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# Getting started

## What is an idiom?

An idiom is a phrase with a special meaning, like **over the moon** or **pulling someone's leg**.

**I'm over the moon** means *I'm very pleased*.

**I'm just pulling your leg** means *I'm joking*.

When you see or hear an idiom, you may know all the words in it (*over, moon, pull* etc.) but you may not know what the idiom means.

## Why are idioms useful?

Idioms are very common in spoken English and informal written English, so it is important – and fun – to learn some of them.

In spoken English, they are used in most situations, from friendly conversations to business meetings.

In written English, they are especially common in newspapers because the writers want to make the headlines and articles interesting and lively.

### **What will I learn from this book?**

You will not learn old-fashioned idioms like **raining cats and dogs!** You will learn idioms that are frequently used in modern everyday English.

This book concentrates on about 130 of the most commonly used idioms.

The idioms are all contained in short, entertaining texts, so that you can easily see the meaning of each idiom and how it is used.

The **Index** at the back lists the idioms in alphabetical order, with further examples, and provides space to write a translation in your own language.

### **How to use the book**

You can just read and enjoy the texts, learning as you read, or help yourself to remember the idioms like this:

- Read a text page and make sure you understand the three (or four) idioms on it.
- Find the idioms in the **Index** at the back of the book and translate them into your language. When you have finished a chapter, think about the review questions at the end of the chapter. You can check your answers in the **Answers** section at the back of the book.

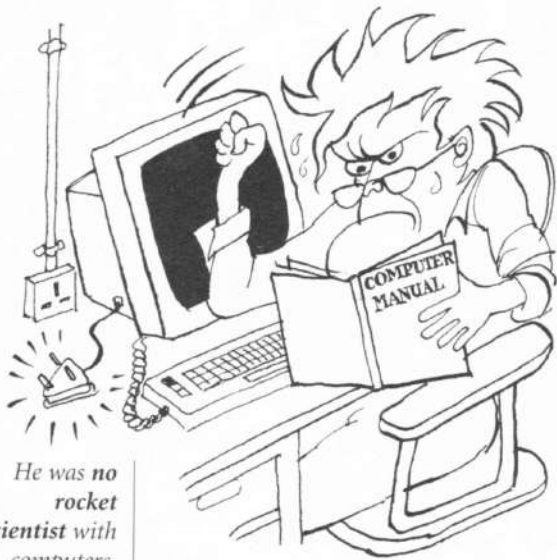
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# People

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# Types of people



*He was no  
rocket  
scientist with  
computers.*

Does it matter if someone says you're **no rocket scientist**? Yes, it does! This phrase means *not very intelligent*.

What if a newspaper describes a politician as a **dark horse**? This means *nobody knows much about him*.

And a **party pooper**? This means a *person who spoils enjoyable activities by refusing to join in*. This idiom is also useful in apologies: 'I'm sorry to be a party pooper, but I have to go home now.'

**no  
rocket  
scientist**

not very  
intelligent  
person

**dark  
horse**

secretive  
person

**party  
pooper**

person who  
spoils fun

# Brains and beauty



*Her car  
turned  
almost as  
many heads  
as she did.*



A Hollywood actress once met the British philosopher, Bertrand Russell. Whereas he was quite ugly, she **turned heads** wherever she went. She was rather **full of herself** and said to Russell, 'They say I'm the most beautiful woman in the world, and I hear you're the smartest man. Imagine if we had a child with your brains and my beauty.'

Russell, who was never **lost for words**, replied, 'Imagine if it had my beauty and your brains.'

**turn heads**

attract a lot of attention

**full of yourself**

too pleased with yourself

**lost for words**

not knowing what to say

# Larger than life

*James Bond, the larger-than-life secret agent, was first played by Sean Connery.*



Say 'Sean Connery' to **the man in the street** and he'll probably say 'James Bond'. The famous British secret agent, 007, has been played by six actors in the last forty years, but Connery was the original and probably the best. He was **larger than life** both on the screen and **in the flesh**. Even in his 60s, he was chosen by the readers of an international women's magazine as *The World's Most Attractive Man*.

**the man in the street**

an average person

**larger than life**

more exciting than normal

**in the flesh**

as a real person

# Twins

