

Talk a Lot

Getting a Job

20 Common English Idioms

1. the early bird catches the worm	if you do sth early – before other people – you'll have more chance of success	2. believe in yourself	be confident; have self-belief
3. don't judge a book by its cover	don't judge sby or sth by appearance	4. well done!	congratulations!
5. to accentuate the positive	to emphasise the good points of sth	6. to keep your ear [close] to the ground	to listen attentively for news of sth; to be well-informed
7. to do your homework	to prepare thoroughly for sth, e.g. a job interview	8. to sell yourself	to state your skills and strengths confidently
9. Rome wasn't built in a day	great objectives take time to achieve, so be patient	10. to do yourself justice	to do the best that you can to demonstrate your abilities
11. to keep a roof over your head	to avoid becoming homeless	12. nothing ventured, nothing gained	if you never take a risk, you won't achieve anything
13. to give sby a [helping] hand	to help sby	14. [to do sth] off your own back	to be self-motivated
15. not for love nor money!	impossible; not under any circumstances	16. to put your foot in it	to say or do sth offensive or embarrassing by accident
17. to keep a cool head	to keep calm in a stressful situation	18. to do your bit	to do what people expect you to do
19. to dot the i's and cross the t's	to ensure that sth, e.g. written work, is done correctly	20. to have sth to fall back on	to have a back-up plan, in case the original plan fails

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English Idioms – Matching Game

Match each sentence below with one of the idioms from this unit. Change forms where necessary:



You have to really _____ on the application form, by stating your strong points.
In this day and age it's vital _____, because you never know when you'll lose your job.
If you want to find out about new job vacancies, it's best to _____.
I would <i>never</i> work on a production line in a factory – _____!
My wife's been nagging me to find a job, so after applying for nine, I feel I've _____.
You'd better get to the Jobcentre as soon as it opens. _____.
After filling out an application form, I always check through it to make sure I've _____.
"Had you read a lot about the company before the interview?" "Yes, I'd _____."
I feel like I _____. I said everything I wanted to say. It couldn't've gone any better.
I _____ at the interview by telling them that I'd been expelled from school twice.
You <i>will</i> find a job soon! Try to think positive and _____.
I found this job _____, because I wanted to prove that I can be independent.
Don't put down that you got fired on your CV. Try to _____.
If you're feeling under pressure, it's important to breathe deeply and _____.
I need to get a job, if only to _____!
"The first candidate looked really scruffy." "I know, but _____."
"Hey, mum!" "What?" "Could you _____ with my CV?" "Of course."
Another rejection letter? Try to think more long-term. _____, was it?
Hi! I heard you got the job! That's fantastic! _____!
"Do you think I should apply for this one?" "Why not? _____."

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Getting a Job – English Idioms Activities

Meaning and Context

1. Check for new vocabulary. Are there any idioms that you know already? Explain each meaning and give an example sentence or situation in which you could use it. Find the meaning of the rest by using a dictionary, then match the definition cards with the idiom cards.
2. Do any of the idioms exist in your first language? Translate each idiom.
3. Divide the idioms into four categories: **Looking for a Job**, **Applying for a Job**, **Job Interviews**, and **Motivation**.
4. Take some cards. Describe the idiom on a card without saying it.
5. How many idioms can you remember when they are all turned over?

Practice Activities

Choose a random idiom (or one that particularly interests you) and...

1. think of a time or situation in your life when you... a) could have said this idiom (past), and b) might say this idiom (future).
2. say the name of a person you know who would be the *most likely* to say this. In what kind of situation?
3. others guess while you act it out without speaking, although you can make sounds!
4. others guess while you draw a picture to represent both forms – idiomatic and literal.
5. analyse the words. Is it at all possible to guess the meaning from the words – or completely impossible? Research the origin and background of this idiom.
6. replace the idiom in a sentence with the literal (boring) meaning. Compare the two sentences. Which sounds better? Why?
7. think of another idiom or saying that has the same or a similar meaning.
8. tell a story or devise a dialogue/role play by linking one idiom to the next.

Topic Questions

1. Choose the correct idiom. 2. Make a sentence about... a) yourself, b) a friend.

1. If you are a quiet, reserved person who has low self-esteem, this could be difficult for you.
2. People who are slapdash and careless with their writing don't bother doing this.
3. Many people need to work so that they don't become homeless.
4. If you do this you might be among the first to find out about the latest job vacancies.
5. This is what I would say to you if I found out that you'd got a new job.
6. If you apply for jobs when they're first advertised, you may have more success.
7. I always read up on the firms that I'm applying to, because it helps me know what to expect.
8. It's important to keep calm at job interviews. Listen to the panel and answer questions carefully.
9. What will you do if you don't get promoted this year? It's good to have a few options.
10. If you're getting nowhere fast, maybe reconsider your approach, and try to be more patient.
11. You should put more on your CV about your skills and experience. You're being too modest!
12. Although the last candidate was grossly obese, we should appraise him on merit, not belt size!