



500

Idioms & Phrases

Every idiom with its meaning, a real example and a memory hint.

★ marks the ones asked again and again. For SSC, Bank and Railway exams.

500

idioms & phrases

10

days · 50 a day

★ 139

most asked

A CARD FROM INSIDE

001 ★ MOST ASKED

Burn the midnight oil

to work or study late into the night

*Before the exam, Riya **burnt the midnight oil** for a week.*

HINT · oil lamps at midnight

INSIDE

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DAY 1 · A – B

Idioms & Phrases

001–050 of 500

001

Above board

honest and open; done legally

All the payments in the deal were completely above board.

HINT · cards on the table

002 ★ MOST ASKED

Achilles' heel

the one weak point of a strong person or thing

Time management is his Achilles' heel in the exam.

HINT · Achilles' only weak spot

003 ★ MOST ASKED

Add fuel to the fire

to make a bad situation worse

His rude reply only added fuel to the fire.

HINT · fuel makes fire bigger

004 ★ MOST ASKED

Add insult to injury

to make a bad situation even worse

He broke my phone and, to add insult to injury, laughed about it.

HINT · hurt, then insult

005

Against the clock

in a hurry, with very little time

The rescue team worked against the clock to save the miners.

HINT · racing the clock

006

All at sea

confused and not knowing what to do

The new clerk was all at sea with the computer system.

HINT · lost at sea

007

All ears

listening carefully and eagerly

Tell me your plan; I am all ears.

HINT · nothing but ears

008

All in all

considering everything

All in all, the trip was a success despite the rain.

HINT · adding it all up

009

Alpha and omega

the beginning and the end; the most important part

Practice is the alpha and omega of exam success.

HINT · first and last Greek letters

010 ★ MOST ASKED

Apple of discord

the cause of a quarrel

The ancestral house became the apple of discord between the brothers.

HINT · the golden apple of the Greek story

011 ★ MOST ASKED

Apple of one's eye

a person someone loves very much

The youngest grandson is the apple of his grandfather's eye.

HINT · the centre of the eye

012

Apple-pie order

perfectly neat and organised

Her notes are always in apple-pie order.

HINT · neat layers of a pie



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013

An arm and a leg

a very high price

*The new phone costs an **arm and a leg**.***HINT** · pay with your body

014

Armchair critic

a person who criticises without practical experience

Armchair critics** always know how to play better than the team.HINT** · judging from a comfortable chair

015

At a loss

unsure what to do or say

*He was at a **loss** for words when he won the award.***HINT** · lost for an answer

016

At arm's length

at a safe distance; not too close

*She keeps her rude neighbours at **arm's length**.***HINT** · stretch your arm out

017 ★ MOST ASKED

At daggers drawn

very angry with each other, ready to fight

*The two brothers have been at **daggers drawn** over the property.***HINT** · knives already out

018

At one's beck and call

always ready to obey someone

*The rich man expects his staff to be at his **beck and call**.***HINT** · come when called

019 ★ MOST ASKED

At one's wit's end

so worried that one cannot think what to do

*With no money left, the family was at their **wit's end**.***HINT** · the end of your thinking

020 ★ MOST ASKED

At sixes and sevens

in total confusion and disorder

*After the sudden transfer, the whole office was at **sixes and sevens**.***HINT** · numbers all mixed up

021

At the drop of a hat

immediately, without any hesitation

*He will help you at the **drop of a hat**.***HINT** · as fast as a hat falls

022 ★ MOST ASKED

At the eleventh hour

at the last possible moment

*The deal was signed at the **eleventh hour**, just before the deadline.***HINT** · one hour before twelve

023 ★ MOST ASKED

An axe to grind

a private reason for doing something

*The critic had an **axe to grind** with the director, so his review was unfair.***HINT** · sharpening your own axe

024

Back out

to withdraw from a promise or agreement

*He **backed out** of the deal at the last minute.***HINT** · step backward

025

Back to square one

back to the beginning after a failure

*The software crashed and we were **back to square one**.***HINT** · first square of the board

026

Back-seat driver

a person who gives unwanted advice

*Stop being a **back-seat driver** and let me cook.***HINT** · advice from the back seat



027 ★ MOST ASKED

Bad blood

hatred between people because of past quarrels

*There has been **bad blood** between the two families for years.*

HINT · blood gone bad

028 ★ MOST ASKED

Bag and baggage

with all one's belongings

*The tenant left the house **bag and baggage**.*

HINT · everything packed

029

The ball is in your court

it is your turn to decide or act

*I have made my offer; the **ball is in your court**.*

HINT · your turn to hit

030

Bark up the wrong tree

to blame the wrong person or look in the wrong place

*If you think I took your book, you are **barking up the wrong tree**.*

HINT · dog at the wrong tree

031

Be at the helm

to be in control or in charge

*A new governor is now at the **helm** of the central bank.*

HINT · hand on the ship's wheel

032 ★ MOST ASKED

Be born with a silver spoon in one's mouth

to be born into a rich family

*He was **born with a silver spoon in his mouth** but still works hard.*

HINT · silver from day one

033

Be in the same boat

to be in the same difficult situation as others

*Don't worry about the tough paper; we are all in the **same boat**.*

HINT · one boat, one fate

034

Bear in mind

to remember and consider

***Bear in mind** that negative marking applies.*

HINT · carry it in your mind

035

Bear the brunt

to suffer the worst part of something

*The poor **bear the brunt** of rising prices.*

HINT · the heaviest blow

036

Beat a hasty retreat

to leave quickly to avoid trouble

*When the dog started barking, the thieves **beat a hasty retreat**.*

HINT · run back fast

037 ★ MOST ASKED

Beat about the bush

to avoid saying something directly

*Stop **beating about the bush** and tell me what happened.*

HINT · hitting around, not inside

038

A bed of roses

an easy, comfortable situation

*Life in a big city is not always a **bed of roses**.*

HINT · soft and pleasant





039

Beggar description

too remarkable to be described

*The beauty of the Himalayas **beggars description**.***HINT** · words become poor

040

Behind one's back

without someone knowing; secretly

*It is wrong to speak ill of people **behind their back**.***HINT** · where they can't see

041

Behind the scenes

secretly; out of public view

*Many workers **behind the scenes** made the event successful.***HINT** · backstage

042 ★ MOST ASKED

Bell the cat

to take on a risky task for the good of everyone

*Everyone complained about the manager, but no one was ready to **bell the cat**.***HINT** · mice and the cat's bell

043 ★ MOST ASKED

Below the belt

unfair or cruel

*Mocking his illness during the debate was **below the belt**.***HINT** · an illegal punch

044

Beside the point

not related to the main subject

*Whether he is rich is **beside the point**; is he honest?***HINT** · next to, not on, the point

045 ★ MOST ASKED

Between the devil and the deep sea

facing two equally bad choices

*Lose the job or move far away: he was **between the devil and the deep sea**.***HINT** · danger on both sides

046

Beyond the pale

completely unacceptable behaviour

*His abusive comments were **beyond the pale**.***HINT** · outside the fence

047

Big fish

an important or powerful person

*The police arrested the small dealers but the **big fish** escaped.***HINT** · the biggest in the pond

048

A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush

something you already have is better than something you only might get

*Take the job offer now; a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.***HINT** · sure thing beats a maybe

049

Birds of a feather

people with similar interests or character

*Those two gamers are **birds of a feather**.***HINT** · same feathers flock together

050 ★ MOST ASKED

Bird's eye view

a view from above; a broad overview

*The first chapter gives a **bird's eye view** of the whole syllabus.***HINT** · what a flying bird sees



DAY 2 · B-C

Idioms & Phrases

051-100 of 500

051

Bite off more than one can chew

to take on more work than one can handle
With three courses and a job, she has bitten off more than she can chew.

HINT · too big a bite

052

Bite the bullet

to face a painful or difficult situation bravely
She bit the bullet and told her parents the truth.

HINT · soldiers bit a bullet to bear pain

053 ★ MOST ASKED

Bite the dust

to fail, die or be defeated
Many small shops bit the dust during the lockdown.

HINT · fall face down

054 ★ MOST ASKED

Black sheep

a family or group member who brings shame
*He was the **black sheep** of the family who never kept a job.*

HINT · one dark sheep in the flock

055

A blessing in disguise

something that seems bad at first but turns out to be good

*Missing the train was a **blessing in disguise**: I met my old teacher on the platform.*

HINT · a hidden gift

056 ★ MOST ASKED

Blow hot and cold

to keep changing one's opinion
*The minister **blows hot and cold** on the new policy.*

HINT · hot one day, cold the next

057 ★ MOST ASKED

Blow one's own trumpet

to praise oneself
*A good leader lets results speak instead of **blowing his own trumpet**.*

HINT · playing your own music

058

Blow the whistle

to report wrongdoing to the authorities
An honest employee blew the whistle on the fake accounts.

