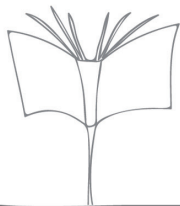


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## Finding idioms and phrases in MD

### Worksheet

www.macmillandictionary.com

#### Introduction

English contains many idiomatic expressions.

- 1 An idiomatic expression is a combination of words with a particular meaning.
- 2 The meaning cannot usually be guessed from the individual words.
- 3 Words cannot usually be left out or put in a different order, so words, word order and meaning need to be learnt as a whole. The dictionary helps you by giving the word order, meaning and usage of idiomatic expression.

Notice how in the two entries below for *let your hair down* and *shake like a leaf* the idiom is printed in **bold**, and then defined.

**let your hair down** *informal* to relax and enjoy yourself because you are in a comfortable environment: *We need*

**shake like a leaf** to shake a lot, for example because you are cold, nervous, or afraid: *Put on a sweater – you're shaking like a leaf!*

#### ► Activity 1

Complete the idioms with a word from the box. If you need help, look in the [dictionary](#). Then check the meaning of each idiom.

prey wisdom chance mind bearings  
pocket spot press inch matter corner mile

- a not give an inch
- b go out of your \_\_\_\_\_
- c to fall \_\_\_\_\_ to something
- d the heart of the \_\_\_\_\_
- e to find your \_\_\_\_\_

f \_\_\_\_\_ someone into doing something

g a sore \_\_\_\_\_

h words of \_\_\_\_\_

i turn a \_\_\_\_\_

j on the off \_\_\_\_\_

k stand out a \_\_\_\_\_

l pick someone's \_\_\_\_\_

#### ► Activity 2

To find an idiom or phrase in the [dictionary](#), try following these steps:

- 1 Decide which is the keyword in the idiomatic expression. Usually this word is a noun or a verb, sometimes an adjective or adverb.
- 2 Look up the keyword in the dictionary to see if the idiom is there. If not, try one of the other words.
- 3 Idioms are given after the definitions of the different senses of the word.

Guess the keyword in these idioms. Then check your answers in the dictionary.

**hit the roof/ceiling** *spoken* to become very angry: *When*

keyword: \_\_\_\_\_

**have your hands full** to be extremely busy with a difficult job: *The police had their hands full with other*

keyword: \_\_\_\_\_

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## ► Activity 3

Read the sentences and underline the idiomatic expression in each. Then guess the keyword in the idiom and look up this word to find the meaning of the idiom.

**keyword**

**a** She has always been the apple of her father's eye.

apple

**b** At the last meeting I got cold feet and I haven't been since.

\_\_\_\_\_

**c** It's been difficult but now there is light at the end of the tunnel.

\_\_\_\_\_

**d** It seems pretty risky, but I think we'll take the plunge.

\_\_\_\_\_

**e** He's not in her good books.

\_\_\_\_\_

**f** It's obvious what you have to do: here it is in black and white.

\_\_\_\_\_