

Vocabulary Ex. > Idioms from Animals



Read the text below. Based on the context, guess the meaning of the idioms in bold.

Text taken from Broukal, M. (1994) Idioms from Everyday Use. National Textbook Company. US.

Two Very Different Brothers



At school, Randy was shy and **as quiet as a mouse**. He was also very clever. He had a twin brother, Jason. Jason loved football and had to **work like a dog** to make good grades. In school, Randy was the **bookworm**. He loved to read. But without his glasses he could not see. He was **as blind as a bat**. Jason **ate like a horse** and was two hundred pounds at age seventeen. Both of them were **early birds** and got out of bed at four every morning. Randy read and studied. Jason went training. Today, because they were **pigheaded** and did not give up, Jason is quarterback for the Glendale Geeks, and Randy is the owner of the team.

Questions

1. If you *work like a dog*, how hard/easy do you work? Tell when you have worked like a dog.
2. Are you an *early bird*? Tell why or why not.
3. If you are a *pigheaded*, do you change easily?

Exercise # 1

A. Each example has an idiom using an animal word. Read the example carefully to find the meaning of the idiom. Then, match the definition with the corresponding idiom.

as blind as a bat

I am nearsighted, so I am **as blind as a bat** without my glasses.

as quiet as a mouse

When my mother walked into my room, I was reading a book, **as quiet as a mouse**.

a bookworm

As a serious **bookworm**, I missed browsing at the library.

a copycat

Little brothers can be a **copycat**. They can imitate the way their older brothers walk, talk, and behave.

a dark horse

"Wow, Denise, you're a **dark horse**- I didn't know you could cook so well!"

an early bird

Frank is not the kind of person who gets on time. He is not **an early bird**.

chicken

I used to be too **chicken** when my family took me to the roller coasters.

an elephant in the room

The fact that John was still living with his parents after his divorce was a big **elephant in the room** at every family gathering.



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LIVEWORKSHEETS

fishy	There is something fishy going on in that company. Profit and loss report does not match the annual sales report.
(not) to bat an eye	When Vito told me what he'd done, I didn't bat an eye . It is typical of him.
pigheaded	Yves was too pigheaded to listen. Thus, he lost lots of money in the casino.
to be in the doghouse	After being reminded several times, Connie and Alex forgot their sister's birthday, so they're in the doghouse .
to eat like a horse	Francis' appetite has significantly increased after joining gym lessons. He eats like a horse .
to kill two birds with one stone	I wanted to try a new restaurant and meet Justine, so I booked a table for us, and it killed two birds with a stone .
to horse around	"Hey, guys. Can you please stop horsing around ? I'm trying to watch a film."
to smell a rat	Samuel said he couldn't join us because he had other plans, but I smelt a rat .
to talk turkey	Cecilia promised to go talk turkey with Lucas' parents after the misunderstanding in the restaurant.
to work like a dog	A friend of mine works like a dog and still not make ends meet. I think he should consider giving up his job.

IDIOM	DEFINITION
1.	<i>(informal)</i> to make almost no noise; to be shy and not talking much
2.	<i>(informal)</i> a major problem or controversial issue that no one wants to discuss.
3.	<i>(informal)</i> not taking advice; being stubborn
4.	<i>(informal)</i> to consume a great amount of food.
5.	<i>(informal)</i> a person who rises, arrives, or acts before the usual or expected time.
6.	<i>(informal)</i> to show no surprise or concern.
7.	<i>(informal)</i> a person who enjoys reading.
8.	<i>(informal)</i> cowardly, lacking courage
9.	<i>(informal)</i> to discuss something frankly and straightforwardly.
10.	<i>(informal)</i> to suspect trickery or deception.



11.	(informal) a person who copies another's behavior, dress, or ideas.
12.	(informal) to accomplish two or more tasks at once.
13.	(informal) to act in a way that is silly and playful and sometimes noisy.
14.	(informal) a person who's surprisingly good at something and you might not expect them to be.
15.	(informal) to be in trouble or disgrace because you've upset somebody.
16.	(informal) arousing feelings of doubt or suspicion
17.	(informal) to work day and night very hard.
18.	(informal) having a very bad eyesight

Exercise # 2

A. Answer each question with YES / NO.

QUESTIONS	YES	NO
1. Lorena is <i>as blind as a bat</i> . Does she need to wear glasses?		
2. Laura's sister is such a <i>copycat</i> . First, she did the same her haircut. Now, she wears the same jacket. Is Laura's sister free spirit?		
3. I was sacked despite the fact I <i>worked like a dog</i> . Did I deserve it?		
4. Clark reads two or three books fortnight. Is he a <i>bookworm</i> ?		
5. Amanda arrives on time once in a blue moon. Is she an <i>early bird</i> ?		
6. Only few know my skills for designing. Can I be called a <i>dark horse</i> ?		
7. In the movie 'Go Back to the Future' Marty McFly usually overreacted when he was called <i>chicken</i> . Was it a compliment for him?		
8. Burglars break in houses at night. Should they get in <i>as quiet as a mouse</i> ?		
9. Sebastian accomplished all tasks on time. Is he <i>in the doghouse</i> ?		



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Exercise # 3

A. Read the sentences below carefully. Write the idiom that corresponds to each situation best. Conjugate the verbs when necessary.

1. Chris _____ after being told to leave the room when he was going to complain about the CEO's shady deals.
2. Anthony has struggled to make the right decisions lately. His alcoholism was _____, and nobody raised the issue.
3. Regarding the lavish parties and expensive presents for the guests, something very _____ is sought in some influencers' businesses.
4. When the judge sentenced him to life, the accused stood there without _____. He felt no regret for his crimes.
5. Her kids were _____ in the living room when one of them broke the lamp.
6. My father _____ all his life to pay our studies in private schools and universities.
7. That _____ old man refused to change his habits after being told to stop eating fatty foods and drinking sugary drinks.
8. On her way to see the premiere at Colon Theater, Ruth bumped into her best friend in the queue. She _____.
9. The time has come to _____ about the peace process. We cannot wait forever until blood is all over the country.



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