

Movie Idioms

1. Popcorn movie

A popcorn movie is one that you watch almost purely for entertainment. While there are movies that will make you think and give you a new perspective on life, popcorn movies will not – nor are they made for that.

Instead, they are made for you to get out of your worldly responsibilities for a moment and just enjoy your life. You can eat these types of movies with popcorn and forget about the worries that you have in the world.

I know that some people will judge you for admitting that you enjoy popcorn movies, but they are really popular for a real reason!

Many of the summer blockbusters that you see each year are popcorn movies, but you might be surprised to realize that the ones that do the best are ones that really make you think.

2. Get the show on the road

If someone tells you to get the show on the road, they are urging you to get started on something! Rather than waiting somewhere for the preparation to finish, they want you to start, even if there might be some mistakes and things that hinder your progress.

Many of these potential problems will sort themselves out before you have to really deal with them.

This idiom comes from the old mobile circus way of life. Circuses would move from town to town, and bring all their tents, animals, equipment, etc. with them. If they were stuck in one city, doing things such as picking up supplies, they would not be able to make money.

Instead, they needed to get the show on the road, start traveling to other cities, and marketing their show so that they could earn more.

The circus ringmaster was tired of all his employees spending time drinking and partying instead of packing up to move. He shouted, “Let’s get this show on the road!” to get them to move.

I know you are worried about leaving something important behind, but we have our passports and cash for our trip to Japan so let’s get this show on the road!

3. Kick something off, kick off

If you kick something off, you spark its beginning. If you are sitting in a meeting and no one says anything when the boss asks for feedback, it will be awkward.

To make everyone more comfortable, you can be the first one to speak. If you do this, you kick off the conversation and get everyone started. This way, the conversation can start and someone else can continue it.

In relation to show business, to kick off a show means to start it, or to have the first performance out of many. You can also use the term kick off as an adjective or as a noun.

A kick off celebration is some sort of party that celebrates the beginning of something. When it starts, you could also simply call it a kick off; it is sometimes known as a kickoff.

The movie's cast and crew wanted to celebrate the release of their movie by holding a private kick off party the night before the formal movie premiere.

Our local grocery store is helping the families in the community kick off the school year right by offering lots of discounts on all kinds of back-to-school items! They have reduced prices on backpacks, stationery like pens and notebooks, lunches, etc.

4. Sell out

Sell out has two meanings – one is positive and the other is negative. If you use sell out as a noun, it is not a good thing. This means that you have completely abandoned your principles in favor of something such as money.

Instead of looking to build a long-term relationship with your audience, for example, you are trying to make a quick buck and earn money fast. In this case, sell out as a verb means to do something like this. If you endorse a bad product simply because they have paid you a lot of money, you have sold out.

If you use sell out as verb or adjective describing an event, this is a great thing! This term is used when you have tickets to sell. If you are sold out, it means that some person has bought every single ticket available for a certain show, movie, concert, etc.

There will be the maximum number of people in the audience, which is exciting for both the people putting on the show and the people who will attend it.

I spent two years building up this blog and I will not sell out my brand for any amount of money by letting a bad service advertise on it.

If we are able to sell out the first show of our musical, we can show all these people that there is a market for the stories that we can tell and that people will like them!

5. Live up to the hype

If something (typically a movie or a show) lives up to the hype, it means two things. First, it means that there is enough interest in it, or hype. People (such as movie critics, bloggers, etc.) will get excited for something by generating hype for it.

Before the release date of one of Taylor Swift's albums, for example, they will typically announce the date everything will be released and continually tease people about the songs that will be on it. This generates a lot of excitement and hype, and, more importantly, expectation.

If some show, movie, or music album is to live up to this hype, it has to be as good as people hope it will be. This is, in general, difficult to live up to if there is a lot of hype. However, the best products are able to generate a lot of excitement before they are released, and deliver something that is so high quality that the majority of fans end up loving it.

I was not too sure how many details I wanted to share with my audience before the launch of my new podcast because I wanted it to live up to the hype.

Jerry thought for sure the new Marvel Cinematic Universe movie, Spiderman Homecoming, was going to fall short of the expectations of the fans. To his surprise, however, it really lived up to the hype!

6. Jump the shark

This is a semi-derogatory term used to describe certain television shows (and occasionally some films) that have decreased in quality.

It used to be something completely amazing and worth watching, but they have, for one reason or another, begun to use far-fetched plots and special effects to maintain ratings. Instead, they should have kept their story telling quality high in some other way.

