21 Idioms for Academic English

This Worksheet is for use with the **21 Idioms for Academic English** video, available on YouTube and Youku.

Video name:	**21 Idioms for Academic English**
Link to video:	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n6SEB4Nemms
Alternate link:	https://v.youku.com/v_show/id_XNTEwOTkxODAzNg==.html

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Worksheet

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Task 1: Before watching

Answer the following questions *before* watching the video.

i) What is an *idiom*? Write a short definition. Use a dictionary if you need to.

_____

_____

ii) Below are some common *informal* idioms. Do you know what they mean? Try to match the idiom with the meaning. Use a dictionary to check. An example has been done.

Idiom	***Meaning***
a piece of cake	to give away a secret
hit the nail on the head	to ignore someone
let the cat out of the bag	to be exactly right
give someone the cold shoulder	something that is very easy to do
speak of the devil	to achieve two things with one action
kill two birds with one stone	said when someone spoken about unexpectedly appears

iii) Does your language use idioms? If so, how do these translate into English.

Task 2: What are idioms?

1. According to the video, an *idiom* is an expression which is:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

2. Which of these three example idioms, from the first part of the video, is *academic*?

i. Raining cats and dogs
ii. Break a leg
iii. Beg the question

Task 3: Idioms in Academic English

3. Complete the following tables with data from the video.

List	**Coverage of texts**
Academic Idioms (speaking)	_____%
Academic Collocation List	_____%
Academic Word List	10%

Type of academic idiom	**Total number**
Spoken	170
Written	36

4. According to the video, why is it helpful to study academic idioms for:

- writing/speaking? _____
  _____
- reading/listening? _____
  _____

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Task 4: 21 Academic Idioms

5. Complete the following academic idioms from the video by adding *one* missing word for each.



in the _____ of



go hand in hand _____

on the ___ hand



on the ____ hand



on the ____ of it



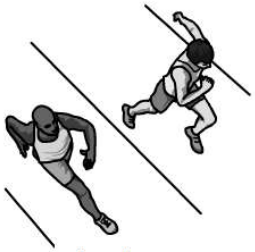
_____ of thumb



___ in mind



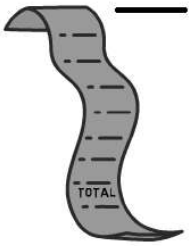
in the ____ run



in the ____ run



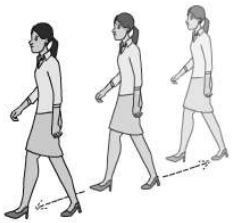
in (the)____ of



the _____ line



_____ into play



a ____ further/back



the _____ of power



_____ force



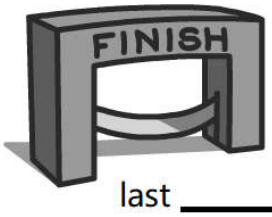
bad _____



golden _____



_____ the lines of



last _____



in its own ____



gold _____

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6. Match the idioms from Q4 to the definitions below. Each idiom should be used once. An example has been done.

Idiom	**Meaning**
along the lines of	*roughly similar to something*
	to become an important factor
	something that is the best example of its kind
	the most important aspect of something
	someone or something unpleasant
	on its own and not because of something else
	because of (some new information)
	a solution chosen only if there are no other options
	to make an improvement/to make things worse
	someone/something with the power to make things happen
	the way power is distributed between rival groups or countries
	from one point of view
	over a long period of time
	over a short period of time
	be closely related to something
	from a different point of view
	an approximate way of doing/measuring something
	controlled/owned by someone
	remember/consider when making a decision
	seemingly, based on the evidence
	a period of time when a particular art etc was very successful

7. Complete the following sentences by using one of the idioms. There are 21 gaps in total, so you should use each idiom *exactly once*. You may need to change the form of any idioms which use verbs.

i. Coal and steam were the _____ behind the industrial revolution.

ii. When learning moved out of the classroom and online because of Covid-19, there were many different teaching techniques which _____.

iii. They were forced to discontinue the product _____ the extremely negative publicity it received.

iv. As a _____, the older a child is, the more they will benefit from doing homework.

v. Most employers hold _____ in the workplace, and may force their employees to do unpleasant or stressful work tasks.

vi. Reading ability often _____ writing ability.

vii. It is widely known that half of the world's wealth is _____ only 1% of the population.

