

100 Useful Idioms for the IELTS Speaking Test

bear in mind

Definition: remember or consider something.

1. Bear in mind that this happened a long time ago.
2. I have to bear my goals in mind all the time.
3. If you bear in mind the fact that exam results aren't the end of the world, you'll be less anxious.

at the end of the day

Definition: ultimately; when everything is considered.

1. We can discuss different options, but at the end of the day, it's your decision.
2. The project faced many challenges, but at the end of the day, we successfully completed it.
3. Sure, there might be disagreements, but at the end of the day, we're all on the same team.

the bottom line

Definition: the most important factor; the essential point.

1. When negotiating a contract, the bottom line is always the financial terms.
2. Forget about the details; what's the bottom line? Are we moving forward with the plan or not?
3. The bottom line is that hard work and dedication lead to success in any field.

take on board

Definition: to accept or consider information, feedback, or suggestions.

1. I appreciate your advice, and I'll take it on board when making my decision.
2. The manager encouraged the team to take the client's feedback on board for future improvements.
3. It's important for students to take constructive criticism on board to enhance their academic performance.

by and large

Definition: generally; for the most part.

1. By and large, people prefer to live in a peaceful and safe neighborhood.
2. The new policy has been well-received by employees, by and large.
3. By and large, the project was a success, despite a few minor setbacks.

take for granted

Definition: to assume something is true without questioning or appreciating it.

1. Don't take your friends for granted; let them know you appreciate them.
2. People often take good health for granted until they face illness.
3. It's easy to take the convenience of modern technology for granted.

along the lines of

Definition: similar to; in the same category or manner.

1. The new initiative is along the lines of our previous successful projects.
2. Let's create a plan along the lines of what we discussed in the meeting.
3. The artist's new collection is along the lines of abstract expressionism.

at the back of my mind

Definition: in one's thoughts, although not constantly at the forefront.

1. Even though I'm busy with work, my dream of traveling is always at the back of my mind.
2. The possibility of promotion is at the back of my mind as I take on new responsibilities.
3. The idea of starting a business has always been at the back of my mind.

sit on the fence

Definition: to remain neutral or undecided; not to take sides in a dispute.

1. In the debate, he chose to sit on the fence and listen to both arguments before forming an opinion.
2. Don't just sit on the fence; take a stance on the issues that matter to you.
3. The politician was criticized for constantly sitting on the fence and avoiding clear positions on important issues.

in the long run

Definition: over an extended period; considering the future.

1. Investing in education pays off in the long run with better job opportunities.
2. Quitting smoking may be challenging, but it's worth it for your health in the long run.
3. Consistent exercise may seem difficult now, but it's beneficial in the long run for overall well-being.

driving force

Definition: the main factor or motivation behind a particular action or process.

1. The desire to create positive change is the driving force behind her community involvement.
2. Innovation is the driving force that propels technology companies forward.
3. Economic growth can be the driving force for policy changes in a country.

on the face of it

Definition: based on what is immediately apparent or obvious.

1. On the face of it, the proposal seems like a viable solution to the problem.
2. The job may look simple on the face of it, but it involves complex tasks.
3. On the face of it, their relationship appears perfect, but there might be underlying issues.

in (the) light of

Definition: considering; taking into account.

1. In light of recent events, we need to reevaluate our safety measures.
2. The decision was made in the light of new information that came to light during the investigation.
3. In the light of your achievements, you've earned this opportunity for advancement.

come into play

Definition: to become relevant or applicable; to be actively involved in a situation.

1. When negotiations stalled, the mediator came into play to facilitate communication.
2. Flexibility comes into play when adapting to unexpected changes in the project.
3. Your problem-solving skills will come into play as you face various challenges.

gold standard

Definition: the best or most reliable example of something; a benchmark of excellence.

1. The restaurant's exceptional customer service has set a gold standard in the industry.
2. Their research methods are considered the gold standard in scientific inquiry.
3. The gold standard for professionalism is evident in his work ethic and interactions with colleagues.

what on earth...?

Definition: an expression of surprise or confusion, often used to ask about something unusual or unexpected.

