

Focus On

ESL Reference Series

*Making the difficult parts of learning English easy!*

***Using English Expressions for Real Life***

***Stepping Fluency for ESL Learners***

*by*

Thomas Celentano

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Revised edition 2020

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Focus on English Books

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## *About the author*

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THOMAS CELENTANO HAS been teaching English as a second language to students from all over the world for more than 20 years. He holds university degrees in language studies and anthropology from the University of Hawaii at Manoa, and has held academic and managing directorships in various English language schools over his career.

**To my students everywhere**

ENGLISH EXPRESSIONS are everywhere in the English language. The correct use of English expressions in English communication can sometimes be difficult and comes with practice. This text was written as a quick reference guide, a primer, and a practice text to help students quickly learn new expressions, and find and correct problem areas. The book was written for high intermediate and advanced learners.

FOCUS ON

Reference Series Books

*Making the difficult parts of learning English easy!*

**Using English Expressions for Real Life**

*Stepping Stones to Fluency for Advanced ESL Learners*

*Understanding the language of sarcasm, clichés, slang, jargon, colloquialisms and informal speech patterns in English.*

**Using English Expressions for Real Life**



*Using English Expressions for Real Life* was designed for the advanced ESL learner. This book is not an exhaustive list of English idioms and expressions. It is, instead, an approach to understanding how native English speakers articulate their daily concerns, needs, wants and feelings. Most fluent day-to-day American English is spoken via expressions whose meanings are best understood in the context of a specific situation and of American culture in general. This book attempts to give the advanced ESL learner a window onto this world of English expression.

*Using English Expressions for Real Life* is a wonderful way to explore and practice some of the more common forms of fluent English expression. The book explores common English idioms, sarcasm, clichés, slang, and informal expressions used every day by native speakers in a variety of different situations. The student will find lots of explanations and examples of correct usage in common sentences.

If the student has the Focus on audio book version of this book (for smart phones and other digital audio devices; available separately at the student will be able to listen to the examples along with the teacher. Reading and listening helps the student remember a lesson more easily and also helps the student with pronunciation.

## ***Free audio book access***

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THERE IS AN AUDIO BOOK for *Using English Expressions for Real Life* available on our website to all of our students, free of charge. [Go here to access this audio](#)





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coming from

contain yourself

engage your brain

fast track

get away from it all

getting all worked up over nothing

go over like a lead balloon

hogtied

in tow

lay it all on the table

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(to) make a mountain out of a molehill

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### FOCUS ON REFERENCE SERIES BOOKS

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“Using English Expressions for Real Life” is a wonderful way to explore and practice some of the more common forms of fluent English articulation. The book explores common English idioms, sarcasm, clichés, slang, and informal expressions used every day by native speakers in a variety of different situations. The student will find lots of explanations and examples of correct usage in common sentences.



## About Louise Gibessi

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LOUISE GIBESSI IS OUR famous advice and gossip columnist from New York City who writes for our newspaper and a famous Internet blog called Dear Louise Gibessi.

People write to her from all over the world to ask her about personal problems and sometimes problems that they are having when they are using English in real life situations.

Louise Gibessi is famous because she is very *up front*\* and *tells it like it is*. She gives advice about **the** and

**be up front** means to be completely honest with someone, without hiding any facts.)

(\***To tell it like it is** (slang) means to be completely honest when telling someone something; to describe something to someone by simply telling the facts. Straight talk; often used to express the reality of something. Often very frank, bordering on impolite.)

In this and following sections you will learn how native English speakers use various idioms and expressions correctly in real life situations.

***CORRECT USAGE OF SOME common English expressions and idioms in travel situations***

In this first chapter Louise Gibessi's column deals with traveling.

Directions: Read and / or listen to Louise's column and try to understand the general meaning. Don't **stress out\*** about **every little** After you have read (or listened to) the story, you will have a chance to read (or hear) the meanings of the idioms used in the story with some brief examples. After you've learned what everything means, there will be a practice and review session at the end of the chapter. By this time you will be **up to snuff\*\*\*** on the meanings of all of the idioms and other expressions in the story.

(\* **stress** don't worry)

(\*\* **every little** about every detail)

(\*\*\* **up to** you will know about or be up to date on)

*Some common English expressions and idioms when talking about travel*

Below we have reprinted one of Louise Gibessi's recent columns about **travel**.

TRAVEL

*Below is a letter from a man who is concerned that his mother-in-law wants to be a part of the romantic vacation that he has planned for himself and his wife.*

Dear Louise Gibbesi,

I'm looking forward to my vacation, which is right around the I have been thinking about traveling to an island far away in the South Pacific because I really need to get away from it

The is that my wife wants her mother to go along with us on this vacation and, frankly, I don't want to open a can of by telling her that her mother is a pain in the and that I really wouldn't enjoy my vacation with her in I can't just come out and my wife that I don't want her mother around because that would go over like a lead

Louise, I'm chomping at the to fast my South Pacific vacation plans. My job is really stressful and this kind of vacation would be a great way to chill Having my mother-in-law along would be stressful. How do I put it my wife that three's a on this vacation? Signed: in Minnesota

Louise Gibessi responds:

Dear

You're getting all worked up over Contain and simply engage your Take a and then follow these steps. it all on the so that your wife can really understand where you are coming Suggest to her that this vacation should be just for the two of you—a kind of romantic or second Second, make a with your significant to the that mother would be welcome on the next vacation, or the next extended family outing.

Now, stop making a mountain out a and start making your vacation plans!

And, by the try your hand learning how to hula when your down there. It's a great way to relax!

Signed: Louise

**Right around the** (*idiom*) When something is *right around the corner* that means that it will happen very soon.

### **Examples:**

- My sister's wedding is right around the corner and I still haven't bought a dress for the occasion.
- Summer vacation is right around the corner and the students have already made their summer plans.

To get away from it (*idiom*) To escape from your normal, everyday life. To go somewhere where life is very different from what you experience in your daily life. To distance yourself from your normal daily life in such a way as to be pleasant and different from what you are normally used to.

### **Examples:**

- My job is terrible, my wife is not happy because she wants a new house, and the kids are complaining because they want new video Right now, I just want to get away from it all on some deserted South Pacific island!
- Some people like to get away from it all by taking a vacation on a cruise ship.

The (*noun, informal*) The problem, the obstacle, or the difficulty.

### **Examples:**

- John and Betty wanted to invite everyone they knew to their The rub was that they had a small apartment and they could only invite a small number of people.

- Kana loved to going speeding around the city in her sports **The rub** was that she couldn't afford to pay for all the speeding tickets.

**Open a can of** (*idiom*) To introduce more problems, possibly worse problems than those already occurring.

**Examples:**

- I really **opened a can of worms** when I reminded my girlfriend of the time she flirted with my She then started to remind me of all of the times when I flirted with her What a mess.

- You are just **opening a can of worms** when you start to argue with a policeman about giving you a traffic ticket.

**Pain in the** (*idiom*) A person or thing that is very annoying. This is for casual use, usually around people you already are acquainted with.

**Examples:**

- The new math class is such a **pain in the** We have to do homework every night.

- I hate it when Becky's friends come They're such a **pain in the**

**In** (*idiom*) A person who comes **in tow** is a friend or family member of the person who is actually invited. A person who

comes in tow with someone else is usually welcome mainly because of their affiliation with the person who brought them.

**Examples:**

- Sally came to my party last night with her sister in
- I attended the health seminar with my brother in. He came along because he wanted to learn more about nutrition and health.

**Can't just come out and (idiom)** When a person comes out and tells someone something, he or she is being very direct about passing information to someone else. Often, the information is obvious to other people but not to the recipient. Often, the information is embarrassing to the recipient and / or to the people around the recipient. Sometimes coming out and telling someone something can be impolite, embarrassing, or stressful, but usually it is necessary so that the person knows how others are feeling about him or her.

**Examples:**

- Stop You should just come out and tell Harry that he has a hole in the back of his pants.
- Rather than *beat around the bush* the boss just came out and told his secretary that she was *around the bush*= being indirect or evasive about telling someone something.)

**Go over like a lead** (*idiom*) Information that is not welcome by another person.

**Examples:**

- Telling my wife that we would have to skip our vacation this year **went over like a lead**
- I told the police officer that the reason why I was speeding was because I had to go to the That **went over like a lead**

**Chomping at the** (*idiom*) Really anxious or excited to get started doing something.

**Examples:**

- I was **chomping at the bit** to learn English because then I could communicate with lots of people around the world.
- Our soccer team was **chomping at the bit** to win the championship.

