ENGLISH VOCABULARY BUILDER

WORKBOOK (200 LESSONS)

ESSENTIAL WORDS, PHRASES, COLLOCATIONS, PHRASAL VERBS & IDIOMS FOR MAXIMIZING YOUR TOEFL, TOEIC & IELTS SCORES



JACKIE BOLEN

English Vocabulary Builder Workbook (200 Lessons): Essential Words, Phrases, Collocations, Phrasal Verbs & Idioms for Maximizing your TOEFL, TOEIC & IELTS Scores

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www.eslspeaking.org

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How to Use this Book

Welcome to this book designed to help you expand your knowledge of collocations, phrasal verbs, idioms and words in American English. My goal is to help you increase your vocabulary and to be able to speak and write more fluently. And of course, get higher scores on English proficiency exams like the TOEFL, TOEIC and IELTS tests.

Let's face it, English vocabulary can be difficult to master, even for the best students. In this book, you'll find thousands of English phrases that are used in boardrooms, over a meal, and with friends and family around the world. They are also the ones that you'll see on various exams designed to test your English ability.

There are 200 lessons, each designed to take 10-15 minutes a day. Along the way, you'll find review sessions and then at the end, a final “exam.” The vocabulary is recycled throughout the book so that you'll see most of the phrases and idioms more than once. This will help make them more memorable.

To get the most bang for your buck, be sure to do the following:

- Review frequently.
- Make a plan to use this book every day, for 200 days. Each lesson takes

around 10-15 minutes.

- Make sure to do the practice exercises in this book (cover up the answers while you're doing them!)
- Use each phrase or idiom in real life as soon as possible.
- Don't be nervous about making mistakes. That's how you'll get better at English!
- Consider studying with a friend so you can help each other stay motivated.
- Use a notebook and write down new words, phrasal verbs, idioms, and expressions that you run across. Review frequently so that they stay fresh in your mind.
- Be sure to read frequently. Choose something that is slightly below your level and try to read it for at least 20 minutes a day. Read quickly and if you don't know a word, guess what the meaning is instead of stopping and looking it up in a dictionary. This is one of the best ways to learn vocabulary naturally. Do this in addition to using this book.

Good luck and I wish you well on your journey to becoming more proficient with English.

About the Author: Jackie Bolen

I taught English in South Korea for 10 years to every level and type of student. I've taught every age from kindergarten kids to adults. Most of my time has centered around teaching at two universities: five years at a science and engineering school in Cheonan, and four years at a major university in Busan where I taught upper-level classes for students majoring in English. In my spare time, you can usually find me outside surfing, biking, hiking, or snowshoeing. I now live in Vancouver, Canada.

In case you were wondering what my academic qualifications are, I hold a Master of Arts in Psychology. During my time in Korea, I completed both the Cambridge CELTA and DELTA certification programs. With the combination of almost ten years teaching ESL/EFL learners of all ages and levels, and the more formal teaching qualifications I've obtained, I have a solid foundation on which to offer advice to English learners.

I truly hope that you find this book useful. I would love it if you sent me an email with any questions or feedback that you might have.

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You might also be interested in these books: 1001English Expressions and Phrases, or 1005 ESL Conversation Questions. You can find it wherever you like to buy books. It has hundreds of helpful English phrases and expressions that can be used in a wide variety of situations. Learn to speak more fluently in American English.

Lesson 1: Goofing Around

Andy: How's it going these days?

Matt: Oh, I'm feeling frustrated. My kids alternate between **goofing around** and **beating each other up.** I wish they'd **cut it out** and act normally.

Andy: That sounds tough. They'll **grow up** before you know it though! Enjoy it while they're young.

Matt: I know that but they **wear me down**. I hate **dealing with** their battles.

Andy: Lighten up a little! Let them **battle it out**. I know it's bad but I let my kids **get away with** murder! It helps me stay sane.

Vocabulary

Goofing around: Being silly or joking with someone.

Beating each other up: Hitting or being physically violent towards each other.

Cut it out: Stop doing something.

Grow up: Get bigger or older.

Wear me down: Make me feel tired and weary.

Dealing with: Handling.

Lighten up: Relax; not take things so seriously.

Battle it out: Fight until there's a winner.

Get away with: To do something bad but not receive punishment for it.

Practice

1. I'm not sure you should get in between them. Why not let them _____?
2. My kids _____! I need to take a walk every day to get a break.
3. Hey, stop _____. We need to get some things done.
4. You should _____. It'll be better for your mental health.
5. Kids _____ so quickly.
6. The pen tapping annoys me. Please _____.
7. I know you're _____ a lot right now. Can I help by watching your kids tonight?
8. Do you think we can _____ it? I'm worried that we won't.
9. My cat and dog love _____.

Answers

1. battle it out
2. wear me down
3. goofing around

4. lighten up

5. grow up

6. cut it out

7. dealing with

8. get away with

9. beating each other up

Lesson 2: Idioms

A bee in my bonnet

Meaning: A certain, specific issue that is annoying someone.

Origin: First seen in the 1500s. Came from the Scottish idiom, “A head full of bees.” It's evident how annoying a bee buzzing around in your hat (bonnet) would be.

He had *a bee in his bonnet* about the new protocol at work.

I have *a bee in my bonnet* about the bad decision my boss made. It has a big negative impact on me.

Add insult to injury

Meaning: Make something already bad worse. For example, a guy fell off his bike but then a car ran over his foot.

Origin: Possibly from the ancient Roman fable of a bald man and a fly. The man tried to crush a fly on his head but used too much force and hurt himself too.

To *add insult to injury*, my brother got Covid-19 when he went to the hospital for a heart attack.

I don't want to *add insult to injury* after you've just finished your shift but you'll have to work for a few more hours. Johnny called in sick today.

A dime a dozen

Meaning: Something that is very common; not special.

Origin: First seen in the early 1800s when you could often buy a dozen (12) things for $0.10 (a dime).

Jobs in tech are *a dime a dozen* in this town.

Guys like that are *a dime a dozen* on this dating site. I'm looking for something different.

A hard nut to crack (A tough nut to crack)

Meaning: Someone who is difficult to get to know.

Origin: Used since the 1700s. Refers to how it's not easy to open a nut because

of the hard shell. Depending on the nut, it's not possible to do it without a special tool.

She's *a hard nut to crack*. It's been years and I still have no idea if she's married or not.

My boss is *a hard nut to crack*. I can't figure out if he likes me or not.

Ahead of the pack

Meaning: To be ahead of other people or companies trying to do a similar thing.

Origin: “Pack” has been used to refer to a group of people since the 1400s. Or, it could be a reference to pack animals like dogs that have a leader that goes near the front.

I think we can get *ahead of the pack* here and gain some serious market share.

There's no point in getting too far *ahead of the pack*. We'd have to wait for everyone else to catch up to us.

Hit the books

Meaning: Study.

Origin: Unknown.

Sorry, I can't play soccer this weekend. I have to *hit the books*. My final exams are next week.

Okay, I have to go *hit the books*. My test is tomorrow.

Hit the ground running

Meaning: Start something and make progress quickly on it.

Origin: Unknown but could be related to soldiers who are dropped by parachute into combat zones and have to be ready to fight the second they hit the ground. Or, could refer to stowaways who jump off a train when it gets close to the station and have to begin running to avoid the police.

We need to *hit the ground running* if we want to stay ahead of the competition.

I want to *hit the ground running* on this project. How can we make that happen?

Practice: Write an appropriate response using an idiom.

1. I'm a little nervous about that project we have coming up next week.

2. Have you talked to our new coworker yet?

3. Wow! Dad keeps hassling me about cleaning up my room.

4. There are so many options for getting a new cellphone. I don't know which one to pick.

Answers (many are possible)

1. Me too. We need to hit the ground running.

2. Yes, but she's a hard nut to crack.

3. Yeah, he has a bee in his bonnet about that.

4. They're a dime a dozen. Sorry, I can't help you.

Lesson 3: Disagreeing with a Decision

Jerry: I don't want to **make waves** here, but I don't think Kim is making a good financial decision for our company.

Linda: Oh, I don't know. Maybe you just don't see **eye to eye**? I think she's done a lot of research and **knows what she's doing**. She's generally quite good at making decisions. It's why they pay her the **big bucks**.

Jerry: Well, I understand why you'd think that. You were **born with a silver spoon in your mouth**, just like Kim, and have never really been **short on cash.** Anyway, it's some **food for thought**!

Linda: To play the **Devil's advocate**, making big decisions is **second nature** to her. She's great at it!

Jerry: Hmmm...okay. Let's **agree to disagree**. We're never going to **settle** this I think.

Vocabulary

See eye to eye: Agree with someone.

Born with a silver spoon in your mouth: Someone who comes from a wealthy

family who doesn't have to work that hard in life.

Food for thought: Something to think about.

Make waves: To cause trouble.

Devil's advocate: Someone who takes the other side in an argument.

Knows what she's doing: Sure of something or do something correctly.

Agree to disagree: To stop talking about something controversial when you can't agree.

Settle: Decide or agree to something.

Big bucks: To have a very high salary.

Second Nature: Something that someone does easily and well because they have done it so often.

Practice

1. My mom and I had to finally _____ because there was no way we could understand each other's point of view.
2. I'm not trying to _____ but I just don't agree with what's going on at my company.
3. I'm thinking about changing jobs. My boss and I don't _____.
4. My cousin was _____ and has never had to work a day in his life.
5. My younger brother's most annoying habit is his need to always play the _____.
6. That newspaper article had some _____ in it.
7. I've learned so much from my teacher. I can see she _____.
8. I was hoping to not have to _____ for that job because the salary isn't great but it's tough in this economy.
9. Skating is _____ to him. He's been doing it since he was three.
10. He has a ton of responsibility but that's why they pay him the _____.

Answers

1. agree to disagree
2. make waves
3. see eye to eye
4. born with a silver spoon in his mouth
5. Devil's advocate
6. food for thought
7. knows what she's doing
8. settle
9. second nature
10. big bucks

Lesson 4: How to Thank People

Thanks for your help today.

You're welcome.

No problem at all.

I appreciate your help.

No problem.

Of course.

Sure, any time.

Thanks for (looking after my son, carrying my bag, helping me with my homework, etc.)

No worries.

It was fun.

That's very kind of you.

Oh, it was nothing.

No problem.

My pleasure.

You shouldn't have gone to the trouble.

It was no problem at all.

I was happy to help.

Thank you for _____ (many answers possible).

You're welcome.

No problem.

You're the best!

Oh, thank you.

Dialogue #1:

Tom: Thanks for your help with moving today, Jenny. You shouldn't have gone to the trouble.

Jenny: Oh, no problem at all. I don't mind helping you. You've been very kind to me over the years.

Tom: You're welcome. And, I still really appreciate the help.

Jenny: No worries. That's what friends are for.

Dialogue #2:

Tim: Carrie, I appreciate your help with that assignment.

Carrie: No problem, it was a tough one.

Tim: Yeah, I just couldn't figure it out.

Carrie: It took me a while too. Anyway, I'm always happy to help a friend out.

Tim: I'm thankful to have you in this class with me.

Lesson 5: House Hunting

Craig: What are you up to **this weekend**?

Ted: I'm going **house hunting**. I'm finally going to get **a place of my own**.

Craig: How exciting! It's almost impossible to save up a **down payment** with how expensive rent is in **this town**.

Ted: No kidding. I'll never be able to **pay off my mortgage**.

Craig: Well, let me know if you **throw a housewarming party** and if you need **help moving.**

Vocabulary

This weekend: Saturday and Sunday coming up.

House hunting: Looking for a house to buy or rent, usually buying.

A place of my own: A home that you live in by yourself, usually after buying it.

Down payment: A large amount of money required up-front for purchasing a house.

This town: The city you're currently in.

No kidding: You're not joking.

Pay off my mortgage: Finish paying off a bank loan for a house.

Throw a housewarming party: Hosting a party to celebrate moving into a new house.

Help moving: Help to move from an old home to a new one.

Practice

1. Let me know if you need _____. I have a truck.
2. I'm planning on going to the hockey game _____.
3. It's very difficult to buy a house in _____ as they're very expensive.
4. I can't believe that I can finally have _____. I've had roommates for years.
5. _____. That's amazing news.
6. Let's _____ next weekend maybe.
7. The _____ will need to be at least 10% of the listing price.
8. Oh, you're going _____? What areas are you looking at?
9. I plan to _____ in 10 years.

Answers

1. help moving
2. this weekend

3. this town
4. a place of my own
5. no kidding
6. throw a housewarming party
7. down payment
8. house hunting
9. pay off my mortgage

Lesson 6: Asking for Clarification

Harper: Just so I'm clear on this: you're asking me to **scale back** production on Model 1234?

Logan: Yes, correct. Fuel prices are **skyrocketing** and there isn't as much demand for things that aren't fuel-efficient. Put it on the **backburner** for now.

Harper: Is this the plan **for the long haul**?

Logan: Pretty much as long as fuel prices remain at current levels and we're **in the red**. We're **feeling the pinch** with our expansion into Canada and we just don't have **money to burn** like we did a few years ago.

Harper: Okay, I got it. I'll let my team know.

Vocabulary

Scale back: Reduce something.

Skyrocketing: Increasing rapidly

Backburner: Leave something for now and deal with it later.

For the long haul: For the long term.

Pretty much: Almost 100% certain.

In the red: Losing money.

Feeling the pinch: Experiencing financial difficulties.

Money to burn: Extra money to spend freely.

Practice

1. Look at that new car he bought. He must have _____.
2. My company is in it _____.
3. I'm worried about this project that's now running _____.
4. We're _____ with Covid-19.
5. I _____ only want to know where I stand with this company.
6. Let's put this on the _____ until the economy recovers.
7. Fuel prices are _____ these days with the shortages.
8. Let's _____ production until the new model comes out.

Answers

1. money to burn
2. for the long haul

3. in the red

4. feeling the pinch

5. pretty much

6. backburner

7. skyrocketing

8. scale back

Lesson 7: Work Something Out

Kari: Hi, I'd like to **trade in** this car if possible and upgrade to a better one.

Jen: I'm sure we could **work something out**. Can I **point out** some of the options for new cars?

Kari: Hang on. You can maybe **talk me into** a new car but I have to **stick to** my budget pretty strictly so it would have to be a cheaper one.

Jen: Sure, let's have a **look around**. Why don't you **think about** a Kia? I could **go down** a bit on price if your old car is in reasonable shape.

Vocabulary

Trade in: Exchange something old, usually for a newer thing.

Work something out: Make a deal.

Point out: Highlight or feature.

Hang on: Wait.

Talk me into: Convince.

Stick to: Not cheat (a diet), not exceed (a budget), etc.

Look around: Check out the items or a location.

Think about: Consider.

Go down: Reduce.

Practice

1. Can you come back in a few minutes? I'd like to have a _____ first.
2. I'd like to _____ all the features.
3. Are you able to _____ on price at all? It's just above my budget.
4. It's so hard to _____ my diet around Christmas.
5. Can you please give me some time to _____ that? I'm not sure where I'll be next year.
6. I think you could _____ getting that game console for the kids.
7. I'm sure we could _____ to compensate you for all this extra time that you're working.
8. _____ a second. I'd like to take a closer look at the contract before I sign in.
9. I'd like to _____ this phone for a newer one, please.

Answers

1. look around

2. point out

3. go down

4. stick to

5. think about

6. talk me into

7. work something out

8. hang on

9. trade in

Lesson 8: Idioms

A lot on my plate

Meaning: Many responsibilities.

Origin: First used in the 1900s. Refers to a plate that's heaping full of food and difficult to balance when carrying it to a table. Now, imagine those are your responsibilities!

I have *a lot on my plate* with work and school.

She has *a lot on her plate* at work these days. She's managing three projects.

An apple a day keeps the doctor away

Meaning: Eating healthy keeps you from getting sick.

Origin: First seen in the late 1800s to early 1900s in Wales. In old English, an apple could refer to any round fruit so it may be related to the fact that healthy eating is vital for good health.

My mother used to say, "*An apple a day keeps the doctor away.*"

Don't forget that *an apple a day keeps the doctor away*! Stop eating so much junk food!

A piece of cake

Meaning: Something that's easy to do.

Origin: From the 1870s. Cakes were often given as prizes during competitions and at fairs so that's why they're associated with something being easy to do.

That project? Don't even worry about it. It's *a piece of cake.*

That homework is *a piece of cake*. It'll only take you 10 minutes.

As far as I can tell

Meaning: To the best of my understanding.

Origin: Unknown.

As far as I can tell, it's just going to be the three of us for dinner tonight.

As far as I can tell, Tim is probably going to get fired.

As fit as a fiddle

Meaning: In great shape.

Origin: From England in the 1600s. Initially used to mean well-suited but “fit” later came to be known as in good shape. A fiddle is used because of the alliteration (fit/fiddle) and also because it's a nicely shaped instrument.

Jerry is *as fit as a fiddle* considering that he's 84.

I was *as fit as a fiddle* in my thirties. Then, I got old and lazy!

A storm is brewing

Meaning: Difficulty or danger is expected in the future.

Origin: Unknown but could be related to sailors reading the signs in the ocean and sky to predict a coming storm.

I think *a storm is brewing* at work between Marnie and Carrie. Things are getting tenser by the day.

I'm worried that *a storm is brewing* between my parents. They keep complaining about each other.

Practice: Write an appropriate response using an idiom.

1. My doctor told me to stop eating so much junk food.

2. Can you believe that he's 90? He looks like he's 70.

3. Have you done the driver's test yet?

4. It looks like Tim and Tony aren't getting along well these days.

Answers (many are possible).

1. You know what they say, an apple a day keeps the doctor away.

2. He's as fit as a fiddle.

3. Yeah, it was a piece of cake.

4. It seems like a storm is brewing.

Lesson 9: The Best of Both Worlds

Jerry: My friend Tommy **eats like a horse** but still doesn't gain any weight, **despite getting on in years**.

Linda: Lucky guy. I **eat like a bird** but still have to **watch my weight**. I do try to **spice things up** though with different kinds of salads and things like that.

Jerry: Tough break! I generally eat whatever I want but my wife can tell when I start to eat too much **junk food**!

Linda: Ideally, I'd have **the best of both worlds**. I could eat junk food but also not gain weight. It's not my **fate** though!

Vocabulary

The best of both worlds: Getting the benefits of two things at the same time. For example, having children but being able to afford a full-time nanny.

Spice things up: To make things more interesting or exciting.

Eat like a bird: To eat very little.

Eats like a horse: To eat a lot.

Getting on in years: Becoming older.

Tough break: When something unlucky or bad happens.

Junk food: Unhealthy food. For example, potato chips, fast food or candy.

Watch my weight: Gaining weight easily and having to be careful about what you eat.

Fate: Something that happens over which you have no control.

Practice

1. She _____ but she's still so skinny.
2. I love to eat _____, especially while I'm watching TV.
3. I appreciate the fact that my teacher is trying to _____ a little bit but it comes across badly.
4. My doctor said that I have to _____.
5. Having grandchildren but not having to watch them all the time is _____.
6. I'm worried about my mom. She _____ these days.
7. The ball deflected in off the defence. What a _____.
8. My dad is _____ and may have to go to a care home.
9. My son thinks it's his _____ to take over the family business. But I do think he has a choice in this.

Answers

1. eats like a horse

2. junk food

3. spice things up

4. watch my weight

5. the best of both worlds

6. eats like a bird

7. tough break

8. getting on in years

9. fate

Lesson 10: How to Greet Someone

Good morning (afternoon/evening).

Good morning/afternoon/evening.

Hi, how are you?

Good. How about you?

Not bad. How are you doing?

Busy these days.

How are you doing?

Not bad. How about you?

What's up? (Very informal)

Oh, not much.

What have you been up to?

Nothing much. What about you?

Long time no see.

It has been a while!

Yeah, what have you been up to?

How's your day going?

Oh, pretty good. How about you?

Good to see you!

You too.

It's been a while, hasn't it?

Dialogue #1:

Tom: Good morning Jenny. What you have been up to lately? We haven't talked in a while.

Jenny: Oh nothing much. Same old, same old. How about you?

Tom: Same here. Just really busy at work these days.

Jenny: Isn't everybody?

Dialogue #2:

Tim: Carrie! Long time, no see.

Carrie: Wow, it has been a while, right? Maybe a year?

Tim: Yeah, I think it was around Christmas last year that I ran into you at the mall.

Carrie: That's right. I remember that.

Tim: Anyway, nice to see you again!

Carrie: For sure. Let's catch up over coffee soon.

Lesson 11: Review

1. Since Covid-19 started, my company has been _____.

A. scale back

B. a dime a dozen

C. in the red

D. food for thought

2. Well, if you have _____, you could buy me lunch.

A. no kidding

B. money to burn

C. a bee in your bonnet

D. a lot on your plate

3. For you to do that? It should be _____.

A. cut it out

B. long time, no see

C. see eye to eye

D. a piece of cake

4. What are you up to this weekend?

A. paying off the mortgage

B. house hunting

C talk me into

D. work something out

Match the statement with the response-A

1. How are you? A. You're not taking it seriously.

2. Lighten up. B. Not bad. What about you?

3. I just lost my job C. No, I'm full.

4. Are you sure you don't want more? D. Oh tough break my friend.

B

1. Does that sound like a plan? A. Nah, I prefer junk food!

2. Don't you want some vegetables? B. It's certainly some food for thought.

3. You shouldn't have gone to the trouble. C. Do you have to play the Devil's advocate?

4. What about doing A instead of B? D. I didn't mind at all.

C

1. Ted stole $1000 from work. A. Let me think about it, okay?

2. Wow! Tom looks so different. B. How did he get away with it?

3. She just got a raise at work. C. He's as fit as a fiddle.

4. Let's consider hiring someone else. D. She must make the big bucks now.

Answers

1. C

2. B

3. D

4. B

Match the statement with the response-A: 1-B, 2-A, 3-D, 4-C

B: 1-B, 2-A, 3-D, 4-C

C: 1-B, 2-C, 3-D, 4-A

Lesson 12: Idioms

A tough pill to swallow (A bitter pill to swallow)

Meaning: Something difficult to get over or accept.

Origin: First seen in the 1600s. Probably related to medicine pills that can be big or bitter when you have to swallow them.

Getting fired was *a tough pill to swallow*.

A D+ on that paper? That's *a tough pill to swallow*. I worked so hard on it.

At death's door

Meaning: Close to dying.

Origin: Death and an entryway (door) became associated with each other in England in the 1300s. At death, some people think that you go through a door of some kind to the next life.

My friend is *at death's door*. I'm not sure she's going to make it.

My grandpa was *at death's door* for months but he surprisingly recovered.

At the eleventh hour

Meaning: At the last minute.

Origin: Possibly from Mathew 20:9 in the Bible. In this story, each worker received a denarius (unit of currency) for a day of work, even those who started at hour 11 in a 12-hour day.

That bank got bailed out by the government *at the eleventh hour*.

That meeting got called *at the eleventh hour*, right before I was getting ready to leave.

Back to square one

Meaning: Starting at the beginning again.

Origin: It came from the days when people listened to soccer on the radio. Square one refers to the goal area. The commentator would often say back to square one because of all the passes back to the goaltender and free kicks when the ball goes out of bounds. It was often said with frustration because it's boring to just pass the ball back to the goaltender instead of going on the offensive.

Well, we're *back to square one* on that project. Tim rejected our first attempt.

I'm *back to square one* on my thesis proposal. My advisor recommended against what I had in mind.

Back to the drawing board

Meaning: To start over.

Origin: From cartoonist Peter Arno in *The New Yorker* in 1941. The cartoon has a burning airplane with the military pilot coming down by parachute. The civilian engineer has design plans under his arms and the caption says, “Well, back to the drawing board.”

It's *back to the drawing board*—the client didn't like the first schematics.

The government regulators rejected our modifications so it's *back to the drawing board*.

Rule of thumb

Meaning: General rule about something.

Origin: Various theories:

- Builders who don't measure well and just use an approximate measure (thumb).
- A thumb is generally equivalent to an inch when measuring cloth.
- The thumb is used when brewing beer to gauge temperature.
- An alleged British law that allowed men to beat their wives with sticks no wider than a thumb.

A good *rule of thumb* is to think about big purchases for at least a week before buying them.

My *rule of thumb* for keeping my house clean is to always tidy up before I go to bed.

Practice: Write an appropriate response using an idiom.

1. I can't believe I was doing that assignment incorrectly.
2. It's crazy that I got the blame for that project going wrong when I had only a very small part in it.
3. My assignment is due tomorrow at 8 am and I haven't even started yet.
4. Have you seen Bob? He looks terrible.
5. I try to get eight hours of sleep each night.

Answers (many are possible).

1. Well, back to the drawing board.
2. That's certainly a tough pill to swallow.

3. You left it until the eleventh hour.

4. Yeah, he looks like he's at death's door. Too many late-night drinking sessions!

5. That's a good rule of thumb I think.

Lesson 13: Talking about Co-workers

Jerry: Why are all of our co-workers **living hand to mouth**? We get paid a **living wage.** I **can't make heads or tails of it**.

Linda: Well, I think most of them **hit the bottle** pretty hard after work every day. That **costs a pretty penny**. But, your **guess is as good as mine**.

Jerry: Come to think of it, I've noticed that too. I used to **drink a lot** but now it's only **once in a blue moon**. I **quit cold turkey** for a couple of years before I could **get a handle on it.**

Linda: Good for you for making a big change like that! Plus, it's saved you a lot of money I'm sure. Don't **blow it all** on stuff that isn't long-lasting, right?

Vocabulary

Once in a blue moon: Something that doesn't happen often.

Quit cold turkey: Suddenly stop doing something addictive. Most commonly refers to smoking.

Living hand to mouth: To live paycheck to paycheck. Not having lots of money, especially disposable income.

Living wage: Salary that is high enough to cover all the monthly bills relatively easily.

Your guess is as good as mine: To not know something.

Hit the bottle: Drink alcohol.

Get a handle on it: To control something.

Costs a pretty penny: Is expensive.

Can't make heads or tails of it: Unable to understand something.

Drink a lot: Consume lots of alcohol.

Come to think of it: On reflection after hearing someone say something about it.

Blow it all: To waste everything, usually money.

Practice

1. My dad _____ hard when I was a kid.
2. That new car I want _____.
3. I'm going back to school so can find a job that pays a _____.
4. I only eat junk food _____.
5. I want to quit smoking but it's difficult to _____.
6. I've heard that the best way to stop smoking is to _____.
7. It's often hard for single parents to avoid _____.
8. Math just isn't my subject! I _____.
9. Wow! They sure do _____.
10. _____, that was a strange decision Tim made.
11. I'm worried about my Dad and his big pension payout. I think he might _____ on junk.

Answers

1. hit the bottle
2. costs a pretty penny
3. living wage
4. once in a blue moon
5. get a handle on it
6. quit cold turkey
7. living hand to mouth
8. can't make heads or tails of it
9. drink a lot
10. come to think of it
11. blow it all

Lesson 14: Ask Out

Cayla: So, I'm thinking about **asking out** Jenny. Do you remember her? She was at my Christmas party last year.

Kenny: Oh yeah. Well, **call her up** and **go for it**! **Go after** what you want.

Cayla: Do you think I'll **come across** as too forward? Or that she'll **blow me off**?

Kenny: I don't think so. She already knows you! Don't **chicken out**. And **check in** with me after you do it. I want to know how it **turned out**.

Vocabulary

Asking out: Inviting someone to go on a date.

Call her up: Phone her.

Go for it: Encouraging someone to do something.

Go after: Pursue someone or something.

Come across: Give an impression.

Blow me off: Not pay attention to; disregard.

Chicken out: Not do something due to nervousness.

Check in: See how someone is doing.

Turned out: Finding out the final result of something.

Practice

1. That _____ terribly. I'm so disappointed.
2. Why don't you _____? It's better than obsessing about it.
3. I think he's going to _____ again. I'm so tired of dealing with him.
4. Please _____ with your Mom. I think she's having a difficult time lately.
5. I don't want to _____ badly but I think I need to resign from this position.
6. You should _____. You'd do a great job as a coach!
7. If you want a good job, you have to _____ it. It won't just fall into your lap.
8. I'm nervous about _____ Jill. Do you think she'll say yes?
9. It's okay if you _____. I know it's a big thing to do.

Answers

1. turned out
2. call her up
3. blow me off
4. check in

5. come across
6. go for it
7. go after
8. asking out
9. chicken out

Lesson 15: Weather Forecast

Ted: What's the **weather forecast** looking like this weekend? We should get out for a hike.

Lindsay: Let me check. Clear skies on Saturday but **scattered showers** on Sunday. **Hot and humid** both days.

Ted: If we're going to go to Mount Hood, we need to be **prepared for anything**. It can go from calm to **gale-force winds on a dime**.

Lindsay: That happened last time I was there. Just **light rain** at first and then the **storm clouds** rolled in and there were **wind gusts** of more than 100 km/h. It was wild.

Vocabulary

Weather forecast: Prediction of future weather.

Let me check: Give me a minute to find the answer to something.

Clear skies: Not cloudy.

Scattered showers: Rain that is on and off.

Hot and humid: Muggy.

Prepared for anything: Ready to face any situation.

Gale-force winds: Very strong wind.

On a dime: Suddenly.

Light rain: Not raining heavily.

Storm clouds: Clouds that may produce rain, snow, hail, thunder, etc.

Wind gusts: Bursts of wind after periods of relative calm.

Practice

1. There will be _____ of more than 150 km/hour today.
2. _____ at night usually means good weather the next day.
3. His personality changes _____.
4. It's so _____. I just want to sit next to a pool.
5. You have to be _____ with this job.
6. I'm not sure if we have that in stock. _____.
7. There are some serious _____ over there. I think we should turn around.
8. The forecast showed some _____. Don't forget your umbrella.
9. What's the _____ for Japan this week? I need to know how to pack for my trip.
10. I know it doesn't seem like it, but _____ are not ideal when sailing.

Answers

1. wind gusts

2. clear skies
3. on a dime
4. hot and humid
5. prepared for anything
6. let me check
7. storm clouds
8. scattered showers/light rain
9. weather forecast
10. gale-force winds

Lesson 16: Talking about a Customer

Emma: Hey, so I was just talking to Noah and it looks like they won't renew the contract. It's a bit **up in the air** but I think they want to **sever ties** with us.

Oliver: To me, **the writing is on the wall**. They haven't been happy for months now.

Emma: Not to **throw someone under the bus** but the **elephant in the room** is Mia's performance as their account manager. It's just not good enough.

Oliver: I think you've **hit the nail on the head**. She's already **in the dog house** with that other account she manages.

Emma: She's **all talk**. It's time she **puts her money where her mouth is**.

Oliver: I'd love to go behind her back and **blow the whistle** on this but I don't want to draw attention to myself.

Vocabulary:

Up in the air: Not decided yet.

Sever ties: To stop a relationship.

The writing is on the wall: It's obvious to everyone.

Throw someone under the bus: To blame someone for something.

The elephant in the room: The obvious thing that nobody is talking about.

Hit the nail on the head: See the problem clearly.

In the dog house: In trouble.

All talk: Good at talking but their actions don't reflect this.

Puts her money where her mouth is: Her actions need to reflect her words.

Blow the whistle: To disclose true information that might be harmful to someone.

Practice

1. Honestly, I just think he should _____ on his company. They're doing some terrible things.
2. I'm _____ with my kids if I get home too late from work.
3. I think we need to _____ with that contractor.
4. Why is nobody talking about _____?
5. It's time for her to _____ and do some work.
6. He's _____ but no action.
7. I hate that we have to _____ for this.
8. You've made a good point and _____ exactly.
9. Don't you think that _____? I'm going to get fired.
10. I don't think she's made the decision yet. It's still _____.

Answers

1. blow the whistle

2. in the dog house
3. sever ties
4. the elephant in the room
5. put her money where her mouth is
6. all talk
7. throw someone under the bus
8. hit the nail on the head
9. the writing is on the wall
10. up in the air

Lesson 17: How to Say Goodbye and Finish a Conversation

I gotta run. (Very informal)

Okay, talk to you later.

Let's chat later, okay?

Sure, sounds good.

Yeah, let's catch up again next week.

I need to get back to work.

I do too!

Okay

Can we talk more about this tomorrow?

Sure, no problem.

Of course.

I'll give you a call then.

See you later.

Okay.

Sure.

It was nice seeing you.

I'm off now.

Okay, catch you later.

It was fun hanging out.

I gotta get going.

Sure, I'll see you later.

Dialogue #1:

Tom: Hey Jenny, I'm afraid that I gotta run. Can we talk more about this tomorrow?

Jenny: Sure, sounds good. I need to get back to work too.

Tom: Okay, chat later my friend.

Jenny: Sure.

Dialogue #2:

Tim: So, I think I need to get back to work.

Carrie: Oh, me too! That newsletter isn't going to write itself.

Tim: I know, right? Same with my report.

Carrie: We don't get paid the big bucks for nothing!

Lesson 18: Talking about a New Co-worker

Jerry: Have you met our new co-worker yet?

Linda: I talked to him yesterday but he's **a hard nut to crack**. He only gave one-word answers to all my questions! He seems to keep everyone **at arm's length**.

Jerry: Well, **you can't judge a book by its cover**. I'm sure we'll find out more about him as time goes on. Maybe he's not that **talkative.**

Linda: Maybe. But I felt frustrated talking to him for just a few minutes. Anyway, I'm working on not **burning bridges** so I'll **put my best foot forward**!

Jerry: Good plan. You never know **what may come**. **It's a long shot**, but let's invite him out for lunch and see if he **opens up**.

Linda: My gut tells me that we just **got off on the wrong foot**. Let's see!

Vocabulary

You can't judge a book by its cover: To not judge something or someone based on appearance. For example, a restaurant that's not stylish may have delicious food.

A hard nut to crack: Someone that is difficult to get to know.

At arm's length: Avoids being close with people.

Burning bridges: Damaging relationships.

Put my best foot forward: To be on one's best behaviour.

What may come: What could happen in the future.

Talkative: Describes someone who likes to talk a lot.

It's a long shot: Something that's not likely to happen.

Opens up: Shares information about oneself.

My gut tells me: Instinct or intuition about someone or something.

Got off on the wrong foot: A bad first meeting or start to something.

Practice

1. _____ to not hire that guy. I'm not sure why but it just seems like a bad decision.
2. I know _____ but I hope to win that contract.
3. I try to avoid _____ when I leave a job. Who knows what the future holds.
4. That client is _____.
5. My new co-worker is so _____ that I have a difficult time getting any work done!
6. My boss and I _____ but we're doing okay now.
7. I hope that my client _____ to me more about what his company is going through right now. I think I can offer him some assistance.
8. I'm not sure _____ but I want to be prepared for all the possibilities.
9. I always try to _____ when starting a new job.
10. I feel like my boss is keeping me _____. I'm not sure why.
11. Over the years I've learned that _____.

Answers

1. my gut tells me
2. it's a long shot
3. burning bridges
4. a hard nut to crack
5. talkative
6. got off on the wrong foot
7. opens up
8. what may come
9. put my best foot forward
10. at arm's length
11. you can't judge a book by its cover

Lesson 19: Idioms

Bang for the buck

Meaning: Something that offers good value for the money you paid for it.

Origin: Bang = excitement and buck = money. Could be a play on Pepsi's advertising campaign from the 1950s, “More bounce to the ounce.”

We need to get more *bang for our buck*. Mason just isn't worth what we're paying him.

That video game console isn't cheap but you get a lot of *bang for the buck* with all the games that come with it.

Barking up the wrong tree

Meaning: Blaming the wrong person.

Origin: From the 1800s in the USA where hunting dogs would bark at the base of a tree when they thought a wild animal like a raccoon was in it so that their owners could shoot it. But, the wild animal had sometimes had already escaped which left the dogs barking at the wrong tree.

You're *barking up the wrong tree* here. Jeremiah broke your phone, not me.

My mom is always *barking up the wrong tree* and blaming me for stuff that my brother does.

Beat around the bush

Meaning: Avoid talking about something important, or not getting to the main point directly.

Origin: From the early 1400s. Rich men used to hire people to beat the bushes when they went hunting to scare the birds out of them so that they could shoot them.

Let's not *beat around the bush*—the blame lies with Logan for this problem.

I hate that my boss always *beats around the bush* which makes meetings take way longer than they need to.

Beat me to the punch

Meaning: Say or do something before someone else.

Origin: From the early 1900s regarding boxing. Sometimes, it's possible to win with just one punch by knocking someone out before they even hit you.

You *beat me to the punch*—that's exactly what I was going to say.

Oh wow. It looks like *Apple beat Samsung to the punch* with that new eye recognition feature.

Behind the scenes

Meaning: What happens out of sight from the public.

Origin: Refers to backstage at a performance of some kind. It's what the audience can't see.

Our clients think it's all calm and serene but *behind the scenes,* it's chaos.

Things aren't always as they appear *behind the scenes* at the restaurant where I work.

Practice: Write an appropriate response using an idiom.

1. I can't believe *Apple* came out with that new phone feature before us.
2. Hey! Clean up your dishes before you go to school.
3. Wow. There's so much pasta.
4. Everything always seems so peaceful and calm here. Not like our office.
5. Okay, so there's something I'd like to talk to you about. But, first, how are you?

Answers (many are possible).

1. Yeah, they beat us to the punch.
2. You're barking up the wrong tree. Those are Tim's dishes.
3. It's a lot of bang for the buck. That's for sure.
4. Oh, you never know what happens behind the scenes.
5. Let's not beat around the bush. Just tell me what it is.

Lesson 20: Beef Up

Tim: I think we need to **beef up** our cybersecurity. We're starting to **fall behind** and I'm nervous we might **end up** getting hacked.

Nathan: I agree. It's time to **break out** all the tools I think. I'd rather do some prevention now if it means we don't have to **fight back** against some unknown enemy later.

Tim: I agree. Let's **get it over with**. We have to do it at some point and better late than never.

Nathan: For sure. But, we can't get **carried away** with it. We still have to **stay within** the budget. Let's **hit up** Tony and see what he thinks about this. He's the head of security here.

Vocabulary

Beef up: Increase.

Fall behind: Not keep up to others.

End up: To be in a place that was not planned for in the end.

Break out: Deploy or start to use something.

Fight back: Counterattack in a fight or battle.

Get it over with: Do something that you don't want to do.

Carried away: Do something to an excessive degree.

Stay within: Not go over budget or time; not exceed some limit.

Hit up: Ask someone for something, usually a favour.

Practice

1. We need to _____ the scheduled time for this meeting. I have a dentist appointment after it.
2. I don't want to _____ being stuck next to him at lunch.
3. We're starting to _____ on this project. Let's stay late tonight and tomorrow and try to get back on track.
4. Let's _____ against Tim about this decision. It's the wrong one for our company.
5. My kids always get _____ with games and never clean up!
6. Let's _____ your parents and see if they'll take us out for dinner tonight.
7. Let's _____ that wine you made. I think it's ready.
8. Cleaning the garage this weekend? I don't want to but let's _____.
9. Let's _____ our home security system. There have been a lot of break-ins recently.

Answers

1. stay within

2. end up

3. fall behind

4. fight back

5. carried away

6. hit up

7. break out

8. get it over with

9. beef up

Lesson 21: Speak of the Devil

Jerry: Have you seen Kenny lately? He **looks like a million bucks,** always wearing **flashy** clothes and driving his fancy new car.

Linda: I haven't seen him lately but guys like that are **a dime a dozen in this town.** They all made their money in finance, I think.

Jerry: Speak of the devil! I think I see him coming in the door right now! Let's call him over.

Linda: I don't want to **beat around the bush** so I'll just say it. I don't like Kenny! He **ripped me off** on his old TV that he sold me. It was hanging on by its **last legs**.

Jerry: Let's **get out of here** then before he sees us.

Vocabulary

Speak of the devil: The person you are talking about appears at that exact moment. For example, you are talking about a coworker and then they walk into the room right then.

Looks like a million bucks: To look attractive or well put together.

A dime a dozen: Something that is very common, not special.

Beat around the bush: Avoid talking about something important, or not getting to the main point directly.

Ripped me off: To make a bad deal with someone. To be stolen from.

Get out of here: To leave a place, usually quickly.

Flashy: Bright, shiny, expensive.

Last legs: Something that is close to breaking/stopping/not working.

Practice

1. Tim _____ these days with his new haircut.
2. Job offers like that are _____.
3. I want to _____ so badly! I hate this school.
4. “Oh, _____! We were just talking about you!”
5. Honestly, I hate that my boss loves to _____. I wish he'd just get to the point.
6. I'm so embarrassed that he_____.
7. My brother got a _____ new haircut in preparation for his job interview.
8. I'm going to have to buy a new car. This one is on its _____.

Answers

1. looks like a million bucks
2. a dime a dozen
3. get out of here

4. speak of the devil

5. beat around the bush

6. ripped me off

7. flashy

8. last legs

Lesson 22: Review

1. I think we should cancel that subscription. It's just not enough _____.

A. in the dog house

B. ripped off

C. bang for the buck

D. back to square one

2. A good _____ is to always turn off the lights, make sure the doors are locked and turn down the heat before going to sleep at night.

A. living wage

B. rule of thumb

C. eats like a horse

D. long shot

3. Let's not _____ here. We need to fire Ted.

A. on a dime

B. hit up

C. beat around the bush

D. ask out

4. To _____, he lost his job as well.

A. add insult to injury

B. ahead of the pack

C. blow it all

D. break out

5. I hate to _____, but he sends me way too many texts.

A. let me check

B. blow him off

C. wind gusts

D. a hard nut to crack

Match the phrase with the definition.

1. At death's door A. Not often

2. Once in a blue moon B. Something difficult to do or get over

3. The writing is on the wall C. Very sick

4. A tough pill to swallow D. Too expensive

5. Costs a pretty penny E. It's obvious to everyone

Match the statement with the response.

1. So what time are we leaving? A. Yeah, he looks like a million bucks.

2. Do you think he'll do it? B. It was no problem

3. Did Ted get a haircut? C. It's up in the air

4. That's very kind of you. D. No, he usually chickens out

Answers

1. C
2. B
3. C
4. A
5. B

Match the phrase with the definition: 1-C, 2-A, 3-E, 4-B, 5-D

Match the statement with the response: 1-C, 2-D, 3-A, 4-B

Lesson 23: Talking about Someone Who Got Fired

Jerry: Did you hear that Beth **got canned** last month?

Linda: Oh wow! **No kidding**.

Jerry: It turned out to be a **blessing in disguise** though. She got a higher-paying job **in no time.**

Linda: Oh, that's great. She wasn't **living within her means**, **splashing out** all the time. Maybe this will solve her **financial woes**. Give me a **ballpark figure**. How much?

Jerry: Time will tell about solving her financial woes. I'll have to **see it to believe it.** I think she's making around $100,000 now.

Linda: Well, at least she gets to start with a **clean slate**. It's a good opportunity for her.

