



A to Z Idioms: Episode 001

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Listen to the episode and write the definitions of the idioms.

Hit the books:

Hit the sack:

Twist someone's arm:

Stab someone in the back:

Lost your touch:

Discussion Questions:

1. How often do you hit the books to study English?
2. What time do you hit the sack?
3. Have you ever twisted someone's arm to get what you want?
4. Have you ever stabbed someone in the back? Have you ever been stabbed in the back?
5. Have you lost your touch in regard to a skill or talent that you used to have?

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Speaker1: You're listening to the A to Z English podcast. Hey there, A to Z. Listeners, this is Jack. I am flying solo today. Unfortunately, Kevin is not feeling well. He is under the weather and so he'll be back soon. But for today you are stuck with only me. So we are going to do a special episode today and today's special episode is called A to Z Idioms. And we are going to look at five different English idioms. And then I am going to give you some examples and I'm going to explain the meanings of the idioms. And so I will also put the idiom descriptions in the show notes, in the descriptions of the podcasts, so you can go right in there and see the idioms and then see what the definitions of those idioms are. So I will provide that for you. And as usual, we will I will also provide a full transcript of today's podcast, which is just me. So anyway, let's go ahead and get started. So our first idiom is hit the books. So what does that mean to hit the books? Hit the books? Now I think everybody knows what the verb hit means. To hit something is to take make a fist and to punch it or hit it. You could also use an object to hit something or somebody. And but that's not what hit the books means, right? Because why would anybody want to hit a book? Right. When we say hit the books in English, what that means is it means to study hard to go and study your textbooks.

Speaker1: And so if we're if I were to give you an example of a conversation between two people, you could imagine that one person is calling his or her friend and they call and say, Hey, are you busy? Would you like to go see a movie tonight? And then you say, Oh, I'm sorry, I can't. I have a test tomorrow. I really need to hit the books. And hit the books means I really need to study. And so hit the books is a very common expression in high school and university, especially in America. I've heard it many times, I've used it many times myself, and it's a very common expression for students. For students. Now, do you have to be a student to use this expression? No. You know, sometimes adults, people who have graduated from university, people like yourselves, you are studying English right now. And if you are studying English and you are taking an English class or something and you have a test coming up soon or a homework assignment or something that you need to prepare for, you could use this expression with your friend. You can say, I'm sorry, I'm really busy, I need to hit the books or I have to hit the books. I have to study. I really have to study. So there you go. That is idiom number one. Hit the books. Hit the books. And I've got another idiom which is also using the verb hit.

Speaker1: So we use this. This is a common verb in several different expressions and idioms in English. And the second one is hit the sack. And this one is a very common one to hit the sack. And I'll let you think about this one for a second just to I don't want to give away the answer to quickly. What does it mean in English if somebody says, hit the sack, hit the sack. Well, hit the sack means to sleep. And I think if you think about this expression or this idiom, it kind of makes sense when you're so tired and you're so tired that you just collapse. You fall down on your bed. Or a long time ago, before we had modern comforts like beds and things like that, people would sleep on sacks, you know, with some maybe some straw or something to make it a little bit softer. And to hit the sack means to go to sleep, you know, to fall almost. It's almost like falling on your bed, you know, collapsing. You're so tired. You just want to hit the sack. You don't want to do anything else. You don't want to talk to your friends. You don't want to make any phone calls. You don't want to watch television. You don't want to eat a snack. You probably don't even want to have dinner. You just want to go to sleep. You just want to hit the sack.

Speaker1: So hit the sack. And here's a quick conversation example that you might, you know, that you might have with somebody, for example, if you are talking to your friend on the telephone at night and it's getting later and later and later. And finally, you're so tired, you say to your friend on the telephone, I'm sorry, but I need to hit the sack. I'm so tired. I need to hit the sack. I need to go to sleep. And so hit the sack, go to sleep. Those have the same meaning. So if you use this in English, native English speakers will understand you. It will make your English sound more sophisticated. Or maybe sophisticated is the wrong word. But you will sound more like a native speaker because we often use these kinds of idioms to express ourselves in English. And so if you say hit the sack and people will know what you're talking about, but you'll also sound a lot more like a native speaker. So these are great little useful idioms that you can throw into your conversations. All right, then, let's keep moving. Let's go on to number three, our third idiom. We are going to do five idioms today. So the third one is. Twist someone's arm. So twist someone's arm. Now, obviously, if we're talking about literally twisting someone's arm, that means you're hurting the other person, right? You're taking their arm and you're twisting it. You're turning it so that they're arm, so that they're in a lot of pain.

