

18 Animals: idioms, p.40

A. CATS AND DOGS

A: Trevor and Sue are so arrogant.

B: Yes, they think they're **the cat's whiskers**. [better than everyone else]

A: Do you think he'll get the job?

B: With no qualifications or experience? He **hasn't got a cat in hell's chance!** [no chance at all]

A: It's not fair that we have exams immediately after the school holidays!

B: I know, **it's a dog's life!** [life is hard and unpleasant]

A: I know I don't need the car over the weekend, but I don't want you to use it either.

B: Don't be such a **dog in the manger!** [you're keeping it only so that I can't have it, not because you really want it yourself]

B. FARM ANIMALS

| idiom | example | meaning |
|---|--|--|
| flog a dead horse | You're flogging a dead horse trying to persuade Kim to move house again. | wasting time trying to do something that won't succeed (usually used in continuous tenses) |
| (straight) from the horse's mouth | Guess what? Juan is going to work in Moscow! I got it straight from the horse's mouth! | from the person concerned |
| until the cows come home | You can argue until the cows come home but I'll never agree. | for a very long time |
| sort (out) the sheep from the goats | Setting the class such a difficult exercise will certainly sort the sheep from the goats . | find the people or things of high quality from a group of mixed quality |
| might as well be hung for a sheep as a lamb | You're already late, so just take all day off. You might as well be hung for a sheep as a lamb! | might as well do something more serious as you are going to be punished anyway |

C. WILD ANIMALS

In these conversations, the second speaker uses an idiom to repeat and sum up what the first speaker says.

A: The president's just pretending to be upset about the situation, don't you think?

B: Yes, he's **shedding crocodile tears** to get popular support.

A: Thomas was really upset when his team let in an own goal.

B: Yes, he was **sick as a parrot**, wasn't he?

A: Ana's hoping that Carlos will stop gambling once they're married, but I doubt he will.

B: No, **a leopard can't change its spots**.

A: He complained his business was about to fail so often that no one believed him when it finally did.

B: Yes, he **cried wolf** once too often.

A: He looks kind and gentle but he's not like that at all.

B: You're right. He really is **a wolf in sheep's clothing**.

A: I'm sure everyone is thinking about the divorce, but no one ever mentions it.

B: That's right. It's certainly **the elephant in the room**.

Exercises, p.41

18.1 Complete each dialogue with an idiom. Don't forget to write articles where necessary!

1. A. She obviously thinks she looks really good in that new dress, doesn't she?
B. Yes, she thinks she's _____.
2. A. Things are pretty hard for you at the moment, I guess.
B. Yes, it's _____!
3. A. Do you think you'll pass your driving test?
C. No, I haven't got _____.
4. A. Her husband is so selfish, he never shares anything, even if he doesn't want it.
B. Yes, he has a real _____ attitude.

18.2 Which idioms do these pictures make you think of? Write the idioms in the boxes provided below the pictures.

1



3



5



2



4



6



18.3 Complete each idiom. Write ONE word in each gap.

1. He's _____ a dead _____ trying to revive that old idea.
2. He'll never stop causing trouble – a _____ can't change its _____.
3. Luc will argue with you about that until the _____ come _____.
4. He was _____ as a _____ not to make the finals.
5. Let's stay out a bit longer. We might as well be hung for a _____ as a _____.

18.4 Replace the underlined part of each sentence with an idiom and write it in the gap left.

1. Don't pretend there is an emergency _____ or no one will help when you really need it.
2. The minister pretends to be upset _____ about homelessness, but does nothing about it.
3. I hate our neighbours' selfish _____ attitude – they don't want the parking space but they won't let us have it.
4. We can discuss it for a very long time _____, but I won't change my mind.