1. What on earth are you doing with my phone? I never gave you permission.
2. What on earth possessed you to quit your job without having another one lined up?
3. What on earth happened to the car? It was fine yesterday.

go without saying

Definition: to be self-evident or obvious; to be understood without needing to be stated explicitly.

1. In a team, mutual respect should go without saying for effective collaboration.
2. It goes without saying that punctuality is crucial in a professional setting.
3. The importance of good communication skills should go without saying in any relationship.

trial and error

Definition: a problem-solving method that involves experimenting and learning from mistakes.

1. Building a successful business often requires a process of trial and error.
2. Learning a new skill involves a lot of trial and error before achieving proficiency.
3. The best way to find the right solution is through a combination of trial and error.

over the top

Definition: excessive; beyond what is reasonable or appropriate.

1. The party decorations were a bit over the top, but everyone enjoyed the festive atmosphere.
2. His reaction to the criticism was way over the top; there was no need for such a strong response.
3. The marketing campaign was considered over the top, leading to mixed reviews from consumers.

down the line

Definition: in the future; at a later time.

1. Investing in education pays off down the line with better job opportunities.
2. The decisions we make today will have repercussions down the line.
3. Consider the long-term effects of your actions down the line.

state of the art

Definition: using the latest and most advanced technology or design.

1. The new research facility is equipped with state-of-the-art equipment for cutting-edge experiments.
2. The smartphone boasts a state-of-the-art camera system, setting it apart from other models.
3. The company is committed to maintaining a state-of-the-art infrastructure to stay competitive in the market.

the man in the street

Definition: an ordinary person; the average member of the public.

1. The policy changes should be accessible and understandable to the man in the street.
2. It's important for politicians to connect with the concerns of the man in the street.
3. The man in the street may not be aware of the complexities involved in economic decisions.

Note: increasingly, we use the phrase “the man or woman in the street” because the original phrase “the man in the street” seems a bit sexist today.

stepping stone

Definition: a preliminary stage or a means of progress toward a goal.

1. Completing an internship can be a valuable stepping stone to securing a full-time job.
2. Learning a second language can be a stepping stone to understanding different cultures.
3. Each success in your career can serve as a stepping stone to achieving greater accomplishments.

from scratch

Definition: starting from the beginning; with no previous work or preparation.

1. The chef decided to bake the cake from scratch, using only basic ingredients.
2. Building a successful business requires careful planning and starting from scratch.

3. Writing a novel can be challenging, especially when you have to create the entire plot from scratch.

bridge the gap

Definition: to reduce the differences between two things or groups.

1. Educational programs aim to bridge the gap between students with different learning abilities.
2. The new policy is designed to bridge the gap between the rich and the poor.
3. Cross-cultural communication is crucial to bridge the gap between diverse teams.

the big picture

Definition: the overall perspective or full context of a situation.

1. It's important to focus on the big picture when making strategic decisions for the company.
2. In relationships, communication is key to understanding the big picture of each other's needs.
3. Climate change requires us to consider the big picture of global environmental challenges.

in the early days

Definition: during the initial or early stages of a period or process.

1. In the early days of the project, we faced numerous challenges but overcame them with teamwork.
2. The company struggled in the early days but eventually became a market leader.
3. In the early days of the internet, online communication was limited compared to today.

get one's head (a)round

Definition: to understand or come to terms with something.

1. It took me a while to get my head around the complex concepts presented in the lecture.
2. Understanding different cultural norms can be challenging, but it's essential to get your head around them.
3. Learning to use the new software was difficult, but I finally got my head around it.

go hand in hand with

Definition: to be closely associated or connected with.

1. Success often goes hand in hand with hard work and dedication.
2. Innovation goes hand in hand with curiosity and a willingness to take risks.
3. Personal development goes hand in hand with continuous learning and self-reflection.

keep an eye on

Definition: to watch or monitor closely.

1. As a manager, it's crucial to keep an eye on the team's progress and address any challenges.
2. Parents need to keep an eye on their children's online activities to ensure their safety.
3. Investors should keep an eye on market trends to make informed decisions.

hang on a minute

Definition: used to ask someone to wait or pause for a short time.

