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**СОВРЕМЕННЫЕ  
РУССКИЕ  
ИДИОМЫ**



A WORKBOOK  
FOR RUSSIAN  
LEARNERS



# 99 Contemporary Russian Idioms A Workbook for Russian Learners

## *Introduction*

This isn't your average language resource.

Inside, you'll find **99 real idioms** that Russians actually use — the kind you won't always find in textbooks.

They're grouped by topic, explained in simple English, and paired with short multiple-choice questions to help you remember. No fluff. No boring theory. Just pure, useful language.

By the end, you'll understand what it means when someone says “руки опускаются” or “деньги не пахнут” — and how to use it without sounding like Google Translate.

## **Emotions & Feelings**

### **Idiom: на седьмом небе**

*Choose the correct meaning:*

- to be extremely angry
- to be extremely happy
- to feel extremely sad
- to be daydreaming

### **Idiom: душа поёт**

*Choose the correct meaning:*

- to feel very sad and lonely
- to feel very joyful
- to reveal one's innermost feelings

- to sing a song quietly

**Idiom: сердце разрывается**

*Choose the correct meaning:*

- to experience a heart attack
- to be extremely nervous or anxious
- to feel intense emotional pain
- to fall deeply in love

**Idiom: как на иголках**

*Choose the correct meaning:*

- to be very nervous
- to sit in a very uncomfortable position
- to be extremely bored and uninterested
- to be extremely angry

**Idiom: душа уходит в пятки**

*Choose the correct meaning:*

- to suddenly become courageous
- to be extremely frightened
- to feel very embarrassed
- to feel exhausted and weak

**Idiom: глаза на мокром месте**

*Choose the correct meaning:*

- to suffer from an eye condition that causes constant tearing
- to be emotionally cold and never cry
- to be constantly on the verge of tears

- to laugh so much that one cries often

**Idiom: вывести из себя**

*Choose the correct meaning:*

- to help someone overcome confusion
- to calm someone down
- to irritate or infuriate someone
- to surprise someone unexpectedly

**Idiom: как гром среди ясного неба**

*Choose the correct meaning:*

- a very loud but harmless occurrence
- an early warning sign of danger
- an extremely unusual weather phenomenon
- a sudden and completely unexpected event or news

**Idiom: руки опускаются**

*Choose the correct meaning:*

- to have very weak arms
- to avoid any physical work out of laziness
- to become discouraged and give up trying
- to relax after hard work

**Idiom: рвать и метать**

*Choose the correct meaning:*

- to tear objects apart forcefully
- to be in a fury, acting very angrily
- to rush about in great haste

to vomit violently

**Idiom: сердце не на месте**

*Choose the correct meaning:*

to feel very anxious or uneasy

to be lovesick

to lack compassion

to experience heart trouble physically

## Work & Career

### Idiom: работать спустя рукава

Choose the correct meaning:

- to be extremely meticulous at work
- to find it hard to work due to uncomfortable clothing
- to work tirelessly without breaks
- to work in a lazy or careless way

### Idiom: (работать) засучив рукава

Choose the correct meaning:

- to roll up one's sleeves to keep them clean rather than to work
- to perform tasks very slowly
- to work hard and energetically
- to refuse to work until forced

### Idiom: работать как лошадь

Choose the correct meaning:

- to be physically very strong
- to work extremely hard
- to be exploited by others at work
- to have a job caring for horses

### Idiom: бить баклуши

Choose the correct meaning:

- to carve wood or make wooden crafts
- to prepare for a fight
- to put in a lot of effort at work

- to idle around instead of working

**Idiom: валять дурака**

*Choose the correct meaning:*

- to idle about doing nothing worthwhile
- to physically roll on the ground
- to anger an authority figure
- to pretend to be foolish in order to deceive

**Idiom: крутиться как белка в колесе**

*Choose the correct meaning:*

- to work hard but without achieving much
- to attempt something impossible
- to feel dizzy or disoriented
- to be constantly busy with many tasks

