

I've got a lot on my plate

Idiom of the month

a cura di Sarah Gudgeon

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1. List 5 things that make you feel stressed.

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.
- e.

Sample answers:

- a. exams;
- b. family problems;
- c. homework;
- d. arguments with friends;
- e. global problems like war and poverty.

2a. Read

What's wrong, Ines?
You look really stressed.

I've got a lot on my plate, Samad. I've got exams next week, my grandma is really sick and my mum and her boyfriend argue every night.

That does sound stressful. Come round to my house for dinner tonight. I'll help you study and you can tell me more about the situation with your grandma and your mum and her boyfriend.

2b. Complete with the idiom of the month.

When someone has got _____ they are trying to manage a lot of situations at the same time.

Answer: When someone has got a lot on their plate they are trying to manage a lot of situations at the same time.

We use the plate metaphor to talk about feeling stressed when we have too much to do because if you have too much food on your plate, it falls off and then you have a real problem. Similarly, if you try to put too many things on your mental 'to do' list, you overload your brain and this leads to stress and feelings of anxiety.

3. Complete these tips for avoiding stress and anxiety. Use the words below.

regular outdoors methodically wellbeing worried
priority responsible draw up spend healthily

- a. Make a realistic 'to do' list. List all the things you have to do in order of _____ and complete each task calmly and _____.
- b. If you're _____ about homework and exams, _____ a study plan. Remember to allocate time for breaks.
- c. _____ time with your family and friends and try and go _____.
- d. Take _____ exercise, eat _____ and don't stay up too late.
- e. Talk to a _____ adult about any problems that are affecting your _____.

Answers:

- a. priority; methodically;
- b. worried; draw up;
- c. spend; outdoors;
- d. regular; healthily;
- e. responsible; wellbeing

4. Write a short post for your school website. Give other students some advice on what they can do if they feel like they've got a lot on their plate during exams. Begin your post, of around 100 words, with the following sentence:

Have you got a lot on your plate at the moment? Don't worry, you're not alone.

Sample answer: Have you got a lot on your plate at the moment? Don't worry, you're not alone. Everyone feels a bit stressed during exams but the key is to take a step back, breathe, and come up with a plan! The first thing to do is to write down all the subjects that you have to study. Then, calculate how many hours you can realistically dedicate to revision between now and the exams. Next, draw up a study plan based on those hours with a specific day and time for each subject. Finally, find yourself a quiet and comfortable place to study and go for it!