

365

American English

Idioms

an idiom a day

by Michael DiGiacomo



365 American English Idioms
by Michael DiGiacomo, MBA

Paperback Edition

Published in New York, USA
January 2014

To Gloria...thanks for editing

PLEASE DO NOT MAKE ILLEGAL COPIES OF THIS BOOK
COPYRIGHT © 2013 MICHAEL DIGIACOMO ALL RIGHTS
RESERVED

Any redistribution or reproduction of part or all of the contents in any form is prohibited. You may not, except with my express written permission, distribute or commercially exploit the content. Nor may you transmit it or store it on any other website or other form of electronic retrieval system.

ISBN: 978-0-9915079-0-0

A Message From Michael

Thank you for purchasing 365 American English Idioms. My name is Michael DiGiacomo, and I am a native New Yorker. I have been helping language students learn English since the early 1990's. I began my formal language-teaching career in Sendai, Japan in 1994. Since then, I have worked in the ESL field as an instructor, a teacher trainer, an academic director, and a language school director. In 2004, I earned an MBA in Global Management. Now, I am the owner of Happy English, an English tutoring company in New York City. I teach students from all over the world here in New York, and online in their country.

I believe that language study should be both enjoyable and practical. In 2010 I started a website to provide a variety of English lessons to students all over the world. I set out to create lessons that were practical, easy to understand, and useful for self-study. Many of my students have given me ideas and suggestions for lessons and this book grew out of some of those ideas.

You can find my website at **www.myhappyenglish.com**

Idioms are commonly used in everyday, conversational English. Using idioms in your conversation will make your English more colorful and interesting. I encourage you to study the lessons in this book, and begin using these idioms in your conversations today! You will sound more natural when you do so.

Please note that this book use American English idioms and American English spelling.

As always, thanks for studying with me.

Table of Contents

A Message From Michael	2
Table of Contents	3
Key Points About Idioms	17
1: a cup of joe	18
2: a dime a dozen	18
3: a pain in the neck	19
4: a piece of cake	19
5: a pipe dream	20
6: a screw up	20
7: absent-minded	21
8: add fuel to the fire	21
9: all heart	22
10: all over the map	22
11: all set	23
12: all thumbs	23
13: an arm and a leg	24
14: as quiet as a mouse	24
15: as sick as a dog	25
16: at the drop of a hat	25
17: back to square one	26
18: bark is worse than one's bite	26
19: bed head	27
20: bed of roses	27
21: bend over backwards	28
22: bent out of shape	28

23: big enough to swing a cat.....	29
24: bite one's tongue.....	29
25: bite the bullet.....	30
26: blow a fuse	30
27: blow one's top.....	31
28: break someone's heart	31
29: break the bank	32
30: break the news	32
31: break up with.....	33
32: breeze through	33
33: bring home the bacon	34
34: button one's lip.....	34
35: call the shots.....	35
36: calm someone down	35
37: cat got [someone's] tongue.....	36
38: catch some rays	36
39: catch Z's	37
40: caught red handed	37
41: change of heart.....	38
42: chase rainbows.....	38
43: chew the fat	39
44: chicken out.....	39
45: cold turkey	40
46: collect dust.....	40
47: come a long way	41
48: come clean	41
49: come down with a cold	42

50: come in handy.....	42
51: come like clockwork.....	43
52: crack open a cold one.....	43
53: crack someone up.....	44
54: dead from the neck up	44
55: dead in the water	45
56: dead quiet	45
57: dead-end job.....	46
58: dirt cheap	46
59: dish the dirt	47
60: do away with	47
61: the dog days of summer	48
62: dog eat dog world	48
63: dog tired	49
64: done to a turn.....	49
65: down to earth.....	50
66: down to the wire	50
67: drag one's feet.....	51
68: draw a blank.....	51
69: dressed to kill	52
70: drink like a fish	52
71: drive someone up a wall	53
72: ducks in a row.....	53
73: everything but the kitchen sink.....	54
74: face the music	54
75: fender bender	55
76: fight an uphill battle	55

