

Idioms

An **idiom** is a distinctive expression whose meaning cannot be deduced from the combined meanings of its actual words. It means something it just doesn't say! These words and phrases are widely used in spoken English, and present problems to learners of English, because the word meanings rarely lead to comprehension.

See <http://www.eslcafe.com/idioms/> for a list of other idiom web sites. There are many of them! To help you get started, this is a copy of the idiom list from Dave's ESL Café (a great site!) by Dennis Oliver, which can be found at <http://www.eslcafe.com/idioms/>. Each idiom is defined and used in a sentence.

A

ace: make an "A" on a test, homework assignment, project, etc.

"Somebody said you aced the test, Dave. That's great!"

all right (1): expression of reluctant agreement.

A: "Come to the party with me. Please!"

B: "Oh, **all right**. I don't want to, but I will."

all right (2): fair; not particularly good.

A: "How's your chemistry class?"

B: "It's **all right**, I guess, but it's not the best class I've ever had."

all right (3): unharmed; in satisfactory condition.

A: "You don't look normal. Are you **all right**?"

B: "Yes, but I have a headache."

and then some: and much more besides.

A: "I'd guess your new computer cost about \$2,000. "

B: "It cost that much **and then some** because I also bought extra RAM and VRAM."

antsy: restless; impatient and tired of waiting.

"I hope Katy calls soon. Just sitting around and waiting is making me **antsy**."

as easy as pie: very easy.

"I thought you said this was a difficult problem. It isn't. In fact, it's **as easy as pie**."

at the eleventh hour: at the last minute; almost too late.

"Yes, I got the work done in time. I finished it **at the eleventh hour**, but I wasn't late."

B

bad-mouth: say unkind, unflattering, embarrassing (and probably untrue) things about someone.

A: "I don't believe what Bob said. Why is he bad-mouthing me?"

B: "He's probably jealous of your success."

be a piece of cake: be very easy.

A: "Bob said the test was difficult, but I thought it was **a piece of cake**."

be all ears: be eager to hear what someone has to say.

A: "I just got an e-mail message from our old friend Sally."

B: "Tell me what she said. I'm **all ears**!"

be broke: be without money.

"No, I can't lend you ten dollars. I'm completely **broke** until payday."

be fed up with (with someone or something): be out of patience (with someone or something); be very tired of someone or something.

"Bill, you're too careless with your work. I'm **fed up with** apologizing for your mistakes!"

be in and out: be at and away from a place during a particular time.

"Could we postpone our meeting until tomorrow? I expect to **be in and out** of the office most of the day today."

be on the go: be very busy (going from one thing or project to another).

"I'm really tired. I've **been on the go** all week long."

be on the road: be traveling.

"You won't be able to contact me tomorrow because I'll **be on the road.**"

be over: be finished; end.

"I can't see you until around 4 o'clock. My meetings won't **be over** until then."

be up and running: (for a technological process) be operational; be ready to use .

"Dave's ESL Cafe on the Web has **been up and running** since December 1995."

be used to: be accustomed to; not uncomfortable with.

"It won't be hard to get up at 5:00 AM. I'm **used to** getting up early."

beat: exhausted; very tired (adj.).

"This has been a long day. I'm **beat!**"

beat around the bush: evade an issue; avoid giving a direct answer.

"Quit **beating around the bush!** If you don't want to go with me, just tell me!"

beat one's brains out: try very hard to understand or do something.

"Can you help me with this problem? I've been **beating my brains out** with it, but I just can't solve it."

Beats me: I have no idea.

A: "What time's the party?"

B: "**Beats me!**"

before long: soon.

A: "I'm really tired of working."

B: "Just be patient. The weekend will be here **before long.**"

bent out of shape: needlessly worried about something.

"I know you're worried about your job interview, but don't get **bent out of shape.** You'll do just fine."

bite off more than one can chew: take responsibility for more than one can manage.

"I'm really behind with my project. Can you help me? I'm afraid I **bit off more than I could chew!**"

blabbermouth: a very talkative person--especially one who says things that should be kept secret.