Over time, this term has come to apply to shows and movie series, but also bands, celebrities, and other public figures (including politicians) that have sold out. They are now doing things that are off brand and that they would probably have frowned upon if they were their younger selves, looking at the current version of themselves.

To jump the shark comes from the TV show Happy Days. It was a sitcom from the 1970s and early 1980s about an idealized life of some teenagers in the Midwestern United States.

In one episode in the fifth season, the main character literally jumps over a shark in confines. This went against the character's personality. As a result, this scene was seen as a ridiculous plot device that marked the beginning of a decline in ratings.

I thought that there were lots of story lines that the writers of my favorite TV show could have developed, which would have brought in more viewers. However, they decided to jump the shark and have two characters that should have hated each other start to date instead.

It takes a lot of time and energy to create a television show that really appeals to a lot of viewers, and turn those viewers into dedicated fans. Still, I believe that it would be better for the TV network to decide to end a series when it should end rather than jump the shark simply for the ratings. It ruins the show!

7. Break a leg

This idiom comes as a result of the superstitious nature of actors and other performers. Many of them think that if you wish them good luck, the exact opposite will happen! Instead of jinxing them, their friends and fellow actors may tell them to break a leg – or, metaphorically, to have good luck!

My husband is trying out a new stand up comedy routine tonight at the coffee shop. I told him to break a leg!

I know you really do not need the luck with all the practice that you have been putting in, but make sure to break a leg!

8. To make a clown of yourself

Clowns are supposed to be funny and entertaining people. Even if some people are scared of clowns, they are sometimes thought of as ridiculous people who do all kinds of things to make people laugh. Thus, if you make a clown of yourself, you are doing something that makes people laugh.

This is usually not something you do intentionally. Instead, you probably intend to do something seriously. However, by no fault of your own, you end up making a clown of yourself – or looking like a fool.

The idiom is usually not meant as a good thing. Even though some people really like clowns, in this context they are someone who knows very little.

Ada was so scared to make a clown of herself that she ended up doing a terrible job at her performance anyways.

Kelly did not mean to make a clown of her coworker but the coworker was trying to exaggerate their role in the project so much without understanding it that it was embarrassing for everyone who was listening.

9. To be in the limelight

If you are in the limelight, you are in the public eye. This means that there are people who actually care about your personal life aside from all the work that you do.

They will want to know about your personal life, including who you are dating, how your family is doing, what your typical day looks like, and what you like to spend your free time doing. Because of this, you will likely have paparazzi and reporters around you often.

People are interested in you as a person, meaning that they will take steps to figure you out.

The expression comes from an old practice from the theater scene. Limelight was an actual type of light, also known as “calcium light”. The bright white light is made by heating oxygen and hydrogen, and placing a piece of lime into it. It was used for stage lighting and still exists today.

Dylan tried to avoid the publicity as much as possible, but he was in the limelight all the time because of his new major hit movie.

The public’s interest is always wandering, so once you are in the limelight it is difficult to keep the attention on you.

10. To crave the limelight

If you crave the limelight, you really like to be the center of attention. You crave (really, really want) to be the focus of everyone’s interest. This applies to celebrities and politicians, but it also applies to regular people that you meet at work or at school.

If someone is constantly doing crazy things and telling you about it, they are likely a limelight craver. Another word for this is attention hog.

I had no idea why my friend always asked questions she knew the answer to in class, until I realized that she craved the limelight and enjoyed it when the teacher acknowledged her.

Jo Ann was never someone who craved the limelight, but after the press and interviews of her after her first New York Times bestselling book, she began to see the appeal.

11. Museum piece

A museum piece is something or someone that is so old, antique, and out of place that it should belong in a museum rather than as a part of everyday life.

It is used mostly as a derogatory phrase – if you call something or someone a museum piece, it means that they are stuck in the old ways of doing things and unable to change or improve.

Of course, a museum piece can be used literally. You can literally call something that is displayed in a museum a museum piece, but the idiomatic meaning is much more common.

Ross, your hat looks like a total museum piece; please do not take it with you to wear to the show.

Lany was so angry when Rebecca called her homemade pants a museum piece because she had been so proud of her work before that.

12. A dog and pony show

A dog and pony show is an event of some sort whose purpose is to rally people for their support and/or their money. If someone is trying to sell you something, they are likely to advertise something free to get you to join, show you a portion of what they have, and ask you to pay for the full thing.

A dog and pony show is one that does that, regardless of the quality of the product. Many times, the quality or usefulness of the service or product is far lower than you would expect. Even if this is the case, people will often buy the product because they have been subtly manipulated to be receptive to it.

