



## IDIOMATIC EXPRESSIONS

An idiom is an expression which does not have a literal meaning but a figurative meaning instead.

### RELATED TO THE BODY



- **get cold feet:** to suddenly become too frightened to do something you had planned to do  
e.g. *They're presenting their project to a big audience next week; that's if they don't get cold feet!*
- **get something off one's chest:** to tell someone your problems  
e.g. *Thanks for listening to my problems. I just needed to get this off my chest.*
- **be all ears:** to listen carefully  
e.g. *Give me a minute to finish my work and then I'll be all ears and you can tell me about your project.*
- **give a hand, lend a hand:** to help (someone) do something  
e.g. *I can give you a hand with your school project if you like.*
- **break a leg:** to wish good luck  
e.g. *Today's the big day, eh? Break a leg!*
- **keep an eye on:** to take care of, to watch in order to protect  
e.g. *I'll keep an eye on the dinner while you're on the phone.*
- **stab someone in the back:** to say nasty things about someone when they are not there  
e.g. *He thought they were his friends until they stabbed him in the back.*

### RELATED TO FOOD



- **a hot potato:** to speak about a controversial or difficult subject/topic  
e.g. *The issue of children's starvation is a hot potato right now for world leaders.*
- **piece of cake:** a job, task or activity that is (very) easy or simple  
e.g. *The test was a piece of cake.*
- **bad egg:** a person who is (often) trouble  
e.g. *I don't want my little sister hanging around with the bad eggs on the street.*
- **(not my) cup of tea:** something you particularly enjoy (often used negatively)  
e.g. *Cooking isn't exactly my cup of tea.*
- **(not) cry over spilt milk:** get upset over something that has happened and that cannot be changed; to regret a past event  
e.g. *The computer is broken and we can't fix it. There's no need to cry over spilt milk.*
- **something is fishy:** something is suspicious and not quite right  
e.g. *There was something fishy in the way he paused before answering the question.*
- **be as cool as a cucumber:** to be calm, instead of nervous or anxious  
e.g. *She is always as cool as a cucumber and never worries about anything.*



**A** Choose the appropriate word to complete the **idioms** below.

- I can't carry everything. Could you give me a/an \_\_\_\_\_, please? Thanks.  
 a. leg                      b. hand                      c. arm                      d. ear
- I asked Peter to keep a/an \_\_\_\_\_ on the house when we are away.  
 a. eye                      b. ear                      c. head                      d. mouth
- I never said that. Don't put words in my \_\_\_\_\_.  
 a. ear                      b. eye                      c. head                      d. mouth
- Good luck with your exams. I'll keep my \_\_\_\_\_ crossed for you.  
 a. arms                      b. fingers                      c. hands                      d. ears
- He asked me if I wanted to know the latest gossip, so I told him I was all \_\_\_\_\_.  
 a. arms                      b. fingers                      c. hands                      d. ears
- I told my parents what I did and I was glad to get it off my \_\_\_\_\_.  
 a. ear                      b. chest                      c. head                      d. foot



**B** Complete the **idiomatic expressions** with a word related to **food**.

- It's no good crying over spilt \_\_\_\_\_, what's done is done!
- I really enjoyed the film; it was just my cup of \_\_\_\_\_.
- Talking about hungry people is a hot \_\_\_\_\_ at the moment.
- John never phoned his mother. He was always a bad \_\_\_\_\_.
- I knew I would pass the test. It was a piece of \_\_\_\_\_.
- I don't know, but I fear there's something \_\_\_\_\_ in the way she behaved.

**C** Answer these questions about you.

- When was the last time you had **butterflies in your stomach**?  
 \_\_\_\_\_
- Who is your favourite **shoulder to cry on**? Why did you choose that person?  
 \_\_\_\_\_
- Do you usually have **your feet on the ground** or **your head in the clouds**?  
 Is it possible to have both at the same time?  
 \_\_\_\_\_



**M-LEARNING**

Download the free app "Johnny Grammar's Word Challenge" on the British Council website and play the game **words > idioms > easy/medium/hard**.

