Idioms and phrases for NDA and CDS English

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What Are Idioms and Phrases?

Idioms and phrases are expressions that have meanings different from their literal interpretation. They add creativity, color, and cultural depth to a language, making communication more engaging and expressive.

- **Idioms** are fixed expressions whose meanings cannot be understood from the individual words. For example, *"Break the ice"* doesn't literally mean breaking ice but refers to starting a conversation in a social setting.
- **Phrases** are groups of words that work together to create meaning but may not always be idiomatic. They can include common expressions like *"in a nutshell"* (meaning a brief summary).

Both idioms and phrases help make language more natural and interesting. They are commonly used in spoken and written English to express ideas in a more vivid and imaginative way.

Here are 20 idioms and phrases along with their meanings and usage examples:

1. **Break the ice**
   Meaning: To initiate conversation in a social setting
   Example: The teacher told a joke to break the ice on the first day of school.

2. **Hit the nail on the head**
   Meaning: To describe exactly what is causing a situation or problem
   Example: When John said the project failed due to lack of planning, he hit the nail on the head.

3. **Bite the bullet**
   Meaning: To endure a painful or difficult situation bravely
   Example: I hate injections, but I had to bite the bullet and get vaccinated.

4. **Burn the midnight oil**
   Meaning: To work late into the night
   Example: She burned the midnight oil to finish her thesis before the deadline.

5. **A blessing in disguise**
   Meaning: Something that seems bad at first but turns out to be good
   Example: Losing that job was a blessing in disguise because I found a better one.

6. **Throw in the towel**
   Meaning: To give up or surrender
   Example: After several failed attempts, he finally threw in the towel on his startup idea.

7. **The ball is in your court**
   Meaning: It is now your decision or responsibility
   Example: I have done my part of the project; now the ball is in your court.

8. **Let the cat out of the bag**
   Meaning: To reveal a secret unintentionally
   Example: Jane let the cat out of the bag about the surprise party.

9. **A piece of cake**
   Meaning: Something very easy to do
   Example: The test was a piece of cake; I finished it in 10 minutes.

10. **Under the weather**
    Meaning: Feeling sick or unwell
    Example: I won't be coming to work today because I'm feeling under the weather.

11. **Kill two birds with one stone**
    Meaning: To accomplish two tasks with a single action
    Example: By studying while commuting, she kills two birds with one stone.

12. **Go the extra mile**
    Meaning: To make an extra effort to achieve something
    Example: The customer service team went the extra mile to resolve my issue.

13. **Barking up the wrong tree**
    Meaning: Pursuing a mistaken or misguided course of action
    Example: If you think I took your book, you are barking up the wrong tree.

14. **Spill the beans**
    Meaning: To reveal secret information
    Example: Don't spill the beans about the surprise gift for Dad!

15. **Once in a blue moon**
    Meaning: Something that happens very rarely
    Example: He visits his hometown once in a blue moon.

16. **Cut to the chase**
    Meaning: To get to the point without unnecessary details
    Example: We don't have much time, so let's cut to the chase.

17. **Hit the sack**
    Meaning: To go to bed
    Example: I'm really tired, so I'm going to hit the sack now.

18. **Pull someone's leg**
    Meaning: To tease or joke with someone
    Example: I thought he was serious, but he was just pulling my leg.

19. **Face the music**

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Meaning: To accept the consequences of one’s actions
Example: He was caught cheating and had to face the music.

20. **Cry over spilled milk**
Meaning: To be upset over something that cannot be changed
Example: There’s no use crying over spilled milk; let’s find a solution.

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