Vocabulary

Blessing in Disguise: Something that initially seems bad which turns out good in the end. For example, someone lost their job but ended up getting a better job three months later.

Living within her means: To not spend more than she makes.

Got canned: Fired from a job.

No kidding: A response to something surprising.

In no time: Quickly.

Splashing out: Spending extravagantly.

Financial woes: Money trouble.

Time will tell: Wait and see.

See it to believe it: When you don't think something is likely.

Clean slate: New beginning.

Ballpark figure: Rough estimate.

Practice

1. Be patient. _____ if that was a good decision or not.
2. Do you honestly think that he's changed? I'll have to _____.
3. Wow, _____. I can't believe I won the contest!
4. My brother _____ because he was always late for work.
5. Are you sure you want to buy me dinner? You're _____.
6. Maybe getting fired was a _____. I hated that job.
7. I'm trying to teach my wife about _____ but it's an uphill battle.
8. Just let me know a _____ for how much this going to cost.
9. I'm embarrassed to admit it, but all of our _____ were caused by me.
10. I had the project done _____ but my boss still wasn't satisfied.
11. I love changing jobs! It's like starting with a _____.

Answers

1. Time will tell
2. see it to believe it

3. no kidding
4. got canned
5. splashing out
6. blessing in disguise
7. living within her means
8. ballpark figure
9. financial woes
10. in no time
11. clean slate

Lesson 24: Idioms

Bend over backwards

Meaning: Work extra hard; go out of your way to do something special for someone.

Origin: From the 900s. Refers to a gymnast bending his back which is not that easy to do unless you're very flexible.

I *bent over backwards* for that company but still got fired.
I'm so tired of *bending over backwards* but never getting a raise.

Better late than never

Meaning: Encouragement after getting a late start to something.

Origin: First seen in 1396 in the *Canterbury Tales*.

It's too little too late but *better late than never*, right?

Better late than never for our holiday bonuses. I thought they forgot about them this year.

Bite the bullet

Meaning: Resolve to do something difficult.

Origin: Unknown. But, one theory is that patients had to bite a bullet when undergoing surgery before anesthesia was developed to endure the pain. However, a leather strap was most often used for this purpose and not a bullet.

Let's just *bite the bullet* and get this done before we go home.

You're going to have to *bite the bullet* and apologize to her.

Blessing in disguise

Meaning: Something that initially seems bad which turns out good in the end. For example, someone lost their job but ended up getting a better job three months later.

Origin: First seen in the 1700s but the origin is unknown.

I think getting fired turned out to a *blessing in disguise*.
I know it doesn't seem like it now but it may turn out to be a *blessing in disguise*.

Blow off some steam

Meaning: Doing something to get rid of stress. For example, venting loudly about something frustrating.

Origin: Comes from the early days of railroads. Trains had no safety valves then so engineers would have to release or blow off some steam to prevent an explosion.

Don't worry about him—he's just *blowing off some steam*. He'll be back to normal tomorrow.

Let's grab a beer after work and *blow off some steam*.

Practice: Write an appropriate response using an idiom.

1. My boss wants me to work late again this weekend.

2. Hey, do you want to grab a beer after work?

3. I can't believe they fired me.

Answers (many are possible).

1. Why do you keep bending over backwards for her? It's not even a great job.

2. Sure, I need to blow off some steam.

3. Maybe it'll turn out to be a blessing in disguise. Who knows.

Lesson 25: How to Say Sorry

Sorry to have kept you waiting.

Oh, it's fine. You're not that late.

It's okay. Don't worry about it.

Sorry I'm late.

Please don't let it happen again. (To a student or child.)

No problem.

It's not a big deal.

I'm sorry for missing your message.

It's okay. I'm happy that I got ahold of you.

Excuse me, please/Pardon me.

Sure, no problem.

Sorry for bumping into you.

No worries.

My apologies for _____ (many answers possible).

It's okay.

My bad. (Very informal)

No problem.

Dialogue #1:

Tom: Oh hey Jenny. Sorry to have kept you waiting.

Jenny: No worries, you're not that late. My daughter was an hour late for our meeting yesterday. She said she missed my message about the time change.

Tom: Oh wow! What did you do?

Jenny: I said that I hoped it wouldn't happen again.

Dialogue #2:

Tim: My bad. Sorry for not finishing my part of the assignment on time.

Carrie: You put us in a tough spot.

Tim: I'm sorry. How can I make it up to you?

Carrie: I think that if you finish your part by tomorrow morning, we can still turn it in on time.

Tim: Okay. I won't go to sleep until it's done.

Carrie: Okay.

Lesson 26: Small Talk

Jerry: I'm thinking about running a marathon. I have **butterflies in my stomach** though. It's going to be difficult!

Linda: What? It'll be **a piece of cake** for you. You're **as fit as a fiddle**.

Jerry: I know I'm always **cool as a cucumber** when I start the race but then I get so tired in the middle. I eventually get a **second wind** though.

Linda: Fingers crossed that you'll **knock 'em dead**. I'll come to cheer for you!

Jerry: What about you? Did the doctor give you **a clean bill of health**? You can train with me.

Linda: I'm not quite **back on my feet** yet. Plus, I have **a lot on my plate** right now. I've been **working day and night** on this latest project. I need **a change of pace** for sure!

Vocabulary

A piece of cake: Something that's easy to do.

Cool as a cucumber: Very calm or relaxed.

As fit as a fiddle: In really good shape.

Second wind: Having some energy again after being tired. Usually applies to exercise or staying up late.

Butterflies in my stomach: Nervous feeling about something.

Fingers crossed: To wish someone good luck. Or, a symbol of good luck.

Knock 'em dead: Do well or be successful at an event.

A clean bill of health: Healthy, not sick anymore.

Back on my feet: Recovered, after a problem (health, financial, divorce, etc.)

A lot on my plate: Many responsibilities.

Working day and night: Working all the time.

A change of pace: Something new or different.

Practice

1. Don't worry, I'm sure you'll _____.
2. Under pressure, Roger Federer is as _____.
3. I always get _____ before a test.
4. That speaking test was _____.
5. I've got my _____ waiting for the results of the SAT.
6. My grandpa is _____ even though he is 80.
7. My wife has been _____ to get the latest project done at work.
8. I hope I get my _____. I have lots more studying to do!
9. I'm hoping to get _____ after my recent job loss.
10. I'm moving to Costa Rica for _____.
11. I'm hoping that the doctors give me _____.
12. I'm going to have _____ this week at work.

Answers

1. knock 'em dead

2. cool as a cucumber
3. butterflies in my stomach
4. a piece of cake
5. fingers crossed
6. as fit as a fiddle
7. working day and night
8. second wind
9. back on my feet
10. a change of pace
11. a clean bill of health
12. a lot of my plate

Lesson 27: Noise Pollution

Kathleen: Kenny! You lived in Busan, South Korea? I've always wanted to go there. What's it like? I've heard that it's a beautiful **coastal city**.

Kenny: Well, there's a lot of **noise pollution** and **light pollution**. It's the second biggest city in Korea. And **traffic jams** too during **rush hour**.

Kathleen: It sounds terrible.

Kenny: Oh no, it's amazing! I love Nampo-Dong, which has lots of **street food** and **street vendors** plus **trendy cafes**. It's perfect for a date.

Kathleen: What else?

Kenny: Well, there's no real **downtown core** or **main square** but there are six beaches within **city limits**. Most people just **hang out** there, especially in the summertime.

Vocabulary

Coastal city: A city next to the ocean.

Noise pollution: Ambient noise in a city. For example, cars honking.

Light pollution: Light from signs and cars that you can see inside your house at night.

Traffic jams: Lots of cars on the road which makes progress slower than normal.

Rush hour: The busiest times to drive, usually in the morning and after work.

Street food: Food from an outside stall.

Street vendors: People selling things at an outside stall.

Trendy cafes: Coffee shops that are fashionable and hip.

Downtown core: The area in a city with lots of tall buildings; an important place of business.

Main square: The most important public courtyard in a city.

City limits: The entire city, including suburbs. Not just the downtown core.

Hang out: Spend time together.

Practice

1. Do you want to _____ tonight?
2. I love to buy Christmas presents from _____. There are lots of interesting things.
3. Vancouver is the best _____ in Canada.
4. Within the _____, you can find three beaches and countless parks.
5. Go after 9:30 am to avoid ____.
6. Where's the _____? I'd love to spend some time there and people watch.
7. The best _____ in Korea? Honestly, I can't choose. There are many delicious things.
8. The _____ in Edmonton is famous for being boring at night.
9. ____ makes it difficult for me to sleep at night even though I have blackout curtains.
10. My boyfriend loves to spend time at _____ on weekends. I think they're expensive!
11. During ____, it takes twice as long to get home.

12. The _____ is terrible here. I have to wear earplugs to sleep at night.

Answers

1. hang out
2. street vendors
3. coastal city
4. city limits
5. traffic jams
6. main square
7. street food
8. downtown core
9. light pollution
10. trendy cafes
11. rush hour
12. noise pollution

Lesson 28: Come Through

Ethan: Do you think Bob is going to **come through** for us?

Allen: I don't want to **rule him out** but he is known to **fall apart** under pressure. He's for sure going to **screw up**.

Ethan: Hey, don't **hold back** what you think! I **look forward to** seeing what he can do.

Allen: You can **dress it up** all you want but the fact is that he's terrible at his job.

Ethan: Slow down. Don't **get ahead of yourself.** Let's be open-minded and see what he can do.

Vocabulary

Come through: Succeed at doing something.

Screw up: Not do something successfully.

Rule him out: To eliminate, cancel, or discount someone.

Fall apart: Break down.

Hold back: To not say or do something that you want to do.

Look forward to: Await something eagerly.

Dress it up: Present or show something to be better than it is.

Slow down: Don't move so quickly.

Get ahead of yourself: Look too far ahead; not focus on the initial things.

Practice

1. Don't ____. First things first.
2. Did he _____ again? That guy just can't get things right.
3. He's going to _____ for us. He always does.
4. Let's ____. I can't keep up this pace for the whole hike.
5. Let's _____ for a minute. I want to let them make the first move.
6. That company always seems to _____ when it counts. I'm not sure how much longer they'll be around.
7. You can _____ all you want but it's not going to change the fact that he's a terrible boss.
8. I _____ the day when my kids go back to school! I need some peace and quiet.
9. Please don't _____. He'll make an excellent employee.

Answers

1. get ahead of yourself
2. screw up

3. come through
4. slow down
5. hold back
6. fall apart
7. dress it up
8. look forward to
9. rule him out

Lesson 29: Once in a Blue Moon

Jerry: Why are all of our coworkers **living hand to mouth**? We get paid a **living wage.** I **can't make heads or tails of it**.

Linda: Well, I think most of them **hit the bottle** pretty hard after work every day. That **costs a pretty penny**. But, your **guess is as good as mine**.

Jerry: I've noticed that too. I used to **drink a lot** but now it's only **once in a blue moon**. I had to **quit cold turkey** for a couple of years before I could **get a handle on it.**

Linda: Good for you for making a big change like that! Plus, it's saved you a lot of money I'm sure.

Vocabulary

Once in a blue moon: Something that doesn't happen often.

Quit cold turkey: Suddenly stop doing something addictive. Most commonly refers to smoking.

Living hand to mouth: To live paycheck to paycheck. Not having lots of money, especially disposable income.

Living wage: Salary that is high enough to cover all the monthly bills relatively easily.

Your guess is as good as mine: To not know something.

Hit the bottle: Drink alcohol.

Get a handle on it: To control something.

Costs a pretty penny: Is expensive.

Can't make heads or tails of it: Unable to understand something.

Drink a lot: Consume lots of alcohol.

Practice

1. My dad _____ hard when I was a kid.
2. That new car I want _____.
3. I'm going back to school so can find a job that pays a _____.
4. I only eat junk food _____.
5. I want to quit smoking but it's difficult to _____.
6. I've heard that the best way to stop smoking is to _____.
7. It's often hard for single parents to avoid _____.
8. Math just isn't my subject! I _____.
9. Wow! They sure do _____.

Answers

1. hit the bottle
2. costs a pretty penny
3. living wage

4. once in a blue moon

5. get a handle on it

6. quit cold turkey

7. living hand to mouth

8. can't make heads or tails of it

9. drink a lot

Lesson 30: Idioms

Blow the whistle

Meaning: To disclose true information about a company or person that might be harmful to them. The term whistleblower is used for the person who does this.

Origin: People used to blow whistles to get the attention of police.

I know you don't want to but I think you should *blow the whistle* on your boss. He's so sketchy.

It's time for someone to *blow the whistle* on that police officer. He's so aggressive.

Born with a silver spoon in his mouth

Meaning: Someone who comes from a wealthy family who doesn't have to work that hard in life.

Origin: Likely began in the Middle Ages when people would bring their own spoons to the table when they ate. A silver spoon as opposed to a wood one was an indicator of wealth.

That guy? He was *born with a silver spoon in his mouth*.

I wish I was *born with a silver spoon in my mouth*. I've had to work so hard to have so little.

Break a leg

Meaning: To wish someone good luck, usually before performing or going on stage.

Origin: Somewhat unknown but could be related to the 1865 assassination of American president Abraham Lincoln. The assassin, John Wilkes Booth, jumped onto a stage after the murder and broke his leg when doing so.

Hey, *break a leg*, all right?

Have fun and *break a leg* tonight.

Break the bank

Meaning: Something that costs a lot or more than you can afford.

Origin: From the 1600s. Referred to gamblers winning more than the house (referred to as a bank) could afford.

I'd love to get a new car but I think it'd *break the bank*.

I don't want to *break the bank* when buying a house. Let's get something affordable.

Break out in a cold sweat

Meaning: To be afraid or nervous about something.

Origin: Unknown but first seen around the 1500s. When some people get nervous, they sweat but also feel cold.

I *broke out in a cold sweat* even thinking about that possibility.

I always *break out in a cold* sweat before tests. Once they start, I'm fine.

Practice: Write an appropriate response using an idiom.

1. I'm so nervous about the play tonight.

2. Do you think we can get a new car?

3. He's going to Europe again? How can he afford it?

Answers (many are possible).

1. You'll do great. Break a leg.

2. Probably not. It'd likely break the bank.

3. That guy? He was born with a silver spoon in his mouth.

Lesson 31: Small Talk

Jerry: To **add insult to injury**, my dad got Covid-19 when he was in the hospital with a heart attack.

Linda: Oh no. Is he okay?

Jerry: Well, he's not **out of the woods** yet. He's still **sick as a dog** but he's not **at death's door**. He does need **round-the-clock** care though.

Linda: Send him my **best wishes**, okay? And **keep me updated** on how he's doing.

Jerry: Don't waste your breath. He still acts like he got up on the **wrong side of the bed** all the time. We've **never seen eye to eye**.

Linda: Well, you certainly don't **take after** him. Don't worry!

Vocabulary

Add insult to Injury: Make something already bad worse. For example, a guy fell off his bike but then a car ran over his foot.

Out of the woods: A difficult situation that has improved. Usually refers to

medical things when someone is very sick but has recovered a little bit.

Don't waste your breath: Whatever you say doesn't make a difference.

Sick as a dog: Very unwell.

Round the clock: All day, every day.

At death's door: Close to dying.

Keep me updated: To ask someone to tell you what's happening with a situation.

Wrong side of the bed: Grumpy.

Best wishes: Friendly hope that someone is doing well.

Take after: Usually a son/daughter who is similar to his/her mother/father.

Never seen eye to eye: Never agreed.

Practice

1. My sister hates mornings and often gets up on the _____.
2. I was _____ last year and spent a week in the hospital.
3. He's doing better but he's not _____ yet.
4. I can't believe he made it! He was _____.
5. _____. I've already made up my mind.
6. I honestly don't want to _____ but it looks like you have a flat tire too.
7. I've been working _____ on this project at work. I'm so tired.
8. My boss and I have _____ on how to deal with that client.
9. _____ on your recent engagement!
10. Please _____ on whether or not you can get ahold of that client.
11. I hope my son doesn't _____ me. I haven't been the best example for him growing up.

Answers

1. wrong side of the bed
2. sick as a dog
3. out of the woods
4. at death's door
5. Don't waste your breath
6. add insult to injury
7. never seen eye to eye
8. round the clock
9. best wishes
10. keep me updated
11. take after

Lesson 32: Bitter Divorce

Sierra: Did you **hear the news**? Jeremy and Katie are going through a **bitter divorce**.

Brian: Really? What about the kids? Are they doing **joint custody** or **sole custody**?

Sierra: Joint custody. Jeremy will have them **on weekends** but he has to **pay child support**.

Brian: Poor kids. That was a pretty **dysfunctional family** and they've already had a **troubled childhood.**

Sierra: A **broken home** might be better than all that conflict though. It's too bad that Jeremy and Katie aren't **on good terms**.

Vocabulary

Hear the news: Catch the latest gossip.

Bitter divorce: A divorce that is hostile with both people feeling angry towards the other.

Joint custody: When divorced parents each spend some time taking care of their children.

Sole custody: When a divorced parent is responsible 100% of the time for the children.

On weekends: On Saturday and Sunday.

Pay child support: When one divorced parent has to give money to the other parent to help pay for the care of the children.

Dysfunctional family: A family with many problems.

Troubled childhood: Growing up in a family or situation with a lot of problems.

Broken home: A home where the parents are divorced.

On good terms: Friendly and get along well.

Practice

1. Thankfully my former boss and I are ____. I need him for a reference.
2. I grew up in a _____ but have worked hard to overcome this.
3. Alex and Jen seem to be doing well with their _____ agreement.
4. Did you _____ ? Jeremy cheated on his wife.
5. _____, I like to spend as much time outside as possible.
6. He's had a _____ so far. I'm surprised that he still does well at school.
7. I want to get _____ of the kids. Tom is a terrible father.
8. I grew up in a _____ and have tried my best to make things better for my kids.
9. I had such a _____ but I'm happy that I don't have to see him anymore.
10. She does _____ but it should be way more than $500 a month I think.

Answers

1. on good terms

2. broken home
3. joint custody
4. hear the news
5. on weekends
6. troubled childhood
7. sole custody
8. dysfunctional family
9. bitter divorce
10. pay child support

Lesson 33: Review

got canned, clean slate, bite the bullet, rule him out, noise pollution, traffic jam, once in a blue moon, quit cold turkey, break a leg, sole custody

1. I want to start with a _____ at my new job.
2. The _____ in Seoul makes it difficult to sleep at night.
3. If you leave at 7 am, you'll hit a serious _____.
4. I smoke _____.
5. Tony _____ because he always showed up late and left early.
6. I know you don't want to clean your room but just _____ and get it done.
7. He went to court and got _____ of the kids.
8. Hey, _____ tonight, okay?
9. Do you want to _____? It can be extremely difficult.
10. Hey, don't _____. He usually gets things done at the last minute.

Match the words with the meaning.

1. blessing in disguise A. Something easy to do

2. bend over backwards B. When divorcees share responsibility for kids

3. a piece of cake C. Something that turns out good in the end

4. hit the bottle D. Drink alcohol

5. joint custody E. Do anything for somebody or in a situation

Answers

1. clean slate
2. noise pollution
3. traffic jam
4. once in a blue moon
5. got canned
6. bite the bullet.

7. sole custody
8. break a leg
9. quit cold turkey
10. rule him out

Matching: 1-C, 2-E, 3-A, 4-D, 5-B

Lesson 34: How to Ask for Permission

Can I turn the TV on?

Oh sure, no problem.

Actually, I'd rather listen to music I think.

Do you mind if I turn up the music?

No, go ahead.

It's already quite loud!

Is it okay if I take the car to school tomorrow?

No, sorry. I need it for work.

Sure, no problem.

Yes, but what time will you be home? I have an appointment at 4:00.

I'm planning on staying at my friend's house tonight? What do you think?

That's fine.

Don't you have school tomorrow?

Can I turn in my assignment three days late?

No, the deadline can't be changed.

Maybe, why do you need to?

Would it be all right if I took a look at your notes?

Sure, no problem.

Oh, they're so messy.

I can email them to you.

Dialogue #1:

Tom: Do you mind if I turn up the music? I can't hear that well in my old age!

Jenny: No, go ahead. It's fine with me.

Tom: And, I'd love to turn the heat up a bit too. It's freezing in here.

Jenny: Oh Tom, so many problems!

Dialogue #2:

Tim: Hey Mom, can I stay at Tony's house tonight?

Carrie: Are his parents going to be home?

Tim: Of course.

Carrie: It is a school night though, right?

Tim: No, remember it's a holiday tomorrow.

Carrie: Oh, that's right. Sure, you can. I'll just give his parents a quick call first

though.

Lesson 35: Idioms

Bring a lot to the table

Meaning: Have a lot of skills, money, wisdom, talent, etc.

Origin: This might refer to the amount of money that a gambler brings to the table to play with. Or, social or religious feasts where everyone is expected to contribute something to the table.

I think Julie *brings a lot to the table*. Why don't we hire her?

Jeremy *doesn't bring much to the table*. He should be the first guy we let go.

Bring home the bacon

Meaning: Make money with a job.

Origin: Likely popular with the African-American community in the USA before this but first seen in print in 1908. In 1906 Joe Gans' mother sent him a telegram telling him to “bring home the bacon” before his lightweight championship boxing match.

I know you want to hang out but I have to *bring home the bacon*!

I need to get going. Someone has to *bring home the bacon*.

Bring me up to speed

Meaning: Update me or teach me something.

Origin: The first usage of this idiom to refer to keeping someone fully informed was from the 1970s with the Apollo 13 mission and the Watergate hearings in the USA.

Please *bring me up to speed* on what you're doing. I've been sick for the past few days.

I *brought Tom up to speed* but he didn't seem to appreciate it!

Burning the midnight oil

Meaning: Working very long hours, late into the night.

Origin: First seen in the 1600s. Candles and oil were used to provide light

before electricity so refers to someone working late into the night.

I've been *burning the midnight oil* on this project. I hope it'll be done soon.

She's been *burning the midnight oil* studying for her final exams.

Burn the candle at both ends

Meaning: Work very hard from early morning to late at night.

Origin: The early meaning of this idiom was to be frugal. Candles were expensive so if you wanted to save money, you'd burn both ends. Later, it was used to refer to working too hard, possibly burning the first end of the candle but wanting to continue work so burning the other end too.

Don't *burn the candle at both ends*, okay? You can't do that forever.

I'll have to *burn the candle at both ends* to get this project done by the deadline.

Practice: Write an appropriate response using an idiom.

1. I'm coming down with a cold. Again!

2. We've been working hard on this project while you were gone.

Answers (many are possible).

1. Maybe it's because you're burning the candle at both ends.

2. Can you please bring me up to speed on it? I don't know what's happening with it.

Lesson 36: Back Down

Candice: I'm not going to **back down** here. It **boils down to** this—we need to fire Tony.

Tracy: Calm down. We're going to **get through** this without firing anybody.

Candice: At the very least, we need to **call in** the experts. We're not equipped to handle this.

Tracy: Why don't you take a day to **cool off**? We need to **get back to** work and keep at it. We'll **figure this out.** We've **run into** problems like this before.

Vocabulary

Back down: Let up; not fight someone.

Boils down to: Summarize something.

Calm down: Relax; chill out.

Get through: Overcome a difficult situation.

Call in: Ask for help from someone.

Cool off: To calm down after getting agitated or angry.

Get back to: Start again; reply to a phone message or email.

Figure this out: Solve a problem.

Run into: See or encounter someone you have previously met.

Practice

1. I think we can _____ if we put our minds to it.
2. My son never wants to _____ and we fight to the death!
3. I hope we don't _____ Todd again. That guy is so loud.
4. Let's try to ____. I think it won't seem so bad in the morning.
5. It's time to _____ the big dogs. The guys we have just aren't getting the job done.
6. I hope that we can _____ our project soon. I hate having to deal with this other thing.
7. It _____ the fact that I just don't like working with him.
8. Please take some time to _____. We need clear heads to figure this out.
9. We're going to _____ this. I know it seems difficult but we will.

Answers

1. figure this out
2. back down

3. run into

4. calm down

5. call in

6. get back to

7. boils down to

8. cool off

9. get through

Lesson 37: From Dawn Till Dusk

Eric: How's work going **these days**?

Mandy: Same old, same old. I have to work **from dawn till dusk**. We have all these **strict deadlines** from clients and are always **running out of time**.

Eric: Can you **cut back on** your hours? That's terrible not having any **free time**.

Mandy: Not if I want to **get ahead** in this industry. I'd love to **take my time** on projects and not be **in a rush** too. But, that's **not going to cut it**.

Vocabulary

These days: Lately.

Same old, same old: Nothing has changed.

From dawn till dusk: Working very long hours (early morning to late at night).

Strict deadlines: A definite time when something needs to be finished.

Running out of time: Lacking time to finish or do something.

Cut back on: Reduce.

Free time: Leisure time when not working or studying.

Get ahead: Make gains, especially compared to other people.

Take my time: Not hurry.

In a rush: The need to do something quickly.

Not going to cut it: Something you do isn't good enough.

Practice

1. Please do it again. That's _____.
2. I hate having to work under _____. It's very stressful.
3. In my _____, I love to hang out with friends.
4. He's always _____ with his math homework and gets so many answers wrong.
5. I have to work _____ during the year-end.
6. I'd love to _____ my drinking but it's difficult around the holidays.
7. Covid-19 has impacted my social life! It's _____ around here.
8. I'd love to _____ and make a good decision about which program to take.
9. It's difficult to _____ in Vancouver when housing is so expensive.
10. _____, I'm trying to get in better shape.
11. We're _____ and will need to stay late tonight.

Answers

1. not going to cut it
2. strict deadlines
3. free time
4. in a rush
5. from dawn till dusk
6. cut back on
7. same old, same old
8. take my time
9. get ahead
10. these days
11. running out of time

Lesson 38: Small Talk at Work

Tim: The weather looks great for the weekend. Do you have any plans?

Carrie: I'm going to get my garden ready for planting. I have **my work cut out for me**. It's so overgrown. But, it's not **set in stone**. I'll see what else comes up!

Tim: Yeah, it is that time of year, right? The days are getting longer. I'm going to **play it by ear**. Honestly, I'm pretty **burned out** and am **barely treading water**. The **fallout** from the **cost-cutting measures** has had a huge impact on me.

Carrie: Sorry to hear that. Is there anything I can do to help?

Tim: Nah, it's okay. Gotta **bring home the bacon**, right? It's not all **doom and gloom**. I may **rally the troops** for a movie or something.

Carrie: You **got hit hard by** that. Don't you want to **throw in the towel?**

Vocabulary

My work cut out for me: A big or difficult job to do.

Set in stone: Decided 100%.

Burned out: Tired, stressed and overworked.

Treading water: Barely keeping up with work or school.

Fallout: Negative consequences.

Cost-cutting measures: Something done to save money.

Bring home the bacon: Make money with a job.

Doom and gloom: Only bad things.

Rally the troops: Organize or convince people to do something.

Got hit hard by: To be badly affected by something.

Throw in the towel: To quit or give up.

Practice

1. Okay, who's going to _____ to check out that new Chinese place for lunch?
2. I'm barely _____ at my new job and am worried that I'll get fired.
3. We're not the only ones who _____ by Covid-19.
4. I hate my job but someone has to _____.
5. It's not all _____. He did get a B+ in English.
6. I have _____ with this new team.
7. I quit that job because I was so ____.
8. The _____ went too far I think. We're so understaffed now.
9. Nobody anticipated this would be the _____ from that decision.
10. Someone has to get fired but nothing is _____.
11. I'm ready to _____ on that project! It's brought me nothing but grief.

Answers

1. rally the troops

2. treading water
3. got hit hard by
4. bring home the bacon
5. doom and gloom
6. my work cut out for me
7. burned out
8. cost-cutting measures
9. fallout
10. set in stone
11. throw in the towel

Lesson 39: How to Ask for Help

Could you open the window/door, please?

Sure.

Of course.

Certainly.

Could you make me a cup of tea, please?

No problem.

Could you please give me a hand?

Sure, what do you need?

Could you look after my daughter this weekend for a couple of hours?

Sorry, I can't. I'm really busy.

Yes, I can.

It depends on when it is.

Do you mind moving so that we could sit together?

Oh sure, no problem.

Of course.

Do you have a few extra dollars to spare?

Sorry, I'm flat broke.

Sure, what's going on?

Do you have an extra pen I could borrow?

Sorry, I only have this one.

Yes, here you go.

Dialogue #1:

Tom: Could you please give me a hand this weekend?

Jenny: Sure, what do you need?

Tom: Would you mind looking after Tony during my dentist appointment?

Jenny: Okay, no problem. I love hanging out with him. What time?

Tom: From 2 until around 4.

Dialogue #2:

Tim: Oh hi, excuse me. Do you mind moving over one seat so that my friend and I could sit together?

Carrie: Sure, no problem.

Tim: Thanks so much.

Carrie: Of course, enjoy the movie.

Lesson 40: Idioms

Bury my head in the sand

Meaning: To avoid a certain situation or problem.

Origin: Possibly related to ostriches who some observe to hide their heads in bushes when faced with predators. However, this isn't actually what they do!

Johnny loves to *bury his head in the sand* but it makes it difficult for our team.

I want to *bury my head in the sand* and not think about this problem anymore.

Busy as a beaver (Busy as a bee)

Meaning: Working a lot or very hard.

Origin: Beavers are very hard workers who spend lots of time building dams and lodges. Same with bees who work very hard to make honey and build hives.

You're as *busy as a beaver* these days with all your homework.

I'm as *busy as a beaver* with the holidays approaching.

Butterflies in my stomach

Meaning: Nervous feeling about something.

Origin: Unknown but seen as early as 1908.

I have *butterflies in my stomach* just thinking about that exam.

She always gets *butterflies in her stomach* before doing a presentation.

Buttering me up

Meaning: To flatter or please someone because you want something in return. For example, a child who is extra nice to his parents around Christmas because he wants an expensive video game system.

Origin: Possibly from ancient India where people used to throw balls of butter at statues of gods when asking them for favours.

Let's *butter Mr. Thompsen up* to let us go early.

They've been *buttering me up* for months now to get that new video game system.

By the book

Meaning: Completely legal, doing something the correct way.

Origin: It's generally thought that the “book” refers to the Bible.

Please do everything *by the book*—lots of eyes are on us.

I hate that my boss makes us do everything *by the book*. It takes so long.

Practice: Write an appropriate response using an idiom.

1. Wow! You look so beautiful today.

2. This weekend, I planted the garden, cleaned up the garage and made jam.

3. Do you think we can do it this way instead? It'll save time.

Answers (many are possible).

1. Why are you buttering me up?

2. You're as busy as a beaver these days.

3. I don't think so. We need to do this by the book.

Lesson 41: Talking about the New Coffee Machine

Tim: Hey Carrie! I was supposed to **keep this under wraps** but Tony **splashed out** and we're getting a new espresso machine.

Carrie: Seriously? I've been bugging Tony about that for years now! I can't believe he finally **caved in**. **My lips are sealed**.

Tim: I know, right? It's coming next week. It's nice to **have your voice heard**.

Carrie: Wow! Work just got a whole lot better. The coffee machine now is seriously **below par.** If they want us to **burn the candle at both ends**, there's gotta be some perks.

Tim: I think Tony got a bit of a **reality check** when Min-Ji quit. He had to **step up to the plate** to keep the rest of us happy.

Vocabulary

Keep this under wraps: Not tell anyone about it.

Splashed out: Spent a lot of money.

Caved in: Finally agreed to something.

My lips are sealed: A promise to not tell anyone.

Have your voice heard: Someone listens to you.

Below par: Not good enough.

Burn the candle at both ends: Work very hard from early morning to late at night.

Reality check: Reminder about how things really are.

Step up to the plate: Take responsibility.

Practice

1. If he doesn't want to get fired, he's going to need to _____.
2. His performance this quarter was _____.
3. I finally _____ and gave her that day off she requested.
4. Johnny losing his job was a bit of a _____ for me.
5. I'm going to tell you who we decided to hire but please _____.
6. It sounds like you need to _____ at work.
7. I don't want to _____ for much longer. I need to find a new job.
8. Tell me your secret! _____.
9. My Dad really _____ for Christmas this year and took us all to Hawaii.

Answers

1. step up to the plate
2. below par
3. caved in

4. reality check

5. keep this under wraps

6. have your voice heard

7. burn the candle at both ends

8. my lips are sealed

9. splashed out

Lesson 42: Brush Up

Ethan: I'm feeling stressed out. I think I **bit off** more than I can chew.

Jeremiah: Yeah? What's up? Whatever it is, I'm sure that you can **pull it off**.

Ethan: Well, I had to **brush up** on a new programming language for work but I'm not **catching on** as quickly as I usually do. It's starting to **pile up**.

Jeremiah: Don't **freak out**. You're a smart guy! **Get on** it and you'll be up to speed in no time. Soon, you'll be **showing off** like usual.

Ethan: Not likely but thanks for your support. I want to **leave this behind** me as soon as possible!

Vocabulary

Bit off: Taken on.

Pull it off: Succeed at doing something, usually difficult.

Brush up: Refresh; relearn something.

Catching on: Understanding or figuring something out.

Pile up: Not taking enough action so that projects or tasks increase to a stressful amount.

Freak out: Show stress, fear, or anxiety.

Get on: Start doing something.

Showing off: Boasting or bragging.

Leave this behind: Forget about it; finish it.

Practice

1. Stop _____! I already know that you're good at that.
2. If anyone can _____, it's you.
3. Tommy is famous for letting things _____ and then pulling all-nighters.
4. I think she's _____ quickly. I'm so happy with her progress.
5. Can we please _____ us? We keep coming back to it but it's not helpful.
6. Okay, let's _____ it. We have so much to do.
7. Don't _____ about what I'm going to tell you, okay?
8. I need to _____ on my first aid skills for my new job.
9. I may have _____ more than I can chew. I think I need some help with this project if it's going to get done in time.

Answers

1. showing off
2. pull it off
3. pile up

4. catching on

5. leave this behind

6. get on

7. freak out

8. brush up

9. bit off

Lesson 43: Eating Habits

Sun: Do you have a **New Year's resolution** planned for 2021?

Todd: A big one! I want to change my **eating habits** by not eating so much **junk food** and **processed food**. I'm going to focus on **home-cooked meals** and smaller **portion sizes**.

Sun: Mine is very similar. I'm not going to **go on a diet** but I want to eat a **balanced diet** with more **fruits and vegetables**. And I want to avoid the **second helpings**, especially at dinner. That's my **Achilles heel**.

Todd: We should **hold each other accountable**.

Sun: Great idea!

Vocabulary

New Year's resolution: Thing you resolve to do for the upcoming year.

Eating habits: General way of eating (can be healthy or unhealthy).

Junk food: Food that isn't healthy. For example, chips and candy.

Processed food: Food that has been manufactured in some way. Often contains

lots of sugar, fat and salt.

Home-cooked meals: Food that you cook at home.

Portion sizes: How much food you eat at one time.

Go on a diet: Eat less or differently to try to lose weight.

Balanced diet: A wide variety of healthy foods.

Fruits and vegetables: Fruits and vegetables!

Second helpings: Taking a second portion of a meal after finishing your first portion.

Achilles heel: A weakness in someone who is generally strong.

Hold each other accountable: Check in with each other to help achieve some goal.

Practice

1. Let's _____ for this. I want to get this done under budget.
2. My son eats way too much _____. He probably eats an entire box of crackers a day!
3. I want to _____ so that I can lose weight for my sister's wedding.
4. His _____ is that he procrastinates.
5. Avoid _____ at dinner if you want to drop a few pounds.
6. I love _____ like potato chips and candy.
7. I want to reduce my _____. For example, only one piece of chicken instead of two.
8. It's best to eat a variety of brightly colored _____.
9. My _____are terrible. I often skip breakfast and then snack late at night.
10. I love my husband's _____.
11. My _____ is to stop smoking.
12. A _____ consists of healthy foods from a variety of food groups.

Answers

1. hold each other accountable
2. processed food
3. go on a diet
4. Achilles heel
5. second helpings
6. junk food
7. portion sizes
8. fruits and vegetables
9. eating habits
10. home-cooked meals
11. New Year's resolution
12. balanced diet

Lesson 44: How to Offer Help

Do you need a hand?

Sure, I'd love some help.

Thank you.

Yeah, I'd appreciate it.

I just don't understand it!

I can explain it to you.

Do you want me to pick you up?

No, it's okay. My Dad said he would.

Yeah, that'd be great.

Do you have a ride home from the airport?

No, I don't. I'd love one. Or, I can take a taxi.

Yes, I already booked a ride-sharing service.

I planned on taking the subway.

Do you want me to have a look at it?

Sure, that'd be great.

Yes, please.

What can I do for you?/How may I help you?

I'd love to look at that ring.

Can you please tell me the difference between these two computers?

I'm wondering how much this costs.

Could you please get me _____?

Dialogue #1:

Tom: Hey Jenny, do you need a ride to the airport?

Jenny: Oh, if you wouldn't mind. I'd appreciate it.

Tom: Sure, I don't mind lending you a hand.

Jenny: Thank you. I'll let you know my flight time once it's confirmed.

Dialogue #2:

Tim: Hi there, what can I do for you?

Carrie: I want to buy a new laptop but I'm not sure which one to get.

Tim: Sure. What's your budget?

Carrie: Not more than $1000.

Tim: Okay, there are three that I recommend taking a look at.

Carrie: Great. Can you walk me through their features?

Lesson 45: Idioms

By the skin of his teeth

Meaning: Just barely succeeding, finishing, etc.

Origin: From Job 19:20 in the Bible: “I am nothing but skin and bones; I have escaped only by the skin of my teeth.”

He just passed that exam *by the skin of his teeth*.

If I do finish, it'll be *by the skin of my teeth.*

Call it a day

Meaning: To stop working for the rest of the day.

Origin: First recorded use was in 1919 to refer to the end of a workday.

I think we can *call it a day*. See you tomorrow.

I'm hoping that Johnny *calls it a day* soon. I'm beat.

Calm before the storm

Meaning: A quiet period before a difficult period.

Origin: Used by sailors to explain the eerily calm period before a big storm.

I think this is going to be the *calm before the storm*.
Please rest and recover now. This is the *calm before the storm*!

Can't make heads or tails of it

Meaning: Unable to understand something.

Origin: Probably goes back to Ancient Rome. Cicero used a phrase that meant neither head or feet to refer to confusion.

What's he saying? I can't make *heads or tails of it*.

What do we have to do? I *can't make heads or tails of this assignment*.

Can't put my finger on it

Meaning: Not sure exactly what is wrong.

Origin: From the 1800s. Refers to looking through a document and putting your finger onto something to support what you're looking for. If you can't find what you're looking for, then you can't put your finger on it.

I'm not feeling well but I *can't put my finger on what's wrong*.

Something isn't right between Jenny and me but I *can't put my finger on it.*

Card up my sleeve

Meaning: A secret advantage to be used later.

Origin: From the 1800s. Refers to gamblers who hide a winning card in their shirtsleeve and then pull it out at the right time in order to win.

Owen always has *a card up his sleeve*. He'll pull through in the end.

I wish I had a *card up my sleeve* but all my chips are on the table now. This is all I have.

Practice: Write an appropriate response using an idiom.

1. I'm so tired. We've been working so hard.

2. What's up with Terry? He seems a bit off.

3. I'm not sure what I should do for my assignment. It's quite difficult.

4. These instructions are so confusing.

Answers (many are possible).

1. You're right. Let's call it a day.

2. I'm not sure. I can't put my finger on it.

3. Don't you always have a card up your sleeve?

4. I can't make heads or tails of them either.

Lesson 46: Motivating Employees

Brendan: So I'm just going to **cut to the chase** here. We're **getting some heat** from management. Our results this quarter aren't great. We need to stay more **on top of things** and **keep our eyes on the prize,** which is sales.

Riley: Thanks for **bringing us up to speed**. I had a feeling that our numbers weren't going to be great. We spent a ton of time **troubleshooting** that bug in the reporting software.

Brendan: I know, you did a great job **thinking outside the box** on that issue. You **headed it off at the pass** and it could have been way worse.

Riley: Sales will be on my mind **24-7**. I want to get **ahead of the pack** and exceed targets.

Brendan: Great. It sounds like we're on the same page. No more deals can **fall through**.

Vocabulary

Cut to the chase: Get to the main point.

Getting some heat: Feeling some pressure.

On top of things: Organized.

Keep our eyes on the prize: Remember the most important thing.

Bringing us up to speed: Updating.

Troubleshooting: Finding and fixing the problem.

Thinking outside the box: Creative thinking about something.

Headed it off at the pass: Stopped something from becoming worse.

24-7 (twenty-four-seven): All day, every day.

Ahead of the pack: To be in front of competitors.

Fall through: Something that didn't work out.

Practice

1. I'm a bit worried that this deal is going to _____.
2. Thanks for _____ on this new project.
3. It's on my mind _____.
4. I want to get _____ so let's get down to work!
5. I'm not going to waste your time and I'll just _____ here.
6. Braden is good at _____.
7. Elissa did a nice job with that malfunction and _____.
8. We've been _____ from the big boss!
9. Let's focus on _____.
10. This new problem will require some serious _____.
11. I'm hoping we can stay _____ and not get behind on this project.

Answers

1. fall through

2. bringing us up to speed
3. 24-7
4. ahead of the pack
5. cut to the chase
6. thinking outside the box
7. headed it off at the pass
8. getting some heat
9. keeping our eyes on the prize
10. troubleshooting
11. on top of things

Lesson 47: Wrap Up

Tommy: Okay, let's **wrap up** and **get out** of here. Joe, can you **turn off** all the lights? Kim, please make sure everyone is **logged off** the network and **shut down** all the computers.

Carrie: I don't want to just **stand around**. What should I do?

Tommy: Oh, why don't you **put away** all the dishes in the lunchroom? And then **switch off** the lights in there when you're done.

Carrie: Watch out weekend! Here we come.

Vocabulary

Wrap up: Finish.

Get out: Leave.

Turn off: Stop something from working.

Logged off: When you sign out of your account on an electronic device.

Shut down: Close or stop something.

Stand around: Someone not doing any work does this.

Put away: Make sure everything is in its' proper place.

Switch off: Stop something from working.

Watch out: Look for something; be alert.

Practice

1. Oh ____. The ball is coming right towards us.
2. Were you _____ that account before you left last night?
3. Don't forget to _____ the lights before leaving for work.
4. If you're just going to _____, you could at least hold my tools for me.
5. Let's _____ all the appliances before going on vacation.
6. Did you _____ yet? I'm hoping we can have dinner together tonight.
7. We'll have to _____ the network. We need to do some database maintenance.
8. Please _____ all your toys before bedtime.
9. I'm hoping to _____ for a hike this weekend.

Answers

1. watch out

2. logged off
3. turn off
4. stand around
5. switch off
6. wrap up
7. shut down
8. put away
9. get out

Lesson 48: Played Soccer

Tom: What did you get up to **last weekend**?