**Idiom: дело в шляпе**

*Choose the correct meaning:*

- the effort has been completely wasted
- the task is extremely easy to do
- the matter is successfully completed
- something is being kept hidden

**Idiom: палец о палец не ударить**

*Choose the correct meaning:*

- to accidentally hurt one's fingers doing work
- to make no effort at all
- to be slow in making decisions

to be very detail-oriented

**Idiom: (работать) не покладая рук**

*Choose the correct meaning:*

- to avoid physical labor
- to frequently delay work
- to be unwilling to assist in tasks
- to work continuously without rest

**Idiom: идти по головам**

*Choose the correct meaning:*

- to trample on people physically
- to rise rapidly in one's career
- to be an effective team leader
- to achieve goals ruthlessly at others' expense

**Idiom: тянуть лямку**

*Choose the correct meaning:*

- to toil at hard work for a long time
- to delay doing a job as long as possible
- to give up on a task quickly
- to pull something heavy as part of work

# Relationships & Communication

## Idiom: найти общий язык

Choose the correct meaning:

- to discover a new spoken language
- to have frequent disagreements
- to reach mutual understanding
- to create a secret way of communication

## Idiom: как кошка с собакой

Choose the correct meaning:

- to spend all day sleeping and eating
- to constantly quarrel with each other
- to be very close and friendly
- to have many cats and dogs

## Idiom: не разлей вода

Choose the correct meaning:

- to be very close and always together
- to quarrel all the time
- to share all their belongings with each other
- to spill secrets easily

## Idiom: держать камень за пазухой

Choose the correct meaning:

- to hide a grudge or ill intent against someone
- to secretly feel guilty about something
- to conceal a valuable object

- to have a heart of stone

**Idiom: подливать масла в огонь**

*Choose the correct meaning:*

- to literally pour fuel onto a fire
- to aggravate or intensify a conflict
- to add unnecessary details to an argument
- to defuse a tense situation

**Idiom: вставлять палки в колёса**

*Choose the correct meaning:*

- to provide helpful guidance to someone
- to obstruct or hinder someone intentionally
- to slow down one's own work pace
- to fix a broken wheel with sticks

**Idiom: выносить сор из избы**

*Choose the correct meaning:*

- to argue about household duties
- to discuss personal or family problems publicly
- to keep all disputes within the family
- to thoroughly clean one's home

**Idiom: за словом в карман не лезет**

*Choose the correct meaning:*

- to be quick to come up with a retort
- to be a very quiet, shy person
- to steal other people's ideas

- to often struggle to find words

**Idiom: вешать лапшу на уши**

*Choose the correct meaning:*

- to whisper secrets to someone
- to fool someone by telling lies
- to literally hang something on someone's ear
- to give honest advice to someone

**Idiom: души не чаять (в ком-либо)**

*Choose the correct meaning:*

- to love or adore someone greatly
- to be suspicious of everyone
- to have no feelings for someone at all
- to spend very little time with someone

**Idiom: жить душа в душу**

*Choose the correct meaning:*

- to live all by oneself
- to quarrel with each other constantly
- to live together in complete harmony
- to focus only on spiritual life

## Money & Wealth

### Idiom: как сыр в масле кататься

Choose the correct meaning:

- to live a life of luxury and comfort
- to roll around playfully like a child
- to indulge in eating a lot of rich food
- to live in poverty and hardship

### Idiom: сводить концы с концами

Choose the correct meaning:

- to gather people together for a meeting
- to join two ends of a rope together
- to barely manage to cover one's basic expenses
- to successfully complete a project

### Idiom: ни кола ни двора

Choose the correct meaning:

- to live off of others without any belongings
- to own a lot of land and property
- to have no home or possessions of one's own
- to lack any clear direction in life

### Idiom: курочка по зернышку клюёт

Choose the correct meaning:

- to be very stingy and hoard every little thing
- to survive on minimal resources
- to accumulate wealth or results slowly but steadily

- to fail due to taking only small actions

**Idiom: деньги не пахнут**

*Choose the correct meaning:*

- having a lot of money is nothing to be ashamed of
- money should be earned honestly
- money is valuable no matter where it comes from
- wealthy people often have strange habits

