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A M Y G I L L E T T



**More Speak English Like an American:
Learn More Idioms & Expressions That Will Help You Speak Like a Native**

Kindle Edition

by Amy Gillett





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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Amy Gillett has taught English as a Second Language (ESL) in Stamford, Connecticut and in Europe. Her essays and humor writing have appeared in many publications, including MAD Magazine, the San Francisco Chronicle, and Family Circle. She majored in Slavic Languages and Literature at Stanford University and holds an MBA from Cornell. Amy has studied and worked abroad in many countries and speaks several foreign languages, including Russian, Czech, French, and Italian. She is also the author of Speak English Like an American, Speak Business English Like an American, Speak Better Business English and Make More Money, and the mobile app Business English Power Verbs.

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to More Speak English Like an American.

Maybe you have already read *Speak English Like an American*. But this is not a necessary requirement. You can start with this new book, if you like, and work back.

This new book introduces 300 more everyday American English idioms and expressions.

I wrote *More Speak English Like an American* after getting many emails and letters from readers of *Speak English Like an American* all around the world. They told me that they want — in a word, more. More idioms. More expressions. More help to sound like a native speaker, in dozens of everyday situations.

So ... continue on ... or start right here. (If you are interested in learning more business idioms, order *Speak Business English Like an American*. It's all about careers, clients, customers, and success.)

Most books teach classroom English. When it comes to everyday life, this can seem unreal. And make you seem unreal.

Our emphasis is on helping you talk, sound, and think like a native speaker. We also help you pick up more native English from movies and TV, newspapers, books, and the Internet. *More Speak English Like an American* helps you recognize and understand idioms whenever you see or hear them.

Have some fun! Try these idioms out on your colleagues, friends, and family members. And show your native-English speaking friends that you love English. It's your language, too.

Idioms add color and spark to your speaking and writing — they make you come alive, the way you do when speaking your native language.

More than anything else, *More Speak English Like an American* aims to make you feel more at home with English. And, if I may say it, to make you feel more American.

This is not homework. You don't have to add every idiom in this book to your everyday speech. You'll find some expressions more useful than others. The ones you don't use will lurk in the background, becoming part of your deep-English vocabulary. When you hear or read them, you'll understand them and you won't be wondering what people mean. To put this in idiomatic English, you'll get it!

Set a goal for yourself. Try to make time for a chapter a day. On the bus or the train. At lunch break. Before bedtime. Make learning English part of your routine. Then, over the weekend, do the review that follows each five chapters. You can write the idioms on notecards: put the idiom on one side and the definition on the flip side. As you hear someone use the idiom — in person, on TV, or in a book — write down the example on your card.

If you want to learn more business English after reading this book, check out [Speak Business English Like an American](#) (sold in hard copy form with audio CD and also available on [Kindle](#)) and [Speak Better Business English and Make More Money](#). And if you're interested in learning more American English idioms, see [Speak English Like an American](#) (also available on [Kindle](#)) and [Say it Better in English](#) (also available on [Kindle](#)).

LESSON 1: GOURMET INTERNATIONAL GETS NEW COMPETITION

Mark, Ron, and Steve work at Gourmet International, a small food company specializing in ethnic frozen foods. Mark, a marketing manager at the company, tells his boss Ron and his co-worker Steve that Grand Foods, a large food company, is going to start competing with them in the frozen Chinese meals market. Mark got this information from an ex-girlfriend. Ron tells Mark to call her back and see if she can give more details.

Mark: I just found out that Grand Foods is planning to **come out with** a line of gourmet frozen Chinese meals.

Ron: It was **only a matter of time before** a big company decided to **enter the market**.

Mark: That's true. We've been making money hand over fist with our frozen Chinese meals for the past two years!

Steve: They're going to **eat our lunch!**

Mark: Our dinner, too.

Ron: Let's not **push the panic button** yet. Mark, how did you get this information?

Mark: **I have my sources.**

Ron: **Out with it!** Who told you?

Mark: An ex-girlfriend. She's the **head honcho** at Shop-Well.

Ron: Call her back and see what else she can tell us. We need to get this information **by hook or by crook**.

Mark: She's my ex.* It's very awkward!

Ron: Sometimes you have to **leave your comfort zone**.

Mark: I'll call her tomorrow, but **this is not in my job description**.

Ron: Don't worry about your job description. If you **drag your feet** on this, you're not even going to have a job! Call her back right now.

* ex - a former spouse or romantic partner (short for ex-husband, ex-wife, ex-girlfriend or ex-boyfriend)

IDIOMS & EXPRESSIONS

(to) come out with – to release (as in a product or service)

Example: Levi's has **come out with** a new line of "eco jeans" made from organic cotton.

(to be) only a matter of time before – to be sure to happen

Example: The stoplight at the intersection is broken. It's **only a matter of time before** there's an accident.

Note: You will sometimes see this expression as "it's just a matter of time before." Also, you may hear the variation "it's only a matter of time until."

(to) enter the market – to start competing; to become a competitor

Example: Apple **entered the market** for cell phones in 2007 with the iPhone.

(to) make money hand over fist – to make a lot of money, often quickly or easily

Example: Mike is **making money hand over fist** by buying old apartment buildings, renovating them, and then renting them out.

(to) eat one's lunch – to take away one's business

Example: Our competitor's new cell phone offers more features than ours at a cheaper price. If we don't act quickly, they're going to **eat our lunch**.

(to) push the panic button – to panic suddenly; to overreact

Example: Our soccer team has lost four games in a row, but we're not ready to **push the panic button** yet.

I have my sources – I know people who have information (say this when you don't want to say who gave you some information)

Example: "Who told you that Jack is planning to leave the company?" – "**I have my sources.**"

Out with it – Tell me; Don't hold back the information

Example: The teacher said, "**Out with it!** Who drew this picture of me on the blackboard?"

head honcho – an important person; the boss or somebody in a senior position

Example: When Jeff Immelt became the **head honcho** of General Electric, he made some strategic changes at the company.

by hook or by crook – in any way possible, fair or unfair

Example: Roy was going to get the client to sign the contract **by hook or by crook**.

(to) leave (or get out of) one's comfort zone – to do something that makes one feel uncomfortable in order to achieve a certain goal

Example: Larry doesn't like speaking in front of large groups, so he'll have to **leave his comfort zone** to make a speech at his daughter's wedding.

This is not in my job description – an expression used to point out that what you're being asked to do is beyond your usual responsibilities (and you are not very happy about it)

Example: I can't believe I'm cleaning everybody's old food out of the office refrigerator. **This is not in my job description!**

(to) drag one's feet – to delay doing something

Example: You'd better stop **dragging your feet** and start working on your college applications. Otherwise, you're not going to get them in on time.

PRACTICE THE IDIOMS

Choose the best substitute for the phrase or sentence in bold:

- 1) Drive the president to the airport at 6 a.m. tomorrow? **This is not in my job description!**
 - a) I'll do it gladly.
 - b) That's beyond my usual responsibility.
 - c) That's just part of my job.

- 2) Who's the **head honcho** of the marketing department?
 - a) head assistant
 - b) manager
 - c) person in charge

- 3) Please **don't drag your feet** in getting me the sales reports.
 - a) take your time
 - b) don't rush
 - c) don't delay

- 4) Adam's company is **making money hand over fist** by offering low-cost video games online.
 - a) losing a lot of money
 - b) making a lot of money
 - c) making a little money

- 5) The police know who the robber is. **It's only a matter of time before the police find him.**
 - a) The police need to find out who he is.
 - b) The police will definitely find him.
 - c) The police may be able to find him.

- 6) The president was determined to stay in power **by hook or by crook.**
 - a) by any means possible
 - b) by stealing the election
 - c) by following the rules

- 7) Starting your own business usually requires you to **leave your comfort zone.**
 - a) find a place where you feel safest
 - b) be uncomfortable for a long time
 - c) leave your feeling of safety and take a risk

- 8) Many small newspapers say that the website Craigslist.org is **eating their lunch** by offering free classified advertisements.
 - a) hurting their business
 - b) helping their business
 - c) giving people a good deal

- 9) Our best salesperson just announced he's leaving the company, but **let's not push the panic button yet.**
 - a) let's keep calm and come up with a plan
 - b) let's panic in a few days
 - c) let's not worry about it at all

- 10) Who was sitting in my office while I was on vacation? **Out with it!**
 - a) Get out!
 - b) Tell me!

c) Go back in!

ANSWERS: 1. B; 2. C; 3. C; 4. B; 5. B; 6. A; 7. C; 8. A; 9. A; 10. B



I don't want to open a can of worms.

LESSON 2: MARK DISCUSSES HIS REGRETS

Mark regrets telling Ron that his ex-girlfriend Cindy was the source of his information. He doesn't want to call Cindy back because he's afraid she'll think he wants to date her again. Steve tells him he'll need to call her anyway.

Steve: What's wrong?

Mark: I'm **kicking myself** for telling Ron about my ex-girlfriend. He's **on my case**. He wants me to call her for more information.

Steve: **What's the big deal?**

Mark: She's **off her rocker**, and I think she still **has the hots for** me. I don't want to **open a can of worms!**

Steve: So she's **got a few screws loose!** It couldn't be that bad.

Mark: It is. She's a **control freak**, too.

Steve: If I were you, I'd just call her. **Suck it up!**

Mark: I'm afraid it's a **recipe for disaster**. If I call her, she may think I want to **get back together**.

Steve: Well, Ron is not going to **let you off the hook**. He wants more information.

Mark: I'm in a **no-win situation**. If I don't call her, Ron will keep **breathing down my neck**. If I do call her, I'll have to talk to her!

IDIOMS & EXPRESSIONS

(to) kick oneself – to regret something

Example: Sue is **kicking herself** for quitting her job before finding a new one. Now she's got no money and can't get any interviews.

on someone's case – bothering or nagging somebody to do something

Example: Ted complained that his mother was always **on his case** about doing his homework.

What's the big deal? – What's the problem? What are you worried about?

Example: "So Diane's decided to leave the company. **What's the big deal?**" — "She's one of our top employees!"

off one's rocker – crazy

Example: When Britney Spears shaved her head, some people thought she was **off her rocker**.

(to) have the hots for someone – to have romantic feelings for someone

Example: Gary **has the hots for** you. Didn't you see how he was staring at you during the meeting?

(to) open a can of worms – to do something that will lead to problems later

Example: We'd like to let you work from home, but it would just **open a can of worms**. Everybody would want to work from home.

(to) have a few screws loose – to be crazy

Example: Nick met a woman on the Internet, and she showed up in a wedding dress on their first date! He realized she must **have a few screws loose**.

control freak – a person who wants to control everything

Example: "You moved the chairs around in the conference room without asking me first?" — "Yes, I did. I didn't realize you were such a **control freak!**"

(to) suck it up – to deal with something unpleasant; to endure something without complaining

Example: I know you don't like your roommate, but the school year is almost over. **Suck it up** for another couple of months.

recipe for disaster – something which is likely to cause trouble; a bad idea or plan

Example: Emily put the time and place of her next party on Facebook.com for everybody to see? That's a **recipe for disaster!**

(to) get back together – to restart a romantic relationship

Example: Ken and Nancy got divorced two years ago, but lately they've been talking about **getting back together**.

(to) let someone off the hook – to free someone from a duty or obligation; to forgive someone for not doing a duty

Example: You're too busy to walk the dog today? Okay, I'll do it today, but I'm not **letting you off the hook** for tomorrow.

no-win situation – a situation where all options are unpleasant

Example: I'm in a **no-win situation**. If I promote Rachel, then Bill will be angry. If I promote Bill, then Rachel will leave the company.

(to) breathe down someone's neck – to watch over someone very closely in a way that makes them uncomfortable or pressures them to do something

Example: I promised my boss I'd finish the report by Friday. Hopefully, he won't be **breathing down my neck** all week.

PRACTICE THE IDIOMS

Choose the most appropriate response to each sentence:

- 1) Nina is starting to think that her new boss has a few screws loose.
 - a) Why doesn't she like him?
 - b) Why doesn't she offer to tighten the screws?
 - c) What did her boss do to make her think that?

- 2) Jim has the hots for Andrea.
a) Then he'll probably ask her out.
b) Then he should wait until he cools off.
c) Then he should stop seeing her.
- 3) I told Karen that I was too tired to help prepare for the party, so she let me off the hook.
a) That's too bad.
b) That was nice of her.
c) Maybe she'll put you back on the hook later.
- 4) I'm kicking myself for investing in Carl's company.
a) How much money have you lost?
b) How much money have you made?
c) How much has Carl kicked in?
- 5) I hope my boss stops breathing down my neck.
a) You should tell him you need a lot of close attention.
b) You should tell him your neck is getting too warm.
c) You should tell him you work best when you're left alone.
- 6) Is it true that Jessica is a control freak?
a) Yes, she has no control over anything.
b) Yes, she doesn't trust her employees to do anything on their own.
c) Yes, she really does behave like a freak.
- 7) Don't repeat any gossip you hear at work. It's a recipe for disaster.
a) That's good advice.
b) You're right. It's a great idea.
c) I agree. It is a good recipe.
- 8) Kevin's next door neighbor is always on his case about turning down his music.
a) The neighbor must enjoy listening to it.
b) Kevin should turn the music up.
c) Kevin must play it very loudly.
- 9) I know you're not happy about having to go on a six-week business trip to Malaysia, but just suck it up.
a) Okay, I'll tell my company I can't go.
b) You're right. I am looking forward to it.
c) You're right. The time will go by quickly.
- 10) I think we've opened a can of worms by asking our employees to be more open with the management.
a) I agree. We're getting very valuable comments.
b) I agree. Now they're all complaining about their bosses!
c) I agree. We should close the can as soon as possible.

ANSWERS: 1. C; 2. A; 3. B; 4. A; 5. C; 6. B; 7. A; 8. C; 9. C; 10. B



I'm all ears.

LESSON 3: MARK AND CINDY CHAT ON THE PHONE

Mark calls Cindy back to see if he can find out what Grand Foods is planning with their frozen Chinese meals. Cindy gives him some information, but tells him that if he wants more, they will need to meet.

Mark: Hi, Cindy. I was just wondering if you have any more information about Grand Foods.

Cindy: Mark, how are you?

Mark: Fine, but I don't have time for **small talk** right now. I've got a meeting in five minutes.

Cindy: Well, let me **get right to the point then**. Grand Foods is planning to roll out two new products: Moo Shu Pork and Princess Chicken.

Mark: That's interesting. What else can you tell me?

Cindy: They're buying Fu Dong Foods, a food company in China.

Mark: Thanks. I'll talk to you later.

Cindy: I've **dug up** more, too.

Mark: **I'm all ears**.

Cindy: **It's going to cost you!**

Mark: What? Now you're going to charge me for the information? You must be **pulling my leg!**

Cindy: I'm not asking for money. I was just going to suggest that we get together.

Mark: Well, I guess I can **swing by** your office later.

Cindy: My office? Ha! I'm offering you important information. **The least you can do is** take me out to dinner on Saturday night.

Mark: I'm **booked solid** this weekend.

Cindy: Okay, then, I guess I'll just **hang onto** this information. **It's no skin off my nose**.

IDIOMS & EXPRESSIONS

small talk – casual conversation

Example: I made some **small talk** with our company's CEO at the holiday party.

(to) get right to the point – to talk about what's most important

Example: Let me **get right to the point**. If we don't come up with a plan to increase our sales, we're going to go out of business.

(to) roll out – to introduce a new product, service, or program

Example: Starbucks announced plans to **roll out** a new line of coffee drinks.

(to) dig up – to get information, especially secret and often negative information

Example: When the senator announced he would run for president of the United States, reporters worked hard to **dig up** information about his past.

I'm all ears – I'm very interested in what you're saying

Example: "Did you hear what happened to Liz on her date with that guy she met online?" — "No, tell me. **I'm all ears!**"

It's going to cost you – You're going to have to do something for it

Example: You want me to help you with your science project? Okay, but **it's going to cost you!**

(to) pull someone's leg – to joke

Example: Don told you we all have to work on Christmas Day? Don't listen to him. He's just **pulling your leg!**

(to) swing by – to go somewhere, usually for a short time

Example: If you're going to be in my neighborhood tomorrow, please **swing by** and say hi.

The least you can do is – You should feel obligated to do this; In exchange for what's been given to you, you should do this

Example: Your sister visited you every day when you were in the hospital. **The least you can do is** call her on her birthday.

booked solid – busy; having no availability

Example: Sorry, but Rajeev won't be able to meet with you until next Friday. He's **booked solid** until then.

(to) hang onto – to keep; to not give out

Example: I was going to sell this antique vase on eBay, but then I decided to **hang onto** it instead.

It's no skin off my nose – It doesn't matter to me; I'm not going to worry about it

Example: Heather didn't invite me to her wedding, but **it's no skin off my nose**. Now I won't have to buy her a gift.

Note: You will also see the variations "it's no skin off my back" and "it's no skin off my teeth."

PRACTICE THE IDIOMS

Choose the best substitute for the phrase or sentence in bold:

1) Bob won't be able to meet with you on Friday. **He's booked solid.**

- a) His schedule is full.
- b) He's busy reading.
- c) He's got plenty of time.

2) Campbell Soup Company announced plans to **roll out** a new line of healthy soups.

- a) buy
- b) introduce

c) cancel plans for

3) As part of their hiring process, the Donox Company searches the Internet to see what kind of information they can **dig up** on their job candidates.

- a) validate
- b) make up
- c) find

4) If you don't want to go to the party, then stay home. **It's no skin off my nose.**

- a) I'll be happy.
- b) It doesn't matter to me.
- c) I'll be very upset.

5) Glen got promoted to vice president? **You must be pulling my leg!**

- a) That's great news!
- b) It's about time!
- c) I can't believe it!

6) You should **hang onto** those old family photos.

- a) throw out
- b) donate
- c) keep

7) Ashley told you what happened between her and Jeremy? **I'm all ears!**

- a) Good for you!
- b) I'm very interested.
- c) I can't hear you.

8) Please **swing by** later to pick up the sales report.

- a) leave my office
- b) come to my office
- c) make an appointment

9) You want me to drive you to the airport at 6 a.m. on Saturday? Okay, but **it's going to cost you.**

- a) I'm going to expect something in return
- b) I'm happy to do it
- c) I'll send you the bill

10) Be sure to **make small talk** with the Japanese clients before presenting the proposal.

- a) talk about business
- b) talk about small details
- c) talk socially

ANSWERS: 1. A; 2. B; 3. C; 4. B; 5. C; 6. C; 7. B; 8. B; 9. A; 10. C



LESSON 4: MARK CALLS CINDY BACK

Mark gives Ron the information he got from Cindy regarding Grand Foods. Ron wants more information and orders Mark to call Cindy back. Mark calls her back and agrees to take her out on Saturday night.

Mark: I **got the scoop** on Grand Foods. They're buying a food company in China and **coming out with** two products: Moo Shu Pork and Princess Chicken.

Ron: How will they be packaged?

Mark: Cindy didn't say.

Ron: Stop **futz**ing around! Call Cindy back and **pick her brain**.