**Fast** (*idiom*) To accelerate, to speed up, or make go faster.

**Examples:**

- My human resources manager decided that I could **fast track** my career by taking some courses in English.
- The architect told the builder that he could **fast track** the approval of the building plans by changing the design (*Building*)

plans must first be approved by the government before a building can be. Sometimes this takes a long time.)

**Chill** (*idiom*) Usually used as an imperative, **chill out** means to relax or be calm. Sometimes this is shortened to just the word

**Examples:**

- We should be home in about ten **Chill** you can get a drink of water then.

- After school, a group of us go to a pizza place, order pizza and just **chill**

**Put it to** (*idiom*) Means to explain something, usually something that may be difficult to discuss.

**Examples:**

- Let me **put it to you** this if you don't study for the exam, you won't pass.

- I couldn't figure out how to **put it to** my son that we wouldn't be able to go fishing this weekend.

**Three's a** (*idiom*) When a third person is unwelcome. Usually used when a couple wants to be alone or do something by themselves without a third person coming along or being present. The third person could be a friend or relative of one or both members of the couple.



**Examples:**

- My brother should know by now that when I am with my girlfriend, **three's a**
- Jackie had to tell her brother that he couldn't come with her and her boyfriend to the She told him that **three was a**

*(idiom)* To disrupt or restrict movement. When you are you feel restricted about what options you have to resolve an issue.

**Examples:**

- I was trying to plan our vacation, but everyone wanted to do something I really felt
- My brother was having a difficult time finding a birthday gift for his wife because she didn't really need His choices were limited and he felt a little **hogtied** because he wanted to get her something nice.

**Getting all worked up over** *(idiom)* When you *get all worked up over* you get emotional about something that is not very important, or that appears to be more important than it really is.

**Examples:**

- This is just a You're **getting all worked up over** We're not going to be attacked by aliens from outer space!

- I thought the test was going to be really hard, but it was I **got all worked up over**

**Contain** (*idiom*) Means to control your behavior and relax. Often used playfully, contain yourself is used when someone is over emotional about something.

**Examples:**

- **Contain** I was only kidding when I said that your favorite movie star was coming to dinner with us.

- My girlfriend's plane will land in approximately ten I can hardly **contain**

**Engage your** (*idiom*) When you *engage your* you think rationally. **Engage your brain** is another idiom that is often used playfully; sometimes we say this to a person who is being lazy and they appear unwilling to think about something more carefully. (Note: this expression is used among people who are friendly. Saying this to someone you do not know could be insulting.)

**Examples:**

- Don't worry, you can pass the Just **engage your brain** and you will see how easy it is.

- Life doesn't have to be Just **engage your**

**Take a** (*slang*) *Take a pill* is another way to say or *stay*. This term is usually used playfully among people who are acquainted. It can be used sarcastically in some situations.

**Examples:**

- My wife kept bothering me about going to the doctor for a I told her to **take a** I'm too busy for a checkup right (*Slightly sarcastic in this context and may not be appreciated by the wife!*)
- I was really excited about seeing my favorite rock band and I couldn't contain my excitement. Finally, my friend told me to **take a pill** because we'd be at the concert auditorium in less than ten minutes.

**Lay it all on the** (*idiom*) When you **lay it all on the** you are giving someone all of the facts and details about a situation. Many times, you use this expression when there is a misunderstanding that needs to be cleared up, or when something needs to be made more clear.

**Examples:**

- I **laid it all on the table** for I couldn't sign the contract unless all of my needs were listed in the contract.
- She just didn't understand the danger of smoking cigarettes so her doctor **laid it all on the table** for her.

**Coming\_** (*idiom*) The origin / source of your thinking, having to do with your point of view.

**Examples:**

- I'm not sure where my boss was coming from when he said I was doing a good job. Was he being sarcastic, or was he sincere?
- When my wife says she loves me, it comes from her heart.

**Romantic** A pause or segment of someone's life when they are romantic with someone else; a time taken for romance.

**Examples:**

- My sister and her husband used to watch the sunset. It was a beautiful romantic interlude for them.
- Jim's wife had a little romantic interlude with another man. When Jim found out, he filed for divorce.

**22. Second** After many years of marriage, some couples decide to take a honeymoon for the second time in their lives. The first honeymoon usually occurs right after marriage. A second honeymoon can occur many years later.

**Examples:**

- My mother and father took a second honeymoon after 50 years of marriage.
- My wife and I decided to take a second honeymoon after 25 years of marriage.

**To make a** To **make a pact** with someone is to make an agreement. A pact is usually more binding, stronger than just an agreement.

**Examples:**

- My friend and I **made a pact** to always help each other in emergencies.
- The two leaders **made a** nuclear non-proliferation **pact** (*an agreement not to continue to produce nuclear*

**Significant** Usually your wife or husband. Your significant other can be a girlfriend or a boyfriend.

**Examples:**

- I wanted to go have a few beers with my friends so I called my **significant other** to find out if she had any plans for us.
- It is possible for your **significant other** to be of the same sex in gay relationships.

**To the** Approximately, or something similar to (this idea).

**Examples:**

- I wasn't there when the mayor gave his speech, but he said something **to the effect** that taxes would be going up next year.

- I couldn't hear exactly what the teacher was saying, but she said something to the effect that the project would be due soon.

To make a mountain out of a To make a big deal out of something insignificant.

**Examples:**

- I think they are making a mountain out of a molehill when they say you have to eat vegetables every single I'm sure you can miss a day here and there and not get sick!
- tefan was making a mountain out of a molehill when he described the difficulty of the advanced English course at the college.

By the Incidentally.

**Examples:**

- Yes, I liked the movie By the will you be going to the party tomorrow night.
- I normally like eating at good quality By the when are you going on your vacation?

To try one's hand at (idiom) To try doing something new.

**Examples:**

- I'd like to try my hand at I heard it was fun and very healthy!

- Alex *tried his hand at* carpentry and found that he liked. Now he is going to school to become a carpenter.

## Chapter 1 Practice and Review

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*DIRECTIONS: IN EACH of the sentences below, fill in the blank spaces with the word or words that are missing from the expression. Think about the sentence carefully. Which expression best fits? Do not use the same expression twice. There is no answer key. Complete all of the sentences that you know, and then go back and work on the ones that are more difficult.*

Jill and Harold took a \_\_\_\_\_ **honeymoon** after 25 years of marriage.

Our plane will land in Hawaii in approximately ten minutes. I \_\_\_\_\_ **contain** myself.

Please \_\_\_\_\_ **your brain** before you take the exam!

I had to lay \_\_\_\_\_ **on the table** for him so he would understand my position.

True giving \_\_\_\_\_

Two is company, but three \_\_\_\_\_

When we were in high school, my friends and I \_\_\_\_\_ **pact** to stay friends forever.

Trying to make plans was impossible because everyone wanted to do something different. I really felt

My friend said, **a** \_\_\_\_\_, the test won't be that hard!

**By the** \_\_\_\_\_, will you be competing in the marathon this weekend?

Jean is making **a** \_\_\_\_\_ **out of a** \_\_\_\_\_ when she says that no one will pass the exam.

12. The vacation in Kauai was a beautiful \_\_\_\_\_ **interlude** for the young couple.



13. The workers were getting \_\_\_\_\_ worked \_\_\_\_\_ over nothing because the company really did not want to fire them.

Adam tried his \_\_\_\_\_ painting and found that he didn't like the smell of the paint.

15. The policeman said something to \_\_\_\_\_ effect that if we didn't leave right now, we would go to jail.

## Chapter 2 - ENTERTAINMENT

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*CORRECT USAGE OF SOME common English expressions and idioms used to talk about entertainment.*

Directions: Read Louise's column and try to understand the general meaning. Don't **stress** about **every little**. After you have read the story, you will have a chance to read (or hear) the meanings of the idioms used in the story with some brief examples. After you've learned what everything means, there will be a practice and review session at the end of the chapter. By this time you will be **up to** on the meanings of all of the idioms and other expressions in the story.

(\* **stress** don't worry)

(\***\*** **every little** about every detail)

(\***\*****\*** **up to** you will know about or be up to date on)

*Some common English expressions and idioms when talking about entertainment*

***Below we have reprinted one of Louise Gibessi's recent columns about entertainment.***

### ENTERTAINMENT

*(Here is a letter from a girl who is not happy about her boyfriend's idea of a date)*

Dear Louise,

I'm so sick and of turning on the TV and seeing the same old on the night after night. Our TV gets 156 TV Channels of little something for I guess—but it is all so

Anyway, my boyfriend came over the other night and we decided to watch TV and make some popcorn. LLouise, we must have flipped every channel on my TV at least twice trying to find something that both of us could enjoy.

My boyfriend wanted to watch mixed martial arts fighting and I wanted to watch a mystery show. So we decided to flip the channels until we could find something we both wanted to watch.

