

## English Idioms About People

This part of our English idiom list focuses on the expressions used to describe or characterize people, from their emotions to their personalities. Whether you want to describe someone as happy, strong, or eager, use one of the popular English expressions below.

- To be on cloud nine – To be extremely happy
- One-trick pony – A person with only one talent or area of expertise
- Wouldn't hurt a fly – A person that is inoffensive and harmless
- Like a fish out of the water – Very uncomfortable
- Fit as a fiddle – Very healthy and strong
- To have your head in the clouds – To be daydreaming and/or lacking concentration
- To be under the weather – To feel sick
- To be as right as rain – To feel healthy or well again
- Eager beaver – A person who is enthusiastic and wanting to do something very much
- Teacher's pet – A person who is considered the teacher's favorite. This can be used in a positive or negative way depending on the context
- Gold digger – A person who is pursuing a relationship with another for the sole purpose of benefiting from their wealth
- Party pooper – Someone who tends to suck the fun out of situations by either not participating or adding negativity
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## English Idioms About Relationships

You'll also find people using [English language](#) idioms to describe how people interact with one another. Some of these common English phrases are used in a flattering way, while others are used to explain a distaste or irritation with someone.

- Like two peas in a pod – Two people who are always together
- To give someone the cold shoulder – To intentionally ignore someone
- To cut somebody some slack – To stop being so critical of them
- To give someone the benefit of the doubt – To justify or excuse someone's actions, and not assume malice
- To let someone off the hook – To not hold someone responsible for something he/she has done wrong
- To rain on someone's parade – To ruin one's plans or temper one's excitement
- To get off on the wrong foot – To make a bad first impression with someone
- To keep someone at arm's distance – To keep your distance and not get too involved with someone
- To rub someone the wrong way – To irritate or get on someone's nerves
- To bend over backward for someone – To go out of your way to do something for them

- To burn a bridge – To ruin a relationship to the point that it cannot be repaired
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## English Idioms About Communication

Sometimes your wires get crossed (see below!) when it comes to [communication](#). Use these English idioms when you're trying to explain a situation like when someone reveals a secret, hears a rumor, or addresses something uncomfortable.

- To break the ice – To get the conversation going
- To let the cat out of the bag – To reveal a secret
- To spill the beans – To reveal a secret
- To beat around the bush – To avoid talking about what is important
- To pull someone's leg – To say something that is not true as a way of joking
- To get wind of something – To hear a rumor about something
- To wrap your head around something – To understand something complicated
- A penny for your thoughts – Tell me what you are thinking
- To play the devil's advocate – To argue against an idea for the sake of debate
- To see which way the wind is blowing – To try to discover information about a situation before taking action
- To hear something straight from the horse's mouth – To hear from someone who personally observed a certain event
- The elephant in the room – An obvious problem that people do not want to talk about
- Comparing apples to oranges – Comparing two things that cannot be compared
- To get your wires crossed – To misunderstand another person particularly because you thought that they were talking about one thing when they were actually talking about another thing
- To be left in the dark – When someone doesn't receive all the appropriate information that tells the whole story
- To go around in circles – When you repeat the same things over again in a conversation without coming to a conclusion or resolution

## English Idioms About Scenarios

Does everything seem to be falling apart at once? Or did something that you initially thought was bad turn out to be something good? Use these common English idioms to describe certain [scenarios and situations](#).

- A blessing in disguise – A good thing that seemed bad at first
- The best of both worlds – Benefiting from two different opportunities at once
- A perfect storm – The worst possible situation
- To be on thin ice – To be in a risky situation
- A snowball effect – A situation that becomes more serious and potentially dangerous over time
- When it rains it pours – Everything is going wrong at once

- To get out of hand – To lose control in a situation
- To get a taste of your own medicine – To be treated the way you've treated others
- To throw caution to the wind – To do something without worrying about the risk
- To bite the bullet – To force yourself to do something unpleasant or difficult
- Barking up the wrong tree – To pursue the wrong course of action
- To go down in flames – To fail miserably at something
- Best thing since sliced bread – To praise something for being especially great
- Safe bet – Something that is sure to succeed
- In full swing – Something that is currently in process and moving efficiently along
- Up in the air – Something that is uncertain or still undecided

## English Idioms About Time

If you're looking for a way to describe time, use one of these common English expressions. Maybe you want to say something rarely happens (once in a blue moon!) or it happens all the time without stopping (around the clock).

