

Common idioms for IELTS Speaking

Idiom – A group of words (or a single word) which have a meaning that is not understood by combining the standard definitions of the individual words (though that meaning may sometimes be inferred).

1. **on the dot** – happens at a particular time, precise time, exactly time.

The class will start at 8:00 a.m. on the dot, so don't be late!

2. **and then some** – and even more; and more than has been mentioned.

It looked like 20,000 people and then some were crowded into the stadium. Investors in the business got their money back and then some.

3. **Find my feet** – to become comfortable doing something.

Moving to a new city was difficult at first, but I soon found my feet.

4. **read my/your/his mind** – W – refers to the idea that thoughts are known by another.

I was surprised he knew what I was planning, like he could read my mind.

5. **before long** – a rather short amount of time.

I will be gone before long, but I hope you learn a lot

6. **Cost an arm and a leg** – really expensive.

This dress is really nice, but it cost me an arm and a leg.

7. **Set in their ways** – not wanting to change

My parents are quite traditional and set in their ways

8. **(the) bottom line** – most important number or information.

My bottom line to do this job is freedom from meddling!

Don't give me the details of what the client said about the bid, just tell me his bottom line.

9. **burn the midnight oil** – stay up late, esp work late

We're gonna have to burn the midnight oil to get this job done by tomorrow.

10. **call it a day** – end the job (or task) for the day, (or night)

Well, it was nice chatting with you, but it's time for me to call it a day.

11. **change one's mind** – to change a decision or opinion.

Nothing you have told me motivates me to change my mind.

12. **Over the moon** – to be extremely pleased or happy.

I was over the moon when I passed my speaking test.

13. **(Right) off the top of my head** – saying something without giving it too much thought or without precise knowledge.

You are familiar enough with the data. Give us the information off the top of your head.

14. **catch your/my/his eye** – something or someone that has a visual attraction for you, can be a written description as well. Really is often used to introduce this idiom.

That pretty girl really caught my eye. Do any of these watches catch your eye? The price on that advertised special really caught my eye.

15. **down in the dumps** – unhappy, sad

She's a bit down in the dumps because she failed one of her exams.

16. **(on the) cutting edge** – the most modern, up to date process or product/equipment

His teaching process is on the cutting edge. This new computer is cutting edge technology.