**Idiom: бросать деньги на ветер**

*Choose the correct meaning:*

- to spend a lot on helping others
- to squander money carelessly
- to invest money for the future
- to lose money due to bad luck

**Idiom: денег куры не клюют**

*Choose the correct meaning:*

- to earn money by farming chickens
- to be very cheap in spending money
- to have hardly any money at all
- to have an enormous amount of money

**Idiom: жить на широкую ногу**

*Choose the correct meaning:*

- to live in an extremely modest way
- to literally wear very large shoes
- to have many dependents to take care of

- to live in grand style with lots of spending

**Idiom: стоит как чугунный мост**

*Choose the correct meaning:*

- to weigh a lot or be cumbersome
- to be inexpensive and affordable
- to have a very solid construction
- to cost a fortune

**Idiom: остаться с носом**

*Choose the correct meaning:*

- to feel deeply embarrassed in front of others
- to come down with a cold or flu
- to gain nothing despite expectations
- to inherit only a single item from someone

**Idiom: считать копейки**

*Choose the correct meaning:*

- to live on a very tight budget
- to work in accounting or finance
- to have a lot of money to spend
- to pay extreme attention to tiny details

# Daily Life & Everyday Living

## Idiom: кот наплакал

Choose the correct meaning:

- very little (almost none)
- a huge amount
- a situation that causes tears
- an issue of no importance

## Idiom: через пень-колоду

Choose the correct meaning:

- to walk through an obstacle course
- to do a task flawlessly
- to take much longer than necessary to finish something
- to do a job in a sloppy, half-hearted manner

## Idiom: как сельди в бочке

Choose the correct meaning:

- jam-packed or extremely crowded
- having a strong unpleasant smell
- heavily salted or preserved
- with a lot of free space

## Idiom: попасть впросак

Choose the correct meaning:

- to find oneself in an awkward predicament
- to become physically stuck in a small space
- to manage to avoid embarrassment at the last second

- to unexpectedly get a lucky break

**Idiom: когда рак на горе свистнет**

*Choose the correct meaning:*

- very soon
- never
- at a random time every day
- only when something extremely unusual occurs

**Idiom: как без рук**

*Choose the correct meaning:*

- to have a serious physical handicap
- to be unable to manage without something essential
- to be very clumsy in doing tasks
- to be unwilling to do any work

**Idiom: голова идёт кругом**

*Choose the correct meaning:*

- to spin one's head around physically
- to feel dizzy or mentally overwhelmed
- to have one's mind full of creative ideas
- to become very angry suddenly

**Idiom: руки не доходят**

*Choose the correct meaning:*

- to forget about doing something important
- to never find the time to do a particular thing
- to intentionally refuse to do something

- to physically be unable to reach or touch something

**Idiom: и ежу понятно**

*Choose the correct meaning:*

- it's a reference to a popular children's story
- it's extremely complicated to figure out
- it's clearly understood by anyone
- it's known only to a small child

**Idiom: делать из мухи слона**

*Choose the correct meaning:*

- to completely misidentify something
- to build a huge thing out of small parts
- to blow a small issue out of proportion
- to be very creative in making up stories

**Idiom: без сучка и задоринки**

*Choose the correct meaning:*

- with a few small issues along the way
- in a carpentry context only
- absolutely flawlessly, with no issues at all
- with many unexpected complications

# Time & Speed

## Idiom: в мгновение ока

Choose the correct meaning:

- as a result of careful planning
- during a brief eye contact
- almost immediately, very fast
- after a very long time

## Idiom: как снег на голову

Choose the correct meaning:

- slowly and gradually
- in a cold or unfriendly manner
- very unexpectedly and suddenly
- in the middle of winter

## Idiom: как грибы after дождя

Choose the correct meaning:

- to vanish just as quickly as they appeared
- to emerge in great numbers very rapidly
- to appear only under ideal conditions
- to be very scarce or rare

## Idiom: не за горами

Choose the correct meaning:

- will happen in the near future
- in a nearby location
- undefined or unpredictable

