

Scrambled Idioms (Theme: Love, Dating, and Marriage)

Cut up the idioms. Match the two halves together to create the correct idioms!

You are the

apple of my eye.

Let's tie

the knot.

I only have

eyes for you.

Love is

blind.

Wear your heart

on your sleeve.

I've fallen head over

heels in love.

Double

date.

Matching Idioms with Pictures (Theme: Employment)



Red tape
Meaning:



Cash cow
Meaning:



Jump through hoops
Meaning:



Dog eat dog world
Meaning:



Bite the bullet
Meaning:

Matching Idioms with Definitions (Theme: Colours)

Note: This page is meant to be cut up for distribution to other learners, or scrambled on a desk. Cut up the idiom and definition to match, and then have students write their own sentences. Once finished, give out the sample sentences for another example!

Idiom	Definition	Sentence
beet red	blushing: when one's face becomes very red, usually from embarrassment	My face turned beet red when I was caught talking to myself on the c-train.
red handed	to be caught doing something wrong	I know Lizzeth was stealing. I caught her red-handed!
black and white	something is very clear	The library has very clear rules about not talking on the phone. The rules are very black and white.
out of the blue	unexpected: something that happens as a surprise	An old friend called me yesterday out of the blue! I hadn't spoken to her in years!
born with a silver spoon in one's mouth	to be born into a wealthy family	Lina was born with a silver spoon in her mouth. She hasn't worked a day in her life!
green with envy	to be jealous	I love Marco's new car. I'm green with envy!
have a green thumb	to be a good gardener	I definitely do NOT have a green thumb; I kill all of my plants instantly!
have the blues	to be very sad for a period of time	John must have the blues. He has been sad for a long time.
tickled pink	to be very happy or pleased	Shelagh was tickled pink when her boss complemented her on her project.
pass with flying colours	to accomplish something very well	I passed my language test with flying colours.

Reading Passage (Theme: Weather/Environment)

Two weeks ago, everything in my life was going great. However, you know what they say, when everything is running smoothly, it's just the calm before the storm. The bad news came like a bolt from the blue. My husband lost his job. I knew something was wrong when I saw him come home with a face like thunder. He hadn't gotten wind of what was going to happen, so this was a complete surprise. That day I had been feeling under the weather. I had had a headache and the beginnings of a cold and because it never rains but it pours, this bad news didn't exactly brighten my day. "What will we do?" I asked. "Well", he said, "I could ask my brother for a job. It's not a great idea, but any port in a storm." "Never mind," I said, "We will weather this storm like we have weathered many other ones."

1. What do you think the calm before the storm is?
2. Is a bolt from the blue something you expect or is it a surprise?
3. What do you think a face like thunder might look like?
4. Had her husband received any news about losing his job before it happened?
5. If you are under the weather, how do you feel?
6. Is the expression "it never rains but it pours" actually talking about rain?
7. Would bad news "brighten your day"?
8. What is a port? Why would it be a good place in a storm?
9. What do you think "weather the storm" might mean?

Reading Passage (Theme: Weather/Environment) Continued

Match the idiom with the definition:

1. _____ Something that happens that makes you feel positive and happy all day long
2. _____ When things go wrong, a lot of things go wrong at the same time
3. _____ Something that happens unexpectedly and suddenly
4. _____ To feel a bit ill, sad or lack energy
5. _____ To look very angry or upset about something
6. _____ A calm time immediately before period of violent activity or argument
7. _____ In an emergency, any solution will do, even one that would normally be unacceptable.
8. _____ To hear or learn about something, especially if it was meant to be secret
9. _____ To get through a crisis or hard times

Matching Idioms with Definitions (Theme: Food)

Idiom	Definition	Sentence
spill the beans	to tell a secret when you are not supposed to	Don't spill the beans about Darren's birthday party! I want it to be a surprise.
bad apple bad egg	a bad person	That boy is a bad apple. He never does what he is supposed to.
out to lunch	not focused; not paying attention	Jocelyn was not paying attention for the entire class. She was out to lunch.
in a pickle	in trouble; in a difficult situation	Maria was in a pickle when she forgot all of her homework.
eyes are bigger than one's stomach	you have taken too much food on your plate to eat	Look at all the food Renée took! She will never be able to eat it all. Her eyes were bigger than her stomach!
couch potato	someone who is lazy; someone who spends a lot of time sitting on the couch	Andrew is a couch potato and never wants to leave his house.
as cool as a cucumber	to be calm and relaxed	Tina was relaxed and calm in her interview; she was as cool as a cucumber
apple of someone's eye	to be liked a lot by someone	Charlotte is the apple of her father's eye. He loves her.
like two peas in a pod	two people who are very similar or are very close	Juliana and Maxim are two peas in a pod. They never do anything apart!
have a lot on one's plate	to be very busy with many different things	Patrick works, volunteers, and has 2 children. He has a lot on his plate.

Matching Idioms with Definitions (Theme: Descriptions of People)

Idiom	Definition	Sentence
rotten apple	someone who is unpleasant and has a bad influence on others	Jimmy is a rotten apple. He is always doing bad things and getting other people in trouble.
wet blanket	someone who is boring and prevents other people from having fun	Don is such a wet blanket. He sat in the corner of the room and complained throughout the whole party.
a chip off the old block	someone who is very similar to his/her parents	Michelle is a chip off the old block; she looks and acts just like her mother!
busybody	someone who is nosy; someone who is interested in what everybody else is doing	My mother is a busybody. She always wants to know where I am going and who I am seeing.
social butterfly	someone who is very outgoing and enjoys socializing	Lindsay is always going out with new friends. She is a real social butterfly.
fat cat	someone who is very wealthy	Bill is a fat cat; he made \$20 million from his company last year!
big cheese big enchilada	someone who is very important; a boss	Sandra is the big cheese around her office. Everyone listens to her and does what she asks.
eager beaver	someone who is a hard worker and enthusiastic, sometimes negatively	Julie is an eager beaver. She planned the whole staff party in one day!
happy-go-lucky	someone who is happy and does not stress out	Tom is a real happy-go-lucky guy. He is always in a positive mood and makes everyone feel good!
poker face	someone who does not show emotion	Rachel has a real poker face; I can never tell how she is feeling.

Describing Idioms to a Partner

Read the idiom and history below. Then, describe the idiom fully to a partner *without* looking at your paper!

Idiom: Give the cold shoulder

Meaning: To act unfriendly to someone; to show no interest in someone

History: This idiom originates from the middle ages. A welcomed guest would be served a nice, hot meal with a good cut of meat. However, if an unwelcomed visitor arrived, or stayed too long, he or she would be given a cold piece of low-quality meat instead, such as a piece of cold shoulder!

Idiom: Spill the beans

Meaning: To tell a secret or surprise

History: A possible origin of this idiom is from Greece, where applicants for society memberships or government jobs were secretly voted on with beans. Those who approved of this new candidate would vote by putting a white bean into the jar, and those who opposed would signal their disapproval with a black bean. The top official would count the beans and notify if the candidate is approved or not. By “spilling the beans,” someone would accidentally knock over the jar and show everyone how many yes and no votes the candidate received.

Idiom: Couch potato

Meaning: A person who spends a lot of time being lazy or watching TV

History: The origin of “couch potato” to describe someone who is lazy or who watches a lot of TV comes from a man named Tom Iacino in 1976. He used it to describe his friend who was sitting on the couch, and then published an article in the LA Times newspaper using the term. It grew in popularity after that!