

Unit 26 Face Idioms

1: Literal and non-literal meanings

We all know the literal meaning of *face*. But do you know that a clock or a watch also has a *face*? We can use *face* as a noun. It often has the meaning *appearance*. For example, *put on a brave face*. When we use it as a verb, it often has the meaning *look clearly at* or *confront*. For example, *to face the consequences*.

Face sometimes means the whole person. Someone once said:

I'm not just a pretty face.

Mrs Thatcher was called:

the unacceptable face of capitalism.

Helen of Troy had:

the face that launched a thousand ships.



"I'm glad I'm not Joe. He's facing the music at the moment!"

2: The grammar of *face*

In these first five examples *face* is used as a verb. Use these words to complete the idioms:

the consequences work the music the fact a full meal

- 1.1 suppose it's time I faced that Lydia isn't interested in me because I'm old enough to be her father!
2. Did you hear that Joe didn't back up his computer last night and it crashed this morning? He's with the boss at the moment - no doubt facing !
- 3.1 couldn't face A sandwich is enough for me.
- 4.1 just can't face at the moment - not so soon after the funeral.
5. I'll take the decision. I'm not afraid to face if things go wrong.

In these examples *face* is used as a noun. Add the following verbs:

put got lose keep putting save

6. People won't give their opinions during meetings in case they are wrong. They don't want to face.
7. When Di fell off her chair, it was all I could do to a straight face.
8. Why have you such a long face today? Has something happened I don't know about?
9. You've no doubt heard that Frank's mother was in a car accident this morning. I think it's fairly serious, but he seems to be a brave face on it.
10. It's nice to meet you at last, Mr Lee. It's good to be able to a face to a name.
11. I think the government is just trying to face.

3: Expressions with *face*

Fill in the following expressions in the sentences below:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| a. <i>off the face of the earth</i> | e. <i>all over your face</i> |
| b. <i>blue in the face</i> | f. <i>face to face</i> |
| c. <i>staring us in the face</i> | g. <i>flat on his face</i> |
| d. <i>at face value</i> | h. <i>to his face</i> |

1. You can keep asking till you're - I'm not going to change my mind.
2. Maureen always has an ulterior motive. You can never take what she says
3. Everybody knows that Andy is the wrong person for the new post, but nobody is prepared to say so
4. Has anyone seen my car keys? I put them down five minutes ago and now they've disappeared!
5. I've just come back from a holiday in Borneo. It was amazing. I actually came with a real gorilla!
6. Come on, Pete, somebody's been eating my biscuits. It must've been you. It's written
7. We've spent ages trying to decide who to send to the conference in Tokyo. The answer's been Let's ask Ray. He studied Japanese at university!
8. The President was a bit accident-prone. He once fell as he was getting up to give a major speech.

4: Revision

Put the following pairs of words into the sentences below:

- | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------|
| a. <i>written -face</i> | e. <i>putting - brave</i> |
| b. <i>blue -face</i> | f. <i>disappeared - earth</i> |
| c. <i>face - name</i> | g. <i>flat -face</i> |
| d. <i>say -face</i> | h. <i>keeping - straight</i> |

1. a face was never one of my talents!
2. You can ask till you're in the
3. My pen has off the face of the
4. I know what's going on. It's all over your
5. I fell on my and hurt my arm.
6. If you want to say something, it to my
7. It's nice to put a to a
8. She's very upset, but she's a face on it.

Have you been in a situation recently when you found it difficult to keep a straight face?