- a long way off

### **Idiom: без году неделя**

*Choose the correct meaning:*

- about a year
- an unspecified time frame
- a very long time
- almost no time at all

### **Idiom: битый час**

*Choose the correct meaning:*

- a brief moment
- precisely one hour
- a particularly challenging hour
- an extremely long time (especially spent on nothing)

### **Idiom: ни свет ни заря**

*Choose the correct meaning:*

- at midday (noon)
- very late at night, around midnight
- when it's completely dark outside
- very early in the morning, before sunrise

### **Idiom: со скоростью света**

*Choose the correct meaning:*

- incredibly quickly
- traveling as a ray of light
- very slowly

- very carefully

**Idiom: тянуть резину**

*Choose the correct meaning:*

- to use makeshift solutions to fix problems
- to be very adaptable to changing situations
- to finish a job as fast as possible
- to drag out a task or postpone it deliberately

**Idiom: черепашьим шагом**

*Choose the correct meaning:*

- at a very rapid pace
- with great caution at every step
- crawling on the ground
- at an extremely slow pace

**Idiom: на ночь глядя**

*Choose the correct meaning:*

- early at dawn
- under strict observation
- in total darkness without light
- late at night (at an hour when it's almost bedtime)

# Character & Personal Qualities

## Idiom: белая ворона

Choose the correct meaning:

- a person who is extremely lucky
- someone who always dresses in white
- an outsider who doesn't fit in with the group
- a person who is very timid

## Idiom: тёмная лошадка

Choose the correct meaning:

- an extremely transparent and straightforward person
- a mysterious or underestimated person who surprises others
- an individual who is very fond of horses
- someone with a secret criminal history

## Idiom: душа компании

Choose the correct meaning:

- the lively, fun person that everyone enjoys being around
- a quiet person who avoids social events
- a deeply empathetic and caring person
- the chief executive of a business company

## Idiom: мастер на все руки

Choose the correct meaning:

- a person who refuses to do manual work
- someone who is incompetent at most things
- a craftsman who works only with his hands

- someone who can do many things well

**Idiom: семи пядей во лбу**

*Choose the correct meaning:*

- having many years of experience
- extremely smart or talented
- exceptionally tall in height
- having an unusually large forehead

**Idiom: ни рыба ни мясо**

*Choose the correct meaning:*

- an average, unremarkable person
- a highly unusual and unique person
- someone who eats neither fish nor meat
- a very determined and decisive individual

**Idiom: волк в овечьей шкуре**

*Choose the correct meaning:*

- a lone outsider in a group
- a genuinely gentle person
- a dangerous person who pretends to be harmless
- a person who wears unusual clothing

**Idiom: стреляный воробей**

*Choose the correct meaning:*

- a professional hunter of small game
- a very timid and jumpy person
- a seasoned person who has seen a lot and is hard to fool

- a person who has been injured in battle

**Idiom: язык без костей**

*Choose the correct meaning:*

- to speak with great fluency and skill
- to have a speech impediment
- to be unable to keep any secrets
- to chatter or babble incessantly

**Idiom: семь пятниц на неделе**

*Choose the correct meaning:*

- a very consistent, dependable person
- a very fickle, unreliable person
- a person who is perpetually lazy
- a person who behaves as if every day were a Friday

**Idiom: язык хорошо подвешен**

*Choose the correct meaning:*

- to have an unusually strong tongue
- to talk at length without saying anything important
- to speak very fluently and convincingly
- to struggle in putting words together

## Luck & Misfortune

### Idiom: повезло как утопленнику

Choose the correct meaning:

- surviving a deadly situation by luck
- very lucky against all odds
- very unlucky, having bad luck
- having neither good nor bad luck

### Idiom: родился в рубашке

Choose the correct meaning:

- to be very fortunate and protected by luck
- to be born into a rich family
- to be born wearing a piece of clothing
- to have an unusually easy life from birth

### Idiom: пальцем в небо

Choose the correct meaning:

- an offensive hand gesture
- an answer given with no real knowledge, just a shot in the dark
- a sign from the heavens
- a perfectly accurate answer