"Don't say anything to Bob unless you want the whole office to know. Bob's quite a **blabbermouth.**"

blow one's top: become extremely angry.

A: "Was your father upset when you came home at 3 AM?"

B: "He was *more than* upset. He **blew his top!**"

boom box: portable cassette/CD player.

"Don't forget to bring your **boom box** to the picnic!"

the **bottom line:** the most essential information.

"The discussion lasted many hours. **The bottom line** was that the XYZ Company isn't for sale."

Break a leg!: Good luck!

"I understand you have a job interview tomorrow.

Break a leg!"

break someone's heart: make someone feel very disappointed/discouraged/sad.

"Joe **broke his mother's heart** when he dropped out of school."

broke: without money.

A: "Can you lend me 10 dollars?"

B: "I'm afraid not. I'm **broke.**"

buck(s): dollar(s).

"The cheapest tickets for the concert cost 25 **bucks.** Do you still want to go?"

bug: annoy; bother.

"I'm trying to concentrate! Don't **bug** me!"

bull-headed: stubborn; inflexible.

"Don't be so **bull-headed.** Why can't you admit that others' opinions are just as good as yours?"

a bundle: a lot of money.

A: "Your new car is really nice."

B: "It should be. It cost me **a bundle!**"

burn the midnight oil: study/work all night or until very, very late at night.

"I'm not ready for the test tomorrow. I guess I'll have to **burn the midnight oil.**"

bushed: very tired; exhausted.
"I'm going to lie down for a while. I'm really **bushed**."

by oneself: alone and without help.
"I can't do this **by myself**. Can you help me?"

by the skin of one's teeth: barely succeed in doing something.
"I'll have to start earlier the next time. This time I only finished **by the skin of my teeth**."

C

call it a day: stop work for the day.
"It's late and you've accomplished a lot. Why don't you **call it a day**?"

can't make heads or tails of something: can't understand something at all; find something confusing and illogical.
"I **can't make heads or tails of** your e-mail. Were you having problems with your computer?"

catch one's eye: attract one's attention/interest.
"This brochure about Tahiti **caught my eye** when I was at the travel agency."

catch some Zs: sleep for a while; take a nap.
"You look tired, Dave. Why don't you **catch some Zs**?"

change one's mind: decide to do something different from what had been decided earlier.
A: "Why are you working this week? I thought you were going to be on vacation."
B: "I changed my mind. I'm taking my vacation next month."

chicken (adjective or noun): cowardly.
"Fred will never ask Lucy for a date. He's **chicken** / a **chicken**."

chow: food.
"How's the **chow** in the university cafeteria?"

chow down: eat.
"It's almost 6:00. Are you ready to **chow down**?"

a cinch: something that's very easy to do.
A: How was the test?
B: It was **a cinch**. I finished it quickly and I know that all my answers were correct."

cool (also *kewl*): neat, special, wonderful.
"The ESL Cafe on the Web is really **cool**!"

Cool it!: calm down.
"There's no need to be so upset. Just **cool it!**"

cost (someone) an arm and a leg: cost a lot; be very expensive.
A: "Your new car is really nice."
B: "It should be. It **cost (me) an arm and a leg!**"

couch potato: someone who spends too much time watching TV.
"You're a real **couch potato**, Jay. You need to get more exercise!"

cram: try to learn as much as possible in a very short time.
"Sidney did well on the test because he crammed for it. However, he probably won't remember any of the information a couple of days from now."

crash course: short course designed to give a lot of knowledge/information in a very short time.
"Tom's company is sending him to a business meeting in Istanbul. Should he take a **crash course** in Turkish?"