Mark: But it's really difficult to get information from Cindy.

Ron: Then **turn on the charm**! Do what you have to do to get the information.

Mark: I really don't know why you're pushing me so hard.

Ron: **Do I have to spell it out for you?** The future of our company is **at stake**!

Mark: **I wouldn't go that far!**

Ron: I would. **Time is of the essence** here.

(Mark makes a phone call)

Mark: Cindy, it's Mark calling again. I've **cleared my calendar** for Saturday evening.

Cindy: I knew you'd **come around**!

Mark: By the way, do you know how Grand Foods is packaging these new products?

Cindy: Sure, I'll **fill you in** on Saturday.

IDIOMS & EXPRESSIONS

(to) get the scoop – to get information, often before anybody else does

Example: "Do you know why Rich got fired?" — "No, but I'll try to **get the scoop**."

(to) come out with – [see Lesson 1](#)

(to) futz around – to waste time, often through unnecessary activity

Example: The sales clerk at the store was not very good. He **futzed around** for half an hour before giving me my purchase.

Note: You may also hear the vulgar variation "to fart around."

(to) pick someone's brain – to get information from someone; to get advice from someone knowledgeable

Example: If you're thinking about buying a new stereo system, you should **pick Sam's brain**. He writes for *Stereophile* magazine.

(to) turn on the charm – to start being nice or charming (often not sincerely)

Example: Tina really **turned on the charm** when she was visiting her new boyfriend's parents.

Do I have to spell it out for you? – Do I need to explain this to you further?

Example: **Do I have to spell it out for you?** If you don't start doing better in school, you're not going to get into college.

at stake – at risk; in question

Example: When Jill started a new business, she had \$250,000 of her own money **at stake**.

Example: There is a lot **at stake** in the upcoming climate talks.

I wouldn't go that far! – The situation is not that bad (or good); You're exaggerating

Example: "If Todd takes over as CEO of this company, we're going to go out of business." — "**I wouldn't go that far!**"

Example: "The cakes at the new pastry shop in town are the best in the world!" — "They are good, but **I wouldn't go that far!**"

Time is of the essence – We must act quickly; Time is very important at this point

Example: **Time is of the essence** in addressing global warming.

(to) clear one's calendar – to free oneself to do something

Example: The head of our Japanese office is coming to the office next Tuesday. Please **clear your calendar** for his visit.

(to) come around – to change one's mind; to agree in the end

Example: Your parents won't let you have your own computer? Maybe when they realize you need it to do your homework, they'll **come around**.

(to) fill someone in – to give someone the latest information

Example: I missed the meeting this morning, so can someone **fill me in** on what was discussed?

PRACTICE THE IDIOMS

Choose the most appropriate response to each sentence:

1) Please call a lawyer. Time is of the essence.

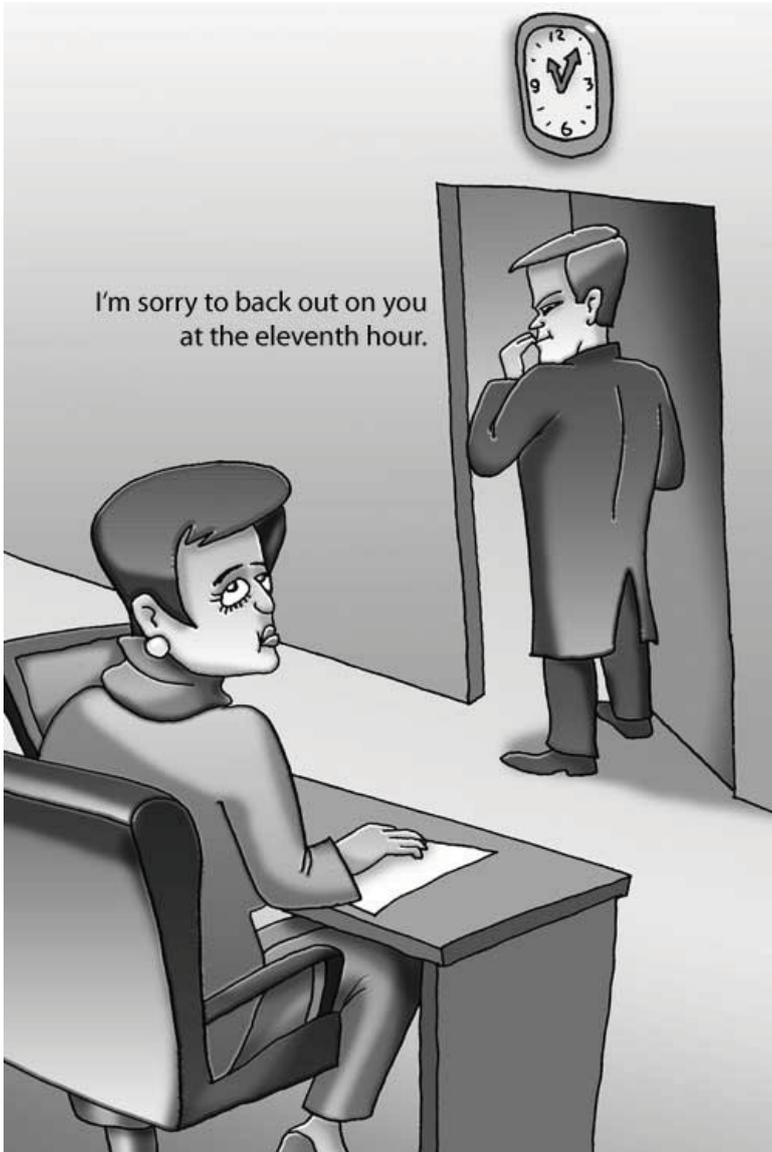
- a) Okay, I'll call one next month.
- b) Okay, I'll call one right away.
- c) Okay, I'll call one when I have time.

2) Many people have lost their jobs at my company, and now I worry my job is also at stake.

- a) I hope you don't lose it.
- b) I'm glad your job is secure.
- c) You have an important job.

- 3) Mark can turn on the charm when he wants to.
a) Yes, he's always very nice to everybody.
b) Yes, he knows how to be nice when he needs to be.
c) Yes, he's got no manners at all.
- 4) Let me fill you in on the day's events.
a) No thanks. I'm already full.
b) Thanks, I'd like to know what happened.
c) I don't have time to tell you what happened.
- 5) Why are you futzing around making tea? We're going to be late for the party!
a) Sorry, I didn't realize how late it was.
b) Okay, I'll finish making the tea and then we can drink it.
c) Sorry, I know you want to have tea before we go.
- 6) Before buying a new computer, be sure to pick Ted's brain.
a) Okay, I'll tell Ted which one I bought.
b) Thanks, but I already have a brain.
c) Okay, I'll get Ted's advice before I buy one.
- 7) At first Rick's parents said he couldn't study abroad in London, but then they came around.
a) Maybe they'll change their minds.
b) I'm sure they'll enjoy their visit.
c) I'm sure Rick will enjoy it in London.
- 8) Did you get the scoop on why Debbie lost her job?
a) Yes, she called me and told me everything.
b) No, but her boss told me what happened.
c) Yes, she called me, and we talked all about her love life.
- 9) You thought Atonement was the best movie ever made? I wouldn't go that far!
a) Okay, but it was an excellent movie.
b) Okay, it was a bad movie.
c) You're right. It was excellent.
- 10) Please clear your calendar for Monday morning. We're having an important meeting.
a) Okay, I won't be here on Monday morning.
b) Okay, I'll be available on Monday morning.
c) Okay, I'll make other plans for Monday morning.

ANSWERS: 1. B; 2. A; 3. B; 4. B; 5. A; 6. C; 7. C; 8. A; 9. A; 10. B



LESSON 5: MARK CANCELS HIS DATE WITH SARA

Mark has to tell Sara, his current girlfriend, the bad news: he has to cancel their date for Saturday night. He makes up a story about a friend who needs his help. He invites Sara to go out for dinner on Monday night instead.

Mark: I'm afraid I'm going to have to cancel for tomorrow night.

Sara: What? I bought tickets for the Lenny Kravitz concert. I was going to surprise you!

Mark: Those must have cost a small fortune!

Sara: They did.

Mark: Well, I'm sorry to back out on you at the eleventh hour, but something came up. I can't get out of it.

Sara: What came up?

Mark: An old friend of mine is in bad shape, and he really needs my help on Saturday night.

Sara: Oh, really?

Mark: I'll make it up to you.

Sara: How?

Mark: How about I treat you to dinner at that new restaurant, Café Felix, on Monday night?

Sara: Well, I'm still PO'ed about Saturday. But, okay, I'll take you up on your offer.

IDIOMS & EXPRESSIONS

I'm afraid – I'm sorry to say (usually said before giving somebody bad news)

Example: I'm afraid I'm not going to be able to make it to your house for dinner on Friday night.

Example: "Can you attend the conference?" — "I'm afraid not."

(to) cost a small fortune – to be very expensive

Example: We tried to do it as cheaply as possible, but remodeling our kitchen ending up costing a small fortune.

(to) back out – to cancel a plan; to refuse to do something already agreed to

Example: You said you'd host the group of 10 visiting dancers from Russia. Don't try to back out now.

at the eleventh hour – at the last minute; right before an activity is to happen

Example: I'm sorry to cancel at the eleventh hour, but I'm not going to be able to drop you off at the airport this afternoon.

something came up – an unexpected activity or obligation has arisen (often used when you need to cancel another plan and you don't want to say exactly why)

Example: I know I promised to take you to San Francisco next weekend, but **something came up**.

(to) get out of it – to free oneself from an obligation or activity

Example: What do you mean you can't take me to the movies tonight? You promised me a week ago you'd take me. Don't try to **get out of it!**

in bad shape – not doing well, either physically or mentally

Example: Kevin was **in bad shape** after the car accident.

Example: After her dog died, Heidi was **in bad shape**.

(to) make it up to you – to do something nice for you (said when you have to cancel an arrangement and want to offer to make the same or similar arrangement in the future)

Example: Sorry I have to cancel our trip to London, but let me **make it up to you**. I'll take you to New York next weekend.

how about – what if; let me

Example: I don't like the ballet. **How about** we go to the opera instead?

(to) treat someone to (dinner, lunch, drinks, etc.) – to take somebody to a meal, etc., at one's own expense

Example: I'd like to **treat you to dinner** on Saturday.

PO'ed – angry; annoyed

Example: When Amanda found out that her boyfriend Tyler had invited Megan to the school dance, she was really **PO'ed**.

Note: This slang term is short for "pissed off" and is considered vulgar by some.

(to) take someone up on an offer – to accept an offer

Example: You're willing to translate this report into Spanish? Okay, I'll **take you up on your offer**.

PRACTICE THE IDIOMS

Fill in the blank with the missing word:

1) What's upsetting you? You look ____.

- a) PO'ed
- b) PS'ed
- c) PR'ed

2) Lisa's boyfriend promised to take her out to dinner tonight at 6, and he called at 5 and canceled at the ____ hour.

- a) last
- b) eleventh
- c) twelfth

- 3) Lisa's boyfriend Jake said he was in bad ____ after working all night at the bank.
a) form
b) time
c) shape
- 4) This is the second time this week that Jake has backed ____ of dinner with her.
a) out
b) in
c) away
- 5) How ____ you and I go to dinner tonight at Chez Pierre?
a) if
b) do
c) about
- 6) Chez Pierre? That's a fancy restaurant. That would cost a ____ fortune!
a) big
b) small
c) whole
- 7) Let me treat you ____ dinner.
a) to
b) with
c) at
- 8) You're offering to take me to dinner? I'll ____ you up on your offer.
a) bring
b) accept
c) take
- 9) Sorry, but I can't go to dinner tonight. Something came ____.
a) out
b) down
c) up
- 10) Sorry I had to cancel our dinner plans. Let me make it ____ to you. How about I take you to lunch tomorrow?
a) down
b) up
c) through

ANSWERS: 1. A; 2. B; 3. C; 4. A; 5. C; 6. B; 7. A; 8. C; 9. C; 10. B

REVIEW FOR LESSONS 1-5

Fill in the blank with the missing word:

- 1) My boss managed to turn ____ the charm, and the clients bought everything we were selling.
 - a) up
 - b) on
 - c) off

- 2) I'm glad you like my wedding dress. It cost a ____ fortune.
 - a) big
 - b) huge
 - c) small

- 3) You're quitting your job to become a sheep farmer? You must be ____ my leg!
 - a) squeezing
 - b) joking
 - c) pulling

- 4) We opened a ____ of worms by letting a few of our employees bring their pets to work. Now our office looks like a zoo!
 - a) tin
 - b) can
 - c) bottle

- 5) Sharon backed out of the project at the ____ hour, and we didn't have time to find a replacement.
 - a) final
 - b) last
 - c) eleventh

- 6) Don't waste your time talking to the assistant sales manager. You need to go directly to the ____ honcho.
 - a) main
 - b) head
 - c) high

- 7) Our son is applying to college, and I know you're very knowledgeable about schools. Can we pick your ____?
 - a) opinion
 - b) brain
 - c) mind

- 8) Todd's wife is breathing down his ____ about filing their taxes on time.
 - a) neck
 - b) back
 - c) head

- 9) I'm sorry I won't be able to go to the movies tonight. Something came ____.

- a) up
- b) out
- c) in

10) ____ your calendar for next Friday. The entire office is going to the beach to celebrate our great results.

- a) remove
- b) free
- c) clear

11) You may want to hang ____ your old coins. They may be valuable some day.

- a) onto
- b) up
- c) on

12) Amita spent hours helping you plan your trip to India. The ____ you can do is bring her back a souvenir.

- a) most
- b) best
- c) least

13) Jenny's ex-husband owes over \$15,000 in child support. She's not about to ____ him off the hook.

- a) let
- b) take
- c) free

14) It's no skin off my ____ if the movie theater in town closes. I never go to the movies anyway.

- a) chin
- b) nose
- c) cheek

15) Len was determined to get tickets to the sold-out football game, by hook or by ____.

- a) crook
- b) book
- c) brook

ANSWERS: 1. B; 2. C; 3. C; 4. B; 5. C; 6. B; 7. B; 8. A; 9. A; 10. C; 11. A; 12. C; 13. A; 14. B; 15. A

Carmen's Bistro has really gone downhill.



LESSON 6: MARK AND CINDY MAKE DINNER PLANS

Mark had planned to take Cindy to Carmen's Bistro, but Cindy insists on going to Café Felix instead. Mark tells Cindy about his girlfriend Sara. Cindy is surprised to hear he is seeing someone and takes the opportunity to insult Sara.

Cindy: **It's about time** you got here! You're 20 minutes late.

Mark: Sorry. I **got held up** in traffic.

Cindy: Where are we going to dinner?

Mark: I made reservations at Carmen's Bistro.

Cindy: Carmen's? I was just there last weekend. It has really **gone downhill**. Let's go to Café Felix instead.

Mark: But we don't have reservations. It'll be **packed to the rafters** on a Saturday night!

Cindy: I called yesterday and reserved a table.

Mark: I guess that means you'll be **picking up the tab**, too.

Cindy: **Like hell** I will! Don't forget that I'm going to share some valuable information with you.

Mark: I haven't forgotten. It's why I **broke my date** with Sara to go out with you.

Cindy: Who's Sara? I didn't know you had a new girlfriend!

Mark: Why should you know? You and I **split up** a year ago.

Cindy: Is that the Sara who's the receptionist at your company? The **plain Jane** who sits at the front desk?

Mark: She's not the receptionist anymore. She got a promotion and moved into the marketing department.

Cindy: I guess **it pays to** date the boss!

Mark: **Don't go there.**

Cindy: Why not? People must think that's why she got promoted!

Mark: It's a **touchy subject**. Let's not talk about it anymore.

IDIOMS & EXPRESSIONS

It's about time – It's finally happening (often used to express frustration that something is late in happening)

Example: Brian finally got a job? **It's about time**. He's been hanging around the house for over a year.

(to) get held up – to be delayed

Example: Sorry I'm late. I **got held up** in a meeting.

(to) go downhill – to worsen; to become bad

Example: The service at this hotel has really **gone downhill**. They don't even help you with your luggage anymore.

packed to the rafters – very crowded; overcrowded

Example: The Retox Rock Bar in New York is always **packed to the rafters** on Saturday nights.

(to) pick up the tab – to pay the bill

Example: You paid last time we went out for lunch. Let me **pick up the tab** this time.

like hell – no way (say this when you want to refuse strongly or to disagree strongly with what's just been said)

Example: "Jeff says he already paid you back." — "**Like hell** he did!"

Note 1: This is considered to be strong language by some.

Note 2: This expression can also be used to:

1) Express intensity: We tried like hell to win.

2) Say somebody looks bad: She looked like hell after staying up all night.

(to) break one's date – to cancel a date

Example: Sorry to **break our date**, but I can't make it to the movies tonight.

(to) split up – to end a romantic relationship; to get divorced

Example: Did you hear the news? Laura and Tony have **split up**!

plain Jane – a plain-looking girl or woman; a female who's not very attractive

Example: "Is Rich's new girlfriend pretty?" — "No, to tell you the truth, she's a **plain Jane**."

it pays to – it's worth it; it's a good idea to

Example: Although the restaurant was very crowded, we got seated right away. **It pays to** be friends with the owner!

Don't go there – I don't want to talk about that

Example: "Why did you lose your job?" — "**Don't go there**."

Note: You may also hear the variation "I don't want to go there."

touchy subject – a sensitive issue; a topic that is likely to bring out emotions in people

Example: Don't ask Joy how old she is. Age is a **touchy subject** for her.

PRACTICE THE IDIOMS

Choose the best substitute for the phrase or sentence in bold:

1) Let's go somewhere else. This club is **packed to the rafters**.

a) noisy

b) full

c) dangerous

2) You think our boss will agree to have the office holiday party at his house? **Like hell he will!**

a) He's probably going to.

b) He's definitely going to.

c) He's definitely not going to.

3) "Why didn't you invite Kyle to your party?" – "**Don't go there.**"

a) I didn't want to talk to him.

b) I couldn't reach him.

c) I don't want to talk about it.

4) Al's girlfriend is **a plain Jane**, but she has a great personality.

a) not pretty

b) hideous

c) attractive

5) If we go out tonight, I'm not going to let you **pick up the tab**.

a) pick everybody up

b) pay the bill

c) drink too much

6) Fran's Five Star Catering has **gone downhill** recently. Let's use a different company.

a) become expensive

b) become cheaper

c) gone down in quality

7) When it comes to buying a new TV, **it pays to** compare prices at many stores.

a) it takes a lot of time to

b) it is worthwhile to

c) it costs money to

8) Josh finally apologized to you for breaking your iPod? **It's about time.**

a) It took him longer than it should have.

b) He did so very quickly.

c) That was nice of him.