Jerry: I **played soccer**. We had a **big match** against the **first-place** team in the league. And it was an **away game** so the **deck was stacked against us**.

Tom: Did you **win the game**?

Jerry: It was **a nail-biter** but we won. The **final score** was 3-2. We were down by two goals but **made a comeback** in the **second half.**

Tom: Congratulations.

Vocabulary

Last weekend: The previous Saturday and Sunday.

Played soccer: Played soccer at some point in the past.

Big match: Important game (tennis, soccer, rugby etc.).

First-place: Top of the league.

Away game: Not at home.

Deck was stacked against us: Some big odds to overcome.

Win the game: Come out on top of someone else or another team.

Nail-biter: A close game.

Final score: The outcome of a game.

Made a comeback: Came from behind to win.

Second half: The last half of a game.

Practice

1. Hopefully, they'll play better in the _____.
2. Get some rest tonight. We have a _____ tomorrow.
3. We tried to _____ with a final push at the end but ended up tied.
4. Wow! The Yankees _____ in the 9th inning to win it.
5. Who got _____ in the American League?
6. The _____ was 4-3.
7. We tried our best but the _____.
8. I _____ almost every day when I was a kid.
9. That game was a serious _____. I had no idea who was going to win.
10. _____, I caught that James Bond movie.
11. Our next _____ is in Toronto next weekend.

Answers

1. second half

2. big match
3. win the game
4. made a comeback
5. first-place
6. final score
7. deck was stacked against us
8. played soccer
9. nail-biter
10. last weekend
11. away game

Lesson 49: Surf the Web

Terry: Do you want to **grab dinner after work**?

Tom: Sorry, I can't. I have to help my 90-year old grandma **access the Internet**. She **got the Internet hooked up** but can't **surf the web** for some reason.

Terry: That's amazing. My mom barely knows how to **get online** or **check her email** and she's only 60.

Tom: I know, right? Plus she has all sorts of **social media** accounts like *Facebook* and *Pinterest.*

Vocabulary

Grab dinner: Get something to eat for dinner.

After work: When work is done.

Sorry, I can't: What you say when you're unable to do something.

Access the Internet: Use the Internet.

Got the Internet hooked up: Get the Internet turned on at home, work, school,

etc.

Surf the web: Go online using a web browser.

Get online: Use the Internet.

Check her email: Have a look at an email account.

Social media: Facebook, Pinterest, Twitter, etc.

Practice

1. What's your favourite _____ platform?
2. _____, I like to go for a run and then go home and cook dinner.
3. She wants to _____ from home as well as at work. Is it possible?
4. I can only _____ at school.
5. What's the best way to _____, phone or computer?
6. _____. I have to study tonight.
7. Does anyone say _____ these days? Maybe only seniors!
8. Do you want to _____ this weekend?
9. Now that I've _____, I can start online gaming!

Answers

1. social media
2. after work
3. check her email

4. access the Internet

5. get online

6. Sorry, I can't

7. surf the web

8. grab dinner

9. got the Internet hooked up

Lesson 50: Idioms

Cash in your chips

Meaning: Quit or stop.

Origin: From the 1900s. Gamblers turn in their chips for the cash equivalent when they're finished playing.

Don't you think it's time to *cash in your chips* and quit? That job is terrible.

Let's *cash in our chips* and be done with this company, okay?

Caught between a rock and a hard place

Meaning: A difficult decision with two less than ideal options.

Origin: From Greek mythology. In the *Odyssey*, Odysseus had to pass between a treacherous whirlpool (the hard place) and a man-eating monster on a cliff (the rock).

I don't envy you. You're *caught between a rock and a hard place*.

I was *caught between a rock and a hard place*, having to decide between my job

and my kids.

Caught me off guard

Meaning: Surprised me.

Origin: Unknown.

Oh! You *caught me off guard*—I didn't see you there.

He *caught me off guard* with that comment at the meeting. It came out of nowhere.

Compare apples to oranges

Meaning: When people try to compare two things that actually shouldn't be compared because they're too different.

Origin: In use since the late 1800s. Predated by the idiom, “apples to oysters” in the 1600s as two things that could never be compared.

I think you're *comparing apples to oranges* here and it's not that helpful.

Let's c*ompare apples to apples* instead of *apples to oranges*.

Cool as a cucumber

Meaning: Very calm or relaxed.

Origin: Unknown but cucumbers always feel cool and fresh inside, no matter how hot it is.

My friend is an air traffic controller and is always as *cool as a cucumber*.

Cool as a cucumber? I'm the complete opposite of that—always stressed out.

Practice: Write an appropriate response using an idiom.

1. I've done well but I want to invest more.
2. I still don't understand why Tim quit.
3. I think Jenny is a much better employee than Tony.
4. So John is thinking about becoming an air traffic controller.

Answers (many are possible).

1. Have you thought about cashing in your chips?

2. Yeah, it caught me off guard for sure.

3. You can't compare apples to oranges though. Their jobs are quite different.

4. He'd be good at that I think. He's as cool as a cucumber all the time.

Lesson 51: Break Up

Tammy: I'm thinking about **breaking up** with Tony. We **get along** well but he never **calls me back** and I often feel like he's **brushing me off**.

Katrina: Maybe you're just **growing apart**? At least you don't **live with** him. It'll be easier to break up.

Tammy: Yeah, I kind of wonder if he's **cheating on** me? I always feel like he's **keeping things from** me.

Katrina: Who knows. Anyway, it sounds like you're done. Let's go have some beers and I'll help you **get over** it.

Vocabulary

Breaking up: Ending a relationship.

Get along: Enjoying each other's company; not fighting.

Calls me back: Returns phone calls.

Brushing me off: Ignoring; slow to respond to phone calls or text messages.

Growing apart: Having less in common than previously.

Live with: Sharing a house or apartment with someone.

Cheating on: Having sex with another person secretly or without permission.

Keeping things from: Not telling someone everything; keeping secrets.

Get over: Recover; feel better.

Practice

1. I know it doesn't seem like, but you'll _____ it.
2. My coworker and I _____ so well. We're the dream team!
3. I think she's been _____ her husband with Todd.
4. Maybe you and Tony are just _____. It's not a bad thing. It's natural.
5. _____ wasn't the worst of it. They had to sell their house too.
6. I'm not sure I want to _____ someone. I love my alone time too much.
7. Do you think he's _____? I'm not sure. Maybe he's just busy.
8. I'm wondering if he's _____ me. I just have a weird feeling about it.
9. My son never _____. I'm thinking about making him pay his own phone bill!

Answers

1. get over

2. get along

3. cheating on

4. growing apart

5. breaking up

6. live with

7. brushing me off

8. keeping things from

9. calls me back

Lesson 52: Asking for Time Off

Bob: Hey Linda, I'd like to talk to you about taking some time off. I hoped to **get the ball rolling ahead of time** on this.

Linda: Oh, you've **caught me off guard**! But, what days would you like?

Bob: Well, I just found out my ex-wife's plans for this summer so I'd love to take the kids on vacation the first two weeks of July.

Linda: Hmmm...that's when everyone wants vacation time. But since you're the first to ask me, let's cut through all the **red tape**. I'll approve it, but **mum's the word**, okay?

Bob: Of course, thank you!

Linda: I don't want to be the **bad guy**, you know? Thanks for being so **on the ball** with this.

Vocabulary

Get the ball rolling: Start or begin something.

Ahead of time: Doing something earlier than required?

Caught me off guard: Surprised me.

Red tape: Unnecessary or restrictive rules or regulations.

Mum's the word: Don't tell anyone.

Bad guy: A person not well-liked.

On the ball: Organized

Practice

1. I wish my boss was more _____ with assigning vacation time.
2. I'm just hoping to _____ on this before it's too late.
3. Oh! I'm not sure about that. You _____.

4. I hate to be the _____ here, but this project won't get done by itself.
5. I love to get things done _____ so I can have less stress at work.
6. I'll tell you but _____, okay?
7. When I take over, I want to cut through all the _____.

Answers

1. on the ball
2. get the ball rolling
3. caught me off guard
4. bad guy
5. ahead of time
6. mum's the word
7. red tape

Lesson 53: How to Suggest an Idea

Let's open the window. It's so hot in here!

Good idea.

Oh, I have the air conditioning on. I'll just turn it up a little bit for you.

Why don't we ask my Mom to look after Jenny this weekend?

That's a great idea.

Oh, she's going camping this weekend with her friends.

How about taking the subway there?

I'd prefer to drive. It's so crowded at this time of day.

Sounds good.

What about checking out that new Italian place tonight?

Sounds great.

I just had Italian last night. What about Chinese?

Can we stop going out so much? I'm short on cash these days.

Oh definitely. Let's eat at home tonight.

Sure, why don't we cook something together?

Oh, I want to go out. It's my treat.

I'd recommend checking out Stanley Park when you go to Vancouver.

Thank you. I'll have a look at that.

Have you thought about just getting a new computer?

Yeah, I have but they're so expensive. I'm hoping to just fix this one.

Oh really? That might be something to consider.

Dialogue #1:

Tom: I want to do something fun this weekend! Why don't we ask your parents to look after Tony?

Jenny: That's a great idea. How about checking out that new Greek restaurant?

Tom: Sounds good. I'll give your parents a call and see what they say.

Jenny: Perfect.

Dialogue #2

Tim: Hey Carrie, do you want to catch a movie this weekend?

Carrie: Honestly, I'm a little short on cash these days. How about staying in and watching a movie at my house?

Tim: Sure, that sounds great too. There's this new one that just came out on Netflix that everyone is talking about.

Carrie: Awesome! I'll make some snacks for us. Come over at 7:30.

Lesson 54: Review

1. I hope that I get a _____. I have so much more studying to do.

A. blow off some steam

B. second wind

C. by the book

D. card up my sleeve

2. Enjoy your weekend. It's the _____ when we have to prep for that big presentation.

A. set in stone

B. calm before the storm

C. free time

D. working day and night

3. I have _____ about that test next week.

A. better late than never

B. clean bill of health

C. out of the woods

D. butterflies in my stomach

Matching

1. Do you mind if I turn up the heat? A. My lips are sealed.

2. Can you please look after Timmy this weekend? B. Sure, no problem.

3. Please keep this confidential. C. I'm looking forward to it.

4. Lunch next Tuesday, right? D. Sorry, I can't

Fill in the blanks with the correct phrase.

blew the whistle, rush hour, excuse me, ran into, throw in the towel, in a rush, rally the troops

1. Let's _____ for a hike this afternoon.
2. _____, could I get past you please?
3. I don't want to _____ yet. Let's try one more time.
4. It takes so long to get home during _____.
5. He _____ on that big scandal that'll probably bring the company down.

6. Guess who I _____ at the store last night?

7. I know you're _____ but this will just take a second.

Answers

1. B

2. B

3. D.

Matching: 1-B, 2-D, 3-A, 4-C

Fill in the blanks

1. rally the troops

2. excuse me

3. throw in the towel

4. rush hour

5. blew the whistle

6. ran into

7. in a rush

Lesson 55: Opening Night

Sid: Are you going to watch that new James Bond movie? It **comes out** on the 22nd.

Manny: Oh yeah, I never miss an **opening night** for a Bond movie. I've seen the **movie trailer** at least 10 times now. It's going to be a huge **box office hit**.

Sid: I heard that Tom Cruise has a **supporting role** and that Brad Pitt plays the **main character**. That's pretty impressive.

Manny: For sure. What about you? Will you be there on opening night?

Sid: Not in the **movie theater** but I'll watch it when I can **download it for free**!

Vocabulary

Comes out: Begins.

Opening night: The first night of something (movie, play, etc.)

Movie trailer: A short teaser to entice you to watch the full movie.

Box office hit: A movie that makes lots of money.

Supporting role: Not the lead actor/actress.

Main character: The leading person in a book/movie/TV show, etc.

Movie theater: Place you watch movies.

Download it for free: Steal a movie/TV show/software/music from the Internet.

Practice

1. Why pay for it when you can _____?
2. Do you know when that _____ on Netflix?
3. Do you think our local _____ will survive Covid-19?
4. Have you seen the _____ for that one yet?
5. The _____ in that book was so complex.
6. She was amazing in that _____. She stole the show.
7. I love to go to a play's _____. There's a different kind of buzz.
8. What's going to be the _____ of the year?

Answers

1. download it for free
2. comes out
3. movie theater
4. movie trailer

5. main character

6. supporting role

7. opening night

8. box office hit

Lesson 56: Idioms

Corner the market

Meaning: Gain a lot of the market share.

Origin: Unknown, but likely originated in the 1800s with the beginning of the market economy.

I'm hoping we can *corner the market* with our new release.

Apple *cornered the market* with their new phone.

Costs an arm and a leg

Meaning: Very expensive; costs more than you can afford.

Origin: Uncertain but one theory is that it comes from painters in the 1700s. For portraits, the cheapest option was just the head and shoulders as painters charged more for arms and legs.

Those things *cost an arm and a leg* and I'm not sure they're worth it.

I saved up to buy a new Tesla, even though it *cost an arm and a leg*.

Costs a pretty penny

Meaning: Is expensive.

Origin: Somewhat uncertain and there have been lots of variants (a pretty penny, a fine penny, a fair penny). An early example is from 1710 by the playwright Susanna Centlivre.

That new video game system *costs a pretty penny*.

He always has new cars that *cost a pretty penny* but I'm not sure how he can afford them. He doesn't seem to have a job.

Counting her chickens before they hatch

Meaning: Counting on something before it's already happened. For example, making plans to go to a certain university before getting the official acceptance letter.

Origin: First seen in the 1500s in Thomas Howell's *New Sonnets and Pretty Pamphlets*. Could have originated from medieval or Latin fables. Not all eggs

hatch into chicks. Some are unfertilized or have another problem.

Don't go *counting your chicken before they hatch*. Wait for the official notice, okay?

She was *counting her chickens before they hatched* even though I told her to wait.

Crack the whip

Meaning: To be tough on someone or encourage people to get to work.

Origin: Related to drivers of horse-drawn carriages who cracked their whips to get the horses to go faster. The first use of it related to people is seen in the 1800s.

Let's *crack the whip*! It's time to get back to work.

My dad used to *crack the whip* if I didn't finish my chores.

Practice: Write an appropriate response using an idiom.

1. Judy is talking like she's already gotten that job after the first interview.

2. Have you seen that new *iPhone*?

3. Have the kids done their chores yet?

Answers (many are possible).

1. She's always counting her chickens before they hatch.

2. I heard it costs a pretty penny.

3. No, let's crack the whip.

Lesson 57: Bump Into

Jeremy: Hey, guess who I **bumped into** today at Starbucks?

Owen: Who?

Jeremy: Tony. Remember him from high school? It **cheered me up** to see him and **catch up**.

Owen: Oh, I see him at the gym all the time and we sometimes even **work out** together. We always say that we need to **get together** but we never **get around to** it.

Jeremy: He seems like a hard guy to **lock down**. He's so busy with his job. Maybe you can **plan ahead** and get a coveted spot on his calendar?

Vocabulary

Bumped into: Saw someone unexpectedly.

Cheered me up: Made me feel happy.

Catch up: Learn what's been happening in someone's life.

Work out: Exercise, usually at a gym.

Get together: Hang out with each other.

Get around to: Deal with or handle something at a future time.

Lock down: Make definite plans with someone.

Plan ahead: Plan something, not at the last minute.

Practice

1. It's better to _____ for retirement than to be stuck without enough money later.
2. Let's _____ next week and talk about this upcoming project.
3. It _____ to hang out with her new puppy.
4. Guess who I _____ at the grocery store?
5. I want to _____ a definite delivery time.
6. I get grumpy if I can't _____ every day.
7. I'm not sure when I can _____ it. I'll have to check my schedule.
8. Let's grab a coffee and _____.

Answers

1. plan ahead
2. get together

3. cheered me up

4. bumped into

5. lock down

6. work out

7. get around to

8. catch up

Lesson 58: Getting Back to Work

Tim: So, I think I need to get back to work.

Carrie: You **beat me to the punch**. That newsletter isn't getting written by itself. I've been **burning the midnight oil** working on this thing.

Tim: I know, right? Same with my report. It was nice to **bounce some ideas off of you**.

Carrie: Same here. We sure do **bend over backwards** for this place!

Tim: Anything to **earn a living**, right? I don't mind **going the extra mile**. We get treated pretty well. Let's **get down to business**!

Vocabulary

Beat me to the punch: Say or do something before someone else.

Burning the midnight oil: Working very long hours, late into the night.

Bounce some ideas off of you: To talk about ideas informally.

Bend over backwards: Work extra hard.

Earn a living: Work at a job.

Going the extra mile: Working very hard to do a good job.

Get down to business: Start working (again).

Practice

1. I was going to take credit for that but Jenny _____.
2. Let's _____. Time is not on our side.
3. He did his job but he hated _____.
4. I'm hoping you have some time this week. I'd like to _____.
5. I've been _____ trying to finish up this presentation.
6. There must be an easier way to _____.
7. My boss expects me to _____ for her. I don't mind once in a while but it's all the time.

Answers

1. beat me to the punch
2. get down to business
3. going the extra mile

4. bounce some ideas off of you

5. burning the midnight oil

6. earn a living

7. bend over backwards

Lesson 59: Idioms

Same old, same old

Meaning: Nothing has changed.

Origin: First came into common use in the 1970s. It perhaps came from Pidgin English spoken in post-WWII Japan or in Korea after the Korean war.

What's new? *Same old, same old*. Just working a lot.

How's that situation with Steve? *Same old, same old.* He won't break up with Jenny even though they're terrible together.

Selling like hotcakes

Meaning: Selling quickly.

Origin: Unclear but may be related to the fact that hotcakes (pancakes) were popular items at fairs and sold out quickly.

Apple's new phone is *selling like hotcakes*.

I want to get that new video game console for my son but they're *selling like*

hotcakes and are difficult to find.

Shake things up

Meaning: To reorganize something in a drastic or big way.

Origin: Uncertain.

Let's *shake things up* here and put Tommy in charge. I think he'll do well.

My company loves to *shake things up* and is constantly promoting and demoting people.

Shop till she drops

Meaning: Loves shopping and spends lots of time doing it.

Origin: Seen as early as 1920 when it was used as an advertising slogan.

My dad loves to *shop till he drops*. I hate going with him.

I know you love *shopping till you drop* but we just can't afford it since I lost my

job.

Sick as a dog

Meaning: Very unwell.

Origin: Seen as early as the 1700s when people compared bad things to dogs and other animals. This is because they often carried disease.

Sorry, I can't come to work today. I'm as *sick as a dog* with the flu.

My grandpa is as *sick as a dog* with pneumonia. He'll have to go to the hospital soon I think.

Smoke and mirrors

Meaning: Flashy things that distract from what is real.

Origin: Seen around the 1770s. Magicians used smoke and mirrors to create illusions.

That guy? He's all *smoke and mirrors* but doesn't do any real work.

Their latest model is all *smoke and mirrors*. There's nothing new from the last one.

Practice: Write an appropriate response using an idiom.

1. Did you see that new bracelet that Jenny got?
2. Sorry, I can't come to work today.
3. Did you see the latest *Tesla* model?
4. What's up with you these days?

Answers (many are possible).

1. I heard that she's always shopping till she drops. How can she afford it?
2. No problem. It's going around. Everyone is as sick as a dog.
3. I heard that they're selling like hotcakes and the waiting list is over a year

now.

4. Same old, same old.

Lesson 60: Lifestyle Changes

Kim: Did you **go to the doctor**? I know you were **not feeling well**.

Tanya: I did. She didn't **diagnose me** with anything but said that I'd need to make some serious **lifestyle changes**. My **overall health** is quite poor.

Kim: Oh no! What did she recommend?

Tanya: She said that I have to **reduce my stress**, **get plenty of sleep**, and **eat a balanced diet**.

Kim: That doesn't sound so bad. Do you have to **quit smoking**?

Tanya: Oh yeah, that too. It **shook me up**. She said that if I didn't change, my **life expectancy** would decrease.

Vocabulary

Go to the doctor: Have an appointment with a doctor.

Not feeling well: Feeling sick.

Diagnose me: Assign a name to a health problem.

Lifestyle changes: Change in what you eat, how much you exercise and other unhealthy habits like smoking or drinking alcohol.

Overall health: General level of healthiness/unhealthiness.

Reduce my stress: Decrease the amount of stress in your life.

Get plenty of sleep: Sleep eight hours a night.

Eat a balanced diet: Eating mostly healthy food from all the food groups.

Quit smoking: Stop using cigarettes.

Shook me up: Made me feel nervous, worried, or anxious.

Life expectancy: How long you can expect to live.

Practice

1. In Canada, the average _____ for men is 84 years.
2. Please _____. It seems like you've been sick for a while now.
3. You'll have to make some _____ to reduce your chance of a heart attack.
4. It _____ when he told me that he wanted to get divorced.
5. I'm _____. I need to go home early today.
6. I hope that I can _____ by changing jobs.
7. My goal is to _____ this year but I know it won't be easy.
8. Please try to _____ if you want to lower your cholesterol.
9. My doctor didn't _____ with anything but just said that I had to stop drinking so much coffee.
10. His _____ is quite good, considering how old he is.
11. Please try to _____ before your exam. You'll be able to think more clearly.

Answers

1. life expectancy
2. go to the doctor
3. lifestyle changes
4. shook me up
5. not feeling well
6. reduce my stress
7. quit smoking
8. eat a balanced diet
9. diagnose me
10. overall health
11. get plenty of sleep

Lesson 61: How to Give or Accept a Compliment

Your dinner was delicious!

Oh, I'm glad you liked it.

Thanks, it was a new recipe that I wanted to try.

It's one of my favourite things to cook.

That's a nice sweater.

Thank you.

Do you like it? I just bought it the other day.

Your presentation was so helpful.

That's good to hear.

Thank you.

You look nice tonight.

Thanks, I appreciate you saying that.

Oh, thank you.

What a lovely ring.

Thanks for noticing.

Oh, it was my grandmother's wedding ring.

That color looks great on you.

Thanks.

Thank you.

Thank you. I just got this shirt.

Dialogue #1:

Tom: Hey Jenny, you look really nice tonight.

Jenny: Thanks so much. I appreciate you saying that.

Tom: Yes, I think it's your new haircut. It looks great.

Jenny: Oh wow. You're too kind.

Dialogue #2:

Kerry: Your presentation was so helpful! I learned a lot.

Jim: Great, I'm happy you enjoyed it. I spent a lot of time getting ready for it.

Kerry: It's obvious that you did. It was one of the best ones I've ever seen.

Jim: Thanks so much for saying that. I appreciate it.

Lesson 62: Break Down

Nathan: I hate to **bring it up**, but it seems like your car **breaks down** all the time. You're going to **wind up** in a tough spot one day without a reliable car.

Rob: I know but you're preaching to the choir. It **comes down to** money. I can't **come up with** the cash to replace it. I'm also surprised it hasn't **blown up** on me yet.

Nathan: I can help you find a better one for cheap. I know a thing or two about used cars.

Rob: Do you **feel up to** it? I'd appreciate your help. I don't want to **get ripped off** again. It's so easy to **con me into** buying a lemon when it comes to cars.

Vocabulary

Bring it up: Talk about something, usually a topic that people avoid talking about.

Breaks down: Something that no longer works; works but not well.

Wind up: To end up in a certain situation.

Comes down to: Finding the underlying problem.

Come up with: Find.

Blown up: Exploded; stopped working in a final, decisive way.

Feel up to: Strong, healthy and with enough time to do something.

Get ripped off: Pay too much for something; get something that is poor in quality or doesn't work.

Con me into: Trick or fool.

Practice

1. He always seems to _____. I wish he'd ask more questions before signing on the dotted line.
2. If you car _____, please call me, okay? I'll help you.
3. That is what it _____ for me: either he can do the job or he can't.
4. I don't _____ seeing people yet. I'm still so sad about losing my cat.
5. His social media has _____ since he posted that viral cat video.
6. If you _____ coming to Vancouver, please give me a call.
7. It's difficult to _____ enough money for a down payment on a house.
8. Please don't _____ doing something I don't want to do! It always happens when we go out drinking.
9. I hate to ____, but you've been late for work these past three days. What's up?

Answers

1. get ripped off
2. breaks down

3. comes down to

4. feel up to

5. blown up

6. wind up

7. come up with

8. con me into

9. bring it up

Lesson 63: Idioms

Crunch the numbers

Meaning: Analyze data.

Origin: Came into use in the 1980s when computers became more commonplace and refers to the complicated numerical calculations that mainframe computers did at the time.

Let's *crunch the numbers* and see if we can figure this out.

I *crunched the numbers* and it looks like we'll be $2000 over budget.

Cut to the chase

Meaning: Get to the most important thing.

Origin: Early films often finished with a chase scene. The early meaning meant to skip unnecessary dialogue and get to this more exciting part so that the audience wouldn't get bored.

Let's *cut to the chase* here and stop wasting time.

During that meeting, Tim *cut to the chase*. I liked it!

Don't see eye to eye

Meaning: Disagree with someone.

Origin: From Isaiah 52:8 in the Bible, “...for eye to eye they see the return of the Lord to Zion.”

My boss and I just *don't see eye to eye*.

Her teacher keeps getting mad at her for talking during class. I think they *don't see eye to eye*.

Don't waste your breath

Meaning: Whatever you say doesn't make a difference in the outcome of something.

Origin: Early usage in the 1400s with “wasting words.” Wasting breath was first seen in 1667.

Don't waste your breath. He's not going to change his mind.

You *don't need to waste your breath*—my mind is already made up.

Down on my luck

Meaning: Experiencing a period of bad times.

Origin: Somewhat uncertain but first seen in the 1800s to describe someone experiencing financial embarrassment, usually temporarily. Now can mean any kind of difficulty.

I was *down on my luck* last year—I got divorced and lost my job too.

She was *down on her luck* but turned it around when she got a job.

Practice: Write an appropriate response using an idiom.

1. Do you think she'll extend the due date?

2. I'm wondering what you think about it. I'm not sure how to proceed. It's confusing.

3. Can we afford to get this house? I'm not sure.

Answers (many are possible).

1. Don't waste your breath. She definitely won't.

2. Cut to the chase. What do you need?

3. Let's crunch the numbers and see what they look like.

Lesson 64: Considering a Job Change

Jerry: I want to **nip this in the bud** now that the **cat's out of the bag**. I don't want people talking about me at work.

Linda: Oh, **spill the beans,** Jerry. I haven't heard anything about it.

Jerry: Well, I'm thinking about leaving the company but nothing is final yet. I do have some **irons in the fire** though. I don't want people talking about it because I may end up staying.

Linda: Say no more. **Your secret is safe with me**. I have a feeling that **the ball is in your court** though. You're the most qualified guy around here by a long shot.

Jerry: Thanks, Linda. I know that I **bring lots to the table** but **the bottom line** is who is going to pay me more!

Vocabulary

The cat's out of the bag: Accidentally reveal something secret.

Spill the beans: To tell a secret.

Nip this in the bud: To stop something bad from happening early on in the process.

Irons in the fire: A few different plans.

Say no more: The matter is finished or decided.

Your secret is safe with me: Not telling a secret to other people.

The ball is in your court: You have the power to decide on something.

Bring lots to the table: Have a lot of skills, money, wisdom, talent, etc.

The bottom line: The outcome or thing to base a decision on.

Practice

1. _____. I'm on top of this right now.
2. I can tell you now that _____.
3. Doug and Jenny _____ and I'm happy that our company hired them.
4. I want to _____ before it becomes a much bigger issue.
5. Come on! Just _____, please!
6. My dad has so many _____ with all his side-gigs.
7. I think you can do whatever you want! _____ now.
8. Don't worry about it! _____.
9. Honestly, _____ is that I'm going to work for whoever pays me more.

Answers

1. say no more
2. the cat's out of the bag
3. bring lots to the table

4. nip this in the bud

5. spill the beans

6. irons in the fire

7. the ball is in your court

8. your secret is safe with me

9. the bottom line

Lesson 65: Apply for University

Ted: Are you in your last year of **high school**?

John: Yes, I'll be finished in a few months from now.

Ted: Congratulations! Did you **apply to university**?

John: Yes, for the University of Toronto. I get **good grades** so I should get in. I even hope to **get a scholarship.**

Ted: That's great! Did you **choose a major**?

John: Not yet. Everyone does **general studies** in **first-year**. But next year, I want to choose something so I can have a **good salary** when I graduate.

Ted: Makes sense to me.

Vocabulary

High school: Last 3-4 years of school (approximately grades 9-12).

Apply to university: Send in an application to go to university.

Good grades: High marks in classes (mostly A's).

Get a scholarship: Free money for university.

Choose a major: Pick a course of study at university.

Not yet: Not made a decision; haven't done something but plan to in the future.

General studies: Not specific classes.

First-year: Year one of something, usually university.

Good salary: Getting paid a lot of money to do a job.

Makes sense: Has good logic.

Practice

1. That _____ to me why he would choose to change jobs.
2. I don't have to _____ until second year.
3. What _____ did you graduate from?
4. He didn't get _____ so has to retake some classes.
5. I'm planning on taking _____ my first year.
6. The most important thing to me is a job with a ____.
7. I think I can _____ for university next year.
8. I'm in _____. I just started last month.
9. My son is so lazy that I think he might not even _____.
10. Did you take out the trash? _____.

Answers

1. makes sense
2. choose a major
3. high school

4. good grades
5. general studies
6. good salary
7. get a scholarship
8. first-year
9. apply to university
10. not yet

Lesson 66: Idioms

Eat like a bird

Meaning: Eat very little.

Origin: First seen in the early 1900s to describe how birds don't eat very much compared to other animals.

She *eats like a bird*.

I've never been known to *eat like a bird*, the opposite is true!

Eat like a horse

Meaning: To eat a lot.

Origin: First seen in the 1700s to describe how horses eat a lot of food.

Wow! Those hockey players *eat like horses*.

I *eat like a horse* and still can't gain weight.

Fall through the cracks

Meaning: Overlook something.

Origin: Unknown. However, it's easy to imagine small cracks in old wooden floors and things going missing.

Please don't let this *fall through the cracks*. It's too important.

I'm worried about this *falling through the cracks*, so let's make a note in our calendars to check on our progress in two weeks

Feeling the pinch

Meaning: Experiencing financial difficulties.

Origin: From the 1800s. Could be related to having to tighten a belt when there is less food to eat. Or, kids who have to wear shoes that are too small and getting their toes pinched because parents couldn't afford to buy new ones.

My company is *feeling the pinch* since we lost a bunch of accounts due to Covid-19.

I've been *feeling the pinch* since my husband lost his job.

Feeling under the weather

Meaning: Not feeling well; feeling sick.

Origin: Related to traveling by sea. People most often become seasick when the weather is bad. When this happened, they were sent below the deck, out of the weather and where the sway of the ship was less.

You've been *feeling under the weather* lately? Please stay home from work and rest.

I've been *feeling under the weather* since the change of seasons. My allergies kicked in.

Practice: Write an appropriate response using an idiom.

1. I'm spending so much money on groceries these days.

2. Sorry, I can't come to the movie tonight.

3. Let me write this down in my agenda for next week.

Answers (many are possible).

1. Those teenagers at your house eat like horses.

2. It's okay. Sorry to hear that you're feeling under the weather.

3. Thank you. I don't want it to fall through the cracks again.

Lesson 67: How to Disagree

Trump is going to win the election.

I don't think so.

I beg to differ.

Really? Why do you think so?

Italian food is the ultimate!

Really? I prefer Greek.

I don't know about that. Mexican is my number one.

That new job is much better.

I'm not sure about that.

Not necessarily. What about the amount of vacation time?

I loved that movie.

I didn't think it was that great.

It was okay but not amazing.

I'd love to go hiking this weekend.

Hmm...I think it's going to be pretty rainy!

The weather doesn't seem great.

Dialogue #1:

Tom: You should apply for the job. It's much better than your old one.

Jenny: I'm not so sure about that. The pay is better but it's only two weeks vacation.

Tom: Are you sure? Ken works there and has four weeks I think.

Jenny: I'm pretty sure it's just two weeks when starting. For the first 3 years.

Dialogue #2:

Jim: Did you see that James Bond movie this weekend? It was so good!

Jen: Really? I don't know. It was okay but the older ones are better.

Jim: We'll have to agree to disagree I think. It was the best one yet.

Lesson 68: Dry Up

Karen: All my contracts seem to have **dried up.** Have you heard of any work?

Ellie: What about that job you **applied for**? Did you **follow up** with them?

Karen: Their funding **fell through** in the end and they didn't hire anyone.

Ellie: Oh, I didn't know about that. Do you want to **stick with** this industry or are you **open to** other possibilities? You might be able to **fill in** for a position at my company. Someone is going on maternity leave.

Karen: I'd **settle for** just about anything. I'm about to **give up**.

Vocabulary

Dried up: Ran out.

Applied for: Sent in a job application.

Follow up: Contact someone you've talked to previously about a job, business deal, etc.

Fell through: Didn't work out.

Stick with: Stay with the same thing.

Open to: Willing to consider it.

Fill in: Replace temporarily.

Settle for: Accept something not ideal.

Give up: Stop trying.

Practice

1. Don't _____, okay? Things will get better.
2. If you _____ this, you'll get some good results.
3. Please _____ for me when I'm on vacation.
4. My job offer _____ when we couldn't agree on vacation time.
5. I don't want to _____ the first job offer I get. I have lots of valuable skills.
6. It'd be better if you were _____ working for Tommy as well.
7. The funding has _____ and we'll have to shut this project down.
8. Please _____ with me next week, okay?
9. I _____ ten jobs and only heard back from one of them.

Answers

1. give up
2. stick with

3. fill in
4. fell through
5. settle for
6. open to
7. dried up
8. follow up
9. applied for

Lesson 69: Disagreeing with a Co-worker

Jerry: I think I've found a way that I can **kill two birds with one stone** on this project at work. It's a little bit **sketchy** though. There's **a lot at stake**.

Linda: Oh Jerry, you know that stuff like that **isn't my cup of tea**. I like to keep everything **aboveboard** and hate these backroom deals.

Jerry: Yeah, I know. You're always on the **up and up**. But I don't mind **crossing the line** once in a while.

Linda: Well, keep me **out of the loop**! I don't want to hear anymore about it.

Jerry: Okay, okay! I know you do everything **by the book**. I'll talk to Kenny about it. He likes to **think outside the box** about this kind of stuff.

Vocabulary

Kill two birds with one stone: Achieving two things with one single effort. For example, using the same essay for two different university classes.

Isn't my cup of tea: Not something I would do. For example, you have a friend who loves skydiving but you have no interest in it.

Up and up: Not illegal or sketchy.

Aboveboard: Not illegal or sketchy.

Crossing the line: Doing something illegal or not quite honest/right.

Out of the loop: Not knowing anything about something.

Sketchy: Not completely legal or right.

By the book: Completely legal, doing something the correct way.

Think outside the box: Think differently than most people would.

A lot at stake: There are important things that could be lost if something fails.

Backroom deals: Deals that happens secretly.

Practice

1. He's been _____ a lot lately. I'm not surprised that he finally got caught.
2. That popular new TV show just _____.
3. I remember him being pretty sketchy but he seems like he's on the _____ now.
4. Am I the only one who didn't know she was pregnant? I'm so _____.
5. I wish my company was a bit more _____. It's a bit difficult to work for them sometimes.
6. There's _____ with this upcoming work project.
7. I'm hoping to _____ to potentially save myself a lot of time.
8. My Internet provider seems a little bit _____ but I love how cheap they are.
9. Something that frustrates me about my wife is that she does everything completely _____.
10. Let's try to _____ about this problem.
11. To get things done in this industry, you have to make _____.

Answers

1. crossing the line
2. isn't my cup of tea
3. up and up
4. out of the loop
5. aboveboard
6. a lot at stake
7. kill two birds with one stone
8. sketchy
9. by the book
10. think outside the box
11. backroom deals

Lesson 70: Protect the Environment

Jimmy: So what are you doing your **final project** on?

Kent: The need to **protect the environment. Climate change** is real, **fossil fuels** are **running out** and **natural disasters** are **on the rise**. It's scary stuff!

Jimmy: You're **preaching to the choir** here. I've been talking about **global warming** and the need to develop more sources of **renewable energy** for years.

Kent: Okay, good to hear! I've learned a lot from this project and want to tell everyone.

Vocabulary

Final project: The last assignment to do for a class at school.

Protect the environment: Do things to reduce harm to the Earth. For example, recycling or buying fewer things.

Climate change: Changes in weather patterns, due to increasing temperatures on the Earth.

Fossil fuels: Non-renewable energy sources like coal, oil, and gas.

Running out: Being depleted.

Natural disasters: Things like earthquakes, tornadoes, forest fires, etc.

On the rise: Increasing.

Preaching to the choir: Telling someone something that they already know.

Global warming: The Earth's average temperature increasing.

Renewable energy: Energy source that doesn't run out. For example, solar or wind.

Practice

1. We need to develop more _____ sources.
2. Our main goal is to _____. We think you'll find it easy to get on board with this.
3. Crime is _____ in my city.
4. _____ is a serious issue, probably the most important one facing our world today.
5. What are you going to do for your _____?
6. I'm hoping that cars won't run on _____ in 10 years from now.
7. There were so many _____ in 2020, probably due to climate change.
8. Honestly, you're _____ here. I already know this!
9. Time is _____ for us to decide what we're going to do.

Answers

1. renewable energy

2. protect the environment

3. on the rise

4. global warming/climate change

5. final project

6. fossil fuels

7. natural disasters

8. preaching to the choir

9. running out

Lesson 71: Idioms

Food for thought

Meaning: Something to think about.

Origin: Unknown.

Interesting idea. It's certainly some *food for thought*.

Thanks so much for your very interesting presentation. There was lots of *food for thought* in it.

Foot the bill

Meaning: To pay for something.

Origin: Comes from an early idiom in the 1500s, “foot up.” It means to add up numbers on a bill and come to a total at the bottom (foot) of it. First seen as “foot the bill” in the 1800s.

Please don't *foot the bill* for this. It's not our responsibility. The client should pay.

Tommy always *foots the bill* for lunch. I'm starting to feel uncomfortable about

it.

From rags to riches

Meaning: Going from poor to rich.

Origin: Uncertain but history is full of examples of people who did this.

I love that story of that guy who went *from rags to riches* in just a couple of years.

I'm hoping I'll be one of those *rags to riches* stories with this new business I just started.

Get down to business

Meaning: Start working.

Origin: Unknown.

Let's *get down to business*. This meeting is only scheduled for an hour.

It's time to *get down to business* and finish this project up.

Get into deep water

Meaning: To be in trouble.

Origin: From Psalm 69:14 in the Bible, “...out of the deep waters.”

He *got into deep water* with that bad business deal a few years back.

She's been *getting into deep water* lately with her terrible grades at university.

Practice: Write an appropriate response using an idiom.

1. Well, enough small talk.
2. I feel like we've solved all the world's problems.
3. Did you see the story on the news about that couple who won the lottery?
4. Let's spend some time on this project next week.

Answers (many are possible).

1. Yes, it's time to get down to business.
2. It's certainly some food for thought.
3. Yeah, it's a true rags to riches story.
4. I agree. I'm worried we're going to get into deep water if we don't spend some time on it.

Lesson 72: Complaining about a Co-worker

Jerry: I'm ready to **blow a gasket**. Nobody wants to talk about **the elephant in the room**.

Linda: Oh yeah? What's going on?

Jerry: Well, the project manager at my company is not **on the ball.** We keep talking about budgets and timelines but this guy should **get canned.** Everything goes through him but it's like **pulling teeth**. It's like he's **at cross purposes** with everyone else on the project.

Linda: It sounds like you guys are **getting into deep water**. Will your client **bail**?

Jerry: I'm starting to wonder. If I was **in their shoes**, I'd certainly demand a change. They're **bleeding money** right now because of it. I know there's **a learning curve** but this is too much.

Linda: Tough times. I'm curious to see what happens.

Vocabulary

The elephant in the room: Something obvious and important that nobody wants

to talk about.

On the ball: Easily understands things or reacts quickly to a situation.

Getting into deep water: To be in trouble.

Get canned: Get fired from a job.

Blow a gasket: Get very angry or annoyed.

Pulling teeth: Something painful or difficult to do.

Bail: To leave or exit quickly; to give up on something.

In their shoes: How you would act if you were in someone else's situation.

Bleeding money: Losing money very quickly.

At cross purposes: Having different goals from each other.

A learning curve: Time it takes to figure out something new.

Practice

1. Honestly, my job would be decent if the company wasn't _____.
2. It's time to _____! I'm nervous that someone is going to call the police.
3. There's _____ for this new software and I'm having a difficult time.
4. My brother might _____ because he's always leaving early.
5. Everyone is beating around the bush talking about unimportant stuff. But, I wish I had enough courage to mention _____.
6. He's _____ with all his financial commitments.
7. My boss is _____, unlike the last guy.
8. My boss and I are _____ on this latest project and it's so frustrating.
9. My dad is usually a pretty relaxed guy but sometimes he'd _____ over something minor.
10. It's honestly like _____ to get any information out of him.
11. Before judging, try to put yourself _____.

Answers

1. bleeding money
2. bail
3. a learning curve
4. get canned
5. the elephant in the room
6. getting into deep water
7. on the ball
8. at cross purposes
9. blow a gasket
10. pulling teeth
11. in their shoes

Lesson 73: Go to the Doctor

Ted: Hey Anita, what's up?

Anita: I've had a rough **couple of weeks**. I **caught a cold** and it took me a while to recover. I was just **getting ready** for Christmas too. It was **terrible timing**.

Ted: Oh no! Did you **go to the doctor**?

Anita: Yes, she said to take some **over-the-counter medications** because it was a virus.

Ted: Well, that's better than **taking antibiotics** when you don't need to. I think that happens **quite often** but it's certainly not a good thing.

Anita: Enough about me. How are you?

Ted: Well, I **had the flu** last month and I'm just **fully recovered** now.

Vocabulary

Couple of weeks: Two weeks.

Caught a cold: Got sick with a cold.

Getting ready: Preparing.

Terrible timing: A bad time for something negative to happen.

Go to the doctor: See the doctor for an appointment.

Over-the-counter medications: Medicine you can buy at a pharmacy.

Taking antibiotics: Taking medicine that kills harmful bacteria.

Quite often: Happens frequently.

Enough about me: I've been talking too much about myself!

Had the flu: Was sick with the flu but okay now.

Fully recovered: Not sick anymore.

Practice

1. I was sick for almost a month but I'm now _____.
2. Please _____. You're sick!
3. My son _____ from the other kids at school.
4. I _____ for almost two months. It was terrible.
5. Well, _____. What's happening with you these days?
6. He is _____ late for work.
7. These _____ have been tough. I lost my job plus my dog died too.
8. That's _____ for getting sick. November is your busiest month at work, right?
9. I've been _____ for my ear infection but it's not getting better.
10. I'm well stocked with _____ at home.
11. _____ for work takes me at least an hour.

