

## Idioms & Phrases Questions for SBI PO Exam

**Q1. In each of the question given below a/an idiom/phrase is given in bold which is then followed by five options which then try to decipher its meaning. Choose the option which gives the correct meaning of the phrases.**

**Looking to your laurels**

- (a) To immediately start training
- (b) To plan a victory celebration
- (c) To scout for new talent immediately
- (d) To disregard the achievements
- (e) To rest on past achievements

**Q2. In each of the question given below a/an idiom/phrase is given in bold which is then followed by five options which then try to decipher its meaning. Choose the option which gives the correct meaning of the phrases.**

**Bear a grudge**

- (a) To forget past conflicts
- (b) To hold onto resentment or ill feelings
- (c) To make amends with ease
- (d) To celebrate their shared history
- (e) To lose contact without reason

**Q3. In each of the question given below a/an idiom/phrase is given in bold which is then followed by five options which then try to decipher its meaning. Choose the option which gives the correct meaning of the phrases.**

**By the skin of your teeth**

- (a) With high marks and accolades
- (b) Without any preparation
- (c) After multiple attempts
- (d) By a very narrow margin
- (e) By collaborating with peers

**Q4. In each of the question given below a/an idiom/phrase is given in bold which is then followed by five options which then try to decipher its meaning. Choose the option which gives the correct meaning of the phrases.**

**Down for the count**

- (a) Energized and more productive than ever
- (b) Temporarily incapacitated or defeated
- (c) Ready to take on new challenges
- (d) Waiting for their turn to present ideas
- (e) Taking a short break for relaxation



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**Q5. In each of the question given below a/an idiom/phrase is given in bold which is then followed by five options which then try to decipher its meaning. Choose the option which gives the correct meaning of the phrases.**

**Draw the line**

- (a) To request more responsibilities
- (b) To extend working hours voluntarily
- (c) To set a clear boundary or limit
- (d) To erase previous agreements
- (e) To initiate negotiations for a raise

**Q6. In each of the question given below a/an idiom/phrase is given in bold which is then followed by five options which then try to decipher its meaning. Choose the option which gives the correct meaning of the phrases.**

**Easier said than done**

- (a) Easy to plan but hard to disregard
- (b) Quick to finish and easy to start
- (c) Difficult to explain but easy to understand
- (d) Fast to approve but slow to reject
- (e) Simple to state but difficult to implement

**Q7. In each of the question given below a/an idiom/phrase is given in bold which is then followed by five options which then try to decipher its meaning. Choose the option which gives the correct meaning of the phrases.**

**Break a leg**

- (a) To literally fracture a limb
- (b) To perform poorly on purpose
- (c) To wish someone good luck in a performance
- (d) To exit the stage in disgrace
- (e) To change the choreography last minute

**Q8. In each of the question given below a/an idiom/phrase is given in bold which is then followed by five options which then try to decipher its meaning. Choose the option which gives the correct meaning of the phrases.**

**Up a creek without a paddle**

- (a) In an ideal situation to relax
- (b) In a difficult situation without help
- (c) With many options to choose from
- (d) In a convenient place to find assistance
- (e) Surrounded by supportive friends

**Q9. In each of the question given below a/an idiom/phrase is given in bold which is then followed by five options which then try to decipher its meaning. Choose the option which gives the correct meaning of the phrases.**

**Give it a whirl**

- (a) To completely ignore it
- (b) To review it critically
- (c) To try something out
- (d) To dismantle it completely
- (e) To recommend it widely

**Q10. In each of the question given below a/an idiom/phrase is given in bold which is then followed by five options which then try to decipher its meaning. Choose the option which gives the correct meaning of the phrases.**

**Fish out of water**

- (a) Completely in his element
- (b) Naturally adept at navigating complexity
- (c) Eager to return to familiar settings
- (d) Uncomfortable or out of place
- (e) Skilled in adapting to new environments

**Q11. The sentences given below consists of an idiom/phrasal verb given in bold. From the given alternatives identify the most suitable option reflecting the meaning of the idiom/phrasal verb.**

Living in a luxury high-rise and driving the latest sports car, he was clearly living **in the fast lane**.

