

# ESPERANZA CENTER

CATHOLIC CHARITIES IN ACTION

## *Guide on Idiom and Street Phrases*

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# OVERVIEW OF THE GUIDE

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## **1) How to teach idioms:**

This section includes a brief explanation of how to teach idioms and street phrases from an experienced ESL teacher.

## **2) Common phrases/idioms charts:**

This section will help the student notice and recognize common phrases they might hear on a daily basis. This section provides a phrase, definition, and a clear example of the phrase.

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# HOW TO TEACH IDIOMS

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**Idioms are for High Intermediate/Advanced Students ONLY:**

## Introduction

- Explain what idioms are: phrases that don't literally mean what they say

## Explanation of Idiomatic Phrases

- Introduce only a few idioms at a time
- Explain the phrase, what it means literally and what it means idiomatically
- Use the phrase in the given sentence
- Explain different situations in which you would use the phrase

## Application Activity

- Using a conversation book or your own conversation starting ideas, tell the student to pretend that the following event happened and now you are going to discuss it with a friend using the new idioms
- Example: The student comes home after a long day of work and wants to tell his/her roommate that he is tired from work and annoyed that his roommate left the house disorganized. (The student then says "I'm beat...You've got to be kidding me...")
- Assist the student as needed with thinking of more idioms

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## COMMON PHRASES/IDIOSM CHART

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<b>Common Phrases/ Idioms</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Example</b>
You've got to be kidding me!	Something that you feel cannot be true.	A: They ran out of cash at the bank. B: You've got to be kidding me!
I am bored to death	When someone has absolutely nothing to do.	I have been in my room all day, now I am bored to death!
Call it a day	To stop working.	I have been working for 9 hours straight, I think I'm gonna call it a day.
To get on one's nerves	To annoy something, to be irritating.	My sister keeps interrupting me and it is getting on my nerves.
Get your foot in the door	To have an opportunity; to complete the first step in a process.	If I get this job interview, that will be my foot in the door to working with this company.
I'm beat!	To be tired.	After a long day of work, I am beat!

Have the guts to...	To have the courage to do a difficult task.	Do you have the guts to ride that roller coaster?
That gave me goose bumps	Something either made you scared or excited.	That scary movie gave me the goose bumps!
Jumping to conclusions	To guess the facts about a situation without having enough information or to guess the facts about a situation without having enough information.	A: They have been ignoring me, I think they're mad. B: You might be jumping to conclusions.
Stay in touch	To maintain communications with someone.	After graduation, make sure you stay in touch with me!
Play it by ear	To decide how to deal with a situation as it develops rather than planning how you are going to react.	A: So what are the plans for vacation? B: I don't know, I think I will play it by ear.

Read between the lines	To try to understand someone's real feelings or intentions from what they say or write.	In the poem he wrote, you have to read between the lines, than you will know the real meaning behind what he is saying.
Easier said than done	Something that you say when something seems like an easy idea but it would be difficult to do.	A: Can't you just start over? B: That is easier said than done.
Piece of cake	Something easy to do.	A: How did you do on your test? B: It was a piece of cake!
Go with the flow	To do what other people are doing or to agree with other people because it is the easiest thing to do.	I didn't really like the decisions, but it was easier to go with the flow.