Answers

1. fully recovered
2. go to the doctor
3. caught a cold
4. had the flu
5. enough about me
6. quite often
7. couple of weeks
8. terrible timing
9. taking antibiotics
10. over-the-counter medications
11. getting ready

Lesson 74: Give Away

Ethan: Hey, do you think we'll have time to **get to** the garage this weekend? We've been **putting it off** for months now. Let's **get down to** it!

Candice: Yeah, my only plan was to **check out** that new show on *Netflix*. Let's do it! Maybe we can get the kids to **help out**. A lot of it is their toys.

Ethan: Sure, let's let them **pick out** a few toys each and **give away** the rest. And maybe we can **fix up** that old canoe as well.

Candice: Sure, let me **look into** places we can donate those old toys.

Vocabulary

Get to: Do something you've been waiting a while to do.

Putting it off: Delaying doing something.

Get down to: Begin; start doing something.

Check out: Take a look at.

Help out: Offer assistance.

Pick out: Choose something.

Give away: Donate.

Fix up: Repair.

Look into: Check out; research.

Practice

1. It seems like a good idea. Let me _____ it a bit more first though.
2. Do you want to _____ your own snacks or should I just pack some for you?
3. I'm not sure I can _____ it before I go home. I'll do it tomorrow though.
4. Let's _____ work!
5. Do you want to _____ the new James Bond movie with me this weekend?
6. Let's _____ this old computer for Kenny instead of buying him a new one.
7. I'm hoping we can _____ a lot of this stuff. I'd hate to just throw it in the trash.
8. I've been _____ for too long. It's going to happen tonight!
9. If you want to _____, you could start by unloading the car.

Answers

1. look into

2. pick out
3. get to
4. get down to
5. check out
6. fix up
7. give away
8. putting it off
9. help out

Lesson 75: Review

Fill in the blank.

1. My doctor said that I should get _____.

A. lifestyle change

B. plenty of sleep

C. food for thought

D. terrible timing

2. Do you _____ playing tennis tonight? I heard you were sick last week.

A. feel up to

B. wind up

C. open to

D. bend over backwards

Choose the correct response.

3. I think we need to hire someone else for this position.

A. That's good to hear.

B. It fell through.

C. I couldn't agree more.

D. Say no more.

4. Do you want to order pizza for dinner tonight?

A. That's good to hear.

B. It fell through the cracks.

C. Really? I prefer pizza.

D. That's a great idea.

Match the phrase with the meaning.

1. fully recovered A. get to the most important thing

2. the elephant in the room B. begin

3. get down to business C. oil and gas are examples

4. fossil fuel D. well again

5. cut to the chase E. the thing nobody wants to talk about

Fill in the blank with the correct phrase.

look into, on the ball, bleeding money, conned into, sick as a dog, crack the

whip, bumped into, give up

1. We're _____ and need to make a budget as soon as possible.
2. Let's _____ and get the kids cleaning up their rooms!
3. I know you want to _____ on this idea but I still think it can work.
4. Let me _____ whether or not the programmers can do that.
5. I got _____ signing up for all these TV channels that I don't need.
6. Guess who I _____ at the grocery store yesterday?
7. Wow! You're _____. I appreciate it.

Match the statement with the correct response.

1. Did you get a haircut? A. For sure.

2. Did you hear that Tony got fired? B. I'm not sure about that.

3. I picked up groceries on my way home. C. Maybe. It costs a pretty penny.

4. I think we can submit taxes late this year. D. Thanks for noticing.

5. Can you help me with this? E. You beat me to the punch.

6. Let's check out that new restaurant. F. No, I'm so out of the loop

Answers

1. B
2. A
3. C
4. D

Match the phrase with the meaning: 1-D, 2-E, 3-B, 4-C, 5-A

Fill in the blank with the correct phrase

1. bleeding money
2. crack the whip
3. give up
4. look into
5. conned into
6. bumped into
7. on the ball

Match the statement with the correct response: 1-D, 2-F, 3-E, 4-B, 5-A, 6-C

Lesson 76: Idioms

Get in touch with

Meaning: Contact someone.

Origin: Could be from the 1800s where soldiers in military marches had to be close enough so that they could touch the person next to them.

How can I *get in touch with* him? I don't have his phone number or email.

What's the best way to *get in touch with* Erin?

Get my foot in the door

Meaning: Achieve some initial stage. For example, an entry-level job at a company.

Origin: Related to the selling tactics of door-to-door salespeople. They try to get one foot inside the door to make it impossible for the homeowner to shut it so that they can continue their sales pitch.

I'd like to *get my foot in the door* at Apple.

Now that I've *got my foot in the door*, I'd like to work hard and move up the ranks.

Get the ball rolling

Meaning: Start something.

Origin: Two possible explanations. The first is from the sport of croquet in the 1800s. The second is during the 1840 presidential campaign in the USA where William Harrison used “victory balls” that were pushed from one campaign stop to the next.

Let's *get the ball rolling* on this project. Time is of the essence.

We didn't *get the ball rolling* fast enough and our competitors came out with a similar product.

Getting on in years

Meaning: Becoming older.

Origin: Unknown.

Now that my parents are *getting on in years*, I'm trying to visit them more.

I'm *getting on in years* and find grocery shopping more difficult and time-consuming.

Get up to speed

Meaning: Achieve competence at something or to be fully informed.

Origin: First seen in the 1800s to refer to something that had the power to achieve an optimal working speed such as a horse or a machine. Later, during the Apollo-13 mission and the Watergate hearings of the 1970s, it meant to be fully informed.

Let's *get him up to speed* quickly on this, okay?

I'm trying to *get up to speed* on this new software but am finding it very difficult.

Practice: Write an appropriate response using an idiom.

1. So I'm thinking we should start thinking about this next project.

2. How are your parents doing?

3. Have you heard from Tony yet?

Answers (many are possible).

1. Sure, let's get the ball rolling.

2. Okay, but they're getting on in years.

3. No, why don't I get in touch with him?

Lesson 77: Talking about Conflict

Jerry: Oh wow. I had a rough week.

Linda: What happened?

Jerry: Well, I usually like to **bury my head in the sand** and not pay attention to **office gossip** but Tim **stabbed someone in the back**.

Linda: Who?

Jerry: It was his boss.

Linda: Oh wow! Well, **let the dust settle**. I'm sure they won't be like **two peas in a pod** but hopefully, they can **put it behind** them. And surely he won't **get off scot-free**?

Jerry: Tim isn't known for **letting bygones be bygones** so he'll **go down swinging** for sure. I'm honestly just **counting the days** until this **blows over**.

Vocabulary

Stabbed someone in the back: To betray someone, especially someone with a close relationship.

Bury my head in the sand: To avoid a certain situation or problem.

Let the dust settle: Wait for and let a situation become calm or normal after something exciting or unusual happened.

Two peas in a pod: Two people who are very similar in thinking or appearance.

Put it behind: Overcome, or forget about it.

Office gossip: Talking behind someone's back at work, rumours.

Letting bygones be bygones: Putting something behind you, forgiving.

Go down swinging: To continue to fight.

Counting the days: Waiting for something to be finished.

Blows over: A bad time passes or is finished.

Get off scot-free: Not get in trouble for something.

Practice

1. My sister and I were like _____ growing up.
2. I actively try to avoid _____.
3. I think you two can get back together. Just _____ for a bit.
4. One of the only things I regret in life is the time that I _____.
5. I know it sounds crazy, but I can't let it go and _____ me.
6. If I get fired, I'm going to _____.
7. I don't want to but I tend to _____ and not get involved with conflict.
8. It's impressive how good my mom is at _____.
9. I hope this _____ quickly. I'm so tired of the drama.
10. I'm _____ until I can retire. I hate my job.
11. How could he honestly expect to _____ after what he did?

Answers

1. two peas in a pod

2. office gossip
3. let the dust settle
4. stabbed someone in the back
5. put it behind
6. go down swinging
7. bury my head in the sand
8. letting bygones be bygones
9. blows over
10. counting the days
11. get off scot-free

Lesson 78: How to Sympathize

My grandfather had a heart attack last night.

Oh, that's terrible.

I'm here for you if you want to talk.

My back hurts so much.

*Sorry to hear that. Anything I can do to he*lp?

I lost my jacket.

Let me help you look for it.

When did you last have it?

I've wasted half an hour looking for my car keys.

Oh no!

Can I help you look for them?

Where have been in the last while?

I have a bad cold.

Take care of yourself, okay?

Please let me know if you need anything.

Please stay home and get well.

My boyfriend just broke up with me.

Oh no, please let me know if you want to talk.

Let's get some ice cream, okay?

Dialogue #1:

Tom: I got some sad news last night. I heard that my grandmother died.

Jenny: Oh no, I'm so sorry to hear that.

Tom: Yes, me too. We weren't that close but I'll miss her.

Jenny: Anything I can do to help? Want to grab a coffee and talk?

Dialogue #2:

Tim: Do you want to go for a quick hike after work today?

Carrie: Oh, I can't. I have a terrible cold.

Tim: Oh no! Did you stay home from work today?

Carrie: Yes. For the past three days.

Tim: Oh friend. That's terrible. Do you need me to bring you anything?

Carrie: My Mom brought me over some homemade soup. I'm doing okay.

Lesson 79: Highly Controversial

Marty: I'm **grateful for** your support this **past year.** I know it was **highly controversial** to fire Jimmy but it was **the right decision**. You **had my back** when it came to that.

June: That guy had to go. He not only had a **mean streak** but he also **held a grudge** like a boss.

Marty: For real. This year will be better and hopefully won't be **a roller coaster of emotions**.

June: I know, I **lost my temper** more last year than I had in my **entire life**.

Vocabulary

Grateful for: Thankful

Past year: Past 365 days (approximately).

Highly controversial: An issue where people have lots of differing opinions.

Right decision: The correct thing to do.

Had my back: Supported me.

Mean streak: Describes a person who does things out of anger or to be vindictive.

Held a grudge: Not forgiving or forgetting past wrongdoing.

Roller coaster of emotions: Emotional ups and downs (highs and lows).

Lost my temper: Yelled, snapped, got very angry.

Entire life: From birth to the current time.

Practice

1. I've never felt so angry in my _____.
2. It was difficult but I have no doubt that it was the _____.
3. This _____ has been super difficult with Covid-19.
4. I _____ and yelled at my daughter for not putting her dishes in the dishwasher.
5. My boss has a bit of a _____ so you have to be careful around him.
6. 2020 has been a _____.
7. In the USA, getting the Covid vaccine is a _____ issue.
8. I'm _____ nobody in my family being sick.
9. You've always _____ and I appreciate it.
10. You _____ for that long? Why didn't you just move on with your life?

Answers

1. entire life
2. right decision

3. past year
4. lost my temper
5. mean streak
6. roller coaster of emotions
7. highly controversial
8. grateful for
9. had my back
10. held a grudge

Lesson 80: Break Off

Jeremy: Hey, did you **hear about** Tommy and Jen? They **broke off** their engagement.

Cayla: No, I didn't. I'm happy to hear that though. Jen **put up with** a lot of crap. Hopefully, she doesn't **take him back**. I can't believe she **fell for** that guy in the first place.

Jeremy: I know. She sure did put up with lots of crap. Let's see if she wants to **hang out** with us this weekend. As for Tommy, I'd be happy to **cut him off** and never see him again.

Cayla: Same here. I hope that she **settles down** with a nice guy. I hope it doesn't **come out** that they're back together.

Vocabulary

Hear about: Find out about something.

Broke off: Stopped or finished a relationship.

Put up with: Tolerate or endure something bad.

Take him back: Get back together with someone.

Fell for: Fell in love with someone.

Hang out: Spend time with.

Cut him off: Stop talking to someone; stop giving money to someone.

Settles down: Gets married; moves in with someone.

Come out: Something becomes known.

Practice

1. I think the truth is going to _____ eventually.
2. Did you _____ the upcoming merger? It was so surprising!
3. Is she going to _____?
4. I hope that he _____ with a nice woman and has kids.
5. He _____ her so hard. They moved in together after only three months.
6. His family needs to _____. He causes them nothing but grief.
7. We _____ a lot of crap from our boss.
8. I want to _____ with you this weekend.
9. I'm happy that they _____ their engagement. They were always fighting.

Answers

1. come out
2. hear about

3. take him back
4. settles down
5. fell for
6. cut him off
7. put up with
8. hang out
9. broke off

Lesson 81: Idioms

Give her a ring

Meaning: Call someone by phone.

Origin: First seen in the early 1900s when telephones came into common usage.

Please *give Tony a ring* when you get a chance.

Can you please tell her to *give me a ring*?

Give him the cold shoulder

Meaning: Ignore someone.

Origin: Somewhat unknown but could be from a mistranslation of a Latin phrase in Nehemiah 9:29 in the Vulgate Bible.

I'm so tired of everyone *giving me the cold shoulder* at work because I support Donald Trump. Let's *give him the cold shoulder* when he behaves that way and see if it makes a difference.

Give them a run for their money

Meaning: Provide good competition.

Origin: Could be from horse racing and placing bets. Sometimes horses are withdrawn from a race after bets are placed in which case you don't get a run for your money.

I think we can *give them a run for their money* if we play well.

Wow! The Blue Jays *gave the Yankees a run for their money*.

Go for broke

Meaning: To risk everything in one final effort or push.

Origin: From Hawaiian Pidgin slang. Refers to gambling when you wager everything on a single roll in craps.

We need to *go for broke* if we don't want to go bankrupt.

Our competitors are forcing us to *go for broke*. It's all or nothing now.

Good head on your shoulders

Meaning: Smart or intelligent.

Origin: First seen in the 1500s to refer to an old head on young shoulders (physical youth combined with wisdom).

You'll do well at university. You have a *good head on your shoulders*.

Jeremiah has always had a *good head on his shoulders*.

Practice: Write an appropriate response using an idiom.

1. Have you heard from Terry lately? It's been so long.
2. Let's go!
3. Did you hear that Ted got into medical school?
4. Have you talked to dad this week?

Answers (many are possible).

1. No, he's giving me the cold shoulder these days.

2. Let's give them a run for their money.

3. Good for him. He's got a good head on his shoulders.

4. No, why don't we give him a ring now?

Lesson 82: Apologizing to a Co-worker

Tim: My bad. Sorry for not finishing my part of the project on time. We're **in hot water** now.

Carrie: You put us in **a tough spot.** Your part is critical to avoid a **bottleneck** for the entire team.

Tim: I'm sorry. How can I make it up to you?

Carrie: I think if you finish your part by tomorrow morning, we can still have it to Jerry on time.

Tim: Okay. I'll **bite the bullet** and won't sleep until it's done.

Carrie: You know I'd love to help you **crunch the numbers** but **my hands are tied.** I don't have the qualification for that yet.

Tim: No problem. Back to work! Sorry for **dropping the ball** on this.

Carrie: It sounds like we're **on the same page** now. **Keep your eye on the prize**!

Vocabulary

My bad: It's my fault.

In hot water: In trouble.

A tough spot: A bad situation.

Bottleneck: Something that stops the flow. In this case, the project can't continue.

Bite the bullet: Resolve to do something difficult.

Crunch the numbers: Analyze data

My hands are tied: Unable to do something, even if you wanted to.

Dropping the ball: Not getting something done, or doing a bad job.

On the same page: Share a similar way of thinking.

Keep your eye on the prize: Remember the end goal.

Practice

1. Seriously, _____. Sorry that I didn't get that done in time.
2. I was in _____ when I lost my job.
3. We're going to be _____ if we can't get this done on time.
4. I'm nervous about _____ on this project. My job depends on it.
5. Can you please _____ again? I think there was a mistake somewhere.
6. We need to figure out where the _____ is and get things moving more quickly.
7. You're going to have to _____ and work this weekend.
8. I'd help you if I could but _____.
9. As long as we are _____, I think we'll get along just fine.
10. Whatever happens, make sure you _____.

Answers

1. my bad

2. a tough spot
3. in hot water
4. dropping the ball
5. crunch the numbers
6. bottleneck
7. bite the bullet
8. my hands are tied
9. on the same page
10. keep your eye on the prize

Lesson 83: Good Manners and Greetings (Your Turn!)

Write an appropriate response to each statement or question.

I appreciate your help today.

Response:

What's up?

Response:

I have the worst headache.

Response:

I love your sweater.

Response:

Can we turn up the heat a little?

Response:

Do you need a hand with that?

Response:

Could you please drive me to the airport?

Response:

Hey, how are you doing?

Response:

Could you please pass me the salad?

Response:

Would you mind if I opened the window?

Response:

Long time, no see!

Response:

Did you get a haircut? It looks great.

Response:

Lesson 84: Get a Job

Tony: Some **bad news**. I **was fired** from my job last month.

Athena: Seriously? What happened?

Tony: Well, there was a **heavy workload** and they wanted us to **work overtime** but for just the regular **pay rate**. That's ridiculous for a **minimum wage** job.

Athena: I agree. You shouldn't have to do overtime **without pay**. Are you okay for money?

Tony: Yes, I have an **emergency fund** that can cover my **living expenses** for a **few months**. I also have a **job interview** lined up next week for a **well-paid job**.

Vocabulary

Bad news: Not good news.

Was fired: Lost a job, usually due to poor performance.

Heavy workload: Very busy at work or school, often more than someone can handle.

Work overtime: Work beyond normal work hours.

Pay rate: How much you get paid for a job, usually per hour (for example

$10/hour).

Minimum wage: The minimum amount of money a job can legally pay (set by the government).

Without pay: Doing something but not getting paid for it.

Emergency fund: Money stored away to use in case of an emergency (illness, job loss, etc.)

Living expenses: How much it costs to live each month for housing, car, food, etc.

Few months: 3-5 months.

Job interview: An interview between an employer and a potential employee.

Well-paid job: A job that pays more than usual.

Practice

1. My son just got a ____. I'm so proud of him!
2. He _____ from his last job. I don't understand why we'd want to hire him then.
3. My _____ is next Thursday at 9:30.
4. The _____ in BC is $15.25/hour.
5. I have an _____ of $10,000. It's enough for at least a few months.
6. That program has a _____ but if you finish, you're almost guaranteed to get a good job.
7. These past _____ have been amazing! I got married plus bought my dream house.
8. The _____ is that you're going to have to work this weekend.
9. That's a very high _____ for that kind of job, isn't it?
10. My _____ each month are around $2000.
11. I try to _____ whenever possible. I need the cash.
12. My boss always wants me to stay late _____. It's time to find a new job for

me.

Answers

1. well-paid job
2. was fired
3. job interview
4. minimum wage
5. emergency fund
6. heavy workload
7. few months
8. bad news
9. pay rate
10. living expenses
11. work overtime
12. without pay

Lesson 85: Complaining about the Boss

Julie: Tony keeps trying to **pull the wool over our eyes**. He thinks we won't notice the **cuts** to our benefits plan. I'm **sick and tired of it**.

Tracy: I think maybe he's getting **kickbacks** from someone at that health company. There's **no other explanation as far as I can tell**.

Julie: I'm sure they're both getting **filthy rich**. Those **well-to-do** guys don't understand what's it like for us **pleebs**.

Tracy: I'm tired of this **carrot and stick** thing. We keep getting punished even though we do good work here.

Vocabulary

Pull the wool over our eyes: Trick someone.

Cuts: Reductions of some kind.

Sick and tired of it: Weary of something.

Kickbacks: Bribes.

No other explanation: Only one possible explanation for something.

As far as I can tell: To the best of my understanding.

Filthy rich: Describing someone with far more money than they need.

Well-to-do: Describing someone with a lot of money.

Pleebs: Slang for common people.

Carrot and stick: Offering rewards and punishments at the same time.

Practice

1. I find that the _____ approach works best at this company for managing employees.
2. _____, we're not going to meet our projections this year.
3. It's time to make some _____ among the salespeople.
4. Us _____ will never be able to buy stock in this company.
5. It's illegal to take _____ if you're a government employee.
6. They're a _____ couple. Both of them have great jobs.
7. He's so _____ that he just bought another yacht!
8. I hate getting treated like this by my boss. I'm _____.
9. He thinks he can _____ but I'm on to him.
10. It's so confusing why he did that but I think there's _____.

Answers

1. carrot and stick
2. as far as I can tell

3. cuts
4. pleebs
5. kickbacks
6. well-to-do
7. filthy rich
8. sick and tired of it
9. pull the wool over our eyes
10. no other explanation

Lesson 86: Talking about a Company in Trouble

Jerry: My company has been **cutting corners** on this latest project and we're **in hot water**.

Linda: Well, honestly, it's time for your company to **face the music.** You've been doing some things that **cross the line** for years now. It's going to be **an uphill battle** for you.

Jerry: Hey, hey. I know. You're **barking up the wrong tree**! I don't have anything to do with making the decisions. I do what I'm told. I'm basically a **yes man.**

Linda: I know. But, I wish you'd find some **greener pastures**. That company is going to **go under** soon I think. Just **read between the lines**.

Jerry: Well, jobs in my field are like a **needle in a haystack** these days. I'd **pull the plug** if I could.

Vocabulary

Cutting Corners: Doing something cheaply or badly. Can often be related to construction/home renovations.

Face the music: Deal with the reality of something negative that you did. For example, getting punished for a crime.

In hot water: In trouble for something.

Cross the line: Behave in an unacceptable way.

Barking up the wrong tree: Blaming someone for something that isn't their fault.

Greener pastures: A better opportunity someplace else.

Go under: Go bankrupt or out of business.

Yes man: A weak person who always agrees with their superior at work or in politics.

Needle in a haystack: Something that is impossible to find.

An uphill battle: Something very difficult to deal with.

Read between the lines: Discovering something secret or hidden.

Pull the plug: Quit, or stop doing something.

Practice

1. That CEO made some terrible decisions and his company is about to _____.
2. I know you don't want to _____ but your company is about to go bankrupt.
3. I'm leaving my job and heading for _____.
4. It's time to _____ for ripping all those customers off.
5. Honestly, you're _____. Johnny did it, not me.
6. Donald Trump is _____ these days with the most recent scandal.
7. The guy painting my house is _____. I feel so angry about it.
8. I hate that my company likes to _____ on just about every deal they do.
9. I hate that my husband is forced into being a _____ in his new role at the company.
10. Looking for my glasses in my messy house is like finding a _____.
11. Quite honestly, it's going to be _____ to get back on track.
12. I think he's going to _____. That new guy just isn't performing well.

Answers

1. go under
2. read between the lines
3. greener pastures
4. face the music
5. barking up the wrong tree
6. in hot water
7. cutting corners
8. cross the line
9. yes man
10. needle in a haystack
11. an uphill battle
12. pull the plug

Lesson 87: Zip Up

Dad: Hey, please **wipe up** your mess on the kitchen table before you go to school. And **pick up** your clothes off your floor too. I also want to **look over** your homework. Please bring it to me.

Nate: Get off my back! I can't **keep up** with all these things.

Dad: If I didn't **crack down** on you, you'd just **fool around** and be late for school every day.

Nate: Okay fine. You could **lay off** me a little bit though.

Dad: And **zip up** your jacket before you go.

Vocabulary

Wipe up: Clean something with a cloth, usually a spill.

Pick up: Lift something from a lower location; get something from a store.

Look over: Check.

Get off: Stop discussing something; stop hassling.

Keep up: Stay on top of things.

Crack down: Be strict; enforce rules.

Fool around: Be silly; not do what you're supposed to be doing.

Lay off: Be easier on; stop hassling someone.

Zip up: Close with a zipper.

Practice

1. Please _____ your jacket. It's cold out there!
2. I can _____ that report before you submit it if you want.
3. The government is starting to _____ on tax evasion.
4. Please _____ Tommy from school, okay?
5. Can you please just _____ your brother for a bit? I'm tired of the fighting.
6. Let's _____ his back. He's tired of hearing about it.
7. If you _____ and don't get your room clean, you'll have to stay home tonight.
8. I can't _____ with her. She has so much energy.
9. Can you _____ that mess in the kitchen?

Answers

1. zip up

2. look over

3. crack down

4. pick up

5. lay off

6. get off

7. fool around

8. keep up

9. wipe up

Lesson 88: Idioms

Go out on a limb

Meaning: To take a risk.

Origin: Related to climbing trees and going out a bit further on a branch (limb) than is comfortable. First seen in writing in the late 1890s in the USA.

I think you'll need to *go out on a limb* and take a few risks if you want to succeed in this industry.

I usually avoid *going out on a limb* during meetings and just keep my opinion to myself. It's not worth it.

Go the extra mile

Meaning: Work very hard to do a good job. Doing something extra than is expected.

Origin: From Matthew 5:41 in the Bible. Under Roman law, a soldier could order a Jew to carry his pack for a mile. Matthew said to carry it even further than that without complaint.

Thanks so much for *going the extra mile* helping that customer out. They appreciated it.

I love to *go the extra mile* to help people out.

Got a taste of his own medicine

Meaning: Being treated in the same bad way he/she has treated other people.

Origin: Comes from Aesop's famous story when a swindler sells fake medicine to lots of people, claiming it could help them. When he gets sick, people give him his own medicine which of course, doesn't work.

I don't feel sorry for him. He *got a taste of his own medicine*.

She *got a taste of her own medicine* at work the other day. I was so happy!

Got up on the wrong side of the bed

Meaning: Someone who is grumpy.

Origin: From ancient Rome. They had a superstition that said getting up on the

left side of the bed would bring them bad luck for the day.

My son always seems to *get up on the wrong side of the bed*.

I *got up on the wrong side of the bed* this morning and felt terrible all day.

Got started off on the wrong foot

Meaning: Get started badly.

Origin: Unclear but in use since the 1600s. One theory is that it refers to the left foot which is not most people's dominant foot. Another theory is that it refers to military marches where everyone has to start with the same foot to be in sync.

I know that we *got started off on the wrong foot* but I'm hoping that things will be better in the future for us.

That project *got started off on the wrong foot* because the main engineer was sick for a few days right at the beginning.

Practice: Write an appropriate response using an idiom.

1. I heard that Ted went bankrupt.
2. My mom is always bugging me about cleaning up after myself.
3. Are you feeling alright?
4. Let's take a look at this project and see if we can get back on track.

Answers (many are possible).

1. Good. It's time he finally got a taste of his own medicine. He's such a sketchy guy.
2. Why not surprise her and go the extra mile sometimes? It might help.
3. Not really. I think I got up on the wrong side of the bed!
4. Yeah, we kind of got started off on the wrong foot.

Lesson 89: Financially Savvy

Tim: What's new?

Meenu: I'm tired of **being broke** so I went to a **financial advisor**. I **make good money** but **money is tight** each month. I have no idea why.

Tim: What did they say?

Meenu: That I **waste money** like nobody's business and that I need to **make a budget** and **stick with it**.

Tim: Well, maybe it's time to **get serious** about **saving for retirement** at our age. I've just started **investing money in the stock market**.

Meenu: You're so **financially savvy**. I wish I knew how you did it!

Vocabulary

Being broke: Not having money.

Financial advisor: Someone who advises about money matters.

Make good money: Gets paid a high salary.

Money is tight: Short of money.

Waste money: Spends money freely on frivolous things.

Make a budget: Write down how much money you will spend each month.

Stick with it: Not alter or change something.

Get serious: Start taking something more seriously.

Saving for retirement: Saving money for after you stop working.

Investing money in the stock market: Buying stocks (shares of companies).

Financially savvy: Describes someone good with money.

Practice

1. They are _____ and have already paid off their mortgage.
2. I'd like to learn more about _____.
3. I hate _____.
4. Let's not _____ on eating out, okay?
5. I need to start _____ now that I'm in my thirties.
6. It's time to _____ about this class or I'm going to fail.
7. _____ at my house which means that we only buy used clothes.
8. I _____ but find it difficult to save. I love going out on weekends.
9. Let's _____ even though it's difficult.
10. A good _____ will help you stay on track with your goals.
11. Let's _____ together. That way, we'll both be invested in it.

Answers

1. financially savvy
2. investing money in the stock market
3. being broke
4. waste money
5. saving for retirement
6. get serious
7. money is tight
8. make good money
9. stick with it
10. financial advisor
11. make a budget

Lesson 90: At the Movie Theater

Can I please get two tickets for Batman?

Sure, no problem.

Sure, what time?

Oh sorry, it's already sold out.

Sorry, the 7:00 viewing is sold out. Would you like tickets for the 8:00 show?

That sounds great. Thank you.

That's kind of late. What else is showing around 7:00?

I'd like a large popcorn and a large Coke, please.

Sure.

Would you like to add some candy and make it a combo?

Where would you like to sit?

I'd like to sit in the back (middle/front/aisle).

Do you have assigned seating?

No, you can sit anywhere you want.

Yes, where would you like to sit?

What size would you like?

A small (medium, large) please.

Anything else?

Sure, I'll have a medium coke.

No, that's it. Thank you.

Dialogue #1:

Tom: Hi, can I get four tickets for James Bond, please?

Jenny: Sure, the 7:30 viewing?

Tom: Yes, please. And do you have any combos that include popcorn and drinks?

Jenny: We do, but you don't buy them here. You can purchase them at the concession.

Tom: Okay, thank you.

Dialogue #2:

Tim: Can I see your ticket, please?

Carrie: Here you go.

Tim: For the 8:00? You have to wait a few more minutes before going in.

Carrie: Oh really? Okay.

Lesson 91: Bring On

Natalie: What do you think about **bringing on** a new employee? I'd love for us to be able to **cut down** on our hours. It's too much overtime.

Tom: We should **go ahead** with that. Let's put up an ad and **plan on looking at** resumes next Friday. We can **set up** some interviews for the following week.

Natalie: Sounds perfect. I'd love to **sit in on** the interviews. I want to make sure I **get along with** the new person.

Tom: For real. Let's **lock in** someone better than that last guy we hired!

Vocabulary

Bringing on: Hiring.

Cut down: Reduce.

Go ahead: Do it.

Plan on: Do something in the future at a certain point.

Looking at: Directing eyes towards something.

Set up: Organize.

Sit in on: Join with someone to do something.

Get along with: Not fighting; enjoying each other's company.

Lock in: Secure.

Practice

1. I hope that I'll _____ with my new boss.
2. I'm hoping that by _____ a new person, we'll be able to take all our vacation time.
3. Let's _____ a lunch meeting next week. Maybe Thursday?
4. Do you mind if I _____ this?
5. Let's _____ those tickets. I don't think they're going to get any cheaper.
6. Let's _____ the large meeting room. I think we'll have about 30 people.
7. Please _____ and take care of this for me. I'd appreciate it.
8. What are you _____? I want to see it too!
9. Do you think it's best to _____ gradually or quit cold turkey?

Answers

1. get along with

2. bringing on

3. plan on

4. sit in on

5. lock in

6. set up

7. go ahead

8. looking at

9. cut down

Lesson 92: Leaving a Job

Jerry: I'm worried about my job. A **storm is brewing** at my company. They were **let off the hook** last time but I'm not sure the other company won't sue for **breach of contract** this time.

Linda: I mean, **it takes two to tango.** That other company should have seen the **writing on the wall** way earlier than now. Your company missed so many deadlines.

Jerry: I know, it's **an impossible task.** I did my best but it's not going to be enough.

Linda: Ditch that sinking ship. Time to move onto bigger and better things and test the waters. Someone will **snap you up** in seconds.

Jerry: You're right. I'm **working my connections** already to **see what's out there**. But **warts and all**, I honestly don't mind working here.

Vocabulary

Let off the hook: To not be punished, even though he/she was caught doing something wrong. For example, a politician who doesn't go to jail even though

he committed a crime.

A storm is brewing: Difficulty or danger is expected in the future.

It takes two to tango: There are two people responsible for a situation or problem.

Breach of contract: Breaking the terms in a contract.

Writing on the wall: A sign that something bad is about to happen.

An impossible task: Something that isn't able to be completed.

Ditch that sinking ship: To leave a bad situation.

Snap you up: Hire quickly.

Test the waters: Try something out before committing fully to it.

Working my connections: Talking to people you know to get something from them.

Warts and all: Including things that aren't attractive.

See what's out there: To look for new opportunities.

Practice

1. Maybe it's just me but I predict that _____ at work.
2. I quit before I could get fired because I saw the _____.
3. I know you're worried about losing your job but someone will _____ so quickly!
4. I couldn't believe that my son was _____ for that thing he did at school. Lucky guy.
5. Well, it's partly my fault but _____.
6. Honestly, that was _____ and not even Superman could have finished it.
7. It's time to _____ and find a better job.
8. That company often doesn't keep its word, but I didn't think a _____ would happen.
9. I'm going to start _____ to hopefully get an internship opportunity.
10. I'm not looking for a new job but I'm going to _____.
11. I love him, _____.
12. Is it possible to _____ before deciding?

Answers

1. a storm is brewing
2. writing on the wall
3. snap you up
4. let off the hook
5. it takes two to tango
6. an impossible task
7. ditch that sinking ship
8. breach of contract
9. working my connections
10. see what's out there
11. warts and all
12. test the waters

Lesson 93: Save me a Seat

Jerry: Hey Sid, can you **save me a seat** in class? I'm going to **come late**.

Sid: Take your time. I'll even **take notes** for you but I go **old school** on a **pad of paper**. But, why are you always late?

Jerry: You know the cute girls always **catch my eye** and then I have to stop and talk. But, **keep up the good work** my friend. I love that you always **pay attention** in class.

Sid: We should **have lunch** after class. What do you think?

Jerry: Sounds great. It's **my treat**.

Vocabulary

Save me a seat: Hold a seat for someone at an event, meeting, class, etc.

Come late: Show up not on time.

Take your time: Don't worry about hurrying.

Take notes: Write down briefly what is being heard.

Old school: Old-fashioned.

Pad of paper: Papers that are bound together in a pad.

Catch my eye: Something shiny, sparkling, appealing makes you look.

Keep up the good work: Continue doing the good things you're doing.

Pay attention: Look closely; focus.

Have lunch: Eat lunch.

My treat: I'll pay.

Practice

1. Do you want to _____ next Friday?
2. Please _____! You'll need to know this for your test next week.
3. If you _____ to Dr. Kim's class, you have to sit in the front row.
4. My dad loves to play _____ music on his record player.
5. Jeremy, _____. You did so well on your last report card.
6. Don't worry about it. It's _____.
7. Please _____. I'm going to be a little bit late getting there.
8. I can't go to the mall! So many things _____ and I spend too much money.
9. Please _____ for this meeting, okay?
10. I need to pick up a _____ for the house to take phone messages.
11. Please _____ doing this test. You have two hours to do it.

Answers

1. have lunch
2. pay attention
3. come late
4. old school
5. keep up the good work
6. my treat
7. save me a seat
8. catch my eye
9. take notes
10. pad of paper
11. take your time

Lesson 94: Giving Someone the Cold Shoulder

Jerry: My daughter called me for the first time **in ages**. She usually **gives me the cold shoulder**.

Linda: Why? What happened to your relationship?

Jerry: Well, we got in a big fight about paying for **grad school.** She was **counting her chickens before they hatch** and assumed I would pay. But, I just didn't have **the dough**. That new car I bought **cost a pretty penny**.

Linda: Yeah, my son only calls **once in a blue moon**. He usually wants some **moola** too! But to be fair, he never misses a Mother's Day card.

Jerry: Kids these days! That seems like the **bare minimum**!

Vocabulary

Gives me the cold shoulder: To ignore someone.

Once in a blue moon: Rarely.

Counting her chickens before they hatch: Counting on something before it's already happened. For example, making plans to go to a certain university before

getting the official acceptance letter.

In ages: In a long time.

Grad school: Graduate school.

The dough: Money.

Moola: Money.

Bare minimum: The least someone is obligated to do.

Cost a pretty penny: To be expensive.

Practice

1. I wish my kids would do more than the _____ to keep the house clean and tidy.
2. I haven't seen my parents _____ because of Covid.
3. I play tennis _____ because it's always rainy where I live.
4. My neighbour has been _____ lately but I'm not sure why.
5. My daughter is convinced that she'll get into Harvard but I keep telling her to stop _____.
6. I wish that I'd gone to _____ right after I'd finished university.
7. My brother makes the big _____.
8. Give me _____ please!
9. My university education _____. I hope it was worth it!

Answers

1. bare minimum

2. in ages

3. once in a blue moon

4. giving me the cold shoulder

5. counting her chicken before they hatch

6. grad school

7. moola

8. the dough

9. cost a pretty penny

Lesson 95: Review

1. I only eat junk food _____.

A. go with the flow

B. once in a blue moon

C. by working my connections

D. my treat

2. You'll get far in life if you _____ for your friends and family.

A. take your time

B. give the cold shoulder

C. do the bare minimum

D. go the extra mile

3. The writing is on the wall. It's time to _____.

A. lose my temper

B. ditch that sinking ship

C. be in hot water

D. start off on the wrong foot

4. A storm is brewing and it's going to _____ to get back on track

A. takes two to tango

B. get a taste of our own medicine

C. crack down

D. be an uphill battle

Match the statement and response

1. I'm thinking about bringing him on. A. Yeah, we'll need to.

2. Money is tight these days. B. That sounds great.

3. Let's pull the plug on that project. C. Yes, please.

4. Sorry, I dropped the ball on that. D. Oh, sorry to hear that.

5. Can I help you with that? E. Don't worry about it.

Fill in the blank with the correct phrase.

pad of paper, hit the ground running, hit the books, get along with, stick with it,

cold shoulder

I want to _____ on this project.

Please try to _____ your brother on this trip, okay?

Can you pass me that _____?

I don't understand why he's giving me the _____.

_____. I think you'll get it.

Answers

1. B
2. D
3. B
4. D

Match the statement and response: 1-B, 2-D, 3-A, 4-E, 5-C

Fill in the blank with the correct phrase: hit the ground running, get along with, pad of paper, cold shoulder, stick with it

Lesson 96: Talking about Finishing Work for the Day

Jerry: I'm so tired. Let's **call it a day** and grab some dinner. It's **my treat**.

Linda: Sure, I'd love to but only if we **go Dutch**. You **foot the bill** for me too often!

Jerry: Sure, if you insist. Let's check out that dessert place. They have sandwiches and then I can satisfy my **sweet tooth**. It's expensive but **worth it**.

Linda: Okay, **twist my arm**. Let's go. And don't just pick up the bill when I'm in the bathroom. I want to **pony up** for my share, okay?

Jerry: Let's **make a break for it** before **the big cheese** finds more work for us to do!

Linda: Sure, let's **head out.**

Vocabulary

Call it a day: To stop working for the rest of the day.

Foot the bill: To pay for.

Go Dutch: Each person pays their own bill, especially at a restaurant or bar.

Pony up: To get money/credit cards out to pay for something.

Worth it: Good enough to justify the high cost.

Twist my arm: Convince to do something.

Sweet tooth: To like sugary foods.

My treat: To offer to pay, usually for a meal or drink.

Make a break for it: Leave somewhere quickly.

The big cheese: The boss.

Head out: To go somewhere.

Practice

1. I feel uncomfortable when guys pay for me so I insist that we _____.
2. It's time to _____ for all those drinks you had!
3. I have a wicked _____ and can't stop eating candy.
4. Is the company going to _____ for the Christmas party this year?
5. Let's _____. I'm beat.
6. It's time to _____ and go home while the boss isn't looking.
7. Let's grab lunch. _____.
8. I hope to be _____ one day!
9. I'm tired. I'm going to _____ now.
10. Okay, I know that subscription box is expensive but it's _____ to me.
11. I didn't want to do it! My wife had to _____ to get me to go skydiving with her.

Answers

1. go Dutch
2. pony up
3. sweet tooth
4. foot the bill
5. call it a day
6. make a break for it
7. my treat
8. the big cheese
9. head out
10. worth it
11. twist my arm

Lesson 97: Burn out

Mo: I'm so **burnt out** these days!

Amy: Why? What's up?

Mo: I've had to **care for** my sick mother. When she **dozes off,** I work on **cleaning out** her garage and then I'll get to **emptying out** her storage locker too.

Amy: That's a lot! Does your brother **help out**?

Mo: Not a lot. I don't **hold it against** him though. He has three young kids. He does **run around** on weekends and do errands for her. Lots of neighbors and friends **drop by** so I get breaks throughout the day.

Vocabulary

Burnt out: Very tired from working too hard.

Care for: Look after.

Dozes off: Fall into a light sleep for a short period.

Cleaning out: Emptying.

Emptying out: Removing all the items.

Help out: Assist.

Hold it against: To think badly about someone because of something they did in the past.

Run around: Be busy going to many places and doing many things.

Drop by: Stop by to visit someone.

Practice

1. Why don't you _____ my office and we'll get that paperwork done?
2. Sorry, I can't hang out. I have to _____ and pick up all the stuff for Tim's birthday.
3. Please don't _____ me. I've changed since then.
4. Sorry, I can't hang out this weekend. I have to _____ my little brother.
5. If you're going to be _____ your garage, can you let me know if you have any old canning jars?
6. I'd love to _____ but I'm so busy with work this week.
7. I'm _____ my storage locker. I don't want to waste my money on it anymore.
8. Tim always _____ in my classes. It drives me crazy.
9. I know you're _____ but hang in there until this project is done, okay?

Answers

1. drop by
2. run around
3. hold it against
4. care for
5. cleaning out
6. help out
7. emptying out
8. dozes off
9. burnt out

Lesson 98: Idioms

Hit the nail on the head

Meaning: See the problem clearly and precisely.

Origin: Related to carpentry. You want to hit the nail squarely on the head to avoid damaging the thing you're working on or yourself.

You've *hit the nail on the head*. That's exactly what we need to do.

I don't quite think you've *hit the nail on the head*. Let's look at it this other way.

Hold the purse strings

Meaning: Make financial decisions.

Origin: Unknown.

My wife *holds the purse strings* in our family.

Terry *holds the purse strings* at our company. Everything goes through him.

I'll have to see it to believe it

Meaning: When you don't think something is likely or believable and you want to see it with your own eyes.

Origin: Unknown.

Do you think he can do it? *I'll have to see it to believe it.*

He can play tennis that well? I never thought he was athletic. *I'll have to see it to believe it.*

In it for the long haul

Meaning: Committed to something or someone for the long term.

Origin: Somewhat unknown but could be related to the fact that strategy for a long journey or project is different from a short-term one.

Melissa and I are *in it for the long haul.* Neither of us plans on ever getting divorced.

We're *in it for the long haul,* for better or worse.

In the dog house

Meaning: In trouble.

Origin: First seen in *Peter Pan* in 1911 when the father stays in the dog's kennel to express his remorse for causing his children to be kidnapped.

He was *in the dog house* with his parents after they caught him smoking.

I'm *in the dog house* at work after calling in sick for 3 days in a row. I really was sick though!

Got wind of

Meaning: Heard about a certain thing.

Origin: Used since the early 1800s. Refers to animals who become aware of scents that are carried in the air.

