

Sports idioms

Identify the sports that each list of idioms below is associated with. Most sports have more than one section.

Rather than training for a year first, I think it is better for a manager to just **jump in at the deep end** and start managing.

I'd like to **test the water** before I put forward a formal proposal.

I'd like to take your idea about splitting up the company and **run with it**.

We really have to **tackle** the rising costs before we think about new products.

The viral marketing campaign in the weeks preceding the launch ensured that sales **got off to a flying start**.

That market is still a bit immature and I think we **jumped the gun** a bit by buying into it back in the 90's.

I was worried about retiring but I'm relieved to be able to **pass the baton** to someone with your experience.

I haven't finished the report yet but I feel like I'm **in the homestretch**.

Intel **sets the pace** that other companies have to try and follow.

I can understand why you can't be more precise, but if you just give me **a ballpark figure** it would really help

I **pitched** our idea to him yesterday and I should get an answer next week.

They haven't signed the contract but I think we've **got to first base**.

The level of the dollar is widely tipped to **bounce back/ rebound** by the end of the year.

They seemed to like the design and functions, but mentioning the price was **the slam dunk**.

I'd like to **kick off** this meeting with a summary of what we discussed the last time we met. We made all the changes that the safety inspector demanded the first time he visited, but he keeps **moving the goal posts**.

I was really nervous about the meeting but I was pleasantly surprised how my boss **went to bat for** me.

It wasn't a big problem but I already **had two strikes against me** so I think I will never get a promotion now.

By the time I arrived the Christmas party was already **in full swing**.

They suggested merging the two departments but one of the directors **refused to play ball**.

When pay negotiations were still going nowhere after two weeks he decided to **play hardball** and say he'd been offered a job with their main competitor.

Let me say **right off the bat** that we have been offered a much lower price by another company and so we'll be expecting some discounts this time.

Complaints about new staff are just **par for the course**.
I thought I would at least get in as a management trainee but I didn't **make the cut**.
His idea has been **kicked in the rough**, so that might be the last we hear of it.

It isn't a perfect product but we need to be **first out of the gate** so we are going to launch it by the end of the month.
I heard that you are **in the running** for the CEO job.

His father, who set up the company, got too ill to work so he had to quit university and **step up to the plate**.
Can we **touch base** while you are in Tokyo?
After the main company collapsed doing business in that sector became **a whole new ball game**.

The CEO hasn't even retired yet but already everyone is **jockeying into position** for his job.
The two main political parties are **neck and neck** going into the last week before the election.

I don't like him either, but mentioning his personal problems was **hitting below the belt**.
I'm still not confident about my presentation so it's good to know that I have you **in my corner**.

It won't make a huge profit but it should help us **keep our heads above water**.
Everyone predicted a steady year for technology stocks but instead they **plunged** as soon as the markets reopened after the New Year holidays.
I thought I knew something about management but being put in charge of a whole department makes me feel **out of my depth**.

The company is **on the ropes** but there is hope that someone will buy them out and rescue them.
He gives a lot of useful advice but he doesn't **pull his punches** so don't be offended if you ask him about your project.
They are only a small company but their connections to famous researchers means that they can **punch above their weight**.

The teacher was going to ask me to give my presentation next but I was **saved by the bell**.
After failing three interviews I decided to **throw in the towel**.
When none of the top directors went for the job some of the lower level managers decided to **throw their hats into the ring**.

Match the following definitions to the idioms above:

“In sport this means punches to the lower body that aren’t allowed. In normal life it means doing things which are unfair.”

“The sporting meaning is how many shots it usually takes to finish one round. Outside sport it is used to mean that problems are to be expected in that situation.”

“In ordinary conversation this is used to mean dealing with a problem. It comes from the way a defender deals with an attack and tries to take the ball from the attacker.”

Underline useful phrases from the definitions above for explaining what sporting idioms mean and how they are used.

*Use similar language to guess the sporting and/ or everyday meanings of different idioms from above **without using any words in the idiom** until your partner guesses which one you are talking about. You can say which sport it is connected with if you need to.*

Does your partner agree with your definitions?

