

Vocabulary – Idioms

Practice 12 Common Business English Idioms – Part 3

A. Match each idiom on the left with its meaning on the right, e.g. CAVE (IN) = admit defeat:

Idiom:	Meaning:
1. make a quick buck	a) work according to the rules
2. (don't) rock the boat	b) do sth quickly or cheaply to save time
3. hold the fort	c) gain an advantage
4. my hands are tied	d) be in agreement
5. get off on the right / wrong foot	e) earn money easily, perhaps dishonestly
6. cave (in)	f) admit defeat
7. do sth by the book	g) I can't do anything about it
8. cut corners	h) the time it takes to get knowledge / experience
9. get the upper hand	i) start in a good / bad way
10. see sth through	j) take care of sth temporarily
11. a learning curve	k) (don't) create a problem
12. be on the same page	l) finish what you started

B. Discuss each idiom with a partner or small group. How do they relate to your life? E.g. how could you make a quick buck? Do you ever cut corners at work?

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

- I want the launch event to be absolutely perfect – so don't _____.
- They're not interested in a lasting partnership. They just want to _____.
- The meeting with the new VP went pretty badly. We didn't exactly _____.
- I really felt like quitting, but in the end I felt a responsibility to _____.
- 'We should complain to the CEO – his policies are causing havoc.' 'No, _____.'
- I didn't agree with Emma, but after eight hours of talks I had to _____.
- I'm just popping out to get a sandwich. Could you _____?
- 'Do you think Oliver will bend the rules on this one?' 'No. He always _____.'
- I couldn't work with her on that project because we just _____.
- Unfortunately, there's nothing I can do, mate. _____.
- 'They thought they'd _____ by opening their store before ours.' 'They were right.'
- I'm afraid the induction training is going to be a steep _____. It takes hours.

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.



Vocabulary – Idioms

Practice 12 Common Business English Idioms – Part 3

Answers:

A.

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

C.

1. I want the launch event to be absolutely perfect – so don't **cut (any) corners**. (8)
2. They're not interested in a lasting partnership. They just want to **make a quick buck**. (1)
3. The meeting with the new VP went pretty badly. We didn't exactly **get off on the right foot**. (5)
4. I really felt like quitting, but in the end I felt a responsibility to **see it through**. (10)
5. 'We should complain to the CEO – his policies are causing havoc.' 'No, **don't rock the boat**.' (2)
6. I didn't agree with Emma, but after eight hours of talks I had to **cave (in)**. (6)
7. I'm just popping out to get a sandwich. Could you **hold the fort**? (3)
8. 'Do you think Oliver will bend the rules on this one?' 'No. He always **does things by the book**.' (7)
9. I couldn't work with her on that project because we just **weren't on the same page**. (12)
10. Unfortunately, there's nothing I can do, mate. **My hands are tied**. (4)
11. 'They thought they'd **get the upper hand** by opening their store before ours.' 'They were right.' (9)
12. I'm afraid the induction training is going to be a steep **learning curve**. It takes hours. (11)

D. i) and ii)

Answers will vary.

Photo by kreatikar: <https://pixabay.com/>