Our competitor *got wind of* our new feature and copied us.

My Mom *got wind of* my plan to sneak out and I got in big trouble!

Go with the flow

Meaning: To relax and go along with whatever happens.

Origin: Used by the Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius who said that it was better to go with the flow than to try to change society.

I find it very difficult to *go with the flow*. I prefer to be in charge!

Let's just *go with the flow* and see what happens? I think it's all going to work out well in the end.

Have your cake and eat it too

Meaning: Two good things that normally don't go together. For example, having many children but being able to afford a nanny to look after them.

Origin: First seen in the 1500s in a letter from Thomas, Duke of Norfolk to Thomas Cromwell.

I'm not sure you can *have your cake and eat it too*. It seems impossible.

I want to *have my cake and eat it too*! Lots of money but not working that much. Is it possible?

Practice: Write an appropriate response using an idiom.

1. I'm so worried about this project at work. There are so many pieces that I don't control.
2. My boss caught me taking an extra-long lunch.
3. Don't you think that his dating problems are caused by his too-high expectations?
4. Did you hear that Tony is going to get fired?

Answers (many are possible).

1. Just go with the flow. It'll all work out.
2. Oh no. You're in the dog house now.

3. It sounds like you hit the nail on the head.

4. I got wind of that as well.

Lesson 99: At the Library

Do you have your library card?

Yes, just a second.

Oh, sorry. I left it at home. Can you look up my account?

How many books can I take out?

You can take out 10 books at a time.

When are they due?

They are due in two weeks.

Is there a quiet study space?

Yes, it's in the room at the back.

Where's the bathroom?

It's downstairs, on your left.

You have a late fine of $1.70. Would you like to pay for that now?

Yes, I can.

Do you take credit cards?

I'll do it later if that's okay.

I lost my library card. Can I get a new one?

Yes, but there's a $10 fee.

Dialogue #1:

Tom: Hi, it's my first time here. I just have a few questions.

Jenny: Sure, how can I help?

Tom: How many books can I take out at a time?

Jenny: You can take out up to 20 books.

Tom: And how long can I keep them?

Jenny: 3 weeks for books and 2 weeks for movies and music.

Tom: Finally, do you have a quiet study space?

Jenny: Unfortunately not but it's usually pretty quiet between 10 and 2.

Tom: Great, thanks for your help.

Dialogue #2:

Tim: I can't check these books out for some reason.

Carrie: Hmmm...let me take a look.

Tim: Oh, it says that you have overdue fees of $22 on your account. You can't take out more books if it's over $20.

Carrie: Really? I'll pay the fine now then.

Tim: Sure.

Lesson 100: Take a Rest

Sienna: How are things going Bob?

Bob: To tell you the truth, I need to **take a break** from work. We're just so busy it's impossible to **get away**.

Sienna: Life is short. **Go fishing, visit friends, break the rules**. Make time for the good stuff.

Bob: I know, I'm **running out of time** now that I'm **getting older**. My kids tell me to **have a good time** and enjoy life. They're 100% right.

Sienna: You should take their advice! Aren't you **close to retirement** anyway?

Vocabulary

To tell you the truth: Speaking honestly or plainly.

Take a break: Stop working or studying for a bit.

Get away: Take a vacation or break.

Life is short: We all die eventually, often sooner than we think we will.

Go fishing: Catch some fish.

Visit friends: Talk with friends.

Break the rules: Don't follow what is mandated or the normal course of action.

Running out of time: Lacking time.

Getting older: Aging.

Have a good time: Have fun.

Close to retirement: Nearing the age when you'll stop working.

Practice

1. Isn't he pretty _____? He must be at least 60.
2. It's okay to _____ once in a while! As long as nobody finds out.
3. Let's _____ to Mexico this winter.
4. Let me know when you want to _____. Let's go to *Starbucks.*
5. I want to _____ with you. Please invite me next time you go.
6. Let's _____ with a few beers tonight.
7. I'm worried that we're _____. Can everyone stay late to finish this?
8. _____, I don't think this is the right job for you. We'll have to let you go.
9. _____. Why not enjoy it?
10. I love to _____ but it's been difficult during Covid-19.
11. My health is starting to be much worse now that I'm _____.

Answers

1. close to retirement
2. break the rules
3. get away
4. take a break
5. go fishing
6. have a good time
7. running out of time
8. to tell you the truth
9. life is short
10. visit friends
11. getting older

Lesson 101: Idioms

In the driver's seat

Meaning: In control of something; able to make decisions.

Origin: First seen in the 1600s with “In the saddle.” “In the driver's seat” came into common usage in the 1800s when cars became more popular.

I think we're *in the driver's seat* with these negotiations.

I like to be *in the driver's seat* at work—I hate uncertainty!

In the same boat

Meaning: In a similar situation as someone else; or a situation where peoples' fates are tied together.

Origin: Various theories but one is that it was used by the ancient Greeks to refer to all the people in a boat facing the same fate when going out to sea. They would all either survive and make it, or sink and drown.

I think you and I are *in the same boat.*

You don't need to blame me. We're *in the same boat* and need to figure out how to fix this together.

It's a long shot

Meaning: Something that's not likely to happen.

Origin: From the 1700s to refer to the chance of hitting a target with a gun or arrow that is very far away. In the 1800s came into common usage with horse racing to refer to a horse that had only a small chance of winning.

It's a long shot but I'd like to see if we could do it.

I know *it's a long shot* but I'm hoping that you'll have this car part in stock.

It's not rocket science

Meaning: Something that shouldn't be that difficult to do.

Origin: Came into common usage in 1980 as rocket science is considered to be something difficult to master. Before this, the common phrase was, “It's not

brain surgery."

It's not rocket science. I think Jenny should be able to figure this thing out on her own.

Why is this homework taking us so long? *It's not rocket science*!

It's the least I can do

Meaning: No problem; it's a small thing, usually when you feel like you should do more.

Origin: Unknown.

I enjoyed helping you today. *It's the least I can do*.

Oh, you're welcome. I didn't mind helping you move. *It's the least I can do*.

Practice: Write an appropriate response using an idiom.

1. I'm hoping that job will work out.

2. I need to cut down on my spending.

3. This Ikea furniture is so complicated to set up.

Answers (many are possible).

1. It's a long shot but it'd be great if you could get it.

2. You and I are in the same boat.

3. It's not rocket science. Let's figure it out together.

Lesson 102: Inviting a Co-worker for a Drink

Jerry: Okay, fine Linda, **twist my arm**. I'll go get a drink with you.

Linda*:* Wait, what? Do you want to grab a drink? Sure, why not. I'd love to **unwind.**

Jerry: Yeah, I'm having a rough time. I just found out that Braden **got a kickback** on this latest contract. Some bad stuff is **going down**. Our company has certainly **seen better days**.

Linda: Oh wow. That's not good. Let's **kick back and relax**. I know a new place that has some great **craft beer**. We can **talk shop**. Your **secrets are safe with me**.

Jerry: Yeah, it's just the **tip of the iceberg**. A whole bunch of money **vanished into thin air**.

Linda: Oh, wow Jerry! You need to **take a breather.** Meet you at Brown's Pub in 20!

Vocabulary

Twist my arm: Convince someone to do something.

Got a kickback: Accepted a bribe.

Tip of the iceberg: A very small part of something much bigger, usually a negative thing or a problem.

Vanished into thin air: Disappeared without a trace.

Going down: Happening.

Seen better days: In poor/bad condition.

Talk shop: Talk about work with a co-worker.

Your secrets are safe with me: Promise to keep things confidential.

Unwind: Relax.

Kick back and relax: Chill out.

Craft beer: Specialty beer that is brewed in small batches.

Take a breather: Relax for a while.

Practice

1. There's some crazy stuff _____ in the US election.
2. I can't believe your friend just _____.
3. The politician _____ for awarding the contract to a certain company.
4. Well, that's just the _____. There's a whole lot more that we don't know yet.
5. Okay Joe, you don't have to _____. I'll do it.
6. I used to drink _____ but it's too expensive now that I've lost my job!
7. I'm wondering if his company has _____?
8. I like to watch some Netflix to _____ from the week.
9. My dad loves to _____ with a nice beer on Friday nights.
10. Let's go outside and _____.
11. Please don't _____ tonight, okay? It's so boring!
12. It's okay! Just talk to me. _____.

Answers

1. going down

2. vanished into thin air
3. got a kickback
4. tip of the iceberg
5. twist my arm
6. craft beer
7. seen better days
8. unwind/kick back and relax
9. unwind/kick back and relax
10. take a breather
11. talk shop
12. your secrets are safe with me

Lesson 103: Cheer on

Rosie: Hey, are you going to come **cheer me on** tonight?

Carmen: Oh yeah, you can **count on** me. I'll have to **sneak out** of work early though!

Rosie: Thanks for your support. You've always **believed in** me.

Carmen: Do you think you'll **get in** the game tonight?

Rosie: I should be able to. A couple of people are injured. **Look out** world!

Carmen: To tell you the truth, I find it difficult to **tell everyone apart**. What's your number again?

Rosie: 17.

Carmen: Cool. Well, **eat up** and get some energy. And **keep on** them tonight, okay?

Vocabulary

Cheer me on: Support at a competition or game.

Count on: Depend on.

Believed in: Thought that someone could accomplish their goal.

Get in: Play.

Sneak out: Secretly leave.

Look out: Watch.

Tell everyone apart: Distinguish between people.

Eat up: Finish your meal.

Keep on: Don't give up.

Practice

1. Let's _____ him about his chores, okay?
2. You know that you can always _____ me, right?
3. Please _____ for him. He's smaller than most of the other dogs.
4. I'd like to _____ a workout today if I can.
5. Can you _____ tonight? Meet me behind the school at midnight.
6. _____. It's time to go to school.
7. It's difficult to _____ when watching a soccer game.
8. My mom always _____ me when I was growing up.
9. Come _____ tonight if you have time. I'd love to see you there.

Answers

1. keep on
2. count on

3. look out

4. get in

5. sneak out

6. eat up

7. tell everyone apart

8. believed in

9. cheer me on

Lesson 104: Fed Up With

Lindsay: I'm honestly so **fed up with** Ted. He's **addicted to** his cell phone and gets no actual work done.

Ethan: I know, he's **famous for** that, right? Everyone is **fully aware of** it. But, Bob seems to like him and he's **the only one who matters**.

Lindsay: It's weird that Bob is so **impressed by** him and that he even **got a promotion**. I would have **fired him years ago**.

Ethan: Did you hear that he **failed a drug test** at his last job?

Lindsay: Wow!

Vocabulary

Fed up with: Tired of; annoyed with.

Addicted to: Can't stop doing something.

Famous for: What someone is well-known for.

Fully aware of: Has full knowledge of.

The only one who matters: When there's only one important person.

Impressed by: Admiring someone's talent or accomplishments.

Got a promotion: Got a higher position with more responsibilities at work.

Fired him: Let go from a job.

Years ago: Many years previously.

Failed a drug test: Did not pass a test for illegal drugs.

Practice

1. He lost his job after he _____.
2. I was _____ how well he led that team.
3. He's _____ always pulling through in the end, even though things seem bad.
4. I used to play hockey _____ but I don't even think I have skates anymore.
5. I'm _____ Animal Farm, that new cellphone game.
6. I don't care what you think. Jen is _____.
7. Good news! I _____ and a pay raise too.
8. I'm _____ with my junior employee. He always leaves early.
9. I'm _____ the problems you're having but I don't think I can do anything to change it.
10. Finally, they _____. He had that coming for a long time.

Answers

1. failed a drug test

2. impressed by
3. famous for
4. years ago
5. addicted to
6. the only one who matters
7. got a promotion
8. fed up with
9. fully aware of
10. fired him

Lesson 105: Take or Leave a Phone Message

Hi, how can I direct your call?

I'd like to talk to Tim, please.

Is Tony there now?

She's not in right now. Can I take a message?

Sure.

No, thanks. I'll call back later.

No, thanks. Do you know when she'll be in?

Would you like to leave a message?

Yes, please.

No, thanks.

What can I tell him for you?

Please get him to call me back at 423-345-4352.

It's Jackie returning his call.

Can I please leave a message for him?

Sure.

Why don't you try calling back in 30 minutes? He's back from lunch then.

Oh, he's not here? Do you know when he'll be back?

In about an hour.

He's on vacation now. He'll be back next Monday.

Dialogue #1:

Tom: Can I talk to Jerry, please?

Jenny: He's not in, can I take a message?

Tom: Sure, please tell him it's Tom returning his call.

Jenny: Okay, will do.

Tom: Thank you.

Dialogue #2:

Ken: Hi, ABC manufacturing. How can I direct your call?

Bob: Can I please talk to someone about a custom order?

Ken: Sure, let me put you through to Cari.

Bob: Great, thank you.

Lesson 106: Idioms

It's time to face the music

Meaning: Deal with the reality of something bad that you did. For example, getting punished for a crime.

Origin: From the USA in the early 1800s. Various theories:

- Related to stage fright.
- Related to the drumbeat that was played when a soldier was removed from the military for bad behaviour.
- Related to a soldier going into battle to face the music of the opponent's guns.

Don't you think *it's time to face the music*? You've been avoiding this for years now.

It's time for Tim to face the music. He's been doing sketchy things at work forever.

It takes two to tango

Meaning: There are two people responsible for a situation or problem.

Origin: First came into common usage with the 1952 song by Al Hoffman and Dick Manning, "*Takes Two to Tango*."

I know you want to blame Emma for this but *it takes two to tango*.

I don't care whose fault it is. *It takes two to tango*. Figure it out together.

I've got my work cut out for me

Meaning: A big or difficult job to do.

Origin: Goes back to the 1600s. A good tailor (someone who makes clothes) would have everything cut out before starting to sew. Successful tailors would hire someone to do the cutting for them.

I've got my work cut out for me cleaning the garage. It's a mess in there.

I think *you've got your work cut out for you* with that project.

Jumping on the bandwagon

Meaning: Following the crowd or popular opinion.

Origin: First seen in 1848 in the USA when a famous circus clown used his bandwagon to gain attention for his political campaign appearances. It became popular and other politicians wanted to jump (get a seat) on his bandwagon.

Not to *jump on the bandwagon*, but it's a great idea. Let's go with it.

She's famous for *jumping on the bandwagon* and having no original ideas of her own.

Practice: Write an appropriate response using an idiom.

1. Did you hear that Tom got the same shirt as me?
2. Kerry got busted, along with Tim.
3. My teacher said that I'd need to get 80% on the final to pass the class.
4. I'll have to work through the night to finish this up.

Answers (many are possible).

1. He's jumping on the bandwagon too?

2. It takes two to tango, right?

3. It sounds like it's time to face the music!

4. You've got your work cut out for you.

Lesson 107: Out for Lunch

Tom: So how's the **bull market** treating you these days Jenny?

Jenny: Business is **booming** and we'll be even busier in the next few weeks. We **fast-tracked** this new project and are trying to **hit the ground running** with the latest technology. We hope to **corner the market** before our competitors come up with similar products.

Tom: It sounds like you're **in the driver's seat**.

Jenny: Well we're **walking a tightrope**. Regulators could **pull the plug** at any time and we've already **spent a fortune** on development.

Waiter: Hi, can I get you something to drink?

Jenny: I'd love a glass of red wine and we're ready to order too.

Waiter: Sure, what would you like?

Jenny: I'll have the lasagna, please.

Tom: And I'll have the chicken penne with cream sauce and a glass of your house white.

Waiter: Sure, I'll bring those drinks right out.

Vocabulary

Bull market: When share prices are rising in the stock market.

Booming: Growing or expanding rapidly.

Fast-tracked: Made progress more quickly than normal.

Hit the ground running: Start something and make progress quickly on it.

Corner the market: Gain a lot of the market share.

Driver's seat: In control of something.

Walking a tightrope: To do something that requires extreme care and precision; to navigate a situation that allows for no error.

Pull the plug: To end or finish something, usually suddenly and without warning.

Spent a fortune: To spend a lot of money.

Practice

1. I hope my boss doesn't _____ on this project. I'm having a lot of fun working on it.
2. We're doing well these days and business is _____.
3. Do you think Samsung's new phone will _____?
4. It's best to sell stocks in a _____ and buy in a bear market.
5. I need a new car but I don't want to _____.
6. We're _____ when dealing with the local regulators.
7. Our company is in the _____ with our latest innovation.
8. My hope is that with that new guy we just hired, we can _____.
9. The project I'm working on got _____ and I'll have to do lots of overtime in these upcoming weeks.

Answers

1. pull the plug
2. booming
3. corner the market

4. bull market

5. spend a fortune

6. walking a tightrope

7. driver's seat

8. hit the ground running

9. fast-tracked

Lesson 108: At the Bank

Can I please open an account?

Sure, what kind? Checking or savings?

Do you already have another account with us?

Can I talk to someone about investment options?

Sure, let me check the schedule.

Yes, Tim is available now.

I'd like to exchange some money, please.

Sure, no problem.

Which currency?

I lost my ATM card.

Okay, do you have some ID?

You'll need to select a new PIN.

Okay.

Please sign here.

Sure.

I'd like to make a withdrawal, please.

Sure, how much?

Okay, from which account?

Dialogue #1:

Jenny: Hi, I'd like to open a new account.

Tom: Sure, checking or savings?

Jenny: A savings account, please.

Tom: Okay, do you have some ID?

Jenny: Yes, here's my driver's license.

Tom: Okay, I'll get that all set up for you. Sign here, please.

Dialogue #2:

Tim: I'm going to Europe and would like to get some Euros.

Carrie: Sure, how much?

Tim: 1000 Euros, please.

Carrie: Sure, from your savings account?

Tim: Yes, please.

Carrie: Okay, let me get that for you.

Lesson 109: Emotional Wreck

Jeremy: Hey, how was your weekend?

Nathan: It started well. I **went swimming** with the kids and **did yoga**. But, Tim **broke his leg** at his **soccer game**. He has a **vivid imagination** so I didn't believe him at first but we **went to the hospital** and there was a big break. I'm an **emotional wreck** right now.

Jeremy: Oh, that sounds like tough times. I hope he's okay.

Nathan: He'll recover but he has to have a cast on for at least six weeks. What did you get up to?

Jeremy: I **played tennis** and had a **first date** with someone I **met online.** It went well and we're going to see each other next weekend.

Vocabulary

Went swimming: Swam.

Did yoga: Did a yoga workout.

Broke his leg: Broke a bone in his leg.

Soccer game: A soccer match.

Vivid imagination: Active imagination.

Emotional wreck: In a bad state; anxious, worried, depressed, etc.

Played tennis: Had a tennis game or practice.

First date: Spending time together with a romantic interest for the first time.

Met online: Meeting a romantic partner on a dating app like *Tinder* as opposed to in real life.

Practice

1. My husband and I _____.
2. My daughter has a _____.
3. I _____ this morning and now I feel great. I'm so relaxed!
4. I had a _____ with someone last night and I think we're going to meet up again.
5. I _____ with my kids but it was frustrating because they couldn't hit the ball well.
6. I _____ this morning very early. I got there when the pool opened at 6:00.
7. Will you come to watch my _____ this weekend?
8. I was an _____ when my grandmother died.
9. My husband _____ at work last week and will be off for at least three months.

Answers

1. met online
2. vivid imagination

3. did yoga
4. first date
5. played tennis
6. went swimming
7. soccer game
8. emotional wreck
9. broke his leg

Lesson 110: Ask for

Lenny: How are things going at work?

Carmen: Terrible! We can't **carry on** working so much. So many of us are **coming down with** serious health problems due to stress.

Lenny: Hold on. Can you **cut back** on the hours and **stand up for** yourself? That sounds ridiculous.

Carmen: I'd love to **do away with** all the OT but we've **asked for** that exact thing and been told that it's too busy. And that's not the worst of it—it's that they won't **pay up** when it comes to bonus time.

Lenny: Wow, I could certainly **do without** that crap. Are you **planning on** looking for a new job?

Vocabulary

Carry on: Continue.

Coming down with: Getting sick.

Hold on: Wait.

Cut back: Reduce.

Stand up for: Support something.

Do away with: Stop something.

Asked for: Requested.

Pay up: Pay a bill or obligation that has come due.

Do without: Not have something.

Planning on: Intending to do something.

Practice

1. You want me to work late tonight? I was _____ taking my daughter to her soccer practice.
2. I think you'd get what you want if you _____ it.
3. I can certainly _____ his bad attitude.
4. Just _____ a minute! I can come up with the answer myself if you wait.
5. He should _____ for himself and not let his boss get away with that.
6. Please _____ with what you're doing. It looks great.
7. It's time for that company to _____ for all those warranty claims.
8. I think I'm _____ a cold.
9. I'd love to _____ on how much I drink but it's difficult around the holiday season.

Answers

1. planning on

2. asked for

3. do away with/do without

4. hold on

5. stand up for

6. carry on

7. pay up

8. coming down with

9. cut back

Lesson 111: How to Agree

I think Kobe Bryant was the best basketball player of my lifetime.

For sure!

Of course. I can't believe anyone would disagree!

Pizza is the world's most perfect food.

Most definitely.

I love it too.

He isn't an honest guy.

I think that's common knowledge.

I think the Oilers are going to win the Stanley Cup this year.

Yeah, you're probably right.

I hope so.

Let's get sushi tonight.

That's a great idea.

That sounds good.

Awesome. I have a favourite place not far from here.

I'm so happy that Joe Biden won the US election.

I couldn't agree more.

I think we should see a movie tonight.

I can get on board with that.

Dialogue #1:

Tom: I know you don't love pizza, but that new restaurant is just so delicious.

Jenny: For sure. It's some of the best pizza I've ever had.

Tom: I'm so happy you liked it. And that movie we saw after? Amazing.

Jenny: Most definitely. It's going to win a ton of awards.

Dialogue #2:

Tim: Did you watch the Oilers game last night?

Joe: Yeah, McDavid was on fire.

Tim: For sure, it was amazing to watch him.

Joe: I love to see him play.

Lesson 112: Idioms

Keep me in the loop

Meaning: Update me; keep me informed.

Origin: Comes from the military where orders are passed in a feedback loop so everyone is well-informed.

I want to be *kept in the loop* during this project.

Keep me in the loop about how that's going, okay?

Keep me on my toes

Meaning: Always ready to deal with anything that might happen. A situation or person that is challenging and requires someone to be at their best to handle it.

Origin: Various explanations. One of them relates to short people having to stand on their toes to see something when in a crowd of people.

My kids *keep me on my toes*.

This job is *keeping me on my toes*. Things are always changing.

Keep this under wraps

Meaning: Not tell anyone; conceal something.

Origin: From horse racing in the late 1800s. Refers to slowing down a horse by wrapping the reins around the hand in the beginning and middle of a race to hide the true speed. Then, they will have the strength for a sudden burst of energy at the end as they cross the finish line.

Please *keep this under wraps*. It's not public yet.

I'm hoping we can *keep this under wraps* so that our clients don't find out.

Keep your eye on the prize

Meaning: Remember the most important thing.

Origin: From a folk song that became popular during the civil rights movement in the USA in the 1950s and 1960s.

I know it's difficult but *keep your eye on the prize.*

We're going to have to *keep our eyes on the prize* to get this finished.

Keep your head above water

Meaning: Trying to just break even. Having a hard time with something difficult.

Origin: Unknown but is likely related to struggling to keep your head above water so that you don't drown.

I have to work so hard just to *keep my head above water*.

It looks like it takes a lot to *keep your head above water* with that new job.

Practice: Write an appropriate response using an idiom.

1. I'm so tired from studying for the SAT.
2. This is confidential so please don't tell anyone.
3. I'll get started on that.

4. I'm so overwhelmed with work and the kids.

Answers (many are possible).

1. Keep your eye on the prize. You'll be happy when you get into a good university.
2. Okay, I can keep it under wraps.
3. Sure. Keep me in the loop, please.
4. It's tough to keep your head above water these days.

Lesson 113: Talking about a Project

Jerry: I have to **hit the sack.** I'm so tired right now.

Linda: Have you been **burning the midnight oil** lately?

Jerry: Yeah, I've been trying to finish preparing for this big presentation. I got a slow start working on it because I was in the hospital for a few days. It's a **race against the clock** now.

Linda: Well, **better late than never**. But, you need to go to bed early and get enough sleep. If you're tired, you won't be able to concentrate.

Jerry: You're right. It was **many moons** ago that I got a decent night's sleep. I have such **a full plate.** Normally, I like to be **ahead of the curve** on this stuff.

Linda: Keep fighting! I think you'll **ace** it.

Jerry: Well, here's hoping I **come up trumps**! Time to **knuckle down** and get to work.

Vocabulary

Hit the sack: Go to bed.

Many moons: A long time ago.

Burning the midnight oil: Staying up late working or studying.

Race against the clock: Time is running out to finish something.

Better late than never: Encouragement after getting a late start to something.

A full plate: Lots to do.

Ahead of the curve: Preparing early for something.

Keep fighting: Keep trying.

Ace: To get a high mark on a test or do well at something like a job interview.

Come up trumps: To get exactly what is needed at the last minute.

Knuckle down: To focus deeply on something.

Practice

1. Don't forget to _____ early. It's your big game tomorrow!
2. I know it's difficult but ____. Things will get better.
3. Although it was _____ ago, I still think about my ex-boyfriend.
4. I've been _____ lately, working a second job.
5. Honestly, it's _____ but he dropped the ball on this project.
6. You won't _____ the test unless you study.
7. That guy has an uncanny ability to always _____.
8. It's the last thing I want to do but I know it's time to _____ and study.
9. It's going to be a _____ to get this project done.
10. My boss always has _____. He needs to hire more people.
11. I have a master calendar with all my projects so I can stay _____.

Answers

1. hit the sack

2. keep fighting
3. many moons
4. burning the midnight oil
5. better late than never
6. ace
7. come up trumps
8. knuckle down
9. race against the clock
10. a full plate
11. ahead of the curve

Lesson 114: At the Coffee Shop

Hi, what can I get you?

I'd like a medium drip coffee.

What options do you have without caffeine?

What size would you like?

A medium, (small, large, extra-large) please.

Would you like room?

Yes, please. (Room for cream or milk at the top).

Where can I find cream?

It's over there, by the door.

We have it behind the counter here.

What time do you close?

We close at 9:00.

Do you have any food?

Yes, we have paninis and cookies.

No, sorry we don't.

Do you need anything else?

No thanks. That's it I think.

Do you have a points card?

No, I don't. Can I get one?

Yes, let me get it.

Dialogue #1:

Tom: Hi, what can I get you?

Jenny: I'd like a mint-chocolate chip Frappuccino, please.

Tom: Sure, what size would you like?

Jenny: Medium, please. To go.

Tom: Sure.

Dialogue #2:

Tim: Hi, what would you like?

Carrie: What do you recommend? I don't like coffee that much.

Tim: Do you want a hot or cold drink?

Carrie: Hot, please.

Tim: Sure, we have some nice teas or hot chocolate.

Carrie: Okay, I'll have a large hot chocolate then. For here.

Lesson 115: Job Interview

Interviewer: I'm wondering why you're leaving your current position?

Ken: The cat's out of the bag so I'm comfortable telling you, but ABC traders are **closing up shop**. They've been struggling to **keep their head above water** for the past year or so.

Interviewer: Oh, wow! I'm **out of the loop**! I get it. I was **in the same boat** once early on in my career.

Ken: That's why I'd love to **get my foot in the door** here. I've heard great things about your **state-of-the-art** technology and that kind of thing is **second nature** to me.

Interviewer: We certainly are **ahead of the pack** when compared to our competitors. We have some **groundbreaking** developments in this industry.

Ken: I'm confident that I can **learn the ropes** and **get up to speed** quickly.

Vocabulary

The cat's out of the bag: Something is no longer a secret.

Closing up shop: Going bankrupt or shutting down.

Keep their head above water: Trying to just break even.

Out of the loop: Don't have some certain information about something.

In the same boat: In a similar situation.

Get my foot in the door: Achieve some initial stage. For example, an entry-level job at a company.

State-of-the-art: Advanced technology.

Second nature: Instinctive, easy to do.

Ahead of the pack: To be ahead of other people or companies trying to do a similar thing.

Groundbreaking: Innovative or new.

Learn the ropes: Get trained to do something.

Get up to speed: Achieve competence.

Practice

1. I hope it doesn't take me too long to _____ with this new software.
2. I'm looking forward to the _____ software at this new job.
3. Our goal this year is to get _____ with voice recognition software.
4. You and I are _____ here!
5. I'm worried that my company is considering _____.
6. It might take you a while to _____ but I'm confident you'll get it!
7. Back in the day, it was considered to be _____.
8. I'm okay talking about it now that _____.
9. Running these kinds of seminars is _____ to me.
10. I'm willing to do any job just to _____ there.
11. Let's keep Tony _____ on this, okay?
12. That company has to work so hard just to _____.

Answers

1. get up to speed

2. state-of-the-art
3. ahead of the pack
4. in the same boat
5. closing up shop
6. learn the ropes
7. groundbreaking
8. the cat's out of the bag
9. second nature
10. get my foot in the door
11. out of the loop
12. keep their head above water

Lesson 116:Burning Up

Dad: Hey Jimmy, you don't look great. Are you **coming down with** something? Let me feel your forehead.

Jimmy: Dad! I feel fine.

Dad: You're **burning up**. We'll have to **call off** that birthday party of yours tomorrow. **Go back** to bed. And **stay off** electronics for the entire day. And don't **monkey around with** your new puppy. You need rest.

Jimmy: Dad, no! I'm okay. I don't want to **lie around** all day. And I for sure want to have my party tomorrow.

Dad: I told you this would happen if you kept **staying up** late playing video games. You're **run down**.

Vocabulary

Coming down with: Getting sick.

Burning up: Having a fever.

Call off: Cancel.

Go back: Return to somewhere you previously were.

Stay off: Not use.

Monkey around with: Play with; fool around.

Lie around: Be lazy in bed or on the couch.

Staying up: Not going to bed, usually late at night.

Run down: Not in the best of health due to working too much, staying up late, etc.

Practice

1. I'm starting to get _____. Something has to give.
2. Why don't you _____ to school? You could get a much better job.
3. Hey, you're _____. I'll make a doctor's appointment for you.
4. Why are you _____ so late? You look exhausted.
5. Please _____ electronics in the mornings. I just got a call from your principal that you're always late for school.
6. I hope I'm not _____ that cold that my son had.
7. I love to _____ on rainy weekends.
8. My kids love to _____ with the neighbor kids after school.
9. Let's _____ that meeting. I think we've already solved the issue.

Answers

1. run down

2. go back
3. burning up
4. staying up
5. stay off
6. coming down with
7. lie around
8. monkey around with
9. call off

Lesson 117: Save the Environment

Tanya: I'm wondering if we can **save money** on our bills and **save the environment** at the same time?

Keith: I don't keep track of the **electricity bill**. Has it gone up?

Tanya: The rates have gone up, yes. I think we can **save electricity** in a few different ways.

Keith: Will it **make a difference**? Aren't things like replacing lightbulbs mostly **a waste of time**?

Tanya: We can **save energy** in several ways. I found this **helpful guide** online. We can try a few of the things in it.

Keith: Okay, I'm **on board**. But **bear in mind** that I'm also very lazy about this kind of thing.

Vocabulary

Save money: Have more money in the bank.

Save the environment: Doing things like recycling, not buying things, reducing food waste.

Electricity bill: How much you pay for electricity each month.

Save electricity/save energy: Doing things like turning off the lights, turning down the heat.

Make a difference: Make an impact with an action you take.

A waste of time: Doing something that is not helpful or doesn't produce results.

Helpful guide: A written document or video that explains in detail how to do something.

On board: Willing to follow a plan.

Bear in mind: Please remember.

Practice

1. Please _____ that I don't know anything about using that computer program.
2. Our _____ is $20 more than normal this month.
3. Let's get Tim _____ with this new plan.
4. Small things can add up and _____ for the environment.
5. I want to _____ but I often feel overwhelmed and don't know where to start.
6. Let's try to find a _____ online for how to clean our dishwasher.
7. Don't you think that trying to help him is _____?
8. I'd like to _____ on food by not eating out so much.
9. Let's turn off the lights every morning before we go to work so we can _____.

Answers

1. bear in mind

2. electricity bill
3. on board
4. make a difference
5. save the environment
6. helpful guide
7. a waste of time
8. save money
9. save electricity/save energy

Lesson 118: Idioms

Kick back and relax

Meaning: Chill out.

Origin: Came into popular use in the late 1900s.

It's time to *kick back and relax* this weekend. I'm so tired of working.

Maybe you need to *kick back and relax* a bit. You seem stressed out.

Kill two birds with one stone

Meaning: Achieving two things with one single effort. For example, using the same essay for two different university classes.

Origin: Likely originated from the story of Daedalus and Icarus in Greek Mythology. Daedalus killed two birds with a single stone.

I'm hoping that we can *kill two birds with one stone* if we get this done now.

Getting my kids to mow the lawn is the ultimate way to *kill two birds with one stone*. I don't have to do it and I also don't have to entertain them.

Knock yourself out

Meaning: To encourage someone to take action to do something. Often something that others think is a waste of time.

Origin: Uncertain but first seen in the 1930s to refer to a great effort.

Do you want to take that on? *Knock yourself out*.

Knock yourself out with that! I hate putting up Christmas lights.

Land on your feet

Meaning: To be in a good position again after a difficult time.

Origin: Unknown.

I'm hoping to *land on my feet* after Covid-19 calms down a bit.

He's good at *landing on his feet* after a crisis. I don't know how he always does it.

Learn the ropes

Meaning: Get trained to do something.

Origin: Two possible explanations. The first is from people who travelled around doing rope tricks for a living. These tricks were not easy to learn and master. The second is new sailors who had to learn to tie ropes on sailing ships.

I still need to *learn the ropes* for my job. It's not easy and it seems like it's taking so long.

Please help him with *learning the ropes*, okay?

Practice: Write an appropriate response using an idiom.

1. I'm thinking about putting the Christmas lights up this weekend.
2. I'm struggling to understand all the systems.
3. Want to get a beer after work?

Answers (many are possible).

1. Knock yourself out.

2. Don't worry about it. It takes a while to learn the ropes here.

3. Sure. I need to kick back and relax a bit.

Lesson 119: At the Dentist

Have you had any problems with your teeth?

No.

Yes...

How often do you floss?

Once a week.

Every day.

Never.

How often do you brush?

3 times a day.

Only at night.

Can you feel that?

Yes/No.

Raise your arm if you have pain.

Okay.

Sure.

Would you like to make another appointment now?

Yes, please.

No, I'll call later.

Do you have any benefits?

Yes, I do. I'll get the card.

No, I don't

Dialogue #1:

Dr. Thomsen: Hi Jenny, have you had any problems with your teeth?

Jenny: No, I think they're good.

Dr. Thomsen: Okay, let me have a look. Please raise your arm if you have any pain.

Jenny: Sure.

Dialogue #2:

Tim: How's your brushing and flossing going?

Carrie: I brush almost every time after I eat.

Tim: And your flossing?

Carrie: Well, not so great. Maybe once a week.

Tim: Okay. That's not ideal. You should be doing it every night before bed.

Carrie: I know. I'll do better.

Lesson 120: Wake Up

Mom: Hey, **wake up** Jenny. I'm going to **turn on** the lights.

Jenny: Mom! Stop **picking on** me.

Mom: I'm certainly not. Don't **take it out on** me that you stayed up too late last night. I hate **starting off** the day like this too.

Jenny: Arghhh.

Mom: You need to **print off** your homework and **make up** your lunch before you go to school. **Hurry up**. You don't have a lot of time. I need to **head for** work now.

Vocabulary

Wake up: Open your eyes after sleeping.

Turn on: Switch on something (lights, electronic device, etc.).

Picking on: Bullying.

Take it out on: Blaming someone wrongly for something you're angry about.

Starting off: Beginning.

Print off: Use a computer printer to print a document.

Make up: Put together; assemble.

Hurry up: Go quickly because time is running out.

Head for: Go somewhere.

Practice

1. Tony! _____. You're going to be late for school.
2. My teacher gets frustrated so easily and loves to _____ Matt. It's just not fair.
3. Please _____ your room before you go to school. It's a disaster.
4. I want to _____ work before 8:00 tomorrow. Traffic is so bad after that.
5. Our train is at 9:30 so let's _____ at 7:30.
6. I hate _____ the day without coffee first.
7. Please _____ your computers and let's get started.
8. I want to _____ my ticket. Can I do that here?
9. Stop _____ your sister! I'm so tired of it.

Answers

1. hurry up

2. take it out on

3. make up

4. head for

5. wake up

6. starting off

7. turn on

8. print off

9. picking on

Lesson 121: Hit the Nail on the Head

Jerry: Let's **cut to the chase** here. Ben is going **off his rocker** and I don't even understand half the stuff he's saying.

Linda: What's his deal do you think?

Jerry: Maybe dementia? He's **getting on in years**.

Linda: Hmmm...you may have **hit the nail on the head**. Maybe we should **get in touch with** his daughter? I'm not sure she knows what happening.

Jerry: Good idea. I'll **give her a ring** this week.

Vocabulary

Hit the nail on the head: To describe exactly what is causing a situation or problem. For example, a technician hit the nail on the head when she discovered that all the tech problems were caused by a poor Internet connection.

Cut to the chase: Getting to the important things instead of all the minor details. For example, someone who is nervous about talking about a problem with their husband or wife might “beat around the bush” instead of cutting to the chase.

Off his rocker: Someone who is acting crazy or not rationally.

What's his deal?: What's wrong with him?

Getting on in years: Becoming older.

Get in touch with: Contact someone.

Give her a ring: Call someone by phone.

Practice

1. He's been acting very strangely lately. _____?
2. Tommy, I think you've _____. Everything is clearer now.
3. Let's _____ and stop beating around the bush.
4. My grandfather is _____.
5. It took him a long time to _____ me.
6. I think the president of that company is kind of _____.
7. Don't forget to _____. You need to talk about the Christmas party.

Answers

1. What's his deal
2. hit the nail on the head
3. cut to the chase
4. getting on in years
5. get in touch with

6. off his rocker

7. give her a ring

Lesson 122: Negotiating with Another Company

Jerry: I want to **touch base** with you and find out where you're at with that new product we recommend to your company.

Karen: Oh you know Bob. He likes to **take things slowly** and is reluctant to **shake things up**. He doesn't want to invest more money into something like this. Sorry if I gave you **the wrong impression** that this deal might happen quickly.

Jerry: To **go out on a limb** here, if you don't upgrade what you're currently using, you'll likely be **playing catch up** for years **down the road**.

Karen: Big picture, he does know that. We've been trying to tell him this for years now. Unfortunately, I don't **call the shots** or **hold the purse strings**.

Vocabulary

Touch base: To check in with someone.

Take things slowly: To not move quickly.

Shake things up: To reorganize something in a drastic or big way.

The wrong impression: To think wrongly about someone, based on a first meeting.

Go out on a limb: To take a risk.

Playing catch up: To try to reach the same level as others, especially after starting late.

Down the road: In the future.

Big picture: Considering everything.

Call the shots: To make the decisions.

Hold the purse strings: To make the financial decisions.

Practice

1. You'll have to talk to Tommy about money stuff. I don't _____.
2. I'm afraid that you've got _____ about our company.
3. Things are fine now but I'm worried about what will happen _____.
4. If we don't upgrade our databases, we'll be _____.
5. I only _____ about HR-related things.
6. Can we _____ next week? I'd love to hear how you're doing.
7. My CEO wants to _____ in terms of the kind of people we hire.
8. I don't want to _____ too much here, but someone has to tell you this.
9. I'm a mover and shaker but my boss likes to _____.
10. I know you don't agree with me but I don't think you're looking at the _____.

Answers

1. hold the purse strings

2. the wrong impression
3. down the road
4. playing catch up
5. call the shots
6. touch base
7. shake things up
8. go out on a limb
9. take things slowly
10. big picture

Lesson 123: Idioms

Let off the hook

Meaning: To not be punished, even though he/she was caught doing something wrong. For example, a politician who doesn't go to jail even though he committed a crime.

Origin: From the 1800s and refers to a fish letting themselves off a hook to not be caught.

I can't believe they *let him off the hook* for that crime.

My brother always got *let off the hook* by my parents. He was always their favourite.

Letting bygones be bygones

Meaning: Putting something behind you, forgiving someone.

Origin: From the 1400s. A bygone was something that has gone by.

I'm all for *letting bygones be bygones* but I'm never going to forgive my boss for

what he did.

It's easy enough to say *let bygones be bygones* if you are on the other end of it.

Let the dust settle

Meaning: Wait for and let a situation become calm or normal after something exciting or unusual happened. Give something time before proceeding.

Origin: Unknown. But, could be related to construction where there's lots of dust that needs to settle before a place is inhabitable.

I think we should *let the dust settle* before deciding on this.

I'm not sure what the result will be. We need to *let the dust settle* first.

Like riding a bike

Meaning: Something that you always remember how to do, even with a large break of time in between.

Origin: Unknown but came into usage sometime after 1860 when people started using the word bicycle.

I'm sure it'll be easy to pick up tennis again. It's *like riding a bike*.

Driving a car is *like riding a bike*. You'll be a pro in no time.

Like two peas in a pod

Meaning: Two people who are very similar in thinking or appearance.

Origin: Refers to peas still in the peapod that are almost identical in size and color.

Sarah and Lucy are *like two peas in a pod*. They're never apart!

Remember how Brian and Kenny were *like two peas in a pod* when they were growing up?

Practice: Write an appropriate response using an idiom.

1. I'm nervous about playing tennis for the first time in years.
2. Should I go talk to him?
3. How should we punish him?

4. They're so cute together!

Answers (many are possible).

1. You'll do great. It's like riding a bike.
2. Tomorrow is better I think. Let the dust settle.
3. We need to do something. We can't just let him off the hook.
4. Just like two peas in a pod.

Lesson 124: Clog Up

Andy: Hey Nicole. The drain is **clogged up** again with your long hairs. You're not **holding up** your end of the bargain. Remember? You promised to clean the sink and I promised to **knock off** the late-night video gaming.

Nicole: Oh, **come off it**. It's not a big deal. I could **do with** you not hassling me all the time.

Andy: You **went back on** your word! I **carried out** my end of the deal. You **let me down**.

Nicole: Okay, you're right. I **messed up** and I'm sorry. I'll pay more attention to it.

Vocabulary

Clogged up: Blocked.

Holding up: Doing something you promised.

Knock off: Stop.

Come off it: Stop saying something silly or ridiculous.

Do with: Get something you want.

Went back on: Didn't follow through; broke a promise.

Carried out: Did something as promised.

Let me down: Disappointed me.

Messed up: Did something incorrectly.

