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DESCRIPTION : IELTS speaking idioms	Targeted Exam : IELTS
Created By : Ms. Samiksha Sanger	Creation Date : 22/7/2023

IDIOMS FOR SPEAKING (PART-2)

1. AN ARM AND A LEG

Meaning: - Very Expensive

Example: - It cost me an arm and a leg to take my trip to Australia.

2. OVER THE MOON

Meaning: - Extremely pleased or happy

Example: - I was over the moon when he asked me to marry him.

3. JUMPING THE GUN

Meaning: - Doing or starting something too early

Example: - You are taking your IELTS test next week. Are you not jumping the gun? You have only just started studying.

4. ONCE IN A BLUE MOON

Meaning: - Happening very rarely

Example: - He comes around to see me once in a blue moon.

5. CHIP ON HIS SHOULDER

Meaning: - Feeling inferior or having a grievance about something.

Example: - He's got a chip on his shoulder.

6. PIECE OF CAKE

Meaning: - Very easy

Example: - I reckon getting a band 7 in IELTS will be a piece of cake. I am very good at English.

7. A DROP IN THE OCEAN

Meaning: - A very small part of something much bigger

Example: - The money sent by comic relief to help poverty in Africa is just a drop in the ocean. They need far more than this.

8. A BLESSING IN DISGUISE

Meaning: - Something positive that is not recognized until later.

Example: - Getting a low score for the first time I took IELTS was a blessing in disguise. It forced me to study extremely hard so I got a much better score the next time.

9. ACTIONS SPEAK LOUDER THAN WORDS

Meaning: - It's better to actually do something rather than just talking about it.

Example: - We have to actually do something about global warming as actions speak louder than words.

10. IT'S A SMALL WORLD

Meaning: - Meeting someone you would not have expected to.

Example: - I bumped into Jenny in town the other day. It's a small world.

11. BACK TO THE DRAWING BOARD

Meaning: - When an attempt to do something fails and it's time to start all over again using different methods.

Example: - Oh well, I got 5.5 in IELTS again back to the drawing board.

12. COCK AND BULL STORY

Meaning: - Fake story or news

Example: - When teacher asked him about not attending the classes. He created a cock and bull story.

13. STUCK / CAUGHT BETWEEN A ROCK AND A HARD PLACE

Meaning: - Having two very bad choices.

Example: - I hate my job so much. I can't bare going to work, but if I quit I don't think I can get another job. I am really caught between a rock and a hard place.

14. BITE MY TONGUE

Meaning: - Wanting to say something but stopping yourself.

Example: - I have to bite my tongue so I don't say what I really think of him.

15. CUT TO THE CHASE

Meaning: - Leave out all the unnecessary details and just get to the point.

Example: - Come on, cut to the chase. We have not got all day.

16. PUT ALL YOUR EGGS IN ONE BASKET

Meaning: - Putting all of one's resources into one possibility.

Example: - Are you putting all of your savings into that company? Don't put all eggs in one basket.

17. EVERY CLOUD HAS A SILVER LINING

Meaning: - Believing that every bad situation has a positive side/ eventually leads to something good.

Example: - Try not to worry about it. Every cloud has a silver lining.

18. FOUND MY FEET

Meaning: - To become comfortable in what you are doing.

Example: - It was difficult when I moved to another country but I eventually found my feet.

19. FIXED IN THEIR WAYS

Meaning: - Not wanting to change from the normal ways of doing things.

Example: - My parents are very fixed in their ways. They won't start using the internet.

20. GOT UP ON THE WRONG SIDE OF THE BED THIS MORNING

Meaning: - To refer to someone who is having a bad day.

Example: - I think he got up on the wrong side of the bed this morning. He is in a terrible mood.

21. GO THE EXTRA MILE

Meaning: - Doing much more than is required when doing something.

Example: - My mother will always go the extra mile to help people.

22. HIT THE NAIL ON THE HEAD

Meaning: - Say exactly the right thing.

Example: - I think you have hit the nail on the head. That's reason he did not get the job.

