's wish of becoming a doctor and instead became an engineer.

31. **Blow one's trumpet** (to praise oneself):

No one likes to talk to those who are always blowing their own trumpet.

32. **Break the news** (to give bad news):

He broke the news of her husband's death very gently so as to lessen the intensity of the shock.

33. **Burn a hole in one's pocket** (money spent quickly):

Money given to a spendthrift only burns a hole in his pocket.

34. **Bury the hatchet** (to make peace):

India and Pakistan must bury the hatchet to bring about peace to the region.

35. **Beside oneself** (to feel excessively):

Due to the accidental death of his wife he was beside himself with grief.

36. **Bad blood** (bitter relations):

The riots have created bad blood between the two communities in India.

37. **Black and blue** (to beat mercilessly):

The thief was beaten black and blue by the police.

38. Beat about the bush (to talk in a round about manner):
We should always come to the point and should not beat about the bush.
39. Beat the air (to make useless efforts):
Some speakers merely beat the air in speech while preaching.
40. Build castles in the air (to make visionary schemes):
Many people who live in dreams build castles in the air and do not succeed in life.
41. Break the ice (to speak first after prolonged silence):
In the meeting Rajesh broke the ice and suggested the plan to solve the problem.
42. Bring to book (to punish, to call to account):
The manager was brought to book for his negligence.
43. Breathe one's last (to die):
He breathed his last in the prime of his life.
44. Back stairs influence (by unfair means):
These days many persons are given good posts through back stairs influence.
45. Bird's eye view (concise view):
We had a bird's eye view of the whole fair from the top of a giant wheel.
46. Bolt from the blue (sudden or unexpected shock):
The news of her husband's death in the air crash came to her as a bolt from the blue.
47. Burn one's boats (point of no return):
We had burnt our boats by declaring that we were not going to sign C.T.B.T.
48. By the by (by the way) :
By the by, what is your age?
49. Be upto (to be equal to):
He is upto all the tricks of the trade to grind his own axe.
50. Bated breath (in anxiety, expectancy):
The fate of the match hung in balance and everybody waited for the result with bated breath.
51. Bandy words (to wrangle, to argue):
Obedient children don't bandy words with their parents when they are advised.
52. Bee in one's bonnet (to be fussy):
She seems to have a bee in her bonnet because she is always finding faults with others.
53. Bite the dust (to be defeated):
Pakistan had to bite the dust in the final of the World Cup.
54. Blue stocking (educated but pedantic lady):
Nobody likes to mix with her because she is a blue stocking.

55. Book worm (a person in the habit of pouring over books):
He has no time for social activities because he is a book worm.
56. Bring down the house (receive applause):
Though it was his maiden speech, he brought down the house because of his oratory skill.
57. Brow beat (to bully): The President of the college union always tries to brow beat the students opposed to him.
58. Bad egg (a worthless):
He comes of a noble family but he himself is a bad egg.
59. Beside the mark (irrelevant):
No body agreed with him because his arguments were beside the mark.
60. Burn one's fingers (to get into trouble):
Those who interfere in the affairs of others, often burn their fingers.
61. Brown study (reverie, day-dream):
He could not follow the significance of my offer. He was in brown study.
62. Bank on (depend on, count on):
The rich always bank on money to get things done.
63. Blaze the trail (to start a movement):
Surinder Nath Bannerjee blazed the trail of Indian National Movement.
64. Bull in a China shop (one who causes damage):
Most of the leaders of the freedom struggle have proved bulls in a China shop.
65. By the rule of thumb (according to practical experience):
In older times business was run by the rule of thumb.
66. Big draw (a huge attraction):
The match between India and Pakistan is always a big draw.
67. Broken reed (support that failed):
When he needed help, his friend proved a broken reed.
68. By the skin of the teeth (narrowly):
He escaped death in the accident by the skin of the teeth.
69. Bone of contention (cause of quarrel):
Since India got independence, Kashmir problem has been a bone of contention between India and Pakistan.
70. Bit/piece of one's mind (to scold):
My father wrote to my brother giving a piece of his mind about his insulting conduct.
71. Born with silver spoon (to be born in a rich family):
My friend does not have to worry about spending any amount of money as she is born with a silver spoon in her mouth.

72. Burn candle at both ends (squander): After the death of his father he is burning candle at both ends.

73. By fits and starts (irregularly):

If we study by fits and starts we can never be successful in our exams.

74. By dint of (by force of): He achieved success in life by dint of hard work.

75. Blow hot and cold (to speak in favour and against at the same time):

Do not trust those who blow hot and cold in the same breath.

76. By and by (gradually):

He is recovering by and by after long illness.

