

## IDIOMS COMPETITION 2016 – GLOSSARY

### What is an idiom?

An idiom is an expression with the following features:

1. It is fixed and is recognised by native speakers. You cannot make up your own!
2. It uses language in a non-literal, metaphorical way.

### Abbreviations used:

sb = somebody

sth = something

sb's = one's = somebody's

### SOURCES:

<http://dictionaries.cambridge.org>

<http://www.thefreedictionary.com>

'English Idioms in Use' by M. McCarthy, F. O'Dell

'Idioms Organiser' by J. Wright

### CATEGORY: CLOTHES

IDIOM	DEFINITION	EXAMPLE	POLISH EQUIVALENT
to be in sb's shoes	to be in sb's situation, position	What would you do if you were in my shoes?	być na miejscu kogoś
to be dressed to kill	to be dressed in fancy or stylish clothes	Wow, look at Sally! She's really dressed to kill.	być super ubranym
to have an ace up sb's sleeve	to have secret plans or ideas	If I know Mark he'll have one or two tricks up his sleeve.	mieć asa w rękawie
to fit like a glove	to be exactly right size for sb	This dress fits you like a glove!	leżeć jak ulał
to talk through one's hat	to talk about something without understanding what you are talking about	Nothing of what he said made sense - he was talking through his hat.	pleść głupstwa
to keep sth under sb's hat	to keep sth secret	I'm going to tell you something but you must promise to keep it under your hat.	trzymać w tajemnicy
to tighten sb's belt	to spend less money than you did before because you have less money	I've had to tighten my belt since I stopped working full-time.	zaciskać pasa
roll up sb's sleeves	to prepare for hard work	There's a lot of work to do, so roll up your sleeves and get busy.	zakasać rękawy
to have ants in one's pants	to not be able to keep still because you are very excited or worried about something	Sit still Andy! Have you got ants in your pants?	nie móc usiedzieć na jednym miejscu
to wear the trousers	(especially of a woman) to be the person in a relationship who is in control and who makes decisions for both people	Don't bother asking Steve about coming for dinner, ask Lydia. She's the one who wears the trousers in their house.	rządzić w domu/ w związku
to have sth in your pocket	to be certain to win or succeed at something	Last year's winners again have the championship firmly in their pocket.	mieć coś w kieszeni (np. wygraną)
to put your thinking cap on	to start to think seriously about how to solve a problem	Let me put my thinking cap on and see if I can come up with an answer.	ruszyć głową

Put a sock in it!	Shut up!/ Stop talking.	Put a sock in it! Some of us are trying to work around here.	przymknij się
to give sb the shirt of one's back	if someone would give you the shirt off their back, they are extremely generous	Karen's not well off, but she'd give you the shirt off her back.	oddać komuś ostatnią koszulę
to shake/shiver in your boots/shoes	to be very frightened	Damon was shaking in his shoes when he heard all the shouting.	trząść się ze strachu
to get shirty (with sb)	to annoy sb, to make sb angry	Don't get shirty with me!	wkurzyć się na kogoś
to pull your socks up	to make an effort to improve your work or behaviour because it is not good enough	He's going to have to pull his socks up if he wants to stay in the team.	wziąć się porządnie do roboty

**CATEGORY: ANIMALS**

<b>IDIOM</b>	<b>DEFINITION</b>	<b>EXAMPLE</b>	<b>POLISH EQUIVALENT</b>
to be like a bull in a china shop	to be very careless in the way you move or behave	We told her it was a delicate situation but she went there like a bull in a china shop.	być jak słoń w składzie porcelany
to be as blind as a bat	unable to see well	I'm as blind as a bat without my glasses.	być ślepy jak kret
to have a memory like an elephant	to be able to remember things easily and for a long period of time	She'll never forget what you've done. She has a memory like an elephant.	mieć doskonałą pamięć
to let the cat out of the bag	to reveal a secret by accident	It secret. Try not to let the cat out of the bag.	wygadać się przypadkiem
to have bats in the belfry	to be silly and slightly mad with confused behaviour	I don't think she is quite normal. She seems to have bats in her belfry.	mieć bzika, Świra
to be as stubborn as a mule	to be very stubborn	Jack never changes his mind even if he knows he's wrong. He's as stubborn as a mule.	być upartym jak osioł
a snake in the grass	an unpleasant person who cannot be trusted	Don't trust her. She's a real snake in the grass.	podstępna żmija
at a snail's pace	very slowly	We got stuck in a traffic jam and were moving at a snail's pace.	w ślimaczym tempie
to have a bee in one's bonnet (about sth)	to be obsessed about sth	She never stops talking about dieting - she's got a real bee in her bonnet about it.	mieć bzika na punkcie czegoś
to be as busy as a bee	to be moving about quickly doing many things	My mum is busy like a bee so don't disturb her. The guests are coming in half an hour.	uwijać się jak pszczołka
to make sheep's eyes at sb	to admire someone so much that you don't see his faults	Everyone tells her that John is nothing but a liar but she only makes sheep's eyes at him.	patrzeć na kogoś z cielęcym uwielbieniem