9) When Anna arrived an hour late to work, she explained to her boss that she **got held up in traffic**.

a) got delayed by

b) avoided

c) decided to blame

10) Don't ask Tim how he's doing in school. It's **a touchy subject** for him right now.

a) a topic he enjoys discussing

b) a topic that may upset him

c) a topic he doesn't know anything about

ANSWERS: 1. B; 2. C; 3. C; 4. A; 5. B; 6. C; 7. B; 8. A; 9. A; 10. B



LESSON 7: CINDY ASKS MARK TO GET BACK TOGETHER

Over dinner, Cindy tells Mark that she wants to start dating him again. Mark reminds her that they didn't get along well, but Cindy tells him he looks good in comparison to the other men she's dated recently.

Mark: So, Cindy, what did you find out for me?

Cindy: I'm not ready to **talk shop**! We haven't even had our drinks yet.

Mark: You know what they say: **business before pleasure**!

Cindy: Okay, then let's **talk turkey**. You and I should **get back together**.

Mark: What? We **fought like cats and dogs**! Why would you want to get back together?

Cindy: **To make a long story short**, I've dated a lot of losers* lately: **stuffed shirts, two-timers — you get the picture**.

Mark: So after dating all these losers, you've decided I'm **Mr. Right**?

Cindy: Maybe not exactly, but you are a **good catch**.

Mark: Well, perhaps you should **hold out for** Mr. Right. Why **settle for** me?

* loser - a failure; somebody who is unsuccessful in life; a jerk

IDIOMS & EXPRESSIONS

(to) talk shop – to talk about work when away from the office

Sorry to **talk shop** at a party, but what do you think we should do about the contract?

Business before pleasure – a saying that means one should finish one's work before enjoying oneself

Example: At our holiday party, the boss stood up and said, "Before we start eating and drinking, I'd like to announce our recent sales results. **Business before pleasure**."

(to) talk turkey – to speak plainly; to get to the point; to be specific

Example: Let's **talk turkey**. If you'd be willing to lower the price of your house by 20%, we might be interested in buying it.

Note: There are different theories about the origin of this expression, which dates from the 1840s. One possibility is that it refers to the conversation around the turkey on Thanksgiving Day. There is also a story of a settler and an Indian who went hunting together. They caught turkey and buzzards. When discussing how to share their catch, the Indian said, "Talk turkey to me."

(to) get back together – [see Lesson 2](#)

(to) fight like cats and dogs – to argue a lot; to not get along well

Example: I don't know how Scott and Lisa stay married. They **fight like cats and dogs**!

to make a long story short – to get to the point; to be brief

Example: **To make a long story short**, I've decided to quit my job and move to Prague to open a coffee shop.

stuffed shirt – a self-important and overly formal person

Example: Brenda's boss takes himself very seriously and never makes jokes. He's a real **stuffed shirt**.

Note: In the 19th century, merchants stuffed shirts with paper for display to give an idea of how the shirt would look when worn. From this practice came the insult of calling a person a "stuffed shirt."

two-timer – someone who is unfaithful to their partner or spouse

Example: Joan's ex-husband was a **two-timer**. She caught him in bed with his administrative assistant.

you get the picture – you know what I'm saying; I've said enough to make it clear what I'm talking about

Example: My roommate throws dirty laundry on the floor, leaves old food in the refrigerator, and, well, **you get the picture**.

Mr. Right – the man who would make the perfect husband; the perfect man

Example: "Is Liz married?" — "No, she's still looking for **Mr. Right**."

good catch – a good romantic partner; a good match for someone

Example: Amanda got a **good catch**. Her fiancé is a successful investment banker, good-looking, and a nice guy.

(to) hold out for – to wait until one gets exactly what one wants; to keep refusing with the hope that the ideal thing or person will come later

Example: We've received several offers on our house, but we're **holding out for** a price we think is fair.

(to) settle for – to accept something or someone that is not exactly what one wants

Example: José dreamed of becoming a professional football player, but he **settled for** becoming a high school football coach instead.

PRACTICE THE IDIOMS

Fill in the blank with the missing word:

1) You should marry Sam. He's a good ____.

- a) catch
- b) hook
- c) grab

2) Rachel is 40 years old and still not married. Hopefully, she'll find ____ Right soon.

- a) Sir
- b) Dr.
- c) Mr.

3) It's not surprising that Keith and Marie broke up. They fought like cats and ____.

- a) puppies

- b) dogs
- c) mice

4) Jenny's boss is no fun at all. He's a real stuffed ____.

- a) suit
- b) pants
- c) shirt

5) I won't go into the details now, but to make a long story ____, Jake and Tina are getting divorced.

- a) interesting
- b) shorter
- c) short

6) Don't settle ____ someone who you're not really in love with. Keep looking and you'll find someone.

- a) by
- b) for
- c) in

7) Let's talk _____. If you're not ready to marry me now, I'm going to look for somebody else.

- a) chicken
- b) goose
- c) turkey

8) Business before _____. Let's work out the details of our agreement, and then we can go get out for a drink.

- a) fun
- b) anything
- c) pleasure

9) Joe was always flirting with other women, coming home late, and well, you get the _____.

- a) picture
- b) image
- c) story

10) Adam is 39 and still single. He says he's holding _____ for the right woman.

- a) on
- b) out
- c) up

ANSWERS: 1. A; 2. C; 3. B; 4. C; 5. C; 6. B; 7. C; 8. C; 9. A; 10. B

LESSON 8: CINDY INVITES MARK TO HER PLACE

Cindy asks Mark to come back to her house after dinner, but Mark says he has to go to bed early. Mark asks Cindy to give him more information on Grand Foods, but Cindy says she can't remember any more.

Mark: Cindy, **as a rule**, I never get back together with ex-girlfriends.

Cindy: **Rules are meant to be broken!**

Mark: Okay, let me **mull this over**. I have a lot of **food for thought** now.

Cindy: Speaking of food, this lobster is delicious. Want a bite?

Mark: No, thanks.

Cindy: I forgot — you **eat like a bird**, but you **drink like a fish!**

Mark: Yeah, I already feel like I've **had one too many**. I'm getting a headache.

Cindy: Let's go back to my place after dinner. We have a lot to **catch up on**.

Mark: I've got to **hit the hay** early tonight.

Cindy: **Stay over** at my place!

Mark: No, I need to wake up early tomorrow and do some work.

Cindy: Okay, **suit yourself!** Be a **party pooper!**

Mark: So can we talk about Grand Foods now and the new information you've got?

Cindy: Oh, I left my notes at home. I can't remember much **off the top of my head**.

Mark: I feel like you're **giving me the runaround**.

Cindy: No, I'm not. You can call me tomorrow at 9 a.m.

Mark: Do you know whether Grand Foods is planning to offer meal kits*?

Cindy: Yes, that **rings a bell!** Of course, I'll have to check my notes.

* meal kits - a pre-prepared food product, typically frozen, in which each main ingredient is packaged separately and the consumer puts them all together when cooking. For example, a Chinese food meal kit might come with a bag of vegetables, a bag of chicken, a packet of peanuts, and a packet of sauce.

IDIOMS & EXPRESSIONS

as a rule – usually; typically

Example: **As a rule**, I stop eating two hours before I exercise.

Rules are meant to be broken – a saying that means you should not always worry about following rules or habits strictly

Example: "You know our teacher doesn't allow eating in the classroom!" — "I know, but **rules are meant to be broken**. I haven't eaten anything all day."

(to) mull something over – to think about something

Example: “Are you going to take the new job you were offered? — “I don’t know. I’m still **mulling it over.**”

food for thought – something to think about

Example: Al Gore’s movie, *An Inconvenient Truth*, provided a lot of **food for thought** on the problem of global warming.

(to) eat like a bird – to not eat much; to have a small appetite

Example: That’s all you’re having for dinner — an apple and a slice of bread? You **eat like a bird!**

(to) drink like a fish – to drink a lot of alcohol

Example: Frank drank two bottles of wine at the dinner party. He **drinks like a fish.**

(to) have one too many – to drink more alcohol than one should; to get drunk

Example: We can’t let Becky drive home. She’s **had one too many.**

(to) catch up on – to discuss (said when you haven’t talked to the other person in a while)

Example: Come over to my house early on Saturday. We’ve got lots to **catch up on.**

(to) hit the hay – to go to sleep

Example: You look tired. It’s time for you to **hit the hay!**

(to) stay over – to sleep somewhere; to spend the night

Example: You’d better **stay over** at my house tonight. It’s snowing too hard for you to drive home.

Note: When someone asks you to “stay over,” it is sometimes, but not always, meant as a sexual invitation.

Suit yourself – Do what you want

Example: You don’t want to go to Melissa and Brian’s wedding? **Suit yourself.** I’ll go without you!

party pooper – someone who doesn’t want to have fun; someone who ruins the fun of others

Example: We just got to the party half an hour ago, and you want to leave already? What a **party pooper!**

off the top of my head – from memory

Example: I can’t remember the name of Al’s company **off the top of my head**, but when I’m back in my office I’ll email it to you.

(to) give someone the runaround – to lead someone along without giving them what they want; to make it difficult for someone to do something

Example: I’m trying to get more money for my studies, but the financial aid office keeps **giving me the runaround.**

(to) ring a bell – to sound familiar

Example: "Your name **rings a bell**. Have we met before?" — "Yes, we were introduced at Joe's party last week."

PRACTICE THE IDIOMS

Choose the most appropriate response to each sentence:

1) Is it time to hit the hay?

- a) Yes, it's still early.
- b) Yes, I'm not tired at all.
- c) Yes, let's go to sleep.

2) You want Don's phone number? Sorry, I can't remember it off the top of my head.

- a) Can you look it up and give it to me later?
- b) Can you give it to me right now?
- c) Can you tell him I called?

3) Every time we go out, Ray drinks like a fish!

- a) Maybe he's just thirsty.
- b) Maybe he's an alcoholic.
- c) Maybe you should take him swimming.

4) Your name rings a bell.

- a) Yes, I think we've met before.
- b) No, my name doesn't ring any bells.
- c) Yes, you've never heard of me before.

5) Am I going to get to see the doctor today or are you going to keep giving me the runaround?

- a) Keep running around and you'll see the doctor.
- b) Please be patient. The doctor will see you soon.
- c) The doctor is busy running around today.

6) You look like you've had one too many.

- a) Yes, I've had one drink.
- b) Yes, I've had several drinks.
- c) Yes, I'm ready for many more drinks.

7) You and I have a lot to catch up on.

- a) Yes, we just talked yesterday.
- b) Yes, I have a lot of news for you.
- c) Yes, there's not much to talk about.

8) Thanks for the job offer. I need to mull it over.

- a) Okay, what's your answer?
- b) Okay, sorry you're not interested.
- c) Okay, let me know tomorrow.

9) Are you coming out with us tonight, or are you going to be a party pooper?

- a) I'm going to be a party pooper. See you tonight.
- b) I'm going to be a party pooper and stay home tonight.

c) I'm going to be a party pooper and have everyone over to my house.

10) You're eating like a bird tonight.

a) I had a very big lunch.

b) I've got a pretty big appetite right now.

c) I'm really hungry.

ANSWERS: 1. C; 2. A; 3. B; 4. A; 5. B; 6. B; 7. B; 8. C; 9. B; 10. A



LESSON 9: MONDAY MORNING AT THE OFFICE

Sara's co-worker Angela tells Sara that she saw Mark dining with a very attractive woman at Café Felix on Saturday night. Sara is very angry to hear this news.

Angela: Sara, I don't want to **stick my nose where it doesn't belong**, but did you and Mark **split up**?

Sara: No. Why?

Angela: I saw him with another woman on Saturday night at Café Felix.

Sara: Are you sure it was him?

Angela: Yes, he and his date were really **living it up**, too. She ordered lobster, and they had a couple of bottles of wine.

Sara: That **makes my blood boil**!

Angela: Sorry I **brought it up**, but I thought you'd want to know.

Sara: What did she look like?

Angela: Tall, thin, and blonde. My boyfriend **couldn't keep his eyes off her**. He thought she was **eye candy**.

Sara: That must have **put a damper on** your evening.

Angela: It sure did!

Sara: **I should've known better than to** start dating Mark.

Angela: He is known to be a **ladies' man**.

Sara: I'm going to **give him a piece of my mind**!

Angela: Please don't tell him I told you! He didn't see me at the restaurant. I don't want to **get on his bad side**.

IDIOMS & EXPRESSIONS

(to) stick one's nose where it doesn't belong – to interfere in someone's business

Example: Donna asked me what Max and I discussed during our meeting. She's always **sticking her nose where it doesn't belong**!

(to) split up – [see Lesson 6](#)

(to) live it up – to really enjoy oneself (often spending a lot of money in the process)

Example: During our weekend in Manhattan, we saw two Broadway shows and ate at a French restaurant. We really lived it up.

(to) make one's blood boil – to make one very angry

Example: Pamela told you that I have a bad attitude? That **makes my blood boil!**

(to) bring something up – to raise a topic; to start talking about something

Example: When Nicole’s father asked her how her grades were last semester, she said, “I was hoping you wouldn’t **bring that up.**”

(to) not be able to keep (or take) one’s eyes off (someone or something) – to stare, usually because the person or object is attractive

Example: Who was that actor in *Pirates of the Caribbean*? I **couldn’t keep my eyes off him!**

eye candy – a very good-looking person; a beautiful object

Example: Ryan’s wife isn’t very nice, but she is **eye candy.**

Example: Our company lobby is very dull. Let’s put some **eye candy** in there.

Note: This expression also means graphics that make software, video games, or a website more pleasing to look at.

(to) put a damper on – to spoil; to make something worse

Example: When Christie’s passport was stolen in Budapest, it **put a damper on** her entire trip.

I should’ve known better than to – I regret; I never should have

Example: Sam told everybody that I’m planning to leave the company? **I should’ve known better than to** trust him!

ladies’ man – a man who enjoys being with women; a man who dates lots of women

Example: Luke danced with all eight of the bridesmaids at the wedding. He’s such a **ladies’ man!**

(to) give someone a piece of one’s mind – to let someone know what one really thinks; to speak openly, usually in anger or frustration

Example: After her lousy lunch at Carmen’s Bistro, Tammy decided to write to the owner and **give him a piece of her mind.**

(to) get on someone’s bad side – to get into a situation where someone is angry at you; to do something to annoy someone

Example: “How did you **get on the teacher’s bad side?**” — “I came to class late every day.”

PRACTICE THE IDIOMS

Choose the best substitute for the phrase or sentence in bold:

1) After my terrible flight aboard Toledo Airlines, I wrote them a letter and **gave them a piece of my mind.**

- a) complained
- b) praised their service
- c) asked for my money back

2) Doug is getting promoted instead of me? **That makes my blood boil!**

- a) He deserves it.
b) I'm very angry about that.
c) I'm glad you told me.
- 3) Tara's mother-in-law keeps telling her how to raise her kids. She's always **sticking her nose where it doesn't belong**.
a) providing helpful advice
b) looking for ways to help people
c) providing unwanted advice
- 4) If you refuse to work overtime, **you're going to get on your boss' bad side**.
a) your boss is going to be angry with you
b) your boss will force you to
c) your boss will be pleased with you
- 5) It's not surprising that Jim was surrounded by women at his high school reunion. He's always been a **ladies' man**.
a) a man who looks like a woman
b) popular with women
c) a talkative guy
- 6) Our waiter isn't very friendly, but let's not let him **put a damper on** our dinner.
a) spoil
b) improve
c) prepare
- 7) Alex likes going to the local dance club on Friday nights. He says it's full of **eye candy**.
a) nice people
b) good dancers
c) pretty women
- 8) We really **lived it up** on our trip to the Caribbean.
a) enjoyed ourselves
b) didn't have a good time
c) met a lot of locals
- 9) **I should've known better than to ask** Sue to water my plants while I was away on vacation. They were all dead when I got back!
a) I am glad I asked
b) I should have asked
c) I regret asking
- 10) The new marketing assistant is so pretty, Chris **can't keep his eyes off her**.
a) really enjoys looking at her
b) really enjoys talking to her
c) can't wait to ask her for a date

ANSWERS: 1. A; 2. B; 3. C; 4. A; 5. B; 6. A; 7. C; 8. A; 9. C; 10. A



Let's not air our dirty laundry in public.

LESSON 10: SARA CONFRONTS MARK

When Sara sees Mark, she lets him know that she knows about his date with another woman on Saturday night. Mark tries to explain, but Sara just gets angrier. Angela tells them they may not want to argue so loudly where everybody can hear them.

Mark: How was the Lenny Kravitz concert on Saturday night?

Sara: Great.

Mark: I hope you're not mad at me. I really did want to go.

Sara: Right, but you had to help your friend.

Mark: Yes, his wife left him, and he **went to pieces**.

Sara: Well, I'm sure a lobster dinner and a couple of bottles of wine helped a lot!

Mark: What?

Sara: I've **got your number** now. **The jig is up!**

Mark: **What's that supposed to mean?**

Sara: You're **cheating on** me, and you're a liar!

Mark: Hey, don't **get bent out of shape**. I don't know what you heard or saw, but I can explain...

Sara: You told me a **cock-and-bull story** about a friend in trouble. Meanwhile, you were out with another woman.

Mark: Okay, so I told a little **white lie**.

Sara: **To add insult to injury**, you took this woman to the same restaurant you were going to take me to!

Angela: Hey, you guys might want to **keep it down!**

Mark: Right. Let's not **air our dirty laundry in public**. I'll call you later.

Sara: **Don't bother!**

IDIOMS & EXPRESSIONS

(to) go to pieces – to have a mental breakdown; to react very negatively to something

Example: When Tiffany got rejected from all of the colleges she applied to, she **went to pieces**.

(to) have someone's number – to have someone figured out; to understand someone's sneaky behavior

Example: Craig, one of our sales managers, always tries to keep all the new accounts for himself. Fortunately, we all **have his number**.

The jig is up – You have been caught; Your secret has been discovered; The good deal you were getting in the past is now ending

Example: Linda, I saw you taking money from the cash register. **The jig is up!**

What's that supposed to mean? – What are you talking about? What are you implying?

Example: "I don't know if you and I have a future together." – "**What's that supposed to mean?**"

(to) cheat on someone – to be unfaithful, usually romantically

Example: Gina found some love letters in her husband's night table and realized that he was **cheating on** her.

(to) get bent out of shape – to become very angry or annoyed

Example: "My roommate plays loud music every night while I'm trying to study!" – "Try not to **get bent out of shape** about it."

cock-and-bull story – a lie; a ridiculous excuse or explanation

Example: When Kara handed in the report a week late, she told a **cock-and-bull story** about having her laptop stolen from a coffee shop.

white lie – a harmless lie; a lie told so as not to upset someone

Example: "You told Suzi she looks good with blonde hair?" – "Yes, I told a **white lie**."

to add insult to injury – to make a bad situation even worse; to further upset someone

Example: Sam broke up with Kara on Tuesday. **To add insult to injury**, he asked her good friend Joy out on a date for Saturday night!

(to) keep it down – to not speak so loudly; to be quiet

Example: "You guys are talking too loudly. Please **keep it down** so the baby doesn't wake up."

(to) air one's dirty laundry in public – to discuss personal matters in front of other people

Example: The reporter kept asking the actress questions about her divorce. Finally, the actress said, "I'd rather not **air my dirty laundry in public**."