23. IF IT'S NOT ONE THING, IT'S THE OTHER

Meaning: - When everything seems to be going wrong.

Example: - Today's going so badly. If it's not one thing, it's the other.

24. THE HEAT OF THE MOMENT

Meaning: - Saying or doing something suddenly without thinking about it.

Example: - I just said it in the heat of the moment. I was angry. I know I shouldn't have.

25. KEEP AN EYE ON HIM

Meaning: - Watch someone or something carefully

Example: - Keep an eye on him. I think he may cheat in the exam.

26. KICKED THE BUCKET

Meaning: - Died

Example: - Have you heard? John down the road has kicked the bucket.

27. LET SLEEPING DOGS LIE

Meaning: - Avoid a conflict

Example: - I don't want to argue with him again. It's better to let sleeping dogs lie.

28. LET THE CAT OUT OF THE BAG

Meaning: - Tell someone something that you were not supposed to.

Example: - I told him what gift you have bought him for his birthday. Sorry, I didn't mean to let the cat out of the bag.

29. BITE THE HAND THAT FEEDS YOU

Meaning: - Hurt or upset someone who is helping you.

Example: - Don't tell her what you really think of her if she's helping you with your English. Don't bite the hand that feeds you.

30. SITTING IN THE FENCE

Meaning: - Not making a firm decision between different choices.

Example: - I am not sure which party he is going to vote for. He is sitting in the fence.

31. OVER THE TOP

Meaning: - Excessive

Example: - Everything she does is very over the top. She can't just have a few drinks she has to get really drunk.

32. PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

Meaning: - Continuously doing something to improve.

Example: - Let's keep studying for IELTS. Practice makes perfect.

33. PULLING YOUR LEG

Meaning: - Joking around

Example: - Don't get upset about what he said. He is just pulling your leg.

34. TAKE A RAIN CHECK

Meaning: - To decline an offer that you will take up later.

Example: - Sorry but I think I'll take a rain check on that.

35. RULE OF THUMB

Meaning: - Principal that is strictly adhered/kept to.

Example: - As a rule of thumb, don't study at weekends. I spend the time with my family.

36. SMELL A RAT

Meaning: - To sense that something is not right.

Example: - I can smell a rat. He said he has a PhD but he can't even remember which University he studied at.

37. THE SPITTING IMAGE

Meaning: - To look exactly like someone else.

Example: - She is the spitting image of her mother.

38. THE BALL'S IN YOUR COURT

Meaning: - Telling someone it's now their turn to make a decision.

Example: - The ball's in your court now. What are you going to do?

39. UNTIL THE COWS COME HOME

Meaning: - For a very long time.

Example: - Unfortunately I think he'll be studying for IELTS until the cows come home. His English is very poor.

40. TONGUE-IN-CHEEK

Meaning: - Something said in humour rather than seriously.

Example: - It was all tongue-in-cheek. He did not really mean what he said.

41. UNDER THE WEATHER

Meaning: - Unwell

Example: - She's feeling under the weather today so she won't be going to work.

42. WATER UNDER THE BRIDGE

Meaning: - Things from the past that are not important anymore.

Example: - We've had some big disagreements over the years, but it's all water under the bridge now. We get on fine.

43. YOU ARE WHAT YOU EAT

Meaning: - If you eat bad food, you'll be unhealthy, if you eat good food, you'll be healthy.

Example: - You are what you eat so it's better to have healthy diet.

44. YOU CAN'T JUDGE A BOOK BY ITS COVER

Meaning: - The belief that outside appearances do not reveal what someone or something is really like.

Example: - You can't judge a book by its cover. I need to get to know him before I decided what he is like.

45. WORKING AGAINST THE CLOCK

Meaning: - Not having enough time to do something.

Example: - We are really working against the clock now. We must hurry.

46. FLOGGING A DEAD HORSE

Meaning: - Attempting to continue with something that is finished/over.

Example: - Why are we bothering? We are flogging a dead horse. Our online business is making no money, so we should move on and do something else.

47. BENT OVER BACKWARDS

Meaning: - Doing all you can to help someone.