to do all the donkey work	to do the hard, boring part of a job	Why should I do all the donkey work while you sit around doing nothing?	odwalać najgorszą robotę
to buy a pig in a poke	something that you buy or accept without first seeing it or finding out whether it is good	I never buy things in the Internet. I don't like buying a pig in a pog.	kupować kota w worku
Yeah! Pigs fly!	If you say it, it means you don't believe in what sb says at all.	And you say you did it yourself? Yeah! Pigs fly!	Nie wierzę w cuda.
to play cat and mouse with sb	to try to defeat someone by tricking them into making a mistake so that you have an advantage over them	The actress spent a large proportion of the week playing cat and mouse with the press.	bawić się w kota i myszkę
be the cat's whiskers	to be better than everyone else	Stop being so selfish! You aren't the cat's whiskers!	być pępkiem świata
fight like cat and dog	to argue violently all the time	As kids we used to fight like cat and dog.	żyć jak pies z kotem
to go to the dogs	to become ruined, to deteriorate	He was a great actor, but his drinking problems made his career go to the dogs.	zejść na psy
till the cows come home	For a long but indefinite time.	I could dance with you till the cows come home.	bez końca, w nieskończoność
a cold fish	sb who doesn't seem friendly and doesn't show their emotions	He is a cold fish. You never know if he likes you or not.	osoba nie okazująca uczuć
sb can talk the hind legs off a donkey	sb talks all the time	She could talk the hind leg off a donkey.	zagadać na śmierć
to drink like a fish	to drink too much alcohol	He's never sober. He drinks like a fish.	pić jak szewc
Hold your horses!	Stop! / Not so fast!	Hold your horses, dear. Ladies first.	Chwileczkę!
kill two birds with one stone	to manage to do two things at the same time instead of just one, because it is convenient to do both	I killed two birds with one stone and saw some old friends while I was in Leeds visiting my parents.	upiec dwie pieczenie na jednym ogniu
be as sick as a parrot	to be very disappointed	Tim was sick as a parrot when he heard Manchester had lost the match.	jak struty; zawiedziony
to rain cats and dogs	to rain heavily	Take an umbrella! It's raining cats and dogs!	lać jak z cebra
a rat race	an unpleasant way in which people compete against each other at work in order to succeed	I'd love to get out of the rat race and buy a house in some remote part of the countryside.	wyścig szczurów

**CATEGORY: COLOURS**

<b>IDIOM</b>	<b>DEFINITION</b>	<b>EXAMPLE</b>	<b>POLISH EQUIVALENT</b>
to be as white as a sheet	to be very pale, usually because you are frightened or ill	She was trembling all over and was as white as a sheet.	być bladym jak ściana
a white lie	a lie that you tell in order not to upset someone	I don't see the harm in telling the occasional white lie if it spares someone's feelings.	niewinne kłamstwo; pobożne kłamstwo
a white-collar worker	sb who works in an office, doing mental work	My father is a white-collar worker – he works in an office.	pracownik umysłowy
a blue-collar worker	sb who does physical work, often in a factory	Blue collar workers in the factories are demanding wage increases.	pracownik fizyczny
in black and white	written down	I wouldn't have believed him but there it was, in black and white.	napisane czarno na białym
to be in the red	to owe money to a bank, to have debts	Many of the students were in the red at the end of their first year.	mieć długi
to be in the black	to make profit	The situation of our company is very good, we are in the black.	utrzymywać się na plusie
to catch sb red-handed	to discover someone doing something illegal or wrong	I caught him red-handed trying to break into my car.	przyłapać kogoś na gorącym uczynku
to be like a red rag to a bull	if sth is like a red rag to a bull, it makes someone very angry	Some people believe that bulls become very angry when they see the colour red.	działać na kogoś jak płachta na byka
to have green fingers	to be good at keeping plants healthy and making them grow	I'm afraid I don't have green fingers. I've killed every plant I've ever owned.	mieć dobrą rękę do roślin
to be green with envy	to wish very much that you had something that another person has	Sharon's going off to India for three weeks and we're all green with envy.	pozielenieć z zazdrości
to give sb the green light	to give permission for someone to do something	They've just been given the green light to build two new supermarkets in the region.	dać komuś zielone światło
a white elephant	something that has cost a lot of money but has no useful purpose	We should never have bought this table as we never use it. It's a white elephant.	niepotrzebny drogi rupieć
out of the blue	if something happens out of the blue, it happens suddenly and you are not expecting it	Then one day, completely out of the blue, I had a letter from her.	nagle, ni z tego ni z owego
to feel blue	to be sad, depressed	I've been feeling blue since you went away.	być przygnębionym
the boys in blue	the police	The boys in blue were round again last night.	policja