77. Blue blood (aristocratic blood):

Though my friend has blue blood yet conduct is very mean and vulgar. her

78. Carry matters with a high hand (to deal with a person strictly):

The owner of the industry carried matters with a high hand and expelled two workers who were caught doing mischief in the office.

79. Clip one's wings (to weaken the power):

My elder sister is very ambitious but my mother will surely clip her wings.

80. Come home to (to understand):

Seema wanted to be a teacher in the college but soon it came home to her that she was not fit for the job as she was only a graduate.

81. Come to a standstill (come to a sudden stop):

When we were going to Mussourie yesterday, our car came to a standstill right in the middle of the journey.

82. Come off with flying colours (to come out successfully):

The final football match was very crucial but finally we won and came off with flying colours.

83. Cross one's mind (to occur to oneself):

In the examination hall it crossed my mind that I had left my pen outside on the table.

84. Cry for the moon (to wish for something impossible):

The hope of winning the lottery amounting to lakhs of rupees is simply crying for the moon.

85. Curry favour with (win favour of somebody):

Neena gave a lot of costly presents to her science teacher to carry favour with him.

86. Call a spade a spade (to speak plainly):

People often get angry when one calls a spade a spade.

87. Carry the day (to win a victory):

After initial setback India carried the day in the Test match.

88. Cut a sorry figure (to give a poor show):

The speaker cut a sorry figure in the meeting.

89. Cry over spilt milk (repent):

Careless students often have to cry over spilt milk during the exams.

90. Cut one's coat according to one's cloth (to live within one's means):

A wise man always cuts his coat according to his cloth if he wants to be successful in his life.

91. Call names (to abuse):

Neeta called me names, so she was severely punished by the teacher.

92. Curtain lecture (a reproof by wife to her husband):

My brother never pays any attention to his wife's curtain lecture and does what he thinks.

93. Chip of the old block (resembling one's parents in habits):

My friend is quite helpful like her father, so she is a chip of the old block.

94. Cave in (yield):

Although our team fought bravely, yet had to cave in before the superior power play of the opposite team.

95. Cloven hoof (the evil intention):

The Chinese showed the cloven hoof in 1962.

96. Cut throat (tough):

It is very difficult for Indian Industry to survive in the teeth of international cut throat competition.

97. Call in question (doubt) :

You should not call in question my honesty.

98. Cheek by jowl (close together):

In metropolitan cities it is common that affluence and poverty exist cheek by jowl.

99. Come to a pass (a difficult situation):

The things have come to such a pretty pass that he is financially ruined.

100. Close shave (a narrow escape):

As he was driving recklessly in a crowded street, he had a close shave.

101. Cut and dried (readymade form):

There is no cut and dried formula for success in life.

102. Clinch the issue (decide the matter):

When he agreed to leave the house for good, it clinched the issue in favour of his wife.

103. Carry one's point (win approval):

After heated discussion he was able to carry his point.

104. Chequered/Checkered career (full of ups and downs):

Politicians have generally chequered career all along.

105. Cut both ends (argue in favour of both sides):
He is ambiguous because he always cuts both ends.

106. Cock sure (very sure and certain):
He was so cock sure of his success that he applied for the job before the declaration of the result.

107. Cock a snook (to show impudent contempt):
She is so proud of her wealth that she always cocks a snook at the acts of her husband.

108. Chapter and verse (in full detail, to give proof):
He has such a sharp memory that he can narrate the story chapter and verse.

109. Cool one's heels (to be kept waiting):
He had to cool his heels before he could meet the President of the party.

110. Carrot and stick policy (reward and punishment):
A successful businessman follows the carrot and stick policy towards his employees.

111. Come in handy (to be useful):
Take some woollen clothes. They may come in handy in Simla.

112. Dig the grave (to tarnish, to destroy) :
By taking side of the culprit he dug the grave of his reputation.

113. Draw the long bow (exaggerate)
In calling him the best politician of the world, his followers draw the long bow.

114. Die in harness (die while working)
Our Principal died in harness.

115. Dutch courage (bravery under alcoholic influence)
Drunkards often indulge in Dutch courage and boast of their imaginary qualities.

116. Dare devil (fearless person)
Only a dare devil can face the land mafia.

117. Dead broke (penniless)
On account of reckless spending he is dead broke these days.

118. Down and out (poor and ruined)
After a slump in share market he is down and out these days.

119. Draconian law (extremely severe law)
During emergency in 1975 the government imposed Draconian laws to subdue opposition.

120. Die-hard (persistent in struggle)
He is a die-hard person and will not easily surrender.

121. Days of reckoning (time to answer for one's actions)
You may commit crime after crime but days of reckoning are never far off.

122. Down in the mouth (out of elements)

Now-a-days he is down in the mouth because he has suffered heavy loss in business.

