ESL LAB

Valentine's Day Idioms Activity Pack

25 idioms about love and relationships that English speakers really use, and six printable activities to practice them with adults. Every page works for one student alone or in pairs, and the answers are upside down at the foot of each page.

LEVEL	STUDENTS	GROUPING	TIME
B1 to B2	Adults and older teens	Alone or in pairs	10 to 20 minutes each

What's inside, in the order of the blog post

	The 25 idioms	Every idiom with its meaning, in five stages of a love story	**Page 2**
1	**Story in order**	Ten sentences of one love story to put in order	**Page 3**
2	**The literal trap**	Ten idioms, three meanings each: one real, two literal	**Page 4**
3	**A story in messages**	A chat between two friends with eleven gaps	**Page 5**
4	**What would you say?**	Sixteen situation cards, plus a board for online lessons	**Pages 6-7**
5	**Fix the idiom**	Ten sentences with the mistakes learners really make	**Page 8**
6	**Advice column**	Two letters to answer with three idioms each	**Page 9**

Activities 7 and 8 in the post need nothing printed. Page 6 is cards: print one per pair and cut on the dashed lines. For online lessons, share page 7: each number opens one situation, and every situation page has a link back to the board.

Every story and situation in the pack is about invented people, so no student has to talk about their own love life.

Grammar to watch

THE PERSON COMES AFTER

fall **for** a person
crazy **about** a person
have a crush **on** a person

ALWAYS "THE"

pop **the** question
tie **the** knot
love **at** first sight

CHANGE THE VERB

They **hit** it off. (past: hit)
She **fell** for him.
He **got** cold feet.

THE 25 IDIOMS

Love and relationship idioms

The idioms follow a love story from the first meeting to the end. Use this page to check your answers in activities 1 to 6.

It starts

1. **love at first sight** falling in love the moment you first see a person
2. **have a crush on** have romantic feelings for a person, often in secret
3. **hit it off** like each other straight away
4. **have chemistry** feel a natural attraction or connection
5. **play hard to get** pretend you're not interested, so the other person tries harder

Falling in love

6. **fall for** start to love a person
7. **head over heels (in love)** completely in love
8. **sweep a person off their feet** make a person fall in love quickly, with charm and big gestures
9. **crazy about** love or like a person very much
10. **wear your heart on your sleeve** show your feelings openly

A couple

11. **love is in the air** people around you are feeling romantic
12. **a match made in heaven** two people who are perfect together
13. **my other half** my partner, husband or wife
14. **a third wheel** the extra person who spends time with a couple
15. **puppy love** romantic feelings between very young people, usually not serious

The big question

16. **pop the question** ask your partner to marry you
17. **get cold feet** suddenly feel too nervous to do what you planned
18. **tie the knot** get married

When it ends

19. **on the rocks** having serious problems and likely to end
20. **grow apart** slowly become less close
21. **fall out of love** stop loving a person
22. **call it quits** decide to end a relationship
23. **break a person's heart** make a person very sad, usually by ending a relationship
24. **an old flame** a person you had a romantic relationship with in the past
25. **plenty more fish in the sea** many other people you could date

ACTIVITY 1

Story in order

This is the story of Sofia and Marco, but the sentences are mixed up. Read them and write 1 to 10 in the boxes. The idioms will help you: you can't pop the question before you hit it off.

☐	**A**	Two years later, Marco popped the question on a night train to Lisbon.
☐	**B**	For the next week, Sofia played hard to get and waited a whole day before she answered his messages.
☐	**C**	In June, Sofia and Marco tied the knot in a small garden, and all the guests agreed they were a match made in heaven.
☐	**D**	Sofia's friend invited her to a party. Sofia almost stayed at home.
☐	**E**	Her friend Nina joined them for dinner once and felt like a third wheel all evening.
☐	**F**	A week before the wedding, Sofia got cold feet and called her mother in tears.
☐	**G**	At the party, she met Marco by the kitchen door. It wasn't love at first sight, but they hit it off and talked until 2 a.m.
☐	**H**	Her mother laughed and told her that every bride feels that way.
☐	**I**	Then Marco swept her off her feet with a surprise picnic by the river.
☐	**J**	By spring, Sofia was head over heels and told all her friends about him.

