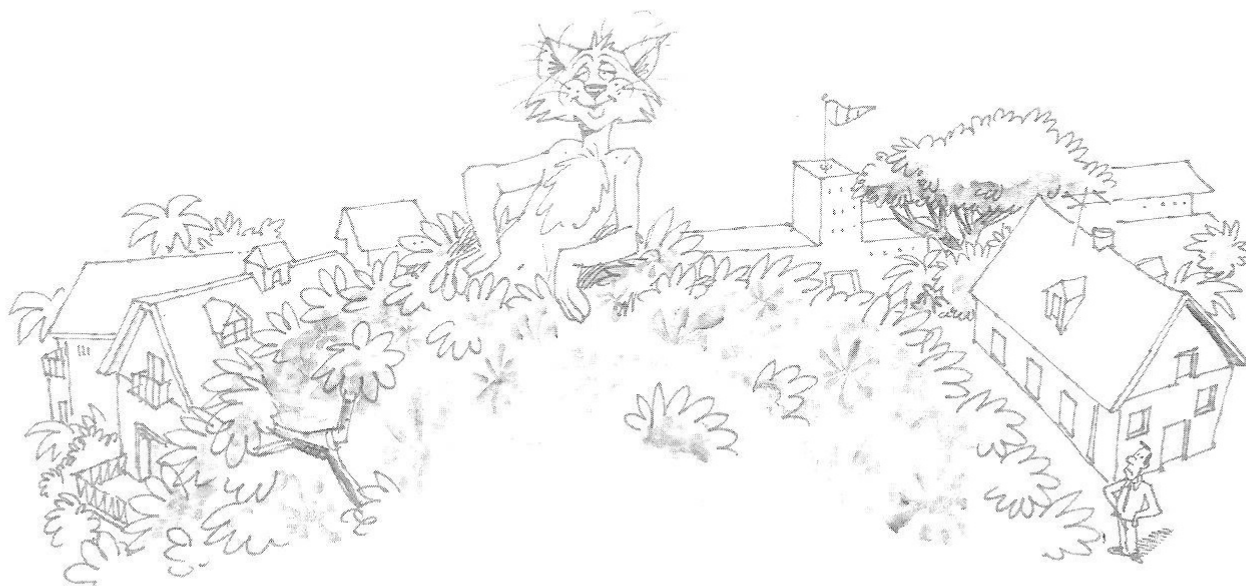


Idioms from Time



Reading

Read the story. Then discuss the questions.

Cat Time

My cat is an expert at waiting for things to happen. Waiting around and **kill time** is her specialty. She watches the birds in the backyard for a couple of hours at a time.

Like all cats, she never makes plans. She'll do many things **on the spur of the moment**. For example, if she suddenly feels that **the time is right**, she'll try to go fishing in my fish tank.

Her favorite hobby is tree climbing. Give her a dangerous tree and she won't hesitate. **In no time**, I'll have to call the fire department to come and get her down. When she hears the fire engine, she gets scared and jumps out of the tree. She always lands on her four feet **in the nick of time**—just before she hits the ground. Then she walks away as if there's no problem.

1. When you **kill time**, what are you doing? What do you do when you want to kill time?

2. When you do something **on the spur of the moment**, do you plan it in advance? When is the last time you went somewhere on the spur of the moment?
3. If you do something **in the nick of time**, do you do it before it's too late or after it's too late?

Meanings

Each example has an idiom with time. 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.

the big time	Mafalda used to work in a supermarket. Then she hit the big time and she got a job as the star actress in a movie.
to call it a day	When I finish writing this composition, I'm going to call it a day and go to bed.
for the time being	We have no extra money. So for the time being , we can't move to a nicer apartment.
high time	It's high time we bought a new car. The old one keeps dying out on the highway.
in no time	When Sid got sick suddenly, we called the emergency number and the paramedics were here in no time .
in the nick of time	The vase was just about to fall off the sink, but she grabbed it in the nick of time , so it didn't break.
to kill time	We were a half hour early for the movie. To kill time , we went to the fast-food restaurant next door for a cup of coffee.
to make time	I was planning to work on my report all day, but I'll make time in the morning to meet with you and discuss the problem.
on the spur of the moment	They didn't plan to go away for the weekend. They decided to go to the mountains on the spur of the moment .
to take one's time	It's better to take your time when doing tests than to hurry and make mistakes.
the time is right	The time is right to invest in a house because real estate prices are low now.

1. _____ to waste time, waiting for something else to happen
2. _____ quickly
3. _____ immediately, without planning

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|-----------|---|
| 4. _____ | it is a good time to do something |
| 5. _____ | just before it is too late |
| 6. _____ | not to hurry |
| 7. _____ | to do something although you did not plan it and you are already busy |
| 8. _____ | almost too late to do something |
| 9. _____ | a high level of success |
| 10. _____ | to stop doing something |
| 11. _____ | temporarily, just for the present moment |

Practice

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

1. Fernando had half a tank of gasoline, but he still went to the gas station to fill his tank up. Did he go just in the nick of time?
2. Claudia was very busy when I gave her my letter to type. She said it wasn't a problem and typed it immediately. Did Claudia make time to type my letter?
3. It was six o'clock in the evening. We were very tired, but we were determined to finish the project, even if it meant staying up all night. Did we call it a day at six?
4. Joanna wrote a romance novel, and she suddenly became famous and very rich. Did she hit the big time?
5. We had nothing to do on the long train trip, so we played cards. Did we play cards to kill time?
6. When we called room service at the hotel to get some coffee, it came two hours later. Did it come in no time?
7. There's no safe place to sit on Tony's sofa. It's falling to pieces. Is it high time he got a new one?
8. We always plan our vacation at least six months ahead of time. Do we go on vacation on the spur of the moment?
9. Car prices are at their lowest. Is the time right to buy a new car?
10. We were already twenty minutes late, but Jackie still didn't rush to get ready. Did she take her time?
11. Irina was thinking about moving to the suburbs, but she's decided to stay in the city for a while. Is she staying in the city for the time being?

B. Each example has the correct idiom, but there is one error with each idiom. Find the error and correct it.

1. It's higher time he got himself a job.
2. I think we've done a lot of work. Let's call a day.
3. We're staying at my sister's house for the time be.
4. The police came at no time.
5. We watched TV to kill the time, while we waited for the cab.
6. That singer is in big time now.
7. Robin made time to check over my composition.
8. We went to the movies on the spur of moment.
9. He came with the money in nick of time.
10. The times is right to buy a house.
11. I like to take my times in the morning and not hurry off to work.



Conversation

Practice each conversation with a partner.

SITUATION 1

Ntozake is talking to her secretary at the office.

NTOZAKE: Ginny, I wonder if you could type this memo for me.

GINNY: I can do it in no time.

NTOZAKE: No need to hurry. Take your time.

SITUATION 2

Pat and Joyce are going to see a movie.

PAT: We're almost one hour early. What should we do to kill time?

JOYCE: Well, there's a coffee shop across the street.

PAT: Great! We can take our time over a cup of coffee.

SITUATION 3

Tim and Ben are working together on a project at the office.

TIM: I'm really tired.

BEN: Me too. Let's leave the project as it is for the time being.

TIM: I'm glad you want to call it a day too.

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 use words with time. Do you know any other idioms in English that use words with time?
2. When you have time and nothing special to do, you **kill time**. How do people kill time in your native country?
3. **In the nick of time** means just before it's too late. Tell a story using this idiom.