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viii. Although the research unit was originally part of the physics department, it is now a department _____, with completely separate funding and staffing.

ix. _____, academic writing may seem like an impossible skill to master. However, it is possible to improve with enough practice and patience.

x. This method of preparing the substance is very hazardous and should only be used as a _____ when no other methods are possible.

xi. The eighteenth century is considered to be the _____ of music, since it coincided with the lives of many great composers such as Bach, Beethoven, Haydn and Mozart.

xii. Although citing sources and avoiding plagiarism is difficult, _____ is that it is essential for students to do these things in order to achieve academic honesty.

xiii. Profits in the fourth quarter were extremely low. This was _____ for the company, which bankrupt early the following year.

xiv. The double-blind, randomised controlled trial is considered to be the _____ in medical research, since it produces completely unbiased results.

xv. Although the apparatus was new, it operated _____ of previous apparatuses and was therefore fairly straightforward to use.

xvi. Although it was meant to improve the popularity of the company, the new product line took it _____.

xvii. _____, studying at an overseas university can provide an excellent experience. _____, it can be extremely expensive.

xviii. Although smoking may seem enjoyable _____, its effects can be very harmful _____.

xix. Parents should _____ that their actions may have a lasting impact on their children, and they should therefore behave responsibly.

Further reading/viewing

The following page gives more information about academic idioms.

https://www.eapfoundation.com/vocab/academic/other/idioms/

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Answers

Task 1: Before watching

i) What is an *idiom*? Write a short definition. Use a dictionary if you need to.
Answers will vary depending on the dictionary used.

ii) Below are some common *informal* idioms. Do you know what they mean? Try to match the idiom with the meaning. Use a dictionary to check. An example has been done.

Idiom	***Meaning***
a piece of cake	to give away a secret
hit the nail on the head	to ignore someone
let the cat out of the bag	to be exactly right
give someone the cold shoulder	something that is very easy to do
speak of the devil	to achieve two things with one action
kill two birds with one stone	said when someone spoken about unexpectedly appears

iii) Does your language use idioms? If so, how do these translate into English.
Answers will vary, depending on the language.

Task 2: What are idioms?

1. According to the video, an *idiom* is an expression which is:

- fixed
- multi-word
- well-established
- usually difficult to understand

1. Which of these three example idioms, from the first part of the video, is *academic*?

i. Raining cats and dogs
ii. Break a leg
iii. **Beg the question** – *this idiom is academic, #22 for writing*

Task 3: Idioms in Academic English

2. Complete the following tables with data from the video.

List	**Coverage of texts**
Academic Idioms (speaking)	0.1 %
Academic Collocation List	10 %
Academic Word List	10%

Type of academic idiom	**Total number**
Spoken	170
Written	36

3. According to the video, why is it helpful to study academic idioms for:

- writing/speaking? *It will help students writing seem more natural/help students become part of the academic discourse community.*
- reading/listening? *It will help students understand spoken or written texts (since meaning of idioms cannot be deduced from individual words).*

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Task 4: 21 Academic Idioms

4. Complete the following academic idioms from the video by adding *one* missing word for each.



in the hands of



go hand in hand with

on the one hand



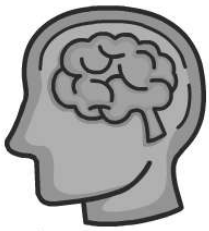
on the other hand



on the face of it



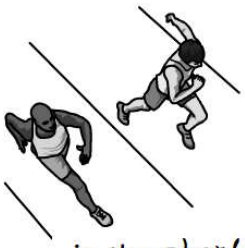
rule of thumb



bear in mind



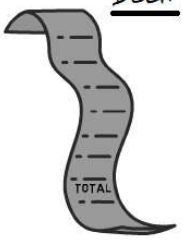
in the long run



in the short run



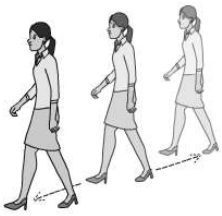
in (the) light of



the bottom line



come into play



a step further/back



the balance of power



driving force



bad news



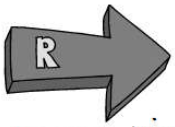
golden age



along the lines of



last resort



in its own right



gold standard

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5. Match the idioms from Q5 to the definitions below. Each idiom should be used once. An example has been done.