Well, after plowing two big bowls of popcorn, quaffing two big bottles of pop, and flipping at least 300 channels, we finally settled on a reality where everyone on the show was lost or something.

It was so I think next time we should go to the movies together, or maybe a concert or a play. But making TV into a is really a bad idea.

We are seriously thinking about going to the theater more to see musicals and plays. The problem is that my boyfriend and I can't agree on how we should dress when we go to the theater. My boyfriend says we can dress however we want. I say that there are certain dress that you have to pay attention to. What is the appropriate attire for live theater performances?

Signed, ready for a night on the

*Louise Gibessi responds:*

Dear Ready,

I'm glad you two to your You are so right! There is so much more to do out than just watch TV!

If you are lucky enough to live in a city that has live theater performances, this is an excellent way to enjoy time together. Take a little time during the week to check the different performance reviews on the Internet or in your local newspaper.

Then use the Internet or your local newspaper to find out where and when it's all Do a little during the week and you will be able to plan the perfect weekend for you and your guy.

Here's a little guide on how to dress for a night out on the

If you are in a big city with live theatrical performances, then semi-formal will most likely be the best. If in doubt, why don't you give the theater a call and ask. If you are going to a smaller theater for a live performance, dress in comfortable smart. If you are going to a rock concert, then dress like everyone else is going to dress. If you are going to a musical, or a band or orchestral concert then you may want to dress somewhere between smart and Again, if there is a question, take a stab calling the theater and ask someone how people are dressing. If you can't get then check the advertisement on the Internet to see if it may tell you about the dress

The most important thing is to have fun!

Signed: **Louise**

**1. Sick and** (*idiom*) To dislike or be annoyed with something or someone; when you are *sick and tired* of something or someone, you can no longer put up with or tolerate them.

**Examples:**

- We had five days of Everyone was sick and tired of the rain.
- Anna was sick and tired of eating the same food every day, so she decided to try something different.

**2. Same old** (*idiom*) Something that you do on a regular basis that is so familiar to you that you are bored with it.

**Examples:**

- I go to work five days per I arrive at 8am, make coffee, listen to my phone messages and then go to **Same old thing** every day.
- Every Friday night Gina's boyfriend takes her to dinner and then they see a **Same old thing** every Friday Gina wishes she could do something different on Friday nights.

**3. The** (*slang*) Television, TV.

**Examples:**

- What's on **the tube** ( what shows are on television tonight?)
- on't believe everything you see and hear on **the**

**4. A little something for** (*idiom*) Everyone attending a show or presentation, or involved in an activity will be entertained by or interested in at least some part of the show, presentation or activity.

**Examples:**

- Let's go to the The circus usually has **a little something for**
- Our group project **has a little something for** everyone will find some part of the project interesting to him or her.

**It's all so** Produced mainly just to make money, usually with little concern for quality.

***Examples:***

- Many of the tourist destinations today are **so** All they care about is taking the tourist's money, and not so much about the quality of the tourist's experience.
- The Internet is becoming **so commercialized** with all of the pop-up advertising and advertising on almost every website.

**I swear . . .** This is an expression that is used to mean: I promise you that this is the truth. This expression usually precedes a statement that you want someone to really believe; used to emphasize something to someone.

***Examples:***

- **I** said Alice, "I'm not going out on another date with my boyfriend until he gets a new pair of shoes."
- **I** if we don't win this soccer match, we are really bad.

**Flipping** To rapidly change the channels on a TV, usually with a remote control. People often flip through channels to try to find something interesting to watch, or to ***kill time***\* when the program they are watching was interrupted by a TV commercial.

( **time** means to occupy yourself with something while you are waiting for time to pass.)

**Examples:**

- We must have **flipped through** 25 channels before we found something interesting to watch on TV.
- Every night my father would come home from work, sit in his favorite chair in front of the TV, and just **flip through** the TV. He never seemed to be interested in watching just one particular thing.

**Plowing**\_(slang) When you *plow through* something, you do something intently, that is, with single-minded focus. When a person plows through food, they are generally eating large amounts of food rapidly.

**Examples:**

- I **plowed through** my homework in 45 minutes so that I would have time to see the concert.
- My colleagues and I **plowed through** the assignment in two. Our boss was very proud of us.

**Quaffing**\_When you *quaff* something you drink a lot of it quickly, or heartily.

**Examples:**

- We quaffed down a pitcher of beer and then went to the Boy, we were ( \***Blitzed** (slang) means drunk or inebriated.)

- The runners were so thirsty after the competition that they quaffed down over two gallons of lemonade.

**Reality** This is a television show that does not have a script. There are usually no actors in a reality show, and the idea is to show television audiences a real life situation with the actual people who are in those situations.

**Examples:**

- My friends and I like watching reality shows because they are more interesting.

- There are many reality TV shows on American television, and they are often the most popular shows in America.

**So** (slang) Something that is *lame* is something that is boring or even stupid (pointless or worthless).

**Examples:**

- Jim's idea to go bird watching on Saturday was so I'd rather go snowboarding!

- That television show is so They should replace it with something that is more interesting.



**Making TV into a** When you make something into something else, you are representing one thing as another. In this case, **making TV into a date** means that you have decided to watch TV on a Friday night with your boyfriend or girlfriend and then you decide to call that a date.

**Examples:**

- Let's go to the park this afternoon and have a We could **make this picnic into a** wonderful

- Mark is famous for **making TV into a date** with his female friends.

**Dress** A set of rules that indicate the approved way to dress in certain situations.

**Examples:**

- There is a company meeting tomorrow night at The **dress code** is casual.

- The **dress code** is often semi-formal for graduation ceremonies.

**A night on the** (*idiom*) Going out for *a night on the town* means you intend to have a lot of fun going to different places throughout the evening; perhaps a combination of visiting several pubs, going to a show, going to a dance or a party, or other celebration.

**Examples:**

- I just got a big promotion in my company so I would like to celebrate by going out for a night on the
- Nicole's boyfriend took her out for a night on the town last She's exhausted today!

Came to your (idiom) To begin to think clearly, or act in a sensible way.

**Examples:**

- When Edward looked at his bank account, he came to his senses and decided that he could not afford a new car.
- After his wife caught him with another woman for the third time, she came to her senses and filed for a divorce.

16. Out Meaning: in the real world, the larger world beyond personal perception, reality.

**Examples:**

- My counselor told me that I've got to get out there and find a good job.
- After my divorce, my friend told me that I had to get out there and make some new friends.

Check (slang) Meaning: To investigate, look at or examine.

**Examples:**

- Let's go down to the mall and **check out** the new cell phones.
- Hey, **check out** He's wearing his new jacket.

**It's all** (*informal*) Where *it's all happening* means where [the exciting or interesting] activities are taking place.

**Examples:**

- There is a really cool party happening **It's all happening** at Jean's house.
- Where is the concert **It's all happening** at the Sports Dome.

**Do a little** (*informal*) When you *do a little homework* you do some research about something, or you investigate something to find out more about it.

**Examples:**

- After **doing a little** the detective figured out who committed the murder.
- Before she bought the new computer, Cynthia **did some homework** to find out which computer was best for her.

*Big-time* is an adjective describing something as being at the most prestigious level, or of major significance.

**Examples:**

- Shows playing on Broadway in New York City are considered **big-time** entertainment.

- If you are a really good baseball player, the **big-time** professional baseball teams might be interested in hiring you.

**Semi-formal** *Semi-formal attire* (clothing or dress) is often used to describe one of the dress code categories. When a person is wearing *semi-formal attire*, he is usually wearing a tie and jacket (for men), and she is usually wearing an evening dress (for women).

**Examples:**

- We are invited to the dance next Friday We have to wear **semi-formal**

- We have been invited to attend the annual celebration with our partner banks at the Old Opera House in **Semi-formal** attire is required.

**Best** (*informal*) Your *best call* is you best decision or very best guess. Sometimes we just say *good*

**Examples:**

- I don't know who will win the soccer game My **best call** would be that we will win by just one point.

- I think that going to the movies might be our best call tonight because there isn't any other entertainment that looks very interesting.

**Smart casual** *Smart casual attire* (clothing or dress) is often used to describe one of the dress code categories. When a person is wearing *smart casual attire*, he is usually wearing fashionable pants and shirt outfit (for men), and she is usually wearing a fashionable, but comfortable dress (for women). Smart casual attire differs from casual attire in that casual attire is considered appropriate for everyday activity. Casual in this context means relaxed and not serious. Smart casual means somewhat relaxed but still recognizing that the occasion has some importance.