Practice

1. Sorry. I _____ on that project. I'll do my best to fix it.
2. He _____ his word—I was so disappointed in him.
3. He's famous for not _____ his end of the deal. Such a sketchy guy.
4. I have a feeling he's going to _____ in the end but so far, so good.
5. I could _____ a cup of tea.
6. The drain is _____ again. Could you please take a look at it?
7. He _____ each task efficiently and under budget.
8. Oh, _____. That's not what happened.
9. Please _____ all the swearing around Jamie, okay? I don't want her to hear that stuff at home.

Answers

1. messed up

2. went back on
3. holding up
4. let me down
5. do with
6. clogged up
7. carried out
8. come off it
9. knock off

Lesson 125: How to Extend an Invite or Suggest an Idea

Would you like to have lunch together next week?

Sure, how about Thursday?

No, I can't. I'm so busy with this project. I have no free time.

Sounds great.

Why don't we get a beer together after work?

Sorry, I'm busy tonight but how about tomorrow?

Yeah, I'd love to!

Why don't we check out that new pub down the street?

Are you interested in seeing the new James Bond movie with me?

That sounds great. How about this weekend?

I've already seen it.

Do you want to have dinner together on Friday?

Perfect.

I can't do Friday. How about Saturday?

I'm thinking about going to see the Rolling Stones concert. Are you interested?

Maybe. How much are the tickets?

Would you be interested in going hiking sometime?

Sure, I'd love to.

Hmmm...I don't like exercising!

I don't like hiking but what about grabbing a beer?

Dialogue #1:

Tom: Do you have any plans this weekend? I'd love to see the new James Bond movie.

Jenny: Not really. Do you want to go together?

Tom: Yeah, that sounds great. And while we're making plans, are you interested in going to the U2 concert next month?

Jenny: I don't think I can do it. The tickets are so expensive.

Dialogue #2:

Tim: Let's grab a beer after work. I need to chill out.

Carrie: I know, it's been a long day. I'm game.

Tim: Awesome! Should we invite Bob and Jen?

Carrie: Sure, why not?

Tim: Okay, I'll ask them.

Carrie: Cool, let's walk over to the Dublin around 5:00.

Lesson 126: Idioms

Speak of the devil

Meaning: The person you are talking about appears at that exact moment. For example, you are talking about a co-worker and then they walk into the room right then.

Origin: Goes back to the 1500s when it was thought that you shouldn't mention the devil.

Oh, *speak of the devil*! We were just wondering if you wanted to join us for lunch.

Well, *speak of the devil*! We were just talking about how your daughter got engaged.

Spice things up

Meaning: To make things more interesting or exciting.

Origin: Uncertain.

Let's *spice things up* a bit and go for Thai food tonight. I'm tired of the usual.

Jeremiah tried to *spice things up* at work and organized a secret Santa gift exchange. It did make it a bit more fun.

Spill the beans

Meaning: Tell a secret.

Origin: It's thought to have originated in Ancient Greece. People used white or black beans to vote secretly. Then, the beans were spilled to reveal the results.

Come on, *spill the beans*. I won't tell anyone.

Nicole *spilled the beans* accidentally on Tina's resignation. It was so awkward.

Stabbed someone in the back

Meaning: To betray someone, especially someone with a close relationship.

Origin: From Germany after WWI. The German army felt betrayed by politicians who signed the peace treaty because they thought they could win.

Adolph Hitler used this “stabbed in the back” story during his rise to power to gain followers.

Tim *stabbed Tony in the back*. I'm not sure how this is going to go down.

She *stabbed me in the back* years ago and has been dead to me ever since.

Stealing my thunder

Meaning: Taking credit for something that someone else did.

Origin: From the early 1700s. A playwright invented a thunder machine and a few days later, someone stole the idea and used it in another play.

Stop *stealing my thunder*! This is my news to share, not yours.

My boss is always *stealing my thunder* for the work I do. It's getting old.

Step up to the plate

Meaning: Take responsibility.

Origin: Comes from baseball where the batter steps up to the home plate to hit the ball.

I'm hoping that Mike will *step up to the plate* and take charge now that Tony has quit.

I'm hoping that my wife will *step up to the plate* and register the kids for all their activities. I'm tired of doing it.

Practice: Write an appropriate response using an idiom.

1. So I just heard the latest gossip about Bryan.

2. Hey look, there's Tony!

3. Do you think he'll pay the child support he owes?

4. Did you see Jen at the meeting, taking credit for my work?

Answers (many are possible).

1. Spill the beans.

2. Speak of the devil.

3. Probably not. He's not known for stepping up to the plate.

4. She stole your thunder.

Lesson 127: Keep a Secret

Jerry: Hey Min, can you **keep a secret**?

Min: Sure, what's up? I can **keep quiet.**

Jerry: I **can't say for sure** but I think that Ted paid someone to **take his place** for the CPA exam. He had to **take the exam** on Friday at 10:00 am but I saw him **posting on *Facebook*** during that time.

Min: Is he **capable of** that? Do people **make money** taking exams for others?

Jerry: I think it's a thing. Ted should **be ashamed of himself**. He should get fired for sure.

Vocabulary

Keep a secret: Not telling other people what someone told you in confidence.

Keep quiet: Don't say anything.

Can't say for sure: Uncertain about something.

Take his place: Replace somebody.

Take the exam: Write a test.

Posting on *Facebook*: Writing something on *Facebook*, uploading a video or picture, etc.

Capable of: Having the ability to do something.

Make money: Do a job, task, etc. in order to get paid.

Be ashamed of himself: What other people say in response to someone doing something bad.

Practice

1. He should _____ for acting like that at school.
2. Please _____ about it, okay? I don't want everyone to know.
3. If you _____ now, then you'll be eligible for that promotion next month.
4. I need to _____ quickly to pay the rent at the end of the month.
5. I'll tell you but only if you can _____.
6. I need to find someone to _____ for the game next week. He broke his leg.
7. I don't think he's _____ doing such a terrible thing!
8. I'm addicted to social media and can't stop _____.
9. I _____ but I think Ted and Judy are going to get divorced.

Answers

1. be ashamed of himself
2. keep quiet
3. take the exam
4. make money

5. keep a secret

6. take his place

7. capable of

8. posting on *Facebook*

9. can't say for sure

Lesson 128: How to Talk about the Weather

Wow, it's so cold outside!

Yeah, it's freezing.

I can't believe how much it's raining today!

I know, I'm so happy I remembered my umbrella.

Did you see the forecast? It's going to be sunny all next week.

Yes, I'm excited about it!

I can't wait.

Nice weather this weekend. Any big plans?

Oh, not really. I may do some work in the garden.

It's so sunny out there!

I know. I seriously regret not bringing my sunglasses.

It's beautiful.

Beautiful day, isn't it?

Yes, it is.

Yeah, I'm going to play tennis later.

It feels like winter is coming.

Yeah, there's a chill in the air today.

Dialogue #1:

Tom: It's raining cats and dogs!

Jenny: Yeah, my feet are soaking wet. I hate it.

Tom: Did you see the forecast though? Lots of sun next week.

Jenny: I'm already looking forward to it.

Dialogue #2:

Tim: The weather looks great for this weekend. Do you have any plans?

Carrie: I'm going to get my garden ready for planting.

Tim: Yeah, it is that time of year, right? The days are getting longer.

Carrie: Definitely. What are you up to?

Tim: Probably going kayaking with a friend. That's about it.

Carrie: Okay, have fun.

Lesson 129: Wiped Out

Jeremy: Doug? Are you okay?

Doug: I **wiped out** on my bike. I **ran over** a tree root and went over the handlebars. I thought it was just some dirt and I tried to **wash it off** but it **turned out** to be a big cut.

Jeremy: You **lucked out**. It could have been way worse. How was the bike?

Doug: I had to **take apart** the front wheel and then **straighten out** the rim. But, we're both going to **pull through**. You can't **keep us down**!

Vocabulary

Wiped out: Fell off a bike, skateboard, skates, etc.

Ran over: Went over something with a car, bike, etc.

Wash it off: Remove something with water.

Turned out: Proved to be the case in the end.

Lucked out: Something turned out less badly than expected due to luck.

Take apart: Disassemble.

Straighten out: Make straight again.

Pull through: Feeling better, or having a good outcome after a bad situation.

Keep us down: Prevent from advancing or going further.

Practice

1. You can't _____! We never give up.
2. He _____ on his skateboard and broke his leg.
3. My dad is in the hospital but he's going to _____.
4. Can you _____ or is it permanent?
5. He _____ and has no broken bones from his accident.
6. Let's _____ this house before everyone comes over!
7. Let's _____ the dishwasher and see if we can figure out what's wrong.
8. I _____ my son's bicycle accidentally. He was so angry with me but I told him to put it away so many times.
9. It _____ okay in the end but I have to confess that I was worried about it.

Answers

1. keep up down

2. wiped out

3. pull through

4. wash it off

5. lucked out

6. straighten out

7. take apart

8. ran over

9. turned out

Lesson 130: Idioms

Living hand to mouth

Meaning: Live paycheck to paycheck. Not having lots of money, especially disposable income.

Origin: Goes back to the 1600s and may have referred to a time of famine in England.

I'm so tired of *living hand to mouth*. I need to go back to school so I can get a better job.

They're *living hand to mouth* so I try to help them out by bringing meals over every week.

Looks like a million bucks

Meaning: Look attractive or well put together.

Origin: Unknown, but in the days when you could buy a hamburger or soda for $0.05, a million bucks (dollars) was a lot of money. A million dollars was considered to be very wealthy.

He *looks like a million bucks* with his new haircut!

She's *looking like a million bucks* these days with that flashy new car.

Make a break for it

Meaning: Leave somewhere quickly.

Origin: Unknown.

Let's *make a break for it* before he sees us and makes us stay.

I'm hoping that Tony goes for lunch soon and then I can *make a break for it* and get out of here.

Making a mountain out of a molehill

Meaning: To make something into a bigger deal than it is. For example, someone who gets a traffic ticket but doesn't pay it and then ends up going to jail because of it.

Origin: From the 1500s in Nicholas Udall's translation of "*The First Tome or*

Volume of the Paraphrase of Erasmus upon the New Testament."

Don't you think you're *making a mountain out of a molehill*? It's not a big deal.

I hate working with Tommy. He always *makes a mountain of a molehill* and it's stressful to deal with.

Make ends meet

Meaning: Make enough money to pay all the bills.

Origin: First seen in the 1600s but the origin is uncertain.

It's been difficult to *make ends meet* for my family since Covid struck.

I need to change jobs. My current one doesn't pay enough to *make ends meet*.

Practice: Write an appropriate response using an idiom.

1. Jerry just went to the bathroom.

2. I wish we had more money.

3. Do you like my new haircut?

Answers (many are possible).

1. Okay, let's make a break for it.

2. I'm tired of just making ends meet.

3. Yeah, you look like a million bucks!

Lesson 131: Business Trip

Cayla: How was your **business trip**?

Jill: It was a nightmare. The **plane was overbooked** so we were packed in like sardines. It was a **bumpy flight** with lots of **crying babies**. There was barely any room for my **carry-on luggage**. We **took off late** and I had to run to catch my **connecting flight**. To top it all off, my **checked luggage** arrived one day late.

Cayla: Wow! That's too much. I'm **amazed by** your **bad luck**.

Jill: I know, right? I shouldn't complain though. At least it's my **dream job** and I only have to travel **once in a while**.

Vocabulary

Business trip: Travel for work.

Plane was overbooked: The airline sold too many tickets for the number of seats on the plane.

Bumpy flight: Turbulence while flying.

Crying babies: Often refers to young children making lots of noise on a plane, bus, etc.

Carry-on-luggage: Bags that you store in the plane under your seat or above you.

Took off late: Describes a plane that departed after the scheduled time.

Connecting flight: An intermediate flight between departing city and destination.

Checked luggage: Bags that you give the ticket agent at the airport which are inaccessible while flying.

Amazed by: Impressed with.

Bad luck: Describes a series of unfortunate circumstances.

Dream job: An ideal job.

Once in a while: Not that often.

Practice

1. Tennis isn't my favourite sport but I'll play with my wife _____.

2. We _____ because someone wouldn't put their seat belt on.
3. The _____ so I offered to take the next flight for $300.
4. My _____ is to be a doctor.
5. The _____ arrived late which meant I was late getting to my meeting.
6. It seems like you always have such _____.
7. I need to go on a _____ next week to meet with our new clients.
8. I only take _____ when I travel because I hate waiting for my bags after a flight.
9. I'm _____ how well you did on that exam.
10. Thankfully, there were no _____ on my flight.
11. It's usually a _____ from Edmonton to Vancouver because you go over the mountains.
12. You can find your _____ at carousel four.

Answers

1. once in a while
2. took off late
3. plane was overbooked
4. dream job
5. connecting flight
6. bad luck
7. business trip
8. carry-on luggage
9. amazed by
10. crying babies
11. bumpy flight
12. checked luggage

Lesson 132: Break a Leg

Jerry: Hey, I heard **through the grapevine** that you're going to be in a play next month.

Linda: It's true. I must admit! I had to **blow off some steam** from work and escaping into my character is a great way to do that.

Jerry: You're **taking the bull by the horns** lately! Can I come watch?

Linda: Sure, **knock yourself out**! It's a little bit **amateur hour** but **on the upside**, the tickets are cheap!

Jerry: Okay, I'll come for sure. I can't forget to tell you to **break a leg** though!

Vocabulary

Break a leg: To wish someone good luck, usually before performing or going on stage.

Blow off some steam: Doing something to get rid of stress. For example, having a few drinks after a difficult work project.

Knock yourself out: To try hard to do something. Often something that others

think is a waste of time.

Taking the bull by the horns: Doing something bravely and decisively.

Through the grapevine: To spread information informally. Often related to gossip.

Amateur hour: Not professional.

On the upside: Something positive in a generally negative situation.

Practice

1. I heard _____ that Tom and Monica broke up.
2. Do you want to do that for me? _____.
3. I starting playing soccer to _____ from my terrible job.
4. Well, _____, this job has better hours.
5. Good luck and _____.
6. It was hard to watch that presentation. Talk about _____.
7. I'm _____ at work lately and it's going well!

Answers

1. through the grapevine
2. Knock yourself out
3. blow off some steam
4. on the upside
5. break a leg

6. amateur hour

7. taking the bull by the horns

Lesson 133: Idioms

Make some bank (Make bank)

Meaning: To earn lots of money.

Origin: Uncertain but first seen in the 2000s. Common in rap songs.

I'm hoping to *make some bank* doing tree planting this summer.

He must be *making bank*! Look at that new car of his.

Missed the boat

Meaning: To perform poorly or badly.

Origin: A common expression in England in the 1700s when boat transport was the main way to get around. To miss the boat meant that you were stuck having to wait for the next one, missing out on opportunities.

He kind of *missed the boat* during that presentation. Why did he spend so much time focusing on unimportant things?

I'm hoping that we won't *miss the boat* on this. There's a lot of opportunity here.

Money burning a hole in your pocket

Meaning: Extra money that you want to spend.

Origin: A similar phrase was used as early as the 1500s and the current one was seen in the 1800s.

Sure, you can take me out for lunch if you have *money burning a hole in your pocket.*

I'm thinking about going shopping this weekend. I got my bonus and have some *money burning a hole in my pocket.*

Money to burn

Meaning: Extra money to spend freely.

Origin: Used since the 1800s and refers to paper money that you don't need. Hence, you can afford to light it on fire and burn or waste it.

Sure, let's go out tonight! I've got a bit of *money to burn*.

I know you have some *money to burn* and want to spend it, but why not pay off some bills first before buying all that stuff?

Mum's the word

Meaning: Don't tell anyone.

Origin: A popular English expression of unknown origin that was used by Shakespeare in *Henry Vl*.

Please remember that *mum's the word* on this, okay? I don't want our competitors to hear.

I'll tell you what I'm getting Jimmy for his birthday but *mum's the word*.

Practice: Write an appropriate response using an idiom.

1. Let's go for lunch. My treat.
2. Tim's presentation was terrible.

Answers (many are possible).

1. You must have money burning a hole in your pocket.

2. Yeah, he kind of missed the boat.

Lesson 134: How to Talk about Activities

What are you up to this weekend?

Oh, the usual. Going hiking and hanging out with my friends.

No plans yet. I'll see what comes up.

Did you go hiking this weekend?

The weather wasn't great so I didn't. But, I'll try to get out next weekend.

Yes, I went to Mount Seymour.

So what are some of your hobbies?

Well, I like to read, watch TV, and cook for friends.

I love to make beer and wine.

It's going to be nice this weekend. Do you have any plans for getting outside?

For sure. My friend and I will go kayaking I think.

Not really. I'll try to go for a bike ride though.

Seen any interesting shows on Netflix lately?

Oh yeah, I loved _____.

It's been so nice. I've mostly been spending time outside.

Did you do anything interesting this weekend?

Not much. I mostly just stayed in and watched TV. How about you?

I just got back from camping last night.

Dialogue #1:

Tom: Hey Jenny, what are you up to this weekend?

Jenny: Oh, not much. I think the weather is going to be terrible. Maybe some cooking and Netflix. How about you?

Tom: That sounds nice. I go hiking in all weather, so I'll probably do that on Saturday.

Jenny: Wow. You're braver than me!

Dialogue #2:

Tim: Did you get up to anything fun this weekend?

Carrie: Yeah, I went camping with my family.

Tim: Nice! Where did you go?

Carrie: We went to Porteau Cove. Our campsite was right on the ocean.

Tim: That sounds fabulous. I'd love to see some pictures.

Lesson 135: Say No More

Tom: I'm **getting prepared** for the **dinner party**. Are you **allergic to** anything?

Kristine: I'm allergic to gluten.

Tom: Oh wow, that's a big one. I **never knew** that.

Kristine: I only became **aware of** it myself **quite recently** when I took an **allergy test.** Please **keep in mind** that even things like soy sauce have gluten in them. I can **save you the trouble** and bring my own food though.

Tom: Say no more! I will do some research and send you the recipes of what I'm going to cook. Then, you can make sure they're safe for you to eat.

Vocabulary

Getting prepared: Getting ready for something.

Dinner party: A gathering where the host cooks dinner for everyone.

Allergic to: Can't touch, eat, etc. without having a bad reaction.

Never knew: Didn't know.

Aware of: Learned about.

Quite recently: In the past months, weeks, etc.

Allergy test: A kind of test that tells you things you can't touch, eat, etc.

Keep in mind: Please remember.

Save you the trouble: Prevent you from experiencing any hassle.

Say no more: Stop talking! I understand or will take care of it.

Practice

1. _____, I will take care of it.
2. Are you sure I can't _____ of coming to the airport to pick me up? I can take a taxi.
3. It's time to start _____ to leave for your soccer game. It starts soon.
4. I _____ that Tom was Jenny's cousin.
5. Please _____ that you only have two hours for this exam.
6. Why not take an _____? It might help you figure out all your stomach aches.
7. I'm _____ pineapple and peppers.
8. I only found out about this job opportunity _____. I'm going to apply tonight.
9. Let's have a _____ and invite your team at work over.
10. I'm _____ the fact that you don't like Tim but you'll have to work with him.

Answers

1. say no more

2. save you the trouble
3. getting prepared
4. never knew
5. keep in mind
6. allergy test
7. allergic to
8. quite recently
9. dinner party
10. aware of

Lesson 136: You can't Judge a Book by Its Cover

Jerry: Have you met our new neighbor yet?

Linda: I talked to him last night but he's **a hard nut to crack**. He only gave one-word answers to all my questions!

Jerry: Well, **you can't judge a book by its cover**. I'm sure we'll find out more about him as time goes on. Maybe he's not that **talkative.**

Linda: Maybe. But I felt frustrated talking to him for just a few minutes. Anyway, I'm working on not **burning bridges** so I'll **put my best foot forward**!

Jerry: Good plan. You never know **what may come**. Let's invite him over for dinner and see if he **opens up**.

Vocabulary

You can't judge a book by its cover: to not judge something or someone based on appearance. For example, a restaurant that's not stylish and new may have delicious food.

A hard nut to crack: Someone that is difficult to get to know.

Burning bridges: Damaging relationships.

Put my best foot forward: To be on one's best behaviour.

What may come: What could happen in the future.

Talkative: Someone who likes to talk a lot.

Opens up: Shares information about oneself.

Practice

1. I try my best to avoid _____ when leaving a job.
2. I'm happy for the fresh start and want to _____ at this new job.
3. My dad rarely talks and is _____.
4. I learned early on in life that _____.
5. I'm well prepared for _____.
6. My daughter is so _____. I go for a walk every day to get a break!
7. I love it when my son _____ to me. It happens so rarely!

Answers

1. burning bridges
2. put my best foot forward
3. a hard nut to crack
4. you can't judge a book by its cover
5. what may come

6. talkative

7. opens up

Lesson 137: Eat in Moderation

Tim: I'm **eager for** the **winter holidays** to start. I'm so bored with this project I'm working on. How about you? Any **big plans**?

Sam: Oh yeah, for sure. I'll **get together with** my **extended family** and some **close friends**. But it's **highly probable** that I'll get called into work. I have **difficulty with** saying no to double overtime! What are your plans?

Tim: You got to **earn a living**, right? For me, no work but lots of family and friends too. And of course, I'm sure I'll achieve my **personal best** in the amount of **Christmas baking** eaten.

Sam: Do your best! That's a big goal. I try to **eat in moderation** but we all know that'll go out the window with my wife's baking.

Vocabulary

Eager for: Excited about.

Winter holidays: Holidays that are taken during winter, usually around Christmas.

Big plans: Plans that are not usual.

Get together with: See; hang out with.

Extended family: Aunts, uncles, cousins, etc. Not immediate family.

Close friends: Good friends.

Highly probable: Very likely.

Difficulty with: Finding something or someone hard to deal with.

Earn a living: Make money at a job so that you can pay the bills.

Personal best: The best you've done at a certain task in your entire life.

Christmas baking: Special cakes, cookies, etc. that are made around Christmas.

Eat in moderation: Eat only a small-medium amount of food each day.

Practice

1. It's almost impossible, but I'm going to try to _____ this Christmas.
2. Let's _____ with your parents this weekend.
3. I'm _____ this exam to be finished.
4. It's _____ that the Edmonton Oilers will make the playoffs this year.

5. There are better ways to _____ than what you're doing now I think.
6. Want to help me with _____?
7. I'd rather have a few _____ than many acquaintances.
8. Do you have any _____ for New Year's Eve?
9. I have _____ sitting still for more than an hour. That's why I don't like movies.
10. For the _____, my family is going to go on a ski trip.
11. I couldn't see my _____ this year because of Covid-19.
12. My _____ for biking is 27km in one hour.

Answers

1. eat in moderation
2. get together with
3. eager for
4. highly probable

5. earn a living
6. Christmas baking
7. close friends
8. big plans
9. difficulty with
10. winter holidays
11. extended family
12. personal best

Lesson 138: Review

1. I'm working a lot but on the upside, I _____.

    A. took his place

    B. am burning bridges

    C. have money to burn

    D. let the dust settle

2. That sounds fun! _____.

    A. speak of the devil

    B. knock yourself out

    C. make a break for it

    D. eat in moderation

3. I hope that she can _____ and get the job done.

    A. miss the boat

    B. step up to the plate

C. keep a secret

D. live hand to mouth

Match the phrase with the meaning.

1. down the road A. not doing some professionally

2. amateur hour B. flashy in appearance

3. stole his thunder C. not overeating

4. looks like a million bucks D. in the future

5. eat in moderation E. took credit for something that someone else did

Match the statement or question with the response.

1. Do you want to catch a movie tonight? A. Oh, not that much.

2. Please keep in mind that I'm allergic to shellfish. B. Sure, I'll give you a call on Thursday.

3. Let's get together with Tony this weekend. C. That sounds great.

4. Why don't we touch base later this week? D. For sure.

5. Did it cost a lot? E. Sorry, I can't.

Fill in the blank with the correct phrase or expression.

eager for, make bank, let me down, holding up, wiped out, a hard nut to crack, dinner party

1. What do you think about planning a _____ next month?

2. I want to _____ this winter and then take the summer off.

3. I _____ on my skateboard and broke my arm.

4. Tim sure is _____.

5. How are you _____ at work? We're super busy over here.

6. I'm _____ 2021 to be over!

7. Please don't _____. This has to get done on time.

Answers

1. C
2. B
3. B

Match the phrase with the meaning: 1-D, 2-A, 3-E, 4-B, 5-C

Match the statement or question with the response: 1-E, 2-D, 3-C, 4-B, 5-A

Fill in the blank with the correct phrase or expression

1. dinner party
2. make bank
3. wiped out
4. a hard nut to crack

5. holding up

6. eager for

7. let me down

Lesson 139: Idioms

My hands are tied

Meaning: Unable to do something, even if you wanted to.

Origin: First seen in the 1600s. Refers to being unable to do something because someone else has tied your hands together.

Sorry, *my hands are tied*. I can't reverse that decision Johnny made.

I'd love to help you but *my hands are tied*.

My lips are sealed

Meaning: A promise to not tell anyone a certain thing.

Origin: The current expressions came into use in the 1900s but some earlier, related phrases are recorded in the 1700s. It was famously used by British Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin when people asked him about the abdication of King Edward.

Don't worry! I won't say a thing. *My lips are sealed.*

My lips are sealed. I'll never tell anyone about that!

Needle in a haystack

Meaning: Something that is impossible to find.

Origin: In ancient times, needles were made from bone or wood and looked similar to hay. This made them very difficult to find in a big haystack.

Finding my keys in this messy house is like finding a *needle in a haystack*!

I'm hoping we can find the *needle in the haystack* and get lucky with that accounting error.

Nip this in the bud

Meaning: To stop something bad from happening early on in the process.

Origin: First seen in the early 1600s and describes the de-budding of plants that were nipped off.

Let's *nip this in the bud,* okay? I don't want everyone showing up late to work all

the time.

I'm hoping we can *nip his nail-biting in the bud* before it starts. Let's work together on this.

No pain, no gain

Meaning: Working hard for something, undergoing hardship because of it.

Origin: Came into popular use in 1982. Jane Fonda used the saying in her popular workout videos.

Keep going! *No pain, no gain*, right?

I'm so tired of studying but *no pain, no gain*. I need to pass this test to get a promotion.

Practice: Write an appropriate response using an idiom.

1. I've been searching for my keys for over an hour now.

2. I'm so tired and sore from those workouts with my new trainer.

3. Did you notice that Tony is leaving his homework until super late at night?

4. Can you help me out here?

Answers (many are possible).

1. It sounds like finding a needle in a haystack.

2. Well, no pain, no gain.

3. Yes, we need to nip this in the bud now I think.

4. Sorry, my hands are tied.

Lesson 140: How to Talk about the Local Sports Team

Did you see the game last night?

It was a real nail-biter!

No, I missed it. I had to work.

No. What happened?

Do you follow the Kings?

I don't even know what sport they play!

Yeah, who doesn't in this city?

Did you hear that the Oilers are going to trade Connor McDavid?

Wow! Where did you hear that?

I heard that too.

Are you excited about the upcoming NHL season?

For sure, I'll catch a few games. My boyfriend is obsessed with the Canucks.

I don't follow hockey.

That was a poor showing from the Oilers last night.

I know, they're having a terrible season this year.

Better than last year though!

Dialogue:

Tom: Hey, did you catch the game last night?

Jenny: Which one? I'm out of the loop.

Tom: The Canucks. They're in the playoffs now.

Jenny: Oh yeah, I did hear about that. Did they win?

Tom: They sure did!

Lesson 141: Pay Someone a Visit

Cindy: What are you up to this weekend?

Ted: I have to **pay my grandfather a visit**. I'm not sure he can **tell the difference** between me and anyone else but I have to **keep a promise** to my mom that I would visit in the **next few days.**

Cindy: Of course, you can't **break a promise** like that. It's nice that you **keep him company.**

Ted: It's **time-consuming** as I have to drive an hour to get there and he's also **going deaf** so often **says nothing.**

Cindy: Ted! You're **a good guy** for doing this. I think the visits mean more to him than you might think.

Vocabulary

Pay my grandfather a visit: See his grandfather in person.

Tell the difference: Distinguish between things.

Keep a promise: Follow through with someone you said you'd do.

Next few days: The following 2-3 days.

Break a promise: Not follow through with something you said you'd do.

Keep him company: Spend time with him.

Time-consuming: Describes something that takes up lots of time.

Going deaf: Starting to not hear well.

Says nothing: Don't talk.

A good guy: A man who is generally trustworthy, dependable, helpful, etc.

Practice

1. Ted is _____ and will help you out for sure.
2. Let's go to the hospital and _____. I'm sure he's bored.
3. It's best to _____ in cases like this. Whatever you say can come back to haunt you.
4. I can't _____ between his two daughters.
5. I think it's okay to _____ if someone wants you to do something illegal.
6. Even though it's _____ to make homemade lasagna, it's worth it.
7. Sorry, I can't play tennis. I have to _____.
8. Let's have a meeting to talk about this in the _____.
9. Wow. It's difficult to _____ like that.
10. My father is _____ and turns up the TV so loud.

Answers

1. a good guy
2. keep him company

3. say nothing
4. tell the difference
5. break a promise
6. time-consuming
7. pay my grandfather a visit
8. next few days
9. keep a promise
10. going deaf

Lesson 142: Add Insult to Injury

Jerry: To **add insult to injury**, my dad got Covid-19 when he was in the hospital for a heart attack.

Linda: Oh no. Is he okay?

Jerry: Well, he's not **out of the woods** yet. He's still **sick as a dog** but he's not **at death's door**.

Linda: Okay, good to hear. Send him my **best wishes**, okay?

Jerry: Don't waste your breath. He still acts like he got up on the **wrong side of the bed** all the time.

Linda: Well, you certainly don't **take after** him. Don't worry!

Vocabulary

Add insult to Injury: Make something already bad worse. For example, a guy fell off his bike but then a car ran over his foot.

Out of the woods: A difficult situation that has improved. Usually refers to medical things when someone is very sick but has recovered a little bit.

Don't waste your breath: Whatever you say doesn't make a difference.

Sick as a dog: Very unwell.

At death's door: Close to dying.

Wrong side of the bed: Grumpy.

Best wishes: Friendly hope that someone is doing well.

Take after: Usually a son/daughter who is similar to his/her mother/father.

Practice

1. My sister hates mornings and often gets up on the _____.
2. I was _____ last year and spent a week in the hospital.
3. He's doing better but he's not _____ yet.
4. I can't believe he made it! He was _____.
5. _____. I've already made up my mind.
6. I honestly don't want to _____ but it looks like you have a flat tire too.
7. _____ on your recent engagement!
8. I hope my son doesn't _____ me. I haven't been the best example for him growing up.

Answers

1. wrong side of the bed
2. sick as a dog
3. out of the woods

4. at death's door

5. Don't waste your breath

6. add insult to injury

7. Best wishes

8. take after

Lesson 143: Dealing with a Health Emergency

I think I need to go to the hospital.

What's going on?

I think I'm having a heart attack. Call 911.

Okay, I'll do it right now.

Should we call 911?

Yes, I think so.

No, let's drive him to the hospital ourselves. It'll be faster.

I think I broke my leg.

Okay, should I take you to the hospital?

Stay on the phone until the ambulance gets there.

Okay.

How long will they be?

How's he doing now?

Worse. His breathing is louder now.

He seems to be doing a bit better.

Can you send someone out to meet the ambulance?

Sure, my son will go outside.

I'm alone right now.

How much longer will they be?

They're on their way. It should be about five more minutes.

Dialogue #1:

Tom: I feel terrible. I think I might be having a heart attack.

Jenny: Should we call 911?

Tom: Yes.

Jenny: Okay, I'll do it right now.

Tom: Ugghhhh.

Dialogue #2:

Tim: Are you going into labour? I think we should go to the hospital.

Carrie: Maybe, let me phone my doctor first and see what she says.

Tim: Okay, I'll call her and we can talk to her, okay?

Carrie: Sounds good.

Lesson 144: Stealing Someone's Thunder

Jerry: I just had a big fight with my friend and I'm not sure I can just **get over it.** It was a **massive blow-up**.

Linda: Oh no! What happened?

Jerry: Well, she's my co-worker and keeps **stealing my thunder** on work projects. She's taking credit for stuff that I do. I'm **sick and tired of it.**

Linda: That's a **tough pill to swallow**. I'd for sure have a **bee in my bonnet** about this too.

Jerry: It's not even **the straw that broke the camel's back.** She owes me a thousand **bucks** as well.

Linda: It sounds like you two need a bit of distance from each other.

Vocabulary

Stealing my thunder: Taking credit for something that someone else did.

Get over it: To fully recover (from an illness) or not think about it negatively anymore (break-up with a girlfriend or boyfriend, losing a job, etc.).

Tough pill to swallow: Something difficult to get over.

Bee in my bonnet: A certain issue that is annoying someone.

The straw that broke the camel's back: The last thing in a series of bad things before an event occurs — like a breakup, quitting a job, or fight.

Blow-up: Big fight or problem.

Massive: Very big/huge.

Sick and tired of it: Annoyed by something that happens frequently.

Bucks: Dollars.

Practice

1. He looks like a million _____ these days.
2. I get a _____ any time I deal with that certain customer at work.
3. My mom is pretty relaxed but she would have a big _____ every once in a while.
4. He got a _____ raise at work. Lucky guy!
5. My teammate keeps _____ and always seems to forget that I set him up for most of his goals.
6. Getting a D on that test was a _____.
7. I can't just _____. I'm still in love with my ex-boyfriend.
8. That last project was _____ before I quit.
9. My mom is _____. She's gone on strike!

Answers

1. bucks

2. bee in my bonnet

3. blow-up

4. massive

5. stealing my thunder

6. tough pill to swallow

7. get over it

8. the straw that broke the camel's back

9. sick and tired of it

Lesson 145: Idioms

Not going to fly

Meaning: Not going to work.

Origin: First seen in the late 1800s with the development of airplanes.

This *isn't going to fly*. There are too many variables that we can't control here.

I told him that his idea *wasn't going to fly* but he didn't listen to me.

Not my cup of tea

Meaning: Not something I like or would do. For example, you have a friend who loves skydiving but you have no interest in it.

Origin: First seen in the late 1800s in England as “My cup of tea” to describe something you enjoyed. A few years later, “Not” was added to describe something you don't like.

I know you love black licorice but it *isn't my cup of tea*.

Sorry, I don't want to go hiking with you. It's *not my cup of tea*.

Not out of the woods

Meaning: A difficult situation that has improved slightly but could still be dangerous. Usually refers to medical things when someone is very sick but has recovered a little bit.

Origin: First seen in the papers of Benjamin Franklin. Probably refers to the idea that the forest is a dangerous place for humans.

My dad is doing okay but he's *not out of the woods* yet. The doctors are still worried.

He's *not out of the woods* yet. He had surgery but we're not sure of the outcome of that yet.

Not seeing the forest for the trees

Meaning: Seeing only small details instead of the big picture.

Origin: First seen in the 1500s in the *Proverbs of John Heywood*.

Mason is famous for *not seeing the forest for the trees*. He gets so into all the small details.

I'm worried that we're *not seeing the forest for the trees*. Let's step back and take a look at the big picture.

Not set in stone

Meaning: Not decided 100% yet.

Origin: Came into popular use in the 1700s when tombstones were made from stone or granite. Carving or writing something into them is permanent, as compared to something like wood.

I think we're going to Whistler for Christmas but it's *not set in stone*.

Nothing is set in stone. We're still open to feedback about this.

Practice: Write an appropriate response using an idiom.

1. Do you know what time we're starting?

2. How's your new idea coming along?

3. Is Dale doing better?

Answers (many are possible).

1. Maybe 6:00, but it's not set in stone.

2. It's not going to fly.

3. He's not out of the woods yet.

Lesson 146: Breakthrough

Jerry: How's your thesis going?

Athena: I had a big **breakthrough**. I'm planning to **hand it in** next month.

Jerry: Wow! That's great news. It was **hanging over** your head for so long. What did you **come up with**?

Athena: I'll **spare you** the boring details! But, I'm going to **make for** the mountains and **rip up** the slopes for a few days when it's done. That's the exciting news.

Jerry: I'll have to **see about sneaking in** a few days myself. I heard there was a big dump of snow last week.

Vocabulary

Breakthrough: Achieve some success at something, usually after a difficult period of time.

Hand it in: Turn something into a boss or teacher.

Hanging over: Feeling upset or worried about something.

Come up with: Discover; figure out.

Spare you: Save from dealing with or hearing about.

Make for: Go to.

Rip up: Do a sport enthusiastically (skiing, snowboarding, skateboarding).

See about: Look into something.

Sneaking in: Being able to do something even though you're busy; go someplace you're not supposed to go.

Practice

1. I think someone is _____ here at night. Some things are in different spots each morning.
2. What did you _____?
3. I'll have to _____ that vacation request. I'm not sure what our staffing needs are yet.
4. I'm happy to _____ the hassle and just do it myself.
5. Please _____ by Friday at midnight.
6. Let's _____ the slopes this weekend! There's 100 cm of fresh snow!
7. He's famous for projects _____ his head for months until he finally gets them done.
8. Let's _____ the mountains! It's such a nice day.
9. We just had a big _____ on that research we're doing.

Answers

1. sneaking in
2. come up with
3. see about
4. spare you
5. hand it in
6. rip up
7. hanging over
8. make for
9. breakthrough

Lesson 147: How to Talk about the News

Did you catch the news last night?

Oh yeah, crazy, right?

No, I didn't hear anything. What happened?

Did you hear that the bus drivers might go on strike?

Really? Why?

Yeah, I heard that on the radio on my way to work.

Oh no. I depend on the bus to get to work.

I can't believe the election has finally been decided.

I know, right? It's been forever.

It's about time!

It was so much drama.

Did you hear about that big earthquake in Chile?

No, what happened?

I know. It's tragic.

Dialogue #1:

Tom: Did you catch the news last night?

Jenny: Oh no, what happened?

Tom: There was a huge flood in Florida.

Jenny: Oh wow. What happened?

Tom: There was a massive storm that they weren't prepared for.

Jenny: Oh, I'll have to take a look at it.

Dialogue #2:

Ken: Did you watch the election last night?

Lana: I know it's bad but I don't follow politics that closely.

Ken: I understand completely. It's all a lot of drama

Lana: So, who won? Anything surprising?

Lesson 148: Cutting Corners

Jerry: My company has been **cutting corners** on this latest project and we're **in hot water** now.

Linda: Well, honestly, it's time for your company to **face the music.** You've been doing some things that cross the line for years now.

Jerry: Hey, hey. I know. You're **barking up the wrong tree**! I don't have anything to do with making the decisions. I do what I'm told. I'm basically a **yes man.**

Linda: I know. But, I wish you'd find some **greener pastures**. That company is going to **go under** soon I think.

Jerry*:* Well, jobs in my field are like a **needle in a haystack** these days. I'd leave if I could.

Vocabulary

Cutting Corners: Doing something cheaply or badly. Can often be related to construction/home renovations.

Face the music: Deal with the reality of something negative that you did. For

example, getting punished for a crime.

In hot water: In trouble for something.

Barking up the wrong tree: Blaming someone for something that isn't their fault.

Greener pastures: A better opportunity.

Go under: Go bankrupt or out of business.

Yes man: A weak person who always agrees with their superior at work or in politics.

Needle in a haystack: Something that is impossible to find.

Practice

1. That CEO made some terrible decisions and his company is about to _____.
2. I'm leaving my job and heading for _____.
3. It's time to _____ for ripping all those customers off.
4. Honestly, you're _____. Johnny did it, not me.
5. Donald Trump is _____ these days with the most recent scandal.
6. The guy painting my house is _____. I feel so angry about it.
7. I hate that my husband is forced into being a _____ in his new role at the company.
8. Looking for my glasses in my messy house is like finding a _____.

Answers

1. go under
2. greener pastures
3. face the music

4. barking up the wrong tree

5. in hot water

6. cutting corners

7. yes man

8. needle in a haystack

Lesson 149: The Elephant in the Room

Jerry: I'm ready to **blow a gasket** at work. Nobody wants to talk about **the elephant in the room**.

Linda: Oh yeah? What's going on?

Jerry: Well, the project manager at my company is not **on the ball.** We keep talking about budgets and timelines but the reality is that this guy should **get canned.** Everything goes through him but it's like **pulling teeth** to get anything done because of it.

Linda: It sounds like you guys are **getting into deep water**. Will your client **bail**?

Jerry: I'm starting to wonder. If I was **in their shoes**, I'd certainly demand a change. They're **bleeding money** right now because of it.

Linda: Tough times. I'm curious to see what happens.

Vocabulary

The elephant in the room: Something obvious and important that nobody wants to talk about.

On the ball: Easily understands things or reacts quickly to a situation.

Getting into deep water: To be in trouble.

Get canned: Fired from a job.

Blow a gasket: Get very angry or annoyed.

Pulling teeth: Something painful or difficult to do.

Bail: To leave or exit quickly, to give up on something.

In their shoes: To consider someone else's position or way of thinking.

Bleeding money: Losing money very quickly.

Practice

1. Honestly, my job would be decent if the company wasn't _____.
2. It's time to _____! I'm nervous that someone is going to call the police.
3. My brother might _____ because he's always leaving early.
4. Everyone is beating around the bush talking about unimportant stuff. But, I wish I had enough courage to mention _____.
5. He's _____ with all his financial commitments.
6. My boss is _____, unlike the last guy.
7. My dad is usually a pretty relaxed guy but sometimes he'd _____ over something minor.
8. It's honestly like _____ to get any information out of him.
9. Before judging, try to put yourself _____.

Answers

1. bleeding money

2. bail

3. get canned

4. the elephant in the room

5. getting into deep water

6. on the ball

7. blow a gasket

8. pulling teeth

9. in their shoes

Lesson 150: How to Buy Things

How much is this?

Let me check for you.

It's $7.20.

Do you have this sweater in a different color?

No, sorry, only the ones you can see on the shelf.

Yes, you can find more colors online.

Would you like a bag for that?

No, thank you. I have a bag already.

Yes, please.

Would you like that delivered?

Yes, please.

No thanks. I have a truck here with me.

Do you want to get the extended warranty?

No, thank you.

Maybe, how must does it cost?

What are the details?

Is that with cash or credit card?

Credit card, please.

Sign here.

Sure, thank you.

Dialogue #1:

Tom: How much is this sweater? I don't see a price-tag.

Jenny: It's on sale for $29.99.

Tom: Great, thanks. Do you have any other colors?

Jenny: No, just the ones you see here.

Dialogue #2:

Tom: Hi, can I help you find something?

Jenny: Oh, I'm just browsing.

Tom: Okay, let me know if you need help.

Jenny: I will.

Lesson 151: Track Down

Police officer #1: I think we should **turn up** the heat on this guy. I'm sure he'll **turn over** his accomplice. Or, at least help up **track him down**.

Police officer #2: I think you're right. He's already told us enough to **narrow down** the search. I was just about to **punch out** but I'll **stick around** for a bit.

Police officer #1: Okay, do you want to question him this time? I'll **back off** for now. But, don't **let up** too much.

