



# LET THE CAT OUT OF THE BAG

© talkmor.com

## PDF 1: Reading Passage + Comprehension

**Title:** Let the Cat Out of the Bag – Reading & Comprehension

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

**Time:** 20–30 minutes



### HISTORY



### Vocabulary

Word	Meaning	Sounds like
<b>idiom</b>	a common expression with a special meaning	ID-ee-um
<b>reveal</b>	to show or tell something that was secret	ri-VEEL
<b>dishonest</b>	not honest, trying to trick people	dis-ON-est
<b>poke</b>	an old word for a bag or sack	POHK
<b>accidentally</b>	by mistake, without planning	ak-si-DEN-tuh-lee

### Talkmor Challenge

Fill in the blanks using the new idiom:

- I wanted the movie ending to be a surprise, but my brother \_\_\_\_\_ and told me who the villain was!
- We need to be careful not to \_\_\_\_\_ before Sarah's party on Friday.

## Reading Passage

### Let the Cat Out of the Bag

Have you ever accidentally told someone a secret? In English, we say you “let the cat out of the bag.” This popular idiom has a very old and interesting story.

Hundreds of years ago, before supermarkets existed, people bought animals at busy outdoor markets. Dishonest sellers had a common trick: they showed customers a pig in a bag (called a “poke”), but inside the bag they often hid a cat instead. The customer paid good money for a pig but received a much cheaper cat.

If a customer opened the bag too early and the cat jumped out, everyone at the market could see the trick. The seller’s secret was suddenly revealed! This is where the expression “let the cat out of the bag” comes from — meaning to accidentally tell a secret or reveal something that was supposed to stay hidden.

Today, we still use this idiom in everyday situations. For example:

“I let the cat out of the bag when I told my sister about her surprise birthday party.”

From medieval markets to modern conversations, this fun idiom shows how language can carry stories from hundreds of years ago into our daily lives.

## Comprehension Questions

### A. True or False

True / False

1. The idiom “let the cat out of the bag” is very new. \_\_\_\_\_
2. The expression means to keep a secret. \_\_\_\_\_
3. In the past, some sellers tried to trick customers with cats. \_\_\_\_\_
4. Today we still use this idiom when someone reveals a secret. \_\_\_\_\_

### B. Truth or Trap?

Read these three explanations for why a seller would put a cat in a bag.

Only one is the "historical" theory. Discuss with your partner:

#### Which one is the most believable?

1. **The Weight Trick:** Cats were used because they weighed exactly the same as a baby pig, so the buyer wouldn't notice the difference.
2. **The Sound Trick:** Sellers would poke the bag so the cat would make a noise that sounded like a squealing pig.
3. **The "Blind" Sale:** Sellers hoped the buyer would wait until they got home to open the bag, making it too late to get their money back.

**Critical Thinking Question:** If you were the buyer in the picture, what is the first thing you would do before paying the "Cheap Pigs" seller?

### C. The Secret's Impact

**The Mission:** Don't just define the idiom—use it.

Rank these "secrets" from 1 (Small Mistake) to 5 (Big Disaster). Explain **why** to your partner.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Letting the cat out of the bag about a **surprise birthday party**.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Letting the cat out of the bag about a **movie spoiler**.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Letting the cat out of the bag about a **company's new secret product**.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Letting the cat out of the bag about a **friend's crush**.