**Examples:**

- Stefan and Helga were invited to an afternoon party at their yacht Attire for this kind of affair is smart

- Keiko is going to a baby shower this She will be wearing smart casual

**Take a stab** (*idiom*) When you *take a stab at* something, you try to do it.

**Examples:**

- I would like to take a stab at learning how to play tennis.

- Angelina was a pretty good rock climber, so she **took a stab at** climbing the difficult rock face.

**Get** In the context of this sentence, **get through** means to make a successful telephone connection with someone else.

***Examples:***

- I called the doctor's office but I couldn't **get through** because the line was busy.

- After the earthquake, the telephone system was down and you couldn't **get through** to anyone.

## Chapter 2 Practice and Review

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*DIRECTIONS: IN EACH of the sentences below, fill in the blank spaces with the word or words that are missing from the expression. Think about the sentence carefully. Which expression best fits? Do not use the same expression twice. There is no answer key. Complete all of the sentences that you know, and then go back and work on the ones that are more difficult.*

1. Cathy has really gotten good at soccer. She is ready for the soccer leagues.
2. Jan's mother told her that she should **get** \_\_\_\_\_ **there** and make some friends.
3. When the bank clerk told Bill he had no money in his account, Bill \_\_\_\_\_ **to his** \_\_\_\_\_ and decided that he had better get a job.
4. After **doing a little** \_\_\_\_\_, the girl figured out that her boyfriend was cheating on her.
5. You and I are invited to a dance party next Monday night. We have to wear attire.
6. I don't know who will win the football game tomorrow, but **my** \_\_\_\_\_ **call** would be that we will win by a small margin.
7. Hey, let's go to the shopping center and \_\_\_\_\_ **out** the sales.
8. Her boyfriend took her out for a **night** \_\_\_\_\_ **town** yesterday evening.
9. The office workers **plowed** \_\_\_\_\_ the project in two hours. Our boss gave them a raise for their good work.
10. Maureen would like **to** \_\_\_\_\_ **a stab at** surfing.

11. Hey, what's happening tonight? It's **all** \_\_\_\_\_ **at** the pub on the corner of Elm Street and Davis Avenue.

12. My brother must have \_\_\_\_\_ **through** 100 TV channels before he found a program he liked.

13. I must have drunk ten glasses of beer. Boy, was I

14. I must have flipped through two hundred channels. There is so much nonsense on **the** \_\_\_\_\_ today!

15. We have been in our hotel rooms for five days. I think that everyone is \_\_\_\_\_ **and tired** of being in their hotel rooms.



## Chapter 3 - BUSINESS

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*CORRECT USAGE OF SOME common English expressions and idioms when talking about business situations.*

Directions: Read and / or listen to Louise's column and try to understand the general meaning. Don't **stress out**\* about **every little** After you have read (or listened to) the story, you will have a chance to read (or hear) the meanings of the idioms used in the story with some brief examples. After you've learned what everything means, there will be a practice and review session at the end of the chapter. By this time you will be **up to snuff**\*\*\* on the meanings of all of the idioms and other expressions in the story.

(\* **stress** don't worry)

(\*\* **every little** about every detail)

**up to** you will know about or be up to date on)

*Some common English expressions and idioms when talking about business*

**Below we have reprinted one of Louise Gibessi's recent columns about business.**

### BUSINESS

*Here is a letter from a business investor who is having a very difficult time with English expression*

Dear Louise,

I would like to buy some steak a company that I feel has a good future. The problem is, I don't think that they like me very much. I realize that buying into any company is a calcified but I don't think that this is a big I would like to sit down with these guys and fix up a or at least push something in the When I talked to the head he said that he'd probably want to throw cold water the idea of having more partners right now. I told him that I usually take a hot shower so he need not worry about me.

Louise, what's your take how I can get these guys interested in my offer?

Signed, Iy.

**Louise Gibessi responds:**

Dear Iy.

Are you sure you are ready to take the into something so risky? And, I think that I have discovered why it may appear that the in this company may not be falling all the idea of having you on

First of all, let's fix a few mistakes: it's buy a stake not buy some steak in. Next, it's a calculated not a calcified risk. Third, it's a long not a big shot. A big shot is a person! Next, it's draw up a not fix up a contract! Fixing a usually means to change a contract illegally! And it's get something in the not push something in the works!

Okay, now that we are back on I would suggest that you contact the big by phone and schedule a face to face Tell him what you are bringing to the If you have something they want, they will allow you to buy.

And, by the way, to throw cold water something means to diminish interest in something and has nothing to do with hygiene or showers!

Good luck, Ty. I hope you make a

(Read Ty Coon's corrected letter below)

(I would like to buy a stake a company that I feel has a good future. The problem is, I don't think that they like me very much. I realize that buying into any company is a calculated but I don't think that this is a long I would like to sit down with these guys and draw up a or at least get something in the When I talked to the head he said that he'd probably want to throw cold water the idea of having more partners right now. I told him that I usually take a hot shower so he need not worry about me.

Louise, what's your take how I can get these guys interested in my offer?

Signed, Ty.

**To buy a stake in something:** (*idiom*) Means to invest money in part ownership of something.

***Examples:***

- The new computer company is doing very well I think I would like to buy a stake in that company.

- My friends decided to share the cost of a vacation home in After I saw the home, I decided to buy a stake in it.

(*noun*) The person or people who are in charge of or responsible for something. Often in business, the *principals* are the people who started the company, or were the first to initiate a partnership investment.

***Examples:***

- The **principals** in the company decided to close one of the sales departments because the company was not doing well.
- My friend and I wanted to invest a large sum of money in a certain computer. We called the company on the phone and we were told to contact the **principals** for more information.

**Calculated** (*idiom*) You take a *calculated risk* when you have carefully assessed or analyzed the possibilities for success for something and then do it. Something that might fail, but, because of good analysis, has a good chance of being successful.

**Examples:**

- When athletes use illegal drugs before a competition, they are taking a **calculated risk** that they will not be caught.
- Jeff decided to dive into the ocean from the cliff. It was a **calculated** risk. If he failed he could be seriously injured, but, after careful analysis, Jeff felt he would be successful.

**Long** (*idiom*) When the chances for success are not very good.

**Examples:**

- At the horse racing track, Ivan decided to bet on the big black horse. This horse did not do well in the last five races so it was **a long shot** to win.

- Two of the students from my class decided to stay up very late to study for the exam, which was being given the next day. They knew that if they stayed up late they would be tired the next day, but they also knew that they might have a better chance of success on the exam if they studied. It was a long but they decided to stay up late and study.

**Draw up a** (*idiom*) To write a contract or an agreement usually to accomplish some goal in business.

**Examples:**

- Hiroko owns a big piece of property in the city and wants to build a building on it. She called a building contractor and asked him to estimate how much this building would cost. After receiving the estimate, she told the building contractor to draw up a contract so that she can look at it and then sign it.

- The owner of the football team and the star player drew up a contract and both of them signed. With the signing of this contract the star player now had a career with this team.

**To get something in the** (*idiom*) To take action to develop plans for and implement an idea. To take the steps to change an idea into a reality.

**Examples:**

- For years the city has had an idea to build a new sports arena. This year they are finally getting something in the works and we may have a new sports arena by next May.

- We've been talking about going to Bali for two After our meeting last night, I really feel like we have **got something in the works** It sounds like we will be in Bali by next January.

**Head** (*slang*) The person in charge. *Honcho* is slang for leader or person in charge. It is often used playfully. In some regions of the U.S., referring to the person in charge as the head honcho may not be appropriate. If in doubt, just say: *may I see (or talk to) the person in charge?*

**Examples:**

- I would like to return this item that I purchased yesterday from your May I see the **head**
- When Kazu first came to this company he was just a stock Now he is the **head**

**To throw cold water** (*idiom*) To diminish enthusiasm for something. To discourage something.

**Examples:**

- The boss **threw cold water on** the idea of hiring new employees.
- We heard about the violence that was occurring in the country that we were planning to That **threw cold water on** our plans to visit that country.

Someone's **take on** (*idiom*) When you ask someone what their *take is on* something you are asking them for their opinion. So, *what's your take on that* means *what's your opinion about that*.

**Examples:**

- Allison's **take on** the illegal drugs problem is that if someone is caught using illegal drugs, they should be punished in some way.
- My teacher asked me what my **take** was **on** the final exam that was given last I told him I thought the exam was fair.

(*noun*) Ty Coon is a play on words. Ty is a somewhat common American first name, and Coon is a possible last name. The English word *tycoon* means someone who is very successful in business and is worth a lot of money, controls many industries, and is generally very aggressive in business.

**Examples:**

- A very wealthy **tycoon** owns the fiber optic cables that deliver our Internet signal.
- If you want to be a you've got to think ***out of the box*** (means: you have to think differently than most people).

