

**Access English Centre**  
**Immigrant Centre Manitoba**  
**CULTURE AND CITIZENSHIP: Idioms**  
*"Idioms/Expressions" Work-out Activity*  
**60 minutes**  
**Intermediate/Advanced Level**

**Facilitator Note:** This activity requires the participants to work together to "figure out" the meaning of each idiom/expression/common phrase or to rephrase them in their "own words". This is a think-pair-share activity for the participants.

**Work-Out:**

**Materials:** Participants need: Idiom/Expression slips  
Optional-pens/pencils  
Paper  
Facilitator needs: Whiteboard and whiteboard markers  
Optional: tape recorder or digital recorder  
Optional: Idioms Explanations Key

10 min.

**Procedure: Introduction-**

*Before you begin:*

1. On the whiteboard: *"Idioms/ Expressions". Write "reading my mind"*
2. Explain the activity.
3. Divide the whole group into **pairs**:  
Option #1: Instruct the participants to find a partner.

Option #2- Partner the participants by instructing them to get into groups of two – male and female.

Option #3- Give each participant a partner.

30 min.

*Activity:*

4. Hand-out 2 idioms/ expression slips to each pair. Give them time to *think*.
5. Instruct the participants to discuss with one another.
6. Demonstrate.
7. Ex. Go over the quotation- *" reading my mind"*
8. Ask the participants what they think the idiom means: discuss together.
9. If you do not hear something close to this explanation, then explain:

- "It means if you know what I'm really thinking."

- 1) Explain that each group will receive 2 idiom slips. Each pair will think up the meaning of the idioms. Optional: They can write their explanations on paper.
- 2) Switch quotations with another group.

20 min.

10. Ask for volunteers and have them *share* their quotations with the rest of the whole class.
11. If a pair has difficulty with an idiom, be prepared to give the participants a few hints so that they can figure out the meaning. Optional: Use the Idioms Explanations Key for reference.

Extension Activity #1: **Advanced level-** Have the participants come up with their own idioms or brainstorm ideas on the whiteboard with the class. The

	<p>participants will choose idioms from the whiteboard.</p> <p>Extension Activity #2: Either levels can have each pair create an oral short story using some of their idioms that they learned today. The participants if they like, can write it down on paper.</p> <p>Later, share their stories with the whole group or stories can be recorded and listened to at a later time.</p> <p>*The facilitator can demonstrate first:</p> <p>Ex. One day I came to AEC class and I met some new people. At first, I felt like I had <i>nothing in common with them</i>, but soon I realized that I needed to be friendly towards my new classmates. Under my breath, I said, " <i>Here goes</i>. don't <i>be a chicken</i>." Then I started talking to the person beside me. I always feel <i>scared out of my wits</i> when I am in a new group but <i>history repeats itself</i>. In every new group setting, I remember to smile and be friendly. I feel better once I see some friendly faces. I became really good friends with Shan Shan, and now we <i>keep each other's company</i>.</p> <p>Variation Activity #1: Have one person from each pair go to the next group to share their idioms and, so on.</p> <p>Variation Activity #2: As a whole group, check-out: <a href="http://idioms.thefreedictionary.com/">http://idioms.thefreedictionary.com/</a> Ask the participants for idioms that they have heard before and find out the meanings.</p>
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## IDIOMS (COMMON PHRASES)

From: Fragiadakis, Helen Kalkstein. *"All Clear! Idioms in Context"*. Heinle & Heinle Publishers, Inc. 1993.

1. "nothing in common."
2. "history repeats itself"
3. "be chicken"
4. "take a deep breath"
5. "wish me luck."
6. "here goes"
7. "keep someone's company"
8. "that makes two of us"
9. "scared out of my wits."
10. "Why do you ask?"
11. "that's funny"
12. "Here you go."
13. "work something out"
14. "Let's split it."
15. "What's up?"
16. "go cold turkey"

## IDIOMS (COMMON PHRASES) EXPLANATIONS KEY

<p><b>1. “ nothing in common.”</b> <i>-when 2 people have nothing to relate to one another, not share the same/similar interests</i></p>
<p><b>2. “history repeats itself”-</b> <i>-a past situation has occurred again and again</i></p>
<p><b>3. “be chicken”</b> <i>-too scared to do something</i></p>
<p><b>4. “ take a deep breath””</b> <i>-to pause(think first)</i></p>
<p><b>5. “ wish me luck.”</b> – <i>you are asking the other person for their blessing because you are unsure of the outcome</i> <i>Ex. Wish me luck, I’m writing my final exam tomorrow.</i></p>
<p><b>6. “ here goes”</b> <i>- here is what you asked for</i></p>
<p><b>7. “ keep someone’s company”</b> <i>-you are there to be a comfort to someone/visiting him/her</i></p>
<p><b>8. “ that makes two of us”</b> <i>-a comment said when you have something in common with another person or when both individuals possess/ have the same interests/experiences, etc.</i></p>
<p><b>9. “ scared out of my wits.”</b> <i>-you are scared/terrified of some kind of uncomfortable Situation</i></p>
<p><b>10. “Why do you ask?”</b> <i>-you are curious as to why another person has asked you something, it is something you would not like to share with them</i></p>

**11. “that’s funny”**

*-a comment said when an action or comment of another person was humorous/funny*

**12. “Here you go.”**

*-a comment said when you are giving something that a person asked*

**13. “work something out”**

*-you are willing to solve a problem cooperatively*

**14. “Let’s split it.”**

*-you have divided your item evenly with your company  
(ex.bill or food-**Let’s split** the bill.)*

**15. “What’s up?”**

*-you are curious about what the other person is doing*

**16. “go cold turkey”**

*-you have quit/stopped a habit or addiction*

*Ex. When smoking addicts **go cold turkey**, they might need to chew gum.*