1. Hang on a minute, I need to grab my jacket before we leave.
2. Before you make a decision, hang on a minute and let me provide more information.
3. Hang on a minute, I think I left my keys inside the house.

on the spot

Definition: immediately; without delay.

1. When the client requested changes, the team had to make decisions on the spot.
2. The manager made a crucial decision on the spot during the emergency meeting.
3. In a job interview, you may be asked to solve a problem on the spot to assess your problem-solving skills.

get to grips with

Definition: to understand or become familiar with something challenging.

1. It took me some time to get to grips with the new software, but now I find it easy to use.
2. Students often struggle initially before getting to grips with complex academic concepts.
3. Getting to grips with a new language requires consistent practice and exposure.

go through the roof

Definition: to increase dramatically; to reach a very high level.

1. The demand for the product went through the roof after the successful marketing campaign.
2. When news of the price increase spread, customer complaints went through the roof.
3. The excitement in the room went through the roof when the team won the championship.

full circle

Definition: returning to the original point or situation.

1. After years of traveling, I found myself back in my hometown, completing the full circle.
2. The project's success brought the team full circle to the initial goals they set.
3. Life has a way of coming full circle, and experiences often connect in unexpected ways.

that's another story

Definition: used to indicate that there is more to a situation or topic than has been mentioned.

1. I can help with the basic tasks, but when it comes to advanced programming, that's another story.
2. The first part of the project went smoothly, but the challenges in the next phase are another story.
3. He's great at managing finances, but when it comes to investments, that's another story altogether.

how on earth...?

Definition: an expression of disbelief or surprise, often used to ask about something challenging or difficult.

1. How on earth did you manage to finish the project ahead of schedule?
2. How on earth can we solve this complex mathematical problem?
3. How on earth did you find my address in this big city?

cast one's mind back

Definition: to think and remember past events.

1. Let's cast our minds back to the time when we first started this project.
2. Cast your mind back to your childhood; what were your favorite hobbies?
3. I often cast my mind back to the moments that shaped my career.

last resort

Definition: the final option when all others have failed.

1. Filing for bankruptcy should be a last resort for struggling businesses.
2. Seeking legal action should be a last resort in resolving disputes.
3. Using force should always be the last resort in international conflicts.

ring a bell

Definition: to sound familiar; to trigger a memory.

1. The name doesn't ring a bell; have we met before?
2. The song playing in the background rings a bell from my high school days.
3. When you mentioned the incident, it didn't immediately ring a bell, but now I remember.

good old days

Definition: a period in the past that is remembered nostalgically as a time of happiness or success.

1. People often reminisce about the good old days when life seemed simpler.
2. The grandparents love telling stories about the good old days to their grandchildren.
3. Nostalgia often makes us long for the good old days, even if they weren't perfect.

grey area

Definition: an undefined or unclear situation that does not fit into conventional categories.

1. The legal issue falls into a grey area, making it challenging to determine the right course of action.
2. When it comes to ethics, there can be a grey area where right and wrong are not clearly defined.
3. The new policy left a grey area regarding employee responsibilities, leading to confusion.

out of the blue

Definition: unexpectedly; without warning.

1. She received a job offer out of the blue, completely changing her career path.
2. The accident happened out of the blue, leaving everyone in shock.
3. Receiving praise from the manager came out of the blue for the diligent employee.

golden age

Definition: a period in the past marked by great achievement, prosperity, or cultural flourishing.

1. Many consider the Renaissance to be a golden age of art and intellectual achievement.
2. The 1950s is often remembered as a golden age of economic growth and stability.
3. The company experienced a golden age during the 1990s, expanding rapidly.

touchy-feely

Definition: characterized by a tendency to express emotions openly and engage in physical contact.

1. The therapy session had a touchy-feely approach, encouraging participants to share their emotions.
2. Some people prefer a more direct communication style, while others appreciate a touchy-feely approach.
3. The team-building workshop aimed to create a more touchy-feely atmosphere in the workplace.

spring to mind

Definition: to come quickly and easily to one's thoughts or awareness.