- (a) Leading a slow and steady lifestyle
- (b) Leading a high-risk, fast-paced lifestyle
- (c) Following traditional pathways to success
- (d) Taking the safest routes in travel
- (e) Preferring public transportation options

**Q12. The sentences given below consists of an idiom/phrasal verb given in bold. From the given alternatives identify the most suitable option reflecting the meaning of the idiom/phrasal verb.**

He always **goes the extra mile** for his clients, ensuring all their needs are met more than satisfactorily.

- (a) Does the bare minimum required
- (b) Exerts a minimal amount of effort
- (c) Exceeds expectations with additional effort
- (d) Strictly adheres to job descriptions
- (e) Avoids taking on more responsibilities

**Q13. The sentences given below consists of an idiom/phrasal verb given in bold. From the given alternatives identify the most suitable option reflecting the meaning of the idiom/phrasal verb.**

On chilly winter nights, curled up by the fire, she felt as **snug as a bug in a rug**.

- (a) Uncomfortable and restless
- (b) Anxious about the encroaching cold
- (c) Eager to go outside and explore
- (d) Perfectly warm and comfortable
- (e) Dissatisfied with the room's decor

**Q14. The sentences given below consists of an idiom/phrasal verb given in bold. From the given alternatives identify the most suitable option reflecting the meaning of the idiom/phrasal verb.**

With increasing competition, he knew he needed to **step up his game** to stay relevant in the industry.

- (a) Reduce efforts in career advancement
- (b) Focus solely on past achievements
- (c) Withdraw from challenging projects
- (d) Maintain current levels of productivity
- (e) Increase efforts to improve performance

**Q15. The sentences given below consists of an idiom/phrasal verb given in bold. From the given alternatives identify the most suitable option reflecting the meaning of the idiom/phrasal verb.**

Overwhelmed by data, the analyst could **not see the wood for the trees**, missing the overarching trends.

- (a) To overlook the general situation due to focus on details
- (b) To enhance focus on minor details deliberately
- (c) To ignore all details in favor of a general overview
- (d) To cut down on excessive information processing
- (e) To prioritize environmental concerns over data analysis

**Q16. The sentences given below consists of an idiom/phrasal verb given in bold. From the given alternatives identify the most suitable option reflecting the meaning of the idiom/phrasal verb.**

He was always cautious and followed the maxim **look before you leap** when making investment decisions.

- (a) To make decisions impulsively
- (b) To ignore advice and act independently
- (c) To consider possible outcomes carefully
- (d) To follow others' decisions blindly
- (e) To invest without researching

**Q17. The sentences given below consists of an idiom/phrasal verb given in bold. From the given alternatives identify the most suitable option reflecting the meaning of the idiom/phrasal verb.**

After several warnings about his performance, he knew he was **on thin ice** with his employer.

- (a) In a stable and secure position
- (b) In a precarious or risky situation
- (c) On a path to rapid promotion
- (d) Under no scrutiny at work
- (e) Completely trusted by all



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**Q18. The sentences given below consists of an idiom/phrasal verb given in bold. From the given alternatives identify the most suitable option reflecting the meaning of the idiom/phrasal verb.**

During the meeting, he decided to **play devil's advocate** to challenge the team's ideas and encourage deeper thinking.

- (a) To agree with all suggestions made
- (b) To systematically reject all proposals
- (c) To purposefully argue a contrary position
- (d) To document the meeting impartially
- (e) To support the most popular ideas

**Q19. The sentences given below consists of an idiom/phrasal verb given in bold. From the given alternatives identify the most suitable option reflecting the meaning of the idiom/phrasal verb.**

Just as she announced her engagement, her brother inadvertently **rained on her parade** by bringing up her previous failed relationships.