Example: - I bent over backwards to help him. I hope he appreciates it.

48. BREAK A LEG

Meaning: - Good luck

Example: - So you have IELTS test today? Break a leg.

49. PLAYING DEVIL'S ADVOCATE

Meaning: - To put forward a side in an agreement that may not be your own in order to show the counter argument /ensure all sides are discussed.

Example: - Ok, I am playing devil's advocate here, but if marijuana is legalized, isn't it more likely young people will smoke it?

50. HOLD YOUR HORSES

Meaning: - Telling someone who is getting ahead of themselves to wait/ be patient.

Example: - Hold your horses! We haven't won anything yet.

51. DRIVING ME UP THE WALL

Meaning: - Annoying or irritating somebody.

Example: - She is driving me up the wall. She won't stop talking.

52. FIT AS FIDDLE

Meaning: - Fit

Example: - My grandfather is fit as fiddle because he does exercise daily.

53. DOWN IN THE DUMPS

Meaning: - Unhappy

Example: - When he missed his interview due to bad weather. He felt down in the dumps.

54. MISS THE BOAT

Meaning: - Miss an opportunity.

Example: - If I will get the chance to go outer space. I will never miss the boat.

55. RED LETTER DAY

Meaning: - Very important day

Example: - That was a red letter day for me when I got first prize in the competition.

56. TO ACE

Meaning: - To do well

Example: - I aced my IELTS exam.

57. GIVE A GREEN SIGNAL

Meaning: - To allow/ to permit

Example: - My brother got a green signal from my parents for his sports camp.

58. DROPOUT

Meaning: - To leave without finishing.

Example: - Due to some financial problems, he had dropped out his course.

59. LIKE A KID IN A CANDY STORE

Meaning: - Super excited

Example: - As soon as I entered in the mall, I was like a kid in a candy store.

60. SCRATCHED THE SURFACE

Meaning:- Looked at something very briefly.

Example: - They have a boring image but scratch the surface it is fascinating.

61. TO FIND IT FISHY

Meaning: - Doubtful/ strange

Example: - There is something fishy about her.

62. MUGGED AT

Meaning: - Attacked/ robbed

Example: - Mugging is rising in our area.

63. LOOKING AT THE BRIGHTER SIDE

Meaning: - Thinking positive

Example: - He always looks at the brighter side. No matter whatever the situation.

64. NOT UP TO THE MARK

Meaning: - Not satisfactory

Example: - She was really good in her studies but her result was not up to the mark.

65. FASHION VICTIM

Meaning: - A person who wears fashionable clothes even if they look silly.

Example: - I am not a fashion victim; I stick to what suits me.

66. KEEP IN SHAPE

Meaning: - To take good care of the body.

Example: - She is a fashion victim and she always keeps her body in shape.

67. SPEND A FORTUNE

Meaning: - To spend a lot.

Example: - Rahul has spent a fortune for repairing his car but still his car not working properly.

68. SWIM LIKE A FISH

Meaning: - Great swimmer

Example: - Although I am a hydrophobic but my brother swims like a fish.

69. AS EASY AS ABC

Meaning: - Very simple.

Example: - Cooking is as easy as abc for me.

70. AS FAST AS SQUIRREL

Meaning: - To run fast

Example: - Jatinder ran as fast as squirrel.

71. HIT THE BOOKS

Meaning: - To begin studying finally.

Example: - After failing in the exams, he decided to hit the books.

72. ZIP YOUR LIPS

Meaning: - Keep quite.

EXAMPLE: - While you are in the class you have to zip your lips.

73. BURN THE MID NIGHT OIL

Meaning: - To work extremely hard.

Example: - Suhani has being burnt the mid night oil to get desired scores.

74. LEAPS AND BOUNDS

Meaning: - To get successful quickly.

Example: - He gets leaps and bounds in the start-up of his business due to his father's contacts as his father is a politician.

75. FED UP WITH

Meaning: - Irritated.

Example: - John is a chatterbox, he always fed up everyone.

76. BLACK MOOD

Meaning: - Sad mood.

