

Vocabulary – Idioms

Practice 12 Common Business English Idioms – Part 2

A. Match each idiom on the left with its meaning on the right, e.g. A LONG SHOT = an unlikely outcome:

Idiom:

Meaning:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| 1. show sby the ropes | a) approve / disapprove of sth |
| 2. go round in circles | b) find the true meaning |
| 3. fight an uphill battle | c) not make any progress |
| 4. read between the lines | d) become the preferred supplier |
| 5. a no-brainer | e) struggle with a situation that is getting worse |
| 6. a long shot | f) an unlikely outcome |
| 7. a tough break | g) a mutually beneficial / detrimental situation |
| 8. corner the market in sth | h) anything is possible! |
| 9. give sth the thumbs up / down | i) train sby to do sth |
| 10. a win-win / lose-lose situation | j) an obvious solution |
| 11. don't take sth lying down | k) an unfortunate event |
| 12. the sky is the limit! | l) don't accept defeat |

B. Discuss each idiom with a partner or small group. How do they relate to your life? E.g. when have you been shown the ropes? When have you felt like you were fighting an uphill battle?

C. Complete each sentence with an idiom in the correct verb form, if necessary:

- 'I just don't get what he means. This email is too formal.' 'Try _____.'
- Janie had _____ when she got demoted and her brother died in the same month.
- If each party is happy with the deal then it'll be _____.
- You're new to the factory, aren't you? Come on – I'll _____.
- If this product takes off in the US, then _____ for our firm!
- The café down the road _____ in full English breakfasts.
- It just feels like we're _____. We're not getting anywhere!
- Giving the guys in the warehouse a few hours off to watch the final was _____.
- Hiring more scientists might just provide the breakthrough we need. I know it's _____.
- Larry and Ivan from sales are just so infuriatingly stubborn. They won't give up. I'm _____.
- That report by Miriam is absolutely fantastic. I'm definitely _____.
- 'Clancy has launched a full-on attack on our company!' 'Well, you're not going to _____, are you?'

D. i) Write a sentence with each idiom:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____



ii) Write a text containing all of the idioms in a particular genre, e.g. a news report, a sci-fi movie, a romantic novel, a comedy, a thriller, etc.

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Answers:

A.

- | | | | |
|----|----|-----|----|
| 1. | i) | 7. | k) |
| 2. | c) | 8. | d) |
| 3. | e) | 9. | a) |
| 4. | b) | 10. | g) |
| 5. | j) | 11. | l) |
| 6. | f) | 12. | h) |

C.

1. 'I just don't get what he means. This email is too formal.' 'Try **reading between the lines.**' (4)
2. Janie had **a tough break** when she got demoted and her brother died in the same month. (7)
3. If each party is happy with the deal then it'll be **a win-win situation.** (10)
4. You're new to the factory, aren't you? Come on – I'll **show you the ropes.** (1)
5. If this product takes off in the US, then **the sky's the limit** for our firm! (12)
6. The café down the road **has cornered the market** in full English breakfasts. (8)
7. It just feels like we're **going round in circles.** We're not getting anywhere! (2)
8. Giving the guys in the warehouse a few hours off to watch the final was **a no-brainer.** (5)
9. Hiring more scientists might just provide the breakthrough we need. I know it's **a long shot.** (6)
10. Larry and Ivan from sales are just so infuriatingly stubborn. They won't give up. I'm **fighting an uphill battle.** (3)
11. That report by Miriam is absolutely fantastic. I'm definitely **giving it the thumbs up.** (9)
12. 'Clancy has launched a full-on attack on our company!' 'Well, you're not going to **take it / that lying down, are you?**' (11)

D. i) and ii)

Answers will vary.

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