



# 51 useful idioms and phrases for SSC CGL and Bank Exams

The language of English is a funny one. Sometimes, it feels like people aren't saying what they really mean to say, using, instead, strings of words that make no sense on their own. Confusing as they may be, these strings of random words stitched together are the essence of the language. Here are 51 often-used idioms and phrases SSC CGL and Bank Exams.

## 1. Once in a blue moon:

Meaning-Something that happens very rarely

Sentence- Once in a blue moon, the blue jay can be seen in these parts of the forest.

## 2. Beating around the bush:

Meaning-Avoiding the main topic

Sentence-The President was beating around the bush when the citizens demanded a reason for the forgery of legal documents.

## 3. Chip on your shoulder:

Meaning-When someone is upset about something that happened a while ago

Sentence-He has a chip on his shoulder for being abandoned by his parents in his childhood.

## 4. Cry over spilt milk:

Meaning-Complaining about a loss or failure from the past



Sentence-He was mad because he couldn't clear the cut off due to a silly mistake. But, then he realized there was no use crying over spilt milk and decided to become more careful.

### 5. Spill the beans:

Meaning-To disclose a secret

Sentence-The little one spilled the beans about the surprise vacation we had planned.

### 6. Piece of cake:

Meaning-Something that is easy to understand or do

Sentence-I thought that the problem would be tough, but it turned out to be a piece of cake!

### 7. Blessing in disguise:

Meaning-Something good and useful that did not initially seem that way

Sentence-His accident was a blessing in disguise because it gave him a lot of time to think about his life while he was recovering, and as a result, he made some important decisions that improved his life.

### 8. Come hell or high water:

Meaning-Possible obstacles in your path (will not stop you)

Sentence-I have decided that come hell or high water I will become an engineer.

### 9. Taste of your own medicine:

Meaning-When someone receives the same treatment, usually negative, that he/she gives to others



Sentence-She is always taunting others and hurting their sentiments. I just wish someone would give her a taste of her own medicine.

### 10. Golden handshake:

Meaning-A big sum of money given to a person when he/she leaves a company or retires

Sentence-The management of the company wanted to decrease their workforce. They offered a golden handshake to their aged employees.

### 11. Mean business:

Meaning-Being serious/dedicated

Sentence-The border is sealed by troops who mean business.

### 12. Apple of one's eye:

Meaning-Being cherished more than others are

Sentence-Sam is adored by his teacher for his childlike nature. He is the apple of her eye.

### 13. The best of both worlds:

Meaning-The benefits of widely differing situations, enjoyed at the same time.

Sentence-I had the best of both worlds since I worked as an ordinary member of the team but got to learn from the leaders.

### 14. Feeling a bit under the weather:

Meaning-Feeling slightly ill

Sentence-I may not be able to jog today, as I am feeling a bit under the weather.



**15. Icing on the cake:**

Meaning-Something that turns good into great

Sentence-India's victory over England on India's Independence Day was like icing on the cake.

**16. Cost an arm and a leg:**

Meaning-Be very expensive

Sentence-His laziness made him miss his flight to Chandigarh. The next ticket cost him an arm and a leg.

**17. Jump the bandwagon:**

Meaning-To join a popular activity or trend

Sentence-When he was detected with diabetes, he quickly jumped on the bandwagon and joined the Zumba dance class.

**18. Ball is in your court:**

Meaning-When it is up to you to make the next decision or step.

Sentence-Now the ball is in your court; decide whether you want to reply or not.

**19. Bite off more than you can chew:**

Meaning-To take up a task which you may not be able to accomplish due to lack of ability.

Sentence-I bit off more than I could chew when I decided to take up the 300-page research project.

**20. Can't judge a book by its cover:**



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Meaning-Cannot judge something primarily on appearance.

Sentence-The house looked impressive in the advertisement. Still I made a trip to the house to check everything. It is wise not to judge a book by its cover.

### **21. Hear it on grapevine:**

Meaning-To hear rumors about something or someone

Sentence-I heard it on grapevine that he had stiffed an old man asking for his pension.

### **22. It takes two to tango:**

Meaning-Actions or communications need more than one person

Sentence-Even though I thought I would be fired after the altercation with my manager, thankfully upper management realized that it takes two to tango.

### **23. Last straw:**

Meaning-The final problem in a series of problems

Sentence-My body was already in bad shape. The accident was the last straw. I am now on complete bed rest.

### **24. To be in the doldrums:**

Meaning-To be in low spirits

Sentence-Sam was in the doldrums after he was insulted by the boss in front of his colleagues.