HINT · the referee's whistle

059 ★ MOST ASKED

Blue blood

a person from a royal or noble family
*Despite his **blue blood**, he lives a simple life.*

HINT · royal blood

060 ★ MOST ASKED

Blue-eyed boy

a favourite person who is treated well
*He is the manager's **blue-eyed boy** and gets every chance.*

HINT · the favourite

061 ★ MOST ASKED

A bolt from the blue

a complete surprise, usually unpleasant
*The news of the factory closing came as a **bolt from the blue**.*

HINT · lightning from a clear sky

062 ★ MOST ASKED

A bone of contention

a subject people keep arguing about
*The river water has long been a **bone of contention** between the two states.*

HINT · two dogs, one bone





063

Break a leg

good luck (said before a performance)

Break a leg in your interview tomorrow!

HINT · actors' wish for luck

064

Break even

to make neither a profit nor a loss

The new café hopes to break even in its first year.

HINT · equal in, equal out

065

Break new ground

to do something that has never been done before

The ISRO mission broke new ground in space research.

HINT · first to dig

066

Break the bank

to cost too much money

A short holiday in the hills won't break the bank.

HINT · empty the bank

067 ★ MOST ASKED

Break the ice

to start a conversation in an awkward or silent situation

The teacher told a joke to break the ice on the first day.

HINT · ice = silence

068

Break the news

to tell someone bad or important news

The doctor gently broke the news to the family.

HINT · open the news

069

Breathe one's last

to die

The freedom fighter breathed his last at the age of ninety.

HINT · the final breath

070

Bring down the house

to make the audience applaud wildly

Her song brought down the house at the college fest.

HINT · applause shakes the hall

071

Bring home the bacon

to earn money for the family

Both parents work to bring home the bacon.

HINT · food for home

072 ★ MOST ASKED

Bring to book

to punish someone or make them explain their actions

The officials who took bribes must be brought to book.

HINT · write them in the record

073

Bring to light

to make known; to reveal

The audit brought to light several fake bills.

HINT · show it in the light

074

Brownie points

credit or praise for doing something good

He arrived early to earn brownie points with the boss.

HINT · points for good deeds





075

Brush up

to improve or refresh one's knowledge

*I need to **brush up** my English before the interview.***HINT** · brush off the dust

076 ★ MOST ASKED

Build castles in the air

to make plans or dreams that will never come true

*Instead of **building castles in the air**, start studying today.***HINT** · a castle with no ground

077

Bull in a china shop

a clumsy person who breaks things or upsets people

*He walked into the meeting like a **bull in a china shop**.***HINT** · a bull among plates

078 ★ MOST ASKED

Burn one's boats

to do something that makes it impossible to go back

*He **burnt his boats** by resigning before getting the new job.***HINT** · no boat to return

079

Burn the candle at both ends

to work too hard without enough rest

*Studying all night and working all day, she was **burning the candle at both ends**.***HINT** · lit from two sides

080 ★ MOST ASKED

Burn the midnight oil

to work or study late into the night

*Before the exam, Riya **burnt the midnight oil** for a week.***HINT** · oil lamps at midnight

081

Burst into tears

to start crying suddenly

*She **burst into tears** when she heard the result.***HINT** · tears suddenly flow

082 ★ MOST ASKED

Bury the hatchet

to stop quarrelling and make peace

*After years of fighting, the neighbours finally **buried the hatchet**.***HINT** · bury the weapon

083

Butterflies in one's stomach

a nervous feeling before something important

*I had **butterflies in my stomach** before the exam.***HINT** · fluttering inside

084

By and by

after some time; gradually

*By and by, she got used to the new city.***HINT** · slowly, step by step

085

By and large

on the whole; generally

*By and **large**, the new rules have been welcomed.***HINT** · broadly speaking

086

By fair means or foul

by any method, honest or dishonest

*He wanted to win the election by **fair means or foul**.***HINT** · right way or wrong way

087 ★ MOST ASKED

By hook or by crook

by any means possible

*She was determined to reach the venue on time by **hook or by crook**.***HINT** · any tool will do

088 ★ MOST ASKED

By leaps and bounds

very quickly

*Digital payments in India have grown by **leaps and bounds**.***HINT** · big jumps



089 ★ MOST ASKED

By the skin of one's teeth

only just; very narrowly

*He passed the exam by the **skin of his teeth**.***HINT** · teeth have no skin = nothing to spare

090

By word of mouth

by people telling each other, not in writing

*The small restaurant became famous by **word of mouth**.***HINT** · mouth to mouth

091

A cakewalk

a very easy task

*The final match turned out to be a **cakewalk** for the champions.***HINT** · easy as walking

092 ★ MOST ASKED

Call a spade a spade

to speak plainly and honestly

*Our coach **calls a spade a spade** and tells us our mistakes.***HINT** · name it as it is

093

Call it a day

to stop working for the day

*We have finished ten chapters; let's **call it a day**.***HINT** · the day is done

094

Call the shots

to be the person who makes decisions

*In this project, the senior engineer **calls the shots**.***HINT** · the one who orders fire

095 ★ MOST ASKED

Carry coals to Newcastle

to take something to a place that already has plenty of it

*Selling tea in Darjeeling is like **carrying coals to Newcastle**.***HINT** · Newcastle had coal mines

096 ★ MOST ASKED

Cast pearls before swine

to offer something valuable to people who cannot value it

*Explaining classical music to them was **casting pearls before swine**.***HINT** · pearls for pigs

097

Catch someone red-handed

to catch someone while doing something wrong

*The guard caught the thief **red-handed** with the bag.***HINT** · red hands = caught in the act

098

Caught between two stools

unable to choose between two options and losing both

*Trying to please both parties, he was **caught between two stools**.***HINT** · falling between two seats

099 ★ MOST ASKED

Chew the cud

to think deeply about something

*He sat by the window, **chewing the cud** over the offer.***HINT** · a cow slowly chewing

100

Chip off the old block

a child who is very like a parent

*The young batsman is a **chip off the old block**, just like his father.***HINT** · cut from the same wood



DAY 3 · C-E

Idioms & Phrases

101-150 of 500

101

Clean slate

a fresh start with past mistakes forgotten
*After paying his debts, he started with a **clean slate**.*

HINT · a blank board

102

Clip someone's wings

to limit someone's freedom or power
*The new rules **clipped the wings** of the regional managers.*

HINT · a bird that can't fly

103

Close shave

a narrow escape from danger
*The bus nearly hit us; it was a **close shave**.*

HINT · the razor came close

104 ★ MOST ASKED

Close-fisted

unwilling to spend money; miserly
*The **close-fisted** landlord never repairs anything.*

HINT · a fist that won't open

105 ★ MOST ASKED

Cock and bull story

an unbelievable, made-up story
*He told a **cock and bull story** about why he was late.*

HINT · a silly tale

106

Cold feet

sudden nervousness that stops you from doing something
*He got **cold feet** just before the interview.*

HINT · feet won't move

107

Cold war

a state of hostility without open fighting
*There is a **cold war** between the two departments.*

HINT · war without bullets

108

Come off with flying colours

to succeed very well
*She came off with **flying colours** in the final exam.*

HINT · flags flying after victory

109

Come to blows

to start fighting
The two drivers almost came to blows over the accident.

HINT · words turn to fists

110

Come to grips with

to begin to understand and deal with
*It took her a month to **come to grips** with the new software.*

HINT · get a firm hold

111

Come to light

to become known
New facts came to light during the inquiry.