1. When discussing eco-friendly options, solar power often springs to mind.
2. When asked about his favorite vacation destination, Hawaii immediately springs to mind.
3. Various solutions may spring to mind when brainstorming ways to improve efficiency.

have a stab at

Definition: to attempt or try something, often without certainty of success.

1. I've never played the guitar, but I'll have a stab at it during the music class.
2. Before asking for help, try to have a stab at solving the problem on your own.
3. Although I'm not an expert, I'll have a stab at fixing the computer issue.

get the picture

Definition: to understand the situation or concept.

1. I explained the instructions multiple times; do you finally get the picture?
2. After reviewing the presentation, do you get the picture of the project's goals?
3. It may take some time, but eventually, you'll get the picture of how the system works.

the high point

Definition: the most successful or exciting part of an event or experience.

1. Winning the championship was the high point of the team's season.
2. Graduating with honors was the high point of her academic journey.
3. The successful product launch marked the high point of the company's achievements.

do the job

Definition: to fulfill its purpose or meet expectations.

1. This simple tool may not look fancy, but it does the job efficiently.
2. The budget-friendly smartphone may not have all the latest features, but it does the job for basic needs.
3. A reliable coffee maker doesn't need fancy features; it just needs to do the job of brewing good coffee.

move the goalposts

Definition: to change the rules or conditions in a way that is unfair or makes it more difficult for someone to succeed.

1. Negotiating a contract became challenging when the other party attempted to move the goalposts at the last minute.
2. It's frustrating when the requirements for a project suddenly change, as if someone decided to move the goalposts.
3. Success is difficult to achieve when people keep moving the goalposts and raising expectations.

behind the scenes

Definition: activities or work that happens privately or secretly, not publicly visible.

1. While the actors perform on stage, there's a whole team working behind the scenes to ensure a smooth production.
2. The success of the event was thanks to the hard work of the team behind the scenes.
3. Much of the decision-making process occurs behind the scenes, away from the public eye.

on the back burner

Definition: postponed or temporarily set aside; not a current priority.

1. The project was put on the back burner as the team had to focus on urgent tasks.
2. Personal goals may be on the back burner during busy periods at work.
3. Due to budget constraints, the expansion plan was put on the back burner for the time being.

bog standard

Definition: basic, ordinary, or standard; without any special features.

1. The hotel room was bog standard, with no amenities or extra luxuries.
2. The computer came with bog-standard software; additional programs needed to be installed.
3. The car model is bog standard but reliable for everyday use.

out of one's hands

Definition: beyond one's control; unable to influence or manage a situation.

1. Once the decision is made by the committee, it's out of our hands.
2. The outcome of the court case is out of our hands; now we have to wait for the verdict.
3. When dealing with unpredictable circumstances, some things are simply out of your hands.

call the cavalry

Definition: to ask for help or assistance, often in a difficult or urgent situation.

1. The project was falling behind schedule, so we had to call the cavalry for additional manpower.
2. When the technical issue escalated, the IT department had to call the cavalry to resolve it.
3. Facing a challenging project, the manager decided to call the cavalry for expert advice.

beg the question

Definition: to assume something in the premise of a statement and then use that assumption as evidence for the argument.

1. The proposal begs the question of whether the company can afford such a significant investment.
2. Stating that the policy is effective begs the question of how success is measured.
3. When analyzing the report, it's essential not to beg the question by assuming the conclusions.

get something straight

Definition: to clarify or correct a misunderstanding; to make sure information is accurate.

1. Before we proceed, let's get something straight regarding the project timeline.
2. It's crucial to get something straight about the budget constraints before making decisions.
3. Let's get something straight: the success of the team is a collective effort.

boil down to

Definition: to simplify or reduce a complex situation to its essential elements or factors.

1. The argument may seem complicated, but it boils down to a disagreement over priorities.
2. Success in the project boils down to effective communication among team members.
3. When making decisions, it often boils down to weighing the pros and cons.

get one's act together

Definition: to organize oneself; to improve one's behavior or performance.

