Idioms

Everyday problems, decisions and conversation

Learn complete expressions

An idiom has a conventional meaning that may not be predictable word by word. Hit the nail on the head means identify something exactly; get the hang of something means learn how to do it.

Secrets and communication

Spill the beans means reveal a secret. Let the cat out of the bag often suggests an accidental revelation. Be on the same page means share an understanding.

Decisions and risk

Be on the fence means be undecided. Take the plunge means decide to do something after hesitation. Better safe than sorry recommends caution. Use each expression in a suitable situation.

Costs and problems

Cost an arm and a leg means be very expensive. A blessing in disguise is an apparent problem with a beneficial result. The last straw is a final, intolerable problem; out of the blue means unexpectedly.

Study the pattern, then the meaning

Compare the examples. Identify the rule and explain why it fits the situation. Create a new example of your own, then check that its meaning and grammatical form agree.