HINT · step into the light

112

Come what may

whatever happens
***Come what may**, I will finish my course this year.*

HINT · whatever comes





113

Cool one's heels

to be kept waiting

*The visitors were left to **cool their heels** outside the office.***HINT · standing till feet cool**

114

Cost the earth

to be very expensive

*A good education should not **cost the earth**.***HINT · price of the whole planet**

115

Count one's chickens before they are hatched

to be sure of success too early

*Don't **count your chickens before they are hatched**; the result is not out yet.***HINT · eggs aren't chickens yet**

116

Crack a joke

to tell a joke

*The speaker **cracked a joke** to relax the audience.***HINT · joke breaks the silence**

117

Cream of the crop

the best of a group

*Only the **cream of the crop** get into the top institutes.***HINT · the cream on top**

118 ★ MOST ASKED

Crocodile tears

false sorrow; pretended sadness

*The cheat shed **crocodile tears** in court.***HINT · crocodiles "cry" while eating**

119

Cross swords with

to argue or fight with

*The two leaders **crossed swords** over the budget.***HINT · swords meet**

120 ★ MOST ASKED

Cry for the moon

to wish for something impossible

*Wanting a top rank without studying is **crying for the moon**.***HINT · a child wanting the moon**

121

Cry over spilt milk

to regret something that cannot be changed

*You failed once; don't **cry over spilt milk**, prepare again.***HINT · milk cannot go back in**

122 ★ MOST ASKED

Cry wolf

to raise a false alarm

*He cried wolf so often that no one believed him when he was really ill.***HINT · the boy who cried wolf**

123

Cudgel one's brains

to think very hard

*I **cudgelled my brains** but couldn't remember her name.***HINT · beating the brain to work**

124

Curtain raiser

an event that comes before a bigger one

*The friendly match was a **curtain raiser** for the World Cup.***HINT · raises the curtain**



125 ★ MOST ASKED

Cut a sorry figure

to look foolish or make a poor impression

*He **cut a sorry figure** when he could not answer a single question.***HINT · a sad picture**

126

Cut corners

to do something cheaply or carelessly to save time or money

*The builder **cut corners**, and the wall soon cracked.***HINT · the short way round**

127 ★ MOST ASKED

Cut no ice

to have no effect or influence

*His excuses **cut no ice** with the principal.***HINT · the blade can't cut ice**

128

Cut the Gordian knot

to solve a difficult problem in a quick, bold way

*The new officer **cut the Gordian knot** by merging the two departments.***HINT · Alexander cut the knot**

129

Cut to the quick

to hurt someone's feelings deeply

*Her harsh words **cut him to the quick**.***HINT · cut to the tender flesh**

130 ★ MOST ASKED

Damp squib

something that is much less impressive than expected

*The much-hyped launch turned out to be a **damp squib**.***HINT · a wet firecracker**

131

Dance to someone's tune

to do whatever someone wants

*The weak minister **danced to the party chief's tune**.***HINT · moves to their music**

132 ★ MOST ASKED

A dark horse

a person who wins or succeeds unexpectedly

*Nobody knew her, but she proved to be a **dark horse** and topped the exam.***HINT · the unknown horse wins**

133 ★ MOST ASKED

Dead letter

a law or rule that is no longer followed

*The old rule on cycling helmets has become a **dead letter**.***HINT · a letter no one reads**

134

Dead of night

the quietest, darkest part of the night

*The thieves broke in at the **dead of night**.***HINT · when night is still**

135

Die-hard

a person who strongly refuses to change

*He is a **die-hard** fan of old Hindi songs.***HINT · hard to kill**

136

Do or die

to make a final, all-out effort

*For the team, the last match was **do or die**.***HINT · win or nothing**



137

Dog days

the hottest days of summer

*In the **dog days** of May, the roads are almost empty at noon.***HINT** · the Dog Star season

138 ★ MOST ASKED

Dog in the manger

a person who stops others using what he cannot use himself

*He doesn't read the books, yet won't lend them; he is a **dog in the manger**.***HINT** · dog that won't let the cow eat

139

Don't look a gift horse in the mouth

don't criticise a gift

*The free laptop is old, but **don't look a gift horse in the mouth**.***HINT** · don't check the gift's teeth

140

Down to earth

practical and humble

*Despite her success, the actor is very **down to earth**.***HINT** · feet on the ground

141

Draw the line

to set a limit on what one will accept

*I help my friends, but I **draw the line** at lying for them.***HINT** · the line you won't cross

142

Drive home

to make something clearly understood

*The teacher used many examples to **drive home** the point.***HINT** · nail driven in fully

143

Drop a brick

to say something tactless by mistake

*He **dropped a brick** by asking her age at the party.***HINT** · a heavy mistake

144 ★ MOST ASKED

A drop in the ocean

a very small amount compared with what is needed

*Ten new buses are a **drop in the ocean** for a city of ten million people.***HINT** · one drop, huge sea

145

Drop the bombshell

to give shocking news

*He **dropped a bombshell** by announcing his retirement.***HINT** · a sudden blast

146

Dutch courage

false courage from drinking alcohol

*He needed **Dutch courage** before giving the speech.***HINT** · courage from a bottle

147 ★ MOST ASKED

Eat humble pie

to admit one was wrong and apologise

*After the loss, the boastful captain had to **eat humble pie**.***HINT** · swallow your pride

148

Eat one's words

to admit that what one said was wrong

*He said she would fail; now he must **eat his words**.***HINT** · take the words back in



149

Egg on

to encourage someone to do something,
often foolish

*His friends **egged** him on to jump into the river.*

HINT · push, push, push

150

Elbow grease

hard physical work

*It took a lot of **elbow grease** to clean the old house.*

HINT · arm power





DAY 4 · E - G

Idioms & Phrases

151-200 of 500

151 ★ MOST ASKED

End in smoke

to come to nothing; to fail

*All his grand plans **ended in smoke**.*

HINT · nothing left but smoke

152

Every cloud has a silver lining

there is something good in every bad situation

*He lost the job but found a better one; **every cloud has a silver lining**.*

HINT · light behind the cloud

153

Every dog has its day

everyone gets a chance of success at some time

*Keep working hard; **every dog has its day**.*

HINT · your day will come

154

Every Tom, Dick and Harry

ordinary people; anyone at all

*Don't share your password with **every Tom, Dick and Harry**.*

HINT · any three common names

155

Explore every avenue

to try every possible way

*The police **explored every avenue** to find the missing child.*

HINT · walk every road

156

An eye for an eye

punishment equal to the harm done

*The law does not allow an **eye for an eye**; it follows fair trial.*

HINT · same harm back

157

An eye-opener

something that reveals a surprising truth

*The visit to the slum was an **eye-opener** for the students.*

HINT · opens your eyes

158 ★ MOST ASKED

Face the music

to accept criticism or punishment for one's actions

*He cheated in the test and now has to **face the music**.*

HINT · stand before the band

159

Face to face

in person; directly

*The two leaders met **face to face** for the first time.*

HINT · faces meet

160

Fair and square

honestly and fairly

*Our team won the match **fair and square**.*

HINT · square = honest

161 ★ MOST ASKED

Fair-weather friend

a friend who leaves when you are in trouble

*When he lost his money, his **fair-weather friends** disappeared.*

HINT · only in sunshine

162

Fall back on

to use something for help when other things fail

*If the job doesn't work out, he can **fall back** on his savings.*

HINT · a cushion behind you





163

Fall flat

to fail completely to have the intended effect

*His joke fell flat and no one laughed.***HINT** · falls with no bounce

164

Fall on deaf ears

to be ignored

*Our requests for a new bus stop fell on deaf ears.***HINT** · ears that can't hear

165

Fall through

to fail to happen

*The plan to open a new branch fell through.***HINT** · drops through the floor

166

Far and wide

over a large area; everywhere

*People came from far and wide to see the fair.***HINT** · far away, wide around

167

A far cry from

very different from

*The new hostel is a far cry from the crowded room we had last year.***HINT** · too far to hear

168 ★ MOST ASKED

Feather in one's cap

an achievement to be proud of

*Winning the national award is a feather in her cap.***HINT** · a feather for bravery

169

Feather one's nest

to make oneself rich, often dishonestly

*The corrupt officer feathered his nest with public money.***HINT** · a bird lining its nest

170

Feel the pinch

to suffer from a lack of money

*With rising prices, middle-class families are feeling the pinch.***HINT** · money pinches

171

Few and far between

very rare

*Good bus services are few and far between in the hills.***HINT** · not many, far apart

172

Fifth columnist

a traitor who secretly helps the enemy

*The army arrested a fifth columnist passing on secrets.***HINT** · the hidden fifth group

173 ★ MOST ASKED

Fight shy of

to avoid doing something

*Many students fight shy of maths in the beginning.***HINT** · shy to face it

174

Fight to the finish

a fight that goes on until one side wins

*The final was a fight to the finish.***HINT** · till the very end

175

Fight tooth and nail

to fight very fiercely

*The villagers fought tooth and nail to save their forest.***HINT** · with teeth and nails

176

Fill the bill

to be exactly what is needed

*This small car fills the bill for city driving.***HINT** · fits the list



177

Find one's feet

to become confident in a new situation

*It took him a few weeks to **find his feet** in the new job.***HINT** · standing steady

178

Fine kettle of fish

a difficult or awkward situation

*The bus broke down in the rain; this is a **fine kettle of fish**.***HINT** · a messy pot

