

UNIT 15

Idioms from the Weather



Reading

Read the story. Then discuss the questions.

A Breeze

For some folks, everything is easy. Life is a **breeze**. They're always healthy. They're never **under the weather**. If they walk into a room full of strangers, they make friends in five minutes. They have no trouble **breaking the ice**. They earn enough to save some money every week. They're **saving money for a rainy day**. So if trouble ever does come, they'll be able **to weather the storm**. Yes, some people have no problems if times are good or bad. They're okay **come rain or shine**.

1. If something is a **breeze**, is it easy or hard for you to do? What things are a breeze for you?
2. If you're **under the weather**, how do you feel?
3. When you **break the ice**, what do you do?

Meanings

Each example has an idiom from the weather. 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 break the ice	Cedric is very shy. If he goes to a party where he doesn't know anyone, he finds it very hard to break the ice .
a breeze	Because I studied English every day, the exam was a breeze .
come rain or shine	Uncle Jeremiah lives two hundred miles away, but he'll be at my birthday party come rain or shine .
a fair-weather friend	Judy showed that she was just a fair-weather friend . When I needed help on my report, she refused.
full of hot air	Many politicians are full of hot air . They make promises, but they don't keep them.
to have one's head in the clouds	I don't think Celia understands that she's in danger of not passing the course. She seems to have her head in the clouds .
to rain cats and dogs	It must be raining cats and dogs outside. The rain's pounding on the roof.
to save something for a rainy day	Hank makes only four hundred dollars a week, but every week he saves forty for a rainy day .
snowed under	I have to stay late at the office tonight and finish some things because I'm snowed under with work.
under the weather	Berta was feeling under the weather , so she didn't go to work.
to weather the storm	Our business has had a lot of problems this year. But I'm sure things will be okay if we can weather the storm for just a few more months.

1. _____ something easy for a person to do
2. _____ sick
3. _____ to begin a conversation with a stranger
4. _____ no matter how hard it is to do
5. _____ to prepare for trouble, usually by saving money
6. _____ to wait and be patient until things get better
7. _____ talking a lot but never doing what one says

8. _____ not to know or understand what is going on
9. _____ to rain very hard
10. _____ having a lot of work to do
11. _____ a person who doesn't help when a friend is in trouble

Practice

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

1. In the first year, the business didn't do well, but the second year it did better. Did the business weather the storm?
2. The rain was very light, so Tim went jogging as usual. Was it raining cats and dogs when Tim went jogging?
3. A teenager and an older woman were sitting opposite each other in a train compartment. After about two hours, the teenager asked the woman if she was going to New Jersey, and the woman answered. Did the teenager break the ice?
4. Julia has two big assignments due next Monday, and she's just starting on them. Is she snowed under?
5. The politician promised no taxes and free health care for everybody. But when she was elected, she didn't keep the promises. Was she full of hot air?
6. Rob doesn't have any money saved. He spends everything. Does he save something for a rainy day?
7. Louisa lent me some money when I needed it to pay my tuition bill. Was she a fair-weather friend?
8. Penny thought she was getting a cold and didn't go out with her friends last night. Was she feeling under the weather?
9. Geraldo is gifted at learning languages. After six months in the United States, he spoke perfect English. Was learning English a breeze for Geraldo?
10. You can always depend on Ngogi to do what he says. He keeps his promises even if it's hard for him. Does Ngogi keep his promises come rain or shine?
11. Some of my classmates don't think about or plan for the future. They seem to think everything will work out with no effort on their part. Do they have their heads in the clouds?



B. Complete the idiom in each example with the correct word or words.

1. Alexei wasn't shy and broke _____ ice at the party.
2. You can't go out. It's raining _____ and _____.
3. I should have finished this composition last week because now I'm snowed _____.
4. Sid doesn't seem to pay attention in class. He has his head _____ clouds.
5. I'll finish this come rain _____ shine.
6. Katrina's feeling _____ weather today.
7. You should save some for _____ rainy _____.
8. The entrance exam was _____ breeze.
9. We have no other choice but to weather _____.
10. Craig is full _____ hot _____.
11. Rosa helped me when I needed it. She was not a _____-weather friend.

Conversation

Practice each conversation with a partner.

SITUATION 1

Will is calling Angie in New York.

WILL: How's the weather in New York?

ANGIE: It's raining cats and dogs right now.

WILL: Do you think the weather will be better tomorrow when I get there?

ANGIE: The weather report says we'll be in for a cold spell starting tomorrow.

SITUATION 2

Bonnie calls her classmate Nancy.

BONNIE: I didn't see you in class today. Are you okay?

NANCY: I'm feeling a little under the weather.

BONNIE: I hope it's not serious.

NANCY: I think it's just the flu.

BONNIE: Well, take care and I hope you'll feel better soon.

SITUATION 3

Harry is asking Bob to play tennis.

HARRY: Are you coming to play tennis with us, Bob?

BOB: Sorry, I'm snowed under. I have to finish this work for tomorrow come rain or shine.

HARRY: Okay, Bob. I'll call you later.

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. Are there any idioms in your native language that use words related to weather? Are any idioms like the ones in English?
2. **Raining cats and dogs** is an idiom that describes the weather. What idioms do you use to describe the weather in your native language?
3. **To weather the storm** means to wait and be patient until things get better. Describe a situation where you had to weather the storm.
4. When you do something no matter how hard it is, you do it **come rain or shine**. When did you do something come rain or shine?