**To take the** (*idiom*) To take decisive action and do something that may appear a little risky or involved or complicated, but that could be rewarding.

**Examples:**

- We had been dating each other for six We decided **to take the plunge** and get married.

- Learning how to dance was something I always wanted to I finally **took the plunge** and went to a dance instructor last week.

**To fall all** (*idiom*) To be very enthusiastic about accepting or doing something. The feeling of this idiom is that the affected person or people are so excited and enthusiastic about something that they are almost 'drunk' with enthusiasm.

**Examples:**

- Professional soccer teams in Europe were **falling all over themselves** to meet with the new soccer star who was looking for a team to play with.

- Automobile manufacturers were not exactly **falling all over the idea** of building more inefficient Gas prices were expected to climb even higher.

**On** (*idiom*) Being part of a team, company, staff, or other entity. To *welcome someone on board* means to formally accept someone as being part of your group.

**Examples:**

- Our company will welcome three new employees **on board** today during the monthly staff meeting.



- Our department finally got the employee we We have been trying to get this employee on board for months.

**Fix a contract:** (*verb*, The word *fix* can mean to change or alter something so that the outcome or results favors you even though the changes that were made were illegal or unethical. *Fix* in this context can mean to change illegally, or at least unethically, so as to favor the person who did the fixing. To *fix up* a contract means to change a contract in such a way as to favor the person who fixed it up.

***Examples:***

- The election results were fixed and, even though he was not popular, the president was elected to office again.
- The accounting balance sheets were fixed giving the appearance that the company was very successful, when actually the company was losing money.

**Back on** (*idiom*) To be *on track* to doing something means that you are on schedule, headed towards, or en route to getting something done. When you are *back on* you come back to doing what you were doing after being temporarily distracted. Being *back on track* means that you are back to doing what you were doing and you have done all of the work necessary to be on schedule for successful completion.

***Examples:***

- After a two-week vacation in Italy, we are back on track to completing the work we started before we left for Italy.
- Serena was back on track to getting her project done, after being absent with the flu for one week.

**Big\_** (*idiom*) The person who is in charge. Similar to *head*. Often used playfully. Could be construed as disrespectful in formal settings, so be careful where you use this.

**Examples:**

- Who is the big cheese over at that corporation?
- Wally is the big cheese now, all bow to (Used playfully and a bit sarcastically in this office setting)

**Face to face appointment:** (*idiom*) A *face to face meeting* is a meeting where people meet in person, as opposed to meeting over the phone or Internet.

**Examples:**

- The two leaders met face to face to talk about problems in their countries.
- I met face to face with my son's teacher to talk more about my son's progress in school.

**Bring to the** (idiom) Often used in business, *bringing something to the table* means to come to a meeting or negotiation prepared to offer something of value to the others taking part in the meeting or negotiation. Since meetings or negotiations are often discussed around tables, when you come with your offer or idea it is said that you are bringing that offer or idea to the table.

**Examples:**

- Everyone at the meeting was waiting to hear what the others had **brought to the**
  
- The mayor of the city **brought** some good ideas **to the**

**Buy** (idiom) To make an investment in something that is established. To invest time or money in something that was in progress.

**Examples:**

- The corporation spent \$10 million to **buy into** the new computer technology.
  
- My friends all bought shares of stock in a local company and asked me if I wanted to **buy in** too.

**To make a** (idiom) To make a lot of money because of an investment. Sometimes people make a lot of money when the stock market goes up. People say: they made a killing on the stock market.

**Examples:**

- My parents invested in some real estate about twenty years  
They really **made a**

- Jan spent \$2 on a lottery ticket and She **made a killing** on the  
lottery.

### Chapter 3 Practice and Review

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*DIRECTIONS: IN EACH of the sentences below, fill in the blank spaces with the word or words that are missing from the expression. Think about the sentence carefully. Which expression best fits? Do not use the same expression twice. There is no answer key. Complete all of the sentences that you know, and then go back and work on the ones that are more difficult.*

1. Who is in charge here? Oliver is the **big**\_\_\_\_\_ in this department.
2. The two business owners **met**\_\_\_\_\_ **to**\_\_\_\_\_ to talk about a partnership.
3. Alice bought the house for \$100,000 two years ago. She sold the house for \$300,000 last month. She really \_\_\_\_\_ **a**
4. Our project was **back**\_\_\_\_\_ **track**\_\_\_\_\_ after being delayed for the long holiday.
5. All four of us **bought**\_\_\_\_\_ the new business venture.
6. After dating for ten years, the couple decided to \_\_\_\_\_ **the plunge**\_\_\_\_\_ and get married.
7. Our school welcomed three new teachers \_\_\_\_\_ **board**\_\_\_\_\_ this past week.
8. Ross and his wife didn't have enough money in their savings, which **threw**\_\_\_\_\_ **water on**\_\_\_\_\_ the idea of buying a new car.
9. The two witnesses that saw the crime had a different **take**\_\_\_\_\_ what happened.
10. We spent \$100 on lottery tickets, but winning was a **long**\_\_\_\_\_.
11. We have been planning this vacation for two years. It's time to **get**\_\_\_\_\_ **in**\_\_\_\_\_.

12. Cal and Jennifer were the in the new business venture.
13. Ai was falling all over herself to meet the handsome new student.
14. Surfing big waves involves a \_\_\_\_\_
15. Heidi and Clem were satisfied with the plans for the house and \_\_\_\_\_ up a \_\_\_\_\_ with the builder.

## Chapter 4 – The WORKPLACE

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*CORRECT USAGE OF SOME common English expressions and idioms when talking about the workplace*

Directions: Read Louise's column and try to understand the general meaning. Don't **stress out**\* about **every little**. After you have read (or listened to) the story, you will have a chance to read (or hear) the meanings of the idioms used in the story with some brief examples. After you've learned what everything means, there will be a practice and review session at the end of the chapter. By this time you will be **up to snuff**\*\* on the meanings of all of the idioms and other expressions in the story.

(\* **stress** don't worry)

(\*\* **every little** about every detail)

**up to** you will know about or be up to date on)

*Some common English expressions and idioms when talking about the workplace*

**Below we have reprinted one of Louise Gibessi's recent columns about the workplace**

### The Workplace

*Here's a letter from a woman who's got a real problem in the office where she works*

Dear Louise,

I work as an admin assistant in the office of a large corporation in Minneapolis, Minnesota. The job but one of my

coworkers gets on my She is always other colleagues behind their and, frankly Louise, she has a hygiene problem that makes out like a sore She practically bathes in cheap to cover a problem and she totally As luck would have I have to sit next to this woman most of the day! By the end of the day, I end up a headache from the odor.

Louise, if you can't help me I think I will lose my She's got the boss wrapped around her little so I have to watch my around her. First of all, how can I let her know that it is not okay to behind other people's I mean, she really needs to get this And secondly, how do I break it to that she's really fouling the in our office with her terrible hygiene habits?

Signed, holding my in Minneapolis.

*Louise Gibessi responds:*

Dear Holding your

It sounds like this coworker is really lousing up your The workplace needs to be a comfortable, safe environment for everyone in the office, otherwise work will not get done on time. If your coworker's hygiene problem is as bad as you say, it's beyond that the boss hasn't detected it. I'm sure he or she has! So here's your first

Arrange a meeting with your boss and don't be afraid to lay it Explain to him or her that this employee is making it difficult for you to get your work done. It may help to mention that you get headaches from the odor. Remember, your boss has bigger fish to so keep your conversation brief and to the point. Believe he or she already knows about the problem. What you will do by talking to him or her is bring the issue out into the

As the gossiping problem that this woman has, you would do well not to encourage it! You encourage it when you allow her to gossip to you about other coworkers in the office. Next time



she tries gossiping, let her know that you think she would also gossip about you behind your back if she were talking to another colleague. Also, put a bug in the of your other colleagues to follow your behavior. The woman will get the

Good luck! In the next week or so, I hope that you are not having to hold your anymore!

(*slang*) When something rocks, it is really good, enjoyable, exciting, or interesting.

**Examples:**

- My new English class really The teacher is really good and the class is really interesting.
- Skiing really Fresh air, lots of sunshine, fun slopes, and parties at night make this one of my favorite things to do.

**Gets on my** (*idiom*) When someone or something gets on your nerves, you are annoyed or bothered.

**Examples:**

- That new girl in the class talks too She really **gets on my**.
- All that construction noise outside is really **getting on my**.

**3.** (*slang*) To say bad things about someone or something; despoiling someone's reputation through negative gossip; attempting to discredit something or someone.

**Examples:**

- One of my colleagues is always **badmouthing** my favorite soccer He's just jealous because my team beat his team in the championships.

