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Introduction

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After each quiz, turn page for answer.

What are idioms?

An idiom is a group of words with a special meaning. Native English speakers learn idioms naturally from a young age, but learners of English have to study them. You might already know the meaning of every word in an idiom, but this doesn't mean you'll know what the idiom means. For example, if you haven't learned the idiom ***call it a day***, you won't know what someone you work with means if they say "Let's call it a day". Even if you know what the words *let's*, *call* and *day* mean, you won't know what they're saying. But if you've learned the idiom, you'll know that they're saying it's time everyone finished work for the day.

Is learning idioms important?

Yes. Idioms are very common in both spoken and written English, so learning them is very

List of Idioms A-Z

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above board

Meaning: If something is above board, it's been done in a legal and honest way.

Example sentences

- I'm sure the deal was above board. I know James well and he'd never do anything dishonest.
- Were corrupt officials bribed by the company that got the contract, or was it all above board?

Quick Quiz

The president's facing an inquiry, but if everything he did was above board he has

- a) a lot to worry about
- b) nothing to worry about
- c) something to worry about

Answer

b) nothing to worry about

above the law

Meaning: You can say someone is above the law if they aren't subject to the law because of their high position, or if they can use their power and wealth to avoid punishment when they break the law.

Example sentences

- In a democracy, no-one is above the law - not even a president or a prime minister.
- He's the son of a powerful politician, so Hector thinks he's above the law and the police won't arrest him.

Quick Quiz

Hector thought he was above the law, so he was shocked when

- a) he failed his law exam
- b) he was released from jail
- c) he was arrested for selling drugs

Answer

c) he was arrested for selling drugs

across the board

Meaning: You can say something is done across the board if it affects everyone or every part of a situation.

Example sentences

- The company has increased salaries across the board, so everyone will get a pay rise.
- The tax increases only apply to high-income families, so they won't be across the board.

Quick Quiz

If staff cuts are across the board, staff will be cut from

- a) every department
- b) some departments
- c) only one department

Answer

a) every department