- (a) Enhanced the joy of her announcement
- (b) Organized a surprise party in her honor
- (c) Celebrated the news with great enthusiasm
- (d) Spoiled her special moment with negativity
- (e) Recorded the event for family archives

**Q20. The sentences given below consists of an idiom/phrasal verb given in bold. From the given alternatives identify the most suitable option reflecting the meaning of the idiom/phrasal verb.**

Unable to attend the dinner party, he asked to **take a rain check** and meet up at another time.

- (a) Decline the invitation permanently
- (b) Accept the invitation enthusiastically
- (c) Postpone the acceptance temporarily
- (d) Forget about the event altogether
- (e) Attend the event despite difficulties

## Solutions

**S1. Ans.(e)**

**Sol.** "Looking to your laurels" means to become complacent or overly satisfied with what one has already achieved, at the risk of not striving for future success. It's a caution against resting on one's past achievements and losing momentum or failing to continue working hard. Thus, the correct interpretation is option **(e) To rest on past achievements.**

**S2. Ans.(b)**

**Sol.** "Bear a grudge" means to continue feeling bitterness or resentment towards someone because of past wrongs or conflicts. It's not about moving past disagreements, reconciling, commemorating shared experiences, or drifting apart without cause, but about maintaining negative feelings over time. Thus, the correct interpretation is option **(b) To hold onto resentment or ill feelings.**

**S3. Ans.(d)**

**Sol.** "By the skin of your teeth" means to barely succeed in doing something, often by a very narrow margin or with minimal difference between success and failure. It's not about excelling, repeated efforts, lack of effort, or teamwork, but achieving something with very little to spare. Thus, the correct interpretation is option **(d) By a very narrow margin.**

**S4. Ans.(b)**

**Sol.** "Down for the count" means to be temporarily unable to participate, often because of illness, exhaustion, or facing a setback. It's not about being energized, gearing up for new projects, queueing for presentations, or leisurely pausing, but being out of action. Thus, the correct interpretation is option **(b) Temporarily incapacitated or defeated.**

**S5. Ans.(c)**

**Sol.** "Draw the line" means to establish a clear boundary or limit on what is acceptable or tolerable, often to protect one's interests, principles, or well-being. It's not about seeking additional tasks, offering more time, undoing decisions, or discussing compensation, but about asserting limits. Thus, the correct interpretation is option **(c) To set a clear boundary or limit.**

**S6. Ans.(e)**

**Sol.** "Easier said than done" refers to tasks or ideas that are easy to talk about or propose but much more difficult to actually execute or implement. It captures the disparity between conceptual simplicity and practical complexity. Thus, the correct interpretation is option **(e) Simple to state but difficult to implement.**

**S7. Ans.(c)**

**Sol.** "Break a leg" is a theatrical expression used to wish performers good luck in an ironic way, where saying 'good luck' directly is considered bad luck. It is not about actual physical harm, intentional poor performance, leaving under negative circumstances, or making unplanned changes. Thus, the correct interpretation is option **(c) To wish someone good luck in a performance.**

**S8. Ans.(b)**

**Sol.** "Up a creek without a paddle" describes being in a challenging or bad situation without any means of escape or solution, akin to being stuck in a creek (small river) in a boat but without a paddle. It's not about relaxation, abundance of choices, easy access to help, or the presence of friends, but about helplessness. Thus, the correct interpretation is option **(b) In a difficult situation without help.**

**S9. Ans.(c)**

**Sol.** "Give it a whirl" means to try something to see how it works or to experience it, often for the first time, without committing deeply or having high expectations. It's about an exploratory attempt, not neglect, critical analysis, disassembly, or promotion. Thus, the correct interpretation is option **(c) To try something out.**