- Be careful when you **badmouth** someone because it may *come back to bite you* (it may harm or make you look bad later on)

**Behind their** (*idiom*) Without them knowing. Doing something or saying something behind someone's back usually has a negative meaning. It means that you are doing or saying something that someone else would not approve of or would not allow.

**Examples:**

- **Behind his** people were saying that he was a terrible soccer player and should be removed from the team.

- What a gossip says **behind your** they will rarely *tell you to your* Tell you to your face= tell you directly.)

**Stand out like a sore** (*idiom*) When something or someone stands out like a sore thumb, he, she or it is very obvious to everyone. This expression sometimes has a negative feeling.

**Examples:**

- Julie's red dress **stuck out like a sore thumb** among all of the black formal dresses at the party.

- Jim's small car **stuck out like a sore thumb** among all of the big pickup trucks.

**Bathes in cheap perfume:** (see the definition of hyperbole) Called a hyperbole, this is an expression that exaggerates something in order to emphasize the point the speaker is trying to make. In this case, the girl put a lot of perfume on herself. Whether it is cheap perfume or not may not be known for sure. That she takes a bath in it is most probably not true.

**Examples:**

- That guy is so rich he **bathes in** money!
- That woman **bathes in** good. She has lots of money, fame, and good friends.

**7.** (abbreviation) This abbreviation stands for *body*. Abbreviations are occasionally used in casual or informal English conversation for effect or brevity.

**Examples:**

- Boy, I wish he would take a shower. He's got **B.O.**
- To avoid having to shower daily.

**8. Totally** (slang) If you *reek* of something you give off or emit it in a very strong way. To *reek* by itself often means to smell very badly. The use of the word *totally* in a slang expression usually means completely.

**Examples:**

- After Alfred fell in the dirty pond, he totally reeked and had to go home and shower.
- We sat around the campfire all By morning we totally reeked of campfire smoke.

**9. As luck would have (idiom)** Dictated by pure luck: sometimes good luck, sometimes bad luck.

**Examples:**

- I didn't study for the As luck would have they postponed the exam for another week giving me a chance to study.
- The day started out sunny and beautiful so we decided to have a We packed lots of good food, blankets and games and went to the As luck would have though, it started raining as soon as we arrived at the park.

**10. End up (idiom)** Finish up with a certain result or object.

**Examples:**

- Alexander worked on his car for two months and ended up with one of the most beautiful cars in his neighborhood.
- After investing all of that money in the stock market we ended up with We lost all of our money.

**11. Lose my (idiom)** A figure of speech meaning to become very agitated, upset or distraught about something.

**Examples:**

- If I had a job where I had to do the same thing every day, I'd **lose my**.

- I thought she was going to **lose her mind** when she found out that her boyfriend was dating another girl.

**12. Wrapped around her little (idiom)** To have control over someone, usually because of emotional reasons .

**Examples:**

- Alice had her boyfriend **wrapped around her little** He would do anything for her.

- Jim was a tall, good-looking guy who worked for a big company in New His coworkers really didn't like the fact that he often got special favors from his female Some people said that he had her **wrapped around his little**

**13. Watch my (idiom)** To exercise caution; to be careful.

**Examples:**

- A coworker of mine told me that the police were out giving tickets for He said I'd better **watch my step** when I drive home after work.

- Watch your this is a bad Maybe you'd better take another road home.

14. (*informal / casual*) When you blab you reveal information about other people or things that your probably shouldn't. A person who blabs just talks without giving thought to the content of his or her conversation, often revealing information that is either unnecessary to the listener or considered secret by someone else.

**Examples:**

- I never told her any of my secrets because she likes to
- Jenny is the neighborhood She'll blab about anything.

15. this (*slang*) When you *get the message* you completely understand the meaning of what someone is trying to communicate to you.

**Examples:**

- The police told those kids last week that they couldn't skateboard in the They're doing it I don't think they got the
- We saw a very powerful show on TV last night about the dangers of I don't think my sister got the message because she is outside smoking right now.

**16. it to her**: (*idiom*) When you break something to someone, you tell them something directly, usually information that is not good news.

**Examples:**

- A young boy was seriously injured in a car accident and taken to the hospital. The police had to go to the boy's home with this bad news and **break it to** his parents.

- My friend didn't get accepted to the university and I'm not sure how to **break it to** him.

**17. Fouling the** (*slang*) Polluting the air, in this case with the strong smell of perfume. This has a hint of sarcasm in it.

**Examples:**

- I hate it when a smoker **fouls the air** with his cigarette smoke.

- The smell of French fries and grease **fouled the air** around the fast food restaurant.

**18. Holding my** (*idiom*) Pinching off the openings of your nose with two fingers to prevent a strong smell from entering.

**Examples:**

- As we walked past the bakery, I **held my nose** so I wouldn't have to smell all of that delicious pastry.

- I held my nose when we went into the horse stable because I don't like the smell of horse stables.

Lousing up your (*idiom*) Ruining your day. When something is lousing up your day, it is ruining the quality of your day's experience.

**Examples:**

- The rain really loused up my day. Traffic was heavy and there was flooding downtown making it difficult to go anywhere.

- I found out that I own \$10,000 in That really loused up my (*in this case, put me in a bad mood so that the rest of the day wasn't very pleasant*)

20. (*idiom*) When something is *beyond* that means that you do not understand it.

**Examples:**

- Why people use illegal drugs is beyond

- Why Alicia went back with her boyfriend after he cheated on her is beyond

21. (*noun, slang or used in the expression to have an* An opportunity or an opening; (*noun*) a connection to someone or something that has access to what you may want.

**Examples:**



- You've got to have an in to be asked to join that club.
- I know that you are trying to get accepted into that I think you'll have an in when you show them your excellent grades.

22. lay it (*idiom*) To be direct and clear when giving someone information.

**Examples:**

- The prime minister laid it out for the if they didn't find an alternative energy source soon, their country would be in trouble.
- The coach of the team laid it out for the they can win the championships if they win the next two games.

23. Bigger fish to (*idiom*) More important things to do.

**Examples:**

- I don't have time to listen to every little complaint; I've got bigger fish to
- The president of the company has bigger fish to fry and relies on his managers to direct the day-to-day operation of the company.

24. Believe (*idiom*) An expression that means this is true, don't doubt it.

**Examples:**

- **Believe** if we didn't have to depend on oil, we would be a lot happier.
- **Believe** a person's quality of life depends on how healthy they are.

**25. into the** (*idiom*) Something that is there for everyone to observe; not hidden.

**Examples:**

- The issue of companies not hiring people from certain racial backgrounds needs to be brought **out into the open** so that this does not happen in the future.
- The dangers of using a cellular phone are just now being **brought out into the**

**26.** (*idiom*) Pertaining to or in regards to.

**Examples:**

- The state should provide more opportunities for less fortunate people to better **As for** wealthy people, well, they can take care of themselves.
- Everyone is going to Florida when they **As for** me, I'm going to the South Pacific.

**27. Bug in the** (*idiom*) When you put a bug in someone's ear you give them a hint or an idea about something.

***Examples:***

- I put a **bug in** my boss' **ear** that I am due for a raise in pay.
- My wife put a **bug in** my **ear** about the garage needing to be cleaned.

## Chapter 4 Practice and Review

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*DIRECTIONS: IN EACH of the sentences below, fill in the blank spaces with the word or words that are missing from the expression. Think about the sentence carefully. Which expression best fits? Do not use the same expression twice. There is no answer key. Complete all of the sentences that you know, and then go back and work on the ones that are more difficult.*

1. I don't have time right now to talk about the weather. I **have** \_\_\_\_\_ **fish to**
2. Why people smoke is \_\_\_\_\_
3. **Believe** \_\_\_\_\_, a person's quality of life depends on how healthy they are.
4. The lady next door **likes to** \_\_\_\_\_, so don't tell her anything.
5. The smoke from the building fire **fouled the** \_\_\_\_\_ around the city.
6. We didn't know how to **break** \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ **her** that she didn't pass the exam.

7. The weather really loused \_\_\_\_\_ our It was supposed to be sunny, but, instead, it was stormy.
8. Jim \_\_\_\_\_ a bug\_\_\_\_\_ his friend's ear about his poor eating habits.
9. After working on the painting for six months, the artist ended \_\_\_\_\_ with a beautiful work of art.
10. Whew! That dead fish \_\_\_\_\_ It has been there for a week.
11. That new pub really good music, good food, and cheap drinks.
12. \_\_\_\_\_ your step, it is dark in that cellar and you may trip on something.
13. There was a warning in the newspaper about the dangers of some prescription drugs. Despite this warning, many people never get the \_\_\_\_\_ that prescription drugs can be very dangerous.
14. It really \_\_\_\_\_ on my nerves when some one leaves their cell phone on in class.
15. Boy, that pink house really \_\_\_\_\_ out like a \_\_\_\_\_

## Chapter 5 - ROMANCE

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*CORRECT USAGE OF SOME common English expressions and idioms when talking about romance*

Directions: Read Louise's column and try to understand the general meaning. Don't **stress** about **every little**. After you have read the story, you will have a chance to read (or hear) the meanings of the idioms used in the story with some brief examples. After you've learned what everything means, there will be a practice and review session at the end of the chapter. By this time you will be **up to** on the meanings of all of the idioms and other expressions in the story.