- Hold your horses – Wait a moment; slow down
- To do something at the drop of a hat – To do something at once, without any delay
- Once in a blue moon – Rarely
- To take a rain check – To postpone a plan
- To have bigger fish to fry – To have more important things to do with your time
- To miss the boat – To miss an opportunity
- Call it a day – It's time to stop working on something
- Round-the-clock – Something that is ongoing for 24-hours a day
- Kill time – To do something for the sake of passing the time while you're waiting for another thing to occur
- Time flies – To express that time passes quickly
- Better late than never – It's better to do something late than not doing it at all
- At the eleventh hour – When you complete something at the very last minute before it's too late
- Third time's a charm – To describe that the first two times did not work, but it will work on your third try

## Miscellaneous Idioms in English

These [English expressions](#) might not specifically fall into the categories above, but you can use them in many different situations as they are more famous idioms and common phrases in English. You can say an item at a store might cost you an arm and a leg or comment that it's raining cats and dogs outside during a summer storm.

- It's raining cats and dogs – It's raining very hard
- A dime a dozen – Something is very common, or of no particular value
- By the skin of one's teeth – Narrowly or barely escaping a disaster

- Come rain or shine – No matter the circumstances, something will get done
- It costs an arm and a leg – It's very expensive
- It went to the dogs – Something is no longer as good as it was in the past
- To run like the wind – To run very fast
- Go on a wild goose chase – Go on a futile search or pursuit
- A cloud on the horizon – Something that threatens to cause problems in the future
- Hit the nail on the head – To do something exactly right
- Piece of cake – An especially easy task
- Steal one's thunder – To take credit for someone else's work or achievements
- Through thick and thin – To experience both the good and bad times

Below we listed out some of the most popular proverbs in English. These phrases have literal meanings that often provide advice or suggestions.

- Better late than never – It is better to be late than never to arrive or complete a task
- Time flies when you're having fun – Time seems to move faster when you're enjoying something
- Actions speak louder than words – What someone does means more than what they say they will do
- Don't count your chickens before they hatch – Don't make plans that depend on something good happening before you know that it has actually happened
- Every cloud has a silver lining – Difficult situations usually have at least one positive aspect
- Don't put all your eggs in one basket – Don't risk everything on the success of one venture
- Good things come to those who wait – Be patient
- Kill two birds with one stone – Achieve two goals at once
- There are other fish in the sea – There will be other opportunities for romance
- You can't judge a book by its cover – You shouldn't determine the value of something by its outward appearance
- Curiosity killed the cat – Being inquisitive may get you into trouble
- Birds of a feather flock together – Similar people usually become friends
- Absence makes the heart grow fonder – When the people we love are not with us, we grow even more in love
- It takes two to tango – Both parties involved in a situation are equally responsible for it
- The ship has sailed – It's too late
- Two wrongs don't make a right – If someone has done something bad to you, there's no justification to act in a similar way
- When in Rome, do as the Romans do – When you are visiting another place, you should follow the customs of the people in that place
- The early bird catches the worm – The one who takes the earliest opportunity to do something will have an advantage over others
- Save up for a rainy day – Put some money aside for whenever it may be needed

- An apple a day keeps the doctor away – Apples are good for your health
- Your guess is as good as mine – I'm unsure of the answer or solution to a problem
- It takes one to know one – Someone must have a bad quality themselves if they can recognize it in other people
- Look before you leap – Take calculated risks
- Don't cry over spilled milk – Stop worrying about things in the past because they cannot be changed
- You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make him drink – You can't force someone to make the right decision, even after guidance is given
- A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush – The things you already have are more valuable than those you hope to get
- You can catch more flies with honey than you can with vinegar – You can get what you want by being nice
- All good things come to an end – The good times won't last forever
- A watched pot never boils – Constantly checking on something won't make it happen faster. Give it time and trust the process
- Beggars can't be choosers – If you are in a bind, you can't be picky when someone offers you some help