

Wit idioms

Here is a list of idiomatic expressions using the word wit.

At one's wit's end

When you are at your wit's end, you are at the limits of your intellectual resources.

- She didn't know what she was supposed to do. She was at her wit's end.

When you are at your wit's end, you are so worried or upset because you don't know what to do.

- I have tried everything I can to get her back in my life, but she still doesn't talk to me. I am at my wit's end.

Brevity is the soul of wit.

This is a saying from Shakespeare's Hamlet. It means that jokes are funnier if they are shorter. This expression also indicates the need to express ideas using fewer words.

- Stephen doesn't know that brevity is the soul of wit. He takes at least ten minutes to tell even a simple joke.

Frighten one out of one's wits / scare one out of one's wits

To frighten somebody out of their wits is to frighten them so badly.

- That loud noise frightened me out of my wits.
- Don't shout at me - you are scaring me out of my wits.

The expressions 'frighten one out of one's mind' or 'scare one out of one's mind' has the same meaning.

- As soon as I entered the compound, the dogs started barking at me and scared me out of my mind.

The expression '**scare the wits out of someone**' has very similar meaning.

- The windows blew shut and scared the wits out of me.

Get one's wits about one / have one's wits about one

To get your wits about you is to think clearly when you are under pressure.

- I was so stressed out that I couldn't get my wits about me.

The expression '**keep one's wits about (one)**' also has the same meaning.

- If the driver hadn't kept his wits about him during the accident, more lives would have been lost.
- I couldn't keep my wits about me when the manager told me that I was going to be sacked.

Live by one's wits

To live by your wits is to survive just by being clever.

- He lost both parents when he was just ten and had to live by his wits.

Match wits (with someone)

To match wits with somebody is to prove that intellectually you are just as capable as them.

- I can never match wits with my kid sister.

An ounce of discretion is worth a pound of wit

This is a proverb. Before telling jokes you should think whether it is appropriate or not.

- Stephen makes fun of everybody. He doesn't care whether his jokes hurt others. Someone should tell him that an ounce of discretion is worth a pound of wit.

Sharp wit

When you have a sharp wit you are quite good at making jokes and funny comments.

- My chemistry professor had a sharp wit. That was the only reason I attended his classes.

A battle of wits

A battle of wits is a situation in which two people try to beat each other by using their intelligence.

- The battle of wits between the government and the opposition is going to continue for a while.

A half-wit

A half-wit is a stupid person.

- Mike is a half-wit. He can't even write his own name.

Frighten/scare the hell out of somebody

To frighten the hell out of somebody is to frighten them so badly.

- Don't drive so fast. You are frightening the hell out of me.

Gather your wits

To gather your wits is to make an effort to think more clearly.

- I was so confused so I sat there trying to gather my wits.