

# IDIOMS AND PHRASES

## Complete SSC CGL English Notes

Comprehensive Guide with Meanings & Examples • Created by GovtExamPrep

### 1. UNDERSTANDING IDIOMS AND PHRASES

#### Definitions and Differences

**Idiom:** A group of words established by usage as having a meaning not deducible from those of the individual words.

**Phrase:** A small group of words standing together as a conceptual unit, typically forming a component of a clause.

| Aspect        | Idiom                       | Phrase                           |
|---------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Meaning       | Figurative (not literal)    | Literal or figurative            |
| Structure     | Fixed, cannot be changed    | Flexible, can be modified        |
| Understanding | Requires cultural knowledge | Can be understood from words     |
| Example       | "Break a leg" = Good luck   | "On the table" = Being discussed |

**Important:** In SSC CGL, both idioms and phrases are tested, but idioms are more frequently asked due to their figurative nature.

#### Why Idioms are Important for SSC CGL

##### Exam Significance:

- 2-3 questions directly on idioms/phrases
- Helps in reading comprehension
- Improves vocabulary and expression
- Essential for precise communication
- Frequently asked in previous years

## 2. MOST IMPORTANT IDIOMS FOR SSC CGL

### High-Frequency Idioms (A-D)

| Idiom                  | Meaning                                             | Example                                                 |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| A blessing in disguise | Something good that isn't recognized at first       | Losing that job was a blessing in disguise.             |
| A dime a dozen         | Something common                                    | Those kind of problems are a dime a dozen.              |
| Beat around the bush   | Avoiding the main topic                             | Stop beating around the bush and tell me what you want. |
| Bite the bullet        | To get something over with because it is inevitable | I had to bite the bullet and tell him the truth.        |
| Break the ice          | To initiate conversation                            | He told a joke to break the ice at the meeting.         |
| Call it a day          | Stop working on something                           | After 8 hours of work, we decided to call it a day.     |
| Cut corners            | Do something poorly to save time/money              | Don't cut corners on this project - quality matters.    |

### High-Frequency Idioms (E-M)

| Idiom                           | Meaning                                   | Example                                             |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| Every cloud has a silver lining | Good things come after bad things         | I lost my job, but every cloud has a silver lining. |
| Feel a bit under the weather    | Feeling slightly ill                      | I'm feeling a bit under the weather today.          |
| Get out of hand                 | Become uncontrollable                     | The party got out of hand after midnight.           |
| Give the benefit of the doubt   | Believe someone's statement without proof | I'll give you the benefit of the doubt this time.   |

|                               |                                  |                                                            |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| Hit the nail on the head      | Get something exactly right      | Your analysis hit the nail on the head.                    |
| In the heat of the moment     | Overwhelmed by what is happening | I said that in the heat of the moment.                     |
| Kill two birds with one stone | Solve two problems at once       | By studying on the train, I kill two birds with one stone. |

### 3. CATEGORY-WISE IDIOMS

#### Animal-Based Idioms

| Idiom                           | Meaning                              |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| When pigs fly                   | Something that will never happen     |
| Straight from the horse's mouth | Information from the original source |
| The elephant in the room        | An obvious problem no one discusses  |
| Let the cat out of the bag      | Reveal a secret                      |
| Kill two birds with one stone   | Accomplish two things at once        |
| Hold your horses                | Wait and be patient                  |

#### Body Part Idioms

| Idiom                 | Meaning              |
|-----------------------|----------------------|
| Cost an arm and a leg | Very expensive       |
| Pull someone's leg    | To joke with someone |
| Keep an eye on        | Watch carefully      |
| Get cold feet         | Be nervous           |
| Give a hand           | Help someone         |
| Learn by heart        | Memorize             |

#### Color-Based Idioms

| Idiom              | Meaning                              |
|--------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Green with envy    | Very jealous                         |
| Feel blue          | Feel sad or depressed                |
| Black sheep        | A disgraced family member            |
| White lie          | A harmless lie                       |
| Golden opportunity | Excellent chance                     |
| Red tape           | Official rules that seem unnecessary |

