

INTRODUCTION

The Daily Warm-Ups series is a wonderful way to turn extra classroom minutes into valuable learning time. The 180 quick activities – consisting of one commonly-used English phrase – review, practise and teach common English idioms. With these brief activities students will explain common idioms with the help of everyday scenarios, from a friend ‘lending a hand’ when moving out of home, to your dog being given a ‘clean bill of health’ by the vet. If students have not come across an idiom before, the scenario should help them to figure out and explain what the idiom means.

Daily Warm-Ups are easy-to-use activities. Make them into laminated cards for student use. You may want to use the activities as a test on English vocabulary that is built and acquired over time.

They may be used at the very beginning of class to get students into learning mode, near the end of class to make good educational use of that transitional time to shift gears between lessons – or whenever else you wish. The activities would also be ideal for gifted learning students to complete when they finish other work early. However you choose to use them, Daily Warm-Ups are a convenient and useful supplement to your regular lesson plans. Make every minute of your class time count!



as the crow flies

This phrase is usually used to give the distance from one place to another. Since crows don't have to follow the road, or go around obstacles such as trees or buildings, they can fly in a straight line. Thus, 'as the crow flies' refers to the shortest distance between two points.



Write a conversation between two people in which one asks the distance to a certain place. In answering, the second person should use the phrase 'as the crow flies'.

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big fish in a small pond

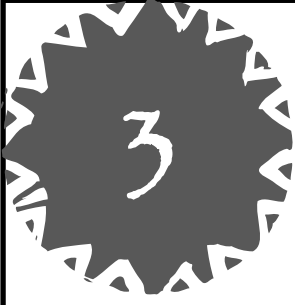
Have you ever seen a fish tank with a lot of small fish and one larger fish? That larger fish might seem big in the fish tank, but it's really only a few inches long. If that fish were put in the ocean next to an even larger fish, it would seem quite small.



The phrase 'a big fish in a small pond' is used to describe someone who is important in a small community, but might not seem so important in a bigger community.

Write a paragraph about a time when you've felt like 'a big fish in a small pond'.

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bull in a china shop

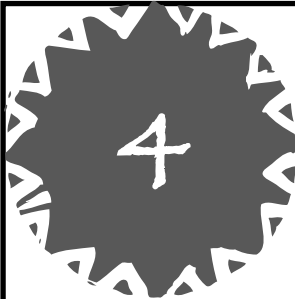
The phrase 'a bull in a china shop' is used to describe someone who is either very clumsy or very tactless. What ideas do you associate with the word 'bull'? Most people think of a large, strong, charging animal. What about 'china shop'? Most people imagine a small space

filled with fragile pieces of china and pottery.

Now put those two ideas together: the huge, rushing animal and the small store full of breakable things. The result would be a disaster, with broken china everywhere.

Describe a situation in which someone is perceived as 'a bull in a china shop'.

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feather one's nest

Different birds use different building designs: they can be huge or tiny, made of twigs, grass, leaves or mud. But most birds follow a similar final step in the nest-building process. They line the inside of the nest with something soft, such as a feather.

Once eggs are laid in a nest, the parent birds will spend hour after hour sitting on them to keep them warm and safe. They need that nice soft lining for their own comfort.

This is probably the origin of the phrase 'feather one's nest'. It means to do something now that will provide for your own comfort later on.

Make a list of some things you can do now to 'feather your nest'.

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sitting duck

This phrase comes from duck hunting. It's hard to hit a bird when it is flying; the hunter has to take the bird's movement and speed into account and aim for the place where the bird will be when its path and the bullet's path intersect. On the other hand, when ducks land on water, such as a pond, they are much easier to hit. A stationary target is easier to hit than a moving one. Thus, a sitting duck is easier to hit than a flying one.

This phrase has also come to be used figuratively. It refers to someone who seems to be wide open for some kind of attack, whether physical, verbal or electronic.

Describe a situation in someone might be a 'sitting duck'.



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for the birds

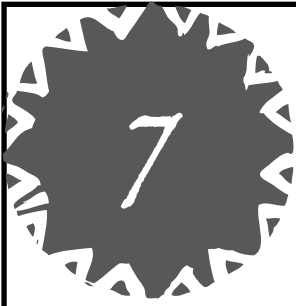
For each bird idiom, circle the letter of the correct answer.

- If you have a bird's-eye view, you are looking
 - up from below.
 - down from above.
 - from one side.
- The saying 'a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush' means something you already have
 - is likely to fly away and be lost.
 - could be replaced by two new things.
 - is better than something you might or might not get.
- A phrase meaning 'people who are similar often become friends' is 'birds of a feather _____'.
 - flock together
 - chirp and preen
 - fly off together

Now use one of these idioms in a sentence of your own.

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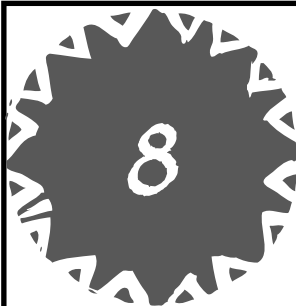
animal kingdom

Decide which idiom you would use to describe each situation below. Circle the letter of the correct answer.

- Which of the following phrases would you use to describe someone who is more successful than his or her rivals?
 - one of the pack
 - pack rat
 - ahead of the pack
 - pack it in
- Which of the following phrases would you use to describe a secret being discovered?
 - a cat on a hot tin roof
 - the cat got your tongue
 - take a cat nap
 - the cat is out of the bag

Now use one of these idioms in a sentence of your own.

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party animals

In the paragraph below, each underlined phrase could be replaced by one of the idioms in the box. Write the letter of the correct idiom above each phrase.

- | |
|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none">like herding catsa whale of a timelocked hornsin the doghouse |
|--|

By the time I got there, the party was in full swing. Everyone was having a great time, but I knew that if Kevin's parents found out, he'd be in a lot of trouble. I tried to get people to leave, but it was hard to get everyone to move in the same direction at the same time. Finally, I got into an argument with Kevin and decided to just go home.

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