### Idiom: как пить дать

Choose the correct meaning:

- definitely, without any doubt
- very easy to accomplish
- as essential as drinking liquid

- only if someone asks politely

**Idiom: как в воду глядел**

*Choose the correct meaning:*

- to be in a dreamy, reflective mood
- to guess something totally wrong
- to behave in a secretive manner
- to foresee something exactly as it happened

**Idiom: на волосок от (беды)**

*Choose the correct meaning:*

- entirely out of danger
- almost experiencing a disaster, but just escaping it
- unable to decide on a course of action
- having one's hair slightly messed up

**Idiom: коту под хвост**

*Choose the correct meaning:*

- leading to a great success
- gone to waste without any result
- used in a very practical way
- given as a gift to a pet

**Idiom: не судьба**

*Choose the correct meaning:*

- it was not meant to happen
- it was destined to happen
- not a priority or concern

- completely unrelated to fate

**Idiom: всё пошло наперекосяк**

*Choose the correct meaning:*

- everything worked out perfectly well
- things went completely wrong
- objects ended up physically leaning or crooked
- the outcome was even better than expected

**Idiom: пан или пропал**

*Choose the correct meaning:*

- to risk everything for a potentially huge reward
- an old battle cry from history
- to aim for a moderate success with low risk
- a statement announcing someone's death

**Idiom: как назло**

*Choose the correct meaning:*

- completely by accident with no bad intent
- unfortunately, in a way that seems deliberately bad
- fortunately and unexpectedly good
- with kind intentions

# List of Idioms with Translation and Explanation

☁ **на седьмом небе** (on the seventh heaven)

*English analog: on cloud nine*

Extreme joy, feeling elated.

🎵 **душа поёт** (the soul sings)

*English analog: feel very joyful*

Deep inner happiness.

💔 **сердце разывается** (heart is breaking)

*English analog: heart is breaking (with sorrow)*

Overwhelming sadness.

🌀 **как на иголках** (on pins and needles)

*English analog: on pins and needles*

Nervous anticipation.

😱 **душа уходит в пятки** (soul goes to the heels)

*English analog: to be extremely frightened*

Sudden intense fear.

😓 **глаза на мокром месте** (eyes on a wet place)

*English analog: eyes ready to tear up*

Close to tears.

😡 **вывести из себя** (to drive out of oneself)

*English analog: to infuriate*

Cause someone to lose their temper.

⚡ **как гром среди ясного неба** (like thunder from a clear sky)

*English analog: like thunder from a clear sky*

Something totally unexpected.

😞 **руки опускаются** (hands drop down)

*English analog: to be discouraged*

Complete loss of motivation.

🔥 **рвать и метать** (tear and throw)

*English analog: to be furious*

Being in a fit of rage.

❤️ **сёрдце не на месте** (heart is not in its place)

*English analog: heart is uneasy*

Inner anxiety and unrest.

👉 **рабóтать спустя рукавá** (with sleeves down)

*English analog: to work carelessly*

Sloppy, negligent work.

👊 **засучи́в рукавá** (having rolled up sleeves)

*English analog: with sleeves rolled up*

Ready to work hard.

🐎 **рабóтать как ло́шадь** (to work like a horse)

*English analog: to work like a horse*

Laboring tirelessly.

😴 **бить баклу́ши** (to hit wooden blanks)

*English analog: to loaf around*

Wasting time idly.

😜 **валя́ть дуракá** (to fool around)

*English analog: to fool around*

Goofing off instead of working.

🐹 **крути́ться как бе́лка в колесе́** (to spin like a squirrel in a wheel)

*English analog: to spin like a hamster wheel*

Busy without progress.

👑 **де́ло в шля́пе** (the matter is in the hat)

*English analog: it's in the bag*

Guaranteed success.

👊 **па́лец о па́лец не уда́рить** (not strike a finger)

*English analog: not lift a finger*

No effort at all.

👊 **не покладáя рук** (not lowering hands)


*English analog: without rest*

Relentless work.

