

Vocabulary – Idioms

20 English Idioms about Laughter

Match each idiom with a definition below and sort them into two groups: idioms with a positive meaning and idioms with a negative meaning. Then write your own sentence with each idiom:

Idioms:

- | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| 1. are you having a laugh? | 11. don't make me laugh! |
| 2. be (a) laugh a minute | 12. have a laugh |
| 3. be a laughing stock | 13. have somebody in stitches |
| 4. be laughed out of court | 14. have the last laugh |
| 5. be laughing all the way to the bank | 15. laugh in the face of sth |
| 6. be laughing on the other side of your face | 16. laugh sth off |
| 7. be no laughing matter | 17. laugh your head off |
| 8. be the class clown | 18. laughter is the best medicine |
| 9. burst out laughing | 19. not know whether to laugh or cry |
| 10. do sth for a laugh | 20. you've got to laugh |

note: sth = something

Definitions:

- | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| a) be brave when faced with a problem | k) ignore something serious |
| b) make somebody laugh a lot | l) it is not something to joke about |
| c) be somebody who is funny (or unfunny) | m) laugh a lot |
| d) do sth for fun, without a particular reason | n) don't say stupid things |
| e) are you serious? | o) laughing makes you feel better |
| f) it is better to laugh at a negative situation | p) win a battle |
| g) it is an easy way to make money | q) look stupid in public |
| h) your idea will be rejected as ridiculous | r) laugh suddenly |
| i) feel incredibly emotionally confused | s) our fortunes will be reversed |
| j) have fun | t) the person who makes others laugh |

Your sentences with the idioms:

- | | |
|-----------|-----------|
| 1. _____ | 11. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 12. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 13. _____ |
| 4. _____ | 14. _____ |
| 5. _____ | 15. _____ |
| 6. _____ | 16. _____ |
| 7. _____ | 17. _____ |
| 8. _____ | 18. _____ |
| 9. _____ | 19. _____ |
| 10. _____ | 20. _____ |

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Answers:

Idioms with a **positive** meaning:

- | | | | | |
|-------|-------|--------|--------|--------|
| 2. c) | 8. t) | 10. d) | 13. b) | 18. o) |
| 5. g) | 9. r) | 12. j) | 17. m) | 20. f) |

Idioms with a **negative** meaning:

- | | | | | |
|-------|-------|--------|--------|--------|
| 1. e) | 4. h) | 7. l) | 14. p) | 16. k) |
| 3. q) | 6. s) | 11. n) | 15. a) | 19. i) |

Example sentences:

1. 'The train is going to be forty minutes late.' 'Are you having a laugh?'
2. 'Her cousin's laugh a minute, isn't he?' 'I know – he's hilarious!' [positive]
'Her cousin's laugh a minute, isn't he?' 'I know – I've never seen him smile.' [negative – ironic]
3. If you go to the meeting without that report you'll be a laughing stock.
4. If you ask Ben for a pay rise you'll be laughed out of court!
5. If this product takes off, you'll be laughing all the way to the bank!
6. You'll be laughing on the other side of your face when I'm rich and famous!
7. Tell me who did this graffiti! It's no laughing matter, you know!
8. 'Look – Jake's dancing on the table!' 'He always was the class clown.'
9. When I saw what her mum was wearing to the wedding, I burst out laughing!
10. 'Why did you walk all the way to the chip shop instead of driving?' 'For a laugh.'
11. 'I'm pretty sure Joanna will get the promotion instead of you.' 'Don't make me laugh!'
12. We had a laugh at the karaoke night, didn't we?
13. My grandad had everybody in stitches at the pub quiz last night.
14. Bob was smug about winning the quiz, but I had the last laugh when he was disqualified!
15. 'Be careful getting off the ski-lift, darling!' 'Don't worry. I laugh in the face of danger!'
16. 'Were you upset about getting a verbal warning?' 'Nah – I just laughed it off.'
17. That film was so funny – I absolutely laughed my head off!
18. I'm glad Dee went to the comedy club, despite her bad news. Laughter is the best medicine.
19. When it started raining after I got locked out, I didn't know whether to laugh or cry.
20. 'It looks like our pay rise has been cancelled.' 'Oh well. You've got to laugh, haven't you?'