179 ★ MOST ASKED

Fish in troubled waters

to take advantage of a confused situation

*Some leaders **fish in troubled waters** during riots.***HINT** · fishing when water is muddy

180 ★ MOST ASKED

A fish out of water

someone who feels uncomfortable in a new place

*The village boy felt like a **fish out of water** at the city party.***HINT** · a fish cannot live outside

181

Fits and starts

not continuously; with breaks

*Work on the bridge went on in **fits and starts**.***HINT** · stop, start, stop

182 ★ MOST ASKED

Flash in the pan

a sudden success that does not last

*His first hit film turned out to be a **flash in the pan**.***HINT** · a spark with no fire

183

Flesh and blood

one's own relatives; human nature

*You cannot desert your own **flesh and blood**.***HINT** · same body

184

Flog a dead horse

to waste effort on something that is finished

*Arguing about last year's result is **flogging a dead horse**.***HINT** · a horse that won't run

185

Fly in the face of

to go against what is expected or accepted

*His decision **flies in the face of** all expert advice.***HINT** · straight against it

186 ★ MOST ASKED

Fly off the handle

to lose one's temper suddenly

*He **flies off the handle** at the smallest mistake.***HINT** · an axe head flying loose

187

Follow suit

to do what someone else has done

*One bank cut its rates and others soon **followed suit**.***HINT** · playing the same card suit

188

Fool's errand

a task that is useless or impossible

*Searching for a taxi in that storm was a **fool's errand**.***HINT** · a job for a fool

189 ★ MOST ASKED

Fool's paradise

a state of false happiness

*If you think you can pass without studying, you are living in a **fool's paradise**.***HINT** · a heaven that isn't real

190

For good

forever; permanently

*She has left the city for **good**.***HINT** · for always



191 ★ MOST ASKED

French leave

leave taken without permission

*He took **French leave** and missed two days of office.***HINT · leaving without asking**

192 ★ MOST ASKED

From pillar to post

from one place to another without success

*He was sent from **pillar to post** to get his pension.***HINT · one pillar, another post**

193 ★ MOST ASKED

From the horse's mouth

directly from the person who knows

*I heard the news from the **horse's mouth**: the principal told me.***HINT · check the horse's teeth yourself**

194

From the word go

from the very beginning

*She led the race from the **word go**.***HINT · the starter's "go"**

195

Full of beans

lively and full of energy

*The children were **full of beans** after the holiday.***HINT · beans = energy**

196

Gain ground

to become more popular or successful

*Electric scooters are **gaining ground** in Indian cities.***HINT · moving forward**

197

Get into hot water

to get into trouble

*He got into hot water for leaking the exam paper.***HINT · water that burns**

198

Get on one's nerves

to annoy someone

*The constant honking **gets on my nerves**.***HINT · pressing on nerves**

199 ★ MOST ASKED

Get the sack

to be dismissed from a job

*He got the sack for coming late every day.***HINT · given your bag to leave**

200

Get wind of

to hear about something secret

*The press got wind of the minister's plans.***HINT · news carried by the wind**



DAY 5 · G-I

Idioms & Phrases

201-250 of 500

201

Gift of the gab

the ability to speak easily and persuasively

*A salesman needs the **gift of the gab**.***HINT** · gab = chatter

202

Give and take

willingness to compromise

*A good marriage needs **give and take**.***HINT** · both give, both take

203

Give someone the cold shoulder

to ignore someone deliberately

*After the argument, she gave him the cold shoulder.***HINT** · turning a cold shoulder

204

Give the devil his due

to give credit to someone you dislike

*He is rude, but **give the devil his due**: he is very hardworking.***HINT** · even the devil gets credit

205 ★ MOST ASKED

Give up the ghost

to die or stop working

*My old phone finally gave up the ghost.***HINT** · the spirit leaves

206

Go against the grain

to be against one's nature or normal practice

*Telling lies goes **against the grain** for her.***HINT** · against the wood's grain

207

Go back on one's word

to break a promise

*A man of honour never goes **back on his word**.***HINT** · walk back from a promise

208

Go Dutch

to share the cost equally

*The friends went **Dutch** at the restaurant.***HINT** · each pays their own

209

Go haywire

to stop working properly; to go out of control

*The traffic signals went **haywire** after the storm.***HINT** · tangled wire

210

Go the extra mile

to make more effort than is expected

*The nurse went the **extra mile** to comfort the patients.***HINT** · walk one more mile

211 ★ MOST ASKED

Go to the dogs

to become ruined

*Without proper management, the company went to the **dogs**.***HINT** · thrown to the dogs

212

Go with the flow

to accept a situation and not resist it

*On holiday, just relax and go with the **flow**.***HINT** · float with the river



213

Good Samaritan

a person who helps strangers in need

*A **good Samaritan** took the injured man to hospital.***HINT** · the helper in the old story

214

Grease the palm

to bribe someone

*He tried to **grease the palm** of the clerk to get the licence quickly.***HINT** · money in the hand

215

Green horn

an inexperienced person

*He is still a **green horn** in the stock market.***HINT** · new and green

216 ★ MOST ASKED

Green with envy

very jealous

*Her friends were **green with envy** when she bought a new car.***HINT** · green = jealousy

217

Grind to a halt

to slow down and stop completely

*Traffic **ground to a halt** because of the rally.***HINT** · gears stop

218 ★ MOST ASKED

Hale and hearty

healthy and strong

*Even at eighty, my grandfather is **hale and hearty**.***HINT** · healthy heart

219 ★ MOST ASKED

Hand in glove

working closely together, often in something wrong

*The guard was **hand in glove** with the thieves.***HINT** · hand fits the glove

220

Hand over fist

very quickly and in large amounts

*The new app is making money **hand over fist**.***HINT** · grabbing with both hands

221 ★ MOST ASKED

Hand to mouth

having just enough money to live on

*Daily-wage workers often live from **hand to mouth**.***HINT** · earn, eat, nothing left

222

Hang by a thread

to be in great danger

*After the accident, his life hung by a thread.***HINT** · one thin thread

223

Hard and fast

fixed and not to be changed

*There are no **hard and fast** rules for writing an essay.***HINT** · fixed firmly

224 ★ MOST ASKED

A hard nut to crack

a difficult problem or person to deal with

*The new tax rules are a **hard nut to crack** for small shopkeepers.***HINT** · a tough shell

225

Hard of hearing

not able to hear well

*Speak louder; my grandmother is **hard of hearing**.***HINT** · ears find it hard

226

Have a bee in one's bonnet

to be obsessed with an idea

*He has a bee in his bonnet about healthy food.***HINT** · a buzzing idea



227

Have a chip on one's shoulder

to feel resentful about being treated unfairly
He has a chip on his shoulder about not getting into the IIT.

HINT · daring others to knock it off

228

Have a soft corner for

to have a special liking for
The teacher has a soft corner for quiet students.

HINT · a gentle place in the heart

229

Have the last laugh

to succeed in the end after others doubted you
They mocked his idea, but he had the last laugh when it worked.

HINT · who laughs last

230

Head over heels

completely, especially in love
He fell head over heels in love with music.

HINT · turning upside down

231

Hear through the grapevine

to hear news informally from others
I heard through the grapevine that the exam is postponed.

HINT · news along the vine

232

Heart of gold

a very kind nature
The old shopkeeper has a heart of gold.

HINT · golden heart

233 ★ MOST ASKED

Herculean task

a task needing very great effort
Cleaning the polluted river is a Herculean task.

HINT · Hercules' labours

234

High and dry

left alone without help
When the company shut down, its workers were left high and dry.

HINT · a boat left on the shore

235

High and mighty

proud and arrogant
Don't act so high and mighty with the new staff.

HINT · too high to talk to

236

Hit the headlines

to become big news
The young scientist hit the headlines with her invention.

HINT · front-page news

237

Hit the nail on the head

to say exactly the right thing
You hit the nail on the head when you said the plan was too costly.

HINT · a perfect hammer hit

238

Hit the sack

to go to bed
I'm tired; I'm going to hit the sack.

HINT · sack = bed

239 ★ MOST ASKED

Hobson's choice

no real choice at all
It was a Hobson's choice: take the last bus or walk.

HINT · Hobson gave only one horse

240

Hold one's horses

to wait and be patient
Hold your horses; the result will come tomorrow.