1. If you want to succeed in your career, you need to get your act together and stay focused.
2. After a period of procrastination, it's time to get your act together and meet the deadlines.
3. The team needs to get their act together for the upcoming project presentation.

fall into place

Definition: to become clear or understandable; to fit together harmoniously.

1. As we gathered more information, the pieces started to fall into place, revealing the solution.
2. After weeks of confusion, the plan finally fell into place, and everyone understood their roles.
3. Sometimes, ideas need time to mature before they fall into place for a successful project.

so far so good

Definition: expressing satisfaction with progress made up to a certain point.

1. The project is proceeding well, and so far, so good in terms of meeting deadlines.
2. The new employee has adapted quickly, and so far, so good in terms of their performance.
3. The changes implemented in the company have been effective; so far, so good.

in the same boat

Definition: facing the same challenges or difficulties as others.

1. During tough times, it helps to remember that we're all in the same boat.
2. Whether experienced or new to the job, we're all in the same boat when it comes to meeting targets.
3. The economic downturn affected everyone; we're all in the same boat trying to recover.

kicking and screaming

Definition: resisting or opposing something strongly and unwillingly.

1. The employees accepted the policy changes, but not without some kicking and screaming.
2. The teenager was dragged to the family event, kicking and screaming the entire way.
3. Implementing new procedures often faces kicking and screaming from those resistant to change.

rule of thumb

Definition: a general principle or guideline based on practical experience rather than strict rules.

1. A rule of thumb for investments is to diversify your portfolio for better risk management.
2. When estimating cooking times, a good rule of thumb is to check for doneness with a fork.
3. A rule of thumb in time management is to prioritize tasks based on urgency and importance.

put your finger on

Definition: to identify or pinpoint the exact nature of something.

1. I can't quite explain it, but there's something intriguing about the artwork; I can't put my finger on it.
2. When discussing the issues, he struggled to put his finger on the root cause.
3. It's challenging to put your finger on what makes a successful team, but it often comes down to effective communication.

go in one ear and out the other

Definition: to be quickly forgotten or not retained.

1. I explained the instructions, but it seems like it went in one ear and out the other.
2. The lecture was interesting, but most of the information probably went in one ear and out the other.
3. Advising someone who doesn't listen is like talking to a wall; everything goes in one ear and out the other.

in a nutshell

Definition: briefly summarized; in a few words.

1. To explain the complex concept, I'll put it in a nutshell: it's all about balance.
2. In a nutshell, the report highlights the key findings and recommendations.
3. To describe the project's goals, let me put it in a nutshell for you.

set the scene

Definition: to provide the background or context for a particular situation or event.

1. Before diving into the details, let's set the scene by understanding the historical context.
2. The introduction of the novel sets the scene for the upcoming events.
3. In a presentation, it's essential to set the scene to help the audience understand the topic.

make up one's mind

Definition: to reach a decision; to make a choice.

1. After considering the options, she finally made up her mind about the job offer.
2. It's time to make up your mind about the vacation destination; we need to book the tickets.
3. Making up your mind about the right course of action requires careful consideration.

get carried away

Definition: to become overly excited or enthusiastic, often to the point of losing control.

1. When shopping, it's easy to get carried away and buy more than you need.
2. During the celebration, the crowd got carried away with joy and laughter.
3. The speaker got carried away with passion, extending the presentation beyond the allotted time.

stand to reason

Definition: to be logical or reasonable; to make sense.

1. If you invest time in learning, it stands to reason that your skills will improve.
2. Considering the circumstances, it stands to reason that the team needs additional support.
3. It stands to reason that regular exercise contributes to better health.

devil's advocate

Definition: a person who takes a contrary position for the sake of argument or to challenge the prevailing opinion.

1. Before finalizing the decision, let's have someone play devil's advocate to explore potential drawbacks.
2. The team assigned one member to be the devil's advocate and question the proposed strategy.
3. Playing devil's advocate can uncover hidden risks and strengthen decision-making.

happily ever after

Definition: a conclusion or ending where everything is resolved satisfactorily; often associated with fairy tales.

