

# Colour Idioms

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Marga Garrido

Esther Planells

Eva Paramio

Olga Sanchez

# What's an idiom?

An expression whose meaning is not predictable from the usual meanings of its constituent elements or from the general grammatical rules of a language.

*Thesaurus.com*

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## Why do we use idioms?

- As a short way of expressing a more complicated idea.
- To make English a more colourful language because they bring a clear mental picture to mind.

# *The grass is always greener on the other side (of the fence)*

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## Origin

This is observed in the countryside when a cow or a horse is trying to get at that juicy green grass just on the other side of the fence.

## Similar colour idioms

"Hills are (look) green (blue) far away"

"Distant pastures always look greener"

## Meaning

People always think they would be happier in a different situation. Usually implies that the other situation is not any better.

# Tickled pink

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## Origin

When some people are really excited they literally change colour, and their skin becomes quite pink just like when they blush.

## Similar colour idioms

“Walking on air”

## Meaning

Used when you are really excited about something.

# *Golden opportunity*

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## **Meaning**

An excellent opportunity that is not likely to be repeated.



# ***Brown nose***

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## **Origin**

This term originated in the army in the late 1930s.

## **Meaning**

A brown noser is a person who acts favourably to his or her peers to gain status or favour that will eventually be used to their advantage.

# *To see through rose-coloured glasses*

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## **Meaning**

To take an optimistic view of something.

# *Out of the blue*

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## Origin

Blue refers to the clear blue sky. Normally a thunderstorm does not happen when the sky is clear blue. When it happens, that surprises us since it is unexpected.

## Similar colour idioms

“Out of a clear blue sky”

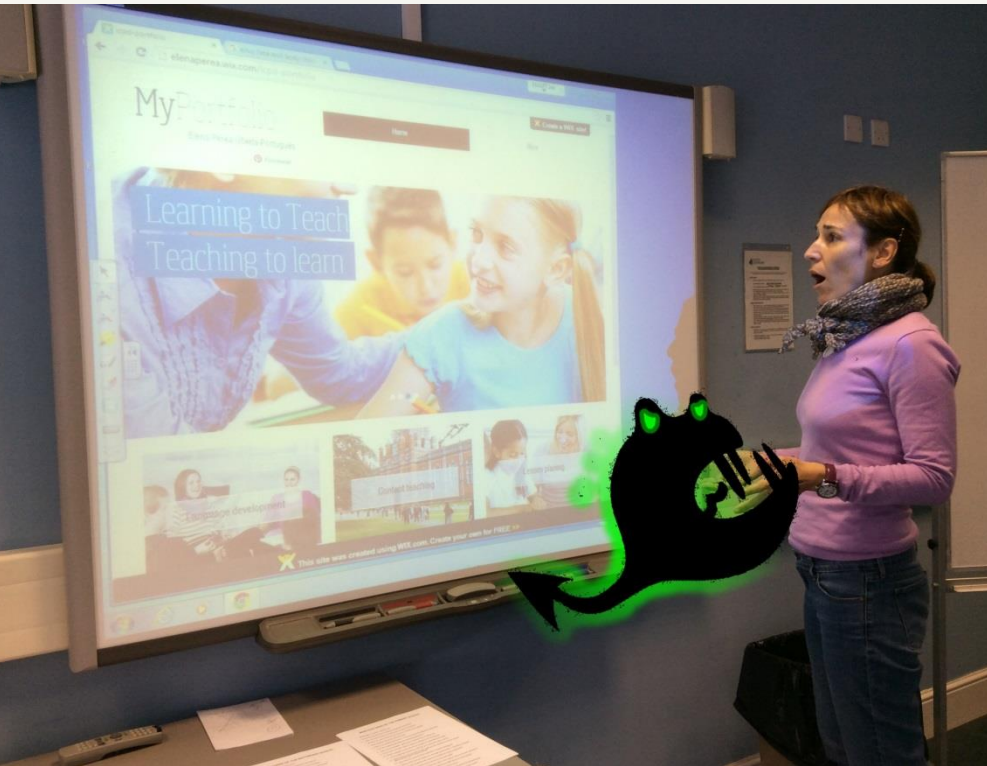
## Meaning

Something that happens suddenly and you are not expecting it



# *The green-eyed monster*

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## Meaning

Be jealous.

## Origin

This expression was coined by Shakespeare in Othello, where Iago says:

“O! Beware, my lord, of jealousy; it is the green-eyed monster which doth mock the meat it feeds on.”

## Similar colour idioms

“Green with envy”

# *To paint in dark colours*

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## Origin

Everybody understands the symbolic negative meaning of shadows in contrast with light.

## Similar colour idioms

"In a bad light"

## Meaning

To describe something in an unflattering way.

# *To see red*

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## **Origin**

It derives from the sport of bull-fighting and the toreador's use of a red cape to deceive the bull.

## **Meaning**

If someone sees red, they suddenly become very angry or annoyed.

# *To chase rainbows*



## Meaning

To try to achieve something that is not possible or practical.

## Origin

Science has always maintained that finding the end of a rainbow is impossible because it's an optical illusion which requires a certain amount of distance from the viewer to be seen.



# *Flying colours*

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## Meaning

To pass successfully an exam, for instance.

## Origin

It derives from when ships would return home with their "colours" (another word for flags) flying to show they had been victorious.

# *To feel blue*

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## Origin

This expression comes from an old tradition among old deepwater sailing ships. If the ship lost the captain or any of the officers during its voyage, it would fly blue flags and have a blue band painted when returning to home port.

## Similar colour idioms

“Down in the dumps”

“Down in the mouth”

“Face like a wet week-end”

## Meaning

If you feel blue, you are feeling unwell; associated with depression or unhappiness.

# Resources used for the presentation

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- Family host enquiry.
- Questionnaire on Campus.
- [www.usingenglish.com/](http://www.usingenglish.com/)
- [www.thefreedictionary.com/](http://www.thefreedictionary.com/)
- [www.myenglishteacher.eu/blog/colour-idioms-list-and-their-meanings/](http://www.myenglishteacher.eu/blog/colour-idioms-list-and-their-meanings/)
- [www.eslprintables.com/](http://www.eslprintables.com/)
- [www.idiomconnection.com/color.html](http://www.idiomconnection.com/color.html)
- <http://www.phrases.org.uk/meanings/>
- [Look For The Silver Lining - Chet Baker Sings](#)