HINT · pull the reins





241 ★ MOST ASKED

Hold water

to be valid or logical

*His excuse doesn't **hold water**.***HINT** · a pot that doesn't leak

242

Hornet's nest

a situation full of trouble and anger

*The new tax stirred up a **hornet's nest** among traders.***HINT** · disturbing angry insects

243 ★ MOST ASKED

Hue and cry

loud public protest

*There was a **hue and cry** over the rise in fares.***HINT** · shouting crowd

244

Hush money

money paid to keep something secret

*The witness was offered **hush money** to stay quiet.***HINT** · money for silence

245 ★ MOST ASKED

Ill at ease

uncomfortable or nervous

*He felt **ill at ease** among the senior officers.***HINT** · not at ease

246

In a nutshell

in a few words; briefly

*In a **nutshell**, the plan failed because of poor funding.***HINT** · fits in a nut

247 ★ MOST ASKED

In black and white

in writing

*Get the promise in **black and white** before you pay.***HINT** · black ink on white paper

248 ★ MOST ASKED

In cold blood

deliberately and cruelly

*The villain murdered his partner in **cold blood**.***HINT** · no heat of anger

249

In deep water

in serious trouble

*The firm is in **deep water** after the loss.***HINT** · too deep to stand

250

In the bad books

out of favour with someone

*Since the argument, he has been in the boss's **bad books**.***HINT** · name in the wrong book



DAY 6 · I-M

Idioms & Phrases

251-300 of 500

251 ★ MOST ASKED

In the doldrums

in low spirits or inactive

*The car market has been in the **doldrums** this year.***HINT · sea with no wind**

252

In the long run

over a long period of time; eventually

*Hard work pays off in the **long run**.***HINT · at the end of the race**

253 ★ MOST ASKED

In the nick of time

just in time

*The ambulance arrived in the **nick of time**.***HINT · a nick = a tiny moment**

254

In the same breath

at the same time, saying two opposite things

*He praised the plan and, in the **same breath**, called it useless.***HINT · one breath, two ideas**

255

In the teeth of

in spite of strong opposition

*The bill was passed in the **teeth** of fierce protests.***HINT · facing the bite**

256

Iron out

to solve small problems

*The two sides met to **iron out** their differences.***HINT · smooth the creases**

257

Itching palm

greed for money, especially bribes

*The officer with an **itching palm** was suspended.***HINT · a hand that wants money**

258

Jack of all trades

a person who can do many things but is master of none

*He fixes fans, paints walls and sings: a **jack of all trades**.***HINT · Jack does every job**

259

Jump on the bandwagon

to join something because it is popular

*Many companies **jumped on the bandwagon** of electric cars.***HINT · climb onto the music cart**

260

Jump the gun

to act too soon

*The news channel **jumped the gun** and announced the result early.***HINT · starting before the gun**

261

Keep at bay

to keep something away

*A healthy diet **keeps diseases at bay**.***HINT · hold them off**

262

Keep body and soul together

to earn just enough to stay alive

*He works two jobs to **keep body and soul together**.***HINT · body and soul stay joined**



263

Keep one's fingers crossed

to hope for a good result

*Keep your fingers crossed for my interview.***HINT** · the good-luck sign

264

Keep one's head above water

to manage to survive, especially with money

*With the new loan, the shop is just keeping its head above water.***HINT** · not drowning

265

Keep the ball rolling

to keep an activity going

*The host asked questions to keep the ball rolling.***HINT** · don't let it stop

266 ★ MOST ASKED

Keep the wolf from the door

to have just enough money to avoid hunger

*The pension barely keeps the wolf from the door.***HINT** · hunger is the wolf

267

Kick the bucket

to die (informal)

*The old dog finally kicked the bucket.***HINT** · informal for dying

268 ★ MOST ASKED

Kill two birds with one stone

to achieve two things with one action

*By cycling to work, he kills two birds with one stone: exercise and savings.***HINT** · one stone, two birds

269 ★ MOST ASKED

Kith and kin

friends and relatives

*She invited all her kith and kin to the wedding.***HINT** · kith = friends, kin = family

270

Know the ropes

to know how to do a job well

*Ask Meena; she knows the ropes in this office.***HINT** · sailors knew the ropes

271 ★ MOST ASKED

Lame duck

a weak or ineffective person or thing

*The outgoing government was a lame duck in its final months.***HINT** · a duck that can't keep up

272

Land on one's feet

to be lucky after a difficult situation

*He lost his job but landed on his feet with a better one.***HINT** · a cat always lands well

273

The last straw

the final problem that makes one lose patience

*Losing his umbrella was the last straw.***HINT** · the camel's back breaks

274

Laughing stock

a person everyone laughs at

*His silly mistakes made him the laughing stock of the class.***HINT** · stock for laughter

275

Lay one's cards on the table

to be completely honest about one's plans

*Let me lay my cards on the table: I want a promotion.***HINT** · show your cards

276

Lead someone up the garden path

to deceive someone

*The fake agent led the students up the garden path.***HINT** · a walk to nowhere



277

Learn by heart

to memorise

*We had to **learn the poem by heart**.***HINT** · keep it in the heart

278 ★ MOST ASKED

Leave no stone unturned

to try every possible way

*The police left no stone unturned to find the culprit.***HINT** · look under every stone

279 ★ MOST ASKED

Leave someone in the lurch

to abandon someone in difficulty

*His partner left him in the lurch just before the launch.***HINT** · left alone at a bad moment

280

Lend an ear

to listen carefully

*Please **lend an ear** to my problem.***HINT** · give your ear

281

Let bygones be bygones

to forget past quarrels

Let bygones be bygones**; let's work together again.HINT** · past is past

282 ★ MOST ASKED

Let sleeping dogs lie

to avoid bringing up an old problem

*The quarrel is over; **let sleeping dogs lie**.***HINT** · don't wake the dog

283 ★ MOST ASKED

Let the cat out of the bag

to reveal a secret by mistake

*She **let the cat out of the bag** about the surprise party.***HINT** · the cat jumps out

284

Lick into shape

to make someone or something ready and efficient

*The new coach **licked the team into shape** in a month.***HINT** · a mother bear shapes her cub

285

Lie low

to stay hidden; to keep quiet

*After the scandal, he decided to **lie low** for a while.***HINT** · stay down

286 ★ MOST ASKED

Lion's share

the largest part

*The **lion's share** of the budget goes to defence.***HINT** · the lion takes most

287 ★ MOST ASKED

Lock, stock and barrel

completely; including everything

*He sold his business **lock, stock and barrel**.***HINT** · every part of the gun

288

Long and short of it

the main point in a few words

*The **long and short** of it is that we need more money.***HINT** · all of it, briefly

289

Look before you leap

think carefully before acting

Look before you leap**; read the contract fully.HINT** · check the ground first

290

Lose face

to lose respect or reputation

*The captain **lost face** after the team's heavy defeat.***HINT** · face = respect



291

Lose heart

to lose courage or hope

*Don't **lose heart** after one failure.***HINT** · heart = courage

292

Lose one's temper

to become angry

*He lost his temper when the bus didn't stop.***HINT** · temper = calm

293

Lose the thread

to forget what one was saying

*The interruption made the speaker **lose the thread** of his talk.***HINT** · thread of the story

294

Low-hanging fruit

easy tasks or targets to achieve first

*Revising the easy chapters first is the low-hanging fruit.***HINT** · fruit you can reach

295 ★ MOST ASKED

Maiden speech

a person's first speech, especially in parliament

*The young MP impressed everyone with her **maiden speech**.***HINT** · maiden = first

296

Make a beeline for

to go straight towards

*The children made a beeline for the ice-cream stall.***HINT** · bees fly straight home

297 ★ MOST ASKED

Make a clean breast of

to confess everything

*The accused made a clean breast of his crime.***HINT** · open your chest

298 ★ MOST ASKED

Make a mountain of a molehill

to make a small problem seem very big

*It was a tiny scratch; don't **make a mountain of a molehill**.***HINT** · a molehill is tiny

299

Make a scene

to cause a public display of anger

*Don't **make a scene** in the restaurant.***HINT** · a drama in public

300

Make amends

to correct a wrong one has done

*He apologised and tried to **make amends**.***HINT** · mend the damage



DAY 7 · M-O

Idioms & Phrases

301–350 of 500

301 ★ MOST ASKED

Make both ends meet

to manage with the money one has
*With rising prices, it is hard to **make both ends meet**.*

HINT · income end meets expense end

302

Make good

to succeed; to repay or fix
*He promised to **make good** the loss.*

HINT · make it right

303

Make hay while the sun shines

to use a good opportunity while it lasts
*Sales are high this season; **make hay while the sun shines**.*

HINT · dry hay in sunshine

304

Make headway

to make progress
*The talks are finally **making headway**.*

HINT · moving ahead

305

Make light of

to treat something as unimportant
*She **made light of** her injury and kept playing.*