77: fish or cut bait.....	56
78: fish out of water	56
79: fit as a fiddle	57
80: fit for a king	57
81: fit to be tied.....	58
82: flash in the pan	58
83: fly by the seat of one's pants.....	59
84: foot the bill.....	59
85: from the bottom of one's heart	60
86: from the get-go	60
87: full of hot air	61
88: get a second wind	61
89: get along with.....	62
90: get back to someone	62
91: get down to the nitty-gritty	63
92: get down to the nuts and bolts	63
93: get hitched	64
94: get off on the wrong foot	64
95: get on one's nerves.....	65
96: get one's feet wet	65
97: get out of hand.....	66
98: get pulled over.....	66
99: get something	67
100: get something for peanuts	67
101: get the boot	68
102: get the pink slip	68
103: get with it.....	69

104: gift of gab	69
105: give someone a hand.....	70
106: goes around in circles.....	70
107: go belly up	71
108: go bonkers.....	71
109: go down the tubes.....	72
110: go for broke.....	72
111: go out of one's way	73
112: go south	73
113: go through the roof.....	74
114: go to the dogs.....	74
115: go-to guy.....	75
116: goof off	75
117: goof up	76
118: graveyard shift.....	76
119: grease monkey.....	77
120: greased lightning	77
121: green around the gills	78
122: green thumb	78
123: guinea pig	79
124: half-baked.....	79
125: hang it up	80
126: hard sell.....	80
127: have a ball.....	81
128: have a crush on	81
129: have a ghost of a chance.....	82
130: have a memory like a sieve.....	82

131: have a screw loose	83
132: have a thing for	83
133: have an iron stomach.....	84
134: have no spine.....	84
135: have the time of one's life.....	85
136: have the upper hand	85
137: have time to kill	86
138: have two left feet	86
139: head over heels.....	87
140: heart of gold.....	87
141: high and dry	88
142: hit a nerve.....	88
143: hit it off	89
144: hit or bust	89
145: hit the books	90
146: hit the ceiling.....	90
147: hit the ground running.....	91
148: hit the mark	91
149: hit the sack	92
150: home stretch.....	92
151: hook, line and sinker	93
152: hop, skip and a jump	93
153: hopping mad.....	94
154: hot under the collar.....	94
155: in a jam	95
156: in a New York minute	95
157: in in full swing.....	96

158: in good shape.....	96
159: in hot water.....	97
160: in my book.....	97
161: in over one's head.....	98
162: in stitches.....	98
163: in the bag	99
164: in the boondocks	99
165: in the long run.....	100
166: in the middle of nowhere	100
167: in the pipeline	101
168: jump through hoops.....	101
169: just around the corner	102
170: kick back	102
171: kill time	103
172: know something like the back of one's hand....	103
173: know the ropes	104
174: know zip.....	104
175: labor of love	105
176: leave someone in the dark.....	105
177: let the cat out of the bag.....	106
178: like there is no tomorrow	106
179: like two peas in a pod	107
180: lock horns	107
181: look on the bright side	108
182: lose one's temper	108
183: lose the plot.....	109
184: love at first sight.....	109

185: love handles.....	110
186: luck out.....	110
187: lucky break	111
188: made for each other	111
189: make a big stink.....	112
190: make a killing.....	112
191: make a mint	113
192: make a pit stop.....	113
193: make eyes at someone	114
194: make good time	114
195: make one's blood boil.....	115
196: make one's hair stand on end	115
197: make one's skin crawl	116
198: make out like a bandit.....	116
199: make racket	117
200: make waves.....	117
201: man's best friend.....	118
202: meat and potatoes	118
203: mickey mouse job	119
204: mind one's business.....	119
205: mint condition.....	120
206: money to burn.....	120
207: next to nothing.....	121
208: night owl	121
209: not all there.....	122
210: not my cup of tea	122
211: not playing with a full deck	123

212: now and then.....	123
213: null and void.....	124
214: number cruncher.....	124
215: off the beaten track.....	125
216: off the mark.....	125
217: off the top of one's head.....	126
218: on a roll.....	126
219: on cloud nine.....	127
220: on good terms.....	127
221: on hold.....	128
222: on pins and needles.....	128
223: on the ball.....	129
224: on the dot.....	129
225: on the fly.....	130
226: on the house.....	130
227: on the level.....	131
228: on the rocks.....	131
229: on the spur of the moment.....	132
230: on the wagon.....	132
231: on the warpath.....	133
232: on the wrong side of the bed.....	133
233: on top of the world.....	134
234: once in a blue moon.....	134
235: one off.....	135
236: open a can of worms.....	135
237: open twenty-four-seven.....	136
238: out like a light.....	136

