



JUST TALK

ENGLISH ACADEMY

Speak Smart: Idioms & Phrases

1. A Fish Out of Water

Meaning: Feeling uncomfortable, out of place, or struggling to adapt in a new situation.

Origin: Fish thrive in water, but when removed, they struggle to survive.

Examples:

- "Emily felt like a fish out of water at the formal gala, having never attended such an event before."
- "After moving from a small town to a big city, John felt like a fish out of water, overwhelmed by the fast-paced lifestyle."

2. The Elephant in the Room

Meaning: An obvious problem or issue that everyone is aware of but avoids discussing.

Origin: An elephant's presence is impossible to ignore, yet people might pretend it's not there.

Examples:

- "The company's financial struggles are the elephant in the room; everyone knows, but no one wants to discuss it."

- "The tension between the two team leaders is the elephant in the room, affecting team morale."

3. Bite off More Than You Can Chew

Meaning: Taking on more responsibility or tasks than you can handle.

Origin: Trying to bite off more food than your mouth can contain.

Examples:

- "I think I've bitten off more than I can chew with this new project; it's too complex."

- "By accepting multiple tasks at once, Sarah bit off more than she could chew and struggled to meet deadlines."

4. Let Sleeping Dogs Lie

Meaning: Avoid reviving past conflicts, controversies, or sensitive issues.

Origin: Disturbing sleeping dogs might provoke them to bite.

Examples:

- "Let's not bring up the argument again; let sleeping dogs lie and move forward."

- "The politician avoided discussing the scandal, choosing to let sleeping dogs lie and focus on current issues."

5. The Lion's Share

Meaning: The largest portion or majority.

Origin: In ancient times, lions were known to claim the largest share of prey.

Examples:

- "The marketing team got the lion's share of the budget, leaving smaller departments with limited funds."

- "The majority of the inheritance, the lion's share, went to the eldest son."

6. Bite the Bullet

Meaning: To endure difficulty, pain, or unpleasantness with courage or determination.

Origin: In the mid-19th century, medical professionals would give patients a bullet to bite on during painful procedures to help them cope.

Examples:

- "I'm nervous about getting a tattoo, but I'll bite the bullet and do it anyway."

- "After procrastinating, John finally bit the bullet and started working on his challenging project."

7. Butter Someone Up

Meaning: To flatter or try to win favor by excessive praise or complimentary words.

Origin: Buttering bread makes it more appealing; similarly, flattering words make someone more receptive.

Examples:

- "The employee buttered up the boss to get a promotion, constantly praising their decisions."
- "The salesperson buttered up the customer, complimenting their taste in clothing."

8. Sugarcoat

Meaning: To make unpleasant news or information more palatable or easier to accept.

Origin: Coating bitter medicine with sugar makes it more tolerable.

Examples:

- "The doctor sugarcoated the diagnosis, emphasizing the positive aspects of treatment."
- "The manager sugarcoated the layoff news, focusing on the severance package."

9. The Icing on the Cake

Meaning: An additional pleasure, benefit, or advantage that enhances an already positive situation.

Origin: Icing on a cake adds sweetness and decoration.

Examples:

- "Getting a raise was great, and the extra vacation days were the icing on the cake."
- "The new job offered a competitive salary, and the flexible work hours were the icing on the cake."

10. Take with a Grain of Salt

Meaning: To be skeptical or cautious, taking information with a pinch of doubt.

Origin: Ancient Romans believed a grain of salt could neutralize poison; taking information with a grain of salt means being cautious.

Examples:

- "Take the rumor with a grain of salt until it's confirmed by official sources."
- "I take online reviews with a grain of salt, considering both positive and negative comments."

11. Make Hay While the Sun Shines

Meaning: Take advantage of favorable circumstances or opportunities while they last.

Origin: Farmers harvest hay during sunny weather, as rain can spoil the crop.

Examples:

- **"With the current market trends, now's the time to invest and make hay while the sun shines."**
- **"The travel company is offering discounts; let's make hay while the sun shines and book our vacation."**

12. Rain on Someone's Parade

Meaning: Spoil or ruin someone's plans, event, or enthusiasm.

Origin: Rain can dampen a parade's festivities.

Examples:

- **"I hate to rain on your parade, but we can't afford the expensive wedding venue."**
- **"The news of the concert cancellation rained on everyone's parade, disappointing fans."**

13. Take a Rain Check

Meaning: Postpone or delay an activity, often with the intention of rescheduling.

Origin: In the 19th century, baseball teams would offer rain checks to spectators for games postponed due to rain.

Examples:

- **"I'd love to attend the party, but can I take a rain check for next week?"**

- "The restaurant is fully booked; let's take a rain check and try again next month."

14. Storm in a Teacup

Meaning: An exaggerated or unnecessary reaction to a minor issue.

Origin: A storm in a teacup refers to a turbulent reaction in a small, contained space.

Examples:

- "The controversy over the minor policy change is a storm in a teacup; it's not worth the fuss."

- "The argument over the misplaced document is a storm in a teacup; let's focus on the bigger picture."

15. A Drop in the Ocean

Meaning: A small contribution or effect, often insignificant compared to the larger situation.

Origin: A single drop of water is negligible in the vast ocean.

Examples:

- "Donating \$10 to the charity may seem like a drop in the ocean, but every bit counts."

- "The local volunteer work is just a drop in the ocean compared to the global efforts, but it's still valuable."

16. Give Someone the Cold Shoulder

Meaning: To deliberately ignore or show indifference to someone.

Origin: In the 19th century, serving a cold shoulder of meat was a way to show inferior guests they weren't valued.

Examples:

- "After the argument, Sarah gave her ex the cold shoulder, refusing to speak to him."

- "The boss gave the underperforming employee the cold shoulder, excluding them from important meetings."

17. Lend a Helping Hand

Meaning: To assist or support someone in need.

Origin: The phrase emphasizes physical assistance, offering a helping hand.

Examples:

- "Can you lend a helping hand with moving my furniture this weekend?"

- "The charity lent a helping hand to flood victims, providing essential supplies."

18. Pull Someone's Leg

Meaning: To tease or joke with someone.

Origin: The phrase originated from physically pulling someone's leg, tripping them up.

Examples:

- "I was just pulling your leg about the surprise party; it's actually next week."
- "Stop pulling my leg! I know you're joking about quitting your job."

19. Put Your Foot Down

Meaning: To set boundaries or assert authority.

Origin: The phrase comes from firmly planting one's foot to indicate a stance.

Examples:

- "I had to put my foot down and say no to the additional workload."
- "Parents need to put their foot down and establish clear rules for their teenagers."

20. Take It to Heart

Meaning: To take something personally or be offended.

Origin: The phrase suggests emotional impact, affecting one's heart.

Examples:

- "Don't take the criticism to heart; it's meant to improve your performance."
- "She took the breakup to heart and needed time to recover emotionally."

Address: Shop No. 14, First Floor,
Vrindavan Shopping Canter,
Opposite JB Ludhani High School,
Evershine City, Vasai East,
Vasai–Virar, Maharashtra.

Contact: 8080287408 / 7972593800

Email: ejusttalk@gmail.com

Website: www.jtenglishacademy.in

www.jtenglishacademy.in