Answers: 1 D 2 C 3 B 4 I 5 J 6 E 7 A 8 F 9 H 10 C

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ACTIVITY 2

The literal trap

An idiom doesn't mean what its words say. For each sentence, tick the real meaning. Two of the answers are traps: they take the words literally.

1 **Marco swept Sofia off her feet.**

- ◯ **a** He pushed her, and she fell over.
- ◯ **b** He made her fall in love quickly.
- ◯ **c** He cleaned the floor around her.

2 **At dinner, Nina felt like a third wheel.**

- ◯ **a** She felt like the extra person with a couple.
- ◯ **b** She felt tired after a long bike ride.
- ◯ **c** She came third in a race.

3 **Their marriage is on the rocks.**

- ◯ **a** They live in a house by the sea.
- ◯ **b** They are on holiday in the mountains.
- ◯ **c** They have serious problems.

4 **Two days before the wedding, the groom got cold feet.**

- ◯ **a** He forgot to bring warm socks.
- ◯ **b** He suddenly felt too nervous to go ahead.
- ◯ **c** He caught a cold at the party.

5 **Daniel wears his heart on his sleeve.**

- ◯ **a** He has a heart tattoo on his arm.
- ◯ **b** His favorite shirt has a red heart on it.
- ◯ **c** He shows his feelings openly.

6 **Paula and Jorge tied the knot.**

- ◯ **a** They got married.
- ◯ **b** They fixed their boat.
- ◯ **c** They had an argument.

7 **Ana and Leo have chemistry.**

- ◯ **a** They studied science together.
- ◯ **b** They feel a natural connection.
- ◯ **c** They both work in a lab.

8 **I ran into an old flame yesterday.**

- ◯ **a** I nearly started a fire.
- ◯ **b** I met an old friend from school.
- ◯ **c** I saw my ex-partner by chance.

9 **Tom is head over heels.**

- ◯ **a** He's completely in love.
- ◯ **b** He fell down the stairs.
- ◯ **c** He's learning to do a handstand.

10 **Her friend said, "There are plenty more fish in the sea."**

- ◯ **a** The sea is full of fish this year.
- ◯ **b** You'll find another person to date.
- ◯ **c** You should go fishing to relax.

Answers: **1** b **2** a **3** c **4** b **5** c **6** a **7** b **8** c **9** a **10** b

ACTIVITY 3

A story in messages

Lena tells her friend Kasia about her weekend. Complete the chat with the idioms in the box. Change the verb form if you need to. One idiom is extra.

have chemistry	wear your heart on your sleeve	call it quits	old flame	grow apart
third wheel	head over heels	on the rocks	break a person's heart	have a crush on
plenty more fish in the sea	fall out of love			

KASIA Hey! How was your weekend with Piotr?

LENA Not great. To be honest, we're 1 _____.

KASIA Oh no! What happened?

LENA Nothing big. We just 2 _____. He works nights, and I work days.

KASIA Do you still love him?

LENA I think I 3 _____ with him months ago. Last night we talked and decided to 4 _____.

KASIA I'm so sorry. Are you OK?

LENA Sad, but OK. I didn't want to 5 _____, but he feels the same.

KASIA Well, you know what they say. There are 6 _____.

LENA Ha! Funny you say that. Adam messaged me today, my 7 _____ from university. He wants to meet for coffee.

KASIA No way! You 8 _____ him for three years! Go! You two always 9 _____.

LENA OK, but I won't be 10 _____ after one coffee.

KASIA Sure. You 11 _____, Lena. I'll know everything by Saturday night.

