



IDIOM

UNIT 3

Exercise 1

Match phrases 1–8 with A–H to make idioms from this unit.

- | | |
|----------------------|---------------------|
| 1 go off at | A the bag |
| 2 get your wires | B base |
| 3 to be | C a tangent |
| 4 keep someone | D the beans |
| 5 spill | E the picture |
| 6 touch | F posted |
| 7 let the cat out of | G at cross purposes |
| 8 put someone in | H crossed |

Exercise 2

Complete the sentences with the words in the box. Some of the sentences have more than one answer.

out | from | at | in | off | on

- 1 Keep me _____ the loop, will you?
- 2 I wish she wouldn't keep going off _____ a tangent.
- 3 We heard a rumour _____ the grapevine.
- 4 Let me put you _____ the picture.
- 5 I heard all this straight _____ the horse's mouth.
- 6 I think they were arguing _____ cross purposes there.
- 7 She promised me she wouldn't let the cat _____ of the bag.
- 8 She really came _____ of her shell when the singing started.

Exercise 3

Re-order the phrases to make sentences. Add punctuation where necessary.

- 1 true / it must be / here in black and white / because it's
- 2 as you develop / keep me / the idea / in the loop
- 3 every week to / touch base / we meet / have lunch and
- 4 was moving / that the discussion / off on a tangent / I thought
- 5 she was doing / she asked him / on how / to keep her posted
- 6 paid / the office cleaner to / the newspaper reporter / spill the beans
- 7 the issue of / find common ground on / they managed to / rates of pay
- 8 going away / the family agreed that / would bring him out of his shell / to university

Exercise 4

Make sentences 1–6 less formal. Replace the underlined words with the correct idioms A–F.

- 1 I haven't heard any news yet, but I'll inform you.
- 2 It was meant to be a surprise, but someone gave the secret away.
- 3 I heard a rumour that Penny and Alan are getting married.
- 4 It must be true. I heard it from a reliable source.
- 5 Let's meet up next week just to make contact again.
- 6 They support different teams but they agreed with each other when someone mentioned the off-side rule.

- A let the cat out of the bag
- B heard on the grapevine
- C keep you posted
- D found common ground
- E heard it straight from the horse's mouth
- F touch base

Exercise 5

Match idioms 1–6 with situations A–F.

- | | |
|--|------------------------------------|
| 1 Jo and Dee learnt that Bud was being fired when Baz told them what he'd heard from Amit. | A We got our wires crossed. |
| 2 First the professor was talking about dinosaurs, then somehow it was the price of oranges! | B I got it from the horse's mouth. |
| 3 This diamond was found by a workman on a building site. He told me about it himself. | C She let the cat out of the bag. |
| 4 I think we should tell Lee that the time of the meeting has been changed. | D They heard it on the grapevine. |
| 5 I thought we were going to the cinema and he thought I was cooking him dinner! | E Let's put him in the picture. |
| 6 Nobody knew about the baby until Suzi mentioned maternity leave. | F He went off at a tangent. |

Exercise 6

Complete the table. Put the idioms in the correct groups.

keep someone in the picture | go off at/on a tangent | hear something on the grapevine
 keep someone posted | let the cat out of the bag | get your wires crossed | in the loop
 touch base | from the horse's mouth | at cross purposes | spill the beans | in black and white

communicating badly	1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____
maintaining communication	1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____
revealing a secret	1 _____ 2 _____
trusting information	1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____

Your turn!

Think about the way you've communicated with people around you recently. Use the idioms from this unit to describe a situation from the last few days. For example:

My teacher went off on a tangent and started telling us about her holiday.

I heard on the grapevine that Petra's getting married.



Sometimes, even your friends let the cat out of the bag.