

A Handful of Phrases

Match the idiom in each sentence to its meaning and learn how the idiom came to be!

- 1 Our team is going to win this game hands down. _____
- 2 Her lemonade stand is making money hand over fist. _____
- 3 Mom's calling for all hands on deck to clean the house. _____
- 4 You don't stand a chance; I have the upper hand. _____
- 5 I didn't want to do this but you're forcing my hand. _____

An **idiom** is a colorful way of saying or describing something. Often idioms come from sports, games or work.



A. THE ADVANTAGE

During neighborhood baseball games in the 1900s, team captains decided who got first pick of the players by closing their eyes and placing a hand on the same baseball bat. They would take turns moving hands up the bat until one player hit the top--and got first pick!

B. IN LARGE AMOUNTS

At first this described sailors who could climb rigging hand over hand. Later it came to describe a person grabbing a fistful of money with an open hand reaching for more.

C. EASILY

Starting in the 1800s, you could tell a horseback rider was winning easily if he or she let hands drop down at the end of a race.

D. EVERYONE TO HELP

When the captain of a sailing ship gave this command, it meant everyone on board who could help ran to the deck.

E. GIVING ME NO CHOICE

A card player makes a clever move that forces another to play a losing hand.



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