to see red	to get furious	My father saw red when I told him I failed the exams.	wkurzyć się
to paint the town red	to go out and enjoy yourself in the evening, often drinking a lot of alcohol and dancing	Jack finished his exams today so he's gone out to paint the town red.	wypuścić się na miasto
to do sth once in the blue moon	very rarely	My sister lives in Alaska, so I only get to see her once in a blue moon.	robić coś niezmiernie rzadko

<b>CATEGORY: FOOD &amp; EATING</b>			
<b>IDIOM</b>	<b>DEFINITION</b>	<b>EXAMPLE</b>	<b>POLISH EQUIVALENT</b>
you can't have your cake and eat it	to have or do two good things that it is usually impossible to have or do at the same time	You can't have your cake and eat it. If you want better local services, you have to pay more tax.	albo... albo!, nie można mieć wszystkiego
it's a piece of cake	it's very easy	'How was the test?' 'A piece of cake!'	to bułka z masłem
have to eat your words	to be forced to admit that something you said before was wrong	She told me I'd never be able to give up smoking, but she had to eat her words.	musieć wszystko odszczekać
to eat out of sb's hand	to do everything someone tells you to	He eats out of her hand! He never refuses her.	jeść komuś z ręki
to bite one's fingers	to be very nervous	I was biting my fingers waiting for the exam results.	gryźć palce ze zdenerwowania
bite the hand that feeds you	to treat someone badly who has helped you in some way, often someone who has provided you with money	Leaving the company after they've spent three years training you up - it's a bit like biting the hand that feeds you.	kąsać rękę, która cię karmi
to swallow one's pride	to accept that you have to do something that you think is embarrassing	Swallow your pride and call your daughter to tell her you're sorry.	schować dumę do kieszeni
a bitter pill to swallow	a situation that is unpleasant but must be accepted	Losing the championship to a younger player was a bitter pill to swallow.	sytuacja trudna, która musi być zaakceptowana
a hard nut to crack	a difficult problem to solve	I don't know how to cope with this situation. It's a hard nut to crack.	twardy orzech do zgryzienia
it's not my cup of tea	if someone or something is not your cup of tea, you do not like them or you are not interested in them	If this book isn't your cup of tea, why not try something else?	nie przepadam za tym
to be as cool as a cucumber	to be very calm and relaxed, especially in a difficult situation	I expected him to be all nervous before his interview but he was as cool as a cucumber.	zachowywać stoicki spokój

to be the salt of the earth	if someone is the salt of the earth, they are a very good and honest person	His mother's the salt of the earth. She'd give you her last penny.	być solą ziemi, być bardzo dobrym człowiekiem
to be a couch potato	sb who doesn't like physical activity and prefers doing nothing	The remote control television was invented for couch potatoes.	być leniwcem / domatorem
to be the icing on the cake	something which makes a good situation even better	I was just content to see my daughter in such a stable relationship but a grandchild, that was really the icing on the cake.	dopełnić szczęścia, być wisienką na torcie
to take sth with a pinch of salt	to listen to a story or an explanation with considerable doubt	You must take anything she says with a pinch of salt. She doesn't always tell the truth.	odnosić się do czegoś z rezerwą
sb's bread and butter	a job or activity that provides you with the money you need to live	Teaching at the school is his bread and butter.	źródło utrzymania