HINT · make it feel light

306

Make no bones about

to say something clearly without hesitation
*She **made no bones about** her dislike of the plan.*

HINT · no bones to choke on

307

Make one's blood boil

to make someone very angry
*Cruelty to animals **makes my blood boil**.*

HINT · blood heating up

308

Make one's mark

to become successful or famous
*She **made her mark as** a young scientist.*

HINT · leave your mark

309

Make the most of

to use something fully
***Make the most of** your holidays by revising.*

HINT · use the most

310

Make up one's mind

to decide
*I have **made up my mind** to prepare for the bank exams.*

HINT · mind is made

311

Man in the street

an ordinary person
*The new tax will hurt the **man in the street**.*

HINT · anyone walking by

312

Man of his word

a person who keeps his promises
*You can trust him; he is a **man of his word**.*

HINT · word = promise





313 ★ MOST ASKED

A man of letters

a scholar or a well-read writer

*Rabindranath Tagore was a **man of letters** admired across the world.***HINT** · letters = literature

314

A man of straw

a weak person with no real power or money

*The company was run by a **man of straw** while the real owners hid behind him.***HINT** · straw has no strength

315

Many happy returns

a birthday wish

Many happy returns** of the day, Priya!HINT** · may the day return often

316 ★ MOST ASKED

Mare's nest

a discovery that turns out to be worthless or false

*His "big scoop" proved to be a **mare's nest**.***HINT** · a horse has no nest

317

Matter of fact

practical, not emotional

*He spoke in a **matter-of-fact** way about the accident.***HINT** · just the facts

318

Method in madness

a reason behind strange behaviour

*There is **method in his madness**; he plans everything.***HINT** · a plan inside the madness

319 ★ MOST ASKED

Midas touch

the ability to make money from everything

*The investor seems to have the **Midas touch**.***HINT** · King Midas turned things to gold

320

Mince matters

to avoid saying something directly to be polite

*The doctor did not **mince matters** about his health.***HINT** · chop it small

321

Mind one's p's and q's

to be careful about one's behaviour

Mind your p's and q's** in front of the guests.HINT** · careful letters

322

Miss the boat

to lose an opportunity by being too slow

*He didn't apply in time and **missed the boat**.***HINT** · the boat has left

323

Moot point

a matter that is open to debate

*Whether the plan will work is a **moot point**.***HINT** · still debated

324

More often than not

usually

More often than not**, the train is late.HINT** · most times

325

Move heaven and earth

to do everything possible

*She **moved heaven and earth** to get her son admitted.***HINT** · shift the whole world

326

Mum's the word

keep it a secret

*The party is a surprise, so **mum's the word**.***HINT** · mum = silent



327

Neck and neck

equal in a race or competition

*The two parties are **neck and neck** in the polls.***HINT** · horses side by side

328

New lease of life

a fresh chance to be active or successful

*The repair gave the old car a **new lease of life**.***HINT** · renewed contract on life

329 ★ MOST ASKED

Nine days' wonder

something that attracts attention only for a short time

*The viral video was a **nine days' wonder**.***HINT** · famous for nine days

330 ★ MOST ASKED

Nip in the bud

to stop something at an early stage

*The police **nipped the riot in the bud**.***HINT** · cut the bud before it opens

331

No love lost

dislike between people

*There is no **love lost** between the two rivals.***HINT** · no love to lose

332

Nook and corner

every part of a place

*They searched every **nook and corner** of the house.***HINT** · every corner

333

Not my cup of tea

not something I like

*Horror films are **not my cup of tea**.***HINT** · not my drink

334

Now and then

occasionally

*We meet **now and then**.***HINT** · sometimes

335 ★ MOST ASKED

Null and void

having no legal force

*The court declared the contract **null and void**.***HINT** · zero and empty

336 ★ MOST ASKED

Odds and ends

small items of different kinds

*The drawer was full of **odds and ends**.***HINT** · bits and pieces

337

Of no avail

of no use

*All his efforts were of no **avail**.***HINT** · avail = use

338 ★ MOST ASKED

Off and on

from time to time

*It rained **off and on** all day.***HINT** · on, off, on

339

Off the cuff

without preparation

*He gave an **off-the-cuff** speech at the party.***HINT** · notes on a shirt cuff

340

Off the record

not to be officially reported

*The **officer spoke to the reporter off the record**.***HINT** · not in the record



341

Oil one's palm

to bribe someone

*He tried to **oil the officer's palm**.***HINT** · money in the hand

342

On cloud nine

extremely happy

*She was on **cloud nine** after clearing the exam.***HINT** · the highest cloud

343

On tenterhooks

in a state of nervous waiting

*We were on **tenterhooks** until the result came.***HINT** · stretched cloth on hooks

344

On the cards

likely to happen

*A rate cut is on the **cards** this month.***HINT** · the cards show it

345

On the fence

undecided

*Many voters are still on the **fence**.***HINT** · sitting between sides

346

On the rocks

in serious difficulty

*Their business is on the **rocks**.***HINT** · a ship stuck on rocks

347

On the spur of the moment

suddenly, without planning

*On the **spur of the moment**, we decided to go to Goa.***HINT** · a quick kick

348

On the verge of

very close to

*The rare bird is on the **verge** of extinction.***HINT** · at the edge

349 ★ MOST ASKED

Once in a blue moon

very rarely

*My cousin visits us **once in a blue moon**.***HINT** · a blue moon is rare

350

Open secret

something supposed to be secret but known to all

*Their engagement is an **open secret**.***HINT** · a secret everyone knows



DAY 8 · O-R

Idioms & Phrases

351-400 of 500

351

Out of sorts

slightly unwell or unhappy

*He has been **out of sorts** since the trip.***HINT · not feeling right**

352

Out of the blue

unexpectedly

Out of the blue**, my old friend called me.HINT · from the clear sky**

353

Out of the question

impossible

*A holiday this month is **out of the question**.***HINT · not even a question**

354

Out of the woods

out of danger

*The patient is recovering but not yet **out of the woods**.***HINT · out of the dark forest**

355 ★ MOST ASKED

Over head and ears

completely, deeply

*He is **over head and ears** in debt.***HINT · drowned up to the head**

356

Over the moon

very happy

*He was **over the moon** about his promotion.***HINT · jumping over the moon**

357 ★ MOST ASKED

Part and parcel

an essential part

*Hard work is **part and parcel** of success.***HINT · part of the same package**

358

Pass the buck

to shift responsibility to someone else

*The officials keep **passing the buck** instead of fixing the road.***HINT · pass the marker on**

359

Pay through the nose

to pay too much for something

*We paid **through the nose** for tickets on the black market.***HINT · painful payment**

360

Pell-mell

in a confused rush

*The crowd ran **pell-mell** when the alarm rang.***HINT · rushing mess**

361 ★ MOST ASKED

Penny wise, pound foolish

careful about small amounts but wasteful with large ones

Skiping servicing to save money is penny wise, pound foolish.**HINT · save a penny, lose a pound**

362

Pick holes in

to find faults in

*He likes to **pick holes** in every plan.***HINT · poking holes**



363

A piece of cake

something very easy

*For her, the reasoning section was a **piece of cake**.***HINT** · easy to eat

364

Pin money

a small amount of money for personal expenses

*She earns some **pin money** by tutoring.***HINT** · money for pins

365 ★ MOST ASKED

Play second fiddle

to take a less important role

*She refused to **play second fiddle** to her junior.***HINT** · the second violin

366 ★ MOST ASKED

Play truant

to stay away from school without permission

*The boys **played truant** and went to the cinema.***HINT** · truant = absent pupil

367

Play with fire

to do something dangerous

*Driving without a helmet is **playing with fire**.***HINT** · fire burns

368

Pocket an insult

to accept an insult without reacting

*He **pocketed the insult** to avoid a fight.***HINT** · put it in your pocket

369

Point blank

directly and bluntly

*She refused **point blank** to sign the paper.***HINT** · shot at close range

370

Pour oil on troubled waters

to calm a quarrel

*The teacher **poured oil on troubled waters** between the boys.***HINT** · oil calms waves

371

Proof of the pudding is in the eating

something's value is judged by results

*The plan sounds good, but the **proof of the pudding is in the eating**.***HINT** · taste it to judge

372

Pros and cons

advantages and disadvantages

*Think about the **pros and cons** before you decide.***HINT** · for and against

373

Pull one's leg

to joke with someone by telling them something untrue

*Don't believe him; he is **pulling your leg**.***HINT** · a playful trick

374

Pull one's socks up

to try harder to improve

*You must **pull your socks up** if you want to pass.***HINT** · get ready to run