239: out of the blue	137
240: out of the loop	137
241: out of the question.....	138
242: out of this world	138
243: out to lunch	139
244: over and over	139
245: over the top.....	140
246: paint the town red	140
247: party animal	141
248: pass the buck.....	141
249: pay a pretty penny.....	142
250: pay through the nose	142
251: penny pincher	143
252: pick up the tab	143
253: pie in the sky.....	144
254: pig out	144
255: pitch dark	145
256: plan B	145
257: play a mean guitar	146
258: play hardball	146
259: play hooky	147
260: play something by ear	147
261: play with fire	148
262: pop the question.....	148
263: pressed for time	149
264: prince charming	149
265: pull a fast one	150

266: put a sock in it.....	150
267: put one's foot in one's mouth.....	151
268: put our heads together.....	151
269: rack one's brain.....	152
270: rake someone over the coals	152
271: red tape	153
272: right up one's alley	153
273: rinky-dink.....	154
274: roll out the red carpet	154
275: rolling in it.....	155
276: rub someone the wrong way	155
277: run circles around	156
278: run into someone.....	156
279: run of the mill.....	157
280: run one's mouth off.....	157
281: run out of steam	158
282: run the show	158
283: safe and sound	159
284: scare the pants off someone.....	159
285: see eye to eye.....	160
286: seen better days	160
287: set in stone	161
288: set of wheels	161
289: set someone back.....	162
290: seventh heaven.....	162
291: shake a leg	163
292: sharp as a tack.....	163

293: shoestring budget	164
294: shoot hoops	164
295: shoot oneself in the foot	165
296: sick and tired	165
297: skate on thin ice	166
298: slap on the wrist	166
299: sleep in	167
300: sleep like a log	167
301: slim chance	168
302: slip of the tongue	168
303: smart cookie	169
304: smoke like a chimney	169
305: smooth sailing	170
306: snake in the grass	170
307: snow job	171
308: snowed in	171
309: spend money like water	172
310: spitting image	172
311: spread like wildfire	173
312: square meal	173
313: squeaky clean	174
314: state of the art	174
315: stay up until all hours of the night	175
316: steal one's heart	175
317: steamed up	176
318: step on it	176
319: sticking points	177

320: stone's throw away.....	177
321: stuffed to the gills.....	178
322: sweat bullets.....	178
323: take a dip	179
324: take a hike	179
325: take after.....	180
326: take one's breath away	180
327: take one's eye off the ball.....	181
328: take someone for a ride	181
329: take the floor	182
330: take the plunge	182
331: talk of the town.....	183
332: talk shop.....	183
333: tall story	184
334: tear one's hair out.....	184
335: test the waters.....	185
336: the boys in blue.....	185
337: the ins and outs.....	186
338: the munchies	186
339: the red carpet treatment.....	187
340: thick skinned.....	187
341: think outside the box.....	188
342: three sheets to the wind	188
343: thrilled to death.....	189
344: tickled pink	189
345: tie the knot	190
346: tighten one's belt.....	190

347: time and time again.....	191
348: too big for one's boots	191
349: top dog	192
350: top-notch.....	192
351: travel light	193
352: true blue.....	193
353: turn a place upside down	194
354: under fire	194
355: under the weather	195
356: under the wire	195
357: until the end of time	196
358: up in the air	196
359: up the creek	197
360: veg out	197
361: walk in the park.....	198
362: watering hole	198
363: wet behind the ears.....	199
364: work against the clock	199
365: work like a dog	200
366: worth one's salt	200
367: zip it.....	201
368: zonk out.....	201

Key Points About Idioms

An idiom is a group of words that go together as a set phrase. It is usually not possible to guess the meaning of the phrase because the meaning of the phrase itself is generally quite different from the meaning of the words used in the phrase.

For example, let's look at the idiom **a pain in the neck**. Looking at the words literally, the phrase **a pain in the neck** seems to mean a kind of medical problem. Let's see this idiom in use:

Renewing my driver's license was **a pain in the neck**. I had to take time from work, because the office is not open on the weekend. Then, I needed to wait for almost three hours there!