123. Dog in the manger (a person who prevents others from enjoying what he himself cannot)

By disrupting Parliament Session the Congress is following a dog in the manger policy.

124. Damp squib (complete failure)

The visit of our Foreign Minister to China proved a damp squib on border issue.

125. Eat humble pie (to apologize)

Inspite of his constant bragging he lost the match and had to eat humble pie.

126. Eat one's words (take a statement back)

I warned my friend to be very careful in her speech otherwise she would have to eat her own words.

127. End in smoke/fiasco (come to nothing)

He spoke a lot about his new film but it all ended in smoke and it flopped on box office.

128. Egg on (to urge somebody)

The Captain egged the players on to continue to play foul till the end of the match.

129. Eke out (supplement income)

To eke out his income he also works as a part time accountant in the evening.

130. Every dog has his day (good fortune comes sooner or later)

Don't be disappointed. It is truly said that every dog has his day.

131. Ever and Anon (now and then, sometimes)

He visits his parents ever and anon.

132. (An) eye wash (a pretence)

My friend's promise to help me just proved an eye-wash.

F

133. Flesh and blood (human nature)

People in some villages are so poor that their sufferings are more than a flesh and blood can endure.

134. Fish in troubled waters (to take advantage of the trouble of others)

Shrewd businessmen fish in troubled waters when there is scarcity of things.

135. Follow suit (to act in a like manner)

If you do not obey your elders, your children will follow suit.

136. Fall flat (to have no effect)

The minister's speech fell flat on the audience.

137. Fight shy of (to attempt to avoid a thing or a person)

I generally fight shy of confronting my elder sister as she is in the habit of making sickening comments.

138. Fabian policy (policy of delaying decisions)

Politicians generally follow a Fabian policy in order to keep everyone satisfied.

139. For no rhyme or reason (any reason whatsoever)

Seema did not appear for her final examinations for no rhyme or reason.

140. Fight to the finish (fight to the end)

Indian Army has vowed to fight to the finish and turn every intruder out of Indian territory.

141. Few and far between (very rare)

His visits to his home town are few and far between because of his expanding business.

142. Flog a dead horse (to revive interest in old matters)

The rivals always flog a dead horse to insult their enemies.

143. Fool's errand (useless undertaking)

His visit to the States to earn money proved to be a fool's errand.

144. Fall foul of (to quarrel)

They were once bosom friends but now they have fallen foul of each other.

145. Fly off the handle (to lose one's temper)

When his father questioned him about money, he flew off the handle.

146. French leave (to be absent without permission)

Those who take french leave should not be pardoned.

147. Fair and square (upright)

My father advised me to be fair and square in business dealings.

148. Feather one's own nest (to provide first for one self)

Our leaders are busy feathering their own nests and have no concern for the poor.

149. From pillar to post (rush in all directions and suffer much harassment)

You may rush from pillar to post, but you stand no chance of getting what you want without a bribe.

150. Foot the bill (bear expenses)

Although he hosted the feast, his brother had to foot the bill.

151. Fair weather friend (selfish friend)

A fair weather friend will never stand by you in difficulty.

152. Flash in the pan (sudden success)

The success of Indian cricket team is never constant and steady. It is generally a flash in the pan.

153. Fit to hold a candle to (match for, equal in quality)

He is the son of a famous writer but he is not fit to hold a candle to his father.

154. The Fourth Estate (the press)

The newspaper is regarded as the Fourth Estate of the state.

155. Feather in one's cap (additional success)

His success in his M.A. exams has added a new feather in his cap.

156. Fly in the face of (to defy)

It is disobedience on their part to fly in the face of the orders of the Principal.

G

157. Gain ground (to succeed slowly & steadily)

The belief in the abolition of dowry system is gaining ground.

158. Get off scot free (to escape without punishment)

A murderer can also very easily get off scot free for lack of evidence.

159. Grease the palm (to bribe)

Now-a-days if you want to get your work done, you will have to grease the palm of someone or the other.

160. Gird up the loins (to prepare for hard work)

Indians must gird up the loins to face any foreign attack on their country.

161. Go to the dogs (to be ruined)

The rich industrialist will go to the dogs because of his son's bad habits.

162. Get oneself into a mess (to drift into trouble)

Due to sheer ignorance, Vijay seems to have got himself into a mess in his office.

163. Give a wide berth (to avoid)

We should always give a wide berth to all selfish and mean persons.

164. Gentleman at large (an unreliable person)

We must not believe a gentleman at large.

165. Good Samaritan (one who helps strangers)

He is a good Samaritan because he always comes to the help of the old and the children in difficulties.

166. Give a good account of oneself (to act creditably)

As the eldest son of his family he gave a good account of himself when calamity befell the family.