Speaker1: But that's not what this expression means. This is an idiom. Idioms are metaphors. They are expressions or words and phrases that have different meanings than the literal meanings. And so. To twist someone's arm is to kind of how can I say this, to encourage someone strongly to do something that you want them to do. So, for example, if you if you want to go see a movie, but your friend doesn't really want to. Now let's, let's use one of our let's use the old an idiom that we already learned today. Let's say, for example, your friend says, I can't go to a movie tonight. I have to hit the books. I have to study. And you continue to push your friend, you're like, Oh, come on, no, let's go see the movie. Come on. You know, you love this movie. You know you love Tom Cruise. Oh, it's going to be such a good movie. Come on, please, please. Let's go, let's go. Come on. No, no, no. You don't need to study. So all of that stuff that I'm doing right there, all of my encouragement or trying to persuade my friend to do what I want my friend to do, that is an example of twisting my friend's arm. I am twisting my friend's arm. I'm trying to force my friend to do what I want to do. And so, you know, and it's not I don't need to even say the the the idiom to my friend, just the action of what I'm doing, trying to convince my friend, really pushing my friend to do what I want that person to do.

Speaker1: My friend might say, stop twisting my arm. You're you're trying to twist my arm. You want me to go to the movie? But I'm really busy. I need to hit the books, so please stop twisting my arm. So twisting my friend's arm is trying strongly to convince my friend to do what I want that person to do. And we all do this. We all we all twist people's arms, right? We always try to kind of push someone or force someone to do something that we want them to do. And in English, we have just given it an idiom, an expression to describe this situation. And so that is to twist someone's arm, to try to force someone or push someone or encourage someone to do what you want them to do. So twist someone's arm. That's number three. And let's go to number four. Okay. Now, number four, this one is this one sounds really terrible. This one really does sound bad, but it's another very common idiom in English. And the idiom is to stab someone in the back and stab, stab, stab means to stick a knife into a person's body. So to stab someone. And if you stab someone in the back. It means that they're you know, they cannot see. Right. You're not looking behind you. We look forward. So if somebody stabs you in the back, usually we use this expression when a friend does something bad to you and you don't expect it, it's a surprise.

Speaker1: So your friend surprises you by doing something really bad to you? It could be, say, gossiping about you. It could be telling your secret to somebody else. It could be stealing something from you. And if that happens to you, if your friend does something really bad to you behind your back secretly in English, you could say he or she stabbed me in the back. That's that's the feeling that you have when somebody does something like that to you, especially a friend, you know, somebody that you trust and they do something really bad to you and they they lie about you, and they tell a secret to somebody else that, you know, they break a promise. And so we use the expression stabbed you, stabbed me in the back, or she stabbed him in the back or he stabbed her in the back. He he broke her trust or she broke his trust. He gossiped about her or she gossiped about him. And so that is the meaning of stabbing someone in the back. It's not it has nothing to do with real violence. But again, these are all metaphors. These are all expressions or idioms that describe the feelings that you get when these situations occur. And so our last idiom for today. Is lose your touch to lose your touch. And what does that mean to lose your touch? If somebody says, I lost my touch, I lost my touch.

Speaker1: This is a very interesting one. This one is not bad like a lot of the the other ones that we studied today. To lose your touch means. To lose an ability that you used to have, but now you are not as good at something as you used to be. So, for example, when I was young, when I was in my teens, when I was a teenager, and in my early twenties, I was a basketball player. I played basketball in high school and I also played basketball in university. And I played at a competitive level, a pretty high level. And now that I am 45 years old, this is 20 to 25 years later, I've lost my touch. I'm not as good as I used to be. If I try to play basketball, I cannot play as well as I did before. And so I can use the idiom. Lost my touch. I lost my touch. I'm not good at that anymore. And so I would like you listeners out there to think about some of the things that you used to be really good at. And maybe because you haven't practiced or because you have gotten older, or for whatever reason, you're not as good at that thing as you used to be. You can use the expression, I lost my touch. I lost my touch. I'm just not as good at that as I used to be.

Speaker1: And I used to have a skill or a talent for that, but now I just don't do it as well. And so in that case, you kind of shrug, shrug or sigh and you say, Ha, I lost my touch. And so there you go. Those are our five idioms for today's episode, and this is the A to

Z idioms, episode number one. And what I would like you to do is you can go to our website A to Z English podcast dot com, you can listen to the episode, you can find the transcript, you can leave a comment. You can also find a link on our home page that will take you to our WhatsApp group. And we have a very active WhatsApp group where students will listen to the episodes of our podcast and they will ask questions, leave comments and even leave answers to the discussion questions that we provide at the bottom of our transcript. So if you look at the transcript, you can read the transcript of the episode, and then at the bottom you'll find some vocabulary, you'll find some some discussion questions, and you can leave those answers. You can put your answers in the WhatsApp group and we will read those and reply to you in the WhatsApp group. So I guess that concludes today's episode. Thank you very much everybody for listening and we will see you next time for another episode of A to Z Idioms. Thanks a lot, everyone. Bye bye.