Don't bother – Don't make the effort, because it's no longer welcome

Example: "Please let me apologize for being rude to you." – "**Don't bother**. I won't be dating you anymore, so it's not necessary."

PRACTICE THE IDIOMS

Fill in the blank with the missing word:

1) After reading her husband's text messages on his cell phone, Rita realized her husband was cheating ____ her.

- a) by
- b) on
- c) with

- 2) Not only was Rita's husband cheating on her, but to make ____ worse, he was having an affair with her best friend.
a) matters
b) stories
c) issues
- 3) Rita was really upset about her husband's affair. In fact, she went to ____.
a) bits
b) part
c) pieces
- 4) Rita told her husband, "Nick, now I have your _____. If you don't stop seeing that woman, you're going to be in big trouble."
a) secret
b) number
c) letter
- 5) Nick told his wife not to get bent out of _____.
a) shape
b) form
c) character
- 6) When Nick told Rita he was coming home from work late because he was working on a proposal, Rita said, "Don't tell me a cock-and-bull _____."
a) tale
b) lie
c) story
- 7) When Rita accused Nick of being a liar, he said, "I admit it. I've told a few _____ lies."
a) white
b) black
c) gray
- 8) Rita told her husband, "The jig is _____. You need to move out of the house."
a) over
b) through
c) up
- 9) "Hey, keep it _____," said Nick after Rita yelled at him. Otherwise, you'll wake up the kids."
a) silent
b) down
c) low
- 10) Rita doesn't talk about her personal problems at work. She doesn't like to air her dirty _____ in public.
a) clothes
b) matters
c) laundry

ANSWERS: 1. B; 2. A; 3. C; 4. B; 5. A; 6. C; 7. A; 8. C; 9. B; 10. C

REVIEW FOR LESSONS 6-10

Fill in the blank with the missing word:

- 1) Our rental car broke down during our vacation in California. That ____ a damper on our trip.
 - a) placed
 - b) put
 - c) created

- 2) Joyce is telling everybody around town what a jerk her ex-husband was. I don't know why she's ____ her dirty laundry in public.
 - a) airing
 - b) washing
 - c) cleaning

- 3) Be sure to buy plenty of beer if Alex is coming over. He drinks like a ____.
 - a) bird
 - b) pig
 - c) fish

- 4) I don't mean to ____ my nose where it doesn't belong, but is everything okay between you and Victor?
 - a) stick
 - b) put
 - c) place

- 5) I have to get up really early tomorrow morning, so I'm going to ____ the hay early tonight.
 - a) strike
 - b) hit
 - c) take

- 6) Norm got all bent out of ____ when Steve borrowed his car and returned it with an empty gas tank.
 - a) shape
 - b) form
 - c) sorts

- 7) Adam Bennett? That name doesn't ____ a bell.
 - a) strike
 - b) ring
 - c) sound

- 8) My office is ____ to the rafters with old paperwork. I need to clean it up.
 - a) crowded
 - b) stuffed
 - c) packed

- 9) I know Stanley Kubrick directed many movies, but I can only remember the names of a few ____ the top of my head.
 - a) from

- b) off
- c) at

10) We waited 45 minutes for the waiter to take our order. To add insult to _____, the dish we wanted to order was sold out.

- a) hurt
- b) injury
- c) damage

11) Should we accept Microsoft's offer to buy our company for \$50 million, or should we hold _____ for more money?

- a) out
- b) up
- c) down

12) Bill and his boss fight like _____ and dogs.

- a) puppies
- b) wolves
- c) cats

13) Frank's Seafood used to have the best fish in town, but lately they've gone _____.

- a) downhill
- b) uphill
- c) down

14) I was hoping Gary would pick _____ the tab, but instead he suggested we split the bill.

- a) on
- b) out
- c) up

15) Your boyfriend broke up with you by email? You should call him and give him a _____ of your mind.

- a) slice
- b) part
- c) piece

ANSWERS: 1. B; 2. A; 3. C; 4. A; 5. B; 6. A; 7. B; 8. C; 9. B; 10. B; 11. A; 12. C; 13. A; 14. C; 15. C



It would be great to beat them to the punch.

LESSON 11: GOURMET INTERNATIONAL TALKS STRATEGY

Mark shares the news about Grand Foods' plans. Ron likes their idea of packaging the food in meal kits and says their company should do the same.

Ron: Mark, let's **get this meeting underway** with your news.

Mark: Grand Foods is buying Fu Dong Foods, a food company in China, and introducing two new products: Moo Shu Pork and Princess Chicken.

Steve: How will they be packaged?

Mark: In meal kits.

Sara: Those kits for **wannabe** cooks where the ingredients come in separate pouches* and then you put them all together?

Ron: Yes, it makes people feel like they're actually cooking **from scratch**. It's a great concept.

Mark: When I suggested we **come out with** meal kits last year, you said it was a bad idea. Now you think they're the **greatest thing since sliced bread**!

Ron: **In all honesty**, I don't remember talking about meal kits with you last year.

Steve: It seems to me these meal kits are **just the ticket** for today's **time-crunched** consumer!

Ron: Let's **get cracking** on our own meal kits. If we act fast, maybe we can get our meal kits out before Grand Foods' **hit the shelves**.

Steve: It would be great to **beat them to the punch**!

Ron: We should set up a meeting with Jeff Torres. He's our **go-to guy** for new products.

Sara: We'd better get manufacturing **in the loop**, too.

Ron: Right. We also need more information on what Grand Foods is planning. Mark, **get right on that**!

IDIOMS & EXPRESSIONS

(to) get something underway – to begin something; to get started

Example: We're losing sales. Let's **get the new ad campaign underway** immediately.

Example: The global economic conference **got underway** today in Washington.

wannabe (slang) – someone who tries to fit a role; imitating the behavior of a certain role or person

Example: Ellen's son plays the guitar and sings for hours every night. He's a **wannabe** rock star.

from scratch – from all original ingredients; from the beginning

Example: Have a muffin. I baked them **from scratch**.

Example: Brandon threw out the college essay he was working on and started a new one **from scratch**.

(to) come out with – [see Lesson 1](#)

greatest thing since sliced bread – a fantastic product; something or someone very exciting or useful

Example: Jacob loves his new iPod. He thinks it's the **greatest thing since sliced bread**.

Note: This expression refers to the convenience of buying bread pre-sliced rather than having to slice the loaf yourself at home. This was considered an exciting new product when it was first available in the USA in 1928.

in all honesty – to tell you the truth; to speak openly

Example: Some people liked Bob's speech, but **in all honesty**, I thought it was too long.

just the ticket – exactly what is needed

Example: Dennis just retired and is looking for something to do with his free time. Doing volunteer work may be **just the ticket**.

time-crunched – not having much time

Example: Laura is so **time-crunched**, she doesn't have time to go to the mall anymore. She buys all of her clothes online.

(to) get cracking – to get started

Example: "I'm having 12 people over for dinner tonight, and I haven't started cooking yet." — "You'd better **get cracking!**"

(to) hit the shelves – to be released; to be available for purchase

Example: Do you know when Sheryl Crow's new CD is going to **hit the shelves**?

(to) beat someone to the punch – to do something before someone else has a chance

Example: I was going to give you the details of our new advertising campaign, but Heather **beat me to the punch**.

go-to guy – the person everyone goes to for a specific matter

Example: Your computer isn't working? Call Boris. He's our **go-to guy** for technology problems.

Note: The female equivalent is the "go-to gal."

in the loop – informed; having the most up-to-date information

Example: Our company is starting an online newsletter to keep our customers **in the loop** about our new products.

(to) get right on (that or it) – to start working on something immediately

Example: You need that report by tomorrow morning? I'll **get right on that!**

PRACTICE THE IDIOMS

Choose the best substitute for the phrase or sentence in bold:

- 1) Let's **get cracking on** the project so we can finish by 5 o'clock.
 - a) cancel
 - b) take apart
 - c) start working on
- 2) I was going to pay the bill for dinner, but Charlie **beat me to the punch**.
 - a) hurt me
 - b) did it first
 - c) ordered another drink
- 3) **I'm so time-crunched** these days, I barely have enough time to exercise.
 - a) I'm so tired
 - b) I'm so busy
 - c) I'm so free
- 4) Sick of winter? A vacation to Hawaii would **be just the ticket!**
 - a) make you feel better
 - b) require a plane ticket
 - c) make winter end sooner
- 5) Fred is our **go-to guy for** legal issues.
 - a) the one who helps us with
 - b) someone who comes to us for help with
 - c) someone not very knowledgeable about
- 6) Don't ask me what's going on with our company's strategy. I'm not **in the loop**.
 - a) in agreement
 - b) informed
 - c) going to tell you
- 7) Jack thinks his new high-definition TV is **the greatest thing since sliced bread**.
 - a) wonderful
 - b) as good as sliced bread
 - c) pretty good
- 8) College football season **has just gotten underway**.
 - a) is half-way through
 - b) has just finished
 - c) has just begun
- 9) The client would like a revised proposal as soon as possible? I'll ask my assistant to **get right on it**.
 - a) work on that right away
 - b) work on that later this week
 - c) work on that when she has some free time
- 10) A new iPod model just **hit the shelves**.
 - a) became popular
 - b) got released

c) sold out

ANSWERS: 1. C; 2. B; 3. B; 4. A; 5. A; 6. B; 7. A; 8. C; 9. A; 10. B

LESSON 12: RON AND MARK DISCUSS PLAN B

When Ron finds out that Mark can't get any more information from Cindy, he tells Mark he's sending him to China to research Fu Dong Foods, the company Grand Foods is buying. Ron says he's sending Sara with him. Mark tries to tell Ron that's a bad idea since he and Sara aren't speaking, but Ron insists.

Ron: Mark, are you **making any headway** getting information out of your girlfriend?

Mark: You mean my ex-girlfriend? No, I'm not making any progress. I'm at a **dead end**.

Ron: Let's go with **Plan B** then. I'm sending you and Sara off to China on Monday to research Fu Dong Foods.

Mark: I don't think that's such a good idea. I'm **in the doghouse with** Sara right now.

Ron: You need to stop dating women from the office. I thought you **learned your lesson** after dating Monica and Mindy!

Mark: I'm **turning over a new leaf**. No more office romances.

Ron: So why is Sara mad at you?

Mark: Because I had to **break my date** with her last Saturday so I could go out with Cindy.

Ron: So you broke one little date with her. She's **holding that against you**?

Mark: Yes, because some **busybody** told her that I was out with another woman on Saturday night.

Ron: Well, this trip should give you plenty of time to **patch things up** with Sara.

Mark: She's **giving me the silent treatment**. I don't think we should travel together right now. We should wait until this **blows over**.

Ron: I'm sending you two on a business trip — not a honeymoon*!

* honeymoon - a vacation taken by newly-married couples after their wedding ceremony

IDIOMS & EXPRESSIONS

(to) make headway – to make progress

Example: Firefighters in California are **making headway** putting out the wildfires.

dead end – when no more progress can be made

Example: Unfortunately, we're at a **dead end** in our negotiations to buy the Indian software company.

Plan B – what to do when the original plan does not work; an alternative plan

Example: "If the job offer in Chicago falls through, do you have a **Plan B**?" — "Yes, I'll just stay at my current job in New York."

in the doghouse with – when someone is angry at you

Example: Sonia is **in the doghouse with** her boss after forgetting to attend an important meeting this morning.

(to) learn one's lesson – to change one's behavior based on experience

Example: My grandmother got lost last night while driving. Now she says she's **learned her lesson**. She won't be driving at night anymore.

(to) turn over a new leaf – to start behaving better; to break a bad habit

Example: In the past, I've been known to gossip. However, I'm **turning over a new leaf** and won't be talking about people anymore.

Example: Jake is **turning over a new leaf**. Starting tomorrow, he's giving up smoking.

(to) break one's date – [see Lesson 6](#)

(to) hold something against someone – to be angry at someone for something

Example: I'm sorry I got the promotion you were hoping for. I hope you won't **hold it against** me.

busybody – a person who interferes with the business of others; a nosy person who gets into other people's business

Example: Wanda is such a **busybody**. Whenever anybody makes a phone call, she tries to overhear.

(to) patch things up – to repair a relationship

Example: Shawn and Monica had a big fight on Saturday night, but by Sunday afternoon they had **patched things up**.

(to) give someone the silent treatment – to stop talking to someone out of anger (usually for a short period of time)

Example: "Why are you **giving me the silent treatment**?" — "I'm mad at you for not inviting me on your ski trip."

(to) blow over – to calm down again

Example: "Jim is so angry that we're not releasing the product on time that he's running around screaming." — "Don't worry. It'll **blow over**."

PRACTICE THE IDIOMS

Choose the most appropriate response to each sentence:

1) I'm in the doghouse with my wife after forgetting our wedding anniversary.

- a) It must be a big doghouse.
- b) I'm sure she'll forgive you soon.
- c) You two must've had a great anniversary.

2) I'm making headway with my new diet.

- a) Why don't you try a different diet?
- b) How many pounds have you lost?

c) When will you start the diet?

3) Rachel is giving me the silent treatment these days.

a) She's talking to me, too.

b) Why, is she angry at you?

c) That's a great treatment.

4) No more unhealthy foods for me. I'm turning over a new leaf.

a) That's a good idea.

b) Good luck with the new leaf.

c) I'll bring over some donuts and candy.

5) You loaned Steve your iPod, and he lost it? I hope you learned your lesson.

a) Yes, I'll be loaning out my new iPod too.

b) Yes, do you want to borrow anything from me?

c) Yes, I won't loan Steve anything in the future.

6) Do you have a Plan B in case you don't get accepted to any law schools?

a) Yes, I'll go to law school.

b) Yes, I'm not sure what I'll do.

c) Yes, I'll work as a paralegal at a law firm.

7) Your wife is angry with you now, but things will blow over in a few days.

a) Yes, she'll probably leave me.

b) You're right. I'm sure she'll forgive me.

c) You're right. I'll forgive her right now.

8) Do you think Shane and Elena will patch things up?

a) Yes, they fight a lot, but they always get back together.

b) Yes, they're probably going to get divorced.

c) Yes, Shane is already dating somebody else.

9) I'm really sorry I'm not able to offer your son a job at my company. I hope you're not holding it against me.

a) I'm not, but I am still angry about it.

b) I'm not. I understand.

c) I'm not, but I never want to speak to you again.

10) Carrie asked me, "Who was that guy you were eating lunch with today?" She's such a busybody!

a) Yes, she's very nosy.

b) Yes, she's very busy.

c) Yes, she's very helpful.

ANSWERS: 1. B; 2. B; 3. B; 4. A; 5. C; 6. C; 7. B; 8. A; 9. B; 10. A



LESSON 13: MARK AND SARA FLY TO CHINA

Mark and Sara are flying to Beijing to research Fu Dong Foods and the Chinese food market. Mark tries to speak with Sara on the plane, but she's still angry with him. He explains why he was with another woman in the restaurant, but Sara doesn't like his excuse.

Mark: I see you're reading Let's Speak Chinese. **Boning up on** your Chinese for the trip?

Sara: **None of your business.**

Mark: Somebody **woke up on the wrong side of the bed!**

Sara: I'm still **ticked off at** you.

Mark: Well, I hope we can **clear the air**. Otherwise, it's going to be a long week!

Sara: Okay, **come clean**. Who was that woman in the restaurant?

Mark: That woman was my ex-girlfriend. She had **inside information** on Grand Foods. When Ron found out, he told me to get the information.

Sara: Even if it meant **getting back together** with her?

Mark: I wasn't planning on **getting back together** with her. I was just **pumping her for information**.

Sara: How could you **stoop so low**?

Mark: Ron demanded the information. He said the company would fail without it.

Sara: Don't try to **pin this on** Ron.

Mark: Why not? This is all Ron's fault!

Sara: This whole experience has been an **eye-opener**. You and I are not **on the same wavelength**.

Mark: Give me another chance.

Sara: I'm going back to my Chinese lessons now.

IDIOMS & EXPRESSIONS

(to) bone up on – to study quickly, usually just before the information is needed

Example: Before the debate, all of the presidential candidates were busy **boning up on** the issues.

None of your business – That is not your concern

Example: When Tanya's ex-husband asked her if she was dating anybody, she replied, "**None of your business.**"

(to) wake up on the wrong side of the bed – to feel annoyed; to be in a bad mood

Example: "Glen screamed at me when I walked into his office to ask a question!" — "He must've **woken up on the wrong side of the bed.**"

ticked off at – angry at

Example: I hope you're not **ticked off at** me for forgetting to invite you to my party.

(to) clear the air – to make bad feelings go away; to settle an issue that is causing tension between people

Example: Jay's wife is angry at him for forgetting to pick up their son from school, but he hopes he'll be able to **clear the air**.

(to) come clean – to talk openly; to admit everything

Example: The mayor should **come clean** and admit that he bought a new car for his wife with taxpayers' money.

inside information – private information; information known only to those working inside a company or closely associated with a company

Example: My boss's laptop was stolen, and it had lots of **inside information** about our company's strategic plans on it. What a nightmare!

(to) get back together – [see Lesson 2](#)

(to) pump someone for information – to get secret information from someone

Example: As a producer at HBO, Sharon already knows how the popular TV series will end. Her friends are trying to **pump her for information**.

(to) stoop so low – to behave poorly; to behave in an unethical or undignified way

Example: Our biggest competitor was caught going through our company's trash bins. How could they **stoop so low**?

Example: I can't believe Seth was cheating on his wife with her best friend. How could he **stoop so low**?

(to) pin something on someone – to shift the blame to someone or something else

Example: When the high school football team lost the game, the players **pinned the loss on** their coach.

eye-opener – an experience or activity that makes one realize what is really going on

Example: Working as an intern in the White House was an **eye-opener** for Joy. She learned how politics really works in Washington.

on the same wavelength – in agreement; able to understand one another; compatible

Example: "How was your date with the guy you met online?" — "He was a nice guy, but talking to him was difficult. I don't think we were **on the same wavelength**."

PRACTICE THE IDIOMS

Choose the best substitute for the phrase or sentence in bold:

- 1) When our advertising agency lost a big client, my boss tried to **pin it on me**.
a) blame me
b) comfort me

c) fire me

2) Your mailbox was stolen last night? **How could someone stoop so low?**

- a) How could somebody reach it?
- b) Who would do something like that?
- c) How come you didn't see who it was?

3) I told the reporter to stop trying to **pump me for information.**

- a) write a story about me
- b) give me information
- c) get information out of me

4) Ed is **boning up on** biology in preparation for his final exam.

- a) experimenting with
- b) reviewing
- c) forgetting

5) My supervisor and I **aren't on the same wavelength.**

- a) generally agree on things
- b) usually don't agree on things
- c) listen to the same radio station

6) When Liz added up all the money she spent in one month on coffee drinks, **it was an eye-opener.**

- a) it helped her stay awake
- b) she learned something useful from the process
- c) it was a useless exercise

7) Do you think the company will **come clean on** their bad business deals?