Example: - Because Karan has not been selected for the football team so he is in black mood today.

77. AS HARD AS ROCK

Meaning: - Very solid.

Example:-My mother supports me to go abroad for my further studies but it is as hard as rock to convince my father.

78. AS SHY AS A LAMB

Meaning: - Very shy.

Example:-Reema is very introvert kind of person and she behaves as shy as a lamb in front of any stranger.

79. AS DULL AS DITCH WATER

Meaning:-Very boring.

Example:-The trailer of the movie was very interesting but the movie was as dull as ditch water.

80. APPLE-PIE ORDER

Meaning:-Extreme neatness.

Example:-The children's garden is in apple-pie order.

81. OUT OF BLUE

Meaning: - Unexpected

Example: - When my brother gifted me a laptop on my birthday. Initially I got surprised because that was out of blue. I hadn't expected it.

82. ON EDGE

Meaning: - Nervous

Example: - When I went on the stage for giving speech first time. I felt on edge.

83. BREATH OF FRESH AIR

Meaning: - To get fresh air.

Example: - Whenever I go to the park. I feel a breath of fresh air.

84. OUT OF THE REST

Meaning: - To be much better than other similar things or people.

Example: - Well, there are a lot of places where I would like to go for vacation but which stands out of the rest is Kashmir.

85. FOLLOW MY HEART

Meaning: - To do something in which we have a great interest.

Example: - I choose medical stream for my higher studies because I want to follow my heart.

86. TO PUT MY FOOT FORWARD

Meaning: - To work very hard.

Example: - My mother always encouraged me to put my foot forward to reach my goal in the life.

87. TO FOLLOW THE FOOTSTEPS OF

Meaning: - To do similar as someone has done.

Example: - My father is an architect and he is my role model. I will follow his footsteps because I want to do something like him.

88. HARD NUT TO CRACK

Meaning: - Very difficult.

Example: - Puzzles are not hard nut to crack. It's just the game of mind.

89. AT ARM'S LENGTH

Meaning: - At a certain distance.

Example: - Yesterday I have an argument with my friend, now I want to patch up with her but she keeps me at arm's length.

90. WITH OPEN ARMS

Meaning: - Warmly; affectionately.

Example: - They have accepted their adopted daughter with open arms.

91. TO OPEN THE BALL

Meaning: - To begin.

Example: - The players of India and Australia are preparing to open the ball in this cricket world cup.

92. TO KEEP THE BALL UP

Meaning: - To keep a conversation going.

Example: - Although, Rajan's phone rang many times but he kept the ball up with me.

93. TO BE LEFT IN THE BASKET

Meaning: - To be neglected or thrown over.

Example: - Anita's painting designs were not suitable for the event. Therefore, they were left in the basket.

94. BIRD OF PASSAGE

Meaning: - One who shifts place to place.

Example: - People who love travelling and to explore distinctive places are the bird of passage.

95. GOOD WINE NEEDS NO BUSH

Meaning: - A good thing requires no advertisement.

Example: - Mr. Sharma starts a shop of organic groceries and he gets success without any advertisement. This means good wine need no bushes.

96. IN THE GOOD BOOKS OF

Meaning: - A favorite of

Example: - He does his work very carefully. Thus, he is in the good books of my father.

97. BETWEEN YOU AND ME

Meaning: - A phrase used when anything is spoken confidentially.

Example: - My boss will not come to the office tomorrow. He gives the responsibilities to me and have said that this should be only between you and me.

98. TAKE IT WITH A PINCH OF SALT

Meaning: - Don't take it too seriously.

Example: - I heard that elephants can fly now, but Sam often makes up stories so I take everything he says with a pinch of salt.

99. TO KILL TWO BIRDS WITH ONE STONE

Meaning: - To effect two results with one expenditure of trouble.

Example: - Whenever I jog, I like listening to English rap music. That way, I kill two birds with one stone; I stay fit whilst I improve my English language skills.

100. TO BEARD THE LION IN HIS DEN

Meaning: - To attack a dangerous or much feared person boldly in his own quarters.

Example: - I went to the tax collector's office to beard the lion in his den.