1. The movie concluded with the characters living happily ever after, tying up all loose ends.
2. While life isn't always a fairy tale, some people do find their happily ever after in real relationships.
3. Despite challenges, the novel ends with the promise of a happily ever after for the main characters.

throw somebody in at the deep end

Definition: to involve someone in a challenging or difficult situation without much preparation.

1. The new employee was thrown in at the deep end, taking on complex tasks from the start.
2. To develop resilience, sometimes it's beneficial to throw students in at the deep end and let them face challenges.
3. Managers often throw team members in at the deep end to assess how well they handle pressure.

have a go

Definition: to try or attempt something.

1. Don't be afraid to have a go at solving the problem; you might come up with a creative solution.
2. Learning a new skill requires the willingness to have a go and make mistakes along the way.
3. Instead of watching from the sidelines, join the activity and have a go!

pat on the back

Definition: recognition or praise for a job well done.

1. After completing the project ahead of schedule, the team deserved a pat on the back.
2. Giving employees a pat on the back for their efforts can boost morale and motivation.
3. Sometimes, a simple pat on the back is enough to show appreciation for hard work.

sit on one's hands

Definition: to refrain from taking action; to do nothing in a situation that requires attention.

1. It's frustrating to watch the team struggle while management sits on their hands and avoids making decisions.
2. When faced with a crisis, effective leaders don't sit on their hands; they take proactive measures.
3. Instead of sitting on your hands, take initiative to address issues in the workplace.

throw up one's hands

Definition: to express frustration or resignation by raising one's hands in a gesture of surrender.

1. Faced with constant obstacles, he eventually threw up his hands in frustration and walked away.
2. When the project faced unexpected challenges, some team members were tempted to throw up their hands in defeat.
3. The manager resisted the urge to throw up her hands and instead sought alternative solutions.

watch this space

Definition: a statement indicating that there will be future developments or announcements.

1. The company teased a new product, asking customers to watch this space for an upcoming reveal.
2. The project is still in progress, and stakeholders are encouraged to watch this space for updates.
3. After hinting at potential changes, the team asked everyone to watch this space for exciting news.

get cracking

Definition: to start working on something with urgency or enthusiasm.

1. The deadline is approaching, so it's time to get cracking on the final stages of the project.
2. After a break, it's important to get cracking on your tasks to make up for lost time.
3. Don't procrastinate; get cracking on your goals to achieve success.

have a crack at

Definition: to try or attempt something, often with determination.

1. If you have an interest in photography, why not have a crack at capturing some beautiful shots?
2. Learning a new language can be challenging, but don't be afraid to have a crack at it.
3. Before seeking help, have a crack at solving the problem independently.

not to put too fine a point on it

Definition: used to emphasize a statement or opinion, often when expressing something directly.

1. Not to put too fine a point on it, but the project's success relies heavily on your contributions.
2. Let me not put too fine a point on it; your dedication is crucial for the team's achievement.
3. Not to put too fine a point on it, but your leadership has been instrumental in our progress.

give the game away

Definition: to reveal a secret or disclose information that was meant to be kept confidential.

1. Be careful not to give the game away before the official announcement.
2. Accidentally mentioning the surprise party plans might give the game away to the birthday person.
3. Keeping a poker face is essential to avoid giving the game away during negotiations.

get a move on

Definition: to hurry up; to start moving more quickly.

1. The train is about to depart, so we need to get a move on and board quickly.
2. The event starts in 10 minutes, so everyone, get a move on and take your seats.
3. If you want to finish the project on time, it's time to get a move on and increase the pace.

hand on heart

Definition: a gesture symbolizing sincerity or truthfulness, often used when making a promise or expressing honesty.

1. Hand on heart, I promise to deliver the project on schedule.
2. When asked about his involvement, he spoke with hand on heart, emphasizing his commitment.
3. Hand on heart, I can say that I did my best to fulfill the responsibilities.

put one's head above the parapet

Definition: to take a risk or make oneself visible, often in a challenging or difficult situation.

