



# SPILL THE BEANS

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## PDF 1: Reading Passage + Comprehension

**Title:** Spill the Beans – Reading & Comprehension

**Level:** Pre-Intermediate to Intermediate (A2–B1)

**Time:** 20–30 minutes

**THE ORIGIN OF THE IDIOM**  
**SPILL THE BEANS**  
 To tell a secret.

Guess what? I know the secret!

**THE ORIGIN**

In the past, baked beans were cooked for special occasions. If you "spilled the beans," you ruined the surprise by telling the secret.

**WHAT IT MEANS**

To accidentally tell a secret or reveal information that was meant to be kept quiet.

**EXAMPLES**

- ★ I wasn't supposed to say anything, but I spilled the beans!
- ★ Don't spill the beans about the birthday party!
- ★ He spilled the beans and now everyone knows.

**ALWAYS REMEMBER!**

Think before you speak, not every secret is yours to share!

**LET'S TALK!**

- ✔ Have you ever spilled the beans?
- ✔ How did it make you feel?
- ✔ Why do people find it hard to keep secrets?

## Vocabulary

Word	Meaning	Sounds like
spill	to accidentally drop or pour something	spil
reveal	to tell or show something that was secret	ri-VEEL
accidentally	by mistake, without planning	ak-si-DEN-tuh-lee
secret	information that should not be told to others	SEE-krit
ruin	to destroy or spoil something	ROO-in

## Discussion Questions

1. Have you ever spilled the beans about something?
2. Is it easy or difficult for you to keep secrets?

## Reading Passage

### Spill the Beans

Have you ever accidentally told someone a secret? In English, we say you “spilled the beans.”

The idiom “spill the beans” means to accidentally reveal a secret. But where does this funny expression come from?

One popular explanation comes from ancient times. In some cultures, people used beans to vote secretly. White beans meant “yes” and dark beans meant “no.” If someone accidentally knocked over the jar and spilled the beans, everyone could see the votes — the secret was out!

Another story says the phrase comes from old cooking traditions. Baked beans were sometimes prepared for special celebrations. If someone spilled the beans before the party, they ruined the surprise for everyone.

Today, we use “spill the beans” whenever someone reveals information that was supposed to stay secret.

Example:

“I wasn’t going to tell anyone about the surprise party, but Sarah spilled the beans!”

## Comprehension Questions

### A. True or False

1. “Spill the beans” means to keep a secret.
2. One origin story involves beans used for voting.
3. The idiom is only used in cooking situations.
4. Spilling the beans means accidentally revealing information.

### B. Multiple Choice

1. What does “spill the beans” mean?
  - a) To cook beans
  - b) To accidentally tell a secret
  - c) To clean the floor
2. According to one story, why were beans used in the past?
  - a) For voting secretly
  - b) Only for rich people
  - c) To make soup

### C. Short Answer

1. Explain the meaning of “spill the beans” in your own words.
2. Which origin story do you like more? Why?