Cut it out!: stop doing something (that's annoying).
"You kids are making too much noise. **Cut it out!**"

D

Don't count your chickens until (before) they hatch (they've hatched): Don't assume that something will happen until *has* happened.
A: I'm sure that I'm going to win a lot of money in Las Vegas."
B: "**Don't count your chickens until they hatch!**"

dicey: uncertain; taking too much of a chance.
A: A friend of mine says I can make a lot of money if I buy stock in the XYZ company. Should I do it?
B: I wouldn't if I were you. The chances for success are too **dicey**."

ditch class: skip class/play hookey.
"You shouldn't have **ditched class** yesterday. We had an unannounced test."

do a bang-up job: do a very good job; do very well at something.

"Have you seen Frank's home page? He **did a bang-up job** with it."

down in the dumps: depressed; "blue."

A: "Is something wrong?"

B: "Not really, but I feel kind of **down in the dumps**."

drop someone a line: write to someone.

"I haven't written to my parents for a long time. I'd better **drop them a line** today or tomorrow."

drag one's feet: delay; take longer than necessary to do something.

"Joe should have finished his project a week ago. Why is he **dragging his feet**?"

E

an eager beaver: a person who is always willing to volunteer or do extra work.

"Jan is certainly **an eager beaver**. Any time there's work to be done, she's the first to say she'll help."

Easy does it!: Be very careful! / Don't do anything too fast or too hard!

A: "I'm going to move the table just a little further from the window."

B: "**Easy does it!** If you move too fast, you might knock over the plant!"

an **egghead:** a very intelligent person.

"Jake didn't make very good grades in school, but his sister was a real **egghead**."

elbow grease: hard work; effort.

"Yes, the car is pretty dirty, but it'll look nice again with a little **elbow grease**."

every other _____: alternately; omitting the second one in each group of two.

"In your essays, please write on **every other line**. That will make the essays much easier to read."

F

far-fetched: difficult to accept; difficult to believe.

"That story's pretty **far-fetched**. Nobody's going to believe it."

feel blue: feel sad and depressed.

"I'm **feeling blue** because I haven't had any mail except bills for a long, long time."

fire someone: dismiss someone from a job because of poor performance.

"If you continue to be late for work, the company will **fire you**."

feel puny: feel unwell, ill.

"Ted was **feeling puny** yesterday, so he decided not to go to work."

fender-bender: automobile accident.

"Traffic was really slow on the freeway this morning because of a **fender-bender** in one of the westbound lanes."

for ages: for a very long time.

"Where's Marie? I haven't seen her **for ages**."

G

get going: leave.

"Look at the time! I'd better **get going!**"

get it: understand something (often negative).

"I don't **get it**. What do you mean?"

get a kick out of something: find something amusing.

"I really **get a kick out of** listening to children talk. They say some very funny things."

get lost!: go away

"I wish he'd **get lost** and stop bothering me. I don't want to talk to him!"

get on one's nerves: irritate someone; make someone upset.

"I know you like that song, but it's **getting on my nerves**. Can you play something else?"

get a move on: hurry

"If you don't want to be late, you'd better **get a move on**."

get one's wires crossed: be confused or mistaken about something.

A: "Bill said there was a meeting this morning. Don't we have one?"

B: "No. The meeting's tomorrow. I guess Bill **got his wires crossed.**"

get out of hand: become out of control; become badly managed.

"Your absences are **getting out of hand**, Bob. You'd better do something quickly to improve the situation if you want to keep your job."

Get real!: Be realistic! / Don't be naive.

A: "I'm going to Las Vegas. I know I'll win a lot of money!"

B: "Get real! You'll probably *lose* a lot of money!"

get up and go: energy.

"I'm really tired. I don't have any **get up and go.**"

give someone a hand (1): help someone.

"I can't do this alone. Can you **give me a hand?**"

give someone a hand (2): applaud (to show respect or appreciation for someone/something).

"Dave's done a wonderful job with The ESL Café on the Web. Let's **give him a hand!**"

a (real) go-getter: a (very) ambitious, hard-working person.

"I'm not surprised that Jean finished before anyone else. She's a **real go-getter.**"

go with the flow: take things as they come.

"There's no need to worry. Everything will be OK if you just **go with the flow.**"

grab a bite: get something to eat.