Can you guess the meaning of **a pain in the neck** from this example? It is not a medical problem... **A pain in the neck** means "bothersome" or "inconvenient."

In this book, I am going to teach you 365 idioms. That's an idiom a day. I suggest you study and memorize one idiom every day. The best way to memorize the idioms here, or to memorize any vocabulary, is use that idiom in a sentence that is true in your life. So for example, if renewing a driver's license is **a pain in the neck** where you live, just memorize the sentence I wrote above. Otherwise, try to think of another situation (or person) that is "bothersome" or "inconvenient" for you and create your own sentence.

Good luck, and thanks for studying with me!

1: a cup of joe

How to use it:

- You can buy, drink, make, etc. a cup of joe.

Explanation:

- Joe is a slang word for coffee and so a cup of joe means a cup of coffee.

Example:

- I like to start my day with a cup of joe.

2: a dime a dozen

How to use it:

- [something] is a dime a dozen

Explanation:

- A dozen means twelve, and a dime is a ten-cent coin, so a dime a dozen literally means twelve costs ten cents. So if something costs a dime a dozen, it is inexpensive or easy to find.

Example:

- Hot dog carts are a dime a dozen on the streets of NYC.

3: a pain in the neck

How to use it:

- [something] or [someone] is a pain in the neck

Explanation:

- Something that is a pain in the neck is troublesome and inconvenient.

Example:

- Tom is a pain in the neck. He borrows my tools but never returns them on time.

4: a piece of cake

How to use it:

- [something] is a piece of cake

Explanation:

- Something that is a piece of cake is easy to do.

Example:

- Using computers is a piece of cake for me.

5: a pipe dream

How to use it:

- [something] is a pipe dream

Explanation:

- A pipe dream is something unrealistic that you wish for or wish to do.

Example:

- I know sailing a yacht in the South Pacific is a pipe dream, but someday I hope to do it!

6: a screw up

How to use it:

- [someone] is a screw up

Explanation:

- A screw up is a person who often makes careless mistakes, generally because they are not paying attention to what they are doing or because they are incompetent.

Example:

- I hear Tom was fired because he is a screw up.

7: absent-minded

How to use it:

- [someone] is absent-minded

Explanation:

- Someone who is absent-minded easily forgets things.

Example:

- Jack forgot his wife's birthday. He's so absent-minded.

8: add fuel to the fire

How to use it:

- [something] or [someone] adds fuel to the fire

Explanation:

- Someone who adds fuel to the fire makes a bad situation much worse.

Example:

- Bob added fuel to the fire by yelling at his boss.

9: all heart

How to use it:

- [someone] is all heart

Explanation:

- Someone who is all heart is a very kind person.

Example:

- Ted is all heart, so everyone likes him.

10: all over the map

How to use it:

- [something] or [someone] is all over the map

Explanation:

- Something or someone that is all over the map is very disorganized.

Example:

- The CEO's speech was all over the map.

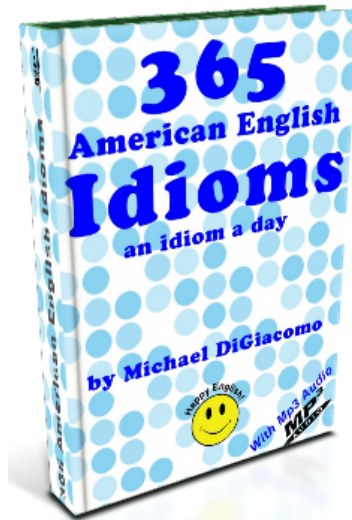
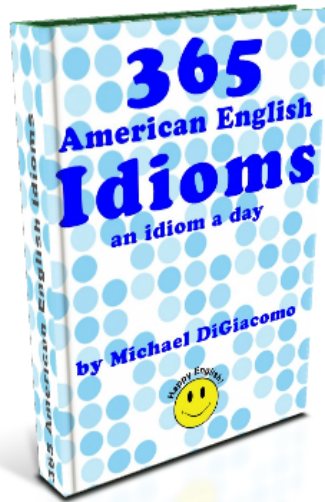
Thanks for downloading this sample!

I'm sure you'll love the book.

eBook

or

eBook + Audio



Click here to order

<http://blog.myhappyenglish.com/downloadable-ebooks-books-to-learn-english/365-idioms-an-idiom-a-day/>