



# CLOTHES IDIOMS

**Warm-up. Have you ever attended a wedding ceremony? Did you like it? What do you think are the do's and don'ts of a best man's speech?**

**I. Read a story of an unfortunate wedding event. What do you think Garry said at the end? How do think the story finished?**

When Garry was asked to give a best man speech at John and Lucy's wedding, he was petrified. It happened just after Mr Smith's toast and at that very moment Garry understood that he had completely forgotten about this one tiny thing a best man has to do - what's worse he was utterly hopeless when it came to public speaking. Obviously, he had no other choice but to **1) speak off the cuff**. He stood up and started his speech **2) at the drop of a hat**. His thoughts went running riot, but a voice in his head kept on saying ' Man, **3) keep your shirt on!**' Never before had he been so nervous and the presence of Bella, his unrequited love from high school years, didn't help at all. Desperately trying not to look at anyone, he felt a sudden urge to **4) pull up his socks**, so that Bella would finally see the better side of him. He **5) put on his thinking cap** and after a couple of seconds he came up with the solution - a joke. A joke could come in handy, it would show his cheerful, even hilarious side... a witty joke - that's what he needed. He racked his brains and then it came to him - it was a story that only he and Lucy knew, when John **6) was caught with his trousers down**, quite literary in fact. Garry wasn't sure why he said what he said, then it seemed to be a great idea, of course he soothed himself later that it had been a spur-of-the moment decision and he shouldn't lash himself for that. Nevertheless, the moment he said that, he could sense tension in the room, Lucy's face went white and John, as red as a beetroot, **7) got hot under the collar**. Garry didn't know how to save his face, he was getting more and more embarrassed and started to **8) talk through his hat**. He felt as if he was **9) in his birthday suit** with everyone staring at him. He didn't even dare to look at Bella, who was looking at him with a combination of horror and disbelief in her eyes. Oh, how he wished he could **10) have something up his sleeve** right then. He looked at all the guests, then at Lucy, John and uttered: "....."\*

**II. Have you ever made a blundering mistake? How did you feel? How did it end?**

**III. Match the idioms from the story with the definitions.**

- A. to have a secret plan
- B. to be caught in an embarrassing situation
- C. to be naked
- D. to think about something in a serious way
- E. to talk without much sense
- F. to stay calm
- G. to talk without preparation
- H. to be angry
- I. immediately
- J. to make an effort to improve your work

[answers: 1G, 2I, 3F, 4J, 5D, 6B, 7H, 8E, 9C, 10A]

**IV. In the ex. 1 there was an abundance of idioms used. Do you think it is natural to use a lot of idioms when speaking? Decide how many you would use to sound natural and which ones you'd leave in the original story.**

**V. Correct the mistakes in the idiomatic expressions:**

- |   |                                 |
|---|---------------------------------|
| 1. It all happened at the drop of the hat.      | <i>of a hat</i>                 |
| 2. Adam really got hot in the collar.           | <i>under the collar</i>         |
| 3. Janet must have something inside her sleeve. | <i>something up her sleeve</i>  |
| 4. Don't speak through a hat!                   | <i>talk through the hat</i>     |
| 5. I was in the birthday suit.                  | <i>in my birthday suit</i>      |
| 6. Peter was caught with the trousers down.     | <i>with his trousers down</i>   |
| 7. Try to put over your thinking hat.           | <i>put on your thinking cap</i> |
| 8. Ben spoke of a cuff.                         | <i>spoke off the cuff</i>       |
| 9. You have to try to push up your sock.        | <i>pull up your socks</i>       |
| 10. Keep your skirt on!                         | <i>your shirt on</i>            |

**VI. Retell the story using the prompts below. Try to sound natural, so use only a few idiomatic expression:**

cuff → hat → shirt → socks → trousers → collar → hat → suit → sleeve

**VII. Complete the dialogues with the appropriate clothes idioms in the correct form.**

- A: Betty said she was on a diet, but when I came by her house yesterday I saw her eating fast food!  
B: Oh! You .....*you wouldn't have caught Betty with her trousers down*... if you had called her before you came by.
- A: I can't believe she did that behind my back! How could she? I'm going to go to her and tell her that...  
B: You'd better ..... *keep your shirt on*.....! She's going to apologize for what she's done, you'll see.
- A: Adam's so bad-tempered. I don't know how his girlfriend puts up with his fits of anger.  
B: I know! If my boyfriend .....*would get hot under the collar*..... every time I make a mistake, I'd go crazy!
- A: To be quite honest, I was totally unprepared for my presentation. Instead of working on it, I just watched the latest episodes of 'The Game of Thrones'. I know – if I hadn't been watching the series, I....*I wouldn't have spoken off the cuff/I wouldn't have talked through the hat*.....during my presentation.  
B: You're right, and you know what? If you were more responsible, you .....*would have pulled up your socks*..... last night and just got to work.
- A: I don't know what to do – my boss is a pain in the neck, but apart from that I love my job so much! Should I hand in my notice or not?  
B: It's a tough one. You'd better .....*put your thinking cap on*.....!

**VIII.** In pairs, create a dialogue with 1-2 clothes idioms. Write the dialogue down but **without** the idioms. Write the idioms on the reverse side of the page, then swap the dialogues with another pair. Check if you can guess the missing expressions.

**\* John uttered: “That was below the belt, I’m sorry. Better put a sock in it.”**