"I'm really hungry. Would you like to **grab a bite** with me?"

green: inexperienced.

"I don't think you can depend on Jack to do that job by himself. He's too **green.**"

H

had ('d) better: be obliged to; should (strong).

"You'd **better** leave soon. If you don't, you'll miss your bus."

hassle (noun): a troublesome situation; something troublesome that interrupts one's normal routine.

"I know it's a **hassle** to complete this form now, but Mr. Rogers needs it in his office by the end of the day."

hard feelings: anger; animosity; bitter feelings.

A: "I'm sorry that Jim got the job instead of you."

B: "I have no **hard feelings** toward him; I know that he had stronger qualifications."

hard-headed: stubborn; inflexible; unwilling to change.

"I don't think Julie will change her mind. She's pretty **hard-headed.**"

hassle (verb): annoy; bother; interrupt one's normal routine.

"If you'd stop **hassling** me, I might get this finished on time!"

have one's hands full: be extremely busy.

A: "Will you be able to help us this afternoon?"

B: "I'm afraid not. I'll **have my hands full** trying to finish my research paper."

have/has ('ve/'s) got: have/has.

"Dave's **got** a son whose name is Benjamin and a daughter whose name is Shannon."

have something down pat: know/understand something completely and thoroughly.

"I know I did well on the test. I **had** all the material **down pat.**"

head honcho: person in charge; top boss.

"Dave's the **head honcho** of the ESL Cafe on the Web."

hit the books: study.

"I wish I could go to the movies, but I've got to **hit the books.**"

hit the hay: go to bed; go to sleep.

"It's late, so I guess I'll **hit the hay.**"

hit the sack: go to bed.
"I'm really tired. I think I'll **hit the sack**."

How come?: Why? (statement word order).
"**How come** you weren't at the party?"

I

if I had my druthers: if I could do what I wanted/preferred.
"**If I had my druthers**, I'd stay home from work today."

in over one's head: in a situation that is too much / too difficult for one to manage.
"Do you have time to help me? I thought I could do this myself, but I'm afraid I'm **in over my head**. I just can't handle things alone."

inside out: with the inner part on the outside and the outer part on the inside.
"Why are you wearing your tee shirt **inside out**?"

in stock: in supply and available to buy / sell.
"I'm sorry, but we just sold our last pair of hiking boots. If you come back at the end of the week, however, we should have some more **in stock**."

in the black: profitable; not showing a financial loss.
"What did you do to increase profit and eliminate losses? We've been **in the black** for two months in a row."

in the red: unprofitable; showing a financial loss.
"We have to do something to increase profit and decrease losses. We've been **in the red** for two months in a row."

in time: not late.
"I thought I was going to be late for my flight, but it was delayed, so I was still **in time**."

J

jump all over someone: severely criticize / find fault with someone.
A: "What's wrong with Joe?"
B: "He's feeling bad because his boss **jumped all over him** this morning."

jump the gun: do something before it's time to do it.
A: "How did Marsha know about the party? It was supposed to be a surprise."
B: "Chuck **jumped the gun**. Without thinking, he said, 'I'm bringing the cake at your party; I hope you like it!'"

jump to conclusions: decide something too quickly and without thinking about it or considering all the facts.
A: "Angela just doesn't like me. She won't even say hello."
B: "You're **jumping to conclusions**. Actually, she's very shy."

junk mail: unsolicited mail (usually advertisements for something you're not interested in).
"I didn't have any letters today--only **junk mail**."

K

keep an eye on: check something regularly.
"You're busy, so you'll need to **keep an eye on** the time.
Remember that we have to leave at 4:30."

keep an eye out for: watch for.
"I'll **keep an eye out for** John. If I see him, I'll tell him you want to talk to him."

keep one's chin up: remain brave and confident in a difficult situation; don't despair or worry too much.
"I know that things have been difficult for you recently, but **keep your chin up**. Everything will be better soon."

keep one's nose to the grindstone: stay diligent; steadily work hard, without breaks or an uneven pace.
"If I **keep my nose to the grindstone**, I should be finished by the end of the day."

keep/stay in touch (with someone): remain informed (about someone) / in contact (with someone) by writing, calling, sending e-mail, etc. on a regular basis.
"I haven't seen Frank for two or three years but we **keep (stay) in touch** by e-mail."

keep one's fingers crossed: hope for the best.