👣 **идти́ по голова́м** (to walk on heads)

*English analog: to walk over others*

Ruthless ambition.

 **тяну́ть ля́мку** (to drag the strap)

*English analog: to drag the chain*

Laboring under heavy work.

 **найти́ о́бщий язы́к** (to find a common language)


*English analog: find a common language*

Achieve mutual understanding.

 **как ко́шка с соба́кой** (like cat with dog)

*English analog: like cats and dogs*

Constantly quarreling.

 **не разлей вода́** (you can't spill water between)

*English analog: inseparable*

Very close friends.

 **держáть ка́мень за па́зухой** (hold a stone in the bosom)

*English analog: to harbor a grudge*

Hidden resentment.

 **подлива́ть ма́сла в ого́нь** (to pour oil in the fire)


*English analog: to pour oil on the fire*

To intensify conflict.

 **вставля́ть па́лки в колёса** (to stick sticks in wheels)


*English analog: to throw a wrench in the works*

Hinder progress intentionally.

 **выно́сить сор из изб́ы** (to take trash from the hut)

*English analog: air dirty laundry*

Expose private problems publicly.

 **за сло́вом в карма́н не лэ́зет** (not reach into pocket for a word)


*English analog: sharp-witted*

Quick, clever responses.

 **вешáть лапшу́ на у́ши** (hang noodles on ears)

*English analog: to feed someone a line*

Deceive with lies.

 **души́ не ча́ять** (to not spare soul)

*English analog: to cherish dearly*

Deep, unwavering love.

 **жить душа в душу** (to live soul to soul)

*English analog: to live in harmony*

Perfect mutual understanding.

 **как сыр в масле кататься** (to roll like cheese in butter)


*English analog: live in the lap of luxury*

Life of abundance and comfort.

 **сводить концы с концами** (to bring ends to meet)

*English analog: make ends meet*

Barely cover expenses.

 **ни кола ни двора** (neither stake nor yard)


*English analog: not a penny to one's name*

Own nothing.

 **күрочка по зёрнышку клюёт** (hen pecks grain by grain)

*English analog: from little acorns*

Slow accumulation.

 **дэньги не пахнут** (money doesn't smell)


*English analog: money is money*

Value regardless of source.

 **бросать дэньги на вэтер** (throw money to the wind)

*English analog: to throw money away*

Spend recklessly.

 **дэнег күры не клюют** (chickens don't peck money)


*English analog: money to burn*

Huge amounts of money.

 **жить на широкую нóгу** (live on a broad foot)


*English analog: live large*

Extravagant lifestyle.

 **стóит как чугу́нный мост** (costs like a cast-iron bridge)

*English analog: costs an arm and a leg*

Extremely expensive.

 **остáться с нóсом** (to be left with a nose)

*English analog: to be left high and dry*

Gain nothing despite hopes.

 **считáть копéйки** (to count kopecks)

*English analog: to count pennies*

Extreme frugality.

 **кот наплáкал** (the cat cried)


*English analog: hardly anything*

Extremely small amount.

 **чéрез пень-колóду** (through stump-log)

*English analog: in a slapdash way*

Clumsy, unprofessional.

 **как сéльди в бóчке** (like herrings in a barrel)


*English analog: packed like sardines*

Extremely crowded.

 **попáсть впросáк** (to get into a trap)


*English analog: to get into a fix*

Find oneself in embarrassment.

 **когда рак на горé свíстнет** (when crayfish whistle on a mountain)

*English analog: when pigs fly*

Something never happens.

 **как без рук** (like without hands)

*English analog: at a loss*

Feeling helpless.

 **голова́ идёт крúгом** (head goes around)


*English analog: head is spinning*

Overwhelmed, dizzy.

 **ру́ки не дохóдят** (hands don't reach)


*English analog: haven't got around to*

No time to do something.

 **и ежý понятнó** (even hedgehog understands)

*English analog: it's crystal clear*

Very obvious.

 **дéлать из мýхи слонá** (make an elephant from a fly)

*English analog: make a mountain out of a molehill*

Exaggerate small issues.

