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## EC12. Action Idioms

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Student ID Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Instructor: \_\_\_\_\_ Level: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

For media links in this activity, visit [the LLC ESL Tutoring website for Upper Level SDLAs](#). Find your SDLA number to see all the resources to finish your SDLA.

### Section 1: Introduction

In EC11: Introduction to Idioms, you learned that idioms are words, phrases or expressions which are commonly used in everyday conversation by native speakers of English. They often make the language more colorful, and they often don't mean what the speaker is actually saying. In this SDLA, you will learn about idioms that describe actions. Action idioms are used all the time. Have you ever heard of any of these action idioms? Check any of the ones you've heard before:

- blow the whistle
- rock the boat
- bite one's tongue
- get off the hook
- draw the line
- hit the nail on the head
- carry the ball
- get to the bottom of
- chill out
- catch you later



What do all of these idioms have in common? \_\_\_\_\_

### Section 2: Meaning from Conversation

On the next page is a conversation between two friends, Julia and Shanice. [Listen to](#) and read the conversation. Notice the **bold-faced** idioms. Try to use the context of the conversation to figure out the meaning of the idioms. You will write the meaning on the following page. The first one has been done for you as an example.





**Take Action: A Phone Conversation**

**Section 2 Listening**

*Ring...*

**Julia:** Hello?

**Shanice:** Hey, Julia.

**Julia:** Hey. What's up?

**Shanice:** Not much. What did you think of the test we had today? I thought it was pretty difficult.

**Julia:** I did too. I should've studied more. Oh well. Oh yeah, and did you see what I saw while we were taking the test?

**Shanice:** Umm, are you talking about Carol? I'm pretty sure she was cheating. I can't believe we both noticed but the teacher didn't.

**Julia:** I know. Do you think I should **blow the whistle** on her or keep quiet and not **rock the boat**?

**Shanice:** Well, if you **bite your tongue** about this, she'll get away with it. And I don't think this is the first time she's cheated on a test for this class.

**Julia:** The problem is that I am pretty sure, but not positive, that she was cheating. What if I tell the teacher and she really wasn't cheating? I would feel really bad.

**Shanice:** If she really was cheating, do you want her to **get off the hook**?

**Julia:** No. I saw her do it once before on a test we took, but I didn't say anything. I guess it's time to **draw the line**. She needs to be stopped.

**Shanice:** Looks like you've **hit the nail on the head**. Now it's up to you to **carry the ball** and decide how to handle this situation.

**Julia:** I guess telling the teacher is the only way to **get to the bottom of it**.

**Shanice:** I know it'll be hard, but try to **chill out**. Just do what you know is the right thing.

**Julia:** OK. I will. Thanks for helping me.

**Shanice:** No problem. **Catch you later**.





**Idiom:** Blow the whistle

**Meaning:** *to report or tell that someone has done something wrong*

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rock the boat

---

bite one's tongue

---

get off the hook

---

draw the line

---

hit the nail on the head

---

carry the ball

---

get to the bottom of

---

chill out

---

catch you later

---





### Section 3: Review Questions

In order to better understand the conversation and idioms, answer the questions below.

1. If someone suggests that you **chill out**, which words tell how you might be feeling? Check all that apply.
  - nervous
  - hot
  - scared
  - troubled
  - warm
  - excited
  - anxious
  - worried
2. Julia and Shanice are not talking about nails, balls, whistles, drawing lines, or catching each other. What are they talking about? Describe the problem and solution.
3. If you saw someone cheating in class, would you choose to **blow the whistle** or **not rock the boat**? Explain your answer.
4. Is the language in this conversation similar to the way you talk to a friend on the phone in your native language? In English? In what way?
5. Are there any idioms in your native language that are similar to any of these action idioms? Give some examples.

### Section 4: More Idioms

Below are 8 more action idioms. Choose 4 of the 8 idioms and find their meaning. You can go to [Section 4 Website](#) to help you find the meaning of the idioms. Then write a sentence to show how it is used for each of the idioms you've chosen.

1. beat around the bush
2. bury the hatchet
3. come out of one's shell
4. burn one's bridges
5. put a cork in it
6. hold your horses
7. throw in the towel
8. pull oneself together





# English Self-Directed Learning Activities

Language Learning Center 77-1005, *Passport Rewards*

EC12. Action Idioms

## Your Idioms





Idiom	Meaning	How is it used? (sentence)





**Section 5: Student Self-Assessment**

Complete this table BEFORE meeting with a tutor.

Communication Skill	I can't do this YET. 	I can do this WITH help. 	I can do this WITHOUT help. 	I can TEACH this to a classmate. 
I can use a conversation to infer the meaning of idioms.				
I can answer comprehension questions based on a conversation.				
I can find information about idioms using the Internet.				
I can create sentences with new idioms.				

Here are some words/phrases I need to practice.

**Good Job!**

Now make an appointment

with a tutor on the LLC ESL Tutoring Website

([www.mtsac.edu/llc/passportrewards/llctutoring](http://www.mtsac.edu/llc/passportrewards/llctutoring)).








**Section 6: Practice with a Tutor!**

After completing the self- assessment, meet with a tutor and give this completed SDLA to the tutor. You will review the idioms and questions in Sections 2 and 3. Also, you will go over the information about the idioms you researched in section 4. The tutor will provide you with feedback in the following areas:

**Grading Rubric**

Possible Points	Need Practice  (0-1 Point)	Good Job  (2-3 Points)	Excellent Work  (4-5 Points)
<b>Content</b>	Not enough information provided in responses and often does not use correct vocabulary.	Provides most important information in responses and some of the time uses correct vocabulary.	Provides all necessary information in responses and most of the time uses correct vocabulary.
<b>Skill: Speaking</b>	More than 6 mistakes saying words; needs guessing more than 3 times.	Not more than 5 mistakes saying words; needs guessing on 1-2 words or sentences.	Not more than 2 mistakes saying words; needs no guess about meaning.
<b>Oral Fluency</b>	Speaks mostly in phrases, individual words; many pauses.	Sometimes speaks in complete sentences; several pauses.	Speaks in complete sentences; a couple pauses okay.

\*Students must receive at least 10 points to move on

Possible Points: \_\_\_\_\_ / 15

Tutor Comments:

**Congratulations! Keep going.**

You have successfully completed this SDLA and are ready to continue to the next.

**Work on this more.**

You have not yet mastered this SDLA. It is recommended that you complete it again.

Tutor Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