167. Give the devil his due (give credit to a worthless person for his good qualities)

We should give the devil his due for his good qualities.

168. Green horn (inexperienced)

Though a green horn in political field, he appears to have a bright future.

169. Give up the ghost (pass away, die)

After long illness he gave up the ghost last week.

170. Go the whole hog (to do something thoroughly)

You will have to go the whole hog to come out of this mess.

171. Get into a scrape (awkward situation)

He got into a scrape when his wife refused to let him help his sister.

172. Go broke (become bankrupt)

As a result of heavy gambling he had to go broke in the long run.

173. Get into hot waters (get into trouble)

He got into hot waters by marrying a girl of another caste.

174. Give currency (to make publicly known)

The Government has refused to give currency to a number of scams.

175. Great hand (expert)

He is a great hand at organising social parties.

176. Get down to brass tacks (to deal with the matter straight)

Instead of wasting time in discussion, please get down to brass tacks.

178. Give one a long rope (to let someone commit mistakes)

He never gives his employees a long rope.

179. Good turn (an act of kindness)

He did me a good turn by recommending me for the post of Vice-President.

H

180. Hold water (sound, tenable)

His statement will not hold water as it is not based on facts.

181. Hang together (support one another)

The two statements delivered by the leader of the party do not hang together.

182. Hope against hope (hope inspite of disappointment)

Sohan's case is very weak and everybody knows that finally he will lose, but he is still hoping against hope.

183. Have an axe to grind (to have a selfish interest)

Reema is very selfish but the way she is being polite with everyone gives the impression that she has an axe to grind.

184. Have the gift of the gab (art of speaking)

Meena is not highly qualified but she has the gift of the gab.

185. Hit below the belt (to strike unfairly)

We should always face the enemy boldly and never hit him below the belt.

186. Hold one's tongue (to keep quiet)

We should always hold our tongue before our elders.

187. Herculean task (very difficult)

It is a Herculean task to root out corruption in India.

188. Haul over the coals (to take to task)

She was hauled over the coals by her parents for her misconduct.

189. Have one's finger in everyone's pie (to partake of something)

My best friend likes to have her finger in everyone's pie as she is in the habit of meddling with the affairs of others.

190. Halcyon days (peaceful days)

The days we spend in our school life are the halcyon days of our life..

191. Have an iron will (strong will)

If we have to live among the mean and selfish people, we must have an iron will.

192. Hold out an olive branch (offer of peace)

The terrorists are not prepared to hold out an olive branch to the Government of India.

193. Hanky Panky (jugglery)

None of this hanky panky, tell me the truth.

194. Have feet of clay (full of faults)

The C.B.I. inquiry has revealed that many ministers have feet of clay.

195. Heart and soul (devotedly)

He took part in the annual function heart and soul.

196. Hard and fast (strict)

No hard and fast rule is laid down about being regular in the college.

197. Hang fire (remain unsolved)

Kashmir problem has been hanging fire for many years.

198. High & dry (a difficult situation)

He was left high & dry by his business. partners.

199. Hit the nail on the head (to do the right thing at the right time)

He hit the nail on the head by resigning his job.

200. Hobson's choice (no alternative)

The employees in the private sector have Hobson's choice because they are forced to accept what they are ordered to do.

201. Have too many irons in the fire (doing many things at a time)

He is fickle minded and has too many irons in the fire.

202. Hold in abeyance (postpone)

For lack of funds the district administration has held the construction of road in abeyance.

203. High and mighty (proud persons)

The high and mighty forget that everything in the world is transient.

204. Hard nosed attitude (aggressive)

I don't know why my teacher always has a hard nosed attitude towards me.

205. Hold in leash (to restrain)

As a responsible leader of a party you must hold criticism of party workers in leash.

206. Head and shoulders (superior)

Shri Atal Behari Vajpayee is head and shoulders above his predecessors.

207. Hold a brief (to defend someone)

It is very improper for parents to hold a brief for their children who are in the wrong.

208 Hush money (a bribe)

He managed to escape punishment by paying hush money.

209. Hold at bay (to prevent enemy from coming)

Maharana Partap could not hold the Mughal army at bay for long.

210. Hit the jack pot (unexpected success)

He hit the jack pot by investing his money in shares.

211. Helter skelter (here and there)

When the police arrived the rioters ran helter skelter.

212. Have a brush with (to have encounter)

Our principal had a brush with the Vice Chancellor over the appointment of a lecturer.

213. Hornet's nest (raise controversy)

The speaker stirred up hornet's nest by referring to impending changes in the rules.

214. Hold somebody to ransom (to demand concession by making someone captive)

It is a pity that a handful of militants are holding the nation to ransom.

215. Hole and corner (secret)

I have come to know of your hole and corner method of dealing with people.