- a) clean up
- b) hide
- c) be honest about

8) Larry just came in my office and started yelling at me. **He must've woken up on the wrong side of the bed.**

- a) He's in a bad mood today.
- b) He's in a great mood today.
- c) He's tired today.

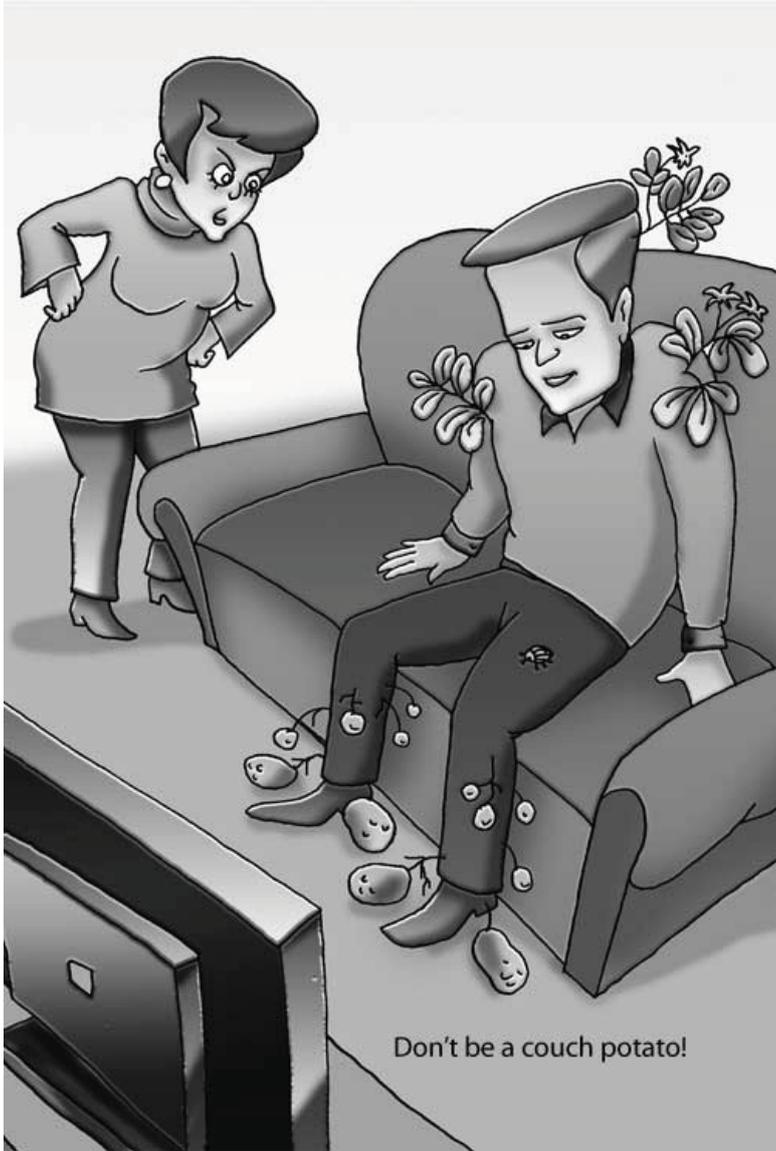
9) Our upcoming merger with Magna Corporation is still considered **inside information.**

- a) news not to be shared with outsiders
- b) general knowledge
- c) information employees should share with friends

10) Stan **ticked off** the boss by questioning his strategy in front of everybody at the meeting.

- a) pleased
- b) challenged
- c) annoyed

ANSWERS: 1. A; 2. B; 3. C; 4. B; 5. B; 6. B; 7. C; 8. A; 9. A; 10. C



LESSON 14: MARK AND SARA VISIT THE GREAT WALL

Mark and Sara are in China. Sara asks Mark if he wants to visit the Great Wall with her. Mark is tired and doesn't really want to go, but Sara convinces him.

Sara: I'm **off to** the Great Wall. Do you want to come?

Mark: We're here on business!

Sara: We've got a whole week here. Let's get to know the country better.

Mark: By going to a **tourist trap**?

Sara: You'll **change your tune** when you see it. I hear it's amazing.

Mark: I'm **ready to drop**. I've got **jet lag**. I think I'll **stick around** the hotel.

Sara: Exercise and fresh air will **work wonders** for your **jet lag**! You'll definitely **get a second wind**.

Mark: I don't feel like sightseeing.*

Sara: Don't be a **couch potato**! This is a **once-in-a-lifetime** opportunity.

Mark: Okay, let's go see the Great Wall.

(at the Great Wall)

Mark: Wow, this wall is long!

Sara: It's over 4,000 miles long.

Mark: I feel like we've walked about 2,000 miles already. I'm hungry.

Sara: Let's **grab a bite**!

Mark: We passed a woman selling dumplings about a mile back.

Sara: Okay, let's go find her.

* (to) sightsee – to visit interesting places as a tourist

IDIOMS & EXPRESSIONS

off to – going to; leaving for (a place)

Example: We're **off to** the movies. See you later.

Example: "I'm **off to** Singapore tonight." — "Have a great trip!"

tourist trap – a place that attracts many tourists and charges them high prices

Example: "Did you visit Fisherman's Wharf during your trip to San Francisco?" — "No, our friends who live there told us it was a **tourist trap** full of souvenir shops and silly museums."

(to) change one's tune – to start thinking differently about something; to change one's opinion

Example: The president of our company says he doesn't want to manufacture in China. But when he

realizes how much money we can save, he'll **change his tune!**

ready to drop – very tired; exhausted

Example: After a full day of sightseeing in Moscow, Grace was **ready to drop**.

jet lag – tiredness caused by the time difference when traveling

Example: I just returned from four days in India. I've got **jet lag**.

(to) stick around – to stay somewhere

Example: "I'd better be going home now." — "Why don't you **stick around** and have dinner and watch a movie with us?"

(to) work wonders – to help; to be effective at making something better

Example: Wendy puts lemon peels on her forehead whenever she has a headache. She says it **works wonders**.

(to) get a second wind – to get new energy after feeling tired; to suddenly feel energized

Example: Tim thought his two-year-old daughter was going to fall asleep, but then she **got a second wind** and started singing and dancing.

couch potato – a lazy person; someone who just wants to stay at home and watch television or videos

Example: "Every weekend, I sit around the house and watch videos." — "You're such a **couch potato!**"

Note: This expression was first used by a man named Tom Iacino in 1976. He loved to watch TV (or the "boob tube") and belonged to a group called the "boob toobers." A potato is a type of "tuber," and the couch is the favorite place to sit and watch TV.

once-in-a-lifetime – rare; unlikely to occur again (most often said of an opportunity or offer)

Example: Ed's boss offered him a six-month assignment in Beijing, telling him it was a **once-in-a-lifetime** opportunity.

(to) grab a bite – to get something quick to eat

Example: Do you want to **grab a bite** before the movie starts?

PRACTICE THE IDIOMS

Fill in the blank with the missing word:

1) Our tour group arrived in Paris this morning. Now we're off ____ the Eiffel Tower.

- a) in
- b) with
- c) to

2) My friend Jane says she just wants to stick ____ the hotel today.

- a) around
- b) by

c) with

3) "I feel like I'm ready to _____," Jane says, explaining that she didn't sleep at all on the flight to Paris.

- a) fall
- b) sink
- c) drop

4) After the long flight to Paris and with the time difference, Jane and I both have jet _____.

- a) fatigue
- b) lag
- c) exhaustion

5) I tell Jane that exercise will work _____ for us. If we get out and walk, it will be good for us.

- a) miracles
- b) wonders
- c) marvels

6) We'll definitely get a second _____ once we get moving, I tell Jane.

- a) life
- b) blast
- c) wind

7) Jane tells me she doesn't want to go to the Eiffel Tower because it's a tourist _____.

- a) trap
- b) catch
- c) place

8) I tell Jane she'll change her _____ once she sees how impressive the Eiffel Tower really is.

- a) tune
- b) song
- c) melody

9) While I go to the Eiffel Tower, Jane goes to a pastry shop to grab a _____.

- a) piece
- b) morsel
- c) bite

10) Later that night, I am ready to go out to dinner but Jane says she just wants to stay in the hotel. I think I'm traveling with a couch _____!

- a) person
- b) potato
- c) sitter

ANSWERS: 1. C; 2. A; 3. C; 4. B; 5. B; 6. C; 7. A; 8. A; 9. C; 10. B

LESSON 15: MARK AND SARA DISCOVER DELICIOUS DUMPLINGS

Mark and Sara successfully locate Madame Chu, the woman selling dumplings by the Great Wall. The dumplings are so delicious, Mark offers Madame Chu \$500 for her recipes. A suspicious Madame Chu says no to the offer.

Mark: There it is — Madame Chu's Dumpling Stand.

Mme Chu: What can I get for you?

Sara: What do you recommend?

Mme Chu: The variety plate is popular. It has pork, shrimp, and vegetable dumplings.

Mark: That sounds good.

Sara: Mmmm, these dumplings are **to die for!**

Mark: They do **hit the spot.**

Sara: I wish we could bring Madame Chu back to California with us, but that's probably not **in the cards.**

Mark: I wonder if we can **get our hands on** her recipes.

Sara: Getting secret information out of women is **right up your alley!** You had great success with Cindy!

Mark: That was a **cheap shot!**

Sara: **All kidding aside,** maybe she'd be willing to share her recipes. Just ask her.

Mark: Excuse me, would you give me your recipes?

Mme Chu: **Not a chance!** These recipes have been in my family for over 100 years.

Mark: I'll pay you.

Mme Chu: I'm not interested, **not for all the tea in China!**

Mark: How about for \$500?

Mme Chu: I **smell a rat.** Why are you offering so much?

Mark: Because I want to make these delicious dumplings at home!

Mme Chu: I can **see the writing on the wall.** You and your wife will **set up shop** down the road and compete with me!

Mark: No, **that's the furthest thing from my mind!**

Mme Chu: I have customers waiting. Good-bye.

IDIOMS & EXPRESSIONS

to die for – very tasty; delicious

Example: Mmmm, this chocolate cake is **to die for!**

(to) hit the spot – to satisfy a desire, such as for food or drink

Example: On a hot summer day, a cold beer really **hits the spot**.

in the cards – likely to happen; possible

Example: The economy is slowing down. Do you think a recession is **in the cards**?

(to) get one's hands on – to get, sometimes with difficulty

Example: We asked the owner of the used bookstore where we could **get our hands on** a first edition of *The Grapes of Wrath*.

right up one's alley – something someone is good at, has a lot of experience with, or really enjoys

Example: Tom loves horror movies, so Dawn of the Dead was **right up his alley**.

cheap shot – a nasty comment; an unfair thing to say

Example: After the bank reported bad earnings, the journalist took a **cheap shot** at its CEO by writing, "Some leadership might help."

all kidding aside – seriously (note: say this after you joke about something, to indicate that you are now changing your tone)

Example: "Who left the science experiments in the company refrigerator? **All kidding aside**, please tell the employees to throw out their old food."

Not a chance! – No way; That's not a possibility

Example: "Do you think Paul would let me borrow his motorcycle?" — "**Not a chance!** He never lets anybody else use it."

not for all the tea in China – not for anything

Example: Martin loves football. He would **not** miss the Superbowl **for all the tea in China**.

(to) smell a rat – to be suspicious about something

Example: Ivan got an investment proposal by email, but he **smelled a rat** when he read the line, "Please deposit \$25,000 into my account by next Friday."

(to) see the writing on the wall – to see signs of trouble in the future; to know what is going to happen

Example: The furniture store is selling everything at 60% off. I can **see the writing on the wall**: soon they'll be going out of business.

Note: You may also see the variation "handwriting on the wall."

(to) set up shop – to open a business; to expand a business to a new location

Example: When the English language school heard about the demand for English in Korea, they **set up shop** in Seoul.

That's the furthest thing from my mind – I wouldn't even think of doing that

Example: "I hope you're not planning to stay at this job for a few months, get information, and then start your own company." — **"That's the furthest thing from my mind!"**

PRACTICE THE IDIOMS

Choose the most appropriate response to each sentence:

1) This mug of hot chocolate really hits the spot.

- a) Can I get you something else instead?
- b) I'm glad you're enjoying it.
- c) I'm sorry you don't like it.

2) When the State Department asked Carl to serve in Afghanistan, he said he wouldn't go for all the tea in China.

- a) Why would he rather go to China?
- b) Why does he want to go so badly?
- c) Why did he refuse to go?

3) The supplier is offering 75% off on our first order? I smell a rat.

- a) Me too. It stinks in here.
- b) Me too. It sounds too good to be true.
- c) Me too. Let's take the offer immediately.

4) Our company had another bad year. Can't you see the writing on the wall?

- a) Yes, our company is in serious trouble.
- b) Yes, I read what was written on the wall.
- c) Yes, our company will do better next year.

5) I was looking at the employment ads in the newspaper yesterday, and I think I found something right up your alley.

- a) Thanks. Please show me the ad.
- b) Thanks. I'd love to work in an alley.
- c) Thanks. I'd love to work for you.

6) Drive Larry to Kennedy Airport tomorrow for a 7 a.m. flight? Not a chance!

- a) I'll let him know you're available.
- b) I understand why you don't want to do it.
- c) There won't be another chance.

7) Do you know where I can get my hands on two tickets to this Sunday's football game?

- a) Yes, my friend is selling a pair.
- b) Yes, the tickets are sold out.
- c) You can touch my tickets if you want.

8) We'd love to buy a bigger house, but I don't think it's in the cards for this year.

- a) Good luck with your move.
- b) Maybe you'll get a new card.
- c) Maybe next year.

- 9) We're thinking of setting up shop in China.
a) Good idea. The market is growing fast there.
b) Good idea. They don't have many shops there.
c) Good idea. I'm sure you'll enjoy shopping there.

- 10) If you go to Penny's Pastry Shop, get a slice of the Mississippi mud pie. It's to die for!
a) Thanks. I'll be sure to try it.
b) Thanks, but I'm sure it's not worth dying for.
c) Thanks, I'll be sure to order something else.

ANSWERS: 1. B; 2. C; 3. B; 4. A; 5. A; 6. B; 7. A; 8. C; 9. A; 10. A

REVIEW FOR LESSONS 11-15

Fill in the blank with the missing word:

- 1) When Evan found out his company was going to fire him, he beat them to the ____ and quit.
 - a) punch
 - b) hit
 - c) stroke

- 2) Cheryl said she'd never drive a big car, but she changed her ____ after driving in a few heavy snowstorms.
 - a) line
 - b) song
 - c) tune

- 3) Jackie loves to meet people from different countries, so working as an English as a Second Language teacher is right up her ____.
 - a) alley
 - b) street
 - c) skill

- 4) The computer maker doesn't want to discount its laptops too much. They're afraid people will ____ a rat if they're too cheap.
 - a) sniff
 - b) smell
 - c) suspect

- 5) If you want to bone up ____ investing, I suggest you read *Wise Investing Made Simple*.
 - a) in
 - b) on
 - c) with

- 6) Tyler's teacher told him she'd throw him out of class if he kept coming late. He promised to turn ____ a new leaf and start coming on time.
 - a) over
 - b) in
 - c) up

- 7) Our company is having trouble ____ headway in our efforts to cut expenses.
 - a) making
 - b) doing
 - c) having

- 8) Under the hospital's new therapy program, dogs visit the patients for 15 minutes a day. The patients say it's the greatest ____ since sliced bread.
 - a) program
 - b) invention
 - c) thing

- 9) What do you mean you'd rather stay at home than go to the holiday party? Don't be a couch ____!
a) yam
b) tomato
c) potato
- 10) Alex hasn't called me in three days. I can see the writing on the _____. He'll probably break up with me!
a) paper
b) wall
c) door
- 11) It's your fault there were mistakes in the contract. Don't try to pin it _____ your assistant!
a) with
b) at
c) on
- 12) I was falling asleep during dinner, but now I'm getting a _____ wind.
a) second
b) third
c) new
- 13) Doug hasn't spoken to his father in years, but now he'd like to patch things _____ with him.
a) in
b) up
c) over
- 14) Andy and I are not always on the _____ wavelength, but we generally get along.
a) one
b) similar
c) same
- 15) Reducing the sales tax may be _____ the ticket for improving the state's economy.
a) just
b) only
c) simply

ANSWERS: 1. A; 2. C; 3. A; 4. B; 5. B; 6. A; 7. A; 8. C; 9. C; 10. B; 11. C; 12. A; 13. B; 14. C; 15. A

LESSON 16: TWO TOUGH COOKIES

Mark and Sara decide to go looking for dumplings as good as Madame Chu's. Sara says she doesn't want to gain weight from eating too many dumplings. Mark tells her she looks great and asks if she wants to get back together. Sara says she's not ready yet.

Mark: That Madame Chu is one **tough cookie!**

Sara: You can't blame her for not wanting to sell her recipes. Those recipes are her **bread and butter.**

Mark: I know, but **money talks.** I should have offered her more.

Sara: Maybe all the dumplings in China are this delicious. Maybe Madame Chu's are just **run-of-the-mill** Chinese dumplings.

Mark: Let's find out. We've got a week to **stuff our faces** with dumplings!

Sara: Okay, but I'm **watching my waistline.** Dumplings are fattening*, so I'll just have a bite of each.

Mark: What are you worried about? You look great.

Sara: I've **put on a few pounds** since we **broke up.** Now that I'm back **on the dating scene,** I need to **get in shape.**

Mark: I don't mind **love handles.**

Sara: It doesn't matter what you like. I'm talking about my future!

Mark: I was hoping that you could forgive all that **monkey business** with Cindy and that we could **move on.**

Sara: Okay. That's all **water under the bridge.**

Mark: So we're back together?

Sara: No, let's not **rush into** anything. I need to think about it.

Mark: And I thought Madame Chu was a **tough cookie!**

* fattening – high in calories; likely to make one gain weight

IDIOMS & EXPRESSIONS

tough cookie – a strong person; someone with a strong will

Example: Lou returned to work three days after getting out of the hospital for heart surgery. He's a **tough cookie!**

Note: You may see the variation "one tough cookie."

bread and butter

1) someone's means of support; the way someone makes money to live on

Example: Jane's novels earn her just a few hundred dollars a year. Teaching fiction writing at the local university is her **bread and butter**.

2) the main way a company makes money; a company's main business

Example: Google has many different business activities, but selling ads is still their **bread and butter**.

money talks – money can convince people to do things

Example: "Do you think José will be willing to leave his job at Hewlett-Packard to work for us?" — "Yes, **money talks**."

run-of-the-mill – ordinary; nothing special

Example: With offerings like lobster pizza and fried chicken pizza, Paola's Restaurant is not your **run-of-the mill** pizzeria.

(to) stuff one's face – to eat a lot; to overeat

Example: We **stuffed our faces** at the all-you-can-eat brunch this morning. We probably won't be eating again today.

(to) watch one's waistline – to not overeat; to be careful about what one eats so as not to get fat

Example: I'd love to have another slice of pie, but I'd better not. I'm **watching my waistline**.

(to) put on a few pounds – to gain weight

Example: Kristen **put on a few pounds** over the holidays, so now she's on a diet.

