

Idioms from Colors



Reading

Read the story. Then discuss the questions.

In the Red

The letter came **out of the blue**! I wasn't expecting it. But there it was **in black and white**, signed by the bank manager. I had no money in my checking account. I was **in the red**.

I couldn't believe it. So I went to see the manager. We looked at the problem together. The bank had made a mistake. It had put ten dollars into my account instead of one thousand dollars!

Because it was the bank's mistake, there was no delay reopening my account. The manager cut through all the **red tape**. Now I had money in my account. And I had **the green light** to write checks again.

1. Does **in the red** mean to have enough money or to not have enough money? When a company is in the red, is it in trouble?
2. When you learn something **out of the blue**, is it a surprise?

3. If doing something takes a lot of **red tape**, is it easy to do? Sometimes getting papers from the government takes a lot of red tape. Can you think of some examples of things that take red tape?

Meanings

Each example has an idiom with a color word. Read the example carefully to find the meaning of the idiom. Then look at the definitions that follow the examples. Write the idiom next to its definition.

the black market	You can go to the bank to change dollars. But if you change money on the black market , you often get more money for each dollar.
to feel blue	I was alone on my birthday and feeling blue . Then Anny called and invited me out, and I felt better.
the green light	The bank has given us the money. Now we have the green light to start the project.
green with envy	I was green with envy when I learned that Luis had won a trip to Europe.
in black and white	I couldn't believe it, but there it was in black and white , as clear as it could be. The letter said that I had won a trip to Europe.
in the black	Theo earns a thousand dollars a week. He doesn't have to worry about having enough money. He's always in the black .
in the red	I never have enough money to pay my bills. I'm always in the red .
out of the blue	The news of the factory's closing came out of the blue . No one was expecting it.
the red carpet	When the movie star visited, our town rolled out the red carpet . There was a parade and a special dinner in her honor.
red tape	Every time you want to get a new passport, you have to go through a lot of red tape . It's not easy and it takes a lot of time.
a white lie	I didn't feel like going out. So I told a white lie , and I said I didn't feel well.

1. _____ by surprise, unexpectedly

2. _____ very clear and easy to understand

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| 3. _____ | owing money, in debt |
| 4. _____ | complicated official procedures and forms |
| 5. _____ | the okay to start something |
| 6. _____ | special honors for a special or important person |
| 7. _____ | the market not controlled by the government, where things are sold in private and often against the law |
| 8. _____ | something that is not true but that causes no harm |
| 9. _____ | jealous of someone else's good fortune |
| 10. _____ | to feel sad |
| 11. _____ | having money |

Practice

A. Answer each question with **yes** or **no**. Explain your answer.

1. My boss just gave me a raise in salary. Am I feeling blue?
2. I took my driver's test and passed. Then in less than half an hour I had my driver's license in my hand. Was there a lot of red tape?
3. My friend Jack asked if I liked his new purple tie. I didn't really like it, but I said that the tie was nice. Did I tell a white lie?
4. I always like to keep some extra money in the bank for an emergency. Am I in the black?
5. My boss said he had to talk to two other managers about my project. Did I get the green light?
6. They said it was in the contract, but I never saw it. Was the contract in black and white?
7. If I write this check, I won't have enough money in my account to cover it. Will I be in the red?
8. We had no idea at all. He told us he was leaving the company. Was the news out of the blue?
9. When the famous general came to town last year, we even had a special parade and fireworks show. Did the town roll out the red carpet?

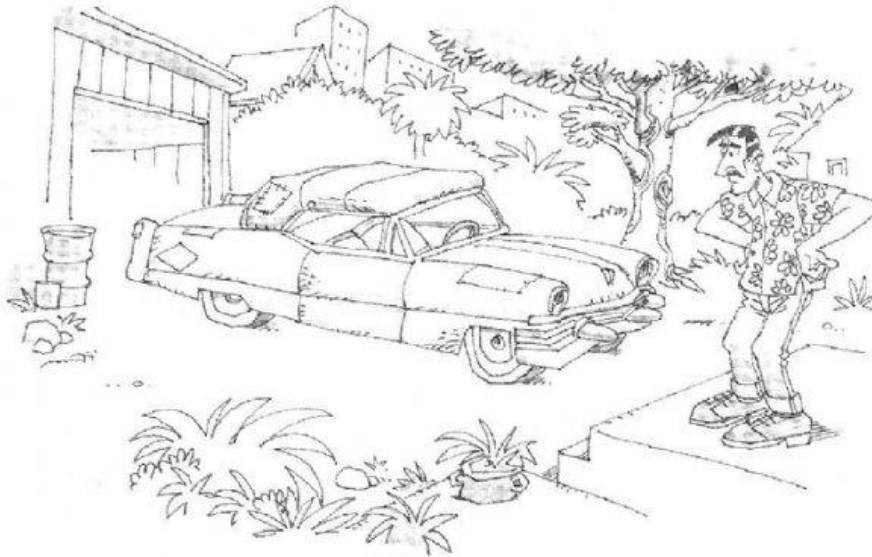


10. When I exchange foreign currency at the bank, do I get it on the black market?
11. Sam wanted the job as manager of the store, but another employee got it. Might Sam be green with envy?