Answers: 1 on the rocks 2 grew apart 3 fell out of love 4 call it quits 5 break his heart 6 plenty more fish in the sea 7 old flame 8 had a crush on 9 had chemistry 10 head over heels 11 wear your heart on your sleeve Not used: third wheel.

ACTIVITY 4

What would you say?

Read the situation and write the idiom that fits on the line. In pairs, cut out the cards: take a card, read it aloud, and your partner answers with the idiom in a full sentence.

SITUATION 1
Jonas saw Mia across the room and knew at once that she was the one.

SITUATION 2
Two colleagues meet on a training day and talk all through lunch like old friends.

SITUATION 3
Ella thinks about her neighbor all day, but she has never told anyone.

SITUATION 4
Clara likes Leo, but she waits two days to answer his messages, so he tries harder.

SITUATION 5
In their first month, Sam brings Nora flowers, writes her poems and plans a surprise trip.

SITUATION 6
Everyone at the office knows when Maria is happy, sad or in love, because she shows it all.

SITUATION 7
Your friends invite you to the cinema. You sit next to them while they hold hands all evening.

SITUATION 8
Pedro and Ines love the same books, the same food and the same terrible jokes.

SITUATION 9
Olga can't plan the holiday until she talks to her husband. "Let me check with my ..."

SITUATION 10
At a restaurant, Kai takes out a ring and kneels down next to the table.

SITUATION 11
A month before the wedding, Rosa suddenly wants to cancel everything.

SITUATION 12
After two years of arguments, Ben and Ada hardly speak to each other at home.

SITUATION 13
Kate and Rob were best friends at school. After years in different cities, they have nothing to say.

SITUATION 14
After ten years together, Jan and Eva agree to end their relationship.

SITUATION 15
Your friend is sad after a breakup. You want to tell her she will meet a new person.

SITUATION 16
At a wedding, Diego sees the woman he dated at university, for the first time in 15 years.

Answers: **1** love at first sight **2** hit it off **3** have a crush on **4** play hard to get **5** sweep her off her feet **6** wear her heart on her sleeve **7** a third wheel **8** a match made in heaven **9** my other half **10** pop the question **11** get cold feet **12** on the rocks **13** grow apart **14** call it quits **15** plenty more fish in the sea **16** an old flame

ACTIVITY 4 · ON SCREEN

What would you say? The board

For online lessons, share your screen on this page. Your student picks a number. Click it to open the situation, ask for the idiom in a full sentence, then click "Back to the board".

1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16

Make it a game

One point for the right idiom, one more for a full, correct sentence. Numbers that are done can be crossed out in the chat.

ACTIVITY 5

Fix the idiom

Each sentence has one mistake in the idiom: a wrong word, a missing word or a word too many. Write the correct idiom on the line.

1. It was love from first sight.
2. He finally popped a question last night.
3. They tied a knot in a small church in Lisbon.
4. I'm head over heel in love with her.
5. Marta is crazy of her new boyfriend.
6. I've had a crush to my yoga teacher for months.
7. We hit off at the party and talked for hours.
8. He broke her the heart.
9. After ten years, they called it quit.
10. Don't cry. There are many fishes in the sea.

Answers: **1** love at first sight **2** popped the question **3** tied the knot **4** head over heels **5** crazy about **6** a crush on **7** hit it off **8** broke her heart **9** called it quits **10** plenty more fish in the sea

ACTIVITY 6

Advice column

You write the advice column for a magazine. Choose one letter and write a reply of 60 to 90 words. Use at least three idioms from page 2 and write them below.

LETTER 1 · FROM MARTA, 29

My best friend has a new boyfriend, and they're head over heels. Now every weekend I go out with them and feel like a third wheel. I miss our time together. What should I do?

LETTER 2 · FROM IVAN, 34

My girlfriend and I have been together for six years. Everyone asks when I'm going to pop the question. I love her, but every time I look at rings, I get cold feet. Is something wrong with me?

GIVING ADVICE

Why don't you ...?
If I were you, I'd ...

BEING KIND

It's normal to ...
A lot of people feel ...

