PRATIK DERS

Idioms

Ders kategorisi: Mësimet në gjuhë angleze

> Learn why idioms mean more than the sum of their words, how register and context decide when to use them, and why they are best memorised as fixed expressions. Includes common everyday examples.

Idioms

An **idiom** is a fixed expression whose meaning cannot be worked out from the individual words. *It's raining cats and dogs* has nothing to do with animals. Idioms make English sound natural, but they are also the fastest way to sound strange if you use them in the wrong situation or change a single word.

Learning objectives

- Distinguish literal from figurative meaning.
- Judge when an idiom is appropriate.
- Learn idioms as fixed units rather than word by word.
- Recognise common everyday idioms.

Literal vs figurative

Expression	Literal reading	Real meaning
break the ice	smash frozen water	make people feel relaxed
piece of cake	a slice of cake	very easy
hit the books	strike books	study hard
under the weather	beneath the sky	slightly ill
cost an arm and a leg	a physical price	be very expensive
let the cat out of the bag	free an animal	reveal a secret

Some expressions work both ways. *He let the cat out of the bag* is normally figurative, but in the right context it could be literal. Context always decides.

Common everyday idioms

Idiom	Meaning	Example
once in a blue moon	very rarely	*We meet **once in a blue moon**.*

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Idiom	Meaning	Example
get the hang of it	learn how to do something	*You'll **get the hang of it** soon.*
make up your mind	decide	*Please **make up your mind**.*
keep an eye on	watch carefully	*Can you **keep an eye on** my bag?*
on the same page	in agreement	*Let's make sure we're **on the same page**.*
call it a day	stop working	*It's late — let's **call it a day**.*
out of the blue	unexpectedly	*She called me **out of the blue**.*
a blessing in disguise	something bad that turns out well	*Losing that job was **a blessing in disguise**.*
bite off more than you can chew	take on too much	*He **bit off more than he could chew**.*
the last straw	the final problem in a series	*That was **the last straw**.*

Register: when to use them

Situation	Advice
Conversation with friends	Natural and welcome
Informal email	Fine in moderation
Job interview	A few common ones are fine; avoid slang
Academic essay	Avoid — use precise language instead
Legal or technical writing	Avoid entirely
Speaking to a non-native speaker	Use sparingly; they may not be understood

Idioms are fixed

You cannot change the words, the number or the order. Small changes destroy the expression:

Wrong	Right
a piece of pie	**a piece of cake**
break the ices	**break the ice**
raining dogs and cats	**raining cats and dogs**
cost a leg and an arm	**cost an arm and a leg**
keep an eye at	**keep an eye on**

What *can* change is the verb tense and the subject: *She **broke** the ice. They **are breaking** the ice.*

Common mistakes

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Mistake	Why it fails
Translating an idiom word for word from your own language	The image rarely exists in English
Using an idiom in an academic essay	Wrong register
Overloading a sentence with idioms	Sounds unnatural and forced
Changing a preposition	The expression stops being recognisable
Using a dated idiom	Some expressions sound old-fashioned

Learning tips

1. Learn each idiom with a full example sentence and a note on when to use it.
2. Start with the twenty most frequent ones rather than collecting rare and colourful ones.
3. When you meet an idiom while reading, write down the whole sentence, not just the phrase.
4. Understanding matters more than production — you need to recognise far more than you use.

Summary checklist

- Is the meaning figurative rather than literal?
- Have I kept the expression exactly as it is fixed?
- Is this the right register for the situation?
- Would a plain word be clearer here?

Shpjegim në gjuhën shqipe

Rregulli i anglishtes, i shpjeguar në shqip

Një **idiomë** është një shprehje e ngulitur, kuptimi i së cilës **nuk del** nga fjalët që e përbëjnë. Shprehja *It's raining cats and dogs* nuk ka asnjë lidhje me kafshët: do të thotë se bie shi me rrëke.

Idiomat janë **të pandryshueshme**. Nuk mund të zëvendësohet asnjë fjalë, të ndryshohet numri ose rendi. Nuk thuhet *a piece of pie* në vend të *a piece of cake*, as *raining dogs and cats*. E vetmja gjë që ndryshon është koha e foljes dhe kryefjala.

Ato i përkasin një **regjistri të caktuar**. Në bisedë dhe në shkrim joformal janë të natyrshme; në një ese akademike, në një raport ligjor ose në një tekst teknik duhen shmangur. Përdorimi i tepërt i tyre tingëllon i sforcuar edhe në bisedë.

Për këtë arsye idiomat duhen mësuar si **njësi të tëra**, bashkë me një shembull të plotë dhe me një shënim se kur përdoren.

Ekuivalenti në gjuhën shqipe

Shqipja i quan këto **shprehje frazeologjike** dhe i ka po aq shumë sa anglishtja. Problemi është se **figurat nuk përputhen**: e njëjta ide shprehet me imazhe krejt të ndryshme.

Anglisht	Kuptimi	Shprehja shqipe
It's raining cats and dogs.	bie shi shumë	Bie shi me gjyma.
a piece of cake	shumë e lehtë	punë e lehtë; lojë fëmijësh

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Anglisht	Kuptimi	Shprehja shqipe
break the ice	thyej akullin e heshtjes	**thyej akullin** — përputhet plotësisht
cost an arm and a leg	kushton shumë shtrenjtë	kushton sa një pasuri
let the cat out of the bag	zbuloj një sekret	nxjerr të fshehtën
keep an eye on	vëzhgoj	**mbaj një sy mbi** — përputhet
out of the blue	papritur	si nga qielli
once in a blue moon	shumë rrallë	një herë në hënë

Vini re se disa përputhen (*break the ice* = *thyej akullin*), por shumica jo. Prandaj përkthimi fjalë për fjalë është rruga më e shpejtë drejt gabimit.

Ku ndryshojnë dy gjuhët

- **Imazhi.** Çdo gjuhë zgjedh figurën e vet. *Bie shi me gjyma* nuk mund të përkthehet me *it rains with buckets*.
- **Regjistri.** Në shqip disa shprehje frazeologjike janë të pranueshme edhe në shkrim të kujdesshëm; në anglishten akademike idiomat shmangen më rreptë.
- **Njohja kundrejt përdorimit.** Për të dyja gjuhët vlen i njëjti kështillë: duhen *kuptuar* shumë më tepër idioma nga sa duhen *përdorur*.

Gabime të zakonshme të folësve të shqipes

Gabimi	E saktë	Pse
Përkthim i drejtpërdrejtë i një shprehjeje shqipe	gjeni idiomën angleze	figurat nuk përkojnë
a piece of pie	**a piece of cake**	shprehja është e pandryshueshme
keep an eye at	**keep an eye on**	parafjala është pjesë e shprehjes
Idioma në një ese akademike	gjuhë e drejtpërdrejtë	regjistri i gabuar

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