**CATEGORY: BODY AND HEALTH**

<b>IDIOM</b>	<b>DEFINITION</b>	<b>EXAMPLE</b>	<b>POLISH EQUIVALENT</b>
to do sth behind sb's back	if you do sth behind sb's back, you do it without them knowing, in a way which is unfair	I don't want to talk about it behind his back.	robić coś za czyimiś plecami
a bag of bones	an extremely skinny person	I've lost so much weight that I'm just turning into a bag of bones.	chudy jak szkapa
to turn your back on sb	to abandon or ignore someone	Don't turn your back on your old friends.	odwracać się od kogoś
to be as fit as a fiddle	to be very healthy	My dad's 80 now but he's as fit as a fiddle.	zdrowy jak ryba
to have itchy feet	to want to travel or to do something different	Why've you got all these travel brochures? Do you have itchy feet?	nie móc usiedzieć w miejscu
keep sb's fingers crossed	to hope that things will happen in the way you want them to	I'm getting my exam results tomorrow! Keep your fingers crossed for me!	trzymać kciuki
to give sb a hand	to help sb	Can you give me a hand with this heavy box?	pomóc komuś
to get cold feet	to become afraid of sth	I took the job but then I got cold feet.	stchórzyć
to work one's fingers to the bone	to work really hard	I work my fingers to the bone to make your life comfortable and you are so ungrateful!	bardzo ciężko pracować, harować
to feel sth in sb's bones	something that you say when you are certain something is true or will happen, although you have no proof	Something terrible is going to happen. I feel it in my bones.	czuć coś w kościach, mieć przecucie

to stand shoulder to shoulder	to support sb in a difficult situation	You are not alone. We will stand shoulder to shoulder and we will manage.	stać ramię w ramię
to pull sb's leg	to tell someone something that is not true as a way of joking with them	Is he really angry with me or do you think he's just pulling my leg?	nabierać kogoś
to lose your head	to suddenly become very angry or upset	He usually stays quite calm in stressful situations but this time he really lost his head.	stracić głowę
to keep your head	to stay calm, especially in difficult or dangerous situations	Can you keep your head at times of pressure and stress?	nie stracić głowy
soft in the head	stupid and naïve	You're soft in the head if you think I'll do it.	głupi, niemądry
to make/pull face	to show that you do not like sth or sb by making an unpleasant expression	'I hate pepperoni pizza!' he said, making a face.	krzywić się / być zniesmaczonym
Keep your hair on!	Calm down!	Stop shaking and keep your hair on!	Uspokój się!
to be a pain in the neck	to be very annoying	My little sister is a real pain in the neck.	być nie do wytrzymania
to give sb the cold shoulder	to behave towards sb in a way that is unfriendly, sometimes for reasons that this person doesn't understand	What have I done to him? He gave me the cold shoulder the whole evening at the party.	potraktować kogoś oziębło
in the blink of the eye	extremely quickly	In the blink of an eye the handsome prince was transformed into an ugly frog.	w mgnieniu oka
to keep an eye on sb	to watch sb carefully	You must keep your eye on her. I think she's going to do sth stupid.	mieć kogoś na oku
to be all ears	to be very eager to hear what someone is going to say	'Do you want to hear what happened at the party last night?' 'Oh yes, I'm all ears'.	zamieniać się w słuch
my lips are sealed	sth you say to let sb know that you will not tell anyone else what they have just told you	'I'd prefer you not to mention this to anyone else.' 'My lips are sealed.'	nie pisnę ani słowa
to make sb's mouth water	if the smell or the sight of food makes your mouth water, it makes you want to eat it	The smell of fish and chips made my mouth water.	powodować, że ślinka komuś cieknie
be on the tip of your tongue	if something you want to say is on the tip of your tongue, you think you know it and that you will be able to remember it very soon	Now what's her name again? Hang on, it's on the tip of my tongue.	mieć coś na końcu języka

a slip of the tongue	a mistake you make when speaking, such as using the wrong word	Did I say she was forty? I meant fourteen - just a slip of the tongue.	przejęzyczenie
to lie through sb's teeth	to tell someone something that you know is completely false	The man's lying through his teeth. He never said anything of the sort.	Kłamać w żywe oczy

