10 Essential Expressions in English (1/5)

This course is designed to enhance your communication skills in English with a focus on expressions that are crucial for effective conversation. To help you sound more natural and fluent in various contexts.

1/ Hit the nail/neɪl/ on the head/hed/:

This expression is used when someone has described a situation or solved a problem with perfect accuracy. It's akin to striking the exact spot needed to drive a nail into place in one go.

Example: After debating/dɪˈbeɪtɪŋ/ the cause/kɑːz/ of the company's financial loss, when Maria suggested reallocating funds to marketing, her boss said, "You've really hit the nail on the head."

2/ Beat/biːt/ around/əˈraʊnd/ the bush:

To avoid the main topic, not speaking directly about the issue. It's like walking in circles around a bush instead of going straight through it.

Example: When I asked Joey if he'd seen my phone, he started talking about the weather/ˈweð.ə/. He was really beating around the bush.
3/ **Break**/breɪk/ the ice:

This expression is used when someone does something to create a more relaxed atmosphere in a tense or formal situation. It comes from the notion of breaking the ice in waterways to allow ships to pass through.

Example: *At the start of the team-building session, the facilitator/təˈsɪl.ə.tər/ told a funny story to break the ice.*

4/ **Burn the midnight oil:**

To work late into the night, especially studying or working on a project. This phrase originates from the time before electricity when people used oil lamps for light.

Example: *With finals approaching, Susan has been burning the midnight oil to ensure/ɪnˈʃʊər/ she covers all her study/ˈstʌd.i/ material/ˈmeɪ.təri.əl/.*
10 Essential Expressions in English (3/5)

5/ Catch /kætʃ/ someone's eye:

To attract someone's attention. It can be used in both literal and metaphorical contexts.

Example: *The vibrant /ˈvaɪ.brənt/ painting caught /kɑːt/ my eye as soon as I entered the gallery /ˈɡæl.ər.i/.*

6/ Cut to the chase /tʃeɪs/:

To get to the point without wasting time on introductions or irrelevant details. It stems from old movies where the chase scene was often the climax, and audiences wanted to skip straight to it.

Example: *During the meeting, the manager said, "Let's cut to the chase and discuss /dɪˈskʌs/ the schedule."*

7/ Face /feɪs/ the music:

To confront the consequences of one's actions, especially when those consequences are negative or undesirable. It's like being called to stand and face the orchestra or audience after a performance.
10 Essential Expressions in English (4/5)

Example: *After messing up the report*/ɪˈpɛsɪŋ/ *, I knew I had to face the music and explain the mistake to my boss.*

8/ **Jump on the bandwagon*/ˈbændˌwæg.ən/:

To join others in doing something that has become fashionable or successful. This phrase comes from the idea of jumping onto a band's wagon in a parade because it's popular or exciting.

Example: *When the new technology started gaining popularity, many companies quickly jumped on the bandwagon.*

9/ **Spill the beans**: 

To reveal a secret or disclose information that was supposed to be kept confidential. It's thought to originate from an ancient method of voting using beans.
Example: *Eventually* /ɪˈven.tʃu.ə.li/, Laura spilled the beans about the surprise party they were /wɜː/ planning for Mark.

10/ *Take with a grain* /ɡreɪn/ of *salt* /sɑːlt/:

To not take what someone says too literally or seriously; to view a statement with skepticism. It's derived from the idea that food is more easily swallowed if taken with a small amount of salt.

Example: *When you read online reviews, it's often best to take* /teɪk/ *them with a grain of salt since they can be biased* /ˈbaɪ.əst/.