375

Pull strings

to use influence to get something done

*He **pulled strings** to get the contract.***HINT** · a puppet master

376

Put a spoke in someone's wheel

to block someone's plans

*His rival **put a spoke in his wheel** by complaining to the board.***HINT** · a stick in the wheel



377

Put one's foot down

to be firm about something

*The principal **put her foot down** on mobile phones in class.***HINT** · a firm step

378

Put one's foot in one's mouth

to say something embarrassing

*He **put his foot in his mouth** by mentioning her ex-husband.***HINT** · foot in mouth

379 ★ MOST ASKED

Put the cart before the horse

to do things in the wrong order

*Buying a car before learning to drive is **putting the cart before the horse**.***HINT** · cart can't pull the horse

380

Put two and two together

to work something out from the facts

*Seeing his packed bags, she **put two and two together**.***HINT** · 2 + 2 = 4

381

Queer fish

a strange person

*Our new neighbour is a **queer fish**.***HINT** · an odd fish

382

Queer the pitch

to spoil someone's plans

*Her complaint **queered the pitch** for his promotion.***HINT** · spoil the ground

383

Rack one's brains

to think very hard

*I **racked my brains** to find the answer.***HINT** · stretching the brain

384 ★ MOST ASKED

Rain cats and dogs

to rain very heavily

*It **rained cats and dogs** all night.***HINT** · heavy, noisy rain

385

Raise eyebrows

to cause surprise or disapproval

*His sudden resignation **raised eyebrows**.***HINT** · surprised face

386 ★ MOST ASKED

Rank and file

ordinary members of a group

*The **rank and file** of the party opposed the decision.***HINT** · soldiers in lines

387

Rat race

a fierce struggle for success in work

*He left the city **rat race** for a quiet village life.***HINT** · rats racing

388

Read between the lines

to understand the hidden meaning

Read between the lines**: he doesn't want to come.HINT** · the gap holds the meaning

389 ★ MOST ASKED

Red herring

something that distracts from the real issue

*The clue about the car was a **red herring**.***HINT** · a smelly fish to mislead dogs

390 ★ MOST ASKED

Red tape

too many official rules and delays

Red tape** delayed the project by two years.HINT** · files tied with red tape



391 ★ MOST ASKED

A red-letter day

a very important or happy day

*The day she got her appointment letter was a red-letter day for the family.***HINT** · festival dates in red

392

Rest on one's laurels

to stop trying because of past success

*After one good result, he **rested on his laurels** and failed next time.***HINT** · sitting on old prizes

393

Ride roughshod over

to treat people or rules with no respect

*The landlord rode roughshod over the tenants' rights.***HINT** · horse shoes that hurt

394

Ring a bell

to sound familiar

*His name **rings a bell**, but I can't remember him.***HINT** · the memory bell

395

Rise to the occasion

to do well in a difficult situation

*In the final over, the bowler **rose to the occasion**.***HINT** · rise when needed

396 ★ MOST ASKED

Rob Peter to pay Paul

to take from one to give to another, solving nothing

*Taking a new loan to repay the old one is **robbing Peter to pay Paul**.***HINT** · one debt to another

397

Rock bottom

the lowest possible level

*Prices of onions hit **rock bottom** this week.***HINT** · the bottom rock

398

Rolling stone

a person who keeps moving and never settles

*A **rolling stone** gathers no moss, so stay in one job for a while.***HINT** · a stone that never stops

399

Rome was not built in a day

important things take time

*Keep practising; **Rome was not built in a day**.***HINT** · great cities take years

400

Rub salt into the wound

to make a painful situation worse

*Laughing at his failure was **rubbing salt into the wound**.***HINT** · salt stings a cut



DAY 9 · R-T

Idioms & Phrases

401-450 of 500

401

Rule the roost

to be in charge

*In that house, the grandmother **rules the roost**.***HINT · the chief rooster**

402

Run amok

to behave wildly and out of control

*The angry elephant **ran amok** in the village.***HINT · wild running**

403

Run in the family

to be a common feature in a family

*Musical talent **runs in the family**.***HINT · passed down**

404

Run riot

to behave in a wild, uncontrolled way

*The fans **ran riot** after the match.***HINT · run wild**

405

Safe and sound

unharmed

*The children returned from the trip **safe and sound**.***HINT · safe + sound = unhurt**

406

Sail close to the wind

to take a risk, almost breaking a rule

*His business deals often **sail close to the wind**.***HINT · a boat near danger**

407

Salt of the earth

a very good, honest person

*The farmers of this village are the **salt of the earth**.***HINT · salt makes life good**

408

Save one's skin

to escape danger or punishment

*He blamed his friend to **save his own skin**.***HINT · protect your own body**

409 ★ MOST ASKED

Scot-free

without punishment

*The real culprit went **scot-free**.***HINT · scot = a tax not paid**

410

See eye to eye

to agree completely

*The two partners don't **see eye** to eye on the plan.***HINT · eyes on the same level**

411

See red

to become very angry

*He saw red when someone scratched his car.***HINT · red = anger**

412 ★ MOST ASKED

Sell like hot cakes

to sell very quickly

*The new phones are **selling like hot cakes**.***HINT · fresh cakes go fast**

413

Set the ball rolling

to start an activity

*The principal **set the ball rolling** with a short speech.***HINT · the first push**

414 ★ MOST ASKED

Set the Thames on fire

to do something remarkable

*He is a decent student but will never **set the Thames on fire**.***HINT · a river can't burn**Scan to get the free PrepZen app · Google Play: PrepZen · Website: prepzen.inTelegram: Main t.me/PrepZenOfficial · English t.me/PrepZenEnglish · CA t.me/PrepZenCurrentAffairsInstagram [@prepzen.app](https://www.instagram.com/prepzen.app) · Share this PDF with your exam group · Comment **IDIOMS** on our reels



415

Shed light on

to help explain

*The report **sheds light** on the causes of the crash.***HINT** · bring a lamp

416

Show one's true colours

to reveal one's real character

*In the crisis, he **showed his true colours**.***HINT** · the real flag

417 ★ MOST ASKED

Show the white feather

to show cowardice

*The soldier refused to **show the white feather**.***HINT** · white feather = coward

418

Sit on the fence

to avoid taking sides

*You can't **sit on the fence** forever; choose one.***HINT** · the fence between sides

419

Sit tight

to wait patiently

Sit tight**; the doctor will see you soon.HINT** · stay seated

420

Six of one and half a dozen of the other

two choices that are equally good or bad

*Bus or train, it's **six of one and half a dozen of the other**.***HINT** · 6 = half a dozen

421

Sixth sense

a feeling about something without proof

*Her **sixth sense** told her something was wrong.***HINT** · beyond the five senses

422

Skeleton in the cupboard

a shameful secret

*Every family has a **skeleton in the cupboard**.***HINT** · hidden bones

423

Sleep on it

to delay a decision until the next day

*Don't sign now; **sleep** on it.***HINT** · decide after sleep

424

Slip of the tongue

a small mistake in speaking

*Calling him by the wrong name was a **slip of the tongue**.***HINT** · the tongue slipped

425

Small talk

polite conversation about unimportant things

*They made **small talk** while waiting for the bus.***HINT** · little chat

426 ★ MOST ASKED

Smell a rat

to suspect that something is wrong

*When the offer was too good, I **smelt a rat**.***HINT** · something smells bad

427 ★ MOST ASKED

Sour grapes

pretending to dislike what one cannot have

*He says the job was boring, but it's just **sour grapes**.***HINT** · the fox and the grapes

428 ★ MOST ASKED

Spick and span

very neat and clean

*Her kitchen is always **spick and span**.***HINT** · shiny new



429

Spill the beans

to tell a secret too early

*Who **spilled the beans** about the surprise party?***HINT** · beans fall out = secret falls out

430

Split hairs

to argue about very small details

*Let's not **split hairs** over a few rupees.***HINT** · cutting one hair in two

431

Spread like wildfire

to spread very quickly

*The rumour **spread like wildfire**.***HINT** · fire in dry forest

432

Square peg in a round hole

a person in a job that doesn't suit them

*A shy person in sales is a **square peg in a round hole**.***HINT** · wrong shape