Other useful language for talking about idioms

I guess/ I suppose/ I reckon/ I imagine...

...almost certainly/ probably/ possibly...

I’ve studied this one before and...

There is a similar idiom in Japanese/ in Spanish/ in...

It’s a positive thing/ negative thing...

It’s connected to...

It’s used to talk about...

It’s used in business/ politics/ newspapers/ television news/....

It’s informal/ slang.

It’s American English/ British English/ ...English.

Suggested answers

Swimming

Rather than training for a year first, I think it is better for a manager to just **jump in at the deep end** and start managing.

I'd like to **test the water** before I put forward a formal proposal.

American football

I'd like to take your idea about splitting up the company and **run with it**.

We really have to **tackle** the rising costs before we think about new products.

Athletics

The viral marketing campaign in the weeks preceding the launch ensured that sales **got off to a flying start**.

That market is still a bit immature and I think we **jumped the gun** a bit by buying into it back in the 90's.

Athletics

I was worried about retiring but I'm relieved to be able to **pass the baton** to someone with your experience.

I haven't finished the report yet but I feel like I'm **in the homestretch**.

Intel **sets the pace** that other companies have to try and follow.

Baseball

I can understand why you can't be more precise, but if you just give me **a ballpark figure** it would really help

I **pitched** our idea to him yesterday and I should get an answer next week.

They haven't signed the contract but I think we've **got to first base**.

Basketball

The level of the dollar is widely tipped to **bounce back/ rebound** by the end of the year.

They seemed to like the design and functions, but mentioning the price was **the slam dunk**.

Football (= Soccer)

I'd like to **kick off** this meeting with a summary of what we discussed the last time we met.

We made all the changes that the safety inspector demanded the first time he visited, but he keeps **moving the goal posts**.

Baseball

I was really nervous about the meeting but I was pleasantly surprised how my boss **went to bat for me**.

It wasn't a big problem but I already **had two strikes against me** so I think I will never get a promotion now.

By the time I arrived the Christmas party was already **in full swing**.

Baseball

They suggested merging the two departments but one of the directors **refused to play ball**.

When pay negotiations were still going nowhere after two weeks he decided to **play hardball** and say he'd been offered a job with their main competitor.

Let me say **right off the bat** that we have been offered a much lower price by another company and so we'll be expecting some discounts this time.

Golf

Complaints about new staff are just **par for the course**.

I thought I would at least get in as a management trainee but I didn't **make the cut**.

His idea has been **kicked in the rough**, so that might be the last we hear of it.

Horse racing

It isn't a perfect product but we need to be **first out of the gate** so we are going to launch it by the end of the month.

I heard that you are **in the running** for the CEO job.

Baseball

His father, who set up the company, got too ill to work so he had to quit university and **step up to the plate**.

Can we **touch base** while you are in Tokyo?

After the main company collapsed doing business in that sector became **a whole new ball game**.

Horse racing

The CEO hasn't even retired yet but already everyone is **jockeying into position** for his job.

The two main political parties are **neck and neck** going into the last week before the election.

Boxing

I don't like him either, but mentioning his personal problems was **hitting below the belt**.

I'm still not confident about my presentation so it's good to know that I have you **in my corner**.

Swimming

It won't make a huge profit but it should help us **keep our heads above water**.

Everyone predicted a steady year for technology stocks but instead they **plunged** as soon as the markets reopened after the New Year holidays.

I thought I knew something about management but being put in charge of a whole department makes me feel **out of my depth**.

Boxing

The company is **on the ropes** but there is hope that someone will buy them out and rescue them.

He gives a lot of useful advice but he doesn't **pull his punches** so don't be offended if you ask him about your project.

They are only a small company but their connections to famous researchers means that they can **punch above their weight**.

Boxing

The teacher was going to ask me to give my presentation next but I was **saved by the bell**.

After failing three interviews I decided to **throw in the towel**.

When none of the top directors went for the job some of the lower level managers decided to **throw their hats into the ring**.