MY THREE IDIOMS

1 _____
2 _____
3 _____

MY REPLY

A model reply to Marta: Dear Marta, it's great that your friend is head over heels, but you don't have to be the third wheel every weekend. Tell her that you miss your time together and ask for one evening a month, just the two of you. A good friend will understand. And who knows? Love might be in the air for you soon, too.

ACTIVITY 4 · ON SCREEN

Situation 1

Jonas saw Mia across the room and knew at once that she was the one.

Which idiom fits? Say it in a full sentence.

← Back to the board

Answer: love at first sight

ACTIVITY 4 · ON SCREEN

Situation 2

Two colleagues meet on a training day and talk all through lunch like old friends.

Which idiom fits? Say it in a full sentence.

← Back to the board

Answer: hit it off

ACTIVITY 4 · ON SCREEN

Situation 3

Ella thinks about her neighbor all day, but she has never told anyone.

Which idiom fits? Say it in a full sentence.

← Back to the board

Answer: have a crush on

ACTIVITY 4 · ON SCREEN

Situation 4

Clara likes Leo, but she waits two days to answer his messages, so he tries harder.

Which idiom fits? Say it in a full sentence.

← Back to the board

Answer: play hard to get

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ACTIVITY 4 · ON SCREEN

Situation 5

In their first month, Sam brings Nora flowers, writes her poems and plans a surprise trip.

Which idiom fits? Say it in a full sentence.

← Back to the board

Answer: sweep her off her feet

ACTIVITY 4 · ON SCREEN

Situation 6

Everyone at the office knows when Maria is happy, sad or in love, because she shows it all.

Which idiom fits? Say it in a full sentence.

← Back to the board

Answer: wear her heart on her sleeve

ACTIVITY 4 · ON SCREEN

Situation 7

Your friends invite you to the cinema. You sit next to them while they hold hands all evening.

Which idiom fits? Say it in a full sentence.

← Back to the board

Answer: a third wheel

ACTIVITY 4 · ON SCREEN

Situation 8

Pedro and Ines love the same books, the same food and the same terrible jokes.

Which idiom fits? Say it in a full sentence.

← Back to the board

Answer: a match made in heaven

ACTIVITY 4 · ON SCREEN

Situation 9

Olga can't plan the holiday until she talks to her husband. "Let me check with my ..."

Which idiom fits? Say it in a full sentence.

← Back to the board

Answer: my other half

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ACTIVITY 4 · ON SCREEN

Situation 10

At a restaurant, Kai takes out a ring and kneels down next to the table.

Which idiom fits? Say it in a full sentence.

← Back to the board

Answer: pop the question

ACTIVITY 4 · ON SCREEN

Situation 11

A month before the wedding, Rosa suddenly wants to cancel everything.

Which idiom fits? Say it in a full sentence.

← Back to the board

Answer: get cold feet

ACTIVITY 4 · ON SCREEN

Situation 12

After two years of arguments, Ben and Ada hardly speak to each other at home.

Which idiom fits? Say it in a full sentence.

← Back to the board

Answer: on the rocks

ACTIVITY 4 · ON SCREEN

Situation 13

Kate and Rob were best friends at school. After years in different cities, they have nothing to say.

Which idiom fits? Say it in a full sentence.

← Back to the board

Answer: grow apart

ACTIVITY 4 · ON SCREEN

Situation 14

After ten years together, Jan and Eva agree to end their relationship.

Which idiom fits? Say it in a full sentence.

← Back to the board

Answer: call it quits

ACTIVITY 4 · ON SCREEN

Situation 15

Your friend is sad after a breakup. You want to tell her she will meet a new person.

Which idiom fits? Say it in a full sentence.

← Back to the board

Answer: plenty more fish in the sea

ACTIVITY 4 · ON SCREEN

Situation 16

At a wedding, Diego sees the woman he dated at university, for the first time in 15 years.

Which idiom fits? Say it in a full sentence.

← Back to the board

Answer: an old flame