Vocabulary

Turn up: Increase.

Turn over: Give something up.

Track him down: Find him.

Narrow down: Eliminate some possible options.

Punch out: Finish work for the day.

Stick around: Stay.

Back off: Draw back.

Let up: Reduce or lessen whatever you're doing.

Practice

1. Don't _____ on him, okay? He's just starting to brush his teeth without us telling him every single time.
2. Let's _____ the oven. I want it to cook quickly. I'm so hungry.
3. I know you want to _____ but there are still a couple more things to do.
4. Let's _____ so we can find out why he's missed so much school.
5. Please _____. I know you're trying to help but I don't want to hear it anymore.
6. I'm hoping to _____ the choices online first so we don't waste so much in the store.
7. We have to _____ the keys next Friday.
8. Let's _____ until the end and see if there's any leftover alcohol we can take home.

Answers

1. let up
2. turn up
3. punch out
4. track him down
5. back off
6. narrow down
7. turn over
8. stick around

Lesson 152: Idioms

Pick up the slack

Meaning: Working harder out of necessity because someone else isn't working hard enough.

Origin: Related to working on ships where you'd have to fix a portion of a rope that hung too loosely by “picking up the slack.” The opposite idiom is “Cut some slack.”

Melissa had to *pick up the slack* for Logan on that project.

I've been *picking up the slack* around the house because my wife has been traveling a lot for work.

Playing catch up

Meaning: To try to reach the same level as others, especially after starting late.

Origin: Dates back to the 1800s. One theory is that it was commonly used in sports such as football to describe a team that was losing.

I know we're *playing catch up* here but I think we can still get it done on time.

I hate working for Kerry. We're always *playing catch up* because he's so disorganized.

Pull the plug

Meaning: Stop or cancel something before it's finished.

Origin: A medical term related to unplugging a life support or breathing machine that is keeping someone alive. To turn off the machine (pull the plug) means that the person will die.

Let's *pull the plug* on this, okay? We're not getting anywhere.

I'm going to *pull the plug* if we don't get some good results in the next week or two. We have to stop wasting money on this.

Pull the wool over my eyes

Meaning: Trick someone.

Origin: First seen in the USA in the 1800s and probably comes from people commonly wearing wigs made out of wool.

My kids are great at *pulling the wool over my eyes*! I don't know how they always do it.

I'm not sure we can *pull the wool over Richard's eyes*. He's a pretty smart guy.

Off his rocker

Meaning: Someone who is acting crazy or not rationally.

Origin: Rocking chairs were very common in the 1800s and people often socialized with neighbors while enjoying some beers. Inevitably, someone would get drunk and fall out of the rocking chair (off his rocker).

Do you think Logan is acting a bit *off his rocker*? Maybe something is wrong with him.

I'm hoping that I don't go *off my rocker* when I get old! I'd rather die in a car crash before then.

Once in a blue moon

Meaning: Something that doesn't happen often.

Origin: First seen in 1528 in an anti-Church pamphlet. The reference to the blue moon is a conversation between two characters saying that if someone tells you that the moon is blue, you must believe it. The Church at that time was making outrageous statements and expecting people to believe them.

We're getting a bonus this year? That only happens *once in a blue moon*!

He only cleans his room *once in a blue moon*.

Out of the loop

Meaning: Not knowing anything.

Origin: Comes from the military where orders are passed in a feedback loop so everyone is informed.

I'm a bit *out of the loop* on that project. Could you please update me?

Tammy and Jeremy broke up? I'm so *out of the loop*!

Out of my depth

Meaning: Not qualified for, lacks knowledge of.

Origin: Unknown.

I'm a bit *out of my depth* on this. Can you please explain it again?

He was *out of his depth* on that project. We never should have put him in charge.

Paying through the nose

Meaning: Paying too much or more than usual for something.

Origin: Uncertain but could be related to when the Danes conquered Ireland in the 800s and took a census by counting noses. A large tax was imposed on each person (nose).

I'm so tired of *paying through the nose* for the Internet. Let's look at some other options.

We've been *paying through the nose* for organic vegetables but I just don't think

they're worth it. Do you?

Practice: Write an appropriate response using an idiom.

1. Did you hear about Tim?
2. Can you believe that my kids thought I wouldn't notice?
3. I don't think this is working.
4. I'm so tired these days since Tim had to go to the hospital.
5. I'm nervous about this new job.

Answers (many are possible).

1. No. I'm out of the loop.
2. Nobody pulls the wool over your eyes.
3. You're right. Let's pull the plug.
4. Of course you are. You're picking up all the slack.

5. You'll do fine. You're not out of your depth at all.

Lesson 153: Review

Fill in the blanks with the correct word or phrase.

pull the wool over my eyes, stick around, not going to work, go under, sneak out, out of his depth, in his shoes, bleeding money, not out of the woods, put your best foot forward

1. Just _____, okay? I'll only be a few more minutes.

2. Let's try to _____ so we don't have to pay.

3. Put yourself _____. I'd have done the same thing he did.

4. I know it's difficult so you'll have to _____.

5. Our company is _____ on this new product launch. I'm a bit nervous about my job.

6. I know that you're disappointed but it's _____.

7. I have a feeling that the company is about to _____.

8. My dad is quite sick and _____ yet.

9. My kids know how to _____.

Matching the phrase with the definition

1. narrow down A. lacking information

2. punch out B. not often

3. out of the loop C. reduce the number of options

4. once in a blue moon D. stop or quit something

5. pull the plug E. hit someone with a fist

6. needle in a haystack F. something difficult to find

Answers

Fill in the blanks with the correct word or phrase.

1. stick around
2. sneak out
3. in his shoes
4. put your best foot forward

5. bleeding money
6. not going to work
7. go under
8. not out of the woods
9. pull the wool over my eyes

Matching the phrase with the definition

1-C, 2-E, 3-A, 4-B, 5-D, 6-F

Lesson 154: Kill Two Birds with One Stone

Jerry: I think I've found a way that I can **kill two birds with one stone** on this project at work. It's a little bit **sketchy** though.

Linda: Oh Jerry, you know that stuff like that **isn't my cup of tea**. I like to keep everything **aboveboard**.

Jerry: Yeah, I know. You're always on the **up and up**. But I don't mind **crossing the line** once in a while.

Linda: Well, keep me **out of the loop**! I don't want to hear anymore about it.

Jerry: Okay, okay! I know you do everything **by the book**. I'll talk to Kenny about it. He likes to **think outside the box** about this kind of stuff.

Vocabulary

Kill two birds with one stone: Solving two problems at the same time. For example, using the same essay for two different university classes.

Isn't my cup of tea: Something that you wouldn't do. For example, you have a friend who loves skydiving but you have no interest in it.

Up and up: Not illegal or sketchy.

Aboveboard: Not illegal or sketchy.

Crossing the line: Illegal or not quite honest/right.

Out of the loop: Not knowing anything about it.

Sketchy: Not completely legal or right.

By the book: Completely legal, doing something the correct way.

Think outside the box: Someone who has a different way of thinking about something than most people.

Practice

1. He's been _____ a lot lately. I'm not surprised that he finally got caught.
2. That popular new TV show just _____.
3. I remember him being pretty sketchy but he seems like he's on the _____ now.
4. Am I the only one who didn't know she was pregnant? I'm so _____.
5. I wish my company was a bit more _____. It's a bit difficult to work for them sometimes.
6. I'm hoping to _____ to potentially save myself a lot of time.
7. My Internet provider seems a little bit _____ but I love how cheap they are.
8. One of the things that frustrate me about my wife is that she does everything completely _____.
9. Let's try to _____ about this problem.

Answers

1. crossing the line

2. isn't my cup of tea

3. up and up

4. out of the loop

5. aboveboard

6. kill two birds with one stone

7. sketchy

8. by the book

9. think outside the box

Lesson 155: How to Buy Food

Could I please get some shaved roast beef?

Sure, how much would you like?

How would you like it sliced?

Thin, (thick, medium) please.

Do you have any more _____?

Sorry, we're all out right now.

Maybe. I'll check in the back for you.

I'm looking for some gluten-free pasta.

Sure, it's in aisle 7 on the right.

Oh, sorry. We don't have any.

I'm allergic to nuts. Does this product contain any?

Let me check for you.

No, you're safe.

Could you please slice this bread for me?

Sure. How thick?

I'd like to order a cake for my son's birthday, please.

Sure, no problem.

Okay, would you like something written on it?

When would you like to pick it up?

Dialogue #1:

Tom: Hi, I'd like to get some shaved ham, please.

Jenny: Sure, how much would you like?

Tom: 300 grams, please.

Jenny: And how would you like it sliced?

Tom: Thinly, please.

Jenny: Okay, I'll grab it for you.

Dialogue #2:

Tim: Hi, I'd like to order a cake, please.

Carrie: Sure, for when?

Tim: This Saturday.

Carrie: Sure, which one?

Tim: The large rectangle one, please.

Carrie: Okay, what would you like written on it?

Tim: Happy Birthday Molly.

Carrie: Okay, we'll have that ready for pick-up by 10 am on Saturday.

Lesson 156: Idioms

Put your money where your mouth is

Meaning: Actions need to reflect words.

Origin: First seen in the 1930s in the USA, concerning backing up your words with cash.

She never *puts her money where her mouth is*! I'd love to see some actual results.

I know I have to pull through in a big way here. It's time to *put my money where my mouth is*.

Put the cart before the horse

Meaning: Getting one or more steps ahead by skipping something important.

Origin: First seen in the 1500s when people commonly travelled by cart and horse. They could only go with the horse before the cart and not the other way around.

Don't you think you're *putting the cart before the horse* here? Let's take a step

back and look at the big picture first.

The programmers I work with are famous for *putting the cart before the horse* and saying that things won't work before anything has even been decided.

Quit cold turkey

Meaning: Suddenly stop doing something addictive. Most commonly refers to smoking.

Origin: Various uses but first seen in the early 1900s regarding drug withdrawal.

I'm trying to *quit cold turkey* but it's been very difficult. My doctor says I have to though.

I don't recommend *quitting cold turkey*. It's best to gradually reduce how much you smoke for a few weeks before stopping.

Race against the clock

Meaning: Time is running out to finish something.

Origin: First seen in the 1950s in sporting competitions where people don't directly compete against each other but are timed. For example, a time trial in cycling.

We're in a *race against the clock* here. Let's get back to work!

I don't want to stress you out but it's a *race against the clock* to finish this project on time.

Rally the troops

Meaning: Organize or convince people to do something.

Origin: Uncertain but the original usage was likely related to a military leader exhorting his soldiers before a battle.

Let's *rally the troops* and get this house clean.

Kristine is great at *rallying the troops* at work and helping us be more productive.

Read between the lines

Meaning: Discovering something secret or hidden.

Origin: First seen in the 1800s and refers to the hiding of secret messages or meanings between lines of text in a document.

I know you're *reading between the lines* but nothing is going on.

I think we should *read between the lines* here. It looks like that company is getting ready to take us over.

Practice: Write an appropriate response using an idiom.

1. That guy is all talk but no action!

2. Nobody at work will talk to me these days. I have no idea why.

3. This house is a pigsty!

4. How did you quit smoking?

Answers (many are possible).

1. Yeah, I wish he'd put his money where his mouth is.

2. If I had to read between the lines, it seems like you might lose your job.

3. You're right. Let's rally the troops to get this place cleaned up.

4. I just quit cold turkey one day.

Lesson 157: Talking About a New Project

Noah: Hey Emma, I'm kind of **in the dark** about the new project that you're working on. Can you **bring me up to speed**?

Emma: Well, I let Jeremy talk me into it. I honestly thought it **wasn't going to fly** but we got it **up and running** at **the eleventh hour**.

Noah: So, what is it exactly?

Emma: Oh...It's **as clear as mud**! Well, we're going to **overhaul** the accounting software to make it much easier to use by people who aren't accountants. It's better than **paying top dollar** for a new system.

Noah: Ah, that was the recommendation I made years ago but it got **shot down**. **Water under the bridge** though. I wish you luck!

Vocabulary

In the dark: Not knowing about something.

Bring me up to speed: Update me.

Wasn't going to fly: Wasn't going to work.

Up and running: Get started and then continuing.

At the eleventh hour: At the last minute.

As clear as mud: Confusing.

Overhaul: Revamp or change significantly.

Paying top dollar: Paying lots of money for something.

Shot down: Rejected.

Water under the bridge: Something from the past that is better forgotten.

Practice

1. That conflict I had with him is _____ now.
2. I don't like to be kept _____.
3. I thought his idea _____? Why are we doing it now?
4. The government bail-out happened _____.
5. His idea needs to be _____. It's terrible!
6. Our networking system needs an _____.
7. Am I making myself _____? I'll explain it again!
8. I hope to have it _____ by next week at the latest.
9. Please _____ on what you're doing right now.
10. He's known for _____ to good employees.

Answers

1. water under the bridge
2. in the dark

3. wasn't going to fly
4. at the eleventh hour
5. shot down
6. overhaul
7. as clear as mud
8. up and running
9. bring me up to speed
10. paying top dollar

Lesson 158: Come In

Kendra: Hey, **come in** and **sit down**. What's up?

Ethan: I'm hoping to **sort out** that issue Ted and I had.

Kendra: Sorry to **cut in**. But, please **hold off** on telling me more. I've heard enough. I've already told you guys to **stay out** of each other's business.

Ethan: Okay, but he keeps **putting me down**.

Kendra: Stop. I'm tired of you two **telling on** each other. Just **stay away** from each other and we'll try to arrange for you to be put on separate sides of the office.

Vocabulary

Come in: Enter

Sit down: Have a seat in a chair or on a couch.

Sort out: Come to an understanding about something.

Cut in: Stop someone from talking before they were finished.

Hold off: Wait.

Stay out: Not go somewhere.

Putting me down: Insulting.

Telling on: Tattling; complaining about something someone did.

Stay away: Not get near.

Practice

1. Please _____from your brother. He's grumpy right now.
2. Can I _____ before you say more? I already know this information.
3. Please _____ of my office until I invite you in.
4. Can I ____? I'd like to talk to you about something.
5. She's always _____ her brother and it's starting to get very annoying.
6. Please _____ on working overtime on this project. We don't have the budget to pay for it.
7. Would you like to _____?
8. My boss keeps _____ in subtle ways. I don't know how long I can stay at that place.
9. I'm hoping that we can _____ this conflict we're having.

Answers

1. stay away

2. cut in
3. stay out
4. come in
5. telling on
6. hold off
7. sit down
8. putting me down
9. sort out

Lesson 159: Review

Choose the word or phrase that matches the definition

1. To stop something, not gradually. For example, stop smoking suddenly.

A. as clear as mud

B. quit cold turkey

C. rally the troops

D. tell off

2. Having to do something quickly before a deadline.

A. cross the line

B. race against the clock

C. rally the troops

D. by the book

Match the word or phrase with the definition.

1. sort out A. insult

2. put down B. the last possible second to do something

3. read between the lines C. organize

4. 11th hour D. see the hidden meaning

5. in the dark E. not knowing some information

Choose the best response to a statement.

1. Stay away! A. Yeah, it's just too complicated.

2. That guy is super sketchy B. I hear you, loud and clear.

3. I don't think it's going to fly. C. For real. I don't want to do business with him.

4. That's as clear as mud. D. Me too. It's worth it, I think.

5. I don't mind paying top dollar. E. I'll explain it again.

Answers

1. B

2. B

Match the word or phrase with the definition.

1-C, 2-A, 3-D, 4-B, 5-E

Choose the best response to a statement.

1-B, 2-C, 3-A, 4-E, 5-D

Lesson 160: Talking About a Mistake

Katherine: I'm a bit sad that we had to put that new product on the **backburner**. I thought customers would **pay a premium** for it but it just didn't turn out that way.

Claude: I would have liked to **see it through**. But, I understand why management had to **pull the plug**. It was **bleeding money**.

Katherine: It was certainly **a tough pill to swallow**. My team **got it off the ground** and we thought it had some real promise.

Claude: I think consumers didn't realize how different our product was. It was like they were **comparing apples to oranges**.

Vocabulary

Backburner: Something that is put to the side and will be dealt with later.

Pay a premium: Pay more for something than normal.

See it through: Finish something.

Pull the plug: Stop or cancel something before it's finished.

Bleeding money: Losing money rapidly.

Tough pill to swallow: Something that is difficult to deal with or get over.

Got it off the ground: Started something.

Comparing apples to oranges: When people think things are similar but they're quite different.

Practice

1. He's _____ and doesn't understand the different features.
2. I'll willing to _____ for organic vegetables.
3. We're _____ on this. I'm not sure we can keep going.
4. It's time to _____ on that new hire.
5. Let's put ABC on the _____ and focus on XYZ.
6. This company? He _____.
7. Losing that race was a _____.
8. Let's just _____. Things might turn around for us here.

Answers

1. comparing apples to oranges
2. pay a premium
3. bleeding money

4. pull the plug

5. backburner

6. got it off the ground

7. tough pill to swallow

8. see it through

Lesson 161: Feeling Under the Weather

Jerry: I know, I know. My mom used to tell me to not be such a **couch potato** and that **an apple a day keeps the doctor away**. I wish that I'd listened to her! I'm feeling **worse for wear.**

Linda: Keep your chin up! I know you're **feeling under the weather** but **this too shall pass.**

Jerry: Thanks Linda, I appreciate you **checking in on** me every day.

Linda: It's the least I can do. You've helped me with so many things over the years. Just don't **kick the bucket** on me, okay?

Vocabulary

Feeling under the weather: Not feeling well; feeling sick.

Keep your chin up: Telling something to stay strong. Encouraging someone in a tough situation.

Couch potato: Someone who spends lots of time on the couch watching TV or movies or playing video games. Not active.

An apple a day keeps the doctor away: Eating healthy keeps you from getting sick.

This too shall pass: A bad period of time that will eventually end.

Checking in on: To see how someone is doing.

It's the least I can do: No problem; it's a small thing, usually when you feel like you should do more.

Worse for wear: Feeling worn out or tired.

Kick the bucket: Die.

Practice

1. My dad keeps phoning and _____ me. It's almost too much!
2. I keep nagging my son to get active because he's such a _____.
3. I called in sick because I was feeling a bit _____.
4. My mom is great at telling people to _____ when something bad happens.
5. I'm convinced that the saying, "_____" really does work!
6. My son has been pretty down lately but I told him that, "_____."
7. Lunch is on me. _____, seeing as you've been making me meals all week.
8. I'm _____ after being in the hospital for more than a week. It was impossible to sleep there.
9. I hope that I don't _____ before I'm 80 but I'm nervous about how much I smoke!

Answers

1. checking in on

2. couch potato

3. under the weather

4. keep your chin up

5. An apple a day keeps the doctor away

6. This too shall pass

7. It's the least I can do

8. worse for wear

9. kick the bucket

Lesson 162: Talking About Retirement

Neil: I **can't hack it** anymore. I'm so **burnt out**.

Bob: I hear ya. Climbing the **corporate ladder** takes a lot out of someone. Why not **cash in your chips** and retire? You'll be **well off** with that pension plan.

Neil: I **can't put my finger on it** but I don't want to for some reason. Maybe I'm scared of what will come next?

Bob: I understand that. But don't **work yourself to death**, okay? Maybe you could **have your cake and eat it too**. Retire, and then do some consulting?

Vocabulary

Can't hack it: Unable to do it.

Burnt out: Extremely tired and worn out.

Corporate ladder: Moving up in an organization by getting promotions.

Cash in your chips: Quit or stop.

Well off: Describing someone with lots of money.

Can't put my finger on it: Not sure exactly what is wrong.

Work yourself to death: Working too hard.

Have your cake and eat it too: Two good things that normally don't go together.

Practice

1. Are you sure you can't _____? It might be possible.
2. ____ at this job. We'll need to fire him before his probation is up.
3. It's time to _____ and retire I think.
4. Don't ____, okay? It's not worth it. Go on vacation!
5. I _____ but something is kind of off about that guy.
6. I have no desire to climb the _____.
7. My parents are quite _____ and I expect a big inheritance.
8. I'm so _____ from that big school project.

Answers

1. have your cake and eat it too
2. can't hack it
3. cash in your chips

4. work yourself to death

5. can't put my finger on it

6. corporate ladder

7. well off

8. burnt out

Lesson 163: Idioms

Strapped for cash

Meaning: Lacking money.

Origin: From the mid-1800s when strapped used to refer to lack of cash.

I know you're *strapped for cash* but this is a great deal. I think you should do it.

Why don't you come over for dinner instead of going out? I'm a bit *strapped for cash* lately.

Take a breather

Meaning: Relax for a while.

Origin: Unknown but likely related to exercise and breathing more heavily than usual.

Let's *take a breather* for a minute. My brain is tired from working for so long.

Can I *take a breather,* please? I'm angry right now and need to calm down before we talk about this more.

Take it lying down

Meaning: Accept an insult or setback without complaint or protest.

Origin: Uncertain but could be related to a dog or other pack animal laying down to show their submission to the leader.

You can fire me but I'm not going to *take it lying down*.

He didn't *take it lying down*, that's for sure. I think he might sue us.

Taken to the cleaners

Meaning: Not doing well, struggling; someone took advantage of you.

Origin: Related to the earlier idiom, “To clean someone out.” Taken to the cleaners came into use in the 1920s when dry cleaning shops began to appear.

The Yankees got t*aken to the cleaners* by the Blue Jays with that trade.

We got *taken to the cleaners* in the finals of that tournament. We were seriously outplayed.

Take the bull by the horns

Meaning: Do something bravely and decisively.

Origin: Could be related to bullfighting in Europe, or cowboys in the USA who wrestled cows with horns.

I think you should *take the bull by the horns* and make a decision about it.

Carol is great at *taking the bull by the horns* and getting things done! She's the best boss.

The ball's in your court

Meaning: You have the power to decide on something.

Origin: First came into use in the 1960s from tennis. When the ball is in your court, you must hit it back to keep the point going.

I know you feel like you don't have any power in this situation but *the ball's in your court*.

The ball's in your court. You can decide what you want to do here.

Put all your eggs in one basket

Meaning: Count on only one thing to work out; to explore only one option.

Origin: Uncertain but one of the earliest uses was in the book, *Don Quixote* by Miguel Cervantes.

I know you want to do this but I don't think it's wise to *put all your eggs in one basket.*

Let's not *put all our eggs in one basket* and keep exploring some other options. That may or may not work out for us.

Put my best foot forward

Meaning: To be on one's best behaviour.

Origin: First seen in a poem dated from 1613, *A Wife* by Thomas Overbury.

People always try to *put their best foot forward* when starting a new job.

I want to *put my best foot forward* on this project. The team is being led by the CEO of my company.

Off the top of my head

Meaning: Without research or deep thought about something.

Origin: First seen in the mid-1900s but not much else is known besides that. Could be related to coming to a conclusion about something without using your entire brainpower.

I need to do more research about this but just *off the top of my head*, I think we should go with Apple instead of Dell for our networking system.

Hmmm...*off the top of my head*, perhaps we could check into these two options?

Practice: Write an appropriate response using an idiom.

1. I'm not sure I'll be good at this job.
2. What do you think I should do?
3. Do you know what time the game is at?
4. Do you want to go out for dinner tonight?
5. Should I ask her out?

Answers (many are possible).

1. Well, just put your best foot forward.
2. The ball's in your court.
3. Just off the top of my head, 6:30.
4. I can't. I'm strapped for cash until payday.

5. Take the bull by the horns and go for it!

Lesson 164: Sit Tight

Jerry: Hey, let's get moving! **Time is money.**

Linda: Sit tight. I need to grab a few things before we go.

Jerry: Come on. I'm caught **between a rock and a hard place**. We have to get to the train station on time. I hate always being the **bad guy** about stuff like this.

Linda: Well, to be fair, you've been as **clear as mud** about exactly what time we need to leave though. The time you tell me keeps changing and I don't think traffic will be as bad as you think.

Jerry: There are always a ton of **traffic jams** between here and there. Let's **get a move on.**

Linda: Okay, **get off my back**! I'll be ready **in the blink of an eye**.

Vocabulary

Sit tight: Wait patiently and don't take any action right now.

Clear as mud: Confusing or not easy to understand.

Between a rock and a hard place: having two bad options to choose from.

Time is money: To try to get someone to work faster or more efficiently.

Traffic jams: When cars aren't moving quickly because it's busy.

Get a move on: Hurry up.

Bad guy: Someone who always has bad news/enforces a rule.

Get off my back: Leave me alone; stop bugging me.

In the blink of an eye: In a short amount of time.

Practice

1. If you leave after 8am, there will be lots of _____.
2. Let's _____. I don't want to be late for school.
3. I try to always remember that _____.
4. I had a terrible teacher in high school. His explanations were as _____.
5. _____ while I check and see what time the movie starts.
6. My dad is stuck _____ with this new project he agreed to take on.
7. I hate to be the _____ but you need to get it together or you're going to get fired.
8. Don't miss the eclipse. It'll happen _____.
9. I wish my boss would _____.

Answers

1. traffic jams
2. get a move on

3. time is money

4. clear as mud

5. Sit tight

6. between a rock and a hard place

7. bad guy

8. in the blink of an eye

9. get off my back

Lesson 165: How to Change or Cancel an Appointment

Hi, I'd like to cancel my appointment, please.

Sure, what's your name?

I have an appointment at 3:00 but I'm going to be late. Is it okay to come at 3:30 instead?

Sure, no problem. The doctor is running behind anyway.

No, it's not possible. Would you like to reschedule?

Can I please change my appointment to tomorrow?

Sure, what time?

Sorry, there are no appointments for tomorrow.

Yes, but we charge a $20 fee.

Would it be possible to meet next Tuesday?

That's fine. What time?

I can't but how about Thursday?

Are you free to meet on Friday instead?

Sure, that'll work.

Sorry, I can't. Can we try next week?

Dialogue:

Tom: Hi, this is Tom. I have an appointment at 3:00 but I won't be able to make it.

Jenny: Okay, do you need to reschedule?

Tom: Yes, please. Do you have anything for Thursday?

Jenny: Yes, how about 2:30?

Tom: Sounds good. Thank you.

Lesson 166: Let the Cat Out of the Bag

Jerry: I want to **nip this in the bud** now that the **cat is out of the bag**. I don't want people talking about me at work.

Linda: Oh, **spill the beans,** Jerry. I haven't heard anything about it.

Jerry: Well, I'm thinking about leaving the company but nothing is final yet. I do have some **irons in the fire** though. I don't want people talking about it because I may end up staying here.

Linda: Say no more. **Your secret is safe with me**.

Jerry: Thanks Linda, we're definitely **on the same wavelength**.

Vocabulary

The cat is out of the bag: Accidentally reveal something secret.

Spill the beans: To tell a secret.

Nip this in the bud: To stop something bad from happening early on in the process.

Irons in the fire: A few different plans.

Say no more: The matter is finished or decided.

Your secret is safe with me: Not telling a secret to other people.

On the same wavelength: To have similar thinking about something.

Practice

1. _____. I'm on top of this right now.
2. I can tell you now that _____.
3. I want to _____ before it becomes a much bigger issue.
4. Come on! Just _____, please!
5. My dad has so many _____ with all his side-gigs.
6. Don't worry about it! _____.
7. My husband and I just aren't _____ about having kids.

Answers

1. say no more
2. the cat is out of the bag
3. nip this in the bud
4. spill the beans
5. irons in the fire

6. your secret is safe with me

7. on the same wavelength

Lesson 167: Talking About Strategy

Mason: I'm hoping that we can gain some **market share** on ABC company this year.

Owen: Them? They're **small fries** in my opinion. I'd love to gain the **upper hand** on XYX. I think it's **within our reach** if we can **ramp-up** production quickly enough.

Mason: To gain on them is a **long shot** for sure. But, it's potentially a **gold mine** if we become **top of mind** in that category instead of them.

Owen: Well, let's **give them a run for their money**. But, we can't forget about QRS. They're trying to **move in on** us.

Vocabulary

Market share: A percentage of the overall market that a company holds.

Small fries: Insignificant people or things.

Upper hand: The controlling or dominant position.

Within our reach: Can be obtained without too much difficulty.

Ramp-up: To increase quickly.

Long shot: Something that's unlikely to happen.

Gold mine: Lucrative.

Top of mind: The first thing people think of; the greatest priority or concern.

Give them a run for their money: Provide good competition.

Move in on: Get closer to a person or place. Usually to attack or take over.

Practice

1. It's time to _____ them. We've been waiting long enough!
2. I know it's a _____, but I'm hoping to make a million dollars in sales this year.
3. Let's _____. They're struggling right now and the timing is perfect for us.
4. Fuel efficiency should be _____ when buying a new car.
5. Coca-Cola and Pepsi are constantly fighting for more _____.
6. Let's _____ production on the black shoes. They're selling well.
7. I think the targets are _____ if we push hard this last quarter.
8. Developing software for businesses is potentially a _____.
9. I'm hoping to gain the _____ this year over my main competitor.
10. Those guys? I'm not worried. They're just _____.

Answers

1. move in on

2. long shot
3. give them a run for their money
4. top of mind
5. market share
6. ramp-up
7. within our reach
8. gold mine
9. upper hand
10. small fries

Lesson 168: A Piece of Cake

Jerry: I'm thinking about running a marathon. I have **butterflies in my stomach** though. It's going to be difficult!

Linda: What? It'll be **a piece of cake** for you. You're **as fit as a fiddle**.

Jerry: I know I'm always **cool as a cucumber** when I start the race but then I get so tired in the middle. I eventually get a **second wind** though.

Linda: Fingers crossed that you'll **knock 'em dead**. I'll come to cheer for you!

Jerry: What about you? Did the doctor give you **a clean bill of health**? You can train with me.

Linda: I'm not quite **back on my feet** yet. Maybe in a few weeks, we can talk about running together.

Vocabulary

A piece of cake: Something that's easy to do.

Cool as a cucumber: Someone who is very calm or relaxed.

As fit as a fiddle: In good shape.

Second wind: Having some energy again after being tired. Usually applies to exercise or staying up late.

Butterflies in my stomach: To feel nervous about something.

Fingers crossed: To wish someone good luck. Or, a symbol of good luck.

Knock 'em dead: Do well or be successful at an event.

A clean bill of health: Healthy, not sick anymore.

Back on my feet: Recovered, after a problem (health, financial, divorce, etc.)

Practice

1. Don't worry, I'm sure you'll _____.
2. Under pressure, Roger Federer is as _____.
3. I always get _____ before a test.
4. That speaking test was _____.
5. I've got my _____ waiting for the results of the SAT.
6. My grandpa is _____ even though he is 80.
7. I hope I get my _____. I have lots more studying to do!
8. I'm hoping to get _____ after my recent job loss.
9. I'm hoping that the doctors give me _____.

Answers

1. knock 'em dead
2. cool as a cucumber
3. butterflies in my stomach

4. a piece of cake

5. fingers crossed

6. as fit as a fiddle

7. second wind

8. back on my feet

9. a clean bill of health

Lesson 169: Idioms

The bottom line

Meaning: The outcome or thing to base a decision on.

Origin: First seen around 1960 in corporate America. The actual bottom line of a profit-loss statement shows whether or not a company made money.

The bottom line is that I'm not willing to do that. You'll have to find someone else who will.

When it comes down to it, *the bottom line* is that he wasn't able to get the job done. That's why we fired him.

The cat's out of the bag

Meaning: Something is no longer a secret.

Origin: Uncertain but may be related to the cat o'nine tails, used for punishment on British navy ships. It was stored in a sack and the sailor who told on another would be letting the cat out of the bag.

Well, *the cat's out of the bag*. I was hoping to keep it a secret for longer but that's okay.

Now that *the cat's out of the bag*, let's just tell everyone else on Facebook.

The last straw

Meaning: The final annoying thing before someone loses their patience. For example, a child has been misbehaving all day but his dad finally yelled at him when he wouldn't stay in his room at bedtime.

Origin: First seen in the late 1700s. Camels were often used to transport goods and as much weight as possible was loaded onto them to get the most value from a trip. A final piece of straw was placed on the camel and caused him to collapse, breaking his back.

This is *the last straw*! If it happens one more time, I'm going to quit.

The last straw was when Kerry told me that I was bad at dealing with clients. That's just not true.

The straw that broke the camel's back

Meaning: The last thing in a series of bad things before an event occurs — like a breakup, quitting a job, or fight.

Origin: First seen in the late 1700s. Camels were often used to transport goods and as much weight as possible was loaded onto them to get the most value from a trip. A final piece of straw was placed on the camel and caused him to collapse, breaking his back.

The *straw that broke the camel's back* was that he bought a new car without asking me first. I knew I had to divorce him then.

What was *the straw that broke the camel's back* and made you quit? I knew you were unhappy but what did it in the end?

The writing is on the wall

Meaning: Something that is obvious to everyone.

Origin: Related to the Old Testament story of Daniel in the Bible. A mysterious hand wrote a message on a wall for the King and Daniel was able to interpret it.

It's weird that Emma can't see that she's going to get fired. To me, *the writing is on the wall*.

The *writing's on the wall*. I think we're going to go bankrupt if we don't turn things around.

Thinking outside the box

Meaning: Creative thinking about something.

Origin: Probably comes from the marketing and advertising world that wants to gain attention for products.

I want to hear all the ideas and suggestions for dealing with this problem. Let's *try thinking outside the box.*

He's great at *thinking outside the box* and coming up with solutions for difficult situations.

Practice: Write an appropriate response using an idiom.

1. Should we fire Ethan?
2. Are we going to go bankrupt?
3. Did you hear that Tony is leaving?
4. Jace had such a good idea!
5. He was late again.

Answers (many are possible).

1. Well, the bottom line is that he isn't getting the job done.
2. Yes. The writing is on the wall I think.
3. Yes, the cat's out of the bag. He told everyone at lunch.
4. He's great at thinking outside the box.

5. That's the last straw. Let's fire him.

Lesson 170: How to Order at a Restaurant

Would you like a drink to start with?

I'll have a beer.

No thanks, water is fine.

I haven't decided yet. Give me a minute, please.

Would you like something to start with?

Sure, I'll have the Caesar salad.

No thank you. I'll go with the Clubhouse sandwich.

What can I get you?

I'll have _____.

Are you interested in dessert?

Can I see the menu?

No thanks, I'm so full!

Sure, do you have any cheesecake?

Do you have any specials tonight?

Yes, they are _____.

No, just the regular menu tonight.

I can't decide between the tomato pasta and the creamy lasagna. What do you think?

I personally love the lasagna here.

Dialogue #1:

Tom: Hi, can I get you something to drink?

Jenny: I'd love a glass of red wine and I'm ready to order too.

Tom: Sure, what would you like?

Jenny: I'll have the lasagna, please.

Tom: Okay, that's a great choice.

Jenny: I hope so!

Dialogue #2:

Tim: Are you ready to order?

Carrie: Not quite yet. Can you give us another minute?

Tim: Sure, no problem. Can I start you off with a drink though?

Carrie: Okay, I'll have a pint of your house lager, please.

Tim: Okay, I'll be right back.

Lesson 171: The Last Straw

Jerry: So I think I'm going to **leave my wife**.

Linda: On no! What happened? You guys always seemed like pretty **happy campers** to me.

Jerry: Well, **the last straw** was looking at my retirement accounts and seeing that most of them were **cleaned out**. Plus, we're in the red on all our other accounts too. She loves to **shop till she drops** but I didn't realize how **dire** it was until now.

Linda: Sorry to hear that. I hope you can get back **in the black**. You went **from rags to riches** once. I'm sure you can do it again.

Jerry: Hopefully, but after paying the divorce lawyers, I'll have a lot of work to **make up for lost time** on those retirement accounts. And she may also want **spousal support.**

Linda: Well, hang in there my friend. I'm here for you.

Vocabulary

The last straw: The final annoying thing before someone loses their patience.

For example, a child has been misbehaving all day but his dad finally yelled at him when he wouldn't stay in his room at bedtime.

In the black: To not be in debt.

Leave my wife: Separate or get a divorce.

Happy campers: People that are joyful or having fun together.

Cleaned out: Usually refers to money, when someone spends everything.

Shop till she drops: Loves shopping and spends lots of time doing it.

Dire: Very bad.

Make up for lost time: Wasted time that you can't get back.

Spousal support: Money paid to a former husband or wife after getting divorced.

From rags to riches: Poor to rich.

Practice

1. The food situation is now becoming _____. One of us has to go shopping!
2. Honestly, this is _____ before he gets fired.
3. We started living frugally and are now _____.
4. I want to _____. We just don't have that much in common anymore.
5. The kids were such _____ when I bought them a new trampoline.
6. My wife loves to _____ but I feel nervous about how much money she's spending.
7. I had to pay _____ after getting divorced.
8. I only started dating in my twenties. Now, I have to _____.
9. Wow! I love the story of that guy going _____ when he moved to the USA.

Answers

1. dire
2. the last straw

3. in the black

4. leave my wife

5. happy campers

6. shop till she drops

7. spousal support

8. make up for lost time

9. from rags to riches

Lesson 172: Idioms

This too shall pass

Meaning: A bad time that will eventually end.

Origin: The earliest recorded usage was from Persian poets, as well as in Jewish folklore.

I know you're having a difficult time but *this too shall pass.*

Do you miss him? Well, *this too shall pass*. Let's have a beer to distract you from thinking about him.

Through the grapevine

Meaning: To spread information informally.

Origin: Slaves in the American south used the “grape-vine” telegraph to stay in touch with each other and keep up to date with current events.

I heard *through the grapevine* that you found a new job. Is it true that you're leaving us?

Oh, she didn't tell me. I heard about it *through the grapevine*.

Throw in the towel

Meaning: To quit or give up.

Origin: Comes from boxing, where a boxer throws a towel into the ring to indicate that he's giving up.

Let's not *throw in the towel* yet. We can still make some progress here.

I know you want to *throw in the towel* but you committed to the team and can't quit halfway through the season.

Throw someone under the bus

Meaning: To blame someone for something bad that happened.

Origin: First seen in the 1980s but the origin is uncertain.

Tim *threw me under the bus* during that meeting. I was so angry.

Well, the conflict started when *Ethan threw Molly under the bus* on the project they were working on together. It just went downhill from there.

Tip of the iceberg

Meaning: A very small part of something much bigger, usually a negative thing or a problem.

Origin: It's well known that icebergs contain most of their mass under the water and that you can only see the smallest portions of them above the water.

That was just the *tip of the iceberg*. There are way more problems than that one.

I know that Jerry thinks he can solve this one problem and that all will be good but that's just the *tip of the iceberg*.

Too much time on your hands

Meaning: Not busy enough.

Origin: First seen in the 1800s but the origin is unknown.

Do you think that you maybe have *too much time on your hands*? That could be why you're focusing so much on this problem.

It looks like you have *too much time on your hands*. Let's put you to work! I'm sure I can find something that needs to get done.

Practice: Write an appropriate response using an idiom.

1. That company is getting busted for sure.
2. I can't believe what just happened.
3. Are we finished?
4. What's new at work these days?

Answers (many are possible).

1. That latest scandal is just the tip of the iceberg.
2. Yeah, Jerry threw Tony under the bus.
3. Yes, let's throw in the towel.
4. Well, I heard through the grapevine that we're getting bought out.

Lesson 173: Cost an arm and a leg

Jerry: Hey Linda, don't **jump the gun** on buying a car. They **cost an arm and a leg**. It's wise to do some research first. A good **rule of thumb** is one hour of research for every $500 you plan to spend on something!

Linda: You're such a **smart cookie**. I'm glad to call you a friend. What would I do without you?

Jerry: I'm not sure! But, you're a good **shoulder to cry on** and you've been with me through **thick and thin**. I appreciate you too!

Linda: Well, **birds of a feather flock together**. We have so much in common it's impossible not to be friends!

Vocabulary

Cost an arm and a leg: Very expensive.

Rule of thumb: A general, unwritten rule about something.

Smart cookie: An intelligent person.

Jump the gun: Do something too quickly.

Shoulder to cry on: Someone that offers comfort in a difficult situation.

Thick and thin: Through good and bad times.

Birds of a feather flock together: Good friends who are there for each other.

Practice

1. My brother is a _____. He always got top marks in school.
2. My husband and I have been together through _____.
3. New cars these days _____.
4. He's always ready to _____ but it'd do him well to be a bit more patient.
5. My _____ is to always turn off the lights when I leave a room.
6. Today, I need a _____.
7. My dad always used to say, "_____" to talk about my brother and me. We'd never tattle on each other no matter what.

Answers

1. smart cookie
2. thick and thin
3. cost an arm and a leg
4. jump the gun

5. rule of thumb

6. shoulder to cry on

7. birds of a feather flock together

Lesson 174: How to Talk about Feeling Sick

I'm not feeling well right now.

Oh no, what's wrong?

Sorry, I won't be able to come to work today. I'm not feeling well.

Okay, I hope you feel better.

Sure, keep me updated about tomorrow.

I think I should go see the doctor.

Oh really? What's wrong?

That meal didn't sit quite right.

Oh no. Does your stomach hurt?

I'm feeling a bit sick to my stomach.

Can I do anything to help?

Do you have the flu?

I have a terrible hangover.

Do you need anything?

Did you have a fun night though?

I think I'm coming down with something.

Really? What's wrong?

Dialogue #1:

Tom: Hey Jenny, I'm not feeling well right now.

Jenny: Oh no, what's wrong?

Tom: I know it's my fault but I have a terrible hangover.

Jenny: I hope you at least had a fun night. Do you need anything?

Tom: Could you grab me some water and an aspirin, please?

Dialogue #2:

Tim: Oh, that Chinese food didn't sit quite right.

Carrie: Oh no! Do you have a stomachache?

Tim: Yes, I feel terrible.

Carrie: Let's stay in tonight.

Tim: That seems like the best plan.

Carrie: Sure, let me know if you need anything.

Tom: I may just take you up on that offer.

Lesson 175: Idioms

Treading water

Meaning: Barely keeping up with work or school.

Origin: Unknown but is likely related to keeping your head above water so that you don't drown.

I'm barely *treading water* with my job. There's just so much work to do.

He was only *treading water* for years before he finally got fired. It's surprising that it didn't happen sooner.

Twist my arm

Meaning: Convince someone to do something.

Origin: First seen in the 1900s and refers to using physical force to get something done.

Okay, stop *twisting my arm*! I'll clean the garage this weekend.

You can't *twist my arm* that easily. I don't want to do it.

Two sides of the same coin

Meaning: Two things that seem unrelated but aren't.

Origin: Unknown.

We're talking about *two sides of the same coin* but I think I'm the only one who sees that.

Problems A and B are *two sides of the same coin* and should be dealt with together.

Under the table

Meaning: Something sketchy or illegal.

Under the table: First seen in the mid-1900s regarding money being passed under a table for a bribe.

You know I hate to do things *under the table*. Let's get the legal team in on this.

The best deals in my industry usually happen *under the table*.