## 4. IMPORTANT PHRASES FOR SSC CGL

### Common Phrases and Their Meanings

| Phrase        | Meaning        | Usage                                                         |
|---------------|----------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| According to  | As stated by   | According to the weather forecast, it will rain.              |
| As well as    | In addition to | She speaks English as well as French.                         |
| At all        | In any way     | I don't like it at all.                                       |
| By the way    | Incidentally   | By the way, have you seen my keys?                            |
| For instance  | For example    | Many countries, for instance Japan, have an aging population. |
| In advance    | Beforehand     | Please book your tickets in advance.                          |
| On account of | Because of     | The match was cancelled on account of rain.                   |

## 5. SSC CGL PRACTICE QUESTIONS

### Previous Year Question Patterns

#### Question Type 1: Choose the correct meaning of the idiom

**Example: "Break the ice" means:**

- A) To fall through thin ice
- B) To initiate conversation in a formal situation
- C) To have an accident
- D) To end a relationship

**Answer: B) To initiate conversation in a formal situation**

#### Question Type 2: Choose the appropriate idiom for the situation

**Example: When you accomplish two things with a single action, you:**

- A) Break the ice
- B) Kill two birds with one stone
- C) Beat around the bush
- D) Bite the bullet

**Answer: B) Kill two birds with one stone**

#### Question Type 3: Sentence completion with idioms

**Example: After working for 12 hours straight, we decided to \_\_\_\_.**

- A) break the ice
- B) call it a day
- C) hit the road
- D) face the music

**Answer: B) call it a day**

## 6. MEMORY TECHNIQUES AND TIPS

### Effective Learning Strategies

#### Visual Association Method:

- Create mental images for each idiom
- "Break the ice" - picture breaking ice at a formal party
- "Cost an arm and a leg" - imagine paying with body parts
- Visual connections help long-term retention

#### Category Grouping:

- Learn idioms in categories (animals, body parts, colors)
- Create mind maps for each category
- Group similar-meaning idioms together

#### Daily Practice Routine:

- Learn 5 new idioms daily
- Review previous day's idioms
- Use them in sentences
- Create flashcards for quick revision

### Common Mistakes to Avoid

**Literal Interpretation:** Never take idioms literally

**Word Substitution:** Don't change words in fixed idioms

**Context Ignorance:** Consider the situation before using

**Overuse:** Don't use too many idioms in one sentence

## 7. QUICK REVISION LIST

### Must-Know Idioms for SSC CGL

#### **Top 30 High-Frequency Idioms:**

1. Break the ice - Start conversation
2. Bite the bullet - Face difficult situation
3. Hit the nail on the head - Be exactly right
4. Once in a blue moon - Very rarely
5. Piece of cake - Very easy
6. Costs an arm and a leg - Very expensive
7. Kill two birds with one stone - Two tasks at once
8. See eye to eye - Agree completely
9. When pigs fly - Never
10. Call it a day - Stop working
11. Blessing in disguise - Good in bad situation
12. Beat around the bush - Avoid main topic
13. Get out of hand - Become uncontrollable
14. Through thick and thin - In all situations
15. Pull someone's leg - Joke with someone

## 8. SSC CGL PREPARATION STRATEGY

### Study Plan for Idioms and Phrases

#### 30-Day Intensive Plan:

##### Week 1-2: Foundation Building

- Days 1-5: Learn basic idioms (5 daily)
- Days 6-10: Category-wise learning
- Days 11-14: Practice with examples

##### Week 3-4: Advanced Practice

- Days 15-20: Previous year questions
- Days 21-25: Mock tests and quizzes
- Days 26-30: Revision and weak areas

#### Daily Routine:

- Morning: Learn 5 new idioms
- Afternoon: Practice with sentences
- Evening: Revision of learned idioms
- Weekly: Take practice tests

### Exam Strategy

#### Time Management:

- Idiom questions: 30-45 seconds each
- Read all options carefully
- Eliminate obviously wrong answers
- Use context clues in sentence completion

#### Common Pitfalls:

- Don't go by literal meanings
- Watch for similar-sounding idioms
- Consider the overall context
- Avoid overthinking

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