A: "How did you do on the test?"

B: "I think I passed, but I won't know until tomorrow. I'm **keeping my fingers crossed!**"

kid (noun): child.

A: "You have three **kids**, don't you?"

B: "That's right. I have two girls and a boy."

kid (verb): playfully say something that isn't true.

"I was **kidding** when I said my teacher was a monster. She's strict, but she's actually a very nice person."

kind of: rather; more or less; a little.

"I'm feeling **kind of** hungry. I think I'll make myself a sandwich."

a **klutz:** an awkward, uncoordinated person.

"Don't ask Jeff to dance with you. He's a real **klutz** and will probably step on your feet!"

a **know-it-all:** someone who acts as if he/she knows everything--as if no one can tell him/her anything that he/she doesn't already know.

"Don't try to make any suggestions to Bob. He's a **know-it-all** and won't pay attention to anything you say."

know something backwards and forwards:

know/understand something completely and thoroughly.

"If you have a question about html tags, ask Susan. She knows html **backwards and forwards.**"

know something inside out: know/understand something thoroughly.

"If you have a question about grammar, ask Dr. Martin. She **knows** grammar **inside out.**"

L

lend someone a hand: help someone.

"I can't do this alone. Can you **lend me a hand?**"

leave well enough alone: do nothing (because doing something would make things worse).

"Don't tell Jim how to discipline his children. **Leave well enough alone.**"

a **let-down:** a disappointment; something that's very disappointing.

"It must've been quite a **let-down** not to be chosen for that job. I know you really hoped you would get it."

Let sleeping dogs lie.: Don't cause problems by doing something when it isn't necessary.

"I know that what Julie said made you angry, but **let sleeping dogs lie.** If you say or do anything, you'll only make things worse."

live from hand to mouth: survive on very little money; have only enough money to pay for basic needs.

"Chuck and Alice are **living from hand to mouth** since Chuck lost his job."

live and let live: don't unnecessarily make things difficult; do as you wish and let others do as they wish.

"I'm not going to criticize Alice's family just because their habits are a little strange. My motto is '**Live and let live.**'"

a **low blow:** a big disappointment.

A: "Fred seems depressed. Is he OK?"

B: "He's OK, but not good. It was a **low blow** for him to be laid off from his job."

lousy: terrible; very bad.

"Why did you speak so rudely to your grandmother? That was a **lousy** thing to do!"

M

macho: super masculine / masculine to an extreme (in appearance and behavior).

"Her husband would never agree to help with the housework; he's too **macho** to do that."

make a mountain out of a molehill: make something seem much more important than it really is.

"Calm down. There's really nothing to worry about. You're **making a mountain out of a molehill.**"

make up one's mind: decide what to do.

A: Where are you going on your vacation?

B: Maybe Canada, maybe Mexico. I can't **make up my mind.**"

N

No way!: Absolutely not! / Definitely not!

A: "You didn't open this letter addressed to me, did you?"

B: "**No way!** I'd *never* read look at else's mail!"

nosh: snack.

"There's plenty in the refrigerator if you want something to **nosh** on."

Not on your life!: Absolutely not! (a strong "no").

A: "Someone said you cheated on the test. Did you?"

B: "**Not on your life!**"

now and then: occasionally; from time to time.

A: "Do you see Jennifer often?"

B: "No, not really. I see her **now and then**, but not regularly."

nuke: heat in a microwave.

"If your coffee's cold, just **nuke** it for about a minute."

nuts: crazy.

A: "Stuart says some really strange things sometimes."

B: "Sometimes? All the time! He's **nuts!**"

O

OK: (1) yes (to show agreement--often reluctant agreement).