Before she realized that this was a dog and pony show meant to get her to spend as much money as possible, Ada had already promised her next paycheck to the event's manager.

The company had a hard time convincing their potential customers that they were more than just a dog and pony show, but their lack of professionalism and experience really hurt their cause.

13. The show must go on

Regardless of all the bad things that happen and the things that go wrong, an event or show that is planned must continue. This is what people mean when they say, "The show must go on!"

This is an expression that someone uses when they want to push through adversity and bad luck and carry out their plan. Often times, there are many reasons to quit and give up or postpone something, but making do with the situation is allowing the show to go on.

"I know that the rain makes all out papers tear easily," said the director, "but we can replace those with plastic pages. The show must go on!"

Even when the flower delivery was mixed up and the chef for the reception bailed at the last minute, the bride insisted that the show must go on and made the most of the situation anyways.

14. To run the show

If you run the show, it means that you are in charge of every part of it. You make sure that it happens, and that each person and thing involved is able to do a smooth job. Any kind of boss runs the show. This means that the head is not someone who is limited to show business.

A train conductor who makes sure that the train arrives at its destination at the right time and that all the passengers have the right tickets is one who successfully runs the show.

It is foolish to think that you can simply come to the office and start giving out orders to the employees like you are the one who runs the show!

Joey has always admired his boss because she has the ability to run the show like it's nobody's business.

15. To sing your heart out

This idiom comes from the fact that most people like to sing, even though they do not always sing well. This is a dilemma because someone who is a bad singer may not want to sing in front of other people, or sing loudly.

However, if you power through your nerves and fear and sing out loud anyways, that is singing your heart out. This applies to any situation. As long as you overcome fears, doubts, and even criticisms from other people, you can sing your heart out.

Let me tell you – the only thing you will regret is holding yourself back from doing something that you will really enjoy. Sing your heart out instead!

Even though thousands of people thought the movie star was stepping out of bounds for speaking out against racism, sexism, and discrimination, most of his fans wanted him to keep singing his heart out!

16. To be star-studded

If something is star-studded, it means that it has all kinds of stars – movie, TV, music, and any other entertainment stars. Something that is studded has things all over it. For example, a diamond-studded keychain has diamonds that completely cover its surface.

A star-studded event or movie is one that has many actors and music artists at or in it. The new superhero movie is completely star-studded; I just can't wait to see it!

If there is a star-studded party happening, there is always very tight security to prevent the paparazzi from taking too many pictures and journalists from bothering the stars.

17. To steal the show

Somebody that steals the show is one that the audience pays the most attention to, even though the creators of the show did not intend for her to be the star. For example, if you are watching a YouTube video with a talking head and their adorable puppy comes into the camera shot, you may start to pay attention to the puppy instead of the person.

If you scroll down to the comments and see that everyone is talking about how cute the puppy is, it has officially stolen the show!

At my daughter's piano recital, she ended up stealing the show by going on stage but refusing to play, making all the other parents laugh!

When the anthropology professor had to bring his son to class with him one day, his son stole the show with how cute and entertaining he was.

18. A show stopper

To be a show stopper, something has to literally stop the show. For one reason or another – good or bad, the show has to be paused for a short time before continuing. The reason can be a song in a Broadway musical, after which most people applaud, or

a horrible shock or accident that causes everything to stop while the injury is tended to.

The twist at the end of the play was a complete show stopper; you could hear the gasps and the whispers in the audience for a full three minutes after it was revealed! It looked like the broken stage lights would be a show stopper until the technician came and fixed it all for us.

19. It's not over until the fat lady sings

This is one of the most well known and most used idioms from show business. When you say, "It's not over until the fat lady sings," it is a silly expression that means that nothing is over until it is truly over. Some people want to leave or give up if they are lagging behind in the score after the third quarter.

However, the truly experienced players know that they could still make a comeback in that last quarter. Instead of giving up prematurely, they will keep playing hard until the end. In this case, you would say, "It's not over until the fat lady sings," to prod them and get them to stay focused.

This saying comes from the olden times when watching the opera was popular. The performances almost always ended with an overweight woman singing the last song. Because of this, those songs usually marked the end of the shows, and this saying came out of it.

We are so close to putting on the best show of our lives! Remember that it's not over until the fat lady sings so don't lose focus now.

All the fans thought that their baseball team was going to lose when they trailed by 4 runs at the bottom of the ninth inning, but they were able to score 5 runs and win the game! It's not over until the fat lady sings.

Where to watch movies in English language with English subtitles ...