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**S10. Ans.(d)**

**Sol. Fish out of water**" describes someone who is feeling uncomfortable, awkward, or out of their element, much like a fish would feel if it were on dry land. This idiom highlights disorientation or unease in unfamiliar surroundings. It's not about being comfortable, capable, desiring to return, or adaptively skilled, but about feeling awkward or displaced. Thus, the correct interpretation is option **(d) Uncomfortable or out of place.**

**S11. Ans.(b)**

**Sol. "In the fast lane"** refers to a lifestyle characterized by high energy, fast-paced activities, and often high risk, associated with rapid success and/or luxurious living. It suggests an intense, dynamic way of life, not a conservative or cautious approach, nor a preference for public transit. Thus, the correct interpretation is option **(b) Leading a high-risk, fast-paced lifestyle.**

**S12. Ans.(c)**

**Sol. Go the extra mile**" means to do more than what is required or expected in order to achieve excellence or provide additional satisfaction. It involves putting in extra effort beyond the standard requirements, not just meeting basic expectations or avoiding additional tasks. Thus, the correct interpretation is option **(c) Exceeds expectations with additional effort.**

**S13. Ans.(d)**

**Sol. Snug as a bug in a rug**" is an idiom used to describe feeling warm, cozy, and comfortable, especially in a wrapped or confined space, much like a bug would be in a tight, enclosed area. It's not about discomfort, eagerness for outdoor activities, anxiety, or dissatisfaction with surroundings, but about contentment and physical comfort. Thus, the correct interpretation is option **(d) Perfectly warm and comfortable.**

**S14. Ans.(e)**

**Sol. Step up your game**" means to improve one's performance or efforts, especially in response to an increase in competition or challenge. It suggests enhancing skills, work output, or strategies, not withdrawing, reducing efforts, or relying on past successes. Thus, the correct interpretation is option **(e) Increase efforts to improve performance.**

**S15. Ans.(a)**

**Sol. "To not see the wood for the trees"** means to be so involved in the details or complexities of a situation that one misses the overall or larger picture. It reflects a preoccupation with minutiae that obscures broader understanding, not a deliberate enhancement of focus, neglect of details, simplification of processes, or prioritization of ecological issues over analytical tasks. Thus, the correct interpretation is option **(a) To overlook the general situation due to focus on details.**

**S16. Ans.(c)**

**Sol.** "Look before you leap" advises careful evaluation and consideration of potential risks and outcomes before making a decision or taking action. It encourages thoughtfulness and prudence, rather than impulsive or uninformed behaviors. Thus, the correct interpretation is option **(c) To consider possible outcomes carefully.**

**S17. Ans.(b)**

**Sol.** "On thin ice" metaphorically describes being in a dangerous or unstable position, where any further mistakes could have serious consequences. It conveys the fragility of one's current standing, much like the literal risk of walking on thin ice. Thus, the correct interpretation is option **(b) In a precarious or risky situation.**



**S18. Ans.(c)**

**Sol.** "Play devil's advocate" means to deliberately take a contrary or opposing viewpoint, often to provoke discussion or to explore the full spectrum of perspectives on an issue. It's not about blanket agreement, rejection, neutral reporting, or popularity alignment, but about critical examination and debate facilitation. Thus, the correct interpretation is option **(c) To purposefully argue a contrary position.**

**S19. Ans.(d)**

**Sol.** "Rain on someone's parade" means to spoil or dampen one's happiness or success, often by bringing up something negative or by overshadowing the event with less favorable aspects. It's about turning a positive occasion into a less enjoyable one, not enhancing, celebrating, organizing, or documenting it. Thus, the correct interpretation is option **(d) Spoiled her special moment with negativity.**

**S20. Ans.(c)**

**Sol.** "Take a rain check" means to politely decline an offer or invitation at the current time while expressing an interest in rescheduling for a later date. It's a way to defer commitment without cancelling the possibility of future engagement. Thus, the correct interpretation is option **(c) Postpone the acceptance temporarily.**