

Color Expressions in English

Instructions: There are many colorful expressions in the English language. Let's take a moment to learn some of the most common ones.

Task 1: Match the Meaning

Read the sentences on the left. They all contain a popular expression with color BUT the color was removed. Look at the context and match the sentence with the definition of the color phrase. Write the letter in the blue space.

1. Police caught the criminal was caught <u>red</u> handed when he was leaving the bank. E		A) An excellent chance to do or get something.
2. I was so dehydrated after the marathon that I thought I was going to <u>black</u> out. D		B) Someone that does not fit in with the group.
3. John was the <u>gold</u> child. It was obvious his parents liked him more. H		C) Something untrue you say to avoid hurting someone's feelings.
4. I wanted to open a new business but there is so much <u>red</u> tape with the city regulations. G		D) To faint (<i>desmayarse</i>). To lose consciousness.
5. I definitely do not have a <u>green</u> thumb. All of my houseplants die! F		E) To see someone doing something they are not supposed to.
6. Jessie is the <u>black</u> sheep of the family. All his brothers and sisters are successful doctors but he wants to be a graffiti artist. B		F) Someone who is very good at gardening.
7. The job offer was the <u>gold</u> opportunity he always wanted. A		G) Excessive bureaucracy, forms, and paperwork.
8. He asked what I thought about his new shirt and I had to tell a little <u>white</u> lie because it looked terrible. C		H) The one who is the favorite in the family.

CHECK YOUR ANSWERS AT THE BOTTOM OF THE SCREEN

1E, 2D, 3H, 4G, 5F, 6B, 7A, 8C

Task 2: What's the Color?

Now fill in the spaces with the missing color. You can guess if you are not sure. Some colors are used more than once.

GREEN - WHITE - BLACK - RED - GOLDEN

1. Police caught the criminal red handed when he was leaving the bank.
2. I was so dehydrated after the marathon that I thought I was going to black out.
3. John was the golden child. It was obvious his parents liked him more.
4. I wanted to open a new business but there is so much red tape that you have to go through with the city regulations.
5. I definitely do not have a green thumb. All of my houseplants die!
6. Jessie is the black sheep of the family. All his brothers and sisters are successful doctors but he wants to be a graffiti artist.
7. The job offer was the golden opportunity he always wanted.
8. He asked what I thought about his new shirt and I had to tell a little white lie because it looked terrible.

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Learn the real expressions!

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Red handed• Black out• Golden child• Red tape	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Green thumb• Black sheep• Golden opportunity• Little white lie
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Task 3: Discussion Questions

Now let's try to use some of these expressions in conversation. Discuss the following questions with your partners. You do NOT need to write. Only speak.

- Have you ever **blackened out**? What happened?
- Who is the **black sheep** in your family? Who is the **golden child**?
- Have you ever taken advantage of a **golden opportunity**? Have you ever missed one?
- Do you or anyone in your family have a **green thumb**?
- Can you tell a story from your childhood when you were **caught red handed**? What happened?
- Do you think Costa Rican institutions require us to deal with too much **red tape**?
- What are some situations in which you think it is ok to tell a **little white lie**?