

# a non-romantic valentine inspired lesson

## B2-C1 IDIOMS & CONVERSATION



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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

What is an idiom?

Think of an idiom in your native language. What does it mean?

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What images pop into your head when you think about Valentine's Day?

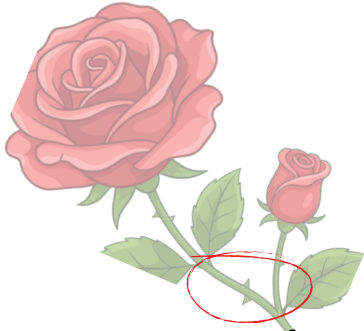
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Flowers/Gifts don't have to be romantic. Think of other situations in which these items could be appropriate. Draw and/or write.

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# idioms

## FLOWERS/NATURE

- *every rose has its thorn*    nothing is perfect
- *stop & smell the roses*    slow down & enjoy life
- *coming up roses*    everything is going well
- *nip it in the bud*    stop a problem early
- *a late bloomer*    someone who develops later in life
- *bloom where you're planted*  
make the best of your situation

Fill in the blank with the appropriate idiom.

You may need to change the subject pronoun.

1. After years of struggling in school, she finally found her confidence and realised she was just a \_\_\_\_\_.
2. The new project seemed risky at first, but everything has been \_\_\_\_\_ since the team changed direction.
3. I was constantly stressed and rushing, so I decided to slow down and \_\_\_\_\_ more often.
4. The manager noticed small conflicts early and managed to \_\_\_\_\_ before they affected the whole team.
5. The job looks perfect from the outside, but remember that \_\_\_\_\_ — there are always some challenges.
6. When he moved abroad, he focused on adapting and making the most of his situation, choosing to \_\_\_\_\_.

What are these people doing? How might they be feeling?  
Use flowers/nature idioms to describe the situations.



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# idioms

## GIFTS/OBJECTS

- **the icing on the cake** an extra positive detail
- **cherry picking** choosing the most favorable (with a biased view)
- **a mixed bag** something with both positive & negative aspects
- **bear with me** be patient and wait for me
- **come with strings attached**  
involve hidden conditions/obligations
- **that's the way the cookie crumbles**  
that's just the way things happen

Fill in the blank with the appropriate idiom.

You may need to change the form of the verb.

1. I know the instructions are confusing, so please \_\_\_\_\_ while I explain step by step.
2. The conference was interesting, but the sessions were \_\_\_\_\_ — some were really useful, others a bit dull.
3. The company offered me a free trial, but it really \_\_\_\_\_ — I had to sign up for a yearly subscription.
4. She only included the positive reviews in her report — she was clearly \_\_\_\_\_ to make the product look better.
5. I didn't get the promotion, but \_\_\_\_\_ — there's nothing I could have done.
6. The team finished the project on time, and winning the client's praise was just \_\_\_\_\_ on top.

What are these people doing? How might they be feeling?  
Use gifts/objects idioms to describe the situations.

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# idioms

## EMOTIONS/RELATIONSHIPS

- *wear your heart on your sleeve* show emotions openly
- *at arm's length* keep emotional distance
- *lose heart* become discouraged



Fill in the blank with the appropriate idiom.  
You may need to change the possessive pronoun.

1. After several rejections, he started to \_\_\_\_\_ and questioned whether the goal was worth pursuing.
2. She tends to \_\_\_\_\_, so it's easy to tell when something excites or upsets her.
3. He's friendly at work, but he keeps colleagues \_\_\_\_\_ and avoids sharing personal details.

- Describe a time when you wore your heart on your sleeve.
- Describe a situation where you kept someone at arm's length.
- Talk about a moment when you almost lost heart, but didn't.

# idioms

## CARDS/WORDS

- *read between the lines* find the hidden meaning
- *put your cards on the table* be honest & direct
- *play your cards right* act strategically

Fill in the blank with the appropriate idiom.  
You may need to change the possessive pronoun.

1. We spent weeks guessing what each side wanted, so finally we decided to \_\_\_\_\_ and discuss expectations openly.
2. He didn't say it directly, but if you \_\_\_\_\_, it's clear he wasn't happy with the decision.
3. She wasn't the most qualified candidate, but she managed to \_\_\_\_\_ and secured the role anyway.

- Describe a time when you (didn't) read between the lines.
- Describe a situation where you put your cards on the table.
- Talk about a moment when you played your cards right.



# idioms

## PRACTICE

Match each situation to the appropriate idiom. Explain why they match.

- He didn't say he was unhappy, but his tone and body language made the message clear.
- The manager decided it was time to be completely honest about the budget problems.
- He stayed polite but avoided sharing personal details with his colleagues.
- After several failed attempts, she started to feel discouraged and considered giving up.
- The job offer was good overall, but not perfect.
- He waited for the right moment, negotiated calmly, and got exactly what he wanted.

- *every rose has its thorn* nothing is perfect
- *stop & smell the roses* slow down & enjoy life
- *coming up roses* everything is going well
- *nip it in the bud* stop a problem early 
- *a late bloomer* someone who develops later in life
- *bloom where you're planted* make the best of your situation
- *read between the lines* find the hidden meaning
- *put your cards on the table* be honest & direct
- *play your cards right* act strategically
- *the icing on the cake* an extra positive detail
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- *wear your heart on your sleeve* show emotions openly
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# idioms

## PRACTICE

Rewrite/Reword each sentence twice:

a) using different words (no idiom)

b) using one idiom from this lesson

1. She didn't say she disagreed, but her email suggested otherwise.
2. The company decided to be completely honest about the delays.
3. He behaved politely, but he avoided getting emotionally involved.
4. After several unsuccessful attempts, she started to feel discouraged.
5. The experience had both positive and negative aspects.
6. The flexible schedule was an extra benefit that made the job even better.
7. He waited for the right moment & made smart decisions to reach his goal.
8. Not everything goes as planned, and sometimes you just have to accept the outcome.

### ENGLISH WITH SHOLA - PRO TIP

Search idioms on [Youghlish.com](https://www.youghlish.com) to hear various accents of speakers using these expressions in speeches and conversations.

### **Speaking Prompts**

Teacher says the prompt. Students decide which **idiom** is appropriate for the situation and then use the idiom in their response. (Teacher could assign the same prompt to small groups, and then after presentations, the class votes on the best responses and must explain why. Teacher could assign different prompts to small groups to allow for more variety in presentations.)

- 1 Describe a time when you understood something someone didn't say directly.
- 2 Tell about a moment when being honest helped solve a problem.
- 3 Talk about a person you keep at arm's length and why.
- 4 Describe a time you almost gave up, but kept trying.
- 5 Share an experience that had both good and bad parts.
- 6 Talk about a time something unexpected made a situation even better.
- 7 Describe a moment when you acted strategically and it paid off.
- 8 Tell about a time something didn't go as planned.
- 9 Describe a situation when you showed your feelings openly.
- 10 Talk about an offer or opportunity that seemed good but had hidden conditions.
- 11 Have you ever focused only on the best parts of something and ignored the rest?
- 12 Share a moment when you stopped to enjoy life or appreciate something simple.