Under the wrong impression

Meaning: Incorrect thinking.

Origin: Uncertain.

I think you're *under the wrong impression*. I'm not great at computer things.

I hope that I'm *under the wrong impression* but that new guy we hired seems terrible.

Practice: Write an appropriate response using an idiom.

1. I wonder if we can get a better deal?
2. Want to get a beer after work? Come on!
3. How are you doing these days?
4. I heard you have some discounts?

Answers (many are possible).

1. Definitely. If we do it under the table.

2. Okay. Twist my arm. I'll go!

3. I'm barely treading water.

4. You're under the wrong impression. We don't do that here.

Lesson 176: Talking About Good Results

Mason: Logan, you **raised the bar** in your department! You **got off to a flying start** this quarter.

Logan: Oh really? I've just **knuckled down** and focused on sales above all else. I haven't even looked that closely at the stats yet.

Mason: I'd love to **pick your brain** sometime. I need to **shake things up** a bit with my team.

Logan: We were just lucky enough to be **on-trend** with those ads. It was kind of a **no-brainer** that we'd do well.

Mason: Take some credit! The rest of us **came up short** compared to your team.

Vocabulary

Raised the bar: Made the standard higher.

Got off to a flying start: Started well.

Knuckled down: To work very hard on something.

Pick your brain: To get information from someone who knows more about something.

Shake things up: Change things.

On-trend: In style, savvy or fashionable.

No-brainer: Something that is an easy decision.

Came up short: Didn't go far enough.

Practice

1. I know he worked hard on this but he _____.
2. You've _____ for results at this company!
3. Can we meet for coffee? I'd love to _____ on this idea I have.
4. I think we'll be _____ this year. I hope so, at least!
5. It's a _____ that we need to replace our CFO.
6. I know Katie wants to _____ but this isn't the right way to do it.
7. It's time he _____ and got to work. He spends way too much time chatting.
8. They _____ but got sidetracked along the way somewhere.

Answers

1. came up short
2. raised the bar
3. pick your brain
4. on-trend

5. no-brainer

6. shake things up

7. knuckled down

8. got off to a flying start

Lesson 177: Talking About Bad Results

Brad: I think we **missed the mark** on this radio advertising campaign.

Jeremiah: It's clear that there's no **one size fits all** solution. We have to **tailor** the ads to each radio station to account for demographic differences. We should have **pulled the plug** on it earlier too.

Brad: Maybe we did **jump the gun** on releasing them. I know we were in a **time crunch** at the end there.

Jeremiah: I **dropped the ball** on that one. We should have started working on them sooner.

Brad: We were way too **under the gun.** I'm not going to **take it lying down** though. Let's **regroup** and make those changes for the next round. **Back to the drawing board**!

Vocabulary

Missed the mark: Didn't achieve a hoped for result.

One size fits all: Something that is used for all instances or applications.

Tailor: Adapt, change or modify.

Pulled the plug: Stopped or finished something.

Jump the gun: Started too early.

Time crunch: Time pressure.

Dropped the ball: Didn't do a good job.

Under the gun: Feeling pressure.

Take it lying down: Accept an insult or setback without complaint or protest.

Regroup: To get organized and try again.

Back to the drawing board: To start over.

Practice

1. I don't want this to hold us back. Let's _____ and get back to it.
2. I'm happy he _____. We weren't getting anywhere with that group of people.
3. We need to go _____ and come up with a new idea.
4. It's wishful thinking to believe that there's a _____ solution.
5. We need to fire him but I don't think he's going to _____.
6. We need to get moving on this or we're going to have a serious _____.
7. I'm nervous that we're going to _____ here. Let's take our time.
8. Ted is _____ on this project. He may have to do an all-nighter.
9. We need to _____ our offerings to each market segment.
10. I think Ted _____ on this one. He wasn't organized enough.
11. I may have _____. Let's go back to the drawing board.

Answers

1. regroup
2. pulled the plug
3. back to the drawing board
4. one size fits all
5. take it lying down
6. time crunch
7. jump the gun
8. under the gun
9. tailor
10. dropped the ball
11. missed the mark

Lesson 178: When Pigs Fly

Jerry: My kids are **buttering me up** because they don't want to have to help put up **Christmas lights.**

Linda: You're lucky that you can get some help **once in a while**. My kids never **pitch in** for stuff like that. **When pigs fly**, right?

Jerry: Ah, it's all **smoke and mirrors** at my house usually. My kids **make a show out of** cleaning up after themselves after dinner but their rooms are still like a **pigsty**.

Linda: What have we gotten ourselves into?

Vocabulary

When pigs fly: Something that is very unlikely to happen.

Pitch in: To contribute to or help with something.

Buttering me up: To flatter or please someone because you want something in return. For example, a child who is extra nice to their parents around Christmas because they want an expensive video game system.

Smoke and mirrors: Flashy things that distract from what is real.

Christmas lights: Lights on houses for decoration around Christmas.

Once in a while: Sometimes.

Make a show out of: To do something in a flashy way.

Pigsty: Refers to a very messy room or space.

Practice

1. I like to let loose _____.
2. His presentation was all _____. No real substance.
3. My kids love to help me put up _____.
4. We all _____ every Saturday morning to clean up the house.
5. My kid's bedroom is a _____.
6. My mom always used to say, "_____" when I asked her for money!
7. I know when my kids are _____ but I fall for it anyway. Their sweet smiles!
8. I hate that my coworkers always _____ finishing even the smallest task.

Answers

1. once in a while
2. smoke and mirrors
3. Christmas lights
4. pitch in

5. pigsty

6. When pigs fly

7. buttering me up

8. make a show out of

Lesson 179: Idioms

Vanished into thin air

Meaning: Disappeared without a trace.

Origin: Shakespeare used the term, “thin air” and similar phrases in many of his works.

He *vanished into thin air* when out hiking one day. He was never found, even years later.

That important document seems to have *vanished into thin air.* I've looked everywhere.

Walking a tightrope

Meaning: To do something that requires extreme care and precision; to navigate a situation that allows for no error.

Origin: Uncertain when it came into use but tightrope walking has been around for centuries.

I'm *walking a tightrope* between balancing the budget and getting this project done on time.

I know you've had to *walk a tightrope* between Tom and Kenny these past two years. You must be tired of it.

Watch my weight

Meaning: Gaining weight easily and having to be careful about what you eat.

Origin: Uncertain.

I have to *watch my weight*, especially during the holidays when there are so many parties.

He's trying to *watch his weight* before the wedding.

Water under the bridge

Meaning: Something from the past that is better forgotten.

Origin: From the 1900s and probably refers to the fact that water which flows

under a bridge will never come back the same way. It goes in only one direction.

Oh, that thing? It's *water under the bridge*. Don't even worry about it.

That mistake of yours is *water under the bridge*. Let's just move forward and try to do better in the future.

When pigs fly

Meaning: Something that is very unlikely to happen.

Origin: A similar idiom can be found in various languages and cultures, including Romania, Germany, Scotland, and the USA. Pigs are an animal that is unable to fly.

Tommy will give us a Christmas bonus *when pigs fly*!

Katrina and Steve breaking up? *When pigs fly*. They're great together.

Weather the storm

Meaning: Make it through, or survive a difficult situation.

Origin: First seen in the 1600s to describe a ship safely making it through a dangerous storm.

I hope we can *weather the storm* and make it through this pandemic without going out of business.

Let's *weather the storm* the best we can. It's just a couple more months until Kathy comes back from maternity leave.

When it rains, it pours

Meaning: When more than one bad thing happens at the same time.

Origin: Uncertain but made popular by the rapper 50 Cent when he used it in a song.

I know you're having some bad luck. *When it rains, it pours*, right?

Sorry to hear that you're sick now too. *When it rains, it pours*.

Practice: Write an appropriate response using an idiom.

1. I'm nervous that I might be laid off.
2. Do you think we'll get a bonus this year?
3. Should we get dessert?
4. On top of all that, I had to pay a $20 fee.
5. Are you still mad at Judy?

Answers (many are possible).

1. Hopefully, you can weather the storm.
2. When pigs fly.
3. No thanks. I'm trying to watch my weight.
4. When it rains, it pours.
5. No, it's water under the bridge now.

Lesson 180: Talking About an Office Scandal

Richard: Did you hear about the fight between Tom and Carrie? **Sparks were flying**!

Candice: Oh yeah, it's **out in the open** now. I think it's **common knowledge**. I heard that Tom didn't want to **play hardball** and he was happy to let the client do things **under the table** concerning their taxes.

Richard: Yeah, and Carrie disagreed and thought it was to either get them to do things the right way or **bail on** them.

Candice: No harm done. I think it's **settled down** now. I'm happy I don't make the decisions around here!

Vocabulary

Sparks were flying: There was a big conflict.

Out in the open: Everyone knows about it.

Common knowledge: Everyone knows about it.

Play hardball: Be firm and determined to get what you want.

Under the table: Something sketchy or illegal.

Bail on: Quit on someone or something.

No harm done: Nothing bad happened.

Settled down: Quiet, or relaxed again.

Practice

1. Let's get the kids _____ a bit before bedtime.
2. I hate doing things _____.
3. I know you want to _____ but a gentler approach will work better here.
4. Let's get this ____. I hate keeping secrets.
5. Honestly, there's _____. I don't care about that kind of thing.
6. Please don't _____ me. There's so much work to do.
7. It's _____ that Tom is terrible at his job!
8. The _____ during that meeting.

Answers

1. settled down
2. under the table
3. play hardball
4. out in the open

5. no harm done

6. bail on

7. common knowledge

8. sparks were flying

Lesson 181: Getting a Taste of His Own Medicine

Jerry: My son **got a taste of his own medicine** this weekend. He just barely escaped legal trouble **by the skin of his teeth**.

Linda: Seriously? What happened?

Jerry: Well, if you can believe it, someone called in a **noise complaint** to the **cops**. He's usually the one **tattling** on everyone else.

Linda: What was he doing?

Jerry: He was having a small **shindig** but I guess his neighbors were tired of the cops always showing up at their house for minor things.

Linda: Well, it seems like **sweet justice to me!**

Vocabulary

Got a taste of his own medicine: Being treated in the same bad way he/she has treated other people.

By the skin of his teeth: Just barely making it.

Noise complaint: Calling the police or authorities when neighbors are too loud.

Tattling: Telling on other people in an annoying way.

Cops: Another name for police.

Shindig: Party.

Sweet justice: When someone deserves what they get.

Practice

1. I filed a _____ recently on my neighbor after they hosted a late-night party.
2. Let's have a little _____ to celebrate your birthday.
3. I had to call the _____ because I saw someone steal a car.
4. I'm so relieved that he _____ after bullying people for so many years.
5. Ahhh _____! That guy sure had it coming.
6. As a rule, I don't think _____ is a good thing but this guy deserved it.
7. He narrowly escaped that latest disaster _____.

Answers

1. noise complaint
2. shindig
3. cops
4. got a taste of his own medicine
5. sweet justice

6. tattling

7. by the skin of his teeth

Lesson 182: Review

Fill in the blanks.

when pigs fly, sweet justice, no harm done, under the gun, back to the drawing board, not set in stone

1. It's _____ that he finally got caught.
2. Well, it's _____ but I think we're going to leave at 4:00.
3. _____. It's seriously not going to happen.
4. _____ with his mistake but he should have seen it coming.
5. I'm _____ with this project at work so can't hang out until next weekend.
6. Let's get _____ and figure this out.

Match the definition with the correct phrase or word.

1. once in a while A. doing something out of sight

2. smoke and mirrors B. in trouble

3. under the table C. not that often

4. sparks were flying D. a heated exchange or argument

5. not my cup of tea E. trying to hide what is real

6. in hot water F. not my preference

Choose the correct response.

it's like pulling teeth with teens, he's going to get canned, you'll weather the storm, it's water under the bridge, she's not out of the woods yet, he can't see the forest for the trees

1. Todd was late again for work.
2. I don't understand why he keeps focusing on that one small thing.
3. I'm feeling overwhelmed at work these days.
4. My daughter never talks to me.
5. I'm sorry for forgetting our coffee date.
6. How's your grandma doing?

Answers

1. sweet justice

2. not set in stone

3. when pigs fly

4. no harm done

5. under the gun

6. back to the drawing board

Match the definition with the correct phrase or word.

1-C, 2-E, 3-A, 4-D, 5-F, 6-B

Choose the correct response.

1. He's going to get canned.

2. He can't see the forest for the trees.

3. You'll weather the storm.

4. It's like pulling teeth with teens.

5. It's water under the bridge.

6. She's not out of the woods yet.

Lesson 183: Bite the Bullet

Jerry: Hey Linda, so I decided to finally **bite the bullet** and get a new car.

Linda: Oh wow! Did it **break the bank**?

Jerry: Kind of, but I didn't want another **lemon**.

Linda: I know, **when it rains, it pours,** right? Your car was always in the shop!

Jerry: For real. It was so annoying. Now, I just have to **crack the whip** on my employees to get out there and make more money for me to pay for it.

Linda: Don't **discredit** yourself! You're **working your fingers to the bone** too.

Vocabulary

Bite the bullet: Doing something that you've been avoiding for a while. For example, someone finally deciding to paint their house after delaying for years.

When it rains, it pours: When more than one bad thing happens at the same time.

Crack the whip: To be tough on someone.

Break the bank: Something that costs a lot.

A lemon: A reference to a car that needs more repairs than usual.

Discredit: Not give someone credit.

Working your fingers to the bone: Working very hard, beyond capacity.

Practice

1. I wish he'd just _____ and stop complaining so much!
2. My mom used to _____ and make us all clean the house every Sunday morning.
3. That guy has the worst luck! _____.
4. I hope this new-to-me car I just bought isn't _____.
5. Let's go on a nice vacation but I don't want to _____.
6. I don't want to _____ his success, but his father handed him the job.
7. Take a break, Tom! You're _____ lately.

Answers

1. bite the bullet
2. crack the whip
3. When it rain, it pours
4. a lemon

5. break the bank

6. discredit

7. working your fingers to the bone

Lesson 184: Talking About a Possible Strike

Jeremy: I think the **blue-collar** workers at our company are going to **go on strike**.

Rachel: I get that feeling too. Management needs to **make some concessions** but I'm not sure they're willing to. Their benefits aren't in line with other workers in this industry.

Jeremy: Hopefully the two sides can **meet in the middle**. It's not like we're **stinking rich** and have **money burning a hole in our pocket**.

Rachel: Anyway, negotiations better **pan out** or we'll be **back to square one**.

Vocabulary

Blue-collar: Describes a worker who does manual labour.

Go on strike: Stop working to demand better job conditions.

Make some concessions: Agree to, or give something to end a disagreement.

Meet in the middle: When two sides compromise to reach an agreement.

Stinking rich: Describes someone who has an excessive amount of money.

Money burning a hole in our pocket: Extra money you want to spend.

Pan out: Work out.

Back to square one: Starting at the beginning again.

Practice

1. We'll be _____ if we can't figure this bug out.
2. I think you can _____ and stop fighting about this.
3. If your job doesn't ____, you're always welcome back here.
4. My wife and I have some _____ and are thinking about buying a boat.
5. _____ workers can make some good money in Canada.
6. Let's _____ and end this sooner rather than later.
7. He's _____. Look at his house!
8. They're going to _____ if we don't pay them more.

Answers

1. back to square one
2. meet in the middle
3. pan out

4. money burning a hole in our pocket

5. blue-collar

6. make some concessions

7. stinking rich

8. go on strike

Lesson 185: No Pain No Gain

Jerry: I'm thinking about going back to school! **Hitting the books** again. Am I crazy?

Linda: Well, as I like to say, "**No pain, no gain**!" If you're going to **make some bank** at a new job afterwards, then why not?

Jerry: That's what I thought too. I'm going to enjoy the **calm before the storm** though. I'm going to be **as busy as a beaver** once it starts up in September.

Linda: Oh, you'll **weather the storm** just fine. You've got a **good head on your shoulders**.

Vocabulary

No pain, no gain: Working hard for something.

Calm before the storm: A quiet period before a difficult period of time.

Weather the storm: Make it through, or survive a difficult situation.

Hitting the books: Studying.

Make some bank: To earn lots of money.

Good head on your shoulders: Smart/intelligent.

As busy as a beaver: Working a lot or very hard.

Practice

1. I'm going to work up in northern Canada to _____.
2. Sorry, I can't hang out. I'll be _____ this weekend.
3. I'm just going to enjoy the _____ before things get too crazy at work.
4. I'm trying to get in shape by training for a marathon. It's tough going but _____.
5. You have a _____. You'll be fine at university.
6. It's going to take more than that to _____.
7. He's _____ with that new course he's taking.

Answers

1. make some bank
2. hitting the books
3. calm before the storm
4. no pain, no gain

5. good head on your shoulders

6. weather the storm

7. as busy as a beaver

Lesson 186: Talking About a Dissatisfied Customer

Emma: Word on the street is that Tony is pretty unhappy with us.

Roxy: Oh that guy? He just wants to make **a quick buck**. He doesn't care about quality and our reputation is **on the line** every time we accept a contract from him.

Emma: Yeah, you need a pretty **thick skin** to work with him. He **shoots from the hip** and almost entirely lacks **self-awareness**!

Roxy: He certainly **keeps us on our toes**. I think we need to **hold our ground** though and not **lower our standards**. That's going to hurt us **in the long run**.

Emma: You're right. He can **take his business elsewhere** if he's so unhappy.

Vocabulary

Word on the street: Rumours or news.

Quick buck: Making money quickly, often by cutting corners.

On the line: At risk.

Thick skin: Ability to not get upset or offended at things.

Shoots from the hip: Makes decisions without thinking a lot about them.

Self-awareness: Conscious knowledge about oneself.

Keeps us on our toes: Always ready to deal with anything that might happen.

Hold our ground: Not give way.

Lower our standards: Reduce quality

In the long run: Long-term.

Take his business elsewhere: Choose another company or person to work with.

Practice

1. I'm afraid that he'll _____ and we'll struggle to make targets.
2. He entirely lacks _____ and it hurts his job performance.
3. She _____ and needs some solid advisors around her because of this.
4. I think we can make a _____ on this during the holiday season.
5. _____, it's better for us to improve efficiency instead of hiring more people.
6. I'm afraid that if we _____, we're going to lose market share.
7. The _____ is that Tony is going to get fired.
8. You have to have a _____ to work with him.
9. Let's _____ on this. We're 100% correct about this.
10. Our jobs are _____ if we can't figure this out.
11. That new client _____.

Answers

1. take his business elsewhere

2. self-awareness
3. shoots from the hip
4. quick buck
5. in the long run
6. lower our standards
7. word on the street
8. thick skin
9. hold our ground
10. on the line
11. keeps us on our toes

Lesson 187: Stab Someone in the Back

Jerry: Oh wow. I had a rough week at work.

Linda: What happened?

Jerry: Well, I usually like to **bury my head in the sand** and not pay attention to **office gossip** but Tim **stabbed someone in the back**.

Linda: Who?

Jerry: It was his boss.

Linda: Oh wow! Well, **let the dust settle**. I'm sure they won't be like **two peas in a pod** but hopefully, they can **put it behind** them.

Jerry: Tim isn't known for **letting bygones be bygones** but we'll see how it goes. I'm honestly just **counting the days** until this **blows over**.

Vocabulary

Stabbed someone in the back: To betray someone, especially someone with a close relationship.

Bury my head in the sand: To avoid a certain situation or problem.

Let the dust settle: Waiting for a situation to become calm or normal after something exciting or unusual happened.

Two peas in a pod: Two people who are very similar in thinking or appearance.

Put it behind: Overcome, or forget about it.

Office gossip: Talking behind someone's back at work, rumours.

Letting bygones be bygones: Putting something behind you, forgiving.

Counting the days: Waiting for something to be finished.

Blows over: A bad time passes or is finished.

Practice

1. My sister and I were like _____ growing up.
2. I actively try to avoid _____.
3. I think you two can get back together. Just _____ for a bit.
4. One of the only things I regret in life is the time that I _____.
5. I know it sounds crazy, but I can't let it go and _____ me.
6. I don't want to but I tend to _____ and not get involved with conflict.
7. It's impressive how good my mom is at _____.
8. I hope this _____ quickly. I'm so tired of the drama.
9. I'm _____ until I can retire. I hate my job.

Answers

1. two peas in a pod
2. office gossip
3. let the dust settle

4. stabbed someone in the back

5. put it behind

6. bury my head in the sand

7. letting bygones be bygones

8. blows over

9. counting the days

Lesson 188: Talking About Tough Times

Team leader: I wanted to give you an update. We're a bit **down on our luck** because of Covid-19 and are struggling to **make ends meet**. On your end, please **put a lid on** expenses. From the management side of things, we're going to change suppliers and stop **paying through the nose** for raw materials. We all have to **tighten our belts** around here because I have no **card up my sleeve**. We either do this or we'll **go bankrupt.** That's it for the **pep talk**! Any questions?

Employee: Okay, boss. That's **crystal clear.** My team will **double down** on our sales efforts and pay close attention to expenses.

Vocabulary

Down on our luck: Experiencing a period of bad times.

Make ends meet: Make enough money to pay all the bills.

Put a lid on: Stop or finish something.

Paying through the nose: Paying too much or more than usual for something.

Tighten our belts: Cut back on.

Card up my sleeve: A secret advantage to be used later.

Go bankrupt: Go out of business due to financial problems.

Pep talk: A talk to motivate people.

Crystal clear: Easy to understand.

Double down: Recommit to a course of action.

Practice

1. I know you're not going to like this but we need to _____ on overtime this month.
2. We have to _____ if we're going to survive.
3. Please _____ your smoking. It looks terrible for customers to see you doing that.
4. I know we're a bit _____ but I hope we can recover.
5. We're going to _____ if we don't fire some people.
6. I want this to be _____. Everyone needs to understand how important this is.
7. That's my _____! Get back to work.
8. I know you think I have a _____ but I don't.
9. He's struggling to _____ with that job. He doesn't get enough hours.
10. I hate _____ for this service but there are no better options.

Answers

1. double down

2. tighten our belts
3. put a lid on
4. down on our luck
5. go bankrupt
6. crystal clear
7. pep talk
8. card up my sleeve
9. make ends meet
10. paying through the nose

Lesson 189: Let Someone Off the Hook

Jerry: I'm worried about my job. A **storm is brewing** at my company. They were **let off the hook** last time but I'm not sure the other company won't sue for **breach of contract** this time.

Linda: I mean, **it takes two to tango.** That other company should have seen the **writing on the wall** way earlier than now. Your company missed so many deadlines.

Jerry: I know, it's **an impossible task.** I did my best but it's not going to be enough.

Linda: Ditch that sinking ship. Time to move onto bigger and better things.

Jerry: You're right. I'm **working my connections** already to **see what's out there**.

Vocabulary

Let off the hook: To not be punished, even though he/she was caught doing something wrong. For example, a politician who doesn't go to jail even though he committed a crime.

A storm is brewing: Knowing that there will be trouble in the future.

It takes two to tango: There are two people who are responsible for a situation or problem.

Breach of contract: Breaking the terms in a contract.

Writing on the wall: Something that is obvious, usually something negative.

An impossible task: Something that isn't able to be completed.

Ditch that sinking ship: To leave a bad situation.

Working my connections: Talking to people you know to get something from them.

See what's out there: To look for new opportunities.

Practice

1. Maybe it's just me but I predict that _____ at work.
2. I quit before I could get fired because I saw the _____.
3. I couldn't believe that my son was _____ for that thing he did at school. Lucky guy.
4. Well, it's partly my fault but _____.
5. Honestly, that was _____ and not even Superman could have finished it.
6. It's time to _____ and find a better job.
7. That company is famous for not keeping their word, but I still didn't think a _____ would happen to me.
8. I'm going to start _____ to hopefully get an internship opportunity.
9. I'm not looking for a new job but I'm going to _____.

Answers

1. a storm is brewing

2. writing on the wall

3. let off the hook

4. it takes two to tango

5. an impossible task

6. ditch that sinking ship

7. breach of contract

8. working my connections

9. see what's out there

Lesson 190: Talking About Financial Issues

Ethan: Do you feel like we're getting **taken to the cleaners** this **quarter**?

Emily: Unless that new model starts **selling like hotcakes**, we'll for sure be **in the red**.

Ethan: That's what happens when you **put all your eggs in one basket**. It's only a matter of time before some of us get **the pink slip** I think.

Emily: Maybe I'm **under the wrong impression** but I didn't think it was that bad yet.

Ethan: Our **overhead** is way too high. I just **ran the numbers** yesterday. It's nearly impossible to get back **in the black** without making some **cutbacks**.

Emily: That might not be the worst of it. Hopefully, **corporate raiders** don't **get wind of** this.

Vocabulary

Taken to the cleaners: Not doing well, struggling.

Quarter: Three months (Jan.-March, April-June, July-Sept., Oct.-Dec.)

Selling like hotcakes: Selling quickly.

In the red: Losing money.

Put all your eggs in one basket: Count on only one thing to work out.

The pink slip: A notice of firing.

Under the wrong impression: Incorrect thinking.

Overhead: A fixed cost or expense.

Ran the numbers: Did calculations.

In the black: Making money.

Cutbacks: Reduction in something, usually financially.

Corporate raiders: People who make hostile takeover bids of companies.

Get wind of: Hear about.

Practice

1. I'm nervous that Mr. Kim is going to _____ our plan.
2. It's best to diversity a little bit and not _____.
3. Oh wow. The Blue Jays got _____ last night against the Yankees.
4. When Jay _____, it's clear we're going to have to make some changes.
5. It's looking like it's going to be our best _____ to date.
6. With the recent _____, we'll likely have a balanced budget this year.
7. Maybe I'm _____, but is he not the worst customer service agent?
8. Carl Icahn is one of the most famous _____.
9. We'll have to focus on sales a lot more to get back _____.
10. Electric cars are _____.
11. Our _____ is just too high for us to make a large profit.
12. Someone is going to get _____. I hope it's not me.
13. Covid-19 meant that many companies were _____ for 2020.

Answers

1. get wind of
2. put all your eggs in one basket
3. taken to the cleaners
4. ran the numbers
5. quarter
6. cutbacks
7. under the wrong impression
8. corporate raiders
9. in the black
10. selling like hotcakes
11. overhead
12. the pink slip
13. in the red

Lesson 191: Ask for Someone on the Phone

Hi, could I please talk to Jenny?

Sure, I'll put you through.

She's out of the office. Do you want to leave a message?

No, thanks. I'll try later.

Yes, please.

Sure, can you please tell her...

Do you know the extension of the person you're trying to call?

Yes, it's 413.

No, her name is Jenny Ford.

I'd like to talk to someone about _____.

Is this a good time to talk?

Sure.

Can you call back in one hour?

Tomorrow is better. Are you free then?

What's your name?

It's Jackie Bolen.

What's your phone number?

It's 743-353-8422.

Dialogue:

Tom: Hi, could I please talk to Jim?

Jenny: Jim Ford?

Tom: Yes, please.

Jenny: Okay, I'll put you through.

Tom: Thank you.

Jenny: He's not answering. Would you like to leave a message?

Tom: Sure, thank you.

Lesson 192: Call it a Day

Jerry: I'm so tired. Let's **call it a day** and grab some dinner. It's **my treat**.

Linda: Sure, I'd love to but only if we **go dutch**. You pay way too often for me!

Jerry: Sure, if you insist. Let's check out that dessert place. They have sandwiches and then I can satisfy my **sweet tooth**. They have some decadent treats.

Linda: Sounds good. And don't just pick up the bill when I'm in the bathroom. I want to **pony up** for my share, okay?

Jerry: Let's **make a break for it** before Tony finds more work for us to do!

Linda: Sure, let's **head out.**

Vocabulary

Call it a day: To stop working.

Go dutch: To pay for yourself, especially at a restaurant or bar where everyone pays for their own foods or drinks. Or, on a date where both people pay for themselves.

Pony up: To get money/credit cards out to pay for something.

Sweet tooth: To like sugary foods.

My treat: To offer to pay, usually for a meal or drink.

Make a break for it: Leave somewhere quickly.

Head out: To go somewhere.

Practice

1. I feel uncomfortable when guys always pay for me so I insist that we _____.
2. It's time to _____ for all those drinks you had!
3. I have a wicked _____ and can't stop eating candy.
4. Let's _____. I'm beat.
5. It's time to _____ and go home while the boss isn't looking.
6. Let's grab lunch. _____.
7. I'm tired. I'm going to _____ now.

Answers

1. go dutch
2. pony up
3. sweet tooth
4. call it a day

5. make a break for it

6. My treat

7. head out

Lesson 193: Twist My Arm

Jerry: Okay, fine Linda, **twist my arm**. I'll go get a drink with you.

Linda: Wait, what? You want to grab a drink? Sure, why not. I'd love to **unwind.**

Jerry: Yeah, I'm having a rough time at work. I just found out that one of my coworkers **got a kickback** on this latest contract. Some bad stuff is **going down**.

Linda: Oh wow. That's not good. Let's **kick back and relax**. I know a new place that has some great **craft beer**.

Jerry: Yeah, it's just the **tip of the iceberg**. A whole bunch of money **vanished into thin air** too.

Linda: Oh, wow Jerry! You need to **take a breather.** Meet you at Brown's Pub in 20!

Vocabulary

Twist my arm: Someone has convinced you to make a different decision.

Got a kickback: Accepted a bribe.

Tip of the iceberg: A very small part of something much bigger, usually a negative thing or a problem.

Vanished into thin air: Disappeared without a trace.

Going down: Happening.

Unwind: Relax.

Kick back and relax: Chill out.

Craft beer: Specialty beer that is brewed in small batches.

Take a breather: Relax for a while.

Practice

1. There's some crazy stuff _____ in the US election.
2. I can't believe your friend just _____.
3. The politician _____ for awarding the contract to a certain company.
4. Well, that's just the _____. There's a whole lot more that we don't know yet.
5. My coworkers always have to _____ to get me to go for a drink with them but I'm always happy that I did.
6. I used to drink _____ but it's too expensive now that I've lost my job!
7. I like to watch some Netflix to _____ from the week.
8. My dad loves to _____ with a nice beer on Friday nights.
9. Let's go outside and _____.

Answers

1. going down
2. vanished into thin air

3. got a kickback

4. tip of the iceberg

5. twist my arm

6. craft beer

7. unwind

8. kick back and relax

9. take a breather

Lesson 194: Idioms

Within our reach

Meaning: Can be obtained without too much difficulty.

Origin: Uncertain.

I think that this contract is *within our reach*. We have to think carefully about our bid price though.

An A+ on this group project is *within our reach*. Let's work hard on it and see if we can do it. We have a great team.

Working my fingers to the bone

Meaning: Working very hard, beyond capacity.

Origin: From the 1800s and refers to working so hard that you rub all the skin off your fingers.

I've been *working my fingers to the bone* for this company for basically nothing. I'm tired of it.

My daughter has been *working her fingers to the bone* lately with school and work.

Work my way up

Meaning: To start at the bottom and work hard to move higher up in a company.

Origin: Unknown.

I want to *work my way up* in this company. I'm not going to stop until I'm the CFO.

He's been *working his way up* for years and now holds a very high position.

Work yourself to death

Meaning: Working too hard.

Origin: Unknown, but could be related to working beyond normal capacity until you're sick.

Please don't *work yourself to death*, okay? It's not worth it.

I know there's a lot to do but I don't want anybody to *work themselves to death*. Please remember to take all your breaks.

Worse for wear

Meaning: Feeling worn out or tired.

Origin: Seen as early as the 1500s and could be referring to someone drunk or hungover.

I'm feeling a bit *worse for wear* lately. Work is just so busy.

He's looking *worse for wear* since he got out of the hospital.

Rock the boat

Meaning: Cause trouble or make waves.

Origin: Attributed to American politician William Jennings Bryan in 1914. He used it to refer to those who stir up trouble.

I don't want to *rock the boat* but I don't think Steven is the best choice of leader

for this project.

I think you can point that out to your boss without *rocking the boat.*

Practice: Write an appropriate response using an idiom.

1. I have to stay late again tonight.

2. Did you hear that Jen wants to change teams, again?

3. Tom got another promotion.

4. How's Tim doing?

Answers (many are possible).

1. Don't work yourself to death, okay?

2. She loves to rock the boat.

3. He's working his way up quickly.

4. Oh, he fell off his bike the other day but he's no worse for wear.

Lesson 195: Blessing in Disguise

Jerry: Did you hear that Beth **got canned** last month?

Linda: Oh wow! **No kidding**.

Jerry: It turned out to be a **blessing in disguise** though. She got a higher-paying job **lickety-split.**

Linda: Oh, that's great. She wasn't **living within her means**, **splashing out** all the time. Maybe this will solve her **financial woes**.

Jerry: Time will tell! I'll have to **see it to believe it.**

Linda: Well, at least she gets to start with a **clean slate**. It's a good opportunity for her.

Vocabulary

Blessing in Disguise: Something that initially seems bad which turns out good in the end. For example, someone lost their job but ended up getting a better job three months later.

Live within her means: To not spend more than she makes.

Got canned: Fired from a job.

No kidding: A response to something surprising.

In no time: Quickly.

Splashing out: Spending extravagantly.

Financial woes: Money trouble.

Lickety-split: Quickly.

Time will tell: Wait and see.

See it to believe it: When you don't think something is likely.

Clean slate: New beginning.

Practice

1. Be patient. _____ if that was a good decision or not.
2. Do you honestly think that he's changed? I'll have to _____.
3. Wow, _____. I can't believe I won the contest!
4. My brother _____ because he was always late for work.
5. Are you sure you want to buy dinner? You're _____.
6. Maybe getting fired was a _____. I hated that job.
7. I'm trying to teach my wife to _____ but it's an uphill battle.
8. I'm embarrassed to admit it, but all of our _____ were caused by me.
9. I'll get to it _____. Don't worry.
10. I had the project done _____ but my boss still wasn't satisfied.
11. I love changing jobs! It's like starting with a _____.

Answers

1. Time will tell

2. see it to believe it
3. no kidding
4. got canned
5. splashing out
6. blessing in disguise
7. live within her means
8. financial woes
9. lickety-split
10. in no time
11. clean slate

Lesson 196: Hit the Sack

Jerry: I have to **hit the sack.** I'm so tired right now.

Linda: Have you been **burning the midnight oil** lately?

Jerry: Yeah, I've been trying to study for this test. I got a slow start working on it because I was in the hospital for a few days.

Linda: Well, **better late than never**. But, you need to go to bed early and get enough sleep. If you're tired, you won't retain anything that you've studied.

Jerry: You're right. It was **many moons** ago that I got a decent night's sleep.

Linda: Keep fighting! I think you'll **ace** it.

Jerry: Well, here's hoping I **come up trumps**! Time to **knuckle down** and get to work.

Vocabulary

Hit the sack: Go to bed.

Many moons: A long time ago.

Burning the midnight oil: Staying up late working or studying.

Better late than never: Encouragement after getting a late start to something.

Keep fighting: Keep trying.

Ace: To get a high mark on a test or do well at something like a job interview.

Come up trumps: To get exactly what is needed at the last minute.

Knuckle down: To focus deeply on something.

Practice

1. Don't forget to _____ early. It's your big game tomorrow!
2. I know it's difficult but ____. Things will get better.
3. Although it was _____ ago, I still think about my ex-boyfriend.
4. I've been _____ lately, working a second job.
5. Honestly, it's _____ but he dropped the ball on this project.
6. You won't _____ the test unless you study.
7. That guy has an uncanny ability to always _____.
8. It's the last thing I want to do but I know it's time to _____ and study.

Answers

1. hit the sack
2. keep fighting
3. many moons
4. burning the midnight oil

5. better late than never

6. ace

7. come up trumps

8. knuckle down

Lesson 197: Talk about Feeling Sick

I'm not feeling well right now.

Oh no, what's wrong?

Sorry, I won't be able to come in to work today. I'm not feeling well.

Okay, I hope you feel better.

Sure, keep me updated about tomorrow.

I think I should go see the doctor.

Oh really? What's wrong?

That meal didn't sit quite right.

Oh no. Does your stomach hurt?

I'm feeling a bit sick to my stomach.

Can I do anything to help?

I have a terrible hangover.

Do you need anything?

Did you have a fun night though?

I think I'm coming down with something.

Really? What's wrong?

Dialogue #1:

Tom: Hey Jenny, I'm not feeling well right now.

Jenny: Oh no, what's wrong?

Tom: I know it's my own fault but I have a terrible hangover.

Jenny: I hope you at least had a fun night. Do you need anything?

Tom: Could you grab me some water and an aspirin, please?

Dialogue #2:

Tim: Oh, that Chinese food didn't sit quite right.

Carrie: Oh no! Do you have a stomachache?

Tim: Yes, I feel terrible.

Carrie: Let's stay in tonight.

Tim: That seems like the best plan.

Carrie: Sure, let me know if you need anything.

Tom: I may just take you up on that offer.

Lesson 198: Hit the Books

Jerry: I've been **breaking out in a cold sweat** a lot lately. I'm not used to having to **hit the books**.

Linda: What are you studying for?

Jerry: I have to pass this exam for work and I'll lose my job if I don't. I'm maybe **making a mountain of a molehill** but I can't help being nervous about it. It's been so long since I've had to take a test.

Linda: It's **like riding a bike**. You'll get back into it once you start. **Go with the flow**.

Jerry: Do you have any **study tips**?

Linda: My best advice is to study a little bit every day instead of **pulling all-nighters** or **cramming**. That doesn't work.

Vocabulary

Breaking out in a cold sweat: To be afraid or nervous about something.

Hit the books: When someone spends time studying.

Go with the flow: To relax and go along with whatever.

Making a mountain out of a molehill: To make something into a bigger deal than it is. For example, someone who loses sleep over a small problem.

Like riding a bike: Something that you always remember how to do, even with a large break in between.

Study tips: Ideas for how to study more effectively.

Pulling all-nighters: Staying up all night to study or work.

Cramming: Trying to learn everything for a test at the last minute.

Practice

1. Dude, sorry I can't hang out. I need to _____.
2. You'll get the hang of it. It's _____.
3. Before the second date, I kept _____. That's a bad sign, right?
4. I think you need to _____ with this school project. It sounds like you're taking it way more seriously than the other people in your group.
5. I don't think that _____ is a very effective study method.
6. One of the best _____ is to do it for one hour and then take a 10-minute break.
7. My days of _____ are over. I'm too old for that!
8. I think you're _____. It's not a big deal!

Answers

1. hit the books
2. like riding a bike

3. breaking out in a cold sweat

4. go with the flow

5. cramming

6. study tips

7. pulling all-nighters

8. making a mountain out of a molehill

Lesson 199: Idioms

You can't judge a book by its cover

Meaning: To not judge something or someone based on appearance. For example, a restaurant that's not stylish may have delicious food.

Origin: From a 1944 edition of the *African Journal of American Speech*.

Over the years, I've learned that *you can't judge a book by its cover*. It's best to be open-minded.

I'm surprised that she's so good with clients. *You can't judge a book by its cover I* guess.

Your secret is safe with me

Meaning: Not telling a secret to other people.

Origin: Unknown.

Don't worry. I won't tell anyone. *Your secret is safe with me*.

I thought *my secret was safe with him* but then he told his wife.

Read between the lines

Meaning: Discovering something secret or hidden.

Origin: First seen in the 1800s and refers to the hiding of secret messages or meanings between lines of text in a document.

I know you're *reading between the lines* but there's nothing going on.

I think we should *read between the lines* here. It looks like that company is getting ready to take us over.

Practice: Write an appropriate response using an idiom.

1. Please keep this confidential.

2. I was so surprised by his singing voice.

3. What do you think is going to happen?

Answers (many are possible).

1. Sure, your secret is safe with me.

2. Well, you can't judge a book by its cover.

3. Reading between the lines, I think she's going to get fired.

Lesson 200: The Final Exam!

Fill in the Blanks with the correct phrase.

running out of time, dream job, broken home, wrong side of the bed, pile up, bad luck, freaked out, burn the midnight oil

1. I haven't divorced my husband because I don't want my kids to come from a _____.

2. The paperwork at work is starting to _____.

3. I have to _____ at year-end.

4. We're _____ to start saving money for retirement.

5. Did you get up on the _____? You're so grumpy.

6. My dog _____ because of all fireworks at Halloween.

7. Honestly, I think you're having a stroke of _____.

8. My _____ is to be a doctor.

Match the statement with the correct response-A

1. I'm so confused by this math problem. A. Sure, no problem.

2. Can you keep a secret? B. He's as busy as a beaver.

3. Tim is always working! C. I can keep it under wraps.

4. Do you think you can take my shift for me? D. Let's figure this out together.

5. How are you? E. Same old, same old.

6. Speak of the devil! F. Were you talking about me?

Match the statement with the correct response-B

1. Take care of yourself, okay? A. I think we need to.

2. Let's go for broke. B. Me too.

3. I think we're on the same page. C. You too.

4. Did Timmy get up on the wrong side of the bed? D. It looks like it.

5. I'm sick and tired of it. E. Yes, he's so grumpy.

6. It's like riding a bike. F. Not really!

Match the phrase with the correct meaning.

1. global warming A. in trouble

2. natural disaster B. things aren't going my way

3. in deep water C. examples are tornado and earthquake

4. spill the beans D. tell your secret

5. down on my luck E. the Earth's temperature is increasing

Choose the correct answer.

1. The _____ is that you need to stop smoking if you want to recover from this.

A. life expectancy

B. bottom line

C. putting it off

D. makes sense

E. go ahead

2. You're good at _____.

A. out of the loop

B. taking antibiotics

C. thinking outside the box

D. feeling under the weather

E. living expenses

3. Don't _____. He's not going to change his mind.

A. pick out

B. get down on your luck

C. kill two birds with one stone

D. waste your breath

E. accept kickbacks

4. Let's _____ that rate now before it goes up.

A. plan on

B. lock in

C. lay off

D. put up with

E. save for retirement

5. I know you want to _____ but it's just not possible.

A. have your cake and eat it too

B. face the music

C. wipe up

D. bite the bullet

E. job interview

6. I think that company is going to _____.

A. go out on a limb

B. go under

C. fool around

D. well-to-do

E. sick and tired of it

Answers

Fill in the Blanks with the correct phrase

1. broken home

2. pile up
3. burn the midnight oil
4. running out of time
5. wrong side of the bed
6. freaked out
7. bad luck
8. dream job

Match the statement with the correct response-A: 1-D, 2-C, 3-B, 4-A, 5-E, 6-F

Match the statement with the correct response-B: 1-C, 2-A, 3-D, 4-E, 5-B, 6-F

Match the phrase with the correct meaning:1-E, 2-C, 3-A, 4-D, 5-B

1. B
2. C
3. D

4. B

5. A

6. B

Before You Go

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Please get in touch via email (jb.business.online@gmail.com) if you have questions or comments about this book. I love to hear from my readers and I'll do my best to assist you in any way that I can.