

83 Idioms (1)

A Discussing problems

You know, my English should be quite fluent by now, but **when it comes to** foreign languages, what I learn in class **goes in one ear and out the other**, and my mind **goes a complete blank** the minute I open my mouth.

Well, it takes time to learn a language, but you'll **get there** in the end.

Perhaps. Do you **have anyone in mind**?

I could probably do **with** some extra lessons.

Off the top of my head, no.

Well, I think your **best bet** is to talk to your teacher.

As far as I know, she doesn't give private lessons, but you're right: I **might as well** ask her. Thanks.

GLOSSARY

when it comes to sth ...	when it is a question of sth
go in one ear and out the other	be forgotten very quickly
my mind is/goes a complete blank	suddenly I cannot remember sth
the minute (that) ...	as soon as ...
get there	achieve your aim
could do with sth inf	used to say you need or would like to have sth
have sb/sth in mind	be thinking of sb/sth for a particular purpose
off the top of my head	without thinking about sth carefully
your/the best bet	used to tell sb the best action to take to get the result they want
as far as I know	used to say that you think you know sth, but you are not sure if it is true
might/may as well (do sth)	do sth because it seems the best in the situation, although you may not really want to do it

SPOTLIGHT idioms

An **idiom** is a group of words whose meaning is often different from the meaning of the individual words in it, e.g. if someone is feeling **under the weather**, it means they don't feel well. It is sometimes easier to guess the meaning, e.g. **let me see/ think** is used when you are thinking or trying to remember something.

■ Now **let me see** – where did he say he lived?

1 Correct the mistakes in each sentence.

- I don't know the answer from the top of my head.
- The information just goes in one ear and out of another.
- Are you free on Friday? ~ Help me see what I've got on that day.
- When it goes to science, I'm hopeless.
- I think he's feeling below the weather.
- It's no good to worry about it.
- When I try to remember his name, my mind goes a big blank.
- What do you have in the mind for New Year's Eve?

2 Complete the idioms in the dialogues.

- We need someone for the extra work. ~ True. Do you have anyone in _____?
- Do you think we should leave? ~ We might _____. I doubt they'll come now.
- Did she ask you a question? ~ Yes, and my mind went a complete _____.
- What shall I do? ~ Your best _____ is to ring the station.
- They're making very slow progress. ~ Yes, but they'll get _____ eventually.
- Are you thirsty? ~ Yes, I could _____ a drink.
- Does the bank close at four? ~ Yes, as far _____.
- Can you remember the instructions? ~ No. They went in one ear _____.
- Does Emma know about the concert? ~ No, but I'll tell her the _____ she comes in.

3 ABOUT YOUR LANGUAGE How would you translate these idioms into your own language? Write a translation, or talk to someone who speaks your language.

4 A common word like *mind* is used in a number of idioms. If you don't know these idioms, use a dictionary to complete them.

- _____ your mind decide sth
- _____ sth in mind remember/don't forget sth
- _____ my mind in my opinion
- _____ your mind say what you think



TEST YOURSELF

B Responses

A number of idioms are often used as responses in spoken English.

Idiom	Meaning
<i>I'm going to do the essay again. ~ What for?</i>	for what purpose or reason
<i>Are you going to the party? ~ You bet!</i>	used to emphasize that you are keen to do sth
<i>I've got my exam today. ~ OK. (The) best of luck.</i>	used to wish sb success in what they are going to do ALSO all the best
<i>I'll be there as soon as I can. ~ It's OK – take your time.</i>	used to tell sb there is no hurry
<i>Where's Poppy? ~ Don't ask me.</i>	used to emphasize that you don't know sth SYN I haven't the faintest (idea)/ Goodness knows
<i>It must've been an awful evening. ~ On the contrary, I really enjoyed it</i>	used to introduce a statement that says the opposite of the last one
<i>Are you ready? ~ Hang on. I'll be with you in a minute.</i>	wait a minute/moment very soon
<i>Rani's going out with a film star. ~ You're kidding!</i>	inf used to show that you are very surprised at what sb has just said
<i>I think you owe me some money. ~ How come?</i>	inf used to say you do not know how something can happen and would like an explanation
<i>Can we go in if we aren't members? ~ No way!</i>	inf used to say that sth is not at all possible or not allowed SYN no chance

5 Circle the correct answer.

- If you answer **you bet**, you *want to do something / don't mind doing something*.
- If you reply **don't ask me**, it means you *don't know the answer / don't want to answer*.
- If you say **you're kidding**, you think the other person is *being / not being* serious.
- No way** means it's not *practical / possible*.
- Goodness knows** means *I'm sorry / I don't know*.
- If you ask someone to **hang on**, you want them to *help you / wait for you*.

6 Combine words from each box to form eight idioms.

you're	no	how	what	of luck	bet	on	come
don't	hang	best	you	ask me	way	for	kidding

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7 Complete the idiom in each response.

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| 1 I've just won the lottery! | ~ You're |
| 2 Could I borrow your dad's car? | ~ No |
| 3 Why did they leave so early? | ~ Goodness |
| 4 I'll be with you in two minutes. | ~ It's ok, take |
| 5 Are you going to the party? | ~ Yes, you |
| 6 I've got my driving test tomorrow. | ~ Well, best |
| 7 The college said we have to apply again. | ~ What? How |
| 8 I'm going to repeat the course. | ~ What |
| 9 Where have they all gone? | ~ I haven't the |
| 10 I heard the lecture was really boring. | ~ No, on the |



TEST YOURSELF