

IDIOMS

Idioms are phrases or expressions that convey a meaning which cannot be derived from the conjoined meanings of its elements. These do not convey the exact meaning of the words but have a figurative or literal meaning. Many verbs, when followed by various prepositions, or adverbs, acquire an idiomatic sense.

Here are few examples which will help you understand about Idioms.

Literal Meaning: Before the bartender made the drink, he *broke the ice* with a spoon and dropped it into the glass.

Idiomatic meaning: Before the conference began, the speaker *broke the ice* with a joke.

In the above example, the phrase 'break the ice' can assume different meanings based on its usage. In the second sentence, the phrase 'break the ice' is used as an idiom which means 'to make a beginning/ get through the first difficulties in starting a discussion or a conversation'.

Here is another example: The phrase 'jaundiced eye' literally refers to 'a person afflicted with jaundice' while as an idiom, it refers to 'a person who views something with a prejudice or bias.' **Idiomatic Usage:** Since the terrorist attacks, all members of a certain community have been viewed with the *jaundiced eye*.

There are no fixed rules for idioms. The more you read, better will be your knowledge of idiomatic usages. Since the number of idioms runs into hundreds, practicing is the only way to retain a good number of them. Eventually, logical thinking and contextual meaning will help you spot the right meaning of any idiom.

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