A: "Come on, Al. We really need your help!"

B: "Oh, **OK**; I may be crazy, but I'll help you."

OK: (2) neither good nor bad; so-so.

A: "How was the movie?"

B: "**OK**, I guess, but I've seen better ones."

OK: (3) in satisfactory condition; well.

A: "You look awfully pale. Are you **OK**?"

B: "Actually, I'm not. I have a terrible headache. "

OK: (4) approve (verb).

A: "Did your boss **OK** your vacation plans?"

B: "No, but he said that taking them two weeks later would be all right."

on the dot: exactly at a given time.

"We're leaving at 9:00 **on the dot**. If you're late, we'll go without you."

on time: at the scheduled time.

"It's getting late. You'd better hurry if you want to get to work **on time**."

(on the) cutting edge: using the most recent technology.

"The university's computer lab is **(on the) cutting edge**. It has all the latest hardware and software."

once in a while: occasionally; from time to time.

A: "Would you like coffee or tea?"

B: "Coffee, please. I drink tea **once in a while**, but I generally drink coffee."

over one's head: too difficult or complicated for someone to understand.

"This explanation of cgi scripting is **over my head**. Can you explain it in a less technical way?"

P

pay the piper: face the consequences for something you've done.

"I stayed up too late tonight. Tomorrow I'll have to **pay the piper**."

plastic: credit card(s).

"Oh, no! I forgot to get any cash! I hope this restaurant accepts **plastic!**"

pooped: very tired; exhausted.

"I went to bed really early last night. I was **pooped!**"

pop quiz: unannounced short test.

"You shouldn't have missed class yesterday. We had a **pop quiz**."

pretty (adv.): rather; somewhat.

"That car's **pretty** expensive. Are you sure you can afford it?"

pull an all-nighter: study or work all night without getting any sleep.

A: "You look really tired."

B: "I am. I **pulled an all-nighter** to get ready for the meeting this morning."

pull someone's leg: tease someone by trying to make her/him believe something that's exaggerated or untrue.

A: "Wow! Carl has done some really amazing things!"
B: "Don't believe everything he tells you. He was probably **pulling your leg**."

Q

quite a few: several; numerous.
"I don't think I can meet you after work. I have **quite a few** errands that I have to do."

a quick study: someone who learns new things quickly and easily.

A: "Annie seems to be doing well at her new job."
B: "I'm not surprised. She's **a quick study**."

R

R and R: rest and relaxation (a vacation).
"I think you're working too hard, Dave. You need some **R and R**."

rain or shine: (describing something scheduled) no matter what the weather is.
"We're leaving tomorrow, **rain or shine**."

rain cats and dogs: rain very hard.
"You can't leave just now! It's **raining cats and dogs** and you don't have an umbrella or raincoat!"

read someone's mind: know what someone is thinking.
A: "I'll be you're thinking of what you're going to have for dinner."
B: "Hey, did you **read my mind**?"
A: "No. I just know that you're always hungry and lunch was several hours ago!"

rub someone the wrong way: irritate someone; bother or annoy someone.
"All my little brother says is 'Why?' Usually I'm patient with him, but sometimes all his questions **rub me the wrong way**."

run-down: (1) not well; weak; fatigued.
"Are you eating regularly and getting enough sleep? You look **run-down**."

run-down: (2) in poor condition; needing repair.
"This must be a poor neighborhood. All the buildings look really **run-down**."

S

savvy: knowledgeable about ____ .
"If you're having problems with your hard disk, talk to Jim. He's very **computer-savvy**."

schmooze: make relaxed, casual conversation.
"No, we weren't talking about anything important. We were just **schmoozing**."

shoot the breeze: make relaxed, casual conversation.
"No, we weren't talking about anything important. We were just **shooting the breeze**."

sleep on it: take at least a day to think about something before making a decision.
"The job that you're offering me sounds really good, but I'd like to **sleep on it** before giving you my final decision."

a snap: something that's very easy to do.
A: "Is your job difficult?"
B: "No, actually it's **a snap**. In fact, it's so easy that it's a little bit boring."