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101. WHAT GOES AROUND COMES AROUND

MEANING: the consequences of one's action will must be dealt with eventually

EXAMPLE: But some decide to be selfish forgetting that WHATGOES AROUND COMES AROUND, karma is real.

102. IT TAKES TWO TO TANGO

MEANING: both the parties are held responsible for any argument or situation, not just one

EXAMPLE: we must not blame her parents alone; IT ALWAYS TAKES TWO TO TANGO.

103. HARD NUT TO CRACK

MEANING: a person or thing that is difficult to deal with, understand or influence.

EXAMPLE: He's a HARD NUT TO CRACK, but I think I can get him to agree to the contract.

104. BURN HOLE IN THE POCKET

MEANING: money that someone has just acquired and is eager to spend

EXAMPLE: But there's no need to BURN HOLE IN YOUR POCKET to copy them.

105. HEART OF GOLD

MEANING: to be very kind and generous

EXAMPLE: Jane is always willing to help; she has a HEART OF GOLD.





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106. STORM IN A TEACUP

MEANING: great anger over small matters

EXAMPLE: The succession issue seems rather a STORM A TEACUP to me.

107. TO HAVE A SWEET TOOTH

MEANING: to like eating things those are sugary or taste sweet

EXAMPLE: Some of us have a SWEET TOOTH and would like a nice home baked cake.

108. PUT ALL THE EGGS IN ONE BASKET

MEANING: to risk all one has on the success or failure of one thing

EXAMPLE: I'm applying for several jobs because I don't really want to PUT ALL MY EGGS IN ONE BASKET.

109. SPILL THE BEANS

MEANING: to reveal all the secrets immaturely

EXAMPLE: I don't talk to her much, as she always SPILLS THE BEANS.

110. BEAT AROUND THE BUSH

MEANING: to avoid the main point or topic and discuss other things

EXAMPLE: In order to clarify your point you must tell it clearly, there is no need to BEAT AROUND THE BUSH.



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111. AT THE TOP OF THE BUCKET LIST

MEANING: at the top of the priority list

EXAMPLE: I wish to travel various cities in India but at the TOP OF MY BUCKET LIST is Jaipur.

112. POTATO COUCH

MEANING: A person who spends a lot of time sitting and watching television

EXAMPLE: Lisa wants to date a man who loves to travel and explore not a COUCH POTATO who watch television all the time.

113. CHERRY ON THE CAKE

MEANING: an additional benefit or positive aspect

EXAMPLE: Having all of you here for my birthday has really been wonderful and this thoughtful gift is the CHERRY ON THE CAKE.

114. AT SNAIL' PACE

MEANING: very slowly

EXAMPLE: The work is progressing at a SNAIL'S PACE.

115. PLAY WITH FIRE

MEANING: an urge to play with fire made her provoke him

EXAMPLE: You must not PLAY WITH FIRE because it's quite dangerous.

116. BUTTERFLIES IN MY STOMACH

MEANING: a feeling of nervousness

EXAMPLE: The BUTTERFLIES IN MY STOMACH almost kept me from going on stage and performing.

117. MY HEART MELTS

MEANING: sympathy for someone or something

EXAMPLE: Jane gave him a warm smile and that MELTED HIS HEART.

118. DOWN TO EARTH

MEANING: simple, realistic

EXAMPLE: She is very DOWN TO EARTH person, not at all attracted by the glamour world.

119. AROUND THE CLOCK

MEANING: all day all night without stopping

EXAMPLE: He worked AROUND THE CLOCK to attain his goals.

120. ADD INSULT TO INJURY

MEANING: to further hurt the feelings of someone who has already been hurt

EXAMPLE: The Company rejected his application for a job, and to ADD INSULT TO INJURY, refused to pay his expenses.

121. BY THE BLINK OF THE EYE

MEANING: extremely quickly

EXAMPLE: The speed camera reveals how the frog uses its specialized tongue to capture the insect in the BLINK OF THE EYE.

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Ms. Samiksha /ROW/S_H 22 JULY, 2023

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