**Sitting on the fence and turning a corner (Everyday idioms in newspapers)**

[**https://dictionaryblog.cambridge.org/2019/10/09/sitting-on-the-fence-and-turning-a-corner-everyday-idioms-in-newspapers/**](https://dictionaryblog.cambridge.org/2019/10/09/sitting-on-the-fence-and-turning-a-corner-everyday-idioms-in-newspapers/)

The idioms and phrases in this week’s post are taken from a range of national newspapers that were published during the course of a weekend. We write a newspaper idioms post every couple of months in order to keep you supplied with up-to-date, commonly used English idioms.

One newspaper reports on the front page that a major British company is ‘on the brink of’ collapse. To be [**on the brink of**](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/teeter-on-the-brink-edge-of-sth?q=on+the+brink) or [**teetering on the brink of**](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/teeter-on-the-brink-edge-of-sth?q=on+the+brink), something, (especially something bad), is to be very close to doing it. The same paper writes that the leader of a political party has ‘come under fire’ from within his own party. To [**come under fire**](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/come-under-fire)is to be severely criticized.

In the sports pages of that paper, we read that a Formula One champion is set to ‘play hardball’ with his rivals. If a person [**plays hardball**](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/play-hardball), they are very determined to defeat someone, using force if necessary. On another page of the sports section, a journalist observes that the story of an athlete who has successfully recovered from cancer will ‘strike a chord’ with very many people. If something [**strikes a chord**](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/strike-a-chord) with you, you understand it and respond to it emotionally, usually because something similar has also happened to you.

Another broadsheet insists that a UK party leader must ‘stop sitting on the fence’ in relation to Brexit. To [**sit on the fence**](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/sit-on-the-fence) in a debate is to not support one side or the other. A guest columnist in the same paper claims that he is a ‘dab hand’ at making tasty dishes with kale (= a dark green cabbage). A [**dab hand**](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/dab-hand) is someone who is very good at a particular activity.

A third newspaper comments that many people now have a low opinion of politicians, assuming that they entered politics only to ‘feather their nests’. To [**feather your (own)** **nest**](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/feather-your-own-nest?q=feather+your+nest) is to deliberately make yourself rich, usually by doing something dishonest. In an article on ‘ethical fashion’, a campaigner claims that the fashion world has finally ‘turned a corner’ and is now serious about environmental issues. If a situation [**turns a/the corner**](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/turn-the-corner), it improves after a difficult period.

Finally, all the newspapers report that people in their millions have ‘taken to the streets’ to protest against climate change. [**Take to the streets**](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/street) is a phrase that newspapers often use simply to mean ‘demonstrate’.