🌲 **без сучка́ и задóринки** (without knot or splinter)

*English analog: flawlessly*

Perfectly done.

👁️ **в мгновéние óка** (in a moment of eye)

*English analog: in the blink of an eye*

Happens almost instantly.

❄️ **как снег на́ голову** (like snow on the head)

*English analog: out of the blue*

Very unexpected.

🍄 **как грибы́ по́сле дождя́** (like mushrooms after rain)

*English analog: mushrooms after rain*

Rapid abundance.

▲ **не за гора́ми** (not beyond the mountains)

*English analog: just around the corner*

Imminent.

📅 **бе́з году́ неде́ля** (without a year a week)

*English analog: one short week*

Very brief time.

🕒 **би́тый час** (beaten hour)

*English analog: a solid hour*

Long, tedious time.

🌅 **ни свет ни за́ря** (neither light nor dawn)

*English analog: at the crack of dawn*

Very early.

⚡ **со ско́ростью све́та** (at the speed of light)

*English analog: at lightning speed*

Incredibly fast.

👉 **тяну́ть рези́ну** (to stretch rubber)


*English analog: to drag one's feet*


Delay deliberately.


🐢 **черепа́шьим ша́гом** (with a turtle's step)


*English analog: at a snail's pace*


Very slow.


 **на ночь глядя** (when looking at night)  
*English analog: late at night*  
Very late evening.


 **белая ворона** (white crow)  
*English analog: black sheep*  
Someone who stands out.


 **тёмная лошадка** (dark horse)  
*English analog: dark horse*  
Unexpectedly talented.


 **душа компании** (soul of the company)  
*English analog: life of the party*  
Brings energy to a group.


 **мастер на все руки** (master of all hands)  
*English analog: jack of all trades*  
Versatile skilled person.


 **семь пядей во лбу** (seven spans on the forehead)  
*English analog: a real brain*  
Extremely smart.

 **ни рыба ни мясо** (neither fish nor meat)  
*English analog: neither fish nor fowl*  
Unremarkable, mediocre.

 **волк в овечьей шкуре** (wolf in sheep's clothing)  
*English analog: wolf in sheep's clothing*  
Danger hidden behind kindness.

 **стреляный воробей** (shot sparrow)  
*English analog: seasoned veteran*  
Hard to fool, experienced.

 **язык без костей** (tongue without a bone)  
*English analog: tongue-tied*  
Talkative without restraint.

 **семь пятниц на неделе** (seven Fridays in a week)  
*English analog: two-faced*  
Fickle, inconsistent.

 **язы́к хорошо́ подвѐшен** (tongue well-hung)

*English analog: silver-tongued*

Highly eloquent.

 **повезло́ как уто́пленнику** (lucky as a drowned man)

*English analog: as unlucky as they come*

Extremely unlucky.

 **родился́ в рубашке** (born in a shirt)

*English analog: born with a silver spoon*

Very fortunate.

 **па́льцем в не́бо** (finger in the sky)


*English analog: shot in the dark*

A wild guess.

 **как пить да́ть** (as drink give)


*English analog: dead cert*

Absolutely certain.

 **как в во́ду гляде́л** (as if peering into water)


*English analog: hit the nail on the head*

Accurately predicted.

 **на волосо́к от бе́ды** (a hair away from trouble)

*English analog: a hair's breadth away*

Barely averted disaster.

 **коту́ под хвост** (under the cat's tail)

*English analog: down the drain*

Complete waste.

 **не судьба́** (not fate)

*English analog: not meant to be*

Something is not destined.

 **все́ пошло́ наперекося́к** (everything went crooked)

*English analog: went south*

Everything went wrong.

 **пан и́ли пропа́л** (Pan or perished)

*English analog: all or nothing*

High-risk, high-reward.

🙄 **как назло** (as if to spite)

*English analog: to make matters worse*

Bad timing.

## What's next?

If you've made it all the way here — congrats!

You've just unlocked 99 idioms that Russians actually use in everyday life.

But idioms are just one layer of the language.

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Thank you for reading. Keep learning — and may Russian feel just a bit less scary now.

— Igor