BBC Learning English The Teacher

Cat idioms



In this episode, **The Teacher** introduces you to three idiomatic phrases connected with cats.

- 1. There isn't enough room to swing a cat
- 2. Who let the cat out of the bag?
- 3. To put the cat among the pigeons

Hello, I'm a very interesting and intelligent man.

And this is Tinkles, who, like me, is an excellent teacher of English.

Well, she is my cat...I bet you've never been taught by a cat before.

We live together in this house. Small, isn't it?

Not much room for Tinkles and me.

In fact there isn't enough room to swing a cat.

In English, if a room or a space is very small, we can say there isn't enough room to swing a

There isn't enough room to swing a cat.

Unlike here, where there's plenty of room, isn't that right Tinkles?

I've got something to tell you... It's a bit of a secret.

Tinkles? Tinkles?

Oh, so you know my little secret already... Who let the cat out of the bag?

In English, if someone lets a secret be known, especially by mistake, we can say they let the cat out of the bag. To let the cat out of the bag.

Anyway, you are all invited... to Tinkles's wedding.

Cats... Little cuties, aren't they?

But never forget that underneath all that fluff they are vicious hunters.

So, it's not a good idea to put Tinkles with this lot.

The Teacher

© BBC Learning English Page 1 of 2 In English, if there's something which causes trouble or makes people very angry we say it put a cat among the pigeons.

To put a cat among the pigeons.

Like when I told my students I'd spent the whole year preparing them for the wrong exam. That put the cat among the pigeons. Ah, they hated me *so* much, ha, ha, silly me.