### **25. To sit on the fence:**

Meaning-To remain neutral





Sentence-Since I wasn't aware of the details, I decided to sit on the fence during the argument between my cousins.

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### **26. Break the ice:**

Meaning-To initiate a social conversation or interaction

Sentence-At the start of the lecture, the new professor tried to break the ice by telling a joke.

### **27. A bird's eye view:**

Meaning-A view from a very high place that allows you to see a very large area

Sentence-The Singapore Big Wheel offers a bird's eye view of the city.

### **28. A litmus test:**

Meaning-A method that helps to know if something is correct

Sentence-Taking up the job served as a litmus test for me to know how good I was at applying my knowledge.

### **29. At the drop of a hat:**

Meaning-Willingness to do something instantly

Sentence-She expects me to make dinner at the drop of a hat even if I am very busy with office work.

### **30. Afraid of one's own shadow:**



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Meaning-To become easily frightened

Sentence-Her creepy encounter with the supernatural had a devastating effect on her. She is now afraid of her own shadow.

### **31. A house of cards:**

Meaning-A poor plan

Sentence-The State's new scheme was initially welcomed, but later turned out to be a house of cards when it was discovered how easy it was to perpetrate a scam.

### **32. Black and blue:**

Meaning-Full of bruises

Sentence-The young lad was all black and blue after a tiff with a raging senior.

### **33. Be on cloud nine:**

Meaning-Be very happy

Sentence-I will be on cloud nine when my first article gets published.

### **34. Bone of contention:**

Meaning-A subject or issue over which there is continuing disagreement

Sentence-The examination system has long been a serious bone of contention in the HRD Ministry.

### **35. Eat humble pie:**

Meaning-To apologize humbly

Sentence-He will have to eat humble pie for the disrespect shown to the Captain.





### **36. Fool's paradise:**

Meaning-False sense of happiness or success

Sentence-They were living in a fool's paradise, refusing to accept that they were facing poverty.

### **37. Give cold shoulder:**

Meaning-To ignore

Sentence-I sent her a message to apologize for my misbehavior, but she gave me the cold shoulder.

### **38. Get a raw deal:**

Meaning-To not be treated as well as other people

Sentence-The fact is that students in government schools get a raw deal.

### **39. Hit the nail on the head:**

Meaning-To do the correct thing

Sentence-She hit the nail on the head when she laid out a list of justifiable grievances she had with the company.

### **40. Hand to mouth:**

Meaning-live on only basic necessities

Sentence-The severe drought led the farmers to live hand to mouth.

### **41. Hit the bull's eye:**

Meaning-To be exactly right about something or achieve the best result possible.





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Sentence-The detective hit the bull's eye when he figured out that nobody but the doctor could have had access to the poison.

#### **42. Let the cat out of the bag:**

Meaning-To reveal the secret carelessly or by mistake

Sentence-Now that she had let the cat out of the bag, she had no option but to confess.

#### **43. Make a face:**

Meaning-To show dislike or disappointment through facial expressions

Sentence-Little Stella made a face at the sight of bitter gourd in her food.

#### **44. Open Pandora's Box:**

Meaning-To find a source of great troubles and problems

Sentence-Finding the wallet on the road opened up a Pandora's box. I was arrested for stealing when I went to report it at the police station.

#### **45. It's Greek to me**

Meaning-Something that is not understandable

Sentence-I failed my commerce test; it was all Greek to me!

#### **46. Don't put all your eggs in one basket:**

Meaning-Do not put all your resources in one basket.

Sentence-The boy put all his money into his dream startup that eventually failed. I had told him not to put all his eggs in one basket.





**47. To call a spade a spade:**

Meaning-To be brutally frank, outspoken, blunt in speech.

Sentence- Let's call a spade a spade – popular he may be, but that man is a liar.

**48. To be a Good Samaritan:**

Meaning-To be kind and compassionate to someone in distress

Sentence-I was sure I would be stuck on the highway till the morning, but a Good Samaritan offered me a ride home.

**49. To put in a nutshell:**

Meaning-To say in a few words or to make something concise

Sentence-The Textbook Development Committee decided to put the 30-page chapter in a nutshell to help save time for students during revision.

**50. To pour oil on troubled waters:**

Meaning-To make peace

Sentence-I am always stuck pouring oil on troubled waters when my mother and wife start their bickering.

**51. To move heaven and earth:**

Meaning-To exert all efforts

Sentence-He moved heaven and earth to ensure that his family was taken care of in the foreign land in his absence.