

## Spoken idioms

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Idioms are generally used as a more interesting or emphatic way of conveying meaning. For example, if you say that you are 'getting to grips with' a situation, you mean that you are starting to understand it or deal with it.

However, the idioms in these exercises are used a little differently. They are used as a response to a particular situation. They are all types of **exclamation**.

**1** Match the exclamations (1–4) with their meanings (a–d).

- 1 Break a leg! .....*d*.....
  - 2 You took the words right out of my mouth! .....
  - 3 Easier said than done! .....
  - 4 Just what the doctor ordered! .....
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- a That's exactly what I needed! I feel much better now.
  - b You said exactly what I was just going to say!
  - c That is not easy to do, although it may sound like a good idea.
  - d Good luck! (said to a performer just before they go on stage)

**2** Now match these exclamations (1–5) with their meanings (a–e).

**1** Look what the cat's dragged in! .....*c*.....

**2** Famous last words! .....

**3** Don't give up the day job! .....

**4** Eat your heart out, Frank Sinatra / Beckham, etc! .....

**5** In for a penny, in for a pound! .....

**a** You are not good at something so don't try to do it as a job.

**b** What has just been said may be proved wrong.

**c** Look who has just arrived! (used disapprovingly or humorously)

**d** I am definitely going to continue with something, even if it means more effort or money.

**e** That was a brilliant performance!

3 Write a response for each statement using these idioms.

Just what the doctor ordered!

Break a leg!

Famous last words!

Don't give up the day job!

Easier said than done!

1 A: I need to lose six kilos by January.

B: ..... *Easier said than done!* .....

2 A: I'm on stage in half an hour.

B: .....

3 A: Ah, a nice ice-cool glass of lemonade.

B: .....

4 A: Everything is under control and I'm confident the event will be a success.

B: .....

5 A: So what did you think of my singing?

B: .....

4 Choose the correct idiom for the situation.

You took the words right out of my mouth!

Look what the cat's dragged in!

Eat your heart out, Ronaldo!

In for a penny, in for a pound!

**Bang goes any chance of promotion!**

1 Susannah makes a serious mistake at work. What does she say?

*Bang goes any chance of promotion!*

2 Daniel sees his old friend, Paul, walking into the café. He hasn't seen him for a while and likes to joke with him. What does Daniel say?

3 Luke goes to a shop to buy a tent for his holiday. He ends up buying the tent, a camping cooker, a sleeping bag and other items of equipment. What does he say?

4 Luisa's friend expresses an opinion that is exactly what Luisa is thinking. What does Luisa say?

5 John is playing football for his school team and scores a brilliant goal. What does he say?

## Spoken idioms – Answer key

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### Exercise 1

- 1 d
- 2 b
- 3 c
- 4 a

### Exercise 2

- 1 c
- 2 b
- 3 a
- 4 e
- 5 d

### Exercise 3

- 1 Easier said than done!
- 2 Break a leg!
- 3 Just what the doctor ordered!
- 4 Famous last words!
- 5 Don't give up the day job!

### Exercise 4

- 1 Bang goes any chance of promotion!
- 2 Look what the cat's dragged in!
- 3 In for a penny, in for a pound!
- 4 You took the words right out of my mouth!
- 5 Eat your heart out, Ronaldo!