Your English Toolbox

VOCABULARY · EPISODE 229

Keep Your Cool: 4 Idioms About Control

English learning resource · EN

Key words & expressions · English

4 idioms and 4 additional expressions

Study task: Listen again and notice the expressions you studied.

1

keep your cool

DEF

Stay calm when a situation is difficult or stressful.

An informal idiom; it does not mean ignoring a problem.

She kept her cool when the lights failed.

Try to keep your cool during the interview.

2

lose your grip

DEF

Stop managing or controlling a situation effectively.

The figurative sense describes control; a literal grip means holding something firmly.

The manager began to lose her grip on the project.

He felt he was losing his grip on the schedule.

3

in the driver's seat

DEF

In the position of controlling decisions or direction.

Figurative use does not require a vehicle; it describes who is in control.

The client is in the driver's seat on this project.

You made the plan, so you're in the driver's seat.

4

get out of hand

DEF

Become difficult or impossible to control.

Often used for a situation that has grown worse; it is not the same as choosing to give someone control.

The meeting got out of hand after the argument.

We acted before the costs got out of hand.

5

lose your cool

DEF

Become angry or upset instead of remaining calm.

The opposite of keep your cool; the possessive changes with the person.

He lost his cool during the argument.

I nearly lost my cool when the light failed.

6

take a breath

DEF

Pause and breathe, often to calm yourself before acting.

A common gentle suggestion in a stressful moment.

Take a breath before you answer.

She took a breath and called the driver.

7

stuck in traffic

DEF

Unable to move quickly because there are many vehicles on the road.

Often used to explain a delay.

The van was stuck in traffic.

I arrived late because I was stuck in traffic.

8

in charge

DEF

Responsible for managing or directing something.

Often followed by of and a noun naming the responsibility.

Anna is in charge of the exhibition.

Who is in charge of the team?