**BUSINESS IDIOMS** for students

**1. a golden handshake**

e.g. My boss fired me but I got a golden handshake. Now I can buy a Maserati! My manager will receive a huge golden handshake when he retires next year.

**2**. **a skeleton staff/crew**

e.g. We don’t need a lot of workers on Sundays so our company has just skeleton staff. The hospital has a skeleton staff at weekends. A skeleton staff of the company consists of experienced workers.

**3.** **a white-collar worker; a blue-collar worker**

e.g. His father was a blue-collar worker but Jim went to college and became a white-collar worker. White-collar workers usually perform job duties in an office setting. They are highly skilled and formally trained professionals. Blue-collar workers perform labor jobs and typically work with their hands.

**4.** **monkey business**

e.g. This company sells fake Chanel bags. It’s a monkey business! The company was involved in some monkey business with the tax department and has hired a lawyer to defend themselves.

**5. dog-eat-dog (world)**

e.g. It is a dog-eat-dog branch. You should analyze your competitors. It is dog-eat-dog world in the advertising and public relations business.

**6. to break your back**

e.g. I have been breaking my back over this project for six months and now they want to close it! Don't break your back trying to please these people—they'll never appreciate it.

**7.** **to climb to the top of the career/corporate ladder**

e.g. If you want to climb to the top of the career ladder, you should be an eager beaver. Farrow wants to climb the career ladder by stepping on my back.

**8.to do something by the book / to go by the book**

e.g. He always goes by the book when it comes to his business. My lawyer always goes strictly by the book.

**9.** **On a shoestring.** When you do something on a shoestring, you’re working on a tight budget or with very little money.

e.g. It’s going to be a challenge doing such a big project on a shoestring but we’ll try our best. We lived on a shoestring for years before I got a good-paying job. I know that he lives on a shoestring. The man started his new company on a shoestring.

**10.** **From the ground up.** If you build a business or project from zero or from the bottom, you’re starting from the ground up.

e.g. Have you read the news about the enterprising 12-year-old who’s building her business from the ground up?

**11. Run around in circles.** To run around in circles means to keep doing something without achieving any real results. In other words, you’re doing a lot of unnecessary work but not getting anywhere.

e.g. The deadline is coming up, but we’ve been running around in circles because the client keeps changing their mind about the design.

**12.The bottom line.** You may know that the last or bottom line on a financial statement is the most important. The bottom line is what shows the total profit or loss. So then, the phrase the bottom line is used in general to refer to the final outcome, or the most important point to consider.

e.g. It is true that we’re very short-handed, but the bottom line is we must still deliver the project on time. Slip the details and give me the bottom line.

**13. Fifty-fifty.** Fifty-fifty simply means dividing something into equal parts so that both parties get 50%.

e.g. Since I’m as busy as you are, let’s split the work for this project fifty-fifty. They have a fifty-fifty chance.

**14.** **The big picture.** The big picture means to look at the overall view of something, or the situation as a whole and not at the details.

e.g. I think his presentation was too long and detailed. He should’ve just given us the big picture. Don’t lose sight of the big picture! You should focus on the bigger picture.

**15. Long shot.** A long shot is an idiom that’s usually used to describe something that has a very small chance of happening or succeeding.

e.g. Landing such a high-paying job is a long shot but I’m still going to give it a try. I'm sure it's a long shot but is there anyone who is going to be at the show on May 5th?

**16. Back to square one.** Back to square one simply means to start over, or to go back to the beginning.

e.g. Now I have to go back to square one. We’re back to square one. Right when you think you've got a handle on it... something else happens and you're right back to square one!

**17. Gray area.** The color gray is between black and white. When something is in a gray area, it means the situation isn’t certain. In a gray area there are no clear rules and it’s difficult to say if it’s right or wrong.

e.g. You have many good points in your proposal but there’s one gray area we need to discuss. I do well in math and most sciences, but chemistry is still kind of a grey area. Many people think they know what right and wrong are, but on closer examination it's usually a grey area.

**18. Go the extra mile.** To go the extra mile means to give more effort or do more than what’s expected of you.

e.g. Anyone would be glad to have Pam on their team. She’s a great team player and is always willing to go the extra mile.

**19. Call it a day.** When your work has been completed for the day, or when you decide to stop working on an activity, you call it a day.

e.g. We have learned new business idioms and phrases that you can start using immediately, let’s call it a day. All professional athletes know they will reach a point when they have to call it a day. I'm tired. Let's call it a day. After second heart attack, she decided it would be best to follow her doctor's advice and call it a day.

**20. Beat about the bush**

**e.g.** Will you please stop **beating about the bush** and get to the point?

When I asked George whether he knew who had taken the files from my desk, he started **beating around the bush** and refused to give me a direct answer.

Don’t beat around the bush and tell me frankly what you think of my proposition.