

# Essential Business English Idioms



## A ballpark figure

An approximate number or estimate.

### Origin:

*This idiom comes from baseball, where the ballpark is a large area, suggesting a rough estimate.*

*e.g.: Can you give me a ballpark figure for the project costs?*

YOUR EXAMPLE

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## Back to square one

To go back to the beginning, right where we started.

### Origin:

*This idiom comes from football radio commentaries, where they mentally divided the football pitch into numbered grids and "square #1" was in front of the home team's goal.*

*e.g.: The client rejected our proposal, so it's back to square one.*

YOUR EXAMPLE

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## Bite the bullet

To endure a painful or difficult situation that is unavoidable.

### Origin:

*Historically, soldiers would bite on a bullet during surgery to endure the pain.*

*e.g.: We'll have to bite the bullet and accept the budget cuts.*

YOUR EXAMPLE

## Cut corners

To do something in the easiest, quickest, or cheapest way, often sacrificing quality.

**Origin:**

*It likely comes from carpentry or similar trades where cutting corners can compromise the integrity of the work.*

*e.g.: We can't afford to cut corners on this project; quality is paramount.*

YOUR EXAMPLE

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## Hit the ground running

To start something and proceed at a fast pace with enthusiasm and readiness.

**Origin:**

*It probably comes from military parachuting, where soldiers needed to be ready to move quickly upon landing.*

*e.g.: We need someone who can hit the ground running with this new initiative.*

YOUR EXAMPLE

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## In the driver's seat

To be in control of a situation.

**Origin:**

*It comes from the idea of driving a vehicle and being in control of its direction.*

*From now on, you're in the driver's seat for the firm's future direction.*

YOUR EXAMPLE

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## On the same page

To have a shared understanding or agreement about something.

**Origin:**

*It comes from the idea of everyone reading from the same page of a book or document to ensure alignment.*

*e.g.: Before we proceed, let's make sure we're all on the same page.*

YOUR EXAMPLE

## Put all your eggs in one basket

To risk everything on a single venture or course of action.

**Origin:**

*If all eggs are in one basket and it drops, all eggs are lost.*

*e.g.: Diversify your investments; don't put all your eggs in one basket.*

YOUR EXAMPLE

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## The bottom line

The most important or fundamental aspect of something.

**Origin:**

*It comes from accounting, where the bottom line shows the net income or profit.*

*e.g.: The bottom line is that we need to increase sales to stay profitable.*

YOUR EXAMPLE

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## To be at stake

In danger of being lost.

**Origin:**

*It likely comes from ancient practice of watching dogs fight a staked bear after placing bets.*

*e.g.: We can't give up now. The entire company is at stake.*

YOUR EXAMPLE

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## Throw in the towel

To quit or give up something.

**Origin:**

*It comes from boxing, in which a fighter indicates surrender by throwing a towel into the ring.*

*e.g.: It's too early to throw in the towel. We still have a chance to win the bid.*

YOUR EXAMPLE