

Dog idioms

Here is a list of dog idioms.

As clean as a hound's tooth

If something is as clean as a hound's tooth, it is very clean. A hound is a hunting dog.

- We didn't rest until the house was as clean as a hound's tooth.

As crooked as a dog's hind leg

If somebody is as crooked as a dog's hind leg, they are very dishonest.

- My former employer was as crooked as a dog's hind leg. I am glad to have left his company.

As sick as a dog

When you are as sick as a dog, you are very sick.

- She was as sick as a dog when she got home from work.

Bark is worse than bite

If someone's bark is worse than their bite, their words are worse than their actions.

- Don't worry about what my mother said. Her bark is worse than her bite and she is actually a caring person.

Bark up the wrong tree

To bark up the wrong tree is to put the blame on the wrong person.

- You are barking up the wrong tree by accusing me of poisoning your dog. I didn't do it.

Call the dogs off

To call the dogs off is to stop haunting someone.

- They will not come out of their hideouts until the police call the dogs off.

Dog and pony show

A dog and pony show is a highly promoted, over-staged performance organized with the sole objective of impressing people. This expression has a negative connotation. It is not used to talk about a campaign that you approve of.

Dog-eat-dog

Used to refer to a situation where people are ready to hurt others to get what they want.

- It is a dog-eat-dog world. If you aren't competitive, you won't get anywhere.

Dog in the manger

Used to refer to a person who keeps something they don't want in order to prevent others from having it.

- Sam is such a dog in the manger. He wouldn't let his brother ride his bike though he doesn't use it himself.

Every dog has his day

Used to mean that everybody will get an opportunity

- Don't worry about these setbacks. Every dog has his day. Someday, you too will get an opportunity to prove your mettle.

Fight like cats and dogs

To fight like cats and dogs is to fight violently all the time.

- My boys are always fighting like cats and dogs.

Go to the dogs

If a company or a country is going to the dogs it is becoming less successful than it was.

- His career has gone to the dogs because of his drinking problem.
- A lot of things in our country have gone to the dogs during the last few years.

In the doghouse

When you are in the doghouse, you are in trouble.

- The president's secretary is in the doghouse over some controversial remarks she made to the press.
- I am in the doghouse with my boss. I missed an important deadline.

Lead a dog's life

To lead a dog's life is to lead a miserable life.

- Janet leads a dog's life. She works three jobs in a day.

Let sleeping dogs lie

Don't create trouble when you do not have to.

Janet: I was again late for an appointment. Should I ask the boss if he is angry about that?

Maria: If he hasn't said anything about it, let sleeping dogs lie.

Put on the dog

To put on the dog is to wear expensive dresses.

- She is putting on the dog for the party.

To put on the dog is to try to appear richer than you are.

- Maria likes to put on the dog in front of her neighbours.

Rain cats and dogs

To rain cats and dogs is to rain very hard.

- It has been raining cats and dogs since yesterday.

A shaggy dog story

A long and pointless story

- He told me a shaggy dog story about how he got his first job.

The tail is wagging the dog

When the tail is wagging the dog, a person who occupies an insignificant position controls everything in an organization.

- There is no point in talking to the manager. You should talk to his secretary. The tail is wagging the dog in this company.

Top dog

The top dog is the most important person in a company.

- My dad is the top dog in his company.

Work like a dog

To work like a dog is to work very hard.

- She works like a dog to raise her four children.

You can't teach an old dog new tricks

- Your dad is too old to learn driving now. You can't teach an old dog new tricks.