(to) break up – to end a romantic relationship

Example: Wendy and Mike fight all the time, so I wouldn't be surprised if they **break up**.

on the dating scene – looking for a boyfriend or girlfriend; dating

Example: Alex just got divorced. He's not quite ready to be **on the dating scene**.

(to) get in shape – to become physically fit

Example: After gaining 10 pounds over the holidays, Dana decided to join a fitness club and **get in shape**.

love handles – fat on each side of a person's waist

Example: Paul has been working out at the gym every evening since his girlfriend told him he had **love handles**.

monkey business

1) silly or naughty actions

Example: The principal walked into the classroom to find the kids dancing on their desks. "Stop your **monkey business!**" she said. "Your teacher will be here in a few minutes."

2) unethical or illegal behavior

Example: The governor fired his deputy after he discovered her **monkey business**. She had accepted

\$200,000 from a construction company in exchange for awarding them government contracts.

(to) move on

1) to stop thinking or talking about a certain subject

Example: We've been talking about the sales strategy for 45 minutes. We need to **move on** to another topic now.

2) to recover emotionally from something

Example: Jerry was depressed for months after his girlfriend left him, but now he's finally ready to **move on**.

water under the bridge – something unpleasant that happened in the past and is no longer important; something that has been forgiven

Example: Seeing Joe made me nervous because I hadn't seen him since I won the promotion he wanted. Fortunately, he told me that was **water under the bridge**.

(to) rush into – to proceed too quickly; to be hasty

Example: You just met Rob two months ago, and now you're talking about marriage? Don't you think you're **rushing into** things?

PRACTICE THE IDIOMS

Choose the best substitute for the phrase or sentence in bold:

1) The cheesecake looks delicious, but I'm **watching my waistline**.

- a) trying to avoid fattening foods
- b) too busy looking at myself to eat it
- c) going to take a big piece

2) Brad is doing special exercises to lose **his love handles**.

- a) a pound or two
- b) as much weight as possible
- c) the fat around his waist

3) We do sell greeting cards and magazines in our bookstore, but books are still **our bread and butter**.

- a) popular with some customers
- b) our main source of sales
- c) a small part of the business

4) I know Debbie is upset about the divorce, but it's time for her to **move on**.

- a) marry somebody else
- b) file the paperwork
- c) continue with her life

5) You just met Troy and now you're moving in together? Don't you think you're **rushing into things**?

- a) rushing Troy to make decisions
- b) moving too quickly with the relationship
- c) acting like a fool

6) **Stop stuffing your face with cookies!**

- a) Stop eating the cookies!
- b) Have just a few more cookies!
- c) Please use better manners while eating!

7) The bank was fined \$5 million over some **monkey business** involving bad loans.

- a) animal activity
- b) illegal dealings
- c) confusion

8) After meeting a nice woman online, Leo is no longer **on the dating scene**.

- a) going out at night
- b) interested in women
- c) looking for a girlfriend

9) I've had some disagreements with my brother-in-law over the years, but that's all **water under the bridge**. These days, we get along great.

- a) in the past
- b) in the present
- c) still unsettled

10) With amusement park rides and thousands of shops, the Mall of America is not your **run-of-the-mill** shopping mall.

- a) convenient
- b) extraordinary
- c) average

ANSWERS: 1. A; 2. C; 3. B; 4. C; 5. B; 6. A; 7. B; 8. C; 9. A; 10. C

LESSON 17: MARK GETS A SURPRISE CALL

Mark and Sara are talking about going out for dumplings when Mark gets a surprise phone call. It's Cindy yelling at him for going away without telling her. Mark tells her that he doesn't need to tell her where he's going because they're not together anymore. Cindy says she thought they were going to get married.

Sara: Good morning! What's that you're having for breakfast?

Mark: Rice and pickled vegetables. **When in Rome, do as the Romans do!**

Sara: Wow, you've really **gone native**. That didn't take long.

Mark: I asked the hotel where we can get the best dumplings in town. I've got a list of places.

Sara: Don't **fill up on** rice now. **Save room for** the dumplings!

Mark: Don't worry. Oh, there's my cell phone.

(Mark answers his cell phone)

Mark: Hello?

Cindy: Mark, it's Cindy! Where have you been? You **dropped off the face of the earth!**

Mark: I'm in Beijing. It was a **last-minute** business trip.

Cindy: You went to China **on the spur of the moment?**

Mark: That's right.

Cindy: Well, when will you be back in town? I need to see you!

Mark: Cindy, I can't see you anymore.

Cindy: What?

Mark: **It's over between us.**

Cindy: What? You and I were going to **get hitched!**

Mark: We must've **gotten our wires crossed!** I was never going to marry you.

Cindy: **I can't believe my ears!** So all this time you were just **stringing me along.**

Mark: We're **breaking up.** This is a bad connection. I'd better hang up now.

IDIOMS & EXPRESSIONS

When in Rome, do as the Romans do – When you're visiting a foreign country or new place, behave like the local people

Example: Once she moved to the United States, Juanita decided she would only speak English. "When in Rome, do as the Romans do," she said.

(to) go native – to start behaving like the locals when in a new place or a foreign country

Example: When Adam moved to Los Angeles, he **went native** and started wearing shorts and sandals to work every day.

(to) fill up on – to eat so much of something that you're no longer hungry

Example: If you **fill up on** bread, you won't be able to eat the rest of your dinner.

(to) save room for – to make sure you still have some appetite left for

Example: Be sure to **save room for** dessert. I baked an apple pie.

(to) drop off the face of the earth – to disappear

Example: Maria and I used to talk on the phone every week, but then she stopped calling and just **dropped off the face of the earth**.

last-minute – unplanned; with little prior planning; at the latest possible moment

Example: I know this is a **last-minute** invitation, but are you free tonight to come over for dinner?

on the spur of the moment – on very short notice; unplanned; spontaneous

Example: We had no plans for the weekend, so **on the spur of the moment** we decided to go to Atlantic City.

It's over between us – Our romantic relationship is finished

Example: "How are you and Vera doing? — **"It's over between us."**

(to) get hitched – to get married

Example: Bob and Ann **got hitched** last Saturday night in Las Vegas.

(to) get one's wires crossed – to have a misunderstanding

Example: "I waited for you at Starbucks for 45 minutes this morning. Where were you?" — "We must've **gotten our wires crossed**. I thought our meeting was tomorrow morning!"

I can't believe my ears – I'm shocked by what you're telling me

Example: Bart got promoted to vice president? **I can't believe my ears!** He is the worst manager in this company.

(to) string someone along – to create false hope in someone; to deceive someone in order to get something from them

Example: Before you move in with Sam, make sure that he's serious about getting married, and he isn't just **stringing you along**.

(to) break up

1) to lose a telephone connection

Example: "Hello? Hello? I can hardly hear you. We're **breaking up**."

2) for the second definition, [see Lesson 16](#)

PRACTICE THE IDIOMS

Fill in the blank with the missing word:

- 1) Paul and Tammy went off to Las Vegas to get _____.
 - a) hooked
 - b) hitched
 - c) hiked

- 2) Paul asked Tammy to marry him on the spur of the _____.
 - a) moment
 - b) minute
 - c) second

- 3) Tammy was happy when Paul asked her to marry her. She was starting to worry he was just stringing her _____.
 - a) by
 - b) on
 - c) along

- 4) Paul picked out a 24-hour wedding chapel for their wedding. "When in ____, do as the ____ do," said Paul.
 - a) Paris...Parisians
 - b) America...Americans
 - c) Rome...Romans

- 5) After the wedding, Tammy called her mom to tell her she'd gotten married. Her mom replied, "I can't ____ my ears."
 - a) trust
 - b) understand
 - c) believe

- 6) Tammy explained that she and Paul decided to get married in Las Vegas last ____, so she didn't have time to tell anybody beforehand.
 - a) second
 - b) minute
 - c) hour

- 7) Tammy's mom said, "What happened to Rob, that nice guy you were dating?" Tammy said, "It's over ____ us. I'm in love with Paul now."
 - a) to
 - b) between
 - c) by

- 8) When Tammy's mom started yelling at her, Tammy said, "Sorry, we're breaking _____. I'm going to hang up now."
 - a) up
 - b) through
 - c) apart

9) When Paul offered Tammy a big slice of wedding cake, she said, "I don't want to fill ____ on cake. I'm looking forward to a nice dinner."

a) through

b) by

c) up

10) Paul replied, "Yes, save ____ for dinner. I'm going to take you to a really nice restaurant."

a) space

b) room

c) places

ANSWERS: 1. B; 2. A; 3. C; 4. C; 5. C; 6. B; 7. B; 8. A; 9. C; 10. B



LESSON 18: MARK AND SARA ON THE DUMPLING TRAIL

In their search for dumplings as good as Madame Chu's, Sara and Mark try Chan's Dumplings. They're expensive compared to other dumplings, but Mark agrees to pay. Unfortunately, it turns out they're inferior to Madame Chu's dumplings.

Mark: Let's see, number 10 on our list — Chan's Dumplings. He's asking 8 yuan per dumpling. That's **highway robbery!**

Sara: This is a place for tourists, and tourists always **pay through the nose**.

Mark: Let's **do the math** here: 4 dumplings, 32 yuan. That's about 4 bucks!

Sara: Well, it's **not** going to **break the bank**.

Mark: These will be **my treat**.

Sara: Thanks, **big spender**.

Mark: Hmmm, not bad. But **nothing to write home about**.

Sara: No, **no great shakes**. Madame Chu's dumplings are better **by a long shot**. We've only got two places left on our list to try. What if we can't find better dumplings?

Mark: We'll **cross that bridge when we come to it**.

Sara: Let's **call it a day**. I can't eat any more dumplings today.

IDIOMS & EXPRESSIONS

highway robbery – charging too much money; overpriced

Example: Ten dollars for a glass of wine? That's **highway robbery!**

(to) pay through the nose – to pay a lot or too much money for something

Example: With oil prices so high, we're going to **pay through the nose** to heat our house this winter.

(to) do the math – to figure out how much something will cost; to calculate

Example: Let's **do the math**. If we buy concert tickets for our 10 top clients, then at \$50 per ticket, we'll have to pay \$500!

(to) not break the bank – to not be too expensive; to be cheap

Example: We're looking for a hotel in London that **won't break the bank**. Do you have any suggestions?

my treat – I'll pay

Example: Put down the bill. Tonight's dinner is **my treat!**

big spender – someone who likes to spend money; a generous person (sometimes used sarcastically when someone offers to pay for something that doesn't cost much)

Example: "My boss treated me to lunch at McDonald's." — "Wow, he's a **big spender!**"

nothing to write home about – nothing special; not very good

Example: “How was your dinner at Café Michel?” — “I was expecting great things, but it was **nothing to write home about.**”

no great shakes – not very good

Example: My cell phone does have a camera, but the pictures it takes are **no great shakes.**

by a long shot – by far; by a large amount

Example: “Was that \$90 bottle of wine you bought the most expensive one in the store?” — “Not by a **long shot.** They had a bottle for \$500.”

(to) cross that bridge when one comes to it – to make a decision when needed and not before

Example: When a reporter asked the football coach what he would do if his contract wasn't renewed, he said, “I'll **cross that bridge when I come to it.**”

(to) call it a day – to finish an activity for the day; to stop doing something

Example: After skiing for eight hours, Kim was ready to **call it a day.**

PRACTICE THE IDIOMS

Choose the most appropriate response to each sentence:

1) Samantha is the best candidate for this job by a long shot.

- a) Okay, then let's make her an offer.
- b) Okay, then let's keep looking for somebody.
- c) Okay, then let's reject her.

2) Bill bought you a Mercedes for Valentine's Day? Wow, he's a big spender.

- a) Yes, he never spends any money.
- b) Yes, he is very cheap.
- c) Yes, he is very generous.

3) I may get laid off next month, but I'll cross that bridge when I come to it.

- a) Good idea. Why worry about it now?
- b) Right. Crossing the bridge will help.
- c) That's good news.

4) Let's look hard for street parking when we drive into Manhattan. If we park in a lot, we'll have to pay through the nose.

- a) Yes, street parking in Manhattan is expensive!
- b) Yes, parking lots in Manhattan are cheap!
- c) Yes, parking lots in Manhattan are expensive!

5) The Broadway play got great reviews, but we thought it was no great shakes.

- a) Why did you like it so much?
- b) Why didn't you like it?
- c) Why did you go?

6) I'm ready to call it a day.

a) Okay, let's work until late tonight.

b) Me too. See you tomorrow morning.

c) Okay, let's keep going.

7) This wine is okay, but it's nothing to write home about.

a) I agree. It's not very good.

b) I agree. It's delicious.

c) I agree. I'm going to bring home several bottles.

8) Can you recommend a sports car that won't break the bank?

a) Yes, the Mazda Miata isn't too expensive.

b) Yes, the BMW M6 Convertible is very expensive.

c) Yes, the Hyundai Tiburon probably won't break down.

9) The hotel charges \$30 for one day of Internet access? That's highway robbery!

a) Yes, it's way too much.

b) Yes, it is a great deal.

c) Yes, it's very reasonable.

10) Let's go out for lunch, my treat.

a) Okay, but I paid last time.

b) Okay, that's generous of you.

c) Okay, but you should pay for my meal too.

ANSWERS: 1. A; 2. C; 3. A; 4. C; 5. B; 6. B; 7. A; 8. A; 9. A; 10. B

LESSON 19: MARK AND SARA MAKE PLANS

After trying all the dumpling places on their list, Sara and Mark conclude that Madame Chu's are the best. They don't know how they'll get the recipes from her, but they decide Ron might have an idea. They go shopping for frozen dinners to see what their competition is planning and then go out to celebrate their last night in town.

Sara: These dumplings are **for the birds!**

Mark: Well, we've tried every place on our list. Madame Chu's dumplings are the best.

Sara: How are we going to persuade* her to give us her recipes?

Mark: That's the **\$64,000 question!**

Sara: Well, we have to get her to **fork over** the recipes. We can't return to the office **empty-handed**.

Mark: We won't. I'll let Ron know all about Madame Chu. I'll just let him know we **hit a snag** in the negotiations with her.

Sara: Maybe he'll know how we can get her to **part with** her recipes.

Mark: He should. That's why he **makes the big bucks!**

Sara: Let's go buy some frozen dinners from Fu Dong so we can see what Grand Foods **has up their sleeve**.

Mark: Right! This is our last chance. Tonight's our last night here.

Sara: Let's **go out on the town** to celebrate.

Mark: I'm **up for** that. After we go shopping, let's go to dinner and then we'll go dancing. We'll **paint the town red!**

* persuade - to convince; to make someone take a certain action

IDIOMS & EXPRESSIONS

for the birds – lousy; worthless

Example: This new dishwashing detergent is **for the birds**. The dishes are still dirty.

\$64,000 question – the most important question; a question that's very important but difficult to answer

Example: "What will your son do if he doesn't get into medical school?" — "That's the **\$64,000 question!**"

Note: This expression comes from an American game show from the 1950s called "The \$64,000 Question." The last question on each show was worth \$64,000.

(to) fork over – to give, usually unwillingly; to pay

Example: The New York Yankees had to **fork over** \$52 million to get the baseball star to sign a contract.

empty-handed – with nothing; without a gift

Example: Let's pick up a bottle of wine so we don't go to the party **empty-handed**.

(to) hit a snag – to meet some difficulty

Example: The new Internet dating site has **hit a snag**. They have 500 women signed up and only 20 men.

(to) part with – to give up something valuable; to give with reluctance

Example: "If Alan needs the money, he should sell his art collection." — "He'll never **part with** his paintings."

(to) make the big bucks – to make a lot of money; to be well-paid

Example: If you want to **make the big bucks**, you should go into investment banking.

(to) have up one's sleeve – to have something secret in development or ready to use

Example: When Apple Computer said they would announce a new product soon, many people wondered what they **had up their sleeve**.

Note 1: You will also see the variations "to have a card up one's sleeve" and "to have an ace up one's sleeve."

Note 2: This idiom comes from gambling, where players sometimes cheat by hiding a card up their sleeve.

(to) go out on the town – to go out and have fun for the evening (usually at bars, restaurants, or clubs)

Example: You passed the citizenship exam? We should **go out on the town** to celebrate!

(to be) up for – (to be) interested in; (to be) ready to

Example: Would you be **up for** going out for a drink after the movie tonight?

(to) paint the town red – to go out and enjoy oneself (often by drinking a lot)

Example: Let's go to Manhattan to celebrate New Year's Eve. We'll **paint the town red!**

PRACTICE THE IDIOMS

Choose the best substitute for the phrase or sentence in bold:

1) As a partner in a large law firm, Linda **makes the big bucks**.

- a) does important work
- b) makes major decisions
- c) makes a high salary

2) Chris asked if my old Honda Civic was for sale, but I said I wasn't quite ready to **part with it**.

- a) give it away
- b) keep it
- c) sell it

3) Rob and Sue arrived at our dinner party **empty-handed**.

- a) bringing nothing

- b) bringing a gift
- c) with clean hands

4) When will the economy improve? **That's the \$64,000 question.**

- a) That question is worth a lot of money.
- b) That's the question everyone wants answered.
- c) That's not an interesting question.

5) You got a new job? Let's go out tonight and **paint the town red.**

- a) have a great time
- b) spend all your money
- c) get home early

6) When my cell phone battery died, I had to **fork over** \$40 for a new one.

- a) donate
- b) save
- c) pay

7) Our plan to hold an outdoor concert in Central Park **has hit a snag.**

- a) has met with some trouble
- b) is proceeding as planned
- c) will not proceed at all

8) Several of my co-workers are going to a bar after work, but I'm not **up for it.**

- a) free tonight
- b) in the mood for it
- c) interested in them

9) Our president says he's going to surprise us at the holiday party this year. I wonder what he's **got up his sleeve!**

- a) planning
- b) making
- c) celebrating

10) I just bought these muffins, and they're as hard as rocks. They're **for the birds!**

- a) lousy
- b) delicious
- c) just okay

ANSWERS: 1. C; 2. C; 3. A; 4. B; 5. A; 6. C; 7. A; 8. B; 9. A; 10. A



LESSON 20: MARK HAS A SURPRISE VISITOR

Mark has a surprise when he comes back to his office to find Cindy waiting for him. Mark tells her they're definitely finished and advises her to get over it. Ron sees Cindy and thinks she's beautiful. Mark agrees to introduce Ron to Cindy.

Angela: Welcome back to the office, Mark. There's a woman waiting outside your office, and she's **on the warpath**.

Mark: It must be Cindy Hansen. Can you please tell her to leave?

Angela: **Wishful thinking!** I'm not **doing your dirty work**.

(Mark sees Cindy)

Mark: Hi, Cindy. What can I do for you?

Cindy: You **had some nerve** leaving the country without telling me!

Mark: I don't need to tell you before I go away.

Cindy: It's just **common courtesy** to let your girlfriend know when you're going away.

Mark: You're not my girlfriend anymore. **Wake up and smell the coffee!** Our relationship is **ancient history**.

Cindy: But I still love you!

Mark: You and I are finished. **Get over it**.