(\* **don't stress** don't worry)

(\***\*** **every little** about every detail)

(\***\*****\*** **up to** you will know about or be up to date on)

*Some common English expressions and idioms when talking about romance*

***Below we have reprinted one of Louise Gibessi's recent columns about romance.***

### ROMANCE

*Here is a letter from a guy in Seattle, Washington, U.S.A., who has a crush girl in the office where he works*

Dear Louise,

I asked the pretty black-haired girl who works in the accounting department if she would like to go out to with me on

Friday night. To my surprise, she said yes! But when I asked her if she wouldn't mind going she really told me and then walked away. I can't figure what happened! Signed, in Seattle

*Louise Gibessi responds:*

Dear

First of all, get a When you asked her if she wouldn't mind going you asked her to pay half of the expense of your date at the restaurant. I'm going to be very up front with here: what a are! Did you really like this girl? Well, you can forget now because is not one of the words in a woman's My advice to you is this: in the future, when you have a crush on and would like to date this person, please never bring up the subject of who will pay for the date. In many societies around the world the man pays for the dates—especially the first date! Using the expression, going to most women on the first date is like waving a red flag in front of a Good luck, and I hope you find Miss soon.

Signed, Louise

**To go out to (idiom)** In a romantic situation, to take someone to dinner on a date. To ask someone to go out with you is to ask someone to accompany you on a date.

**Examples:**

- I asked the girl with the red hair to go out with me.
- My girlfriend and I go out every Friday We usually go to dinner and then see a movie.

**To go (idiom)** To split the cost of something, usually in casual situations when two or more people are going to dinner or

experiencing other activities together where there are charges involved.

**Examples:**

- My girlfriend and I are trying to save money for our marriage, so when we go out we usually **go**
- She is a good friend of mine, but there is no romantic interest between. Sometimes we have lunch. When we do, we **go**

To **tell someone** (*idiom*) To tell someone off is to get angry with someone and tell them exactly how you feel. This is usually done with a lot of emotion. To tell someone off usually implies a rejection.

**Examples:**

- When I found out that my boyfriend was seeing another woman, I really **told him** and then left him forever.
- The policeman really **told** the driver **off** for speeding through the school zone, and then gave him a ticket (cars must go very slowly through a school zone).

**Can't figure** (*idiom*) Unable to understand what is happening or what is going on.

**Examples:**



- I can't figure out why my colleague was fired at He was a good worker, always came in on time, and was always respectful to the I just can't figure it out.
- We could never figure out why the cat liked to sleep on the top of the refrigerator.

(*adjective*) Suffering from overwhelming grief or sorrow, many times because of the loss of a loved one or something very important to you.

**Examples:**

- I was heartbroken when our dog died.
- Our family was heartbroken when we heard that our house did not survive the storm.

Get a (*slang*) Is derived from *get a grip on* which means to calm down and think rationally or become rational. This is often used in a playful, lighthearted way to mean *think* But using this term with strangers can be considered to be rude and impolite, so be careful when you use this.

**Examples:**

- My friend was really upset about not getting her work done on time at I told her to get a she still has two more days to complete the project.

- My neighbors were upset and panicking after hearing that a hurricane might be coming through our I told them to **get a grip** and just do what is necessary to prepare themselves.

(imperative) Is derived from *look at me*, which means to pay careful attention to what I am going to say next. This is often used in a serious conversation where there may be a misunderstanding, or where important points need to be understood by the listener. Usually used between people who already know each other or have not met for the first time; but if a stranger is causing you some problem it is possible to begin your comments to him or her with *look!*

**Examples:**

- The kids were running in and out of the house while the adults were trying to have a Finally, the father said, *you kids stay outside and play!*

- I thought that it was very important that my customer purchased one of our safety I said to him, *if your building catches fire and you don't have one of these safety devices, many people could be hurt.*

**To be up front with someone:** (idiom) To be completely honest with someone without hiding any facts.

**Examples:**

- The doctor was very **up front with** us when he was describing our daughter's injuries from the auto accident.

- Some people say it is difficult to find a politician who will be up front with you.

(*informal, noun*) Often used playfully to mean that a person is not very smart.

**Examples:**

- What a He didn't wait for the light to change to green before he crossed the street.

- You would have to be a numbskull not to understand this lesson.

**You can forget** (*slang*) Sometimes used playfully to mean that your opportunity to do something has come and has now gone, possibly forever. Don't worry about it anymore because that opportunity will not come again.

**Examples:**

- You have failed the last three If you think you're going to graduate to the next level, [you can] forget

- The boy asked the amusement park attendant if he could go on the big roller coaster for The attendant *No money?* can forget

(*slang, noun*) A cheapskate is a person who never wants to pay for anything. This is a person who will buy the cheapest of

everything and will rely on his friends or family to pay for things. Sometimes used playfully.

**Examples:**

- He's such a Every time we go to the pub, we end up buying him a He never buys.

- If you're a you won't have a girlfriend for long.

*(informal, adjective)* Used to mean a person with good taste in clothing and other things in life, as well as conducts themselves in a sophisticated way. A person who is highly stylish and elegant.

**Examples:**

- She wears stylish clothing and drives a nice She is a classy lady.

- The man's good manners, stylish clothing, and expensive car distinguish him as a classy gentleman.

*(abbreviation for vocabulary, informal)* Sometimes, in informal or slang speech, speakers will abbreviate certain words. They do this to create a certain effect or to get their point across more quickly. Below are some other words that are sometimes used this way:

**Examples:**

- Body = You can really see what a good bod she has in that bathing suit.

- Body odor = Showering daily is a good way to prevent B.O.

To have a crush on (*idiom*) Means to be romantically interested in someone who usually doesn't know that you feel this way. *Crushes* are usually temporary for one reason or another, but occasionally they develop into relationships.

**Examples:**

- I had a crush on my boss, but she was married.

- A lot of girls have crushes on their favorite movie stars.

15. To wave a red flag in front of a (*cliché*) Means to deliberately provoke a dangerous situation. To say or do something that would obviously make someone else mad or very annoyed.

**Examples:**

- Telling that policeman that he should be fired from the police department for giving you a ticket was like waving a red flag in front of a

- My business partner was already upset because our company was not doing But when I told him that a close associate was starting another company to compete with ours, it was like waving a red flag in front of a

**16. To find Miss Right or Mr.** To find Miss Right means to find the right woman for someone. To find the person who you could best be together with.

***Examples:***

- In order **to find Miss** you have to look in the right places.
- If you want to **meet Mr.** go where Mr. Right hangs out.

## Chapter 5 Practice and Review

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*DIRECTIONS: IN EACH of the sentences below, fill in the blank spaces with the word or words that are missing from the expression. Think about the sentence carefully. Which expression best fits? Do not use the same expression twice. There is no answer key. Complete all of the sentences that you know, and then go back and work on the ones that are more difficult.*

1. The teenager was afraid to be up\_\_\_\_\_ with his problems. Whenever an adult tried to help, he told them that everything was okay.
2. Sylvia has a\_\_\_\_\_ on her classmate, but he doesn't seem interested.
3. Telling the policeman that you only drink a little when you drive, is like waving a\_\_\_\_\_ flag in\_\_\_\_\_ of a
4. He always asks his girlfriends to pay half of the restaurant bill. He is such a
5. People can't figure\_\_\_\_\_ why they have to pay so much in taxes.
6. Sam has been trying to\_\_\_\_\_ Miss Right for years, but he hasn't had much luck.

7. He forgot to roll up the windows in his car again, and now it's starting to rain. What a

8. Alicia's friend was really upset about losing her job. I told her to **get a** \_\_\_\_\_, she will get another one.

9. You don't have the skills of a professional soccer player. You **can** \_\_\_\_\_ **it** if you think you will be hired by a professional soccer team.