Idiom	**Meaning**
along the lines of	*roughly similar to something*
come into play	to become an important factor
gold standard	something that is the best example of its kind
the bottom line	the most important aspect of something
bad news	someone or something unpleasant
in its own right	on its own and not because of something else
in (the) light of	because of (some new information)
last resort	a solution chosen only if there are no other options
a step further/back	to make an improvement/to make things worse
driving force	someone/something with the power to make things happen
the balance of power	the way power is distributed between rival groups or countries
on the one hand	from one point of view
in the long run	over a long period of time
in the short run	over a short period of time
go hand in hand with	be closely related to something
on the other hand	from a different point of view
rule of thumb	an approximate way of doing/measuring something
in the hands of	controlled/owned by someone
bear in mind	remember/consider when making a decision
on the face of it	seemingly, based on the evidence
golden age	a period of time when a particular art etc was very successful

6. Complete the following sentences by using one of the idioms. There are 21 gaps in total, so you should use each idiom *exactly once*. You may need to change the form of any idioms which use verbs.

i. Coal and steam were the driving force behind the industrial revolution.

ii. When learning moved out of the classroom and online because of Covid-19, there were many different teaching techniques which came into play.

iii. They were forced to discontinue the product in (the) light of the extremely negative publicity it received.

iv. As a rule of thumb, the older a child is, the more they will benefit from doing homework.

v. Most employers hold the balance of power in the workplace, and may force their employees to do unpleasant or stressful work tasks.

vi. Reading ability often goes hand in hand with writing ability.

vii. It is widely known that half of the world's wealth is in the hands of only 1% of the population.

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viii. Although the research unit was originally part of the physics department, it is now a department in its own right, with completely separate funding and staffing.

ix. On the face of it, academic writing may seem like an impossible skill to master. However, it is possible to improve with enough practice and patience.

x. This method of preparing the substance is very hazardous and should only be used as a last resort when no other methods are possible.

xi. The eighteenth century is considered to be the golden age of music, since it coincided with the lives of many great composers such as Bach, Beethoven, Haydn and Mozart.

xii. Although citing sources and avoiding plagiarism is difficult, the bottom line is that it is essential for students to do these things in order to achieve academic honesty.

xiii. Profits in the fourth quarter were extremely low. This was bad news for the company, which bankrupt early the following year.

xiv. The double-blind, randomised controlled trial is considered to be the gold standard in medical research, since it produces completely unbiased results.

xv. Although the apparatus was new, it operated along the lines of previous apparatuses and was therefore fairly straightforward to use.

xvi. Although it was meant to improve the popularity of the company, the new product line took it a step back.

xvii. On (the) one hand, studying at an overseas university can provide an excellent experience. On the other (hand), it can be extremely expensive.

xviii. Although smoking may seem enjoyable in the short run, its effects can be very harmful in the long run.

xix. Parents should bear in mind that their actions may have a lasting impact on their children, and they should therefore behave responsibly.

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Teacher's Notes

Video name:	**21 Idioms for Academic English**
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Alternate link:	https://v.youku.com/v_show/id_XNTEwOTkxODAzNg==.html
Video length:	19.28
Learning Outcomes:	(1) Understand what idioms are. [*Tasks 1, 2*]
	(2) Be aware of reasons to study academic idioms. [*Task 3*]
	(3) Understand meaning of common academic idioms. [*Task 4, Q5-6*]
	(4) Use academic idioms in sentences. [*Task 4, Q7*]

Suggested sequence/timings (for teachers)

The following is a possible sequence for a 70' lesson. For a 50' lesson, do 1-2, with 3 (Q6-7) done in a second lesson, as review, along with one of the extension activities.

1. Warm-up (15')

a) Do *Task 1: Before watching*. This task can be done before giving the handout to students, e.g. copy text/questions to the board or PPT.

b) Go through answers (see next page). Answers for i) will vary, depending on dictionary used (if any). The key point about idioms is that **the meaning cannot be derived from the individual words.** Be sure to highlight that the idioms in ii) are informal, not academic. They are ones students might have seen before. For iii), most languages will have idioms, and it can be interesting for students to translate literally and share, e.g. *tener memoria de pez* (Spanish, to have a bad memory, literally *to have fish memory*), 人山人海 (Chinese, a sea of people, literally *people mountain, people sea*).

2. Video comprehension (35')

a) Direct students to watch the video and take notes.

b) Give out the handout and have students (in pairs) complete Tasks 2-4 (Q1-5 **only, NOT** Q6 or Q7). Note that the length of the video means it would probably take too long to allow a second viewing.

c) Go through answers with students. It is especially important to check the idioms before moving on to Q6 and Q7.

ALTERNATIVE APPROACH

To save time, the teacher could present the information in the first part of the video, and skip Tasks 2-3. In this case, start the video at 3'54" (i.e. 21 Academic Idioms).

3. Using Academic Idioms (20')

a) Students complete Q6 and Q7. Answers to Q6 could be checked before moving on to Q7.

b) Go through answers with students.

4. Extension activities

a) Students could write their own sentences, using some of the idioms. Swap to check.

b) Students could use a concordancer (such as Lextutor) to see further examples of academic idioms in context.

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