Cindy: I **bent over backwards** to get you information, and **this is the thanks I get!**

(Cindy runs out. Ron enters)

Ron: Welcome back, Mark. I just overheard* your **lover's spat**. Who was that woman?

Mark: That was Cindy Hansen of Shop-Well.

Ron: She's a **knockout!** If you're not dating her anymore, can you **set me up with** her?

Mark: Sure. I think you two would be a **match made in heaven**.

* overhear - to hear something, usually without the speaker knowing it

IDIOMS & EXPRESSIONS

on the warpath – very angry

Example: The actress was **on the warpath** after a newspaper printed a false story about her love life.

Note: The warpath was originally the "path to war" taken by Native Americans when traveling to a battle.

wishful thinking – thinking hopefully, not realistically, about something

Example: You think your two-year-old will become a genius by watching these DVDs? That's **wishful thinking!**

(to) do one's dirty work – to do an unpleasant task for someone

Example: The president wanted to keep his image clean, so he had others **do his dirty work** for him.

(to) have some nerve – to behave in a bold or disrespectful way

Example: Karen **has some nerve** telling me to clean up my desk. Her entire office is a mess!

common courtesy – thoughtfulness; polite behavior

Example: It's **common courtesy** to send a thank-you note after having a job interview.

Wake up and smell the coffee – Be realistic

Example: You think your employees don't surf the web during work hours? **Wake up and smell the coffee!**

ancient history – the past; something that is finished

Example: The college football team lost every game last year, but that's **ancient history** now. With their new coach, they know they'll do better this year.

(to) get over it – to deal with the reality that something is finished; to recover from an upsetting event

Example: Tina was very upset when she lost the tennis tournament. "You'll **get over it**," her mother told her.

(to) bend over backwards – to make a great effort for somebody

Example: No wonder Starbucks was voted one of the best places to work. They **bend over backwards** to keep their employees happy.

This is the thanks I get – This is how you thank me for all I've done for you

Example: **This is the thanks I get** for spending six months training Rob. My company just fired me and put Rob in charge!

lover's spat – an argument between a couple

Example: When the president and his wife had a **lover's spat** in public, it was in all the newspapers the next morning.

knockout – a beautiful woman

Example: In Joel's experience with online dating, many women look like **knockouts** in their photos, but aren't so pretty in person.

(to) set someone up with someone – to introduce someone to a friend or acquaintance for the purpose of dating

Example: I **set Todd up with** Melanie last year, and I just found out they're getting married!

match made in heaven – an ideal couple; a very good fit between two people or organizations

Example: Kathy loves sports, and her new boyfriend is a professional athlete. They're a **match made in heaven**.

PRACTICE THE IDIOMS

Fill in the blank with the missing word or words:

- 1) Wake up and smell the _____. Jim is never going to ask you to marry him.
 - a) tea
 - b) coffee
 - c) cocoa
- 2) Greg is running around the office yelling. Do you know why he's on the _____?
 - a) war trail
 - b) warpath
 - c) anger path
- 3) Jen is fed up with doing her boss's dirty _____ all the time.
 - a) tasks
 - b) jobs
 - c) work
- 4) Tom loves to eat and his new girlfriend is a chef. They're a _____ made in heaven.
 - a) match
 - b) pair
 - c) couple
- 5) Did you hear Bill on the phone with his wife earlier? It sounded like they were having a lover's _____.
 - a) argument
 - b) fight
 - c) spat
- 6) We bent over _____ to make our houseguests feel welcome and they left without saying thank you.
 - a) forward
 - b) sideways
 - c) backwards
- 7) Tina is not interested in you anymore. Get _____ it.
 - a) by
 - b) over
 - c) into
- 8) Tyler used to skip class all the time, and he never studied. But all that's _____ history. Now he's a great student.
 - a) ancient
 - b) old
 - c) past
- 9) You think you're going to get a big raise this year? That may be _____ thinking.
 - a) hopeful
 - b) wishful
 - c) reasonable
- 10) It's common _____ to thank the bus driver for the ride as you step off the bus.
 - a) niceness

b) manners

c) courtesy

ANSWERS: 1. B; 2. B; 3. C; 4. A; 5. C; 6. C; 7. B; 8. A; 9. B; 10. C

REVIEW FOR LESSONS 16-20

Fill in the blank with the missing word or words:

- 1) The sushi at Kabuki Sushi is okay, but it's nothing to ____ home about.
 - a) tell
 - b) run
 - c) write

- 2) We may have trouble flying out tomorrow because of the storm, but we'll cross that ____ when we come to it.
 - a) river
 - b) bridge
 - c) problem

- 3) Karen found her old boyfriend's profile on Facebook and decided to send him a message ____ the spur of the moment.
 - a) with
 - b) at
 - c) on

- 4) Diane ____ on a few pounds during her trip to Italy.
 - a) put
 - b) added
 - c) look

- 5) We ____ over backwards to make our new neighbors welcome, but they didn't seem to appreciate it.
 - a) bent
 - b) folded
 - c) went

- 6) You got a promotion today? Let's go out on the ____ to celebrate.
 - a) city
 - b) street
 - c) town

- 7) Prices in Germany are high right now. We paid through the ____ for everything during our trip there.
 - a) nose
 - b) mouth
 - c) ear

- 8) Stay away from Bill today. He's ____ the warpath because he just found out our sales are down by 30% this month.
 - a) in
 - b) on
 - c) at

- 9) Our talks to acquire the Indian software company have ____ a snag.

- a) reached
- b) hit
- c) struck

10) I know you and I have had our differences in the past, but that's ____ history now.

- a) medieval
- b) old
- c) ancient

11) Randy is the best soccer player on our team by a long ____.

- a) shot
- b) way
- c) reach

12) During her trip to Japan, Paula ate fish, a raw egg, and pickled vegetables for breakfast. When in ____, do as the ____ do.

- a) Rome...Romans
- b) Italy...Italians
- c) Japan...Japanese

13) My gym just raised its fees. Now I have to fork ____ \$95 a month to work out.

- a) up
- b) in
- c) over

14) The bank keeps telling me to call back in a week to see if they have any job openings. I think they're just stringing me ____.

- a) along
- b) around
- c) about

15) A real estate developer has offered to buy Ed's house for \$3 million so the developer can build an office building on the property. Ed loves his house, but money ____.

- a) speaks
- b) talks
- c) yells

ANSWERS: 1. C; 2. B; 3. C; 4. A; 5. A; 6. C; 7. A; 8. B; 9. B; 10. C; 11. A; 12. A; 13. C; 14. A; 15. B

Madame Chu won't play ball.



LESSON 21: MARK TELLS RON ABOUT THE DUMPLINGS

Mark tells Ron that he believes the company should start making dumplings. Mark explains that Madame Chu's dumplings are the best, but Madame Chu won't share her recipes. Mark asks Ron for ideas. Ron says that if Mark wants to pursue the dumplings, Mark will have to figure out a solution for himself.

Ron: How was China?

Mark: Even though I was exhausted, Sara **dragged** me to the Great Wall when we got there. It turned out to be a **blessing in disguise**.

Ron: How so?

Mark: All that climbing made us very hungry, so we bought some dumplings from a cook named Madame Chu. We realized that those dumplings are our company's future.

Ron: Meal kits are our company's future!

Mark: Sure, we can make meal kits too, but that's just copying what Grand Foods is doing.

Ron: Of course it's copying them. **Get off your high horse!** Business is all about **keeping up with** the competition!

Mark: Well, these dumplings are a way to **get a leg up on** the competition.

Ron: So how do you make these dumplings?

Mark: There's the **catch**. Madame Chu wouldn't give us her recipes. She wouldn't even sell them to us for 500 bucks.

Ron: Couldn't you find another dumpling recipe in China?

Mark: Madame Chu's dumplings are so good. They just **melt in your mouth**. All other dumplings **paled in comparison!**

Ron: But you just told me that Madame Chu won't **play ball**. So what do you suggest we do?

Mark: I don't know. I was hoping you would have some ideas.

Ron: These dumplings are your **brainchild**. **The ball's in your court**.

IDIOMS & EXPRESSIONS

(to) drag someone somewhere – to bring someone somewhere they don't want to go

Example: This party is so boring! I can't believe I let you **drag me here**.

blessing in disguise – something bad that ultimately results in something very good; a bad event that unexpectedly turns out to bring a positive result

Example: Getting fired from Microsoft was a **blessing in disguise** for Chad. He went on to start his own business and became a millionaire.

Get off your high horse! – Stop acting so arrogant or self-righteous

Example: “I can’t believe you bought such a big refrigerator! Do you know how much electricity that’s going to use?” — “**Get off your high horse!** Look at your big-screen TV.”

(to) keep up with – to stay with; to not fall behind

Example: Ellen is really struggling with her English literature class. She can’t **keep up with** the reading.

(to) get a leg up on – to get an advantage over; to get ahead of

Example: Falling Leaf Vineyards is experimenting with different ways of packaging its wines to try to **get a leg up on** the competition.

Note: This idiom comes from horseback riding. A helper offers a cupped hand so the rider can step in and put his or her leg up and over the horse’s back.

catch – a difficulty that is not obvious; a hidden drawback; something that makes an offer not as attractive as it first seems

Example: “The bookstore is giving away free reading lamps? What’s the **catch?**” — “The catch is that you have to pay for their membership plan to get the lamp.”

(to) melt in your mouth – to taste delicious; to be tender (especially for meat)

Example: Susan’s chocolate chip cookies are so good, they **melt in your mouth**.

Example: The filet mignon at Rick’s Steakhouse just **melts in your mouth**.

(to) pale in comparison – to not be as good as; to be inferior to

Example: The flat-screen television we bought two years ago **pales in comparison** to the models available today.

(to) play ball – to cooperate; to agree to do what somebody asks; to work together to achieve a common goal

Example: We thought we were going to buy a small software company, but suddenly the company has doubled their asking price. I don’t think they want to **play ball**.

brainchild – an idea resulting from someone’s creative thinking; a great idea; an original idea

Example: The reality TV show “The Apprentice” was the **brainchild** of Donald Trump.

The ball is in your court – You need to do something; It’s your turn to do something

Example: “We’ve made you the job offer. **The ball is in your court** now.”

PRACTICE THE IDIOMS

Choose the most appropriate response to each sentence:

- 1) It doesn’t look like our supplier wants to play ball.
 - a) Then let’s find somebody else to play.
 - b) Then let’s look for a new supplier.
 - c) Then let’s keep working with them.

- 2) Your website pales in comparison to your competitors' sites.
a) You're right. We need to improve our website.
b) You're right. Our website is the best.
c) You're right. We need to make the site more colorful.
- 3) Mmmm, this apple pie just melts in your mouth.
a) It must be too hot.
b) I'm glad you like it.
c) It is fattening.
- 4) Michelle got rejected from Yale Law School, but maybe it was a blessing in disguise.
a) Right. She'll probably get a blessing elsewhere.
b) Right. It's great news for her.
c) Right. She's probably better off going somewhere closer to home.
- 5) We're still waiting for your company's proposal. The ball is in your court.
a) We'll be getting you the proposal soon.
b) We'll return the ball as soon as possible.
c) Please respond to the proposal quickly.
- 6) Whose brainchild is the \$2500 "Nano" car?
a) I don't know who runs it.
b) Tata Motors came out with it.
c) Tata Motors was the first to give a car a brain.
- 7) Our bank is going to start offering several new services to try to get a leg up on our competition.
a) I'm sure your new services will help.
b) I'm sure your competitors will appreciate that.
c) I'm sure you'll manage to get your leg up.
- 8) I can't keep up with my classmates in my Spanish class.
a) You must be very good at Spanish.
b) Your classmates must be moving too slowly.
c) You should study more.
- 9) The music club is offering 10 CDs for just \$20? There must be a catch.
a) The catch is you need to buy another 10 CDs at full price.
b) There's no catch, but you can't quit until you've bought another 10 CDs.
c) The catch is it's a great deal.
- 10) Why did I let you drag me to this woman's movie?
a) Sorry, I didn't realize you wouldn't like it.
b) I knew you'd enjoy it.
c) I know how much you like woman's movies.

ANSWERS: 1. B; 2. A; 3. B; 4. C; 5. A; 6. B; 7. A; 8. C; 9. A; 10. A



Let's get Madame Chu to sign on the dotted line.

LESSON 22: THE TEAM MAKES PLANS TO WOO MADAME CHU

Mark, Steve, Ron, and Sara meet to discuss the dumplings. Steve asks why they're going into the dumpling business, but Ron says he supports the idea. Sara comes up with a new plan for approaching Madame Chu. Mark and Sara decide to fly to Beijing to present it to her.

Mark: We need a plan for Madame Chu's dumplings.

Steve: I don't mean to be a **wet blanket**, but why are we talking about dumplings? What about the meal kits?

Mark: We shouldn't **put all our eggs in one basket**. You can keep working on the meal kits, while Sara and I work on the dumplings.

Steve: Aren't we going to **spread ourselves too thin**?

Mark: That seems like a **risk worth taking**.

Ron: I agree. I think we should **go for it**.

Sara: What about hiring Madame Chu to develop recipes for us and using "Madame Chu" as the brand name?

Mark: I think your idea is **right on the money**.

Steve: Not to be a **naysayer**, but do you think Madame Chu will really **go along with it**? You said before that she didn't want to work with us.

Mark: She'll **have a change of heart** when she hears our new offer.

Ron: Let's **move full steam ahead** on this. Let's get Madame Chu to **sign on the dotted line**.

Mark: Okay, Sara and I will get on the next flight to Beijing to **seal the deal** with Madame Chu!

Ron: You'd better spend the whole week there. She may be difficult to woo.*

* woo - to seek the favor or affection of; to try to convince someone to do something

IDIOMS & EXPRESSIONS

wet blanket – someone who discourages ideas; someone who spoils the enthusiasm or fun of a group

Example: When Tracy's neighbors were playing loud music at 2 a.m., she knocked on their door and said, "I'm sorry to be a **wet blanket**, but I'm trying to sleep."

(to) put all one's eggs in one basket – to rely too much on one thing; to put a lot at risk by relying on just one plan

Example: Investment advisors recommend holding a variety of stocks and bonds. They say it's important not to **put all your eggs in one basket**.

(to) spread oneself too thin – to try to do too many projects at once, so that one doesn't give enough time to any of them

Example: The small restaurant has announced plans to publish cookbooks and produce a line of frozen foods. I think they're **spreading themselves too thin**.

risk worth taking – worthwhile; a plan whose benefits are greater than the risks

Example: It's risky for David to leave his job as a corporate lawyer to run an art gallery. But he says it's a **risk worth taking**.

(to) go for it – to proceed; to pursue a certain goal (sometimes taking on risk to do so)

Example: "I'm thinking of applying to film school." — "I think you should **go for it!**"

right on the money – correct; sensible

Example: Your poor opinion of Ted's girlfriend was **right on the money**. She ended up leaving him after she realized he wasn't rich.

naysayer – someone who speaks against something; someone who often has negative or contrary opinions

Example: I don't mean to be a **naysayer**, but I don't think your new business idea is very good.

(to) go along with it – to agree to a plan

Example: Before we present our proposal to the CEO, we have to get our manager to **go along with it**.

(to) have a change of heart – to change one's mind

Example: The CEO said he was going to retire in a month to spend more time with his family, but then he **had a change of heart** and decided to stay on the job.

(to) move full steam ahead – to proceed with maximum enthusiasm or energy

Example: George is **moving full steam ahead** with his plan to start his own software company.

(to) sign on the dotted line – to agree formally to a plan or proposal

Example: We're almost ready to buy the house, but before we **sign on the dotted line**, we're going to ask the sellers to replace the roof.

(to) seal the deal – to come to an agreement

Example: "Are you still interested in buying my car?" — "Yes, but before we **seal the deal**, I'd like to take it for another test drive."

PRACTICE THE IDIOMS

Choose the best substitute for the phrase or sentence in bold:

1) We like your proposal, and we're ready to **sign on the dotted line**.

- a) sign it
- b) look at it
- c) discuss it

2) After a three-hour presentation to the client, we were finally able to **seal the deal**.

- a) start the negotiations
- b) make the sale
- c) get them interested

3) You were **right on the money** when you said I'd enjoy Prague the most of all the cities on the tour.

- a) exactly right
- b) incorrect
- c) thinking of money

4) At first, Jill agreed to transfer to the Mumbai office, but then she **had a change of heart**.

- a) started feeling chest pains
- b) decided to leave the company
- c) changed her mind

5) John and Natasha are **moving full steam ahead with** their plans to move to the East Coast.

- a) proceeding with
- b) changing
- c) reconsidering

6) Nick didn't like your idea for the ad campaign? **He can be a wet blanket**.

- a) He doesn't always like new ideas.
- b) He's always enthusiastic.
- c) He's probably got a good point.

7) You should apply to more than just Harvard. **Don't put all your eggs in one basket**.

- a) Don't bother applying to other schools.
- b) You probably won't get into Harvard.
- c) Don't put all your hopes into getting into Harvard.

8) Let's wait until next year to expand our business into Russia. I'm afraid we're **spreading ourselves too thin** right now.

- a) losing too much money
- b) working on too many projects
- c) working too hard

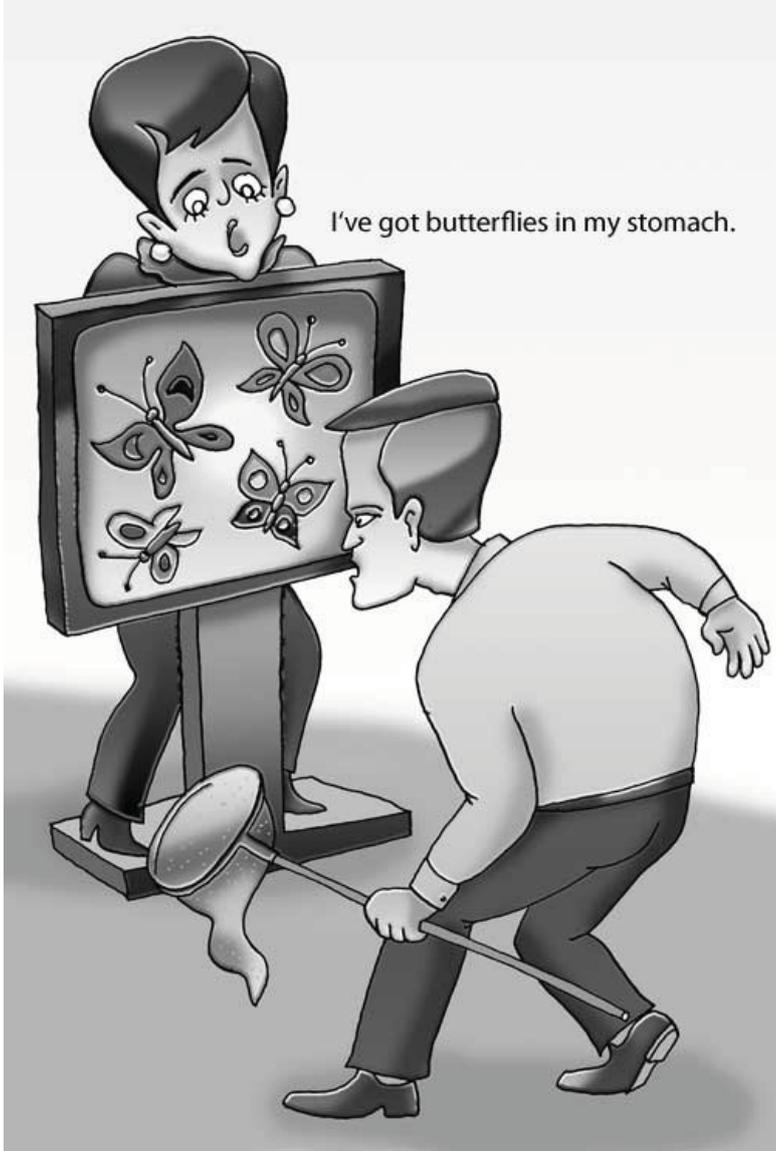
9) Jim couldn't decide whether to quit the law firm of Dewey, Cheatham & Howe and start his own firm, but he finally decided to **go for it**.

