

101 American English Idioms

1. **Smell a rat:** feel that something is wrong
2. **Go to the dogs:** become run-down
3. **Fishy:** strange and suspicious
4. **Take the bulls by the horns:** take decisive action in a difficult situation
5. **Horse of a different color:** quite a different matter
6. **Let the cat out of the bag:** inform beforehand
7. **For the birds:** uninteresting and meaningless
8. **Straight from the horse's mouth:** from a reliable source
9. **Horse around:** play around
10. **Cat got your tongue?:** can't talk
11. **Get in someone's hair:** bother someone
12. **Shoot off one's mouth:** express one's opinion loudly
13. **Jump down someone's throat:** become angry with someone
14. **Pay through the nose:** pay too high a price
15. **Tongue in cheek:** not serious
16. **Pull someone's leg:** fool someone
17. **Play it by ear:** improvise as one goes along
18. **Stick out one's neck:** take a risk
19. **Shake a leg:** hurry
20. **All thumbs:** clumsy
21. **Not have a leg to stand on:** to have no good defense for one's opinions or actions
22. **Get off someone's back:** stop bothering someone
23. **Drive someone up a wall:** annoy someone greatly
24. **String someone along:** lead someone on dishonestly
25. **Sell someone down the river:** betray someone
26. **Leave someone high and dry:** abandon someone
27. **Sell someone short:** underestimate someone
28. **Snow job:** insincere talk
29. **Spill the beans:** reveal a secret
30. **Feed someone a line:** deceive someone
31. **On ice:** set aside for future use
32. **Shoot the breeze:** chat informally
33. **Bite the dust:** go down in defeat
34. **Bend over backwards:** try very hard
35. **Hit the hay:** go to bed
36. **Cough up:** give unwillingly
37. **Jump the gun:** to be hasty
38. **Scratch someone's back:** return a favor
39. **Hit the ceiling:** become very angry
40. **Fork over:** hand over, give
41. **Turn someone off:** disgust someone
42. **Go fly a kite:** go away
43. **Kick the bucket:** die
44. **Raise a stink:** protest strongly
45. **Wet blanket:** dull or boring person who spoils the happiness of others
46. **Keep under one's hat:** keep something a secret
47. **Up one's sleeve:** concealed
48. **Dressed to kill:** wear one's finest clothing
49. **Give someone the slip:** make a getaway
50. **Knock someone's socks off:** enthuse and excite

51. **Talk through one's hat:** make foolish statements
52. **Lose one's shirt:** lose a great deal of money
53. **In stitches:** laughing very hard
54. **Dressed to the teeth:** dressed elegantly
55. **Lemon:** something defective
56. **Out of the woods:** out of danger
57. **Get up on the wrong side of the bed:** wake up in a bad mood
58. **Out on a limb:** in a risky position
59. **Eating someone:** bothering or worrying someone
60. **Get the ax:** be dismissed, fired
61. **In the hole:** in debt
62. **Bite the bullet:** endure in difficult situation
63. **Face the music:** accept the consequences
64. **Blow it:** fall at something
65. **At the end of one's rope:** at the limit of one's ability to cope
66. **On one's last legs:** sick and failing
67. **Hot under the collar:** extremely angry
68. **On the line:** in danger of being lost
69. **For a song:** for very little money
70. **Make a splash:** be successful and attract attention
71. **Have the world by the tail:** be successful and happy
72. **Sitting pretty:** in a fortunate position
73. **Feel like a million dollars:** feel wonderful
74. **Kick up one's heels:** celebrate
75. **Bury the hatchet:** make peace
76. **Paint the town red:** carouse and have a good time
77. **Get away clean:** escape punishment
78. **Come alive:** brighten up and become active
79. **Toot one's own horn:** boast
80. **Stick to one's gun:** maintain one's position
81. **Get the ball rolling:** initiate action
82. **Mind one's P's and Q's:** take care in speech and action
83. **Hang on:** persevere
84. **Give it one's best shot:** try hard
85. **Make ends meet:** pay one's bills
86. **Get the jump on someone:** get the advantage over someone
87. **Pull strings:** exert influence
88. **Spread oneself too thin:** become involved in too many activities
89. **Go to bat for someone:** help out and support someone
90. **Duck soup:** easy, effortless
91. **Money talks:** money can influence people
92. **Let sleeping dogs lie:** do not agitate a potential source of trouble
93. **Shape up or ship out:** behave properly or leave
94. **If the shoe fits, wear it:** admit the truth
95. **Different strokes for different folks:** everyone has different interests and tastes
96. **Bark worse than one's bite:** not as bad-tempered as one appears
97. **Eyes are bigger than one's stomach:** take more food than one can eat
98. **Put one's money where one's mouth is:** follow through with a stated intention
99. **The early bird catches the worm:** arriving early gives one an advantage
100. **People who live in glass houses shouldn't throw stones:** one should not criticize when one is equally at fault
101. **All's well that ends well:** a successful outcome is worth the effort