433

Stab in the back

to betray someone

*His trusted partner **stabbed him in the back**.***HINT** · attack from behind

434

Stand one's ground

to refuse to give way

*Despite pressure, she **stood her ground**.***HINT** · feet don't move

435

Steal the show

to get the most attention or praise

*The little girl's dance **stole the show**.***HINT** · take the whole show

436

Steer clear of

to avoid

Steer clear** of junk food before the exam.HINT** · steer the boat away

437

Stick to one's guns

to refuse to change one's opinion

*Despite criticism, she **stuck to her guns**.***HINT** · a soldier holding his post

438 ★ MOST ASKED

A stone's throw

a very short distance

*The school is just a **stone's throw** from our house.***HINT** · as far as you can throw a stone

439

A storm in a teacup

a lot of anger about a very small matter

*The quarrel over the parking spot was just a **storm in a teacup**.***HINT** · a big storm in a small cup

440

Strike while the iron is hot

to act at the right moment

*The offer is open today; **strike while the iron is hot**.***HINT** · hammer hot iron

441 ★ MOST ASKED

Swan song

a person's last performance or work

*The match was the legend's **swan song**.***HINT** · the swan sings once before dying

442

Sweat blood

to work extremely hard

*She **sweated blood** to clear the exam.***HINT** · sweat that hurts



443

Take a back seat

to take a less active role

*After retiring, he took a back seat in the business.***HINT · not driving any more**

444

Take the bull by the horns

to face a difficult situation bravely

*She took the bull by the horns and spoke to the manager.***HINT · grab the bull directly**

445

Take the wind out of someone's sails

to make someone less confident

*Her quick reply took the wind out of his sails.***HINT · a sail with no wind**

446 ★ MOST ASKED

Take to one's heels

to run away

*The thief took to his heels when he saw the police.***HINT · show your heels**

447

Take with a pinch of salt

to not believe something completely

*Take his stories with a pinch of salt.***HINT · a little salt makes it easier**

448

Talk shop

to talk about work outside work

*At dinner, the doctors kept talking shop.***HINT · shop = work**

449

Talk through one's hat

to talk nonsense

*He knows nothing about cars; he's talking through his hat.***HINT · words from a hat**

450 ★ MOST ASKED

Through thick and thin

in good times and bad

*Her friends stood by her through thick and thin.***HINT · through every kind of road**



DAY 10 · T-Z

Idioms & Phrases

451-500 of 500

451

Throw cold water on

to discourage an idea

*His father threw cold water on his plan to start a band.***HINT · cold water kills the fire**

452

Throw dust in someone's eyes

to deceive someone

*The fraud threw dust in the investors' eyes with fake reports.***HINT · blind them with dust**

453

Throw in the towel

to admit defeat

*After three losses, the team threw in the towel.***HINT · the boxer's towel**

454

Tie the knot

to get married

*They will tie the knot next month.***HINT · the wedding knot**

455

Till the cows come home

for a very long time

*You can argue till the cows come home, but I won't agree.***HINT · cows return late**

456

The tip of the iceberg

a small, visible part of a much bigger problem

*These cases are only the tip of the iceberg.***HINT · most of the ice is under water**

457 ★ MOST ASKED

Tit for tat

paying back in the same way

*He was rude, so she was rude back; tit for tat.***HINT · hit for hit**

458

To a T

exactly; perfectly

*The new suit fits him to a T.***HINT · to the tiniest detail**

459

Toe the line

to obey the rules

*New members must toe the party line.***HINT · toes on the line**

460

Touch and go

uncertain; risky

*It was touch and go whether we would catch the flight.***HINT · could go either way**

461

Turn a blind eye

to pretend not to notice

*The guard turned a blind eye to the late arrivals.***HINT · close one eye**

462 ★ MOST ASKED

Turn a deaf ear

to refuse to listen

*The authorities turned a deaf ear to our complaints.***HINT · ears that won't hear**

463 ★ MOST ASKED

Turn over a new leaf

to start behaving in a better way

*After the warning, he turned over a new leaf.***HINT · a fresh page**

464

Turn the tables

to reverse a situation to one's advantage

*The team turned the tables in the second half.***HINT · swap the table sides**



465

Turn up one's nose at

to reject something as not good enough
*He **turns up his nose** at street food.*

HINT · nose in the air

466 ★ MOST ASKED

Turncoat

a person who changes sides
*Voters punished the **turncoat** in the next election.*

HINT · turning the coat inside out

467

Under a cloud

suspected of doing something wrong
*The officer has been **under a cloud** since the inquiry.*

HINT · shadow of doubt

468

Under one's thumb

completely controlled by someone
*The owner keeps all his managers **under his thumb**.*

HINT · pressed by the thumb

469

Under the weather

slightly ill
*I stayed home because I was feeling **under the weather**.*

HINT · bad weather, bad health

470 ★ MOST ASKED

Up in arms

very angry and protesting
*The residents are up in **arms** over the new tax.*

HINT · arms raised

471

Up to the mark

as good as expected
*His work this month was not up to the **mark**.*

HINT · reach the line

472

Upper hand

a position of advantage or control
*With the early goal, the team had the **upper hand**.*

HINT · the hand on top

473

Ups and downs

good times and bad times
*Every business has its **ups and downs**.*

HINT · up, down

474

Utopian scheme

a plan that is perfect but impractical
*Free cars for everyone is a **utopian scheme**.*

HINT · Utopia = ideal land

475

Vanish into thin air

to disappear completely
*The thief seemed to **vanish into thin air**.*

HINT · gone like air

476

Vexed question

a problem that is difficult and much discussed
*The **vexed question** of water sharing is still unsolved.*

HINT · a troubling question

477

Walk on eggshells

to be very careful not to upset someone
*Since the fight, everyone **walks on eggshells** around him.*

HINT · step softly

478

Wash one's dirty linen in public

to discuss private quarrels in public
*The two leaders **washed their dirty linen** in public on TV.*

HINT · dirty clothes outside





479

Wash one's hands of

to refuse to be responsible any longer
*The company **washed its hands** of the faulty product.*

HINT · clean hands, no blame

480

Water under the bridge

past events that no longer matter
*Our old quarrel is **water under the bridge** now.*

HINT · water that has flowed past

481

Wear one's heart on one's sleeve

to show one's feelings openly
*He **wears his heart on his sleeve** and cries easily.*

HINT · heart where all can see

482

Weather the storm

to survive a difficult period
*The company **weathered the storm** of the recession.*

HINT · ship through the storm

483 ★ MOST ASKED

Wet blanket

a person who spoils others' fun
*Don't be a **wet blanket**; come to the party.*

HINT · a blanket that puts out fire

484

When pigs fly

never
*He will clean his room **when pigs fly**.*

HINT · pigs can't fly

485 ★ MOST ASKED

A white elephant

a costly possession that is useless and hard to maintain
*The huge stadium became a **white elephant** after the games ended.*

HINT · a gift that costs to keep

486 ★ MOST ASKED

White lie

a small, harmless lie
*She told a **white lie** to avoid hurting him.*

HINT · a harmless lie

487 ★ MOST ASKED

A wild goose chase

a useless search for something you will not find
*Looking for the old file without its number was a **wild goose chase**.*

HINT · chasing a bird you can't catch

488

Win hands down

to win very easily
*Our team won **hands down**.*

HINT · the jockey drops his hands

489

Win laurels

to gain honour or praise
The young athlete won laurels for India.

HINT · the laurel crown

490

With a heavy heart

with great sadness
*With a **heavy heart**, he left his village.*

HINT · heart weighed down

491

With flying colours

with great success
*She passed the interview with **flying colours**.*

HINT · flags of victory

492

Without batting an eyelid

without showing any surprise or emotion
*He paid the huge bill **without batting an eyelid**.*

HINT · not even a blink





493

A wolf in sheep's clothing

a dangerous person who pretends to be harmless

*The friendly salesman was a **wolf in sheep's clothing** who cheated the elderly.*

HINT · danger dressed as gentle

494

Worth one's salt

good at one's job

*Any teacher **worth his salt** knows his students.*

HINT · earning your salt

495

Write off

to accept that something is lost or useless

*The bank had to **write off** the bad loans.*

HINT · cross it out

496 ★ MOST ASKED

Yellow journalism

news that is exaggerated to attract readers

*The channel was criticised for **yellow journalism**.*

HINT · the old yellow papers

497 ★ MOST ASKED

Yeoman's service

very good and useful work

*The volunteers did **yeoman's service** during the floods.*

HINT · the loyal yeoman

498

Young blood

young people with new ideas

*The party needs **young blood**.*

HINT · fresh blood

499

Your guess is as good as mine

I don't know either

*When will the bus come? **Your guess is as good as mine**.*

HINT · both of us guess

500

Zero in on

to focus closely on

*The police **zeroed in** on the suspect.*

HINT · aim at zero





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