

Yazd University
Idioms & Expressions: Text 10
Lecturer: Ali A. Ariamanesh

- 1. One's tail between one's legs:** to feel beaten, ashamed, unsuccessful
He left the meeting with his tail between his legs after being criticized by the boss.
- 2. Take a nosedive:** to collapse or fail; decrease in value
Many stockholders took a hard nosedive during the economic crisis.
- 3. Take it from me:** believe me!
The teacher himself said the next-week exam is cancelled. Take it from me, please.
- 4. Talk (Speak) of the devil:** used when sb who you have just talked about suddenly arrives
Talk of the devil! We just mentioned your name before you stepped in.
- 5. Talk through one's hat:** to say sth without knowledge or thinking
Stop talking through your hat when you don't know anything about me.
- 6. Talk till one is blue in the face:** talk for a long time while others don't pay attention to you
I talked to him till I got blue in the face but he was not convinced at last.
- 7. Talk turkey:** to talk frankly and seriously
I'm not here to waste my time; so, let's talk turkey about the details of the contract.
- 8. Take the bull by the horns:** to take a determined and courageous decision
My brother decided to take the bull by the horns and changed his university major.
- 9. Ten to one:** very likely; said to show the possibility is very high
I will make a bet that ten to one he will come back to his previous job.
- 10. Test the waters:** to test out the situation; to weigh up
We have to test the waters before making the final decision.
- 11. That's out of the question:** there is absolutely no way/possibility to be considered.
You are going to borrow my car again? That's out the question!
- 12. The ball's in your court:** it's up to you to make the decision or do the next step
We did all we could! Now the ball's in your court; do as you wish.
- 13. The coast is clear:** everything is fine and quiet
Hey guys you can come out by now, nobody is here. The coast is clear actually.
- 14. The fat is on fire:** what is done is done; don't cry over spilt milk
The fat is on fire! You have had the accident and your car is badly damaged.

15. The other day: recently, a few days ago

Can you guess who I ran in to the other day? You won't believe it.

16. Tight spot: a difficult situation

Because of the sanctions the car-manufacturing companies are now in a tight spot.

17. Tighten one's belt: to spend less money than needed in one's life

We decided to tighten our belt in order to save some money for our new year holidays.

18. Top banana: an important person, a head or boss

If you want to have your job done, see Mr. Brown who is the top banana here.

19. Turn a deaf ear to: to pretend not to have heard sth

I turned a deaf ear to the complaints made by my next-door neighbor.

20. Turn one's stomach: to make one feel sick or have a very unpleasant feeling

Seeing the dead cat on the road turned my stomach badly.

21. Turn tail: to run away from danger or trouble

When we faced those wild dogs, we got frightened and decided to turn tail.

22. Under one's thumb: it shows to have control over somebody

She had her husband under her thumb. In fact, here husband is a hen-pecked man.

23. Under the weather: not feeling well

I have been feeling under the weather recently and won't come to the party tonight.

24. Upper hand: power, advantage

For its political and military power, the US has usually the upper hand in the world.

25. Upset the applecart: to ruin some plan or situation completely

Everything was going well until you came in and upset the applecart.

26. Vanish into the air: to disappear completely

I can't find my wallet anywhere. It just vanished into the air

27. Wash one's hands of something: stop taking responsibility of sth anymore

After facing some overwhelming problems, I decided to wash my hands of the project.

28. Wear more than one hat: to have more than one job, position, responsibility

Some politicians in Iran wear many hats and have several positions.

29. Wet blanket: it refers to one who disappoints others all the time

You should refrain from talking to him since he is such a wet blanket.

30. Wheel and deal: to do some dishonest and hidden activities to get sth done

If you don't wheel and deal, you won't be able to do any jobs in this country.

31. Wig out: to become very anxious or upset or afraid

Nobody knows what happened that Daniel wiggled out at the end of the class.

Some Proverbs

32. When in Rome, do as Romans do: try to follow the norms and conventions of a group/society, (don't be a black sheep)

33. Where there is a will, there is a way: by having enough motivation, and setting your goals, you can reach your goals at last.

34. Wishes don't wash the dishes: Action is needed to get things done, not just talking about them, or making wishes for them to be done

35. Wolf doesn't eat wolf: there is an honor among thieves; members of the same family/group don't harm each other.

36. You are a back-seat driver: it's to criticize somebody who just gives advice to others about how to do sth when such recommendations are not welcomed.