B. Each example has the correct idiom, but there is one error with each idiom. Find the error and correct it.

1. I got the news from the blue.
2. The rules for the contest were in black or white.
3. They were green for envy when their friend won the lottery.
4. Tony loves to shop, so he is always on the red.
5. You must go through a lot of red tapes to get a visa in some countries.
6. They rolled out the red carpets when he came.
7. Yuri does not have a problem with money. He's in black.
8. Pam was feeling in blue because she had to stay home.
9. I told white lie. I said I couldn't come to the party because I had other plans.
10. The city has the green lights to build a new highway.
11. The tourists bought some money on the black.

Idioms from Food



Reading

Read the story. Then discuss the questions.

A Real Lemon

The used car I bought for three hundred dollars was a **lemon**. My friends said I was **nuts** to believe the **baloney** the seller gave. The seller said that the car was like new, with only ten thousand miles on it. She called it reliable transportation at a very low price. She said she was really selling it for **peanuts**.

Starting the engine of the car was a **piece of cake**. I just turned the key—no problem. However, soon I was **in a pickle**: the brakes didn't work! The owner of the Cadillac I hit **went bananas** when he saw the damage to the front of his car. He started shouting at me and wouldn't stop. Now I have to pay him two thousand dollars to repair his car. But my friend Nina was a **peach**. She took my car to the garbage dump so that I didn't have to see it again.

1. Does something that is a **lemon** work well? Have you ever bought a lemon?
2. Is something that is a **piece of cake** easy to do or hard to do? Name some things that are a piece of cake for you to do.
3. When someone **goes bananas**, what happens to the person?

Meanings

Each example has an idiom with a food word. Read the example carefully to find the meaning of the idiom. Then look at the definitions that follow the examples. Write the idiom next to its definition.

the apple of one's eye

The baby is **the apple of her grandfather's eye**. He thinks that she's wonderful.

baloney

His speech about the importance of helping the poor is **baloney**. He wouldn't even give his best friend a dime.

to cream someone

Our basketball team really **creamed** its opponent. Our team won by a score of 120 to 60.

fishy

On our return home, we found the front door open, and we suspected that something **fishy** was going on.

to go bananas

She **went bananas** when she heard she had won first prize in the talent contest.

in a pickle

Bill was **in a pickle**. After filling his car with gas, he could not find the money to pay.

a lemon

The new tape player I bought was **a lemon**, and I'm going to take it back to the store for a new one.

nuts

Tony must be **nuts** to pay over a hundred dollars for a shirt.

a peach

When I was sick last week, Susan visited me and bought groceries for me. She's **a peach**.

peanuts

Rose buys used clothes at secondhand stores, and she gets nice-looking clothes for **peanuts**.

a piece of cake

The math test was **a piece of cake** for Erik. He is very good at doing math problems.

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| 1. _____ | in trouble |
| 2. _____ | something that is very easy to do |
| 3. _____ | something that does not work, usually an electrical appliance or mechanical item |
| 4. _____ | to totally beat someone in a game |
| 5. _____ | a very small amount of money |
| 6. _____ | nonsense |
| 7. _____ | suspicious, not right or honest |
| 8. _____ | to go crazy |
| 9. _____ | very crazy, very upset |

10. _____ a very nice person
11. _____ someone's favorite person

Practice

A. Answer each question with **yes** or **no**. Explain your answer.

1. When the president gave Lou her award, they shook hands, and the audience applauded politely. Did the audience go bananas?
2. Sokolovshy beat Splatski 11 to 1 in the chess championship. Did he cream Splatski?
3. Someone on the street offered to sell me a gold watch for five dollars. Was something fishy happening?
4. When dad was making breakfast, the bacon caught on fire. Was making breakfast a piece of cake for him?
5. My car has only three thousand miles on it and has already been to the garage five times for repairs. Is it a lemon?
6. The salesperson told me he could give a big discount, just for me. Was he probably talking baloney?
7. John has a good job and today he won a million dollars in the lottery. Is he in a pickle?
8. John just gave a million dollars to a stranger. Will people say that he's nuts?
9. Maria went to a fancy store and paid full price for her furniture. Did she buy the furniture for peanuts?
10. Bob Kent thinks his daughter is the best. Is she the apple of his eye?
11. Karen promised to spend Saturday helping me cook the food for the party. Is Karen a peach?

B. Each example has the correct idiom, but there is one error with each idiom. Find the error and correct it.

1. Using the computer was so easy, it was piece of cake.
2. Something fish must be happening. We're the only ones here, but I'm hearing strange noises.

3. That man doesn't know anything, but he talks as if he knows everything. Everything he says is the baloney.

4. My new TV is lemon. It has a very bad picture.

5. Millie was in pickle when the police officer stopped her for speeding.

6. The dog went nut when its owner came home.

7. In the soccer tournament, our team crammed its opponent 8 to 1.

8. The team went banana when it won the championship.

9. Norma is very nice. She's peach.

10. Jason bought a used stereo for a peanut, and it sounds really good.

11. I'm the apple of my grandmother's eyes.