10. My girlfriend and I are trying to save money for our marriage, so when we go out we usually go

11. The mother was growing impatient with her kids: "You kids go outside and play!"

12. The little girl was \_\_\_\_\_ when her kitten died.

13. The boy asked the girl with the red hair to **go** \_\_\_\_\_ **to** **dinner with** him.



## Chapter 6 - EDUCATION

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*CORRECT USAGE OF SOME common English expressions and idioms when talking about education*

Directions: Read and / or listen to Louise's column and try to understand the general meaning. Don't **stress** about **every little**. After you have read (or listened to) the story, you will have a chance to read (or hear) the meanings of the idioms used in the story with some brief examples. After you've learned what everything means, there will be a practice and review session at the end of the chapter. By this time you will be **up to** on the meanings of all of the idioms and other expressions in the story.

(\* **stress** don't worry)

(\***\*** **every little** about every detail)

(\***\*****\*** **up to** you will know about or be up to date on)

*Some common English expressions and idioms when talking about education*

**Below we have reprinted one of Louise Gibessi's recent columns about education.**

### Education

*Here is a letter from an ESL student who is studying English in the United States. Apparently, this student is not too happy with his school*

Dear Louise Gibbesi,

I am an English student presently studying English in the United States. I'm pretty about learning English because I want to use English in my profession when I get back my home country. The school that I am going to is okay, but some of the classes leave a lot to be. In some classes some of the other students in the class are not as enthusiastic about learning English as I am. I have brought this to the teacher, but the teacher doesn't seem to be able to do anything about it. I guess this lack of enthusiasm is a personal decision on the part these students.

One of the other I have about my present educational experience is my home stay accommodations. My home stay parents are very nice and they can speak my native language. But, that's the problem! I came to America to learn English but my home stay parents think that this is an opportunity to improve their conversation in my language! Louise, I can't seem to get them to break this of talking to me in my language. One of the big reasons why I chose home stay accommodations was because I wanted to practice English with my home stay parents. What should I do? Also, regarding my first problem, what can I do to make bigger strides in improving my English in my present situation at my school?

Signed, down in the in the USA.

*Louise Gibessi responds:*

Dear down in the

Look on the bright side of Being able to study English in America is a After all, this is an English speaking country! And herein your answer! Make time when you are not going to school to participate in activities around the community. You can find these activities by looking on the Internet or in the local

newspaper. Go out volunteer for something – they're always looking for volunteers. Go to museums, art galleries, and specialty shows where you have a chance to talk to the people who are responsible for the exhibits. Go to street festivals, concerts and local events and mingle the people. Make a trusted friend in America; someone with whom you share the same interests. Remember, you learn to speak English well by speaking English. So don't be bashful, go for

Here's the on your home stay dilemma. Your home stay parents are not obligated to teach you English. They have signed a contract with your school saying that they would provide a student with clean, safe accommodations within a family environment. There is nothing in that contract that says they have to speak English. Why don't you sit down with and explain your point of view. Then negotiate an arrangement with them where part of the time they can practice your language with them, but most of the time you would prefer to speak English.

That's it in a Hey, keep your chin Life is a bowl of for you right now!

1. (*idiom*) When you are gung-ho you are very eager, motivated and enthusiastic to do something.

**Examples:**

- Our team was really gung-ho to win the championships.
- Molly studied every day for the upcoming She was gung-ho to do well on the exam.

2. Get back (*idiom*) To return to somewhere, something or someone.

**Examples:**

- The clerk said she had to answer the phone but that she would **get back to** us in a minute.
- We won't be **getting back to** our home country for three weeks.

**3. Leave a lot to be** (*idiom*) Inadequate. When you say that something leaves a lot to be desired, you are saying that it is not as good as it could be, inadequate.

**Examples:**

- The food in that restaurant **left a lot to be**
- The manager was thinking about firing Ted because his work **left a lot to be**

**4. Brought this** (*idiom*) When you bring something up, you introduce it into a discussion.

**Examples:**

- Yesterday I talked to my boss about my I **brought up** the fact that I had not received a raise in nearly two years.
- When I spoke to my friend Jocelyn on Tuesday, she reminded me that I owed her That was the second time this week that she has **brought** this

**5. On the part** (*idiom*) On the part of means regarding or by.

### **Examples:**

- A lot of hard work on the part of our employees ensured the profitable year.
- Complaining on the part of some students caused the teacher to change the test date.

### **6.** (noun) Complaints.

#### **Examples:**

- One of my gripes about this town is that there aren't enough entertainment spots.
- The mayor asked the audience if anyone had a special ( *special gripe= a complaint that is particularly important to someone*)

### **7. Break this** (idiom) To end or stop a usually bad habit.

#### **Examples:**

- Kelly has to break her habit of smoking.
- I wish my friend would break his habit of interrupting people while they are talking.

**8. Down in the** (idiom) When you are *down in the dumps* you are unhappy, sad, kind of melancholy.

#### **Examples:**

- Jean was really down in the dumps when she found out her flight was cancelled.
- Jun's sister was really down in the dumps because she couldn't go to the concert.

Look on the bright side of (idiom) When you look on the bright side of things you attempt to be positive about something; you see the positive side of something.

**Examples:**

- I know you hate to go to work, but look on the bright side of if you didn't have a job, you wouldn't have money to live.
- I like Katy because she is never She always looks on the bright side of

11. (noun) A *godsend* is something that you need or want that appears in your life unexpectedly or at a good time.

**Examples:**

- Winning this money was a now I can pay my bills.
- Hiring that new employee was a now we have enough people to complete the project.

12. *lies* means within this place, idea, situation, scenario, or concept something exists: perhaps an answer; perhaps something you have been looking for, or just something of interest.

**Examples:**

- When learning English, studying is very Herein lies the key to studying.
- She said she likes to smoke because it helps her stay Herein lies the wisdom behind her smoking habit.

13. out and (do) To go out and do something is a way of saying that you are taking action to do something.

**Examples:**

- I got tired of not having a good job so I went out and took some courses in school.
- My parents said that it was good to know how to speak more than just one language so I went out and learned another language.

14. To mix together with or be among individuals in a group.

**Examples:**

- The older students mingled with the younger ones at the graduation ceremony.

- Customers and company representatives mingled with each other at the trade show in Chicago.

**15. for** When you *go for* you use all of your energy and talent towards achieving a certain goal, sometimes without regard for the consequences of failure.

**Examples:**

- I really wanted to do well in the competition, so when I practiced, I really went for
  
- Sally wanted the job with the fashion designer company but was a little afraid that they might not accept. Finally, she decided to go for

**16. the** *Here's the skinny* means here are the details about something.

**Examples:**

- Here's the skinny about our we're leaving at 6am tomorrow morning and will be at the airport by Our flight leaves at 10:05 am.
  
- Here's the skinny about the exam next there will be two parts, grammar and Each grammar question will be worth two points.

**17. down with them:** When you *sit down with* someone to have a meeting, you have usually pre-arranged or pre-planned the



meeting, and the meeting is usually important to both parties. To *sit down with* someone is to take the time necessary, usually to discuss something important.

**Examples:**

- We *sat down with* the union leaders and discussed benefits for the workers.
- The human resources director *sat down with* the new employee and explained all of the company rules.

**18. a** To describe something in a few words, concisely.

**Examples:**

- What the cruise director explained to us, *in a* was that we had to be back on the ship by 8pm because the ship was sailing at 8:30pm.
- *In a* if you are an athlete and you take performance-enhancing drugs, you are not allowed to compete in the competitions.

**19. your chin** When you *keep your chin* you stay positive in spite of negative circumstances.

**Examples:**

- *Keep your chin* it's a beautiful day today and there are lots of fun things we can do.

- Even though it looks like rain, keep your chin up because there is always sunshine behind every cloud.

20. of (idiom) When life is a bowl of cherries, it is really good.

**Examples:**

- Keep your chin up, life is a bowl of cherries if you choose to see it that way.
- Life during a war is not exactly a bowl of

## Chapter 6 Practice and Review

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*DIRECTIONS: IN EACH of the sentences below, fill in the blank spaces with the word or words that are missing from the expression. Think about the sentence carefully. Which expression best fits? Do not use the same expression twice. There is no answer key. Complete all of the sentences that you know, and then go back and work on the ones that are more difficult.*

1. Our team really went \_\_\_\_\_ it and won the match.
2. Getting this new job was a now I can pay my bills.
3. Ursula was really to do well in the competition.
4. In a if you smoke, you could end up with cancer.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ the habit of eating too much at dinner might help you lose some weight.
6. The teachers mingled \_\_\_\_\_ the students during the school party.
7. If you lose sometimes, keep your \_\_\_\_\_ work hard, and you will have better days.
8. Life can be a \_\_\_\_\_ of cherries if you keep a good balance.
9. Work hard and be positive; herein \_\_\_\_\_ the key to success.
10. The quality of his work was not so good; it left a \_\_\_\_\_ to be
11. One that everyone had on the tour was that the tour guide spoke too quickly.