**CATEGORY: MONEY**

<b>IDIOM</b>	<b>DEFINITION</b>	<b>EXAMPLE</b>	<b>POLISH EQUIVALENT</b>
to spend money like water	spend too much without thinking	My daughter spends money like water!	trwonić pieniądze
to pay through the nose for sth	to pay a lot of money for sth	We had to pay through our nose for the repairs but at last our car is working.	zapłacić kupę pieniędzy za coś
to be a money spinner	be a successful way of making money	My dog-walking business is a real money spinner!	być maszynką do robienia pieniędzy
a penny saved is a penny gained	it is wise to save money	You'd better put aside some of your earnings – a penny saved is a penny earned.	ziarnko do ziarnka a zbierze się miarka
to have money to burn	to have a lot of money and spend large amounts on things that are not necessary	Christine's new boyfriend seems to have money to burn. He's always buying her extravagant gifts.	mieć kasy jak lodu
not for love nor money	if you say that you cannot or will not do something for love nor money, you mean that it is impossible to do or that you will not do it whatever happens	It's incredibly popular. You can't get tickets for love nor money.	za żadne pieniądze /skarby
Money doesn't grow on trees.	you should be careful how much money you spend because there is only a limited amount of it	'Dad, can I have a new bike?' 'We can't afford one. Money doesn't grow on trees, you know.'	pieniądze nie rosną na drzewach
be in the money	to suddenly have a lot of money, especially when you did not expect it	If I can get a commission for a royal portrait, I'll be in the money.	być przy forsie



**CATEGORY: WEATHER & NATURE**

<b>IDIOM</b>	<b>DEFINITION</b>	<b>EXAMPLE</b>	<b>POLISH EQUIVALENT</b>
be under a cloud	if sb or sth is under a cloud, they are not trusted or not popular because people think they have done sth bad	Richard left the company under cloud. Everybody knew he was guilty.	być w niełasce
be on cloud nine	to be very happy	For a few days after I heard I'd got the job, I was on cloud nine	być w siódmym niebie
to have one's head in the clouds	to not know what is really happening around you because you are paying too much attention to your own ideas	He's an academic. They've all got their heads in the clouds.	bujać w obłokach
Every cloud has a silver lining.	something that you say which means that there is something good even in an unpleasant situation	As the trip's been cancelled I'll be able to go to the match this Saturday. Every cloud has a silver lining.	nie ma tego złego, co by na dobre nie wyszło
a storm in a teacup	a situation where people get very angry or worried about sth unimportant	I think it's all a storm in a teacup - there's probably no danger to public health at all.	burza w szklance wody
to be under the weather	to feel slightly ill	I'm feeling a little under the weather - I think I may have caught a cold.	czuć się kiepsko
to be living on another planet	it means sb doesn't notice what is happening around them and behave differently from other people	He doesn't always make much sense. It's like he's on another planet half the time.	być z jak z innego świata
to be over the moon	to be extremely happy	Marie got the job. She's over the moon.	być bardzo szczęśliwym
to have the foggiest idea (usually used in negative)	to have absolutely no idea about something	I'm sorry I don't know. I haven't the foggiest idea.	nie mieć zielonego pojęcia
as old as the hills	very, very old	My grandfather seems to be as old as the hills.	być bardzo starym

**CATEGORY: FAMILY, RELATIONSHIPS & FEELINGS**

<b>IDIOM</b>	<b>DEFINITION</b>	<b>EXAMPLE</b>	<b>POLISH EQUIVALENT</b>
a baby of the family	the youngest member of the family	Ben is the baby of the family. All his siblings are older than him.	najmłodsze dziecko w rodzinie
like father, like son	In the same manner from generation to generation	<i>Kevin decided to run for mayor like father, like son .</i>	Jaki ojciec, taki syn
blood is thicker than water	it means family relationships are stronger and more important than other relationships, such as friendship	They say blood is thicker than water, so how come so many families hate each other?	więzi rodzinne są ważniejsze od innych powiązań
to be like to peas in a pod	to be very similar	You can tell they're brothers at a glance they're like two peas in a pod.	być jak dwie krople wody
to tie the knot	to get married	When are you two going to tie the knot?	pobrać się
to be sb's own flesh and blood	to be someone's relative	How can you be so cruel to him when he's your own flesh and blood?	być z czyjejs krwi i kości
to be like chalk and cheese	about two people: completely different from each other	I don't have anything in common with my brother. We're like chalk and cheese.	kompletnie się różnić
to follow your father's footsteps	to do the same job or the same things in your life as someone else, especially a member of your family	He followed in his father's footsteps and went into the army.	iść w ślady ojca
to take a shine to sb	to like sb immediately	I could see from her smile that she had taken a shine to him.	od razu kogoś polubić
to be on top of the world	to be very happy	I'm on the top of the world today! I've passed all my exams.	być w siódmym niebie
to be down in the dumps	to feel depressed and sad	After John left me I've been down in the dumps.	być zdołowanym
a black sheep of the family	a person who has done something bad which brings embarrassment or shame to their family	He's the black sheep of the family.	czarna owca
to give someone the willies	to make somebody really terrified	Driving at night on country roads gives me the willies.	przerażać kogoś