

Time Idioms List with Meanings and Examples

Idiom / Phrase	Meaning	Example Sentence
a hell of a time	a difficult (or exciting) experience	Her grandmother had a hell of a time trying to connect to the internet.
a matter of time	when something is inevitable	It's only a matter of time until they find a cure for cancer.
a whale of a time	an exciting experience	The family had a whale of a time at the theme park.
about time	said to convey impatience	I've been waiting for you for an hour. It's about time you arrived!
ahead of time	earlier than the deadline	Finish your work ahead of time so you can enjoy your hobbies.
around the clock	without stopping	The pharmacy is open around the clock. It never closes.
beat the clock	finish something before the deadline	The paperwork was piled high, but she manages to beat the clock and finish it all.
better late than never	doing something late is better than not doing it	You finally visited the dentist. Better late than never!
bide your time	relax and take your time doing something	Bide your time and take a look through the restaurant menu. There are no other customers.
born yesterday	inexperienced	Were you born yesterday? You have to pay your credit card quickly to avoid serious debt.
borrowed time	an uncertain length of time that may end suddenly	Everyone is living off of borrowed time. Enjoy every day as if it is your last.
call it a day	finish work	Let's call it a day. It's time to go home.
catch you later	see you later	I have to go home now. Catch you later!
crunch time	a critical period	Crunch time in most sports comes down to the final few minutes of a game.

do time	go to prison	Franky has to do time for all those crimes that he was convicted of.
down time	relaxing time	You need to have some down time after a long day at work.
get with the times	to get up-to-date with the modern era	Time to get with the times and buy an electric car.
give a hard time	tease or bother someone	Stop giving your little brother a hard time and help him with his homework.
high time	the right time to accomplish something	It's high time to solve this budget problem.
in no time	very quickly	It's so easy. I will be finished the assignment in no time.
in the long run	in the long term	She hates doing homework but in the long run it will make her successful.
in the nick of time	just in time	He caught the train in the nick of time just before it departed.
kill time	pass time aimlessly	Most people kill time by swiping through their iPhone apps.
make up for lost time	to catch up with something after disregarding it for a long time	Let's make up for lost time and hang out all week.
on my watch	during my time on duty	I told the workers that they couldn't sleep on my watch. They can sleep when they get home.
pressed for time	having limited time available	The doctor was really pressed for time, so he misdiagnosed the illness.
put on ice	postpone	Let's put this problem on ice and get back to it tomorrow.
question of time	an inevitability or eventuality	It's only a question of time until all cars drive themselves.
serve time	spend time in prison	Chuck served time in prison so it is difficult for him to get hired.

ship has sailed	a lost opportunity	Jack was thinking of marrying Jane but that ship has sailed. She married Zack instead.
the big time	a situation involving fame or success	The actress was ready for the big time when she was nominated for the award.
the eleventh hour	last chance to do something	Just before the deadline, the student submitted the assignment at the eleventh hour.
third time's a charm	the third time is usually successful	I tried unlocking the door twice already. I hope the third time's a charm.
time flies	time goes very fast	Our vacation is over already? Time flies!
time is money	time is valuable	We can't wait here all day. Time is money!
time of your life	an enjoyable time of your life	Did you have the time of your life when you were a teenager?
time to run	time to leave	It's time to run. I need to go and pick up my kids from school.
time will tell	the outcome will soon be known	Only time will tell what happens to the human race.
two-time	cheat or betray	His girlfriend was two-timing him by sleeping with the plumber.
until the cows come home	for a long time	She can watch Netflix until the cows come home.