Someone's made his/her own bed; now let him/her lie in it.: Someone has caused his/her own problems; he/she will have to solve them himself/herself.
A: Jim upset everyone when he got angry at the meeting. Can we do anything to make the situation better?
B: No. **He's made his own bed; now let him lie in it.**"

sooner or later: eventually.
"You've been working too hard for too long. If you don't relax a little, **sooner or later** you're going to get sick."

sort of: rather; somewhat.
"I think I'll lie down. I feel **sort of** dizzy."

so-so: fair; not particularly good.
A: "How're you doing?"
B: "**So-so**. I've been better, but I've also been worse."

state of the art: using the latest technology.
"The company is very proud of the equipment in its computer room. It's **state of the art**."

Step on it!: Hurry up!
"**Step on it!** The taxi will be here at any time and you're not even dressed!"

T

take it easy: relax.

"I don't have any special vacation plans. I'm just going to **take it easy**."

tell a white lie: say something that isn't true in order not to hurt or offend someone.

"The cake that Susan made tasted terrible, but I knew that she made it because she wanted to please me, so when she asked if I liked it, I **told a white lie** and said it was good."

toss something: throw something away; put something in the trash.

"These shoes are worn out. I guess I'll have to **toss them**."

tough: difficult.

"Question number three is a **tough** one. Do you know the answer?"

There, there.: expression of comfort.

"**There, there**. Everything's going to be OK."

tight-fisted: very frugal; unwilling to spend money unnecessarily.

A: Do you think Charlie will donate any money to the activities fund?

B: No way! He's too **tight-fisted**!

a tightwad: someone who is very frugal and unwilling to spend money unnecessarily.

A: Will Charlie donate any money to the activities fund?

B: Absolutely not! He's a real **tightwad**!"

tricky: easily confused or misunderstood.

"This problem is **tricky**. I don't really understand it."

two-faced: deceitful; disloyal; someone who pretends to be a friend but isn't.

"I thought he was my friend, but he's **two-faced**. He says nice things to me when we're together, but makes jokes about me when we aren't."

U

under the weather: ill; sick; unwell.

"Ted was feeling **under the weather** yesterday, so he decided not to go to work."

until hell freezes over: forever.

"Chris can practice the piano **until hell freezes over**, but he'll never play well because he's tone-deaf."

Note: This expression is used to describe something that will not change, no matter how long or how often it's done.

until you're blue in the face: forever.

"You can talk **until you're blue in the face**, but I won't change my mind."

Note: This expression is used in the same way as "until hell freezes over."

update: make current; add information to show what has happened recently.

"I need to **update** my résumé. It doesn't show what I've done during the last year."

upside down: with the bottom part on top and the top part on bottom.

"Put the glasses **upside down** in the dishwasher. If you don't do that, they'll fill with water and you'll have to dry them by hand."

used to: an action that was true in the past but is not true now.

"Jane **used to** live in Austin, Texas. She lives in San Francisco now."

Y

a yes-man: someone who tries to get approval by agreeing with everyone.

A: "Why does the boss think Arnold is so intelligent?"

B: "Because Arnold is a **yes-man**. He agrees with everything the boss says!"

You don't say!: Really? / Is that really true?

A: "Have you heard the news? Jessica got married!"

B: "**You don't say!**"

You've got to be kidding!: You can't be serious! (What you said can't be true.

What you said is very surprising/hard to believe.)"

A: "Did you know that Bob quit his job?"

B: "**You've got to be kidding!**"

yucky: terrible; distasteful; very unpleasant.

"Don't eat the soup at the cafeteria. It's **yucky!**"

yummy: delicious.

"Have you tried the cookies that Jonathan baked?
They're **yummy!**"

Z

zilch: nothing.

A: "How much money do you have?"

B: "**Zilch.** I'm broke until payday."

Zip your lip!: keep something secret; promise not to
tell what has just been said.

"What I told you is really important, so **zip your lip!**"