

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?

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

I could probably do with some extra lessons.

Off the top of my head, no.

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?

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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.

| | |
|--|---|
| 1 your mind decide sth | 3 my mind in my opinion |
| 2 sth in mind remember/don't forget sth | 4 your mind say what you think |



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> | |
| <i>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.

- 1 If you answer **you bet**, you *want to do something / don't mind doing something*.
- 2 If you reply **don't ask me**, it means you *don't know the answer / don't want to answer*.
- 3 If you say **you're kidding**, you think the other person is *being / not being* serious.
- 4 **No way** means it's not *practical / possible*.
- 5 **Goodness knows** means *I'm sorry / I don't know*.
- 6 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 don't | no hang | how best | what you | of luck ask me | bet way | on for | come kidding |
|-----------------|------------|-------------|-------------|-------------------|------------|-----------|-----------------|

7 Complete the idiom in each response.

- 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