1. Despite potential backlash, the CEO decided to put his head above the parapet and address the company's challenges directly.
2. Employees who put their heads above the parapet and suggest innovative ideas are often rewarded.
3. When addressing controversial topics, individuals who put their heads above the parapet may face criticism.

a fair share

Definition: an amount that is considered reasonable or equitable.

1. Everyone should contribute a fair share of effort to ensure the success of the team.
2. In a partnership, both parties should benefit and bear a fair share of responsibilities.
3. Allocating resources based on each department's needs ensures a fair share for everyone.

to say the least

Definition: expressing an understatement; suggesting that the situation is even more extreme than described.

1. The meeting was unproductive, to say the least; we need to address communication issues.
2. The project faced numerous setbacks, to say the least, but we managed to overcome them.
3. His behavior was inappropriate, to say the least; it requires immediate intervention.

pick and choose

Definition: to select carefully from a range of options; to be selective.

1. With limited resources, we have to pick and choose our marketing strategies wisely.
2. When hiring, the company can afford to be picky and choose candidates with the right skills.
3. In a competitive market, consumers can pick and choose from various products and services.

at loggerheads

Definition: in a state of conflict or disagreement; unable to reach an agreement.

1. The two departments have been at loggerheads over budget allocations for months.
2. The negotiators are at loggerheads regarding the terms of the contract.
3. Finding common ground is challenging when parties are at loggerheads on key issues.

drag one's feet

Definition: to delay or procrastinate; to be slow or reluctant in taking action.

1. The project is behind schedule because some team members are dragging their feet.
2. Management's decision to expand has been delayed as they continue to drag their feet on the proposal.
3. To avoid dragging your feet on important tasks, prioritize and set deadlines.

in the driving seat

Definition: in control or in a position of authority; having the power to make decisions.

1. As the project manager, you're in the driving seat and responsible for steering the team toward success.
2. The CEO is in the driving seat, guiding the company's strategic direction.
3. Being in the driving seat comes with the responsibility of making crucial decisions.

go back to square one

Definition: to start over or return to the beginning of a process or project.

1. After the unexpected setback, the team had to go back to square one and reassess their strategy.
2. Receiving negative feedback on the prototype meant we had to go back to square one in the design process.
3. When faced with insurmountable challenges, sometimes it's necessary to go back to square one.

set in stone

Definition: to establish something firmly and permanently; to make an unchangeable decision or commitment.

1. The company's core values are set in stone, guiding its ethical principles.
2. Once the policy is set in stone, any changes will require careful consideration.
3. The project timeline should be agreed upon and set in stone to avoid unnecessary delays.

off the top of one's head

Definition: without careful consideration or prior planning; spontaneously.

1. When asked about potential solutions, she provided suggestions off the top of her head.
2. I can give you a ballpark figure off the top of my head, but for an accurate estimate, we need to analyze the data.
3. Off the top of my head, I'd say the meeting is scheduled for next week, but I'll double-check the calendar.

in a rut

Definition: stuck in a monotonous or unproductive routine; lacking progress or development.

1. Feeling trapped in a rut, she decided to explore new hobbies to bring excitement into her life.
2. The team realized they were in a rut when productivity declined, prompting a reassessment of workflows.
3. Recognizing that they were in a rut, the couple decided to take a spontaneous weekend trip.

tick the boxes

Definition: to fulfill all the necessary criteria or requirements.

1. The candidate's qualifications tick all the boxes outlined in the job description.
2. When evaluating potential investments, it's essential to ensure they tick the boxes for financial stability.
3. The comprehensive report ticks all the boxes, addressing all aspects of the project.

dig one's heels in

Definition: to resist change or refuse to compromise; to be stubborn.

1. When negotiations reached a standstill, both parties began to dig their heels in on key issues.
2. Employees may dig their heels in when they feel their concerns are not being addressed.
3. The team should be flexible and open to suggestions instead of digging their heels in on every decision.

on that note

Definition: used to conclude a statement or discussion.

1. We've covered all the necessary points, so on that note, let's move on to the next agenda item.
2. The presentation was insightful and engaging, so on that note, I'd like to thank the speaker.
3. If there are no further questions, on that note, we can conclude the meeting.

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