



1

the cat that got the cream

If you are looking particularly happy or proud and satisfied with yourself, it may be said that you look like the cat that got the cream.

"Lisa was delighted when the boss complimented her idea in the meeting. She looked like the cat that got the cream."

2

curiosity killed the cat

An expression used to mean that being too nosy or too curious about something can lead to one's downfall.

"I advise you not to try and find out where that money is coming from. Curiosity killed the cat."

3

look what the cat dragged in/ to look like something the cat dragged in

A statement used to describe surprise at someone who has just arrived looking dishevelled, untidy or messy. Depending on the tone, this statement can be used in a joking manner but could also come across as rude or offensive.

"When Hayley arrived home from the party at 6am her disapproving parents simply remarked, 'look what the cat dragged in'."

4

like herding cats

Coordinating a large or distracted group of people is often described as 'like herding cats'; a near-impossible task.

"I'm trying to get everyone together for my birthday at the weekend, but with everyone working different hours it's like herding cats!"

5

put the cat amongst the pigeons

To put the cat amongst the pigeons is to do or say something that causes an uproar or widespread dissatisfaction or worry.

"There's a rumour going around that the new guy is earning more, despite having less experience. That's really put the cat amongst the pigeons."

Practice activity

Fill in the spaces with an idiom from the list above.

1. "I got caught in a rainstorm on my way to the meeting. I was so embarrassed, when I walked in I _____!"
2. "We don't want to _____, so we are trying to delay telling the employees about the losses the company has been making."
3. "Getting all the kids to stand in line before starting the race was _____."
4. "Simon was fired after the boss caught him reading his emails. _____."
5. "Eleanor was beaming with pride about her promotion. She _____."

Answers

1. looked like something the cat dragged in
2. put the cat amongst the pigeons
3. like herding cats
4. curiosity killed the cat
5. looked like the cat that got the cream



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