

Idioms from Recreation



Reading

Read the story. Then discuss the questions.

A Person on the Ball

We always knew what our boss, Winona, was thinking. **Right off the bat**, as soon as she walked through the door, she'd let you know what she wanted you to do. Her style was clear, direct, and open. She always **put her cards on the table**.

If you did something wrong or said something inappropriate, Winona told you that you were **off base**. If she thought you were doing well and **on the ball**, she told you that, too. And when she said no, she meant no. **No dice**. Not many people argued with Winona and won. But I think she really enjoyed people who would stand up to her and give their own opinions. I think she secretly **got a kick out of it**.

1. **Right off the bat** is an idiom from baseball, in which a player hits a ball with a bat. If you do something right off the bat, when do you do it?
2. If you are **on the ball**, do you do things well?
3. If you **get a kick out of something**, do you enjoy it? What things do you get a kick out of?

Meanings

Each example has an idiom with a word from a recreation or sport. Read the example carefully to find the meaning of the idiom. Then look at the definitions that follow the examples. Write the idiom next to its definition.

to get a kick out of something	I really get a kick out of Lisa's jokes. She always makes me laugh.
to go fly a kite	I'm tired of listening to you complain. Stop bothering me. Why don't you just go fly a kite ?
a good sport	I beat Albert five times at video games today, but he's such a good sport that he bought us a pizza afterward.
in the same boat	Now that we're both out of work, we're in the same boat .
to keep the ball rolling	Let's keep the ball rolling . We're off to a good start, but we still need to collect more money to get videotape machines for our school.
no dice	Tom wanted the party to be at my apartment, but I said no dice .
off base	You're off base with that answer. Try again.
on the ball	Sophie is an excellent manager. She really knows how to organize things and get things done. She is really on the ball .
to put one's cards on the table	Let me put my cards on the table . Either we sell more or we'll have to close the business.
right off the bat	Una looked at the math problem for just a minute, and she got the correct answer right off the bat .
sink or swim	We're going to do our best to start our own restaurant, sink or swim .

1. _____ very good at doing things, effective and efficient
2. _____ immediately, without delay
3. _____ to enjoy something a lot
4. _____ no, a negative answer
5. _____ someone who does not complain if he or she loses or who does not boast if he or she wins

6. _____ not to hide anything, to explain
the situation fully and honestly
7. _____ not correct, inappropriate
8. _____ in the same situation
9. _____ to make something continue to happen
10. _____ to go away or stop annoying someone,
usually said in anger
11. _____ fail or succeed, no matter what

Practice

A. Answer each question with **yes** or **no**. Explain your answer.

1. Can we keep the ball rolling if everyone helps?
2. The bank said no dice about the loan. Is that good news?
3. Angel always complains when he loses at tennis. Is he a good sport?
4. If you tell someone to go fly a kite, are you being rude?
5. Are you off base if you give a really wrong answer?
6. Bernard seldom does a good job with anything. Is he on the ball?
7. If I wrote to you right off the bat, did I wait to do it?
8. If you put your cards on the table, do you hide anything?
9. If you get a kick out of something, do you enjoy it?
10. If we're in the same boat, do we have the same problem?
11. Dalia isn't the strongest runner, but she's training hard to make the track team. Is she determined to try to make the team, sink or swim?

B. Complete each example with an idiom from this unit.

1. We'll keep trying to find a way to solve the problem, but at the moment, I don't know if we'll
_____.
2. Jack is a _____. He never gets upset when he loses.

3. Anthony is _____. He knows how to get things done well.
4. My father wouldn't lend us the money. He said _____.
5. I was so angry at Jimmy, I told him to _____.
6. Don't tell me you're having a hard time, too. We're _____.
7. To finish this job, we need to _____.
8. Some people really _____ watching football.
9. I started to work on the project, but I ran into a problem _____ and stopped.
10. I think that you're _____ by saying that sports are not useful or important.
11. I'm _____. There's no point in hesitating any longer.



Conversation

Practice each conversation with a partner.

SITUATION 1

Two people are discussing a problem.

HENRY: Stop complaining. We're all in the same boat.

MARY: But you told me to put my cards on the table.

HENRY: Yes, but complaining doesn't help.

SITUATION 2

The conversation continues.

MARY: Well, I think you were off base to tell me not to complain.

HENRY: Really? I was just saying what I think.

SITUATION 3

The conversation continues.

MARY: Do you get a kick out of arguing?

HENRY: I'm not the one who's arguing. You are.

MARY: Go fly a kite!

On Your Own

Work with a partner. Choose three idioms. Write a short conversation for each idiom. Then act out your conversations.

Discussion

Work with a partner or in a small group. Do the following activities.

1. The idioms in this unit all use words from recreation or sports. Do you know any other English idioms with words from recreation or sports?
2. Are there idioms that use words from recreation or sports in your native language? Are any idioms like the ones in English?
3. Look over the list of idioms. Some of them come from specific sports. For example, several come from baseball. Can you identify the idioms that come from specific sports? Which sports are they?
4. If you are never **on the ball** because your information is **off base**, do you think you'll **sink or swim**?
5. Some people do not complain if they win or lose. They're **good sports**. Describe a situation where someone was a good sport.