Idioms

Idioms are expressions that have much more meaning than the words alone. For example, *to spill the beans* does not mean to drop the beans; it means to reveal a secret to somebody. Idioms can never tricky at first but with practise they come naturally and reveal a lot about the culture behind a language. For me they are what make a languages fun and interesting.

Idioms are usually the main part of the transition of intermediate vocabulary into advanced level language. You need to incorporate them into your speaking and writing. This way your language will become far more colourful.

At B2 level, idioms are not essential, but they will definitely improve your grade.

*To use idioms well, what you need to do is practice using them in contexts. You must associate them with situations that you understand and link them to familiar vocabulary.*
Hobbies and free time

Let off steam – TO UNWIND
Put your feet up – TO RELAX
Take five – TO TAKE A BREAK
Surf the net – USE THE INTERNET
Be on the ball – TO BE ON FIRE (estar en racha)
Jump the gun – TO JUMP AHEAD (precipitarse)

Travel and getting around

Be down to earth – TO BE HUMBLE OR REALISTIC
Go with the flow – TO BE EASY GOING
Have itchy feet – TO WANT TO MOVE OR PROGRESS
Be a globetrotter – TO HAVE TRAVELLED A LOT
**Education and lifestyles**

- **Hit the books** – TO STUDY A LOT
- **Pull an all nighter** – TO WORK ALL NIGHT
- **Be on the mark** – TO BE CORRECT
- **Cover all the bases** – TO DO A BIT OF EVERYTHING
- **Be ahead of the pack** – TO BE BETTER THAN OTHER PEOPLE
- **With flying colours** – TO DO SOMETHING WELL

**Work and obligations**

- **Work like a dog** – TO WORK HARD
- **Work 9-5 OR Work 24/7** – TO WORK LONG HOURS
- **Work around the clock** – TO WORK LONG HOURS
- **Be a people person** – TO BE SOCIABLE
- **Be a big fish** – TO BE AN IMPORTANT PERSON
- **Be a go-getter** – TO BE AMBITIOUS
Money and spending

Be a cheapskate – TO BE TIGHT/NOT LIKE SPENDING MONEY

Foot the bill – TO PAY FOR EVERYTHING

Have an eye for – TO BE ABLE TO FIND CERTAIN THINGS WELL

Be pinching pennies – TO NOT HAVE A LOT OF MONEY

Be on the dole – TO BE UNEMPLOYED

Be skint – TO NOT HAVE A LOT OF MONEY

Time

Around the corner – TO BE VERY SOON

In a flash – TO DO SOMETHING FAST

In the nick of time – TO BE JUST IN TIME

Lose track of time – TO NOT KNOW THE TIME

When pigs fly – TO RULE SOMETHING OUT/NEVER

Once in a blue moon – TO DO SOMETHING RARELY
Eating and drinking

Take with a pinch of salt – NOT TAKE SOMETHING SERIOUSLY

Be a piece of cake – TO BE EASY

Be tough to swallow – TO BE A DIFFICULT SITUATION TO ACCEPT

Take the biscuit – TO BE OUT OF ORDER/UNREASONABLE

Be as easy as pie – TO BE VERY EASY

Spill the beans – TO REVEAL/TELL A SECRET

Pig out – TO EAT A LOT

Not be someone’s cup of tea – TO DISLIKE

Health and fitness

Get your heart pumping – TO BECOME ACTIVE

Push yourself – TO MAKE AN EFFORT

Risk life and limb – TO TAKE A HUGE RISK
People and their lives

Give a hand with sth – TO HELP WITH SOMETHING

Keep an eye on sb – TO OBSERVE SOMETHING

Have a cat nap – TO SLEEP FOR A SHORT TIME

Give the green light – TO GIVE PERMISSION

Be a busy body – TO BE NOSY/ TO GOSSIP ABOUT SOMETHING

Be a know it all – TO THINK YOU KNOW EVERYTHING

Technological advances

Surf the net – USE THE INTERNET

Blow a fuse – TO BECOME FURIOUS

Pull the plug – TO GIVE UP OR STOP DOING SOMETHING

To make something tick – TO MAKE SOMETHING FUNCTION WELL

Wildlife and the environment

Rain cats and dogs – TO RAIN A LOT

Be bucketing it down – TO RAIN A LOT

Face the facts – TO ACCEPT A REALITY
Life, crime and society

Let the cat out of the bag – TO REVEAL A SECRET
Smell a rat – TO SENSE SOMETHING IS WRONG
Curiosity killed the cat – TO BE CURIOUS AND GET INTO TROUBLE
Copy cat – TO DO THE SAME AS SOMEONE ELSE
Smell something fishy – TO BE SUSPICIOUS

Design and creativity

Be dressed to kill – TO WEAR GOOD CLOTHES
Dress like a tramp – TO WEAR BAD CLOTHES
See through rose-tinted glasses – TO SEE IN A POSITIVE WAY
Cost an arm and a leg – TO BE EXPENSIVE
Spend an arm and a leg – TO COST AN ARM AND A LEG
Happiness and relationships

Be over the moon – TO BE VERY HAPPY

Be on cloud noun – TO BE VERY HAPPY

Be in the clouds – TO BECOME DISTRACTED

Jump for joy – TO BE EXCITED

Be an item – TO BE A COUPLE

Tie the knot – TO GET MARRIED

Have butterflies in your stomach – TO BECOME NERVOUS