

Idioms

An **idiom** is an expression, or phrase, that has a meaning different from the literal meanings of its individual words. Many idioms are used in everyday language, so you can memorize what they mean. Here are some common idioms and their meanings.

Common Idioms

- **Spill the beans:** tell a secret
- **Burning the midnight oil:** up late
- **Right on the money:** correct about something
- **At the top of your lungs:** as loud as you can

Sometimes, you can figure out the meaning of an unfamiliar idiom by looking at some of the individual words that make up the idiom. In the following idioms, the highlighted words give clues to each idiom's meaning.

eat like a horse: eat a lot

make it big: to succeed

You might be able to find the meaning of an idiom in the dictionary by looking up the main word, such as the word *make*, and seeing if the idiom is listed.

Sometimes, you can figure out the meaning of an idiom using context clues, or familiar words around the idiom. In this example, the highlighted words give clues to the meaning of the idiom *it takes two to tango*. *It takes two to tango* means “a conflict in which both sides are at fault.”

Whenever they had a **conflict**, twins Sharise and Shawna agreed that it takes two to tango. Because they were **both at fault**, they often quickly forgave each other.





Each sentence has an idiom that is underlined. Write the meaning of the idiom on the line that follows. Use the words in the idioms, context clues, or a dictionary to figure out the meanings.

1. Ben was so happy about his math grade that he was walking on air.

happy or excited

2. Some people say it is a dog-eat-dog world and people look out only for themselves, but I have seen too many acts of kindness to agree.

3. The class was all ears as the guest speaker began her presentation.

4. My mom said this year we will have to tighten our belts and follow our budgets if we hope to go on the camping trip.

5. If my brother was not such a couch potato, he would finish his homework and chores before it was time to go to bed!

6. When you get up on the wrong side of the bed, listening to music can put you back in a good mood.

7. Keisha has a heart of gold and would do anything for a person in need.

8. Looking for something in Brent's messy room is like looking for a needle in a haystack.

9. My grandfather always taught me to save for a rainy day because you never know when you might need an extra dollar!

10. The new game cost an arm and a leg, so I had to use all of my baby-sitting money to buy it.