- a) do it
- b) forget it
- c) stay where he was

10) Of course Evan doesn't think our new project will be successful. He's **such a naysayer**.

- a) so positive
- b) so negative
- c) so neutral

ANSWERS: 1. A; 2. B; 3. A; 4. C; 5. A; 6. A; 7. C; 8. B; 9. A; 10. B



LESSON 23: MARK POPS THE QUESTION

Back in Beijing, Mark and Sara discuss their plans to approach Madame Chu in the morning. They worry that they'll both be fired if she declines their offer. Over dinner, Mark asks Sara to marry him.

Mark: Let's get up early tomorrow to go see Madame Chu.

Sara: I've **got butterflies in my stomach!** What if we can't **cut a deal**?

Mark: That'll be the **kiss of death** for us.

Sara: Right. Ron will **hit the roof** and fire both of us!

Mark: Let's go get something to eat while we're still **on the company's dime**.

Sara: Dumplings?

Mark: No, let's go somewhere nice.

(at the restaurant)

Mark: I'm glad we're back together.

Sara: Me too.

Mark: So you've completely forgiven me?

Sara: Yes, I don't like to **dwell on the past**.

Mark: Me neither. I know I **played the field** in the past, but **those days are over**.

Sara: We should **let bygones be bygones**.

Mark: Fortune cookie?

(Sara breaks the cookie in half and reads the scrap of paper inside)

Mark: Read your fortune aloud.

Sara: Let's see. It says: "Will you marry me?"

Mark: Well?

Sara: What a way to **pop the question!**

Mark: Is that a "yes"?

Sara: Yes.

IDIOMS & EXPRESSIONS

(to) have butterflies in one's stomach – to feel nervous

Example: Before the job interview, Marianna **had butterflies in her stomach**.

(to) cut a deal – to make an agreement (especially in business or politics)

Example: AOL **cut a deal** with Hewlett-Packard to have its name on the welcome screen of all new Hewlett-Packard computers.

kiss of death – an action that causes failure or ruin

Example: When the job candidate asked about the salary during her first interview, it was the **kiss of death**.

(to) hit the roof – to get very angry; to lose one's temper

Example: When Jack found out that one of his employees was stealing from the company, he **hit the roof**.

on the company's dime – when the company is paying

Example: Please tell Mona to stop making personal phone calls **on the company's dime**.

(to) dwell on the past – to focus too much on the past

Example: Doug never talks about his first marriage. He doesn't like to **dwell on the past**.

(to) play the field – to date many people, usually while one is single

Example: "I saw Tina with a cute guy last night. Does she have a new boyfriend? — "Nothing serious. She's just **playing the field**."

those days are over – that's the past; things are different now

Example: When Tim was single, he hung out at bars on the weekends. Now that he's married, **those days are over**.

(to) let bygones be bygones – to forgive and forget what happened in the past

Example: I'm no longer angry at you for forgetting to show up for dinner last weekend. We can **let bygones be bygones**.

Note: A "bygone" is an event that has already happened, or gone by.

(to) pop the question – to propose marriage

Example: Do you think Dan will **pop the question** when he and Stephanie are on vacation in the Caribbean?

PRACTICE THE IDIOMS

Fill in the blank with the missing word:

1) Joe is going to present his report in front of 200 people. He has butterflies in his ____.

- a) brain
- b) stomach
- c) body

2) Did you hear? Sam ____ the question. We're getting married!

- a) tossed
- b) popped

c) dropped

3) Tim is tired of playing the _____. He's ready to get married.

- a) field
- b) ground
- c) pasture

4) After the conference in San Francisco, Angela spent the weekend in California on the company _____.

- a) nickel
- b) dollar
- c) dime

5) My boss hit the _____ when he found out the client was leaving us for a competitor.

- a) desk
- b) top
- c) roof

6) Jen liked Greg at the beginning of the death. But when he started talking about his ex-wives, it was the kiss of _____.

- a) death
- b) dying
- c) loss

7) Jeremy used to date several women at the same time, but those days are _____.

- a) behind
- b) done
- c) over

8) If you want to be our distributor for China, I'm sure we can _____ a deal.

- a) slice
- b) carve
- c) cut

9) Yes, it's true I hated my last job, but I prefer not to _____ on the past.

- a) dwell
- b) stay
- c) continue

10) I was mad at you for not inviting me to your party, but let's let bygones be _____.

- a) finished
- b) over
- c) bygones

ANSWERS: 1. B; 2. B; 3. A; 4. C; 5. C; 6. A; 7. C; 8. C; 9. A; 10. C

LESSON 24: MADAME CHU: ROUND TWO

Mark and Sara return to Madame Chu's dumpling stand to talk to her about their business proposal. Madame Chu asks them not to waste her time. But when she hears their offer, she grows interested and asks them to return later in the day.

Sara: I think you should do the talking. I'm afraid I'll get **tongue-tied**.

Mark: Right. From what I remember, Madame Chu can be a little scary.

Sara: But hopefully she'll **warm up to us**!

(at Madame Chu's stand)

Mark: Hello, Madame Chu. How are you today?

Mme Chu: What can I get for you?

Mark: I'd like to make you an offer. Let me start by saying that your dumplings are the best in Beijing.

Mme Chu: That's why I don't have time to stand here **shooting the breeze** with you. I'm expecting more customers **any minute now**.

Mark: We have a proposal for you. Instead of **slaving away** here **day in, day out**, you could **cash in on** your delicious dumplings.

Mme Chu: Listen, I've **been around the block a few times**. Don't try to **sell me a bill of goods**.

Mark: Let me **put my cards on the table**. We're from a food company in the United States, and we've come with a great offer.

Mme Chu: Oh, yeah? What are you offering?

Mark: We'd like to sell Madame Chu's dumplings in the United States. We'd like to hire you.

Mme Chu: The last time we talked, I was **under the impression** you just wanted my recipes.

Mark: Right, but now I've got **an offer you can't refuse**.

Mme Chu: I've got customers now. Come back at 5 o'clock, and we can **get down to brass tacks**.

IDIOMS & EXPRESSIONS

tongue-tied – unable to speak clearly because one is nervous or embarrassed

Example: When Beth's boss asked her why she was gone for three hours for lunch, she became **tongue-tied**.

(to) warm up to someone – to get comfortable with someone; to be nicer to someone after a period of time

Example: At first I thought our new neighbors were strange, but I'm starting to **warm up to** them.

(to) shoot the breeze – to waste time talking; to chat

Example: The postal clerk was **shooting the breeze** with one of the customers as the line got longer and longer.

any minute now – very soon

Example: I need to hang up. I'm expecting a phone call from my doctor **any minute now**.

(to) slave away – to work very hard for not much reward

Example: Jennifer **slaved away** at a big law firm for 10 years before finally deciding she'd rather work as a teacher.

day in, day out – every day, over a long period of time

Example: Kendra lives right near the airport, so **day in, day out**, she hears airplanes taking off and landing.

(to) cash in on – to make money from; to profit from

Example: The mall is open until midnight the entire week before Christmas to **cash in on** the holiday shopping rush.

been around the block a few times – has a lot of experience

Example: We're looking for an experienced money manager to manage the new fund — somebody who's **been around the block a few times**.

(to) sell someone a bill of goods – to deceive someone; to cheat someone; to tell someone something that is not true

Example: When you buy your new house, be careful what kind of mortgage you take. Your mortgage lender may try to **sell you a bill of goods!**

(to) put one's cards on the table – to be honest with someone; to say openly what one is thinking about or planning

Example: Let me **put my cards on the table**. If I don't get promoted this year, I'm going to leave the company.

Note: You will also see the variation "to lay one's cards on the table."

under the impression – believing; convinced

Example: Jill is **under the impression** that if she does 100 sit-ups a day, she'll flatten her stomach.

an offer one can't refuse – a great offer (note: sometimes also used to mean a bad offer one is forced to take)

Example: The car salesman said, "I'm going to make you **an offer you can't refuse!**"

(to) get down to brass tacks – to start discussing business; to come to the point

Example: With just a few months to go before the presidential election, the candidates are finally **getting down to brass tacks**.

PRACTICE THE IDIOMS

Choose the most appropriate response to each sentence:

- 1) Frank's Heating & Cooling told us they couldn't fix our furnace and we'd have to buy a new one. Are they trying to sell us a bill of goods?
 - a) No, it does look like your furnace is very old.
 - b) No, they're trying to sell you a new heating system.
 - c) No, they're not trying to sell you any goods.

- 2) I was under the impression that Dave was interested in moving to the marketing department.
 - a) Why did he tell you that?
 - b) Why did you think that?
 - c) When is he moving?

- 3) Ben likes honest talk, so just go into his office and put your cards on the table.
 - a) Okay, I'll go in there and put my cards on his table.
 - b) Okay, I'll go in there and tell him what I want.
 - c) Okay, I'll go in there and see what he wants.

- 4) Our receptionist is always on the phone shooting the breeze with her friends.
 - a) Maybe we should replace her.
 - b) Maybe we should promote her.
 - c) Maybe we should close her window.

- 5) We're going to make you an offer you can't refuse.
 - a) Okay, I'm sure I'll be able to refuse it.
 - b) Okay, I'll take it.
 - c) Okay, I look forward to hearing it.

- 6) Speaking before a crowd of 300 at the sales conference, Helen got tongue-tied.
 - a) She must be very proud of herself.
 - b) She must have experience speaking before groups.
 - c) She must need more experience speaking before groups.

- 7) We've already had four meetings to discuss this business deal. Now we need to get down to brass tacks.
 - a) Okay, let's keep meeting.
 - b) Okay, let's make some decisions now.
 - c) Okay, we'll get in touch with you next year.

- 8) Eric is tired of slaving away for the big consulting firm.
 - a) Why don't they pay him?
 - b) Why doesn't he find a new job?
 - c) Why doesn't he take a vacation?

- 9) Has Emeril cashed in on the success of his cooking show?
 - a) Yes. He's got a popular line of food products.
 - b) Yes. He's very good on TV.
 - c) Yes, his cooking show is successful.

10) Our interview candidate will be here any minute now.

a) Okay, let me know when she gets here.

b) I'm glad she's early.

c) I don't know when she'll be here.

ANSWERS: 1. A; 2. B; 3. B; 4. A; 5. C; 6. C; 7. B; 8. B; 9. A; 10. A



LESSON 25: ONE YEAR LATER

Ron promotes Mark to marketing director after telling him that the dumplings were a great idea. He tells Mark that he's marrying Cindy and that when they return from their honeymoon, Cindy will start working at the company.

Ron: I'm glad we decided not to launch the meal kits. Grand Foods is going to **deep-six** their meal kits. Sales have been terrible.

Mark: Where did you hear that?

Ron: **I heard it through the grapevine.**

Mark: Good thing we went with the dumplings instead.

Ron: Yes, Madame Chu's dumplings are **flying off the shelves!** Their success is a real **feather in your cap.**

Mark: Well, I am proud of the successful launch.

Ron: I'm promoting you to marketing director.

Mark: Thanks. That's great news!

Ron: And you'll be in charge of the company while I'm on my honeymoon.

Mark: Honeymoon? I didn't know you were getting married.

Ron: Yes, I am. Cindy Hansen and I really **hit it off.** We're **tying the knot** next month.

Mark: Good for you!

Ron: I know the two of you had some problems in the past, but please don't **bad-mouth** her around the office.

Mark: **I wouldn't dream of it.**

Ron: She'll be joining our sales department after we get back from our honeymoon.

Mark: Really? What happened to her job at Shop-Well?

Ron: She **got her walking papers** after they found out she was **giving us the lowdown** on Grand Foods.

Mark: I don't think I can work with her.

Ron: Well, she's **coming on board**, and I expect you to **show her the ropes** when she gets here.

Mark: I guess I should've known I was **playing with fire** when I introduced you two!

IDIOMS & EXPRESSIONS

(to) deep-six – to discontinue; to get rid of; to scrap

Example: After enough people complained, the governor finally agreed to **deep-six** the new tax on services.

(to) hear it through the grapevine – to hear news from someone who heard it from someone else; to hear a rumor

Example: I **heard it through the grapevine** that Marilyn’s husband is leaving her to marry his administrative assistant.

(to) fly off the shelves – to sell very well; to be popular

Example: After Oprah picked A New Earth as her book club selection, the book **flew off the shelves** at bookstores around the country.

feather in one’s cap – an achievement; a success one can use for future advantage

Example: Kate is already the star of the tennis team and the president of her class. Winning the art contest is yet another **feather in her cap**.

(to) hit it off – to get along great from the start

Example: Andrea and Dave met at a party and **hit it off** immediately. They’re still together after five years.

(to) tie the knot – to get married

Example: Hal and Leah **tied the knot** during their trip to Las Vegas.

(to) bad-mouth – to say bad things about someone; to speak poorly of someone

Example: I hate to **bad-mouth** our receptionist, but she chats on the phone all day and is rude whenever you ask her for anything.

I wouldn’t dream of it – I definitely wouldn’t do that

Example: “If we pay for you to get your MBA, you’d better not leave the company once you get your degree.” — “**I wouldn’t dream of it.**”

(to) get (or to be given) one’s walking papers – to be fired; to be let go from a job

Example: After the bank suffered big losses from the mortgage crisis, one of their mortgage brokers **got his walking papers**.

(to) give someone the lowdown on – to give someone information

Example: After being out of the office for six weeks, Anna asked me to **give her the lowdown on** what she’d missed.

(to) come on board – to join; to start working somewhere

Example: We have a new employee **coming on board** tomorrow.

(to) show someone the ropes – to help a new employee learn his or her job; to help somebody learn how to do an activity

Example: Karen just hired a new marketing assistant. She’s going to spend a couple of weeks **showing him the ropes**.

Note: This terms comes from the world of sailing. New sailors were shown how to use the ship’s ropes.

(to) play with fire – to do something that can lead to danger; to get involved with people or an activity that can lead to trouble

Example: When Wendy told me she was dating a married man, I warned her that she was **playing with fire**.

PRACTICE THE IDIOMS

Choose the best substitute for the phrase in bold:

- 1) You missed last night's episode of *Downton Abbey*? I'll **give you the lowdown on it**.
 - a) find out what happened on it
 - b) give you a copy of the show
 - c) tell you what happened on it

- 2) The high school baseball coach told his team members that taking steroids was **playing with fire**.
 - a) likely to improve their performance
 - b) very dangerous
 - c) likely to make them sick

- 3) Meg is interested in starting a blog. Her daughter has promised to **show her the ropes**.
 - a) teach her how
 - b) write her blog
 - c) buy her an instruction manual

- 4) We need two more singers for our choir. Let's ask Penny and Carol to **come on board**.
 - a) leave
 - b) perform tonight
 - c) join

- 5) Short boots are **flying off the shelves** this season.
 - a) falling off the shelves
 - b) very popular
 - c) out of style

- 6) I heard that you were **bad-mouthing** me around town!
 - a) saying negative things about
 - b) saying nice things about
 - c) asking people about

- 7) Julie and Juan **tied the knot** over the weekend in Manhattan.
 - a) had a nice reception
 - b) announced marriage plans
 - c) got married

- 8) Bank of America **gave Bill his walking papers** on Friday.
 - a) gave Bill a raise
 - b) fired Bill
 - c) gave Bill permission to leave

- 9) The government decided to **deep-six** its program of lending money directly to college students.

- a) continue
- b) expand
- c) end

10) Winning the Boston Marathon was **a feather in Rita's cap**.

- a) a great achievement for Rita
- b) no big deal for Rita
- c) Rita's only success in life

ANSWERS: 1. C; 2. B; 3. A; 4. C; 5. B; 6. A; 7. C; 8. B; 9. C; 10. A

REVIEW FOR LESSONS 21-25

Fill in the blank with the missing word or words:

- 1) This apple pie is so good. It just ____ in your mouth.
 - a) melts
 - b) stays
 - c) disappears

- 2) Why would John get married now? He's having too much fun playing the ____.
 - a) scene
 - b) pasture
 - c) field

- 3) Let's invite some clients to play golf with us on Friday. We can play on the company ____.
 - a) penny
 - b) nickel
 - c) dime

- 4) We've got a new salesperson starting on Monday. Please show her the ____.
 - a) ropes
 - b) strings
 - c) wires

- 5) Our waiter spent most of the evening shooting the ____ with a pretty woman at the table next to ours.
 - a) time
 - b) breeze
 - c) wind

- 6) Jake's parents hit the ____ when they found out he had a big party at the house while they were away on vacation.
 - a) roof
 - b) house
 - c) hay

- 7) Doug is trying to cash in ____ the success of his Harry Potter website by publishing a book with similar content.
 - a) at
 - b) by
 - c) on

- 8) We have a new finance director ____ on board next Monday.
 - a) going
 - b) coming
 - c) beginning

- 9) The salesman said, "Your new cell phone plan will start as soon as you sign on the ____ line."
 - a) spotted

- b) dotted
- c) solid

10) Telco's strategy of expanding quickly overseas is right on the ____.

- a) money
- b) cash
- c) dime

11) Angela is the star of her high school play, the captain of the soccer team, and the president of her class. Her parents think she's spread herself too ____.

- a) wide
- b) thick
- c) thin

12) Discussing politics at the workplace is ____ with fire.

- a) starting
- b) toying
- c) playing

13) Brian sent in his application to Harvard Business School last month. Now the ball's in their ____.

- a) court
- b) office
- c) side

14) Hopefully our company's creative new advertising campaign will give us a leg ____ on our competitors.

- a) over
- b) above
- c) up

15) The 2006 remake of *All the King's Men* pales ____ comparison to the original film.

- a) in
- b) on
- c) with

ANSWERS: 1. A; 2. C; 3. C; 4. A; 5. B; 6. A; 7. C; 8. B; 9. B; 10. A; 11. C; 12. C; 13. A; 14. C; 15. A

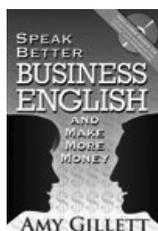
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